

Tip the cabbie a wink

HALL a Pedicab in York for free. Er, unless of course, (wink wink) you want to tip the rider of these three-wheel rickshaws.

That is how 23-year-old barman Paul Styles is managing to steer a tricky path around the licensing laws which normally apply to hailing a cab.

Paul, who bases his business at Parkside Commercial Centre, in Skeldergate, has four of the vehicles up and running, mostly within the city centre (and two to come). He relies purely on business sponsors to fund the venture.

So far he has been backed by the likes of The Cock And

Bottle, in Skeldergate, The Varsity Bar in Lendal, and York Digital Image, in Ousebridge.

Paul said: "I found this loophole in the licensing rules, at least temporarily until the authorities devise tailor-made licensing rules for Pedicabs."

A team of four part-time cyclists offer the service to the public between say, restaurant and theatre and pub to club.

Paul said: "It is an ideal way of getting from the pub to the station, which means you can have a drink and not bother about the car."

The three-wheelers are designed to carry three

passengers maximum and all are sheltered from the rain under a canopy.

Occasionally, at race meetings, Paul's business operates between the city centre and the race course via a scenic Ouse-side route.

He said: "I first got the idea when I saw these pedicabs operating successfully in Edinburgh."

"Then I discovered that there were as many as 400 operating in London, based on advertising sales and realised that I could fund a similar venture in York in much the same way. "It's the greenest form of

travel anywhere in the city and the most fun, even for the power source, who are all cycling buffs, including myself.

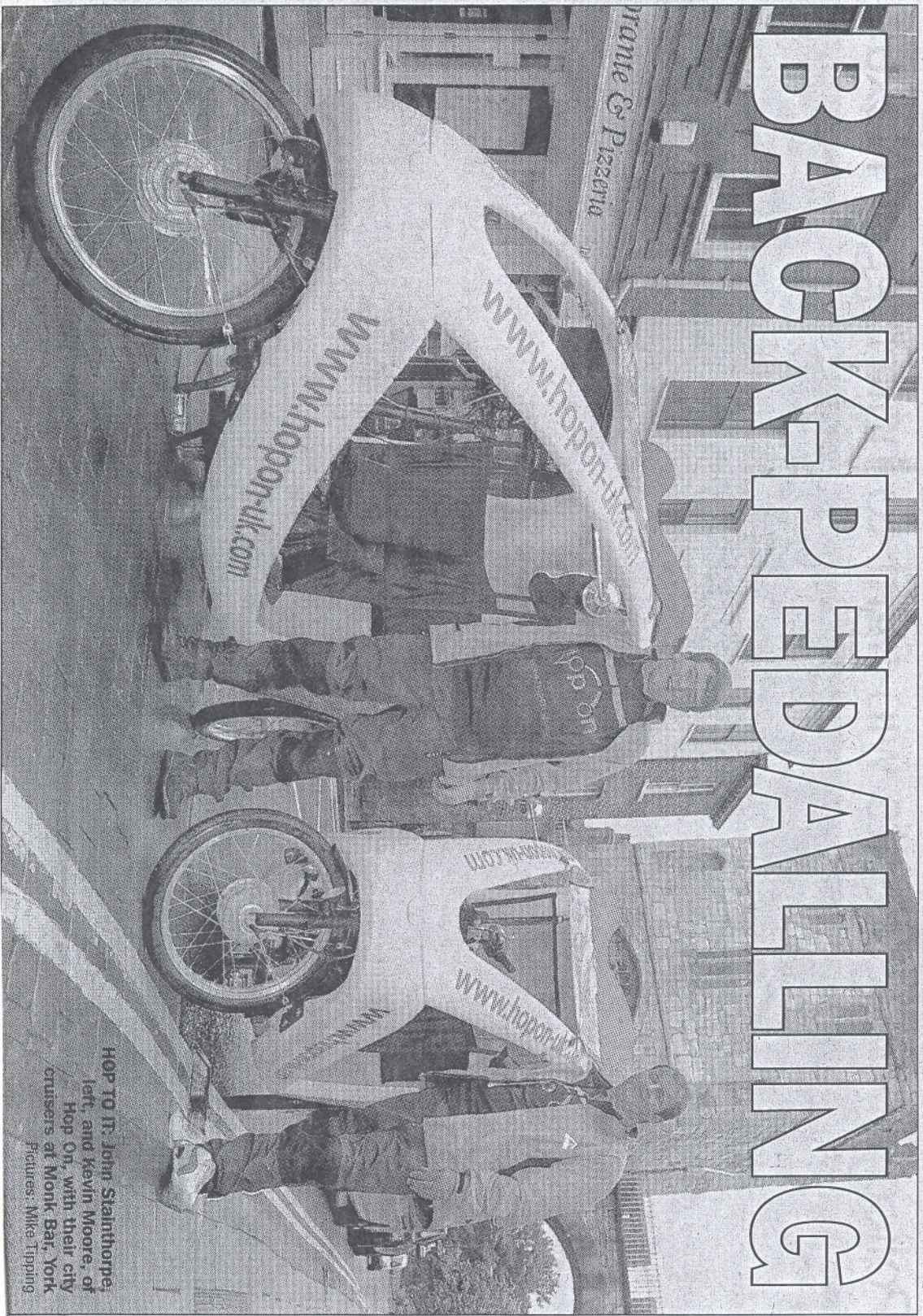
"I have had staff – and tremendous help – from Bike Rescue, York's recycle cycle centre."

He said that far from seeing taxi drivers as his rivals, he hoped to work with them.

"If someone flags me down and wants to travel further afield than my York-only brief, then I will be happy to supply the phone numbers of local taxi firms or physically transport them to a taxi rank."



BACK-PEDDALLING



HOP TO IT: John Stainthorpe, left, and Kevin Moore, of Hop On, with their city cruisers at Monk Bar, York
Pictures: Mike Tipping