

July 2007



# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

*Inside this issue...*

---

The Chairman on more  
calltakers and drivers...

---

Jim hunts for Prince Harry!

---

Lib Dems condemn bendy buses

---

Allen Togwell and Princess  
Diana: Call Sign Flashback...

---

Banned for having a WCHCD  
logo on his cab - CS exclusive...

---

Sid Nathan at pirate ship  
owner's birthday...

---

DaC driver makes no 1 in pop  
charts...

---

Just who is the real Alan Fisher?



***DaC girls win the WCHCD  
Treasure Hunt***



***No Hello! No OK!  
Call Sign at Keith  
and Tammy's wedding!***



# NASH'S NUMBERS

By Alan Nash (A95)

To save space and list more hotels, I've left out 'What's On at Earls Court and Olympia', but they are listed in 6-month blocks in the UID. If you can't wait for the complete list of hotels, visit [www.nashsnumbers.co.uk](http://www.nashsnumbers.co.uk) and register for the 'Useful Information Document'.

<b>PARK PLAZA</b>			
Riverbank	18 Albert Embankment, SE1 7TJ	Sherlock Holmes	108 Baker Street, W1U 6LJ
Victoria Park Plaza	239 Vauxhall Bridge Road, SW1V 1EQ		
<b>PREMIER TRAVEL INN</b>			
Docklands Excel	Festoon Way, E16 1RH (by Connaught Bridge)	Euston	1 Dukes Road, Euston Road, WC1H
Gatwick	Longbridge Way, Crawley, RH6 0NX	Hammersmith	255 King Street, W6 9LU
Hampstead	215 Haverstock Hill, NW3 4RB	Heathrow Bath Road	11 Bath Road, Hounslow, TW6 2AB
Kensington	11 Knaresborough Place, SW5 0TJ	Kings Cross	26-30 York Way, N1 9AA
Putney	3 Putney Bridge Approach, SW6 3JD	Tower Bridge	Tower Bridge Road, SE1 3LP
South Mimms	Swanland Road, South Mimms, EN6 3NH	Thurrock West	Stonehouse Lane, West Thurrock, RM19 1NS
<b>QUALITY</b>			
Epping	High Road, Epping, CM16 4DG	Hyde Park	8-14 Talbot Square, W2 1TS
Paddington	144 Praed Street, W2 1HU	Hampstead	5 Froggnal, NW3 6AL
Harrow	12-22 Pinner Rd, Harrow, HA1 4HZ	Heathrow	Brands Road, Slough, SL3 8QB
Welwyn	The Link, Welwyn, AL6 9XA	Wembley	McDermott House, Empire Way, HA9 0NN
West Ham	West Ham FC, Green Street, E13 9AZ	Westminster	82-83 Eccleston Sq, SW1V 1PS
<b>RADISSON EDWARDIAN</b>			
Berkshire	350 Oxford Street, W1N 0BY (Marylebone Ln)	Grafton	130 Tottenham Court Road, W1P 9HP
Hampshire	Leicester Square, WC2H 7LH	Heathrow	140 Bath Road, Hayes, UB3 5AW
Kenilworth	Great Russell Street, WC1B 3LB	May Fair	Stratton Street, W1J 8LL
Marlborough	9-13 Bloomsbury Street, WC1B 3QD	Mountbatten	20 Monmouth Street, WC2H 9HD
Pastoria	St Martins Street, Leicester Sq, WC2H 7HL	Portman	22 Portman Square, W1H 7BG (Upp..Berk. St)
Stansted	Waltham Close, Stansted Airport, CM24 1PP	Sussex	19-25 Granville Place, W1H 6PA
Vanderbilt	68-86 Cromwell Road, SW7 5BT		
<b>RAMADA JARVIS</b>			
Docklands	Festoon Way, E16 1RH(by Connaught Brdg)	Gatwick	Tinsley Lane South, Crawley, RH10 8XH
Ealing	Ealing Common, W5 3HN	Heathrow	Bath Road, Cranford, TW5 9QE
Hyde Park	150 Bayswater Road, W2 4RT	Encore London West	4 Portal Way, W3 6RT (Gypsy Cnr)
Royal Berkshire	London Road, Ascot, SL5 0PP		
<b>RED CARNATION</b>			
41 Hotel	41 Buckingham Palace Rd, SW1W 0PS	Chesterfield	35 Charles Street, Mayfair, W1X 8LX
Milestone	1 Kensington Court, Kensington, W8 5DL	Montague	15 Montague Street, Bloomsbury, WC1B 5BJ
Rubens	39 Buckingham Palace Road, SW1W 0PS		
<b>RENAISSANCE</b>			
Heathrow	Bath Road, Hounslow, TW6 2AQ	Gatwick	Povey Cross Road, Horley, RH6 0BE
Chancery Court	252 High Holborn, WC1 7EN		
<b>SHERATON</b>			
Lanesborough	Hyde Park Corner, SW1X 7TA	Park Lane	Piccadilly, W1J 7BX
Belgravia	20 Chesham Place, SW1X 8HQ	Heathrow	Colnbrook Bypass, Bath Road, UB7 OHJ
Park Tower	Knightsbridge, SW1X 7RN (Lowndes Square)		
<b>SOFITEL</b>			
St James	6 Waterloo Place, SW1Y 4AN	Gatwick	North Term. Gatwick Airport, RH6 0PH
<b>SOMERSET APARTMENTS</b>			
Bayswater	42 Princes Square, Bayswater, W2 4AD	Queens Gate	58-66 Cromwell Road, SW7 5DA
Roland Gdns	121 Old Brompton Road, SW7 3RX		
<b>SWALLOW</b>			
Churchgate	Churchgate Street, Old Harlow, CM17 0JT	Kingston Lodge	Kingston Hill, Kingston-U-Thames, KT2 7NP

## What's On at Excel

EVENT	TYPE	START	FINISH
The Tile & Stone Show 2007	trade	01/07/07	to 03/07/07
Newham Welcomes the World: The Journey Begins	public	04/07/07	to 04/07/07
Star Wars Celebration Europe	public	13/07/07	to 15/07/07
Benny Hinn Holy Spirit Miracle Crusade	public	27/07/07	to 28/07/07

VISIT [www.nashsnumbers.co.uk](http://www.nashsnumbers.co.uk) for this issue and all previous issues back to 1997 in PDF format for good quality prints. REGISTER for the UID (Useful Information Document), packed with information you will need on a daily basis. Simply email [alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk](mailto:alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk) with the Subject as "UID" (essential, otherwise it may get deleted thinking it's junk) and the body of the message containing your name, call sign, badge no, email address and mobile number (which will only be used if I have problems with your email address).



# from the editor's desk

## CitySprint Group

In a shock deal I would not have wanted to see – one that pushes the *CitySprint Group's* annual revenue over the £70 million mark – they have now announced the acquisition of Burgundy Cars. The group already includes WestOne Cars.

CitySprint is the delivery side of the group and last year did over 6 million trips that *pro rata*, the three major radio circuits would have done between them a few years back. Exaggerating? Ask those who have been on DaC more than a few years and who remember a time when we had so many deliveries that we would put 3 or 4 together on separate dockets just to clear them off the dispatcher's board! How many do taxis do nowadays?

Now CitySprint have merged two of the largest PH companies in WestOne and Burgundy and added them to their expanding group. Anyone who thinks that doesn't represent competition needs to rethink – and fairly soon – because that organisation is now in a position where they can compete with licensed taxi radio circuits.

It isn't my job to go on about DaC drivers' service levels and I rarely do. The majority of my own work consists of account work because it suits me to do so. However, having been with DaC since around 1974, the Society has become a part of my life and I feel proud of the success it has become. But when I read that we are in danger of losing accounts not because we do not have enough drivers, but because many of the drivers we do have just keep rejecting trips during peak hours – even when they are on top of the job – it does upset me.

Anyone can cover work when it quiets down, but having been told how many rejects we have during an average morning peak hour, it amazes me that our account clients show such loyalty. Dial-a-Cab do still leave other radio taxi organisations standing, but sadly that is now no longer enough. WestOne claim to have grown by over 30% last year. Even if that figure includes some exaggeration, there can be little doubt that we are no longer up against a few tiny car companies with scruffs going around in rust buckets. These organisations are run by financial experts who know exactly what they are doing and as much as it hurts me to say this, we are in danger of being overtaken unless we pull our fingers out and realise that we can no longer fob clients off with a “nothing in the area; shall we keep trying,” until one of our drivers decides to accept the trip.

We now have an amazing building that stuns me when I think back to my early days at Sutherland Avenue and how Board members of the time thought **that** was amazing compared to our first building in Pentonville Road. We have a system that has proved itself time after time, but what we don't have is a team of robots who will accept trips regardless. Thank God we aren't robots, but we are shareholders in what I am often told is **our** Society! If it is our Society... should we not at least look as though we care?

We've had warnings before and some of you will no doubt poo-poo this as being a set up



from the Board, but believe it or not, every time I write an Editorial it comes from me. If you choose not to believe that and are just content to carry on doing whatever you want, then I fear that the warning may have come too late.

## LCDC and private hire

Keeping with the above topic of successful private hire, the London Cab Driver's Club launched a rather childish attack on me in their June issue of *The Badge* in which they claimed I had “...gone to great lengths to try and discredit *The Badge* and obviously the LCDC.” Perhaps rather less surprisingly, it was unsigned.

In May's *Call Sign*, I went to great lengths to say how much I agreed with their Vice Chairman's article in *The Badge* regarding the use of SatNavs. I ended with a much smaller piece saying that I disagreed with their decision to publish a press release that was obviously aimed solely at the private hire market and which was promoting the Dodge Avenger as being “appealing” to that market. Was that discrediting the LCDC?

Their answer was headed “*How to put your foot in it*” and claimed that there was nothing wrong with stating a fact. What fact? What Mr Anonymous put into *The Badge* was a press release designed for the PH market. It may well have been a fact to the non-cab driver who wrote it because his company gets paid to do so, but it isn't a fact to a London taxi driver because he has no interest whatsoever in which cars are appealing to the PH section. The info, if put into perspective and discussed isn't a problem, but how many of their readers are PH drivers? I refused to publish it and I would have expected *The Badge* to also do so. They didn't and I asked them why, so they took umbrage, obviously being incapable of admitting an error that would have ended the matter.

They then added their masterstroke; how DaC are “...in bed with minicabs and a PHV company known as Concierge,” adding sarcastically how “...DaC should at least be interested in how their new business partners transport their passengers!” At least *The Badge* admitted who their article was aimed at because who else but PH drivers would be interested?

I wouldn't dream of trying to explain what

Concierge was to Mr Anonymous, because I wouldn't want to spoil his rather sad answer and finale that people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

Well, Mr Anonymous, if I think something is wrong, I say so. If I make an error, I apologise. Obviously *The Badge* is incapable of admitting an error of judgement and prefers instead to try covering it up with a silly response. I wasn't trying to discredit *The Badge*, the LCDC or anything or one connected with it, but it's up to them if they choose to deny being anything other than perfect. However, if DaC are so bad and are “in bed” with the opposition, why is it that we are the first company the LCDC phone when trying to organise a demo in order to get drivers? Or are they thinking of boosting their membership by accepting PH drivers???

## Wembley pix

My thanks to all those drivers who sent me photos from their local papers featuring DaC Wembley FC with their Dial-a-Cab shirts on show. I can't imagine many coming up in July, but according to DaC driver and Wembley goalkeeper Lee Pearce (J71), the team will be back in training around now. So whenever you do see any of the players with our name on their fronts, perhaps you could cut out the page and send it to me at the new office. Thanks again...

## Ken's good side

Ken Livingstone will never be able to please all London's taxi drivers – especially this one! However, I do believe that he is proud of us and our reputation. The problem is that he wants a situation in London where everyone can get whatever form of transport they want virtually on tap. However, if that ever were to include allowing private hire vehicles into bus and taxi lanes – as he has said on both LBC and Capital Radio phone ins – then the Mayor will negate in one fell swoop any use they currently have and the actual thought is enough to convince many that he is against us.

So I was pleased to hear that he had written to Gordon Brown before the latter became PM, asking him to have a rethink about including late TXIIs and the TX4 from the new Band G vehicle excise duty rate, which would otherwise mean those owners paying substantially more for spending a fortune on a vehicle that was either Euro III or Euro IV compliant.

At the time of writing I have no way of knowing whether the Mayor's request will be looked on favourably or not, but I have a sneaking suspicion that Ken and Gord could possibly form a relationship that the outgoing premier couldn't and that would mean a ‘yes’ so far as the road tax request is concerned...

## Into year eleven...!

My sincere thanks to all those DaC drivers who called to congratulate me on completing 10 years as Editor. I was even more shocked to get emails from some who aren't on this circuit following an article in the trade press while I was on holiday. Thank you all...

**Alan Fisher**  
callsignmag@aol.com

# Reflections Of The Chairman

## New premises

We have now been in our new building for just over a month and everything is progressing extremely well. We are currently in the process of employing more call takers and would like to be in a position where we have employed up to another additional forty by the beginning of September, so that we will be able to grow your business even further.

At the same time, we will be endeavouring to increase the size of the fleet to accommodate the increase in work that we anticipate. However and as you know, we are very selective when it comes to recruiting new members and will be operating a scheme whereby preference will be given to new recruits that are recommended by existing members. As a consequence, we'll be operating a selection process whereby we will offer an incentive to existing members if they recommend a colleague, the details of which you will receive in the near future and might in fact have possibly received before you even read this article.

But back to the move. We met at 2am on Saturday 5 May at Brunswick House, the system was taken down at 3.15am and moved to the new premises. By 5.25, we were up and running at our new premises and totally self-sufficient. I cannot commend highly enough everyone in our IT department that made the move a seamless operation, because these things do not happen by sheer luck!

John Bankes and his IT department spent six months planning this move and it showed as we did not experience one single glitch during the process. To move an operation like ours is a mammoth task and to say that I am delighted with the way it went is an understatement, especially as I had sleepless nights wondering if we would take the system down and then not be able to re-instate it, or that the telephone lines would not be switched to the new premises! However, in hindsight, I had a lot of worry for nothing especially as we had Tom Carter and Jim Moore on hand for extra insurance just in case we experienced any problems! My sincere thanks to everyone concerned. It is always worth remembering - if you fail to prepare, be prepared to fail!

## Voice channel to data...

In order that we can continue to grow your business, I applied to **Ofcom** in an attempt to acquire some extra VHF channels, but they came back to say there were not any available and there probably wouldn't be in the near future. Consequently, if we wish to increase capacity then in all probability we will have to convert channel 2 - our voice channel - to data. This will then give us extra capacity, whilst improving signals when we are busy and is something that we will be doing in the foreseeable future.

At the same time, we will probably move some of our aerial sites to give us a better spread and also introduce multi-channel working from each aerial site. This will benefit us two-fold. Firstly, it will increase our capacity and secondly, it should also improve signals.

## Reality check?

As you know, we were the first in the market



place to have a Job Distribution Engine (JDE), one we designed ourselves and which we named Concierge. This breakthrough has proven to be an unmitigated success for Dial-a-Cab, so much so that all our competitors have endeavoured to copy the system themselves, which I suppose is a compliment as they do say that imitation is the best form of flattery!

However, these copiers have certain advantages over us because they can set their new facilities up as separate companies in an attempt to persuade clients that the new companies do not owe any allegiance to the parent company, which may or may not be true. However, I am convinced they have taken the correct route and it is something that we would have done initially had this company been structured differently and I hadn't spent the first year of Concierge's life fighting the dissidents within our own Society, while at the same time as making sure that the Society progressed.

Because of the success of these JDEs, a new threat has entered the arena and that is the scenario whereby not only taxi and car companies are endeavouring to emulate Dial-a-Cab, but totally independent software houses are building their own systems! This is a much bigger threat to us, as they are approaching our clients and persuading them that they are totally independent of any taxi or car company

(which they are) and the client can choose their preferred choice of taxi and car suppliers, while the software house can operate and run the account for them without any affiliation to the client's vendors.

To my knowledge, there are already three software houses in the market with more to follow. This is quite a frightening scenario and the only way it can be derailed is for car and taxi suppliers to refuse to work off their systems.

**I have already declined to work on one of these independent systems that was being installed into one of our smaller accounts. You can probably guess what happened - they went out and installed another taxi company!**

This is an extremely shortsighted attitude and I am completely aghast at the attitude of the Management concerned. So as a consequence, not only are we competing against taxi and private hire, we are also up against software houses! So we must - all of us - try to be better than anyone else in every department, otherwise this could well be as good as it gets and the future could be a gradual downward spiral for the radio taxi business!

## Smoking and 1 July..

As you are all aware, the smoking ban in all enclosed public places comes into effect as from 1 July and this will include taxis. Consequently, as from the above date passengers and drivers will be banned from smoking in taxis. This includes even when the driver is not working and is using his vehicle for social reasons. I am led to believe that 'No Smoking' signs can and should be affixed - one on the windscreen, with one each on the rear windows. We have a large supply at Roman Way and of course, should you prefer, you can always pick them up from the PCO...

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

## THE GROOMER FOR MEN



**Barber shop now open at 1 St Bride Street EC4  
With a special price for Dial-a-Cab drivers!**

Usual Price	DaC driver's price
Wash/ cut/ blow dry	£14.00 £11.00
Dry cut	£11.50 £9.00
Clipper cut (with wash)	£9.50 £7.00
Beard trim	£4.50 £4.00
Long hair (with wash)	£17.50 £15.00

**NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED!**

**Tel: 0207 353 1649**

**We are next door to Subway**

## Proceeds go to Havering's St Francis Hospice...

Another of the Dial-a-Cab drivers to successfully complete the 2007 *Flora London Marathon* was **Russell Tiller (P19)**. Besides promising to raise funds for St Francis Hospice in Havering – the second DaC driver to do so, Daren Dennis (W65) being the other - Russell also had a personal reason for making the trek. Russell takes up the story...

"I ran the Marathon in aid of my late mother-in-law Maureen Kaye, who sadly lost her brave battle against cancer at Xmas 2005. She was so well cared for at St Francis Hospice and anyone who has had a relative in a hospice knows what a fantastic job these nurses and volunteer carers do. This was my way of helping them continue their work and what better way was there than to push myself to the ultimate test – *The Flora London Marathon*!

I have always kept myself fit playing football and boxing, but had never run more than around 5 miles. I began training in October and ran three times a week with my long run on a Saturday morning. Come rain or shine, I'd run anything up to 21 miles towards the end of my schedule. There were times when I thought it was impossible, but I knew I couldn't give up.

I had told so many people and once committed, I had to see it through! The thought of so many people battling such terrible illnesses made my tough training seem insignificant.

Come marathon day I was so nervous but excited. The buzz on the train on the way was

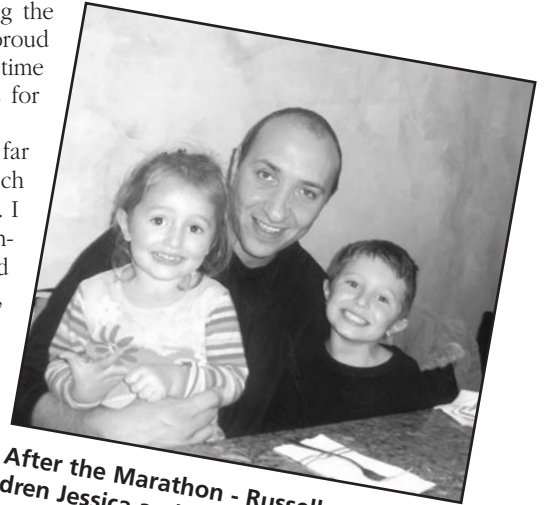
# Russell Runs Marathon in Memory of Mum-in-Law

fantastic. The crowd were amazing, something I will never forget. People lining the streets for all 26.2 miles made me feel proud to see all these runners giving their time and effort to raise millions of pounds for many different charities.

It was the hottest day of the year so far and I had never before run in such intense heat or such humid conditions. I managed to finish in 5 hours 31 minutes, no blisters or bad feet. I would have liked to finish in under 5 hours, but to finish the course was for me my biggest goal. I have managed to raise £2500 so far and I am still receiving donations including one from **Call Sign**. I also did a collection at the airport and just wanted to say thanks to all the drivers who kindly donated money to this charity.

I'd also like to thank my training partner Spencer Goodman who ran for a children's charity.

The many memories will stay with me forever. I wanted to do it for my wife Victoria after she lost her mother. Her true support all through the training and on the day, along with our children Zachary and Jessica and some members of the family, really kept



After the Marathon - Russell with children Jessica and Zachary

me going.

I ran for a good cause and would recommend anyone in DaC-land who has ever thought about it, to get out there and do it. Again, thanks to everyone who sponsored me."

**Russell Tiller (P019)**

## ECO-POWER EMISSION REDUCTION SYSTEM APPROVED



In order to assist cab owners comply with the emission strategy, the PCO will be announcing which systems have been approved upon completion of independent field trials and testing to Euro 3 level.

The PCO has now approved the Eco-Power emission reduction system, an emission reduction solution in support of the Mayor's Taxi Emission Strategy.

The Eco-Power system has a cooled Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR) circuit and a combined catalyst and partial flow filter unit. This conversion can be installed into the 'Euro 1' LTI Fairway taxi, which then becomes Euro 3 compliant.

This system has been independently assessed by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and has undergone a monitored period of 'in-service' durability testing.

## TAXI MORTGAGES ESPECIALLY FOR LICENSED TAXI DRIVERS

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

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

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

**01322 293600/07702 302863** (mobile)

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

**Peter Griffin, Mortgage Adviser, 1 Market Street, Dartford, DA1 1EY**  
YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE

Griffin Financial Consultancy is an Approved Representative of Openwork Ltd. Openwork Ltd. offer insurance and investment advice on products from a limited number of product providers and advice on mortgages representative of the whole of the market.



# Jery's World



"Scuse me lady! Da Mayor say I be soon go in bus lane. You know where near one is so I go practice?"

## LTI STAFF RAISE £4500 FOR HOSPICE



*Pictured are (l-r): Rita Patel, Allison Forrest, Robert Page, Janet Johnson, Becky Campbell and Derek Chalmers*

Staff from Coventry-based LTI Vehicles have raised in excess of £4500 for their local Myton Hospice. A current national campaign to 'Help a Hospice' has highlighted the issue of how expensive it is to fund and maintain hospices and indeed several **Dial-a-Cab** drivers ran in this year's Flora London Marathon attempting to raise funds for their local hospice.

It costs £380 per day per patient and £35 per hour to run a hospice and this was why LTI's staff decided to give most of the proceeds of their fund raising activities to Myton Hospice.

However, smaller donations from a total of £4750 were also made to the Air Ambulance, McMillan Nurses, Alzheimer's Association and Clic.

LTI Vehicles PA, Rose Jardine, told **Call Sign**: "Everyone has been hugely supportive of our fund raising activities and without their help it would not have been such a success. Hospices provide specialised care and the running costs are huge so we can't thank enough the people who have and continue to support us."

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

3 master bedrooms, 2 twin bedrooms,

3 bathrooms (sleeps 10/12)

30ft private swimming pool and Jacuzzi

Fully equipped kitchen

Cable TV in every room

Just off the I-4 - 15 mins from Disney

Close to local shops and golf courses

From £500 per week (late deals available)

For further details and availability go to [www.dovevillas.co.uk](http://www.dovevillas.co.uk)

Or contact Derek Donnelly (V74 on 07951 130 154.

Prices are for the villa per week and not per person

Late deals and special price for DaC members.

# No more smoking in London Taxis

**As of 1 July, smoking will be prohibited in all licensed taxis and PHVs at all times by all occupants**

The new law is being introduced to protect employees and the public from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke. Some of the key points are:

As of 1 July 2007 it will be against the law to smoke in virtually all enclosed and substantially enclosed public places and workplaces.

This includes public transport such as taxis and work vehicles that are used by more than one person. No-smoking signs will have to be displayed in all smokefree premises and vehicles. PCO guidance says taxis must consist of three double sided, no-smoking stickers to be located on the rear fixed side windows of the passengers' compartment (bottom, front of cab end) and front windscreen of the taxi (top nearside). Any other no-smoking signs are to be removed from taxis when the new stickers are fixed.

Staff smoking rooms and indoor smoking areas will no longer be allowed, so anyone who wants to smoke will have to go outside. That will apply to Dial-a-Cab's new premises in East Road.

As for responsibility, managers of smokefree premises and vehicles will have a legal responsibility to prevent people from smoking.

**That means you cannot tell a passenger that it is up to them if they smoke. If caught, it will be the driver's responsibility.** If the customer refuses to stop smoking before entering the cab, you should consider not serving or providing a service to them. Also, keep a record of where

and when the incident took place, the name of the person involved (if possible) and the outcome. If a person threatens physical violence when smoking, you should notify or seek assistance from the police.

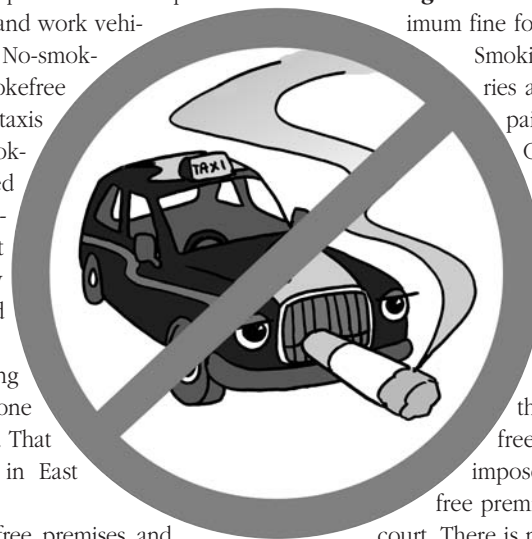
**If you do not comply with the new smokefree law, you will be committing a criminal offence.** The fixed penalty notices and maximum fine for each offence are:

Smoking in smokefree premises or work vehicles carries a fixed penalty notice of £50 (reduced to £30 if paid in 15 days) imposed on the person smoking. Or a maximum fine of £200 if prosecuted and convicted by a court.

Failure to display no-smoking signs has a fixed penalty notice of £200 (reduced to £150 if paid in 15 days). There is a maximum fine of £1000 if prosecuted and convicted by a court. DaC and Roman Way have the signs.












Perhaps the biggest problem for taxi drivers is the law on failing to prevent smoking in a smoke-free place. This will carry a maximum fine of £2500 imposed on whoever manages or controls the smoke-free premises or vehicle if prosecuted and convicted by a court. There is no fixed penalty notice for this offence. Whether an excuse that your passenger refused to put out their cigarette will carry any weight in court is something that will undoubtedly be tested in a court case.

Local councils will be responsible for enforcing the new law in England.



## Martin Cordell & Co ACCOUNTANTS

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

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

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

**All for one yearly fee**

**The London Taxi Trades Premier Accountants**

(24 hour answering facility for prompt service)

**020 8980 7161**

(24 hour answering facility for prompt service)

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

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

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



**DaC driver Jim Rainbird (T25) has reported for *Call Sign* on many strange events that he has been called upon to get involved with, from appearing in Japanese TV quiz shows to Bollywood movies! But driving around the paparazzi...???**

"Over the years I've had a few photographers jump in and lay the old chestnut on me: 'Follow that cab!' That usually means a cab that contains a celebrity of whom a snatched photo would feed that paparazzo's kids for a month. But a recent filming job turned the whole scenario on its head - celebs trying to be paps!

The show, being filmed for ITV, was called *Deadline*. It had ten celebrities working as photo journalists for a magazine with that famous temporary cabbie, Janet Street Porter, as its editor. The two wannabe 'paps' in my

## **Bendy Buses: "Twice as dangerous as any other!"**



**Lib Dems Transport Spokesman  
Geoff Pope: "Bendy buses are twice  
as dangerous as normal ones"**

Figures released in June by the Liberal Democrat Transport spokesman on the London Assembly, Geoff Pope, are suggesting that twice as many pedestrians are injured by bendy buses than by any other bus and that three times as many cyclists are hurt by them. The group has called for a review of the routes bendies cover and the standard of the drivers.

Mr Pope said: "Given there are only 345 bendy buses, these numbers are worryingly high. We have had claims from cyclists that they have been terrified to find themselves crowded against safety barriers by bendy buses making left turns. Both pedestrians and cyclists find it hard to judge the line the bus is going to take."

He went on to add: "TfL have launched a costly advertising campaign about safer cycling. But these figures show that the money would be better spent stepping up safety training for drivers as well as a *how is my driving* hotline to report poor driving. TfL should order and urgent and full review of bendy bus routes."

A *Transport for London* spokesman called the figures unfair, claiming that bendy buses work on busier than normal routes and that accidents were more likely to occur there. He added that many ordinary routes ran out to the suburbs where accidents were far less likely and that gave a false impression of the bendy bus situation. He ended by claiming that bendy buses had covered millions of miles and collisions were rare.

# **DaC's Jim chases Prince Harry...**

*Well, er...sort of!*



**Iwan Thomas, Jim Rainbird and fellow pap, Yvette Fielding**

charge were Olympic athlete, Iwan Thomas and former Blue Peter presenter, Yvette Fielding.

Along with a film crew, we set off in chase of Prince Harry and a girlfriend on the day of his announcement of going to Iraq - since reversed due to security fears. Sadly, the info they had been given by their contact turned out to be fruitless as the Prince's party failed to turn up at the given location. With their tales between their legs, they asked to be taken back to their base at the St Martins Hotel.

Driving along Knightsbridge on the way back, Iwan saw a Bentley with the number plate initials D.B. "That's Posh and Becks car,"

he screamed, "follow it!"

I had a traffic island in my way as the Bentley turned through Edinburgh Gate into Hyde Park, so I raced up to Albert Gate and parked in the dead end by the French Embassy. Yvette stayed in the cab but Iwan, followed by the film crew, ran through the pedestrian gate just in time to grab a sequence of shots of the Bentley driven, as Iwan put it "...by some old geezer with a great big moustache - definitely not Goldenballs!"

All in all, not a very successful day for the potential paparazzi but a couple of hours of fun work for me with a quick photocall at the end..."

**Jim Rainbird (T25)**

## **LONDON LEGEND *Limousine Taxis***



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

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





Dave Stock

The *taxi emissions strategy* requires that all taxis meet Euro 3 emission standards for NO<sub>x</sub> and PM10 by July 2008. PCO Notice 07/06 set out the timetable for Metrocab taxis, stating that any Metrocab taxi that is of a Pre-Euro, Euro 1 or Euro 2 standard will, when presented for its annual licensing inspection from 1 July 2007 onwards, be required to have fitted either approved emissions reduction equipment or an approved conversion to run on an alternative fuel.

Some emission reduction solutions for Metrocabs have been in development for some time, but they are not likely to receive full approval in time for implementation from 1 July.

**In recognition of this, the following arrangements will apply for affected Metrocabs that have plates expiring in July, August or September 2007.**

For any in-scope vehicle (ie any Metrocab except TTT model), proprietors will book a vehicle licence appointment in July, August or September 2007 when notified by SGS that their annual inspection is due. They will not at that stage be expected to have an approved emission reduction system fitted, although they

*The April issue of Call Sign contained an article from Mike Son in which he queried with Dave Stock of the PCO that their decision for all Metrocabs not falling within the emissions strategy would mean a new engine costing around £6-7000 and that there must be cheaper ways. Dave Stock has now sent out this press release...*

# Metrocab Emissions Strategy from 1 July

may do so if an approved system is available to them. They will however, have to have one of the approved systems fitted to that vehicle prior to its 'mid-term' safety inspection six months later. For example, a vehicle whose annual inspection was at the end of September 2007 would return for the mid-year inspection before the end of March 2008 and would have to have approved emissions reduction equipment fitted at that inspection.

At the mid-year inspection, the emissions equipment conversion will be examined and the installer's 'Fitment Sign-Off' sheet and endorsed 'Type Approval' document must be produced for inspection.

Any in-scope vehicle presented for its annual inspection from 1 October 2007 must be fitted with an approved emissions reduction system and appropriate documentation must be produced.

**Failure to comply with any of these**

**requirements may result in the vehicle licence being suspended and/or revoked by the Licensing Authority.**

**Dave Stock**

**PCO Head of Service Delivery**

**Call Sign**

**July 2007**

Editor: Alan Fisher

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

Tel: 0207 251 0581 Fax: 0207 250 0581

E-mail: callsignmag@aol.com

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

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

Design: Aldan Publications,

Tel: 07958 300 428

Email: danny.fresco@dsl.pipex.com

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

# E<sub>3</sub>TAXIS

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

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

*Some of our other services include:-*

- ★ Overhauls ★ Tracking/4 wheel alignment ★ MOT testing on Class 4 vehicles ★ Smoke Test
- ★ TXII Timing Chains/Belts ★ TXII Heater Control Valves ★ Tyres Supplied and Fitted

*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*

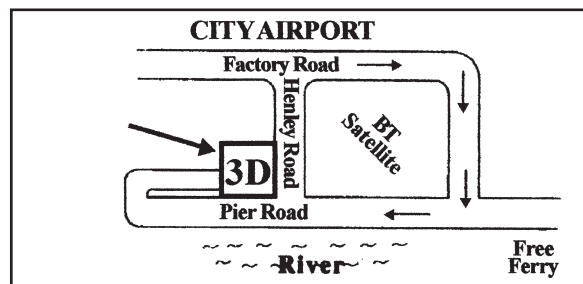
*And we will advise on any warrantee work needed*

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

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

**Open Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm, Saturday 9am – 1pm**

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



# COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

*Hello ladies and gents,*

This is my first report as Compliance Officer for our Society and in the short time that I have been in this important position, I realise even more what a responsible role it is and how hard it can sometimes be to evaluate the information from all sides and come to the appropriate decision. I believe my experience and understanding of the Licensed Taxi trade and my varied roles since you, the members elected me to the Board of Management, will certainly stand me in good stead. I feel this is an ideal opportunity to mention a little about my role as Compliance Officer and to give a brief explanation of what happens when either a full member or journeyman is the subject of a complaint and, of course, the manner in which a complaints meeting operates.

Firstly, as my title indicates, my role is ensure that all of our members operate within the rules of our Society, be it by their actions, manner and their endeavouring to follow procedures.

In the event I'm given notice of a member not following procedures or who has allegedly committed a misdemeanour, I will attempt to contact that member to discuss the issue or request in writing their version of the complaint. The outcome may result in no further action, or I may consider it necessary to issue a warning or severe reprimand, which will then go onto the driver's record and is the maximum of which I have the power to administer. If in my judgement I believe the committee should hear the alleged offence, I will inform the member of that decision together with a date on which the hearing will take place.

**A complaints hearing consists of a committee made up of three drivers picked at random, plus a Chairman (selected from the Board of**



**Management) whose role is to ensure the meeting is conducted in a proper and fair manner in accordance with Society rules and procedures.**

The committee, who after hearing the details presented by me may ask questions of the complainant, after which both the complainant and myself will leave the meeting whilst the committee in the presence of the Chairman deliberates. It is the sole responsibility of the committee only to reach a verdict and administer a penalty should one be deemed necessary. The Chairman is not permitted to influence or direct any of the committee in their decision, however he can be called upon for guidance and advice if so requested. The complainant can appeal against a judgment they feel may be undeserved and the appeal will be heard by the remainder of the Board who have no previous knowledge of the complaint. The sentence could be reduced or increased.

Complaints are received pretty much on a daily basis from all angles and it is my job to safeguard the reputation of our Society and of you the members. I realise some of the decisions I will have to make may be difficult, but my role as I have already mentioned

is to make sure all our rules and regulations are followed correctly and fairly for everyone and this is what I will try my hardest to do - I am my own man.

I have taken on board a lot of what previous Complaints Officer, Tom Whitbread, already had in place, but I will add my own input and hope to carry out the role with integrity and make any necessary changes for the good of the Society.

**In my short period in this particular role there are a few important issues that have come to light that I would like to bring to your attention and which I hope you will all take on Board.**

Please remember that working ranks are physical and that you **must** be on them before you actually book in. The call centre monitor GPS to ensure that queue position number one should always be the first Dial-a-Cab driver on all ranks (especially E14C, E14S and W101). The only exception would be a taxi that was cancelled which as you know, would revert back to the head of the queue in the number one position. This will be closely observed.

**If your journey takes you beyond the M25, please remember to inform the call centre of the actual destination e.g. Southend and not just E99 or Essex. This is very important and failure to update the correct destination will often result in late payment.**

If you are instructed by a client to take a longer route such as the M25 or North Circular, please authorise the trip through the call centre at the beginning of the journey before making any final choice of route. Using the M25 may at times be quicker, but it can significantly increase the meter fare and clients are now rightly more conscious of their invoice charges.

Please read your trip details carefully and follow any additional information that may be added - remember some trips have more than one page of information.

The Society rules and procedures we work from are there to make it fair for everyone. I have listed a number of points that will now be closely monitored and once again, I hope that all of you will operate within these guidelines at all times. After already speaking to many of you over the past month, it is quite clear that you want me to carry on Tom Whitbread's good work and enforce the correct rules in a fair and just way and to take appropriate action if they are broken. *Please don't give me the need to contact you for a breach of these rules.*

I firmly believe that on Dial-a-Cab, we have the fairest system and the best selection of drivers in the taxi trade - let's all work together and keep it that way, it will certainly make my job a little easier.

**Allan Evans  
DaC Compliance Officer**

## CONVERT ANYTHING TO DVD OR CD

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

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

**Cassettes to CD... £4**

**(VHSC 8mm Hi to DV) to DVD... £4**

**VHS tapes to DVD... £4**

**Reel to Reel... £4**

**Super/Standard 8/Cine film to DVD... £5**

**+ Vinyl records professionally cleaned...**

**All quotes include DVD discs, CDs and sleeves**

**Pick up and delivery is possible for a small fee**

**Call for more information**

**020 8518 8765**



*It's Showtime*

**TAXI**

The TX4 is now fitted with an advanced MP3 compatible stereo system

Now "thats entertainment"

Conders Garage Ltd - Peterborough tel: 0870 850 5457  
 KPM UK Taxis PLC - London tel: 020 7377 2182  
 Mann & Overton - Manchester tel: 0161 831 3434  
 TBF Thompson Ltd - Belfast tel: 028 9084 8371  
 John Paton Ltd - Edinburgh tel: 0131 558 8005

John Paton & Son Ltd - Glasgow tel: 0141 553 4000  
 Mann & Overton - Birmingham & West tel: 0121 322 0700  
 Smith & Humphrey Ltd - East Sussex tel: 01424 210 746  
 Mann & Overton - London tel: 020 7700 0888  
 Taxiflix Ltd - Liverpool tel: 0151 482 5101



Vehicles

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

**HAILED THE WORLD OVER.**

Many Dial-a-Cab drivers are the sons of fathers who were – and possibly still are – licensed taxi drivers. Some were even involved in the early ODRTS days. But why is **Call Sign** writing about a father and son duo where the father was only here for a few short months and the son hasn't been here much longer?

Well **Gary Cox (O46)** sounds as though he will be on DaC for a substantially longer time than his father James. Gary came to our attention when he put his name down as one of the nine drivers **Call Sign** took to Coventry for a tour around the LTI factory.

So where does Gary's father come into the equation? Well James (or John as we knew him) was one of the five DaC drivers who ran the St Joseph's Hospice (Mare St, E8) outpatients transport department in the late 70s and early 80s. Although on DaC when the five began with the hospice, he left soon afterwards but carried on with his hospice work. Jim died several years ago, but Gary remembers his dad's days with St Joseph's.

"To tell the truth," Gary told us, "none of us really remembered his short stint with DaC, because he spent most of his radio career on Mountview, but we definitely remembered his time working at the hospice. He was proud of it and the way the five drivers worked together."

Along with **Ken Freeborn (W06)**, **Tony Jack (ex-R47)**, **Ian Cameron (ex-R12)** and **Alan Fisher (F07)**, **John Cox** turned up at St Joseph's most Thursdays for six years, taking cancer-stricken patients to and from the "out patients" – a service run by the remarkable Dr Richard Lamerton and which was to become the forerunner to the MacMillan Service. In those days, the hospice survived with no financial assistance other than what they could scrounge via donations.

All five drivers had their allocated areas and patients would wait to be picked up by the five

# Second Generation...



**Gary Cox**

DaC taxi drivers for their trip to the Hospice, get a quick check-over from Dr Lamerton, a cup of tea and the occasional singsong organised by a piano-playing nun! In reality, all those patients were dying, but thanks to Dr Lamerton's belief that everyone should be allowed the dignity to die at home with their loved ones whenever possible and the fact that he had the DaC taxi drivers organising patients travelling arrangements to call on, many patients had the quality of their lives improved – albeit for a short period.

In Richard Lamerton's 1986 book, **East End Doc** (Lutterworth Press), he writes of the five DaC drivers and talks of the Christmas show they put on in which they put on skirts and sang as Radio Luxemburg's Ovaltinies! Even the nuns shrieked with laughter and the day went down into history as the one where 80 dying patients forgot all about their problems and spent an invaluable period of time just laughing. John was right to feel proud of his time there.

And why did James become John?

"I was told by my dad several years ago," Gary remembered, "that it was in the late 50s and early 60s when James Dean was the 'rebel without a cause' and men had to look rebellious! He had arranged a date with the woman that he would end up marrying and who was to become my mother, but apparently he thought that Jim (he no longer called himself James) sounded too common to be rebellious, so he became John for the date – and found that it stuck!"

John had completed his National Service around the Suez Canal area and spoke six different Arabic tongues with fluency and even after returning to Civvy Street, he still took an interest in Middle East politics. It was when Gary's grandfather was stricken with cancer and John heard the DaC message asking for volunteers that he became involved with St Joseph's.

And Gary? "From my days at school, I always wanted to either play for Spurs or drive a cab, but as Jimmy Greaves took my place in the team, taxi driving won! I was on ComCab for 20 years but felt unhappy when it went from the LTDA over to Singapore and ridiculously low fixed prices came in. I have no problem with fixed prices so long as they are reasonable, but on ComCab they were becoming silly. I eventually applied to come onto DaC and it has been the best thing I have ever done in the cab trade. I can't believe that it's also much cheaper than the others!"

Anything Gary doesn't like?

"I really do like it here, but if you push me, I really think that some of the drivers need to smarten themselves up a bit. You don't need a shirt and tie to look smart, but some really just look awful. Other than that, I love it here..."

## TAXI DRIVER OF THE YEAR CHARITY DINNER / DANCE

*'Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves'*

*The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund*

*Present their annual Dinner and Dance on Saturday 1st December 2007*

**This, the 35th Taxi Driver of the Year Dinner and Dance, will be held at The Britannia International Hotel, Marsh Wall, London E14. Reception 6.15pm... Dinner 6.45pm.**

**Tickets cost just £59 each and include a 4-course meal and half a bottle of wine per person!**

**Please remember that with your support, The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund is able to make substantial donations to the taxi trade charities that support them.**

**Don't be the one to miss one of the great nights out! Come along and enjoy good food and great entertainment!**

**This event will prove to be an enjoyable and memorable occasion for all!**

**Please complete and return to: Russell Poluck MBE, Hon Chairman 5 St Brides Avenue Edgware, Middlesex HA8 6BT**

**Please make cheque out to T.D.Y.C.F.**

Please print your details:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of tickets reqd: \_\_\_\_\_ Dietary requirements: Veg \_\_\_\_\_ Fish \_\_\_\_\_ Meat \_\_\_\_\_

*Dress: Smart*

*For further information contact: Russell Poluck 07850 056 765 - Tel/fax 020 8952 1357*

*Registered with the Charities Commission No: 1000761*



Workers at LTI Vehicles in Coventry were celebrating recently as production of the TX4 model passed the 2,000 milestone.

Order books both in the UK and abroad have been bulging since its launch at Lords cricket ground last October, with production levels stepped up to keep pace with demand.

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

"To have reached such a landmark figure so soon after production started is quite incredible for us. It is a testament to the hard work of our employees and the quality of this latest London taxi. We have increased production levels at the factory with extra shifts, so we knew the magical

*Even Harvey Nicks are taking one to Istanbul!*

# **TX4: Fastest selling London Taxi ever**

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

## **Kupkake's Korner**

### **BRANSON'S PIES?**

There's Virgin Cola  
And Virgin Vodka  
Virgin brides and trains,  
Virgin PEPS, Virgin discs  
And of course there's Virgin planes.  
Virgin balloons  
Silver and big  
That float around the Earth,  
How's about a gynaecological first  
A genuine Virgin birth...!!!

**Copyright Kupkake**



2,000 was coming up, but now we have already left that behind as we continue to work overtime to meet orders.

"Since the TX4 was first revealed to the world, the demand for it has been

unprecedented. We have had drivers ordering them without seeing them, cabbies who have not switched their vehicle for some years clamouring to get one and many drivers selling other models to switch into a purpose-built taxi for the first time. There seems to be no let up in the demand for the vehicle, so our staff on the production line have had no time to pause for breath as the 2,000th TX4 sailed through!"

LTI Vehicles, which has been making purpose-built taxis at its Coventry base since 1959, invested £5.5 million in developing the TX4 and the taxi has already been exported to France, Italy, Turkey, Angola, the Philippines, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and the Caribbean, among others.

**Perhaps the most unusual export was the TX4 that Harvey Nichols bought and exported to Turkey to help publicise its newest overseas store – this one in Istanbul.**

Nigel Walters, Overseas Operations Co-ordinator for LTI Vehicles, told *Call Sign*:

"Harvey Nichols is a world-famous British brand so when it opened a store in Istanbul it wanted to promote it by using something instantly recognisable as being British. So they bought the latest London style taxi as it fitted the bill perfectly, itself being a world famous British icon. We hear it is really turning heads on the streets of Istanbul!"

## **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...?**

On Sunday 3 June and in glorious summer sunshine, Dial-a-Cab Board member Keith Cain married his long-time partner Tamara Alma-Shepherd – known to all and sundry as Tammy – in the historic venue of *The Old Rectory*, a rustic property built in 1837 and which nestles amid the rolling fields and wide open skies of rural Essex.

Family and friends, together with DaC Board members, staff and their partners, gathered to see the couple tie the knot and solemnise their relationship.

Tammy was visibly emotional as she walked steadily down the aisle, leaning on her father's arm for support. Her ivory satin dress, overlaid with sparkling stars embroidered into the fabric, shimmered in the bright reflected sunshine as it streamed through the venue windows.

Keith was first to take his vows and gently placed the ring on Tammy's finger – "third finger of the left hand please" the Registrar cautiously instructed, just in case the occasion caused Keith a bout of forgetfulness!

By this time Tammy – looking absolutely stunning – was so overcome she could barely say her vows, pausing frequently to regain her composure... and then delicately fitted Keith's ring onto his finger. To relieve the tension of the moment, Keith feigned a struggle to fit the ring over his knuckle, a mock grimace passing briefly over his face! The gesture had the guests giggling – and even Tammy managed a smile!

Later, during an often witty and humorous speech, Keith praised his new bride, telling all present that she was the most beautiful person

## It's Wedding Bells for Tammy and Keith!



Keith and Tammy in the "official" pose!  
Inset pic:  
The happy couple sign the register



Sam and Jo for their steadfast support.

Later, Keith confided thoughtfully to *Call Sign*:

**"I am a very, very lucky man to have won Tammy's love, although during the wedding service I was more nervous than at a Dial-a-Cab AGM!"**

The festivities continued long into the night as guests danced to a disco that also featured live, remarkably accurate vocal impersonations of Elvis and Neil Diamond.

On behalf of everyone at DaC from drivers to staff, Call Sign would like to wish Tammy and Keith all the very best for their future life together.

© Call Sign Magazine MM7

## Call Sign's Danny becomes a daddy!



Pic Left:  
Danny,  
Debbie and  
new son  
Harrison

No doubt few readers ever bother reading what *Call Sign* refers to as its "bump box" containing names of the printers etc, but if you do you will have seen the name of Danny Fresco who started doing this magazine's layout at the same time as the current Editor was appointed in June 1997.

Now Danny and lovely wife Debbie have become parents for the first time. Their son Harrison was born on 2 May at 9.19am weighing 5lb 14oz. He is now closing in to the 8lb mark and looking cuter by the day!

Harrison already has a famous grandpa in TAXI correspondent Al Fresco and knowing Al, you will be able to get a regular baby update in his column!



- Roadside Repair
- Roadside Assistance
- Running Repair
- Recovery
- Accident Recovery
- Pay as you go to Membership
- Credit Card taken at Roadside

0845 094 5307

We make the wheels turn  
so you can earn,



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  
1997

**This month's Flashback goes back to October 1997. The news about Princess Diana's death was still very fresh in the mind...**

## From Call Sign October 1997...

Saturday 30 September was a pretty ordinary sort of day. There had been some heavy overnight rain on the Friday but the skies were clear by early morn. It was the day before the 1997 Taxi Driver of the Year Show and it started a weekend that very few will want to remember or be able to forget. **Call Sign** had made arrangements to sponsor our computer man, Vince Chin, for an internet display at the show. Allen Togwell was due to go to the site that morning to put up a backdrop for Vince...

## ALLEN TOGWELL REMEMBERS A WEEKEND TO FORGET

Saturday (30<sup>th</sup>) was a complete disaster as far as I was concerned. I arrived at the TDoY site with a frame and two back-drops – one was a spare design concept in case the original could not be used. On arriving at the site, I was unaware that there was no main tent, so in the process of driving round the site looking for it I suddenly became immersed in a foot of mud.

After a few minutes of spinning wheels and splashing mud all over the cab, while in the process being buried even further, I eventually got out of the cab knee deep into the stuff!

I noticed a tractor standing around, so on finding a representative of the show I asked for his assistance to get me out of the mud. I didn't expect much help, so I wasn't surprised when I didn't get any! I searched for another rep that promised to help me. An hour later I was still waiting. I eventually freed myself.

If you are smiling at this stage, then it's as well you weren't doing it at the time because the chances are your testicles would be in the same vicinity as your tonsils!

I was told that Vince Chin would be there at 12. At 2pm he still hadn't shown so I spoke to Mike Son who contacted him by mobile. He apparently knew nothing about being there at 12.

As previously explained, the stand was in a mess, however I managed to erect it as best I could and when Mr Chin arrived, we got it into a presentable state.

I intended to get there early on Sunday to see if everything was okay. Unfortunately the tragic news about Princess Diana came and left me gutted and affected my plans. As a client of ours, I wanted to get some flowers and pay HRH our respects, but had trouble finding a florist. I eventually found one at Sloane Square, which involved a nice gesture. I asked the florist to make a bunch to the value of £20, which he did. I then asked him for a card. When I told him what I wanted them for he gave me ten pounds back. Nice touch.

I laid the flowers at Kensington Palace and being there relatively early dressed in the Dial-a-Cab blazer as I was still intending to go to Battersea, I was approached by the press. I explained that the Princess had an account with us and that it seemed ironic that one of the reasons she used us, was to avoid the very people who it is alleged were responsible for her death. I was too upset to say anymore.

I eventually got to the show and stayed till around 2.30. I didn't think it was very good although the death of the Princess obviously had an effect on the attendance. But my concern is that when minicabs get licensed, they will put on a show that will make ours look a disgrace. By then it will be too late anyway. All in all, a lousy end to a lousy weekend...

## WCHCD Election Court Chooses New Master

Each year The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers holds an Election Court to appoint the Court Officers for the following year. In the imposing surroundings of the Aldermans' Court Room, this year's Election Court agreed that

**Alan Parker** will become the new Master of the Company. The Company also welcomed Robert Taylor as a new Freeman of the Company. A presentation of certificates was made to the successful candidates who have completed the Guiding Course run by the WCHCD's Education Committee. Graham Woodhouse who leads the course proudly announced that seven taxi drivers had completed the course and Master Pat Stanley congratulated them all. Details of the next guiding course will be available shortly.



At the lunch held after the Court meeting, Master **Pat Stanley** announced that Alan Parker, affectionately known in the trade as Henry VIII, will be installed as Master in September.

Pat Stanley also announced that Andrew Overton will take the position of Upper Warden, Michael Davis will be Renter Warden and **Jim Rainbird (T25)** will be Lower Warden. One of the first duties for a newly installed Master of the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers is welcoming everyone to the send off breakfast for the annual Magical Taxi Tour. Martin Coffey, OBE, OFSM who is the Master of The Worshipful Company of Firefighters was a guest at the lunch and he wished The Magical Taxi Tour a good trip again this year.

**Sandie Goodwin**

## FLORIDA DISNEY EXECUTIVE 4 BED 2 IDENTICAL MASTER SUITES

Have a look at our websites:

[www.housebymouse.co.uk](http://www.housebymouse.co.uk) or

[www.floridavillas2book.com](http://www.floridavillas2book.com)

**FOR MORE EXECUTIVE POOL HOMES / CONDOS FROM £350**



## FLORIDA DISNEY VILLAS 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7+ BEDS

★ Gated communities

★ Overlooking conservation woodland/lakes

★ Air conditioned throughout. ★ Pool heating available

★ Excellent management companies on hand if needed

All enquiries please contact Lisa Rogers

01227 360388 / 07946 374420 or email:

[enquiries@floridavillas2book.com](mailto:enquiries@floridavillas2book.com)

Or call Steve Rogers (H82) on 07951 829959

In a season that at times looked as though it could give **DaC-Wembley** the *Cherry Red Combined Counties Premier League Championship*, their end position of third in a twenty-two team league, seemed a bit disappointing.

While eventual champions Chipstead seemed to be running away with the title, it was a superb 3 – 0 win against the leaders by DaC-Wembley that set in a mini-rot and had not the Wembley Lions lost some of their impetus when the end of the season drew close, the 10 point gap could have been substantially reduced and even overtaken.

One thing no one in the league can take from DaC-Wembley is the publicity they received from all the national papers together with both the BBC and Sky TV following their first preliminary round cup match where they put on the style in defeating Thame Utd 3 – 0. Wembley were picked on because of the probability of Wembley Stadium hosting this year's cup final. Following that hugely disappointing match, who would doubt that DaC-Wembley would have put on a better show at their neighbouring ground!

But for the league, DaC driver and DaC-Wembley goalie **Lee Pearce** (J71) told *Call Sign*:

**"We did seem to lose some steam towards the end and certainly failed to beat teams that we'd have swallowed whole earlier in the season! Why? I just don't know..."**

The Lions captain/coach, **Ian Bates**, told *Call Sign*: **"Lee has been outstanding this year and if he carries on with that form, DaC-Wembley should have a good chance of promotion next season."**

So what was so outstanding about Dial-a-

# It's third place for DaC-Wembley



**Making a guest appearance, Brian Rice stands next to DaC-Wembley and Dial-a-Cab driver Lee Pearce**

Cab's Lee Pearce?

**"I did a personal best this year,"** he told us, **"twenty clean sheets out of 42 matches. Not bad for an overweight taxi driver!"**

*Call Sign* are extending their sponsorship of DaC-Wembley for at least another season. Many DaC drivers have forwarded cuttings of DaC-Wembley players in their Dial-a-Cab tops

to us. Please carry on! The publicity DaC have had from *Call Sign's* reasonably small layout has been astonishing. BBC, Sky, half a page in The Sun! It has been amazing and if you see photos of the players in their tops, please forward them to *Call Sign*.

As for next season, it must be come on you Lions...!

## DRIVER SERVICES - NEW DETAILS

**As you are now aware, Dial-a-Cab has now relocated to its new home. Driver Services can now deal with most general queries, including rollerbond requests by phone, email or fax.**

*Driver Services contact details:*

**Driver Services, Dial-a-Cab, 39-47 East Road, London N1 6AH.**

**Telephone: 020 7553 7201 or 020 7553 7230**

**Email: [nualag@dialacab.co.uk](mailto:nualag@dialacab.co.uk) or [valerieg@dialacab.co.uk](mailto:valerieg@dialacab.co.uk)**

**Fax: 020 7553 7296.**

For your convenience, there is a cab rank for three taxis in Chart Street and parking is free of charge.

I hope the above information will be of assistance to all drivers, especially those who work nights, Val and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

**Nuala Glavin  
Driver Services Supervisor**

## Power Pill

DRIVE FURTHER CHEAPER  
CLEANER GREENER

### Benefits of Power Pill

- Improves fuel economy
- Increases engine power
- Easier start-up
- Lubricates valves
- Cleans entire fuel system
- Slashes smoke emissions
- Saves on servicing costs

### What DaC drivers have to say...

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

1 Pack £19.99  
5 Packs only £14.99 each

**Special Dial-a-Cab Offer of  
10 Packs at £14.99 each  
and receive  
2 extra free packs**



Available from Power Pill UK Ltd on **0845 1 30 80 77**  
or by visiting **[www.powerpilluk.com](http://www.powerpilluk.com)**  
Entering Promotion Code **DaC12**

JVBright - Southbank Service Station, London



*Hello everyone!*

**Firstly, I should introduce myself. My name is Christina and I am the new Trainer for Dial-a-Cab. I'm here to assist Daren in the training of call centre staff and drivers, have been here since October and feel nicely settled in now thanks to my friendly and helpful colleagues.**

My background goes a little bit like this....

I graduated from University with a degree in hospitality, which led me to spend 5 years as a Bar Manager for *All Bar One* in and around London. During my final year, I was asked to get involved in recruitment and training for both staff and management. On leaving *All Bar One*, I spent a year in a dedicated training role helping unemployed people return to work. Prior to coming to DaC, worked as a Recruitment Consultant for a Hospitality recruitment company where I recruited bar and restaurant managers. Certainly a great job for getting free food and wine!

So, what on earth am I doing here?????

Well, I am mainly responsible for the recruitment and training of CSRs in our call centre and also assist with the training of new drivers. Currently, I'm concentrating on new CSRs.

Any new members of our call centre now spend four weeks in a training environment while learning our computer system and our standards and procedures.

I also monitor and review each trainee's performance once a month for the 3 months of his or her probationary period. The purpose of this is to ensure they settle into the role and their teams, but it also gives us a chance to iron out any creases before they are made permanent members of the call centre.

Since my arrival, we have also changed the recruitment strategy for all call centre staff. All candidates must now prove themselves to us through a three-stage process. Firstly, they must pass a telephone screening, which ensures that they have a good telephone manner and are able to communicate well.

The successful candidates from the telephone screening will then be invited to attend an Assessment Centre. This is a half-day session involving individual and group exercises designed to identify the key skills required for working within the call centre, such as listening, accuracy and communication.

**Christina Conn now assists Daren Morley in the Dial-a-Cab's training department...**

# *Tales from the Training Room...*



**Christina in the DaC training room overlooking some trainee call takers**

The Assessment Centre provides us with an opportunity to understand each candidate's skills and personality and also allows the candidates to gain a better idea of the role of a CSR. If they are successful, they are then invited back to attend a final interview with Keith Cain. We have just finished our fifth recruitment drive using this process and I'd like to think we've found some great people.

Our priority for the summer is to recruit and train like mad in order to fill our spanking new call centre in preparation for a very busy and successful winter. Once we have achieved this, we

plan to design training sessions based around customer service, time management and general staff development in order to improve the skills of our call takers. We would also like to be able to provide training courses for other departments of the company, time permitting!

I hope this has given you an insight into my role within Dial-a-Cab. Have a great summer and I look forward to meeting you all at some point in the future!

**Christina Conn  
DaC training dept**

## **From £250 per week! ROYAL PALM BAY ORLANDO, FLORIDA**

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

**Next to heated pool and hot tub**

**Facilities include clubhouse with gym, sauna, pool table, Internet and snack bar**

**For brochure and more information:**

**Call Lewis Shurlin (R13) 01708 476 883 or 07956 547 123**

**Email: [lewissshurlin@talktalk.net](mailto:lewissshurlin@talktalk.net)**

**Fairmilehead** is on the southern outskirts of Edinburgh. It sounds like a very pleasant place which is more than you can say for the local Edinburgh licensing office after they slapped a ban on taxi driver **Bob McCulloch**, whose "crime" was to make two 800-mile trips to take terminally-ill children from London to EuroDisney and back.

But the petty Carriage Office officials insisted that he removed the badges he purchased when making the trip, which in many cases grant youngsters their dying wish. Speaking to **Call Sign**, 63-year-old Bob said he was proud to display the crest of the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers*, "but it isn't advertising anything – I bought it to put on my cab before taking part in the annual *Children's Magical Mystery Tour*. I have it on my cab out of pride."

But officials told him he was advertising and would have to pay the charge, even though the WCHCD crest only shows two horses and a motto in Latin. There is no name or phone number for the organisation. The London PCO places no ban on the logo.

"I was told I'd have to pay a fee as they are classed as advertisements," said Bob, "but I'm not advertising anything except the taxi trade. You think the London PCO are bad, come to Edinburgh...!"

# WCHCD driver faced ban for badges on cab!

*Tells Call Sign: "You think the London PCO are bad...!"*



Banned for having this logo on his cab!

Bob has been a Licensed Edinburgh Taxi driver since 1979 and his licence runs out on June 19. If he doesn't get approval for the WCHCD roundels by then, his taxi will have to come off the road. The fee involved is £70.

A miserable council spokeswoman responded by saying: "The council's licensing conditions for taxis clearly prohibit the display of any signs on taxis for the purpose of advertising or by way of identifying or personalising marks, but the council is able to vary this on application by the licence holder."

DaC's **Jim Rainbird** (T25), himself heavily involved with the Company, told **Call Sign**:

"This is ridiculous. These small roundels are approved in London for any member of the WCHCD. Bob - and his son Neil - are both proud members who actually travel further to get to London to pick up children for the weekend than they do from Canary Wharf to Paris! They should receive a commendation – not a bill for £70!"

So annoyed at the petty bureaucracy Bob was facing, **Call Sign** offered to pay the £70 rather than see him lose his licence out of principle. Fortunately, a retiring member of the Edinburgh PCO, almost as a last act before standing down, put an end to the debacle and passed the logo.

Bob, who drives a new TX4, ended by telling us:

"Thank you **Call Sign** for your kind offer, but fortunately our PCO had at least one sensible person in their ranks, one who is sadly about to retire. But had he not passed the roundels, so far as paying the £70 was concerned, the words hell and freeze over spring to mind!"

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

## CALL SIGN EN LA BELLE FRANCE



Despite the recent gloriously hot weather and the therapy of cleaning client's swimming pools down here on the Mediterranean, I have been backwards and forwards from Stansted airport much more often than I would have assumed for early summer.

The reason is that I have been negotiating with a Colchester-based estate agent who is keen on marketing the French property we have for sale on our books. It looks to be worthwhile and very promising as they intend putting on a show one weekend later in the summer. It might entice 'Essex Man' to buy a holiday home in the South of France, knowing the transport route is right on his doorstep!

But what have been disappointing are the regular trips that I've had to make to try to get the tenant in my Southfields flat evicted. However, at last, he has decided to leave – that's the good news. Not so good is that he is in rent arrears by £2,800 and seems to have unilaterally decided that I no longer required the furniture in the flat, which he then kindly took with him – a sort of unofficial house clearance if you like!

The place was left in a state with damaged walls and work surfaces, so if I do need to relet it – and I do – I'll have to redecorate and replace the furniture and of course it all takes time and money!

But how about this? I had an inventory check out from my letting agents confirming the rent arrears and stolen furniture, went to Wandsworth Police who apologised, but then informed me that "this is not theft!" Now I remember why I decided to move down to the South of France! But it's not all bad, the Old Bill were "happy" to offer me a counselling service – what a load of round dangle bits! They won't get any further help from me whenever I'm back in the saddle.

Many Dial-a-Cab subscribers have subscribed to my Ezine Newsletter, which keeps folk on top of what's going on down here in the French property market. Drop me a line if you'd like one to [robert@immoboulevard.com](mailto:robert@immoboulevard.com) and receive a regular copy. Also, check out our site at [www.immoboulevard-herault.com](http://www.immoboulevard-herault.com) for the latest deals...

Until next time – a bientot...

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

## PORTRAIT AND WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

Looking for a present? There is nothing quite as personal as a picture of you and your loved ones in a frame. I do portrait shoots in the comfort of your own home or on location.

Are you getting married? If you want something a bit different and contemporary, then look no further. My specialty is to capture candid moments and the story of your day will be presented in a stylish coffee table book.

As a regular **Dial-a-Cab** client, I will offer you a special deal on portraits: £50 with a CD of all your images (not normally included) and 8% discount on the wedding package.

Please check out my portfolio on [www.anjaking.com](http://www.anjaking.com)  
Enquiries: email: [anja@anjaking.com](mailto:anja@anjaking.com)





**Continued from May**

*The next seven days and nights were the most wonderful days of my life. We had so much fun, we ran through the streets of Manhattan like two kids. We loved each other day and night. We couldn't get enough of each other...*

We went shopping, we went to a comedy house and along the way found a little café where we'd have breakfast every morning. One morning while eating, we met comedian Jackie Mason, who'd also come in to have breakfast. We spoke to him for a while and shared a few laughs. He invited Sam to go see him in London - he was heading there soon after to do a live show.

We did a lot of walking around the Manhattan streets, hand in hand, exploring and just having lots of fun together. We were like two peas in a pod. We found an Irish Pub right across from our hotel on our second night and went in to have a drink. I remember that Sam looked so good that night. We had just come back from the Comedy House and he was wearing a black suit with a royal shirt and Disney tie I had given him. I still remember him so well. It's been over two years since this all happened and I still have the memories so clearly in my mind...

We did some really crazy things together, but I couldn't possibly divulge them to **Call Sign** readers, they are our private secret. I had never done things like that before. This man really brought the wild woman out in me. That's all I can say...

I remember so well one day whilst taking a shower, Sam ran downstairs and bought me some red roses so that when I got out, he was waiting there for me holding the roses in his hands. I was so touched. What a sweet thing to do! I still have those roses. They are all dried up now but the memories will never dry up, they will stay alive in my mind and in my heart for as long as I live.

On our fifth day in New York, we decided to hire a car and take the 2-hour drive to Atlantic City for the day. Sam insisted on driving and I was surprised to see how easily he was able to drive the car. In London he drives a **Dial-a-Cab** black taxi, which has the steering wheel on the right side and is driven in the left side of the street. In the US, the steering wheel is on the left side of the car and we drive on the right side of the street, but Sam is such a good driver that it made no difference to him. He drove the car like an expert. That goes to show you what experience the London cabbies from **Dial-a-Cab** have.

Atlantic City was a great experience for both of us. We walked through the boardwalk alongside the beach, went into the casinos and had dinner at one of the Taj Mahal Hotel restaurants. We ate dinner and just talked and talked. It was wonderful to be there with him, Sam told me he felt the same. I just couldn't bear this to ever end...

By the time we left the restaurant, it was dark outside but we didn't care. We went and sat on the cool sand of the beach on this beautiful warm night. Sam began running up and down the beach, throwing sand up in the air and then letting it fall on him as I took pictures. I drew a heart in the sand and carved our initials in it. Of course I took a picture of that as well.

Sometimes I look at the pictures of all those unforgettable times we shared together and I

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

# L♥ve On the Internet



**Jenny and Sam in Manhattan**

remember - and I cry because I miss him so much. I miss us being like we were then.

Two days later it was time for us to part. The time had gone so fast, I didn't want to part from him, my heart was hurting. I just wanted to stay like this forever and ever. I didn't want him to go away from me again.

I remember so well as we were packing our

suitcases, how hard it was to know he would be going away again to London, England and so far away from me. I knew how much I would miss his arms around me while we slept at night, we would sleep this way all night long, just holding each other...

*Continued next month*

## Executive 6 Bedroom Villa in Florida

**From £395 per week**



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

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

**Dial-a-Cab driver Sid Nathan (K88) has never been afraid to grab the microphone at any DaC AGM over many years and *Call Sign* recently discovered why.**

Sid's cousin, **Abie Nathan**, was the founder of the former Israeli pirate radio ship, the **Voice of Peace**. The Peace ship became famous for Abie's many attempts at bringing about a peace settlement between Israel and its Arab neighbours, not just through its programming, but by sailing and anchoring in places where few others would have even dreamt of going with such high tensions in the area. In 1977 it sailed down the Suez Canal to Egypt with music blaring out! It was also famous for going beyond the Gulf of Eilat into Jordanian waters before being threatened by bombing. Now there is peace with both countries.

**Yet whilst far from stable, peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours seems more likely now than ever and at Abie's recent 80th birthday celebration in Tel Aviv, that was the message that was being passed around.** One of those guests was indeed Abie's DaC cousin Sid Nathan

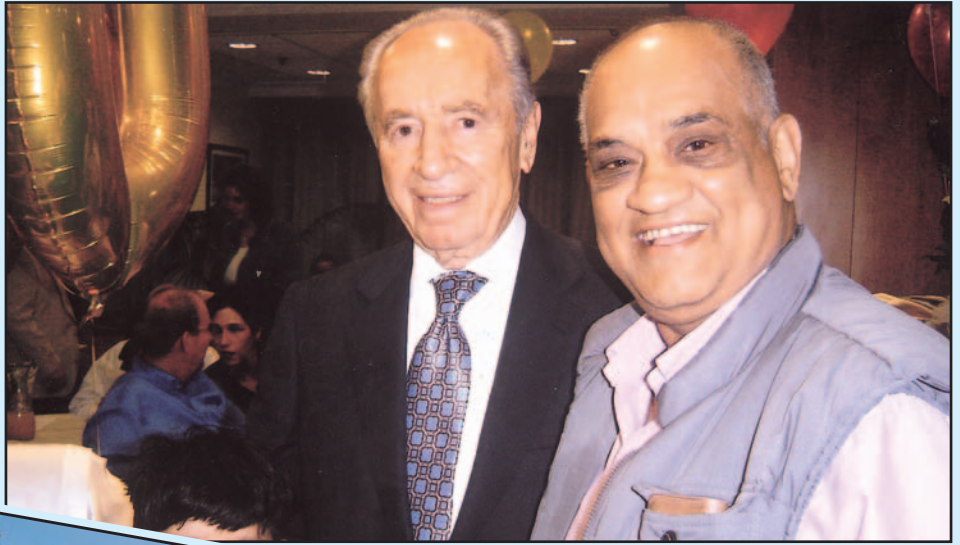
and among the many dignitaries at the bash was **Shimon Peres**, the Israeli Vice Premier who in 1994 won the Nobel Peace Prize along with Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat.

Sid told *Call Sign*: "I remember many of Abie's broadcasts and some of the almost-crazy things he did in order to try and bring peace to the middle east. In 1966, he flew his private plane to Egypt and became the first Israeli to visit the country outside of hostilities. The peace deal between the two countries was still 13 years away. In 1974 when he saw how dangerous things were becoming, rather than do the sensible thing and sail off into the distance, he attempted to sail the Peace ship through the Suez Canal for the first time! Even during the 1991 Gulf War, the MV Peace moored off the Tel Aviv coast within easy reach of any enemy planes."

Sid ended by telling us: "All those famous people that came to see him on his birthday, no one deserved it more than Abie."

During its height of popularity in the 1970's with its top 40 play list, the Voice of Peace boasted a listenership of over

## Sid Nathan at 'Voice of Peace' birthday



**Sid Nathan with Israel deputy PM Shimon Peres  
Inset: The Voice of Peace ship**



20million covering the complete middle east and much of Europe. But in 1976, the I s r a e l

Broadcasting Authority did what the Harold Wilson Labour government did in 1967 when it banished Radio Caroline into illegality to see the formation of Radio 1, so the IBA brought in Israel's first ever pop radio station - Reshet Gimmel (Network Three) - to compete directly with the Voice of Peace.

The end came for the Voice of Peace when Abie Nathan saw that the Israeli government and PLO were having dialogue so he maintained that there was no need for the Peace ship anymore. Unlike its UK counterpart, Caroline, the Voice of Peace was always held in deep regard and it was the-then mayor of Tel Aviv, Shlomo Lahat, who went out to the ship and took part in the final broadcast. Legendary folk singer Pete Seeger's *We shall Overcome* was the station's final record. Strangely, Radio Caroline often played the Joan Baez version.

On November 28, 1993, following the signing of the Oslo Peace Accord, which he assumed was validation of the station's mission, Abie Nathan deliberately sunk the Peace ship in International waters.

Abie Nathan was imprisoned on sev-

eral occasions for violating Israeli laws forbidding contact with enemy countries and the PLO in particular. But he always claimed that he would continue until peace arrived and in a protest against Israeli policy towards Palestinians, he wore nothing but black for 20 years.

In 1996, during a visit to Washington, Abie Nathan suffered a stroke which left him partially paralysed and from which he has never fully recovered.

At the party, Shimon Peres told Abie: "We owe you a major debt of gratitude. You showed us what one man can do alone. You made us something different, something more important. I am convinced your dream will come true. It is a dream that has no alternative, not among us, and not among our neighbours."

### FOUNDLING MUSEUM

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

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

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

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

**The Foundling Museum is at 40 Brunswick Square WC1**

**Tel. 020 7841 3600**

**Visit their website at**

**[www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk](http://www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk)**



In a move that Dial-a-Cab Chairman Brian Rice described as being as momentous as any that had ever been accomplished by a radio taxi company in Europe, the Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Society Ltd began the move on Saturday 5 May from their previous home at Brunswick Place to a new state-of-the-art home, literally around the corner, in East Road.

**"We met at Brunswick Place at 2am,"** a delighted Brian told *Call Sign*, **"and began moving the equipment at 3.15am. By 5.25am we were up and running again in the new building!"**

The Chairman continued: **"By that time, we had half of our phone lines switched to the new building and by 7.30 the rest of the phone lines from the old building were switched over – every single thing going exactly to plan and to time."**

He went on to add: **"Of course, whilst everything on that morning ran exactly as we had hoped it would, this was a huge move and the planning began around six months earlier when our IT department under John Banks starting making preparations for the move. We naturally hoped that everything would go well because it really was a huge, huge move, but it all went spectacularly to plan and we were – and are – absolutely thrilled. Not that long ago, it was virtually a bombsite – now Dial-a-Cab has the finest radio call centre and offices of any taxi company anywhere."**

One of the first to be given a tour of the building was *Call Sign* Editor Alan Fisher. He said:

**"Being shown around the stunning new building was an amazing experience when realising that in June 1953, just a handful of drivers led by founder-Chairman Bonnie Martyn had to make a collection amongst themselves at the Albany Tavern – still situated at the top end of Great Portland Street - to raise the £200 needed to purchase equipment to get the Society off the ground! Then just 8 weeks later, the newly formed ODRTS leased their first premises at 172 Pentonville Road, Islington and 12 weeks after that when news came through that the lease was up for sale, the Committee of Management – as they were known - decided to put in a bid and their first office became the official offices of the new Society."**

It was several years later that the rapidly growing Society moved to Shirland Road, Maida Vale, where the phone number prefix of LORDS became a nickname that even overtook their ODRTS moniker – at least until June 1984 when the Society officially took the rather easier to remember trading name of Dial-a-Cab.

Then on 11 August 1984, DaC moved to their third home at Brunswick Place

## *It's Goodbye to Brunswick House as DaC move home!*



**A piece of History as Becci dispatches the first trip. Brian Rice, Theresa Whitfield & John Banks look on**



**Part of the fourth floor where most of the offices have walls of glass**

where they were to stay until 5 May 2007 when the current move to 39 – 47 East Road – which consists of 15,500 square feet with parking for 20 vehicles and astonishingly that they bought without incurring any debt - took place!

Brian Rice takes up the story: **"Moving is never easy,"** he said, **"but in those days computerisation was in its infancy and the only real problem would have been in moving phone lines. Our IT is ultra high-tech. There is no one in our business that has anything**

**even approaching the computerisation that DaC now uses, neither is there a call centre anywhere in Europe to match the one we are now using. If I sound proud, believe me it's because the DaC board and I are proud of what we have now achieved. Our new building has set a new benchmark in the radio taxi business and is a worthy addition to the history of Dial-a-Cab and will, I believe, provide the opportunity to increase our market share even further."**

# DaC Customer Services/Special Projects

You have read elsewhere in *Call Sign* about the fact that various clients are extremely concerned about the unacceptable level of service we are giving - in other words a lack of coverage. Make no mistake about it, this, unfortunately is a fact. Our Account Management team and call centre are having to spend too much time placating issues such as cabs turning up late or not at all, or drivers not adhering to instructions on their trip details instead of concentrating on getting even more work.

We have moved into new premises with more staff, better technology plus a bright and better working environment. The drivers that have visited our new building have been pleasantly surprised and very complimentary on it. However, the whole project doesn't amount to a can of beans if we cannot service clients.

I am spending far too much time on the phone and visiting clients explaining why we cannot cover trips and why drivers are running in with more than £4.20. Clients now have the choice to go to other licensed suppliers. Let's face it, car companies can - and do - guarantee that they can have a car outside the pick-up point when required. Whether they achieve this or not is not always relevant - the perception is that they can.

Customers are now getting wise to the fact that our drivers can pick and choose trips, unlike minicab drivers. Also, although again perception, that car companies are cheaper than us and trying to explain that this is not always the case is difficult when trying to get past first base - our service. There are only so many times we can make commitments to improve things.

We lost the HoC and now an account we have held for many years, has given us a matter of weeks to make improvements. In anticipation that this will not happen, another cab company has been employed as a back-up. In addition, due to the lack of service, we are not taking any more new business and it's not even Christmas. Tell me what organisation turns away new business because the workforce can't fulfil its obligation to existing clients? I'll tell you what they do - they make changes to improve serviceability.

Drivers moan about the data dispatch system and the fact there are so many resends when trying to send information or accept a trip. I can assure you that our IT Department have been working diligently to try and resolve the problems. But what are the problems?

Yes, we need more aerial sites. Dial-a-Cab have been in constant contact with Ofcom who are the telecommunication authority, asking to have more sites allocated to us. We need better channel capacity strength to allow more taxis to log on



easily and quickly in all areas. You can read more in the Chairman's Report.

BT engineers, DaC's IT team, plus consultants from the USA have all been working to improve things. But one of the major problems are the various packets of data that travel to and from your on board terminal to our host computer and back again to your terminal. The unacceptable number of rejects and queue positions sent is now having a profound effect in slowing down the data dispatch system.

**When you take note of the data supplied and the general problem with coverage, the question must be asked, do we continue in the same way or should we change our working practices?**

Do we solve the problem by increasing the minimum number of trips a driver must take per month from 40 to 60? Do we make every job dispatched non-rejectable or do we expect every driver to take it upon him or herself to reduce their own number of rejects and queue positions and take as many trips as they can? I must point out that none of the above is Board policy or has yet even been up for discussion.

Nevertheless, something will have to be done if we want to continue being the premier radio circuit.

A non-rejectable scenario would, I am sure, be a bitter pill to swallow, nevertheless if we do nothing, make no mistake about it - we will lose accounts. To help with service, new staffs are being employed in the new call centre to increase from what was a 35-work station in Brunswick House to 70 in the new building, 1 training room to 2 multifaceted training rooms, plus increased capacity in both IT and Customer Services departments. The move to the new building was in anticipation of making us an even better Society, taking on more work, an increase in the fleet, with driver revenue increasing as we head up to and beyond the 2012 Olympics. If we cannot cover the work we already have, what of the future?

I would like to believe that it is not necessary to legislate how you should work, therefore it must be up to you. The more work you cover, the more money you earn. Help us to help you.

## Parking at the new building

Some of you may have noticed a taxi bay in Chart Street opposite our premises. I negotiated with Hackney Council to have these 3 bays, which are now available for use. Even though there is payment machine next to the bays, no payment is required. The machine will be moved in due course.

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



Moving home  
Commercial property  
Property disputes  
Family - divorce, co-habitation and children  
Wills and Probate  
Personal Injury - accidents at work, on the road, at home, criminal injury claims

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

Tel: 020 8868 4343

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

Tel: 020 8735 9770



## Will is yet another DaC Marathon success!

Dial-a-Cab driver **Will Jones (B38)** was yet another Dial-a-Cab driver to successfully complete this year's *Flora London Marathon*. He had tried previously to get onto the list of runners for the event, but failed. But this year he made it and completed the course in a good 4 hours 47 minutes.

Will ran for the UK-based disabled children's charity KIDS.ORG running along with his best mate, Neil Richardson. They were aiming for a time of 4 – 4.5 hrs and after 26 miles run in extreme heat, came close!

**Call Sign** sponsored Will's effort in the 26-mile race just as we have several other drivers mentioned in previous issues.

After the event, Will told **Call Sign**: "Every one seemed to be running around 30 minutes behind their targets due to the exceptionally hot weather. Even Gordon Ramsay was 40 minutes down on last year! It was the last 6 miles that was the real killer, but it was all worthwhile when I crossed that finishing line to collect my medal! I'm hoping that I will have raised around £1500 in total for this very worthwhile charity."

KIDS.ORG is a national charity that provides an extensive range of services to over 6,000 disabled children aged 0-19 and their families in 5 regions across England providing services that focus on the child's educational, social, developmental and emotional needs while also providing vital support to their parents, carers and siblings.



### Mickey's Music...

## Dial-a-Cab driver finally gets his "Big Day!"



As 70's pop duo **Luke and Blake**, Dial-a-Cab's **Steve Stern (G34)** and friend **David Capri** had substantial success in the early to mid-70's. But after not securing the top ten hit they craved, they decided to call it a day and went their separate ways.

But after a chance meeting of their mothers at the Royal London Hospital and an exchange of phone numbers, the boys are now back with a new name, an old song and a number one download hit!

As **After Eight** and with a re-working of their 1973 classic **Big Day** released onto the MP3 download charts, they are finally getting the success they deserve with **Big Day** going straight to number one on the *Easy Listening* charts - and on the day of its release!

**Big Day** is the ultimate feel-good summer track and with its natty, catchy rhythm is sure to be heard everywhere and be a big hit at holiday resorts, barbecues and parties right throughout the summer.

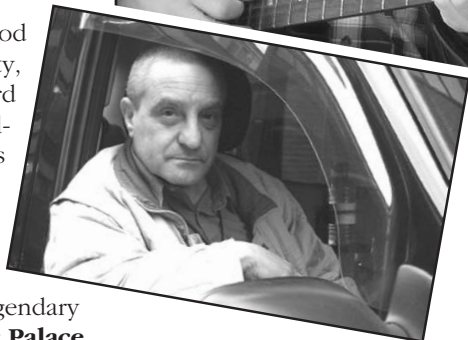
As **Luke and Blake**, the duo supported the likes of **Tom Jones**, **Alan Price**, **Jimmy Ruffin** and **The Faces** playing legendary venues such as **The Manchester Palace** and **The Marquee** in Wardour Street. They also did some recording for music giant CBS.

After going their separate ways, Steve worked in casinos around the world before settling in Spain. He then moved back to England and became a cab driver

A Chance meeting with his old band mate....and a number one hit!



Pic above: Steve (left) and David as After Eight.  
Inset Steve as G34 on DaC



in 1994, joining Dial-a-Cab 3 years ago. David stayed in music, performing on the West End stage in *Les Misérables*.

You can download **Big Day** by going to **www.caprisalsa.com** and clicking on the **Big Day** logo.

**After Eight** also performed live at this year's Pimlico Summer Festival held at St. Georges Square, Pimlico on Sunday 1 July. If you get this issue on Saturday 30 June, pop along tomorrow and have a **Big Day!**

Winners of last month's competition for the *Dan Raza CD* were *M.Greenberg*, *Lucy Charles*, *Ron Lucas*, *C.Jeffries* and *Tony Clark*. Go to **www.danraza.com** for details of his upcoming gigs...

**Mickey Lappin (E46)**

After five successful years in Scotland, a challenging now board game is to hit the shops in London. Called *'Taxi'* it is a fun, educational and socially interactive board game based on the working life of a city Taxi driver. It combines local general knowledge in the shape of 600 questions on London, luck in getting the best fares and your social skills are tested when landing on a *Sound Off* square and you have to talk on a subject for 20 seconds. The questions cover history, long lost cinemas and dance halls, famous people, places and events throughout London's long history. So the better your knowledge and social skills, the better the tips and the more you earn! It also covers losing cash through passengers being sick in the cab and by failing the annual overhaul - situations that Dial-a-Cab drivers can obviously relate to.

Created by Derek Carroll, an Edinburgh Taxi driver since 1988, it was first launched in Edinburgh in 2001 with a Glasgow version following two years later. Although based on the life of a taxi driver, *'Taxi'* has sold in its thousands to people from all walks of life who have an interest in the history of their local area. Many have also been sent abroad where there exists a large ex-patriot market. The game has even outsold *Monopoly* and *Trivial Pursuit* in stores such as John Lewis and WHSmith. With retail sales now well into six figures, a decision has been made to licence the game in eight further cities in the UK and Ireland.

**Derek is not just looking for the first person to offer the price of the**

# TAXI: The New General Knowledge Board Game for Londoners!

*and you can be involved in it!*



A huge success in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Now you can make it big in London too

could be made, both to the game and to the packaging. All points raised have been taken on-board and are now being

**licence, more importantly they must show a keen interest in the social history of their area and an enthusiasm for the product.**

Piloting the game in Scotland has given Derek a chance to observe at first hand the customers reaction to *'Taxi'*. This also provided him with an opportunity to gain in-store feedback from retail managers and the public. From these liaisons, he was given suggestions of changes that

introduced into future print runs, thus helping to strengthen the appeal of the game and to dictate the future merchandising strategy.

**Derek will be in London in July and August, so if anybody feels they have the drive and enthusiasm to take on the potentially lucrative London licence for the *'Taxi'* board game, contact Derek through the advert below.**

## SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW YOUR CITY



## A UNIQUE LONDON AREA



## BOARD GAME LICENCE OPPORTUNITY

A **unique** opportunity is being offered, to an existing business or individual, for the right to supply major retailers and local stores in the London area with a local history/general knowledge/trivia board game. The licence would suit an individual with an existing business and an interest in London and district local history, who can show the dedication and flair needed to successfully promote a local board game. Edinburgh and Glasgow versions of this game have been established in those areas for the past five years and, due to the success achieved there, we are now in a position to license the game for eight further major cities. The successful applicant will have the **sole rights** to supply and promote the game in the London area. With the game already on sale in major national retailers in Edinburgh and Glasgow, help will be given in establishing a connection with local buyers from these stockists.

An investment of approximately £65,000 will be required, although this cost may be substantially reduced by the sale of on-board advertising. For this outlay, you will receive an initial 5,000 games, point-of-sale literature, contacts with major retailers and a substantial amount of London-targeted advertising. **Only one licence holder will be chosen for the London area.**

To note an interest and receive further information, please send your details, including a phone number, giving a brief description of any existing business to:

Derek Carroll, Taxi Board Game, 7 Laverockbank Avenue, Edinburgh EH5 3BP.

A SAMPLE OF THE 600 QUESTIONS IN THE GAME:

**Which London travel aid did Harry Beck create in 1933?**



# CALL CENTRE CHAT

**We have been in our new call centre now for almost two months and the staff have adapted to their new surroundings very well. It's surprising to see just how much the atmosphere has changed and I must say, it really is for the better. Having the facility to double the number of call taking positions, we are now well into the recruitment process of reaching a full complement of staff by the end of this summer.**

## Controllers and messages...

I have had many conversations with drivers regarding controllers responses to messages. My instructions have always been to understand the contents of the message and make a decision on the urgency of the message. It is also important for them to ensure the accuracy of the information before sending it out.

One real problem for controllers lies in the way the dispatch system offers the message to the controller. When I tell you that a small box appears at the top of their screen with just a number and the box appears simultaneously on other screens at the same time, this can present controllers with confusion. Each time a message is dealt with, they have to call out to see if another controller has dealt with that message.

During busy periods, this is not the best way because if a controller does not hear the call due to them perhaps talking to a telephonist or a driver, then the system fails. I have spoken with the senior controllers and a new method of dealing with messages is being put into place until such time as we can get the dispatch system changed.

Controllers have asked if drivers can make sure they read all their messages to prevent the same message being sent to us several times. Also, for those who feel they have a sense of humour and find it highly amusing to send false traffic information, please stop doing it. Otherwise, I'm sure the changes will improve things.



## Service problems

We have had many account clients expressing their concerns over our service. Investigations have shown that the majority of problems are caused by traffic congestion, over which we have no control and our explanations about this do help to placate some of the issues.

However, there have been a few complaints that appertain to drivers not following the correct procedures once they have arrived outside a pick up or have failed to keep the controllers informed of their delay. While it may not seem important to many of you, any problem caused to a client because procedures are not followed, only add more problems to any other issues they may have. Clients are very quick to inform us about these, so please ensure you follow the procedures.

In addition please look out for the operational changes that have been posted to you and which we hope

will help improve the service to clients and also make things simpler for drivers.

## A change for Gazza

There has been a senior staff change made recently on the evening shift. Gary Gates, who was our shift operations manager, has decided to revert to his original shift, which is back on days. The evening shift operations manager's position has now been given to Andy Parry who I know will grasp the opportunity to take over the helm and I am confident his style and skills will only enhance the running of the shift.

I would like to thank Gary for the two and half years he has spent managing the team and for the operational changes he implemented. They not only improved our coverage, but also contributed to clients receiving an excellent service.

## And finally!

You will have no doubt have seen a few photographs of my wedding. The day went off better than my wife and I could ever have wished for and both Tammy and myself would like to thank the vast number of members who sent us their best wishes.

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

## 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.***

Back in May, **Call Sign** featured Formula Ford's **Linton Stutely** at a special **Power Pill Taxi Day** at **JVBright** together with DaC drivers **Barry Groner (V30)** and **Sid Nathan (K88)**. Power Pill is the main sponsor of Linton and his team, Getem Racing, and Linton's racing season is going from strength to strength!

The first meeting of the season was held at Oulton Park, where Linton finished a credible sixth in a field of 24. Unfortunately the second race of the day was abandoned after complete mayhem in the Formula 3 race delayed the remaining scheduled races.

However, things improved at Donnington Park in mid-April with good qualifying sessions for the two races (third and second respectively) and another sixth place was followed by a first podium finish of the season with Linton finishing third.

The Formula Ford merry-go-round then headed to Brands Hatch as part of the A1 Grand Prix weekend. Linton's improvement continued over the two races and a second consecutive third was followed by a second place leaving Linton forth in the championship overall.

Linton and Power Pill were awarded the "Ford Spirit Award" at Brands for their work in promoting the sport by inviting youngsters in to have pictures taken with the car and drivers, signing autographs and letting the public see just how a race team works.

Leon Warner, Power Pill's CEO, told **Call Sign**:

*"This is our first season in Formula Ford and it quickly became apparent that there was a huge opportunity to bring families into the paddock to see what goes on within a racing team. Children love to have their picture taken with the car and a real live racing driver and Linton has taken well to leading the way in promoting this fabulous sport."*

Then, just when the team thought things couldn't get any better, Snetterton provided Linton with another second place finish, followed by a win in round eight of the championship, pushing him up to second place in the championship.

Linton told **Call Sign**: **"I really cannot describe how good it feels to have driven so well this early on in the**

# Remember Power Pill's Taxi Day?

**Now Linton Stutely tops the podium and wins DaC drivers free Power Pills!**



Linton in the Power Pill car. inset: A delighted Linton on the podium

*season - and it just keeps getting better and better. Right from the start, with support from the public - including the many Dial-a-Cab drivers I met back in April - things have steadily improved. It would be great to meet some of the drivers again when we bit*

**Brands Hatch again in July."**

Leon Warner added: "We are so proud of Linton that to celebrate his success - and for DaC drivers only - we are going to run a very special July limited offer..."

**"Buy two packs of Power Pill at £19.99 per pack and receive a third one FREE! However, this offer must end on the 27th July 2007."**

**For more info on Linton Stutely, Power Pill or this special offer go to [www.powerpilluk.com](http://www.powerpilluk.com). Drivers can still obtain Power Pill from JVBright or Power Pill direct on 0845 1 30 80 77.**

## PENALTY CHARGE NOTICE PROCEDURE

- \* In the event of a DaC driver receiving a PCN on an account ride, he/she should pay it within the time allowed for the reduced rate of £50.
- \* The PCN can be paid by phone, online or in person.
- \* Driver Services require the original ticket plus proof of payment.
- \* If you pay over the phone, please write the payment reference on the ticket.
- \* If you pay online, please print the receipt.
- \* If you pay in person, you will be issued a receipt, please remember to keep the original PCN.
- \* Send or bring the ticket into Driver Services, with your call sign and badge number written on it.
- \* You will be reimbursed via your credits.
- \* If you receive a ticket that has increased in value, please contact Driver Services for further advice.



# ASCOTT CAB COMPANY & SALES LTD

Victoria Wharf, Grove Street, London SE8 3NW

Telephone: 020 8692 1122

**Friendly Staff & Quick Service**

**For All Your Running Repairs & Overhauls ...**

**Phone Now To Book An Appointment 020 8692 1122**



## **TXI Service**

Standard Service  
**£44.65** inc VAT

**ASCOTT CAB CO.**

ONE STOP CAB SHOP

**Book On Line**  
**[www.ascottcab.com](http://www.ascottcab.com)**

**Minimum**  
**5 Days**  
**In Advance**



## **TXII Service**

Standard Service  
**£75.20** inc VAT

Major Service  
**£116.33** inc VAT

## **TX4 Service**

Standard Service  
**£88.00** inc VAT

Major Service  
**£129.00** inc VAT



There have long been discussions among cab drivers over how we should describe ourselves. Are we London licensed taxi drivers? Are we cabbies? Are we black cab drivers (*see Mailsbot pages*)? The probable answer is that we are whatever we want to be!

However, there is one Dial-a-Cab member who is entitled to the name of World licensed taxi driver! Tony Arnold (F03) is quite probably the only taxi driver in the world who has travelled so far across the continents purely as a working cabby.

We know of the WCHCD who take their cabs across the Channel to Disney each year loaded up with happy kids, there was **Gerry Dunn (S84)** and **Bill Tyzack (C6)** who shared the driving on a Paris job in 1999 and there was DaC's **Mark Thurbin (M96)** on his trip to Morocco last year. All amazing *Call Sign* stories, yet almost piling into insignificance when compared to **Tony Arnold's** taxi driving exploits.

We first wrote of Tony in 2002 when he was paid on behalf of a Chinese TV company to fly a TXII to Beijing in China and then drive it all the way back to London with two young Chinese passengers who had won the trip in a competition! The trip was to help publicise the Beijing Olympics – which were then still 6 years away. The 3-month TXII trip took him through **China, Outer Mongolia and Russia** – where at the border crossing of Manzhouli a local restaurant offered to catch a dog and cook it for him and co-driver (LTI's) John Rula! Tony declined the kind offer and stuck to something resembling a pizza!

They then drove to the **Arctic Circle**, through **Finland, Sweden, Germany, Holland, France** until Tony and the TXII arrived safely back in **London** after a trouble free trip!

To most Licensed London taxi drivers, that would be enough driving abroad to last a lifetime – but not for Tony Arnold! Several years down the line, *Call Sign* again followed Tony's exploits – this time taking a TXII to Abuja, the capital of **Nigeria** to help train the local cabbies in how to not only drive the LTI vehicle, but also in how to behave towards passengers. West African cabbies were famous for their take-it or leave-it attitude. During his stay in Nigeria – and later on in **Ghana** – Tony instigated examinations for the local drivers, in addition to lessons in how to drive the TXII – something Tony refers to as one of his life's most satisfying times.

"I started with a group of Nigerians who drove smashed-up cars that they referred to as taxis and whose driving habits were appalling! When I left, they acted like professionals!"

On the trip, he also met up with members of the Nigerian Government who

# Tony Arnold: DaC's WORLD Licensed Taxi Driver!



Tony in Tiananmen Square, China



...and in the 125 degrees heat of Abuja, Nigeria!

had heard of his Chinese exploits and afforded him almost film star status... "except," said Tony, "when there was a dispute over whose job it was to fix the TXII's aircon unit. I wouldn't have minded had it not been 125°F outside! But it helped me shift a few pounds..."

## Onto Australia and Japan via Dubai!

So China and Africa were conquered, surely enough for most? Not for Tony! His taxi projects where he has been hired to display his training skills include some "local" work in **Rome, Seville and Valencia** – where he addressed a taxi driver conference - return trips to **Helsinki and Stockholm** and then **Copenhagen**. In November, he is scheduled to make a trip to **Tokyo**, followed in February 2008 by a 3-week stint in **Melbourne**,

C class, how to maintain their cabs in a safer way than they were currently doing (even though there is talk of changing to a different cab) and in customer communications. Tony was hired purely as a taxi teacher without the LTI cab.

"I do have the latest TX4 at home," he told us, "and it is a brilliant taxi, but LTI are not involved in the project this time. However, make no mistake, when asked for my opinion on the best vehicle to use as a taxi I will always truthfully reply that although I am currently sponsored by Toyota, it has to be the latest LTI model. They could certainly afford them in the Emirates should they wish to – even in temperatures equalling those in Nigeria! I also tell them that when in London, always to use Dial-a-Cab when phoning for a taxi. And yes, I still do my 40 jobs a month when not abroad!"

Undoubtedly Tony classifies as a World Licensed Taxi Driver...



Two years ago, my wife Lesley and I bought a run-down farmhouse in Le Marche Italy. Then last August we decided that I should take a year away from driving my cab with DaC in London and finish off the restoration. With one daughter getting a scholarship to do her *Masters* at Kings Collage in the Strand and the other one training to be a teacher, we thought it would be our only opportunity. So we rented out my cab and house in Kent and started off to **Le Marche** on what proved to be quite an adventure...

Le Marche is a region in central Italy enclosed between the Apennines and the Adriatic Sea. It is rich in poetry, art and history with a stunningly beautiful and hospitable landscape. For centuries, Le Marche has jealously guarded its hidden treasures and remained almost unknown to the world. Its unique landscapes and the kindness of its inhabitants are a surprise to anybody venturing into this land on a voyage of discovery.

Its picturesque villages are full of ancient churches, abbeys and monasteries, all beautifully preserved over the years. Its sunny hills marked by rows of vines and leafy oak trees that overlook green valleys. You can see what drew us there! But it hasn't all been about beauty, it has been an unforgettable experience. **No one here speaks English, so dealing with builders, plumbers and the like was great fun - if not a bit frustrating for them as well as us!**

In London, I have been driving a cab for 29 years or so and been on **Dial-a-Cab** for 20 of them. But this felt at least one million miles away. My Italian is going well, but for Lesley - who is a teacher - it has come a lot quicker. She is also working a few hours a week teaching English to 4 and 5 year olds in a local school. No English is spoken at the school, but we had a year of evening classes before we left the UK so restaurants and shops were no real problem, but as I've said, builders and plumbers etc were great fun with pen and paper plus a bit of pointing with fingers! So it all went well. But how did it all start...?

## Where shall we go?

Like thousands of other people, we sat and watched programs on television inviting us to find our *'Place in the Sun'*. Over the course of several years, we explored different regions of Spain and France but never found the right place for us.

In the summer of 2004, we took a four-week holiday and traveled around Italy. We visited several different regions and caught up with DaC's 'Italian John' (**John Rubini F55**) in Rome where he gave us our own private guided tour - thanks John! We then spent a few days with him in his home region of Abruzzo. During this holiday we fell in love with Italy, its beautiful scenery, delicious food and friendly people.

Once back in Kent, we settled into the humdrum routine of work again and continued with our hectic lives. Then, with Christmas out of the way and the grey days of January and February to look forward to, we began to think again about the possibility of buying a place abroad. This time, with the experience of our holiday fresh in our minds, we began looking on the internet at places in Italy.

In hindsight, we probably acted quite hastily, but fate seemed to be taking a hand. We

**Ever fancied buying a run-down farmhouse and then taking a year away from the cab to renovate it? Well that's exactly DaC driver Tony Holmes (C09) and his wife Lesley did! Tony will tell *Call Sign* readers about their adventure over the next few issues...**

# A DaC Drivers Year in Italy...



**This is how the house looked...**

spotted a house on the internet in the region of Le Marche, flew out to view it a few days later and agreed to buy it there and then. As we looked around the house, unbeknown to each other we were both thinking that this was the place we were looking for.

In Italy your word is binding and once you verbally agree that you want the house, you have to pay 10% of the purchase price. As this was a big step for us and quite different to the way things are done in England, we were

erring on the side of caution. We asked the agent if it was possible to have a survey done before we handed over the 10 percent? He offered a handshake and said he knew that this was done in England and the house would be held for us until we were happy with the survey. This was just the start of our Italian adventure...

*Continued next month*

**Tony Holmes (C09)**

## SUNNY LIFE

### Spanish Property

**For holidays, retirement or investment**

**Steve Shaller**

**Shaller9@aol.com**

**www.sunnylife.co.uk**

**35 Gaysham Hall longwood Gardens**

**Ilford Essex IG5 0EP**

**Tel. 020 85039318    Spain 0034 965321122**



Natalie Ezekiel tells Call Sign  
how DaC won the WCHCD Treasure Hunt

## Dial-a-Cab girls on a mission - To Win...!

When **Jim Rainbird (T25)** approached Dial-a-Cab on behalf of the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* and asked if we would like to take part in a Treasure Hunt to help raise money for their Charity Trust, I went straight to the DaC Admin floor to seek out a team for the mission!

The message I relayed to Account Managers, Annita, Carol and Jeni was: "Our mission should we chose to take it, is to win, win, win!" All four girls instantly agreed. In our customized T-shirts (see cover), which I must say stole the show, we set out to meet Jim Rainbird who was to be our lucky driver for the day, while holding a message from *Call Sign* that we had to win... or else!

We arrived at Finsbury Square on Sunday 10

June with all the other contestants and once we had collected our question sheets, challenge list and Polaroid cameras, we set off at 11am.

After helping ourselves to a beer mat, followed by a brass rubbing from a church and risking life and limb to collect photos from weird places, we had our only brush with the law - that was to have a photo with a female police officer. Oh yes, and it was taken by a very nice young policeman! (*Ed's note: I'll have to send an escort with you next time!*)

We then travelled through the City over to Westminster filling in our answers on route. The back of the cab was a bit like the *London Stock Exchange* with everyone talking at once! Annita then broke the morse code, which held the clue to our next photo request. *Photo to be taken in front of Big Ben at 12.30 on the dot.* And yes, we did it!

On our way back towards the city, we arrived at the Waldorf Hotel where Carol and I went in to collect marmalade and coffee! No we weren't stopping for breakfast, this was

**Captain of the DaC girls team Natalie Ezekiel receives the winners trophy from current WCHCD Master Patricia Stanley**

part of our treasure hunt. Then towards South London for more torturous challenges before the final task, which was to write a poem or lyric about the day - but a song would be worth double points! Well luckily Annita, who is great at writing little lyrics, got started. We were the only team to write a song that we happily performed - with all contestants joining in the chorus!

After handing in our competition forms, the winning team was announced - Dial-a-Cab!

I would like to thank the organisers, Jamie Owens and Gary Mankelow, for inviting us along to a great and very worthwhile day.

**Natalie Ezekiel**  
**DaC Sales Dept**

## DaC's David Lessman Meets The Flash Angels!

### As the Edgware Mall helps LTFUC children

The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children have had their funds boosted thanks to a weeklong campaign at The Mall Edgware shopping centre, the centre having chosen the LTFUC as its **Mall Cares** charity.

Live performances by award-winning dance group the Flash Angels (Boogie Woogie Sony UK Bollywood Champions) were the culmination of the campaign, which ran from May 29 to June 2. In particular, the Fund's Hon Chairman - DaC's David Lessman (D19) - was seen to enjoy this particular fund-raising exercise, claiming to be something of boogie woogie expert (see the photo)!

Throughout the week, LTFUC volunteers were present to run a lucky dip and sell popcorn and candyfloss and tickets for a prize raffle. A balloonist and face-painter from Children's Parties with Zako also entertained visitors to the Mall Edgware.

Angela Greenlees, General Manager of The Mall Edgware told *Call Sign*:

"One of the greatest strengths of the LTFUC is that it concentrates on supporting

of children who truly deserve our help."

The Fund have asked *Call Sign* to thank on their behalf the following companies who donated the raffle prizes:

**PC World (Staples Corner), Curry's Digital (Holborn), Woolworths (Head Office), Stephanie Moses of the Cake Group, Locanda Florio Ristorante Italiano (Edgware), Marks & Spencer (Edgware), Boots (Edgware), Superdrug (Edgware), Sainsbury's (Edgware), WH Smith (Edgware) and Hamleys.**

Ray Levy, the LTFUC Press Officer told *Call Sign*:

"The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children are extremely grateful to all those who supported us, including The Mall Edgware, our loyal supporters the Flash Angels (Terry Revill) and those companies and organisations who donated raffle prizes. However, special

thanks must go to the Edgware Mall's Marketing Manager, Dina Mistry, for all her help, support and hard work in making the week possible. **Mall Cares** week was a great success and we are deeply grateful to all involved."



**David Lessman about to show off his boogie woogie skills with LTFUC supporters, the Flash Angels**

local and London children while keeping its running costs to a minimum. We are delighted by the response to our weeklong programme of activities and know that the money that our visitors donated will help make a real difference to the quality of life



## Holidays and insurance

I was standing on the beach in Normandy last year thinking what a fantastic time I was having, only to realise that it would be almost a year until I was on a beach holiday again. It's no wonder people look forward to this time of year because it's a long time coming and yes, we all do spend a huge amount of time working. Choosing a holiday destination with three small children in mind and involving new surroundings always has its risks – as I found out when my daughter fell off a chair and cut her head, requiring three stitches. It was a Sunday in France and she was going to need hospital treatment.

Before we left for France, I arranged holiday insurance as I always do. No matter what people say, it is wise to do so and I can vouch for that having spent a day in Atlanta Hospital having had an appendicitis operation whilst on a 10-day holiday to the US a few years back. Even though it was an inconvenience, it saved me £12,000 in medical bills as the insurance company paid. A day for an appendix? Yes and believe me there is no better place to have an operation than the US.

Anyway, when we set out for France, we were well covered for in-patient treatment, but for outpatient treatment we needed **EHIC** cards (European Health Insurance Cards) as the E111 forms are now invalid. These I got easily over the Internet. After making enquiries, I found a local private hospital near Deauville who, even though initially refusing to speak any English, were very helpful, efficient and after 3 hours we were on our way home. We settled the £90 bill by credit card as we were told they didn't accept the EHIC cards, but we had little choice as all the main hospitals were closed. I kept all the receipts and once home I got in touch with EHIC enquiries in Newcastle upon Tyne (0845 605 0707). After filling out a form and sending the hospital and pharmacy receipts, I received



reimbursement in full.

So even though the EHIC cards initially appeared worthless at the French hospital, because I had registered I was entitled to make a claim back home. Some insurance companies offer to do this service for you, but there is no reason why you can't D-I-Y. So don't be put off and claim!

## Picking hops for a holiday?

In this day and age, we take paid holidays for granted – unless you are self-employed of course. But it wasn't long ago that people had to work their holiday, which was what 100s of eastenders did in the first week of September each year. Travelling down to Kent on Southern Railway, the big brewers such as *Guinness* employed workers to take down hop vines and pick the hops. Kent is world renowned for its quality of hops (a member of

the nettle family) and harvesting was an important part of production. The hops vines were taken down by men on stilts, picked by the women and children and packed off to various locations for drying.

In the early days, Ale became a very popular drink for obvious reasons, but also because the water was purified in the brewing process. It's hard to believe, but once upon a time, water available for public consumption was impure and caused disease, so to feel safer people drank ale! It was at a later date that hops were added to improve flavour, thus the basic difference between bitter and ale is that bitter contains hops and ale doesn't.

**It's true to say the whole of England was at one stage consistently drunk - including London cab drivers! And the remedy to keep us out of pubs? The cab driver's shelter or green huts!**

Anyway, the history of hop picking still lives on and you can read about it in the famous Limehouse writer Gilda O'Neil's series called *Lost Voices: Memories of a vanished way of life*, where she writes of going hop picking to Kent with her parents in the 1950s.

Alternatively, the *Kent and East Sussex Steam Railway* at Tenterden near Ashford holds an annual "Hoppers Weekend" at Bodiam, close to the castle. This year it takes place on the weekend of the 8/9 September. So if you or your family would enjoy reliving or remembering the hop-pickers way of life in days gone by, with local real ales and a late night singsong, look no further! For more information on a really enjoyable day and evening out in *Darling buds of May* country, details are at the Kent and East Sussex Steam Railway website on [www.kesr.org.uk](http://www.kesr.org.uk).

Finally if you wish to contact me, feel free. Just send your email, putting *Richard Potter* in the subject line, to [callsignmag@aol.com](mailto:callsignmag@aol.com).

**Richard Potter (T51)**

**Until the new Driver's Reception area is completed and a notice board put up, Call Sign will be taking cabs for sale ads etc. Please bear in mind that Call Sign comes out on the 1st of each month. Email [callsignmag@aol.com](mailto:callsignmag@aol.com)...**

## Call Sign Classified ads Call Sign Classified ads

**51 plate** TX1 Silver SE, full aircon, upgraded radio / CD player, DaC fitted, charcoal grey, remote alarm, Cabvision fitted if wanted. Available mid-August.  
£14,500 (OVNO). Call Jon (E88) 07956 369 876...

**Lonely** ten-month-old night cab (Wed to Sun) in Hampton Court area on DaC seeks caring dayman (or woman) to share work and day outings, non-smoker and G.S.H. essential. Could lead to long term relationship and possible partnership (not civil) for compatible applicant. Reply in confidence to Malcolm (F24) on 07984 419210 or 020 89793766 after 1pm...

**TX1 (Silver)** Y-reg in *metallic storm grey* for sale, £13,750. Call David Killington (G67) on 07971 783 851...

## Ruffles

*The Complete Curtain Making Service*

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

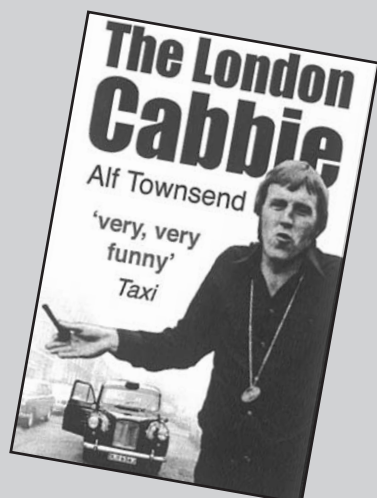
Cushions, quilts and headboards all made to measure using customers own fabric...

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

Tracks and blinds can be supplied and fitted

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

## BOOK REVIEW



### THE LONDON CABBIE by Alf Townsend (Sutton Publishing £6.99)

Alf's way of describing anything to do with the London taxi trade is well known as being pretty accurate in an entertaining sort of way and in the paperback version of his first book, Alf has done exactly that by shrewdly collecting together an amalgam of sharp editorials threaded with warm, personal anecdotes, an injection of East End villains, knowledge boy novices and cab shelter faces together with a nice selection of old photos.

Also included in *The London Cabbie* is the reason why Butterboys are so-called, inside stories from those cab shelters, tales on how you used to earn yourself an 'easy extra wunner' followed immediately by direct mentions of those long-ago east end notables such as the Kray twins - Ronnie and Reggie - together with Jack Spot and Barbara Windsor's ex, Ronnie Knight! P'raps the wunner wasn't that easy! *The London Cabbie* is filled with anecdotes such as the story of the man Alf refers to as the most talked about cab user in London, alongside such other almost-celebrities of years gone by like Mr Whippy!

If you've heard about Welbeck minicabs but know nothing about them, then here's your chance alongside many other interesting facts to London cabbies. Not sure about the flash on the front cover saying "very, very funny," but *The London Cabbie* certainly contains humour and more importantly, it is very interesting.

**Just one downside – and sadly one that is rather irritating. The hardback, which so far as I can see by flicking through it is identical to this paperback version, was called just "Cabbie." The paperback one is called "The London Cabbie." So if you are an internet buyer who already has the original, you could be tempted into buying the same book again without realising.**

If you don't have the original, then *The London Cabbie* makes a very good read...

# Will the real Alan Fisher please stand up?



Alan and Linda - but is it the real Alan!

Over the years, *Call Sign* has helped many people from overseas make contact with lost family or friends who are believed to be residing in the UK. Some get published, many others not.

We helped the Australian mother of a young man who tragically died from cancer, make contact with cab driver friends of her son's living in the UK. Details she had were sketchy, but with much luck we managed to put her in touch with the person she wanted to say hello to and he turned out to be on Dial-a-Cab!

We helped John Osborne from Vermont, USA, trace his uncle James who used to be a London Taxi Driver back in the 1950s and who used to live near Fulham.

We also had the task of finding anyone descended from a person we were told "lived in St Pancras during the early 20th century!" We hadn't realised that at the time much of Camden used to be known as St Pancras, but eventually made contact with someone who had details of the family's descendants. We traced them to an alleyway off Primrose Hill Road, but they had emigrated to New Zealand years before. We sent the person concerned a photo of the house their descendants had previously lived in and astonishingly they were thrilled with it! Well, you can't win 'em all!

Then last month we received a letter from the US and someone called Len Nakisher. For some reason he believed that *Call Sign's* Editor might have been related to him.

He wrote to Alan Fisher giving his name and saying that he was looking for family in England and was hoping that this was the Alan Fisher he believed he was related to. His only clue was in the name of "his" Alan Fisher's wife, Melody and that they lived in Clayhall. As *Call Sign's* Alan is married to Linda and doesn't live in Clayhall, it appeared that was the end of the story. But just as a last chance, Alan put out a message over the terminal asking if anyone knew Alan and Melody Fisher. Other than a few drivers suggesting it might have been the Editor, there was nothing. Then the following day there was a call from **Gary Appel (J35)** who told Alan that his father knew Alan and Melody Fisher.

A few emails crossed the Atlantic and then Alan received an email from his namesake addressed to the "other" Alan! It thanked him for getting involved in the hunt for the "real" Alan Fisher and that thanks to his efforts, he and Melody were now in touch with Len's son Rob in the USA.

Unfortunately, by the time Melody's Alan had made contact with his American cousin, Len had left to go on vacation in London.

"But," wrote Alan, "we will be keeping in touch with Len and his family in the future. Without you this would never have happened and thanks once more for linking us all together."

Everyone was happy except the Editor.

"I thought I was the real Alan Fisher," he told *Call Sign*!!!



(Continued from May)

To a few London cab drivers, it was becoming obvious that as the 1960's came in, car ownership was growing and becoming more affordable as wages increased. In addition, hire purchase regulations were eased, so more people of all classes were now able to buy their own cars.

As usual, the cab trade prophets of doom uttered their usual cries: "The cab trade is finished. We're doomed! Who will want to ride in a taxi when they have their own car?" In fact the exact opposite happened...

Once a bus fare payer became a car owner, they would not uncomplainingly wait for a bus to come along. They rapidly lost their patience and often hailed the first empty cab they saw. This turned many of the former cab trade graveyard areas into taxi-using zones, perhaps not with the levels of cab-users of the traditional strongholds such as Knightsbridge, Mayfair, West End and the City, but it increased the work available to taxis and made up for the loss of the thousands of American servicemen who had been such frequent cab users.

At that time there were three major London radio circuits, York Way Radiocabs, Radio Taxis Southern (aka Mountview) and Owner Drivers' Radio Taxis. London Wide had not yet been born. Out of the 9,000 or so licensed London cab drivers, radio men totalled fewer than 800. Ranks and street hails were still the life blood of the London cab trade.

York Way Radiocabs closed down their radio circuit that had catered for large fleet owners for various reasons, among which was the lack of support by the other fleet owners. Their complaint was that instead of reducing unpaid mileage, drivers were running further to cover radio work, increasing cabs mileage and wear and tear for the same money.

The other two radio circuits had mainly owner driven cabs, whose owners were in the main happily taking extra money that recompensed them for the increased miles. Some owner drivers had worked out that as long as they were taking more money by running to cover radio work, that they were better off financially than ranking and waiting for a fare, or driving around their usual haunts hoping for a hail. The more money you took, the lower your overall running costs.

Fortunately for me, the majority did not, or could not either work it out or understand this new way of working, so I and my like-minded colleagues could continue to take increasing amounts of dosh with ODRTDS radio work. But even better was to come with the unexpected growth of credit accounts...

Continued next month

**Sunset Strip**

**"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...



York Way Radiocabs call centre when they were still called control rooms!



## COMPLAINTS RESULTS



Results of a Complaints meeting heard Wednesday 6 June  
and Appeal meeting 13 June.

Call Sign does not publish 'no further action' results...

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

Name/call sign	Nature of complaint	Sentence
Lee Rowley (B66)	Not completing minimum amount of credit trips Rules: 20, 28	Expelled 6 months suspended
David Brent (F91)	Refused to drop client at destination address Rules: 2, 3, 25	Expelled
Barry Mehrtens (Y81)	Made racist remarks Rules: 2, 3, 5	Expelled (Reduced to 2 weeks susp on Appeal)
Stewart Jopling (T72)	Due to flat battery, unable to complete trip. Abused to client and his wife Rules: 2, 3	Severe rep
James Crow (B18J)	Driving too fast and close to vehicle in front. Also texting or playing with mobile phone during trip. Stopped to refuel and left meter running Rules: 2, 3, 5, 24, 25	Expelled
Patrick Waldron (K55)	Went to wrong pick-up address and passenger had to walk to another street. When client asked for the meter to be restarted, driver became abusive Rules: 1, 2, 3, 5	Severe rep
Russell Hall (G44)	Driver used threatening and intimidating behaviour towards the Chairman of ODRTS Rules 1, 2, 3	2 weeks susp (Upheld following Appeal)
Justin Mendoza(N53)	Driver has taken the same trip at different times of the night. Driver and brought passenger into work. Rules 2, 14, 27	Expelled (Upheld following Appeal)

After the past two year's **Mocatra Open Championships** being held at Rayne Lodge in Essex and only producing average results, it was decided to take the 2006 event to a new venue - Monk Lakes, which is just outside Maidstone in the village of Linton.

Monk Lakes is a new complex established around four years ago with four match lakes all stocked with similar quality size and variety of fish.

Club captain Dave Cronin told **Call Sign** that two of the lakes were full. Over 30 years of organising Opens ensures the draw, pools, side bets and peg locations run smoothly with just 15 minutes needed to put 68 anglers safely at their pegs for a 10.30 start and 4.30 finish.

At 10.30 precisely, the match got under way with all anglers starting to catch fish straight away.

On lake one, **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Bill Mariner (M80)** was catching fish at a very quick rate, whilst on lake two, another DaC driver **Ron Smith (M35)** was catching at a steady pace.

A rule of Monk Lakes is that you are not allowed more than fifty pound of fish in a keep net, so weighing scales were put around the lakes for anglers to weigh in their nets during the match. This also gives you an idea of who is catching the most fish.

# DIAL-A-CAB ANGLING

## DaC Driver Takes Mocatra Open



**DaC's Billy Mariner takes the Mocatra Open Championship**

Towards the end of the match, Dial-a-Cab driver **Billy Baldock (E27)** fell into the lake with his mobile and wallet in his pocket! Jerry Roberts, a young 72 years old, ran to his help - or so we thought. But it turned out that he just wanted to

moan at Bill for disturbing his fish with the wash caused by his falling in - Bill is hardly the tiniest of fishermen!

At 4.30 sharp, Captain Cronin again sounded the hooter for the end of the match and the designated scales men and assistants made a speedy and efficient weigh-in with the results relayed by phone to Captain Cronin at the Stile Bridge public house!

**So congratulations to the winner of the 2006 Mocatra Cab Trade Open - DaC's Bill Mariner with a new record weight of 171.5 lbs. Second was another DaC's driver Ron Smith with 143lbs with George Manoli third, around 10lbs behind.**

The Mocatra Open would not take place without the sponsors, of which **Dial-a-Cab** are always one, so a very big thank you to them. And finally, thank you to all the anglers who came to fish and I hope you had a great day and look forward to seeing you all for the 2007 event.

**Jeff Clark (C25)**

## ££Money...

Self-employed tax is due again at the end of the month with groans of pain all round, I'm sure. My favourite **Dial-a-Cab** driver, Glen, has his tax nicely tucked away just like the Inland Revenue says you should, all saved up and earning interest, but he is so sensible sometimes you want to slap him! I'm sure it's not so easy if you've got a family to support or you have had to take time off work recently.

From where I sit as a wage slave on PAYE, the more tax you owe the happier you should be, as you must have earned even more than you're paying! I went to a party last year where a barrister was complaining about shelling out £25,000 for his wedding and then added: "Now I have to find another £25,000 by the end of January for the tax man."

I nearly spat my champagne on him as I choked back laughter - he must have earned £200,000 or so for that tax bill, no? And in six months...?

People can be embarrassing about money, and I don't mean the ones who think it's for stuffing down pole-dancers' panties in night-clubs. (Any idea how much you can get in a pair?...Ed). Americans talk of little else besides markets and the economy and what things cost, but they're not the ones who annoy Glen by saying they can't believe the fare and that he must be making a fortune. He can't be bothered to argue, but sometimes he points out that there are huge over-heads, no promotions, no bonuses or early retirement deals when you drive a taxi.

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

## Back Seat *Driver*



My Jewish parents always taught me (apart from "never buy retail") that you had to use money to build more - don't shine shoes for a job or you'll always shine shoes. Sell some apples from a cart, use the profit and some day you'll have a chain of fruit shops. When I see signs from the car saying, "Jesus Saves," I can still hear my mother add: "Maybe, but Moses Invests."

Judging by the charities they support, taxi drivers are a really generous lot of people. Can I suggest a charity box for everyone who can no longer smoke in their own taxi, to see some real benefit from the restrictions just imposed in your "public enclosed spaces?"

You could put 30p in the box every time you don't light up. It's a false economy, though, if you stop work and get out to have a fag after every trip. Good luck on that one...

Couples have as many problems about money as there are couples, don't they? I liked the practice up north where working men traditionally handed their pay packets to their wives, who managed the housekeeping and handed back pocket money to the men as they saw fit. My Glen thinks I'm retarded for having a flutter on the FA Cup or the lottery. "(Bad ticket again? No? Really? Try a different shop!)" Well, I think he's daft for shopping at Waitrose when street markets sell just as good food if you select sensibly and can save you enough each week for a fiver on any horse race you choose on Saturday - which is a better adrenalin buzz than shopping at Waitrose - try it.

I don't envy the rich because, as Richard Branson says, he can only wear one shirt at a time and eat three meals a day, same as anyone else. I do envy Glen though, because he can sleep as late as he wants and go home when he wants and he has no boss - and that is priceless...

**Till then...**

**Love Poppy x x x**



Louise Burrows and her boyfriend Alan Hall (J23) are appealing for help for Louise's 9-year old cousin George, who is suffering from a rare form of cancer...

## CAN YOU HELP GEORGE YEOMANS?



"My 9-year old cousin, George Yeomans suffers from a rare form of childhood cancer (Neuroblastoma). He was diagnosed at 7 and has been through intensive chemo, radiotherapy and major surgery over the past 2 years. He was given the all clear at Christmas 2006 to our joy, but within a few months the cancer had returned and there's no cure within the UK for recurring Neuroblastoma. George's parents only hope is to pay for him to have pioneering treatment at the Memorial Sloane Kettering Hospital in New York. The initial deposit for this treatment is £200,000. Time is not on our side and so we need to raise this money as quickly as possible. The **2Simple Trust**, a registered UK charity (no 1113954) are supporting the appeal. We've set up a website for George ([www.georgeyeomansappeal.org](http://www.georgeyeomansappeal.org)) where you can find details of how to donate, read George's story and find out how he is currently getting on, along with details of planned fund raising events.

His plight has been advertised in the local Hertfordshire papers. George and his parents were also interviewed for BBC London.

We are still a long way off reaching our target. Many of George's family are London Taxi drivers (as is my boyfriend, Alan Hall J23 on DaC), so we are appealing for London Taxi drivers to help us raise these initial funds. If anyone can help via donations, fundraising events, prizes for our auctions or raffles or celebrity contacts, then please contact me, Louise Burrows, at [samsredhouse@aol.com](mailto:samsredhouse@aol.com) or on 07984 326950. Or speak to the Trust that are supporting this appeal on 0208 732 3372 - you can also make an online donation by calling the Trust.

Thank you for taking the time to read this..."

**Louise Burrows**

# The LTFUC Outing to Legoland



David Lessman receives a cheque for the LTFUC from LTI's Richard Daniels

**The damp morning of Thursday 17 May saw 100 taxis – many with new drivers - turning up at Earls Court to take 200 'special needs' and underprivileged children on the *London Taxidrivers' Fund for Underprivileged Children's* fun-day outing to Legoland in Windsor.**

Damp it may have been, but the sight of so many blue and yellow balloon-decorated cabs certainly brightened things up as the convoy set off. An hour later, just before entering Legoland, the convoy stopped on the hill leading to the car park and looking down at the winding convoy of 100 decorated taxis provided an amazing sight!

The children (and drivers) were given their admission tickets, plus 'Lego loot' and emergency Rap Macs and the fun began. The sun eventually made an appearance and in no time everyone was running in different directions – especially towards the many fantastic free rides on offer.

The Fund's Hon Chairman, DaC's **David Lessman (D19)**, on behalf of the Committee offered grateful thanks to all the wonderful drivers and helpers who came and gave the children such a great day – they just couldn't do it without them. Grateful thanks also went to the management and staff at Legoland and Earls Court for their help and assistance in making the day possible.

Ray Levy, the Fund's Press Officer, asked *Call Sign* to thank on behalf of the LTFUC, *Westminster Insurance*, *Bartle Bogle Hegarty and Zeckler & Co* for covering the cost of the outing, *LTI Vehicles* for sponsoring the fuel and *EC&O Venues*, *Creative Events (the Food & Drink Company)*, the *RAC* and *St John's Ambulance* for all their help and support on the day. Thanks were also due to *London Communications* for use of the radios on the day.

There were two cheque presentations made to **David Lessman** for the LTFUC. One came from Simon Rich of *Westminster Insurance* and the other from *LTI's* Government Affairs spokesman Richard Daniels. David thanked them both on behalf of the charity and also thanked *Mr Zeckler* who had very kindly come to see the children off.

**The Fund's annual outing to Southend takes place on Wednesday 11 July 2007 and if you would like to help on the day, contact Drivers' Liaison, Susan Angel on 07958 280881.**

The Fund's website is at [www.ltfuc.org.uk](http://www.ltfuc.org.uk) where you can see more Legoland photos in the 'Photo Gallery'. Don't forget: None walks so tall as he who stoops to help a child...

## MAILSHOT

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

## Black night for signals?

Alan, as an evening man, I'm sure you know that last night's signals (26 April) were the worst ever. How many drivers does it affect and why does it happen? Will it happen again? How many accounts are lost on a night like this? There must have been 300 jobs on the board at one time, surely if we had a marshal on the Fins giving drivers jobs by pen and paper via the phone and call centre, this would still have been better than the meltdown we suffered last night. Do drivers have a right to a subs refund or rebate - no I'm not joking!

Secondly, after a 6-hour wait for a trip offer, I got a true A/D - except that when I accepted the job, it had a given destination. Well that's not a true A/D is it? That's to fool the greedy driver into thinking he might get a roader, but really he can do what someone has deemed an undesirable job. True A/D it certainly isn't. Also if Dial-a-Cab were not so busy flogging theatre tickets or recruiting drivers to daytime TV cookery shows via their terminals, it might free up the airways a bit. After a very frustrating nights work, the biggest insult to me is only 2 trip offers but 3 different cabs for rent on my screen. Can these ads be put on hold till another day, or at least to when we have stopped swearing at our state-of-the-art top-of-the-range, 'dogs nuts' terminals that don't work!

**Nick Steventon (J65)**

**Brian Rice replies:** I can understand your frustration, Nick, but I can assure you that I was equally and probably more frustrated than you! As you know, we recently moved and it was imperative that our system was upgraded before the move. That led to problems when our system was put under pressure, particularly on a Thursday evening - the busiest night of the week. It is very easy to criticise, but what we need is a little tolerance and understanding as we endeavour to improve our infrastructure, that will be to the long-term benefit of members and clients. Have we sorted our problems out? Well, at the time of writing we do not know, we can only be sure once the system comes under pressure again, however, I am hopeful the situation has been resolved! Will it happen again in the future? Probably yes, because with the best will in the world all organisations have problems with their computerisation programmes, we are no different and possibly even more prone to difficulties as our systems are so much more complex than most. I appreciate your suggestion regarding the Finsbury, but that is not an option, purely because of the volumes of work

that go through the system nowadays.

Finally Nick, as I wrote earlier, we need tolerance and understanding from members as we do not 'crash' our systems on purpose!

## Classifieds in Call Sign?

With all that's happening in the trade at the moment with new emission regulations and the two overhauls a year rule, what are your views on the idea of a page or column in *Call Sign* for subscribers to advertise cabs for sale / wanted or drivers looking for a cab to work, or owners looking for a driver or partner?

**Gary Saffer (P59)**

**Gary, I used to run a classified column. The problem was that too many drivers complained their ads were being answered up to a month after the ad went out because *Call Sign* comes out monthly. It will always happen because some drivers take a month to read the mag whilst others flick through it. So you can be looking for a cab to buy, see one in *Call Sign* and phone the seller who gets irritated because his cab was sold three weeks earlier! I'd have no problems doing it again if that's what drivers want, it's just that the system of a notice board in the old building seemed to work well. However, until the new Driver's Reception is completed and the notice board goes up, I will be happy to take any ads (see page 31) ...Ed**

## Thanks for the article

Thank you for the lovely very touching article you included in the May *Call Sign* on the arrival of my newest grandson, Liam, who is doing great.

**Stephanie Bell**

**Redbridge, Essex**

**Stephanie's husband was the very popular DaC driver, Lennie Bell (L01), who died in March 2005 ...Ed**

## Gone...but not forgotten!

How sad that *Call Sign's* best two columnists Chas Kissin and Russ Hall have decided not to continue writing in the magazine, here's hoping they reconsider. Let's hope Richard stays ...good stuff.

**John Addis (K97)**

**Hello John, as I wrote in the last issue, it was my decision to ring in a few changes. Both Chas and Russell have been writing for *Call Sign* for many**

years and I felt that on some occasions you have to make changes in order to keep a magazine fresh. I don't know whether I have succeeded, but I constantly have to keep trying. I'm sure both appreciate your support - and yes, Richard Potter is still a comparative newcomer compared to those two and still here.

Several drivers have also asked why I stopped the series of legal articles by solicitor Hope Liebersohn. The reason was that Hope had almost reached the end of the series and the May issue, with the following month off, is a traditionally good time to drop a shutter down! To all three, once again a big thank you ...Ed

## Black is black?

Re the debate started by Stanley Roth (Y53) in the last *Mailshot* on whether we are black cabs or not, I wholeheartedly agree with the quoted JPM passenger. Black cabs mean London cabs. A licensed taxi driver can mean anyone from any part of the world, but black cabs, well that means us - the best in the world - London black cab drivers! I have had many people in my cab who say they have just returned from another country and that they never realised just how much they appreciated the black cabs of London! They don't mention London licensed taxis...

Personally, I don't even think we should have a choice of colour - we should only have black. I think that people who choose a different colour when buying a new cab only do it so they stand out as in: "Look at me, I'm different, I drive a 2-tone or 'white pearl' or 'rose red'. No sooner than these new colours - and optional extras for that matter - were allowed, that's when I believe the PCO started saying: "If you can afford £750 extra for a paint job, you can afford to represent your cab for that 'hangy' bit of trim.

As for full or half liveries, well I don't think they should be allowed either. And before anyone starts ranting, just look around you - New York has yellow, Mexico City's are green and white, some German cities have beige, while Madrid has white and red. Even our beloved Basildon has white and orange - and all have no - or very little - external adverts.

Every single London cabbie knew when getting their badge that they were becoming a member of the world's most famous club. The title 'black cab' is one of the most respected (outside TfL and every local London council, that is) group of drivers





# MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 36

throughout the world. The phrase black cabs is one of only things we have left that is unique to us, excepting bus lanes and street hailing, and if these two go what do we have left? I'll tell you - a rank full of coloured cabs with no identity

**Michael Beevor (N76)**

**York Council recently entered the debate by deciding to only licence taxis that are black and which only display the council crest on the outside. Anyone else like to give a view on the subject? ...Ed**

## E14 rankers...

Thank you for clarifying the E14C ranking regulations (May *Call Sign*). As it happened, in my incident I was 100% correct because I did not book-in until I was on the rear of the rank on the left hand side of the road. It was the cab in front of me that waited until he reached the first 4-cab portion before booking-in that caused the problem. I will know in future what the rules are and with your information all drivers should also be aware. There is nothing worse than disputes with other drivers who mistake the rules. Thank you again...

**Tom Reynolds (O85)**

**Pleasure Tom! If only all queries were that simple to solve! ...Ed**

## Subs up

Just read Brian Rice's *Call Sign* article and the 'good news' that our subs are going up despite the fact the Society has millions in the bank, we break records month after month and we have a shiny new building. It seems that the drivers' reward for all this success is an increase in subs, surely the very opposite of what should have happened! An increase insultingly spun as if we were lucky and we should consider it good news.

Frankly the Board can't have it both ways, freshly re-elected on the back of rightly trumpeting their successful stewardship, with records being broken all over the show, best ever financial position etc, but who then say ignore all that now and far from decreasing your subs, we're actually going to increase them. What is the point of having 4 or 5 million in the bank or 9 or 10 for that matter if we can never reap the benefits?

My question is this: Just how successful, profitable and record breaking does this 'mutual society' have to be before drivers can receive some financial bonus for their efforts?

**David Brett (P93)**

**Brian Rice replies: One of the reasons we are so successful, David, is that we**

**think to the future. To increase subscriptions by the rate of inflation is not unreasonable, after all, your staff expect an increase in their salary every year - just as you do. Because this Society has been so well-managed, we are in the position of purchasing our new building without incurring any debt so that we might attract more work for our members in the future. Although we are still in a healthy financial position, our reserves have been used to acquire the freehold of the new building and I believe the vast majority of my members will understand the necessity to increase subs, otherwise, unless we can guarantee a surplus every year then if at any time we needed to spend large amounts of money, the BoM would have to come to the membership cap-in-hand. That is not good management but weak management!**

## LPG conversions?

I have been with Dial-a-Cab for 18 years but this is the first time I've written or emailed to *Call Sign*. Would it be possible to find out about any cab companies that carry out taxi conversions to LPG or CNG, as I cannot find any details on the PCO or TfL websites? If any DaC driver can recommend anybody, my email address is garryfarr@hotmail.com.

**Garry Farr (R87)**

**Nice to hear from you, Garry. There is no one in the trade who knows more about LPG/CNG conversions than Stanley Roth (Y53) and I asked him the questions on your behalf. He said that the only company that may offer LPG conversions is the London Central Cab Company at Herne Hill Road (phone 020 7501 9998). So far as CNG conversions are concerned, it has never worked due to the weight of the tank and also the refuelling infrastructure. However, Garry, if you can wait until the end of the year, there may be some good news regarding cabs on test ...Ed**

## SatNavs

I'm sorry you have had a bad experience with a driver who was using a SatNav, Alan. I purchased one last year. I spend a lot of time in Spain, which is why I really bought it. Unfortunately, after only one week my SatNav failed to work. For this I blame myself. I thought I could talk dirty to the lady giving me directions, but obviously she was not amused!

Having received a replacement - and now on my best behaviour - it helps me locate speed cameras (*What...? Ed*). Sorry, that should have read safety cameras - the man-

ufacturer's preferred description (*That's better! Ed*). It is certainly a help, but not something in which I would put absolute faith. I firmly believe it is no substitute for the Knowledge. Yes! It will get you to your destination, but in a manner that would certainly displease most members of the public. When tested, it has given me routes that inform me to turn at junctions where I am not allowed to do so and has also advised me to take routes through busy shopping centres when there are better options! On several occasions my passengers have seen my SatNav mounted on my dash and given me their postal codes. I assume that this is the result of travelling in minicabs on a regular basis. In the meanwhile, I look forward to getting a fare outside London where I would find it more beneficial.

**Steve Shaller (R75)**

**Thank you Steve. Much of what you say concurs with what I said. It gets you there but not in a way that passengers would want - even when the route is straight. Where you fall into the trap is in your last section re postcodes. By seeing your satnav, passengers will eventually believe that there is no difference between minicabs and us. That's why I said that I keep mine hidden until needed on that out-of-towner.**

## Appeal, appeal, appeal...

Just to let you know the PCN I received from TfL for stopping on a red route at 3.40am on the Edgware Road has been cancelled. I got the PCN in November and appealed twice to TfL with no joy. One week before I was due to appear at the *Parking and Traffic Appeals Service*, TfL bottled out. I suggest any driver with a PCN should take TfL the whole way.

**Barry spear (Y16)**

**I spoke to Barry when he received the PCN and told him what I'd tell anyone in similar circumstances; if stopping is in connection with the job, then you must appeal! TfL may be stubborn, but their legal department aren't stupid. They know when the driver has right on his side and that the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service often come down on the side of the driver. Of course there are times when you are in the wrong and then you just have to hold your hands up and shell out ...Ed**

## H of C...

I am at a loss to understand how an account we serviced, at fixed prices, satisfactorily for a long while migrated to Radio Taxis whose drivers are now servicing this same account



# MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 37

on meter readings plus a 5% gratuity? I am, of course talking about the House of Commons account. Reading Paul Jenner's letter (**May Call Sign**), he writes that Radio Taxis are going to undercut our prices by a reported 50 pence a mile.

I do not know where Paul got his information from, but I got mine from numerous Radio Taxi drivers and a close friend who happens to be an employee of the aforementioned circuit.

I am aware strange things happen in our trade, but this has got to qualify as being one of the strangest. Possibly a Board member may be able to enlighten me with regard to this puzzle?

**Steve Shaller (R75)**

**Brian Rice replies:** I now believe it was all down to service. The account was due for renewal in April this year and we went in with £3.30 per mile, but if you remember Steve, the House had a torrid time before Christmas with our service because we are so busy. They were complaining to us on a daily basis, as indeed many of our large accounts were about our level of service. Again, if you remember, I wrote at the time that we might have some casualties as our service was perceived by some customers to be poor. I believe the decision was made before Christmas that the account would not renew with us in April - I do not write things for the sake of it. I will also predict that unless our service improves during the morning rush hour, the HoC will not be the last account we lose. Many drivers just sit there and reject, reject and reject. I know all the reasons, I've heard them all a million times before, but at the end of the day some of our members are not supplying the service our clients require - no doubt some of those same members would be the first to jump up and tell drivers in *Call Sign* how it's OUR company. Their coverage doesn't always seem to back up that theory.

## A question of numbers?

It is a standard complaint of organisations that they are overburdened by unnecessary regulations. If only the red tape could be cut to shreds then they would be free to flourish, offer every item the public could desire, provide unlimited employment and make a handsome profit. With a bit of reflection, would we really say that when it comes to driving there would be an improvement if there were fewer regulations? Would we accept that cars should be free to be driven without brakes or lights or insurance? Or decent tyres or safety glass? Or that drivers should not be constrained by traffic lights

that turn red? All this 'red tape' imposed on everyone and accepted by the majority, is for the benefit of motorists as a whole. I would like to suggest yet another regulation! That is that each private and commercial building should be obliged to display the street number in large and clear signage. This would be a simple piece of legislation that local authorities could introduce and which would make life so much easier for all drivers and members of the public. It would be a cheap and uncontroversial proposal. Finding your friend in the correct Starbucks on Oxford Street when there are seven of them, none of which has the number displayed, would no longer be a problem. And the benefits to taxi drivers when looking for a passenger's house or office are obvious.

But this new legislation is not about to happen. Instead, I would like to suggest that **Dial-a-Cab** and *Call Sign* initiate a publicity campaign pointing out the benefits of better signage. To start, all current clients could be sent a note suggesting that they look at their own premises and ask themselves if a first time visitor would easily be able to identify it from a vehicle in the road? *Call Sign*, with the help of drivers, could publish pictures of fine examples of clear numbering with a monthly nomination for the best example. Perhaps the *Evening Standard* could join forces, which would be extra publicity for Dial-a-Cab.

As good examples, I think of the bold numbering on the houses in Wilton Crescent and the office block at 10 Victoria Street, which has digits 3 feet high. On the downside, I find that brass plaques are pretty useless unless you are standing 2 feet away. It is surprising how often house numbers are painted over by a lazy decorator or hidden behind an expensive bay tree.

Also, the new fashion of an address etched into glass on the front door is not very helpful and can easily be overlooked. **Laurence Kelvin (W88)**

**Thanks for the letter Laurence.** I think our number by the main entrance can be easily seen from East Road, but I asked the BoM's Special Projects Manager, Mike Son, if he could look into local council regulations on the subject. The BoM are in agreement that to approach our clients and tell them how to number their premises could bounce back in our faces ...Ed

**Mike Son replies:** Although it appears various boroughs have their own legislation, in this case I have spoken to the Corporation of London and was referred to their website: [http://www.city-of-london.gov.uk/Corporation/our\\_services/development\\_planning/planning/street\\_nam-](http://www.city-of-london.gov.uk/Corporation/our_services/development_planning/planning/street_nam-)

*ing.btm.*

**If you feel a complaint is warranted, they say they will action that complaint, however, not many in the past have been forthcoming. The City of London is the statutory authority for the naming and numbering of streets and buildings in the Square Mile. The appropriate naming and numbering of streets and buildings is important for identifying property in general, record keeping (eg responses to emergencies by ambulance, police and fire services). Furthermore, all addresses are recorded in the NLPG (National Land and Property Gazetteer) in an official and consistent format. So the bottom line is that buildings should be clearly numbered, but I would wish anyone luck in trying to action a property that isn't!**

## Cabtvate

Re Malcolm Levan's (F24) letter in the May issue of *Call Sign*. Unfortunately, I and a few others didn't have his wisdom or foresight and ended up getting our fingers burnt. I settled early reducing the debt to £2,400, which was a bitter pill to swallow.

In defence of my actions, I'd never heard of Cabtvate until I read an article about them in *Call Sign* informing us that they had been given the nod by the PCO and considering that Cabvision were a going concern working on a similar basis plus the fact they had established a clientele up north, they seemed a *bona fide* company.

I'm not looking for sympathy here, but found Mr Levan's letter insensitive. What was he hoping to get from this, a congratulatory pat on the back?

**Steve Regan (K25)**

**I can understand your frustration Steve, but taking it out on Malcolm Levan isn't the answer. Malcolm was just thanking Brian Rice for his advice. Even though it was just a press release and the PCO passed the system, I still feel bad about it and have, in fact, been working with a DaC driver who is currently seeing a solicitor. Obviously I can't comment on that at this moment.**

In defence of *Call Sign*, I publish a small minority of the press releases that come in and only published the one on Cabtvate because it claimed that the equipment was going to be rented on a monthly basis from the leasing company, the inference being that the worst that could happen was that the driver could lose one month if the company went under. Sadly, the press release and what actually happened didn't match up. You can read the original press





# MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 38

release on page 13 of Call Sign's online website at

<http://www.dac-callsign.co.uk/06/Jul06/CallSignJuly06.pdf> ...Ed

## Exhausts and extensions

I have just heard of a new exhaust system, details are few but it costs around £800. Do you know any more about this? Also re the new building, can you let us all know the new extension numbers there please, as they are now all 4 digits?

**Roy Manix (K98)**

**At the time of writing, there are apparently several systems out there on test. The problem is that the PCO require six months on-the-road testing before they will pass any system and in all honesty, they are probably right to do so providing they then make the right decision at the end of that period. £800? Nothing is impossible but have you ever known anything in this trade to go down in price when an updated version arrived? You got it in one, Roy!**

**As for extensions, you can reach Brian Rice via ext 7211, Allan Evans on 7222, Keith Cain on 7204, Mike Son on 7207, Howard Pears on 7206, Allen Togwell on 7203 and Tom Whitbread is at Roman Way on 0207 700 4443. Details for contacting Driver Services (ground floor of the new building) are elsewhere in this issue ...Ed**

## Is DAB the best radio for a taxi?

Lots of drivers are buying the new TX4, but I wonder how many have them fitted with DAB digital radios and whether any of them can tell *Call Sign* readers whether the difference is as good as they say? It could be of great assistance to DaC drivers.

**Kevin Went (N19)**

**Call Sign asked drivers last year and got a very mixed reaction with several complaining about signals fading. If you have a DAB radio, perhaps you can advise *Call Sign* readers on whether the extra outlay is worth while? ...Ed**

## New name boards

The new DaC name boards that hang on the windows are great. Very useful too at the airport when waiting at arrivals because you can hang them onto your badge necklace, as I'm currently doing while sending you this text!

**Martin Barker (G06)**

**I really feel wanted now! ...Ed**

## New building 'grand tour'

On Monday 5 May I handed in my new taxi licence to Driver Services at our new building in East Road - very easy to do as parking is provided for three cabs in Chart Street. Whilst there, I thought it would be nice to be nosey and have look around. Well I didn't have to wait long as Brian Rice caught my eye and I seized my chance. "Hey Brian, any chance of the *Grand Tour*" say's I? Well, as busy as he normally is, he says sure Pat and commences to show me around the ground floor. Very impressive, I think, as he shows me this room and that room etc. I can feel how proud he is of this new building and his enthusiasm is catching onto me. On the next two floors he shows me staff training rooms, calltaker training rooms and driver training rooms, then we go on to the main frame computer room - air conditioned to keep it cool. So many lights flashing and cables everywhere, I could not understand any of it but Brian knows a man who can!

Then onto the hub of things - the call centre / dispatch open plan floor. Now this really is high tech stuff, looks like mission control Houston! Then on to the top floor and a meeting room, Boardroom, Chairman's office and his secretary's office. There are still finishing touches to be done on all floors, but was I impressed? You bet the hell I was! I truly believe that Brian Rice and the BoM have acquired the best building with the interior finish and furnishings that any taxi company anywhere in England - or

worldwide for that matter - could aspire to have.

On the way out, Brian showed me the backup generator explaining that if we ever have a power cut, the generator should kick in and keep us up-and-running. I must say that at this point I was proud to be a 35-year member of a Friendly Society called Dial-a-Cab as I could see our profits being put back into our new building, rather than some anonymous share holders who will never fill the same loyalty to our Society as I do.

Every so often drivers send in letters to *Call Sign* just to have a pop at the BoM and I'm glad some of you do! It keeps them on their toes, but before you put pen to paper, do what I have done and have the *Grand Tour*, you might think twice...

**Pat Keefe (G01)**

**You're right Pat, it is special - and you didn't even get to see the fifth floor! ...Ed**

## Marathon sponsorship

Thank you for *Call Sign's* kind sponsorship of my Marathon run. We are looking forward to seeing my ugly face in the next issue... scary thought!

**Russell Tiller (P19)**

*PS: Alan, I have signed you up for the 2008 London Marathon. Good Luck...*

**Thanks Russell, but re next year's marathon, I've already signed up to run up and down Everest balancing a 100lb rucksack on each foot. Otherwise I would! You can read about Russell's run elsewhere in this issue ...Ed**



# 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...**

# THE NEW

# TX4

from Mann & Overton

The very best of over 60 years of experience and the most advanced purpose built taxi in the world.



# Drive it away for only £124 per week\*.

## Standard Features include:

- Euro IV compliant engine
- Head restraints
- ABS all round brakes
- Coil suspension
- Improved in car entertainment
- Improved security
- Improved intercom

Mann & Overton are the largest retailer of London Taxis in the UK, we are therefore able to offer an extensive choice of models and specifications, supported by an experienced sales and technical team.

\*Business users only. Price per week based on financing on a Black Horse Taxi Finance Preferences scheme. Illustration based on a new TX4 Bronze Auto in Black = £31,092.00 with £1,500.00 deposit, then 35 monthly payments of £536.08 (£124.40 per week) £145 acceptance fee on first payment due one month from delivery and optional final payment of £18,500.00 (Guaranteed Future Value). APR 11.2%. Taxi pictured may not reflect actual taxi in offer. TX4 models and specification subject to availability. Finance subject to status.

Mann & Overton London  
39 - 41 Brewery Road, London N7 9QH  
T: 020 7700 0888 F: 020 7700 6676  
E: london@mannandoverton.com  
W: www.mannandoverton.com



Mann & Overton