

July 2009



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*DAC loses a true gentleman as
Charlie Rubin passes away*



*Lee's team take the
Championship and promotion!*



NASH'S NUMBERS

By Alan Nash (A95)

Reclaim work from the Touts! By now you must all be aware of the tremendous work done by Dial-a-Cab drivers in covering work that had been taken by the touts. Many of you may have already seen the list below as it is both on my website and a large number of photocopies have been handed out by one of our superb drivers who I will only name as Len for now.

We need to keep up this superb coverage because as soon as we are not there, the touts return with a vengeance.

Venue		Address	Note	Busiest Time	Rating
Abacus	L	24, Cornhill, EC3V 3ND	7	?	?
Apt Bar		10-15 Queen Street, EC4N 1TX	9	?	?
Babble		59 Berkeley Square, W1J 6ER	10	?	?
Beduin		57, Charterhouse St, EC1M 6HA		?	★★★★
Buddha Bar		8, Victoria Emb. (under Waterloo Bridge)		?	★★★★
Cipriani		23-25 Davies Street W1K 3DE	11	?	★★★★
Crystal	L	78 Wells Street, W1T 3QL		?	?
Funky Buddha		15, Berkeley St, W1		?	★★★★
Jalouse		17, Hanover Sq. W1 5HU	12	?	?
Mahiki		1 Dover Street Mayfair London W1S 4LD	8	?	?
Movida	L	7-8 Argyll Street, London, W1F 7TF		?	?
Nobu		15, Berkeley St, W1J 8DY	1	?	★★★★
OXO		Barge House St, SE1 9PH		?	★★★★
Prohibition		1 Bishopsgate, EC2N 3AB		?	★★★★
Revolution		140 Leadenhall Street, EC3V 4QT	4	?	★★★★
Shoreditch House		Ebor Street, E1 6AW		?	★★★★
Smiths		67, Charterhouse St, EC1M 6HJ	5	?	★★★★
TigerTiger	L	29, Haymarket, SW1Y 4SP	6	?	?
Walkabout	L	Victoria Embankment (by Temple Pl)	3	?	?
Whisky Mist	L	35 Hertford Street, W1J 7SD Built into Hilton		?	?
Zuma		5, Raphael St SW7 1DL	2	?	★★★★

L= Venues featured on LTDA video - see the video at www.ltda.co.uk

Note 1 - Nobu

Mon - Wed midday - 1.00am
Thur - Fri midday - 2.00am
Saturday 6.00pm - 2.00am
Sunday 6.00pm - 11.00pm

Note 2 - Zuma

Mon-Thur 12:00 to 14:15
Fri 12:00 to 14:45
Sat-Sun 12:30 to 15:15

AND THEN

Mon - Sat 18:00 to 23:00
Sun 18:00 to 22:00

Note 3 - Walkabout

(Embankment)

Sun: Midday - 10.30pm
Mon & Tue Midday - 11pm
Wed & Thu Midday - 1am
Fri & Sat Midday - 3am

Note 4 - Revolution

Mon-Fri 11:00 to 01:00
Sat Sun private hire only

Note 5 - Smith's

Opens M-F 07:00 am
Sat 10:00am - Sun 09:30
No closing times available

Notes 6 - tigertiger

Mon-Sat 11:00 to 03:00
Sun 12:00 to Midnight

Note 7 - Abacus

Mon - Tue, 12 noon - late
Wed - Fri 12 noon - 3am

Note 8 - Mahiki

Mon - Fri 17:30 to 03:30
Sat 19:30 to 03:30

Note 9 - Apt Bar

Mon: Noon until 11pm
Tues: Noon until late
Wed - Fri: Noon until 2am

Note 10 - Babble

Mon-Thur close 1am
Fri-Sat close 3am

Note 11 Cipriani

Mon-Sat 11:45pm
Sun 10:30pm

Note 12 - Jalouse

Members only except
Wed & Thur. No opening times
available.

I have no busy times currently and the star rating is based on my own views based on quality, quantity, ease of pickup etc.



Nash's Numbers Needs YOU.

This list will be updated frequently and new issues are easily obtained on my website.

www.nashsnumbers.co.uk

BUT I need YOU the drivers input to update this list by adding or removing venues, supply closing and busy times and your anecdotes. So far, from those who have been printing off the list, which has been on the web for over a month, the response has been very poor. Go on, be brave, send in your comments and suggestions, either to alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk or use the "Leave Comments or Suggestions" button on the web site. Valid comments will be added to this document, anecdotes and credits will be listed in "View Drivers comments."

For "What's On" in July, visit www.nashsnumbers.co.uk

from the editor's desk

*It's nice to be back after a welcome month off and as I enter my 13th year in the **Call Sign** hot seat (no, I don't believe it either!) I must thank everyone out there who obviously read the last issue - which announced the usual non-appearance of any June issue - because I had very few calls during that time off. If you did call, don't worry; I really don't mind!*

Helping non-members?

This column has always maintained that every licensed taxi driver should belong to a trade organisation. I've been with the LTDA for more years than I care to remember and having used their legal assistance on two occasions, I am more than delighted. So obviously, I am biased towards that organisation, but I would be delighted if everyone joined a trade organisation regardless of whichever one that was. But what if you don't and then need help?

A DaC driver was in that situation recently when he was arrested outside the OXO Tower. We tried to get him to tell **Call Sign** about it, but after phoning him the first time, he never answered our calls again. No one is compelled to tell **Call Sign** anything. We can but ask.

The next thing we saw was several weeks later when the driver's story appeared on the front page of The Badge. The paper told its readers that the LTDA had refused to help the driver, recommending that he contacted the Law Society, whilst without actually saying it, inferring that he was an LTDA member. When we checked with the LTDA, we were told it was due to him not being a member. However, the LCDC offered assistance and from that we assume that anyone in trouble who doesn't belong to a trade organisation should go to them and they will help for nothing. That just leaves the question, why would anyone want to join an organisation that helps you anyway. Surely not just for publicity? Hush my mouth...!

Wasted website?

Call Sign recently received a letter from a driver asking us to publicise a website. The driver wrote: *"There's a forum up and running where lots of taxi business is discussed. It's the LTDF and whilst it contains the usual dissenters, they are a minority compared with the rest of the 500 drivers on there who are only interested in winning back the work. Can you give it a plug in **Call Sign**?"*

I agreed and the letter was laid out in *Mailshot*. But he wrote again several weeks later:

*"I recently wrote you a letter regarding the London Taxi Drivers Forum and asked if you could publicise it. Can I withdraw that request please? The whole forum has been taken over by the likes of your old buddies *** and *** etc (I have withheld the names...Ed). It has turned into nothing short of an anti-LTDA machine and anti-DaC/ComCab diatribe. I refuse to post there as it's like a witch hunt with the above trying to disclose posters, personal details and because of that I don't wish to publicise it any further."*

How sad is that for designer Alan Roudge who must have put a tremendous amount of work into it. In 1998, **Call Sign** together with designer Vince Chin put up the world's second taxi discussion list. Other than the American *Taxi-I*, there was nothing like it anywhere. Bearing in mind that email was in its infancy, we had around 200 members who used *Discuss* to put their problems and to answer



others. In addition to drivers, members included MDs from taxi companies, radio circuit leaders (yes, Brian Rice was a member) and even the-then chief executive — and later chairman — of Manganese Bronze, Jamie Borwick was on it. Many drivers used the site to ask questions or just to discuss trade issues. Eventually Vince was forced to take the site down because of the unruly attitude of a few members who had hijacked it. Amazingly one of those people is the same person mentioned by the driver who wrote to me! How sad is that. And his spelling hasn't got any better over the years...!

Prayer? Yes it was I...

I recently went to Westminster Cathedral to say a last goodbye to Doug Sherry. It seems quite unlikely that magnificent building had seen so many non-Catholics within its hallowed walls for a service, but to a man, we were all there — Christians, Jews, Muslims and of course Catholics — to say a fond farewell to Doug. I have to admit that I am not the world's most religious person. Each to his own. If religion helps you, then that is excellent and it puts you into an enviable situation. So I was stymied for what must have been all of two seconds when a bearded reporter holding a microphone approached me outside the Cathedral from the religion radio station, *Premier Radio*.

Apparently he had asked some others to say a few words on their views of prayer, but they hadn't wanted to participate and pointed him in my direction! You won't be surprised to know that *Premier* isn't on my list of radio stations to listen to, but surprisingly to me, it rates quite highly for some Dial-a-Cab drivers because several phoned me during that week to say that they'd heard me on *Premier* and wondered — quite seriously apparently — whether I had forsaken my own religion and entered the church!

The answer is no, but the views I gave *Premier* were genuine. For those interested in what I said about prayer, it was that I felt it was something that many grasped at when they felt they needed it, but looked the other way when things were going well. And those views not only went out on air, but also formed a subject for discussion! So the answer to several questions I've had is yes, t'was I but no, I haven't changed my religion...!

Pedicabs, police and Old Compton Street

I recently dropped a fare on a lovely summer's

late afternoon in Old Compton Street and stared in amazement at the number of pedicabs parked in every available gap; on the pavement, zigzag lines and almost as a right, on double yellow lines. Then I saw two police officers walking along totally ignoring the sight of the menacing three-wheeled death traps. I pulled over, got out and asked why they were disregarding the bikes? I expected a rude answer from yet another two police officers that were blissfully ignorant of the rules. But they surprised me — not so much with their knowledge, but more for the way they translated that knowledge. They pointed to the taxi rank outside the Prince Edward Theatre and the empty taxi obviously parked on the back of it.

"What about that cab," they asked, "has the rank suddenly become a facility for going shopping! Should we put a ticket on it?"

They took my sting away and I rather meekly drove off after giving a watered-down version of the rights and wrongs of the situation. Regular readers will remember the photo in a recent **Call Sign** of a taxi parked on the Hamleys rank in Regent Street, which was saved from a ticket by a **Call Sign** reporter convincing a policeman that he was probably on a radio job.

The non-DaC driver in Old Compton Street was parked and because of him, I couldn't argue about the pedicabs. In addition, that rank could have been used by working cabs with lots of people milling around in the warm sunshine.

I'm not sure I would defend drivers again who couldn't care less about the rest of us and just park on any rank that suits them. In my view, it represents the height of selfishness. If you disagree, please let **Call Sign** know and we'll be happy to publish your letter.

Ban don't licence...

Speaking of pedicabs, many drivers will remember the 'ban don't licence' campaign run by the LTDA in regard to these appalling menaces. So I have to offer my congratulations to that organisation following Transport for London's decision not to licence pedicabs. I remember the Woodfield Road organisation putting out a video showing what the results of an accident between a car and a pedicab would be — and doesn't their riders terrible driving often ask for one! That must have helped convince previous Mayor Ken Livingston that these three-wheelers should not be given the respectability of licensing. Now Boris has concurred with that and whilst still no sign of any banning, licensing has flown out of the window.

I have never had a problem with pedicabs giving rides over set routes for fixed prices — even better if those routes are in parks — but when they park wherever they like and ride over pavements and against one-way streets, you had to ask whether TFL actually realised what was happening. Well now we know that they've finally seen the light!

Soon pedicabs will have to begin behaving or else they will be subject to PCNs like the rest of us. But be assured that their bosses won't pay the tickets as DaC does and that could be the beginning of the end of pedicabs in such huge numbers.

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections Of The Chairman

Normality returns!

Well, the editor allowed us all to have a rest for a month by not publishing an issue of *Call Sign* in June, but now he's back, driving me crazy with sarcastic and cryptic emails asking when my article is going to be completed as he obviously believes I have nothing else to do other than write for him! It is, of course, all the more difficult when approaching a holiday period and you know through experience there will not be much happening as people prepare for their summer holidays. But if it gets him off my back for another month, then here goes...

Was I right?

I know we have many members that do not know me personally, however, assuming you read my articles you will have formed some type of impression of me, which is the natural thing to do. This was brought home to me whilst travelling in a member's cab. I had never met him before and we were having a conversation about the 'state of the trade' as is the norm with members.

He explained that although he didn't know me, he read my articles regularly and gained the impression from them that I was a bit of an optimist. As you can imagine, he got me thinking about this and I've come to the conclusion that he was probably right! I think I am a bit of an optimist, something I had never really thought about before.

What probably prompted that member's view was that over the past several months, I have been endeavouring to focus on some plus points regarding the worldwide recession we are experiencing. But I am really delighted to now realise that I am not alone in this quest, as it would appear that others are now also beginning to focus on some of the positives out there. I have even heard some politicians and bankers etc pronouncing the discovery of 'green shoots' and how things could start improving very quickly. Of course, re-reading that previous sentence and my using politicians and bankers as an example, is possibly not the best thing to do as I can't actually think of any other two occupations that are held in less esteem by the public than the two I have mentioned – and rightly so!

Anyway, although I have not seen any dramatic increase in our figures, what I have noticed is that the number of trips we complete on a daily basis is beginning to stabilise on our week-by-week figures. This is quite encouraging, as it would seem we may well have arrived at the bottom of the downturn and hopefully things will now slowly begin to improve as confidence once again builds. The next few months will be difficult to judge, as many of us will be away on holiday, however, this should be more than offset by the amount of tourists we have visiting London. I believe they will arrive in record numbers, enjoying the good



exchange rate against our weak pound and although there will be a decline in the amount of corporate work - which is the norm in the summer - I believe this will be more than compensated with street work and those extra visitors. This of course can only be good for our industry.

Red Routes

You would have read earlier this year in one of Keith Cain's articles, that there was going to be a trial regarding taxis stopping at Automatic Teller Machine (ATM's) for up to five minutes between the hours of 10pm and 6am on red routes. I can now inform you that an addition to the current orders was agreed on 26 May to come into force as from the 6 June. The addition (k) now reads 'using a London Taxi or London Private Hire Vehicle to stop for a maximum period of 5 minutes between the hours of 10pm and 6am to permit passengers

to use an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM)'. So basically, you can now legally stop for up to five minutes during the agreed hours to allow a passenger to get some money from the 'hole in the wall'!

Doug Sherry and Charlie Rubin

Finally, since my last report there have been two well-known members of the trade that have passed away. The first was Doug Sherry, who many people in the trade knew. Unfortunately, I could not attend Doug's funeral as I was away on holiday, but of course Dial-a-Cab was represented. I have read several obituaries regarding Doug and I must say I wholeheartedly agree with them. Doug was involved with the trade for many years and although he never held a 'bill' he was a great supporter of our trade with both time and money. Doug could always be seen at trade and charity events and not only was he a generous man, but also a nice one. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

The second was Charlie Rubin, a man I had known for over thirty-five years. Charlie was for many years our Contact Centre Manager and relinquished that position when we went data in 1989. Charlie was an extremely quietly spoken and mild mannered man and a true gentleman in every sense of the word who will be greatly missed by his family and many friends.

My sincere condolences go to the families of both the above and I know they will both be greatly missed by all that knew them.

Brian Rice
Chairman, Dial-a-Cab

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Licence in jeopardy?

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DAC MOURNS CHARLIE RUBIN

Whilst **Charlie Rubin (C89)** always looked well whenever he popped into the Dial-a-Cab East Road reception, it was well known that he had a heart problem. However, his recent death caused a huge shock to everyone that knew him and **Call Sign's** phone did not stop ringing once the message went out on driver's terminals. Every single driver and several staff members that phoned, told this magazine what a lovely person Charlie had been.

You would have to have been on DaC for at least 20 years to know much about Charlie. He had been the Control Room Manager at our second premises of Shirland Road and continued in that job following our move to Brunswick Place. But most drivers remember him for his voice dispatching. He had the most soothing voice you could possibly wish for and if something had upset you, a word from Charlie and you'd feel better instantaneously! His knowledge of the DaC control room (before call centres became buzzwords) was second to none and of course he also drove a cab so there was little about our problems that he didn't understand.

One driver, who also worked under Charlie as a voice dispatcher, is **Dave Freeman (A46)**. His views are representative of others we also received. Dave writes:

"It's 15.11 on 8 June and a black cloud descends over the cab as a message arrives on the screen. It announces the passing of Charlie Rubin. I start to well up and a few tears trickle down my cheeks. You see Charlie was my mentor when I began dispatching twenty or so years back. A nicer guy would be hard to find. Charlie had the patience of a saint when all hell was running loose in the control room; he was as cool as a cucumber. Nothing ever fazed him. He always had time for you; nothing was ever too much trouble, while as a dispatcher Charlie was in a league with the likes of Jack Taylor, John



Charlie Rubin

Saunders and Lou Gitlin.

I reminisce back to the old days of Lords and think how much togetherness and camaraderie there was then compared with now. The Society then was like a family. Now? Well, they call it progress. For me it was a privilege to work with Charlie and he will remain in my memory, as do Jack and John who have also departed. My deepest sympathy goes out to Charlie's family and may he rest in peace.

As I was reading the message on the screen on 8 June, the record that was being played on Radio 2 at that exact time was Neil Young's Heart of Gold. How appropriate!

Goodnight Charlie and God Bless..."

TX4 Under Bonnet Fires

Remedial work by LTI and final date for completion



Further to PCO Notice 40/08 issued on 25 November 2008, the PCO can confirm that the remedial work on the majority of TX4s licensed in London has now been completed. The PCO would like to thank all affected owners for their cooperation during this very difficult period.

However, LTI has informed the PCO that a small number of owners are still failing to attend M&O for the remedial work to be carried out. The PCO also understands that there may be some TX4s being brought into London from other parts of the country and being presented for licensing before they have had any remedial works completed.

Due to the serious safety related nature of this remedial work, the PCO is concerned to ensure that the work is completed on all affected TX4s without further delay. In support of achieving appropriate completion of this remedial work, the PCO has written to owners of licensed TX4s up to VIN 205838 who had not yet attended Mann and Overton for the remedial work to be carried out, requiring that they did so by 31 May 2009 or face suspension of the vehicle licence.

As a result, all TX4s up to VIN 205838 attending SGS for licensing inspections must now have had the remedial work carried out and this must be supported by an LTI certification confirming that M&O, the LTI agent, have completed the remedial work. Failure to have the remedial work completed or to present the relevant LTI certification will result in refusal of the vehicle licence.

Owners must ensure that the LTI certification remains with the licensed vehicle when in service and be made available during any 'on-street' compliance inspection by an authorised officer.

Mary Dowdye
PCO Head of Standards and Regulations

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Jerys World



"If I'd have realised this rank was moving so slowly, I'd have brought an electric razor to work!"

The London Taxi Board with the LTDA link up to promote

THE LONDON TAXI EXPERIENCE...

In a piece of news that caught many by surprise, the **London Taxi Board** has joined up with the **LTDA** to promote a new website that tells the general public exactly how good we are!

Describing itself as the official website for the London taxi, the first thing visitors will see when logging onto the site at **www.the-london-taxi.com** is a headline describing the taxi as the only way to travel. It goes onto say that we are licensed and describes us – as it should – as the best in the world! It explains that all fares are on the meter and controlled by the licensing authority, adding importantly that up to 6 passengers can travel for the price of one. Sections on the Knowledge, wheelchair accessibility and processes drivers go through on their way to becoming a taxi driver are all included. It tells of our eligibility to use bus lanes and how much time that can save on a journey. All the relevant sections are hyperlinked so that readers can skip from one item to another quickly.

General info about taxis informs readers that London's classic cabs are not all black and that many also come in a dazzling pallet of colours. And just in case anyone doesn't know how to hail a London taxi, the site tells you how and also about the yellow taxi for hire sign.

Importantly, it also tells passengers that should they rather ring for a cab, they can do so at 0 871 871 871 0 (the 'one number' that links all of London radio circuits).



One of the photos on the new website

It ends on a romantic note by telling visitors to **www.the-london-taxi.com** that they can complete their London experience by letting a London taxi whisk them away to a romantic dinner – or just simply take the weight off their feet after a day of hectic sightseeing and shopping!

DaC Chairman **Brian Rice**, who is also Chairman of the Taxi Board, told **Call Sign**: "The Taxi Board is delighted to be associated with the LTDA and this project. It just goes to show that separate organisations

within the London taxi industry can still work together for the driver's mutual benefit..."



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We make the wheels turn
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One of the world's most remarkable people, **Henry Allingham**, celebrated his 113th birthday on 6 June – one hundred years after first becoming a teenager!

"Does that mean I qualify as being a teenager again," Henry asked with a smile!

Born on 6 June 1896, Henry is now the world's oldest man and the UK's oldest ever male. He has been associated with **The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled** for many years and often goes on their annual outings to Worthing, being one of only two surviving WW1 veterans and the last survivor of the Battle of Jutland in 1916 – considered to be the largest naval battle ever. By the time the Normandy landings of WW2 commenced on 6 June 1944 – always known as D-Day - Henry was already celebrating his 48th birthday!

The LTBAWD was formed in Fulham in 1948 to help the War Disabled wherever they were in London, by providing entertainment, outings and much needed specialised equipment. The charity's first Worthing outing took place in that first year when 25 taxis took 50 War Disabled to the seaside.

The charity is recognised as one of the prime organisations helping those disabled in conflicts and among its guests at the Worthing trips have been Princess Alexandra, Prince Philip, the Duchess of Kent, Sir Douglas Bader, Group Captain Leonard Cheshire VC

Henry Allingham celebrates his 113th Birthday!



Henry Allingham last year and as he was at the time of the Battle of Jutland (inset)

and many others, including on many occasions their patron, the remarkable Vera Lynn. Henry Allingham has always been in that group and has been on the outing many times - even since turning 100.












The LTBAWD Hon President, former ODRTS driver and Board member Harry Joel, has now held that position with pride for over 40 years. Soon to celebrate

his 85th birthday and looking remarkably well, he must feel even younger knowing that Henry Allingham was already coming up to his 28th birthday when Harry was still in nappies!

The Royal Navy hosted a birthday party on HMS President at the Victoria Embankment for Henry, his family, close friends and members of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force to celebrate a remarkable man's birthday...

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Steve gets his Camden U-Turn Fine Back

But it takes 6 months and they still don't admit liability!

In the November 2008 *Call Sign*, DaC driver **Steve Hassan (P95)** asked **Gary Bromelow** of Saunders Solicitors in Essex Street WC2 what he should do about a PCN he had received and paid many months earlier. He had read a *Call Sign* article about **Bob Stafford (N75)** who'd had his PCN for doing a u-turn in Southampton Row overturned when Bob showed that the signage was incorrect. After reading the article, Steve also asked for a refund quoting Bob Stafford's PCN number, as he had paid a PCN for a similar offence.

Camden told Steve that the charge had been

paid in full so they were not responsible, as the charge was not contested at the time. Steve wrote to Gary Bromelow, who answers DaC drivers motoring legality questions in an occasional *Call Sign* series.

Gary replied that in an ideal world, Steve would take Camden to the High Court! However that was not really practical in regard to a fight for £60. He said that the Local Government Ombudsman had power to deal with Councils when they acted in a manner where they were at fault. Gary added that there was no charge for their service. He also said that Council's almost inevitably follow their recommendations.

Steve took the advice, although the Ombudsman told Steve it could take as long as 12 weeks. In fact it took 6 months, but finally Steve has got his £60 back!

However, Camden still refuse to admit that the signage was incorrect, but instead agreed to pay Gary back his £60 because his case was "misplaced in the system." Then, under their own code of conduct, they "fined" themselves £10 for every month Steve's case went unresolved. In Steve's words, that amounted to – surprise, surprise – £60.

Steve added that he was happy to get his money back: "But the principle has still not been addressed - ie the lack of or inadequate signage, which as far as I am aware is still causing drivers to still be fined."

However, it looks as though Steve has resigned himself to having done as much as he could in his battle with Camden Council. The fact that he got his £60 returned was pretty close to a victory...

LTFUC UPDATE...

Eater bunnies and Woburn...

Call Sign may have taken a month off, but the *London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children* still had business as usual. But in case you've read it elsewhere, we've abbreviated their news items.

During the month, John Anderson from the **Royal Oak** presented a cheque for £640 to the LTFUC following the eatery's Easter raffle. John appeared as a giant bunny but was outdone by the lovely **Sophie** who donned her Bunny outfit and caused even those fluttering cabbies with deep pockets, to shell out!

John presented LTFUC committee member and DaC driver **Gerry Dunn MBE (S84)** with the £640 cheque. During the time that John and his family have run the Royal Oak, they have raised huge amounts for the LTFUC and in appreciation were recently made *Honorary Members of the Fund*, something that John is very proud of.

The Royal Oak is said to be closing and if so it will be a huge loss, not just to the cab drivers that use it, but also to the LTFUC...

The LTFUC also ran their yearly outing to Woburn Safari Park for special needs children. As usual, the children were buzzing with excitement just riding in a taxi, let alone having the thrill of going around the Safari park and seeing the animals in their natural environment. Some of the children also went on the Foot Safari, where they mingled with an amazing range of smaller animals from lemurs, wallabies and squirrel monkeys to a huge Burmese python.

Towards the end of the day, even the LTFUC committee were surprised by one lovely young man who during tea, took the microphone and asked everyone to give three cheers for the committee and drivers. The kids always love the day out, but how nice to hear it.

Chief Superintendent Joe Royle of the Met Police was there. He later commented that the Transport Operational Command Unit (TOCU) was pleased to lend its assistance to the event.

The Fund's Hon Chairman, **David Lessman (D19)** told *Call Sign* that the Woburn trip was a huge success and asked us to thank everyone – from sponsors to drivers and even the Mayor of Barnet who saw the children off at the start. We are happy to do so.

Southend outing – 14 July

Moving to future events, if you are attending the LTFUC outing to Southend on Friday 14 July, you will be entered into a draw to win an overnight stay for two, with breakfast, at the Connaught Hotel in Carlos Place – most definitely one of London's top hotels. The draw will take place on the day of the outing at the Cliffs Pavilion in Southend.

However, more drivers are still needed. Not only will you be providing some children with a day they will remember for a long time, but you too will have a brilliant day!

Remember, without you there are no outings. So if you can make Friday 14 July, please let the Fund's Driver Liaison, Susan Angel, know by phoning her on 07958 280 881.

If you prefer, you can enter your details onto the volunteer page of the LTFUC website at www.ltfuc.org.uk.



Gerry Dunn with 'Bunny John' after being presented with £640 by the Royal Oak for the LTFUC

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call centre chat

Looking back at the tube strike...

From our experiencing a couple of really quiet months, the tube strike on that Wednesday and Thursday soon gave us all a swift reminder of what the good times were like!

While it was difficult for drivers to get around due to heavy traffic, the response by Dial-a-Cab members to start work early was well received and coverage was, without any shadow of doubt, the best I have ever experienced on a strike day. Our staff also played a crucial role by responding to my request to start work earlier and finish their shifts later. It made such a difference to the speed in which we answered calls and allowed us to put more work into the system.

Many of you would have seen trips offered to you that might have been an hour old. It was because the Call Centre were proactively speaking with clients days in advance about the strike and were advising them to book their cabs an hour before they needed them. That made all the difference with the number of complaints coming from clients being minimal over the two-day period.



Who do you call for...?

What was very clear to see was that when the going gets tough, everyone looks towards Dial-a-Cab to get them out of trouble. As you'd expect on a tube strike day, *Sod's Law* dictated that on that Wednesday morning it would rain heavily and this threw any cost-saving measures the clients considered using right out of the window!

What was also very pleasing was that the

average speed to answer a call was just 12 seconds. Considering that it can take 10 seconds for a caller to hear the greeting and instructions message, our telephonists on all shifts did a truly remarkable job on a day when undoubtedly it was all hands to the pump.

Our Controllers, who also did a sterling job, meticulously managed the whole operation on those two days. On the Wednesday, we even had around fifteen bookings picking up from Wembley Stadium following the England match. I have to admit that I believed under the circumstances those trips would not be covered, but I was to be proven wrong. Excellent DaC coverage...

It may have been several weeks ago by the time you read this, but non-the-less I, on behalf of the Board, would like to thank all the drivers that went the extra mile to give our clients the best possible service, and to thank all the staff who without their extra commitment, would have made the two strike days far more difficult to handle.

Well done everyone...

Keith Cain

Call Centre Manager

Driver Operations Manager

Dodgy Money

On a recent Sunday afternoon, Dial-a-Cab driver **Mike Galton (J05)** was cruising eastbound along Oxford Street towards Oxford Circus, when he was hailed by a male of Eastern European appearance who wanted to go to Warren Street tube station.

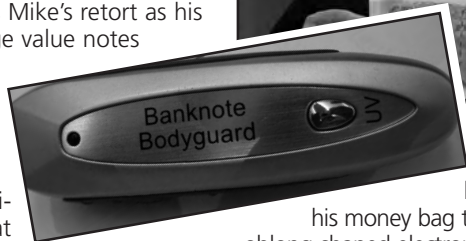
"No problem," was Mike's reply, until in the next breath the punter stated that he only had a £50 note.

"Big problem," was Mike's retort as his mind raced about large value notes for short distance journeys. So he politely declined the trip on the basis of insufficient change, which would have seriously depleted his float for the rest of his shift.

While pondering the possibilities of the legality of that £50 note for a cab ride only a few hundred yards long, Mike moved on along Oxford Street towards Tottenham Court Road, where he encountered yet another Eastern European male who flagged Mike down.

"This man did not even want to go anywhere, but asked me if I could break his £50 note!" Mike told **Call Sign** that the two incidents were too closely related to be coincidental.

"I don't have any real hang-ups about accepting £50 notes for longer journeys, and of course you use your judgement as to the person, but two incidents within a few minutes of each other seemed slightly odd to me" he said.



"And anyway," he added delving into

his money bag to bring out an oblong-shaped electronic tester called *Banknote Bodyguard*, "I've got this gadget."

"£50 notes cannot be verified with the standard Ultra Violet light source as other paper denominations can, but all notes have a metallic strip running through them and this little gem has a magnet at one end and a built-in ultra violet light source that allows me to confidently check all notes of every value speedily and accurately."

Mike then demonstrated the magnetic facility by rubbing the end of the *Bodyguard* along the metal strip of **Call Sign's** genuine £50 note. Sure enough, after a couple of strokes along the metal strip on our £50 (which we took back!), the hand-held gadget gave a bleep to confirm the note was genuine. Meanwhile, **Call Sign's** security guard

Pic left: Mike Galton with £50 note he made earlier! Inset pic The Banknote Bodyguard

stood nervously looking around in case a passer-by should grab our legal tender and make off onto the crowded City streets!

"I bought the *Banknote Bodyguard* on the internet and it has proven itself on numerous occasions," Mike said with a smile as we snatched our currency back!

"No doubt there are many such aids around, I just happen to have this one" he added.

The *Banknote Bodyguard* can be found at www.banknotebodyguard.co.uk.

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Like all Dial-a-Cab drivers, **Richard Belasco (Z34)** knows the parking hazards we face when picking up in town and takes care not to be any longer than necessary in leaving the cab unattended when calling for his passenger.

On this particular morning, Richard had accepted an account trip at 11.24, pushed his arrival button at 11.27 and with speed in mind, parked his cab and ran into the client in Mayfair Place, W1. At 11.29 he was back at his taxi, which had a PCN being placed on it!

"It was only five minutes since I had accepted the job," Richard told **Call Sign**. We didn't want to upset Richard, but we hear so many similar stories...

"But I haven't finished, yet," said Richard! "Around an hour later, I stopped briefly by a rank in Mayfair to run into a café to get a takeaway coffee. Two minutes later I came out with a hot cup in my hand to see the same warden standing by my cab! He said that he had recognised my number plate and that's why he gave me an extra minute. He was ready to issue another ticket! I'm not sure if he expected thanks, but that wasn't the sentiment that immediately sprang to mind. Before long we won't even be allowed to stop to pick up passengers and they'll have to run alongside and try to jump in while we're moving!"

Mayfair's Friendliest Parking Attendant?

No' buy one get one free' here!



Another "friendly parking attendant

SO NOW WE KNOW!

First **Call Sign** reported Addison Lee to the PCO for removing their rear wipers so as to show their name in a clearer way. Then it was the rear tinted windows in their newer models that are so dark, you cannot see the roundel through it.

But now it seems that we were wrong all along and that the PCO's Taxi and PH Director, Ed Thompson was right all along and that London doesn't have 25,000 taxi drivers and 50,000 PH drivers; there are 75,000 of us and we can all use taxi ranks!

Whaddya mean you didn't see it coming!



Parked in a 'Taxis only' bay - so he obviously believes the hype

SO NOW WE KNOW 2!



With a wiper blade we can see what AL had against it as Lee becomes Loo!

Speaking of our friends from Hampstead Road, we now understand why they were so miffed at **Call Sign's** campaign to have them replace their suddenly missing rear wiper blade, although we have some doubt as to said wiper's ability to actually move!

Look at the *before* and *after* pix carefully. Even though the latter was taken at night, it can still be clearly seen that with the blade attached, Addison Lee become Addison LOO!

Hmm? There must be a joke there somewhere...

Dial-a-Dream - the children's charity that was founded at **Dial-a-Cab** by **Tom Whitbread** and **Bob Heath** in 1989 to realise dreams for terminally ill children - recently received an email from the Regional Manager of **Vodafone Central** in Oxford Street. Stuart had read about their charity and was impressed by the fact that it was very small, yet run successfully by volunteers so that all the money collected could be spent on turning what could be a child's last dream into a reality. Some of these children literally have just days to live, yet may still have that one dream left in their mind and it is often Dial-a-Dream who start a race against time to help realise that dream before time runs out for the child.

These children have been dealt life's cruellest blow by contracting an illness that has no cure. It would scare the thickest-skinned adult, let alone a child between 4 and 18 years old. The charity hopes to show these children that although life can be cruel, there are times when good things can also happen. This can often give them the incentive to try and fight on and to add precious extra time to their young lives.

Dial-a-Dream can only complete this work by raising the money from kind Samaritans such as Stuart and the Vodafone mobile phone organisation. It was Stuart who went out of his way to get his company to donate **£4000**, the main bulk of the donation going towards sending a 13 year-old young lady from Bromley, suffering with cystic fibrosis, to Disney World in Orlando, Florida.

Dial-a-Dream are also paying for her mother, 10 year-old brother and also her father, who is a London Fireman, to go with the young lady to help her have a wonderful 2 week holiday. Her first week will be with *Give Kids the World*, while the second week at one of Dial-a-Dream's magnificent villas, giving her the chance of a rest and a visit to the main Disney theme park.

Any Dial-a-Cab driver who would like to rent one of Dial-a-Dream's villas in Orlando - ten minutes from the Disney theme park - and also avail themselves of getting reduced rates on a rental car, can do so by visiting their website at www.dial-a-dream.co.uk and press the purple button for villas.

You can also go to www.thedreamvillas.com where you can view the inside of the villas via a slide show. Please remember that any money raised by the charity in renting out the villas goes straight into their funds to realise another child's dream.

Most of us have the good fortune to be reasonably healthy, but these children aren't so lucky and many will not live beyond their teenage years.

The story of Dial-a-Dream...

In 1989, two Dial-a-Cab drivers were talking at Brunswick House about a disturbing incident involving a children's charity that had been set up to make sick children's wishes come true and which had suddenly cancelled a children's

Vodafone Donation to Dial-a-Dream



Stuart, Vodafone RM (left) and his two assistants present Bob Heath with a wonderful cheque for £4000

organised trip due to what were described in the press as "financial irregularities."

Those same two drivers, **Tom Whitbread** and **Bob 'the dog' Heath**, later went on to set up Dial-a-Dream - you can guess how they thought of the name! It is a completely voluntary organisation, which helps make wishes come true for sick children - often terminally ill - between the ages of 4 and 18.

Dial-a-Dream is now one of the longest running and most respected charities of its kind and over the years, the number of chil-

dren whose wishes have been fulfilled runs well into four figures. Some children dream of doing fairly simple things, others have never had a bike and would love one, whilst yet others have their fantasies of going to meet Mickey Mouse at either Disneyland Paris or Disneyworld Florida (where Dial-a-Dream have two properties which are used) brought to reality.

Dial-a-Dream may not get the amount of publicity the rest of our wonderful trade charities get, but they also do a magnificent job.

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This is the story of DaC driver Philip Benjamin (K20) and his dual battle against two PCNs...

Part 1: The parking ticket...

19 Nov 2008: It's quiet; I'm bored and fed up. Decide to check if the warden perched up a lamppost on corner of Quebec / Bryanston feels the same. He doesn't, picks me out between two ranks in Bryanston Street; sends lovely photo as proof.

27 Nov 2008: The Challenge – waiting for passenger who is collecting prescription from Bliss the Chemist. **The reality** – coffee and croissant from Valerie the patisserie.

12 Jan 2009: Penalty Charge Notice from Dingwall (where?). "You owe us £180 'cos you didn't respond to Rejection Notice." What Rejection Notice? Phone Dingwall – too late now sir, you should have contacted us before! You mean I should have contacted you to tell you I have not received something I didn't know you'd sent! Short pause... correct, but you'll get another chance after registration at County Court!

3 Feb 2009: Letter from Philips - debt collectors/bailiffs based in Doncaster – 7 days to pay or proceedings. Continue UK tour...

4 Feb 2009: Phone Dingwall (Scotland) – why are you instructing debt collectors when matter is undergoing Statutory Appeal Process? Don't know! Suggest contacting customer services.

7 Feb 2009: Email customer services (Cheshire).

11 March 2009: CS reply with discourse on process. No mention of debt collectors.

12 March: Email again. Why are you instructing debt collectors?

16 March: Email me back. Still no mention of debt collectors but add; "I know this reply may not meet with your expectations..." Copies to his manager and section manager. Is he trying to tell me something?

17 March: Philips commence campaign of intimidation and harassment with recorded phone text messages to my home phone over 4-day period starting with: "You owe a penalty. Phone this (premium) number urgently. Culminate with: **"One of our recovery agents will be visiting your home"** – I take all the calls and bake a cake.

21 March 2009: Another seven day letter from Philips (they're on a roll).

24 March: Order for Recovery received from Northampton County Court. Debt increased to £185.

26 March 2009: Appeal on grounds of documents not received.

31 March: Order revoked – Charge Certificate cancelled. Westminster must now

A NICE WIN DOUBLE?

Not for the Dingwall "tossers"...

start from scratch at £60.

12 April: *Don't want to be caught out again. Directed to Westminster Debt Collecting Department, also at Dingwall. Now know this is small town 15 miles north of Inverness on banks of Cromarty Firth, noted for annual caber tossing festival. Speak with Craig. Describes himself as accomplished Tosser. Leads me through timetable of new events procedure: "By the way Craig, what's with all these threatening calls from Philips?" "Oh, they'll try anything to get money out of you." Not Craig's finest moment and only confirms his status as a Highland Games competitor.*

"I think I should tell you that I am recording this call and you might regret that comment. I will be sending this tape with that one from Philips along to the council Ombudsman, the OFT, the Govt dept for Consumer Affairs and my local police for review under the Protection of Harassment Act 1998.

17 April: PCN is cancelled. No reason given. Do I take the matter further? Is anyone interested? I think not on both counts.

Summary

Your only friend here is the Arbiter. It's where you need to go and therefore the last place the council wants you to go. Craig said they – and I believe he means we – will try anything to get money out of you. The Arbiters are currently cancelling far more PCNs than they approve. My view is they don't like these cameras but they do like us and people like us.

Government guidelines are clear; CCTV should only be used where impractical for on-foot personnel eg duel carriageways or roads with no footpaths etc.

It should also be made clear that CCTV is in operation in that location. These are, of course, only recommendations with no statutory powers and are generally ignored. In fact I believe it suits government that councils raise sufficient funds in this way without looking to central government for a subsidy. It is also a fact that Westminster raises a staggering £98million per annum from parking related charges, leaving others in its wake. This is an industry and most of it is probably raised from people visiting its patch, thus allowing it to charge the second lowest council tax in London, keeping the Tories in power there term after term.

One recalls the Shirley Porter *bomes for votes* scandal many years ago. And the same council still reigns – only the faces have changed.

Part two: The yellow box offence...

6 March 2009 (From TfL): Photo from TfL, taxi stationary at exit of yellow box junction. Vehicle on other side of junction also stationary. Road is clear ahead. Confused. Don't remember incident. Looks like I'm stranded

when it stops with clear road ahead.

8 March 2009: Email TfL. Info inconclusive, need more evidence.

16 March 2009 (From TfL): Checked video. You entered box before clear.

26 March 2009: I'm not convinced, ask for evidence they will rely on.

31 March 2009 (From TfL): If you want video, send £10!

21 May 2009 (From TfL): Send video prior to appeal meeting free of charge as required under procedure. Shows what I suspected. Both vehicles in traffic flow passing through box with exit clear, lead vehicle stops for no reason.

30 May 2009: APPEAL...

Arbiter unimpressed TfL want £10 for video: "Why isn't it available on internet?" I quote excerpts from Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002: *'No person shall cause a vehicle to enter the box so that the vehicle has to stop within the box due to the presence of stationary vehicles.'* I argue vehicle in front was not stationary as I entered. Arbiter counters that it became stationary, that's the way he reads law on it. Debate goes back and forth. I give analogy. Lights change to green, lead car drives through 80foot box. I can only move forward to start line, wait till he clears box totally and then proceed. Every vehicle must then do same as if invisible barrier goes up and down.

Correct, says he! In other words only one vehicle at a time goes in box. But vehicles will be shunting into each other or huge jams will be created. No one drives like that.

He shrugs shoulders, flashes palms, looks pensive. He knows it's potty but acts in gesture as the meeting is being recorded. I am resigned to my fate. He rewinds video, views it again and again then announces: "Your appeal has been successful on technical grounds, the ticket is cancelled. Anyone want to guess the reason? I can tell you the video shows me clearly stuck in the box for 30 seconds and then exiting. The Arbiter said:

"In this case the closed circuit television evidence produced by TfL, the focus of the camera, is such that it does not show the appellant's vehicle just at the moment it apparently enters the box junction. Although the vehicle had to stop within the box junction, I cannot therefore determine the position when the vehicle actually entered the box. Considering all the evidence before me carefully, I cannot find as a fact that, on this particular occasion, a contravention did occur."

In other words, as there is no offence in stopping in the box if you are turning right, without the video showing me entering the box, there was no proof that I hadn't entered with that intention!

I told you the Arbiter was your friend. This one is now my very best friend!

Philip Benjamin (K20)

While **Call Sign** has always disliked the term referring to us as 'Black Cab' drivers, we have long accepted that the name is only associated with London taxi drivers and publicity-wise, is a dream name. **Bob Woodford's (ex P49)** new initiative - *London Black Cab Sightseeing Tours* - obviously agrees with our synopsis and had its official launch at Regent Street's *Britain & London Visitor Centre* (BLVC) recently.

One of his 3 business partners is Dial-a-Cab subscriber **Brian With (Y84)** and they decided to hire floor space at the BLVC in order to create an instant awareness to tourists and visitors alike who were finding their way in to research visitor attractions and things to do while in London. So why not see all the sights in an iconic London taxi - forever now to be known as a 'Black Cab'.

Anyone entering the centre during the LBCST's 8 days in residence could not possibly have missed the team - ably assisted by **Arfur**, who is 'half-a-cab' and kindly donated for the launch by LTI to generate publicity. Arfur sat proudly in the ground floor foyer, slap bang in the face of anyone entering through the front door!

The launch week got off to a great start with Brian being interviewed by **Robert Elms** on his BBC Radio London 94.9 show. Elms has for years championed the services of London's cabbies and he was delighted to accept a complimentary tour! Another BBC presenter to find his way down to the launch was nighttime talk show host, '**Big George**' **Webley**.

Back at Regent St, Bob Woodford was busy meeting visitors and talking to them about their *Classic Tour* with the options of bespoke tours, depending on their interests. At the same time, he was giving them the LBCST colourful, eye-catching brochure with a shiny

DaC and Black Cab Tours



Bob and Brian talking to prospective tour punters at the BLVC launch

jet-black cab sitting proudly on a Union flag!

The launch also offered the chance for taxi driver guides to join the fleet, or for 'would-be' guides to sign up for a course to become a guide. The tours are fun and entertaining as well as factual - no need to make up tales with these guys. Several DaC subscribers also made their way to Regent Street to take a look at the new group. Among them were **Jim Rainbird (T25)**, **Ann Watkins (M78)** and **David Roulant (F97)** among others, who had all dropped by to give the new service the 'thumbs up'.

Call Sign readers who are keen on taking on the *Cabguide* course (sponsored by the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* and fully accredited by

the *City University*), simply contact course lecturer **Graham Woodhouse** on 07939 070224 or by email to cabguide@sky.com.

Bob Woodford told **Call Sign**: "The launch was a great success and there is no stopping us now! We are shortly off to Paris and New York City to promote the tours, and that will include completing the Marathon in the 'big apple' dressed up as a taxi!"

London Black Cab Sightseeing Tours now have an office at 56 Station Rd, Chingford E4 7BE (020 8523 8555 or 07766 332938).

They also have a website at www.london-blackcabsightseeingtours.co.uk.

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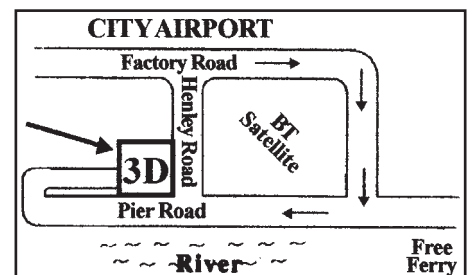
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It all started when a copy of *Private Hire & Taxi Monthly* dropped through the **Call Sign** office door. Perhaps not the sort of magazine that usually circulates in the London cab trade, but an interesting read all the same encompassing as it does, news and views of the taxi / PH trade outside the capital.

And that's when we noticed it; the enormous difference in the price of a provincial Mercedes M7/8 taxi against its London counterpart, the MB Vito taxi.

Even Vito lookalikes, such as the Peugeot and Renault, are much cheaper to buy with weekly repayments substantially lower than here in London. Residual values of these vehicles would also be appreciably less as well - and a quick browse through the many taxi / hire car company's advertisements confirmed this to be true. All are used by both taxis and PH companies outside the capital.

While the TX4 may have some small price differences depending on where you buy it and the licensing authorities requirements, quoting some examples from the ads in PHTM offers show startling differences to London taxi prices for the Vito.

A Mercedes BM8 Taxi, a 'Vito' clone, is £26,582 on the road, whereas the on the road London Vito goes from £34,858. A *Gold* spec TX4, the direct competitor to the Vito, is £35,493 on the road - £635 less and with the added benefit of instant recognition of exactly what it is and who drives it. There is no need to put a large TAXI sign along the side of it - everyone knows what it is.

One of the lookalikes in the provinces is the Peugeot EuroTaxi, which comes in at under £19,000. Other makes of cab are similarly much cheaper than London, although of course they cannot be used here as taxis. Licensed minicabs can and do use them in London.

Residual values are also dramatically lower outside the capital. You can buy an 07 Vito for £13,995 (inc VAT) and an 09 Vito from £19,150. A 56 Vito 111 Auto is £11,995 (inc VAT).

This begs the question; what will the London Vito be worth when you come to change it?

Many drivers prefer to change up at the expiry of the manufacturer's warranty period. It remains to be seen how much the London Vito will be worth when out of warranty.

Out of London cab prices may be substantially less, but that doesn't mean the fares are hugely different. The same mag lists a range of provincial fare rates and in Coventry the flag fall (initial hiring) is £2.80, Glasgow £2.00, Liverpool £2.00 and Manchester £2.50.

It seems then, that the only difference between London and the outside world is the PCO stipulation of a 25ft turning circle to comply with the *Conditions of Fitness* relating to London taxis. The Vito does this with a system of rear wheel drive/steer, which in essence is similar to front wheel drive/steer that has been around on motor cars for decades.

This function is achieved by employing a Constant Velocity Joint, which allows the wheels to turn in any direction while still transmitting power to those wheels in order to propel the vehicle forward. In the case of the Vito, the angle of turn of the rear wheels is limited sufficiently to complete a 25ft. turning circle.

The popularity of the Vito, judging by the numbers seen on the road, is not in doubt. What is more worrying is the longer-term residual value of its second hand market when these current vehicles are traded in, added to the fact that the same and similar vehicles can also be used by PH - who are not allowed to use LTI taxis as private hire vehicles. As they say, time will tell.

Our thanks to PHTM for use of the info...

Ron Yarborough Call Sign online

Mercedes Vito Taxi: Value for Money?



Taxi and PH Vitos - why the huge price difference?



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Regular **Call Sign** readers will recall **Rob Binding (V49)**, who in June 2008 took part in the *Summer Punch* charity boxing match at Bethnal Green's York Hall. The funds raised went to support the *Peacock Amateur Boxing Club* in Canning Town. The Club aims to keep youngsters off the streets and guide them into the dedication and respect that amateur boxing provides.

Rob's valiant effort last year inspired another Dial-a-Cab driver, **Mickey Tarbuck Jnr (L12)**, to take up the sport and he has been in training with Rob at the Peacock ABC for almost a year now.

Mickey told **Call Sign**: "I've always been keen on keeping fit, working out in the gym several times a week and weightlifting, so the fight game seemed a good way to stay toned up, while raising money for the youngsters by way of these charity matches. My wife Karen doesn't object too

Mickey Knocks Himself Out in Boxing Match!

Just 30 seconds from victory!



Mickey (red shorts) on the attack forces his opponent into a corner

Inset: Gaining an unexpected victory, Daniel enquires if Mickey is ok...?



much and our children, Olivia (6), Michael (4) and baby Mitchell (2), shout their support from the ringside – not to mention dad Mickey Snr (L41)! So it's all great," he said beaming with pride.

Friday 5 June 2009 saw *White Collar Boxing* come to York Hall and way up on the bill was **Mickey (The Rock Cake) Tarbuck Jnr** battling **Daniel (Rossi) Rossington** in a 3 x 2minute rounds match.

Mickey started well, gaining an early advantage and undoubtedly took the first two rounds, landing some good, solid



After the fight. Mickey Jnr with proud dad Mickey Snr

body punches onto his opponent, before weaving out of the way from Rossington's heavier blows.

But the final round didn't go to plan. Rossington came on strong, but Mickey Jnr managed to duck and weave, avoiding the worst of Daniel's onslaught. But in the final 30 seconds of that final round, Mickey slipped on the canvas while moving away from his adversary and his head made hard contact with the bottom rope

as he fell.

Mickey looked a bit dazed. Wary of any possible head injury, the referee had no option but to stop the fight, primarily out of concern for Mickey's health, but it also took away a Mickey Tarbuck deserved victory!

Tough luck Mick, but a great performance all the same...

...as HandE.org help raise money for Whizz Kids

It may have been raining on Saturday 6 June, but it couldn't stop the Dial-a-Cab sponsored **HandE.com** football team from smiling as they arrived at Battersea Park along with their football supporters, 'Wizbit' and their HandE supporters banner and horn blower! The publishers of HandE are used to it! However, with footballers representing **Fox, Financial Times, Time and Fortune magazine, Mindshare, Eurosport** and even Auntie **BBC** among others in this Charity held event called **Whizz Kids for Disabled Children**, the relatively unknown HandE.org, players were expected to bow in and then bow straight out again! But DaC's surprise team in their maroon and yellow striped kit took them all on, winning their league and reached the final!

The HandE.org team not only shocked the soccer-playing world with their ability, but also included three gorgeous ladies in the team who brought some glamour to the rain-filled sky! The team consisted of Justine (the boss of HandE) along with co-workers Meia, Jodie and six muscle-bound men - George, Justin, Jay, Mark, Michael and goalie Matt. HandE also brought along enough supporters to fill Wembley - that's the Horse and Duck and not the stadium!

Amazingly, HandE made it to the final with Justine running up and down the pitch flapping her arms, Meia showing off her skills, Michael almost running too fast for his own feet and the rest of the brilliant team giving us winning goals.

DAC SPONSORED FOOTBALLERS REACH FINAL



The HandE.org team sponsored by DaC reached the final

The day was full of so much spirit and great atmosphere and although HandE.org did not win the tournament,

making the final was a real success. Well done team HandE and to Whizz Kids who made lots of money on the day...

THE SHANGHAI ENGLON GOES ON SALE

That's the Geely Chinese TX4 to you!

The Geely-built London taxi, renamed the *Shanghai Englon TX4*, went on sale in the Chinese market recently with a price tag of between 208,000 - 228,000 yuan (£19,000 - £20,800). The Chinese TX4 gives buyers the choice of a 2.4litre manual gearbox running on petrol or a 2.5 automatic diesel cab.

The *Geely Shanghai Englon TX4* is aimed more at the business market than the taxi one, with few Chinese taxi owners able to sustain that type of cost. However, with capitalism reaching ever deeper into China, many businesses are now thriving.

The cab is made by Shanghai Maple Auto - the joint venture between Geely and Manganese Bronze Holdings (LTI) with the name Shanghai Englon meaning England. The venture has an annual capacity of up to 20,000 units, around seven times as many as Coventry. Shanghai will also be producing over 90% of components for the London TX4 by the end of the year, giving a financial saving of around £2000 on the London version...



The Geely Shanghai Englon aka the TX4

Tony Arnold Becomes a Grandad!

Undoubtedly the world's most widely travelled taxi driver, DaC's **Tony Arnold (F03)** has now stayed in the same place long enough to tell **Call Sign** that son Jamie and his partner have produced a beautiful grandson - **Charlie Jon Anthony**. Charlie caused a few flutters when arriving almost four weeks early. However, at 5lbs 4ozs, he was hardly underweight and both mum and son are doing well.

In addition to driving a London taxi, Tony travels the world to order to help various taxi drivers and among the places has lent his expertise to have been Australia, Nigeria and Ghana. He has also spoken at European taxi conventions in addition to taking the world's longest taxi trip - from Beijing in China to Trafalgar Square!

To Tony and family - not forgetting new uncle and Tony's brother, **Max Arnold (D66)** - congratulations..



Tony with young Charlie

On 26 June, the Science Museum celebrates its hundredth anniversary. If you are a space fan, then you'll love their July exhibitions because to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the moon landings, the Exhibition Road museum will be hosting a space season from 20 July, which includes the following:

Cosmos & Culture: How astronomy has shaped our world (opens July 23 – free)... This exhibition traces 400 years of telescope technologies, explores our changing perceptions of our place in the cosmos and examines the role astronomy has played in our everyday lives. Objects on display include Thomas Harriot's drawings of the Moon, Jupiter's satellites and sunspots; the telescope William Herschel used to discover Uranus; a detector seeking the mysterious dark matter that makes up most of our Universe and an amateur telescope made of bean cans, car parts and coat hangers.

Force Field – the ultimate multi-sensory experience (charges apply)...

See, hear, feel and even smell what it would be like to venture into space, with a ride in the Science Museum's extraordinary new multi-sensory experience. Visitors can journey deep into the unknown with *The Legend of Apollo* film and discover what it felt like to be part of the Apollo missions. The experience utilises the latest simulation and effects technologies to place the audience in a truly experiential environment where they not only see, but feel what it was like to be part of this major historical event. *The Legend of Apollo* has been created with participation from former NASA Apollo astronaut Col. David R. Scott. The film will draw on Col. Scott's own experiences, actual Apollo archival footage, recent satellite imagery of the Moon and exceptional 3D computer animation.

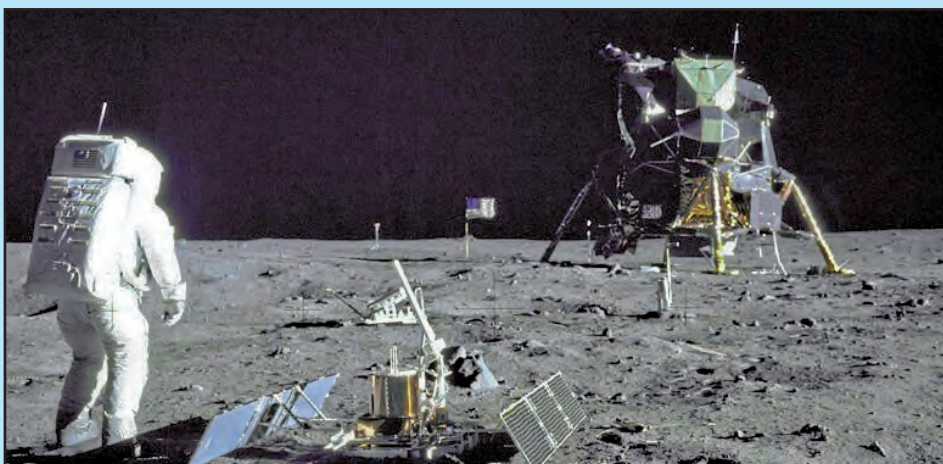
40th Anniversary of first Moon landing (opens July 20 – free)...

Discover the story of the first Moon landing in the 'Exploring Space' gallery, featuring a highly accurate replica of the Apollo 11 Moon Lander, which carried Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to the Moon. Free 'Spaced Out' tours for families will be taking place on 20 July to coincide with the anniversary of the Moon landing. The 'Spaced Out' tours are suitable for children aged 5 and above. Don't forget to see a real spaceship, the Apollo 10 module, which was used for the 'dress rehearsal' of the Moon landings.

Space in Your Face! (25, 26 July at 12.00, 14.00 and 16.00 – free)...

3, 2, 1 blast off! Go on a journey through space in this fast paced action packed extravaganza of a show! Suitable for children aged 5 and above. There is no booking process, places are available on arrival.

Science Museum celebrates the Moon Landings



Buzz Aldrin on the moon in 1969 by the Lander

The 'Spaced Out Tour' (5, 11, 12, 18, 19 July at 11.30, 13.30, 15.30. And on 20, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29 30, 31 July at 12.00, 14.00, 16.00 – free)...

Roaring rockets, amazing astronauts and smelly space pool! Discover these and much more on this interactive tour of the 'Exploring Space' gallery located on the ground floor. Suitable for children aged 5 and above. There is no booking process, places are available on arrival.

Apollo (20 and 21 July, doors open 19:00 - £18)

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing, the Science Museum, alongside Sound and Music, present the premiere of a new live arrangement of Brian Eno's 1983 album 'Apollo' performed by Icebreaker with BJ Cole and supported by experimental artists. The concert takes place in the Museum's IMAX Cinema and 'Making the Modern World' gallery. Children aged 14 and older are welcome to attend accompanied by an adult.

Call 0870 870 4771 to book; tickets available from the Science Museum.

My Mercedes is Hip!



John and Merc

When it comes to driving, **John Farmer (H69)** has pretty much done it

all, except for maybe a farm tractor or combine harvester! Before taking up cabbing, John drove HGVs and even road trains (several trailers joined together) throughout and across Europe. He also ran his own haulage company, based in Belgium.

In 1997, he decided to give up the trucking business in favour of something less energetic to haul around the streets and that's when he took up taxi driving.

"I had a TX11 Royale, which I was happy with, but you have to move with the times and keep up with technology," he said to **Call Sign** whilst eagerly polishing his shiny new Mercedes Vito taxi.

"I've had lumbar decompression (col-

lapsed spinal discs to you and me) and was off work for 18 months. I've also

got a replacement hip as well, so comfort in the cab is of paramount importance to me. The drivers' seat in this Mercedes Vito is ok and the cabin size means there's plenty of space for me to move around," he added.

"I've got a theory," John said leaning forward as if to divulge a secret to **Call Sign's** ever-open ears. "I reckon this new cab is some sort of pilot for a European standard of taxi. If it's successful here, I wonder if it will be rolled out across the EU?"

It certainly could be for Europeans with hip replacements!

© Call Sign Magazine MM9

The RMT, shared taxis – and the odd one from France!

Bob Crow is the General Secretary of the *National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers* (RMT). He is said to be a communist and someone from the old school of union leaders and activists such as Arthur Scargill and British Leyland's Derek 'Red Robbo' Robinson. What is an undoubted fact is that he has greatly increased the RMT membership from around 50,000 in 2002 to over 80,000 last year. That makes the RMT Britain's fastest growing trade union by far. Now Mr Crow has taken the RMT into the London taxi trade and is said to have gained over 200 members in a few short months. If true, this puts it well above Unite and closing in on the LCDC for second place behind the untouchable LTDA.

So how does that affect RMT taxi members? After all, if you are in a union, you are expected to follow that union's code and avoid crossing picket lines – even if they aren't actually visible to the naked eye.

The recent tube strike caused havoc in London – although it failed to stop the capital from operating. Part of that continuation of London's business was the use of more shared taxi ranks at train stations. So we had the situation where taxi drivers in the RMT were crossing that invisible picket line by allowing themselves to counter the effect of



know. After all, 200 as against the membership of their London underground workers. No doubt he will see this and *Call Sign* would be

their striking "brothers." The obvious question is what Bob Crow felt about that? The probable answer is that he doesn't even

happy to publish any response.

In a lighter vein, Dial-a-Cab driver **Barry Spear (Y16)** was working during tube strike day and snapped this photo of a French taxi in Londres. Whether as a member of the European Community, the PCO brought him over to assist the shared taxi scenario, we know not. But it made us smile and that can't hurt!

Alan Fisher

TUBE STRIKE



French taxi in London on tube strike day. Inset pic: Bob Crow

Sam's Plans Go Down A Rabbit Hole!

Recent issues of *Call Sign* have detailed the progress of **Sam Bezzina**, son of Dial-a-Cab driver **Dean Bezzina (M10)**, and his ambition to box for England. He climbed one step closer when winning a prestigious Golden Gloves Championship against Walsall boxer Liam Etheridge to claim the national title and a pair of Golden Gloves.

His next step on the ladder was scheduled to be the Newham Amateur Boxing Club's annual dinner show at the Circus Tavern in Essex. But fate had other plans for Sam.

Dad Dean told *Call Sign*: "Sam was in training and using an athletics meet as part of that. Unfortunately he caught his foot in a rabbit hole and wrenched the ankle almost 90 degrees. I was never happy about him competing at the meeting, but he insisted - only to be defeated by a rabbit!"

Sam was also preparing for his international debut in the *Three Nations* where he would have proudly represented his country for the first time and possibly win his first gold medal whilst wearing an England vest. The rabbit hole put paid to that as well.

Dean continued: "Needless to say Sam was devastated after putting in so much effort over the past year and overcoming so many other problems against all the odds. He knows that without an impressive appearance at the *Three Nations* it is extremely unlikely that he will get his chance to box in Russia at the European Championships. I'm disappointed that more care was not taken by the school to ensure that the running surface the lads were training on was in good order, but having said that, at the end of the day it is all about staying healthy and fit. It could just as easily been flu that took him out of the competition. I'd love to keep Sam at home and wrap him up in cotton wool so I can keep an eye on him and keep him from harms way before a major championship, but in reality Sam is an adrenalin junky! As well as his boxing, he loves to race motocross and is very competitive; you just can't get him to slow down for five minutes. No wonder I've lost

most of my hair! But when all is said and done, Sam should be very proud of himself, just as we are. He is still unbeaten since joining Newham and let's not forget as National Champion being ranked No 1 (Class3 48kgs). He can't wait for the new season to start in September and if we can keep him away from athletic meetings, we will. But I don't fancy our chances!"

Good luck Sam. The Olympics are just 3 years away...!



No boxing ring to pose in for Sam - just dad's DaC taxi!

Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is undoubtedly a killer. Former DaC driver **Paul Bishop** used to run marathons along with **Call Sign's Bob Woodford** in aid of BLISS, the baby life support charity. Then one day he came down with MND symptoms and it took his life soon after. That was on 17 May 1999. One of Paul's last wishes was that more money be put into finding a cure for this appalling illness that gradually and methodically affects every muscle in the patient's body, so that even eating and breathing become a problem.

Now a doctor in India is claiming some success, so much so that Dial-a-Cab driver Maurice Karter (W46) took his partner of 27 years - now his wife of one year - Janet to see Dr Geeta Shroff at her Delhi clinic.

Dr Shroff carries out embryonic stem cell (ESC) treatment, which many scientists hope one day will cure everything from spinal injury to diabetes, by growing into a replacement part after being transplanted into the body. The treatment is expensive and while most of the world's scientists are still experimenting with ESC, India allows the use of the technology on incurably or terminally ill patients.

At 53, Janet suddenly found the strength in one of her hands had become so weak that she could no longer play the clarinet - an instrument she played in an amateur orchestra. The diagnosis for Janet shocked both her and Maurice. She had MND and was given a prognosis that would see her life end within two to five years.

Previously a very active woman, Janet was soon confined to a wheelchair and unable to carry out tasks that most would consider just a normality of life. Through this heartbreak, Maurice, together with Janet's daughter Charlotte, stood by her doing all they could to help. They sought medical opinions that all came back totally negative. According to Maurice, although Janet was given various pills etc, consultants were claiming there was no effective treatment and in reality, they were all just watching Janet slowly die.

Then Maurice heard stories on the internet about an Indian doctor who had been helping people such as Janet with remarkable results. The stories revolved around Australian rugby player, **Perry Cross**, who became a quadriplegic after a rugby injury at the age of 19. He had no movement below his neck and had to use a ventilator to breathe. After 14 years in that situation, he went to Geeta Shroff and now is able to breathe unaided. Some British scientists have voiced concern and scepticism over his claims and have labelled Dr Shroff a dangerous maverick, claiming she has produced no data in what cells she is using or how they are prepared or even injected into the body. However her technology is patented and has been in use for over 7 years. And

CAN MND BE DEFEATED?

Dial-a-cab Driver takes his wife to India to find out...



Janet and Maurice at Dr Shroff's Clinic

with over 600 patients benefiting from this treatment, patients report that they have not experienced any side effects.

Janet and Maurice were convinced that it had to be better than just waiting to die, so they went to India. By the time they arrived, Janet could no longer speak or even cough - more dangerous than it sounds because that is nature's way of keeping the lungs clear and failing to do so would lead to suffocation. However, she showed improvement soon after treatment began and regained that vital ability to cough.

At the time of writing, the couple were on their third trip to Geeta Shroff's clinic. **Call Sign** spoke to Maurice to ask how Janet was. He surprised us by saying that at the end of November 2008, Janet had weighed just 44 kilos, but within 5 months her weight had increased to 53.65 kilos - an astonishing weight gain for someone suffering with MND!

Maurice told us: "I have been on DaC for over 20 years, although I have not driven the cab for a year because I've been looking after Janet 24/7. When we arrived back in Delhi for our third trip and the doctors and nurses saw her again, they immediately noticed the difference. Her face was fuller and she had more muscles and strength on her than she'd had 6 weeks previous - especially on the left hand between her thumb and forefinger where the muscle had wasted away, but is now gradually returning. The clinic says her body is responding well and is

starting to regenerate."

Call Sign asked Maurice about the costs involved, because their second visit lasted two months, with this third one taking up the whole of May. Currently there is no time limit on how long the treatment could take.

"I stay in the same room as Janet in the clinic," he told us, "and yes, it is very expensive. But the cost includes all treatment, accommodation, food and physio. We get assistance 24 hours a day if needed. It is also air-conditioned and with the outside temperature in May reaching 40C (104F), going out isn't something I miss out over here!"

And what if the money runs out? According to Maurice, Dr Shroff's main concern is to see her patients do well and she would never abandon them. She would like to see Janet treated in London, but the UK medical profession will not allow the treatment. The stem cells could be imported under licence to treat Janet over here, but no one would help to administer them. Dr Shroff's vision is to see that HESC therapy is made available globally.

So how long will they be going back to India for the treatment?

"When we get to a point where Janet can talk, eat properly again and walk unaided, then that will be our aim - for Janet to have a better quality of life and if that means travelling to India, then so be it."

Now, following recent treatment, Janet has showed further improvement. Her walking is better - although obviously still aided and her tongue has now begun moving again, allowing her to speak clearer. Her strength and muscles continue to grow with doctors and physios commenting on her amazing progress.

All **Call Sign** can do is to wish Janet the very best. That is certainly something Paul Bishop would also have said...

Call Sign

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Editor: Alan Fisher

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

Tel: 0207 251 0581 Fax: 0207 553 7293

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Email: danny.fresco@dsl.pipex.com

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Royalists, Rationalists, Believers... and DaCman!

Meeting people on a cruise ship is like meeting them in a hospital maternity ward, particularly in the old days when they kept you in for over a week after the birth. There's an unwritten rule that you don't talk about controversial things and don't upset anyone. You're all taking photos, feeling excited and well, you're all in the same boat - if you see what I mean. All races and classes mingle and the experience is unforgettable. So don't go on a cruise with my **Dial-a-Cabbie**, Glen. Why couldn't my DaCman just be nice to our dining companions the night they got onto royalty chat? OK, we've heard it all before, how the Queen works so hard and never puts a foot wrong. How Charles just isn't up to the job and when the time comes should step aside and let William be King. Then someone else on our table chips in: *"He should've had the backbone to refuse to marry Diana. They made him marry her, you know, of course they did, but he never loved her, poor dear, it was never going to work."*

Now another person adds to the tabloid script: *"No one wants Camilla as queen, do they? I never agreed with him marrying her and now she won't do her job and go to half the places the Queen visits. Camilla says she can't stand the heat in Africa; well it's going to be hot there isn't it, it's Africa. It goes with the job as that's where half the Commonwealth is!"* Glen can bear no more and interrupts: *"Come on, there aren't many women in the country as stupid as Elizabeth Windsor and if her job went on merit, she'd never have got it."*

Oh, dear... Dead quiet then... End of conversation at our table. The rest of the cruise round the Baltic capitals with MSC (an Italian outfit) was fabulous, but we didn't make any friends. Glen went on to tell an Italian that it was pointless the Pope praying for peace, as he did that last year and the year before and it

AND FINALLY.....

For the last time, the views on life, love and the laundry basket from the lady behind a DaC driver...

Back Seat *Driver*



Glen does believe in some things, such as the right to freedom of speech. He picked up Rowan Atkinson recently and congratulated him for his campaign to stop incitement to religious hatred becoming outlawed. Rowan Atkinson says that if you can't insult religion, comedy will die. Glen also believes in freedom of expression, yet realises most other drivers are fed up with the Tamil and other protests around the Houses of Parliament causing congestion. And, as always, Glen believes absolutely in John Lewis.

What keeps me going, dear readers, is an irrational belief that something really good is just around the corner. Like people who believe in God, I keep seeing signs of it, visions if you like. Here is the most recent: A lovely girl my son has met, who has charmed him out of his tree, with a special aura about her. Wait for it and please sit down, because it is the truth - her mother has actually met Elvis!

I believe in the future and I am sure, more than ever, that it will be full of magic...

Love Poppy xxx

P.S. Well, I'm signing off now and getting out of the back seat. It's time for another Dial-a-Cab WAG to share her thoughts on life, love and the laundry basket. Thanks for reading and thanks to editor Alan for adding all the exclamation marks over the years - I wish my successor as much fun as I've had...

If you are a WAG with a PC and fancy entertaining CS readers, let me know...Ed



A familiar site on the roads of Britain, the London taxi is globally recognised as the world's finest taxi service. Now in a move by manufacturer LTI Vehicles to develop a professional service throughout Europe and the world, a demo vehicle of the British icon has started to turn heads on the streets of Poland's capital city, Warsaw.

As a result, the Coventry-based company has been inundated with enquires on how Polish dealers and businesses can be a part of the unrivalled taxi system that provides its passengers with a first class ride and experience.

LTI International Market Development Director, **Matthew Cheyne**, told **Call Sign**:

"People who see the London taxi instantly want it. Passengers want to ride in it, taxi drivers want to drive it and businesses want to own it. Our demo vehicle in Poland has proved that. Drivers find it easy to drive and very manoeuvrable with its tight turning circle and passengers feel safe and relaxed. It is sure to be a big success in Poland."

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I am 81 now and talking about life more than 60 years ago. It is possible my memory is faulty on some things. If you feel strongly enough that this is the case, feel free to write in...

The Knowledge in the 50s...

I presented myself at the PCO in Lambeth Road to ask if I could do the Knowledge. During the preliminary interview, it was made plain to me that if I obtained my badge I would become a public servant. If I did not like the idea of being a servant, it would be best if I didn't waste everybody's time and just forgot the whole idea.

Then, whilst waiting my turn to be interviewed, I heard a heated voice from the interview room shouting out: "I'm trying to help you. I'll ask you again. Do you want to alter these papers you have completed in which you state that you have never been convicted of any crime, because you seem to have forgotten that in 1934 you were found guilty in the Juvenile Court of riding a bicycle without a front light. However, I'll make an exception for you if you still want to be a cab driver; get out of sight before I change my mind!"

I think that perfectly illustrates the difference between police checking application forms who could - and in the case of my colleague did - find out about a conviction and today's overpaid expert civil servants. We are now forced to fill in Enhanced CRB Disclosures. I assume that John Worboys - who raped and sexually assaulted God knows how many women in his cab - also completed this form, presumably to the entire satisfaction of these same civil servants, enabling him to continue his revolting career of assaulting innocent woman.

But back to my Knowledge. While waiting in the interview room, I met two other gentlemen also hoping to be accepted. If successful, it was agreed we would meet up at Mark Antonio's cafe on the corner of Lambeth Road and Pratt Walk. At the cafe, we discussed how we could do the Knowledge together. I wonder how many old timers are now saying: "Blimey I knew that cafe." Well so did everyone else who did the Knowledge at that time.

We were all ex-service men and organ-

At the age of 81, DaC driver John Edwardes (H05) had to suddenly retire following a heart problem. Now he has written about his life as a taxi driver. Call Sign is serialising it...

John Edwardes: My Life as a Taxi Driver

ised ourselves accordingly. We would meet every morning at 7 o'clock at a designated spot and try and do three runs a day. Packing up at about 6 o'clock, we took turns as to whose house we went to for our call-overs and to plan the next day's three runs. Sometimes I would not get to bed until one or two in the morning and still have to get up in time to meet the others at seven. We worked seven days a week, including bank holidays, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

We did the Knowledge on pushbikes - it was the only way allowed. If you were seen doing it any other way, then you were out. For example, a popular gadget in those days was a small petrol engine that fitted onto the front wheel of bicycles. A couple of Knowledge blokes were seen using these and were promptly sent on their way with their papers torn up. Drivers today have no idea what it was like then.

There were no appointments at the end of your visit to the PCO. You were told to return in 30 days, but never given a time or date. When you arrived outside the Carriage Office, 30 days after your last appointment, it was at around 4am - that is if you wanted to be seen. Even then you were never first in the queue - there was always someone in front no matter how early you got there. If you arrived much later than that, you were wasting your time, as you would not be seen. At 8am the doors at the top of the steps

were opened and the queue would start to move. Behind a small window, a gentleman would enter your name on a list. When his list was full, the rest were turned away. Reaching the window, you were told to turn left down some narrow stairs into the 'snake pit'. Lit by two bare bulbs, this was a cellar about 20 feet by 16 feet with a couple of benches running along the sides for you to sit on, though I cannot remember ever seeing anybody actually sitting on them. Ventilation was by small slit windows along one wall about seven feet from the floor. Here you would wait until your name was called. I cannot remember how many hopefuls were imprisoned at any one time, but it was always packed. If it had been raining, we'd all be wet. With some smoking and little or no ventilation, it often stank.

At last your name was called. You went upstairs, along a short corridor and turned right into another corridor. There were three offices to your left; all had frosted glass windows including the door. You'd knock on the door as instructed and a voice would shout for you to come in. As you entered, there was a piece of board stretching the length of the office on your right. Being fairly high, you could see the officer sitting behind it, but not much else...

Next month - John's horrifying appointment...

ED THOMPSON TO LEAVE PCO

Ed Thompson, TfL's Taxi and Private Hire Director at the PCO has said he plans to step down from the post after seven years in the role as soon as a new Director is appointed.

Ed has overseen the introduction of private hire licensing, stepped up the battle against taxi touts and has been a constant voice supporting the vital work of London's taxi and private hire services.

Jeroen Weimar, Chief Operating Officer, Surface Transport said: "Ed has led the PCO through challenging times and has been instrumental in some really positive changes which have benefited both the trade and passengers. I wish him well in his future endeavours."

Ed Thompson said:

"It has been a great privilege to serve in this post for the past seven years. I would like to pay tribute to all of the staff at the PCO and those providing taxi and private hire services that do such a great job for London. I'm looking forward to my future challenges, but will greatly miss the PCO and the taxi and private hire trade."

DaC doesn't go into 'green' competitions; our Society just goes about its business doing everything it can to try to help the environment. For example, all lights and air-con are on sensors so that if a room is empty both will automatically switch off. In addition, all paper is shredded and recycled, whilst our intranet service cuts out much of the old memo paperwork. DaC also offset their carbon footprint. Read on...

Impressive progress is continuing in the Dial-a-Cab sponsored *Kenya Tree Planting* programme. This is run in collaboration with our carbon management partner, *Carbon Footprint Ltd* (www.carbonfootprint.com). This is in spite of the political turmoil that faced Kenya last year. Fortunately the Great Rift Valley region - where the DaC programme is based - largely escaped the drought faced by other regions in that country and the programme continues to grow from strength to strength, with the team hitting all their planting targets for the season.

Carbon Footprint's managing director **John Buckley** told *Call Sign*: "The programme continues to deliver vital humanitarian benefits as well as reducing carbon emissions, while the local communities are benefiting from Dial-a-Cab's contributions now more than ever."

The Kenya project forms part of Dial-a-Cab's carbon management programme - that underpins our environmental policy and commitment to alleviate climate change. Our carbon management programme - now well into its second year - includes regular appraisal of all our operational emissions, a reduction programme and carbon offsetting of all our emissions via projects from across four continents.

Carbon Footprint's local project coordinator **Mburu Waiganjo** updated *Call Sign* on the programme's progress...

"Preparation for the planting season started quite early with the ground preparation some two

DaC Still the Greenest Taxi Company



DaC's coordinator at work

Inset pic *Call Sign's* reporter in Kenya - **Mbura Waiganjo**



months ahead of the planting. The intent was to plant early and enjoy the full benefits of the long rainy season. While all the five forests in what are called 'water towers' were experiencing raging forest fires, we were lucky that the Escarpment forest, which is at the tip of the Aberdare forest, was spared the catastrophe. There was therefore no interference with our preparations."

The planting was managed over two phases and although the rains were late and sparse and delayed the planting, the DaC team still hit their targets and managed to plant the planned fifteen hectares (15ha) with 15,000 trees.

Wearing their distinctive new DaC T-shirts, they also succeeded in planting the largest species collection at one planting event - an all time record of 21 species - all helping to promote biodiversity!

This season has also seen the increasing participation of neighbouring commu-

nities - and especially of women who we are also educating on the need to reduce fuel use through use of fuel-efficient jikos (wood kilns) as well as seeking alternative fuels such as biogas.

But care for the trees doesn't just stop there. Now planting has been achieved, participation of the neighbouring community is the key to ensuring the forests thrive.

DaC Chairman, Brice Rice, told *Call Sign*: "I'm delighted at the great efforts and results our team in Kenya have achieved this season. Dial-a-Cab is again leading the way in demonstrating that good business, environmental and social responsibility all go hand in hand."

In addition to Kenya, DaC's carbon offset projects also include a clean energy project in Harshnath (India), our new Maya Nut tree reforestation project in Central America and of course our UK tree-planting project.

Keep reading *Call Sign* for further project updates over the coming months.



Why LTI were not at the Coventry Show...

LTI has explained to *Call Sign* why they did not take part in the *Private Hire and Taxi show* at the Ricoh arena on 27 and 28 May, deciding instead to continue its drive to offer customers fantastic new TX4 deals that represent unbeatable value for money.

Rob Laidler, Sales Director at LTI, told this magazine: "It's not an easy decision pulling out of the show, but we think our strategy of creating unbeatable offers for our customers to buy a new TX4 is the right thing to do in the current economy."

He continued: "We recognise that drivers want to be out there working on the streets at the moment, therefore LTI are heavily supporting our dealers to take the show out onto the ranks, offering test drives and doing deals that include the Government's £2000 Scrapage deal for older part exchanges. We believe our customers will agree that this way they can drive the best purpose-built taxi in the world without taking an unnecessary day off work."

Call Sign could write pages of what Doug Sherry has done for the taxi trade and its associated charities. However, we have decided to let others do that because make no mistake, this trade has lost one of its biggest-ever supporters - and a lovely man...

Brian Rice

Chairman Dial-a-Cab

I was really sad to hear of the passing of Doug. I knew him for many years and he had always been a great advocate of our trade, attending and supporting any function representing our industry. Doug was an extremely generous man who contributed greatly to our trade; he will be greatly missed, especially by Audrey and their family. My deepest condolences...

David Lessman (D19)

Chairman LTFUC

I have no doubt that the sad passing of Douglas Sherry MBE will leave a huge gap in the London taxi trade. Doug's self-effacing and avuncular nature, coupled with his reluctance to be spotlighted, will be to his eternal credit.

The London 'Taxidrivers' Fund for Underprivileged Children first approached Douglas over 15 years ago when the facility then used for committee meetings was withdrawn. His offer of the use of the 'boardroom' at the Kings Cross Taxi Wash was most welcome; and thence began a longstanding friendship with a true gentleman. I cannot recall more than a handful of events since then when Doug wasn't there with his support, be it financial, goods in kind or just the promise that if we needed him, he would be there.

I'm sure I speak for everyone in the trade with whom he came into contact, that although not here to share our lives, he will be watching over us with that enigmatic smile and wishing us well in all we do. Sleep well, Douglas...

Tom Whitbread

Chairman Dial-a-Dream

Dial-a-Dream would like to send their deepest condolences to Doug Sherry's family. This is the very sad loss of a man held in such high esteem by our charity and others. We have had a long relationship with Doug from the day we formed the charity all those years ago at Dial-a-Cab's offices. Without his generous help, many a terminally ill child's dream would have been delayed and could have ended up as being too late to realise. God Bless you Doug and a big thank you...

Bill Tyzack BEM (C06)

Life President LTFUC

I first met Douglas just before he set up a cab and car wash below St Pancras Station. It was there you could get your

DOUG SHERRY MBE

1929-2009



Doug with wife Audrey at the TDY dinner and ball

cab washed and serviced and have a very wholesome, well-cooked meal in his Big Red Bus café. There were also, thanks to Douglas's generosity, a few rooms set aside for use by trade charities and organisations. This is where the LTFUC was able to store toys and goods in addition to having our meetings. Indeed I was associated with Doug on three different organisations and we spent many hours organising events for all of them. Douglas was instrumental in boosting these organisations and it was due to his generosity with his time, and not least his money, that they thrived as well as they did. Douglas and I actually made the inaugural trip to Euro Disney in Paris, taking with us a family from north London as guinea pigs. While the family enjoyed the delights of the complex, Doug and I had meetings with local officials to plan for the main trip by dozens of taxis with their children and minders later in that year. It was because of Doug's untiring efforts and fluency in French, that we were able to complete our plans satisfactorily. I felt privileged to be associated with him in connection with all the organisations that he so generously supported.

To Audrey, his wife who was always by his side in total support, I send heartfelt condolences and assure her that where he is now, there will be a wonderful welcome to all taxi drivers at his cab wash in heaven. With respect and thanks...

Russell Poluck MBE (T55)

Chairman TDOY Charity Fund

When asked what I felt when I heard that Doug Sherry MBE had passed away, I was devastated. I have known Doug for over 30 years. Firstly, like many others, I used the car wash garage and in later years ate

at his Big Red Bus in Pancras Road.

Doug then gave the TDYCF the use of an office on his premises. Eventually he joined both the TDY committee and the Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers. In later years he also joined the London Benevolent Association for War Disabled and was made Vice President.

I always found Doug to be friendly, helpful and willing to help all the trade charities. He always had time to have a chat when he owned the shelters at Kings Cross and Heathrow. If you needed to sell raffle tickets or diaries etc, he would never say no to any trade charity.

Doug was a quiet man and doted on his wife Audrey. He may not have said much, but he was always ready to help everyone – something I learned by his kind donations to the TDYCF charity. His goodwill always helped us to help the other charities that we support.

He has done so much for the taxi trade charities and he will be so sadly missed. His staff and friends called him the Godfather. A legion has died. A man always to be remembered.

Our thoughts are with his wife Audrey at this sad time...

PORTRAIT AND WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

Looking for a present? There is nothing quite as personal as a picture of you and your loved ones in a frame. I do portrait shoots in the comfort of your own home or on location.

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

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

Please check out my portfolio on www.anjaking.com

Enquiries: email: anja@anjaking.com





The last issue of *Call Sign* wrote of a new product aimed at smokers. Intellicig is an electronic rechargeable cigarette that is said to have the same qualities as a real cigarette (including blowing out smoke), but is cheaper, legal for indoor use and gives out no fumes. It looks like a real ciggy and provides smokers with their fix of nicotine (plus traces of propylene glycol, glycerol and water compared to the 4,800 chemicals you find in a typical pack of 20).

Call Sign asked Dial-a-Cab Account Manager, **Caroline McGowan**, who smokes over 20 a day, to try out Intellicig for 6 weeks and then let us know whether it has helped her. Her brief was just to tell the truth.

She now tells *Call Sign*:

"I was so eager to try Intellicig out that I kept asking Alan (the editor) whether the sample had arrived. When he came into the office on the Friday 24 April with it, I

Caroline: Intellicig could be the smoker's answer!

couldn't wait to try it out. It just so happened that I had already arranged a night out with colleagues from work that evening, so we all headed off to Upper Street with our first port of call being the Slug & Lettuce public house.

After getting a round of drinks, we all sat chatting for at least an hour and the nicest thing was that I didn't have to leave the pub in the mid-conversation as I had often done previously because a little man in my head kept saying cigarette, cigarette, cigarette! I was completely relaxed puffing on my new ciggy. We all noticed the finger pointing and whispers from other people in the pub and it became a great talking point when we moved onto the restaurant and also on the tube journey home.

I have tried patches and other inhalers, but found Intellicig to be the closest thing to a real cigarette, although you do not get quite the same kick as you do from the real thing. It also leaves a slight taste on your lips, which I presume is the nicotine, but you do get used to it. Although I have not given up smoking completely, I have certainly cut down and on the two days that I did not smoke at all, I noticed how nice it was not to have the stench of smoke on my clothes and in my hair. I am also quite happy to sit at my desk puffing

away on my new ciggy when it's cold and raining outside.

I suspect that I don't have the willpower of those who have already kicked the habit, but I will continue in my quest in the hope that I can cut down even further. Alan did ask me to put away the money that I had saved, but like every good woman I never listen to men (ha ha) but I can tell you that I have brought a couple of new pairs of shoes!

On the downside, I would advise that you order a new set of cartridges once you have received your starter pack, as these have to be ordered on-line. However, after speaking with John Chamley at Intellicig, they are hoping that the replacement cartridges will be widely available soon so you may even be able to go to your local shop or supermarket.

I would recommend any smoker to give Intellicig a go. Even if you just cut down, you will be better off health-wise and you can also save a little money - especially if you are a 20-a-day or over smoker. A good 10 out of 10 for Intellicig if you want to cut down..."

Intellicig can be purchased online direct at www.intellicig.com. Intellicig is also available at selected retail outlets

INTELLICIG'S

"SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE"

And a special offer for Dial-a-Cab drivers...

Call Sign offered Intellicig the opportunity to comment after reading a transcript of DaC Account Manager Caroline McGowan's comments on this page on how she found that Intellicig has given her "smoking" a social acceptance. They have now made us an offer:

A spokesperson told us:

Every day Intellicig is succeeding in changing people's perceptions of smoking. Gone are the days of smelly ashtrays to be replaced with the greatest invention of recent times. The Intellicig success story is testimony itself to the positive effect our *EVOLution* model has had for so many users; in just six months the company has grown incredibly and now exports to major suppliers across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas. The Intellicig offers smokers more than a fighting chance to change their smoking habit to a cleaner alternative, which has spin off benefits for family, friends and work colleagues as they can now be free from passive smoking, smelly clothes and staff disappearing for their fix. Intellicig is also much cheaper than conventional cigarettes and can save you enough in a year for an extra holiday!

We know that many Cabbies smoke and



along with spending much of their working day in the cab, this can have adverse effects. We are offering all Dial-a-Cabbies a superb discount of 20% off their first order from Intellicig. Also, have a look at our Trade Pack opportunity further down the page.

To claim your discount, just go to www.intellicig.com, buy a starter kit and when you reach checkout, enter the coupon code **cabbie20** which will automatically take 20% off your bill.

Intellicig offers a 30-day guarantee and if you are not satisfied within that time, simply return the product for a refund. If you have non-DaC cabby friends, they too are welcome.

Cabbies' Trade Offer

Having been a cabbie many years ago, I know that passengers will be fascinated with the Intellicig and will want to know more. Intellicig have put together a special Trade Pack for Taxi drivers which consists of the following:

- 10 x EVO-U Starter Kits.
- 1 Free EVOLution to demo.
- 25 Free Cartridges to demo.
- 1 Free Car USB Adaptor.
- Free Information Stickers.

The pack costs just £150, which is the trade price for the 10 EVO-U kits. The RRP for the EVO-U is £26 each. If you would like to know more or place your order, please contact the Intellicig team by calling 0845 527 6115 or emailing john@intellicig.com

Full details of our kits and Trade Packs are on our website at www.intellicig.com.

COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Hello Ladies & Gents,

In this report I'd like to remind you of some of the important *Procedural Rules* that I hope will prevent any misunderstandings in the future. On any complaint forms that I send out to members, the rules I feel may be violated are individually itemised and can be easily checked or verified in the *driver's manual*, which as you know is available on line at the Dial-a-Cab website (www.dialacab.co.uk) under the heading of *DaC Members Portal*. Listed below are a number of procedures that have recently caused slight problems or have been misconstrued.

Booking In

You must be able to reach the furthest part of all London postal zones you intend booking in to within 15 minutes. Zones outside of London such as E50S and SE99 (either side of the M25) are physical and you must be within the exact zone before booking in. Please remember that any unmatched trips will appear on the *Bid* screen if they have been rejected or unsuccessfully offered to the relevant back-up zones. It is then that you can bid and offer the client a time or a suitable delay on a particular trip.

Run Ins

£4.20 unless otherwise authorised. Taxi-Card trips are £3.80.



If you arrive with less than the above amounts, the difference must not be added onto the meter at the end of the journey.

Regular Bookings

Throughout the day and night, there are regular trips that are dispatched from certain zones bringing clients into their places of work or transporting them home. If you choose to book in very early and wait for the same trip on a consistent basis, it will be deemed as *hanging up* or *making a trip your own*. These are procedure rule violations.

It is not in the true spirit of the Society to book into a zone and hog a queue position because you are aware of a regular trip,

and by doing so it certainly gives you an unfair advantage over your fellow members.

Multi-choice trips

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

How would you feel if it happened to you...?

The system is consistently monitored and whilst work is quieter than in previous times, if members are seen to be gaining an unfair advantage or exploiting the system they will be dealt with appropriately. I hope that when you read this report, you will agree with me that if we all work within the Society rules and regulations, it is much fairer for everyone. It is the very small minority that unjustly exploit the system, take advantage of their fellow members and in so doing jeopardise accounts. Every effort is made to ensure that Dial-a-Cab is not just the fairest circuit, but with your help remains at the top of the tree.

Allan Evans

Allane@Dialacab.co.uk



COMPLAINTS RESULTS

A Complaints meeting was held on 4th June 2009.

The results are below...

Name / call sign	Nature of Complaint	Sentence
Tony Farrugia (F09)	<i>Driver booked into E14 when not physically in the zone Rule 11</i>	1 week susp
Daren Stratford (P08)	<i>Driver completed a regular booked trip on many occasions and accepted the trip from his home address Rules 6, 11</i>	4 weeks susp
Patrick Foy (B93)	<i>Driver completed a regular trip on many occasions booking in to trip zone long before the trip was dispatched Rules 6, 11</i>	4 weeks susp
Kevin Jacobs (V45)	<i>Driver was still booked into SE3 when true position was the Highway E1. Then accepted a trip in SE7 (SE3 back up zone) Rules 11, 16</i>	Reprimand

City Parking Changes

From 15 June 2009, the City of London Corporation put into place changes to parking controls in the City zones where yellow lines are displayed. The changes are being implemented to improve the flow of traffic in the City, particularly for taxis, buses and emergency service vehicles.

A single controlled parking zone will cover the whole of the City between 7am and 7pm from Monday to Friday and between 7am and 11am on Saturday. All single yellow lines in the City will operate at these times. Double yellow lines will, however, continue to prohibit waiting in their location at any time.

When waiting is prohibited (during the controlled period on single yellow lines and at all times on double yellow lines), waiting solely in order to load or unload will however be permitted for up to 40 minutes (except in locations where loading and unloading is prohibited; these areas are clearly indicated by traffic signs and road markings). The maximum stay period in pay and display parking bays will be increased to four hours.



Ray Sorene - 40 years with DaC

Ray Clocks up 40 Years with DaC

Congratulations to Dial-a-Cab driver **Ray Sorene (A53)** who will be clocking up forty years with the Society on Thursday 9 July. Ray joined as Jack Taylor was handing over the ODRTS Chairmanship to Jack Russell.

Ray told **Call Sign**:

"The time has gone far too quickly, but I

know that when I joined this Society I definitely made the right choice."

DaC's longest serving drivers are **Alan Lewis (A44)**, who joined in August 1962, followed closely by **Bill Tyzack (C06)** who arrived in September of the same year – the only surviving DaC drivers from the chairmanship of **Eli (Trixie) Solomons**.

The DaC Driver and the "Wobbly" TX4...

When **Call Sign** met **Paul Faulkner (O13)** recently, he wasn't a very happy bunny. His TX4 rear suspension stabiliser bar had broken and he was awaiting the recovery truck to take him back to his garage.

Paul takes up the story:

"I'd stopped at Shepherd's Bush for a passenger going to Kensington. As I pulled away, I heard a light scraping noise from the rear of the cab, but kept on going gently thinking I'd drop the passenger off before investigating the problem. Unfortunately, the noise got rapidly louder and the rear end of the cab began swaying uncontrollably from side to side as I rolled along. I had to let the passenger get another taxi as mine had become very unstable. I wobbled ultra-cautiously into Hyde Park, as it was safer to stop there and looked under the cab to see if I could find the problem. I originally thought it might be something jammed in either the suspension or a wheel that was causing the difficulty, so you can imagine my dismay when I saw an iron bar - obviously part of the rear axle/suspension - hanging down just centimetres from the ground! It had broken away from somewhere near the rear wheel and apparently plays a major role in the stability of the taxi."

Paul lost the use of the cab over that weekend and for much of the following week whilst repairs were being carried out. He continued his story...

"After LTI in Coventry confirmed the warranty status, my garage - **Ascott Cab Co** - got on with the job, keeping me informed throughout. They were brilliant and got me back on the road as quickly as they could. It's a bit daunting when the rear end of your taxi suddenly starts wobbling like a strawberry jelly!"



The underneath of Paul's cab shows why it "wobbled!"

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Albany Charity trip to Hastings

On 3 June, the football club car park at The Valley - home to **Charlton Athletic FC** - saw 90 taxis convene ready for the annual **Albany Charity** outing to Hastings. Cabs were decorated before departing in convoy with their precious cargo of special needs children. The annual event began back in 1972 and has left from Charlton's ground for many of these years. Thanks go to Charlton for providing the much-appreciated breakfast.

Once on the road, the excitement built for the 300 children and their carers. A quick comfort stop at **Bewl Water** on the A21 saw everyone enjoying sandwiches and refreshments; credit goes to **Claire and mum-in-law Jean** for these. Then it was off to the seaside! The **Sussex police** joined the convoy and helped make sure everyone arrived safely. The weather in Hastings was kind as the town welcomed the convoy of taxis. Everyone enjoyed a great day at the funfair and amusements followed by tea and a disco, before winding their weary way back to London.

The Albany charity is grateful to everyone who gave their help and support to make the trip a success. The committee would like to thank **Ascotts** for providing diesel for the outing, **T&J Rescue** for their back-up service in case of any breakdowns and of course **the drivers** who gave up their time to make the 17th annual outing possible. We were pleased to welcome new drivers on the trip and look forward to seeing them again.



These two children were obviously enjoying the day!

Sandie Goodwin

Charlie Rubin

Together with Brian, I attended Charlie Rubin's Funeral. Having not seen him for some time, I was shocked to hear he hadn't been well and of his passing. I first met Charlie about forty years ago when I first joined Dial-a-Cab – then ODRTS and Lords – as a journeyman. He was a dispatcher and I remember having a whinge about something or another, most probably about voice channel signals or that a driver wasn't where he said he was when blowing in for a job. However, Charlie invited me to the Control room to listen to the voice dispatch system and listen to what dispatchers had to put up with from the drivers. No change there!

I used to see him at some of the cafes where he loved to talk about anything and everything. He was a man who loved people. This gentle and loving man will be missed by his family and everyone who knew him. My condolences to all the family

Doug Sherry

It was also with great sadness that I heard of the passing of our friend and loving husband to Audrey, Douglas. No words can adequately give comfort during this extremely difficult time. The good causes Doug supported were a testament to the distinctive qualities he possessed. Although both Doug and Audrey supported many charities within the taxi industry and outside, one of the first encounters I had with him was many years ago at an LTFUC charity event, a horse riding competition that was certainly a first for our charity. Together with a riding school, the committee organised the event and Doug kindly sponsored the catering. However, as was Doug's nature with all his endeavors, the support given was limitless. Catering an event with so many competitors and their families, he constructed a marquee offering a sumptuous menu, which included steaks, vegetarian options and desserts at no cost to either the participants or the charity! A truly magnificent gesture. I mention this, one of many donations given, because as I said to Doug at the time, his sup-



port exceeded anyone's expectations. His reply was that if he committed himself to something, he gave it the best he could give. That was Douglas indeed, a man of honour with a huge generosity of heart.

I'm sure friends and colleagues will have many wonderful stories and encounters to talk of. I will miss our good friend, but will cherish the memories we have of Doug.

I take this opportunity in sending our sincere condolences to Audrey and the family...

Travelling with SAS!

My wife and I recently visited Sweden to see our family who have lived there for a few years.

I don't know if any of you have been there, it is most certainly a beautiful country, although very expensive to live in or visit. In beautiful Stockholm, we had two coffees and a pastry at a cost of £15.

Seeing our three-year-old grandchild was wonderful - he speaks English and Swedish, such a clever little boy! Am I biased? You bet! Anyway, a great holiday until we were coming

Mike Son's bits and pieces

home.

We arrived back at Stockholm airport and while trying to check in our luggage, found that our flight to the London City Airport had been cancelled. Then everything went tits up. I was told we'd be getting on another flight to Heathrow - not much help to us due to having a Southend taxi driver (who took us to the LCA) waiting to pick us up. When we arrived at Heathrow, I was told a taxi would take us home. We contacted our Southend driver to explain that our booking with him had to be cancelled, but he understood the situation.

An SAS (Scandinavian Airline Systems) representative gave me a voucher, which indicated the name of the "cab" company and directed us to Valet Parking on Terminal 3. Was it a London Taxi? You guessed it – no! I objected and said I wanted a London taxi. The reply was they could not use them because they were too expensive and the airline had a contract with a car company. Other than take public transport to Westcliff, we had no choice but to accept.

Although the driver was pleasant and quite helpful, the vehicle was dirty and stunk of curry. During the trip home, I asked the driver what the cost of a trip to Southend was and he said about £110. If I was empty, I wouldn't mind doing a trip like that! He also said he rarely took passengers, mainly luggage that had been lost by various airlines. He sometimes traveled as far as Scotland and Wales. No wonder the airlines are losing money.

I have written to SAS complaining about the whole saga and look forward to their response.

Mike Son
Special Projects

DAC'S LEE GETS HIS CHAMPIONSHIP MEDAL

Bedfont Green's match against local rivals Bedfont would normally be a tense affair. But this season saw BG with their **Dial-a-Cab** goalkeeper, **Lee Pearce (J71)**, going into this final match of the 2008/2009 *Combined Counties Premier division* season amidst a carnival atmosphere, having been on a 22 match unbeaten run and their biggest crowd of the season knowing that the team had already won the championship and promotion even before the match had kicked off! And in fact, Bedfont Green easily took their unbeaten run into match number 23 with a 3 – 1 victory that included another brace for BG striker Chris Henry.

Following the match, league Chairman John Bennett presented the championship trophy to Bedfont Green captain, **Jon-Barrie Bates**, much to the obvious joy of the crowd.

Lee Pearce – who will be marrying his long time partner Becky on 1 August – told **Call Sign**:

"This has been a magical day. I have missed very few games this season and watched us progress from a slow start into an almost unbeatable force. It's hard to believe that the club is barely five years old. We are going places...!"

Congratulations to Bedfont Green...



A delighted Lee Pearce shows off his two children and the championship trophy

On Tuesday 16th June, Dial-a-Cab launched their Intranet. Call Sign asked DaC's Network Administrator, Jonathen Winterburn, to explain what the intranet is...

For those of you unaccustomed to such things, an intranet is a private, internal website for employees only, most often used as a communications tool.

Dial-a-Cab's Intranet has been designed by our IT department to provide all of us at DaC House with a single point of access to forms, documents and useful services. The three resources that will be available on our Intranet to begin with are:

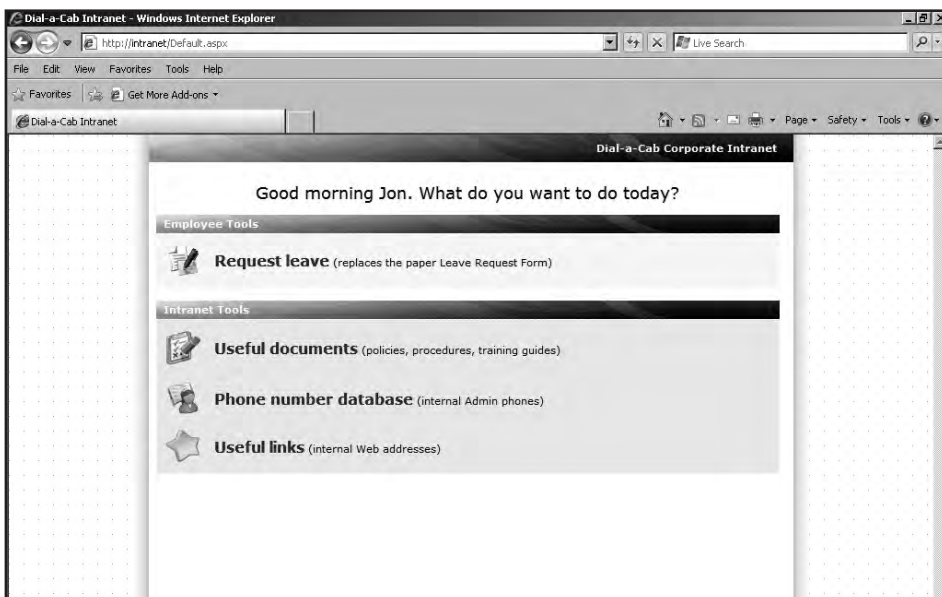
* *A library of useful documents such as forms and policies.*

* *A searchable telephone directory of internal extension and other useful numbers.*

* *An online application for requesting holiday, Christmas Leave and lieu time.*

As part of Dial-a-Cab's commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, the Intranet will begin to replace a number of paper-

Call Sign Looks at DaC's Intranet



John's Intranet monitor

based systems we have in place for staff management. The electronic leave request forms and useful documents in electronic format

are the first.

Further resources are in development and will be added to the Intranet in due course.

Al Fresco: Cab Driving Insurance Man

If you read TAXI regularly, you'll be familiar with the entertaining tales of one of my closest friends, Al Fresco.

As the vernacular goes, Al has been round the block a few times with our lives running in an amazingly similar crooked line. We both arrived in this world as Alan F, both had our roots in east London's Mile End and both went to Davenant Grammar School – which in those days was based next door to the Sally Army's soup kitchen in Whitechapel. With the SA basement backing onto the school playground, even we hardy young males knew enough about pungent odours not to venture down their dark staircase to get our ball back after an errant kick sent it over the railings – at least not if you wanted to avoid fellow bus travellers holding their noses on the 2d bus fare home after the bell had sounded!

Although going to a grammar school at that time was described as being somewhat "poncy" by the locals, it taught us how to put a few words together. Why we'd have any need to when both independently decided to go on the Knowledge wasn't a question worth asking. It was either that or risk becoming a future Prime Minister – and of course, the PM couldn't stand on the terraces at Spurs! The choice was simple...

By the time the 1970s had arrived, we were both pushing our droshkies around town – I looking normal, whereas Al decided to make a statement by wearing white glasses almost half the size of his face and complete the exercise by sporting a ponytail! However, that Davenant-taught ability to put a few life-changing sentences together became another part of our lives and certainly made a statement for me that overtook Al's fashion sense when I began writing a regular column in Taxi Globe as the sex-mad Lana Sherif, followed soon after by the mysterious pro-wrestling guru, Mr X. A ponytail looked quite sensible compared to me!

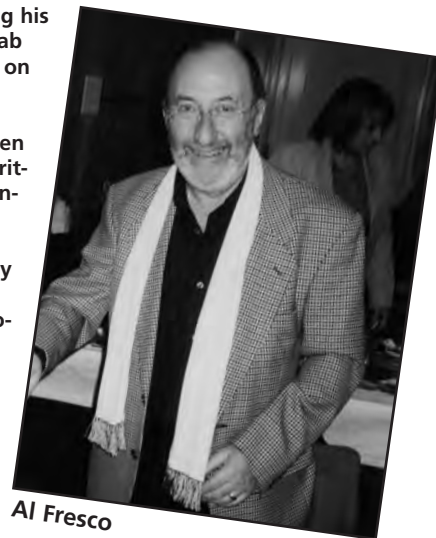
Meanwhile, Al had become the Editor of Steering Wheel – which he and the late Ernie Keates renamed The Cab Driver. He also headed Mountview News for many years. I'm here at **Call Sign** and have been so since 1997 – during which time Spurs have won nothing. Coincidence? I think not...

And that brings us to the present day. I'm still driving my cab around town and doing as little as I can get away with, while Al was always a harder worker than me and thought nothing of putting in long days in his manual cab. A manual taxi in central London whilst on a day shift! It's no wonder he has been feeling rather tired as of late – tired enough on doctor's advice to give the cab a rest and move into another field.

Naturally, he couldn't bring himself to leave the trade altogether, because one of his biggest loves is speaking to other drivers and believe me there is no one around more interesting to listen to. He can make the folding of a newspaper sound interesting – no doubt picked up in a Davenant class!

But now he is combining his cab knowledge with his cab chat and will soon be out on the ranks doing market research on behalf of Cabsurance. At a time when many DaC drivers have written into *Call Sign* complaining about their insurance policies, this will provide them with the opportunity to ask questions, while giving Al plenty of reciprocal chatting! Al wouldn't know how to tell a lie if he wanted to – and when talking insurance, that is something good to know.

So do our lives still run closely? Lunches with our better halves at David Lloyd in Chigwell give us ample chance to discuss the matter!



Al Fresco

Alan Fisher



Keith Reading

Professional Toastmaster / Master of Ceremonies

**Telephone: 01279 465938
Mobile: 07774 860374
Email: kgr.21virgin.net**

10% Discount for Dial-a-Cab drivers

Fellow of the Guild of Professional Toastmasters

Over Ranking at Station Ranks...

The PCO is currently receiving complaints about taxis over-ranking, particularly around mainline rail stations. Some complaints refer to the traffic congestion caused by this activity, particularly where the over-ranking goes onto trunk roads. Where residential streets and other roads are affected, residents can be adversely affected by noise and exhaust emissions.

The economic downturn means that it is much harder than usual to find work at the moment. It appears that many taxi drivers prefer to wait for considerable lengths of time on station ranks rather than ply for hire at other ranks or cruise for street hails. This is entirely reasonable and drivers are free to choose how they spend their time and where they wait or ply for hire.

However, space on any taxi rank is limited and when a rank is full, drivers must not linger at the approach to the rank waiting for space to open up. This obstructs other traffic and gives rise to the complaints mentioned. A number of highway authorities have indicated that they will start enforcing waiting restrictions and penalising for obstruction offences if the present levels of over-ranking continues.

Drivers may wish to consider changing the times and places that they work in order to build up trade at inner London ranks, or provide safer options for evening and late night travel.

A list of London street ranks will shortly be available on the PCO website at tfl.gov.uk/pco.

Len Simkins

PCO Head of Strategy and Planning

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

Kupkake's Korner



The missing policemen...

I have driven in this city
for 40 years or more,
I've seen all there is to see,
I've heard it all before!

I have watched driving standards
descend to anarchy,
but it's the absence of a policeman
that is a mystery to me!

Once they were on every corner
in ones, twos and threes,
now they're never there to warn ya
so all do as they please!

Exceeding the speed limits
and jumping red lights,
overtaking on the inside...

I see it every night.

When I park, I get a ticket
even though I'm doing my work,
all-in-all a sticky wicket
bowled out by some jerk!

I support our demo drive-ins
for too long we've been suppressed,
now our purpose is surviving
...because we are the best.

Kopyright Kupkake 2009

ALAN GOLDSMITH'S "JACK THE RIPPER" WALK

SUNDAY 5 JULY AT 2PM – PREPARE TO BE SCARED!



Some Dial-a-Cab drivers and their families may have already been on one of Alan Goldsmith's (£45) *Jack the Ripper* walks. In addition to driving a DaC taxi, Alan is also a qualified City of London guide, so he knows his stuff.

His latest walk takes on a revised route and visits four of the notorious Whitechapel "Jack the Ripper" murder sites – and that is more than any other Ripper tour!

Alan's next tour is on Sunday 5 July. There is no need to book, just turn up outside Whitechapel Station at 2pm. The cost of the fascinating walk is £5 per person and Alan donates all the funds to the *WCHCD charity fund.

Why sit at home on a Sunday afternoon watching reruns of *Eastenders* when you could be out having the pants scared off you – and all in a good cause!

**The WCHCD charity fund helps to finance the Magical Taxi Tour to the Disneyland Resort Paris. You can read more about the next Paris trip at www.magicaltaxitour.com*

Dial-a Cab Credit Union

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

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

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

The cost?

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

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

Call us on: 0208 522 4502 or 0208 522 4503

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

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

This month's Flashback goes back to 1987 and a popular column in those days; Big Al...

From Call Sign, November 1987...

BIG AL

Hello again and welcome to my humble little corner. I feel extra sad this month. No doubt you have all heard by now that we are going over to MDI from Dowty



for all our data despatch requirements. I know for a fact that the Board deliberately waited until I had learnt how to spell Dowty before they announced the change and as if that news wasn't enough, I heard last week that there never was a Mr Kipling and that his exceedingly good cakes were made in ordinary ovens by ordinary bakers.

And then we lost the account in

Fredericks Place after it took me a month to learn where it was! For goodness sake, how much can a man be expected to take! Meanwhile...

Dispatcher's delight

Have you sometimes felt that a despatcher has given you a kick in the Oliver Grumplings? You know the feeling. You come in for a job and the despatcher says you can't have it because you're more than two calls out. Then the next day you hear someone getting a job when he's about four calls out and the despatcher tells him to buck his ideas up and get in quicker in future. Well, if you've had your Olivers kicked, then tough titties because I think all our despatchers are wonderful human beings and I'm not saying a bad word against them. Besides which I haven't got rid of last month's bruises yet...

Happy ever after?

The incumbents of the Joint Radio Taxi Association (JRTA) are becoming very friendly towards each other. How nice it was to see Geoff Kaley visiting Brunswick house and Stanley "another fine mess" Samuels leaving Mountview's confines to visit ComCab at Woodfield Rd and then popping in to say hello to uncle Ken at BH.

It's really wonderful being able to forget that ComCab pinched the BBC account

by creeping in the back way and that Mountview went behind our backs and did a deal with Aunty. The ability to forgive and forget is wonderful. I wish I could learn it...

Medium size story...

I can't help but notice that Call Sign has been getting articles by and against Mediums. I don't know whether any of you believe in the supernatural, but it reminds me of a friend of mine who regularly attended a spiritualist church near Stratford for many years and who claimed to have received numerous 'messages'.

He believed strongly that everything he heard and saw was genuine until one day when he turned up and saw the church door locked and a notice stuck to it. It read: *Church closed due to unforeseen circumstances.* He never went again..

I'll see you anon...

Big Al

FLYING TO PETER PAN IN KEN GARDENS

If like Peter Pan and Wendy, you can fly wherever you want, then you won't need to read this. However, if you are just an honest to goodness London taxi driver who still relies on his cab to ferry passengers, then you may want to know it.

One of London's most popular shows is **J.M.Barrie's Peter Pan**. The only problem seems to be that some taxi drivers are not dropping their passengers at the correct set down. Those coming in from the Exhibition Road end are entering **West Carriage Drive**, seeing signs referring to the show and then

dropping passengers by the Serpentine Gallery.

The theatre management have now asked **Call Sign** to point out that the set down is closer to the Bayswater Road end. You cross over the Serpentine, follow the right and left bend until you see the large marquee on the left. The production is in that and there is an entrance to Kensington Gardens close by.

And if by chance you happen to see Peter Pan, Wendy and the Darlings flying past, please tell them not to be late for the start! The show runs until August 30...

MBH Share discount to raise £9million

Manganese Bronze Holdings Plc, parent company of TX4 manufacturers LTI Vehicles, are offering 5.35 million new shares at a 9% discounted rate of 187p per share in order to raise an extra £9.4million.

MBH say that the extra revenue from the share placement will be used in developing new international markets for their taxis and to assist in developing new types of taxis. That could be a reference to a hybrid / hydrogen cab and a Euro V engine. An electric cab is scheduled for later this year.

Shares in MBH jumped almost 16% after it unveiled plans to raise the extra capital.

The business is currently valued at £52million...

Slash Your Diesel Costs - Guaranteed!

See next month's Call Sign to discover the new way for Licensed Taxi drivers to save a minimum of 3 pence per litre off their diesel costs on an ongoing basis with an exclusive Fuel Card offering

mailshot

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

Sri Lanka and the Tamils

On behalf of Tamil people everywhere, many thanks for the supportive article in the *May Call Sign*.

Dana Thananjeyan
Manager, DaC Roman Way

And a driver's view...

Having read the piece by our Roman Way Manager about the Tamil demonstration in Parliament Square, I feel we ordinary cab drivers have a point of view too. This cruel war has been going on for years and the Tamil tigers have committed their fair share of atrocities as well. So why continue this demonstration and disruption of London's everyday life? We've got the message. If an indigenous British person had decided to starve himself to death in front of the Houses of Parliament, he would have been carted away and sectioned a long time ago! And before anyone starts yelling "racist" my best friend and golf partner is a Tamil and he's off of 12!

Roy Martin (R42)

It looks as though the demo began fizzling out once the Sri Lanka government claimed victory in the war against the Tamils. Yes, I agree with you Roy that it has been very inconvenient and that the demonstrating Tamils shot themselves in the foot by their ventures into the road, causing huge tailbacks. The length of their stay didn't help.

On the other side, Dana at Roman Way has been keeping me updated with news reports from Sri Lanka and what was going on there was appalling. The occasional hold-up compared to what many described as genocide? Not much of a contest. Like many others in the same situation, Dana doesn't know the whereabouts of several family members. Other Tamils have lost whole families. The whole thing has been a tragedy...Ed

How it all started...

I feel I must drop you a line with what came about on Monday evening, 20 April at around 10pm. A DaC taxi driver pulled up outside Nobu in Berkley Street and waited in a gap between various minicabs that are always ranked outside such venues these days (probably taking Taxi's Steve McNamara's view that if they are making their own rank there, we need to join them). The next part becomes interesting; the doorman/clipboard Jonny working at that restaurant came over and told him to move as he was parked outside and preventing them from parking their minicabs there and stealing **their** work! With that, the driver had the

sense to send a message over to drivers on our radio circuit and within minutes there was a rank of cabs outside! Then it became even more interesting as we cab drivers realised just how much work comes out of there throughout the evening. We really had no idea as usually it is all directed into their cars!

The newly found makeshift cab rank carried on throughout the week and approximately 40-50 jobs per night went into our cabs rather than their cars! Drivers then started to do the same at Smiths of Smithfield - minicabs were using our rank and we had to keep cabs on there to stop them ranking on **our** taxi rank outside! Also, other venues notorious for using touts such as Abacus in Cornhill, were seen to have a new found presence of taxis outside, which seemed to upset some touts as one of them decided to reverse into a taxi that wasn't going to be threatened and scared off as the touts had hoped for. Police had to be called.

Keep up the fight back to reclaim the work, drivers!

G. Negus (Y73)

Mr Negus letter arrived before the May issue came, out which detailed much of the above. But he is 100% correct in saying that in order to reclaim our work – after all, most of the people taken to these places went in a taxi – we will have to keep at it. I've spoken to touts and doormen and they all say the same thing... as soon as it gets busy, we'll dump them again. Time will tell, but I hope we can prove that to be untrue. In the meantime, well done to everyone who was involved – especially the DaC dispatchers, without whom we couldn't have done it and the Board who allowed it to happen ...Ed

Thanks to Dial-a-Cab

This is just a quick note to say a huge thanks to your call centre staff and all the DaC drivers who led the way in targeting the clubs of London recently and rightly claiming our work back from the minicab touts that infest these venues. I've had a couple of out of town fares from the Nobu 'rank', both good earners and both completed at far less than the in house minicab service wanted.

Greig Smith (badge number 65476)

Greig is one of Call Sign's on-line readers ...Ed

Our work?

What euphoria! One can almost see the look of glee on the faces of drivers as they fight back against the minicabs. Without regurgitating the masses of messages broadcast on the DaC screen, it is quite heartening to see drivers uniting and fighting back. It has taken far too long for this to happen. It is only in hard times that individuals are forced to defend their income livelihood and/or status. Thus, it is hardly surprising that the recent stance taken by drivers comes at the time of the worse recession of recent times.

Of the many messages from drivers, the use of two words stands out in particular; '*our work*' (repeated by Alan in May's *Call Sign* Editorial). But I ask why is it our work? Why do we think we have a God-given right to any work? Or put another way, why do drivers believe they have the sole right to pick-up and carry passengers? When the Knowledge is passed and Green Badge obtained, it gives drivers the right to pick-up passengers on the streets of London and that's all. It does not necessarily follow that the work belongs solely to taxi drivers. Or am I misinformed? The Oxford dictionary refers to '*ours*' as 'belonging to or associated with us, it is ours'. There is no doubt that members of the public who require taxis are usually associated with the Licensed Taxi trade; but not exclusively so. Yes licensed drivers have exclusive rights to pick-up on the street, but it does not follow that they have exclusive rights to all the work. Or does it?

Being a driver of 24 years, I am very aware that the minicab business has taken a hold and has become an integral part of the London transport system because of the inconsiderate and selfish actions of some drivers in the past. So we have to accept that they are here to stay. I am not saying we should put up with the so-called scabs and their intimidatory tactics that we are fighting so well. However, those drivers that work within the rules of the PCO / TfL, we cannot do much about. In relation to the clubs, bars and restaurants now being fought over, licensed cabs were not servicing them unless drivers were actually passing establishments when individuals actually wanted taxis. In fact I admit to not even knowing some of these places until the action of our drivers. However, what happens once the economy and work improves? How many of these establishments will continue to be serviced by the licensed trade? I suggest not many; because we all know when the streets and radio are busy, drivers will not run to or rank at these places. Thus, they will return into the control of the so-called scabs. Result? Back to square one until hard times come again or the next recession. So well done to all drivers who have fought and are fighting to get back passengers into licensed taxis, but it has to continue when times are good otherwise it would have all been so fruitless! We have to accept that we are not a priority as far as the police are concerned. The fact that these scabs prowl the streets, clubs, restaurants and bars picking up passengers unabated, indirectly assists the police as it clears the streets in a relative short period, thus lessening the chances of problems on those streets. Can you imagine



mailshot

Mailshot continued from page 34

if these scabs were not around, the amount of people there would be on the streets between midnight and 03:00? The police just wouldn't have the manpower to cope if public disturbances occurred. So it's easier for them to turn a blind eye to many of the scabs if it means clearing the streets of bodies.

For those of you that might think these are the words of a minicab driver, I make it clear that I have never driven a minicab. Neither do I have any family members who are minicab drivers. I just look at the situation from a different perspective.

Louie Christian (A48)

Thanks for that Lou. I've said previously that we need to continue providing a service when things return to normal, but reality suggests that you may be correct in what you say. If any drivers would like to offer a response to Lou's letter, I'd be happy to publish them ...Ed

Patrick O'Brien

My brother, Pat O'Brien (E57) was cremated at Islington & St.Pancras Crematorium on the 28th April 2009 and I would like to thank the BoM of Dial-a-Cab and the DaC drivers who sent flowers and turned up to see Pat off. If I may, could I also send a special thank you to Allan Evans for his help and to David Creber, Gerry Dunn, Fred the fireman (Ex K42) and Stuart Benjamin. Also, my thanks to all the other drivers that knew Pat who attended.

It was a simple service for a man who did not like a fuss being made, but who would have peed himself laughing when someone's mobile went off halfway through the Vicar's speech!

It was all very much appreciated by my family and myself and we were very moved when arriving at the Crematorium to see a long line of cabs that had turned up to pay their last respects.

John O'Brien (Ex-M44)

General behaviour and God...?

Reading Allan Evans and Allen Togwell's articles in *May's Call Sign*, I must in part agree about showing professionalism and good customer care, especially in these uncertain times as accounts can so easily be lost. But over the past few months, I've had jobs that showed total disregard for me, my profession and property. I've had chips thrown over the carpet, empty beer bottles left in the cab, been moaned at because my cab was cold and the passenger didn't want the heater on. Then they had the audacity to complain to DaC about me and I've since had the fare removed. And in general, the rude nature that I've been spoken to by these people is leaving me to wonder

if this is becoming the norm?

Amazingly, these weren't cash rides or men in track bottoms and trainers – these were passengers from big accounts. I was so incensed with the chips and bottles that I really wanted to go back to their houses and post them in their letter boxes with notes saying: "I think these belong to you!" But I realised I'd just be lowering myself to their standards.

DaC too are not immune. I once picked up a member of our Sales team and after waiting was greeted with a Neanderthal type grunt. She then spent the entire fare on the phone with not even a goodbye or thank you at the end. It seems to me that this is not professionalism, just downright ignorance towards us. Yet they want professionalism shown to them? Respect gains respect, it's as simple as that

So I think Mr Togwell has got it slightly wrong. Just because you wear a suit and work for a large city bank and perhaps have done national service, it doesn't make you a pillar of society. What concerns me is Mr Togwell's attitude; he seems to consider real men to be 6ft 3inch policemen. Are they the same police who cover their police numbers, or give an innocent bystander a hefty whack outside the Bank of England, allegedly causing their death? If 1000s of 17 - 21 year olds are forced into national service, they would become cannon fodder for Gordon Brown and America's world domination plans.

I doubt if God minds that people visit his house in just jogger bottoms, as to him all men are equal and considering God's own son spent most of his life in tatty old cloth, unshaven and sandals, does that not show that it is not your image, but your actions that count?

Michael Beevor (N76)

Allen Togwell replies: Mr Beevor, I don't know the details but your letter appears to be prompted by what seems like an unjustified complaint against yourself from a client. I can well understand your grievance, unfortunately like it or not you are a public servant and when dealing with the public you have to accept attitudes and manners not always to your liking. I don't know how long you have had a badge, but in my 42 years of owning a bill I have come across arrogance, disrespect and despicable manners from the most unlikely of people, including knighted public figures, royalty, members of parliament and I might add, the clergy. As well as of course that small minority of clients who because they earn more in a week than you earn in a year, feel they can treat you with utter contempt. My attitude to these people is they have got a problem, not me. I complete the journey for which I'm paid, I say thank you. Then I concentrate on the next job. I cannot change the world so I don't drive myself mad trying.

As for my comments about police and

national service, it was a different era, probably before you were born. An era when I can say from experience those two institutions alone played a major part in teaching people to avoid doing the very thing you are complaining about. And yes, you are correct, wearing a suit doesn't make a person a pillar of society, but it does show self-esteem and self-respect. As for the state of the clothes that God's own son wore - and I assume you mean Jesus - there is no record that his robe was tatty. It was probably a plain canvas robe as worn by men at that time (a woman's robe by law had to be a different style, usually with a silk sash). Ornate robes as worn by priests came into being several hundred years later. Most men, particularly Jews, wore beards while sandals were the most common footwear.

Letter to the leader of the House of Commons...

Dear Ms. Harman,

Re: My Second Home allowance

May I call you Harriet? Thank you. I do not know if you are aware, but 6 years ago my wife and I relocated to sunny Spain, which is where we both hope to retire. I, not having reached pensionable age, do have to carry on working. I am a licensed London taxi driver, so I work two weeks in London and join my wife for two weeks in Spain. I have an ex-authority flat in London, which my Honourable friends in Westminster would call a *second home* and which is in dire need of refurbishment.

I am hoping (nay, appealing to you) to set up an expenses facility for me (at the expense of the taxpayer, of course) so that I may claim allowances to renovate and update my very humble abode. I am not contemplating anything extravagant or ostentatious, merely a bit of carpet (mine has worn thin with my pacing the floor wondering how to pay my heating bill) and maybe a bit of new flock wallpaper to paper the cracks on the walls. I now find that commuting back and forth on EasyJet is taking its toll on my finances. This is due to the recession, which has affected my industry very badly. Any chance of a travel allowance at 4p a mile? You will be pleased to know that I do not have a moat going around my flat that requires maintenance and the gardens are so meagre that horse manure would be an irrelevance. I am, however, experiencing a pigeon problem that is caus-



mailshot

Mailshot continued from page 34

ing serious fouling on my window ledges. Any chance of a falconer coming around and frightening the pigeons off? You try doing a full shift on a cab and then come home to pigeon sh*t. I am informed that a falconer would literally cost pigeon sh*t to the taxpayer.

Harriet, I would be eternally indebted to you if you would forward my details to the *Members Estimate Committee* for their kind consideration. In return you may rest assured that your party can rely on me for their vote at all forthcoming elections. Your obedient servant...

Steve Shaller MOFS

PS Enclosed receipts from B&Q, Homebase and Wickes...

Steve Shaller MOFS is also known as R75 (amongst other things)! ...Ed

Nash's Numbers

Dear Alan,

Can I recommend the website provided by Alan Nash which contains so much useful information at **www.nash numbers.co.uk**. I went back to this site recently and it is now greatly improved. All the information from back issues of Nash's Numbers is now easily viewed and any section can be printed. A big thank you to Alan for the work he has put into this and for the monthly numbers and information he provides us.

Laurence Kelvin (W88)

Thanks for that Laurence. I wouldn't even contemplate itemising the info that Alan has written in *Call Sign* since July 1997. I get more phone calls asking for a copy of something he has written in the past than for anything else, yet a 'thank you' letter regarding Alan is unusual, so your taking the time is appreciated. For anyone who doesn't know about the Nash's Numbers website, go to **www.nashsnumbers.co.uk for this issue and all previous issues back to 1997 in PDF format. All are in good quality for printing. You can also register for his Useful Information Document (UID), which has lots of info you may need regularly throughout your working day. Send an email to **alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk** with the subject line as UID. In the body of the email, write your name, call sign, badge number, email address and mobile number (in case there are any problems with your email address). And thanks again Laurence ...Ed**

Charlie Rubin

I was very sad to hear of the passing of Charlie Rubin. On my return to DaC, Charlie had the foresight to have sufficient confidence in me to allow me to go on and become one of the finest dispatchers the taxi

trade ever had! The fact that he might have told that to everyone was irrelevant to me. May his dear soul rest in everlasting peace.

Tony Arnold (F03)

Many drivers have told *Call Sign* how shocked they felt at Charlie's untimely death ...Ed

TX4 and fuel consumption...

In June last year, I sold my 7-year-old TX1 and bought a shiny new TX4. The first few weeks behind the wheel were a revelation; all the updates LTI had put in place over my previous TX1 became apparent. Improved steering, suspension, intercom and electrics, all making the job a little easier. At the time, fuel prices were rising almost daily, as I am sure you will remember. So I began to do MPG checks, just to see what it was returning. I was disappointed when my first test returned 21.6 MPG; I thought it would improve as the engine loosened up. Well it didn't. That has been about the average over 3 months of daily checks and 15000 miles on the clock now. I rang LTI customer services, only to be told that's what they do. I think that's not good enough.

A few years ago, I participated in the MPG tests using the Power Pill on my TX1, so I already had plenty of reliable results for it of around the 24-MPG mark. So my new allegedly *greener* cab is burning more diesel than the earlier previous model. Spending some time with a pencil, paper and calculator, I worked out that over a 25,000 mile year, I am spending £750 more on fuel, £200 more on road tax and with servicing costs much higher, it works out well over £1000 a year more to run my TX4 than my old TX1. All you drivers out there with TX4s are paying out that £1000+ as well. Most of it goes in extra fuel burnt, and this is 'The cleanest diesel engine ever to beat at the heart of a London taxi' to quote from the LTI sales brochure. Well call me old fashioned, but

surely the idea is to burn less fuel to be greener, you don't burn more coal to get less smoke, do you! The price of diesel is not going to go down, so yours and my fuel bill will rise every year - look at it as putting another £1000 to your tax bill every year just for running your cab. Let's hope when the Euro 5 TX4s come in, they are not even worse. LTI also say in their sales blurb 'continually improving' and the engine 'packs a punch never before experienced in a purpose built taxi'. It is certainly punching our wallets!

So what can we do? Well I can't do it on my own, but please take the time as I have, to phone or write to Trevor Hattersley, the Customer Support Manager at LTI, and make him aware of the fuel consumption on your cab and how new models are always more fuel efficient than the model 10 years previous. It's not right and are they working on it? With all that complex electronic engine management technology the TX4 has, the fuel consumption issue must be resolved. To call the TX4 the cleanest cab, it should be the most fuel efficient - not the worst. There are 4000 TX4 owners out there; it's no good saying that someone else will do it. We must make ourselves heard. We are all pumping £750 worth of diesel out in emissions we do not need to. That is not a GREEN taxi fleet. If 4000 letters of complaint arrived at LTI, they would realise something is wrong with our iconic London Taxis. So get phoning and write those letters, you could save yourself money on your fuel bill. The TX4 is the best cab LTI have made - the job just needs finishing.

Paul Gane (H33)

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Contact Shayne Wise (G05)

Tel: 01708 753128 or on mobile: 07590 540620

Email: **shaynewise@yahoo.com**

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



THE
TX4

We've got a crush on you!



You'll love the deal that helps you send that old cab to the crusher

At Mann & Overton, our Scrappage Trade-In offer is worth an incredible **2½** times the value of the recently announced Government supported scheme!*

£5000

Scrappage Trade in

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TX4 Gold in Platinum Silver

You need to hurry and snap up this offer quickly before the funds allocated by HM Government run dry! You qualify if, for at least the last 12-months, you've owned and had registered in your name, a currently PCO plated TX1, Fairway or Metrocab which was first registered up to 31st August 1999 (T-reg or older) and trade it in against any model of a smart new British built TX4.

*Limited Offer whilst allocated TX4 stocks and HM Government support lasts. Traded in vehicle must, at point of new vehicle order, have been first registered up to and including 31st August 1999, be currently London PCO Hackney Licensed and have been in the vendor's ownership and registered UK keepership for at least the previous 12-months. The offered £5,000 by Mann & Overton is a maximum trade-in value and includes HM Government Scrappage Scheme financial support and VAT. This offer is not available in conjunction with any other offer, incentive or discount. Offered strictly in accordance with HM Government Scrappage Scheme Rules which may be modified or be terminated at any time. TX4 pictured is for illustration purposes only and does not necessarily reflect model available in this offer. Union Flag options available at extra cost. E&OE

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



Mann & Overton

Official fuel consumption figures for the TX4 in mpg (l/100km): Urban 25.5 (11.1) - 28.0 (10.1), Extra Urban 38.2 (7.4) - 41.5 (6.8), Combined 32.0 (8.8) - 35.2 (8.0), CO2 emissions: 211 - 233 g/km.