

RANKS OF PEDICABS *By John Kennedy*

Yes it was a regular sight outside the Chelsea Flower Show - lines or should I say ranks of Pedicabs doing whatever they wanted and nobody in authority making any effort to move these dangerous objects on.

Right now before Parliament is an amended version of the London Local Authorities and Transport for London (no.2) Bill. It is waiting for its third reading in the House of Lords and after this it will pass to the House of Commons. Here will be the chance of the London taxi trade to oppose this bill upon the grounds of public safety and the fact that to devolve powers to Transport for London and London's boroughs will merely lead to even further chaos upon our streets and roads. Remember these are the same authorities that inform you that they are doing all in their power to eradicate the touting problem in the capital. When in fact the touting problem is getting much worse and the Police cannot cope with the limited resources they have to deal with illegal touting and soliciting of fares by unscrupulous operators of which there are plenty.

The signage has been approved by the Department of Transport and Westminster City Council intends to give the pedicabs up to 30 bays which will hold upwards of 50 for free, yes you and me have to pay for the privilege of using a toilet yet at the drop of a hat Westminster City Council and Martin Lowe wishes to hand valuable road space to these death traps. To make matters even worse the largest trade organisation, the LTDA, watches this Bill's passage in the House of Lords and doesn't even bother to raise an objection even though their own policy is to "Ban don't Licence".



To place a registration plate upon an object like a pedicab will only lead the public into believing that these contraptions are safe and that the rider is vetted. I've read the parliamentary record called Hansard and it wasn't even mentioned that a 29 year old male was found guilty on the 23rd of March 2005 at Snaresbrook Crown Court of one count of oral rape; this man picked the drunken lady up and committed the sexual assault on the back of the pedicab he was using.

We have been denied our democratic right to petition against this Bill in the House of Lords because it seems the authorities failed to consult us yet again, yet the General Secretary of the LTDA was present at the opposed bill committee hearing. We know this because he told us in a recent edition of Taxi newspaper stating they only wish to issue parking tickets and moving traffic offences to owners of pedicabs, yet the scheme will be voluntary and therefore no sanctions can be taken against those operators and riders that do not comply.

It should be noted the LTDA did petition against a similar bill back in 2004-05 but the petition was withdrawn and thanks to the LCDC who stood up for the trade and managed to make the Government take notice and the Bill fell due to lack of support. Thank goodness the LCDC is preparing, along with others, to petition against this amended piece of legislation for it seems the largest trade organisation is content to have its members sit behind a pedicab rank, sorry bay in the very near future.

Place the Pedicabs in the parks; the 3rd way is the only way...

CELEBRATING THE LIVERY

It is now five years since The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers received Livery Status from the Court of Aldermen. Then a service was held at St Bartholomew the Great where Freemen of the Company were clothed in the Livery of the Company. Since then the Company has continued to grow and now there are more Freemen and Liverymen. There has been a new Master each year and each of these has brought their own individuality to the role. The Company has also seen its first Lady Master, Pat Stanley enjoy her year in office. So on St George's Day 2009, five years on from that first service, a Thanksgiving Service was held to mark the anniversary, once again at the Priory Church of St Bartholomew, led by the Company's Honorary Chaplain Dr Martin Dudley.



Before the service began, today's Master, Andrew Overton, welcomed everyone to the church. Those Liverymen of the Company present then made a Declaration affirming their original oath and promise to the Company as the sun poured through the stained glass windows of the Norman church. New Liverymen Chris Bird, Frederick Levy, Peter Tye and Tracey Davidson were clothed in the Livery in the beautiful surroundings of the Sanctuary Altar. An address was given by the Reverend Dr Martin Dudley in which he talked of



how he believes the cab trade will weather the present economic climate as the trade is such a unique wonderful asset to the city of London.

Following the service there was a buffet and a chance for everyone present to socialise. The WCHCD continues to be held in high regard in the City and all its Freemen and Liverymen earn their living through the cab trade. This means its membership is very diverse as some are cab drivers; others are involved in the running of radio circuits, some in cab insurance, together with trade accountants and others in the buying, selling, repairing or renting of cabs. The fellowship of the Company is the thing that binds it altogether and The Master and The Court of Assistants hope that the next five years will continue to bring enjoyment to all those Freemen and Liverymen who belong to the Company. The Company continues to support the cab trade through various means, including education and welfare as well as its charitable works, including The Magical Taxi Tour, each year.

Anyone who would like more details about the Company should contact The Clerk, Mary Whitworth, on 01494 765922. Further information can also be found on the website www.hackneycarriagedriverscompany.com