

A new journey begins

by Jonathan Levine

It has been yet another exciting and significant year for First Security, and one which will probably go down in the annals of our company as a watershed.

From the day we completed our Management Buyout (MBO) in April 1998, we have enjoyed the support of our investor, the world-leading venture capital company 3i. They were stolid in their support, and allowed us to retain the independence that remains one of our major strengths. Now we have new support, The MacLellan Group PLC, who share our outlook in terms of the delivery of first-class service, and respect our independence, but are perhaps even better placed to provide the financial investment we need to continue to grow and maintain our long-term stability.

Even before the acquisition, First Security had been enjoying a noteworthy year, taking on more new contracts and people and steadily increasing our turnover to c£250 million. We have also continued to lead, retaining our place at the forefront of the industry, working collaboratively with the regulatory bodies for a better environment and improved conditions in which to work, and ultimately helping deliver an enhanced product.

The year started as it had ended, as we took on the prestigious contract to protect Swiss Re's new headquarters, the splendid 30 St Mary Axe. In many ways, as I said at the time, 30 St Mary Axe might be considered a 'typical' First Security contract. Its significance cannot be overstated, and perhaps the greatest evidence of this came with the attention given to the project by the industry-leading magazine, Security Management Today, which was forthright in its praise for the work we have undertaken – to the delight of our customer.

We also took on another impressive contract for the integrated global law firm Clifford Chance, winning the

mandate to provide a range of security and concierge services at its premises at 10 Upper Bank Street in Canary Wharf.

Speaking at the time of the award, Pat Berry, House Manager at Clifford Chance said that we came to her "highly recommended and with a good reputation," and it is this reputation that we must strive to retain.

There were other notable contracts awarded throughout the year: The British Library, for example, with whom we can trace a relationship back to 1998, re-awarded the contract to First Security in the Spring, and it is a pleasure to be working with them again. We took over further contracts in Westminster, working with the City Council and the Heart of London Business Alliance to help make public areas safer and enhance the heart of the capital's reputation as a lively and desirable place to be. We now have 16 wardens employed covering Leicester Square, Piccadilly Circus and the immediate surrounds, working closely with the police and other authorities and winning high praise for their achievements.

We also took a leading role in the Beck's Futures Exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in London. Whilst we have a firm reputation within the Arts (the Royal Opera House, Festival Hall et al) this was a project with a difference, since our officers took part in an exhibition entitled 'a guide to London guards' as pieces of modern art!

Once again we were called upon to provide the security for a number of major Annual General Meetings (AGMs) – BP, the European Bank and Orange to name but three – and passed all tests with flying colours. We also cemented our relationships working with some of the country's leading property businesses. Through FPD Savill's, for example, we won the contract to provide manned guarding at the impressive Atrium Building, a multi-tenanted office in Uxbridge that houses, amongst others, BP, with whom we are already acquainted. For the Prudential we took on the security at The Pavilions Shopping Centre, similarly in Uxbridge. And the list can go on.

We also finished the year as we had started – with significant new contracts awarded to us by Barclays Capital and Stockley Park – which we will cover in future issues.

This year has been a year of achievement. But there is still much more to be done. During 2005 the biggest agenda item for the manned security industry will be the formal commencement of licensing.

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FT journalist takes on the nightshift as a security officer



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Focus on Bernadette Duncan in charge of security at City University London



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First Security extends its activities in new project for Westminster City Council



First enters the Official Top 100

Employees have known it for some time. Clients benefit from its significance. And now even the Chancellor Gordon Brown has acknowledged that First Security is officially one of the best companies in London.

The cause for the celebration was the naming of First Security within The Inner City 100, a yearly business index and research initiative that locates and celebrates the fastest growing inner city businesses in the UK and is dubbed the "Enterprise Oscars".

Now in its fourth year, The Inner City 100 is led by the leading politically independent think tank, NEF (the New Economics Foundation) and supported by organisations such as The Royal Bank of Scotland Group, Financial Times and HM Treasury. Its mission is to champion entrepreneurship in the inner city and to promote untapped market potential. It aims to influence public and private sector policy towards inner city areas, to increase the growth potential of new and indigenous businesses, enhance their economic linkages and maximise their socio-economic impact.

The rewards for the 100 fastest-growth companies on the Index includes a listing in a dedicated section of the Financial Times as well as broad media coverage, master classes at the London Business School, the opportunity to engage with high level policy-makers and funders and significant UK and international networking opportunities.

Political Support

The Index is supported by a wide range of political and business leaders, including the Chancellor who First Security Managing Director Jonathan Levine had the chance to meet at a dedicated reception at 11 Downing Street in November.

Jonathan said: "Being recognised for what we do and what we have achieved is always a great boost for the team. The process for being nominated was rigorous, and explored every area of our business from our financial performance through to our environmental policy. To my knowledge, we were the only security company and certainly the only manned guarding business to win this accolade, and I would like to thank everyone who played a part in attaining this award."

The Chancellor, and Inner City 100 Patron, the Rt. Honourable Gordon Brown said: "I have been delighted to support the Inner City 100 over the last four years and proud to be one of its patrons. The success of the 2004 Inner City 100 award winners shows that enterprise can flourish in our inner city areas."

"For far too long, the image of enterprise in this country was of a closed circle with millions left out. But I believe that there should be no no-go areas for enterprise culture, and that the British economy will do best when men and women from the nation's high, as well as low, unemployment communities have the confidence that they can transform their ideas and hopes into business start-ups and growing firms, building an enterprise culture genuinely open to all."

A new journey begins (cont.)

Licensing will impact on every security company, every security officer and every customer that employs contract security.

There has already been much written about licensing. It is a massive logistics exercise in both training and administration terms, and hopefully by early 2006 we should begin to reap some of the benefits that licensing will bring to the industry. I shall of course keep you regularly updated on this key issue.

As highlighted in the Queen's speech, and with a General

Election scheduled for next year, perhaps an even greater challenge is the ongoing security threat posed by terrorists. Recent press coverage directly links terrorist plans with many of our clients, and many of our clients' sites. It hardly needs to be said, therefore, that we need to stay extremely vigilant.

For now, however, I would like to thank you all for the enormous support and contribution you have made to our success. In saying goodbye to 2004, I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas, and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

What the papers say

First Security recently found itself in the papers when a journalist from the Financial Times decided to work a night shift in his pursuit to find the 'worst job ever'.

Journalist Sathnam Sanghera took up the challenge after a conversation with a colleague who said that being a security guard was one of the worst jobs ever. Sathnam, who thought "security guarding had always looked quite easy," volunteered to complete a night shift with the FT's security Team, led by 'Trevor'. He found himself working alongside a First Security team who put him straight on what a security officer really does. He soon realised that his expectations of surfing the internet all night long could not have been further from the truth:

"Instinctively, my hand reached towards the mouse attached to one of the computer terminals. 'No!' warned Trevor. 'Those belong to the receptionists! We're under strict instructions not to touch them!' What? So we can't e-mail? 'No!' We can't surf the net? 'Oh, no, no, no, no, no! We have to keep our minds on the job!'

The article continued: "I was only minutes into the shift when my biggest assumption about the job – that you could while away the hours reading novels, browsing the Internet and contributing to late night radio discussion programmes – was proved wrong. It appeared that security guarding actually involved a large degree of security guarding. 'We have to keep a look-out for walk-in thieves, tramps, drunks and disgruntled ex-employees,' pronounced Trevor, my partner for the evening."

After taking the opportunity to indulge his curiosity by looking at his colleagues' staff card photos he carried on with his duties under the close supervision of Trevor:

"I arrived for my next task - a night patrol with Trevor – with a spring in my step. He had prepared for the job by donning a reflective jacket and strapping a high-powered torch across his torso as if it were a machine gun. He explained that we would be looking for suspicious packages around the perimeter of the building, checking locks and emergency telephones and inspecting vehicles to make sure there was nothing 'untoward' going on.

"As it happened, there were no suspicious packages, all of the locks were locked and the emergency phones working. But I did spot something highly untoward in one of the director's limousines. Suppressing a shriek, I beckoned to Trevor, who ran over and shone his torch at the front seat. He looked back at me, exasperated. 'I'm afraid that a Phil Collins CD doesn't classify as something untoward'. Trevor marched off, stating: 'I quite like a bit of Phil Collins, occasionally.'



"Running after him, I asked if he'd ever found anything 'untoward' during a patrol. 'No'. Had he ever found a suspicious package. 'No'. Had he ever seen anything salacious? 'No'. Anything horrific? 'No'. Anything slightly titillating? 'No'. Anything mildly violent? 'No'.

"This was the theme for the rest of the night. On the ground floor security desk, at 10.30 pm, there was some excitement when Trevor declared a package addressed to the Fashion Desk 'suspicious'. He took it away, had it X-rayed and came back. Was it dangerous? 'No. It's an electric toothbrush'. Had a suspicious package ever turned out to be dangerous? 'No. We get quite a few electric toothbrushes.'

"And this is the bad thing about being a security guard. It's not the endless conversational silences, the dining alone at 9.00 pm or the half-day shifts that are difficult. It's the fact that, even though nothing ever happens, you still have to behave as if something very serious might happen at any minute. This isn't boring. It's just exhausting."

Sathnam concluded: "This, at least in part, is my excuse for having ended my shift early. At 12.15 am I was exhausted. At 12.20 am I was in a taxi. By 1.30 am I was tucked up in bed, the tune of Phil Collins' 'Another Day In Paradise' running through my head along with a new-found admiration for security guards."

Commenting on the article, Jonathan Levine said: "Hopefully this journalist's first-hand experience and subsequent article will go some way to dissolve the misconceptions that still remain prevalent in the business community.

"Security remains high on the agenda for all commercial premises and our security officers take their responsibilities very seriously. The job is exhausting and may not be for everyone, but at First Security it is a job that we do well, and we are proud to see that our officers are setting very high standards for the rest of the industry to follow."

Better by degrees

by Sean Feast

Since Spring 2002, First Security has been providing additional manned guarding at City University London to support the establishment's own in-house employees. To give some idea of the scale of the task, the University has some 28 buildings spread across two square miles, including its new flagship Business School opened by HM The Queen last year. In the latest in our series of client profiles, First Choice's Sean Feast spoke to the lady in charge of City University's security, Bernadette Duncan.

SF How did you come to be involved in security?

BD I have been in security all of my working life since leaving school at 17. I spent 14 years in the Royal Military Police before coming to City University in 1988.

SF What was it like then?

BD The university then was very different than it is today. When I joined, it still followed the 'hall porter' style of security. Everything was very gentle. Very slow. In the last eight years in particular this has changed significantly. It has had to. We are now three times the size, our government funding has been reduced, so we have a much greater challenge. We have to run ourselves more like a business.

SF So the hall porters have gone?

BD Yes, and been replaced by a core team of in-house security staff backed up by First Security providing mobile patrols at night, securing the halls of residence, manning reception, that sort of thing. Security requirements have changed considerably in universities, especially recently with the day-to-day problems of terrorism, extremism etc. When you think that we now have more than 14,000 students, and 40% of them are international students, it gives you a better understanding of the issues we face. London is considered a target, and therefore emergency planning has become much more of a priority, as is working with the police as part of their 'extended family'.

SF What impact do you think licensing will have on our industry?

BD Our in-house staff are not affected by licensing, so it is only an issue for our contracted guards. First Security have made us aware that officers will have to pay £190 for a licence, and will be required to undertake an extra day's training, and that some of this cost will have to be passed on. I'm not necessarily happy with it, but I accept that if the end-product means that the industry is better for it, then I have to go along with it. I have said for some time, however, that training is an issue that more manned guarding companies need to take seriously. You can read a glossy brochure and see what a company says they do, but historically we have had officers on site with little or no training other than

two days in a classroom. This is simply not good enough. First aid, conflict management, health and safety – all of these are areas that we train our own in-house staff on, and I expect the same from an external supplier. Suppliers have got to take the issue of training seriously.

SF So you think the industry must do more to endorse its professional image?

BD Completely. The quality of manned guarding is so variable that it is going to be an uphill struggle. The industry wants to be seen as being professional, but the public image is still so poor. It has a long way to go, and it certainly will not improve overnight. For our in-house staff, just as an example, we have re-issued them with terms and conditions of employment commensurate with our clerical staff, rather than manual labourers. This is a clear sign that attracts a better quality of recruit, and gives them a career path to follow.

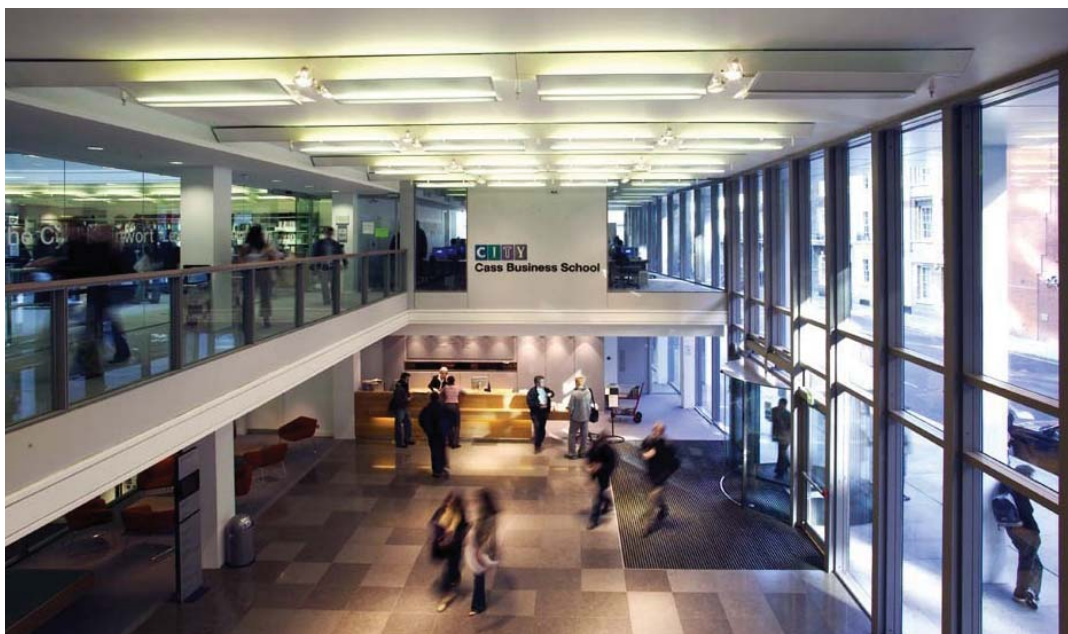
SF Do you share your ideas with other higher education establishments?

BD Certainly. We belong to the Association of University Chief Security Officers, and I was their chairman for three years. The Association meets at our annual conference as well as regional meetings where we discuss and share ideas and best practice, and find solutions to common problems. Through the Association we have close ties with many of the security equipment manufacturers – anything from locks to software for incident recording – and this is a tremendous help. We also find that we provide expert advice to other organisations, so over the last 20 years the Association has grown to be a creditable force. We work, for example, with JSIC, and provided advice to the Home Office for its 'Good2bSecure' scheme, and we have developed our own literature about Student Safety that is now available across every university in the country.



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

BD I live on site, so getting away is never that easy and I am on 24 hour call! When I do get away, I like to get up to Scotland (my husband is Scottish). We have two Westies (West Highland Terriers) and I like nothing better than getting out and walking with them on the West Coast. I am also a keen photographer, and have just made the transition to digital. I'm trying to master it but still have a little way to go!



First Security protects the Heart of London

First Security has won a prestigious contract to extend its work with London's Westminster Council and the Heart of London Business Alliance to help make public areas safer and enhance the heart of the capital's reputation as a lively, desirable place to be.

Six additional officers have been contracted by the Heart of London Business Alliance to join the team of 10 wardens who initially covered the Leicester Square area. The 16 wardens now work together as City Guardians, covering Leicester Square, Piccadilly Circus and the immediate surrounding areas, with four Guardians on the streets at any one time.

Every Guardian receives comprehensive training involving five full days of classroom based teaching. They are trained in conflict management, Westminster City Council's by-laws, general working practices of the contract, court procedures, reporting and on compiling evidence.

The uniformed Guardians work in pairs and make the area visibly safer, fundamentally acting as the eyes and ears of the Metropolitan Police. Their responsibilities include: moving on beggars and anyone causing a nuisance; reporting any illegal traders, graffiti, faulty street lighting, damaged roadside furniture, broken flagstones, and also directing and advising the public. Their role is predominantly to observe and report, providing a deterrent to crime and antisocial behaviour.

Each Guardian has a radio and lapel microphone enabling them to be in permanent contact with the police,



Westminster's CCTV control centre and other council teams in the Community Protection Department, including the 'clean team' and the 'gum fighters'. They work closely with the police and support them on a daily basis; however they do not replace them. They are there to alert the police and act as witnesses. Their presence is improving public confidence and helps make the area a safer, friendlier and more welcoming place for the 25,000 people who are attracted to the area each day.

Sarah Porter, Chief Executive, Heart of London Business Alliance said: "We are delighted to be working with First Security helping ensure the Heart of London remains safe and welcoming to the many thousands of visitors we receive everyday. Our holistic approach ensures our Heart

of London City Guardians remain a highly successful support team to the Metropolitan Police and Westminster City Council with First Security servicing the contract very efficiently."

Commenting on the Guardians' performance, Sarah Porter said: "They are a credit to the team and the community."

First Security's Managing Director, Jonathan Levine added: "We are very pleased to be providing officers to be City Guardians. They are seen as ambassadors for the area providing a deterrent to crime, littering, graffiti and illegal street trading, ultimately helping to make Piccadilly a more welcoming place, not just for visitors but also for those people who live and work in the area.

"The Guardians are becoming part of the community, getting to know the local people and understanding their concerns. By keeping in touch with local people, businesses and visitors to the area they know the quickest way to make things happen and the best way to get problems solved. They are undoubtedly becoming an integral part of the area's regeneration."

The Heart of London Business Alliance aims to create a close partnership between businesses, property owners, Westminster City Council and the Metropolitan Police to tackle issues that affect businesses, their workers and visitors. The Alliance encompasses about 400 businesses, including nine cinemas, five theatres, 50 restaurants and some 85 retailers within its boundaries, which run from Piccadilly Circus through Coventry Street to Leicester Square.

First Security Officers Win Police Commendation for Bravery

Two Security Officers from the London Trocadero, have been presented with letters of commendation after they rushed to the aid of a plain-clothes Police Officer struggling to arrest an armed assailant.

While on patrol, Bikash Goswami (right) and Dean Gellineau (left) recognised that a plain-clothes Police Officer from the Soho Unit was in trouble. The Officer was attempting to affect

an arrest in Rupert Street outside the Trocadero loading bay when the suspect became violent, and the First Security team stepped in to help.

The Police later wrote to the Trocadero Centre to thank the First Security Officers involved and said that without their help, the armed suspect could have escaped or worse the Police Officer could have been seriously injured.

The suspect was later charged with possession of a bladed article and assault on a Police Officer. The Police went on to praise the First Security duo for their "professional attitude and sense of community spirit."

At a formal presentation, First Security's Managing Director Jonathan Levine said: "I am delighted with the outstanding actions of these two First Security Officers who went above and beyond the call of duty to help a Police Officer in difficulty.

"Their actions highlight the close working relationship that First Security has with the Police and the value our Officers are having in helping to reduce crime in the area."



Trio plays well above par in annual golf day

The impressive Westerham Golf Club in Kent was the venue this year for the First Security Annual Golf Tournament. And in amongst the bacon rolls and general bonhomie that accompanies such an event, competition remained as intense as ever, with more than a sombrero or two in sight.

Winner overall in the Stableford competition was John Maxted of Howe Maxted, closely followed by Mike Thornton of the London Stock Exchange and Keith Silver of RIMS. Adam Williams took the FSG Stableford prize, whilst the team event, Texas Scramble and Yellow Ball prize was won by Neil Ames (who organised the day), Angus Graham of Montague Evans, and Steve Kennedy of Stockley Park.

Both Steve Kennedy and John Maxted were clearly on top form, taking the longest drive and nearest the pin respectively. The award for the person who played the most golf – a euphemistic term for the most hopeless on the day – went to First Security's very own Sales Director, Dave Mundell.