

January 2008



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

Inside this issue...

Sid Gold leaves DaC after 42 years

The DaC driver who enjoys
100 mile walks!

DaC driver on Chris Tarrant quiz

Keith Cain meets Westminster City
Council re parking problems

How many different vehicles can
use a bus lane? You may be wrong!

Lib-Dem Mayoral candidate answers
DaC driver's questions

DaC driver's wishes for 2008

DaC driver on fraud protection



He doesn't just watch Strictly Come Dancing, this DaC driver is now British Champion!



Why is this young lady sitting in the back of a DaC taxi with her own terminal?





NASH'S NUMBERS

By Alan Nash (A95)

Happy New Year to you all. Do you know your SM3 from your IG3? Outer London postal districts within the M25, a total of 135. If you want all 475 in the home counties visit www.nashsnumbers.co.uk

BR1	Bromley	EN5	Barnet	KT12	Walton-on-T	TW4	Hounslow
BR2 pr	Bromley	HA0	Wembley	KT13	Weybridge	TW5	Hounslow
BR2 8x	Keston	HA1	Harrow	KT16	Chertsey	TW6	Hounslow
BR3	Beckenham	HA2	Harrow	KT17	Epsom	TW7	Isleworth
BR4	W. Wickham	HA3	Harrow	KT18	Epsom	TW8	Brentford
BR5	Orpington	HA4	Ruislip	KT19	Epsom	TW9	Richmond
BR6	Orpington	HA5	Pinner	KT20	Tadworth	TW10	Richmond
BR7	Chislehurst	HA6	Northwood	KT21	Ashtead	TW11	Teddington
BR8	Swanley	HA7	Stanmore	RG27	Hook	TW12	Hampton
CR0	Croydon	HA8	Edgware	RM1	Romford	TW13	Feltham
CR2	South Croydon	HA9	Wembley	RM2	Gidea Park	TW14	Feltham
CR3	Caterham	IG1	Ilford	RM3	Harold Hill	TW16	Sunbury-on-T
CR4	Mitcham	IG2	Ilford	RM3	Harold Wood	TW17	Shepperton
CR5	Coulsdon	IG3	Ilford	RM4	Romford	TW18	Staines
CR6	Waringham	IG4	Ilford	RM5	Collier Row	TW19	Staines
CR7	Thornton Heath	IG5	Ilford	RM6	Romford	UB2	Southall
CR8	Purley	IG6	Ilford	RM7	Romford	UB3	Hayes
CR9	Croydon	IG7	Chigwell	RM8	Dagenham	UB4	Hayes
DA1	Dartford	IG8	Woodford Green	RM9	Dagenham	UB10	Southall
DA2	Dartford	IG9	Buckhurst Hill	RM10	Dagenham	UB10	Uxbridge
DA4	Dartford	IG10	Loughton	RM11	Hornchurch	UB5	Northolt
DA5	Bexley	IG11	Barking	RM12	Hornchurch	UB6	Greenford
DA6	Bexleyheath	KT1	Kingston upon Thames	RM13	Rainham	UB7	West Drayton
DA7	Bexleyheath	KT2	Kingston upon Thames	RM14	Upminster	UB8	Uxbridge
DA8	Erith	KT3	New Malden	SM1	Sutton	UB9	Uxbridge
DA14	Sidcup	KT4	Worcester Park	SM2	Sutton	WD5	Abbots Langley
DA15	Sidcup	KT5	Surbiton	SM3	Sutton	WD6	Borehamwood
DA16	Welling	KT6	Surbiton	SM4	Morden	WD7	Radlett
DA17	Belvedere	KT7	Thames Ditton	SM5	Carshalton	WD17	Watford
DA18	Erith	KT8 (part)	West Molesey	SM6	Wallington	WD18	Watford
EN1	Enfield	KT8 0xx KT8 9xx	East Molesey	SM7	Banstead	WD19	Watford
EN2	Enfield	KT9	Chessington	TW1	Twickenham	WD23	Bushey
EN3	Enfield	KT10	Esher	TW2	Twickenham	WD24	Watford
EN4	Barnet	KT11	Cobham	TW3	Hounslow	WD25	Watford

What's On ExCel, Earls Court and Olympia

BETT 08	Olympia Grand & National	09/01/08	to	12/01/08
Collins Stewart London Boat Show	Excel (Public)	11/01/08	to	20/01/08
Top Drawer Spring 08	Earls Court One	13/01/08	to	15/01/08
DIY & Garden Show and Totally Tools	Earls Court Two	13/01/08	to	15/01/08
WINE+ 08	Olympia Nat.	16/01/08	to	17/01/07
France Show 08	Olympia Grand	18/01/08	to	20/01/08
ICEi 08	Earls Court One	22/01/08	to	24/01/08
ATEI	Earls Court One & Two	22/01/08	to	24/01/08
Environmental Sustainability Conf.	Olympia Conference Centre	22/01/08	to	23/01/08
Bubble London	Olympia Two	22/01/08	to	23/01/08
ICE 08	Earls Court One & Two	22/01/08	to	24/01/08
The Event Show 08	Olympia National	23/01/08	to	24/01/08
Olympia Musicmania 08	Olympia Two	26/01/08	to	26/01/08
Asia Expo 08 Olympia	Olympia Grand.	29/01/08	to	01/02/08
Learning Technologies 08	Olympia Two	30/01/08	to	31/08/08
Broadcast LIVE & VideoForum	Earls Court Two	30/01/08	to	01/02/08
Toy Fair	Excel (Trade)	30/01/08	to	02/02/08
MCN London Motorcycle Show	Excel (Public)	31/01/08	to	03/02/08
The Holiday & Travel Show 08	Earls Court One	31/01/08	to	03/02/08

What's On O2 Venue

Spice Girls	Concert	2nd 3rd 4th 6th 8th 9th 11th 12th 13th 15th 16th 18th 20th & 22nd	January '08
Linkin Park	Concert	28th & 29th	Jan 08

Sign up for the free Nash's Number Useful information Document. Email alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk with subject as "UID." Text Name, email address, badge #, call sign and contact telephone number (which will only be used if I have problems with your email address)

from the editor's desk



Well, this is going to be a short one! Not because of any lack of space but purely because of publishing schedules that mean this is my second Editorial in just over 2 weeks! I don't know when you got this issue of *Call Sign*, but it was posted – thanks to Christmas schedules – on 21 December and in all honesty, I haven't much new to say!

Some may say that's a good thing, some may shrug and say so what, whilst others will hopefully be a least slightly disappointed. That's what this time of year does for editors...

Slowdown?

Not too long ago, everything seemed pretty rosy with confidence soaring through the roof that it would remain so until at least the London Olympics in 2012. Now can anyone be sure? The signs are not too dissimilar to those in 1989 when for no apparent reason, London never celebrated Christmas but didn't even realise it. The London taxi trade certainly did and my outstanding memory of that year was trying to get on the rank at St Pauls on a wet Friday evening, when in reality it should have been almost impossible to get a cab! I put on foul hoping the rank would move and was "caught" by a passing policeman who issued me with some sort of ticket - can you remember a time when there was no CCTV, just police! Fortunately, after sending a begging letter, it was cancelled with a curt "next time we could take further action" note.

Now, with the well-publicised housing crisis in the US that no one thought could affect us – until Northern Rock came along - we seem to be looking at least at some kind of slowdown.

Fortunately for us, it could affect street work rather than that on the radio because unlike last time when it was a simple matter of account clients telling their staff to grab cabs off the street, with all the benefits in the form of information they now have at their fingertips from DaC for every trip they give us, giving us up would mean that large accounts would have to bring in extra administrators to replace the info via DaCport they get for free. And besides, I don't think any slowdown will last too long anyway.

Call Sign thanks...

Call Sign isn't run by magic. It doesn't just appear with 40 pages of hopefully interesting material for you to look at each month and I really would like to thank everyone who makes it what it is. All my regular contributors from the trade's finest cartoonist by the proverbial mile, Jery Craig to Richard Potter, who besides testing different fuels on

behalf of our readers, is also prepared to give his views on life and...well everything! Then there's the mysterious Sunset Strip whose memory goes back to the early years when we were plain ODRTS and known as Oddrats! What about the notorious Kupkake, sometimes known to his family as David Kupler and whose poems match the trade's ailments to a tee – except that the trade doesn't operate in rhyme!

There's John Addis, who has been keeping *Call Sign* up-to-date with developments – or should that be NON-developments - at the Limehouse Link and of course Jenny in California, who has revealed some rather intimate details of her private affair with a DaC driver! Because of a shortage of space in the November issue, I delayed the continuation of that story for a month and was inundated with emails asking why, because they were concerned that they'd never know the ending. Most were driver's wives, but one or two surprising names of actual drivers also complained. I won't mention their call signs for fear of embarrassing them!

Speaking of driver's wives, there's Poppy, *Call Sign's* back seat driver and guardian of our morals, whose American slant to life suggests that you shouldn't do it unless you are certain you can get away with it!

Vince Chin runs the *Call Sign Online* section and has been with me since issue number one and whose knowledge of all things PC and Internet are second to none. And Alan Nash; his Nash's Numbers have too been with me since that first issue. There are still some out there who haven't emailed Alan for his *Useful Information Document* (UID) that, providing you are on email, is free and contains pages and pages of useful info for you to keep in the cab.

Let's not forget the man whose musical taste keeps you whistling in most issues, Mickey Lappin and our *Eating Out* volunteers whose thankless job it is to go to some lovely restaurants, tuck into food and wine and leave without having to pay a penny - just to let you know whether you too should go there – and pay!

Of course, the hundreds of drivers who write into *Call Sign* either with letters or

articles and all of whom are happy to put their names to them, where would I be without them? No made up stuff in these pages...!

My foreign staff in the form of Bob "ooh la la" Woodford leaves me with the last but not least name, the man who does my day-time running around, interviewing and photography, Alan Green. Life would be so much more difficult if I had to do it all myself.

As I said at the beginning, the mag doesn't run by magic, it's just hard work so my thanks also to everybody, including Board members and the Chairman himself, some of whom don't always fancy writing but do it to save hearing me moan!

And the most important people of all - those who just read it but consistently say nice things when they see me on the road! My thanks to you, it still means a lot to me. My apologies if I have missed anybody out and to everyone, the happiest and healthiest of New Years...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

SUPERIOR 5 BEDROOM EXECUTIVE VILLA IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA FOR RENT

3 master bedrooms, 2 twin bedrooms,

3 bathrooms (sleeps 10/12)

30ft private swimming pool and Jacuzzi

Fully equipped kitchen

Cable TV in every room

Just off the I-4 - 15 mins from Disney

Close to local shops and golf courses

From £500 per week (late deals available)

For further details and availability go to
www.dovevillas.co.uk

Or contact Derek Donnelly (V47 on 07951 130 154.

Prices are for the villa per week and not per person

Late deals and special price for DaC members.

Reflections Of The Chairman

Slightly premature!

We are still a week away from Christmas and yet here I am sitting at home writing yet another report for the Editor, as he informs me everything has to be in early due to the printers closing for an ultra-long period over the Christmas holidays!

I had no sooner finished my report for the December issue, then this one is due whilst in the meantime I have also had to write a 2000 word piece for our *End of Year Report*. As a consequence, I am not entirely sure what I have written or where it went, so life is currently very confusing!

However, what I can remember is that in the *End of Year Report* I informed members that the sale of Brunswick House was imminent, well the situation has now moved on from there and I was informed late on the afternoon of Friday 14th December that the sale had been concluded and the £2.75million would be in our account on Monday 17th. And to save anyone worrying needlessly, any interest that had accrued on the £2.75m over that weekend will be payable in its entirety to Dial-a-Cab's account.

I must say I was extremely pleased with the price we received for Brunswick House and I believe it was an excellent piece of business for the Society. To receive £2.75m for a building that is just in excess of 7,000 square feet and to replace it with a building in excess of 15,000 square feet together with a large car park for £3.7m is fantastic business and something I am extremely pleased about. It will prove to be a very valuable asset for the Society in the future.

Coverage and the Christmas incentive

As I wrote earlier, there is still just over a week to go before Christmas and the coverage does not seem too bad in comparison to last year - although things could change in the next week. However, I don't think this will be the case as things should slowly start to quieten off. I believe the improvement in coverage is due to the incentive and in part to a slight 'drop off' in street work.

Many members have told me how quiet the radio has been - this is a fact that is totally untrue and not borne out by our figures, which are holding up very well against last years. As I explained earlier, the difference is that members are accepting the work rather than rejecting, as they know each trip will attract an extra £5.

Quietening off? Thursday 6 December was the busiest day we have ever experienced in over 54 years of trading. In fact, at the end



of November we invoiced our clients to the tune of £5.1million and just like 6 December, this too was a remarkable achievement and something we should take great pride and pleasure from.

Downturn or recession?

Much has been written regarding a downturn in 2008 and I am totally convinced that we can talk ourselves into a downturn by making everyone feel nervous and reluctant to spend any money, which just exacerbates the situation. All I can do is to inform you what I perceive to be the situation. There certainly has not been a downturn in our figures and they are comparable to last years, in fact slightly better.

Is this going to continue? I really don't know, however speaking to our account clients in the financial sector they do seem to feel there will be a *blip*, although not a prolonged or deep one as the UK economy is in pretty good shape and some of the larger financial institutions in the city have hardly been affected by the problems in the inter-

banking system and events in the American mortgage market.

However, what I am aware of is that clients are already talking to me about reducing costs next year. They will all be examining the economy extremely closely and the more money they can save, the better and one of the first places they will look will be at their ground transportation.

What they all require is the same service they receive now, but at a cheaper cost and the first thing they will endeavour to do is to transfer more taxi work into cars as they are perceived to be cheaper, while giving the same service. We all know that is totally untrue, but what the truth is doesn't matter, it's what people believe that is important. Consequently, we will all have to try a little harder in 2008 to maintain our market share and remain the premier radio circuit in London.

In the meantime, you should all soon be receiving my *End of Year Report* in the accounts that you receive with your AGM bundle and which should arrive sometime in January. I urge you all to read my report as it is extremely controversial and depending on the outcome, will definitely affect the whole future of the Society.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a healthy 2008.

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

**7 King Street Cloisters
Clifton Walk King Street
London, W6 0GY**

Telephone: 020 8735 9770

**H U B B A R D
P E G M A N
W H I T N E Y**

Moving home

Commercial property

Property disputes

Family - divorce, co-habitation and children

Wills and Probate

Personal Injury - accidents at work, on the road, at home, criminal injury claims

Sid Gold Leaves DaC After 42 Years



One of Dial-a-Cab's longest serving drivers, **Sid Gold (E20)**, has finally called it a day with DaC.

"At over 86 years of age, it's a bit of a responsibility," he told *Call Sign*, "and although I have regularly passed my PCO medicals with flying colours, driving a radio taxi carries much responsi-

bility with it. Dial-a-Cab has been a big part of my life and I am so sad to let it go, but that time had to come one day. I still go out occasionally to work the streets, so I won't starve!"

Sid was born in the London Hosp in October 1921 and is now London's oldest driver. He began driving in 1939 but has never passed a test, as there were no driving tests then. He was in the RAF throughout the war although he never flew a plane.

"I refused unless they could find me one with a logo," he joked!

Leaving the RAF in 1946, Sid went into radio and TV sales in addition to repairs from two different shops in Brick Lane.

"In the early 1960s, I decided to do the

Knowledge of London on a part-time basis because of my other businesses. I did it with two friends, but not on a bike - we bought an old FX3 between us and did the KoL in that!"

He showed his toughness when at the age of 82 he was left lying on the floor after two jobs - one of whom held a gun to Sid's head - attempted to rob him of his takings. He refused and the two thugs gave up and left. He was back at work the following night!

Sid joined DaC in 1965 and even though no longer on the radio, intends carrying on until he can no longer drive or is pushed out by PCO. From everyone at *Call Sign*, good luck Sid...

BAD NEWS DAY AT THE EVENING STANDARD

The **London Evening Standard**, the paper that many in the cab trade believe to be anti-taxi, has caused a few feathers to ruffle by banning its journalists from using taxis other than in what it calls "exceptional circumstances." Just to rub it in, the paper has also refused to pay for meals with contacts unless they end up generating a genuine story. And surely the biggest blow to any self-respecting journalist, an internal memo sent to staff by Steve Vaughan, the Standard's deputy news editor, said that staff now needed prior permission for any purchase of "more than a few drinks!"

Mr Vaughan added that the Standard's departmental expenses had to be immediately reduced.

"In future," he said, "entertaining must be directly connected with getting stories and a claim for more than a few drinks must be cleared with the head of department in advance. Even in those cases, it will only be in exceptional circumstances that a receipt of more than £50 for taking a contact out for a meal will be approved. As of now, staff will need to submit a receipt and a credit card chit together with the contact or story details."

He ended by saying: "No taxis should be used unless in exceptional circumstances. Taxi receipts will only be reimbursed if approved by the head of department for being necessary in a critical situation."

Two days earlier, Associated Newspapers who produce the Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday in addition to the Evening Standard, announced a dramatic fall in profits of 16%, down from £99m to £83m. A large proportion of the drop must be down to the two freebie evening papers whose vendors practically launch themselves at passing motorists in case they want a copy! They have also invested heavily in new digital technology.

One real problem though is that older **Dial-a-Cab** drivers will remem-

ber back to late 1989 when several companies announced that their employees should use public transport rather than taxis and if they had to use one, to always get it off the street to save paying a run-in and to always get a receipt. Several months later, the world went into recession and the taxi trade barely survived, with no such thing as an empty taxi rank in Central London.

Hopefully, the Evening Standard's plight is not one that will set a trend...

Alan Fisher



On the way down?

DAC 2007 AGM

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

If you decide to vote via postal ballot, you can still attend the meeting but cannot vote again. Please remember that in accordance with rule 9(g), a fine



of £50 will be imposed for member's non-attendance at the meeting, unless a postal vote was received by the outside agency at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Non-attendance includes leaving the meeting before the Chairman declares it closed unless you have already voted via postal ballot.

The date for putting in propositions and rule changes has now passed.

TAXI

MORTGAGES ESPECIALLY FOR LICENSED TAXI DRIVERS

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

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

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

01322 293600/07702 302863 (mobile)

peter@griffinmortgages.com

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

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

Ever say to the other half that you fancy going out for a walk? Well Dial-a-Cab driver **Micky Doyle (A47)** and his wife **Joan** do exactly that – but quite possibly exceed the distance most of us aim for. In fact, how about walks of 100 miles – and that only because his age prohibits him from running 100 mile races as he used to or the 100K runs (62 miles) in addition to marathons – which must seem like a Sunday stroll after 100 miles and something both Micky and Joan still do! How old is Micky? Well we're not saying, we'll leave you to guess after reading Micky's story...

"I'm fast approaching that magic number - 50 years driving a cab! I started when I was 21 and may have been the youngest cabby on the road at that time. I rented my first cab from a garage in London Lane, Hackney. There were two brothers who used to fill up there, **Sid** and **Manny Conway** and I was fascinated by their talk of radio work. I asked them about joining the circuit. They told me you had to be an owner-driver, so off I went to buy my own Beardmore and joined Lords in 1961 to become C23.

I could count among my friends **Jack Taylor** (ex-D19). We used to dine together in the back of the cab at the Marylebone Grill - when it was still at Marylebone. I can still hear **Johnny Thwaites** saying: *D19 says how long to the grill 23*. Johnny was a great despatcher; he never drove a cab but picked up his knowledge from we drivers out there. If you wrongly apposed someone, he would come back with *Come on, don't muck John about!* I occasionally had a beer with John in the Crown and Anchor in Cross St on a Sunday lunchtime.

Our office at that time was on the corner of Affleck St and Pentonville Rd. It was painted blue with our telephone number, TERminus 6444 in white. The Levy brothers privately owned Levy's, our main competitors at that time. They had a garage in York Way with a fleet of cabs on radio in distinctive red and black. I don't recall any telephone number on the cab - come to think of it, neither did we! Perhaps it



100 Mile Walk?

DaC's Mickey does them for fun!



Micky and Joan with his Beardmore in 1961.
Inset Micky (on right) in 1997 after competing in a 100 mile walk

wasn't allowed in those days?

Before driving a cab, I was a young soldier serving with the Enniskillen fusiliers. I believe **Jack Russell** served in the same

regiment, although I never got to talk to Jack.

I started running marathons in my 50s and have since completed 40, plus numerous 100k races and 5 x100 milers! The last of those was in 2000 when I was aged 60 something or other! Most of the longer events were map and compass jobs cross country (orienteering) and went right through the night non-stop! I think my abil-

ity to navigate in the dark had something to do with looking at maps as a nightman for all those years on ODRTS!

I should also mention my wife Joan. She has completed over 30 marathons, 11 of which were the Beachy Head marathon, recognised as one of the hardest in the country. It's an event we have been doing annually for a number of years. On the longer events, she works on the checkpoints.

I only do two or three days a week now, just enough to get in my 40 jobs and the nearest I have ever got to a complaint was a letter from Tom Whitbread saying I had only done 39!"

And for those interested, Mickey is almost 70...!



Transport for London

Setting down passengers at the Houses of Parliament

The Metropolitan Police has drawn attention to the practice of taxis stopping outside the **Houses of Parliament** next to the Corus Security Lane in the section of road with cones. Stopping there is prohibited; it blocks through traffic and it is also inconvenient and potentially dangerous for alighting passengers.

Taxi drivers are advised that the most convenient and accessible alighting point for passengers for the Houses of Parliament is the kerb between the St Stephens Entrance and the statue of Oliver Cromwell.

Enforcement action may be taken against drivers who continue to stop in the prohibited area.

Len Simkins
Head of Strategy and Planning, PCO

CONVERT ANYTHING TO DVD OR CD

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

- Vinyl long playing records to CD... £4
- Cassettes to CD... £4
- (VHSC 8mm Hi to DV) to DVD... £4
- VHS tapes to DVD... £4
- Reel to Reel... £4
- Super/Standard 8/Cine film to DVD... £5
- + Vinyl records professionally cleaned...

All quotes include DVD discs, CDs and sleeves

Pick up and delivery is possible for a small fee and a minimum of 4 copies

Call for more information

020 8518 8765

Shadow Minister for Transport meets the TX4



Robert Goodwill (left) with LTI's Richard Daniels and of course their TX4...

Shadow Minister for Transport, **Robert Goodwill MP**, was introduced to the latest London taxi - the TX4 - at a meeting at the House of Commons recently. The Shadow Transport Minister, elected at the 2005 general election, was shown the latest model of London taxi by Richard Daniels, LTI Vehicles' Government Affairs Manager.

Mr Goodwill reviewed the vehicle's disability access features, which of course include the wheelchair ramp and swivel seat for ambulant disabled passengers, as well as a hearing loop, intercom and features for those with visual impairments.

As part of the demonstration, Robert was also shown the vehicle's latest VM Motori Euro 4 engine and famous 25 foot turning circle.

Having viewed the taxi, the MP commented: "Black cabs are truly iconic and an excellent example of British automotive manufacturing succeeding in the global economy. The London taxi is also an internationally recognised symbol of Britain."

Robert Goodwill, a keen supporter of the British automotive industry, was briefed on LTI's developments in China and the work the company is undertaking to reduce emissions from its vehicles. The new TX4 model meets the lowest Euro 4 emissions limits and actually exceeds these limits by 50 per cent.

Richard Daniels added: "I am delighted that Robert was able to take the time out to see the latest London taxi and that we had the opportunity to explain what the company is doing to meet the emerging policy challenges of the 21st Century. The reduction of 'air quality' and CO2 emissions from our taxis is at the top of the company's agenda and was important to have discussed it with him."

LTI Vehicles, the largest British owned automotive manufacturer, has been manufacturing the purpose built London taxi for 59 years. The company employs over 450 people at its plant in Coventry and M&O dealerships across the UK. They were the first company to manufacture a fully wheelchair accessible taxi back in 1989...

London Assembly: "Out with the tout..."



Peter Hulme Cross on a visit to DaC last year is shown around by Brian Rice

Thousands of people spill out onto the streets every night after enjoying the best of the capital's nightlife – but how many unknowingly get into minicabs that are operating illegally?

The London Assembly have now launched an inquiry into cab enforcement in the capital.

Led by **Peter Hulme Cross AM** - on behalf of the Assembly's Transport Committee - the investigation will measure how effective Transport for London (TfL) and the Metropolitan Police Service have been in reducing the level of touting by licensed minicabs.

Only 'black cabs' are allowed to ply for hire on the streets, however, there are concerns that licensed drivers of licensed minicabs are plying for hire.

Peter Hulme Cross said: "Many people do not know they are taking a big risk when they flag down a licensed minicab. If the cab is not pre-booked, it is not insured to carry passengers and it is much more difficult to detect offenders if a crime is committed.

"Campaigns such as Safer Travel at Night have raised public awareness of the dangers of using unlicensed minicabs and it is encouraging that there have already been over 4000 arrests for illegal touting since 2002.

"However, we need a clearer picture of how effective awareness campaigns and enforcement have been over the past four years and what can be done to make minicab journeys even safer in the future."

As well as the significant number of arrests for touting, the number of sexual assaults in minicabs has fallen significantly in recent years – to an average of three each month.

Information will be gathered from the Transport Operational Command Unit (TOCU), TfL's Transport Policing and Enforcement Directive (TPED), the Public Carriage Office, private hire representative organisations and venues in areas known as 'touting hotspots'. The report is due for publication in February 2008.



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

0845 094 5307

We make the wheels turn so you can earn,

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

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

Flashback
1978

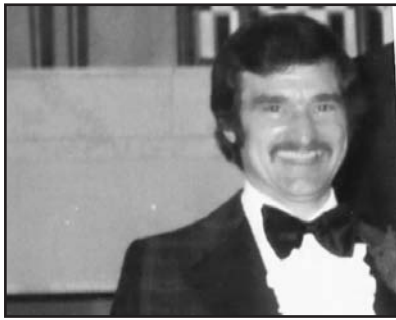
This month's Flashback goes back to December 1978 with a New Year wish for 1979 and look back at 1978 from Editor of the time, Phil Emden...

FROM CALL SIGN, DECEMBER 1978...

LAST WORD, LAST PAGE FROM PHILLY...

1979 – a new year begins and the pundits forecast what is in store for us. Will we have enough to eat? Will we get enough fuel? Will inflation absorb any increase we get? Will we ever work Christmas again, with office statistics showing there were fewer radio cabs out there this year than ever? Why? Working legit (and I know you all do), the legals, inconveniences, some passengers proffering £10 notes for change of a 10-shilling ride with not even a sixpenny gratuity at the end! It just wasn't worth the end net result.

It makes me feel good when I hear of celebrities who are sympathetic to our cause. At the 1978 Mad Hatters Tea Party for physically handicapped children, John Thaw of The Sweeny fame, his wife Sheila Hancock, Patti Boulaye and (I have to force myself),



Arsenal (cough, cough) Manager Terry Neill, all gave up their precious time for free. I for one will put myself out for these nice people if the need ever arises – yes, even for Terry Neill! Brilliant former Spurs half back and captain of their even more brilliant double-winning side, Danny Blanchflower also promised to be there until the Chelsea loonies suddenly sacked him as their manager! No class at Stamford Bridge!

A London Wide radio circuit member has been summoned to court for charging a cash booking fee. You will remember that we at ODRTS agreed to take our solicitor's advice and discontinue to charge the booking fee. At the time of going to press, no date had yet been set, but all eyes will be on the outcome of the case.












Jack Taylor tells me that another 32 accounts were opened last month. The way our seasonal friends are helping the regular radio men this time of year leaves Jack with no cause to complain about coverage. On the contrary, even first call at 100 yards causes the dispatchers to take 3 positions! We need all the work we can get as no one knows, not even the pundits, if the streets of London will be paved with gold next year – they certainly weren't this year. We need to keep our customers happy, if they are happy, they will ultimately keep us happy. We as humans can only live day by day, but must look further ahead for the benefit of our Society.

Have a nice day and a super 1979...

Phil Emden
Editor

Martin Cordell & Co ACCOUNTANTS

Does your accountant supply you with the following?

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

Martin Cordell & Co....DO!

All for one yearly fee

The London Taxi Trades Premier Accountants

(24 hour answering facility for prompt service)

020 8980 7161

(24 hour answering facility for prompt service)

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

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

www.martin-cordell.co.uk



Private Hire Vehicles and Royal Parks

The Regulations governing Royal Parks prohibit any vehicle "constructed, adapted or in use for the purpose of a trade or business" from using roads in the Parks. There is a specific exemption for **London licensed taxis**, but this does not cover private hire vehicles (PHVs). This means that PHVs cannot drive in the Parks if they are on business, for example taking customers to or from Park venues (such as the Zoo or the Serpentine), unless the passenger resides in the parks.

Enforcement of this regulation has been variable due to the difficulty of identifying PHVs. The licence discs and the forthcoming red route exemption signage makes these vehicles more readily identifiable, thus increasing the possible risk of a fine. We have made clear that private hire vehicles provide a similar public service to taxis in many respects and urged Royal Parks to extend the exemption to include PHVs among the vehicles allowed to use the Parks. In response to these requests, Royal Parks has agreed to review the restrictions and will be consulting on whether to allow PHVs to drive in the Parks in the coming months. In the meantime the existing prohibition remains in force.

The Royal Parks are Bushy Park, Green Park, Greenwich Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Regent's Park (with Primrose Hill), Richmond Park and St James's Park...

Len Simkins
Head of Strategy and Planning, PCO

Editor's note: *Call Sign* does not usually publish PCO notices obviously intended for the Private Hire market, but have made an exception to the above for obvious reasons...

'Clever Trevor' Loses Out on Chris Tarrant Quiz!

A new afternoon quiz for expert bluffers appeared on ITV afternoon screens in November. Hosted by **Chris Tarrant, The Great Pretender** sees contestants attempting to utilise their general knowledge and at the same time, exploit their ability to mislead and deceive their fellow five contestants to win the game – not to mention substantial amounts of cash!

One of the first to try his luck was **Dial-a-Cab** driver and former DaC football team free-scoring centre forward, **Trevor Smith (V78)**.

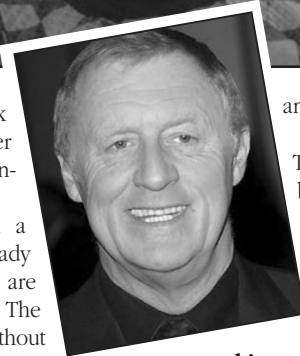
The contestants are tested on a range of subjects, but one has already won the prize money before they are even halfway through the show! The trick is to hold onto the cash without anyone guessing they've won. At the final round, if the losing contestants can correctly identify the winner, they then "steal" the money and the original winner is left with nothing!

Incorrectly guessing who the Great Pretender is, or if the vote is equally split through indecisiveness among contestants, means the actual Pretender will walk away with the entire cash jackpot.

Trevor told *Call Sign* that he had no intention



Trevor Smith - "Afraid of looking silly!"
Inset: Chris Tarrant



of going onto a TV quiz, but that his daughter Ashley had put his name forward! He thought he had struck lucky when the TV company gave him a date that coincided with his holiday and he had to say no, but they liked what they heard

and fixed him up with another date!

"I really didn't fancy it," said Trevor, "like most people, I was a bit afraid of making myself look silly – especially as it was based on general knowledge questions and if you get a simple one wrong, your life could dramatically change when speaking to drivers who had seen it! But after appearing, I can't wait for the next opportunity! It was great fun and even though I didn't win, I just enjoyed it so much."

And what was Chris Tarrant like to work with?

"He was really good at putting contestants at ease. His easy-going way you see on TV is exactly how he is with you in the flesh. It was just a great day..."

SOUTH LONDON TAXIS 10% DISCOUNT FOR DAC DRIVERS!

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

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

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

Call Sign

January 2008

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
Printers: John Brown Printing 112 Portland Rd, London SE25 4PJ
Design: Aldan Publications, Tel: 07958 300 428
Email: danny.fresco@dsl.pipex.com

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

Make this year TWO THOUSAND & GREAT

Join the rank of the professionals!



Reliable, efficient, robust and a joy to drive, just a few reasons why buying a new TX4 in 2008 would be one of the best decisions you make all year.

It's iconic shape, unrivalled turning circle and excellent reputation among taxi drivers go to only further enhance the popularity of Britain's only purpose built taxi.

KPM UK Taxis PLC - London tel: 020 7377 2182
Taxifix Ltd - Liverpool tel: 0151 482 5101
Mann & Overton - London tel: 020 7700 0888
Mann & Overton - Birmingham & West tel: 0121 322 0700
Mann & Overton - Manchester & N. Ireland tel: 0161 831 3434

Conders Garage Ltd - Peterborough tel: 0870 850 5457
John Paton Ltd - Edinburgh tel: 0131 558 8005
John Paton & Son Ltd - Glasgow tel: 0141 553 4000
Smith & Humphrey Ltd - East Sussex tel: 01424 210 746

© LTI Limited reproduced with permission. Fairway and TX shape is a registered design. Fairway™, TX™, the LTI device, the LTI and the London Taxis International logos are all trademarks of LTI Limited.



Vehicles

HAILED THE WORLD OVER.

www.lti.co.uk

CALL CENTRE CHAT

The last few months have been busy for all of us. Michael Son and I have attended meetings with Eurostar at St Pancras Station regarding the rank and pick-up points for account clients.

Westminster City Council Parking Services was another good meeting where we discussed the number of parking fines issued to our drivers.

Both Allan Evans and myself met with Canary Wharf Management Services regarding the parking problems within the Canary Wharf area and in addition to these, we have had the day-to-day business to deal with...

St Pancras International

The lay out of the new ranking facility at St Pancras International does leave a lot to be desired. While all parties accept the rank layout is causing problems, we have been asked by St Pancras Station to try and go with it until the building works above the rank are completed. Once completed, it will give a much larger area to pick up passengers and a longer distance for vehicles to pass and leave the rank. One of our problems was the collection of account clients. We have started to advise clients that our taxis will wait for them at the northern set down points to the station in Pancras Road. The ideal place is outside the M&S food hall and those clients that have used this have found it easy to meet the cab. However, until recognised by Camden Council, it could change at any time. We have suggested to station management that they approach Camden to put signage up here that clearly states *Radio Taxi Pick-Up Point*. We did explain it would be no different to the operation at the airport and they were responsive and will meet with the council in the New Year. We have agreed that in the event of a Eurostar shout - that is the late train service - all cabs will go to the coach park area and wait for instructions from the DaC marshal. The coach parking bays are positioned under the station and the entrance is at the front end of the northern set-down point.

The actual number set down points for the station is very large. Hopefully and to avoid confusion, the area immediately on the left having entered Pancras Road from Euston Road opposite Kings Cross, is classed as the Eurostar set-down point. Continuing along Pancras Road and through the traffic lights is the set down point for St Pancras Midland Main Line.

Westminster City Council

We had a good initial meeting with the parking services department at Westminster City Council. The meeting will hopefully be the first of many for us to be able to work towards reducing the number of parking fines issued. It was pleasing to note that the Council are aware of our problems and prepared to look at solutions to improve the situation. We were asked by them to be mindful of the fact that



the majority of tickets that have been issued to drivers have been to those who have parked on double yellow lines. They said the law is very clear about this and there are no exceptions to allow a driver to park on a double yellow line at any time. It was requested that we ask all drivers where possible to park sensibly and if it is at all possible, please find an empty parking bay to use, even if it means we have to get the client to walk a little way. The Council have meetings with other trade organisations scheduled to take place before Christmas and have agreed a second meeting with us to take place in the New Year. I hope we can get something out of this, not only for the driver on radio but the trade as a whole. If we can work with Westminster, then I see no reason why other Boroughs should not work with us as well.

Canary Wharf Management

Allan and I had a good meeting with Canary Wharf Management and their Security over the parking issues and the numbers of occasions cabs are being stopped and searched before entering the island.

We pointed out that the number of Private Hire vehicles allowed to park in what should be restricted areas for various length of time, was preventing Taxis from waiting outside buildings for their passengers. They were forcing cabs to double park and causing confrontational problems when security staff, with obvious justification, were instructing drivers they could not do it. We explained that the frustrating part of all this was that many of the cars waiting were doing so without having being allocated trips. Their response was good and they said that a PH company had also approached them on the same subject.

We also spoke of the perception drivers were having that more taxis were being stopped and checked than cars. Drivers had informed us that because of the number of incidences that have occurred between drivers and security staff, they felt there was resentment of the taxi driver and deliberate disruption to their working day was in place. We were assured that their instruction to staff is to randomly stop all vehicles. They again promised to look into this, but asked drivers to understand that vehicles are stopped due to the high level security risk they have to deal

with. They were also mindful that if drivers had the perception that to enter the area would cause them hassle, then they know those drivers would not return - a situation they would not wish to happen.

Hopefully, we will see some improvement and will be monitoring that situation very closely.

Booking-in on the 'island'

While on the subject of the 'island' and as a reminder, the booking-in procedure on E140 is that you must be inside the security cordon unless instructed otherwise by the Call Centre.

The only reason controller's change this to being within 15 minutes is to assist with coverage when it's busy. But unfortunately, when doing this, still some drivers see it as an opportunity to try and gain an advantage by booking-in incorrectly. When it's busy, the controllers are working flat out to deal with the driver's line and helping telephonists with client problems, the last thing they need is to have to monitor the system for these drivers. However, they do it and Allan Evans has spoken to many of them. Controllers do not want to have to issue complaints against anyone, but if they are forced to, then their instructions are to take no prisoners. In the coming months when it gets a little quieter, they will have a lot more time to concentrate on monitoring, so please follow the procedures.

Excellent coverage!

By the time this issue of *Call Sign* has been received, we would have completed another very busy Christmas period. From the call centre point of view, we have seen first-hand the effort made by drivers to cover work and it has been absolutely brilliant! We're reasonably sure that the incentive had something to do with it, but it has also proved that when trips are accepted quickly, a lot of pressure is taken off the call centre as a whole. Controllers are under far less stress, which allows them to deal with drivers and clients more efficiently.

Telephonists are under a lot less pressure with not having to deal with irate clients.

The number of calls waiting to be answered drops dramatically because clients get through the first time of trying and far less calls are received enquiring where the taxi is! Already many clients have complimented us on what a big improvement we've made this year on service. Therefore, we have proved conclusively that when drivers cover the work it has a tremendous impact on every facet of our service and the change in people's attitudes from clients, drivers and staff is so noticeable.

I never had the opportunity to offer you all seasonal greetings before Christmas, but I would like to now wish all of you and your families a very happy and prosperous New Year...

Keith Cain
Call Centre Manager
Driver Operations Manager

Dial-a-Cab driver, **Glen Robertson (E54)**, recently wrote to *Transport for London* regarding the safety aspect of bus / taxi lanes and to ask whether TFL planned to allow minicabs to use them. He wrote:

"Having read several articles claiming that you are contemplating opening bus lanes to minicab drivers, I should like to bring to your attention a point of safety. I have had the privilege of using bus lanes for over thirty years. They were not so dangerous in the past because a motorist wanting to turn left would enter the bus lane some thirty meters before his exit and although this may be illegal, it is a good and safe driving practice. Now we have cameras everywhere, so motorists do not enter the lane until the last inch and then cut in - sometimes violently - right across the bus lane. A classic example is Park Lane and Mount Street where there is a double width bus/taxi lane.

"Several times in recent months, I've had to be quick on my brakes and then due to the inconsistent shapes of vehicles, one doesn't always see their signals. The point I am making is that if a seasoned professional can be caught out, what if we have a gang of amateurs with their eyes glued to their Sat-Navs? I'm sure you will give the matter every consideration before making a decision..."

The answer came from Business Operations Manager, Mark Campbell. In response to Glen's letter, he explained:

"Thank you for your email regarding minicabs in bus lanes. The enforcement of bus lanes is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the London Local Authorities Act 1996 (as amended). The enforcement is through the use of camera systems (CCTV, roadside and mobile enforcement solutions). It is illegal for motorists other than buses and permitted vehicles to drive or stop in a bus lane during its operational hours. Permitted vehicles fall into the following categories:

Bus Lanes: All Bar The Milkman!

Buses, Taxis displaying a Hackney Carriage or local authority carriage plate. This includes Asquith taxis but currently excludes TfL licensed minicabs. Taxis are interpreted as vehicles licensed under section 37 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 or section 6, Metropolitan Public Carriage Act 1869. Also permitted are universal postal service providers (as defined in the Postal Services Act 2000), local authority refuse collection vehicles, vehicles undertaking repairs or maintenance to roadway, street furniture or street infrastructure, vehicles being used in connection with the removal of any obstruction to traffic, vehicles used for transporting prisoners, vehicles used in connection with any building operation or demolition, vehicles used for Fire Brigade, Police and Ambulance services, motorcycles (where permitted by the Traffic Management Order) and cyclists.

Transport for London (TfL) currently have no provisions to exempt licensed Private Hire Vehicles (PHV) (minicabs, executive cars, limousines, chauffeur-driven cars etc) from bus lane regulations. However, changes are planned in



No sign of any milkfloats...yet!

the near future to allow for PHVs to pick up and set down at the kerb side. This will not permit the vehicle to drive along the bus lane and the vehicle should exit the bus lane immediately after the set down or pick up has been completed."

Surprisingly, there was no mention of the milkman...!

E₃ TAXIS

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

AT E₃ TAXIS – 50% DISCOUNT! ON SERVICING

Some of our other services include:-

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

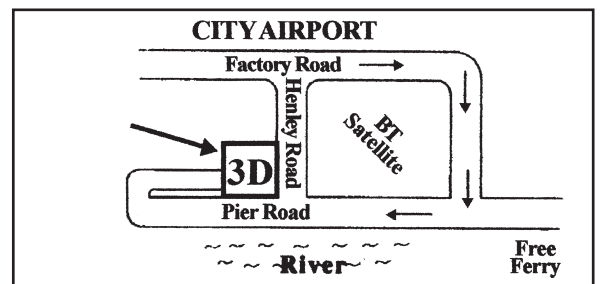
We are also fitting the new PCO Approved Tyres MAXXIS, as well as DUNLOP & MICHELIN

*We can service your TXII from new without affecting your warrantee
And we will advise on any warrantee work needed*

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

**E3 Taxis Unit 3D Standard Industrial Estate, Henley Road, E16 2ES
Open Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm, Saturday 9am – 1pm**

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



The first Saturday in December saw the 35th annual Taxi Driver of the Year Ball, as last year held at the Britannia Hotel in Docklands.

With a full house enjoying good food and excellent dancing to *Band of Gold*, the charity's Chairman **Russell Poluck MBE (T55)**, explained that the committee were doing everything they could to find a sponsor for next year's show and that the current absence of a **Taxi Driver of the Year** was totally out of their control – even though they had tried incessantly to resurrect the yearly event. However, they were still hopeful for next year. He ended his speech by thanking the sponsors of the evening, **Dial-a-Cab, KPM, Doug Sherry MBE** and the **Royal Oak** and of course presenting cheques to the trade charities.

But the evening wasn't just about speeches and presentations, it was about letting your hair down and having a great time – something most seemed to achieve.

However, there was one part that wasn't quite so much fun – and that involved the utter humiliation of **Call Sign!** Ok, it wasn't quite that bad, but Editor **Alan Fisher** had to wipe some egg off of his face following the 'cock-up' involving the crossword in the December issue of the magazine. Having advertised it on driver's terminals and with a prize of £100, it would have made a handy little Xmas win for someone – except that it had one number in the wrong place and one black square similarly placed incorrectly!

There was only one thing he could do, eat humble pie and cancel the competition knowing that he was going to face some warped humour via driver's emails. He wasn't disappointed!

However, he decided that the £100 shouldn't be wasted and instead presented it to Russell, knowing that the TDoY make presentations to all the trade charities, so they'd all get something out of Alan's misput black square!

Russell told **Call Sign**: **"The Charity would like to thank everyone that supported our annual dinner-dance and helped raise money for the charities that have supported us."**

Russell's wife Barbara added with a smile: **"On behalf of the Charity, I would like to thank Call Sign for its kind donation and hopefully, the more cock-up's the better!"**

They both added their greetings for a Merry Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year.

Then the evening of fun continued along its merry way...

Raffle numbers: 1st prize 0860, 2nd 1433, 3rd 2501, 4th 2504, 5th 0085 and 6th 2520.

The Taxi Driver of the Year Ball

And the Call Sign 'cock-up' of the year!



Feeling silly, Alan presents Russell Poluck with what should have been the £100 crossword prize!



Taxicab News State of the Trade columnist John Pace!



Brian Rice has a chat with Grace Tyzack - wife of DaC's Bill (C06)

Number Twelve restaurant is situated by the Ambassadors Hotel in Upper Woburn Place. It has two menus; the *pre-theatre* menu serves from 5.30pm-7.30pm with a choice of two or three courses inclusive of a carafe of wine per person and priced of £22.95 for two courses or £25.95 for three courses – all of which comes courtesy of head chef, Santino Busciglio.



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 Number 12 in Upper Woburn Place...

Eating Out with Call Sign

Choosing is the hardest part especially as *home-cured* really means that at **Number Twelve**, with Santino salting his own cod, smoking his own meat and fish and overseeing the baking of six different types of bread each morning!

But we had to choose and both our choices looked, and more importantly tasted spectacular! I decided on the *Roasted Cumbrian Herdwick lamb, artichokes, samphire grass and shoulder potato cake* while my ever-more smiling partner went for *Medallion of 28 day Donald Russell beef fillet, celeriac, braised red onions and girolles* all washed down with a nicely chilled carafe of house white wine.

When you review a nice restaurant, it's sometimes easier to pick out the occasional item that doesn't come up to expectations. With **Number Twelve**, I can honestly say that there wasn't one aspect of our dinner that we could criticise! Well, ok, if you push me; the weather outside was awful, but we could hardly blame **Number Twelve** for that!

Anyway, on to dessert time – yes, someone has to do it! I chose a selection of *farmhouse cheeses from La Fromagerie*, while my Radio Taxis friend decided that he wanted something more elaborate and chose wisely with a

70% Valbona chocolate mousse served with hazelnut biscuits and vanilla sugar syrup. Not for the more diet conscious, but for food lovers only the word *magnifique* could suffice.

Throughout our time in the restaurant, we were looked after very well without it being overbearing. This enhanced our dining experience even more and if you enjoy your food, I would heartily recommend paying **Number Twelve** a visit. Good service and excellent cuisine make this a real showstopper!

There is a regularly changed *à la carte* and also fixed price menu of two courses for £13.50 or three courses at £15.50 at lunchtimes and £14.95/ £17.95 every evening. Wine is extra.

An average three course meal from *à la carte* menu including wine is around £35 per person.

The restaurant is open for lunch Monday – Friday, midday - 3pm and dinner Monday - Saturday 5.30pm -10.30pm.

For information and reservations call Number Twelve on 020 7693 5425 or go to www.numbertwelve-restaurant.co.uk and have yourself a real dining experience.

Alex Constantinou (N05)

My eating partner and I opted for the second option, the *à la carte* menu. This was more extensive and slightly more expensive. The service was excellent and even looking for faults, we failed to find any from the moment we entered the bar area!

We were offered cocktails and aperitifs but decided to sit down in the very comfortable and contemporary surroundings and get stuck into the menu! My partner, replacing my wife who couldn't get a baby sitter at the last minute, was a driver with Radio Taxis who couldn't believe his luck at being asked to come with! He began with *Devon crab salad, avocado and radish*, while I tucked in to some home-smoked *Gressingham duck breast, citrus salad and mint*. As a trusted **Call Sign** reviewer, I naturally tasted both and they were extremely tasty, making us more than ready for the main course – and we were not disappointed!

MANGANESE BRONZE AGM



Tim Melville-Ross

Manganese Bronze Holdings, the parent company of LTI, reported that at the Annual General Meeting of the Company held on 27 November, Chairman Tim Melville-Ross, made the following trading statement:

"I am pleased to report that sales of the TX4 continue to be strong and are ahead of the same quarter (August to October) last year. The TX4 is the most technologically advanced, purpose built taxi that we have ever produced and market acceptance has been excellent throughout the UK.

Shanghai LTI, our joint venture with Geely Automobile Holdings Ltd, is performing to plan. The JV is putting in place the necessary engineering, manufacturing and supplier development actions to achieve prototype production in mid-2008 and production for sales at the end of 2008. Milestones of particular note that have been achieved are the placing of the orders for the key body tooling, the commencement of factory modifications to accommodate TX4 production and the preliminary selection of engine and gearbox suppliers. Supplier quotes received to date have confirmed the level of procurement savings that have been targeted.

Looking ahead, taxi sales for the balance of this extended financial year (to 31 December 2007) and into 2008 will depend on our ability to maintain the momentum of TX4 and the extent of market opportunities arising from the change in emissions regulations in London in mid-2008. Our prime objective remains the initiation of production in China through our joint venture with Geely and we look forward to 2008 with confidence as the foundation year for our development."

FLORIDA DISNEY EXECUTIVE 4 BED 2 IDENTICAL MASTER SUITES

Have a look at our websites:

www.housebymouse.co.uk or

www.floridavillas2book.com

FOR MORE EXECUTIVE POOL HOMES / CONDOS

FROM £350



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

★ Gated communities

- ★ Overlooking conservation woodland/lakes
- ★ Air conditioned throughout. ★ Pool heating available
- ★ Excellent management companies on hand if needed

All enquiries please contact Lisa Rogers

01227 360388 / 07946 374420 or email:

enquiries@floridavillas2book.com

Or call Steve Rogers (H82) on 07951 829959

The 2007 AGM

Rules and Propositions



Call Sign invited any member who intended putting forward a rule change or proposition for the 2007 AGM, to use Call Sign's pages to give members a rough idea of what their rule change/proposition meant. There were two, which are as follows:

Rule Change

Mike McGlynn (F60):

I have put forward an amendment to *membership terms of admission section b*. Having signed the waiver letter on initially joining as a member and having completed two years membership, the member becomes entitled to full membership as all members who joined prior to the 1st September 2004 and receives the same benefits.

At the present moment, it is an Orwellian society, we are all equal but some are more equal than others!

I appreciate why the rule was introduced to stop carpetbaggers, but surely after two years of contributing to the profitability and well being of the Society, the new member should become a full member?

If the admission policy stays in its present form, it could conceivably, although not very likely, come down to one member deciding the fate of all the other members. I also believe that when members see how the other major radio circuits in London have gone after being taken over or demutualised, the drivers haven't benefited.

Editor Alan Fisher said in a previous issue of *Call Sign*: "You knew the rules when you joined." I believe that the vast majority of members would rather see The Gentlemen's Circuit behaving in a Gentlemanly way.

The 25 signatures I had to get to put forward the amendment proposal were all taken from members who had joined before the 1st September 2004 and they believed that this was a fairer way forward.

Proposal

Keith D'Urso (M57)

To allow drivers to book onto EC5 (or when disbanded, EC1, 2, 3 and 4) and E140 whilst on their *CODE 3* (going home). The

jobs would still be presented to the driver *AS DIRECTED* and *NON REJECTABLE* so the driver will not know the destination until he accepts the job but he will know the job is going to his primary or backup zones thus helping him or her home.

The reason for this proposal is that the present Code 3 (only being allowed to take jobs from the bids) just does not work. Drivers wanting to go home sit bidding for the small number of jobs in the bid zone when there could be 100+ jobs uncovered in the system.

Surely if a driver is ready to go home and there is a job in the system going his way, it would benefit the Society by clearing that job quicker. It benefits the client by that job being allocated sooner rather than waiting to go into the bids.

It has an obvious benefit to the driver in that he would have a much better chance of a job his way than under the present system. It also has a benefit to the system in general as we would not have going home drivers using up valuable signal space having to press their bid button every 30 seconds.

The proposal, if successful at the AGM, would not guarantee a job home every night but it would give you a better chance than under the present system. It would also not guarantee a roader, as this would depend on an individual primary and backup zones.

THE SALIERI RESTAURANT

376 Strand, WC2

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

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

We are certain that you will be delighted



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

Salieri Restaurant
376 Strand, WC2
Reservations: 020 7836 1318

E-STATEMENTS

There has been a resounding thumbs-up from Dial-a-Cab drivers to forego printed statements in favour of the E-statement and I would like to congratulate the 700 subscribers who have taken this opportunity to "go green."

Drivers must enter the DaC *Members Portal* to access the *Drivers Only Area*. You will have to click on the *Statements* button and this will taken you to the Microgen site where you will be asked for your login and password.

You will have received from me a letter with your login and password. The password however will have to be changed immediately for security reasons.

There will be instructions on the website on how to save your files. I hope that you will enjoy the new service, but if you get any problems please ring Driver Services or email: driverservices@dialacab.co.uk and I will reply asap.

Warren Smith
DaC Financial Accountant

On this side of the Pond we have idiomatic expressions for nearly every occasion. One is: *You can take the boy off the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the boy.* Which brings to mind two men...

Dick Gibson was a southern (USA) boy who migrated to Colorado where oil made him rich. He was a fan of jazz. He indulged this whim by sponsoring an annual week-long jazz festival, bringing in the best jazz musicians from all over the USA for the event. He could afford and bought a small local FM radio station and launched an all-jazz format. Great listening for those who enjoyed jazz.

Dick never lost his southern accent. His disc jockeys at the radio station lacked his personal knowledge of Southern Jazz, so Dick indulged himself by broadcasting his own jazz program. His thick dialect added to the enjoyment of his programs.

Frank was born in Budapest but had no recollection of that background, other than the tattooed number he got on his arm as a new born baby in Auschwitz. Relatives ransomed the young couple and their infant from the Polish concentration camp and gave them passage to the US. They arrived with no money, but their freedom made them feel

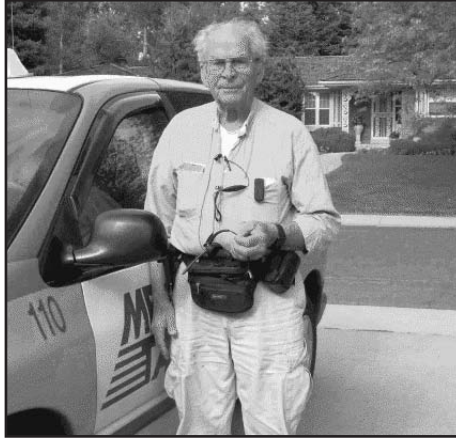
Frank grew up to become a cabbie and owned his own Checker cab. His love of jazz justified installing a total of eighteen *tweeters* and *woofers* in the head-liners, door panels and trunk - your boot. His license plate was **JAZZCAB**. Sitting in his cab listening to Dick Gibson was like being in the bandstand. With the volume turned up, you felt the vibrations of the drums and other instruments. What an experience.

Like cabbies do, a bunch of us were eating and discussing the taxi business. Frank lamented having to pick up "the little old ladies from Windsor Gardens (a retirement community)." His gripe? "They never tip..."

He'd made this same complaint before. "Frank," another driver (*moi? I'd never admit it*) observed: "If you'll change your radio to the AM station that plays music from The Big

Wendell White drives a taxi in Denver, Colorado and writes the occasional column for Call Sign. He is the current TLPA Taxi Driver of the Year...

Out & About in Denver



Band era and turn the volume down lower, they'll give you better tips."

Frank derided the suggestion. "That's elevator music," he objected. "Yeah," said the other driver, "but it will elevate your tips." He didn't believe it.

A few weeks later he sheepishly confided: "You were right, you know?" We'd forgotten the previous conversation and asked what he was talking about. "The music and the volume on the radio. I didn't believe you but I tried it. Now they say how much they enjoy the ride and are giving me good tips."

While he splurged with his extravagant stereo equipment in his cab, Frank was a cautious spender, so when Dennis and I became two of the first cabbies in Denver to install cell phones in our cabs back in the early 80s, Frank asked questions about the

cost, its installation, cost per minute, how much a month? His reaction to our answers was that it was too expensive.

A few weeks later my phone rang as I was cruising down a busy thoroughfare. It was Frank. "Guess where I am," he asked? "Just a block behind you. Wanna stop for coffee?" He wanted to show off his new cell phone and boast of the concessions he'd finagled that we didn't get. Free unlimited calls nights and weekends, call waiting and a few other goodies.

Later I stopped by a pay phone and dialled so I could record my cell phone ringing for several minutes. Then I kept my tape recorder set to play that ring without delay. Sure enough a day or so later, Frank called again just to chat. As he talked I grabbed the tape recorder and hit *Play* with the volume set high enough so Frank would hear it as we talked.

I interrupted him. "Frank could you hold on a minute? *My other phone is ringing!*"

Which reminds me of another of our expressions: *The difference between the Men and the Boys is the price of their toys!*

Dick had his radio station and jazz festivals. Frank had his JAZZCAB. And all I had was my cassette with the sound of "my other phone ringing."

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

CONTACTING DRIVER SERVICES AT DAC

Some drivers have asked *Call Sign* to republish the direct lines for Nuala and Val in Driver Services. They can now deal with most general queries, including rollerbond requests by phone, email or fax.

So here they are...

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

Telephone: 020 7553 7201 for Nuala or 020 7553 7230 for Val.

Email: nualag@dialacab.co.uk or valerieg@dialacab.co.uk

Fax: 020 7553 7296.

Dial-a Cab Credit Union

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

*Well wonder no more! If you are a subscriber, journeyman or member of staff at Dial-a-Cab, then you qualify to join the **Dial-a-Cab Credit Union**. Any member of your family residing at your address also qualifies for membership!*

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

The cost?

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

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

COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Hello Ladies and Gents,

Can I start by wishing you and your families a very happy and prosperous 2008. The past year has flown by and with my change in role, I can honestly say that personally I have had a particularly varied and interesting 2007.

Throughout the coming year, there are certain changes that I intend implementing that I feel will enhance my role as Compliance Officer and also add continuity and consistency to what I believe is a very important position within the Society.

I am fully committed to my position and will work hard to make sure that our rules and regulations are followed correctly. I still drive regularly myself and have always been hands-on, open-minded and above all, fair.

Talking to drivers and staff alike, many have raised numerous concerns and issues that I will do my utmost to keep abreast of. In our trade, honesty goes a long way and over the next few months, with the help and expertise of the Call Centre, I will be strictly monitoring the system to make sure



that these guidelines and procedure rules are adhered to.

I recently had a very interesting meeting with the head of complaints at the PCO in which we discussed our individual methods of dealing with certain types of grievances. I am sure that there are initiatives that I can gradually incorporate at Dial-a-Cab, which will ultimately improve me as Compliance

officer and further develop the role within the Society.

I sometimes feel that when it's particularly busy, a very small minority take the opportunity to try and beat the system because they feel it will go unnoticed. Let me reassure the vast majority of you who do not do that, this will not be the case. So to those the comment may refer to, please be aware that zone hopping (especially into physical zones) and booking into zones such as E140 from far away areas, are high on my priority list of regular complaints that I receive.

As I have previously mentioned, If you have queries on any of these issues I will be only too pleased to explain them. Please play the game fairly or risk facing the consequences.

Once again, a very happy and healthy new year to you all...

Allan Evans
DaC Compliance Officer
Allane@Dialacab.co.uk

The LTFUC 2007 Chairman's Report

The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children and London's licensed taxi drivers are very aware of the increasing interference that affects day-to-day operations. I am nevertheless delighted to report that with an increase in generated income, a reduction in general administration expenses to a little over 2% and restrictions on the appeals granted, a strong reserve is carried forward to 2008 - the 80th anniversary year of the Fund. This has been achieved not only through the many benefactors who give regular, unstinting and generous support, but the taxi drivers of London whose unfailing encouragement - by donating lost property rewards, taking our diaries, carrying collecting boxes at Christmas and of course giving their time when taking part in the outings for which the Fund is so well known - is truly appreciated.

The events organised by the LTFUC during the year and those in which the Fund participated, followed a similar pattern to previous years, giving pleasure and excitement to many hundreds of disadvantaged children. Since the early 1970s, the first event of the year has been the **Grosvenor House Mad Hatters** party and 2007 was no exception with Frank Bruno and the Cheeky Girls heading the fantastic entertainment. No less than seven London boroughs were represented by their Mayors and escorts, which lent a very special atmosphere to the day. Although the weather wasn't too kind for the visit to **Legoland** in the Spring, the spirits of over 200 children were not dampened. The resounding success of the outing was due to a terrific turnout of over 100 taxis and the Earls Court Exhibition Centre facilitating the start and finish of the event, including break-



fast for the drivers.

July saw the annual outing to **Southend-on-Sea** and although proving once again to be a most popular and exciting venue, I have to repeat my request to drivers that giving up just one day in the year would make such a difference. I thank the Metropolitan Police for allowing the Fund to once again support their **Summer Camp** for deserving children from East London, and the Pearly Kings and Queens for the invitation to take part in the **Costermongers' Harvest Festival and Parade**. The **Edgware Mall** must be thanked for making the LTFUC their sponsored charity for 2007 and the Mayor of Camden, for kindly inviting the committee to tea in the Mayor's Parlour. As I've said, grants this year have been restricted in order to

build reserves, but among others I was delighted to present a motorised changing bench to the **TuffKids nursery** at north London's Kisharon School. I must also recognise the support given to the families of London taxi drivers unable to work through no fault of their own.

Apart from a brief review of the last twelve months, this report also marks the start of the **Fund's 80th anniversary year**, during which there will be numerous fund-raising events, outings and parties, all currently in the planning stage. Please visit

www.ltfuc.org.uk for a continual update. I congratulate those committee members

who have celebrated family occasions during the year and am delighted to welcome back **Sheldon Collins**, who rejoins the committee as a trustee. Not only do I thank **Gerry Dunn MBE (S84)** for his sterling service as Honorary Treasurer for many years - and wish **Sim**

Yiannikaris (E53) good luck on

taking on this responsibility - but I thank most sincerely all my fellow trustees - working London taxi drivers who take no money for their time - for their loyal and unflagging support. In my capacity as Chairman for a further three years, I look forward to serving the **LTFUC** to the best of my ability, helping maintain its position as the oldest and best-known London Taxi Trade Charity.

David S. Lessman (D19)
LTFUC Hon Chairman



Regular readers of *Call Sign* will recall former subscriber **Leslie Cohen (ex-S98)** – nowadays enjoying the luxury of semi-retirement - as a man of achievement. Not only has this septuagenarian raised considerable sums of money for the charity *Breakthrough Breast Cancer* through his sponsored walks, he has together with his friends from the *Arnos Grove Bowling Club*, been entered into the Guinness Book of Records for the longest continuous game of Bowls, putting even Sir Walter Raleigh's pre-Amada effort to shame! That too was for charity.

But even Leslie was amazed by his latest 'result'. *Call Sign* met him recently to get the full facts to an incredible story...

"I picked up a street fare from Harrods in Knightsbridge to Cadogan Gardens SW3. The passenger was obviously in a hurry and paid me off quickly before rapidly disappearing into a doorway. I was concentrating on the traffic around me as I pulled away from the kerb, so didn't check the carriage compartment until I was safely underway. In a corner of the rear seat was a thick brown envelope. It was open, unsealed and when I looked inside, my eyes popped!

Former DaC driver finds £3000 on Taxi seat!

And he didn't even get a thank-you for handing it in!



Leslie with a cheque for Breakthrough Breast Cancer after completing a Moonwalk at the age of 70+

"I saw three bundles of £10 notes neatly wrapped up with those paper sleeves that the banks use. In my entire cab-driving career, I've seen all sorts of lost property, but nothing like that! Once my heart rate had settled down, I began to think more clearly. Perhaps it was Mafia money? Or the proceeds of a bank heist? Perhaps just a win on the horses? Whatever it was, it wasn't mine and so I decided to go straight to Albany Street Police station and hand it in. I really didn't think twice. Even the desk duty officer expressed some amazement, possibly because I had displayed honesty, but equally as much that anyone could be so care-

less with their finances – especially that sizeable amount! It took PC49 and a colleague almost an hour to count and then re-count the cash, before giving me a receipt and allowing me to go home after being told that if, as almost certainly, it was claimed then I'd be in line for a reward.

"A few weeks later, in early November, I received a cheque from *Transport for London's Lost Property Department* for £42 - my reward for handing in the £3000. They said that was the 'standard' figure allowed. Apparently, the bank whose money it was had reclaimed it without even asking how it was found or who had handed it in. So what really gets my blood pressure up is the fact that nobody from the bank thought it was worth writing a letter of thanks for my honesty. Not even a few lines of gratitude! *That's* what really ruffles my feathers because I was brought up to show appreciation for kindness and integrity.

"Friends and acquaintances have suggested I should have taken the wife on holiday or a cruise with that money, but that's not the way I have lived my life so far and I am not going to start now. That sort of thing is not in me and living with a clear conscience is more important to me than three grand."

With a laugh, Leslie ended by saying: "Never mind, at least I can tell my grandchildren how I held £3000 in my hands for two hours!"

© Call Sign Magazine MM8

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

Kupkake's Korner



Pedicabs

I nearly hit a pedicab *thing* he almost got a smack! Funny? I wasn't laughing, like the people in his back!

He was travelling south down St James Street!

I was turning right from King, He was inches from my bumper - but didn't say a thing...

I hit the brakes and blew my horn I cursed his stupidity! Still he took no notice though he knew he'd endangered me!

This town is like Dodge City was with outlaws everywhere. They exist the way they do because no one seems to care.

I wish I had a CC camera filming all I could see, I'd make a reality movie to broadcast on TV.

Maybe then we'd get results shaming TfL and the Met. Until that time I'll yell insults without remorse - or regret...

Kopyright Kupkake 2008

Executive 6 Bedroom Villa in Florida

From £395 per week



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

Contact Andy (P32) on 07904 091278 or 07932 960350

Meet **John West (B07J)** and his wife **Linda**, Dial-a-Cab's answer to Fred and Ginger! The couple, from Brentwood in Essex, recently won the **British National Latin Dance Championships** held annually at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool, beating all comers by a healthy margin.

Call Sign caught up with John to get more details of the couple's success...

"There are two competitions each year," he explained, "in May there's the UK Open whilst November sees the UK Closed and it's the Closed that Linda and I clinched," he said with the smile of a champion.

"There are 4 sections; the Cha-Cha, Rumba, Samba and Paso doble. We won all four, which managed to annoy quite a few people who thought they were the bees knees - but weren't," John said proudly!

"We're ranked 6th in the UK *Over 35s* ratings and now we've just won the *Over 50s* Dance Championships, we've proven we are top of the stack. You could say we're on point of the rank! We've won a monetary prize and hold the Silver Trophy for one year before having to return it, but what is really prestigious is having our names engraved on the *Wall* in the dancers *Hall of Fame*," he added with a delighted look on his face.

So how did it all start, *Call Sign* asked?

"15 years ago, I was a golf addict and Brenda suggested we do something together because she was not seeing a great deal of me! We started with social dancing and turned competitive about 12 years back. It has been a hard road to success, but thanks to our Coaches, **Alison Fulham** from the *Starlight Club* in Streatam High Road for *Latin*, and

Strictly Come Dial-a-Cabbing?

DaC Driver and wife become British Ballroom Dancing Champions!



John and Linda on the dance floor. Inset pic: John back at Dial-a-Cab

very seriously, practicing in rehearsal studios three times a week, lessons on Saturdays and competitions on Sundays. If we need quiet for total concentration to work on complex moves, we hire a hall just for ourselves.

Any plans for the future, we probed?

"We must defend our title next year and then gain our professional dancers card



Stephen Hillier and **Jennifer Buchanan** from *Grafton Hall* in Village Way, Dulwich for the *Modern*, we are where we are."

John added: "Linda and I take our dancing

before being able, hopefully, to set up our own dance school. We have been offered technical support for the project, but have to go through the system to do things correctly," he concluded.

Call Sign - along with all fans of *Strictly Come Dancing* - wishes the couple every success for

the future and, given the determination they have shown thus far, have every confidence they will achieve their ambitions.

© Call Sign Magazine MM8

TX4 Reversing Camera From M&O

Call Sign was recently treated to an exclusive demonstration of an innovative reversing aid for TX4 taxis available from north London LTI dealer, **Mann & Overton**.

A tiny camera sits neatly above the rear number plate and sends wireless images to a small monitor, similar to a TV screen, fitted behind the drivers' sun visor.

Operating the system couldn't be easier. Just select reverse gear, flip the sun visor down and as if by magic, you can see pedestrians or other obstacles behind the cab that may have prevented you from reversing safely! The monitor is hidden behind the driver's sun-visor for security reasons.

Mark Baker, M&O's Service Manager, explained the thinking behind this useful gadget.

"Customers have highlighted to us the difficulty of reversing safely, given the TX4's restricted rearward vision due to the fitting of head-restraints throughout the vehicle. These are of course a legal requirement and factory fitted. It means that drivers have to rely on the door mirrors, which can only see along the sides and not directly behind the taxi.

He ended by adding: "The camera lens can be positioned to an owner's individual preference, looking directly behind the taxi or angled upwards to see impending obstacles further away from the rear end. Either way, that expensive rear bumper is protected. We can also retro-fit the camera to TXII models. When used in combination with the reversing sensors we have been offering for some time now, reversing the cab safely could not be easier."

For further details, contact M&O directly on 020 7700 0888...



The camera can be seen just above the number plate

© Call Sign Magazine MM8

NICK THE HAMSTER "DOES" KINGSTON!



Affectionately known as *The Hamster* to his friends, Dial-a-Cab driver Nick Moody (Y05) was last seen competing in - and completing - the 16-mile Kingston mini-marathon.

According to his two friends, Mark Gramson (N29) and George Hughes (E43), *The Hamster* was last seen looking for his nuts somewhere near Twickenham!

Being more of the kind-hearted variety here at *Call Sign*, we'd just like to congratulate Nick on a great run and make no comment on his lost nuts!

Pic courtesy of the Fat Greek...

Dancha Designs

Professional & Personal Web-design

"...Dancha Designs work with our clients to deliver exactly what they want, how they want it, when they want it. It is integral to what we do..."

for more info visit:

www.danchadesigns.com

Or call: 01992 85 10 82

DaC's Lee Gets the Last Laugh as Wembley Crash



Wembley's Paul Shelton forced Lee into the save that turned the match.

Call Sign readers will remember last month's story about how DaC driver and Wembley FC goalkeeper Lee Pearce (J71), was suddenly transferred to rivals Bedfont Green after receiving a cash offer that he felt he couldn't turn down.

Lee had been the goalkeeping hero for the DaC-sponsored Combined Counties Premier

League team for several years, but the arrival three months ago of his and partner Becky's third child began to put pressure on the purse strings and he accepted the offer.

Then in early December, Wembley's Vale Farm ground saw the fixture that Lee wasn't yet really ready for – home to Lee's new club, Bedfont Green.

"It was certainly strange being there but not putting on the red Dial-a-Cab sponsored tops that I had become so used to," Lee told *Call Sign*, **"and I also heard the odd boo from the crowd – but not as much as I had expected."**

Bedfont took an early lead, but Wembley soon equalised. Then Wembley's Paul Shelton struck a beautiful 20 yarder that looked to be flying inside the left post, but Lee threw himself across the goal to keep it out. That seemed to be the turning point of the match and Bedfont Green went on to score another twice, running out 3 – 1 winners.

"Bittersweet," was Lee's reaction after the match, **"but I can't allow my feelings for Wembley to affect my game."**

That result seemed to give Lee's new team a boost and they went on a run of 4 straight wins.

Thanks to the many DaC drivers who send in photos from their local paper showing Wembley with their DaC strip on. Keep 'em coming...

From Slapstick the Clown to Mayor Livingstone...

WHY ARE YOU BANNING TAXI DRIVER COLLECTIONS?

Dear Mr Livingstone

I am writing this letter to ask why you have stopped London Taxi drivers from collecting money for their Fund for Underprivileged Children? This money goes to The Grosvenor House Christmas Party. I am a member of *Clowns International* and give my time freely to these events, like a lot of other people.

It would be nice if you came along to one of these events to see what fun the children get out of it.

If there were more people like London's Taxi Drivers, the world would be a better place.

Yours Sincerely
Slapstick the Clown
(Sometimes known as Ian Fincham)

Slapstick gets a push from Spiderman



Dial-a-Cab has teamed up with Carbon Footprint Ltd to help reduce and offset our carbon emissions, to reduce our impact on the environment and in particular, climate change. Every journey undertaken by Dial-a-Cab will now be Carbon Footprint free - any carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions made will be offset to zero...

Carbon Footprint Ltd is the provider of the Web's number one carbon footprint calculator (www.carbonfootprint.com), as well as consultants to businesses on carbon reduction, management and offsetting. Their highly regarded carbon offsetting programme is based around energy saving in the developing world and ensures carbon dioxide emissions are neutralised quickly, traceably and permanently.

What is Climate change?

Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge facing the world today. Rising global temperatures will bring changes in weather patterns, rising sea levels and increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. The effects will be felt both here in the UK and internationally. The UK is acting now to adapt to climate change and to reduce the risk by reducing our contribution to the causes.

What is the greenhouse effect?

Some of the energy from the sun is trapped inside our atmosphere as it reflects back from Earth towards space. This natural process is called the *greenhouse effect*. The atmosphere acts like the glass walls of a greenhouse, allowing the sun's rays to enter but keeping the heat in.

The gases that make this happen (greenhouse gases) are mainly water vapour and carbon dioxide. As humans emit more CO₂ and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, the greenhouse effect becomes stronger. This causes the earth's climate to change unnaturally.

At present, just over 7 billion tonnes of CO₂ is emitted globally each year through fossil fuel use, with an additional 1.6 billion tonnes emitted by land use change, largely by deforestation. The concentrations of these gases in the atmosphere have now reached levels unprecedented for tens of thousands of years.

What does this mean for us?

Mean global temperatures are likely to rise between 1.1 and 6.4°C (with a best estimate of 1.8 to 4°C) above 1990 levels by the end of this century depending on our emissions. This will result in a further rise in global sea levels of between 20 and 60cms by the end of this century, continued melting of ice caps, glaciers and sea ice, rainfall pattern changes and intensification of tropical cyclones.

How do we know climate change is linked to CO₂ in the atmosphere?

Over the last 650,000 years, the natural range for CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere has been between 180 to 300 parts per million (ppm). This data has been found through ice core surveys, where air trapped as the ice froze hundreds of thousands of years ago has been carefully analysed. The amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere up until 1950 had never exceeded 300ppm. The atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ in 2005 was 370ppm, this far exceeds the natural range over the last 650,000 years (180 to 300 ppm) as determined

DAC AND CARBON FOOTPRINTS



Some things you may want to know...



from ice core surveys. Over the last 10 years, we have seen the fastest annual growth rate in the carbon dioxide concentration since the start of direct atmospheric measurements in 1960.

So what is a carbon footprint?

A carbon footprint is a measure of the impact our activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of green house gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide (CO₂).

A carbon footprint is made up of the sum of two parts, the direct (primary) footprint and the indirect (secondary) footprint.

The *primary footprint* is a measure of our direct emissions of CO₂ from the burning of fossil fuels, including domestic energy consumption and transportation (e.g. car and plane).

The *secondary footprint* is a measure of the indirect CO₂ emissions from the whole lifecycle of products we use - those associated with their manufacture and eventual breakdown. The secondary footprint includes the energy used to manufacture items that a company such as **Dial-a-Cab** may use, but does not have direct control of, eg although a company is likely to use PCs, it would be very difficult to determine the carbon used in the manufacture and delivery process as the end user has no visibility of control of these items.

Dial-a-Cab and Carbon Reduction

In addition to offsetting carbon emissions, Dial-a-Cab is also reviewing the energy usage at *Dial-a-Cab House* to identify and then implement reduction measures. DaC recognises that the solution to climate change must first be through reducing carbon emissions.

How can we all help?

Lights turned off unless needed, replace filament style light bulbs with energy saving lights (you can save up to £10 a year in electricity costs, by replacing just one bulb). Use heating only when needed and try turning it down by 1 or 2 degrees. Ensure your boiler is regularly maintained (can boost energy efficiency by over 20%). Ensure your hot water tank is well insulated and that you have 180mm thick loft insulation - you could stop about 25% of your heating escaping through the roof. Insulate your walls - 35% of heat generated in the house is lost through the walls. Repair any dripping taps.

What can Dial-a-Cab drivers do to reduce emissions?

Keep your taxi (and car) properly serviced. Check tyre pressure at least once a fortnight. Avoid carrying unnecessary weight in the boot. Try to avoid sudden acceleration, engine revving, and sudden breaking - harsh accelerating and breaking can use up to 30% more fuel and increase wear and tear of

the vehicle. Avoid using aircon if possible as this uses more fuel. Drive with the windows closed - this reduces drag on the vehicle. Accelerate slower. Switch the engine off if you think you are likely to be stationary for more than 2 minutes. When starting up, there is no need to allow the engine to warm up; it is better to just drive off steadily. Keep a good distance from the car in front to avoid unnecessary braking. If buying a new car, look for the most carbon efficient (i.e. with low kg CO₂/km) or with a high mpg.

What is Carbon Offsetting?

Each of our everyday actions consume energy and produce carbon dioxide emissions, e.g. taking holiday flights, driving our cars, heating or cooling our homes. Carbon Offsetting is a way of compensating for the emissions produced with an equivalent carbon dioxide saving. This is done by buying 'carbon offset' credits from emission reduction projects. Such projects will prevent or have already prevented or removed an equivalent amount of carbon dioxide elsewhere in the world.

As CO₂ emissions are distributed across the world, it doesn't matter whether you make the reduction in Manchester or Mumbai - the positive effect on the environment will be the same.

What has Dial-a-Cab chosen as their Offset Programme?

Dial-a-Cab has decided to offset their emissions into 3 different programmes provided by *Carbon Footprint Ltd*. 70% goes into the clean energy Fund, 20% into the Kenyan Reforestation and 10% into UK Trees.

The Clean Energy Fund

This programme provides carbon offsetting via Carbon Footprint's handpicked portfolio of international projects that are all validated to the *Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS)*. Carbon Footprint sources only high quality international projects and consequently the exact content of the programme will vary from time to time as new projects come on stream.

A typical example of a project that has been included in the *Clean Energy Fund* portfolio is a Wind Farm in India, which reduces CO₂ by supplying energy to the electricity grid from renewable sources and in doing so, reduces the amount of electricity being supplied from polluting coal-fired power stations.

Kenyan Reforestation

This project is a partnership with Kenya's *Escarment Environment Conservation Network (ESCONET)*, geared towards sustainable rehabilitation and management of the natural forest ecosystem. In choosing this project, **DaC's** business will be helping to raise funds to plant thousands of trees, provide education on sustainable land management skills and work to local communities. In this way, the Kenya tree voluntary emission reduction (VER) provides environmental benefits to reduce CO₂ emissions and also valuable and highly visible socio-economic benefits.

ESCONET is a Red Cross backed organisation, started in October 2004, which aims to be a lead-

continued on page 23



Mike Son replies to Robert Lyle (W39) following his letter in this issue's Mailshot...

DaC drivers and parking appeals

I was a little annoyed with this issue's Mailshot letter by Mr R.Lyle (W39) and his claim that I had given him a poor response. I feel I must put the record straight for **Call Sign**.

Following your initial phone contact with me, Mr Lyle, you stated your decision to appeal the various PCN's that were eventually withdrawn. You said you appealed because you could ill-afford to pay the fines. I made the point that provided you were on a legitimate Dial-a-Cab account hiring, you would be reimbursed. You said that wasn't the point and wanted to know what DaC were doing about it - do we appeal or just pay up? I congratulated you on your determination and the time you spent to get some resolve on the PCNs you received and said that we had compiled a standard appeal letter, which was sent to the borough of the PCN.

Were we successful? No, not particularly! Out of 500+ appeals, only around 30 had a favourable response! However, if we were to pursue the negative responses and initiated court cases, drivers would have to attend hearings. I don't imagine the majority of them would take kindly at having to leave their work to attend court.

You went on to ask what DaC were doing about this ongoing issue? I stated that initially some months previous, we'd had meetings with the City of London Corporation at DaC and also

Guildhall to voice our concerns. From those meetings came more understanding of our problems and in an effort to help us, there was a reduction in some of the legislation which enabled a little more observation time when picking up passengers. This was reported in **Call Sign**. Since those meetings, we get weekly communication with regard road closures, events and when applicable, new legislations.

I also said I was trying to get a meeting arranged with ourselves and the Westminster Director of Parking and Westminster's Head of Parking. This was eventually arranged and we had a forthright discussion with various ideas put forward. You can read a report from Keith Cain in this issue. Further meetings are to be arranged at the beginning of the New Year.

When you asked what DaC were doing about the situation, I made it clear to you and as I have always said, the DaC BoM is not in office to protect the interest of the taxi industry in general, we are elected as trustees to manage ODRTS and protect the interest of our members, clients and the financial stability of the Society - which is what we do.

Towards the end of our conversation, you asked if DaC would make a financial contribution for your time spent on the PCN issues and the fact that you saved DaC £240? I made the point that many of our drivers take it upon themselves

to also appeal Parking Fines - sometimes as a matter of principal - with or without success, but no one had ever asked for payment. And if you remember, I stated the plain fact of the matter is that as a shareholder, you also have a responsibility to your Society and in this case no matter how difficult it may be, until parking legislation is changed in our favour, you should try to park your taxi where you can legitimately do so. This would save DaC expenditure and you any hassle.

You wrote to me and included a notice from Westminster Council that the PCNs had been withdrawn. I did not write back to you with any comment because in my view everything had been spoken about previously.

My subsequent phone call to you referred to today's letter in **Call Sign** and that fact I was pretty 'peed off' with your comments suggesting we were doing nothing - something that was far from the truth. However, one comment you made which I agreed with asked what the trade organisations were doing? I said this was a prime opportunity for the various reps to work together instead of the fragmented taxi industry that has always been perceived.

In closing, may I wish all DaC drivers a very happy and PCN free New Year...

Mike Son
DaC Special Projects

DAC AND CARBON FOOTPRINTS *(continued from page 22)*

ing Community-Based Organisation, mitigating against environmental degradation through rehabilitation and conservation of the natural ecosystems in the Great Rift Valley area, Kenya.

Over the past few years, the escarpment has been virtually depleted by human effects / poor land management, causing loss of forest vegetation cover, leading to drying of springs / rivers / streams, soil erosion and emigration of wildlife/birds. The objective of the Carbon Footprint - ESCONET project is to reverse this. A great start has already been made - over 30,000 new trees have been planted since April 2005 and via the unique partnership, *Carbon Footprint Ltd* hope to boost this to into several 100,000s of new native trees.

The Carbon Footprint - ESCONET project provides substantial socio-economic benefits to disadvantaged communities; helping to reduce poverty, providing wildlife habitats and creating a brighter future for orphans and people living with HIV / AIDS.

Carbon Footprint Ltd has received endorsement from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for their reforestation efforts in The Great Rift Valley. All trees pledged and planted by Carbon Footprint / ESCONET are being included in the *Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign*, which aims to plant over 1 billion trees in 2007 across the globe to help avert damaging and economically debilitating climate change.

UK Trees

This tree-planting project is run in partnership with *Tree Appeal*, a not-for-profit organisation. Its objective is to plant native broad leaf trees in most needy

locations, helping to reduce climate change, supporting biodiversity and creating space for wildlife. Already the number of trees planted runs into 100,000s.

Trees are able to offset carbon emissions by sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and effectively act as 'carbon sinks'; this is achieved naturally as part of the photosynthesis process. The project is endorsed by the conservationist and television personality Bill Oddie.

For **Dial-a-Cab**, the trees will be planted in the London area, giving the Society an opportunity to put something back into the area where most of the emissions are caused.

How else can we help?

We can all take small steps to reduce carbon emissions. Firstly, calculate your own carbon footprint so that you know your personal impact on the environment. This can be done at www.carbon-footprint.com.

The items in this list will cost you nothing, but help save money and reduce global warming.

Sign up to a green energy supplier who will supply electricity from renewable sources - eg wind and hydroelectric power. This will reduce your carbon footprint contribution from electricity to zero. Turn it off when not in use (lights, television, DVD player, computer etc).

Turn down central heating slightly - try just 1 to 2 degrees C.

Turn down the water heating setting (just 2 degrees will make a significant saving). Check the central heating timer setting - there's no point heating the house after you have left for work.

Put a full load in your dishwasher and washing machine - this will save water, electricity and washing powder.

Fill the kettle with only as much water as you need. Unplug your mobile phone as soon as it has finished charging.

Defrost your fridge/freezer regularly.

Do your weekly shopping in a single trip.

Hang out the washing to dry rather than tumble drying it.

Who is Carbon Footprint Ltd?

Carbon Footprint Ltd is an independent company and leading brand in the environmental sector providing a full carbon management solution. They serve national and international businesses to appraise their carbon emissions, help them to reduce these emissions and provide a full portfolio of accredited projects to offset their impact on the environment. *Carbon Footprint Ltd* has a strong relationship with the national and international media including television, radio, newspapers and magazines.

The www.carbonfootprint.com website receives well over one million hits per month and is home to the leading on-line carbon footprint calculator.

Some laugh at the suggestion of planting a tree in another continent as helping to offset a carbon footprint in London, but as CO₂ emissions are distributed across the world, it doesn't matter where the reduction is made, the positive effect on the environment will be the same.

Call Sign would like to thank *Carbon Footprint Ltd* for the above information...

The supermarkets have been known to taxi drivers for many years now and Sainsburys have been supplying drivers with petrol and diesel since 1980, six years after they opened their first superstore in Croydon.

In 1995, **City diesel** replaced Sainsburys regular brand and pushed them into the forefront of companies wanting to sell cleaner fuels to their customers by using the slogan: "Low in sulphur." When I first used **City diesel**, I remember that the cab didn't run as smooth as it used to and generally the feeling was that the original diesel had more additives, wasn't so environmentally friendly but seemed more compatible with the engine.

I tested City diesel over five days with the following results: My MPG were 23.52, 23.31, 23.55, 23.59 and 23.49. I didn't notice any difference in power, but there was a slight reduction in soot from the exhaust. As with most supermarket petrol stations, the price seems to vary depending on how much competition there is locally from other supermarkets and Sainsburys don't seem to have a national pricing policy for their fuel, which they should have as Brent crude is sold at the same price in dollars to all the big petrol companies and it is alleged that BP supply Sainsburys. All in all, my average MPG was 23.49 very close to the other fuels I had used, so if you can get it at the right price, I would use it.

Next I looked at **Sainsburys Biodiesel**, which you only get at a small number of filling stations and is marketed as **Global diesel**. It is made up of 95% City diesel and 5% rapeseed oil blended together. Biodiesel isn't anything new; in fact the original diesel engines were designed to run on nut oil and its only

This series sent out Call Sign's Richard Potter to test different diesel fuels to see what, if any, of their publicity is true. So far he has tested BP Ultimate, Shell Diesel Extra and Shell V-Power. This month it's Sainsburys Biodiesel and City diesel...

The Call Sign Fuel Test



been of late that diesel have had additives to stop them from waxing up in the cold. Rapeseed is only one of many oils you can mix to make biodiesel, such as vegetable cooking oil or animal fats. However, most vehicle manufacturers will not guarantee their warranties if anymore than 5% oil has been added to the biodiesel mix and research has found that it can reduce emissions by 20-30%

in hydrocarbons and particles (soot or unburned fuel), but there is a slight increase in NOx.

Again I trialed this fuel over 5 days and my MPG were 23.81, 23.85, 23.71, 23.82 and 23.84 with an average of 23.80. This was the best MPG I had while trialling these fuels and even though it was a small increase, there were other benefits as well. I was very surprised that there was indeed a significant reduction with very little soot or smoke coming from the exhaust. Also the engine seemed to run a whole lot smoother and there was a lot more power underfoot. As this filling station was next to an Asda, the price was extremely competitive, bordering on a loss leader - some 2 pence per litre cheaper than anywhere else.

So to sum up, I would use Sainsburys Global diesel all the time if it was easily available because of its smoothness and power and even more so if it was consistently cheaper. I would say it was the best fuel I tested, so if you get a chance give it a trial yourself.

Is it really over ten years that I've been writing for **Call Sign**? Is it really over ten years that I've been waffling on about the Internet and how it would revolutionise our daily lives? Is it really 20 years since I passed the Knowledge of London? I'm beginning feel like an old fart!

Considering the impact of the Internet, I do feel a certain sense of satisfaction. In 1996 I contacted the large radio circuits and asked to meet the appropriate people to discuss their Internet policies. Some had ideas for the future; others brushed me aside saying the Internet would never take off. I'm glad to say that Dial-a-Cab was not one of the latter.

Simply visiting recognised web sites such as the Motley Fool at <http://www.fool.co.uk/news/investing/investing-strategy/2007/11/>



27/shop-till-youdrop.aspx and the BBC's <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7120723.stm> further emphasises the impact that the internet is having on our daily lives and buying trends. Will there be a need for high street shops in say, 20 years time?

My kids are now 15, 16 and 18, so the days of me keeping them entertained are well gone; a Nintendo Wii or Xbox will keep them entertained for hours. However, if you have kids significantly younger, then how can the Internet help you? I have a solution!

First step, for the younger age group visit <http://www.learningplanet.com/parents/alphabet/> where they provide an image for each letter in the alphabet that you can print and colour-in. For those of us in the know, this is a godsend as it will keep the younger children active for hours; in fact they also provide word puzzles and other Christmas colouring pictures free of

charge at <http://members.learningplanet.com/usr/spot/christmas/free.asp>.

For the older kids, <http://www.miniclip.com/games/en/> is a great free alternative where games are freely available to download; they may not be the best graphical games, but they're playable and fun. Finally for those slightly older who want to play an online game daily, visit <http://www.miniclip.com/games/en/>. It can be addictive, but it's also fun as it's a massive multiplayer turn-based game with apparently millions of players.

How do I know about these websites? Simple... I asked my kids! The type of websites I usually visit relate to "boring" history sites, or news sites, or technology websites or eBay. Horses for courses as they say; which is exactly what the Internet is all about.

Be Lucky and a Happy New to all.

Vince Chin
Call Sign online

TAXI AIR CONDITIONING

**All makes and models
Serviced and Repaired**

Mobile Service –

We Come to You!

Call Mick Wheeler on

020 8715 0079

**Covering London and the
Home Counties**

Work and worry...

It was a slower Christmas on the roads for my lovely DaCman Glen, than he would have liked and slower than last year. He says the night work is a good barometer of the country's economic prosperity and like a miner's canary, predicts recession. I'm sorry about that. I hope your holiday season was better than Glen's and that you're about to have a good January holiday. Certainly the bonus helped, didn't it?

I got a 3% rise and 10 days off work – lowly office hacks have little to fear from recessions and I'm pleased to be in a secure job. The worst problem I've got at work is an anti-Elvis faction on my floor, led by a Nigerian cashier who says everyone there loves Michael Jackson but lots of people have never even heard of Elvis!

We Elvis fans have started an Elvis board, with photos and quotes: "Confused? Ask yourself what would Elvis have done?" The Michael Jackson contingent has started putting his records on after 5.30, which is a good reason not to work late. I'm sorry to report that the two sides in this feud are divided on racial grounds, which is really sad since Elvis was first inspired by what were called at the time *negro spirituals* and he never respected the racial segregation he grew up with in Mississippi and Tennessee. People who heard his early music thought Elvis was black! Jackson, on the other hand, somehow physically turned from black to white and married two white women, although no one has ever known what any of that was about. And one of his wives, of course, was Elvis's only daughter, Lisa Marie!

I guess it's a pretty pointless thing to have an office feud about, and once we do our Elvis's birthday tributes on the 8th of this month, I

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

Back Seat Driver



may take down the Elvis board and admit defeat. Then we can go back to squabbling about who left the microwave with splatters on and why no one ever refills the paper towel dispenser ("...not my job")!

I never reported this when it happened because I was traumatised, but two people from the floor beneath mine sent regular emails over many weeks, complaining of unspecified, unspeakable conditions in the ladies' loo. Human Resources called a meeting; the directors in other branches of the business were called in and the ladies' loo on my floor was locked, since no one confessed to the crimes.

As a sufferer from ulcerative colitis, I took legal advice from the *National Association of Colitis and Crohn's Diseases* and discovered

that I am protected under the *Disability Discrimination Act*. I demanded a key to the locked loo and confidentiality, both of which I got. My own private facilities! In a matter of days, however, the Toilet Police discovered my unique access and all hell broke loose. I was put on complaint and investigated. Head Office demanded the return of my key and I went to counselling. I felt humiliated and wanted to walk out, but I'm too old to find another job. Nor did I want everyone at work to hear all about my illness. It's not glamorous...

It ended happily, readers, if you're still with me; the complaint was found not proved, the loo was re-opened, one of the Toilet Police found a new job and I started buying chocolate biscuits for every floor and got back into everyone's good books.

Glen says he loves working alone with nothing to worry about except drunks, muggers, traffic, fare-bilkers and the PCO. He had a brick thrown through his window in Maida Vale recently and his first ever speeding ticket from (you guessed it)... a camera!

It's great to have a partner you can whinge to and even better to be trusted with their whinges. Of course, adult children and friends are good listeners and so is a dog.

What new madness will this year bring? I wish all of you a fun and prosperous 2008, with Lady Luck right there in your cab. And I wish you the strength to make your own luck when the Lady, as so often, is no lady at all...

Till then...

Love Poppy x x x

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

Vintage Photos
 Large Format
 Canvas Prints
 Calendars
 Greetings Cards
 Enlargements
 Photo Restorations

Superb Cab Photos
 Hansom Cabs
 Growler Cabs
 Early Motor Cabs
 FX3s & FX4s
 Cab Shelters
 London Speciality

Great as Xmas Presents

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

Jon Asks What's New?

ZeroHouse – the ultimate 'green' home

Do you ever wish your home required very little of your time for upkeep (without paying for cleaners)? A home where you don't have to worry about gas prices and electricity bills? If so, then check out ZeroHouse...

ZeroHouse is a home that is 100% automatic. This home generates its own electricity with the help of the high-efficiency solar panels that help to produce power, which is then stored in a battery backup. Once completely charged, the home can run efficiently for one week without a hint of sunlight. The house runs automatically with the help of sensors that are connected to a centralised laptop computer.

ZeroHouse collects water into a 2700 gallon cistern, which runs water by the use of gravity to other parts of the home thus eliminating the need for any electrical pumps. Organic waste is also diverted to a digestive mechanism located beneath the home, which is then converted into compost that needs to be removed from the home only twice a year.

Each home is not only designed for sustainability, but also for comfort. Included in the home are a living area, kitchen, full size bath and two bedrooms - even coming with built-in furniture and storage areas. Adjustable LED lighting is built into the wall and ceiling and can last up to 100,000 hours of non-stop usage.

Architect Scott Specht has designed this concept house – more information and in-depth images can be seen at <http://www.zerohouse.net/>



The ZeroHouse - no upkeep needed

**Jonathen Winterburn
 DaC Network Administrator**

Through DaC driver **John Addis (K97)**, *Call Sign* has been following with amazement the seemingly never-ending saga of the Limehouse Link. The works were originally supposed to end in March 2007, were delayed until May and followed by a further delay taking the project into July.

July came and went and *Transport for London* via its subsidiary of *Surface Transport Communications* then assured us that they had finally set a finishing date – 26 August. There was of course the slight proviso of removing their equipment from the tunnel. But hey, after a five month delay, another day or so wouldn't hurt too much – except that the "day or two" was scheduled to take up September and October!

TfL told John that they admitted the delay was due to "...some issues with our contractor's performance. These issues are being addressed and please be assured, we are taking the appropriate action."

Since the last issue, TfL or STC have informed us that Friday 24 November was scheduled to be the end.

"However," they added to our huge surprise – or perhaps not - "the rigorous testing regime for the completed systems may bring faults to light. Any faults with the safety based systems that have been installed will need to be addressed."

Limehouse Link - The Beginning of the End?

Or the end of the beginning...?



So how many more months will that involve? TfL said they would not take risks with safety so it depends on how well the job

was carried out and judging by the performance so far of the company concerned, that could well be around 2010 – although officially that should be February 2008.

There is now going to be testing of the installed PA systems, these mean daytime closures in addition to what is now referred to as "regular maintenance closures undertaken by the tunnel operator." If you are a dayman and wonder what the fuss was about for the nightmen with the constant disruption to DaC's E14 service, then come out at the following weekends and try it for yourself. But bring your earmuffs – the sound will be deafening.

Closed weekends Jan 12/13, Jan 19/20, Jan 26/27 and Feb 2/3. 0700 – 1700 Sats and 0800 – 1700 Suns...

Fourth Annual Liverymen's Dinner

by Sandie Goodwin

This year the annual Dinner was held in the Ironmongers' Hall. This beautiful Hall was first opened in 1925 and is a Tudor style Hall. There were many from Dial-a-Cab among the Liverymen, Freeman and their guests enjoying a Champagne Reception before the dinner, prior to which two new Freeman were admitted to the Company - Roy Ellis, former Head of the Public Carriage Office and Steven Luton, a taxi driver who had become involved with the Company through the Cab Guiding Course. 27 drivers had attended and passed the recent course and many of them were present to receive their certificates. Some stayed on to enjoy the evening with their partners.

Terry Spurr MBE and John Stubbs are well known in the Company for their continuing support of The Magical Taxi Tour. Both are from the London Ambulance Service and dedicated to their charity work. They were both clothed in livery on the evening, becoming Honorary Liverymen of The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers.

At this dinner, the Master Alan Parker and his wife Christine had a surprise in store for the diners. Firstly, the toast to the Queen was accompanied by John Beesley playing the National Anthem. Entertainment was provided by barbershop quartet, *By Appointment*.

Ironmongers Hall is splendid and good fortune that guests are to be able to enjoy these surroundings. Back in December 1940, a German Air Raid set fire to all of the adjacent buildings, but luckily this Hall escaped, although all the lead in the pipes melted, along with the glass in the windows! In 1966, the Hall was almost subject to a compulsory purchase order by the City Corporation to make way for the new Museum of London.

The **Cab Guiding Course** has become extremely popular with taxi drivers. These are not just in-class lessons. Visits are made to museums and walks are also organised with drivers who have attended the course giving it a big thumbs up. If you would like to know more about know more about the Cab Guiding Courses, contact Graham Woodhouse on 07939 070 224.

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Drivers has many facets but one common goal – to promote the London taxi trade. The Company is involved in charitable events such as the Magical Taxi Tour; Education embraces the Guiding Course. Throughout the year The Master and his wardens attend various events in the City and beyond, raising awareness of the taxi trade.

If you'd like to know more about the Company, please contact The Clerk 01494 765 922.



Brian Rice and Janet Fox (G35J), at the dinner

THE 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

ASCOTT CAB COMPANY & SALES LTD

Victoria Wharf, Grove Street, London SE8 3NW

Telephone: 020 8692 1122

Friendly Staff & Quick Service

For All Your Running Repairs & Overhauls ...

Phone Now To Book An Appointment 020 8692 1122



TXI Service
Standard Service
£44.65 inc VAT

ASCOTT CAB CO.
ONE STOP CAB SHOP

Book On Line
www.ascottcab.com

Minimum
5 Days
In Advance



TXII Service
Standard Service
£75.20 inc VAT
Major Service
£116.33 inc VAT

TX4 Service
Standard Service
£88.00 inc VAT
Major Service
£129.00 inc VAT



The only thing sure in life is death and taxes although a DaC driver could add bad traffic and bad signals to that list! DaC IT Director John Banks explains to Call Sign the causes of our signal problems and the efforts being made to improve them...

The problems our drivers encounter with the radio network are caused by a number of factors. As a result there is no golden bullet to solve these issues. Improving the situation requires a multi-faceted approach.

Ironically, the Editor's introductory comments are probably more relevant than he realises. There is a direct analogy between bad traffic and bad signals and the solutions are the same too. To relieve congestion on the roads, you must either improve the roads you have, build more roads or reduce the traffic on the existing roads. An even better approach is to do all three. The same is true with a radio network...

Radio Network Congestion

One of the major causes of our radio problems is congestion on the network. When a channel is heavily loaded, it takes longer for the messages to run through the queues and *time-outs* can occur. Timeouts are one of the causes of the dreaded red resend popup. In many ways, Dial-a-Cab's radio network has become a victim of the unprecedented success of the Society. Turnover has increased by 34% over the last 2 years and consequently the message load over the network has increased by at least the same amount. The challenge for Dial-a-Cab is finding a way to add extra capacity to the network at the same rate as we are adding extra work.

To continue the analogy, the roads on a radio network are of course the channels through which the messages flow. Each channel requires two radio frequencies, one to transmit and one to receive. These are like the opposite sides of a two-way street passing traffic to and from the base station. These frequencies are grouped into bands. Dial-a-Cab's frequencies fall into the VHF high band group.

In the United Kingdom, frequencies are allocated and controlled by OFCOM. Dial-a-Cab has recently applied to OFCOM for more frequencies, but that application has been denied. As a result, we have to find ways of using our existing frequencies more effectively.

Building New Roads

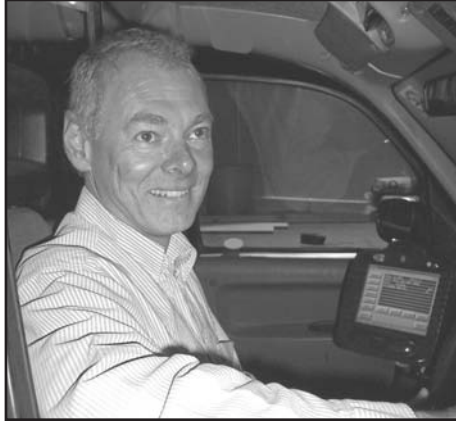
Back in 1997/98, Dial-a-Cab applied to the Radio Communications Agency (now known as OFCOM) for two new frequencies. On this occasion, the application was granted and the new frequencies became channel 7 and channel 8. The channels were located at Shooters Hill and Tolworth Tower. Neither channel performed well.

Last year we decided that channel 8, which held less than a dozen cabs, should be moved to the Barbican. This was a success and channel 8, now co-located with channel 5 at Lauderdale Tower, regularly holds over 100 cabs.

This year we added channel 9, which is co-located with channel 3 on top of the Park Lane

SIGNALS: John and Co go on the road

And it's from the horse's mouth!



IT Director John Banks in DaC's TX1

Hilton. Since the vast majority of drivers used mobile phones to communicate with dispatch rather than the voice channel, we realised that this precious frequency was not being used to its full potential. Since we were unable to procure any new frequencies, it was decided to use the voice channel frequency as an additional data channel. At the time of writing, around a quarter of the fleet have been upgraded with the capability to operate on channel 9. As more of the fleet are upgraded, the load on our busiest channels (1 and 3) will be shared by the new channel 9.

One of the downsides of moving channel 8 from Tolworth Tower to Barbican is that cabs at Heathrow have to use channel 1, which is further away from the airport. We are currently in the process of installing a new aerial site on the top of Brunel University Runnymede, in Englefield Green. This location overlooks Heathrow Airport, which is just 5 miles to the northeast. This new site will re-use the same frequency that we currently use at Shooters Hill. Since the two aerial sites are so far from each other, we are able to use the same frequency on both without them interfering with one another. We are hopeful that this new site will be operational early in the New Year. This channel will be identified on the terminal as either channel 7 or channel 10.

Improving the existing roads

In 2005, we employed a consultant from the US to analyse the effectiveness of our aerial sites. He recommended and fitted a set of crystal filters to each aerial combiner unit. Last year, we replaced all of the base station radios at our aerial sites with new Tait equipment. The more modern Tait's are better able to compensate for the massive amount of interference caused by London's busy and congested airwaves. Also last year, as we prepared to move our infrastructure to our new building, it became apparent that we were going to struggle to find the additional Motorola communications controllers necessary to enable a smooth transition from

Brunswick House to Dial-a-Cab House.

These old workhorses of the network were becoming very long in the tooth and almost impossible to source. I bought the last one off eBay!

We were also unable to source any more Gandalf modems, the devices that send the messages from our dispatch system over the phone lines to our aerial sites. Even eBay failed me with the Gandalfs. We had to decide whether to completely replace our entire radio infrastructure at a cost of millions of pounds and massive amounts of disruption to drivers and customers, or find a way of upgrading it with compatible yet modern and therefore readily available equipment.

The answer came in the form of a product from San Diego California. The system supported the MMP31 protocol running in our cabs. After some teething trouble, the system was successfully installed. The old Gandalf modems were replaced by fully digital kilostreams from BT. This new office based infrastructure now gave us the ability to expand the network and duplicate equipment in the new building to ensure a seamless move.

Reducing Traffic

Mayor Ken's answer to reducing traffic is the Congestion Charge, but don't worry, Brian has no such ideas! We have taken some steps to try to reduce the number of messages that go over the air. For instance, we have removed many of the unrealistic back-up zones so that more trips will go into bids. That way these trips will not be thrown to drivers who are almost certain to reject them. Receiving a job from bids requires a lot less network resource than transmitting the job numerous times only to have it rejected.

Improving the Software

No matter how much time, effort and money is spent on our radio network, the radio reception will never be perfect. We have to start from that premise. What we can improve is the way that the software that runs on the terminal copes with the reception problems. We have had mixed results with the latest software release. Some drivers say that it is much better, some that it is much worse. This places us in a very difficult position. At the time of writing, I have decided to stop the rollout of the new software until we can determine exactly what it is that makes the release worse for some drivers.

In order to test more effectively, we have purchased an old TX1 and fitted it with 3 terminals, signal attenuators, a laptop and an in-cab network. We are driving around London in this cab trying different releases of the software and identifying problematic areas in terms of radio coverage. If you see a Dial-a-Cab taxi out on the road with

Continued on page 29

SIGNALS: John and Co go on the road! (continued from page 28)

no plate and lots of aerals...that'll be Theresa Whitfield and/or Joe Mensah and me - so give us a wave!

Where do we go from here?

With OFCOM refusing to release any more VHF frequencies, we have very few options in terms of expanding the network and thereby improving its performance. I've made enquiries with other users of VHF High Band frequencies to see if anyone is willing to sell us their frequencies, so far without success. This really just leaves us with the option of running over the public GPRS (cellular) network. GPRS is a very expensive medium to use exclusively. We are currently testing a method whereby the terminal will switch to the GPRS network when it fails to reach our private network. This will also mean that cabs will be able to operate outside of the M25, indeed anywhere in the UK. When the terminal becomes aware that the private network is available again, it will switch back.

We are also in the process of purchasing another batch of Tait mobile radios to replace some of the older radios currently installed on the fleet. Roman Way will make the decision whether or not your radio will be replaced.

What can drivers do to help?

Having driven around doing testing in the cab, I can identify with how utterly frustrating it is for a driver when the terminal does not perform properly. However, if the response from the terminal does slow down, pressing a button over and over again will actually make the problem worse. Also, when the terminal shows *Busy*, no matter how many times a button is pressed, the message will not get through. The correct action is to wait until the *Busy* situation

clears and a good channel is settled upon. If your terminal is frequently in a *Busy* state for more than 2 minutes at a time, you should go to Roman Way and let the guys check out your system.

Another thing I would ask you to do is consider this; the radio network is not an unlimited resource. Every time you request a queue position, every time you send a text message, every time you reject a job you are burning part of a finite resource. We always notice the *message to job ratio* drop considerably after 9pm when more jobs become non-rejectable. When this ratio falls, the performance of the radio network improves and visa versa.

Early in the New Year, we will be starting a Drivers Technical User Group. This group will be made up of two day men, two night men, Dana Thananjeyan from Roman Way and Theresa Whitfield and myself from the IT Department. The purpose of the group will be to solicit constructive feedback as to the performance and functionality of the system from a driver's point of view.

We have also set up an email account through which drivers can directly feedback issues to the IT Department. I would like to invite drivers to use the email address for con-

structive comments and reports about the operation of the in-cab equipment. The email address is driverfeedback@dialacab.co.uk. If you are reporting a specific instance of signal problems, it will help tremendously if you include the time of the incident, your location and the channel you were on. Please always include your call sign on every email.

Conclusion

I have heard it said by drivers that no one is doing anything about signal problems. I remember being told that by a driver at the end of an all-night signal testing shift and it didn't go down too well. I hope this article will assure you that every effort is being made to improve the situation.

If the solution were simple, we would have done it by now. If it were just a case of throwing money at the problem, we would have done it by now. Be assured that no stone is being left unturned and no expense is being spared to resolve what we regard as one of the most critical issues facing the Society today.

**John Bankes
DaC IT Director**

TO HELP BEAT PCNS?

Following various letters and articles in Call Sign, DaC's Tony Mitchell (T88) has left petition forms at DaC House for drivers to sign and I or distribute. Please come and take some or at least sign one in the office. Driver Services say they will be happy to collect completed petitions. Working with Martin Hizer (M47) and the support of DaC members and other drivers, they hope to push for a change in local council parking policies.

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



I flew over the English Channel during the first week in December to claim a 'wee bonus' with a stint in the saddle, but it seems that every year that I come back to work for a few night shifts just before Christmas, there are evermore drunken guttersnipes rolling around the streets of London spoiling for a punch-up!

It's over 5 years now since I enjoyed good quality radio work with Dial-a-Cab and as a night man, preferred not to cover too much street work. But with no more radio, it was a case of picking and choosing, checking for slurred speech or funny walks.

However, even a steady jaunt down Park Lane one night was a case of running the gauntlet and outside the Grosvenor House Hotel there was sheer chaos on my approach. There were 12 drummers drumming, 11 pipers piping, 10 Lords-a-leaping, 9 ladies dancing and 8 maids-a-milking - and all fighting to get in my hired Fairway! It appeared I was the only taxi in Mayfair at the time these boozers needed cruisers!

I was having none of it - the suit with mad eyes and face pressed against my nearside window, carrot and coriander soup smeared down his frilly white shirt that looked like it had come out of Adam Ant's wardrobe, was mouthing inaudible expletives - probably advising me where to stick the partridge and pear tree no doubt, as he struggled to grasp the simple concept of a central locking system. I'd had enough by now, slipped the stick into gear and rolled away gesticulating to him the good old-fashioned holiday wrist action!

If the night work was exciting, daytime was boring by comparison. I was delivering wine orders - bottled wine from our vineyard near Carcassonne in the Corbieres region of the south of France. I had already transported a few pallets earlier in the year to my 'lock-up' near Colchester. It is a good grape that ends up on tables in restaurants in London and Essex and during the New Year, I shall offering cases of wine to DaC subscribers at remarkably discounted prices.

In the meantime, un Bon Joyeuse Année...

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

Ruffles
The Complete Curtain Making Service

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

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

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

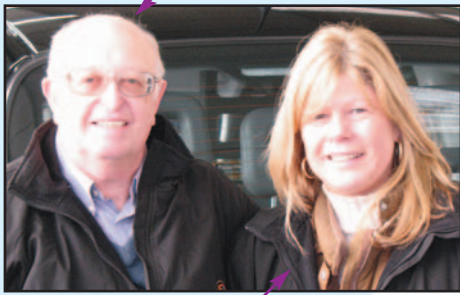
Tracks and blinds can be supplied and fitted

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

As we head into 2008, Call Sign decided to ask twelve subscribers at random – one for each month: If Mayor Ken, TfL or the PCO could grant you New Year wishes to improve your working lives, what might those wishes be...?

January: Ray Sorene (A53)

If Mayor Ken was so concerned about the safety of the travelling public, he would get rid of Pedicabs and keep tighter control on Private Hire vehicles picking up in the street. I also wish there were higher training standards for bus drivers because from what I have seen, the current standard is rather poor. Finally, there should be honorary membership of the R.N.I.B. (Royal National Institute for the Blind) for pedal cyclists who cannot see, choose to ignore red traffic lights, ride on the pavement and generally disregard the Highway Code!



February: Anne-Marie Cole (J60)

I've only just joined the circuit, so I don't know what it's like from the radio viewpoint yet, but Mayor Ken and TfL seem to put those cameras in the most stupid places! They should be sited where they are useful, across many more road junctions where vehicles regularly block traffic from flowing.

March: Kenton Campbell (T61J)

I wish Mayor Ken would revise the C-Charge times because I do not think it is working as it should. I see delivery and construction trucks blocking the roadway during the day, when these vehicles should go about their business at night-time only. There should also be a sensible approach to those cameras! I pre-ordered a meal from my favourite restaurant in Wardour St, dived in to collect and pay for it and came back to the cab with a PCN on the windscreen. £60 for a takeaway lunch is a bit steep - even by my Cordon Bleu standards! There are also *so many* buses that are not fully occupied - it's absurd.



April: Keith Tumbridge (M26)

I wish Ken Livingstone would retire! And that's all I'm going to say on the matter...!



DaC Drivers: My New Year Wish List

May: Alex Scaliotis (Y19)

I wish the cab trade bodies would work more closely together for the good of the taxi trade in general. I also wish that the half-yearly safety check was scrubbed, because I see it as nothing more than a money-making idea. I'm dreaming that there will be a fuel subsidy to cushion us from these constant fuel rises. Well, you did say *dream/wish* didn't you!



June: Dave Jennings (S91)

I wish TfL would scrub this half-year check, especially on new cabs. It's bad enough having an inspection when it comes down from the factory. Garages also charge for check-ups, which makes more money for them. When you think how many people make a living on our backs - garages, tyre makers and stationery printing firms, receipt pads being a prime example. However, thankfully, that situation does not apply to DaC drivers...



July: Mark Blakett (M16)

New Year wishes eh? Mayor Ken to resign! He's killing our Trade. I can't think of one thing he has done *for* the cab trade. Why are we trying to save the world single-handedly with this emission strategy, when the rest of the world doesn't seem to care? India, China and the USA to name but a few. It should be fairer all round.



August: Steve Tyson (V99)

I dream that Ken has the power to 'lean on' local councils ie Camden and Westminster, to show leniency towards cab drivers when issuing parking tickets etc. I wonder if he really has? This is especially the case while waiting at ATMs or helping wheelchair users, when all we are doing is simply going about our daily business offering a service to the travelling public. Furthermore, we never get a letter of apology when tickets are quashed. It all takes time to write letters, make phone calls and all the other stuff that goes with it! There is never any recognition that *they* might have been wrong to issue the ticket/PCN in the first



place. Can I wake up from my dream now?

September: Steve Gander (V20)

It shouldn't be a wish, it should be reality. Get rid of Pedicabs and touts outside clubs and other venues in the City. It's a farce. The police do nothing and it's up to a small minority of cab drivers to respond to fighting a losing battle.



October: Michael Heatley (L52)

This is the dream I have almost every night – quite simply to get rid of bendy buses and give Boris a chance, yeah!



November: Steve Harper (O59)

Why just wish? It should be happening now. Goodbye Pedicabs! I'd also like to see more police enforcement on the streets because I see touts intimidating potential cab passengers every night of the week.



December: Alan Callaghan (L80)

I wish there were more T.O.C.U officers out on the streets. I see minicabs hanging up outside venues on a regular basis. I also wish TfL would get rid of those dangerous Pedicabs and I'd also like the return of our extras on the meter. Can I have one more wish? I wish every cab driver would put £1 into a kitty for Ken Livingstone to retire!



© Call Sign Magazine MM8

LTFUC 2008 DIARIES

The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children are pleased to say their 2008 Diaries are now available from:
The 'Halt' Office at the Feeder Park, Heathrow
Ilyas Taxi Spares at Heathrow
From any committee member
We thank you in advance for your kind donation.
www.ltfuc.org.uk

Happy New Year to all DaC's drivers and their families. As we look ahead to the coming year, I think we have much to look forward to and be optimistic about. For a change, it seems that the Taxi trade is coming back into favour with the media and lately DaC have had requests from both Channel 4 and the BBC to speak to drivers regarding the job and its history for television programmes - and its about time! For far too long, some parts of the media and especially one London Evening paper which you have to pay for, have had nothing good to say about us. One newspaper empire owner has for a number of years, had a policy of not mentioning us at all. I think it's important to keep ourselves in the media spotlight and we should constantly keep promoting ourselves against those cheaper imitations who have proven to be inferior and who can't cope when its busy.

Just last summer on my way home from holiday, the family and I stopped in Rheims (France) for some lunch and whilst looking around, bumped into a party of 30 US WW2 veterans. I started chatting to one of the guys who told me that he had been sent to Rheims as a 20-year-old, part of a bridging unit. We chatted on how he felt coming back and what his experiences were like? He asked where I came from and what I did. I told him I was a London cabbie and his replied: "You know that you and your colleagues are the best in the world." I must admit I felt very humbled and thanked him for his comments. On another occasion whilst taking a taxi in Atlanta Georgia, I again mentioned to the driver what I did. It took some convincing, but the driver eventually took in what I said and radioed his control saying that he had a genuine London cabbie in the back! I felt like royalty. So remember that cream always rises to the top and that *the Knowledge* separates the wheat from the chaff. Be proud of who you are and what you do.

The next time you get on the end of the queue in the Strand heading westbound or waiting for the traffic sequence to allow three cabs to turn right into Northumberland Avenue from the Embankment, remember who created this mess. Indeed, thinking ahead to the GLA elections could see the end of Ken Livingstone as a politician. Whilst in the queue, think about how he has improved our lives as cab drivers and how we have benefited from him being in power. As we know by the traffic congestion, which is the same regardless of the Congestion charge, you will have quite sometime to think about it. Indeed I think you will need quite a lot of time to think about it!

One thing that has been bubbling under is the resentment by the trade of Ken giving help to Ethic minorities with financial incentives to do *the Knowledge*. Black broadcaster, Lee Jasper said on BBC London: "If I had a penny for every time I hailed a cab and the driver drove past, I would be a rich man." So is it about helping underprivileged people or has he a personal vendetta against the cab trade? In a previous life, I have seen this type of tokenism used as a Trojan horse for downgrading services and

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...



change. What's going to happen when these same people start to fail to make the grade and are struggling to complete *the Knowledge*? Will they give Ken the perfect excuse to make the KoL quicker and easier? We shall see...

Over the past few years I've tried to be a little more Eco friendly - doing my bit for the world preservation. If everyone did just a little bit to help, times the number of people in the world, it could make a big difference. What I did was to change nearly all my light bulbs to low energy replacements, put in a combination boiler, got the heating system cleaned and with the help of a local council grant, got some cavity wall insulation. When I visited my accountant, he told me that over the course of the year I had saved an incredible £500 - roughly £10 a week. So there's proof that making a few changes does really help the environment...

Finally, I sent a number of letters to the Chairman a few years back regarding the

issue of signals. Yes, it's frustrating accepting a job then getting job details of a completely different trip, or accepting a Heathrow on W101 and struggling to get the details because the data link changes! Then when you get round to Berkeley Street, there's another DaC loading up to go to LAP and you get a scrub! What affects one driver affects us all and we're all in the same boat. If you look at the latest figures, we are a victim of our own success with growth increasing by 35% over the past two years, so as the signals tend to get a little bad at peak times, its simply through volumes with the system being put under extreme pressure. It's fair to say that the signal quality has also increased by 35% over those last two years as well and that it's in all of our interest, including the BoM, that jobs should take no longer than necessary to get covered. To say that the BoM are doing nothing about it is simply untrue. Indeed, some drivers complain to me about the signals, then when I look at their cabs, their aerials are laying flat against the roof. If you go into Euston, make sure you reset your aerial as it will only work efficiently when in the correct position. If you want advice or an aerial check or are concerned about adjusting the aerial yourself, pop into Roman Way and speak to Tom Whitbread. Remember, even if some think otherwise, we all work for the same firm.

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

Richard Potter (T51)

2-BEDROOM SPANISH VILLA FOR RENT

Village of Pinar de Campoverde (nr Pilar de la Horadada)



- ★ Sleeps 4 - 6
- ★ two bathrooms
- ★ upstairs terrace
- ★ communal pool
- ★ Sky TV

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

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

Brian Paddick is a former Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner and is now standing as the Liberal Democrat candidate for the Mayor of London elections in 2008. Mr Paddick, 47, was the Met's most senior gay police officer and casually mentioned the possibility of standing for the post at the launch of *The Way We Are Now*, a collection of essays from gay community members. He has since confirmed his intention to stand for the position.

Call Sign's panel asked Mr Paddick the following questions...

From Call Sign's Poppy (whose partner drives for DaC)

What is your view on increased provision for public toilets both on the streets and on the transport system? They are now woefully inadequate, not only for drivers and others working outside buildings who may need toilets at any time, but also for sufferers from Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis?

Brian Paddick: *The issue here was the closure of traditional public toilets because of the problems associated with them and inadequate plans to replace them. The current situation is unacceptable and needs to be addressed.*

From Laurence Kelvin (W88)

Under the Barnett formula devised in the 1970s, England and London especially, sends a disproportionate amount of money to subsidise Scotland. Scottish voters have a say in English matters such as health, education and transport, yet have complete control over their own systems without English interference. How would you like to resolve this?

Brian Paddick: *The whole constitutional position needs to be addressed including having fixed periods between General Elections and proportional representation where everyone's vote counts as opposed to the current situation where Governments get into power on a minority of people's votes. We need a fairer system where more money is raised and spent locally rather than by central government - less central government - more local government.*

From Bernie Silver (G08)

Would you keep the Congestion Charge as it is and do you think it is working?

Brian Paddick: *I would keep the Central Zone but raise the charge for non-essential journeys to really discourage private motorists. I would look at abandoning the Western Extension that allows everyone who lives there to drive into the Central Zone with a 90% discount on the charge. We also need to look at the phasing of the traffic lights to make sure traffic flows*

In a previous Call Sign, DaC drivers interviewed London Mayoral election candidate Garry Bushell (English Heritage). This issue sees the turn of Lib-Dem candidate Brian Paddick...

The Mayoral Election

Brian Paddick (Lib-Dem)



freely in Central London. The current system is not cutting congestion.

From David Marks (R22)

Could you see yourself as Mayor ever allowing private hire vehicles to ply for hire on London's streets?

Brian Paddick: *No, absolutely not...*

From John Dixon (B67)

Are your views on the London Olympics the same as the current Mayor and would you, if elected, give priority entrance to the Olympic Village for London Taxi drivers in 2012 for picking up and setting down passengers? Cabbies in other Olympic countries were promised the earth, but when the time came, were given no priority at all.

Brian Paddick: *Licensed taxis are an integral part of the London transport system and should be given priority over other traffic in accessing the Games.*

From Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)

Many Londoners and probably most taxi drivers consider that having too many buses causes much of London's traffic problems. A good transport system is important, but is not Ken's bus policy a case of overkill?

Brian Paddick: *Traffic jams have been replaced by bus jams. The old joke about no bus for ages then two come along together is*

not only true, but sometimes is three or four! What Londoners want is a reliable service, they want to know there will be a regular bus service. Having too many buses and the wrong type of buses (bendy buses are a nightmare in Central London) is increasing congestion and Central London is grinding to a halt (and we need to do something about the tour buses as well). We need to work out the right number of buses needed on each route, not put as many buses as we can onto each route.

From John Riley (K38)

Would you, as Mayor, be happy to see pedicabs working the streets of London as they currently do? They cut up traffic, ride on the pavement and take terrible chances whilst having unsuspecting tourists on board who are often fleeced with the cost?

Brian Paddick: *Pedicabs have become a real nuisance. We need proper regulation, a limit on numbers and proper enforcement of the traffic laws to ensure they drive responsibly.*

From Stewart Lewis (D20)

Ken is trying to work out how private hire cars can use bus and taxi lanes. Do you not think that would nullify the benefit buses and taxis currently have?

Brian Paddick: *We need to give priority to buses and licensed taxis. The more traffic that is allowed use bus lanes, the slower and less reliable buses and cabs will become. We already have people abusing the system of private hire by registering two-seater sports cars as minicabs in order to get discounts on the Congestion Charge. The whole private hire system needs tightening up and bus lanes need to be kept for buses and licensed taxis.*

From Brian Flanagan (T79)

What is your view on Ken's version of a 'green' London? Many taxi drivers considered that his time limits at the licensed taxi driver's own expense were very unfair...

Brian Paddick: *What the Mayor is bad at is genuinely consulting and listening to what people say. I would sit down and discuss the conversion process with representatives of the licensed taxi trade and negotiate a reasonable timetable for conversion.*

How To Protect Yourself Against Fraud?

DaC's Bernie Silver recommends CIFAS



The December *Call Sign* had a shock article about a Dial-a-Cab driver whose identity had been "stolen" and used to buy a new Mercedes car and then not pay for it. The driver only found out when he tried to buy a taxi and was turned down because the credit reference companies had him down as a bad risk. He still cannot gain acceptance from them...

Now DaC driver **Bernie Silver (G08)** has told this magazine about an organisation he belongs to that assists in fraud detection and helps individuals who have had their ID stolen.

"They are called CIFAS and can be contacted on 08700 102 091. It costs £11.75 per year to join and is well worth it," Bernie told *Call Sign*. **"It would cost you much more than that if you were caught like that DaC driver!"**

In 1988, CIFAS was founded as a non-

profit membership association solely dedicated to the prevention of financial crime. It provides a range of fraud prevention services to its members, including a fraud avoidance system used by the UK's financial services companies, public authorities and other organisations. This system allows members to exchange details of applications for products or services, which are considered to be fraudulent, because the information provided by the applicant fails verification checks. Members can also exchange information about accounts and services, which are being fraudulently misused or insurance and other claims, which are considered to be fraudulent. CIFAS members also exchange information about innocent victims of fraud to protect them from further fraud. This exchange of information is referred to in a fair processing notice, or use of personal data clause, on application / proposal / claim forms and agreements. CIFAS does not provide a credit reference service, it only provides a fraud prevention service.

CIFAS information is processed by fraud prevention agencies that may also independently provide separate credit referencing services to their clients. When a CIFAS member identifies a fraud, a warning is placed against the address or addresses linked to the application / proposal / claim or account / policy / service. The text of the warning says *CIFAS – Do Not Reject – Refer for Validation*. The

warning shows the name used on the application / proposal / claim or account / policy / service but this does not necessarily mean the person named is involved in the fraud as fraudsters tend to use a variety of names, some false and some genuine. The CIFAS warning will appear on the fraud prevention agency record of any person who has a link with the address. Any CIFAS member subsequently checking that address sees the CIFAS warning. The warning does not mean the address has been blacklisted. It means extra precautions should be taken to ensure the application / proposal / claim or account / policy / service that has prompted the check of the address is genuine and this protects the address from further misuse.

CIFAS helps to prevent thousands of frauds every month. If a fraudster has misused your address, the CIFAS warning is designed to protect you. Only CIFAS members are able to see CIFAS warnings and they are very careful to establish the validity of any application for a product or service made from the address. This may lead to a delay when applications from you are being processed as the information you provide may need to be confirmed. However, this helps to prevent your address or other personal identification details being misused, and avoids the distress and inconvenience this would cause you.

Bernie ended by saying: **"That has to be worth £11.75 a year..."**

THE MAYORAL ELECTION – BRIAN PADDICK (Continued from page 32)

From Joe Brazil (K16)

What would you say were Ken Livingstone's best and worst decisions since taking power?

Brian Paddick: *He was very brave to bring in the Congestion Charge and if we can get it working properly, it could still be a great idea. His worst decision was to pretend to consult people and then ignore what they say. Most people in the Western Extension said "no" and he ignored them. Either you are a conviction politician and say "I don't care what you think, I'm going to do it" or "I'm genuinely going to listen to what you want." You don't ask them and then ignore them.*

From Martin Freeborn (C67)

I live in Barnet where the Council has removed most of the speed humps without any dire consequences. Would you like to see other councils follow this example and find a way to control traffic that doesn't make it so

uncomfortable for passengers?

Brian Paddick: *Speed humps damage vehicles, slow down emergency vehicles and make it uncomfortable for passengers. There are better and more effective ways of slowing traffic, like speed warning signs that come on if you exceed the limit.*

From Bill Kibble (K86)

There are road works and congestion all over town with the renewal of water mains. This could be completed in a third of the time if work were carried out at night as well as during the day. In many places such as Strand, there are few residents to disturb and elsewhere surely people would prefer to get the work completed quicker rather than have heavy traffic outside their houses for months on end. Is it something you would look at if elected?

Brian Paddick: *It makes me mad when you go from one set of road works to another. There*

needs to be co-ordination so there are not too many road works in any one area at any one time. Night working, if it can be done without too much disturbance to local residents, must be looked at.

Alan Green (E52): If elected, do you foresee any problems in your being gay?

Brian Paddick: *My former (police) boss thought it would be a problem putting me in charge of Brixton because Caribbean people are supposed to be anti-gay, but when he tried to take me out, it was the black community who complained the loudest! What is more important is, are you a decent bloke, do you know what you're doing and do you understand the problems of Londoners? I was born in Balham and have lived and worked in London all my life. My private life is not very interesting and I do not expect it will be of any interest when I am Mayor...*

Since time immemorial there have been prophecies of doom and destruction. The end of the world is nigh, we're all doomed, invasion by creatures from outer space, etc, etc. In the 60s we were going to be nuked by the Russians if you lived in the west, or by America if you lived in the east. Somehow we all survived. In the 80s, we were going to be overrun by communists via the domino effect, yet we survived that threat too! Also in the 80s and 90s there was the threat of Aids and how we were all going to die of ignorance unless we changed our sexual ways. Homosexuality is now accepted and the epidemic, although still with us, never materialised to the extent that was forecast. Then as the new millennium approached, we were told our computers would fail and that airplanes would fall from the sky come 1 January 2000. This was the Y2K bug and surprisingly, that too failed to materialise!

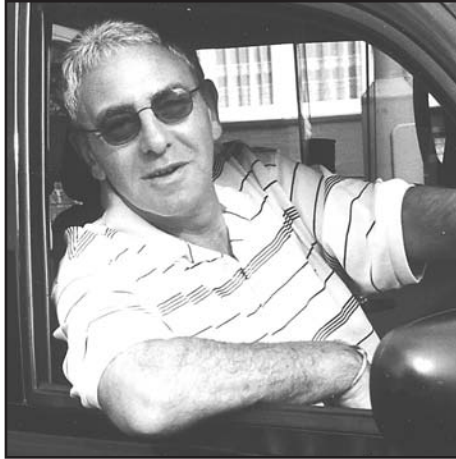
The latest crusade is Global Warming and how we must all work together to save the planet (I thought that was Superman's job). They keep going on about how the earth's temperature is hotting up by one degree every so many decades and that the ice is melting and the Polar bear is dying. Just a few years ago we were heading for a new ice age - now we're going for a warm-up! I don't believe any of it.

If you check into past year's temperatures, you'll see a pattern emerge where every now and again nature corrects itself for the heat or cold of the previous few years, just as the economy goes from boom to bust (usually on a 4 - 5 year cycle each way). So it is with the weather. Not so long ago, we were told there was a hole in the ozone layer caused by the carbon emitted from our cars or planes. Even our escaping deodorant spray was doing untold damage by allowing the sun to heat up the earth.

My own theory is this; we're reproducing children at an alarming rate worldwide and there are now more people than ever on this planet. We all produce our own body heat and as we all know from our school days, heat rises. If there is no hole in the outer ozone layer and our world is in something akin to a cocoon, the heat cannot keep going up as there's nowhere for it to

An Occasional Chas Grump

By popular demand. Chas Kissin has the occasional return grump!



Things that annoy you in your taxi...

In the days of steam radio and especially the *Billy Cotton Band Show*, there was a speciality song called *What noise annoys an oyster?* I still don't know the answer to that question, but how about a variation of this for taxi drivers? The questions that get up my nose are: How much will it be? How long will it take? Which way are you going? The answer to all these are also still not known, but heard quite a lot this past month. Another thing that really irks me is when the passenger gets in while on their mobile phone and ignores you after muttering something through the glass partition. On goes the intercom, but now you're given a blank because they are so absorbed in their own little world. Try as you may, you cannot make contact with them. When eventually you agree as to where they are going, off you set and all's well until the area is reached, then the process starts again trying to ascertain the road. Sitting forward, they again speak to the partition and no amount of hand gesticulating can make them understand to sit back in their seat so they can be heard via the microphone! They will tell you that it's half way down the street and assume you know how long the street is! Then the money exchange starts after all the lights and heater go on - especially if it is a female. Then another five minutes elapse with the traffic behind you building up. After the money has finally changed hands, they then decide that they need a receipt. No thank you's are exchanged, just the word receipt. I always ask them if they know the magic word - and no, I don't mean abracadabra!

My magic words to you are to have a very Happy New Year...

Chas Kissin (P99J)

SMILE



Sent in by Pat Keefe (G01)

A guy sticks his head into a barber shop and asks how long before he can get a haircut? The barber looked around the shop full of customers and said about 2 hours. The guy left. A few days later the same guy stuck his head in the door and asked: "How long before I can get a haircut?" The barber looked around at the full shop and said it was around 3 hours. The guy left. A week later and the same guy stuck his head into the shop doorway asking the same question: "How long before I can get a haircut?" The barber looked around the shop and said it would only be one hour, but the guy still left again. This time the barber turned to a friend and said: "Hey, Bill, do me a favour. Follow that guy and see where he goes. He keeps asking how long he has to wait for a haircut, but then he doesn't come back." A little while later, Bill returned to the shop laughing hysterically. The barber asked: "So where does that guy go when he leaves here?" Bill looked up, tears in his eyes and said... "To your wife..."

escape to. So it rests on the outer limits of the atmosphere and will eventually be pushed back down to our level as pressure mounts up. This has absolutely nothing to do with the fuel we use, neither will lowering the wattage of light bulbs help. All that will do is to make the world darker with ads now telling us that 11 new watts are equal to 60 old watts. Could this be yet another con - like decimalisation was in the 70s?

This is all beginning to sound like the Hans Anderson story of the King's New Clothes, where a couple of con artists got him to wear nothing but said that only a fool would think he was naked. So the whole country, not wishing to appear foolish, all agreed he looked wonderful. If we are perpetually told something, even though it may be false, enough people will eventually believe it. That is how governments survive. The ordinary person in the street thinks that these people who allegedly run the country, must know what's right for us. I believe that unless we learn to think and question for ourselves again, that the whole world will sleepwalk into oblivion.

LONDON LEGEND *Limousine Taxis*



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

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

Continued from December

So after having a cup of tea with our friends we decided to go to bed. It felt strange having someone in the next room, but that didn't stop us from anything - if you know what I mean. We shared another very special night. All the nights with Sam were very special to me. Sadly they weren't to last...

It was Valentine's Day and we had a lovely day with Sam's sons. We took them to see the movie Antz. They had never been to the cinema before so we thought it would be a great idea, stopping at KFC for some chicken with the four of us eating in the back of Sam's **Dial-a-Cab** taxi. In the cinema, we bought some candy and soda and had a great time.

At home, I thought it would be best if the boys slept with Sam in his bed and for me to go to the guest room with its single bed. I didn't want the boys to see me in bed with their dad.

After a while laying in the small bed and missing Sam like crazy, I heard the door open. It was him! He said the boys were asleep and he just wanted to be with me. We fitted so well into that single bed. We were quiet, but had the best night ever making wonderful love in that little bed. I'll never forget it.

We woke up before the boys and Sam went back into his room. He fell asleep again, tired out!

After he woke up, we had breakfast together and spent most of that day with the boys. I remember the fun we had. His oldest started a water fight and we were chasing each other all over the house with spray bottles and buckets full of water! His youngest son probably thought we were crazy. Later we all walked to the market to buy some food.

Sam is such a good father to his sons. I know he missed them very much as he only got to have them on weekends. I had a lovely time with them both, I wish we could have had longer, it just went by way too fast.

This was my last night in London, I was going back home to California the next day while Sam would be going back to working for **Dial-a-Cab** in London. We took the boys back home. I hugged and kissed them good-bye, they told me they loved me and I wanted to cry. I knew I would miss them so much.

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. Jenny has come to London to visit Sam...

L ve On the Internet



Jenny's last night in London - was the photo of Jenny on her own by a phone box a sign of things to come?

I fell in love with them both and I miss them so much now.

Then Sam and I went to the store to choose some new drapes for his house. He also bought me a pair of Adidas trainers like his. I wear them all the time.

Then it was back to the house and we were finally alone! I told him I wanted to cook a meal for him that night so we could eat by candlelight. I wanted to lay down with him on his black leather couch after dinner and make love to soft romantic music, just like we had planned to do for such a long time. I wanted

to be in his arms and even watch a movie or just talk.

The first part was wonderful. We had that lovely meal together by candlelight. It really was just so romantic! But then Sam's friend Shaw dropped by. He wanted to meet me. He was a nice guy and we enjoyed his company, but that wasn't what we were here for. After he left, Sam and I laid down on his leather couch. It was so nice, he held me so I wouldn't fall and it felt so right. I wanted to stay there forever and ever but after a short while the phone rang and it was yet another friend, Shaun, who wanted to say good-bye! Sam and Shaun talked for a while, but I could feel myself becoming annoyed. I wanted this last night to be just for the two of us with no interruptions. Now I felt that something was going on, but just couldn't figure out what it was. Sam could have told Shaun that we were busy and that he would talk with him later, but he chose not to do that. It really hurt my feelings. Perhaps I was selfish, but I just wanted to be alone with him for my last night in London. Who knows when we'd see each other again. But our romantic evening was spoiled. We ended up going to bed and even though we made love, it was nothing special and I could feel that something was wrong. Was it just because I was leaving? I didn't know what it was, but things just didn't feel right from here on...

Continued next month

THE ALG **TAXICard** ...

WHY DAC NO LONGER SERVICE IT

As you should all now be aware, Dial-a-Cab have ceased to be a sub-contractor for ComCab in regards to the all-London Taxicard scheme. However, we will continue to be the sole supplier to the Borough of Westminster for their scheme.

For approximately the past six years, we have serviced the all-London scheme in conjunction with ComCab, who were - and still are - the main supplier.

Earlier this year the account went out to tender and ComCab were successful in retaining the account, however the new terms were not acceptable to DaC and as a consequence we decided to terminate our participation as of 1 December 2007.

Dial-a-Cab would like to make it quite clear that there is not, and has not been, any animosity between ourselves and ComCab regarding this account, nevertheless DaC took a business decision not to participate in its future.

As stated earlier, we will continue to be the sole supplier for the Borough of Westminster...



Keith Reading
Professional Toastmaster &
Master of Ceremonies

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

Graduate of the
Professional Toastmasters' Academy

Continued from December

Thinking back to last month's article on the impressive new offices that proudly bear the name *Dial-a-Cab House*, I wondered how long it would be before the dissidents, activists and militants began their criticisms of the costs of owning, running and moving into the new and needed larger premises? In any democratically run business or organisation, no matter how hard you try, you can never satisfy everyone - shareholders, members or staff. Nevertheless, if, or when the dissidents, activists and militants start up, their actions will be nothing new and even though they seem to have plenty of time, they rarely have any time to spare to help. Let me give you some examples I remember from the past in my 50 'green years' of driving a London taxi.

When the decision was made to move from **Pentonville Road** to **Shirland Road**, the dissidents, activists and militants said that the costs and expense of the move would ruin us and why did we need bigger and better premises anyway? This was despite everyone on ODRTS being told that as the numbers of staff were growing, the Society needed extra space to work in. Another complaint was that the location in Shirland Road was not as convenient to get to or park at and difficult to find. We are all licensed London taxi drivers and in even in those far off days with no parking meters, Maida Vale was a cabbing area.

Exactly the same happened when the decision was made to move to **Brunswick House** and what a brilliant decision that proved to be over the years. I have no doubt that exactly the same will happen about the even more important decision by the BoM to move to **Dial-a-Cab House**. There will be those few who are against the move, the equally few in favour, while the majority of members who take little or no interest in their Society other than the next job - preferably to the flyers - couldn't

"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...



Jack Taylor greets a passenger in his cab when not working at the Shirland Road office

care less where their Society's offices are!

Equally in the bad old or good old days in Shirland Road, come a quiet Friday and from lunchtime onwards, the roads nearby would be full of parked taxis as their drivers crowded into the small, sparse office trying to collect their credit money. Drivers, including committee members, would congregate and while waiting, complain just like today about most things, including the time and money they were losing waiting to be paid. Those same drivers could never spare the time to sit as a member on any of the ODRTS Boards, complaints committees or just help out. They were always far too busy trying to take their money. However, during the quiet seasons, the very same men would be ready to volunteer their

services to ODRTS - so long as they got paid the call-in rates, which was much to be preferred to ranking up and waiting for a punter for up to 45 or more minutes!

It was also interesting how much time some Board members suddenly had to spend in the office when their cab was off the road, yet when it was busy, let someone like **Jack Taylor** call out over the radio for help and assistance and suddenly nobody was near! Often the excuse used was that they could not get a signal. The exceptions were the few, regular, reliable stalwarts who gave up their time for the good of all.

So tell me, has anything changed or does today's modern membership think beyond the next job, realising that a strong, dynamic radio circuit benefits enormously if its members use their vast variety of talents to help make their Society stronger and better? Even if doing so means giving up just a little of their time without immediate reward? The alternative is to not give a damn, let the BoM do it all and complain that they don't have a clue! But remember, don't stand for election to the BoM or you might have to work hard and frequently for poor returns, while getting used to being regarded as useless, or worse and at the same time constantly be berated both by members - and often your family - for all the time you give up to the Society.

Be lucky and have a Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New Year...

More ODRTS memories next month

 COMPLAINTS RESULTS 		
A Complaints meeting was heard on 20 November 2007. The result is below...		
Name/call sign	Nature of complaint	Sentence
Grant Davis (L39)	Rule 2 Rule 3	4 weeks susp Expelled

**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!**

From everyone at Call Sign Magazine and at Dial-a-Cab House, we wish you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year...

M&O HAVE FOUR CABS WITH DAC TERMINALS

Mann & Overton have four courtesy taxis fitted with Dial-a-Cab terminals and DaC drivers attending the Brewery Road dealership for servicing or overhauls have the chance of a free DaC-fitted TXII while their own vehicle is being worked on.

Speaking to Call Sign, M&O General Service Manager Mike Saunders said:

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

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

MAILSHOT

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

Dear Tom...

Sorry to read about the unfortunate incident with regard to your bedroom ceiling falling down whilst you were sleeping, but happy to know that neither you nor Ann were hurt. Speaking as a reasonably competent DIY man, I cannot stress enough just how important it is to make sure that a bedroom ceiling mirror is correctly fitted.

As you will appreciate, I do not know the size of your mirror but needless to say glass is heavy. If these ceiling mirrors are not secured in the proper manner they will, with time, put stress on the plaster board, resulting in the ceiling collapsing. Using a bradel (which is a strong pointed tool) try to ascertain the location of your ceiling joists. These are positioned approximately 14" apart. You can use toggle bolts, (no, not Togwell bolts) but No.8 raw plugs and screws will suffice.

Hope you'll find this information helpful. Wishing you and Ann a Happy Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year.

Steve Shaller (R75)

PS: Glass shards can seriously damage your health.

I'm sure Tom appreciates the advice Steve. He did tell me once that the ceiling mirror is only there to make it easier to find his slippers in the morning after the dog had finished using them! ...Ed

On-line enquiry from California...

Call Sign on-line magazine has been of great assistance to me in my ongoing project. My grandfather, Joe Lestock, was with ODRTS from 1963 until 1967. My parents together with my sister and myself moved to sunny California in 1995 and I now attend the UCLA where I am majoring in transport studies including the history of taxis.

I have finished studying the US system (it didn't take too long) but I wonder whether you could point me in the right direction for studying about London cabs, the most famous of all.

Thank you for any assistance...

Aaron Lestock

Culver City, California

Hi Aaron, one good site to get you started is the BBC's history of the London 'black cab' trade at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A744888> and good luck with your studies ...Ed

And from Georgia...

We have just seen the *Sept Call Sign* online and had no idea you were going to do a full page article about our incident involving private hire, however, it was a nice surprise and written very well. I hope that it helps with your endeavours to make 'real' taxi service a mainstay in London. I can attest that it is very much needed. I can't believe that anyone

would want to promote 'private hires' as it is obviously not a reputable service.

I do hope the next time we travel to London, we will have the opportunity to meet in person.

**Dan & Robin Tharpe
Columbus, Georgia, USA**

And not forgetting Australia!

Dear Alan,

Recently I became aware of the Power Pill. I have seen your name on testimonials for it and am wondering if you could please let me know if Dial-a-Cab are still using this product and if they still find it as useful as the original testimonials stated? I live in Australia and I am very interested in this product as a means to reduce my personal carbon emissions. I understand your time is precious and would truly appreciate your answer to the above questions.

**Melissa Colliton
W.Australia**

Difficult question. DaC do not use it as a company, but many of our drivers did - until recently when the London agent who supplied them appears to have vanished. The supply has now totally dried up and we cannot get them any more. A brief report was in our last issue on page 17. I know it is much easier to get them in New Zealand where they apparently originated from, although I'm not sure about Oz. All I can tell you Melissa is that yes, if you can get them, they do work. They reduce smoke while giving more KPG. Any more help, just email ...Ed

But Somerset?

I saw your magazine online and wonder if you can help? My great great grandfather lived at Brunswick House, Offord Road, Islington. His name was William Henry Messer. Is the building still there? Any info would be much appreciated. I live on the Somerset and Dorset border and do not know Islington at all.

Many thanks...

**Jo Gardn
Somerset**

Sorry Jo but I don't think it's there. If it is, then it is well hidden. However, your obvious inference is that it might be our old office. It's not that far, but not the one you're looking for ...Ed

Salieri

Does the Salieri still give Dial-a-Cab drivers a 25% discount when eating there?

Alan Sullivan (F20)

They certainly do, Alan. They also give excellent food and magnificently friendly service. One point; as you know, nothing is for nothing in this world - even inhaling cleaner air costs many DaC drivers £2000 each! So, if you go there and enjoy the experience, please tell your passengers ...Ed

**Bus lanes**

Interesting to read the article about the Sevenoaks taxi using the M4 bus lane (**Dec Call Sign**). I live in Sevenoaks and even though it is outside the Met area, I have parked my cab on the main cab rank in the High Street for many years whilst doing some shopping. I once checked with a Traffic warden who said that to him taxis mean taxis so he didn't have a problem with them parking there. So here's one DaC driver who's been taking full advantage of the rules and doesn't mind a Sevenoaks taxi using the bus lane!

Richard Potter (T51)

Most of the drivers that have contacted me since the article came out were as shocked as I was to discover that London bus and taxi lanes could be used by any taxi driver from England and Wales. However, only one pointed out the little PH disk the "taxi" had on the back windscreen ...Ed

Spent on parking tickets?

I cannot believe how much we are spending on parking tickets and it's about time we passed these back to the account holder. All tickets issued while doing a Westminster account ride should be billed back to Westminster. Maybe this would help them think twice before they issue one? As for other accounts and bookings, if a ticket is issued before booked time, it's down to us, but after booked time it should be passed onto the account holder. What you do with ASAP jobs, I have no idea! Perhaps a Board member could come up with something?

Bernie Silver (G08)

Brian Rice replies: Not a bad idea Bernie, however, what would happen if the account holder - Westminster or whoever - refused to pay? There is not a lot we could do other than to refuse service and close the account - is that what we really want? We could actually refuse to pay the tickets, but then the authorities would not approach DaC for payment, they would approach individual members who own the vehicles, something that I could not allow to happen. Thinking cap on again Bernie...!

Rudeness in Call Sign

Dear Alan,

I have been reading your editorial with great interest. It is the only reading material I have to hand at present - albeit I could have read *Abstracts of Law* relating to cab drivers within the Metropolitan Police District. It was a close call...

I was flicking through the pages of *Call Sign* when to my surprise I spotted my name in print. I thought that this was unusual as I usually only read between the lines. I was

MAILSHOT

Mailshot continued from page 37

flabbergasted; nay embarrassed to say the least, that you should refer to me as a "master of friendly sarcasm." What a wonderful compliment. After all these years on the circuit, recognition at last. I was going to apply for a Master's Degree from The University of South Carolina, available on line for the meagre sum of \$50, but now that you have bestowed upon me this title I see very little point in doing so. Can I use this title after my name eg Steve Shaller MOFS (not to be confused with the insect closely related to the butterfly)? In doing so would I offend or undermine those on the circuit who have been awarded the MBE?

It has been said that "sarcasm is the lowest form of wit," well that doesn't surprise me at all, Alan. Many years ago a guy told me that I was full of it. Well I think that was what he said?

On a more serious note, I have to agree with you regarding the rude and offensive letters and your right not to publish them. The basic rule is never to abuse or insult on a personal level and if you wish to criticise then it has to be constructive. Although my vocabulary is limited, I am fortunate that I can string a few sentences together - but not everyone can. Not being able to express themselves properly may (in some cases) be the reason why some writers or speakers are rude.

Thanks for giving me something to write about, the ink in my printer was starting to dry up!

Steve Shaller (Red 75) MOFS

How nice to know that you only had *Call Sign* in your possession! I've been editing this magazine for almost 11 years now and if I am still nowhere near professional standard, I have learned the difference between someone who isn't as literate as they would like and someone who is rude. I go through every letter as carefully as I can - regardless of whether the comment is pro or anti anything - and make sure that the letter looks as the writer would want. Not everyone spells as well as you do, Steve, but hopefully no one reading that particular letter would ever know. Sure, when someone criticises me but can't spell it, the temptation may be there, but it will never happen because I won't allow it to. All I ask in return is that criticism is not mixed with outright rudeness.

As for someone telling you that you were 'full of it', I thought the late Jack Taylor once shouted across the road to me as he was going into Euston and I was exiting: "Hello you oil tanker!" It took me some time to realise what he actually said! And by the way Steve, in addition to no outright rudeness, my other rule is only one letter per issue. Luckily for you I am currently drunk and can't see your first one! ...Ed

Crossword cock-up!

Just to let you know that I have completed the crossword (*Dec Call Sign*). I did it for the challenge and not for the reward. Keep up the good work...

Stelios Stylianides (C27)

This letter from Stelios was one of many drivers who successfully completed the Christmas Crossword, but because some of the black boxes were put in the wrong place, I decided that it would be unfair to let the competition run - even though I had advertised it on the terminals and ended up with a large portion of egg on my face! Although the crossword wasn't mine, anything that goes wrong in *Call Sign* is my responsibility. As you can read elsewhere, I decided to donate the £100 to a trade charity ...Ed

TX4 complaint

So the TX4 is deemed a success as the Editor reports. If having a TX2 for 5 years with minimal problems, then going to a new TX4 that is now 12 weeks old and which has spent more time in M&O than one of their own staff is called success, then I'd hate to see what failure is! The rear page ad in the *December Call Sign* read: The TX4 - a Christmas cracker! Hmmmm, the *Trade Description Act* comes to mind here. It should surely have read: A right Christmas crapper! I could fill an issue of *Call Sign* with the problems on my TX4, the best advert I can give for the TX4 is for anyone thinking of buying one, go and first sit down in one of the dealership waiting rooms. It's a little shop of horrors, believe me.

Is it also true that Chrysler VM engine has been having problems, that the Italian army sent back their VMs and Islington council cancelled their contract with VM? Also that a chief fitter at M&O told me that SGS are not retesting 07 & 57 plate TX4s on emissions if they fail first time. My cab has been back 6 times in 12 weeks, each time a new fault appears on top of the last one. All they keep saying is that they reset the on-board computer, drive it for 3 days and see how it goes. Every one I speak to with a TX4 (well 9 out of 10 of them) are having major problems, but it seems because the trade and papers 'bigged' up the TX4 18 months ago, to slate it now would see them eating humble pie or could these papers not survive without the vast advertising revenue paid to them from LTI.

Amazing this: Type TX4, then hold down the shift key and do it again and you then get TX\$. I think the \$ says it all. Thank God there wasn't a TX3 or would have been TX£...!

Michael Beevor (N76)

Sorry to hear about your problems, Michael. Let me clear up one misapprehension that some seem to have. Yours isn't the first letter of complaint about a cab that I have published and neither do I expect it will be the last, but not once have LTI made the remotest threat to cancel any advertising. On the contrary, they

often go out of their way to give me any information when I question them about any aspect of a taxi. On this occasion though, I thought it more prudent to speak to T&J's Rescue. They also advertise every in every issue, but they go out onto the roads to repair taxis only, so get the stories first hand. According to them, most TX4 owners seem reasonably happy with the cab and the main problem seems to be in connection with the turbo pipes failing. A new tougher one is being brought out soon, if not already. They have also heard rumours about TX4s overheating, but hadn't had any call-outs for that problem. They did say, though, that if there were a problem, drivers would probably phone the RAC (included in the price of the cab) and get it towed back to the dealer. The spokesperson actually commended M&O, who he said had asked T&J to keep them informed of any TX4 breakdowns that occurred on a regular basis, so that they could report it back to LTI. The RAC, on the other hand, usually just lift and tow so they really have little info to report whereas T&J usually repair on the roadside.

The VM engine? Dunno! I've heard rumours, but I've learned over 37 years in this trade not to believe everything I hear. Some turn out to be true, many don't. Even the Italian army story. Is it true? Well the British army returned their Renault trucks because they were unhappy with the brakes, so nothing is impossible. I have to say, Michael, that most TX4 owners I speak to seem happy with the overall performance of the cab, even if occasionally irritated by minor bits and pieces. Next time there is a *Call Sign* trip to LTI at Coventry, put your name down and you can then ask any questions directly. And let's face it, no dealerships wants to have unhappy punters! And if any taxi driver is unfortunate enough to break down, T&J have built up an excellent reputation for speedy roadside repairs. And I'd say that whether they advertised or not. ...Ed

Taxi and PH licenses

I was shocked to see I had made the cover of the *December Call Sign* in addition to the actual article! In regards to the article (Bus / Taxi lane sensation) there was no mention that this car was also a licensed minicab. I was wondering if this car is playing the system, whereby getting the vehicle a private hire licence in London avoids the congestion charge, likewise a Hackney in Sevenoaks would get access to bus lanes. I assume that when this vehicle went for either plate, he left the other off the car because surely you can't be licensed for 2 areas? It would be interest-



MAILSHOT

Mailshot continued from page 38

ing to see what area this car actually covers
Barry Spear (Y16)
Call Sign asked **Luke Howard, Senior Strategy & Integration Manager at the PCO and the person who assisted with the article for his view. Incidentally, we mistakenly referred to him as Luke Richard last month, so apologies to Luke on that: He told us: Your reader is correct, it should not be licensed in two areas. We're not sure whether Sevenoaks' Hackney Carriage regulations prohibit this, but the London PHV ones certainly do. Our compliance teams have spotted other vehicle keepers removing the clip-on licence plates in order to get their outside-London hackney carriage or PHV licensed as a London PHV and these have been dealt with - we will now follow up this vehicle in the same way.**

A minor correction to the last paragraph of the article - the coach licence is not equivalent to a Hackney Carriage one, it is a passenger-carrying vehicle so equivalent to a bus. A coach (I think 9 or more plus driver, not 8 or more as you said) can use a bus lane as long as the sign is restricted to 'local buses' or some such - so coaches can use bus lanes that taxis cannot.

Parking appeals...

The achievements of the DaC Board and circuit have been commendable. I would not like you to take the following criticisms out of context, but the main point is this. I feel I have had a very poor response from Michael Son in dealing with what is now becoming an all too familiar problem with parking tickets. I did four account rides for which I received, despite being as careful as I could, four PCNs. Potentially £480 fines. Over the ensuing four weeks I wrote up to eight letters, viewed the video evidence at Victoria Street and appealed directly to the Head of Parking (Westminster), Kevin Gould. The outcome was that the fines were cancelled.

A damn good saving to DaC ultimately. I put to Michael Son a suggestion that, bearing in mind the saving that was made, a minor reimbursement could be offered to compensate me for all my time and expense. This resulted in a terse phone call from him dismissing my suggestions. His response was lazy and uninspiring, bearing in mind I had taken the trouble to write to him. There seemed little thought as to how to confront this problem, which has bedevilled, in particular, taxi drivers on booked account rides. That would never have happened with Allen Togwell. One always received a carefully thought out written reply. I believe my request was an equitable one.

There has been much correspondence of late regarding the mightily impressive DaC achievements, in particular the new premises. The approach of Michael Son seems to be emblematic of the DaC Board. Ostensibly, you have created an aura of a prosperous, forward thinking company that looks after its stakeholders; the reality does not fully bear this out.

The fact is the situation regarding these PCNs should have been resolved long ago. It needed a delegation of the four 'Chairmen' of DaC, XETA ComCab and Mountview meeting with Kevin Gould, Head of Parking Westminster, and Ken Livingstone, or a representative, to reach a solution once and for all. This has got to stop It is worth remembering these things at the AGM and Board of Management elections. There are a prodigious number of cameras in the Soho area to be wary of. I find I am now rejecting more WISE jobs than I am accepting, partially negating the point of being on a radio circuit. To counter the pernicious activities of the cctv camera, when I do an account ride in the WISE area near a known camera point, I pop my bonnet up or park directly underneath the camera, their lens cannot seem to focus on the plate this way. Obscuring the number plate is not an option, though dropping the boot down prior to pick up might be considered. Quite frankly though, we



should not be having to resort to such machiavellian tactics. To date I have not received any more PCNs. I will continue to be vigilant as regards parking on radio jobs, but at the first sign of a PCN coming my way, I am going to slap it on Nuala Glavin's desk like everyone else does and I will only take a principled stand and appeal if it is not on DaC business.

On another unrelated matter, I did write in excess of five weeks ago to the DaC Sales Dept. I was curious to understand how Mountview won the contract at the House of Commons for meter rides, when we lost it doing fixed price rides?

R.Lyle (W39)

Robert, Mike Son has answered your letter on page 23 and whilst I have some sympathy for your predicament, I have to say that no one is forced to appeal. DaC spend an absolute fortune each year on behalf of drivers, yet many - including myself - appeal because we feel the PCNs to be wrong, even though we know we will be reimbursed by DaC ...Ed

One down, two to go...

I am pleased, nay, deliriously proud to announce that one of my 3 PCNs, received whilst on a DaC credit booking in Soho Street, has been cancelled. As said previously (The Curse of CCTV, Dec *Call Sign*), I can just throw the ticket in and let the company pay but that just validates the position of the thieves running Westminster. Unfortunately, the tickets issued against me during the credit rides in Old Compton Street and Carlisle Street are ongoing, but my resolve has been bolstered by this victory. Watch this space!

Martin Hizer (M47)

Well done Martin, don't let them grind you down ...Ed

A NEW WAY TO EAT IN PADDINGTON – CORE!

A new restaurant is now open in Paddington. CORE will be delighted to serve you breakfast, lunch, dinner – or even just a cup of organic coffee! CORE is located at 12 West End Quay, 1 South Wharf Road and you can learn more about this new way of eating by going to their website at www.coregrill.co.uk.

To encourage London taxi drivers to try them out, they are offering a special discount of 10% on production of your badge.

CORE serves fresh, organic, seasonal, local food. You choose your preferred dish from the display counter and can watch as they grill your food in front of you to main-



tain the flavour and goodness.

CORE is a contemporary grill restaurant with a casual relaxed and fun feel serving wholesome, healthy, fresh quality food quickly, conveniently and uncomplicated.

You can kick-start the day with a healthy breakfast - cool and fresh in summer, warm and cosy in winter or grab a working lunch, quick, filling and wholesome to keep you going and keep you feeling healthy and active. Perhaps you'd like to treat yourself to weekend brunch; pop in for a quick bite or take a leisurely meal while you relax and unwind.

Or you can finish the day on a high with something tasty, wholesome and healthy - without the fuss of cooking at home.

And don't forget – show your badge and get a healthy 10% off the bill!

THE NEW

TX4

from Mann & Overton

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



TX4 Bronze in Godiva Blue

Every new TX4 from Mann & Overton London now comes with a FREE first 10,000 miles service and a FREE first half-year SGS Presentation! **

Drive it away for only £125 per week*.

Standard Features include:

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

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

*Business users only. Finance Subject to Status. Price per week based on financing on a Black Horse Taxi Finance Preferences scheme. Illustration based on a new TX4 Bronze Auto in non-metallic paint = £31,295.00 with £1,500.00 deposit, then 35 monthly payments of £542.77 (£125.26 per week) £145 acceptance fee on first payment due one month from delivery and optional final payment of £18,580.00 (Guaranteed Future Value + Option to Purchase Fee). APR 11.4%. Taxi pictured may not reflect actual taxi in offer. TX4 models and specification subject to availability. ** Applies to all TX4 models registered and sold from new by Mann & Overton London on or after 1st October 2007

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



Mann & Overton