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Trade News

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NATIONAL MONTHLY PAPER OF THE LICENSED TAXI TRADE

MAY 2010

UNITE CAMPAIGN FOR PRIVATE HIRE LAW CHANGE

Full Story on Page 2

HEAD OF PCO VISITS LONDON CAB SECTION

April 6th 2010, John Mason Director of Taxis and Private Hire and West Ham fan, along with Helen Chapman, Head of Business Services & Development, Chelsea fan gave up the opportunity to watch Arsenal exit from the Champions League and visited the Central London branch of the UNITE Cab Section to take questions directly from the membership. During the meeting a vast range of topics were discussed, ranging from the proposed taxi age limits to Addison Lee & the M4 bus and taxi lane.

Post meeting in an email to Branch Secretary Peter Rose, Helen Chapman said. "Thank you for inviting us to attend - something we are keen to do is to engage with as many people as possible so the opportunity to attend one of your branch meetings was much appreciated as it provided us with the opportunity to provide updates, gain feedback and be available to answer questions, quash rumours etc. If you are happy to have us again we would be delighted to attend a future meeting and provide updates on the relevant areas we covered in last night's meeting". UNITE Cab Section looks forward to arranging another session for them.



CAMPAIGN FOR LAW CHANGE



Liverpool taxi drivers would like to thank you for joining our campaign to change the law concerning cross-border hiring. This campaign was created by the UNITE the UNION Branch 680 Cab Section in Liverpool and has been backed by Unite at National level.

The catalyst for our campaign has been brought about by the urgent need to regulate the Private Hire industry in our city. As we see it, the current act of Parliament which governs Private Hire Operators and Drivers, does not go far enough in providing a fair and workable environment where both the Licensed Taxi Trade and the Private Hire Trade, can compete on a level playing field while servicing the public's transport needs. This is not solely a Liverpool issue however, Cross-Border Hiring occurs in ALL major cities and that is why we have been campaigning in yours.

Last summer we launched the campaign in Liverpool before branching out into the neighbouring Boroughs. We collected over 1500 completed letters and then posted them to the MP that matched the postcode on each one. In total 25 MPs were contacted, the majority of which, supported our campaign. Unfortunately 25 are not nearly enough and so here we are. We believe that our National Campaign will reach many more MPs, thus putting more pressure on the Government to amend the Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976.

We have spoken to the Transport minister and he has indicated a willingness to act if we can show that cross-border hiring is a national problem. We realise that in many places it is not a problem, but throughout the country it is. If you would like to receive petitions to show the government it is a problem in your area then please contact Cab Trade News.

UNITE 680 BRANCH (TAXI SECTION) LIVERPOOL

NATIONAL CROSS-BORDER HIRING CAMPAIGN PETITION



Unite are making you aware of the serious problem of cross border hiring of private hire vehicles from neighbouring boroughs, that are permanently based in your borough. Not only does this affect the livelihoods of the legitimate taxi and private hire trade in your borough, it also means that the burden of enforcement falls onto local licence payers.

Unite are asking you to support our national campaign, to change the legislation that would require a private hire vehicle that undertakes a fare to another borough to return to the borough that they are licensed with. This is already the case with hackney carriages, which are essentially required to return to their 'controlled area'.

Unite takes the view that the legislation in question, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 never

envisaged the above situation, and that an amendment is long overdue.

We draw your attention to section 21 (b) Civic Government Act (1982) that requires taxi and private hire vehicles to return to the licensing area when they have completed a hiring that terminates outside of the controlled area. Legal opinion has indicated that it would be possible to incorporate the aforementioned section of the Scottish legislation without having to undergo wholesale changes to the 1976 Act.

Unite trust that you will give this request serious consideration. A number of MP's have already pledged their support for our national campaign. However, Unite needs your support as well. Help us change the law for a level playing field.

I support Unite's National Cross Border Hiring Campaign Petition and the lobbying of my MP in this cause.

I support Unite's National Cross Border Hiring Campaign Petition and the lobbying of my MP in this cause.

Name:..... MP Name:.....
 Address:.....
 Postcode:.....
 Signed:..... Date:.....

Remember, if you need petitions to tackle this very important issue then please contact CAB TRADE NEWS.

JOIN NOW!

unite 4Labour
 GOING FORTH TOGETHER INTO A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OUR JOBS
VOTE LABOUR!

Last year I rejoined the Labour Party after a break of 20 years. Like many people I have had my reservations with the 'New Labour' party. However I could have sat on the fence and continued to snipe from the sidelines or as Tony Woodley (Joint General Secretary) advocates I could rejoin and "reclaim our party!"

Since rejoining Labour I constantly bring up at constituency meetings the conditions and long hours that cab drivers and workers at the airport endure. Both John Purdom (Chair Heathrow Liaison Committee) and I have spoken on Unite's policy of supporting the third runway and against the race to the bottom which companies are keen to pursue. I am now standing as a councillor in the local elections in May.

The Labour Party over the past 11 years has done a great deal to make things better. It has a record investment in schools and hospitals. It has introduced a right to 28 days paid holiday a year, improved paid parental leave and has now placed a windfall tax on bankers' bonuses.

There is, however, a lot more it could and should do. Abolish the anti trade union laws, ensure the NHS cannot be outsourced. How can it be right that energy utility companies are making obscene profits whilst the elderly are dying through hypothermia? We are still fighting our battles based on the now literally bankrupted free market experiment which Maggie Thatcher introduced.

I also have a long memory and remember the devastation and conflict that the Tories brought to this country and ordinary workers in the eighties. One of the

first things that Maggie did was to hike up interest rates. This had a two-fold effect. If you worked in the city high interest rates meant a strong pound and large profits. It also meant that if you worked in the unionised manufacturing industry it became harder to sell your product abroad. The City boys and girls prospered whilst ordinary workers lost their jobs in their thousands.

Cameron has said that he wishes to introduce more anti trade union laws. He wants to repay the debt sooner rather than later (this is what happened in the USA in the thirties and then in Japan in the eighties) turning a recession into a depression. He wants to cut public services to pay for bankrolling the bankers. Perhaps David Cameron might consider giving some of his estimated £35 million inherited wealth to help the public purse.

George Gideon Osborne said at the Tory Party Conference at least 15 times that "we are all in this together" When you have an estimated £4 million in the bank are heir to a 17th century baronetcy and have a 15% stake in your families luxury wallpaper business 'Osborne and Little' worth around £15 million, you could argue that some of us are "in this" more than others!

The Labour Party was set up by unions to give workers a voice. We need to be proud of our values, fairness for all, distribution of wealth, looking after workers – We need to VOTE LABOUR!

Dan Freeman, Secretary Unite Heathrow Cab Section, Chair Heathrow Union Learning Forum, Chair West London Area Activist Committee. For more information on UNITE4Labour please visit, www.unite4labour.org

TAXI DRIVER IDENTIFIERS

By **JIM KELLY**

Chair of UNITE's Cab Trade Committee

Is a visible identifier in every London taxi an effective way to stamp out illegal working by suburban drivers in London?

The issue of yellow badge drivers working outside their sectors has been a topical one for many years. The true extent of this has never been established. The issue is further complicated by yellow badge drivers not only working in central London, but also working in other suburban sectors for which they are not licensed. Recent proposals for an "identifier" in every taxi are proving difficult to put into practise.

Should the identifier show that a driver is a licensed green badge holder only? If so, how much detail should the identifier itself contain? Will this option tackle the issue of suburban drivers working in other suburban sectors?

Who will police the above proposal, will it be left to other drivers to confront the wrongdoer, this would seem a recipe for trouble. Would we be required to send the

details to Cab Enforcement? If so how will it be proved, its one driver's word against another? Could this be open to malicious accusations?

In many suburban sectors the driver's self regulate, to a great extent. They are aware of who should and who should not be working their sector. This information can be sent to Cab Enforcement now, without a need for a new identifier. Every cab has a plate number and registration. Will yet more clutter in our cabs make the public better aware of the issue? I think not. Will we end up like cabs in New York where it's nearly impossible to see out the window with all the messages on show?

Before PCO goes ahead with a compulsory identifier much more work needs to be done to find the extent of the problem, if, indeed, present rules better implemented, cannot deal with the issue adequately.

Jim Kelly is Chair of UNITE the UNION's Regional Committee



UNITED TRADE STATEMENT

The Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA), the UNITE Cab Section and The London Cab Drivers Club (LCDC) are united in their condemnation of the RMT's (Rail, Maritime and Transport Union) support for a restriction on taxi driver's working hours and the compulsory fitting of tachographs in London taxi cabs.

CTN

Comment

UNITY!

By FRANK HULL

At the going down of the sun and with the going out of this political administration, it would be nice to be able to say that most of this trade's troubles have been assuaged. Alas we cannot say this for most of those troubles are still with us! Unfortunately other troubles have also sprung up.

We are still plagued by that world - wide taxi problem, delimitation/deregulation.

Delimitation is inflicted on local taxi trades for various reasons. In this country different agencies, such as OFT and National Consumer Council, have been roped in to try and strengthen the argument for delimitation and they seem to have jumped at the opportunity to poke their noses in. However; we know that most of the argument used by the delimiters is based on assumption rather than solid reasoning in their desire to turn local taxi trades into commodities that can be controlled by those mysterious so - called market forces. Rather than treat local taxi trades for what they really are, that is, of course, an essential part of the public transport system!

Many long-suffering local taxi trades are plagued "still" with another old problem. This, of course, is cross-border incursions by taxi drivers from other, near by, licensing areas who then sneakily nibble away, unlicensed, at work that legally belongs to properly licensed local taxi drivers. It is a problem that many believe could be speedily cured with small changes to the legislation.

Another problem that has arisen and seems to have been egged on by the outcome of the action taken by Newcastle against Berwick -on- Tweed. The Judge's finding in this case has left a very grey area in taxi law that has encouraged some to take advantage of. It seems that it is not illegal for taxis licensed in one area to be used for private hire work in another licensing area, even using the communications system of the out of area mini cab base and doing work in that operator's licensing area where the licensing authority there has no enforcement powers to deal with these locally unlicensed taxis.

If that isn't turning taxi legislation on its head what is? Rickshaws arrived and were allowed to operate like taxis in, of all places, London where the black taxi is renowned across the globe for its high safety factor and strict regulations on the vehicle imposed. Some London cabbies are saying that this was part of the deal when China gained the right to manufacture the London taxi. This is more credible than any decision that allowed these bikes to operate for hire on the streets of London.

Certain areas across the country have seen the tuk tuk arrive and allowed to operate as taxis and/or busses. Perhaps those authorities that were quick to welcome them here and endorse them might be interested in the thoughts of Delhi's chief minister, Sheila Dickshit, who wants them banned in India's capital. In revealing her thoughts to the State Assembly Minister Dickshit cited a litany of faults attributable to these vehicles.

Whatever Government is formed on May 6th it is clear that this trade's problems will remain probably for a good many years. The only answer we can see is trade Unity to get our new masters to recognise that this trade needs revised taxi legislation.












Don't forget unlike India nobody gives a 'dickshit! About taxi drivers here!

If like us you believe that Trade Unity is a valuable asset in this trade's struggle for change then we invite you to join us by filling in the application on Page 15.

Frank Hull is a member of UNITE's Cab Trade Committee.

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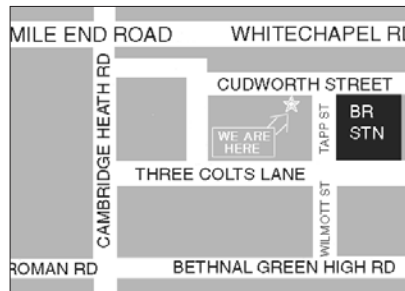
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THE TAXI DRIVERS' UNION



HEATHROW UPDATE

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

EDUCATION! EDUCATION! EDUCATION!

As drivers are aware at Heathrow. Both Micky Samroo and I are just as keen on quality education as a certain Tony Blair!

We believe in lifelong learning for drivers and have through the UNITE Education Department, become Union Learning Reps and arranged several courses for drivers. When we asked drivers last year what you would most like to learn, computer courses and languages came top of the list.

'Take a Bite' e-learning project – for UNITE Drivers – Watch this space!

This is an innovative e-learning project that Unite Heathrow Cab Section has won funding for with a learning provider. The idea behind it is that UNITE theUNION taxi drivers will be able to access 15 minute e-learning "bites" gradually building up to a full module.

With the Olympics in mind we have 4 languages on line as well as a basic computer course, numeracy and literacy courses. The bulk of the funding will go to the provider to build the e-learning platform, with money set aside for publicity and capital expenditure.

With this budget we have begun refurbishing the office with two new computers 6 laptops as well as new desks and breakfast bar. UNITE Drivers will be able to come into the office and use the computers for education when they are waiting in the feeder park.

Wouldn't it be fantastic if we could have say, 100 drivers that could speak and greet in a foreign language at Heathrow. We hope to launch in May and will be bringing a customised mini bus which has computers on board to allow all drivers to try a taster session. We will put out a lot more information and publicity nearer the time – so watch this space!

Information Technology Course (ITQ) – for all drivers

Now into its second year (We had 7 pass last year!) we are running an Information Technology Course ITQ in partnership with Orpington College. This is open to all drivers regardless of whether they are Unite members. It is held once a week at UNITE House, Bath Road.

This year 9 have enrolled. Each course costs approx £1,300 pounds but is FREE to drivers thanks to government funding Unite have sourced. The ITQ is accredited by the Oxford and Cambridge and RSA examining bodies.

Switched On Project – for all drivers

The switched on project is a basic IT project for those with little or no knowledge of computers. We have 5 drivers who have enrolled on this. Again this will be held at UNITE House once a week. Both Micky and I have trained as facilitators to enable the cost to be kept down to £40.00. So if you are interested in quality education and e-learning then its time you joined Unite. We are always looking at ways of improving your lot.

This could be through representation at the highest level, benefits through our 'More for Members, booklet or education, both at the airport or on-line at home.

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

SGS THE ANNUAL TEST

By **PETER BOND**

The overall first-time pass rate at SGS for the annual test is now 39%.

As we've stated before some in this Trade have become obsessed with this figure, not to mention some in the media and those at City Hall, but the fact remains that we have a near 100% pass rate – it just takes some Cabs a second visit to SGS after rectifying couple of minor non-safety defects.

Taxis are still regarded as one of the safest ways to travel the streets of London.

Although, as you will read elsewhere in this issue, TPH have reviewed the original draconian £50 re-test fee, it will now only be for certain safety-related defects (see TPH Notice 12/10), we at Unite the Union are vehemently opposed the introduction of this fee.

The team at TPH have been visiting Taxi garages for the past few years giving advice and some practical help with some success. The fact remains that some garages are just not interested and it is blatantly unfair to punish the whole Trade when most of us, Drivers and garages alike, do our best to keep our Cabs in good condition and aim to pass the annual test first time.

It is our view, as stated before, that if the new 'Advisory Letters' are good enough to replace some 'Unfits' for the On-Street-Compliance team then this principle should be extended to the Annual Test with the obvious result of increasing the much loved first time pass rate.

The number of Cabs failing the smoke test is now much lower than before but the top five Headline Inspection Failure Rates remain – brake pipes, calipers, cylinders, leaks (not the rolling road), chassis under

body rust, cracks, lamps/reflectors, lights and topside body

As of 18th March 2010 there were 541 Mercedes Vitos licensed. We have requested for the next meeting a direct comparison between these and TX4's licensed during the same period, which should make interesting reading.

Remember if your garage tells you SGS failed your Cab on one small defect, ask to see the VIR, Vehicle Inspection Report, because, in my experience dealing with complaints from members on this issue, 9 times out of 10 it did fail on that defect but also failed on a number of others as well, some you wouldn't be too happy about.

If you booked and paid for your test before 6th April 2010 but your test is after the £50 re-test fee comes into operation, you will not be charged if you fail first time.

There is a new sticker to go on the rear drivers side window to advise wheelchair users the safest way to travel is facing backwards with the clamps and seat belts secured properly, it also incorporates a No Smoking sign to replace, in addition to, the one on that side.

Without knocking this particular sticker I wonder what the old guard from the PCO, think of all the information that now adorns the glass in our cabs- remember the state they used to get themselves in for 'Health and Safety' reasons if they caught us with as much as a 'Please Do Not Smoke' sign in the back! The new sticker will be issued by SGS at the annual test from now and will be compulsory from 6th April 2011.

Peter Bond is a member of UNITE the UNION's Cab Trade Committee.

PCO Notice 08/10

Transport for London
Taxi and Private Hire



Safety information for wheelchair users in taxis

A new sticker with safety information for wheelchair users has been approved for display in licensed taxis. The sticker clarifies the recommended safe position for wheelchair users when travelling in taxis.

Wheelchair users should be carried facing the rear of the taxi with their back to the partition. The attachment belts, that are designed to ensure the safety of wheelchair users, will only work properly if the wheelchair is in this position.

The sticker, shown below, will be available from the SGS taxi inspection centres and also incorporates the 'no-smoking' sign which must be displayed in the passenger compartment of all licensed taxis.

The new sticker will go inside the taxi passenger compartment, in the off-side rear

quarter light window, the same side as the driver's seat and opposite the window where the Taxi Information Sticker should go. The sticker will go in the same position in all models of taxi, whether LTI, Metrocab or the Mercedes Vito.

The stickers will be rolled out to all licensed taxis over the next 12 months and after this period will become a mandatory requirement for all licensed taxis.

Instructions for fitting and removing the sticker can be found on our website at tfl.gov.uk/tpH and are the same as those set out in the 'Taxi Information Sticker - fitting instructions' leaflet in the 'Publications' section on the website.

John Mason, Director Taxi and Private Hire, 29 March 2010. For previous Notices visit www.tfl.gov.uk/pcO

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John Paton & Son Ltd - Glasgow tel: 0141 553 4000

Taxifix Ltd - Liverpool tel: 0151 482 5101
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Official fuel consumption figures for the TX4 in mpg (l/100km): Urban 25.5 (11.1) - 28.0 (10.1), Extra Urban 38.2 (7.4) - 41.5 (8.8), Combined 32.0 (8.8) - 35.2 (8.0), CO2 emissions: 211 - 233 g/km.

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PCO Notice 012/10

Transport for London
Taxi and Private Hire



Licence Fee Changes for 2010/11

Taxi and Private Hire licence fees are reviewed annually to reflect the basic legal principle that the costs of providing the licensing service and operation are recoverable through the fees payable by licensees and licence applicants and that these fees should be kept under review.

A review of the licensing fees for 2010/11 has been undertaken and the following fees have been revised as set out in the table below. Revised fees take effect from Tuesday 6 April 2010.

Description	2009/10 Fee	2010/11 Fee
Taxi licence application/inspection	£111	£101
Taxi annual licence	£53	£53
Taxi inspection re-test	n/a	£50
Taxi driver – replacement badge	£0.15	£15
Knowledge appearance – Suburban (yellow badge) taxi driver applicants	£150	£200
Private hire operator variation fee (removal of existing centre)	£25 per centre	£50 per centre
Private hire operator variation fee (addition of an operating centre)	£25 per centre	£200 per centre

Taxi licence application and inspection, and introduction of re-test

The taxi licence application and inspection fee has been reduced by £10 to £101 with the introduction of a £50 re-test fee for vehicles that fail the first time inspection.

There are two key reasons that we are introducing the re-test fee:

- The current system is unfair to vehicle owners that make the effort to ensure vehicles pass the annual inspections first time as they subsidise those that don't;
- The first time pass rate remains low at below 40 per cent and we need to take steps to address this and to encourage a higher first time pass rate. We need to use all the mechanisms available to us to try and increase this rate and provide the travelling public with as much reassurance as possible that they are using a safe, well maintained taxi.

The effect of the £10 reduction in the annual licensing fee is expected to balance out the additional income received from the re-tests. However, if this proves not to be the case any surplus will be used to further reduce the fees next year. SGS, our service provider that carries out the inspections, will not financially benefit from these changes so there is no incentive for them to fail your vehicles.

We have decided to phase the implementation of the re-test fees to help us to closely monitor the effects that it has on the trade.

Therefore, with effect from 6 April, taxis that fail inspections for one or more of the following conditions (taken from the vehicle inspection manual) will be subject to the £50 re-test fee:

Category	Sub-category
Brakes	Service brake performance
	Performance of parking brake
	Condition of mechanical brake components
	Condition of brake pipes and hoses
	Condition of servos, exhausters and hydraulic components
	Anti-lock braking system (ABS)
Steering	Steering linkages
	Steering mechanism
	Power steering
	Stub-axles, king pin assemblies and wheel bearings
Tyres / Wheels	Rear hub bearings
Underbody	Condition of chassis
	Underpanels, sills and body mountings
	Fuel tank and pipelines
	Front suspension
	Rear suspension

For the short term, all other reasons for failure will remain unchargeable conditions of a re-test, however we will look to phase in these additional reasons throughout 2010.

We will publish updates to the list of chargeable items on our website – www.tfl.gov.uk/tph along with information held at the SGS vehicle inspection centres.

Taxi driver replacement badge

The increase from 15 pence to £15 reflects the full cost of the production and administration involved in the process of issuing a replacement badge.

Knowledge appearance – Suburban (Yellow Badge) taxi driver applicants

The increase to £200 brings this into line with the appearance fee for All London (Green Badge) taxi driver applicants and it reflects the real cost of administering the Knowledge examination arrangements.

Private hire operator variation fee – removal of existing operating centre

The increase from £25 to £50 per operating centre reflects the increased cost of administration of this function since its inception in 2001.

Private hire operator variation fee – addition of an operating centre

The increase to £200 per operating centre is necessary to take into account the real cost of administering this change. Adding new operating centres requires an on site visit by a TfL member of staff which has a significant impact on costs.

All other fees remain unchanged from the 2009/10 levels as instead TfL have looked to make efficiency savings by improving back office processes. Unfortunately many of our back office processes are manual, time consuming and labour intensive and we are working hard to make improvements in these areas. – *John Mason, Director Taxi and Private Hire, 7 April 2010. For previous Notices visit www.tfl.gov.uk/pco*

LTI's NEW LONDON TAXI?



Some readers that follow the automotive websites may have come across some articles that would seem to show a new smaller Chinese made London taxi.

The vehicle which looks as though it is about to be unveiled at the Beijing motor show certainly has the aesthetics of a London cab.

Because of the speculation LTI sent Cab Trade News the following statement.

LTI STATEMENT ON THE TXN CONCEPT VEHICLE

LTI Vehicles have stated that the TXN Concept vehicle, pictures of which have been sent out in advance of the Beijing motor show, is not intended to replace the TX4 London Taxi.

"The TXN is a concept car which is intended for international markets," said Peter Shillcock, Managing Director of LTI. "We have always said that our relationship

with Geely would allow us to explore other vehicle designs and the TXN is the first example of this."

The Concept Vehicle does not conform to UK disability legislation nor does it have the famous 25ft turning circle and therefore would not comply with PCO regulations for London.

"The vehicle is designed to showcase what we do best which is our taxi knowledge and unique interior design ideas," continued Shillcock. "This is definitely not the TX4 replacement and is aimed at international markets which need a smaller vehicle than the current London Taxi but would still benefit from our taxi experience with vehicle design."

"Manufacturers are always showing concept designs to test market reaction and therefore refine their design ideas."

For more information about LTI Vehicles visit www.lti.co.uk

ON-STREET COMPLIANCE

By PETER BOND

The figures for the year ending 31.3.2010 for Taxis and PHV's examined on the road by TPH Compliance Team prove that there is still an unacceptable disparity against Taxis.

Although the Compliance Team have, and are still attempting, to redress the balance the fact remains that we are an easier target than PHV's – Heathrow, City Airport, O2 Arena, Stations etc, mean we are a sitting target whilst waiting on any rank in London. The positive news is that many, not all, of their operations away from ranks are aimed at PHV's only with taxis being left alone, these being mainly at night at regular spots like Bayswater Rd, Victoria Embankment, Charing Cross Road etc.

The figures below speak for themselves: From 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010. Taxis inspected 18,000 (3,000 above their target) – Unfits 1,671. PHV's inspected 13,000 – Unfits 1,600.

That adds up to approximately 80% of the taxi fleet inspected as opposed to 25% of PHV's, and less than 9% of Taxis unfit with nearly 15% of PHV's unfit – we look forward to a much fairer set of statistics next year.

The main problems are still tyres, steering, lights/bulbs and untidy luggage compartment. Bald tyres seem to be mainly on rented cabs so remember it costs the driver nothing to insist the proprietor keep

them legal but if the police are present it'll cost you the driver, and not the proprietor, the fine and 3 points per tyre!

The, long, list of defects that will be subject to 'Advisory letters' to replace 'Unfits' for some defects from the Compliance Team is nearly ready. It makes interesting and welcome reading, and will, hopefully, be ready soon.

Suburban drivers plying for hire in central London are still proving to be a problem to this team and a second offence comes with an automatic one month suspension. Unbelievably some are still being caught ranking up, even at stations, as opposed to just taking a chance on their way back to the suburbs!

A couple of drivers with taxi licences outside London had doubled up with licences from TPH, just changing the plates when working in London – it turned out they were both on the Knowledge in London. Needless to say the taxi licences have been suspended and their position on the Knowledge is now up for review.

The management at the O2 are to charge PHV's to wait for pre-booked jobs to try and prevent them hanging-up at that venue – its not just taxi drivers who are fed up with these predators.

Peter Bond is a member of UNITE the UNION's Cab Trade Committee.

Mark's Mélange 74

MARK EDWARD TAYLOR

ELECTION SELECTION

May the sixth 2010 is the day Britain's political destiny will be set. Many millions will cast their votes. Many millions will choose not to vote. The outcome is likely to be decided by a relatively small number of voters in 100 marginal key parliamentary constituencies. Roughly around 80,000 people i.e. A Wembley stadium full of voters, not your ordinary voters, but the select band called, floating voters, who will have the biggest say about the collection of ragamuffins, rapscallions and control freaks who wish to run the United Kingdom. Every vote counts, however the floating voter in a key marginal seat has a very precious vote...



Some readers of Cab Trade News may be lucky enough to be one of these floating voters, if not, they may know a floating voter or be fortunate to be on holiday at the time of the Election floating in the ocean like our voter pictured above. Hopefully in the knowledge they may have secured a postal vote. If that is the case; what helped the floating voter give his or her postal vote to a particular party...

The Tories have a mantra of Broken Britain. Is Britain really broken? It may be a little scratched, beat up on a few edges; however the UK is one of the world's biggest economies. Most people enjoy a standard of living many folk across the world can only dream of. The Conservative party has a habit of playing on people's fears for things that are never likely to directly affect them.

Scaremongering about crime, immigration and Europe. The floating voter who casts a cross in the Tory direction should remember the Tories have had more time in power over the last hundred years to change things. They rarely do. They conserve. Britain has the highest inequality of all the industrialised countries with the wealth of the richest 10% of the population being more than 100 times as wealthy as the poorest 10%.

The floating voter may consider the equality gap has not closed under 13 years of Labour at the helm. Would this be likely to happen under the Tories? They believed the introduction of the minimum wage would be the end of civilisation as we know it.

Their pals in the boardrooms of big business have again tried to skew the Election in a Conservative direction

dismissing a 1% increase in National Insurance that would go some way to protecting public services that have had a great deal of investment over the years of a Labour Government.

Business leaders may have very little use of National Health hospitals, local authority care-homes or state run schools. Vince Cable of the Liberal Democrats, a nice man whom the media seem to trust on economic issues, views the big business view of attacking a rise in NI as obscene.

Incidentally dear floating voter, bookmakers have the Lib Dems at 250/1 to win a Westminster majority. A Lib-Dem vote may feel good but rarely changes anything. Reputable bookmakers tend to stay in business...

Under-lying the premise floating voters control the Election, 49% of parliamentary seats have remained the same for the last 50 years. Key marginals are key. The flip-flopping of a few thousand citizens control British democracy.

The voting system of First past the Post has done little to encourage reform of the democratic process. Only when the party in power sees public opinion slipping away does it begin to devote any thought on the electoral system.

Britain has a history of strong governance. More democratic systems of proportional representation or single transferable vote have been dismissed as European affectations, places where floating voters' whims don't yield such influence.

Looking back on previous elections there have been some peculiar phenomenon. The 1992 Election saw John Major's Conservatives retain power despite



Street Legal

By ELLIE REEVES

WOMEN IN THE WORK PLACE, THE EQUALITY ACT AND EQUAL PAY

Last year's Office for National Statistics annual pay figures showed that the gender pay gap is narrowing – which is great news – but 40 years after the 1970 Equal Pay Act, it is still the case that for women working full time the pay gap is 16.4% and for women working part-time that gap is a staggering 35.2%.

These shocking statistics make it all the more disappointing that the Equality Act passed on 7th April, welcome as it is, is unlikely to make any difference to the confusion over equal pay.

Modernising a law that has been more or less unchanged since 1970 is clearly a "good thing" and much needed. But the Act could have introduced strong measures to tackle discriminatory pay systems and to make it easier to pursue equal pay claims.

What we wanted to see was the ability of trade unions to run these cases on behalf of a representative job role, rather than individual women having to complete Employment Tribunal forms – with the risks that brings of victimisation in the workplace.

A positive move is the new protection for workers who talk about their pay. The Act bans secrecy clauses in public sector organisations which prevent people discussing their pay with colleagues by the threat of disciplinary action or even dismissal.

Such clauses keep workers, more often than not lower paid women, in the dark about what others are paid and make it much more difficult for trade unions to negotiate equal pay or to pursue equal pay claims at employment tribunals.

The Act also gives the power for statutory regulations to require particular employers to publish data about men and women's pay in order that the existence or extent of any gender gap can be established.

But the power will only cover employers who employ more than 250 people.

What would have been more effective in tackling inequality in pay would have been compulsory pay audits in all workplaces, private and public. Transparency of the pay structure in the organisation can only be a good thing. But inevitably, the employers didn't want it. They used their usual arguments about the supposed damage compulsory pay audits would do to business and claimed that audits (and indeed trade unions) were not necessary in workplaces because they always act fairly as employers.

If that's right, an employer has nothing to fear from pay audits, or from giving its employees the benefit of having their union recognised in the work place.

I cannot accept that it may be another 100 years, at the rate the gender pay gap is closing at present, before my daughters can know that they will earn the same pay as a man for doing work of equal value.

And then there is discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy. The number of tribunal cases pursued by women who have been dismissed when they announce they are pregnant, or who do not get the chance to prove themselves in a job because employers would rather take on a man who won't need time off for maternity leave, or won't be "unreliable" because they may need time off to look after children, continues to grow.

How long will it be before our society accepts that women have a right to be in the workplace and that having a child is not an hindrance to being a good employee?

the polls predicting a narrow Labour win. Shy Tories seemed to be the winning factor.

It was very difficult to find anybody who admitted voting Conservative although Neil Kinnock was defeated by voters too embarrassed to tell pollsters their voting intentions.

The 2005 Election was the reverse of this current campaign. Five years ago the main parties were public spending crazy. Leaping over themselves to try and be the party to place the most Police on our streets. There was an impression almost every house could have a copper standing outside it as every party promised more Police than their rivals.

This election, public spending cuts mean the parties are having to cut police, health workers, education and public sector employees.

To assist the floating voters make up their minds, the media aims to help with TV & Radio debates from the party leaders. Newspapers have massive column inches of coverage and advice.

Radio phone-ins offer hilarious entertainment as the naive and the nut-cases bombard listeners with unworkable solutions and silly suggestions to remedy the nation's woes.

Some floaters may be swayed by the fringe candidates representing the Greens, Nationalists or small parties to the left of Labour. Then there's the BNP with their doctrine of race hate to pit communities against each other.

Only folk lacking any decency succumb to their vile message. UKIP will bang on about Europe and there will be a smattering of Independents who have the best of intentions coupled against those who are barking mad... The likelihood is though, only Labour or Conservative will form a government. For the floating voter, fringe parties are a wasted vote.

Still not able to make up your mind?... Don't worry. A hung parliament remains a good bet. Which means we could go through the whole shebang, all over again, soon.....



V.



WITHERING HEIGHTS?

By **JIM KELLY**

Chair of UNITE's Cab Trade Committee

Most taxi trade "historians" date the beginning of the public carriage office to Oliver Cromwell's time as Lord Protector. That's quite a pedigree, over 350 years. It sometimes seemed that PCO would be in existence for at least another few hundred years. But will it and if not, will taxi driver's have the same relationship with the new TfL London Taxi and Private Hire.

Under the previous Mayor there were no radical changes to the structure of the PCO. Roy Ellis and then Ed Thompson introduced a number of new ways of working but the PCO essentially remained apart from the burgeoning bureaucracy that was to become TfL. That seems unlikely to continue.

The new management at PCO has been keen to change the working of the Carriage Office. The new management team of John Mason and Helen Chapman has been more pro-active in their relationship with bona-fide driver's organisations, even extending to visiting a recent Unite cab section branch meeting in central London.

There's no doubt that some change has been for the good. The decision to move vehicle licensing to SGS was clearly beneficial. The recent £50 retest fee was brought in with too much haste. Change for change sake does not always work.

The change from Penton Street to Palestra has speeded up this process. Before cab drivers could look at Penton Street and identify with not just the building, but what it represented.

Whether it was doing the Knowledge, renewing your Bill, or being hauled over the coals for a misdemeanour, you could at least wait in line and exchange the time of day with a fellow working cab driver. The everyday business of servicing the cab trade in London was carried out in the ugly grey building in Penton Street, staffed at many levels by ex-police.

This situation led to a "love-hate" relationship with PCO. Many drivers, while moaning about the perceived arrogance of many PCO employees, were safe in the knowledge that this all powerful institution would always be our protection against the

enemy at the gates, whether mini-cabs, politicians or any number of "busy bodies".

We could drift through our working lives content that this paternalist relationship would offer protection against all comers.

That all began to slowly change when PCO began to licence mini-cabs, as well as taxis. New staff recruited for private hire licensing did not share the old PCO culture. The examiners at the "Yard" lost all their control after being contracted out to SGS. With them went the clearest expression of the "love-hate" relationship. Now Penton Street is the hub of Boris' new cycle scheme.

Is the sum of all the recent changes going to finally, irreversibly change this relationship? PCO has had more than a name change, more than a change of location, much more than a change of management style. PCO is slowly disappearing into TfL.

Many of the old staff remains, but new working habits, internal pressure on budgets, more external pressure from politicians including the Mayor could be further changing things.

The most recent change, the closure of the counter at Penton Street, while small in itself, means we will now find ourselves waiting in queues at the Post Office with no one to moan to about PCO staff, timing chains, LTI, touts, etc.

Has the process of change been too quick? It is still too early to see how this will impact on the taxi trade in the long term. In the short term, one thing is clear, the days when some London taxi drivers can feel that there's a big brother out there, in the shape of the PCO, to look after their interests are no more, "change is the only certainty" is the new mantra.

There is now an even more pressing need for drivers to be a part of a democratic taxi drivers union such as Unite to better represent their interests. There is also a need for genuine driver's organisations to be able to unite to promote positive change and oppose change for change's sake. PCO is dead, long live the PCO!

Jim Kelly is Chair of UNITE the UNION's Regional Committee



RANKS REPORT

By **JIM KELLY**

Secretary London Ranks Committee

TAXI DRIVER LICENSING

The year to April 2010 saw an overall increase of London drivers of 159, 158 of those were in Suburban sectors, where there are now a little over 3500 yellow badge drivers covering all sectors. There are now 455 female drivers in London out of a total of just under 25000. There are also just under 60000 licensed private hire drivers and just under 25000 taxi drivers.

ABACUS' A TALE

The rank at Abacus was doomed to fail. The City Corporation failed to engage with the London Cab Ranks Committee and wasted thousands of pounds on misguided marshalling schemes when a rank appointed in the correct place, immediately outside the club, would have provided a safe, legal means of transport for the many

people wanting safe transport home late at night. In one respect the Abacus situation sums up the present situation in the Square Mile, with the Corporation failing to understand how the taxi trade operates and seemingly being advised by people who lack any experience of the needs of the travelling public when it comes to taxi issues. This issue is not new and at present there seems a lack of will to resolve the situation. How many more thousands of pounds of public money will be wasted before the Corporation decides to sit down with UNITE and other representatives of the licensed taxi trade on the London Cab Ranks Committee?

WIMBLEDON TENNIS FORTNIGHT

Yet again we are close to the tennis fortnight. Will the situation get worse this

THEATRE

By Tony Benson

LONDON ASSURANCE at the National Theatre



London Assurance is directed by Nicholas Hytner and a cast of many wonderfully acted characters including Fiona Shaw, Richard Briers, Nick Sampson, Paul Ready, Matt Cross and Michelle Terry.

In this 1841 classic comedy by Irish dramatist Dion Boucicault, Simon Russell Beale plays Sir Harcourt Courtly, a sixtyish corpulent dandy. He is lured away from fashionable London to Oak Hall, Gloucestershire, by his friend Max Harkaway on the promise of marriage to Max's niece, the pretty 18 year-old Grace. (It's all to do with money and property.) On arrival at the Hall Sir Harcourt is suitably impressed by Grace – who wouldn't be? But it is only when the horsey, thigh-slapping Lady Gay Spanker turns up, dressed as though she's just dismounted, that Sir Harcourt begins to feel the throbbing in his loins, so much so that at one stage when Lady Gay immodestly comes on to him, he places a strategic cushion over his lower parts.



The fly in the ointment is the unannounced arrival of Charles, Sir Harcourt's handsome son (unrecognised because he's in disguise, wearing a pair of spectacles... yes, I know) and he and Grace fall in love. The real fun, however, lies in the main characters' sexually ambivalent interpretation of their roles. Russell Beale prances around in a brocade dressing gown sniffing a perfumed

handkerchief and recalling how his wife ran off with his best friend, adding wistfully "and I still miss him", while the marvellous Fiona Shaw is the crop in hand, tally-ho Lady Gay Spanker. There are other wonderfully acted characters, in particular Sir Harcourt's valet (Nick Sampson), Sir Harcourt's son Charles (Paul Ready), Dazzle, Charles friend (Matt Cross), Grace (Michelle Terry) and Richard Briers as Lady Gay's doddering husband, the largely ignored Mr Spanker.



Boucicault (pronounced Booseeoco) wrote this play when he was twenty. It had the National Theatre audience in hysterics from start to finish. The director is Nicholas Hytner.

WET WEATHER COVER at the Arts Theatre

Brad and Stuart are actors on location in Spain, filming a historical drama miles from anywhere, but they are prevented from working on any outdoor scenes because of the constant downpour. While awaiting the call to action they are confined to an ancient leaky trailer and going more and more stir crazy. But they have to remain on alert, in costume, in case one of them has to do an indoor shot – a situation giving rise to the play's title.

There are funny lines such as when the macho American Brad (Michael Brandon) and the effeminate English Stuart (Steve Furst) are trading insults about the culture and acting styles of their countries, at the same time giving a workshop on Elizabethan playwrights, but there is insufficient tension to sustain interest for eighty minutes with no interval. As the camp Spanish dresser who appears from time to time, Pepe Balderrama speaks entirely in Spanish and still manages to amuse the audience.

Kate Fahy (Mrs Jonathan Pryce) makes a good fist of her directorial debut with this play by actor Oliver Cotton, presumably writing from experience.

PESTANA HOTEL, CHELSEA WHARF, QUEENSTOWN ROAD

A new 3 cab rank has been agreed at the hotel. The rank is on the Hotel's own land and is the result of the Manager attempting to actively encourage licensed taxis to service his hotel.

PICCADILLY CIRCUS

The new road layout appears to be causing considerable delay for traffic. Traffic approaching the Circus along Piccadilly eastbound, or north from Lower Regent Street is experiencing much longer journey times. One of the problems is the reduced road space for traffic waiting to go into either Shaftesbury Avenue or Coventry Street. This is made worse by the confusing signals simultaneously showing a red light and a green filter light at the stop line. Westminster City Council needs to sort this out quickly.

RICHMOND STATION

There will be a new round of consultation on the proposals to change the highway around the station. The proposals will impact on the busy rank. A new start date has not yet been agreed.

REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM TAXIS THE MAYOR'S PROPOSALS

By MIKE HEDGES

The Mayor, Boris Johnson, has recently launched his proposals for cleaning London's air quality. In a public consultation document; *Cleaning the air – The Mayor's draft air quality strategy for public consultation*, the Mayor builds upon the initial consultation released last year.

The original proposals were for taxis to have age limits so that by 2012 the age limit would be 15 years and 2015 the age limit would be 10 years. Following the release of the original consultation the UNITE Cab Section, along with the LTDA and LCDC, have had a number of meetings with TfL regarding our views on the consultation, particularly age limits.

We have made it clear that the proposals for the 15 year followed by the 10 year age limit is totally unacceptable and we believed that we made sufficient progress to be greeted with a change in these age limits when the full consultation was launched. We were astounded when the consultation contained exactly the same 15 year and 10 year proposals which we thought would be changed to a straight 15 year age limit.

The Mayor still talks about subsidies when everyone acknowledges that no money is available from central government or any other sources. Not only that but items such as making eco-driving courses compulsory are included when we have consistently said they should be voluntary. A full summary of the proposals regarding taxis is set out below. We shall carry on meeting the Mayor's advisors and we want to see these proposals changed as we think that we have been very helpful regarding the desire to improve air quality. But this improvement cannot be at the cost of the taxi trade.

A summary of the Mayor's proposals

- The Mayor will seek ways to accelerate the take up of cleaner, new vehicles into the taxi fleet including introducing age-based limits for taxis. It is proposed that from 2012 no licence will be issued for a taxi over 15 years old. From 2015 it is proposed that this age limit will tighten to ten years.

- The Mayor will introduce a requirement for all new taxis entering the fleet to meet a minimum Euro 5 standard from 2012.

- The Mayor will encourage central Government and industry to develop approaches that would mitigate as far as possible any costs of these measures, for example through extensions to the Government's vehicle scrappage scheme.

- The Mayor will work with the taxi manufacturing industry to develop an affordable zero-emission taxi such that all new taxis entering the fleet are zero emission by 2020 and 60 per cent more fuel efficient than today by 2015.

- The Mayor, through TfL and working with the taxi industry and boroughs, will reduce idling and empty running by exploring the potential for additional taxi ranks and suspension of stopping and waiting restrictions where appropriate. The Mayor will also support the development of new technologies which encourage taxi sharing and enable electronic hailing.

- The Mayor, through TfL, will work with the taxi industry to introduce eco-driving training from 2012 to promote efficient driving techniques to reduce emissions.

Taxis and PHVs

TfL, working with the industry and stakeholders, will develop a detailed plan for reducing emissions from taxis and PHVs in the course of 2010, which will set out more detailed actions, time-scales and costs and an implementation plan to 2020.

This is already underway, including extensive discussions with drivers, trade bodies and manufacturers. This approach will reflect changes taking place in the taxi industry, for example, increasing use of leasing arrangements. In the meantime, a number of measures are being proposed to take early action to address and reduce these emissions.

To further promote the use of newer, cleaner taxis, the Mayor will use the licensing regime to remove the oldest vehicles from the fleet. The Mayor will introduce age-based limits for taxis and PHVs. From 2012 a rolling fifteen year age limit will be set for taxis so that no taxis over fifteen years old could be licensed to operate in London unless by a special exemption. From 2015, it has been proposed that this would tighten to ten years.

For PHVs, a ten year rolling age limit will be introduced from 2012. This reflects the differential values of the vehicles used for private hire and taxis and the broader structures and licensing requirements of the two industries. As part of the ongoing discussion on these proposals, possible incentives to reward lower-emission taxis are being explored.

The Mayor strongly believes that London's famous taxi trade can and should lead the world in moving towards a zero emission future. He will work with the trade and manufacturers to create a viable road map to this end. The taxi must be affordable for drivers and enhance the passenger experience. The aim is to produce a taxi which has 60 per cent lower fuel consumption by 2015 (based on current levels) and zero tail pipe emissions by 2020, which will deliver significant air quality benefits.

The Mayor will also work with the vehicle manufacturing industry to develop zero emitting vehicles that are suitable as PHVs by 2020. The Mayor and TfL will assist the industry in identifying funding opportunities to help cover the costs of development from EU, central Government, industry investment and sponsorship sources. As part of this, the GLA is working with partners to deliver 20 fuel cell taxis on London's streets by 2012. To promote the use of cleaner taxis, the Mayor will provide information on the air quality emissions from taxis, potentially through a symbol or colour code.

For PHVs, the licensing regime will be amended to incentivise the use of lower emissions vehicles. Further steps will be taken to promote the use of the cleanest vehicles, potentially by branding these

vehicles and giving their operators additional benefits.

For both taxis and PHVs, the Mayor will seek to eliminate situations where drivers are effectively forced to keep engines running – for example at taxi ranks at stations. A number of boroughs have indicated that they would be supportive of this approach if it would reduce the amount of empty running by taxis and private hire vehicles and that they may be able to provide additional space for taxi ranks and private hire stands, especially at stations.

Given the large number of kilometres driven by taxi and private hire vehicle drivers there are particular benefits to be had from optimising driving style and the way a vehicle is generally operated. For this reason the Mayor will introduce eco-driving training for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers. This can also deliver very significant fuel cost savings to drivers, with no expense to them.

The Mayor will work with the industry to mitigate any potential negative economic impacts of these measures as far as possible; for example, by pressing central Government to extend the size and scope of the vehicle scrappage scheme to include taxis and PHVs.

It should also be noted that there are considerable potential savings in terms of reduced fuel and running costs which will benefit taxi drivers adopting newer, cleaner taxis, financially.

There are also opportunities to work with organisations such as the Olympic Delivery Authority and the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games to ensure that the transport vehicles used in the Games are fuel efficient. The GLA is already in active discussions with both organisations to ensure that the cleanest possible vehicles are used in the over 4,000 strong vehicle automotive sponsor fleet and the similarly sized fixed support fleet.

Further measures to promote the use of the cleanest taxis are considered as part of the local measures set out under Policy 3.

Promoting more eco-efficient driving

TfL will implement emissions efficient driver training for vehicles under the Mayor's control. For taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers, TfL will identify

suitable courses that existing drivers and applicants wishing to become drivers will be required to take in order for their application or renewal of licences to be granted. TfL will work with bus operators to explore the potential for installing new on-board systems to provide detailed information to monitor driving performance and emissions.

TfL will work with boroughs and encourage central Government to improve enforcement processes and increase penalty charges. A priority for the No-Idling Zone will be to raise awareness, particularly at locations such as schools where parents who leave their cars running contribute to poor air quality affecting their children. Taxi idling, especially at taxi stations, is a particular issue.

The current design of taxi ranks makes it difficult to prevent idling as taxis are required to move forward every few minutes and the stop-starting of engines would be worse for emissions. The Mayor will work with transport operators and the boroughs to address this where practical, potentially by making taxi passengers walk along the rank to the taxi rather than the taxi moving up the rank. Targeted action will also be needed at the priority locations identified in Policy 3.

Providing the right information

The Mayor will provide information on emissions to air from the public transport fleet. Providing information in an easily accessible way, allowing people to make comparisons between modes and even particular vehicles, will enable more informed choices about their journeys and the vehicles they use. For example, identifying, in a simple way, the taxis with lower emission ratings will enable members of the public and businesses to actively choose to use cleaner vehicles. New York City has already adopted this approach with their 'Green NYC' symbol and associated information campaign

Scrapping or retro-fitting older, more-polluting vehicles

- The Mayor will encourage central Government to extend its scrappage scheme to target particular vehicles such as taxis, as well as introducing a grant scheme for retrofitting vehicles with pollution abatement equipment.

Mike Hedges is a member of UNITE the UNION's Cab Trade Committee



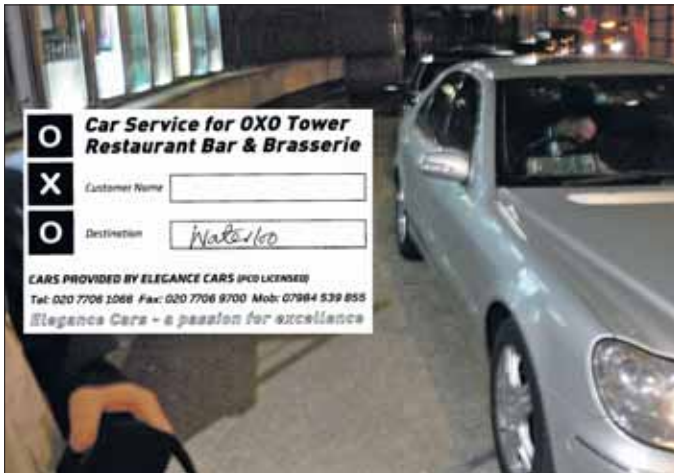
The full consultation can be found at www.london.gov.uk

AROUND & ATOUT

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

Recently I attended the regular Touting Solving Problem meeting hosted by the Chief of Safer Transport Command's (formerly TOCU) Joe Royle. UNITE Cab Section members will know that as one of the capitals's fully recognised trade bodies UNITE, along with the LCDC and the LTDA, is one of the main players at these meetings. During this meeting we were briefed on the current progress regarding the major touting problems that the United Trade Group highlights on a daily basis.

OXO TOWER



A few months ago Cab Trade News flagged up a problem at the **OXO Tower** restaurant on the south bank. I paid a visit to the venue at the request of a driver who, quite rightly complaining about the fact that cars were to be found parking up outside seemingly without a booking, in other words, touting. It later transpired that they had indeed been pre-booked because of a clever little angle.

It would seem that when you dine at the OXO the restaurant assigns a car to the table, thus creating a pre-booking. On investigation, which was instigated by the Cab Trade News article, Safer Transport Command did find a minor touting problem, if any touting can be a minor problem, which they report had been dealt with. However the situation regarding the pre-allocation of cars is not illegal. Disappointing news it must be said, but at least the case was investigated.

That said, we were informed that Southwark Council were going to be contacted about the lack of enforcement of parking controls in the area. UNITE the UNION will also continue to press for a legitimate taxi rank to be placed in a prominent position, to allow the taxi trade to compete for work at the venue.

TIGER TIGER



Another venue making the front page of Cab Trade News recently was **Tiger Tiger**, so bad they named it twice! As you may be aware, John Mason, head of Taxis and Private Hire at TfL recently redeployed the Cranborn Street taxi marshals to the venue. This has gone somewhat to encourage taxi use at the club but has done little to discourage private hire from parking on the extended night time taxi rank. Unfortunately the taxi marshals do not have powers to move offending cars.

This can only be done by proper enforcement. Unfortunately there seems to be a hitch with the camera enforcement which was supposed to eradicate the problem. UNITE London Cab Section will be contacting Westminster Council's Martin Low urgently to resolve the camera enforcement situation. It is worth noting that Martin has so far been onside with our battle against illegal touts and has been instrumental in the appointment of new night time taxi ranks in the West End.

PEP-C



Down the road from Tiger Tiger is another club, again highlighted by Cab Trade News, **Pep-C**. UNITE reported the activities of a blatant Clipboard Johnny, complete with hi-vis proclaiming 'licensed taxi service'. I am happy to report to the trade that this individual was arrested on investigation.

ABACUS



A few months ago Cab Trade News reported that taxi drivers continue to do battle with the minicabs at this venue, forming slow moving cavalcades along Cornhill in an attempt to take work from the touts. Carriage Office investigations found that booking arrangements at **Abacus** were in fact in order. But the use of a marshal gave the appearance illegal activity. Again the subject of double yellow enforcement was brought up; the meeting was told that camera enforcement was impossible because of bad lighting. City of London Police has also recently undertaken TfL sponsored anti tout operations at Abacas, Revolution in Leadenhall Street and Smithfield Market. Good news for the taxi trade was the welcome comment from City Police that they would not oppose a rank being appointed outside Abacus.

REVOLUTION

The Kings Road venue was inserted into the meeting because of obvious friction between taxi drivers the Clipboard Johnny and his drivers. Safer Transport Command along with the PCO was told that this venue had been a long time problem for the taxi trade and that touting was rampant. They have also been told that any attack on working taxi drivers by touts was unacceptable. This location has been consequently investigated, resulting in an arrest.

COMMENT

While all of this news is good for the taxi trade and the efforts of Safer Transport Command, Transport for London, Westminster Council and others is welcome. The fact remains that we are all being let down by the judicial system. No sooner do the authorities make an arrest the courts will send the offender back to the streets with little more than a warning and a small fine, the Clipboard Johnny at Pep-C being the most recent example. Only a few days after being told of his arrest at the meeting, he or perhaps one of his friends could be seen back at the door of the club, complete with clipboard and hi-vis. The group is now looking at the possibility of bringing in representatives from the Crown Prosecution Service and the Magistrates Association to try and cure this major irritation.

UNITE the UNION believes that unless proper resources are made available, the only way the problem of the Clipboard Johnny will ever be sorted is to end the concept the satellite office. UNITE will continue to press for the Abolition of Satellite offices and an end to the Clipboard Johnny.

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THE MORE FOR MEMBERS CAB SECTION BENEFIT BOOK IS HERE!

...and what better timing.

Make more fantastic savings throughout the year!

Unite Cab Section is offering all members the chance to save money on a whole host of products and services with the launch of 'More for members' the Cab Section's new member benefits scheme.

Working with benefits specialist, Personal Group, Unite Cab Section have put together a comprehensive package of benefits for all members. These include discounted retail vouchers, fantastic offers on music, short breaks and hotels, a financial and mortgage advice service plus much more!

Use your Retail Vouchers to make great savings of up to 12% at several high street stores, save money on large household purchases with 9% discount at B&Q, 10% at Curry's and Comet, cut the cost of food with a number of popular supermarkets including Asda and Sainsbury's. Cut the cost of shopping online with 7% off purchases at Amazon, plus many, many more discounts.

To be able to enjoy life luxuries to the full we understand that the most important thing to concentrate on is you and your health and wellbeing, which is why we have included significant benefits in your package such as

discounted eyecare, and the Taxi Drivers Personal Group Hospital Plan.

Every Unite the Union Cab Section member can now take advantage of all these benefits, simply for being a member. Booklets will be distributed to all members over the coming months. Accessing the benefits is easy, simply call the telephone number in the book and quote the unique reference or visit the Unite Cab Section More for members website.

Remember for more information and to view all your benefits simply visit:

www.personal-benefits.com
Username: cabsection
Password: cab123



National monthly paper of the licensed taxi trade

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EDITORIAL BOARD:
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Frank Hull, Peter J. Rose
and Colin Williams.

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THE EDITORIAL BOARD



Frank Braverman



Mike Hedges



Frank Hull



Peter J. Rose



Colin Williams



Join the campaigning Union for taxi drivers!

**As a member of the
UNITE Cab Section you will:**

- **Make the policies on all taxi issues, including**
 - ◆ Annual tariff review based on a cost index
 - ◆ VAT zero rating and no fuel tax
 - ◆ Vehicle protection against assault, noise and accident
 - ◆ Free and Open access to all transport interchanges
 - ◆ Access to bus lanes
 - ◆ Taxis at the centre of all local transport plans
- **You are represented**
 - ◆ on the Unite Cab Trade Committee
 - ◆ on the Unite National Passenger and Transport Committees
 - ◆ on the Ranks Committee
- **and negotiate**
 - ◆ with the police
 - ◆ with the local councils
 - ◆ with licensing authorities
 - ◆ with Railtrack and Train Operating Companies
 - ◆ with airport authorities
 - ◆ with D.E.T.R.
- **Enjoy special benefits**
 - ◆ Driver Care – Loss of license Insurance scheme. £7,000 pay out for 80p per week
 - ◆ Free legal advice and assistance. The Unite has over 100 solicitors at its disposal, and won over £80 million compensation for its members last year. Each member is given an exclusive Freephone number that gives access to a free 24 hour legal help-line
 - ◆ Full service annual accounts prepared by qualified accountants Martin Cordell & Co for £305.00 per annum (saving over £100)
 - ◆ Holiday facilities and free convalescence at the Union's centre at Eastbourne
 - ◆ Free Will service
 - ◆ Free education courses

**For membership enquiries only
telephone: 020 8800 0151
whose members produce this paper.**

**Isn't it time
YOU joined?**

All you have to do is fill in the form below and send it to:
Unite The Union Cab Section, Woodberry, 218 Green Lanes, London N4 2HB

Please send me an application form to join the Unite The Union

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

AREA OF LICENSE

AGE

AFTER COMPLETION PLEASE SEND TO:

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