

LONDON BRIDGES FALLING DOWN...

by John Kennedy

What's happened to London Bridges? We are losing the use of Hammersmith Bridge at weekends until 5.00am on Monday the 15th March 2010. If you thought that was bad, take a look at Waterloo Bridge closed with a contra flow marked out on one side of the bridge whilst it under goes major engineering works. Just when you thought things couldn't get much worse, we got the news that Albert Bridge will be closing for 18months; now if we add Southwark Bridge with its road works and huge cycle lane barriers/kerbs and you have to come to the conclusion that those in authority don't seem to be able to plan maintenance of capitals infrastructure and road network in an effective manner.

Does London need the help of the British Army to build a couple of new river crossings rather than an £11 billion pointless javelin throwing and running venue? London isn't working and those people in charge appear either not to care or just take the capitals inhabitants and workers for a complete bunch of mugs. However mention parking and fines and each of these boroughs plus transport for London can spring into action and produce an Army that will not only ticket and tow but chase you to the end of the earth until they receive payment.

London is failed by a class of politician that doesn't care enough about a city that the majority of us love and understand. I campaigned against the previous incumbent Ken Livingstone only to have the present Mayor stay silent on the many subjects that matter to you and me, Transport for London doesn't function correctly and neither do the capital's town halls. We need new thinking, better more competent management and not necessarily overpaid people but people who are prepared to work night and day for the betterment of us all. A return to values and public service is required and not more of the overpaid bonus seeking culture that manages to deliver three bridge closures, two of which will be long term and the other temporary.

London's Bridges may be falling down and once repaired we will get over the chaos that these works will create but the confidence of a city will be dented at a time when we are barely dragging our way out of recession. Couple this with the present underground maintenance and refurbishment programme and you will see that heads really do need to roll at the very top of London's transport authority and councils, for whilst me and my taxi-cab driving colleagues try to take you on a journey you get the distinct feeling that some of London's politicians and civil servants maybe taking us all for a ride.

UK'S BIGGEST HYDROGEN FUEL CELL

Transport for London (TfL) has launched the UK's biggest hydrogen fuel cell housed in a building. The Palestra building in Southwark, is home to the Taxi and Private Hire Office; TfL acquired the lease for the Palestra building in Southwark in August 2006 for 20 years and occupies ten of the building's twelve floors with the remaining two floors occupied by the London Development Agency (LDA).

TfL has installed a £2.4 million Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant, including the hydrogen fuel cell, at the Palestra building to generate energy locally, cut carbon emissions and save money off energy bills. The building is shared by 2,800 TfL and LDA staff. It is estimated that the fuel cell and power plant will cut carbon emissions by up to 40 per cent and generate £90,000 cost savings per annum. To communicate the benefits of hydrogen and the fuel cell to people passing and visiting the building, a permanent multi-media exhibition display has been created - fuelled by the energy generated on site.

The state of the art hydrogen fuel cell, funded by the £25m TfL Climate Change fund, will provide electricity, heat and cooling to the building. In addition, the building's hot water supply will be heated by the fuel cell. At times of peak energy use, the building will generate a quarter of its own power, rising to 100 per cent off-peak. The waste heat from power generation will be pumped into a unit on the roof which will work to keep the building cool and supplements the building's six electric chillers.

TfL is committed to become more energy efficient, cutting carbon and pollution across its operations. Key measures include the introduction of 56 hybrid buses, with all new buses entering the fleet being hybrid by 2012, and the use of regenerative braking on the Tube which can reduce energy consumption by up to 25 per cent. TfL is also investing millions into programmes and technologies that will deliver a cleaner, greener capital such as a public cycle hire scheme launched later this year, encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles, promoting the benefits of walking and designing a new green bus for the capital. As reported in a recent issue of Taxi Globe, taxis powered by hydrogen fuel cells are being developed by Intelligent Energy, Lotus, TRW Conekt and LTI. A report from Environmental Transport Association (ETA) estimates there will be 200 of these cabs on the road in time for the Olympics; the project has vehicles which are still at the prototype stage. Not only will the cabs need to be tried and tested, but hydrogen filling stations will also need to be provided for the the refuelling.



TAIWAN TAXIS

Supersides are being used as part of a Taiwan advertising campaign in London. They are part of a campaign also on the Tube and in key consumer publications, including The Sunday Times Travel Magazine and The Daily Telegraph Magazine.

75 taxis are currently featuring Taiwan.



THANK YOU TO SPONSORS AND DRIVERS

by Derek Leone

The President, Chairman and Officers of The London Taxi Benevolent Association For War Disabled would like to thank all of our sponsors who contributed to our diary and all the drivers who purchased a diary this year. As this a major source of our income, we look forward to your continued support so that we are able, on your behalf, to continue the annual outings to Worthing which started in 1948 with 25 taxis and 50 ex-servicemen to the present day with 130 taxis and 400 ex-servicemen. We have also been able to give assistance to Combat Stress, The Haigh Homes Morden, St. Davids Home Ealing and Queen Alexandra's Home Worthing.

DRIVERS NEEDED

The date of this year's annual outing to Worthing will take place on Tuesday 15th June 2010, meeting as usual at the village of South Holmwood.

Any driver who wishes to take part on this day or any of our regular drivers who have moved or changed their phone numbers, would you please contact our Secretary Paul Davis on mobile 07869805102 or go to our website on www.taxicharity.org

