

Licensed Minicab (PHV)

BEING BRANDED!

One of the great joys of running The LPHCA is the fantastic diversity of people I form friendships with. As well as the great friendships that I make, I really enjoy the whistle stop tours where I get to see member companies in action.

In addition to visiting operating centres I get invited to staff awards, presentations and sometimes something completely different. Last year Eddie Townson and I were kindly invited by Murray Cowell MBE of Murray Chauffeur Service to The Worshipful Fellowship of Carmen's dinner at Painters Hall.

Cart Marking was the forerunner to Vehicle Licensing in the City of London and it is quite an irony that 2005 saw the first PCO licensed Private Hire Vehicle from GLH marked by the Carmen.

The Carmen Company gathers in Guildhall Yard to watch the Cart Marking ceremony with the Rt Hon Lord Mayor in attendance. This is all supervised by the Keeper of Guildhall and some 40 vehicles, ranging from hand carts, horsed carriages, steam wagons, old taxi cabs, buses, trucks and even modern articulated Lorries all come for marking.

They are branded with the year letter, and carry a vehicle number and City and Carmen arms. After the marking, there is a drive-past, and an informal reception and lunch where Carman, London Mayoral candidate and former Transport Minister Steve Norris spoke.

So back to our GLH Private Hire Vehicle and our own special piece of history. Carman John Scott presented for 'cart marking' a new, PCO Licensed, state of the art London Minicab (PHV) and with some pride we all watched as this dual fuelled (electric and petrol) vehicle was marked in the ceremony.

The event took place a few days after the London tube and bus bombings and Steve Norris rightly said that this ceremony and the full turn out demonstrated why Londoners value their

history, freedom and their heritage so strongly.

A day for London's Private Hire Industry be proud of.



Mediaeval Cart and Carman

So who are the Carmen? Well in 1580 the Oxford English dictionary made the definition – a man who drives a car (a wheeled vehicle); a carter, carrier.

The Carmen's Company is a guild of the City of London, reflecting the transport industry in all its modes, but particularly surface transport – road and rail, goods and passenger.

As a Livery Company (a guild entitled to 'clothe' its members with its 'livery' or uniform) it supports the civic traditions of the City. Its Liveried members share with other Liveries the right and responsibility of electing the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs annually.

So when John Scott of GLH invited me to the Carmen's 'cart marking' ceremony this year at The Guildhall I had envisaged a few horse and carts being there. I was right but only to a certain degree and I had no idea what a history lesson I was about to get. I was even more shocked to learn that a Private Hire Vehicle – yes a London Minicab from John's company was to be included in the ceremony.