

**DECEMBER 2006**



# Call Sign

**From the home of Dial-a-Cab International**

*Inside this issue...*

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**Brian Rice: Ten years as Chairman**

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**DaC's former Mr TaxiCard, Michael Dwemoh, dies in fire**

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**Call Sign's Mr Grumpy has heart attack**

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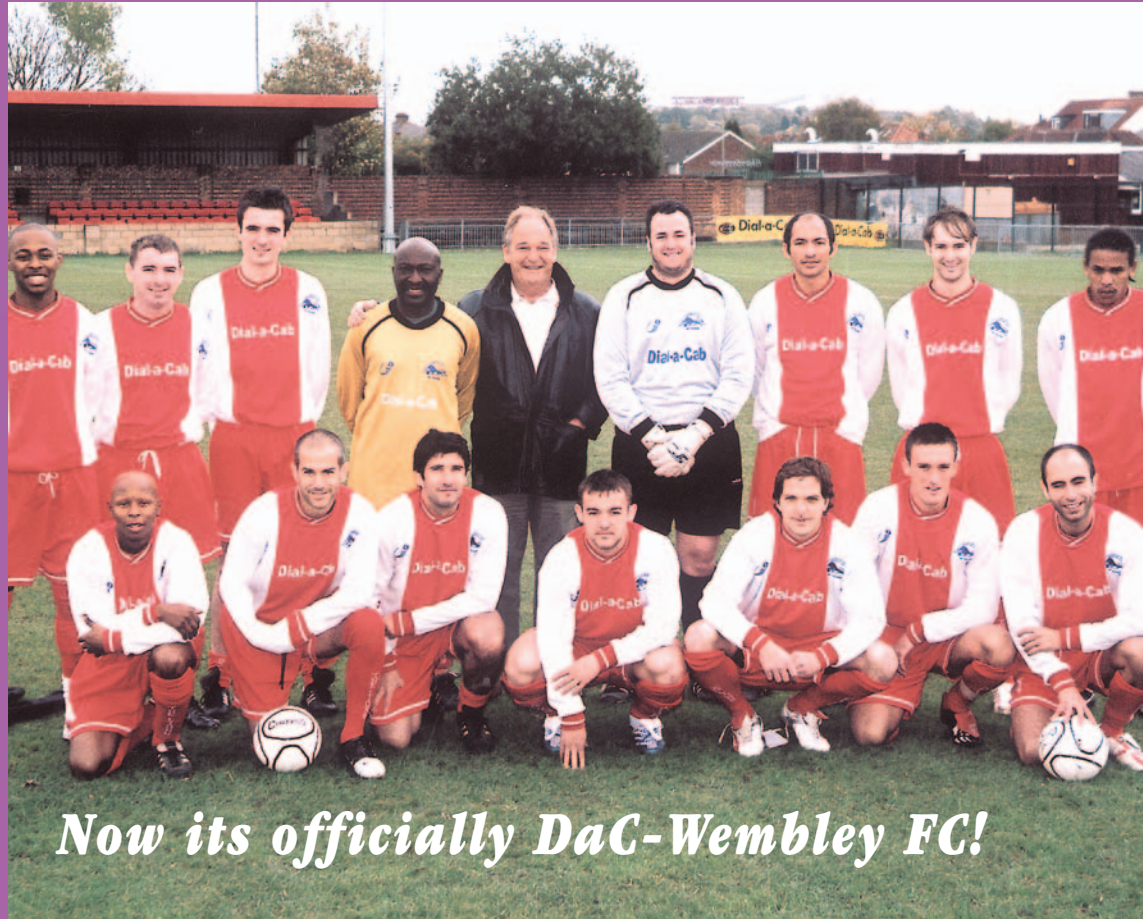
**Win a holiday every year for life!**

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**DaC election candidates CVs**

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**British Legion thank DaC**



***Now its officially DaC-Wembley FC!***



***Brian Rice says farewell to Roy Ellis on behalf of DaC***





# NASH'S NUMBERS

By Alan Nash (A95)

Back to pubs and wine bars - this month SW1. Plus the usual Whats On at the exhibitions centres... Can I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and as Sgt. Phil Esterhaus used to say in Hill St Blues - let's be careful out there...

Pubs & Bars N1	Pubs & Bars N1	Pubs & Bars N1
25 Canonbury Lane, 25 Canonbury Lane	Eagle, 2 Shepherdess Walk	Myddleton Arms, 52 Canonbury Road
Albion, 10 Thornhill Road	Earl of Essex, 25 Danbury Street	Nags Head, 12 Upper Street
Alma, 59 Newington Green Road	Edinburgh Cellars, 125 Newington Green Road	New Rose, 84 Essex Road
Alma, 78 Chapel Market	EQ, 142 Essex Road	Nobody Inn, 92 Mildmay Park
Alwyne Castle, Street Pauls Road	Florence, 50 Florence Street	Old Queens Head, 44 Essex Road
Angel, 03 Islington High Street	Garden, 179 Upper Street	Perseverance, 194 Southgate Road
Angelic, 57 Liverpool Road	George & Vulture, 63, Pitfield Street	Pitcher & Piano, 68 Upper Street
As Good As It Gets, 125 Packington Street	Green, 74 Upper Street	Prince Arthur, 49 Brunswick Place
Bacchus, 177 Hoxton Street	Green Man, 144a Essex Road	Prince of Wales, 1a Sudeley Street
Backpacker, 126 York Way	Hemingford Arms, 158 Hemingford Road	Prince Regent, 201 Liverpool Road
Bar & Dining House, 2 Essex Road	Hope & Anchor, 207 Upper Street	Rosemary Branch, 2 Shepperton Road
Beehive, 36 New North Road	Hoxton Square, 2 Hoxton Sq	Salmon & Compasses, 58 Penton Street
Bluu, 1 Hoxton Square	Huntingdon Arms, 115 Hemingford Road	Shade, 77 Upper Street
Buffalo Bar, 259 Upper Street	Jay Cubed, 73 White Lion Street	Slug & Lettuce, 1 Islington Green
Bull, 100 Upper Street	Kennedy's Bar, 297 Caledonian Road	Social, 33 Linton Street
Camden Head, 2 Camden Walk,	Kenrick's Bar, 342 Essex Road	Steam Passage, 44 Upper Street
Castle (Geronimo Inns) 54 Pentonville Road	King Charles, 1 Northdown Street	Sussex, 107a Culford Road
Chapel Bar, 29 Penton Street	King Edward VI, 25 Bromfield Street	Talbot, 109 Mortimer Road
Charlie Wright Bar, 45 Pitfield Street	Kings Head, 59 Essex Road	Tarmon, 270 Caledonian Road
Compton Arms, 4 Compton Avenue	Lark In The Park, 60 Copenhagen Street	Three Crowns, 8 East Road
Coolbah Bar & Kitchen, 55, Baring Street	Lincoln Lounge, 52 York Way	Trolley Stop, 28 Stamford Road
Crown, 116 Cloudesley Road	Lion & Lamb, Fanshaw Street	Tup Inns Ltd, 80 Liverpool Road
Den, 157 Caledonian Road	Lloyds No. 1, Unit 5-6 Parkfield Street	Walkabout Inn, 56 Upper Street
Drapers Arms, 44 Barnsbury Street	Lord Wolseley, 55 White Lion Street	Warwick, 45 Essex Road
Duchess of Kent, 72 Prebend Street	Marie Lloyd, 24 Chart Street	Weavers, 98 Newington Green Road
Duchess of Kent, 40 Half Moon Cr.	Medicine Bar, 181 Upper Street	Wenlock Arms, 26 Wenlock Road
Duke of Cambridge, 30 St. Peters Street	Mitre, 181 Copenhagen Street	White Swan, 255 Upper Street
Duke of Wellington, 71 Nile Street	Mitre, 130 Upper Street	William IV, 7 Shepherdess Walk
Duke of York, Platform 8, Kings Cross Station	Monarch, Croyley Street	York Public House, 82 Islington High Street
Dun-a-Ri Bar, 19 Caledonian Road	Mucky Pup, 39 Queens Head Street	Zigfrid, 11 Hoxton Square

## What's On at Excel, Olympia and Earls Court

Event name	Where	Date
Sale of Collectors Motor Cars,	Olympia 2	03/12/06 - 04/12/06
APTS Europe 2006	Olympia National	05/12/06 - 06/12/06
Counter Terror World	Olympia National	05/12/06 - 06/12/06
EVS	Olympia National	05/12/06 - 06/12/06
Infrastructure Security	Olympia National	05/12/06 - 06/12/06
Nikon Solutions Expo	Olympia Conference Centre	05/12/06 - 06/12/06
IX Forex Trader	Olympia Conference Centre	08/12/06 - 08/12/06
London Motorsport Show	ExCel public	09/12/06 - 10/12/06
Championship Boxing	ExCel public	09/12/06 - 09/12/06
Cage Rage Championships 19 - Fearless	Earls Court 1	09/12/06 - 09/12/06
Cat Club champ Cat Show	Olympia National	09/12/06 - 09/12/06
International Horse Show	Olympia	12/12/06 - 18/12/06
Kasabian	Earls Court	19/12/06 - 19/12/06
Iron Maiden	Earls Court 1	22/12/06 - 23/12/06

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# from the editor's desk

## Chas Kissin

To say that I was stunned when a Dial-a-Cab driver phoned to tell me that Chas Kissin had been rushed to hospital in an unconscious state and was on a life support machine would be a gross understatement. I've known Chas for many years and our kids used to go to cubs together.

Not surprisingly, Chas' home phone was engaged for hours, but I eventually got through to his wife Frankie who confirmed the heart attack, but also said it had been very mild and he hadn't even realised that he was having one! This trade is famous for its building up of stories (Chinese whispers), but I don't need shocks like that, thank you!

Chas is now feeling as good as ever and although he has had to give up his taxi licence to the PCO, he hopes to get it back early in the new year.

With his accident last year when his taxi was written off travelling along The Highway E1 added to this latest incident, Frankie may well be right when she told **Call Sign** that it looks as though "...no one up there wants him!"

Incidentally, as a last word to the story, the day after the heart attack Chas asked son Ryan to email me his latest *Grumpy* column, which he'd written just before the attack. Devotion to duty or what...!

## Brian Rice anniversary

It's been a standing joke for as long as I have been editing **Call Sign** that Brian Rice gets his piccie in more issues than most! Whilst probably true, if you looked through all the back issues – and no, that isn't an invitation for you to come to my home to look at every issue since 1963 – the number is probably far fewer than you'd have thought, but besides that, as the Chairman he is probably going to be involved more than anyone else. However, this issue of **Call Sign** may well break the record for the number of photos of one person – that person being Brian Rice!

On 1 August 2004, Brian became the longest serving Chairman in DaC history when overtaking the period of Chairmanship by Peter Fennymore some 20 years earlier. On 24 November 2006, Brian took his Chairmanship of DaC to an amazing 10 years. Like the majority of drivers and staff on this Society, **Call Sign** would like to send its congratulations because 10 years ago, possibly through circumstances beyond our control, we were bottom of the pile and now we sit proudly at the top. That is certainly worth an extra photo or three...!

## Working in Hackney

I believe the new PCO initiative of allowing suburban taxi drivers from Haringey and Waltham Forest to ply for hire in parts of Hackney is an idea well worth pursuing.



The yellow badges will be able to use the rarely worked ranks at Manor House and Stamford Hill – one I remember as being very busy in the 70s and 80s.

Sadly, these and many other ranks have faded into ignominy as we have forced ourselves more and more into the centre of town where we perceive the work to be. The result has been the growth of minicabs to the point where so far as numbers are concerned, they push us into a corner. Why? Because they work everywhere and we don't!

I know some will say there is a never ending queue of empty cabs with their lights on coming through Clapham Common 24 hours a day, the problem is that those cabs in the main don't really want to go back to where they have just come from and really have their for hire sign on in the hope that a passenger wants to go somewhere that we fancy. That isn't criticism, just human nature.

This trade needs the ranks that are no longer used to be given a resurgence of life because there can be no doubt that private hire are aiming for the sky and that means plying for hire. They'll start by asking for ranks and the excuse will be that licensed taxis don't use them and that someone has to provide a service to Londoners that don't live in the centre. I for one would rather have a yellow badge moving in slightly than a minicab and Hackney seems as good a place as any.

Those wishing to take up the initiative will have to apply to the PCO and undergo a one-off Knowledge test of the area and that may well involve a yellow badge driver sitting on the Manor House rank with a passenger walking up to them and asking for Gibson Square. I think the candidate had better know that one...!

## Happy holidays for some...

This may be a fun time of year for most, but not if you are editing **Call Sign**! The issue you are currently reading is December and in a perfect world that should mean that there is a month before the next issue

comes out. Sadly for me, but great for the printers, the next issue has to be done and dusted by the time they leave for their Christmas hols, which means that -postage allowing – the next issue should be with you around Christmas Eve.

So... the bottom line is that if you have any letters for Mailshot or questions to those standing for the Board at the AGM, I need them much earlier than usual – probably by the 14th December for letters and 12th for election candidates. The extra two days is to allow me to get a response if relevant.

So, if you see me around and wish me the season's greetings and I look as though I don't know what day it is, you'll know why!

## Wrong again?

I had two complaints regarding last month's issue of **Call Sign**, one from a driver and one from the Chairman of another trade organisation, the LCDC. Both raised the point that in the November issue, there was an article on the LCDC retest of taxi emission systems and that only the PCO version was given with no room for the LCDC response.

The reason for that was because the article came in at the last minute and I would have had to leave it until this issue had I waited for a response – by which time it would have been well and truly yesterday's news. Whilst that didn't entirely please the driver, he accepted that publishing schedules can bring their own problems – the above being one.

Alan Fleming, when raising the same point, asked me why I had published without asking them first for a response? I gave him the same answer, but also pointed out that it was a two-way process. In a previous issue of their newspaper, *The Badge*, they had published an article by a DaC driver which gave a totally misleading version of our figures. When I asked Alan why they had not checked with DaC first before publishing that article, no answer was forthcoming.

I'm not having a go at Alan because as I've said before, I greatly admire his grasp on the legalities of our trade. However, life is a two-way process and even then it's difficult to keep to it...

## And remember...

So as I don't really have much of a clue as to when your postie will drop the next issue through your door, can I wish you all everything you wish me! That should cover most eventualities.

But whatever you do, enjoy the holidays and remember how hard it was to get your taxi licence and how that could all go with just a few drinks. If you're not sure, then get someone else to drive...

Alan Fisher  
callsignmag@aol.com

# Reflections Of The Chairman

## Coverage – well done!

A Chairman's report in the December **Call Sign** that doesn't mention coverage would just not be the same! But I must say that under the circumstances, you have done extremely well and there is not any question in my mind that many of you have really endeavoured to give our clients a service under extremely difficult circumstances.

Are we getting complaints from clients? Well, yes we are, but unfortunately they do not understand - nor indeed do they really care - about our problems. However, I certainly understand and you are doing extremely well. But just because there is some praise forthcoming, it does not mean that you can take your foot off the gas, because providing our clients with a service prior to Christmas is as the saying goes, a marathon and not a sprint.

I'm very aware of the horrendous traffic, wet weather, closing of the Limehouse Link and the surfeit of street work that just adds to the fact of how very, very busy and extremely successful this Society has become.

Your response in servicing the Rolling Rank on the Island has been nothing less than outstanding, especially as the Link is closed for five nights a week. However, I have visited all our major clients in recent times and unfortunately they are all complaining about service – that's the length of time it is taking to have an ASAP taxi arrive at their door. I've explained that if they require a taxi for ASAP and the taxi arrives in 30 minutes during a busy period, then that is ASAP. If it's 10 minutes during less busy periods, then that is also ASAP. Unfortunately – if understandably – clients want ASAP to mean 10 minutes or less, 24 hours a day, something that is just not going to happen at this time of year!

Another problem we also occasionally encounter is our client's belief that our competitors in the taxi industry can do better than we can and that is not true, because at this moment in time and despite how very busy we are, Dial-a-Cab is providing the best service of the three. We may well have more work than the other two, but we are also running the largest fleet. We have a glut of work, while our competitors have a shortage of cabs – there is a difference! So in a nutshell, your efforts are really appreciated but please keep it going for a few more weeks until we get past the Christmas period and things return to normality.

I know what it's like when you have done your very best to get to an account client, only to have them complain about how long they have been waiting from the second they enter your taxi! I'd like to suggest that you apologise to the customer and explain how very busy things are and how bad the traffic is etc. However, what some of our drivers are doing is to complain to the customer that we have taken on too much work, especially with the introduction of a new large account on the Island! Hold on fellas! We started servicing that account on 1 July this year and have increased the fleet accordingly, so please, please do not offer that type of opin-



ion to clients as they could believe that we are neglecting them in favour of new accounts that we have taken on and you know that's not true, because I've written previously that we have terminated the opening of new accounts until the holiday period ends. Please remember that 'loose lips sink ships'!

By all means placate the client, but please don't tell them we have taken on too much work! The first thing they then do is to ring me for an explanation and the last thing I want to do is to tell them that my members have got it wrong! It is far better that we all sing from the same song sheet and just explain how very busy things are; after all, we have increased the size of the fleet, employed more staff and call takers, bought larger premises, stopped opening new accounts, operate an incentive for members and I have also written to every client personally explaining the situation – what else

can we do? So please, just one more concerted effort until Christmas and our account base will be secure for the forthcoming year!

## New building update...

As you are all aware, I do try to keep you up to date with the latest developments for not only our Society, but also within our industry. So without hopefully becoming too boring, the latest developments regarding our new building are as follows.

We have concluded our ongoing negotiations with the contractors and commencement of the new building's refurbishment is imminent. I believe we have done an excellent deal, not only on the purchase of the building, but also on its refurbishment. I have every confidence that the contractors will do an excellent job for us as their reputation is above question.

I am looking forward to the building's completion, but I will only be satisfied once we have moved completely and all our systems hold up satisfactorily, because in this day and age we are deemed as being not just a radio taxi circuit, but also a technology company and one that is extremely dependent on the latter. Currently, everything is going to plan but with just a little more slippage than I would have liked.

## It's Christmas again...

*Finally, I would like to wish all members, staff and of course the Board of Management, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and thank you for making 2006 the most successful year Dial-a-Cab has ever had!*

## THINKING OF HOLIDAYING IN FLORIDA?

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*The villa is situated just 20 minutes from all major parks and shopping areas. The villa sleeps a maximum of 10 people and the cost advertised is per week and not per person*



# Michael Dwemoh dies in house fire

It is with sadness that we report the sudden passing of **Michael Dwemoh** as a result of burns suffered during a house fire. Michael worked for Westminster City Council from 1989 until 2004 and during that time was closely involved with Dial-a-Cab and the TaxiCard service as the Head of Westminster Transport Contracts.

Michael was known to many drivers and staff at Dial-a-Cab and worked tirelessly to ensure that TaxiCard users received the best possible service. He was instrumental in working with Dial-a-Cab to set up disability awareness training and often attended area forum meetings along with DaC managerial staff and users to hear their comments.

**Clive DeRidder**, Senior Projects Manager at Westminster Council told *Call Sign*:

**"Michael was a person who made a deep and lasting impression on all who met him. That has been reflected**



**Michael Dwemoh at a User's forum held at Brunswick House in 2002.**

**in the comments from people as they learned of his passing – comments such as his being such a lovely man who lit up the room with his smile or that he always showed care and concern for others. Our condolences go**

**to his family and friends."**

The DaC's TaxiCard Manager, **Carol Carpenter**, told *Call Sign* how upset she had been when she heard of the tragedy.

**"Through the Westminster TaxiCard, I got to know Michael very well both on a work level and socially and we became good friends during the 8 years that we worked together. He always had time for people and couldn't do enough to help those he worked with or for. He also thought the world of Dial-a-Cab and even after leaving Westminster Council just over two years ago, still kept in touch.**

**He was just a lovely man who will be sadly missed by many..."**

**Michael Dwemoh:  
1968 – 2006 RIP...**

## HACKNEY EXTENSION FOR SUBURBAN TAXI DRIVERS

Following the success of the pilot scheme for suburban drivers in the Clapham, Balham and Tooting area, the PCO has identified another area on the periphery of central London that would benefit from a similar scheme.

Suburban drivers currently licensed for Haringey and / or Waltham Forest will shortly be receiving a letter offering them the opportunity to apply for their licence to include part of the London Borough of Hackney.

If accepted for the project, they will be permitted to ply for hire within the prescribed area, including the ranks at Manor House Station and Stamford Hill, in addition to their normal licensed area. A map will be issued to drivers involved by the PCO and will have to be kept with their driver's licences at all times and produced for inspection by a police officer or authorised member of the PCO on request.

In order to have this additional area added to their licence, they will be required to undergo a Knowledge of London assessment for the area concerned. This assessment will normally involve a single 'interview' with a Knowledge of London Examiner lasting approximately 20 minutes and will focus on journeys starting from this area to surrounding areas. The assessment will be designed to confirm that the driver can deliver a satisfactory level of service to the passenger.

The success of the scheme will be reviewed after 6 months and periodically thereafter to establish whether there is any increase in the supply of taxis in this area or if the supply of taxis in Haringey and Waltham Forest has been adversely affected.

Applications from suburban drivers licensed for Haringey and / or Waltham Forest wishing to participate in the pilot project must be submitted to the Senior Knowledge of London Examiner on the form supplied. Applicants will then be offered an appointment for their Knowledge assessment.

**Roy Ellis  
Head of the Public Carriage Office**



**TAXI**

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# Jery's World



"Sorry Mr Smith, but YOU will have to explain to your wife why you don't win a car just by doing 40 credit trips!"

## Addison Lee: "Not enough work but still expanding?"

Having been around since 1975 with a claimed 1400 mobiles, John Griffin's Addison Lee have undoubtedly been a thorn in the side of the licensed taxicab trade regardless of how close those figures are to fact. There is even less doubt that John Griffin himself is a shrewd cookie who knows how to manipulate the press into believing that AL, with their rip-off versions of real taxis, are as reputable as Licensed Taxis.

However, it also has to be said that it is no longer feasible for London's taxi service to provide cover for everyone that requires a cab and many PH companies seem to have found their niche in the market place – some on a higher plane than others.

**Call Sign** has now heard from a **Dial-a-Cab** driver with a close friend working for **Addison Lee** – one who has been there for many years as a driver.

Whilst we are not always too keen on third party versions of events, we have good reason to believe that the report we have received is true. Sadly, if we were to publish the name of the DaC driver who passed on the report, it could give away the identity of his Addison Lee informant and possibly cost him his job; so we are keeping that information quiet.

The AL driver told our driver that their "1400" drivers were too many and did not have enough work to keep them all busy. However, unlimited driver numbers provide income for the company and a falsely good-looking service for their clients at a time when everyone else is busy. That could mean that after Christmas, Mr Griffin will be marching into the account



addresses of other radio circuits – both PH and Taxis – and boast about their service and coverage.

However, the driver also said that he had heard Addison Lee's fleet were now aiming to expand up to 2000 mobiles because "...when that target was achieved, it would allow them a rank at

Heathrow's new terminal 5."

Who told them that, we have no idea, but we doubt it to be a prerequisite of getting a rank. However, if they did ever reach 2000 and their drivers hang around long enough, there is no doubt they could start pushing their way into the domain of the licensed taxi radio circuits. The expression *wake up and smell the coffee* could come to mind the next time our *reject* button looks tempting.

This may well sound like a begging letter ala-BoM to "cover the work," however, I think this story, which I believe to be factual, could pose the biggest threat to our industry that we have ever seen. "Think before rejecting" has to be our goal between now and December 31...

**Alan Fisher**  
Editor

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London's Mayor, **Ken Livingstone**, has announced the start of a detailed consultation by TfL on the proposed London-wide *Low Emission Zone*. The scheme is aimed at reducing emissions from the highest polluting diesel engine lorries, coaches, buses, heavier vans and minibuses.

The LEZ scheme is proposed to improve the air quality and health of Londoners by encouraging operators of large diesel vehicles to update their fleets and run environmentally friendly vehicles. From 2008, diesel engine lorries, coaches and buses that fail to meet a minimum pollution standard face having to pay a charge if they drive within Greater London. The charge would be designed to act as an effective incentive for operators to modify or replace dirty vehicles.

The LEZ could go live as early as February 2008 and it is also proposed that by 2010, the scheme would be extended to heavier diesel engine light goods vehicles and minibuses. From 2012 the emissions standard for HGVs, buses and coaches would be tightened to Euro IV standards for particulate matter. Transport for London has published a scheme order and consultation on the plans will run until 2 February 2007. Following the consultation, the Mayor will decide whether or not to

# Emissions Toll For Polluting Buses & Co....



confirm the proposals with or without modifications.

Mr Livingstone said: **"The proposed Low Emission Zone is the most effective way of quickly reducing pollutants that are among the most harmful to human health. It will make London one of the first cities in the world to have taken such a radical step to tackle air pollution and**

**safeguard our environment. London suffers the worst air quality in the UK and amongst the worst in Europe. We want people living, working and visiting London to benefit from better air quality."**

The proposed LEZ would use cameras to identify registration numbers of vehicles driving within Greater London and would be in force seven days a week, 365 days a year. Cameras would be linked to databases, including DVLA records, to identify a vehicle's emissions rating, whether it was liable for a charge and if that charge had been paid.

Through the fitting of particulate traps, all London buses under contract to TfL now meet a minimum of Euro III emission standards for particulate matter. Similarly, the Taxi Emissions Strategy requires all London licensed taxis to meet Euro III emission standards for particulates and oxides of nitrogen by mid 2008, consistent with the LEZ requirements for buses, coaches and all HGVs.



## DAC APPEAL RESULT:

An Appeals meeting was held on 21 November 2006...



### Name/call sign

Mark White (B86)

### Nature of Complaint

*Not completing the minimum number credit rides: Rules 20, 28*












### Original Sentence

Expelled on 6 months probation

**Appeals Meeting result: Expelled**

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# Chas Kissin Suffers Heart Attack

Call Sign received a telephone call on Monday 13 November from a DaC driver asking if we had heard that *Call Sign* contributor and DaC driver Chas Kissin (P99J) had suffered a massive heart attack and was on life support at King Georges Hospital in Goodmayes. Several other drivers later phoned to ask the same question.

To say we were shocked would be an understatement. *Call Sign* phoned Chas' wife Frankie to ask what had happened and indeed Chas had been taken to hospital having had a heart attack, however, it wasn't

quite as bad as the callers had heard.

He had trouble sleeping through what he thought was a bad case of indigestion. Eventually at 5.30am, Frankie called for an ambulance and within minutes Chas was being rushed to hospital.

Once there and after having had an ECG, Chas, fully conscious, asked why everyone was rushing about only to be told that he was actually having a heart attack there and then!

**"I thought it would have been somewhat different than it was,"** Chas told *Call Sign* after being released, **"you hear of people having heart attacks, but to be fully conscious and not even realise it!"**

Needless to say, his heart attack was very mild and he has now given up his one vice –



smoking. **"I had no choice,"** he told us, **"they were quite vocal in telling me that!"**

Chas has now had to surrender his badge and Bill to the PCO but hopes to get them back early in the new year.

Just prior to his heart attack, Chas was delighted to hear of the engagement of his youngest son Ryan to Danielle. *Call Sign* sends its congratulations to them both...



## TAXI EMISSIONS STRATEGY - PCO FURTHER MEASURES

*Emission abatement systems - enhanced installation requirements*



PCO Notice 27/06 issued on 19 May 2006 recommended a number of specific servicing requirements to be carried out prior to, or during, the fitment of any of the approved emission abatement technologies. It has now come to light that some cabs are not being prepared adequately or subsequently maintained to the necessary standard. These are deficiencies that would also affect the efficient operation of the vehicle even without an emission reduction system fitted.

Therefore, for the benefit of cab proprietors and to ensure the correct fitting of systems, the PCO will, with effect from 4 December, require the following measures to be put in place and complied with when emission reduction systems are installed.

Equipment manufacturers/installers are to introduce a 'Fitment Sign-off Declaration' to provide documented evidence that the following pre and post-fitment checks have been carried out. This document is to be retained by the cab proprietor and made available to the PCO when the vehicle is presented for inspection. The sign-off declaration is to be completed and stamped by the fitting centre and confirm, as a minimum:

- When the emission reduction system uses a throttle position sensor, that the throttle cable was replaced at the time of installation
- when the emission reduction system uses engine temperature as an input to its control unit, that the thermostat was checked for correct operation
- that the cold-start solenoid was checked for correct operation
- that anti-tamper seals were fitted to the fuel injection pump once correctly set
- that engine cylinder compression tests were conducted and were within engine manufacturers' tolerances before the emission reduction system was fitted that fuel injectors were replaced with new or officially sourced reconditioned units with new nozzles
- that the air, oil and fuel filters were changed
- that a free acceleration (MoT) smoke test was carried out (with the results stated on the sign-off sheet) after the emission reduction system was fitted and that the result was within current legal limits...

The 'Fitment Sign-off' sheet must also contain the taxi's make, model, mileage, registration number and fitment date and may also have the system's serial number and installer's official stamp if required.

The Energy Saving Trust has confirmed that these measures will maximise the benefit and robustness of any emission reduction system in terms of its operational lifetime and emissions performance.

The PCO remains confident that all the approved emission reduction systems are fit for purpose and, if correctly fitted to properly prepared and maintained vehicles that have undergone the measures listed above, will deliver the required standard.

Taxi owners are reminded that they have a responsibility to keep their vehicles in 'good order and repair', (paragraph 14(j) of the London Cab Order 1934) and be 'maintained to approved standards' as set out in section 28 of the Condition of Fitness 2000.

**Roy Ellis**  
Head of the Public Carriage Office



THE HON. PRESIDENT,  
HON. CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE OF  
THE LONDON TAXIDRIVERS' FUND FOR  
UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN

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**COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON**

WITH GRATEFUL THANKS TO ALL OUR  
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## We're doing the business!

A few months back I wrote in my article that the busy period was upon us and it was up to all of our members to go that extra mile and provide a service that was better than excellent. Well I'm pleased to say that the vast majority of members have done exactly what has been asked of them. Our clients have been given what can only be called the highest possible service during our busiest period ever. I know that we recently introduced the car incentive, but my belief is the service would still have been the same even if the cars were not up for grabs. The numbers of Call Centre staff have been increased to meet demands and I'm pleased to report that the new recruits are doing very well. If you do see some strange instructions or missed information, please make some allowances and I assure you the new development training we have embarked on for all staff will come to fruition in the months to come.

The coverage of an evening on the island and EC5 has to be worth a mention. Our controllers set the response times for staff to inform clients at the time of booking how long the expected wait for a taxi will be. Over the past few weeks, we have been offering a service up to 15/20 minutes. Our stats show that driver's response times are averaging 10/12 minutes. I really cannot tell you how very good these times are and DaC members should be very proud of the service you are giving.

But – and isn't there always a 'but' – our success does not mean that we can afford to take our foot off the pedal. There are still a few weeks remaining until Christmas and our early morning period along with the week-ends needs to improve if we are going to be able to say our complete service reached the highest levels possible. Unfortunately, controllers have been forced into making more trips during the morning non-rejectable. I have expressed my feelings verbally, using words the Editor would not like me to put down in print and argued the case against them doing it but it's only because they are passionate and conscientiousness about doing their job - together with the actions of a few drivers who reject exceptionally large numbers of trips - that causes the need for them to put *non-rejectable* onto a trip. They have produced the evidence to back up their side of the argument and it is astounding to see what some drivers do every day.

I'm afraid I have no defence against the controller's arguments and recently have had to deal with some very irate clients that they have passed on to me to get an explanation as to why their cab had not arrived on time when the booking was made hours - if not days - in advance? I can see the controller's total frustration and why they are doing it.

**Disregarding executive accounts - which are non-rejectable at all times - only trips that have been through a complete trip cycle ie primary zone, back up zones and then BIDS, are re-matched as non-rejectable. As soon as the trips start searching in their back up zones, they revert to normal trips again.**

Despite a few glitches, which we can manage, our service compares to the words of the Tina Turner song "... better than all the rest!" Please keep it going! Dial-a-Cab is moving forward with

Another Dial-a-Cab Call Centre update from Keith Cain...

# Call Centre Chat



great strength and everyone associated with the Society - members, staff and the Board - are all part of that well-oiled machine and not one of us should feel anything other than pride at the position our Society finds itself in.

## EC5 modification update...

The modification to splitting EC5 has been implemented into the dispatch system and an information sheet will soon be available from Driver's Reception. It is very important if you are booked into EC5 prior to the information message being sent, as it explains what time the zone will be split. You must then book into one of the 4 EC zones to get offered a trip. Members must also pay careful attention to the trip offer screen. Only trips offered in their primary zone are non-rejectable. If a trip is offered from a back up zone, it can be rejected. When on the *going home* facility, it is

strongly recommended that you only BID for trips. While the system will allow you to book in to any of the 4 EC zones while on a *going home*, it will not recognise this and offer you a trip that you will not be able to see either where the pick up or destination is and you will have to accept it. The idea of splitting EC5 is to help drivers not having to travel from one side of the city to the other in order to pick up a trip. EC5 in its present format has been very successfully operated by the Society for many years. If the change is abused and our service is put into jeopardy, then controllers will take the decision not to switch it on. Service must always be in the forefront of everyone's mind. If you remain booked in to EC5 once it has been split, you will not be offered any work.

## When the bug has gone!

**STOP PRESS!** Having written all the above, we have just been notified of a bug on EC5 when on a *going home*. I'm really sorry, but this will obviously delay the implementation of splitting the zone. It's incredible with all the testing on the training system that was carried out, that it did not show up the problem, but when implemented on the live system - bingo! It all goes wrong! Therefore until further notice, drivers are not permitted to book into EC5 with their *going home* facility on.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members and their families a Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

**Keith Cain**  
Driver Operations/  
Call Centre Manager

## CONDO FOR RENT

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Gym, Restaurant, 10 Minutes Disney Nr  
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10% discount for Dial-a-Cab drivers  
Contact John (M13) on 07921 920743...**

**Drivers are hailing the newly launched TX4 London taxi as the best purpose-built cab ever.**

Hundreds of eager cabbies have been inundating LTI dealers wanting to see the latest incarnation of the world-famous vehicle and sign up for a test drive - and the early feedback from them is that the TX4 is living up to the hype.

The TX4 keeps the distinctive world-famous London taxi shape with subtle changes to the front end and an eye-catching new grille. The purpose-built cab is compliant with incoming Euro IV emissions rules thanks to a new VM turbodiesel engine, features anti-lock brakes as standard and has been upgraded inside for improved comfort for both driver and passengers.

It retains the full raft of accessibility features, including an integral wheelchair ramp, brightly coloured grab rails and induction loop that have helped to make previous TX models so popular.

Revealed to the world on October 18 at Lords cricket ground, sales have been brisk with drivers singling out the more responsive and quieter engine, smoother ride, ABS and sleek styling as its main improvements over previous TX models.

"My first impressions are that it is a much better vehicle," said Edinburgh driver David Hamilton, one of the first to take delivery of a TX4 through city dealer Patons.

"I need vehicles that are reliable and durable as this is important for my business. I like the fact that I drive a respected and easily identifiable vehicle. To be honest, it was really exciting when test-driving my new cab; it is such a beautiful vehicle. I really like the new design overall - it's sleeker, but unmistakably a London cab that the public recognise. It's also better for the environment and that's good. I will tell my passengers that they are privileged to be driven in the new generation TX4 and hope they enjoy their journey as much as I enjoy driving them!"

Mick Norton, owner of Swift Yellow Cabs, in Leicester is another instant fan of the TX4 after ordering nine for his fleet from Conders in Peterborough.

"Previous TX models have been so fantastic that I could not really see how they could improve on the quality," said Mick, "but compared to the other models, the TX4 has an improved ABS braking system and better suspension that creates a much smoother ride for the customer. I've also noticed better acceleration. The main reasons I bought the new cabs are that they are made for the job and easily recognisable. Passengers throughout the world know the shape. It is an icon. Another considerable reason was that it has a new, lower emissions Euro IV engine and

# Drivers Rushing Out To Buy The New TX4



**2 Symbols of London - The TX4 and the London Eye**

so is better for the environment. The feedback I've received so far on the TX4 is really good. My drivers enjoy driving the new cab and I would not have a different model. I can only say that all my drivers are proud to drive this new model TX4 through the streets of Leicester."

Satisfied customers around the country have echoed the comments.

Matthew Cheyne, Sales and Marketing Director with Coventry-based LTI Vehicles, told *Call Sign*:

"The new Euro IV compliant TX4 really is a revelation. Not only is it setting new standards for emissions, safety and comfort, but also for sales levels. All our dealers have been inundated with customers since the launch of the TX4. The new vehicle retains the distinctive shape that has made the London taxi instantly recognisable across the world, but combines that with the latest technology and performance, with a raft of features that make it the most socially inclusive vehicle ever."

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# A Bigger & Better Mann & Overton



## Bigger Showroom

We've doubled the size of our dealership so we can better show off our huge selection of the TX range of purpose built taxis - including the brand new TX4!

## Better Location

The new Mann & Overton is now closer to many of London's mainline stations, including Kings Cross, St Pancras and Euston, so now we're even more conveniently located to where you work...

## Bigger Aftersales

The size of our workshop will soon be doubled - making it easier to book your cab in at a convenient time and our new Parts department has increased by 50% too so we can better serve all your TX aftersales needs.

## Better Facilities

At Brewery Road there's more than double the parking space with a team of ten attendants to greet you on arrival and we hope to make your visit to us even more comfortable than before with many more improved customer friendly surroundings.



Mann & Overton have moved to  
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Tel: 020 7700 0888 Fax: 020 7700 6676  
E-Mail: [london@mannandoverton.com](mailto:london@mannandoverton.com)

*Come and see us soon...*



Mann & Overton





### Brian Rice goes 'under the hammer'!

*Brian Rice is better known for being the successful Chairman of Dial-a-Cab, but away from the hustle and bustle of preparing our busy run-up to Christmas, I, as promised, managed to grab an exclusive interview about his other passion...Queens Park Rangers FC.*

### Russ: How did you become a Rangers fan?

**Brian:** It all started a long time ago when I was born just 300 yards from the ground! One side of QPR's ground is Ellerslie Road and I went to the aptly named Ellerslie Road Junior school. Most of the boys either supported Fulham or Chelsea, whilst QPR in those days were a 3<sup>rd</sup> Division South side, but my dad took me to watch them and it progressed from there.

### Russ: Who have been your favourite players to adorn the 'Super Hoops' shirt?

**Brian:** Stanley Bowles! My favourite moment of Stanley was when he scored the only goal to beat Chelsea 1-0 at home in the FA Cup. Close behind Stanley was Rodney Marsh who was absolutely fantastic, but the reason I chose Stanley was because even though they were both very skilful, he could blend into the team just that little bit better.

### Russ: Are you pleased with QPR's current form?

**Brian:** No, we are lurking down the lower regions of the Championship, but I'm pleased with the appointment of the manager. I think and hope that, given time, John Gregory will do a good job for Rangers. I admired him as a player at QPR where I believe he had his best form. He also picked up a few caps for England whilst at Loftus Road.

We can score goals, our midfield isn't too bad, but we are leaking goals terribly at the moment. However, these current players were not Gregory's choice.

### Russ: You rate John Gregory quite highly then?

**Brian:** I rate him very highly actually and I'm probably going to eat my words at a later date, but he has always been my choice for manager at QPR. I think he's got the affiliation at the club, the history etc and commands respect from the current playing staff, which I think is what we need. He comes across in the proper manner, he's articulate, smart and projects the right image for the club. I wasn't happy with our last few managers because you never knew what they were going to say next! They came across as rather 'country bumpkin' types and I didn't think they were good for the club. I'm happy with Gregory and just hope that results pick up. Importantly, he has a good relationship with Chairman Gianni Paladini.

### Russ: Is it a case of getting 52 points as

More true football/taxi tales from the pen of DaC's Driver/West Ham fan Russ...

# Russell's Hall of Footie



**Two of Brian's favourite QPR past players: Stan Bowles (left) and Rodney Marsh battle over the number 10 shirt!**

### quickly as possible and aiming for the play offs?

**Brian:** You're right, 52 points is the aim but I don't think we have much chance of getting to the play offs at the moment. I think it's going to be a bit of a dogfight this season. Gregory has been left with some good players and some talented youngsters. You never know with football, we'll just have to wait and see, but defeating table-toppers Cardiff was a good start!

### Russ: If you could meet one footballer, past or present, who would it be?

**Brian:** Phew, that's a difficult one. It would probably be the greatest footballer that I've ever seen and in my opinion, that's Diego Maradona. I know people carry on about Pelé, but I'd like to meet Maradona and share a couple of drinks!

### Russ: What have been your greatest and saddest moments as a Rangers fan?

**Brian:** Winning the League Cup in 1967 when we were the first 3<sup>rd</sup> Division team to accomplish it. We were playing West Bromwich Albion and were 2-0 down at half time, but then scored 3 in the second half! Unfortunately, that was almost 40 years ago. If we get to the FA Cup final in the future, there's only one team I would like to meet and beat - Chelsea!

My most disappointing time was in 1986 when we got to the League Cup Final - then called the Milk Cup. I really thought we were going to win that. On the way to the final, we beat Nottingham Forest and Coventry City and then in the semi-final beat Liverpool over two legs! We beat them

1-0 at QPR, where Terry Fenwick scored and then we went up to Anfield. Nobody at that time could beat Liverpool over two legs and I was up there to witness a 2-2 draw - and Liverpool scored 2 own goals! Now we were through to the final and I, the same as the team, felt that all we had to do at Wembley that day against Oxford United was turn up! They tonked us 3-0! A bit of complacency...!

*The interview concludes next month with Brian's views on Rangers best ever manager, how he would manage Rangers, their greatest goals - plus the two footballing heroes he would like to see statues of in Trafalgar Square!*

*Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year whoever you play - except West Ham please!*

### Russell Hall (G44)

*Send your footie tales to Russell at [rwball@russthehammer.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:rwball@russthehammer.fsnet.co.uk) or look out for his cab when you are out and about, reg J111 RUS. He loves a footie chat...*

## THE KNOWLEDGE EXAMINATION SYSTEM: ACCREDITATION BY CITY AND GUILDS...



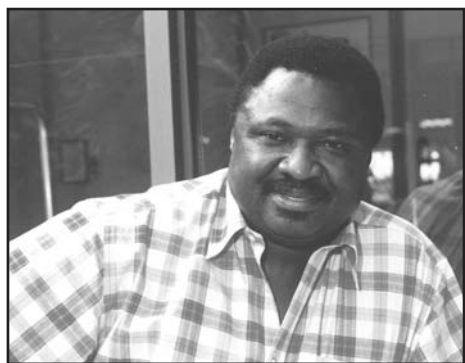
In a surprise announcement, the PCO have told the trade that the *Knowledge of London* examination system for taxi driver applicants has received accreditation from City and Guilds. City and Guilds is an internationally recognised awarding body and the UK's leader in vocational and work related qualifications.

The aim of accreditation has been to have the PCO's in-house examination system examined by an outside independent body that has up-to-date experience of the vocational education and examination environment.

City and Guilds undertook a detailed analysis and critique of the methodology and delivery of *Knowledge of London* examinations in June and July of this year and the accreditation process is said to give the PCO and Knowledge students alike the assurance that the methods and procedures used to examine the KoL meet recognised quality standards, have appropriate management structures and quality controls and are transparent and inclusive.

The PCO say they will continue to work with City and Guilds to ensure that standards, consistency and the integrity of the system are maintained at the highest level.





Some DaC drivers have said they are unhappy with Tom Whitbread's recent outburst regarding illegal immigrants and have called his views racist. Had *Call Sign* believed them to be such, we would not have published them. But whilst we have some sympathy with the view that they may not be the correct material for a magazine of this nature, we are happy that they are the personal views of someone living in a high illegal immigrant area with an also high rate of street violence.

We have now been asked by Dial-a-Cab's janitor, **Albert Kyei-Kankam Poakwah**, to publish his views on Tom Whitbread. He told us that he first met Tom 16 years ago, at a time when he had just been returned to the Board. Albert continued:

"It upsets me to hear anyone describe Tom

For obvious reasons, DaC's man-about-the-building, Albert Kyei-Kankam Poakwah is just generally known as Albert! He has been janitor at Brunswick House for many years and has never written to *Call Sign* before, but insisted on doing so now...

# Tom a Racist?

## "Never," says DaC's Albert...!

as a racist. Since our first meeting I have found him to be very friendly to everyone. He does not distinguish between anyone's colour or religion. I must admit that he is very passionate about England. It doesn't matter whether it is football or the running of the country. Neither does he hide his true feelings or talk about you behind your back and will tell you anything he has to say to your face. But if he promises to do something for you, he will always complete the task."

Continuing, Albert told us: "When I was applying for my naturalisation papers and

then British passport, Tom was the first to come forward and sign my sponsor forms – for which I am still grateful. I have also spoken to a young black lady in Hackney, who considers Tom to be her adopted white father and I know she is also proud to be associated with him."

Albert ended by saying: "If you ask most of the staff in Brunswick House, whatever their colour, who is the first person to make them feel at home when they arrived at Brunswick House, most will say Tom. A racist? Never..."

### Festive season greetings...

The nights are long and both my children, at 27 and 29, are single again. My son has moved back in on the principle that home is where – when you have to go there – they have to take you in. He has a lot in common with Glen, my Dial-a-Cab hero, as they both sleep half the day and stay out half the night! But Glen's alcohol intake doesn't rival my son's; not surprisingly since Glen is working hard to win that Peugeot for me. He texts me as to how many account jobs he's done before bedtime and I give or withhold food and affection accordingly.

But let's get seasonal – with no partners for my children, I've got two less presents to buy this month and Christmas arrangements are infinitely simpler all round. Apart from advan-

Views on life, love and the laundry basket from the lady behind a DaC driver...

## Back Seat *Driver*



and really thoughtful. When I was 16, a friend memorised the poem *The Walrus and the Carpenter* from Alice through the looking glass (and what she found there)! Her present to me was to recite it on demand for me throughout the year. Magic...!

**Portion control:** Buy a bunch of parsley, coriander or any old leaf to arrange artistically around HALF-sized portions on the plates in a nouvelle cuisine kind of way. Use smaller glasses for drink and don't refill them straight-away. You've saved £££ on groceries, your preparation time's halved and your home has morphed into a gourmet gastropub. No one gets sick or falls to fighting or passes out. By January, you'll be saving money on gym fees because you won't have to do the 'fresh start' business and you can skip the pathetic post-holiday detox diet. Think it through – three sprouts instead of eight, a tablespoon of stuffing – preferably in a flower shape and not a dirty great scoopful. You won't regret it...

My Glen works straight through Christmas, not for the £3 extra fare but for the empty roads, good account work and chance to act miserable while secretly enjoying the window displays and city centre lights. The seasonal display at Marks & Spencer at Marble Arch floats his boat this year – check it out!

Till then...

*Love Poppy x x x*

## M&O MOVE

**After many years at Holloway Road, LTI main dealer Mann & Overton have finally completed the move they have been promising, to their new premises at 39 – 41 Brewery Road N7.**

**Rumour has it they were tempted to call it Double House because everything from the Showroom to the workshop to parking space have – or soon will be – doubled in size. From *Call Sign* Magazine, our best wishes for the future...**

tages in getting family members to become single again, losing partners does have its sad side. But let's not dwell on it. I've got some tips for the hols that I'm happy to share...

**Cranberries:** Totally nutritious, colourful and easy to use. Buy a box, rinse them off and boil with a little sugar and water. Two minutes work and you've a fresh, delicious sauce for any festive poultry, ice cream topping or even a mixer for gin cocktails – if you've a liquidiser...

**'Service' Tokens:** My tip for family stocking-fillers: a magazine photo or drawing pasted onto a card with a promise the recipient can redeem. An evening's babysitting, washing the taxi, cooking a 3-course meal, a lift to Heathrow, even a session of your personal football, guitar or bridge coaching. Cheap, fun

Luck played a major hand in Dial-a-Cab driver **Terry Goldsmith's (R74)** choice of summer holiday this year – as his fortnight in the sun was courtesy of a prize incentive draw organised by DaC Chairman Brian Rice.

The draw, designed to reward driver loyalty, offered our drivers the chance to win six weeks holidays at any one of **Golden Years Holidays PLC** luxury villas or apartments throughout Europe. As holder of the winning ticket, Terry chose to enjoy a 2-week family holiday in a magnificent £500,000 apartment overlooking the golf course and hotel at Los Flamingos in Malaga. Also included in the holiday (and standard with any Golden Years Holiday) was a chauffeur driven limousine from the airport to the apartment, a chaperone and daily maid service. He also has another two 2-week holidays for the next 2 years! When asked to write a few words for **Call Sign** to describe his holiday, Terry told us with typical DaC modesty:

**"It was just fantastic, I felt like a film star – if only I looked like one...!"**

Brian Rice told **Call Sign**: **"We are delighted that the first part of Terry's holiday was such a success. Golden Years Holidays offer a wonderful choice of exclusive holiday locations and they definitely worked their magic with Terry and his family."**

Brian was first introduced to Golden Years at a charity dinner in aid of the national wish granting charity, the **Willow Foundation**.

Auctioneer and former rugby international, Martin Bayfield, encouraged bids from his audience and Brian successfully bid on behalf of DaC for 6 weeks holiday with Golden Years – a prize he then put into the Dial-a-Cab prize draw for last year's incentive draw in **Call Sign**.

## Another chance to win... and even more than Terry!

Jealous? Well you should be, because Terry certainly described his winning vacation experience as the holiday of a lifetime. But don't give up hope because Dial-a-Cab would like others to enjoy some paradise – again courtesy of Golden Years Holidays PLC.

**DaC, through Call Sign, is helping to promote a competition where the winner will get TWO WEEKS HOLIDAY FOR LIFE at any of Golden Years luxury villas or apartments throughout Europe! Yes, you read that correctly - two weeks holiday FOR LIFE at any of Golden Years luxury villas or apartments throughout Europe!**

A 'Spot the Ball' entry form has been inserted into this issue of Call Sign and extra copies are available from Dial-a-Cab's Driver's Reception at Brunswick House. You can also take some entry forms to hand out to passengers. Besides the reception, you can also download forms from [www.goldenyearsholidays.com](http://www.goldenyearsholidays.com) or [www.willowfoundation.org.uk](http://www.willowfoundation.org.uk).

One guaranteed entry will come from Terry Goldsmith, who is eager to repeat his most recent holiday experience because the opportunity to win two weeks for life with Golden Years is just too good an opportunity to miss. The company's portfolio includes a wonderful variety of

# Win a Holiday of a Lifetime - For a Lifetime!



**Terry Goldsmith - "Holiday of a lifetime"**

**Inset pic: Bob Wilson and daughter Anna - in whose memory the Charity was set up**



**The Goldsmith's Los Flamingos bedroom**

locations including Cirencester, Swiss Alps, Mallorca, Portugal, Madeira and the West Indies.

Brian Rice added: **"I would encourage everyone to have a go in this competition – it's a great charity and an unbelievable prize."**

All proceeds from the competition go to the **Willow Foundation**. This charity, founded by former Scotland and Arsenal goalkeeper and BBC sports presenter **Bob Wilson** and his wife Megs as a memorial to their 31-year old daughter Anna who died of cancer, aims to provide quality of life and quality of time for seriously ill young adults (aged 16-40) through the provision of *special days*. To date, the charity has fulfilled more than 1,800 *special days* for those living with life-threatening conditions such as cancer, motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis and heart disease – providing them and their families' with precious memories. Bob and Megs knew that if *special days* worked for Anna, they'd work for others. They strongly believe that between the ages of 16 and 40, an individ-

ual is in the prime of their life and should be enjoying new experiences, starting a career and developing relationships. When serious illness strikes, the individual's life begins to take a very different path.

For some, their *special day* is the last chance to fulfil a dream, for others it is an opportunity to return some normality to their lives, empowering them for what the future may hold. But for all, the memories of the day will stay forever.

**The closing date for the competition is 29 December 2006. The winner and a guest will also be invited to the Willow Foundation Ball at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane on 3 March 2007 as the personal guests of Doug Hardwick, chairman and CEO of Golden Years Holidays PLC.**

*Terms and conditions apply. For more information please read the terms and conditions printed on the entry form.*





*Hello everyone,*

I do hope we find you and yours in the very best of health. I don't know about you, but this year seems to have gone quicker than ever before. I was recently trying to establish whether I had achieved the goals that I set way back in January and realised that I have crossed some off my list, but alas some I have not. However, this is not helped by the fact that I blinked and found myself writing my Christmas **Call Sign** article - how did that happen!

I started with DaC just after Sept 11 2002, so had never seen such volumes as last year delivered.

It was always said that it would take five years to recover from that atrocity and during 2006 we have since seen unprecedented volumes throughout the industry. Clearly since last year's Olympics announcement, there has been a great deal of investment in London. The knock-on effects of mergers and acquisitions in the banks are clear when you see how busy the legal companies are - they all go hand in hand. This coupled with all the efforts from the Sales Team has meant we have gained some great new accounts this year, so once again I implore you to do everything you can to support all of our efforts by covering our account work.

When I returned from Crete in early October, we decided that as it had been such an amazing year for the company, we should not spoil it and temporarily stopped opening new accounts in order to protect service levels. This decision seems to have paid dividends and has not only gained us respect from existing customers, but also with those new ones we have lined up to do business with in 2007. I am sure you can imagine that since that decision was taken, how hard it has been sitting in at some very high profile meetings and then having to turn down significant volumes of work! Whilst it seemed early, this was the right thing to do. Christmas has certainly come early this year - the figures prove that.

In truth, we simply could not deliver our product without all the different elements that make up DaC, so it's important to recognise everyone's

## Selling DaC With Lydia

efforts throughout the year and I want to take the time to thank our drivers and all the team here at HQ, there has been a tremendous amount of work and great achievements for which we should all be very proud. With the New Year ahead and the move to the new building, organic growth is very much on our agenda.

I would also like to wish you the best of luck with the incentive, how fantastic to have three Peugeots up for grabs - I don't see our competitors being able to boast such stories! We are also celebrating 10 years of Brian's Chairmanship this month, so I would like to extend a big well-done from the Sales team for all his outstanding efforts and length of service.

### Yoga!!

I'm often asked about the Yoga I do, particularly now as winter is here and we all feel so guilty about not doing as much exercise as we possibly should. The studio I use is just around the corner to our new building and will be going through a revamp in the New Year.

**Bikram** is a 26-posture system that is practiced in around 110 degrees of heat to promote the opening of muscles and joints, detoxification of major organs and giving a boost to the immune system. The Bikram method works on a 'tourniquet effect' through compression of joints and organs, blood pressure builds up and when released, a floodgate effect occurs to flush the compressed area with oxygenated blood and enable increased healing. It is superb if you spend a great deal of your time driving or sitting down at a desk....

Go to [www.BikramYoga.co.uk](http://www.BikramYoga.co.uk) and click on Studios and City branch.

It is at 6/8 Vestry Street or phone 0207 3366330...

*Wishing you a wonderful Christmas time from both Natalie and myself...*

*Until next time...*

**Lydia Foulkes,**  
DaC Sales Manager

## DAC 2006 AGM

### Notice of 2006 Annual General Meeting...

All members should by now have received a letter advising them of the arrangements for the 2006 AGM and I would like to take this opportunity to remind members of the details.



**The 2006 AGM will be held as in recent years at The Brewery, Chiswell Street, London EC1 on Sunday 11 February 2007 at 11:00hrs.**

This year, the AGM includes the election of officers and any nominations had to be received at Brunswick House on or before 09:00hrs on Friday 10 November, as were any rule changes or propositions. That date has now passed.

**The CV's of those standing for election are in this issue. If you wish to ask a question via *Call Sign*, the Editor requires that letter by Tuesday 12 December for publication in the January issue of the magazine.**

**Howard Pears**  
Company Secretary

## Spot the ball competition

in aid of wish granting charity, the Willow Foundation

### Win a lifetime of holidays!

A once in a lifetime opportunity to win two weeks of holiday, every year, for life\* at any of Golden Years Holidays Plc luxury villas/apartments in premier resorts and locations throughout the world.



**Where should the football be?**

**£5 a guess**

proceeds to the Willow Foundation

Bob Wilson dives at the feet of Malcolm Macdonald. Arsenal vs Newcastle United at Highbury.

**To enter visit: [www.willowfoundation.org.uk](http://www.willowfoundation.org.uk)**

For more information on this wonderful prize visit:  
**[www.goldenyearsholidays.com](http://www.goldenyearsholidays.com)**

The Willow Foundation is a national charity that funds and organises special days for seriously ill young adults (aged 16-40) in the UK. Established by former Arsenal & Scotland goalkeeper and TV presenter, Bob Wilson, and his wife Megs, the charity is a lasting memorial to their daughter, Anna, who died of cancer aged 31.

**willow foundation**  
special days for seriously ill young adults

**01707 259777**  
Registered Charity No. 1106746

\*Full terms and conditions are available at: [www.willowfoundation.org.uk](http://www.willowfoundation.org.uk)

This issue's Mailshot contains a letter from Dial-a-Cab driver Mike Pollington (K17). Mike had the winning entry to Call Sign's Name the New Building competition with his 'LorDaC House'. This combined the two names we are famous for – Lords and DaC.

The competition rules stated that the winner's entry would not necessarily be the one chosen should the building be renamed, but it would give entrants the chance to use their imagination in thinking of a name rather than have to come up with a more obvious choice. **Call Sign** sent a list of the many entries to every Board member (except Keith Cain who

*Views on life as seen through the eyes of David Kupler (Y74) at...*

## Kupkake's Korner



### Norman the Doorman

Norman the Doorman works at the hotel, he ain't paid too much but he has stuff to sell...

Norman the Doorman has a lucrative trade, a house down in Surrey from the money he's made...

He'll sell you a flyer or a trip down the road, he'll give you a price list as the cases he loads...

Norman the Doorman makes no mistakes, he pays no tax on the money he makes...

There are plenty of fools Who'll pay him for work, they think they're so cool - but in fact they're all jerks...

Norman the Doorman will retire before them, his pension grown higher on the backs of weak men...

Kopyright Kupkake 2006

# Mike's DaC Loss is the LTFUC's Gain!



**LTFUC Chairman, DaC's David Lessman:**  
"We are very grateful to Mike..."

was on holiday) and asked them to choose two. **Call Sign** then picked a winner on the strength of their majority choice. Mike's entry beat off several other thought-out challenges such as Pat France' (A81) clever version of GCHQ (Gentlemen's Circuit Headquarters), Laurence Kelvin's (W88) Taxi Towers and several who came up with The Lords House!

Mike's prize was dinner for four at Brian Turner's Mayfair restaurant at the Millenium Hotel, Grosvenor Square and not surprisingly, Mike was delighted with

his prize.

However, Mike has now written to us saying that since his win "...several colleagues have spoken to drivers who, without knowing me, were unhappy with my winning entry. I read in the November **Call Sign** a letter echoing the same dissatisfaction. I entered what I thought was a harmless competition and tried to be inventive with the name, however dummies are being spit out. Whether that's because of the name I chose or the fact that I may be taking my family out to dinner when they feel it should be them, only they know. Therefore, I would like to donate the equivalent cash sum **Call Sign** offered me to a cab trade charity, preferably with a Dial-a-Cab connection. There are so many more things going on in this country that need our attention, this one needs to be put to bed. Anyway, what's in a name?"

So thanks to Mike – who was more than entitled to keep his prize – the London Taxi Drivers Fund for Underprivileged Children will be getting their entire collection of videos put onto DVDs to guarantee their long-term survival.

LTFUC Chairman **David Lessman (D19)** told **Call Sign**:

"We are very grateful to Mike Pollington. We have been concerned that our video collection of outings etc could become worn and unplayable with time, now Mike's donation of his **Call Sign** prize will allow us to put them onto DVD at no cost to the Fund."

So all's well that ends well and as Mike said: What's in a name...!

## S & S TAXIS

*London's premier 24-hour taxi repair and recovery garage*

We will carry out your running repairs, servicing, overhauls + PCO presentation and vehicle recovery  
Bodyshop is repair approved with free cab / no excess for non-fault

**Garage weekday opening hours: 7.30am – 5pm**

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DISCOUNT TO  
DAC DRIVERS!**

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07917 142 626 or 07917 142 625**

**DONT FORGET WE GIVE 10% DISCOUNT ON ALL  
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*Keep this ad handy, you never know when you'll need us!*



On the evening of Wednesday, 15 November 2006, selected members of the taxi trade joined forces with invited guests from TfL, PCO staff and the Met Police to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Public Carriage Office's move to Penton Street.

The occasion also marked the impending retirement of Roy Ellis, Head of the PCO for the past eleven years and gave our trade a chance to meet Mary Dowdye, who will take over some of Roy's responsibilities.

To the music of *Imagine the Beatles*, an excellent tribute band who sounded just like the real deal, guests - together with representatives from the taxi trade charities - mingled and chatted amiably as the canapés and liquid refreshment flowed throughout the evening.

As a backdrop to the festivities, a number of taxis - from a *Low Loader* of 1933 vintage, right up to the present day LTI Vehicles TX4 - were on display on the inspection ramps as a reminder of the past and the present.

Tributes were paid to Roy by various dignitaries from TfL, including newly appointed Commissioner Peter Hendy and Taxi and Private Hire Director Ed Thompson.

Bob Oddy, General Secretary of the LTDA, noted Roy's accessibility because whenever Bob phoned the PCO, Roy answered, suggesting there might be through the technological advances of communication, a re-routed line directly to Roy's armchair at home such was Roy's level of commitment and also his ability to listen - even if he did not always give the response that was looked for! With Roy's imminent retirement, Bob assumed Roy would have time to 'do the Knowledge' and in anticipation of a successful outcome, presented Roy with a bright yellow LTDA lanyard upon which to hang his shiny new Green Badge!

Responding, Roy Ellis thanked all those involved in making the event happen and related how Sandy Kennedy had urged him to apply for the job of PCO Head all those years ago in competition to himself, and how over the ensuing years, Sandy had offered constant support and encouragement. Brian Rice said afterwards that Roy could have a priority fitting on DaC!

Roy commented that in 1966, the PCO issued less than 20,000 licences, while in 2006 the figure is 124,464. He admitted that he never realised what the job would

# PCO HIT 40 AS ROY SAYS GOODBYE...!



**Brian with former ComCab MD Mike Galvin, who is now with TfL**



**Brian with Mary Dowdye, who will be taking on many of Roy Ellis' former duties Inset pic: Brian makes friends with the cab trade press: L-R Sandie Goodwin, John Pace and Bob Fisher**



become when he took over 11 years ago and took the opportunity to thank all the many members of the PCO staff who had helped him, through their own particular areas of expertise, make his job easier, although he confessed to some difficult times during his tenure in office.

He praised the leaders in the taxi trade, the efforts of the cab trade charities for their hard work and the licensees for their service to the public.

He concluded by saying that the job had been both challenging and gratifying, providing varied opportunities and experiences, and had been greatly fulfilling

over the years.

Finally, in an emotional moment, he thanked his wife Geraldine for her support and understanding during his taxi 'anorak' moments and looked forward to spending more time together.

Dial-a-Cab Chairman Brian Rice presented Roy with a crystal decanter and we at **Call Sign** also wish Roy and Geraldine all the best for the future and thank him for always having the time to answer questions we have passed onto him from our drivers.

*Continued from November*

Blowing out at Dalston Junction wasn't much fun, so with the help of some of the older, friendlier cab drivers on the ODRTS radio circuit, I began to learn how to be a real green badge man. As I was only 22 when I started, practically everyone driving a cab was older!

The first thing to learn was how to spot signs of potential work. One of those was empty cabs going the same way in a hurry. Often they were going to a theatre on the burst, no pedicabs, no touts, no minicabs and no over officious policemen or wardens to worry about then, just a few genuine chauffeurs - and I mean real peaked cap gentlemen driving the owner's car! I know, it seems unreal and even dream like, but that is how it was in the fifties.

Another lure that attracted speedy driving in convoy were the stations. Other than Sunday night, when many night-men preferred to 'do the earlyies' which I'll explain another time, this flood of cabs signified the imminent arrival of a boat train, especially if you had a cab with a roof rack! The blagging of boat train punters with lots of cases or even better, with trunks was an eye opener to an innocent like me. Well, I was an innocent at the start! Roof rack cabs could charge and easily get 'off the clock' premium prices.

Two of the best blaggers and pricers was rumoured to be the twins, who didn't even vaguely look like one another. They were known as the twins, but not due to their seldom happy and unsmiling faces, because they were both ex-Met police. The large one was said to have been an inspector, while his even bigger and burlier mate had been a sergeant with the aforesaid inspector. Both had immaculate FX3s with roof racks, securing the luggage with padlocks and chains.

The minute they had their punters, usually from porters who they knew had done the vital selection process, they loaded first and then commenced setting the fare or bargaining. It always seemed to be a bargain for them, but never, ever for the poor punter who faced with two large tough men and his or her luggage locked, barred and bolted, was faced with little or no choice but to agree to their extortionate demands. If things got, or even looked like getting heated, the twins would beckon over the same porters who hand on heart, would tell the punters how lucky they were to be getting two cabs to take this amount of baggage to such far away places!

As boats trains came in to St. Pancras, Kings Cross, Euston, Paddington, Victoria and Liverpool Street Stations, far away to the twins

**"Sunset Strip" has now handed his badge and bill back to the PCO after 50 years. These are his memories. We left him last month talking about ODRTS in the 'fifties...**

## Fifty Green Years...



### THE OWNER DRIVERS RADIO TAXI SERVICE

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The Owner Drivers' Radio Taxi Service is a highly efficient taxi mobile radio network. Owner driver members currently handle over £40,000 worth of credit account work alone and yet this represents just 20% of the business of the service. To enable us to operate this rapidly growing business more members are urgently required. This is *your* opportunity to participate in a highly profitable organisation.



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For a limited period only we are offering a reduced weekly subscription of £2.50 for the first 6 months (fitting your Pye mobile radio is free). After 28 days' trial period you'll be asked to pay a £5 share deposit (returnable if and when you leave the society).

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### ODRTS first ever advert in 1960

meant almost anywhere out of the aforesaid railway stations! As for going east or south, that was totally out of the question except for triple fare plus whatever they could stick on top!

It was said that the twins took a hint from certain sources following a few years of this well paid activity and retired to the sunny climes of Spain. Here they opened a hostess bar and restaurant that was the meeting place for many a retired officer wearing his pension on his wrist, as they called a flamboyant display of gold jewellery.

Not being brave or big enough to follow their example, I followed the radio job route. Customers, who had phoned ODRTS to be taken to a station, were encouraged to book an ODRTS cab for their return trip. We used to pick these jobs up usually just past the head of the rank or opposite the rank to avoid con-

fusion and also to be able to pull away without too much hassle from the other waiting taxis. In those days it was safe to leave your cab, even though they could not be locked.

Occasionally a porter would slide over to try and sell a cabdriver a fare he had overpriced, but for most of us on ODRTS their overtures were ignored. To be honest, the pre-booked radio jobs had usually been well priced and the fare agreed between the customer and the radio room. No hassle, good money and you had time to look up the destination if it was a roader. In those days, even signposts were few and far between, and SatNav would have been shorthand for sitting on a navy. Well, it takes all types to make the world go round...!

*Continued next month...*

**Sunset Strip**

### Personalise your cab!

**T121 CAB**

**is for sale.**

**A great Christmas gift can be yours for just £300!**

**Tel: 07946 840939**



# DAC-WEMBLEY MOVE UP TO SECOND!

In a successful month, Dial-a-Cab-sponsored Wembley FC were knocked out of the Middlesex Senior cup competition by Potters Bar Town after controlling the whole match, yet failing to capitalise and going down by one goal to nil.

But it's promotion to the Ryman league that DaC-Wembley are after and 3 days later they defeated close rivals Sandhurst Town in a hard-fought and at times rough battle away fixture.

Wembley goalkeeper and DaC driver **Lee Pearce (J71)** was predictably pleased with the Sandhurst result as it pushed Wembley into second position.

**"We're really starting to get it together,"** he told *Call Sign*, **"and even though our cup exit earlier in the week was disappointing as we had played so well, promotion has to be our aim. Mind you, we're still in the League Cup and that 'double' would be very nice!"**

But even Lee couldn't have predicted the run that Wembley would go on starting with a 3 – 2 away win at Epsom after going behind twice. That was followed up by a 3 – 0 home

trouncing of Egham Town, who were pushing Wembley in the league table up to that point.

A third win off the trot came when defeating Chessington and Hook Utd by 5 – 3 with **Paul Shelton** grabbing 4 goals!

**"Scoring is so much easier when the team are playing well,"** Paul Shelton told *Call Sign*. **"and we really are starting to get it together. Perhaps the new DaC tops are bringing us luck!"**



**Paul Shelton scored 4 goals against Chessington helping Wembley up to 2nd Place**

## Combined Counties Premier Division (top 10 of 22) (Week Ending 24 November)

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Chipstead	16	15	0	1	53	14	39	45
<b>DaC-Wembley</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>37</b>
Ash Utd	16	9	6	1	32	11	21	33
Chertsey Town	17	10	3	4	39	25	14	33
Merstham	16	10	2	4	26	16	10	32
Egham Town	19	9	2	8	43	27	16	29
Banstead Athletic	15	9	1	5	35	23	12	28
North Greenford Utd	15	7	3	5	31	27	4	24
Raynes Pk Vale	17	7	3	7	32	36	-4	24
Camberley Town	16	6	4	6	22	25	-3	22

Club captain **Ian Bates**, who holds the record number of appearances in a Wembley shirt, also added that the team were chuffed with the DaC tops and it was being recognised as a sign of professionalism in a league where sponsorship isn't easy to come across.

If DaC-Wembley can hold it together through December – especially on the 23rd when they have a huge match against leaders Chipstead – that Ryman promotion target won't be just a dream. And at this standard, the Ryman would be a huge upward move...

Former Dial-a-Cab driver, **Bob Woodford**, writes a regular column for *Call Sign* from his home in Languedoc, France...

## Call Sign En La Belle France



*Bonjours mes amis!*

Just a little to the south-east of here is the remarkable region called the Corbieres, surely many of you would have sampled its fine wines of quality by now? It's what's known as *Cathar Country* and readers of the *Da Vinci Code* will know that the so-called *Holy Grail* is hidden somewhere in the Carcassonne area of this region.

It is also a region that has become very attractive to property seekers recently. Another book, titled *Labyrinth* from British author *Kate Mosse* – as against the rather skinny model – has also been mentioned by our recent house hunters.

Low cost Ryanair flights from Stansted, Dublin and East Midlands have helped to open the region up and surprisingly, property prices are still very attractive to the British and Irish holiday home seeker. Nestled between the Black Mountains and the Mediterranean, Cathar Country manages to perpetuate its traditions together with the art of festive life!

Take a short break before the Christmas rush, or book a short break early in the New Year and follow the footsteps of the past.

Check out [www.southoffrancelets.com](http://www.southoffrancelets.com) for a place to stay, or [www.immoboulevard.com](http://www.immoboulevard.com) if you are seriously looking for property to buy.

To discover more about the region itself, go to [www.carcassonne.culture.fr](http://www.carcassonne.culture.fr) or [www.carcassonne.org](http://www.carcassonne.org). They do translate into English...

*A bientot!*

**Bob Woodford (Ex-P49)**  
Saint Genies de Fontedit, Languedoc, France

*In a world where technology moves at an astounding pace, DaC Network Administrator Jonathen Winterburn takes an occasional look at the latest gadgets...*

## JON ASKS WHAT'S NEW?

When I spotted this new cam from Swiss firm Seitz, my jaw hit the floor and then rebounded a few times! This mega-



**Nice camera...but £19,000!**

lith of a camera shoots at 160 megapixels to create a native 6 x 17-cm image, is packed with an ISO range from 500 to 10,000, a read-out speed of 300MB per second and a shutter speed

of 1/20,000th second.

So the question has to be: Just how do you store such huge image files (almost 1 GB per uncompressed full panorama)? Certainly not on your off-the-shelf 16GB SDHC card, nor the upcoming 64GB CompactFlash cards – but rather via gigabit Ethernet to Seitz's "state-of-the-art computer system", which translates to a decked out Apple Mac mini.

And what will this much imaging power cost you? Well, it's 28,900 Euros (£19,073) for the "mobile version" and 26,900 Euros (£17,341) for the "studio version" and I assume that the Apple Mac mini is included for that price. If you do have the spare pocket money to buy this gargantuan camera, you'll have to wait until it becomes available in early 2007.

More info at

[http://www.roundshot.ch/xml\\_1/internet/de/application/d438/d925/f934.cfm](http://www.roundshot.ch/xml_1/internet/de/application/d438/d925/f934.cfm).

**Jonathen Winterburn**  
DaC Network Administrator

# The new TX4



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John Paton Ltd - Edinburgh tel: 0131 558 8005  
Mann & Overton - Birmingham & West tel: 0121 322 0700  
Smith & Humphrey Ltd - East Sussex tel: 01424 210 746

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Mann & Overton - London tel: 020 7700 0888  
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# Standing for Election at

**The 2006 Dial-Cab AGM will be held at The Brewery, Chiswell Street on Sunday 11 February 2007. The following candidates have announced that they are standing for election and sent Call Sign their CVs for publication. Names are in alphabetical order...**

**Keith Cain (Q07) –  
(Sitting Board member)**

I am 53 years of age, have held a licence for 26 years and have been associated with the Society for 23 years. During that time I have been a part-time voice dispatcher, was employed in the Sales department and for the past 16 years been a member of the Board.



During my time as a Board member, I was elected to the position of Treasurer and have been given various responsibilities that included selling corporate accounts as well as dealing with client complaints. My present position is that of Driver Operations Manager. Within this role I oversee all issues relating to drivers and am assisted by other Board members. My primary function is to manage the Call Centre where DaC employ 120 personnel.

I have always seen the position of a Board member as someone who is prepared to manage the Society with the driver's best interest. My goals have always been to generate quality work for members and build a Society that is the best within our industry. Over the past 10 years, we have been progressing year-on-year and having had the best year ever, we can now say with conviction that our Society is the number one radio circuit.

For the future, the difficulty will be to maintain our standards and position. This will involve strong management and making difficult decisions. Hopefully my experience speaks for itself and I would like your continued support to be part of the future of this Society.

**Grant Davis (L39)**

I am aged 42, married with 1 child, having held a Green Badge for 18 years, more than 10 of which have been on DaC.

I trained as an Advanced City & Guilds Certificated



plumber and am also an Advanced Amateur Boxing Association coach. I still maintain the training of up-and-coming boxers on a part-time basis.

I am an elected Arbitrator for DaC.

As an LCDC member for 14 years, I am currently its Vice-Chairman, taking an active part in defending drivers and our trade against the many threats we face. I have dealings with the PCO, the GLA Transport Committee and MPs.

It seems that the radio circuits are being used as a Trojan horse by the various LPH companies who, if the current trend continues, will grow bigger and stronger and in time outgrow us. There are 43,000 LPH vehicles to approx. 23,000 licensed taxis and it would be severely detrimental to us all if these figures were reflected on our radio circuits.

The members took a positive decision when they voted to retain the Society's mutual status and I firmly believe that remaining so is in the member's best interests.

I strongly believe that our BoM always needs new blood to keep the Society provided with new thinking. I would like members to take a greater role in our decision-making process rather than a PLC-like situation where we can just be told what is going to happen without sufficient consultation, eg Concierge. As it is our Society, we should develop it the way we choose.

I welcome the opportunity to serve you as a Board Member and work to the best of my abilities in keeping the Society meeting its primary objectives.

Please, give me your support and vote in the forthcoming election.

**Allan Evans (Y83) –  
(Sitting Board member)**

I have been a licensed taxi driver for thirty years and a Dial-a-Cab member for over twenty. Prior to being elected, I worked as a new Driver Trainer and Marshalling Officer, always seeking to raise the Society's profile and generate additional income for us all. As you will know, I am jointly responsible for Driver Operations and this position has certainly given me a much greater insight into the needs and wishes of you, the members. I always aim to put into practice what I would expect as a fellow subscriber.



I have been privileged to work on a number of high profile projects, which has helped me build up an excellent working relationship with some of our most senior clients. The knowledge gained over the past six years in office has given me a deeper understanding of the Society and provided me with invaluable experience. I have always made every effort to be approachable and supportive to all members of our Society and totally committed to my position.

I am a working driver and I have met and spoken to many of you during my time in office. I constantly endeavour to be as understanding as possible and am always willing to offer help and advice.

I am proud to be member of a Board of Management that has steered our Society through the most successful period in its history. I again ask you, the members, to vote for me to continue to represent you all for a further term in office - I will certainly not let you down.

**Russell Hall (G44)**

I am a licensed taxi driver of almost 23 years.

For the benefit of our newer members, I previously held the important role of a DaC marshal for 4 of my 13 years on DaC. This led me to represent you when liaising with our highly valued account customers who were impressed with my proficient and professional approach.

This responsibility enabled me to build an excellent relationship with you, our staff and Board Members. This important trilogy has been an invaluable experience and given me more of an insight into the inner sanctum of DaC.

I have also regularly contributed to **Call Sign** for most of the past 4 years, something that has improved my IT and PC skills.

There has been much achieved in recent years, however, if we are to keep moving ahead of our rivals with a competitive edge, planning for the future is crucial to preserve our prestigious profile. So it is vitally important to vote for someone that can make the smooth transition to become a Board member, who is a proven team player, can add to our ongoing success and more crucially, who is able to work alongside the remaining Board.

Fresh, younger blood is needed at Boardroom level to maintain our success.





# the 2006 AGM

Not only to herald our successes, but also to battle any trials and tribulations that may lie ahead. With a willingness to listen and learn from the experience of our Chairman and remaining Board members, I look forward to developing new skills thus ensuring the continuity and harmony that your Society necessitates - something that I feel is paramount to our future success.

I therefore ask for your support to continue the ongoing development of our Society.

## Mike Son (V52) – (Sitting Board member)

I am aware there are a number of candidates standing for the Board of Management at the next AGM, however, before who you decide who to vote for it is important to be aware of who you think will serve the Society best with both integrity and having a clear understanding of the member's and client's expectations. As part of the existing Board, I can say that each member of the current Board compliments each other, while all having skills in different areas.



### What are my responsibilities?

Sales are an obvious factor in any commercial organisation. Winning accounts can prove to be difficult and as we all know, keeping them is another matter. Although Dial-a-Cab is the most sophisticated and innovative technological communication taxi company in London if not the world, communication with the customer in all areas is paramount - whether a phone call or visit to placate issues they may have with the service we provide or keeping costs at a level that will sustain the financial stability of DaC, while also making sure we are competitive in the market place.

Protecting interests of drivers by having meaningful dialogue with various authorities is another avenue I have embarked on during the past year or so, the outcomes of which are proving to be very successful.

I still work on the road a few days a week, therefore it does give me an advantage to know what our clients really think about our service plus the thoughts of drivers who do not visit Brunswick House.

During these many years serving as your Board Member, I have gained much experience in resolving problems and recognising the expectations of both customer and driver. Continued interaction with the customer is important and as a

candidate in the forthcoming election, I would like your support to continue as your elected Board Member.

## Allen Togwell (Q08) – (Sitting Board member)

I have been a member of the Board since 1988 and was responsible for developing our Sales & Marketing dept, which up until that time did not exist. Prior to joining DaC, I already had considerable experience in Sales, Marketing and Design from running my own fashion business in London, as well as having worked in Munich, Paris and Zurich.



In addition to helping create the foundation for what is now a sound client base at DaC, I am also a Fellow of the Institute of Direct Marketing and during my entire time on the Board have been personally responsible for designing and producing in-house all of the marketing, advertising material (including our corporate logo) and sales literature at considerable cost savings to our Society.

I have always believed in an old adage that 'quality survives all changes' which can apply to something you buy or a service you give. The best will always outlast the need to change, which was the mantra I used when selling our taxi service and particularly so to existing clients when convincing them to stay with us. Dial-a-Cab is without doubt the most successful radio taxi circuit in Europe and with your support, I would like to continue to play my part in assuring our Society remains so.

## Steven Tyson (V99)

I am aged 47 and married with 2 teenage children. I joined Dial-a-Cab in 1994 and currently hold an almost unique position as a Driver, Senior Evening Shift Controller and Senior Marshall. As



such, I have gained vital knowledge in the everyday running of the Society and believe I have built up an excellent relationship with members, staff and current Board.

### Achievements include:

- One of the few drivers to be invited to become Senior Controller. Since 2004, I have worked to ensure account rides are covered whilst co-ordinating drivers, solving their problems, resolving booking errors

and liaising with key account clients.

- Marshalling team since 1995 having covered all major accounts, station work and most cash events.
- Marshalled and worked in the Call Centre for the extremely busy Virgin Trains contract, covering and co-ordinating the distribution of cabs at various stations around the country (2002 – 2004).
- Member of a 20-strong Licensed Taxi team on a Great Britain tourism promotion tour of Europe after the 9/11 bombings.
- Regular driver since 2001 on the annual Magical Taxi Tour to Disneyland, Paris. I believe the current Board have done an excellent job, resulting in this year being the best year ever. I do not want to make changes, but believe that with my understanding of the balance between the problems of driving a taxi in modern day London against the needs to make sure all account work is covered, I will be able to add to and enhance the Board and its members by bringing a wider range of experience than most, which is quite rare for someone as relatively young as myself.

## Tom Whitbread (Q9) – (Sitting Board member)

It's now another 2 years since I've had to write an AGM CV and in that time I have been proud of our achievement in bringing the Society into the position it has reached today.



During the 20 years that I have been a Board Member, I have seen the Society through the good and bad times. The Society is now in the best position that it has experienced in the 30+ years I have been associated with it.

To say that the work to get to this level has ranged from being a pleasure to frightening is an understatement. In the bad times, it was as bad as not knowing if you could lose your own home just for staying on the Board and trying to keep it solvent.

In the good times there were the glory seekers all wanting to stand for election to the Board whilst in the bad times I have seen them disappear.

I have gained my Board experience through hard work, coping with nearly all the jobs throughout the company. Most of my time on the Board has been serving as the Complaints Officer, a job most Board Members shy away from, as it is a vote loser. But during this time I have always been honest and straight talking. I will tell you how it actually is to your face and not change my view behind your back. Neither will I ever give you false or unattainable promises just to get your votes.

I will again give you my promise of hard work and dedication to the Society, just as I have done over the past 32 years.

In 1996, 24 November was a Sunday and the date of that year's Dial-a-Cab Annual General Meeting at the Metropole Hotel, Edgware Road. The Chairman at the beginning of the meeting was **Aubrey Siteman**, but at 2.40pm precisely, Aubrey took his leave and introduced his successor as this Society's new Chairman - a youngster of two years BoM experience, Brian Rice!

Brian took the microphone from Aubrey and immediately paid a tribute to his predecessor by leading a standing ovation. Aubrey was seen to become rather emotional, but held himself together long enough for Brian to present him with a clock on behalf of the membership.

Brian was then left to speak, and showing amazing confidence for someone in that position, pledged: "I will do my very best to take our radio society further into the future," before lightening the mood by adding, "...all I ask of the membership is that you are gentle with me to start with!" Several humorous remarks from some of the drivers in attendance - including "how was it for you dear," - which brought laughs from the platform and the floor! Certainly, his first ten years have not been without "excitement!"

In February 1998, Brian announced that DaC drivers would be having new terminals fitted to their cabs that Brian described at the time as "revolutionary" and added in his Chairman's column of the time that there would be nothing on the market to touch them. After all these years, amazingly they are still the best and even at a time when DaC are looking to the next generation!

Later that year and soon after speaking on behalf of Dial-a-Cab in the chambers of Mr Justice Popplewell following litigation brought by a Board member against the Chairman and remainder of the Board, as well as the Finance manager and **Call Sign** Editor Alan Fisher, Brian suffered a heart attack at his home on 3 June. Within 6 weeks, he was back at his desk having sailed through the stress test that the PCO demand for taxi licence holders.

That year also saw Brian announce that new logos had been designed in-house by Allen Togwell after subscribers voted at the 1997 AGM to disallow exterior livery ads on DaC taxis with the DaC logo being the only option.

Also in 1998 saw the beginning of a technical revolution at Brunswick House, when DaC's boffins designed a system whereby clients could order cabs via the Internet, access our system and even send a message to their passenger travelling in one of our cabs via the driver's terminal. It was the first system of its kind in the world.

That year ended with the announcement of record figures and Brian announcing that a small group of drivers had gone to the PCO to tell them that he had suffered a heart attack and asked them to take away his licence! The PCO disagreed claiming that his stress test results showed him to be fully recovered.

1999 began with the Chairman writing that the Board member who had taken out litigation against the BoM, Finance Manager and Alan Fisher had dropped that litigation and had left DaC after making a contribution towards the costs. He followed that up by announcing that for the third consecutive year,

# Brian Rice: Ten Years as Chairman...



**22 November 1996 and Brian has his last day as a Board member before the AGM that would make him Chairman**

there would be no increase in subscriptions.

Two months later, the DaC Chairman announced that Deutsche Bank were coming over to us and reiterated how important it was that drivers keep to the 40-job minimum rule and followed that up in the next issue by saying that the future of this industry could involve going over to a complete *ground transportation system*. In a Q and A session with **Call Sign**, Brian said that we would not be running a minicab service, but could earn management fees whilst gaining much more work for our members. He added that corporate companies were now saying that tenders for their work should include details of GTS.

"I could tell them that we are not interested," Brian told **Call Sign**, "but I believe that the bulk of our members would want us to tender and to get them as much work as we can."

In March 2000, following the 1999 AGM, Brian reported that it had been the first-ever DaC AGM that had included postal voting with voting up by an average two and a half times the usual numbers. The meeting also demonstrated our new terminals to many astonished drivers who had not seen technology like this in a cab before. Several weeks later, the PCO passed the terminal and we reached the 21<sup>st</sup>

century! Also, that month in 2000 saw Brian announce a review of the way subs were paid with those sporting the DaC logo paying less than those who chose not to have it. By 2006, 99.9% of drivers sport the DaC logo.

In March 2001, Brian announced that DaC had now enhanced our internal system so as to enable account clients to extract Management Reports - something no other circuit managed for years to come and then only in a much smaller way.

Darker days loomed in 2001 when the Chairman told **Call Sign** readers that the USA looked as though it was heading into recession and that some of our corporate clients had hinted that they wanted to cut costs. Even so, up until that time we'd had "a very good year" but the BoM had decided that we would be depreciating an extra £1million the following year and that would be coming off our bottom line. As a result, there was going to be the first subscription increase since 1996.

In September of that year, Brian wrote for the first time of the litigation Radio Taxis had gone into against us regarding the use of website domain names. Brian was in the witness box at the Law Courts in the Strand for five hours and both radio organisations left the building not knowing who would be the winner. Several months later, DaC were announced as victorious in a situation that Brian described as a complete waste of money that RT could have solved just by speaking to DaC rather than jumping into litigation.

By the end of 2001 and following the introduction of the increased night charges, DaC's Chairman made the first mention of seeing a noticeable slowdown following a tariff increase so close on the heels of the September 11 acts of terrorism. He wrote that he'd had to visit many of our large accounts to explain why the night tariff had increased by so much when everyone could sense business quietening down following what was to become known as 9/11. That slowdown was to continue for some time...

By March 2002, Brian reported that street work was noticeably down and the only advantage that created was to improve our service. Even then, clients were still complaining about costs and cutting down on their usage.

One month later, Brian announced that DaC shareholders would be receiving a letter following an offer that had been made to the Society regarding a company buying a controlling share

*continued on next page*





**Brian is proud that over 99% of Dial-a-Cab drivers now sport the DaC logo**

ton. This would help stop those who booked into incorrect zones at the expense of the vast majority that played fair – especially as work was still not easy to come by.

In that September, Brian told *Call Sign* how upset he had been after discovering that founder Chairman Bonnie Martyn had passed away at the age of 93. Brian and Bonnie had become friends. The front cover of that issue said it all with a full-page portrait of Bonnie.

The following month heard how the downturn in

business sector was beginning to bite into UK industries, although DaC were still holding their own. Sovereign Capital, who at one point were looking into the possibility of making a bid for DaC drivers shares, wrote that they would be looking again at their offer “later in the year.” But nothing could stop us all having a great time at DaC’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary bash, an event still spoken of as being the best taxi social event ever.

A few weeks later and Brian was having meetings with those looking at the possibility of putting outside advertising onto Private Hire vehicles. Among those he spoke to on this round were the Mayor’s Woman’s Advisor at County Hall, Anni Marjoram and the Director of Taxi and PH at the PCO, Ed Thompson. Brian’s hope at the time was that we could keep delaying any chance of minicabs displaying outside liveries because, as he wrote at the time, it would inevitably lead to an epidemic of touting with signs of all kinds appearing on cars and drivers then pretending to be part of legitimate PH companies. Three years on and they still don’t have it, so we must have done something right!

September 2003 and the DaC Chairman proposed that the Taxi Board should open its doors to all trade organisations and for the first time, create complete trade unity – a sentiment agreed by the SPLT Gen Sec of the time, John Paul Pace. The T&G and LTDA refused the offer and another opportunity to unify the trade went begging.

Into 2004 and Sovereign said that for the deal to progress further, DaC should pay a share of the costs so far accrued. Brian had said earlier that DaC would not be involved with any costs and so far as DaC were then concerned, the matter was non-negotiable. The offer was then withdrawn.

The following month, Brian announced that things seemed to be picking up and whilst we had made a surplus the previous year “under very trying conditions,” we were now 13% up on that previous year. Brian also gave a moving tribute following the death of former Board member, Cecil Selwyn.

Never shy of being controversial, the March 2004 Chairman’s report asked why the number of licensed taxi drivers passing the Knowledge had decreased whilst the number of examiners at the PCO had increased? He also asked why there were so many cab drivers now sitting as examiners as against the retired policemen that used to be at the PCO? “Could it be,” asked Brian, “that when these examiners go out in their cabs, there might be more business for them with fewer drivers passing out?” That point has been raised several times since by other trade reps, but Brian was the first to ask the question.

In May of that year, Brian was honoured by the *Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* when he was one of 100 freeman to be clothed with their livery. “It wasn’t just an honour for me,” Brian said at the time, “it was an honour for Dial-a-Cab.”

In August, Brian went to Clarence House as a representative of the licensed taxi trade with the DaC Board and was presented to Prince Charles and Camilla. Coincidentally in that month Brian also became DaC’s longest serving Chairman, taking that title from Peter



**2004 and Brian meets up with Prince Charles**

in DaC. The letter was to see whether subscribers wanted to gain more information on the takeover or to come out with a straight “no.” As an indirect result of the possible purchase, the financial papers were giving much publicity to DaC at a time when work had been noticeably slowing down.

The next issue of *Call Sign* gave Brian’s figures that 73% of subscribers had voted to get more info, but that 300 had not even replied. Brian called the non-voters a worrying situation but said that with 73% asking for additional information, the BoM felt they had little choice but to investigate the possible takeover further.

In July 2002, DaC added GPS to its range of facilities and announced that it could track any cab and know where it was at the push of a but-

the economy had affected DaC’s end-of-year figures. We were 18% down on the previous year “...which is almost as bad as the 22% downturn we suffered 10 years ago (the recession),” wrote Brian. The big difference, he told *Call Sign*, was that unlike 10 years earlier, we were still making money this time. He also said that the slowdown showed no signs of easing.

In the December issue, Brian told of his sadness at the death of former Board member and dispatcher, Johnny Saunders. John was one of the first people the Chairman met when joining DaC in 1974 and the fact that they were both QPR supporters formed an instant bond between them.

By July 2003, the downturn in the financial

## BRIAN RICE: TEN YEARS AS CHAIRMAN *(continued from page 25)*



**24 November 2006 and the DaC Board organise a secret reception for Brian to celebrate his first 10 years as Chairman**

Fennymore.

October saw the announcement that turnover was up by £4.5million and that DaC had paid its subscribers £3.5million more than the previous year. It was also the month that Brian revealed details of the job distribution system we were building. It was called Concierge...

Into **2005** and Concierge makes its first appearance in Mailshot and an election poster signed by four of those standing in the 2004 AGM was criticised by Brian for being totally inaccurate. Brian apologised for bringing up the subject just as we were going into the election, but said he was left with no choice, as the leaflet "was factually inaccurate and contained glaring anomalies!" Rumours were floating around the trade that DaC had invested huge amounts into Concierge – although it was later revealed that the true cost had been around £25,000, that it had regained the cost within weeks and that it had since bought much money and many extra trips into the Society!

The election came and went and in March 2005 Brian wrote asking why so many members had attended the AGM and answered his own question: "Could it be because of the rumours suggesting we would be annihilated over Concierge?" He then added that if that was the case, they must have gone home disappointed and that it had been a very enjoyable meeting!

The atrocities in London of 7 July 2005 were mentioned in Brian's September report when he wrote expressing the shock and sadness we all felt as those awful events unfolded. But he also passed on the appreciation from many of our account clients for the assistance DaC drivers gave on that day. All transport stopped – except taxis. We carried on, not knowing what risks were involved, and managed to get people to their homes and clients were quick to send their grateful thanks.

In October of that year, Brian announced

that the FSA investigation into DaC, which had been launched after a small group of drivers wrote to them, had been concluded with the Society being given a clean bill of health.

It was **2006** and Brian wrote of the forthcoming 2005 AGM and the record number of rule changes and propositions. He wrote that most were coming from the same person who had reported us to the FSA and that as Chairman he wasn't too worried – but showing that he can be as sarccy as the next man (!!!) – Brian explained to *Call Sign* that the member had also explained in a letter to the Chairman how Brian should run the meeting! "This is the 11th meeting I've conducted. How many has this member chaired," Brian asked?

The Board also decided that having so many rules and propositions – many seemingly unnecessary – would undoubtedly slow up the normal democratic process and decided to give drivers a further option to vote on. That was that future rule changes or propositions should need 25 signatories of fully paid-up members before they could be put to the membership. As Brian told the meeting: "If they are good enough, then finding those 25 members would not be a problem. It would, however, get rid of pointless ones with no or very little support. The membership carried it and it entered the rulebook.

The February cover showed how the DaC Chairman should be feared when Brian was pictured putting a wrestling hold onto Spiderman with old Spidey apparently begging for mercy! "No one messes with DaC," Brian told *Call Sign* with a smile! The "happening" took place at the Grosvenor House Hotel at the LTFUC Mad Hatters tea party for children – an event Brian rarely misses.

In April, Brian announced that Brunswick House was "popping at the seams" and needed larger premises. He said that we had found a suitable building close to BH and were looking at it. Marten House later became our prop-

erty. He also had further meetings with Anni Marjoram and the Mayor's chief advisor, Mark Watts over the still-possibility of PH having signage and told *Call Sign* that both were extremely supportive of our battle to stop PH displaying any form of livery.

In July, in addition to being shown on the cover with four attractive ladies called The Suffrajets, Brian told drivers that we

had retained both the Rothschild and Morgan Stanley accounts after both had gone out to tender. We were also about to begin servicing the Citigroup account at Docklands.

By September of this year, Brian admitted that he had changed his mind about Pedicabs and whereas he originally could see little harm in them, after seeing what was happening in Brighton with the Tuk Tuks, which are the motorised versions, he now believed that they were indeed a danger to our industry. Speaking to *Call Sign* afterwards, Brian said that he could never understand why some people were afraid to ever admit that they had changed their minds. "If someone convinces me that I am wrong, then I see no problem in changing my mind. "Mind you," he said with a smile, "it doesn't happen too often!"

And finally, Brian announced once again that we had achieved excellent end-of-year results and he also wrote that we had now started to use our new building even though there were still some "ongoing negotiations" with the contractors. These were later sorted out.

And so begins year 11...

Brian's most notable achievements during those first 10 years? He told *Call Sign*:

**"I'm proud of so many things concerning Dial-a-Cab. Every single year of my ten as Chairman has shown a surplus – several into six and even seven figures, our fleet is now probably the most recognisable in London with 99%+ sporting the DaC logo and probably more than anything else, I'm proud of the quality of staff, Board and drivers that are involved with our company. They are undoubtedly the best group than anyone could have even though there are exceptions to every rule. You could say that I'm just proud of Dial-a-Cab!"**

***Congratulations to Brian from everybody at DaC. 10 years at the top is an amazing achievement.***





# Jack Russell Rushed Back into Hospital

*92-year old ex-Chairman picks up infection after operation*

The November **Call Sign** reported that former Chairman **Jack Russell** (1964 – 1969) had gone

into hospital for a routine knee replacement operation. He came out several days later and was, he said, delighted to find a huge bouquet sent from Dial-a-Cab. But according to another former DaC driver and good friend of Jack, Sam Harris, he didn't sound too well.

So **Call Sign** phoned Jack to see if everything was ok, after all, even a minor op in your 93<sup>rd</sup> year isn't without its risk.

But there was no answer and that remained the situation for 8 days. Starting to feel concerned, **Call Sign** kept phoning Jack's home but with no response. We also phoned the hospital in Stanmore who said they had no record of him!

However, into the second week, Jack phoned and told us that he had been readmitted after picking up a severe infection in his leg and it was to the same hospital that had no record of him!

Jack told us: **"It was a very worrying time. The day after I came home, I began to feel quite unwell and a nurse had to**

**come and see me. She looked at the wound and said that I had to go back into hospital immediately. I ended up being there for eight days. For the first two days, antibiotics were intravenously poured into me, but made no difference and it was decided to operate once again."**

Jack continued: **"The operation involved placing a tube into my throat and feeding it through the main artery, down into my groin. I was finally discharged with the tube still inserted and the infection still**

**there. It is expected to be there for some time."**

Jack ended by saying that he couldn't remember having such a bad time – even when he was in the army and wounded!

**"And by the way,"** he said displaying his usual humour, **"the flowers were beautiful and were still going strong when I came out! They must be Dial-a-Cab strength flowers!"**

From everyone at Dial-a-Cab: Get well soon Jack...

## PAM'S LITTLE BOY PUTS ON CARNIVAL EXHIBITION

Colin, son of Pam Campbell from Dial-a-Cab's Customer Accounts Dept, has been asked by *Camden Primary Care Trust* to stage an exhibition of photographs taken by him over the summer of 2006 at the Notting Hill Carnival, Sadler's Wells Brazil Brasileiro and the Night Carnival at the Mayor's Thames Festival.

**The Exhibition runs until 12 December 2006 and is open daily from 9am to 6pm at the Gallery Space in the South Wing, St Pancras Hospital, 4 St Pancras Way, NW1.**

Entry is free. Dial-a-Cab drivers and staff are welcome to come along and enjoy Colin's brilliant photography...



*Carnival again through the lens of Colin Campbell*

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# DaC Customer Services/Special Projects

## PCO event

Together with Brian Rice and other members of the taxi trade, I attended a celebratory event at the PCO recently. I must say it was a very nice evening.

There were two aspects of the evening; one was celebrating 40 years of service to the taxi industry from Penton Street, while the other was due to Roy Ellis - the long-serving Principal of The Public Carriage - retiring shortly. The evening was also dedicated to Roy and an appreciation of the work he has done during his time at the PCO. I believe there is an article on the event in this issue of *Call Sign*.

We all know there have been many changes within our industry in recent years. Some have been controversial and they include the licensing of minicabs and of course the reduction of emissions. Changes to the Knowledge of London examinations have also been a bone of contention to some.

And soon to come, 'fit for service' taxi testing by outside sources. It's a far cry from when I became a cab driver 41 years ago and received my badge and Bill at Lambeth PCO, where the Met Police were the overseeing licensing authority.

Transport for London has also embarked on some good things for those that live, work and visit London. However, there have also been changes that some could say are contrary to that which is considered sacred to our lifestyle and what many, during time of war, have died for... and that is freedom of choice.

With so much more camera enforcement legislation, being penalised for working as taxi drivers, having to pay unacceptable fines just to pick up our passengers, security cameras watching our very movement both on the roads and in the streets allegedly due to terrorist threats and extending the boundary to bring evermore numbers into Congestion Charging, the job has certainly changed!

With charges the authorities invoke increasing like a rash, I have no doubt that it will be just a matter of time before some commercial enterprises consider relocating to other less expensive and restrictive cities in the UK.

But enough of the political side, what I really wanted to say is thank you to Roy Ellis for his diligence in what is a most difficult and demanding job - trying to please all of the people all of the time is impossible.

Both Roy and his wife Geraldine have been tremendous supporters of *The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children* as they were with all the trade charities. Personally, I wish them both well for the future and look forward in continuing to see them



at both taxi and charity trade events.

## Southampton Buildings

You will notice that there is a temporary closure of Southampton Buildings from High Holborn. With this in mind, it will involve a change to the normal pick up address for some of our clients.

There is an alternative pick up point to Holborn Gate - which you can temporarily access via Chancery Lane - and that is at 330 High Holborn. There is a single yellow line that will give you 5 minutes observation time instead of the 2 minutes you would get on double yellow lines.

It is important to keep an eye on your on-board terminal instructions. As with many account clients, there could be a second page of further important information. Some drivers are not looking at the subsequent page, which often results in the driver going to the wrong pick up address. It's no good moaning that you've had to reset the meter because you went to the wrong address when that change is detailed on page 2...

*As this is my last column before the New Year, can I send you all season's greetings and wish both you and your families a happy and healthy New Year...*

**Mike Son**

**DaC Customer Services /  
Special Projects**

## PCO XMAS / NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES

**The Public Carriage Office vehicle licensing inspection service  
will be open during the festive season as follows:**

Thursday 21 December 2006  
Friday 22 December 2006

**Normal Opening Hours**  
**Open 08:00 – 12:00**  
**(Vehicle Inspections 07:45 – 11:15)**  
**CLOSED (Christmas Day)**  
**CLOSED (Boxing Day)**  
**Normal Opening Hours**  
**Normal Opening Hours**  
**Normal Opening Hours**  
**CLOSED (New Years Day)**  
**Normal Opening Hours**

Monday 25 December 2006  
Tuesday 26 December 2006  
Wednesday 27 December 2006  
Thursday 28 December 2006  
Friday 29 December 2006  
Monday 1 January 2007  
Tuesday 2 January 2007

## SUPERIOR 5 BEDROOM EXECUTIVE VILLA IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA FOR RENT

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**Late deals and special prices for DaC members.**



With many schools now asking parents to get their kids a laptop computer and with those same children also asking for a PC in their room, this could be an expensive holiday season for many mums and dads.

There is no doubt that one of the best places to pick up a good quality laptop or PC is at the many **PC World** branches. The prices are as good as you can get and the backup's improved over the years. But one thing about PC World hasn't changed – their hire purchase prices are ludicrously high. Some may say that they are no worse than many other High Street shops and that is undoubtedly true, but when you are looking at equipment that could cost you up to or even more than £1000, how much you pay becomes very important.

These are some examples from PC World's *EasiPay* system:

Take a PC that costs £500. With PC World, you can pay that off over 48 months at £15.16 per month which comes to £728. The APR may well be advertised as 21.8% but to **Call Sign's** not quite so educated eye, that is almost 50% above the cash price! Or buy something for £800 and with 48 monthly payments of £24.28, you will end up as having paid £1165 – an extra £365...!

Now look at the **Dial-a-Cab Credit Union**. It's quite true that they won't give you credit over 48 months but they'll go up to 36 if you want it. And the terms leave those of PC World just standing!

That £800 loan over 12 months at £72 would cost you just £53 extra in interest with the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union. Even over 36 months, you would pay nowhere near PC World's rate.

DACCU loaning you £1000 over 36 months would cost you £34 a month and a total of £195 in interest, whereas PC World's *EasiPay* over 48 months would cost you £4 a month less for that extra 12 months, but would also mean that you were paying them an astro-

# Giving a PC as a Gift?

*And are you paying via PC World or the DaC Credit Union?*



The DaC Credit Union Committee just waiting to hear from you...

nomical £457 in interest!

And yet the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union has to beg members to join! Why? It costs you nothing. If you do not want to borrow money, contrary to rumour, you pay no fine and you can just continue saving – and saving is the only compulsory thing about the DACCU. You have to save a set amount regularly. How much you save is entirely up to you, but the more you save, the more you can borrow! And even if you do not want to borrow, you will still get a dividend at the end of the financial year and of course, your savings can be taken back whenever you want them, just as loans can be either paid directly into your account or by

cheque – if that's what you want. You can also get your loan by just making a quick phone call – no dressing up and begging to the bank manager!

The DACCU is for drivers and staff of Dial-a-Cab, but anyone in your family can also become a member in their own right with all the loan benefits that it offers.

**You can contact the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union on 0208 522 4502 or 0208 522 4503 or pop up to see them at Suite 209, Channel Sea House, Canning Rd. Stratford, E15...**

*It's our Credit Union, it's been described as the best. Let's use it!*

## DaC Xmas Incentive: 3 Peugeot 307 Cars...!

Last Christmas, Dial-a-Cab gave away a brand new 'gold' spec TXII to lucky driver **Richard Barford (R39)** whilst **Terry Goldsmith's (R74)** won 6 weeks of luxury holidays with Golden Years Holidays PLC, so how can they top that?

**"Well,"** Brian Rice told **Call Sign** in last month's magazine, **"we're hoping that this year's incentive will get our driver's wives, girlfriends or partners to encourage them to cover even more work than they already do because they fancy getting their hands on a Peugeot 307 1.6 'New S' model – and this Xmas we are giving away three of them!"**

So for those who have forgotten how you amass the points to have a chance of winning a £14,000 Peugeot, we are republishing the relevant info below – and good luck!

There is one point for account trips covered between the following hours...

**Monday – Friday**

**06:00 – 10:00 hrs**

**12:00 – 14:00 hrs**

**17:00 – 19:00 hrs**

**21:00 – 02:00 hrs**

Once you have ten points, you will be entitled to one entry into the prize draw. There is no limit to how many entries you can have. The more trips you complete, the more entries and the more chance you have of winning. Points only count in months



**3 of these £14000 beautiful Peugeots are up for grabs just for doing credit work!**

where you do at least 40 trips.

You can gain double points if you cover an account ride during 06:00 - 10:00hrs with a **'W'** or **'SW'** in the postcode. The same criteria also apply to any credit ride taken from **E140** between the hours 21:00 - 02:00hrs.

**Any credit ride between midnight Friday and midnight Sunday will carry double points.**

The first three call signs drawn will receive a new **Peugeot 307 1.6 New S in black**. The competition began on 9 October and ends at midnight on 31 December 2006.

# British Legion Thanks DaC Drivers...

## Following 'Silence in the Square'...

Following several terminal messages from the **Royal British Legion** to **Dial-a-Cab** drivers asking them to pull their cabs over to the side of the road if in the vicinity of Trafalgar Square on 11 November at 11am, our drivers did us proud and many were seen to stop as London became silent for two minutes during which time we remembered Britain's war dead.

As Big Ben struck 11 o'clock in the distance, a lone bugler played the Last Post leaving the only sound coming from the bells of St Martins-in-the Field. The two minutes ended with a lone bugler and Reveille.

The scene at the Square was incredibly moving as, in an act of remembrance, Londoners and tourists of all nationalities, colours and religions just stopped and stood in silence. Those



The pools of Trafalgar Square's fountains turned red with poppies..

close to the fountains scattered their poppy petals into the water turning them into pools of red. The time of 11am on 11 November marked the moment the guns stopped firing at the end of the First World War.

London following the war years when work was so difficult to come by. That assistance continued for many years after, forming a bond between the two organisations that exists to this day...

The Trafalgar Square event was named *Silence in the Square* by the Royal British Legion and saw live performances by the *Charterhouse School Choir* and singers *All Angels*.

Royal British Legion PR Officer, Mandy Castle, told **Call Sign**:

"The Royal British Legion would like to thank all the cab drivers who supported the Two Minutes Silence. It was amazing to see central London stand still and silent together in remembrance. It was a very moving occasion."

The Legion is closely attached to the London Taxi trade after its assistance to those on the Knowledge of

## Marshalled Taxi Rank in Queen Victoria St

The City of London Corporation, in partnership with the PCO, is trialling a new marshalled taxi rank in Queen Victoria Street (between Bank Station and Queen Street) EC4.

The trial commenced on 9 November 2006 and will initially operate for three months. During this period, marshalling will be in operation at the rank every Thursday and Friday evening between 10pm and 1am.

The marshals, who will be licensed taxi drivers, will be responsible for getting taxis and passengers away from the rank as quickly and efficiently as possible. The success of the scheme will be monitored throughout the duration of the trial.

The new rank will be on the south side of Queen Victoria Street, adjacent to Budge Row, EC4 and outside of the Temple Bar nightclub. The rank will only be in operation when marshals are present.



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## Call Sign

### December 2006

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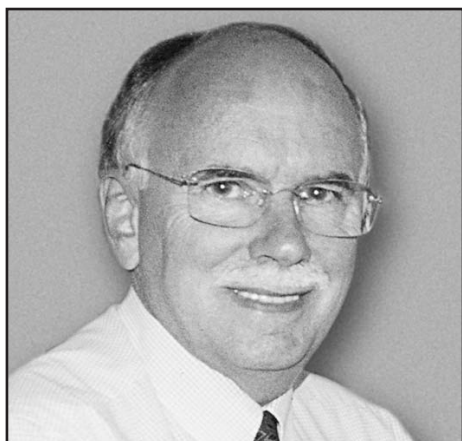
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**Much of the work putting the response together was carried out by Bob Oddy**

The one issue that unites the London taxi trade is our collective dislike for the third world pedicabs that have infested London over that past 8 years. Not because they compete with taxis, which they don't, it's because they are allowed to disregard the laws that we abide by.

They work predominantly in the West End, around theatres and the Covent Garden area, although some are found in others parts of the capital. It has long been a mystery to drivers why pedicabs appear to be immune from prosecution for touting and obstructions. Drivers also often ask why Westminster Council don't "do" them for trading without a licence or why the Mayor doesn't ban them...

Some years ago, the PCO did take them to court but through the combination of a poor prosecution and a sharp defense, the pedicab operators won the case and carried on regardless.

Since they first appeared in London, the LTDA has been at the forefront of the campaign to have pedicabs banned from the streets of our town. More recently, the LTDA instigated a court case to get a ruling that pedicabs are touts! Once again the court found in favour of the rickshaws and in what must be seen as a travesty of justice, the judge ruled

*Most taxi drivers agree that Pedicabs have become a real nuisance on the roads. The PCO have spoken about licensing them and issued a Consultation document some time ago. Now the LTDA have issued an excellent comprehensive response. Call Sign takes a brief look...*

## The PCO's Pedicab Consultation Document - The LTDA Response...

that the pedicabs are in fact stagecoaches and it cost the LTDA £50grand into the bargain.

The Public carriage Office are now proposing to licence pedicabs, the consultation period for submissions has now closed and the PCO are seeking a High Court ruling to have the pedicabs classified as hackney carriages. In the event that pedicabs are found by the High Court to be hackney carriages, no pedicabs would be permitted to carry passengers for hire and reward unless licensed and ridden by a licensed pedicabs rider.

**Licensed pedicabs would be permitted to ply for hire on the street and at designated ranks. TfL would regulate fares; this will place requirements upon the rider, the pedicabs and the owner of the pedicabs.**

### The LTDA response...

On behalf of the trade, the LTDA have submitted a response to the consultation on the licensing of pedicabs. It is a well-prepared and professional response along with two DVD's. Included on the DVDs are a Police Inspector giving his reasons for having pedicabs banned, the heads of the Covent Garden and Leicester Square Associations who argue that pedicabs should be banned from their areas and tourists who bitterly complain about the

exorbitant fare the pedicabs charge.

In their response, the LTDA show many examples of extortionate overcharging. These include £30 from Garrick Street to Piccadilly Circus, £30 from Oxford Circus to Marble Arch and £12 from Covent Garden Piazza to the Waldorf Hotel. The LTDA response explodes the non-profit making green myth perpetrated by the pedicabs operators and the persistent attempts to mislead transport authorities and the media into believing that the service they deliver is akin to a charity providing an emissions free solution to London's transport problems! The LTDA contends that these claims are spurious and that the pedicab trade only functions for the sole purpose of generating financial benefit to the operators and riders. The riders undertake very few hirings and consequently levy excessive fares to offset the high vehicle rents imposed by the operators - typically £80-£150 per week. The riders are predominantly young foreign nationals who pay their vehicle rental in cash.

The trade as a whole should thank the LTDA for the hard work they have put in on our behalf in preparing this response to the consultation on pedicab licensing. Special thanks must go to Bob Oddy who has tirelessly collated the information, often working late into the night to show that pedicabs should not be licensed - but banned.

## CAB DRIVER ATTACKS - KEEP YOUR TAKINGS SAFE!

Parts of E14 have suddenly become unsafe for taxi drivers with several attacks taking place around the A13 where the approach to Blackwall Tunnel is. Even the western exit to the Limehouse Link was recently targeted, as drivers coming out and heading towards the Tower stopped at the traffic lights only to find themselves under attack.

The police are currently chasing the culprits and it's only a matter of time until they catch them, however, it does appear to be a fact of life that young hoodlums are looking for any easy ways of getting money without having to work for it and even when these are caught, another group will appear somewhere or other.

Answers? Well the obvious first one is to always keep your front doors locked whether you are in E14 or Belgrave Square. Just get into the habit.

The second answer could save some of your property should you be unlucky enough to be involved in an attack - and that involves a product known as the Stoplock Strongbox.

Stoplock have long been the market leaders in vehicle security and this tough metal safe fits into the driving cabin to a fixed point using a security cable that locks into the Strongbox itself!

The Stoplock Strongbox has an anodised aluminium casing with a slide-out inner tray made of tough steel. Fully lined, the tray is large enough to easily hold a day's takings in addition to other items such as a SatNav unit for those times when you are perhaps leaving the cab to call an account client.

The Stoplock Strongbox is available from Halfords and leading in-car accessory retailers. It will cost you around £40.

You can see images of the Stoplock Strongbox at [www.saxonind.co.uk/downloads/strongbox](http://www.saxonind.co.uk/downloads/strongbox).



**The Strongbox is big enough to hold a SatNav while you leave the taxi**

By the time you read this article, the Christmas period will be steadily gathering momentum. As with other years, our DaC Marshals will be at many credit and cash events at which we will be calling on all of you to give the normal high levels of support that is required to maintain our excellent levels of service.

As you know, this is our Society's most successful and busiest period on record and I'm certain that we will be tested to the extreme over the festive period. Our priority must always be to service our many valued clients and as hard as it will be, we will not succeed without your help and assistance - ***I am confident that you will all once again come up trumps...***

## Battersea Park

You will by now be aware that for the first time in five years, Dial-a-Cab do not have a presence at Battersea Park. Over the past year there have been a number of serious issues that needed urgent attention before we could provide our services once again, which incidentally was second to none.

This year, on more than one occasion, a senior Marshal was physically attacked by a drink fuelled passenger, many were verbally abused and one or two of our members were bilked on long distance fares. I met with the Director of Battersea Park Events and initially he agreed with me to make the necessary changes, then the following day decided against it. I am in no doubt that they will be the big losers, but it is only right and proper to give you a true account of the reasons why we withdrew our services. This was originally put in place for the benefits of our members and the Licensed Taxi trade as a whole, ***but none of our members should be subject to this type of treatment, it was totally unacceptable.***

# Drivers Operations



This year as a good alternative, we are once again on site at the 'Bull Ring' (Chelsea Embankment) throughout December, so if you are over in West London please pop in and support our Marshals – it will be much appreciated.

## And signals...

I hope you have experienced a noticeable improvement in signals, especially in times when a very large volume of work is dispatched through the system and many of you are signed on. This time last year it did create problems and the work carried out over the past twelve months shows significant improvements in error rates from the various base stations.

The Board of Management will continue to explore further ways to increase channel capacity in all areas which will help to further reduce the number of resends, especially in certain areas. We will, as soon as it is physically possible, reuse a frequency west of Heathrow that will enhance coverage at the airport and in the

southwest. Unfortunately, these sites are very difficult to acquire and to obtain the radio licenses is even more difficult - ***Rest assured that everything possible is still being done, and that this project is high priority.***

## Bonjour Dial-a-Cab, ici Paris...!

As you know, the BoM are always looking at ways to improve the performance and coverage of our radio system, but the events of 7 November show that you can only take this so far!

What happened was that freak reception caused by the particular weather conditions of that day meant that some of our base stations were suddenly able to receive signals from within Central Europe! The FM broadcast band was also affected with French and Dutch stations being heard in some areas. Channel 8 suffered the worst problems due to a continental data transmission blocking our signals for much of the afternoon and evening. Fortunately, these freak conditions are quite rare, but it is a stark reminder that radio waves don't always behave predictably and that problems can sometimes occur even though the equipment itself is all working perfectly.

**Before I finish, may I please wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year...**

Allan Evans

Tel:0207 607 6403

Allane@Dialacab.co.uk



**The Children and Committee would like to thank the sponsors and drivers who participated in this years outing and wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

**2007 outing July 4th**

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## Taking the pee...?

This country of ours has thrived on immigration for a long time. Most newcomers have thrived, helping themselves and the economy to prosper. Some have come from war-torn countries, others expelled from theirs. My grandparents were from the second group, arriving here in the late 1800s from Russia. In the 1700s, the Huguenots were persecuted in France for their religious beliefs and so came to England to settle. In the late 1800s, the Jews were hounded out of Russia and settled in Europe and the USA working mostly in the sweatshops as tailors, later to dominate the fashion trade. Many Europeans were displaced after the two world wars. In the 1950s, black people from the Caribbean were invited here to replace the workforce lost in WW2, mostly working for London Transport or in hospitals as auxiliary workers. In the 70s Asians were expelled from Uganda and came here to work and create the phrase, *corner shops*. With each generation came some backlash. The Jews were dirty; the blacks were taking all the jobs - as were the Asians. None of this was true, but perception was everything. There were even signs in the boarding houses of the time stating No Irish, No Dogs, and No Blacks.

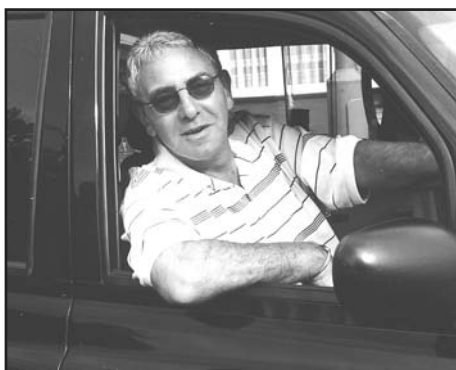
None of these groups asked for anything but the chance to work and go about their business in peace, certainly not asking the state to provide them with handouts. They believed in the work ethic. Recently though, it seems the reverse is true and people are arriving with the conception that the state will provide, not only for them but their dependants as well.

A case in point was that of the Pakistani woman who at, 7 feet 2 inches tall is claiming asylum because of her height. People in her native country throw stones at her and call her names. She claims that she cannot work because she has diabetes and as the NHS treatment is free here unlike in Pakistan, she would like to stay in Britain. Having lodged an appeal to stay, she was given rented accommodation with no council tax. She also receives £40 in benefit and has said that any extra money would be sent back home to help her family. As her case is not due to be heard before next year, she is entitled to stay here for up to two years while still receiving the benefits. I am not suggesting that this occurrence is the norm, but it does highlight the absurdity of our interpretation of the human rights laws and the ineptitude of our Home Office.

## Green is the colour...

I was always under the impression that stealth was a form of invisibility as in the stealth bomber, thereby not seeing it coming. How wrong can I be? This government, not wishing to raise direct taxation due to a pledge in 1997, have come

From the front seat of his TXII these are...



## The Views of a Grumpy Old Man

up with all sorts of variants to extract money from us and all the while being accepted by the populace as if not noticing. A simple case of "put up and shut up." We have had our national insurance put up by 10% although Gordon claimed it was only 1% (he does wonders with numbers). This was to go directly into the Health service. We've had our pension funds raided year-on-year to save the population - by killing them off early no doubt!

We even have a congestion tax to save our roads, but really to subsidise the public transport system in London and pay for the inflated wage bill of TfL. The newest idea is a double-edged sword whereby they can't lose and make you feel guilty at the same time by using the word *green* to mean ecology. Having had the longest, driest, summer on record, they say that we must go green to save

the planet. We must be more energy efficient and not waste the natural resources we have on Earth. We are also headed for the coldest winter in a long time, so is this global warming or ice age 2. Most of us have central heating, but now we are thinking air conditioning. Aha, say the government, improvement to your property, up goes the council tax. Windows need replacing? Double-glazing is the answer. More improvements, more council tax. We don't really need the front garden, let's pave it over and park the car there, thereby freeing up road space. Another improvement, more council tax. Can't really afford to move, let's build either an extension or a loft conversion and another improvement and again more council tax. Generate your own energy, even though the cost will not pay for itself in your lifetime. Improvement and more tax. The rubbish we put out for the dustmen? Put it out on the wrong day or in the wrong bin and it's a fine. No matter that collections now occur fortnightly instead of weekly, recycling is the name of the game. And just for the record, I don't want recycled toilet paper, for one thing you don't know who used it before!

## 15 minutes of fame...

Andy Warhol once said that everybody should have 15 minutes of fame. Well now we have 24 hours of fame each - being caught on CCTV cameras placed all over the capital. It's alleged that we are filmed at least every twenty seconds somewhere. This is policing by camera and not by consent. Not only that, but if they do see someone breaking the law, why is the picture always fuzzy of the person but not the vehicle?

*See you all next year and have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year...*

Chas Kissin (P99J)

# SUNNY LIFE

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To a ripple of polite applause from the London cab trade, LTI has launched its new TX4. It was a surprise to many because so far as LTI were concerned, they had no plans to replace the TX2 and vehemently denied on numerous occasions that a new taxi would be offered for sale! In fact, on their trading report for 05-06, they blame a decrease on new cab sales on "...the anticipated launch of the TX4."

Relations between drivers, LTI and main dealers has been fraught for many months due to the poor performing early TX2 and attempting to convince drivers who were buying the last remaining few that they were getting a genuine £2500 discount will do nothing to give drivers confidence in London's main supplier. If history were to repeat itself, LTI would have been far better to publicise the new TX4, thus alleviating the need to give a discount as a mass scramble may have taken place to buy the last of the improved TX2s with drivers not wanting to risk buying a new cab. The discount should have been put on the TX4!

The new TX4 is more expensive, so what do you get in the way of improvements for your money? For starters looking at the price, a TX4 auto bronze will cost £31,000 on the road, the auto silver £33,500 and the TX4 auto Gold £35,500. Even though new cab sales dropped in 05-06, LTI have raised the RRP on new cab sales by £2000 per vehicle, their excuse being that the cab has been tested in different locations around the world whilst apparently travelling ten times around the world in testing mileage.

What's alarming is that the TX4 has a Euro 4 compliant engine, so just when you thought you were in the clear by having a Euro 3 compliant taxi, the goalposts are bound to move again. The engine is made by Italian company VM Motori and to be honest, I've never heard of these engines before, but LTI claim they make purpose built engines. More specifically, it comprises of a DOHC straight 4-turbo diesel VM 425 2.5 litre engine capable of taking a 5% bio diesel mix. Service intervals are 10,000 miles apart - which I think is too long for the kind of work we do. In my experience, even the best quality 5w/30w fully synthetic oil struggles and as the oil becomes less effective, this in turn leads to engine wear. Even though it's not so much the blue exhaust smoke that gives out harmful emissions, an air filter can become clogged up with soot, resulting in less fuel mileage. It is this smoke that will give the authorities the excuse to give you a free smoke test in Park Lane and the possibility of a fine.

The transmission is made by Chrysler in the USA and set on 5 speeds. The suspension is based on a coil spring model with the brakes worked by ABS, but without discs on the rear - a big disadvantage as the front pads will wear more quickly. Driver features are an improved seat, chip and pin facility and all the things you don't really need but will cost a fortune to fix when they go wrong.

LTI claim they have put more thought into the creation of the TX4. I hope it doesn't compare with the engineers who designed the *Iron Lung* in Horse ferry Road. Four compartments - but only room for three standing!

Interestingly LTI profits have improved by 88% to 3.7million, up by 1.7m on the previous

**With so many issues involving the licensed taxi trade, DaC driver Richard Potter takes a look at some of them. His views do not necessarily reflect those of Call Sign or DaC...**

## A DaC Driver's Views on Life and Everything!



year to July 06. This may look a little rosier than it seems as most of the money came from property sales. The Parts department made a loss caused by "cannibalisation due to retirement of many Fairway drivers." I'm sure that many TX2s will be retired and "cannibalised" with a lot less mileage on the clock set against that of the excellent *Fairway Driver*.

It's good news that MBH have struck up an overseas deal as the wider MBH go, the less dependent they will be on London sales. I always felt that if the CoF were downgraded, LTI could possibly have gone broke, thus leaving us with one less supplier to choose from.

### The battle for Oxford Street

The battle of Oxford Street continues with TfL already stating that a trial will go ahead soon. This one billion pound scheme, paid for by central government, will have dire consequences leaving us with no through route. History would tell Ken that the last pedestrianised scheme in the West End failed and roads were re-opened. Soho became a sleazy, filthy zone full of ladies of the night and drugs dealers. Also I don't remember any mention in Mr Livingstone's manifesto about Oxford Street when he was up for election? There was a pledge by Simon Hughes (Lib/Dems) to create such a scheme and I believe this was just one of the reasons why he wasn't elected. How about that then? Don't mention it beforehand, but bulldozer it through once you get elected! Modern day politics? Little wonder there is huge voter apathy when it comes to voting at local and central government elections...

In his monthly radio broadcast to the "cab trade nation" on BBC London, Mr Livingstone shows his usual short thrift. Whilst listening to the debate regarding emissions, I've never heard a senior politician threaten libel action against a trade union before and if it weren't such a serious issue, it would be laughable. If

the Major has any evidence that counteracts the claims made by the LCDC, then he should produce it. It's not for me to judge who's right or wrong, but the cab trade are entitled to a fair hearing, just like everyone else.

### And Heathrow...

There seem to be trouble brewing at Heathrow. I've always found BAAs attitude to the trade a little naïve and condescending. As a trade, we bemoan the Hackney Carriage laws we work under because they place demands upon us and give others the right to tell us what we should do. However laws are also there to protect. Its one thing for the PCO to give a blessing to BAA to negotiate fixed fares at terminal 5, its another for BAA to interpret what we have to do under current Hackney Carriage law. On a busy Monday morning or Sunday night, a driver leaving the park will be entitled to choose Terminals 1 - 4 for meter fares or 5 for a fixed price. I know where I will go. BAA need us just as much as we need them and the fact that there is a timescale involved in opening terminal 5 should remind them of a need to settle. The cab trade has one distinct advantage over PH, that's the ability to adjust and cover any demand and that should not be forgotten. (See article on Addison Lee re Terminal 5...Ed)

### Advice on everything!

On a lighter note, whilst doing radio work have you had problems with your name board? Have I the only name board that requires sandpaper? And here's one for all you coffee lovers. The kind people at the Piccolo in Gresham Street, Queen Vic and Shepherd St tell me that the coffee they use is *Drury's Espresso Roma*. If you want to try it at home, you can buy it at the Drury's Shop in New Row WC2. They'll grind it for you and the cost is around £2.50 for 250 grams.

If you look at your rear carpet and intend spending 30 minutes picking out some chewing gum, try *Mr Muscle window cleaner*. Spray a lot into the gum whilst rubbing it with the hard end of a hand brush. Watch it disappear as the vinegar in it dissolves the gum like magic!

Finally, by the time you read this you will be in the top of the 9th or crossing the twenty to the ten-yard line, heading for the Christmas End zone looking for that illusive roader, like a squirrel trying to remember where he had stashed those peanuts.

*It's been a bumper year for DaC and as we know it's by far the best radio circuit in London. So wherever you are, have a good, prosperous and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.*

**Richard Potter (T51)**



*The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children* recently donated a miniature taxi, murals and sensory equipment totalling in excess of £8,700 for the opening of a new children's Sensory Room located in the children's Galaxy Ward of the new *University College Hospital* in Euston Road. Half the floor is for children with cancer and leukaemia whilst the other half treats acute admissions.

The official presentation and opening of the room took place on 10 November with the Fund's Life President **Bill Tyzack BEM (C06)**, Chairman **David Lessman (D19)** and committee including DaC's **Gerry Dunn MBE (S84)**, **Sim Yiannikaris (E53)** and **Mike Son** with DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** there to watch. The LTFUC were delighted to have **Barbara Windsor** join them as a guest along with the Mayor of Camden, **Councillor Jill Fraser**. Before the official opening, Barbara took time to go round the wards chatting to the children and later said she would be back in two weeks to visit a child suffering from cancer whom she had just met!

Ward Sister Annabel Simmonds thanked the LTFUC on behalf of the hospital and described the project as "a dream come true." DaC's Bill Tyzack then made a speech praising the hard work of his LTFUC committee in raising the money while the Mayor of Camden described the work of the LTFUC as "legendary and wonderful." An 11-year old boy from one of the wards helped complete the ribbon-cutting ceremony and it was indeed a very moving moment.

*The Sunshine Room*, so-named by the children on the ward, has a plaque affixed to the door incorporating the room name, the Fund's name and logo. The entrance to the room has been decorated with the artwork of children's illustrator Karen George and consists of taxis and London landmarks with another mural inside the room showing a calming seaside theme.

*The Sunshine Room* has comfy chairs, optic lights, bubble tubes, mirrors, projectors and a soft play area. The miniature taxi has been placed in the corridor outside the room and was donated by Geoffrey Hunt, Managing Director of Rainbow Rides who was also present. The committee asked **Call Sign** to pass on their grateful thanks to him. Barbara Windsor squeezed her tiny frame into the taxi, but the larger visitors

# Babs Windsor Opens LTFUC Sensory Room at UCH

*...with a little help from Dial-a-Cab!*



declined - no names mentioned!

*The Sunshine Room* will provide a fascinating space and safe adventure room where children can feel comfortable and in control as sensory rooms help and encourage children to find the right level of stimulation. The rewarding effects will often carry over outside the room and into other activities, reducing agitated behaviour and stimulating conversation. It is widely accepted as an effective therapy for 'special needs' children and helps to provide a range of experiences that able-bodied children take for granted. Rewards can be measured in many ways, but to hear the enthusiasm and joy and see the increased responses and motivation of the children after they have been in the sensory room is immeasurable.

Through **Call Sign**, the LTFUC would like to offer their thanks to Ward Sister Annabel Simmonds and Media Relations Manager of the hospital, Ian Lloyd, for their assistance. They will no doubt derive great pleasure in seeing the children benefit from using *The Sunshine Room* and taxi and the LTFUC are proud to have been able to assist children needing their help.

The Fund also asked us to wish Barbara Windsor a speedy recovery following her fall on the set of *Eastenders*...

The new LTFUC website is at [www.ltfuc.org.uk](http://www.ltfuc.org.uk)

The photo shows **Barbara Windsor** and the all-DaC group of (l - r) **David Lessman**, **Gerry Dunn**, **Barbara**, **Bill Tyzack**, **Brian Rice**, **Sim Yiannikaris** and **Mike Son**

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**Tel. 020 7841 3600**

**Visit their website at**

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## MAILSHOT

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## Christmas incentive - yes!

I have also had a couple of drivers mention to me that the chance of winning a car is so small and they would prefer to have a larger number of smaller prizes (**Nov Call Sign**).

However, the logical conclusion of their reasoning would be to have 1500 prizes of £25 each. This would hardly be an incentive to get drivers to cover credit rather than cash work. There are several drivers like myself who would try to cover the radio work regardless of any incentive, simply because we realise it is in the best interests of the Society. Overall, the Board have probably got the balance about right; since we do not make a "profit" this inducement is a fine way of handing back to some drivers part of the healthy surplus we are making.

**Laurence Kelvin (W88)**

**I agree Laurence. I believe that if DaC offered every driver an extra one-off £20 to come out on a wet Wednesday evening when Arsenal were playing and there was a shortage of cabs, the number of cabs over and above those who would come out anyway, would hardly be noticed ...Ed**

## And Christmas incentive - no!

I whole-heartedly agree with those subscribers who wrote in about this year's Xmas incentive. We should all write or call in to the B of M and show our disgust about this inadequate Xmas incentive. One raffle ticket for every 10 jobs completed within certain prescribed hours and only if you complete 40 jobs a month? Well, as this is the silly season, I'll hopefully cover 40 or more jobs. I'd like to congratulate the 3 DaC subscribers who will win a 9 grand car each and say unlucky to all the other 1997+ other drivers who did those extra little jobs for the benefit of our clients. They'll be so much happier to reward our loyalty (just like our very own ODRTS) next year by increasing our subs. These Xmas incentive ideas should be proposed, voted on and passed at the AGM, not decided behind closed doors. For instance, I heard this year that Radio Taxis are to offer reduced subs for the amount of radio work covered in December. This is what I believe ComCab does all year round as standard or at least did when I subscribed to them.

Talking of ComCab, re the article from Stephen Gander (V20) on EC5. If ComCab can use a program of allocating the 'nearest cab' to the client basis via GPS on their system, wouldn't it be novel to have the same system for use in EC5? No more unnecessary dead mileage. Now there's a thought! After all, we are told that we have such up-to-date, hi-tech, state of the art equipment in our

vehicles that I wonder if someone could perhaps write a program?

And finally, Mr Rice, resentment or not, if you don't ask, you don't get! A seasonal token or gesture per job, maybe a few pence, bigger gratuity etc from our clients who want cabs on time, every time this time of year and not to mention the same quality of service for the ensuing year. Or are we just to expect 5-10 quid bag jacket or brolley's again?

Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year to everyone on DaC and your families - including the staff.

**Ian Lingham (K64)**

**Ian, if you don't like the incentives, what you do is to write a nice letter to Call Sign or even phone the office and ask to speak to a Board member and suggest that next year we change the system so that everyone gets a share out of what you claim is £27,000 (3 x £9000 cars) between 2200 drivers - which equals £12.27 each. What you don't do is to write a letter loaded with sarcasm and expect it to see results. Only I may write in that manner! As for your comment: "Well, as this is the silly season, I'll hopefully cover 40 or more jobs," I would assume that as a member of DaC - the last circuit to be owned by its drivers - that you would be happy to provide a service to our clients all year round and not just for Xmas. Yes, you can get reduced subs on RTG, but it would come off of your £180 a month that has to be paid weekly and of which you could get 50p returned for every job you cover over 10 each week. So, Ian, if this is indeed the "silly season" and you cover your 40 jobs a month, sadly you'd still not be in line for any bonus. In fact you'd have to do quite a few in order to bring those subs down to what you are paying on the circuit you enjoy criticising! I believe that ComCab also operate something similar, but as you can pay up to £60 a week for that, it might not be what you are looking for either - although I believe they are looking for drivers, so you could always go and try it out!**

**So far as Xmas gifts are concerned, I don't know what is on offer as I write, but what happened to "it's the thought that counts?" With your way of voting for everything at the AGM, we'd have to allow two days for every meeting!**

**Re EC5, had you read the article by Keith Cain instead of just the letters page, you'd have seen that EC5 IS being rewritten and a new system tried. After all, if that ComCab system was so good, you wouldn't have left!**

**I've left out your "nudge, nudge" reference because besides being in bad taste, it would probably lead Call Sign into a lawsuit! And I wonder what you'd say if I made a similar remark about you and then claimed that it was only a joke? And**

**by the way, Ian, if you went out to buy one of the cars DaC have on offer, it would cost you 14K and not £9,000 ...Ed**

## What's in a name?

Since winning the competition to name the new building, several colleagues have spoken to drivers who, without knowing me, were unhappy with my winning entry. I read in the November **Call Sign**, a letter from Graham Church (S59) echoing the same dissatisfaction (it could be they all spoke to him). I entered what I thought was a harmless competition and tried to be inventive with the name, however dummies are being spit out. Whether that's because of the name I chose or the fact that I may be taking my family out to dinner when they feel it should be them, only they know. Therefore, I would like to donate the equivalent cash sum **Call Sign** offered me to a cab trade charity, preferably with a Dial-a-Cab connection. There are so many more things going on in this country that need our attention, this one needs to be put to bed. Anyway, what's in a name...?

**Mike Pollington (K17)**

**How sad that some drivers have so little to occupy their minds that they have to start criticising someone who wins an innocent prize in a competition designed for fun. Mike obviously read the "rules" before entering, unlike some who are criticising his win. The winner was supposed to use his or her imagination to come up with a name for the new building that even if not used, showed imagination. I got to know Bonnie Martyn probably better than anyone on Dial-a-Cab, but whilst naming the house after him would be a sensible option, that wasn't what the competition was about. Anyway, *The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children* are getting their video collection transferred over to DVD with payment coming from Mike's generous donation ...Ed**

## Female TaxiCard

I was interested in both the Editor's mention and that of Allen Togwell's writing about the old *Female TaxiCard*. I remember it well having been one of the three female Dial-a-Cab drivers originally involved with the project along with Brenda Bartlett (J75) and a lady called Jackie. The original idea was to get female drivers to cover women's trips. It never really worked that way - probably because there weren't enough women and it was rather impractical anyway. But the idea was good and I'm pleased to read in Allen Togwell's report that it might be coming back.

**Pat Graves (I53)**

**Allen Togwell replies: Yes Pat, you were indeed one of the first three females to join our circuit in 1992 - the year I introduced the Dial-a-Cab female taxicard.**





## MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 36

However, I would like to politely point out if I may, that I think your memory of the project has become a little jaded over the course of time and perhaps become confused with similar services involving female passengers. The DaC female taxi-card service was introduced following the assault of a female passenger by a bogus minicab driver who overheard details of the pick-up address by listening in on another licensed radio taxi company's two way voice system. On realising our new Data Despatch system could not be heard over the radio, including classified details that previously could be heard by passengers sitting in our fleet of taxis, I exploited that fact in our marketing portfolio as well as using it to for a new service strictly for females travelling alone. Females wishing to use this service would be issued with a pink plastic card on which would be an exclusive ex-directory telephone number for booking cabs and a registration number, which when quoted would indicate to our telephonists the female status plus their pick-up address and phone number etc. It was a cash paying service and available to the whole fleet. The driver accepting a trip would identify him/herself at the pick-up address by their Call Sign and at the end of the journey, the driver would delay moving off until the passenger was safely inside their place of destination. To be honest, when I originally launched this service I was deeply disappointed at the response, particularly as it was at the time of the Suzy Lamplugh disappearance in 1986 and that was still making headlines together with the spate of assaults on females by minicab drivers. Disappointed, because I had written to every female MP as well as editors of a large number of female magazines and female journalists, inviting them all to the launch - and not one bothered to attend.

In conclusion, I feel it prudent to mention that whilst the safety of females before moving off was a feature of the Fem service, in theory it should really apply to every journey involving females.

## Will your God forgive you, Mr Warden?

I was parked outside JPMorgan at Finsbury Bars and noticed what appeared to be a traffic warden issuing a ticket to my taxi. So I went up to him and asked if he was issuing a ticket to my cab and he said that he wasn't. Then he went behind the cab and began typing away, so I crept up behind him and saw him typing in the details of my cab. I told him that I had seen what he was doing and said that I hoped his God would forgive him for telling such lies and reiterated to him that he had lied to his God!

Then my passenger came out and just as we pulled away, the warden tapped on my

window and said that he had now cancelled it! A warden with a conscience? Nah, can't be!

**Mark Tiller (K90)**

Bless you, my son ...Ed

## Regular drivers?

I've just read the piece in the November *Call Sign* about Anja King and her photography hobby. My question is how do drivers become regular drivers of clients as Anja claims some are? And also, how can drivers "phone other regular drivers of clients" to do pick-ups for them? I'm puzzled...

**Terry Catherall (Y90)**

I know exactly what you mean Terry and whilst not for one second did I suspect Anja of being involved in anything untoward, I couldn't help but feel uneasy, so I looked into it. However, the answer isn't that bad. It seems that Anja's version of regular drivers are the few that she recognises out of those who take her home each night - often whilst booked on a 'going home' trip (she goes before EC5 comes into operation).

The other incident involving the pick-up was also innocent. After realising that she had left something at her Gresham Street office, the driver taking her home phoned a friend who usually finished around then and asked if he would pick up something and drop it off to Anja who lives fairly close. He did and would accept no money for the trip, which is why she was so astonished and why this circuit has the good name that it does ...Ed

## Searching for the Elisha family

Thank you very much indeed for the article on my great-grandfather, Joseph Nathan Elisha - it looked great (*Oct Call Sign*). I saw it on your Internet issue and through it we have found one relation - Paul Brown (a cabbie) and his wife Paula. Both are very keen on family history, so the article did get a result - but our search still continues!

**David Elisha**

Romford, Essex

Pleased we could help ...Ed

## San Francisco testimony!

I recently came across the *Call Sign* website at my home in San Francisco, California and although that's my home, I often spend weeks at a time in London on business. While there, I often use the services of you guys and seeing your website has given me the opportunity to thank you all for the great service you provide. Because of you, I can get around town and do twice as much work than if I waited for buses, tubes or limos. So thanks guys. Everyone says you're the best... I KNOW that you are and I'm just grateful that the company discovered your services...

**Arnold Goldheimer**

San Francisco, California

We do our best ... have a nice day! ...Ed



## The wrong John!

I spoke to you recently outside the office about a letter in the Mailshot section of the November *Call Sign* titled Biodiesel in which the writer makes a comment about an article written by Poppy. My name is John Addis, my Call Sign is N26 and not K97 and I did not write this letter! Perhaps there is another John Addis on Dial-a-Cab? I would be grateful if you would check this out, as I do not want people to think I would write such a letter.

**John Addis (N26)**

'Fraid there ARE two of you, John! Either way, Poppy thanks you for your nice sentiment ...Ed

## The right John!

Just to let you know why I have decided I will not be using Biodiesel. Faye Scott's (The Environment Trust in the Nov *Call Sign*) attempt to allay my concerns re the use of that fuel in my taxi failed. I feel that as a representative of an organisation promoting the product, she may be slightly biased in its favour. The paragraph beginning "most taxis are out of warranty anyway..." hardly inspires confidence. When her organisation is in a position to guarantee the product will not damage my fuel system and / or engine, I'll probably reconsider. But for the time being, I think I'll be careful and take notice of Ford, Bosch, Delphi and Siemens etc who obviously are not convinced either.

Perhaps LTI could give their opinion - the only one that really matters to us. Would biodiesel negate the TXII or TX4 warranties? I'd like to have a bet with Ms Scott on their answer!

**John Addis (K97)**

Now do you believe me John Addis (1)!

The new TX4 can use a 5% bio-diesel mix and this would be covered under warranty. The TXII handbook reads: CAUTION: The use of diesel fuels with high vegetable oil content of over 5% is prohibited. This includes products commonly described as bio-diesel. This should mean that the fuel available at filling stations in the UK and Europe complies with this, providing that the fuel supplied is to ISO/BSI/EN590 which is the standard for mineral diesel for road use.

LTI Government Affairs spokesman, Richard Daniels, went on to tell *Call Sign*: "I think there is also a wider issue of reducing emissions and particularly carbon emissions (foot print) which is headlining the political agenda at present. As you may be aware, LTI has been looking at developing a marketable hybrid vehicle and developed three prototypes vehicles, but they are currently not commercially viable. We continue to work to find a commercially viable solution to reduce emission levels." ...Ed

## MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 37

## Welcome back Patsy...

It's great news that Patsy McCarthy (C01) is on the road to recovery after his spell in hospital. Patsy used to be a driver trainer at DaC and managed to guide me through that exhausting day back in April 1994. The great news sentiment also applies to DaC dispatcher Jay Gomez, whose kidney transplant I read of in *Call Sign*. It's just a shame that he supports Arsenal!

**Russell Hall (G44)**

**Just like it's a shame that you support East Ham – er sorry, West Ham! They're so close it's easy to become confused ...Ed**

## EC5 et al – again!

I felt compelled to write again after reading Keith Cain's response to my last letter. I felt it was used as little more than a platform for re-election to the Board in the up-coming elections. My initial question regarding EC5 was basically glossed over by saying they were trying but having problems with reprogramming, even though we were having severe coverage problems in the City when I first raised this point over two years ago. Maybe whoever is working on this should try a little harder, after all it works in all zones during the morning busy period - so why not in just the EC zones at night?

The next points I raised were in regard to bringing more drivers onto the circuit, the subs increase and Concierge. I admit I might have got it wrong with regard to us needing more drivers and it wasn't done purely to get more money in the bank, although I still feel my point regarding Concierge is more than valid.

On page 4 of last month's *Call Sign*, we had Brian Rice telling us that "our turnover has increased by a massive 15% or £5.5m extra work and that during the first month of our new financial year our turnover has increased by a further 9%". So we are obviously doing very well at the moment - or are we? If turnover is up but profit margins down, then it's not so rosy. If that is not the case however, then I ask once again why the subs increase? Saying that it makes good business sense to increase subscription rates in line with inflation or in case account charges from customers fall might be valid if we were a PLC with share holders requiring a return for their investment, but we are not - we are a friendly (non-profit making) Society.

If the subs previously never went up and on one occasion even went down, why now that we are having our greatest year ever are they going up? Before whoever answers my letter says that I have taken my quotes out of context - another regular statement that's doing the rounds - I don't believe I have. I have interpreted everything as it was written, so please think about the point you are trying to get across before you put pen to paper. This letter more than likely will not change a thing, but criticism if constructive and I

believe this is, should be encouraged.

Anyway merry Christmas and a happy new year to everyone.

**Steve Gander (V20)**

**Steve, I think that you are being unfair. You wrote a letter for the November issue and had a very long and detailed reply in response. Asking the same questions again won't change the responses you get and I'm sorry, but to accuse the writer of electioneering is rubbish. I asked Keith Cain to write an answer and he took time off from his weekend to do it. I see no electioneering in that - unless you wanted him to lie and say that things really aren't good when they obviously are. Yes, we are a non-profit making organisation, but it still has to be run like a business. Do you want DaC to give all its money away and then when there's none left, to ask for a subs increase? Yes, it's a nice thought but totally impractical and would see us fold ultra-quickly. And who said that profit (surplus) margins were down? I would expect the figures to show a healthy increase when released.**

**Yes, constructive criticism is fine, Steve and *Call Sign* thrives on it. Your suggestion about EC5 was acted on as soon as other equally high priorities were sorted out and I congratulate you on seeing a good idea, but that doesn't mean that the world has to stop while your suggestion is implemented. Software writing for a complicated system such as ours isn't a two minute job and can have very severe implications if it were to go wrong - not least from the drivers who would write in their droves that we shouldn't have rushed a software change!**

**Finally, Steve, can I ask where in *Call Sign* you have seen regular use of the expression "taken out of context" because it isn't one that I remember seeing used particularly often?**

**And finally, Steve a sincere happy Christmas and New Year to you as well, ...Ed**

## Immigration and Christmas "fun"

Tom Whitbread in his last article believes that as nobody has written to contradict his personal views, it meant that we all must have agreed with him. He couldn't be further from the truth. There are two reasons why I haven't written this far in response to Tom and Chas' rants on immigration. Firstly, I believe that everybody is entitled to their own views and secondly because having been in this country for 24 years now, you just learn to shrug your shoulders and get on with life. But I must point out that reading these articles does offend and hurt. And before anybody suggests that I am being over-sensitive, then that is because I suffered similar prejudices when I originally came here in 1982 and then had to grin and bear it. Was there **no** crime in this country before the



arrival of the first immigrant? Wow...!

In response to the letters from Mike Appleby and Steve Crisp, all I've got to say gentlemen is that the incentive is meant to be a bit of fun while we go about covering our work. These are **our** accounts and **our** work and not the BoMs. With that in mind, do we actually need end of year bonuses to cover our work?

Stephen Gander mentions in his letter that he tends not to cover EC5 if he can help it. Thanks mate, you look after yourself while the majority of us run for miles to cover **our** work in EC5. I am sure those lovely cash rides will be there for you come January!

For the record, it takes around 10 minutes to get to London Wall from Bridge St SW1 and I don't think that's too much to ask a driver to put him/herself out to cover work.

Finally, Poppy is entitled to her views, but she is wrong to suggest that we are against emissions control. We are against being singled out and having to fund the project with systems that we don't have confidence in, while the buses get huge subsidies. Maybe she is right when she says she doesn't understand these things.

**Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)**

**Thanks for the letter, Divyesh. I understand your point of view re immigration and I'm sorry if anything you read in *Call Sign* offends you, but as you say, everybody is entitled to their own views. However, I think that the most important sentence in Tom's last article was his reference to "uncontrolled immigration." I know Tom quite well and contrary to the beliefs held by some, he is not prejudiced against anyone in particular - although he often jokes that he is against everyone! He just speaks his mind and perhaps living in an area considered to be top-heavy with immigrants from other countries whilst high on the list of violent attacks, has given him a false impression. I've seen him with kids of all creeds and colours whilst he acting for his charity, Dial-a-Dream, and they all think he's great - outrageous perhaps, but great!**

**As for emissions, I agree 100% with your view that we are being singled out as the fall guys. If it all went pear-shaped, it wouldn't cost the bus companies a penny. We, on the other hand, would not be so lucky ...Ed**

## And more...

I can't think of anyone whose personal views I would least like to hear, yet once again Tom Whitbread has decided to treat us to his 'words of wisdom'. His views are obnoxious however I support the right to freedom of speech. The problem for me is the forum used to exercise that right. We are advised that we should read *Call Sign* because it is used to impart important information (I long ago



## MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 38

abandoned reading the rantings of Chas Kissin, confident that I would never miss anything remotely important. However BoM articles - and particularly Mr Whitbread's - are often used to advise of procedural changes etc. This being the case, surely BoM articles as a 'must read' should keep to relevant subjects?

If Mr Whitbread has a burning desire to impart his narrow minded view on us, then let him put it in a letter to Mailshot like the rest of us.

I suspect that the irony is lost on him, but within his Compliance Officer's report he writes: "We have a new office building, most up to date call centre, IT/DP dept and billing credit control in the licence taxi trade - a company that is now respected and looked up to." How long, I wonder, will that respect last when clients and other important people that receive copies of *Call Sign* read such ignorant bigoted stuff from a member of the Board of Management?

Perhaps Allen Togwell's concern about our image regarding sloppy dress could be extended to include the rantings of his colleague? We are all shamed by association and coming as it does from a BoM member, it demeans the Society.

Finally, whether we agree or not with Mr Whitbread's sentiments, surely he should not use his privileged position to treat us to his sad philosophies.

**David Brett (P93)**

**Thanks for the letter, David. The answer to you as it was to Divyesh above is the same so I won't repeat it again other than to say that contrary to the way his views sound, Tom is not prejudiced against colour or creed, only against Governmental policies allowing unchecked immigration. However, I have now asked him to concentrate more on DaC matters. But one thing puzzles me in all this tirade against Tom's views; why do those against write in, but those who agree with him telephone their views but don't want their names published? Whilst not necessarily agreeing with all Tom's views, I admire him for putting his name to his views ...Ed**

## A difficult year...

To all my many friends on Dial-a-Cab, a big thank you for your help and support in what has been a very difficult year for both me and my family. It began with the death of my dear mother and continued more recently with my wife's cancer.

To Tom Whitbread, special thanks for your support and also the lovely flowers you sent to my wife. And to all my friends on the Finz, thank you all...

**Steve Goldberg (A77)**

**Let's hope things start to get better soon, Steve ...Ed**

## I know where you are!

Thanks so much for sending me the copy of *Call Sign*. We really appreciate your support and thank you so much for including the ad

about the museum which we are delighted with. One of my colleagues was in a licensed taxi the other day and this time, instead of the driver having no idea where the Foundling Museum was - something that has been a recurrent problem for us - he told her that he kept hearing about the museum over the radio and thought it sounded very interesting. All down to you I think!

**Sarah Carr**

**Marketing and development, The Foundling Museum WCI**

**Many drivers have now been to the museum and several have contacted me to say how fascinating it is and that they would never have known about it without *Call Sign* (we passed the info over to several other trade papers as well). London has many excellent museums, but it's always nice to find one that you hadn't heard of before ...Ed**

## Question of the day!

The poor are always with us. So it appears in the vexed question of a dress code. Whilst not a member of the trackie bottoms, string vest and flip flop brigade, neither do I follow the shirt, tie and shiny shoe path! To be frank, I've told my wife to bury me in blue jeans, so you can see where I'm coming from!

But one word keeps popping up during this debate and it gives me the creeps. It's redolent of the 1950s; of beige, of "Just slip these on," of "How do they feel," of "Oooh! Suits you sir!" That word is slacks! Can anyone define slacks? Can you buy one slack? Can anyone please let me know!

**Geoff Levene (K43)**

**We have just the man to answer your query! Allen Togwell responds:**

**Why Mr Fisher asked me to answer your question, I don't know, but I'll try! The definition of slacks in my old Tailor**

**and Cutter book of the 1950s is a pair of lightweight trousers that have a sharp crease, made in various colour fabrics to be worn with or without a contrasting jacket. Slacks, as with pants, come in the plural. Whether that is because it refers to meeting the requirement of two legs, I cannot say for certain, but if so then it's not beyond the realms of probability that one day, particularly with the present fashion of wearing trousers that show most of your bum, that we might well see those same idiots wearing slacks minus one leg, which the other idiots - the PC brigade - will then insist on changing the plural of slacks into the singular, thereby easily answering your question!**

Seriously though, Mr Levene, you mention your affection for jeans; sadly, the popularity of that garment during the 70s was a major cause of the decline in the fashion industry in this country and worse, a decline in people's general appearance - both men and women - of which we have never recovered.

## Thanks from Mrs Grumpy!

May I through Mailshot, firstly thank the Board for the bouquet of flowers and good wishes sent to Chas after his recent heart scare. May I also thank the drivers who have either called or emailed asking after him. It would seem that what with last year's accident and this year's heart scare, somebody up there does not want him! Maybe in the future he will not be so grumpy and just be thankful that he is on this earth for a reason.

**Mrs F.Kissin**

**I've spoken to Chas and he sounds as grumpy as ever but also sounds much better...Ed**

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