

BRITAIN TO BRITTANY - JUST GO GET THE BRIDE TO CHURCH ON TIME

Although most of the work The London Cab Company Ltd undertakes is supplying cabs for film shoots, with cabs appearing in movies such as National Treasure II, The Bourne Ultimatum and Run Fat Boy Run, they also get lots of unusual requests from all over the world. Several months a call from a Brussels based PR company enquired about a number of cabs to cover a high profile society wedding in the south east of Brittany, France. With three weeks' notice the final order came in confirming the supply two cabs, one white and one black.

Drivers, crossings and hotels were booked and vehicles checked over. Then with just 20 hours notice another five cabs were suddenly requested. All stops were pulled out to ensure that the cabs got into workshops, Green Cards were collected and at 9.30 the following morning all seven cabs were en-route to the Eurotunnel terminal at Folkestone. A quick fuel stop in Calais and the convoy headed for an overnight stay in Alencon, completing the route the following day.

The convoy consisted of Ray Shenholds setting the pace, Gary Zylberszac and his credit card taking care of road tolls and fuel, followed by Andy Gorman, Daniel Lester and Gary Mankelow. Jimmy Pullum of T&J Recovery was next with a cab full of spares and tools. European Breakdown cover had been purchased for all the cabs but it was great knowing Jimmy was behind keeping an eye on the cabs. Each morning no one was allowed to leave until Jimmy had checked the cabs over. Bringing up the rear was Peter Rose of Eros Wedding Taxis in a white TX4 acting as a beacon so that all the drivers could see the back of the convoy. Only essential stops were made to take on fuel and cake.

On arrival in St Nazaire and after a quick lunch, a drive-through car wash was initiated with cleaning equipment brought from London. A hose and hot water were 'commandeered' from the hotel manager. Jimmy was in charge of the hose (something Gary M soon regretted), Peter soaped, Andy wrangled all the cabs, Gary Z and Ray leathered, Daniel was in shock having never washed a cab before and Gary M err..... polished!

On the big day, after an early breakfast, the final vehicle clean took



place. Next it was the drivers who had a wash and polish. The cabs then travelled to the Brittany Polo Club where Peter fixed white ribbons and bows to all the cabs after which the florists attached a display to the front grilles. Then a short trip to the bride's house for a final briefing, except this time it was the real thing. Shopkeepers, locals and tourists all looked on in disbelief as seven London taxis arrived with the wedding party at the cathedral in the medieval walled city of Guerande. Probably more photos were taken of the cabs than of the blushing bride! After a short time the cabs once again lined



up at the entrance to the church to transport, now with a police escort, the newly married couple and their family to the Polo Club.

Back at the hotel a discussion took place about the return leg of the journey as the team had now been caught up in the Eurotunnel closures following the fire. With a 420 mile journey to Calais a decision was made to 'go for it' as no concrete information was forthcoming from Eurotunnel. So for the final time, the convoy set off for home, again only stopping for essential diesel and cakes. To make things a little 'interesting' every driver estimated, on the back of a £10 note the fare from the hotel to the final fuel stop in Calais in a winner-takes-all challenge. While everyone knew the distance, no-one knew how long the convoy would actually be stopping for breaks, traffic conditions or additional mileage for diversions. Ray Shenholds won with the meter a staggering .40p under his predicted target of £1352.60! He very generously donated his winnings to the Albany Charity Fund.

With a joint total over of over 8,000 miles, could this be the furthest anyone has had to travel in a cab to get the bride to church on time?

DO YOU REMEMBER MARILYN?

Taxi globe has received a request from Nigel Young, owner of an FX4. He asks: "I was wondering whether any of your readers could help me with the following. I own a really interesting FX4R taxi, which I call 'Marilyn'. I bought her on Ebay in 2006. I flew down to Bournemouth for 99p +taxes, train to Weymouth followed by bus to the Isle of Portland and collecting my new purchase for a lovely drive back up to Scotland via friends in Devon.



"She is a 1985 model on a 'B' plate with 63,000 miles from new, excellent original condition with 5 speed box and disc brakes, the last of the chrome bumper and chrome instruments. The original bill of sale and Metropolitan police check are all there. I would really like to find out if any one out there knows more about her history, she was supplied new to Colin Derek Capewell, 401 London Road, North Cheam, Sutton whom I believe used her sparingly as a taxi before suffering from ill health and garaging her until Paul Reed bought her with 58,000 on the clock and took her to Portland in July 2003.

"If anyone knew Colin Capewell or his family can tell me anything about my taxi I would be most grateful."

You can contact Nigel by email at nypdscotland@aol.com

ComfortDelGro ACQUIRES TAXI COMPANY IN LIVERPOOL

Liverpool's largest taxi circuit operator has been acquired by ComfortDelGro, for £800,000. Merseyside Radio Meter Cabs Ltd, which was founded in 1958, operates a radio circuit with a total fleet of 400 licensed Hackney taxis. The operator, better known in Liverpool as Merseycabs, caters to both corporate and individual clientele.

ComfortDelGro Managing Director and Group CEO, Mr Kua Hong Pak, said: "This acquisition adds to our strong presence in the major cities in the United Kingdom, enabling us to further enhance our service offerings to our corporate clients. London clients who travel to Liverpool, for example, can now make use of Merseycabs for their transportation needs, knowing that their fares can be charged to their London accounts."

Mr Reginald Kermode, Chairman and CEO of Cabcharge Australia, which holds the remaining 49% of CityFleet (UK), said: "This transaction again demonstrates our vision to expand our operations throughout the UK and the establishment of sound businesses in the respective cities where we already operate, providing the base to leverage other opportunities as they arise." With the acquisition of Merseycabs, ComfortDelGro now has a fleet of 4,500 taxis on its radio circuits in London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. All of the Group's taxis in the UK offer the Cabcharge taxi account service which allows for cash-free travel.