

ANNUAL INTER-LIVERY & CITY OF LONDON PANCAKE RACES

Once again this year, The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers were delighted to be able to take part in the Pancake Races run in the Guildhall Yard, by kind permission of the Chief Commoner. Organised by the Worshipful Company of Poulterers in association with The Cook & The Butler, the event is held on Shrove Tuesday. Pancake Day is the traditional feast day before the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday. Lent, the 40 days leading up to Easter, is traditionally a time of fasting. Traditionally, it became Pancake Day because milk butter and eggs were often the foods given up for Lent.

Back in 2004, the Poulterers began the City's inter-livery pancake race. Then those taking part were Livery companies in some way associated with the making of pancakes. Now other Livery companies have joined the event, which sees the Masters and their teams race run along the Guildhall



Brenda Bartlett

Carlos Oliveira

Geoff Richards

Yard with a pancake in a pan. Each runner has to flip the pancake at least once without dropping it on the floor! Themed hats are worn making it even more tricky to run. Unfortunately this year saw the Master of WCHCD, Andrew Overton, injured during a pre-race practice session and so Geoff Richards, a Past Master and taxi driver, agreed to run on Andrew's behalf. Taxi drivers who are Freemen and Liverymen of the WCHCD racing included Carlos Oliveira, running in the "Mad Hatters" race; both he and Geoff were second in their respective semi finals. Ric Alford was running in the Liveryman's race and Brenda Bartlett was in the Ladies Race. Each team has four competitors who compete for the Trophy - frying pans are awarded to the winner of each class final. Each heat is started by the Gunmakers Company with the Clockmakers being responsible for the timing. Lemons are provided by the Fruiterers whilst the Glovers white gloves are worn by each runner. Sadly WCHCD did not win in their heats this year, but will start training again for next year.



WCHCD team

350 YEARS OF WRITING CHEQUES

2009 is the year the cheque celebrates its 350th birthday. Today we use our plastic cards far more than we write cheques, but one of the cheques known to be in existence in the UK dated 16 February 1659. It made out for £400, signed by Nicholas Vanacker, payable to a Mr Delboe and drawn on Messrs Morris and Clayton. Although the date written on the cheque reads 16 February 1659, its date is actually 16 February 1660 by today's calendar. This is because of the switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar and the fact that until 1751 the legal year in England began on 25 March rather than 1 January.

Early cheques were all handwritten, but in the early 1700s printed cheques were introduced for the first time. By the late 19th century cheques were widely used, being the only real alternative to cash. Cheque usage hit its peak in 1990 when an average of 11 million of them were issued each day. Since then, cheque volumes have increasingly declined as consumers and businesses continue to embrace alternative payment methods, including the debit card, and automated payments such as the Direct Debit and standing order.

If all the cheques that went through the clearing system in 1990 (the peak year for cheque usage) were laid end-to-end, they would stretch 12 times around the world. Since 1985 – when the Cheque & Credit Clearing Company was established – it has cleared more than 44.8 billion cheques, with a value of £26,850 billion.

Angela Thomas, Managing Director of the Cheque and Credit Clearing Company, said: "It is remarkable to think that cheques have been with us for 350 years, arriving in a year when we were a Commonwealth under Richard Cromwell the Lord Protector, and Sir Isaac Newton was still at school. Cheques only reached their peak as recently as 1990 but they are unlikely to be around in even another 50 years' time, as we increasingly move to use other, more modern, more convenient and quicker ways to pay."

"Although cheque clearing volumes are now decreasing at the rate of over 10 per cent every year there are still around 4 million items cleared every working day. The Cheque and Credit Clearing Company remains committed to making sure the clearings happen on time, reliably and to quality standards."



GRAB YOURSELF A BARGAIN!

There is a selection of clothing and unique gifts in the Black Cab Collection. Simply visit any LTI Vehicles main dealer or go online www.blackcabgifts.co.uk and discover the new Black Cab Collection for yourself – and grab a bargain. Any order placed for exclusive Black Cab Merchandise before the end of March 2009 will receive a 12.5% discount on exclusive merchandise featuring the iconic London Taxi. This offer is available on all products, excluding model taxis, within the Black Cab Collection. The collection features items such as branded clothing, vehicle accessories and exclusive gifts that range from a multi-tool to an air freshener.

Rob Laidler, Sales Director at LTI Vehicles said: "This offer is great news for anyone looking to own a piece of merchandise that features an internationally recognised symbol of London."