

Head for the Angel of the North, and you'll soon find Dean Taxis of Gateshead

Nestled in the attractive suburban area of Low Fell, Dean Taxis thrives today as a market leader in providing transport for the Gateshead area, and surrounding districts in Tyne & Wear. Dean Taxis was established in 1986 as the private hire vehicle service division of

employed, working under sub-contract to Dean Taxis. 40 per cent of the fleet are owner/drivers, and the remaining 60 per cent have vehicles supplied by the company on a lease purchase scheme.

I.T. PIONEERS

Not long after the com-

pany was formed, Dean Taxis' founding owner and managing director Alex Felce determined that in order to ensure continued growth of his company, it would be necessary to invest in the introduction of a computerised booking and dispatch system. Over the following two years Dean Taxis began to grow and prosper, and in 1988 Alex began a period of research into

the flexibility and integrity of the programming, but also because of the potential for the system to grow alongside Dean Taxis as the company grew. The Haley system initially developed under a XENIX platform and subsequently UNIX platform was considered to be the most stable, flexible and reliable on the market. Dean Taxis went on to utilise the 5-Tone module in 1989 for vehicle location tracking, which was developed and manufactured by Gordon Haley Associates. In 1992 a visit was made to the Halda offices in Kings Cross, London to look at introducing data terminals into the Dean Taxis fleet. This was a marriage made in heav-

en, for the Halda data terminals and the Haley system interfaced perfectly. Like the Haley system, the Halda supplied equipment was both robust and flexible, allowing for future integration of new technology being developed by both teams. Over the years the Haley system has been developed to enable it to be used at satellite offices anywhere in the world. All managers at Dean Taxis are linked from their homes, utilising internet technology with VPN networks and IP telephony directly into the system. Sophisticated telephone recording and CCTV monitoring systems are employed at Dean Taxis, thereby enabling managers to manage and control the working environment from anywhere they may be located, day or night. And some working environment that is as well! Dean Taxis was one of the original founder members of the National Association, and we were actively involved in overseeing their ISO9000 quality classification, therefore spending some time in their prestigious three-storey offices. Believe me, nothing is left to chance...and the activity level is awesome. In the past three and a half years, research has been ongoing to locate a new data head, capable of interfacing with the new technology introduced into the Haley system, including the unique TP radio supplied by RT Systems, which rates very highly in the opinion of those at Dean Taxis.

PEOPLE POWER

In 1998 Steve Orrock, an ex-police officer, licensing official and university business graduate, joined the staff at Dean Taxis. Since this date the company has increased its public profile and market share, and now acts as consultants to the Passenger Transport Executive for the whole of the Tyne & Wear region.

Many exciting and ground-breaking projects have been undertaken in recent years, and Dean Taxis has been hugely successful in the field of corporate account development. In fact, of their work volume, 1.8 million passengers a year are account customers. Amongst the many



account holders with Dean Taxis are organisations such as the Hilton Hotel Group, Marriott and Swallow Hotels, the BBC and Sky TV, to name but a few.

The management team consist of: Managing director - Alex Felce; Operations Director - Steve Orrock; Driver manager - Noel Foley; IT Manager - Arthur Snowdon; Accounts Manager - Craig Oliver; and Control room manager - Phil Walton. The management team are supported by a team of 25 full and part time dispatchers/booking clerks, two accounts administrators and a cleaner.

Further support comes from their garage services: Belle Vue Motors down the road but still in Low Fell, Gateshead. This is a fantastic garage set-up! It's a class 7 MoT and vehicle mechanical

repair centre which is managed by Alan Potter and his team of six personnel comprising secretary/administrator, customer services clerk, mechanical fitters/MoT testers and a data installation engineer.

So you might deduce that any mechanical repairs to Dean Taxis' vehicles can be dealt with in-house, as they say... We were actually in the garage on one occasion when a conversion was being done on a Vito, as mentioned. Again, an awesome facility.

It only remains to say that, with next year being Dean Taxis' twentieth anniversary, would that there could be many other firms around the UK that match their record for progress, high standards and achievement of growth and development.



Collinsdale Limited. A combination of takeovers and acquisitions, coupled with a desire from early on to utilise the latest computerised technology, has resulted in a growth rate from the original two vehicles in 1986 to today's fleet size of 237 vehicles.

Covering something in the region of 99 square miles in the Tyneside area, incorporating Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Gateshead, Dean's fleet provide all types of vehicles around the clock, including executive limousines and specially adapted wheelchair accessible Mercedes Vitos. Their prestige/limousine type vehicles include a range of Mercedes saloons including C, E and S class, and a luxury Bentley.

The variety of wheelchair vehicles available - some of these are licensed as hackney carriages and some are private hire - ranges from 8-seater VW Caravelles, the Vitos, Peugeot EuroTaxis, Fiat Scudos and Fiat Doblo. The Mercedes Vito is a special conversion which is carried out by Dean Taxis' own workshops located on the Team Valley Trading Estate, one of Europe's largest industrial complexes. All drivers are self-

employed, working under sub-contract to Dean Taxis. 40 per cent of the fleet are owner/drivers, and the remaining 60 per cent have vehicles supplied by the company on a lease purchase scheme.



computerised taxi management systems, visiting a substantial number of sites throughout the country where computers were being used to control taxi fleets. Following detailed examination and consideration of the merits, features and benefits of the variety of systems available the market at that time, it was decided to opt for the Gordon Haley Associates CAB 5000 system, because of

most stable, flexible and reliable on the market. Dean Taxis went on to utilise the 5-Tone module in 1989 for vehicle location tracking, which was developed and manufactured by Gordon Haley Associates.

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The Microbus unit is compact, robust and effective. Utilising the taxi management and accounts software of Gordon Haley, and with additional programming by Dieter Fritsch, a system has been developed that not only produces a data head that displays specific job details and messaging; it also incorporates fare transfer features, a unique mapping and satellite navigation system, mobile phone capability, text messaging and callback functions - not to mention the actual taximeter, speedometer, post code location finder, speed trap detector, and credit card validation facility.

All this, and it will even play DVDs! The message here is that the new bespoke system

for Dean Taxis is multifaceted, future-proof and with a whole range of features and flexible options available. More importantly, if any readers wish to see more about this system, the gentlemen will be exhibiting at the Telford exhibition next month - so have a chat to them on their stand!

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DATA PORTFOLIO

DEAN TAXIS LIMITED

Address:	415 Durham Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE9 5AN
Telephone:	0191 444 4444
Website:	www.deantaxis.co.uk
Year started:	1986
Number of vehicles:	237
Types of vehicle:	55 hackney carriages; 7 saloons, remainder wheelchair accessible, 182 private hire vehicles, including a Bentley and a Mercedes S Class
Licensing authority:	Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
Cost of -	
Operator licence:	£132
Driver's licence:	£38 private hire or taxi - £65 dual badge
Vehicle licence:	£242 - includes two tests per annum
Radio rent fee:	£117 - All equipment is supplied and includes the facility of free access to a number of licensed PHV pool cars in the event of accident or major mechanical breakdown of the driver's own vehicle
Booking system:	Computerised - Haley CAB 5000
Phone system:	Samsung DCS Internet
Radio system:	Unique TP supplied by RT Systems