

# PRIVATE HIRE NEWS

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The news magazine of the Graded Private Hire Companies  
Incorporating the London and Southern Private Hire Car Associations

Welcome to edition 36 of **Private Hire News** and as always we have a full edition with the major concerns that currently affect the industry. In addition to current issues we are looking back to the role that **Diana Lamplugh** played in bringing **Private Hire** into regulation. We also highlight the legacy that **Diana** created via **The Suzy Lamplugh Trust** and the wonderful ongoing work of The Trust in today's mad world.

The **LPHCA** Topographical Assessment Software has now been out and about for a couple of months and we now have over 40 member companies using it, with more installations planned.

**Alan Haslehurst** who designed the program and who has done most of the installations is on a long, well deserved, holiday. Before he left Alan wrote an article which we reproduce giving an update of where things are.

We are very pleased with the software and its take-up and the Association will be developing the software further. When Alan returns we will be issuing revision 2, which will have most reported minor bugs fixed and be it will be capable of delivering the reporting requirements that are needed by **The Public Carriage Office** (The PCO) and **The Adult Learning Inspectorate** (The ALI).

By the time we go to press **The Adult Learning Inspectorate** will have been to the **LPHCA** to see how we are delivering the assessment and training, we will let **Graded Companies** using the software know how we get on.

The feedback we have received so far is that the software is excellent and does the job extremely well, producing truly unique

randomised tests. There are a few glitches with the software but those reported have been fixed. It would be very much appreciated if any known problems are emailed to **The LPHCA** so as many as possible can be dealt with when Alan returns.

We are very pleased so many members have taken up the option to become '**PCO Approved Assessors**' and would remind those of you in London who have not opted to do so *that drivers will become much harder to get from 1st January 2007 when the temporary permit scheme ends.*

At present drivers may work whilst awaiting assessment, this will not be the case next year, so if you want the assessment software please don't wait until November or December.

**Talking of Grading** this month deals with why we need members and the considerable increasing benefits of being a **Graded Company**. There is also a feature on why Platinum Member **Nick Pavlou** of '**Q-Despatch**' is smiling.

**The LPHCA** has for a considerable time been seeking the removal of planning consent from the administrative requirements of **The Public Carriage Office**.

This single requirement has caused a lot of unnecessary grief for operators as it effectively throws part of the current Licensing requirement to Local Authority Planners. Platinum Member **Roland Blanks** of '**Best Cars**' in Erith is embroiled in an upstairs / downstairs battle with planners in his local authority.

**The LPHCA** has stepped in to support **Roland** whose Platinum membership gets us on site to help him. I've already been down to Erith to witness first hand the madness of bureaucracy over common sense and safety. **The LPHCA** remains committed to making the world a safer place whilst exposing bureaucracy that is out of touch. We are supporting **Best Cars** all the way to The Planning Inspectorate where their appeal now resides.

Some better news is the beginning of the end for the so-called '**Loophole**' in the **Private Hire**

**Vehicles (London) 1998 Act**. We publish details of a letter from the **Department for Transport** that will spell the end for those avoiding Licensing in London. We also publish our thoughts on the timescale for those who have 'not been playing the game' and we see the time to be allowed to conform as an **absolute minimum**.

The most commonly asked question to the Association is "When are we going to get into the bus lanes"? It is closely followed by "Why as a '**TfL Licensed**' Mode of Transport are we ticketed by them when picking up and setting down on Red Routes?"

Well we are making progress in these areas but with some apathy and a lack of 'pulling together' pan industry it remains a hard task. **The LPHCA** needs more members and we need a different mindset from those who don't join. **The Private Hire Board**, which was set up to be a body that moves us forward is wholly funded, managed 'day to day' by **LPHCA Graded Company** members. If it wasn't for **Eddie Townson's** considerable personal input it would possibly collapse.

The good news is that we are getting closer on **Red Routes** and **Bus Lanes** but there is *still so much to do*. An extract from **The London Assembly** question and answer session with **Mayor Ken Livingstone** on these subjects looks positive and is reproduced in this edition of **Private Hire News**. We have also had a reply from the **Mayor** on Signage, so **The LPHCA** and **The Private Hire Board** are making progress.

How much progress we can make is dependent on how much support we can get and to this end I received a letter from non member **Lee Hanson of Plaistow & Stratford Car Services** by email and post asking for help.

As I picked it up before returning from holiday I called **Mr Hanson** for a chat as much of it made sense, however I was astonished to find out how little he actually knew of our work. The letter on page 45 is well worth reading, so are my comments.

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