

January 2009



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

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for Call Sign

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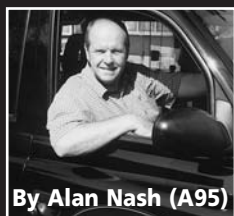


*DaC's Jim and Jan help Lewis Hamilton promote don't
drink and drive!*



*DaC's Nuala and Val display their Diversity Awareness
graduation certificates...*





By Alan Nash (A95)

NASH'S NUMBERS

The 'kipper season' is with us again and it could be worse than recent years. So this month sees a total 'What's On' guide to give a slight edge on where the work might be.

ExCel Event	Type	From	To
London International Boat Show 2009	Public	09 Jan 2009	18 Jan 2009
Paul McKenna's I can make you thin	Public	24 Jan 2009	24 Jan 2009
Toy Fair	Trade	28 Jan 2009	31 Jan 2009
MCM - Motorcycle show	Public	29 Jan 2009	01 Feb 2009

O2 Events	Venue	Type	Start Time	Dates
Chris Brown	O2 arena	Music	18:30	03 Jan 2009
Chris Brown	O2 arena	Music	18:30	11 Jan 2009
David Guest	IndigO2	Entertainment	18:30	12 Jan 2009
Best of Jongleurs	IndigO2	Entertainment	18:30	15 Jan 2009
Carmina Burana	O2 arena	Theatre	18:30	17 Jan 2009
Carmina Burana	O2 arena	Theatre	15:00	18 Jan 2009
We-R-One Funk Physics 1st Anniversary	IndigO2	Music	18:30	23 Jan 2009
New Kids on the Block	O2 arena	Music	18:30	24 Jan 2009
The SAS Band's All Star Bash	IndigO2	Music	18:30	24 Jan 2009
Pussy Cat Dolls	O2 arena	Music	18:30	27 Jan 2009
Pussy Cat Dolls	O2 arena	Music	18:30	28 Jan 2009
Alizay and K.I. presents UK's finest	IndigO2	Music	19:00	30 Jan 2009
Supercross	O2 arena	Sport	18:00	31 Jan 2009

EC & Olympia Events	Venue	Type	Dates
The France Show 2009	Earls Court 1	Consumer	09/01/2009 to 11/01/2009
BETT 2009	Olympia Grand. & Nat. Halls	Trade	14/01/2009 to 17/01/2009
Totally DIY/ Secure/Tools	Earls Court 2	Trade	18/01/2009 to 20/01/2009
Top Drawer Spring 2009	Earls Court 1 & 2, Ground Level	Trade	18/01/2009 to 20/01/2009
Bubble London	Olympia 2	Trade	18/01/2009 to 19/01/2009
The Event Show 09	Olympia Nat. Hall	Trade	21/01/2009 to 22/01/2009
Olympia Music Mania 2009	Olympia 2	Consumer	24/01/2009 to 24/01/2009
Asia Expo 09	Olympia Grand. Hall	Trade	26/01/2009 to 29/01/2009
ATEi 09	Earls Court 1 & 2, Ground Level	Trade	27/01/2009 to 29/01/2009
International Gaming Expo	Earls Court 1 & 2	Trade	27/01/2009 to 29/01/2009
Learning Technologies 09	Olympia 2	Trade	28/01/2009 to 29/01/2009

Home Football Matches (Add approx 1hr 45mins from KO for general exit)

Team	KO	Date	Opposition	Type	Team	KO	Date	Opposition	Type
Arsenal	TBA	Sat 03/01	Plymouth	FA Cup	Tottenham	16:00	Sun 18/01	Portsmouth	League
Charlton	15:00	Sat 03/01	Norwich (TBC)	FA Cup	West Ham	13:30	Sun 18/01	Fulham	League
Leyton O's	15:00	Sat 03/01	Southend	League	Tottenham	20:00	Tue 27/01	Stoke City	League
Millwall	15:00	Sat 03/01	Swindon Town	League	Chelsea	19:45	Wed 28/01	Middlesboro	League
Arsenal	15:00	Sat 10/01	Bolton Wanderers	League	West Ham	20:00	Wed 28/01	Hull City	League
Charlton	15:00	Sat 10/01	Nottingham Forest	League	Arsenal	15:00	Sat 31/01	West Ham	League
Fulham	15:00	Sat 10/01	Blackburn Rovers	League	Crystal Palace	15:00	Sat 31/01	Blackpool	League
QPR	15:00	Sat 10/01	Coventry City	League	Fulham	15:00	Sat 31/01	Portsmouth	League
Chelsea	15:00	Sat 17/01	Stoke City	League	Leyton Orient	15:00	Sat 31/01	Yeovil	League
Crystal Pal.	15:00	Sat 17/01	Ipswich Town	League	Millwall	15:00	Sat 31/01	Scunthorpe	League
Leyton O's	15:00	Sat 17/01	Bristol Rovers	League	QPR	15:00	Sat 31/01	Reading	League
Millwall	15:00	Sat 17/01	Tranmere	League					

Albert Hall - Cirque du Soleil - Quidam Below is the calendar for Jan 09 and start times of performances.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
04 (7:45)	05	06 (7:45)	07 (7:45)	08 (15:00 & 7:45)	09 (15:00 & 7:45)	10 (15:00 & 7:45)
11 (15:00 & 7:45)	12	13 (7:45)	14 (15:00 & 7:45)	15 (7:45)	16 (15:00 & 7:45)	17 (15:00 & 7:45)
18 (15:00 & 7:45)	19	20 (7:45)	21 (15:00 & 7:45)	22 (7:45)	23 (15:00 & 7:45)	24 (15:00 & 7:45)
25 (15:00 & 7:45)	26	27	28 (7:45)	29 (15:00 & 7:45)	30 (15:00 & 7:45)	31 (15:00 & 7:45)

Wembley Arena (note - at the time of compiling, 02/12/08, the tickets for Masters Snooker were almost sold out)

Event	Start Time	From	To
Masters Snooker	19:00	11/01/2009	18/01/2009
TNA Wrestling	19:30	24/01/2009	One night only

Eurostar: See the December 08 **Call Sign** for the timetable. If you can't find it, you'll see the info at www.nashsnumbers.co.uk. Also see the website for London City Airport arrivals under 'extras'. Can I wish you all the happiest and healthiest of New Years...

from the editor's desk

Boris's pledges

In January 2008, then-prospective London Mayor Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson, sat down and answered DaC driver's questions in an exclusive **Call Sign** Q/A session. He has now been Mayor for 8 months and I decided to have a look back at how his election promises were panning out.

Bernie Silver (G08) asked about the Congestion Charge and Mr Johnson said that he would keep it, but wasn't happy about the western zone as that allowed too many into the central zone. The western zone has now gone. **Stewart Lewis (D20)** asked whether he would allow minicabs into bus lanes? He said no and has since reiterated that statement. **Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)** asked about the congestion buses cause and now Boris has scrapped the bendy bus. **Alex Constantinou (N05)** asked whether he would scrap the 6-monthly safety check that Ken Livingstone had introduced? His response was decisive: *"I will scrap the midyear inspections. They add to the cost of the licence and are an unnecessary burden on cab drivers."* And he did. **David Marks (R22)** asked Boris whether he would ever allow PH to ply for hire on London's streets? The situation with WestOne cars at Leicester Square brings that one to mind. Mr Johnson's response was: *"I think private hire vehicles have their place, but black cabs must retain their right to solely ply for hire."* That should provide much comfort.

And some promises that he hasn't (yet) done? **Bill Kibble (K86)** asked why we only do roadworks during daytime hours in streets where there are no residents? Bill told the man soon-to-be-Mayor that these roadworks could be completed in one third of the time with night-time working. Boris told **Call Sign** in response: *"How many times have we all driven past a giant hole in the road left unattended? They do roadworks at night in other major cities and I will certainly look at it, yes."* Nothing has happened yet, but who'd put it past him!

Last but not least and still on the back burner, one from **Call Sign's** Poppy whose other half drives a DaC taxi and is forever moaning that there aren't enough public toilets. Boris Johnson answered in the February 2008 issue: *"The one thing that lets our city down is not only a lack of provision for public toilets, but also the grotty state of most of them. I believe that in order to get a clean, pristine city we need to work with local councils to upgrade them and provide more of them where they are needed. This is particularly important for people like cab drivers who spend long hours out on the road."*

Judging by what he has already done since being elected in May 2008, who'd dismiss those outstanding questions from soon becoming reality! I think there is a huge difference between someone who says he will do something and just does it, as against the previous incumbent of the position who on his many radio phone-in appearances, promised the world, but delivered very little...

How to (not) cheer yourself up...

I know all about the state of London's Victorian



water mains and the decision to complete the renewal of them before the 2012 Olympics, but it's beginning to get on my nerves because there are also so many sections of roadworks that are nothing to do with water mains or drainage or any combination of the two (thereof)!

How daymen cope, I shudder to think. But those of us out on the evening of Friday 28th November had our own shuddering, with terminal message after terminal message bemoaning another tailback where roadworks had been left until the next morning or where whole roads were shut, not to mention an exceptionally high number of road traffic accidents.

Sussex Gardens shut; Bishopsgate shut; M25 by the A13 shut causing an A13 hold-up back to Aldgate; Victoria Street shut; Westminster Bridge shut; Knightsbridge shut. Then there were 'minor' inconveniences such as closing two lanes of Marylebone Road eastbound so that the tailback went from the cones back to the Paddington exit of the A40 Marylebone flyover. And it wasn't moving. As the person 'blowing' that one in (No96) so succinctly put it: "When will it ever end!"

Fare increase

My thanks to all those who responded about my Editorial where I wondered aloud whether a fare increase next April would be in our interest, or would we be better off with the goodwill that could come from declining it? I've also enjoyed talking about it with other drivers when on multiple-cab trips. I have been amazed at how many agreed with my view but surprised to hear some tell me they wouldn't say it in print because they'd sound like a wimp! Why would anyone think that?

My reasoning was that the increase might bring an extra £7 or £8 a day, but if it costs us one lost job then that has been wiped out. However, I've had my say and it is no longer up to me...

DaC Credit Union

It still astounds me that every single driver and staff member on this circuit, together with members of their family, doesn't belong to DACCUC – the DaC Credit Union. Although not connected to DaC, the two work together and you can pay any regular savings along with your subscriptions. More importantly, when you have need for a sudden and very quick

lump sum, they are the absolute tops. A quick phone call and provided you have enough savings, a cheque can be issued within days – even quicker for a genuine emergency. Contrary to popular belief, you are not compelled to borrow and certainly there is no fine should you not need a loan.

Yet they have to beg for members. It just doesn't make sense and at a time when the work is going to be quiet and bills are on the up, you could regret not joining DACCUC. If nothing else, you are saving money, which, however small, will build up into a useful sum as well. Their ad is in every issue of **Call Sign** and if you are interested, give them a call on 020 8522 4503...

Jack Russell funeral

I make no apology for devoting two full pages in this issue to the late Jack Russell. Without people like him, there possibly might not be a DaC. At his funeral, there were around fifty people including Brian Rice, representing the Society, Bill Tyzack who was there for the Taxi Driver of the Tear Charity – Jack was a founder committee member – and David Lessman, Chairman of the LTFUC. The family had requested no flowers, but that any donations should go the Underprivileged Children's Fund. No doubt, one of Jack's wishes.

I was there not just as Editor, but because I thought he was a lovely man who deserved every bit of the respect that was being shown at the Ruislip crematorium service. However, it is probably true to say that in his 95th year, Jack had outlived most of his friends.

I salute Jack Russell, not just as a former Chairman, but as a true gentleman...

And finally...

Call Sign tries to entertain and inform you each and every month. However, there are a lot of people who put in hours and hours of delving or writing or just being entertaining and without whom this would probably be just an 8-page information sheet. So to all my writers – none of whom ever let me down – my sincere thanks for all your hard work. Thanks also to the BoM, who I constantly nag to give me their articles, even when they are busy with something important!

I'd also like to thank everyone that writes to the **Mailsbot** section of the mag, regardless of whether you have something nice to say or not. The fact that you take the time to write in is appreciated. **Call Sign** has more reader's letter than the rest of the taxi trade papers all put together and for that, I thank you all. And to those who tag on at the end that they enjoy reading the magazine, yes, after almost 11 years in the hot seat, that still gives me a buzz.

If my plans have gone correctly and Bob Woodford's gorgeous organic red hasn't got me totally sloshed, then you should be receiving this issue of **Call Sign** sometime between Boxing Day and New Year's Eve, so I'd like to wish you all a happy and healthy New Year...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections Of The Chairman

Is it still Christmas!

Due to **Call Sign's** printers closing for a couple of weeks over the Christmas period, the Editor has been badgering me for an article for the magazine.

As I write, Christmas Day is still over two weeks away and knowing the Editor as I do, you will probably be reading this piece before Christmas, he couldn't possibly have the magazine go out late – such as the second week in January so that I would be aware of exactly how we did in the run-up to Christmas!

So as I say, we still have two weeks to go but if they were anything like the previous month, then it would not have been too busy. This is probably one of the quietest build-ups to Christmas I have seen and it does make me a little worried about January and February. The first two weeks of January are always very quiet, but things then tend to pick-up slightly and possibly become even quite busy if the weather is bad through snow and ice etc.

Because the run-up to Christmas has been so quiet, I'm attempting to convince myself that the work we are completing at the moment will be the norm after Christmas, as everyone has already cut down their usage and the trips we are doing are actually the day-to-day work that businesses need to get done in order to run their businesses effectively.

Although it may not be of much consolation, I can remember downturns in the past – four spring to mind immediately. They were the three-day week in 1974 when following industrial action by the coal miners, the Tory Government decided to conserve electricity by forcing commercial users of electricity to be limited to just three days consumption each week. This lasted from 1 January until 7 March 1974 and believe it or not, even TV had to close down at 10.30! It certainly did the taxi trade no favours.

Then on March 12 1984, Arthur Scargill called a national miner's strike following the closure of many pits. This was to continue for a large part of that year during which time things got very bad in the UK – even though it spawned Elton John's hit musical Billy Elliot!

Then of course there were the early nineties when things were really dire and the UK entered into full-blown recession.

More recently there was the slowdown of 2002/3 following the aftermath of 9/11 and the Iraqi war – not to mention the foot and mouth epidemic at around the same time.

Although in my mind the early nineties were by far the worst downturn or recession we have experienced – well certainly in my memory – they all have one thing in common and that is that we have all come through those downturns and then experienced several years of substantial growth afterwards.

Although not an economist, I am extremely confident this downturn will not be any different to those in the past. The problem we currently have is that the public are frightened to spend their money for fear they might lose their employment in the downturn. If we could only make the public start spending, then the downturn would be far shorter. The problem is, of course, how do



we instill that confidence into people?

The taxi industry is different as drivers depend on their livelihoods by the number of people travelling in their taxis, or indeed companies employing those same vehicles to transport their staff. So you rely on how well the economy or the individual is doing.

However, as a member of the public, assuming of course you can retain your job, then this downturn is terrific! Your mortgage has never been so cheap, there are sales on everywhere and it is becoming cheaper by the week to fill your car up with petrol. And as a bonus, inflation is falling!

As a result there will be millions of people who will benefit by this downturn, whilst others will lose their jobs and perhaps their assets. There is, of course, one thing fundamentally different from other downturns and that is the Bank Rate at just 2% (as I write and expected to drop even lower). Even at my age, I cannot remember the rate being so low, so I am hopeful that things will return to normal in the not too distant future.

Although the above is good for a substantial swathe of the public, there are many who depend on the interest from their life savings

to subsidise their pensions; when the Bank Rate falls, then so does the interest they receive on their savings. There's probably a moral in there somewhere about what's good for one may not be good for another.

Jack Russell

I recently attended the funeral of Jack Russell, who sadly passed away in November at the age of 94. He became Chairman of ODRTS in 1964, which was some ten years before I joined the Society.

What surprised me at his funeral was that Jack was the holder of the Military Medal and a Citation due to his exploits during the last war. I believe there is further information on how he got that, elsewhere in this issue.

Even at an advanced age, Jack was always happy to attend any function organised by Dial-a-Cab, so consequently I got to know him quite well during the latter part of his life. What I also found surprising was that there were over 50 people present for his funeral and when you consider he only had one daughter, his partner of 30 years Barbara, having passed away last year and that he was 94, then the turnout was very large.

A mark of the man was that he insisted on attending the launch of Dial-a-Cab House last year even though he was confined to a wheelchair. Being Jack, he also insisted on visiting every floor!

I would like to pass my sincere condolences to his family and friends on the passing of someone who was a truly remarkable man.

New Year

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all members and staff, together with their families, a Healthy New Year and let's all hope that 2009 will be better than the second half of 2008.

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

7 King Street Cloisters
Clifton Walk King Street
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

DIAL-A-CAB AND DIVERSITY AWARENESS

Dial-a-Cab Trainer, Christina Conn, has been busy recently training all members of staff, including Board Members, in the art of *Diversity Awareness* - a scheme that aims to promote equality and diversity while providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all within the workplace.

Christina told *Call Sign*: "Everyone in Dial-a-Cab House is participating in these training sessions, designed to help people become aware of how they can better interact with each other and towards clients as well. During the three, two-hour segments, we discuss the many ways of improving communication between each other through mutual respect and understanding, treating each individual as an equal and understanding the contribution each one makes to the company."

She continued: "We discuss the seven laws of discrimination, including sex, race, age, religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability. We talk about each law in detail, giving examples through role-play and on screen displays via pc monitors. We also encourage group members to relate their own experiences and how they dealt with a particular incident. We use newspapers, magazines and draw on items in the media to spread the message. Finally, there's a light-hearted quiz to ensure everybody has understood what they have learned!"

Everyone participating in the Diversity Awareness scheme receives a certificate to acknowledge their success in it. Nuala and Val, from Drivers Services, are proudly shown displaying their certificates on this issue's front cover.

Call Sign asked Christina for specific examples of topics covered and was given a comprehensive list of what you can do or not do, such as the effects of bullying, harassment, personal insults and degrading or humiliating comments or behaviour. The list is almost endless and it is possible to see that offence could easily be caused through a moment's lack of thought.

Christina added that the strength of personal relationships has a bearing on things and also the fact that people having a conversation in private, out of public earshot and perhaps enjoying a joke or relating an incident, could be acceptable.

She said: "The courses are tailored to the specific needs of staff members. For example, there's *Managing Diversity* for line managers, where bullying, harassment or other issues can be



Christina Conn

handled in an appropriate manner. The other segment is for members of staff who have problems, where we discuss ways of confronting these issues on a one-to-one basis, or how to approach their line manager who can deal with the matter as required."

Ending, Christina added: "Even when there is a reluctance to report issues, everyone is made aware of the procedures to follow, to resolve issues amicably and diplomatically. It is not a legal requirement to train staff in Diversity Awareness, but it protects the company and has been found to be beneficial for members of staff."

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Wide Red Line: Buckingham Palace Road Set Down...

The PCO have advised *Call Sign* about a wide red line that has been introduced in the bus stop cage in Buckingham Palace Road immediately to the south of the junction with Terminus Place at Victoria (Grosvenor Hotel side).

Taxi drivers are reminded that the restrictions are similar to those that are in place on the wide red line at the bus stop in nearby Wilton Road. Taxis and private hire vehicles - including those showing the *pre-booked only* signs - are not allowed to stop or pick up or set down passengers where the wide red line is marked. Setting down or picking up may take place further down Buckingham Palace Road to the south of the wide red line.

Other sites where wide red line restrictions are in force or likely to be introduced are on Euston Road eastbound in front of Kings Cross Station and Bishopsgate northbound outside Liverpool Street Station. Facilities at Kings Cross are described in PCO Notice 09/08 issued in April 2008.

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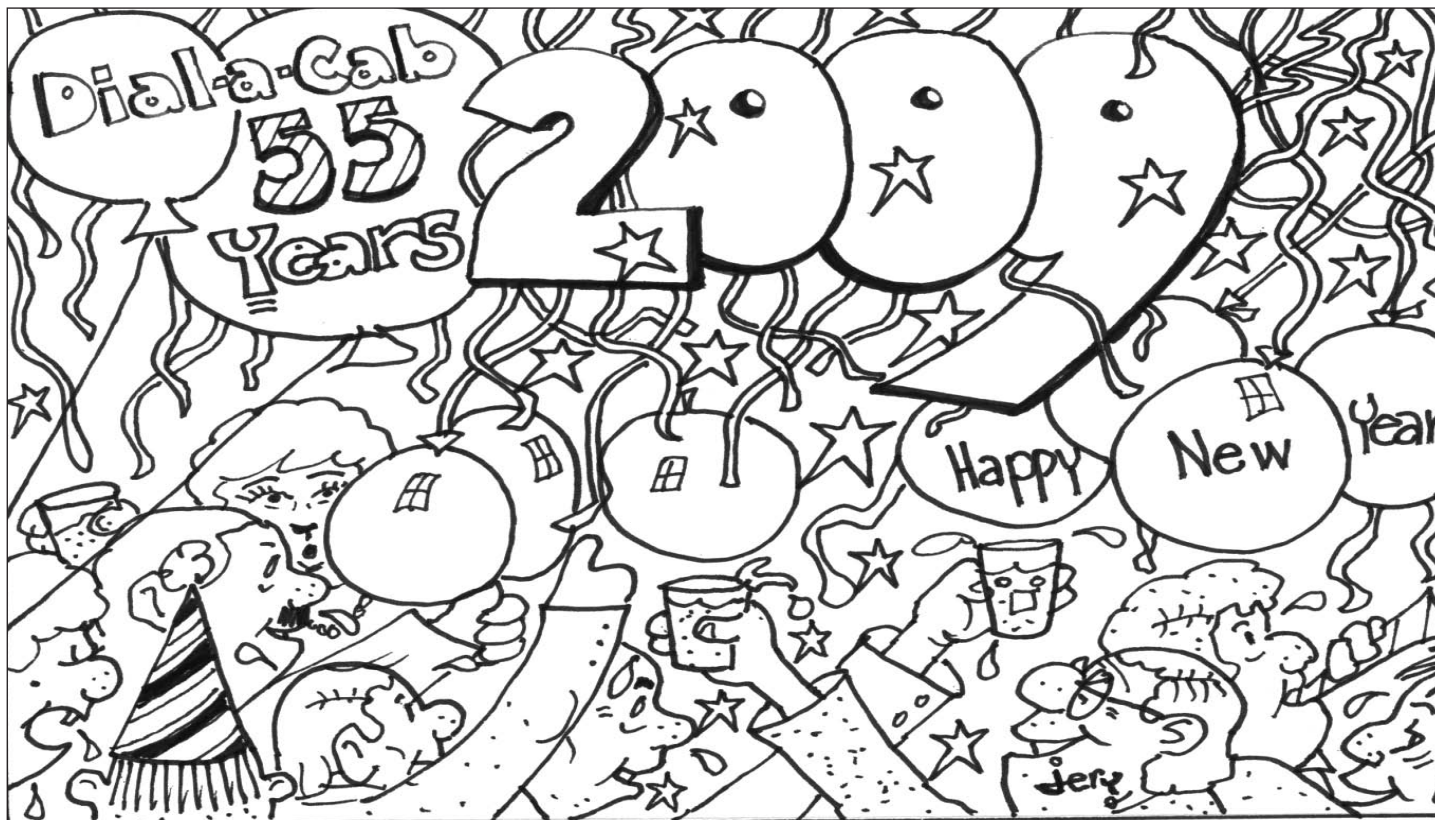
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Jery's World



To all Call Sign readers; we wish you a happy, healthy and successful as possible New Year...



Yellow Badges - PCO Respond

Following several recent articles in **Call Sign** regarding licensed taxi drivers who only hold a yellow badge for working in a suburban area but who attempt to work inside the central green badge area, the PCO have now issued a statement. Signed by Mary Dowdye, Head of Standards & Regulations, it reads:

"The Public Carriage Office is receiving an increasing number of reports of Suburban (yellow badge) taxi drivers plying for hire in central London. Suburban drivers are reminded that under the London Cab Order 1934, paragraphs 27 and 31, their licence limits the area in which they may ply for hire."

Any driver who is convicted, cautioned or warned by the police for plying for hire off their area, will have their fitness to remain licensed considered by the Licensing Authority. Offences identified by PCO staff during compliance activity will be considered in a similar manner.

Clearly if individuals wish to ply for hire in central London, then there is nothing to prevent them from taking the All London Knowledge and becoming licensed for that area as many suburban drivers have done in the past and continue to do now."

The problem was first highlighted in the October and November issues when one DaC driver's wife claimed she knew the identities of several yellow badge drivers that regularly worked in town. She threatened to act as a whistleblower and after speaking to a TfL department, had a response from the Senior Driver and Operator Policy Manager at the PCO, Simon Bugey.

Then last month, a DaC driver who had previously held just a yellow badge revealed that he knew the identities of several former friends from his old south London rank who were working up to 6-days a week in central London.

The PCO said in a previous **Call Sign** that any yellow badge driver caught working outside his zone faces a one-month ban, which would become longer on a subsequent offence. Their licence would also be at stake because as Mary Dowdye also adds, they would have their fitness to remain licensed considered by the Licensing Authority. The PCO also say they are looking at ways to identify the two different licenses. This issue's *Mailshot* page has some suggestions...

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members.*

Barrie Segal is the founder of **AppealNow.com** and first heard of Dial-a-Cab from his late mother who was a regular and very satisfied user of the Westminster TaxiCard. Barrie has also given advice to some DaC drivers in the past. Now we have heard from Barrie of a landmark case at the London Parking Adjudicator offices where Barrie Segal did what looked to be impossible and got the Controlled Parking Zone for the central zone of London's West End declared illegal...!

Barrie was representing transport company, *Keystone Distribution UK Ltd* in a case against *Westminster Council*. He claimed that the Council's massive F3 Controlled Parking Zone in the heart of the West End was illegal and that no parking tickets could be issued to motorists on single yellow lines in that zone. Barrie's argument was that Zone F3 did not have the correct signs at each vehicle entry point and therefore the zone was illegal. After a site inspection, the Parking Adjudicator agreed with Barrie.

The effect of the *Keystone Distribution UK Ltd v City of Westminster* (case 2080274557) is that every single yellow line must now have a time plate showing the parking restrictions along its length (the Department for Transport recommends every 30 metres). As hardly any single yellow lines in the area have these individual signs, no parking ticket can be issued to vehicles parked or waiting there until such time as they have been put up.

The F3 Zone is bordered by the whole of Oxford Street to the south, Edgware Road to the west, George Street /New Cavendish Street to the north and from Centre Point northwards to the east. The Adjudicator said in his decision:

"Despite three adjournments, I have not been assisted by any information from the local

Barrie Segal Adjudication victory means:

Millions of Westminster PCN's are unenforceable!



Barrie Segal- The parker's champion!

authority concerning the Controlled Parking Zone described as F3. Controlled Zone F3 has no signs in the form 663 or 663.1 at any of the entrances. The definition of it being a controlled Parking Zone under Regulation 3 and Direction 25(2) in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 is not therefore made out. In consequence, if the local authority wish to enforce parking restrictions on any of its streets in that neighbourhood and in particular, Regent Street (where this parking ticket was issued) it will

not be able to rely upon the signing concession in Direction 25(2) and will need to ensure that the requirements of Direction 25(1) are complied with. The signing is therefore unlawful here and the appeal is allowed."

In a statement, Barrie Segal said:












"This is a victory for motorists in their fight against over-zealous councils. This decision will affect motorists throughout the United Kingdom as I believe that hundreds, if not thousands of Controlled Parking Zones are not properly marked as required by law. It is clear to me that millions of parking tickets have been issued illegally in London and the rest of the UK. For years, councils have unfairly penalised motorists for trivial contraventions such as parking slightly over a parking bay and have claimed that it was the law. Well this is the law and the council failed to comply and must suffer with the consequences."

Barrie's advice to anyone who has received a PCN for parking on single yellow line in the F3 zone in Westminster, is to contest their parking ticket quoting the this case number: **Keystone case – PATAS number 2080274557**.

Barrie Segal is the founder of www.appealnow.com - the only website in the world where you can appeal your parking ticket on line in 4½ minutes...

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The last issue of Call Sign published CVs of those standing for election to the Dial-a-Cab Board of Management at the AGM on Sunday 8 February. The item also said that anyone wanting to ask a question of any candidate could do so. Just one driver, Steve Thomas (N10) took up the option. These are his questions together with the answers provided to us...

Steve Thomas to Joe Brazil (K16):

Q: How do you think our customers will react if we increase our minimum charge to £15 in these "extraordinary" times?



A: Thank for your question Mr Thomas, regarding an increase of minimum fare from £8.00 to £15.00. You're right, the increase I am asking for will be greater than the last increase of 60%, but it is important in my view that in times which I have termed as extraordinary, to protect each and every subscriber to the maximum degree. I know, as well as you, that the waiting time between jobs will increase and you can be sure your costs will increase also. To expect a driver to wait for an unusually long time for increasingly reduced earnings will alienate drivers towards account trips, which in turn will reduce coverage and so reduce our effectiveness in completion of account work. I realise that increasing charges is a double-edged sword, but if we align ourselves as the cheapest carrier, guess what - that will be the only work that we see. If elected to the Board, I know more than anyone that you become part of a committee and this will be debated and voted on. My position is to protect the driver's interests to the maximum extent. The balance struck will reflect your needs and those of our Society. I look forward to that debate.

Steve Thomas to Allen Togwell (Q08):

Q: You quite rightly state that we are not immune from the economic chaos currently being experienced, and that we need an experienced BOM. Don't we also



need the odd new face to gain experience for the future, before all growing too old together?

A: Steve, by coincidence my article in

ELECTION QUESTIONS

this edition about this Society's future more or less answers your question. You have been a member of DaC since 2004, so you may not be aware that in past years the only active Board members out of a board of eight were the Chairman, Treasurer and PRO. The remainder changed so frequently, they came and went making very little difference to the running of the Society. We have come a long way over the past 15 years from the days when the only prerequisite to join the Board was to be an ex-dispatcher. Technology alone is advancing at such a rate as to continually stretch the minds of those who have worked with it since its inception. What chance then of those with no experience at all? Would you trust your life's savings with a financial advisor who is learning his trade and more to the point, during an economic crisis such as now? I doubt it. Your reference to age obviously wasn't aimed at my younger colleagues on the Board, so I assume it was aimed at me. If you follow pro-football, Steve, would you advocate Sir Alex Ferguson or Arsene Wenger being replaced because of age, or perhaps those in our trade losing their bill when they reach 65? Very few of those that make up the boards of top companies in the private sector are young and none, I would imagine, are inexperienced.

Having the odd new face? Yes absolutely, but on a Board with the demands we now face at DaC, and assuming the manner in which we operate doesn't change, then for the Society to be a continued success it needs any new face to possess at least a modicum of skills that would benefit the Society from day one. It would also eradicate the feeling of inadequacy and being out of their depth, bearing in mind all take home pay per hour before tax is equal, irrespective of length of service or experience.

I can speak only for myself and my role, which for many years has been Sales and Marketing. Recently during an interview with a prospective Dial-a-Cab member, I discovered he was a graphic designer prior to doing the Knowledge. So I showed him some of the work I had recently finished on a brochure and this year's Annual Report and from the way he spoke, it was obvious he possessed similar skills. Now had this chap been standing for the Board, he could rightly claim to have skills that could save this Society thousands of pounds by producing artwork and design as I do in-house. There must be dozens amongst our 2500 members who have similar skills, ability and background to stand for the Board. Conversely, those coming onto the Board

that have no skills at all, are really going to find it extremely difficult learning anything of any significance in the time allocated in the office, which could be - particularly during a recession - just a couple of days a month.

Steve Thomas to Mike Son (V52):

Q: You've had a difficult year, and understandably doubts as to whether you wanted to serve for a further term. Do you think you've got the appetite and energy for a further 2 years?



A: Yes, it has been a very difficult year and yes, after my brother died I did have some doubts about what was important in life and whether I had the desire to continue as a Board Member. But it didn't take me long to realise that I enjoy representing DaC, to further its cause with clients and the desire to be part of such a successful Board. With the current traumatic conditions out there, I sincerely believe that whilst there will be a time for new faces, that shouldn't be at a time when experience is needed.

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As many subscribers who read **Call Sign** may know, former Chairman Jack Russell - who sadly passed away last month - was Chairman of ODRIS from 1964 when he took over from Eli (Trixie) Solomons, before handing the Society over to Jack Taylor in 1969.

It has long been known by those close to Jack that as Sgt Russell, he was awarded the Military Medal and also given a *Citation for undertaking a mission in 1943 against the enemy, in which he returned with his entire unit alive. Jack finally spoke about it many years later...

This is what he told *Call Sign* and his legacy to Dial-a-Cab: The story of a hero...

"It was March 1943 and one of the patrols I went on together with another Sergeant and a Fusilier involved us going out at dusk together. We concealed ourselves on the slope of a hill overlooking another hill, which at just 300 yards in front of us was occupied by the Germans. Another patrol from our group was sent out 100 yards to our left and opened fire with automatic weapons at the German positions just to get them to fire back. The job of my patrol was to try to pinpoint exactly where the German firing positions were located.

The job did not finish there; we had to stay put for the rest of the night and all of the next day until dusk to plot any governing features on the ground and to make enemy firing positions easily identifiable for our attacking troops. We were fortunate in finding some fairly tall bushes and thick undergrowth in which to conceal ourselves. It was a very trying 24 hours."

Jack went on to describe another dangerous mission he went on...

"On another occasion, an officer and myself had to really put ourselves on offer to find out if any of the farms that were in an area defined as *no-man's land*, were occupied by the enemy? To understand the situation, I should tell you that these farms were all on a vast plain, each farm covering many acres with the farmhouse itself and surrounding buildings all on a raised plateau surrounded by a very large and deep moat. They were constructed like that because of the torrential rains that North Africa is plagued with. When it rained, these moats would fill to a depth of 5, 6 or even 7 feet in just minutes. The object of this patrol was to find out if any of the farms were occupied. There was no cover at all for us when approaching the farms, we just had to trust to luck that if anyone was there and they took a shot at us, that they would miss! And that happened!

We reached the moat and were walking round it, looking up at the farm buildings to see if we could see anything, when we came under fire. The Officer leapt over the moat, but I reacted differently. I dropped into a prone position hoping I would see something or somebody. As I lay there, a bullet went into the ground by my left shoulder, followed a second later by another one hitting the ground by my right shoulder. I thought the next one would be in the middle, so I decided to get out of there as quickly as I could! However, as I got up and leapt into the moat, I looked up at the point from where I thought the firing had come from and saw a tin hat. As I joined the Officer, I told him I had seen a tin hat and that I was sure it was a British one. The young Officer was just out from Blighty and sent out with me to gain experience. He asked me what was the best thing to do and I said to shout out that we were British and see what

Jack Russell - The Story of a Hero



Jack (front centre wearing the Irish regiments kilt) received a citation for leading his regiment into the heart of the enemy with every one of them returning alive. Inset pic Sgt Russell



happened. If they weren't British, we'd have to think of something else. Well, he did this and after a period of silence, back came a British voice telling us to come out with our hands up. You can imagine how relieved we were. It turned out they were another patrol from another regiment doing the same as us!

When writing about these two patrols, they seem to be nothing, but they were very dangerous as most of the area we had to move into was devoid of any cover at all. We were part of a special patrol group that was set up at Battalion Headquarters for a period of 7 days. During that period, there was a patrol of some sort or another out in *no-man's land* 24 hours a day, for the whole 7 days. The patrols consisted of any number of soldiers from 2 to 30, depending on what information was required at the time.

The last patrol I was on was also the last scheduled one for this 7-day group. We had obtained most of the information about the

enemy that we required. Our Battalion Commander had received his orders for attack and this last patrol was a fighting reconce patrol to reconce the actual route of the attack on our section and fight for that information if we had to. Up to that time, we had been very lucky; we'd had very few casualties, none serious. However, our luck ran out on this last one when we walked straight into a minefield. Of the 30 men on the patrol, four were killed with many injured - of which I was one. I became deaf in one ear from a burst eardrum gained on that day and still have shrapnel in the walls of my lungs, which causes some discomfort at times if I exert myself too much. However, I thank my lucky stars that I survived that hellhole!

Let me say that for every one of us who received any award, there were hundreds who are no longer here, deserving of far higher awards. I am witness to their great bravery..."

**Jack's Citation was dated 1 March 1943 as a Sergeant in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers...*

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Liverymen, Freeman and guests of *The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* recently enjoyed the 5th Annual Liverymen's Dinner at The Vintners Hall. As The Vintners' Company is ranked eleventh of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of the City of London, those in attendance enjoyed the beautiful surroundings and were able to see some of the treasures the Hall displays around their entrance, together with the Dining Hall itself.

Shortly before dinner, Andrew Barnett and Gary Pyner were clothed in livery. Both Andrew and Gary have connections with the hackney carriage trade going back a number of years and the WCHCD were delighted to welcome them as Liverymen. New Freeman Garry Holman and Stephen Francis also joined the Company. A long line of newly qualified Cab Guides received their certificates for having passed the latest course run by the WCHCD. A champagne reception heralded the beginning of the evening and began an evening of fine wine and dining.

This year's Master, Andrew Overton, together with his Wardens, welcomed everyone to the dinner. Andrew told diners: *"Since our last dinner and my installation in September, it seems the world has been turned upside down. However, as we battle through this maelstrom to survive - and survive we will as we have done in the past - I can only hope it does not all go on for too long. The cab trade has always been a barometer of the economy signalling a downturn before it happens and, I trust, signalling an upturn when it comes. So let us hope the pound stays weak and the tourists will come to replace the bankers - because we need them!"*

The Company is always delighted to meet guests at these dinners. These guests sometimes then decide to join the WCHCD and become Freeman and Liverymen themselves. The role of Livery Companies today is a modern progressive role and the camaraderie of joining like-

WCHCD

Liverymen's Dinner



The newly qualified cab guides including several from DaC

minded people in an organisation that strives to portray the best taxi service in the world to others in the City and beyond, is of great benefit. The charitable work carried out by the WCHCD includes The Magical Taxi Tour.

If you would to know more about the Company, please contact The Clerk Mary Whitworth on 01494765922.

Sandie Goodwin

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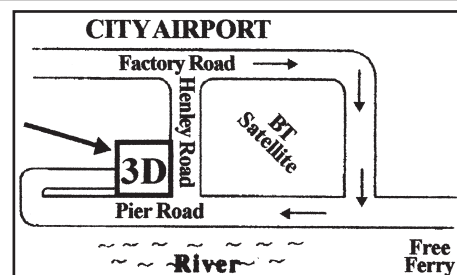
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HAILED THE WORLD OVER

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DaC driver and champion PCN escapee, **Martin Hizer (M47)** recently told *Call Sign* readers of his successful October visit to the *Parking and Traffic Appeals Service* (PATAS) at New Zealand House in Haymarket, when his PCN was thrown out after around 90 seconds! Just a few weeks later he was again summoned for a parking appeal, this time for a ticket given to him in Rathbone Place whilst picking up a sandwich from those fine purveyors of quality food, *Prêt à Manger*. Martin takes up the story...

"A fair cop you might say, but to me, a flagrant suppression of my human rights. I had been slogging away in my taxi all day with only a bowl of crunchy nut cornflakes, a banana, two plums, a pear, four satsumas and a Diet Coke (TM) to sustain me and was near to collapse and in need of sustenance. There was no way I was going to be oppressed and so, following the normal process of plumbing my imagination for a suitable *cock and bull* story - this one involving the return of a document folder from a cash hiring - an appointment was set for 3:30pm on 5 November. I arrived at New Zealand house and was greeted again by the two pretty receptionists. This time I selected the brunette, as I like to spread the love!

Upon entering the PATAS office, *Smiley*, the stern looking, cold sounding receptionist from last time greeted me with a smile! Maybe she'd just killed someone! I checked to see if there was any blood around her mouth or if there was a tell tale pair of feet sticking out from a corpse behind her desk. Nothing...phew!

"I gave her my name and she scanned down the list... no Hizers! Surely they hadn't cancelled another one? But yes, the cancellation had been sent out that day, so of course there would be no way of stopping me from wasting my time and coupled to this, you have to wonder at the cost to the taxpayers of Westminster due to these idiots and wasters. The cancellation letter arrived next day, but nonetheless another victory, which only goes to prove yet again that *Audere est facere*, Latin for 'To dare is to do' - Come on you Spurs!"

Not quite as lucky was *Call Sign* Editor **Alan Fisher** who decided to go to a PATAS appeal in late November to test out the Burghers of Barnet after making one of the most common parking mistakes of all. His story begins some time earlier in Golders Green...

***The Master and Wardens of
The Worshipful Company of
Hackney Carriage Drivers
would like to wish all their
colleagues in the Hackney
Taxi trade a Merry Christmas
and a Healthy New Year...***

DIAL-A-CAB 1...PATAS 1

Martin Wins – the Editor Loses!



Martin wins his case

"Linda and I had arranged to meet some friends for lunch on a Bank Holiday Monday in Golders Green. The rain was falling down as we stopped in The Riding. I pulled onto a single yellow line as it was a Bank Holiday and looked at the pay and display machine to be sure that there was no charge for Public Holidays. I – and apparently many others – have always assumed that single yellow line parking was ok if there was no meter charge on a Public Holiday. So I did and off we went for a very pleasant lunch – until we came back to find a not-so-pleasant £50 PCN attached to the vehicle (we came in the car).

"At New Zealand House I explained the situation to the barrister. However as it didn't say that parking was allowed on Public Holidays on the little yellow sign, although he agreed that Barnet should have made the situation clear, he could not interpret the rules to suit the situation and found in favour of Barnet Council. I



Alan loses his...

was stunned, having really believed I would win. I had confirmed with Barnet that no tickets were to be issued on Christmas Day and pointed out to the barrister that the notice didn't say *except Christmas Day*, but that still wasn't good enough, explaining that they chose not to send Parking Attendants out that day but could have if they so wished.

"Even though I lost, I'd advise anyone who believes they have a case to go to New Zealand House. The barristers are very friendly and if you have a good case such as Martin did, you will have a great chance of overturning a PCN. However, don't expect them to overturn a ticket just out of sympathy..."

So the answer from both Martin and Alan seems to be that the PATAS Appeal service is well worth going for if you have a good case...

Ron Yarbrough
Call Sign online

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And DaC's answer to Victor Meldrew!

As we get to the festive season, it does not seem that it is going to bring to much happiness and cheer for a hell of a lot of people. When you read the papers, all you seem to see is doom and gloom - not just in England, but all over the world. And then to make matters worse, Terry Wogan is not going to officiate at any more Eurovision song contests with the BBC adding more gloom by giving the show to Graham Norton - the man in my estimation who is most likely to make any intelligent viewer reach for their on/off button and go out for a walk!

If it wasn't bad enough that taxi work has dropped by over 20%, there are still more redundancies in the pipeline from large companies and institutions. If you have been in the taxi trade for 20 years or more, you will have experienced past recessions and majors strikes, which have caused us to really tighten our belts and weather those storms. Problems such as the miner's strike, orchestrated by Arthur Scargill with his Shredded Wheat haircut and the black days of the stock market crash.

It's during times like that that, you know if you have acted correctly and prudently so that you have the resources to carry you through until the economic climate levels out. Perhaps you saw the past few years, when work was plentiful, as a barometer of the future and went out to buy a very expensive house and new taxi, as well as going off on overseas holidays. These drivers are now finding that they cannot earn the money quick enough to keep up the bank or building society repayments.

I remember during the last big recession seeing a driver late at night in his taxi at St James Square. I had seen him stationary for over an hour whilst I was working around the area, so when empty I stopped to see if he had broken down and if I could be of assistance to him. As I asked if there was a problem, he began to cry uncontrollably. Now I know I'm not the best looking man in the world, but to take one look at me and burst into tears is a bit over the top!

He kept repeating the words: "I can't do it." Had someone propositioned him? After some 15 minutes, I discovered that he had accumulated so many bills, that the bailiffs were about to move into his property and he was just sitting there in the first throes of a nervous breakdown.

It is not just the single person or family that have these problems, it goes right up to the Government who have been spending money on inappropriate items to gain votes, only to find that this bad management is coming back to bite them on the bum. If you do not believe me, then look at just one of the points I have been informing you about for months; in the papers it says we have 1500 fewer police officers in England and Wales this year. The Government, in trying to gain votes, have given you a sharp rise in the total misfits acting as plastic policemen and women (PCSOs) at up to £25,000 a year, doing nothing to assist in combating crime.

This being the case, if you do not plan correctly you will not weather the financial crisis. Now look at the three major radio taxi companies in London and see who is in the most stable position. I do not mean being told by someone who can make a good speech, who twists the truth to make it sound like the future is rosy for their company. We at Dial-a-Cab are in a very strong position to survive. We have no

Another batch of views from Tom. These do not necessarily reflect the views of DaC...

The World According to Tom Whitbread



large debts; we have money in the bank and a large new building that we own. Is it because you have a lot of the same people that took you through to last recession and are now using that experience? I think you will find this is fact.

When you look at MFI, the makers of their 3-legged tables (you may have ordered 4-legs but this is what you got) and their cut prices, it is they who have gone to the wall. This is similar to many more companies who are having to shut up shop.

It is here that drivers need to make sure that our service is the best and clients have nothing to complain about, because if you give them a chance to change supplier, then they will. Cover every job as though it could be the last, the money for the journey you have completed is yours. The money for that airport or roader you are holding back for, may not materialise and paper promises do not pay food bills. Grab the money while you can.

Before you all start screaming that you cover all of the work these days, that isn't true for everyone. I had occasion to book a taxi to go from Dalston to the Dial-a-Cab office in East Road for a 17:00 appointment. The journey went into the system at 16:25 on Wednesday 26 November, some 10 minutes later I got a phone call to say they could not cover the job and did they want me to keep trying? Who was to blame for this lack in our excellent service? The despatcher who could see that this was for a Board Member trying to get to the office and could put pressure on the drivers to cover the job? Or was it the fault of the drivers who could not be bothered to cover the journey? The job was rejected 5 times during which time there were 64 taxis in EC2 and more in the surrounding areas.

At this time Mr Andy Donnelly (L64) was way up the M11 coming into town. From the pickup and destination, he worked out who needed the taxi and seeing that it was not being covered, he phoned in and said he could be at the pickup in 30 minutes but was informed to leave it as there would be someone nearer.

I then received another phone call

from the call centre informing me that the job was still not covered and did I want to carry on waiting? It was not until 16:56 that Andy got to the backup area for E8 and noticed that the job was still in the BID system. He bid and accepted the journey, offering another 12 minutes. He arrived, picked me up apologising profusely for the bad service and got me to the office by 17:25. Can I take this opportunity to thank Andy once more for his help on that evening.

I relate this story because I know the facts are true and if I had not been a DaC Board Member going to DaC's office, I'd have cancelled the taxi and rebooked with one of our competitors. I hope after reading the above problem that if you see a job not being covered, then you would offer a time to help keep our reputation and standard of service during these hard times up to the excellence that our clients have come to expect from our drivers.

Over celebrating!!!

At these festive times, you are getting some great deals from the main supermarkets and Iceland, the frozen food shop, but you must watch that expanding stomach. With those good deals come the backlash! I also know this as a fact as my family say that I am heading to becoming a fat b*****! I think if my wife had her way, my Christmas dinner would be some poached fish and a yoghurt.

Whilst you are off over the Christmas holiday, may I suggest that you look at the web site www.celeb2nds.com where you will find some wonderful celebrity auction items. These could make wonderful presents and they are all authenticated.

The money raised from these items helps us at **Dial-a-Dream** make children who sadly may not see another Christmas, have the dream of a lifetime. Thank You.

At this time, I hope you all enjoyed a very Happy Christmas and that you have a Prosperous New Year to look forward to. If a member of your family or yourself have an illness, then I hope that the coming New Year sees you all back to complete fitness very soon...

Tom Whitbread
DaC Board Member



Keith Reading
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David Kupler (Y74), David Ballard (N28) and Alex Constantinou (N05) are Call Sign's restaurant reviewers. These DaC drivers and their guests will visit restaurants periodically and give their honest opinions. This month Alex visited St James in Crouch End...

EATING OUT WITH CALL SIGN

Located at **4 Topside Parade, Middle Lane**, the **St James** restaurant is in the heart of the busy and vibrant Crouch End Broadway area. As you enter the restaurant, you pass through the very pleasant and well-designed cocktail bar on your way to a tastefully decorated eating area. As my fellow critic for the night, **Dean Rafferty (O19)** and I entered the restaurant, we could tell we were in for an upmarket dining experience.

Simon Trussell, who enjoyed classical training at the *Ritz Club* and *La Tante Claire*, heads the kitchen. He had spent the past 10 years at the St James restaurant in Bushey and if I were the Crouch End "branch," I'd make sure he stays!

There are several menus available; an à la carte, a weekly changing market menu where the chef sources weekly produce to offer dishes at a very reasonable £4 for starters and main courses for £8, and a lighter menu for the bar area where you can enjoy *soup in a mug with toasted rustic bread; a charcuterie board; posh cheese on toast or a steak sandwich*.

There is also a peaceful garden courtyard for some very pleasant *alfresco* dining. This area seats 16, but could possibly require warmer weather!

However for the good of **Call Sign**, both Dean and myself opted for the à la carte menu!

I began with *grilled pencil asparagus, bubble and squeak cake with poached egg and béarnaise sauce*. It was just simply exquisite and cooked to perfection! Dean chose a *tian of crab with avocado and mango salsa with a citrus and bacon dressing*. Even looking for something to complain about, Dean gave up and said that it was totally scrummy. Throughout the meal we were served hot bread and a complimentary appetizer of *tiger prawns with sweet chilli sauce*.

With the starter out of the way, we couldn't wait to see whether the standard for the main course would - or even could - be maintained? But we certainly were not disappointed.

I had the *roast loin of venison wrapped in pancetta with potato gnocchi and sautéed chanterelles*. Although venison is accepted as being a lower fat variety of meat, that in no way affected the wonderful flavour of this Simon Trussell masterpiece. This was food at its very best with every molecule literally melting in my mouth and leaving my tastebuds wondering how they could ever get used to a ham sandwich in the cab ever again!

Dean chose the *Beef Wellington*, which arrived with *potato rösti, roast carrots and parsnips with a thyme jus*. This dish is a classic where the beef tenderloin is usually coated with pâté and then wrapped in

puff pastry and baked. According to Dean, all he knew was that it tasted delicious and that he wasn't prepared to waste any by letting me have a sample!

If that wasn't enough, we then finished with a *Toblerone cheesecake* and a selection of cheeses. Look, being **Call Sign's** restaurant reviewer is a tough job... but someone has to do it!

The service at the restaurant is very attentive and professional, with waiters exuding expert knowledge of the menus and it is obviously beginning to draw attention. In fact, sitting at the next table to us was the outgoing Dr Who, David Tennant. I was tempted to ask if he wanted a Dial-a-Cab logo to stick onto his Tardis!

The average price for a three-course meal from the à la carte menu is around £30 per person or £15 from the market menu (both without wine). For a special night out or even a midweek break, I cannot recommend St James highly enough.

Opening times: Mon – Wed (Midday - 11pm); Thurs - Sat (12pm - 1am); Sun (12pm - 6pm)

Reservations: 020 8348 8348 or to visit their website: www.stjamesn8.co.uk

Alex Constantinou (N05)

Smollenskys & LTFUC at Xmas & New Year

Smollenskys Bar and grill restaurants will be donating £1 of their Xmas menu price from each meal to the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children in celebration of their 80th anniversary.

The Xmas booking period for Smollensky's Restaurants in the Strand and Canary Wharf continues right up to Friday 9th January 2009. Enjoy a great meal while at the same time supporting the LTFUC.

Booking contacts as follows:

Strand:

www.smollenskys.com/restaurant/the-strand/christmas.asp (020 7836 5654)

Canary Wharf:

www.smollenskys.com/restaurant/canary-wharf/christmas.asp (020 7719 0101)

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Contact Andy (P32) on 07904 091278 or 07932 960350

In an exclusive meeting arranged by Editor Alan Fisher, a *Call Sign* reporter met face-to-face - some might say eyeball-to-eyeball - with the very people who have responsibility for implementing Westminster Council's parking services and regulations and who to many, represent the bane of our working lives. We were not allowed to take photos.

Parking problems...

Call Sign was given unrestricted access to the very heart of Westminster's parking control unit, the CCTV centre, where row after row of computer monitors control the Council's 115 wireless and 120 fixed site cameras that vigilantly watch that borough's motorists' every move - both by day and night. We were somewhat taken aback to discover that there are only two Smart car mobile patrols operating in the borough, because they seem to have the ability to be all over the place - according to one senior member of staff!

There is also a van with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras on board which regularly finds uninsured / untaxed vehicles or those with outstanding fines, being brazenly used on the streets.

Patrick Allen, Westminster's Service Development Manager for Parking Services, stressed the need for a constant balancing act between the Council's entire road user *family* - including residents, shopkeepers and market traders as well as the Borough's many individual transient motorists. Dial-a-Cab have also had several meetings. Patrick explained that when he meets them, every interested group has their own agenda - often to the detriment of other parties who hold opposing views to common road space problems and that compromise within the terms of the Councils' parking rules can be difficult to achieve.

Call Sign pointed out that Dial-a-Cab drivers are just doing their job, going about their daily business, aiding the economy of the borough including the transporting of Westminster residents to their hospital appointments. Patrick Allen accepted that, but claimed that bias or exemptions towards a particular road user group would be seen by others as being unfair and could lead to an 'open door' of preference claims. Again he said that the balancing act scenario played a vital part in the equation. It was stressed to us that 'rules were rules' but that reasonableness and common sense on both sides, with open lines of communication "...would lead to greater understanding between our mutual interests of keeping the Westminster streets moving and saving DaC drivers their hard earned money!" It soon became clear to our reporter that any rule changes would have to be of a political nature, rather than at the remit of the Parking Team, who enforce the regulations as they stand.

Call Sign was then told that the camera operators and on-street Parking Attendants allow the regulatory 2 minutes for vehicles to stop before issuing a PCN, unless there is obvious continued activity such as loading or unloading a wheelchair. Waiting more than 2 minutes for a passenger to come out of a pick-up address would probably attract a PCN. The fact that it is our job is obviously not part of their equation.

They "advised" our drivers to check the local parking information plate, which gives details of

Call Sign Meets Westminster's CCTV Parking Team...



We were not allowed to take photos. This pic is from the Bristol CCTV centre

parking regulations peculiar to that location. Of course, we know we aren't supposed to stop, but we do so as part of our work pattern. We were also advised to adhere to the single / double yellow lines and the yellow kerbside markings where waiting / loading is restricted. So as informative as the trip was, so far as being of physical assistance, it was becoming as useful as having a cough!

We then met **Philip Sawyer**, the CCTV Centre Manager. His role is to ensure that things go according to plan in the camera centre, overlooking the minute-by-minute proceedings of life on the streets through the all-seeing camera monitors.

He demonstrated to *Call Sign* how once a camera operator had issued a PCN, those details were then passed to another operator sitting at yet another bank of monitors. All the details of the 'offence' are carefully checked and verified in terms of legality before the PCN is sent off. These checks include the accuracy of the alleged offence, ownership details via the DVLA, time stamp of the alleged offence and the 2-minute video clip, including which photographs to include on the PCN and even down to the size of the vehicle number plate as it appears on the paper copy of the PCN! All these checks form the basis of the quality controls that this second viewing allows and our reporter saw several PCNs being cancelled by the Second Viewing operator, because of discrepancies in the original image capture.

Yet despite these careful checks, Appeals and Challenges are a way of life and are - says Patrick Allen - welcomed because they highlight inconsistencies within the system and point out where - in his words - additional training was required. *Call Sign* readers may wish to interpret that comment in their own way, but it was a genuine gesture to make the system the best it could be.

Even after a ticket has been issued, challenged or goes to Appeal, the video / details are archived on the system for 30 days after complete closure of the PCN, which may drag on for many months. The Westminster City Council website gives full information on parking controls and associated matters and several times during our visit, this font of parking know-how

was mentioned.

Moving offences (U-turns)...

Then we came to what they called *Moving* offences, such as making banned 'U' turns and yellow box junction infringements. These are also captured on CCTV and generate an instant ticket. The fact that our cabs are designed to do U-turns was no excuse, according to Philip Sawyer, who emphasised the signage prohibiting them. Our view naturally differed. But of course we were there for a look round rather than a discussion on policy changes - something that would have to be taken up by persons higher than *Call Sign*!

Cameras can sometimes prove useful in providing evidence of criminal activity, attacks on parking attendants (surely you are pulling our plonker!) and temporary traffic jams, where foot patrols can be sent to sort out local problems.

Patrick highlighted the chase for road space in high-density areas such as Mayfair and Soho, where for example, chauffeur driven cars wait, perhaps for many hours, for their *captains of industry* to appear. This certainly deprives residents and other road users, including DaC taxis, of vital road space to go about their business, so it isn't just the taxi trade that gets targeted.

During our visit and possibly of some embarrassment to our reporter, a Dial-a-Cab taxi was spotted by a camera with the most incredible clarity when honing in on it, stopping on a yellow line in Duke of York Street SW1. The driver got out, returning to the cab some 3.5 minutes later, his freshly made sandwich clasped in his hand before driving off and unaware he was being observed! Given the 2-minute warning mentioned earlier, it was a very expensive sandwich! Our asking that he be "let off" as a sign of goodwill fell on deaf ears.

Call Sign would like to thank Kevin Goad, Patrick Allen, Philip Sawyer and Maddy Findlay for their time and hospitality, in what was an informative tour and honest, if somewhat one-sided, exchange of views.

Several drivers have recently phoned *Call Sign* to point out something that we hadn't really noticed – Private Hire company, Addison Lee, have removed the windscreen wiper blades from the rear of both their current make of vehicle. They use the VW Sharan and the Ford Galaxy and both models with the new Addison Lee name on the back have had the blade removed. Older models that have yet to have the logo put onto the rear windscreen still have the wiper.

Our problem goes back to the launch of the Mercedes Vito when some drivers expressed concern about having to go out to work with no spare tyre – the Vito doesn't have one. However, others such as *Call Sign's* correspondent **Richard Potter (T51)**, believe that for how often we have a puncture, there is more of an advantage in saving fuel by carrying less weight and no spare. A matter of choice?

We suddenly remembered a chat

Brian Rice had with the PCO's **Dave Stock** at the Vito launch when the Dial-a-Cab Chairman asked whether it was now ok

for a TX cab driver that also did not want to carry a spare tyre, to not bother? His reply was that it was only ok if that was how the vehicle was designed. So if it doesn't come with a spare tyre, you don't need one but if it does come with it – and all LTI taxis have one – then you must always carry one. Like it or not, that seemed pretty straightforward.

So then we come back to Addison Lee and their wiper blades. Earlier this year, PCO/TfL allowed signage on PH vehicles. This followed an attack on *Call Sign* Editor **Alan Fisher** by *Licensed Private Hire Care Association* Chairman, **Steve Wright MBE**, who wrote in *Private Hire News*:

"Alan Fisher of taxi magazine *Call Sign* said: "Quite possible the biggest victory the Licensed taxi trade has ever achieved," when describing the decision to ban exterior advertising from

Addison Lee wiper blade PCO mystery...

While the TX4 must have a spare and the Merc doesn't!



AL cab with name but no wipers on the rear. The inset shows the spindle sticking out

minicabs. We wonder where the safety of the travelling public came in his thinking?"

We believed then – just as we still do – that signage on the rear of minicabs does no more to help passengers identify their cab than a written sign on a board in the driver's window. However, PCO/TfL in their wisdom gave PH the go-ahead.

Addison Lee now have a large sign of their name in the back of all their updated minicabs – both Sharans and Galaxys. Where the 'O' of AddisOn is, there is now a protruding



Old version without AL logo but with wiper blade

windscreen wiper blade spindle – minus the blade. Obviously, any wiper blade would have forced the NW1 company into having a smaller logo. Older vehicle that still have not had the rear name put on, still have the wiper blade.

So the question must be: Why is it that Taxis cannot leave their spare tyre at home, but Addison Lee do not have to have a wiper blade? After all, both vehicles come with the relevant part and as we asked at the top of the article: Are the PCO favouring PH over Taxis?

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

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Tel. 020 7841 3600

Visit their website at
www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk

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Tel: 01708 753128 or on mobile: 07590 540620

Email: shaynewise@yahoo.com

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Cabs Towed Away For Using Canary Wharf Loo?

Could Ivor's Letter provide a way out?



Ivor Belkin

Long time Dial-a-Cab driver and dispatcher, **Ivor Belkin (C97)** recently wrote to the *Canary Wharf Group* asking why he wasn't allowed to stop briefly on the **Waitrose** taxi rank at the Wharf in order to use the toilet, having been told by a security guard that if he did his cab would be removed. In addition, he was also told that he would also be banned from working at Canary Wharf.

Ivor pointed out that he realised security was paramount, but wrote that non-taxis were seen to be left on the rank for over 20 minutes without any PCN – let alone being removed. He asked CWG whether we could be given a 15-minute time limit so that we could use the loo without fear of coming back to no taxi. Ivor readily agreed that if the taxi was left for over 15 minutes, then action could be taken.

He received an encouraging reply from estate Security Manager, **Keith Trobridge**. In it Mr Trobridge said:

"I am sure that you have experienced the frustrations of motor vehicles parked on a taxi rank, thereby restricting your ability to ply for hire and Canary Wharf Group seeks to be fair and consistent to all drivers, whilst recognising the practical issues that are not covered by legislation or regulations.

I am encouraged by the fact that you recognise the need for security and please be assured that I also understand the importance and value of the licensed taxi trade. Regrettably, not all drivers abide by a reasonable time limit for either loading / unloading or visiting the lavatory, yet my staff are understanding of the particular problems of professional drivers.

If a driver advises one of my staff that he / she is loading / unloading or visiting the lavatory, then I expect 15 minutes grace to be permitted in most circumstances. This is a possible explanation for the vehicle that you saw on the rank. However, this cannot be set in stone, as congestion and traffic flow at the time needs to be taken into account. That said, I would not expect a private or commercial vehicle to be permitted to wait on a taxi rank, except in an emergency.

Nearly a quarter of all vehicles entering the Canary Wharf Estate are licensed taxis and I repeat my acknowledgement of the importance of taxis to Canary Wharf Group and its tenants. My security personnel aim to be fair and reasonable, whilst also recognising the potential threat of an abandoned vehicle (including taxis). Your comments are noted and please be assured that the specific issues affecting licensed taxi drivers are acknowledged and understood..."

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

Flashback
1981

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

This month's Flashback goes back to 1981 when the country was also in recession. It is a letter to Call Sign Editor Phil Emden from a driver...

From Call Sign, June 1981...

Letters Page

Dear Phil,

A recent experience of mine caused me to re-read the May issue of Call Sign. I refer in particular to the very first sentence in the letter from D64 and then to the second paragraph of Jack Taylor's monthly (in vain) plea for intelligent reaction by ODRTS subscribers to the needs of those who phone in for cabs. Lastly, I refer to the concluding section called 'Last Word'.

About a week ago, I returned to the Buckingham Palace Road side of Victoria Station from my holiday. I approached the first eight cabs that came in and to each driver I asked: "Would you like to take me to North Finchley or prefer to stay in town?" Each one refused me. To the ninth cab, I said I was a cab driver and again asked if he would mind taking me to North Finchley?

"Certainly," he replied and my wife and I went home in comfort. The journey took under 40 minutes and the driver got £8.15. I wonder how much those other eight gents got crawling around Chelsea that afternoon? Perhaps they ended up at Kings Cross or got a ride to happy Streatham! There must be a moral in this for all the drivers on our circuit, or does it all come under the old French saying: *Le plus que ca change, le plus la meme?*

Many years ago, I wrote in an ODRTS bulletin sheet that if every single driver on the circuit put himself out to cover jobs, we could get to the position where we would have so much credit work that it would hardly be possible to cover cash work. In spite of this recession, I still hold that assumption to be true.

Alf Levy

POWER PILL IS BACK!

Call Sign finds another Power Pill supplier!

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COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Hello Ladies & Gents,

Firstly can I wish you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year. 2008 has not just flown by, but the latter part of it has been nothing less than extraordinary! The year ahead will be a vitally important period of consolidation and we will need a hugely experienced Board of Management, one that over many years has built the strong financial foundations that has and will enable our Society to sustain these difficult times and that has the proven skills to guide us through the turbulent period ahead.

EC5

As both Keith Cain and myself mentioned in last month's magazine, booking in procedures for EC5 (Finsbury Square) have been altered and you must now physically be in EC1, EC2, EC3 or EC4 before you gain a queue position. The Call Centre is regularly monitoring the situation and whilst the vast majority of you are booking in perfectly correctly, there is still a minority that aren't and unless they do start booking onto our City rank correctly - rather than trying to gain an advantage over their fellow drivers - they will face appropriate action. The new system is designed to make it fair and equal for all of us and no more warnings will be given. Both Keith and I have spoken to



many of you on this change and with the queue numbers much more manageable than before the change, it has been a positive one.

As with any updated procedure changes, the Board is mindful of your needs and concerns and changes will only be implemented for the benefit of you, the members.

Picking up at Aldermanbury

JPMorgan have introduced a new pick-up

policy in which they ask for all DaC drivers to *Advise Arrival* through their terminal and not to make contact at the reception. They have also requested that surnames are displayed on your name board and that the name board is facing towards the main entrance at 10 Aldermanbury. The original start date was put back until Monday 15th December to give both staff and drivers prior warning of the new procedures. These are designed to speed up the whole process and prevent drivers queuing up at the reception.

Fair play at ranks

As we head into 2009, it looks as though it is going to be fairly quiet, so can I remind you that booking-in at all ranks and zones will be strictly regulated and monitored over the coming months. Please play by the rules.

Together with the Call Centre, it is my job to ensure that we are all working within the rules and that all of us are equal.

Be very lucky...

Allan Evans
DaC Compliance Officer

LTI'S SOPHIA IS NAMED APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

LTI are celebrating the news that one of their bright young sparks has been announced as Apprentice of the Year at the 2008 EEF Annual *Engineering Apprentice of the Year Awards*.

Sophia Lock, aged 24, was given this prestigious title at the awards ceremony hosted by the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on 12 November 2008.

After completing a foundation year of training, Sophia then spent three years of 'in-company' training at the Midland Group Training Centre in Coventry where she enjoyed developing her practical skills.

Peter Shillcock, Managing Director at LTI Vehicles told **Call Sign**:

"We're thrilled with Sophia's accomplishment and very proud of all she has done during her apprenticeship. Being short listed as one of the six national finalists was a great achievement in itself, but going on to win the title is wonderful news for Sophia and all at LTI."

This recognition of her hard work quickly follows another main highlight in her career after receiving the opportunity to visit China in October 2008 and assist with LTI's joint venture with Chinese car manufacturer Zhejiang Geely. During this trip she got to observe the pre-production builds for the manufacture of taxis in China and assist with problem solving.

Coventry born Sophia is passionate about both changing attitudes towards engineering and encouraging more young women to consider the industry, which she finds rewarding, enjoyable and flexible.

"We as engineers have an obligation to the profession and to our society to encourage girls and boys to pursue careers in engineering and technology to ensure we have a high-performance and diverse workforce. After all, the UK is famous for having the best Engineers world wide."

Sophia ended by saying: "I want to stay in industry to gain as much experience and knowledge as possible, complete a mechanical engineering degree and hopefully climb the career ladder to take on a management role."

Sophia Lock is congratulated by David Richards, chairman of Prodrive and Aston Martin (left) and Barrie Williams, President of EEF in the West Midlands



TX4 Fires: The Next Step

The PCO have confirmed to **Call Sign** that remedial work on all TX4s whose licences were suspended has now been completed, but that LTI will continue to contact all remaining London TX4s in order that remedial works can be completed on those too. These will also be done in ascending VIN order and fulfils the commitment given by LTI to further minimise the risk of under bonnet fires in later TX4s.

The PCO have pointed out that some owners contacted by M&O are demonstrating a reluctance to make their vehicle available for the remedial work to be carried out and have said that affected owners must make every effort to

have their vehicles attend for this remedial work on the appointed date so that LTI can complete the recall. Both the PCO and LTI have agreed that completion of remedial works should adhere to two key dates. In support of achieving appropriate completion of this work by these dates, the PCO will now take the following actions:

* All TX4s up to VIN 203500 must have remedial works completed by 16 January 2009. LTI will notify the PCO of those vehicles failing to have the work completed by this date and the Licensing Authority will consider suspension of licence on affected vehicles.

* All TX4s up to VIN 205838 must have

remedial works completed by 13 March 2009. LTI will notify the PCO of those vehicles failing to have this work completed by this date and the Licensing Authority will consider suspension of licence on affected vehicles.

The PCO has asked us to reaffirm its thanks to every affected vehicle owner for their co-operation during this very difficult period, but are urging all affected owners to respond promptly and positively to LTI when invited in for the work to be done.

Further information can be found on www.tfl.gov.uk/tx4 or by calling **020 7126 1980** (Monday to Friday 9am - 4pm).

It's a Chairman lock-out at the TDOTY ball!

Always one of the year's highlights, the 2009 Taxi Driver of the Year dinner and dance not only kept up the usual high standard, but probably beat it!

Having moved home to the fairly new **Crowne Plaza Hotel** at Excel, **Russell Poluck MBE (T55)** and his TDOTY Committee pulled out all the stops to make sure that the large number of guests enjoyed every minute. The food was excellent and of course the most important part of making an evening swing - the band. Called **Fraternity**, they were faultless, knowing exactly what music to play that would get everyone up on their feet. It is just astonishing how the young seem to like beats that sound like a coal miner

on speed, yet when it comes to a bash like this, young and old get up to dance to all the old favourites! Even more astonishing is how those who weren't even born when the sixties were in full swing, know the words to every song! This band knew them all and played them brilliantly. The Mavericks *Dance the night away* could have been the actual group with the same applying to the Rolling Stones *Satisfaction*. No wonder the dance floor was always packed! You name a hit dance track and they probably played it. As you would expect, there was a queue waiting to dance with **Editor Al** - although he did have to search to find it!

Perhaps more importantly, the reason

everyone was there - to raise money for the trade charities and that produced a very healthy cheque for each of them of £1000.

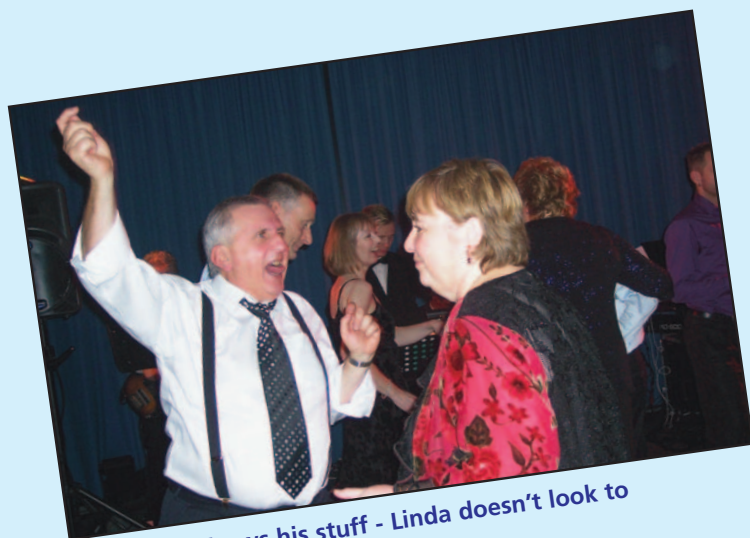
But, we hear you say, what's this about a Chairman lock-out? Well Dial-a-Cab Chairman **Brian Rice** and wife Brenda made the long drive in from Hampshire in their everyday clothes intending to change at the hotel. Sad to say that on arrival, the electrics controlling the boot failed to work leaving them on the outside and their evening clothes on the inside!

That, of course, didn't stop the Chairman from joining everyone in the fun.

All in all, a great night...



Barbara and Russell Poluck



The Editor shows his stuff - Linda doesn't look to impressed



The Chairman steps out with a mystery brunette!



Tom Whitbread with DaC Account Manager Jeni Albert

Call Sign asks DaC driver Natalia Shalom

A recent press release from LTI regarding Manchester taxi driver Julie McColgan and her views on women driving taxis and feeling safe in her TX4, reminded us of the fact that London seems to have more and more female taxi drivers, with quite a few on **Dial-a-Cab**.

Julie once come close to being raped, stabbed and shot by her passengers and says she is now thankful for the TX4 with its strong central partition that divides the driver and passenger compartment.

So **Call Sign** asked one of our younger female drivers, 22-year old **Natalia Shalom (A34)** whether she agreed with her Manchester counterpart?

"I drive a TX4," said Natalia, "and I agree with Julie 100%. I value the security and safety it provides, while the central partition is crucial to the job as it provides both added peace of mind and protection. The vehicle's intercom system provides all the communication with passengers that you need and open partitions just are just not necessary any more. In addition, the overriding door locking system allows the driver – especially females – to secure passengers whose behaviour is suspicious."

Like Julie, Natalia would never drive a car as a taxi.

"Not in a million years," she told this magazine, "you could be attacked so easily with no partition. Anyone could just grab you from behind. While I haven't had anything like the awful attack Julia faced, but I have had a few scary people in the cab. One male passenger

Female Taxi Drivers and Safety?



DaC driver Natalia Shalom and her TX4

insisted on sitting on the tip-up seat while looking to see how he could open the partition! Of course he couldn't – but it does make you wonder about people like that."

Natalia has been on DaC for over a year now and will still not be 23 until the end of May! She got her licence in July 2007 and came to DaC just a few weeks later. Not only does she believe that the TX4 is a great safety

provider, but she also says that being on Dial-a-Cab is an added safety feature.

"I work well into the early hours and I knew that it would be much safer to be on radio," Natalia told **Call Sign**, "so after speaking to many cabbies, I soon realised that Dial-a-Cab was the best circuit to join and I believe that decision is still correct. Between the radio and my TX4, I believe I am as safe as I can be..."

Icons of F1 Meet Icons Of London - DaC!

Lewis Hamilton, 2008 Formula 1 World Champion and **Mika Hakkinen**, twice F1 World Champion, were out in London just before Christmas driving iconic London taxis. Both of them were reinforcing the *Johnnie Walker anti drink-drive* campaign – a global one and not just for Christmas. When questioned about the drive, Lewis Hamilton told reporters that it had been exciting, fulfilling an ambition of his to drive a London taxi and that it was only slightly less exciting than driving an F1 car! Two Dial-a-Cab drivers, **Janet Fox (G35J)** and **Jim Rainbird**



Lewis Hamilton (inset) wonders which way to go! Two DaC drivers provided the advice and the taxis

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(T25), were on hand to offer words of encouragement!

Lewis and Mikka drove the taxis – which had their DaC logos removed when Chairman **Brian Rice** wasn't looking and liveried with the *Never Drink and Drive* campaign for the day – over Tower Bridge, around the Tower of London, across London Bridge and ended their drive at Potters Field by City Hall, where they were met by Mayor Boris Johnson.

Mika Hakkinen, the *Johnnie Walker Responsible Drinking Ambassador* told us:

"Lewis and I want to use our profiles positively and try to change attitudes. It's great that we've been able to come to London and highlight the real champions, the people who get us home safely every

day of the week."

Together with **Andrew Morgan**, President of *Diageo Europe* who produce the *Johnnie Walker* brand, and the road safety charity *Brake*, the message to drive home safely during the festive season and beyond was to drink responsibly and never drink and drive. Lewis Hamilton added:

"Our message is simple; never drink and drive. If you are out celebrating use a designated driver, whether that is a taxi, bus, tube or train or a friend who doesn't drink that evening."

Then Jan and Jim quietly slipped back on their DaC logos before the Chairman had even noticed.

Sandie Goodwin

In April 2006, Dial-a-Cab driver **David Marks (R22)** showed **Call Sign** an article taken from a motorcycling magazine and questioned whether it could help Dial-a-Cab drivers? 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 had worked, with UK police forces dropping the offences from a 3-point category to a one-day driver awareness course whenever the technicality was used.

However, we were later told that many police forces had blocked the loophole, but several DaC drivers have still phoned **Call Sign** over the months to say they remembered reading it and asked whether they could use it? Whilst our honest answer was that we believed the PACE loophole had been closed, we couldn't and wouldn't stop anyone trying.

One DaC driver even tried it on two separate occasions and phoned to say that it worked both times, when he was given the option to attend a road safety course in exchange for not getting any points.

The latest driver to try using PACE was **Martin Barker (G06)**. Martin phoned **Call Sign** some time ago to say that he remembered reading in the magazine about PACE and that he felt it was worth a try. We forwarded the original letter onto him and questioned whether it still worked as we had been publicising it since April 2006! His reply some time later read:

Hi Alan,

Yes it still works! I've been offered a drivers awareness course instead of 3 points. However Thames Valley police did state in their letter that the case regarding code C of PACE did not apply when the case went to appeal and that a person need not be cautioned if questions are for necessary purposes: A/ Solely to establish their identity or ownership of any vehicle; B/ to obtain information in accordance with any statutory requirement..

Thanks again...

Martin Barker (G06)

We all know that you shouldn't speed and **Call Sign** is not condoning it, but as in the case of one driver who went from a Fairway to a TX4 and successfully used PACE, sometimes you can be going slightly faster than you think - especially late at night - and to put your licence in jeopardy for just a few miles per hour seems harsh.

We must also re-emphasise that we believe the loophole had been closed, but as so many of you tell me it has worked - one driver even successfully used it in regard to a PCN - and in case we are wrong, this is what happens...

Following receipt of the *Notice of Intended Prosecution*, those accused of speeding reply with a specially worded response. This is because when someone is questioned regarding any offence - be it in person or via a form - they had to have first received a formal caution and cameras can give no caution. That is the part that the police are disputing. But according to the original argument, 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

'PACE' LOOPHOLE: *Does it still work?*



David Marks originally discovered the loophole in a motorcycling magazine

remain silent.

After receiving the NIP, you are asked who was driving the vehicle. If you agree that you were the person, you fill out the form and add "see attached letter" which you then return 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 be used against them.

As we've said, if this loophole has indeed been blocked, then a surprising number of DaC drivers have still used it successfully and the option of a driver awareness class as against three points is obviously a good deal.

If any other DaC drivers do 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...

Call Sign

January 2009

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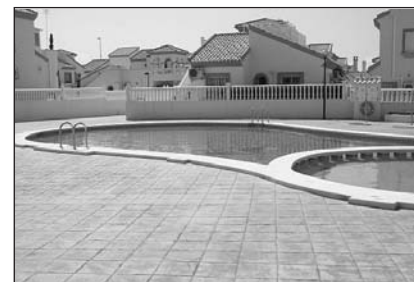
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Allan Evans and I were asked by *Westminster Parking Office* to meet with their Policy Project Officer to discuss plans they are looking to implement, which would assist taxi drivers in going about their day to day business within the Borough.

It was pointed out that the majority of PCNs issued were for parking offences on yellow lines - single and double.

Currently, CCTV camera operators are requested to monitor a driver for a minimum of two minutes before issuing the ticket. Their question to us was whether we felt an extension to the two-minute observation time - by increasing it to five minutes - would improve the situation and help reduce some of the PCNs issued?

While we accept that any additional time allowed could help improve the situation, there would be no better solution than a full exemption to taxi drivers. Unfortunately we accept that this will never happen, but we did ask for more driver awareness information because there are a number of tickets issued to drivers who stop and wait in bus stops, resident parking bays and loading bays.

We also asked if they would look more favourable at a radio taxi driver who could

Soon after Call Sign's visit to Westminster's CCTV HQ, the same council invited DaC in for a discussion on the parking problems the Society and the trade in general has. Keith Cain and Allan Evans went along to meet who many perceive to be our biggest enemies!

Parking: DaC Meet With Westminster...



prove via provided information from Dial-a-Cab, that they were hired on an account

ride and perhaps even more so if it was a Westminster TaxiCard trip with the possibility that the passenger was disabled. They felt it was a valid request and would discuss it further.

While no definite changes have been made, we were very pleased to have the opportunity of giving our opinions and to be able offer some alternative solutions...

Keith Cain

Call Centre Manager

Driver Operations Manager

"LOST" LOST PROPERTY!

At last Stanley gets his money...

In the October issue, *Call Sign* ran an article that asked serious questions of the taxi lost property system. We told how Dial-a-Cab driver **Stanley Roth (Y53)** had handed in a wallet containing £345, that someone had left in the back of his taxi, to a London police station. With no reward received by the end of April, he assumed the wallet hadn't been claimed and was therefore his. But it had gone missing from the police station he had handed it into...

He complained and an investigation by the police took place during which they claimed that due to the length of time that had elapsed, CCTV pictures that would have showed him handing in the wallet and getting a receipt had been deleted. The police also claimed that "items they would have expected to locate" - *Call Sign* assumes that meant the original *Lost Property* book - they were unable to, as they had apparently been removed. That would have included the original entry that recorded Stanley as handing the wallet in.

Fortunately, Stanley still had his original copy and added how inconvenient it must have been for all the relevant records and CCTV to suddenly disappear! He also asked what incentive there was to be honest?

A high level Met Police officer responded, assuring Stanley that the MPS had not tried to "wipe their hands" of the matter and that a criminal and misconduct investigation had been undertaken to detect any wrongdoing. Other than an officer being disciplined in respect of record keeping and conducting property checks, the MPS officer said there was insufficient evidence to prove a case of theft against any one person. The officer added that a full and transparent investigation had been undertaken but agreed that the conclusion was "somewhat frustrating." Well, yes, it certainly was for Stanley Roth.

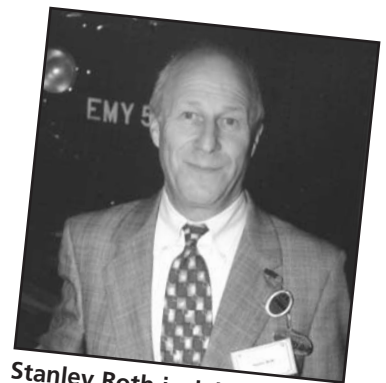
But now Stanley has received a letter from an OCU Commander who, "having fully reviewed this matter," had no doubt that the situation arose due to "human error" and that Stan should be assured that the Commander had taken positive action to ensure it does not occur again.

In the following issue of this magazine (November), we said:

Perhaps Call Sign has got it wrong, but had it been the other way round, wouldn't the PCO have then been involved? Perhaps they should act on Stanley's behalf and insist that someone from the MPS should pay Stanley the £345 that is now rightfully his...?

Well we're not sure how or why, but quite astonishingly, the police now say they will be transferring the full amount of £345 into Stanley's bank account. Stanley, it must be said, is delighted but is still wondering whether this was a one-off or has it happened to any other driver out there?

The London taxi industry is famous for the handing in of even the most valuable items of lost property accidentally left in the back of our cabs. The system must be beyond reproach or it is the drivers who will be pointed at and not the Lost Property Office...



Stanley Roth is delighted to finally receive his £345 but wonders if his story is a one-off?



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Call Sign Kids XMAS Competition Result

When **Call Sign** announced a Christmas card competition for children aged 10 or under with a prize of £200, we expected a few dozen entries. But we ended up with over eighty – of which around 90% were from girls!

The task of picking a winner became really difficult with the standard of artwork being very high. In fact, the two judges – DaC Call Centre/ Driver Operations Manager, **Keith Cain** and Brian Rice's PA **Jacqui Chart** – took an eternity to whittle the best ones down to around ten. They then still found it almost impossible to separate the final three. So **Call Sign** decided to make their task a bit easier by adding a further two runner-up prizes – one of £60 and a third prize of £40. They still took forever in deciding.

Among those they looked at several times,

but which didn't make the final three: An excellent effort from 9-year-old **Alice Glover**, daughter of Peter (V81), who even took the time to add sparkly bits around the edges. There was a lovely one from 6-year-old **Megan Adams**, whose dad is Grant (E84). Seven-year-old **Isobel Harrington** (daughter of Kenny R92) sent in a cute entry trying to "bribe" the judges by putting in no less than three DaC logos – and it came close! **Emma Washington**, the sister of one of the runner-ups, also sent in a great effort and dad David must be proud to have two such artists in the family! A really nice card that also didn't quite make it came from **Kamsi Thananjeyan**, the daughter of Roman way Manager Danna. The daughter of Chris (Y27), eight-year-old **Sarah Allen**, sent in a lovely card with a very care-

fully drawn DaC logo, which must have earned a few brownie points with the two judges! **Emre Misiri** also came close with a lovely card that even showed the broken white line down the centre of the road! Dad (W58) had better be careful how he drives!

There were many, many more – far too many to mention them all. But thanks to everyone who entered and if you didn't win, we hope you at least had some fun doing it.

And so to the winners...

First prize of £200 goes to Eloise Heatley, (daughter of V09)

Second prize of £60 goes to Tom Hannah (son of K26)

Third prize of £40 goes to Gracie Washington (daughter of W17) and aged just five!



Eloise' winning entry



Keith Cain gets down to the final ten



Tom won second prize



5 year old Gracie took 3rd prize

Is it now illegal to prevent a passenger leaving the cab if you suspect they cannot pay?

Call Sign readers will recall a court case reported in the April 2008 issue when a 2-day-old TX4 was vandalised by two male passengers following a dispute with the driver over the fare. At the first trial, heard at the City of London Magistrates Court, one male was acquitted while the second was convicted as charged.

At the subsequent Appeal trial, held over 3 days at the Old Bailey before Judge Peter Fingret, the Court heard how at 05.45 on 30 September 2007, **former DaC subscriber John Farren** stopped in Shaftesbury Avenue for two males and was asked to take them to Waterloo. When almost there, they asked for a cash machine. Mr Farren told the Court he had told the pair they were virtually there and that he had probably passed several ATMs along the way. He was re-directed onto the Waterloo Rd, but could not see an ATM and had become suspicious that the two might make off without paying the £8.80 fare. While keeping his foot on the brake to activate the door locks, he unsuccessfully asked for payment several more times. Farren said he then advised the pair he was taking them to a police station and pulled away from the kerbside. At this point, all hell broke loose in the back of the taxi with the passengers swearing, shouting abuse and becoming violently aggressive, kicking at the windows, doors and central Perspex partition of the taxi, causing £624 worth of damage to the 2-day old TX4.

From the Old Bailey witness box, John Farren stated that he feared for his personal safety and that of his 2-day old taxi and while en-route, he dialled 999 from his mobile phone stating that he was making for Snow Hill police station hoping to alert the police of his imminent arrival. Once outside the police station, he said he repeatedly blew his horn to attract attention and that within moments, several uniformed officers came tumbling out towards the cab. The two passengers were then arrested.

During intense cross-examination from the appellants' counsel, Farren became overcome with emotion as he recalled the journey, describing it as the worst of his 30-year taxi-driving career.

Photographs taken by the police at the time of the incident, clearly showing the extensive damage to the vehicle, were scrutinised by the Bench. The Judge then questioned Farren as to the operation of the door-locking motion sensors and whether the intercom had been switched on so the passengers were aware of where they were being taken. Farren said that as far he could recall, the intercom had been on.

When called to the Stand, PC Giffen of the City of London police said she had been first to reach the cab and had had to physically restrain Passenger A, while Inspector Paul White - a few yards behind her - had restrained Passenger B. She stated that both male passengers were in a distressed and agitated state and appeared to have been drinking. Other police officers that had been on the scene also gave evidence as they had done previously at the original trial in the lower magistrate's court.

Tape recordings played

The Court also heard tape recordings of the emergency call made by John Farren, the mayhem going on in the rear of his taxi, the mobile phone conversation made by one of the male passengers who had also dialled 999 believing he and his friend were being kidnapped and also the taped police interviews of the two passen-

Old Bailey Appeal Case

Is it now illegal to lock passengers in?



Justice - but not to Call Sign

gers following their arrest. All were clearly audible in the public gallery where *Call Sign's* reporter was sitting.

In his evidence, the 26-year-old Appellant stated that he and his friend had visited *Heaven* nightclub on the night of the 29 September 2007 and had enjoyed a few drinks during the evening. They were aware of the danger of using unlicensed cars and had sought a taxi to take them to the Waterloo area where they were due to stay. He further stated that as a prolific taxi user, it was his usual practice to pay the taxi fare outside the vehicle, unless it was raining. This, he said, was his intention on this occasion. He said he had felt branded a thief to be asked to pay before leaving the taxi, although he accepted that by his attempts to open the taxi door before paying, despite repeatedly being asked to do so by Mr Farren, his actions could have been seen by the driver as a potential bilk. The Appellant also said he had not heard Mr Farren say he was taking them to a police station and that by driving off out of the area, he was concerned for his and passenger B's welfare, believing the taxi driver was taking them where the drivers' friends might "duff them up!"

During her cross-examination, the prosecuting counsel asked the Appellant why he simply had

not paid the fare through the tray in the central division, specifically there for the purpose, especially in view of the fact that when searched at the police station he had £84 in cash and two banks cards on him? He repeated that his intention was to pay outside the cab. He stated that while still inside the cab, he had taken his wallet from his pocket but then subsequently claimed it was difficult to remove it from clothing when still inside the taxi! During questioning by prosecuting counsel, the Appellant accepted responsibility for damaging the taxi, describing in detail how he had laid on the back seat of the cab and kicked and punched at the windows and doors of the cab in a desperate bid to escape from what he perceived to be an attempted kidnapping situation.

The verdict

After careful consideration of the events, Judge Fingret in his summing up found the Appellant guilty as charged in the case of damage to the taxi, but quashed the other charges as he felt that the force used to try and escape from the vehicle was proportional to the perceived threat of unlawful imprisonment by way of the locked doors of the taxi.

That decision raises questions as to whether drivers can legally stop anyone exiting the cab by keeping their foot on the brake...

On a personal note and with the matter of justice being decided upon, despite having been given permission at the start of proceedings to take notes during the trial, Call Sign's reporter had his notebook confiscated during the hearing and when eventually returned, 10 pages of notes had been removed from the book. We still do not know why. As a consequence some of the above report has been drawn from memory.

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THE HON. PRESIDENT, HON. CHAIRMAN
AND COMMITTEE OF

THE LONDON TAXIDRIVERS' FUND FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN

would like to wish you all the compliments of the season

With grateful thanks to all our
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After reading how Call Sign intends keeping him to the election promises he made our drivers, Mayor Boris Johnson has written for this magazine exclusively...

Mayor Boris writes for Call Sign



Seasonal salutations and best wishes for 2009 to **Call Sign** readers everywhere. I hope you have been able to take at least a little time over the holiday period to take your feet off the pedals and get some rest ahead of the challenges that the New Year will no doubt bring us all. The Editor of this publication has made me aware that he quite rightly intends to hold promises I made on the election trail to account. And I hope he will give a favourable review!

It has been an incredibly hectic, yet immensely satisfying year. I know you'll agree that London's cabbies are the finest that can be found; and my team has been working extremely hard to make the changes you told us you hoped to see.

You will have heard that the mid-year inspections were scrapped and that we are doubling the number of cab enforcement officers to crack down on the touts who flout the laws of our land and pose real danger to their passengers.

No doubt you will also be aware that I have asked Transport for London to begin the legal processes required to remove the western extension of the congestion charge. And that from next year there will be less bendy buses in London as their contracts expire on three of the capital's routes.

In 2009, I hope to be able to bring you good news of my holy war on holey roads. I am as sick and tired of sitting in traffic jams caused by the craters that litter our roads as you are. We are urging the Government to approve a permit scheme that will allow a much more powerful fining regime and new powers to hold the utility companies to account. Work will also continue on the rephrasing of London's traffic signals aimed at reducing the stopping and starting on your journey.

My thanks go to each and every one of you, for the hard and sometimes unappreciated work you put in each day. You play a huge part in the success of the capital and I can assure you that my mayoralty will never forget that.

Here's to a smooth running, prosperous and crater free 2009...

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

Boris Keeps Another Pledge

Bendies on the way out!

When Boris Johnson stood for the position as Mayor of London, he made several pledges to the cab trade and also to Dial-a-Cab drivers in an exclusive pre-election **Call Sign** interview.

Among the items he promised to look at were traffic light phasing – he has now said they will be rephased to give more time to traffic. He promised to abolish 6-month taxi testing and they are now history. He promised that mini-cabs would not be allowed to use bus lanes along with taxis and he has reiterated that promise.

But the promise he made that few believed he could keep, was that bendy buses were not suitable transport for London regardless of what his predecessor thought, and that if elected, he would rid London of the bendy bus menace. Now he has begun the process of getting rid of them.



Boris keeps his pledge – so it's goodbye to the number 38 monster!

The first three routes are the 507 and 521, which run between Waterloo and Victoria and are to be replaced by shorter buses. Perhaps more exciting will be the departure of the number 38 which, on its route from Clapton to Victoria, regularly clogs up New Oxford Street and

Shaftesbury Avenue. From next Autumn, this route will revert to a double decker and eventually use one of the Mayor's new Routemasters.

After the announcement, Mayor Johnson said that bendy buses were abused by fare dodgers and are a danger to cyclists. His final words were: "Today marks the beginning of the end for the bendy bus in London."

Still to do with his **Call Sign** pledges; sorting out road humps and getting road works completed quicker. And we will keep reminding him if he doesn't. Meanwhile read the response he has written for us on this page...

TAXIDRIVERS & OWNERS LEGAL PROTECTION LTD

Following many months of planning, we are pleased to announce the launch of **Taxidrivrs & Owners Legal Protection Ltd**. We are in the process of accepting members now and intend to commence cover on January 1st.

Taxidrivrs & Owners Legal Protection Ltd is the brainchild of Alan Fleming, who was formerly the Chairman of The London Cab Drivers Club Ltd.

Taxidrivrs & Owners Legal Protection Ltd will be a non-political organisation and will provide legal cover and representation for fully paid-up members.

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It's AGM Time Again

Notice of 2008 Annual General Meeting...

All members should by now have received an individual letter advising them of the arrangements for the 2008 AGM and I would like to take this opportunity to remind members of the details.

The 2008 AGM will be held as in recent

years at The Brewery, Chiswell Street, London EC1 on Sunday 8, February 2009 at 11:00hrs.

This year, the AGM includes the election of officers and any nominations had to have been received at Dial-a-Cab House by Friday 14 November. The same closing date applied to Members putting forward

rule changes or propositions. Questions or comments that members wish to have published regarding the CV of any individual standing for election are published elsewhere in this issue.

Howard Pears Company Secretary



Over the past few weeks, several Dial-a-Cab drivers have told **Call Sign** they believed they were being held to ransom by M&O over the selection of dates to have their TX4 upgraded. These are the upgrades required following the eight London fires in 2008 when all early TX4s had their licenses withdrawn by the PCO. The TX4s in question now are the next batch to require what has become a modified version of the earlier upgrade - although still scheduled to take over a day. Drivers said they were told the PCO would be informed if they did not bring their cab in before Christmas - something many were upset about because of the fear that these could be the last reasonably busy days for some time. Rather than snatch at rumours, **Call Sign** asked M&O General Manager, **Peter Rigden** to give us M&O's view and to update what they are actually doing...



"A letter went out to all owners of TX4s bearing a VIN number of under 203501 and which we had so far been unable to appoint - either because they had continually refused the choices we were offering or because we had been unable to

reach them by phone. Enclosed with the letter was a form providing owners with the option of indicating a first and second choice of appointment date and a prepaid reply envelope. Also enclosed was a copy of PCO notice 40/08 which explained that vehicles were at risk of having their licences suspended if the safety recall work had not been com-

Peter Rigden

pleted by 16th January 2009. Only around 10% of those written to responded by written reply. Many others did call in by telephone and were successfully appointed, but the remainder failed to make contact and so we continued to try and telephone them.

For many weeks we have been providing everyone with a wide scope of dates to choose from, but with so many vehicles to process, the availability of the more popular dates does reduce as each day goes by.

As was the case during the period of the 56-plate suspensions and in the light of potential future suspensions, we are again obliged to advise the PCO of owners who are refusing to have the safety recall work carried out. We had resisted in doing so, but yesterday we did advise the PCO of a small number of owners who were refusing the appointment choices being offered to them. Within that group were a small number (not all of them) who were being verbally aggressive to our staff. I was therefore left with no option but to hand the matter to the PCO.

The task we are facing here at M&O London is enormous. With in excess of 3,000 vehicles requiring attention, our entire service facility remains solely dedicated to the safety recall. We are being as cooperative and flexible as we possibly can be and working 7-days a week in order to provide owners with delivery and collection dates as convenient as possible. We do fully understand that traditionally this is a very

"Snitching" to the PCO?

M&O Respond to Call Sign

busy time for the trade, but such is the nature of this safety recall that we need to complete every TX4 in as short a time frame as possible so as to minimise the risk of an under bonnet fire occurring. We are therefore seeking the support of the trade to help us in that significant task and would urge owners to please accept an appointment choice offered to them.

As for the recall itself, very early TX4s affected by the recall action were taking substantially longer to complete than later models are. Essentially, the work required on every TX4 below VIN number 200540 involved the complete removal of the engine and gearbox and other ancillary components. This was the only way to gain access to the areas of the engine compartment affected by the application of the replacement heat shield material. All of those vehicles were within the 56-registered range, took up to three days to complete and were thoroughly tested before handover back to the owner. As you know, we completed all the early TX4s by 11 November - a day ahead of the deadline published by LTI.

A change in factory production took place from VIN 200541, such that we now need to temporarily remove only the gearbox to gain access to the affected areas of the engine compartment. This has substantially reduced the actual working time per vehicle.

The reason we ask drivers to bring the vehicle into us early - usually the previous day - is because the vehicle needs to have completely cooled down before we can start the rework. Once completed, a full quality control procedure takes place, including a road test. This is to ensure that the vehicle is fully tested and operating properly before we can issue the PCO required certificate and call the owner back to collect.

To minimise any future further driver inconvenience and as well as the under-bonnet recall work, we are also making sure that any other outstanding LTI required service actions and safety checks have been carried out. Many vehicles are fully up-to-date in this respect, but unfortunately we are discovering some which, having not previously been in for service here at M&O or one of our authorised service dealers, therefore have a substantial number of these actions outstanding. Depending on the work required, this can add a couple of hours more work per vehicle.

Before final handover, we also make sure the vehicle has been thoroughly cleaned so that it is presented in a condition acceptable to every owner.

Provided owners deliver their vehicles to us as early as possible on their appointment day, we do very often manage to return it to them completed later the same

day. But depending on the actual amount of work required, it can take a day and a half between delivery and handover and so this is what we are advising owners as being the likely timescale when arranging their appointments.

To minimise owners' down time during this busy time of year and especially at weekends, and also in an effort to live up to our next-day delivery commitment, we are currently working 7-days a week. So on Saturdays we try to deliver back completed all those vehicles that have arrived on Friday and on Sundays we offer the appointment opportunity for owners to bring their vehicles in ready for the work to be completed on Monday.

On very rare occasions regrettably, things can of course sometimes go wrong and in such cases we try hard to keep any affected owner fully informed. However, in over 98% of all cases, we are currently achieving at least our next-day delivery commitment.

I hope this answers the queries **Call Sign** has raised."

Peter Rigden
GM, Mann & Overton

OLYMPICS TAXI BAN?

Call Sign has been told that during the 2012 Olympics, roads designed to carry competitors and others involved in the games could well be banned from taxi use. In addition, for the period of the Games, the maximum fine for infringement may well be raised £5,000! We hope that the Mayor will look at this and decide that those travelling in taxis to the Games deserve equal priority.

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Shopping at Westfield...

Glen and I loved our trip to Westfield, the fabulous new mall in Shepherd's Bush, all sparkly and with big chandeliers on the ceiling. Parking included an option of valet parking for an extra £10, but I didn't need that service as I had my chauffeur and DaCman Glen, to drive me and carry my parcels! There are also tube and bus connections as well as a taxi rank incorporated into the complex.

Once inside, the layout can be confusing and if you need to find a shop or service, just key your request into a help machine and directions are sent by text to your mobile phone. We ate in Pizza Express, but Glen didn't think his food was 'bursting with flavour' as the menu promised, but since he had a voucher for a free main course, I was frogmarched past the Lebanese place - which had looked good!

I don't know how many Rolex watches anyone buys in a lifetime and how the glittery shops full of diamonds, expect to stay in business paying their huge rents. Surely their customers can pop over to Dubai to shop these days? For me, there was an interesting Australian clothes shop and the usual chain stores seem to have made an extra effort. Glen spent his time playing with gadgets in the *Apple* shop and I found some retro bright blue flat shoes with a bow on the front for £38 at *Office*, which I thought was pretty good.

Of course, DaCman had to have a go at me since I already have about 30 other pairs of shoes, calling me a shopaholic. I am not a mall rat. But where else can women hang out that is warm, safe and has a function as well as being fun and attractive? If we didn't shop and

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

Back Seat *Driver*



used our leisure more like men, watching sport in pubs and betting shops, or like Glen, playing chess and arguing politics at his tennis club, what would home be like? Someone has to buy the food, spare batteries and presents, get things repaired, make sure there are toilet rolls, stamps and washing powder and have the place looking nice and supplied with beer and goodies when your friends and family arrive.

And we need to look good to hang onto our men - that is bellowed at us with a megaphone at all times. How could all that happen if we didn't shop?

Anyway, if shops are the secular churches of the 21st century, Westfield is a cathedral! Glen claims to hate shopping, but like many

Dial-a-Cab drivers, it seems he knows nearly every shop within the M25 and he loves talking to people when he meets them about what shops and restaurants are new in their area. It's a great ice-breaker. His loyalty to *John Lewis* rivals that of their biggest fan, journalist Deborah Ross, whose mother intends to be buried at the Brent Cross branch of JL to make sure her daughters go to visit her grave! He loves the good service ethic of John Lewis, which may be what he learned from his dad who ran a fine dress shop on Queensway, flattered the ladies and sold them clothing that they did not know they wanted. Or from his granddad, who sold furs to ladies from a shop in Mayfair.

My father sold discount wallpaper and paint in a slum part of Washington DC to people who spat on the floor and whose cheques bounced. His goods were the cheapest in town, and he too did well. So I go where the best value is and am loyal to no shop. Good service is nice, but a 50% off sign is nicer. Good luck if you do the January sales - I'll be there too in my nifty new shoes.

If, like me, bargains float your boat, visit www.vouchercodes.co.uk to print excellent money-off coupons for restaurants, shops and services around London.

Till then, a Happy New Year with love...

POPPY

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



CALL SIGN EN LA BELLE FRANCE



My wine business got into full tilt in the lead up to Christmas and I even had the distinction of making a delivery to the House of Lords. My buyer had arranged for a car parking space for my rented taxi and even Old Bill seemed to be expecting me and welcomed me on my arrival!

I then took the two cases of wine to the appropriate room where his Lordship greeted me, invited me to sit down and then reached for his wallet to pay for his festive seasonal booze. That's always the bit I enjoy most, of course!

"Oh, by the way Mr Woodford," said Lord X, "I would like to introduce you to Lord Y, he too might be interested in your organic wines." Well, always keen to meet a new punter, within no time my handshake was in a vice-like grip while a short fat geezer stared at me intensely with mad looking eyes! It was even more unnerving when Lord X

rapped Lord Y on the arm and shouted: "No, no, no Lord Y, Mr. Woodford wants to sell you his wine, he doesn't want to sleep with you!"

"Mmm, what a pity," hissed Lord Y as his handshake and stare seemed to last an eternity! Eventually his grip loosened, but that crazy mad old stare stayed burning through me during my visit, one I was anxious to end now that I had my wallet topped up.

But just as I announced my excuses, anxious to make a quick getaway, I was ordered to sit down and then asked by Lord X: "How do you take your whiskey?" I couldn't believe what I was hearing! "Whiskey? Oh, no thank you Sir, I intend to drive away from here," was my excuse. "Nonsense," came the response, "a few glasses of this fine Glenmorangie will improve your driving skills, Mr. Woodford."

Well that was enough, I was off as Lord

Y piped up again: "Oh, do come back, we have a 15-year old Glenfiditch to work through this afternoon."

Well I had a smile about it on the way out of the House of Lords car park of course, but in all seriousness, next time you clock the Peers on TV in the chamber, it will be no surprise why they are all asleep - they are probably drunk!

By the way, there are just a few cases of wine still available for your consumption should you care to try an organic wine for much less than the price you would pay in your local wine merchants. Drop me a line at woodford19@btinternet.com or give me a ring on **07853 128823** for more details.

Be lucky, be careful and have a very happy New Year ...

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

I hope you had a Merry Christmas and are about to have a Happy New Year - though if you believe all you see, read and hear, then there is not much chance of that! But think of this; so long as you have your Green Badge and a cab to work with, you can still take money.

If you had an ordinary job, you would be prey to all the stresses of not knowing for how long or what the future held for you. But with this job, there is no senior age discrimination to worry about - just the PCO, TfL, private hire, pedicabs, parking attendants, muggers, touts, bilkers and those miserable scabs that nick your job! So perhaps there is a bit to worry about after all!

However, if you are reading this magazine, then it is likely you are also on the best radio circuit in London, Dial-a-Cab, and that should be helping you to take your money - especially when the weather is bad or the Underground unexpectedly goes on strike for a few days! You also don't have to beg for overtime or work hours determined by a manager, controller, or the tachograph.

If it makes you feel better, then this is just to let you know that us old 'uns have been here before! So here are some reminders of what we used to do years and years ago to get punters into our cabs:

- 1) Try working seldomly-used ranks out in the sticks. This does require some patience, but the work builds up when the locals get to know that they can expect to find a taxi.
- 2) Go to DaC and pick up a bunch of calling cards and card up your chosen area. But you then have to make certain that any calls from

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

FIFTY GREEN YEARS...



There may be more empty cabs about, but you can help yourself get busier

that area get covered - whether local or long.

- 3) Smile, say please and thank you; offer to help with carrying bags and luggage; don't moan and whine; confess (ok, lie!) that the cab trade is still reasonably busy, most probably because of the good value for money and honesty of the London Licensed taxi driver, not to mention the security and safety of travelling in London taxis with fully licensed taxi drivers that have passed the Knowledge.
- 4) Don't broom any job; you never know

what golden job it can lead to.

- 5) Be clean, neat and tidy in appearance and don't give the appearance of having just greased and washed the cab.
- 6) ...and most important of all. Be Lucky! The more jobs I covered, the luckier I got!

So be lucky, stay safe and keep taking those credit and cash jobs; it all adds up...

Sunset Strip

What Goes Around Comes Around!



The average view from your cab of Oxford Street. Should we transfer it all to Wigmore St?

The 9 December 2008 issue of the *Evening Standard*, in an article by **Christian Wolmar**, said that it was about time we got rid of buses and taxis from Oxford Street or it wouldn't survive.

The article followed a successful 'traffic free' day on the previous Saturday when London's premier shopping street was closed to all traffic including buses and taxis. However, there is nothing new in wanting to keep Oxford Street for pedestrians only and **Call Sign's** thanks go to **Stanley Roth (Y53)** for digging up the following information...

During World War II after the Blitz of late 1940 to May 1941, large parts of London were in ruins. At the time London County Council set up a planning committee to look at all aspects of building a new and better London. Little did the committee know of the damage to come in June 1944 to March 1945 with the V1s and V2s.

This plan appears in the book, *County of London Plan 1943*, also referred to as the

Aberconway report. In this plan it is suggested that Oxford Street be closed to traffic and Wigmore Street be rebuilt to take the traffic. It also suggests the closure of the north side of Trafalgar Square. It took 50 years for this latter suggestion to be implemented, but it does seem that the title of this piece may be coming into fruition. And if we thought Oxford Street was bad, Wigmore Street will be a real dooley!

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Call Danny (N95) on 0796 747 6626 or email: thedevilles1720@aol.com

Just over a year ago, December 2007 to be precise, **Call Sign** announced that there was a new toastmaster in town! His name was **Keith Reading (W76)** and he had been driving a cab since 1979 of which 10 had been on Dial-a-Cab.

When his son got married earlier that year, Keith said that he would get a toastmaster to officiate at the wedding, but his son wanted his dad to do it – and Keith said yes! Amazingly, he also enjoyed the experience so much that he went online to see whether there were any sites that could assist him and he came across *The Guild of Professional Toastmasters*. He went to their academy where he learned the trade through their intense course and he qualified as a toastmaster.

Now one year on and at a recent meeting held at the Guild's London headquarters, Keith was invited to join the *Guild of Professional Toastmasters*. Having completed the Guild's comprehensive training at its academy, passed two written examinations and satisfied their observers whilst carrying out his duties at numerous functions, he was recommended to

DaC's Keith: Fellow of the Guild of Toastmasters!



Pray silence for the Chairman! Keith is offering a 10% discount on his toastmaster services to all DaC drivers

the Guild for membership. As a result he was invested as a Fellow of this prestigious Guild of Toastmasters at their recent quarterly meeting.

Keith was presented with the Guild's dis-

tinctive Collaret and Jewel by the Chairman of the Guild of Professional Toastmasters; Mr Chris Thomas FGPT in the presence of several other Fellows and the Guild's training officers.

If anyone is looking for a toastmaster for a forthcoming function, you can contact Keith; **01279 465 938** or mobile on **07774 860 374**. You can also email him on **kgr.2@virgin.net** and see his toastmaster website at: **keith@toastmasterdirect.co.uk**.

And if that wasn't enough, Keith is offering a **10% discount** to any DaC driver wanting to use his services at a wedding, barmitzvah or any function where a toastmaster is needed. And not just any old toastmaster, but one who is a Fellow of the Guild of Professional Toastmasters.

Well done Keith...

Tom Whitbread Jnr at the Barbican Theatre



Tom Junior with Gareth Malone

On Saturday 6 December, **Thomas Whitbread Junior** - grandson of Board Member **Tom Whitbread** - sang with the *London Symphony Orchestra / St Luke's Youth Choir* at the Barbican Theatre in what was described as a faultless performance.

The *St Luke's Choir* work under the supervision of **Gareth Malone**, who first came to prominence in the BAFTA award-winning documentary *The Choir*, which was screened in December 2006 on BBC2. The success of the first series led to the commissioning of a second: *The Choir II - Boys Don't Sing*. Gareth has a wonderful CV; He studied at the University of East Anglia and sang at the Royal Academy of Music. He now combines running the two London Symphony Orchestra Choirs with his educational work. If you viewed the TV programmes, you will also remember he is a school music teacher and one of the fastest rising stars within the world of opera.

Thomas Junior not only has the same name as his granddad, but they both share the same birthday – except that granddad is substantially older and has a singing voice like a cabbage grater!

A Great Granddaughter For Trevor



Trevor with granddaughter Nicola and great granddaughter Lily-May

Trevor Clarke was at Dial-a-Cab for fifteen years as Secretary to the Society. He left in April 2001 when he entered the realms of retirement after having served under four different Chairmen during his tenure at Dial-a-Cab - Ken Burns, Phil Messias, Aubrey Siteman and Brian Rice.

Trevor still likes to keep in touch with DaC via **Call Sign** and often sends details of his ever-expanding family. The May issue saw a new grandson in Jack and now we hear that the latest family member is their granddaughter Nicola's first baby – making Trevor and Jeanette great-grandparent for the first time! The gorgeous baby is named Lily-May and takes Trevor and Jeanette's total up to five grandchildren and one great-grandchild! No wonder he didn't have time to carry on working!

Our heartiest congratulations to all the Clarke family...

A mystery opened up recently regarding the use of bus lanes that taxis had been previously banned from. Out of the blue and with little warning so far as **Call Sign** could see, the Angel end of the Islington bus lane suddenly opened to taxis on a 24-hour basis, whereas it had previously been from 7pm only.

Then at the same time, the first two sections of the northbound Bishopsgate bus lane – from Liverpool Street to Middlesex Street, also suddenly included the word 'Taxis'.

Like everyone else, **Call Sign** was delighted, but our job is also to find out who and why had someone suddenly made the decision? We phoned the TfL press office. They didn't know but suggested we phoned the PCO. Before we could do that, Luke Howard, *Senior Strategy and Integration Manager* at the PCO phoned me. Luke has helped this magazine before when it comes to solving mysteries, but on this occasion, he too admitted that so far as he was aware, the Angel end of the Islington bus lane still operated from 7pm only!

We suddenly began to suspect that something was fishy as our mind travelled back several years to when the four sections of the Hammersmith Bridge Road bus lane had two that taxis could use and two they couldn't – alternatively! That was an error and more and more, this seemed to be following the same pattern.

By now, we were ready for publication due to the printers early closing for the holidays, so I phoned the LTDA. Unfortunately, whereas you can usually catch either Bob Oddy or Richard

The mystery of the taxi bus lanes?



The Angel end of the Islington bus lane shows taxis are allowed - but not for long!

Massett, both were out of the office on that day. I had a chat with Barry Hooper, who admitted that he hadn't heard but suggested that it could have been just a coincidence after many years of LTDA pushing for us to have access. Many of you will remember their excellent video showing a wheelchair passenger trying to cross the Angel bus lane to get into a passing cab.

But it wasn't them either, because we had yet another call from Luke Howard at the PCO. He thanked us for letting them know - which made me feel somewhat akin to a leper. Should I perhaps have just "forgotten" to ask and leave

things as they were? But to give me some peace, he confirmed that it would have been discovered anyway - and very soon.

He confirmed that in order for a bus lane to change, there would have to be a change in the *traffic orders* that currently prohibited taxis from using either of the two bus lanes **Call Sign** had referred to and no changes had come through. Luke was brave enough to admit that the new signs had gone up in error and claimed they would soon be changed back to show the prohibitions on taxis again.

Ok, everyone makes mistakes and it obviously wasn't the PCO. So we couldn't help but wonder why this had happened? The only reason we can think of is that with motorcycles being allowed to use all bus lanes from 1 January, someone had been told to get the affected bus lanes rewritten and they made the assumption that it was the word 'taxis' that was missing! Would that surprise anyone? Didn't think so...

Alan Fisher

Editor (and bus lane destroyer)

MERCS: WAS CALL SIGN RIGHT 2?



The same Mercedes minicab - spot the difference! Thanks to Stuart Pessok at TAXI for use of the photo

The November **Call Sign** contained a short article penned by DaC driver **John Hudson (W34)**, in which he wrote:

"In Berkeley Square recently, I saw a PH vehicle complete with roundel in the rear window and an identical looking flash along the side to that the Merc taxi has – except that it read *Eurocab*. The driver saw me taking the photo and called out to me. He had both thumbs up and said: 'We all look the same now!' **Call Sign** said they would end up being confused with taxis and I fear it was right..."

John later called this magazine to say that he had spotted a photo of the same Mercedes minicab in TAXI – but that it had changed the rear number plate onto two lines so that he could include a plate that looked suspiciously like the PCO plate which was actually his phone number. The result was that the driver was going out of his way to confirm his initial comment that "we all look the same."

Well one type of taxi does...

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Any Dial-a-Cab driver or member of staff interested in earning an extra income and saving money on all your utility bills?

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or email: tonybardin@telecomplus.org.uk

Tony Bardin (R09)

Allen Togwell's Marketing Place

Firstly may I take this opportunity of wishing all of our members and their families a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

A future Dial-a-Cab?

Many years ago, the idiomatic phrase *the school of hard knocks* or the *university of life* was often expressed by many who progressed through life the hard way and considered the experience be recognised as being equal to those who had been to university. And as such had the background, confidence and ability to achieve goals that earlier in their lives would have seemed beyond their reach.

In recent years, there seems to be less and less of those with this background making themselves heard - or at least not on DaC. As we enter into yet another year of Dial-a-Cab's history, it begs the question; where lays the future of this Society if what the Chairman said in last year's Annual Report about changing the management structure, does eventually materialise? It's an accepted fact that the age group of the cab trade is primarily of middle age and above, so where amongst this large contingent from the *school of hard knocks* are those with the desire to play a part in taking this Society forward into the next decade?

Dial-a-Cab has come a long way from the days when the only experience needed to serve on the Board was being an ex-dispatcher. Today, the size of our fleet, the size of our customer base, our staff, our £50 million plus turnover and above all, our technology, requires skilled management and a CEO with expertise well beyond the capabilities of your average day-to-day cab driver. And as the Society grows - as it surely will - the quality and demands from that level of management will become even greater.

In the future, we could well see many of the jobs that are carried out by Board members as at present, in addition to their custodian duties being transferred and managed by inter-department personnel, leaving a new style Board to concentrate solely on setting policy, strategic planning, financial issues, procedures etc at monthly Board meetings and special meetings when necessary, and to receive a stipend commensurate for that role. I personally have met several taxi co-operatives, particularly in Scandinavia, over the years that operate this way and very successfully. There then comes the question; who would have the required CV to fill the role of the new style Board including, I might add, the willingness to accept the liability? Personally, I feel the most suitable candidates would be those that have been round the block so to speak,



those with common sense gleaned from the *school of hard knocks*, are knowledgeable of the taxi trade and have an

Personally, I feel the most suitable candidates would be those that have been round the block so to speak, those with common sense gleaned from the school of hard knocks, are knowledgeable of the taxi trade and have an affinity with this Society and a passion to see it succeed.

affinity with this Society and a passion to see it succeed.

A measure of someone coming through the *school of hard knocks* could be compared to my own, which began in the early 1950s when setting out for the first time to earn a crust for my labours. Work was plentiful and in the days before *job experience* came into being, the only way to get an insight into whether the profession suited you, was to spend time giving it a try and if it wasn't, you simply moved on to something different. I cannot remember exactly how many jobs I tried before eventually deciding on the fashion industry, but it was an awful lot. A few that stick in my mind for varying reasons were as an upholsterer of antiques, which was a worthwhile craft in its day and probably still is, but the downside apart from the £2.5s (£2.25) a week wages, was spending half the day with a mouthful of tacks and using deadly 12inch needles that more than once caused me an injury!

Then came a stint at being a coalman during the foggiest and probably coldest January on record, breaking ice before shovelling coal into sacks at 4am, loading the lorry, then making deliveries until 8pm. It was a backbreaking occupation and I was as dirty arriving for work each day as I was leaving the job the night before! But the wages of £8 pw plus perks compensated for the discomfort.

I then tried the print, which was a bit cleaner, instead of coal dust I was covered in ink. A little older and after a dozen or so other nondescript jobs, I encountered my first experience at being rejected, which I partly expected because at that time only those from grammar school or of wealthy parents ever got a place, and that

was failing to get entry into *St Martins School of Art*. A few more jobs followed when I had the sudden urge to immigrate to New Zealand.

I went to New Zealand House and spoke to an immigration officer who treated me as if I was a complete fool and with a sneer, told me that without any academic qualifications I had no chance. A short while after that, I had my third taste of rejection made worse by the fact I was given such high hopes of being successful. A professor of medicine I knew had encouraged me to apply for a job as a medical theatre artist that had become vacant at the hospital where she worked. The job involved sitting on a perch directly above the operating table, which gave a birds eye view of a patient being operated on. But I didn't even make it to the first interview stage.

With rejection becoming a bit too frequent, I began to wonder if I would develop an inferiority complex but it didn't happen, maybe because I've always believed in the saying *nothing ventured,*

nothing gained. However, what it did was to prompt me into doing something about what I had failed to gain at school, so I enrolled at the *Working Men's College*, then *Goldsmiths College* and later the *Goethe Institute*. And as a flexible job to accommodate this late spate of learning, I tried door-to-door selling. The first job I tried was selling carpet cleaners. It involved a crash course, then a demonstration in front of a panel of sales managers. It was bit like the X Factor, but instead of singing it was selling! On being accepted, I together with a dozen other guys, were transported in the back of a van onto the back streets of Suburbia to put those new found sales skills into practice. Thinking back to that period and especially the camel overcoat I used to wear with 12-inch shoulder pads, I must have looked like a latter-day Del Boy Trotter. How I made a success at selling those ridiculous cleaners is beyond me. But I did and after a while I decided to go up a notch to selling encyclopaedias.

This involved another crash course learning the art of selling a huge volume of books to people who not only had no use for them, but even worse, couldn't afford them. I had to change my appearance and looked a bit like an undertaker, but it had the desired effect in getting that all important signature on a contract before legging it on to the next unsuspecting victim. Morally the work was draining, but the experience - as crude as it was - was helpful in later years when I changed from gent's tailoring, to having my own business manufacturing ladies fashions and I was pressurising the big stores and high street outlets up and down the country to buy

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When he isn't in goal for Bedfont Green, Lee is in a taxi for Dial-a-Cab!

Bedfont Green: Team of the Month!

Dial-a-Cab driver and Bedfont Green goalkeeper, **Lee Pearce (J71)** has told *Call Sign* that the players were thrilled at being awarded the Combined Counties Premier Division's *Team of the Month* award for November.

"We deserve it," said Lee, "not just because we got to the top of the league, but more because of the football we played. It was one-touch stuff that you usually see in much higher leagues than ours. We were undoubtedly the team to beat."

This is the first time the club has won the *Team of the Month* award and although getting a few draws in December where they should have won and slipping to second place just behind Epsom and Ewell, Lee told us that he expects to win the award again.

"This is a great team," he said, "one worthy also of promotion..."

Allen Togwell's Marketing Place (continued)

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my goods. There were times when I just could not afford to take no for an answer. If a buyer wouldn't see me or give me an order, I would pester them every day and sometimes twice a day until they did. You need a thick skin to be a sales person, an undying belief in the product you are selling even if it's rubbish, the ability to sell yourself and above all confidence - the last of these being a common attribute often seen amongst those who have come through the *school of hard knocks*.

Which was just as well, because I needed all the confidence I could muster when I started selling and marketing Dial-a-Cab's services for the very first time. A non-tangible product, which was another first and a product with a price tag - namely the meter - set in stone. The latter being one of the major reasons why sales people whose earnings are based on results are either not attracted to the taxi industry, or if they are, they don't last. How do you sell a product with a cost that is non-negotiable?

Many years ago, one of our members made a proposition at an AGM that no client should be exempt from paying a particular surcharge. I argued it would take away our ability to negotiate. My argument failed and the proposition was carried. At the following AGM, the member in question having suffered the loss of work from a number of lost clients because of his proposition, asked that it should be rescinded and the members in their wisdom agreed. It was a painful lesson learnt and a stark reminder of the delicate nature of our business where Board members, once elected, can be controlled by a section of the membership who think they can run the business themselves from the front of a cab.

I mean no disrespect, but very few of our below middle age members have a true understanding of what it is like running a unique business like Dial-a-Cab. And it is unique in every sense. For example, how many companies are there with a work force of several thousand of which

the management has absolutely no control? How many firms of our size has a Chairman/CEO and a Board of management responsible for a £50million business without a contract, yet are personally liable and could lose everything they own if the company was to go belly up? How many firms our size have a management structure where the entire Board, including the Chairman, could be in office on the Sunday of the AGM and out of office in their entirety the very next day with no changeover period to finish what's on their desk or to assist those taking their place? Can you imagine how much unfinished work could be on the Chairman's desk alone and in his diary and in his head, which if it wasn't acted upon or handled as only he knew how, the damage it could do to this Society? It's a frightening thought and there is absolutely nothing to prevent it happening...

Could you sell our services?

Finally, not wishing to be so negative at the start of a New Year, I'll end on a lighter note. I've mentioned a little about the task of selling a product like ours. As a little bit of fun and role-playing. Below are 8 non-technical questions out of the 50 odd questions that we often get when tendering for new business.

It would be interesting to get your ideas on how you would sell our services. Who knows, we could learn something of benefit.

After driving a client mad ringing them week after week, you have finally have an appointment to convince them to give you their taxi transport business.

Client: Hello Mr DaC sales person, I have received and read your sales literature and would like to start by asking you a few questions.

No 1): If I give you a minimum of 7 days notice, can I be guaranteed a cab will arrive on the day and time required, and I emphasise the word 'guarantee' and the legal implications if the guarantee is not

met. And if not, why not?

No 2): In your literature you state your cabs can arrive with up to £4.20 on the meter. Please explain why the meter should be engaged before the vehicle arrives at the pick-up address. Or more specifically, before the passenger gets into the vehicle?

No 3): There are hundreds of empty cabs passing our door daily. Please explain why we should book a taxi with your company and take a chance that the cab might not arrive on time or if it does, could have up to £4.20 on the meter, in preference to hailing a cab off the street?

No 4): You state you will charge a minimum of £8.80. Please explain the reason for this minimum charge.

No 5): You insist a 10% gratuity is applicable on all fares and is non negotiable. Please explain the reason for this gratuity. Will the gratuity be waived if I am not satisfied with your service, for example if the cab arrives late or the driver refuses to give assistance or the driver and or the vehicle arrives in an unacceptable condition?

No 6): You state I will be subject to additional waiting time charges. Please explain why additional waiting time is applied on top of a meter, which is already charging waiting time?

No 7): Our annual taxi expenditure runs into millions of pounds, a contract of that value involving any other product would warrant a discount. If I award you the contract, what % discounts are you prepared to offer on the meter fare?

No 8): Please state as briefly as you can why you feel your company is better than your competitors?

If you'd like to give me your answers, I'd be interested in seeing them. Please send them to allent@dialacab.co.uk

And as I said at the beginning, a very Happy New Year to you all..

**Allen Togwell
DaC Marketing**

Jack was born John Leonard Russell in Paddington in 1914 to Elizabeth and George Russell.

He joined cigarette manufacturers WD&HO Wills, probably leaving school at 14 to do so. Well known later as the taxi driving Chairman of ODRTS (1964 – 1969), Jack learned to drive before road tests actually came in and with his yearly bonus from Wills, would buy a new motorbike each year.

At the outbreak of WW2, Jack joined the 6th battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and served as a sergeant in North Africa. This is where he won the Military Medal while on reconnaissance patrols.

With the help of the British Legion, he trained to become a London taxi driver and became involved with the LTDA at Edgware Road and ODRTS at Pentonville Road. He became Chairman of ODRTS for five years and at about this time also joined the Masons in Cannons Lodge, making many friends and becoming Master of the lodge in 1989.

In the 1930s, he met and married Doris Vickery. They had a daughter, Valerie, who later helped Jack on his work with various charities.

In the 1970s, Doris passed away and to help Jack over his loneliness, he joined the Friends of Northwick Park Hospital. It was there he met Barbara and they spent over 30 years together until her death last year. It was also at that hospital where Jack sadly passed away.

Jack also helped set up and run with his friend John, a school for training drivers in the Knowledge of London. In addition, he was also very involved in the running of the Taxi Driver of the Year Competition.

After Barbara passed away, Jack began to feel lonely and at an age of almost 94, he went to a care home in Pinner where he spent some happy times with caring staff and very friendly housemates. These consisted of several lovely ladies who became known as *Jack's Harem!* They would sit in the summerhouse with him while he read the newspaper to them. They couldn't all see as well as Jack.

Jack met a lot of people in his life and something of his cheerful personality must have rubbed off onto them. He will be sadly missed by all his friends and family.

Jacks sister and brother-in-law, Joyce and John Fuller

With the death of Jack Russell, we have lost not just a hero, but also a gentleman. I first met Jack at a meeting of the British Legion Cab Drivers section in Paddington Street W1. It would be the first of many such meetings I had with him.

We had been invited to form a committee with Jack as Chairman, to assist in bettering the name of the London taxi trade. It was called the Joe Polski Charity, but was later changed to the Taxi Driver of the Year Charity. It began with a show at the Southbank and continues to run events to this day. When Jack retired, I took over.

JACK RUSSELL

1914-2008

DaC OBITUARIES



Jack with Brian Rice at DaC's 50th anniversary celebration. As Aubrey Siteman points out, Jack never lost touch with DaC...

Jack was also the Chairman of Dial-a-Cab's parent company, ODRTS, for five years and even into his nineties, still took an interest in the fortunes of the Society via *Call Sign*. He would be very upset if his copy didn't arrive in the post each month!

So goodbye to the man who in addition to being a true gentleman, was also awarded the Military Medal for events in WW2. *May he rest in peace...*

Bill Tyzack BEM (C06)

I began cabbing in 1949 and Jack Russell was one of the first cabmen I met through the auspices of the British Legion Cab Drivers section. To me, Jack was always a fair-minded and upstanding man. To hear of his passing has greatly upset both my wife Martha and myself. Many, both in and out of the taxi trade, will miss him.

Rest in peace my friend...

Sam Harris (Ex S95J)

I knew Jack for many years; he was always immaculate and a perfect gentleman who represented to me the best traditions of being British. I have often wondered if it was because of Jack that the ODRTS was frequently referred to as 'The Gentleman's Circuit'? We as a trade have lost a truly great gentleman.

Rodney Lewis (Ex Dan 77)

I was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Jack Russell. I had known Jack over many years and indeed when I was first elected to the Board all those years ago, he was Chairman. He welcomed me

with the utmost courtesy and cordiality. I came to respect him and his utmost dedication to the Society.

In those days, the remuneration was very poor; £6.50 per day no matter how many hours were spent on behalf of the Society. Many of us were badly hit in our pockets and many an elected member quit because they could not afford to stay. Jack never wavered in his dedication. The Society in those days was living from hand to mouth.

What very few people knew was that at one time there were insufficient funds to pay the staff and drivers for their credit work. The bank was reluctant to advance an overdraft to meet our needs. What did Jack do? He went to see the Bank Manager and put his house on the line as collateral to get the overdraft. How many people would do that! Very few I suspect and what's more, he never told anyone about what he had done.

There was very little kudos in being a Board member in those days, only responsibility and hassle. Jack had many a tough time in his life but he always took it on the chin.

Over the years Jack never lost interest in the Society he cared for and he was also involved in the trade charities. I could go on about other aspects to his life, but I suspect others may want to contribute. I can only say it was an honour to have known him and I send my deepest sympathy to his family.

Rest in Peace...

Aubrey Siteman (Ex C07 and Chairman 1992 – 1996)

The December issue of *Call Sign* ran an article on the Halloween night celebrations in the Dial-a-Cab Call Centre, where staff worked their shifts dressed up in the spookiest way they could. In addition to providing some colour and fun on DaC's third floor - while still continuing to work as normal - the ghoulish Calltakers raised almost £200 for the *National Breast Cancer Campaign* when all the staff involved donated a minimum of £2 each.

We later heard from Call Centre and Driver Operations Manager **Keith Cain** who told us that we had created some bad feeling between the shifts after the *Call Sign* article seemed to infer that it was just the day shift who were involved! That caused ructions from the evening shift who, via Team Leader and CSR **Emma Rumbol**, wrote to the magazine telling us that they had done just as much and asking if we could publish some photos of them as well?

Well, fearing for his safety if all those delicious ladies were to get their hands on him, *Call Sign's* Editor is happy to announce that it was the evening shift as well the day one who entered into the Halloween spirit and helped boost the amount that went to the *National Breast Cancer Campaign*.

DAC SHIFT WORK ... OR SHIFT WAR!



Yes, it was the evening shift as well!

We should also add that in reality, the shifts all get on well and in our defence, we DID publish a photo of the evening shift on the cover, but for them, here's another!



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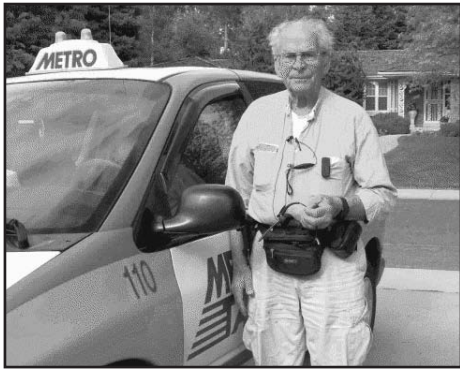


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Wendell White drives a radio taxi in Denver, Colorado and writes the occasional column for Call Sign. He is the TLPA International Taxi Driver of the Year...

Out And About in Denver

For years I have tried to heed Earl Nightingale's admonition: Don't talk about your health unless it is good!*

This once, I'm making an exception while recovering from a serious operation in November. My energy level is low, but I hope that by sharing what happened might save just one life! If so, that will make the effort worthwhile. So I want to tell you how lucky I am to be alive, not because I was wise, but because I luckily made a couple of the right choices.

Several years ago, the local Heart Association had a billboard that said: *Driving a car is the most stress we put on our hearts everyday.* But that's what we do to earn a living. Even aware of this warning, I never paid much attention.

Monday is the day I settle the account with my taxicab company – usually late in the afternoon. Just after 1pm I accepted a radio trip I've run before. A *shortie* picking up a newly arrived patient at a clinic and taking them a few blocks to a high-rise apartment house with their luggage, waiting while they check-in and then taking them back to the clinic. A trip of about one mile and I still had time to run another trip or two before heading to the office.

Except... as we arrived at the apartment building and I was unloading her baggage, I felt a pain in my lower back, above the right hip. I thought I might have strained my back but continued unloading her bags. Usually these waits at the apartment are only ten to fifteen minutes at most, but this time she was nearly an hour before returning to the cab. During that wait, the pains increased in intensity and then developed a rhythm of stabbing intensity. I tried walking it off. Didn't help. Tried leaning my seat back to where I was almost lying down. That didn't work either. Finally she came out and we returned to the clinic.

Forget those additional trips. I'd head to a car wash and clean the cab inside and out. As I turned north, I was hit with an excruciating pain. That got my attention! Making an illegal u-turn on a busy street, I phoned the company to tell a Manager I had problems and would come in Tuesday. This was my first *lucky decision*.

I was less than two miles from home. Grabbed an ice pack and put it across the area that was hurting and lay down on the couch. Too soft; maybe getting down on floor would be better? Nope. Unlike my usual attitude of postponing trips to the doctor, I made a second *lucky decision*. I

asked my wife Lottie to take me to the Emergency Room at the hospital. A better decision would have been to call for an ambulance – then I would have received more immediate attention than checking in with the other arrivals.

What I didn't know until later was the moment I arrived at the Emergency Room, the odds of my survival immediately jumped from 0% to 50-50!

I'll not bore you with a lengthy description of the ER procedures. When they discovered my aorta was swollen, things began happening fast. Not sure if I was just lucky or if I was blessed by a miracle that Dr. Hollis was the vascular surgeon who was summoned. A no-nonsense take-charge doctor, capable of straight talk without medical mumbo-jumbo and Latin leaving you to wonder what he meant. He arrived, studied the CAT scan and came to see Lottie and I.

"You have a ruptured Abdominal Aorta Aneurysm. You have two options: 1) You can do nothing and the results are guaranteed – you'll die very quickly. Or 2) You can let us try to repair it and your chances will then be 50%."

I caught that phrase *let us try*. That was good enough for me! Giving him the go-ahead didn't require luck. That was obvious.

Since coming home, I've had too little time to search the Internet – there are hundreds of thousands of Google links to information about an Abdominal Aorta Aneurysm. One paragraph though, written by Edward R Winstead in 2000 regarding the death of Actor George C. Scott, appeared on the Genome News Network. It read:

Scott, who won an Oscar for his role as General George S. Patton Jr., died in September after a bulging blood vessel in his abdomen burst. Doctors said Scott's death was preventable because surgeons can repair a damaged blood vessel or aneurysm. But once the main artery in the abdomen ruptures, most victims go into shock and don't make it to the hospital alive.

Knowing that, now leads to this admonition: **When in Doubt – FIND OUT!**

Looking back, I should have asked one of you *Call Sign* readers to buy me a ticket to the Irish Sweepstakes. With all that luck on November 3, I know we'd have wound up with a winning ticket. Then I could have joined you DaC drivers in taking those Underprivileged Children to Southend and shown them that real nice day that the LTFUC provide.

**Earl Nightingale was on the USS Arizona during the American Airforce attack on Pearl Harbor...*

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

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

Kupcake's Korner



Happy New Year???

This January Poem
written as the winds are blowin'
while the temp falls through the night,
is just a work of fiction
not an accurate prediction
but mark my words and know
that I am right!

I often form conclusions,
make New Year resolutions
and generally plan the next year ahead.
But regardless of desire
I still cannot retire
or sleep eight hours in my cosy bed!

So, full of good intentions
and some vane pretensions
perhaps I'll even work a longer week!
With this ongoing recession
soon to be a depression,
the near future looks so very bleak.

We'll be 'done' for fouling ranks
waiting outside banks
and stopping, really, just to take a leak!
The COs will ensure
that our cabs are 'pure'
and that we are subservient and meek.

So for two thousand and nine
prepare to wait some time
but things'll change for we taxi drivers.
We'll continue like before
and one thing is for sure...
WE are London's only true survivors.

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mailshot

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

Southampton Row U-turn success

Hi Alan

Just received a letter from Camden Council informing me that they are refunding me my £60 for making a u-turn in Southampton Row. They admitted the signage was not visible from Vernon Place. Many thanks to everyone that wrote in *Call Sign* with advice.

Stephen Brady (Nova 31)

Pleased to hear that Stephen. Last month's *Call Sign* had a similar letter from Gerry Tobin (L32) who had his U-turn ticket overruled after taking our advice of keeping on at the council. No doubt many others have now realised that an incorrect signage means that you cannot "fine" drivers. If you give in, they won't offer you a penny. They are taking your hard-earned money. At least make sure they are in the right before you give it to them ...Ed

Cash bookings?

Because of the severe economic downturn it looks as though it could be a long, hard winter on the streets, so I wonder whether the Board might consider bringing back pre-bookings for cash work. Yes, the odd one might blow out, but the vast majority are usually ok. Perhaps more to the point, can we afford to let any possible work go? Allen Togwell always used to say that you could never tell what might lead to someone opening an account; perhaps a return to allowing cash pre-bookings might help?

Antony Hizer (E63)

I asked the Board and I believe that cash bookings are already back. Drivers can assist in the publicity by picking up two additional door stickers with the DaC cash phone number on. These fit below the CCC logos ...Ed

Dear Alan

I have seen on the screen of my MDT that there is a TX2 for rent with "full back up." I have a TX4, I have searched it from front to back, top to bottom, but I can't find a back up on it. Are they unique to TX2s? What is a back up? How much does a back up hold? Will a cab work with an empty back up? These are important questions to which I need answers; can anybody help...?

Alfred Cook (A62)

Are you trying to pull my plonker, Alf? You wouldn't like me if you got my back up ...Ed

Dial-a PCN???

I have just read the **Peter Hopkins (W60)** article in December's *Call Sign* re the PCN he received whilst mopping up his spilt hot drink and cannot tell you how angry this has made me. Not because once again the *Evil Empire* has successfully extorted money

from an honest taxi driver trying to make an honest living, but because it seems that Mr Hopkins just rolled over and accepted his fate. Where is the fire in your belly, Peter? You've found the time to meet *Call Sign* but couldn't be bothered to write an Appeal! Once again Westminster has seen its ongoing persecution of the Taxi trade justified.

I don't want to dig Peter out; I just am fed up hearing about our colleagues giving away £60 a time on stupid PCNs and then moaning about it afterwards! Well, boo hoo, let's begin to do something about it!

Nuala at Driver Services has in the past contacted me on behalf of drivers and I have happily given advice on how to keep your money in your pocket. That support is available to all! Just call Nuala and she will put you in touch! The only thing I ask is that you do not leave messages. I will not return calls as that could turn out to be very costly! But my phone is always with me and you will get through eventually.

We are now chest-deep in recession and about to enter a traditionally quiet period for the trade where this year we may genuinely wonder where our next fares will come from. We must not allow the "thieves" at Westminster reduce our takings any further! Fight back!

Be lucky, be strong!

Martin Hizer (M47)

Martin has probably won more PCN Appeals than anyone on DaC. As you can see from this issue, *Call Sign* was invited to Westminster's CCTV centre where although they treated us immaculately and answered all our questions, it was fairly obvious that our visit wouldn't change anything. However, soon after and also in this issue, a DaC delegation met Westminster and that has given hope of special treatment. In the meantime, Martin's offer is genuine ...Ed

Fare increase?

Re your Editorial in the December issue of *Call Sign*. The public are choosing their transport carefully, not purely on price though. Remember, there are lots of travel options, taxis, private hire, buses, trains, tubes, coaches, riverboats, DLR, cars, bikes and even walking. A once a year rise ain't going to lose us our customer base because, let's be honest, did we really have one to lose?

It's a free market and people only use us when they want to, or when it suits them. The same goes for other forms of transport. Just look at last year; 50-99 uncovered jobs in EC5 regularly, this year 99 waiting cabs! I think that alone proves my point. I'm not sticking up for PH, but it does annoy me when we say that P.H. are nicking our work. How can they be? It's not our work in the first place, we have no right to claim any work out there and the London streets, public and businesses owe us no living. People have the right to choose how they get from A to B. Ask Tom Whitbread how he gets from Dalston to the West End? I bet when it

suits him, he gets a 38 bus or if it suits, he gets a cab. Instead of moaning about what others are doing, we as a trade need to promote ourselves more.

My concern about no 2009 fare increase would be that when the slowdown ends - and it will end - people will be jumping into cabs as if nothing had happened and with no rise there is a danger that we could be driving people around right up to 2010 on 2008 prices. And what happens then? We'd have to have an 8% rise in 2010 to cover 2 years and then people would really moan.

Michael Beevor (N76)

Thanks for an interesting perspective, Michael. Your logic is sound - my problem is that I don't think logic comes into this scenario as much as it did the last time we faced a similar situation. Yes, there are lots of travel options but I don't think you are right in believing that cost doesn't enter the equation. It might not for someone who takes the occasional cab, so yes, your scenario may well apply so far as street work is concerned. But it surely doesn't apply to a corporate client on radio that spends £3million a year with DaC? Let's assume it's a bank that's trying to keep the City happy with its finances and they hears they can save 20% of their taxi cost by using PH - and yes, 20% has been touted around as a possible saving. That comes to £600,000 a year and hardly chicken feed. Whether those car companies could afford the discount is another matter, they'd still take the work and to say it isn't ours in the first place is being a bit pedantic.

I agree that we need to promote ourselves and that was my point in the Editorial. Other than being the best - which everyone knows anyway - we need something else at a time like this and I felt that being the only major form of transport not to take an increase this year could help us. Yes, we'd somehow have to claw it back when the recession ends, but reading your letter, Michael, it's as though you believe that this time next year we'll be back to normal? I doubt it, although I hope I'm wrong.

For some time to come, we are going to struggle to find fares and my belief is that we might just get some extra work if we do not take the increase. If we do and it is the 3.9% that I've heard touted around, then for every £100, you'll get an extra £3.90 - not even the price of one job. Your words were that we as a trade need to promote ourselves more; for the loss of that £3.90, I think we could all get a few extra trips a day. Either way it's gonna be tough ...Ed



mailshot

Mailshot continued from page 37

And again...

Hello Al,

I agree there should not be an increase next year, but I would put forward an increase by stealth. I'm fed up with four or five handers getting into the cab for a short journey and they end up paying less than on public transport! So I'd like to put forward an idea.

For five passengers, the minimum fare would be £10, four passengers £8, three passengers £6 and two passengers £5. I don't know how much this would generate, but at least it would be something. I look forward to your view...

Barry Spear (Y16)

Thanks for that Barry. Your suggestion does make sense, although changing the complete format of the way we charge could involve us in a non-stop round of disputes at a time when we might be happy just to get a fare. Imagine having to tell a group that the £5 on the meter is really £10? So as you asked for my view, I'd say that it's a good idea for a future time when the recession looks to be on the way out ...Ed

LCDC – Terry Bezant responds...

It had not been my intention to speak publicly about the circumstances of me leaving the LCDC, but as my name has now appeared in the December issue of *Call Sign* I feel I should respond.

In his letter (*page 35 December*) Darryl Cox says that Alan Fleming and Dave Cohen left because their position had become untenable after they gave evidence on my behalf. This is simply untrue. Mr Cox and his colleague Grant Davis, know very well that Alan Fleming and Dave Cohen both left because of the disgraceful behaviour of this little group of dissidents who were trying to draw the LCDC into a war with DaC in the time running up to and following Grant Davis' expulsion from DaC. They had repeatedly tried to use the LCDC paper, The Badge, to publish anti-DaC material which Alan Fleming, the editor refused to do.

Furthermore, on the question of cost to the LCDC of my failed claim against them, the Judge having denied my application on a technicality refused to award costs against me despite an attempt by the LCDC barrister to get costs. When Mr Davis pathetically began to pontificate to the Judge about his 'duty of care to his members' she said to him: "Why don't you quit while you're ahead" and waved him away. She was clearly not impressed with the behaviour of Grant Davis or his colleagues and wished me well as I left the hearing. My conscience is clear that any costs borne by the LCDC, was because of the behaviour of the committee led by Grant Davis and not me. Collectively, Dave Cohen, Alan Fleming, myself and others have worked for many years to build the LCDC into a credible and ethical cab trade organisation. Regrettably, if the members

don't wake up to what is happening, all of that hard work will have been for nothing.

Terry Bezant (W87)

Taxi Driver of the Year dinner and dance

We would like to thank everyone for their support at our annual dinner dance and making it a great success. For those who missed it, the raffle prize winners were:

1st prize (Trip to New York): Tony Warren from the East London Cabbies

2nd prize (32inch TV): Shirley from Middlesex

3rd prize (Nintendo Wii): Steve Thompson

4th prize (Nintendo DS): Phil Sharp

5th prize (Hamper): Nick Watkinson

6th prize (Overnight stay with breakfast at the Connaught Hotel): John Anderson

The Chairman, Committee and their wives would like to wish you all a very happy and healthy Christmas and safe and prosperous New Year.

Russell Pollock MBE (T55)

Hon Chairman TDOTY Charity

Yellow badges in London?

Dear Alan

I would like to thank you again for publishing my letter regarding yellow badge drivers. It has become apparent to my husband and I that we are not the only ones who are frustrated by this and would like something done to stop this illegal and unfair practice.

Having read the article in December's *Call Sign* by **O85**, I presume the writer is referring to Radio Taxis. They allow yellow badge drivers to join the circuit and they are offered green badge work. They even offer an incentive of 4 weeks free subs to any yellow badge driver who introduces another yellow badge driver to join the circuit. When I first wrote to you in September, I also wrote to Radio Taxis. Now I can see why they did not publish my letter in their own in-house magazine. Referring back to my original letter to Simon Bugey at the PCO, the first reply I received from him stated that if he were informed of any yellow badge drivers working illegally, he would make sure that appropriate action was taken against the driver. A certain yellow badge driver, who drives a gold spec TX4 registration number ** *** with Radio Taxi logos on his doors, has been seen several times over the past few months working in central London. He was sighted dropping a fare in Lots Road, Chelsea and after being paid, drove off with his *for hire* sign alight. He was also sighted on two separate evenings waiting for a fare on the Excel taxi rank. I did report these sightings to Simon Bugey, whose reply was that the driver would have to be caught 'in the act' before any action could be taken against him. This is going to be very unlikely considering there are several thousand black cabs working in London every night, even though this driver is more easily recognised



because he has a personalised number plate.

I read the article by Brian Rice confirming that the subject of yellow badge drivers had not been discussed at any of the meetings he had attended at the PCO. I am pleased that he will be raising these issues when he next meets with them and I'm looking forward to hearing about this if he decides to write about it in his *Call Sign* Chairman's column.

As for me, I will continue with my campaign until something is done to stop yellow badge drivers working in central London. When the public and the PCO officers on the street are able to distinguish between yellow and green badge drivers, I will be happy to rest my case.

Michelle Haslam (wife of a DaC driver)

Thanks Michelle. Your original letter and its follow-ups has brought a response from the PCO (elsewhere in this issue) not to mention quite a number of phone calls from DaC drivers - mostly similar to the two letters below. My problem is that whilst I do not disbelieve you, it would be unfair for me - not to mention the many RTG drivers who would also be annoyed to find a yellow badge picking up their street work - to publish the RTG driver's registration number just on your say so. However, I have it in the cab with me and anyone who has any suspicions of a particular driver's actions during the evening (up till 22.30) is welcome to phone me to see if the reg number matches ...Ed

Yellow star?

Like most drivers, I am appalled to read of yellow badge drivers picking up in the central London green badge belt. Perhaps the PCO should introduce a system where a yellow or green star could be put into the front of licensed taxi to signify whether the driver is licensed for that area. I assume that if a yellow badge picks up in town, then he is acting as an unlicensed driver in an unlicensed vehicle? A bit like a minicab perhaps?

Bill Tyzack (C06)

Thanks for the suggestion, Bill. Not sure about the yellow star though as it has connotations from WW2 concentration camps. But see the letter below for a similar idea that sounds as though it could have possibilities ...Ed

Yellow licence plates?

I was rather shocked to read the ongoing saga of yellow badge drivers picking up in town, but there does seem to be a logical answer to the problem. When a cab is passed, the PCO / SGS find out whether it is to be driven by a green or yellow badge driver and issue the plate either in the usual white for a green badge or tinted yellow for drivers with that colour badge.

For those proprietors who rent cabs out to

mailshot

Mailshot continued from page 38

both sections, they can have one of each and should affix it to the cab's rear after being shown the driver's badge and bill. After checking that the numbers correspond and the photo shows the correct person, anyone then deliberately caught deceiving that system would be severely brought to task with a long suspension.

Jimmy Long (V04)

Jim, I asked Simon Buggiey - Senior Driver and Operator Policy Manager at the PCO - to give a view. He told *Call Sign*:

We take the issue of suburban taxi drivers working outside of their licensed area very seriously and as PCO Notice 44/08 stated, any driver caught doing so will have his licence suspended for one month for a first offence, with a longer period of suspension or revocation if he offends again. As I am sure *Call Sign* readers will appreciate, policing this problem is extremely difficult as it is hard to identify or catch such offenders. We are therefore looking at alternative forms of identification that would make it easier for the public, PCO compliance officers and the police alike to know whether the driver is a suburban or All London driver. We propose to carry out a public consultation in the new year that will address the issue of identifiers for PHVs and we will take the opportunity to include the additional issue of taxi drivers' identification. I would encourage drivers to respond to the consultation, as this will be their opportunity to make innovative suggestions such as that from Mr Long...Ed

Those foreigners from Northern Ireland...!

I am an independent producer for the BBC and had a bad experience with one of your cab drivers this afternoon. I had just returned from Belfast after a broadcast event and took a Dial-a-Cab taxi with a client and her toddler from Paddington Station to Tavistock Place.

At the destination, the driver refused to take a Northern Ireland £10 note, claiming that it was not legal tender as Northern Ireland was not part of the UK. Not only is this incorrect, but it was extremely embarrassing to me in front of my client. The driver was indignant that he would not take the note and I managed to scrape together some English pound coins to pay him. He refused to give me his name or licence number and drove off.

You say that you pride yourself on customer service. I will definitely spread the word amongst my colleagues at the BBC to only use your company as a last resort if this is the kind of treatment I receive - especially with a client. Could you at the very least instruct your fleet that Northern Ireland is part of the UK and that its' currency is legal tender.

Lou Stein

Thank you for your letter Mr Stein. I am sorry that you were embarrassed, but to

avoid you in turn embarrassing your colleagues, the BBC only use us as a last resort anyway! Your tone reminds me of someone who says they will refuse to watch the BBC again because the wrong person was kicked off in *Strictly Come Dancing*! I suspect the driver just didn't want the hassle of having to take it to the bank, as I'm sure you realise Mr Stein, that it isn't a note many would readily accept. In fact Bank of England notes are the only ones that are legal tender. Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes are not legal tender anywhere. However, neither are they illegal and those that wish to accept them are free to do so if they choose. Their banknotes are promissory notes as against legal currency, so they are not actually legal tender in the sense that we usually mean. Those banknotes are a bit like cheques. If both sides are happy with it, then it's fine and most cab drivers, garages, stores and of course all banks will accept them. But they don't have to.

However, your story also reminds me of an incident I faced some time ago at the Hoilday Inn hotel in Kings Cross Road. Having taken my passengers on the short £4.60 ride from Kings Cross Station, they gave a a Scottish £20 note. I accepted it as I usually do (and NI notes too) and proceeded to give them their change - 40p in coins, a £5 note and a Scottish £10 note. They refused to accept the Scottish note saying that it would be too difficult to get rid of! I neglected to ask them if they worked for the BBC!...Ed

Thank you to the 25 proposers....

I would like to thank the 25 plus drivers who signed my proposition to change the Going Home procedure. However I have withdrawn it for this year at least because the current computer system cannot store cumulative number of jobs done.

The proposition was to make it harder, ie do more jobs before you had the option of using Code 03 but they would be cumulative, so if the level for Code 3 was 20 jobs this could be done over many days. In return and when engaged, all jobs offered would show destinations, to include EC5, E140, 07:00-10:00 SE75 "O" attributes etc etc. I have withdrawn the proposal but asked the BoM to consider future system re-writes being able to count cumulative jobs for a future proposal. After all we need something done with the almost useless Code 03 facility.

Alan Nash (A95)

Alan, no one appreciates your efforts more than I and your Nash's Numbers over the years must have assisted many thousands of drivers. However, I have to say that your proposition would have had much opposition. Why would a driver bother booking into EC5 or SE75 when the point cab(s) can stay there until they get a roader going the way they want, when roaders are not quite as



frequent as they once were? ...Ed

Watching out for 'clipboard Johnnies'

Whilst I'm sure many subscribers keep an eye on the PCO notices published by our masters at Penton Street, others might not have clicked their way through the TfL/PCO website recently. There have recently been some useful reminders about PH operations, both regarding operators and drivers, which, whilst we all know the rules they should operate under, serve as a useful reminder of the specifics that we should all find useful when reporting touting activities. It particularly helps clarify the 'Clipboard Johnnie' question - if it isn't the licensed premises - it's touting! If the clipboard approaches the punter - it's touting!

The obvious touts (with or without the yellow window stickers) are sadly an ever-present feature of our city and whilst we can report 'hot spots' to the Police/Carriage office we simply have to live with the fact that there's the occasional headline grabbing 'Police clamp down' which disrupts their activities for an hour or two! However, the group I find most annoying are the smart suit brigade - the PHVs and their drivers around the posh bits of town. The PCO notices serve as a useful reminder that unless a passenger makes a booking themselves, by phone or in person at an operators address, the trip is illegal. Whilst I'm sure many hotels are licensed PHV premises, the rules still apply about who makes the approach. A doorman asking a guest leaving the hotel if they need a cab, then getting his smart PH mate to pick up the job is outside the law.

I'm sure we all know this, but if more complaints go in to the Police and Penton Street, we can hopefully regain some hotel, club and restaurant work from our ranks.

Kinds regards and a Happy New Year!

James Griffin (T97)

***Call Sign* has recently been in touch with the tout squad following one of DaC's female drivers volunteering to go out with them to see how often she is approached outside clubs etc. For obvious reasons, I can't give her name but if something comes of it, you will naturally read all about it here ...Ed**

RTG and Addison Lee

I won't bore you with the reason I was looking, but if you go to Radio Taxis Group internet site, then click onto the London Taxi Times link, what do you find? An advert for Addison Lee. No joke! How this must please their driver/share holders...

Nick Steventon (J65)

Naughty Google I suspect! You can read about Addison Lee elsewhere in this issue ...Ed

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*Trade Descriptions Act 1968. We have been unable to confirm the mileage on this odometer and it must therefore be considered incorrect

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