

DECEMBER 2007

CALL SIGN

FROM THE HOME OF DIAL A CAB INTERNATIONAL



IS THERE A
TOASTMASTER IN
THE HOUSE?



IS THIS
SEVENOAKS TAXI
WRONG TO USE
THE M4 BUS
LANE?

PREPARE FOR A
SHOCK...





NASH'S NUMBERS

By Alan Nash (A95)

Christmas is just around the corner and the onset of clubbers, so here are a list of clubs in the W1 area. Some may be just bars or other establishments, but they list themselves as clubs...

24 London, 24 Kingly Street, W1B 5QP	Infinity, 10 Old Burlington Street, W1S 3AG	Rex Cinema & Bar, 21 Rupert Street, W1D 6DG
# 5, 5 Cavendish Square, W1G 0PG	ISIS Club, 50, Dover Street, W1S 4NY	Ronnie Scotts Jazz Club, 47 Frith Street, W1D 4HT
# 3 Bar 3, New Burlington Street, W1S 2JF	Jazz after Dark, 9 Greek Street, W1V 5LE	Roxy, 3-5 Rathbone Place, W1T 1HJ
Aint Nothin But Blues, 20 Kingly Street, W1R 5LB	Jewel, 4 Glasshouse Street, W1R 5RP	Ruby Lo, 23 Orchard Street, W1H 6HL
Albany, 240 Great Portland Street, W1W 5QU	Kabaret, 70 New Bond Street, W1Y 9DE	Shadow Lounge, 5, Brewer Street, W1F 0RF
Annabels Club, 44 Berkeley Square, W1J 5AR	Kabarets Prophecy, Up. John Street/Beak Street, W1	Sirocco, 39, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1D 6LA
Arts Theatre Club, 50 Frith Street, W1D 4SQ	Kingly Club, 4 Kingly Court, W1B 5PW	Social, 5 Little Portland Street, W1N 5AG
Asylum Club, 28 Rathbone Place, W1P 1DJ	L'Equipe Anglaise, 21 Duke Street, W1U 1LB	Soho Lounge, Meard St/Dean Street, W1D 3SE
Borderline, Orange Yard, W1D 4JB	Madame JoJos, 8 Brewer Street, W1R 3FP	Soho Revue, Brewer Street/Walkers Ct, W1F 0ED
Burlington Club, 12 New Burlington Street, W1S 3BF	Maddox, 3-5 Mill Street, W1S 2AU	Soho Spice, 124 Wardour Street, W1F 0TY
Cafe de Paris, 3 Coventry Street, W1V 7FL	Mahiki, 1 Dover Street, W1S 4LD	Soho, 12 Greek Street, W1D 4DJ
Cameos, 50 Margaret Street, W1W 8SF	Manteca, 66 Wardour Street, W1	Sound, Swiss Centre, Leicester Sq W1D 6QF
Camouflage, 84, Wardour Street, W1F 0TQ	Market Place, 11 Market Place, W1W 8AH	Spearment Rhino, 161 Tottenham Ct. Rd., W1
Candy Bar, 4 Carlisle Street, W1D 3BJ	Masters Club, 12 Denman Street, W1D 7HH	St Moritz Club, 159 Wardour Street, W1V 3TA
Carbon, Old Quebec Street, W1C 1LZ	MAYA, 1a Dean Street, W1D 3RB	Strawberry Moons, 15 Heddon Street, W1B 4BF
Catwalk, 70 New Bond Street, W1S 1DE	Metro, 19 Oxford Street, W1R 2DN	Stringfellows Soho, 201 Wardour Street, W1
CC Club, 13 Coventry Street, W1D 7DH	Mo Bay, 139 Wardour Street, W1	Studio Valbonne, 62 Kingly Street, W1B 5QN
Century, 61 Shaftesbury Avenue, W1D 6LQ	Mo*vida, 8-9 Argyll Street, W1F 7TF	Sub Logic, 5 Argyll Street, W1V 1AD
Cheers 72, Regent Sreet, W1R 5PJ	Moonlighting, 17 Greek Street, W1D 4DR	Sunset Strip, 30 Dean Street, W1V 5AN
Chinawhite, 6 Air Street, W1B 5AA	Moose Bar, 31 Duke Street, W1U 1LG	Taboo, 25 Brewer Street, W1F 0RR
Churchills, 52, Piccadilly, W1J 0DX	Mortons 28, Berkeley Square, W1J 6EN	Tantra, 62, Kingly Street, W1B 5QN
CLUB 49, 49 Greek Street, W1D 4EG	Music Room, 26 South Molton Lane, W1K 5AB	Thirst, 53 Greek Street, W1
Corks Club, 28, Binney Street, W1K 5BW	O Bar, 83 Wardour Street, W1V 3TG	Thirteen, 13 Gerrard Street, W1D 5PS
Cousin Jills, 42 Albemarle Street, W1S 4JH	On Anon (Pavillion), Piccadilly Circus, W1	Trap, 201 Wardour Street, W1F 8ZH
Crystal Club, 78, Wells Street, W1T 3QH	Opium, 1a Dean Street, W1D 3RB	Trash Palace, 11, Wardour Street, W1D 6PG
Cuckoo Club, Swallow Street, W1B 4EZ	Pangaea, Clerges Street/Piccadilly, W1J 7NB	Umbaba, 15 Ganton Street, W1F 9BW
Digress Soho, 10 Beak Street, W1F 9RA	Paper Club, 68, Regent Street, W1B 5EL	Vanilla, 131 Great Titchfield Street, W1W 5BB
Embassy Club, 29 Old Burlington Street, W1S 3AN	Peacock Club, 1a Chesterfield Street, W1X 7HG	View club, 1 Leicester Square, W1D 6QF
Escape, 10a Brewer Street, W1F 0SU	Pear Shaped, 16a, Charlotte Street, W1T 2LY	Village Soho, 81 Wardour Street, W1V 3TG
Eve Club, 3 New Burlington Street, W1S 2JF	Phoenix, 37 Cavendish Square, W1G 0PP	Volstead, 9 Swallow Street, W1R 7HD
Freedom, 66 Wardour Street, W1F 0TA	Pigalle Club, 215 Piccadilly, W1J 9HN	Vox, 43 South Molton Street, W1K 5RW
Funkybuddha, 15, Berkeley Street, W1J 8DY	Platinum Bar, 23, Paul Street, EC2A 4JU	Walkabout, 136 Shaftesbury Avenue, W1D 5EZ
Ghetto, Falconberg Court, W1D 3AB	Play Room, 10 Air Street, W1B 5AB	Warwick, 1 Warwick Street, W1B 5LR
Glass, 9 Glasshouse Street, W1R 5RL	Player, 8 Broadwick Street, W1F 8HN	Wax, 4 Winsley Street, W1W 8HF
Green Carnation, 5 Greek Street, W1D 4DD	Polka, 58 Poland Street, W1V 3DF	Zebrano, 14 Ganton Street, W1F 7QY
Groucho Club, 45 Dean Street, W1D 4QB	Profile, 56 Frith Street, W1D 3JN	Zeta Bar (Hilton), 35 Hertford Street, W1J 7SD
Hedges & Butler, 3 New Burlington Mews, W1	Punk, 14, Soho Street, W1D 3DN	

What's On @	Event	When	Type
O2	"Take That" sold out event, should be busy. Burst app. 22:15	01 - 03 - 04 - 06 - 07 & 08 Dec '07	Entertainment
O2	Jeff Wayne's "War of the Worlds"	22/12/07 starts 20:00	Entertainment
O2	High School Musical Ice Tour	26/12/2007 starts 13:00 & 17:00	Entertainment
ExCel	OPPLive 07	04 to 05 Dec 2007	Trade
Earls Court 1 & 2	Earls Court Boat Show 2007	01 to 09 Dec '07	Consumer
Olympia 2	Bonhams and Brooks 07	02 to 03 Dec '07	Consumer
Olympia Grand Hall	Online Information Services	04 to 06 Dec '07	Trade
Olympia National Hall	ISNR - International Security National Resilience	04 to 05 Dec '07	Trade
Olympia National Hall	National Cat Club 107th Championship Show	08 Dec '07	Consumer
Earls Court 1	Kaiser Chiefs	14 to 15 Dec '07/12/07	Music
Olympia Grand Hall	The London International Horse Show	17 to 22 Dec '07	Entertainment

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from the editor's desk

Mailshot and signals...

I'm proud of the *Mailshot* pages in *Call Sign*. They represent the ultimate in driver participation and give members an opportunity unavailable on any other radio circuit to air grievances or to ask questions. I have fought hard to maintain the freedom involved and over the years have also spoken to many account clients who see the magazine either via the mailing list, the *Call Sign Online* version or through a driver passing on his or her copy. The vast majority appreciate that it makes us more reliable because there are no underground rumblings. Everything is in the open.

Some drivers ask whether I side with the BoM more than the drivers? The answer is that I side with whomever I think is right on any given subject, but if a driver cannot ask a civil question without being rude, then his point will fly out of my office window and whilst his letter may well be printed, he will not get any support from me. There is no excuse for rudeness. Yes, I know it has been on both sides, but rarely when a question has been asked in a polite fashion.

If drivers ask the same question as one printed a few issues earlier and nothing has changed, then I will provide the answer based on the answer given at the time. If that makes me sound like an unelected Board member (another driver's comment to me) then there isn't much I can say. It's not true, of course, but there are some out there who don't listen to answers unless they asked the question.

My problem of late is deciding whether some drivers know what to do with the freedom that the mag provides? I ask because recently, not content with the freedom to ask that question, some drivers seem to be unable to ask without being rude.

I also drive a taxi and know what our signals have been like during very busy times. It has been an ongoing problem. I was also here 30+ years ago when voice signals were even worse with a fraction of the work, but I've seen at first hand what is now being done to try to improve the situation – and my belief is that combined with the latest upgrade (3.4.5), additional aerial sites and expertise from our San Diego "tweaker" Jim Moore during a recent visit to DaC House, the situation is improving. As I said in response to a letter last month, my own signals have been much better since having the upgrade – together with training myself to have patience when pushing buttons. No, they are still far from perfect, but they're getting better. But regardless of the success or otherwise, I'm getting a bit peed off with having to ask for a response from Board members when passing letters over from subscribers who seem to believe that having been here for two years or so, also means they can say whatever they like in whatever



manner they like and to whomever they like.

Well no more. *Mailshot* is a tool that I hope is helpful when you want an answer, but regardless of how frustrated you may feel because you have had a problem with your signals or anything else, if you want your letter published in its entirety, then please write it without being rude. That doesn't mean that you have to write like a fairy godmother. Drivers such as Steve Shaller (R75) are masters at the art of friendly sarcasm and I'd hate to see the demise of the occasional friendly dig, but that is a million miles away from the downright rudeness that has been creeping in of late – albeit from a small minority.

Please remember that we are all members of the same Society and we all want it to succeed – and ALL means Board members too.

Perhaps it might be worth pondering on the fact that however proud I say I am of the freedom *Mailshot* has, if it wasn't for the fact that the Board allow it, it wouldn't be here – and it's no good denying that fact, because it's true. Is there another radio circuit board or committee or just individual boss who allows this freedom? Of course not and that is worth bearing in mind the next time you consider an insult is the order of the day!

Fancy some T...?

You have to smile when reading the latest piece of anti-DaC literature plastered all around London's taxi eateries by someone who supposedly thinks a lot of this Society. He even stuck his notice up in the DaC driver's reception! In all fairness to the writer, who as you would expect was afraid to sign it, he is only trying to help DaC's drivers whom he obviously doesn't believe are sensible enough to help themselves.

The open letter asks whether anyone who accepts a T attribute job (private hire) knows what they are doing and that they should immediately go to DaC House to take that particular attribute off their list. That's fine and no one who doesn't want to pick up a T attribute should do it. As the writer correctly states, you go to Driver Services and just ask. They'll take it off for

you immediately. It's no more difficult than saying you don't want to pick up bicycles.

But the stupidity of someone plastering these signs at taxi watering holes is exactly that – stupid! They infer that DaC drivers are unable to make up their own minds. I know that the last time I asked, there were around 20 drivers who stick to their guns and have never had the T attribute and according to Driver Services (at least at the time of writing) another 4 drivers have gone in and asked to have the T removed after reading the note.

I'm down for T attributes and if it came to it, I'd cover one of our own accounts first. I don't need this person to tell me what's what. Had he had the balls to send it to *Call Sign*, it would have been printed and many more DaC drivers would have read it. It's too late now because I've given whoever it is enough publicity and he obviously considers that the Granby Grill gives more publicity than I can.

The only question remaining is whether our hero is also the same person who stuck the anti-DaC literature on the Waterloo Station walls for everyone to read or photocopied an incorrect terminal message sent to drivers and emailed it to TAXI newspaper where Stuart Pessok published it (just as I would have had it been the other way round).

So as I also asked last month: If Mr Mystery Writer hates DaC that much, why doesn't he go elsewhere? It isn't compulsory to stay here. You stay because you want to...

And...

I so much wanted to make this page a light-hearted piece to fall in with the upcoming frivolities of the holiday season. Sadly, if you read the above pieces you'll see that I have failed miserably!

Nevertheless, previous issues have wished all *Call Sign's* Jewish readers a *Happy New Year*; Muslim drivers and staff a successful *Ramadan* and a happy *Eid ul-Fitr* and that only leaves me the pleasant task of wishing all Christian drivers a very merry Christmas.

Sadly, I have been asked in a press release not to refer to it as Christmas, but as the holiday season. I'm pleased to say that my answer was the polite alternative to get stuffed!

If you celebrate Christmas as a religious festival, I hope it gives you the peace you deserve. If it's more of a fun-time, then I hope you enjoy it. If it's an excuse to cash in before the work quiets down a bit, then good luck.

If I've left anyone out, then sorry. But to everyone, have a great time!

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections Of The Chairman

Christmas again!

It's a sure sign of getting older when Christmas comes around so quickly, and boy has this year just flown by! However, upon reflection, I can understand how it appears to have gone so quickly - from my perspective anyway - and that was probably due to the massive project I had to deal with in order to move your business from one location to another, which of course was over and above the normal running of your business.

Even today, I am not convinced that members appreciate the enormity of the task that was undertaken - we could have lost our whole business in one operation. I can confess now that I did have many sleepless nights in the months leading up to the move, because I was extremely aware of the consequences that we could have experienced had I failed to prepare correctly for the impending move. However, our IT department were absolutely magnificent with the attitude and commitment they directed toward the project.

Of course, other departments deserve their appreciation as well, but I am sure they would agree with me that in a company such as ours, if the IT doesn't work, then nothing does! The old motto comes to mind: "If you fail to prepare, then prepare to fail!" However, I did prepare and the rest is history.

I believe that in the future, 2007 will go down in this Society's history as a momentous occasion, not just for the move, but also as the time when Dial-a-Cab were at the pinnacle of the radio taxi industry. I'm not so sure about our future under the present structure, however, I am also extremely proud of the fact that I will be known as the Chairman that presided over Dial-a-Cab when we were the best!

Talking of buildings, I have exchanged contracts on our old premises, Brunswick House, and the purchasers have paid a 10% deposit so I am hopeful the process will be finalised by the agreed date of 12 December. I waited until after we had moved and settled in before deciding to sell and I was delighted that we were offered £300k more than I anticipated. Then, like many of these sales, the purchaser 'cooled' before contracts were exchanged so another buyer had to be found. In addition and as you are all aware, the market also slowed down. But in our favour, there is undoubtedly a shortage of freehold commercial property, as I discovered from my own experience when looking at properties whilst endeavouring to purchase Dial-a-Cab House. So I was optimistic a buyer could be found - and indeed a buyer was found, one who was also willing to pay £250k more than the original purchaser! So, yes, I was absolutely delighted. I agreed terms and exchanged contracts and a 10% deposit was paid - all in less than a week - and I'm optimistic that the sale will go through this time...

Christmas driver incentive...

I hope the sale of Brunswick House does go through in December, as I believe I will need



the money in January to pay for the Christmas incentive - and I will be delighted to pay it!

The feedback I have had from members regarding this year's Christmas incentive has been extremely positive, you all seem to like it and most of you are really doing your bit in covering more work. That is not only good for your Society, it is also good for you.

I listened to what you've had to say in the past regarding last year's three Peugeots and the TX4 Gold prize from the previous year and decided to devise a simpler scheme where everyone, should they so desire, be able to benefit.

However, I have to confess that I altered the 100 trips threshold several times as I kept recalculating how much the scheme was going to cost! Obviously, when you give away three cars, you know exactly how much the incentive is going to cost before the scheme gets underway, but with this latest scheme I can only estimate the final cost to the Society - a cost that I already know will be substantial. But if means we cover the work easier and quicker - and with less complaints - then it would have been worth it. By the time you read this, there will be approximately three weeks to Christmas, so just keep the great coverage going.

Parking fines and the taxi trade...

I know there must be very few of you who have not had unpleasant experiences regarding parking tickets. It is an absolute disgrace the way in which licensed taxi drivers are being persecuted - yes persecuted - by the authorities when it comes to them going about their normal business of transporting members of the public around London. Councils and boroughs are using CCTV cameras as a means of raising extra revenue from the taxi industry because, as always, we are seen as an easy touch. I know how obscene the whole scenario is becoming just by the number of tickets we are receiving from drivers.

What you must bear in mind is that we only pay for *bona fide* radio trips, so it is obvious our drivers are doing their day-to-day work when they receive these notices, otherwise we would not pay them. Goodness only knows how much it's costing taxi drivers whilst they are doing cash work - I don't suppose I will ever know that figure. I have spoken to every-

one I can think of regarding this issue; councils, TfL, PCO, the press, CBI and politicians to name just a few!

The situation is getting worse because the authorities just don't seem to care. Is there no one that can do something about this persecution? If vehicles are illegally parked, then they deserve everything they get, but not in the case of a taxi driver on an account ride whose only crime is to be waiting for a member of the public so they might transport them to their destination.

I still believe the Mayor can do something about it - I know I would! However, all we get from Mr Livingstone is that he doesn't have any jurisdiction or control over all the various councils - right Ken! Just last week, Dial-a-Cab spent £3000 on parking tickets - which equates to £150k per annum! I know for a fact that the other radio circuits are receiving tickets at the same rate as we are. Consequently, a minimum sum approaching £500k and rising is being raised in extra taxes from our industry. Enough is surely enough - someone has to stop this madness - the question is who?

Christmas greetings...

Finally, I would like to wish all members / journeymen and their families a very Merry Christmas and a healthy, Happy New Year!

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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Please check out my portfolio on www.anjaking.com
Enquiries: email: anja@anjaking.com



Christmas for many is the season for merriment – and shopping! As licensed taxi drivers, we have the advantage of being able to drive into town and avoiding the congestion charge (we won't tell if you don't)!

However, once in town the problem of parking sees us looking for the same few spaces that other motorists too are searching for. So the temptation is there to leave the cab on what we try to convince ourselves is a rarely used taxi rank.

But a shock was in store for one Dial-a-Cab driver when he asked the Public Carriage Office about that very subject. In return they sent him part of the 1853 Cab Act (subsections 19 and 21) and he was shocked to find out that the fine which can be levied is up to £1000 – something we have never heard of before.

The section that David Baker (D22) was sent and which shocked him read:

It is a requirement within these regulations that the drivers of the first two cabs on a rank,

£1000 for parking on a taxi rank?

DaC driver gets frightener from the PCO!

or portion thereof, must be with their cabs and available for hire immediately.

A cab must not be left on a standing, or portion thereof, unless the driver is willing to be hired. The penalty for breach of these regulations is set at Level 3 (£1000).

The PCO ended by advising David: "Please adhere to these regulations whilst operating as a Motor Hackney Carriage Driver and be aware that fellow drivers may wish to rank where unattended cabs are parked."

Drivers who park on shelter ranks are just selfish and if we say that some ranks are no longer used, we will lose them and one day when things are not so busy, we could regret that. The answer is please, please do not park on a taxi rank.

But £1000 fine? That too is just ridiculous...



Parking on a taxi rank to do your Xmas shopping could cost you £1000!

Will New Year's Eve Grind to a Halt?

With many attractions announced for the capital on New Year's Eve, all of it could be ruined due to a strike by London Underground's RMT Union members.

The New Year will be seen in by a fireworks display at the London Eye, organised by the Mayor of London in conjunction with Visit London. Mayor Livingstone told **Call Sign**: "London is one of the best cities in the world to visit during the Christmas period and the New Year's Eve fireworks display is world famous. It is one of hundreds of attractions taking place in the capital during the Christmas and New Year period, which make London the most exciting city in the world."

London's display is produced by award winning London based experiential communications agency, Jack Morton Worldwide and renowned pyrotechnician Chris Berthonneau.

Its popularity means it could get very crowded and it might not be possible to enter the viewing area once capacity has been reached. There are plans for it to be screened on BBC 1.

People are being advised not to bring their cars into central London and to use public transport instead, whether working during the day or going out in

the evening as road closures are being put in place earlier than last year – from 6pm.

The Mayor added: "If you are going home or going out on New Year's Eve, public transport is the best way to get about. Because of road closures and planned improvements at Victoria station and Liverpool Street, we will be advising people not to drive in and to plan their journey in advance. Public transport will be free."

Against that, the RMT Union have announced strike action on Sunday 8 and Monday 9 January, but following a London Underground visit to ACAS to discuss new issues raised by the RMT, the union responded by immediately threatening a further escalation of the strike action for New Year's Eve itself!

London Underground told us: "The issue in dispute is not about safety and does not involve job losses. It is an attempt to rewrite an agreement reached with the RMT and TSSA unions which the RMT itself previously hailed as groundbreaking."

If the strike for New Year's Eve were to go ahead, it would provide an impossible strain on the taxi trade for an already-busy night and one that would cause many problems for Dial-a-Cab's regular clients who would be relying on us...



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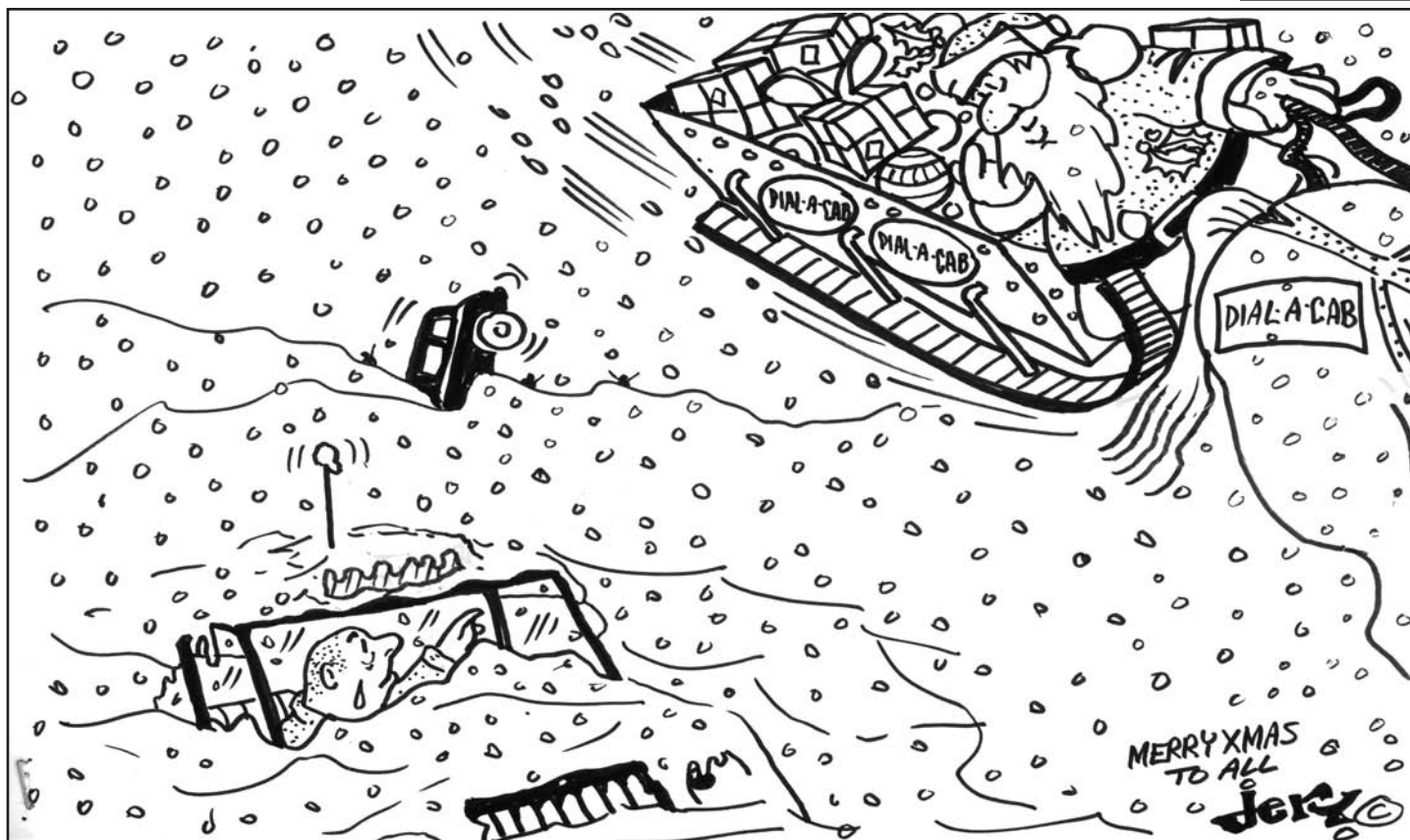
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Jery's World



Allen Togwell phoned and said that I could work with Dial-a-Cab again this Xmas – provided my sleigh was clean! So here I am...!

Manganese Directors sell all their shares



MBH Finance Director Mark Fryer sold over 30,000 Shares

Mark Fryer (Finance Director) and Peter Shillcock (Chief Operating Officer) of LTI parent company **Manganese Bronze Holdings**, have both sold all their 25p ordinary shares in the company.

Mr Fryer sold 30,350 at £7.10 each (£215,485) while Peter Shillcock sold a total of 18,823 over a two-day period at £6.69 each (£125,925).

Earlier this year Manganese Bronze won the award for Best Performing Share of the Year, when the previous 12-month period saw their share make an astronomical rise from 204p to 850p – an increase of 289 percent, making them the best performing share outside the FTSE 350 on the London Stock Exchange. They are currently trading at around 594p.

Two large companies, **Hermes** and **Lehman Brothers International (Europe)**, have recently shown interest in purchasing substantial numbers of the issued share capital in MBH.

Manganese had been remarkably resistant to profit-taking, but the tie up with Chinese company **Geely Automobile Holdings** has led to a suspected selling price abroad of almost half that of the UK with £15,000 for a basic TX4 having been touted outside of this country - thanks to substantially lower production costs in China. That would put the Geely version of the London taxi within reach of buyers in Europe, North America and China, who are often put off by the £27,000 basic model price tag.

According to MBH, the market outside of the UK could reach 2million. That would certainly provide more sales, but almost certainly show lower profits.

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*Late deals and special price for DaC
members.*

Russian actor Vasily Livanov – known as The Russian Sherlock Holmes for his performance as the famed sleuth – enjoys taking trips around London's attractions in an original Victorian hansom cab dating back to 1899, which he hires – along with the driver – from the Sherlock Holmes Museum. But he has a problem that **Call Sign** should agree with, but which we aren't too sure about. The cab cannot gain access to the Royal Parks because of the advertising ban.

The museum staff are currently campaigning for the right to drive the original working hansom through the capital's Royal Parks even though it carries a discreet ad, the sponsorship of which goes to help the upkeep of the museum. But carrying ads is banned.

The 1899 horse drawn Forder cab belongs to the Baker Street museum and is rolled out for VIPs and privately hired engagements. However, it cannot get past the gates of the park because of the advertising ban.

John Aidiniantz, Assistant Curator at the Sherlock Holmes Museum has now taken his campaign to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, James Purnell. Requests for exemption from the regulations were sent to the Head of Policy at Royal Parks and flatly turned down.

Flat Battery? SIMPLE START is the answer...

As Dial-a-Cab drivers head into winter – and judging by the lousy summer it could be a long and cold one – we can expect more terminal messages for drivers requiring jump starts! We all know that the sensible thing is to get your battery checked out before the onset of winter, but while the temperature remains mild and the battery turns over, we always assume that the old one is going to be ok for a few more months.



But isn't it always on the foulest and busiest night of the year, when you turn the ignition key after waiting 30 minutes for a client having had your lights, wipers, demisters, heater and terminal all on and around £15 already on the meter, that you hear that familiar flat battery whirr and splutter coming back at you from under the bonnet!

You may have jump leads, but you still need that second cab and you also know that you are going to end up cold, wet and probably with greasy fingers. Well, not any more!

Call Sign has now heard of a new product from **Black & Decker** that should solve all the above problems. Called **SIMPLE START**, all you do if you can't start the cab is to plug it into the cigarette lighter point, wait 15 minutes and that will boost up your failing battery enough to get your cab started.

Although **SIMPLE START** fits into most car glove compartments, even if that doesn't apply to your cab it is small enough to hide somewhere. It also has a torch so you don't have to fumble around in the dark looking for the cigarette point.

Sadly, **SIMPLE START** isn't given away free, but at a RRP of £49.99, it still sounds like a bargain. Of course, **SIMPLE START** doesn't perform miracles. Once your battery keeps failing, you will still need a new one – but you will at least know that until you get one, **SIMPLE START** will be there to get you out of trouble.

SIMPLE START™ is a trademark of Black & Decker and available from Argos.

Please Let Our Hansom Cab Into the Park!

Sherlock Holmes Museum wants entry to Royal Park



Vasily Livanov takes a ride in the 1899 Forder Cab - but not into the Royal Park

"It's a Royal Park Regulation from 1977," explained Mr Aidiniantz, "to prevent people with vehicles that are constructed or adapted for trade or business driving along park roads. And quite right! This is a hansom cab; it WAS built for the purpose of business, serving as a Victorian taxi carrying 2 passengers with the driver behind. But that's not what we use it as."

The striking horse drawn vehicle has carried famous actors such as Dustin Hoffman and the wives of state leaders.

"But we always have to stop at the park gates

and ask passengers to walk – it's difficult to explain to them why we have to do that," added Mr Aidiniantz.

His gripe is that we as licensed taxis and tourist coaches, which both carry advertising, are permitted by special dispensation to drive through the parks.

In correspondence with David McLaren, Head of Policy for the Royal Parks, it was explained that taxis were vehicles licensed under the Metropolitan Carriage Act of 1869 and to apply to be licensed as a taxi, Mr Aidiniantz and his Hansom would need to apply to the PCO!

Mr Aidiniantz insists that he does not want to have the hansom cab licensed as a taxi, but would like to be permitted into the parks as one of the list of vehicles carrying advertising that are exempt from the ban. He argues that tourists like to see such vehicles and going through the parks makes a welcome break for the horses, which are otherwise forced to stay on London's busy roads.

"The Queen is known as a horse lover," said Mr Aidiniantz, "do I have to take this all the way to Her Majesty?"

Call Sign Comment:

We would have no problem at all with the Museum's Hansom Cab going into the park – in fact it would undoubtedly add to London's colour. Our problem is whether minicabs would then jump onto the wagon and insist on being allowed to advertise their names and phone numbers too. The saying about driving a coach and horses through the regulations is more than pertinent to this issue. But we wish the museum luck ... Ed

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DaC driver Martin Hizer (M47) asks whether CCTV is the biggest threat the trade has faced?

The Curse of Closed Circuit Television?

My name is **Martin Hizer (M47)** and I am a London Licensed Taxi Driver who has held his Bill for 11 years. When I first contemplated writing this article or if you prefer, proposal, it was as a personally aggrieved individual whose own perceived injury was, if I'm honest, the only concern to me. Upon reflection, I now regard the nature of my grievance as possibly one of the biggest threats that our collective trade has ever faced.

That threat comes from a technology that was initially introduced (if we believe the powers that be) to protect us from threats ranging from muggings and car theft all the way up to international terrorism. I'm talking of course of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV).

In the last nine or so months, CCTV has found a new niche in the market, one which in my view is a form of extortion. I'm sure that a number of you have had the unpleasant experience of picking up the morning post only to find that you have been issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) informing you that you owe anything up to £120 to some council or other for a parking offence. As if the spiteful council Parking Attendants that replaced the Metropolitan police wardens aren't bad enough, I have now taken to looking up at the sky as well as around me when I stop!

"So you got a parking ticket," I hear you say, "so what?" This ticket however, was issued by CCTV whilst I was in my cab waiting for a DaC account customer for whom I was booked. The 'offence' occurred in the cul-de-sac portion of Carlisle Street (Soho), so there could be no through traffic to which I could have been an obstruction or nuisance. I wrote to Westminster Council, who issued the PCN and put this point to them only to be told that although allowances are made for picking up/setting down, no provisions are in place to allow you to wait for clients. Now whether you drive a London Black Taxi, a Mercedes or a Vauxhall Corsa that has been licensed for hire and reward, you must have had times where you've had to wait for clients for a multitude of different reasons, but mainly because your client is on the telephone conducting business, which in some cases could mean procuring thousands or possibly millions of pounds of extra revenue for their companies - and they certainly are not going to curtail such activities because the poor driver is waiting!

I have since received two more PCNs whilst on account trips - in Soho St and Old Compton Street. Add another in Dean Street where I had the audacity to pull over and eat a sandwich in my vehicle, so I guess you could say the whole of Soho is no-go. And for those of you not on radio, what about

the clients who ask (as they often do) to go via a cashpoint, because if the fixed CCTV cameras don't get you, the new periscope fitted Smart cars will! Both fixed and mobile cameras will take your photos even if you are waiting for a matter of just seconds!

When a client orders transportation, unless there are extreme circumstances they expect to find you outside their door. Look at it this way; if you had ordered a cab in Frith Street and it was pouring with rain, you wouldn't want to walk to Soho Square or Great Marlborough Street to pick it up and you certainly wouldn't pay for such a poor service!

So what's the answer? It goes without saying that you cannot accept a job that will earn you £8 for example, if it ends up costing you £120 (or £60 if paid within 14 days)! Surely we are not expected to give up literally millions of pounds of accounts? Not only is it unfair, but to me it is a blatant restriction of a perfectly lawful trade and as I stated before, a form of extortion. Normally the practise of *demanding money with menaces* is carried out by people that most refer to as gangsters! It has now got so bad that I had a warden come over to me whilst I was on an account job recently and gruffly told to "move." Yet I thought what a good lad, at least I got a warning!

My dear brother Antony, who has been a driver for over 25 years and who is also on DaC, hit the nail on the head when he compared the introduction of prosecution (or persecution) by CCTV to the other bane of most

drivers, the speed camera, insofar as it has removed discretion, commonsense and confrontation from the process. It is now simply black or white. But there are other implications. What if you have broken down, what if you need the toilet? What if you are taken ill or overcome with tiredness and need to rest? Isn't there a multi-million pound government funded advertising campaign claiming tiredness kills? Even if you appeal and have the PCN overturned, doesn't that just add to the duress of an already stressful job? And to those who are genuinely taken ill, should you just drive until you pass out and plough into a building or some unfortunate pedestrian who happens to be passing?

I say this must stop right now! There are currently 23,000 licensed taxi drivers and God knows how many from the private hire sector, but like it or not this is a problem for all of us! **If we stay strong and every single one of us without exception refuses to pay every one of these PCNs by appealing them all, we could make the system grind to a halt.**

At the risk of sounding overly dramatic, our entire trade is at risk. Do not take this threat lightly and please, with immediate effect, stop paying these thieves now. I will leave my address with the **Call Sign** editor through whom I will happily receive your comments and views.

Be lucky, be strong...

Martin Hizer (M47)

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This series has sent out Call Sign's Richard Potter to test different diesel fuels to see what, if any, of their publicity is true. Last month it was BP Ultimate and Shell Diesel Extra. This month Richard tried Shell V-Power diesel...

The Call Sign Fuel Test...



I mentioned in the last article about BP ultimate diesel and what affect it had on my fuel economy. At the same time, Shell has brought out their V-Power diesel as an alternative to their diesel extra. I trialed it over a five-day period and this was the result...

The most noticeable differences were an increase in power, especially when

you pulled away and there was a little reduction in smoke from the exhaust.

My MPG over the 5 days was 23.26, 23.12, 24.34, 24.07 and 23.51 making an average of **23.66** compared to 23.32 for BP ultimate diesel and 23.44 for Shells diesel extra. Again the cost of Shell V-Power diesel was 5p per litre more than Shell diesel extra, so if you take into account the increase in price against the improved MPG - if you can call 0.22 of an MPG an improvement, there is little to be gained by using it and over one month your fuel bill will be more and that speaks for itself.

It may be stating the obvious, but what we as a trade need is a fuel that acts like Powerpill at a good price.

The next fuel I will trial is **Sainsburys Biodiesel**, so we will see if that has any benefits for Dial-a-Cab drivers.

Richard Potter (T51)



Call Sign has also put together this comparison chart to show the difference in diesel prices since 1995. In 11 years, the cost has spiralled by £2.40 per gallon...

1st June 1996 -	51.9p per litre
1st June 1997 -	54.9p per litre
1st June 1998 -	65.9p per litre
1st June 1999 -	72.9p per litre
1st June 2000 -	81.9p per litre
1st June 2001 -	77.9p per litre
1st June 2002 -	75.9p per litre
1st June 2003 -	77.5p per litre
1st June 2004 -	89.0p per litre
1st June 2005 -	89.7p per litre
1st June 2006 -	96.9p per litre

And in December 2007 - 106.9 per litre!

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Call Sign rarely prints anything where the name of the person involved is hidden, but we do make rare exceptions and this case is certainly one of them.

A Dial-a-Cab driver (we'll call him Bill) had recently arranged to buy a second hand cab from another DaC driver (who we'll refer to as Bob). Because the cab involved was still fairly new, there was a finance agreement involved and that's when Bill's problem came to light.

He was told that because he hadn't made any payments for the Mercedes he had bought the previous year, his name had been put onto a debtors list and that he would be unable to get finance from any reputable company because they all had the same information referring to Bill's non-payment. There was only one problem, Bill hadn't bought any car last year - let alone a Merc!

Bill told **Call Sign**:

"I had spoken to Bob about buying his cab and we'd agreed everything. Then I had a shock when the finance company said that according to their records, I still hadn't made a payment on my last purchase - the Mercedes. I explained that I hadn't bought a Merc, but they couldn't accept my word and there was then no alternative but to call in the police."

The DaC driver continued: "Eventually they came round and believed me that I hadn't bought the vehicle and said it looked as though I had been a victim of ID theft - a crime that is becoming more prevalent. I gave the police a statement and they now believe that the Mercedes was bought using my details and taken out of the country within 24 hours. They also think that it will probably take up to two years for me to get back onto the HP registers.

He ended by saying:

"So far, other than losing out on the cab and having the police involved, it hasn't made any other difference. But should I want to buy anything over the next few years, it will have to be cash or nothing!"

There were 43,000 victims of Identity theft in 2003, but by 2006 that was up to 80,000.

As the type of identity fraud varies, so does the impact on those whose identity have been stolen. It could be a one-off theft involving just one fraudulent application or transaction, such as Bill has gone through, but some persistent and skilled fraudsters can comprehensively steal an identity and cause a great deal of distress to the victim. It can cost up to £8,000 to clear a name in addition to the considerable damage to their credit status. However, many also claim that the police aren't interested in ID fraud because of the time and resources involved and in the eyes of many legal associations, it is the financial institution that lend the money who are the victims. The person whose ID has been stolen comes a poor second. Lending organisations

DaC driver victim of ID theft!

are considered the only victims because they are the ones who have been defrauded. Consequently, the damage inflicted on the reputation of the victims and the time they spend mending the trail of destruction, cannot easily be redressed. Any compensation needs to be fought for through the courts.

Until recently there has been insufficient deterrent to criminals. Sentences in UK courts have tended to be light, although with the growth in identity theft and with the implementation of *The Fraud Act 2006*, there are indica-

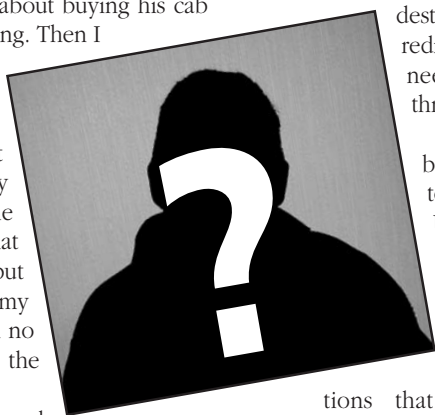
tions that this is beginning to change. But it still remains difficult, if not impossible, to retrieve the funds lost to a fraudster or to extract compensation in the unusual event of them being caught.

How do they get hold of identities? In the past, they have exploited loopholes in the issue of 'identity documents' such as passports, driving licenses and birth certificates. They manage to obtain official documents to prove a false identity. Around 2,500 fraudulent applications for driving licenses were detected

by the DVLA in the 12 month period to March 2007.

In 2005 almost 5000 driving tests were stopped due to doubts over the identity of the person sitting the test, whilst 16,500 applications for passports received by the Identity and Passport Service (IPS) in the 12 months to September 2006 were found to be fraudulent!

The British Security Industry Association told **Call Sign**: "With the shocking security breach by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs involving 25 million child benefit claimants, we should all be learning lessons about the importance of protecting confidential information. Shredding your important documents when not required is one of those things.



Call Sign

December 2007

Editor: Alan Fisher

Address: 39-47 East Road, London, N1 6AH

Tel: 0207 251 0581 Fax: 0207 553 7293

E-mail: callsignmag@aol.com

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

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Tel: 07958 300 428

Email: danny.fresco@dsl.pipex.com

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

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



I recently had cause to complain to Transport for London about being delayed by movie companies who use the services of the *Metropolitan Police Service Film Unit* to hold up or

delay traffic at certain times while filming is in process.

The particular incident which caused my complaint was the use of two Met motorcycle police patrolman who ushered vehicles out of the middle lane of a busy east-to-west Euston Road, while a small convoy of tracking vehicles were used to film a car in a trailer followed by camera crew on a late Friday afternoon in April of this year.

On another occasion, this time in August, I had also been held up in St James Square by a police officer, unnecessarily I believe, while filming took place.

On both occasions I took photographs of incidents, which I then provided in evidence to TfL. In my email, I pointed out that I believed it was totally unnecessary for this type of activity to take place during busy weekday periods and that this type of filming should be restricted to evenings and weekends.

After my initial complaint, TfL got back to me and said they would investigate the matter. To give credit where it is due, they did exactly that and I subsequently had an email from the officer in charge of the *Metropolitan Police Service Film Unit* based at the Empress State Building in Lillie Road SW6, who had been contacted by his Commander to investigate the matter. I later received a communication from the sergeant in charge of the unit informing me in some detail of

Have you been delayed by police while filming took place? DaC's David Baker took it further

Delaying Taxis Through Filming?



Should this type of filming truck be allowed to hold up legitimate traffic?

both occurrences.

I have included a brief part of his reply. It comes from PS Andrew Clerk...

"Since the deployment of traffic officers in April, the Metropolitan Police Film Unit has reviewed working practices and further control measures are in place when traffic officers are deployed to assist with moving filming scenes.

May I offer the following paragraph as a communication link for you and the readers of your magazine. The Metropolitan Police Film

Unit and Film London welcome suggestions on how to improve working practices in order to reduce inconvenience where our support of the filming industry impacts on London's citizens. We can be contacted via our web site: www.met.police.uk/filmunit or www.filmlondon.org.uk."

I hope this small article can provide further proof that if one takes the time to complain about certain issues, then they are listened to.

David Baker (D22)

Saving the Planet?

Stanley Roth (Y53) asks about saving the planet...

Each week a section of the Jewish Torah (five books of Moses) is read at the Sabbath services. In September we started reading from the start (In the beginning etc...) again. Our Rabbi during his sermon, used a commentary written by Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks. I would like all of you to take note and say "...what can I do to help?" The following is part of that commentary...

A Degraded Planet...

"We see this today as more and more cities sit under a cloud of smog and as mercury advisories are issued over large sectors of our fishing waters. Deforestation of the rainforests, largely a result of humanity's growing demand for timber and beef, has brought on irrevocable destruction of plant and animal species.

"We can no longer ignore the massive negative impact that our global industrial society is having on the ecosystems of the earth. Our unbounded use of fossil fuels to fuel our energy-intensive lifestyles is causing global change. An international consensus of scientists predicts more intense and destructive storms, floods and droughts resulting from these human-induced changes in the atmosphere. If we do not take action now, we risk the very survival of civilisation as we know it."

This sermon made me think about the destruction of the rainforests to grow palms that will be turned in to **Biofuels**. Also farmers who instead of growing food to feed the starving masses, are also growing crops to use as fuel. Yet everyday we are throwing thousands of gallons of fuel away. What is not happening in this country is the use of **Biogas**. That is Methane produced from all the rubbish thrown away, plus human and animal effluence broken down, which we would then make us slightly less reliant on the whims of the oil producers.

Because RTG are promoting the use of a Biofuel that is not recommended by LTI plus the fact that in the past the LTDA have spoken out against gas, I really wonder which direction those who claim to speak for our trade are taking us?

I think that unless we wake up to what we (yes, me as well) are doing to this world of ours, it will get a lot worse.

Stanley M. Roth MITG (Y53)



Stanley Roth at one of his many meetings with PCO officers, explaining how his gas taxi works

Allen Togwell's Marketing Place

Allen looks at Dial-a-Cab and the environment...

Being forced into doing something against our will and at a cost few could afford, does little to encourage us to do anything in a similar vein voluntarily. I refer in this instance to the **Transport for London** directive that all taxis should be fitted with energy saving emissions reduction systems.

The consensus of opinion by many is having been forced into paying a large sum of money for emission-reducing equipment, which in many instances was not necessary? Why should they do anything more to help the environment voluntarily?

Unfortunately, saving the environment is a very serious issue and it can only be achieved by literally everybody playing their part in every way possible, willingly or otherwise.

In the Chairman's **Call Sign** article last month he spoke at length about Dial-a-Cab's Carbon Footprint commitment, including the necessity to make our clients aware of that commitment and what we are doing to offset the carbon that is produced whenever they use our vehicles.

For many years I used to be responsible for replying to tenders, the contents of which have now grown enormously since those early days when the two primary questions were the size of fleet and the system of dispatching the work. Then with the market place becoming more competitive and clients more



demanding, tenders became more complex and grew to 100 odd pages of issues, many of which one wondered what they had to do with supplying a taxi service?

The problem was that if the questions were ignored or insufficiently answered, it weakened the chances of retaining or capturing the account. Now in addition to tenders looking something akin to the *Maarstricht Treaty*, the big issue of the moment is the environment and believe me this issue is big, very big. So much so that the retention of many of our senior clients could depend on our Society's carbon footprint policy.

Needless to say our competitors, also mindful of its importance, are resorting to desperate measures by making all sorts of claims on their vehicles such as having the only carbon free taxi fleet in London etc, when in truth they probably have no more than a dozen

cabs running on 5% of biofuel.

However, in our case our carbon footprint is being applied part directly ie that by which we operate within Dial-a-Cab House such as automatic lighting, solar panel heating etc, and part indirectly ie we are offsetting the carbon produced by your vehicles by the installation of wind turbines and the planting of tree's etc. I urge you all to make note of these details because should any of your passengers broach the subject, particularly those from our senior clients, it is important they are made aware of the facts.

And it need not stop there because should you be asked what the drivers themselves are doing apart from those things you do domestically, there are two areas that could be of benefit to you and the environment. The Chairman mentioned your credit payments being available via our website, this will be an enormous saving of paper.

The other area is your tyres. I was surprised to learn that 80% of commercial airlines use remoulds. I always thought remoulds were inferior, but it appears to be quite the opposite. Apparently it takes only 7 litres of crude oil to make a remould compared to 22 litres for a new tyre. They are longer lasting and considerably cheaper...

Before signing off for 2007, may I wish you all a merry Christmas and the happiest of New Years...

Allen Togwell
DaC Marketing
allent@dialacab.co.uk

SAFER TRAVEL AT NIGHT OVER XMAS

Late night marshalled taxis during December 2007...

Late night marshalled taxi ranks during December 2007...

The PCO have informed **Call Sign** that during December 2007, late night marshalled taxi rank schemes will operate on the dates and times detailed below...

Liverpool Street

Wednesday 5, Wednesday 12, Wednesday 19 Dec.	22:00-02:00
Thursday 6, Thursday 13, Thursday 20, Thursday 27 Dec.	22:00-02:00
Friday 7, Friday 14, Friday 21, Friday 28 Dec.	22:00-02:00

In the New Year, the rank will be marshalled from Wednesday 9 January 2008 onwards at the standard times (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evenings between 22:00 and 02:00).

Cranbourn Street

During December 2007, the directional marshalled taxi rank in Cranbourn Street (opposite Leicester Square) will operate during the following times...

Friday 7, Friday 14, Friday 21, Friday 28 Dec.	22:00-03:00
Saturday 1, Saturday 8, Saturday 15, Saturday 22, Saturday 29 Dec.	22:00-03:00

In the New Year, the rank will be marshalled from Friday 4 January 2008 at the standard times (Friday and Saturday evenings between 22:00 and 03:00).

Queen Victoria Street

The marshalled taxi rank at Queen Victoria Street is no longer operating due to the extensive building works that have started in the area and the closure of the late night venues the marshalled rank served.

The PCO hopes that drivers will support the above schemes and that they find them beneficial in meeting the needs of the travelling public during December and over the festive period.

If you require further information please contact the PCO at lic.research@pco.org.uk.



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**We make the wheels turn
so you can earn,**

The survey was conducted amongst Dial-a-Cab drivers by **Know Your Limits**. Total sample size was 112 and undertaken in September 2007. The official report says:

Heavy drinking cuts your chances of getting a taxi home, a new survey by Government-backed alcohol campaign *Know Your Limits* in conjunction with **Call Sign Magazine** has revealed, with nine out of 10 taxi drivers admitting to avoiding picking up people who have drunk too much.

Three quarters of drivers (74%) felt that drunken passengers behaving badly in their cabs showed a lack of respect, while one in two (58%) rated dealing with the intoxicated public as the worst part of their job. Three-quarters (72%) have had drunken passengers vomit in their cab and a similar number (75%) have had drunken passengers forget where they live.

However, this does present taxi drivers with a dilemma. More than two thirds (69%) of the drivers said that they worry for the safety of the women they see who have drunk too much alcohol and are walking home alone. According to government figures, one in three reported rapes happen when the victim has been drinking.

Alan Fisher, editor of taxi magazine **Call Sign**, said: "Cabbies often see young women walking home alone and we're concerned for them. They seem to forget about their personal safety after a few drinks and either walk home

DaC Drunken Passenger Survey Result

One for the road is often one too many to get a cab home!



Next stop to try and catch a taxi?

alone or take unlicensed minicabs."

He added: "We're more likely to pick them up if they're not staggering or slurring their words. We want to get people home safely, but without the hassle that comes with drinkers. People should reconsider having that one more for the road before trying to get a cab."

83% of cabbies have lost time during their shift through having to clean up when someone has vomited in their cab, having drunk too much whilst 39% have lost a whole shift because they couldn't use the cab again afterwards. And it's not just vomit that causes taxi drivers a headache with drunken passengers:

Eight out of 10 cabbies (82%) report that drunken passengers have tried not to pay. A similar number (78%) say they have been verbally abused while almost half (45%) say they've had to take drunken people to the police.

Gary Fulcher, a taxi driver of 15 years, said: "Just as I wouldn't go into an office tanked up and abuse the staff, passengers who've had a few drinks shouldn't cause me trouble in my workplace. We're just doing our job and drinking too much is no excuse. Don't drink past your limits and you're much more likely to get picked up."

The *Know Your Limits* campaign has just launched an advertising campaign using taxis in Birmingham, Liverpool, London and Manchester to promote sensible drinking. They feature police and ambulance livery with the strap line: *Don't let a good night turn into a bad one*. The message to the 18-24 target audience is plain: Watch your drinking or risk ending the evening in an emergency service vehicle.

Thanks to all the drivers that spent time filling in the survey forms ...Ed

Xmas / New Year at the PCO / SGS

**PCO and SGS opening times over
Xmas and New Year:**

Public Carriage Office

Monday 24 December 2007
Tuesday 25 December 2007
Wednesday 26 December 2007
Thursday 27 December 2007
Friday 28 December 2007
Monday 31 December 2007
Tuesday 1 January 2008
Wednesday 2 January...

Open 8:00 till 12:00
Closed (Christmas Day)
Closed (Boxing Day)
Normal opening hours
Normal opening hours
Normal opening hours
Closed (New Years Day)
Return to normal...

SGS Inspection Sites (Taxi)

Monday 24 December 2007
Tuesday 25 December 2007
Wednesday 26 December 2007
Thursday 27 December 2007
Friday 28 December 2007
Monday 31 December 2007
Tuesday 1 January 2008
Wednesday 2 January...

Open 7:30 to 12:00
Closed (Christmas Day)
Closed (Boxing Day)
Open 7:30 to 15:30
Open 7:30 to 15:30
Open 7:30 to 15:30
Closed (New Years Day)
Return to normal...

Any enquiries in respect of this notice should be made to
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The shocking development began when Dial-a-Cab driver **Barry Spear (Y16)** wrote to *Call Sign* attaching some photos he had taken of an out-of-town taxi from Sevenoaks using the M4 bus and taxi lane. Barry took offence at this and *Call Sign* said it would check to get official confirmation that no taxis other than those licensed for London could use them.

So Editor **Alan Fisher** asked *Transport for London* to confirm that only London taxis could use London bus and taxi lanes.

"I was shocked," said Alan **"when they told me that any licensed taxi from anywhere in England or Wales could use our taxi lanes. I'd always believed that the opposite was the case and that if I was outside the Met area – Dartford for example - then I couldn't use their taxi lanes. Yet according to TfL, I had been wrong all these years!"**

So *Call Sign* spoke to **Luke Richard**, the PCO's *Senior Strategy Integration Officer*, to confirm that the TfL spokesperson had got her facts wrong. But no! They were correct and any licensed taxi from anywhere in England or Wales CAN use our taxi lanes – unless there is a specific sign saying London taxis only and we haven't see many of them.

Mr Richard was very helpful and gave us a full reply, stopping to answer any questions we had along the way. But the end result hasn't changed. Mr Richard told *Call Sign*:

"The regulations for this are part of the national regulations, so whether the bus lane comes under TfL on a Red Route, the London boroughs as a normal bus lane, the Highway Agencies for the M4 or any authority outside of London that is responsible for the bus lanes, the national definition of the signs means that the word

Bus/Taxi Lane Sensation...

Any taxi from anywhere in England or Wales can use them!



This Sevenoaks taxi is legally using the M4 bus / taxi lane

TAXI applies to any taxi licensed by any authority in England or Wales and they can use that bus and taxi lane. It does, of course, also mean that London taxi drivers can use bus and taxi lanes anywhere in England or Wales too, provided the bus lane sign has just the word taxi on it. The definitions come from the various licensing acts – the 1846 act for outside of London and the 1869 act inside London. This applies only to taxis and NOT private

hire who cannot use bus lanes."

Call Sign went on to ask Luke about coaches using bus lanes and the answer was that yes, their licence is the equivalent to a Hackney Carriage and provided they are licensed for at least 8 passengers and the driver, they too can use all bus lanes.

This magazine is still shocked and doubts that many in the trade knew about the regulations and out-of-towners – but it's true and now we all know.

We've Been Telling Them for Years... Congestion Charge Crooks become "cabbies!"

Call Sign – and in fact the trade press as a whole - have been telling everyone for over a year that London car owners are registering their vehicles as private-hire vehicles in order to evade the £8-per-day congestion charge. But it is only now that the national press and motoring magazines have picked up on it, that anyone is taking notice.

All that is needed is an £82 application fee plus a £27-per-yearly licence and easy medical, and car owners can claim exemption from the £8-per-day charge. And it isn't just ordinary car owner and (!!!) window cleaners in their vans who have cottoned on to the scam – luxury car owner also seem to need the saved £8!

According to one respected motoring magazine, up to now an Aston Martin, two Maserati Quattroportes, 31 Bentleys, 18 BMW X5s, 52 Range Rovers, three Maybach 62s and eight Rolls-Royce Phantoms are said to have been registered as PH. And to prove



A sign of things to come?

how stupid the current regulations are, the same magazine claims that there are also eight Mercedes SL models currently registered as private-hire vehicles - yet these cars do not even have a back seat!

On behalf of *Transport for London*, it is the PCO's job to track around 50,000 private hire vehicles. It can't be easy, but as they seem to have ample staff to check out licensed taxis at various London ranks, we wonder whether they should be employed

looking after the private hire section, who seem to have learned more tricks than we ever have in our 320 years! Because very soon, if the Mayor has his way, these same crooks will be using bus and taxi lanes and more than likely using our ranks!

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Editor

The **London Transport Museum**, one of the capital's most iconic and best-loved cultural attractions, has reopened its doors to the public at the **Covent Garden Piazza** after a major transformation project costing £22.4 million and taking two years to complete. The project received a £9.4 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The new museum is filled with stunning exhibits and brings the story of London's transport and its impact on our city into the 21st century. Lively exhibitions explore the powerful link between transport and the growth of modern London, culture and society since 1800. Visitors will encounter the world's first underground steam and electric tube railways and meet characters from the past such as financiers and the first female bus driver! You can even tunnel under the Thames and shelter as during the war! In the Metroland Gallery, visitors can relax in a recreated 1930s suburban living room and discover how our commuter lifestyles changed so dramatically between the wars.

New exhibitions suggest the future of transport and consider how our actions might impact on the environment and what it will be like to live in London 50 years from now.

A new design gallery showcases the crown jewels of the museum's collection and explores how transport has given the city its unique cultural identity. The stars of the show include Harry Beck's original artwork for his groundbreaking London Underground map, cutting edge graphic design, branding, vehicle design and architecture. The collection includes many firsts and breakthroughs in design, now famous worldwide. The legendary poster archive will be on display throughout the museum, and in themed temporary exhibitions in the new CBS Outdoor

Return of the London Transport Museum



Not sure about the driver - but the bus is at the museum!

Gallery.

The galleries are full of interactive exhibits for young people and adults alike. For children there is a new learning zone and interactive play area. The Museum's popular stamp-card collecting trail is back, and there are countless other attractions including play vehicles and action packed interactive exhibits that are fun and informative.

You can finish your day by relaxing with a coffee or themed cocktail in the *Upper Deck* café/bar, London's latest venue for informal dining throughout the day and into the evening.

LTFUC 2008 DIARIES

The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children are pleased to say their 2008 Diaries are now available from:

The 'Halt' Office at the Heathrow Feeder Park,

Ilyas Taxi Spares at Heathrow
From any committee member

We thank you in advance for your kind donation.

www.ltfuc.org.uk

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We can service your TXII from new without affecting your warrantee

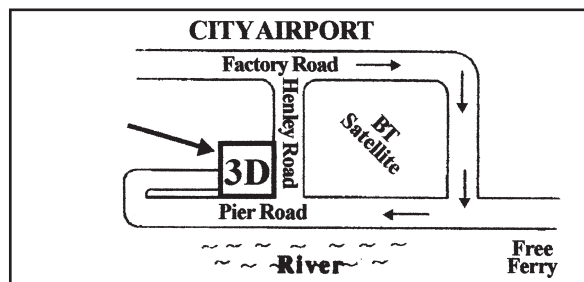
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To book: Ring Christine on 0207 474 6592 and mention that you are on DaC

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WE ARE ALSO A PCO APPROVED EMISSIONS FITTING AGENT FOR THE TAXI CAT SYSTEM



St Pancras International opens its doors...

*And yes, Call Sign's Eurostar
trips continue...*

There has been some confusion regarding the pick-up and set-down points at the new and amazing £300million St Pancras International Station. The former Victorian station has now been acclaimed as the finest railway station in the world, leaving even New York's Grand Central in its 186mph wake following the installation of a £5.8billion high-speed line between London and the Channel Tunnel.

Eurostar's Tom Parker told *Call Sign*: "It was certainly an historic day with it being the first high-speed line and first new rail line in 100 years."

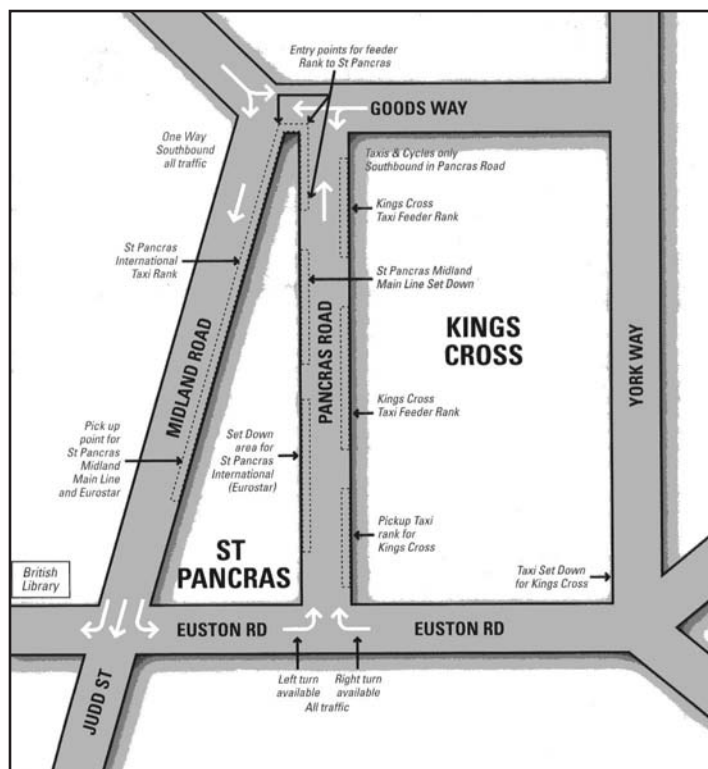
To set down passengers, enter the now two-way Pancras Road via either Euston Road or Goods Way and drop passengers opposite the Kings Cross station taxi rank. Stopping is limited to 2 minutes, so don't hang about! You can then either head north towards Goods Way and 'U' turn to join the Kings Cross station rank or exit on to Euston Road where left and right turns are permitted. Alternatively, follow the narrow slip road signed 'Taxi Only' and negotiate a very narrow service lane that will lead you around the back of St. Pancras station and into Midland Road to the Eurostar/mainline taxi rank to pick up passengers. This is a kerbed lane, so once you're inside that area and have joined the rank, you will not easily get out of the taxi queue if you are offered a radio trip with instructions to 'meet at head of rank' or another local pick-up location.

There is a small area just ahead of the taxi rank where pre-booked passengers can be met. The main roadway outside the kerbed area has double yellow lines and zigzag markings for the pedestrian crossing. Exit onto Euston Road where as mentioned left and right turns are permitted.

Inside the station there is clear signage directing passengers to the taxi rank on Midland Road.

Eurostar also confirmed that the special deal for Dial-a-Cab drivers to Lille, Brussels and Paris is continuing from the new station and you can now travel from the world's newest and most exciting railway station to Lille in 1 hour 20 minutes, Brussels in 1 hour 50 minutes or of course Paris – now just 2 hours and 15 minutes away! Forms are available in the reception.

The map shows where you should pick up or set down, but be aware that once on the rank you will only be able to get off at official escape openings.



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Dial-a-Cab Credit Union Christmas Closing

**Please note that Friday 21 December will be
our last open day until after the Christmas and
New Year holidays.**

**be reopening on Tuesday 2 January
take this opportunity to wish all
members a very Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year...**

One of the most important decisions you have to make as a cab driver is whether to buy or rent your first cab and if you buy, how much should you spend? Do you buy



something cheap with the intention of saving up money to buy something better, or do you borrow more and buy brand new or one just a few years old? By doing that, once you've paid off your first two cabs, you would be in a position to *keep up* because you'd have a large proportion to put down against the next cab, so just paying for depreciation. Personally, I have never had the mindset that you are freehold as there's always a loss to be paid for and by renting, you line someone else's pocket with nothing to show for it at the end. If you do go the proprietors' route, the next most important thing you need is a good garage.

My first cab was a three-year-old FX4S plus which I viewed at The Royal Oak and paid for at the rank at Terminal 4 after meeting the owner. How things change. It wasn't long until I realised that it wasn't the best cab LTI had ever made and even though it had done relatively few miles, there was an alarming knocking noise coming from the engine when you got up to 50mph. I sat on the long Broadgate rank outside Austin Reed - which incidentally should be reinstated considering the carbuncle of a rank they have in Liverpool Street these days - and strolled along asking drivers if they could recommend a garage to me. Two drivers recommended **Dunston Crash Repairs** who were at Kingsland Road. So I took it up there and have been going there ever since. My 'Plus' needed new piston rings

A DaC Drivers Views on Life and Everything...

(remember those days at 46,000 miles) but over the years Hassan and Richard have saved me numerous amounts of time and money. They have been established for over 30 years and have their own fleet of 80 cabs as well as a big client-base of owner-drivers, many already being **Dial-a-Cab** drivers. You hear stories of drivers having to take time off the road to book their cabs in to have a service. At Dunston you don't have to book, just drive straight in and a service on a TX1 or TX2 takes around 45 minutes. If you want to rent a cab, you can or they will rent out your cab for you if you want.

As a special deal for Christmas and from now on, Hassan has agreed to do servicing for DaC drivers only at a special rate. A full service on a TX1 will cost £48 inc VAT and a TX2 £80 inc VAT. This includes oil change, oil filter, air filter, brake adjust, check fluid levels and lights etc. Dunston can use fully synthetic oil for £10 extra and source all their parts and oil from KPM. I think you will agree that this is a very good deal. You can find Dunston Crash repairs at Stern Street E8 off Kingsland Road by the canal bridge or phone 0207 254 1136.

Banning spare tyres?

As we look to make energy savings to help stop the world from melting away, one way this could be done and also improve MPG is to remove our spare tyre. On only two occasions in 16 years

have I had to change my spare and they are indeed surprisingly heavy. If you think about the extra fuel a taxi burns over the course of a year due the added weight, then multiply that by every vehicle on the road, the environmental benefits would be huge if spare tyres were banned altogether. In an age where everything must be done to stop global warming, reducing pollution from vehicles must help. It seems that flat tyres occur less these days as the quality of tyres and remoulds greatly increase. Many call the AA to change their flat tyre and Kwik-Fit already do a mobile tyre fitting service. So if you did get a flat, you would call them to either repair or change it and set that against your reduced MPG. Over a period, it wouldn't really cost you anything and would benefit everyone.

As it's the Christmas month, I bid you happy holidays. Another year where DaC has gone from strength to strength with more records broken. As a driver, it's not easy with traffic being as bad as it's been and roadworks popping up everywhere with few people working on them! I bet they will all have been done by the start of the GLA elections next year! For now, wherever and with whomever you spend it, have a Happy Christmas and New Year.

As usual, if you would like to get in touch with me, just put Richard Potter in the subject line and send to callsignmag@aol.com ...

Richard Potter (T51)



DAC 2007 AGM

The Dial-a-Cab 2007 Annual General Meeting will take place at the King George III and Queen Charlotte Rooms, The Brewery, Chiswell Street on Sunday 10 February 2008. The meeting will commence at 11am.

If you decide to vote via postal ballot, you can still attend the meeting but cannot vote again. Please remember that in accordance with rule 9(g), a fine of £50 will be imposed for member's non-attendance at the meeting, unless a postal vote was received by the outside agency at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Non-attendance includes leaving the meeting before the Chairman declares it closed unless you have already voted via postal ballot.

You will have already received notification by post that propositions and rule changes had to be received at DaC House by Friday 23 November.

Anyone who has put forward a proposition or rule change by the closing date can, if they wish, write a précis for Call Sign readers. It will appear in the January issue, but due to early closing by the printers, the magazine would require any text by 7 December. Please try to keep it to around 500 words max...

THE SALIERI RESTAURANT

376 Strand, WC2

We Invite Dial-a-Cab drivers and their guests to our restaurant where you can partake of the finest food and wine

And as a thank-you for helping our clients come and go over the years, we are happy to be able to offer you a genuine 25% discount on your bill

We are certain that you will be delighted



Please bring along your badge or Bill as ID
We are also happy to be able to offer you £5 for every passenger you bring to us (minimum of two persons).

Salieri Restaurant
376 Strand, WC2
Reservations: 020 7836 1318

Continued from November

Bigger, better and brighter -so what's next?

Having recently had the honour of being invited to Dial-a-Cab's open day to see their bigger, better and brighter new offices in the appropriately named Dial-a-Cab House, meeting once again former chairman **Jack Russell**, as well as past and present members and staff, got me thinking back to where ODRTS had their first premises - a shop in Pentonville Road!

In those early days - the 1950's - we six or so regular radio night men would meet there to sort out which areas to dwell in to cover the very early morning regulars. Think about this; these customers were all cash rides with no extras for running to, or covering the work. Why did we do it? I'd like to think it was for the good of the newly formed Society, but it had as much to do with greed and the lack of weekday fares between 3 and 6am in the morning as much as for any high-sounding principles!

One regular fare stayed in Whitefriars Court, just off King's Road and he was a flower buyer who went very early to Convent Garden to place his orders. From there to The Garden was not much of a fare at that time of morning, but it was a job and there was always the chance of pulling another fare out of The Garden. This could be toffs and their girl friends, as it was quite the thing for them to go there for a coffee from one of the stalls - usually serving market porters - after leaving a Mayfair nightclub. Also, the local pubs opened at five in the morning and the upper classes always found it amusing to briefly lower themselves by mixing with, and lording it over the poor, needy and working class! But the big, big reason was this; this punter never gave the driver less than 10 shillings and more often than not, would hand over 11 shillings for a five-shilling fare. What we hoped for was that he would keep you waiting ten or twenty minutes. Then out he'd come, apologising profusely and as often as not stuff a £1 pound note in your hand at the end of the trip. In those days, that meant you were getting at least an hour's money for less than half an hour's work.

To put that into perspective, a hard working, long day man's target would have been £10 and that was a target - not necessarily achieved in the kipper or off-season. So again, whether I worked days, nights, long days or long nights, it always paid me to be a radio cab driver on ODRTS, as I found out whenever I was obliged to work on a non-radio taxi!

If any of you think I get some sort of bung for being so pro-radio, any money the editor may have paid me is given by him at my request to various taxi trade charities. What I do get is a regular copy of, in my less than humble opinion, the trade's best in-house magazine and from time to time, invitations to DaC's brilliant events that are so well organised by **Jacqui Chart** and her hard working team, together with **Brian Rice** and the **DaC BoM**.

Who would have thought; who could have dreamed all those years ago that ODRTS would need, own and occupy such a magnificent building - and all without going into major debt! All involved, past and present members, staff, they and you all deserve the highest praise. Well done! Here's to the future!

Will DaC's next move be to even grander premises and if so, will it encompass a whole

"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...



It can't get earlier than this - blind MP, Sir Ian Fraser, opens ODRTS first office in Pentonville Rd - Founder Chairman Bonnie Martyn stands next to him...

section devoted to cab sales, servicing and repairs exclusively to DaC members and their families only? Perhaps a gym or café? A whole complex that would serve to prove that DaC has for years realised that the organisation has two main customers, its members and the public who want to pay to ride in their taxis. Personally, I doubt I will be around to see such a giant step forward with all of its costs and management implications, so instead I will keep on writing about the good and bad old days as long as **Call Sign** allows me.

Here's to the next article about those past days that have led to DaC being able to afford owning such magnificent offices...

More of those memories next month...

Sunset Strip

*The Hon. President, Hon. Chairman and Committee of
The London Taxidriver's Fund For Underprivileged Children
Would like to wish you the compliments of the season
With grateful thanks to all our drivers and supporters for your continued help
Celebrating 80 glorious years in 2008*

"None walks so tall as he who stoops to help a child"

www.ltfuc.org.uk

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**. Any member of your family residing at your address also qualifies for membership!*

Then if you are over 18, have been a member of the Credit Union for over 3 months and have established regular savings, you can borrow up to 3 times your total savings...

The cost?

Just 1% per month on the outstanding balance (or APR of 12.68%). Loans can be paid back early AND there is usually an annual dividend on your savings.

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

Help find a cure for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy...

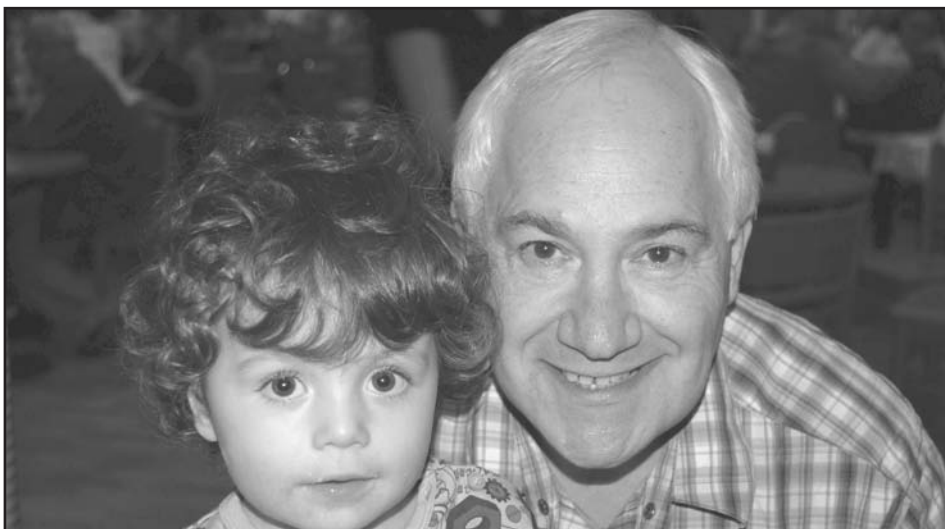
Harvey Cohen, a senior taxi salesman for Manchester's M&O and whose youngest grandson has Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, is encouraging all taxi drivers to unite in an effort to find a cure for children with that heartbreaking disease and hopes that through his daughter's campaign - *One can make a difference* - the lives of thousands of young children can be drastically improved.

Harvey told **Call Sign**: "The belief of this campaign is that you can really make a difference. It's absolutely vital that we increase awareness and raise money in order to fund research programmes dedicated to finding a cure or treatment."

He went on to add: "In our line of business, we pride ourselves on assisting people with all types of disabilities. Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy is the most aggressive form of Muscular Dystrophy which affects almost exclusively boys."

Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy is a severe and progressive genetic muscle wasting disease for which there is no cure. Young men usually die in their late teens or are left wheel-

M&O SALESMAN: CABBIES CAN "MAKE A DIFFERENCE..."



Harvey with grandson Joey

SMILE



The Irish Hunter

Two Irish hunters were out in the woods when one of them fell to the ground. He didn't seem to be breathing as his eyes rolled back in his head. The second Irishman took out his mobile phone and quickly called 999. He gasped to the operator:

"My friend is dead! My friend is dead! What should I do?"

The operator, in a calm soothing voice, told him to take it easy...

"I can help," she said, "but first let's make sure he's dead and not just unconscious."

There was a short silence and then a shot was heard.

Then the voice came back on the line...

"Okay, he's definitely dead - now what?"

The Parking Ticket

After getting a parking ticket, a cab driver walked into a lawyer's office and asked about their rates.

"£150.00 for three questions," replied the lawyer.

"That's a bit rich isn't it?" asked the cabbie?

"Yes," said the lawyer, "and what is your third question...?"

The Curse

An old man went to a Wizard to ask if he could remove a curse placed on him for the past 40 years. The Wizard replied:

"Perhaps, but you'll have to tell me the exact words that were used to put the curse on you."

The old man replied without hesitation: "I now pronounce you man and wife..."

chair bound, unable to move unaided. The hope for families lies in new treatments that can slow or stop the fatal condition in its tracks.

Andrew Shaw, the dealer principal at M&O (Manchester) added: "We fully support Harvey in his quest to raise awareness and funds for this worthy cause. When I was told about the '*One can make a difference*' campaign, I didn't think twice about lending my

support. I hope that other cab drivers will feel the same so that we can give new hope and comfort to young children across the UK."

Anyone wishing to make a donation or to find out more about the One can make a difference campaign should visit www.ocmad.net, the North West arm of Action Duchenne.

M&O Manchester is one of the UK's nine official dealerships for LTI's London taxi...

WCHCD at St Pauls Remembrance Service



"When you go home, tell them of us and say, For your tomorrow, we gave our today..."

Alan Parker, Master of the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers*, attended the Opening of the Garden of Remembrance Service at St Paul's Cathedral on 5 November. Organised by *The Royal British Legion*, this annual service was conducted by The Dean of St Pauls.

Following *The Last Post* and *The Silence*, The Lord Mayor, Alderman **John Stuttard** planted the first cross on behalf of the cit-

Part of the St Pauls Garden of Remembrance

izens of London. Sheriffs, other City dignitaries and Masters of the 107 Livery Companies of the City of London planted further crosses.

Alan Parker told us: "Having stood silent, we paid our respects to the very brave men and women that sacrificed their lives in order that we can live in peace today. The sun shone and the early autumn leaves fell, a very sombre experience, one

that I was inwardly moved to have been part of. We did remember them and long may we do so."

There were some very strange happenings going on at the **Royal Oak** eatery on the night of Halloween, when the 'Guv'nor' and his team of gals really got into the 'spirit' of things by dressing up for the occasion. The restaurant itself was suitably decorated with spiders, skeletons and spooks - although the diners were still treated to the usual warm welcome from **John Anderson** and his staff.

When **Call Sign** was phoned by several Dial-a-Cab drivers on the evening of 31 October and warned that strange things were occurring at the Oak and that we shouldn't risk going alone for fear of floating ba-ghouls, we took the chance!

John told us that he and his staff have had regular themed decorations in the restaurant for several festive occasions throughout the year including Easter, St Georges' Day, Christmas and of course, Halloween!

"We'll be having the traditional decorations this coming Christmas with a tree over in that corner," he said pointing to an alcove, **"and of course we'll be in fancy dress!"**

And prompted by lovely daughter Sophia to mention the *London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children* of whom the Royal Oak are supporters, John put on his scariest Halloween look and stared at DaC

Well and Truly Dunn..!

Ba-ghouls at the Royal Oak's Halloween!



Halloween at the Royal Oak - Left to right: Gerry Dunn, John Anderson, Kathryn, Sophia and Jacqueline

Marshal, **Gerry Dunn MBE (S84).**

"Oh yes, that's right, the Underprivileged Children's Fund! I

wouldn't want Gerry Dunn over there to think I've forgotten him," he said letting out a loud piercing shrill of a laugh whilst motioning towards the DaC driver dining at a nearby table who looked suitably petrified!

For free, easy parking, good food and a warm welcome – even on blood-curdling nights such as Halloween - the Royal Oak restaurant can be found down the slip road off the Harrow Road roundabout.

© Call Sign Magazine MM7

A New Paige for Terry



Terry with new granddaughter Paige

(Y90) and his family. Because of that, Alan wanted to knock something off the fare but Terry wouldn't hear of it. So instead, Alan gave Terry's young son – also called Terry - £5 spending money for the holiday.

He thought nothing more of it until dad Terry recently contacted Alan – now Editor of **Call Sign** – to ask whether he remembered the day, because that young boy was now 22 years older and together with his wife Clare, have produced their first child and Terry's first agrandchild!

The beautifully named Paige was born on 16 September and according to granddad, weighed in at a rather hefty 9lb 6ozs. After the excitement had worn down slightly, he remembered that it was actually 6lb 9ozs!

Dad Terry told **Call Sign**: **"I remember that day 22 years ago very well. Terry is now all grown up and working at Canary Wharf and my wife Dawn and I are just so proud! Our granddaughter Paige is absolutely gorgeous. We are just over the moon with no sign of coming back down to earth yet!"**

Terry ended by asking: **"I was even thinking of asking the Board for permission to change my call sign to Pops 90!"**

Congratulations to the whole Catherall family...

When Alan Fisher (F07) accepted a cash radio ride in 1985 to Gatwick Airport, he was surprised to find that it was fellow Dial-a-Cab driver **Terry Catherall**

FOUNDLING MUSEUM

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

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

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

Usual admission £5, concessions £4, children up to 16 years free
The Foundling Museum is at 40 Brunswick Square WC1
Tel. 020 7841 3600

Visit their website at
www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk

It isn't just **Tottenham Hotspur** where strange footballing things occur! Dial-a-Cab driver **Lee Pearce (J71)** has been the goal-keeping hero for DaC-sponsored Combined Counties Premier League team **Wembley** for a few years and it's his magic between the sticks that has now cost Wembley his services.

The problem started earlier this season when Wembley and Lee were up against fellow Combined Counties team, **Bedfont Green**, who were awarded a penalty. Up came the Bedfont number 6 to take the spot kick and Lee flew to his right to make a great save – something Lee has become renowned for. The game ended in a 1 – 1 draw.

Then two months later, Lee heard that Bedfont Green were interested in signing him – one of several teams over the years to try.

"To be honest," Lee told **Call Sign**, "I've always said no because not only do I like the way Wembley play the game, but I've always got on really well with the team captain/manager, Ian Bates. But this time was different, Bedfont Green made me a financial offer that I just couldn't turn down, coming as it did just at the time my partner Becky gave birth to our third child."

Lee continued: "I kept Ian in touch with developments, but Wembley just couldn't match Bedfont Green's offer and as a result, I have now moved on."

So does he miss Wembley?

"I made a lot of friends there and of course it was a wrench leaving, but Bedfont Green represents a new challenge and I am really looking forward to it."

He certainly went in at the deep end with

Bedfont Green Snatch DaC's Lee Pearce



Lee Ready to drive away from DaC-Wembley for the last time.
Inset pic: Lee in action

Bedfont Green's first home match seeing them up against runaway leaders, Merstham. Lee made six top-drawer saves, but still couldn't stop the away team leaving with all the points following a 2-0 defeat. The home fans appreciated Lee's efforts, making him their *Man of the Match*, but the result still left his new team down at

the wrong end of the table. At the same time, DaC-Wembley began to get things together and took a great away win at high-flyers, Cove.

An interesting match should take place on the day **Call Sign** drops onto your mat, because on 1 December Lee and his new team-mates make the trip over to DaC-Wembley, with Ian Bates and co making sure that Lee gets plenty of exercise – by picking the ball out of the net!

"I'm looking forward to the match," said Lee, "because joking aside, I gave DaC-Wembley all I had and I'm proud of my time there. I'm sure we'll have a drink after the match."

Incidentally, thanks to the many DaC drivers who send in photos from their local paper showing Wembley with their DaC strip on.

Keep 'em coming...

To confuse matters further, both Bedfont Green and Bedfont are in the Combined Counties Premier League...



London to get Hydrogen Bus Fleet

In what Transport for London via Mayor Ken Livingstone calls investing in cleaner air.

London Buses, who are responsible for achieving environmental targets and standards across the whole of London's bus fleet in line with the Mayors Air Quality Strategy 1 and Climate Change Action Plan 2 initiatives, have announced their commitment to hydrogen technology.

TfL took part in a successful two year European project known as Cleaner Urban Transport for Europe (CUTE) and its one-year extension, HyFLEET: CUTE, which involved the operation of three hydrogen fuel cell buses in revenue service.

Hydrogen fuel cell buses are an ideal clean fuel solution, as they produce no emissions - only water vapour. In February 2006, the Mayor announced his aim to introduce up to 70 hydrogen powered vehicles across the GLA family by 2010. Ten of those will be buses. TfL is also undertaking the procurement process for the remaining vehicles and have now signed contracts with American company ISE4, who will be supplying the ten hydrogen buses to London. Five of these will be hydrogen fuel cell buses and five will be hydrogen internal combustion engine (ICE) buses.

Fuel cell buses are powered by electrical energy, which is generated when hydrogen passes through the fuel cell. The hydrogen then forms with oxygen from the air to form water vapour as it enters the atmosphere. The hydrogen is stored in pressurised tanks on the roof of the bus.

The five hydrogen internal combustion engine vehicles (H2ICE) will use a specialist ICE V10 engine, which is powered directly by hydrogen, again stored in tanks on the roof of the bus.

Hydrogen can be made from a number of different sources, including natural gas and the splitting of water into hydrogen and oxygen (electrolysis). The procurement process to secure a hydrogen refuelling supplier for the project is well under way and TfL expects to have the provider secured by early 2008.

Although not publicly acknowledged, it is said that LTI have a hydrogen powered taxi engine on test.





I can still remember my first visit to New London with my grandfather. He had promised to take me as a Christmas treat and at last we had arrived. Having passed through the usual security checks at our suburban station, we had boarded the Nuclear Supertrain emerging at London East New Station at exactly 10am new time.

We walked onto the escalator, beneath the scanners, behind the screens and into the bright light of a New London morning and onto a New London street. Granddad had been a London cab driver before the Revolution and had once worked these streets in a taxi. He had explained to me that a taxi was a motorised machine powered with a liquid fuel that could be hired for what was then called money, to transport people from place to place as they so desired.

Of course, no one used money anymore, only Life Credits accumulated whilst working till aged 60, then gradually returned until Death Day, which was fixed and could not be altered or changed. On the rare occasion that a citizen had applied for extensions, the matter was reviewed before a jury and if rejected, 5 years were deducted from their life span. Soon no one bothered to trying to get extra time. This measure was introduced to help counter the problems of the increasing old age sector of the population that had spiralled out of control and had been a great burden to the New National Health Service.

After the Revolution, taxis were abolished to be replaced with computerised pods that were made in China and so granddad lost his job, retired early and lived off his supply of credits.

We stood for a moment on the quiet street and the sun shone down, casting deep shadows on the pavement.

"This was called Bishopsgate once," granddad remarked pointing to the south. "The river is down there - or should I say what remains of it. Would you like to see it?"

I nodded and we began walking and he described what had been where once and was now gone. As we proceeded, silver pods with uniformed passengers sitting side by side whizzed almost silently by, occasionally stopping to discharge the people outside the massive steel and glass buildings that I assumed were places of work.

I had heard about the revolution many times. It was granddad's main topic of conversation. He had recalled how the people became sick of the "rules." He told how people's lives were ruined by those rules and how they had risen up against Parliament and the police. Many were killed during the uprising, but in the end they won and the country returned to the democracy it had earned so many centuries before. Now, the New Government cared for the people and the people cared for the New Government. That's

A story for the Holiday Season from David Kupler (Y74)

THE CHRISTMAS TO COME...



"The pod moved away to the nearest pod park to recharge..."

what we learned in our schooling time, so it had to be true. There were still rules, but they were for our protection.

Granddad was born in the early years of the 21st Century. At that time, Londoners were the most scrutinised people in the world with thousands of cameras recording their every movement throughout the city. Then cameras with microphones were introduced, which could pick up innocent conversations and transmit them to central control where technicians would scrutinise the data and decide if further action was necessary. Heavy fines were imposed for infringements and stiff prison sentences for the more radical elements. The death penalty was reintroduced for serious crimes and the execution of murderers and other offenders was a weekly event broadcast live on televisions and radios throughout the nation.

Soon prisons and police stations became overcrowded with prisoners who had been arrested on the basis of overheard conversations without trials! People were afraid to speak out against the regime and there was much unrest throughout the land; then came the Revolution, followed by The Reformation and the New Government with its promises of change and giving consideration back to the people. We reached the river and stood by the thick wall that overlooked the water.

"Look up river to your right and tell me what you see," commanded granddad. I turned my head to take in the view. There was a ribbon of water as far as the eye could see, flowing between two six-lane highways - one on the south side and one on the north. They disappeared into the distance, passing beneath bridges stretched out between the two banks.

Small boats with umbrella-like sails drifted up and down the river. Occasionally a larger craft with many commuters on board swiftly moved from bank to bank dropping off at the small piers.

"I remember when they started the River Road," granddad sighed, "it was after the 2012

Olympic fiasco. I was just a lad, but I recall it like it was yesterday," he continued as we walked westward towards the New Recreation Area, where citizens were permitted to enjoy the approved entertainments thoughtfully provided by the New Government.

"The idea had been to have a continuous highway from Oxford to Tilbury, diverting heavy traffic from the over-congested streets. It seemed like a good idea at the time and although the cost of the project was scandalous, the-then Government pushed ahead with it, justifying the expense as an investment. They funded most of it through fuel taxes, even though the supply of oil was diminishing at an alarming rate and the development of nuclear powered transport was still in its infancy."

By now the sun was unmercifully oppressive and we were glad of the shade provided by the palm trees growing out of the pavement along our route.

"Fancy a ride in a pod," granddad asked as we strolled over towards one of the Pod Parks situated conveniently close by? There was a machine about two meters high and he inserted a card into the slot. The screen flashed into life and a series of easily understood instructions appeared. Granddad spoke to the voice activated unit, advising of our intended trip, removed his card and we made our way to the first pod whose doors slid open to receive us. We sat side by side on the cushioned seats, the doors closed and we heard the faint hum of the cooling climate control as the safety bars locked down around us. The hover pod lifted a few centimetres off the ground and we moved forward at a slow but comfortable pace.

"I programmed a tour with commentary ending up in what was once called the West End, so just sit and listen," granddad instructed.

We joined the main stream of traffic, which was mostly two seater pods like ours, all nuclear or solar powered and all travelling in the same direction but at various speeds according to the requirements of the passen-



THE CHRISTMAS TO COME (CONTINUED)



gers. I looked at those fellow travellers. Lots of tourists gaping at the sights, lots of business types engaged in conversations and the occasional converted wheeled vehicle driven by tradesmen going about their business in a separate lane. The pods converged very close to each other but never touched - like horizontal bubbles moving just above the streets' white, reflective surface.

All the while, the pod's voice highlighted points of interest, occasionally slowing down so that we might see. We changed direction and as we passed a big square. Granddad said that this was once the place where our victory in war over the French in the 19th century was remembered. There had been a statue of an Admiral Nelson standing on a tall column in the centre, but one of the London Mayors succeeded in having it removed as it was not politically correct and was considered offensive to other members of the European Union when we were still members before the revolution. I wonder where it has been stored?

"There was also a huge station called Waterloo until they changed its name to New South Terminus for the same politically correct reason," added granddad. "I used to work it daily when I was a cabby. Those were the days," he mused with what looked like a tear in his eye.

We continued along a wide road where many large shops displayed their wares. Hundreds of people moved around on the wide pavements clutching bags and parcels. The pod voice advised us that our journey was over and we stopped by a large store whose windows were decorated with Christmas themes. The doors slid open and the safety bars rose up, allowing us to exit.

Emerging from the pod, granddad smiled and said that it was so nice to have our Christmas back again after so many years of stupid political correctness and total identity loss. The pod moved away to the nearest Pod Park to recharge and await its next user.

We entered the shop to be greeted by young people dressed in green outfits who offered to accompany us around the store to assist with our purchases. Granddad declined the offer and one of them smiled saying: "Welcome to Hamleys, enjoy your shopping experience."

We strolled to a notice board displaying the departments and granddad smiled as he found what he was looking for.

"This way," he said and we proceeded onto the moving walkway up to the next level, emerging into a huge room filled with all kinds of model planes, ships, trains and motor vehicles from a bygone age. Granddad scanned the room and then headed for a section marked *Heritage Transportation*. There we both saw what he had been looking for - in a glass case about 50 centimetres square, sat the scaled down model of a black four-wheeled vehicle with a little yellow light on its roof and the label *London Taxi* (early 21st Century) price 25 credits. Nearby were also placed models of strange red vehicles called Routemaster buses.

"Do you like it," he asked me as I gazed at the Taxi? I had never actually seen one as close as this, although there were some images of him with his cab on his home computer and I had seen a few old English movies where actors used taxis. The drivers always looked unhappy and said strange things like *where to gw* or *that'll be four and six-*

pence please.

"It's your Christmas present and something to remind you of me when I'm gone," he said.

"But granddad, it's wonderful but so expensive." I asked him if he could really afford it?

"Look here," he sighed, "if I don't use the credits I have left, the New Government will seize all my assets when my time is up as is the rule nowadays and you'll not see a credit or even a fraction of one for sure. Remember my Death Day is soon, just another few weeks. In January I have to report to the New Ministry of Births and Deaths as prescribed by law. That's why I wanted to spend this day with you and dispose of some excess. You'll treasure it, I know, and maybe pass it onto your grandchildren before your time is up. Who knows, perhaps there will be another government who will allow citizens to die naturally as in the old days and Death Days will be abolished."

He selected the purchase and pay option, took his receipt and we went back down to collections. Within a few minutes our Taxi model was wrapped and brought over to us by one of the assistants.

We stepped out of the store and into New London's bright sunshine, joining the shoppers in New Regent Street, each living every moment to the full, each enjoying the New Christmas experience as if it might be their last - and for many like granddad, it could well be...

Happy New Holidays...

David Kupler (Y74)

PCO Ban LTFUC Taxi Collection Boxes

Over many years - certainly going back to the early 1970s - London's licensed taxi-drivers have been given the option to have a *London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children* collection box in their taxi during the run-up to Christmas. The Fund has raised over £100,000 over the years in that manner and it helps towards the Mad Hatters party they hold each year at the Grosvenor House Hotel, which so many underprivileged and sick children have enjoyed so much over the years.

This year, as the Fund approaches its 80th anniversary, the Public Carriage Office has for the first time refused the permission it has always previously given, including all of the Xmas collections under the Roy Ellis era at the PCO.

The LTFUC told **Call Sign**:

"The Fund trustees are unwilling to place any driver in a situation that could jeopardise his or her ability to work. Officials from the PCO have verbally stated that approval cannot be given, but they have refused to put it in writing. Apparently, licensed London taxi-drivers cannot act as an agent for an organisation collecting money.

"However, if any responsible London taxi-driver, licensed as a fit and proper person and CRB checked every 3 years, would like to help the LTFUC and over 600 underprivileged children with this year's collection, please contact any committee member through *Call Sign* or go to www.thelondon-taxidriverchildrenscharity.co.uk."



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Great as Xmas Presents

The March and September issues of *Call Sign* ran stories on the farcical closures at the Limehouse Link, which cause not just tremendous delays in the area, but untold frustration for Dial-a-Cab drivers and their clients on the 'Island'.

DaC driver **John Addis (K97)** has been following the story and has been in constant touch with the area's MP **Jim Fitzpatrick** and *Surface Transport Communications* department of *Transport for London* who keep trying to justify the never-ending delay in completion.

John told *Call Sign* that the completion date for the closures had changed several times from 30 March to 30 May and then to 23 July. Looking back, that would have been something of a result because since then, TfL said completion would be on 26 August, but that there would have to be further night time closures for a week in September or October to remove any unnecessary equipment from the tunnel. Er, right...

Sadly, John now tells *Call Sign* that the Link closures have yet again been extended, this time until 23 December, meaning that the closures that were supposed to take 5 months have now reached 15 and are still not yet completed!

In reply to John, *Transport for London* said: *"The aim of the works is to ensure that the systems in the tunnel remain at a high standard and comply with the evolving guidelines for tunnel communication systems. The works include the installation of a re-broadcasting system for mobile phones, the emergency services systems and radio channels. During emergencies, there is a facility to interrupt a radio broadcast to give drivers instructions. The new speaker system being installed will be able to relay instructions to drivers both inside the tunnel and those just outside."*

"These works will, when complete, enhance the existing safety features within the tunnel."

The layout of the tunnel has required that a hugely complex bespoke design be produced. The production and installation of such a bespoke system has been more problematic than envisaged but the works are almost complete and moving into the testing phase. As can be appreciated, the design and installation of such complex safety based systems must be thoroughly and rigorously tested to ensure that, during an incident, they work as expected. With such rigorous testing, there will inevitably be problems encountered and delays caused. However, the systems must be ready to respond to any emergency."

"We have experienced some issues with our contractor's performance. These issues are being addressed and please be assured, we are taking the appropriate action and in the meantime I apologise for any inconvenience these closures may have caused."

John Addis told both *Call Sign* and TfL:

I am a loss as to why a 5-month contract should be extended to 15 with probably more to come. Clearly there has been incompetence

The never-ending saga of the Limehouse Link!



One day it will be completed!

either in the original estimate or the carrying out of the work. There can be no doubt it is

one or the other. Many of us at DaC use this route often but there seems to be no urgency in the works. I just wish someone in authority would make a random inspection, as all I ever seem to see are vans with contractors aboard reading newspapers! The vans are often parked by the cones facing the traffic with their headlights on - as if to make it difficult to observe what is going on. I previously worked in civil engineering and avoiding overrunning was paramount. I have never heard of a contract running three times over estimate.

TfL purports to be anti-pollution and anti-congestion. This sad episode certainly doesn't back up that claim - and they still haven't given a date for completion!"

Dolly comes to The O2

Darcey Bussell and Katherine Jenkins' Viva La Diva too!

Following a mammoth sell out arena tour in March this year, the one and only **Dolly Parton** will be playing The O2 on 5 July 2008 - the final stop in next year's UK tour.

With hits like *9 To 5*, *Here You Come Again*, *Jolene* and of course the incomparable *I Will Always Love You*, audiences are guaranteed to see the show of a lifetime. With new sets, costumes and even new music from her forthcoming *Backwoods Barbie* album (released Feb 2008), it is sure to make an evening spent with Dolly Parton a night to remember.

Dolly Parton has written over 3,000 songs, had numerous number 1 hits and won countless Grammy, CMA and ACM awards, not to mention enough gold and platinum albums to make even the folks at *Tiffany's* blush!

The O2 are also welcoming **Darcey Bussell** and **Katherine Jenkins** with their *Viva La Diva* show on 10 May 2008. *Viva La Diva* sees Bussell and Jenkins unite to present a sensational fusion of song and dance, paying homage to the heroes and heroines that have inspired them. Directed by choreographer Kim Gavin, who has worked previously with the likes of Take That, the show will see two of Britain's best loved and admired stars stretch each other's discipline.

Tickets for both shows are now on sale and also available from www.theo2.co.uk or telephone 0871 2200 260..



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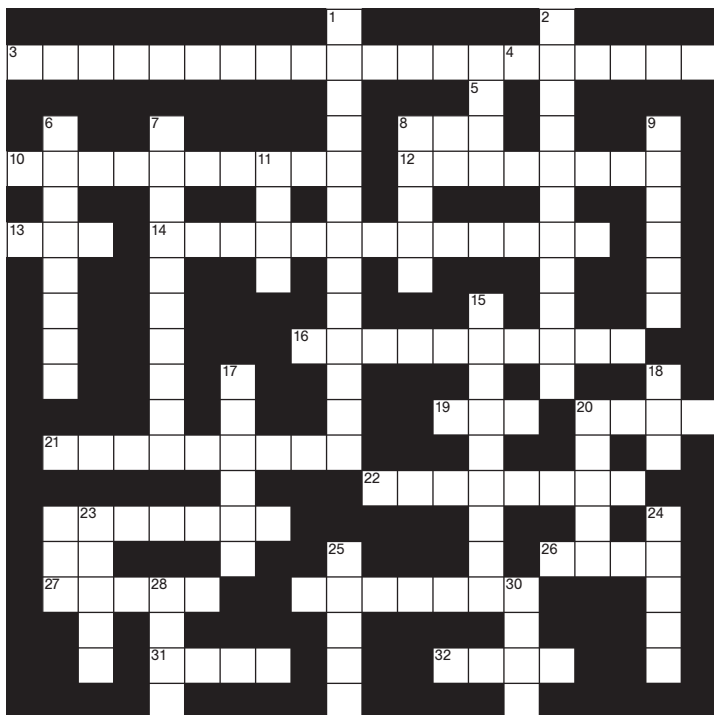
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Contact Andy (P32) on 07904 091278 or 07932 960350

Call Sign Crossword

Win £100 for Xmas!

Call Sign doesn't believe in £10 prizes! So for this crossword we're offering £100 for the first name out of the hat from all correct entries received by Friday 14 December. Entries must be returned on the crossword, whether original or photocopy. Good luck...



ACROSS

3. *Old Lady in the City Centre*
4. *He keeps time in London*
10. *Jordans love*
12. *A fitting place*
13. *Cock and hen*
14. *The new base*
16. *Whitbread's old job*
19. *One minus one*
20. *Persuade*
21. *A circle by the river*
22. *A bridge leading to the continent*
23. *Editors name*
26. *A great man*
27. *Cut off point*
29. *Throw off.*
31. *Mislaid*
32. *Chairman goes with peas?*

DOWN

1. *Now Charlie's home*
2. *Loves a newt*
5. *We all have one.*
6. *God's acre*
7. *Plastic money*
8. *Backhander*
9. *Hanging about at Edgware and Bayswater Road*
11. *On the rock & roll*
15. *Cab drivers clock*
17. *An evil illness*
18. *Cockney sherbet dab*
20. *Lookalike*
23. *Is it a pixie?*
24. *Irish broadcaster*
25. *Depraved*
28. *Inactive*
30. *A harbour*

David Kupler (Y74), David Ballard (N28), John Hudson (W34), John Hall (K74) and Alex Constantinou (N05) are Call Sign's restaurant reviewers. These DaC drivers and their guests will visit restaurants periodically and give their honest opinions...

This month David Ballard went to Clapham High Street's ESCA



Eating Out with Call Sign

ESCA is a popular and well-stocked delicatessen/patisserie, which can be found at **160 Clapham High Street**.

It opened in 2004 and caters for both eat-in or takeaway. In between the beeswax-finished walls with its rows of shelving offering everything from kebabs of marshmallows to picnic hampers to enjoy on the Common, there is a buzz with diners enjoying the – so I'm told – very popular breakfasts or the excellent lunches for which they are famous. We had the lunch (served from 11.30am) and found the restaurant to be busy, but well staffed.

I ordered the stuffed roast lamb cut from the deli and heated up, which can either be served on its own at £5.90 or with 2 salads from the varied display at £8.90. I chose the wild rice salad and the pumpkin and flaked almonds. The lamb was tender and the salads freshly made and interesting.

My wife ordered the chicken and mushroom pie. This can be eaten cold or warmed through and is served together with potato, yoghurt, dill and cucumber salad and also a green bean and toasted sesame dish. It was thoroughly enjoyable, although the chicken pie could have been a little warmer.

ESCA also serve a selection of wines, either by the bottle or glass, beers and liqueurs and also a selection of hot chocolates, including hazelnut and almond.

We were enticed by the amazing display of cakes in the front window that featured everything from cheesecakes to chocolate brownies. I chose the bounty cake, a big thick chocolate gâteau with coconut on the outside, while my wife had everyone's favourite – the banoffee pie!

For a lighter lunch, soup with bread is available at £3.75 – each table already having a huge slab of butter on it – and various sandwiches can be purchased with a choice of at least 10 different types of bread which change daily, but include organic black olive sourdough and 1000 seed cob.

ESCA also has a menu for kids with lots of healthy dishes such as sweet potato gratini and grilled chicken salad, as well as fresh fruit meringue with cream and muffins and cookies!

With free Wi-Fi, the restaurant has 3 large wooden benches to the rear usually filled with locals enjoying their food while tapping away on their laptops!

ESCA opens at 8am for breakfast during the week and 9am at the weekend. Breakfast includes a selection of pastries from £1.60 or a full English breakfast at £7.50

This is an interesting delicatessen and a lot of thought has been put into it. It also appears to be extremely popular with the locals and I'm told, goes crazy at the weekend!

**David Ballard
(N28)**

Ruffles

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Continued from October's Call Sign...

I went into Sam's bedroom. I will never forget that night, our first night together in such a long time. It was wonderful to be in his arms again. We made love and fell asleep in each other's arms all night long. I will remember this night forever and surely it will always be this way with us? I surely hoped it would be like that forever...

We woke up the next day and spent some-time on our own in Sam's bedroom. It seemed that whenever we were together, we could never get enough of each other. We would love each other day and night. I could never forget all those nights and days with him. How could I? He had stolen my heart...

It was Saturday morning and we were going to pick up Sam's sons so I would get to meet them. He has two sons and at the time they were 2 and 4 years old. I had spoken on the phone with them many times and I was dying to see them in person, I could hardly wait to give them a big hug. So after a cup of tea, we got into Sam's DaC taxi and went to pick up the boys from their mother's house where they now lived with her, their grandmother and grandfather.

I didn't know how his ex would feel about me seeing her sons, so I asked Sam to leave me at a bus stop near their house while he went to get them. While I was waiting, an older man approached me and asked me if I knew where some place was, I didn't know who he was so I said that I was a stranger. He tried to make conversation and we talked for a bit.

Then I saw Sam's cab coming back with the boys inside, so I excused myself and went to meet them. The man came to the cab and Sam introduced him as his ex's father-in-law, Charlie! I was so surprised and happy to meet him, I had talked on the phone with him many times and he was just playing a joke on me!

Sam and he were very close to each other. I hugged him and we laughed. Then I saw the boys. God it was so nice to be able to see those little faces in person and I hugged them. They were apprehensive at first, they knew

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 wrote it. Their names have been changed, but any photos are genuine. Jenny has come to London to visit Sam...

L♥ve On the Internet



DaC's Sam with Jenny in London

with them.

Then Sam and I went to the Portobello Market and walked and browsed around the shops. I really loved it there. We stepped into one of the shops and he picked a knob for my kitchen cabinet here at home in California. I still have it on my cabinet and each time I see it, I think me of that wonderful day with the man I loved. We had lunch at a café and walked around for a while. Sam picked up a silver ashtray for me. I have that as well on my table at home. So many good memories.

That evening we met some of Sam's friends for a meal and just as the last time, some drank too much so we took them home to Stephen's to save them driving. I even had a drive of Sam's Dial-a-Cab taxi. Boy that was fun – especially with a right-hand drive! But I was also a bit disappointed about having company yet another night, I wanted to be alone with Sam but I understood. So after having a cup of tea with our friends, we decided to go to bed. I felt strange having someone in the next room, but that didn't stop us from anything – if you know what I mean. We shared another very special night. All the nights with Sam were very special to me. Sadly they weren't to last forever...

Continued next month...

DAC HOUSE SECURITY SYSTEM UPGRADE

By the time you read this, many visitors to Dial-a-Cab House will be familiar with our new security arrangements for gaining entry to the building. But what you may not know is that when it came to the highly technical stuff about installing the hardware, the task was left to our own Information Technology Department stalwarts, **Jason O'Brien** and **Jon Winterburn**.

Co-incidentally, **Call Sign** was on hand just as the IT duo were struggling to run the cabling through some tight gaps, so as to make a neat and tidy job before the engineers came to screw the entryphone boxes onto the walls and then, no doubt, claim all the credit for a job well done!

But **Call Sign** knows who the *real* heroes are and as it's almost Christmas, we won't charge them the usual fee for letting our readers know!



From the DaC IT department, Jon Winterburn (left) and Jason O'Brien sort out the security system cables

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For the past two months, we have been upgrading our taxis as they come into Roman Way for the later version of our data system and for adding extra channels to their radio. But it is not until drivers have used their terminals in every conceivable way that we can test them to see if there are any faults.

This has been happening and the programmers are addressing any faults that have occurred with the help of DaC's IT manager John Banks and Dana from Roman Way. We are also addressing the problems with signals, although some of these problems are not down to us as a company. All radio and mobile phone users are experiencing similar problems.

Some drivers have asked Board members why do we not go completely over to the GPRS phone network? Well just think back; when was the last time you got cut-off in mid-sentence whilst on your mobile phone? Now if that happened just as you were trying to accept a good job, you'd come into the office and call us the biggest pillocks on God's earth to have switched away from our private circuits! Add the fact that putting all our taxis onto the phone network would cost a fortune and how would we pay for it? For a start, up would go subscriptions. This would not be something that many drivers would take lightly, they'd be screaming to leave them on the private network that we own.

There is also another aspect that many drivers decide not to mention when complaining about the standard of their computer equipment - the dirt, filth and rubbish that is heaped onto the equipment in their taxi! It's sometimes disgusting that the fitters have to work in such filth. Rubbish consisting of old food, sweet wrappers and personal luggage that is heaped on top of the equipment, can cause it to overheat and malfunction.

Some of the problems that you as a driver experience are of your own making, not allowing a proper air flow around the equipment or a leaky cab with water dropping on the black box. When cleaning the inside of the driver's compartment, some move the wires so that they lay on the slider track under the driver's seat, but when they then move the seat, the wires are cut through and these cables cost up to £200.

Lower subscription rate

We have drivers who come to the Roman Way fitting bay with no CCC sticker in the front window, but if you are claiming the lower subscription then you are breaking the rules. To claim that lower subscription, you must have both front doors complete with logo, the CCC yellow sticker in the windscreen and the notice on your partition window informing passengers that you take credit cards.

If you come into the depot with any of the above missing, you will be asked to replace them. Then if you are spotted again with the stickers missing, the BoM will increase your subs to the higher amount. Why should there be a small minority in our Society who think they are better than all the other drivers that abide by the rules of the Society? These are the usual band of drivers who are not the smartest in their dress and who could be 'faces' at the airport. They are the ones who hang around hotels and are willing to hand over their cash for a job to the fliers, then complain about the regular account clients of Dial-a-Cab. Because of their greed, they cannot see the greater picture and how to plan and retain the work so that their livelihood is set for many years to come.

So if a fitter points out that your signage is incorrect, he will only be fulfilling the duties that have been set out for him by the Board. So do not shout and scream at him, if you were not trying to cheat, the conversation would not be occurring.

Tom's Roman Way Happenings...



Roman Way quieter times...

During the early part of the morning - usually before midday - Roman Way tends to be quiet. Then after the morning drivers have completed their work, they decide to come in on their way home. There's no problem with this, but it does cause a bit of a queue, so if you don't mind waiting, then that's ok. But if you would like to have a quick turnaround, then please come along during the quiet hours.

As you may have heard, we have been giving out driver's Christmas gifts - a reversible fleece jacket - since the beginning of November. We have restricted the distribution to the fitting depot, this way only the correct drivers get the jackets and the correct size as we get you to try them on before leaving. During December, we will try and accommodate night drivers who can't get to Roman Way by sending their coats down to East Road if they request it.

We also hope you are finding the changes we have made to the depot make your stay a more pleasant one.

Mr Livingstone, buses and cyclists...

I sat on a 38 bendy bus from Dalston to Shaftsbury Avenue recently, using my Freedom Pass, courtesy of Ken Livingstone. Sitting at the front of the bus, I had a clear view of the traffic and traffic lights. To say that my bowels were going to be in an uproar would be an understatement!

As we got to within 3 yards of the ATS, the lights were red. But did the driver apply the brakes? Not on your life! We just carried on straight through the junction - all 54 feet of public transport bendy bus carrying a full cargo of passengers. It seems that with all the CCTV cameras that can spot a taxi stopped for a second in a yellow box, they cannot see a bus, private hire or cyclist failing to comply with the traffic signals! Or is it because they cannot collect the fines from an individual bus driver without upsetting a bus company - and they work under the office of Mayor Livingstone. The cyclists cannot be identified because they do not have any registration plates and if they hit every private hire vehicle that broke the rules, then you would have a delegation saying that ethnic minorities were being picked on. Why? Because a large majority of

private hire drivers come from an ethnic background.

As I've said before, offending cyclists should be stopped by the police and if they do not have any positive identification, then their bike gets confiscated until such time they can offer proof of identity and perhaps pay a £50 fine. Because these riders do not have a licence to lose, if they are caught 3 times then it should be a compulsory 3-month sentence in a boot camp. As these cyclists profess to be fit, harsh physical exercise shouldn't be a problem!

But it seems the only people they want to prosecute are the hard-working tax-paying drivers.

Why do the people running the country need all this money, is it because they cannot control spending? It is like trying to retain water in a bucket with a large hole in it.

Tom and the saga of the stolen wallet...

An update on the saga of my stolen wallet. After some 4 weeks, the police admitted they had lost the CCTV discs we had supplied them. A senior officer found out about this problem and the sh*t hit the fan! The discs were suddenly found, the thief identified by officers in E14 when it was put on the Police Internet system (the wallet had been found in Canning Town).

Statements were taken from Steve Thomas - who helped chase the crook - and myself and the thief was arrested and taken to Islington Police Station. He admitted that he had been into the depot and my office, but denied taking my wallet. He also pleaded that he was seriously ill, so the police bailed him until mid-December.

When the police took our statements, I offered to give them the wallet to try and find the thief's fingerprints, but they declined this offer saying they doubted they would find any prints. This baffled me as the wallet is made of a shiny leather, which I thought was the ideal material for gaining fingerprints. So now we just have to wait, but I'm not holding my breath.

Christmas thoughts...

It may be nice at this time of the year to spare a thought for drivers who are seriously ill or have sadly died during the year. Not just drivers who are well known, but also those who have assisted the Society over the years but never got involved further than covering the work.

Without these drivers, the Society would not be in the envious position it has achieved. They are the unsung heroes, you have them in all walks of life and we were lucky to have had them.

If you are driving over the Christmas period, remember it is always the other driver who is to blame for any accident, so try and make sure that you do not become just a statistic. Take that extra second to check before making a driving decision.

My team and I at Roman Way would like to wish you and your family a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year...

Tom Whitbread
DaC Roman Way Manager

DaC driver Mickey Lappin (E46) is always on the look-out for anyone connected to DaC who is involved in music. Are you in a band? Solo artist? Musician? Successful writer? Call Mickey on 07879 465 771 and he'll make sure everyone knows about you...



Mickey's Music

This month Mickey's Music takes on a different guise as Mickey asks you to be the jury and win a great prize as he tries to convince you beyond doubt that ex-cab driver's son Paul Weller is Britain's greatest songwriter — EVER!

The case for...

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, it is my aim over the next few hundred words to convince you unequivocally, that **Paul Weller**, spokesman for a generation and proclaimed universally as *The Modfather*, is Britain's greatest ever songwriter. Full stop!

It all started in the mid-seventies when, with his band **The Jam**, Weller rode in on the coat tails of Punk and New Wave. But with his fantastic songwriting and ability to put his own experiences and observations onto paper, turning the poetic kitchen-sink dramas of everyday life as with *Town Called Malice* into musical classics, The Jam soon set themselves apart from their contemporaries with their own unique sound. Bruce Foxton's brilliant bass lines, Rick Buckler's dynamic drumbeats, but most of all Weller's fantastic songwriting. From their first hit *In The City* to their last, *Beat Surrender*, Weller's lyrics captured his and the nation's mood at the time with classics like *English Rose*, *Ghosts*, *That's Entertainment*, *The Butterfly Collector*, *To be Someone* and *Going Underground*. And who can deny Weller's songwriting greatness with their tear jerking, gut wrenching classic *Down in the Tube Station at Midnight*. In December 1982, after countless chart hits and 4 number one singles, The Jam broke up. Paul Weller was still only 22!

After splitting, Weller formed **The Style Council**. It was then, around the time of the miner's strike, that he gave his still amazing songwriting a more political protest slant. Weller started to write about other people's experiences rather than his own and tried his best to live up to the *angry young man* label that had been foisted upon him with songs such as *A Stones Throw Away*, which spotlighted Mrs Thatcher's use of police to gain her political will and crush the miners with violence. He highlighted the displacement of communities into new towns with *Come to Milton Keynes*. Weller continued to pen classic after classic with *My Ever Changing Moods*, *Long Hot Summer* and *Shout To The Top*. My own personal favourite of the time was *It Just Came to Pieces in My Hands* — which was quite apt, as it did!

In late '89, Weller's record company would not renew his contract. He was unemployed for the first time at the age of 29.

After a brief time in the wilderness, Weller came back in the early nineties as a solo artist and with a new sound. From his first self-titled album to his last - *As is Now* - Weller had gone back to his old way, writing of his own experiences and he continued to write one classic song after another, never more evident than with the superb album *Wild Wood*. Along with songs such as *The Loved*, *Out of the Sinking*, *You Do Something to me* and *All the pictures on the Wall*, I put it to you, the jury, that **Paul Weller** is unarguable and undeniably, the greatest British songwriter off all time!

I rest my case...

The case against...?

Well, am I right? What do you think? Is Weller the greatest or do think there's another pretender to the throne? Ray Davies, John Lennon, How Noel Gallagher, Pete Townsend or perhaps Paul McCartney? Then there are the mighty midgits, Marriott and Lane...

Every Call Sign reader who sends in a suggestion with a small explanation as to why they think their choice is the greatest British songwriter of all time, will be entered into a draw with the first name drawn out by the Editor winning Hit Parade, a retrospective album charting Paul Weller's song writing career. Closing date 14 December, so you'll have it for Christmas.

Mickey Lappin (E46)

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

KUPKAKE'S KORNER



KUPKAKE AT KRISTMAS...

Last Christmas (not the one before), the people that moved in next door, had a party 'till half past four - and with no regard for the law!

To be really honest and fair, the adults themselves, they weren't there!
Their kids and mates from who knows where were making noise without a care.

Sex and drugs, not rock'n'roll, no Buddy Holly, no King Creole, no music to stimulate the soul - just endless rap for a dumb asshole.

Thumping bass to crack the walls, moaning girls with cat-like calls, foulmouthed youths about to fall upon their mates strung out in the hall.

Next day 'cross my new-mown lawn, beer cans chucked before the dawn, fag ends piled like branches sawn... vomit pools still barely warm.

It really makes you stop and peruse, where would they be if not for booze?

Would they ever watch the news - could they follow any clues?

In France and Spain and Italy, they have a drink of wine daily, alcohol's cheap, almost free - but they drink responsibly!

*Safe Christmas
and a Happy New Year*

Kopyright Kupcake 2007

MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

*There's a new
toastmaster in town!*



Keith Reading (W76) has been driving a cab since 1979, of which the last 10 have been on Dial-a-Cab. As we all know, driving a licensed taxi leaves you with lots of spare time (!!!) so Keith is also a qualified electrician running that business together with another DaC driver, Fred Jones (A49).

When his son got married earlier this year, Keith said that he would get a toastmaster to officiate at the wedding, however, knowing that Keith only had two jobs, his son said that he wanted his dad to do it – and Keith said yes!

"I had never done anything like it before and was rather nervous at the beginning, but I was soon into it and enjoying the experience. Those who knew me couldn't believe that I was totally inexperienced at being a toastmaster – and to be honest I couldn't either! So it occurred to me that perhaps this was something I could do?

"So I went online to see whether there were any sites that could assist me and came across *The Guild of Professional Toastmasters*. I went to their academy where I learned the trade through their very intense course and am now fully qualified as a toastmaster."

Part of the course also includes going out with other more experienced toastmasters and that will then leave Keith as a fully-fledged Professional Toastmaster and Master of Ceremonies.

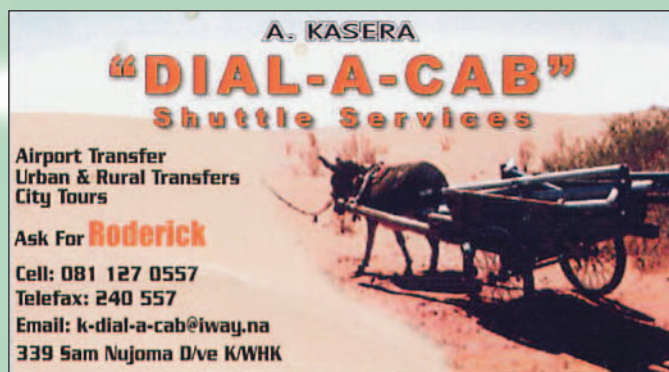
So is there a connection between being a London cabbie and a toastmaster? Keith answered by telling *Call Sign*:

"Yes, the link is people; we are all in the people business. The people we ferry to and from any business or home premises could be the people I would introduce in a receiving line. Both professions deal with people, if there were no people we would have no business!

If anyone is looking for a toastmaster for a forthcoming function, you can contact Keith **01279 465 938** or mobile on **07774 860 374**. You can also email him on **kgr.2@virgin.net**.

Dial-a-Cart ...er Cab? At Your Service!

The Namibian name nickers strike!



Dial-a-Cab's Namibian service?

When a long-time Dial-a-Cab client returned from his vacation trip to Africa and congratulated the Society on having a transport system in Namibia as well as London, he caused no little confusion at DaC House.

He had been to the 22,000 km **Etosha National Park** in the north of Namibia, where safaris can see the finest wildlife viewing in Africa. Etosha is home to 114 different mammal species, almost 400 species of birds and over 110 species of reptiles.

On his way back to the UK he stopped over at Swakopmund, Namibia's busiest resort town. It is surrounded on 3 sides by the Namib Desert and on the 4th by the Atlantic Ocean. It is, according to our client who asked to remain anonymous in case he was banned from future safaris,

also home to the thriving business of Roderick, one of the partners in Dial-a-Cab???

"But I must say," said the mystery client, **"the travelling was a trifle slower and although the carts were comfortable, I think I prefer your London taxi service!"**

Dial-a-Cab? Namibia? Carts!!! Well apparently... yes! As the business card shows, Dial-a-Cab (Namibia) uses only the famous WX44 carts – famed as being the most comfortable carts in Africa.

"But there is a complaint I'd like to bring up with London Chairman, Brian Rice," said our intrepid travelling client, **"it's regarding the view at times if you happen to be looking towards the back of the horse – it's sometimes accompanied by a rather unpleasant odour. Do you think your Complaints Officer could take it up...!"**

POWER PILL

Many DaC drivers have phoned *Call Sign* to ask why they cannot get in touch with *Power Pill*; the answer is that we don't know and neither do JVBright, who were one of the main stockists of the pill.

***Call Sign* has no doubt that *Power Pill* works, but until such time as we can resume contact with the PP dealer, we will not be using their advertisement...**

TAXI AIR CONDITIONING

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**Covering London and the
Home Counties**

A bit of a do...

I thought the Dial-a-Cab open house would be like an office party and I'd be charming and loyal - as my DaCman Glen is at my office bashes - and try not to offend anyone. A bit of *wife display*, as *The Guardian* called it when the (reportedly) fierce intelligence of Cherie Blair didn't stop her smiling inanely and gazing lovingly at Tony, at both elections and every party conference, saying nothing. I can do smiling too! I hoped to meet Alan Fisher for the first time, as I felt like a pen pal or *Facebook* friend, having exchanged only emails over many years. Would I find out for sure if he really exists?

Since the party was in a marquee in what is otherwise the taxi park, we had to feed the street meters (10p a minute) but it was worth it. What a do! I couldn't agree less with the nice DaC wife I met recently who said: "Why don't they just give the drivers the money?"

Isn't driving isolated enough - this was a chance to see all the people whose photos and thoughts are in **Call Sign** every month, on marketing, complaints, power pills and all the other excitement I am privileged to be among.

The party included a tour of the sleek, shiny building and the dozens of staff taking calls, tracking taxis, running Concierge and supervising, with an automated light board showing how many callers were waiting and for how many seconds. There were green carbon footprint people explaining that the lights go off automatically if offices are empty. Our tour guide, Michael Son, rattled off loads of statistics and explanations of the technology, but what surprised me was that 10% of the trips apparently aren't covered at all! He said he was "pas-

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

Back Seat Driver ...at party season



sionate" about serving the clients and I believed him. He made me want to nick Glen's badge and help - though I got over that!

The incentive scheme this year, I worked out using Glen's 35-hour week records for September/October, could easily cost 10 times the amount that the three prize cars cost last year - and all going into drivers' pockets, so they really are serious about covering the work and good luck to everyone. My only issue is that it stops on 21 December, great for dads, Christians and others who want Christmas off, but my Glen works non-stop through Christmas and Boxing Day being a *bab bumbug* sort of guy.

To return to the open house - it was more like a wedding than an office do, with the best buffet I can remember; huge sides of ham and beef and sauces, salads that weren't drenched in vinegar, fruity delicacies, cream pastries, smoked salmon and a well-stocked bar, round tables with white linen and staff with cham-

pagne and nibbles on silver trays. And a cool live jazz duo - fun! We met lots of folk, including two women from one of the accounts, 3 hours ahead of us on the eating and drinking and who could hardly sit upright by 4 pm. We asked if they wanted a lift home, but they said they were paid to work until 5:30 and had to stay till then, pour us another one please!

The LTDA magazine *Taxi* gave the event just a few grudging lines in their paper last month, but I bet they ate and drank like piglets too.

People from Polynesia to Peckham have their feasts and festivals, many religious and many to show off status. Glen says he's not a party person and has never asked me to dance since we met. I'm a bit of a damp rag myself if it's fancy dress, ceilidhs or birthdays in restaurants where the guests not only have to pay for themselves, but also other people's serious alcohol habits - and you have to bring a present too. The bash at Dial-a-Cab House was my idea of fun. And, dear readers, Alan Fisher does indeed exist.

A happy, sparkly Christmas to you and yours...

Till then...

Love Poppy xxx

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



No sign of winter yet here in the *Languedoc*, but it is certainly a tad cooler. We never really experience hard winters, just the occasional 'cool snap' and what there is of winter is just about a 6-week period

from mid-January to the end of February - and I'll settle for that!

The only significant difference I guess is the *Tramontane* - this is the wind that blows through these parts from the northwest - and it does tend to part your hair once it blows this way. Not too many retail stores around here sell syrups!

Mind you, the good news about *La Tramontane* is that good weather normally follows once it's been around for a day or two - it's nothing like the old wind that used to get up around Cold Blow Lane when we used to head down to watch the Lions of Millwall on Boxing Day! Over Christmas, it could well be possible to head down to the beach - there will be some days of sunshine over the festive period that's for sure. But before I enjoy those festivities, I'll be heading back to London

for one last stint in the saddle for 2007.

Check out www.southoffrancelets.com for a place to stay in la belle France or www.immoboulevard.com if you are seriously looking for property to buy.

In the meantime, all the very best to **Call Sign** readers for Xmas and for the New Year!

**Bob Woodford (Ex-P49),
Languedoc, France**

2-BEDROOM SPANISH VILLA FOR RENT

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- ★ two bathrooms
- ★ upstairs terrace
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many local bars-restaurants - ideal golfing weekend - 9 courses within 30 mins (including Polaris World) - 20 mins Murcia airport - very clean villa

Prices from £225 (includes final clean) OR £199 golf weekend (Thurs-Mon)
Email john@sheridanj.freesevice.co.uk or phone John (E35) on **07866 943 469**

LIFELONG IMPRESSIONS

*Paintings, prints
and drawings by
Milein Cosman*



Gerrard Schurmann by
Milein Cosman

In January 2008, **The Jewish Museum** will present a major exhibition of the work of German-born Jewish artist **Milein Cosman** (b.1921) at the **Austrian Cultural Forum** in London. It spans more than 6 decades of prolific output, ranging from prints and drawings to oil paintings and watercolours selected by the artist. Most of the work on display has not previously been exhibited. Cosman is an outstanding draftsman and portraitist whose work catches the essence of character and movement with its spontaneity and feeling of freedom.

The earliest work on display was produced during her time at the *Slade School of Fine Art* (1939-1942) and the exhibition will feature around 80 works including portraits of distinguished cultural figures such as Henry Moore, Francis Bacon, T.S.Eliot, Iris Murdoch, and Martin Buber. Also on view are paintings and prints of landscapes ranging from the Rhine to St Tropez and Nepal and a series of prints of animals and dancers.

Born in Germany, Cosman arrived in England in 1939 to study at the Slade. In 1947 she met and later married the Austrian-born musician, writer and broadcaster Hans Keller who had a major influence on musical life in this country. They later collaborated on various publications including *The Jerusalem Diary*, which won the Royal Philharmonic Society Prize for Book of the Year in 2001.

Cosman remains active as a draftsman and printer and is a member of *Camden Printmakers*. She has had numerous exhibitions and her work is represented in many public collections here and abroad, including the National Portrait Gallery, V&A, British Museum, Ashmolean in Oxford and the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge.

The exhibition has been organized by the friends of The Jewish Museum at the Austrian Culture Centre, 28 Rutland Gate SW7. It ends 26 March...

Tel. 020 7225 7300 or see website www.austria.org.uk/culture.

Opening Hours: Mon - Fri from 10am, last admission 4.30pm. Sundays 2 - 4.30pm; closed Saturdays.

Admission free. Group Visits and Educational Programmes welcome by prior arrangement...

Call Sign's Gambling Battle Takes Another Knock!



Laughing - but Editor Alan loses another round of his anti-gambling stance

Call Sign's on-going battle against Internet gambling being advertised on taxis sank to a new low recently when *All Response Media* used *Taxi Promotions UK* to launch a 3-month campaign for global online gambling giant 888.com.

According to the press release, a significant SuperSide campaign has been booked, with advertising dominating both sides of the (non-DaC) taxis for high impact and frequency in busy urban environments, with tip-up seat ads and branded receipts. The taxis are now on the streets in several urban centres, specifically London, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham.

They also have what are described as "Ambassador Drivers." These were selected

with "additional care" – although we were not informed as to what this "additional care" involved. Ambassador Drivers are dedicated 888.com poker players and the tip-up seat ads invite passengers to ask the drivers about 888.com.

As **Call Sign** has said many times, we have no problem with adults gambling, but we now know that credit card abuse is rife on Internet casino sites, with youngsters using their parent's card details to try to win money. Until we have been convinced that is no longer happening – and according to Radio 5-Live it is a real growing menace – they will not be advertising in this magazine. Even if it's to advertise their new catchphrase of *please gamble responsibly*. That says it all...

LONDON LEGEND Limousine Taxis



London Legend specialises in wedding transport. Our magnificent Asquith Limousine Taxis and Landaulets with drop hoods are replicas of the legendary 1930's Austin Low Loader Hackney Carriage. Special rates for Dial-a-Cab drivers on mid week and out of season weddings. We cover all areas of London and the south east.

Tel.: 01628 471632. Mob.: 07974 348974.

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

Jon Asks What's New?



A new concept in energy saving Xmas lights

On November 20th, the Regent Street Christmas lights were switched on – but this year they are different to years past. Regent Street's lights are traditionally the most spectacular of all and images of the street are synonymous with

Christmas. Families from all over the country make the trip to see the switch being flipped.

This year coincided with the launch of a new Nokia shop, so they've chipped in for some new lights - fourteen futuristic 3D light clusters are illuminating the street – named *Unity*. For the switching on ceremony, shoppers met festive entertainers either at the north or south end of Regent Street and walked under the lights as they were turned on.

And it's not just the design of the lights that's futuristic, the way they operate is too. They are programmed to respond to the number of people in the street, as well as to the wind, weather and sunlight! Plus they're eco-friendly - to quote:

"Each of the fourteen light clusters is made up of a large central opaque sphere, surrounded by 24 smaller spheres. Each contains a low energy LED core and operates like a series of pixels with the ability to be individually programmed. They are 100% recyclable and the LEDs use a fifth of the energy required by traditional light bulbs, thereby reducing the energy consumption over the seven-week period from 4,657 kilowatt hours (KwH) to approximately 465 KwH – a saving of about 4,190 KwH."

Regent Street was closed off to traffic during the switch on while tourists and shoppers alike wandered along outside Hamleys, Libertys and the other famous department stores, to see lights that have symbolised the spirit of Christmas since 1954.

You can find more information at: <http://www.regentstreetonline.com/RegentStreet/EventsChannel/Unity.htm>

Until next time, have a very merry Christmas from everyone on the DaC IT floor...

Jonathen Winterburn
DaC Network Administrator

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..



STOMP
...Still wowing them!

Jon Trevor visits the Ambassadors Theatre

When I saw one of **Call Sign's** terminal messages asking for anyone interested in reviewing the musical **STOMP**, I jumped at the chance. It had already been at the Vaudeville Theatre for 5 years - becoming the longest running show in the theatre's history – and consistently gained rave reviews, so because it had now moved to its new home at the **Ambassadors Theatre**, our mag was given the opportunity to see how well it has aged.

I was given four tickets, which included my partner Rachel and Charlie, the 10-year old son of my cousin Libby, who also came with. And I have to say that it was every bit as good as we had all hoped!

No one goes to see **STOMP** for its story! But it has such amazing energy and humour. The directors and co-creators, Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas, have staged scenes with a meticulous rhythm – so much so that you are never sure whether it has been rehearsed or it is just totally spontaneous - and believe me, there is no bigger compliment than that!

The amazingly athletic-looking drummers (according to Rachel and Libby) also play the kitchen sink and dustbins! If you don't like noise, you could be under some pressure but then they go on a quieter musical route by playing – or perhaps that should be tapping - a matchbox or twisting a creaking folding chair!

When you leave the Ambassadors Theatre, you actually listen to the background noises that fill our lives with a new admiration!

STOMP is now booking until March 2008 at the Ambassadors Theatre.

Tel: 08448 112 334.

Jon Trevor (W94)



Keith Reading
Professional Toastmaster &
Master of Ceremonies

Telephone: 01279 465938
Mobile: 07774 860374
eMail: kgr.2@virgin.net

Graduate of the Professional Toastmasters' Academy

Vince's NetXposure cards hit the mark!

Call Sign readers will know Vince Chin as this magazine's computer expert. For almost 11 years he has been writing about the latest in PCs and answering driver's queries.

You may also remember his excellent Cabalendar that DaC gave away to drivers last year. Now Vince has branched out even further and owns the copyright to thousands of old photos involving the cab trade and London in general. Many of these old digitally remastered photos are now available on greeting cards and also as canvas prints or enlargements etc. No grainy pics here, all the photos are of excellent quality.

If you go to his website at <http://www.netxposure.net> all the details and examples are there. Vince also has an ad in each issue of **Call Sign**...

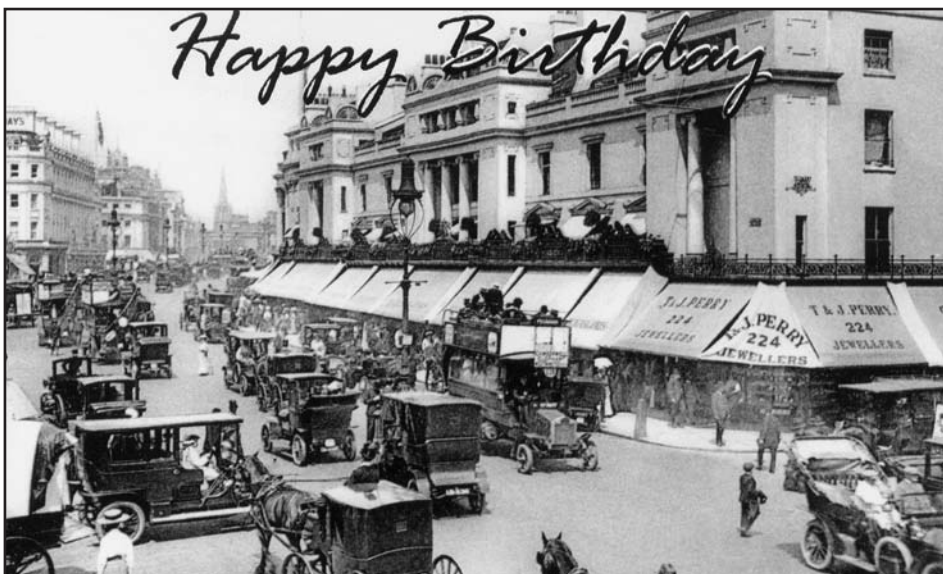
KPM HAVE DIAL-A-CAB TERMINALS

On loan cabs for bodywork repairs

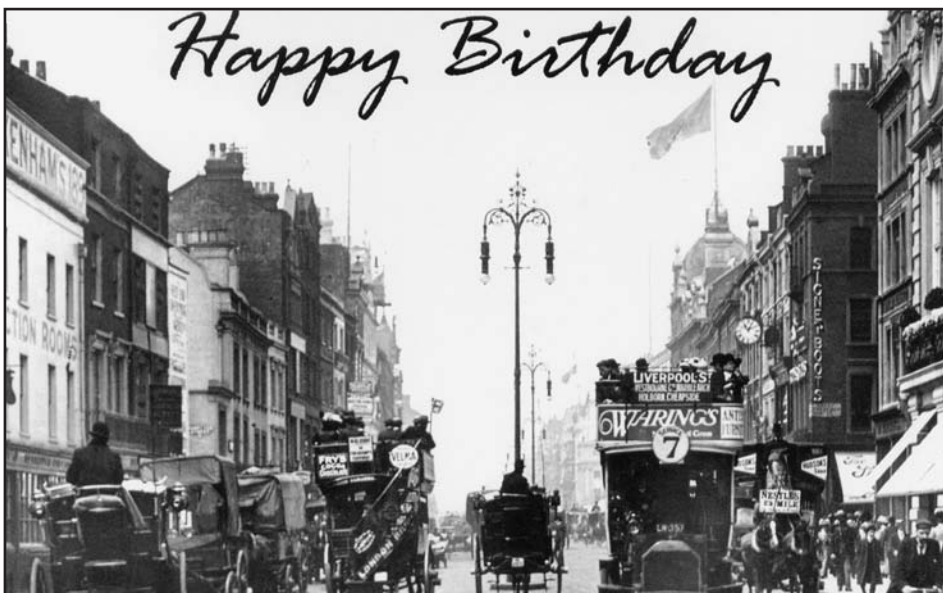
LTI main dealer KPM have three taxis fitted with Dial-a-Cab terminals that they are happy to loan to Dial-a-Cab drivers who take their taxis to the East London dealership for bodywork repairs. That means that DaC subscribers can now order a replacement cab with a terminal and continue working with a 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...**



2 of Vince's birthday cards - one of Regent St in 1910 and the other of Oxford St at around the same time...



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

LOCKHOUSE SECURITY

10% Discount on keys and locks for DaC Drivers

Free estimates No call out charge

Burglary repairs / boarding up

Additional security / security upgrades

Safes opened, repaired and serviced

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MAILSHOT

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

Westminster PCNs

I recently received a PCN (Penalty Charge Notice) from those lovely people at Westminster Council whilst picking up a job in Soho Square having been spotted by their 'spy in the sky'. I appealed as I was on a Dial-a-Cab job. I thought, erroneously, that helping out the business ratepayers of Westminster with a taxi service might hold some sway with the Council. The reply I received seems to make picking up in any Westminster street if you are called to a job, almost impossible. I quote from their reply, which in their view clarifies the situation:

"The City Council appreciates that picking up and setting down of passengers is sometimes necessary and most regulations provide an exemption for this purpose." It goes on...

"Picking up is where a vehicle slows to a stop at the kerbside next to a waiting passenger, allows the passenger to get into the vehicle and immediately drives away. Waiting at the kerbside for passenger to arrive is not permitted. In most instances, the exemption applies strictly to allow the passengers to board or alight the vehicle and does not include waiting for or seeking out the passenger. The vehicle should not be left unattended."

I don't know how the Council makes up its rules, but they seem to lack a certain amount of practical commonsense. The word *sometimes* regarding picking up is interesting. I would contend that in all cases it is essential, or how else do we do our jobs? How often do you get to a job from the screen and find your passenger waiting for you outside? What should you do if you are asked to *make your own contact*? Find a parking bay, ring the Council's telephone lines to pay for the space for an indeterminate amount of time, then go and seek out your passenger who may come down in 1 minute or 31? How are you supposed to deal with wheelchair passengers or those with mobility problems in the west end?

In my own case, the council say they saw my passenger had come out and was by the cab, but, (my words, not the councils) decided to finish his ciggie and mobile phone call before the journey. So I got penalised because they hadn't got in! I have no control over their actions and should the passenger's account be charged the additional cost of the ticket?

Perhaps one of the trade bodies - or even all of them - should ask the Council(s) to be a bit more practical. Of course I understand that they need to raise revenue, as well as stopping people blocking up London's arteries any worse than they already are, but PLEASE, let's have some help for we who are trying to help London's businesses and resi-

dents by providing a service that helps them. You don't see those rickshaws getting harassed do you?

Robbie Donald (O47)

And more...

Picture this, an account customer on board going to Wardour Street. As we near High Holborn, he asks me if I can set him down in Dean Street? Of course, I reply and I set him down just before Carlisle Street, reset the meter and go on my way. A normal thing for all we cab drivers to do - pick up at destination A and set down at destination B. I'm sure that you will all agree this is what our job is all about. So why in the West End, the area covered by City of Westminster, do we face problems?

Two weeks after doing this job I received a PCN (fixed penalty charge) for parking in Dean Street. It seems that the cameras the City of Westminster use cannot differentiate between setting down a passenger and parking a vehicle. Such councils are targeting our livelihoods. It seems so ridiculous that in order to do your job, you could potentially get fined up to £120 just for picking up and setting down a passenger in the area covered by the City of Westminster. We need some sort of legislation through parliament and I need support of all our members to get a petition together to try get this legislation in place. I intend to visit my local MP with this petition to get the ball rolling. Have you had a similar experience? Do you agree with me and would like to offer your support. Please email me with your comments or experiences at **antho-nymitchell48@yahoo.co.uk** or alternatively send me a letter c/o Val or Nuala at Driver Services, Dial a Cab. The more support I get, the more chance I will have to try to do something about this problem and stop the City of Westminster and other councils issuing these ridiculous fines just for doing our job. Be lucky...

Anthony Mitchell (T88)

There is an article elsewhere in this issue from Martin Hizer (M47) in a similar vein and I have put him and Anthony in touch with each other. A petition seems like a good idea in addition to contacting MPs ...Ed

And even more...

Regarding the ongoing problem of the CCTV camera tickets that we are getting whilst attempting to go about our job, I have personally had two this year, the second of which was while waiting for an account customer in Beak Street, W1. I decided to appeal against this ticket, so I sent a letter explaining the situation to them on the 26 September. I finally received a reply from

them on the 29 October rejecting my appeal.

To say that I am annoyed and totally frustrated with the situation is putting it mildly. I decided to write to my local MP, Lee Scott, and he told me in his reply that he has written to Westminster parking services on my behalf and has requested that my concerns are looked into. We both await their response.

In the meantime, Alan, I suggest that we all put a concerted pressure on the powers that be to act with a common sense attitude to the problem ?.

Morris Abrahams (R85)

Lee Scott is an excellent representative MP for the cab trade and is also on the Call Sign mailing list and a good ally to have on our side ...Ed

And the other side...

Thanks for putting the warning about my PCN in the **November Call Sign** (*Watch out in Park Lane*). TfL has now cancelled it much to my relief; so should you have a spare inch or two could you please tell our colleagues the outcome. Hopefully our drivers will have the courage to oppose these outrageous tickets and fight to be able to carry on our daily/nightly business of providing a service to the public.

Please also pass on to Brian Rice and the BoM my congratulations on providing an excellent incentive for the Xmas rush and an early merry Xmas to them, you, the staff of DaC and all the drivers.

Just one last question; how do we gain entry to the new building at night to pick up supplies and latest info sheets?

Ian Lingham (K64)

Well done re the PCN. It always pays to appeal as far down the line as you can - even to arbitration at Haymarket if necessary. The problem, and no doubt one that the Boroughs are pleased about, we rarely have the time or inclination. If you can, it often pays.

Entry to the building in the early hours? A new security system was recently fitted. If the gates are locked, park outside, go to the side door of the car park and push the button. Security will bleep you in provided you can show your badge to the camera ...Ed

A "chat" with a Parking Attendant

Alan, these are comments and observations regarding my brush with a Westminster Parking Attendant. I am seething!

Philip Benjamin (K20)



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Re Parking Attendant No. 4612...

On 5th November at 3.45 pm, I was instructed to attend the Chapel Street entrance of the Edgware Road branch of M&S to pick up a disabled customer, Mrs Alice Cooper, travelling on a Taxicard to take her to her home to Ilbert Street W10. Parking bays are marked on the stretch of road outside the store. All were empty but for one, where Parking Attendant No 4612 was processing a PCN. The exchange that followed went something like this:-

"I'm stopping to pick up that lady waiting inside the doorway."

"You'll have to get a ticket."

"But she's standing there and she's disabled. She needs help with her shopping."

"I don't care. If you don't pay I'll issue you a ticket."

"Where shall I park? She's disabled."

"I don't care."

"I'll go round the corner (Cabbell Street - single yellow line)."

"When I've finished this one, if you're still there, I'll give you a ticket."

With that he began photographing my taxi. I managed to complete the pick up to relief of my waiting customer. This ignorant man's complete lack of communication skills and inability to understand simple English probably accounted for his failure to understand the word disabled. It was not until the disabled customer's card was put under his nose that he began to understand the concept of what was being explained to him. I am not the first to experience this sort of behaviour and doubt I'll be the last by some of the people you feel fit to employ as so called Parking Attendants. Kindly note, licensed taxis displaying the Dial-a-Cab logo on their doors are contracted by Westminster Council Social Services, as preferred conveyors of the disabled and incapacitated residing within the borough of Westminster; and carry out a vital service every day of the year. It would be advisable for all parties if during training programmes, your staff - either on foot, operating a remote camera or driving a mobile periscope - could be made aware of our valuable role and other companies who carry out a similar service.

As made clear, this kind of behaviour is far from unusual, so my question is: What are you going to do about it? Would you rather the disabled be left to their own devices?

Philip D. Benjamin

Shouting at Shirland Road...

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Martha and myself to thank Jacqui Chart, Brian Rice and everyone at Dial-a-Cab

for making our day there for the new building launch so special. It was most gratifying as a former subscriber and Board member to see the wonderful progress that the circuit has made over the years since its humble beginning - and believe me, it WAS humble! We sometimes had to struggle to even pay our cleaner, Mrs Gee!

My wife Martha was astounded when she was shown around the call centre and compared it to the control room she called the *dungeon* at Shirland Road! This new one was also just so peaceful compared to Maida Vale when shouting to each other was considered to be the norm! But now we found the whole look of your new building just breathtaking and we take great pride in having been part of the Society's history.

Thank you Alan as well for looking after us so well. We wish everyone at Dial-a-Cab the very best for the future.

Sam and Martha Harris
Stanmore

Where is Power Pill?

I am a yellow badge driver and have recently purchased my own cab. Having read about Power Pill in your magazine, I decided to buy a years supply from Power Pill online. No pills have to date arrived and I can neither contact the company by telephone or email. Do you have any info on what has happened to this company? If you find that they have gone missing, please inform other cabbies so they don't lose money just like me.

Mark Hazelton

Sorry to hear about that Mark. *Call Sign* tested out Power Pill over a long period and it undoubtedly worked, but you are not the only person to find they have suddenly vanished. I also spoke to JVBright who stocked the pill and they too have been unable to make contact.. I have to assume that this particular supplier just couldn't make it pay with all the special offers they were offering. But perhaps the hardest kick of all was their hope that the PCO would accept the pill to be used in older cabs instead of the emission systems that, even if they do work, are costing drivers around £2000 each. I introduced PP to the PCO and the biggest stumbling block was the PCO's concern - and you can see their logic: How would they know that drivers weren't just using the PP before their overhaul to pass the smoke test and then stopping? I believe that was the final nail in the Power Pill's UK coffin. It wouldn't have been so bad if the product never worked ...Ed



Call Sign and the PCO

I could not agree more re your Editorial (*Out and about with the PCO*) in the *Nov Call Sign*. Last Thursday there were touts galore at the Grosvenor House Hotel, while the PCO were checking taxis at the Hilton Hotel - hardly a hotbed for touting. What is their real agenda here?

Eddie Lambert (V47)

And more...

Just read your editorial notes in the *Nov Call Sign* and I just wanted to commend you on your articles, especially *out and about with the PCO*. You are spot on mate, if only more people thought like you and I and were in a trade association, we wouldn't be in this mess.

Once again, cheers and keep up the good work.

Roland Brewer (M38)

Is there a TX5?

I recently bumped into someone who works in my old garage and he asked how I was getting on with my new TX4. He claims there have been so many faults with that model that LTI are going to launch a brand new model in February (TX5) and that it will have a Nissan engine. Do you know if that is true or is it another groundless rumour?

Kevin Went (N19)

I could phone LTI and speak to them. Contrary to what many say, they have always tried to help - but not when it comes to giving info on possible new models! I asked them whether there was a new cab due just weeks before receiving my invite to see the then new TX4 launch. They said no! In all fairness, had they said yes, sales of their TX2 would have ground to a halt! A TX5? Could be, but doubtfully a Nissan because the TX4 has been deemed a success even though the occasional problem has surfaced. They will hopefully be cured as the model progresses. The TX5 will probably be some sort of hybrid - possibly running on hydrogen - because that is obviously one of the future options. But Kevin, perhaps you should try to get your name down for the next *Call Sign* trip to the LTI factory in Coventry. You can ask them yourself because that will probably take place in or around February ...Ed

LTI listening!

It is nice when LTI take notice of what is asked. If you remember, I asked if they would fit a radio with a Bluetooth interface. I wonder if they will act on any other of the

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ideas bought up?

Stanley Roth (Y53)

Stanley made the suggestion when he went to the LTI factory in Coventry as part of the last *Call Sign* organised, 10-strong driver team. ...Ed

Zone hopping?

Remember the days when it was an offence to zone hop? Well it seems that's not the case any more for early mornings with drivers blatantly banging-in for jobs in any and every outer zone. I have gone to voice and woken the dispatcher up on more than one occasion only to be told the person had not stayed in the zone long enough to be traced. Bring back Joe Brazil I say, the man took an interest when he was dispatching, often reprimanding people and was not afraid to let it be known he was monitoring the zones. I mean how difficult is it to send out warnings every now and then? You may wonder why I am telling you this, well if the dispatchers don't want to know and the complaints officer is not doing anything about it, then maybe - just maybe - you might put this in *Call Sign* and you never know, it might shake someone up, even the early morning gaaaaangsters! I have not written in before, I hope it is not an exclusive clique as I notice the same old names cropping up in the *Call Sign* letters. Please print this and maybe everybody concerned might start doing the right thing. It should not have to take involving Brian Rice before management jump...

Glenn Broadbent (K42)

Ok Glenn, it's in the mag now! I do agree with you that there is nothing more irritating than seeing a job in an outer zone with you patiently waiting for it to appear in the *bids*, when suddenly a cab appears in the zone alongside the trip and both then vanish off the screen. However, I think you are being a bit unfair in saying that nothing is ever done because I have published many complaint results over the years where drivers have been suspended and even expelled for zone hopping into an outer zone, which unlike London zones are physical ie you have to be in the zone. In fact Allan Evans has mentioned the subject of outer zones in two out of his last three complaint reports. I spoke to Allan about your letter and he said that if you believe the situation has occurred, phone the call centre, ask the dispatcher to check the GPS of the driver you believe has incorrectly taken the trip and if the person was not in the outer zone, ask for it to be sent down to Allan Evans. But you would have to phone in

at the time and not an hour later because you suddenly feel irritated. And by the way, welcome to the Mailshot pages, I hope to hear from you again ...Ed

DaC House launch...

Is it really 24 years ago that Brunswick House opened its doors for the membership to view? Thank you Alan for "accidentally" informing me of that fact! It's frightening how time slips by. As I mentioned in my previous letter (*Nov Call Sign*), I couldn't remember the date but I do recall that weekends were chosen so as not to disrupt very active weekday periods within the building and also this was considered to be the most convenient time for the membership to visit and view. Board members and staff were prepared to give of their time to show the membership what had been achieved by this joint effort. Since this period in time, the membership has increased considerably, which begs the question why were only two hours set aside for the present membership to view Dial-a-Cab House? This was on a Friday afternoon when parking facilities were at a premium. Why would the BoM want the membership to book off their respective zones and compromise the cover of work? What if hundreds of drivers turned up to view during this two hour period? I think the BoM knew that the response to view would be minimal. Why? Well if the BoM do not know, then I do. With the financial success that has grown over the years within the Society, so equally has apathy from the membership. The general census of opinion among drivers that I speak to appear to believe that the Society no longer belongs to them. Many tell me that they no longer feel that the BoM truly represents them and that the only aim of the BoM is to put profit before its members. I assume that the viewing time, which was reserved for the dignitaries and trade representatives the day prior to the memberships, extended to more than two hours? If that was the case, then I too understand why some members view the Society as a "them and us" Society. As one member I spoke to said: "Maybe if the membership were made to feel that the Society belonged to them, they might not want to sell it off."

On a lighter note, I read that Dial-a-Cab have announced that from 1 October "...we will be offsetting our Carbon Footprint." Like it's something new! I've been putting Odor-Eaters in my shoes for years.

Steve Shaller (R75)

Thanks for the letter Steve. There is no point me passing your letter over to a Board member because the answer is fairly obvious - not satisfactory, but

nonetheless obvious. As you said yourself - it's apathy. I don't know who you spoke to, but I'd bet he was one of the more "mature" members. Not us, Steve, but others! Had there been a rush to get into DaC House during those two hours, there would have been several red faces around, but the fact of the matter is that very few were interested. A few dozen turned up and probably the ones you would have expected and the same ones who always attend AGMs. Most younger drivers couldn't care less where the work is dispatched from so long as they get it - and logically speaking, why should they? I'm with you, Steve, but it ain't gonna happen. Of course the Society no longer belongs to us. We're members and it provides us with work, but if it belonged to us, you would be able to sell your bit if you wanted to - and you can't, so why pretend that it's ours. We've had the chance to make it ours and rejected the opportunity, so that means we are DaC's guardians until the next generation come along. Incidentally, DaC House viewing for guests was also on that same Friday with any associated parking problems. Can I also add that if any driver would like a tour of the building, just book a time and I'm sure someone will be happy to show you around. Sadly you won't get the delicious food that accompanied the original!

As for your shoes, Steve, I have to tell you that the Odor-Eaters aren't working! Can't think why, but they remind me of paella! ...Ed

More apathy?

I have read the last issue of *Call Sign* and there appears to be a lot of disgruntled and unsatisfied drivers experiencing a variety of problems at present. It is clear that some of these drivers are prepared to write in and complain; I wonder whether these are the same drivers who are too apathetic to attend the AGM and vent their concerns? It is much easier for Mr Rice and the Board to pen a written reply than to advocate their point of view before 1500 / 2000 members! Not for the first time, I challenge all the drivers not to participate in the postal ballot but to attend the AGM, at least then meaningful discussions could be had between, "them and us." Is the above likely to happen, I don't think so. I am likely to attend, not for obvious reasons.

Al, I have always admired you for your objectivity and fairness in producing the magazine.

However, am I imagining things or are



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your views becoming more pro-Board?
Louie Christian (A48)

Pro-BoM? I'm just pro-DaC, Louie – just as I know you are. What has bugged me of late has been the occasional rudeness when some ask a question and that has probably been reflected in my answers. If I were just pro-BoM, none of the letters you write of would ever see the light of day, after all, you don't see them in RTG or ComCab's mags and believe me, they have as many - if not more - problems than DaC. I also think we should keep things in perspective – we have 2500 drivers and a handful write in with complaints. Some of those are justified and some maybe not so much. But all get published. That still leaves around 2490 that haven't complained and I think we should remember that.

As for the main part of your letter, I agree with you and have written it many times – is it too much to spend a few hours with a Society that many of those who don't attend, are only too ready to describe as "ours?" I look forward to seeing you there, Louie ...Ed

Dear Keith (again)

Would you please clarify in more detail your answer to my questions in the *Nov Call Sign*. You say we are covered by the Society for PCNs if we get one while on a Taxicard job so long as it corresponds with the trip details from start to finish. We are at the end of the job when the Taxicard customers leave the cab and they have paid their part of the full amount. The hiring is then over and finished. It is only then that we would help them to their homes etc. Does this mean that as the hiring is legally over, we are helping them in our own time? Would the Society pay for the PCN if this were the case and we received a PCN while helping the passenger after the job is legally over? I would appreciate some clarification if you could.

Regarding the distances you would like us to run for jobs. If I am offered a job in the next zone and accept the job, I could be a long time reaching the customer. Apart from the financial downfall to myself, I do not totally agree when you say it is better for the passenger to be told a cab is on the way. There could possibly be other drivers setting down in the primary zone that could reach the customer much quicker and then everyone is happy. If we all go around running to the next zones, we would in effect be giving an inferior service, not a better one. To reject a job in the next zone would actually give the next person on the list the job who could be much nearer. Only yesterday, a

regular account customer while talking to me made it clear that when he requires a cab for meetings or to the airport, he would not tolerate his cab being late and would look elsewhere for an account. This is only one person's opinion I agree, but it is one worth noting. I am sure you are correct when you say that 75% of jobs are in the primary zone, but the problems of getting to the jobs are still the same regarding very heavy traffic. There are no easy remedies to this, but it is something the Board may like to discuss while sitting with their feet up drinking coffee and us drivers are out there battling the elements (the last sentence is just a joke)!

Tom Reynolds (O85)

Keith Cain replies: In answer to Mr Reynolds question, each trip taken via the terminal, regardless of what type of trip it is, has a beginning and an end. The Accept time and the CLJ time. Any ticket that has an issue time between these two will automatically be honoured by the Society. That doesn't mean to say that it should not be challenged and appealed against. In theory, while assisting the passenger a driver is still hired and the trip should not finish until he/she returns to vehicle. However, I'm fully conversant with such trips because I have experience of them myself. Trips of this nature would have to be dealt with separately. Each trip would be assessed as to the length of time the ticket was issued after the trip was cleared. If it only took a few minutes for the driver to help the passenger to their door and return, then the cost could be paid by the Society. On the other hand, if the passenger just happens to say to the driver "thank you for your help, why don't you let me make you a cup of coffee," which the driver accepted and stayed for some time, then the decision would be different. These type of scenarios must be dealt with on an individual basis.

With regard to Mr Reynolds's other point regarding running for trips. It is totally up to him and the rest of the fleet to decide how they want to work. If a driver does not want to do something, then I have enough experience to know nothing in the world is going to change that. What is very dangerous is to make assumptions that someone else will be there to do the trip. Unfortunately, Mr Reynolds only sees the Dial-a-Cab operation from his vehicle - and why shouldn't he! I assure you that the whole picture is not what he sees.

In my last *Call Sign* article

(November), I stated that many central zones have had their back-up zones removed. The reason is to stop trips being offered to drivers in back-up zones when we know full well they will be rejected. Our aim is to reduce the number of unnecessary packets of data going backwards and forwards to hopefully improve signals.

Naughty Ed?

Having read your page in November's issue I couldn't help but wonder if the contradiction of two of your articles was lost on you or not. Firstly, whatever you do in your own cab is your own business, however when you write about TfL "decimating our trade" and "anyone who doesn't believe that minicabs will eventually be allowed to ply for hire is living in cloud cuckoo land," you shouldn't then go on to say in the next subject that you took four people to Victoria "because they looked sad, even though I would normally have my light turned off, read the paper and wait for another account trip."

We all need a rest and a tea from time to time, but if licensed taxi drivers like you never want to stick your light on and ply for hire on a Saturday night, what are TfL to think? They are obviously going to look at alternatives and to people who ARE prepared to transport people from A to B on a Saturday night. What do you want the public to do...walk? If the day does come when minicabs legally ply for hire, will you look in the mirror take a little bit of responsibility or blame everybody else? If it's buzzing on a Saturday evening why not put your light on? I'm not saying you alone are going to solve London's transport problems, but we all need to do a bit if we want to thwart the minicabs.

Don't you remember The London Chamber of Commerce saying that London needed more Taxis just a month or two ago and what was your reaction to that?

Gary Leaver (J54)

Gary, I hold my hands up and plead guilty. However, in my defence I would have added that the radio was chock-a-block with work, the Bid Zone almost half-filled and coverage looked to be non-existent. I expected a bleep at any second and would normally give priority to that, but it would have taken unnecessary space in the article and added nothing to the point I was making about tube fares compared to ours. But yes, I can't argue your point too greatly because the fact is that when it's buzzing, I give priority to account work and perhaps that isn't doing the



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trade any favours. However, not to do so would be doing no favours to DaC. I have never denied that I do mainly account work, but that doesn't detract from your well-made point ...Ed

Pots and kettles etc!

A recent account trip caused me to negotiate a crowded Highbury Corner. However, I was able to zoom around the bus lane until a blue car lumbered slowly out of Highbury Station Road, forcing me to stop. It was no problem and I waited for a *thank you* from the driver. But I waited in vain – in fact he didn't even look in my direction! Perhaps he didn't see the large black vehicle with the CCC logo across the windscreen. Or perhaps because he was a DaC Board member, he

assumed that he had the right of way over us plebs? I await his next article about falling standards in the cab trade...

Geoff Levene (K43)

I spoke to the Board member in question. In fairness to him I won't reveal which one it was other than to say that he was making his way from Roman Way, where he is based, back home to Dalston! For easiness, we'll call him Rupert. I asked him about the incident and he said that if he didn't acknowledge you, it would have been due to the nature of pulling out from that street into Highbury Corner being rather hazardous and he was probably watching out for other cars. However, if he did ignore you, it wasn't intentional and he apologises if it upset you ...Ed

To the Prime Minister

I have sent the following to the Prime Minister...

Gary Cox (O46)

Prime Minister,

*I must tell you that the Mayor of London's election campaign is already doing untold damage to the harmony among different groups of Londoners. Let's face it, this prat made Labour unelectable for 20 years. If you are not seen to kick him up the a*s hard and quick, you can say goodbye to staying in power. I don't want another mob in at any cost.*

Gary Cox

*PS When the London cab trade turns, we are in the sh*t – I should know, I am one sir.*

Thanks for imparting that info, Gary (I think)!!! ...Ed

Xmas gifts? Magic mirrors, miracle beads or impossible putty!

The Science Museum launches an innovative range of Launchpad products...

The Science Museum has teamed up with Middlesex University to produce a range of innovative and fun products that aim to engage and excite children and adults in the scientific principles behind *Launchpad*, the Science Museum's newly transformed hands-on, brains-on gallery, which is now open.

Each of the 12 mini-kits relates to one of the *Launchpad* themes – light, sound, energy transfer, electricity & magnetism, forces & motion and materials. They come complete with easy-to-read instructions, information about the science behind the products and fun experiments allowing people to take a piece of *Launchpad* home.

If you are a Dial-a-Cab driver looking for fun stocking fillers or stuck for something to get the man who has everything, well with each of the mini-kits retailing at under £5.00, there's something to suit everyone this Christmas!

Favourites from the range include:



Impossible putty £3.99: This highly advanced material feels like chewing gum but goes hard if bounced or hit – throw it at a wall and it'll bounce straight back like a bouncy ball!

Miracle beads £3.99: These clever beads are white indoors, but turn different colours when outside – even if the sun's not out. The beads contain a special dye – also used in sunglasses – that reacts to ultraviolet light in sunlight.

Seeing heat £3.99: Just how hot are

you? This mini-kit contains state-of-the-art film that makes heat visible as amazing colours. Place warm fingers on the mat to see your own body heat or use it to test how hot other objects are.

Atom squasher £3.99: This easy-to-use kit contains everything needed to make one of the most famous gadgets in science – Newton's Cradle.

Instant photos £3.99: Take pictures without even using a camera! The re-usable film stores light energy and gives it out again. The shape of anything placed on the film will be instantly recorded as an outline that can be seen in a dark place.

Magic mirror £3.99: Secretly watch others and see round corners with this clever kit of mirrors! Other clever gifts – such as *Watch Water Freeze* are also available.

All products are available to buy in the Launchpad Shop. Admission to Launchpad is free of charge to all visitors. The Science Museum is open daily from 10am – 6pm.

CHRISTMAS



CRACKER

**Get into the festive spirit and buy yourself a new TX4.
Guaranteed to be a real Christmas Cracker for years to come.**



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