

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER TAXI DRIVER DUO

It was appropriate that mother and daughter Green Badge drivers Jeanette and Danielle Barton should arrive at Knowledge Point School to thank everyone for their help on the same day as the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day whose slogan is Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities and Progress for All.

As far as Knowledge Point is aware, Jeanette (on the left) and Danielle (on the right (shown photographed with Derek O'Reilly, Knowledge Point's senior tutor, are the London cab trades only mother and daughter duo.



Jeanette completed the Knowledge in 2002 and encouraged her daughter to join Knowledge Point as soon as she expressed an interest in following in her mother's footsteps and becoming a London taxi driver. Supported by a part-time job at Dial-a-Cab it took Danielle just over 3 years to qualify in February of this year. Both women have expressed great satisfaction with the job, particularly with the flexibility of hours.

TAXI DISCS WANTED!

Neil Jones from Beccles in Suffolk has an unusual hobby. His hobby, which began at the age of 11, is collecting taxi discs. He was always interested in cars as he grew up and his first disc came from an Austin 1300 that belonged to his father. Once Neil realised that the discs were different colours according to their year of issue, he decided to start collecting the discs. Today his collection is a staggering 123,000 discs! Neil says: "I started out collection clambering around in scrap yards, which continues even today, although some yards now insist on a high vis jacket as I continue my searches! It is quite common for people to put one disc on top of another when they renew their road fund licence, so sometimes there are quite a few on a car."

Neil, now aged 36, also writes to "car" magazines and so has written to Taxi Globe and Taxicab News to ask if any taxi drivers have discs they could send him. Although he would like some taxi discs in particular, whatever disc you may have is welcome, old or newer. The oldest disc in the collection is from a 1922 Tricycle De Dion-Bouton, a three-wheeled French motorbike. He also has one from a Koenigsegg. Neil continued: "Most



taxi drivers, when they renew their disc, tend to do one of two things; they either throw the old one away, or they slip the new one over the top of the old one, resulting in a wad of them accumulating in the holder. Rather than doing that, would you be kind enough to please send any unwanted, expired discs my way? It does not matter to me how old or how recent the discs are, even ones as recent as last year (or even this year!) would be most welcome additions to my collection, nor which make, model, or age of taxis the discs are from!"

If you would like to send any discs, the address is: Neil Jones, 6 Pleasant Place, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 9YD.



PRIME MINISTER IMPRESSED BY TAXI MANUFACTURER

The sustained growth of Cab Direct's manufacturing output in Glasgow has attracted the interest of Prime Minister Gordon Brown. He singled out the company's Glasgow manufacturing plant for an extended personal visit in February when he met several shop-floor workers on the assembly line, as well as holding discussions with directors about current issues affecting the taxi trade. Cab Direct, a key part of the highly successful Allied Vehicles Group, was established with just 18 employees in 1993, the group began its own manufacturing operations in 2003. Since then the company hasn't looked back, with production rising to more than 2,500 vehicles per annum. The company now employs more than 350 people, including local area managers based throughout the UK.

The Prime Minister witnessed the wide-ranging development, engineering and production activities at Cab Direct and was impressed by the company's range of specialist products. Cab Direct works in partnership with manufacturers like Peugeot, Citroen, Fiat, Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz to produce wheelchair accessible cabs tailor-made for the UK's hard-working taxi trade. These include full specification hackneys like the prestigious Mercedes-Benz M8, the



Prime Minister Gordon Brown with Scottish Secretary Jim Murphy, talking to some of the Cab Direct engineering team.

economical Citroen EuroTaxi and the Peugeot E7. Mr. Brown took great interest in the full range of products made at Cab Direct. He also particularly praised the firm's commitment to training and development, including its support for modern apprenticeships. "You've certainly got a very enthusiastic young workforce here," said Mr. Brown. Vehicle assembler Paddy Tonner was one of the workers surprised to find himself chatting with the Prime Minister. Paddy comments: "The PM asked how I was and how

long I've been here. He also asked how long it takes for us to make a vehicle and said that wheelchair accessible cars and taxis are really important because of the difference they make to the people who need them."

"Of course it was a great honour for us to have the Prime Minister come and see what we do here," adds Cab Direct co-chairman Michael Facenna. "Glasgow used to be world-renowned for its engineering but sadly so much of that has gone now," he continued. "I think, though, that the PM was genuinely pleased and perhaps a bit surprised to see that we've created so many manufacturing jobs here in the UK."

