

UNITE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TINTED WINDOWS

By **MIKE HEDGES**

The Private Hire Consultation has just finished and one of the issues that UNITE Cab Section has highlighted is the use of tinted windows in Private Hire vehicles. There are different standards between taxis and private hire regarding the safety of the public. There is no reason to have tinted windows on private hire vehicles, passengers should be able to be seen at all times. Safety should be the paramount objective at all times, UNITE cannot accept that women and vulnerable people's safety is not compromised by a vehicle having tinted windows.

UNITE argues that all taxis and private hire vehicles should not be licensed if the window tint exceeds the requirement that all windows must allow at least 75% of light to be transmitted (70% on the rear window if an advert is fitted). This is the restriction that currently exists for taxis in London and Liverpool plus numerous other licensing areas. This means that the vehicle can be seen throughout from every angle from the outside of the vehicle.

UNITE strongly believes that tinted windows darker than those which allow at least 75% of light to be transmitted are a danger in particular to vulnerable and female



passengers. If the windows cannot be seen through then anything could be going on inside of that vehicle without any means of seeing inside from outside of the vehicle.

Transport for London is currently proposing changing the yellow licence discs that are on private hire vehicles in London. The reason is because they cannot be seen through the tinted windows. The same reason

was used for the introduction of the red route stickers that are issued to Private Hire. So rather than address the problem of the tinted windows they seek another solution. The yellow discs are clear and obvious indications of licensing. Nothing else is needed if tinted windows are banned.

UNITE currently has support for the banning of tinted windows from

Diana Holland, Assistant General Secretary for Equalities of UNITE, TUC Women's Committee, Fawcett and Women's Aid. We are also expecting support from other Women's groups. We feel this is a very important issue regarding safety for the travelling public and cannot see a reason why safety should be compromised by the use of tinted windows.

MAYOR ANNOUNCES 15 YEAR AGE LIMIT FOR TAXIS



UNITE Cab Section has, along with the other drivers organisations and trade groups, successfully persuaded the Mayor of London to drop the 10 year age limit proposals in favour of a 15 year age limit. The Mayor of London has announced he is to set an age limit for taxis. Any taxis over 15 years old will not be allowed to be licensed to operate on London's streets and he is also to re-introduce twice-yearly testing as part of his efforts to reduce air pollution in the capital.

The Mayor's Air Quality Strategy, *Clearing the Air*, will demand that from 1 January 2012 no black cab over 15 years old will be licensed by the Taxi and Private Hire Office, a move expected to affect around 1,200 vehicles, while all new taxis will need to meet Euro 5 emissions standards from 1 April 2012. Also from January 2012, all new cab drivers will be required to take a mandatory eco-driving course before they are licensed.

From 2013, all taxis will be required to take two full MOT tests each year, rather than a single inspection as at present, although they will be free to have this carried by any MOT centre rather than being limited to the three inspection centres run by Transport for London (TfL). At the same time, the Mayor and TfL announced a £1 million fund to encourage taxi owners to upgrade to low emission vehicles such as electric black cabs.



Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, said: "London's magnificent cabbies are famous the world over for their top notch service, but I also want the capital's taxi fleet to match up to the highest environmental standards that a great city like ours deserves.

"From 2012 when the world heads to

London, we will remove the oldest, dirtiest cabs from our streets. But we are also offering a juicy carrot, with the establishment of a fund to help speed up the introduction of electric black cabs. This forms part of a robust package of long-term measures to progressively clean up London's air."

The Mayor originally announced in the air quality consultation a 10 year age limit proposal. UNITE negotiators, along with the LTDA, LCDC, Proprietors, radio circuits, LTI and KPM, have been in discussion with the Mayor's advisors and TfL over many long months on the way forward. While committed to ensuring that the Trade continues to play its part in cleaning up the quality of London's air, we argued that the Mayor's original proposal to introduce 10 year age limits to taxis was too onerous and failed to acknowledge sufficiently the beneficial effects of the various initiatives introduced in recent years. This led to all of the above groups submitting a joint trade response to the Mayor arguing against the 10 year age limit proposal. This joint approach was necessary to show the Mayor how every group in the taxi trade recognised the disastrous consequences of the 10 year age limit.

Jim Kelly, Chair of the Cab Trade Committee, welcoming the decision said: "Cab drivers have made significant investment in recent years in order to comply with the increasingly regulated system which has already led to a considerable reduction in harmful emissions. UNITE has been involved every step of the way, and has always adopted a progressive approach to the issue. Air quality is of course a huge Health and Safety issue for our members who spend their working day in congested areas of our city. This has to be balanced however with the reality of the economic situation affecting the Trade."

The Mayor has announced that there will be the introduction of a 15 year age limit. This will be accompanied by the re-introduction of twice yearly testing.

Mr Kelly continued, "At a time when cab drivers are affected as much by the difficult economic climate as any other working person, we welcome the final conclusion of the consultation. Introducing a 10 year limit would have turned the economics of the Trade upside down, and many drivers would have been forced out of work. We now look forward to TfL's "London Taxi & Private Hire" (LTPH) turning its focus fully onto ensuring that the licensed taxi Trade is able to serve the people of London without having to contend with the endemic flouting of the laws by sections of the minicab trade."

HEATHROW UPDATE

By **DANNY FREEMAN**
Secretary UNITE Cab Section, Heathrow Branch

SNOW CHAOS



As drivers who worked the airport during the cold snap will know it was absolute chaos here at Heathrow. Hundreds of flights were cancelled and on some days stopped arriving altogether!

On several nights a Code Red was implemented and I think there are many lessons to be learned going forward. The trade need to be working more closely with BAA when a Code Red is called. Only taxi drivers know the taxi trade and it is imperative the trade are included in helping drivers and passengers leave the airport as quickly as possible.

I am pleased to say that over the past couple of months the recognised trade bodies, UNITE, HALT, LTDA, HATDU and LCDC and have had several really constructive and positive meetings on ways of improving and moving our trade forward. We will shortly be having a meeting with BAA to discuss a whole raft of issues.

HEATHROW – BEWARE! By Peter Bond

Don't leave your Cab unattended anywhere within the confines of Heathrow – not even for a few seconds or by a few yards and especially don't leave your keys in the ignition!

The examples below show some enforcement officers at the airport show no mercy.

One member broke down by the entrance to the tunnel, called a breakdown service, decided to leave the Cab to get a cuppa, only to return a short time later to find the cab had gone – towed away, and not by the breakdown company – it cost him £150 to get it out of the Police compound plus a £40 parking ticket.

Another unsuspecting member arrived at Terminal 4 loaded with luggage and his son in his cab, and behind five other members of his family in his brother's cab. He helped his son with three trolley loads

of luggage to the entrance, about 30 yards away, leaving his brother and family looking after his cab. Unfortunately for him leaving his keys in the ignition.

During the fifty or so seconds he had gone, a vigilant Police Officer jumped in his cab and, after some heated 'discussions', another Police Officer was called who arrived with three more security staff. After threatening to make an arrest, all with our members' family looking on, the Officer drove the cab to the Police compound.

Again – £150 to get the cab out of the Police compound plus a £40 parking ticket.



Obviously the Police will claim security, terrorism etc justifies their actions but, surely, particularly in the terminal 4 incident, a ticking off and a parking ticket would suffice - unfortunately after seeking legal advice, it turned out they acted within their rights, even in driving the cab away in the presence of its owner.

So BEWARE – don't leave your cab for any reason anywhere in or around Heathrow, and especially don't leave the keys in the ignition!

Become part of the 44,000 Unite Heathrow family. Pop into the Unite office and join today!



Dan Freeman is
Chair Heathrow Union
Learning Forum
Chair West London Area
Activist Committee

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UNITE LEADS THE WAY AT SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY

From the UNITE Cab Section

The first day of the Transport Select Committee's Inquiry into cross-border hiring was held on Tuesday 18th January. The session heard oral evidence from UNITE and other organisations in favour of a change in the law to stop this practise taking place.



Cross-border hiring has a huge impact on our members and taxi drivers everywhere. This is evidenced by over 3,400 taxi drivers signing our petition in support of changing the law to make drivers immediately return to their own area of licensing if they haven't already got a pre-booked return journey.

We want to stop the problem of cars licensed in one area always waiting and working in an adjacent licensing area. In this we were very much supported by the licensing officers and council leaders represented at the committee hearing.

UNITE lead the evidence for a change in the law to stop cross-border hiring and there were many questions from the committee about the effect and objectives of our campaign.

But it seems very simple to us, why allow vehicles licensed by one authority to consistently work in neighbouring authorities for which these vehicles and drivers are not licensed.

They are undermining the efforts of the neighbouring areas to license and enforce their own licensing system. These drivers could easily be licensed for the area where they always work. The only reason they don't is cost. It is always drivers coming from areas with lower standards into areas with higher standards. Strangely the higher standards are normally associated with higher costs. The committee took up many of the issues raised by unite in our evidence.

The Operators, mainly those that currently do have cross-border operations, were next to give evidence. They tried to deflect the discussion away from cross-border hiring into a discussion about a national licensing scheme, which would effectively allow any licensed driver and licensed vehicle to work anywhere and remove the localism that exists today.

This was resoundingly rejected by the local authority representatives who quite rightly pointed out that local accountability and enforcement is desirable. The private hire operators could be seen defending a position that was unsustainable. They had no answer to the question of why not get a license for those cross-border areas that they work in other than to claim that the public wants it.

The enforcement officers totally backed UNITE's desire for a simple change in the law. They pointed out how many resources are currently wasted chasing cabs licensed in other areas to their own. This costs the council money that they will never recoup from these drivers and have no say over the drivers that are prosecuted if the neighbouring council takes no action.

There is to be another session of oral evidence to the committee at which we hope we can raise the other items that we believe are important issues relating to safety in the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles.

Amongst many are three others that Unite raised. These are quantity restrictions, signage and tinted windows in private hire vehicles. The first day of evidence was an important first step to getting the law changed to stop cross-border hiring but we still have a long way to go.

LONDON COMPLIANCE & LICENSING

By PETER BOND

As always the percentage of taxis being inspected on-street is far higher than that of PHV's being inspected, although the percentage of unfits is similar. The compliance team have moved a long way since the licensing of PHV's, but parity still seems a long way off unless staffing levels are dramatically increased, which is unlikely.



LTPH Compliance team have issued 9 warning letters to Suburban drivers for plying for hire out of their area in this period (3 of these are for a second offence and have been referred to the Licensing Authority), City of London Police have reported 16 for the same offence and Safer Transport Command another 8.

Funny how authorities in most walks of life adjust their behaviour when attempting to justify a potential change in policy – these

figures have been a near constant 2 offenders per accounting period since warning letters for this offence have been in existence.

The top 5 reasons for Taxis being found unfit for service remains: Tyres, Lights, Steering, Suspension and Documentation.

The new Licensing Night Team should be up and running by now, which should see some results in tackling the Satellite/Clipboard Johnnie problem- almost certainly not enough to satisfy us in the Taxi trade though.



Some drivers showed an interest in fitting snow chains during the recent bad weather, unfortunately this will have to be approved by the old guard at LTPH - so little likelihood of any joy there.

1528 drivers had badge/bill checks during this 4-week period with only 8 in breach for not wearing their badge, 2 for not having their licence and 6 for not signing it- all receiving warnings.

NEW BEGINNINGS FOR HISTORICAL NAME



As the industry gets used to a new name for a historical icon, there has been another change within this traditional market. Andrew Overton, whose grand-father, founded Mann & Overton in 1899, has decided to retire from The London Taxi Company after more than 41 years in the taxi trade.

Andrew has held many roles over the years, including Managing Director of Mann & Overton, when the company was owned by Lloyds and Scottish. He remained an integral part of the business, taking on the role of Sales & Marketing Director, following Manganese Bronze's acquisition of London Taxis International in 1985.

Later he was Market Development Director for LTI Limited, the next incarnation of the recently renamed company, a role that was adapted approximately 7 years ago, allowing Andrew to reduce hours, whilst still acting in a consultative capacity.

In 2009, he became The Master of the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers, an organisation that he intends to remain a part of for years to come.

Andrew said "I have always enjoyed my roles, whatever it may have been, and in particular I have enjoyed dealing with so many wonderful people within the trade. The taxi trade, whether in London or in the regions, has so many genuine people who want the best for this industry.

"It has been my pleasure to deal with these people over the last 40 years. I will be sorry not to be a part of this any more, but there is a right time in life for everything and I take this opportunity to wish the London Taxi Company and all those who work so hard in this trade a prosperous and successful future."

Peter Shillcock, Managing Director of The London Taxi Company said: "It really is the end of an era for us all here at The London Taxi Company. Andrew has been such an important and passionate advocate for taxis, and is known across the UK for his expertise and knowledge.

"He will be sorely missed. We wish him a wonderful retirement and thank him for his contributions to the institution that is now The London Taxi Company over the past four decades."



RANKS REPORT

By JIM KELLY

Abacus

A new rank has been agreed closer to the exit from Abacus, Cornhill. While the site is an improvement from the rank appointed by the City Police, it still needs to be moved further east in order to attempt to cut down on the touting problem.

Kings Cross/St Pancras

Due to redevelopment in the Kings Cross environs a new access and ranking arrangement was introduced on the 11th January. The scheme, which allows for access to the Kings Cross and St. Pancras ranks from Euston Road will be in place until the end of March. The section of Pancras Road, north of Battlebridge Road will be one way northbound

for this period. There have been no serious problems reported during the first 2 weeks.

Lower James Street/ Brewer Street junction

Martin Low, Commissioner of Transportation at Westminster has informed Unite, LTDA & LCDC that Penalty Charge Notices issued to taxi drivers for crossing Brewer Street into Sherwood Street from Lower James Street will be reimbursed if they contact the council with their details. The signage, which was meant to stop traffic turning right into Brewer Street was clearly confusing.

Martin Low also agreed that the compulsory right-turn from Oxendon Street at the junction with Coventry Street was not

CTN

Comment

HAPPY NEW YEAR?

By **FRANK HULL**

Happy New Year. Let's hope so! But be warned there are forces out there, already, nibbling away at the workings of this trade. We are not trying to worry you all but then again perhaps we should all be concerned when we learn that a body calling itself the National Association of Taxi Users has been set up and has held its inaugural meeting last month in Coventry. It is ironic that most members of this trade, the largest number of taxi users in the country, know nothing about this association. Neither have we heard if any taxi using taxi driver attended the Coventry bash.

No surprise then that taxi-representing groups in this country are wondering what this so-called association of taxi users is up to.

This month has seen the publication of the taxi reform consultation document from the Institute of Licensing. This to us appears to be a more credible outfit than the Coventry lot. However, we are not clear as to what input, if any, there has been from working taxi drivers? Call us naïve but we still believe that there has to be a significant input of information from working taxi drivers into any consultation on the taxi trade in this country for that consultation to be deemed credible. To ignore us as other organisations have when carrying out so called surveys into the workings of this trade would once again be truly incredible!

The Harlow Council Licensing Committee spent some time at this month's meeting on the proposal that Harlow taxi fares should be set by the driver and not the Council. The local trade did not ask for change and is quite happy to continue with a condition that has worked well over the years.

No doubt those councillors that support this proposal mean well but unfortunately they are not involved in the practical workings of the taxi trade and cannot see the internal trade problems that will arise if this proposal is adopted. Nor do they appear to understand that an authorised maximum rate gives financial protection to the taxi user.

We have always believed that taxi drivers should beware when those who would administer this trade come up with controversial ideas. Therefore, Cambridge taxis should really be prepared to oppose the controversial proposal from Cambridge County councillor Nichola Harrison to introduce charges for use of all Cambridgeshire roads except trunk roads such as the A14. The Cambridge Labour party and the Cambridge Federation of small businesses are opposed to this proposal that could cost 90 per cent of drivers £3 to £10 per week. We know we don't have to advise the Cambridge trade to also oppose it.

Frank Hull is a UNITE Cab Trade Committee Member.

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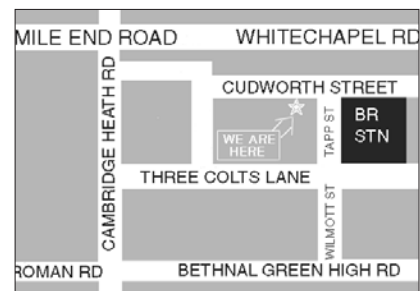
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London-WIDE

By **PETER J ROSE**
Secretary UNITE Cab Section, London Branch

UNITE welcomes the opportunity to engage in the London Private Hire consultation. Since Private Hire in London has been licensed many changes have taken place in relation to drivers, vehicles and operators. For Unite the major problems that need to be addressed are primarily those which have been created by 'satellite offices'. The long lines of private hire vehicles, often illegally parked, outside clubs, pubs and bars together with the illegal touting by 'clipboard Johnnies' etc. and the lack of record keeping has contributed to a system which has become impossible to enforce. This is despite the best endeavours of a very dedicated enforcement team. The situation has clearly been allowed to get out of control. UNITE hopes that this consultation will be able to rectify the problems of enforcement that have been produced by the current system. We welcome the suspension of the issuing of private hire operator licenses in 3rd party venues.

Opening paragraph from UNITE's consultation submission on private hire in London.

Satellite offices are the absolute scourge of the night time taxi trade. No matter how many venues we visit, no matter how many times we report misdemeanours to the authorities, little or nothing seems to happen. UNITE has argued for many many months now that satellite offices are out of control and unenforceable.

As I've reported in previous London-wide articles I have witnessed first hand how illegal minicabs 'slip in' where a satellite office is present, safe in the knowledge that the chances of being challenged are almost nil. UNITE has also argued that a line of parked, un-booked minicabs legal or illegal constitutes a rank at these satellite offices. What else could they be?

UNITE also has grave concerns regarding the safety of the travelling public. It is for this reason that Unite has included in our private hire consultation submission a requirement to ban tinted windows in private hire vehicles. This is not the first time that UNITE has tried to get the authorities to recognise this clear and present danger. Back in 2006 UNITE put together a campaign against tinted windows in private hire vehicles. The union had the backing of all of the major women's groups. At the time it was decided to continue to allow private hire to keep tinted windows due to the fact that they were very much the minority, unlike today where they are far more prominent.

Again we are gathering support from the major women's organisations, as our front page story tells but the union has also taken the campaign to national level. UNITE has lobbied the government's Transport Select Committee on the issue.

From UNITE's submission to the Transport Select Committee:

- Private Hire Vehicles should not be able to have tinted windows in the same way as taxis are not allowed. This is clearly double standards and there are possible health and safety implications with allowing this.
- UNITE opposes the LTPH policy of passing PHV's with tinted windows, some completely blacked out, with

obvious consequences for the vulnerable, particularly women not knowing who may be in the vehicle when they enter, let alone what may happen en route with any possible attack being out of sight.

UNITE has also pointed out to TfL that if private hire were subject to the same rules as the taxi trade regarding tinted windows, there would be no need to add additional signage to private hire vehicles as the existing signage would be clearly visible. UNITE has also put forward other proposals to TfL which would increase passenger safety.

From UNITE's submission to LTPH.

Private hire vehicles should not be colour coded with a single colour such as silver, as this will add even more to the confusion by the public. It would allow unlicensed vehicles to adopt the licensing colour and the colour would become the distinguishing feature of the vehicle rather than the vehicle licence.

It is already a concern expressed in the consultation document that PHV's waiting for booked journeys may be regarded as a rank (we do think it is a rank) by customers and that this is an opportunity for unlicensed drivers to tout and may expose passengers to the risk of assault. Having a standard colour for PHV's is likely to increase this risk as a passenger will instinctively use a vehicle of the correct colour rather than checking the licence of the vehicle. Colour coding is another form of signage which is likely to distract the public from correctly identifying the licence status of the vehicle.

Regarding licensed operators there has clearly become a problem late at night regarding providing private hire to corporate events. We welcome the suspension of the issuing of licenses in 3rd party venues but the number that has currently been issued has made it impossible to enforce. The long line of vehicles outside many of these premises means that along with the private hire marshals that are often employed in tandem, passengers get into these private hire vehicles with no pre-booking meaning no records are kept of the journey. This is clearly touting by the driver with all of the safety implications for the passenger. We believe that the removal of all the record keeping requirements at these operating centres is also responsible for this proliferation of illegal activity. We think addressing the late night situation of illegal touting should be the main object of this consultation.

We do not believe that Operating Centres, commonly known as Satellite offices, should be licensed in shared premises. The problem that this causes for enforcement is beyond the control of the resources available.

If our proposals were to be implemented in full then we believe that this would lead to a much safer licensing regime for the travelling public, particularly women and a fairer crack of the whip for the London taxi trade.

Be seeing you. :-)

We shall be publishing our full response to the private hire consultation in the next issue of Cab Trade News.



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ASSEMBLY CALLS FOR CODE OF ETHICS FOR ADS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The London Assembly branded the decision to sell advertising space on Tubes and buses to a loan company known to charge 2689% APR irresponsible.

Assembly Members called on the Mayor to publish a robust code of ethics for sponsorship and advertising to more closely regulate the types of advertising that can appear on public transport.



Jennette Arnold AM, who proposed the amended motion, said: "These adverts offering quick cash can be very tempting to the vulnerable and desperate, but can lead to people finding themselves in serious financial difficulty if they can't meet the very challenging repayment terms. I believe the Mayor as the Chair of TfL should publish a robust code of ethics that forbids advertising for this type of service on the transport

network."

Darren Johnson AM, who seconded the motion, said:

"There have been instances in the past where Transport for London has refused specific adverts on moral or ethical grounds, but it needs to set out more clearly exactly what is and isn't acceptable. As the owner of the advertising space, TfL has a duty to uphold certain standards."

The full text of the amended motion reads as follows:

"This Assembly deplores Mayor Boris Johnson's recent decision to sell prime-time advertising space on London's Buses and Tubes to a Loan Company known for charging 2689% APR. Consumers can easily get into difficulties using these kinds of loans to cover debts, and when unable to repay in a timely fashion the interest rates and fines can be punitive. The Assembly believes it is irresponsible for politicians and public organisations to be endorsing these services, particularly at a time of year when many Londoners are vulnerable to getting into further debt, and when there are other services that offer Londoners a much safer route out of debt. This Assembly calls on the Mayor to publish a robust code of ethics for sponsorship and advertising."

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON SECURES MULTI-MILLION POUND SPONSORSHIP FOR OYSTER CARD WALLETS

Oyster card wallets to carry MasterCard branding exclusively in 2011. Multi-million pound deal generates revenue for Transport for London (TfL) to invest in London's transport network.

TfL has announced a new, multi-million pound sponsorship with MasterCard to exclusively brand TfL's Oyster card wallets for 2011. Oyster card wallets are distributed with all new cards issued and are available from Tube and rail stations, and Travel



The multi-million pound deal builds on TfL's work to secure valuable sponsorship from the private sector to

support investment in London's transport network. The revenue generated by the deal demonstrates the Mayor and TfL's commitment to delivering value for money for London's fare payers and will contribute to protecting frontline services and the vital investment in the Tube upgrades and construction of Crossrail.

Kulveer Ranger, the Mayor's Transport Advisor, said: "This is yet another example of our determination and ability to land great deals with major private companies in order to get the best value for money for Londoners."

Shashi Verma, TfL's Director of Fares and Ticketing, said: "Oyster has been a huge success and most Londoners now have a card in their pocket – almost 40 million have been issued since 2003.

"The branding of Oyster card wallets is a prime example of the work being undertaken to secure valuable sponsorship to support investment in London's transport network.

"The revenue generated will make a significant contribution to protecting frontline services and maintaining investment in the Tube upgrades and delivery of Crossrail."

RANKS REPORT – Continued from Page 2

intended to stop cabs turning north into Rupert Street. Again any cab drivers who paid Westminster PCNs will be reimbursed if they contact the council.

Kingsway Hall Hotel

The hotel staff have made a number of complaints to the PCO over drivers being abusive while using the hotel toilet facilities. They are also complaining that the 3 cab rank is constantly full of empty cabs.

Golden Fares Scheme

The above scheme will restart on Friday 28 January in Coventry Street, and will operate between 10pm and 4am. The scheme had a very successful launch in December, despite the freezing temperatures and problems with snow and ice.

Westfield Stratford

A start date of late October has been announced by Westfield in Stratford. There are 2 separate

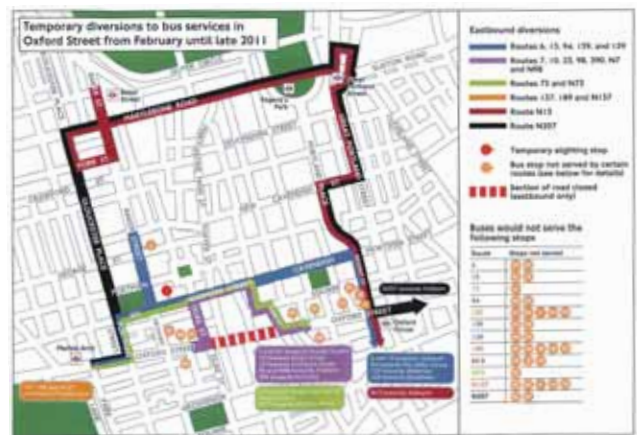
ranks included in the plans. Coinciding with this is a planned launch of the Javelin train service linking St.Pancras with Stratford.

Winter Wonderland Rank

The rank in Hyde Park, which functioned from 20 November to 4 January, was, again, very successful. There were some issues with the Parks Police which moved on drivers ranking in South Carriage Drive on a few occasions. During the period between Xmas and New Year this was, surely, one of the busiest ranks in central London.

Oxford Street

Oxford Street eastbound will be closed in early February between Duke Street and Vere Street (See diagram below). Traffic, including some bus routes will be diverted northbound on Duke Street, along Wigmore Street eastbound and rejoining Oxford Street at Vere Street. The Selfridges rank will be unaffected.



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DEATH IN LONDON

London is certainly a fine place to live and work, but it would also appear to be a good place to die!...All London licensed taxi-drivers are aware of celebrity haunts notorious for the demise of those in the public eye. The prime spot being the sycamore tree in Queens Ride Barnes, South-West London, where Marc Bolan of T.Rex fame was tragically killed in his Mini driven by Gloria Jones, seemingly at the time when his music career was being revived.

Judy Garland met her end at 4 Cadogan Lane SW1 in 1969 aged 47. Five times married Judy, her first husband being David Rose, composer of The Stripper...ba ba bar, ba bar ba bar...was found dead from an overdose by her fifth husband, Mickey Deans. This Hollywood icon enjoyed London and sometimes ventured out to the East End. Occasionally, she would forgo Soho & Mayfair for The Waterman's Arms on the Isle of Dogs in the company of American hard men, home-grown gangsters and TV's, then man of the moment, Daniel Farson.

At the time of her death she was allegedly a remarkable \$4 million dollars in debt.



A far less well known American than Judy also met his maker in London. Billy Murcia, drummer with the legendary New York Dolls, who Malcolm McLaren would later manage and possibly used as a blue print for The Sex Pistols project. They had been bringing their brand of Manhattan mayhem to London. Billy had been at the Speakeasy club located at 49 Margaret Street where a cocktail of drink and drugs took its toll. The New York Dolls was a fine band but, members of the group had a less than fifty percent chance of staying alive. Only Sylvain Sylvain and David Johansen are still with us. Jerry Nolan, who replaced Murcia, and Johnny Thunders, collaborated latterly as The Heartbreakers leading a hedonistic lifestyle that was always bound to end in tears. Bass player – Arthur Killer Kane ended up working for the Mormon Church, and then had a joyful reunion with Sylvain & Johansen as they re-formed in 2004 for Morrissey's South Bank Meltdown festival at the Royal Festival Hall, before dying 22 days later. There's a wonderful enchanting DVD called, New York Doll, the story of Arthur Killer Kane; from rock star to rock bottom and back again. A tale about one of rock'n'roll music's unsung heroes.

Australian rocker, Bon Scott, former lead singer with ACDC had probably the most bizarre, least glamorous demise of a musician in the capital. Worse for wear on the usual post gig cocktail Bon was supposed to be staying with friends in East Dulwich. Somehow, he returns alone to 67 Overhill Road SE22 but was unable for whatever reason to gain access to the house. A cold February night in 1980, tired and drunk and ill, he found an unlocked Renault 5 outside the house climbed in and fell asleep sadly never to wake up again!



Just over forty years ago on the 18th September 1970 Jimi Hendrix died in the basement of the Samarkand Hotel at 22 Lansdowne Crescent W11. The hotel being geographically named after an Uzbekistan city on the Silk Road. Silk, a material much favoured by Jimi and the hippies.

Hendrix, a native of Seattle Washington, criss-crossed the Atlantic during his career spending a great deal of time in London.

He loved London and is famously remembered at Teabag corner, the junction of Brook & Bond streets, where a blue plaque commemorates his time at 23 Brook Street W1.

This juxtaposes beautifully with a plaque for George Frederick Handel who resided at the same address many years before. Two musical geniuses who probably both raised some merry hell in Mayfair.

JOIE DE VIVRE



Mama Cass Elliot of Mamas & Papas fame is another American heavyweight performer to have died in London. Flat 12, 9 Curzon Place, which was owned by Harry Nilsson. 32 year old Cass was a mere five foot, five inches tall but weighed in around 16 and a half stone.

That's a fair old ratio on the body mass index. Not surprisingly, cause of death is attributed to a heart attack and not the widespread apocryphal story of choking on a ham sandwich.

Chillingly, just over four years later on the 6th of September 1978, Keith Moon, staying in the very same flat of the Curzon Place walkway was taken ill. The notorious drummer of The Who had an ability to hit every drum skin and cymbal with frenzy while maintaining perfect timing.

Some music writers dubbed the early Who sound as freakbeat for the sheer wildness of the drumming. Keith Moon was taken from Curzon Place to the Middlesex Hospital on Mortimer Street where he died. This begs the question of avoiding any property owned by singer/songwriter Harry Nilsson...he of; audience cigarette lighter swaying Without You nausea.

- **GLUM**
- **MONDAY MONDAY**
- **DEDICATED TO THE ONE I LOVE**

London Cabbies may well end up in the morgue of a London hospital. Not through the glamour that isolated celebrities have with the occupational hazards of show business...more through the occupational hazards of hard work and stress....

marktaylor842@btinternet.com

Street Legal

By ELLIE REEVES

INAPPROPRIATE REMARKS!

The recent Transport for London Private Hire Trade Consultation included the laudable proposal that "no driver is to make a remark of a sexual nature or have any sexual contact in a licensed vehicle". A similar rule is planned for taxi drivers.

It is absolutely right that TfL takes action to stop cab-related sexual assaults. Last year, according to TfL, the number of such attacks increased by 54%, although there has been a 20% drop since the Safer Travel at Night campaign was launched in 2002. Cab-related sex assaults were at an all-time low of 93 in 2008/2009. Any form of sexual contact between a driver and passenger, including remarks of a sexual nature by the driver, cannot be tolerated.

But Unite, which responded to the consultation, is right to be concerned that the proposal contains a counter-productive unintended consequence. By recommending that a driver's licence could be revoked on a precautionary basis "on the balance of probability" as a result of an allegation, TfL appear to be disregarding the right of anyone accused of such a crime to natural justice.

The threat to revoke the licenses of drivers who have been accused of some sort of sexual contact could undermine TfL's campaign to encourage them to ensure that vulnerable passengers get home safely. There are of course guidelines for drivers in dealing with drunk or abusive passengers. But they may be reluctant to put themselves in any situation that could result in an allegation that leads to the loss of their licence.

A black cab driver told the Guardian in December that he now refuses to take very drunk passengers, particularly women on their own. He described how he had once accepted such a fare, only for the woman to fall asleep. He tried to rock the cab to wake her but it didn't work. He feared her reaction if he attempted any kind of contact to get her out of the cab, so resorted to asking a female passer by for assistance.

Unite has asked TfL a series of questions which will have to be addressed before support can be given to the proposal:

- What is the test for balance of probabilities?
- How will investigations be conducted?
- Who makes the ultimate decision to revoke?
- Who will enforce the policy?
- For how long will the licence be revoked and what is the definition of "precautionary basis"?
- Will there be a right of appeal and will the licensee be able to operate during the appeal period?
- Could the licensee be offered the opportunity to have a licence with conditions such only accepting fares with more than one passenger or courier type work?
- If the allegation is not pursued by the police or CPS, where the criminal burden of proof is beyond reasonable doubt, will the licence be reinstated?

TfL must address these issues and ensure that the process of investigation and appeal are absolutely transparent and fair. Anything less could result in the individuals who are most in need of the safety of a licensed taxi home becoming prey to unlicensed mimicabs.

THEATRE

By TRUDI-JOY LEVY

We welcome our new theatre critic Trudi-Joy Levy who is going to do our theatre reviews as Tony Benson has decided to retire. CTN thanks Tony for the fine reviews he has contributed and send him and Pauline our best wishes.

KT Sullivan's COLOURED LIGHTS at the Pheasantry, Kings Road

A new season has just begun at The Pheasantry, in Kings Road, which has replaced Pizza on the Park as the hot spot for cabaret in London, and it could not have a better opener than New York's acclaimed vocalist, KT Sullivan. KT puts her own spin on such favourites as There's No Business Like Show Business and Autumn in New York as well as introducing us to more unfamiliar songs in this journey from Oklahoma to the bright coloured lights of Broadway. She executes them all with consummate ease. She is accompanied throughout by the pianist, Jon Weber, who excels in the finale of a medley of 29 songs from 1929. Many other performers from both sides of the pond will be appearing at this venue between now and March. Further details at www.pizzaexpresslive.com.

SEASON'S GREETINGS at the Lyttelton Theatre, South Bank

Alan Ayckbourn is possibly our most prolific playwright, currently working on his 76th play. The National Theatre has chosen to present a revival of Season's

Greetings, originally performed in 1980. I don't think it's one of his best, but an understandably relevant choice for the festive season, as it spans the period between Christmas Eve and Boxing Day. Neville (Neil Stuke) and his wife, Belinda (Catherine Tate) are hosting the festivities. His sister Phyllis (Jenna Russell) is in charge of the Christmas Eve dinner while his uncle Harvey (David Troughton) watches an old film on TV. Belinda's sister, Rachel (Nicola Walker) has invited her writer friend, Clive (Oliver Chris), and Phyllis' husband, Bernard (Mark Gatiss) prepares for the obligatory annual puppet show, which everyone else dreads. Neville has also invited his old business colleague, Eddie, (Marc Wootton) with his pregnant wife Pattie (Katherine Parkinson) and their children.

The comedy descends into farce, with much coming and going through the night, mistaken identities and an hilarious set piece with the dreaded puppet show. The ensemble playing is exemplary, although it is rather difficult to separate Catherine Tate, with her distinctive voice, from her TV character. As usual with the National Theatre, the set is truly amazing with brilliant lighting effects. Not one of his best certainly, but one that still sends you smiling out into the cold air.

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London Taxi & Private Hire News

Winter 2010

Transport for London
Taxi and Private Hire



London Taxi and Private Hire (LTPH) recently launched a semi-regular newsletter. As it is only available online at the moment we thought that we would publish the 'best bits' here in Cab Trade News for you. If you would like to read the full newsletter you can find a link to it at www.cabtradenews.co.uk

Post Office® Check and Send Service

With the closure of the counter services we identified the need to improve the Check and Send service offered by the Post Office to ensure that application and renewal forms were checked accurately. We have therefore restricted the number of Post Offices offering this service to 21 key locations and have provided additional training to all these locations.

Taxi and private hire drivers wishing to renew their licence, plus anyone applying for the first time to become a taxi or private hire driver, can now make use of these services at the following locations:

Barking & Dagenham 214-216 Heathway Dagenham Essex RM10 8RD	Barnet 63-65 High Street Barnet Hertfordshire EN5 5UU	Barnet 879 Finchley Road Golders Green London NW11 8RT
Bromley 22 Rectory Road Beckenham Kent BR3 1AA	Camden 112-114 Camden High Street Camden Town London NW1 0RR	Croydon 10 High Street Croydon Surrey CR9 1HT
Dartford 19 Hythe Street Dartford Kent DA1 1AB	Ealing 38 The Broad Southall Middlesex UB1 1PY	Ealing 400 Greenford Road Greenford Middlesex UB6 9AJ
Hackney Stoke Newington High St London N16 7JN	Haringey 191 High Road Wood Green London N22 6DZ	Harlow 4-12 Headstone Drive Harrow Middlesex HA3 5QL
Havering 46-48 Collier Row Road Romford Essex RM5 3PB	Havering 127-129 High Street Hornchurch Essex RM11 1UB	Islington 116 Upper Street Islington London N1 1AE
Islington Mount Pleasant Rosebery Avenue London EC1R 4SQ	Southwark 53 Blackfriars Road London SE1 8NN	Tower Hamlets 22 Market Square London E14 6AB
Waltham Forest 553 Lea Bridge Road Leyton London E10 7EG	Waltham Forest Walthamstow Central Central Library Site London E17 7JN	Wandsworth 202 Lavender Hill Battersea London SW11 1AA

The Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012

Preparations are well underway for the Olympic and Paralympic games in 2012. The key agencies are the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA), responsible for the preparation and infrastructure for the Games; the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG), which prepares and stages the Games themselves. We have had fruitful meetings with these agencies along with representatives of the taxi and private hire trade bodies and good progress is being made to ensure that the Games are a great opportunity for the trades and for London.



Planning is progressing for drop-off areas, taxi ranks and private hire pick-up locations at the venues around London. In some cases, venues that already have big events (such as Wembley or Wimbledon) will work quite differently, with changes to access arrangements. Trade representatives are party to discussions about these sites. The Olympic Route Network (ORN) will be a set of routes allowing the Olympic Family – athletes, officials, national and international committees, media etc – to travel rapidly between the different sites that are involved in the Games. Where there is enough space, dedicated lanes will be used, and on much of the network special stopping and waiting restrictions are likely to apply, as well as traffic priority measures like changes to signal timings.

The ORN, street events like marathons and cycle races, and other activities ('live sites' where screens will allow crowds to watch the Games, live performances etc.) will all affect London's road network throughout the Games. We are working with other parts of TfL and London's local authorities to make sure that disruption to services, residents and businesses is kept to a minimum.

Communications are being planned to make sure all parts of the taxi and private hire trade know what is happening, how it affects them, and what the opportunities will be. We are also ensuring that visitors coming to the Games will be aware of London's excellent taxi and private hire services, and are given key messages about how to find and use taxis and private hire vehicles safely and lawfully.

Heathrow gets tough on parking enforcement



BAA have been in contact with us and asked us to let you know about parking enforcement arrangements which have been introduced at Heathrow Airport.

BAA Heathrow introduced a parking enforcement scheme in its short-stay car parks to crack down on dangerous and inconsiderate parking. The scheme went live on 1 July and will help reduce congestion and improve traffic flow in the terminal car parks.

A team of uniformed parking officers patrol the car parks and will issue fixed penalty notices to vehicles parked in contravention of the Terms & Conditions for parking in the Short-Stay Car Parks at Heathrow Airport.

Users of the car parks can avoid a Penalty Enforcement Notice by parking within the permitted bays only and checking that they are inside the clearly marked lines before leaving their vehicle. Drivers who park within a disabled person's bay without an appropriate disabled badge or park a motorcycle outside of the designated parking area for motorcycles or a low sided vehicle in a designated high sided vehicle bay will be targeted.

Although the scheme commenced on 1 July 2010, Penalty Enforcement Charges were not levied until 1 August 2010 as a gesture of goodwill. However, vehicles contravening after this period will be expected to pay £90 if payment is received within 28 days (discounted to £45 if paid within 21 days). Any profits raised from the Parking Enforcement Notice scheme will be used to fund public transport improvements at the airport, this will be via the Public Transport Levy.

Approved signage will be erected across the terminal short-stay car parks to inform users of the scheme. An appeals process has been set up and users wishing to dispute a Penalty Enforcement Notice can call a dedicated help line or write in. Fraser Brown, Head of Travel Services, said "The safety and security of our passengers remains our number one priority and we are confident that the parking enforcement scheme will deliver a better passenger experience in Heathrow's short stay car parks. The majority of car park users who park in compliance of the car park Terms & Conditions will see no change. This scheme will crack down on irresponsible parking that contravenes the Terms & Conditions of our car parks, ensuring a safer and less congested experience for all."

Safety and cyclists

With more people cycling in London and the introduction of the cycle hire scheme it is important that all road users look out for each other and do all they can to avoid accidents and make the roads as safe as possible. Although some taxi and private hire drivers may feel their temperature rising at the very mention of cyclists it is worth remembering that a lot of cyclists are children or young people who have not driven a car before so may not be aware of the problems facing motorists.

When you are out on the roads try to remember the following points:

- Cyclists are vulnerable and obviously don't have the protection of a bumper, seatbelt and metal shell – make sure that when you pass a cyclist you allow plenty of room and if it looks like you'll only just be able to squeeze past wait until there is more space
- Take care when stopping, pulling off or performing any sudden manoeuvres
- Don't try to cut across a cyclist when you need to turn left at a junction, instead wait behind them until they have either turned left or passed the junction
- In slow moving traffic cyclists may overtake you on your inside so make sure you check your left mirror before pulling into the kerb or turning left
- Once you've stopped to let a passenger out, look to see if there are any cyclists approaching and if necessary tell the passenger to wait before opening the door – this will be better for you, the passenger and the cyclist
- Tell passengers to get out of your taxi on the kerbside instead of opening the door into the road
- Check over your shoulder to see if there is a cyclist approaching before opening the driver's door, there might be one in your blind spot
- Cyclists may ride at some distance from the kerb to avoid drains and potholes and their ability to signal is limited so try to anticipate what they might do from the position they have taken on the road
- Pay particular attention on roundabouts, where many accidents involving cyclists happen
- At night time a cyclist's lights may be drowned out by the lights of cars, lorries and other vehicles so be extra vigilant

Taxi Sharing Scheme

The taxi sharing schemes which operate at Euston and Paddington along with those at Wimbledon and the Buckingham Palace Garden parties have all been successful and play an important role when demand for taxis is high. However, not all passengers wish to take a shared taxi. Drivers must remember that they cannot insist on passengers sharing and if a passenger wishes to take a taxi by themselves, normal rules about compellable journeys apply. If the destination is within London and less than 12 miles or an hour away, the first driver should accept the hiring.

Taxis at The O2

Following discussions between TfL and AEG Europe – who own The O2 – it has been agreed that the taxi rank at North Greenwich Station will continue to be marshalled on certain evenings between 21:30 and 00:30 when there are events on. Taxi marshals have already been used on numerous occasions at the North Greenwich taxi rank and proven successful and popular with drivers and passengers alike. The marshals will manage passenger queues and will ensure people get a taxi quickly and safely.

London Taxi & Private Hire News – Continued from Page 10

The O2 Taxi Driver Reward Scheme

This month a new scheme for taxi drivers will be trialled at The O2 where drivers who pick up a certain number of fares from the North Greenwich taxi rank (over a 4 week period between 22:00 and 00:30) following certain arena events will be rewarded with two free tickets to an arena show. Tickets will be subject to availability and to qualify for the scheme drivers will need to register with The O2 by completing a registration form. Registration forms will be distributed by The O2 stewards at the taxi rank from mid-December and can also be collected from Gate 3A staff entrance at The O2, opposite the taxi rank.



THE LONDON TAXI SERVICE TRAVELS TO FRANCE



Passengers in Paris will soon benefit from The London Taxi Service which is about to be launched in the nation's capital.

London Taxis France, the official representative of The London Taxi Company in France will unveil the world famous London Taxi and the associated service at the Salon Des Taxis.

London Taxis France will exhibit the world famous London Taxi for the first time

in Paris on 29th and 30th January 2011. The tenth edition of Salon Des Taxis is to take place in Hall 6 of Porte de Versailles, Paris, an exhibition dedicated to the French taxi trade and its drivers.

London Taxis France is a partner of The London Taxi Company, the manufacturer of the iconic London Taxi and will be exhibiting the London Taxi and The London Taxi Service throughout the two day exhibition.

Elisabeth Young, Pr sident of London Taxis France said "come and visit us on stand B01 and test drive the iconic London Taxi for yourself. If you want to drive a vehicle that is recognised the world over and offer the most professional service to your customers then we look forward to meeting you".

Elisabeth will be accompanied by Ross MacKerron, International Sales Manager from The London Taxi Company. Ross commented "I am looking forward to presenting the London Taxi and all its features to the local taxi trade." There is no other vehicle in the world built purposely to be a taxi so please come and join us'.



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Email:
peterjrose@cabtradenews.co.uk

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