

Facing the challenges of a new year

by Jonathan Levine

It has been another exciting year for First Security, a year in which we have seen our business continue to thrive, win a number of important new contracts, and both extend the range of services that we offer and the geography that we cover.

But it has also been a year of challenges – notably licensing – and dramatic events, and the way in which we have responded to those events is indicative of the spirit of our organisation, and the strength of character of the officers and management around which our business is built.

The year started well with a contract to secure Stockley Park, the 150-acre office campus and home to some of the most prestigious names in business. This was particularly gratifying as it was won in a four-way tender and we were chosen because – although not the least expensive – we offered the most comprehensive package of services to meet the client’s requirements.

It coincided with the award of a new contract with Barclays Capital – the investment banking division of Barclays Bank PLC, the international financial services group – to provide a manned guarding team at its landmark City headquarters in London’s Canary Wharf. At about the same time, The Ogden Group of Companies – a property business with more than 30 years’ experience – appointed First Security to provide guarding at its prestigious City Reach development in the Crossharbour district of London’s Docklands.

These two contracts confirmed – if confirmation was really needed – not just our Number One status in the City, but also our Number One credentials in London’s Docklands. They were underpinned by an

unprecedented five-year contract with Reuters, which includes protecting its new headquarters in South Colonnade. When you add these three contracts to the two we already have in Canary Wharf – the HSBC Tower and the global headquarters (Upper Bank Street) of law firm Clifford Chance – it is fair to say that First Security is the dominant provider of manned guarding services in that area!

Summer Madness

Further afield, indeed outside London, we continued our success in extending our geographical reach. Sony was a major business win for us, and we followed this with another business opportunity of significance, having won the contract for the Newbury Business Park. It is significant not so much because of the nature of the contract, but more as a result of its location. We are now embarking on a concerted effort to extend our sphere of influence, notably within the M4 corridor, and by benefiting from belonging to the MacLellan’s family.

The summer was of course dominated by the dreadful events of 7th July. The way in which our teams responded was nothing short of magnificent. I have comments from every one of our customers within the City and the West End who are full of praise for the actions of our security officers on that day of infamy. All are in agreement that the actions of our men and women went above and beyond the call of duty, not just then but also subsequently. For most of you to have to return to duty the next morning – when many others had understandably taken time out to take stock and recover – is a testimony to the strength and depth within First Security. As one of our customers was to remark: ‘that took guts.’

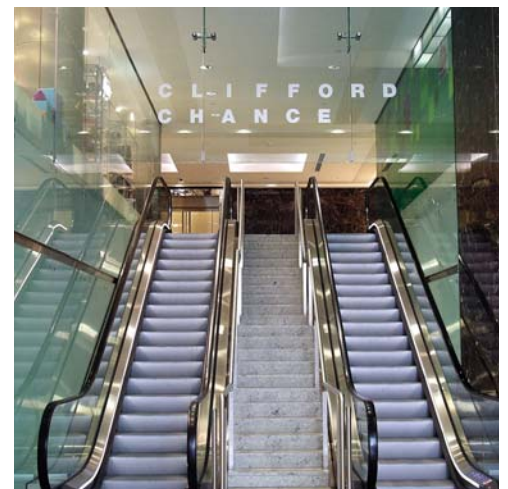
In the Autumn, we announced another significant development within the business, with the launch of our new Specialist Services Division, a new business unit especially established to provide a range of very specific value-added services to complement our core manned guarding capability.

The new division is something of a departure for First security,



Above Par [page 2 ↙](#)

The annual First Security Golf Day provided more than its fair share of fun



Legally Yours [page 3 ↙](#)

Pat Berry of Clifford Chance goes on the record for First Choice



Cruel Summer [page 4 ↙](#)

First Security officers went above and beyond the call of duty at the BMA



Stockley Park

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First makes a 'special' case for a new services division

First Security has launched a new 'Specialist Services' Division, a new business unit especially established to provide a range of very specific value-added services to complement its core manned guarding capability.

The new division looks to build on the company's existing expertise by providing a broad range of selected 'Specialist Services' to meet the demands of its clients, both existing and potential.

These services include such things as close protection and close escort provision, through to the deployment of specialist electronics surveillance, tracking and remote monitoring via IP.

As Eugene O'Mahoney – who heads up the division and has considerable experience in this area – explains: "First has been looking at the practicalities of launching a Specialist Services Division for some time," he says, "and has been taking soundings from its clients and from those in authority within our industry about what specifically is required.

"Increasingly, businesses are looking at ever more innovative ways of protecting their buildings, assets and staff, and this is becoming more prescient with the advent of licensing likely to drive up costs and restrict the supply of trained officers.

"We have therefore launched a series of value-added services to meet these demands, whether it's using the latest technological solutions, often in use by today's military and adapted for a commercial environment, or specialist manpower resources using highly-trained, highly skilled operatives to protect individuals one-on-one.

"The key driver is the customer," he continues. "We recognise that in a competitive environment the need to differentiate our services from our competitors is critical.

"But more than this. First Security has a reputation for being at the forefront of industry developments, and we believe firmly that a professional manned guarding offering – supported by a range and diversity of Specialist Services that are constantly refined and updated – will be the way forward."

STOP PRESS:

As we go to press, Specialists Services reports that it has won its first major contract and completed the implementation of its IP Monitoring capability. Details to come in a future issue of First Choice.

Facing the challenges of a new year (cont.)

but an essential one as we look to build on the company's existing expertise by providing a broad range of selected 'Specialist Services' to meet the demands of its clients, both existing and potential. These services include such things as remote monitoring via IP, specialist electronics surveillance and tracking, through to the deployment of close protection and close escort provision (of which more details in the column at left).

From an industry perspective, the last 12 months has of course been dominated by the issue of licensing. Licensing is the first tangible step in taking the manned guarding industry to a new level of professionalism. Previously there had been no benchmark, no starting point from which companies could be measured. Now it sets a 'minimum' standard, and provides a hint of credibility – an official endorsement, if you like, of conformity to something that is at last 'measurable'.

The official timetable for licensing is that by the end of this year, 70% of our workforce must be licensed or in the process of becoming licensed, and that figure rises to 85% by February of 2006.

To date we are well on track with the training, vetting and licensing of our officers in line with the SIA's requirements. We are one of the few manned guarding companies to be confident of meeting the ultimate deadline of March 2006 by which time ALL officers working in the industry must be licensed to be employed. It's been tough – and it has required significant investment both financially and in terms of resource – but ultimately it will be worth all of the pain!

We head into 2006 in good shape. It has been an extraordinary year, one which none of us will forget, and many of the issues we faced in 2005 will be with us again in the coming months. The threat of further terrorist atrocities can never be far from our minds, and we need to stay vigilant.

For now, however, I would like to thank you all for the enormous support and contribution you have made to our success. I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas, and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Swing when you're winning (again)

The oldest-established golf club in the county, Bushey Hall Golf Club in Hertfordshire, was the venue for this year's First Security Golf Day, when the weather was kind and the golf (largely) even kinder.

The morning's Texas Scramble winner was a four-ball led by First's David Mundell and comprising Chris Leeds (LaSalle Investment Management), Mike Adams (Nelson Bakewell) and an old friend of First Security, Anne Day.

There were some gasps of astonishment and cries of foul play when both the Yellow Ball competition and the Team Stableford were won by the event's organiser, Neil Ames – with a little help from Colin Restall (South Bank Centre), Angus Graham (Montagu Evans) and Steve Kennedy (Stockley Park). Angus also picked up the overall winner's prize for a suspiciously high 41 points. He is now being investigated by the handicap committee.



Comedy moment of the day was undoubtedly First Security's Michael Brady who managed to tee off in the wrong direction, undaunted by the tall trees in front of him that might have hinted to a more seasoned player that he was facing the wrong way. Another comedy moment was of course provided by David Mundell who once again scooped his own prize (The Mundell Award) for the lowest score on the day.

Celebrating 10 years' service

No fewer than 14 of our officers are celebrating 10 years at the company. All started in 1995 – the years of Die Hard With A Vengeance, Golden Eye and Braveheart, when Michael Jackson's Earth Song topped the Christmas Charts and Everton pipped Manchester United to the FA Cup. So congratulations to:

- D Taylor
- H Salah
- T A Millar
- J Ntem
- A Uziah
- R Vere-Compton
- G Egejuru
- B Din
- O Okonkwo
- M Kitzberg
- W Ryan
- N Oliver
- T Mutunga
- M Prince.

Legal Eagle

Sean Feast meets Pat Berry



Clifford Chance is the world's largest law firm, born out of the merger of Clifford Turner and Coward Chance. It advises financial institutions, commercial enterprises, and state and regulatory bodies on complex and critical legal issues, with the aim of providing consistently high quality advice that combines technical expertise with an understanding of the commercial environment in which its clients operate. With 28 offices in 19 countries throughout the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, it offers in-depth local knowledge and a uniquely global perspective.

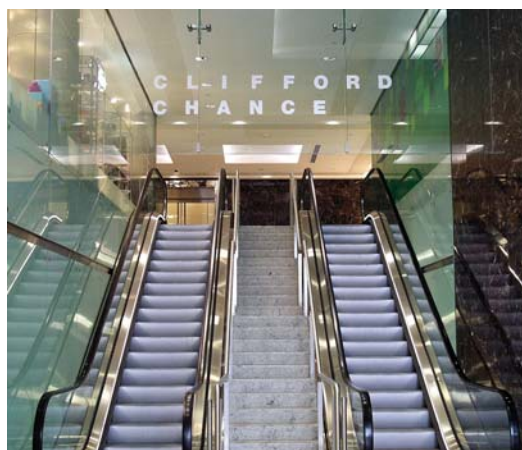
Clifford Chance moved to its new London headquarters in August 2003, an impressive 30-storey building at 10 Upper Bank Street in Canary Wharf. It is now home to more than 2,800 staff and 600 tenants. And Pat Berry is in charge of Security, as Sean Feast found out.

SF How did you come to be involved in the security industry?

PB By default really! I have been with Clifford Chance for more than 23 years, and started working in the administration department – something equal to a facilities management department of today. Originally the office we occupied was looked after by a housekeeper, but then as security became more of an issue in the late 1980s it became a specific responsibility and it came to me.

SF So you are the head of security?

PB My job title is House Manager which encompasses looking after not only security but also other areas of the business such as cleaning, the



multimedia team, plants – and even the health club (although I probably don't use it as much as I should!). That is what is so very different about Clifford Chance. We pride ourselves on the 'Clifford Chance experience', and it is a service that stems from an original concierge-style need. Many of our in-house reception team, for example, have a hotel background, and we have tried to pass their skills onto our security officers.

SF They are a visitor's first point of contact?

PB Exactly. I want all of my officers to welcome our visitors with a smile! The type of officer we appoint is very important, and we have tended to choose those who may have backgrounds working in the leisure industry, especially hotels. We also make sure they are suitably attired in suits and ties.

SF You are obviously pleased with the service that First Security provides. What effect do you think licensing is going to have on our industry?

PB I think it has to be a good thing. For a start, it will help weed out the cowboys. But more than this, it will help make the manned guarding industry more professional. At the moment, few would see manned guarding as a career. Historically it's been something to do to fill in the gaps, until something better comes along. In the past we've had good officers who leave as soon as the labour market picks up and they can go and get themselves a 'proper' job. Licensing will help change that.

SF So have you noticed the quality of staff improving?

PB All the time. In fairness, First Security has always invested in their training, but what has been good to see is how they have adapted to our needs. Our requirements have changed over time, and I am pleased to say that First has changed with us.

SF Do you believe the industry is becoming more professional?

PB Yes, and for the reasons I have already touched upon. It has to be professional. Manned guarding today isn't the same job it was 10 or 15 years ago. They used to compare manned guarding to caterers or cleaners. You could always get a job as a security guard if there was nothing else about. Now that has definitely changed. We look for a very high quality in our officers. They have to be a suitable calibre, because the work that they are tasked with needs intelligent people. I don't want bouncers on the door. I want security officers who aren't threatening to either our employees or our visitors. I don't want anyone coming in here feeling scared. I want them to be reassured they are being looked after.

SF What do you particularly look for in a supplier?

PB Quality. And the evident support of management.

How do I measure that? By their responsiveness – how they respond when there is an issue. I also look for consistency. The first two people I met at First Security were Neil Ames and Colin McFaul, and they are still with me, supporting the contract. I also want to know that they look after their own staff and invest in them. I know the level of training that First Security provides, and a good part of that is done on site which is a positive advantage.

SF Is it better to buy smart or buy cheap?

PB Smart. I have never known Clifford Chance to buy cheap. You get an inferior product.

SF How did you come across First Security?

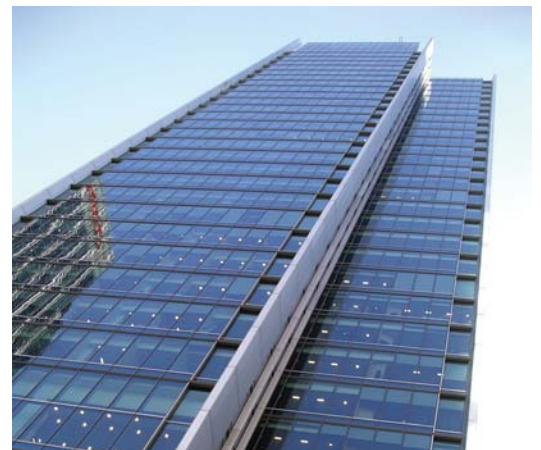
PB We used to have offices within a multi-tenanted building where First was the incumbent. When we came to look for our own security team, I invited First to tender. We went through a thorough and detailed tender process before opting for First Security. We had an opportunity of seeing how they worked in other similar environments, notably HSBC, and they came to us highly recommended and with a good reputation.

SF What do they do for you?

PB Their principal responsibility is providing what might be called conventional security duties at 10 Upper Bank Street in Canary Wharf, such as manned guarding, staffing the fire control centre and CCTV monitoring, together with additional concierge-style services such as manning the front desk, issuing contractor/visitor passes, monitoring the loading bay etc. A team of 59 staff work on site, providing security on a 24/7 basis. We have both male and female officers and find the mix works well as they complement one another.

SF Away from work, what do you like to do?

PB I like to spend time with my family. I have two young grandchildren and they tend to keep you young. I'm also an eternal optimist. I'm going to win the lottery at the weekend...



First Security officers praised

by BMA following 7/7 bombings

Thursday 7th July. 0947. Tavistock Square. A Number 30 Double Decker Bus, travelling from Marble Arch to Hackney and following a diversion from its normal route passes the junction of Tavistock Square and Upper Woburn place, just outside the headquarters of the British Medical Association (BMA). A peaceful summer morning is suddenly shattered by a terrifying explosion as a bomb blast tears the vehicle apart.

The beauty of the historic BMA House contrasts painfully against the ugly scenes around, as one eyewitness later reported: "It was a massive explosion and there were papers and half a bus flying through the air." Doctors rush from the building to perform triage and emergency care to those injured.

On duty that day is a team of security officers from First Security. They have been working with the BMA for more than 18 months, performing duties that might be considered 'typical' for those working in the manned guarding industry today. As well as 'traditional' security responsibilities – securing specific access points around the site and supporting the BMA's own in-house security personnel – the officers also undertake a number of added-value services of a more 'facilities management' nature. They monitor the alarm management systems within the building, for example, and provide escort duties for staff, especially out of hours.

Patrick Reed, Head of Security at the BMA has been keen right from the outset that First Security and his own in-house teams operate as one, and it seems to be working well. Just how well is now being tested to the limit.

"Thursday was a normal morning," he says. "Security officers were at the rear gate and various entrances at the front when the bomb went off. The first priority was to evacuate the building. Given the circumstances, this was performed with only minor difficulties. We had almost immediately lost communication, so the First Security team took it upon themselves to assess the situation and take appropriate action.

"This meant getting people off the streets in the first instance, and then applying First Aid to the injured who were lying around. Terry Hughes came to the front to help the doctors who were by now outside, and between them they co-ordinated moving the wounded inside. We're not a hospital so we had to improvise, and Terry helped to ensure that tables were moved and set up so that the injured could be brought in."

Their duties didn't end there, as Patrick continues: "After the initial shock, things began to calm down. Then the team had to help secure the building, and carry out a sweep of the area, making sure no-one was being left unattended, and identifying areas affected by the blast within the building and cordoning them off. This is where their knowledge of the building was particularly helpful.

"Then came the shake-down afterwards," Patrick adds.

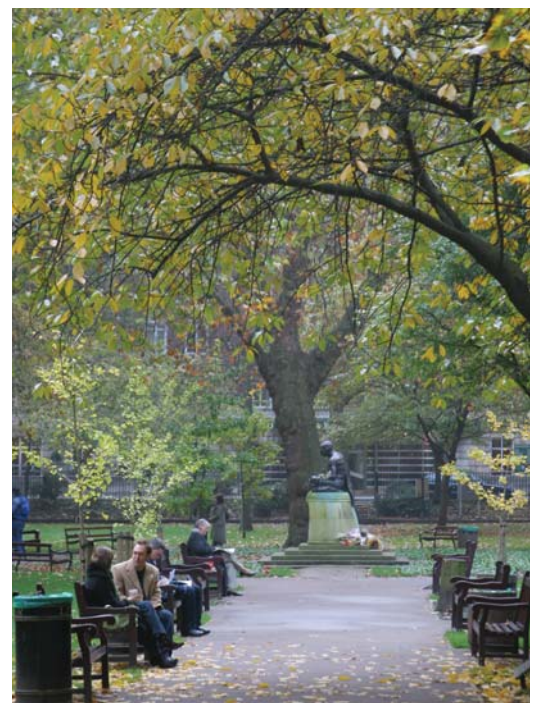
"BMA House had become a crime scene, and had to be treated as such. First Security maintained a list of who was there, and escorted some of our staff to their desks to retrieve their possessions. Obviously once the bomb went off everything had been abandoned – bags, car keys, house keys etc."

Even much later, on 21st July, a larger force of First Security officers was again out in force for an Open Air Memorial Service that was held in the BMA's grounds for the 13 innocent victims who had died in the explosion. Above and beyond the call of duty is perhaps an over-used and clichéd phrase, but one which most certainly applies in the case of First Security's response to the Tavistock Square bombing. Throughout the City, First Security Officers were called upon in ways they had never experienced before, and hopefully will never experience again. Perhaps Patrick's description of one team's actions might serve as indicative of the spirit evoked by every one of our officers:

"I wouldn't have blamed them if they had run away," he says. "But they didn't. They did a great job. They used their own initiative rather than waiting to be told what to do, and without them and our own in-house team I don't think we could have managed.

"Afterwards, most staff were able to walk away and take time out at home to come to terms with what had happened. Our security team, however, had to be there the next day and those weeks following the attack, protecting our building and our people, and that took guts.

"They shone."



First Industry Accolade

First Security came runner-up in the Security Excellence Awards 2005 for the UK's best manned guarding company. The Awards, organised by industry publication Security Management Today, are held annually and look to reward those companies throughout the security industry who have demonstrated excellence through their products, services or people. First Security won the award in 2000, and was also runner-up in 1999 and 2002.

