

August 26, 2006

'Friends buy cab for rally to Croatia'

By Suzanne McTaggart

Taking the taxi!

LENGTH: 425 words

THE cry of 'Where to, love!' can often be heard on the streets of London. But four old school friends from Otley near Leeds will be shouting it in eight different languages as they head off on a trip around Eastern Europe. The lads have bought a black cab off eBay for their journey with the Student Gumball Rally, which starts on September 3 and is a seven-day race from Dover to Croatia. Former Prince Henry's Grammar School pupils, Eddie Langran and John Palmer, both 23, and Nick Smith, 22, will compete against 149 other cars to raise money for the Teenage Cancer Trust and hopefully, win the grand prize of £1,000. They will be joined by a fourth friend, Aidan Hulbert, 22, while team mechanic Joe Crabtree, 23, has prepared the old L-registered cab for the staggering 1,500 mile journey. Their motto is 'Where to, love!' and Eddie's dad, who writes Russian language textbooks, has translated the phrase into the languages of the eight countries they will visit - France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Croatia. They bought the fully MoT'd London taxi, which has 130,000 miles on the clock, for just £680 off eBay. Eddie, who recently graduated from Sheffield University with a Masters degree in human nutrition, said: "Since Easter we've been trying to get a cab off eBay but they've all been going for about £1,000, which was too expensive." So we were going to get another car which was more boring, but then this taxi came up and I went down to Worcester to get it. "We were just lucky, it seems like we got a bargain - so long as it gets us to Croatia." The lads themselves are planning to raise money for Chernobyl Children's Project International and are still looking for sponsorship, particularly from companies, who will be able to advertise on the side of the cab. Nick achieved a 2.1 in his politics and history degree at Manchester University and has been spending the summer working as a caretaker at Park Lane College. He said: "We just thought it would be a good chance to meet new people and afterwards we're thinking of going travelling around Europe." It will be a good experience and we'll see some sights." Eddie added: "It's just a nice thing to do because we've all just finished uni and it's a good ending to our uni life. Sponsor "It's the last proper holiday we're going to get before we have to work for the next 40 years." To sponsor the lads, call Nick Smith on 07810 485802 or email

smithnicholas@hotmail.co.uk. suzanne.mctaggart@ypn.co.uk