

CITY DINNER ENJOYED BY WCHCD

On 27th November, Liverymen, Freeman and guests of The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers enjoyed the 5th Annual Liverymen's Dinner at The Vintners Hall. As The Vintners' Company is ranked eleventh of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of the City of London, those in attendance enjoyed the beautiful surroundings and were able to see a few of the treasures the Vintners' Hall displays around their entrance, together with the Dining Hall itself.

Shortly before the Dinner began, Andrew Barnett and Gary Pyner were clothed in livery. Both Andrew and Gary have connections with the hackney carriage trade going back a number of years and the WCHCD are delighted to welcome them as Liverymen. New Freeman Garry Holman and Stephen Francis also joined the Company. A long line of newly qualified Cab Guides received their certificates for having passed the latest course run by the WCHCD. A champagne reception heralded the beginning of the evening and began an evening of fine wine and dining. The sociable atmosphere at dinners such as these is wonderful and gives everyone a chance to meet with new acquaintances, as well as meeting with colleagues and friends.



(Left) Stephen Francis (right) Garry Holman



Andrew Barnett and Gary Pynter

This year's Master, Andrew Overton, together with his Wardens, welcomed everyone to the dinner. Andrew told diners: "Since our last dinner and my installation in September, it seems the world has been turned upside down. However, as we battle through this maelstrom to survive, and survive we will as we have done in the past, I can only hope that it does not all go on too long. The cab trade has always been a barometer of the economy signalling a downturn before it happens and, I trust, signalling an upturn when it comes. So let us hope the pound stays weak and the tourists will come to replace the bankers because we need them!"

The guest speaker was Peter Nelson, who is the Assistant Town Clerk at the City of London Corporation. Andrew said: "One of Peter's many roles is to keep a thousand liverymen entertained and informed for about 25 minutes during the process of the Lord Mayor's election, whilst the principals are in session elsewhere and I can assure you that he does it with great aplomb.

Peter has, for the last few years or so, been one of three Assistant Town Clerks, retaining his role with the Common Council, acquiring the other

court, that of the Court of Aldermen, and he also provides support to a number of committees including Planning, Port Health, the City Bridge Trust, to name a few and generally and oversees the team that looks after elections. The two Courts, those of Common Council and of the Aldermen are where the real work is." Following toasts to The Queen, The Royal Family, The Lord Mayor and the City of London Corporation, guests at the dinner were also toasted. Peter then made a speech, keeping guests entertained with his after dinner jokes.

The Company is always delighted to meet guests at these dinners. These guests sometimes then decide to join the WCHCD and become Freeman and Liverymen themselves. The role of Livery Companies today is a modern progressive role and the camaraderie of joining like minded people in an organisation which strives to portray the best taxi service in the world to others in the City and beyond is a great benefit. The charitable work carried out by the WCHCD includes The Magical Taxi Tour.

If you would to know more about the Company please contact The Clerk Mary Whitworth on 01494765922.



Newly Qualified Cab Guides

EX DIAL-A-CAB CHAIRMAN JACK RUSSELL DIES... by Alan Fisher

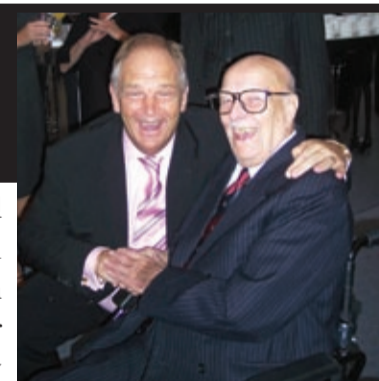
Former ODRTS Chairman Jack Russell, who turned 94 in early September, was recently taken ill at his residential care home and rushed into Northwick Park hospital. Sadly he passed away on the afternoon of Tuesday 25 November. It was in 2002 at the tender age (for him) of 88 that he was admitted into St Mary's hospital, Paddington for a double heart bypass operation. When DaC's in-house magazine Call Sign spoke to Jack soon after, he told them that the double had turned into a triple "as I was there anyway!" But Jack was more irritated that the by-pass would stop him driving his car temporarily!

Then at the age of 92, he was admitted into hospital again for a knee replacement operation and while there, caught the superbug MRSA. Speaking to Call Sign again after being discharged, he queried whether they couldn't find a "...more pleasant way to polish me off!" Then last year, Barbara, Jack's partner for what he described as thirty wonderful years passed away. Yet again Jack bounced back from that tragic event in his life and moved from his home into residential care and when Call Sign paid him a visit, he looked very well.

Speaking to Jack's daughter Joyce, she told the magazine that even at 94 Jack was still fighting and desperate to keep in touch with his old circuit. Call Sign Editor Alan Fisher used to send him a copy of the monthly mag.

Jack was ODRTS Chairman from 1964, when he took over from Eli Solomons, until standing down in 1969 and handing the reins over to Jack Taylor. He remained as a driver. He was a founder member of the Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund and honoured with the Military Medal for exploits during World War 2. Current Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund Chairman, Russell Poluck said: "Jack was a lovely, genuine man who was always ready to help anyone. During his later years, he would still attend the Taxi Driver of the Year Show in his wheelchair! His passing marks the end of an era."

A minute silence in Jack's name was held at the recent Taxi Driver of the Year dinner and dance.



Brian Rice and Jack Russell