

Mountview News



Radio Taxi Group Limited

September 2010

WE'RE BACK!



RadioTaxis
The world's first carbon neutral taxi company

020 7272 0272

GOLD



WELCOME BACK...

After several years of successful production, **Mountview News** disappeared. Now with the passing of time, many drivers look back with fond memories of their **lost Magazine**. In order to put things right and restore the voice of Radio Taxis through these slick and well designed pages, I am proud to have inherited the Editor's chair together with a team of dedicated workers. Our re-launched magazine will bring you information with plenty of entertainment and enjoyment to read whenever and wherever you wish.

TO INTRODUCE MYSELF...

My name is **Roger Sligo** and for the past 26 years I have been a green badge taxi driver with 12 years' service on Radio Taxis. I have my own successful internet website company, which exceeds 35,000 hits per month. For the last year I have been working on RTG's monthly **E-View Magazine** as web designer and editor which I hope to continue doing. E-View has been well received and is a good tool for presenting drivers and the public alike with the everyday challenges on the streets of London. Believe me, as a working taxi driver I know them all! However we do appreciate not all drivers have computers, and therefore it only seems fair to include every driver with a hard copy magazine delivered right to the door.

I have also been involved working with Chairman and CEO **Geoffrey Riesel** on the new company website; **www.radiotaxis.co.uk** – as consultant for SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) which helps people find Radio Taxis by listing us the top end of the first page with major search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing, without the unnecessary costs involved with pay per clicks, making sure we target potential business users looking for our type of company.

I hope **Mountview News** will bring us all closer together and that you write in to tell us what you like. Send us pictures of unusual happenings from your phone or camera.

Mountview News will be published quarterly.

Hope you enjoy reading our first issue.

Roger Sligo

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 **RadioTaxis**

 **xeta**
BY THE LETTERS OF THE COMPANY

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MountviewNews CONTENTS





Geoffrey Riesel Radio Taxis Group Chairman and CEO writes...

Welcome Back MOU

AFTER A "PAUSE" OF SOME 5 YEARS

we have decided to bring back Mountview News and we are extremely pleased to be doing so. Why I hear you ask? Well we will still be publishing E-View magazine, which is a monthly publication and Mountview News will come out quarterly to compliment it and we will publish MVN online replacing E-View once in every quarter.

The reason is our acceptance that some of you are not yet ready to go 100% online. I am happy to say that we do now regularly get around "750 hits" a month on the E-View magazine site, which is pretty good, but it still only represents about 25% of our drivers. The important thing is that the rest are not keeping up to date with what's going on.

"I am very keen to ensure that our drivers all get to know what is really going on!"

In my view a good interaction between management and drivers is a such an important aspect of our business. In an industry like ours, without good lines of communication, rumours and counter rumours proliferate to fill the vacuum of information. I am very keen to ensure that our drivers all get to know what is really going on, rather than the tittle tattle which is the currency of the rumour-mongers, many of whom have their own agenda.

I reported in E-view last month that I had an interesting conversation with a really nice driver a few weeks ago, who had said something which struck me as very profound, which I trust he doesn't mind me repeating again. He said that after years of not having a computer and not being able to access the world online, he decided that felt like he was **"the only person in the street who still didn't have a telephone."** I thought what a good analogy, some of our parents or even our grandparents thought that the telephone was an instrument "of the devil." Probably some of our parents resisted change in their lifetimes.

Actually being online is just a medium for communication. What is said or what can be accessed online can be a force for good as easily as it can be a force for bad.

NEW BOSS AT PCO

I must say I am quite impressed; thus far by the new Director of Taxis at what was once the PCO. **John Mason** has started by changing the name to TfL TPH, which stands for Transport for London, Taxis and Private Hire. Considering that's what he's in charge of it makes sense. Also as you know, TPH has moved lock, stock and barrel to "Palestra" in Blackfriars Road, SE1.

John seems keen to bring the trade into the 21st century. My position has always been that I want to see the trade thriving in the future. I want our industry to be sustainable. I understand completely that the average driver, just wants to earn a living and then to just go home. The average taxi driver is only worried on a day to day basis about his livelihood and quite rightly so.

However, I see my role as trying to make sure that our trade does have a future, attempting to predict where we are going. So far John Mason seems to support that view. He does however want to modernise things. Not everyone in our trade likes change, they often say things like, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it"

Well in my view, there are lots of things that are "broke" and in any case if we had always adopted that attitude, we would still be driving Hansom Cabs and feeding the "horse" with oats. Progress is inevitable; we just have to make sure that we are the architects of it and not its victims.

We will be discussing in future issues of MVN some of the topics that really do affect the future of our industry.

THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Before I forget, I must take the opportunity to thank the editorial team (pictured below) for helping to make the "rebirth" of the Mountview News a reality.



Left to right; Doug Canning (graphic design); Roger Sligo (editor and photos); Penny Cuckston (administration); Geoffrey Riesel and Peter Gibson (board production).

REAR WINDOW

Apart from being the name of a classic movie by Alfred Hitchcock and starring James Stewart and Grace Kelly, it is the area of your taxi that is crucially needed.

INTERVIEW NEWS!

For years I have been “getting it in the neck” from drivers complaining about Addison Lee and why they have been “allowed” to become so prominent.

Well there are many reasons; one is because they saw a gap in the market which was the supply of “taxis” ordered by phone to the general public. For years we in the taxi trade (especially the radio circuits) had concentrated on winning the plentiful amount of corporate account work. Over the last 10 – 20 years, most people in London didn’t even know they could order “a black taxi” by phone or online.

This helped Addison Lee grow to a size where by copying our uniformity (black vehicles mainly) they conquered the consumer market and then moved into the corporate account market selling themselves as 30% cheaper, with great success. They are not and were never 30% cheaper across the board, but the detail hasn’t got in their way.

The other reason they have been successful is, by good marketing. Their name is everywhere. Through PR through adverts in the press etc., etc.

IT’S BEHIND YOU!

But nowhere has their name been more prominent than on the rear window of their vehicles. They do not beg their drivers to advertise the name, they just do it. Consequently they have thousands of mobile adverts, as reminders, for our customers to call them.

Earlier this year we launched our new website. The site is aimed at attracting clients to open an account with us but more especially to be an online booking service, mainly by credit card.

The site deals with the myths about AL being 30% cheaper; it sings our praises as a great service with great vehicles and drivers. It talks about our new six seater Mercedes taxis; it extols the virtues of having a professional driver who knows what he is doing and who is separated by a partition for privacy. It allows a customer to book a cab with only a few “clicks.”

Almost 50% of the “traffic” going through our site is from “search engine optimisation” (SEO) – so for example, if you put in “Google” the words “the best cab company in London” for instance, we come out top of the listings. And we do so for many other searches.

Around 44% of the traffic on the site is from direct means. This means advertising of the site name, www.radiotaxis.co.uk directly. The traffic going through our website is growing significantly.

AND THIS IS WHERE YOU COME IN

So far, having “preached” for around 3 months, we still only have less than 200 cabs with the rear window sticker on them, to those drivers a great big well done and thank you, you are my heroes!

We have a scheme where you can win free subs (and cash) for displaying the rear window sticker, but you know what, apathy lives and rules supreme. I cannot believe that you are not

“banging” down the doors at Station Road to get the rear window advert affixed on your taxi. It’s invisible from the inside, so it’s unobtrusive.

This is how we will fight back against AL. By having thousands of taxis displaying our name and website so that the public can go online and book a cab directly, giving you instant work, or for the potential account clients to contact us online to open an account.

PUT A REAR WINDOW STICKER ON YOUR CAB!

Business is done online these days. Miss out on it and you are nowhere! Come to Station Road, if you care about winning back work, get a rear window sticker put on your cab, “do not pass go, do not collect £200!” Help me to help yourselves to fight back!



“The rear window sticker – let’s fight back by having thousands of them!”

FEEDBACK

Finally we are looking for feedback. Tell us what you like and what you don’t like. I am not promising to do everything you ask, but I am promising to listen to common sense. So write to the editor or better yet, e-mail him on: mvn.editor@radiotaxis.co.uk

I started this column by saying that communications is important; as I get older I recognise that it must work both ways.

Best wishes – *Geoffrey Riesel.*

Thank you Apple!



Steve Cooper, RTG's Driver Services Manager takes a look at the choice of MDT...



"Omg lol ;-) m8 cu 2mrw. L8ers." Am I going mad or just getting old?

iPods, iPhones and now iPads, whatever next – iMDT?

You might be surprised to know that Apple influenced Radio Taxis choice of new MDT. Here's the thing;

RTG has a hand-held PDA solution that has proved to be capable of fulfilling the requirements of an in-cab terminal. The software has been developed and tested and could have become the standard issue across the RT fleet. Then overnight the PDA device was no longer available!!!

It was withdrawn from production with immediate effect because, apparently, a component was no longer available, with no plan to produce an equivalent replacement

In my opinion, this was due, in part, to the new generation of "Smartphones".

Our unit is a multi-tasking PDA, running Windows Mobile, Operating System. The public are not too bothered by the details of the Operating System, but they do want their phones to play music, take photos and keep them in touch via email and the internet. Now the Smartphones manufacturers found that one way to conserve battery life is to design software to connect to one application at a time, no more multi-tasking and with the success of the Android Operating System there was no longer a business case to produce a PDA for the domestic market and so our PDA bit the dust.

We at RT searched around and came up with some PDA replacements but we had previously dismissed these units as being unsuitable. The only way we could assure the longevity of a new Terminal was to procure a purpose built unit and we found one that exceeds all the functionality of the PDA in the Autocab Zeus.

All of this Smartphone technology happened because the companies involved needed to offer an iPhone alternative. So Apple influenced the Smartphone market and we have a new MDT. Thank you Apple!

STOP PRESS: Apple iPhone 4 now supports multitasking!

NO I'M NOT MAD!

"Omg lol ;-) m8 cu 2mrw. L8ers." Am I going mad or just getting old? Is it any wonder that the younger generation have difficulty communicating? There is a lot to be said for the advances in technology that have helped break boundaries but please...

We have arrived in an age where a relatively private "Dear John" has been superseded by a publically humiliating social networking update on Facebook, for all the world to see. I have learned things on Facebook that I really didn't need to know and can't believe that a one time student based membership has evolved to the point where anyone from 8 to 80+ has a profile and "friends" they don't even know.

After an initial honeymoon period of about a week I cancelled my membership to what I now prefer to call "2 faced book".

Looks like I have answered my own question, no I'm not going mad, just getting old...

Roy Hughes, Radio Taxis Group Head of Sales and Account Management on...



TRIALS, TRIBULATIONS AND TENDERS:

A year in the Life of the Account Management and Sales Department.



“Once the genie was out of the bottle, it was never going to go back in”

SO FAR 2010 IS PROVING TO BE AN EVENTFUL YEAR FOR RTG'S ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT AND SALES DEPARTMENT!

In response to the economic downturn, the department was re-structured and reduced in size towards the end of last year. However, thanks to the efforts of an exceptionally committed group of individuals, the slimmed down department is more effective and more efficient than ever before, and it needs to be!

The main focus for the new team has been the re-contracting of the 40% of our account business that has been up for renewal; including the likes of London Underground, Westminster and UBS. I am pleased to say that, so far, we have managed to retain our entire “out of contract” business.

In amongst the PQQ's, RFI's and RFP's for existing clients (all forms of tender information, not communicable diseases) there has been no slacking with business development! Significant new accounts, such as Eurostar, London Overground and Moelis, have been won from our competitors. Also, as I'm sure some of you will have noticed there have been more bookings from established accounts such as Slaughter and May, Freshfields and Blackrock, where we have considerably increased our share of business.

As far as business development is concerned, it is always useful when we receive information or leads from Drivers – so if you pick up any information that you think would be useful in either winning new accounts or helping to develop existing ones, we would be very happy to hear about it.

One big change that we've noticed since the recession, is that clients have been scrutinising invoices and checking costs like never before – ‘waiting time’ and meter fare on arrival being particular favourites! Once the genie was out of the bottle as far as the focus on cost reduction was concerned, it was never going to go back in. As a result, explicit travel policies to reduce expenditure are becoming increasingly common and our clients see the role of Account Management as helping them implement these policies and therefore reduce their transport costs. In order to meet this challenge, a large amount of work has been done to develop innovative pricing methods for clients and we are certainly ahead of our competition in this regard.

To end on a team note, **Marsha Miles** is on maternity leave from the end of September (her third child is due in October). Those of you who have ever met or spoken with Marsha, will know what a big vacancy that is to fill! However we have been very fortunate to recruit **Kylie Wallace** from One Transport as maternity cover. Kylie was previously in the Contact Centre and has been with RTG for six years and will bring all that experience to the team. Also by the time this newsletter is produced, I should have hopefully completed the Great North Run. If I can finish in two hours or less and – as it's September in Newcastle – avoid frostbite, I'll be delighted!



Marsha Miles



Kylie Wallace



Like most drivers when finishing Radio Taxis' training course at Station Road, I was invited to book an appointment for a tour of the operation centre at Mountview House. Not having the time and wanting to get out to work, I never took up their offer – that is until 12 years later when I decided to book a tour of...

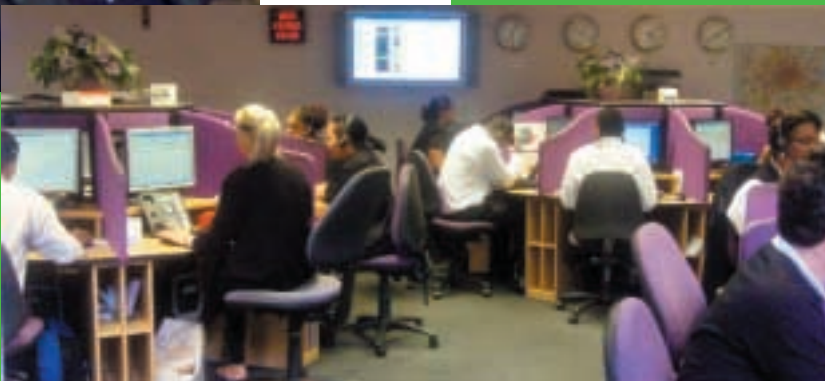
The Mountview Operation Centre



I WAS GREETED BY FIONA GAVIN

Operations Manager, who put me at my ease and made me feel welcome. Fiona's name had appeared many times over the years on my terminal with messages, so it was nice to put a face to the name.

After we casually chatted in her office which connects to the operation centre, it was time for my tour to begin.



are not totally alone out there and your safety is paramount.

Fiona also explained how they know when you do an advise arrival, a delayed arrival or a voice request. I saw how all jobs go out automatically from the despatch engine, so there's no chance of being overlooked in any way. Fiona also went on to say that if they have difficulty covering a job, it goes to another screen where a request goes out for drivers to cover it. I also learned that when a large fixed price is added to a job because of no response, the cost of this comes out of Radio Taxis' funds and not from the customer's pocket.

As well as taking calls in London there is also a national/ international network desk with four different clocks showing the time zones. Even this desk seemed to be kept busy with calls coming in all the time.

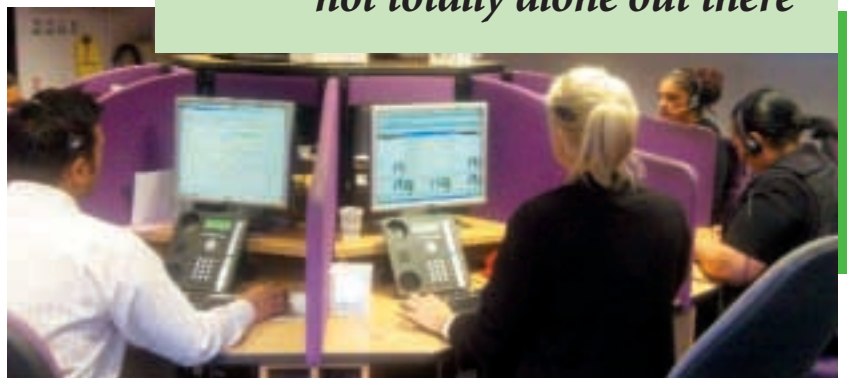
I must say that the staff went about their business in every way as professional as the best the taxi trade has to offer, taking everything in their stride and keeping their cool. Fiona said *"The internet Booker is doing well with credit card bookings since the new website went live"* another

I was impressed how spacious and well organised the working area was. The oval tables had sections for ten operators on each, with plenty of floor space between tables. Although I arrived at 1.45pm and in August with some operators out at lunch or on holiday, there was still a fair amount of personnel taking calls. Knowing how quiet it is in August, especially with the downturn in work due to the economy, I was not expecting everyone to be as busy as they surprisingly were.

I watched as one operator taking a cash call gave out the same job booking number to a customer several times with the patience of a saint. Everyone seemed confident in their work and very professional, something I have come to expect working with Mountview.

I was amazed to see how it works and how they know if you're doing a street hire job; how they are aware of which taxis are on ranks, and how much you have on your meter on arrival! I was told how an emergency call is treated, how everything stops while they listen in to find out how bad the situation is, before calling the police. This certainly makes you feel more comfortable knowing that you

"It makes you feel more comfortable knowing that you are not totally alone out there"

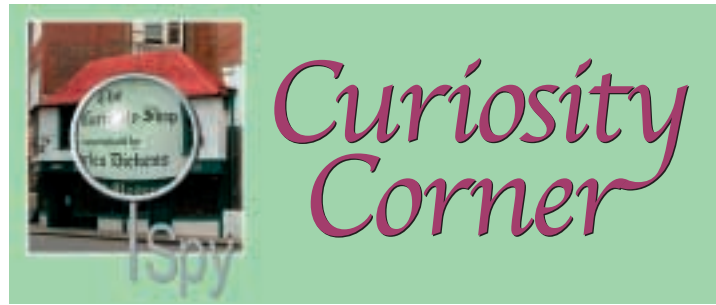


good reason to get the rear stickers I thought!

To sum up it was an enjoyable day and a real eye opener to understand what goes into the job which ends up sitting in the back of my cab. Sometime after I was offered an account job, I accepted it of course – you never know who is watching!

Thanks to Fiona for the tour and the guys and girls who we never see but who help to make it all work. **Roger Sligo.**





Roger Sligo on the mysteries of hidden London

Gibson Square's Temple



“A simulated temple with Pantheon overtones!”

THE MILNER-GIBSON FAMILY owned property in Theberton in Suffolk after making their fortune from plantations in Trinidad. **Major Thomas Gibson** died in 1807, leaving a one year old son also Thomas, born in Trinidad, to develop when old enough, their Islington estate. By the time Thomas had reached thirty, the building work had already started with Gibson and Milner Squares on his Islington fields.

Thomas Milner-Gibson the younger (1806 – 1884) was also MP at various times for Ipswich, Manchester and Ashton-under-Lyne, becoming an active anti-Corn law campaigner and President of the Board of Trade.

The plans for Gibson Square were made by **Francis Edwards** showing the usual layout of central gardens surrounded by railings with locked gates, open to resident key holders only. By the 1930's the Square had become rather run down and the gardens up-keep was taken over by Islington Council. During World War II the gardens were dug up with air-raid shelters installed. Afterwards it was restored and maintained to its conventional design.

London Transport in 1963 was busy building the Victoria Line and needed a ventilation shaft in an open space. As the underground line runs beneath Gibson Square, it was considered a safe bet as the land belonged to the council, and it was thought an easy place to build without any neighbours opposing it. The proposal was to build a fifty foot ventilating tower of a functional, unpleasant design. London Transport engineers were in for a big surprise from the now affluent owner-occupiers, who formed a society to fight this development tooth and nail for several years.

It was eventually decided to create a low-rise structure of a simulated temple with Pantheon overtones, designed by **Raymond Erith** and **Quinlan Terry**. When completed in 1970, it was with the temple in the front with niches and dome-like mesh roof. Now with the passage of time, the mellowing brick-work has given this air-vent Georgian authenticity.

Join The Revolution




The Mercedes Vito-Taxi

now comes with
3 years FREE Servicing



Can you afford NOT to have one of these?
24 hour test drives available

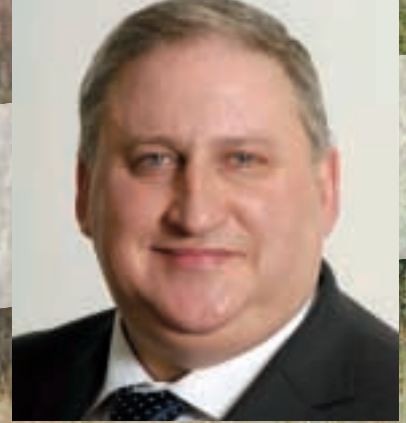
Call our sales team on 020 7375 1179 or visit www.kpmuktaxis.com

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KPM Mercedes-Benz Taxis

London business users only. Servicing deal not available in conjunction with any other offer. Servicing offer is for 3 years or 183,000 miles whichever sooner and applies to routine servicing only. All servicing work must be carried out at KPM Mercedes-Benz Taxis. Offer available on all new Mercedes-Benz Vito Taxis until 30th September 2010.

Alan Franks, Group Operations Director asks...



CROSSRAIL QUESTIONS?

CROSSRAIL, AS YOU KNOW, is the new high speed, high frequency link from Maidenhead and Heathrow in the west to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east.

- Linking the West End, City and Canary Wharf
- New twin tunnels are being built under Central London
- Completion of the project is due in 2017



THE DIRECT EFFECT THIS WILL HAVE

on the Taxi Trade is unknown however; thousands of people will no longer need to come right into central London stations for their connections. Whether this is offset by the ease that other people can get to central London, only time will tell, as London's population is set to grow (according to the GLA) by a further 0.6m (approx.) over the next ten years.

What is certain of course is the chaos that will be caused by the construction. The main tunnel work starts in 2011 and if the closure of the eastern end of Oxford Street is anything to go by, then we will be in for 7 years of abject misery. Do you remember the five years that it took to remodel the Strand in the late 80's and early 90's? Methinks that Crossrail is going to make that look like a weekend closure.

There is an information Centre at 16 – 18 St Giles High Street if you need further information and a website link here:

<http://tinyurl.com/crossrail-info>

Now that I've cheered you up, lets move on to something less depressing.



Roadworks at the eastern end of Oxford Street.

SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social networking sites used to be for our teenage kids to speak to their mates and show the pictures from the weekend when they were at some club slightly the worse for wear.

To some degree they still are, but sites such as Facebook, Twitter and the business version LinkedIn are being used more and more as a networking tool for business and as a communication tool.

Radio Taxis uses these sites more and more and has had some success in attracting business from these sites as well as from our new website on:

www.radiotaxis.co.uk

In the future we will be setting up a driver's version so that we can further improve communication. For those of you who still do not use computers, where have you been? You can still phone us if you like.

As this is the first new Mountview News, I have tried to keep it short. Be lucky.



IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME

since a paper version of the **Mountview News** fell through your letterbox and I am happy to say that we are pleased to be back. As my responsibility is Operations, I will be trying to deal with the issues that affect the daily working lives of Radio Taxis' drivers and not the politics of the trade which I will leave to others; just the issues from the Control Room and anything else that I feel might be of interest.

Peter Gibson, Radio Taxis Group Director and Chief Operating Officer asks...



What just happened

The issue of licensing mini cabs surfaced for the first time about 20 years ago. The then LTB (London Taxi Board) started discussing the issue and other bodies like the LTDA and TGWU took the same stance as the LTB for quite a few years when the crux of the issue was if minicabs are to be licensed then let them do The Knowledge.

The taxi trade held out and held off the licensing issue until 1998 when a bill was passed to license Private Hire in London. The PCO, the body tasked with introducing licensing, decided to put the “topographical knowledge” issue on the back burner whilst they issued grandfather rights and went about licensing up to 42,000 (estimated) minicab drivers and then vehicles. Of the 42,000 applications that were sent out some 28,000 completed applications were returned. A third of all minicab drivers disappeared. Probably, these 14,000 drivers had other jobs or criminal records or an inability to fill in a form, either way it does kind of show that this was an industry that was in need of regulation.

LIGHT TOUCH LICENSING?

In all the years that the taxi trade talked “standards” to the various interested parties that were trying to regulate the Private Hire industry, the “pucker” end of the minicab business were putting pressure on the same bodies to license with a light touch. As there were supposedly 42,000 minicab drivers and about 21,000 licensed taxi drivers perhaps it was just a numbers game, as the light touch won out and Private Hire licensing was introduced.

“Private Hire – few of us were prepared for the speed in which this change occurred!”

Many of us in the Licensed Taxi industry were aware that change would come once Private Hire was a licensed alternative to the “radio taxi” but few of us were prepared for the speed in which this change occurred. Many of the traditional “city” taxi accounts quickly embraced the “supposed” cheaper Private Hire alternative. All of the big named city banks had convoys of cars lining up, at night, alongside a diminishing number of taxis.

One of the assumptions made by many of us in the licensed trade was that Private Hire fares would have to go up. There was

a reduction of available Private Hire drivers, shrinking from 42,000 to 28,000 and there was the additional cost for driver licensing and for the licensing and testing of the car. But something odd happened; PH fares seemed to stay static. So, just as licensed taxi fares were perceived to have gone through the roof, with all the negative publicity around the introduction of the rate three tariff, Private Hire was looked upon as a welcome alternative and one that would “save them money”. I will come back to how the Private Hire industry grew very rapidly and managed to perpetuate the perception that fares didn’t increase and that they were much cheaper than taxis.

THERE WERE NO BIG PH FLEETS

The one disadvantage that Private Hire suffered from, against the previous traditional “radio taxi” offering was, size of fleet. Around 50 or 60 cars was a fairly large fleet back then. But these fleets started to grow but they couldn’t grow to the 2,000-odd size that the licensed radio taxi circuits were, so this paved the way for the transport management systems, the consolidators. Technology was used to join up several different fleets of 50 to 100 cars to create a fleet of 400 to 500 cars. And names like BTR, Freedom, GTM, Concierge, Oscar, Advantage and One Transport became well known in corporate transport purchasing departments.

Now the corporate user had a real viable alternative to the “expensive” licensed taxi because they now had “volume and price” available to them via a consolidator.

SAVVY ADDISON LEE?

Whilst all this was going on, quietly, something else was happening that was causing consternation in the hierarchy of the Private Hire industry... Addison Lee. Addison Lee ploughed their own furrow and have developed a fleet and a product that has carved out a niche all of their own. In the segmentation list of personal and public transport that goes from Tube, Bus, Mini Cab, Taxi and Personal Chauffeur, Addison Lee slot in between Mini Cab and Taxi. They have become the acceptable or preferred choice of the Private Hire using public. They do what



there?

they do in isolation. As far as I know Addison Lee are not members of any Private Hire association. **John Griffin** long ago handed over the day to day running of the company to his two sons, **Liam** and **Kieran**. Liam is an Economics Graduate, an IT savvy business man and Kieran is the marketing force that has put Addison Lee in a league of their own. With identifiable, air conditioned vehicles, smart well trained (in customer service) drivers and Sat Nav systems to reassure passengers that they won't get lost, Addison Lee are the single biggest threat to the licensed taxi trade.

AIR CONDITIONED TAXIS

We could spend days, weeks or months arguing as to how this all happened but the reality is that we are where we are and we can moan about it and cry "foul" or we can take a cold hard look at ourselves and say what can we do to put clear blue water between us and the rise and rise of Addison Lee. Firstly, we need to look at the vehicle that we drive. How can we still be able to purchase a licensed taxi in 2010 that does not have passenger air conditioning fitted as standard? It is disgraceful! Can you think of another executive or passenger moving vehicle that does not come with air conditioning?

MORE FLEXIBILITY

Secondly, we need to get a lot more flexibility in the meter. Shared taxi fares being shown on the meter should be available. Fixed Price fares, agreed by the driver with the passenger or a radio circuit, should be viewable on a meter. The advantage that Private Hire has over the licensed trade, because they do not have a meter visibly clocking up in front of their very eyes, is massive. We need to turn the meter being viewable into an advantage over Private Hire, not a disadvantage. We need to improve our customer care skills and the PCO can and should show a lead here. With the Olympics coming in 2012 they could make it compulsory for all licensed drivers to have carried out a customer care test before the Olympics hit town and to include it as part of The Knowledge for future generations of drivers.

KNOWLEDGEABLE TAXI DRIVERS

And last but not least we need to find innovative and continuous ways of reminding people about The Knowledge. A doctor is qualified before he/she is allowed to treat a patient. A therapist is possibly also licensed but is not a doctor. If, as a licensed taxi driver we are the "doctors" of transport in London, then lets tell people and keep telling people that they are safer in our hands, the hands of a "doctor".

"We need to turn the meter being viewable into an advantage over Private Hire, not a disadvantage!"

Private Hire is here and here to stay. If another Addison Lee comes along then licensed taxis run the risk of becoming a tourist attraction as Private Hire could conceivably become the first choice of the personal transport sector. We operate in an environment whereby each self employed taxi driver is an independent operator. Then we have the radio circuits that, by and large, are in competition with each other. So there is no structure in place for comprehensive joined up thinking and fund raising for "trade" promotion. This is a real ongoing problem.

The trade organisations compete for members and have differing agenda's driving them. Nobody has found a way of tapping into the whole licensed taxi trade successfully and until we can find a way of us all making a financial contribution to a trade promotional fund, we run the risk that Private Hire will go from strength to strength.

PRIVATE HIRE PLOY?

As for the issue of Private Hire fares that seemed to remain static when the expectation was that they would have to rise – well the mileage rates remained the same but the distance appears to have shrunk.

So I leave you with a Private Hire conundrum, when is a mile not a mile? When it's in Private Hire.



Gordon Brown, Radio Taxis Group Finance Director Speculates...

ARE WE SEEING AN UPTURN IN THE ECONOMIC CYCLE?

It may be hard to believe but the UK has now had 9 months of economic growth, with the highest GDP growth being for the last quarter at 1.1%. This suggests we are over the worst of the recession but is it true?

Certainly at Radio Taxis we are now seeing growth in job numbers compared to last year – more than 4% up over the last 3 months.

Our largest corporate banks and legal firms are now starting to use taxis more as they feel more confident about the future with more stability and more deals being done.

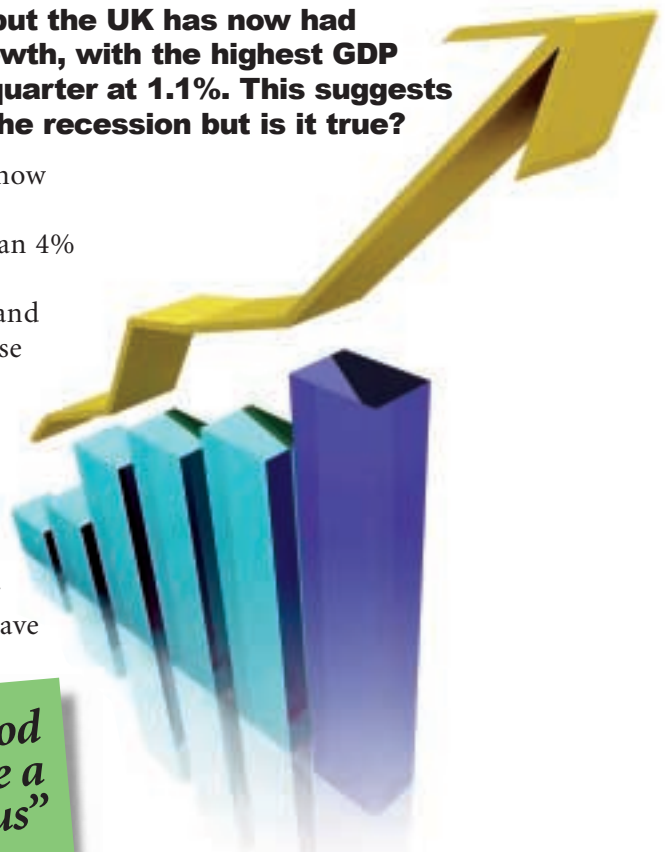
It appears that the car companies are also busier but in some cases struggling to offer the service that the corporates have become used to over the past

“Price, coupled with good service, will continue to be a major focus”

two years – and therefore some are returning to taxis. Let’s hope this continues.

Will our job numbers get back to what we were doing a couple of year ago? Last year our figures were down 26%, with a similar fall seen in the other radio circuits and even Addison Lee was down 10%. It will certainly take a while to get back up to those numbers.

The much hyped public sector cuts – 40% for some departments – will have an effect on us but it also gives us an opportunity as government and local authorities go out to tender and start to consider more innovative approaches to providing services –



something we’re good at helping them with.

Price, coupled with good service, will continue to be a major focus for both corporate clients and individual consumers when deciding on how to travel around the capital, with there being greater emphasis on fixed prices and cab quality to help win their business.

So are we over the worst? – Yes I think so, but we will all have to work hard and continue to be flexible and innovative to reap the rewards!

TfL SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDS PRIVATE HIRE LICENCE REVOCATIONS AT SECOND APPEAL STAGE

TfL LONDON TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE has demonstrated its commitment to take the strongest possible action against touts by successfully defending two legal challenges against its decision to revoke private hire licences.

His Honour **Judge Hone** rejected the appeals from the two private hire drivers at the Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey) on 16 July 2010. The two private hire drivers had initially appealed TfL's decision to revoke their licences for touting at Magistrates' Courts and then launched a secondary appeal at Crown Court level.

TfL took the decision to revoke the private hire driver's licences following their conviction for touting offences in 2009, following an investigation by the Metropolitan Police Cab Enforcement Unit in the Safer Transport Command funded by TfL.

John Mason, Director of London Taxi and Private Hire, said: "I am delighted that the Crown Court judge agreed that our actions were justified. It sends a very clear message to licensed drivers who think they can go out on the streets of London and illegally tout. Working with the Police we will catch you, you will get prosecuted and we will take away your licence. We will also robustly defend any legal challenges as demonstrated by these cases."

The courts have upheld TfL's decision to revoke Private Hire licences in 90 per cent of appeals before Magistrates' Courts and in 75 per cent of appeals before Crown Courts.

This month's NEWS

TfL HAS INTRODUCED NEW REST RANKS IN WESTMINSTER

TfL HAS INTRODUCED NEW REST RANKS enabling taxi drivers to park legally whilst they take a break in their working day. A total of 59 rest bays have been introduced across the Capital.

The first Rest Ranks are now installed in Westminster. There is no charge to park in the bays, but taxi drivers must obey by the strict time limit of 60 minutes to ensure the ranks are used for their intended purpose. Taxi Rest Ranks will be placed close to facilities so taxi drivers don't have to walk far for refreshments or to take a short break.

John Mason, TfL Director of Taxi and Private Hire said; "We hope the introduction of these much needed Rest Ranks will provide London's hard working cabbies with additional flexibility and convenience to stop for short periods of time during their long working days. By making provision for drivers to rest, we hope to reduce the problem of resting drivers blocking ranks which causes frustration for other drivers and passengers alike".

Rest Ranks are in the following locations, a TfL notice will be displayed at each rank to clearly identify it as a Rest Rank:

- Aldwych – 5 rest bays
- Arundel Street – 2 rest bays
- Great Portland Street – 1 rest bay
- Grosvenor Street – 3 rest bays
- Hyde Park Street – 6 rest bays
- Lancaster Gate – 4 rest bays
- Law Courts – 8 rest bays
- Marylebone Road (Baker Street Station) – 12 rest bays
- Matthew Parker Street – 8 rest bays
- New Bond Street – 4 rest bays
- Praed Street – 3 rest bays
- Russel Street – 3 rest bays

Derek Caldeira, Radio Taxis Group Technical Manager tells all about our new telephone system



New phone system goes in with only 2 minutes downtime!

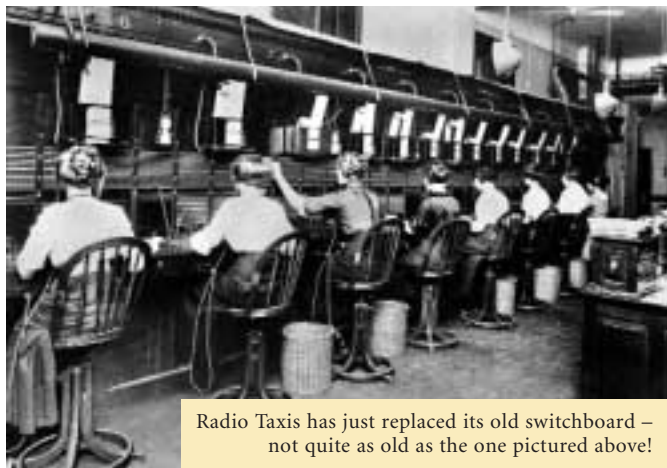
HERE AT RADIO TAXIS we like to think that our employees and our customers deserve the best, which is one of the reasons why we have chosen to replace our existing telephone system with a new VOIP (voice over internet protocol) telephone system from Avaya.

After carrying out some extensive research and reviewing the proposals put forward by various companies, CCT (Call Centre Technology) was chosen as the company to supply and deliver the new system. We selected CCT for a number of reasons. They are Call Centre specialists. We feel that they have best understood our ever growing business and its needs. Their proposal was the most cost effective and we were impressed with the support and system management they have on offer. And last of all we believe that the new “Avaya” system that we have chosen will provide

real and lasting value, proving to be a great investment.

While our (old) existing Avaya System has served the company well for over 9 years – technological changes presented us with real issues around growth and capacity restrictions, as well as a real danger of by being left behind and excluded from the benefits that a more modern telephone system would offer. It was becoming obvious that we needed to take the opportunity to embrace this new internet technology.

Many taxi supply contracts that we now bid for specifically state that our phone system should function in a potential disaster recovery situation and all enquiries include concerns with the resilience of the hardware.



Radio Taxis has just replaced its old switchboard – not quite as old as the one pictured above!

Our existing phone “switch” (a switch is the trade name given to a phone system) could not adapt, could not be updated and more importantly could not be enhanced to meet 21st century technology and consumer needs.

On the other hand the new system will provide a single telephone structure running across our various sites (Mountview House and Station Road) and will also afford us a high level of availability as well as automatic recovery from system, network and hardware failures.

In addition, the new phone system has the ability to enable remote home workers using a PC. This means a call can be redirected to a phone which is installed at an employee’s home and calls could be taken and trips directed to Pathfinder via our Internet Booker.

The system has immense capability and capacity, thus enabling the Call Centre to prioritise incoming calls on the caller’s identity, facilitating a much more efficient service for our customers and for our Call Takers as well.

Radio Taxis is constantly evaluating new technologies that will enable continuation of growth, to benefit our employees and to improve the efficiency of the services we provide to our drivers and customers. Some of these technological changes do not offer visible or tangible evidence easily of how vastly the new system improves over the old – but the new Avaya VOIP telephone system advantages will be like comparing a black and white television to a digital flat screen colour one, so great are the improvements. So even if you are not that interested in a boring telephone system – you are now aware.

“The new system will provide a single telephone structure running across our various sites”



RadioTaxis Credit Union



Radio Taxicabs (London) Credit Union Ltd No. 90C

Mountview House, Lennox Road, London N4 3TX

Tel: 020 7561 5148 Fax: 020 7561 5166

Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Services Authority FRN. 213232

Join the Credit Union

IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY SIGNED UP –

Just ask any member of our Credit Union how useful this has been when requiring a loan or just to save. It really is very easy to join, you decide how much you want to save each month and we will deduct it from your credit work on a monthly basis.

There are certain times in the year when a loan is needed, for example:

- Your tax is due but you are short of funds.
- You want a holiday but don't have enough money.
- Your cab is in overhaul and it's going to cost more than you planned for.

A typical loan from Radio Taxicabs (London) Credit Union Ltd is as follows:

£1,000 over 12 months will cost you £88.85 a month, total loan repayment is £1,066.20, interest payable is only £66.20, beat that if you can. In addition to this all loans and savings are protected in the event of an untimely death, this normally costs a great deal more with other lenders.

There is a qualifying period of 3 months from the time of joining before a loan can be granted, you will then be eligible, should you wish, to apply for a loan, this can be up to 3 times the amount you have saved.

You do not have to take a loan if you don't want, just save an amount each month until you are ready to take out a Share Withdrawal to pay for whatever you want.

For more information or an Application Form please contact:



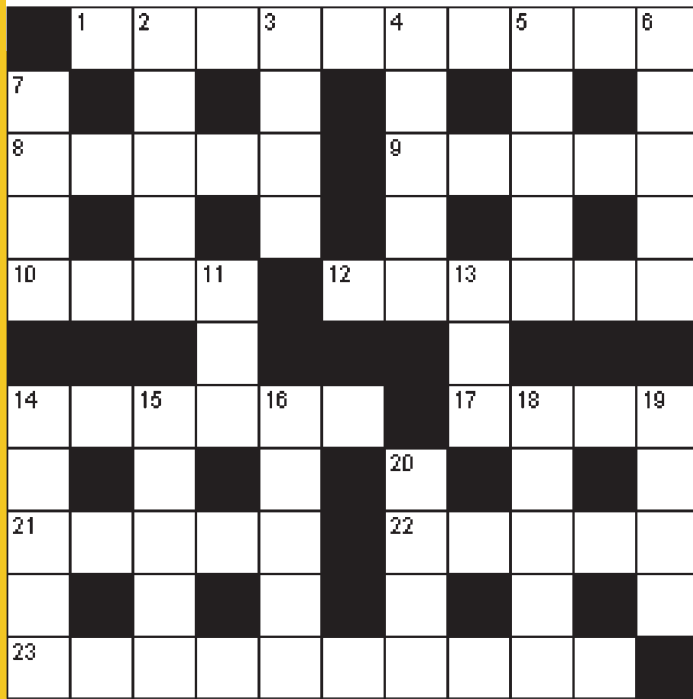
Alan Woolf on: **0207 561 5148**
Tuesday – Wednesday
before 13.00 hours.

Email him:
alan.woolf@radiotaxis.co.uk

Why wait, join now!



The Mountview Puzzler Page



CLUES ACROSS

1. Eager involvement (10)
8. Stream of water (5)
9. Take as one's own (5)
10. Ball game (4)
12. Guard (6)
14. Language communication (6)
17. Fruit (4)
21. In addition (5)
22. Boundary (5)
23. Executives (10)

CLUES DOWN

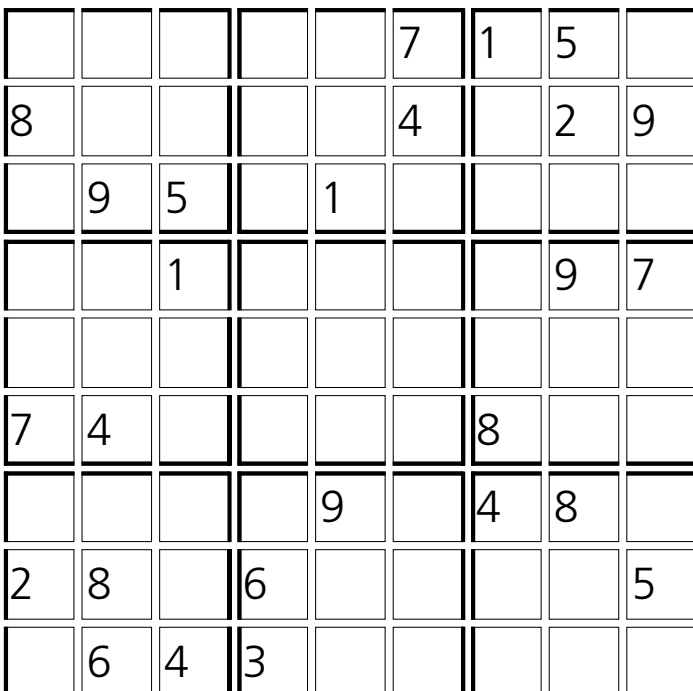
2. Pertaining to warships (5)
3. Solid (4)
4. Apportion (5)
5. Concerning (5)
6. Friendly (5)
7. Boast (4)
11. Enemy (3)
13. Doze (3)
14. Water vapour (5)
15. Consumed (5)
16. Loud, resonant sound (5)
18. Yellowish citrus fruit (5)
19. Mongrel dog (4)
20. Shut with force (4)

Jotting space:

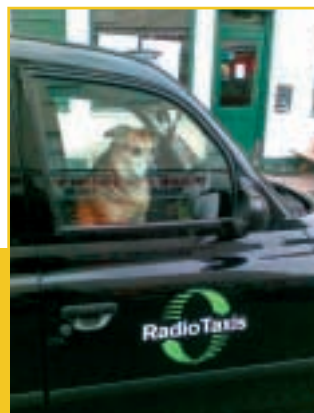
MOUNTVIEW SUDOKU

The object is to write in the missing numbers in the empty boxes below. But to satisfy only one condition: each row, column and 3 x 3 box must contain the digits 1 through to 9 exactly once. What could be simpler?

Hooked? You can find more Sudoku online at: www.sudoku.cc



The Mountview Amusing Caption Competition



CAN YOU think of an amusing caption for this photograph? If you can, please email it to our editor, Roger Sligo: mvn.editor@radiotaxis.co.uk or send on a postcard to:

Roger Sligo,
Mountview News,
Mountview House,
Lennox Road,
London N4 3TX.

The winner, chosen by Roger, will receive a bottle of Champagne!



Letters & Emails to the Editor...

LETTER POSTED BY FOX 24 STEWART ROSE *(E-View June 2010)*

Ross Rose, FOX 24's son, was entered into the Riding for the Disabled Association London Regional Horse Riding Competition, by his RDA Centre Penniwells of Elstree.

He was entered into two competitions – Dressage where he came first with 66% - and with the Farmyard Challenge, taking first place with 89.25%, this being the highest mark of the day for all categories and ages.

Ross will be 10 on the 26th June this year, and can celebrate this occasion with his 5 Rosettes and shield trophy which he was awarded.

After such a superb performance with his disabilities, he will now go on to compete with competitors from Scotland, Wales, Jersey and Ireland.

Well Done Ross – We wish Ross all the best.

Stewart Rose
Fox 24.

A FURTHER LETTER POSTED BY FOX 24 STEWART ROSE *(E-View August 2010)*

Ross Rose, FOX 24's son, who was entered into the Riding for the Disabled Association London Regional Horse Riding Competition, by his RDA Centre Penniwells of Elstree.

Having qualified with his riding for “The Disabled National Championships” through his region, eleven year old Ross came 2nd in the Countryside Challenge, and 3rd in the dressage section.

The Disabled Championships have the very best horse riders from the whole of the UK. Ross's response to coming 2nd and 3rd was; “Next year I'll try harder”.

Stewart Rose
Fox 24.

Well done to Ross for trying so hard this year and doing so well. Ed.

SEND YOUR LETTERS BY:

Email: mvn.editor@radiotaxis.co.uk

Or by snail mail: The Editor, Mountview News, Radio Taxis Group, Mountview House, Lennox Road, London N4 3TX.

E-VIEW MAGAZINE EMAIL

I was pleased to learn that Radio Taxis has received a fantastic response to the recently re-launched web site at www.radiotaxis.co.uk

– The resulting interest has transposed into a marked increase in pre booked credit card rides (+26% since launch) and a significant increase in new account enquires have been generated from this online media tool.

For a long time we, as a trade, have been passive in our attempts to generate and retain consumer (i.e. general public) revenue streams, in particular those who pay by credit card, thus allowing the PHV minicabs to get a foothold in this arena, an area that we should dominate. Now is the time for us to claim the lion's share of this work and fight back against an element of passenger transport that has thrived without the driver skills or the knowledge that we have strived to achieve.

Minicab popularity can be attributed to a few distinct customer perceptions, plus an awareness of the benefits of excellent marketing, “Taxis are more expensive than minicabs” NOT TRUE. “Taxi Drivers are not as accommodating as minicab drivers” NOT TRUE. Taxi Drivers are not as well presented as minicab drivers” NOT TRUE. “Taxis are uncomfortable” NOT TRUE.

We can do our bit to make sure that we are well turned out and practice our customer service skills, but we must promote our profile too. Now here is your chance to make a statement and show them who leads the way.

The Station Road Driver Centre is waiting to fit your Taxi with RT rear screen logos. Call in between 7am and 6pm Monday to Friday, no appointment required. Once your rear screen logos are fitted you will be entered in to a prize draw. It's time to show them who's in front!

Steve Cooper
Driver Services Manager.



GO! 60! GO!

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E: london@mannandoverton.com



Mann & Overton

Official fuel consumption figures for the TX4 (in mpg (l/100km)): Urban 25.5 (11.1) - 28.0 (10.1), Extra Urban 38.2 (7.4) - 41.5 (6.8), Combined 32.0 (8.8) - 35.2 (8.0). CO₂ emissions: 211 - 233 g/km.