

## MOTERING MATTERS by Sandie Goodwin

### RENEWING YOUR TAXI DISC GETS EASIER

Taxi drivers are amongst the many drivers who have found that renewing their taxi disc online is quick and easy. Now the system offers even greater flexibility after improvements introduced by the DVLA. The first of the changes has come about because DVLA has found that towards the end of the month, many motorists taxing their vehicle online or by phone do not complete the transaction when they realise that their tax disc may not be received in time for the 1st of the following month. From 1st of September 2008, those buying their vehicle tax online, by phone or by post, will be able to legally continue to drive their vehicles for up to 5 days while they wait for their new tax disc to arrive. This will only apply where the new tax disc has been applied for before the current one

expires and motorists should continue to display the expired disc on their vehicle, until the new one arrives.

In addition, motorists are now able to buy their vehicle tax disc from the 5th day of the month that their current disc is due to expire in. DVLA has introduced this new procedure following feedback from the motoring public, which has shown an increasing demand, especially since the advent of electronic vehicle licensing, for motorists to be allowed to re-license earlier in the month.

There is also the added incentive that currently anyone using DVLA's electronic licensing service gets entered into a free prize draw to win a brand new Seat Ibiza car. Andrew Rhodes, DVLA Customer Services Director, said: "These

new customer service improvements show that DVLA listens and responds to the motoring public's needs. It makes sense to be able to buy your tax disc throughout the month, and we are pleased to offer a service that may help our customers manage their monthly outgoings."

To renew vehicle tax or SORN quickly and easily, log onto: [www.direct.gov.uk/taxdisc](http://www.direct.gov.uk/taxdisc) or phone 0870 850 4444 or textphone 0870 850 4445



### LOTUS HOLDS 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

A 60th anniversary celebration is being held at the Norfolk headquarters of Lotus on 14th September 2008. Visitors to the Hethel site will be able to tour its impressive engineering and factory facilities and sections of the design studios will be open to the public. The Evora 2+2 model, due to reach dealers next year, will be on display. On the 60th anniversary website, guests can book in advance for a demonstration lap around the Hethel test track. There will also be family-focused attractions such as a fun fair, Red Devils parachute display and marching bands. The day will include a gathering of Lotus vehicles, including a James Bond Lotus Esprit, ex-Formula One racing cars, the unique Black Diamond Europa and road cars from the 1950s to current day. Radio Broadland will have the finale of the "Live the Lotus Life" competition where one lucky winner will win a fully insured Lotus Elise for 6 months and a thousand pounds in cash! (subject to terms and conditions – see website for details.)

The day will also include a rare gathering of Lotus vehicles including a Lotus Esprit James Bond car, ex Formula One racers, the unique Black Diamond Europa and numerous road cars from 50's and 60's classics to the present line up. Mike Kimberley, Group Lotus CEO, says "The Open Day on Sunday 14th September will be a great opportunity for everyone to see the new and exciting Lotus Evora and the 'Hethel Experience'. I'm sure that visitors will enjoy this rare opportunity to look around our excellent facilities and I look forward to celebrating our 60th Anniversary with all our guests.

All parking will be on site with tickets priced at £13 per adult including 2 children under 16 (if booked in advance from: [www.lotus60thanniversary.com](http://www.lotus60thanniversary.com)) Tickets are £15 on the gate, subject to availability.



### NEW CONGESTION-BUSTING EQUIPMENT PIONEERED

British road users have to brace themselves every day for delays on the road. On days such as the recent August Bank Holiday these delays can be worse than normal. Transport for London recently said that congestion levels in the capital are at their worst since 2002, which taxi drivers knew from experience. Golden River Traffic is pioneering new congestion-busting equipment, which is installed without lane closures.

Bicester based Golden River Traffic is using a new road traffic data collection system with secure radio technology to drive traffic lights and smooth traffic flows. Although the Highways Authority does restrict roadworks over Bank Holiday periods, existing sites with ongoing roadworks still cause delays. In a recent survey for the DfT, 87% of respondents felt congestion was a serious problem and over three quarters believed it important that Government tackles congestion. For the last two decades traffic lights at busy intersections and pedestrian crossings have been increasingly been controlled by 'inductive loop' sensors. Normally seen as dark square outlines on the road surface, they detect a passing vehicle by using a magnetic field to detect the metal components in the passing vehicle. They then send information on location and speed to the computer controlling the traffic signals.

One drawback of the inductive loop system is the need to close a section of road to install the system and its associated



wiring, inevitably adding to congestion. In addition, inductive loops are often damaged when water pipes, gas lines or electrical wires are being laid. This again means more road maintenance, more cost and more congestion. In their recent report on rising

congestion in the capital, Transport for London blames utility company roadworks as the prime cause of hold-ups. They have returned journey times to 2002 levels despite the number of vehicles entering the city's congestion charge zone falling by 21%.

The Golden River wireless vehicle detection system uses flush-mounted magnetometer sensors in the road surface, which wirelessly transmit real time data via secure radio technology to a nearby Access Point. This feeds either locally-placed or remote, traffic management controllers to ensure optimum traffic flow at a junction. The small size and lack of wires allows the system to be positioned in the middle of a lane making its data generation highly accurate. It is also less likely to be disrupted by other road works.

"The system is designed to work with all the proprietary traffic management systems in use across the UK and Europe and it is proving to be a major step forward in the replacement of inductive loop systems" says Martin Rodgers, the Golden River Sales and Marketing Director. "It has already proved a great success, with significant benefits in reducing maintenance costs and traffic congestion."