

# Newtown Radio Cars: forward thinkers from day one

We travel north of the Border this month, to touch base with Newtown Radio Cars (Livingston) Ltd. If you travel west out of Edinburgh for about 20 miles on the M8 you will come to this locality, in which Newtown Radio Cars has had an established business in West Lothian since the 1960s.

Over the years the management of this forward looking company has changed in personnel, size and structure: the current management took over the business in 1988 and the fleet has grown from 26 cars then to today's 112. In 2000 they changed to a private limited company, with 53 shareholders who elect seven directors to run the company. The Newtown fleet today

and future needs.

Company secretary Scott Kemp said, "To make this decision as simple as possible, Cordic actually came to our office and set up a working system in minutes and installed a couple of cars for us. This way we could actually see how the system would work for us in our area using live bookings. No other supplier could do this for us. We tested the built-in TomTom satellite navigation too and sure enough, it took us directly to the correct door, every time."

The story is taken up by Newtown chairman John Heggie: "The installation went extremely smoothly and Cordic helped us every step of the way. We are also delighted with the



considering using the card payment features of our system. "There were no hidden costs with Cordic, just as they promised us. In our opinion, our company has got really good value for money. The guys at Cordic have years of taxi experience and we know our company is in safe hands now.

#### GOOD TO (NOT) TALK

"We can communicate with and track all our vehicles all over the UK. With our old PMR radio-based system, we struggled to get a signal over a small hill to the next town only a few miles away and would get lots of TX failures. Now thanks to Cordic all those problems are far behind us. PMR now seems so old hat. We now have no need for our old remote mast sites, base stations and landlines, and the subsequent savings are considerable.

"We use meters in all our vehicles," John Heggie continues. "When one of our taxis picks up a street hire, the XDA detects the meter being switched on and knows that vehicle is busy. We couldn't find another XDA-based system that could connect to the meter in this way.

"We produce management reports and the statistics speak for themselves. Since we went live with our Cordic sys-

tem, our job count has grown by nearly 50 per cent to 10,500 jobs per week. We print the results of the job count report and put it on our notice board for all to see. Of course this success is also due to having such an excellent call centre team.

"We recently introduced Cordic's Web-booker service to allow bookings to be made on the Internet. Customers who use this service can

actually track their vehicle's arrival on a map on the Internet!

"Cordic have really raised the bar! If you asked us whether we would make the same decision today, knowing what we know now, the answer would definitely still be yes! We thought that all suppliers in this market were the same, but Cordic are head and shoulders ahead of the rest. Whether your taxi company has ten cars or

several hundred, you need to check out Cordic."

As for the usual tentative enquiry as to whether Newtown Radio Cars has any issues with their licensing authority, their reply is interesting: they say the authority "has too many special rules to mention!" Particular problems are that they are not allowed to sell hackney plates; they just go back to the council. Also, the council are now only issuing new hackney plates to wheelchair accessible vehicles, but still allow these vehicles to be driven by a driver who is exempt from doing wheelchair work. (We believe this refers to medical exemptions for drivers who cannot lift or manoeuvre wheelchair passengers; they can still drive the vehicles.)

All in all, the progress of Newtown Radio Cars has been remarkable from the very beginning; just stand back and watch them now!



consists of 40 hackneys and 72 private hires, all of which are four, six and seven-seaters driven by owner/drivers. In fact, they generally have two drivers per vehicle, so including part time drivers they have 280 in total. This sizeable fleet covers West Lothian and most of Central Scotland, primarily within which their average job count is around 10,500 jobs per week. Around 70 per cent of this volume is account/credit work.

In addition to the directors, management and drivers, Newtown has a full complement of eight dispatchers and nine telephonists. And just how do they manage the volume of work that comes through the Newtown operator base? Enter Cordic!

level of help and guidance from Cordic's customer support team since the installation.

"We're still getting used to having a system that is so flexible. For example, we allow our drivers to accept work while they're out of their vehicles. Our drivers like this feature and it's good for security. However, if a driver abuses this privilege we can remove it from him.

"We can even adjust our zones any time we want to without any cost or involvement from Cordic - something we've always wished for! As standard, our system has features like closest-cab despatch, multi-fleet bureau facility, drivers' roster, etc. etc.; features you only really hear of on really expensive systems. We are now

#### BACKGROUND

In July of this year Newtown Radio Cars replaced their old PMR radio-based data despatch system with Cordic's cPAQ system. This followed many months of researching the market to establish exactly which system best suited their current



## DATA PORTFOLIO

### NEWTOWN RADIO CARS (LIVINGSTON) LTD

<b>Address:</b>	<b>11 Grange Road Houston Industrial Estate Livingston EH54 5DE</b>
<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>01506 434343</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<b>newtownradiocars@lineone.net</b>
<b>Year firm started:</b>	<b>Early 1960's</b>
<b>Number of vehicles:</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>Types of vehicle:</b>	<b>4, 6 and 7 seater hackneys and private hire</b>
<b>Licensing authority:</b>	<b>West Lothian District Council</b>
<b>Cost of -</b>	
<b>Vehicle licence:</b>	<b>£277 (includes test)</b>
<b>Driver's licence:</b>	<b>£142</b>
<b>Retest fees:</b>	<b>£25</b>
<b>Radio rent:</b>	<b>Shareholders pay £70 incl VAT Non-shareholders pay £90 incl VAT</b>
<b>Booking and despatch system:</b>	<b>Computerised - Cordic cPAQ</b>
<b>Phone system:</b>	<b>Meridian Norstar</b>
<b>Radio system:</b>	<b>Tait</b>
<b>Base facilities:</b>	<b>Tyre replacement Car wash Meter supplies</b>