

May 2008



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

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CRB and taxi drivers shock!
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DaC's CSR of the year awards



Daren Morley, one of several from DaC to complete the Marathon





NASH'S NUMBERS

By Alan Nash (A95)

Continuing the series of clubs. This month H to M...

Half Moon Putney, 93 Lower Richmond Rd., SW15 1EU	Leprechaun Club, 763 Harrow Rd. Wembley, HA0 2LW
Heaven, Villiers St., WC2N 6NG	L'Equipe Anglaise, 21 Duke St., W1M 5D
Hedges & Butler, 3 New Burlington Mews, W1B 4QB	Lighthouse Bar, 382 Essex Rd., N1 8LN
Herbal, 12-14 Kingsland Rd., E2 8DA	Lime, 11-13 Upper High St., KT17 4QY
Hidden, 100 Tinworth St., SE11 5EQ	Lincoln Lounge, 52 York Way, N1 9AB
HMS President 1918, Victoria Embankment, EC4Y 0HJ	Livery, 130 Wood St., EC2V 6DA
Hobgoblin, 73 White Lion St., N1 9PF	Living, 443 Coldharbour Ln., SW9 8LN
Hospital, 24 Endell St., WC2H 9HQ	Lock Tavern, 35 Chalk Farm Rd., NW1 8AJ
House and Terrace, 338 Boord St., SE10 0PF	Lodge, 226-228 High St., NW10 4TD
Hoxton Hall, 130 Hoxton St., N1 6SH	Loop, 12 Crown Hill, CR0 1RZ
Hub, 2 Goulston St., E1 7TP	Lost Society, 697 Wandsworth Rd., SW8 3JF
IndigO2, Gate 3A Millenium Way, SE10 0PH	Loughborough Hotel, Loughborough Rd, SW9
Industry, 1 Curtain Rd., EC2A 3JX	Lounge, 56 Muswell Hill, N10 3ST
Infernos, 146 Clapham High St., SW4 7UH	Lounge, Ebor St., E1 6AW
Infinity, 10 Old Burlington St., W1S 3AG	Luminaire, 307-311 Kilburn High Rd., NW6 7JR
Inigo, 642 Wandsworth Rd., SW8 3JW	M1NT, 57 Jermyn St., SW1Y 6LX
Intrepid Fox, 15 St. Giles High St., WC2H 8LQ	Madame JoJo's, 8 Brewer St., W1R 3FP
ION Bar, 161-165 Ladbroke Grove, W10 6HJ	Maddox, 3-5 Mill St., W1S 2AU
Isis, 50 Dover St., W1S 4NY	Magic Circle HQ, 12 Stephenson Way, NW1 2HD
Island, 180-182 Hungerford Ln., WC2N 5NG	Magnums, 197 High Rd. Ilford, IG1 1LX
Islington Academy, Parkfield St. (BDC End), N1 4EN	Mahiki, 1 Dover St., W1S 4LD
Islington Bar, 342 Caledonian Rd., N1 1BB	Majingos, 187 Marsh Wall, E14 9SH
Ivory Arch, 80-82 Walworth Rd., SE1 6SW	Mamilanji, 107 Kings Rd., SW3 4PA
Ivy Club, 1-5 West St., WC2H 9NE	Man Bar, 82 Great Suffolk St., SE1 0BE
Ivy House, 40 Stuart Rd., SE15 3BE	Manor Club, 277 Seven sisters Rd., N4 2DE
Jack Beards, 76 Mitcham Rd., SW17 9NG	Manteca, 66 Wardour St., W1
Jackdaw & Rook, 96 Balham High Rd., SW12 9AA	Market Place, 11 Market Place, W1W 8AH
Jacks, 7-9 Crucifix Ln., SE1 3JW	Marquee, 1 Leicester Sq., WC2H 7NA
Jam, 123 Shoreditch High St., E1 6JE	Mass, Brixton Hill, SW2 1JF
Jam Circus, 330-332 Brockley Rd., SE4 2BT	Masters Club, 12 Denman St., W1D 7HH
Jamm, 261 Brixton Rd., SW9 6LH	Matt & Matt, 112 Upper St., N1 1QN
Jazz after Dark, 9 Greek St., W1V 5LE	MAYA, 1a Dean St., W1D 3RB
Jewel, 4-6 Glasshouse St., W1R 5RP	Mayfair Works, Miles St, SW8
Jewel, 29-30 Maiden Ln., WC2E 7JS	McCluskys, 80-88 High St., CR0 1NA
Jongleurs - Battersea, 49 Lavender Gardens, SW11 1DJ	McCluskys, 4 Bishops Hall Thames St. Kingston, KT1 1QN
Jongleurs - Bow, 221 Grove Rd., E3 1AA	Mean Fiddler, 165 Charing Cross Rd., WC2 0EN
Jongleurs - Camden, Lock (Middle Yd), NW1 8AB	Medicine Bar, 89 Great Eastern St., EC2A 3HX
Jongleurs - Watford, 76 The Parade, WD1 2AW	Medusa Brixton Rock, 302-404 Barrington Rd., SW9 7JJ
Juno, 134-135 Shoreditch High St., E1 6JE	Megabowl, 142-144 Streatham Hill, SW2 4RU
Kabaret, 70 New Bond St., W1Y 9DE	Mephisto, 254 Edgware Rd., W2 1DS
Kabarets Prophecy, 16-18 Beak St. (Upp.John), W1F 9RD	Metra Bar and Club, 14 Leicester Sq., WC2H 7NG
Kables, Cable St., E1W 3HB	Metro, 19-23 Oxford St., W1R 2DN
Karamel Club, 4 Coburg Rd., N22 6UJ	Metropolis, 2 Old Change Court, EC4M 8EN
KCLSU, Surrey St.(Macadam), WC2R 2NS	Millenium, 167 Drury Ln., WC2B 5
Key, York Way, N1 0UZ	Ministry of Sound, 103 Gaunt St., SE1 6DP
Kingly Club, 4 Kingly Court, W1B 5PW	Mishmash, 45 Lavender Hill, SW11 5QW
Kinky Mambo, 144 Upper St., N1 1QY	Mo Bay, 139 Wardour St., W1
Kitts, 7-12 Sloane Sq., SW1W 8EG	Mo*vida, 8-9 Argyll St., W1F 7TF
Kode, 13 Blackheath Rd., SE10 8PE	Mojama, 58-62 Heath St., NW3 1EN
KoKo, 1a Camden High St., NW1 7JE	Monkey Chews, 2 Queens Crescent, NW5 4EP
LA Confidential, 1 High St., W5 5JY	Moonlighting, 17 Greek St., W1D 4DR
Langley, 5 Langley St., WC2H 9JA	Moose Bar, 31 Duke St., W1U 1LG
Langtrys, 2-4 High St. Beckenham, BR3 1AZ	Mother, 333 Old St., EC1V 9LE
Las Estrellas Tango Club , 2 Inverness Mews, W2 3JQ	Motion, Victoria Embankment(UG Stn), WC2N 6PA
Lately Night Club, 175 West End Ln., NW6 2LH	Music Room Mayfair, 26 South Molton Ln., W1K 5AB
Lawrence, 34 Lower Park Rd., N11 1QD	MV London Belle, Embankment Pier, SW1A 2JH
Le Fez, 23 Lewisham Way, SE14 6PP	My Place, 1-3 Trebovir Rd., SW5 9LS
Lee Hurst Backyard, 231 Cambridge Heath Rd, E2 0EL	Myth Bar, 123 Acre Ln., SW2 5UA
Leonards EC1, 42 Northampton Rd., EC1R 0HU	

For What's on in May visit www.nashsnumbers.co.uk and click on Extras. For lots more information email alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk with subject UID and text body with name, call sign, badge number and contact telephone number (only used if email address is rejected)...

from the editor's desk

So now we'll find out...

So the election is now over for another four years. As *Call Sign* was in the post on Election Day, we have no idea of who the winner is. All we know is that Ken suddenly became pleasant towards voting day, whilst his two main rivals began the process of promising anything that would win them a four year term at City Hall. But to be honest, I'm not sure whether any of them will be too different from the other. This isn't a political election, it's all about running London.

However, I'd be interested in whether any of them intend keeping their promises to *Call Sign* should they be elected. Well, we're about to find out...

Grant me this...

According to the Vice Chairman of the LCDC, former Dial-a-Cab driver Grant Davis, he doesn't want to bore *The Badge's* readers by going into details of why he was expelled from DaC before then doing so in an unsigned article! "Lots of drivers," he says, have heard the recording of a private conversation that he put online and they have all given him their support for doing so!

Grant then goes on to ask why they shouldn't be allowed to discuss the contents of the call, after all, they didn't like the language used in it – even though it WAS an argument and a private one at that...

So let me make something plain for Grant. Anyone who records a private conversation has no right to do so without informing the other person. And most certainly, just because the person recording it gives you a copy of the phone call, you cannot put it online whether it is for a private discussion group or an open website. In fact, you cannot put it online... full stop! Three DaC drivers obviously agreed and expelled him - which now saves Grant boring his readers with the details!

It now looks as though Grant Davis will be standing against Alan Fleming for the Chairmanship of the LCDC, so surely the question for members has to be: Would you want to be part of an organisation where the Chairman thinks that putting a secretly taped phone conversation online is perfectly ok? The person who taped the original call admitted to me that he had recorded a conversation between him and me without telling me. So remember, you could be next...

And just for the record Grant, I didn't give you a "slating" for your part in *Lunatic* as you claimed in *The Badge*. I said the movie had failed and indeed, it WAS awful. You were ok, although the star of the DVD was undoubtedly the blue DaC taxi outside the front door! It was the only thing that didn't swear every other word...

Taxi pre-test centres

I agree (almost) 100% with TAXI Editor Stuart Pessok that taxi pre-test centres are the way of the future. If garages such as Beesley Engineering or Ascott have the



same testing equipment that SGS do and know what that testing organisation is looking for, then that obviously is the way to go. If the garage is close to the test centre, as are the two examples, then even better. However, as a famous man once pointed out, it's the equipment that's important!

But where I differ slightly with Stuart, I do not believe that just because pre-test centres will undoubtedly keep the cost down, that half-yearly testing is now ok. Our vehicles are the best maintained of any on the road, but SGS still will not pass anything less than 100%. Fine! But that does not justify half-yearly testing.

If you have a legal tyre with – according to your garage - three weeks tread left, are you going to take a chance and leave it on for a half-yearly? Course not! We do not need the 6-monthly and neither do we want it. Who benefits? Not the driver or the passenger, because both know the cab will be in good condition. The only people that do well out of it is SGS and no one but no one will ever convince me that it wasn't a long term plan when SGS were awarded the contract to carry out taxi passing, to eventually "double-up" on business by including a half-yearly check as well.

And have things changed that much? The PCO sent me the incorrect leaflet regarding my half-yearly check. I was sent just one for the overhaul so I was unaware that you had to take your *certificate of meter installation* form with you. So even though it passed the check, the cab failed because I didn't have the meter form with me.

As it passed everything else and it wasn't my fault that they sent me incorrect information, I asked if I could either post the form or drop it in the next time I passed? Some hope! They were pleasant enough and gave me a date later on in the day, but that return trip totally messed up my plans. So no, little has really changed and we need as little contact as possible with them – once a year will do fine thanks...

Who's watching the moving cars?

Yeah... we know who's watching cars and taxis that are left unattended for more than two minutes, but is anyone watching the

moving ones?

It was the afternoon of Thursday 3 April; a burst water main caused Victoria Embankment to close forcing traffic over Southwark or Blackfriars Bridges, both of which then ground to a halt. DaC drivers saw the news on their terminals and tried using the Strand going west. They soon realised that route is abysmal even without any extra traffic, thanks to the clueless planners and their desire to give everyone their own set of pedestrian traffic signals. So we all moved up to Holborn, where trying to go west across Procter Street and Kingsway is akin to driving through the Brazilian rain forest in an articulated wagon.

To complete a perfect day – including where every road is apparently compelled to have its water main replacement road works - unfortunately the air ambulance had to land in Parliament Square!

So London ground to a total shuddering halt. What was missing? Well there wasn't one policeman trying to sort out the traffic at road junctions. I remember in days of yore when a policeman would take over if a set of lights packed up. Ok, they weren't always marvellous at it, but at least you would move. Now even total gridlock won't force the police out to where the great unwashed masses are. We are an inconvenience...

Running for charity

Yes, I know that if you work on Sundays, then 13 April must have been nothing short of a nightmare. The road from Docklands, through The Highway, Tower Bridge, Victoria Embankment, Parliament Square, Westminster Bridge and all the way back to Tower Bridge... all shut! Oh, and did I mention that the whole of the Royal Park in addition to The Mall - which mysteriously still closes on Sundays – was closed? Why? Well it was the day of the *Flora London Marathon*. Total traffic mayhem on the roads, but unlike the previous story, you'd need to be made of steel not to admire the whole thing with some 35,000 runners pounding the London streets, many of them doing so for charity.

Among those 35,000 were quite a few from Dial-a-Cab supporting their favourite charities and being sponsored by *Call Sign*. I think that with all the fun aspects of the run, we tend to forget how far 26 miles is. I feel worn out just driving that far! So to all those drivers, well done!

But as one teeny-weensy word of complaint. How come cars can only do 20mph if they do not want to be the proud recipient of a PCN due to the claimed weight limit when crossing Tower Bridge? Yet amazingly 35,000 runners are ok to cross it en masse? Ah well...!

Summer!

As usual, there is no June issue of *Call Sign* so can I take this opportunity to wish you all a lovely holiday, or pleasant summer if you are staying at home. See you in July...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections Of The Chairman

Tribunal result

An ex-member has taken the Society to an Employment Tribunal. I have heard various rumours concerning the situation; but this is the first opportunity I have had to set the record straight with the facts as they happened.

On 28 November 2006, Dial-a-Cab expelled Mr Anthony Gillam for consistent non-compliance with the Society's 40-trip rule. In the 6-month period prior to his expulsion, he had completed a total of just 7 account trips.

Mr Gillam explained in his Complaints Meeting that he had a back problem, which meant he had a preference for working out of Heathrow. He was asked whether he would be prepared to increase the number of account trips he completed, but Mr Gillam declined and asked for the 40-trip rule to be cancelled entirely in his case.

Dial-a-Cab is a Mutual Society run for the benefit of the members. In order to meet the requirements of our account customers and to ensure the continuity and viability of our Society, we operate the minimum account trip rule and rely on members to complete a minimum of 40 account trips each month. The Complaints Committee decided that it was not appropriate to cancel the 40-trip rule completely and in the absence of any indication from Mr Gillam that he was prepared to compromise, they decided that the only option was to expel him. This decision was later upheld on appeal.

On 26 February 2007, Mr Gillam brought various Employment Tribunal claims against the Society. Mr Gillam claimed he was an employee of the Society or a worker, raised a *whistle blowing* issue and also claimed there had been a breach of working time legislation. All were dismissed at a preliminary hearing, however, the claim that Mr Gillam's back problem amounted to a disability proceeded to a full merits hearing.

On 9 April 2008, the Employment Tribunal published its written judgement. Although the Tribunal found that Mr Gillam was capable of complying with the 40-trip rule, they found that his back problem was a disability and that it would not have been unreasonable for the Society to cancel the 40-trip rule in his case. However, the Tribunal stated they were satisfied that Mr Gillam was not expelled because he was disabled.

Mr Gillam was seeking compensation of £20,000 - £40,000. The Tribunal awarded him £2,500 for 'injury to his feelings'. As a result of that judgement, Dial-a-Cab do not feel it necessary to pursue an appeal.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups?

I recently attended a meeting at Minster House, Marsham Street with various Government officials, together with representatives from the LTDA and PCO. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss safeguarding vulnerable groups by the formation of a government-backed body called the *Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)*.

This body has been formed in the wake of the Soham tragedies, where school caretaker Ian Huntley murdered young girls Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells. Consequently, if anyone comes into contact through their job on a regular basis either with children, the elderly



or any other vulnerable groups, then they will have to be registered with the ISA.

Any organisation that is brought into being to safeguard the more vulnerable in our Society must be welcomed, however, some of their thinking does seem a little strange. That is probably because the bureaucrats are intending to foist legislation into our industry and the way in which they are going to proceed makes it abundantly clear they know nothing about our business.

As an example; if you are going to baby-sit for a friend or relative then there is no problem. However, if someone baby-sits on a regular basis for those same children and does so for payment, then they will have to be registered with the ISA. That seems quite sensible! It's when we come onto the Transport Industry that things become a little different.

If a bus/coach driver works for a school or elderly people's home on a regular basis and transports the passengers to and fro, then he/she will have to be registered with the ISA. However, if a bus driver is driving a 'normal' bus and he has a couple of schools on his route that he picks-up from outside every day, then he will not have to be registered.


We now come on to taxis; if we pick up chil-

dren or the elderly on a regular basis and the contract is with the radio circuit, the driver that picks them up regularly has to be registered. But if those very same people order a taxi privately - which would include the *TaxiCard* scheme - then the driver will not have to be registered - confused? You should be...

The authorities have not thought through the introduction of this scheme for London taxis. When a taxi driver receives for the first time - or indeed renews his taxi driver's licence - he/she is checked with the *Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)*, for which there is a charge to the driver. In future the normal CRB check will be made, but if the driver wants ISA registration then the same check will be made with the CRB again and then he can register with the ISA for a 'one off' payment of £64. This new scheme seems quite ludicrous to me, as we will have taxi drivers that are registered and those that are not. It would seem sensible to me that when the initial CRB check is made and of course assuming everything is ok, the driver should automatically be registered with the ISA. If we are already undergoing a CRB check, then that is sufficient to be registered with the ISA. The public quite rightly expect that any taxi driver in London should be a 'fit and proper person' and we have all undergone the same tests and checks. It appears this might not be the case in the future - and it's wrong!

What was particularly annoying is that the meeting was held on a Monday and the government announced their plans two days later on the Wednesday, whereas the meeting should have been held some months earlier so the views of the attendees at the meeting could have been taken into account. Whilst all should welcome the new legislation, the registration to the new system by London taxi drivers is completely ludicrous and the authorities have got it wrong! The scheme comes into operation on 12 October 2009; I am led to believe it will take up to five years for total implementation...

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab



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London, W6 0GY

Telephone: 020 8735 9770

Moving home

Commercial property

Property disputes

Family - divorce, co-habitation and children

Wills and Probate

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

DAC DRIVER STANLEY MAKES CITIZENS ARREST!

Early on a recent Friday morning, **Stanley Roth (Y53)** - aka Mr Gas cab on account of his environmentally friendly taxi - was hailed by a young man in Aldgate who asked how much it would cost to Borough, SE1? Stanley said it would be around £7.

"Would you take my aunt there," asked the young man?

At this point a woman stumbled out of a doorway, obviously the worse for drink and staggered towards the cab.

"Er, no thank you," responded Stan in a polite manner!

"Please," the young man pleaded, "she'll give you £10 at the other end. She really needs to get home and I'm concerned for her welfare."

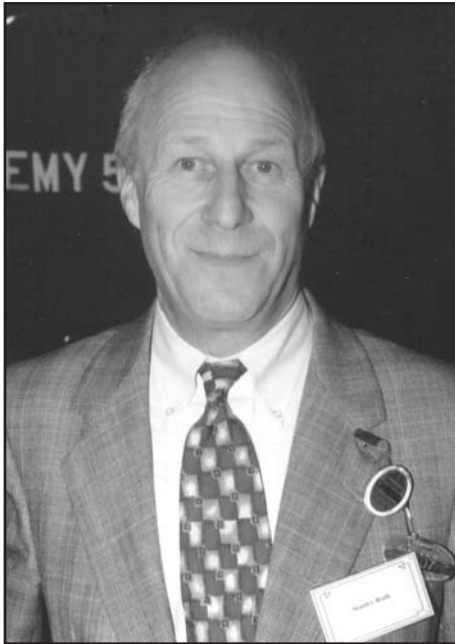
Against his better judgement after many years of driving a cab, Stanley's kind heart won the day, so off they set towards SE1. But once over the river and at Borough, the passenger suddenly announced that she had no intention of paying the fare and that even if she wanted to, she had no money anyway!

With that and now realising that he should have listened to his head instead of his heart, Stanley was out of the cab double-quick and around to the kerbside standing in front of the woman as she struggled out of the cab. He was also on his mobile phone to the police...

Holding her arm gently with his free hand, Stanley uttered the words no bilker wants to hear and undoubtedly would rarely hear from a licensed taxi driver: "I am arresting you for non-payment of the fare."

Suddenly the woman collapsed in an undignified heap on the pavement, shouting abuse at the small group of passers-by who had gathered to see what the fuss was about - but saving her best insults for our Stanley!

Slowly she pulled herself up and straightened her clothing as Stanley kept his stance in front of her, pre-empting any possibility of



Stanley Roth - arrested his passenger!

her escape whilst at the same time being careful not to have an assault charge laid against him.

Within a few minutes, the police arrived and on sight of them the woman decided to collapse to the floor again as if she had been pushed to the ground. The police searched her and found a £20 note in her clothing, not to mention several items of property in her handbag that looked suspiciously as though they might not have belonged to her!

When told she was being arrested for possession of stolen property as well as non-payment of a taxi fare, the woman punched one of the police officers, adding a charge of assault to the growing list before bundling her, ranting and screaming, into the back of the police van!

Having made a statement to the police, Stanley got on with his day musing on the fact that after all these years on the road, perhaps he should have driven away before the passenger entered the cab in Aldgate and thereby save himself much trouble?

To date there has been no word from the police as to the woman's fate, but Stan concludes that while the woman upset his day, as the incident took place on a Friday it was very likely that the lady was kept in the cells over the entire weekend before appearing in court on the following Monday!

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M&O Announce Record Fleet Sales For March

Mann & Overton London has announced a single-month sales record of 60 new 08-registered TX4s delivered to the capital's rental fleet operators in March. The LTI dealership is

enjoying strong demand for its iconic TX4 taxi as fleets decide to upgrade their old Fairway and TX1 vehicles.

Taking delivery of the 60th TX4 was Jason Chillmaid, owner of Hackney-based J&J Taxis.

"I'm delighted to be improving my fleet with the TX4," said Jason. "This will be the third TX4 that I've purchased this month, adding to the firm's fleet of 100 vehicles. It enables J&J Taxis to keep up with current trends and provide my drivers with the best vehicle for the job. The TX4 allows London's drivers to pick up passengers in improved safety and com-



Pic: Simon Brauns, Fleet Sales Executive at M&O London, presents the keys to Jason Chillmaid, owner of J&J Taxis.

fort."

Peter Rigden, General Manager at M&O told **Call Sign**:

"This new fleet sales record reflects a successful first quarter for the next-generation London taxi. It has been achieved through a variety of promotions launched by M&O, including low rate finance deals and an unprecedented Fairway / Metrocab replacement offer. We will continue to work hard to offer our customers the best fleet service and support to ensure this success continues throughout the year."

For further info on M&O deals, call 020 7700 0888 or visit www.mannandoverton.com.



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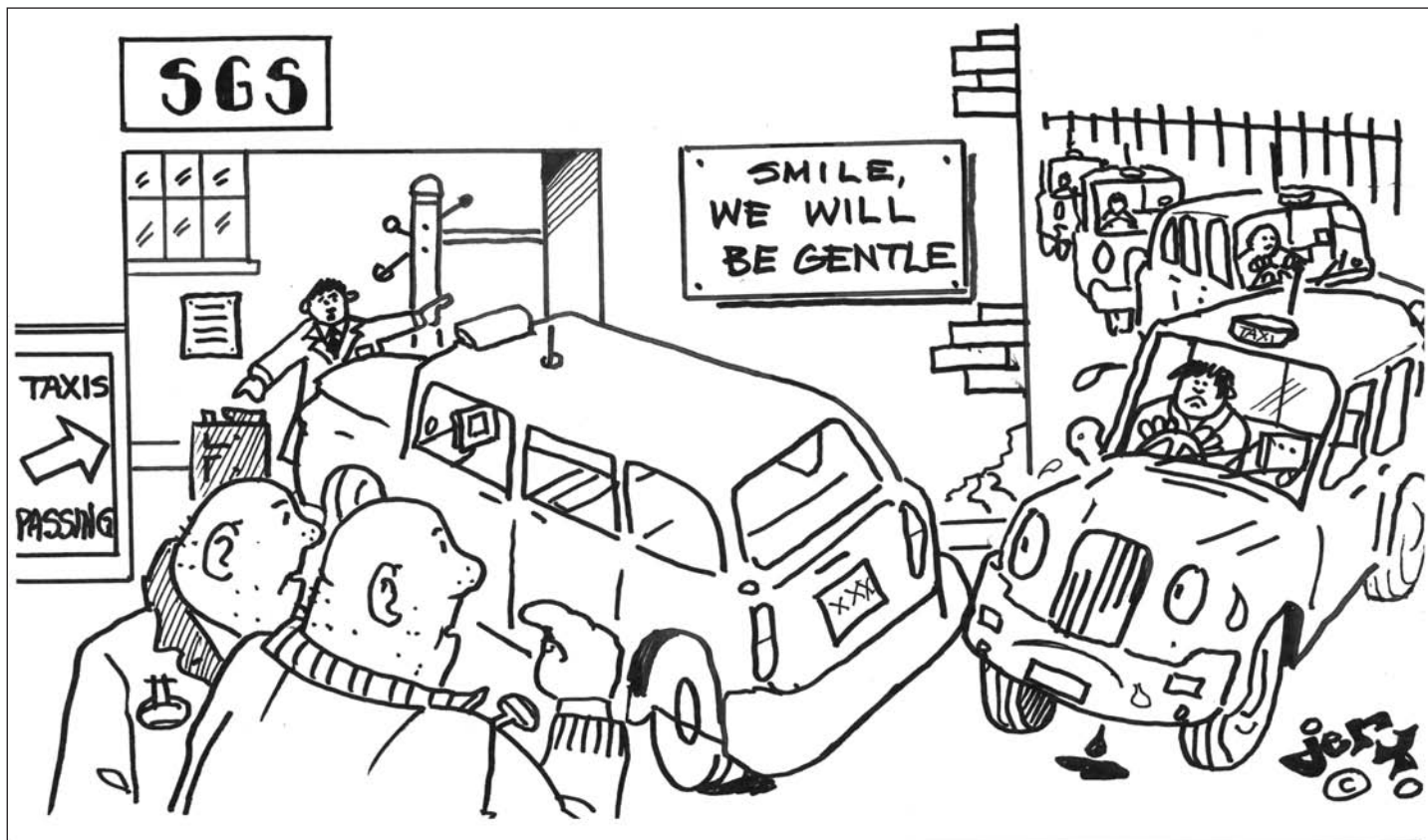
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Jery's World



When that Alan Fisher geezer said we'd end up wiv an overhaul every month wiv SGS, I effinwell fought he was joking...!

Servicing the needs of the UK taxi trade...

LTI Vehicles takes great pride in being the sole provider of a dedicated network of taxi dealerships. Providing an essential service for UK taxi drivers, the network has been established to specifically deal with their unique duty cycle and working patterns.

The network comprises nine dealerships that retail new and used taxis to owner drivers, offer competitive finance packages and stock a comprehensive range of genuine parts and accessories for all LTI models. In addition, 60 plus approved service dealers offer a vital support service by providing drivers with routine servicing, LTI warranty work and unscheduled repairs.

Rob Laidler, Sales Director at LTI Vehicles told *Call Sign*:

"Taxi drivers looking for a complete sales, repair and support service need look no further than LTI Vehicles' national network of dealerships and approved service dealers.

"As is often the case with vehicles that cover large mileages, routine maintenance and servicing is an essential ingredient to prolong the vehicles working life. At LTI, we appreciate the importance of keeping taxis on the road.

"Over time we have established a strong network that has built up an unrivalled reputation in serving and supporting the taxi trade. We pride ourselves on the quality of our vehicles, but should drivers experience any problems our network have the tools, parts and technical knowledge to get them back on the road quickly."

Part of Manganese Bronze Holdings plc, LTI Vehicles employs over 450 people at its Coventry manufacturing plant and owns three Mann & Overton dealerships located in London, Birmingham and Manchester. A further six independent dealerships are based in London (KPM Taxis UK Plc), Liverpool (Taxifix Ltd), Peterborough (Conders Garage Ltd), Bexhill-on-sea (Smith & Humphrey), Glasgow and Edinburgh (John Paton & Son Ltd).

To find your nearest LTI dealership or approved service dealer call LTI Vehicles on 024 7657 2000 or visit www.lti.co.uk.



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CRB check no longer enough for taxi drivers!

The Home Office has announced that from 12 October 2009, individuals will need to register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) if they are to work or volunteer with children and/or vulnerable adults in a regulated activity. *Call Sign's* understanding is that this would apply to taxi drivers and others who regularly pick-up children and/or vulnerable adults as part of a contract, such as school runs – even though they are already vetted by the police and the CRB. TaxiCard trips are also being looked at by the Home Office.

The cost for an individual to apply to register with the ISA will be a one-off, lifetime fee of £64. It will then be possible to check an individual's ISA-registration status online or as part of an Enhanced CRB check.

The Criminal Records Bureau welcomed the launch of the new ISA service claiming it would enhance the current level of protection afforded by CRB checks. The ISA, they say, will remove the most dangerous people from the children and vulnerable adults' workforce and the CRB will continue to provide a person's criminal record and other relevant information through the CRB check.

The Home Office added that the CRB would provide a one-stop-shop for access to both of these checks. When used together, a CRB and ISA check would then provide the most comprehensive vetting and checking service on offer in the world today.

Among the many attendees of a meeting held at Great Minster House to discuss the proposals, DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** – who was representing the *London Taxi Network* – expressed confidence in the PCO's ability to vet London taxi drivers, where holding a green or yellow badge provided public reassurance and should, in his view be seen as sufficient. Brian said that he would not want to see further burdens put on taxi drivers in London.

Mark Crawford, of the Home Office, explained that the ISA scheme would be an extension of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure service and not a replacement. He said it was a scheme that built on the processes for enhanced disclosures. Mr Crawford added that lesser summary offences, such as speeding, would not be included in the list of discretionary barring offences. He said that the ISA might also consider that the same discretionary offences have different weight in making certain decisions, for example theft from a vulnerable adult as opposed to theft from a child.

The PCO's **Mary Dowdye** pointed out that TfL would not know if an applicant was or would be operating under any contract with a school etc. A licensing authority would also need to take into account

offences related to drink and alcohol in making decisions. Any additional checks should therefore be made part of the licensing process, as it was already that system that provided drivers with credibility in the eyes of the public.

LTDA General Secretary **Bob Oddy** pointed out that there are a significant proportion of London taxi drivers (not including PHV drivers) who would never undertake a contract to transport children and vulnerable adults and he was concerned that these drivers should not have additional costs and burdens of registering under the ISA scheme.

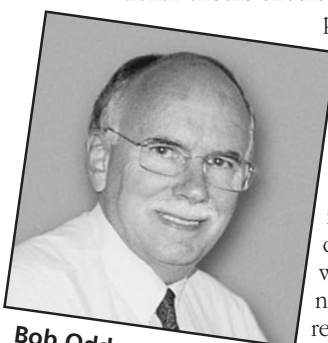
Brian Rice came back to point out that there was also a potential gap in respect of vulnerable adults who make private arrangements to organise a cab themselves. Neither was it clear how the ISA scheme would apply to the **London TaxiCard** scheme subsidised by London Boroughs for the elderly and those with disabilities. Brian pointed out that for trips under such schemes to be outside the ISA scheme when drivers were providing them regularly, whilst others were within it, would show total inconsistency. He added that there were millions of such trips.

There was a sense of annoyance from those leaving the meeting in that the matter had already been decided, which made the meeting pointless...

Call Sign comment: *We are already licensed by TfL and are in the CRB scheme. Why on earth do we need to register for yet another scheme? A £64 fee sounds much like yet another stealth tax. See Brian Rice's comments on page 4...*



Brian Rice



Bob Oddy

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With the development of alternatively fuelled engines, we tend to think that these power plants are a relatively new phenomenon to reduce polluting emissions. But, as our picture shows, engineers were working on developing motive power units that were cleaner and quieter than a normal petrol engine... and no doubt more economical too!

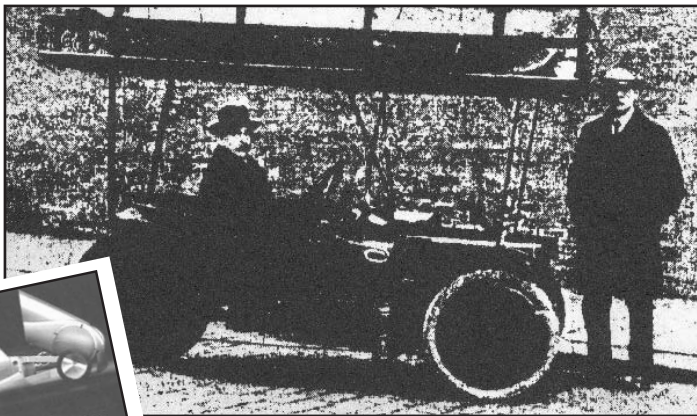
Nowadays, the talk is of hybrid cars that are driven by a combination of electric motors or petrol engines or a milk float type arrangement of electric motor alone like the new TX4E. These battery operated cars are certainly 'cleaner' emission-wise than their petrol or diesel counterparts, but the problem has always been the limited mileage range.

Hybrids are a more practical proposition to those little town cars, as battery power alone remains a science to be further developed before they can be considered a viable 'alternative' to the spark / ignition (petrol) or compression ignition (diesel) engine.

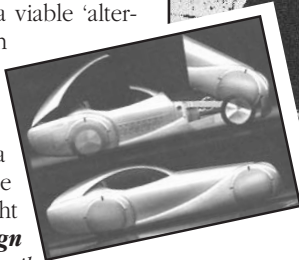
The rumour mill within the cab trade at present is that a hybrid powered taxi is on the way to becoming a regular sight on our streets, however, **Call Sign** was recently informed (see *April issue*) that while there are a few hybrid taxis up and running, the technology is extremely complex for taxi operating cycles and that there is some way still to go...

However, back in 1915, that 'complex technology' did not stop Mr Charles Potter from Leeds converting a Morgan motorcar to run on

Alternative Fuels Are History?



**Mr Potters' original Morgan Cab from 1915.
Inset: The 2008 version of Morgan fuel cell technology**



According to Mr Potter, those 22 miles came "...from one charge of gas costing ninepence."

Now in 2008, there is another Morgan motorcar with an alternative propulsion system. The 'LifeCar' is a concept project that will employ 'fuel cell' technology and emit only water vapour from its exhaust! The vehicle is a co-operation between several companies partnering Morgan to develop the 'LifeCar' into a practical reality, although it might be some time yet before we see them on our roads!

Our thanks to **Call Sign's** man in Winnipeg, Norman Beattie, for the old Morgan info and Alan Green for that of the LifeCar...

© Call Sign Magazine MM8

TOUT AND ABOUT IN LONDON...

It's late on the Thursday night before Good Friday. The last underground train trundles into **Embankment Station**. Two guys up from Sussex for an evening's entertainment need to get a cab to York Way, King's Cross. As they walk out of the station, there to greet them is the reassuring sound of "Taxi Sir, this way." "How much to York Way, King's Cross," they ask? "£18, no problem." "Thank you..."

It's now chucking out time at the **Egg Club**, York Way and our Sussex duo need to get a cab to King's Cross Station. As they walk out of the club door, they once again hear the reassuring sound of "Taxi sir, this way," from a group outside. They're resplendent, this time clothed in fluorescent jackets. It does look more official; anyone in London of any importance has a yellow fluorescent jacket! Well the professionals do, don't they?

"Join the taxi queue, sir, they are busy tonight." "How much to King's Cross station," they ask? "£8, no problem." "Thank you..."

You can see the similar scenarios right across London from hot spots such as Hoxton Square to Clapham Junction Station. The prices are extortionate because these people are skilled operatives at working under cover in a hostile climate and have a limited time span to pick their victims. These victims don't even make it to the street to find a black cab; they are shafted long before then. This is still standard practice for night-time London.

TfL are fully committed - so they say - to fighting illegal taxi touting and other activities such as illegal parking. They are very strict on the latter, heavily fining black cab drivers seen on CCTV stopping at cash points for their passengers!

The fighting campaigns they run are basically high profile PR exercises, using the best designers, script writers and consultants that money can buy. This shows TfL conducting an active front against illegal and criminal activities, regardless of whether they work or not - 'not', it seems, on most nights. TfL ask people to check out their websites and study their literature regularly, just 5 minutes a day before bedtime is particularly beneficial as the thought process incurred is thought to be life sustaining!

They are accountable to no one and have the full backing of the Prime Minister, who has recently demonstrated great affection for their spiritual leader Ken and his close knit governing body. To become a fully paid up member and not be unfairly financially penalised, it is best to purchase an Oyster card, whereby you can make voluntary contributions to the society and their beliefs.

Did you vote for Ken and TfL to keep London moving - unless of course you were late after being stuck on a bendy bus somewhere. Next time take a flask and some sandwiches!



David Heath (Ex W27)

A PCO Notice has outlined the revised arrangements for taxis to pick up and set down passengers in the area of Kings Cross and St Pancras Stations where there have been substantial changes recently. Facilities summarised and locations mentioned are identified in the map.

There are parking and waiting restrictions throughout the roads in this area. The pick up/set down bays on Pancras Road are designated for a maximum of two minutes. Waiting is not permitted in these bays and vehicles must not be left unattended at the roadside.

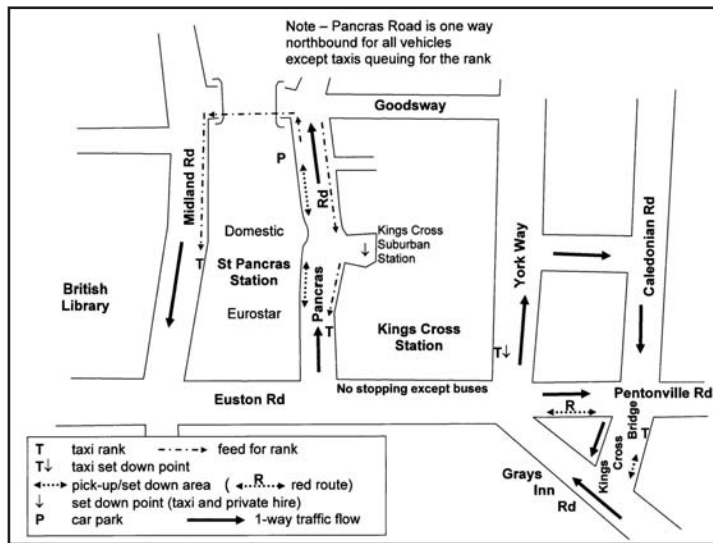
Drivers should always obey traffic signs. The road network in this area is still subject to change and this Notice should not be relied on if signage on the road or at the kerb indicates something different.

In order to minimise traffic congestion on the busy roads in this area, all drivers are urged to use the designated facilities for picking up and setting down and avoid stopping on the roadway if possible. All vehicles should stop close to the kerb and passengers should be encouraged to use kerbside doors rather than step into the path of traffic.

Taxis can stop to pick up or set down passengers (but not wait) on most of the roads in the area, including Red Routes. Remember that stopping is not allowed on the stretch of Euston Road eastbound in front of Kings Cross station.

Taxis can also set down passengers at the taxi set-down area on the nearside at the start of York Way, the 2-minute bays on Pancras Road outside St Pancras station, the set-down area by Kings Cross suburban station and the taxi rank on Kings Cross Bridge alongside the Scala.

Revised Arrangements Kings Cross/St Pancras



northern end of Pancras Road.

There are very few locations where taxis can wait in this area. Pre-booked taxis may need to wait in the car park at the northern end of Pancras Road (*DaC drivers now use the coach park...Ed*). It may be prudent to ask customers with radio bookings to make contact as their train approaches the station or after they arrive in order to avoid parking or

penalty charges.

Transport for London and the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington employ camera enforcement in this area. Drivers are urged to ensure they comply with all the relevant traffic regulations.

Len Simkins

PCO Head of Strategy and Planning

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CALL CENTRE CHAT

Heathrow Terminal 5

Now that Terminal 5 is operating, all pick up instructions are currently telling drivers to park their cab in the car park and to meet the passenger at Arrivals with a name board. This is a temporary situation until such time as a T5 taxi information desk is fully operational.

On the Departure level in the middle of Terminal 5, road markings are in place as is a telephone for radio taxi pickups. Unfortunately, until the taxi desk - which will be sighted on the ground floor Arrivals - becomes fully operational, we will not be using the radio taxi pick up rank. However, in saying all this, if we have to accommodate a passenger with anything different, drivers will be advised.

Canary Wharf

Further to my last report regarding E140 and the possible changes that could be made, it has been decided to leave the working practise of E140 unchanged - which means that at all times drivers must be inside the security cordon to book in.

This will only change when controllers send messages stating drivers can now book in when 15 minutes away. The 15 minutes book-in will only be used when we are very busy. If any driver is uncertain as to what system is in operation, I would recommend they ask rather than guess. E140 has been monitored very closely recently and a number of driver's call signs have been passed to Allan Evans to issue complaints against. Ignorance will be no excuse when answering the complaint. It is every drivers responsibility to enquire what system is in operation at the time of them booking in.

Countless numbers of messages have been sent to avoid any misunderstandings and will continue in the future. Booking in inside the security cordons means exactly what it says, with the define line being the cordon barrier so there can be no confusion. Using the excuse of booking in as you were approaching the cordon because you could not see anyone in front of you will not be an acceptable position. While you may not see anyone where you are, there could be another driver booking in correctly at one of the other checkpoints who would find him or herself at a disadvantage. Remember, inside means inside...

Around the island on E140

While on the subject of E140, many of you will have experienced from time to



time, account trips from various addresses around the centre of the island being dispatched to E140. Further to the request of drivers to remove these streets from appearing on E14C, E14S and E140, the Board have discussed it in depth and have chosen not to remove them. It was felt that the pick up addresses are within reach of the lead times of 10 minutes and because it will only apply to our account clients, then the service they will receive will be beneficial to the Society as a whole.

St Pancras Eurostar

The St Pancras Eurostar pick up has changed. As of 14 April, the Dial-a-Cab pick up point moved to inside the Coach Park area. All drivers who accept trips from St Pancras are to go to the security person positioned at the Coach Road entrance who will ask you to confirm either your call sign or passenger name. You will then be instructed to go

to the very end bay, which is number 6. If you park correctly, there will be space for 4 taxis. When it's busy with coaches reversing, I would ask you all to be extra diligent and give way to those big beasts.

Within the call centre, we are making courtesy calls to each passenger once the trip has been allocated to ensure they know where to find their driver. So we hope to see a big improvement in our service at the station.

Golf days

We are looking to support two-charity golf days this year. The first will be in aid of *Variety Club of Great Britain* at the West Kent Golf Club on 13 June, while the second will be for the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers*, who are holding their day at Nazeing Golf Club on 18 July. Rather than have just one day with 24 players, we will split ourselves between the two and will be inviting 12 drivers to participate at each venue. Entry forms will be available in Driver's Reception for those of you who would like to play.

When completing the form, please ensure you complete the correct one for you, as filling in two forms will not be accepted. If we get more entries than the required number of players, then selection will go to being pulled from the hat.

Keith Cain

Call Centre Manager

Driver Operations Manager

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solicitors
—LLP—



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Drink Driving

Speeding

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Driving without Due Care

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Vehicles

HAILED THE WORLD OVER

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With the kind permission of TaxiTalk Editor David Millward, *Call Sign* is précising a worrying item from their April 2008 issue. It involves an unidentified licensed taxi driver whom we will refer to as John. He had no answer to his problems... but we do.

Up until last August, John was one of those guys who liked to remain on top of things and always paid his bills regularly – but that was until a back problem stopped him working and then did so for the rest of the year. His sickness policy refused to pay out, thanks to a note in the small print that John hadn't realised was there. So he dug into his savings and used a credit card where before he wouldn't have had to. When you have to borrow large amounts to pay bills but can only afford to repay a minimum amount, it doesn't take long before your limit has been reached and that soon happened to John.

He was also in overdraft territory at the bank. Even with his policy of prioritising, he missed a mortgage repayment and on one occasion exceeded his overdraft limit. Banks have no problem with the well-off exceeding their limit, but don't usually approve of those that actually need the money, doing so. Things were looking black for John.

But 2007 came to an end and by February 2008, John was at last passed fit to return to work. He decided to get his taxi serviced before going out for what would, by necessity, be pretty long hours. At least he had the satisfaction of knowing that those long hours would translate into pounds and pence and with some luck, his huge debts would now begin to come down.

But being kicked when you're down comes to mind, because the garage told John that his engine was on the verge of extinction and that he needed a new one. The estimate came to £1800 – bad enough when you aren't heavily in debt, let alone when you are.

John was left with little choice but to approach his bank manager. After all, they were always posting out offers of loans and as reluctant as John was to add to his debts, this one was important because it would allow him to return to work and begin paying back what he owed. Sadly they turned him down because of that one occasion when he had exceeded his overdraft limit. Having been with this bank for 20 years, he then asked if he could extend his taxi loan? They again refused and incidentally, this was the very same bank that had sold him the sickness policy that turned out to be so absolutely useless.

John then tried applying for a £2000 loan on the internet and was inundated with replies. But no one was interested in lending him £2000 – but were happy to lend him far more! He explained about his debts, including the taxi repayments and credit card etc and that he didn't want even more, but several companies offered to consolidate all his debts into one big loan, with one even offering John £35K while another suggesting voluntary bankruptcy – but £2000? No chance. It was obviously not worth their while, even though to John it would have been the money to get his cab fixed and get him on the road to paying off those debts. Eventually John swallowed his pride and bor-

DaC Drivers and the “Credit Crunch...?”



DaC's Credit Union: There to help...

rowed the money from his brother.

So what if you had been John? *Call Sign* can't offer you any suggestions on how not to get a bad back or avoid debts, but we can suggest something that would prevent you getting that final humiliating no to the small loan that would have been the beginning of the answer to paying back his larger debts... Join the DaC Credit Union!

It such an obvious benefit to all DaC drivers, staff and their families that it is just incredible to find that it has just 450 members, yet lent well over £1million to them just last year! You have to make a regular saving with them (on which you gain interest) and can borrow up to three times those savings. And of course your

savings can be taken back should you need them provided you have no outstanding loans. It certainly would have solved John's immediate problem – and probably within a day!

Don't ever find yourself in John's position. Join the DaC Credit Union. See the ad in this issue or ask Driver Services for an application form.

At the DaC Credit Union AGM held on 3 April, all the committees were re-elected. President Terry Dodd (W15) said that it had been a good, if difficult year, leaving DACCU in a stronger position than last year with a further 56 members joining. He was pleased to say that every loan request had been met and announced a 1.25% dividend...

Dial-a Cab Credit Union

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

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What epitomises England to most people? Stonehenge? The pub? Fish and chips? What do we cherish most about England in the 21st century? **ICONS - A Portrait of England** is helping the nation paint a portrait of our national identity and treasures by collating 100 English icons - see <http://www.icons.org.uk>.

So far Stonehenge, the FA Cup, Routemaster bus, Spitfire, Angel of the North, Rolls Royce and the humble cuppa have been revealed as official English ICONS - to name just a few. But now ICONS has officially revealed that the London Taxi - forever it seems to be known as the Black Cab - has joined the list. But this is not an ad for the TX4, this is about taxis - London taxis!

Other ICONS revealed include the Glastonbury Festival, the bowler hat, phone box, cricket, Hadrian's Wall, the Globe Theatre, York Minster, Westminster Abbey, Big Ben and now the London Taxi - long described in press releases as one anyway - now makes the list as an official English icon!

The ICONS project reaches fruition in summer 2008 when they will be unveiling the last cultural gems - the final pieces of



Now the London Taxi Really is an Icon!

The 'Black Cab' joins list of English icons



The London Taxi is now in good company as an official icon along with such esteemed attractions such as Westminster Abbey

the ICONS jigsaw - over the subsequent months.

The **ICONS - A Portrait of England** website is commissioned by the DCMS' Culture Online (www.cultureonline.gov.uk) and sustained by Culture 24 - a not-for-profit organisation funded by MLA, which promotes the UK's culture and heritage. It runs a family of websites including the 24 Hour Museum (www.24hourmuseum.org.uk), the UK's online guide to over 3,700 museums, galleries and heritage sites, which is seen by over 10 million people a year.

LTB: "STRONGER PENALTIES FOR TOUTS!"

The London Taxi Board has welcomed the GLA Transport Committee's March 2008 report, *Tackling taxi touting in London*. The LTB, however, believe that the report should have gone further.

Speaking for the London trade, LTB Vice Chair **Geoffrey Riesel** gave evidence to the inquiry, which was chaired by Peter Hulme-Cross AM. Mr Riesel highlighted the scale of the problem and the urgent need to find a stronger policy to reduce - and ultimately end - touting.

The London Taxi Board believe that the Public Carriage Office should revoke a private hire driver's licence once they are convicted of a single offence, rather than following three convictions, which the report recommended.

The report also notes that just 10% of licensed private hire drivers with a conviction for touting have been banned by the PCO and the same number with a conviction for touting have had no action taken against them. The LTB believe that this sends out a weak message to touts and does not provide the right policy to stop illegal touting.

While Transport for London has successfully reduced the number of attacks on women through the *Safer Travel at Night* awareness campaign, wide scale touting undermines this progress. The PCO and TOCU need to send a clear message to all touts - touting is illegal and dangerous!

The LTB support the list of recommendations proposed by Peter Hulme-Cross, but believe that more funding should also be made available to TOCU to deal with this real problem.



Geoffrey Riesel, LTB Vice Chairman

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Call Sign has received many letters from Dial-a-Cab drivers who have become victims of the London boroughs money-making machines – otherwise known as **Penalty Charge Notices** – but were determined to fight them. Two DaC drivers - Martin Hizer (M47) and Tony Mitchell (T88) – led the way with a petition that gathered around 1000 signatures.

When it comes to the actual numbers of issued PCNs, certainly Westminster is way out in the lead with Camden some way behind in second place. Unfortunately for taxi drivers, these are the two councils in whose areas we as cabbies spend most time and naturally, it follows that we stop in those areas most.

The latest to send in details of his ongoing battle with the **City of Westminster** Parking Services – based, as you'd expect, in sunny Warrington – is **Tony Guerrier (L28)**. Over the years, **Call Sign** has heard of at least two issues of PCNs sent Tony's way. In August 2003, he received a ticket from TfL for stopping in the Bishopsgate bus lane. Tony refused to pay insisting that he was entitled to set down passengers. TfL disagreed, but with Tony obviously getting ready for a long battle, they suddenly backed down with no explanation. Some time later, we heard that we could indeed set down there, but had to pull straight out again afterwards. Victory 1...

Then two years later, the March 2005 issue told of Tony's "capture" on CCTV in the old Holborn yellow box junction that took up so much of the area by Holborn Station. After several unsuccessful appeals to Camden Council, Tony went to adjudication where it was found that the box itself was illegal, therefore no offence could have been committed! Tony had the PCN cancelled again and the yellow box mysteriously shrunk! Victory 2...

Now Tony has told **Call Sign** of yet another battle with an authority over a PCN. This involved him waiting in Dean Street, Soho, for a disabled passenger on a Westminster TaxiCard. He was photographed on CCTV and sent a PCN for parking.

Tony wrote explaining that he was a licensed taxi driver and even the photo showed him with his headlights on – hardly how you would leave your cab parked! Westminster replied that the PCN was issued correctly as you can stop only to pick up or set down, but cannot wait. The fact that disabled passengers take longer to get to the cab (6 minutes) was totally overlooked.

Tony wrote back again disagreeing with their assessment restating that it was for a disabled passenger. They wrote back informing the DaC driver that if he did not pay within 14 days, he would be liable to the whole £120 as against the initial charge of £60. They failed to mention that the £60 is frozen should a further appeal take place.

However, it was in Tony's covering letter to this magazine that we based our headline on. He wrote that he wasn't sure if there was any interest left, as it could be getting quite boring – although Tony wanted to see ongoing publicity because he believed it

Are PCNs a bore?



Would this warden take away the PCN boredom creeping in!

should be kept out in the open and showed how we are all attempting to fight back.

On page 25 of this issue, Westminster's Head of Parking Operations, Kevin Goad, responds to Broxbourne MP Charles Walker, who in turn was acting on behalf of **Mike Holleyoake (M06)** regarding Smart Cars taking photos of what they claim are illegally parked taxis in Mayfair. In his response, Mr Goad said that in Westminster, we as taxi drivers had the freedom to stop in many places that other vehicles could not, but that this only covered the period while the passenger was boarding or alighting. He added that there was no set time limit and taxi drivers could stop for as long as was necessary for the passengers to get in or out. He went on to say that extra time was allowed for the use of ramps for getting a wheelchair user into the taxi.

But the time it takes the disabled passenger to get to the cab is obviously irrelevant to Westminster Council and Mr Goad – a sad indictment of the council behind much of the TaxiCard use.

Tony will battle on until there is no chance whatsoever, but is he right? Is it becoming a bore and should we just pay up quietly? **Call Sign** would like to hear from you.

ECO-POWER EMISSION REDUCTION SYSTEM

PCO approval withdrawn...



Following technical advice from the Energy Saving Trust (EST) based on emissions tests, the PCO decided on 28 March 2008 to withdraw the approval granted on 11 September 2007 for the modified Eco-Power Emission Reduction System (which recirculates exhaust gases into the vehicle's exhaust pipe via a heat exchanger, but not through the vehicle's engine). The modified Eco-Power Emission Reduction System referred to above was approved for installation on the Euro 1 LTI Fairway and Euro 2 LTI TX1.

Taxi owners who have had an Eco-Power system installed need take no immediate action, but are advised of the following:-

1. The PCO will write to these owners in due course advising what action they may have to take. Vehicles should be presented as normal for annual licensing or mid-year inspection at SGS.
2. In accordance with a High Court decision on 22 April 2008*, Eco-Power.co.uk Limited has undertaken to compensate any person who, from 30 March 2008, purchased or purchases a modified Eco-Power Emission Reduction System for any loss they may suffer if it is shown that the injunction was wrongly made. Eco-Power will, within 14 days, furnish the PCO with details of all the purchasers of the modified Eco-Power Emissions Reduction System with a view to enforcing this undertaking in favour of purchasers.
3. If any owner has questions as to whether they are affected by either the contents of this Notice or by Eco-Power's undertaking, then please make contact with the PCO on 020 7126 3802 or email your enquiry to emissions@pco.org.uk.

The PCO has no reason to doubt that all remaining approved emission reduction technologies are fit for purpose and will deliver the required standards provided they are fitted in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications to properly prepared and maintained vehicles.

Approvals granted on 13 June and 16 July 2007 in respect of Eco-Power's original system (which recirculates exhaust gases through the vehicle's engine) remain unaffected. The PCO has no objection to this system being fitted.

**On 30 March, Eco-Power obtained a High Court injunction preventing the PCO from publishing the decision to withdraw approval. That injunction was continued on 7 April 2008 on Eco-Power's undertaking to compensate purchasers of its modified system who suffered a loss as a result of the injunction if it were later found that the injunction was wrongly made.*

On 22 April 2008, the High Court discharged the injunction and dismissed Eco-Power's challenge to the decision to withdraw the approval for Eco-Power's modified system. The judge held that the PCO had acted reasonably on the basis of proper expert advice.

The following CVs for Arbitrators were received for inclusion in Call Sign by this magazine's closing date of Friday 18 April. They are displayed in alphabetical order...

Pat Keefe (G01)

Let me introduce myself. My name is Pat Keefe. I have been driving a cab full-time since the summer of 1971, joined ODRTS at Shirland Road W9 the following year of 1972 and have remained with this circuit unbroken to this day. So I'm of the old school who can remember the days of voice despatch and the camaraderie that went with such halcyon days.

If voted in, I have the experience and judgement to be as fair and neutral as possible. It's easy to say our rules are set in stone, I don't believe that for one moment. One has to use discretion where you have a conflict when a passenger has upset you or vice versa. In cabbying, everyone seems all too ready to believe a passenger's complaint against you. They have the PCO, the police and Ken Livingstone all too willing to believe them. They must be right - they're the public! You're only the cab driver, the minions at their service.

I for one, although one should never say never, will find it hard to go against a cab driver's word or against a single passenger's word, without a third party to back them up. Lets face it, they can't do it in a court of law so why can they do it to you and me? Our word should be treated just as truthful and honourable as the public we drive around.

I hope we don't have to cross paths in any official capacity and thanks for listening...

Alan Nash (A95)

I may be better known to most of you as *Nash's Numbers*. Starting late in life, I have only been a taxi driver for 12 years and on Dial-a-Cab for nearly as long. Now 61, I would like to be an arbitrator. I have served on a number of complaint committees and have never been on complaint myself, although I do understand how easy it is for our members to be put in the position of being on complaint. If you give me your support, I will use my two ears and one mouth in that ration to ensure fairness on all sides.



Steve Shaller (R75)

I have been driving a taxi for over 37 years. I recently turned 62 years of age. My first 8 years of cabbage were with Radio Taxis (Southern) and I joined Dial-a-cab in 1979 and have been with our Society since this time, with the exception of a two year break.

During this period and prior to going data dispatch, I spent time helping in the control room as a part time dispatcher and answering the telephones. Over the years I have been a regular contributor to *Call Sign* magazine writing various articles. I also contribute the occasional letter to Mailshot.

I am the Vice-Chairman of my residents association and take part in various meetings that involve liaising with both my local borough councillors and representatives of the borough.

Several years ago I offered my services



as an arbitrator and I would like to take this opportunity to once again put my self forward in the hope that I can be of service to the Society. I am therefore soliciting your vote in the hope that I can fulfil this wish.

Garry White (L65)

Let me introduce myself. My name is Garry White and I have been a Dial-a-Cab member since 1989. I have been married for 21 years and have four children ranging from 13 to 20 years.

I started working life as a ladies shoemaker. I did that for five years before deciding to learn the Knowledge, which I started in 1985 and finished in 1987. During this time I worked as a postman in the City of London, which helped with learning the Knowledge.

I would like to represent you, the membership, as an arbitrator, which I would do to the best of my ability.



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Qualification and skills specialist, **Best Practice**, is working with **Dial-a-Cab** to provide Level 2 **National Vocational Qualifications** to DaC Call Centre staff. This programme has delivered a significant improvement in staff morale and engagement, driving up customer service through consistency and professionalism. Improved career development is enabling the Society to attract higher calibre candidates to its ever growing Call Centre, whilst the commitment to professional qualifications is gaining significant approval from customers, boosting satisfaction and supporting an increase in business growth in excess of 16% during the past year.

Over the past few years, Dial-a-Cab has invested heavily in not just new technology and Call Centre facilities, but also in staff career development. As **Daren Morley**, DaC Training Manager explains: "DaC's sustained growth is highly dependent on the quality of the front line staff - both Call Centre staff and drivers. Customers must receive consistent, high quality service."

The centre operates 24x7 to support its corporate clients, with Call Centre staff taking between 150 and 200 calls each during an eight-hour shift. Staff are also responsible for contacting customers when the cab has arrived or to explain the reason for any delay.

Daren continued: "One of the main problems with Call Centres is that staff are often not part of the corporate culture. This can dent morale and undermine the quality of work. To ensure consistent service levels in a fast growing Call Centre, DaC needed to invest in training and career development."

Career Development

In the past, DaC has provided initial staff induction training, then relied on supervisors to ensure call handling quality. However, with only limited call monitoring and no follow up training, it was impossible to achieve consistency across every team or ensure staff remained motivated long term.

Daren explained: "Without continual development, even the most efficient staff can become stale, disengaged and lack motivation. By its very nature, Call Centre work is often repetitive, yet it is also extremely challenging, demanding the effective management of diverse customer needs and expectations. To keep staff engaged and involved in the organisation, it is essential to provide career development."

Dial-a-Cab works hard to keep staff motivated, getting people to move around the Call Centre to handle outbound as well as inbound calls. However, to really motivate and support employees, DaC decided to offer Call Centre staff the opportunity to attain a Level 2 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ).

"NVQs are a great way of benchmarking performance against the industry standard," said Daren, "the qualification both enables staff to be assessed on their existing skills and hone those skills further. It also provides us with performance standards and a clear structure to support on-going process improvements within the Call Centre."

The Society turned to training organisation **Best Practice** to deliver NVQ workshops and staff assessment. Daren explained that whilst the majority of DaC training is handled inter-

Level 2 NVQ For DaC Call Centre Staff! *Opportunity for Drivers too...*



DaC Training Manager Daren Morley

nally, NVQs demand lengthy and intensive staff assessment. **Best Practice** employs highly experienced assessors who work closely with the staff to help them through the NVQ process.

Furthermore, the government is strongly committed to ongoing professional development, offering funding through a variety of bodies such as the *Learning & Skills Council* and *Train to Gain*. Daren explained it was often time consuming and complex to access this funding.

"**Best Practice** has many years of delivering NVQs to a variety of organisations," he added, "both with and without government funding. That experience streamlined the process of applying for funding. Whilst we are committed to delivering career progression through nationally recognised qualifications, the ability to harness government funding without doubt boosted Board level commitment to the project."

Staff Commitment

Some Dial-a-Cab staff had initial reservations about 'going back to school' amid fears of the amount of work involved. However, **Best Practice** was able to allay those fears and has tailored the NVQ programme to meet our specific needs. This has included the removal of the cross/up selling module since these skills are not required at Dial-a-Cab. In addition, **Best Practice** has streamlined the number of workbooks from six to three, enabling the entire NVQ to be achieved within three months.

Daren continued: "By reducing the time taken to attain the NVQ, DaC can ensure individuals continue to be motivated throughout the process and critically, just lose a few candidates to natural wastage. To date, 46 Call Centre staff have achieved NVQ Level 2 qualifications, with eight team leaders also taking the Team Leader NVQ. After initial reluctance, the company now has a waiting list of employees keen to join the programme."

Dial-a-Cab will also be embarking on a 12-week course NVQ programme with our taxi drivers under a government-funded programme from Go Skills. DaC drivers can attain an NVQ Level 2 in passenger transport – encompassing customer service, dealing with difficult customers and

passengers with disabilities.

In addition to gaining significant staff commitment, the introduction of the NVQ programme has enabled DaC to refine and improve its customer service policies. Daren also said that DaC have added components to training - such as handling difficult customers - to reflect the requirements of the NVQ. "The programme has also provided staff with a greater understanding of the entire customer service process, including the role of team leaders, which has helped to drive up standards," he said.

Business Growth

Customer response to the NVQ programme has also been positive, with a recent customer satisfaction survey identifying clear improvements in service quality.

"The availability of Call Centre staff with NVQ Level 2 qualifications is proving extremely competitive in the tendering process and has contributed to the acquisition of several large corporate customers in recent months," said Daren, "and as a result, overall call volume has increased by 20 to 25%. To support this rapid growth, we moved to DaC House, creating an 80 position Call Centre - almost double the previous capacity."

Daren ended by saying: "Without a doubt, the availability of the NVQ programme has helped DaC attract a higher calibre candidate for new positions. There is now a clear career development path. Individuals with Level 2 qualifications can then take Level 3 qualifications to achieve the skills required to become a team leader or supervisor and pave the way for promotion. The overall morale of the Call Centre has improved with customer expectations continually improving as the licensed taxi industry faces ever-increasing competition. Without doubt, the NVQ programme has not only reinvigorated the level of engagement within the Call Centre and brought the team into the Dial-a-Cab corporate culture, but has also boosted the professionalism of our front line staff and the quality of customer service."

Chairman **Brian Rice** told **Call Sign**: "We are extremely pleased with the number of staff participating in the NVQ programme to-date and the continued interest in development that can only help to enhance the quality of our call takers and our overall reputation. DaC are committed to staff training and producing the best-qualified staff within our industry for the benefit of not only clients, but also for our organisation. It is now through our work with **Best Practice** that we are able to clearly demonstrate our position at the forefront of the industry."

Among NVQ staff successes were:

Team Leading Level 2 NVQ: Natalie Cleal, Jago De Langen, Teresa George, Alexander Livingstone, Nicola Owen and Paulette Semper.

Contact Centre Operations Level 2: Julie Taylor, Jacqueline Franklin, Sue Coates, Vivienne Clark and Virginia Hewitt. Well done to everyone involved...

Past, Present and future?

Many years ago when the last of the pre-WW2 old-fashioned Austin, Morris and Beardmore taxis were no more to be seen on the ranks, it left just Carbodies FX3. Some, well actually very few of us, among the 9,000 or so of London's then-taxi drivers wondered if we'd ever see a PCO approved taxi to compare to a modern, up-to-date car of the late 1950s? In those days it would have meant a vehicle with four doors, some form of warm air heater controlled from the driver's compartment, windscreen washers and a cabin that was free of draughts?

Well, along came the FX4 and various updated versions of the same. A mere 35 or so years later and the TX1, TX11 and now TX4, which although much more modern in appearance and design, still largely use the same basis of separate body and chassis bolted together. This did give to a lesser or greater degree a more modern vehicle in several aspects, though the TX series still lag behind conventional modern automotive practice.

What all these LTI purpose-built taxis have in common is that use of a separate body mounted on a separate chassis. Bear in mind that about 97% of all cars made since the 1960s, including even those by Rolls Royce, had been designed and built utilising single shell, monocoque structures. This means a platform and bodywork joined together to form a single basic unit, so sharing and spreading the structural loads and stresses throughout the whole of the inner structure of the vehicle. Outer panels are then attached onto this inner structure to give the outward body style and shape.

But the really important thing is that none of these facts, good or bad, about our world famous, iconic London taxis matter a damn!

The main and very real threat the London taxi trade will have to face is the increase in both driving and vehicle legislation enforced by cameras and roadside tests. The reason I say this is because as a nation we have tended to be five to seven years behind what happens in the US, so when I hear that New York's taxi fleet are told to start planning to be 100% hybrid by 2012, that is worrying for us here in London. If he wins the election, how long will it be before Ken Livingstone issues his latest decree via TfL to the London taxi trade that we also must go down the hybrid route with our taxis? Buses will, if instructed, also become hybrid but will get huge subsidies. Does anyone care to guess how much, or to be accurate how little the taxi trade will get in subsidies? Does the word ZERO seem appropriate?

Many years ago, Ken Livingstone and his County Hall cronies hurt the London cab trade by using ratepayer's money to substantially reduce bus and underground fares - and remember we are all ratepayers. They also strongly encouraged the police and bus inspectors to take action against cab drivers who picked up fares at bus stops when quite often passengers had hailed passing taxis because they were fed up waiting for a bus!

The silly thing is that so-called clean hybrids often spend most of their time powered by petrol engines and not the electrical power so talked about, except for short periods when moving at very low speeds. They can only travel a short while

"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...



Beardmore - it just needed a draught-free cabin with a heater

before the petrol engine has to start up to drive the alternator to recharge the battery as it runs down. At low speed, I have been informed the maximum distance a Toyota Prius can travel is 1 kilometre. Their exemption from congestion charging is being taken away from the Prius and other

car size hybrids in the near future, according to a notice from TfL.

So I have a strong feeling that once again London's cab trade will be used as unpaid guinea pigs. What rarely happens is that these highly rewarded "experts, consultants and advisors" ask people such as cab drivers, firemen, ambulance and police drivers who have to cope in the real world of dealing with London's traffic for their ideas and opinions. It isn't going to get any easier in the coming years to earn a decent living driving in London and we are going to need all the help we can muster. Those of you on a decent radio circuit, such as **Dial-a-Cab**, have the backing and reputation of that circuit behind you. Those who still feel they want to stay independent of radio circuits or trade organisations such as the LTDA, LCDC etc, I fear you will pay a heavy price in increased stress, aggravation and fines.

Sunset Strip

CAB TYRES TAXI BATTLE!

Mid-April saw an astonishing development in the London cab trade when suddenly without any warning, SGS began failing taxis on overhaul or six month checks that had Michelin tyres fitted.

Although new taxis usually come fitted with Dunlop tyres, Michelin and Dunlop have both been providing taxi drivers with tyres for many years and most drivers tend to pick one brand and stick with it through personal choice. However, until the PCO announced that Michelin tyres would no longer be accepted, few drivers had ever considered the possibility that one might not be suitable.

The problem lay within code letters imprinted on the tyres. Dunlop comes with a Q-rating, which registers a maximum safety speed of 97mph whereas Michelin has an N-rating, which equates to a safety level of 87mph.

Many drivers with Michelin tyres fitted were suddenly given stop notes at SGS for having Michelines fitted, but were given little in the way of explanation. Several phoned **Call Sign** and when we explained the situation as we knew it, all said the same: "But my taxi doesn't do 87mph - let alone 97mph - and in any case, the maximum speed limit is only 70mph!" Michelin told **Call Sign**: "Our tyres cover all the legal requirements for the UK market. We are in talks with the PCO over this tyre and expect this situation to be clarified soon."

Later that day, **Call Sign** was told that once again, drivers could safely fit Michelin tyres should they want to.

2-BEDROOM SPANISH VILLA FOR RENT

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

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

Email john@sheridanj.freesevice.co.uk or phone John (E35) on 07866 943 469

Dial-a-Cab driver **Tom Reynolds (085)** has been speaking to his MP, **Clive Efford**, about taxi access to Tunnel Avenue where there is a gate allowing buses to bypass traffic hold-ups going north through Blackwall Tunnel. Tom has been battling for 4 years to gain us access!

"For the past 4 years I've been pressing for taxi access to the northern end of Tunnel Avenue, Greenwich. This road leads directly onto the A102 southern approach, northbound into Blackwall Tunnel. We are currently refused access through a *buses only* sign. Those that use this route into central London will be familiar with the time it can take to reach the tunnel when there are delays on the A102 and the unnecessary costs on customer's fares.

I've witnessed nothing less than apathy from Greenwich Council. Every time I counter their opposition, they discover new reasons. One is that a sign "does not exist" that could accommodate both buses and taxis! They also said that the only sign permitted is the most misunderstood sign of all. Puzzled? So am I. Other excuses included that it would create a 'rat run' and that cars would also use the road if taxis were allowed.

I finally managed to arrange a site meeting with TfL, PCO, Police and Greenwich Council. Full of optimism, I went to the meeting to discover very quickly it was not for discussion but to be told that we would not be allowed to use this road. I knew I was on a loser when the police representative arrived and immediately said he and Greenwich Council objected to my request and "...so will TfL when they arrive." To hear them all introduce themselves on first name terms hardly filled me with confidence either.

The policeman said he was convinced 'out of town' taxis would also use the road. He said it would be dangerous to exit onto the A102 and while traffic would slow down to let out buses, they would do their utmost to stop a taxi from doing the same! My explanation that we would not be pulling out into moving traffic - as we would only be in Tunnel Avenue if the A102 were stationary - fell onto deaf ears. We would obviously prefer to be on the A102 driving through a clear tunnel. Neither would he accept that the road would **not** require extra policing.

I would, however, like to thank **Robin Gillis** from the **PCO**. He was on our side and requested a bus lane with a camera be installed. The representative from TfL felt it would probably require a bus lane of some considerable length to be effective. I explained to him that a mile or so away there were bus lanes that were only 25 feet long, have a camera and are very effective (Kidbrooke Park Road). He did not appear convinced.

Apart from Robin Gillis, it was plain to see they did not want taxis to use this road. My concerns regarding stationary traffic and excessive emissions were ignored. They didn't appear bothered that many visiting tourists to the O2 Arena are often penalised financially by being held up in traffic at the tunnel. Greenwich Council's rep even said there were not many delays in the tunnel during the evening! Try telling that to those who get stuck there regularly.

At no time in the last 4 years have my

Taxi Access To Blackwall Tunnel Bus Gate?

A Dial-a-Cab driver's battle...



The Tunnel Avenue bus gate

requests for evidence of their claims been forthcoming. It seems obvious that the taxi trade is considered unimportant by the controlling powers. Their objections penalise us, but the real sufferers are the fare paying public. I can't help wonder if their objections have any bearing on recent suggestions to erect a toll at the tunnel entrance? If this were implemented, Tunnel Avenue would effectively bypass the toll. Am I being paranoid? Possibly? Below is what I gave to attending parties at the site meeting which outlines my proposals and their objections. I would appreciate **Call Sign** reader's views."

Site meeting questions / answers re taxis using Tunnel Avenue

Greenwich Council: Cars and minicabs would also use the road...

Tom Reynolds: There is no evidence to support this theory. If any prohibited vehicle does drive through the road, it will not be because a sign reads buses and taxis. It will be simply because some people have no regard for the law. The police would continue to deal with these drivers.

Greenwich Council: A sign does not exist that allows just buses and taxis...

Tom Reynolds: This comment is misleading and in fact wrong. I have a photo of an alternative sign that could be used. It is situated less than two miles away in Greenwich by the Rochester Way / Dover Patrol shopping parade.

Greenwich Council: The sign is the most misunderstood of all...

Tom Reynolds: I find this statement to be quite bizarre. All my requests for evidence of this statement have not been forthcoming.

Greenwich Council: Police consider this to be a problem with enforcement...

Tom Reynolds: No extra enforcement would be required because taxis would be passing through this road legally. Current police enforcement would still be used for illegal motorists. There's no evidence to prove cars would drive through a no entry sign just because a taxi had.

Greenwich Council: Access would create 'rat runs' through local streets.

Tom Reynolds: This would not happen.

Most taxis would only come off the A102 at the junction with Tunnel Avenue and they would then immediately be driving through the part of Tunnel Avenue to avoid traffic and also cut down on emissions that fabricate while stationary on the A102. Some taxis do, of course, come to the tunnel from other directions but surely this is already known? Otherwise, why would there be a bus / taxi lane in Blackwall Lane?

Tom's Final Summary to Greenwich Council...

I have answered some of the reasons received by me from Greenwich Council. I hope you will consider them and allow taxis access to this road. It is important to note that the only times a taxi would choose to use Tunnel Avenue would be when there are problems on the A102 leading into the tunnel northbound.

Taxis would always prefer to drive through without any traffic hold-ups on the A102. I envisage little use of Tunnel Avenue, but believe access to this road when necessary to be important to fare paying customers and after all, we are part of TfL. Ken Livingstone always said taxis were an integral and important part of the transport system and should be able to use all roads unless prohibition is absolutely necessary. There are no obvious reasons where allowing taxis the use of Tunnel Avenue would cause problems with safety. London taxi drivers are professionals who would enter the traffic onto the A102 just before the tunnel entrance in a responsible manner. Buses can already do this. I am sure you will agree that London taxi drivers are as capable as bus drivers.

The Limehouse Link suspends work in the tunnel on evenings when there are concerts on at the O2 venue to help the traffic flow. There are countless customers staying in central London who use taxis to get them back safely to their hotels after these concerts. On the evenings when there is traffic flow problems leading into the tunnel, these taxis would be able to drive into Blackwall lane and turn right into Tunnel Avenue, thereby avoiding long delays. This could only benefit the flow of traffic and alleviate some congestion and of course cut down on the emissions caused by stationary vehicles in traffic jams.

There is already a bus / taxi lane in Blackwall Lane northbound, but unfortunately, when it reaches Tunnel Avenue a taxi can go no further and has to stay in the traffic jam before it can enter the A102. It would cut down emissions and relieve some congestion if taxis were allowed to continue their journey through this section of Tunnel Avenue.

I would again like to take this opportunity to thank you all for holding this meeting...

Tom Reynolds (085)

Lloyds TSB employee **Bernie Hollywood** isn't currently known as Mr Marathon Man for nothing! His plan is to run 35 marathons in 22 days in an effort to raise awareness and funds for one of his favourite charities – Barnardo's.

Helping Bernie's marathon effort – *for the journey* - from their Brewery Road premises is leading taxi retailer, **Mann & Overton**. The dealership are loaning Bernie a TX4 to provide vital support and offer encouragement on the road. The vehicle, fully branded with the Lloyds TSB *"for the journey"* livery, will drive in front of Bernie as he runs.

Wearing a 15ft Barnardo's billboard, Bernie began his challenge at 5am on March 22 when he took his first steps on the Lloyds TSB *"for the journey"* challenge, hoping to run 926 miles from John O'Groats to Lands End in just 22 days and ended his epic journey by running the 2008 **Flora London Marathon** on Sunday 13 April along with the 13 runners of the Lloyds TSB London Marathon team!

"Barnardo's is a fantastic charity that supports so many disadvantaged children," said Bernie, "every year I do all I can to help them raise enough funds to support these wonderful children. A big thank you must go to M&O for their fantastic generosity. Without their assistance, I wouldn't be able to complete my journey."

Mike Saunders, M&O's Dealer Relations Manager told **Call Sign**: "Please dig deep into your pockets and sponsor Bernie on this incredible journey. Spread the word and let everyone know about this challenge so that we can make a real difference to the lives of these children."

"M&O (London) is delighted to support this massive fundraising effort. We hope that the taxi trade can get together and help Bernie reach his fundraising target."

Also assisting Bernie's *journey* were **JourneyPay**, whose core competency, along with their partner **Ingenico**, supplied payment terminals so that donations could be taken by card on route. The terminals work over GPRS and will always be on and connected for instant authorisation and payment capture, no matter where Bernie was in the country.

Barry Davis, CEO of JourneyPay, told us: "We at JourneyPay are proud to be a key sponsor of Bernie's Journey and wholeheartedly support what Bernie is doing for Barnardo's. As a parent of four children, one of whom has special needs, Bernie's Journey and the wonderful work done by Barnardo's are something personally close to my heart and I feel proud that by supplying payment acceptance terminals, we will go a long way in helping Bernie achieve his target of £100k. We will be with him every step of the way!"

How you can help

Bernie and the Lloyds TSB London Marathon team hope to raise £100,000 for

M&O Support Mr Marathon Man!



Mike Saunders with Mr Marathon Man, Bernie Hollywood

Barnardo's. Please support them on their journey and help the lives of 50 disadvantaged young people today by sponsoring them on their *Justgiving* page: www.justgiving.com/berniesjourney.

Donating through this site is simple, fast and totally secure. It is also the most efficient form of sponsorship. Barnardo's will receive your money faster and if you are a UK taxpayer, an

extra 28% in tax will be added to your gift at no cost to you.

About Barnardo's

As one of the UK's leading children's charities, Barnardo's believes in children regardless of their circumstance, gender, race, disability or behaviour. Barnardo's believe in the abused, the vulnerable, the forgotten and the neglected. Barnardo's will stand by them, stand up for them and bring out the best in each and every child. Barnardo's do this because they believe in children.

SMILE



Men sometimes also write to agony columns...

Dear Marge,

I've never written to you before, but I really need your advice on what could be a crucial decision.

I've suspected for some time now that my wife has been cheating on me. The usual signs... phone rings, but if I answer the caller hangs up. She has been going out with the girls a lot recently, although when I ask their names she always says they are just some friends from work that I wouldn't know. I always stay awake to look out for her taxi coming home, but she always walks down the drive - although I can hear a car driving off as if she has gotten out of the car round the corner. Why? Maybe she wasn't in a taxi? I once picked her mobile phone up just to see what time it was and she went berserk and screamed that I should never touch her phone again and why was I checking up on her?

Anyway, I have never approached the subject with my wife. I think deep down I just didn't want to know the truth, but last night she went out again and I decided to check on her. I decided I was going to park my motorcycle next to the garage and then hide behind it so I could get a good view of the whole street when she came home. It was at that moment, crouching behind my Harley, that I noticed the valve covers on my engine seemed to be leaking a little oil.

Is this something I can fix myself or should I take it back to the dealer...?

Bob the cabbie

And Bob the cabbie also says:

"Someone stole all my credit cards, but I won't be reporting it. The thief spends less than my wife does..."

PORTRAIT AND WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

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

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

Please check out my portfolio on www.anjaking.com

Enquiries: email: anja@anjaking.com



DIAL-A-CAB CSR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Dial-a-Cab call centre staff were recently involved in a presentation ceremony for CSR high achievements. Team Leaders nominated staff from their shift whom they considered worthy of an award and then got together as a group to select the winners.

The DaC Team Leaders had an extremely difficult choice, but after some considerable discussion the winners were selected. They were:

Customer Service Representative of the Year (Day Shift): Isabel Wilson

New Customer Service Representative of the Year (Day Shift): Danielle Barton

Customer Service Representative of the Year (Evening Shift): Thomas Tran

New Customer Service Representative of the Year (Evening Shift): Tim McAuliffe

Congratulations to all the winners...



Danielle and Isabel



L-R: HR Manager John Rogers, Team Leader Teresa George, Tim, Maz and Keith Cain



Brian with Tom Tran



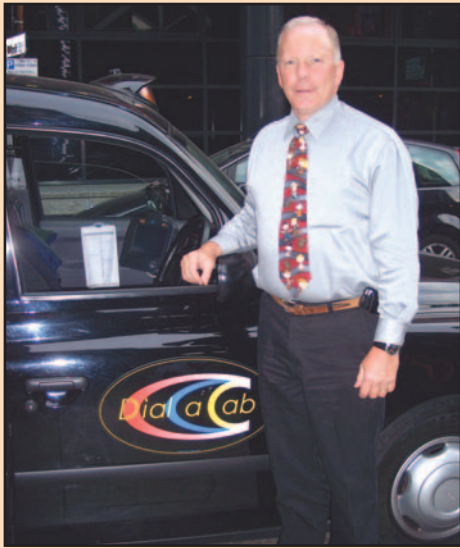
Evening shift winners Tom and Tim



Brian and Isabel



L-R: Keith, Team Leader Nicola Owen, Danielle, Isabel, CSR supervisor Maz and John Rogers



RadioMobile's General Manager Jim Moore

In a press release sent out all over the USA, the *RadioMobile* company have spo-

DAC BUYS NEW RADIOS FROM RADIOMOBILE

ken of landing major new orders from Dial-a-Cab in London for radio and hardware. The order is scheduled for delivery over the next 10 months.

RadioMobile is an OEM (original equipment manufacturer) provider of end-to-end mobile wireless network solutions for public safety, emergency medical, transportation and industrial customers. *RadioMobile's* General Manager, **Jim Moore**, said in the press release:

"This contract is part of our long-term

relationship with Dial-a-Cab (London) to upgrade their 15 year-old installation, which handles dispatch and location management for 3,000 cabs, to a 21st Century state-of-the-art wireless data system. Our ability to design and install new software and wireless systems which are, at the same time, capable of mimicking existing technology, enables *RadioMobile* to provide advanced capabilities without interrupting Dial-a-Cab's service."

DAC-WEMBLEY END SEASON MID TABLE

While Merstham take the title

On a day marked by the rain, **Merstham** and Cove put on a fine display, but it was Merstham who ran out 3-2 winners to confirm what supporters of the *Cherry Red Combined Counties* Premier League team had realised for some time – that it was just a matter of time until Merstham were crowned league champions for the 2007 – 2008 season. It was irony that Cove should be their opponents, having been the only team to defeat them in the league back on the first day of the season in August!

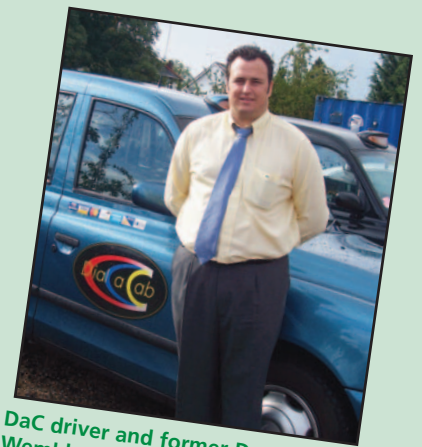
Merstham thoroughly deserve their Championship having been far and away the best team in the division, scoring over 100 goals and totalling over 100 points while taking the title with several matches still to play, with games in hand and a lead of over 20 points!

In the meantime, **Call Sign** sponsored **DAC-Wembley**, continued their slow drift down to mid-table obscurity – something that seemed so unlikely before their former goalkeeper – and

Dial-a-Cab driver - **Lee Pearce (J71)** left them for **Bedfont Green**, who then began an amazing rise up the table – although it was by then too late to challenge for the title. However, there was still the league cup and Bedfont Green made the final, but their opponents were Merstham and the cup-tied Lee Pearce watched his new team fail to stop Merstham take the first step of their now-double by winning 4 – 2 after extra time.

"I was totally gutted about not being able to play in the final," Lee told **Call Sign**, "but none of the goals were our stand-in goalies fault. I suppose just reaching a final gives the season a real boost and I'm sure we'll do well next year."

We also wish Wembley well for next season.



DAC driver and former DaC-Wembley goalkeeper Lee Pearce, was cup-tied for his new team's league cup final

Call Sign

May 2008

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At the start of a New Year, many attempt to give up smoking or to lose weight. My resolution was to stop staring at the TV and read more books and surprisingly I've had some success! It's almost May and I have just read **Roy Keane's** autobiography - being a Sunderland fan through family connections. The Editor mentioned visiting "icy" Roker Park with Spurs in his younger days, except I don't remember Wearside being in the art circle! I've also got through *You Got Soul* by **Jeremy Clarkson**. Then there was *Well I didn't know that about London* by **Christopher Winn**, and with my eldest, *Skeleton Key* with Alex Rider. I have always liked a good read, but just haven't made time. Being a School Governor at my children's school has inspired me to get my brain into gear and a year ago I did an OCR course in English and maths - and passed! Education is very different these days and very much pushed in the positive - unlike when I was at school and it was pretty uncool.

Stressful job...

Talking of smoking, it's been 16 years since I gave up and sometimes I still fancy a smoke - especially when socialising with friends - even though I have not yet succumbed to it!

People often ask what it's like driving a taxi with regards to exercise and fitness. I get them to imagine what it must feel like being a battery chicken. Indeed, if you were to work out how much exercise you get in a day, it's pretty shocking. Walk from house to cab, 5 hours later from cab to Piccolo and back again. Five hours later from cab back into house. I almost forget that other great method of exercise - filling your cab up with Sainsburys biodiesel in between!

What is difficult whilst doing long shifts is what you eat, how many times you stop - bearing in mind that all the time you have stopped, you are not earning. If you eat often, you put on weight. If you eat occasionally you are hungry, adding to your stress level. In fact there can't be many more stressful jobs than the one we do, with traffic levels high and passenger expectations even higher. There are many ways of being a London taxi driver and we all have our own ways of working and earning money. Radio men head for the City and Canary Wharf or wherever there is credit work. Look along Newgate Street and the Link tunnel and you will see non-radio drivers heading in the opposite direction. I speak to some drivers who get really stressed about getting short rides or whatever constitutes to them having a bad day. Is there any point? I did 90 minutes at City Airport the other day and got a job to the Woolwich Ferry, but I've learned in this job that you can try and make an easy day, but sometimes it doesn't happen. But you don't have much control over it so why worry? I'm a believer that you have 5 days to take your money, not one, and no two days are alike. Small amounts of stress can be good for you, but high continual stress levels can do serious damage, so why beat yourself up.

And my new TX4...

I mentioned in the April *Call Sign* that I was the owner of a new TX4. I have now run it in so here's what I think. Firstly, I have to admit to being a little disappointed that the day I was supposed to pick it up was postponed because the cab failed its overhaul. Yes, a brand new TX4 failed at SGS! I also had to take the driver's footwell mat out of my old cab as the TX4 was not supplied with one and the washer/wiper bottle was full of water and not screen wash. If I could put my *Top Gear* hat on, the engine is

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 Drivers Views on Life and Everything...



overpowered, rather like the original Fairway Driver with the clunking diffs. The acceleration is good but unnecessary, due to traffic conditions and a waste of fuel. Both rear doors don't close properly as they are set incorrectly, there is a banging coming from underneath and they still have not fixed the differential vibration, which you could feel from day one. And why the need for a 5-speed gearbox when it doesn't seem to know what gear to be in? If you approach a roundabout at slow speed and then accelerate, there is a very bad flat spot on the kick down.

However, when I traded up my FX4S to a Fairway Driver, my day's work became easier and there was a noticeable difference. The same going to the TX1. From the TX1 to TX2 there was no difference, but there is a huge difference between the TX2 and TX4. Yes, the TX4 has attitude, unlike the TX2 and FX4, which was a buck-

ing bronco and didn't want you to go anywhere near it. The TX4 says simply come and drive me!

It comes into its own when doing motorway work, which is one third of my daily mileage. It really does cruise at 70 mph and is a pleasure to drive. You can be confident that a wing is now unlikely to fly off or you are left holding a detached steering wheel if you go over 60. My current MPG on a combined cycle is 25 and you will get around 23 in town and 28 on a run, which is different to the brochure. Some nice touches are that the intercom is now in the roof lining, allowing passengers to lean forward and speak to you and the rear button cluster for the heating etc has been placed on the nearside door instead of the rear elbow rest, which the punters always used to catch with their elbows. (Both ideas sprang from DaC driver suggestions on *Call Sign* LTI visits... Ed). All in all, my Bronze is an expensive toy at £31,750 and in reality earns the same money as an F-reg Fairway, but looking at the big picture, if you put down its cost against what you would get trade-in after 4 years plus credit interest, its only going to cost £120 a week plus weekly running costs - less tax allowance for depreciation. If I was running a business in central London, the rent on a property would be much higher, plus I get to drive a new cab. Its not everyone's cup of tea, but I can see the appeal of buying a new one every two years like many drivers, even though I don't know what I will do in a few years time.

If you want to get in touch, it's Richard Potter in the subject line to callsignmag@aol.com.

Richard Potter (T51)

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LTI Vehicles parent company **Manganese Bronze Holdings** have announced pre-tax profits of £4.9m for the 17 months to the end of December 2007 compared with £3.75m for the 12 months to end July 2006, as the company switched its accounting year end. MBH said sales were £144.5m in the 17-month period compared with £83.8m in the comparative 12-month period after strong sales of the latest model – the TX4.

A spokesperson claimed that passenger demand for taxis remained healthy despite the feeling of uncertainty in London's financial markets and it was that uncertainty that saw sales in the first quarter come in at below last year's figures. It was also due to a direct comparison with one of our their best first-quarter sales performances following the TX4 launch.

But **Mark Fryer**, the group's Finance Director admitted: "This year we have seen some exceptional volatility and sales in January and February were poor. But, this may have been due to customers holding off for the new registrations as March was a near-record month. However April is looking poor again."

But it wasn't all doom and gloom at MBH. The number of cabs sold reached 3100. This was better than any year other than 2000 when it became compulsory for taxis to have wheelchair access.

The group also said they were on target to start manufacturing vehicles in Shanghai this year as part of the £20m Chinese joint venture with Geely.

Manganese Profit Alert!



MBH CEO John Russell

A final dividend of 1.5p was recommended,

making a total payout for the 17-month period of 7.25p, up from 6p for the 12 months to end July 2006.

Commenting on the results, **John Russell**, Group Chief Executive, said:

"We are delighted with the improving profitability and significant increase in operating cash flow resulting from the success of the TX4 and the substantial progress we have made with our joint venture in Shanghai during this extended financial period.

"Our focus in 2008 is on maintaining and increasing the momentum of the TX4 in the UK whilst investing in primarily environmentally led product initiatives; putting the TX4 into production in Shanghai and achieving the challenging cost, quality and timing objectives that we have set; creating the sales and marketing infrastructure to realise the international sales opportunities for TX4 and realising our vision to make the London Taxi a successful global icon. The successful implementation of these actions will generate a marked improvement in our future profitability."

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:

I have heard there are some new parking regulations but do not really know much about them. What's it all about?

Answer:

I'm afraid that you have heard right. On 31 March, a new parking system was introduced in England, which is supposed to make parking penalties more transparent and fair - although you will have to be the final judge of that.

The *Traffic Management Act* will consist of several different levels of fine that will be determined by the offence and where it takes place. There are five bands of fine that make up 2 levels - lower and higher. One of the five bands will be applied to every local authority in England, who will then apply the penalties to drivers who fall foul of the new rules, the severity of the penalty depending on the offence that they commit. Where the infringement is considered to be at its worst, the breach will be classed as **Serious** - which includes such breaches as parking on double yellow lines and parking in a disabled bay when not permitted. Lesser breaches will be classed as **Non-Serious** and will include staying too long in a pay-and-display bay.

As a matter of interest, in 2005 alone over 8 million parking tickets were given out in England and Wales, leading to hundreds of millions of pounds paid out by drivers in penalties.

What does this mean in relation to Parking Penalties in London?

London already runs on a 3-band system, which will see fines for lesser breaches drop to £80 with more serious breaches rising to £120.

B and A, where previously £100 for all breaches: Higher tier breaches will be £120, the lower tier breaches £80.

B and B, where previously £80 for all breaches: Higher tier breaches will be £100, the lower tier breaches £60.

B and C, where previously £60 for all breaches: Higher tier breaches will be £80, the lower tier breaches £40.

Other changes taking place include councils also being able to:

Penalise motorists who park against dropped kerbs.

Penalise motorists who park too far away from the pavement.

Send out fines by post if evidence is caught on CCTV.

Issue fines to motorists as they drive away (currently a traffic warden issued ticket must be physically placed on the car to be valid).

The message is to watch out, because even if there is not a warden about, there maybe a camera and "You've been framed...!"



Gary Bromelow, Saunders Solicitors

The afternoon of Saturday 5 April turned out to be *electrifying* for 90 special needs and underprivileged children and their carers, when they were taken by the London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children to see the smash hit musical *Grease* at London's Piccadilly Theatre.

The producers of the show had kindly donated 160 tickets to the LTFUC in celebration of our 80th anniversary and we would like to extend our grateful thanks to them for enabling this wonderful outing to take place and for helping us to give the children such an amazing treat, many never having been to the theatre before or likely to go again.

Drivers met at Bow, where they hastily set about decorating their taxis in bright pink *Grease* balloons and posters. The children, all from the **Pam Mason Group** in Bow, were then driven in a convoy of 30 decorated taxis through the City streets to the theatre, escorted by a Land Rover and five motor cycle outriders from the City of London Police. People lined the streets waving to the convoy and one little girl told me later that she felt like the Queen and was trying to wave like her - wonderful!

The convoy arrived at the theatre at 2pm and to the great delight of all, Sandy (*Siobhan Dillon*) and Danny (*Danny Bayne*) came out in full costume to meet and greet us and were quickly surrounded by screaming children. After a photo shoot and the TV crew finished filming, the children and carers were ushered inside and taken to their seats.

At 3pm the show began and in no time the children were transported into the magical world of Rydell High, with its gangs, cheerleaders, denims, leather jackets and slick hairstyles! It was a treat to watch the expressions on their faces - they loved it!

During the interval, ice creams were handed all round but there was yet another big surprise to come. We had arranged for the cast to come out after the show to meet the children and squeals of delight filled the auditorium when they appeared. The children were running in all different directions trying to get autographs and photos with the stars and I found myself caught up in the atmosphere, grabbing hold of Sandy for a photo with her. Not to be outdone, my wife chased after Danny - it was nice being young again, if only for a short while! I must take this opportunity to thank the cast for all their patience and for being so wonderful with the children.

The LTFUC's Hon Chairman, **David Lessman (D19)** thanked everyone who made the day possible and Pam Mason also made a speech thanking the LTFUC for giving the children such a great day.

The LTFUC take kids to Grease!



The cabs and kids on their way to Grease



The kids with Sandy and Danny



DaC's David Lessman and Gerry Dunn go back to Rydell High

Our grateful thanks go to Paul Nicholas and David Ian Associates, who made the afternoon possible and to Michael Havard-Bilton, the Marketing Director for all his hard work, help and assistance with all the arrangements in putting the day together. We are also grateful to the City of London Police for escorting us safely to the theatre and back and to Westminster City Council for their great help, support and assistance with parking. Last but not least, the LTFUC thank all the wonderful drivers who gave up a day's work to enable this outing to take place and also all the helpers involved on the day.

'Grease' is the word - and if you haven't seen it, you are missing out!

Raymond Levy (LTFUC Press Officer)

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COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Hello ladies and gents,

E140

I'm sure that you have noticed over the past month the numerous warning messages sent from the Call Centre reminding you of the procedures on E140 (Canary Wharf) during the evening and night time periods and that it is being strictly monitored via GPS.

Quite simply, unless you are otherwise instructed, before booking into E140 you must be within the security barriers at any of the four entry points.

A number of you have contacted either Keith Cain or myself complaining that some drivers are still breaking the procedure rules on this rank and have pretty much demanded that we take relevant action on those that still choose to disregard the guidelines that are in place. Over the next few weeks, there will be a number of complaint hearings taking place specifically for those drivers caught on GPS as not having been within the security zone when booking into E140.

As the messages have stated, there are no excuses and no more warnings will be given – it will be straight into a com-



plaints meeting to be judged by your fellow members. Those that feel that they can continually flaunt the rules will sadly be in for a surprise and I am sure that the committee members will be strict in their judgement.

Over the last six months, I have listed a number of issues that may lead to a complaint and as you will see from the results of the last complaints hearing, the committee quite rightly judge all grievances in a fair, but

firm manner. In my previous *Call Sign* articles, I've always endeavoured to keep you up to date with many of the problems that raise their heads in the hope that it will prevent similar issues recurring. I am a driver myself and believe that I am also a fair-minded person. Sadly, there is a very small minority that spoil it for the rest – and they can harm our Society. Sometimes actions speak louder than words...please be warned.

Run-in reminder...

Can I again remind you that run-ins are in place to assist you if you are a distance from the pick up address and unless authorised by the Call Centre, you must not exceed the present amount of £4.20 at the booked time.

I am sure that you are all aware that if you arrive at the pick up with less than the authorised amount, the difference must not be added on as an extra or at the end of the journey.

If you have any queries on any of the above, please feel free to contact me on 0207 553 7222.

Allan Evans

Allane@Dialacab.co.uk

COMPLAINTS RESULTS

A Complaints meeting was heard on 9 April 2008. The results are below...

<u>Name/call sign</u>	<u>Nature of Complaint</u>	<u>Sentence</u>
Paul Mariner (V65)	Failing to return and subsequently disposing of the client's property after reporting that the goods were in his possession	1 week susp
Keith Kew (J42)	Booking into an outlying physical zone from an inner zone to gain an unfair advantage over his fellow members	2 weeks susp
Ricky Hazle (Y10)	Driver booked into E14C and EC2 on separate occasions when he was clearly shown on GPS to be located in Rainham and Dagenham respectively	Expelled
Michael Johnson (B15)	Rule 2 two weeks susp Rule 3 two weeks susp Rule 8 Expelled	Following an appeal: Upheld Following an appeal: Upheld Following an appeal: Upheld

such as taxis, coaches, trades vehicles, private motorists etc or can be open to a broader spectrum of users. The principal objectives of these meetings are twofold; to allow the different users to express their concerns and suggestions and secondly they afford an opportunity for the PST team to assess what changes the motorists would like to see implemented.

The last such forum which was focused on the taxi industry was extremely useful for both the PST and those in the taxi business, including drivers. Mr Holleyoake has stated his objections to the council's use of *mobile surveillance vehicles* and that the drivers of these vehicles are paid on productivity related to the number of offences reported. This latter statement is untrue. The primary purpose of these vehicles, as of Parking Attendants, is to assist in traffic management in Westminster in accordance with the 1991 Road Traffic Act.

The demands by all motorist living within, or visiting the area, are varied. It is in everyone's interest that the PST takes appropriate measures to ensure that the regulations within the Act are enforced.

In Westminster, taxi drivers have the freedom to stop in many places that other vehicles cannot, this covers only the period while the passengers are boarding or alighting. There is no set time limit and taxi drivers can stop for as long as is necessary for the passengers to get in or out. For instance, if ramps or a lift are needed to be used to allow a wheelchair user into the vehicle, the time taken to secure these is acceptable.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and affording me the opportunity to address Mr Holleyoake's concerns personally.

In conclusion, I would assure you that the City Council is committed to providing customer care to the highest standard possible at all times. We value feedback from our customers and endeavour to use this to improve continuously the quality of our service.

Kevin Goad

Head of Parking Operations

PARKING AND SMART CARS

Westminster Council responds

Dial-a-Cab driver, **Mike Holleyoake (M06)**, recently wrote to his MP, **Charles Walker** (Bromsbourne), complaining about the apparent zero tolerance of Westminster Council *Mobile Surveillance Vehicles* towards taxi drivers after receiving three £120 parking tickets within the space of just four weeks.

In his letter, Mike suggested that those operating the Smart cars had "cottoned on" to the fact that London taxi drivers were "easy targets" and also suggested that they were paid by results. Mike was concerned that eventually the feeling among taxi drivers would become so strong that French-style militancy would be called for.

Mr Walker passed on Mike's feelings to Westminster Council and this is their response.

Licensed London Taxi Drivers and Westminster Parking Regulations

Thank you for your letter.

I understand your constituent, Mr Holleyoake, has made representation to you regarding his concerns that the WCC is deliberately hampering licensed taxi drivers from carrying out their legitimate business. This accusation is not accepted.

The council's Parking Services team (PST) do hold public forums on regular bases. These meetings can be focused on particular user groups

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
1956

In 1956, ODRTS had just the occasional newsletter to let drivers know what the Board were thinking. Few still exist, but this is one of them. They carried 6 months news on one sheet...

From ODRTS News Sheet, December 1956...

Committee Report

I hope you are all well and keeping busy. I have to report that I have now left the Committee although I am still on O.D.R.T.S. as a driver. There have been rumours concerning myself for some time regarding a job to Ramsgate in Kent. The Committee have graciously accepted my explanation, but I feel that in any case as a founder-committee member, I have done my bit and someone else can now help to take us forward.

The Committee have asked me to write this update so that you may all know what is going on here in Pentonville Road.

Firstly, it is untrue that we are thinking of merging with Radio Taxis (Southern). Whilst it is fact that their Chairman, Mr Stern, has been to our premises, it was purely as a return courtesy after Mr Martyn was invited to their Highgate office. Mr Roth (D18) has told us that Radio Taxis told him there was a possibility of a merger. However, as no one has told O.D.R.T.S. it remains no more than an untrue story.

I have received a letter from Mr Papier, who many of you will know. He left O.D.R.T.S. last year following sickness in the family. He would like me to pass on his thanks to all those drivers who have kept in touch with him. He appreciated your support at a terrible time.

Thank you to all those who have supported Mr Assenheim (A25) in his desire that we should be referred to as The Gentleman's Circuit. Whilst a noble desire, it tells nothing about us should we ever decide to advertise in a bigger way. However, the sentiment is certainly appreciated.

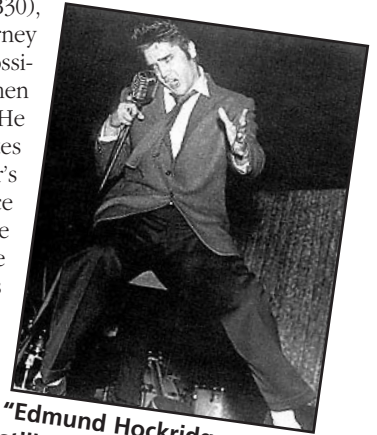
If you know of someone who would like to join our circuit, please let Frank Duncan or Henry Defries (D03) know and they will arrange for them to be fitted at the first opportunity.

Well done to Mr Jefferson (B30), who on an emergency taxi journey to Birmingham from Euston, possibly saved his passengers life when he suffered a heart attack. He found a phone box in minutes and then helped the passenger's wife to give him the assistance he required. The passenger gave him an extra £5 to push the fare up to £20. Not just a nice day's work, but also a very worthwhile one.

Lastly and on a more personal note, I recently saw a singer – and I use the word loosely – on Bonnie Martyn's new television set who I believe could do terrible damage to

the morality of our children. His name is Elvis Presley and he is from America. I could not understand one single word that he sung, but it isn't his voice I worry about. He moves his hips when singing in a way that one would not want to describe.

He says that he has nothing in common with Johnnie Ray other than they both sing. Well Mr Presley, Johnnie Ray can certainly sing, sadly I don't think you can. Those who offer church services to help you get some sort of salvation are right to do so. I too would complain except that I doubt you will still be around by the time I even finish writing this. And when you go back to driving your truck, Edmund Hockridge will still be here to entertain us because the Light programme will never play the noise you emit.



"Edmund Hockridge will still be singing when Mr Presley has long gone!"

Doug Naismith

On behalf of the O.D.R.T.S. Committee

FORMER EASTENDERS STAR VISITS LTI...

Michael Cashman MEP hails manufacturing excellence

Former actor, **Michael Cashman**, is now a Labour politician and has been a Member of the European Parliament for the West Midlands constituency since 1999. He has been the Labour spokesperson on human rights and also represents local Midlands businesses in Brussels.

As an actor, he was best known for his portrayal of Colin Russell - the first gay character in a television soap - in BBC's *EastEnders*. He is also an Honorary Associate of the National Secular Society and a Patron of The Food Chain, the London-based HIV charity.

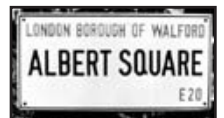
Mr Cashman recently visited LTI Vehicles Coventry factory to see at first hand the progress being made by the automotive firm.

Michael met **John Russell**, CEO of Manganese Bronze Holdings – LTI's parent company - to discuss LTI's continued investment in the Coventry plant and the ongoing work associated with the company's Chinese venture, which is set to transform LTI into a global brand.

Following the meeting, Michael did what many **Dial-a-Cab** drivers have now done via **Call Sign** tours and had a guided tour of the factory. This included a visit to the press shop to see the recently installed automotive panel press, purchased this year for £375,000 and which underlines LTI's commitment to keep manufacturing within the UK.

Mr Cashman told **Call Sign**: "Since its opening some 60 years ago, LTI Vehicles has become an increasingly important part of the area's economy by supporting jobs and giving a much needed boost to the region's manufacturing industry. Not only do LTI deserve the recognition for what they have achieved, but they have also facilitated discussions that have enabled me to make informed decisions back in Brussels."

John Russell added: "As our local MEP, Michael shows a real understanding of the opportunities that face the automotive industry. It has been a real pleasure to meet with him and discuss a number of key policy issues that affect our business. Michael's commitment to local business is greatly appreciated."



John Russell CEO of MBH Shows Michael Cashman around LTI

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It was a Friday evening in January at around 10.30pm, my cab's in overhaul and I'm using my mate's cab for the weekend. I'd just crossed Oxford Street from Vere Street into New Bond Street, when two smartly dressed fellas in their early 30s hailed me and asked for Wandsworth "...just off Earlsfield Road." It was obvious they'd had more than a few cold drinks, but seeing as I needed the money a bit more than usual, I took them. They seemed polite enough.

The ensuing journey was pretty uneventful, with the two fellas getting louder and louder as we got closer to their destination. I was directed to Cargill Road at the bottom end of Earlsfield Road and told to pull up literally as we got into it. After much discussion between the two about whether they were going to carry on drinking, I was asked if I could take one of the fellas to Ripley in Surrey - between Woking and Guildford. Well as you can imagine, I couldn't believe my luck and said I'd be willing to go down there. They said goodbye and one got out and started walking in the direction of his house. I didn't see which one as I was already driving off...

I drove towards the A3. The fella in the back tried to make conversation, but the effects of the night's alcohol intake and tiredness was making this more and more difficult. But he did tell me that he lived on Ripley Green and was married with two children. He then fell asleep and the journey was uneventful with me looking up at the meter every so often, as I think most of us do on these roaders. I turned off the A3 at Ripley and drove in the direction of Ripley Village, shouting to the fella that we were here and where did he want? He looked round bleary-eyed, trying to make out where he was and after some thought, asked me to drop him by the bus stop in front of the shops. I pulled up and he asked how much it was? I looked at the meter and said that it was £106. I sat there for what seemed like an eternity. Then he said could we come to some arrangement, as he didn't have that much. I asked how much he had and he said £95. Slightly miffed that I was giving away £11, I agreed as I couldn't be bothered arguing. He asked if he could have a receipt and I duly agreed. Still fumbling about, he asked for the receipt and I said when he gave me the money, he could then have it. He then said he didn't have £95 either, but only £85. I was getting irritated and told him he was taking the pee. I looked round to see if there were any cashpoints, but this place was like something out of Heartbeat and as my anxiety rose, my heart was missing a few beats too!

Unusually for me, I agreed to £85 telling him in no uncertain terms what I thought of him. Again he asked for a receipt and asked to be given it before he had paid. I said he was testing my patience to the limit, to which he replied that he now had no money! The urge to get out and whack him became all-consuming! I regained my composure and asked if he had a credit card, but he said he didn't. We had now come to an impasse. He apparently had no cash and I was 30 miles outside London in a place I barely knew that looked like it hadn't yet embraced the 21st century! The only option I could see left to me was to let the him out of the cab and follow him to find out where he lived. I told him as much. He staggered to the

This is the story of what happened to DaC driver John Fisher (C45) one Friday night...

The talented (and persistent) Mr Ripley!



passenger window, smiled and proffered £15 through the window. My response wouldn't get published in *Call Sign*, but it was certainly a long way from being a compliment!

"Well at least I'm offering you something," he said. I don't know how I didn't get out and chin him, such was the provocation he was giving me! He began walking off. I turned the cab round and followed. He then turned and walked in the opposite direction. I turned the cab round and again continued following. Realising that I wasn't going to drive off, he began getting agitated - stopping, starting, stopping again, then heading back to the direction he first went. This time he kept walking, with me just behind him. Then I couldn't believe my luck! A police car came in the opposite direction, indicating to turn right into what I now know to be the police station. This looked like a house, but with a little police sign above the door. I waved my arm to attract their attention. The driver lowered his window and I told the two officers inside that the guy some 50 yards away had just knocked me for £106. Could they give me some assistance? Their reply left me perplexed and even angrier!

"Ok mate, we'll park and give you some assistance!" I was stunned. "Park," says me? "Turn the effing thing round and go and get him, he's just over there!" They told me to calm down and they would assist asap. One officer got out. "Get in the back of me sherbet," I said, "and we'll go and apprehend him." He said that he'd rather wait for his colleague! A copper afraid of the dark - you couldn't make it up! By now the fella was disappearing into that darkness and I drove off after him, thinking of making a citizens arrest! As I caught up with him, he turned off the main road and into a rough looking council estate totally out of character with the rest of the village. I looked for vehicular access but as I found out the next day, there was only access from where I first dropped him off. I sat there, apoplectic with rage.

It was then I saw the two coppers running up the middle of the road. Believe me, these two clowns looked just like Delboy and Rodney minus the Batman and Robin outfits -

and of course, the fog! If I hadn't been so peed off, I'd had laughed!

"Which way did he go," they asked in unison? I pointed to where I'd last seen him and off they trotted. They came back around 5 mins later to say they hadn't found him! No kidding, Sherlock, was my reply before launching into a barrage of expletives as to their credentials to be police officers. They said if I felt that strongly, they would do a crime report and give me a crime reference number. Again, through a barrage of expletives, I told them where to stick it and I would instead make a formal complaint about their conduct before heading off in the direction of home - £106 lighter and with even less faith in this country's police...

Saturday...

After a sleepless night and feeling even angrier than the previous evening, I decided to head back down to Ripley to make a formal complaint against the two officers and to see if I could perhaps see the passenger again. After all, he said he lived on Ripley Green. When I got to Ripley, I discovered that the police station was only open from 10am till 12.30pm, but that there was a phone outside with a direct freephone line to Surrey Police HQ. I was put through to an officer and told him the story of the previous night. To be honest, I don't think even he could believe what I was saying about the conduct of the two officers. I was given a crime number and told that someone would be in touch to take a more detailed statement. It was then that I told the guy on the other end of the phone that I intended hanging around to see if I could maybe see the passenger. When he asked why, I said to get the money I was owed and if it wasn't forthcoming, I might be tempted to dish out my own form of retribution for all the hassle this character had given me. The officer advised me against it, so I asked him what I should do instead? Call the police? To be fair, he saw my point but still urged me to go and leave them sort it out. I said that if his officers had done that the previous night, I wouldn't be in this situation! Again, he found it hard to disagree.

I went and got myself a newspaper and sausage roll and sat watching the blue rinses and local yokels going about their business. I'd been sitting there about 40 minutes when my phone went. It was the Surrey Police HQ at Guildford and the officer told me he'd been told of my intentions should I see the fella. I was also asked if I was still in Ripley and said yes, I was still looking for the money I was owed. Again I was told this was unwise and yet again I, with admitted sarcasm, asked what should I do - ask the police to help me out? The policeman sounded exasperated and some 20 minutes later a police car came slowly into

continued on page 29

The talented (and persistent) Mr Ripley continued from p28

view and parked opposite where I was parked. They didn't get out of the car, but instead spoke between themselves whilst looking in my direction. I looked at them in between reading my paper and after 3 or 4 mins they drove off. Getting bored by now, I decided to go and take a drive round Ripley Green to see if I could see anything. It soon became obvious that maybe this was going to be a waste of time, but I still hung around for another hour or so before deciding to cut my losses and let the 'old bill' consign it to the 'not interested' file. It was almost midday and my team, QPR, were at home to Barnsley, so I thought I'd head back up the A3 to Loftus Road, the home of London football.

On my journey, wondering what I could do next, it suddenly occurred to me that perhaps I should go to Wandsworth where I had dropped the first guy off. So consumed had I been with the fella in Ripley, that I'd forgot there might be another option! I got to Cargill Road and stopped close to where I'd dropped the first guy off. I looked at the houses and tooted my horn to see if anyone would come to a window or open a door. After 5 minutes, I hadn't seen anyone and drove off but was going to come back the next day - I wasn't gonna let these two get away with bilking me to the tune of £106.

Sunday...

Now it's two days later, Sunday 20th January and this whole episode is consuming my weekend. I can't think of anything else but getting

the dough back that is rightfully mine. Over dinner, my girlfriend said that if I knew the road he lived in Wandsworth, why don't I go to Wandsworth police station and ask for their help too? I hadn't thought of that and later that afternoon, that's what I did. On my way to the cop shop, I decided to have another look round Cargill Road in the vain hope that I might see the guy I was looking for. As I drove along the road looking at the houses, one of the nicer ones had its front door open. Bingo! I'd give the occupants a description of the guy I was looking for to see if they knew where he lived. But I didn't have to... because who walked out the front door but the exact person I was looking for! I couldn't believe my luck!

"Hello," I said. The fella looked at me non-plussed. "You don't remember me do you? I picked you and your mate up on Friday night, brought you home and then took him on to Ripley. Remember?" He said he did, but still looked confused as to why this irate cabbie was on his doorstep on a Sunday afternoon!

"Didn't he pay you or something," he asked?

"No he effing-well didn't," says me, "and the Surrey police are now involved. Not only that, but now I know where you live, I'm going down to the nick to get you sorted out as well!"

Now the guy's wife is also on the scene and at the mention of the 'old bill' topping up at their drum, the realisation began to sink in.

"All right mate," he says, "calm down! I'm sure we can get this sorted out."

"Calm down," I reply? "Are you sure! I've

spent all weekend chasing you and your mate for the money you owe me and you want me to calm down!" He says he's just off down to the dump, but he'll bring me the money back when they've been there. He asked if I could come back around 6pm, but I told him where he could go! I said that if he wasn't back with my dough by 4.30, I'd go to the nick. His missus tells me I'm being unreasonable! Really! I don't think so and they now had 45 minutes to get my money back to me.

I waited outside their house and at 4.25pm, back they came with £106! Nothing more, nothing less! To be honest, it felt like I'd won the lottery! What a buzz I was feeling! Those bilkers hadn't got away with it!

It turned out that his "mate" wasn't his mate, but a business associate and he wasn't at all happy that he'd knocked me and that I'd giving him all the grief. He gave me the other guy's name and address in Ripley and these have been passed to the police as I'm now pursuing a loss of earnings claim from him. And yes, I'm still pursuing my complaint against the two officers in Ripley.

Some may say I should have asked for the money up front before going on such a long journey, but I believe in giving people the benefit of the doubt. Plus the fact I was going to quaint ol' Ripley, not in a million years did I ever think it would cause me so much aggravation! In future I'll be asking for money up front so I don't get this hassle again...

John Fisher (C45)

MOON BEEVER

S O L I C I T O R S

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Meet **Pat Carter**, hostess of the Warwick Avenue cab shelter and now a celebrity chef of media and TV's **Ready, Steady, Cook** fame!

Pat was first featured across a centre page spread of a daily newspaper and soon offered a guest slot alongside master chef **Ainsley Harriott** in BBC TV's weekday afternoon cooking programme, demonstrating the culinary skills that keeps her many taxi driver regulars - including numerous Dial-a-Cab patrons - well fed at her Little Venice cab bijou.

Pat told **Call Sign** she has been running the shelter for over 17 years, providing sustenance for hungry cab drivers while serving takeaway orders for those in a hurry from the open hatch at the kitchen end of the green hut.

"On the day of filming, I travelled to Wandsworth where the studio is and waited in the hospitality area known as the Green Room. I thought that was most appropriate as, of course, the shelter is green too," she said laughing!

"Then we met Ainsley who was really friendly and, just like old mates, he helped calm my nerves. My daughter Julie and granddaughter Kaly joined me for the show and we all had a great time. Many of my regulars told me they watched the show and saw me on the telly when it was broadcast on 25 March," she added.

Cab Shelter's Celebrity Chef!



Pat Carter in the kitchen of her Warwick Avenue shelter. DaC driver Martin Freeborn (C67) in the background is one of many DaC drivers that use the shelter. Inset pic: Ainsley Harriott



The shelter itself is an historic building, dating back to the 1890s and is one of

the few remaining green huts still dotted about London where cab drivers can stop for a meal, leaving their cabs safely parked in the dedicated spaces adjacent to the shelter

and away from the prying enforcement camera's gaze or over zealous wardens!

The cab shelter is situated by Warwick Avenue tube station and open from 8am to 3pm Monday to Friday.

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JIM'S CAMERA CATCHES THE RED ARROWS!

The recent 90th anniversary celebration of the founding of the RAF saw an amazing flypast over the RAF memorial on Queen Victoria Embankment and the many military dignitaries who were standing at attention. There for **Call Sign**, was Dial-a-Cab's **Jim Rainbird (T25)** and his trusty camera.

"It was such a memorable sight," said Jim, "and believe me that seeing the Red Arrows/RAF Typhoons on TV doesn't hold a candle to seeing them live. It was just mesmerising..."



ELECTRIC CAB AHoy!



Manganese Bronze, parent company of LTI, has signed an agreement with electric vehicle maker Tanfield to make battery-powered taxis that are expected to be in production before the end of 2009, but unlikely to go on general sale until 2010.

With a top speed of 50mph, the vehicle would be of more desirability for in-town working rather than motorway driving. Current plans suggest that it will be based on the TX4 and provisionally called the TX4E. No price has yet been mentioned, but it would cost substantially more than the TX4. The upside is that it will be much cheaper to run at less than 4p a mile - well under half of the diesel version. The current view is that LTI's **green machine** will be able to run for up to 120 miles on one charge of its innovative iron phosphate lithium-ion battery pack. But that could be a problem, being below the average mileage of many cabbies. Drivers would also need to remember to plug in their TX4E overnight, as it takes around seven hours to charge from flat to 100%. The battery can also be "topped up" midway and has a 25% fast charge in one hour.

DaC drivers on the recent trip to Coventry were told that LTI still hadn't found a hybrid model they liked - probably why they have chosen to develop an all-electric taxi rather than a hybrid electric/petrol model, using current technology already developed by Tanfield. The company already makes all-electric vehicles for Sainsbury's and TNT among others and recently agreed a partnership with Ford for the production of two vehicle models under dual branding - the Ampere and Faraday II.

Tanfield Chief executive Darren Kell said: "This partnership will create a unique and highly marketable zero emissions vehicle. By integrating our cutting edge battery and drive train technology into the class-leading TX4, we can offer a truly global product that answers many of the issues raised by urban private passenger transport - rising fuel costs, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions."

John Russell, Manganese CEO added: "We are very pleased to have signed this agreement to produce a zero emission London black taxi. Manganese Bronze is committed to playing a leading role in tackling emissions and the TX4E is an exciting new development that gives us first mover advantage in an expanding global marketplace."

So what are electric vehicles like to drive? Well, if the TX4E is like other types, there will be no noise, no gear changes and no vibrations. The interior will be just like the normal TX4 with regard to comfortable seating, quality upholstery, CD player etc. They will also be thermal and noise insulated.

Tanfield are certainly at the top of the tree when it comes to producing electric vehicles, but the big question will be the price with guestimates placing it around £10,000 more than the TX4. It certainly bodes for exciting times ahead...



Spurs supporter Martin Hizer

Nuts TV has all the character of the lads magazine that the TV company sprang from – ie football and lots of scantily clad females!

The entertainment range is generally aimed at men and also includes gadgets operated by scantily clad females, cars driven by scantily clad females, music not necessarily from scantily clad females – well, ok, mainly from SCF! It also has live shows every night where viewers can enjoy celebrity interviews and get involved in winning competition giveaways from scantily clad females!

Occasionally you can get a mixture of subjects in one program – such as football interviews by females who aren't scantily clad because it's outdoors and still a bit on the nippy side!

One such interview took place recently between *Nuts TV* interviewer **Michelle** and Dial-a-Cab's **Martin Hizer (M57)**, who is probably best known to *Call Sign* readers for his ongoing battles against Westminster Council regarding their issuing of PCNs against DaC drivers. But the meeting of minds between Michelle and Martin had little to do with parking problems.

Martin was waylaid by the lovely Michelle outside **Spurs** White Hart Lane ground following a match. Their eyes met through the sea of blue and white scarves – she with a microphone in her hand and Martin with the remains of his cheese and tomato sandwich.

"I didn't spot the cameraman at first," Martin told *Call Sign*, "mainly because from a side view, her huge chest blocked sight of anyone standing to her left! Even her raincoat did little to disguise a cleavage that could have held more banknotes than any wallet I've ever owned! She came up to me, sighed and whispered *Nuts* in my ear! At first I thought she had something to do with Arsenal, but it was then that I spotted the cameraman!"

Michelle went on to ask Martin who was the better rolemodel between A.C.Milan's **Paolo Maldini** and

Nuts!

DaC's Martin goes NUTS!

L.A.Galaxy superstar **David Beckham?**

Martin explained that he didn't know much about Maldini, other than he had been one of the world's top players and had always played for the same club, but he said that David Beckham portrayed a good image as a footballer and worshipped his family. Then Michelle quickly moved on.

"I can't blame her for that," said Martin, "she must have spoken to me

and thought wow! If she hadn't moved on quickly, she would have been totally captivated by the charm and natural good looks of a Tottenham Hotspur supporter!"

The segment was broadcast the following day when two DaC drivers phoned in to ask whether we had seen the report on *Nuts TV*. Amazingly, both remembered the name of the interviewer but had forgotten Martin's name!

The LCDC AGM 15th May 2008

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, 18-30 pm

Once again the LCDC AGM has come around and is open to all fully paid up members. There are very important issues to be discussed about the trade and the general direction that Tfl are pushing us. There will be a report on the Tfl Bill that is heaping more regulations on the trade that will affect your everyday lives.

Importantly, this year there will be an election for the position of Chairman. The present Chairman, Alan Fleming, has decided to stand and is being challenged by the Vice-Chairman Grant Davis.

The decision that LCDC members will have to make is very important for the future of the Club. You will have to decide on the following: Do you prefer to elect the present Chairman with his vast knowledge of the law and the way he has defended the members? This has been accomplished at little cost to the LCDC.

Or do you prefer to elect the up and coming Vice-Chairman who has a limited knowledge?

Our current subscription rate of £160 per annum has remained at the present level for almost two years.

The choice is yours.

The above was sent to Call Sign by the LCDC...

EAST LONDON CABBIES OUTING

PO Box 48187. Registered charity 1055257
www.eastlondoncabbiesouting.co.uk

We need your help! Taxi drivers wanted!

Our next event is Wednesday 2 July 2008 for special needs children to Maldon.

We are a group of licensed London taxi drivers who organise an annual outing to Promenade Park in Maldon, Essex each year for around 200 special needs children from all areas of London.

The children have a variety of special needs from downs syndrome, autism, physical disabilities and severe learning disabilities. This year makes the 56th year of the outings and is an ever-lasting memory for so many of the children, bringing a joy of happiness to all those who take part.

We need taxi drivers who can help us on this fun-filled event by donating their services for the day.

CAN YOU HELP?

Contact Jeff Samuels on 07517 436 232 or
Ken Flamwell on 07973 462 351

A child's smile makes the day worthwhile

The Flora London Marathon always draws representatives from Dial-a-Cab who are keen to support their favourite charities - and this year was certainly no exception.

DaC Training Manager **Daren Morley**, whose photo is on this month's cover, was one of those successful finishers. He had previously competed in the Great North Run, finishing the world's biggest half marathon in 1.50.39 following a 16-year absence from running. He then set himself a target to run a marathon before he was 40 - and this was it!

Daren, whose chosen charity was *Cancer Research UK*, told **Call Sign**: "During my training, I entered several different races and on each occasion took several minutes off my personal best times. I felt ready for the marathon and was hoping for a time of under 4hours 15minutes. The atmosphere is brilliant with very few parts of the course not having spectators. I got to Surrey Quays on target for sub 4-hour marathon and it was there that I passed the *Masai warriors* who were running to raise money for a well to be dug in their village. They were running with car tyres on their sandals!

"Then it was half way at Tower Bridge where the noise from the crowd is unbelievable and incredibly emotional. You try to take it all in whilst maintaining your pace. Onto East Smithfield where my running club and *Cancer Research UK* had cheering stations, which put an extra spring in my step. Next came the most difficult part of the Marathon - Isle of Dogs and Canary Wharf. The Call Centre's **Alex** and **Bonnie Livingstone** were waiting for me on Narrow St with a quick hug and kiss. Bonnie thanked me for covering them in sweat! At Canary Wharf and the 20-mile mark, I was 4 minutes down on a sub 4 hours (*what do you expect if you stop for a snog midway...Ed*). Then back towards the Tower and a quick hug from my girlfriend Rosie (*was this a run or a love in...Ed?*).

"Then it was all down to the last three miles along the Embankment. I normally love running along that part in training, but this time it felt so long and Big Ben seemed to be getting further and further away! Eventually I reached Parliament Square and Birdcage Walk. I'd forgotten how long that was! The crowd keep you going, calling out your name, offering encouragement as you enter The Mall and the finish. Then a huge wave of emotion comes over you. I completed the 26-miles in 4.09.07 and it is an experience I will never forget."

Daren raised over £2000 for *Cancer Research UK* and asked us to thank DaC for their kind donation in addition to all

DaC And The Flora London Marathon



Mark Hudson crosses Westminster Bridge



Lisa Desborough shows her medal at the end of the Marathon



Phil Hannah with his proud wife and kids at the finish line

the drivers and members of staff who have sponsored him. If you'd like to sponsor Daren, it's www.justgiving.com/darenmorley1.

John Hudson (W34) saw son **Mark** complete the Marathon raising £2000 for *Children with Leukemia*. Mark finished in 4hours 57minutes and is now completing the marathon task of collecting all the sponsorship he and John have been offered by kind cabbies and others.

Mark told **Call Sign**: "I never thought I'd be running a marathon, but all the support and kind words people give really boosts your self confidence. The race was a lot of fun and the crowds carry you through. Towards the end, I thought I was running well - until a Cornish pasty overtook me! At least it wasn't the running banana!"

Mark ran for *Children with Leukemia* after the family of a close friend were affected by it. Since beginning serious training in February, Mark completed two half marathons, two 18-mile runs, two 20-milers and a 22-mile slog. And he gave up booze! If you would like to sponsor Mark, it's www.bmycharity.com/hudsons-bleedingnipples.

Another successful finisher was **Lisa**, daughter of **Ron Desborough (P42)**. She ran to assist the work of the *Royal*

British Legion and also in memory of her grandfather, who had been in the RAF but sadly passed away last October. Lisa trained for 7 months and successfully completed the 26miles in just over 5hours 30minutes raising over £2000 in the process - £500 over her target! Then again, it isn't that surprising as the licensed cab trade has a great affiliation with ex-services charities. If you'd like to help Lisa, go to <https://www.bmycharity.com/V2/lisadesborough>.

Last of the DaC's runners was **Philip Hannah (K26)** who ran in aid of the *Lions Hospice*, which provides specialist palliative or hospice care for those people with life shortening illnesses in Kent. Phil finished in the good time of 4hours 42minutes. He told **Call Sign** he was delighted when the runners were suddenly hit by a storm.

"It cooled us off beautifully and had it stopped then, it would have been great. But it didn't - leaving my feet cold and my shorts heavier than when we started!"

If you'd like to help the *Lions Hospice* you'll find info at Justgiving.com/PhilipHannah.

Well done to everybody. It sounds like fun, but the end result means you have to run 26miles - and that's a long way...

In April 2006, Dial-a-Cab driver **David Marks (R22)** showed **Call Sign** an article taken from monthly mag, *Motor Cycle News*. It had an amazing impact on cctv speeding offences and helped get charges dropped via a legal technicality. Several DaC drivers used it and told **Call Sign** that it worked, with UK police forces dropping cases when the technicality was used. But we were later told that many police forces had blocked the loophole.

As late as this March, drivers were still phoning **Call Sign** to say they remembered reading it and asked whether they could use it? Our honest answer was that we believed the loophole had been closed, although we couldn't and wouldn't stop anyone trying.

Now another DaC driver who decided that he would try it (on two separate occasions) has phoned to say that it seems to have worked both times. **Call Sign** agreed to withhold his name as he didn't want any ripples caused regarding his own cases – both of which came under the auspices of the *City of London Corporation*. In both cases, he was first given the option to attend a road safety course in exchange for not getting any points and following his refusal to accept, was then offered a fixed penalty rather than the possibility of court action. He refused that too and has heard nothing since – both offences now being many months ago.

Obviously, point one is that you shouldn't speed, but as in the case of this driver who went from a Fairway to a TX4, we all know that sometimes you are going faster than you think – especially late at night. **Call Sign** has

THE BANK OF ENGLAND MUSEUM



The museum entrance is around the corner in Bartholomew Lane

The Bank of England Museum (entrance in Bartholomew Lane EC2) is a very popular venue for tourists, but is every bit as interesting for UK adults and children. There is always something of interest taking place there and admission is usually free!

From 27 - 30 May there is an exhibition on the intricate mosaics that decorate the Bank's ground floor. **Picture Perfect** also gives visitors the chance to create their own mosaics. Open 10.30 – 4pm...

Until Oct 31, The Pound in your Pocket tells the story of your money and its value. You can also learn all about the Bank of England from its earliest days, examine the intricacies of banknote designs, see the 1793 bank stock office of Sir John Soane, pick up a genuine gold bar and take an audio tour of the bank. Open 10am – 5pm... *It's all free! Closed public / bank holidays and weekends...*

Is This Speeding Loophole Still Working?



to go against this driver's advice and say that anyone offered the one-day course in lieu of points, should think carefully before rejecting. However, if you feel that strongly and want to follow this DaC driver's example, we are republishing details below of what you had to do. We must also re-emphasise that we believed the loophole had been closed, but in case we were wrong, this is what happens...

Following receipt of the *Notice of Intended Prosecution*, those accused of speeding replied with a specially worded response. This is because when someone is questioned regarding any offence – be it in person or via a form – they should first receive a formal caution and cameras can give no caution.

Even if the police were to visit an offender's home, it would then be too late as only statements given after that time would be eligible in court and a caution would allow the accused to remain silent.

According to MCN at the time, after receiv-

ing the NIP you were asked who was driving the vehicle. If you agreed that you were the person, you filled out the form and add *see attached letter*, which you then returned with the NIP. The letter, designed by road traffic lawyer Robert Dobson, complied with the *Road Traffic Act (section 172)* by identifying the driver. It was called the PACE Witness Statement. Because no caution was given and the receiver of the NIP admitted being the driver, that statement could not then used against them.

*If any other DaC drivers use the letter, please let **Call Sign** know the outcome...*

The Letter to return WITH the NIP:

Insert police reference number here...

Insert your registration number here...

Dear Chief Constable

Further to the above notice of intended prosecution, I confirm that the following individual was driving the above vehicle at the time of the alleged motoring offence:

(Insert all of the details asked for on the NIP here, including name, address, date of birth and driver number).

As this statement is provided under threat of criminal penalty (*Funka v France*) and as I have not received the caution required by paragraph 10.1 of PACE Code C (*Mawdesley*, the Chief Constable of Cheshire (2004) 1 ALL E.R.58), I make this statement on the express understanding that it shall not be used or disclosed in any proceedings of whatever nature against myself.

Yours sincerely

Insert signature here...

Insert your name in print here...

REDBRIDGE HAND CAB WASH

Roding Lane North, Woodford Avenue

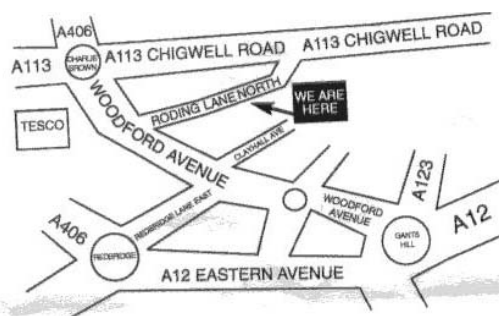
For Essex drivers, the best cab wash for miles around is now offering Dial-a-Cab drivers a discount every time you come in to get your taxi washed!

**Inside and outside including a free air freshener:
Usually £10... The DaC price is £8**

**Outside only:
Usually £6... The DaC price is £5**

Full valet service available

Opening times:
Mon – Fri: 9am to 7pm
Sat: 8am to 6pm
Sun: 9am to 6pm



The **Eco Pizzeria** restaurant is situated in the heart of Chiswick at 144 High Road and run by father and daughter team Sami and Charmaine Wasif. Sami may be Egyptian, but has lived in Italia for so long that he is probably an honorary Italian! They also ran a pizzeria in Clapham High Street.



My 14 year old son Jack accompanied me for the evening and the comfortable yet very informal ambience left us both eagerly awaiting the Mediterranean cuisine...

We began with *antipasti*. Jack had *Parma ham accompanied by buffalo mozzarella, figs and fresh herbs* while my *carne* also included *Bresaola, a selection of salami together with a fresh salad and the Parma ham*. The service was friendly and pleasantly unhurried with waiters who were very knowledgeable on the menu itself, all of which added to a feeling of comfortable relaxation.

For his main course, Jack went with the *beef, tomato, cream and Parmesan sauce with fresh dill and basil* – yes, Jack likes *Lasagne*! His one word contribution to the article was “delicious.” Well two words if you include mmmmm! He begrudgingly allowed me a taster and yes, he was right...!

I chose the *grilled chicken covered in mozzarella and pesto sauce, a huge grilled mushroom, rocket and salad*. I had to agree with Jack, it was just delicious and in addition - for a hungry Dial-a-Cab taxi driver such as myself - there was never any danger of us leaving Eco still peckish with portions being not only very tasty, but also extremely generous.

It was nice to see that the excellent service was not just there to speed things up to get us out and get the table ready for the next customer. Quite the reverse in fact, Eco is extremely relaxing.

To finish off our meal, we both went with an

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

Eating Out with Call Sign

old favourite, *Tiramisu*. Jack commented on the pleasant alcoholic content within the trifle – as you do at 14 - but whatever it was, it tasted delicious.

The prices in the restaurant are very reasonable with starters on average £4 to £5 and main courses £8 to £10. The restaurant is very comfortable and informal with excellent food and choice – although the dessert menu is rather small. But with *Tiramisu* that good, we could overlook that!

I spoke to Sami and was surprised to hear that the eating habits of the patrons in Clapham differ from those in Chiswick to the extent where they sell more of their huge 12inch pizzas in Clapham with Chiswick clients opting more for the pasta meals. Mind you, all the pasta is made on the premises at Eco Chiswick and believe me, you can tell because of the ultra-fresh taste. Daughter Charmaine added that Eco were looking into the possibility later this year of gluten-free pizza bases.

They also cater for *Calzone*, a sort of pizza pie that looks remarkably like a giant Cornish pasty but which contains some delicious fillings, covered with a home made tomato sauce. We didn't have it but taking a peek at others who did, it looked absolutely scrumptious! They also do grilled steaks, grilled salmon and of course my choice, the chicken.

The striking interior of the restaurant was created by *Anand Zenz* – known by many as *Arnold Nononzenz* - whose aim was to retain the spirit, treatment and approach of the original restaurant whilst at the same time producing

something new. I think the amazing curved wooden ceiling that ripples like a wave and which is echoed in the floor certainly comes under that category!

With the current advent of TV cooking programmes, there is also a showcase pizza kitchen that allows diners to watch all the theatre that a pizzeria entails. My immediate thought was how huge and delicious their 12inch pizzas looked and should we have gone for that instead? But you can't eat it all!

Sami is also proud of his extensive wine list and so he should be – not just because of the variations, but because the prices are very reasonable and excepting the Tattinger *bubbly* at £45, most bottles go from between £12 and £20 with a nice *Asbury Grove Shiraz* going at £16.50.

Eco Chiswick is open everyday with food available from midday until 11pm Sunday to Thursday and until 11:30pm Friday, Saturday and Sunday. They only close on Xmas Day! Takeaway is available during opening hours.

For more information and bookings call 0208 747 4822 or visit www.ecorestaurants.com.

Eco Chiswick is a nice, informal restaurant with a very tasty menu. And something you don't find everywhere in London that you would on the Med, Sami and Charmaine welcome well-behaved children to Eco. You will not feel at all uncomfortable. A good choice...

Alex Constantinou (N05)

Names...

I love names and especially funny ones - like Mustafa Liq. Every time I start a new job, I look at the database to see if I can find a grouping. One office had a Mr Bible, Mr Church and Ms Saint, while another had a Mr Mandarin who lived on Orange Street - not here but in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. I found a lady called Ms Quayle who married Mr Partridge and co-workers in one office called Ray, Joy, Dawn and Hope. They just needed a Sonny to complete the happy picture!

Long ago I met a woman called Phyllis who, being a nice Jewish girl, saw her name change when she married Bruce Stein to become Phyllis Stein!

A student I once knew blamed her parents for her name and was keen to marry out of it. They had called her Teresa Ryatt - *to raise a riot* - get it? I can never forget these people and they always cheer me up.

Mind you, it can become embarrassing, when I start giggling on the phone, as I did not long ago when ringing an insurance worker called Seema Butt...!



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

Back Seat Driver

My own alias, if I feel I can't refuse to say who I am but don't really want to, is Victoria Station. I used to use that when men chatted me up and then asked my name – somehow you feel protected with an alias.

And the election...

The voting will be finished before you read this, but in contrast to the taxi establishment and – although he is dithering - my own dear DaCman Glen, I don't think Boris Johnson is competent to run London. Yes, I know he promises a lot and he is as floppy-topped as Flopsy Bunny, but do you know his real name? *Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson*. Maybe that's endearing, but it could also suggest insanity in the family!

K.Livingstone, on the other

hand, is an anagram for *loves thinking*. Well never mind the extra 'h' - you have to compromise in politics don't you?

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



Keith Reading

**Professional Toastmaster /
Master of Ceremonies**

Telephone: 01279 465938

Mobile: 07774 860374

Email: kgr.2@virgin.net

**Graduate of the
Professional Toastmasters' Academy**

HP sauce...

In one of my most recent articles for *Call Sign*, I mentioned the problems I was having with the new 64-bit PC that I'd purchased from HP and moaned about them not providing drivers for the network components. Well I eventually found a wireless network card on **Scan.co.uk** (<http://www.scan.co.uk/Products/ProductInfo.asp?WebProductID=457260>) that is compatible with 3-bit and/or 64-bit Microsoft Windows Vista... at last!

As I'd spent a lot of dosh on this new 64-bit PC, I was determined to take advantage of the 64-bit capabilities. 32-bit PCs can only use up to 4GB of RAM and approximately half of that is designated to the operating system - not to the user running applications. 64-bit in theory can access up to 16 exabytes of memory, although that would be impractical in a desktop PC so a physical limit of 128GB has been set. Since we do a lot of image restoration, scanning and reproduction, memory is important and the more the merrier.

I'd already wasted £15 on 2 network cards that turned out to be only 32-bit, so wasting another £15 was worth the gamble. I installed the network card and then reinstalled Windows Vista 64-bit and I'm glad to say it all installed fine; even the new wireless network card. The weird thing is, once my PC was connected to the internet, Microsoft Vista downloaded the 64-bit drivers for the other network cards, so I now have three network connections! Why couldn't HP have provided them in the first place???

PC World? No thanks...!

I've had a simple policy when buying any IT equipment and that is to never, ever, buy from PC World or Dixons. This policy is not from hearsay, it's a simple fact that my dealing with them has always ended with me getting extremely aggravated and feeling aggrieved with their attitude towards customers.



I recently broke my policy and bought a laptop as it was so cheap. But boy, am I regretting it! At the same time I also bought an external hard drive case for a 400GB hard drive, which they reduced by £5. This was all undertaken at the Slough PC World as I would not step into the Reading store due to my previously mentioned experiences with them. Overall, the initial impressions of the Slough store were satisfactory - until 30 days later when we noticed that the power cable showed signs of splitting.

Considering the safety implications of a split power cable, I thought this would have been a simple case of taking it to PC World and them replacing it, which is why I left it to the wife. However, nothing is ever that simple when dealing with PC World, well except for the management staff. The manager of the store accused the wife of damaging the cable herself... can you believe that! He refused to replace it and was rude and obnoxious.

Obviously his attitude was to aggravate the customer and quite rightly Sandra argued back. Subsequently the manager had my wife escorted from PC World and she is now banned from PC World and Dixons! To top it all, the external

hard drive case now no longer works either, so that also goes into the bin!

So if you see me in the street, do not be afraid to call out: "Vince, don't ever, ever go to PC World," just in case I'm tempted, which is now as likely as Labour winning the next election!

Be lucky and see you in July... although definitely not in PC World!

Vince Chin
Call Sign online

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

Kupkake's Korner

**Epitaph to Ken?**

Before he became a politician,
I worked alongside Ken,
we were medical technicians
and things were different then...

We weren't friends, didn't socialise,
didn't do pubs or bars.
But in the tearoom we'd have a chat -
'bout music, girls and cars!

Our destinies were mapped out
and I went off to see the world.
He became a teacher
and his red flag became unfurled.

I'd hear him on the radio,
and see him on TV,
read about him in the papers...
but nothing ever pleased me!

And so he rose to power
and was voted in again.
But could this be his final hour -
when we see the last of Ken?

I predict he'll yell and scream
spouting doom and gloom,
cursing the winning team
as he leaves his Mayoral room...

You'll close the door behind you,
there's no Taxi gonna take you then!
Crawl on back to NW2...
good riddance... and goodbye Ken.

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



Call Sign En La Belle France



When I return to the British Isles to enjoy one of my favourite pastimes - birdwatching - I find some great places to stay. Just recently I have been to two locations in England and Scotland respectively and I'd like to recommend them to subscribers who aren't particularly looking for overseas destinations the next time they need a break from London's traffic, its war-dens and cameras.

So how about the northeast coast for a change? How about a lovely cosy little bed and breakfast cottage in Yorkshire run by a very friendly couple, situated in the much sought after hamlet of **Holmptin** near the seaside town of Withensay?

Guests enjoy the excellent views from the bedrooms and conservatory, the mature orchard and also the hot spa tub. The old fashioned beams and the open fire in the lounge create a relaxing ambience and should you prefer to go self-catering, a kitchen is available. Home cooked meals can also be purchased in the quaint little pub next door. So, this little gem is worth looking up if you plan to head north. Give Mike or Cath Cox a call on 01964 630 957.

How about relaxing in a purpose-built log cabin in the Moffat valley in the Scottish county of Dumfries? Situated in a country park close to all essential amenities, this venue is served by stunning scenery in the rolling countryside of the borders. Moffat village is a beautiful place to while away the time, with fine pubs and restaurants and the famous woollen mill. Check out www.visitmoffat.co.uk. The cabin can sleep up to 5 with a double, twin and single room, and outside space set in pretty grounds with a fishing lake. For further information contact Tony Coldman on 07944 90547.

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



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

Continued from April

The Copa Cabana show and dinner were great, but Sam had forgotten to bring any formal clothing with him, so before leaving the hotel I had to run and buy him a pair of slacks he could wear that night. He remembered his shirt and tie thankfully! While he took a shower, I ran to a local store and bought the slacks for him and then had to iron them so he could have a decent outfit to wear that night. At the end, everything came out fine and we all had a great time. But for that moment I felt I was dealing with a child and that bothered me. He should have been sure he had the proper attire to wear in case we wanted to go somewhere nice. Maybe we're different when it comes to that and that night it started to show. Yes, I was in love with him, but suddenly had doubts about us ending up together because of silly things like that. He was very mature when it came to his work – and of course making love – but quite immature when it came to his personal life.

That night was to be our last night together in Florida. We spent it together and made love like never before. Somehow I felt it was near the end because of the distance that separated us, but refused to believe it. Nevertheless, I lived in California and he lived in London driving a **Dial-a-Cab** taxi! Could we just survive on love? I didn't know what was to come very soon!

The next day we got up, had a breakfast along with Sheila and Sean and then it was time to say goodbye. We stood in front of the hotel by his rental car for a long time. Someone took our photo. I didn't know it then, but that was the last time I was to see him in person and the last photo we ever had together.

Many bad things happened after we parted that day. Sam had mentioned to me in the past that he had been chatting with Auvril, an old girlfriend from his teen years back in Ireland and who now lived in the US. But he said they were just friends and that was it. Later, I found out that he had flown into Tampa instead of Miami because he had planned all along to meet with Auvril. In fact she had flown there to meet with him – even though she was engaged to an American man. They met at Clearwater Beach near Tampa.

I know that there was some kissing between them, but no sex – well that's what Auvril told me. She said she wasn't attracted to him after so many years. How did I find out about their meeting? I had copied her US phone number from Sam's phone book when I'd been in London with him. I called her and told her about Sam and I and how we had met right before he went to Tampa to meet with her. She couldn't believe it. I also told her about his girlfriend in London. Auvril and I stayed in touch for a few days and when Sam found out about it – I told him myself on the phone – he almost had a heart attack. His scam had been discovered. He wasn't so smart after all.

He was also cheating on me with Mary in London in addition to Auvril in Tampa – or was he cheating on Mary with Auvril and me? I never found out if he knew Mary before me or if he met her after me. All I know is that once when Mary and I talked on the phone,

This is the true love story of a Dial-a-Cab driver and a Californian beauty who met and fell in love on the Internet in 1998. Sam lived in London and drove for DaC, while Jenny lived on the USA west coast. Call Sign is publishing Jenny's story exactly as she wrote it. Their names have been changed, but photos are genuine. Jenny suspects Sam of seeing another women but still loves him. They go to Florida with 2 friends...

L♥ve On the Internet - The Finale...



They didn't know at the time but this was to be their last photo together

we both were very confused by Sam's actions. In spite of it all, Sam and I stayed in touch much longer via the phone, but my feelings for him had changed... or had they? I was always so confused when it came to Sam! I loved him and I hated him, but I was also very hurt by him.

Eventually Sam and Mary moved in together, but even then he'd call occasionally just to see how I was. He'd tell me he wished he could come to California. Was he kidding or what! Why could he not just cut the string and let me go? He even had the nerve to tell me that he still loved me among a bunch of other lies. He called me right after midnight on Millennium night to wish me a happy new year even when it was only 4pm here in California. He often also called when he felt lonely. He'd tell me he loved me, keeping me confused as to my feelings for him.

Eventually Sam left London and **Dial-a-Cab** to move back to Ireland with girlfriend Mary, but still kept calling me for many years telling me he wouldn't marry her. I hope he does one

day and that they can be happy together as a family. They had a baby boy last year.

I don't wish him any harm, just happiness. I have no bad feelings towards him anymore. I have forgiven him and forgotten the bad things that happened. Keeping bad feelings poisons your system and I became determined that he was not going to poison mine. I try only to remember the good and special times we shared. I regret nothing that happened between us, but I'm also glad I didn't end up with him because he was definitely not the man for me.

When my mother passed away in 2005, he contacted me sending a lovely message saying he would always be there for me and even today I'm still in contact with his family – but not him.

Then in this year of 2008, I heard that Sam had a bad accident, his aunt and cousin calling to say he had fallen off a ladder, banging his head and spending a week in a coma with swelling and bleeding in the brain. I stayed in touch with his family everyday until I knew he was out of danger. I couldn't bear to think he might die. Fortunately he is recovering, but the incident really upset me. Does it mean I still have feelings for him?

I believe I was in love with Sam, but perhaps it was all a dream? I believe that he was – in his own way – in love with me too. Was it real love or just a romantic infatuation on both sides? Who really knows. June 6, 2008 marked 10 years from the day we first met online when he sent me an instant message that read: "Hello, would you like to meet someone who has many things in common with you?" I'm not sorry I said yes.

The rest is history. Sam and I came into each other's lives for a reason and that was it where-as my now-husband Steve came into my life for a lifetime. He is a wonderful man and much better for me that Sam would have ever been. But would I do it all over again? You bet...!

I have written a poem to Sam that I'd like to share with you in the next issue...

Jenny

Do you find computers a bit puzzling and still have problems downloading your E-Statements? Warren Smith may have the answer for you...

DAC WORKSHOPS FOR E-STATEMENTS

As you have been made aware by yet another flyer from Microgen, **Dial-a-Cab** is doing its utmost to cut the use of natural resources by trying to get you to sign up for *E-statements*, saving on paper and delivery. However, it is all very well Dial-a-Cab asking you to download your statements, but a proportion of you may not be as computer literate as is necessary to perform these tasks and those of you who do know what to do, may still need a little help.

For these reasons I am going to organise some workshops to last no longer than 30 minutes at various times of the day to

talk you through the procedures. If you are interested, please speak to Driver Services and we can arrange for the training room to be available.

Another suggestion to you all; why not give your accountant access to your statements? I have arranged with Microgen for a secondary recipient to be added to your profile so, with your permission, they can go in and retrieve whatever data is necessary. Remember your statements stay live for a rolling period of TWO YEARS, so it makes no difference when your accounts need to be completed, there will always be a whole year's worth on-line.

Please contact Driver Services if you require any help or wish to sign your Accountant as the secondary recipient. Of course, you should make sure you ask him first!



Warren Smith
DaC Financial Controller

Backache? Feeling tense? Just fancy a massage? Homeopathy? Beauty treatments?

Riverside Therapies: 10% off all treatments for DaC drivers

Diane Revelle MGCP ITEC IEB AOC who runs **Riverside Therapies** at Gabriels Wharf on the Southbank, contacted **Call Sign** after a Dial-a-Cab driver spoke to her. She told us:

"I am following a suggestion from a taxi driver who regularly suffers from excruciating pain from back trauma, which occurs through regular and long term stretches of driving. I look after the health and well being of workers all along London's Southbank and have a complementary health practice in Gabriels Wharf near the OXO tower. I also work with the occupational health dept within ITV and take care of everyone's muscular problems as well as reducing their stress levels!"

Diane added: "I would like to offer 10 % off back treatments at **Riverside Therapies** to all of Dial-a-Cab's Licensed taxi drivers to help keep their stress levels and back troubles at bay and perhaps give them a less exhausting and more comfortable working day. My work is helpful in preventing back problems also, not just for those who are already suffering. Further details are on my website at **www.riversidetherapies.co.uk**."

When you arrive at Gabriels Wharf you already feel as though you are on holiday, with the great eateries and bars, craft shops and designer studios, whilst being by the river is often great therapy in itself. At Riverside Therapies you will be looked after by some of London's most skilful and experienced therapists, whether you are indulging in a fully clothed therapeutic chair massage - walk in, no appointment necessary - or by booking in for Aromatherapy Massage, Reflexology,

Shiatsu, Swedish Massage, Homeopathy, Reiki, Acupuncture, Indian Head Massage, Allergy Treatment, Beauty Therapy or simply some friendly advice!

We consider ourselves to be very lucky to work at such a fabulous location here on this colourful and vibrant stretch of London's Southbank. Your children can play on the beautiful wooden sculptures by *Friedel Buecking*, (his rocking animals are a big favourite), while you enjoy a well deserved backrub!

Make a day of it or just pop in to say hello. People tell us they love it here, so come and meet our friendly team for yourselves! We look forward to meeting you. And don't forget; show us your taxi badge and it will be 10% off the bill!

We're open between 12.00 and 6pm...

Diane Revelle MGCP ITEC IEB AOC
Riverside Therapies, 9 Gabriel's Wharf, 56 Upper Ground or phone 07801 355 440...



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MAILSHOT

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

Giant cover-up?

Just reading in *Call Sign* (From the Editor, April issue) about the driver who suggested that a Parking Attendant issued a ticket to a motorbike with a cover over it after telling the cab driver to move off. I was recently sitting outside an account in Fredericks Place EC2 when I saw a PA looking at a motorbike parked on a yellow line adjacent to a motorcycle parking bay. After about 5 minutes a City of London police car pulled up, a PC got out, quickly spoke to the PA and subsequently lifted the bike cover to expose the index plate of the bike, then the PA issued a ticket. The copper asked if that was all and after 10 seconds drove off. Good job he didn't have anything important to do! So the PA can't touch the bike, but a PC can...?

Richard Potter (T51)

Peter Gourri of Saunders Solicitors responds. If you have any motoring question that replies a legal answer, send it to Call Sign and someone from Saunders LLP will try to answer it...

Where the owner of a motorcycle covers up their number plate with an item such as a bin liner, a cargo net with some hard plastic or a cover, which results in the number plate being covered up in a secure way, it is illegal for a Traffic Warden to "interfere" with the bike in any way other than to place the PCN onto the bike. That means the Traffic Warden cannot remove the cover irrespective of what it is, to see the number plate or vehicle tax disc in order to obtain the details of the vehicle registration so that a PCN can be completed and placed onto the bike.

But that does not make any sense. Who does have power to remove these obstructing covers? Can't a Police Officer simply remove it so that the number plate or Vehicle licence can be seen?

In practical terms, it is up to an individual officer to use his/her discretion when viewing a covered vehicle. As a Police Officer and unlike a Traffic Warden, he/she has specific powers to remove a cover/interfere with a vehicle to ascertain that the said vehicle licence and tax disc are present or not. However to do so could be considered a form of trespass or unlawful interference with property.

It is his then his/her responsibility to issue (or not) a notice of failure to display. It is possible that by a police officer issuing a PCN by first carrying out an illegal act (for instance, tampering with a bike cover), it can be treated the same as a Police Officer recovering information from a suspect's premises without a search warrant. Effectively the evidence,

no matter how damning it is for the accused, maybe considered inadmissible by the Court as it was illegally obtained in the first place. The only way your warden could have issued a 'legal and binding' ticket is if a Police Officer first legally removed the cover for the traffic warden to view the vehicle details.

DaC's Terminal 5 history maker?

I dropped a fare off at terminal 5 at 4.09am on the first day (April 27). Can I claim to be the first Dial-a-Cab driver to take a fare there?

Barry Spear (Y16)

Quite probably, but after the performance there I'm not sure that I'd want to be associated with its opening! ...Ed

BackBoris receipts

It has come to my attention that many taxi drivers are being hassled over handing out BackBoris receipts to customers. We need to stamp out this arrogant behaviour and leave you all to get on with your doing your valuable job of getting people around London. If anyone has been intimidated by members of TfL or any other authority, please do feel free to get in touch with my campaign team.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and hope you and your colleagues will be voting for change on May 1st.

Boris Johnson

Conservative Candidate for Mayor of London

This letter was received after the April issue went to print, however, we feel sure that regardless of the election result, Mr Johnson would like to hear from anyone who has had more than just a small amount of hassle re the issue of receipts. The email address is boris@backboris.com ...Ed

Where's that plaice, Steve...?

I was browsing through a recent issue of Taxi (164) and was drawn to Steve McNamara's column which brought a smile to my face. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish him all the best on his appeal against the parking ticket issued by Westminster Council. I, like many drivers, have been the victim of their "Highway Robbery." The ticket was issued in Shorton Street (which Steve's knowledge didn't cover). Well a little info for my fellow drivers, the *Sea Shell* is on the corner of Shorton Street and Lisson Grove, so please be very careful when, how and where you park when picking up a take-away! I'll say no more!

Tony Doltis (R38)

Sounds a bit fishy to me ...Ed

Racing for Life...

I was reading through *Call Sign* and came across an article about the Race for Life,



Hayley O'Connell. You were probably not aware of this, but in the Call Centre there are around 10 people including Hayley that are doing this race, which they have been organising together.

I would really appreciate it if they could all get a mention. It would mean a great deal to me as their supervisor.

Marilena Russo

DaC Call Centre

No problem Maz. In addition to Hayley, good luck to Keimal West, Jenny Albert, Shannel Bell, Vanita Thayaparan, Vivienne Clarke, Julie Taylor and Stacey Blake who will all be running in the Race for Life at Richmond Park later this month ...Ed

Going Green?

Mayor Ken introduced the low emission zone precluding old lorries from entering any London borough, although they can if they pay £200 a day. The cost of introducing the cameras, signs and computer system etc was £160m. This equates to 5000 people working at £32,000 each for a year. They would each, and their families, on such a salary churn out loads more pollution than being saved by not allowing the lorries in, in the first place. Not to mention the cost to the environment on producing the replacement lorries and their passed-on cost to us to pay for them. Plus, who is suffering the pollution from the old sold-on lorries now? *Going Green* is just scare mongering and used as a cloak for taxing us more. Everywhere you look it's the same with local boroughs, the government and now businesses having latched on to the profitability of global warming and *going green*. The new Dial-a-Cab *E-Statements* say this will be 1383% more carbon efficient than a paper account sheet sent by post. By how much does this fall when our 2000 plus drivers make a cup of coffee (electrically heated) and sit down at their computer (electrically powered) and print off their account sheet (electrical powered printer with ink that's dearer than *Chanel No.5* and using the paper Dial-a-Cab has saved), essential as HMRC require us to keep records for 7 years.

If I started with *E-Statements* 7 years ago, they would have been stored on a floppy disk; remember those little 3 1/4 inch square plastic boxes? Where would you stick them today? What storage will be in vogue in 7 years time? Good old paper survives years and only needs a box to store them in and a pair of glasses, at most, to obtain any information.

To conclude in real terms, it ain't much greener but there are considerable savings for Dial-a-Cab. My telephone suppliers give me a discount if I opt out of a paper option.

MAILSHOT

Mailshot continued from page 38

Hey Dial-a-Cab! How about passing on your savings to those coffee swilling keyboard tapping drivers?

Alan Nash (A95)

Interesting letter Alan, but you miss out one very important point. The whole idea of E-Statements is to store them on your PC and not use any paper at all. That's why it stores each driver's statements under your own password for two years. You just save them as you go along and assuming – as I'm sure you do – that you occasionally do a file back up, then you don't need to print out anything. And of course, you know all about saving on CDs should it be necessary! By the way Alan, if you think paper takes up no room, come to my office where 2 copies of every Call Sign mag and their predecessors take up far more than the odd box!

As for passing on any savings, I don't think I'll bother asking as I'm not sure I'd want to hear that we suddenly have to pay for upgrades etc in exchange for paper saving! ...Ed

Eating in the City...

After getting fed up with being hassled in the early hours by parking wardens in Smithfield, I gave up the nightly coffee. Last night, I noticed the stall opposite the Sweetings rank in Queen Victoria Street for the first time. How did I miss it? Had a beaut cappuccino and later a tea (not as good, but OK). The guy says he's aiming for 24/7. Give it a visit might be worth a note in *Call Sign*.

John Addis (K97)

Thanks for that John. I gave it a go and you're right – both food and drink are good and he seems pretty regular. Not as much parking space as Finsbury Square, but certainly worth a look ...Ed

Wheelchairs...

I read your piece in *Call Sign* concerning wheelchairs and have to say I was never

given any practical demo of placing wheelchair passengers safely in the cab either on my test or when I bought any of my cabs. I recently had to pick up a lady on account in one of those big electric wheelchairs. I only just got it in the taxi by actually lifting it and turning it physically – the camber on the floor of the cab preventing me from turning it, the footrests keep catching. I also feel a bit silly admitting this, but I have no confidence in my ability to strap a wheelchair user in correctly and with the minimum fuss. I have turned down W attributes in the past for this reason, when normally I accept most types of job offered.

Would it be possible to set up some kind of open day at DaC or maybe suggest it to the PCO where drivers could come forward for some kind of training or refresher? I would definitely attend. Even if one of our drivers who does know could demonstrate to me in the yard at DaC House, I would be grateful. The end result would be a better service to all our customers.

I'd also be grateful if you didn't put this in the mag attributed to me, my fellow drivers would rip the you-know-what out of me big style, I fear!

From a DaC driver who doesn't know how to fit a wheelchair passenger in!

Well done Mark; I don't usually hide writer's names but your tearful letter touched my heartstrings! I asked the PCO to see if they could send someone to DaC, but unfortunately their staff are quite busy at the moment. However, they have sent me a DVD by GoSkills in connection with the PCO, which could help with your problem. Anyone who would like a copy, just contact me ...Ed

New old cab for sale...again!

As many members know, I change my cab each year and have had 35 so far! Well the present TX4 is now 6 months old, had its PCO check and is not sold yet! It is going to be available at the end of October 08 with possibly 12,000 miles on the clock, this due



to me being a house husband to my wife. It is a Nightfire Red, Gold model, Reversing sensors, Drivers door window deflector and, of course, fitted on DaC.

It would be a shame if there was not a driver who would like such a unique one year old cab.

If anyone is genuinely interested, please phone 0208 922 0547...

Martin Freeborn (C67)

Questions and questions...

Now the voice channel has gone, has the two minutes of live feed that we get if we press our emergency button also disappeared? What's the procedure if we get into difficulties or even attacked?

Again, now voice has gone, drivers are finding themselves having to use their own personal mobile phones if we are in a dead spot to keep in touch. Are we expected to bear the cost of these calls or can you clarify that we put them on as an expense at the end of the job? You can hang on for a while trying to get through when it's busy. Has the voice channel gone for good? If so, are the Board looking at supplying us with a company phone to keep costs down? Finally, can you let us know in this issue the pick up and set down procedures for Dial-a-Cabs at Terminal 5?

Mickey Lappin (E46)

Keith Cain replies: The revised procedures should a driver get into difficulty are: The driver presses his/her emergency button. This will bring attention to the controller who will then look up the mobile contact number of the driver and call it. If the driver answers and says they are ok, then the call is logged as a false alarm. If no answer is received, then the GPS is checked and a fleet message will be sent stating 'driver requires assistance' with the location.

Until signal problems have been completely resolved, it's hard to say whether the voice channel has gone forever at this present moment.

Drivers who do not wish to use their mobile phones have the use of the message facility in the system. Up till now, those who use this frequently have found it to be very good. If a driver chooses to use his phone, then that's a cost to the driver. Many drivers have remarked that their mobile phone tariffs give them free calls, which they find beneficial. For those who do not have free calls, then any costs associated with the course of your business can be claimed against when doing your annual returns.

You can read about T5 in my report elsewhere in this issue...

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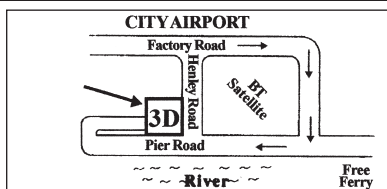
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