

# MONEY COLUMN

## WHITE VAN MAN/WOMAN (AND 4 CAB MAN)

Gordon Brown has finally caught-up with the ubiquitous "White Van Man" (WVM) - you know, the one who passes you at 90mph whilst on the phone and eating a sandwich at the same time! He's not been snared by Central Scotland Police, but by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) with a series of hard-hitting tax charges, charged as Benefits in Kind (BIK).

From 6 April 2007, WVM is subject to some hefty tax charges for the private use of his van. The charge is difficult to avoid and if you do not volunteer to HMRC that you or your employee is a WVM, believing you can speed one tyre's width ahead of the law and they catch you, then there are penalties to boot.

Up to 5 April 2007, HMRC charged a flat rate of £500 for private use of the van plus the fuel which, when converted to tax payable, did not hurt too much. However, the new regime introduces a flat rate 'scale charge' of £3,000 where there is 'unrestricted' private use. If you have such unrestricted private use, and fuel is supplied, there is an additional taxable benefit of £500, resulting in £3,500 being added to WVM's taxable income.

In cash terms, therefore, the tax cost has moved from a modest £110 a year to £770 a year for a basic rate taxpayer and from £200 to £1,400 for a higher rate taxpayer. There is also a Class 1A National Insurance

charge levied at 12.8% which is payable by the employer at a cost of £448. This will not be popular and I can imagine an army of WVM's marching to their employers, demanding compensation for this additional hurt imposed by Gordon.

There are legal methods of avoiding such a charge on WVM which, if properly documented, relieve some or all of the burden and which, indirectly, might save you, as employer, a lot of cash and less grief.

Also, by way of a post-script, HMRC accept that a double cab pick-up, with a payload of 1,000kg or more is a van. If, however, the payload area is covered, for security purposes, with a hard top, this will restrict payload capacity. Hard tops have a deemed weight of 45kg. For example, if the original payload was say 1,015kg, after fitting the hard top the payload drops to 970kgs, which turns the pick-up into a car, at a stroke, giving very hefty BIK problems, making even WVM pale into insignificance.

By the way, painting the van grey, is not one of the legitimate avoidance solutions!

Happy motoring.

*Ian Williams  
Partner*

*Campbell Dallas Chartered Accountants*

## SHERIFFMUIR INN COLLECTS SCOTTISH CHEF AWARD

Sheriffmuir Inn has collected the Scottish Casual Dining accolade from the annual Scottish Chef Awards - the most prestigious event in the Scottish culinary calendar.

The awards, regarded as the Oscars of the country's food industry, celebrate the best in Scottish cuisine. The Casual Dining award is judged from a selection of pubs, cafes, bistros and brasseries the length and breadth of the country.

Owners, Geoff and Moira Cook, collected the award on May 6. The award, adds to the Highly Commended accolade the Sheriffmuir Inn collected at last year's ceremony, only 12 months after taking over

the restaurant with deluxe accommodation which borders the counties of Perthshire and Stirlingshire.

Geoff Cook at the Sheriffmuir Inn, said: "Being shortlisted for the award was an achievement in itself but winning it has been the icing on the cake of another successful year.

"Our aim has always been to provide the very best of fresh, Scottish fare and a first class service. The award is a great verification of how well we are doing and, hopefully, is the yardstick to measure the future successes of the Sheriffmuir Inn."

## A Century Ago in Bridge of Allan

Strange Bridge of Allan Mystery (June 15) Miss Mary Elizabeth McBride Ponton, aged 31 years, and who had resided for some months in a Bridge of Allan hotel, disappeared on Wednesday (Jun 12) under mysterious circumstances. She had as her companion and attendant a lady doctor named Miss Ellen Gordon. Dr Gordon and her patient, it appeared, occupied different bedrooms.

In the morning John Armstrong, Allanside Bakery, found a lady's waterproof cloak and white undershirt bound together, and lying on a stone wall at the side of the river Allan. There was an envelope attached to the clothing addressed to Dr Gordon at the hotel, and on the articles being taken there they were identified as the clothing of Miss Ponton, who was found to be missing. A search was instituted, but without result. From the contents of the letter and other circumstances it is feared that Miss Ponton has been drowned in the river, which is in flood.

Dr Gordon knows nothing further about Miss Ponton or her people than that she (the doctor) was engaged by a firm of solicitors to look after her.

## Macrobert Summer Season - June 2007

### Dance Connection Making Shapes

Dance Connection's 250 pupils will once again be gracing the macrobert stage. The talented children will be performing ballet, tap, modern and streetdance routines from Thoroughly Modern Millie, The Wizard of Oz, The Little Mermaid, Fame and many more!

Saturday 2nd 2pm & 7pm

### The Cholmondeleys Featherstonehaughs

With live electro-groove soundtrack by Yum Yum Band

Lea Anderson's two hugely talented dance companies, the all female Cholmondeleys (pronounced Chumleys) and the all male Featherstonehaughs (pronounced Fanshaws) join forces for the sexually charged, behind the scenes dance rou-

## WINE - PLEASURE OR INVESTMENT?

Most people drink wine for pleasure; indeed 90% of wine purchased is drunk within 2 days of purchase. Some like to fill a cellar - from a space under the stairs to a purpose built air conditioned room.

Others buy wine that they never intend to drink, simply resell in the future at a potential profit. It is easy to pick out extreme investment examples like the chap who swapped me a case of Latour 1982 which cost about £500 20 years ago for about £10,000 worth of wine. Even more recent examples show well - Leoville Barton 2000 purchased 6 years ago for about £300 is now almost £1000 and not nearly ready to drink. There are however examples of poor vintages which have lost money and fraudsters pressure selling at inflated prices.

If you are considering wine investment, the key is to buy as early as possible usually through a system called en-Primeur. This is a system whereby, ordinarily Burgundy and Bordeaux, are sold by merchants before they are bottled. You normally buy by the case

from tasting notes provided and listening to what people have to say about the wines.

You pay an In Bond price, which means that you do not pay the duty or the VAT until you have it delivered out of bond (the warehouse where you can store the wine after bottling). You may never pay the duty or VAT if you sell the wine on while it is still being warehoused.

Aside from the potential to make money, often the only time certain wines are available for sale en-primeur as the demand is such that they never reach the shelves. For many, the investment is realised then in the drinking, safe in the knowledge that the wine has been well stored and has sat waiting patiently for you to decide the moment to sit back and enjoy the fruits of a wonderful vintage.

If anyone is interested in wine investment, do contact us. We are just wrapping up Burgundy 2005 and have launched into the interesting but potentially trickier Bordeaux 2006 campaign.

*Douglas Wood  
WoodWinters Wines and Whiskies*

tines of YIPPEEE!!! Disturbing, decadent and delicious dance, definitely not for the faint hearted.

Tuesday 5th 8pm

### One-Man Star Wars Trilogy With support Matt Reed

Canadian actor Charles Ross spent much of his childhood in a galaxy far, far away, watching Star Wars videos over -and over - and over again. The result of this mis-spent youth is this hilarious show where he single-handedly plays all the characters, sings the music, flies the ships, fights the battles and condenses the plots into just sixty minutes!

Saturday 9th 8pm

### The Puppet Lab Beauty and the Beast

A vibrant mix of technology and live storytelling, Beauty and the Beast mixes projection screens and animation with puppetry and live action. The layered backgrounds and foregrounds create a fantastic miniature world for our puppets to act out this timeless story in.

Saturday 9th 11am & 2pm

### Travelling Light Theatre Company in association with Bristol Old Vic CLOWN Inspired by the book by Quentin Blake

Enter the wonder-filled world of author illustrator Quentin Blake as the award-winning Travelling Light translates a wordless story from the page to the stage, to create a memorable show for children of all ages.

Wednesday 13th 1.30pm

### Dollar Academy Thoroughly Modern Millie

Thoroughly Modern Millie is a high spirited musical romp that has all of New York dancing the Charleston!

Tuesday 19th - Friday 22nd 7.30pm

### Macrobert youth dance company The Adoption Papers

An adaptation of Jackie Kay's powerful poem "The Adoption Papers" brings the taboos surrounding adoption to the stage. An adopted girl searches for her identity while the adoptive mother searches for the unattainable, and her real mother copes with her shame.

Wednesday 20th - Friday 22nd 7.45pm

### Central Scotland Ballet School The Magic of The Musicals

Central Scotland Ballet School's annual dance display showcases the talents of over 500 young dancers from across Scotland.

Saturday 23rd 7pm  
Sunday 24th 6pm  
Monday 25th - Wednesday 27th 7pm

### Teatro di Piazza O'occasione - Italy's award winning theatre company Italian Garden & Kurdish Garden

#### The Kurdish Garden

Use your feet and find your way into The Kurdish Garden with Italy's leading children's theatre company.

Friday 29th 10.30am  
Saturday 30th 11am

#### The Italian Garden

Step into The Italian Garden and experience the vivid visions of a virtual renaissance landscape.

Friday 29th 5pm  
Saturday 30th 3pm



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