

October 2007



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

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***Why is this DaC driver, his father
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a Dutch cemetery?***





NASH'S NUMBERS

By Alan Nash (A95)

Part 2 of arrivals at London City Airport. LCA no longer issue a timetable, so these times were taken from each carrier's own websites and as such are subject to frequent change...

| From | Arrival | Flight # | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thur | Fri | From | Arrival | Flight # | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thur | Fri |
|------|---------|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|---------|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| ZRH | 14:40 | LX458 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | MAD | 18:10 | BA8754 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AMS | 14:50 | VG233 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | JER | 18:15 | VG647 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| IOM | 14:50 | 3W805 | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | AMS | 18:20 | KL1561 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ORY | 14:55 | AF5024 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | AMS | 18:20 | VG243 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| RTM | 15:10 | VG287 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | AMR | 18:20 | VG109 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AMR | 15:15 | VG125 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | MAN | 18:20 | VG308 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| GVA | 15:15 | LX436 | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | FRA | 18:25 | LH4810 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| LUX | 15:15 | LG4595 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | LUX | 18:30 | VG307 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| LUX | 15:20 | VG305 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | DUS | 18:35 | LH4830 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AMS | 15:25 | VG235 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | IOM | 18:35 | 3W809 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| EDI | 15:25 | BA8705 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | FRA | 18:45 | BA8735 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| MPX | 15:25 | BA8744 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | LUX | 18:45 | LG4597 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ZRH | 15:30 | AF5182 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | MPX | 18:45 | BA8744 | | ✓ | | | | | |
| EDI | 15:35 | CB724 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ZRH | 18:45 | BA8766 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| MAD | 15:40 | AF5198 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | AMS | 18:55 | VG245 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AMR | 15:45 | VG107 | | ✓ | | | | | | NCE | 19:00 | AF5186 | | ✓ | | | | | |
| BRU | 15:45 | VG157 | | ✓ | | | | | | MUC | 19:05 | LH4816 | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| RTM | 15:45 | VG289 | | ✓ | | | | | | MUC | 19:05 | LH4816 | | | | ✓ | | | |
| AMS | 16:15 | VG237 | | ✓ | | | | | | RTM | 19:05 | VG295 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AMS | 16:15 | VG237 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | AMS | 19:15 | KL1567 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| FCO | 16:20 | AP4222 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | NCE | 19:15 | AF5186 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| DND | 16:25 | CB914 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ORY | 19:15 | AF5028 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| EDI | 16:25 | BA8705 | | ✓ | | | | | | EDI | 19:20 | CB726 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| RTM | 16:25 | VG289 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ZRH | 19:20 | LX454 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ZRH | 16:25 | BA8764 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | CPH | 19:25 | AF5122 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AMS | 16:35 | KL1563 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | AMS | 19:35 | VG247 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ZRH | 16:40 | LX464 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | BHD | 19:35 | AF5154 | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| CPH | 16:50 | AF5120 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | EDI | 19:40 | BA8709 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| GVA | 17:00 | LX446 | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | GVA | 19:45 | LX448 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| LIN | 17:00 | AP4218 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | RTM | 19:50 | VG267 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AMR | 17:15 | VG127 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ZRH | 19:55 | AF5184 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| GVA | 17:15 | LX446 | | | ✓ | | | | | BSL | 20:00 | LX486 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| MAN | 17:15 | VG443 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | AMR | 20:05 | VG109 | | ✓ | | | | | |
| RTM | 17:15 | VG291 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | DND | 20:05 | CB916 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AMS | 17:20 | VG239 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | LPL | 20:05 | VG419 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| BRU | 17:20 | VG157 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ZRH | 20:10 | BA8762 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| IOM | 17:20 | VG665 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | IOM | 20:20 | VG669 | | ✓ | | | | | |
| GLA | 17:25 | BA8727 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | LUX | 20:20 | VG307 | | ✓ | | | | | |
| EDI | 17:30 | BA8707 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | MAN | 20:20 | VG449 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AMS | 17:35 | KL1565 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | RTM | 20:20 | VG297 | | ✓ | | | | | |
| EDI | 17:35 | CB768 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | BRU | 20:30 | VG159 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| HAM | 17:35 | LH4824 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | EDI | 20:35 | CB788 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| BRN | 17:40 | LX4102 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | EDI | 20:40 | BA8709 | | ✓ | | | | | |
| BRN | 17:40 | 0D502 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | EDI | 20:40 | BA8717 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| CPH | 17:45 | SK1531 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | MAD | 20:50 | AF5188 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| AMS | 17:50 | VG241 | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ZRH | 20:50 | LX462 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ZRH | 17:55 | LX466 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | GVA | 21:30 | LX440 | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| GVA | 18:00 | AF5194 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | GVA | 21:35 | LX440 | | | ✓ | | | | |
| ARN | 18:00 | SK529 | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | |

For What's On at ExCel, Earls Court, Olympia and The O2 Venue visit www.nashsnumber.co.uk and click on Extras. Next time you go to your computer, send an email to alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk with the subject line as UID, the message to state your name, next line your email address, next line call sign, next line badge number and finally your contact number (which will only be used if your email address fails). You will then go on the mailing list for the UID, the Nash's Numbers useful information document that currently runs to 58 pages and is growing rapidly. And it's FREE. Do it TODAY...

from the editor's desk

Call Sign's lost war...

Yep, I admit it. This magazine has lost one of the battles we sincerely believed in and the war along with it. No one – not Ladbrokes, not William Hill and most definitely not the Kahnawake Mohawk Red Indian Territory where online casinos provide far more business nowadays than selling beads – is going to advertise their gambling wares in *Call Sign* during my tenure as Editor. Sadly (at least for me), my little stand has proved to have the impact of a feather duster attempting to stop a tank at the recent arms show in Docklands, because I may soon be the only one left who doesn't accept them.

The UK introduced new laws on 1 September – *The 2005 Gambling Act* – that will change the country's gaming industry and regulate everything from online gambling websites to TV ads.

The new act allows gambling operators to advertise on radio and television and has pulled the plug on membership requirement for casinos. Among the many casinos soon to be available will be those at places such as Piccadilly's Hard Rock Café and Walthamstow dog track.

Mind you, if the 15 minutes between each race at Walthamstow until the casino opens is too unbearably long, you can always go to Wolverhampton where racecourse operator Arena Leisure will pip Walthamstow to become Britain's first 'racino' – a combined racecourse and casino, so that in between races you can go and lose even more.

The gaming industry claims to have put into place a voluntarily agreement not to show gambling ads before the 9pm watershed except during sporting events... oh, but I almost forgot, they have kindly made an exception and allowed one early ad that gives the website address for an online company offering advice for those who have problems gambling – not how to give up, more on how to win!

The British government has banned ads from online gambling websites – but only those based outside the European Economic Area (EEA). That puts a block on around 1,000 online gaming sites from advertising in the UK – including on taxis – and has caused several large companies such as William Hill to move operations from their current Dutch Antilles site in the Caribbean to Gibraltar and Malta. The Kahnawake Mohawk Red Indians have made no such announcement, but having been to several Red Indian reservations and forgetting the obvious "beads" joke, they aren't mugs and I'd bet (whoops!) that they'll be back within months operating from somewhere that no one has ever heard of. It seems that the large online gambling companies are happy to take the UK's money, providing they don't have to offer employment in return.

Culture Secretary, James Purnell – who seems to have taken over from Tessa Jowell without anyone actually noticing – said at the announcement of the act: "I make no apology for banning adverts for websites from places that don't meet our strict standards." Well boil my bunions in a white sauce and



make whoopee! He failed to mention that those online casinos based outside the EEA can still apply to join the HMG's list of places exempted from the ad ban if they can pass a "strict" litmus test of their gambling regulatory standards. Without knowing what this "litmus" test involves, we'll take a guess that it won't pose too many problems.

The antiquated "membership" laws to UK casinos have long been out of date and if that's what turns you on, or if the idea of dog racing with poker in between races is your bag and you are an adult, then I have no real problem with it. Neither will it do the taxi business any harm and probably help bring more tourists in. My beef is really with online gambling and kids getting access.

Since I first made the comment several years ago at the onset of this TV online phenomenon and expressed concern that kids could get access to parent's credit card numbers without ever needing the card itself and lose fortunes, the mass media has joined in and many cases of that nature have now been exposed. Radio 5Live especially has run several exposés on it.

So no doubt the cab trade will now be inundated with ads on how you can now legally lose everything, while still remaining in the comfort of your favourite armchair. If other taxi trade publications want to accept ads for online gambling, that is up to them. I do not care how much they offer, they will not find a space in *Call Sign* unless someone can prove to me that no children read this mag – and I'm pleased to know from many drivers and in letters from wives and partners, that many families enjoy reading different bits.

Nothing personal to William Hill, Ladbrokes and Rank (Hard Rock Café casino), but even though I admit losing the battle and the war, hopefully I have kept my integrity...

Rubbish?

I rarely write about my home borough of Redbridge and don't believe I have since they appallingly took away TaxiCard rides from ComCab and gave them to car companies, who had no chances of providing anything remotely akin to a decent service for the disabled.

That decision was total rubbish. Speaking of which...

I like many others no doubt recently received a letter informing us that the recycling service – which most people seem to use – was increasing from fortnightly deliveries to weekly. Surely a noble cause, until you realise that Redbridge Council must have been so pleased with their decision that they sent two identical copies of their *reduce, reuse and recycle* 10 page booklet, together with a separate leaflet and accompanying letter all published on double-thick glossy paper and heavyweight envelope, to many Redbridge households. At that rate we'll need daily collections!

Oh and by the way Redbridge Council, all the residents know that the weekly collection of recycled rubbish is a prelude to your next tune; because recycling has been so successful, the actual rubbish collections will now come every two weeks instead of weekly. No doubt we'll get used to the smell that is bound to accompany the extended stay of the rubbish sacks, but I just wanted to tell the Borough of Redbridge that we may be stupid to you, but even we know what you are up to – and you know that we know and we know that you know that we know...

York Road, Waterloo...

I recently had an email from a driver who told me about a friend of his – another DaC driver – who received a PCN from TfL for parking in York Road, Waterloo, a 24 hour red route. The fine was £120, or £60 if paid within 14 days. The driver's only problem was that it was his dayman who parked there!

Naturally the dayman paid up, but she had been stopping at the same coffee house in York Road for the past 12 years to pick up a coffee and never received a ticket before. So it looks as though there must be a new camera in York Road, so beware – however good the coffee is there!

Where are you all!

I do dislike this time of year. Everyone seems to have been on holiday and not given a monkey's whatever about whether I have any stories from drivers or not! Selfish I call that! Let's hope you all had a great holiday and have come back loaded down with stories for *Call Sign*! Then I'll forgive you all...!

Greetings

Can I wish all *Call Sign's* Jewish readers a belated Happy New Year and hope you had a successful fast for *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. For our Muslim drivers and staff, I wish you a successful *Ramadan* – which this year runs from 13 September to 11 October – and a happy *Eid ul-Fitr*, the celebration at the end of the holy month.

As for me, I wish myself a very happy birthday on 9 October! Christians will have to wait for the December issue...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections Of The Chairman

End of year figures...

As most of you are aware, the end of our financial year was 31 August and although I do not as yet have the finalised figures for August - indeed the whole year will not be audited until October - the first indications are excellent and point to yet another record breaking year!

I anticipate that our turnover will have increased by something approaching £7million on the previous year - that is £7million of extra work that we have put in the back of member's taxis this year alone. When you take into account that last year's turnover increased by £5.6million on the previous year, you can see how extraordinarily well we have done during these past two years.

Turnover last year increased by 15.6% over the previous year and I am anticipating a further increase this year of around another 17% above that figure - a really fantastic achievement. Adding that all up, it means that over the past two years, the amount of work Dial-a-Cab have completed will have increased by approximately 32.5% over the 2005 figure. At the risk of repeating myself, that is an absolutely staggering achievement and means that our turnover has increased by almost a third over a two-year period!

However, as I wrote earlier, August's figures have not been processed and the year as a whole has not been audited, but the above figures are going to be very - very - close to the final audited accounts, making it once again an extremely remarkable year with the surplus after depreciation probably reaching seven figures or thereabouts!

Signal problems...

We had some problems in the evenings with our signals during the recent tube strike due to the volume of work that was going through the system. The system was operating very slowly, which is obviously very frustrating for members and even more so when a trip you would like cannot be accepted.

What was interesting is that when 21.00hrs arrived, the system began to return to normal although we were still very busy. What was the reason for that? Well, no prizes if you guessed that the return to normality was because the Finsbury (EC5) came into operation and work in the City (and on the Island) all became *As Directed*. Consequently, rejections decreased dramatically and there was less work going back and forth and things gradually began to return to normal.

Before someone tries to read something into the above that isn't there, it is offered as an explanation and not as an excuse. Above all, we do not intend to change the way we despatch work! However, what is apparent is that as soon as we cut the rejections down, everything improves.

We are constantly striving to improve signals and as you can see by reference to the previous topic, we have to improve just to stand still! To this end, we have deleted some



back-up zones from their primary zones if we consider that back-up zone as being too far to run to the primary. That will help in cutting down on some of the unnecessary traffic offers going through the system.

We have also moved and been testing our voice channel with data on top of the Hilton Hotel in Park Lane in an attempt to improve signals. For this improved channel to work, all taxis will have to have an upgrade to their terminals. So far, approximately 150 cabs have been upgraded and the initial signs are very encouraging regarding the Hilton site.

We have also started to make plans for new terminals and part of those will be that we will have a dual modem that will initially seek out our private network, and if that is not forthcoming will automatically switch to a public GPRS system that will ensure nationwide coverage at most times.

If we were to totally move to GPRS, that would be at some considerable cost and we would be in a position that if the public network were to go down, then we would be

out of business! Consequently, I believe the best option is to despatch on our private network and use the GPRS network as a back-up when our own network cannot send or receive to any mobile. We would keep the traffic on GPRS network to a minimum, thereby minimising the cost of using that network. For any mobile to switch automatically between the two systems would take just milliseconds, but we believe things will improve enormously. I am led to believe that one of our competitors is going totally GPRS early in the New Year and it will be interesting to see how they fare.

As you can see from the above and of course the increase in the volume of our work, our system at most times is very busy, however, as you can also see we are doing everything we can to improve the situation regarding signals. If the solution was that easy, it would have been resolved by now!

Consequently, I do sometimes get a little irritated when **Call Sign** receives derogatory letters regarding our system from people who just seem to want to criticise, but do not offer any constructive comments - and if they do have a problem, why write to the magazine? Is it an attempt to discredit us when they could so easily write to me directly in the first place? As I stated earlier, I get extremely frustrated when we are working flat out to improve things and we just get constant criticism from that tiny minority. You will understand better when you get to the letters page - or have you already read that page first!

Brian Rice
Chairman, Dial-a-Cab

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Call Sign's phone began ringing recently about one particular subject – the mid-year safety check for taxis. Why the sudden interest? True that we should have fought harder against it, after all, why would a new taxi that passed its overhaul need a safety check 6 months later? Any problems and it would have to go to the garage anyway? Driver opinion suggested that we were let down by the trade organisations who wrote about it, but apparently did little to stop it.

But that wasn't why there was a sudden rush on the subject. All the drivers phoned for the same reason. They had been given the impression that a mid-year safety check would take place 6-months after their overhaul, but all said the same thing – they had been sent letters to bring their cabs in 6 months BEFORE their next overhaul! The first batch of checks is being backdated!

One driver showed **Call Sign** his paperwork. Sure enough his overhaul was due in May 2008, but he had received a letter that his check was due in October 2007.

"Yes," the driver told us, "October 2008 and every October after that I can understand, even though I disagree with the idea, but how can it be for this October if the regulations have only just come into being? How can the PCO or SGS backdate it? It feels like a con! Nothing has changed with the PCO, they still do as they like..."

Those sentiments were repeated by most of the callers.

Unfortunately, the PCO/SGS are within their rights to backdate the checks, even if it shows

them and their steamroller tactics in a bad light.

The requirement for London taxis to undergo a mid-year safety inspection comes under article 14(o) of the London Cab Order 1934 (as amended by the London Cab Order 2007).

It says that all vehicles licensed from 2 April 2007 onwards will be required to undergo a mid-year safety inspection and that they are to be introduced with immediate effect.

You will receive a letter from SGS informing you when your taxi is approaching the time for its mid-year inspection. You will then have a period of 30 days before or after the six-month anniversary of the cab's licence. You will be able to choose the time and inspection centre. But you won't be able to do anything about the check itself. We've made our bed...

Founded in 1878 in Rouen, France, SGS was registered in Geneva in 1919 as Société

Dac drivers up in arms at "PCO con!"



Dac driver: "Nothing has changed with the PCO. They still do as they always have..."

Générale de Surveillance and are now recognised as one of the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification companies. It has almost 50,000 employees worldwide, operating a network of over 1,000 offices and laboratories.

Transport for London's 'Traffic Radio'



Transport for London (TfL) has invested in London's version of *Traffic Radio*, a Highways Agency initiative to bring information to listeners in London about traffic disruptions and major road-works on the TfL road network. It is available on digital radio or Internet, 24 hours a day.

If you don't hear a traffic delay on Dial-a-Cab, TfL's radio broadcast could play an essential role in providing London-specific information about conditions on the road from the London Traffic Control Centre.

The information will be updated every 10 minutes during peak times and every 20 minutes at other times. This new service will enable road users to pick up detailed information on road conditions, keeping them better informed and helping them to plan their routes. It could prove useful to the taxi drivers. Just tune into *Traffic Radio* on a DAB radio or online at www.trafficradio.org.uk.

TAXI

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Jery's World



Taxi driver: "You said it was ok to drop my passenger quickly..."

Traffic warden: "Well I gave you two seconds... how long do you need...!"



Say hi to 'Whispering' Bob...!

Currently using London taxis very regularly – although not for the reason he'd like – the man known to millions of music fans as "Whispering" Bob Harris" is undergoing radiotherapy treatment for prostate cancer and travels in a cab most days from Paddington Station to Harley Street. Bob made his name in the 1970s with the cult BBC2 show, *Old Grey Whistle Test* and is still playing British rock, country and the odd bit of 1950's folk music with BBC Radio 2 on

Tuesdays and Saturdays – although his Saturday show is currently on hold until he returns to full health.

On one of his recent trips to Harley Street, Bob told *Call Sign* how he has taken encouragement from well-wishers and especially those who have had the illness. So if you are one of the drivers that pick him up, say hi and wish him well on behalf of the London taxi trade...

Gary Cox (O46)

Heathrow - London Transfer to "Undercut Taxis!"



SatNav will guide them from London hotel to hotel???

From 1 November, the National Express group plan to run a new airport transfer service between Heathrow and many London hotels with the declared aim of "undercutting the cost of taxis!"

Called the *dot2dot* service, their shared 10/12 seater minibus service – formerly called *Hotelink* and one must assume by inference that it was not too successful under that banner – will be bookable online. The company claim that the £22 fare from Heathrow to central London will be "half the price of taxis" and will make "no more than four drops per trip." National Express say the minibuses will pick up from Heathrow's terminals every five minutes and that they plan to have 76 vehicles operating by Christmas. The vehicles will be able to use bus lanes to help speed journey times to and from central London. Not surprisingly perhaps, the minibuses will have to be fitted with SatNav equipment, which suggests that the drivers of these large vehicles will be driving around once in London trying to find their way from one hotel to another.

Jumping on the carbon footprint ladder, the company say that because the *dot2dot* ride is shared "...it is also a highly environmentally friendly transport choice."

So now if you spot large silver vehicles going round and round in town and asking how you get to Piccadilly's *Le Meridien* Hotel in Piccadilly from the *Royal Trafalgar* in Whitcomb Street, you'll know why!

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Geoff Pope

Dial-a-Cab Chairman Brian Rice recently made the short trip to Tower Bridge to meet Lib-Dem member and Deputy Chair of the Transport Committee at

the London Assembly, **Geoff Pope** and to pass on some of the concerns that affect the London taxi trade.

Wearing his hat as current Chairman of the London Taxiboard, Brian brought up the disturbing possibility of private hire being able to use **bus and taxi lanes** and all the chaos that would ensue should the Mayor ever agree to that scenario.

Mr Rice also brought up the huge problem of **Penalty Charge Notices** (PCNs) currently being issued to taxi drivers just for doing their job.

One height of irony with PCNs is that many parking tickets are issued to drivers for waiting or assisting disabled passengers on the various TaxiCard schemes that are operated by both Dial-a-Cab and ComCab. That irony being that current Mayor, Ken Livingstone, was the person who as head of the former Greater London Council (GLC) brought in the TaxiCard scheme around 20 years ago. It was first installed as an experiment in Camberwell and now covers most of the

Brian Rice Meets Geoff Pope at City Hall

London boroughs.

In response, Mr Pope promised to put the question to Mayor Livingstone at the next Mayor's Question Time segment which will be this month (October) having just missed the September slot.

Speaking to **Call Sign** after the meeting, the DaC Chairman told us that his 1-hour meeting had gone very well and that

he was hopeful that the London Assembly would look favourably at our situation.

"Geoff Pope is a former Mayor of Richmond – a borough with a heavy usage of licensed taxis - and knows how we operate as well as anyone," said Brian, "so we are hoping that he will look at our problems from a positive viewpoint."



Transport for London

PCO extend approval of Eco-Power emission reduction system












In order to assist cab owners comply with the emission strategy, the **Eco-Power emission reduction system** has been approved upon completion of independent field trials and testing to Euro 3 level, in support of the Mayor's Taxi Emission Strategy.

Following further development of the Eco-Power system, it now comprises a cooled Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR) circuit and a combined catalyst with a revised partial flow filter unit. This original system was approved for installation on the **Euro 1 LTI Fairway** and **Euro 2 LTI TX1** taxis, which then became Euro 3 compliant:

This modified system has been independently assessed by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and has undergone a monitored period of 'in-service' durability testing and is now approved for the above two models...

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Continued from September

The long flight has left me worn, but Sam's friend John is taking us for a quick tour of London's sights in his **Dial-a-Cab** taxi on the way back to the house. We stop at the gates to Buckingham Palace to take some pictures, but a guard comes to chase us away as we are parked in a wrong spot! I managed to take a few shots before rushing back into John's cab.

"Fancy some English tea," asked John, then without response drives into an underground area where some black cabs drivers go to eat. I think it was called The Royal Oak. Nothing like this in California! We're looking for Sam's friend Shaun who also works with **Dial-a-Cab**. We find him waiting for us and after I give him a big hug, we all sit down to have some tea and a nice chat. I have talked with all these guys on the 'net and now I'm meeting them in person. I feel really at home – and with rather a large cup of English tea! But now we have to leave and return to John's taxi for the journey back to Sam's house.

It looks like a very nice house from the outside and once we walk in, I feel at home. I immediately see Sam's black leather couch, the very one he has sat on while phoning me in my Californian home so many times. I dreamed of sitting on it together with him just doing simple things like watching TV – and now it will be reality, we'll be able to do it for real. I'm just so excited!

Sam pointed to his bedroom upstairs while he and John bring my luggage up to the room. There is his bed, the bed he has laid on while we talked on the phone so many nights. When you love someone, love is so good in any way or form. But now I will be able to lie in his bed with him for real and love him all night long, then just go to sleep with his arms around me, just as we have dreamed about doing so many times.

Later on that first day, Sam and I drove into the centre of London and after parking his cab, we walked around. I have always wanted to take a ride in one of the double decker red buses, so we ran after one and went up to the second level so I can see everything. This is so much fun, I feel like a kid in a candy store. I can't get enough. London is such a beautiful city and I'm so glad to be here with my babe...

We got off the bus on Trafalgar Square, my favourite place in London. It's getting dark and the lights in the fountains are on. We took some pictures, I tossed a coin into the fountain and wished I would someday be back there with Sam. He tossed in a coin as well, I don't know what he wished for – I hope it was the same.

After walking around for a while, we met up again with Shaun at a local pub where the three of us had a few drinks and just laughed and chatted. Shaun is such a nice person. After we left the pub, I wanted to take some pictures so I gave my

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

Jenny has come to London to visit Sam...

L♥ve On the Internet



DaC's Sam with his Californian love Jenny in London

handbag to Sam to hold while I took the pictures, you should see him with it hanging up from his shoulder, it was so funny! I took a picture of him, he looked so cute! He's my baby and my love, I'm crazy about this guy! Every time he looks at me with those big blue Irish eyes, I just melt...

After a while we went home and Shaun came with us because he had drunk too much! At Sam's, we put on some music and the three of us danced like nuts until

around 4:30 am. It was so much fun. We were like the three Musketeers that night!

It was now time to go to bed. Shaun stayed in the next room and I went into Sam's bedroom. I will never forget that night, our first night together in such a long time. It was wonderful to be in his arms again. We loved each other for a long time and then fell asleep in each other's arms all night long. I'll remember this night forever and surely it will always be this way with us... won't it?

Continued next month

Call Sign

October 2007

Editor: Alan Fisher

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

Tel: 0207 251 0581 Fax: 0207 553 7293

E-mail: callsignmag@aol.com

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

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Tel: 07958 300 428

Email: danny.fresco@dsl.pipex.com

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With the Internet now considered to be an everyday tool as against the novelty it once was, most London taxi drivers will know that there was a two-day New York cab strike last month. The stoppage was called following driver's reluctance to accept high-tech taxi terminal screens in the back seats of all 13,000 cabs that included credit-card readers, fare information and GPS maps that would allow passengers to track their route.

Many of the drivers claimed that their union – *The New York Taxi Workers Alliance* – had spent three years trying to tell the New York taxi commission that they were very distrustful as to how information was to be gathered through the GPS tracking apparatus – which actually lacked any navigational ability – and then how it would be used. They also resented the 5% credit card charge for each transaction that would have to be paid by the driver.

One major problem pointed out by the small number of 'Yellows' that already had the equipment fitted was that they often didn't work in many areas, meaning that as the passenger got out, suddenly the credit card machinery wouldn't work. In addition, the meters often

Cabvision miss the cut in New York strike!



Queues formed in Central New York for the few cabs still working

Metrocab Turbo 'Cleanpower' emission reduction system approved

In order to assist cab owners comply with the Mayor's Taxi emission strategy, the Metrocab Turbo 'Cleanpower' emission reduction system has been approved on completion of independent field trials and testing to Euro 3 level.

The Metrocab Turbo 'CLEANPOWER' system comprises a Motor and Diesel turbo kit, GAT Diesel Oxidation Catalyst (DOC) - Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF) unit plus electronic Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR). This conversion can be installed on Metrocabs Series I, II and III, which then become 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.

stopped working at the same time!

The Commission took no notice and handed out contracts to four lucky companies to manufacture and install the terminals. One of the four had no experience in this field whatsoever!

However, one company did have all the experience needed by dealing with London Taxis – Cabvision. They arrived in London in 2003 and by fitting over 1000 cabs in the capital via the system's Windows XP Embedded software, proved to be reliable. They also had the expertise to produce everything the NY

Commission required and were the only company to offer to provide and fit the terminals free of charge.

However, the Cabvision proposal was rejected after apparently arriving a day late. It later turned out that the chief contracting officer of the commission section dealing with the sealed bids had opened and read the Cabvision proposal. That was against all the published rules.

The commission is responsible for regulating the city's taxicabs; however, it has no members that have ever driven a cab. Some say that shows...!

LTFUC XMAS COLLECTION BOXES

If there are any drivers who would like to carry a 2007 Xmas collection box on behalf of the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children in their taxi, please get in touch with any committee member direct, or alternatively contact them through their website:

(www.ltfuc.org.uk).

The collection has been authorised by the PCO.

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Dial-a-Cab client, Deutsche Bank, are asking young people to prove they can make positive changes to society and a new prize is being launched to celebrate their achievements. Known as *CHANGEit*, the prize is being sponsored by Deutsche Bank and young campaigners are being urged to come forward to take part. The public is also being asked to nominate young people they know who are making an outstanding contribution to their community.

CHANGEit will be an annual prize run by international leadership organisation *Common Purpose*, which wants to recognise young people who have campaigned for change. All types of campaigns are welcomed, from alcohol awareness campaigns to a fundraising initiative for a local hospital. They are not about sitting in a classroom and getting high grades, but about getting out into the community and changing it for the better.

There are two categories:

The Innovation Prize: This is to enable young campaigners to get their idea off the ground. The prize money is to be used as seed money to help develop their campaign.

The Performance Prize: This is for young people who have run a successful campaign that has made a positive change in society. This prize is recognition of their campaigning efforts.

Julia Middleton, Chief Executive of Common Purpose, explained the importance of highlighting the accomplishment and success of young people to *Call Sign*:

"There has been a lot of attention given to very serious crimes committed by young people recently and we want to tell the other side of the story and highlight the amazing things that young people are doing to change society for the better."

The scheme launches on 10 October 2007

Deutsche Bank asks: "Can young people change society for the better?"



There are always DaC drivers outside Deutsche Bank, but do you know any young people who are changing society for the better?

and is open to nominations until 15 December 2007. The prizes will be announced in May and winners will be presented with a prize of £750 by GMTV presenter Ben Shephard at a ceremony in London.

If you would like to make a nomination of either yourself or a young person that

you know, contact Common Purpose on 020 7608 8148 or go to the website where you will find information about this year's awards and how to apply.

The website is at <http://www.commonpurpose.org.uk/home/about-us/press.aspx>.

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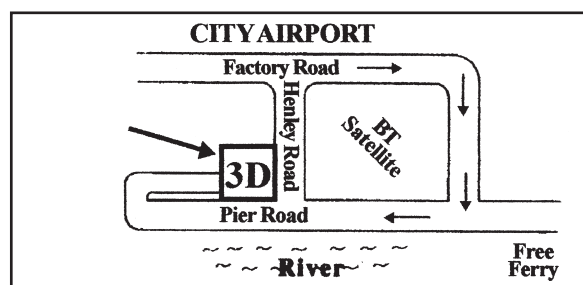
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Meeting Colin Salmon - Dial-a-Cab's Nova 81 - is an inspiring experience. The 43 year old of Jamaican heritage packs a lot of activities into his day, every day!

He is a qualified martial arts instructor with a Black Belt grade to match; he 'works out' several times a week in a gym; is a former glazier by trade; night-club doorman; regular Arsenal supporter; an ordained Minister in the Apostolic Church with his own following... and a Dial-a-Cab Marshall at organized events! *And* he finds time to drive a cab around the streets of London as well as being married to wife Zoe. They have been together for 19 years and somehow found the time to produce 2 sons, Casey and Kai.

After several attempts at catching up with Colin, our breathless *Call Sign* reporter eventually met him at DaC House where he sat down long enough to give us some background into his busy life...

The Cab-Driving Preacher Man..



Born in Bethnal Green, he has three brothers - his parents having returned to the Caribbean. After a succession of house moves, he currently resides on the fringes of Green Badge Village, in Chigwell.

A man of deep religious conviction, Colin told *Call Sign* about his career as an ordained Minister in the Apostolic Church...

"The Church was formed back in 1916 with a strong commitment to Mission, sending representatives into many countries around the world. With the blessing of my own priest, I broke away from the church I had attended to form my own ministry - 'Hope 4 U' - within the movement, and over the past three years have built up a following from scratch. With God's help and guidance, I found a hall in Chigwell to hold services and spread His word, talking to people, bringing hope and comfort to those in need of it.

"I aim to make a better life for those in the local community and go out onto the streets to talk to - and hopefully influence - young people and nurture their ambitions to improve their prospects.

"This is particularly important with youngsters who have domestic problems and whose only 'family' is the street. I have a project for street children and can relate to them to raise their ambitions, show them a better way and influence them into leading meaningful lives. This is especially the case with black youngsters of course, where a white person - with the best will in the world - might not have the same rapport. If I can turn the kids around, I've achieved what the Almighty put me on this Earth to do."

Colin ended simply by saying:

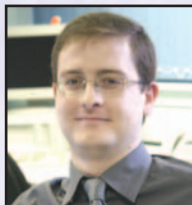
"I conduct my church services on Sunday afternoons between 1 and 3pm. *Everyone* is welcome at 663 Chigwell Rd, Woodford Bridge..."

© *Call Sign Magazine MM7*

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

John Ask What's New?

Like something straight out of a James Bond movie, **Aston Martin** is offering a limited edition **Jaeger LeCoultre** wrist-watch for its new **DBS** that can be used to unlock the car and fire it up!



Available only to buyers of the 510hp model, the new watch carries a price tag of £17,000. But remember, that's on top of the £165,000 already put down for the car!

For that kind of money, customers get one of the most complex watches in the world. There are over 200 parts used for just the casing and an additional 200 parts used for the watch movement itself. Engineers also managed to shrink the electronics inside the DBS transponder so that it fits inside the watch. Jaeger says the new watch allows you to do away with the keys altogether and hinted that an even more expensive model is in the works. Until that arrives, buyers will be limited to either the regular grade 5 titanium model or the more exclusive rose-gold edition. DaC drivers might want to enquire about having the CCC logo added!

Personally, I'm waiting until they release a model for my Ford Ka - although even then I'd only consider re-mortgaging for



The £165,000 DBS Aston Martin



The £17,000 Jaeger Le Coultre watch that runs it!

such a watch if it has a built-in laser - or at the very least, titanium unbreakable escape wire!

Jonathen Winterburn
DaC Network Administrator

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Ilford MP Lee Scott Tours DaC House

Following the recent meeting in his role as Chairman of the London Taxiboard with Ilford North MP Lee Scott at the House of Commons, Brian Rice returned the compliment and invited Mr Scott to Dial-a-Cab House to have a look around our new building.

For over 3 hours, Brian showed Lee how DaC operated - from our Customer Service to the Call Centre.

Brian Told **Call Sign**: "Lee Scott takes a very keen interest in the London taxi industry and took great interest in seeing how we operated. He certainly looked suitably impressed and even though he undoubtedly has a great knowledge of the taxi industry, after today we hope he has learned even more."

"As the tour took place during the tube strike, we were extremely busy and at one time there were 40 calls on hold. I think Lee was impressed at how we coped at the office end."

Brian ended by saying that he and Lee Scott would be having regular meetings in the future to discuss matters affecting the London taxi business.

Lee Scott told **Call Sign**: "My thanks to Dial-a-Cab for their hospitality and I congratulate them on a first class operation. I look forward to many years working with the entire industry to protect and stand up for issues effecting the first class service that Licensed Taxis provide."

Another visitor also popped in for a look around - Radio Taxis Group Executive Chairman Geoffrey Riesel took the Brian Rice tour of DaC House and like Lee Scott, also expressed admiration ...



Ilford North MP Lee Scott

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

Kupcake's Korner



A letter to Mr Mayor...

Another slap in the face,
20% discounts for bus's fuel,
yet more ammo for our case -
TfL's discrimination is cruel.

As I've said so many times before,
You just want us to disappear,
to be replaced with servile bores,
hired from anywhere - far or near.

"Those middle-aged white cabbies,
with their independent air,
will go the way of dinosaurs...
and really I just don't care."

"Our 21st Century London,
will reflect its' ethnic mix,
there's nowt that can't be undone...
there's nothing I can't fix!"

"Visitors and residents
will have a Hackney fleet,
that will set a precedent,
that others cannot beat..."

"We'll do away with radio cabs,
just like New York City!
Oh what jolly fun we'll have
...in a town without pity!"

Copyright Kupcake 2007

Science Museum hosts major new climate change exhibition

The Science Museum has announced details of a major new exhibition that focuses on technological solutions to slowing down climate change - *Can algae save the world?* Other important questions about solving climate change' will aim to engage visitors in the debate on possible solutions to mitigate climate change and find out more about one specific technology - something that should interest Dial-a-Cab drivers - biofuels.

Among the various objects and interactives featured in the exhibition is an area dedicated to algae - as one potential way to help save the planet. Visitors will be able to see a *Mini Algae Farm*, a device to grow algae and learn more about how it could be used as a biofuel as an alternative to fossil fuels to help save the planet.

Held in the Science Museum's Antenna Gallery, the exhibition follows the government's recently announced *Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation* initiative, which requires that 5% of fuels sold at the pump by 2010 must be biofuels.

The free exhibition is sponsored by Siemens and will run in the Antenna Gallery for six months from 18 October 2007 until April 2008.

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Allen Tagwell's Ma

By the time this edition of **Call Sign** reaches your door, I imagine most of you would have returned from your summer hols relaxed, delighted with your chosen destination and probably given the choice you would like to go straight back again. Be it lying under a palm tree in the Seychelles drinking Pina Coladas, Trekking through the Amazon Rain Forest, Pot Holing, Rock Climbing or simply relaxing somewhere quiet with a book. Which in fact is what I did. Nowhere exotic, in fact considering the amount of rain we had prior to going, choosing to rent an apartment in Worthing didn't look too encouraging.

The choice was partly for the benefit of my partner to spend some quality time with her 97 year old father and for me to relax with the odd game of golf or sitting somewhere quiet with a good book. As I write, I am sitting on my comfortable fold-up canvas chair on a beach a mile or so outside of Worthing, which is deserted as far as the eye can see. The weather surprisingly is fantastic; it's unbelievably peaceful and the only sound being the rhythmic motion of the sea rustling up onto the shore. Parked nearby in my car is a packed lunch and a wide selection of books, five of which I've already read since we arrived eight days ago. And to add to my enjoyment I have received by special delivery my September copy of **Call Sign**. As always, the best magazine in the whole of the cab trade was a very good read, including the letters page, even when as was the case again, I'm the target of some demented souls paranoia. In actual fact, rather than take offence at this poor mans diatribe, he did me a favour because on checking my emails at a local Internet café there was a message from the editor reminding me - or should I say demanding of me - an article for this edition of **Call Sign**. So being an obliging sort, I put my sixth book aside, purchased a writing pad and with a topic given me by our extremely unhappy subscriber, I set about drafting the enclosed.

Before going any further, firstly I would like to say to any of our newer members of our circuit who haven't as yet read **Call Sign**, should you be of a sensitive nature I would suggest you read my articles with caution, because it appears from the attitude of the aggrieved gentleman in question the content could well give you cause to seek counselling!

Secondly, the reason I chose to mention holidays was not so I could talk about my favourite subject ME, heaven forbid, but to emphasise the meaning of the word *Choice*. I mentioned my books, there were eleven in fact, each one chosen from a selection of authors who from experience I know I will enjoy reading. If I didn't then of course I wouldn't read them, which is the attitude of most people. This being so, what is it I wonder about the member who wrote in **Call Sign** last month who deliberately reads articles in **Call Sign** knowing they are going cause him enormous grief?

I could accept the odd article being open for dispute, but the manner in which he castigated the articles of the Chairman, the Editor, the Board and me in particular, seemed on the surface to be the actions of a masochist, being as his grief has been exacerbated by numerous articles that he has purposely chosen to read in the past. Obviously he is easi-

ly upset by what he reads, made worse by what I assume to be a reading deficiency causing him to misinterpret what the writer of the articles - in this case me - is saying.

He claims, for example, that I said you the members were fat and unhealthy. I said no such thing. I made a statement of fact that driving a cab, breathing in exhaust fumes is an unhealthy occupation, particularly so for those who are overweight and who smoke. Is he suggesting there are NO overweight smokers driving cabs?

He then takes issue with past articles where I supposedly accused you all of being a bunch of dopes needing to go to night school to learn a foreign language. Again I said no such thing. I made a reference to the learning of languages being of benefit to those in the service industry and as an idea for those who hadn't thought of it to maybe give it a try. I attempted to give credence to the benefit of speaking a foreign lan-

Before going any further, firstly I would like to say to any of our newer members of our circuit who haven't as yet read Call Sign, should you be of a sensitive nature I would suggest you read my articles with caution, because it appears from the attitude of the aggrieved gentleman in question the content could well give you cause to seek counselling!

guage by referring to my travels abroad as a young man. Which appears to be another irritation because he states that instead of my using my double page spread in **Call Sign** as a platform to tell the world about my supposed favourite subject - myself- I should talk about marketing. As the Editor rightly said in his reply to the member's letter, filling up a page with a regular article is not easy, particularly so when it's confined to one subject matter - the cab trade - and near nigh impossible if it was strictly about our society's marketing.

I have been writing regular articles for **Call Sign** for over twenty years, articles comprising on average of over 2500 words, which is feat I would imagine to test the ability of a professional journalist. *And not by choice incidentally but simply because it is expected of a Board member.* In the early years when I ran the Sales and Marketing dept totally on my own, it was easy writing about the daily activities within my dept, such as generating new business and what you the members could do to assist in retaining that business including the manner in which you dress, which again is another of our irate member's irritants. **Call Sign** is a major means of communicating with our members, so its only natural that I and others would use our articles occasionally to voice our concerns. Particularly issues

Exactly why I should be despised for stating the obvious I don't know. Or more to the point why so many people in our trade adamantly refuse to acknowledge that one of the easiest, cheapest and effective ways to discredit PH is simply to raise the cab trade's image.

concerning service and quite often the private hire industry and what is needed to help eradicate their continuing threat.

We no longer have a monopoly on the cab trade.



Anybody, minicabs, radio cabs and non-radio cabs can put four wheels outside a customer's door. So why should a client specifically use us? Particularly when a client cannot be guaranteed a cab no matter how many hours, days, weeks or months in advance it was booked. For over 300 years, all the cab trade needed to do to guarantee business was to wear a green badge and put their for hire light on. This is no longer the case. I know that and the majority of you know that, the problem is apathy overrides the will to do anything about it.

So as head of Sales I considered it my responsibility to continually make you all aware of the need for change and one of those changes was in my opinion, our image. There is nothing more powerful than image and the perception it generates. For example, soon it will be Christmas and the majority of you will be buying presents for family and friends. How many of you before giving those presents will first wrap it in attractive paper and WHY? Because we all know even from a young age the power of packaging and image.

When was the last time the cab trade made a concerted effort en masse to change its image? I'm not too hot on our industry's history, but at a guess I would say the answer was never. WHY? Is it due to arrogance, complacency, apathy or sheer laziness? More importantly, when was the last time the members of DaC made a concerted effort en masse to change their image? Is it such a mammoth task, are some of you so skint that you cannot shop in places such as Matalan and Primart who sell clothes cheaper than at a boot sale? It just doesn't make any sense to me when I see cab drivers spending more on cleaning their vehicles than they do on themselves. And worse, what on earth goes through their minds when they walk into our top clients dressed as though they have just got out of bed and being compared unfavourably to the minicab driver outside who has fraction of their knowledge, ability and recognition simply because the way he is dressed?

Exactly why I should be despised for stating the obvious I don't know. Or more to the point why so many people in our trade adamantly refuse to acknowledge that one of the easiest, cheapest and effective ways to discredit PH is simply to raise the cab trade's image. Even my biggest critics if honest, would agree they have seen some pretty grim sights behind the wheel of a cab. Yet not a word,

Marketing Place

not a solitary word, particularly from those worldly scribes in the trade papers who consider the entire woes of the cab trade is due to PH, Rickshaws, the Authorities, the Mayor, the PCO, the Radio Circuits. Concierge, Brian Rice, Brian Rice and Brian Rice...

But back to our aggrieved member who then questions whether I give value for money as DaC's Marketing Director. Firstly I am not a Director. I am an elected Board member given responsibility for Marketing. Which under normal circumstances would be the person acting on behalf the Society when dealing with a third party, in this case a marketing company. Very few if any marketing managers actually produce marketing material and design work themselves as I have always done.

However, the question regarding value for money is a valid one, and not just with regards me but the Board as a whole because there are things our disgruntled member obviously doesn't understand. When I first joined the Society, we had an eight-man BoM consisting of a Chairman, Treasurer, PRO, Complaints Officer and four Board members without portfolio who just attended Board meetings. All eight received exactly the same hourly rate, whether a Board member had twenty years experience or one month. Which is still the case to this day, with the exception of the Chairman. The Board when elected by the members are not elected for any particular position of office. They are elected as individuals, as custodians to serve the interest of the members. Their primary responsibility being directing, influencing and monitoring the organization's business. When I stood for the Board in 1986, I did so with the knowledge that if successful I would abide by a Code of Ethics, a Statement of Commitment, which basically was the following: *I would on behalf of Dial-a-Cab's members be a custodian in trust of the assets of their Society. The members in recognition of the need for competent and committed elected Board members to serve their organization would put their trust in my sincerity and abilities. The members would expect my utmost effort, dedication, and support. As a Board member of Dial-a-Cab, I would acknowledge and commit that I will observe a high standard of ethics and conduct as I devote my best efforts, skills and resources in the interest of Dial-a-Cab and its members. I would perform my duties as a Board member in such a manner that members' confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of Dial-a-Cab are conserved and enhanced. To do otherwise would be a breach of the trust, which the membership has bestowed upon me.*

Fancy words perhaps, but in truth that is what I as a Board member would be committed to and what I would expect to get paid for - initially.

Incidentally, being a Board member of Dial-a-Cab also includes being personally liable in the event this society went belly-up. A condition which when that fact was made known by our auditors when our Society was once on the verge of closing its doors, one Board member immediately resigned.

However, the management of the Society has changed over recent years. The number of elected Board members in addition to the Chairman has been reduced to five, plus a non-elected

Board member who is the company accountant-cum-secretary.

The changes in the Society and the manner in which it has grown has created managerial positions better suited to professionals from the private sector, with the Chairman taking on the role of CEO. At present all five Board members hold departmental responsibilities in addition to carrying out their elected duties. It has been argued that employed personnel should undertake the department duties. Cost-wise the outlay would be slightly more as the Board's remuneration

The changes in the Society and the manner in which it has grown has created managerial positions better suited to professionals from the private sector, with the Chairman taking on the role of CEO. At present all five Board members hold departmental responsibilities in addition to carrying out their elected duties.

being subject to responsibility would be very much on par with what they are earning now. So in effect the department duties at present are not really costing the Society anything. However that is not to say a better job couldn't be done by outside professionals.

In my case, my departmental duties includes marketing, advertising and design, which is and has always been a hands-on role, in fact a little of my design ability was used recently in our new building, I designed the drivers reception area. All the artwork and design I create is done in the office, plus at home in my own time, which also includes photographic work. My administrative duties in addition to my collective responsibility as an elected Board member, apart from Board meetings and Society matters etc includes chairing complaints meetings, interviewing new drivers, plus of course, as with all the Board, the daily acknowledgement of driver's queries via letter, email, phone and the occasional visit.

Anybody with any knowledge of design will know it's a time consuming occupation, involving a considerable amount of work and ideas being binned before something acceptable is created, hence the high cost when it's outsourced.

To those interested, the following is a brief example of the work involved in a typical design project – in this case the last annual report.

Firstly a theme needs to be chosen, in this instance it was 'growth'. I then had to produce several ideas on how this could be portrayed. The one approved was my use of plants. I subsequently spent much time in various open spaces and parks photographing trees and flowers plus acquiring photos of exotic plants and flowers from other sources. Then with the material gathered came the creating of ideas of how it could be used. Next came producing several ideas for the front cover, one of which was a taxi with a driver on a taxi bonnet. It seemed simple enough, but it took me ages trying to generate with the aid of computer graphic software the cab and driver's reflection on the shiny bonnet of the cab. Even with the help of a graphic professional assisting me, we still couldn't achieve the perfect reflection. Fortunately I solved the problem when by chance I spotted the car park of a local pub completely flooded. With the permis-

sion of the pub manager and the kind cooperation of my neighbour I was able to photograph both him and his new cab in the middle of the flooded car park and achieved the perfect reflection. Then the centre pages had to be completed, including the yearly figures and working with the Chairman with his report so that the design and the report were aesthetically in sync. Ironically when that particular draft was eventually completed and presented for approval, most of the people I showed it to didn't even notice the part that had given me a headache – the reflection! But that didn't bother me, it was a detail that was necessary to give it reality and I wanted to achieve it.

The Annual Report incidentally is not just produced for our shareholders, we have a number of additional copies printed that we use throughout the year for our existing clients, as well as part of the tendering package we supply to prospective clients. As a point of interest, every so often I get approached by marketing and design companies offering their services, one of which is the company that produces the annual report for our major competitor. As of yet, using outside sources have rarely been needed, but nevertheless the

details are kept on file because I'm sure there will come a time when a decision will be made for our design work to be outsourced. And to get an idea on costs, I submit an example of a project that I produced and ask for a quote had they been asked to do it from scratch. The last occasion I undertook this exercise was after I produced the DaC 2005 annual report and the quote offered was eight times that which it cost DaC to produce in-house. Or to use another comparison, the cost of this one project alone was equivalent to three times my annual take home pay.

The designing of our corporate logo would have also been a costly project had it been outsourced simply because the costs of design companies who specialise in this type of work is extremely high. I'm not suggesting we cannot afford it, we can, its just that up until the present time it's not been needed. Unfortunately much of what I produce in-house, in addition to the drivers give-aways, door logos, tip-up seat adds etc, our members do not see. For example, sales brochures, advertising and the extensive library of graphics and photo-shots that I create as and when time permits.

Suffice to say, being in the office three days each week, I am sufficiently occupied. However I have absolutely no intention of demeaning myself by itemising the work I do each month in my *Call Sign* article, neither do I feel any guilt whatsoever with my take-home pay, which on average is half and in some cases a third of what many of our members earn.

Finally I feel it worth mentioning that we have always considered Dial-a-Cab to have two types of customers, our clients and you the members. So as much as marketing and design involves directly or indirectly promoting our business and creating a business image, it also involves supporting you the members with ideas and suggestions that could assist you in your working day. Hence the reason I cover the subjects that I do in my articles. Even if occasionally it includes something about myself, it's something to read whilst waiting for a client. If it is contentious, then it has probably been encouraged by the Editor who hopes the responses will fill his letters page! Sorry Ed....

Allen Togwell
DaC Marketing
allent@dialacab.co.uk

ASCOTT CAB COMPANY INTRODUCE...

"Preference Testing Options!"



Ascott now have preference testing options...

Ascott Cab Company has announced a new innovative method of preparing your cab for its annual or mid-term test. Now that the PCO have announced that mid-term testing has begun, Ascott Cab Company have invested in Automatic Test Ramp, which tests vehicles to a comparable SGS standard. The test ramp eliminates human error in the testing of the mechanical components on the vehicle. This has allowed Ascotts to offer owner-drivers a more cost effective preference option of preparing a cab for testing. With two alternatives, this additional option allows owners to choose one of two ways to present their cabs for plating or a mid-term inspection.

Option 1 is the traditional approach where the owner leaves everything to Ascotts. The garage arranges everything from the chassis wash to the final presentation at the passing station.

Option 2 is the new innovative approach, which will save the owner a considerable amount of money and time. The owner arranges the appointment date and time with SGS, then a day or so before the cab is due to be presented at SGS for passing, Ascotts give the vehicle a pre-inspection test for a fixed price. If any mechanical defects are found, they are rectified at an additional cost. The

owner cleans and valets the cab and presents the vehicle at the testing station.

Option 2 will save the owner time and money and get the vehicle back on the road with the least downtime.



The cost of the fixed price pre-test is £99 + vat. Shock Absorbers, Ball Joints, Track Rod Ends, Bushes, Brakes, Road Springs are all checked, then the Headlights are adjusted and Engine & Wheels are washed off ready for presenting.

Casinos - Membership no longer required!



We can expect to see even more online casinos advertised on taxis...

Inset pic: No membership required...



Tourists to London have long been mystified as to why our casino laws banned them because they had no membership. Many asked their taxi driver the obvious question – how can you become a member and give 24 hours notice when you are possibly only here for 2 days anyway?

Now a new act has done away with membership requirements, so tourists and locals alike can pay a visit to their local casino.

The *Gambling Act of 2005*, which came into effect from 1 September, replaces most of the previous gaming laws - some dating back over 150 years. The law affects most forms of gambling including online casinos, land-based casinos, bingo halls, bookmaking, TV and radio phone-ins and even pub slot machines. These will all now be regulated by a new watchdog, *The Gambling Commission*, which claims to be one of – if not the - most powerful gambling regulators in the world.

Now for the first time, gambling operators will be permitted to advertise on radio and television, although not before the 9pm watershed. The 9pm time is an voluntary agreement and cannot be enforced, but gambling companies have agreed among themselves to keep 9pm as the earliest. That will only be punctured if a major sporting event is being shown live.

The industry is subject to strict advertising codes that ban commercials targeting people under the age of 18, feature players who appear to be under 25 or encourage irresponsible or excessive gambling.

While opening the airwaves to adverts, the British government has simultaneously banned ads from online gambling websites based outside the European Economic Area (EEA). That effectively bans about 1,000 online gaming sites from advertising in the UK and has prompted several major brands to move their operations. William Hill announced last month it was relocating its operations from the Dutch Antilles in the Caribbean to Gibraltar and Malta. Betfred moved to Gibraltar and Intertops also moved to Malta.

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
1977

This month's Flashback goes back to 1977 and the news that Dial-a-Cab subscribers might not only face a subscription increase, but that it would now have VAT added as well...

From ODRTS News and Views, October 1977...

TREASURER'S REPORT (Aubrey Siteman (C07))

As you have been informed by Chairman Peter Fennymore (A79), the Board have been forced to raise subscriptions from 1st December. A further blow to our Society has been the new Finance Act now going through Parliament concerning VAT.

Firstly, the increase of subscriptions; in spite of a record year we are faced with continually rising costs, as in any business organisation. We have to budget for staff increases in April and a possible increase in call-in rates around December if the fare increase comes into being. We also have to take into account other normal rising costs in our operation.

As regards VAT and under the present Finance Act, we are in the category of exempt associations. Regarding member's subscriptions in the new Finance Act, the category of exemption is being redefined and it would appear that we will no longer be exempt. This Act has come about so as to bring us into line with other EEC countries. The only slim chance we may have would be any Treasury amendment whilst the Act is going through Parliament. We are advised that this is highly unlikely.

If any of our members are registered for VAT, they will obviously be able to claim this back, however, the majority of us are not registered so it will mean an added expense. The overall effect will be that VAT will take an approximate extra £15,000 a year from this organisation with nothing in return, an amount we can ill-afford to lose.

So don't forget that from 1st December 1977, your subs will be £20 for a single cab and £21 for a doubled one. This will be inclusive of VAT from 1st January 1978. All subs paid after 31st December 1977 will be liable for VAT, even if it is just payment of arrears so even if you have credits to cover subscriptions, you will still have to come in to clear your account prior to January 1978.



It's 1977, Aubrey Siteman and Peter Fennymore discuss the impending addition of VAT to DaC business

As to the future, we will no longer be able to take into account credit work that you may have accumulated to cover subscriptions. They will now have to be considered as separate items and you could be placed on stop service even if you have a large amount to cover your subs. As we will be dealing with VAT on subscriptions, you can well see the reason for this.

I suggest that more of you switch to paying by Bankers Order, as that would obviate any problems you may have in getting to the office. We have the relevant forms at Shirland Road. If you have any queries, please contact John or myself.

I am sorry to be the bringer of bad tidings, but we have no control over this matter and must maintain our profit margins and stay one step ahead, indeed that is the reason for our past success. We also have plans to re-equip in 1980 and by keeping ahead now, the blow in 3 years time will be much softer. Our financial position is strong and your BoM are determined that it will remain so.



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

This month Alex Constantinou went to the relaunched "Only Running Footman..."

Eating Out with Call Sign

Coming under the banner of The Meredith Group, **The Only Running Footman** recalls the days when aristocrats' carriages were preceded by menservants on foot, whose duties included carrying lights after dusk and paying toll-keepers. The inn was named by the 4th Duke of Queensberry who died in 1810 and is the only London tavern with this name.

The Group's Executive Chef is **Jeremy Hollingsworth** and he will be based on site. He previously spent six years with **Marco Pierre White** restaurants including Quo Vadis, where he gained a Michelin star. **Andre Vazquez**, who has also previously worked with Marco Pierre White in addition to Terence Conran, will be heading up operations.

The Restaurant is at **5 Charles Street, Mayfair** and when I heard the name, it brought back memories from my days of working as a croupier at the Palm Beach casino in Berkeley Street, as this was our local pub.

I was accompanied by my 15 year old son Nick for the evening who jumped at the chance of a meal in a Mayfair restaurant! The setting of the restaurant is on the first floor of the building and is very intimate and comfortable.

The service was very attentive and the staff very polite.

We knew we were in for a treat when the starter came out with a generous portion of lamb's kidneys, buttered mushrooms and toasted brioche. Not only generous, but delicious too!

My main course saw a beautifully done sirloin steak with homemade chips and assorted vegetables, all of which were cooked exactly to my liking. An excellent Bordeaux washed it down.

Nick had free range chicken with organic mash, peppercorn and leeks. Being a young man, that automatically makes him ultra-fussy, but the smile on his face said it all!

Feeling pretty much full, we were going to skip the dessert but our will power vanished when we saw the menu! I went for the treacle tart with ice cream soaked in brandy, while my son went for the chocolate pudding with ice cream. Both were absolutely scrummy and plentiful. From our conversation with the waiter, he was explaining about the private dining room on the second floor. This can be hired out for special occasions such as parties etc. There is also a Chef's table on the third floor which is

available for functions and will also be used as a cookery school for up to five students. Courses for that begin in the autumn.

Both Nick and myself had a very enjoyable evening, with excellent food in very comfortable and intimate surroundings. I'd have no hesitation in recommending this restaurant for a very pleasant relaxing and comfortable dining experience.

Average costs per person (not including wine) are around £25-£30...

The Only Running Footman is at 5 Charles St, Berkeley Square W1. Reservations and enquiries for the ground floor pub, first floor restaurant, second floor private room or third floor Chef's Table and Cookery School, call 020 7499 2988.

Opening hours:

Pub: Breakfast Mon to Fri 0730 - 1030...

Weekend 0900 - 1100

Dining room: Lunch Mon to Fri 1200 - 1430...

Dinner Mon to Sat 1730 - 2230

Weekend breakfast 0900 - 1100... British brunch Sat 1100 to 1430... Sunday 1130 - 2130...

Alex Constantinou (N05)

Dial-a-Cab drivers: Does their emissions reduction conversion equipment work?

Mayor Ken's policy to reduce London's taxi exhaust emissions to Euro 3 for older cabs is now well under way. So **Call Sign** hit the streets to gauge the experiences of our drivers who have been converted and how they have fared with their chosen system.

Glen Hatton (K99):

"I've had the system for about two weeks now and find it reliable, but I've noticed a definite loss of performance. The engine is less responsive on longer runs and power tails off up hills. Fuel consumption is about the same and thankfully there have been no problems."

TX1: Van Aaken system fitted by M&H Taxis, £2000.



Daniel Anchor (H61):

"I've had the conversion for just over two weeks, so it's early days yet but it seems ok so far. It failed the test at SGS the first time round, so I took it back for adjustment and it passed the next day, no problem. I think the fuel consumption has slightly improved as well, but as I said, it's still very early days."

TX1: Van Aaken system fitted by Dave's Taxis of Hackney, £2000.



Mitchell Freeman (V33):

"The system has been fine since being fitted 1 year ago and I have noticed no difference really. There was a loose support bracket in April this year, which was quickly sorted out. I've noticed a rattle somewhere since the recent overhaul, which might not really be related. It's something that needs to be sorted, but yes, the system is fine."

Fairway: TaxiCat system fitted by Davis & Bishop, £1800/2000).



Michael Churchill (G93):

"Overall, I'm happy with the system, which was fitted in October '06, but I've noticed a loss of power on long runs and there is no quick acceleration - not that I go racing anywhere! There has been just the one problem of a split exhaust downpipe around 2 months ago and that was replaced under warranty while I waited."

Fairway: Van Aaken system fitted by Pool Motors, £2000 inc Vat and fitting.



Douglas Shepherd (W28):

"I was converted in June this year and the system seems fine. The only minor problem was an initial loss of power due to a throttle linkage connection, but that was quickly re-adjusted and now there is no difference in performance and no fuel increase either."

Fairway: TaxiCat system fitted by Davis & Bishop, £2000.



John Hall (K74):

"I had the system fitted in April of this year and noticed a lack of performance initially, but I am still happy with the system as a whole and I have not had any problems. While investigating the various options available, I discovered it is wise to firstly have the engine tested to confirm its suitability to conversion before spending money on an engine that is in poor condition and will therefore not reap the benefit of the emission reduction system."

Fairway: Van Aaken system fitted by Putney Bridge Motors, £2000.



Jason Wood (S05):

"My system was fitted about 8 weeks ago and seems fine, although there is a slight turbo 'lag', but then the cab takes off noticeably quicker than previously! I'm sure the fuel consumption is slightly better too, but I have not checked it accurately yet."

There is a loud, irregular electronic clicking noise, which I think is part of the system. But no, I have not had any problems. But it is only 8 weeks old!"

TX1: STT Emtec system fitted by London Cab Co. Herne Hill, £2320.



Michael Kennedy (M30):

"The cab was converted in May 2007. I had an injector service at the same time, which I'm sure is a PCO requirement anyway. I have not noticed any difference in performance and I have not had any problems. Yes, I'm happy with the system - except for having to pay out all that money!"

Fairway: TaxiCat system fitted by A1 Taxis, £2300.



David James (A26):

"The cab was converted on 26 April 2007 and then passed the overhaul with SGS"



first time. No smoke, no problems. I live in west Wales and drive the cab to and from home, a distance of 220 miles each way. The performance is far better than before, with improved fuel consumption. I do not thrash it though because I intend to keep the cab a while longer. I am a qualified motor engineer and service the cab myself. I am happy with the conversion - although the steady 'clicking' noise from the electronic fuel regulator valve can probably be irritating."

Fairway: STT Emtec system from Cricklewood Carriers, £2763.

Charlie Rubin (C89):

"I have not had any problems and I'm happy with the system, although like many other drivers I did not need the extra expense of the conversion! But, that said, yes I'm happy with the system as a whole. The cab passed the overhaul via SGS after the conversion and I did notice a loss of performance, but was told to give the cab a good run. Coincidentally, I took my family to Stanstead along the M11 and sure enough noticed a marked improvement in the performance after that. I also had the injectors serviced 8 months ago."

Fairway: TaxiCat system from Frank Tingley Motors, £1950.



Ken Taylor (S03):

"Yes, it's been fine. I've not had any problems and no loss of performance that I can tell. Yes, I'm happy with the system, but probably like a lot of drivers, I'm not too happy with the cost! However, having said that, I had the system fitted in November '06 and the cab passed the overhaul at the PCO shortly afterwards."

Fairway: TaxiCat system via A1 Taxis, £2000.



Phil Jacobs (D13):

"I had my system fitted in May '07 and have not had any problems. The cab passed its' overhaul with the system fitted at SGS in Deptford that month without any problems. I have noticed a loss of performance though, especially in the 30/50 mph speed range."

Fairway: TaxiCat system fitted by E1 taxis, £2000.



The above drivers were picked at random. Only one driver was rejected as he refused to have his photo taken...

A feeling of confidence was felt throughout the DaC-Wembley dressing room as they opened the 2007 – 8 *Combined Conference* season with what should have been a fairly easy home game against last season's mid-table flops, Sandhurst Town. But it was the same story as last season – DaC's Wembley Lions football skills left Sandhurst standing, but when it came down to it, if you don't take advantage of your superiority then you won't win matches – and that's what happened. Sandhurst – hardly in the game – went away delighted with their 2 – 2 draw.

Three days later and a more difficult away match at Cobham – so as you'd expect, Wembley came away with all 3 points having scored early, locked up shop and comfortably played the home team off the park.

"We played well in both games," DaC-Wembley goalkeeper and Dial-a-Cab driver **Lee Pearce (J71)** told *Call Sign*, "we just need to add some steel to our good football."

The following Saturday saw The Lions start off on their FA Cup dream with an *Extra-Qualifying* away match at Haringey Borough.

With the home team one division below Wembley, it shouldn't have been too difficult, but once again DaC-Wembley's superior soccer skills couldn't kill off Haringey's straight-forward pub game! Rough and ready to rumble, the Borough thought Xmas had come early when they came away with a 2 – 2 draw and although Wembley won the replay, they still weren't firing on all cylinders.

Their next round FA Cup match (First Qualifying) was against Ryman League outfit Ware and in theory DaC-Wembley should have had little chance – but they were playing at home so you never know? Well, sadly that home advantage counted for little. Although once again Wembley's one-touch football made even hard-nosed reporters gasp in admiration and **Bradley Scott's** equaliser following Ware's early **Paul Burton** goal left supporters wondering whether this would be the game to kick-start the season, it was Ware who showed that the Ryman League is deservedly higher than the Combined Counties with 3 second half goals to take a 4 – 1 victory away with them. So Wembley's FA Cup dream ends for another season.

Several days later and it was a trip to Bookham. You could see the team were still reeling from the Ware game – and it showed in a 5 – 0 thrashing.

"If you don't want to play for Wembley, leave now," was Captain Ian Bates comment to his players after the game, "because we don't want anyone here who doesn't turn up mentally and physically!"

However, the next match was the first round of the League Cup against Horley Town and Ian's message must have hit home because the team found their lost style and turned in a superb performance giving Horley a real lesson in how football should be played, walking away with a 3 – 0 victory, Paul Shelton scoring a brace and Shane Sinclair adding the third.

DaC-Wembley Dumped Out of the FA Cup!



Captain Ian Bates leading by example...

Inset pic: DaC's Wembley goalkeeper Lee Pearce makes the save



"More like it," said Ian Bates, "but that's how we need to play in every match, not just occasionally."

Sure enough, their next match – away to Raynes Park Vale – continued the good work when Bradley Scott and Shane Sinclair gave DaC's boys a 2 -1 win.

"A tough opening month for us," **Lee Pearce** told *Call Sign*. "We know we're good, but something occasionally goes wrong – but we'll get it right and hopefully pick up that promotion spot to the Ryman League."

It was even tougher for Lee as he picked up a painful groin strain during the month and had to play through it with some help not from a physiotherapist, but some Ibuprofen! But October will still have a great payoff for DaC-Wembley's goalkeeper, when his partner Becky gives birth later this month. It won't mean missing any games, but the family consider it fortunate that his groin strain came in September and not earlier!

JACK RUSSELL'S PARTNER DIES



Jack Russell with Brian Rice at Call Sign's former Chairmen presentation in 2000

Barbara, the long-term partner of former Dial-a-Cab Chairman Jack Russell, has sadly passed away following a long illness. For 30 years, the pair were inseparable. Wherever, Jack went, there was Barbara just behind to make sure he was ok.

Jack, who was DaC Chairman between 1964 and 1969, told *Call Sign*: "She was a wonderful person, one who could never be replaced and I will always miss her."

Brian Rice represented Dial-a-Cab at the Ruislip cremation...

Cabtivate MD now after the private hire market...

To say that **Call Sign** was stunned to receive a press release from a Scottish PR company extolling the virtues of a 'pioneering' system featuring "an 8-inch touch screen TV to provide news, weather and sports updates, advertising opportunities and public information for residents and visitors to the city and all on the driver's headrest," would be a gross understatement.

The press release went on to add: "It is the first time the system has been installed anywhere in the world and has already been welcomed by tourism bosses, local businesses and the City of Edinburgh's Licensing Committee."

It went on to add: "Private hire drivers in Edinburgh are pioneering the world's first in-car touch screen interactive system to enhance the service they offer to passengers."

The system, called Tapinto, sounded familiar and rang more than one bell when the release mentioned the name of the person behind the system – Mark Greenhalgh. It was Mr Greenhalgh who was behind the system that burned the fingers of many UK taxi drivers when they fitted his almost-identical system to their cabs, but called it Cabtivate and cost most of them up to £4000 each - with nothing back in return.

Among those who lost substantial amount were two Dial-a-Cab drivers, Mark Lane (N97) and Jimmy Parlour (G41).

DAMN CHEEK!



Mark Greenhalgh is now pushing his new screen - Mark Lane's advice is to keep well away!

Call Sign had innocently published Mr Greenhalgh's original press release after his Cabtivate system had been passed by the PCO – amazingly only just over a year ago! As the Penton Street organisation would never take any responsibility just because they had passed something, this magazine paid for our two drivers to have several meetings with a solicitor. The result was a much-reduced amount owed to the poor finance company that innocently lent drivers the finance needed and were then left to clear up Mr Greenhalgh's apparent mismanagement.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, Mr Greenhalgh is aiming his Cabtivate – sorry, Tapinto

system at the Private Hire market this time, no doubt realising that few taxi drivers would touch anything with his name on with a proverbial bargepole.

TV program, **Dragon's Den**, had already warned viewers that Mr Greenhalgh's Cabtivate system wouldn't work; sadly few took any notice and found themselves around £4000 out of pocket. We assume that he never went back with his Tapinto idea.

Even more worrying, Tapinto's creators are said to be making the system and its software available to fleet owners in other parts of the UK and internationally! It isn't often that **Call Sign** feels sorry for private hire, but we're actually leaning in that direction!

DaC's Mark Lane told **Call Sign**:

"I can't believe that Mr Greenhalgh is pushing an identical system onto the market when his previous system failed so badly leaving me and many others out of pocket by amounts we could not afford to lose. Had he made an attempt to repay us, perhaps it wouldn't have been so bad, but Cabtivate went on selling their system even after they knew the system had failed. Anyone taking his new screen on needs their head testing. Thankfully, Call Sign's intervention saved us a lot of money"

Now you know...

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...?



- 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,**

In last September's *Call Sign*, *Taxiwise* spokesperson, Celeste Clarke queried the safety of the then new phenomenon that had reached the south coast holiday resort of Brighton - the motorised Tuk-Tuk.

She inferred that they were trying to be taxis, but pointed out among other things their lack of seat belts and protection in the event of an accident.

"Neither," she said, "are they accessible to wheelchair users."

She went on to rhetorically query whether the drivers had to go through the same standard police checks that ordinary taxi drivers did and ended by telling *Call Sign*:

"The introduction of these vehicles to our streets is a step backwards in terms of the quality of vehicle that passengers can use. We would like to see any vehicle licensed to carry passengers meeting a strict set of safety and accessibility standards, along the same lines as the black cabs do in London."

A spokesperson for *TucTuc Ltd* told *Call Sign* at the time that their vehicle was being tested in Brighton before a London launch! The spokesperson added that the vehicles were "...environmentally friendly and ran on compressed natural gas with super-low emissions and would offer tourists and shoppers a safe, economical and environmentally friendly means of getting around congested cities."

All the above suggests that they consider themselves to be taxis. Now there is a stink in the Brighton sea air

Tuk-Tuks pretending they are Taxis!



Dominic Ponniah with the roof signs
Pic courtesy Brighton Argus

as the gas-operated 'prams' have gone into battle with the local council who forbade them from putting roof signs on the vehicles as per the 1980 Transport Act.

Tuc Tuc Ltd director Dominic Ponniah told them to get stuffed!

"We are outraged," said Mr Ponniah, "do the council really have nothing better to do than fight us over something so petty as roof signs? We operate a Dial-a-Ride bus service and are

legitimately informing the public of our telephone number. We will not be removing our signs and the council will need to get used to it!"

Brighton and Hove City Council, however, were sticking to their guns and told *Call Sign* that if *Tuc Tuc Ltd* did not take the offending roof signs down, the council would have no option but to instigate a court action, adding that it was important that the public should not get confused if they believed they were hiring a taxi and that one way of recognising them was via their roof sign.

"If they are not taxis," added the spokesperson, "but they carry passengers for hire and reward, then they should not have roof signs. Only taxis have them and passengers identify them through that."

Tuc Tuc Ltd were fined £8000 last year for not keeping to their scheduled time table. That was reduced from £16,500 on appeal.

Now we hear that *Tuc-Tuc Ltd* have applied to have motorised Tuk-Tuks licensed in London and now know the type of person we will be dealing with.

SAYNOTO0870.COM

Cutting out the 08** numbers!

Have you ever felt miffed because the telephone number you have been given begins with an 08 and besides costing you extra, usually puts you into a never-ending program of pushing buttons?

A **Dial-a-Cab** driver recently sent us details of the **sayno-to0870.com** website - in English, say no to 0870.com - where you can go and get the equivalent geographical phone numbers of banks, businesses or anywhere they try to hide their real number.

Sayno0870.com lists alternatives for 0800 (not free on mobiles), 0808, 0844, 0845, 0870 and 0871 numbers.

The **sayno0870.com** website has been featured on BBC's Working Lunch TV programme, BBC Radio 2 (Jeremy Vine Show), BBC Radio Norfolk and has also appeared in many newspapers and publications including The Guardian, Which Magazine, Readers Digest and others. Jeremy Vine's Radio 2 program awarded the site its Website Of The Day prize!

We've tried it and it works, so thank you to Adrian for passing the info along to *Call Sign*...

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Mayor Ken's proposals to offer a range of free goodies such as mopeds, free all-weather kit and maps etc to ethnic minority applicants who enroll on the Knowledge of London in an effort to incentivise that sector of our community to become taxi drivers, has met with a less than enthusiastic response from the first five DaC drivers with an ethnic minority background that Call Sign spoke to recently...

Lee Robb (F30)

"Absolute tosh! Total nonsense! The Knowledge was just as hard for me as it was for the others in my group of students. I bought all my own kit. Look at me, I was the only one of my colour in my group and received no favours whatsoever. My mother was white English and my father was born in Burma. I have never had any racist remarks made against me. I've been cabbing 2 years and been on DaC since April '06"



Trevor Smith (V78)

"The Knowledge should be open to everyone, not just a 'disadvantaged' few. If someone is on benefits, they should pay a small percentage upfront to cover the costs of exams etc and then repay the full amount when they pass out. Anyway, if they are given a free bike, who is going to check on its usage? How is that going to work? Maybe the bike could be used for other reasons not connected to the Knowledge, leading to abuse of the facility. I've been driving a cab for 26 years and been on DaC for 16 of them."



Saleem Raja (S46J)

"The PCO should be a place where they do not care what colour you are - so long as you can prove you know where you are going. There are all sorts in this trade already, so why should we give any handouts? I think this move would be detrimental to our trade. Ken is trying to destroy our trade by watering it down and no additional help should be offered. If someone wants to do the Knowledge, they should pay their Knowledge school fees, that



Mayor Ken's Ethnic Minority Knowledge Freebies

DaC drivers give *their* views...

would keep them focused and not give up easily. I did the Knowledge in 11 months and two of my brothers are cab drivers as well. My father came here to the UK in 1962, and we brothers were born in Pakistan, coming over here in 1966. I've been on Dial a Cab since 1998."

Colin Salmon (N81)

"It's scandalous, it degrades the quality of professionalism and integrity of the world-renowned London taxi driver, because you cannot make people do something they do not in their hearts want to do. Everyone who is driving a cab now must have, at some stage, wanted to do so and was not forced into it because of political strategy. We all did it under our own steam and it seems wrong to dangle a carrot in front of some for political gain. I think these ideas are slowly killing the trade and certainly not doing us any favours."



Anyway, I still wonder if it will even work."

Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)

"I think it's a stupid idea. My girlfriend is also Asian and she is on the Knowledge. I have no doubt that if she works hard at it, she could get out in under 18 months. The strange thing was that when she contacted the PCO about going on the KoL, they were so polite and couldn't do enough for her including ringing her back! Have you ever tried to get the PCO to call you back? Would they have been so nice had they not seen her obviously Asian name? I must add that they told her afterwards that she could not expect any favours, but they were just so nice! I don't remember that when I was on the KoL - then again, Ken wasn't the Mayor at that time!"



©Call Sign Magazine MM7

Taxi Driver of the Year Dinner/Dance

*The 35th Taxi Driver of the Year Dinner and Dance will be held at
The Britannia Hotel, Marsh Wall E14, 1st December 2007,
reception 6.15pm, dinner 6.45pm*

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Dietary requirements: Veg _____ Fish _____ Meat _____

Dress: Smart

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

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Since my last article, we have had quite a lot happening at the Dial-a-Cab depot in Roman Way - not all to the betterment of the Society.

Roman Way robbery...

As you will have read in the last issue of *Call Sign*, I had my wallet stolen by a walk-in thief. This man, who had more front than Selfridges, walked in-between 4 drivers and past 5 fitters, with myself and the Manager just 8-feet away from the office doorway! He had already been into other premises on the estate trying to steal whatever he could lay his hands on, but without any joy.

He had also tried to steal the coat of an Autoglass mechanic working in the next unit to us, but as their employee went to challenge him, he walked out and into our depot. Because of his appearance, he was taken to be one of the drivers who were waiting at the entrance to the depot, so nobody questioned him coming onto our property. He was a white man of about 50, with grey hair, wearing a fleece and jeans.

That is why when you now want to come into the depot; **you have to wear your badge**. Due to the loss I suffered, all the staff are edgy and if you enter without your badge on, they could take you for a thief - and sometimes actions speak louder than words.

As a matter of interest, a postman found my wallet in Canning Town, all intact apart from the missing cash (£80) that I was going to spend on going out that night with my wife.

Although we gave the police a description, CCTV tape and pictures, plus the car's registration (P448 NTU) and description of a silver ford Mondeo, they have not captured the miscreant. So it seems that in this day and age you have to sort out the problem yourself, as the police are too busy or unable to help.

Tom and politics...

After my last article in which I gave my views on why the country was going down rapidly due to there being no leadership, with huge amounts of money from taxes being given away or sent abroad, I believe some 5 or 6 drivers wrote or telephoned the Editor to complain that I was expressing my views in our magazine. So there had to have been around 2195 drivers that either agreed with what I said, or possibly just could not care less how the country is going! About the same percentages that are interested in attending an ODRTS AGM! So it needs someone to stir them up and gain some interest in their country.

This being the case, all that I said was true and since that article the establishment has gone out of their way to show that I was correct. But it did cost me £80! So I wonder if any of those 6 drivers were to get into bother on the streets of London and found that no law officers turned up, would they still think that I was wrong to try and get others to address these problems? I have never been one to bury my head in the sand or stand around shaking and hoping the problem goes away. As anyone who knows me will tell you, I will not duck your questions, I will give you an answer - even if the answer is not the one you want.

Upgrades and changes at Roman Way...

As you will have heard by now, we have a

Tom's Roman Way Happenings...



new upgrade that we are installing onto your terminals at Roman Way. When you have the upgrade, all that you will notice is seeing channels 9 or 10 showing on the terminal screen. At this moment, our IT department is trying to double up on aerial sites; they are also trying new sites for existing channels.

The other point of interest for drivers is that when you send a message, it will try all of the channels to send the message before it hits you with a 'RESEND' message.

We have been trying this upgrade and it seems to be cutting down on resends, however, it will not totally eliminate the problem. So when you have the upgrade, please do not phone me saying that you have had the Resend message a few times...

The changes at the Roman Way depot are now noticeable; cleaner toilets, kitchen and working areas, so we would appreciate it if you could help us to keep these improved standards on an upward trend. The staff now take a pride in the improvements and get very upset if drivers cannot aim correctly into the toilet and the floor gets wet and stained. They would also like you to use one of the many rubbish bins for your empty cups when you have had your free tea or coffee. The boys are working very hard during this time of upgrade, but are proud of the short time they are taking in getting you back on the road.

We would also like you not to stray into the fitting area, as this can be dangerous and hampers the fitters giving you a quick turnaround.

There are a range of taxi trade papers as well as a copies of the world-renowned magazine, *Call Sign*, available for you to read whilst waiting. There is also a table with all the replacement items you may need for your work; printer rolls, receipts for cash or credit cards, stickers, books to record your account rides and their plastic covers, plus DaC hand-out cards.

We also still have some 2007 diaries and calendars left if anyone would like them. The pictures on the calendars can be trimmed and framed and look quite good in a hallway or toilet. Well, it gives you something to contemplate apart from your navel while in the toilet!

We will not be getting any 2008 diaries as so many drivers say they do not want them and nowadays you can pick one up for 50p. But we will still be giving the War Disabled charity a donation. So if you are going to say that the

diary is helpful for the telephone numbers, keep the one you have for this year or come and pick up one of the leftovers still at the depot.

Bits and pieces...

Many drivers who have attended Roman Way have been surprised when meeting me to realise that I am not the ogre that they were expecting. This is because they have probably only spoken to me on the telephone regarding a complaint and not seen the good-looking, charming person that I really am.

Editor's note: Come on Tom, you promised you were going to tell the truth in future articles!

Please note that we cannot fit a taxi in your name if you do not produce your taxi licence from the passing centre, which notes that you are registered as the person who owns the taxi. This is needed to make sure we keep within the rules of the Society as registered with the Friendly Societies. Our name actually explains this - The Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Service.

When you come and visit us at Roman Way, if you have any type of leak - oil or brake fluid - from your taxi, please inform us because once you drive out, someone could slip and injure themselves. If this happens, we could have a claim for compensation on our hands and we could be looking to you as the culprit! If we notice a patch of oil or brake fluid on the floor after you have left, we will try and contact you immediately to save you from having an accident or an expensive repair bill. If you tell us of a leak when you come in, we can clean it up as you leave, avoiding any further problems.

We have had a few drivers coming into the depot with terrible attitude problems who start shouting or gesticulating right in the face of the fitters. Do not do this, because as their title denotes, they are fitters and not the manufacturers or repairers of the equipment that has gone wrong. This inappropriate behaviour has almost ended up in physical contact, something that is really stupid. The fitter will complete his job, but if you have any further complaints about the service, then please speak to me and I will address the matter with whomever needs to be informed or direct it to the makers of our system.

The Roman Way staff work under my directions and I will back them all the way against any driver who is rude or abusive. So if you have a problem, please talk to me.

And finally, if you are buying a new taxi, stripping out or exchanging cabs, then contact us at the Roman Way Fitting Bay on 020 7700 4443. All these actions need an appointment.

Please do not contact the main office, as they will not know if we are completing any task that involves all our fitters and therefore make your journey futile.

For all drivers who are reading this whilst off sick, all my staff and I wish you a speedy recovery and hope to see you fit and well at the depot in the near future.

Tom Whitbread
DaC Roman Way Manager

Continued from September...

As new drivers came onto ODRTS and coverage increased, so did the demand for our taxis. Before long, Cyril Nathan became driver number 100.

It carried on growing and appeared to be never ending. Better coverage, more work to cover, so the ODRTS allowed more drivers to join and we went from 10 to 20 active credit accounts to having more companies wanting to open credit accounts than we could cope with financially or cover. But we knew if we didn't, then others would.

Minicabs were now becoming more of a threat to all the London taxi trade, including those with and without radios. Minicabs, with very few exceptions, had not so far made much, if any, real impact outside of London but this was soon to change. What had not changed were our unbeloved FX3s and FX4s whose features were firmly rooted in the beginning of 1950 - hot in summer, cold in winter, draughty, noisy and sluggish!

This state of affairs was also being forced to change and the manufacturer now started to talk to the radio circuits to try and understand what was required by them to make it easier to fit two-way radios. A moot point is how much did they listen or change?

In those days, **M&O** were not like they are now and have been for many years. They knew best then and had no compunction in telling their buyers what was best for them. With the exception of the large, well-established fleets, the rest of us were not dealt with as customers, so scant regard was given to our wishes or requests. A far cry from LTI's Listening Program, DaC driver factory visits and modern, up-to-date showrooms and facilities. But they did start to take notice of the expanding radio taxi market, listened to the men running the circuits and tried to accommodate two-way radio installation requirements.

With hindsight, most radio taxi owners changed their cabs more frequently than non-radio cab mushers, so it paid LTI and M&O to accommodate the special needs of radio cab owners.

There were good reasons why we changed our taxis more frequently than non-radio cab owners. For many, it was our desire to have a reliable cab, as most radio men worked long days or nights to maximise their takings, we also in many cases did a much higher annual mileage as a result of getting more 'long un's' off the radio and running further to cover work than a cab that only worked ranks, stations and street work. The same still applies today, even though the origins of radio work in **Terminus Radio** days was Lou Levy's idea that putting two way radios in his cabs would help his York Way fleet to cut down on wasted mileage.

As credit work grew with the knowledge that you could not lose by blowing

"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...



As ODRTS expanded, founder chairman Bonnie Martyn welcomes the 100th member, Cyril Nathan and his Oxford taxi

out, so the more astute radio men were ever more willing to run to cover work and as always, the more work that got covered, the more rides came in, despite the increasing proliferation of minicabs everywhere. What had started as a mainly London-based operation was spreading like wildfire throughout the country. Initially minicabs were so poorly organised and run, with low grade drivers and even lower grade cars, that even to the non-motoring public, these cars were seen as being unfit for the road. That increased the demand for a door-to-door taxi service that only needed a phone call to a manned radio circuit rather than phoning a rank that could - and often did - produce a wide, but unreliable range of responses that went from no shows, excuses and lies, to hoaxes. What, once again with my 20/20 hindsight, was lacking in many cases was good organisation to cope with the demands being

made on radio circuits by their twin customers - fares and subscribers.

With cab driving members on radio circuits run by elected men who were also cab drivers, was the lack of realisation that these men could not earn their living driving a cab and put in the needed time, effort and acquiring the necessary skills to run a 24-hour, 365-days a year business of increasing complexity. Training and business skills had to be funded and a wage paid to these men, but the majority of us wanted them to do it for free and then go out and earn their living on a cab! Many Committee men tried, but none succeeded - several losing their marriages, homes and families as they tried to do the impossible.

Continued next month

Sunset Strip

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Keith Cain answers Michael Beevor's (N76) letter from this issue's Mailshot...

Is Dial-a-Cab a 'them and us' Society???

Further to your letter, Michael, let me first say that I agree with you about the signals. What are the Board going to do about it? Well, let me say that the next stage of improving the situation is to use our voice channel as two more dispatching channels.

Testing this change was scheduled for Tuesday 4 September, which happened to be the second day of the tube strike! So this had to be abandoned due to the expected workload. By the time you read this, testing will have taken place and as soon as the technical people are happy, we will then need to upgrade radios in the taxis.

Coverage on E14? The Board recently altered the work to be dispatched *As Directed* from 21:00 hours and within days, coverage had improved so much that our clients remarked about the turnaround in service.

EC5? We have been testing the method of splitting this zone to assist drivers so that they are then able to arrive at pick-ups quicker and this was done on the first day of the strike. Comparing it with the second day - when we did not split the zone - there was no difference in coverage.

You refer to DaC becoming a "them and us" (Drivers and Board) circuit. Obviously you would expect me to say I disagree, but if it were the case, we the Board could resolve signal and coverage problems overnight. How would we do it? Simple - by making every trip non-rejectable and taking away the freedom of the driver to have a choice.

We could also then stop drivers who sign on early morning, receive 80 trip offers and then reject all 80 trips. It was very clear to see on the second day of the tube strike when signals were at their worst, that as soon as 21:00 hours came and the City work went non-rejectable and destinations on E140 stopped, signals improved to a remarkable level.

Commercially, this is the decision the Board should make. If we were dictatorial to the DaC workforce, then the problems would be solved.

The reason we don't do it is because we are a driver's circuit and we know what drivers want. In order to accommodate our members, the Board goes out of its way to look at ways of improving the signals to levels that in all honesty will never technically be achieved. We would rather do this and take flak from members than to make what would be a sound business decision and one that we all know would be right for the Society as a whole.

And new cabs? Well, I'll be honest, Michael, I don't follow your reasoning of having to buy a new cab just to improve one's appearance. No one is saying drivers have to wear collars and ties, but because we are supplying a ser-



Is this the home of a them and us Society?

vice to paying passengers - whether they be account clients or passengers off the street - then no passengers, in my opinion, deserve to be driven by anyone who looks like they have just got out of bed. Besides that, it gives all of us in the trade a bad name. If I remember correctly, the topic of how drivers present themselves was criticised recently by a DaC driver (Ron Desborough P42).

When I first stood for the Board, I believed the role was to gain work for members and manage the Society to be successful. That's

exactly what has been done. Its now up to all members to ensure the work is covered and the service we provide is what clients expect.

If reminding members of forthcoming busy periods and what their obligation is in providing a service is classed as slating drivers off, then I'm sorry; I think I'm guilty...

Keith Cain

Call Centre Manager

Driver Operations Manager

OCTOBER EVENTS AT THE O2

The O2 has been remarkably successful leaving its predecessor, the Dome, standing! It has also provided much work for taxi drivers with the bonus of the Limehouse Link remaining open until midnight on nights when there are events on. There is an existing taxi 46-cab rank at North Greenwich station to serve the O2 that both Green Badge and Greenwich licensed taxi drivers can use. Most events finish around 10.30 or 11pm, but there are also regular late night events until the early hours.

October events at the O2 and IndigO2

2 Oct: Kiki Dee and Carmelo Luggeri are at IndigO2 (7.45pm) and will be singing many of the tracks from their joint album, *The Walk of Faith*...

6 and 7 Oct: The DMC World DJ Championships will be at IndigO2...

10 Oct: Boston Celtics v Minnesota Timberwolves are at the main O2 Arena in

the NBA 'Play Europe Live' basketball tour...

14 Oct: Singer-songwriter Christopher Cross will be performing at IndigO2...

From 17 Oct: Disney on Ice presents Disney Adventureland...

22 Oct: The King of Funk - Maceo Parker is at IndigO2...

26 Oct: Grammy winning gospel group, the amazing Leon Russell and the Blind Boys of Alabama are at IndigO2...

Further information about all events scheduled for The O2 can be found at www.theo2.co.uk or by emailing the O2 Customer Services /public enquiries at customerservices@theo2.co.uk.



Maceo Parker is at the IndigO2 on 22 Oct

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

A DaC Driver's Views on Life and Everything



The days of William...

As the evenings start to get cooler with the sun setting earlier, it doesn't seem that long since the hot drawn-out days of the summer holidays.

Again this year I travelled through the port of Dover to get to Europe, but this time spent a day there having a look around. If you think

Dover Town is an uninspiring place with little to offer, think again. I spent one of the best days out I have had for a while looking around Dover Castle. It has a wealth of history and secrets and yes, I sat up there on the top of the white cliffs unnoticed!

The castle itself was built in 1066 by William the Conqueror after his victory over Harold at Battle in Sussex and was one of the first things he did as the new King of England before setting off to London to build the Tower of London. The Romans had previously realised the importance of protecting what is the shortest sea crossing between England and France and a *Pharos* (Roman lighthouse) can be seen in the castle grounds.

Over almost 1000 years, Dover Castle has played host to many sovereigns including Henry VIII, who was on his way to meet the Pope. At one time it was a prison and a working garrison. More recently, a secret set of underground tunnels known as *Hellfire Corner* were dug out of the cliffs and from where Winston Churchill watched The Battle Of Britain and Vice Admiral Ramsey co-ordinated operation Dynamo where 100s of small sailing vessels set out to Dunkirk to rescue stranded soldiers from the beaches. If you visit Hellfire Corner, take a look at the map on the wall that was captured from the Nazis showing where the German Army intended landing in their invasion of England. From St Leonard's on the Sussex coast in the west, all the Way to Hythe in the east. How different things could have been.

This is only a small snapshot of a true gem of English history and Dover may seem a long way from town, but it is well worth the trip. If you want to see Hellfire Corner, get there early, as there are only a limited number of tours and places available each day...

You may also be interested to note that William the Conquer was indeed French, being the first Duke of Normandy. That didn't go down too well with the people from Kent (can't think why) who had somewhat of a rebellious nature - and believe me, still do! This was William's second attempt at invading England, as he'd tried the previous year but had been forced back by locals after attempting to land at Romney. Initially, they refused to accept William as King and after he tried to quell the insurgents, but William decided to negotiate with a group of the leaders at a meeting at Swanscombe. They managed to negotiate their own local land boundaries and other liberties in return for accepting His Majesty as the new ruler. This was done so successfully that the new king allowed them to use their own flag, which was *Invicta* with a white horse on a red background. This means unconquered and is still in use today.

Thefts and Directline...

With Christmas not too far away, it will not be long until the tealeaves

are out and about picking pockets for some extra money. Thefts always rise this time of year and last year I became a victim having a SatNav system stolen from the glove box of my car whilst parked on my drive in a quiet cal-de-sac. I got in touch with my insurance company, *Directline*, who asked the police and then the motor engineer to investigate.

I have used Directline for a number of years but were surprised when they wrote to me saying that I wasn't entitled to a settlement because in their opinion, I had left the doors of the car unlocked and that there was a clause in the small print of the policy that allowed them the right not to pay out under such circumstances. I didn't know this clause was in my policy, but knew about clauses like them because they were there to protect insurance companies against organised crime. I thought I had a genuine claim simply because the police said that a crime had taken place and that there had been a number of thefts from vehicles in the Close that night - hardly organised crime. On the balance of probabilities and because there was no sign of a forced entry, the doors were probably left unlocked.

To me, this is just another example of an insurance company offering to insure you and then when something occurs, bring out their joker - remember it's a knockout? At least with my taxi insurance, it states clearly states: "We do not cover SatNav systems." I know what I will be doing when my Directline policy comes up for renewal later in the year...

And finally...

I did a street hiring from Cabot Square the other morning and after pulling off, the gentleman in the back said: "Driver, what do you want me to do with all this stuff?" I asked what stuff he was referring to as he began passing through the partition a Nintendo DS, a dummy, comfort blanket, cuddly rabbit, another Nintendo DS and Winnie the Pooh! I had taken the kids to school that morning and completely forgot about their belongings. Rather like a mate of mine who loaded his cab up with numerous black sacks with the intention of popping into the tip on the way into work. "Where should I sit," enquired a lady after he was hailed? Embarrassing? I should say!

As always, if you like to contact me please e-mail callsign-mag@aol.com putting Richard Potter in the subject line.

Richard Potter (T51)



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The July issue of Call Sign told the remarkable story of Dial-a-Cab driver Tony Arnold (F03) and his long-term vision to bring the world's taxi drivers closer to the standard of us in London.

"No one will ever match us entirely," Tony told us recently, "but the standard in too many countries is nothing less than appalling!"

Tony, who drives a TX4 in London and who has been on DaC for many years, has been to Africa teaching drivers in Ghana and Nigeria how real taxi drivers operate and left them with what both governments agreed was a hugely improved service. He even taught them in a TX2!

Tony has also been involved in filmed achievements such as his mammoth 3-month TX2 trip from Beijing to Trafalgar Square, which Chinese TV showed in 15 weekly parts. On that trip, he also drove through **Outer Mongolia, Russia** and the **Arctic Circle** – where he met the "real" Santa Clause! Then there was the whole of Europe from **Finland** down to London! Since returning from Africa, Tony has visited much of Europe again and even addressed a taxi driver's conference in Spain!

Tony is incredibly proud of being a London taxi driver and also being part of DaC. In early September, he gave Call Sign an update and also told us of his future plans.

"I just wanted to share with DaC drivers what I have managed to achieve during the past few years, because without this fantastic trade – not to mention DaC's multi-talented Chairman and the UK's best-ever radio circuit – much of it wouldn't have happened.

As you are aware, I went to China in 2002 and drove my cab back to Trafalgar Square with two Chinese passengers who had won the trip in a competition. It was just the most fantastically enjoyable trip.

Then in 2004, I was asked by the UK Government, no less, to represent the taxi trade and to teach our African friends the art of professional driving and communication skills, how to go about the daily job of driving a London taxi – specifically in the Nigerian capital of Abuja where there are currently 75 green London taxis.

Since then, I have been very fortunate to visit some 15 other countries and to show off the skills that we all take great pride in. Whilst these other countries have no London taxis to date, I'm hoping to convince them to purchase the formidable TX4.

With the help of our very professional editor, I would like to share with **Call Sign** readers my future projects – now and when they take place – as all our drivers have played a part in enhancing the name and reputation of the finest taxi service in the world.

One of those future projects will be in **Brazil** in May / June 2008. In fact I was entertaining the Brazilian Finance Minister together with 4 other dignitaries recently at the very highly recommended **Salieri** restaurant in the Strand (opposite the Savoy). We had a very pleasant lunch in extremely pleasant sur-

Tony Arnold's Taxi Travels...



Tony and his two chinese passengers arrive at Trafalgar Square after driving his TX2 from Beijing in 2002

roundings. I mention that because I saw the ad for the restaurant in **Call Sign**, where they offer DaC drivers a very attractive discount!

The food was fantastic and I would have had a photo taken except that I'm currently too fat! Even my prospective client was also highly impressed with the professionalism of all concerned there.

But workwise, I've now also paid 2 visits to **Dubai** in the United Arab Emirates and hope

to visit **Australia** sometime next year. But first it will be **Brazil**, where if I can help get the standard of their taxi drivers even half as good as that of their footballers, I will be thrilled.

Yes, the editor is right – I am very proud of being a London taxi driver and delighted to grab hold of the opportunities that come my way and I would sincerely like to thank each and every one of you who have played some part in providing the best taxi service in the world..."

Breaking and entering a DaC Taxi - via a beer bottle!



Mustafa - Chelsea break in...

Dial-a-Cab driver, **Mustafa Suatt (R45)**, had a shock when he returned to his cab after helping an account client with her luggage. Mustafa told **Call Sign**;

"It was 04.30 on Saturday morning, 26 August, when I pulled up outside an account address in Sloane Terrace SW3 and went up to assist the lady passenger with her suitcases. I had been gone around two minutes and returned to my cab to find both the passenger and driver's door windows smashed by a beer bottle. In addition, many of my personal effects had been stolen.

Mustafa continued: "There was shattered glass everywhere. The cab looked a real mess with the paintwork having been damaged as well,

so it was down to an expensive repair. I was very shocked to think that something like this could happen in what is considered to be one of the nicer parts of London – and especially when there were several cabs parked nearby as other cabdrivers were having their breakfast in a local restaurant.

He ended by saying: "I have been driving a cab for 24 years and never had even one penny stolen... until now. My wife says it was lucky that I didn't come back to the cab any earlier or who knows what might have been. She may well have been right..."

"Last month in *Call Sign* we read about Hans Dooren in Holland, Jose Basadre in Spain and Nigel Walters in Coventry. Well I got sent to Coventry and ended up in Holland in a new TX4!

Lets go back 3 summers; I got the call to pack my overnight bag because it was my turn for the early morning double shift at the far end of the *Virgin / West Coast* line. I was to be at Coventry Station for 6am and arrived to find around a dozen Dial-a-Cab drivers already there. The banter started to pass back and fourth. I mentioned that I had found the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website and had located the grave of an old soldier in Holland who was my father's best friend in the army during the Spring of 1945. Another DaC driver, **John Farmer (H69)** told us he was off to Arnhem in Holland for the anniversary of *Operation Market Garden*. If you've seen the film *A Bridge to Far*, you'll know what that was about. John asked me to text him the details of the grave and he said he would try to find it for my father, which I thought was a nice thing to say. A few weeks later my phone rang; it was John calling to say he was in Holland and had found the Grave! He said he would be in touch.

A few months later, I bumped into John at the Marshall's hut at Morgan Stanley and he gave me an envelope containing pictures of the grave. When I showed the pictures to my father, he said he had always wanted to go back and take a look himself.

So there was a problem how to get dad, mum, wife Tracey and two sons - David and Mark - along with myself, to Holland? Well, I had ordered a new Taxi for the middle of August this year and with other drivers telling me what a comfortable motorway cruiser the TX4 was, my problem was solved!

August bank holiday Sunday, the Ferry was booked from Dover to Calais; priority loading ensured we were first on and first off into France, then Belgium and on into Holland. Around 225 miles later, we arrived at our overnight stop, Arnhem. A quick wash and brush up and back into the cab for evening dinner in Arnhem and a drive over the famous bridge.

Early next morning after a 35-minute drive east, we entered the small Dutch town of Barchem

where 62 years earlier, men had fought for the town and the crossroads there.

We found the cemetery without too much trouble, parked the TX4 and went straight in. Like the photos John Farmer had given us, there was a single well-kept row of simple white gravestones.

There were 25 in all - 12 Airmen and 13 soldiers - all killed on 1 April 1945. Almost in the centre were the remains of Cyril (Pearcey) Leonard Pearce, Private 1477924, 4th battalion Somerset Light Infantry. Aged just 18, an only son from Brentford and my father's best mate.

DaC's Jon Robinson (E88) tells Call Sign how he took his TX4 to the Dutch war graves

I went to Coventry and ended up in Holland



The Mennen Gate - contains names of soldiers who fell in war but never had a marked grave

inset pic: Jon's cab sits quietly outside the gates to the war cemetery at Ypres in Belgium where they found the grave of his great grandfather Fred...

(Ieper), Belgium. After a little searching we found the next cemetery on our list - Perth, China Wall - and great-grandfather, Lance Corporal Fred Sprules from the London Regiment, killed on 7 June 1917.

This cemetery was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and named Perth after the *Perthshire Rifles*, then China Wall after the side wall of the trench dug there. This one was very large and

well kept, containing soldiers from all parts of the commonwealth.

After finding granddad's grave and signing the visitor's book, it was just a short drive into the beautiful town of Ypres. We parked up and had a look at the Mennen Gate, a huge arch built across the road to Mennen. This arch has names of soldiers who were never found and given a marked grave. At 8pm every evening, a short service is held inside the arch with the Belgium Fire Brigade playing the Last Post. This is a very moving ceremony and something well worth seeing.

My new TX4 cab was superb; motorway cruising is effortless and reasonably quiet with over 500 miles covered in 2 hectic days. We turned heads wherever we went, almost feeling like celebrities! Shame it was back to work on the streets of London the next day..."

Jon Robinson (E88)



They were part of *D Company*, ordered to clear Barchem of German Soldiers. Unfortunately resistance was stiff; the town was sited on crossroads that the Germans were retreating to, back towards Germany. Dad told us as they advanced into the town alongside 3 tanks, a machine gun opened fire killing Pearcey. He was buried where he fell.

Dad was a little disappointed that he couldn't recall much of the town, but it was over 60 years earlier. But now it was back into the taxi and a 200-mile trip to Ypres

MICKEY'S MUSIC...

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

Almost famous Jim...

Almost - but not quite!

I was in the motions of putting together an article on **Jim Rainbird's (T25)** near brush with fame. Many years ago – some say even before the oncoming of electricity, Dial-a-Cab driver and tireless charity fundraiser Jim was almost world famous as a Rock God, but luckily for me I've found someone who knows him better than I to write the piece – Jim's lovely daughter, **Ashleigh Rainbird**. So for this month only, *Call Sign* presents Ashleigh's Music...

Mickey Lappin (E46)
Call Sign Music...



Spandau Ballet - minus Jim!

ASHLEIGH'S MUSIC...

Daddy Cool...

Having spent years proudly claiming Jim Rainbird (T25), my dad, was a New Romantic back in his day, I took this opportunity to get the low-down on his stint as drummer for a massively successful band in the 80's; before he was blessed with a charming daughter...

'Well', he began and let rip with a full blown account of how a friend of a friend of his mother's joined a band that desperately needed a drummer. Unfortunately, Jim was already the drummer in a more renowned, big-time band of his own. So famous were they by this point that he now can't quite remember their name, but he does assure me they were playing gigs in a hectic not-quite 'tour' of several universities, so we'll have to assume such dizzy heights of fame for ourselves.

But Jim, being the charitable soul we know him to be, selflessly agreed to lend his services for one night. The flamboyant electro rockers were so dazzled by his

Mickey's Ads:

Barry Ramsden (P54) is looking for a Bass guitar player of any standard to join his group for light hearted 'jamming sessions' on Wednesday evenings in Carshalton. They are into playing stuff by Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Oasis etc. If you are interested, then call Barry on 07801 057 988.

Jon Trevor (W94) is trying to learn to play the guitar and would be happy to pay any driver who could give him lessons either in the back of his cab or possibly at St Georges Square shelter.

Email: westhamjon@ntlworld.com
Or tel 07940 705 978.

remarkable display of percussive abilities, that they desperately tried to entice him into joining on a permanent basis. Jim declined, preferring to focus on his prior engagements with the now defunct nameless band, resulting in his alternative career path as a London taxi driver.

Meanwhile, the drummer-less underdogs found an adequate replacement and went on to form Spandau Ballet...

Ashleigh Rainbird

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
Enquiries: email:
anja@anjaking.com



POST OFFICE 'CHECK AND SEND' SERVICE

A new service is being offered by the Post Office, on behalf of the PCO to make it easier to apply for taxi driver licence renewals. The service will be available nearer home for most applicants and will avoid delays in processing caused by mistakes in the application forms.

The service, called Check and Send, will commence on 1 October 2007 and will be available at selected branches in the Greater London Area. The name and address of your nearest Post Office branch offering this service can be found on their website,

www.postoffice.co.uk/portal/po/finder.

The service will not be available for new taxi driver applicants. For a handling charge of £7, the Post Office will:

- Ensure that applications have been checked for completion;
 - Ensure that all supporting documents have been included together with the full payment for the application fee and CRB check.
- Please note cheques will not be accepted. The Post Office will accept credit, debit cards or cash, provide a receipt and send your application and all other relevant information directly to the PCO on the same day. Cost of postage is additional. Guidance regarding the documents and further information that will be needed at the Post Office will be included in application packs and will be available on the PCO website.

What a summer! Despite the lack of it, I trust you had a good one and I can't believe we are creeping into autumn already. When I first joined Dial-a-Cab, business during the summer term could be slow in both the Call Centre and the Admin offices. However, over the past few years this has all changed. As well as requests for applications over the phone, the Internet has made a huge difference. On-line as well as by phone, our business at this time of the year has doubled.

I am pleased to announce that in addition to other accounts, we have obtained the new account at Westferry Circus, which should go live by the end of September.

I would like to thank the drivers who have sent me excellent leads resulting in some nice accounts being opened. The main area I wanted to target was W1 and after speaking with some of you on my travels, I did receive some great tip-offs.

As you know, in addition to an account, we can offer clients other services. For instance, *DaCport*, which allows account holders access to On-line bookings and Enquiries. Then we have our Charge Cards, which we've had for quite some time and promote as part of our service advising clients that they can use the card to *Hail and Ride*. All extra business, you would think.

Therefore I would like to share a recent experience with you...

After spending four exhausting days in Disneyland Paris, I arrived at Waterloo

Natalie's Hot Gossip from the Sales Dept...



Eurostar and made my way to the taxi rank where there was a queue of taxis. The first and third taxis were DaC drivers. With me were my daughter and 5-year-old granddaughter, 3 small holders and gift bags. I approached the first DaC driver, showed him my charge card and was

told. "Sorry love, I only want to take cash tonight..."

"Fine," I replied and struggled to the next available DaC driver. "Charge Card," I advised him?

"No I don't take them," was the next reply. To say I was angry was an understatement.

This is not the first time I have heard of this happening and although I am an employee, I also am an account holder. This does not look good for DaC.

After months of negotiation, administration and IT input that can go into setting up a new account, an instance like this can cause an account holder to close their account. We must not become complacent. Winning new business is hard work, keeping it is just as important.

Talk soon...

Natalie

You can contact Natalie Ezekiel on Nataliee@dialacab.co.uk or call on 020 7251 0581 Ex 7249...



DaC drivers can save ££££s on their rounds of golf...

New website offers thousands of rounds at up to 60% off - with no booking fee

Golf-loving taxi drivers now have a faster and easier way to book a round of golf – and even save money in the process too! A new website, www.TeeTimes.co.uk has thousands of rounds of golf available online from almost 200 UK clubs and in some cases the green fees are reduced by up to 60%.

The number of available rounds is growing every day as TeeTimes.co.uk offers golfers the fastest way to book golf on the internet and a UK-wide choice of courses and times.

The site is free to use and golfers find themselves just one click away from the largest choice of value golf in the country. There is no registration or booking fee - all they have to pay for is the golf. And when golfers register, they also receive a weekly newsletter containing unbelievable email-only deals, which could even offer a FREE round!

TeeTimes.co.uk Managing Director, Paul Heeney told **Call Sign**:

"We know that lots of DaC drivers love a game of golf – but working unsociable hours often makes it difficult to organise a game through traditional methods like phoning golf courses.

We give golfers incredible choice and value and the ability to find and book their next round of golf quickly and reliably online – whatever the time of day. It's just like booking a flight or a hotel – where the majority of transactions now take place online. We offer a fast and simple way for taxi drivers to find and organise their next round of golf at prices they won't find anywhere else."

Renowned courses online include British Open qualifying course The Hesketh; Forest Pines - which has posted PGA events - and the Dave Thomas-designed Donnington Grove Country Club. Golf at hotel groups De Vere and Q-Hotels is also available on the site.

Information is provided about every course on the site and each month new registrants can enter special prize draws.

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

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

Back Seat *Driver*

The letters keep coming in, so it's now time to answer another selection of your queries...

Dear Poppy,

It is almost October, relations are asking what we're doing for Christmas and invitations are starting to arrive. Last year I went to my sister's and the year before to my aunt. The problem is that my Dial-a-Cab husband keeps saying he must work on Christmas Day as it's busy and easy money with the roads free of traffic. I think this is an excuse to avoid my family; how can I persuade him to join in for once? Jeanette...

Rejoice, Jeanette, rejoice. Your husband sounds like a miserable old sod and you should enjoy the festivities without any feelings of guilt. If he were to come along, he would just sit there with a long face talking wistfully about the good jobs he is missing and no one would have fun. You are lucky to have all the invitations. No, not lucky. You deserve them because you are a good person. Enjoy the fun, and then enjoy the extra money he brings home...

Dear Poppy,

My partner has been on Dial-a-Cab almost as long as we have been together. I love him so much but at times we have arguments, often about politics, and I would like your help on this one. It is to do with the congestion charge, which I think is so obviously a good idea as it means fewer cars and less pollution. But he says that it is just a tax to keep the poor out of London, with the rich able to afford it easily and then have clear roads for themselves. Who is right? Lucinda...

Well Lucinda, it would be wrong of me to spoil your relationship by taking sides and you will have to work this out yourselves. Perhaps there is some personal tension between you finding expression in these arguments? Your husband is right, when the idea of a congestion charge was first mooted back in the 1960s, it was dismissed as an outrageous right wing plot that would discriminate against the poor and so it has turned out. There are so many ordinary workers doing unsocial hours when there is no underground service and a car is about the only way to get to work. Nurses, people who sort the mail and tube drivers all need to travel when most people are asleep. They can't afford to live near work and are hit the hardest by the congestion charge. By the time their shift is over, the charging hours are in force. The idea that public transport is able to provide a replacement is just nonsense. A service mainly for the poor will inevitably end up as a poor service. Those with enough money can ignore the buses with rowdy school-children or smelly tubes with standing room only and continue to drive their Chelsea Tractors in streets that have been cleared of cars belonging to ordinary workers...

METROCAB EMISSION FITTING DATE

In recognition that the PCO has only recently approved an emission reduction system for Metrocabs, the following further arrangements will now apply for affected Metrocabs that have plates expiring in October 2007.

For any Metrocab except the TTT model, proprietors will book a vehicle licensing appointment in October 2007 when notified by SGS that their annual inspection is due. They will not at that inspection be expected to have an approved emission reduction system fitted, although they may do so now that there is an emission reduction system approved (see page 10). They will however be required to have an emission reduction system fitted to that vehicle prior to its mid-year safety inspection six months later.

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

Any Metrocab (except the TTT model) presented for its annual licensing inspection from 1 November 2007 must be fitted with an approved emission reduction system and appropriate documentation must be produced.



Dear Poppy,

My son has just got some very good A level results. At one stage he was talking in terms of going to university to study history. Now he says that he wants to do The Knowledge, but I had always hoped he would do better than ending up as a taxi driver. How can I reconcile this feeling with the respect I have for my lovely Dial-a Cab husband? Estelle...

Estelle, are you trying to live your unfulfilled life through your son? Are you sure that you respect your husband as much as you claim? There is honour in a son following in his father's footsteps and he must be attracted by the independence and flexibility, which is the envy of the rest of London's wage slave lackeys - I know, as I am one of them. He won't start his career with a £15,000 debt and as he's clearly a disciplined and bright lad, he may well decide to complete his higher education while working as a taxi driver part time.

Look at your friends' sons - I bet many of them are doing nothing while their mums still cook for them and wash their clothes. Those at university are probably propping up the bar and little else as you read this. Sons do what they want in my experience and your role is to support him and be proud - especially if he gets onto Dial-a-Cab!

Send your problems to Poppy at callsignmag@aol.com. In the December issue, the 3 best letters will be answered and each will receive a box of chocolates and bottle of bubbly! Drivers, partners and staff are invited to send in any dilemmas they are facing. Names will not be published unless you give permission, but contact details will be needed so that prizes can be distributed. Letters must be received by 26th October.

Till then...

Love Poppy xxx

NetXposure.net
<http://www.netxposure.net>

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|--|---|
| <p>Vintage Photos Large Format Canvas Prints Calendars Greetings Cards Enlargements Photo Restorations</p> | <p>Superb Cab Photos Hansom Cabs Growler Cabs Early Motor Cabs FX3s & FX4s Cab Shelters London Speciality</p> |
|--|---|

Great as Xmas Presents

Let's not get sidetracked on the pros and cons about global warming. Just concede weather patterns seem cyclical. July and August this year have been warmer than usual for Denver. On a hot day in July, I recalled another hot day years ago. I was dispatched to the service entrance of a Jeep dealership.

A young lady came out carrying an infant in a carrier and I helped her secure the baby seat with the seat belt. As we were doing that, she described her horrible day. The car belonged to her parents and she'd taken it to fill up with gas. The car broke down on a busy thoroughfare and she'd had to carry the baby for nearly a mile to locate a pay phone to call for a tow truck. Then trudged back in the heat and waited more than an hour for the tow truck.

The tow was driven by a seedy character who gave her the "creeps." The seat in the truck was filthy, etc. To top it off, the dealership wouldn't take her cheque because the *Wagoner* wasn't registered in her name. You get the idea - she was having a bad day. "So where are we going," I asked?

She replied: "First to the bank, then out to Bow Mar." Bow Mar is a limited access subdivision of Littleton, a Denver suburb. "Which bank?"

"Norwest on Broadway. I have to get some cash."

"Then to what address in Bow Mar?" I asked.

"I'll show you the way," she explained. "Nobody can find it, the way the streets wind around."

"OK. But I'll still need the street address," I agreed. "4700 Larkspur."

I immediately said, "I know the house. The Frosts live there. Are they back from California?" In the mirror I saw her eyes pop wide open.

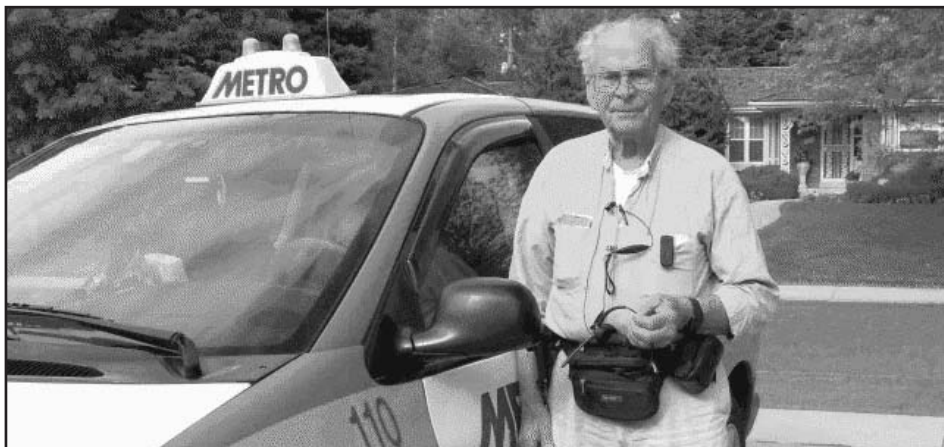
"How do you know that?"

Smiling, I said: "Cab drivers are supposed to know a little bit about everything." "They're my parents!" She looked as if I'd spooked her.

Then you must be Allison's little sister."

Wendell White drives a taxi in Denver, Colorado. He is also a regular on-line reader and writes the occasional column for Call Sign...

Out and about in Denver...



With that she seemed ready to jump out of the cab. "How do you know Allison?"

"Simple. Her husband is a vice president of an insurance company in the Tech Center and he travels a lot, right? Guess who takes Rick back and forth to the airport? Me!"

The rest of her trip was pleasant. The Frosts, having been one of the first to build a home in Bow Mar, knew a lot of the residents there. For months afterwards, many people from Bow Mar would ask if I was the driver who brought Holly home last summer!

Enough hot weather! Let's cool off with a story from last winter. As this summer has been on the warm side, last December was a bit cooler than usual. The Judge and his wife were going to spend Christmas and New Year

with their daughter and new grandson. I was to take them to Denver International Airport for a late-night flight.

While the Judge was bringing out the last of their baggage, Martha stood outside the cab with the collar of her coat wrapped over her head.

"Brrrr," she said, "it's cold!"

"Martha," I retorted, "Just think how cold it would have been if we didn't have global warming!"

**Wendell White
for Call Sign
Denver, Colorado**

Congratulations to Wendell on winning the TLPA Taxi Driver of the Year award...

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



It's been blisteringly hot as usual down here in the Languedoc these past few weeks, while your weather back home has been gearing towards autumn - I know, having spent some considerable time recently back in England setting up my new wine importing business with the relevant authorities. What a rigmarole that is, enough paper work to smash the scales at Ryanair's check-in desks at Stansted, so it's a good job I have a 'UK Office' in Little Clacton to house the bulk of HM Customs and Excise booklets! So, meetings with my accountant, the VAT man, storage unit owners and various business advisory agencies were daunting enough, but all dove-tailed nicely with renting a taxi to knock out a few shifts!

Although I miss the more lucrative radio



work, I have to say that I found cash work on the street during August in surprisingly good supply, although still coupled with the usual moans and groans from occupants of the Piccolo bars - so nothing changes there! I guess it must always seem that way for the full time cabbie as opposed to the 'opportunistic thieves' like me who dip in whenever

it suits - but that's the nature of the game and I would never let my licence lapse because of that.

As I said, some things never change and Millwall continue to lose football matches. So even when my trips back to London overlap home fixtures, I still cannot be tempted back to the Den - and your Editor thinks that Spurs have problems!

If any Dial-a-Cab subscriber fancies a late break - and October is usually very good weather over here - then look us up at www.southoffrancelets.com.

A bientot

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

DaC duo does the business on behalf of the Fund...

Kisharon is a British charity founded in 1976, which specialises in caring for and educating children and adults with profound learning disabilities. Typically, many students may have one or more of Aspergers Syndrome, Downs Syndrome, Autism or Cerebral Palsy.

The **Tuffkid Nursery** is part of the Kisharon charity and following an appeal from them, the **London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children** were very pleased to help by donating an **Easy Life Electric Changing Bench**, valued at £3,000.

On Monday, 17 September 2007, Kisharon's Deputy Executive Director, **Jacalyn Sank** was joined by the LTFUC's Hon Chairman, **David Lessman (D19)**, Hon Treasurer **Gerry Dunn MBE (S84)** and Press Officer **Raymond Levy** at a ceremony which saw the unveiling of a plaque to mark the occasion.

Jacalyn Sank commented: "We would like to thank the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children for their wonderful donation. Their contribution will help our staff continue to provide a high level of care within the community."

David Lessman added: "Kisharon provides an essential service and we are delighted to be able to contribute to the

LTFUC Donation to Kisharon's Tuffkid Nursery



DaC's David Lessman and Gerry Dunn of the LTFUC with kids at Kisharons

nursery and provide a much needed piece of equipment."

Raymond Levy
LTFUC Press Officer

Now WCHCD Master installed

On 6 September, **Alan Parker** held his Installation Dinner at The Apothecaries' Hall in Blackfriars for *The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers*. The Hall, formerly the guesthouse of the Dominican Priory of the Black Friars, was acquired in 1632 and rebuilt on the same site immediately after its destruction in the Great Fire of 1666, making it the oldest extant livery Hall in the City.

The Master, his lady and his Wardens welcomed everyone to the Hall and a champagne reception was held in the pretty courtyard by early evening sunlight.

The Beadle, John Sheen, announced dinner was served and everyone took their places before the Master, his Wardens and guests processed into the Hall. In his speech, Alan Parker welcomed the new members to the Company who had been sworn in after the Court Meeting before dinner and also congratulated Neil McCulloch who had been clothed in the Livery. Alan went on to thank Patricia Stanley for her work during the past year as The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers first Lady Master.

Mr Paul Taylor RIBA, FRSA who is a Chartered Architect, a City of London Guide Lecturer and an Associate of the Institute of Tourist Guiding, gave a speech. The Cab Guide course run by the Education section of the WCHCD is growing ever more popular and Mr Taylor talked about Guiding and the benefits it brings during his speech. Alan Parker had been encouraged into becoming a cab guide thanks to Mr Taylor some years ago and their long friendship has grown since then. Mr Taylor continues to help with the course being run by the Company.

Following dinner, a *Loving Cup* was taken. This is an old tradition said to date back to when King Edward the Martyr was slain by Elfrida. Each guest drinks in turn, starting with The Master. The holder of the Loving Cup



Part of the 'Loving Cup' ceremony

bows to the person on his left who then removes the cover with his right hand and holds it whilst the other sips from the Cup. The cover is then replaced and the Cup passed to the left. At all times there are three people standing, one drinking from the Cup, one holding the lid and one guarding the drinker's back. There may sometimes be some confusion about the right and the left hand as the Loving Cup begins, but this tradition is all about unity and friendship, something those present enjoy in the beautiful surroundings of Livery Halls where these dinners are held. More experienced members of the Company are always on

hand to offer help to those less sure and it is a lovely tradition to uphold.

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers welcomed guests to this dinner from many different areas of the taxi trade; from taxi drivers, to those involved in manufacturing the taxis, to those providing services to the cab trade.

If you would like to know more about the Company, please contact the Clerk on 01494 765922 who will be delighted to help you.

Sandie Goodwin

MAILSHOT

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

Priority for ethnic minorities?

The recent proposals that have been put forward to "encourage" more applicants from diverse ethnic origins to undergo the trials and tribulations of the Knowledge have certainly stirred up a hornet's nest of opinions within the trade. These have been joined by those in the media who consider themselves to be professional Londoners and so feel that they have every right to comment on anything they consider is part of the fabric of London centric.

Very few of these commentators from either of the above parties have agreed with the proposals, and from what I'm hearing the most virulent attacks on these proposals have come from the ethnic drivers within the trade who have "done the Knowledge."

Quite rightly, they see these proposals as devaluing their personal achievement in "getting out." There are few in the trade who would say they breezed through the Knowledge, although some would acknowledge that through their backgrounds, ex-police, armed forces etc, it wasn't as hard as it might have been. But they still had to go and do it and finance it themselves one way or another. There are no short cuts.

I have heard on the trade grapevine that a well known driver from a non-white non-middle class background is so annoyed with the proposals, that he is carrying around a petition with him and asking any drivers that he meets on the road that have also come from similar diverse backgrounds as himself, to sign his petition.

"*The road to hell is paved with good intentions.*" Apparently, although often associated with another well known "professional Londoner," Samuel Johnson (Born Lichfield) when I Googled it, the first hit claimed that it was wrongly attributed to the creator of the dictionary as we know it today. The next two hits both used it in relation to race relations. Perhaps this should be a warning to those who seek to meddle in the natural progress of integration. Personally, I have never met a cab driver who fails to respect another driver purely on their background, but if these proposals happen then the inevitable consequences will be a feeling within the trade of a two level standard of driver. Those that have done it the right way and those who - rightly or wrongly - will be seen to have been "given their badge" and unfortunately, even if a driver from one of the diverse backgrounds has done it the right way, the majority of other drivers and the travelling public will assume that they are in the latter group with a resulting lack of respect.

Whilst having a few words on this subject with Alan (Fisher), he asked me what was the Union's position on this issue? I replied that I couldn't give him an answer due to the branch not having had a meeting for a year!

Jokingly he replied: "Nothing to do with you is it?" I had to reply that actually it was partly.

Due to several active branch members challenging the democracy and financial accountability of the branch and its branch officers, we have been subjected to some sort of investigating and inquiry. This has been made to drag on and almost certainly will result in some form of disciplinary action timed to coincide with the branch elections due in November and December of this year. The purpose of this will be to stop the dissident members from standing for election to those branch positions that will be available. Although this will be appealed and most likely upheld, the elections will have been held and usual suspects returned in their current positions. After all, as one of the present cabal said to me once: "We don't like contested elections."

Eddie Lambert (V37)

See the article in this issue giving the views of 5 DaC drivers who have ethnic minority backgrounds. As for the Union position, I couldn't possibly comment! ...Ed

Emissions stealth tax?

Recently read an article in *Auto Express* suggesting that TX4 taxi emissions are higher than a Citroen C6 2.7HDI V6 (230g/km) and which pointed out that while a taxi pays no congestion charge, the Citroen is scheduled to pay £25 per day if Mayor Ken Livingstone's new G-band comes into fruition early next year. So how long before we are hit with more TfL stealth taxes to make up for the fact that we can hardly be expected to pay to enter London?

Watch out! Vote for Ken at your peril. Any customers in my cab who admit to voting for Ken will be asked to leave forthwith!

As a separate topic, why is it that the PCO's green disc parade continue to abuse and flout the laws by picking up from clubs and street hirings without any sign of pre-booking? We should all take their numbers, phone the tout line and report them. I'm assured that all reported incidents are fully investigated - albeit eventually!

Tony Arnold (F03)

There is no longer a tout line, but if any DaC drivers know of specific hotspots where you believe touting is happening, then please let me know via email and I'll pass it over to Sgt Dave Hilson in case it's one the tout squad don't already know about. Don't believe everything you read about the tout squad, they may be understaffed but they still nick plenty of them. What the courts then do is another matter ...Ed

Signals...

In my cab I have a telegraph pole, an MDT the size of a small suitcase and a lump of a computer base in the luggage compartment footwell - considering that it's the year 2007, this I would consider not very modern. Have a look at the small Xeta unit or many of the other data despatch units available in the modern world.



Last night, 4 September, was the first full day of the tube strike. There was an abundance of street work and an abundance of radio work. The thing is that once again it was impossible to do any radio work because as per normal when it gets slightly busy on DaC as we all know, you cannot accept jobs, book into zones etc, but last night was worse than I have ever experienced on DaC. One word comes to mind - shambolic! So for four or five minutes I stared transfixed at my stone age MDT and telegraph pole and asked myself what is the point?

DaC needs to ask itself some serious questions, I think maybe a better option as you are more interested in getting swish swanky offices than a safe reliable system drivers can use, would be to return to voice despatch? We could all be given 1950s type radio sets with little black hand-held microphones and you could employ maybe a few more dispatchers? I believe this would be a much better way of dispatching work than the current system you try to operate at the moment.

When you interview new drivers at DaC, do you tell or ask them these things: Are you prepared to become a lackey for our beloved minicab friends? Are you prepared to run across London to EC5 to do work that our minicab friends do not want? We expect you to do 40 jobs a month, but we have a despatch system that is so bad that it will drive you insane?

On the subject of DaC's beloved minicab friends, a few comments; Mr Rice tells us time and time again that if we don't do the minicab work, others will. I believe his attitude is defeatist and morally wrong. Can you name me one other business that does the work of another company that it is in effect in competition with? What we need is to abandon any links with minicab companies and OUR chairman should be pushing for progressive talks with the other London radio circuits for a unified stance on this issue. If they don't adhere, then DaC should actively pursue ComCab and Radio Taxis drivers on the premise that DaC is going to be the only true London black cab circuit. The maths is staring you in the face. Minicabs will not have black cab firms to do their rubbish, so what happens then? Work it out for yourself, but as I say I can only dream. Under this Chairman who is so ready and quick to succumb to the mindset of if we don't do it, then the other two will, what chance do we have? Well DaC needs a change and new blood at their swanky swish new offices, only time will tell...

Daniel Priddle (N96)

Brian Rice replies: I was waiting for your letter to arrive, Daniel, because I knew that if there was be one person who would complain about the new offices - that yes, it had to be you! I just find it strange that in the three or so years since you joined us from ComCab, this is no less than the sixth letter of complaint that you have sent to

MAILSHOT

Mailshot continued from page 34

the magazine! Some of the previous ones complained that we are not as good as ComCab. Considering the flak I have taken recently from the LTDA, I am beginning to wonder if you are a plant!

We have a large terminal because that is what our members wanted, not the small PDAs that cannot be read and which could be quite dangerous to endeavour to read whilst the vehicle is on the move. Signals bad? Yes they are when it's very busy, but then again you know the reasons why because I have replied and explained those reasons to you so many times. At the end of the current financial year, we would have put £12 / 13million of extra work through our system over the last two years and yes, it is a problem for us to just increase our capacity to accommodate for our success.

Regarding our completing work for Private Hire/minicab companies, yes, I know all the arguments for and against - that is why we give our members the opportunity of opting out of doing this particular type of work. So that now begs the question; why do you have the attribute so that PH work is offered to you? Does that say something about you? It appears that you want to blame me for everything. I have no problem with that, many people have and continue to blame me for all types of ills - it goes with my territory. However, I do hope you will stop short of blaming me for global warming - but perhaps I shouldn't hold my breath!

Finally, when you joined us we already had the "telegraph pole, the small suitcase and the 'T' attribute", so why did you join - and possibly more importantly, why are you still here? I'm not trying to get rid of you, but when someone complains that their previous circuit was better, yet they make no attempt to return to it, it just begs the obvious question - why? Surely it can't just be so that you can write derogatory letters and get them published - something that no other organisation within our industry would ever do because as you undoubtedly realise, your letters would be banned and confined to any other circuit's rubbish bins. Could it just be that you think we are the best?

And more...

The signals during the tube strike were a joke. I know there were far more jobs in the system than normal, but how on earth are we going to cope when all this so-called new account work comes on? What are the Board gonna do about it?

It seems that month after month, *Call Sign* has complaints from drivers regarding this, but as Gary Leaver (J54) says, all the Board seem to do is slate drivers about coverage and how we dress. I would quite willingly wear a shirt and tie if DaC funded me the 2-3 grand extra it costs to buy a new cab with aircon, not to

mention the extra weekly fuel to run it and also if we were given the roaders that the smartly dressed PH drivers get. Whilst it seems we are just mopping up what they don't want, I believe a basic t-shirt and shorts ain't such a bad thing.

Despite what Ron Desborough (P42) says, a standard cab is a bronze. Does this come with aircon as standard? No! A silver is almost 3K more and for what? The only difference is spotlights and aircon. Do you think that warrants so much more? I have a wife and young family and that 3K is better spent on my home and family.

Re coverage, how long has the Link been closing at 10pm? But what has the Board done to improve service on E14? Same goes for EC5 and the SW zones in the mornings. Nothing, that's what? Well at least it seems that way.

It seems DaC is becoming a them and us circuit - Drivers and Board. I prefer to do account work and I bet so do most of our drivers, so the Board should work with us and not against us and then maybe it will all work out? Educate the drivers into dressing smart, don't antagonise them by asking them to see the Lewis Day marshal at London Wall, when our marshal that DaC subs pay for is standing there. And don't keep slating the drivers. Rub people up the wrong way and they revolt, don't they.

From a fat, lazy, smelly, unexercised, bootsale clothes-wearing who bought a lovely Ben Sherman t-shirt at my last bootsale for 10p (it had a little hole under the armpit but you can't really notice it), chip-eating, speeding moron who urinates.

More commonly known as Michael Beevor (N76)

Mike, Keith Cain has responded to your letter elsewhere in this issue, but does it not concern you when you see more and more PH vehicles serving large account clients with smartly dressed drivers? I won't be wearing a suit for work anytime soon, but the clients I've spoken to - and I was considering an article on MD quotes about us, but decided against it - don't like scruffy drivers or dirty cabs. When there was only us, it didn't really matter, but that is no longer the case and neither is the excuse that PH can't cope with large corporates - they are catching up quickly ...Ed j1

Questions, questions - and then questions...!

I just wondered if you could clear up some issues that we drivers come across and need some clarification on the do's and don'ts. Is there a minimum age of passengers we have to stop for? Sometimes you get kids on their way home from school aged 11/12 - is there an age where they need an adult to travel in a cab? What is the correct ratio of adults and children to seatbelts, I had a job recently from the Tower where there were 2 adults and 4 children aged 8 x 2 and 9 x 2, but they exceed

the seatbelt limit of 5? The passenger quoted to me the '2 children under 10 count as 1 adult' as per the old fare chart and therefore there was less than the maximum 5 passengers? So is it 5 bodies in total including the children under 10 due to the seatbelts etc?

When I took delivery of my new cab, I was on the rank at the Wharf around 5 cabs in and a passenger walked all the way down to me and said "I want this cab, as it's a brand new one." I explained (as if I needed to) how the rank works - but who is right or wrong?

And finally how do drivers stand in respect of a PCN issued when on a cash or credit card job issued by the system?

Mike Curwood (F51)

Mike, PCNs issued to drivers on account trips, cash trips and credit card trips through the system, will be refunded after payment providing the driver has taken as reasonable precautions as they can. As for your other questions, I asked Judith Adams, the Senior Press Officer at TfL's Surface Transport & Enforcement ...Ed

1. We are not aware of any law or regulation that states there is a minimum age at which you can hail a taxi or travel alone.

2. The number of passengers is limited by the number of seat belts. If the vehicle is licensed for 5 passengers, it will have 5 seat belts and can take just 5 people. (Ed's note: The 2 children under 10 refers to the fare only).

3. Whilst the general principle of how a rank works is that the first passenger in the queue takes the first taxi on the rank, the passenger is perfectly within his/her rights to choose any taxi. In practice, the driver would normally refer the passenger to the first taxi, but if the passenger insists on any other taxi, the driver must accept the fare - failure to do so would be a refusal ... Judith Adams

Terminal photos...

Reading a recent copy of TAXI, I saw a photo of a DaC terminal republished in Barry Hooper's column. The terminal contained a message that drivers have since been informed should not have been put out as it had no authority from any Board members and in any case was incorrect. It would be wrong to criticise Mr Hooper for trying to get his own back against Brian Rice who criticised him in the last *Call Sign*, even though perhaps it might have been more prudent had he asked a DaC Board member why the message went out. My point is that whoever the driver was that took and sent the photo, he should be put on complaint for bringing the Society into disrepute. I can understand drivers being upset at the message before we were told it was an error and should not have gone out, perhaps they should have complained to the BoM or *Call Sign*. But sending it to TAXI? No...

Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)



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