

April 2007



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

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TfL 2-year PCN legal farce...

The Tom and Allan swap shop

Exclusive Call Sign interview
with the C.I. of the Tout Squad

Will the last cab leaving the PCO
please switch off the lights!

The Internet and the Cab Trade:
Is it free speech?

Steve Norris on the Metrocab
emissions engine farce

Should we make difficult to
cover trips non-rejectable?
See Keith Cain's report...



***DaC Staff celebrate their
2006 High Achiever awards***



***Call Sign takes another trip to LTI
Coventry - and invites the trade
press along!***



NASH'S NUMBERS

By Alan Nash (A95)

The annual fare increase this year is approx 3.1%. This is above inflation if you believe government statistics on inflation, but lower compared with rises in gas, electricity, council tax and house prices.

| Miles | T1 | T2 | T3 |
|-------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 | £ 4.00 | £ 4.40 | £ 5.00 |
| 2 | £ 6.00 | £ 7.00 | £ 8.20 |
| 3 | £ 8.20 | £ 9.60 | £ 11.40 |
| 4 | £ 10.20 | £ 12.20 | £ 14.60 |
| 5 | £ 12.40 | £ 14.80 | £ 17.80 |
| 6 | £ 14.40 | £ 17.20 | £ 21.00 |
| 7 | £ 17.40 | £ 20.20 | £ 24.00 |
| 8 | £ 20.40 | £ 23.20 | £ 26.80 |
| 9 | £ 23.20 | £ 26.20 | £ 29.80 |
| 10 | £ 26.20 | £ 29.20 | £ 32.80 |
| 11 | £ 29.20 | £ 32.20 | £ 35.80 |
| 12 | £ 32.20 | £ 35.20 | £ 38.80 |
| 13 | £ 35.20 | £ 38.00 | £ 41.80 |
| 14 | £ 38.20 | £ 41.00 | £ 44.80 |
| 15 | £ 41.20 | £ 44.00 | £ 47.60 |
| 16 | £ 44.00 | £ 47.00 | £ 50.60 |
| 17 | £ 47.00 | £ 50.00 | £ 53.60 |
| 18 | £ 50.00 | £ 53.00 | £ 56.60 |
| 19 | £ 53.00 | £ 56.00 | £ 59.60 |
| 20 | £ 56.00 | £ 58.80 | £ 62.60 |
| 21 | £ 59.00 | £ 61.80 | £ 65.60 |
| 22 | £ 62.00 | £ 64.80 | £ 68.40 |
| 23 | £ 64.80 | £ 67.80 | £ 71.40 |
| 24 | £ 67.80 | £ 70.80 | £ 74.40 |
| 25 | £ 70.80 | £ 73.80 | £ 77.40 |
| 26 | £ 73.80 | £ 76.80 | £ 80.40 |
| 27 | £ 76.80 | £ 79.60 | £ 83.40 |
| 28 | £ 79.80 | £ 82.60 | £ 86.40 |
| 29 | £ 82.80 | £ 85.60 | £ 89.20 |
| 30 | £ 85.60 | £ 88.60 | £ 92.20 |
| 31 | £ 88.60 | £ 91.60 | £ 95.20 |
| 32 | £ 91.60 | £ 94.60 | £ 98.20 |

| Miles | T1 | T2 | T3 |
|-------|----------|----------|----------|
| 33 | £ 94.60 | £ 97.60 | £ 101.20 |
| 34 | £ 97.60 | £ 100.60 | £ 104.20 |
| 35 | £ 100.60 | £ 103.40 | £ 107.20 |
| 40 | £ 115.40 | £ 118.40 | £ 122.00 |
| 45 | £ 130.20 | £ 133.20 | £ 136.80 |
| 50 | £ 145.20 | £ 148.00 | £ 151.80 |
| 55 | £ 160.00 | £ 163.00 | £ 166.60 |
| 60 | £ 174.80 | £ 177.80 | £ 181.40 |
| 65 | £ 189.80 | £ 192.60 | £ 196.20 |
| 70 | £ 204.60 | £ 207.40 | £ 211.20 |
| 75 | £ 219.40 | £ 222.40 | £ 226.00 |
| 80 | £ 234.20 | £ 237.20 | £ 240.80 |
| 85 | £ 249.20 | £ 252.00 | £ 255.80 |
| 90 | £ 264.00 | £ 267.00 | £ 270.60 |
| 95 | £ 278.80 | £ 281.80 | £ 285.40 |
| 100 | £ 293.80 | £ 296.60 | £ 300.40 |
| 110 | £ 323.40 | £ 326.40 | £ 330.00 |
| 120 | £ 353.20 | £ 356.00 | £ 359.80 |
| 130 | £ 382.80 | £ 385.80 | £ 389.40 |
| 140 | £ 412.60 | £ 415.60 | £ 419.20 |
| 150 | £ 442.40 | £ 445.20 | £ 449.00 |
| 160 | £ 472.00 | £ 475.00 | £ 478.60 |
| 170 | £ 501.80 | £ 504.60 | £ 508.40 |
| 180 | £ 531.40 | £ 534.40 | £ 538.00 |
| 190 | £ 561.20 | £ 564.20 | £ 567.80 |
| 200 | £ 591.00 | £ 593.80 | £ 597.60 |

| To calculate extra mileage over 35 add - | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 | £ 3.00 | £ 3.00 | £ 3.00 |
| 2 | £ 6.00 | £ 6.00 | £ 6.00 |
| 3 | £ 8.80 | £ 8.80 | £ 8.80 |
| 4 | £ 11.80 | £ 11.80 | £ 11.80 |

It is important not to exceed the run in on account jobs. Below is the time or distance to a £4.20 or £3.40 run in.

Run-in £4.20

Max. time **or** dist.

T1 - 6:05m to 6:38m

or 1.05 to 1.15miles

T2 - 4:57m to 5:24m

or 0.85 to 0.95 miles

T3 - 3:60m to 4:22m

or 0.7 to 0.75 miles

Run-in £3.40

Max. time **or** dist.

T1 - 3:52m to 4:26m

or 0.7 to 0.75 miles

T2 - 3:09m to 3:36m

or 0.55 to 0.6 miles

T3 - 2:33m to 2:54m

or 0.45 to 0.5m

Waiting time is:

T1 £ 21.69/hour (for app. 38min)

T2 £ 26.67/hour (for app. 38min)

T3 £ 33.03/hour (for app. 38min)

The Higher rate (greater than 6 miles / 38mins) waiting time is £30.90 / hour.

T1 first hour of waiting = £ 24.60

T2 first hour of waiting = £ 28.00

T3 first hour of waiting = £ 32.20

Subsequent hours on all 3 rates = £ 30.90

What's On at Excel, Olympia and Earls Court in start date order

| EVENT | VENUE | START | FINISH |
|--|-------------------|-------------|----------|
| Publican Live | Olympia National | 02/04/07 to | 04/04/07 |
| Turkish Textile Spring 07 | Olympia 2 | 03/04/07 to | 04/04/07 |
| Razorlight | Earls Court 1 | 08/04/07 to | 08/04/07 |
| Festival of Life | ExCel (Public) | 11/04/07 to | 14/04/07 |
| Invest In Property 2007 | Earls Court 2 | 13/04/07 to | 15/04/07 |
| Natural & Organic Products Europe | Olympia Grand | 15/04/07 to | 16/04/07 |
| The London Book Fair | Earls Court 1 | 16/04/07 to | 18/04/07 |
| Promotional Marketing Exhibition | Olympia National | 17/04/07 to | 19/04/07 |
| HRD 2007 | ExCel (Trade) | 17/04/07 to | 19/04/07 |
| PestEx 2007 | ExCel (Trade) | 18/04/07 to | 19/04/07 |
| Flora London Marathon Sports Exhibition | ExCel (Public) | 18/04/07 to | 21/04/07 |
| IX Investor April 07 | ExCel (Public) | 20/04/07 to | 21/04/07 |
| Aesthetic Medicine 2007 | Olympia 2 | 21/04/07 to | 22/04/07 |
| Salute | ExCel (Public) | 21/04/07 to | 21/04/07 |
| WWE presents RAW Wrestlemania Revenge Tour | Earls Court 1 | 23/04/07 to | 23/04/07 |
| AVEX 2007 featuring The Cooler Show | Earls Court 2 | 24/04/07 to | 26/04/07 |
| Help Desk and IT Support | Olympia National | 24/04/07 to | 26/04/07 |
| Cruise + Ferry 2007 | ExCel (Trade) | 24/04/07 to | 26/04/07 |
| Infosecurity Europe 07 | Olympia Grand | 24/04/07 to | 26/04/07 |
| The Cooler Show at AVEX 2007 | Earls Court 2 | 24/04/07 to | 26/04/07 |
| WWE Smackdown Wrestlemania Revenge | Earls Court 1 | 24/04/07 to | 24/04/07 |
| London Golf Show 2007 | ExCel (Public) | 26/04/07 to | 29/04/07 |
| Business Startup | ExCel (Trade/Pub) | 27/04/07 to | 28/04/07 |
| London Guitar Show 2007 | ExCel (Public) | 27/04/07 to | 29/04/07 |
| Give it a name | Earls Court 1 | 27/04/07 to | 29/04/07 |
| Turkey Live | Olympia National | 28/04/07 to | 29/04/07 |
| Olympia Musicmania | Olympia 2 | 29/04/07 to | 29/04/07 |

A new Nash's Numbers Useful Information Document (U.I.D) went in March. Anyone who didn't receive their email should re-register, paying particular importance to your email address. Only 77 DaC drivers have so far registered for the UID - what about the other 1900+ of you? Visit www.nashsnumbers.co.uk for this issue and all previous issues back to 1997. To register for the UID packed with information you will need on a daily basis, simply click on the UID button on the web page or to register direct, email alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk with the subject of the email as "UID" and the body of the message containing your name, call sign, badge no, mobile (which will only be used if I have problems with your email address) and your email address.

from the editor's desk

Two non-political tales for a change – something that makes life easier for me as I head into the issue before that which marks my tenth anniversary as Editor of *Call Sign*...

Epilepsy and taxis...

Whilst I do not know for certain, I'd feel fairly safe in betting that among our 2200+ drivers, more than a few have members of their family who sufferer from epileptic fits. If that is the case, then undoubtedly you would know what to do – or not to do – as the situation demands when close to someone having a fit. It's probably just as safe a bet that the majority – myself included – wouldn't have a clue what to do if their passenger suddenly found to have a fit in the back of their taxi. And that brings me onto my tale...

I was due to pick up an 'as directed' account trip from Old Bailey at around 7pm one February evening. After several minutes, a young lady came out supported by a male colleague. My first thought was that she was drunk and was going to throw up over my new carpet. But looking again at her, it was obvious that she wasn't drunk but ill. She got in and her colleague said to me that she should be ok, but that if she collapsed then I should take no notice, but just wait until she had recovered! But I was not to try to help her!

You could say that I was rather concerned, but assumed that wherever she was going wouldn't be too far at 7pm. But it was Barnet – not that far at 11pm, but something of a *schlep* while the "peak hour" was still with us.

As we pulled away, my passenger asked me the most unusual question that I think any passenger has ever requested in my 36 years of cab driving. I've had the opposite, but never has someone asked me to continue talking to them for the whole journey home! She explained that she was epileptic and had been so for many years. She also had regular fits – many of them fairly violent and she knew from previous experience that she was going to have one almost certainly before we reached her home. However, if I could continue talking to her and get her to respond, the brain activity brought on by the conversation could possibly delay the fit until we reached her home.

By the time we reached Highgate, we were on first name terms and I knew much more about epilepsy than I knew before. More importantly, the thought of her having a fit before reaching Barnet no longer frightened me. She told me about her 13-year old son who had lived with her epilepsy since his very young years and how he had given talks to the London Ambulance Service on how to deal with an epileptic!

She then explained what I should do if – and apparently when – she went into a fit. The answer? Nothing! Just wait until she comes round. Don't try to make her comfortable or worry about her swallowing her tongue – epileptics rarely did that.

But – and this put the you-know-whats into me – if she failed to regain consciousness, then there was a special card in her purse called the *London Ambulance Protocol*. I was to dial 999 and quote the card. By this time, her sight had almost gone, something that always happened to her just before fitting.



Just before we reached her home and with my throat beginning to feel sore after almost an hour of non-stop chatting, she decided that instead of her son getting on a bus to meet her at home, we should pick him up as it was just a 5-minute ride away. As he entered the cab, mum went into a fit and lay on the cab floor shaking. Astonishingly, her son and I just sat there talking whilst his mother lay there, from where some 10 minutes later she began to come round.

We made for home and managed to get her in – not easy with someone who is only semi-conscious. But we managed it and I said goodbye and left.

I learned something on that day and I'm hoping that you would all be interested, because my passenger intends writing an article for *Call Sign* on living with Epilepsy – in my passenger's case, totally incurable as she is also allergic to most of the drugs she needs to take, whose only hope is the assistance she gets from the Neurological Hospital in Queen Square and the invaluable help of her son.

Mistaken identity...?

While writing about my fares, I must add this one. Incredibly, it was on the way back from the above trip.

A lady came up to me at the lights on the corner of Archway and Holloway Road and asked if I could take her to Highbury Corner. I rarely do street work, but couldn't turn this one down as it almost took me back to the City and EC5.

We'd barely travelled 200 metres when she called through the partition: "Hello Alan." Admittedly, I'm not very good at remembering names, but I can usually remember whether I know the person or not and her face rang no bells at all. Could it be a driver's wife who had seen my photo in *Call Sign*? Whoever it was, I had to answer – especially as she was now asking how I was keeping?

What I should have said was: "Sorry, but I don't remember you. But in a rather cowardly fashion, I said I was fine and asked how she was, hoping that her answer would give me a clue as to who she was.

"I'm fine," she replied. No help there.

"How are things at home," I queried, hoping that her answer would mention a name that I was familiar with. Her answer wasn't quite what I was expecting.

"Everything's great," she said, "we're having sex again. The operation worked really well."

By now we were closing in on Highbury Corner and as she came round to pay me, I could see a look in her eyes that she hadn't displayed

via my rear-view mirror! In that second, we both realised that whilst she coincidentally had the right name, she had the wrong person!

I think in future that I will ask those who think they recognise me but who I don't think I know, to sign a waiver form. Nevertheless, I'm pleased that the op worked...!

E14 success?

Sadly, it is a fact of life that there will always be some lowlifes whose only way of getting money is to take it from someone else. Until mid-January, there were very few days when at least one driver (and on several occasions their worried wives / partners) didn't phone *Call Sign* to talk about someone they knew being robbed in the E14 area.

There was little we could do physically, but we certainly made sure that those who should know about the problems, did know about them. Thanks to Tom Whitbread, *Call Sign* attended meetings with the Crown Prosecution Services and various police departments, and explained about the problems this trade was facing in the Docklands area.

They assured us that the matter would be taken seriously and we later heard of police driving around the area in taxis. We were also told of arrests and imminent arrests.

What became of those we have not been told, but the message seems to have reached those who would try to rob us and the number of incidents has dropped markedly.

It will always be an ongoing battle and some will just shrug their shoulders and carry on working. But there are also several drivers on Dial-a-Cab who told me to pass on to the police that they were ready to attend ID parades or even court if necessary. It is to those drivers that any thanks must be directed.

TfL 2-year PCN legal farce and Metrocabs!

Last month I suggested that the Mayor's office could help subsidise the cost of a new Nissan engine for Metrocab drivers with a donation towards the cost from the drivers themselves.

Now we hear of the 2-year battle between TfL and Newham councillor, Simon Ademolake, who was caught by a warden parking his car for several minutes just over the edge of a red route line on the roadway. He drove off before the warden had completed the ticket, but was then sent a demand to pay. He disputed the legality of it and appealed to The Parking and Traffic Appeals Service, who confirmed that as he had driven off before the warden had placed the ticket on his car, that he was not liable for the fine. However, TfL disagreed and chased the matter through the legal system for two years, until recently when the High Court ruled that Mr Ademolake was not liable for the ticket.

My question: How many Metrocabs could TfL have bought with that sheer waste of money?

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections Of The Chairman

Turnover up again!

I think you will agree that the beginning to this year has been particularly brisk and naturally assuming that our coverage is good, I do not see any reason why that should not continue.

As you are probably aware, the beginning of our financial year is 1 September and I am delighted to report that after the first five periods or five calendar months, our turnover has increased by just over £3.4million over the corresponding period last year. This equates to an increase of more than 19% on the same period last year, something which in itself is also a record!

I believe this illustrates just how well this Society is performing. However, as I have written so many times before, this can only continue providing Dial-a-Cab members give our clients the prompt, polite service they require. It is very easy when we are doing so well to become rather complacent, believing that this trend will always continue, but as we all know this just isn't the case.

We are busy because we are good at what we do, but should standards fall then our work will fall with it! So this is a gentle reminder; none of us should take our 'foot off the gas' if we want a year that has started so well to continue in this vein into the future.

Whilst on the subject of how well we are doing, I put out a terminal message a few weeks ago to advise you that we had retained one of our largest accounts after it had gone to tender. As you know, we were sharing that account with another taxi supplier on an equal split basis, however, I was informed just a few days later that the client had decided to alter that ratio so that we at Dial-a-Cab now receive 90% of the work!

Naturally, that is something that I am particularly pleased about, but please remember that this ratio can be adjusted at a moments notice by the client should our coverage begin to wane, so the ball is firmly in your court!

New building update...

Everything seems to be going to plan with the new building and we anticipate that we will be making the move from Brunswick House over the Easter weekend. By the time this issue of *Call Sign* reaches you, we should be just one week away, but at the time of writing it is still around three weeks and I must confess that it still looks like a building site to me! But I am reliably informed that it should be completed according to schedule.

However, completion according to schedule could still leave us to a certain extent at the mercy of some suppliers such as BT - and those of you who have dealt with them



in the past will understand exactly what I mean by that. Our fingers are firmly crossed!

And replacing equipment...

We have decided that since we were moving our infrastructure to the new building, it would also be pertinent to replace some of our current equipment. As a consequence, our IT department have had a particularly busy and worrying time together with our colleagues in the USA replacing some of our ageing hardware-driven infrastructure with the latest software driven mechanisms.

You may have noticed - although hopefully not badly - a change in our signals as we go from hardware based communication controllers to software based IQ links. As you can no doubt appreciate, this is the perfect time to replace our infrastructure with the latest equipment as we complete our move to our new building. But, to describe it as a very worrying and traumatic time would be a gross understatement! Hopefully everything will be completed with the minimum amount of glitches, although no doubt there will be some.

Change of roles

It has been decided that there will be a change to a few Board Member's responsibilities. Allan Evans will now be responsible for dealing with complaints and Tom Whitbread will take control of our fitting bay at Roman Way, basically a reversal of roles.

These alterations will commence on 2 April 2007. I know Tom has been dealing with complaints from time immemorial, consequently, a change could be considered as long overdue. I have no doubt that both Board Members will treat their new responsibilities with as much enthusiasm as they have shown in the past.

House of Commons

I am rather sad to have to end yet another upbeat Chairman's report with some sad news and that is that we have been unsuccessful in our tender to retain the House of Commons account. We have been associated with the account for many, many years but we must assume that they were not prepared to accept our latest tender, which contained higher fixed prices for our drivers. The account has now gone to the Radio Taxis Group and we wish them well with it.

It may be rather late in the day to mention this, but when messages go out saying that an account is in danger because the coverage of some trips isn't good enough, it really does mean exactly that. The loss of the HoC account now proves that.

However, on the plus side, we have now captured the Nomura Bank account, which as most of you know, is situated in St Martins le Grand. Your assistance in ensuring a good service is vital...

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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Following the recent Dial-a-Cab AGM where the standing BoM were re-elected, the Board meeting following decided that with them all having held the same positions for several years, a change round was due.

As a result, Tom Whitbread and Allan Evans have changed their positions and as of 2 April Tom will be moving to Roman Way with Allan making the reverse trip to take over as the Complaints Officer.

Tom told *Call Sign*: "Complaints may be just another job at DaC, but there can be little doubt of the anti-popularity effect on whoever does it. Call me a masochist, but I had almost become used to being hated! However, it will be different for me to be able to speak to drivers without them wondering what I'm up to!"

Allan chipped in: "I can see how organised Tom has been, but I am looking forward to the change – whether it will be as the saying goes, as good as a rest, I somehow doubt! But it's good for DaC to change positions occasionally..."



Tom



...and Allan

It's the Swap Shop for Tom & Allan

Selling off TX2 dents Manganese profits

The cost of its 'special deals' in selling off the last of the TX2s and in preparing for the TX4 dented the profits of LTI parent company, Manganese Bronze, half-year profits.

In announcing its interim results for the six months to 31 January 2007, MBH said that October 2006 had seen it successfully launch the TX4. However, it had offered huge discounts on its stock of TX2's prior to release.

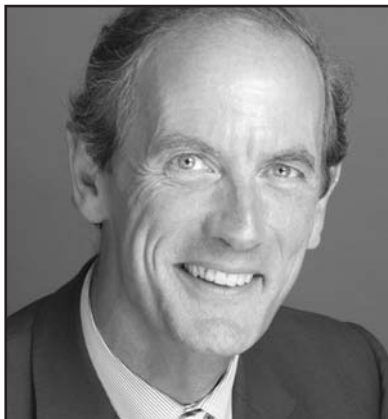
Call Sign Editor, Alan Fisher, was one of those who took advantage of the sell-off.

"They offered £2,500 off the price of a new TX2 and a much higher price than I would have expected for my old TX2. I would certainly have got nothing like it now, several months on. Even though it was obvious the TX4 was around the corner, I don't regret the deal. I got a new 'Gold' model, an extra 3-years warrantee and I saved a huge amount!"

New taxi sales were up 21.3 per cent to 1342 vehicles (236 up on the previous year), but its operating profit at £1million was £200,000 down on the previous year. However, that "loss" included around £700,000 to sell the last of the old TX2s and prepare for the TX4 with depreciation of almost £5.5 million due to the TX4 development and tooling costs. This figure will be written off over five years.

Shareholder approval was given in January for the company's joint venture with Geely Automobile Holdings to form the Shanghai LTI Automobile Company. The aim is to produce London taxis in Shanghai, as well as a limousine style variant of the London taxi and two large saloon cars.

Manganese Bronze Chairman, Tim Melville-Ross, said that MBH had enjoyed a first half of significant achievement with the signing of the Chinese joint venture and the launch of the TX4, which, he said had been very well received by the trade. He further expected sales to continue rising.



MBH Chairman Tim Melville-Ross

The company increased the interim dividend to 2.25 pence a share against 2 pence in 2006.

Jay Sands

TAXI

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LICENSED TAXI DRIVERS AND IN CONJUNCTION
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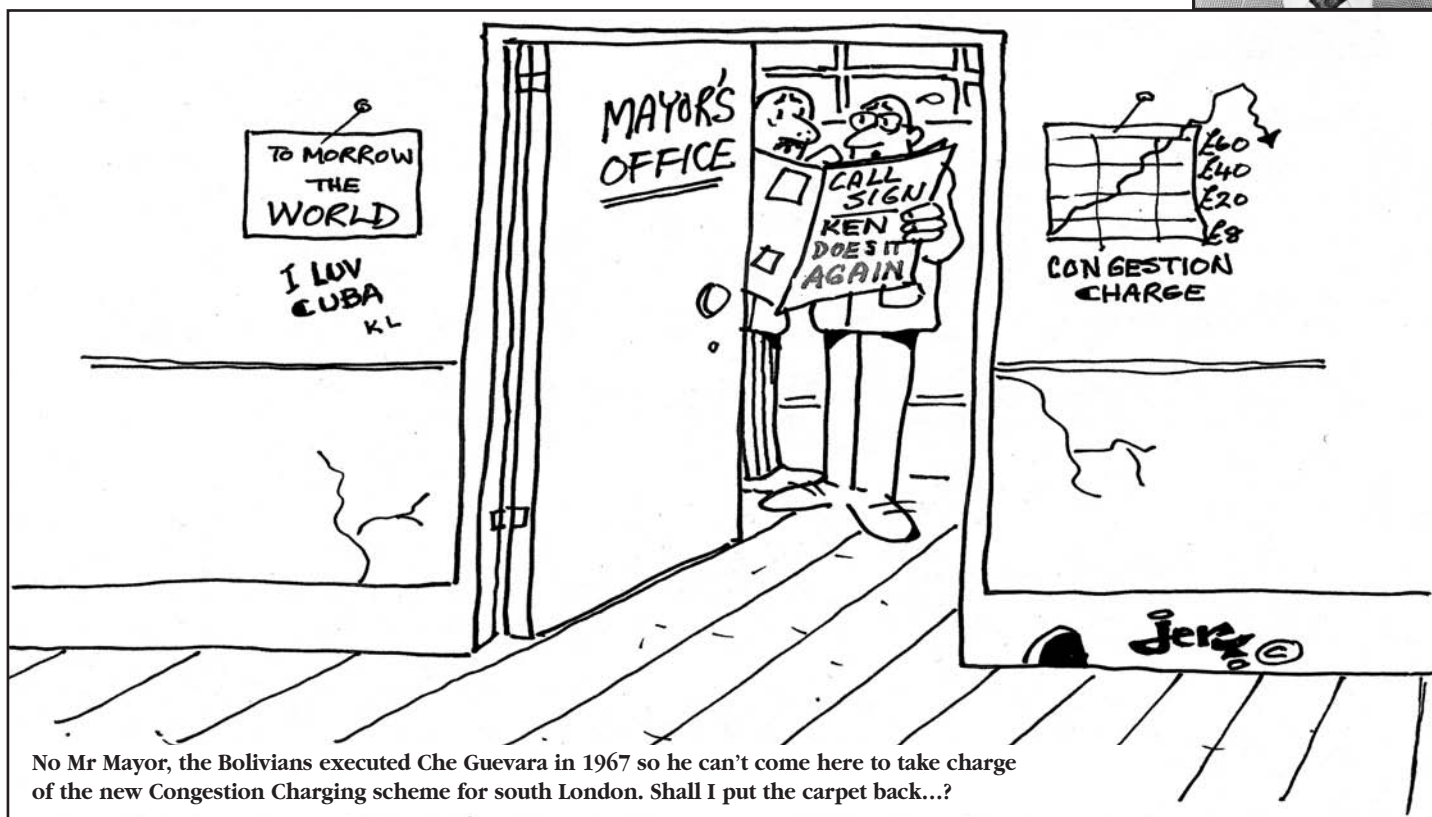
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Jery's World



No Mr Mayor, the Bolivians executed Che Guevara in 1967 so he can't come here to take charge of the new Congestion Charging scheme for south London. Shall I put the carpet back...?

HOWARD KOTT FINISHES AT LP MOTORS

But the garage continues...



Dial-a-Cab driver, **Howard Kott (B74)**, achieved celebrity status on Sunday 7 September 2003 when he became the first licensed London taxi driver to win Taxi Driver of the Year in three consecutive years.

Earlier, following the tragic death of LP taxi garage proprietor Leigh Phillips in February 2003 at the young age of 33 following an 8-month battle against stomach cancer, Howard sat down and told **Call Sign** of the phone call he had received from Leigh around one week before he died.

Even though Howard actually worked at LP Motors, he was amazed to be asked by Leigh to buy the garage. Leigh must have felt that the garage would have a future under Howard – even after he had told Lee that he wasn't even sure if he could raise the type of money needed to buy it. Several days later, Howard spoke

to taxi proprietor Lee Drinkwater and a partnership was formed.

Now, sadly, Howard has told **Call Sign** that the garage was taking just too

much time and effort and as a result he has ceased trading as LP Motors. His fleet of cabs is unaffected.

"It was a heartbreaking decision for me to take," said Howard, "but I couldn't continue the way I was going. Running a fleet and the garage was just too much."

Howard went on to add that the man who had been his foreman and who had done such a great job building up a their client base, Eddie Ahmed, had now taken over the garage and that all his regular customers would still find the excellent standard of mechanical service that they had become used to.

And Howard? "I still have enough to do running my fleet..."

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Late deals and special price for DaC members.

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

Kupkake's Korner

My Metrocab...

I bought my cab in '99
but soon she'll have to go,
cab runs well, all is fine...
but Ken don't want to know!

He thinks that I've got seven grand
saved from the 20 pences,
no one seems to understand...
they've taken leave of their senses!

"Replace the motor with a used Nissan
that'll do the trick,"
"sell your engine to a white van man...
you know they're rather thick."

If they could only see it my way
without all that official fuss,
they'd subsidise the conversion...
as if it were a bus!

They took away our extras
now we're cheaper than the bendies,
so 5 can ride for the price of one
comfortable, private and friendly.

I predicted this would happen
Ken HATES we Taxi drivers,
he'll not rest till we're finished...
and he's subdued the few survivors.
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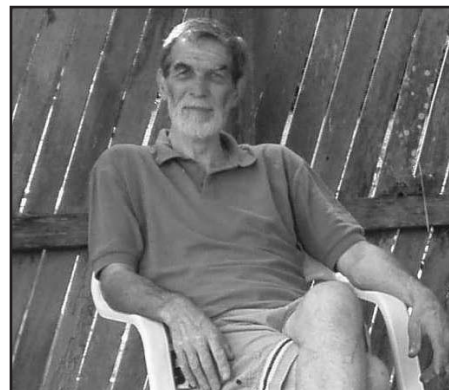
Howard Sales (ex-A11) was a former DaC driver trainer who emigrated to Oz and opened a garage. He keeps in touch with Call Sign via the Internet and sends the occasional update...

DAC DRIVER'S VIEW FROM OZ...

I trust you are all keeping an eye on the fortunes of the Brisbane Broncos! Most of the side play for Queensland in the State of Origin Tri series against NSW that takes place once a year. Originally, the losing team had to fly the state flag of the winning state from the top of the two capital cities main bridge, ie Sydney Harbour and the Story Bridge. But a few years ago, Queensland kept the trophy due to a draw and NSW refused to fly our flag as technically there was not a clear winner. So ever since there hasn't been the flying of flags. No doubt you are wondering how you can get a draw in a 3-match set! Back then they played to the horn, regardless of the score line, so with one game each and the last game a draw, QLD kept the trophy. Since then, they play to the winning point, regardless as to how it is scored.

I do enjoy reading **Call Sign** on line and keeping in touch and it is so sad to see the passing of so many drivers that I either trained or came across on my travels around London, but I suppose, as they say, that's life. As it happens my own 'life' as a cab driver would have had to be put on hold had we remained in the UK. Unbeknown to me at the time, I was developing a liver condition known as PSC, which ultimately means that I'm on 16 tablets a day until I eventually have a transplant.

At the moment it doesn't present me with



Howard relaxes in the Bali hut he has erected in his back garden












too many problems, but one that would have been a hassle is getting to use a toilet both frequently and at a moments notice. I'm not as bad as some of the people who are also on the 'list', in fact they keep telling me how well I look!

So long as I keep busy working I don't feel tired, but sitting down - as I would have been doing in the cab - could very quickly make me want to go to sleep. And that wouldn't be too clever on the M4 going to the flyers!
Be lucky,

Howard Sales (ex-A11)
Queensland, Australia

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New Bank of England Exhibition



A new exhibition and programme of special events for children and adults will take place during 2007 at the Bank of England Museum. Situated within the historic Bank of England building in Threadneedle Street in the heart of the City of London, the Bank of England Museum tells the story of the Bank from its foundation in 1694 to its role today as the United Kingdom's central bank.

SECURITY BY DESIGN:

A new exhibition tracing the design, history & security of banknotes...

The earliest handwritten Bank of England paper money will be on show alongside the newly launched Adam Smith £20 banknote in *Security by Design*, a new exhibition which opened at the Bank of England Museum on 29 March and runs until 26 October 2007.

Security by Design will show how Bank of England banknote design and security have developed over more than 300 years. In addition to seeing the earliest form of banknotes, visitors can also see how they go at safe-cracking!

The latest banknote, the Adam Smith £20, starts a new series of Bank of England notes incorporating a different style, along with the portrait of the 18th century philosopher and economist, new design details and significant new security features against counterfeiting.

Exhibition dates: 29 March - 26 October 2007 from 10am - 5pm. Admission is free. The museum is closed on public and bank holidays...

cab^{"ti"}*vate®

CABTIVATE: Founder Involved in New Company

**Dial-a-Cab driver/victim Mark Lane:
"I wouldn't touch it with a bargepole...!"**

The last issue of *Call Sign* reported on the liquidation of Cabtivate, a company that charged drivers £104 a month to have a screen put into the passengers compartment of their cabs for which they would receive back £190 a month, but which collapsed owing creditors – among whom are the drivers – around £1million.

Few drivers received anything, but most are now tied into finance agreements for £104 per month for four years and for which they will receive nothing back. Now *Call Sign* has been told that the Founder of Cabtivate, Mark Greenhalgh, became the director of a company incorporated in the south of England on January 25 – just three days after the demise of Cabtivate.

The new company, *Tapinto*, had details posted at Companies House

showing its head office as being in Milton Keynes. They showed Tapinto's director and secretary as being company registration agents who were based in Scotland. They then resigned, allowing Mark Greenhalgh to be appointed on February 21.

According to the liquidator, Ken Pattullo, his company would be concerned if there were "intellectual property" which was transferred from Cabtivate to another company but on which they couldn't make any recovery on behalf of creditors.

So could Mark Greenhalgh try to do the same thing with a new company? The reference to "intellectual property" concerns taking ideas rather than physical elements and it does seem that little could be done about it other than for anyone approached by Mr Greenhalgh to refuse his offer – however tempting it may seem to be.

One Dial-a-Cab driver who had signed up to Cabtivate and is now saddled with a huge debt, **Mark Lane (N97)**, told *Call Sign* that in his view, anyone approached by Mark Greenhalgh or his associates, should keep well clear.

"If Cabvision can put a screen into driver's cabs for nothing and pay them for doing it," said Mark, "then paying someone for over-priced equipment is just stupid. I wouldn't touch any business Mr Greenhalgh was involved in with a bargepole!"

At a creditor's meeting, Mr Greenhalgh blamed the Bank of Scotland for making two errors that turned Cabtivate's fortunes around and forced its collapse.

He also claimed that two London companies had expressed interest in taking over Cabtivate.

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Hello Ladies and Gents,

Euston 'shouts'

Over the past few months, there have been a couple of issues that occurred during late night 'shouts' at Euston Station. I am sure you are aware the Dial-a-Cab Marshals are under pressure at times, not only dealing with irate passengers, but also trying to pacify those that have spent a long time on a delayed train - it is not always an easy task.

When you are allocated a trip from either ES1 (Euston) or WS1 (Waterloo), it is important that you arrive in your correct queue position and just as we have always done, please remain in your taxi. The Marshal will then approach you and not the other way round. It can be quite intimidating when a group of drivers converge around a passenger whilst the Marshal is allocating the taxi. Please allow the Marshal to do his or her job in a fair and equal manner, without unnecessary interruption.

Changeover

I would like to briefly mention that on 2 April, there will be a slight change of Board Member's duties and that from this date I will be switching roles with Tom Whitbread. I'll be

Driver Operations

taking over the Complaints Officers duties and Tom will be locating to Roman Way. I am confident that the experience I have gained over many years in the taxi trade and more importantly during the past six years as a Member of the Board holding various positions, will stand me in good stead for this important position.

I have during my time in office, dealt with many clients and drivers alike and as an active driver myself, I certainly feel I have the necessary knowledge and experience to deal with all types of complaints in a fair and just way. I will certainly treat every complaint on its merit, and as a fair-minded person, I will make the necessary judgments however difficult they may be without prejudice. Tom has always carried out this role in a very impartial and unbiased way and I will endeavour to carry on his good work.

And finally...

Finally, I would like to thank the staff at Roman Way, who over the past two years have helped me turn the fitting bay into a far more driver-friendly and professional environ-



ment. I'd also like to thank the Dial-a-Cab Marshals, many of whom I have worked with for more than ten years. I have said it many times - they are the best in the business!

I will be handing over all Marshalling matters to Shelagh Adkins, and she undoubtedly has a good team to work with.

Allan Evans

Allane@Dialacab.co.uk

M&O HAVE FOUR CABS WITH DAC TERMINALS

Mann & Overton have four courtesy taxis fitted with Dial-a-Cab terminals and DaC drivers attending the Brewery Road dealership for servicing or overhauls have the chance of a free DaC-fitted TXII while their own vehicle is being worked on. Speaking to Call Sign, M&O General Service Manager Mike Saunders said:

"With the co-operation of the DaC Board who have made the radio equipment available, we are delighted to provide this facility for our Dial-a-Cab customers. It allows drivers to continue servicing account clients while their own cab is here. I would remind everyone though, that these courtesy cabs are subject to availability and not guaranteed."

You can contact the M&O Service Dept. on 020 7700 0888..

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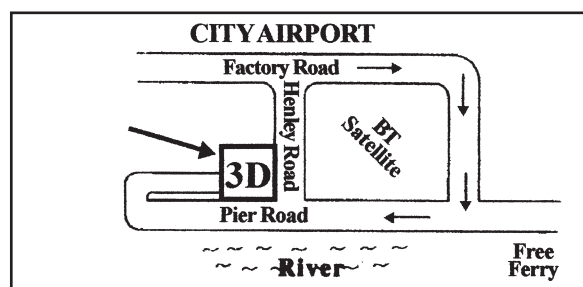
And we will advise on any warrantee work needed

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Doesn't time fly when you're enjoying yourself? Almost as fast as my new TX4 flies along The Highway on its way to the 'Island'. Three years ago I'd have said "...along the M4 to the fliers," but sadly no more. How times have changed!

But there are compromises, no more hugging the inside lane with those bendy buses passing you 5 cms from your right elbow. Now I'm in the outside lane trying to keep within the camera speed limits and enjoying the acceleration I thought was never possible in a taxi!

No more gritting my teeth and avoiding glances in the rear view mirror going over pot-holes and having to see if my passenger has dislocated their third vertebrae! Now we only feel slight discomfort, a great improvement - if not quite Merc suspension.

The TX4 seems to have had the most successful launch of any recent LTI Vehicles taxi with all the Dial-a-Cab drivers Call Sign spoke to claiming to be delighted. No real problems have surfaced, so we asked DaC Marshal and TX4 owner, Ronnie Marlow (L81), to give us his ongoing views of his TX4. The February issue saw his first report after 1 week. Now it's 3 months on and Ronnie gives Call Sign another update...

My TX4: Three Months On

No more straining to hear my passenger asking to stop at Starbucks on the corner, now we discuss the problems of caffeine dependency with a clear intercom designed for the job, of course also helped by the quieter VM engine.

Weather used to be the main topic of conversation - after making excuses for the traffic in Gower Street of course! Now it is: "Smells like a new cab?" Reassuring after my new year's resolution not to 'eat on the go' anymore. Or there's: "What do they call this colour? Pale Purple?" No sir, it's Thistle Blue actually!

So 3 months on and I have just finished another fuel test and got a whole mile to the gallon more than at first. It is now a steady 21 mph and I am ever hopeful that this will improve as the engine settles down and my right foot is not tempted to be quite so heavy. I passed through the brake squeak threshold at around 2000 miles, although I'm told it could be more in some cases, and am now enjoying

silent braking as I was told would happen by the dealer.

The ABS does make the footbrake a little spongy and the handbrake higher than I'd like it, but hey, a small price to pay to have ABS should I go into a skid. Also, the doors have been adjusted and now close first time... thankfully.

The interior ventilation is sadly not to my liking. If the heater is on, you get hot air everywhere, even from the dash facia vents that used to bring cool outside air into the cab at face level. A serious downer for me! My air con is OK, not fantastically cold, but maybe when the summer arrives it will be effective? We'll have to wait and see...

Ronnie Marlow (L81)

There will be a further update from Ronnie Marlow and his TX4 in two months...

The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled held their AGM on 12 March at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

LTBAWD 2006 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Our annual outing to Worthing in June was a resounding success when almost 400 veterans had a day out to remember. The guest of honour was HRH the Duchess of Gloucester, who is also the Patron of *The First World War Veteran Association* along with 110 year old Henry Allingham, the oldest first world veteran and the last survivor of the battle of Jutland. The Mayor of Worthing Major T.Wye MBE and the Mayoress extended the hospitality and help of Worthing Borough Council to our charity.

Dame Vera Lynn, whose voice over the decades has given pleasure to millions and now whose presence at Worthing is a tonic to all the veterans, continues to be a visual Patron for our Charity.

Thanks also to the villagers of South Holmwood who year in year out, from start to finish, help make the outing to Worthing a success. I must also mention our sponsors both within and outside the taxi trade for their generous contributions to our cause. The generosity of the many companies within the London taxi trade is second to none; particular thanks must be made to Doug Sherry MBE, the LTDA, Radio Taxis Group, Dial-a-Cab, The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers and the Taxi Driver of The Year Charity Fund.

I would like to thank each and every London Taxi Driver that each year purchases one of the diaries published by our charity. The diaries are a major source of income and we look forward to your continued support in the future.

For the first time on behalf of *The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled*, a golf day was organised by John Rowland - one of the Charity's many loyal drivers - at Woolston Hall Manor Golf Club in Essex and won by Barry Ryan. Our thanks to the many sponsors of this event and the drivers that took part.

Organised by Ex-Fusilier and London Taxi Driver Roy Knight, the committee was invited by Major Gibson-Horrocks MBE to the Tower of London to watch the ceremony of the keys.

As Chairman of *The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled*, I was invited to the Public Carriage Office for a party to mark the retirement of Roy Ellis and Sandy Kennedy. Roy and Geraldine Ellis are strong supporters of our charity and every year attend Worthing. Sandy Kennedy has also attended a number of our outings and the committee wish them both all the best in their retirement. I also had the pleasure of meeting the new principal at the PCO, Mary Dowdye.

This year yet again we have been able to consider a number of requests for help from veterans, homes, and hospitals. Fany's, WW1 Veterans Ass, SSAFA, Maltese Island Association and where appropriate, we have helped in anyway that we are able.

My fellow committee members are the ones that do all the hard work and make the decisions and I thank them for their support and guidance in the past year.

What can I say about the drivers who

actively participate in our outings?

I was addressing the guests at Worthing Town Hall when I was interrupted by a shout from the floor: "They're brilliant!" That comment coming from a veteran with a chest full of medals says it all...

Michael Calvey



Election of officers:

The following officers were elected unopposed: Michael Calvey (Chairman), Dickie Hudd (Vice Chairman), Michael Husk (Treasurer), Paul Davis (Secretary), Janet Fox (Assistant Secretary), Martin Noble (Appeals Officer), Terry Ward (Transport and Diary Officer), Alan Hooker (Forward Planning Officer) and Derek Leone (PR Officer). Dickie Goodwin requested to go onto the committee. Approved after a vote was taken.

The next outing for the War Disabled charity will take place on Tuesday, 12 June. If your name is down as a driver and your details have changed or you would like to volunteer as a driver, please contact Paul Davis on 07860 850 102.

or go to the website: www.taxicharity.org.

Derek Leone

The new TX4

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Exclusive Call Sign interview with C.I. Bob Marshall...

In our March issue, *Call Sign* was invited on a tour around the West End with the Transport Operational Command Unit's (TOCU) Cab Enforcement Team. On that police tour, we saw no evidence at all of Licensed Taxi drivers being picked on, as others have claimed.

Nevertheless we were concerned that recent PCO publication of figures suggested licensed taxi drivers were being booked for touting almost as often as PH drivers.

In addition, given the increased level of robberies and attacks in the E14 area, *Call Sign* secured an exclusive face-to-face interview with **C.I. Bob Marshall** of TOCU – Chief Inspector of both the Cab Enforcement and Traffic Management teams and also involved in the transport planning for the 2012 Olympics. During an extended interview, he gave honest, straightforward answers to a wide range of topics of concern to our drivers.

Call Sign began by asking why, after Mayor Ken had put public money into TOCU in an attempt to reduce robberies and sex attacks, Cab Enforcement officers appeared to spend time 'booking' cabs that were seen to be left on ranks while their drivers were away in the toilet or getting a sandwich?

C.I. Marshall replied that much of his officers' work was intelligence or complaint driven, usually by a member of the trade. So if they receive a call - perhaps from a shelter keeper - that the rank is blocked with unattended cabs, drivers with legitimate business on that rank cannot park to eat or service a hotel etc, then his officers have a duty to respond accordingly.

He added that some taxi-drivers may have health concerns that mean frequent 'comfort' stops, but added that restraints on his officer's time means they have better things to do than waste too long waiting for taxi drivers to return to their cabs.

He also said that drivers loaded with carrier bags after a shopping expedition and returning to a cab parked on a rank, did nothing to convince his officers that the driver had "...just been to the toilet!"

Call Sign then suggested some sort of 'time clock' to display in the cab window, similar to a disabled 'blue-badge' giving perhaps a 15/20 minute leeway time and C.I. Marshall agreed that this would be an excellent idea and a welcome step forward, saving the Met Police money and minimising his officers' time if they did wait for the driver to return to his cab.

We put it to Bob that on the subject of Cab Enforcement officers allegedly ignoring Mayor Ken's extra public funding to reduce robberies and sex attacks on the travelling public, TOCU appeared to pursue their own agenda by 'doing their own thing'. We asked what instructions his officers are given before they go out on the streets of the capital when on anti-touting operations and how they ensured that they too operated within the framework of the law?

The Chief Inspector replied: **"Since the Cab Enforcement Unit became part of the Transport OCU, which is supported by Transport for London funding through one of five specific objectives, we focus on illegal touts and our operations in this**

Taxis, Touts and the Cab Enforcement Team...



C.I. Bob Marshall

way can lead to the identification of individuals with previous convictions for sexual offences. In respect of this, Safer Travel at Night figures has shown a year on year decrease in the number of reported cases of sexual offences and rape."

He also added that, again, much of his officers' activities are intelligence-driven where experience has proven that there is a problem with illegal touting. He acknowledged that some club doormen work in league with car drivers, but equally, many legitimate cars are pre-booked to meet passengers as arranged. To address this problem of sorting the wheat from the chaff, Bob worked with the PCO and PHV industry to produce what are known as the 5 *Golden Rules* or guidelines, that lay out a code of practice for PH drivers to follow to keep themselves on the straight and narrow path.

The rules also serve as guidelines for his officers to work from to determine the status of anyone they stop on suspicion. The Chief Inspector suggested that some drivers, through language, mental or cultural differences, could find themselves having difficulty answering police questions designed to ascertain the bona fide status (or otherwise) of the drivers they stop and so the Anti-Tout teams work to a specific framework of questioning before arresting anyone. The C.I. added that with police resources in both man/woman power and financial constraints to consider, maximising his resources is a major concern.

So what are these 5 'Golden Rules', *Call Sign* asked?

The Chief Marshall produced a 2-page dossier which explains in clear English exactly what is expected of PH drivers when legitimately picking up passengers from venues and states in no uncertain terms that only **licensed taxis** may ply for hire. It says that private hire drivers are not allowed to ply for hire, referring to such activities as being regarded as touting under Section 8 of the *Metropolitan Public Carriage Act, 1869*. They include NOT waiting in sight of a potential passenger, to approach or engage in conversation, loiter near clubs and other venues, or attract attention in other ways etc.

The missive also gives guidance on what PH

drivers must/can do to stay within the law and not be mistaken for a tout. *Call Sign* is in possession of the full document. The Tout team also refers to these guidelines, working to accredited qualification levels when carrying out their duties. With the 5 *Golden Rules* being so clear, it is no wonder that C.I. Marshall claims a 92% conviction rate for touts that are arrested!

We then asked the Chief Inspector what percentage of cars / taxis were arrested for touting, given the confusing statistics issued by the PCO?

Predominantly, his team's focus is on cars where some 2200 were reported for processing last year as against 98 taxis over the same period. He again stressed the importance of intelligence and his teams' experience to target areas likely to achieve results.

Wherever you look in the West End, taxis are doing their job while cars seem to stop at will and appear to be touting - often in full view of taxi drivers. Do you treat taxis and PH in the same way, *Call Sign* asked?

"No," Bob replied, **"taxis are not treated the same. As I've said, much of our work is intelligence driven and we respond accordingly."**

He added: **"The London taxi has been licensed for 350 odd years - half of that by the Met / PCO and during that long time, a great deal of self-regulation has evolved for the benefit of the public and to the great credit of the taxi industry. On the other hand, the PH trade has been licensed for only 3-4 years and its self-regulation is still in the early stages of development, but I'm hopeful and confident that it will mature over time."**

Robberies in E14

Finally, *Call Sign* raised the subject of attacks and other problems around the E14 area. C.I. Marshall said that in the first instance, these problems were for the local borough to handle, but that he was willing to be a 'conduit' for intelligence and perhaps some other assistance if we at DaC were willing to send him details of the problems we are experiencing. He made the point that these attacks, while centred around E14, could follow a pattern of problems over a larger area of East London which only intelligence could highlight. Dealing with this outbreak could, the Chief suggested, solve problems elsewhere too. So, if you have been a victim of these attacks, or have had other crime problems locally, please send details of your experience (in confidence) to *Call Sign* at the usual address, callsignmag@aol.com and we will forward them to Chief Inspector Bob Marshall.

The Chief Inspector is prepared to work with us, but needs an input from you. We concluded the interview by thanking the Chief Inspector for his time and honest answers and look forward to working with him and his team to our mutual benefit.

Described as one of the most successful-ever afternoon quizzes, Dial-a-Cab driver **John Moody (D82)** returned to TV screens throughout March with a new series of his hit show, **Cash Cab**.

John told *Call Sign*: "I was really thrilled with the reception the first three series of **Cash Cab** received - both from viewers and the production team. But this fourth series was even better because it wasn't just here today and gone tomorrow. We did 40 shows in this batch and I enjoyed every single one of them - especially when I got to give big money away."

Earlier series of **Cash Cab** pulled in huge numbers of viewers by afternoon TV quiz standards - some very close to the one million mark, a figure not normally achieved for afternoon programmes other than sporting events.

If you've never seen **Cash Cab**, this latest series moved to the home of quiz shows, Virgin Media's **Challenge TV**, with John's **Cash Cab** travelling around some of the UK's biggest cities to lure in passengers who thought they were hiring just an ordinary taxi - at least until they got in. Then the lights flash and our smiling Dial-a-Cab driver tells them: "**You're on Cash Cab!**"

The biggest winner in the latest series came from Blackpool and in their short cab trip, instead of paying for the fare they took home a cool £3700. The biggest overall winner so far has been a London passenger travelling to Ken High Street who took £5800 from John.

"I'm pleased it wasn't my own money," said John!

In the meantime, the production company,

John becomes Mr again!



DaC's John Moody - alias Mr Cash Cab

Lion TV have seen the show bloom into a worldwide hit with **Cash Cab** now being seen on - in addition to **Challenge** in the UK - TNT in Russia, TV4 in Poland, Kabel1 in Germany, BNN in Netherlands, Telemadrid in Spain, City TV in Colombia, Antev in Indonesia, Mega in

Greece, Show TV in Turkey and XYZ Networks in Australia. Options on **Cash Cab** are in France, New Zealand, Argentina, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, Israel, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Austria, Italy, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Honduras, Ukraine, Portugal, Australia, Malaysia, South Africa and Chile.

In addition, **Lion TV** has received an 80-episode order from the Discovery Channel for the **Cash Cab** game show in New York, which will be hosted by US comedian Ben Bailey.

Sadly for our John, he is just the host of the UK version.

"Ok," he admitted, "my Greek, Turkish and Indonesian does leave something to be desired!"

John Moody's **Cash Cab** features unsuspecting passengers hailing and stepping into an apparently ordinary taxi only to see lights flashing and to discover that they are on television with the chance of winning thousands of pounds by the time they reach their destination. If passengers / contestants get three questions wrong, they are kicked out of the cab before reaching their destination.

"But," John added, "if they lose and are kicked out, we don't charge them!"

Who said DaC drivers don't have big hearts!

SALES BOOM FOR TX4



Could the TX4 end up as the most successful London taxi ever

A Miles Better News Agency report has given *Call Sign* the official UK sales figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, which show that February sales of the new Euro IV compliant TX4 taxi are booming. February sales increased by 74.68% to 138 vehicles compared with the same month last year.

Sales for the first two months of this year are up by 51.94% with 471 vehicles delivered to UK customers. In comparison, UK new car registrations for February were down 3.17% although up by 2.5% year to date.

The new TX4 taxi is built by LTI Vehicles in Coventry who invested £5 million bringing it to market last October. Record sales followed in November (+27%) and December (+68%). In January 2007 sales continued to grow with a 44.16% increase with 333 new vehicles registered.

Several Dial-a-Cab drivers have told *Call Sign* that LTI dealers are so busy with TX4 sales that there is up to a two month wait for the cab.

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DaC Staff Awards Party!

Last month saw a DaC presentations ceremony incorporated into a party to present Dial-a-Cab staff with awards for high achievements.

The presentations were made because of a DaC Call Centre incentive that ran through November to Christmas, with staff being asked to nominate a colleague who they considered had handled a client with exceptional professionalism. Compliments from clients also

counted in the marking. Prizes were awarded to staff from the day and evening shifts.

There were seven awards on offer – three each from the day and evening shifts and a Call Centre High Achiever Award.

First prize on the Day Shift was won by **Stacey Bower**, second was **Kiemal West** with **Bonita Livingstone** taking third prize. The Evening Shift winners were **Jodie**

Carruthers who grabbed first prize, **Jahar Shil** second and **Gary Could**, who finished in third place.

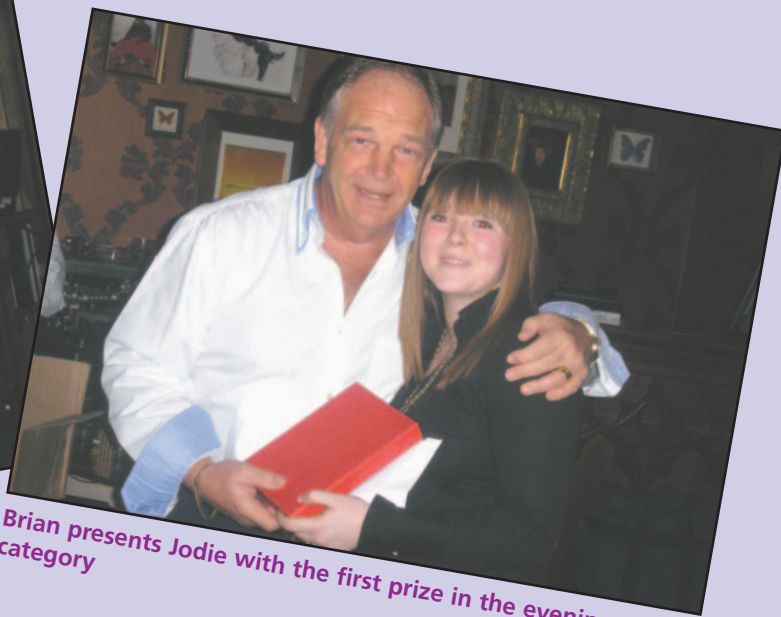
Jahar Shil won the Call Centre High Achiever Award.

Congratulations to all the winners...

Cover pic: Bonnie, Jane, Day Shift winner Stacey and Shelly enjoy the party...



Brian Rice presents Jahar Shil with the "High Achiever award"



Brian presents Jodie with the first prize in the evening shift category

LTI Raise £2000 for NSPCC



Staff at Coventry-based LTI Vehicles have raised £2000 for the NSPCC for 2006. The amount has been generated over the past 12 months through a range of individual and company-wide initiatives, including a golf tournament.

LTI Vehicles, who manufactures the TX4 taxi in Coventry, also support other campaigns throughout the year and make a significant contribution to charitable causes.

Lydia Warrilow, Head of NSPCC Regional Fundraising, told **Call Sign**:

"We are once again most grateful to the staff and directors at LTI Vehicles who have been supporting the NSPCC as their charity for the last four years. During that time, they have raised a substantial five-figure sum, representing a major contribution to our work in the Coventry region."

Margaret Hitchins (PA to LTI Vehicles Managing Director) added:

"We were delighted to once again be able to present a substantial cheque to support the excellent work undertaken at the NSPCC's Boole House facility in Coventry."

Pictured are Margaret Hitchins (left) with Lydia Warrilow of the NSPCC

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What DaC drivers have to say...

*Fuel consumption is lower and engine runs smoother
I could hardly believe it, it's suddenly like driving a new cab!*

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JVBright - Southbank Service Station, London

Licensing appointments to the end of March

1. This Notice should be read in conjunction with PCO Notice 03/07 (March **Call Sign**) which provided detailed information about the arrangements for licensing taxis prior to, and after April 2, when the inspection service is to be transferred to SGS (United Kingdom) Ltd.

2. There has been increasing demand for licensing appointment slots before the end of March and this Notice is intended to clarify the position for owners, drivers and overhaulers. With the co-operation and assistance of owners and overhaulers, it should be possible to ensure that the requirements of most licensees for appointments between now and the end of March can be satisfied.

3. The profile of the supply and demand for taxi licensing slots during March is as follows:

Taxi licences expiring during March 2007: 1,915
Total PCO licensing slots @ 104 per day (up to 23 March): 1,768
Additional appointment slots released for March Saturdays: 320

4. It will be seen from the above that the total number of slots made available by the PCO exceeds the predicted number of taxis with licences expiring during March by 173. These slots have been, and are being, allocated strictly in accordance with the following criteria:

Where the licence expires before 2 April

A brand new vehicle, previously unplatd

A vehicle transfer where the existing plate has been surrendered

5. Every effort will be made by the PCO to accommodate taxis that need to be licensed where they fall into one of the above categories. Where it is not possible to accommodate a vehicle, the owner or overhauler should contact the PCO Contract Management Team (see 12).

Licences expiring before end of March but appointments required after 2 April

6. It is also recognised that some vehicle owners/overhaulers may not be able to present a vehicle for inspection before 2 April where the licence is due to expire before the end of March. In these circumstances, the vehicle owner or overhauler should contact the PCO Contract Management Team (see 12) and every effort will be made to obtain the earliest

Taxi Licensing: Appointments and Licence Variations

suitable appointment with SGS.

Expired licences from earlier months

7. For those vehicles where the licence has expired prior to March 2007 (eg February, January or earlier), vehicle owners or overhaulers are advised to contact the SGS call centre (0845 378 2345) and they will be offered the earliest available appointment, which may or may not be at an inspection centre of their choice.

8. If the vehicle owner or overhauler requires an earlier appointment than that which SGS can offer, the owner/overhauler should contact the PCO Contract Management Team (see 12). Every effort will be made to establish the possibility of finding a mutually acceptable appointment slot.

Variations to licences after 2 April

9. Once the licence has been issued, there can be a number of reasons where the licensee may require a replacement paper licence and/or replacement plate.

10. Paper licences issued from 2 April onwards and an accompanying information leaflet for licensees, will provide clear instructions for licensees to follow in the event that they require a replacement paper licence and/or plate.

11. With regard to those licences issued before 2 April, where one of the following changes occurs, licensees should contact the PCO Contract Management Team (see 12) who will advise the licensee on the action to take:

These are: **Change of licensee address: Change of ownership: Change of VRM: Lost/stolen licence plate: Accident damage: Epsom and Ewell dual licence: Surrender of licence plate...**

12. The PCO Contract Management Team can be contacted on **020 7126 1638**.

Dave Stock

PCO Head of Service Delivery

SGS told Call Sign that it has been first to market with special programmes designed for taxis in cities such as London, Buenos Aires and Ireland. The tailor-made system suits individual regulatory demands country by country, city by city. SGS promotes better use of scarce resources and higher value for money as well as a dynamic system to improve the image and service of Public Service Vehicles.

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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

A group of drivers undertaking the current Cab Guiding Course run by the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers*, together with members of the Company, recently visited the Museum in Docklands. The museum is a fascinating insight into the history of the docks, port and the River Thames. Exhibits chart from Roman times through to today and include vessels in the water outside the museum.

Housed in the first warehouses of the enclosed docks, which were built 200 years ago for storing sugar, coffee and rum, the Museum is on the edge of West India Quay. The quayside, nicknamed Blood Alley after the damaged hands, necks and backs of dockers who once heaved sacks of raw sugar from nearby sailing ships, is overlooked by the modern development of Canary Wharf.

There are thousands of objects and pictures on display, many of which are unique, having been rescued during the 1970s and 80s after containerisation and competition forced London's port to move downstream. Interactives, videos, models and recreations explore the lives of those who built and shaped the port's long riverfront, from yesterday's gentleman pirates to today's city workers. Some of the exhibits are quite emotive, especially for anyone who has been involved in the area's history.

Time Team's Tony Robinson's video welcomes visitors into the museum. Visitors can explore the early ports of London, from the Saxon settlement in Covent Garden to the medieval port at Billingsgate. Enormous whale-bones mark one of the uses of the early wet docks at Rotherhithe in the 18th century, when London was at the centre of the world whaling trade, while a gibbet cage set at the end of a recreation of a legal quay reveals the fate of those engaged in organised crime. In Sailortown, visitors wander through a series of mid-19th century alleyways, when ships jostled to unload their wares, the air was suffused with the smells of exotic goods and the sound of a dozen different languages echoed along the wharves. On some occasions, there are actors within the shops and pub of Sailortown, giving an authentic insight to yesteryear.

Historic photographs and printed materials from the *Port of London Authority* archive show the vast scale of the docks at the turn of the 20th century. Original plans, pamphlets and engineering drawings uncover the debate surrounding the founding of the new docks from 1802. Rarely seen film from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and captured Nazi footage in Docklands at War documents the impact of the Blitz on the area during 1940. For the first time, oral testimonies are combined with footage from the *Imperial War Museum* to explore the port's role in secret projects such as the Pipe Line Under the Ocean. A series of original canvases by official war artist William Ware dramatically capture the full extent of the destruction.

One of the areas which we all enjoyed during our visit was *Mudlarks*, the Museum's interactive and 'soft play' gallery for children. There, under-11's can learn to winch and weigh cargos, get a diver's eye view of work under water, discover archaeological finds on the foreshore or even reconstruct a simple

WCHCD Welcomed to Docklands Museum



An actress brings the museum to life in Sailortown

model of Canary Wharf. There is also a café and restaurant on site.

The Museum is open Mon to Sun, 10am-6pm. Last admission 5.30pm. Closed: 24-26 December and 1 January. Admission is free for under 16's, NUS card holders and disabled carers. Annual adult ticket £5, Concessions £3 (over 60s and unwaged) allowing unlimited readmission for a full

year. For general enquiries, phone 0870 444 3851.

Sandie Goodwin

CALL SIGN READER'S SPECIAL OFFER
Bring in a copy of this article and get two Museum in Docklands entrance tickets for the price of 1. Offer applies to full price tickets only. Valid until 31/12/07.

KPM HAVE DIAL-A-CAB TERMINALS

On loan cabs for bodywork repairs

LTI main dealer KPM have three taxis fitted with Dial-a-Cab terminals that they are happy to loan to Dial-a-Cab drivers who take their taxis to the East London dealership for bodywork repairs. That means that DaC subscribers can now order a replacement cab with a terminal and continue working with a radio under their own badge number should they be unlucky enough to be involved in an RTA.

It can be difficult for those used to working on radio to get used to a period without, while their taxi is off the road, so KPM's DaC taxis with terminals will be very welcome by their DaC customers. Offer subject to availability...

Call KPM on 0207 247 7266 or 0207 377 2182...

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DaC Customer Services/Special Projects

First let me say a big thank you to all those that supported me in the recent elections. As always, I will continue to do my best to further the success of Dial-a-Cab and its drivers.

TaxiCard

Together with Carol Carpenter, DaC's Account Manager for the *Westminster Council TaxiCard Scheme*, I attended one of our regular meetings with the Westminster TaxiCard Team and I would like to pass on to you the outcome of that meeting.

To begin, the basic allocation of rides for TaxiCard users has been increased. As of 1 April 2007 until 31 March 2008, the number of trips available has been increased from 60 to 70 rides. However, various other issues were spoken about, especially with regard to passengers that have medical appointments.

The Westminster TaxiCard Team have received a number of complaints from medical staff that their patients have either been late or not turned up at all due to our service. This has had a cost effect on the service provided by hospitals, consultants, clinics and GP surgeries.

As a consequence and to help resolve the matter of late or even non-arrival of taxi patients, new procedures have been adopted within the Call Centre which may affect the TaxiCard details that drivers receive on their terminals.

At the time of booking, the passenger / patient will advise the Call Taker that the booking is for a medical appointment. This will be added to the booking details and will give our Controllers the opportunity to monitor the trips, especially if there is a coverage problem.

Westminster Council has sent letters to all TaxiCard users informing them of the relevant changes. Please do your best to cover as many TaxiCard trips as you can.

The *TaxiCard User Group* is a very powerful and vociferous group of people - especially in



Westminster. Their support for our service is vital if we are to continue servicing the needs of those with disabilities. I must also emphasise that the TaxiCard account is extremely valuable to Dial-a-Cab both financially and from a prestige point.

Generally, so far as service is concerned, the coverage is good but there have been problems with TaxiCard street hirings. One in particular comes to mind. A member of the public stopped to help a blind TaxiCard user who needed to flag down a DaC taxi. A cab eventually was hailed, but because the passenger had a guide dog our driver said he didn't pick up animals.

The member of the public stated that the passenger just needed to get home, the driver said tough and drove off. To that driver whoever you are, in addition to breaking the law, you should also be ashamed of yourself. I hope that you or a member of your family never has a disability whereby you have to rely on assistance from another person and that person turns out to be like you...

Complaints

At this time, the taxi industry has never been so financially buoyant. Nevertheless, the numbers

of complaints from clients who say drivers are rude and totally discourteous is increasing.

When speaking to some of these drivers, the impression they give is that they consider it subservient to help with luggage or being told which way the passenger wishes to travel. We are in the service and people business industry and whether we like it or not, the passenger pays us to take them from A to B.

They also have the choice as to whether to get into a Dial-a-Cab or use a car service. There are so many more licensed minicabs out there than London Cabs and perhaps some of you should ask yourself what would you do if a member of your family were treated anything with less than courtesy from a taxi driver?

Metrocab conversions

Like many other Metrocab owners, I am worried about the future. At this time, I am given to understand that there are in excess of 2400 Metrocabs on the streets of London with 350 of them on Dial-a-Cab.

I recently had a conversation with Dave Stock, Head of Service Delivery at the PCO, about the fact that I did not believe drivers would spend between £6 / 7000 on a reconditioned engine to meet the Mayor for London's emission strategy by June 2007. He assured me that there is testing for other conversion kits under way. However, should the units not conform to the criterion set by TfL, does that mean the taxi fleet of London will be decimated?

I have asked Dave Stock to write an article for *Call Sign* to allay the fears of our drivers and he did say that he would. I therefore look forward to an article in the next issue...

Mike Son

**DaC Customer Services /
Special Projects**

TOP TEN WORLD JOURNEYS INCLUDES A LONDON CAB RIDE!

A trip in a London taxi through the heart of our capital is among the top ten best cab journeys in the world, according to a leading international travel guide.

ForbesTraveller.com has ranked a trip in a licensed taxi - which it describes as a black cab - from Marble Arch to the London Eye, via Piccadilly Circus and Whitehall, in the top ten anywhere.

The guide - renowned across the world as an invaluable companion for the traveller - says passengers need not worry about the driver getting lost because of the unique knowledge that London taxi drivers have to pass. It is another feather in the cap of the capital's drivers and the iconic cab that is instantly recognisable the world over.

Matthew Cheyne, Sales and Marketing Director of LTI Vehicles, which manufactures the London-style taxis, said: "Once again, London taxis are being recognised internationally as the best. Some of the other journeys on the list are breathtaking, including boat taxis in Venice and around the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. But none of the other trips in the top ten can claim that the vehicle is in an integral part of the experience."

"Millions of tourists each year make a point of taking a ride in a London taxi when they visit London and we are delighted that this latest survey shows they are still as popular as ever."

DAC CUT-PRICE TRIPS WITH...



You can join the hundreds of Dial-a-Cab drivers who have already taken advantage of the concessionary fares Eurostar are offering us. Whether you fancy a trip to the wonderful French City of Culture, Lille, want to sample the magic of Paris or travel back in time to wander through historic Brussels, you can get there on the incredible 186mph Eurostar. You can take family and friends with you, but the DaC driver must be in the party. Booking forms are available only from the DaC Driver's Reception...

The prices? An amazing £49 return standard class - or if you would like a bit of luxury, £99 return first class!

The magic of Dial-a-Cab and Eurostar together...

Continued from February

Having sold my 18-month, money-swallowing FX3, I now went back to renting a cab and once again made a series of mistakes including one really big one - for a few weeks I worked a non-radio cab!

Remember, in those far off days there was little or no regular credit or voucher work, it was still mainly cash rides. For a non-radio cab, the work came from street hailings, ranking up at stations, hotels, theatres, clubs and the better department stores. I soon found out that without a radio, airports and roaders were few and far between. So were jobs in the suburbs, which to many of us started when you went north past Swiss Cottage or the George rank on Haverstock Hill. The chances of picking up a fare that far out in the sticks was remote. Some cabdrivers, who were brave or foolhardy enough to chance their arm and pull onto a foreign rank such as Golders Green or Wimbledon, soon found out the hard way that these ranks were only for the use of "regulars."

A typical stunt just as you reached the point was that the rank phone would ring. The new, and unsuspecting cab driver in his TX3 or even Beardmore would be admonished to: "Get out of your bleeding cab and answer the phone before the bleeder rings off!" Another ploy was when one of the regulars would answer the phone for you, hand it to the new face saying: "They want to go to the Savoy," or some other desirable ride back to town. Great, you thought! You would get the name and address of the fare. Strangely enough, the pickup point was always further away from town than where the rank was.

For example, if it was the Golders Green rank, a typical wind-up was frequently in a block of flats in a hard-to-find turning, somewhere north of the North Circular. So in this way, the 'good old boys' sent you on a wild goose chase that kept you jobless for 30 to 40 minutes. On your return to the rank, the grins on the mugs of your fellow cabdrivers often gave their game away, but there was little you could do about it other than to take the hint and mooch back empty towards town, hoping you might just be lucky enough to pick up a fare on the way.

One or two men took the rank telephone number, waited a few weeks and tried to get their revenge. Even this didn't always work out, as it was not unusual for the regulars to answer the rank phone and pretend it was just an enquiry. For some reason, they didn't want to pull the clock down and drive even a few minutes to collect a genuine fare. Many times, these same fares would give up telephoning their local rank, as it often could take them several phone calls to get a cab plus the lengthy wait. Instead, many of them because of those problems, turned to phoning a radio circuit.

They knew a cab would, 1) pick them up, 2) if there was a delay the circuit would phone them to advise them of the delay and tell them when to expect the cab - which was much better than wondering if any taxi was going to arrive - and 3) there would often be a lot less on the meter when the cab arrived at their door. This helped the radio circuits grow, but

"Sunset Strip" has now handed his badge and bill back to the PCO after 50 years - much of it with ODRTS. These are his memories...

Fifty Green Years...



"Beardmore's (and FX3's) filled the rank"

of course made the few cabdrivers whose taxis were fitted with two-way radios back in the fifties even more unpopular with other non-radio cabdrivers.

You'd be accused of stealing their work, even though they frequently would not cover it themselves if the destination didn't suit. They wanted to stay local, frequently brooming off walk-ups that wanted to go back to town. Some of the Golders Green boys didn't like even to go to anywhere off of The

Meadway, while others refused anything north of Tally Ho Corner!

Unfortunately and 50 years on, it still sounds only too familiar, doesn't it! What is also still as true as ever; you are far better off as a cabdriver on a good radio circuit. Better money, some protection and it takes away the feeling of being out there on your own...

More next month

Sunset Strip

Dial-a Cab Credit Union

Ever needed money quickly but were anxious about 'variable' bank interest rates?

Well wonder no more! If you are a subscriber, journeyman or member of staff at Dial-a-Cab then you qualify to join the **DIAL-A-CAB CREDIT UNION**.

Furthermore, any member of your family residing at your address also qualifies for membership!

Then, providing you are over 18, have been a member of the Credit Union for over three months and have established regular savings, you can borrow up to three times your total savings with a first-time maximum loan of £2000 or twice your savings total.

The cost?

Just 1% per month on the outstanding balance (or APR of 12.68%).

There are now even lower rates for loans above £6000.

You can pay your loan back early should you wish to.

All savings and loans carry free life insurance.

AND you usually get an annual dividend on your savings.

The question is: Can you afford NOT to be in it...?

In the May 2006 issue of **Call Sign**, Dial-a-Cab driver, **Brian Dust (B25)**, told us of an horrific attack in Camden on a friend of his, former DaC driver **Gary Tisshaw**.

Gary had been driving along Camden High Street with a passenger. Just as he reached Camden Lock, a man walked into the road forcing Gary to stop.

Gary – who was on DaC for 7 years – told us that three men then surrounded the cab trying to open the door. He tried to drive off, but one of the men put his hand through the window with Gary believing that the pain he suddenly felt was where he had been hit on the face.

But it wasn't a fist, it had been a Stanley Knife pulled across his face. It left his nose hanging off and a long cut across his cheek. Gary finally spent three days in hospital having lost three pints of blood, with emergency surgery to try to repair the cuts.

Speaking again to **Call Sign** almost one year on, Gary told us that he has now decided against plastic surgery, with the scars having shown huge improvements. Just as importantly, the perpetrators of the crime were caught and appeared in court last month.

Amazingly and unbeknown to Gary at the time, the police had watched the incident on CCTV and were on their way to

2006 Knife Attack on Former DaC Driver Attackers Sentenced...



Gary's injuries after last year's attack. The scars are now almost healed

help even before the ambulance had arrived. They made three arrests soon after, with one of the men still carrying the knife that had Gary's blood on it. One of the three was later released with no charge, but of the other two – who were brothers – one was sentenced to 5 years while the other is awaiting sentence subject to psychological reports.

As for Gary, he told us: **"It was a harrowing experience that I wouldn't**

wish on anyone. But life goes on and you can't just sit down feeling sorry for yourself. The scars are not noticeable to those that don't look for them and that helps. But knowing that those two have been locked up helps more than anything. Like most drivers, I get peed off with CCTV cameras watching our every move, but on this occasion, I can't thank them and the police enough."

ALLAN EVANS CAB BROKEN INTO OUTSIDE ROMAN WAY!

DaC Board member Allan Evans had a farewell to remember prior to leaving his job at DaC's Roman Way fitting depot to take over as Complaints Officer.

"I heard some breaking glass at around 10am but didn't think too much of it. After all, who is going to break into a vehicle at that time of the morning in full view of passers-by?"

Unfortunately for Allan, that is exactly what did happen. Police later told him that the event had been captured on CCTV but both of the culprits wore hoods. They smashed the luggage door window and took among other things, his TomTom satnav unit which he had kept hidden out of sight.

In their rush to escape, a bicycle was left by the cab's broken window among the pile of glass on the floor.

Allan told **Call Sign**: "If you are waiting to get into Roman Way, don't leave your cab unattended for longer than it takes to report to the office to tell them why you are there. Several days later and I still keep finding bits of shattered glass in the cab!"

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Telephone: 01708 735 015

10% discount for Dial-a-Cab drivers!

*Call Sign recently took another 9 drivers on a "Listening Tour"
We asked DaC driver Richard Potter (T51) to write about it*

Call Sign Visits LTI



Roger Gershfield can't think what this reminds him of!



DaC Group looking around the factory

A Driver's view...

If you have read my articles in *Call Sign*, you may have noticed that I haven't been that impressed with the TX2 I brought last year from M&O as a replacement for my TX1. In fact over my years in the cab trade, I have always thought that the service the main dealers offer and the LTI cabs they supply, with the exception of the *Fairway Driver*, was just 'average'.

Some of my complaints about the TX2 were mirrored by other drivers with the engine noise, rattling chain adjuster and a vibrating steering wheel to name a few. Within the first year, I had to get the prop shaft replaced because of a leak in the gearbox, with the timing chain and alternator belts having a persistent problem with reduced power. The cab also struggled to achieve the 9000 miles service intervals even using LTI fully synthetic oil and I am, for the first time, into my third set of front pads since overhaul.

I am also currently sitting in the cold through not using the front heater due to gearbox fumes that blow into the compartment. Even though the cab has only done 90,000 miles, the gearbox is showing signs of wear. When I had it looked at, I was told that the gearbox breather pipe sits directly over the exhaust manifold, so as the gearbox spits out oil when it heats up and it falls onto the hot manifold turning into a gas-like state.

After so many complaints, I thought it a good idea when the Editor asked whether I would like to go to Coventry to see the LTI factory in action, so I joined the group.

The Call Sign team consisted of myself, Alan Fisher, Ronnie Marlow, Stanley Roth, Mike McGlynn, Roger Gershfield, Gary Cox and Alex Constantinou. We met at Euston on Wednesday 14th March and travelled on the excellent Virgin Pendolino tilting train heading for Coventry. Thanks to Virgin, we also travelled First Class.

After a small breakfast, 1 hour 4 minutes later we were met by LTI Sales and Marketing Director Matthew Cheyne and Government Affairs Manager Richard Daniels at Coventry Station and driven the short distance to the LTI factory. My first impression was that it was much smaller than I had imagined. The itinerary for the day was to spend some time with LTI directors on a Q&A session and then go on a tour of the factory, this all being part of LTI's *listening programme*. We were met in the training room by LTI Technical Director Paul Wooley, Customer and Technical Support Manager Trevor Hattersley and again by both Matthew Cheyne and Richard Daniels. Alan was also asked whether he minded two trade newspaper Editors accompanying us – Sandie Goodwin (Taxi Globe) and Bob Fisher (Taxicab News). He gave them the okay. *Call Sign* also sent some advance questions to the LTI team for their consideration and they answered them all – some via other questions, but nothing was hidden from the DaC drivers.

There were questions such as why the VM Motori was chosen for the TX4, why did LTI tell the London cab trade that they had no plans for the TX4 even though there clearly was, did LTI have an alternative cab lined up had the CoF fallen, why did we have such a heavy vehicle, why didn't

the TX4 have disc brakes all round, why are their... whatever happened to the TX3 and a question on... session overran by some 40 minutes! There were... our group, such as Ronnie Marlow talking about... the sharpness under the driver's seat and Mike M... warning light. LTI took notes on all DaC driver's...

We then embarked on a tour of the factory, led... ing the whole process from sheet metal being pr... body being put onto the chassis with bolts, through... started up and tested.

All in all, the LTI production line was very r... was how labour intensive the whole process v... robots here and the metal presses were som... everywhere.

I already knew that the engine and gearbox w... components that came from abroad or were man... quickly apparent was that LTI were very hot on c... detail and checking right through the assembly pr... Marlow's comments elsewhere in *Call Sign*, it's l... with doors that wouldn't shut properly.

At present, the LTI factory produces 80 cabs, c... pleted on overtime with one complete... To me, the factory is where cabs are made. Wh... money that LTI give cab drivers through their tax... cabs from LTI. What I was showed was the pretty... remember if LTI offered cab drivers tours of the... ..Ed).

It was never really explained how the problem... aged to continue until they came off the production... in 2001. Nor was the diminishing MPG problem. A... 24mpg and now the TX4 around 21 in-town mpg... he was getting around 35mpg in his TX4, ... However, I must say that I was impressed with... purpose built vehicle is very difficult and in th... Conditions of Fitness do LTI any favours. If the reg... a bigger and better company through the experien...

“Strengthening Programme” trip to LTI’s Coventry factory.
 Write the article and to give his views on the day...

LTI Coventry Again



Finishing touches - Quality control looking for marks on the body

not more garages authorised to do warranty work, in Blackhorse Finance loan rates? In fact, the Q&A many other questions brought up on the day by this badly closing doors, Gary Cox moaning about Glynn complaining about the lack of an intercom suggestions.

by Overseas Sales Co-ordinator Nigel Walters, seessed into various shapes for body panels, to the h to the paintshop and finally the new TX4s being

much what I expected, but what surprised me was and that LTI employ some 350 people. No ne 60 years old! There were literally people

ere imported, but there were quite a lot of other manufactured by other carmakers. What also became quality assurance and there was much attention to ccess. Again surprising, because if you read Ronnie hard to understand how he received his new cab

on a four-day, 37-hour week, the rest being com-taxi taking 120 man hours to build. at is more important is the quality and value for is, as we basically have no choice but to buy our much untried and tested TX4 and I really cannot factory showing off the early TX2. (Yes, they did

with the TX2 timing chains and tensioners man-on line late last year when the fault was recognised TX1 was covering approx 26mpg, the TX2 around One driver told us that on motorway conditions, but it dropped substantially once in town. the set up and the factory because making any e long run, I do not believe that the (London) gulations were lifted, I am sure LTI would become ce and if competition was allowed in London, dri-

vers could get a better quality vehicle at a cheaper price.

There is market confidence in Manganese Bronze at the moment, with share prices tripling with the introduction of and surge in demand for the TX4. However this could give a false impression if drivers are buying the TX4 simply to get away from the TX2. With the factory working flat out to meet demand, there is surely going to be an oversupply of taxis, thus bringing second values down even faster. At present, a one-year-old cab has a dealer part exchange value of about £9000 of the original sale price.

Apart from this, there should be no reason why LTI can't take on the competition and be the market leader; after all, it's never going to go away. Personally, I want LTI to become a top company in the vehicle manufacturing business because their success is our success, it reflects well on the London cab trade and it is in everyone's interest to be associated with vehicles that are known for their durability and reliability. The London taxi is a British icon the world over and should be built the world over, strengthening LTI's standing. But so long as LTI underachieve, the real losers will be us, the drivers.

Whilst speaking to the LTI team during the visit, I believe that they were genuinely interested in what we had to say, appreciated that the TX2 and Ford Duratorq engine had not been up to standard and had damaged their reputation as a vehicle manufacturer. They were also keen to improve their product and the way drivers were being dealt with by dealers via their quality service questionnaires. This gives them a feedback about dealers and an accountability trail, but LTI should be actively seeking garages that are prepared to do warranty work, because the present waiting times for appointments are unacceptably long with drivers having to travel long distances to get to main dealers.

Personally, I hope that the TX4 heralds a new dawn for LTI and that people quickly start talking about what a good cab the TX4 is and leave the TX2 to rust in the breakers yard of London cab trade. All in all, I found the trip very beneficial as I was speaking to real faces of what can be at times a very frustrating and sometimes faceless company and if any DaC driver gets the opportunity to travel to the factory, then take it.

Finally, thanks to Alan Fisher for organising the trip and to all the other drivers who made it such an enjoyable one. Thanks also to the LTI team for their hospitality during the visit, for the invite itself and for allowing the *Call Sign* team into the factory – also and to Virgin trains for the first class service.

Richard Potter (T51)

Editor's note: Monthly sales of the new TX4, launched by LTI Vehicles last October, are expected to top 400 for the first time in March...

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

Accidents, insurance and the driver's duties...

You've all read the *Highway Code*, but it has been revised considerably in recent years and is well worth another read, I assure you. All of your duties are explained with lots of good advice too. Much of what it contains does not have the force of law, but parts that do are clearly marked.

There is no requirement to report an accident to the police if no one is injured and those involved exchange contact details. If there is an injury, you must tell the police as soon as practicable - although most whiplash injuries are not felt for some time afterwards, even up to 24 hours.

Legally, drivers of emergency vehicles have the same standard of care to meet as anyone else. Although a police car can speed or go through a red light, the driver must still take care for pedestrians and other road users. Police cause an alarming number of injuries and deaths in the course of high-speed chases and depending on the circumstances, can be sued successfully by the injured or the bereaved.

Similarly, learner drivers also have the same requirement to drive competently in law as any other driver and will be prosecuted by the police for driving offences, using the same criteria as they would for you. If a learner driver injures you, claim compensation, as the same principle applies - showing 'L' plates will not help them.

Driving uninsured

If you allow someone to use your vehicle without being insured, you can also be prosecuted for the same offence, although if you believed the driver was insured and had made reasonable enquiries about their insurance, you may have a defence. If your son, for example, faces prosecution for driving uninsured and you knew he had no cover, you are in the frame for a conviction too. But do not be tempted to say you did not know he had taken your vehicle, if you did know. That kind of quick thinking could add another offence on to your son's charge sheet - taking without the owner's consent.

Many policies cover the policyholder to drive any other vehicle - with the owner's consent - for third party liability only. If you have that cover and you are happy with third-party cover, there is no need for further insurance if you borrow someone else's car. Check your policy - which vehicles you can drive are set out right at the beginning.

Accidents

Do not admit liability, or even apologise, after

an accident even if it was completely your fault. If you do, you prejudice your insurer's freedom to deal with the claim on your behalf. At worst, they could decline to cover you if you make admissions at the scene.

Do you need to involve your insurance at all when the damage seems minor and you know it was your fault? But do your sums before thinking of settling or even offering money, as preserving your no-claims bonus is rarely as important as drivers think. If you have the full 60% NCB, one claim is likely to reduce it only by 20%. Normally, only a really big claim wipes out the whole NCB. 20% extra on, say, an £800 premium is only £160 extra for one year. If you pay out more than that through fear of losing your NCB, you are cheating yourself. If you change insurers, of course you will have to declare any recent claims against you, but remember

also, a cash payment at the scene does nothing to prevent a further, formal claim later for the same crash. Remember, the cheerful driver in front of you who takes your £150 for the dent to his bumper, has probably also taken your registration number and is perfectly entitled to claim for more after he wakes up with a stiff neck and takes a month off work!

Hope Liebersohn
GlenistersSolicitors
020-8735-9776 or
hl@glenisters.com



New York Gives Pedicabs a Bashing!



The **New York City Council** has passed a bill on their pedicab industry, which now brings it under the same regulations as taxis. The council also limited their numbers to 325. There are currently around 500 circulating the City.

The new regulations give the New York Police Department summary powers to ban pedicabs whenever they consider them to be a threat to the City's "heavy vehicular traffic."

The Bill passed by 38 - 7, despite objections from the pedicab industry who claim that the new regulations go too far. The Bill also bans the use of the electric motors that some drivers use to assist in pedalling and requires that operators carry liability insurance at a level similar to taxi owners. The bikes must also have proper indicators fitted and will be banned from the midtown area theatre district during the run-up to Christmas and the New Year and also at any time when there are parades in the area.

According to council officials, around half of all pedicab operators are without insurance. The Bill also requires that drivers be licensed and that the vehicles undergo inspections.

New York City Pedicab Owners Association representative, **Chad Marlow**, claimed that the association agrees with much of the legislation, but intended to file a lawsuit challenging some parts of it - especially the sections of the bill referring to the restriction on electric motors and Midtown ban. He agreed that the Council was within its rights to impose a cap, as the city does with taxis.

Theatres, hotel owners and even the drivers of horse-drawn carriages have joined NY taxi drivers in calling for the crackdown on the unlicensed three-wheelers. Taxi operators say the pedicab drivers cut into their business without being bound by the same licensing, safety and insurance requirements.

Mr. Marlow said that the industry did want regulations, not for insurance purposes, but to force out irresponsible drivers. But he said that in the two years the proposal was being considered, the regulations have expanded and now threaten the industry's ability to operate properly.

The PCO's famous brown and white coats have been inspecting, passing and licensing London's taxis for the past 40 years, but Friday 23 March saw a presentation at the Public Carriage Office in Penton Street to mark the end of that era with the last full taxi inspection to be carried out at Penton Street before the operation was taken over by SGS.

The **Metropolitan Public Carriages Office** moved from its home at 7 Lancaster Place, Waterloo Bridge when it took over the regulating of the trade in 1850. The

Will the last cab on the PCO ramps please switch off the lights...

work involved was undertaken by the new **Public Carriage Office** from an annex to New Scotland Yard in Whitehall.

licensing authority changed, the day-to-day licensing function remains with the PCO. That still remains the case...

Some 70 years later, the operation moved to 109 Lambeth Road and remained there until moving to its last home at 15 Penton Street in 1966. Now, as of 23 March 2007, passing London's taxis will have left the domain of the PCO forever.

The final ceremony began with an introduction from the PCO's Taxi & Private Hire Director, Ed Thompson and was followed by a history lesson on Taxi inspections at the PCO from Dave Stock, Head of Service Delivery. Alan Matthews, Head of Taxi Projects, brought those present right up to date with taxi inspections from April 2007.

Guest speaker's David Brown, Director of Surface Transport and Ivan Kovler, Chairman of the LMCPA wound up the proceedings.

Transport for London came into being in July 2000 and although the

SMILE



Billy was bragging to his boss that he knew everyone there was to know.

"Just name someone, anyone, and I know them," he said.

Tired of hearing him boast, his boss called him bluff: "OK, Billy how about Tom Cruise?"

"Sure, yes, Tom and I are old friends and I can prove it," replied Billy.

So Billy and his boss flew out to Hollywood and knocked on Tom Cruise's door. Sure enough, Tom Cruise answered and shouted: "Hey Billy, great to see you! You and your friend come right in and join me for lunch!"

Although impressed, Billy's boss was still sceptical. After they left Cruise's house, he told Billy that he thought Billy's knowing Cruise was just lucky.

"No, no," replied Billy, "just name anyone else then."

Ok, President Bush," his boss quickly retorted.

"Yes," said Billy, "I know him, let's fly out to Washington." And off they went...

At the White House, Mr Bush spotted Billy on the tour and motioned him and his boss over. "Billy," he called out, "what a nice surprise! I was just on my way to a meeting, but you and your friend come on in and let's have a cup of coffee first and catch up."

His boss was very shaken by now but still not totally convinced. After they left the White House grounds, he expressed his doubts to Billy, who again implored him to name anyone.

"How about the Pope," his boss said. "Sure," said Billy, "my parents are from Germany and I've known the Pope a long time." So off they flew to Rome...

Billy and his boss assembled with the masses in Vatican Square when Billy said that he thought it might not work.

"I can't catch the Pope's eye among all these people. Tell you what, I know all the guards, so let me just go upstairs and I'll come out onto the balcony with the Pope!"

And with that he disappeared into the crowd and headed towards the Vatican itself. Sure enough, 30 minutes later he emerged with the Pope onto the balcony!

By the time Billy returned to find his boss, he was stunned to hear that he'd had a heart attack and was surrounded by paramedics. Working his way to his boss's side, Billy cradled his head and asked him what had happened?

His boss looked up and said weakly: "I was doing fine until you and the Pope came out on the balcony and the man next to me asked who that was on the balcony with Billy...!"

METROPOLITAN PUBLIC CARRIAGES OFFICE.

NOTICE.

**To the Public, and to Proprietors,
Drivers, Conductors, and
Watermen.**

**THE Business of this Office WILL CLOSE
on the 6th of April, and under the Provisions
of the Act of the 13th of Victoria, cap. 7, the
Duties will, in future, be carried on**

**AT THE OFFICE
OF THE**

**Commissioners of Police
OF THE METROPOLIS,
IN
GREAT SCOTLAND YARD**

**but in consequence of the time that will be
required for the removal and arrangement of
the Books and Papers, &c., no Business can
be transacted until the 10th instant.**

WILLIAM MANSELL,
Deputy Registrar.

*7, Lancaster Place, Waterloo Bridge,
April 1st, 1850.*

London: Printed by W. Curran and Sons, 14, Cheapside.

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conductors, waterman, proprietors and the public of
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On Wednesday 12 November 1997, *Call Sign* set up a UK Internet list thanks to much hard work from our computer man, Vince Chin. Known as *Discuss*, it allowed anyone with an Internet facility and connection to the cab trade to join and, as its name suggests, discuss matters of mutual interest to the taxi business.

It tried to follow the successful format of the American *Taxi-L*, which managed to discuss most things in a very sensible way – albeit with the occasional spat.

By the end of the first year, there were some 60 drivers on *Discuss* and several others from within the trade whose job was other than driving. There was someone from KPM, the Chairman of Manganese Bronze at the time – Jamie Borwick – contributed and Brian Rice often wrote in response to a question.

After several years, Vince closed the list because he felt that the inmates were running the asylum, with driver's language to each other running out of control. By that time, many original members – including me – had left. Having been involved in setting it up, probably the first UK list of its kind, I felt a terrible sadness.

I was invited to rejoin a new list set up by DaC driver of the time, Jamie Owens, but I declined as the same people were still there and I couldn't see how things would improve. Many on *Discuss* are just ordinary, everyday cab drivers, but they are often drowned out by the small few who put their views forward as gospel when in reality either they know little of what they are talking about, or they feel that they must show off and pretend to know what they don't.

Second in command to Alan Fleming at the LCDC, Grant Davis, is a good example. Unlike Alan Fleming – whose knowledge of law is excellent and who has been re-elected several times – Grant recently stood for election at the DaC 2006 AGM and failed to get anywhere close to the number of votes required. Grant Davis can be very friendly, but usually only to your face. Behind your back – and in the comfort of the UK Internet list – he holds court, spouting rubbish.

Everyone is entitled to their view and no one is right all the time, but the views of Grant Davis seem to bear little semblance to reality.

Although no longer a member of the UK list, I occasionally have some of their emails sent to me if they mention either myself or Dial-a-Cab. I have no interest in anything else they wish to discuss, otherwise I would have rejoined.

So back to Grant Davis. He announced last year that he would be standing as a candidate for election as a DaC arbitrator. I had asked all candidates to send in a CV to publish so that drivers could see who they wanted to vote for. All the candidates sent in CVs except for Grant. He sent in an anti-BoM statement that I refused to publish, as it wasn't a CV.

I offered to rewrite it for him using the parts that were relevant to a CV. As a result, he was elected. Looking back, perhaps I shouldn't have done it for him, but I cannot change the past.

I wasn't looking for thanks, but some nevertheless arrived! He wrote:

From Grant Davis, 23rd April 2006:

Thanks for doing that add on, I see what you mean. My mistake. P.S. will you vote for me?

Neither was I looking for the following,

Internet and the Cab Trade

Is it really free speech?



Grant Davis: Second in command at the LCDC

which he put onto the UK Internet list assuming that I wouldn't see it. His reference to Paul and Gerry was in regard to two DaC drivers who attempted to defend me, one of whom he has repeatedly – and incorrectly – accused of sending me emails from the list.

From Grant Davis, 11th March 2007, Discuss taxi list:

Just because Paul spoke to the slime ball Alan Fisher who told him that you are not the grass on the list.....do you think for one instance I will now shrug my shoulders and say "ok then that's all right" Are you mad? To be honest I do not trust you (Gerry), Paul, or that slag Fisher as far as I could throw you lot!

Does that bother me? Well I can't say I enjoy being called that behind my back, but no, it changed my life not one iota. I already knew that what he says to your face bears little resemblance to what he says behind your back. I've survived worse...

Then there is Concierge. Like many, whilst I thought the idea was amazing – especially the fact that we built the system by ourselves – I had some doubts because Private Hire was involved.

Yes, they were there before anyway, but out of sight, out of mind etc. However, as time went on it became obvious that we were getting more and more work by offering clients the chance to sort out their transport through one number whereas before, the client would have used the same vehicles, but would have to phone individually.

Then we heard that thanks to Concierge,

our share of the JPM account regarding taxis had gone up to 90%. Not that long ago it had been just 10% until Concierge came along and changed everything.

Some still don't trust it, whilst others mix it up with T-attributes accounts. They are totally unconnected. Grant Davis is one who doesn't trust it – and he spends much time on the Internet rubbishing it. That is his right. He also stood for election to the Board on an anti-Concierge ticket and lost heavily.

Then recently, Brian Rice phoned Grant and invited him to DaC for a chat about Concierge and Dial-a-Cab in general. The Chairman had read an article in *The Badge* written by Mr Davis that was in Brian's words to *Call Sign*, "utter rubbish." He wanted to furnish Grant with what he described as the correct facts so that *The Badge* might be in a position to print a retraction. Grant said he'd get back to Brian, but apparently never did because according to the DaC Chairman, the first he knew that Grant wasn't coming was when he saw an email that had been put onto the Internet and then passed onto *Call Sign*. In it, Grant was doing what Grant often does on the Internet. He wrote:

From Grant Davis, 13th March 2007, Discuss taxi list:

I had a call on Friday from Brian Rice, asking me to come in and have a chat! Call me an old cynic, but when he introduced Concierge, the T attributes and even Bolt Holdings to the membership, he never asked me in for a cuppa and a chat. I spoke to someone (on the circuit) who went into the Chair's office for a chat and guess what, he was shown the loggers of a couple of drivers!

Does this break the Data Protection Act? Never mind. I'll have to decline the offer, like they say ignorance is bliss...

I asked Brian Rice whether Grant had phoned him back. The answer was no and the first he knew that he wasn't coming was from this Internet email. Good manners are not compulsory. *Call Sign* also asked about the loggers?

Brian said that he had never shown anyone someone else's loggers – and that includes the *Call Sign* Editor.

If Grant can back up his claim with that driver coming forward, we'd be interested in seeing what he has to say. I have my doubts as any instance such as that would have come out without help from the Internet, but the offer is there. Otherwise we ask again, is the Internet really free speech?

Perhaps Grant should take note of the article on the opposite page and show the world his love side!

**Alan Fisher
Editor**

Continued from March...

We have counted the months, the weeks, the days and the minutes till October 1998 – and the day we are to meet in person is finally here. Sam and I were going to meet face to face...

6 October 1998 – 13 October 1998

We have counted the months, weeks and days, but now it is just hours to the moment when we will be meeting in person. Sam and I are going to meet face to face. We have spoken on the phone everyday since first meeting online and we can just talk forever. I've fallen in love with this wonderful man before ever laying eyes on him and I am hoping he feels the same about me. He said he did, he said he loved me so much that it hurt. When we speak on the phone, it is just so hard to hang up at the end, I just miss him so much afterwards. I feel so close to him while we speak but after we hang up I always know he is, in reality just so far away from me, even though I always keep him very near to me - right inside my heart.

I know it's hard to believe that you can fall in love like this, but it has happened to me and I think it has happened to him as well.

I fell in love with Sam's soul, with his laughter, his soft voice and sexy accent, his great sense of humour, with the way he loved me across the miles, but especially with the way he makes me feel. I always feel so happy when I speak with him – even though I am living in California and he is driving a taxi for Dial-a-Cab in London, England.

But now the day we have both waited for so long is here... watch out New York, here we come!

It is around 6pm, 6 October 1998 and my plane had just landed at JFK. I am so nervous! I'm supposed to meet Sam here. I called a cab and asked the driver to just drive around the air terminal to where Sam was supposed to have arrived just a few minutes before me. I look around but can't see him anywhere. I'm trying to find a guy with a red sports jacket he told me he would be wearing, but I can't see him anywhere. After walking up and down the terminal area and not being able to see him, I return to the cab and ask the driver to take me to the hotel we've booked. I don't know what's happened, I just hope he has arrived safely.

As the cab went through the streets of New York City, I called *The Modern* hotel from my cell phone. The hotel operator answered the phone and let me know that Stephen had just rang and that he is on his way to the hotel as well. I breathe a sigh of relief. He's here and in a few more minutes we are going to meet. I feel so excited! My heart is beating so fast. Oh God! Is this happening for real...

Meeting at The Modern...

I arrive at the hotel first, get a relaxing glass of wine and chat with the lady at the front desk telling her all about our story. Then a yellow New York cab pulls up in front of the hotel. I think I'm going to die! My heart feels like it is going to jump out of my chest as I see a man

This is the true love story of a Dial-a-Cab driver and a Californian beauty who met and fell in love on the Internet in 1998. Sam lived in London and drove for DaC, while Jenny lived on the USA west coast. Call Sign is publishing Jenny's story exactly as she sent it and with her permission. For obvious reasons, their names have been changed, but any photos are genuine...

L♥ve On the Internet



Jenny knows Sam is just minutes away as she tries to calm her nerves with a glass of wine

in a red jacket get out of the cab. Oh my God, it's him!

Without even collecting his luggage, he briskly walks into the hotel lobby and towards

me. I can't take my eyes off him and I just can't believe the moment we have waited for so long is actually here. He stops in front of me, takes me in his arms and hugs me very tightly. Oh God, what a hug! I feel like I've died and gone to heaven. I can also feel how nervous he is.

"Hello Sam," I said. He just responded in kind, smiles at me and then goes back outside to where the cab is waiting, gets his case and almost runs back into the hotel.

We have decided to share a room, after all and even though we have never met in person, we have shared many wonderful times online or on the phone. We have talked to each other every night for the past four months. An hour or more every night. We've gotten to know each other so well, even though we are so far away and have wanted so long for this moment to arrive. Now it's here and we're face to face. This is our moment in time.

They show us to our room...

Continued next month...

Every Monday is Leon Taxi Day!

LEON is the award-winning group serving fresh, seasonal and naturally fast food with five restaurants currently located in London and more branches opening later this year.

LEON food is boldly flavoured with herbs and spices instead of additives and none of the bad fats, carbs and high GI levels of conventional fast food.

Expect to see on the menu Moroccan meatballs, grilled free-range chicken served with Leon-made sauces and baked sweet potato falafels.

Beat Monday morning blues with free LEON coffee or tea all day (including refills on personal hot cups) for taxi drivers.

Tired and hungry taxi drivers will also be able to pick up a bacon sarnie for brekkie (8-11am) or hot soup for lunch (11.30am - close) with any purchase of a smoothie so long as your badge or Bill is produced.

LEON restaurants are located at:

136 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge (020 7589 7330)

35 Great Marlborough Street (020 7437 5280): 12 Ludgate Circus (020 7489 1580)

3 Crispin Place, Spitalfields Market (020 7247 4369): 73-76 Strand (0207 240 3070)

You can take a peep at their menus at www.leonrestaurants.co.uk



The Leon Restaurant at Spitalfields Market

Change of a "Bobby?"

We've all had it! You've just started work and *Charlie Big Potatoes* gets in your cab, goes round the corner for £3.80, gives you a £20 note and then 'legals' you off! You don't mind that, but then you pick up his twin brother for your next job and he does the same! Now you've got a problem because your floats all gone and you have a long shift ahead. You now find yourself on a rank and quickly jump out and ask one of your comrades if they've got change.

This brings us to a new face in our wallets. His name is Adam Smith and you will find him on the back of a newly introduced £20 note. Smith, who by the way was a Scottish philosophy professor in economics, was chosen by *Bank of England* governor Mervyn King to replace Sir Edward Elgar. In a recent poll, more than half wanted Churchill as a preferable male replacement on the note, while suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst narrowly beat Princess Diana as a female choice.

Well being a man of the 'beautiful game', I conducted my own poll amongst a few cabbies and they all agreed that the only person from the world of football that could grace the note in question is Bobby Moore. Come to think of it, the late, great legends name even rhymes with 'score', so it could easily be introduced into 'cabby slang' for the aforementioned note. So the next time you need to change a £20 note, all you need to ask is "can you change a Bobby?"

Deadly Dimitar

Every now and again, we have a foreign import who turns up on our shores and causes everyone to sit up and pay attention. In the past we've had the likes of Zola, Bergkamp, Ginola

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

Russell's Hall of Footie



witnessed his games against Chelsea (3-3 at Stamford Bridge) and the 3-2 home win against Braga in the UEFA Cup, a competition that many believe Spurs will go all the way in - including me!

Teddy Sherring'den'

Could Millwall's favourite son return to the Den to help boost the club's late surge towards the League One play-offs? The Lions approached the striker, who turns 41 this month, with a deal that would initially be as a player but ultimately lead to the prospect of a coaching role. In my opinion, I believe Teddy should be given the opportunity to spread his knowledge and wealth of experience of the game to Willie Donachie's young Lions to assist in what could be a thrilling end of the season. Do Millwall fans want Teddy? Let me know what you think.

Russell Hall (G44)

Send your footie tales to Russell at rwball@russthehammerfsnet.co.uk or look out for his cab when you are out and about, reg J111 RUS. He loves a footie chat...

Now Geely Hits Moscow!

Chinese carmaker Geely – who last year won the right to produce London taxis in Shanghai – are now about to link up with Automobile and Motors of Ural and plan to begin assembling its cars in Moscow as part of its global expansion strategy.

Geely Holding Group vice president Jie Zhao told *Call Sign* that assembly would start from next month.

"The plan is to produce and sell 19,000 cars this year, 30,000 cars next year and 50,000 in 2009," he said.

Like the plan for London taxis, Geely eventually plans to produce cars using locally made parts, although they will be starting with their own parts from China.



Global expansion? Girlie ads? What would Chairman Mao have made of it all!

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 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

And he reckons you're right about Metrocab conversions...!

Call Sign Editor Alan Fisher recently had a phone call from long-time Dial-a-Cab driver **Bernie Silver (G08)**.

"Guess who I just picked up," he asked, "and he agrees with your Editorial on Metrocabs and the Nissan conversion?"

After several minutes of unsuccessful guesses ranging from Alan Fleming to Prince Phillip, the Editor admitted defeat.

"It was Steve Norris," said Bernie, "he sends his regards and said that he agreed 100% with your sentiments on the PCO's decision that it was ridiculous to force a new engine onto old Metrocabs."

So *Call Sign* asked Steve Norris – the former Conservative Minister of Transport who spent much time dealing with taxis as well as the PCO – what the views he imparted to Bernie Silver were. He told *Call Sign*:

"I was appalled to read your report (*March Call Sign*) that Metrocab drivers could be forced to pay many thousands of pounds to have their cabs brought up to the Mayor's imposed emissions standards without any assistance being offered and with no alternative means of financing this punishing burden even being contemplated.

"We all know emissions need to be improved, so the idea of gradually ratcheting up standards over time is perfectly acceptable - provided it is done reasonably. Just assuming you can stick all the costs on the meter is naive. First, you have

I Had That Steve Norris in My Cab!



From the Call Sign vaults. A slightly younger Alan Fisher and Steve Norris discuss a Government white paper when Mr Norris was Minister of Transport

to pay up front rather than over several years and second, every time fares rise the cab trade has to fight even harder just to stand still."

Mr Norris went on: "I would give a far longer notice period to owners to allow them to plan vehicle replacements or upgrades and look for ways in which at least some of the cost could be defrayed. Common sense is what is so often lacking in Livingstone's treatment of the licensed taxi industry. He seems to forget that unless young people have a real incentive to do the Knowledge - still one of the toughest tests of entry to any profession - and then buy a work tool currently costing well over £30,000, the trade will die. The average age of the trade is creeping up year-by-year, which is not healthy. And who will be the real losers? Londoners, every one of them, whether they personally use cabs or not."

He ended by saying: "This trade, despite all its imperfections, is simply the best in the world and its value in terms of our tourism trade is incalculable. I believe the best policy a Mayor should adopt toward the London licensed taxi trade is, quite frankly, that when a clock is ticking, then don't fix it. Maybe that's why I'm a Conservative and not a Marxist Leninist!"

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Telephone 0208 692 1122

Why TFL Closed Link After Building Collapse?

Perhaps cos they're plonkers?

John Addis (K97) was one of the many DaC drivers whose passengers faced nightmare journeys on 13 February when a building in Commercial Road (E1) collapsed. Traffic throughout that day and into the evening remained horrendous, with diversions being set up that seemed to serve little purpose other than to totally baffle drivers.

But there was one other problem facing Dial-a-Cab drivers that puzzled and annoyed John. As the evening came, with traffic still virtually at a standstill in the area, why did they still go ahead with the scheduled closure of the Limehouse Link? After all, had it remained open, it would have at least sped up the departure of those thousands of City office workers trying to get out of the City and home towards the east. As it was, the whole of the east end ground to a halt and remained that way late into the night.

John told **Call Sign**: **"Everyone was stuck with nothing moving. But when I saw a terminal message saying that the Link was closing - as it usually does on Tuesday - and with traffic already totally snarled up, I couldn't believe it. It was just total madness!"**

John decided to write to Transport for London (TfL) to complain and sent a copy of his letter and the TfL reply to MP, Jim Fitzpatrick, whose constituency includes the Wharf. Mr Fitzpatrick called the TfL response "a non-answer." If ever an organisation showed its true colours, then this meaningless piece of TfL drivel to John Addis is it. It comes from Stuart Towne, Customer Services Advisor at Surface Transport Communications (Transport for London)...

Dear Mr Addis,

Thank you for your email regarding the closures of Limehouse Link and Commercial Road.

On 13 February 2007, at around 16:59, a multi-storey building on Commercial Road collapsed necessitating the immediate closure of the carriageway in both directions. Due to the nature of the collapse and the poten-

tial for life-saving rescue operations, the Metropolitan Police instigated a number of closures and diversions. This is normal for this type of event, and we supported this complex activity, which was complicated by a lack of knowledge on the number of people on the building site.

Despite the best efforts of the London Traffic Control Centre (LTCC) to mitigate the congestion, the number of changes to the diversion plan meant that the Limehouse Link Tunnel scheduled maintenance did proceed. Had the situation not been as complex and the closures static and perhaps, clearly defined earlier, a different course of action would have followed.

Lessons have been identified from this incident and changes to working practices and our continued partnership working will do much to ensure against this reoccurring in future.

Thank you for contacting us regarding this issue and I trust the above information clarifies the situation.

Yours sincerely, Stuart Towne

Certainly, of paramount importance was the safety of everyone in the vicinity. But does anyone understand why Mr Towne says the Link had to shut - because **Call Sign** doesn't...!



The collapsed building



Order Power Pill Through Their New Website

As you will notice from the logo attached to this article, Power Pill have a new image and a new website to accompany it. It includes all the articles and letters featured in **Call Sign** over the past 18 months, so if you missed any of them in the magazine you can read them all again. It also includes the report on the *Engine Examinations* carried out with several of our drivers - **Ken Jackman (B29)**, **Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)** and **Stephen Hassan (P95)**, plus a special Dial-a-Cab page featuring many of the quotes from happy drivers reporting fuel savings, less black smoke and quieter, smoother running engines.

You should all know that Power Pill UK Ltd have a special DaC promotion, giving drivers **12 packs of Power Pills for the price of 10** - a saving of £7.50 per pack! This offer can now be taken up online using their new secure payment system on the website. Just hit one of the **"Buy now"** buttons and then type in code **"DAC12"** in the *Promotional Code* box in the shopping cart. This will automatically put the correct numbers into the correct boxes for your order. You can still use the old fashioned method of picking up the phone and calling Power Pill on **0845 1 30 80 77** or purchase them from **JVBright at Southbank Service Station**, but for those of you who do use the Internet, this new method makes life easy.

If you pass the word about Power Pill, you can get free pills for yourself! Call Power Pill on **0845 1 30 80 77** for details...

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The Anniversary Page

Red Rum - Equine Champion Extraordinaire...

For this month's anniversary, *Call Sign* goes back 30 years to April 1977, celebrating a unique sporting achievement in the history of horse racing. *Red Rum* is the only horse ever to win the Grand National Steeplechase three times and to be placed second on the other two occasions when he ran!

He was born in 1965, son of flat racing legends Quorum and Mared, at Martyn Molony's Rossenarra Stud in County Kilkenny, Ireland.

Red Rum's first race, a flat on 7 April 1967, took place at the very track where he would later make equestrian history, Aintree. During his lifetime *Red Rum* raced at this track seven times, winning on four occasions and being placed second at the other three.

Rummie as he was nicknamed, was originally bought for £400 and during his 10-year career ran in over 100 races, winning 3 flat, 3 hurdle and 21 steeplechases. He also managed second place on 37 occasions.

Red Rum did however suffer with the foot problem, Pedalostitis, which his last trainer, Donald (Ginger) McCain treated by galloping him through shallow surf, the sea salt-water easing the horses' condition, while the sand toughened his muscles and tendons.

By the time he ran his first Grand National in 1973, *Rummie* already had five wins and three second places behind him from his previous eight starts and was co-



Red Rum takes the 1977 Grand National
Inset: Statue of Red Rum at Aintree



favoured with *Crisp*, a Fred Winter trained horse. *Crisp* took an early lead, but *Rummie* gained steadily and eventually beat *Crisp* by $\frac{3}{4}$ of a length. The next horse was 25 lengths behind!

In 1974, after a tough race, he beat *L'Escargot* by seven lengths, making *Red Rum* the first horse to win the Grand National in successive years since *Reynoldstown* in 1935/36.

By 1977, and by now almost a veteran, *Rummie* was fit and raring to go again. Ginger McCain had brought him to peak for National day and hopes were high. The only concern was the weather, as the superstar horse didn't like wet ground. The weather stayed fine.

After the favourite fell at Bechers Brook on the second time round, *Red Rum* built up a steady lead with jockey Tommy Stack urging

him on. Only *Churchtown Boy* was able to keep up, and when he fell, *Rummie* had won his *third*, record-breaking Grand National by 25 lengths!

Red Rum continued to race, but foot problems forced his retirement in 1979. He continued to make personal appearances at supermarket and betting shop openings and generally living a life of celebrity status!

He returned to Aintree, scene of many of his victories for his 30th birthday on 3 May 1995 and was humanely put down in his stable on 18 October of that year.

He was buried the same day alongside the winning post at Aintree, where he had established his legendary successes. A bronze statue recalls his amazing achievements in the world of horse racing.

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FOUNDLING MUSEUM

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THE CALL SIGN INTERNET LIBRARY

Want to look up something in an old issue of Call Sign?
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Or... www.dac-callsign.com

Then either browse through every issue of
Call Sign since 1998 by using the 'Search' facility or type in
a clue and let our search engine do the rest...

If you want to read each issue with ads et al, you can now
do that as well. Since May 2006, Call Sign has also gone
online in a PDF version. No 'search' for that though!

There are also issues from 1967 and 1977 as a reminder of
the old days! Happy searching!

THE CALL SIGN INTERNET LIBRARY

Going back almost 20 years, Dial-a-Cab driver **Alan Fisher (F07)** - later to become **Call Sign** Editor - made a phone call to **Redbridge Technical College** regarding their advertised mechanics course. He asked whether there were any for licensed taxi drivers as there were so many of them in the surrounding area? The answer was no, but that he should try Barking Tech...

So Alan arranged a meeting with the head of Barking Tech and asked why they couldn't run a taxi driver mechanics course? The answer was that no one had ever asked before! So Alan did and was told that if he could get 10 drivers interested, then the college would find a teacher and set up a course.

Alan had the message put out on DaC's (voice) radio and 20 drivers put their names down for what was to be called the Dial-a-Cab Mechanics Course. The term would culminate with a *City and Guilds* diploma for successful candidates under the stewardship of teacher Mike Martin.

However, word about the course got out and a delegation from what were then called Computer Cab approached Alan asking if they too could go onto the course. So he dropped the DaC prefix and the course became known as the taxi driver's mechanics course. With ComCab's entry and word reaching the rest of the taxi trade, it ran with four classes each week at Barking Tech - later to join up with Havering as Thames Gateway.

At the recent DaC AGM, Alan met up again with **Mary Leaming (C44)** who was not only the first woman to go on the course, but was also the first person to pass it and gain a *City and Guilds* accreditation.

Mary told **Call Sign**:

"I remember thinking that the idea was brilliant and put my name down as soon as I heard about it. I had always tinkered with our car, so I wasn't totally green as to what the various parts did, but I found the theory part of the taxi course to be much easier than the practical side. When actually working on the cab, there always seemed to be something in the way of whichever part you were trying to get to! But I must say I enjoyed doing it and was so grateful that someone had thought of the idea. And yes, I was proud of gaining my *City and Guilds* diploma."

And does Mary still do all her own mechanics?

"No, I take it to the garage!"

And Alan? Well as the founder member, he was also the first to give it up. Why?

"I didn't like getting oil on my hands!"

Mary Looks Back at the DaC Mechanics Course!



Mary looks back at the DaC Mechanics Course

Taxi Rank Poles and Shelters

Len Simkins, Head of Strategy and Planning at the PCO, has told **Call Sign** that Penton Street is continuing to work with boroughs across London to identify taxi ranks where it is practical to install taxi poles and shelters.

Taxi poles and shelters are illuminated using solar power and help passengers clearly identify taxi ranks. Six ranks have been placed in Kingston town centre whilst three ranks have been identified in Hounslow as potential sites for poles.

Work is also in progress to review the content of travel information and to arrange new panels to be produced to coincide with the new taxi fares and tariffs. The new panels will be installed on all new and existing taxi poles.

Taxis Poles or shelters have been installed at the following ranks: Borough Location

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Bromley | South Bromley Station |
| Camden | Canfield Gardens, Kings Cross / Pancras Road |
| City of London | Liverpool Street |
| Hamm / Fulham | Hammersmith Broadway |
| Haringey | Tottenham Hale Station Forecourt |
| Islington | Finsbury Park Station |
| Ken / Chelsea | Cromwell Gardens (V&A), Sloane Square |
| Kingston Town Centre | High Street, Wood Street, Clarence Street (outside Oceana), Eden Street, Clarence Street (outside GAME), Clarence Street (outside John Lewis) |
| Lambeth | The Pavement, Clapham Common, Vauxhall Cross, Brixton Oval / Rushcroft Rd |
| Wandsworth | Balham Station Road, Mitcham Road |
| Westminster | Lwr Regent St/Picc Cir (Lillywhites), Cranbourn Street, Cavendish Square (J Lewis) |



Psyching themselves up before the Middlesex Charity Cup quarter final

DaC-Wembley are slowly playing catch-up to league leaders Chipstead. Dial-a-Cab driver and DaC-Wembley goalkeeper **Lee Pierce (J71)** told *Call Sign* that Chipstead had been slipping ever since Wembley thrashed them 3 - 0 to hand them their first league defeat.

"Since that Saturday, and as previous untouchables, they have lost another 2 games and drawn a further one. While their lead is still substantial, we can actually see them now and we won't give up that chase for the number one position with promotion into the Ryman League at the end of it. Success there could then lead you into the Conference - leaving that team just one step away from the Football League itself!"

The bad side of the month came with defeat by Cove in the last eight of the League Cup following extra time. However, bouncing back, their league form since the cup exit has been more stable with the team picking up several 1 - 0 wins rather than the more exciting 2 - 3 losses!

Can they catch Chipstead? You never know in football, but there was good news on March 22 when Wembley beat Northwood 2-1 to reach the semi final of the prestigious Middlesex Charity Cup.

DaC Wembley Catching Up To League Leaders



Wembley players training with their DaC tops and watching the floating ball!

Combined Counties Premier Division (top 8 of 22)

Week ending 23 March 2007

| Team | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | Pts |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Chipstead | 31 | 27 | 1 | 3 | 90 | 31 | 59 | 82 |
| DaC-Wembley | 32 | 22 | 4 | 6 | 70 | 34 | 36 | 70 |
| Merstham | 32 | 22 | 2 | 8 | 73 | 27 | 46 | 68 |
| Banstead Athletic | 31 | 17 | 7 | 7 | 59 | 41 | 18 | 58 |
| Chertsey Town | 34 | 17 | 7 | 10 | 60 | 53 | 7 | 58 |
| Ash Utd | 28 | 16 | 7 | 5 | 57 | 24 | 33 | 55 |
| Camberley Town | 34 | 16 | 7 | 11 | 51 | 48 | 3 | 55 |
| North Greenford Utd | 31 | 15 | 9 | 7 | 65 | 48 | 17 | 54 |

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Contact John (M13) on 07921 920743...

Poles apart

Cheshire council have put up road signs for a temporary diversion... in Polish! They say that it is NOT political correctness gone mad, but good commonsense regarding safety. It dates back to the previous year when Polish-speaking drivers could not understand signs referring to road closures and so caused more congestion while trying to turn their cars around in a confined space. Several things puzzle me. How did these people get to drive on English roads, as surely they must have to pass the driving test and why were the signs only in Polish and not in Urdu, Hindi, Chinese or any other language? In any case, I thought pictures accompanying the signs were fairly universal. Can't see it happening in too many other countries.

'Reids' of straw

John Reid has announced a new initiative in his fight against illegal immigration. For those here on a short stay visa, a text message will be sent to their mobile phones telling them of the urgency to renew the visa or to get out of the country. Bold words indeed. How does he know their mobile phone number and can they read English? Or will each individual message be translated into their native tongue? Even so, another former home secretary, Jack Straw, now admits that many immigrants still do not speak or read English at all. A case, most definitely of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing...

Buyer beware...

A primary rule of business is that you must make a profit, otherwise you go under. Recently, the banks have come under the microscope for the hidden "rip off" charges. Well I have found another group of the same ilk. When going abroad, we often go to the travel agent that advertises no commission on money conversion. Recently I went to Rome for

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



The Views of a Grumpy Old Man

my wife's birthday and mine and bought £250 worth of Euros. Unbeknown to me, the family had all put money into a kitty and already bought us some currency for the event. So we kept our money separately and spent the gifted money.

On our return to England, I went to the same travel agent and asked for the unused currency to be changed back to pounds. Bear in mind, the money was not used and the receipt was for £250. I was

told that the amount due back was £210. I naturally queried this, but was told that the exchange rate fluctuates. Well £40 is a lot of fluctuation in one week! It then transpired that they buy and sell at different rates - so much for no commission!

According to the 'net, I could have got back £235 and even the banks offered me £220. I am all for fair trade, profit and loss, but this is highway robbery. I may be mad, but I am not stupid. I did not exchange the money back, as I am sure to go to Euroland at a later date.

Red diesel for Red Ken?

So Ken has done a deal with Venezuelan president, Hugo Chavez, for cheap oil for Londoners? Don't all cheer at once; it will not be for the riff-raff of this city en masse, or the hoi polloi in their 4x4s. No it will be for HIS buses - bendy or otherwise - to enable those with oyster cards even cheaper fares. But not all cardholders will be eligible either. It will be for those on benefits and the out of work. These people don't usually travel, let alone by bus. What a silly man Ken is as the buses already use red diesel and do not pay the full price anyway. What he exchanged and got - is an office in Venezuela to help promote London and he will also be used to help out with their traffic problems. The only way I can see it working is if all the poor people of that country come here and sit on the buses all day.

Chas Kissin (P99J)

EMISSION REDUCTION SYSTEMS: APPROVAL EXTENSIONS FOR TX1

The PCO has extended its approval of both the ECS TaxiCat and the PartsWorld PEAK emissions reduction systems.

The ECS TaxiCat SYSTEM was originally approved for installation on the pre-Euro LTI FX4, Euro 1 LTI Fairway and Fairway Driver and the Euro 1 LTI TX1, which all then became Euro 3 compliant

Following further 'in-service' durability testing this system is now approved for installation on the Euro 2 LTI TX1, which then becomes Euro 3 compliant.

The Peak system was originally approved for installation on the Pre-Euro LTI Fairway and Euro 1 LTI Fairway, which then all became Euro 3 compliant.

Also following further 'in-service' durability testing, this system is now approved for installation on the Euro 1 LTI TX1 and Euro 2 LTI TX1.

Both systems have been independently tested by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and have undergone 6 months of 'in-service' durability testing...

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POWERPILL TAXI DAY AT SOUTHBANK SERVICE STATION

Meet racing driver Linton Stuteley and be photographed with his racing car!

Come to the Southbank Service Station by JVBright on Tuesday 3 April from 10.30am onwards until 3pm and watch live demos of the Ubiee Power Pill being tested.

AND, while you are there, come and meet Formula Ford racing driver, Linton Stuteley and get your photo taken with him and his racing car! Linton has already been successful in several classes and is tipped as a motor racing star of the future.



Complaints Results



A Complaints meeting was heard on 14 March 2007 with an Appeals meeting on 23 March.
The results are below...

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

| Name/call sign | Nature of complaint | Sentence |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Gary Sampson P11) | <i>Not completing minimum number of credit trips</i> Rules: 20, 28 | Expelled: 6 months probation |
| Fred Jones (P14) | <i>Not completing minimum number of credit trips</i> Rules: 20, 28 | Expelled: 6 months probation |
| Jamie Roberts (B62) | <i>Not completing minimum number of credit trips</i> Rules: 20, 28 | Expelled: 6 months probation |
| Thad Carter | <i>Not completing minimum number of credit trips</i> Rules: 20, 28 | Expelled: 6 months probation |
| Jeremiah O'Brien (B64) | <i>Not completing minimum number of credit trips</i> Rules: 20, 28 | Expelled |
| Frederick Boyle (P80) | <i>Alleged rudeness and use of phone on route</i> Rules 1, 2, 3 | 1. 2 weeks susp 2. 1 week susp 3. 1 week susp |
| Alan Hall (J23) | <i>Allegedly swore at client</i> Rules: 1, 2, 3, 5, 25 At an appeal the sentence was reduced to 4 weeks | Expelled |
| Wayne Ragbir (D74) | <i>Allegedly swore at passenger causing client to exit cab and make own way</i> Rules: 1, 2, 3, 12 | 1. 1 week susp 2. Rep 3. Warning 12. Rep |
| James Moore (M58) | <i>Clear credit trips/booking in incorrectly</i> <i>Overcharging on one account</i> Rules: 5, 14 and 5, 8 At an appeal the sentence was reduced to 4 weeks | 5. 1 week susp 8. 1 week susp 5 & 14. Expelled |
| Peter Rowe (O75) | <i>Rudeness to a client</i> Rules: 1, 2, 3 At an appeal the sentence was reduced to a reprimand | 1. 1 week susp 2. Severe rep 3. Warning |

KIBBLES CAMERA



Shaftsbury Avenue in 1915

One of the hobbies of Dial-a-Cab driver **Bill Kibble (K86)** is "now and then" photography. In this series, Bill has taken photos of places and buildings that have an original version somewhere in the public domain...

This month: Shaftsbury Avenue in 1915 and now...



and now...

A unique archive of photographs offering a window into the wartime activities of one of Coventry's most famous companies has been handed over by a former worker.

Though *Sheila Hill* was the Managing Director's secretary at *Carbodies* – now *LTI Vehicles* – in the 1970s and 1980s, her responsibilities stretched far beyond the typewriter, also taking control of publicity work among other things.

Through this, she was made custodian of a collection of historic pictures of the taxi firm showing wartime damage to the factory and details of a special mobile command post built for *Field Marshall Montgomery*. She recently returned to company's Holyhead Road base to hand over the photographs.

While there, she was given a factory tour by LTI Market Development Consultant, *Andrew Overton* whom she remembered well. Andrew was working for LTI Vehicles dealer Mann & Overton in London at the time that Sheila was in office.

"I worked at Carbodies, as it was then called, for about 12 years during the 1970s and 80s," said Sheila. **"I was secretary for MD Bill Lucas, but the role quickly took in lots more things than just typing. One of those things was doing publicity work. I used to write press releases and take them to the press desk at shows. As part of this, I was given a lot of old photographs to hold on to. Many were from the war. I've had these things for years and thought it was time to come back and hand them on."**

Sheila ended by saying: **"It has been fantastic to come back. I remember some things, but there are such a lot of changes with all the machines. It is wonderful. It was also lovely seeing Andrew as well."**

Many of the pictures show wartime damage to the factory. An old memo also reveals the diversity of products manufactured at the factory during and soon after the war. As well as Monty's trailer, these included Commer and Austin vans, Rolls Royce body shells, panels for tanks and field kitchen trailers.

Andrew Overton said: **"It has been lovely to see Sheila again. The management of Carbodies was very differ-**

Sheila's Archive Reveals Forgotten Carbodies History



Old friends reunited! LTI's Andrew Overton shows Sheila Hill around what used to be Carbodies and is now LTI Vehicles

ent back then. The whole factory was run from Bill Lucas's office. It was quite a job for Sheila to control all the people who wanted to see him at all hours of the day, but I remember her

as always being very kind and helpful. We are delighted she has held on to this unique archive of photographs and would like to thank her for bringing them to us."

You may not need us now, but cut us out for when you do!

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Looking for Love...

Both my offspring are single again, so I've put mothballs in the boxes of little clothes and knitted shawls that I saved from their babyhoods, imagining the thrill of dressing up my grandchildren who would in turn someday treasure the things as heirlooms. It may never happen. My daughter wants a new partner with the good looks, good nature and security she had with the last boyfriend, but with higher specifications in other areas. Many of her friends are worse, building identikit for possible partners and refusing to go out with men under a required height or income level. One won't touch divorced men or anyone younger than her and wonders why she's single at 31. The 'tick-box' approach fails to weed out prats, that's why, and the men she does meet are often people with feelings, just like us, who expect her to be interested in them as individuals, ideally, not as commodities...

Internet dating?

The Internet is ideal for the supermarket approach, as you can specify your requirements and reject people with a click of the mouse. You can go to specialist sites like *jdate.com*, if, for example, only Jewish will do.

DAC EDRIVERSTATEMENT: DRIVERS INTO 3RD HUNDRED!

Following recent *Call Sign* articles on DaC's *Edriverstatement* facility, the number of drivers now registered to receive their job statement on-line is now into its third hundred and still growing.

DaC Financial Accountant, **Warren Smith**, who oversees the facility, told *Call Sign* that after a slow start, *edriverstatement* was now pushing ahead.

"I think some drivers were afraid that it would be too confusing, but it really is so simple to use. When you receive the email telling you your statement is waiting, you just log on and either check your jobs from the screen - where you can enlarge the font to whatever size you require to read - or print it off and get the identical copy to that which used to arrive in the post. The big advantage is that you can still save the hard copies if you wish or you can make a file on your PC and save them to that. It really is simple..."

Several drivers have contacted this mag to say that they couldn't believe they had taken so long to decide to join the scheme!

If you weren't sure about edriverstatement but would now like to try it, just send an email to driverservices@dialacab.co.uk and put your badge number in the subject field.

Please do not send any other information, just your badge number in the subject line...

Once registered, you will be sent an email saying that your statement is ready to download and you can then begin checking your trips in whichever way suits you.

We've also had several drivers calling in to ask if you can have *edriverstatement* if you do not have email? Sadly, even DaC cannot perform miracles...

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

Back Seat *Driver*



Obvious drawbacks of online dating, though, are the lies men tell about themselves, height and the existence of wives being the most common ones. I'm not saying women don't lie, but is posting your photos with the spots and fat bits deleted by your Photoshop program a lie? I don't think so!

Another drawback is the addictive thing - no sooner do you find a new love and get comfortable with them, than you just have another sneaky log-on to see who else is up for grabs and the fantasy machine switches on again! And very likely your so-called partner is at it again too! I saw a problem in a newspaper column headed: "Does going to a dating chatroom count as infidelity?" Seemingly, it does!

My son, being male, has no specifications at all for his next love. He wants a spark, though, some excitement before he'll act. Somehow only barmaids have produced that initial thrill for him recently. There are at least two he is sure give him special attention and he's gathering courage. He asked my DaCman, Glen, to find him a blind date after Christmas for the

adventure and he may go speed-dating soon, a kind of cross between clay pigeon-shooting and go-kart racing - a high-speed hunting expedition, if you see what I mean.

So, from where I sit, finding love when you're young is a shopping expedition for the gals and a sports challenge for the lads. The women compare their dates with their girlfriends, just as they might compare new handbags, and the blokes rate their potential quarry together over a matey beer and size up their chances - just as they do Arsenal's Cup prospects (*what cup prospects? ...Ed*).

Car or bare midriff?

One of my daughter's pals said any prospective boyfriend had to have a great car and I got kicked under the table when I said she'd get the shallow jerks she deserved with that attitude. I told my son that you can grow to love someone without instant attraction, and will a come-hither look or a bare midriff-cum-navel ring really meet his intellectual requirements for decades to come?

Glen stays out of these discussions, wisely I guess, despite his impressive matchmaking instincts. And if love eludes my two and no grandchildren come my way, the little clothes

I've saved for nearly 30 years, and the *Beano* and *Twinkle* annuals and all the beat-up best-loved books and toys will eventually go to Oxfam. With tigers all but extinct and polar bears fighting for the few remaining icebergs, it's maybe not much of a world to bring children into any more.

Till then...

Love Poppy x x x

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PCO on the use of hand-held mobile phones



Although **Call Sign** ran an article on the new regulations re hand-held phones in our March issue, below are comments made on the subject from the PCO and signed by Mary Dowdye, Head of Standards & Regulations.

"From 27 February 2007, the fixed penalty for using a hand held mobile phone while driving will rise from £30 to £60 and will for the first time include the award of three penalty points. If the police or drivers choose to take a case to court rather than use a fixed penalty notice, the maximum fine is £1,000. The same changes will apply to penalties for not having proper control of a vehicle. This can also apply where a driver has been distracted by using a hands-free mobile phone.

Taxi (and private hire) drivers are reminded of their obligation to comply with the law. They are also reminded of their obligation to advise the PCO if they are convicted of any criminal offence, including road traffic offences that attract penalty points.

The PCO continues to take a serious view of drivers who place their passengers and other road users at risk by using hand held mobile phones while driving. Any driver reported as having used a hand held mobile telephone will have his/her fitness to remain licensed reviewed."

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 fortnight shift in the cab just before Christmas was needed more than ever this time – the tenant in my Wimbledon flat is now four months in arrears with his rent and causing havoc to business plans in France and the UK! One thing I did notice in the run up to the festive season is just how spiteful traffic wardens have become – it was touch and go one occasion as to whether my cuppa and sarnie was going to cost me half a days takings or not!

But I did get some good news when the City of Westminster agreed that because my taxi was parked on a taxi rank in Wells Street, it was enough to cancel the charge. I have since heard that drivers have in fact been charged for parking on this rank. It does pay to appeal. I always do and have a very good success rate. Their reply is below.

It was great to meet so many DaC drivers in London at Olympia's *French Property Show*. Our little firm had a stand and we were something of a small fish in a big pond, but we think we kick-started 2007 in a positive way. Just as I hope that, hopefully, Wandsworth County Court will finally kick my tenant out before he racks up any more arrears. I would have done so myself long ago, had I not read the legalities of it all first. Now I remember why I left 'Blair's Britain' in the first place!

Check out www.southofffrancelets.com for a place to stay, or www.immoboulevard.com if you are seriously looking for property to buy on the beautiful French Med.

A bientot

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

Bob's reply from Westminster Council after his ticket for parking on a taxi rank:

Thank you for your letter re the above PCN. It was issued because the vehicle was seen parked in a street when parking restrictions were in force. Yellow lines at the edge of the road mean that there are parking restrictions which apply to the entire road.

After careful consideration of the points you have raised, I can advise you that on this occasion as your vehicle was a taxi parked at a taxi rank, the PCN has been cancelled and you are no longer liable for the charge.

Call Sign comment:

We have published Bob's letter from Westminster because all drivers should have the same chance if they have been issued with a PCN when parked on a taxi rank. However, unless it is an "eating" rank, they are for working taxis and especially so if street parking is quiet. Whilst there should be more places for taxi drivers to stop, using a rank is unfair on those wishing to work from it. However, precedents are there to be used ... Ed

Call Sign

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TV

Vic & Jayne Oliver

Sunday
Carvery

*Come to our lovely Essex village and try the menu from
our award winning chef*

Vic is a former Dial-a-cab driver

This is my first opportunity to thank all those members who supported me in the election of officers. I am again extremely grateful at being re-elected and will continue to work on behalf of all DaC members to ensure we continue to maintain our position within the industry.

March Mailshot

In the last **Call Sign**, Colin Lewis (N55) remarked about how certain trips in the morning are offered after a time as non-rejectable and he felt that because these trips were then running late, drivers who were forced to accept them would be in for some aggro from the client.

Not wishing to sound patronising to Colin, but the reason for altering trips to non-rejectable is because the call centre staff have already had the aggro, as he puts it, from the client because the taxi has not arrived on time! The problems of coverage, especially in the mornings, could be said to be an old chestnut. Senior day shift controller Lee Morland and I have recently been having discussions on a daily basis about this, because it is at the lowest level it has ever been.

Controllers are becoming more and more frustrated that no matter what action they take, they are receiving aggro from both clients and drivers. Like drivers, they also do not want to get into confrontation with clients and to combat this, you may have noticed recently more work in the mornings is being made non-rejectable much earlier.

Fortunately or unfortunately - depending which way you look at the situation - making trips non-rejectable earlier has improved coverage to our clients, but has not gone down too well with some drivers. Lee has been on my case to get the Board to agree to make the decision that all account work from 07:00 hours through to 10:00 hours, Monday to Friday, be totally non-rejectable. I have never been one to make change for change sake, but the continuous coverage problems that have occurred this year alone have made me look into the issue further.

Initially, my commercial thoughts were to agree but my driver instincts told me not to do it. When you get into discussions with a controller who has been on the receiving end of the aggro from clients for a very long time, the conversation gets rather heated and a few 'effs' are bandied about! Certainly for the past month, each morning I ask what the coverage has been like and the answer from Lee is the same. He presents me with a list of call signs and the number of trips that have been offered along with the number of rejects done.

To my astonishment, it is not uncommon to see 60 plus rejects being made by a number of drivers. I have looked at how many were due to trips being offered from back-up zones and while they do count for quite a number of them, I am trying to understand why trips in the primary zones were being knocked back when they are dispatched without a destination?

I came up with two theories of thought. One is that the client must be a regular who goes to the same destination each morning and drivers recognise the pick-up address, make their

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

Call Centre Chat



assumption of the destination, thus deciding they do not want to go there. The other is a driver who books into a zone when they are nowhere near, hoping that by the time they travel to the area they will not have to wait too long for a trip offer. The down side of this is because we are very busy at the moment, trips are being offered as soon as the driver books in and because they are so far away, they are forced to reject.

Those drivers who book in incorrectly are not aware of the ramification it has on the whole call centre. Just prior to a booking being put into the system by a telephonist, there is displayed exactly how many taxis are in the pick-up and the back-up zones. From this information, they relay to the customer our expected service level. If drivers are shown as being booked in, we will offer a 10 to 15 minute service for any ASAP trip.

How controllers monitor time parameters

Controllers also have to judge how much lead-time to give zones for the pre booked trips. They monitor the fleet from a screen similar to the zone query screen that drivers have on their terminals. They can also see how many drivers are booked in and from this information make their judgement whether to leave lead times as they are or extend them. Controllers are fully aware that if they fire trips in too early, drivers will not accept them because they are not willing to wait for the client with the meter off for too long. If the information before them cannot be relied upon as being accurate, they end up in a very difficult situation and sometimes end up fighting a losing battle of knowing what action to take that is best for both the client and driver.

Whilst I fully understand the reasons why drivers work the way they do, I am beginning to become more concerned that they are starting to consider themselves only, with no consideration whatsoever to the Society. I would not even begin to criticise anyone for acting this way except to say that if it continues, it will not be long before we start to lose accounts and then drivers. The Society's biggest criticism from clients is our inability to supply a cab when the trip is booked well in advance. Their frustration is compounded when we notify them just 5 minutes or less on some occasions

before the booked time that there is no cab available. All clients require of us is a taxi on time. I have seen accounts move to car companies because they can offer more of a guaranteed service for an early morning pick up than we can.

For those of us who have been involved in the Society for many years, we remember the times when it was growing. I go back to the late eighties and I know there are many more of you who go back even further. It was common practise that being on radio meant travelling some distance to pick up a customer. It was this type of service that gave us an excellent reputation, which has been built upon and has allowed us to be as successful as we are now. Members had the attitude that every trip they did, they did for the best interest of the Society as a whole. There may have been one or two who didn't think like that, but the majority made it best for everyone.

My biggest fear now is that as the years move on, drivers thinking and reasoning behind why they are members of the Society could be changing. I have spoken with many who feel they are working for a company rather than a Friendly Society. I have always explained to them that every trip they undertake is really in the best interest of everyone associated with the Society and every piece of good customer service given will encourage that client to use us again. It is then that the odds are in favour of each member benefiting from the next trip. If we cannot take our clients to work or to meetings, then there is no hope on earth of them continuing to allow us to take them home in the evening from the office. I know drivers main interests are their families and themselves, but the point of all this is this; I sincerely hope that members start to include the whole Society within their thoughts when making choices in the work they undertake.

The rules are there if needed...

We have procedural rules in place to prevent drivers from booking into zones and we can prove this by monitoring the GPS system. However, to do this I have to take a member of staff away from their other duties and because we are as busy as we are, this puts the rest of the team under pressure. On some occasions, drivers are so blatant in what they do it is obvious and very straightforward to report them.

The initial request to make work in the morning non-rejectable, I believe should not be made without first bringing the problem to the member's attention. If the members can resolve the situation first, then it must be for the good of everyone. We shall be monitoring coverage very closely and I hope that we can provide customers with the service they require and not have to alter the way we work.

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

MAILSHOT

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

Car winner

I would like to take this opportunity to say how surprised and thrilled I was to win one of the three Peugeot 307 cars in the 2006 Christmas incentive draw. It was exhilarating to be a winner and the excitement stays with you! Where else would one have had this opportunity to win such a beautiful car? Dial-a-Cab has excelled and I am most appreciative of my good fortune in receiving such a fantastic prize.

With renewed thanks to all involved...

Leon Singer (D92)

Congratulations to all three winners ...Ed

Coloured DaC logos...

I have just ordered a TX4 *Silver* taxi for 17 May at a cost of £34K. While I was there, it occurred to me that drivers on DaC are also ordering *Gold* spec cabs at a cost of up to £37K – a whiff of oxygen job! They come with coloured metallic paint and coded bumpers, wing mirrors etc together with other 'bits and bobs' to make them look like the driver has taken a lot of pride in his brand new taxi. Then what happens! Up you go to our fitting bay only to have a DaC *black* logo stuck on the still-glittering red, blue, silver, green or whatever finish the driver has paid extra for.

Why can't we have transparent logos as we had for many years before these ones? Radio Taxis and DataCab still have transparent ones so that you can see paintwork through them. Let me say that Allen Togwell did a good job designing them in-house a few years ago, but surely even he would not argue that transparent ones would do the job better on coloured cabs, as they are made up of four shades - red, blue, yellow and white. Existing ones would still be used on black cabs, but drivers wanting clear ones would then have a choice. If only the BoM were as clever as me and had thought of this without my prompting! So AT, how about picking up the gauntlet?

Pat Keefe (G01)

Allen Togwell replies: Hello Pat, congratulations on the purchase of your new taxi and I hope it gives you

many years of comfortable motoring. In answer to your question as to why we don't produce transparent logos, firstly our previous logo - as is still the case with ComCab, Radio Taxis and DataCab - was one colour and produced on a clear Perspex which, when affixed to the cab, gave the impression it was a transfer. The original colour before I joined the Board was a poor attempt at gold and was later offered in a variety of shades to suit driver requirements.

When I re-designed the logo, I wanted to break with tradition and produce something totally different from our competitors and so decided to use 4 colours. I'm sure you appreciate that if I put a variable coloured design onto clear plastic and then placed that plastic onto a surface which matched one of the colours of the design, then the corresponding colour would not be visible. For example, the yellow Dial-a-Cab in our logo on a gold cab would not be seen. So I used black as a background colour and I think the colour balance works well, especially on a light coloured vehicle such as silver. And that, of course, is the objective. You mention Radio Taxis - and this is not a criticism - but I've seen a number of their vehicles where the logo looks washed out and the reason, on closer observation, is because the colour of their logo on certain coloured vehicles makes it barely visible.

I hope this answers your question Pat and as for your self-praise at being clever, which I'm sure was said with tongue-in-cheek, I would like to reply in a similar vein with an old Jewish quote:

"A man who thinks he is clever, likes other people to be just clever enough to appreciate his cleverness and stupid enough to admire it!"

Marshalling with the enemy?

Dear Brian,

Re your reply to my letter in the March *Call Sign* about the Lewis Day Marshals at DB and your advice about my ball, I don't want to pick it up and go home. I want to play the game with other licensed taxi drivers who play it properly and who did the knowledge. As for my "guessing" that the trips covered by PH went further than ours, can you confirm then, that they cover trips to E1, N1 and SE1? Maybe I should have called it



an "educated guess?"

John Addis (K97)

Brian Rice replies: I am pleased you want to 'take them on,' John. I thought you might when you knew the facts. Regarding only working with people that have done the Kol, I agree with you, however, that is Utopia and not a situation that exists in the real world. I do feel that your stance has mellowed slightly John, which is good and I can confirm that the PH do an assortment of trips including locals!

Internet question...

According to the Internet, Syed Nabeed Hashmi runs a company in Pakistan called Thermosole Industries. The article claims that his company is manufacturing components for "black taxis in London." He claims that his company designed the component, got its approval from engineers abroad and now holds the patent. Any idea what he's talking about, Alan?

Sam Harris (ex-V52J)

I asked Richard Daniels at LTI and the answer is that Mr Hashmi's company produces the washer bottle used to clean the window. Since the advent of the Internet, it has become a small (and according to Mr Hashmi) clean world! ...Ed

Badge numbers

Whilst reading the article 'Driver incentive winners collect cars', in the March issue of *Call Sign*, I noticed that in the picture of the DaC Boardroom computer, the badge number of one of the winning drivers had been scribbled out. I have no objection to this, but I would like to know why my badge number should be printed on each terminal issued receipt. By having the drivers badge number on the receipt, the driver leaves him/herself open to malicious retrospective complaints being made. This has happened to DaC drivers before. I would advise DaC drivers to scribble out their badge numbers on printed receipts, as has been done in the picture, before giving them to customers.

Yaqub Rafiq (O28)

Thanks for the letter Rafiq. The decision to remove the badge number

MAILSHOT

Mailshot continued from page 38

was mine and so far as I know, no one else – drivers or BoM – has even noticed. Whilst I have not heard of any complaints brought in the way you suggest and it is now compulsory to issue a receipt if asked for one, you can still give a hand-written one if the badge number element causes you problems. The only reason I deleted the number was so that no one could put it into their terminal and sign on in his name ...Ed

Coventry visit

May I thank you for organising the visit to the LTI Factory and meeting some of managers and of course, seeing how the TX4 is put together. I would also like to say thank you to Virgin Rail for the upgrade and to LTI for lunch and the frank - and I think honest - answers to the questions asked.

Stanley Roth (Y53)

Coventry visit 2

Please allow me to say thank you to *Call Sign* for getting me through the door at Coventry to discuss my fears and hopes for the TX4 and at no travel cost to me. It's hard to believe that I have, in three short months at Dial-a-Cab, had a face-to-face meeting with the Chairman and other senior members of the Board in addition to getting a trip to LTI travelling First Class with Virgin! I get the impression that at DaC it's not going to be a revolving door of management, which will allow us to create true stability and grow.

Gary Cox (O46)

On behalf of all the drivers who went on this, *Call Sign's* fifth visit to the LTI factory in Coventry, I must in addition to thanking LTI for their usual hospitality, also thank Virgin who sponsor our trip and who, on this occasion, made it extra special by sending us 'First Class' on their super Pendolino train. The train is magnificently smooth and comfortable and 'First Class' adds even more magic to it ...Ed

Concierge turnover?

The March issue of *Call Sign* ("Another Record Surplus for DaC") contained a quote from the Chairman, which said the turnover from Concierge would

increase to between £15 - £20 Million in this financial year. Can the Chairman please tell us how much of this work will be carried in DaC member's taxis?

Brian Cohen (C81)

Brian Rice replies: A very strange question Brian, which leads me to believe that it will prompt another from your clique in the not too distant future. As you are aware, we at DaC are brimming with technology and the latest addition to our Arsenal (knew that would upset you) is the very latest in 'Crystal balls'. Consequently, I can predict that if we do not add any additional clients to Concierge the amount going to our members this year will be £11,426,394 20p!

Cheaper exhaust systems?

I read in *Call Sign* that there was a cheaper exhaust system to be announced costing "only £1000!" Do you have any news on this unit? My overhaul is in July and I hate parting with my hard earned dosh. I'm looking for the best, yet cheapest system unit available. Can you help me please?

Roy Manix (K98)

Sorry Roy, whilst I did hear that there was something about to come out, I certainly haven't heard of it being passed – although the PCO are saying that they hope there will be an alternative to the absolutely ridiculous Nissan engine "converted" conversion for the Metrocab ...Ed



Can you print my name?

I have been reading your magazine on line for several years and enjoy it very much as we taxi drivers have nothing like it over here. I have posted letters to you on several occasions but have never seen them printed. I would like to see my name in your production so that I can show my friends how good my English is. My late mother was American. My thanks to you...

Gary Nishkawada

Osaka, Japan

While I'm delighted to know how many overseas readers *Call Sign* has, I actually need a reason to publish letters. Just saying hello isn't really one of them! But as I'm in a good mood! ...Ed

Thank you DaC

My thanks to DaC for the beautiful bouquet of flowers. So sorry for the delay, but I am back in hospital again.

I would also like to thank the numerous drivers who have sent their best wishes.

Marilyn Samuels (Mrs. C71)

Marilyn is the wife of DaC Marshal and former Mountview Chairman, Stan Samuels. We wish you a speedy recovery Marilyn ...Ed

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| TXII | Silver | Nightfire Red | 53 | 2003 | £91 | |
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