

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER CITY HALL

by Eddie Lambert

Almost a month to the day, the RMT Taxis London were picketing another City Hall in defence of the taxi trade and working conditions. This time it was not the Westminster City Hall in Victoria Street but the GLA's City Hall on the banks of the mighty Thames next to Tower Bridge in Tooley Street.

This picket had been very close to being called off as the original organiser, John Kennedy of the LTCPR, was indisposed with a fairly serious medical complaint and was unable to attend. The RMT had already agreed to give their support to John and when their members, and those of the London Taxi Driver's Forum, heard that John was going to postpone the action they decided after a series of phone calls to carry on with it anyway.

So on the morning of 26th June, RMT and Forum activists set up the banners and posters opposite the entrance to the City Hall in order to help get their message to the members of the GLA's Transport Board. The message being that we feel the future of the London Taxi Trade is not safe in the hands of TfL/PCO.

By all accounts the members of this committee felt they couldn't look the cab trade in the eye and took route involving a 300 yard underground passage to enter the City Hall avoiding the pickets. Once the pickets were aware that the committee members had sneaked into their council chamber and started business, a message was sent to them that the delegates from the trade would like to speak to them to discuss their concerns about the stewardship of our long and historic trade. This request was turned down, but the Committee Secretary agreed to one delegate entering the building and raising our concerns.

The RMT's Jon Pace went in to put the case for the trade, raising several issues including the huge threat that the (possibly illegal or outside the powers of the officer who made it) Satellite Offices are posing the trade, as well as the stupidity of a voluntary code of conduct for the pedicabs. In our opinion a complete waste of time, not least because only 20% of the riders will be covered by it, and that's only if the riders stay with the operators who agree to the code. Not very likely, after all who is going to volunteer to take fixed



penalty tickets etc for riding on the pavement, the wrong way in one way streets, running red lights and numerous other offences. Jon also raised the issue of a possible breach of data protection legislation. He told the Secretary that he and many other drivers had received phone calls on their mobiles from a company doing a survey about the trade. He had asked the caller who had given them his number and was told Ed Thompson at the Carriage Office. Jon told the caller that Ed had no right to pass his number on. He had not given anyone at the Carriage Office permission to pass on his mobile number and he had a legal right to expect that his number would be kept confidential.

BRITISH AIRWAYS ANNOUNCES CLUB WORLD AT LONDON CITY

A new service at London City Airport could soon be bringing more passengers to the taxi rank there. On 29 September 2009, British Airways commences its first ever all-business transatlantic service to New York on the Airbus A318. Entitled Club World London City, the new service will be given the airline's most prestigious flight number, BA001, previously used by Concorde. The specially configured flat bed 32-seat aircraft will depart London City Airport and make a brief refuelling stop at Shannon where passengers will disembark and clear US immigration. After the stopover, the direct flight from Shannon will go directly to domestic arrivals at New York JFK airport. Flights from New York JFK will be a direct sleeper service.



Richard Gooding OBE, Chief Executive of London City Airport, commented: "This new service has been on the wish list of businesses in Canary Wharf for a long time as a time-saving alternative given London City Airport's close proximity to the two financial districts. We have worked closely with British Airways to offer this service based upon immense passenger demand.

"By delivering the most productive and time-efficient service between the world's two financial capitals, British Airways is demonstrating its long term commitment to the business traveller."

Willie Walsh, Chief Executive of British Airways, said: "There is real enthusiasm from our customers for this project. This is BA at its best - stylish, British and ahead of the game. Reviving the BA001 flight number for the first long haul route out of LCY could not be more appropriate. Every aspect of this service has been designed to maximise convenience for customers to fly between the world's two biggest business centres - Wall Street and London's extended financial district in the City and Docklands."

TOLPS INCREASES MEMBERSHIP

After only eight months of operation, Taxi drivers & Owners Legal Protection Ltd is now firmly established, with an ever increasing membership.

Founded by Alan Fleming, former Chairman of the LCDC and Dave Cohen, former Membership Secretary & Treasurer, who are now providing legal representation for our existing members. Taxi drivers & Owners Legal Protection Ltd is a non-political organisation, which has been set up to provide legal representation for London's licensed taxi drivers.

For further information and membership enquiries, take a look at our new web site, www.taxidriverslegalprotection.com

Alternatively, our Email address is topsltd2009@googlemail.com

Alan Fleming & Dave Cohen