

Proud parents attending passing out parade

On 18th August Geoff Mills, our attendant at Asda Grimsby, and his ex-wife Louise attended the passing out parade at Harrogate Army Foundation College of their son, Chris.

He now goes to Catterick in Yorkshire for 13 weeks training and on to Brize Norton for his jump training. He will then be a full member of the Parachute Regiment.

Early next year he will go on his first operational tour of duty in Afghanistan.

Well done, Chris, and we wish you all the very best for your career in HM Forces during what is a very unsettled period in history.

Christmas is here again

Here we are again, and it doesn't seem as if a year has passed since we were celebrating Christmas last year and Tom Gale was wearing his Santa Suit at Iceland Barnstable.

A little bird has told me that Brian Piper, at Iceland Cheltenham, is also playing Santa this year, and with sponsorship from some of the businesses in the area will have goodies on site.

Is anyone else playing Santa this year? If so send us a photo and tell us where. We can then include a feature in our next issue to prove that Santa doesn't just live in Lapland, but Iceland, Asda, Matalan and Sainsbury's.

Send your photos to gireland@townandcityparking.co.uk or by snail mail to Glad at Head Office. I look forward to seeing our handsome Santas.

At this time of year we are very busy and by 25th December we will all have earned rest and a time to relax with our families and friends. We at Head Office would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work throughout the year and we wish you all **A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR.**



Chris Mills and his proud parents at his passing out parade

Stars of the silver screen

Following Bill Dolan's disclosures of his fame as a film extra in his Navy days (June edition), we have another of our colleagues who has appeared on the Silver Screen. He is Ron Cowan our man at the Aldi/Iceland Car Park at Bathgate.

Ron appeared alongside Michael Cain in 'Get Carter' - now a cult movie. He played the part of a police sergeant during the scene depicting the raid on the gangsters' retreat. If you watch this movie on DVD or TV, look out for our Ron, he's the handsome copper!

Do we have any more film stars in our midst? If so don't be coy, let us know if you made it big (or small!) in the movies.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Page

Company re-organisation
to promote efficiency

2

Flying colours for staff
at Asda, Lowestoft

4

Win £50 of M&S vouchers
in our caption competition

5

Pastures new
Mike Appleby hangs up his calculator

3

Meet the team
introducing the HR team

8

Bernie's space

We're back! After a few months off for the summer the newsletter is back with a bigger than usual issue. We have not been resting on our laurels as most of you will know. We have been busier than ever recently with lots of new sites starting up and of course we are now entering the busiest period of the year!



You will read in the next column about the changes we have been making to the structure of the business which we believe will strengthen our position as one of the leading companies in the parking sector. There are lots of other exciting changes on the way over the coming months on training, marketing and I.T related matters. We'll keep you posted.

We recently completed another training DVD this time on marshalling just in time for Christmas and this has been very well received by colleagues and customers alike.

On a slightly sadder note you will also read that George Alexander has decided to take early retirement. George has been a stalwart of the business, personally one of my most trusted and helpful colleagues. George was instrumental 10 years ago in the push for growth which transformed our company. A little known fact is that when I got involved with the company George was the bookkeeper looking after the accounts!

He has truly worked in virtually every capacity for TCP.

Fortunately we are not losing him entirely but I wish him all the very best for a long and happy retirement and perhaps the odd game of golf!

Regards, *Bernie*

Company re-organisation

Town and City Parking is a successful company, and as with all successful and expanding companies, there needs to be some re-organisation to promote efficiency and ensure that we maintain our high standards. There have been many changes taking place in Head Office where there are now 8 departments or platforms.

These are as follows:

Human Resources: we are now approaching 450 permanent employees and this is a huge workforce to administer, with functions such as Payroll, Recruitment, Training and Health and Safety. The HR Department is headed up by Elaine Montgomery with Leanne Cunningham and Alan Paterson dealing with the Administration and Payroll. (See 'Meet the Team'). Garry Harris Deans will be working with the HR team specifically with a training role. Marion Aitken, who controls reception and incoming telephone calls, will also be under the HR umbrella.

Accounts: all businesses need to keep their finances in order, and this is dealt with by Graeme Hannigan, ably assisted by Vera Dunbar and Paul Stewart.

Penalty Notice Department: this is a department at the forefront of new technology, including the new Automated Payment System (see separate article). Penalties is headed by David Edmeads with his team of Alison Nicholl, Anne Robbie and Rosie Ferguson.

Business Development: this is a relatively new department and is rapidly making inroads in gaining new business and managing our major clients. This department comprises Gavin Mullen and Alan McNaughton, aided by Malcolm Holland and Bernie Dickson.

Business Support: this is a new department and will be responsible for all of the everyday administration of the company, liaising with employees, customers and suppliers. A new manager will be appointed shortly, and the rest of the team will consist of Lynda McLeod and Gladys Ireland.

IT: Paul Carnegie, who recently joined the company, will be responsible for all computer based systems and operations.

Operations: Headed by George Alexander some of the tasks currently carried out under operations will switch to the business support team and the area of operations will continue to shift to being field based. George will help oversee the smooth transition of this process and the continuation of a successful field based operation.

3SM: headed by Malcolm Holland, managed by Steve Taylor and administered by Sandra Wynn-Jones, out of our Liverpool office, 3SM is our Facilities Management Company. An associated company, 3SM deals with signs, machine installation and security work.

The building blocks are now almost in place and we can now face the future knowing we have the people and technology resources to ensure that TCP remains a dynamic force in the Car Park Management market.

Operations director to retire

Our much loved Operations Director, George Alexander, is to take early retirement and will be leaving us on 31st January 2007.

George is 61 years young and has been with TCP for 12 years. He is not quite the longest serving member of TCP, but has seen it grow year by year from eight attendants and four office staff with seven car parks based in Scotland, to the present staff of 450 plus colleagues, and the nationwide company that it is today.



He is very much 'hands on' and can often be seen about the country in the pouring rain, 'planting' signage. "As the years begin to tell and the company has grown," he says, "it's is not so much fun anymore." George now finds that getting out of his bed in the early hours of the morning and driving the length of the UK to a new car park no longer holds the appeal it used to, especially in the winter.

George will continue to act as a consultant to the company. However, he is looking forward to having more time for golf, tending his allotment and his weekly 25-mile bike ride. He will also be able to spend more time with his young grandson.

We will miss you, George, but as you are not retiring until the end of January we have plenty of time to organise a 'bash' to see you on your way.

Watch this space for the report on George's official retirement in the next issue (February).

TCP Howler

Truckers Revenge

A fake Traffic Warden was arrested after calling the police to save him from truckers who found out that his £10 parking fines at an M20 service station were a scam. He pleaded guilty to deception and got community service. It just goes to show that there is no substitute for the real TCP Attendant!

Spotted by Martin Eaton from Swanley
(Daily Star 17/08/2006)

Mike Appleby retires from head office

In 27th October Mike Appleby, our Accountant at Head Office, hung up his calculator to enjoy a well earned retirement.

We had a 'bit of a do' for him and his wife Jean, and a presentation to say thank you for the years of hard work he has given to TCP.

Mike was presented with a Digital DVD Camera, a watch and a life long parking permit for the multi-storey car park in Perth. (He eagerly opened this gift first!) His wife Jean was given a bunch of flowers and a beautiful ceramic vase to put them in.



Mike has been with TCP since January 2001 'man and boy' (he says that it feels that long), and we shall be sorry to see him go. He popped back into the office recently to tell us all how much he is enjoying his retirement and he doesn't know how he found time to work.

We all wish you both a long and happy retirement and please call in and see us again to make us all jealous.

Steve to the rescue!

It was 'shining armour' time for Steve Spavold, our attendant at Asda Retford, when he came across an elderly lady crying in her car.

The lady explained to Steve that someone had slashed one of her tyres and let another one down. As she had recently lost her husband, she had no-one to call on for help.

Without hesitation, Steve changed the wheel, then borrowed a foot pump from the store and re-inflated the flat tyre. The lady was very grateful and thinks that TCP employ wonderful staff, which of course we do!

Steve has now received a reward from TCP and an award from ASDA for service to customers above and beyond the call of duty. **Thank you, Steve. You are a star!**

Flying colours for staff at air show

TCP provided Marshalls for the Asda car park at Lowestoft during the annual Air Show in July.

It was a case of 'all hands to the pumps'. Our Area Supervisor Tim Martins organised the Marshalls and brought Ken Robertson, his predecessor, out of retirement for the two days. He also pressed his wife into working, along with Bernie's son William and his girlfriend, Charlotte. The numbers were made up by Shane Ellis and Tim himself.

Do you remember that HOT summer? It seems a long time ago now but on the days of the Air Show it was 30 degrees plus. While most of the spectators were on Lowestoft beach enjoying the sea and sand, our lads and lasses were baking in the Asda car park. All they saw of the Air Show was the planes going overhead in a shimmering heat haze.



They did a grand job and you will agree they all look cool calm and collected in the photo. **Well done to you all!**

For Sale

Grisley Child's Motor Bike

Would suit a child 8-12year. Condition as new
£450

Telephone 07966 287121 or contact Glad at Head Office and she will pass on your enquiry

Automated payment line

TCP is stepping into the 21st Century with a new automated payment telephone line, offering customers the facility to pay penalty notices 24/7.

Once the customer has paid, they obtain a transaction number for their records. The payment is allocated to the penalty records through an interface with our Parking Gateway system, which makes the process of payment fast, efficient and easy for people to use. The facility has been up and running since 11 September 2006 and between 2500 and 3000 payments are being processed each month.

Payments can also be made via our website, in which case the customer receives a printable receipt plus a confirmation email. We fully expect this facility to become just as popular as the automated telephone system.

The new telephone system is proving to be a big success with our ladies on the phones. As well as freeing up time, it has reduced their exposure to verbal abuse, in turn reducing stress levels. When they were asked if they missed the telephone payment line, there was a resounding 'NO' which could be heard all the way to Edinburgh!

Christmas postal scam

As Christmas approaches, so do the ever more ingenious ways that unscrupulous people find of separating us from our hard earned money.

The following scam has been confirmed by a Royal Mail account manager:

A card is posted through your door from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) suggesting that they were unable to deliver a parcel and that you need to contact them on 0906 6611911 (a premium rate number).

DO NOT call this number, as this is a mail scam originating from Belize. If you call the number and you start to hear a recorded message you will already have been billed £15 for the phone call.

If you do receive a card with these details, please contact Royal Mail Fraud on 0207 2396655 or ICSTIS (the premium rate service regulator) at www.icstis.org.uk, or your local trading standards office.

Let's make sure we have a happy Christmas and fraudsters don't

Win £50 M&S vouchers in our caption competition



Our Christmas caption competition was a great success, so we thought we'd do it again. The subject this time is Sue Hawkins from Sainsbury's Plymouth. What is Sue saying? Tell us and you could be the lucky winner of £50 in M&S vouchers. Send your entry to gireland@townandcityparking.co.uk or by post to Gladys Ireland at the Perth Head Office.

Maureen, top of the league

There was a 'One in a Million' award recently for our Asda Ashford attendant Maureen Head after she 'went that extra mile' to help a customer who had trouble with her car.

Maureen managed to get Keith Tattom from the store to assist the lady and ensured that she was able to get home again.

Maureen also received a second accolade in August in recognition of her assistance to a registered disabled customer, Mrs Noakes, who shops at Asda Ashford every day. In her letter to Asda, Mrs Noakes said, "Maureen always helps with the shopping and is always so polite. She is a credit to the company she works for."

What more can we add? Maureen's warm and friendly approach was also rewarded by TCP with M&S vouchers. Thank you, Maureen, you're a star.



Watch out for the cyber conmen

There is a spate of cyber cons going on and we have picked out ten which you should be aware of:

Text flirting – victims receive a text message purporting to be from an admirer and asking them to ring a premium rate number.

Lotteries - victims are told that they have won a lottery prize. They must pay a fee or dial a phone number. The prize is worth less than the fee or phone call.

Holidays - fraudsters invite victims to call an 090 premium rate number to claim a holiday prize.

Psychic letters – a letter threatens misfortune if the victim does not send money.

Pyramid selling - letters invite victims to join money making clubs. In any pyramid scheme only those at the top make any money and it is illegal in Britain.

Working from home – adverts offer a quick way to make money from home. The victim has to pay a fee, buy goods or call a premium rate number.

Money transfer – victims are e-mailed for help transferring a large sum of money from a foreign bank, often in Nigeria. The fraudster asks for a fee, in return for a cut of the money.

Phishing - fraudsters send e-mails purporting to be from a bank or E-bay, asking for personal details. They then steal the victim's identity.

Cheque overpayment – someone responds to an advert or auction offering to pay by cheque. They send too much, and ask the victim to transfer back the difference. Their cheque bounces.

Charity publishing – fake publishers ask for donations to place adverts in charity booklets which do not exist.

Don't be frightened by this list of scams, but be aware that there are a lot of 'con merchants' out to part you from your hard earned money. They don't just target the gullible and greedy; these people can fool anyone. The Office of Fair Trading is trying to catch these people. For more information visit www.oft.gov.uk

Remember, if any offer seems too good to be true, it probably is!

Central Middlesex hospital

Town and City Parking are embracing high technology in the new Central Middlesex Hospital car park at Park Royal, London.

The newly built, secure and well lit underground car park has CCTV and a state of the art entrance barrier system, operated by a number plate recognition system, which automatically raises the barrier if a vehicle is recognised. This is backed up by a proximity card which, when held in front of the barrier, recognises that the owner of that vehicle is registered to enter.



Our men at CMH: Zafar Jan, Area Manager and Kwabena Sarpong.

The car park was originally intended to be for staff parking only, but a section is now open to the general public in a designated 'pay and display' area. Area Manager Mohammed Zounaki and attendants Zafar Jan, Kwabena Sarpong and Jose Ponciano are proud of their new car park and work hard to keep it operating smoothly and in good order.

As well as this new underground car park, TCP also manages the other surface car parks within the complex.

TCP Howler

Short sighted!

A gentleman in Edinburgh telephoned our Permit Department requesting that an attendant be sent to check out a vehicle parked without a permit in the car park at a housing development.

Our Business Development Manager asked the gentleman to describe the vehicle. It began as a Green Fiat Punto and developed into a Green Ford Focus. When asked if he could give us the registration number, the gentleman replied, "Sorry I can't see that with the binoculars."

Bill Pointer on a mission

Bill Pointer, our man at the Metro Centre, Gateshead is making an exhibition of himself again. He has become Batman and can be seen flying around the Car Park seeking out incorrectly parked vehicles. Startled shoppers cry, "Was that Batman chasing the criminals in our city?" "Nah! It was only Bill from TCP," comes the reply, and the area empties as they all go to check their cars are parked correctly.



When using the car park please park your vehicle in an orderly fashion!



Asda street party day

On 2nd September Asda Spennymoor held a Street Party Day to raise funds for Breast Cancer Research.

There were 1950s vehicles on show and our man at Spennymoor, David Farms, was set to clean up by ticketing any whose owners were not abiding by the rules (all 'tongue in cheek', of course!). Unfortunately it rained heavily and the whole event had to be moved indoors. Even so, £8,000 was raised for Breast Cancer Research, putting the store fourth the league of fundraisers - quite an achievement for a relatively small site.

Our Attendant, Dave Farms, helped with the day by fetching and carrying and clearing up afterwards, for which he received an Asda Star Award. In fact, they were so pleased with him that they offered him a part time job.

It seems a good day was had by all and we are proud of you, Dave.

Notice Board

Appointments and Promotions

Paul Carnegie joined us on 24th July as IT Support Manager. He is based at Perth Office and will assist with the IT requirements as the company continues to grow. Welcome, Paul!

Rosie Ferguson joined us on 30th May as a Customer Service Advisor in the Civil Penalty Department. We welcome you to our TCP 'family' and hope that you will be happy with us.

David Darling joined us on 1st August as Regional Manager for the South East. He has overall responsibility for the area supervised by Dave Burrows, Kwasi Friar, Roy Harward, Peter Murton, Amanda Waller, Mohammed Zounaki, Tim Martins and Mick Lewis. Welcome to TCP David, and best wishes in your new challenge.

Steve Crowther was promoted to Regional Manager for the North West Region as of 1st June 2006. Steve is supported by his team of Area Supervisors: Martin Bacon, Dave Lean, Alan Calko and Ismail Hans. Congratulations, Steve!

Ismail Hans has been promoted to Area Supervisor to cover Steve's former area. Congratulations to you too, Ishmail.

Garry Harris-Deans has joined the HR Team. And will be involved in the development of training materials. Best wishes in your new role!

Mick Hansford has been promoted to Area Manager, South West. He will be supported by John Saxty and John Baverstock. Congratulations, Mick!

John Baverstock, our man with a tank (December 2005 issue), has been promoted to Area Supervisor. Congratulations, John!

Sid Williams has been promoted to Area Supervisor. Congratulations, Sid!

Newsletter

You may have noticed that there has not been a Newsletter for a few months. Please accept our apologies. It seems that with holidays and changes in the company there has just not been enough hours in the day to get it prepared. To make amends we have produced this BUMPER Christmas issue. We hope it was worth waiting for! And don't forget to send us your stories for the next issue.

ASDA Award

Thomas Bird, our attendant at ASDA Cannock, recently received a thank-you certificate from the store. It was awarded in recognition of his outstanding customer service in helping disabled customers. The store management were also impressed by the efficient way that he runs the car park. Well done, Thomas and thank you for showing that TCP is a car parking company with a heart.

New Baby for North East England Area Manager

On Friday 13th October Bob Sutton's wife Penny gave birth to an 8lb 12oz baby son, Luke Robert Paul. Luke is Bob and Penny's first child and he is a little brother to Penni's children Jamie 16, Louise 15 and Marc, 10. With so many family members to spoil him he will be a lucky baby despite the Friday 13th birthday. Bob says that he is going to be a footballer and his hands say he is going to be a goalkeeper. Many congratulations and all best wishes go to you all, not to mention a big cuddle for baby Luke.

Children in Need

As you will probably be aware, each year around about Christmas the BBC launches its Children in Need Appeal. Are you or your family having any fund raising events for Pudsey Bear? Whether it is an individual effort or an event organised by a group or a school, we would like to feature it in our post-Christmas Newsletter. Write and tell us about the event and how much you raised for Children in Need. A photo would also be great.

Leaving

At the age of 76, Fred Collard who works at Nailsea is leaving us after 5 years' service, due to ill health. Thank you for all your hard work, Fred. We will be thinking of you as you relax in the sunshine, while we are all slaving away. Enjoy your well earned retirement!

What do you think?

*What would you like to see in your newsletter?
Do you like the items we do include?
Do you have any suggestions which would make your newsletter more interesting?*

If you have any hints or tips, amusing experiences or special celebrations to report, just let us know and we include them in our Notice Board feature. Similarly, if you are aware of any events or happenings in your area which may be of interest, just contact the editor.

Help us to make the publication of TCP News an event not to be missed. Just drop us a line, call Gladys at Head Office, or e-mail gireland@townandcityparking.co.uk.

New Company Motto

Bernie Dickson is looking for a motto for Town and City Parking. Can you think of a suitable short, snappy strapline to reflect the company profile? An example from our Business Development Manager is 'Car Parks R Us'!

Whoever thinks up the best motto will win £50 worth of M&S vouchers. Come on, get your thinking caps on!

Jimmy Messer off to a great start

Jimmy Messer, our man at Kittleyards in Edinburgh, has only been with the company since 2nd October but already is making his mark. Our clients have received commendations from their clients, commenting on how clean and tidy Jimmy is keeping the car park. Well done Jimmy and keep up the good work!

Meet the team

Most of you will either have spoken to or received letters from the HR team. So, we thought we'd introduce the faces behind the names.



The HR team: from left to right, Alan Paterson, Leanne Cunningham and HR Manager, Elaine Montgomery.

Alan is responsible for ensuring we are all paid accurately and on time. He is also currently performing a cost analysis study on the profitability of each of our sites. Alan joined us in September 2005 after various financial roles in the electricity and transport industries. He lives on the outskirts of Dundee with his wife Grace and three children Lucy (14), Jack (11) and Lana (9), and when he's not dealing with your salaries and wages his interests include football, golf and gardening. He supports Dundee FC, but we won't hold that against him!

Leanne has been with TCP for a five years. Having started off as a receptionist and dealing with CP's, she is now working alongside Elaine and Alan and is responsible for issuing contracts and offer letters, making sure vacancies are advertised and filled, as well as dealing with HR queries. Leanne is a season ticket holder for St Johnstone, so does have the occasional (good natured) clash with Alan. She enjoys going to the gym and socialising, and for those amongst you who are footloose and fancy free, Leanne is single.

Elaine joined us as HR Manager in December 2005 and is ultimately responsible for all aspects of HR. Elaine is developing a training/grade structure for the company and is working on updating all our H&S procedures. Born in Perth she spent 8 years in other parts of the UK working for Asda, the bingo and hotel industries. Kenny her husband is a quiet, unassuming chap! And they have two girls, Blythe (8) and Greer (5). Elaine loves (and indeed teaches!) Body Jam (dance aerobics). She also does Tai Chi to de-stress - and enjoys a glass or two of wine!

Computer tips from the PC Doctor

No 3: Broadband (BB) - a few pointers

What are the advantages?

- higher speeds than 'dial-up'
- 'always on' connection
- can use the phone whilst on the 'Net'
- fixed and known monthly cost

What are the disadvantages?

- much more vulnerable to 'MalWare' (viruses etc) - so you MUST have an up to date anti-virus program & a good firewall (see April issue)
- limits to amount of downloading & uploading - check with the service provider you plan to use.
- not available in all areas of UK - see 'Useful sites' below
- shared service can mean slower speeds depending upon time of day

Useful sites:-

www.broadbandchecker.co.uk - check if your area can get BB

www.broadband-help.com - for help & advice on BB

www.adslguide.org.uk/guide - for BB providers, prices & general info

Some recommended BB providers:-

www.bulldogbroadband.com or ring them free on 0800 056 6731 - up to 8mbs for £9.75/mth up to 8mB speed, & free modem.

www.homecall.co.uk or ring them on 0870 143 0901 - up to 8mbs, free modem, connection, unlimited anytime local and national calls, plus cheap mobile calls. All this for £29.99/mth incl. line rental.

www.talktalk.co.uk or ring them free on 0800 049 1002 - see TV adverts

www.sky.com or ring 08702 42 42 42 - see TV & newspaper adverts

If you need any help with your computer e-mail the editor at: gireland@townandcity.co.uk and she will forward it to the PC Doctor.

April issue competition winner

The winner of £50 worth of M&S vouchers in our 'Name that Tune' competition was Trudy McKenzie from Head Office. Cries of 'Fix! Head Office wins again!' can be heard. However, be assured it is all above board and all correct entries were put into a bag and drawn by our HR Manager, Elaine. Perhaps if we had more than four entries from other parts of the organisation there would be less chance of Head Office winning. **Go on, give it a go!** We would love a **BIG postbag of competition entries. Good luck!**