

February 2007



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

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NASH'S NUMBERS

By Alan Nash (A95)

Continuing the updating of hotel chains. I have now included available postcodes for those with SatNavs. If you can't wait for the complete list visit www.nashsnumbers.co.uk and click on U.I.D...

CLUB QUARTERS			
St. Paul's Gracechurch	24, Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7DR 7, Gracechurch St, London, EC3V 0DR	Trafalgar Sq	Northumberland Avenue, SW1
CORUS			
BRIGGENS HOUSE	Briggens Park, Stanstead Road, Stanstead Abbots, SG12 8LD - nr Harlow not Stansted A/P	ELSTREE COUNTY	Barnet Lane, Borehamwood, WD6 3RE 30 Oak Hill, Woodford Green, IG8 9NY
HYDE PARK	1-7 Lancaster Gate, W2 3LG		
CROWNE PLAZA			
Buckingham Gate Suites	51 Buckingham Gate, SW1E 6AF	London City	19 New Bridge Street, EC4V 6DB
Docklands Excel	Excel, Mace Gateway, E16 1XL	Heathrow Airport	Stockley Road, West Drayton, UB7 9NA
St James	45-51 Buckingham Gate, SW1E 6AF		
DANUBIUS		Regents Park	18 Lodge Road, NW8 7JT
DAYS INN			
Waterloo	54 Kennington Road, SE1 7BJ	London North	M1 London Gateway "Scratchwood" srvc NW7 3HB
Luton	Regent Street, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 5FA	Stansted	Welcomebreak Service's, M11/J- 8, Old Dunmow Rd
Westminster	80-86 Belgrave Road, SW1V 2BJ		Bishop's Stortford, CM23 5QZ
EXPRESS HOLIDAY INN			
Braintree	Cressing Rd, Braintree, CM77 8DH	Buckhurst Hill	High Road, Buckhurst Hill, IG9 5HT
Chingford	Walthamstow Avenue, E4 8ST	Croydon	1 Priddys Yard, Off Firth Road, Croydon, CR0 1TS
Dartford Bridge	University Way, Dartford, DA1 5PA	Earls Court	295 North End Road, W14 9NS
Gatwick	Haslett Av. Squareabout Crawley RH10 1UG	Greenwich	Bugsby Way, SE10 0GD
Hammersmith	124 King Street, W6 0QU	Limehouse	469-475 The Highway, E1W 3HN
City	275 Old Street, EC1V 9LN	Park Royal	Victoria Road, W3 6XU
Royal Docks	1 Silvertown Way, E16 1EA	Southwark	103-109 Southwark Street, SE1 OJQ
Stansted	Thremhall Avenue, Stansted, CM24 1PY	Stratford	196 High Street, E15 2PD
Swiss Cottage	152-156 Finchley Road, NW3 5HS	Victoria	106-110 Belgrave Road, SW1V 2BJ
Luton	2 Percival Way, Luton, LU2 9GP	Luton Hemel	London Road / Flamstead St, St. Albans, AL3 8HT
Wandsworth Battersea	Smugglers Way, SW18 1EG	Wimbledon South	200 High Street, SW19 2BH
FIRMDALE			
Charlotte Street	15 Charlotte Street, W1P 1RJ	Covent Garden	10 Monmouth Street, WC2H 2HB
Number Sixteen	16 Sumner Place, SW7 3EG	Soho	4 Richmond Mews, W1D 3DH
FOUR SEASONS			
Canary Wharf	46 Westferry Circus, E14 8RS	London	Hamilton Place, Park Lane, W1A 1AZ
GRANGE HOTEL			
Blooms	2-5 Montague Street, WC1B 5BP	City	Coopers Row, EC3N 2BQ
Clarendon	34-37 Bedford Place, WC1B 5JR	Fitzrovia	20-28 Bolsover Street, W1P 7HJ
Holborn	50-52 Southampton Row, WC1A 4AR	Langham Court	31-35 Langham Street, W1N 5RE
Rochester	69 Vincent Square, SW1P 2PA	Strathmore	41 Queen's Gate Gardens, SW7 5NB
White Hall	2-5 Montague Street, WC1B 5BU		
GUOMAN			
Cumberland	Great Cumberland Place, W1A 4RF	The Tower	St Katharine's Way, E1W 1LD

What's On at Excel, Olympia and Earls Court

EVENT	VENUE	From	Until
The Holiday & Travel Show	Earls Court 1	01/02/07	to 04/02/07
MCN London Motorcycle Show	ExCel(P)	01/02/07	to 04/02/07
Londonedge & Londoncentral Spring 07	Olympia 2	04/02/07	to 07/02/07
Technology for Marketing 07	Olympia National	06/02/07	to 07/02/07
VideoForum 2007	Earls Court 2	06/02/07	to 08/02/07
London Judo International	ExCel(P)	10/02/07	to 11/02/07
Pure	Olympia	11/02/07	to 13/02/07
Business Travel 07	Earls Court 2	13/02/07	to 15/02/07
Travel Technology Show	Earls Court 2	13/02/07	to 14/02/07
Publishing Expo	Olympia 2	14/02/07	to 15/02/07
Real Estate TV Live 07	Olympia National	16/02/07	to 18/02/07
Zee Carnival 2007	Olympia Grand	16/02/07	to 18/02/07
International Confex	Earls Court 1	20/02/07	to 22/02/07
London Fabric 2007	Brompton Hall	20/02/07	to 22/02/07
The London Floor Show 2007	Olympia 2	20/02/07	to 21/02/07
Railtex 07	ExCel(T)	20/02/07	to 22/02/07
The London Stitch and Creative Hobby Crafts Show	ExCel(P)	22/02/07	to 24/02/07
National Wedding Show	Olympia Grand	23/02/07	to 25/02/07
Professional Beauty 2007	ExCel(T)	25/02/07	to 27/02/07
Building for Health	Earls Court 2	27/02/07	to 01/03/07
Cityscape	Earls Court 2	27/02/07	to 01/03/07
Ecobuild	Earls Court 2	27/02/07	to 01/03/07
Futurebuild	Earls Court 2	27/02/07	to 01/03/07
Regenex	Earls Court 2	27/02/07	to 01/03/07

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N.B. My old e-mail address is no longer valid, only use alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk

from the editor's desk

Call Sign, DaC and Wembley FC

Call Sign recently received a series of emails from a driver who questioned the wisdom of sponsoring a football team. He asked what benefits there were, how much it cost and insinuated that it was really Dial-a-Cab that paid rather than **Call Sign**. He went on to ask me what good the sponsorship had done this Society and questioned whether it had gained us any more work, saying that it must have cost DaC shareholders something?

Although his was the only dissenting voice and after explaining the situation, I believe he now accepts my reasoning, it's feasible that others may also have shared that driver's concerns on whether huge amounts have been spent and as a consequence, **Call Sign** feels that it should explain the sponsorship situation as regards to this mag.

When I first went for an interview for the **Call Sign** Editorship in February 1997, I was asked whether I had any plans to change the magazine's format? At the time, it usually consisted of 12 pages with each Board member giving a report (8 of them then), a page of Big Al "drivel," a letters page and front/back covers. Computers were a rarity then and even 12 pages was a monumental effort.

But PCs were coming in quickly and they made life so much easier and cheaper. I told the interviewing committee that I wanted to reach 28 pages (it's now up to 40), I wanted Board members to write only in every other issue unless they had something specific to write about and that I wanted drivers to be able to have the space to contribute more. I also wanted to accept advertising and be able to use that money to further improve **Call Sign**. History says that I was given the job and only you, the readers, can say if the appointment was successful.

However, that advertising revenue – of which I am in charge but with the need to get all cheques countersigned – has enabled **Call Sign** to sponsor many drivers over the years in a variety of events such as swimathons and marathons etc. Some drivers have even used the mag to help them start their own businesses by accepting free ads that we have offered if we thought their cause worthy. We have also had the best prize competitions in the trade by far.

The revenue received has also enabled me to help some drivers / staff members progress further in their given sporting field than perhaps they would have otherwise. The only requisite I need after agreeing that any ambition is worthwhile, is that there is a Dial-a-Cab connection and that I have unlimited access so far as publicity is concerned.

Last year **Call Sign** also sponsored call centre girls in the Hyde Park Moonwalk to help a breast cancer charity and several drivers who were taking part in various events in aid of charity.

Also up until 18 months ago, we sponsored the call centre's Donna Murray. She, together with the late John Wells, were both expert shots. Donna in particular became British and European champion and made news in many shooting magazines that the average driver might not have read, but which many clients obviously did. Our sponsorship in the name of



DaC usually involved paying for ammunition and came to around £300 a year. Sadly, Johnny Wells died at the end of 2004. His view was that Donna was the best female shooter in the world. Her further success at the world championships where she won several classes, which she accepted wearing her DaC top, was testimony to John's views.

Then earlier this year, DaC driver **Lee Pierce (J71)** – who is the goalkeeper for Combined Counties Premier league side Wembley – approached Brian Rice about the possibility of getting any of the fleece tops that might have been over from the driver's Xmas gifts as the club could not afford identical tops for the players to train in. The DaC Chairman found 20 and handed them over, never being one to miss an opportunity to promote the Society!

Then **Call Sign** heard about Lee and Wembley and as our sponsorship of Donna had ended when she left DaC, we spoke to their Chairman Brian Gunn about a possible sponsorship so long as Lee remained at the club.

I was told that for £1400 I could get a home and away kit for all the players plus around £300 to print Dial-a-Cab in bold type across the fronts. I agreed and the cost again came out of the revenue that **Call Sign** receives for advertising. It was nothing to do with DaC other than I did it in the Society's name. Why would I want to promote an in-house mag to which outsiders cannot subscribe? Some will correctly say that what is **Call Sign's** is really DaCs, however, money received by this mag for advertising could not have been gained any other way, so it really does cost DaC nothing to sponsor anyone in this mag.

I also have to say that I was delighted with the results gained immediately from the one-off amount paid on behalf of Wembley FC. Dial-a-Cab had 6 minutes on the BBC's Football Focus, 4 minutes on Sky Sports News, a big photo in The Sun, an article in the Sunday edition of the Non-League Paper and probably several others that I missed. And on top of that, the 11 players of Wembley FC are running around the southeast wearing tops with Dial-a-Cab plastered across the front and every local paper that carries reports of their away games will show the name of Dial-a-Cab if they show a photo!

Hope that clarifies the situation for that concerned driver and any others who were wondering.

Is the Mayor losing the plot?

No doubt there were many taxi drivers rubbing their hands together when the latest exorbitant new year hike in bus and train fares were announced. Buses are up by a third from £1.50 to £2, while tube passengers in Zone 1 see a single fare rise to an astronomical £4. Yep, that does mean a five-hander going just one stop on a train having to fork out a ridiculous £20.

In the short term, that will undoubtedly benefit the taxi trade, but in the long term our main business of ferrying around people who are already in town will begin to decline because many of those passengers will no longer come in unless they are working here.

Could it be that with London totally flooded by empty buses with numbers that only the biggest anorak can remember, someone now has to pay? It won't come out of Ken's salary – that is a certainty. His life's aim of everyone having plentiful and cheap public transport is collapsing around him – even though he has 100 paid publicists to promote the system.

Now he is talking of having a 2009 celebration in London to celebrate the – if he survives – 50th anniversary of Fidel Castro's Cuban dictatorship following the revolution in 1959 in which Castro replaced another dictator, Fulgencio Batista. According to Mr Livingstone, Cuba has excellent healthcare and a very high literacy rate in addition to the Cuban people's sporting prowess. The Mayor added that there was "...no reason why Cuba should be picked on for controversy other than by those with a right wing perspective."

One cab driver (Tony) is often heard praising Cuba on radio phone-in shows and in a democracy such as ours, everyone is entitled to their say. But are stories of a happy people with a health care service that leaves ours standing, really true?

Well, **Call Sign** isn't relying on the word of an occasional tourist to the Caribbean island. We asked whether any of our Internet readers knew about Cuba and found a young lady in California who was born there and who still has family there. You can read her views on her native country elsewhere in this issue.

AGM Day

Well, it's almost here again – AGM day! The 11th of February will see the same faces gathered at the same place, probably talking about the same things we always talk about. These hundred or so hardy souls may well be wasting their time, but are also undoubtedly the people who care about this Society.

There are always some genuine reasons and you will never get a 100% turnout, but we are owner-driver taxi purveyors! We can do what we want – if you want to change your shift or start earlier / later than usual, most drivers can. And if enough drivers cared and bothered showing up, then perhaps you would have the power to change anything you don't like or fine-tune something you do like.

But if you don't go, you have the right to cast your vote but forfeit the right to moan about a decision. See you there...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections Of The Chairman

The 2006 AGM

It's that time of year again when the Annual General Meeting is due and no doubt you are all aware that this year the date of the meeting is set for 11 February, 11am at the Brewery in Chiswell street.

I would like to remind you that if you do not attend the meeting, then you must vote by post! If you fail to attend and do not vote by post, then a fine of £50 will be imposed. It would be nice to see as many of you as possible at the meeting, with the turnover from the past financial year having been our most successful ever.

Dirty tricks campaign...

In August, I would have been a member of Dial-a-Cab for 33 years and I am also currently in my 11th year as Chairman, so you would have thought that I would have become accustomed to the antics of a few of our members - and one or two outside of our membership! But no, their behaviour just never ceases to amaze me!

Over the years, the names and faces may change, but their morals and principals remain the same - abysmal! Each year we have the 'silly season' as we approach an AGM. However, this usually becomes worse every other year when we have an AGM where Board Members are elected - and that scenario applies this year.

It would appear that the recipient of their wrath this year is Tom Whitbread. You probably remember Tom writing an article in *Call Sign* last July describing a corrective procedure he had undergone to clear two blocked arteries. This wasn't a heart attack, just a medical procedure.

I remember speaking about the procedure to him at the time, because I had undergone the same course of action eight years previously. Tom wanted to write the article to allay any fears that members might have had should they need the same procedure in the future - it was hardly a secret! Then in December, someone forwarded his article to the PCO with a request that his 'Bill' be terminated as he was not fit to hold a licence. Was I surprised? Not in the slightest, because the same type of people (albeit with different faces and names) had done exactly the same thing to me eight years previously. What is it that makes some people act like this?

But it doesn't end there. Perhaps as a 'back-up' should their heart attack ploy fail to rid DaC of Tom, they are also distributing literature endeavouring to discredit a charity of which Tom is the Chairman - can you believe it? I just cannot understand the lengths some people will go to in order to discredit a Board member in the hope that he will not be re-elected at the next AGM. This is politics right out of the gutter from people that have a personal vendetta or who are endeavouring to get a foothold in our Society.

There is one thing that I would like to put on record. I have worked with Tom for over 12 years and can say without contradiction that he is one of the most honest people I have ever



met. Love him or loathe him, what you see is what you get...

Exterior signage and the PCO

I attended a meeting a few days before Christmas where I was informed that on 22 December 2006, the PCO had forwarded their recommendations regarding exterior signage on Private Hire to the Mayor.

It is anticipated that the Mayor will endorse their recommendations. However, at the time of writing I do not have any idea what they may be, but I am prepared to have a guess and I believe there will be some sort of compromise, as the private hire industry wishes to be permitted to have 'all over' signage, whilst the taxi industry wants to keep the status quo (licence plate on front and rear screens).

When the authorities first submitted the consultation document, I felt they had already formed an opinion in favour of the private hire industry. But as the taxi industry put forward its case on safety grounds, because we felt the signage would confuse the public and they would see it as a means of authenticity, I felt there could be a softening of the attitude by the authorities. I believe the authorities will probably allow signage on the back windows, but that's all. So why have I come to this conclusion?

I know the Mayor is in favour of private hire using bus lanes and also setting down and picking up on red routes - but how can they be easily recognised? The simple answer is to allow signage on the back of the vehicle, probably the windows, so the vehicle could be easily recognised by cameras and the authorities and equally as important - by other motorists!

If private hire were allowed to use bus lanes without any signage, then other motorists would just follow them into the bus lanes. I anticipate that as a first step, private hire will be allowed to pickup and set down on red routes - what do you mean they do that already!

At present they could incur a fine, but in the future with the above scenario they would escape any fine so long as they are recognisable to the authorities - and once that is sorted out, my guess is they will be allowed to use the bus lanes - we will have to wait and see!

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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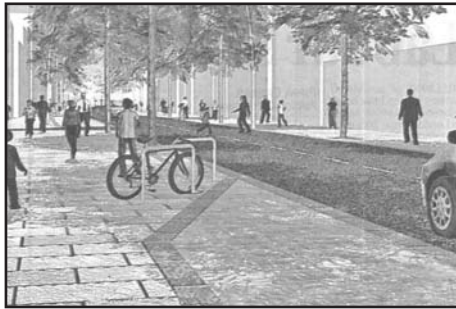
Now Walworth Road becomes 20mph!

Drivers using Walworth Road regularly will know that driving through that stretch of south London can be more stop than go – mainly because of the seemingly unlimited number of half-empty buses constantly stopping and starting. If you are lucky enough to be able to get past one, there will always be another in front.

The only relief from the Walworth Road busmania came during the late evening time when once again 30mph became feasible. But not any more...

Southwark Council have announced a plan to narrow Walworth Road by widening the pavements, getting rid of the bus and taxi lane and replacing that with a bus priority scheme at traffic lights that will hold back normal traffic in favour of buses. The lights will also be rephased to allow extra pedestrian crossing time.

In addition, the speed limit will be reduced to 20mph and if you thought crossing Tower Bridge at night while keep-



An artist's impression of how the new 20mph Walworth Rd will look

ing to 20mph on an empty road was difficult, then Walworth Road should present a real test with the Council planning to reduce the speed limit to 20mph.

The £2.7million scheme is hoped to increase road safety whilst cutting the number of accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists (400 in 5 years of which 10% were classified as serious).

to the road safety aspect, they were hoping that the friendlier environment (80 new trees being planted) and better lighting would help cut street crime and present a more pedestrian friendly zone. Work on the new area has just begun between Browning Street and East Street, which should be completed by July when the rest of Walworth Road's narrowing program will commence.

The spokesperson agreed that many taxis are seen using Walworth Road and were an important part of the borough's transport system, but when **Call Sign** asked whether licensed taxis would also be given priority along with buses now that the bus lane was being discontinued, the spokesperson didn't know and told us that they would have to contact Transport for London to find out!

That doesn't bode too well and we hope that our trade organisations will be pushing TfL on our behalf. In the meantime, be prepared for a sudden change in maximum speeds and make sure your hair is always combed – you could be getting your photo taken at any time...

A spokesperson for Southwark Council told **Call Sign** that in addition

With many DaC drivers living in Essex, the County Council is asking if you are someone that could help improve a child's quality of life and join Mickey Tarbuck to...

MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN ESSEX

Essex County Council is looking for more people aged 18 and over to take part in the *Independent Visitors Scheme* and befriend youngsters living in foster or residential homes across the County. It gives Essex residents a chance to make a real difference to a young person's life by volunteering to visit them or take them out for just a couple of hours a fortnight or a month.

DaC driver **Mickey Tarbuck (L41)** and his wife **Jackie** already have their own children and grandchildren, but are two of the scheme's volunteers and have been seeing an 18-year old boy ever since he was 10.

Mickey told **Call Sign**: "We saw an article in the paper about the scheme and thought it sounded like a good idea. We were given full training and support and then matched with a youngster. It's great if you want to help but are unable to offer full time support, because all you need do is commit to the same time each month or fortnight. The young people just need a bit of understanding and flexibility. It's also particularly important for men to volunteer as lads often prefer a male role model to chat to."

Adults that are interested must be loyal, reliable and predictable. A Criminal Records Bureau check will be required. Volunteers will be expected to commit to the scheme for at least two years to offer the young people aged 8 and over, stability and regularity, something that many youngsters living away from home would value.

Those interested must be able to travel to meet the young person and travel expenses will be paid where possible. Essex County Council also offer full training and a full introduction including child protection, legal systems and confidentiality. Individual and group support is available. Volunteers are needed in all areas of Essex.

Jackie Tarbuck ended by telling **Call Sign**: "We started seeing a young lad when he was 10, he is now 18 and knows that there are people out there who care enough to want to see him. It could mean such a lot to so many young people out there."

For more information or to register interest, call **Dorrie Lindsell** on 01376 555488 or email Dorrie.Lindsell@essexcc.gov.uk

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Jery's World



Albert Loses Sister Aged 32



Dial-a-Cab's janitor and general handy man, **Albert Kyei-Kankam Poakwah**, recently went into mourning following the tragic loss of his sister, **Genevieve**, who died at her home in Newcastle, Delaware (USA) following what was believed to have been a severe asthma attack.

Genevieve was just 32 years of age and had recently given birth to a baby girl who was just three months old when her mother died. Genevieve and her husband also have a son aged 9.

Albert has one other sister and three brothers in America and two other brothers in England. To all of them we send our sincere condolences...

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Selling DaC with Lydia



Hi there ladies and gentlemen and a very happy New Year to you all...

I hope you are pleased with the busy start to the new year that we are enjoying. We believe this momentum is unlikely to slow down as 2007 is set to be another BIG year. So say 'yes' to as many trips as you can and forget about the reject button!

This is a very important time for us, as there will be a number of reviews going on in light of the difficulties one of our competitors faced in the run up to Christmas. As a result of this, we are winning lots more business and it certainly paid off suspending new accounts much earlier than usual to look after our existing business.

With the competition going live on a large account in West London, which I understand was and is a rocky road and with the other company facing criticism on

the nation's airways when DJ's just can't get vehicles, this suggests that we are doing rather a good job in comparison. It certainly helps us understand why so many of their accounts are simply not happy with their current provider and want to do business with us instead...

As we have a large number of new drivers on the fleet, I thought it prudent to mention that there is a Driver Incentive in place and leads that Sales receive here at HQ lead to the driver get £20 once the account is opened. A BIG thank you for the feedback we've had throughout last year, but in particular during the end of the year; we were able to deal with problems and salvage potential problems thanks to this information, so please keep it coming in. And of course, thank you for all your support in making 2006 such a HUGE year.

Dial-a-Cab are committed to growing the fleet to accommodate the increase in demand for our services, so keep your eyes open for those new account messages and please support our efforts throughout the year.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the current Board of Management for all their efforts and contributions in making Dial-a-Cab so successful. I would also like to wish them well at the forthcoming AGM and for the future.

Until next time...

Lydia Foulkes
DaC Sales Manager

FINAL REMINDER FOR THE DAC 2006 AGM












The 2006 AGM will be held as usual at The Brewery, Chiswell Street, London EC1 on Sunday 11 February 2007 at 11am.

This year's AGM includes the election of officers and any nominations had to be received at Brunswick House on or before 9am on Friday 10 November, as were any rule changes or propositions. That date has now passed.

Please note that if you choose not to attend, you must use your postal vote. If you want to vote by post, you can still attend the meeting but you cannot vote twice. If you do neither, you will face a £50 fine.

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Company Secretary's Report

Grant Davis election manifesto

I read with interest the election manifesto of Grant Davis and whilst I do not normally make comment on these matters, I believe that I have been misunderstood and that the membership could be misled.

A proposed rule change (not a request for information) was received which was found to be in breach of Rule 29(b)(ii), which requires any rule change to be *"proposed by at least 25 existing and fully paid up members of the Society."* The proposal received had 26 signatures, but unfortunately 3 of them were not fully paid up.

In addition, I also pointed out that the proposal could not be adopted as it involved the reporting of third party turnover within the balance sheet of the Society. Advice was taken by the proposers who wrote to our auditors, Chantrey Vellacott DFK LLP, and it was confirmed that my understanding of reporting standards was correct and that the proposed reporting should not be adopted.

Subsequently, I received further correspondence from Mr Cox (T33) requesting the information outlined in the proposed rule change. I re-iterated the Society's position and informed him that once the 2006 Annual Report was in the public domain, I would be happy to discuss the request for information at any time.

I also received a further request for information from Mr Cox (T33) on 8 January 2007 and I again advised him that the vast majority of information was included in the Annual Report and that if he/they need further clarification

after he/they had read the document, then they could come in and see me.

To date nobody has asked for a meeting to discuss anything.

It is also obvious from Mr Davis' manifesto that despite many explanations, both from the Chairman and articles in **Call Sign** that he can't or won't understand the concept of Concierge. He commented that the "value of trips going to private hire since the introduction of Concierge is over 500%" – 500% of what?

What Mr Davis cannot accept is that the major clients in London demand a platform, including complex reporting, to book, report and cost their travel spend. As a policy, most of our major clients demand the use of private hire and also which private hire companies they wish to use. Dial a Cab has **NO** influence over which companies are used, as each vendor must tender on an individual basis.

I believe that Mr Davis' desire for Dial-a-Cab "to revert back to its original concept" would cause irreparable damage to the Society's client base and result in an instant reduction in Dial-a-Cab turnover of over 20%. Is this what the vast majority of members want?

Howard Pears
DaC Company Secretary



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

Kupkake's Korner



Gay Letter?

Even though he'd never met her nor spent time in her company, she sent him a registered letter - and he showed the same to me.

She accused him of paternity and said; *"You are a dad, he looks like you certainly - he's a handsome little lad."*

She demanded lots of money she said: *"I'll make you pay!"* But you know what's really funny? My friend is 100% gay!

He's never 'known' a woman or chased a teenage wench, he's never read Playboy Mag he can't converse in French!

We discussed all his options *"let's check the DNA, Has someone nicked my identity?"* was the best that he could say!

We went to see this person who had the little boy, she was almost attractive in spite of her cunning ploy.

On meeting at the doorway she expressed genuine surprise, she'd never met my friend before you could see it in her eyes!

"You ain't the bloke I met that night a year ago this week, you are black and he was white you ain't the bloke I seek!"

She apologised profusely she'd been duped by a cad, who stole my friend's identity when he became a dad...

Kopyright Kupkake 2007

The LTBAWD: "Thank You All!"

The President, Chairman and Officer's of **The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled** wish you all a happy New Year and would like to thank all our advertisers and sponsors who have supported us with this year's diary and also to all the drivers who purchased one.

As this is the major source of our income, we look forward to your continued support so that we are able on your behalf, to continue the annual outings to Worthing, which started in 1948 with 25 taxis and 50 ex-servicemen and continue now to the present day with 130 taxis and 400 ex-servicemen and women. We have also been able to give assistance to The Haigh Homes, Morden, St. David's Home, Ealing, Queen Alexandra's Home, Worthing, the First World War Veterans Association and supplying transport for Mr Henry Allingham, who is the oldest surviving veteran of the First World War and who we are pleased to say was able to attend the outing to Worthing in 2006.

The date for this years outing to Worthing will take place on Tuesday, 12 June 2007, so please make a note of the date. Any driver who has previously been on the outing and has moved or changed their phone number, or any new drivers who would like to be included on our outings, you can either contact the Secretary Mr Paul Davis on 07860850102 or go to our website at www.taxicharity.org.



Henry Allington, the oldest surviving veteran of WW1 - now 109

Derek Leone – Hon PRO

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

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

Flashback
1987

This month's Flashback goes back to November 1987 and a time before postal ballots were allowed at DaC. This was Kenny Burns Chairman's Report. Ken was Chairman between 1984 and 1990...

From Call Sign, November 1987

KENNY BURNS CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The onus and obligation lies with you...

An absolute disgrace is the only way to describe the attendance at this year's AGM. A turn out of 47.7% meant that yet again we were unable to put a number of important rule amendments. This is a situation that cannot be tolerated any longer, fines for non-attendance this year will be levied against any member whose excuse for absence is not, in the opinion of the Board of Management, a reasonable one. The lack of a 51% quorum has forced us to review the way in which we pass rule amendments.

Every member will shortly be balloted for a rule change in respect of the quorum required for a postal ballot.

Every member will **have** to return the ballot form. The envelope will have each member's call sign marked on them, these envelopes will be opened by staff in front of independent scrutineers in order that ballot forms are not seen to be connected with the call sign on the envelope. Any member who does not return his ballot form will be the subject of a complaint by ODRTS for conduct prejudicial to the Society.

Supporting your Society

The mood of the membership that did attend the meeting on Sunday 29th November was, quite rightly, one of anger. Anger at the fact that they make the effort to support their Society, whilst the majority do not attend. I know that there are some genuine excuses for non-attendance, but I believe these are in a minority. To the rest of you who cannot be bothered to attend the annual general meeting of your business (something which many others in the trade would dearly love the right to do) I say go elsewhere and give your opportunity to someone who will appreciate it.

My thanks...

For those of you that did attend the meeting, I thank you for being, in the main, well behaved and conducting yourselves in an orderly manner. I would also like to thank those of you who voted for me, I shall endeavour to ensure that your trust in me is not misplaced.

Good news

One bright piece of news to emerge from the meeting was the approval of the MDI 7100 Mobile Data Terminal fitted in a licensed FX4 model taxicab. Approval for the Metrocab and the FX4 Plus will be sought in January.

Here's to 1988

I would like to thank all of the subscribers, journeymen and staff for their efforts over the past year and wish you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Kenny Burns

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LOGO CARRYING DAC DRIVERS
the following offer is for **YOU!**

AT E₃ TAXIS – 50% DISCOUNT! ON SERVICING

Some of our other services include:-

- ★ Overhauls ★ Tracking/4 wheel alignment ★ MOT testing on Class 4 vehicles ★ Smoke Test
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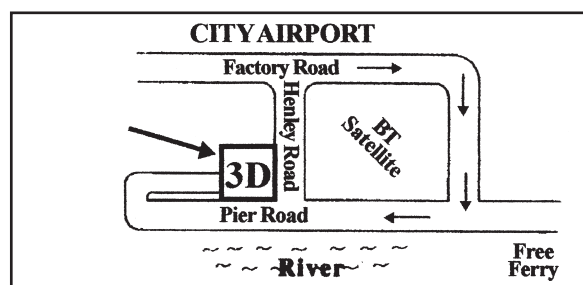
We are also fitting the new PCO Approved Tyres MAXXIS, as well as DUNLOP & MICHELIN

*We can service your TXII from new without affecting your warrantee
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**E3 Taxis Unit 3D Standard Industrial Estate, Henley Road, E16 2ES
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WE ARE ALSO A PCO APPROVED EMISSIONS FITTING AGENT FOR THE TAXI CAT SYSTEM



Having taken the plunge and deciding to work on Boxing Day, I have to admit that the situation I found myself in at Gatwick Airport was nothing short of shocking. Considering this is one of London's major airports, it was total chaos. With the rail network closed down and the Gatwick express not running, BAA had laid on a bus replacement service. To cut a long story short, my female account passenger told me that after she had landed, she had a choice. Wait three and a half hours for the bus or two and a half hours for a car upstairs because they had run out and there was a huge queue. Or there was me within the hour.

When I arrived at the airport, I was inundated with people offering me all kinds of money to "get them out of here." One fella tried to persuade my passenger to share her cab back into town. BAA should take note that again this proves the London cab trade are the only ones that can cope with pure demand and have the capacity to do so. This situation could easily occur at Terminal Five, should BAA seek to put profit before customer service...

Radio work – now and then...

All my taxi driving life, I've had a radio because in my view you earn your money quicker and if you take whatever comes first, you have twice as much chance of getting a job. Whilst shifting through some old paperwork recently, I came across an old radio work record book from some 11 years ago. What surprised me was that the type of work I completed was very similar to what I was doing today. Also, very clear was that the fares were considerable lower. I agree that the use to cars has accelerated to an extent and that it has only slowed down because silver limo firms are struggling to recruit drivers, but based on what the customer is prepared to pay and the fact that our meters are much improved, we were bound to lose work.

Did we really expect to have meter increases year on year and not have account customers scout around for what they perceive as "better value" on distance work? These days, what concerns me is the time gaps between hirings. Getting a roader isn't the be-all and end-all because you can take your money by keeping busy in town. Yes, even though those short trips can be annoying to some, you can earn a good hourly rate and at the end of the day we are there to give a service and it's the public's right to go where they want to. If I only wanted to spend a fiver, I would feel a little aggrieved if I went into a shop and saw a sign put up by the owner saying: "Only people prepared to spend £10 or more are allowed in my shop." Or like a local refreshment van near to my home where there's a sign saying: "No tea without food."

Feeling tired?

Over the years, I can't remember the number of tyres that I've had to get replaced because a nail was too close to the tyre wall to make a repair. I used to always buy new tyres, but because of this reason I have resorted to buying remoulds instead. A new tyre costs more, but will last longer against a remould that will cost less, but do fewer miles. I've found that the quality of remoulds can vary greatly and having tried most of them, Jetyre's standard remould Valiant Kingpin came up the best. The Kingpin has a sidewall moulding as well as the tread, rather than just the tread and is styled on a Michelin, so it's chunkier and at £37.50 each all in, good value.

For those wanting new tyres, you can't beat

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

A DaC Driver's Views on Life and Everything



Costco's offer of 4 new Michelins for £175 all in and you have 1 year to get them fitted! One-year Costco membership is available to London Taxi drivers for £20, so each tyre will cost you £48.75.

The end... or the beginning?

Finally, the days of cabs passing out at Penton

Street appear numbered as the end seems nigh for the men in brown coats. Hopefully, the new system with SGS should be one of the best things to happen to the trade in many years, with a fairer test for both mushers and for garage fleets. I once took a spare cab from my garage when in overhaul and whilst looking at the state of it, was bemused to find the plate was only six weeks old! Personally, I would prefer regular testing if it took COs off the street, because if you have ever encountered them on Cabot Square at midday when there is a queue of people at the rank wondering why there are two men in orange bibs and no cabs, you'll know they just obstruct us from doing our job and look desperately out of date. More importantly and for the first time, the trade will have a proper complaints procedure when it comes to testing. SGS will be accountable to the trade just as we will be to comply with their tests. Hopefully, the days where if you made a complaint you got a re-test the following week or even that afternoon, will be over for once and for good.

Richard Potter (T51)

DAC CUT-PRICE TRIPS WITH...



You can join the hundreds of Dial-a-Cab drivers who have already taken advantage of the concessionary fares Eurostar are offering us. Whether you fancy a trip to the wonderful French City of Culture, Lille, want to sample the magic of Paris or travel back in time to wander through historic Brussels, you can get there on the incredible 186mph Eurostar.

You can take family and friends with you, but the DaC driver must be in the party. Booking forms are available only from the DaC Driver's Reception...

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

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



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The TX4 is the best purpose built taxi ever.

But don't just take our word for it.

Why not join the hundreds of other drivers who have already driven and bought a new TX4?

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John Paton & Son Ltd - Glasgow
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*Even though Fidel Castro's health is perilous, London Mayor, Ken Livingstone, is preparing to spend an estimated £2million of Londoners money in celebrating 50 years of Castro's Cuban dictatorship in 2009. We asked one Cuban on-line **Call Sign** reader - now residing in the USA - how true it was that the people are happy and their health service exceptionally good. This is what Josie Allison had to say...*

"This guy Ken Livingstone is out of his mind. He has no idea what the situation in Cuba is really all about. Not that there is only no freedom, but there are no human rights. Their health service is so lousy that we have to send my cousin - who still lives there - his medication from Spain every month, because they can't get it in Cuba.

His son used to be a medical doctor in Cuba and the last time Castro opened up his doors, he left with other friends because in Cuba he could not even choose his specialty, they chose it for him. He now lives in Miami where he has a very successful business dealing with the baby boomers who will be needing medical help in the very near future.

People in Cuba have to raise their own chickens and pigs and grow their own veg-

Is Ken Right about Cuba?



etables and fruits on their back yards - if they have one - just to be able to survive as the food they have is not enough to make it. People there live like in the cave days. They only have 6 hours of electricity per day and can't even find simple pens or paper to write a letter. How pitiful is that?

"Fidel Castro messed up many lives and separated thousand of families. He promised to give the poor a life, but instead he took from the rich and kept the money for himself so everyone in Cuba is now poor. If he is so great, how come each time he opens the doors and allows people to leave Cuba, they leave by the thousands? I think he is crazy nut who is an opportunist and not a communist. He is the man from hell.

"All I know is that the day he dies, mil-

lions of people will celebrate the same way we are celebrating the hanging of Saddam Hussein who was as evil as Fidel Castro is. I'm not a hateful person by any means and I have a good heart, but if I hate one person in this world, that person is Fidel Castro. He is the most evil person ever besides Saddam and Bin Laden. They will all get the punishment they deserve one way or another."



Do you know Cuba well? Is Josie or Ken right? Let **Call Sign** know...

The Anniversary Page

The Munich air crash wipes out Manchester United

It was 1 February 1958 and Manchester United were chasing their third consecutive Championship. They had just defeated Arsenal at Highbury in a magical game by 5 - 4 and were then off to Yugoslavia to play their European Cup second leg match, having won the home leg by 2 - 1. A 3 - 3 draw saw them safely into the semi-finals. Then it was back to the league again. But tragedy was about to strike...

On **6 February 1958**, BEA flight 609 was attempting its third take-off from the icy Munich-Riem airport in Germany during a blizzard. On board were the most famous team the UK had ever produced - the young Manchester United football team nicknamed the Busby Babes after their manager, Matt Busby. The players were still talking excitedly about the match against Red Star Belgrade in Yugoslavia whilst the plane was refuelling after stopping at Munich.

Following that third attempt to take off, the plane hit slush, over-shot the runway, hit a house with its port wing, veered to the right, hit another building and burst into flames. It crashed killing 23 of the 44 passengers and crew on board. Seven of the dead were members of the Manchester United team.

The football world was left reeling as the names of the dead were read out on the BBC news. Their average age was 24 and they included team captain Roger Byrne, Tommy Taylor, David Pegg, Mark Jones, Eddie Colman, Liam Whelan and Geoff Bent. He died in hospital 15 days later.

Eight British sports journalists and several club officials and supporters were also killed. Manager Matt Busby was seriously injured and was twice read his last rites.

There was speculation that the club would fold, but a threadbare United team completed the 1957-1958 season with United's coach Jimmy Murphy standing in as manager. A team largely made up of reserves and youth team players beat Sheffield Wednesday 3-0 in the first match after the disaster. Poignantly, the programme for that match showed simply a blank space where each United player's name should have been.

Unsurprisingly, the team lost to AC Milan in the European Cup semi final but, although the team's league results were poor, they reached the final of the FA Cup, losing 2-0 to Bolton Wanderers.

Matt Busby made a miraculous recovery and resumed his managerial duties the following season, eventually building a second generation of Busby Babes - one that included George Best. That team went on to beat Benfica 4 - 1 in the European Cup Final in 1968 - exactly 10 years after the disaster - with just two crash survivors left, Bobby Charlton and Bill Foulkes.



All that was left after BEA 609 crashed in Munich ripping the heart out of the Manchester United Football Team

Duncan Edwards was probably the best footballer in the UK at the time.

Continued from January...

Hope you all had a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year because a few weeks after working the first of my many Christmas's on an **ODRTS** radio cab, I made a momentous - and wrong - decision to go 'Mushing'. It all worked out fine on paper - well actually the back of a used envelope - that with what I was paying in on the clock, I could easily afford to buy and run my own brand new FX3 and be much better off into the bargain. It was around £1000...!!!

I decided to order a new one, complete with heater and roof rack from Mann & Overton down in Wandsworth Bridge Road. In those good old days they were the only firm the PCO allowed to sell and pass a new cab in London. Incidentally colour choice was simple - it was black!

First hurdle was that M&Os would not accept my order! In their opinion, I was too young to be allowed to buy a taxicab, secondly they wanted a guarantor for the required finance and thirdly they were worried I was too inexperienced to know what I was doing, so I had to have a senior partner for them to take my/our order. This all went down very badly with me; I was almost 22 years old, had held my green badge for over six weeks and was a right bloody know-all!

My dad agreed - well gave in to my almost non-stop pleading, moaning, and whining - and agreed to act as my guarantor and senior partner. Later on, when applying for my proprietor's licence, he had to be the proprietor as the PCO were reluctant to let a new young driver take on the responsibility needed by them to act as a licensed London taxicab proprietor for even one taxi.

The late Jack Silver, who together with Lenny Kaye owned a small fleet of cabs that operated out of London Lane, off Mare Street (Hackney) and from who I had my first taste of working a cab on radio as Dan 30, also told me to wait a year or so and learn what it took to run a taxi. I ignored his advice too!

Within a few months of taking delivery of my brand new taxi SLL 11, one of the first diesel engined FX3s to be fitted as standard with the latest type of Dunlop tubeless tyres that I came to refer to as airless tyres, I found out that Jack Silver and all the others were right and boy was I ever wrong. Even today, it never pays to be a big head and ignore the advice of those who have learnt the hard way from experience.

The only good thing that worked well with SLL 11 was the **ODRTS** set installed by Pye. This never gave me any trouble. Those new Dunlop tubeless taxi cords kept losing air, some from punctures that they were prevalent to, other times because the wheel rims leaked. In 18 months of owning SLL 11, I took the cab back to Dunlop's fitters in Albany Street, NW1 at least 47 times. In the end they tried replacing the tyres and fitted inner tubes in an attempt to cure the constant air leakage, but the wheel rims chaffed the inner tubes causing more flat

"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...

tyres, so then Dunlop fitted anti-chaff liners in an effort to finally cure the problem. I believe Dunlop also made and supplied those wheels to Carbodies, LTT's forerunners up in Coventry. I was told that after many complaints from M&O and Carbodies, Dunlop altered the wheels and the problems with tubeless tyres were drastically reduced, but as far as I was concerned, by that time it was all too late. The loss of time and morale made me regret jumping into Mushing. So I sold the cab...

One good thing that came out of my constant visits to Albany Street was that I met a young taxicab driver who was just starting to make his mark in the London cab trade and who later became a friend, Danny Jacobs. He went on with Cyril Park to found Crowncoarse Cabs, better known as Dersingham Road Garage in Cricklewood, when they took over from Sid Papier and expanded the fleet and premises.

If I had listened and waited for at least the suggested 12 months, most of the problems would have not happened with the tyres and I might have gained the knowledge about how to deal with that and the other problems. As it was, I was so fed up and lost so much time, that I sold the cab and went back to renting a cab! Just to make matters worse, it was a non-radio cab, so my takings took a dive into the bargain. Some things never change - it never pays to be a *big head* and ignore good advice from people who have learnt the hard way from real life experience, not just some theoretical workings...

Throughout the whole taxi trade Interest is focussed on

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Price £1,041.10s
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M&O ad from late 1950's

Call Sign

February 2007

Editor: Alan Fisher
Address: Brunswick House, 3/11 Brunswick Place, London, N1 6DX
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Sunset Strip

CONDO FOR RENT

Bahama Bay Resort, Florida

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

**Great offers available
10% discount for Dial-a-Cab drivers
Contact John (M13) on 07921 920743...**

Hello Ladies & Gents,

Christmas now seems long gone and I'm sure that we are all looking forward to a very successful year ahead. The last financial year was the most successful in the Society's history and already the current figures point to an even more rewarding 2007.

Dial-a-Cab is the circuit that everyone talks about and the Board of Management are fully aware that we must all work even harder to maintain and continue to cement our position as the number one radio circuit and leaders in our field. Rest assured that the current Board are totally committed and we will certainly not take

SMILE

Sent in by Ian Lingham (K64)

Billy was at school one morning and the teacher asked all the children what their fathers did for a living. All the usual answers came out; fireman, policeman, salesman, chippy, captain of industry etc, but Billy was being uncharacteristically quiet and so the teacher asked him about his father.

"My father is an exotic dancer in a gay club and takes off all his clothes in front of other men. Sometimes, if the offer is really good, he'll go out with a man, rent a cheap hotel room and let them sleep with him."

The teacher quickly set the other children some work and took little Billy aside to ask him if that was really true.

"No," said Billy, "he plays cricket for England but I was just too embarrassed to say it..."

Sent in by David Lessman (D19)

MI5 had an opening for a new James Bond. After all the background checks, interviews and testing was done, there were three finalists left - two men and a woman. For the final test, the MI5 agents took one of the men to a large metal door and handed him a gun.

"We must know that you will follow your instructions no matter what the circumstances," he was told, "inside this room you will find your wife sitting in a chair. Kill her!"

The man replied that he could never shoot his wife and was told that he was not the right man for this job and to take his wife and go home.

The second man was given the same instructions. He took the gun and went into the room. All was quiet for about five minutes, then he came out with tears in his eyes.

"I tried," he said, "I really tried, but I just can't kill my wife."

The agent told him that he didn't have what it takes and to take his wife home.

Finally, it was the woman's turn and she was given instructions to kill her husband. She took the gun and went into the room. Shots were heard - one after another! Then screaming, crashing and banging on the walls was heard. After a few minutes, all went quiet.

Then door opened slowly and there stood the woman. She wiped the sweat from her brow.

"This gun is loaded with blanks," she said, "I had to beat him to death with the chair..."



Drivers Operations



rect passenger name on every trip between these hours.

Goldman Sachs shared account with ComCab

There is no longer a Dial-a-Cab Marshal at this location, but the account operates in the same manner as before and you have every right to use the rank and accept all types of charge cards. It is a shared account, the more we use the rank the larger proportion of work we will acquire.

Eurostar

Concessionary Travel

First and Second class travel is again available to Dial-a-Cab members and staff, the rates are extremely competitive and most dates are at the moment available. It is a very popular trip and well worth considering. Booking forms are usually available in Drivers Reception.

Finally, can I remind those of you still to pick up your Christmas gift from Roman Way - together with an excellent calendar showing photos of old taxis and also a diary - to pop in between Monday and Friday (8am-8pm).

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM

Allan Evans

0207 607 6403

Allane@Dialacab.co.uk

our foot off of the gas.

You will be pleased to learn that Marshal **Chas Kissin (P99J)** is now well on the way to a full recovery and I personally look forward to welcoming him back onto the Marshal team. I believe he is very near to returning to work which is very good news.

This year, more than any other, I have received lots of positive feedback from our clients and I must praise all our Marshals for the professional manner in which they go about their duties - sometimes under extreme pressure. With your valued support, we will certainly continue to stay well ahead of our competitors.

Deutsche Bank

A DaC Marshal is now on site from 20.45pm until 23.45pm (Monday-Friday) and it is very important that you inform them of your parked location and the cor-

THINKING OF HOLIDAYING IN FLORIDA?

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



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

Further details and virtual tour, www.cubberleyvilla.com or call 07752 330263

Please note that for all bookings made through Call Sign, quote that as a reference when making your booking and you can deduct 15% from the advertised price! The villa is situated just 20 minutes from all major parks and shopping areas. The villa sleeps a maximum of 10 people and the cost advertised is per week and not per person

TV Chef for a Week!

Dial-a-Cab driver **John Farmer (H69)** made the pages of **Call Sign** in July 2005 when winning £2012 in a competition designed to raise awareness of the taxi trade if London's Bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games were to be successful – and of course, we now know that it was.

"I was thrilled to win," John told **Call Sign** at the time, "as a cabbie who lives and often works in east London, I jumped at the chance to *Back the Bid*. The regeneration of east London alone is reason enough to host the Games, but I have a family of four children who are all sports mad. My youngest daughter Nicola is 14 and a keen swimmer who has won countless medals. She hopes to swim for Great Britain and compete in the 2012 Games."

But *Back the Bid* was then and John has now moved on to other challenges – being a chef in a top restaurant in front of the TV cameras being his latest one!

It started in November when John saw a terminal message from Tom Whitbread asking for volunteers among DaC drivers who were interested in cooking and who were prepared to pit their culinary skills against a group from other occupations – but in a real restaurant with 25 real – albeit celebrity – diners!

John rang the number and was accepted to appear for five consecutive nights in the program called *Pressure Cooker*. It was filmed at the prestigious **Chancery Restaurant**, where the five volunteers were to cook their favourite meals in the form of four courses – one each day. The courses consisted of starters, a fish dish, a main course and a pudding. Each of the five also had to act as *Maitre D'* for one of the days and were to be watched over by the real restaurant chef, anxious to protect the establishment's reputation – which must have been in danger of being torn to shreds by the program!

Diners gave marks for each course and the outright winner would walk away with £1000. The contestants consisted of three females and two males – both called John, so the DaC version became John the Cabby whilst the other remained as Johnnie.



John on TV in the Chancery Restaurant

John told **Call Sign**:

"It started off well, but at times you could feel some tension creeping in where some took it more seriously than perhaps I did. I did terribly on the first and last day, but was quite happy with my performance in the intermediate three days with my turn as *Maitre D* proving to be top notch, as I came first in that!"

John ended up in third place overall with the other John taking the £1000.

"It was hard work," he said, "but I did enjoy it although I wouldn't put myself through it again! I couldn't wait to get back into my cab. I don't think we did their reputation too much damage and the restaurant must have liked me, because I was the only contestant they invited back for a real meal!"

The Chancery Restaurant is at 9 Cursitor Street and reviews on its food and service are excellent. You can book on 0871 075 7425.

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Accepted by the Beeb's online discussion group...

I've often mentioned the BBC website in my articles, usually praising it. However, there's one part of the website that infuriates me and that's the "Have your Say" section which is located at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/default.stm. I've submitted my comments on many occasions and they've never, ever been approved - until last week!

That's when the furor erupted over Ruth Kelly's decision to send her son to a private school instead of a state school. Now I don't actually care what she does and in her shoes I probably would've done exactly the same thing, but my comments regarding the whole scenario focused on the dreadful state of our education system and I was somewhat surprised that the moderators accepted my comments. In fact the BBC promptly contacted me and asked whether I'd like to participate in one of their online articles discussing education; of course I agreed.

So after six years of trying I've finally succeeded in getting my views aired by the BBC, even if it is only on their website.

Sending online petitions to the PM...

Staying on the political topic, last November a beta website was launched by 10 Downing Street. We all know about the Prime Minister's website at <http://www.number10.gov.uk/>, however the new website located at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/> is specifically for submitting petitions directly to



the PM online!

I thought this was a great idea; the PM can gauge public opinion immediately regards any possible legislation and of course it's being used actively by the British public.

The first petition I've taken part in is the "Scrap the planned vehicle tracking and road pricing policy" petition located at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/traveltax/>. What a great start! In fact as I write this, 354,818 people have taken part in the petition and it's rising sharply. This specific petition ends on the 20 February 2007, so by the time you receive this edition of **Call Sign**, you'll still have time to participate.

Anyone can create a petition and the available subjects include Business & Industry, Economics & Finance, Education & Skills, Employment Jobs and Careers, Transport & Infrastructure etc. Basically, any topic and of course as is usual with the Internet, some really stupid petitions have been created.

This is definitely what the Internet is about and I hope it's a success. Will the PM actually pay any attention to public opinion from the petitions? Of course he

will - just like he did regards the Iraq war...

Be lucky and see you next month...

Vince Chin
Call Sign on-line

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or mobile 07961375418

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

This month: St Clement Dane, Strand



The church at the end of the 19th century

KIBBLE'S



CAMERA



And St Clement Dane as it is now...

What's On At The Science Museum in February

Some of the exhibitions at London's Science Museum this month...

**From 21 February
– 6 May 2007**

**Maurice Broomfield's 'New Look' at Industry:
Photographs from Post-War Britain**

Photographer Maurice Broomfield gave British industry a 'New Look' in the 1950s and 60s to provide an optimistic portrait of the post-war reconstruction period. Broomfield visited British factories to create his carefully crafted, beautifully lit images of industries such as nylon, insulation and shipbuilding. This exhibition charts how his black and white images were influenced by early cinema, then looks at his experimentations with colour.

Broomfield, now 91, always showed the worker in the best possible light, working with skill and integrity in the bold new age of high technology.

Admission is free.

**From 10 February
- 2 September 2007**

The Science of Spying

The world's biggest interactive exhibition examining the secrets of modern espionage, the Science of Spying will run for seven months. Curious young minds and intrigued adults alike will test their ability to crack codes, gather information and use the technologies of real life spies as they embark on an undercover mission to penetrate enemy HQ.

Visitors will get the opportunity to arrive as a civilian and leave as a spy, with training using a series of interactive challenges from evading counter surveillance to becoming a master of disguise.

Admission charges apply.

**Until 25 February
2007**

Game On

The world's first computer game from 1962 takes its place alongside today's technologically advanced game systems, as a huge interactive exhibition exploring the history and culture of gaming continues at the Science Museum. **Game On**, sponsored by Nintendo, runs at the Science Museum until 25 February 2007.

It includes more than 120 classic and modern games, which visitors will be able to play, transporting them back to their gaming pasts



The first real computer game after ping-pong! see how the games have progressed at the Science Museum

as well as introducing younger gamers to the history of current gaming software and hardware.

Admission charges apply.

**From February 10
Feel the thunderous roar of
the real lion king in IMAX
3D!**

The gripping battle between an aging alpha male lion and his young rival in the African desert will hit the Science Museum IMAX 3D Cinema from 10 February. Cinemagoers will be transported to the centre of this struggle through a stunningly shot new documentary film *Lions 3D: Roar of the Kalahari*.

This award-winning film from National Geographic and acclaimed wildlife filmmaker

Tim Liversedge, has been transformed into IMAX 3D format through state-of-the-art digital remastering, bringing viewers closer than ever before to Africa's ultimate predator.

Filmed entirely in the wild, *Lions 3D* captures the most remarkable lion behaviour ever seen on the giant screen, as well as fascinating scenes of their interaction with other inhabitants of the African desert.

Admission charges apply.

TX4 breaks LTI Sales Record

In its first full month of sales figures since releasing the new TX4 taxi, London Taxis International have announced record sales figures.

That first month saw 362 new TX4 taxis leaving the showrooms as against the equivalent from last year when 215 TXII taxis were sold by LTI dealers.

That represents an astonishing increase of 68% and a huge success for LTI

SOUTH LONDON TAXIS 10% DISCOUNT FOR DAC DRIVERS!

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

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

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

MANY DAC DRIVERS AT MICK DALY'S FUNERAL



With the passing of **Mick Daly (B45)**, Dial-a-Cab has lost another of its 'characters'. All who knew him will sadly miss him.

During the Requiem Mass at Brentwood Cathedral, the Minister told the many mourners -including family and friends and also DaC drivers, Board members and Chairman Brian Rice - how he had been honoured to know Mick.

Much of that "knowledge" had come through Mick's regular church visits and how he had quickly learned early in their relationship to steer well clear of two topics of conversation - politics and private hire!

Readings were made by Mick's daughters Julia and Joanna - who both gave emotional addresses - and also by his close friend, David Kupler (Y74).



A wreath in the shape of Mick's badge



Part of the DaC convoy

After the Mass, so many from DaC then attended Upminster Crematorium that the Minister was prompted to comment to wry smiles "...that it must be difficult to get a cab in London today!"

Mick is now re-united with his beloved wife Jackie, who passed away in November 2004 and is probably giv-

ing the Almighty some honest advice on a wide range of subjects.

His immediate family, Julia, Joanna, Andrew and Simon would like to thank all those who attended on the day and also those by whose cards and messages they gained support in love and prayer.

Rest in peace Mick...

Mango Tree Now Open Every Day!

Dial-a-Cab drivers will know of the popularity of **Mango Tree** restaurant in Grosvenor Place at the junction with Hobart Place by the number of people coming and going in taxis. Now, due to that huge popularity, Mango Tree will be open for lunch on Saturday afternoons as well.

The restaurant opened in September 2001 and has become a favourite with customers seeking real Thai specialities and also hugely successful in attracting both locals and visitors to the area - which of course is where we come in!

Typical dishes include succulent chicken skewers with satay peanut sauce, stir-fried sirloin beef fillet with ginger, garlic and spicy sauce and lychee and lime flavoured cheesecake with lychee and pink ginger jelly.

Head Sommelier, Li Ya Nan, has created an excellent and broad international wine list that fully compliments the diversity of dishes on the menu. An extensive list of speciality cocktails are also available.

The 150-seat restaurant provides a unique venue for functions such as weddings, launches, conferences and has staff with vast experience in hosting larger events at hand. Mango Tree can make organising an event as stress free as possible.

Their opening hours are Sunday 12.00-22.30, Monday to Wednesday 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-23.00, Thursday to Saturday 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-23.30. **Mango Tree is at 46 Grosvenor Place. Phone 0207 283 1888**



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What DaC drivers have to say...

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The recent PCO/SGS proposals for taxis to undergo two inspections a year, the usual annual overhaul plus another mid-term examination - which according to the PCO would help to keep standards high - has according to the trade papers been met with a big 'no' from fleet operators and most drivers.

So in order to gauge the feeling of our drivers, Call Sign went out on the streets of the capital to see if there was any sympathy for the PCO suggestions...

TWO CAB INSPECTIONS A YEAR?

Call Sign asks DaC drivers for their view...



Francis Robinson (G18)

I have not read enough about it to comment fully, but I would *not* be in favour. I think one inspection should suffice up to 5 years old, after which perhaps things tend to go wrong...



Mick Osborne (Y78)

I'm against it, but as usual the authorities will do as they like! With test centres all over the show, it will be a half-day job to pass the cab for whoever takes the cab up. It's just more lost time and money...



Steve Stern (G34)

It's all a lot of testicles! It costs £26,000 a year to run the cab - tell that to the PCO. It's just another way of making money out of the drivers...



Bill Kibble (K86)

Whatever way you say it, it's just wrong! It will be a mid-year overhaul. The extensive yearly overhaul should be just that - an overhaul to last the year. Perhaps the authorities should scrap the overhaul and mid-term proposed test and just give us two MOTs a year instead? We'd be happy with that...



Simon Wallis (M11)

The yearly overhaul is a joke as it is. £1200! The waiting times are bad, especially if you are unlucky enough to get a reject. And now they want to give us more of the same? Oh dear...!



John McNamara (P17)

I'm very much against a mid-term check. It's another way of generating money for the authorities from us. I think an excellent annual overhaul, together with the current random stop-checks, are enough...



Glen Broadbent (K42)

I will remain against it until such time as I see it working. I'm against any further changes because I believe it is better the Devil you know...



Garry Townsend (O82)

I'm against two inspections a year. I presume it will cost more money, which I am also against. It isn't as though you don't know if there's a problem with your cab through driving it day in and out. If there is, then you just go and get it sorted right away.



George Christou (E14)

I'm happy with that proposal, provided the authorities publicise our safety record so that the travelling public know we are best and that our cabs are the safest vehicles to travel in...

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

CALL SIGN LEGAL MATTERS

Medical Negligence

Taxi drivers are rarely ill - they can't afford to be. Accidents and illnesses do sometimes strike, though, so what can you do when the medical profession itself damages you after you turn to them to get you back on the road?

Lawyers now use the term "clinical negligence" and it is worth keeping in mind that any professional involved in your health care has a duty to you; physiotherapists, ambulance workers, dentists, pharmacists and nurses for example, as well as doctors. What does the duty consist of? First, they must keep your affairs confidential, except in rare instances involving very dangerous criminal activities. They must warn you of the risks of treatments or surgery they recommend and they must exercise reasonable care and skill in diagnosis, prescribing and treatment, depending on their role.

A GP, for example, is not negligent if you go to him with a splitting headache and he does not diagnose a brain haemorrhage. Or if he fails to check for cancer if you're 30 and arrive with the mother of all tummy-aches. GPs do not have to spot all the conditions that consultants might, just those that GPs are expected and trained to diagnose. They are wise to refer you to a specialist if they see cause for concern, of course, or arrange for immediate hospital admission if you might be in danger.

But the legal standard for every health worker is not that they give the best possible care, merely the standard level of care of a reasonably competent professional at their level.

Outside opinions

Your lawyer will get your records, take your statement and then ask an expert outside your health authority for an opinion on the

care you received. It will be a nursing expert if a nurse is in the frame, an obstetrician if the poor judgment of your own obstetrician caused cerebral palsy at your baby's delivery, or a GP expert if the GP is to blame for your troubles.

You won't necessarily succeed if your doctor simply messed up, or the outcome of your operation was more pain than you had before - the doctor's mistake must be one no competent doctor should make at his level and almost every operation has some risk of failure. As long as you gave informed consent, you agreed to take that risk.

Once you have proved negligence, the next hurdle is to show you've actually suffered harm from the medical mistake. My client with an undiagnosed brain haemorrhage told me she "could have died," and that was true. But she didn't die; she was eventually diagnosed and operated on successfully, so her claim consisted only of a few days unnecessary, appalling headaches - hardly enough damage to start a court case, really.

Wrongful life

An interesting line of cases concerned babies born after incompetent sterilisations. The courts refused claims for hundreds of thousands of pounds for the mother's lost income and other costs of raising the unexpected child to maturity. No damages for a healthy baby, the judges said, as a matter of public policy.

Legal aid is still available for clinical negligence, subject to a means test, but only a few firms offer it. Ring the Law Society or look in the Community Legal Services Directory in the library to find one. Help and advice are

also available from *Action against Medical Accidents* (tel. 0845-1232352; www.avma.org.uk).

Before you go down the legal road, however, consider what you want. Suing a doctor may get you an apology or an explanation for what happened, if that's important, but it can be a long and stressful experience. In every case, you should consider the NHS complaints procedure, which can achieve the same result, before trying to sue.



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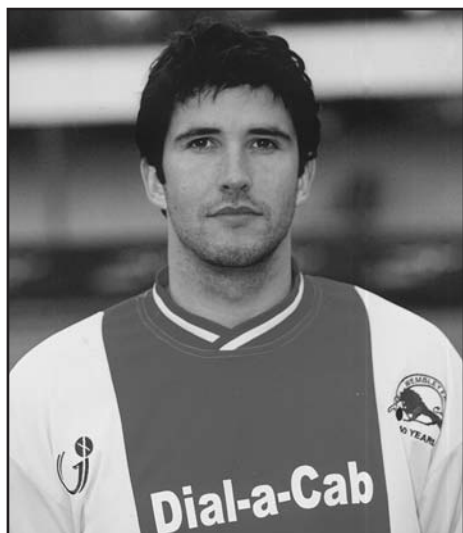
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Jamie Walter's goal completed the 3-0 rout of league leaders Chipstead

There was no doubt about it. It seemed that no one was going to peg back the high-flying leaders of the *Combined Counties Premier League*, **Chipstead**. They had lost just one match all season, that was with a depleted squad and even then by a late fluke goal.

Their game with second in the table, **DaC-Wembley** was undoubtedly going to be the game of the season so far, with the Lions biggest crowd of the season – especially as it was being played just two days before Christmas. If Wembley were to lose this one, the gap at the top would have been just too far for any chance of Wembley catching them.

Dial-a-Cab driver and DaC-Wembley goalkeeper, **Lee Pierce (J71)** told *Call Sign*:

"We were really up for this match and were determined that they were not going to have the luxury of an easy game at our expense!"

Chipstead threw everything forward, but couldn't breach the DaC-Wembley defence and on the few occasions they did, Lee Pierce was in too good form to let them score. Meanwhile, at the other end, the Wembley Lions were pushing the ball around in a way that suggested they should be moving up to the Ryman League. They looked a class above any other team in the Combined Counties.

Their consistent pressure paid off with latest signing, Dean Sylvester bagging two and Jamie Walker cracking in the third.

DaC-Wembley captain, Ian Bates, told *Call Sign* after the Lions 3 – 0 victory:

"If we couldn't raise our game for this match, then we might as well have thrown our kit away and retired! But we were magnificent and all we need now is some consistency."

Unfortunately, the January weather has played havoc with their fixtures and 3 of DaC-Wembley's matches were either abandoned or postponed.

They are due to play Cove this week for a place in the League Cup semi-finals. So it has to be – Come on you Lions...!

DaC-Wembley Thrash The League Leaders!

Combined Counties Premier Division (top 10 of 22)
Week ending 13 January 2007

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Chipstead	23	20	0	3	69	23	46	60
Merstham	22	15	2	5	48	18	30	47
DaC-Wembley	22	15	2	5	53	25	28	47
Chertsey Town	25	14	5	6	52	36	16	47
Banstead Athletic	23	13	3	7	48	36	12	42
Ash Utd	20	11	6	3	36	16	22	39
Egham Town	23	11	4	8	51	31	20	37
Cobham	24	11	3	10	34	33	1	36
North Greenford Utd	22	9	7	6	40	37	3	34
Camberley Town	22	9	4	9	32	36	-4	31

M&O NOW HAVE FOUR DAC TAXIS WITH NEW 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 available the radio equipment, we are delighted to provide this facility for our Dial-a-Cab customers. It allows drivers to continue servicing account clients while their own cab is here. I would remind everyone though, that these courtesy cabs are subject to availability and not guaranteed." You can contact the M&O Service Dept. on 020 7700 0888...



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My story is dedicated to Sam...

*When I met you, it didn't take me long to lose my heart,
I knew you were special right from the start.*

*As the days and weeks quickly passed by,
I got to know you better and then I knew why.*

You were the most loving person that I'd ever met,

And having loved you, is something I'll never regret!

Introduction

Hello, my name is Jenny and this is a love story about two people who met and fell in love on the Internet. Both parties are members of the same Internet provider, which has a system where one member can send instant messages to another member who may be online at the same time. You can then chat with those people online on a one-to-one basis. You are also able to fill in a profile about yourself with your name, location, age, sex, marital status, occupation, interests etc. It was through that system that Sam and I met...

I once wrote to a magazine which had asked readers to write about their 'soul mate' if they had one. I had just met this wonderful guy online, so I decided to write and tell them about our love story. This is what I wrote at the time... I called it: 'I Certainly Do' and it was the beginning of our love story...



July 1998... 'I Certainly Do'

I have always heard about the term *soul mate*, but just never thought it could happen to me. But it did... My soul mate's name is Sam. The funny thing about all this is that everything is against us. **I was born in Cuba, but have lived in California, USA for many years now. He is Irish but lives in London, driving a taxi with Dial-a-Cab.** He is almost 15 years younger than me, but there are many couples with this age difference who are very happy together. If it can work out for them, maybe it can work out for us as well?

Both of our families think we are just crazy, they don't believe you can actually fall in love with someone without having ever seen them in person before, but they are so wrong. When you fall for someone this way, you fall in love with the person's character, you fall in love with their soul...

This was the *true* love story between a Dial-a-Cab driver and a Californian beauty who met and fell in love on the Internet – Sam living in London and Jenny in California. Call Sign has changed the names. Everything else is as it happened. It began in 1998...

L♥ve On the Internet...



Susie looking across the sea to Ireland and hoping Sam was doing the same. She asked a close friend to take the photo

inset pic: Susie wrote J&S in the Californian sand and photographed it to keep forever

my computer when I wake up in the morning and I really look forward to reading his emails.

We send parcels to each other with goodies inside of them, last week he sent some beautiful red roses to my house with a card that said: "To Jenny, just a token

One night while I was doing some work online, I received an Instant Message. It said... "Would you be interested in chatting with someone who shares similar interests to yours?" I figured this person had looked at my profile and although I was hesitant at first, I answered "sure" because I thought it was a sweet way to ask. That's how this whole story got started and now he is my very best friend in the whole world and I am his. We speak on the telephone every night for an hour and sometimes more.

I will never forget the first time I heard Sam's voice on the phone. I loved his sexy Irish accent. It just drove me wild! We leave messages for each other via email every night, so we'll find a loving note when we first wake up in the morning. If either of us is running late for some reason, we at least say good morning and I.L.Y. (I love you) to each other. I run to

of my love and friendship, your boy from Ireland."

Sam is so sweet. He's so adorable and I'm so lucky to have found him. He makes me feel so very happy! He sends me pictures, special gifts, post cards, perfume, music tapes and much more. I sent him muffins baked specially by me just for him, cookies, pictures, music tapes, special gifts, I even sent him some sand from the beach near my home, some dirt from my garden and a rose, also from my garden – unfortunately, the poor thing got there in a very dead condition!

We have sent each other stuffed animals, a bear and a doggie so that we can hug them when we go to bed at night and won't feel too lonely. I also sent him a golden key on a string, which I told him was the key to my heart!

Next month – Jenny and Sam plan to meet in New York...

DaC Customer Services/Special Projects



Spending our New Year celebration in Amsterdam, Maxine and I decided to visit the Anne Frank Museum. It was such a moving experience, I thought it might be interesting to write about the visit in this issue.

Although millions of people lost their lives in WW2 through persecution or on the battlefield and many performed meritorious deeds, no other story has captured imagination and been a source of so much inspiration to people all over the world as that of Anne Frank.

The story of the Frank family began in Germany in the 1920's when Otto and Edith Frank led a happy life, highlighted by the births of their daughters Margot and Anne. Anne and Margot frequently spent their summer in Aachen, Germany, with their grandmother. In 1933, in response to Hitler's anti-Jewish decrees, Otto Frank opened a branch of his company, Opteka, in Amsterdam and began planning to take his family there. They moved into a house on Medwedplein in southern Amsterdam in 1933 and Anne attended the nearby Montessori school, where she excelled. She made many friends and was an exceptional student.

But the family's feelings of security collapsed when in 1940, Adolph Hitler and his troops conquered Holland and the freedom of the Jews began to be severely restricted. Dictates on where Jews could shop, go to school, or even swim became a part of everyday life. Aware of where those restrictions might ultimately lead, Otto Frank spent the year preparing and sticking an annex behind his business office to turn it into a hiding place.

On her 13th birthday in 1942, Anne received as a gift, a diary from her parents. She took to writing her intimate thoughts and musings. A few weeks later, Margot received a notice from the Nazi SS to report for work detail at a labour camp. On July 5th, 1942, Anne and the Frank family moved to their secret annex. Anne's diary went with her. She called it *Kitty* and for the two years she spent in hiding, the diary was her solace, her confidant and her friend. What she recorded there were the ordinary thoughts and feelings of a teenage girl, but one living under extraordinary circumstances and in ominous times.

Eight people eventually came to live in the secret annex. There were the four members of the Frank family, three from the Van Pels fami-

Instead of his usual column, Mike asked if he could write of his moving visit to the Anne Frank Museum in Amsterdam...



Anne Frank

ly - Herman and Auguste and their son Peter - together with an elderly dentist named Pfeffer.

Anne's famous diary captured two years of hiding in the attic above the store, but ended on August 4, 1944, when their hiding place was betrayed by a Dutch cleaning woman - Lena Hartog-van Bladeren. All those who lived there were arrested by the Nazis and deported to concentration camps.

As the Gestapo searched the annex for valuables, the briefcase in which Anne kept her writings was opened and the papers scattered on the floor. Little did these men realise the eventual value of these materials. However, two women who had known of Anne's intense feelings about these papers, saw them later and gathered them up for safekeeping.

A few weeks later, as the Allies began retaking Holland, the inhabitants of the camp were moved to Auschwitz and later to other camps. At the gates of Auschwitz, Otto Frank was sep-

arated from his family for the final time.

Otto was the only one of the original 8 residents of the secret annex to survive. Van Pels died in the Auschwitz gas chambers and Pfeffer died at the Neuengamme camp in Germany.

Anne and Margot ultimately ended up in the Bergen-Belsen camp in Germany, after being evacuated from Auschwitz in October, 1944. As starvation, cold and disease swept through the camp population, April 1945 saw Margot develop typhus and die. A few days later, Anne herself succumbed to the disease, just a few weeks before the camp was liberated by the British. She was 15 years old...

Though she never lived to see her 16th birthday, Anne Frank's innermost thoughts scribbled on scraps of paper challenge and shame us, a full fifty years after her death. Her life serves as eulogy to the millions of children who perished in World War II.

Will reading the many moving pages of Anne Frank's Diary change the world - no! Wars and atrocities are still there. When reading newspapers and listening to the news in our own country, how easily we disregard life, especially the number of murders that take place.

You may ask what the above has to do with DaC?

Only to say after reading spurious letters about our Society by some drivers who purport to have the best interest of the membership at heart, it struck me that whether the conflicts are internal politics or worldwide, no matter what the reasons are, there is always suffering whether by a whole population or an individual.

**Mike Son
DaC Customer Services /Special Projects**

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From £395 per week



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Contact Andy (P32) on 07904 091278 or 07932 960350

Easy money...

Short of cash this time of the year? Credit cards all maxed out? Tax bill overdue? I think that I may have found the answer to all our problems. Sue someone over something so trivial that you can't lose – and no, it doesn't matter how silly it may sound. In fact the sillier it is – the more you seem to get!

Last year, an office worker sued his employer and won nearly £100,000 because at just over six foot four inches tall, his desk was too small for him to work at! He was taken to hospital with chest pains caused by apparently being hunched over his computer.

Another unbelievable case was that of the pregnant woman about to give birth by caesarean and who wanted (needed?) a cigarette as she was a heavy smoker. The operation was delayed while she did indeed have her smoke. The anaesthetist claimed that her coughing made it difficult to give her the epidural that was needed for the procedure, but went ahead anyway. He also told her that as she had seen her baby daughter born, if she were to stop smoking she might even get to see the wedding! The new mother sued for hurt feelings and stress and won almost £45,000.

For my own part, whilst I was on the operating table having the angiogram following my heart attack last year, the surgeon asked me if I was a smoker? I replied that I'd smoked my last cigarette at about 3.30am that morning, that I had finally seen the light and after enough warnings, was now a non-smoker.

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



The Views of a Grumpy Old Man

I have not stopped, nor given up, I just do not smoke. These are the words one must use.

He then informed me that if I should begin smoking again, I would not be on the table, but probably six feet under the ground. The stress this has caused almost led me to having another heart attack! How much are these words worth and can I sue him for that amount?

Help wanted...

How many times have we seen posters and boards with requests from the police for information regarding a crime or an accident? What a pity it is not – at least in Derbyshire – more of a two way street.

The county's top cop had refused to allow pictures of escaped prisoners from jail to be published. He said that it might have been a breach of their human rights as well as against the data protection laws. These people were put into the prison system for crimes committed, not for fun. How could we have been of help or on the lookout for these people, if we didn't even know what they looked like?

If we can't keep our homegrown variety of criminal in check, is it any wonder we can't look after the imported ones! Fortunately for the sake of sanity, after so much controversy, the officer concerned has backed down and the pictures have now been published.

Educashon...

So the government now want to raise the school leaving age from 16 to 18. Is this so that the jobless figures will still be down and will we soon have even more educated muggers on our streets...?

I'm back on the road this month and I look forward to seeing you all...

Chas Kissin (P99J)

The greatest football team in the world... ever!

The greatest football team in the world? This was really easy to pick. So few players elevate themselves to the level of my team, that the elimination process is almost automatic. The criteria? Great technical ability, appetite for battle, sustained excellence over a number of years and an ability to inspire others either by leadership or example.

Apart from Pelé, none of my team are perfect. Managing this galaxy of stars and inflated egos would be impossible, so I thought I might as well appoint myself! No one got close to wearing the green jersey with the next in line being Shilton, Zoff and Jennings – I gave big Pat a mention just to keep the Editor happy! Bergkamp is another Dutchman unlucky to miss out (not because he doesn't like flying!) and Eusebio and Cantona wouldn't have looked out of place. Gullit is also missing from my team. Here's my team (4-4-2)...

Banks (Eng) ...Baresi (Ita) ...Beckenbauer (W. Ger) ...Moore (Eng) ... Maldini (Ita) ...Zidane (Fra) ...Pelé (Bra) ...Maradona (Arg) ... Best (N.Ire) ...Cruyff (Hol) ...Puskas (Hun). Manager Russell Hall (Eng).

Subs: Yashin (USSR) ...Passarella (Arg) ...Platini (Fra) ...Di Stefano (Arg / Spain).

So there it is, *the greatest football team in the world*, unless, of course you disagree? Have you got a team to rival mine? Would you make a few changes to my line up? And

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

Russell's Hall of Footie



just to prove that great minds don't always think alike, here is **Mark Sherlock's (W41) greatest team (4-4-2):**

Yashin (USSR) ... Bergomi (Ita) ... Passarella (Arg) ... Moore (Eng) ...Maldini (Ita) ... Zidane (Fra)

...Maradona (Arg) ...Cruyff (Hol) ...Ardilles (Arg) ...Ronaldo (Bra) ...Pelé (Bra). Manager Mark Sherlock (Eng).

Mark also gave honourable mentions to Eusebio, Jairzinho, Romario, Luis Figo, Ronaldo, Platini, Baggio, Zola, Van Basten and Best. He also felt that the closest modern player to get into his team would be Petr Cech taking over from Yashin, but feels he's still too young.

As you know, I love to write about football and listen to the many stories that you tell me. I have managed to get some of these stories displayed on the BBC web site. You access these on www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2006/07/28/rawfootball_rushall3_feature.shtml. Enjoy!

Russell Hall (G44)

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

Call Sign readers will remember last month's story about the planned television re-union in Australia between **Clare Jones** - wife of Dial-a-Cab driver **Alan (O31)** - and Oz national **Don Moye**, who had rescued her from an horrendous coach crash on the Sydney highway back in 1989 as part of his job as a volunteer with the *Australian State Emergency Service*.

Clare had been travelling on an overnight coach along the Australian highway north of Sydney, when the driver of an oncoming coach fell asleep at the wheel. It crossed the highway and smashed head-on into the coach Clare was travelling in.

The result left 35 passengers dead and a further 41 injured. Many, like Clare, were dangerously ill. Among her injuries were ribs that had penetrated her spine causing the doctors to tell her that she was unlikely ever to walk again. Happily, she proved the medics wrong.

We left the story with Clare and Alan ready to fly out for their TV reunion with Don Moye -

who was unaware that Clare would be on the program. Clare and Don had kept in touch via the phone, but had not met since that fateful day in 1989.

The planned TV meeting was part of a series on *Australia's Network 7* called *Where are They Now?* Alan described the program - hosted by Melissa Doyle and David Koch - as a kind of *Cilla Black's Surprise Surprise*. It was the story of Don Moye's life with the SES and what happened when he was on duty the night of Clare's accident and how he pulled her away from the twisted metal and visited her in hospital during her long months of recuperation and her battle to try to walk again. Clare was to be the surprise guest on the show.

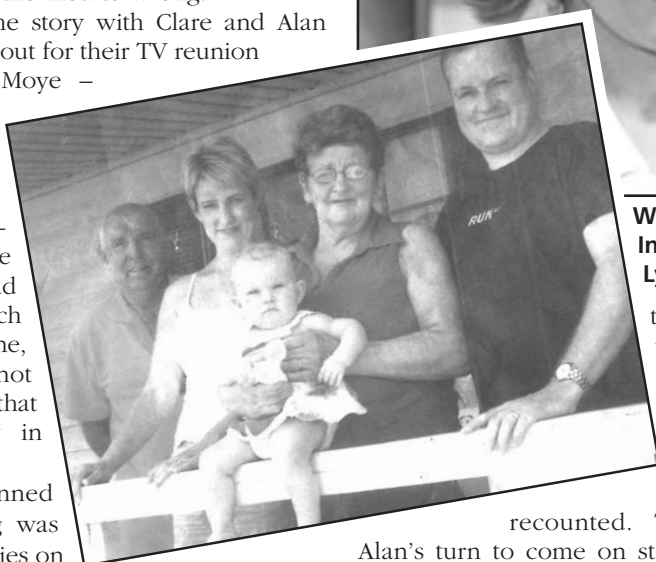
Amidst the secrecy - worthy of a John LeCarré novel - Clare and husband of three years, Alan, had flown to Australia prior to the TV meeting as part of their holiday arrangements. On the day of the programme, Clare and Alan were ushered into the Network 7 boardroom for refreshments before the broadcast. TV executives ran through the programme format with them as a sort of rehearsal of what to expect before going on stage to meet Clare's saviour, Don Moye. Then the real thing and during an emotional re-union after so many years apart,

From Adversity Springs Hope Eternal

Part 2 - The television reunion...



Where are they now hosts: Melissa Doyle and David Koch
Inset pic: From L-R: Don Moye, Clare Jones, Darcy Jones, Lynn Moye and Alan Jones



the odd tear '89.

was mopped dry as the events of that night back in 1989 were

recounted. Then it was Alan's turn to come on stage and hand their 6-month old daughter, Darcy, over to Don Moye to hold - something that would have appeared impossible back in

After the show, the Jones family stayed with Don - a trucker by profession - and his wife Lynn before continuing their holiday of sightseeing around Sydney. They also revisited the crash site.

The show is due to be aired on Network 7 TV during this month (February)...

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DaC's Ronnie: Dedicated Follower of Fashion!



Ronnie Marlow with his old cab.
His new one matched his tie of
the day (see cover photo)!

Dial-a-Cab driver and Marshal, **Ronnie Marlow (L81)**, is usually smartly dressed for work. However, he has now exceeded even Allen Togwell's expectations by taking his sartorial elegance to a whole new level when buying his new TX4 in Thistle Blue - to match his shirt and tie (see cover photo)! So - and with apologies to The Kinks - we think Ronnie has laid claim to the title "dedicated follower of fashion!"

"The salesman at KPM asked me what colour I would like the cab and it seemed a good idea to match it to my clothing," he explained to an incredulous **Call Sign** reporter when he spotted Ronnie and his new TX4 at DaC's Roman Way fitting depot!

"It gets a bit cold in the winter for a torn string vest, so I thought I would out-do Toggers by matching my cab colour to my shirt and tie," he said with a mischievous grin beginning to show through, "I think it's called 'one-upmanship!'"

We at **Call Sign** could not possibly comment, however, we have been a bit worried about you Ron, ever since you bought that holiday home in Peckham because the front door mat matched your shoes!

© Call Sign Magazine MM7

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?

The gadget of the month has got to be the new *iPhone* announced by Apple, which seems to be on everyone's lips at the moment. Certainly every Dial-a-Cab driver I have spoken to have given their views on it and every one of my friends and colleagues are either raving about it or have at least heard the hype. Given the amount of interest in this new gadget, I had to look further into it and I must say that I want one!

Admittedly, I have not yet been able to try out or even hold one (I'm doing my best to get a look-see at one), but after watching a video of Apple's official launch, I'm impressed. I do not usually become impressed too easily by these all-singing all-dancing mobile phones, but this is the one time I make an exception!

This is the next generation of mobile-media device - a lightweight, ultra-thin mobile phone that has no physical buttons, but rather a touch screen that does not need a stylus. Instead, you can use your fingers to navigate the rich menus and applications and I've heard it is highly responsive, even being able to differentiate between intentional and unintentional taps on the screen!

Imagine having an iPod, a widescreen movie player, full wireless Internet access, a full QWERTY keyboard and a mobile phone all in the palm of your hand! That's the *iPhone* and I anticipate that although the initial disk capacity is set to be 8GB, you can bet the upgrade that will no doubt come along 3 months after the release of the *iPhone* will have a much higher capacity for storage.

For commuters like me, or DaC taxi drivers like yourselves waiting on ranks on those

dead nights, this will be fantastic. Just think of all the movies and music you can store on your new *iPhone* and - for the first time on a mobile phone - watch your movies in widescreen. You can even work on documents on the go, in much the same way

as on a PDA - but without having to have a phone and a PDA to carry around and without any of the annoying tap-tap stylus nonsense. Just turn your *iPhone* around into widescreen mode and use the full virtual keyboard!

Apparently they are due for release in the States in early Spring and will retail for around \$350, so we probably won't see them till the autumn, but I think it'll be worth the wait. Take a look at the official site: <http://www.apple.com/iphone> - and as soon as I convince Apple or someone linked to them to let me have a play with one, I'll write a review!

Jonathen Winterburn
DaC Network Administrator



**The amazing iPhone
from Apple**

Dial-a Cab Credit Union

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

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

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

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

The cost?

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

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

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

All savings and loans carry free life insurance.

AND you usually get an annual dividend on your savings.

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

Firstly, let me say thank you to all members for the service given in the lead up to and during the festive period. Your support was very well received from many clients and call centre staff. Whichever 3 drivers are lucky enough to win a car, it will not be without having put in much hard work!

Just what is Concierge?

There is a lot of incorrect information going around at the moment regarding the workings of the Concierge system that really does need to be either squashed or clarified.

There are only five of our top account clients who order their vehicles through the Concierge platform - which first of all means that all other account customers receive our normal service. The Concierge platform is programmed to send a trip to a licensed taxi radio circuit or licensed car company. What is very important for everyone to understand is that Dial-a-Cab do not select or have any contractual agreements with any licensed taxi or car vendors who participate in accepting work through the Concierge Platform. It is the account client who decides whom they wish to use as a supplier and all we demand is for their dispatching system to be flexible enough for us to be able to send them trips directly from our system.

With one call centre taking all the bookings, it allows the client to receive maximum security of their account and ensure every booking request - whether it be for a taxi or car - has the correct reference information attached to it. Having all this information together with pickup addresses and destinations permits them to have excellent management information for their total transport requirements.

An area that concerns most of our drivers is what happens to a trip once it has been sent to a taxi circuit and a car vendor?

While Concierge is designed to dispatch work in the same way whether it be a taxi or car, when either ComCab or ourselves are offered a trip, we both accept it automatically and dispatch it to our fleets. The car vendor has the trip sent to a controller's screen who views the trip and makes the decision whether they can cover the trip or not. If not, that controller can reject it and Concierge will then offer it to the next car company in rotation. Should all car vendors refuse a trip, it is then highlighted to the Dial-a-Cab team to contact the client, advise of the situation and offer them an alternative vehicle - which would be a taxi.

It does not work the same for us. If Dial-a-Cab cannot cover a Concierge account trip, it is scrubbed and not offered to a car company or anyone else. I hasten to add that if any of our account clients who are not using the Concierge facility have their trips scrubbed, there is no facility within our call centre for those trips to be offered to any other company whether it is taxi or car. Therefore, the rumours about the Call Centre giving away our work to car companies are not true.

EC5 and signals...

We still have a couple of outstanding issues at present and the reason for mentioning them is to let you all know that they have not been forgotten. The first is the EC5 rank. I've said this before but what seemed like a relatively simple operation to put in has caused a lot of

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

Call Centre Chat



problems to get right. The programming changes of EC5 have proved just how complex our dispatch system really is and will take a little longer to implement.

Resolving the signal problems fully is still ongoing. However, I must add that while some of you think nothing has been done, I assure you we have made great strides with the signals to the extent that the volumes of work between September and December would never have been processed without the modifications.

We have needed to temporarily slow down on the work of improving these two problems because of the move to our new premises. Plans for moving our phone lines and communications controllers, as you can guess, must be top priority at the present time. As soon as we have settled into the new building, then all outstanding problems will be placed as top priority and dealt with immediately. I am aware of the frustration caused to drivers and I ask you to please bear with us during this period of the move.

Staff training

I have reported that the move to our new premises will give us the capacity of doubling the size of our call centre should we need it in the future and I am currently working with our senior staff to implement new operating procedures. The required changes are being developed now to ensure we offer improved customer service to both client and you, the

driver. Training is very much a major player within our Society. The recent appointment of our new assistant trainer, Christine Conn, has already enabled us to implement a new style of recruitment that will see prospective CSR candidates having to undertake a three-stage interview process.

First there will be a telephone interview, the second stage will be to attend a half-day assessment session with the final part being an interview with our HR manager and myself. This type of selection is widely used in many organisations with call centres and I am confident that we will be able to select the right calibre of individual. Initially, the recruitment currently being carried out is to bring our complement back to the levels we had before Christmas. Unfortunately, Supervisors have been forced to issue disciplinary action against four individuals because of the seriousness of their conduct while in the work place. Having complied with employment law procedures, each has had their employment terminated.

Euston Station "shouts"

Having recently had a meeting with the account client, it appears we need to sharpen our act slightly with regard to the destinations and mileages and this is a reminder to all drivers who accept a Euston Station trip from the ES1 rank.

When dropping off your passenger, you must contact a controller to supply them with all your destinations and the total mileage travelled. Controllers have been instructed to update the trip and then verify with you the cost of the journey. The importance of doing this, even if you are out of range, is to ensure the invoice details match the passenger trip authorisation docket issued by the station. The vast majority of drivers who work the account follow this procedure but we have to ensure that all drivers do it for every "shout." Your cooperation will assist us in getting it correct, saving administrative work and drivers being called the following day by staff - and as is often the case - having to wake them up.

Keith Cain
Driver Operations / Call Centre Manager

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Vic is a former Dial-a-cab driver

LTFUC END OF YEAR REPORTS

With their financial year ending on 31 October 2006, the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children have published their annual reports. Their Chairman is DaC's David Lessman (D19) and the Treasurer is Gerry Dunn MBE (S84).

Both reports are lengthy and can be read in full on their website at www.ltfuc.org.uk, but *Call Sign* has taken some of the relevant sections to reprint.

David Lessman reported that the Fund had maintained its position as London's leading taxi trade charity with the largest amount for several years being spent on improving the lives of many hundreds of disadvantaged children. He thanked the diligence of **Gerry Dunn (S84)** for ensuring that just 2.7% of the total generated income was spent on administration. None of the committee, all working London taxi drivers, claimed any remuneration for their time, nor did the taxi drivers who assisted on outings, for which the Fund has become so well known.

Over **£30,000** was given to a variety of causes, including nearly £2,000 to the dependants of London taxi drivers unable to provide for their families at Christmas. All the successful appeals were reported on in *Call Sign*.

They included a brand new boat at a cost in excess of £11,500 to the AHOY centre in Greenwich, whilst another came from The South London Parents Group, whose charity *Communication Options* revolves around children with diagnoses of autism, epilepsy and sensory problems affecting mobility, motor co-ordination or vision. They had located a specialist in Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation and the LTFUC were delighted to grant £4,000 towards medical attention.

Another major project undertaken was assistance for the Galaxy ward of the new UCH Hospital. In an unrelated attendance, DaC Board member **Michael Son** visited the new children's ward and asked Sister Annabel Simmonds if there was any way in which the Fund might be able to help. After many months of planning, a fully equipped sensory unit, including an Oxiflow monitor to regulate administered Oxygen, was created, enabling children with severe problems to be treated. **Bill Tyzack BEM (C06)**, joined by the Mayor of Camden, Councillor Jill Fraser, and Eastenders star Barbara Windsor, officially opened The Sunshine Room.

David congratulated Committee member **Sim Yiannikaris (E53)** who achieved an entry in the Cypriot *Who's Who* for his charitable efforts.

David also wrote of the success of the Mad Hatters Party at the Grosvenor House where over 600 disadvantaged children enjoyed a fabulous afternoon. Although the whole committee was involved on the day, David specifically thanked **Ray Levy** for arranging such excellent entertainment, Honorary Secretary **Malcolm Shaffron** for his organising skills, the Grosvenor House for their generosity and The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Tim Joiner for his support.

Also a resounding success was the annual trip to Southend. David asked *Call Sign* to publicise the fact that there was a shortage of drivers this year and volunteers are asked to remember next year. He said: "Please think about giving up just one day in the year."

David ended by saying: "I am genuinely grateful to the many sponsors and benefactors who have given so generously during the year as the LTFUC would be unable to function without this financial backing. I am also indebted to the many London taxi drivers who have helped by donating

rewards for handing in lost property, giving donations for diaries, carrying collecting boxes at Christmas and of course giving their time when taking part in the outings. I would not be a worthy Chairman if I failed to thank my hard-working fellow trustees, their partners and families, because without their untiring effort and commitment, I would have been unable to start the report as I did."



LTFUC Chairman and DaC driver David Lessman

In his report, Gerry

Dunn reported that not only was it the Fund's most successful fund-raising year, but they assisted more children than ever and also gave away a record amount to so many deserving causes. He gave the total costings of each event and these can be seen on their website at www.ltfuc.org.uk.

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

Call Sign has been involved in testing Power Pill since 2005 and we are proud to be associated with finding a product of this nature that actually works! We began by using a handful of drivers and followed that up by asking for a larger group of volunteers who were prepared to use Power Pill for nothing in return for keeping simple records on the pill's performance. Now many DaC drivers - and indeed non-DaC drivers too - use the pill regularly and enjoy smoother, smoke-free driving with many getting the added benefit of using less fuel!

DaC drivers who are regular Power Pill users, were asked to let **Call Sign** have their views. There were far too many quotes to use them all, but had they been unhappy and written it down, **Call Sign** would have published them, but everyone seems happy! So here they are, the DaC drivers Power Pill review...

"Better Emissions and Fuel Economy." (J.Bailey D47); "The Pill definitely works." (M.Barker G06); "I would definitely recommend Power Pill because of the smooth running and the lack of visible smoke emissions from the very smoky TXII." (J.Burt E59); "My cab definitely runs better since I've used Power Pill." (G.Chuer E66); "I am still waiting for the black smoke to reappear - I can't quite believe it's gone!" (T.Davidson J31); "Very, very responsive - impressed by smoothness of engine and pick up." (G.Davis L39); "I am very pleased with the performance since using Power Pill. I shall continue using it and buying it from JVBright." (R.Francis L92); "Cab feels sharper and now has far less emissions. On my last two smoke tests, the cab has struggled through, but since using Power Pill it fast-passed the test with a 1.45 reading." (M.Harvey E87); "Lower emissions and better mileage." (B.Irving N42); "The engine feels much more willing, with less noise and in all aspects performs much better. I would recommend Power Pill to anyone because of the results I have experienced for myself first hand. It is a good product that delivers what it says, which is quite unusual these days." (K.Jackman B29); "There is a noticeable effect on the running of the engine. During start up in the mornings there are noticeably less emissions." (A.Jones R45); "It does what it says. I have improved mileage and my cab runs like a new vehicle. Thank you." (D.Kupler Y74); "From my calculations and the way my cab has responded to Power Pill, why would I not recommend it?" (M.Lane N97); "The effect of Power Pill is a welcome change to other products which claim cleaner fuel, emissions and power but fail to deliver." (A.Lawyer



Power Pill: DaC Drivers Offer The Ultimate Proof



Bernie Silver: "Good improvement in power and acceleration."

C51); "Engine generally performs better and doesn't smoke at all since using Power Pill." (P.Linlay R34); "Definitely more power from start and a smoother ride." (M.Madden Y97); "My cab is six years old but is now running like a brand new cab without black smoke." (K.Martin D45); "Improved performance especially in the 20-50mph range with less effort at 70mph." (R.McGowan S78); "Fuel economy is better - I would say I am getting an extra 40-60 miles per tank." (G.Napier J51); "Highly recommended and will continue using Power Pill!" (S.Nathan K88); "My taxi is driving much better and I am getting more miles per litre." (S O'Meara N46); "Smoother engine running, a big drop in emissions and increased engine power - the cab will do 70mph with ease now." (J.Pieroni K63); "In my TXII I have noticed better fuel economy of between 2.5 to 4mpg. Black smoke has also reduced." (S.Raja S46); "I would definitely recommend Power Pill due to the general improvements in the operation of the cab, especially the visible emissions." (J.Sargood G92); "Good improvement in power and acceleration." (B.Silver G08); "Engine smoother, power is definitely up and the whole lot feels tighter - like a new engine." (D.Stratford P08); "It works! The overall running performance of this taxi has improved no end." (M.Walsh



Divyesh Ruparelia: "Does everything it claims!"

H02); "Engine runs much more smoothly with less rattles. There is more power and better fuel economy - I will continue to use Power Pill." (M.Wigmore C16); "Does everything it claims!" (Divyesh Ruparelia V59)...

And an offer especially for DaC drivers only!

If you buy 10 packs of Power Pills at a cost of £14.99 each, DaC drivers will get two free packs - that's twelve packs for just £149.90 including VAT.

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

All of the above are available from JVBright at Southbank Service Station on production of this article (if claiming the 2 free packs) or direct from Power Pill on 0845 1 30 80 77.

Power Pill have not paid Call Sign one single penny to publish this article. It has gone in because our drivers are recommending this amazing product...

"I know it's only six days since I took delivery of my new TX4, but first impressions and all that...!"

According to the registration document, it is only 2499cc but accelerates like a 3 litre Merc. Beware of the 30 mph speed cameras with this new cab!

Of course everything is relative, relative that is to the TX2 that I had for 3 years. So relatively speaking, not only is it far more responsive, faster and smoother over uneven surfaces, but it is also much quieter.

I'm told the gear box and engine were made to use together and that means a match made in heaven - so much so that the gear box will learn your driving style in a very short time and adapt itself to your fancies. Not quite so good for a double-team with opposite tendencies!

Of course I'm being positive here and will leave a couple of niggles to the end. There are numerous improvements to the design inside and out that are included in all 3 models - Bronze, Silver and Gold. The larger front indicators, larger radiator, 95amp battery instead of the previous 75amp, quieter clicking solenoid for the indicators, improved air con controls and ventilation controls, greatly improved intercom both ways and improved interior lighting.

I've only filled up twice, so my MPG at the moment is 20, a little early I know, so I will keep track of it and editor willing, I will do an update in around 6 weeks.

Niggles, yes, brakes were too low; hand brake was 9 notches - now remedied after a visit to the dealer. Every door needs slamming twice until it closes securely, yes that can be adjusted, but why not before delivery? Brakes just starting to squeak, something I was warned about by other drivers, but dealer says it will pass and must drive through it. Don't think I will be able to stand it! And why not have a 'one touch up' for the electric windows, as there is a 'one touch down'. How much can that cost? I'll give em half a crown...!

Ronnie Marlow (Lima 81)

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The TX4 seems to have had the most successful launch of any recent taxi with all the Dial-a-Cab drivers Call Sign has spoken to claiming to be delighted with the vehicle. No real problems have surfaced, so we asked DaC Marshal, Ronnie Marlow (L81), to give us his view of his TX4 as he approached the end of the first week with LTI Vehicles latest model. We have also asked Ronnie to keep to Call Sign readers updated every few issues as to whether he is still happy...

TX4: SIX DAYS ON...



Discounted Holidays for DaC Drivers!

As Bob says goodbye to Olympia 2007...

Following his successful stint at Olympia this week, **Call Sign's** South of France-based London cabbie, **Bob Woodford**, is offering to waive the booking fee to any Licensed Taxi Driver who books a holiday in 2007 with his lettings agency.

"It was nice meeting so many Call Sign readers," he told us, **"and I'm only too happy to make this offer for them."**

'**South of France Lets**' is the product of him being responsible for looking after keys to properties of all descriptions owned by the British and Irish on the Mediterranean coast.

Bob told Call Sign: **"The work involved in providing property care has now come full circle. I got together with a neighbour, Graham Peckham, who has IT skills and between us we have come up with a comprehensive website comprising of anything from Luxury Villas with pools/tennis courts to simple Bed & Breakfast properties. The sun-kissed region of Languedoc has 100 kilometers of coastline with endless sandy beaches, oceans of vineyards and**

some stunning mountain scenery just beyond the plain."

You can check out their website on: **www.southoffrancelets.com**. Ryanair fly direct to four airports in close proximity. If you fancy a break from the Kipper Season and looking for somewhere warm for a short interlude, phone or email Bob now...
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As Carol Martyn passes away at 88

...Whatever happened to Bonnie's Call Sign photo???

Four years after her beloved Bonnie passed away at the age of 93, his wife Carol Martyn joined him in December.

Call Sign got to know Carol quite well through the association we developed over the years with **ODRTS** Founder-Chairman, Bonnie Martyn. It mattered not at what time you saw either of them, they were always immaculately dressed and so dignified in everything they did. But the sad death of Carol – born Caroline – has brought a very strange and as yet unsolved mystery involving Bonnie to the pages of **Call Sign**...

The January issue of this magazine went to print 9 days earlier than usual due to our printers early-closing for the Christmas holidays, so printing began on the week beginning Monday 18 December. Sure enough, when the proofs arrived, there on page 29 was an early photo of Bonnie Martyn. This page was allocated to Fifty Green Years, a series based on the early years of **ODRTS** as written by one of our members of the time under the moniker Sunset Strip and who had recently handed in his badge. The article wrote of **ODRTS** in the fifties and the photo of a young Bonnie was there to help bring the article to life by showing what the Founder-Chairman looked like at the time.

Together with the other 39 pages, Fifty Green Years had the text proofed along with the usual process of making sure that the correct photo was attached and off went the January **Call Sign**. The next time anyone would see it would be when they opened the envelope containing the issue.

The following day, we heard the very sad news that Carol Martyn had passed away and those who knew Bonnie were saying that they would now be together forever.

Bonnie had always been energetic and even into his 90s, was teaching at the University of the Third Age! Carol, on the other hand, was more sedate and Bonnie would often tell her to sit down whilst he did something in the kitchen that Carol would always have done a few years earlier.

Both Bonnie and Carol loved each other very much and Bonnie was always there to make sure that Carol, in her frailer moments, was ok. Many wondered how Carol would cope after Bonnie's death in August 2002, but she was confident that Bonnie would always somehow be there at her side. Then came the



Bonnie with Carol at a DaC function

sad news of Carol's death, too late to go into **Call Sign** because of that one issue's early publication date. So most drivers received the magazine on Saturday 23rd December with no mention of Carol's sad passing.

"It was ironical," Alan Fisher told us, **"that a photo of Bonnie should be in the issue when we couldn't pass on the sad news about his beloved wife. Then my phone rang and rang and rang again. I am usually proud that so few mistakes are discovered in Call Sign. The reason for that isn't through luck, but because it is proofed twice."**

The phone calls Alan received followed drivers seeing the issue and all related to the same thing. On page 29, in the article on Fifty Green Years, the photo with the heading of a young Bonnie Martyn showed a big blank space with, in the top left corner, a taxi and a pair of legs that were obviously not those of our Founder-Chairman. Where had the photo gone?

Carol had died on the day page 29 was being printed. Original proofs show the photo of Bonnie in place, but somehow in between the printing process and the stuffing of envelopes, he had vanished. No other page had any mysterious discrepancies. Could it be that Bonnie wanted to tell everyone that he had to go and welcome Carol, the wife he loved so much and who he always looked after?

Call Sign offers no logical explanation. Readers will have to make up their own minds.

Peter Reed



Bonnie's photo as it was laid out in the January issue just prior to printing



How the photo came out of the print shop - including the blank area - at the same time that news of Carol's death broke!

Unwanted advice?

I can't bear getting unwanted advice. Friends I love dearly visited recently and gave me loads. They told me I could keep leftovers by covering with clingfilm and that I shouldn't let my son drive if he is drunk. Well, duh... thanks for that! It was even more annoying when they insisted on giving all sorts of medical advice. For some reason they said I should get my bone density checked, that I needed an annual gynaecological check and a 'mole map' carried out to check for skin cancer. And I must stop going out with wet hair (although I've done so for the past 40 years).

I smiled and thanked them for their insights, then they said I should cancel the new draught-proof PVC windows as more ventilation is crucial to protect us all from the toxins and fumes in the house, from plastics, foams, furniture - you name it, it will give us cancer and asthma if the windows are airtight.

It was a mild day, so I opened a window, then my DaCman Glen told me to shut it, as London has more toxins outdoors trying to get in, than the other way round. At least my friends stop at helpful advice, but Glen goes further.

Sometimes Glen tries to teach people a lesson, typically from behind the wheel. Loud hooting at 4 x 4s double-parked on St John's Wood High Street is fine, but last week he struck a blow against binge drinking, like this: A couple of drunken women were arguing in his taxi. Then one got out, slammed the door and marched off. Her friend said to fol-

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

Back Seat *Driver*



low her - as the runaway probably expected - so that she could be collected again, but Glen refused. He told the remaining girl that her friend had left voluntarily and to force her back into the taxi would be kidnap. So, a drunken flounce ended in a three-mile trek home at 2 am. No doubt she has now learned her lesson and forsworn the evil drink.

Wanted advice

Glen's advice on my gambling habit is predictable, dull and correct; the bookie always wins, why not just burn your £20 notes, blah, blah. Backing Spain in the World Cup was not clever as it turned out and putting £20 on Paris to get the 2012 Olympics was even stupider. If I had taken Glen's advice and stopped betting, maybe I could afford all those gynae excavations and bone density tests that I

don't want. I'm going to take Glen's advice in a way, by stopping gambling and putting my money on Ladbrokes - their shares that is - on the premise that if you can't beat the bookie, buy into him. This will be my first share purchase and it's odds-on to make more cash for me than walking into Ladbrokes ever has. I'll let you know how I got on in a year's time and if it's good news, maybe I'll start a *Back Seat Investors* feature for all the other taxi partners who are thinking of building up a private nest egg.

Taxi driver advice!

It's often said there are lots of people with the wisdom and ideas to run this country, but they're too busy driving taxis and cutting hair to do it. I hope taxi drivers never stop giving advice or pontificating about current events. It's part of the pleasure of travel by taxi. And I can assure you, minicab drivers can't cut it in this department 'cause they haven't got your brains or charisma and no amount of licensing will help them.

For any novices reading this, start out: "If I woz you (or Tony Blair or the Mayor) mate, you know what I'd do?" Then you'll find the rest just flows....!

Till then...

Love Poppy x x x

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Updated terminals?

When the "new" terminals were fitted to our cabs about 5 years ago, they were the envy of drivers on all the other circuits. The mapping facility especially was viewed with great admiration. With the development of new areas such as Docklands and new housing estates in various areas, it is now time for an upgrade so that we can maintain our reputation for being the most advanced and up-to-date outfit in town. We should not go to work with an atlas that is clearly out of date; nor should we have computer mapping that is obsolete.

Laurence Kelvin (W88)

Brian Rice replies: I agree with you Laurence and it is something that I am fully aware of. We started fitting the terminals to the fleet in June 2000 and I did a deal with Geographers to purchase a licence and CD for each mobile for £10 (they had wanted £40 originally), however, in the meantime they have ceased producing updated CDs. Consequently, we have been endeavouring to source an alternative supply. It can be done, but at the moment the best price we can get is £120 per licence, which I think you will agree is too expensive! However, the search for alternatives continues and we will get there eventually – although it will call for a software change and fleet recall.

Also, in the not-too-distant future there will be an upgraded terminal so I am reluctant to spend a vast amount of capital on current terminals. However, if someone is really desperate they could purchase their own licence and CD and possibly we might be able to install it for them, however I would advise anyone considering it to contact us before purchasing anything, just so we can check it is compatible. Finally, although the mapping and terminal is high priority here, our main concern at the moment is moving our technology to the new building and I'm sure you will understand and agree with me on that point!

Thank you Call Sign...

Thank you very much indeed for the superb album of photographs of the '40 Years at Penton Street' event. It was very nice of you to give me such a fine memento and very kind of Alan Green to take the trouble to present them to me in the office. They will provide an extremely nice reminder of the event.

What is particularly nice is the number of pictures of guests, since these are the people that I have got to know so well over the years and I shall enjoy remembering them in the future.

Geraldine and I have spent a very pleasant weekend looking through the album and she is as pleased with it as I am. Alan did very well to take such good photos considering that the lighting during the event was so unhelpful and I am very grateful to him for his fine work.

Many thanks to **Call Sign** for this fine gift, which I shall treasure.

Best wishes to you all for the future.

Roy Ellis

I sent Call Sign's photographer, Alan Green, along to the event. The photos came out so well, considering that the event was held with subdued lighting resembling a prehistoric cave, that I had an extra set produced and put them into an album for Roy Ellis to keep as a thank you for always responding to driver's questions in Call Sign ...Ed

Questions to prospective Board members

I was handed a paper from Russell Hall (G44) the other day, which I assume was his version of a CV in his effort to be voted on to the Board of Management. It raises several interesting points which I think, in all fairness, need clarification from Russell as it is very easy to make promises, but much harder to put them into practice.

In reality, it is very difficult to raise minimum fares as we have serious competition from our two main rivals in a very competitive environment. Does Russell think that ComCab and Radio Taxis are just going to roll over and do nothing to try and recover some of the ground they have lost to us recently? Of course they will not and this is one very good reason why we, as a Society, have to retain our competitive edge. You do not do this by increasing costs to our clients.

The issuing of "corporate clothing" is of little value unless it is made compulsory for every driver to wear it. This is not made clear. There would be little point in having - let's call it - a 'uniform' when drivers are under no obligation to wear it. He also fails to point out where the funds are coming from to pay for all of this. The profits DaC make are mainly ploughed back into the Society to pay for us to keep ahead of the game, especially in technology and accounting methods. It is our strength in these areas that enables us to secure accounts ahead of our two main competitors.

There is also a comment about the present

BoM - which is the most successful in the Society's history - relaxing in a 'comfort zone'. Had that been the case, we would hardly have opened an account as large as Citigroup and been in a position to turn away - albeit temporarily - other business before Christmas. No, that 'comfort zone' comment is totally unfounded and with the greatest respect Russell, I feel that you should withdraw the remark.

Finally, in his previous appeal to the membership (December **Call Sign**) and in this current handout, he mentions that he served as a Marshal for 4 years. However, he does not explain the circumstances under which he ceased to be a Marshal and a number of drivers feel that an explanation should be forthcoming.

Regrettably, for only the second time in 30 years, I will be unable to attend the AGM, but I am sure that Russell will attempt to explain himself there.

Finally, to paraphrase President John F. Kennedy: Ask not what your company can do for you; ask what you can do for your company...

Michael Harris (F79)

Russell Hall replies: Hello Michael, thanks for your comments and I hope I can furnish you with the answers that you raised from my election manifesto leaflet. I never promised anything in this leaflet, I just looked at some possibilities.

The 'minimum fare' issue was raised by some drivers who felt that there had been a general rise in costs and that the minimum fare had been long overdue for an increase. I stated 2 years ago that we should strive to improve the run-ins. They have been improved to £4.20, but we are *still* ahead of our main rivals in the licensed trade and the private hire sector!

My election manifesto was compiled and printed before we received our Christmas present of two polo shirts, which do promote our Society. I would certainly not insist that drivers should - as you call it - wear a 'uniform' as we are under no obligation to wear one. What I did write was that logoed coats, hats, polo shirts, fleeces, gloves etc that would promote the company should be provided on a regular and on-going basis to help improve our corporate image. These items should not be considered Christmas gifts for the drivers, but invaluable tools to promote Dial-a-Cab in the world of business. Perhaps, if needed, some of the funds generated by the Concierge system (which is heralded



mailshot

Mailshot continued from page 33

a success) could be used? The Concierge system was developed at a cost of just under £25k and has already returned many times more than that. You mention 'the profits that DaC make etc...'. As you know, being a loyal member to our circuit of some 30 years, we *still* operate as a 'Friendly Society' and we *don't* make a profit but a surplus as we are not (like our competitors ComCab and RTG) in the hands of a PLC. So to 'keep ahead of the game,' as you put it, the team need a 'new kit' every now and again!

Michael, in relation to my comment of 'a BoM relaxing in a comfort zone,' you seem to have misunderstood what I actually wrote. I did not write "*We have got a BoM relaxing in a comfort zone.*" That, of course would have been totally wrong. What I did state was that *we do not need, as some would perceive, a BoM relaxing in a 'comfort zone' when there is hard work to be done to stay at the top.* I went onto say that we need new blood and fresh ideas coming through to ensure a seamless transition to a younger generation and that this should not be a matter for conflict, but a matter of good business practice with the older, more experienced Board members grooming people for the future of our Society.

I agree with you that this is the most successful BoM in our Society's history, but would you not agree that it is also the drivers and staff at Brunswick House who work 24/7, who also contribute to the 'whole team success' and not only the BoM?

Michael, as you know, I ceased to be a marshal after a facing a complaint, but believe that Board Member, Allan Evans, would testify that in my 4 years as a marshal I was always punctual, polite and courteous to both drivers and clients and could always be relied on to promote a professional and smart image on behalf of DaC.

In relation to your paraphrase of a JFK quote, I would say that I do as much as can be permitted. I will always try to help new drivers who have the odd problem and query while out on the road and also try to obtain fresh leads to open up new accounts, just as I was recently involved in persuading an account in WC2 to leave their PH supplier!

Finally Michael, I would like to leave you with two quotes if I may. The first is also a President John F. Kennedy (1917-

63) quote: 'The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining' and the second is from our Chairman Brian Rice (30/11/2006): 'To be a Board member you will need thick skin!'

It's a shame that you'll not be attending this years AGM as I always feel they are the highlight of the year.

Power Pill update...

There has been a lot of talk in *Call Sign* over the past year about 'Power Pill' and I thought that after 10 months of using it, I would have my 'two pennies' worth. I decided from the start not to judge the product after just a few pills and do what I considered to be a more thorough, long term test. I live 45 miles due north of town in what has been affectionately called Europe's largest open prison - Milton Keynes! So on an average, day my mileage is split 45/ 55 percent (M1 and town) filling up in MK at the same pump and to the top of the neck - that's visible diesel and not just foam. I also 'popped a pill' every other day, although I have now learnt to break them in half to use daily - you know what they say about people living north of the M25!

I drive a Metro 'Series One' with the later 'banana' engine. I brought it new in 1995 and have covered 304,000 miles with it. The mpg is 30/31, far more than the 27 mpg I was getting before the test began. There is less smoke - if any - when giving it some 'boot' and far more tugging power, which any Metrocab driver will tell you is greatly appreciated.

My bottom line on what Power Pill does for me is that I no longer break out in a cold sweat when I see a free roadside smoke test! I get a feel-good factor at not seeing smoke belching out the exhaust and I enjoy the more willing and smoother engine. I consider that after ten months of using the Power Pill, it delivers the goods and is a great product for the cab trade. Oh, and the people at Power Pill UK are nice friendly, knowledgeable and helpful - if only all companies could be like that

Happy New Year for 2007 to all Dial-a-Cabbies out there and roll the power on...

Ken Jackman (B29)

Call Sign could fill this magazine with letters from drivers writing of their success stories with Power Pill, but we'd then leave no room for any moans! So I've put a few quotes into an article elsewhere inside this issue. There are now few drivers in the trade who don't know about Power Pill - even if they don't use

it. It was this magazine that first tested out Power Pill and to those initial group of drivers who took the risk with a product that no one had ever heard of, thanks are due because a lot of drivers are now saving a lot of money. Those drivers were Peter Ellis (L77), Roger Gershfield (P37), Jim Edwards (E76), Stewart Lewis (D20) and Paul Tully (Y40). *Call Sign* has even spoken to the PCO about using the pill instead of fitting anti-emission contraptions. Their understandable problem was how they could know that drivers weren't using the pill just prior to the overhaul and not constantly?

And yes, Ken is right about the people behind the pills UK sales. They don't live behind a post office box number, they are always contactable for problems. So yes, *Call Sign* does give itself a pat on the back for bringing Power Pill into the public domain... Ed

Will the gasmen cometh - and what will he wear!

In 1995 I bought a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) FX4 because I believe in a London with less pollution. What I was hoping for was a fleet of CNG buses, trucks etc. What did I get? Stupid idiots who wrote to the London Fire Service to question the safety of Natural Gas as a road fuel. All they had to do was enter CNG into Google or any other search engine and to their shock and horror they would have found that the UK was way behind any other country in the world in the use of this clean fuel. I would like to ask the Mayor why are his bendy buses not fuelled by CNG? A similar question could be put to BAA? The same goes for any vehicle owner who operates in congested areas?

I spoke to PCO at the time to try and force LTI and Metrocab down the Methane route, because not only is it cleaner than diesel, but also quieter. Yes, I can hear you all shouting, but where do I fill up? Well, it's a chicken and egg question. One has to follow the other and you have to have faith that you are doing your part to help to make our planet safer. Unlike Radio Taxis, I am not messing on my doorstep and saying what a good boy because I have given the scrubbing brush to someone else!

Unfortunately for me, LTI were in the process of trying another CNG engine (which is in use in the IVECO street rubbish collections used by the City of



mailshot

Mailshot continued from page 34

Westminster and LB of Camden) when they closed that part of the Research and Development Department.

Can I now change the subject completely and add that I agree with Allen Togwell about standard of dress. The motto of the Royal Military Police, in which I had the honour to serve, is *Exemplo Ducemus* – "By example we lead." Every day when I leave home I try to look my best because I believe that when I get out of my taxi to go into an office, the first impression another person gets is the sight of you. I now notice that ASDA are selling suits for £19, M&S sell smart looking trousers for £9 and even Matalan have non-iron shirts for £8 and you can get shoes for less than £30. So why is it when clothes have never been so inexpensive, do I see what I see.

I think we should all make an effort to be the smartest of the three circuits.

Stanley Roth (Y53)

Stanley Roth has been pushing gas cabs for many, many years and it does appear that the rest of the world is starting to climb onto his bandwagon. German registrations of compressed natural gas (CNG) passenger cars in October 2006 climbed by 2,180 vehicles – up more than 300% of the October 2005 figure. From January to October 2006, Germans registered 9,231 natural gas passenger cars, representing a 47% increase year-on-year. There are now more than 50,000 natural gas vehicles on the road in Germany.

Stanley's reference to RTG's CarboNeutral policy means that for polluting the London air, they try to even the balance by doing something useful for the environment of another country (eg planting trees there etc)... Ed

No go at the ExCel?

On the 6th January, I tried to book a cab from the Boat Show at ExCel centre, eastern gate, but was told by the telephone operative that they could not accept the booking from the ExCel centre. Why?

Francis Robinson (G18)

I asked Keith Cain if there would have been any reason for a refusal to accept a booking and the answer was no – if it was an account ride. However, if it is cash (which it was), then the obvious problem is that because of the nature of ExCel, it is quite feasible that cash customers might depart early if they saw an empty cab, leaving the DaC taxi stranded.

Even though I know you are a taxi driver, on the phone you could be anyone saying you are on DaC whereas it could

be a relation or friend trying to get priority treatment...Ed

Call centre help?

On 20 December at 12.30pm, I was covering an account ride in SW13. On arrival, I was turning around when my steering rod suddenly snapped leaving me stranded across the street with no steering. I got onto voice to ask the dispatcher to inform the passenger I had broken down, to recover the trip and also phone the AA, as I had no mobile phone with me. He said he would ring the customer and recover the job, but didn't have time to ring the AA for me! I tried calling again explaining that I was stuck in the middle of the road, but it made no difference.

When I joined Dial-a-Cab, I thought it was run for the benefit of the drivers as well as account holders. I wonder whether the dispatcher would have been so "helpful" had I been a Board member or perhaps one of his mates?

Don Leppard (A89)

I spoke to the Call Centre Manager Keith Cain about your breakdown and he said he was appalled at your treatment and that was not how dispatchers were told to act. All he can now do is to apologise for your treatment and hope that you don't think too badly of a system because of one unfortunate experience.

I also spoke to the Call Centre's Evening Shift Manager, Gary Gates. He too said that the way Don Leppard was treated was not the way DaC try to help drivers. However, Gary also made the point that whenever he has phoned the AA on behalf of drivers who, like Don, had no phone with them, that organisation had refused to send assistance unless they could speak to the person

concerned. Not much consolation Don, but I hope that your vision of the Call Centre wasn't spoiled too much by your unfortunate problem ...Ed

EC5 timing...

As you may recall, some time ago the start time on Finsbury Square was 8pm. This was changed to 9pm for several reasons.

1. There was severe congestion around the square because as a physical rank, we had to queue in order to book into EC5.

2. This caused all sorts of problems and I believe that a complaint was made to the City police from London buses.

As a result of this complaint, we pushed the start time back to 9pm and introduced marshals to monitor the book-in procedure and to move cabs on after booking-in so as to alleviate bunching. This worked well, but from late last year, the marshals were removed from the monitoring and the procedure was changed to allow non-physical booking in.

I have worked the Finz for many years and it occurred to me that as the rank is no longer physical, then there would be no reason not to reinstate the original start time of 8pm.

I believe that this would help drivers and would also help coverage in the early evening.

As an AGM is coming up, I would ask the Board to consider this proposal.

Alan Sullivan (F20)

Keith Cain replies: Thanks for the suggestion Alan, in all honesty it wasn't something that we had thought about. It could be done fairly easily, but at the moment we are having no trouble with coverage in the City between 8 and 9pm. We will certainly bear it in mind if coverage becomes difficult.



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