

July 2008



# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

*Inside this issue...*

Mercedes London cab?

PH signage victory?

Police shamed as DaC House is broken into...

Steve Norris teams up with Boris!

The tragic story of DaC's Jim Wilson...

Lucky DaC driver survives as his taxi catches fire on the M25!

One strike for touting and your licence has gone...



***The unrest is over and DaC gets back to offsetting its carbon footprint by planting trees in Kenya...***





# NASH'S NUMBERS

**By Alan Nash (A95)**

Continuing with nightclubs – this month N to R. Some are really just pubs but list themselves as nightclubs. Postcodes for SatNavs included. Concludes next month...

Nambucca, 596 Holloway Road , N7 6LB	Piya Piya Lounge, 1 Olivers Yard , EC1Y 1HQ
Neighbourhood, 12 Acklam Road , W10 5QZ	Plan B, 418 Brixton Road , SW9 7AY
New Connaught Rooms, 61 Great Queen Street , WC2B 5DA	Plastic People, 147-149 Curtain Road , EC2A 3QE
Next To The Palace, 88a St James's Street , SW1A 1PL	Platinum Gentlemen's Club, 23-25 Paul Street , EC2A 4JU
No 5, 5 Cavendish Square , W1G 0PG	Play, 58 Old Street , EC1V 9AJ
No. 3 Green Street, 3 Green Street , SW1	Play Room, 10 Air Street , W1R 5AB
Notting Hill Arts Club, 21 Notting Hill Gate , W11 3JQ	Player, 8 Broadwick Street , W1F 8HN
Number 3, 3 New Burlington Street , W1S 2JE	Po Na Na Kings Road, 316 Kings Road , SW3 5UH
numberTen, 10 Golborne road , W10 5PE	Po Na Na Souk Bar, 82 The Broadway , SW19 1RH
Nylon, 1 Addle Street , EC2V 7EU	Polka, 58-59 Poland Street , W1V 3DF
O Bar, 83-88 Wardour Street , W1V 3TG	Powder Monkey, 22 King William Walk , SE10 9HU
Oak Bar, 79 Green Lanes , N16 9BU	Profile, 56-57 Frith Street , W1D 3JN
Obeah Club, Charing Cross Road , WC2H 0LB	Public Life, 82a Commercial Street , E1
Ocean, 270 Mare Street , E8 1HE	Punk, 14 Soho Street , W1V 5DA
Oceana, 154-166 Clarence Street , KT1 1QP	Purple Turtle, 61-65 Crowndale Road , NW1 1TN
Oh! Bar, 111-113 Camden High Street , NW1 7JN	Q Bar, 269 Whitechapel road , E1 1BY
Old Billingsgate, 16 Lower Thames Street , EC3R 6DX	Quad, Houghton Street , WC2A 2AE
Old Red Lion, 418 St. John Street , EC1V 4NJ	Raffles, 287 Kings Road , SW3 5EW
Old Truman Brewery Studio 95, 150 Brick Lane , E1 6QL	Raglan, 8-12 Queens Avenue , N10 3NR
On Anon, Piccadilly Circus (Pavillion), W1V 9LA	Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road , N7 7QG
On Rocks, 25-27 Kingsland Road , E2 8DA	Redstar, 319 Camberwell Road , SE5 0HQ
Opera House Nightclub, 2 Chesnut Road , N17 9EN	Reflex, 17 Watling Street , EC4M 9BB
Opium, 1a Dean Street , W1D 3RB	Reflex Nightclub, 184 London Road Kingston, KT2 6QW
Orleans, 259-261 Seven Sisters Road , N4 2HZ	Renaissance Rooms, Miles Street , SW8 1SD
Out Of Blue (Blue Rm), 43 Richmond Rd Kingston, KT2 5BW	Revolution, 95-97 Clapham High Street , SW4 7TB
Oxygen, 17-18 Irving Street , WC2H 7AU	Revolution, 18-20 Chiswick High Road , W4 1TE
Pacha London, Terminus Place , SW1V 1JR	Revolution Underground, 140 Leadenhall Street , EC3V 4QT
Pacific Edge, 80-84 Market Place , RM1 3ER	Rex Cinema & Bar, 21 Rupert Street , W1D 6DG
Palm Tree Club, 462a Greenford Road , UB6 8SQ	Rhum Jungle, 70 Exmouth Market , EC1R 4QP
Pangaea, 85 Piccadilly (Clarges St), W1J 7NB	Rhythm Factory, 16-18 Whitechapel Road , E1 1EW
Paper, 68 Regent Street , W1B 5EL	Rise Bar and Jongleurs, 49 Lavender Gardens , SW11 1DJ
Papillon, 11a Queensbury Place , SW7 2DL	Rocket, 166-220 Holloway Rd , N7 8DB
Paris Rock Club, 14a Baylis Road Croydon, CR0 4JA	Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club, 47 Frith Street , W1D 4HT
Park Avenue, 1-3 Hill Rise Richmond, TW10	Roof Gardens, 99 Kensington High Street (Derry St), W8 5SA
Parker McMillan, 47 Chiswell Street , EC1Y 4SB	Route 66 London Gentlemen's Club, 28 Abbey Rd , NW10
Parker Place, 51 Parker Street , WC2B 5PS	Roxy, 3-5 Rathbone Place , W1T 1HJ
Passion, 251 Amhurst Road , N16 7UN	Royal George, 133 Charing Cross Road , WC2H 0EA
Peacock Club, 1a Chesterfield Street , W1X 7HG	Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 372 Kennington Lane , SE11 5HY
Phoenix, 37 Cavendish Square , W1G 0PP	Ruby Lo, 23 Orchard Street , W1H 6HL
Piano Lounge, 57 King St Pde Cross Deep Twick, TW1 3SG	Rumi, 531 Kings Road , SW10 0TZ
Pigalle Club, 215-217 Piccadilly , W1J 9HN	Rush Bar, 25 Frith Street , W1D 5LB
Pitch, 30 Lisle Street , WC2H 7BA	Ruskin Arms, 386 High Street North , E12 6PH

## "What's On" at O2, ExCel, Olympia and Earls Court

Event	Where	Type	From	To
Doctor Who Exhibition	Museum Hall, Earls Court	Consumer	20/03/2008	18/09/2008
Dolly Parton	O2	Concert	05/07/2008	06/07/2008
Islam Expo 08	Olympia Grand Hall	Consumer	11/07/2008	14/07/2008
British International Motor Show	ExCel	Public	22/07/2008	03/08/2008
The Retirement Show 2008	Olympia Grand Hall	Consumer	18/07/2008	19/07/2008
Kylie	O2	Concert	26/07/2008	
Kylie	O2	Concert	27/07/2008	
Kylie	O2	Concert	29/07/2008	
Kylie	O2	Concert	30/07/2008	
Sun & Swim London 08	Olympia National Hall	Trade	27/07/2008	29/07/2008

For lots more information, email [alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk](mailto:alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk) with subject as 'UID' with the body of the text containing just your name, email address, callsign, badge number and contact telephone number (only used if email address is rejected) for a free - yes free - link to over 50 pages of printable, every day useful information. Don't delay... do it now!

# from the editor's desk

## Back again...

It's nice to be back after my month off and to begin my twelfth year in the **Call Sign** hot seat! But I have to say that it does seem to be ever-harder getting back into the swing of things – this year more than most after spending time in magnificent Snowdonia with probably the best weather the UK had seen this year.

Returning also has its problems in that there is so much news, much of it occurring during our hiatus. I don't want to produce a mag where much of its' news has already appeared in the trade press, so reluctantly I have decided to leave out many items specially sent in and which I would usually find space for. That especially applies to the trade charities who do such amazing work. However, there can't be many of you who haven't by now read about the amazing *War Disabled* trip back to Normandy and the always enjoyable *LIFUC* trip to Chessington World of Adventures. It's difficult enough trying to get a monthly mag to be up-to-date without publishing items you would have seen over a month ago. So apologies to anyone I've left out and I hope you understand my reasoning...

## New cabs galore!

There's weird, there's weirder and then there's the London Taxi business where you can go years with nothing changing – and then suddenly nothing remains the same for more than two minutes!

The May **Call Sign** wrote of next year's projected electric cab and while Linda and I were three quarters of the way up Mount Snowdon, the phone went (yes, some sad people have to take their phones everywhere – even on holiday). My informant explained that LTI were going to jointly build a cab that runs on hydrogen in time for the 2012 Olympics. If the hybrid Metrocab ever appears, suddenly London is going to be awash with different types of taxis!

But then came, surely, the shock of the month when the *Mail on Sunday* "revealed" the existence of a new and specially designed Mercedes taxi that would bear close resemblance to a TX4. Sure enough, on June 26 in Halkin Street, the trade press saw it in all its glory!

Most in our press had heard reports about the Merc paying "secret" visits to the PCO over the past year and that the people involved with Mercedes were none other than KPM, using the name of Eco City Vehicles Plc – a company born when KPM and Pannal were involved in a reverse takeover and of whom KPM were the dominant partner.

In November 2007, **Call Sign** quoted the new company saying they would be building environmentally friendly vehicles for local authorities and urban vehicle fleet owners. But I don't think anyone actually mentioned a taxi for London!

The two questions now are whether KPM will remain as an LTI Main Agent while selling a vehicle in direct competition to the TX4 and whether the new taxi looks like the TX4 or



like an *Addison Lee* people carrier?

And for those who were concerned about my safety when I said we were three quarters of the way up Mount Snowdon, I of course meant on the train!

## Alan Fleming

It took me quite some time to get used to Alan Fleming, the former Chairman of the LCDC and now in the more honorary position of President. His 'shoot from the hip' style was different than what I had been used to before, but eventually I ended up liking him and appreciating just what he had tried to do for his members and the trade.

Now with his decision to stand down in his seventieth year, I wish him luck for the future. If that future, according to some whisperings, involves a place with TfL, then that organisation had better be ready for some lively debate. Rumour has it that Alan knows some swear words that haven't even been invented yet!

It would also be churlish of me not to congratulate Grant Davis on his appointment as LCDC Chairman. But I must also congratulate myself on a recent editorial when I forecast that if Alan was to lose the Chairmanship, it would end up costing the LCDC money because of the work he did with very little recompense. Now I hear that the new administration at the LCDC have awarded themselves a 20% increase plus an hour travelling time when attending meetings. I hope it wasn't me that gave them the idea!

## And speaking of new cabs...

I recently took an ultra-swish looking couple to the \*Raisa Gorbachev Foundation charity gala in a part of Hampton Court I never knew existed - let alone been to! The driveway to the house must have been well over half a

mile and it was filled with limousines of all shapes, sizes and indeed lengths.

It's fair to say that the number of taxis in that queue was minimal compared to the car numbers – although it's probably equally fair to also say that there were very few people carriers either.

As we inched forward towards the house, we watched the posh equivalent of street entertainers designed to keep us amused. They were acting out 19th century Russian plays with a different one every few hundred metres. My passengers thought these were wonderful, but when I asked the purpose of watching a 30 second extract from a production that was probably designed to last several hours, they just looked at me as though I was mad.

"Go on, Anastasia, tell him," said Lord Snooty in the back. "I don't know," she replied quietly, "it's just nice!" Then it went quiet, with his Lordship turning a pleasant shade of rosé that showed up so well against his apparel of white tie and tails...!

Eventually we reached the house and they got out. His Lordship went straight over to a rather tasty looking hostess holding a tray of Champagne, whilst the stunningly beautiful Anastasia came to the front and thanked me for what she called a very pleasant journey. Then to my amazement and within earshot of former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev, U2 front man Bono and Joan Collins, Anastasia said:

"I am so pleased we came in a real taxi. The high seating gave us a wonderful view of London and of the entertainment here – even if you didn't like the theatre!" With that, she winked and walked away leaving me face-to-face with Mikhail Gorbachev, who stared in amazement that not everyone had appreciated 30-second clips from the Russian theatre! But then he gave me a most amazing smile. I was about to give him a DaC card for opening an account, when two rather hefty looking security types asked me politely if I intended moving off any time soon as Mrs Thatcher was waiting to get out of her limo and that I was blocking the photographers view! Another everyday event in the life of a DaC driver!

*\*The Raisa Gorbachev Foundation charity gala is run in memory of Mr Gorbachev's late wife who died of Leukaemia in 1999. The Foundation raises millions of pounds for children suffering from cancer...*

**Alan Fisher**  
callsignmag@aol.com

## CAB GUIDING COURSE

The next Guiding Course starts on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2008. If you would like more information, contact Graham Woodhouse on 07968 791117 or email [info@cabguide.com](mailto:info@cabguide.com).

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. 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, while 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.**

# Reflections Of The Chairman

## The New Mayor

We're now two months into the regime of new Mayor Boris Johnson and so far developments regarding the taxi industry are not looking too bad. In his pre-election manifesto, Boris stated that he would scrap the mid-term inspection /overhaul, or whatever we choose to call it.

I am led to believe that a consultation document is going to be revealed to the trade in the very near future, consequently we can all have our say. Personally speaking, I am against the mid-term inspection because it just incurs an extra expense to the owner-driver, with increased costs and loss of time.

When it was first introduced, there was a considerable outcry from the trade as it was very unpopular and I believe it was introduced to keep us in line with the Private Hire industry, which has two MOTs a year.

However, since its introduction, some factions of the trade have done a somersault and are now in favour of the two inspections! Not surprisingly perhaps, they are the Proprietors that run fleets of cabs!

So why would they be in favour of two overhauls? They tell me it is because there would not be any street inspections by Carriage Officers; also they would not be required to produce vehicles from time to time to be inspected by SGS. However, I have come to the conclusion that the real reason is purely that they have found the second inspection to be quite lucrative for them, with owner-drivers taking their vehicles into their garages for any work that needed to be done prior to that second inspection. So why would they want to lose this extra source of income?

Consequently, when the consultation document is produced, it will not be a forgone conclusion that the second inspection is to be scrapped. However as I've said, I am against it, as I believe standards will not improve and the vast majority of my members, who are all owner-drivers, will not wish to bear the financial burden of this second inspection.

Boris has also appointed a new Chief Executive to run the GLA. Tim Parker took up his new position on 7 June for a salary of £1 per annum. Tim Parker has had considerable experience with the AA, Boots and Kwik Fit and is indeed a very astute businessman - something that the GLA obviously requires. There is no doubt in my mind that Tim Parker will soon embark on a cost-cutting exercise regarding the 'deadwood' employed at City Hall. I'm led to believe that Tim Parker has been referred to in the past as *The Prince of Darkness* due to the amount of streamlining he has completed in various organisations.

I am very impressed that the Mayor has embarked and continues to be focussed on a programme of running the GLA as a business. I just hope he continues with this policy and does not lapse into the extravagances of the previous regime.

So, as I stated earlier, the new Mayor has



started off at a blistering pace regarding changes within our industry and at City Hall, I just hope he continues and remembers it could be a marathon and not a sprint. There is no doubt in my mind that Boris is a very ambitious man and if he can make a success as Mayor of running London, then who knows! Leader of the Conservatives and PM? We could have the Tony Blair and Gordon Brown scenario with David Cameron and Boris Johnson - now that would be interesting!

## Mercedes Taxi?

It looks like there is to be a new taxi for London - a Mercedes six seater! Although the price has not been announced, I am led to believe it will be in the region of a TX4 sil-

ver, although I believe it also has several 'extras' included as standard in addition to being fully air-conditioned. The vehicle was launched on 27 June and there was a 'Ride and Drive' in Battersea Park on 28/29 June. Sadly, by the time you read this piece, the dates would have passed. However, I have it on good authority that the date the Mercedes will go on sale to Taxi drivers is imminent - but we will have to wait and see!

## Subscriptions

I know this particular item will not be very popular, but the BoM have decided to increase subscriptions as from 1 September 2008, I believe there are more details elsewhere in the magazine. I am sure you don't need me to explain why costs are increased, however, we are fully aware of the extra burden the trade has to bear with the increase in the price of fuel, but we believe the increase in subscriptions is a modest one.

**Member's subscriptions will increase from £119 to £124 + VAT per month.**

**Second Drivers will increase from £64 to £67 +VAT per month.**

**Journeymen renting from an owner on the 'full flat' will attract the same subscriptions as an owner-driver, £124 + VAT.**

In the rare instance of a third driver on a taxi, this will be charged at £21 +VAT.

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

## DAC ROMAN WAY: THANK YOU LTI...



**Dana**  
at  
**Roman**  
**Way**

**Tom Whitbread** recently contacted **Call Sign** regarding a problem that **Dana Thananjeyan** and his team occasionally come across. With many drivers using a range of vehicle from TX1 to TX4, it can sometimes cause a problem when needing to drill through bodywork in knowing exactly which way the cab wiring goes.

Knowing that **Call Sign** goes to LTI periodically, Tom asked whether we could get wiring plans for all their taxis!

So we asked and amazingly LTI sat down and sent files and files and yet more files showing all their wiring details.

"We can't thank them enough," Dana told **Call Sign**, "these blueprints are invaluable to us. Whilst we are always mindful of the presence of wiring in the cab, these files will make our lives so much easier. Our sincere thanks to LTI..."



# WILL THE MERC TAXI START AN LTI/KPM BATTLE?

Ever since a Sunday newspaper reported that German car makers *Mercedes-Benz* were close to being allowed to sell a Merc taxi to London drivers, the trade has been buzzing at the possibility of now having a choice of cabs to choose from. According to a Mercedes spokesman, the new cab would offer low emissions and "look similar to its LTI rival." Well, on June 26 at the swish Forbes House in Belgravia, the new taxi arrived...

One question being asked by the trade press was whether the 6-seater vehicle, which is based on the *Mercedes Vito/Traveliner* with a four-wheel drive to assist *Conditions of Fitness* turning circle specifications, looks more like a London Taxi or a Private Hire people carrier vehicle – even with a TAXI roof sign?

The agent selling the new Merc Taxi exclusively will be *Eco City Vehicles Plc*, a company that came into existence last year following a reverse takeover between *KPM-UK Taxis Plc* and *Pannal Plc*, in which KPM was the dominant partner.

The new company said at the time that they intended to supply environmentally friendly vehicles to local authorities and urban vehicle fleet owners. There was no mention of another London taxi, although according to Chief Exec, Peter DaCosta, they have been working on the re-engineering of the Merc taxi for three years – which means it was already on the table.

So if the Mercedes taxi does materialise as a going concern for London drivers, will it cause a bust-up between them and LTI Vehicles, the manufacturer of the TX4 and its predecessors? Will LTI want one of their Main Dealers selling taxis in opposition to the TX4? *John Paton* in Scotland has been selling other vehicles in addition to LTI cabs for many years, but the demand



Does the Mercedes cab look like a taxi or people carrier  
Pic courtesy of TAXI

in Scotland is far less than in the capital.

However, the biggest stumbling block could be the **1998 Private Hire (London) Bill**, which says that no PH vehicle can be put onto the road if it looks like a London Taxi. There is no mention of the reverse, however it could be claimed that the opposite situation must automatically be the same – no Taxi should look like a PH vehicle? Some PH companies already use the unadapted Vito, but although PH are about to get their brand names back on their cabs again, only taxis can currently have a roof sign.

The PCO have admitted that they would like to see London Taxi drivers have a wider range of vehicles to choose from as have many drivers over the years. The two days following the launch gave London licensed Taxi drivers that opportunity, with test drives of the new cab at Battersea Park.

If you drove the cab, let **Call Sign** know what you thought...

## ELECTION OF ARBITRATOR



Alan Nash -  
joins the  
Arbitration  
panel

As you are all aware, the membership was asked to take part in a ballot to select an arbitrator and I am pleased to report that 55% of eligible members participated.

The newly elected arbitrator with 40% of the votes cast is **Alan Nash (A95)** who now completes the panel of ten.

I would also like to thank Steve Shaller (R75), Pat Keefe (G01) and Garry White (L65) for their interest in the election and hope that this will not deter them from participation in the future.

**Howard Pears**  
Company Secretary

**TAXI**

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# Jery's World



"Sorry sir, I know DaC are planting trees in Kenya but our drivers do not deliver them to clients – even if they do say please...!"

## Low Carbon Taxi Technology

**Mayor Boris gives £1million!**

London Mayor, Boris Johnson, has announced funding of £1million towards testing out low carbon technology for London's taxi fleet. TfL's Climate Change fund together with Cenex, the UK's national centre of excellence for low carbon and fuel cell technologies, are to jointly fund the project.

As part of its carbon reduction strategy, the PCO have said that they want to work with vehicle manufacturers to introduce taxis with lower fuel consumption and Co2 emissions. The funding will bring to London a low carbon taxi demonstration project, giving manufacturers the chance to register their interest in supplying the cabs.

In a statement, Cenex say that suitable low carbon technologies could include 'stop-start' or 'micro-hybrid' technology. London's taxis spend about 40% of their time waiting around with their engines running – times such as at pick up / set down, traffic lights and of course, endless traffic hold-ups. A micro-hybrid taxi could help reduce Co2 emissions by up to 15%.

The MD of surface transport at TfL, David Brown, added:

"We are committed to reducing the impact of public transport on the environment and have already taken significant steps to clean up emissions of particulates and nitrogen oxides from the taxi fleet. Now it's time to tackle carbon dioxide emissions for 21,000+ taxis in London."



**The Mayor is putting £1million towards funding**

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# Private Hire Close to Signage Victory?

*And they attack Call Sign in the process...*

There are around 20,000 licensed taxis with 24,000 licensed taxi drivers, battling some 2,000 licensed private hire operators with around 43,000 vehicles working for them. It now looks as though the latter are about to collect a signage victory and are on the verge of having brand names, phone numbers and websites allowed on the reverse of their cars.

The move was put into place by previous Mayor, Ken Livingstone and would undoubtedly have ended with allowing private hire cars into bus lanes – something new Mayor Boris Johnson has told **Call Sign** he will not allow. Mr Livingstone claimed that signage on licensed minicabs displaying the operator's name and contact details would make it easier for passengers to be certain they were getting into the vehicle they had pre-booked. In theory, that should be correct. In practice it could pose many hidden dangers.

In the latest issue of *Private Hire News*, Licensed Private Hire Care Association Chairman, **Steve Wright MBE** attacked **Call Sign** writing:

**“Alan Fisher** of taxi magazine **Call Sign** said ‘quite possible the biggest victory the Licensed taxi trade has ever achieved’ when describing the decision to ban exterior advertising from minicabs. **We wonder where the safety of the travelling public came in his thinking?**”

Well Steve, I'll tell you. Even though the quote was from a 2004 article, when you see a licensed taxi you recognise it immediately. When you see a private hire vehicle, you have to assume it is genuine. I'm sure you've seen cars for sale that come complete with front and back PH licenses in the windows! Not for one moment am I suggesting that London is filled with them, but the problem is that with so many names and different types of vehicles, a passenger coming out of a theatre who was not used to cabs of any type, might then go to all the waiting cars with licence roundels and ask if they were waiting for *Miss Smith*. More often than not, they would end up with the right car,

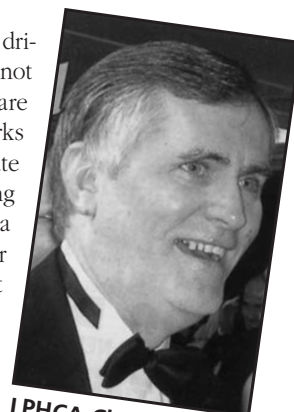
but with a taxi it would be *every* time.

It is on those occasions when minicab drivers who have licenses on their cars (not necessarily their own), decide that they are going to tout for a fare that danger lurks for the passenger. Even legitimate private hire drivers have been seen accepting jobs that are not theirs. Perhaps with a female as head of the PCO, it is rather surprising that organisation could not see it?

For those readers who do not know Steve Wright, he is against touts as much as we are. However, while he may not admit it, surely having company names on the back of the vehicle is going to make some unsuspecting female passenger assume that the car is a taxi?

Brand name signage is totally unnecessary because if they are meeting someone, all they have to do is to put a nameboard up.

As the PCO / TfL have confirmed that signage is now to be allowed on private hire vehicles, I don't blame Steve Wright for accepting it. However, if just one female passenger gets into a car because she saw a name on the rear and assumed it was a legitimate car company and is attacked, it will be the responsibility of PCO / TfL. Let's pray it doesn't happen because so-called 'branding signage' won't stop it and on a bad day, it could achieve the reverse...



LPHCA Chairman  
Steve Wright

**Alan Fisher**

## MATTHEW CHEYNE: FREEMAN OF CITY OF LONDON



A delighted **Matthew Cheyne** - LTI's International Marketing Development Director - was recently bestowed with the honour of becoming a *Freeman of the City of London* at a ceremony held at the Guildhall. Matthew is a member of the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* and was proposed for the honour by **Andrew Overton**.

Matthew told **Call Sign**: "I felt very proud and honoured. It is an ancient institution going back hundreds of years with a great deal of history and heritage. I have never had anything like this happen to me before and really enjoyed going to the Guildhall to pick up the award."

Congratulations to Matthew from everyone at Dial-a-Cab...

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Great as Xmas Presents

Despite the best efforts of London's evening (chargeable) newspaper, it does still seem probable that new Mayor Boris Johnson's Consultation paper will prove to be a success in that our half-yearly check could well be dispatched back to whence it came.

**Call Sign** has yet to find one driver who even privately considers that a trade that has long been established as one of the safest forms of road transport with the strictest yearly check of all, needs to become a nanny industry and take cabs up twice per annum. Many DaC drivers considered the opposite to be true in telling this magazine that they were happy to have a strict yearly overhaul, but with a half yearly added on, felt they would have to try to cut corners due to the prohibitive cost. We doubt that the PCO or SGS would agree with that, but it is the drivers with their Knowledge who are the finest in the world. The other two organisations are exactly that – just two organisations that are involved with the trade.

Founded in 1878 in Rouen (France), SGS was registered in Geneva in 1919 as *Société Générale de Surveillance* and is recognised as one of the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification companies. It has around 50,000 employees worldwide, operating a network of over 1,000 offices and laboratories.

The *Metropolitan Public Carriages Office* moved from its home at 7 Lancaster Place, Waterloo Bridge when it took over the regulating of the taxi trade in 1850. The work involved was undertaken by the new *Public Carriage Office* from an annex to New Scotland Yard in Whitehall. Neither organisation can be criticised in the work that they do, but it's the drivers who give this trade its reputation as the finest in the world - and not SGS or the PCO.

## And Boris?

Among items Mayor Boris has asked *Transport for London* to look at in the Consultation paper is to scrap the half yearly check in allowing us to operate safely while undergoing only one mechanical examination each year, although increasing the number of on-street taxi inspections by TfL's vehicle compliance team. According to many DaC drivers, the number of street checks never really dropped anyway.

Mayor Boris – we refuse to refer to him as BoJo – told us: *"The black cab is an icon of London and an essential part of our transport system. It is essential that we support and work with London's cabbies, who are the best in the world, rather than tying them with red tape."*

**Call Sign** has read reports in other

# Looking Back with Boris...

trade papers about who was first to ask what of Boris and we have no desire to tell everyone that we were not only first, but also by several months!

We would just like to thank the Dial-a-Cab drivers who, in mid-January, agreed to ask Boris – then as just a candidate – questions pertinent to our trade so that on January 31, the world could read his answers. The February 2008 issue is online in the **Call Sign** library should any reader want a reminder of Boris's promises ([www.dac-callsign.com](http://www.dac-callsign.com)). To be honest, he does sound like someone we can work with far more than the previous incumbent of the position – no matter what *Cab Trade News* says.

As a reminder, I'd like to thank **Alex Constantinou (N05)** who asked Boris about the half yearly check should he win the election. The Mayor's answer?

*"I will scrap the midyear inspections. They add to the cost of the licence and are an unnecessary burden on cab drivers."*

Then there was **David Marks (R22)** who asked whether as Mayor he would ever allow PH vehicles to ply for hire? The Mayor replied:

*"No. I believe London's cab trade has taken a bit of a bruising under Ken Livingstone and my approach will be to re-energise it. I think private hire vehicles have their place, but black cabs must retain their right to solely ply for hire."*

**Bernie Silver (G08)** asked about the Congestion Charge and in the course of the Mayor's answer, he admitted to **Call Sign**:

*"TfL have deliberately installed more traffic light schemes, which they themselves admit are reducing road space and slowing down traffic. We have to focus on getting London moving."*

We'll look forward to a welcome readjustment of some of the ridiculously timed traffic signals soon.

**Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)** asked about the huge number of buses and Boris's response was:

*"Oxford Street is a good example of this. 40% of all London bus routes go down there and the place has turned into a giant bus park. It's certainly quicker to walk. What we have to do is get the balance right. We have to meet Londoners' expectation of a frequent, reliable bus service, but we also have to recognise that we need to keep the traffic moving. It's a tough job, but we need a fresh approach."*

**Stewart Lewis (D20)** asked about minicabs in bus lanes and Boris said:

*"I totally agree and I would not allow private hire cars to use bus lanes."*

There were many other questions, but the above involve our everyday work. **Call Sign** has published the Mayor's responses in full just so you know exactly what he said when looking for our votes. However, it is equally important that if we want the Mayor on our side, then it is seen to be a two-way affair. In that case, we won't need to tell anyone other than you, dear reader, that Mayor Johnson in response to **Alan Green (E52)** on whether as a cyclist he had ever deliberately driven through a red traffic light, was that he had! Don't tell anyone though! But if you do, tell them not to tell anyone...!



**Alan Fisher**

## Call Sign July 2008

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# Deutsche Bank:

## Tara is a UK new pioneer...

A young girl from Bermondsey has been honoured for her pioneering campaign idea. **Tara Ifill**, age 14, has won a Deutsche Bank **CHANGEit** award for her campaign idea, *Smile with Style*. GMTV presenter Ben Shephard presented her with the **CHANGEit** prize at a ceremony in London.

Run by international leadership organisation Common Purpose and sponsored by Deutsche Bank, the **CHANGEit** awards aim to show that young people can make positive changes to society and to recognise the achievements and ambitions of young people between the ages of 11-18 who are already doing so. The awards have nothing to do with academic achievement or exam grades, but everything to do with good citizenship and positive action.

Tara's *Smile with Style* campaign aims to have youth from Notre Dame RC Girls School and other local schools and youth clubs in South East London design T-shirts to sell for the charity *Smile Train* and for funds to go back into local youth clubs. By having an activity for young people to engage in, they will hopefully stay off the



streets and out of trouble. By raising money, they have the opportunity to both improve their local area youth clubs and help a charity that gives young children a smile

Common Purpose Chief Executive, Julia Middleton, praised all the finalists and added: "Tara's idea to get young people involved in helping themselves is fantastic. It shows how young people can have a valuable leadership role in society."

Part of DaC's corporate client, Deutsche Bank Corporate Social Responsibility UK manages the Bank's employee volunteering programmes, charitable giving and community partnerships with a particular focus on supporting education, community development and art. In 2007 alone, Deutsche Bank made donations of over £3.5m and

approximately 1,200 employees volunteered with community projects in London.

*Pictured: Craig Parfitt (DB COO Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility), Julia Middleton (Common Purpose Chief Executive), Graham Hodgkin (DB Business Head Global Transaction Banking), Campaigner Haristide Ceasar, Campaigner Tara Ifill and Ben Shephard (GMTV presenter)...*

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# Allen Togwell's Marketing Place

Elsewhere in this copy of **Call Sign** you will see the results of a recently held complaints meeting - one which I chaired. All of the complainants in this instance were appearing for the same offence, namely *booking into a physical zone from an outlying area to gain an unfair advantage*.

It depresses me enormously when sitting in front of me on complaint are subscribers who I have known for a long time. Smart, presentable, courteous, clean cab, helpful and who over the years have put themselves out to cover work that nobody else wanted. They are a credit to this Society; and then they commit just one offence, intentionally or otherwise, and officially I can do little to prevent the Committee from doing their job and punishing them accordingly.

In instances such as this, it is understandable that the complainants will feel they have been harshly treated. Unfortunately, what they and many of our members fail to understand is that should, for example, the offence involves a big client who because of their high usage means there is a greater chance of the offence reoccurring, that client doesn't hold individual drivers to blame - they blame Dial-a-Cab as a company. They will have it on record that Dial-a-Cab are guilty of X number of complaints, to the point where it becomes totally unacceptable and the account is closed. Which emphasises just how important it is for every driver to be so careful in the manner in which they work. There it is literally no room for error, particularly regarding procedures because our technology, whilst it benefits our Society as a whole, will also catch you out immediately if you do something wrong.

As was the case with those subscribers who foolishly booked themselves into E14 from an outlying area, which you must not do. The stupidity is that none of those that committed the offence actually gained anything from it financially. So please, each and every one of you, please follow procedures and if for whatever reason you have genuinely made an error, correct it immediately, which every one of the complainants could have done the moment they arrived at the security barriers to E14 or when they did a QP.

I mention the above mainly because of my concern that the impending recession is going to tempt some drivers who, seeing their earnings being eroded by for example, high fuel costs, will start cutting corners in an attempt to make up the shortfall.

With huge job losses and cutbacks in the City and a reduction in consumer spending, the knock-on effect is likely as always to hit our industry. Many analysts predict the UK won't be as badly hit as the USA, however with many of our clients being US owned, job losses worldwide will include the UK and already we have seen news in the press that in addition to 40,000 job losses, high on the list of cutbacks will be a reduction in the use of taxis.

Having been on the Board during the late 80s, which included the infamous *black Monday* and sat through a Board meeting where a decision had to be made as to whether we should cease trading, I know only too well the disastrous effects a recession can have on a business and individuals.

As I write, I have just read an article in the press of a middle manager arriving for work at a large bank in the City and finding himself shar-



ing the lift with the boss - the last person any employee wants to be stuck in the lift with. "What's the latest news from the bank sir," he asks by way of conversation? "The latest news is you're fired, stay there!" And as the boss gets out at his floor, he presses 'G' and sends the stunned man back down and out of a job!

It must be a devastating experience to become suddenly unemployed, especially someone with a partner and a family. Fortunately, it isn't one that will affect any of you, for which you should all be thankful to be in possession of that little green badge pinned about your person.

No doubt there will those among you experiencing a drop in earnings and you will need to adjust accordingly. But at least you are still employed. And by adjustments, I don't just mean to your finances. There will also be a need to adjust the manner in which you work. Competition is going to be fierce, our competitors and private hire will be making all sorts of crazy proposals to lure away our clients. Proposals that

**No doubt there will those among you experiencing a drop in earnings and you will need to adjust accordingly. But at least you are still employed. And by adjustments, I don't just mean to your finances. There will also be a need to adjust the manner in which you work.**

we all know will not be met, but by then it will be too late and the client would have already been lost. What we all have to do is prove to our clients that they are already getting value for money. And by value we mean a prompt service, the minimum amount on the meter when the cab arrives at the pick-up, a smart courteous driver standing with a smile waiting to open the cab door, taking the shortest or quickest route and above all at the end of the journey, saying thank you, have a nice day. The objective is to leave your passengers thinking that yes, there are cheaper ways of travelling, but using Dial-a-Cab has its benefits and they are worth it.

What we don't want are miserable, dour drivers who feel the world owes them a living, arriving at the pick-up late and with more than the agreed run-in on the meter, moaning to the passenger about the traffic and throughout the journey groaning about your problems or worse, giving the impression you are doing your fare a big favour by accepting the ride that you assume everybody has rejected.

Like it or not, everybody is cutting back very seriously and to give you some idea as to how strict those cut-backs are, there was an article

reported in the press whereby one of the largest banking institutions in the City are refusing to reimburse their staff the 5p cost of a carrier bag when buying food from M&S. It seems extremely petty, but if true then it gives a worrying indication of what their attitude is towards the unnecessary use of taxis when there is cheaper transport in buses, tube trains and cut price private hire.

As I've said on many occasions in the past, it can take months and months of resilient hard work in claiming a new client and then years of good service to retain it. But one driver can take less than five minutes to close it.

## Back problems...

The April edition of **Call Sign** saw yet more letters in *Mailsbot* from drivers with back problems and their concerns about covering trips involving wheelchairs. No doubt the letters printed were just a selection chosen by the editor, which beggars the question; exactly how many of our members suffer with back problem? One I know for a fact is my neighbour.

I hadn't noticed his cab for a while and on the day it crossed my mind that perhaps he had moved it to make way for the London Marathon, part of which starts at the end of our road. When I did next see him, the way the poor man was struggling to walk along the street I began to wonder whether he had actually taken part in the race and was suffering the after effects! But that wasn't the case, it was far worse. He had a severe pain of his lower back, to the extent that for a while he was unable to work.

Over the years, I have come across considerable numbers of cab drivers that have suffered either severe or mild back pain, many of whom - at least of the latter - could have avoided the problem had they taken regular exercise. And I am not talking about being a gym fanatic, pumping weights or running like a lunatic on treadmills. I'm talking about just 10/15 minutes of simple stretching exercises. Nothing strenuous, just bending, twisting and stretching muscles that would otherwise lay dormant. How many of you guys can touch your toes, better still how many of you can bend from the waist and touch the floor with the palm of your hands with your shoes on? Very few I bet. OK, so that's a bit OTT. But any back specialist will tell you that a simple routine of stretching exercises in a controlled, gradual and progressive manner, distributes nutrients into the disc space and soft tissues in the back to keep the discs, muscles, ligaments and joints healthy. Fortunately, I don't suffer with back problems, however having said that I stupidly suffered excruciating back pain for almost a week recently, caused through lifting a heavy PC off the floor without bending my knees. It was a ridiculous thing to do, particularly as it could have been avoided. So take a tip and think before lifting anything heavy. Get out of your cab as often as possible, both to ease the stiffness and when needed to open the door for your passenger. But more importantly, make a habit of doing 10/15 minutes each day of simple stretching exercises. Preferably when you just get out of bed, which is the ideal time because you will be wearing the least amount of clothing, and your muscles will be relaxed.

**Allen Togwell  
DaC Marketing**



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Drivers going past **Dial-a-Cab House** early in June may have wondered why the glass on part of the door was replaced by a piece of board. The answer shames the police section of the 999 service and compounds stories being heard more regularly than ever regarding police not turning up etc.

It was around 3.40am when DaC's overnight security guard heard banging sounds.

"At first I thought something was going on upstairs," he told *Call Sign*, "so I went around the building to have a look but saw nothing out of the ordinary. At that time it never



## PIED À TERRE: LONDON RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

Pied à Terre, Fitzrovia has been announced as the winner of the *Which / Good Food Guide* London Restaurant of the Year award. The award recognises excellence and good service at independently owned restaurants, pubs and cafés and included a public vote that received over 20,000 entries.

Good Food Guide Editor Elizabeth Carter told *Call Sign*:

"Pied à Terre is a well deserved winner. It is a small but precise restaurant where enthusiasm for the food is universal. Shane Osborn's cooking is inventive yet simple, care and attention to detail are second to none and there is nothing complacent about the smooth running operation."

Elizabeth ended by saying: "The British public voted in their thousands for this award. We know from the feedback we receive throughout the year that people feel passionately about great local restaurants and this award is an opportunity to give them recognition."

Pied à Terre, which is at 34 Charlotte Street, will feature in the 2009 edition of *The Good Food Guide* and competed with nine other regional UK winners for the *Which / Good Food Guide* Restaurant of the Year award.

The presentation took place at a ceremony on 17 June at the British Museum where Pied à Terre finished second nationally to Ramsons of Ramsbottom in Kent.

## Call Sign Comment

# Police shamed as DaC are broken into...



DaC's front door after the bungled robbery

occurred to me that the noise was coming from the Client's Reception in East Road. I came back to my desk and then several minutes later heard yet another banging sound, but this time it sounded like it was coming from the front reception."

The guard continued: "It would have been very dark in the front reception, so I used the remote CCTV camera and saw someone wearing a crash helmet trying to break in through the glass. I rang 999 but got no help, so I

asked the call centre to get the police while I went round to see what was going on. As I went through the door, I saw two men with crash helmets on. One looked at me and just carried on trying to get the plasma screen off of the wall."

He wisely left them there and went back to the remote camera. Meanwhile, when the call centre phoned 999, they were told the matter had already been reported! According to the security guard, the burglars were in the front reception for around 5 minutes but had spent around 10 minutes trying to break the glass. Yet the police – having had two calls already – didn't arrive until 11am. The security guard added that the two villains actually failed to break the glass first time – when he heard the original bang – and went away to apparently get a heavier implement, then returned and eventually broke through. The guard phoned 999 yet again and was told the police had no one available to send.

When the police finally arrived some 7 hours later, they checked for prints and took away the CCTV images of the break-in. With both miscreants wearing crash helmets, it seems the best chance of an arrest vanished when they failed to turn up at the time. Perhaps there were some more important speed traps to organise???

**Alan Fisher**

**Saunders**  
solicitors  
— LLP —



## Licence in jeopardy?

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VIII. THE AUTOCAR. ADVERTISEMENTS.—SUPPLEMENT. NOV. 18TH, 1905.

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The names of **Robert 'Bobby' Jones** and **Goodermans Ltd** – well known coach builders of the time – probably mean little to most taxi drivers. But when Bobby took over Goodermans' Coventry-based business in 1919 to eventually become **Carbodies**, this trade was to begin a process that has never looked back after almost eighty years.

Even earlier than Bobby Jones acquisition, another motor company was founded in 1899. **J.T.Overton and J.J.Mann** founded **Mann & Overton** with a business strategy of importing cars from the continent. Then in 1906, the duo decided that there was a gap in the market for a specialist taxi supplier and began selling from their base at 7 Lower Belgrave Street – yes, the company operated from Belgravia!

Sixty years ago, in 1948, Carbodies linked up with Austin and Mann & Overton to produce a purpose built taxi codenamed the **FX3**. Austin built the chassis while Carbodies designed and built the body – making this year of 2008 the diamond anniversary. Bobby Jones stayed with Carbodies until 1954 before selling it on and taking retirement.

Eleven years later, the FX3 saw an updated version in the shape of the **FX4**. While keeping many FX3 features, the biggest change was the shape and even as late as 1989 and the introduction of The Fairway, the shape was to remain relatively stable. With the success of the FX4, Carbodies concentrated on building and the distributing the vehicle.

In 1973, Carbodies was sold on to **Manganese Bronze Holdings** while three years later in 1976, **Lloyds & Scottish** took over **M&O**. That partnership lasted until 1984 when M&O were sold on to Manganese Bronze.

Lloyds & Scottish weren't really interested in selling cabs, but retained M&O's finance arm jointly with Manganese Bronze. It would become **London Taxi Finance**. However, the more important development of that year of 1984 was the founding of **London Taxis International (LTI)**, which brought together Carbodies as the manufacturers and Mann & Overton as the sales and marketing organisation with Manganese Bronze as the parent company.

In the late 80s, London's cabbies saw the introduction of the first taxi not to have a

A rare M&O ad from 1905 - note the upmarket address

# LTI Turns Sixty

deafening engine. Unfortunately, the **FX4R** with its Land Rover engine struggled on inclines when fully loaded and in 1989, a Nissan engine was introduced together with a new and very successful model – the wheelchair accessible **Fairway**.

In 1997, LTI launched the **TX1** that would eventually contain an integral foldout one-piece ramp and become the first major LTI vehicle to be exported in significant numbers. Five years later, in 2002, LTI began producing Euro III compliant **TXII** with its 2.4 litre Duratorq Ford diesel engine.

Then in October 2006, the taxi trade saw the launch of the **TX4** with its VM Motori engine designed to bring taxi emissions within the Euro IV platform and considered by many to be LTI's finest taxi so far.

Looking to the future, 2009 will see the **TX4E**, the first London electric cab, which will work on an iron phosphate lithium-ion battery pack and is expected to cost under 4p per mile to run. Then some three years after that, we expect to see the first hydrogen 'hybrid' cab and you can read about that elsewhere in this issue.

But the bottom line must be to congratulate LTI Vehicles on the amazing achievement of 60 years of taxi building at a time when companies are bought and sold like toys. Ask their staff what LTI are like as employers and the answer from most is they are the best. LTI's longevity is remarkable and **Call Sign** wishes them a happy diamond birthday...

## CABVISION IN RETEC BUY-UP

Multi-channel marketing services company, Retec Digital, which counts Asda, Sainsbury's and Tesco among its clients, has bought Liquid Digital Ltd for £250,000 in cash and shares.

Liquid Digital is a multi-media creative agency that designs and operates screen networks in the digital media market. Its main customers are WH Smith Travel, where it operates an in-store screen network and Transmedia, where it operates the **Cabvision** entertainment screens in London taxis.

Retec Chief executive **John Cole** said the acquisition would allow Retec to develop its strong position in the digital media market.

Transmedia Director, **Nigel West**, told **Call Sign** that the deal would make no difference to **Cabvision** or the service it provides to the drivers...

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# DaC and Tree Planting in Kenya



Planting young saplings in the Kenyan fields



A DaC planting co-ordinator at work

In the January *Call Sign*, this mag wrote of *Dial-a-Cab* teaming 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. The claim was that every journey undertaken by *Dial-a-Cab* would become Carbon Footprint free with any carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions made, being offset to zero. Many drivers have since asked us what has happened. Here is an update...

*Dial-a-Cab* is indeed continuing to sponsor Kenya's *Escarpment Environment Conservation Network* (ESCONET)'s programme of reforestation in the Great Rift Valley area of the country. We've all seen and been shocked and saddened at the reports of civil unrest in Kenya since the elections earlier this year.

But now *Dial-a-Cab* are delighted to let their clients and subscribers know that our Kenya team and their families are all safe and that the planting programme has resumed. At the recent tree planting launch, the Kenyan Army joined forces with *Dial-a-Cab's* Kenyan local community team and within just 3 days had already planted over 10,000 trees, which will help to abate climate change as well as providing socio-economic benefits of assisting communities to develop land management skills to sustain their environment and also to address poverty.

The Kenya tree planting programme forms part of DaC's programme and commitment to abate climate change, along with *Carbon Footprint Ltd* – the leading carbon management solutions provider.

Over the year, *Dial-a-Cab* will offset the entire emissions of its operations via a series of carefully chosen and internationally recognised programmes. That means DaC will be planting over 1,200 trees in Kenya and another 600 trees in the London area. In addition, DaC's sponsoring of an Indian wind farm project will avoid in excess of an additional 3,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, *Carbon Footprint's* Managing Director, **John Buckley** told *Call Sign*:

**"We are all relieved that peace is returning to Kenya and delighted to see a return to the tree planting activities. Now – more than ever – *Dial-a-Cab's* support of the programme is making a highly tangible difference to community morale and to future prospects for sustainable growth, as well as tackling climate change."**

DaC Chairman, **Brian Rice**, told *Call Sign* of his pride at the tree planting resumption:

**"We were very concerned at the possibility of civil unrest in Kenya, but are now delighted to see that**

**peace seems to be returning. Certainly the Kenyan tree planters look very happy and resplendent in their DaC tops and we are very proud to be associated with *Carbon Footprint Ltd* and the *Escarpment Environment Conservation Network Programme*."**

*You can visit *Carbon Footprints* website and among other things, calculate your own carbon footprint, whilst at the same time learn how to reduce or offset it: [www.carbonfootprint.com](http://www.carbonfootprint.com).*

## LTFUC NEED DRIVERS FOR SOUTHEND OUTING

**The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children** still need drivers to help make their 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary outing to Southend-on-Sea on 9 July a fun-packed and wonderful day out for 300 special needs and disadvantaged children. As well as giving a great deal of pleasure to so many needy children, you will have a brilliant day yourself.

All drivers are welcome, whether they have radio circuit logos, liveries, coloured taxis or ads. If you have never helped out at our outings before, we promise to make you very welcome.

**The date is Wednesday 9 July 2008**

This year, the best decorated taxi on the Southend outing will also be considered for entry into the 2008 Lord Mayor's parade.

Remember, without you there are no outings. Please contact the Fund's Drivers' Liaison, Susan Angel, on 07958 280881 or leave your details on the Volunteer page of our website at [www.ltfuc.org.uk](http://www.ltfuc.org.uk)

The Hon. President, Hon. Chairman and Committee (and the children) would be deeply grateful and look forward to seeing you on the day.

*"None Walks so Tall as he who Stoops to Help a Child"*



Can you help and be a part of this?  
Pic Martyn Lewis



# STEVE NORRIS IS BACK!

With the election of Boris Johnson as Mayor of London, one of his quieter appointments has been that of Steve Norris. The former Tory Minister of Transport for London has been asked by the new Mayor to coordinate between the TfL board and that of the London Development Agency (LDA). We asked Steve to give us a brief résumé of how he saw the position? He told *Call Sign*:

**"I am very much looking forward to my new role helping Mayor Johnson sort out the utter mess left to him by his predecessor and moving transport forward in London. He has asked me specifically to ensure that the work of TfL and the LDA is sensibly co-ordinated. These two bodies both have very large budgets and it is vital that they work together if we are to ensure best value for council tax payers.**

**Turning specifically to the licensed taxi trade, it is the Mayor who sets the**

**strategy and I don't want in any way to anticipate what he might say, but you will already know from his election manifesto that he is committed to the abolition of the six monthly test as being unreasonably bureaucratic and expensive. There are a number of other detailed issues we will want to engage on, but speaking personally, my biggest concern as someone who has known the trade intimately for nearly twenty years, is that the profession is ageing rapidly. There are simply not enough young people coming through to replace those nearing retirement.**

**That is a real threat to one of London's greatest assets and I will be looking carefully at anything we can do which will improve that position. As the board of Transport for London takes shape, no doubt the constructive dialogue between TfL, the PCO and the trade will continue**



Steve Norris: Working with the Mayor

**and flourish."**

Steve Norris never courted popularity when as a Minister he introduced a Green Paper for the licensing of private hire, but there can be no doubt that no one other than a taxi driver knows our business better than he. It certainly bodes for interesting times...

## After Electric and Hydrogen Taxis...

### *Now a cab that runs on tap water?*

Within weeks of announcing the first electric cab (May *Call Sign*, page 30), a consortium of companies have announced the first fleet of zero-emission 'black' cabs that will be ready to ply for hire before the London Olympics in 2012. The consortium consists of international fuel cell maker *Intelligent Energy*, auto manufacturer *Lotus Engineering*, vehicle testing firm *TRW Conekt*... and of course *LTI*.

**But following that announcement comes news of the race to commercially produce the first vehicle able to run just on ordinary tap water!**

Swiss Based Company, *Ethos*, are said to be working closely in conjunction with Daniel Dingle, one of the first people in the world to convert his car to run on ordinary tap water. That was back in 1968 and now *Ethos* have set up a new foundation to help bring the

"invention" to the world. However, they have competition from the Japanese in the race to produce a first water powered car.

Japanese company *Genepax* has announced an eco-friendly car that runs on nothing but water. It has an energy generator that extracts hydrogen from the water that is poured into the car's tank. The generator then releases electrons that produce electric power to run the car. They now plan to work with Japanese manufacturers to mass-produce it. Could it work in a cab? Why not???



### WITNESS NEEDED

**Could anyone who witnessed an incident involving a DaC driver (N47) and 3 others on the morning of Sunday 15 June at about 0400 in Knightsbridge outside Mr Chow's restaurant, please contact N47 on 07960 074 288. Police attended and various cabs stopped to offer assistance, but no contact details were obtained at time. Taxi was a thistle blue TXII Gold, reg LR05 ULF. Many thanks...**

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Earlier this year, DaC driver **Craig Barker (O96)**, wrote to **Call Sign** asking us to assist in getting drivers to sign his online petition to the Prime Minister regarding the use of CCTV against taxi drivers whilst in the course of their work.

Craig told us at the time: "More and more drivers are getting PCNs from Westminster Council's stealth smart cars with their fixed cameras. My brother and I have set up a petition against receiving remotely issued parking tickets (CCTV). All you need is a computer, email address and two minutes of your time. The more people that sign, the more notice the powers-that-be will take. Perhaps this may seem futile, but if you don't sign we will never know. At the very least it will again raise awareness of the problem in the corridors of Whitehall. Please pass on the message. The more signatures, the more chance of a solution..."

**Call Sign** passed the request onto the trade press in addition to publishing details of how to add your name to the petition. Most papers – in addition to this mag - published **Call Sign's** press release,

# Downing St replies to CCTV petition...

yet out of some 25,000 drivers – less those not on computer - just 335 bothered to put themselves out. The Prime Minister's office has now looked at the petition. This is their response, but with just 335 apparently interested, it isn't worth going any further...



10 DOWNING STREET

## From the office of the Prime Minister

On 31 March 2008, new legislation and Statutory Guidance on civil parking enforcement undertaken by local traffic authorities came into force. It aims to strengthen and harmonise civil enforcement throughout England on a firm but fair basis and addresses the issues raised in this petition.

The Government's Statutory Guidance to local traffic authorities on civil parking enforcement already makes it clear that CCTV should only be used where enforcement is difficult or sensitive and on-street enforcement is not practical. In

particular, CCTV should not be used where permits or exemptions (such as resident permits or Blue Badges) not visible to the equipment may apply. It also says that the exercise of discretion should, in the main, rest with 'back office' staff considering challenges to Penalty Charge Notices, so as to protect Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) from allegations of inconsistency or favouritism or suspicion of bribery.

Other guidance stresses the importance of CEOs having a clear understanding of the loading and unloading rules (where that is permitted); and of observing a vehicle for an appropriate period to establish whether a contravention has occurred. This applies equally to on-street and CCTV enforcement, but the latter offers the advantage of video evidence of the incident. The procedures for making representations to the authority against a Penalty Charge Notice and for appealing to the independent Traffic Penalties Tribunal or Parking and Traffic Appeals Service are the same for on-street and CCTV enforcement.

The circumstances in which an obstruction would be caused is also already recognised: a 'no stopping' restriction such as a red route will be applied in such cases, whereas the standard 'no waiting' restrictions allow loading and unloading.

## DAC SHIRTS AVAILABLE



**Vic at Roman Way with his DaC shirt and Logo**

We have had drivers showing interest in the short-sleeved shirts that the staff at Roman Way are now wearing. If any drivers are interested, we can get the shirts for £10.16 each (incl VAT). This includes the Dial-a-Cab logo on the left breast.

The shirts are from *Alexandra*, the company that supplies all major companies with their corporate wear.

They come in grey, white, pale blue or lilac and are 70% cotton / 30% polyester. Collar sizes are 14½ up to 19½ ...

**Tom Whitbread**

## 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

**Salieri Restaurant**

**376 Strand, WC2**

**Reservations: 020 7836 1318**



**DaC Sales Exec Natalie Ezekiel keeps Call Sign readers informed with updates...**

## ***Natalie's Hot Gossip From the Sales Dept...***

*Hi all...*

What a month May has been, with business - just like the weather - up and down. Despite the fact that there have been 2 Bank holidays, school half term and the media constantly telling us that jobs and spending cuts are being made across the corporate sector, we are still receiving account applications and have opened over 40 new accounts this month (2 a day) ... not bad!

In my last report, I told you I had been busy with a number of proposals. I've been invited by two of these companies to attend the second stage and hope to hear soon and will let you know how we get on.

Another proposal I completed at the very beginning of the year was for an existing client whose contract was due to end in March. This was EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development). After submitting the proposal, Account Manager

Stewart Byrne and myself were asked to attend a follow-up meeting and I'm happy to announce that we have retained their business and the contract has been extended. Other proposals that have been submitted over the past months are still on-going.

Back in April, Denise Zemba - Account Manager for JPMorgan - and myself were asked to participate in their travel show, which we attend twice a year. Joining us this year was the DaC Director of IT John Bankes, together with our MIS Administrator Jason O'Brien. Dial-a-Cab Chairman Brian Rice also paid a visit.

All kinds of suppliers attend - from catering to airlines - and as always we were delighted to take part. The basis for this is to meet PAs, Secretaries and Heads of Departments to ensure they are fully aware of how to use our On-line Booking System, how to generate MIS Data and to ensure they are taking full advantage of all the services we provide. The event

also gives JP Morgan staff a chance to meet with their Account Manager and to discuss any service issues or queries.

Apart from the giveaways, we ran a prize quiz on London. All completed entries were put into a draw and the winner was given a very nice prize. As always, it was a great success and the Dial-a-Cab stand was extremely popular.

Hopefully, the next time you hear from me, work would have picked-up following the two Bank holidays and news of the outstanding proposals will be reported....

*Until next time*

**Natalie**



### **Prototype Taxis**

Well, we have a new Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, who has said - indeed promised - that he will do away with that twice yearly money maker for some... sorry I mean the twice yearly safety examinations or overhauls! Boris has also announced TfL's part in a £million project to fund work on a hybrid, stop-go taxi for London.

This has been examined and worked on in the past by some of Europe and Japan's largest automotive groups in the 70s, 80s and 90s. So far, with the same results and conclusions.

**These systems, and those prototype taxis, could not be made to stand up to the demands of the real life strains endured by the taxis of London. Also, and at the same time, comply with the conditions of fitness required by the PCO!**

An additional and very important factor to the automotive groups was that the numbers didn't add up. They would be unable to make any money as the costs of producing, together with finance needed to support and fund the projected high costs of meeting warranty claims for these hybrid taxis, was so high. In addition, the retail selling price would also have to be massively subsidised if they were to be competitive with the standard London LTI built taxicab. So they would lose money on every new taxi sold and even so, these new breed of taxis would still cost far more to buy, maintain and operate than the traditional London taxi.

But everyone knows better and more about taxis than London's thousands of taxi owner-drivers and operators. That is why we are seldom asked what we want or what could be done to make a better taxi. And as for asking the mechanics that maintain, repair and service our taxis, well

**"Sunset Strip" handed his badge and bill back to the PCO after 50 years - much of it with ODRTS. These are more of his memories...**

## **FIFTY GREEN YEARS...**

that would be far too obvious, wouldn't it?

In the bad / good old days, none of us were asked, or even listened to. At least now, since the early 1990s, LTI have implemented a 'Listening programme' - to which many *Call Sign* drivers have been to - and to many owner-drivers surprise, they do seem to listen... well some of the time!

To explain in more detail, I am going to ask Alan Fisher if he will let me tell you about the EuroTaxi that was to be based on a Volkswagen and another that was built as a prototype utilising a small capacity

Daihatsu diesel engine to act as an electricity generator to supply motive power to an ultra-low emissions taxi. This was imaginatively called the EuroElec Taxi project. Both these projects started life in the 1980s, as did the Metro-Cammell-Weymann Metrocab, which in its original production version had exhaust emissions that would never be acceptable or passable today, though its emissions turned out to be the least of its problems...

**Sunset Strip**

## **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...?**

**Call us on 020 8522 4503**

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  
1968

**We think fuel prices are expensive now, but in 1968 they were also worried when a 2d (1p) budget increase pushed petrol up to 2/1d (just under 11p a gallon or 2.5p per litre)...**

## From ODRTS News Magazine, July 1968:

### Martin Gellman's PRO Report...

Do you ever stop to think how much the public rely on us and what a catastrophe it can be if they are sitting at home at the start of their holidays needing a cab to get to the station, or perhaps are dressed up for what may well be a rare evening out to celebrate some occasion or other and then they receive a call from us saying: "Sorry, no cab in the area?"

Now I know it is not possible to cover every job, but I feel we could cover a far greater proportion than we do. I am also aware that we are all on radio to make it pay and there is a limit to how far one can run for a job. But I sometimes feel that you are not aware that you are entitled to run in with four shillings on the meter on all jobs and do not need to ask the dispatcher's permission. For example, if you are at Euston Station and a job is called in St. John's Wood High Street going to Paddington, you may feel that it would be ridiculous to run for it. But in point of fact, all you would be doing is running to Mornington Crescent and then setting your meter in motion – from there to the High Street goes no more than four shillings (*2008 Ed's note: 4 shillings = 20p*). So the job is really Mornington Crescent to Paddington.

Although it would appear that we have no legal obligation to fulfil these bookings, we certainly have a moral one.

I recently picked up a similar job and had 4/- on the meter when the passenger got into my cab and with the 2/- tip I received at the end of the journey (which is not unusual), I received £1 for the job. Not bad! A few of those and you are laughing.

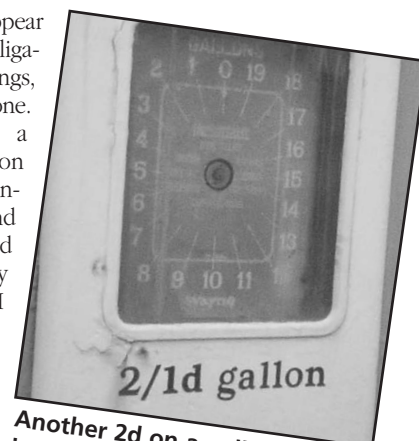
It would seem from my observations over the years that it is becoming more and more difficult to cover work outside the West End. It certainly isn't because the 'minis' have taken it away from us – on the contrary, it is we who are giving the work to them by our worsening service.

Concentrating our activities into a smaller and smaller area is not only stupid, but fraught with danger. Please think about it.

### Derv increase

The cost of derv has shot up once again and before long will catch up to that of petrol – now at an astronomical 2/1d a gallon (*2008 Ed's note: 10p*). Why the chancellor felt he had to put another 2d in tax on a gallon is beyond me. It will soon be cheaper to stay at home!

**Martin Gellman (C47) O.D.R.T.S. P.R.O.**



Another 2d on a gallon pushes it up to 2/1d

## Dennis Severs House in Folgate Street, Spitalfields...

# YOU EITHER SEE IT OR YOU DON'T!

Long-time **Dial-a-Cab** drivers will remember driving through Folgate Street as a cut-through between Commercial Street and Norton Folgate on your way to Liverpool Street. Folgate Street now has a barrier to stop drivers driving through.

But if you and your partners, children and even friends want to see something really special at a time when planners are turning our City into a glass and concrete jungle, take a trip back in time to visit **Dennis Severs' House** at **18 Folgate Street** and see a house that has been untouched by time. Let your imagination take you back to the periods between 1724 and 1914 and see 10 rooms that time has forgotten and which remain as a virtual time capsule.

Dennis Severs was an artist from California who came to London and the house in 1979. He had the 10 rooms refurbished from different periods of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries – and all as though the families had just left them. As the guide will tell you; **you either see it or you don't** (*aut visum aut non*). But if you allow your senses to be your guide, this piece of lost London – a house that is still lived in – will astonish you.

**A real treat are the Monday evening tours (not on bank hols) when the window shutters are closed and as it was originally, the house is lit purely by candlelight. Booking is a necessity and the**

**price is £12.**

There are also tours on the first and third Sunday of each month between 12 and 4pm. – which makes this month's on July 6 and 20. The Sunday tours are £8 and no booking is required.

**Details and bookings on 020 7247 4013 or visit [www.dennissevershouse.co.uk](http://www.dennissevershouse.co.uk)**



## 2-BEDROOM SPANISH VILLA FOR RENT

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



- ★ Sleeps 4 - 6
- ★ two bathrooms
- ★ upstairs terrace
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many local bars-restaurants – ideal golfing weekend – 9 courses within 30 mins (including Polaris World) – 20 mins Murcia airport – very clean villa

**Prices from £225 (includes final clean) OR £199 golf weekend (Thurs-Mon)**

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With great relief to many, we have a new London mayor in Boris Johnston and I think congratulations are in order to the London cab trade as a whole for getting Ken Livingstone replaced. During the run-up to the elections, we were mentioned on many TV and radio programmes and even at the dispatch box in the House of Commons. Yes, it was a well-known fact that some 24,000 London cab drivers were canvassing against the old mayor. Well let's hope Boris now delivers and treats us with a higher regard than Ken Livingstone ever did.

With the cost of diesel soaring to an estimated £1.50 a litre (£6.82 a gallon) by October, things are looking very serious. When diesel was 89.9p per litre, it cost about 16p a mile to drive a taxi that covered 25 mph. With prices at 1.22 per litre, that cost increased to 23p per mile. Not much you may think, but if you travel 150 miles a day that's an extra £10.50 and over a 20-day month, a staggering £210 increase! Considering the *extra* weight per passenger causing *extra* fuel usage, perhaps we should get the *extras* back? Buses get a fuel rebate because they are running a service, but that doesn't seem to apply to us. Something needs to be done or I, like many, could end up having to get the train into work.

A few months ago I was asked to take part in two programmes, one for Channel 4 and one for BBC2, regarding the life of a London Taxi driver. The first interview was done on tape for the *Dispatches* programme with all the usual questions. It didn't take long to be asked how much I earned and I answered: "It depends how much you want to work. You can live in a council flat along the Highway and work a few hours or own a £750k house in Chigwell and spend most of your time in the cab. It really is up to you." The interviewer said that she never gets a straight answer that gives any figures and why was that? I answered "privacy probably." She said that most cab drivers were a bit paranoid when it came to earnings and that the taxi trade had the view that everyone was out to get them. Surprisingly I didn't make the programme!

As for BBC 2, I was asked to do the interview with Dan Snow at the Pont Street shelter one Saturday morning. The day before, a researcher phoned to confirm the time etc and slipped in that they might ask about money and what you earn. My response was that I wasn't prepared to speak about it. She said that was ok and she would tell the producer. I met up with Dan Snow at Pont Street with another DaC driver. During the interview I was asked what I earned with the producer demanding a figure. I just agreed with the other driver's point of view and afterwards mentioned to the researcher what had been agreed. It was then I was told that the interview was for a programme called *What Britain Earns*. It took me a few weeks, but I got an apology from the producer and a written agreement that they would not show the questions about money in the interview. I don't have anything to hide, but didn't think it prudent to discuss my personal finances in front of 2.3 million people. Again I didn't make the programme, so what a waste of

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...



time it was! I was supposed to be taking part in a charity event that afternoon, so I did have something better to do. It seems that the days when a reputable company like the BBC would be upfront when it comes to integrity are long gone. These programmes are commissioned now and things have changed. I don't think the London Taxi trade are at all paranoid, but more that the media in general are obsessed about what we earn.

A few years back, I had a 3am start working at New Covent Garden Market collecting fruit and veg from the sellers, taking it to a nearby railway arch, preparing orders for customers and then doing deliveries around town. I noticed that the best quality produce never made it to market, but was sold direct from growers to supermarkets – who also grew it themselves. If you buy from *Waitrose* or *M&S*, the food quality is of a premium but you have to pay for it. A company like Cape would demand a huge deposit before sending over fruit from South Africa to London wholesalers. I always take notice of quality and value for money whilst food shopping and always read the labels. In recent years, food labelling has become the norm, giving customers vital information about what they are eating and its calorific values. If you're like me, a foodie who is always on a diet, these labels are essential. But you have to be careful of misleading info. Some labels give the calories for an item in 100 grams and when you look it appears low in fat, but then when the weight of the item is shown, say 250g, you have to times it by two and a half thus making that item full of fat. If an item doesn't have nutritional info on it, don't buy it because the manufacturers are probably too embarrassed to show the results i.e. when do you ever see signs saying low fat doner kebabs or doughnuts!

What has come down in price over recent years is beers, wines and spirits. Supermarkets have done well in giving customers good value for money, however in doing so have come under fire for encourag-

ing binge drinking in young people. I thought the idea of bringing down the price of booze was to make prices compatible with the EU, thus relieving the pressure on *Customs and Excise* with smuggling from abroad decreasing as margins lowered. So in the budget, tax gets raised on booze across the board because the Chancellor is not getting enough tax revenue compared to what he used to with prices reduced, but uses the excuse that it helps curb binge drinking in young people! These days, politicians aren't even bothering to make up good excuses. To me, one simple way of stopping underage drinking would be to raise the drinking age limit from 18 to 21...

*If you want to get in touch, it's Richard Potter in the subject line and send to [callsignmag@aol.com](mailto:callsignmag@aol.com).*

**Richard Potter (T51)**

## DIESEL COSTS SINCE 1996



Remember feeling horrified that diesel was almost £1 per litre? It has now climbed another 30%

**With the cost of diesel going ever upwards, Call Sign has looked back through its files at the cost of diesel over the past 12 years...**

1st June 1996	- 51.9p per litre	- £2.36 per gallon
1st June 1997	- 54.9p per litre	- £2.50 per gallon
1st June 1998	- 65.9p per litre	- £3.00 per gallon
1st June 1999	- 72.9p per litre	- £3.31 per gallon
1st June 2000	- 81.9p per litre	- £3.72 per gallon
1st June 2001	- 77.9p per litre	- £3.54 per gallon
1st June 2002	- 75.9p per litre	- £3.45 per gallon
1st June 2003	- 77.5p per litre	- £3.52 per gallon
1st June 2004	- 89.0p per litre	- £4.05 per gallon
1st June 2005	- 89.7p per litre	- £4.08 per gallon
1st June 2006	- 96.9p per litre	- £4.41 per gallon
1st June 2007	- 97.9p per litre	- £4.45 per gallon
*1st June 2008	- 128.9p per litre	- £5.86 per gallon

\*Of the 128.9p, 50p is duty and 19p is vat = 69p per litre

© Call Sign Magazine

There can be no distinction following the death of any Dial-a-Cab driver, all are equally sad. However, the tragic and sudden death of **Jim Wilson (V44)** has left many drivers and staff in shock.

Jim had been on DaC for over three years and according to his cousin, **Steve Sharpe (N25)**, absolutely loved it.

"He'd tell every driver not on here, how great it was," Steve told **Call Sign**. "he used to go out at 5am – sometimes even earlier - but always said that so long as his terminal worked, the time would fly."

Steve went on to tell **Call Sign** about the events leading to Jim's premature death on June 9, following a massive heart attack in his garden several days earlier at the young age of 46.

"He undoubtedly lived a stressful life," said Steve, "but was very fit. He went to the gym most days after work, but was devoted to Maxine and other than work and the gym, spent all his time caring for her and doing the housework etc. But he never complained because he loved Maxine and always said that no one else could look after her like he could. His one big problem was in finding it difficult to sleep and I don't suppose that would have helped his stress level."

Steve's voice filling with emotion, he explained why Jim had to look after Maxine and of the tragedies that had followed the family, which we all hope have now left them in peace to grieve.

Jim's wife, Maxine, was given 6 months to live 8 years ago following the discovery of a brain tumour, but has confounded doctors by still being alive. However, she couldn't have coped without having Jim as a carer.

Jim's brother Danny, also a DaC driver, died exactly 7 years ago to the day that Jim died. He was already looking after the young child that he and his wife had three months before

# The Tragedy of DaC's Jim Wilson



**Jim and daughter Lucy**

she too died, several years earlier, following a brain tumour. The young child went to Jim and Danny's parents to be raised and is still with his grandparents today.

Maxine and Jim's two grown up children, son James and daughter Lucy, together with all the family are rallying round to help Maxine cope with life.

To send condolences almost sounds trite, but we have no doubt that everyone who

reads this story will share a small piece of this family's grief and hope that with Jim's death, the tide of sadness will have moved away.

On behalf of Jim's family, Steve asked us to thank DaC for their concern and flowers and also Nuala in Driver Services for providing a sympathetic ear.

Jim Wilson was cremated at the North East Surrey crematorium, but his memory will remain. RIP...

## GARY'S DAC TAXI CATCHES FIRE ON M25!

At some time or another whilst sitting at traffic signals waiting for the green light to appear, many taxi drivers have suddenly thought there was smoke coming from under the bonnet, only to find that it actually emanated from the exhaust of the old banger in front!

It was a quiet Saturday morning when Dial-a-Cab driver **Gary Johnston (A97)** pulled off at junction 9 of the M25 in his TX2 on his way to visit a friend who had a few horses based at Epsom and he stopped at some traffic lights. He saw smoke billowing from the front of the cab and his first thought was that it had to be from the exhaust of the car in front of him. But he got out to look and saw flames under the TX2. Within minutes, the whole cab was on fire!

The fire brigade arrived within 8 minutes, but it was too late for Gary's trusty cab. It had totally burned out. Within an hour, rumours were received back at DaC concerning the cab and Chinese whispers suggested that the cab had hit a lorry, rolled over and the driver had been decapitated! Happily no such accident occurred, but had Gary not left the cab when he did, in



**Gary's burnt out cab**  
**Inset: The driver's compartment**



Gary's words to **Call Sign**: "I'd have ended up with an over-the-top sun tan!"

Gary added that the journey on the M25 had been trouble-free and that the cab had been running beautifully.

"But," he said, "when I spoke to the fire brigade after they'd put out the smouldering fire of the taxi's remains, they thought that it was the wind rush of travelling on the motorway that kept the flames

down until I pulled off and had to stop. Then the

whole thing just went up!"

When Tom Whitbread recovered the terminal, he told **Call Sign** that not only was Gary's terminal burnt out, but Gary's seat had also gone up and had Gary not got out to look, he would have had no chance.

Gary's last word to **Call Sign** was that in the end, no one was hurt and he is now driving another TX2 on DaC and it was just one of life's experiences.

Some experience...!



## As the UK enjoyed a bank holiday weekend...

Although it's July as you read this, if you worked overnight on the early May bank holiday weekend beginning on the evening of Friday 2 May and were looking to add some credit work to a notoriously quite period, you would have been unlucky.

At 2215, a sudden power surge shook Dial-a-Cab House. Although it was spotted, everything continued working as normal and a joint sigh of relief was heard in the East Road building.

Then in the very early hours - at 00.19 on Saturday 3 May to be precise - a further four electrical power surges hit the building, which proved to be a bit too much even for our fail-safe system. The dispatching system went down along with all the telephones.

Within an hour or so, the normally sedate overnight surroundings of DaC House were overtaken by a string of arrivals more usually seen during daylight hours. Chairman Brian Rice, who hadn't been home for more than a few hours, left his leafy Hampshire abode and drove back to East Road. Also called in was Call Centre Manager Keith Cain, IT Manager John Bankes and Jonathon Winterburn, DaC's Network Administrator.

By 3.30am, DaC had managed to get the telephone system up and running, but couldn't do anything about the despatching system. However, the team did spot the parts that had been damaged by the power surge and contacted the company about picking up the

# For DaC it's a BLANK holiday!



Dial-a-Cab House returns to normal after its first anniversary weekend goes blank!

parts - only to find that unlike DaC, they do not do UK deliveries on weekends and that we would have to deal with them in Belgium to get any service! DaC had little choice but to do that.

Eventually the parts arrived and after one unsuccessful attempt, on the second go - at around 14.30 hrs on Saturday afternoon - the despatch system was finally restored.

Throughout the night, whenever a driver phoned in to ask why they couldn't sign on, DaC took their mobile phone number, sent them to a fixed point paying them an hourly waiting rate to go on standby and when a credit job was taken in their zone, they were phoned back and given details of it. They were, of course, paid for the job in addition to the waiting time. Few of the drivers realised that the person at the other end of the phone was often Brian Rice!

Perhaps the most fortunate part was that it happened overnight on a quiet bank holiday weekend, otherwise it could have been rather hairy! Why the surges came, *Call Sign* has been unable to find out, however it also

knocked out the phone systems of several large companies in the area.

Brian Rice told *Call Sign* after the emergency was finally sorted out and some 37 hours after first waking up on that eventful Friday morning - several hours earlier than usual as he was scheduled to make a presentation to a member of the night staff:

"I would like to thank night dispatcher Dave Ivers for staying late and teaching me how to use the *Aspect* system and to Jon Winterburn, John Bankes (who also happened to be unwell) and Keith Cain for also spending the night here. In addition, can I also thank Allan Evans and Andy Parry for coming in on that Saturday and also to all the Call Centre staff who performed magnificently under very traumatic conditions. If I have neglected to thank everyone that I should have, I am sure they will forgive me - I'm now also going home to bed!"

Amazingly, that same bank holiday weekend last year saw the same unexpected guests in the building - it was the weekend we moved from Brunswick House!

## Revised Subscriptions

At a recent Board meeting, it was agreed that monthly subscriptions should be increased.

However, it was also agreed that to reduce the impact of the increase to members, the implementation date should be deferred until 1st September 2008.

The revised monthly subscription rates are as follows: -

### Members'

£124.00 (£145.70 inc VAT)

### Second Drivers'

£67.00 (£78.72 inc VAT)

### Third Drivers'

£21.00 (£24.67 inc VAT)

### Journeyman\*

£124.00 (£145.70 inc VAT)

\*A driver who drives a member's taxi exclusively.

Howard Pears  
Company Secretary



## POWER PILL IS BACK!

**Call Sign finds another Power Pill supplier!**

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**Pay via PayPal [ziggystardust1000@hotmail.com](mailto:ziggystardust1000@hotmail.com)**

**(Enter promo code DAC 10)**



Charlton Athletic Football Club was the venue for *The Albany Taxi Charity Fund* outing to Hastings. 250 children and their carers found the sun shining brightly and cabs decorated as they enjoyed breakfast before the convoy departed. The first time this trip went to Hastings was back in 1992 and since then it has grown every year. This year was no exception and thanks to generosity from sponsors, even more children with special needs from South East London schools and clubs enjoyed a traditional day out at the seaside, taken in a convoy of more than 70 taxis.

On the outskirts of Hastings, the taxis pulled into a large supermarket much to the amazement of some of the shoppers, and were greeted by the Mayor and Mayoress, the Chairman of the Licensed Victuallers in Hastings and an array of cartoon characters. The convoy then continued down through the town where everyone was waving to the visitors and finally amassed in a car park near the beach where the local Fire Brigade were waiting to greet them. The excited children were keen to get out of the taxis and enjoy their day!

Down on the south coast, the 1066 L.V.A. publicans raise funds throughout the year to sponsor this event. The fun-fair at Stade Amusements, the Aquarium, Hastings Caves, Hastings Museum and the RNLI all opened their doors freely to those on the trip and it wasn't long before the children were enjoying the funfair. The looks on the faces of the children is what this outing is all about and it was clear everyone was having a good time.

At 3.30pm everyone returned to their taxis and the convoy made its way back through the town of Hastings, once again waved on by the shoppers and residents. At the Phoenix Art Centre, Parkstone Road, there was a disco and tea party for the young guests. The hall had been decorated and soon everyone was enjoying their food and drinks. The Mayor and Mayoress came along to join the fun, talking to the children and their carers as well as the taxi drivers. All too soon, the afternoon came to an end and the tired, happy children got back into their taxis for the return journey back to London.

During the afternoon's event, everyone was thanked for all the hard work they had put into making this day possible. The Albany Committee had organised yet another very successful trip and it had been made possible by the continuing support from their friends in Hastings.

There was a presentation to Derek Pearson who has decided the time has come to retire from his role as Secretary of the charity. The charity is extremely grateful to Derek, and his wife, for all their dedication and the wonderful work they have done over the years. Derek, who has been a green badge holder since October 1973, has been involved

# *The Albany Takes Special Needs Children To Hastings*



**The kids and carers enjoying Hastings**

with The Albany Charity for many years and been on the Committee for 31 years. Derek passed on his good wishes to Claire Hughes who is taking over as Secretary.

Grateful thanks go to all the sponsors and those who helped make this outing possible and in particular to Ascotts Cabs for sponsoring the fuel. If you would

like any more information about The Albany Charity or would like to become involved with the outings they undertake, please contact Claire Hughes by telephone 07932 495257, or for further information visit the Albany website on [www.albany-charity.org.uk](http://www.albany-charity.org.uk).

**Sandie Goodwin**

## **Executive 6 Bedroom Villa in Florida**

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



The new Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, is showing that he wasn't just trying to grab extra votes when courting the licensed taxi trade during the run-up to the Mayoral elections. Among the promises he made were to get rid of the half-yearly "safety check" and to look at the problem of touting in the capital.

Following a tour of London's hot touting spots, Mr Johnson has said that he will ask Transport for London and the Metropolitan Police to press ahead with plans to crack down on illegal cabs and to remove touts from the streets of London.

The Mayor said: "There are taxi touts on the streets of the capital every night. They circle the hot spots of London to hunt their prey - innocent Londoners enjoying a good night out who may not be aware that these vehicles are not properly insured and pose a real danger to anyone tempted to use them."

He added that he has asked his team to press ahead with plans to tackle these "tyrants".

"I am determined to ensure that every man and woman in this city can feel safe when they travel around London," he said. "From the moment they leave their home to the moment they return, they should be able to travel in confidence. Removing touts from our streets will be another step in the right direction."

# Touting: Just one strike and you're out!

## *And it's licensed Taxis too...*

So how does he intend going about the job that so many have tried and failed at? A good start is the doubling of



**Boris is determined that everyone should feel safe**

statement concerned the 'one strike and you're out' rule because it applies to ANY licensed driver convicted of touting. They would immediately have their licence revoked and although the Mayor was looking for minicab touts, **Call Sign** sources indicate that it would apply to licensed Taxi drivers as well.

Few (except those it applies to) will shed many tears for those taxi drivers who tout for airport rides at hotel side doors, but touting also refers to approaching bus stops to see if anyone is going home your way or parking up with your light out and waiting to be approached by someone who might be going your way. If while driving you respond to a passenger's hail with your light off, you still then have to take them regardless of which direction they want to go otherwise you are guilty of touting.

With most of us never being guilty of any form of touting, it could be that this is our best chance of getting the Mayor's message across that public safety in taxis means getting rid of all touts...

the number of cab enforcement officers from 34 to 68 with more high profile anti-touting operations.

The most controversial part of his

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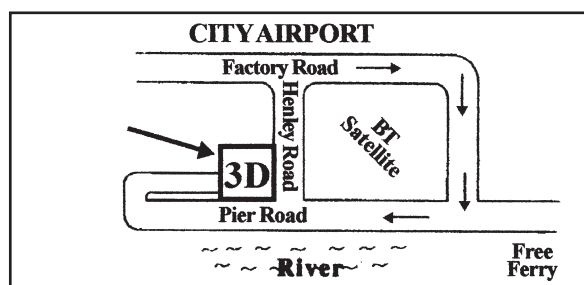
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**To book: Ring Christine on 0207 474 6592 and mention that you are on DaC**

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**LMNT II** is the sister restaurant of the successful and popular LMNT restaurant which opened in Hackney (316 Queensbridge Road) in August 2000.

**LMNT II** is situated at **46 Percival Street, Clerkenwell** on the site of the former Shakespeare's Head pub.

The restaurant, which opened around a year ago, is a little off the beaten track and rather an unlikely location for this type of establishment. So it would need to be good to get word of mouth praise and recommendations.

We visited LMNT II on a Monday night – notorious as the quietest night of the week for restaurants – and sure enough there were very few there, which is a shame as the restaurant is extremely attractive with its neo classical décor. It is split into two main dining areas, one half overlooking the open plan kitchen with a raised private dining area, while the other half contains the bar and a mix of bright ornaments to lighten up the dark wood panels and tables. Relaxing pop opera plays in the background.

We were given a basket of walnut and raisin bread with some hummus to tempt our taste buds while looking through the menu.



**David Kupler (Y74), David Ballard (N28) and Alex Constantinou (N05) are Call Sign's restaurant reviewers. These DaC drivers and their guests will visit restaurants periodically and give their honest opinions. This month David Ballard went to LMNT II in EC1...**

## Eating Out with Call Sign

The starters all looked interesting and we finally settled on the *parmesan and thyme cheesecake* and a light and fluffy *twice baked goats cheese soufflé* that came with apple and walnuts. Both were extremely tasty and well presented and indeed, reasonably priced at £2.95 from lunchtime until 7pm and then £3.95 after that. The *smoked haddock ravioli with leeks and parsley sauce* also sounded tempting, but you can't have everything!

For our main course we ordered *duck en croute with a fruity ginger sauce served on red cabbage* and a *salmon with cauliflower cream on a pea and herb dressing*. Both choices were again nicely presented and more importantly, tasted very nice. Main courses are all priced at £8.95 from lunchtime until 7pm and then £9.95 at evening times.

Certainly Head Chef Slavko Bogdanovic, formerly of Hampstead's New End and the City's Addendum offers some bold-flavoured, Mediterranean dishes that make choosing

rather difficult.

The portions, while ample, are not oversized leaving us room for dessert. Between us we ordered a *chocolate and almond cake with whisky raisins* and a *white chocolate mousse with raspberries and served with a shortbread biscuit*. Both were nice, but the latter had a really nice combination of the sweetness of chocolate contrasting with the sour raspberries.

A bottle of wine at LMNT II starts from as little as £12, with a bottle of beer coming in at just £2.95 – both very reasonable for a restaurant of this type. If you fancy a cocktail, then for a fiver you can sip on a Tutankhamun's Erection, Bleeding Cleopatra or Dragon Fly!

I was also told that Sunday lunch is served all-day, featuring a weekly changing roast joint with potatoes and vegetables for £9.95 alongside the regular menu.

Both my wife and I agree that **LMNT II** is an attractive, high quality restaurant, with a reasonably priced à la carte menu that deserves to do well and I hope that it does...

**David Ballard (N28)**

*LMNT II is open Monday to Friday 12 noon – 3pm and 5pm – 11pm. Saturday 5pm – 11pm, and Sunday from 12 noon – 10.30pm.*

*For more information / reservations call 020 7253 2524 or visit [www.lmnt.co.uk](http://www.lmnt.co.uk)*

## 'Black Cab' Merchandise Goes Live!



**Just some of the items you can now purchase online from LTI**

**LTI Vehicles** has launched an exclusive range of merchandise featuring the iconic London taxi – which seems to have finally lost its battle at being named the black cab!

The **Black Cab Collection** is available online at [www.blackcabgifts.co.uk](http://www.blackcabgifts.co.uk) and through LTI Vehicles main dealer network. Many DaC drivers on **Call Sign** organised trips to LTI's Coventry headquarters have already seen – and indeed purchased – some samples. However, the collection has now grown and includes items such as branded clothing, vehicle accessories and exclusive gifts that range from a golf umbrella to a die-cast taxi model.

Working in partnership with The Corporate Merchandise Company, all products featured online are readily available and are guaranteed to be delivered between two and three working days. New products and special offers will continually be added to the online store.

Rob Laidler, LTI Sales Director told **Call Sign**: "We are pleased to offer taxi drivers and members of the public a range of merchandise that features an internationally recognised symbol of London. Through this special collection, we are able to celebrate our long standing tradition of manufacturing the world famous black cab."

*You can find out more about LTI at [www.lti.co.uk](http://www.lti.co.uk).*

## SMILE



*This month's joke was sent in by David Lessman (D19)*

Wanda's dishwasher stopped working, so she called in a repairman. Since she had to go to work the next day, she told the repairman that she would leave the key under the mat.

"Please fix the dishwasher," she said, "leave the bill on the work surface and I'll send you a cheque. Oh," she added, "by the way, don't worry about my bulldog, he won't bother you."

But whatever you do, do not under ANY circumstances, talk to my parrot! Please, don't talk to my parrot!"

When the repairman arrived at Wanda's apartment the following day, he discovered the biggest, meanest looking bulldog he'd ever seen. But, just as Wanda had said, the dog just lay there on the carpet watching the repairman go about his work. The parrot, however, drove him nuts the whole time with his incessant yelling, cursing and name-calling. Finally, the repairman couldn't contain himself any longer and yelled out:

"Shut up, you stupid, ugly bird!" To which the parrot replied: "Get him, Oliver...!"



# ANTONY'S HAPPY MARRIAGE SECRET!



25 years on and Lauris looks the same! Antony? Not too bad we suppose...

In an era when the longevity of many marriages has been severely tested, it's nice to offer congratulations to a Dial-a-Cab driver and his wife who celebrated 25 years of wedded bliss on June 19. **Antony Hizer (E63)** and his lovely wife **Lauris** met in the school playground when Antony was 16 and Lauris was one week short of being 15.

Three years later they became engaged and another 12 months on they tied the knot

at Grove End Road Synagogue, St Johns Wood, before rushing across to Regents Park where they had the wedding photos taken!

As both fathers of the couple were London cabbies, it was always fairly obvious that Antony would follow in their footsteps and during their courtship he did the Knowledge. Just one month after the wedding, he celebrated by receiving his Green badge at Penton Street. The couple have

two sons, David (23) and Paul (20).

So what is Antony's secret recipe for a long and happy marriage? He explained to an anxious **Call Sign**: "Whenever we have a disagreement, Lauris explains to me why she was right and I was wrong. It seems to work well!"

**Call Sign recently published the true love story of Dial-a-Cab driver Sam and a Californian beauty, Jenny, who met and fell in love on the Internet in 1998. The liaison ended when Sam started seeing other women behind Jenny's back.**

**Now, in 2008, Jenny has written this for Call Sign. In spirit the affair continues...**

## L♥ve On the Internet: *The Epilogue*

### **Thinking about you...**

*I watch the years, the months, the days and the hours go by, and with every second I feel destiny separates us more and more.*

*I think about you... and my body shakes, it's like an invisible force that makes me quiver. In my mind I can see your face and I go across each detail of the same one...*

*Your beautiful blue eyes... when I think about them it fills me with tenderness; Your lips, fathoms of fire that burn mine and as good wine, they intoxicate my soul with a sweet and bitter flavour at the same time...*

*Sweet, because when I kiss them in my mind, it transports me to the most sublimates of worlds. Bitter, because I know I will never be able to kiss them again in my life.*

*Your hair, which I loved to run my fingers through and brush away from your face... Your smile and your laughter... I still*



**Jenny and Sam - it was never to be...**

*remember it so clearly, it was so contagious. You were always making me laugh...*

*If I had the power to change your heart, I would tear off all the passion that's not for me. I would erase all track of confusion so you would think only about me. Just as I am thinking about you right now, my love, and as I will think about you... Until the day I die...*

**I.L.Y. Sam... Always and forever...**

**Jenny**

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

## Kupkake's Korner



### **Why?**

*I've been in this trade for 40 years including my time on the Knowledge, I wonder where I'd be today if I'd have gone to college?*

*It's not the same as it was before but that's cab evolution, I feel the trade has lost a war to TfL's draconian solution.*

*When it suits the Transport Tsar we're a vital part of London's tradition, but now I know they've gone too far with controlling our emissions!*

*There's never a choice of engine type when we purchase our vehicles, now suddenly there's all this hype to suppress those "awful particles".*

*Yet still I see billowing smoke even from brand new cabs, "don't fix if it aint broke" was the advice I always got from my dad.*

*Another thing that's so unfair, even prejudiced and flawed, those Asquiths are exempt I hear - though their engines are Transit Ford!*

*I must spend nigh on around three grand in order to comply, but they're the same, I understand so surely we must ask ... WHY?*

**Kopyright Kupkake 2008**

**Gary Bromelow is a partner and the road traffic expert of Saunders Solicitors who are based in both Aldersgate and Great Titchfield Streets. He will be writing regularly and is happy to answer driver's questions sent via Call Sign...**

# ASK GARY...

## Question:

*If I am waiting to pull out into the main road and a car comes towards the junction I'm at with his left indicator flashing signifying that he intends turning left at that street, can I pull out assuming that his indication is genuine?*

*What if he just did not realise it was on and drives into me as I pull out. Is it my fault or his?*

**Alex Constantinou (N05)**

## Answer:

This is an interesting question because there are two answers. One in *Road Traffic Law* (Criminal Law) and the other relating to *Civil Law* in Tort in respect of *Duty of Care*.

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG\\_070289](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG_070289)

The Highway Code (Link above) sets out the rules regarding signalling.

It takes a pretty commonsense approach that signalling is used to inform other drivers and pedestrians of their intended actions. It quite clearly highlights in these rules not to confuse others and to make sure that your indicators are off after use of them, although at section 104 it indicates that drivers should be aware that signals may not have been cancelled. This shows that there is a legal duty on both.

Any other circumstances would help to find out who is at fault ie was the person with the signal on not looking at the road ahead or were they speeding? Likewise, the person pulling out, did they see the other car slow down as it approached the turn to suggest it was going to turn or pulled out of the junction solely on the fact of the signalling?

So, the simple answer to this question is that there is no clear answer! It will depend on the particular circumstances involved. If you are seeking to come out of a turning, you have to be sure that the vehicle is turning by following the indications given such as indicators followed by slowing to turn etc. If you were to pull out of the turning and the vehicle was in fact going straight and in turn you collide by the other vehicle hitting you, your argument is that the other vehicle was indicating, not keeping a proper look out and going too fast to be able to brake in time to stop and avoid the collision.

There could be a Road Traffic Act prosecution for driving without due care and attention or something similar. As to who, again, it depends on how and who hit whom. It also depends on the approach the police and CPS take. Bear in mind that all the time, you are losing income while the insurance companies are haggling over damages and claims.

The bottom line is to be safe and avoid idiots on the road who do not have the advanced driving skills and knowledge of the licensed 'black' cabbie!



**Gary Bromelow, Saunders Solicitors**

# *Dali: My DaC cab is as clean as you can get!*

## And there's not a trace of water with Sparkling Dri...!

**Dali Kegi (L76)** has been on Dial-a-Cab since 2002 and describes himself as just an average guy.

"When it rains, my cab gets dirty just like everyone else's," he told **Call Sign**, "but I don't like driving a dirty cab when there's no reason and used to wash it quite regularly. But now things are different..."

**It changed for Dali on the day he went to a garage sale and met Matthew Orr. After listening to his description, Dali decided to try a bottle of the car cleaning fluid that Matthew had named as Sparkling Dri.**

"I thought it was worth a try," said Dali, "because according to Matthew this would clean and polish the cab with not a drop of water being needed! Part of me didn't believe it because it doesn't really seem feasible. But I got home and sprayed some *Sparkling Dri* on the cab, not only did it take off the dirt when I rubbed it in lightly with a terry cloth, but when I wiped it off with a clean cloth, it left a polished shine!"

Dali went on to say that he was so delighted with the cleaner that he went back and stocked up with more bottles!

"I'd never heard of it before," said Dali, "and having found it I was scared that I'd run out and have to go back to the old way of washing!"

So has Dali become a partner in the product? "Definitely not," he told us, "I'm just so delighted to have found *Sparkling Dri* that I want as many DaC drivers as possible to know about it!"

**Call Sign** spoke to Matthew Orr who sells it and is also the inventor of the product. He told us that not only would all cleans with *Sparkling Dri* be totally waterless, but there was no danger of the product causing abrasive scratches when being applied. Neither did it contain any silicone, Teflon or any other known harmers to motor vehicle bodies. He also claimed you could do the whole cab in around 20 minutes. In fact, according to Dali, it takes him under 15 minutes!

Editor Alan Fisher also tried *Sparkling Dri*.

"It works," said a delighted Al, "and because you need no water, you can do a wing or door here and there whenever you have a few minutes on your hands!"

*Sparkling Dri* comes in one-litre bottles, which Matthew claims gives around 9 washes that would previously have used 500 gallons of water. At a time



**Dali with his bottle of sparkling Dri and his sparkling DaC taxi**

when Dial-a-Cab are doing all they can to help the environment via our partnership with *Carbon Footprint Ltd*, that means that if every DaC driver used a bottle of *Sparkling Dri*, then every time all 2500 of us cleaned our cabs for those 9 times, between us we would save the astonishing sum of 1.25million gallons of precious water!

**A litre bottle of Sparkling Dri usually costs £19.99, but DaC drivers can get it for the much-reduced price of £11. Call Matthew on 07763 962 422 for details...**



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Standard Service

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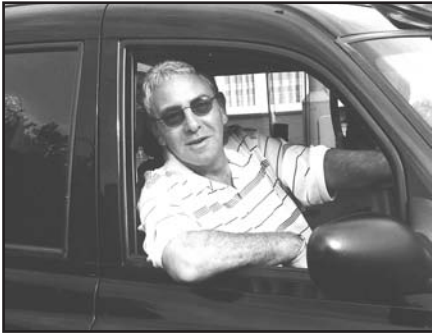
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Never happier than when having a moan, Chas Kissin has...

## AN OCCASIONAL CHAS GRUMP



### Global warming: The answer...

Can somebody please tell me the difference between global warming and climate change, as I am getting very confused? How can the recent increases in fuel and energy - not because of shortages I might add - help the planet? I thought that was Superman's job! However, as Gordon Brown has recently been seen in a Captain Britain comic, perhaps that is Supie's secret identity rather than Clark Kent? And will all these new green taxes help at all? I doubt it. They will only help to alleviate the financial crisis that this government has got us into in the short term and have nothing at all to do with saving the polar bear or the ice caps.

All these scare stories remind me of the story of *The Emperor's New Clothes* syndrome. The story is so widespread now, that to not believe the whole mantra is akin to heresy and even traitorous. Well I for one am sticking my head above the parapet and saying it: I don't believe a word of it...!

If we look back in history, there have always been highs and lows in weather conditions. And this country used to have all four seasons. Now we have milder winters and cooler summers and the only way to tell the difference is that the rain is warmer in the summer. I cannot see why because I may fly to Spain or the USA for my holiday, that I have to plant a tree or the best part of another forest to offset my carbon footprint. And just what is a carbon footprint anyway?

The way I see it is this; over the past one hundred years or so, the world population has doubled, animals and humans produce body heat and that heat rises like cream to the top. Surrounding our world is the ozone layer that stops harmful gasses breaching our world, but it also acts as a buffer, not allowing our body heat escape into the outer zone. This heat therefore has to rebound and so fill up our world, not only the oxygen but the carbon dioxide that we make as well when we exhale. It therefore makes perfect sense to me that we should not cull the seals in the world... but the humans. The only real problem is who decides who will live and who will die? Perhaps we could have a cut-off point as in the film *Logan's Run*, where we are allotted only a certain time on this earth before we are casually euthanized.

What would Superman have done...?

Chas Kissin (P99J)

# Channel Swimmers Almost Ready To Go!



The youngsters are now ready for sea training before swimming the Channel

\*April's *Call Sign* reported on the 15-year old daughter of Dial-a-Cab's **Andrew O'Regan (B92)** who, during July, is going to be part of a team of youngsters who are swimming the English Channel. **Ella O'Regan** wrote to *Call Sign* on behalf of the **Clissold Swimming Club** asking whether we would consider being a sponsor for the club's Channel relay in July. Of course we said yes and Ella has now written to say that they have completed their mock rehearsal - a mere 1,482 lengths of a 25-metre pool in order to reach la mock France! Ella told *Call Sign* after the swim...

"Thanks very much for the article in *Call Sign*, it looked great! The mock swim was a great success; we started off at noon after a couple of photos for local press releases and were then split into 4 teams of 6. We had guest Channel swimmers there as well to show their support and help us along. We swam for up to an hour at a time and cheered on our other teammates the rest of the time! Everyone had to swim twice in order for us to reach 'France' and I was privileged enough to also swim the last hour for my team, which was at around 11pm, to enable us to reach France.

"The day was great, even though it was very hard at times to carry on going. It's not often I push every muscle in my body that hard! I am so proud of our achievement and incredibly grateful to all those, such as *Call Sign*, for donating money to help sponsor us in doing the event. I'm not sure entirely how much money we raised in the end, but I will let you know when I do.

"The mock swim was a great experience, as is the sea training. Now we can't wait for the real thing!"

**Ella O'Regan**

*\*Call Sign's first sponsored Channel swimmer was Robert Lyle (W39) in the September 1998 issue!*

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



# CALL SIGN EN LA BELLE FRANCE

I first met Fred Wrack in New York City in November 1991, his bashed up yellow taxi was ranked up just across the street from my hotel, the *Milford Plaza*. This was Fred's regular rank; it was 2 days before my first Marathon in the big apple. Long after he had set me down at the South Street Seaport, which was that year's venue for runner's registration, we were exchanging cab driver stories from our respective cities.

Five further visits to New York over the years got me the chance to look up Fred and on each occasion he promised to venture 'across the pond' very soon to check out all the sights in London, but that promise was not realised until 17 years on from our first meet – Fred finally got to London last month.

Sure, I showed him all the sights, but Fred had one request that took me by surprise when over coffee at his hotel one morning he asked: "Rob, I would love a game of tennis on grass, get the chance to whup some Brit's ass!



**Bob and Fred after the match**

Can you fix it for us to play at *Wimbleton*?"

Despite my regular stint serving the Southfields rank over the Wimbledon fortnight, that did not unfortunately provide me with membership of the All England Club, so Fred had to settle for a grass court in a public park in Sutton!

Whether it was the fact that after all my Marathons I still had a bit of running in my legs, or the fact that I plied Fred with buckets

of full bodied French wine the night before, I am not sure, but somehow I sneaked home 6-4 in the set... and it felt good. It felt even better when Fred told me he once took a set off former Wimbledon finalist Chuck McKinley in their school days!

Fred is now back on his usual rank in midtown Manhattan, these days with a much smarter and cleaner yellow cab. If you ever go to New York, look him up and tell him you want to be shown the sights, but would love to play him at tennis just so you could 'whup some Yank's ass'!

PS. Chuffed with myself that I could still put bat to ball on a tennis court, later that day I found out that in December I shall become a grandad! Life is sweet!

*Be lucky, be careful out there et à bientôt...*

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

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## Or how Dave Cohen joined the Thorney Island Society!

**Dave Cohen (E94)** thought he was just doing another Westminster trip when his terminal offered him a job to pick up June Stubbs.

"She was a very friendly and charming lady," Dave recalled, "and we began chatting away about Westminster – that's the area itself and not the TaxiCard even though she thought the card was wonderful."

June Stubbs turned out to be the

# A Day in the Life of a DaC Driver

are just so beautiful that you couldn't imagine anyone trying to change them.

attend conservation events and wildlife studies in the capital, also undertaking committee work with a number of public bodies including The Met Police, the Royal Parks and Wild Life Forums.

Dave Cohen added: "June tells all the drivers that pick her up about the Thorney Island Society and before I knew what day it was, I'd become a member! But when you consider the links we have with Westminster, its many historical and well-known buildings, it must be in our interest to make sure that developers don't flatten it in order to make a fast buck."

June ended by saying how wonderful the DaC drivers who pick her up are. "I'd be lost without them! The TaxiCard is a real lifesaver to so many in the area."

*The Thorney Island Society is always keen to welcome new members. If you are interested, go to the membership section at: <http://www.thethorneyislandsociety.co.uk/5.html>. You can live anywhere to become a member...*



**Thorney Islander Dave Cohen!**  
Inset pic: Jools Holland

Founder and Chairperson of **The Thorney Island Society**, a conservation and amenity group that takes its name from the former island in the Thames, upstream of mediæval London and where Westminster Abbey and the original Palace of Westminster were built. There is no longer any sign of the island, but the Society – which boasts Lord Rees-Mogg as its President and a host of Lords and Ladies as vice-presidents with notable celebrities such as Jools Holland as members, continues to thrive.

"Before I knew it," said Dave, "June Stubbs had talked me into becoming a member!"

The Society's original objective after its formation was to save the Great Smith Street library, which had been there since 1893. Sadly that battle was lost, but it encouraged the group to be on their guard with so many historical buildings sited in Westminster. Today it continues to look after the interests of residents and businesses within the area, also acting as a watchdog on local planning and development issues.

The area also includes St James and Green Parks. "Jools Holland is just one of our members who love walking in the parks," June told **Call Sign**, "both parks

But you'd be surprised what people try to get away with. In fact one of the reasons I first started the Society was when the council tried to pull down a beautiful local church in order to build a car park!"

There have been adverse material changes to the area in addition to the closure of the Great Smith Street library. There was the demolition of 18<sup>th</sup> Century art deco houses in Marsham and Tufton Streets and in addition the area is threatened with further construction and development work, gradually removing the old Westminster "village" with its hospital, library, swimming pool, post office and local shops.

June went on to add that the Thorney Island Society understood the importance of striking a balance between conservation, improvement and new building programmes, but that without a watchdog, developers would flatten the old Westminster.

Since its foundation, the Society has grown in numbers and influence. It now has over 500 members and is particularly active in local history and research matters. It has a local resource centre and archive at 10 Old Pye Street where they collect paintings, prints, photographs, period post cards and small relevant artefacts. It also nominates representatives to



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Over the last 9 months, we have been trying many versions of upgrades for the computer system in your taxi. There are currently many different versions of the upgrade; this being due to extras that need to be added to make sure that you have the best one. We have dedicated drivers on the road testing all new versions of the software and channels. They give daily, weekly or immediate reports if they find any problem or think of an enhancement that they believe will improve the drivers daily work pattern.

It may seem as though we are taking a long while to complete this task, but we want to make sure that we have the correct version in the end. Any driver with an early version when we finalise the software, will be asked to return to Roman Way to be given the final version. This will only take a few minutes. We have started to replace the very old Motorola radios, which many drivers are still using in their taxis. Messages were sent out to drivers to phone and make an appointment if they had a Motorola radio and to have it replaced. All was going well until we found 2 of the consignments from America were being held in the Heathrow customs area! It was more annoying finding that no date could be given for their release. Hopefully we will receive the radios soon and can then continue with the replacement programme. We will keep you updated on their progress via your terminal.

## Mini-taxis!

On the local TV news, it was reported that a **taxi** company were refusing to take passengers to the NW10 area of London. This blatantly misleads the public into believing they are reporting on the licensed Taxi trade. If you look in the Oxford Dictionary, it gives the meaning of taxi as a motor-cab plying for hire and fitted with taximeter. I do not think that Private Hire companies – in this case *Addison Lee* – ply for hire on London's streets and carry a meter authorised by the Public Carriage Office!

This is why whenever a PH driver assaults, rapes or overcharges a passenger the public are led to believe it is a licensed taxi driver. I think it's about time the media were taken to task, as it is our good name that they are tarnishing. I'm not saying that every licensed taxi driver is an angel, but we don't need non-registered fly-by-night drivers adding to our problems.

Speaking of PH, have you noticed the disgusting way many of the non-English private hire drivers are allowed to break the law without penalties? The other morning as I was travelling north along Canonbury Park North at speeds between 20 and 30 mph (due to the road humps and width restricting bollards), a PH vehicle went on the wrong side of the road through the restricted road width gap as though this was the legal thing to do. He then proceeded to drive through a red stop sign at the junction of Islington Park Street and Liverpool Road.

I've also read of a driver from one of the 'Slav countries running down and killing someone. He admitted going back to his own country to gain a driving licence because it was easier and no doubt open to corruption.

Any person coming to this country and staying for longer than three months should take an English driving test if he intends driving. Anyone staying over three months is not on holiday – they are living here. By making them take the English driving test, it would make sure they know the rules of the road in England and that they could read English. Anyone who acts as a substitute for the person needing to take the test in an attempt to fool the authorities should get a

# Tom's Roman Way Happenings...



standard 5-year jail sentence. If they are aliens to the UK, they should be deported.

Some may think I am racist, but you could not be more wrong. I have many West Indian, African and Asian friends who all agree with me that it's the illegal immigrants pouring into the country who cause more racial tension due to their flagrant abuse of the law.

## Tom and the number 38 bendy bus!

I wrote some time ago about drivers of the number 38 bendy buses completely ignoring red traffic lights; well I can report that nothing has changed. If I ever witness an accident involving one of these buses, I would willingly be a witness for the other driver. These imbeciles take the front of their bus over red (ATS) stop signals without a care that they are dragging another 50 odd feet of vehicle – often packed with men, women and children – behind them and possibly into the path of a 40-foot fully laden juggernaut.

It's obvious that those in charge of cameras monitoring vehicles have been instructed to ignore buses breaking the law; otherwise there would be lack of drivers for the 38 and others.

## Calling 999

In the last week, 2 drivers have related stories to me of being attacked during the course of their work. Both said they dialled 999 and were told by the operator that although the assailants had knives, which they were prepared to use, it was not an emergency. That reply to those trying to gain assistance for a serious emergency is becoming more and more frequent. So what happens now is that people fail to report crimes as they know they will gain no help from the police service for which we pay such a high price. Then you get politicians or police officers giving figures to show that crime is on the decline. Also see the article in this issue on a DaC break-in.

If you have a burglary, mugging, assault or your taxi is broken into and you want assistance from the police, start by saying that the assailant has made racist remarks against you. You will then get 6 police cars, 2 riot wagons and 4 PCSOs (plastic policemen) turn up. I do not say this in a jovial manner, it happened in the area of Hackney where I live.

As I said earlier, I have many non-English friends and they tell me they've learnt that if you

want an immediate response, that is what you have to do. What they should do is make the senior officer in charge of the civilian 999 operators go back on the beat for a full month every 3 months. Whilst they are hidden in the safety of the call centre drinking tea, they are losing the plot on what's really happening in boroughs like Hackney and Brent and Southwark.

## DaC with the War Disabled...

The other week I was honoured and privileged to represent Dial-a-Cab at the War Disabled outing to Worthing. To meet so many men and women who put their lives on the line to keep this land a free place to live, made me feel humble. These people are heroes, people who go out knowing that someone is hell bent on blowing their head off so that they can come and dominate your country.

As I sat thinking of the millions of lives that were lost in two world wars, I wondered what the point of it all was when the last few Prime Ministers have given this country over to the Germans without a shot being fired. The brave soldiers I was sitting with never realised that 60 years after their war, this country would be invaded not just by those they'd been fighting, but also some lying that their life was in danger by a tin pot war in their homeland. These liars are protected by so-called PC correct activists who have never fought in a war, but are happy to take any 'freebies' that have been achieved. Most of these PC correct people walk around in their polo necks, cheap hairy skirts or corduroy trousers and sandals showing dirty toe nails. If they want to do something worthwhile, they should support the Ghurkhas in their fight for the correct pension they should be getting. These are the bravest and most feared soldiers in the world, who did not hesitate to give their lives defending our country.

But this country would rather spend millions of pounds on illegal immigrants who take, but give nothing in return to enhance to living conditions of this country. Yet the brave Ghurkhas gave the ultimate sacrifice for this country – their lives – and we do not seem to appreciate it.

Many months ago I purchased an armband from *The Sun* to support *Help for Heroes* and I am proud to wear it – as any driver who has attended Roman Way will tell you. If you would like to help our soldiers, then purchase the armband from *The Sun*. Halfords also sell them.

Before our Editor, young Mr Fisher, adds a rider onto this article, I would like to say these are my views and only my views. Before anyone says I shouldn't use *Call Sign* as a soapbox for my views, they all originate from items involving the licensed Taxi trade. I do not write articles that belittle other licensed London Taxi organisations, giving the authorities a lever to split and divide our trade. That only allows the authorities to take advantage of the trade, as we do not stick together as a solid group with huge voting power.

**Tom Whitbread**  
**DaC Roman Way Manager**

Your editor isn't the only one who whizzed off in May – my DaCman Glen and I lived it large on the paradise island of Manhattan for a delightful week, including a sublime opera the night he turned 60. I wore a new gown, new shoes, new bag – bought at BHS but nonetheless themed for a chic 20s retro look – there's no use going for a *Sex in the City* killer heels effect when your oldies London Freedom card is in your purse.

But for some oldies, it's never too late. Glen told me a true story about an acquaintance of his, about 73, who took his wife on a fabulous QE2 cruise with champagne and flowers in the cabin every night. But on night 5, he discovered she'd gone off to sleep with a ship's steward!

No straying for me though, glamorous gown or no. I was more than satisfied going to the top of the Rockefeller Center to look at sunset over the Empire State building, eating short stack pancakes with sugar-free maple syrup, walking across the Brooklyn Bridge, soaking up the beauty at the Frick Gallery and Cloisters, going round the lower East Side on a multi-ethnic eating tour, seeing Grand Central terminal with a witty guide and loads of first-class restaurants. Glen even allowed time for shoe shopping at Macy's – heaven! There is actually no time for sex in New York – that TV show is fantasy stuff (well, maybe a little time)...

## The Poppy US taxi drivers guide to the elections

I want to tell you the results of our US taxi driver probe on Presidential candi-

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

# Back Seat *Driver*



dates. The first one we met, a black guy who lived in Queens, had bought his medallion – at \$500,000! There is no Knowledge there, of course, and with streets numbered in order it isn't that hard to work out where to go. Most drivers lease their medallion and our industrious driver will lease his out, or sell it, when he retires. He supports Obama.

The next driver treated us to a serious rant against the murderous Christians, the Jews at the heart of the tensions in the world and white people in general. I worked out that he must be a black Muslim, but Glen whispered to me not to argue as he had hold of the steering wheel and central locking

and Glen was scared. This one supports Obama.

Another driver, who hails from Mali, refused to answer the question *as he didn't want to get into trouble*, which was sad, but then ventured McCain after sizing us up near our posh hotel. When I said I thought he was rubbish, he tried Hillary eventually claiming to support Obama once we said we did. I don't think he was angling for a big tip – he really didn't believe he was living in the land of the free.

The last, a happy Sikh driver who took us back to JFK said he was still working at 82 because his uncle in the Punjab told him he would die once he stopped work, and the uncle still works in the fields in his nineties – stopping only to wash, eat and pray. He supports Obama.

I guess we didn't find any white taxi drivers, but that's the survey – I'm not putting my money on Obama to win, though. As my American brother put it long ago when my son asked him if the US had racism like Britain: "Racism? Hell, we invented it..."

*Till then...  
Love Poppy x x x*

# What's in a ~~Word~~ Ford?

Long time Dial-a-Cab driver **Tony Arnold (F03)** has been to places with his cab that most could only dream of.

In 2002, Tony drove his then-TX2 from Beijing in China to Trafalgar Square on behalf of a Chinese TV company to promote the fact that China had won the 2008 Olympics. The three month trip took him through **China, Mongolia, Russia, the Arctic Circle, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Holland and France.**

Several years down the line, Tony went to **Nigeria** to help train Abuja cabbies how to drive the LTI vehicle and also how to behave towards passengers. He later did the same with taxi drivers in **Ghana.**

Obviously feeling those destinations to be not far enough, earlier this year he was hired to teach Melbourne cabbies in Australia how to drive a cab and behave correctly.

**But with all that travel, he is still Fox 3 on DaC and drives his TX4 around just the same as we all do. And it's his nearer-to-home travels that we heard of last – and in all fairness to anyone who thinks we're watching you... that only applies if you've driven an LTI cab in China or Africa!**

Tony's data terminal buzzed into life with details of a cash ride going from Greenford out to the wilds of Chigwell in Essex. As no one seemed to want it, Tony took the opportunity to get some cash towards his next trip – there's only the **International Space Station** that he hasn't been to – and offered 40 minutes.

"It was just too good to let it go," Tony told **Call Sign**. So he made his way to Greenford trying desperately to find the street on his map. After all, he had found his way round China, Africa and Australia. He was certain he could do the same in Greenford!

Well on the way, Tony eventually had to ask the dispatcher for assistance to find the street, but he couldn't find it either and phoned the customer before getting back to Tony.

"Sorry F03," said the data message, "but it's Woodford and not Greenford ... do you still want the job!"

Upset? "Not really," Tony told **Call Sign**, "these things happen. It's all in the word. Meanwhile, I have to rush. Gotta meeting with an honourable senior Attaché Senior Miguel Gonzalez from **Mexico City** – and more to the point, a traffic director over there!"



Tony with some of his Nigerian taxi class - it's a long way from Greenford!



**Keith Reading**  
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Master of Ceremonies

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Graduate of the  
Professional Toastmasters' Academy



# COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

**Hello Ladies & Gents,**  
**Since the last issue of Call Sign, I have received a number of complaints and driver queries that I would again like to clarify. Some of the complaints that have been dealt with are more serious than others and in order to highlight them, I will list them below.**

## Meter Interface:

I have in the past made you all aware that account clients receive regular reports that list meter charges they are able to verify with us. It is their right to these listings and it is a service that we, as a Society, are only too pleased to offer. It shows a number of readings that can be queried and confirmed on any chosen trip. The technology is always improving and *Arrival, PoB and CLJ* amounts can now be shown separately on all meter fares. The reports also show valid *extras* that are added to the meter independently from the total fare. Again I would like to remind you that if the actual meter is not automatically showing on the CLJ form, it is very important that you contact Tom Whitbread at Roman Way and arrange for your equipment to be checked. All fares and locations can be verified by the GPS coordinates, so again I would remind you that it is important to stop your meter as soon as you reach the final destination so the exact amount is showing when the passenger concludes the trip and leaves your vehicle. If a client authorises an additional tip, please inform the Call Centre who in turn will add a note to the trip logger to prevent any unnecessary anomalies appearing.

## Run-ins:

As you are aware, run-ins are currently set at £4.20 on all account trips other than Westminster TaxiCard journeys (£3.80). From the time you accept the trip until arriving at the pick-up on a pre-booked or asap trip, you should not exceed this amount unless authorised by the Call Centre. If you arrive with more than this amount, it is imperative that you adjust your meter accordingly. *If you have less than this amount on when you arrive, please do not add the difference on either at the end of the journey or as an extra.*

## Credit Card trips:

Before beginning a journey, it is essential that you are able to swipe the card through the terminal, which in turn will authorise the trip and guarantee payment. Then ask the passenger to sign the receipt, which you should keep it in a safe place as proof of the journey. If the card is keyed in manually,



the banks often decline payment especially if it is a stolen card. *Do not accept this type of trip if you are unable to swipe the card.*

## E140:

You will have noted in this issue of **Call Sign** that a number of fellow drivers were suspended at the last complaints hearing for booking into E140 incorrectly. Just to remind you that when this rank opens (9pm until 6am – every night including weekends) you must be within the security boundaries of Canary Wharf. It is still being monitored and failure to follow the procedure rules may lead to a complaint.

## EC5:

Whilst it is non-physical, before booking into this rank please be certain that from the time of gaining a queue position you are able to reach Finsbury Square within 15 minutes (it is being monitored).

## Regular Bookings:

Throughout the day and night there are regular trips that are dispatched from certain zones bringing clients into their places of work / transporting them home. If you

choose to book in very early and wait for the same trip on a consistent basis, it will be deemed as *banging up* or *making a trip your own*, which is a procedure rule violation. *It is not in the true spirit of the Society to book into a zone and hog a queue position because you are aware of a regular trip.*

## Parked Button:

This button does not automatically generate an *advise arrival (AAR)*. If you need to use this facility, please press the *Parked* button to enter your actual location and then press *Advise*, which will generate the *AAR*. This function is intended to notify the Call Centre when you are either moved on by a warden or unable to stop immediately outside of a particular address.

## Multi-choice trips:

If you are one of a number of taxis picking up from the same location on a multi-choice booking, it is important that you take the correct passenger travelling to the correct location upon arrival as per your trip details. If you arrive before the other taxis, it is unfair to choose a trip that may be seen as having a more lucrative or convenient destination. How would you feel if it happened to you...?

*I hope that when you read this report you will agree with me that if we all work within the Society rules and regulations, it is much fairer for everyone. It is the very small minority that not only jeopardise accounts, but who can also give the rest of us a bad name.*

*It will soon be the holiday season and a time when we can hopefully recharge our batteries. Have a good one...*

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

## HOLIDAY HOME DEALS

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Contact Shayne Wise (G05)

**Tel: 01708 753128 or on mobile: 07961 912340**

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**Rough Guide:** *"One of the most stunning small towns of southern Italy, a gleaming white splash of sun-bleached streets and cobbled alleyways..."*

Whilst **Call Sign** has over the years heard of many father / son combinations on Dial-a-Cab, we can't quite think of one to match that of ODRTS first-ever professional telephonist, Florrie Culverwell and her son Michael.

Florrie took over control of ODRTS three telephones in 1956 from the early band of drivers who used to come into the ODRTS office at 172 Pentonville Road to answer calls as best they could. Some of those stalwarts who were around at the birth of ODRTS – many years later to become Dial-a-Cab – have told **Call Sign** over the years how the introduction of a female with a professional sounding voice, as against the previous drivers with their "Ello mate, where d'ya wanna go," suddenly gave then a feeling of importance with many adding how much callers said it improved the service!

Florrie's professionalism at answering the phones was also partly responsible for ODRTS gaining the prestigious BBC account at Lime Grove and Alexander Palace. They would phone on occasion for cash trips and usually spoke to Florrie, as there was no overnight TV service and the UK's only channel closed down by 10.30pm each evening. Florrie was soon on first name terms with the person at the BBC end and Board member **Frank Duncan** heard about it.

He called a meeting with the rest of the Board and they decided to offer account facilities to the BBC. We had no accounts at the time because it was felt that it would deflect from any cash the Society had and they couldn't see how it would benefit ODRTS. Then founder-Chairman **Bonnie Martyn** came up with the idea of charging a percentage on every job ODRTS covered.

The Board decided to offer the facility and the BBC accepted – provided Florrie Culverwell was the telephonist they would be dealing with. The BBC then became our first account and Florrie the equivalent of an account manager, as it was she who the BBC would come to when they had any problems.

Often, as was the case in the middle of the 20th century workplace, if for any reason your children were on school holiday, not feeling too well or if you had to work a later than usual shift, the mother would often take them to the office with them. Florrie was no exception and brought her young son Michael into the office while she was working if there was nowhere else to leave him. He'd wander round just talking to anyone who happened to be there and looking for the occasional button to press!

Florrie stayed with ODRTS when we moved to our second home at Shirland Road and was there until the late-sixties. She passed away at the age of 82 in 2001 after suffering with Motor Neurone disease for

# Following in his mother's footsteps



Michael Culverwell

Inset pic Mum Florrie



almost 3 years. But the name still remains...

Florrie's son **Michael Culverwell (G82)** – that little boy who spent so much of his young life wandering around Pentonville Road – has been on DaC for the past 22 years and told **Call Sign** how

his mother used to talk of the old days and of people she counted as friends, such as former dispatcher Johnny Thwaites and ex-Chairman Martin Gellman.

"In fact," Michael told **Call Sign**, "she often spoke of the fact that the BBC were the first major ODRTS account and that in addition to her answering the phones, she would also help out with the occasional dispatching and was never too proud to make the tea. But my mother's main job was look after the BBC."

Michael went on to add: "To be honest, I hadn't realised the significance of my mother's time at ODRTS and I'm certainly proud to carry it on. I enjoy working on Dial-a-Cab and hope to be here for many years to come..."

The biggest tribute we can pay to Michael's mother is that after all these years, the name of Florrie Culverwell has not been forgotten...

## TAXI DRIVER OF THE YEAR DINNER/DANCE

The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund presents their annual Dinner / Dance on Saturday 29th November 2008

The 35th Taxi Driver of the Year dinner dance will be held at:

**Crowne Plaza London Docklands**  
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Reception 6.15pm, dinner 6.45pm with a 4-course meal and half bottle of wine per person.

**Tickets £60 per head includes complementary drink on arrival.**

With your support The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund is able to make donations to the taxi trade charities that support us. Don't be the one to miss one of the great nights out. Come along and join in with good food, great company and a wonderful time.

**Please complete and return to the Hon Chairman**  
**with cheques made out to TDYCF**

**Russell Poluck, 5 St Brides Avenue, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 6BT**

RSVP: 28.10.08

Dress: Smart

**Please Print:**

Name:.....

Title:.....

Company (if applicable):.....

Address:.....

Tel:.....

Email:.....

Number of tickets required @ £60 per head:.....

Dietary requirements: Please tick: Veg.....Fish.....Meat.....

For further information contact: Russell Poluck 07850 056 765 - Tel/fax 020 8952 1357  
Registered with the Charities Commission No: 1000761

*'Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves'*



# COMPLAINTS RESULTS

Complaints meetings were heard on 29 April 2008 and 24 June. The results are below...



## RESULTS FROM 29 April 2008

Name/call sign	Nature of Complaint
Simon Bassey (C79)	<i>Booking into an outlying physical zone from an inner zone to gain an unfair advantage over fellow members</i> <b>Sentence 2 weeks susp</b>
Daniel Hayes (D39)	<i>Driver booked into E140 outside of the security barriers</i> <b>Sentence 2 weeks susp</b>
Stephen Mason (A66)	<i>Driver booked into E140 outside of the security barriers</i> <b>Sentence 1 weeks susp</b>
Michael Curwood (F51)	<i>Driver booked into E140 outside of the security barriers</i> <b>Sentence 2 weeks susp</b>
John Phelps (N93)	<i>Driver booked into E140 outside of the security barriers</i> <b>Sentence 2 weeks susp</b>
Brian Sweet (B12)	<i>Driver booked into E140 outside of the security barriers</i> <b>Sentence 2 weeks susp</b>
Don Kelly (Z22)	<i>Driver booked into E140 outside of the security barriers</i> <b>Sentence 2 weeks susp</b>

## Name/call sign

## Nature of Complaint

Paul Alford (J64)	<i>Driver booked into E140 outside of the security barriers</i> <b>Sentence 1 weeks susp</b>
Alex Constantinou (N05)	<i>Driver booked into E140 outside of the security barriers</i> <b>Sentence 1 weeks susp</b>
Hervin O'Connor (O58)	<i>Driver booked into E14C, a physical Zone, on two separate occasions when he was not actually on the rank</i> <b>Sentence 2 weeks susp</b>

## RESULTS FROM 24 June 2008

Jason Cook (J10)	<i>Driver booked into E14S (physical) when in Cotton Street</i> <b>Sentence Severe reprimand + 1 week susp</b>
Melvyn Davis (Y70)	<i>Accepted trip from W1 to E11 on regular basis</i> <b>Sentence 3 weeks susp</b>
Gary Holmes (Z11)	<i>Accepted trip from SE9 to WC2 on regular basis</i> <b>Sentence 2 weeks susp</b>

# LONDON TAXI CONNECTS BUSINESS TO LONDON

**Think London**, the foreign direct investment agency for London, has chosen the latest model of the London taxi to promote London, the world's most exciting city, to international businesses.

The TX4, which is branded to act as a mobile information and communication centre, allows investors to explore how they can benefit from the substantial growth and opportunities projected in London over the next five years.

To date, the *Think London* taxi has successfully initiated its world tour with trips to the US, India and a number of destinations throughout Europe. This year, the tour will hit the road in China, first stopping in Beijing to support London's presence at the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games and then continuing on to key Chinese cities to engage with investors before coming home to London.

Sales Director at LTI Vehicles, Rob Laidler told **Call Sign**: "The TX4 is the obvious choice to showcase what London has to offer – it's recognised globally as the most advanced purpose-built taxi in the world. Our taxis are part of the best transport system in the world and will give investors a taste of what they can expect from locating or doing business in London."

*Think London* spokesperson, Misa Numano, added: "It makes sense to do business in the back of a taxi. The TX4 is an excellent marketing tool that enables us to promote inward investment opportunities. Its iconic shape and unique *Think London* branding has attracted a vast amount of interest from people around the world."



The 'Think London' TX4 in San Francisco

## MAILSHOT

**Either write to Call Sign at Dial-a-Cab House or email us at - [callsignmag@aol.com](mailto:callsignmag@aol.com)**

### Fuel prices

Last night I paid £1.34 per litre for diesel – that's £6 a gallon. How long can TfL and the PCO – and for that matter DaC – go on sitting back and watch these prices rise without acting? It's been said that by the end of the year we could see prices as high as £1.75 per litre – that's almost £8 a gallon. My concern here is how will DaC expect us to cover the work?

Whilst in Clapham North I was dispatched a job to pick up in Balham. I was too far away to set the meter and sent a delay time but was scrubbed with nothing on the meter and already halfway to the pick up. So in theory, it cost me to cover this non-ride. With these high fuel charges, drivers will think twice about running to back-up zones to cover the work that may well scrub and leave them cashless for their trouble.

So should Dial-a-Cab lead the way by placing a minimum of £5 for a scrub regardless of weather the meter is running or not, or even a 20p increase on all run ins. Shouldn't we also lobby TfL for a surcharge or a fuel price reduction for essential vehicles?

Well, it's worth an ask isn't it!

**Michael Beevor (N76)**

**Brian Rice replies: Yes Michael, I do have every sympathy. The price of fuel is a big problem, but it could not have come at a worse time when all the institutions are cutting back and indeed even endeavouring to reduce the price we charge to them due to the 'credit crunch'.**

The trip in question from Balham that was scrubbed was probably due to the fact that you accepted it 3 minutes after the booked time (obviously not your fault). We phoned the customer to advise they had a taxi but they cancelled; that was 2 minutes 23 seconds after you accepted it. I'm not sure how far you could have run in that amount of time at 18.15hrs in the evening, but anyway, you should have been entitled to a scrub – even if it was we who paid you for the 2 minutes 23 seconds.

I took a quick look at your trips for the past month and it seems that was the only scrub you had in that period. That is not to distract from your sentiments, however, they do have to be put into perspective...

### Power Pill

Having read favourable reports on the use of Power Pill UK's fuel additives, I placed an order on their website in February of this year. My card was debited the same day, but to date I have not received any product. Attempts to contact the company by phone produce a 'number unrecognised'

response and my emails have gone unanswered. Do you know if Power Pill UK is still trading (it appears that their website is still active and taking orders / money)?

Thanking you for any information you may have.

**David Sharp**

**Dorset**

**Sorry to hear that David. Call Sign publicised for several issues that the previous distributor had done a bunk of some sort and that no one should send him any money. The probability was that he spent so much time and effort trying to convince the PCO that drivers could use Power Pill rather than expensive exhaust systems, that he ended up owing money and seems now to have vanished. However, the person who distributes Power Pill now, Chris Hayball, seems legit and operates from his home in Chesterfield using PayPal for those paying online. You can also order by phone. Don't forget, it wasn't Power Pill that went, it was a distributor. But please only use the website in the Call Sign ad. The previous one is still floating around out there and still has the capability to snap up your money ...Ed**

### Is the speeding loophole still working?

Just to let you know that the PACE letter does still work (*May Call Sign*, page 33). I received a letter today offering me the option of a 2.5 hour speeding awareness session (and a bill of £95) or £60 fine and 3 penalty points. I think I know which one I'm going for!

Thanks for the reprint of the letter – talk about good timing!

**Chris Lane (V63)**

This was the second time that *Call Sign* has published the letter known as PACE. Initially it had the desired effect of getting any alleged speeding offence 'scrubbed' but it could be that whilst the police have managed to partially close the loophole, that they will offer the opportunity to attend the one-day speeding awareness course rather than get the 3 points on your licence. That can't be guaranteed, but Chris is now the third driver (that we know of) to be made the offer. Pleased we could help ...Ed

### BioMethane engine for LTI?

This country should be ashamed of itself because we lag so far behind in finding ways to be green. It is about time LTI took a serious look at a BioMethane engine because the way they are thinking they will be left behind. The following comes from the *International Association for Natural Gas Vehicles*.

"The construction of the largest biogas plant Switzerland in Inwil (near Lucerne) is

nearing completion on time, according to a briefing delivered by representatives of Natural Gas Central Switzerland AG (Erdgas Zentralschweiz AG) and partners. From approximately 60,000 tonnes of biomass processed every year, 1.9 million cubic meters of biogas will be produced, sufficient to fuel 2,000 natural gas vehicles at 12,000 km annual performance. The gas will replace some 2 million litres of fossil fuel (petrol) without compromising food production in a saving of 4,000 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup>. The plant, costing around \$16.5 million and covering approximately 13,500 square meters, is due to go into service in October 2008.

CO<sup>2</sup>-neutral biogas will be derived from manure, dung, green and other biogenic waste.

Useful side effects of the plant are the reduction of traffic through manure transport and sustainable reduction of ammonia emissions in the catchment area of the plant. Throughout Switzerland in 2007, vehicles fuelled by natural gas and biogas reduced petrol consumption by approximately 10 million litres, of which one fifth was biogas."

**Stanley Roth (Y53)**

**Manure, dung, green and other biogenic waste? You wouldn't want to buy a house too near the plant! In addition Stanley, you might be a little unfair on LTI as they've recently announced an electric cab (2009) and one that will run on a hydrogen cell (2012). Besides, given a choice between those two or a combination of manure and dung, I think I know what I might go for! ...Ed**

### Thank you Call Sign

On behalf of the *Ellenor Lions hospices*, I would like to thank *Call Sign* for sponsoring Phillip Hannah with a generous cheque donation of £50, after he competed in and finished the Flora London Marathon.

Phillip did tremendously well, raising to date £2330 and we are all so grateful to him for the time and effort that is needed to participate in an event such as this, not to mention the blood sweat and tears!

Thank you once again for your support of Phillip. It gives us much encouragement to continue our efforts to raise the necessary funds to offer true palliative care to people with life-shortening illnesses.

**Linda Wood**

**The Lions Hospice, Swanscombe**

**The Lions Hospice was one of several charities that Call Sign sponsored via DaC drivers running in the marathon. In addition, there was a driver's daughter swimming the channel, staff members running around Richmond Park and Jon Woolnough (L22) competing in the 3**





# MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 36

**Peaks Challenge where he will run across 3 mountains! They are all mad but wonderful people and this magazine – on behalf of our readers – is proud to be able to help ...Ed**

## T5 and SW1...

A couple of points I'd like to ask:

1) I had my very first account job to terminal 5 the other day. During the journey I rang the control room to ask if there was a recommended route. A few seconds later on my screen came the answer: *North Perimeter Road round to the West Perimeter Road and follow signs to Terminal 5*. This I indeed adhered to and dropped my passenger off accordingly. But on looking at the map later, I found that had I carried on along the M4 up to the M25 junction and gone along the M25 for a few hundred yards to the Terminal 5 turn-off, not only would the mileage have been virtually the same, but the time taken to get to terminal 5 would've been significantly quicker! So, the question is would there be a breach of conduct should I choose to go Terminal 5 via the M25?

2) On occasion, when booking into any of the zones from SW10 to SW19, my finger has slipped and having accidentally entered just SW1, sent the data. Then up comes the message at the bottom of the screen: QP SW1 001. Of course, as we all know, SW1 is split into SW1N, SW1E and SW1W. So what on earth is this interloper of a zone doing and are there ever any jobs directed to it? Just curious!

**Robert Richland (N94)**

**Keith Cain replies:** Robert, there is no right or wrong way to get to Terminal 5. The only reason I assume the call centre gave the Perimeter Road route is that it can be slightly less costly for the client. The controllers are fully aware of the possible consequences high price meter fares to Terminal 5 could have in the future. It really is a decision for the driver or the passenger.

Without getting too technical, the reason SW1 is in the system is because when we used the SE75 zone to service the HOC trips, SE75 required a primary zone. SW1 was set up as its primary zone because no work would be dispatched to it. To avoid any further confusion, I have requested that SW1 be removed...

## Parking Tickets and the New Traffic

### Management Act 2004

It is now twelve weeks since the new parking ticket legislation came into force on 31 March 2008. Despite government claims that the new laws will be fairer, this has not been the case. If anything, CCTV enforce-

ment, which currently operates in London, has been more ruthless.

Clearly CCTV enforcement of parking will increase and Westminster Council, for example, have announced that they are going to double the number of CCTV cameras used for parking enforcement! Motorists should be very cautious because CCTV enforcement will expand outside London into the rest of England and Wales.

If you want to keep up to date with what's happening in parking ticket enforcement, bus lane and yellow box enforcement, subscribe to *The Insider's Parking Ticket Newsletter*. The annual subscription is £19.97. You can also subscribe for 3 months or 6 months at monthly subscriptions of £2.47 and £1.97 respectively.

There is also a special offer of 29% off my book: *The Parking Ticket Awards: Crazy Councils, Meter Madness & Traffic Warden Hell...*

**Barrie Segal**

**Editor: *The Insider's Parking Ticket Newsletter***

## TaxiCards and PCNs

Regarding your article in the April edition of *Call Sign* entitled *Cab Parking Tickets and TaxiCards*, I would like to inform you that on Friday 9 May I received a PCN whilst picking up a TaxiCard ride from St. Mary's Hospital, QEOM Wing in South Wharf Road. I could not get onto the rank because of a badly parked ambulance, so I parked outside the main entrance, ran in and helped the old lady into my cab and left the scene within 4 minutes. Whilst I was trying to locate the passenger in the reception area, I could see a parking attendant through the window taking the details of my cab, which would have happened within less than one minute of me parking. I escorted the old lady, who was clinging onto my arm whilst I was carrying her bag and her walking stick, towards the cab and explained to the attendant that this was a TaxiCard ride and that I would be leaving very shortly. He reiterated that it was too late and that he would make a note of it. The end result was that I still received a PCN potentially charging me a penalty of £120. Could you advise me what I should do next and pass this information over to Barrie Segal as stated in your article.

**Andrew Morrison (B78)**

Barrie Segal has had talks with Westminster about PCNs being issued while drivers are assisting passengers. Barrie knows them personally, but when it comes to officialdom everything takes time. The only current advice is to always appeal if it was a TaxiCard (or account ride). Of course you can always pass it over to DaC, but we need to show that we are annoyed at this constant harassment and if, as Barrie says above, Westminster are about to double the number of CCTV cameras, then it's almost a battle for life because DaC aren't going to continue paying forever



**if the number of PCNs received doubles. Incidentally, Andrew appealed and the PCN was overturned ...Ed**

## Arbitrator's election

I have recently received a letter from Howard Pears informing me that I was unsuccessful with my application as an arbiter.

Despite frequent bouts of depression, I shall not give up and will continue to make my self available should any vacancy arise at Dial-a-cab House irrespective of job status. This will include in-house sanitation, tea making and cleaning Allen Togwell's golf clubs and golf shoes - but not his balls.

At this time of writing I am unaware of who the successful candidate is, but would like the opportunity to congratulate and also wish him all the best in this position. Any member who is prepared to give of their time to the Society is a winner, so well done to those gentlemen that also applied for position as an arbiter. May I also take this opportunity to thank all the members that put their trust in me by voting for me.

**Steve Shaller MOFS (R75)**

*PS The wrists are healing up well...*

## And the winner is...

Just a brief note to thank the 39.7% of you that voted for me in the recent election for an arbitrator. As I stated in my brief CV in the May *Call Sign*, most of you probably only know me from my page 2 articles in the magazine as I usually leave home at 4pm and get home around 1am, rarely stopping for many chit chats or breaks in-between. The task of an arbiter is rarely required, but is a very responsible position where member's lives can be determined by a decision and accordingly I will take very seriously any decisions with the responsibility you have entrusted to me...

**Alan Nash (A95)**

## SatNav?

Some time ago I remember reading and hearing that DaC were in the process (or contemplating) updating the fleet's terminals with new technology, which would include a SatNav facility. Can you confirm if this is the case and if so, when will it commence?

I am thinking about purchasing a SatNav personally as this can be an asset for that elusive suburb or dare I think it - home county job!

Cheers Alan, look forward to hearing from you...

**Roland Brewer (M38)**

**Brian Rice replies:** You are quite right Roland; you did read that we were going to incorporate SatNav in any new terminal. However, our priority at the

# MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 37

moment is installing our new channels, acquiring new aerial sites and generally improving signals. As you can no doubt appreciate, it is no good having the latest television installed at home, surround sound etc, but you only receive an intermittent signal from the transmitter. When we are satisfied we have signals as good as we can get them, then we will press on with the terminal. However, when we have the new terminal, which will not be in the immediate future, we will probably equip the fleet at the rate of 100 mobiles a month. Consequently, if you require SatNav now then that is a decision only you can make. I hope the above clarifies the situation for you.

## Who does what?

Dear Brian.

I read in the May *Call Sign* that you and the usual suspects were invited (summoned) to a meeting with the Home Office to be told of a new attack on Taxi drivers called the ISA. If my memory serves me well, that stands for the Investigative Strategic Authority or something similar, it matters not what stupid name they've come up with this time. The LTDA - I think that's an acronym for Let Them Do Anything - were concerned of the extra expense to Taxi drivers, probably because they might sell fewer holidays or insurance as a result of it (yes I remember when they were formed and for what reason). I believe you mentioned that the CRB should be sufficient, forgive my suppositions, but my *Call Sign* was accidentally recycled by my wife. We've never really met, but have spoken on the phone and you seem a nice guy, I am very satisfied with you as Chairman and really have no interest in your earnings. But having established that, you do not represent me when you attend these meetings and come out shaking your head with the other sheep. Has it never occurred to you and the others to say to these meddlers that can't keep their noses out of anything, that you will go away and suggest to your members to reject any further intrusions into our personal lives? Who are these people checking up on us? What do we know about them? Wasn't it the Home Office that allowed many illegal immigrants onto its payroll, didn't they lose computer files, weren't they described by John Reed as *not fit for purpose*? And if anyone thinks the present incumbent is going to put matters right, dream on. This trade established its reputation as the best in the world without the interference of busybodies trying to justify their non-jobs, and it's about time they were given the boot.

We've just rid ourselves of the obnoxious Livingstone; let's not allow others to push us around. If we do, the next step down the line will be that you'll have to have an ID card to renew your licence, to no doubt be followed with the addition of your fingerprints and DNA. That's what this is all about, these control freaks are desperate for a database on the law abiding. It's all about control. It's about time we had a political section in *Call Sign*. Everywhere we go we are being monitored, fined for doing u-turns or venturing into deserted bus lanes in the early hours. 4.5 million cameras watching us, satellite tracking on our vehicles, mobile phone tracking. Why? And yet if you become the victim of crime no one wants to know. This trade is still the best in the world, but has lost the will to stand up for itself. And Brian, that comes down to you and those that purport to represent us. Now that our spokespersons wear suits, it should not mean that they become nodding donkeys. After all what could they do if 22,000 cab drivers said no?

These new conditions of fitness being continually asked of us have a history. After the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, a decorated soldier by the name of Timothy McVeigh was convicted and put to death by lethal injection for causing the death of 176 employees of the FBI building in Oklahoma City by explosion, however the world renowned author and political commentator Gore Vidal and many other respected people, were of the opinion that McVeigh was aided and abetted by government agents. The outcome however was that President Clinton made an announcement that basically said if freedom of the people resulted in such atrocities, freedom of the people must be restricted and he brought in the *Terrorism Act* with a clause that allowed suspension of *Habeas Corpus* - ring any bells?

Then after 9/11, again an event that has created much controversy, the much-respected American author and theologian David Ray Griffin described the official report as 571 pages of lies. Whatever the truth, President Bush declared the *War on Terror* and since then, governments around the world have taken the opportunity to harness the freedom of their people. This is what is happening to us now. I leave you with a couple of paragraphs from a speech made by Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls and one of our finest judges to the *Hamlyn Trust* in 1949 (an organisation, among other things, to promote the freedoms that the people of this country enjoy as opposed to other European countries). Read it carefully and think about the future you want for yourself and your children and then make up your mind if this country is going the right way.

**From Lord Denning:** *Let me define my terms. By personal freedom, I mean the freedom of every law-abiding citizen to think what he will, to say what he will, and to go where he will on his lawful occasions without let or hindrance from any other persons.*



*Despite all the great changes that have come about in the other freedoms, this freedom has in our country remained intact. It must be matched, of course with social security, by which I mean the peace and good order of the community in which we live. The freedom of the just man is worth little to him if he can be preyed upon by the murderer or the thief. Every society must have the means to protect itself from marauders. It must have powers to arrest, to search, and to imprison those who break the laws. So long, as those powers are properly exercised, they are themselves the safeguards of freedom. But powers may be abused, and, if those powers are abused there is no tyranny like them. It leads to a state of affairs when the police may arrest any man and throw him into prison without cause assigned. It leads to the search of his home and belongings on the slightest pretext-or on none. It leads to bated Gestapo and the police state. It leads to extorted confessions and to trials, which are a mockery of justice. The moral of it all is that a true balance must be kept between personal freedom on the one hand and social security on the other. It has been done here, and is being done. But how?*

Powers must not be abused or misused: **That is the question I asked in 1949. Now I give the answer. It is this: The law itself should provide adequate and efficient remedies for the abuse or misuse of power from whatever quarter it may come. No matter who it is -- who is guilty of the abuse or misuse. Be it government, national or local. Be it trade unions. Be it the press. Be it management. Be it labour. Whoever it may be, no matter how powerful, the law should provide a remedy for the abuse or misuse of power. Else the oppressed will get to the point when they will stand it no longer. They will find their own remedy. There will be anarchy. To my mind it is fundamental in our society that a judge should do his utmost to see that powers are not abused or misused. If they come into conflict with the freedom of the individual-or with any other of our fundamental freedoms - then it is the province of the judge to hold the balance between the competing interests. In holding that balance the judge must put freedom first. He must give priority to the freedom of the individual**

**Mike Pollington (K17)**

**Brian Rice replies:** Hmmm.... interesting letter, although you do have your facts totally wrong! The ISA is the Independent Safeguarding Authority and to be honest, I went into great detail on the subject in *Call Sign*. I do take exception to being called a sheep and a



# MAILSHOT

## Mailshot continued from page 38

**nodding donkey, especially as you state you don't know me. I might be a lot of things but definitely not either of those. You were not present at the meeting so you have no idea what I said, although the Editor does have a copy of the minutes of the meeting and can verify (according to the minutes) that I was very vociferous in endeavouring to protect the good name of the trade, as indeed was Bob Oddy from the LTDA. We were the only representatives from our industry.**

**You are very quick to condemn everyone that represents us, yet without any facts! How did you get on when you visited your MP Lee Scott to complain about this issue? Lee Scott, whom I know very well even from his days as a local Councillor, is a very good friend to the taxi industry and represents many taxi drivers. Yet he has not received any complaints regarding the ISA from his taxi driver constituents. You have been to see him, haven't you? Or are you one of these people that sit behind a keyboard and complains, making derogatory remarks about everyone else but doing nothing yourself? Do you get the feeling from my reply that I feel no matter how hard I try to make DaC successful and represent our trade, that I sometimes get totally demoralised and frustrated when I receive such a self righteous derogatory letter from someone that is very quick to attack others on a subject that he has not researched and obviously knows nothing about, but is only too willing to use it as an opportunity to get on his soapbox to attack others!**

## Getting better...

Many thanks to Val and Nuala in Driver Services for their help during my time off work due to an operation. Thanks also to the Board and Staff for the lovely bouquet of flowers and get well card I received. I have been off work since the end of April and hope to return on a part-time basis in September.

**Stewart Lewis (D20)**

**I spoke to Stewart last week and he sounds much better ...Ed**

## Zones

*Dear Alan*

You may remember at the AGM I brought up the problem of jobs being sent out in the wrong outer zones, well it is still happening. As an example, this morning a job in NN99 came to me. I was booked in W50N so I get the offer as I am in the backup zone. I took a look and accepted it. Problem was the pickup is in Chelmsford and there are 3 cabs

booked in E99. I phoned the control room and said it was too far to run and to put it back into the system again. It went very quickly. But the fun did not end with this job. Later that morning I accepted a job with the destination given as Gower Street and to confirm destination with the passenger. He says no, when he booked the cab he told the call taker he was going to Euston Station. I wonder if anyone from the call centre could comment. Something is not working well.

**Ray Sorene (A53)**

**Keith Cain replies:** Having investigated the two trips it does appear the first trip was dispatched to NN99 instead of E99. The reason for this is because the telephonist was incorrectly informed by the controller which zone to enter onto the booking. Due to the fact that the pick up address is not within our database, a telephonist has to force the address into the system. This can only be done with the authorisation of the controller who has to acknowledge the trip. On this occasion, the controller has obviously made the mistake of selecting the wrong pick up zone and has marked the trips of his error.

The second one confirms the passenger did say Euston Station and the telephonist inadvertently validated Euston Underground Station, which is in Gower Street. All addresses selected, whether pick up or destination, are viewed from the same database. The despatch system has various ways of helping a telephonist to validate a pick up. One way of doing this is to type in the first four letters of the pick up, which will show a list of all pick up locations spelt EUST. From the list, the telephonist then chooses the one by selecting a number. Unfortunately, the one selected was for the Underground not the Overground Station. With the two being very close together, she has mistyped or pressed two keys at the same time and the wrong one has been entered. Only when validating a destination address does the building name drop to just show the street name. If it had been a pick up, then the telephonist would have seen and realised that the underground station had been selected.

Unfortunately, humans do make mistakes and regrettably Ray has experienced two in one day. All mistakes that Call Centre staff make are firstly brought to their attention and recorded against their work record. Should any individual make an excessive number of mistakes, then disciplinary action is taken. My apologies to A53...

## Busy?

Regarding the recent drop in work, fellow subscribers are asking why we don't get so much from our account at London Wall? There seems to be lots for cars but not so much for us. Is this due to the Concierge system? It seems that without a certain

investment bank just off Gresham Street, we would all be down Carey Street! As regarding fellow subscribers who have the T attribute, take it out and Concierge won't exist - or are you worried you might miss something? Mmmm, yes I think so...

**Patrick Noble (S55)**

**Brian Rice replies:** We still get a great deal of work from the Bank in question and still more than the cars. However, due to the present economic climate, clients are looking at their costs - particularly those in the financial sector. I know all the reasons, but whether we like it or not cars are cheaper than us. You have no perception of how difficult it is to maintain our current levels, particularly when you are endeavouring to sell a far more expensive product! You and I know why it is more expensive, but clients are not interested. However, we are still successful being in excess of £1.5million up on turnover compared to the same period last year, figures our competitors can only envy!

It's evident from your letter that you do not understand how Concierge works. The 'T' attribute has absolutely nothing to do with it! However, if you care to contact me, I will be delighted to explain the whole scenario to you.

Regarding the Investment Bank just off Gresham Street where we are the sole supplier of taxis, the amazing thing about it is we took that account from a competitor because we had Concierge, in fact we built it for the bank and guess what - they are now our largest account! Thank God we had the foresight to be first in the market place with a new product that not only secured that account, but also another extremely large account on the 'Island' where again we are the sole suppliers of taxis.

The market place is extremely tough at present as you have no doubt realised, because that is all you hear when you turn on the radio or TV or read a newspaper. If the pundits continue to talk the economy down, it will get even tougher. Everyone at DaC House is working flat out to maintain our current levels of work, in fact we have improved on it slightly and it would be nice - just occasionally - if some members realised that! Make no mistake Patrick, at the moment we are the most successful radio Taxi circuit in London, which means that everyone is after us whether it be in our own trade, the minicab industry or indeed the independent software houses. You do not help matters by talking things down - just like the political pundits!



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Illustration based on an O2-registered TXII Bronze Auto. Taxi pictured does not necessarily reflect the specification of TXII on offer. Part exchange value of £3,000 is strictly available on any Fairway or Metrocab in any condition but which is complete and currently London PCO Hackney licensed at the point of placing the order. Delivery must take place within one calendar month of order. Available only to London PCO licensed retail owner driver customers. This is a limited offer which may be withdrawn at any time without notice. This offer is not available in conjunction with any other offer or discount. E&OE.

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