

# Talking of Grading...

A few weeks ago a draft bill was laid before Parliament relating to the proposed UK Identity card scheme. Now I can hear drivers in particular thinking:

*'how many more identity cards have we got to carry'*

as they are already required (in all but special cases) to wear and display their **PCO I.D.**

Some good news is that **The LPHCA** has been successful in their quest to prevent drivers needing to carry a paper copy of their **PCO Licence** on their person at all times when working.

Many **Graded Operators** feel there is still a need for their own particular **Company I.D.** to be carried in addition to the **PCO I.D.** badge as it serves to identify *their drivers* as representing *their company*. We as an Association endorse that view, particularly from the safety and company marketing aspects.

Not many of you, like me I expect, will know very much about the proposed legislation that is to be introduced to Parliament in the autumn of this year. Well the first biometric passports, which store fingerprint or iris information, were issued in 2005 and the first cards carrying finger print details will come in 2007.

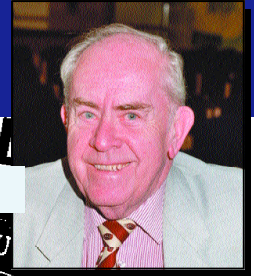
What I can tell you for certain is that all this is going to cost you more money. For example there will be a price hike of £35.00 for a UK passport and postal applications will no longer be possible - just when the passport application process was becoming very much improved!

It would appear that by 2008 eighty percent of the "economically active population" will carry some form of biometric identity document and some five years later MPs will be asked to vote on whether they think it should be compulsory.

## ***Biometric Trials have already commenced at the UK Passport Service's London Headquarters***

Biometric Trials have already commenced at the UK Passport Service's London Headquarters which are to be followed by further trials in Leicester, Newcastle and Glasgow. Any person applying for, or renewing, a UK passport from 2007 will be required to have the compulsory biometric checks before issue.

by **GEOFF WRIGHT**



To obtain a new passport it would require the applicant to sit in a "biometric enrolment pod" which photographs them and scans the face and iris. The information is then recorded on a microchip and in a central database and that is just for a passport!

**Of interest to The Private Hire Industry** is the fact that biometrics will be introduced into UK issued driving licences at some later stage. Perhaps **The PCO** will embrace some of this into driver identity requirements in the future.

The draft bill sets out proposals for a national identity register to hold details of all 60 million people in the UK, which will enable a person's identity to be authenticated when they produce their card.

The ID card scheme proper, which if made compulsory, will have to be produced to access a range of public services including the NHS and the benefits agency and a trial of the identity card technology was launched on Monday the 1st May, which involved 10,000 volunteers.

**The LPHCA** has in recent weeks been involved in some interesting dialogue on identity, vehicle, people and driver tracking technologies that are now available and quite incredible.

The initial feeling from the office is that this and associated technology will revolutionise our industry; the way cars, drivers and passengers are booked and managed.

There will also be in the view of **The LPHCA**, as a bi-product of this new technology, a massive potential increase in efficiency, as well as passenger and driver safety.

So watch this space!