



**WARNERS**  
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#### DISTRIBUTION

DND Transport Services Ltd.  
Tel 01707 272305

#### PRINTERS

Cumbrian Newsprint, Cumbria

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**B**AA has announced the introduction of a six month trial for a managed pre-booked car service to compete with the massive inroads that private hire has made at Heathrow that will begin in September. BAA statistics show that 24% of passengers are choosing private hire as their mode of transport at the airport whilst only 2% are currently choosing taxis.

The new service will have passengers picked up from the short stay car parks of Terminal 3

## ED THOMPSON PLANS TO LEAVE HIS ROLE AT PCO

**A**fter seven years as London's Taxi and Private Hire Director at the Public Carriage Office, Ed Thompson is to step down from his role. Ed has notified Jeroen Weimar, the Chief Operating Officer of Surface Transport at TfL, that he would like to explore new opportunities within TfL. During a challenging seven years leading the PCO, Ed has overseen the introduction of private hire licensing.

Jeroen Weimar said: "Ed has led the PCO through challenging times and has been instrumental in some really positive changes which have benefited both the trade and passengers. But Ed has decided he wants to



take up a fresh challenge within TfL and I wish him well in his future endeavours."

Ed Thompson said: "It has been a great privilege to serve in this post for the past seven years. I would like to pay tribute to all of the staff at the PCO and to those who provide taxi and private hire services who do such a great job for London. I'm looking forward to my future challenges but will greatly miss the PCO and the taxi and private hire trade."

The recruitment process for a new Director will begin shortly with Ed remaining in post until the new Director starts.

## DOUGLAS SHERRY MBE

**I** have no doubt that the sad passing of Douglas Sherry M.B.E. will leave a huge gap in the London taxi trade. Doug's self-effacing and avuncular nature, coupled with his reluctance to be spot-lighted, will be to his eternal credit.

The London Taxidriviers' Fund for Underprivileged Children first approached Douglas over 15 years ago, when the facility then used for committee meetings was

withdrawn. His offer of the use of the 'boardroom' at the Kings Cross Taxi Wash under St. Pancras Station was most welcome, and thence began a longstanding friendship with a true gentleman. I cannot recall more than a handful of events since then when Douglas wasn't there with his support, be it financial, goods in kind, or just the promise that if we needed him, he would be there.

I'm sure I speak for everyone in the trade with whom he came into contact, that although not here to share our lives, he will be watching over us with that enigmatic smile, and wishing us well in all we do.

Sleep well, Douglas.

David S. Lessman (Honorary Chairman) The London Taxidriviers' Fund for Underprivileged Children.

## NEW TRIAL AT HEATHROW T3 AND T5

and Terminal 5 and there will be no provision for a car feeder park. One Transport, the online transport management company of Radio Taxis Group, will control and manage the service at Terminal 5. This is a pre-booked service with no signage in the terminal with the only visibility being a customer rendezvous point outside of the Arrivals exit at T5. Armed with location instructions from their pre-booked print outs passengers will have to walk out of the terminal to the point located in the lower level of the T5 car park. Anyone who should ask for a taxi will be directed to the taxi rank, without exception.

Geoffrey Riesel, Chairman of Radio Taxis Group, said: "At the core of our discussions with BAA has been a shared determination to

implement a new, improved process to manage private hire at the airport, without adversely affecting the taxi business in any way."

Some criticisms for Radio Taxis Group have already been aired as some drivers feel that the private hire trade will benefit at the cost of taxis. Geoffrey Riesel emphasised that this is not the case, "We will be running this service targeting the 24% that already use private hire and we are determined not to allow the taxi trade to lose any more business especially from touts. Those choosing to use One Transport will pre-book and pre-pay for the service – and we will continue to offer the public the choice to pre-book a taxi."

Geof Kaley, MD of One Transport and who also has a strong taxi

background says, "We are the trade's major contestant in this era of personal transport consolidation. This is an opportunity to influence the outcome of this overdue move to bring cars under control at the airport whilst ensuring that there is no further dilution of work at the rank."

Addison Lee has also been awarded a similar trial at T3 in competition with One Transport.

Currently taxi drivers using the feeder park at Heathrow are paying BAA for the privilege. This is not the case with the private hire trade; for BAA this initiative will be the first time they are able to gain revenue from car operations at the airport.

