

November 2006



# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

*Inside this issue...*

---

**DaC 15% turnover increase!**  
page 4

---

**Keith Cain: DaC rewriting EC5**  
page 9

---

**Former Chairman in hospital**  
page 12

---

**Exclusive Power Pill offer for  
DaC drivers**  
page 13

---

**Drivers injured in robbery  
attempts on DaC taxis**  
page 17

---

**The DaC driver and Nigella  
Lawson!**  
page 20



***LTI turn rumour into reality as the TX4 arrives...***



***PCO tell Call Sign they have full confidence in all passed emission systems. LCDC allegations described as "alarmist" at retest...***





# 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...**

Pub/Wine bar, address in SW1	Pub / Wine bar, address in SW1	Pub / Wine bar, address in SW1
Adam & Eve - 81 Petty France	Hedgehog & Pheasant - 25 Warwick Way	Speaker - 46 Great Peter Street
Antelope Tavern - 22 Eaton Terrace	J.D Wetherspoon Unit - 5 Victoria Station	Spread Eagle - 79 Grosvenor Road
Bag O' Nails - 6 Buckingham Palace Road	Jugged Hare - 172 Vauxhall Bridge Road	St. Georges Tavern - 14 Belgrave Road
Balls Bros Ltd - 50 Buckingham Palace Road	Kings Arms - 77 Buckingham Palace Road	St. Stephens Tavern - 10 Bridge Street
Barley Mow - 104 Horseferry Road	Liquid Blue - 15 Wilton Road	Stage Door - 3 Allington Street
Blue Posts - 6 Bennett Street	Litten Tree - 17 Artillery Row	Star Tavern - 6 Belgrave Mews West
Buckingham Arms - 62 Petty France	Lord Burleigh - 250 Vauxhall Bridge Road	Surprise - 110 Vauxhall Bridge Road
Captains Cabin - 4 Norris Street	Lord High Admiral - 43 Vauxhall Bridge Road	Talbot - 1 Little Chester Street
Cardinal - 23 Francis Street	Lord Moon of The Mall - 16 Whitehall	Tapster - 3 Brewers Green
Cask & Glass - 39 Palace Street	Marquis of Granby - 41 Romney Street	Tattersalls Tavern - 2 Knightsbridge Green
Chequers Tavern - 16 Duke Street, St James	Marquis of Westminster - 50 Warwick Way	Tattershall Castle - Victoria Embankment
Clarence - 53 Whitehall	Morpeth Arms - 58 Millbank	Tiles Wine Bar - 36 Buck Palace Road
Coach & Horses - 35 Willow Place	Nags Head - 53 Kinnerton Street	Tom Cribb Public House - 36 Pantom Street
Comedy Public House - 7 Oxendon Street	Old Star - 66 Broadway	Travellers Tavern - 4 Elizabeth Street
Constitution - 42 Churton Street	Orange Brewery - 37 Pimlico Road	Turks Head - 10 Motcomb Street
Davy 1 St James - Crown Psg 20 King Street	Page - 11 Warwick Way	Two Chairmen - 39 Dartmouth Street
Duke of Wellington - 63 Eaton Terrace	Wine Vaults - 12 Upper Tachbrook Street	Two Chairmen - 1 Warwick House Street
Duke of York - 130 Victoria Street	Plumbers Arms - 14 Lower Belgrave Street	Victoria - 1 Lower Belgrave Street
Ebury Wine Bar - 139 Ebury Street	Prince Of Wales - 91 Wilton Road	Walkers - 32a Duke Street, St. James
Elusive Camel - 27 Gillingham Street	Puzzle - 51 Horseferry Road	Walkers of Whitehall - 15 Craig's Court
Feathers - 18 Broadway	Raclette Wine Bar - 152 Victoria Street	Westminster - 75 Page Street
Finnegan's Wake - 2 Strutton Ground	Red Lion - 2 Duke Of York Street	Westminster Arms - 9 Storey's Gate
Fox & Hounds - 29 Passmore Street	Red Lion - 48 Parliament Street	White Ferry House - 1a Sutherland Street
Gallery - 1 Lupus Street	Rising Sun - 46 Ebury Bridge Road	White Horse & Bower - 86 Horseferry Road
Gloucester - 187 Sloane Street	Rose & Crown - 90 Lower Sloane Street	White Swan - 14 Vauxhall Bridge Road
Golden Lion - 25 King Street	Royal Oak - 2 Regency Street	Willow Walk - 25 Wilton Road
Greencoat Boy - 2 Greencoat Place	Shakespeare - 99 Buckingham Palace Road	Wilton Arms - 71 Kinnerton Street
Grouse & Claret - 14 Little Chester Street	Silvercross - 33 Whitehall	

## What's On at the Exhibitions Centres

ExCel Event Name	Where/Type	Date
World Travel Market	ExCel Trade	06 - 09 Nov 06
The Professional Pensions Show	ExCel Trade	15 - 16 Nov 06
London Caravan & Outdoor Show	ExCel Public	16 - 19 Nov 06
The Times Gap Year Show	ExCel Public	17 - 18 Nov 06
The Thames Gateway Forum	ExCel Trade	22 - 23 Nov 06
Emirates-UK Business Investment Opportunities	ExCel Trade	22 - 24 Nov 06
Festival of Life	ExCel Public	24 - 25 Nov 06
The Global Peace & Unity Event	ExCel Public	25 - 26 Nov 06
World Food Market	ExCel Trade	29 - 30 Nov 06
Media Careers Information Day - London	ExCel Public	30 Nov 06

Earl's Court and Olympia Event name	Where	Date
Spirit of Christmas Fair	Olympia Grand	01 - 05 Nov 06
MPH 06	Earls Court 1, & 2	02 - 05 Nov 06
The Language Show	Olympia 2	03 - 05 Nov 06
Winter Fine Art & Antiques Fair, Olympia	Olympia National	06 - 12 Nov 06
Kiosk Show 06	Olympia 2	08 - 09 Nov 06
The London BBC Good Food Show	Olympia Grand	10 - 12 Nov 06
Discover Dogs 2006	Earls Court 2	11 - 12 Nov 06
Mind Body Soul Exhibition	Olympia 2	11 - 12 Nov 06
Mortgage Business Expo London 2006	Earls Court 2	15 - 16 Nov 06
Business Startup 2006	Olympia 2	17 - 18 Nov 06
Erotica	Olympia Grand	17 - 19 Nov 06
DM Live!	Earls Court 2	21 - 22 Nov 06
Insight 2006	Earls Court 2	21 - 22 Nov 06
PETEX 06	Olympia	21 - 23 Nov 06
The Data Show	Earls Court 2	21 - 22 Nov 06
George Michael	Earls Court 1	25 - 29 Nov 06
Olympia Musicmania 2006 (November)	Olympia 2	25 - 26 Nov 06
Spa Show in association with the Sunday Telegraph.	Olympia 2	25 - 26 Nov 06
Civils 06	Olympia National	28 - 30 Nov 06
Online Information Services 06	Olympia Grand	28 - 30 Nov 06

**All back issues, now PDF format for easy printing available at – [www.nashsnumbers.co.uk](http://www.nashsnumbers.co.uk)**



# from the editor's desk

The fuss over the millennium seems to have only just receded and now it's 2007! But what really brought things home to me was hearing that a young Arsenal footballer had recently signed a long-term contract to stay at the club until he is 28 – in 2014. Not only does the year sound so futuristic, but I'm not even sure how it will be pronounced... two thousand and fourteen or twenty fourteen! And he'll still only be 28! And here's me telling anyone who will listen about Spurs double winning team from 1961...

## Radio circuits and the future...

If anyone ever asks me which radio circuit is the best, I wouldn't think twice about saying Dial-a-Cab. Besides being true, after 28 years officially and 4 unofficial years (only our Secretary of the 1970s, John Bernardout, knows where my papers are from that period and sadly John died many years ago), this Society has become a part of my life. Perhaps that's why I jump when I hear criticism from those totally unconnected with us.

For example, Peter Rose wrote in a recent *Cab Trade News* about what he calls the average radio job fare before going on to say in a rather sarccy tone that what the circuits don't tell you is how long the journey took and any waiting etc. He then claims that the average radio job is falling "...because the jobs are getting shorter." And why? Because 'still-mutual radio circuits' (who could he mean?) are acting as a "Concierge" for account customers and who are happy to book a minicab for them if it makes the client's day easier. How did he get all this information? Apparently drivers "...talk to him because he is a member of the T&G." Well that explains it all. Compared to the total number of drivers on radio circuits, the T&G Cab Section must have a membership of at least 3 – 4% of that number!

I don't believe that Peter Rose has ever been on DaC, although I think I once heard that he had applied to come on. So what gives him the right to criticise something that he claims "...drivers told him about?"

To save Peter explaining, it's because the "in thing" is to bash success and something the UK *Discuss* internet list does plenty of. It is, of course, a free country and nothing gives more freedom than the internet, but ask anyone who dares speak up in favour of DaC on the list - they get shot down in flames for no reason other than, as today's young people might say, it isn't cool to speak nicely of us!

Like most of our drivers, I like working with the meter rather than with a fixed price, but on the one hand Peter asks whether the use of minicabs could be down to the cost, whilst later on he criticises



ComCab (without mentioning their name) for talking about more fixed price rides in order to compete better with minicabs.

Then he trots out the same old stuff that we've heard 101 times before about the former head of a radio circuit who now works for Radio Taxis, although again not mentioning that he is referring to Geof Kaley. That strikes me as being rather cowardly. I suggest that Geof Kaley has done more for this trade than Peter Rose has ever done or ever will do in the future. Without Geof Kaley's forethought in those early London Wide days, we probably would have been overrun by minicabs years ago.

*Call Sign* gets letters of criticism about DaC because it is a sad fact that contented drivers don't bother writing, but I'd rather get 100 letters from our drivers having a moan, because they at least are on the circuit.

Writers who get their info from "other drivers" are generally not worth listening to...

## Taxis and MoTs

A disturbing report has reached *Call Sign* via DaC driver **John Dixon (B67)**, concerning a friend of his who was driving his Fairway into work from Milton Keynes, when he was pulled up by the local police for what they called was a random test. They asked the rather shocked cabbie to follow them to a testing station where the vehicle was given a test akin to an overhaul.

An "incorrectly fitted washer" was all they could find and the police in their wisdom slapped a PG9 prohibition order onto the taxi and said that they would lift it on production of an MoT certificate. The driver explained that we didn't need one as licensed taxis, but the police claimed that it wasn't a licensed taxi in Bedfordshire, where the test took place.

*Call Sign* spoke to a member of the London cab enforcement section (TOCU) who, whilst expressing surprise that the cab should have been stopped, said that in theory a PG9 required a test certificate. Perhaps the PCO could give a definitive answer because as John said, Dial-a-Cab often do

journeys from train stations involving long trips. Could the above then happen to us on a regular basis?

## Ken and the Zigzag lines

You couldn't have failed to hear that Mayor Ken Livingstone recently won his appeal against a suspension from his position as Mayor of the capital, following his dispute with a reporter from the Evening Standard when he compared him to a Concentration Camp guard from Auschwitz. The quote was appalling, but the decision to overturn the suspension was probably correct – even if it doesn't make him a particularly nice person.

However, millions watched the news item on the television news and probably saw Ken coming out of the Law Courts with a big smile on his face and jump into a silver-coloured, street-hailed Dial-a-Cab taxi. And where did Ken – who is the head of virtually everything that happens in London regarding stopping, starting, illegally parking, speeding and fine collection – stop the cab in full view of those viewers? Got-it-in-one! Right smack in the middle of the zigzag crossing lines!

Mind you, he is the Mayor, so that's all right then...

## LBC and Radio Scotland

I've been involved in several discussions / interviews on the London cab trade with BBC Radio Scotland and perhaps unsurprisingly, not once has anyone ever claimed to have heard it. But when I made an appearance on LBC – a station I listen to quite rarely – my phone did not stop ringing all day and late into the evening. I also had to delete the mounting text messages as there was a danger of a blockage!

I guess that answers the question as to what radio station is the London cabbies' favourite and will save LBC carrying out a survey!

## James Whale for Mayor?

What is the world coming to? According to TalkSport presenter, James Whale, if elected into the spot currently held by Ken "I can say what I like" Livingstone, he will ban bendy buses and cyclists from the centre of London. If he provides London's cab drivers with subsidised taxis (like five hundred quid each!), he can have my vote - and the other 25,000 of us!

**Alan Fisher**  
**Callsignmag@aol.com**

# Reflections Of The Chairman

## End of year figures

We currently have the Auditors in Brunswick House because as you are aware, our year finished at the end of August. I have been reliably informed that everything is going well and they should be finished by the time you read this report.

It now appears that our turnover as of the end of August has increased by a massive 15% over the previous year, a really quite phenomenal achievement. The 15% turnover increase represents in excess of £5.5m extra work that has been put into the back of your cabs and I am sure you will all be delighted with that!

Even more encouraging - if that's possible - for the first month of the current financial year (September), our turnover increased by a further 9% on the previous year! So that means that there was a 15% increase in work for the whole year and we have started this year with an additional 9% increase on top! I am very hopeful that we can maintain this current trend, however, our resources will be severely stretched during the coming few months.

I really appreciate the fact that conditions out there are extremely difficult, but in reality our clients still expect the same standard of service that they enjoy for the rest of the year. I hope my suspicions are proven to be incorrect, but unless we maintain service levels up until Christmas, then we could see some casualties from our account base in the New Year.

I have written to every single account client explaining how busy we are and what we are doing in an endeavour to maintain service levels and in addition, what the client can do to help the situation so that we are in a position to provide them with a taxi. One of the steps we have taken is to refuse to open any new accounts until the New Year, allowing us to concentrate solely on servicing our current client base. It really is quite extraordinary that we work so hard in an endeavour to gain more work and accounts for Dial-a-Cab members, only to then start refusing to open new ones.

Just last week, I had to refuse to open an account for a prospective client - one we had been 'courting' for more than a year! The account was so large that it would have gone directly into our top three accounts - and that is big. However, the problem is that you would have been swamped and we would not have been able to provide them with a complete service. It would also, of course, have impinged on our current client base.

I'm currently spending a lot of time talking and visiting our top clients to try and placate them about late vehicles etc, fortunately our reputation is excellent and they know that whatever we tell them is the truth, because over the years we've built a reputation that whatever we do, we do with a 'straight bat.' But I don't know for how long we can placate our customers. So the



moral of the story is - and yes, you knew I would get there eventually - if you can do just that little bit extra, it would help us enormously in an attempt to secure our account base. If you are offered a trip and it is within 'striking distance' please accept it immediately; not only will it help to improve our service to clients, but also mean there will be less traffic flowing through our system. We have done everything we can think of to maintain service levels, some of you must also play your part in order that the phenomenal success we currently enjoy continues into the future. There are plenty of companies out there that would be only too willing to take the work from us...

## DaC's new building

We have started to use our new building almost immediately after taking possession by training prospective new call takers. We have taken on an additional 44 recently to help cope with the expected increase in work. It is also planned to move some of our second floor out of Brunswick House in mid-November, so that we might extend the Call Centre to that floor in addition to what

we have at present on our fourth floor. This will help accommodate the new call takers, who will then be able to take the additional work that should be coming through the system from our existing client base.

I wrote earlier that we were hopeful work would commence on the new building in early October, that date has now been put back until the end of the month as we still have some ongoing negotiations with the contractors, however, I am still hopeful there will not be much - if any - 'slippage' on our original time frame.


## Standards and Regulations...

I informed you a few months ago about the imminent retirement of Roy Ellis, Principal officer at the PCO. He recently visited Brunswick House with Mary Dowdye - the new head of Standards and Regulations - to introduce her to Dial-a-Cab.

She was here for around two hours and we had a good 'chat'. I tried to get across the part that Dial-a-Cab plays within our industry and also gave her a tour of the building, explaining all about our various systems and procedures. Mary (yes, she said I could call her that) was, I believe, suitably impressed.

Anyway, I would like to welcome Mary, - who was formerly with TfL - to our industry and to wish her every success in her new role. I am sure she will be successful as I noticed that she has the ability to listen. Ok, it's probably true - some will undoubtedly say that she had little alternative whilst in my company! But it was still a pleasure to meet her...

**Brian Rice**  
**Chairman**  
**Dial-a-Cab**



**GLENISTERS**  
SOLICITORS

**Moving home**

**Commercial property**

**Property disputes**

**Family - divorce, co-habitation and children**

**Wills and Probate**

**Personal Injury - accidents at work, on the road, at home, criminal injury claims**

**Television House**  
**269 Field End Road Eastcote**  
**Ruislip Middlesex. HA4 9LS**

**Tel: 020 8368 4343**

**7 King Street Cloisters**  
**Clifton Walk King Street**  
**London. W6 0GY**

**Tel: 020 8735 9770**

# ***PCO and the emissions retest: "LCDC alarmist..."***

At the TX4 launch, **Call Sign** spoke to both Roy Ellis, Head of the PCO and Dave Stock, PCO Head of Vehicle Inspections about the then-forthcoming retest of emission systems that were about to take place. Both were certain that the status quo would be maintained and that the systems would be found to work as designed.

On 26 October, the PCO released a statement that the trade had been waiting for. Were the approved emission equipment systems working correctly or would the PCO/TfL have to wipe egg off their faces after making the biggest cock-up in cab trade history in the privately paid for emission systems retest by the LCDC and two proprietors?

But it was the LCDC and two fleet proprietors that were left licking their wounds as Messrs Ellis and Stock were proved to be right when the PCO announced: "Whilst the specific tests had been conducted quite properly, they did not collectively have the same integrity as the original extensive programme of system performance and durability tests conducted by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) on behalf of the PCO prior to the systems being approved. These were single isolated tests on only 4 taxis compared with a total of 123 tests on 43 cabs in the PCO/EST durability trial. The PCO took immediate action to have the allegations investigated by the EST."

They then listed the 4 individual taxi test results organised by the LCDC and two proprietors and it became clear that all four taxis had been ill-prepared with all carrying faults that would not have been passed on a taxi overhaul. The PCO added that, regarding the first two taxis, an in-depth examination was not possible because of "actions" taken by those presenting the cab. However, a list of faults materialised from throttle to possible injector faults. The PCO also claimed that the testers were refused permission to check whether the injectors were faulty.

The PCO, referring to these two cabs, ended by saying: "It was clear that adjustments / repairs were likely to have been carried out after the emission equipment had been fitted and these, together with a lack of routine maintenance, were detrimental to the effective operation of the emissions reduction equipment. When both taxis had this equipment removed and / or isolated, they both failed a 'free acceleration' (MoT) emission test that clearly demonstrated neither taxi was in a fit condition to be in service, with or without the equipment fitted. It was also clear that being in this condition, the equipment could not function as it was designed to."

Another two cabs were tested and again a list of faults were found in the cab's preparation from a cracked exhaust manifold to a completely "sooted" air filter, to defective injector nozzles. After these faults were rectified, one cab passed the Euro 3 test while the second marginally failed. This was put down to an overheated engine causing the coolant system to boil during the test.

## **The PCO conclusion**

They finished their statement by adding: "It is clear that all four of the taxis tested by these proprietors had some degree of maladjustment and / or defects that would have caused them to fail. The PCO is satisfied that the integrity of the extensive and controlled testing carried out by the EST on its behalf, including at least six months in-service durability trials on 43 licensed taxis, resulted in the development and approval of emission reductions systems that meet Euro 3 for NOx and particulates. The recent findings do not give the PCO any cause to believe that the approved systems are in any way deficient."

They went on to criticise the manner in which the results of a very small number of tests on ill-prepared and inadequately-maintained vehicles had been "...used by a few individuals in an attempt to discredit the Mayor's taxi emission strategy."

"The systems alleged by the London Cab Drivers Club and Evening Standard to make taxi emissions worse and not better, were developed specifically for taxis and were extensively tested before approval. This alarmist approach has caused unnecessary concern, inconvenience and uncertainty to proprietors with vehicles subject of the emissions strategy as well as unjustly maligning of the technology providers."

The PCO ended their statement by reiterating that "...the PCO remained committed to the Mayor's emissions strategy and were also confident that all the approved emission reduction technologies were fit for purpose and would deliver the required standards if fitted in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications to properly prepared and maintained vehicles. There would be no change to the implementation programme for the taxi emission strategy and any cab to which abatement technology has to be fitted and which is submitted for licensing without such equipment, would not be licensed."

**Call Sign** believes that the emissions program was rushed into unnecessarily, however, if it transpires that the presented cabs were deliberately presented in a way to ensure that they failed a retest, that puts those concerned into very dangerous and unprecedented territory and would certainly rebound on the trade, giving the impression of us being involved in dishonest practice. Hopefully, the LCDC will have a satisfactory answer...



## MORTGAGES ESPECIALLY FOR LICENSED TAXI DRIVERS

RECOGNISING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF  
LICENSED TAXI DRIVERS AND IN CONJUNCTION  
WITH MAJOR UK BANKS WE HAVE ACCESS  
TO EXCLUSIVE MORTGAGE SCHEMES INCLUDING:

- No proof of income up to 95% LTV
- Recently Qualified
- Fixed rates and cashback available

To find out more about these schemes and other services I can offer,  
please call Peter Griffin of Griffin Financial Consultancy on

### 01322 293600/07702 302863 (mobile)

[peter@griffinmortgages.com](mailto:peter@griffinmortgages.com)

**Peter Griffin, Financial Adviser, 1 Market Street, Dartford, Kent, DA1 1EY**

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Suitable security and adequate life and cover may be required by the lender.  
Written quotations are available on request. Griffin Financial Consultancy is a licensed credit broker.  
Griffin Financial Consultancy is an appointed representative of Openwork Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. A limited number of products provided and Openwork Limited offer insurance and advice in mortgages representative of the whole market.



# Jery's World



Sorry Guv, PCO regulation 41473 states that the bar in the TX17 has to close by 11pm. We get an extra 30 minutes when the Olympics start. I can do you a cheese sandwich though...!



With no disrespect meant to King Elvis, Sid Nathan's trip to DaC finds...

## A Message of Blues!

Elvis Presley may have reached number three in the UK charts of August 1960 with *A Mess of Blues*, but Dial-a-Cab driver **Sid Nathan (K88)** found his own mess recently – in the DaC Call Centre! He explained his problem to *Call Sign*:

"I'm sure that I am not the only driver on this circuit to feel miffed that a message I had sent to the Call Centre about poor traffic conditions somewhere, or if for any reason a road had been closed, has not gone out to the rest of the fleet. After all, it could save someone a substantial amount of time. So upset was I that my latest message had once again not gone out that I actually went to Dial-a-Cab in person to complain."

After relaying his moan to Call Centre Manager **Keith Cain**, Keith surprised Sid by inviting him to the Call Centre as he said that he wanted to show him something. Sid continues his story:

"We went up to the fourth floor and entered the Call Centre. I was amazed how busy it was because usually you only know what you get and don't see things from this angle. We went into the dispatchers box and Keith, without knowing what the latest messages would contain, asked me to stand and watch as they poured in one after the other."

Sid went on to add: "Many were genuine queries, but many were also ridiculous messages with drivers sending what they obviously consider to be funny remarks. One I particularly remember was a driver's request to the dispatcher to find out



when Fred Elliot's funeral was in *Coronation Street*! The dispatchers did not stop working the whole time I was in there, dealing not just with driver's queries but also the occasional Call Taker

query. Interspersed within all that was the occasional traffic report and at last I could understand why they didn't respond."

Sid ended by saying: "Those drivers who are sending stupid jokes and messages are responsible for the lack of more important messages. Keith Cain told me that they were considering putting drivers who continually waste the Call Centre's time by sending inane messages on complaint. I would never have been in favour of that had I not seen it all with my own eyes. To those who do it, please don't. Most of them aren't even funny when a stressed dispatcher reads them and they are even less funny when they stop genuine driver traffic reports going out."

### ROYAL PALM BAY ORLANDO, FLORIDA

10 minute drive from Disney, Ideally situated for restaurants & shopping  
Luxurious non-smoking 3 bedroom 2 bathroom condominium  
(Sleeps 6-8 people)

Next to heated pool and hot tub  
Facilities include clubhouse with gym, sauna, pool table,  
Internet and snack bar

For brochure and more information: Call Lewis Shurlin (R13) 01708 476 883  
Email: [lewis.shurlin1@btopenworld.com](mailto:lewis.shurlin1@btopenworld.com)

Early last year, most newspapers from *The Times* to *The Sun* carried articles on a scientific survey on the section of the taxi driver's brain known as the Hippocampus, which showed fascinated readers that our brains were bigger than theirs! This, the survey surmised, was probably due to our learning The Knowledge of London. Now that information appears to have been not totally correct.

A scientific paper arising from a new research has been published in the neuroscience journal *Hippocampus*. In the study it was tried to match as far as possible, a group of London taxi drivers with a group of London bus drivers. Matching equality, according to the report, took quite some time when it came to IQ and driving experience etc. **Call Sign** would like to believe that the bus staff had to reach up to our level!

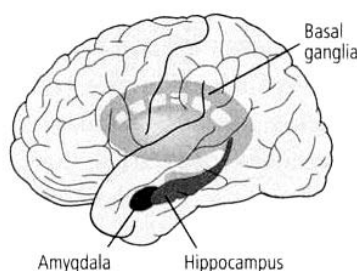
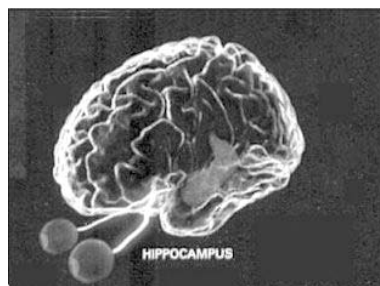
The paper contains a good deal of technical jargon, so we asked one of the authors, Katherine Woollett to summarise the main findings. She told us:

"Our previous work showed that part of the brain in London taxi drivers, the hippocampus, was different compared to control subjects. Part of the structure was larger and another part was smaller. It was subsequently suggested that perhaps this effect was produced by driving in London and not, as we suggested, as a result of taxi drivers learning The Knowledge of London's complex layout."

Ms Woollett continued: "Our new study essentially replicated the findings from the first study. As before, we found that part of the hippocampus was larger in taxi drivers and part was smaller, compared with bus drivers. Thus,

# Taxis v Buses...

## Whose Brains are the Biggest?



### Whose brain works best - a bus driver or taxi driver?

the bus drivers, despite driving in London, were the same as the control subjects in the












original study. This suggests that the changes in taxi drivers may still be as a result of acquiring The Knowledge. In terms of memory, we found that the bus drivers as a group were performing well and within the average range. The taxi drivers, while they had more knowledge about London than the bus drivers, were somewhat poorer at learning new visual information. This may be as a result of the reduced size of part of the hippocampus. This finding, while preliminary, is intriguing and we propose to explore it further in future studies."

Katherine ended by telling us: "Overall, this work adds to our knowledge about brain plasticity, and the types of activities and learning that might affect brain structure, with potential implications in the future for memory-impaired patients."

*Katherine Woollett is now continuing her work by testing retired taxi drivers aged 60 or above. Expenses will be paid and if you are retired and interested, you can contact her at the Wellcome Trust Centre of Neuroimaging which is based at the Institute of Neurology, 12 Queen Square, telephone 020 7 813 1546.*

## Martin Cordell & Co ACCOUNTANTS

### Does your accountant supply you with the following?

-  Over thirty-five years of experience with the Licensed London Taxi Trade.
-  Processing of Self-Assessment Returns.
-  Advice on trading as a Limited Company with its tax advantages and potential pitfalls.
-  Preparation of accounts.
-  Initial consultation dealing with loss of Earnings Claims (due to accidents on the road etc.)
-  Letters to banks, building societies and other lenders.
-  Specialist in house facilities to deal with Inland Revenue enquiry cases,  
(This is expensive and time consuming - Ask your accountant how much he will charge should this unpredictable event occur).
-  A three hundred and sixty five days a year service.
-  A 'nightshift' service.
-  Offices in North and East London.
-  First Consultation Free of Charge.

**Martin Cordell & Co....DO!**

**All for one yearly fee**

**The London Taxi Trades Premier Accountants**

(24 hour answering facility for prompt service)

**020 8980 7161**

(24 hour answering facility for prompt service)

1/5 Alfred Street, Bow, London E3 2BE also at

Front Office, First Floor, 9 Church Road, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 4AS

[www.martin-cordell.co.uk](http://www.martin-cordell.co.uk)



On 18 October, **Call Sign** was invited to Lords cricket ground for the launch of the long-awaited, much-rumoured, latest model taxi to emerge from Coventry's LTI Vehicles.

We were welcomed by Matthew Cheyne, Sales & Marketing Director for LTI Vehicles whilst MD Peter Shillcock with the aid of an audio-visual display, gave we younger members of the audience (!) a history lesson of the Company's long heritage of taxi production and how, over the years, several companies with taxi related interests had come together to become LTI.

Peter Shillcock explained in great detail the intensive and extensive testing program the new cab had undergone from some of the most inhospitable climates and rugged terrains in the world to the streets of the UK - albeit in disguise for reasons of security - to prove and improve both performance and reliability.

The TX4 was three years in the making, test-driven 1,000,000 Kms (equalling 30 times around the world), hammered 3000 odd miles over cobbles the size of kerbstones to test the suspension and going through another million accelerator pedal cycles to simulate street work. ABS brakes were tested on the ice of the Arctic Circle, so the TX4 should not have any problem with the skating rinks of Marble Arch or Somerset House this coming winter for those drivers brave enough to try! Environmental requirements mean the engine is now a Euro 4 compliant, VM Motori unit of 2.5lts size, coupled to a matched gearbox for best driveability and maximum fuel efficiency - designed with taxi work in mind.

Then, whilst others looked at the models revealed behind the curtain, or returned for the "official" test drive on a pre-set route in the beautiful Surrey countryside on the following day, **Call Sign** arranged with main dealers **Mann & Overton** to allow us to take the first test drive in real London traffic - Islington, road hump capital of the UK!

## TX4: The First Road Test

Our tester simulated actual working conditions, the sort of environment the new cab is going to face every day of its working life - stopping, starting, pulling away from the kerbside or traffic lights and blending into flowing traffic. In fact, just about every action you're likely to execute during a shift. Equally importantly, we found out what it's like to be a passenger in the back of a TX4 - because getting people into the back of the cab is what it's all about!

Walking around the TX4, you notice that subtle changes have been made to the front and rear bodywork. A revised radiator grille and deeper, squarer front bumper accommodates the enlarged engine coolant radiator and air-con scoop, while sidelight changes make the new cab recognisably different. At the rear, the cleaner lines of the number plate surround and tail-light cluster are also welcome changes.

The Carriage interior has a one-piece roof lining, with centrally sited, multi-directional microphones and speaker. So asking passengers to 'lean back' before they speak to you will be a thing of the past! The control switches, previously under the side windows, have been moved to the door panel where they can be operated more easily, are out of the reach of Mummy's 'little darling' hell-bent on having

# As the TX4 Hits the Streets...

*Call Sign takes a ride!*



**After rumours and counter rumours, the TX4 finally arrives**

'fun' and now positioned where accidental activation by wayward elbows is unlikely. DaC drivers have regularly raised these two items during **Call Sign's** 'Listening Program' visits to Coventry and so it is particularly gratifying to see that these issues, (as well as others) have been resolved. The now-legally required head-restraints impact on rearward visibility somewhat, but are a necessary safety feature.

The driving compartment is essentially similar to before, the most noticeable change being the climate control panel. The entire climate control system has been changed; where electronics govern the atmosphere, giving the driver and passenger greater choice ensures a comfortable environment. It's a very sophisticated and efficient system.

## The VM Motori Engine

The heart of any vehicle is its motive power and when you're driving professionally, it realises even greater importance. This engine starts instantly and is quiet at all times. Conversation with passengers is easy. The engine revs freely up to 4000 rpm, with maximum torque (pulling power) reached at 1800 rpm, which means there is plenty of beef when you need it, delivered smoothly without the engine screaming. The engine is matched to a Chrysler 5 speed auto gearbox for optimum performance and efficiency. Electronics in the box can sense your driving characteristics and control the gear changes accordingly, maintaining the power/weight ratio for best performance. Now ain't that clever!

## On the road

The cab moves away smartly from the kerbside, gear changes being barely perceptible. On a light throttle, gear changes are undetectable. The new coil-spring suspension, matched to the bodyweight for increased driver/passenger comfort, affords a smooth ride with only the worst of the infamous 'humps' causing any concern. Torsional rigidity (stiffness) of the chassis/body seemed better controlled, no doubt due to the revised suspension configuration.

The new legal requirement ABS brakes were initially disconcerting due to the long pedal movement and 'spongy' feel, it's so very different from what we're currently used to. However, you soon acclimatise to them and build confidence in their ability to stop you wherever you place the cab on the road. Our testers' suggestion to find a local skid-pan or ice rink to really see what the brakes would do was met with a look of horror that firmly said 'NO!' from M&O's minder, assigned to protect their baby from the worst excesses of our eager destruction derby enthusiast...!

**So, overall first impressions of the TX4 were extremely favourable, with several of the issues previously raised by DaC drivers at Coventry visits being addressed as the cab evolves and develops to meet today's demanding workplace - the streets of London. As more of our subscribers become TX4 owners, we look forward to visiting Coventry again soon to give an update on 'living with a TX4'**

*Call Sign Magazine would like to thank Mann & Overton for their kind co-operation.*

**© Call Sign Magazine MM6**



**In this issue's Mailshot, Stephen Gander (V20) asks about the possibility of sending EC5 trips to their original zone during busy periods, about fleet size and subs increases. Keith Cain answers...**

In answer to Stephen Gander's letter in *Mailshot*, I can confirm that the idea of splitting the work within EC5 to its original zone is being tested as I write. It has taken rather longer to be written than one would have liked, but the original request came at a time when other urgent changes to the workings of our despatch system were equally needed. The delay was also compounded by the complexity of EC5 having its own set of programming rules. Providing the testing is successful and does not cause any bugs entering the system, its planned implementation was the end of October.

If I have interpreted your letter incorrectly, then I apologise, but if you think the decision to increase the fleet is based solely on covering work from EC5 then you could not be further away from the facts. While demands for our service are very high in the evenings, it also continues during early mornings, lunch times and at weekends. It is the increase in volumes of work that actually dictates the size of the fleet and if all from the present fleet were to increase the number of trips they take in a day, then we would have a sufficient fleet size to meet the demands. With members choosing what they want to do and when they want to do it, Dial-a-Cab will always find itself in this situation.

You refer to the success of the Concierge system having paid for itself and should now start to benefit the drivers and prevent an increase in subscriptions. This would also be a good idea if it were the only reason used for making the decision to raise subs.

Every year, running costs increase for any business just as they do for each household and it's because we are very fortunate at this time to be extremely busy, that subs have been kept to the substantially lower levels than those charged by other radio circuits. Subscriptions count for about 35.5% of the

# Dac Rewriting EC5



in a good financial position to the Board having to take a vote to close the Society down!

You may also recall this Board has taken decisions in previous years to not increase subs. When we have increased them, it has been over an eighteen-month period rather than twelve. On one occasion, we even reduced them! So I think it's fair to say that a decision to make any increase is not taken lightly and the next increase will not come into play until April 2007.

It may also be forgotten that the success of the Society during the term of this Board has allowed us to equip the fleet with £6 million worth of new technology and put us in a very envious and strong financial position to be able to expand the Society by purchasing for cash a new building, both of which have been at no cost to our members.

I personally, would never remark about the fantastic value Dial-a-Cab offers to members, because those who choose to undertake a lot of credit work obviously receive better value than a member who chooses to do far less. All I will say of the Board's management decisions and predictions is that all have been far from what you believe of us Stephen, as having lost direction or steering the Society the wrong way. Compare us with the others and we are doing very nicely and our position within the market place is still number one despite what others may say.

total running costs of the Society and it makes for good management practise to keep them at a reasonable level just in case account charges from customers fall. Drivers have no idea of the pressure the Board are under to reduce client charges. If we were to circumvent such demands, then the simple equation of what needs to be done to survive would be to increase the subs to cover the shortfall. Managing anything is a balancing act and Dial-a-Cab is no different. It is because of the Board's awareness of how the Society was originally set up that we keep our subscriptions at a lower level.

Many of us were part of the Board of management who back in the very early nineties, had to increase subs by £20 per month just to keep the Society afloat. At that time, it took just two years for this Society to go from being

**Keith Cain**

**Driver Operations/Call  
Centre Manager**

## TRADE ACCOUNTANT ALAN WALL DIES

*Call Sign* is sad to report the death of long-time taxi trade accountant, Alan Wall, following a heart attack at the age of 62.

Alan – a partner in the Simia Wall company – became well known for his outspoken articles in the trade press when he hit out at those drivers who seemed to take little notice of the Inland Revenue timescales for handing in yearly figures.

He was also an expert on London history and enjoyed writing articles on the subject.

To his family, we send our sincere condolences.

## THINKING OF HOLIDAYING IN FLORIDA?

**15% discount on our luxury villa for Dial-a-Cab drivers!**



If you are thinking of going to Florida for a holiday, why not take up the opportunity of this luxury 4 bedroom, 3 bathroom villa available for rent. The Villa was built 2 years ago and has its own swimming pool. It is spacious and luxuriously equipped for your perfect holiday.

**Further details and virtual tour, [www.cubberleyvilla.com](http://www.cubberleyvilla.com)  
or call 07752 330263**

*Please note that for all bookings made through Call Sign, quote that as a reference when making your booking and you can deduct 15% from the advertised price!*

*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*

# Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

**Come and join us... you know it makes sense...**

Before I go on about getting you lot out there to join the **Dial-a-Cab Credit Union**, I must first apologise to regular members if you've had trouble getting through to us. As you all know, the time of year we have just been through is the TAX month, or your HOLIDAY month and you all want MONEY! So everyone calls at the same time...



When I talk to someone on the phone, I always have a little chat after doing the financial bit as I'm always interested in gossip going around the cab trade and like your barber, will listen to any problems you might have and hopefully give you a little advice on the way! So ultimately the phone is engaged for some 40 minutes or more. I know you probably don't like leaving messages, but if you do, somebody will get back to you asap.

We are still looking for new members and it does amaze me after all this time that it should even be a problem trying to persuade drivers to join. Of late, we have had some glowing reports from members who have been extremely pleased with the help and service they have received. I only wish they would put it in writing and send it to the letters page of **Call Sign** rather than just tell me.

Our phone number is at the end of this article, as is the address. When you give it out, people automatically think of the one-way system at Stratford, but it's not! We are just 5 minutes from Canary Wharf - just behind West Ham Station. So if you are passing by and fancy a chat about the Credit Union (or the trade in general), come on up - you're always welcome. And don't forget, your family also qualify should they want to join. If you don't pass this way, a phone call to me and I can send you a membership form or if you are already a member and you want money from your account or a loan, I can post or leave the required forms at Brunswick House. As most of you know, we do an electronic transfer into your bank account, which usually takes 3 working days as opposed to 5 for a cheque, but the choice is yours.

So as my headline says, come and join us... you know it makes sense!

That's all for now. As usual, be lucky, but be careful out there. There is always someone who wants something for nowt...

**John Riley (K38),  
Vice-President DACCU  
Suite 209, Channel Sea House,  
Canning Rd, Stratford, E15  
0208 522 4502 or 0208 522 4503**



I've been buying PCs since 1989 when I purchased my first shiny 286. After that came the 386, 486 and then the Pentiums. Between each of these processor upgrades, I always noticed a massive difference in computing speed. It was always significantly more noticeable how super fast the latest model was compared to the previous one. However, once the Pentiums came in the difference became minimal. You couldn't notice any difference when loading Microsoft Office or PaintShop Pro, so the enthusiasm for the new PC waned - until now.

For a recent venture, we used graphics intensive packages that eat Hard disk space, RAM and Processor power; even my 3.2GHz, 3GB RAM Pentium 4 struggles with a 300MB image. So 3 months ago I thought it was time to check out the Dual Core (Core Duo) processor PCs and to see if there's a difference. It's the first time since the upgrade from the 486 to the Pentiums that I've been impressed with the newer processor, so much so I'm going to get another one!

Without getting too technical, it's like having two processors instead of one. Intel describes it like this: *"Imagine that a dual-core processor is like a four-lane highway - it can handle up to twice as many cars as its two-lane predecessor without making each*

*car drive twice as fast. With an Intel dual-core processor-based PC, people can perform multiple tasks such as downloading music and gaming simultaneously."*

So, if you're looking for a new PC, then seriously consider a Dual-Core. You'll definitely notice the difference.

Besides upgrading my PCs, I've also recently upgraded my ADSL to 8MB download and 800Kb upload and once again there's a significant difference! All this speed is just too much!

I'm with BT and decided to stay with them. Yes I know it's being lazy not checking out the competition, but I just couldn't be bothered - also the upgrade was free! In five years of service with BT's ADSL, I've only experienced one problem, regardless of other people's experience with them.

Anyway, back to the speed thing again. To test my new upgrade, I found a great website with an excellent user interface. Go to **www.speedtest.net**. You can select any server around the world to test against and there's a great speedometer for your upload and downloads. Visit the site and test your Internet connection.

## See you at the market!

As mentioned previously, our venture for the past two years involves vintage UK photos and we attend North Weald Market near Harlow/Epping every Saturday. It's the biggest market in the south and we get many London taxi drivers visiting. Why not pop down and meet us in row B40, come and view our range of vintage UK photos (including the best range of London cab photos), calendars and place mats. Alternatively, for those South of the river, come and see us in Blackbushe Market, Blackbushe Airport off the M3 in Camberley every Sunday (row B128).

I'll even answer any PC related questions when you visit. How's that for a bargain!

**Be lucky  
Vince Chin**

## CONVERT ANYTHING TO DVD OR CD

**We can convert anything to DVD or CD  
And at an affordable price!**

**Vinyl long playing records to CD... £4**

**Cassettes to CD... £4**

**(VHSC 8mm Hi to DV) to DVD... £4**

**VHS tapes to DVD ... £4**

**All quotes include DVD discs, CDs and sleeves  
Pick up and delivery is possible for a small fee  
Call for more information**

**020 8518 8765**



# The new TX4



## drive one today

Conders Garage Ltd - Peterborough tel: 0870 850 5457  
KPM UK Taxis PLC - London tel: 020 7377 2182  
Mann & Overton - Manchester tel: 0161 831 3434  
TBF Thompson Ltd - Belfast tel: 028 9084 8371

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

John Paton & Son Ltd - Glasgow tel: 0141 553 4000  
Mann & Overton - London tel: 020 7700 0888  
Taxiflix Ltd - Liverpool tel: 0151 482 5101

© LTI Limited reproduced with permission. Fairway & TX shape are registered designs. Fairway™, TXII™, TX4, the LTI device, the LTI logo and the London Taxis International logos are all trademarks of LTI Limited.



Vehicles

**HAILED THE WORLD OVER**

[www.lti.co.uk](http://www.lti.co.uk)

How are you all? Please allow me to introduce myself to you. I'm Anja King and I work for Davis Polk & Wardwell who have had an account with Dial-a-Cab for many years. Since I've been there, I have gotten to know a lot of drivers; some became regulars and some even friends. Last night one of my regulars drove me home and gave me a copy of **Call Sign**. I had previously told him about my side project, photography, and he suggested that maybe I could advertise my services in **Call Sign** to a wider audience.

You may recognise my photo from driving me home over the past six years, the first four going north and the past two going east and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for always taking me home safely and sometimes going that extra mile.

One night, when a regular drove me and we'd almost reached my destination, I realised I had left all my food shopping for the weekend at work! I mentioned it to the driver and said I'd have to drive back the next day. "No need," he said and called another regular who was still in EC2 and after I'd made a quick call to my office, he

Anja King is a receptionist for long-time DaC client Davis Polk & Wardwell...

# American City Law Firm Receptionist by Day

Photographer by night...



picked up my shopping and it was with me within half an hour!

Many of you know about my second career as a photographer and I'm grateful to anyone who is spreading the word. Having done gig photography for years, I

am now focusing on Portraits and Weddings. Have a look at my work on [www.anjaking.com](http://www.anjaking.com) and feel free to contact me for feedback or bookings. I haven't got studio space, but we can meet on location, on a nice day at a park for instance or I can come to your family home. I find that people are so much more relaxed in their own surroundings and this reflects in the pictures.

I am currently offering a portrait photo session for £50. This includes my work and time spent on the shoot, post production and a CD of all the images which will give you control over the processing. You can then order your prints on-line or take the CD to a high street photo shop. For those who are not as conversant with computers and would like me to take care of that part too, I'll be happy to. Just let me know the sizes and quantities and I'll provide you with a quote. At the session, which I anticipate to last between 60 to 90 minutes, I will take as many photos as you like! If you live in the Ilford area - aka Green Badge Valley - my travel is included in the price. If you live on the other side of the North Circular, I may add a little extra just to cover my petrol.

As you will see from the photos on my site, my approach is very informal. I enjoy catching moments and make even posed shots look candid! If you like what you see, please contact me at [anja@anjaking.com](mailto:anja@anjaking.com). I can offer the same deal to your friends and their families. A nice family portrait makes a lovely present! I look forward to hear from some of you soon.

And by the way, the Editorial about the police made interesting reading and I very much enjoyed reading Sunset Strip - gotta get my hands on the next issue to read on!

Anja King  
[anja@anjaking.com](mailto:anja@anjaking.com)

## Jack Russell in Hospital



**Jack Russell - ODRTS Chairman from 1964 to 1969 and now with a new knee!**

Former Dial-a-Cab Chairman **Jack Russell** is now in his 93<sup>rd</sup> year, but still talks passionately about the Society that he chaired from 1964 when he took over from Eli Solomons. He held that position until standing down in 1969 when he handed the reins over to Jack Taylor.

**Call Sign** has now heard that Jack recently underwent surgery to replace a knee joint for the second time.

"So I've had three knees on that leg," Jack told us displaying the sense of humour that has never left him, "but I'm pleased to say that my good leg still has the same knee that I had when Chairman! However, I will not be taking questions on it!"

Jack previously underwent a triple heart by-pass operation in 2002 at the age of 88 that he described to **Call Sign** at the time as a major irritation because it stopped him from driving! However, like this latest op, it never stopped him from smiling.

We all wish you well, Jack...

## CONDO FOR RENT

**Bahama Bay Resort, Florida**

**Three beds, high spec swimming pools,  
Gym, Restaurant, 10 Minutes Disney Nr  
Lake Davenport**

**Great offers available**

**10% discount for Dial-a-Cab drivers**

**Contact John (M13) on 07921 920743...**



**Call Sign** readers may remember a story we ran in March 2004 where Dial-a-Cab driver **John Davis (F60J)** did a charity parachute jump in aid of a fund that had been set up to try to raise £25,000 to buy a specially converted van-sized vehicle big enough to carry a wheelchair, oxygen tank, gastrostomy pump, the five members of his family and young Jack Pitcher. Many DaC drivers supported John's parachute jump and the fund reached the £25K needed.

Jack was blind, epileptic, had the intelligence level of a 2-3 year old, suffered from a neurological degenerative disease that was so new that it had no name, was wheelchair bound and had to wear a colostomy bag. The only way he could eat was via a gastrostomy tube inserted directly into his stomach.

**Call Sign** wrote at the time: *Jack will never be cured and tragically, will die very young.*

Sadly, that time came on 21 September of this year and he was laid to rest 8 days later.

John Davis told **Call Sign** after the funeral: "Jack was a happy child who frustrated himself because he wanted to do so much that his condition prevented him from doing, but the converted van that the sponsored money bought made his life as good as it could be and it was used as it should have been – to give Jack as much pleasure as was possible in the circumstances. It really made a difference to his life."

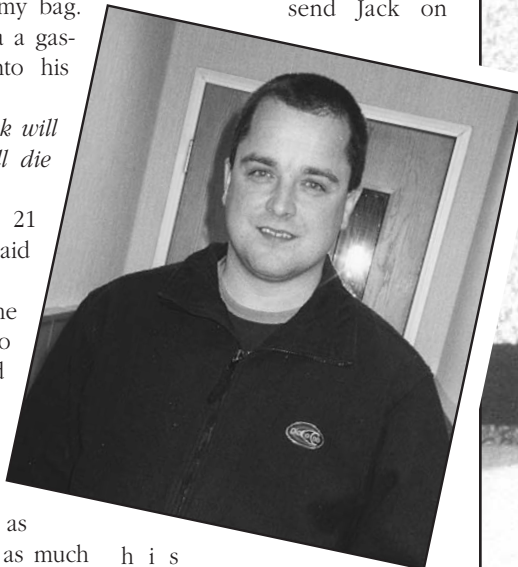
Sadly, everything began to go wrong together and he had a birthday party earlier in the year that Great Ormond Street warned

After years of battling against the odds

# Brave Jack's Fight for Life Ends...

Jack's parents would be his last.

John also told **Call Sign**: "His parents often speaks of the generosity of DaC drivers and also Dial-a-Dream, who helped send Jack on



Jack with brother Frankie and sister Annie  
Inset pic: John Davis knew Jack well

his holiday of a lifetime to Florida."

Our sympathies go to Jack's family. His death is so sad, but his bravery inspiring...

## Exclusive Power Pill Deal for DaC Drivers!

Power Pill has been negotiating hard on behalf of DaC drivers as a way of saying thank you for all the support they have received. Leon Warner, CEO of Power Pill UK Ltd told **Call Sign**...

"The support given to us by **Dial-a-Cab** drivers and personnel over the past year has been tremendous. We have negotiated very hard with the manufacturers of Power Pill and have completed a unique deal for all DaC drivers – and DaC drivers only.

**If you buy 10 packs of Power Pills at a cost of £14.99 each, WE WILL GIVE YOU TWO FREE PACKS - that's twelve packs for just £149.90 including VAT.**

We hope you will agree that this is a fantastic deal, especially as results show that this will save an average driver £600 on fuel – plus have a smoother, quieter, more efficient taxi, lower servicing costs, with no more black smoke. Alternatively, you can still purchase a single pack for just £19.99 or five packs for just £74.95 – again, just £14.99 per pack."

**All of the above are available from JVBright at Southbank Service Station on production of this article, or direct from Power Pill by calling 0845 1 30 80 77.**



## TAXI AIR CONDITIONING

**All makes and models  
Serviced and Repaired  
Mobile Service –  
We Come to You!**

**Call Mick Wheeler on  
020 8715 0079  
Covering London and the  
Home Counties**

# Ray Scott - Almost But Not Quite!

Dial-a-Cab driver and keen golfer, **Ray Scott (T34)** became the first DaC driver that **Call Sign** has heard of to make it through to the **Volvo Masters Amateur UK Final**, held at Wentworth on the 10 – 11 October.

To get to play on that majestic course – home to so many famous championships including the World Matchplay and the PGA Masters - Ray had to win at his local golf course in the *Volvo Masters Amateur Member's Competition* that was played at different golf clubs around the country and then finish in the top three at the regional Final at Woburn. In actual fact, the *Volvo Masters Amateur competition* as a whole is played in 22 countries with in excess of 75,000 golfers all with one hope – to get to the Grand Final, held in Andalucia, Spain.

**"There were 90 entrants at my home club,"** Ray told us, **"so it wasn't too easy."**

But Ray won that to get into the regional final at Woburn Golf Club and needed to finish in the top three places to qualify for a dream championship appearance at Wentworth - where the green fees are usually an astronomical £280

**"I didn't think I'd made it,"** continued Ray, **"I worked it out quickly that I had missed out by one point and had come fourth. I was rather disappointed because I had played well, but I miscalculated and actually took that third place. I was so chuffed!"**

Before the Final at Wentworth, Ray got some good practise in by winning a local tournament and more importantly, playing really well.

**"But when the big day arrived, the lovely weather we'd had up until then vanished and was replaced by thunder, lightning and heavy rain. I was nervous anyway and that just made it so much worse. Then the organisers told us that so much time had been lost through the bad weather that we would only be playing over 9 holes instead of 18, so there was no real chance**



Ray tees off at Woburn on his way to qualifying for the Wentworth final

to get accustomed to the Wentworth course. Sadly, I didn't do myself justice and stood no real chance of being among the three men who would qualify for Andalucia. But with the way we were treated, including being put up in a magnificent hotel and a great awards dinner afterwards, it was still a day to remember."

Ray ended by telling **Call Sign**: **"Many tell me that getting to the regional final is a real success, but I wanted to get further and one day I hope I will..."**

Ray was also in the **Call Sign** team that won the DaC Open Gold last year...

## Marten House Opens For Business After 3 Days

Within days of Dial-a-Cab taking over our new premises at East Road - still named Marten House - DaC Trainer **Daren Morley** became the first person to go into the building to work when taking a staff training session just 3 days after DaC had signed the paperwork to buy the 5-storey building.

"It was certainly different from working at Brunswick House," Daren told **Call Sign**, "but having that much room for training purposes bodes well for the future when we move over there full time."

Daren's trip to Marten House was as much of a test as anything and he asked **Call Sign** to thank DaC's IT department in the shape of John Bankes, Jonathon Winterburn and Joe Mensah, whose joint expertise allowed the whole exercise to go ahead after such a short period.

When will we be moving across the road en bloc? Early-2007 seems to be the favourite date. And what will we be doing with Brunswick House? Well no one really knows yet, but the company that started from an idea



This is what Marten House will soon look like!

in the back of a taxi parked on the Grosvenor Gardens rank on Sunday 29 March 1953 and had to have a "whip round" at their first driver meeting on Sunday 7 June 1953 to get the £200 they needed in order to look for premises, now own two multi-million pound buildings in the City!

Exciting days and more as we get it...

### Ruffles

*The Complete Curtain Making Service*

Curtains, pelmets, swags and tails or blinds as well as soft furnishings...

Cushions, quilts and headboards all made to measure using customers own fabric...

Or choose from a selection of fabrics and trimmings bought to you in your own home.

Tracks and blinds can be supplied and fitted

**For more information call  
Kim on 0208 505 9755  
or mobile 07961375418**





## MANGANESE BRONZE PROFITS SHOOT UP!

Manganese Bronze Holdings PLC, the parent company behind London Taxis International, have announced their audited preliminary results for the twelve months ending 31 July 2006 and they show the cab makers as having boosted pre-tax profits by 88% - up from 2005's £2million to £3.7million. That figure includes profit of £1.1million on the sale of their surplus property in Ipswich.

The company's Balance Sheet also looks strong with cash and cash equivalents of £12.9million (2005: £9.6million) with net assets of £21.5million (2005: £19.7million).

Investment in the new TX4 and a move for M&O to new retail facilities in London resulted in a total capital investment of £6.2 million (2005: £2.9 million).

There was a recommended final dividend of 3p per share (2005: 3p) plus a special dividend of 1p per share (2005: nil) - total dividend increase of 50% to 6p per share (2005: 4p).

Commenting on the results MBH Chairman Tim Melville-Ross, told **Call Sign**:

**"These are a strong set of results, building on last year's turnaround to profit. The Group's restructuring is now complete with loss making businesses and surplus properties sold.**

**"We were delighted to announce our Chinese joint venture with Geely and are excited by the medium term prospects this partnership will create. Manufacturing London taxis in China will enable us to pursue our long term international expansion plans.**

**"Current vehicle sales are ahead of last year and we anticipate a further uplift in sales from the new TX4 model and the introduction of new emissions regulations in London."**

# Driver Operations

## *Hello Ladies and Gents,*

### Marshalling

It seems that Christmas comes earlier every year but with only weeks to go, I feel once again I need to call on all of you to help the Marshals out at the many events that we will be covering throughout the festive season. With current work figures surpassing all previous years, this will surely prove to be the busiest Christmas yet. It's a hard juggling exercise when we have so many new requests for our services, but our aim this year must be to give priority to our many valued account clients.

As with previous years, I will try to give you notice of all locations and times and I know that you will continue to support us. I've said it many times, but we are a team and it is because we work so closely together that we are in such great demand. There will be a mixture of credit and cash events and it is important to give our regular account clients as good a service as possible. **Remember they are with us all year long...**

### Coverage

Coverage and service levels are important at any time, but even more so at the moment - especially in certain problem areas. With many unmatched trips in the system during extreme periods, it is very easy to get in the habit of rejecting trips in so many different directions that in the end you even question yourselves as to which direction you want to end up in!

Please try to accept the first trip that is offered, it will certainly improve response times, which is a problem in the City and Canary Wharf areas late evening. Speedy acceptances would also help lower any error rates on the system, which in itself will

improve the signals when large numbers of taxis are signed on and increased amounts of work being dispatched.

**The three Peugeot cars are there to be won and covering more trips will increase your chances of winning...**

### Picking up...

I'm sure you know better than most how parking restrictions in the City and West End areas can make it very difficult to stop near to a particular address. There are two ways that can assist both the Call Centre and customer. One is to display nameboards (unless specifically asked not to) making sure that the board isn't masked by the steering wheel and the other is to use the *Parked* facility on your terminal. After pressing the *arrival* button, press *Gen Code* which will display the *Parked* button. If you press this button, it will allow you a one-line text message to send back to the Call Centre. This is a facility that is under-used and is a great help, especially if you are parked some distance from the pick-up location. More and more clients are complaining of not being able to locate their taxis, when through no fault of your own, you are parked in a slightly obscure place away from the actual address. Unfortunately if accounts receive automatic ring backs, then the actual location will not be sent but will be logged on the system if passengers still wish to query the status of their taxis.

*Can I again remind you that if you have any problems using the system, please contact me on 0207 607 6403 or email at the address below and I will be only too pleased to assist. Alternatively you can ring Brunswick House and leave a message for me to contact you...*

**Allan Evans**

**Allane@Dialacab.co.uk**

# SUNNY LIFE

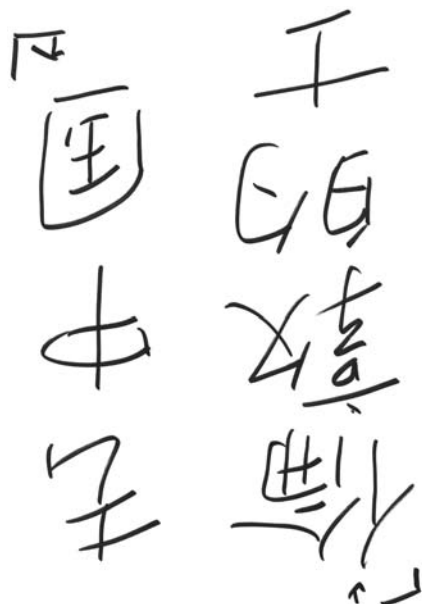
## Spanish Property

**For holidays, retirement or investment**

### Steve Shaller

**Shaller9@aol.com**  
**www.sunnylife.co.uk**

**35 Gaysham Hall longwood Gardens**  
**Ilford Essex IG5 0EP**  
**Tel. 020 85039318 Spain 0034 965321122**



# Made in China!

China Automotive. Both attempts failed to materialise. The London stock market seems to believe that this latest attempt will succeed.

The two signing Chairmen, MBH's **Tim Melville-Ross** and Geely's **Li Shufu** both told *Call Sign* that they were delighted to have reached agreement to see the iconic London taxi being built in China.

It is not expected that the deal will affect the LTI workforce at Coventry. What will be interesting is to see how much the new Chinese TX taxi goes on sale for and what the differences are.



**East meets west in a TXII.** Chairman Tim Melville-Ross and Li Shufu tie up the deal to make the London taxi in China

*Call Sign* had several calls last month from drivers asking why the share price of *Manganese Bronze Holdings plc* had suddenly shot up? One driver, who we won't name, was upset as he had recently sold his shares in the company and they had suddenly – in his words – “gone through the roof!” The MBH 52-week low of 152.50 had indeed leapt and was by then up by more than double at 377.50 and later peaking at an amazing 492!

Well, by now the whole world knows the answer – one that changes the expression ‘*Made in China*’ forever because although the branding has appeared on many things, never before has that included the London taxi! But that is now about to change with up to 20,000 of the TXII look-alikes being manufactured in Shanghai from 2008 following an agreement for a joint venture between LTI's parent company – MBH – and China's largest private car manufacturer and seventh largest in total, **Zhejiang Geely Holding Group**.

The £53million agreement is subject to regulatory approval in China and agreement by Manganese Bronze shareholders. MBH will initially invest £19.85million.

Once built at the Shanghai factory, the taxis are destined for markets in Asia whilst MBH will have the right to sell them to the rest of the world. Manganese Bronze will partly fund the investment by issuing 5.7 million shares to Geely in return for a 37.6 per cent stake in the joint venture. Manganese will have the right to increase its stake to 50 per cent at any time over the next five years for £6.6 million.

Manganese has been looking for a manufacturing partner in China in order to develop a low cost manufacturing facility and to gain access to a country with a growing vehicle market, but under Chinese law, MBH needed a local partner in order to get into their manufacturing base. Geely has an annual production capacity of 250,000 vehicles, 200,000 engines and 150,000 gearboxes from four separate manufacturing bases.

This is Manganese Bronze's third attempt at breaking into the Chinese market having previously attempted the venture with the National Bluestar Corporation and Brilliance

## Complaints Results

### October 2006



**A Complaints meeting was heard on 10 October 2006 with an Appeals meeting on 18 October 2006. The results are below. *Call Sign* does not publish Not Guilty, No Complaint to Answer or No Further Action verdicts...**

**Rep = Reprimand... Susp = Suspension...**

Name/call sign	Nature of Complaint	Sentence
<b>Michael Dwyer (S27J)</b>	Not completing 40 jobs Rules 20, 28	<b>Expelled</b>
<b>Anthony English (N03)</b>	Not completing 40 jobs Rules 20, 28	<b>Expelled</b>
<b>John Short (V11)</b>	Not completing 40 jobs Rules 20, 28	<b>Expelled</b>
<b>Michael Brenchley (R57)</b>	Not completing 40 jobs Rules 20, 28	<b>Expelled on 6 months probation</b>
<b>Thomas Townsend (V01)</b>	Not completing 40 jobs Rules 20, 28	<b>Expelled on 6 months probation</b>
<b>Kevin Lufflum (C29)</b>	Refusing wheelchair job on Mayfair rank leaving it for another subscriber Rules 2, 14	<b>Stripped out before meeting commenced</b>
<b>James Layton (H17)</b>	Put himself in a favourable position for a regular credit trip Rules 5, 14	<b>4 weeks susp (Reduced to 3 weeks on Appeal)</b>
<b>Darren Canterbury (B90)</b>	Taking another driver's job Rules 2, 5, 6, 12	<b>Warning, reprimand + 2 weeks susp (Reduced to Warning on Appeal)</b>



It was a very busy Saturday evening, the last day of September and dispatcher Curls was dealing with the usual queries when a driver called in to say that he had been attacked and robbed by the Blackwall Tunnel slip road exit onto the East India Dock Road. Before long, it became apparent that a gang were targeting London taxi drivers and all of them operating in the E14 area.

First to suffer was Dial-a-Cab driver **Phineas John (N47)** who was in a traffic hold-up approaching the Blackwall Tunnel caused by the tunnel's closure with all traffic being diverted towards the A13. He spoke to **Call Sign** from the A&E department of the Royal London Hospital where he was waiting to be treated for a suspected broken finger – gained whilst trying to hold on to his bag.

"I was in the outside lane," he explained, "and suddenly these 3 kids ran across the road and opened the luggage door and grabbed everything they could while I was stuck in traffic. There was no money in my bag, but I had my SatNav unit in there together with all my PCO paperwork, including my copy bill and spare keys. I may now have to take the cab to a garage and get all the locks changed because they not only have my keys, but also my address."

That job will cost Phineas around £200. He has been a taxi driver for two years and on DaC for around 15 months and sounded surprised when asked why he didn't have his front doors locked?

"I never have done – but I suppose I'll have to now," he replied and ended by telling us that he thought this was going to be one of his best weeks so far having had a trip to Margate earlier in the week. "They say you learn from experience," he said sadly...

Next to face these undesirables was **Paul Shorter (H88)**. "My doors are normally locked," Paul explained to **Call Sign**, "and I had just left the cab to go into a client's office near Cabot Square but the passenger came out and we both got into the cab together. I don't know why, but I just forgot to lock the doors."

Paul and his female passenger had reached West Ferry Road when someone stepped out onto the crossing to stop the traffic. Paul's taxi was third in the queue, but almost instantaneously a young boy tried to force open the passengers door to get to the woman.

"Fortunately, I could see what was happening and managed to lock the back door, but couldn't quite manage to do the fronts. But," continued Paul, "I don't keep any money in my bag only some stuff for cleaning windows! Even so, I struggled with this kid to stop him taking it. In the meantime, another young kid – I think they were all around 15 years old – came running up to the driver's door and gave my TXII an almighty kick leaving a huge dent in it. I haven't a clue why he did it other than just malice. In the end they got nothing."

Paul's dent will cost him around £200 to fix. His upset passenger apologised to him, but Paul said that it wasn't in any way her fault and even though he had received a bump on the head during the attempted mugging, he took the distressed lady home and refused to stop working afterwards.

"I'm not going to let those little sh\*ts stop me," he said...

# Night of the Muggers...



**The one that got away! Joe Brazil reversed back down the road and escaped. Other victims were in traffic hold-ups and couldn't do that...**

Former dispatcher, **Joe Brazil (K16)**, was one of the lucky ones. He escaped by reversing whereas others were trapped by traffic. Joe told **Call Sign**:

"I was approaching the lights at East India Dock Road just before St Leonard's Road when I saw two 14 or 15 year old kids making a beeline towards my cab. I had already read the warning terminal messages from Curls, so I was semi-prepared for any trouble – although you don't really expect to see any. Suddenly one of the boys leapt over a barrier with an object of some kind in his hand whilst the other boy was almost at the luggage door. I put the cab into reverse and put my foot down. After around 30 yards or so, I saw one of the boys staring at me as he pulled his hood up. The two boys then ran off down Ida Street."

**Jonathon Raymond (S39)** wasn't attacked but witnessed two kids – one on a bike – trying to attack a **ComCab** driver.

"Fortunately," he told **Call Sign**, "they had to give up because the driver had all his doors locked, but it looked very unpleasant."

## Shattered window

Soon after, another DaC driver, **Yaqub Rafiq (O28)** was attacked after spotting 7 or 8 youths "hanging around and looking suspicious." Within minutes, two of them were trying to get into his cab – which he sensibly keeps locked – but couldn't. That, however, failed to stop them.

"One of them took out a small stone – about the size of a Ferrero Rocher chocolate, banged it against the window and it immediately shattered," said Yaqub. "He then put his hand through where the glass had been and just took my phone and left. They didn't go for my money bag, however the phone was a very expensive one."

"The dispatcher (Curls) was a great help that night, not just with constant warnings, but also with calling the police and getting my phone stopped."

Several days later, reports came in saying that a group of muggers were attacking cabs around McDonalds in Docklands. All we can suggest is that everyone keeps their doors locked at all times – especially in E14.

Police told **Call Sign** that one arrest had been made and the person released on bail.

**If you have any information that you think might help the police, contact DS Keogh of the Robbery Squad at Bethnal Green on 0208 217 3819...**

## NOW S&S TAXIS OFFER DAC DRIVERS A DISCOUNT

An East London taxi garage has now offered a 10% exclusive discount to Dial-a-Cab drivers. This discount applies to servicing and overhauls. See the S&S ad on page 32...

## SOUTH LONDON TAXIS 10% DISCOUNT FOR DAC DRIVERS!

If you live to the south of London and are looking for a garage offering quality work for a discounted price, try South London Taxis Limited because if you pull in with a Dial-a-Cab logo on your taxi, you will get a 10% discount on ALL work you have carried out there. And YES – that includes overhauls! South London Taxis Limited are already well known in Croydon, but with the savings on offer for Dial-a-Cab drivers, they must be worth those few extra miles even if you don't live there!

**South London Taxis Limited**  
**69 Wortley Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 3EB**  
**Telephone 020 8665 1435**

*This 10% discount offer is available to all new and existing customers who have the Dial-a-Cab logo on their cab doors.*

**Thinking about a compensation claim but confused by TV ads promising the earth? Call Sign's legal expert, Hope Liebersohn, is on the Law Society Personal Injuries Panel and offers assistance in this exclusive series ...**

# CALL SIGN LEGAL MATTERS

## Psychological Injuries

After an accident, you're not yourself. It can knock you for six and take a long time before you start to enjoy life again - long after the physical pain and treatment have ended. The victim may have a holiday ruined or cancelled, feel embarrassed about scars and be panicky about crossing the road or even leaving the house, especially if they are old. All of this is normal and part of the compensation you get for pain, suffering and loss of amenity - basic damages. It improves and eventually, when asked: "How are you, in yourself, I mean?" The victim finds they can smile and say, "fine" and actually mean it!

For some, though, the shock doesn't get better but develops into a recognisable psychiatric illness; depression, chronic grief if the accident killed a loved one, or post-traumatic stress disorder. PTSD can develop even after minor injuries, so long as the victim felt they might die; for example, if they see two tons of metal in the form of your taxi hurtling towards them and they know they can't get out of the way. They may be thrown clear by the impact and land luckily with just bruising. But, months later, if they still have nightmares, daytime flashbacks and tremble at the sight of any taxi, that's PTSD and it can add any amount on to their claim, depending on how disabled they are by it.

## Proving the case

Many people put on a brave face, although I may find out later that even seeing me in the office reduces them to tears when they get home. I look in the medical records for sudden weight loss, sleeping tablet prescriptions and other clues, such as unexplained prolonged absence from work. The sufferer has to see an independent psychiatrist for a definite diagnosis and again many clients resist that, as they may say: "Well, I'm not myself yet, but I'm not crazy either." It's my job to get them to the psychiatrist, even though it costs up to £1000 for a report, as it can be worth many times more than that to my client - and often, a recommendation of cognitive behavioural therapy or other

treatment is effective (and of course, I ask the other side to pay for it).

Onlookers, rescuers at disaster scenes and relatives who witness an accident or its immediate aftermath, may also suffer PTSD or "nervous shock," as it was known in legal literature. A mother can recover damages after seeing her family in hospital, or worse, in the morgue shortly after the accident if that sight causes her psychiatric injury.

Relatives at the ground with people who died in the Hillsborough football stadium disaster claimed successfully if they suffered psychiatric illness from that experience, as distinct from ordinary grief. But the courts refused to compensate relatives who watched the disaster on television - they were too remote from the scene.

## Stress at work

Newspapers love these cases and report them as if grasping lawyers and foolish judges milk employers dry in compensation for telling their employees to turn up on time or for innocent little jokes to women and ethnic minorities with no sense of humour. Of course, it is not like that. These cases are difficult to win and the employer must usually have had ample notice of the bullying, overwork or harassment and ignored it before he is at risk of a claim. The large majority of victims cannot face making a claim, in my experience, and those that do need strong support to see it through. The ones who recover sufficiently to enjoy the money at the end are the lucky ones...

**Hope Liebersohn (solicitor) 020-8735-9776;  
hl@glenisters.com**



## THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM

*Britain's original home for abandoned children  
and London's first ever public art gallery...*

**Free entry to Dial-a-Cab drivers on  
production of your badge or bill**

**Tues-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 12-6pm  
(closed on bank holidays)**

**Usual admission £5, donations £4,  
children up to 16 years free**

**The Foundling Museum is at 40**

**Brunswick Square WC1**

**Tel. 020 7841 3600**

**Visit their website at**

**www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk**

## Call Sign November 2006

**Editor:** Alan Fisher

**Address:** Brunswick House, 3/11 Brunswick Place,  
London, N1 6DX

**Tel:** 0207 251 0581 **Fax:** 0207 250 0581

**E-mail:** callsignmag@aol.com

**Web Site:** www.taxicab.co.uk/dialacabmag

**Printers:** John Brown Printing 112 Portland Rd,  
London SE25 4PJ

**Design:** Aldan Publications,

**Tel:** 07958 300 428

**Email:** danny.fresco@dsl.pipex.com

Views and opinions expressed in Call Sign must not automatically be assumed to represent those of the Editor or Board of Management.  
No part of Call Sign may be reproduced either manually or electronically without the express permission of the Editor

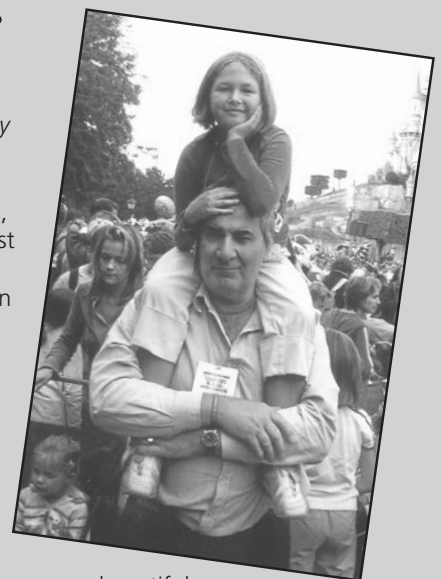
## And Before We Wave Goodbye To Disney for 2006...

The October issue of **Call Sign** had a pictorial report on the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* annual pilgrimage with the *Children's Magical Taxi Tour* to the Disneyland Resort, Paris. Out of 100 volunteer taxi drivers, almost a quarter were from Dial-a-Cab (see last month's cover) and together they assisted in taking 180 happy children and their helpers on this amazing yearly trip.

One of the DaC drivers was **Doug Fisher (E64)**. He contacted this magazine just after publication to say that he was the driver to a lovely brother and sister and their mother and that he had a nice photo of himself and the young girl (Charis).

Many of the children on the trip were suffering with life-threatening illnesses and we didn't ask why Charis was there, but the photo was so beautiful, encompassing everything the trip is about, that we made an exception and published this photo a month after the article.

It shows a taxi driver and a young girl who just hours before, never even knew each other, but who now were firm friends. The milling crowds and Sleeping Beauty castle in the background play second fiddle to the lovely smile on the face of Charis and her new friend Doug. One month late? Yes. But well worth the wait...





Dial-a-Cab have long been acknowledged as the busiest of all the radio taxi organisations in London with by far the largest number of account clients. Our problem is not so much getting more work, as providing cover for the huge amount we already have and to keep that coverage at the excellent level our clients have become used to – especially as we head into the Christmas period.

DaC Chairman Brian Rice told *Call Sign*: “Generally speaking, our coverage is very good and taking out the odd train strike or deluge, I believe that our clients will testify to that fact. However, with Christmas fast approaching and the probability of getting even busier, we want to do something positive that will not only help continue to give our clients the excellent coverage they already receive, but will also give our drivers some fun whilst providing it – hopefully even topping last year’s Xmas incentive!”

Last Christmas, Dial-a-Cab gave away a brand new ‘gold’ spec TXII to lucky driver Richard Barford (R39), so how can they top that?

“Well,” said Brian, “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!”

Brian added that the DaC Board have tried to make the incentive fair for everyone and so rather than give away a Peugeot 307 1.6 ‘New S’ to the three drivers who cover the most work, they will be giving points for those covering account trips during certain busy times of day on weekdays and weekends.

“Then,” said the DaC Chairman, “every 10 points a driver accumulates will get them one entry into the Xmas draw. The more points they accumulate, the more entries they get and the more chances they will have! But the system also means that every DaC driver has a chance provided they cover at least 40 jobs each month – even those hours no longer classify as full time!”

**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.

You can also 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 applies to any credit ride taken

## DaC Xmas Incentive: 3 Peugeot 307 Cars



**3 lucky DaC drivers will each win one of these beautiful cars for just doing their job!**

from £140 between the hours 21:00 - 02:00hrs and any credit ride between midnight Friday and midnight Sunday.

The first three call Signs drawn from the

‘hat’ 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.

## The Lord Mayor’s Show Preview



**The newly elected Lord Mayor of London - Alderman John B Stuttard**

On Friday 29 September, Pat Stanley, Master of the **Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers**, joined other Livery Company Masters and Liverymen from the Hackney Carriage Industry at The Guildhall for the voting ceremony of the new Lord Mayor, where Alderman John B Stuttard was elected and he will take office just before the Lord Mayor’s show in November.

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers will be amongst those taking part in this year’s Lord Mayor’s Show. The procession will take place on 11 November 2006. A poppy drop at 11am will herald the start of a two-minute silence for Armistice Day, as Typhoons from the Royal Air Force and helicopters from Joint Helicopter Command kick-start the celebrations with a flypast over the Royal Exchange and Mansion House.

249 vehicles will take part in the procession, including 19 carriages – the most eye-catching of which is the 250-year-old, gold Lord Mayor’s State Coach. More than 6,000 people of all ages, including 1,550 military personnel, will take part in the parade to celebrate the inaugural outing of the 679th Lord Mayor of the City of London. Some 202 horses and 24 marching bands, including 10 military bands, will also take part in the procession that travels from Mansion House to St Paul’s Cathedral. The day culminates in a fireworks extravaganza between Waterloo and Blackfriars Bridges on the Thames from 5pm.

Spectators are welcome along the route, so why not go along and support the licensed trade’s livery Company.

*Our thanks to Sandie Goodwin for the above information...*

Wednesday 11 October and one of the most surprising hit programmes of the past few years made its scheduled weekly BBC1 appearance. **Who Do You Think You Are** (Walt-to-Wall Productions) is now into its third series and has taken many famous celebrities back into their pasts to trace family trees, with some of those trips ending in not-so-salubrious outcomes!

The first series was BBC2's highest rated series of 2004 and one of the most critically acclaimed television productions of that year.

The ratings continued to climb for the second series and in fact, so successful were those first two BBC2 series that it was moved to BBC1. Among the celebrities whose pasts have been "dug" into have been Barbara Windsor, Robert Lindsay, former Olympic runner Colin Jackson, David Dickinson, Jeremy Irons and many others.

But that second Wednesday in October caused numerous Dial-a-Cab drivers to phone **Call Sign**. Why? Because the subject, **Nigella Lawson**, was being driven around town in what appeared to be several different taxis – but all of them on Dial-a-Cab with the logo continually being shown going across the screen! Each time she left the cab, she was shown paying the driver – and always £10. Could it be that it was the same cab throughout?

Only one of the taxis showed a registration and that belonged to DaC's car winner from the last time that prize was given as an incentive in 2001, **Peter Bond (I67)**.

"Yes," Peter told **Call Sign** after the program, "it was me throughout the program! Whilst everything that happens to the celebrity is genuine, just using me was done for two reasons. The first was that as it was filmed in July and tearing busy, so the production crew didn't want to waste time looking for cabs and secondly, because a lot of time was spent in the cab and the weather was very hot, they wanted a taxi with air-conditioning in the back. So yes, the £10 fare shown was always the same banknote to the same driver!"

Peter went on: "I know that Nigella Lawson uses DaC quite often, but I didn't get the job through the system. A friend of mine heard about *Wall-to-Wall* looking for a cab with air-con that would be available for up to two weeks filming and recommended me. In fact the job lasted exactly two weeks and I was paid by the hour."

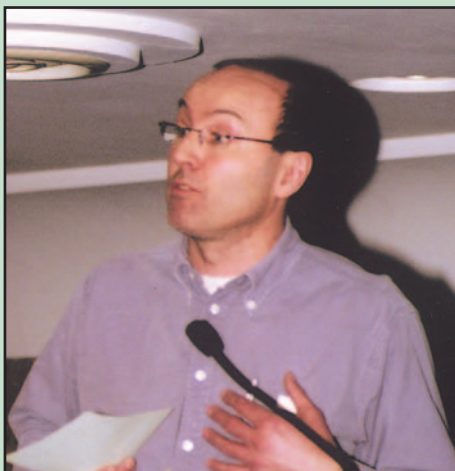
So what was Nigella Lawson like?

"She was just so nice as were all her family who I met briefly, including her husband Charles Saatchi. By the end of the second week, she felt like a friend and made the job so enjoyable!"

The fascinating program told of her connection to the J.Lyons family of caterers through her mother (Vanessa Salmon) and amongst much more, told the story of the Regent Palace Hotel when it was also known as Lyons Corner House where a dinner-suited orchestra would serenade you whilst your family tucked into their 7s.6d (38p) salad served by waitresses – famously known as Nippies! Sadly, prices have gone up since the 1950s and J.Lyons & Co are no more.

As for Nigella, she is the daughter of politician Nigel Lawson and as a journalist, has achieved huge international success with

# Who do you think you are, Peter...!



**Peter Bond**



**Nigella Lawson**

cookery writing and television presenting. She has presented three of her own TV cookery series, including two series of Nigella Bites

and *Forever Summer* with Nigella. Accompanying recipe books are available for both from the BBC shop.

## Regent Street Xmas Lights

The Regent Street Association have told **Call Sign** that the Dreamworks / Aardman feature movie "Flushed Away" is sponsoring their Christmas light spectacular for 2006 with the lights depicting characters from the new film, which features the voices of film stars Kate Winslet, Ian McKellen, Hugh Jackman and many other famous celebrities.

The switch-on takes place on **Tuesday 7 November** and will be done by three of the actors who "voice" the characters - **Ian McKellen** (Toad), **Andy Serkis** (Spike) and Eastenders star **Shane Richie** (Sid) at the flagship store of the British luxury fashion label, *Aquascutum*

and of course marks the beginning of the Christmas shopping season.

*Flushed Away* tells the story of a pampered pet mouse who is flushed down the toilet from his penthouse apartment in the West End, beneath the streets of London and from where he has to learn a whole new way of life.

In recent years, over 40 new shops and restaurants have opened on Regent Street including Brooks Brothers, Timberland, Kurt Geiger, Quiksilver, Penhaligons, Apple, Ted Baker, Hobbs, Kipling, Mamas and Papas,

Lacoste and Coast. They join the established Regent Street names such as Aquascutum, Liberty, Hamleys and Austin Reed.



**Last years Xmas lights at Regent Street**

The Regent Street Christmas lights are one of London's major tourist attractions and attract a huge numbers of visitors each year. The tradition began in 1954 when the Regent Street Association was prompted to organise lights after an article in the *Daily Telegraph* commented on how drab London looked during Christmas. The street's retailers finance the lights and sometimes specific sponsors also come in. The considerable costs range from £75,000 to £450,000 depending on the design.



# Roman Way's Steve Thomas Becomes a Granddad at 38!

**And catches a 38lb Carp while he's at it!**

DaC radio engineer **Steve Thomas** has become a granddad at the tender age of just 38! Master *Ryan Walter Ross* arrived at King George's Hospital on 19 September, weighing in at a respectable 6lbs 8oz.

Steve's son Ray and Mum Victoria are naturally delighted with the little fella, while Steve himself - when not sorting out our driver's radio problems - can be found teaching young Ryan the basics of frequency modulation and voltage stabilisation!

"The Stork has been very busy around DaC lately" Steve told *Call Sign*! "It started with Jacqui Chart's little 'un, then David Lessman (D19) and Mike Son had grandchildren, so I thought I'd continue the fashion," he grinned.

"Actually, it was a tremendous week for me because a few days before Ryan arrived, I caught a 38lb 4oz Mirror Carp while fishing in Bills Lake, France," he enthused.

Steve ended by asking whether DaC had any younger grandfathers than him? We pleaded ignorance, but if you can beat 38, *Call Sign* would like to know!



Steve with new Grandson Ryan  
inset pic: Steve parades the 38lb Mirror carp he caught while fishing in France

## ASCOTT CAB COMPANY

### TXII SERVICING

**EARLY TXII**  
9,000 Mile  
Service

**£64.00**



18,000 Mile  
Service

**£99.00**



**TXII SALES**

**LATE TXII**  
10,000 Mile  
Service

**£64.00**



20,000 Mile  
Service

**£99.00**

**ASCOTT CAB COMPANY & SALES LTD**  
Victoria Wharf, Grove Street, London SE8 3NW  
Telephone 0208 692 1122

# Allen Tagwell's Ma

For some unknown reason and since a very early age, I've had a profound interest in people. The human body (inside and out), procreation and later the way people think. In fact when I was 10, I could draw and name in Latin from memory a considerable number of the 206 bones and 656 muscles that make up the human body from the cranium, right down to the metatarsals - which I'm sure all football followers will know about.

Being one of 11 children and from a very poor family, my parents could not afford to buy me proper drawing paper. So my dad, who was a builder, used to bring home rolls of ceiling paper - ideal on which to draw life size skeletons! Not that my mum or dad ever gave me any praise for my artistic efforts, just strange looks and hopes that my interest in drawing naked bodies covered with peculiar names would soon change to something more in keeping with my age - such as matchstick men. But it didn't!

In my late teens, I had a girl friend - Swiss au pair to a surgeon - who tried to get me a job as an artist in a UCH operating theatre that involved sitting on pendulum-type apparatus that swung back and forth over the top of the person being operated on. I was really excited at the chance of seeing live body organs as opposed to drawings, but unfortunately I failed to get the job because I wasn't a medical student and with my lack of education, never likely to be.

But the human form has continued to interest me and over the years I've done a fair amount of life drawing, male and female, using various mediums such as chalk, crayon, ink, charcoal and pastels. One such drawing of a nude female, which I have in my office, has an interesting story. The model was a hairdresser who did part-time modelling at an art college I attended several years ago and who, after a little persuading, agreed to cut my hair and afterwards pose for me privately. Unfortunately the arrangement only lasted a year or so before her husband, a strange chap, put a stop to it because he didn't like being told to leave the room whilst she was posing, although I later learned that the real reason was because of all the bits of my hair he kept finding in his kitchen! It was sad really, because apart from being a very interesting model, she also did a very good haircut! You can't get hairdressers like that now!

I began by saying my interests included the way people think. And it was the way people think that drew my interest to an article in *Call Sign* last month by Richard Potter (T51) who, amongst other things, commented on the reasons why he was reluctant to join a taxi trade union. One such reason was because the leaders of these organisations appeared to be older than him and because of that age difference, he considered them to be *long in the tooth* - the definition of which is to be *too old to do anything*. That, apart from anything else,

was a somewhat ironic statement to make during the very month the law on age discrimination came into force.

## Ageism?

I've no idea of the exact age of the member in question and whilst photos such as the one submitted with his article can be deceiving, I would hazard a guess and say he looks to be in his late 40s (my apologies, Richard, if you are younger). So assuming I've guessed correctly, then by his reckoning anybody in their 50s onwards is bordering on senility. I have no argument with his reasons - if that's the yardstick by which he uses to measure a person's ability, then that is his right. Although personally, if I had a choice of two barristers to represent me in court, one wet behind the ears and the other of pensionable age, I'm

**One such reason was because the leaders of these organisations appeared to be older than him and because of that age difference, he considered them to be long in the tooth - the definition of which is to be too old to do anything.**

sure I would choose the latter.

Another reason I found Richard's comments interesting, or should I say concerning, was because they appear to be amongst many similar views of far too many drivers in our industry who consider it totally unnecessary to make any provisions whatsoever against any of the unforeseen circumstances that can strike at any moment, resulting in financial hardship or distress. For example, loss of income through sickness or fighting bureaucratic injustice.

On every occasion I use a taxi, I try to engage the driver in conversation and invariably lead it onto the subject of sickness insurance, pensions, union representation etc and I'm truly amazed at how many say they can't be bothered, don't think it's necessary or a multitude of mundane reasons why they shouldn't make the necessary provisions. When I first joined the Board and for many years afterwards, I tried relentlessly to convince our members to join the DaC health scheme, especially during the period when work was on the downturn and the Board were continually being approached by members wanting to withdraw their roller bonds well before they was due, usually because of financial difficulties caused by time lost through sickness. Yet no matter how often I wrote articles in *Call Sign* warning members of the need to make provision for these situations, they were continually ignored. And even to this present day when talking to drivers, it appears that little has changed. Yet as always, when there is a problem, only then do they look for those with experience to resolve it.

To emphasise this point, at the time of writ-



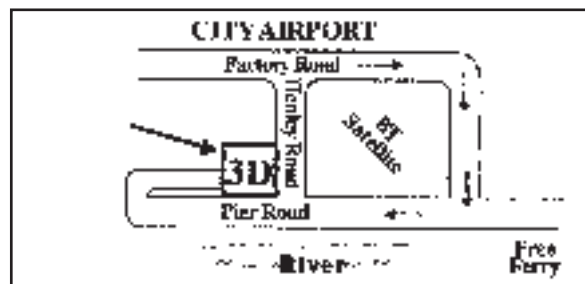
ing I have had a considerable number of calls from DaC members concerned at the closures, and impending closures of some streets in the City's square mile and wanting to know what I or the Board were doing to prevent these closures happening? I explained that we are in discussion with the relevant authorities, but as a company we have limited power to influence these decisions, even though these closures will undoubtedly affect the service we are trying to supply to many of the UK's largest corporates.

I also suggested that in addition to what the DaC Board are doing, drivers should take the issue up with any of the trade unions they may be members of, with emphasis on the fact that collectively they have many years of considerable experience and knowledge of the cab trade and issues such as those in question (needless to say, none of those that spoke to me were members). I also suggested they write to their MP. When making that last suggestion, I was somewhat surprised or perhaps disappointed by the number of drivers who unashamedly admitted they were incapable of composing such a letter and suggested I (supposedly a man of senile age) should publish a draft letter in *Call Sign* for them to copy. I'm still undecided whether to praise their courage in admitting their inability to write or annoyed at the possibility of it being due to typical cab driver apathy. Whatever the reason, I honestly believe that if every driver wrote to their respective MP regularly on any problem issue concerning the cab trade, it would eventually pay dividends.

I feel it prudent to mention that over the years I too have had run-ins with the various trade organisations, usually over comments they made about our Society. But whatever our differences, I have never once questioned their commitment to the cause of defending the cab trade and their respective member's rights. I agree there has been the occasional bickering between the various taxi trade unions, as there has been between the various radio circuits over the years, but that shouldn't be a reason to avoid becoming a member of these organisations, particularly at a time when driving a cab in London is becoming ever more difficult. And neither should the



# E<sub>3</sub>TAXIS



Due to the positive response to our winter special offer of price servicing for LOGO CARRYING DaC

DRIVERS, we have decided to continue the offer throughout the summer

**AT E<sub>3</sub> TAXIS – 50% DISCOUNT ON SERVICING!**

*Some of our other services include:-*

- ★ Overhauls    ★ TXII Timing Chains/Belts    ★ MOT testing on Class 4 vehicles
- ★ Smoke Test    ★ Tyres Supplied and Fitted

*We are also fitting the new PCO Approved Tyres MAXXIS at £42.55 plus VAT and that includes balancing*

*We can service your TXII from new without affecting your warrantee*

*And we will advise on any warrantee work needed*

**To book: Ring Chris on 0207 474 6592 and mention that you are on DaC**

**E3 Taxis Unit 3D Standard Industrial Estate, Henley Road, E16 2ES**

**Open Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm**

*Every issue of Call Sign takes a look back at ODRTS history through the pages of the magazines of the time with a...*

**Flashback  
2004**

# Dial-a-Cab Flashback

*This month's Flashback goes back to September 2004 and a question Call Sign asked some two years before the Government and rest of the British press...*

## From Call Sign, September 2004

*Call Sign asks...*

### WHERE DOES RELIGION STOP AND SECURITY BEGIN?

With the problems of the Middle East region showing no signs of abating and world security being on constant alert, a Dial-a-Cab driver has posed **Call Sign** a question about modes of dress that are seemingly tied in with security.

So far as this magazine is concerned, attempts by France to ban the wearing of head covers by Jews, Sikhs and Muslims was wrong. But what about total face covering?

The driver – himself a Muslim – voiced his concern over the number of Muslim women who have not only taken to wearing the Hijab in a belief of modesty as described in the Koran, but who then also cover their face with a veil (Niqab), something that the Koran does not specify.

Peace loving followers of Islam and the Koran in the UK should have the freedom to follow their beliefs just as Jews who wish to cover their heads or Sikhs who want to wear turbans.

The Koran says that Islamic women should guard their modesty, should not display their beauty or adornments except to their husbands and members of their family and that they should draw their veils over their bosoms. It doesn't mention the covering of the face.

The problem with covering faces is purely one of security. There is no way of knowing whether it is a man or woman under the veil and with the threat of suicide bombings never far away, it makes sense that no one should be allowed to walk around with their identity hidden from the gaze of security cameras.

DaC Muslim driver **Jawied Iqbal (D65)** told **Call Sign** that he believed hiding your face in the current climate was wrong.

**"I've never heard that the Hijab has to include a face cover. No one should be allowed to be totally unidentified in a major city when there is a constant security threat."**

The question is why some Muslim women feel it necessary to cover their faces while others who wear the Hijab up to their necks don't.

## Another name change?

It seems that Tony Blair the policeman, as against the politician although who can tell the difference, has got rid of the yobs from our streets - not by locking them up and throwing away the key though, but by banning PC Plod because he may offend the poor little mites! Most of these feral youths enjoy being called yobs, because later they can progress to be called hooligans as if it were some sort of initiation. Even if they are caught and sentenced to an ASBO, this is seen by some of them as being akin to a medal won in a war and the glory that comes with that is inhaled.

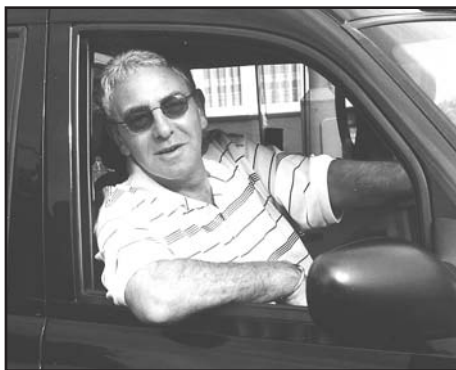
We've seen in our own licensed taxi trade how minicabs have evolved into private hire, but the scabs and touts are still here in great numbers. Perhaps Mr Blair could get rid of the muggers and burglars in much the same way - with a name change? Change the offence of mugging to borrowing with no intent to return and hey presto, no more muggers! Murder could now become downsizing of the population - a much nicer turn of phrase. The biggest crime of all is how this man got to be in such a position! Top cop? More like Top Cat...

## Food for thought...

It's now official; Britain is the obese capital of Europe. This is due in part to our diet and also for not exercising enough to burn off the calories we consume. As a non-sporting person, I understand the need to burn off the extra food we eat, but as most of our parks and playing fields have been either sold off or closed,

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

## The Views of a Grumpy Old Man



where are the children supposed to train and get into the habit of exercising? Even I, as Mr Grumpy, had to laugh at the irony that McDonalds are to be one of the main sponsors for the 2012 Olympics. Makes you wonder though...

## It's a crime...

With our prisons at bursting point, 'no room at the inn' springs to mind. It seems they are cur-

rently so full that you will soon have to go onto a waiting list to be let in to serve your time. Whether this will be a kind of postcode lottery as in the NHS, remains to be seen. The possibility of waiting up to 18 months before you get a cell should not be ruled out and that may not even be one to use on their own. Worse (or better?) still, it could be in a mixed cell. Although this may sound improbable, this is the way it works in hospital if you're ill, so why not if you are a criminal? Early release is already the order of the day - especially in hospital maternity units where after giving birth in the morning, you're sent home after lunch. So why not the same for prisons?

It has also been suggested that foreign criminals should be given up to £2500 for repatriation and for help towards finishing their sentence in their land of origin, while the home grown variety get around £500. Why do you think they come here in the first place? And who's to say they will not come back here to commit even more crimes and get another £2500? Who says crime doesn't pay?

**Chas Kissin (P99J)**

## Dancha Designs

**Professional & Personal Web-design**

*"...Dancha Designs work with our clients to deliver exactly what they want, how they want it, when they want it. It is integral to what we do..."*

**for more info visit:**

**www.danchadesigns.com**

**Or call: 0701 741 5000**



In this issue's *Mailshot*, Dial-a-Cab driver **John Addis (K97)** writes regarding the article in last month's *Call Sign* on Biodiesel. He included cuttings from *The Sunday Times* on the subject in the form of a reader's letter and the newspaper's response.

Courtesy of *The Sunday Times*, we reproduce both here and a response from Faye Scott of the **Environment Trust**, who are marketing the product...

### The question:

*I drive a 2003 Ford Focus 1.8 TDCi and have recently started to use biodiesel. After a couple of fill-ups, my glowplug light started to flash and there was a loss of power. I was advised to have the filter changed and this seemed to cure the problem. However, after another couple of fill-ups, the problem recurred. I am now told I will have to have the fuel system (tank, pipes, pump etc) replaced at a cost of £3000 - £3500. I have heard differing opinions about whether this could have been caused by biodiesel. What do you think?*

**RC, London**

### The answer:

The glowplug lamp usually flashes when there's a loss of fuel pressure, typically caused by the pump failing; as this appears to have been the case, it shows the wisdom of reacting to warning lights. We would ask the dealer for a full report on what appears to have happened. Replacing the pump and injectors is always expensive and the metal pipework will add to this, but we can't see any need to replace the tank when a good flush out will do the trick. If you're not happy, try a local diesel injection specialist (see Yellow Pages), which may well confirm the remedy but might be better on price.

Opinions are divided on the risks of biodiesel. Many users claim they have had no problems but some car manufacturers do not endorse the fuel in anything above a 5% blend (5% biodiesel to 95% normal diesel) because they believe it could affect the durability of some of the more sensitive components.

The leading fuel injection equipment manufacturers (Bosch, Delphi, Denso, Siemens VDO and Stanadyne) are not convinced

***Following the report on global warming by Sir Nicholas Stern on 30 October and endorsed by the prime minister, the subject is obviously not going to go away. So we ask...***

# Biodiesel: Is it Safe?

biodiesel can be used without the risk of damaging the fuel injection system and issued a joint statement in 2003 to this effect.

Your Ford uses a Delphi system and your handbook contains the following line: "Use only fuel that meets EN590 specifications (the standard for unadulterated diesel fuel). Do not use biodiesel." If your car was still under warranty, Ford would probably not pay for the repairs if it knew you had been using biodiesel.

Car manufacturers are now working with the government to try to create international quality standards for biodiesel that would enable them to endorse its use in 10% blends initially and possibly higher. Until then, you use it at your own risk.

### Finally, a response to *Call Sign* from Faye Scott of the Environment Trust...

*Biodiesel is made and sold at a wide variety of standards and some of them may well cause problems for users. Increasingly manufacturers are working to ensure that their biodiesel meets the EU standard for biodiesel. However, it should be noted that this standard was developed to apply to biodiesel made from crops - not used cooking oil. Therefore, those of us making biodiesel from used cooking oil see it as an aspiration for their product, rather than something that can automatically be reached. But even those producers working to reach the EU Standard will be providing biodiesel of a high standard which should not cause the problems discussed above.*

*It is the case that after starting to use biodiesel, drivers may need to replace their*

*fuel filter, but this is due to the cleansing nature of biodiesel in an engine rather than biodiesel being a recurring cause of a problem. Once you start using biodiesel, it will dislodge some of the dirt which clogs up a diesel engine and which may collect on the fuel filter and require replacement. However, this will be an inexpensive, one-off cost and some biodiesel sellers offer to replace the fuel filter for drivers as part of the service.*

*As your readers note, it is also the case that warranties of cars may be an issue, but it should be noted that the warranty of many cars on the continent covers the use of biodiesel up to even 100%, whereas the warranties for the same cars in the UK will only cover a 5% blend.*

*This is a clear demonstration of the overall confidence that car manufacturers have in biodiesel and the differences arise only from the comparative unfamiliarity of the fuel in the UK. Even now, UK warranties are under review as biodiesel enquiries and use increases.*

***Moreover, we understand that many taxis are out of warranty anyway and we feel that those drivers will want to use our fuel due to its lower cost and high standards.***

*In addition, many biodiesel producers find that drivers whose cars are still in warranty which do not cover them to use biodiesel, use it anyway in blends of up to 100% biodiesel due to their confidence in its quality, money saving and environmental benefits.*

Hope that helps, John...

## LTFUC AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children will be held on Tuesday 5 December 2006 at 7.30pm at:

**The New Park Day Centre, 19 Highbury New Park, Highbury, N5**

There is parking at the centre and refreshments will be available. All drivers are most welcome to attend.

**We also still have a number of Xmas collecting boxes available. If any driver would like to carry one in their taxi, please contact any Committee member - your help would be greatly appreciated.**



## Executive 6 Bedroom Villa in Florida

**From £395 per week**



**3 Master Suites, 3 Twin Rooms, 4.5 Bathrooms, 30ft Pool on large extended SW facing deck, Games Room. Luxury Specification. In Remington Golf Community. Within 12 miles/16 mins of Disney. Near Lake Toho. Easily Sleeps 14 in beds.**

**Contact Andy (P32) on 07904 091278 or 07932 960350**

**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...**

Ever wondered what people think about London or we London cabbies in general? Expectation is a funny word and depending on which country your passenger comes from, that interpretation will no doubt vary. When a passenger comments to me on the taxi trade or London, many things come into my head. But North Americans in general are very much harder to deal with because they are used to spin and positives being placed upon negatives. With Londoners, they just moan - and I moan too!

Here's an example; an American gentleman I picked up recently asked why, after almost a week, was Bayswater Road still shut? He added that this sort of thing could only happen in London. I thought he made a good point, but instantly defended the situation by saying that there was an inherent problem with burst water mains along this stretch of roadway because of the antiquated state of the Victorian underground water system. What I noticed that he hadn't, was the traffic build up around Westbourne Terrace being caused not so much by waterworks but by traffic lights still phasing normally as if traffic was coming from the left when it could not - because it was closed! Could they not have just re-phased the lights, taking into account this fairly obvious anomaly?

After chatting a bit more, I discovered that the reason we were going to the Hilton Hyde Park was because I was clearing up for another driver who had taken this gentlemen to the Hilton Park Lane by mistake. This didn't seem to matter to him at all and as he was from New York, perhaps he was used to it! But one thing North Americans are well practised at is being specific with their final destination. Usually giving the corner of one street with another alleviates mistakes. Londoners are quite different and can be very vague.

This is a real example after I had pulled over in response to a street hail:

"Can you take me to Trinity Road, Wandsworth?"

"Whereabouts," I ask.

"Top end," comes the reply.

"Anywhere in particular?"

"Do you know Magdalen Road? Well near there."

"Do you have a road name, Sir?"

"Er yes, Nicosia Road."

And cab drivers get accused of going the long way round!

But getting one hotel name mixed up with another is an easy thing to do these days. There's a seed of doubt in my mind about hotel names, the latest being "Drury's Chelsea." There seem to be many different ideas about where SW3 actually is. This one is squeezed in between SW6 and SW10 at the end of Imperial Road. Long gone are the days where a hotel name was original and not based on location, thus making things more difficult for us.

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



## Advice for passengers too...?

I was interested to read in *Call Sign* about drivers being given guidance regarding the picking up and setting down of passengers. It may be prudent to publish in local evening papers some guidance to taxi users regarding their asking drivers to stop at cash point machines, what is deemed as legal tender and tendering the correct fare.

There has been an increase of late in cab drivers receiving PCNs whilst stopping at the request of passengers at cash point machines. In reality, I know that this happens, but a hirer is legally obliged to have the means to pay BEFORE requesting a hiring, so in principle there should be no need to stop.

Something else I've noticed over the past few years is the increase in payment for fares with £10 or £20 notes for rides going just over a fiver. Get a few of these on the bounce and you can be in trouble. There can't be anything worse than running out of fivers or pound coins when it's busy. Again the onus is on the fare payer to tender the exact fare and not on the driver to give change, even though it is sensible to do so. What usually compounds the issue is that if you ask the passenger to look again, they usually come up with the right

amount. I remember the days when people would say: "Can you change a fiver" or "I only have a ten pound note."

Nothing like a bit of courtesy...

Then there is the issue of Scottish or Irish banknotes. My local baker has now started refusing these, the excuse being an increase in forgeries. What's difficult is getting passengers to accept them as part of their change. In the past, I've used this as an excuse not to accept them, but in reality there is no obligation on the driver to do so because these notes are not legal tender. Only notes that can be accepted at The Bank Of England are.

*So to summarise; you have trouble getting rid of notes that are not legal tender of which you don't have to accept in change you don't have to supply, after stopping when you don't have to!*

## Peter Hendy and the cab trade...?

Finally, I was very disappointed listening to Peter Hendy, Head of TfL, on a radio phone-in show to hear that he obviously has little respect for or understanding of the cab trade.

A working driver questioned Mr Hendy on routes from east to west across town and the impact on them should the tram run between Oxford Street and Shepherd's Bush (Oct *Call Sign*). The caller pointed out that traffic routes were slow and full of traffic around the Embankment, Strand and Euston Road, leaving a driver with only one real option. Firstly, he accused the driver of "doing nothing for emissions" by using Oxford Street as a cut through! The driver has the cleanest cab that TfL enforce upon him, but it's not the cab that pollutes, it's the route!

Mr Hendy then implied that the traffic along Euston Road wasn't that bad and "...I can't think why you would not use the Embankment."

Confidence building stuff? I think not, but I have a feeling there is a lot more to come...

**Richard Potter (T51)**

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

**3 master bedrooms, 2 twin bedrooms,  
3 bathrooms (sleeps 10/12)  
30ft private swimming pool and Jacuzzi  
Fully equipped kitchen Cable TV in every room  
Just off the I-4 - 15 mins from Disney  
Close to local shops and golf courses  
From £500 per week (late deals available)**

**For further details and availability go to [www.dovevillas.co.uk](http://www.dovevillas.co.uk)  
or contact Derek Donnelly (V74 on 07951 130 154.  
Prices are for the villa per week and not per person**

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



*Call Sign on the Wembley trail...*

# MIXED MONTH FOR DAC WEMBLEY

**League form 'iffy' – but into League Cup quarter finals...**

On behalf of Dial-a-Cab, **Call Sign** is sponsoring *Combined Counties* Premier division football team, Wembley FC. The team's goalkeeper is DaC driver, **Lee Pearce (J71)**, and he keeps this mag regularly informed as to the team's progress.

"October was a funny month," Lee told us. "After all the publicity we got from the BBC and The Sun last month following our FA Cup exploits, this month we were knocked out of the FA Vase by Northampton in a replay after a 1 - 1 home draw, having beaten Banstead 4 - 2 in the first round and having played brilliantly! Inconsistency is our problem at the moment, but we must overcome that and continue pushing towards a place in the Ryman league."

Lee added: "My personal highlight was the game against my old club, Bedfont. Not only did we play really well in a 2 - 0 victory, but I was also made captain for the match. Even at this level, being given the captain's armband is a great honour."

But Saturday October 21 was the type of day that Wembley needed to pull out all the stops when they entertained Ash United – the only unbeaten team in the Combined Counties Premier division. Sadly the visitors proved too good on the day, taking the points in a 2 - 0 victory.

"Had we won that match," said Lee, "we would have moved up to second place. We still have games in hand, but we need to win them. But we'll keep on going and hopefully make that promotion push work!"

On the plus side, on 24 October in the League Cup, Wembley crushed Salford 9 - 1 with hat tricks for Dalton Brown and Augustine and now play either Cove or Cobham for a place in the semi finals.

DaC Wembley will be sporting their new DaC tops next week and we hope to have a picture of the team wearing them...



Lee warns up before the Ash Utd match

**Combined Counties Premier Division (top 10 of 22 w/e 27 Nov)**

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Chipstead	12	11	0	1	42	13	29	33
Ash Utd	13	7	6	0	25	5	20	27
Chertsey Town	13	7	3	3	27	18	9	24
Merstham	12	7	2	3	18	12	6	23
Egham Town	13	7	1	5	34	17	17	22
<b>DaC-Wembley</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>
Sandhurst Town	13	5	6	2	23	16	7	21
Camberley Town	12	5	4	3	18	17	1	19
Raynes Pk Vale	12	5	3	4	23	25	-2	18
Colliers Wood Utd	12	5	2	5	20	18	2	17

## Don't Play Around... Bank on... Cygnus Taximeters

**The Name That London Cab Drivers Trust**

City Dealers:

N7 – Mann & Overton 020 7700 9828	SS7 – Just Taxis 012 6879 5895
SW6 – Putney Bridge Taxis 020 7736 8818	W9 – Computer Cab 020 7908 0255
SE17 – Coachline Taxis 020 7277 2200	N18 – S&H Cabs 020 8803 1437
E2 – Framerright Engineers 020 7739 5617	HA8 – Edgware Cab Company 020 8951 4590
EN3 – Enfield Taxis 020 8804 5241	E1 – KPM UK Taxis 020 7375 2086
TW8 – Camberfield Taxis 020 8568 9643	



- 5 minute average waiting at the 2005 tariff change
- London Taxis International recommended choice
- 11 service dealers at key sites throughout the Capital
- Compatible with all radio circuits and Cygnus receipt printers
- All British-made and PCO and BSI approved
- Exclusive suppliers of Blaupunkt Satellite Navigation and DAB Radio.



**www.cygnus-automotive.co.uk Tel: 0870 240 1938**

N18	S&H CABS
SS7	JUST TAXIS
EN3	ENFIELD TAXIS
SE17	COACHLINE TAXIS
W7	MAIN 4 OVERTON
GO	
SW6	PUTNEY BRIDGE TAXIS
E2	FRAMERRIGHT ENGINEERS
TW8	CAMBERFIELD TAXIS
W9	COMPUTER CAB
HA8	EDGWARE CAB COMPANY
E1	KPM UK TAXIS

# COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

**Another 2 months has passed since I last wrote in *Call Sign* and nothing has changed except the BoM has improved the amount of work available, yet we still have many drivers not completing the monthly minimum of 40 trips. If you exclude long-term sick, holidays and overhauls, it's still too many not helping the Society cover work and keeping our accounts.**

As you can see from the complaints meeting results, drivers who are not completing the minimum 40 credit journeys a month are being asked or told to leave.

We are currently putting through the Call Centre the most jobs per day that this Society has ever known, yet we still have drivers saying they are not being offered enough trips to complete the minimum quota. This is rubbish, you could have 2 weeks off and still do well over forty! The Board have worked very hard to bring Dial-a-Cab up to the standard that you see now. You are being offered the most work you have ever been offered and the company is in its most stable position of any time. They have gained the experience they need to enable them to make the most of the position they were elected to cover as Board members. But you still have subscribers who want to ruin the efficient smooth running of the Society. They mock, knock and generally try to cause trouble...

Before my mother died, she used to tell me to stop meddling, saying that if it wasn't broken, then leave it alone! Yet you always have subscribers who would like to get onto the Board by promising you outrageous things, which if they ever got on the Board, they could never fulfil.

In a few months, you will have a new office building with the most up-to-date Call Centre, IT / DP department and billing / credit control in the licensed taxi trade. A company that is now respected and looked up to, one that other taxi circuits try to emulate and taxi companies from around the world want to visit.

You have the lowest subscriptions by far in the London Radio taxi trade, something others would like to copy. But they waste too much of the money going through their companies. The difference between the remuneration of the Directors of the other circuits and ours is quite significant. Also, if you work out the amount of money our Board makes available for drivers to take and put in their pockets as against the other circuits, you have the goose that lays the golden eggs.

So before you consider taking cheapshots against our Management, look at what the other circuits have got. If you want to ride around for 2 to 3 hours with-



out being offered a radio job, or knowing if certain drivers are getting an unfair advantage, try the other circuits. Drivers who have not helped our Society and been expelled or left prior to a complaint being heard, are now experiencing exactly what I have just written. These drivers are now pleading with us to let them back because their earnings have dropped drastically...

## **Help make the circuit run smoothly; adhere to rules set out for completing a DD trip**

\* Inform the control room every 15 minutes from arrival or pre-booked time that you are still waiting.

\* If you cannot park outside your given pickup, inform the Call Centre where you are parked before doing an *Advise Arrival*.

\* If your journey is *As Dir* give the correct destination before the end of the journey.

\* If you are given a destination as an outer zone set up by DaC e.g. S99, WW99, SE51 give the precise destination e.g. Harlow, Colchester or Brighton to the Call Centre

\* If a Westminster or Chargecard will not swipe, enter it manually. If in doubt, gain assistance from the voice channel. Do **NOT** enter a Credit Card manually as payment could be refused.

\* If a Westminster card does not swipe, do not demand cash for the full meter fare; contact the Call Centre.

\* The old Code 21 or Arrival button is not an *Advise Arrival*. If you cannot make your own contact then you have to press the *Advise Arrival* button.

*I am sorry if some of this sounds a bit silly to you, but drivers making these mistakes cause problems and sometimes delays drivers receiving payments.*

## **And Tom's views again!**

Two months ago when I wrote my last *Call Sign* article, I gave my personal views on some things I believed could be changed for the better in this country. I thought my views might be the opposite to the majority, but in fact it turned out to be the opposite. There was just one sub-

scriber who tried to twist what I'd written so that he could try to bring down a Board Member. True to form, he had not checked his facts first. It just goes to show how vicious some people can be if they cannot get their own way. He even reproduced my thoughts on a private website (to which I and my colleagues have no access) before the Editor had a chance to put the article onto our official website. The website he is on seems to be viewed by taxi drivers with similar feelings - to destroy, but never to assist and build.

However, on the other side of the coin, I have received many phone calls saying it was refreshing to find someone who was prepared to put their true thoughts into print. The subscriber mentioned above does not have very good allies; as I write this, the Government has produced figures to say that I was correct in my feelings.

Out of the prisoners who gained early release and were tagged, 6 have committed murder and 1000 at least committed serious crimes. Now we know why you can never find a policeman when you want one, they must all be stressed out knowing the villains will be back on the street before them! They will still be finishing paperwork while the villains are out committing more crimes. That's why we have gangs of young thugs attacking, robbing and injuring taxi drivers while they are in their taxis at traffic lights or sitting in a traffic jam (*see this issue ...Ed*).

When criminals are caught or go for an appeal, they appear in front of Judges who seem to be from another planet. They certainly do not live in the same world as us - a London where you have 1 or 2 shooting a week and God knows how many stabbings. If we had a Prime Minister who had any bottle - as taxi drivers put it - he would address these problems and get his cabinet to bring in laws to force Judges to give realistic sentences.

I suggest 15 years minimum for carrying a gun with no remission and 7 years for carrying a knife with no remission. But silly me, they couldn't do that because they forgot to build more prisons as the population increased!

So we should be congratulating David Blunkett, Charles Clarke and John Reid, all who have held the post of Home Secretary in the past 2 years. They have caused 6 or more families to grieve until the day they die for one of their family who had their life cut short due to the incompetence of the 3 men mentioned above.

We have women and young girls frightened to go out for fear of being attacked or raped and yet John Reid is still importing killers and rapists from other countries. His uncontrollable immigration centre in Croydon will let anyone into this country. They have even let 2 Americans into this

*continued on page 29*



# It's AGM Time Again!

## Notice of 2006 Annual General Meeting...

All members should by now have received an individual 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 must be received at Brunswick House on or before 09:00hrs on Friday 10 November.

**If you do intend standing for election at the meeting and would like to offer Call Sign readers information about yourself and how and why you believe you could benefit the Society, then please let Call Sign have your details together with a photograph by midday on Monday November 13. These will then be published in the December issue. Please try to keep the maximum number of words to around 250.**

Members wishing to put forward rule changes or propositions are also reminded that they should be returned, together with the names and signatures of the 25 proposers, by Friday 10 November 2006.

Questions or comments that members wish to have published regarding the CV of any individual standing for election or rule changes and propositions will be published in the January issue of **Call Sign**.



**Howard Pears  
Company Secretary**

## COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

*continued from page 28*

country, claiming asylum because they were being discriminated against due to their colour. They came from states in America that are predominantly black and guess what colour they were?

I'd like to suggest to the government a way of getting some return for the money we are giving illegal immigrants while they are awaiting their appeals. We are told there are many builders, plumbers, electricians and other building workers from the Slav countries flooding into Britain. Well round them up and take them down to some secluded disused army or air force bases and get them to build some new prisons. As these prisons are needed urgently, make them with just basic amenities. Inside the cells, just a washbasin and toilet. Do not even bother with a socket for the television!

The money saved can then be used on giving the elderly a free TV licence and more money on their pensions. HMG seem to think these old people can live on far less than they give a newly-arrived immigrant. Does it mean the elderly should only be eating cheaper scraggy ends of meat, or that they do not need money for new furniture or even a car?

Another place for the money to be channelled is for new equipment into hospitals, not for Admin staff that got their jobs from the Guardian newspaper in the hope they will vote for the Government. How can a Government allow money that is allocated to a hospital for improvements end up in the pockets of senior administration staff? There

needs to be a culling of the admin staff in hospitals, so that money allocated can be used for its correct purpose - to assist in the recovery of patients back to perfect health.

While on my soapbox, let's dismiss the cheap contract labour uses to supposedly clean the hospitals and get proper cleaners onto the staff of those hospitals. That will bring back the pride they use to have years ago in keeping their own allocated wards clean. Then offer them bonuses if they can get the hospital back to the cleanliness to where MRSA disappears.

### The Mayor of London and the Evening Standard

We have now heard of the decision by the courts to let Ken Livingstone off again. I wonder whether, if it was me who spoke to a Muslim or a black person in that same vein, would I be let off? I think in the Britain we live in, I'd have been arrested by the police and charged - if not for being racist, then for inciting a riot. But then I do not belong to the party in power - I am just a taxi driver.

If you think that I am just knocking the Government because it is Labour, you are wrong. I would express my thoughts about any party that is making such a mess of running the country. If you think I'm wrong, I will go along with your opinions. But just think back to how many times in the past 9 years that the hard working men and women's taxes have gone up to pay for the scroungers in this country.

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

## Kupkake's Korner



### The Mayor went to China!

Our Ken he went to China  
on a cultural exchange.  
"London? Nowhere finer,"  
was his repetitive refrain.

He smiled before reporters  
posing at the City of the Dead,  
the Chinese hid their daughters  
from the eyes of Ken the Red!

He compared the common problems,  
Poll Tax riots, Tiananmen Square,  
he even ordered a take out -  
three times whilst he was there!

We saw him on the telly  
as he travelled north and south,  
as serene as Buddha's body...  
with one foot in his mouth!

**Copyright Kupkake 2006**

If any subscribers are now running to get their pens to attack me over what I've put into print, can I say to them to check what you put in writing. It could be that from the time you write to **Call Sign** and its publication date, the Government will agree with me once again.

I'm sure that soon, any article I write will get a Government Health Warning! But it may also encourage you to think about what I have written and get you to discuss it with your friends.

### Street Credit Card trips

Some drivers seem to believe that the £2 charge for credit card trips obtained via telephone bookings also applies to credit card street hails. This is NOT the case. The £2 only applies to credit card trips via your terminal. Street jobs are only subject to the 12.5% admin charge.

**Tom Whitbread  
DaC Compliance Officer**

*Tom's views do not necessarily reflect those of anyone from Dial-a-Cab or Call Sign, but are his own...*

It's the age-old question; which part of London is the best - north or south? Personally, being born and bred in the south and then moving to the north side three years ago, I'm torn between the two!

So to settle the score once and for all, **Nike Run London** devised an event; North versus South London - 22,000 runners in a 10km race around Hyde Park battling out to resolve the dispute.

I have regained the running bug again after a 12-year absence from the sport and over the past year have gradually been building my mileage up. I ran two 5km races over the past 4 months, gradually building up to my ultimate goal of completing in another marathon before I reach the age of forty.

The *Run London* event was an ideal way to make the next step up to 10km. I decided to run for north London - much to my dad's disgust!

Although Paula Radcliffe and her much-publicised

pregnancy bump took most of the photographer's flashbulbs, the event itself was very well organised. Runners were started in four separate waves over a four-hour period. The event had a fantastic atmosphere and was very colourful with each runner having either a fluorescent orange top for the south team or fluorescent green for the north team.

With such a large number of runners, I decided to begin at a steady pace and pick up more speed during the latter part of the race. I finished in 8,499th position and in a time of 52minutes 56 seconds. Out of a starting line-up of 22,000 runners, I was delighted to finish

**No Sponsorships, no promises - Daren Morley just tries to prove that north London is best!**

# North v South London: Daren Represents DaC!



Paula Radcliffe and bump go first and inset pic: Daren training for the event

well inside the top half of the field! I also finished under the average time of both the north team (56.26) and the winning south team average of (56.09). Yes, I know - you should

always listen to your dad!

**Daren Morley**  
DaC Trainer

## Barbara Gets New Knees!

**Barbara**, wife of *Taxi Driver of the Year* Charity Chairman **Russell Poluck (T55)**, has undergone an operation to have both knee replaced by half-knees! Russell told **Call Sign**: "She saw the specialist and he told her that the fronts of the knees weren't too bad, but that wear and tear had left bone rubbing against bone in the rear halves of the joints and as a consequence, she needed to have new back halves!"

And, asked **Call**

**Sign**, will she be able to take to the floor at the *Taxi Driver of the Year* dinner and ball on 2 December at Docklands International Hotel (see ad elsewhere in this issue for tickets)? "Well," said Russell laughing after a long think, "we might slip in a special Zimmer frame dance just for this year - especially for Barbara!"



Barbara with Russell in 2001 at

## WITNESS NEEDED



On Thursday 19th October 2006 between 09.10am and 10am, did anyone witness an accident between a blue TXII and another vehicle at the junction of Kensington Road and Exhibition Road?

The taxi was hit, sending it into the wall of the Royal Geographical Society and then into a car and motor cycle before coming to rest embedded in a tree. The car came from the direction of South Carriage Road.

If you witnessed any of this please contact Tony Arnold (F03) on 07970 929 452





## "He wouldn't frighten my mother-in-law!"

I've just witnessed the highlights from England's nightmare in Croatia and to be brutally honest, what did you expect! When your club side is playing like they're put together with out of date Evostick, you look towards the so-called 'crème de la crème' of the Premiership to heal the wounds.

Steve McClaren assembled his galaxy of stars at Man U's Carrington training ground for what must have been a few beers and a game of kalookie! The mighty Macedonia at home, followed by a tricky trip to Croatia should have ensured our boys 4 or maybe 6 points to head Group E on our way to qualifying to Euro 2008. At Carrington, the rumour was McClaren was trying out a 3-5-2 formation, but that was put to bed when we went 4-4-2 against Macedonia. The resulting 0-0 should have told the manager that all was not well. Hindsight is great, but those of us who follow England must surely know that to win games, you must score goals! Let's face it, Peter Crouch isn't good enough at International level. And before you all say he's got a great goal scoring record for England, when Crouch comes up against anyone tougher than a part-time waiter, he struggles. Crouch is too one dimensional for me.

Put it this way, you're playing for England and you receive a bobbly ball from Gary Neville, you look up for options and you see Peter Crouch! See what I mean! Now think about the same situation and you're looking at either DeFoe or Darren Bent. Now you have options to play it into feet or slide one down the channels for either one to hare after. Michael Owen and Andy Johnson would also give you the same option if they were fit.

After not letting a goal past the unfortunate Paul Robinson, McClaren decides to disrupt our solid back four to a more unfamiliar back 3 against the Croats. With the unconvincing Jamie Carragher joining Terry and Ferdinand, McClaren also played Ashley Cole and Neville as wingbacks. Stray passes, lack-lustre, inept performances by senior players followed by the cock-up of the year, made England the laughing stock of European football.

Should David Beckham return to the squad against Holland in a week or so is one topic everyone is talking about? My view is that Beckham should be included in the set up as you cannot dismiss his inspirational character when it comes to big games, especially qualifiers. Becks is coming to the end of his glittering career, but when McClaren flexed his muscles and decided to cast off one of England's most influential players over the past 10 years, you feel the manager may have a problem that stems back to their Man U days. England does not have enough good players, let alone world class players to dismiss the likes of Beckham. It's all about 'square pegs and round holes' again.

Why did he replace Downing with Wright-Phillips on the left wing against Macedonia when Wright-Phillips is naturally right footed (when he gets a game at Stamford Bridge)? Why persevere with Crouch up front when he wouldn't frighten any top-class defenders or even my lovely mother-in-law, Pauline! Why go 3-5-2 when the players had only a week to master that formation? Why, after going 2-0 down against Croatia, revert to 4-4-2?

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

# Russell's Hall of Footie

Why give Defoe 15 minutes to score a hat-trick? Why make 3 substitutions in one go?

There are more questions than answers when you get beat in a game of football, but as long as they make amends when we play Israel in March 2007, every thing will be alright...won't it?

## Terry's all gold!

I know you'll join me and wish Chelsea's keepers, Petr Cech and Carlo Cudicini, a speedy recovery and return to full fitness after their serious head injuries against Reading. Blues captain John Terry put on the gloves and grey jersey (can we bring back green please) and kept a blank sheet to capture an important away win. But Terry is not the first England captain to replace a keeper for their club! The late great Bobby Moore not only went

between the sticks, but also had to face a penalty! I was at that League Cup semi-final against Stoke in 1972. Bobby saved the penalty kick, but Stoke scored from the rebound and luckily won 3-2. Oh the pain! (*And he wasn't even Argentinean! ...Ed.*)

## Brian Rice and QPR...

Next month I will bring you an exclusive interview with the Chairman of Dial-a-Cab, Brian Rice. Brian, a passionate QPR fan, chats about Rangers greatest moments, the present set-up and his dreams for the future!

## Russell Hall (G44)

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

## TAXI DRIVER OF THE YEAR DINNER AND DANCE

*The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund is presenting their annual*

*Dinner Dance on Saturday 2 December 2006.*

The 34th Taxi Driver of the Year Dinner and Dance, will be held at The International Hotel, Marsh Wall, London, E14. Reception is at 6.15pm and Dinner at 6.45pm with tickets costing just £59 each!

There are free drinks at the reception, an excellent 4-course meal, a half bottle of wine per person and of course dancing till late to a live band.

This is always one of the great nights out of the year, so come along and enjoy the good food and great entertainment. It will prove to be an enjoyable and memorable occasion for all.

And of course, with your support the Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund is able to give substantial donations to the taxi trade charities that support them.

**Russell Poluck MBE (T55)**

**Complete and return form (please print) to:**

**Russell Poluck MBE, Hon Chairman  
5 St Brides Avenue, Edgware Middlesex HA8 6BT**

**Make cheques out to T.D.Y.C.F  
RSVP by 12 November**

Name.....

Title.....

Company (if applicable).....

Address.....

Tel no.....

Email address.....

Number of tickets.....

Dietary req: Veg.....Fish.....Meat.....

For further information contact Russell Poluck on 07850 056 765 or tel/fax 020 8952 1357

*The Taxi Driver of the Year charity fund is registered with the Charities Commission no 1000761*

*Continued from last month...*

## Decimated earnings...

Following my post Boxing Day shock at the paucity of work with my nightly takings decimated to less than £5 a night - about half what I had been taking over Christmas - it was time for me to learn the hard facts of how to become a real green badge, London cabdriver.

The next few bitterly cold and quiet months up to my first Easter on the cab taught me many valuable lessons. Among those lessons was to wear layers and layers of warm clothing. Even new FX3s were cold, draughty beasts, very few having what were laughingly called heaters and which gave out, at best, a trickle of warmish air. A favourite trick was to blank off most of the radiator grill in the hope that some of heat from the radiator would find its way back into the driver's cabin. Cardboard, old jackets and even the occasional cab boasting a purpose made grill cover! These were fastened onto the outer grill with bolts and fasteners meant the covers could be adjusted to regulate the amount of cold air entering the radiator.

Also learnt was that it was a complete waste of time ranking. Even being 'on point' early in the morning on ranks like Dalston Junction, you could easily wait an hour without much hope of a fare, either a walk-up, rank phone ringing or radio job.

So I changed my tactics, keeping in such areas as Maida Vale, Chelsea or Bayswater depending on where my last fare had taken me. This meant driving around in the rather forlorn hope of picking up a fare off the street. The regulars, who being non-radio cabmen, saw us radio-cab drivers as a big threat to the future of ranks and the cab trade.

## ODRTS in the 'fifties and false positions...

ODRTS in the mid-fifties had about 80 to 100 subscribers - the 100th being a chap called Cyril Nathan. They were split roughly two-thirds day men and one-third night men. Even then, with very little street or radio work, coverage was a problem - except, of course, if the magic words "to London Airport" were uttered. It was amazing how many unfamiliar call signs were on second call for any airport job almost anywhere in central London!

In the still of the night, that quiet was spoilt with the clatter of diesel engines being driven at maximum revs heading to the pick-up point! Frequently with these LAP jobs, the dispatcher would be enquiring why the closest cab that had been given the job was running late. Among the usual excuses was replacing the fan belt, going to the wrong address just around the corner, changing a flat tyre or delayed because of a traffic accident. Some clever dispatchers would decide to 'fail' to hear certain call signs that were always late for the pickup, which considering the distance from where the driver had said he was, to where he actually was, was no surprise! Those of us who tried to cover as much radio work as we could, rapidly became adept at reporting the registration numbers of the hard core 'false positioners'. It wasn't that hard as the same call signs,

**"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 celebrating a busy Xmas, but unaware that his first 'kipper season' was approaching...?**

# Fifty Green Years...



**Bonnie Martyn welcomes the 100th driver to join the circuit - Cyril Nathan with his Oxford taxi**

names and numbers kept on repeating the serious offence of giving false positions, i.e. stealing work from other genuine sub-

scribers. What also helped to catch them was that they weren't very clever at it.

As the circuit grew in numbers, a small select band of trusted subscribers were chosen by the Board of Management to track the 'FPs'. In those early days, several of the drivers who were thrown off ODRTS for repeated offences joined other radio circuits, but this was soon stopped by all - or nearly all - of those circuits. The London cab radio circuits formed a committee that said if you were banned by one, then you were banned by all. However, there was one radio circuit that accepted the very worst of the offenders - London Wide! But even they soon stopped doing it as those drivers were more trouble than they were worth.

## Sunset Strip

*Continued next month*

## NEW TAXI RANK AT FINSBURY PARK

On 30 November, a new taxi rank is being introduced in the forecourt of Finsbury Park Station. This rank has been placed within the bus station area and provided on a 6-month trial basis by the Area Bus Manager after consultation with the PCO. The rank provides space for 2 taxis. This limit must be adhered to and any taxis over-ranking will be asked to leave by the Controller on duty.

The control of the taxi rank, which will be signed and marked, is the responsibility of London Buses and taxi drivers are requested to obey all reasonable instructions from London Buses Controllers. Any taxi left unattended on the taxi rank will be treated as a suspicious vehicle and subject to removal. All taxi drivers must switch off their engines when stationary on the rank.

The rank will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and as an 'island' rank it will be available to be worked by drivers from the Enfield/Haringey/Waltham Forest sector as well as All-London taxi drivers.

If no one uses it, it won't work. If passing, give it a try...

## 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**

**Weekend running repairs: Sat: 8.30am - 4.30pm / Sun: 9am - 5pm**

**WE GIVE 10%  
DISCOUNT TO  
DAC DRIVERS!**

**Outside these hours call:  
07917 142 626 or 07917 142 625**

**DONT FORGET WE GIVE 10% DISCOUNT ON ALL  
REPAIRS INCLUDING OVERHAULS TO DAC DRIVERS!**

**S&S Taxis 2a Three Colts Lane London E2**

**0207 613 3039**

**Keep this ad handy, you never know when you'll need us!**



## Not from us, say LTI!

**Call Sign** has stumbled onto a mystery as Abu Dhabi's influential *Khaleej Times* claims that London's "...iconic black cabs will commute tourists and daily commuters from the upper crust of society in Abu Dhabi from January 2007." The quote apparently comes from **Iyad Al Ansari**, the CEO of Q-link - a joint venture subsidiary of the Abu Dhabi-based Al Qudra Holding - and also GM of the Emirates Link Group.

According to the newspaper, Mr Al Ansari "...plans to introduce 150 London taxis into the Abu Dhabi capital (Abu Dhabi City) as a limousine service - a project that will cost Dh50 million."

The article added that cabs could be called by sending a text message, e-mail or phoning a call centre "...as the company wants to take care of discerning passengers in a most luxurious style."

Q-link also claimed to have plans for a helicopter service for fast and luxurious inter-emirate transportation system in addition to forming an alliance with Singapore's Land Transport Consortium (SLTC) to take up advanced transportation projects in Abu Dhabi and elsewhere.

Abu Dhabi recently hinted that a restructuring of its public transport system according to present-day growth requirements of the emirate would be forthcom-

# 150 TXIIs to Abu Dhabi mystery?

**Khaleej Times** ONLINE

"Oh yes you did!"

ing and that Al Qudra Holding had already expressed its interest in the development of a public transport system in the Moroccan capital Rabat.

A spokesman added that Q-link has unique ideas to not only solve transport problems in the Abu Dhabi capital in addition to the United Arab Emirates, but also to introduce new and efficient transport services. That obviously includes the TXII - the iconic London cab. Except for one thing - London Taxis International, the manufacturers of the taxi deny that any such deal has gone through!

"We'd be only too happy to supply Abu Dhabi with our taxis," LTI Government Affairs spokesman Richard Daniels told



"On no we didn't!"

**Call Sign**, "after all, that is what we do - build and supply taxis. But first we have to have an order and so far as I know, none has been forthcoming from anyone in Abu Dhabi..."

Ah well, there's always China!

© Call Sign 2006



"Make up your mind!"

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

My Agency, [www.southof-francelets.com](http://www.southof-francelets.com) had a very interesting booking this past weekend - a 21-strong team of cricketers from the Isle of Sheppey together with their groupies! This is my former DaC driver-brother Steve's team - they were so impressed that a bunch of crazy Brits formed a cricket team here in the south of France ([www.midicricket.com](http://www.midicricket.com)) that they decided to take up Ryanair's low cost flight offer and soundly thrash us at both the Twenty/20 and 40 overs versions on their trip.

You would have thought that the fact we had organised lots of wine tasting available on their itinerary would have given us old codgers half a chance! Good riddance - I hope the trophies they took Kent-bound on Sunday morning made them overweight with their baggage



Before the match en la belle France - Midi and Sheppey Cricket Clubs

allowance and they got left on the tarmac!

Of course, *mon rédacteur*, Alan Fisher had wanted to fetch a Dial-a-Cab team over here originally, but it appears you all 'wimped out'. We've had the pleasure of hosting matches against other English teams from Somerset and Sussex in our first full season, but only the Sheppey lot have invited us to play in their manor next

year. Great! We'll have to try to squeeze 21 of us into a caravan at Leysdown!

Having a touring side offers the opportunity to socialise as well and 4 consecutive nights on the sauce tends to slow one down a bit, but it's back to normal now!

Property seekers are still coming out to search for their dream home and we can assist, as you can see by checking out [www.immoboulevard.com](http://www.immoboulevard.com).

Come and have a look at the market down here on the Med - we also have many properties available now as business opportunities.

*Jusqu'au mois prochain...!*

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

## JAY BACK AT WORK



Following his successful kidney transplant (Oct *Call Sign*), **Jay Gomez** has now returned to work in the Dial-a-Cab dispatcher's box.

**"I feel great,"** he told *Call Sign*, **"and it really feels wonderful to be back among so many friends. To everyone that enquired about my health whilst I was in hospital, a big thank you. It is really appreciated to know that so many people are rooting for you..."**

## Feeling Tired at the Wheel of your Taxi? "Sleepy Snoozer" may be the answer!

Everyone at some time or another has – probably on a long journey – felt that sudden tiredness that can creep up. It usually happens whilst making your way back to London and can be caused by several things. The obvious one is just genuine tiredness, but it can also be through a form of motorway boredom. As you listen to the radio, you fall into a more and more self-hypnotic relaxation.

The obvious answer is to pull over if on a road or into a service station if on a motorway. Have a coffee and get some air. Close your eyes for 10 minutes if you feel that you need it, but break that cycle of oncoming tiredness. If it's happening during your normal shift in town – then go home!

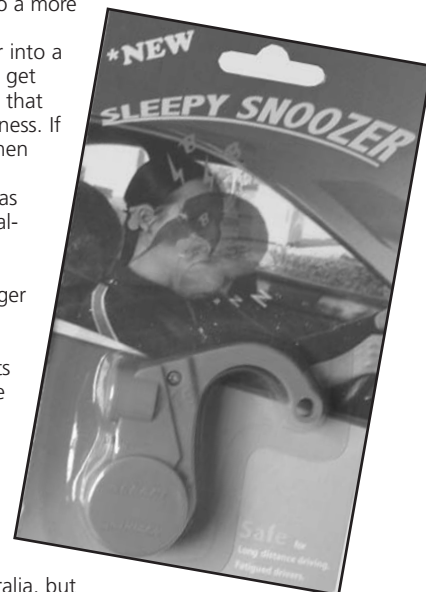
There is also a new idea around that *Call Sign* has tested out. It works on the principle of electronic balance. If you start to nod off while driving and your head falls forward, the smart SLEEPY SNOOZER will buzz loudly in your ear and help you avoid the danger of falling asleep at the wheel.

The alarm is designed to keep you awake until you get to somewhere you can take a break, but also alerts you to that oncoming drowsiness so that you can take the corrective action. That doesn't guarantee it isn't too late, but that wake-up call could be just enough to save someone's life.

The alarm is about the size of an external hearing aid and weighs about 16g and fits snugly around one ear, staying in place even when glasses are worn.

Sadly, the device is currently only on sale in Australia, but you can contact the company promoting it at

**[www.sharryinternational.com](http://www.sharryinternational.com)** and they may be able to send you one. The price including postage will be around the £15 mark...



# The Anniversary Page

## The 'Mini' Man

There can be few older students or learner drivers who did not cut their motoring teeth on the *Morris Mini-Minor* or *Austin Se7en* - to give the twin models their full titles. Many still hold fond memories of their time with these ubiquitous little cars, whose nomenclature was quickly shortened to 'Mini' by an adoring public.

The car was the brainchild of **Sir Alexander Arnold Constantine Issigonis**, more popularly known simply as **Alec Issigonis**, a British national of Greek descent. He was born into the Greek community in Smyrna, Turkey on **November 18, 1906**, where his father worked on the British-built railway - which gained the family their British status.

They were evacuated to Malta during the Greco-Turkish war of 1919-1922 and following the death of Alec's father, the family moved to the UK in 1923. Alec studied engineering at Battersea Polytechnic where he managed to fail his Maths exams no less than three times! He would later refer to pure mathematics as "the enemy of every creative genius." And how right the passage of time would prove him to be...

Alec Issigonis started in the motor industry as a designer with *Humber Cars* in Coventry and by 1936 had moved to *Morris Motors* in Cowley, near Oxford, where he developed an independent suspension system for the ill-fated *Morris 10*. During the later war years, he began work on a project code-named *Mosquito* that would develop into another popular Morris product, *the Minor* which remained in production from 1948 until 1971. In 1952, as Austin merged with Morris to form the British Motor Company, he went to Alvis Cars citing his dislike of company mergers to justify the move.

Towards the end of 1955, Alec was persuaded back to BMC by its then-Chairman, Sir Leonard Lord, this time into the Austin plant with the remit to design three new cars. Early in 1956, Alec worked on the design of the two larger models. They were to be a large, luxury car and a family-sized vehicle, while plans for the third and smallest model - a little town car - were shelved.

However, Fate stepped in - in the shape of the Suez Crisis of 1956 - and the ensuing fuel rationing, which meant that the larger models were put on hold while Lord instructed Alec to push ahead with production of the town car as soon as possible. By mid-1957, prototypes were up and running and the project was given the official design number *ADO 15*.

In August 1959, the car was launched as the *Morris Mini-Minor* and *Austin Se7en* and its many innovative features including low fuel consumption, space saving ideas, transverse engine and tiny 10inch wheels took the motoring press and public alike by storm. It became an immediate hit and proved to be a classless people carrier, from 'chavs' to celebrities alike, around the world!

Later, the 'Mini's' adaptability meant it featured in all sorts of conversions from racing and rallying to open-top, through to leather and wood luxury interior trim. It became the best selling British car, with 5.3 million units sold during its production run. Today, the Mini legend lives on, via BMW.

Sir Alec died of Parkinson's disease on October 2, 1988.



# MAILSHOT

**Either write to Call Sign at Brunswick House or email us at - callsignmag@aol.com**

## Wheelchair passengers

"Ramps needed!" What an understatement that can be as a terminal message. My question is whether there is a line that DaC would draw as regarding the transportation of how disabled passengers can be while still using the TaxiCard and is there a system in place to decide whether a wheelchair-bound passenger can ride in a cab or needs specialist transport?

Last Friday, I was despatched a job for a wheelchair user. When I arrived, I found a problem in that the wheelchair was much bigger than the usual ones and the passenger in it was a very large man who was unable to sit with his knees bent and his legs were at about a 45-degree angle. Due to the man's heavy weight, both his carer and I had a real struggle pushing him up the ramp. Even with my ramps fully extended and his legs in position, we could not get the chair up the ramp without constantly whacking his feet on the ramp. He also could not be placed facing the cab rear as he should have been.

This, in turn, prevented me from strapping the chair and passenger in correctly, even with the chair brake on. When turning corners, his head was hitting the left window and his legs hitting the right door, which was causing him great pain and his only way of holding on was having his arm through the glass partition.

I did at one point mention to his carer that I believed he needed a proper transport ambulance and considered refusing to carry him, but he said they use DaC all the time. Or was this statement just covering up a cost-cutting exercise by the nursing home? In my opinion, this passenger needed a ambulance with a tail lift and one that would be able to allow him to sit properly and safely.

My main concern was what would happen in the event of an RTA. Would I be liable for any injury to the passenger, or when getting them into or out of the cab, could I be nicked if police saw this man travel in such a way? What if I injured myself trying to get the passenger into the cab, especially considering that I have no training on how to push a wheelchair?

Could I please have some answers and possibly a set of procedures to follow...

**Michael Beevor (N76)**

**Mike Son responds:** Michael, you are right to be concerned about the transportation of those passengers with severe mobility problems who, unfortunately, are unable to remove themselves from certain types of large wheelchairs, especially those with accessories such as a motor or oxygen container etc. This could prove to be very difficult when trying to access the taxi and could put both the driver and the passenger at risk - even with ramps - unless considerable care is taken.

However, it is important that all mem-

bers of the public - whether able-bodied or disabled - are certain in the knowledge that they have confidence in both taxi and driver to make sure they (the passengers) are safe and secure for the journey.

With this in mind, some months ago I wrote in Call Sign about a meeting I had with the administrators of the Westminster TaxiCard Scheme. This was a frank discussion with regard to passenger's and driver's expectations of the service. During the meeting, I mentioned that there were occasions when other non-emergency transport seemed more appropriate to the passenger than a taxi - ie Dial-a-Ride vehicles. The TaxiCard administrators replied that if drivers had any problems with transporting passengers or if they were abusive or difficult, then perhaps the passenger should be assigned to non-emergency patient transport instead of a taxi due to their severe infirmities. It was stated that if these situations needed to be addressed, drivers should let Dial-a-Cab know and any issues would be investigated by the Westminster Special Needs team.

I must also make the point, Michael, that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is there to protect the rights of those with disabilities and as taxi drivers, we must not commit a breach of that Act. If we do, there is a legal remedy. So what procedures should you follow? With respect, common sense must prevail. If you have any difficulty, contact the voice channel or send a message via your terminal. Failing that, phone. I know our Controllers will help. Whatever course of action, do not remonstrate with the passenger. I know this is something you would never do. The passenger probably has enough problems already. Below is a very small extract of the Act, which could affect us if we are in breach.

Although quite complex, I would suggest that you have a read-up on the relevant provision of goods and services to safeguard yourself.

**PART III: Discrimination in other areas...**

**19. —(1) Goods, facilities and services...**

**Discrimination in relation to goods, facilities and services.**

It is unlawful for a provider of services to discriminate against a disabled person -

(a) in refusing to provide, or deliberately not providing, to the disabled person any service which he provides, or is prepared to provide, to members of the public;

(b) in failing to comply with any duty imposed on him by section 21 in circumstances in which the effect of that failure is to make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for the disabled person to make use of any such service;

(c) in the standard of service which he provides to the disabled person or the manner in which he provides it to him;

or (d) in the terms on which he provides a service to the disabled person.

## Dress code and Allen Togwell...

Yet another article on dress attire from Allen Togwell! Please Allen, no more... enough! For years now you have been bombarding us with article after article on dress attire and dress code. You are wasting your time and ink in thinking that by writing continuous articles about dress code, that certain members will see the light and start to wash on a regular basis. Please don't misunderstand my views on this subject. On the contrary Allen, I agree with all that you write and I share your sentiments regarding members in sleeveless vests and whose armpit hair resembles the Black Forest. You see them occasionally; I see them most nights and feel embarrassed, but you must accept the fact that not everyone takes care in grooming themselves and neither do they see themselves as being badly dressed. Added to this problem, they may not have anyone in their lives to take an interest in their appearance, to help and guide them. Invariably, they too may have people in their lives that look a mess.

The other day I took a trip up the road from where I live for a days outing to Benidorm. You would have been in your element, Allen! Spending some time having a drink at a bar perusing passers-by would have inspired you to have written yet another article on dress code. You would have seen Neanderthal men walking along the promenade with tattoos emblazoned all over their bodies, hideous beer bellies hanging over their shorts, England football shirts with colour co-ordinated trainers and grandmothers dressed in rah-rah skirts trying to look fashionable and younger. A real 22-carrot experience!

Dress, as a clever Englishman once said, is an extension of one's personality. If you feel good, want to enhance your profile and confidence, then you will dress well. As far as these people were concerned, they were properly dressed. The point I am trying to make, Allen, is that they think they look and dress acceptably and no amount of articles or verbal advice would make them see themselves differently in the mirror as to how you and I see them.

So what is the answer?

Well, if you are serious about improving the visual image of the DaC driver, then introduce a Dress Code. Many years ago I suggested in a letter to *Call Sign* that a dress code rule or proposition should be introduced and that it should come from the BoM and not the membership. The answer I received was that the BoM did not like to propose any proposition or rule change that was contentious, unpopular or might not be carried by the membership. I interpreted this meaning that the BoM were afraid it might have cost them their positions on the Board! Now, however, is the



# MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 35

ideal moment for the BoM to introduce such a proposition. We have a popular Chairman, the BoM itself is very firmly seated and the chances of any BM losing his position are as likely as the Pope getting barmitzvah'd. The BoM takes great pride (justified, in my opinion) in telling us that our Society is streets ahead of the opposition in innovative technology and also of our many "firsts." Why not achieve another first by introducing a dress code? Properly presented, ie *the dress code to be determined from time to time by the membership and not the BoM*, I have no doubt the proposition would carry.

So Allen, what is it to be? More articles about dress or a dress code proposition? If only one BM can be found to throw their hat into the ring, I shall be there to second the proposition...

**Steve Shaller (R75)**

**Allen Togwell replies:** I'm sorry that you find my articles boring, Steve, I do too at times! In fact I only mentioned it on this occasion because one of our most senior clients considered the issue serious enough to bring it to our attention. Unlike private companies who dictate the manner in which their workforce operate, we as a drivers cooperative have to rely on over 2000 members who operate in an insular environment to work as a self-imposed unit, exercising self discipline and individual responsibility assisted by guidance from the Board. Unfortunately Steve, not all of our members have your length of service, so occasionally when we have to remind the newer members of certain issues, you of course will find it boring.

As for the Board proposing a dress code; firstly I don't think our members would agree to such a proposal, secondly it would be unenforceable and thirdly, surprising as this may seem, I personally would not support the proposition. Forcing somebody to wear a particular mode of dress does not necessarily make them look presentable. I've seen men wearing a suit, shirt and tie who look an absolute mess. The point is Steve, I honestly don't believe many of our members fully understand my reasoning for being adequately dressed. It isn't just a case of improving our image to our clients and the public at large against the ever-growing PH, it's also a matter of attitude. Attitude influenced by appearance. They say clothes maketh the man and to prove that point, I defy any man who dressed in a smart dinner suit, dress shirt, bow tie and polished shoes with his good lady on his arm, looking in a mirror and saying he doesn't feel good. That same attitude applies to the manner in which you dress at work. In all the years I drove a cab, I did so suited and booted, in my case mainly because of circumstance. However, I honestly believe it was because of the manner in which I was exceptionally dressed that was the reason

**why I never once had an altercation with a passenger, even when a situation could have prompted one such as taking the wrong route for example. I'm sure that would have happened had I looked aggressive - which is the impression some cab drivers give simply by their appearance. To emphasise this point, one only has to look at those youths that wear hooded sweatshirts, which is a simple enough garment, yet how many cab drivers would stop to pick up four people dressed like that? I'm sure they can't all be delinquents but are considered such simply because of the way they are dressed. So my point is; being presentable not only gives the trade a good image and more importantly Dial-a-Cab in particular, it shows evidence of a driver's high self esteem, which in turn makes the job of driving a cab that much easier and a little less stressful.**

## Cheap and sweaty continued...

I am responding to Mr David Kupler's letter and Mr Togwell's response in a recent issue of *Call Sign*. As a Dial-a-Cab taxi driver's wife who works in the City of London, I have to say that it gives me great embarrassment to see a smart London taxi parked outside an office building (occasionally Dial-a-Cab) only to find the driver waiting in the reception in sloppy shorts, t-shirt and open sandals. I feel there is no need for this, after all you are entering and dealing with people who are usually smartly dressed themselves and are paying a lot of money to ride in your taxi. I don't entirely agree with Mr Togwell's answer - there is no need for you to go to work in a smart suit and tie everyday!

My husband, Martin, prefers to wear slacks and an open neck cotton shirt in the summer and usually wears a tie in the winter with a jumper. He always splashes on some nice aftershave, which is a standing joke when he kisses me goodbye as to who is he picking up today? His usual response is: "I have to smell nice for all the ladies and my 4070s..."

I am lucky enough to work in an office that is air-conditioned and where we are allowed 'business casual' and 'dress down Friday'. This means men can wear smart slacks and a shirt without a tie during the week and smart jeans (no holes or frayed bottoms) with a t-shirt (no large logos) on Fridays. Girls can wear trousers / skirts with a top that has short or long sleeves (no strappy tops) and jeans and t-shirts on Fridays - no bare middles! I personally prefer to dress smartly all week as I feel very 'out of place' with most of the city folk who mainly dress in smart suits etc. Most of the couriers I see around the city making their deliveries are smartly dressed in their company uniform - ie slacks and polo shirt - as are the private hire drivers!

I have had to use taxis over the past year to get me to and from the station and all have

been very kind, chatty and helpful. London taxi drivers have a reputation for being kind, helpful and knowledgeable, but you do not do yourselves any favours by not dressing smartly to go with the smart new taxi, which is now available.

**Doreen Freeborn (wife of Martin C67)**

**Thanks for the letter Doreen. Allen Togwell certainly hasn't lost his knack of getting a response from readers, however, in all fairness, he never suggested that drivers should wear suits! He mentioned cotton shirts, slacks and loafers ...Ed**

## PCNs

Firstly, Alan thanks for your time on the phone although you were on holiday. I appealed against my parking ticket although it was on my windscreen and not posted to me. Like yours, they had one digit wrong on my registration number and this only came to light when I phoned up to pay the reduced fine. I enclosed copies of my registration documents together with a copy of the PCN and heard between 2 and 3 weeks later that it was being cancelled. I think I drew the long straw and you the short!

**Pat France (A81)**

**I'm pleased you had had the easy way out Pat, but looking back on my courtroom experience, although I should never have been put into that position, the experience was invaluable! ...Ed**

## New building name

With regard to the winning entry for the naming of our new HQ, I feel a very valuable point has been overlooked. The fact that 'Bonnie Martyn House' had so many nominations obviously speaks for itself. It does not take a genius to work out the solution, put the most popular name in a hat and pick out one winner thereby avoiding the 'Cheese sandwich' scenario and upholding our Society's name i.e. "ODRTS and not "BMRTS" (Board Members Radio Taxi Service)...

**Graham Church (S59)**

**Thanks for the letter Graham. As was pointed out in the article, the name selected was not necessarily going to be the one chosen (if any), but was to allow drivers to use their imagination. Bonnie Martyn House was an obvious choice for a name, but does not fall into that category - even though a real name change could well use it. The idea was to take away the obvious and allow drivers imagination to take over ...Ed**

## Biodiesel

With regard to the article on Biodiesel in the October *Call Sign*, I enclose a letter and reply from *The Sunday Times* 'Car Clinic' page of their 'In Gear' supplement (dated 24 September 2006). And please, no more





# MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 36

patronising Poppy lectures on emissions!

**John Addis (K97)**

**Because the subject of Biodiesel is important, I have reprinted the original letter and response elsewhere in this issue rather than just a brief synopsis here. As for Poppy and her "patronising" piece on emissions, she's entitled to her view and judging by the number of calls I received, agree with her or not, many drivers seem to read her column ...Ed**

## ...and emissions...

For more than a year, much of the taxi trade press has been full of moans about the introduction of regulations limiting the amount of pollution taxis can discharge. Last month, your excellent contributor, Poppy, brought some common sense to the debate and pointed out that some countries previously regarded as 'underdeveloped' are now enjoying cleaner air than London because of legislation aimed at cleaning up the discharge from vehicles on their roads. Perhaps some of the drivers and writers who keep complaining would also like to go back to the widespread use of leaded petrol in all cars?

We would not think of emptying our household waste onto the streets or into a park, so why should anyone feel entitled to dump pollutants from vehicles into the atmosphere? We would not tolerate factories pouring poisons into our rivers, so why should taxi drivers feel entitled to act without restraint? If a new law was introduced concerning safety legislation at a place of work, then the office, restaurant or factory would have to comply and pay for any necessary alterations or new equipment. The government would not come forward with cash for the improved and safer facilities. For two years, London taxis have been entitled to charge a small extra supplement to go towards the provision of emissions reduction equipment, yet drivers still groan and pule.

**Laurence Kelvin (W88)**

**You were doing well there, Laurence, until mentioning the "extra supplement." Our views parted company at that point. I can understand your logic re places of work and restaurants etc paying for their own alterations, but I'm afraid you are not comparing like with like. I spoke to TfL recently about our TfL "cousins" on their street posters, London buses and the poor results they have been showing after apparent conversions and was told by a rather snooty- sounding woman that almost 70% of the red monsters are now within any new emission regulations. I asked her whether it was the bus drivers who paid for the alterations, after all, the fares went up twice last year? She declined to continue the conversation. Yes, Laurence, we did get 20p per job - not that long after the 'extras' were taken away. And besides, if we really are a part of Mayor Ken's transport stable, then at the very least, any driver needing to have his cab converted should be given a large subsidy towards the cost ...Ed**

## Channel working

I was wondering if there has ever been published in *Call Sign* a guide to which channel works best in which area? If not, would it be possible?

**David Kupler (Y74)**

**I thought that sounded like quite a sensible suggestion, David. However, after making enquiries, I believe that in practise it's probably better to allow the terminal to decide which channel is best for you. If drivers were told, for example, that channel 1 was best for the City, then there would be hundreds of drivers trying to lock onto the same channel and it would go from being the best to the slowest ...Ed**

## Patsy's on the way back...

Words cannot express how very grateful I am for Dial-a-Cab's kind gift of flowers and accompanying card following my recent stay in hospital. It is such an honour and pleasure to belong to such a thoughtful and caring radio circuit as DaC for over 40 years now. Thank you all once again...

**Patsy McCarthy (C01)**

**Looking forward to seeing you back very soon Patsy ...Ed**

## Dominic isn't...

Many thanks for the beautiful flowers sent to me on my retirement. I'd like to send my best wishes and hopes for good health to all Dial-a-Cab drivers, the Board of management and staff at Brunswick House.

**Dominic D'Andrea (Ex-71)**

**From what other drivers have told me following their retirement, they are amazed they ever had time for work! Enjoy it, Dominic ...Ed**

## Peggy White

Thanks for the piece about Mum in *Call Sign*. Could you please thank all the drivers who offered our family their sympathies and also thank Tom Whitbread for his card and Allen Togwell and Howard Pears for their kind words. Thanks also to Editor Al for the phone call...

**Mark White (B86)**

**Soon after the funeral of Mark's mum Peggy, his dad - former DaC driver Fred - had to go into hospital to have a gall bladder removed. All seems to have gone well with the op and everyone at DaC, including all his old friends on EC5, send their best wishes ...Ed**

## Call Sign cartoons

I've just taken a peek at Jerry's cartoon in the October *Call Sign* and as usual find that it lacks any real sense of humour. He must be the unfunniest cartoonist alive today. In fact his characters are so wooden that I've been wondering if he wouldn't be better employed as a cabinetmaker. I'd go as far as to say that his cartoons are about as funny as a public hanging or an M1 pile-up and for that reason



I am going to give him his 'rec' and going to recommend that he stops drawing such unmitigating rubbish. And finally to Jerry himself, I consider that you are to humour what Beethoven was to ice hockey.

As for Tom Whitbread, I'm not going to get into an argument on whether he is a racist or not, but I do take umbrage when you state that he couldn't be because his granny was Polish. I would like to point out that my four grandparents came from Poland and the reason why they left was because of its extreme anti-semitism, which still exists to this day even though there are only a handful of Jews still living there.

**Stanley Frankel (K46)**

**Stanley, the only reason I have left your appalling comments in about Jerry Craig who is one of the country's let alone the cab trade's - finest cartoonist - is because when he was Editor before me, he was a strong advocate in the freedom of the press. But let me tell you something, some may find you amusing, but I have far more complaints about everything you write than I have ever had about Jerry - in fact the only previous comments were to say how good he was and how lucky I was to have the use of such an excellent cartoonist. On the other hand, I have been asked many times why I allow you the space to criticise everyone in the nasty, vindictive way that you do. And as you mention being unfunny, that also applies to you Stanley. Most of the old jokes you send in are so unfunny that I am forced to leave them out - and I do not usually like editing. In fact, on several occasions you have actually asked me why I've left them out and you obviously didn't believe me. Well now you know for certain.**

As for Tom Whitbread, re-read my answer again and what the point was before jumping in with all three feet. I didn't say that having Polish grandparents meant anything other than that his ethnic background wasn't as the questioner had said ...Ed

## Christmas incentives

I read with interest the 'Reflections of the Chairman' column in the October *Call Sign* regarding incentives to "...work a little bit harder" during the Xmas period. Brian states that our clients require a cab on time - something with which I agree. But these incentives, what are they? A new plasma or gold cab? How about increasing the run-ins and setting a new minimum? That way we all win...

**Patrick Noble (S55)**

**Brian Rice replies: As you are probably aware, Patrick, any incentive is funded by DaC whereas what you are suggesting would be funded by the client. We have**

# MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 37

recently increased the run-in to £4.20 and are the only circuit operating with a minimum. The client's argument is that they use us all year round, so why should they pay more when the 'once a year riders' use us (my terminology, not theirs) and I must say that I do have some sympathy with that point of view. Consequently, that is why DaC are funding the three new Peugeots; to appeal to your wives and partners in an effort to get you to cover more account work. Believe me Patrick, when we talk to customers about increasing prices around Christmas, it does generate such a lot of resentment. I know all the stories about 'supply and demand' but as I have stated on numerous occasions, your account clients are there all year, unlike street work - and you don't charge them more at Christmas, do you?

## More on incentives...

I have just received my letter about this year's incentive and I cannot believe you're doing a draw like this again. With over 2000 drivers working over that time, only 3 will benefit and that is only 2 better than last year. Good luck to the guy who won the cab and this is not sour grapes, but this does not give me any incentive to work any harder or do any more jobs. Just look at how many I did last December and for what - for one, yes one driver to win a prize.

You could have done so much more for all of us with things like £1000 gift vouchers, big screen TVs etc. But no, once again you have done this. Big deal, 3 will win a car and guess what? They already have a car - ok a taxi - to drive if they really need to get somewhere. Most drivers on DaC would just sell it and take the cash. I am not a letter writer or one of your regular moaners, but I just had to say how disappointed I am with an incentive like this. It seems that you cannot be bothered to get lots of gifts / prizes etc, so once again you've probably sat in a bar talking about "what we going to do this year." Oh get them a car, them mugs will chase anything. Well that's what comes across. Is this sour grapes? I'll tell you what - if I win (ha-ha, some chance) I will donate it to the Fund for Underprivileged Children and you can publish this to hold me to it!

To end, I must say I am very disappointed with a draw like this and feel that I'm not the only one.

Mike Appleby (L73)

## And more...

Over recent years, we have watched DaC rise from an average company to far and above the pace setters in this industry with assets of £10,000,000 + and no debts - thanks in part to a great BoM who I will have no hesitation in giving my vote to at the next election. Record turnover again this year and hopefully, a good profit. So why will all the drivers, except 3, not be getting a Christmas bonus again? I

would understand if money was tight. In the city, bonuses are paid on the year's performance and not just the run up to Xmas. Imagine what would be said if the employees were to be told that they were to be entered into a lottery where only a handful would benefit?

The BoM are asking us to cover work above and beyond the call of duty, but for what? So that we can be entered into a prize draw where the odds are 100s to 1 of winning. I will cover the work regardless, but I truly believe that the drivers should receive something and not just the very lucky few. The drivers are the engine of this company and should be oiled at least once a year. Why can't we use a percentage of our surplus per year to reward the drivers for their annual contribution to DaC?

Steve Crisp (D52)

Brian Rice responds: Gentlemen, I will answer both letters simultaneously as some points are applicable to both letters. I am genuinely disappointed that you are not happy with the Christmas incentive, it appears that whatever I do attracts criticism - am I surprised? Not really, because when you have in excess of 2000 members, there are bound to be some that are disappointed with whatever is offered. If we had offered numerous prizes then some would have complained about that and said we should offer fewer, but larger prizes.

However, it does get a little frustrating knowing that whatever you do will attract criticism from the few! We could adopt the policy of 'it's your work; if you don't cover it you will lose it - who cares?' But we do care and that is why we offer an incentive.

Incidentally Steve, we cannot pay a bonus to members as I am led to believe that will infringe on our Mutual Trading status.

Regarding the members being 'oiled,' I wouldn't disagree and I think we go some way to showing that appreciation - far more than the management of any other radio circuit. But this Society is not only made up of members that contribute to our success, we have staff that should also be appreciated and - dare I say it - the BoM! Finally Mike, I do take exception to the point where you insinuate that I believe the members to be mugs! I do not think any such thing and I am totally confident that the overwhelming majority of my members will agree with me on that point.

## Joint Ranks Committee response to Mike Son's CoL meeting

As Chairman, I have been asked to write to you by my colleagues on the London Cab Ranks Committee. The members and I are

concerned over your repeated assertions in *Call Sign* that the LTDA and T&GWU failed to turn up at a meeting that you attended at the Corporation of London on the 21st July. It would seem that our non-appearance by your repeated references, was to you more important than anything else at the meeting.

If you do believe that our non-appearance was of such significance that the Trade needs to be continually reminded of it, then I would have thought that the first thing you should have done would have been to check the facts. Had you done so, you would have found that Jim Kelly of the T&G, Robin Gillis of the PCO and myself did not attend because we were all given incorrect details of the meeting by the Corporation. We in fact attended St Alphage House on the 19th July, when we were informed that the meeting was on 21st. Unfortunately, we all had other commitments on the 21st as the Corporation was then made aware.

I trust that you will inform your readers of the inaccuracy of your reports.

Richard Massett

LTDA Executive

Thanks for correcting the misapprehension, Richard. I spoke to Mike and whilst not doubting your attending on the wrong date, no one at the meeting representing the Corporation of London knew anything about your absence and told Mike that they were quite upset and felt it to be something of a snub. However, having read your letter, it seems apparent that a genuine error happened somewhere ...Ed

## Busy EC5

Now we are into November, the work has really started to pick up and we are extremely busy especially at night and in the City. I last wrote in November 2004 to ask if something could be done to make it easier to cover the work in EC5. There are always a lot of unmatched jobs and it's very frustrating to bid for them, as you might end up having to drive from one side of the City to the other and pass hundreds of outstretched hands to cover a very mediocre job. Even if you ask, you are not always given any extra run-in from the Call Centre for helping out or if you are, it sometimes feels like trying to get blood from a stone.

As I said two years ago, a better solution might be to dispatch all jobs in EC5 to their correct postal zones ie EC1, EC2 etc, with the destination hidden so at least if you were coming along the embankment and you saw trips in EC4, you might cover one of those without having to worry that you might get one from the top end of Bishopsgate. That doesn't happen to me any more as I've been caught out too many times in the past and now don't tend to cover EC5 work if I can





# MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 38

help it. When I wrote in two years ago, I was told by Keith Cain that there would not be time before that Christmas to get anything done about it, but that it would be looked into. Some six or so months after writing last time, I had reason to speak to Keith about another matter and I asked how they were getting on with a system reprogram regarding the despatching of EC5 jobs and was told nothing was being done and no reason given. Well it's two years on now and we are still having trouble covering the work. I also asked previously if we could try my idea before bringing on more drivers to the circuit; this request was also ignored. Obviously we all know the reason why! More drivers equals more money for Dial-a-Cab and sod the rest of us come January when it won't be as busy.

Another point I'd like to make is that Concierge, as we all know by now, is here to stay - good or bad take your pick. Dial-a-Cab as a company is doing well out of getting into bed with the minicabs / private hire, but drivers should be benefiting more as well. Apparently our subs are going up again. Why? If Concierge is so fantastic - and I'm not saying it's not - and it has paid for itself, then let it pay for me and everyone else or at least stop putting the subs up. Let's not forget that Dial-a-cab was formed by a group of drivers for the benefit of the drivers and not as a money-making machine to be sold off to the highest bidder.

I'm sure the usual answer will be given, that Dial-a-cab offers fantastic value and is the cheapest radio circuit out there, but if we are pulling in so much money why should I have to pay more just because we are the cheapest? How much money does Dial-a-cab want? It seems that we have lost our sense of direction or perhaps being steered the wrong way!

Could I please ask that whoever responds to my letter answers all the questions raised in my letter and does so in the polite, unsarcastic way in which I put forward my points and requests, as usually anyone who dares to question Dial-a-Cab's management or its workings tends to get dismissed and put

down in a way that wouldn't happen in a verbal conversation face-to-face.

**Stephen Gander (V20)**

**Keith Cain has written an answer to your question elsewhere in this issue. But I have to say, Stephen, sarcastic responses are normally only given when the questioner displays those tendencies first! ...Ed**

## Thanks to DaC...

On the evening of 29 September, I took a Dial-a-Cab taxi from Cadogan Square to Leinster Gardens, calling on the way to pick up a very frail friend. I had the address but not the flat number. I hadn't been there

before and was faced with twenty poorly lit bells. We tried several but to no avail. The very kind driver tried phoning my son on both his landline and mobile with no luck. Eventually my son did arrive and all was well.

I feel bad because I never had the chance to thank the driver for all his kindness and I would appreciate it if you could get this message to him. Incidentally, I am a great fan of Dial-a-Cab.

**Lady Sandilands**

**London SW1**

**Well done Mr J.Sammons (M25). They don't call us the Gentleman's circuit for nothing! ...Ed**

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

## Back Seat *Driver*

### Education for all...

Everyone I know is going to classes at the moment; the lodger goes to holiday Italian classes, my office mate does karate, my friend Nick does A-level astronomy and my son has started his PhD on 1950s Italian film directors, post-neo-realism from a post-modernist perspective, or was it neo-melo-dramatic modernism or post-war expressionism? Crumbs - if I just keep my mouth shut, I won't show him up when I meet his supervisor. It was easier when all I had to **not** do was jig around stupidly dancing every time some great old rock-n-roller came on the radio!

My DaC hero, Glen, goes to the University of the Third Age. It's mostly for pensioners, where his history course attracts 150 students, most of whom stay awake the whole hour. He picks up his friend Arnold before class, and afterwards they have a boys' lunch together - Arnold telling the same jokes to the patient Thai waitress that he told last week and winking at her. "I'd marry you if I could," he flirts, explaining that you can get away with that sort of 'outrageous' remark when you're 86. On Thursdays, Glen does Latin and once a month he goes to Philosophy in the pub at the Rose and Crown, Southwark.

There are perks in being a student. Glen claims discounts at the cinema using his U3A card, while my son says the Kings College School of Dentistry will do his teeth free, using student dentists and no liability accepted. There is paid work undergoing drugs trials advertised and his government funding is tax-free.

I personally can't be doing with sitting in a classroom after sitting at a mouldy desk all day, so I tried Egyptian dancing - Raq Sharqi to me, belly dancing to Glen. I had done some 12 years ago, but this time I couldn't keep up with the pace of the camel step and something snapped inside on the left during the double-time hip drops. I thought I looked pretty good with my mirrored, tasselled Moroccan



scarves tied round my waist, but the only bit that really worked for me was the stretching and relaxing part of the class. I pressed the small of my back down, concentrated my mind on desert thoughts, as directed, and elongated from top to toe like the Pharaoh's cats. But getting an A-star in relaxing doesn't cut the mustard.

### A dropout or a WAG?

So, I'm a college dropout. When Glen does Dial-a-Cab account jobs, taking snacks to high-powered executives at midnight, what is he but a trumped-up pizza delivery boy? But I still feel like I've failed. How can I persuade Glen to give up his dusty, daft Latin and come to 'massage for couples' class? The brochure says it will revive our relationship and all the equipment needed is a floor mat and some essential oils. I broached the subject recently, but just got some muttering in return about "working all the hours god sends for that car you know I won't win."

You're lucky if your partner works days. I can't be the only Dial-a-Cab partner who gets bored on these long, wet autumn evenings? It's ok for male partners, you've got the pub. The memory of the fabulous weekend at the Grand Hotel, Eastbourne, where Glen took me in October is fading and the promise of "more attention" after the Christmas working season is just a promise. He'll be exhausted and out of shape by then and dozing off all the time.

If there's a support group for Dial-a-Cab WAGs during the incentive competition season, can someone send me the website address please? What do other women do? Maybe I can just be grown-up about it, but if I fail and since I couldn't hack it at college, there are only two choices - either a new romantic distraction, or bingo.

I'll let you know how I've got on next time...

*Till then...*

*Love Poppy x x x*

## Got ironing but don't enjoy doing it?



**Don't worry! We'll come to your house and do it for you!**

**If you live in the Wanstead / Redbridge areas call Ayse for details 020 8518 8765**

# The new TX4

has arrived at Mann & Overton



**make a good clean getaway in one today**



Mann & Overton