

October 2009



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

DaC's IT expert Jon Winterburn beats the Brecons!



Pic David Eastham (www.wyepics.co.uk)



A DaC driver offers a stark warning...



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Heathrow Departure Terminals: The last complete list was October and updated in March. Many minor changes since, but the most important is Lufthansa now depart from Term 1...

Heathrow Terminals: Correct as of 7 September 2009

British Airways: All BA flight departs from Terminal 5 **except** those listed below.

BA Information line is at 0844 493 0787...

Bangkok	T4		Helsinki	T3		Malaga	T3		Vienna	T3
Barcelona	T3		Lisbon	T3		Singapore	T4			
Detroit	T4		Madrid	T3		Sydney	T4			

Heathrow Terminals by Airline excluding BA.

Airline	T	Code	Tel.	Airline	T	Code	Tel.
Aer Lingus	1	EI	0870 876 5000	JAT Airways	2	JU	020 8745 0899
Aeroflot	2	SU	020 7355 2233	Jet Airways	3	9W	0808 101 1199
Air Algerie	2	AH	020 8750 3300	Kenya Airways	4	KQ	01784 888 222
Air Astana	2	KC	01293 596 622	Kibris Turkish Airlines	3	YK	020 7930 4851
Air Canada	3	AC	0871 220 1111	Kingfisher Airlines	4	IT	0800 0470810
Air China	3	CA	020 8745 4624	KLM Royal Dutch Airlines	4	KL	0870 507 4074
Air France	2	AF	0870 142 4343	Korean Air	3	KE	0800 413 000
Air India	3	AI	020 8560 9996	Kuwait Airways	3	KU	020 8745 7772
Air Malta	4	KM	0845 607 3710	Libyan Arab Airlines	2	LN	020 8750 4066
Air Mauritius	3	MK	020 7434 4375	LOT Polish Airlines	1	LO	0845 601 0949
Air New Zealand	1	NZ	0800 028 4149	Lufthansa	1	LH	0871 945 9747
Air Seychelles	2	HM	01293 596 656	Malaysia Airlines System	3	MH	0870 607 9090
Air Transat	2	TS	020 7616 9187	MEA Middle East Airlines	3	ME	020 7467 8000
Alitalia	2	AZ	0870 544 8259	Northwest Airlines	4	NW	0870 507 4074
All Nippon Airways	3	NH	0870 837 8811	Olympic Airways	2	OA	0870 606 0460
American Airlines	3	AA	020 7365 0777	Oman Air	3	WY	0870 7707319
Arik Air	2	W3	08444822324	Pakistan International	3	PK	0800 587 1023
Asiana Airlines	1	OZ	020 8990 9880	Qantas	4	QF	0845 774 7767
Atlas Blue	2	8A	020 7307 5803	Qatar Airways	3	QR	020 7896 3636
Austrian Airlines	1	OS	020 7766 0300	Rossiya Airlines	2	FV	
Azerbaijan Airlines	2	J2	0870 760 5757	Royal Air Maroc	2	AT	
Bellview Airlines	2	B3	020 7372 3770	Royal Brunei Airlines	3	BI	020 7584 6660
Biman Bangladesh	3	BG	020 7629 0252	Royal Jordanian	3	RJ	020 7878 6300
Blue1 (SAS Group)	3	KF		SAS	3	SK	0870 607 2772
bmi	1	BD	0870 60 70 555	Saudi Arabian Airlines	3	SV	020 7798 9898
Bulgaria Air	2	FB	020 7637 7637	Singapore Airlines	3	SQ	0844 800 2380
Cathay Pacific Airways	3	CX	020 8834 8888	South African Airways	1	SA	0870 747 1111
China Eastern	2	MU	020 7935 2676	Sri Lankan Airlines	4	UL	020 8538 2000
Continental Airlines	4	CO	0845 607 6760	Swiss International Airlines	1	LX	0845 601 0956
Croatia Airlines	1	OU	020 8563 0022	Syrianair	2	RB	020 7493 2851
CSA Czech Airlines	2	OK	0870 444 3747	TAM	4	JJ	020 8897 3700
Cyprus Airways	1	CY	020 8359 1333	TAP Air Portugal	1	TP	0845 601 0932
Delta Air Lines	4	DL	0845 600 0950	Tarom	2	RO	020 7224 3693
Egypt Air	3	MS	020 8759 3635	Thai Airways International	3	TG	0870 606 0911
El Al Israel Airlines	1	LY	020 7957 4100	Transaero Airlines	1	UN	0870 850 7767
Emirates	3	EK	0870 243 2222	Tunisair	2	TU	020 7734 7644
Ethiopian Airlines	3	ET	020 8745 4235	Turkish Airlines	3	TK	0844 800 6666
Etihad Airways	3	EY	0870 241 7121	Turkmenistan Airlines	3	T5	020 8577 2211
Eva Air	3	BR	020 7380 8300	United Airlines	1	UA	0845 844 4777
Finnair	3	AY	0870 241 4411	US Airways	1	US	0845 600 3300
Gulf Air	3	GF	0870 777 1717	Uzbekistan Airways	2	HY	020 7935 4775
Iberia	3	IB	0870 609 0500	Virgin Atlantic Airways	3	VS	0870 574 7747
Icelandair	1	FI	0870 787 4020	Vueling	3	VY	
Iran Air	3	IR	020 8759 0921	Yemenia Yemen Airways	2	IY	0870 732 3213
Japan Airlines	3	JL	0845 774 7700				

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from the editor's desk

Demo at Penton Street

Well, no one can say that September was ordinary! One subject involving London taxis made front page news around the world – the battle by our trade to stop minicab driver Shamsul Haque going on the Knowledge. The story is well known by now.

Mr Haque was found guilty of manslaughter in 2000 when he killed his wife. The 38-year-old paranoid schizophrenic, strangled her and later admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. He was sentenced to indefinite detention under the Mental Health Act in January 2001, but was released in 2003. Earlier this year he was also cautioned by police for assaulting his daughter.

As LCDC Chairman Grant Davis said on the radio on the morning of the Penton Street demo to LBC's Nick Ferrari, would he (Nick) feel happy knowing his wife or daughter was travelling in the same vehicle as someone who had killed their wife? For such a talented broadcaster, Nick's answer that he had neither, was to put it mildly, very disappointing. However, Grant's point had been well made and many LBC listeners must have then asked themselves the same question.

According to Jeroen Weimar, TfL's chief operating officer (Enforcement and Compliance), they had five to six years of independent medical advice saying this man was no danger to the community and a fit and proper to be a taxi driver or a minicab driver. But would Mr Weimar feel happy knowing his wife or daughter was travelling in the same vehicle as someone who had killed his wife and assaulted his own daughter? We asked Mr Weimar that question, but TfL considered it to be unfair to bring his personal life into the equation. However, Mr Weimar issued a statement to *Call Sign*. It said:

"I fully recognise this is an issue of public concern and passenger safety is always our first priority. This case highlights the stringent checks we have in place when we make decisions on licence or knowledge applications and reassures me that we still have and will continue to have the safest taxi trade in the world."

Then there is Paul Correy, a spokesman for *Rethink*, the mental health charity. He said that the chances of Haque being a danger to passengers were "very, very slim." But will he take responsibility if Mr Haque were to re-offend? Well let's look at someone who did re-offend...

Close on the heels of this case, we had that of an enquiry into the case of Peter Bryan and why he was ever released. He too was schizophrenic and just one year older than Shamsul Haque. He too was also released from captivity – in his case a secure mental hospital. The biggest difference was that Bryan didn't want to go on the Knowledge of London – in fact he couldn't because he is now safely locked up once again.

You may have read about Peter Bryan. In 1993, he was sent to Rampton secure hospital in Nottingham after killing a shop assistant with a hammer. In 2001, it was agreed by a mental health tribunal that he was no longer a danger to the community (can't think where I've heard that before), but two years after his



release he was moved into an open ward of a mental health unit after sexually assaulting a 17-year old girl. As it was an open ward, Mr Bryan walked out and killed a friend of his, Brian Cherry. He then ate part of Mr Cherry's brain after first frying it. He had also begun to dismember the remains. Perhaps unsurprisingly, he was locked up again – this time in Broadmoor – where he took a dislike to a fellow patient and after just 10 days there, attacked him. The other patient later died from his head injuries and Bryan was given a life sentence. Now two enquiries into Mr Bryan suggest that it was the fault of "NHS failures."

We all hope that Shamsul Haque no longer forgets to take his medication and that he can take his place as a member of society – but not as a licensed taxi driver. We've had a rapist besmirching our name this year already; we don't need someone who killed his wife as well. As the *Evening Standard* Editorial page put it when the news broke; *Keep Black Cabs Safe*.

What I'd like to know is just who at the PCO thought that someone with Mr Haque's record should be able to go onto the Knowledge – especially as it is common knowledge that the examiners were all against it? And whoever's decision to allow him to continue it was, I think they should carefully consider whether they are the right person to hold their high position at the PCO...

Bain & Co

Those of you that have been with DaC from the early 1980s will remember the taxi work we used to get from consultants **Bain & Co**. Much of it was during an era when the financial capital of the world was still elsewhere, but Bains used to provide us with an incredible amount of corporate work – so much so that many drivers used to just park up around Portman Square to wait for a trip from their basement office in Fitzhardinge Street.

They would also have food pick-ups involving huge layouts of money from some of London's top restaurants, and when you got 10% of the bill together with the job itself, you knew you were on for a good job. I once had a trip to pick up £800 of hamburgers from a restaurant in Chelsea. By the time they loaded up the cab – and there wasn't even enough space left in the back for a portion of chips – then took the food back to W1 after having my credit card debited by that huge amount, I

received well over £100 for the job – and as I said, that was the 1980s!

Now Bain & Co are celebrating their 30th anniversary and they asked me to film a piece about my early memories of the account. I got so carried away, that the filming at the back of John Adam Street continued for over an hour, with passers-by wondering just who I was with that camera and boom microphone pointed at me!

BBC Radio Scotland is the place I do my relatively few interviews, unless you go back to the early days of satellite TV and my occasional piece on the ill-fated Live! TV channel as wrestling's Mr X! Neither was anywhere near as enjoyable as my long chat with Zulema Quintans. We still service Bain & Co, who are now in the Strand, but it will never compare to those heady days in Fitzhardinge Street. And yes, they paid me well for the filming – just like the old days!

So a very happy thirtieth anniversary to Bain & Co...

M4 bus / taxi lane

Last month's *Call Sign* told how we had asked TfL why, after they said that enforcement of the M4 bus/taxi lane was outside their area, they couldn't then just go to John Griffin at Addison Lee and tell him they had seen his letter and that he was incorrect in telling his drivers that they could use it? Later that day, the PCO sent out a press release – including to AL – saying exactly that. It seems that John Griffin must have told his drivers to ignore it – although once again the PCO are ignoring the situation. Perhaps if AL drivers were also to give out an unauthorised receipt, they would then get dragged up to the PCO to discuss if they were fit and proper? Amazingly, no cameras monitor the M4 bus lane and the Met police admit it is not a priority, claiming they prioritise resources for activities that can reduce casualties – perhaps like seeing if we are wearing our badges the correct way???

Different... but the same?

If you haven't noticed any difference in this issue, then I may go to a quiet corner somewhere and cry! A full colour *Call Sign* has been a long time coming and while I've always had around 20% of it that way, that still left around 80% in monochrome. However, it was always going to be an expensive changeover and certainly, coming out of a recession would have not been the right time.

But with a change in printers, using sophisticated new machinery, it is no longer more expensive to change formats and now I hope that Dial-a-Cab's magazine can catch up to the rest of the world's publications in that colour is accepted as normal.

However, I have no intention of changing *Call Sign's* format. It will remain as a vehicle for everyone to put their view – that means drivers / Board members / staff and all their husbands / wives / partners. It's almost 2010 and I believe that *Call Sign* has finally arrived in the 21st century. You can read about this magazine's journey elsewhere in this issue...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections of the Chairman

Sabotage?

In the last edition of *Taxi* magazine, Steve McNamara wrote about TaxiBoard, Tariff 3 - which was implemented in 2001 - and how he claims the radio circuits attempted to sabotage the increase. But probably just as important, he was also endeavouring to discredit TaxiBoard and the work they have done over the years.

Regarding his statement that the radio circuits endeavoured to sabotage Tariff 3, that is untrue and I will explain exactly what happened just to clear up any misunderstandings. How do I know? Because I was present in the room (and Steve wasn't) when the then Mayor, Ken Livingstone, agreed an increase in the night tariff. Whilst I do not believe that Steve is intentionally endeavouring to discredit me, he does have his facts wrong (as he still wasn't there) and I will attempt to relay exactly what happened so that he will be aware of the situation should the subject arise again in the future.

This is part of what Steve wrote regarding Tariff 3:

"Whilst this much-needed change was universally supported by every working driver, two of the radio circuits attempted to sabotage the new tariff by declaring that 'A dayman is a dayman and nothing will persuade him to come out at night.'"

Below is an extract from *Call Sign*, dated April 2001, from my Chairman's report (before the increase was granted):

"I must say that I'm a little disappointed that nothing at all has been done to entice more drivers out at night by increasing the night charge. The Mayor was asked by the trade to increase the running rate at night so that when the meter was engaged, it would automatically start at the enhanced rate that we currently receive when the journey is in excess of six miles. That tariff would then remain unchanged for the entire length of the journey."

The trade were subsequently informed that this option was not available at the moment because not all meters were equipped with a calendar facility. The meter would need to know the time of day in order to charge the enhanced rate. We were informed that 25% of the trade were not equipped with a calendar meter; consequently, the enhanced running rate was not an option at this time. However, TfL went on to say that the technical limitation of the current taximeters will be addressed as soon as possible and there will be a full review of the fare structure over the coming few months that could lead to changes prior to April 2002. They went on to add that TfL would consult fully with the trade before finalising a new structure."

I believe that this has now become a matter of some urgency because as we are all aware, there is a shortage of cabs in certain areas particularly at night, and unless the tariff is reformed in order to encourage more drivers to work at those unsocial hours, then there



will be even greater demands from our opposition to remove radios from licensed taxis in order to make more of them available during the evening and night and to give the public a better service than they are currently receiving."

The above are hardly the words of a man that was opposed to night drivers enjoying an enhanced tariff.

After I had written the above, the driver organisations including myself, had a meeting with the Mayor and his advisers so that we might endeavour to obtain an enhanced rate for drivers working at night and also entice more day drivers to work more unsociable hours, as there was definitely a shortage of cabs at that time of night. We all believed the Mayor would press for the new rate to come into force from midnight, but we really wanted it to come into play from 10pm, so we thought we'd bluff it. We asked for an 8pm start, believing the Mayor would then try to compromise and we'd all settle for the new rate as from 10pm - which was what we wanted anyway!

Instead, the Mayor left the room with his advisers for around ten minutes and when he returned, told us we had the increase from 8pm as we had wanted. Irrespective of what Steve says, most people in the room that day thought 8pm too early (I know because I was there and Steve wasn't) and we were proven to be correct when at a later date (April 2003), the starting time was put back to 10pm, which as I've said was what we had wanted in the first place.

Then in December 2001, I wrote:

"At the time of writing, it has been almost three weeks since the increase in the night tariff and the feelings from members are very mixed (see Mailshot ...Ed). There is no doubt in my mind that a man working at night should earn a higher rate than the day man due to the unsociable hours he or she works."

Again, hardly the words of a man that was opposed to night drivers enjoying an enhanced tariff. Then in February 2003 (some fourteen months later with the trade having had time to see if Tariff 3 was working), it appeared that most of the trade were in agreement about a change to the tariff, so

I wrote:

"TfL have put forward a proposal for this year's tariff increase that is due to be implemented in April. The increase was a little smaller than anticipated due to the fact that the last one was implemented in June last year, consequently a full year has not elapsed since that increase. It will average 3% although the weekend tariff will remain unchanged. It is also proposed to put the night tariff 3 back from 8pm to 10pm."

I think you will agree that the above are hardly the sentiments of a man who thinks 'A dayman is a dayman and nothing will persuade him to come out at night'.

As I wrote earlier, I don't believe that Steve deliberately set out to mislead anyone, but he definitely has got his facts wrong. The only problem with that is that everything written by him in the future will always have the reader wondering if it is correct! As you know Steve, I am very approachable so in the future all you have to do is pick the phone up and events that happened eight years prior can be clarified.

Building Works

Some of you will be aware that all the buildings facing Dial-a-Cab House, including our previous home at Brunswick House, are being demolished. Consequently, the free taxi parking bays that are situated in Chart Street for members visiting Dial-a-Cab House have been moved 50 yards further down Chart Street, outside the Marie Lloyd pub.

We felt this was a more appropriate place for the safety of your vehicles, as I have been informed that it will take up to three years to complete the project. We were extremely conscious of the fact that large lorries would be entering and leaving the site, the entrance of which is located directly opposite the old taxi parking bays and which could possibly have left your vehicles liable to damage from the construction traffic.

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Chairman
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THE CASE OF THE MISSING TAXI... AND DRIVER?

Paul Warwick (E95) was an unhappy bunny when *Call Sign* spoke to him recently.

"My cab disappeared," he groaned, "...together with the driver!"

Dial-a-Cab subscribers may remember a terminal message that went out one evening last month asking drivers to keep a lookout for a missing Fairway... but not to approach the driver. Paul explained to *Call Sign* just what the message was about.

"I had rented out a Fairway taxi to someone who offered several weeks rental in advance. I completed the usual checks as to driver probity etc and then handed over the cab keys. Then I watched as the cab and driver drove off into the sunset!"

Paul was quite at ease with the deal. It was no different to many that go on daily in the licensed taxi business. However, when the rental money became due again, there was no sign of the driver and no answer from his mobile phone.

"Even worse," said Paul, "the line was dead! I checked out the address on his Bill and also drew a blank. That's when I decided that perhaps the best chance of ever seeing my Fairway again was to put out an appeal for a sighting via our DaC radio terminals. I have to say that the subscribers responded magnificently with reports of my cab being seen all over London - and at all times of the day and night."

Paul continued his tale of woe. "I began driving around town myself with a spare set of the Fairway's keys in my pocket, so that I could snatch it back if there was a report of it being seen. But the driver always seemed to be one step ahead of me."

Paul then phoned the PCO to advise them of the situation.

"They were not especially helpful," Paul said resignedly. "They told me they could only note the drivers *Change of Address* when he came to renew his Bill. That was of absolutely no help to me whatsoever."

Getting ever more desperate for the return of his taxi, not to mention the mounting arrears of taxi rental money, Paul described how he eventually found the cab.

"I was in the Heathrow Airport cab feeder park and decided to take a walk around to see if it was there, as the 'gentleman' concerned was apparently a known airport *face*. Low and behold, there it was! I rushed up to the cab, swung open the driver's door, grabbed the keys from the ignition switch and told the driver exactly what I thought of



him. I cannot say anymore at this time as the matter is now in the hands of my solicitor," Paul added.

"What I can say is that I am very grateful to everybody, both the drivers out there who reported sightings of my cab, and to the Dial-a-Cab Call Centre staff who relayed information to me that led to the recovery of my taxi. A huge thank-you to all. It makes you realise the benefit of being on radio," Paul added in conclusion.

But that begs the question: How do you protect yourself if you rent out your cab while you are away on an extended holiday for instance?

Call Sign spoke to a major fleet operator in the East End. He told us that there was no fail-safe answer, but drivers he doesn't recognise arriving on his door late in the day when it is difficult to check with the previous hirer, are treated with suspicion. He said that years in the business also give him a 'feel' about the legitimacy or otherwise of the individual standing before him and added that a long list of companies showing short hiring records on the back of his Bill also made him suspicious.

You should always make sure you have the copy of the driver's Bill while he has your taxi and take a photocopy of his DVLA driver's licence. Other than that, a business that operates on trust is always going to throw up the occasional bad driver. Paul's story, at least, had a happy ending...

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New Service Interval for TX4

LTI Vehicles has announced the extension of TX4 service intervals to 12,000 miles. The new intervals apply to all TX4 vehicles registered in the UK from 1st September 2009 onwards.

The introduction of 12,000 mile service intervals is made possible by the durability and reliability the TX4 has demonstrated under the tough operating conditions of the typical British taxi. For many drivers, the extended service intervals will result in one less service a year.

Rob Laidler, Sales Director at LTI Vehicles, told *Call Sign*: "These increased service intervals mean drivers can save both money and time on the maintenance of their new TX4. This change also confirms our determination to ensure the purpose-built TX4 is the most cost effective taxi on the road when it comes to whole life costs."

To find out more about LTI Vehicles, visit www.lti.co.uk.





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WCHCD Holds Installation Dinner



Michael Davies has been installed as Master of *The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* for the forthcoming year. His *Installation Dinner* took place at Armourers Hall in Coleman Street on 10th September. The installation of Michael and his Wardens was carried out in a short traditional ceremony just prior to the dinner. The Upper Warden is **Jim Rainbird (T25)**, whilst **Brenda Bartlett** is Lower Warden with **Eddie Crossley** taking office as Renter Warden. **Andrew Overton** is now the Deputy Master, having handed over the office to Michael Davies following his year as Master. Michael said:

"It is a great honour to become Master of the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers and I am looking forward to the year ahead."

The WCHCD is held in high regard throughout the City and proves that the lifeblood of the City's traditions is as important as ever in today's tough economic

New WCHCD Master, Michael Davies with DaC's Jim Rainbird

times. The charity works carried out by Livery Companies, of which the WCHCD is the 104th to have received Livery status, involve much hard work in raising sponsorship and *The Magical Taxi Tour* is supported by many of the other Livery Companies. Michael is well known in the trade for his work in the insurance industry, insuring taxis from Protector's offices in Red Lion Square. He has always felt that taxis were a unique vehicle when it comes to insurance and together with his staff, works hard to provide the insurances required by the trade. Michael's guest speaker was Garath Hughes, City Manager ACII Chartered Insurer for Aviva. He entertained guests with his speech, explaining some of the anomalies of the insurance business.

The Honorary Chaplain of the Company is the **Reverend Dr Martin Dudley CC** and during the dinner, he was presented with a new badge of office. Martin attends many of the Company's dinners and is Rector of St Bartholomew's, the church that is closely affiliated with the Company. It was here that a thanksgiving service was held earlier this year to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Company receiving Livery status.

During the Stirrup Cup ceremony following dinner, Michael thanked everyone for

their support. His duties this year will be full and varied representing the taxi trade across the City.

Sandie Goodwin

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Mark Stansbury (M94) was diligently studying a book when *Call Sign's* eagle-eyed hack spotted him in Roman Way recently. We asked him what it was...

"It's the *Driver's Handbook* for my new Mercedes Vito taxi," he replied. "It's very informative and very comprehensive. Look how thick it is, 328 pages and all in English! No multi-lingual operation here. It will certainly keep me busy while I'm sitting on the ranks," he said smiling.

"And there's another, separate booklet just to operate the music radio too," he exclaimed with the look of a librarian who had just discovered an original Mark Twain manuscript!

Being more serious, we asked how he had come to choose the Vito? Mark told *Call Sign* that he'd owned a TX2 for five years and it had given him good service during its 3 year warranty period but that he had spent over £3,000 this past year, felt he'd had enough and decided to sell it.

Looking quizzically at our reporter, Mark offered the rhetorical question of what he should replace it with?

"I had considered a TX4. Being an LTI product, I had been used to driving something similar for the past seven years that I have held a Bill - five of which have been on DaC

A 'VITO' GOOD READ!

"If the cab is as good as the book, I'll be delighted," says Mark...

- but several friends have Vitos and say they are happy with them, so I went along to get close to one in the showroom. I knew I'd either like it or loathe it and within 10 minutes felt comfortable in it. I had a spinal operation two years ago and the driving position is fine for me. The suspension is good too. The

dows don't mist up in the rain either," he added.

Any quirks about the Vito after driving a TX2, we asked?

"Well," said Mark, "last night was my first evening in the cab and a passenger tried to read a newspaper, but couldn't keep the interior lights on. They kept going off. All I need to know is on which of the 328 pages the answer is on! I'm sure it will be in the book somewhere!" His reply was followed by a broad grin.

Our journo posed the question that many Dial-a-Cab and non-DaC drivers have asked - that of mistaken identity with PHVs?

"I've noticed many PHVs are silver in colour, so I chose black to set me apart and because it is traditional. I also have the 'taxi' stripes down the sides," he said.

While still a little unsure about buying his new workhorse, after two days use Mark was still looking very hopeful for the long term. And if nothing else, the book made a great read!

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Mark with his 328 page Vito Manual

cab glides over speed bumps, so my back is not unduly troubled. The sheer body size did give me slight misgivings at first, but it goes easily around tight bends and confined places, although the rear wheel steering feels very funny until you get used to it. It's a bit like a ballet dancer doing a pirouette! I also find the door mirrors are excellent, you can see far more of the road in them and the win-

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Hitting top form, Bedfont Green - the Zamareto South & West Division One team with Dial-a-Cab goalkeeper, Lee Pearce (J71) – smashed troubled Bracknell Town by a thumping 8-0!

Bracknell manager Kerthey Carty and his assistant manager had resigned just two games into the season, while the team were hit by the absence of 11 players from a first-team squad of 20 men! By half time, BG were already three goals to the good, but ran riot in the second half scoring another 5 times.

However, a footballer's life can change quicker than an airport trip on a quiet Monday would get covered and the following week, Lee's life took a dramatic change. Bedfont Green were playing in the preliminary round of the **FA Cup** with their opponents being one of that competitions most famous giant killers - Isthmian League team **Leatherhead**.

It was in 1974-75 that Leatherhead made news with an FA Cup run that saw them beat Isthmian League rivals Bishops Stortford in the first round, Colchester

Lee's Team Smash 8 ...then he's Dropped!



Just a few short months back and Lee celebrates with the BG team a successful promotion season. Now he has been dropped...

CALL SIGN: ANOTHER 'LISTENING GROUP' TRIP TO COVENTRY



A previous group of drivers on a Call Sign 'listening Group' trip

LTI is launching a new season of *Listening Group* trips and **Call Sign** will be making our sixth visit in five years, when once again drivers will be shown around the facility in addition to being given an opportunity of asking questions about the TX4 and LTI itself to senior staff.

The *Listening Group* programme was set up over 5 years ago to get feedback on the LTI model range from drivers, which then contributed to LTI's vehicle development programme.

This remains an important part of the programme, but LTI will be broadening the scope of the programme to discuss wider trade issues and the restructuring of its dealerships announced in July this year.

Call Sign has a waiting list from the last trip and those drivers will be given first opportunity. Any vacancies for the trip will be advertised on driver's terminals. All expenses are paid for by **Call Sign**...

United in the second and then 2nd Division team Brighton - managed by Peter Taylor - in the third round. In the fourth round they pulled a home tie with first Division (equivalent to the Premier League in 1975) **Leicester City**. Leatherhead decided to switch the tie to Filbert Street to get some much-needed cash. The BBC's *Match of the Day* cameras and a crowd of 32,000 saw a dramatic match in which Leatherhead, with their goal machine Chris Kelly, go two goals up. Then the dramatic moment when a Kelly shot that would have made it 3-0, was just cleared off the line. Leicester City's class and additional fitness eventually told as they fought back to win 3-2 in the second half.

Back to 2009 and no such luck for

Bedfont Green as they went out of the competition by 3-0. Even worse, Lee Pearce admitted to **Call Sign** that he should have stopped the first two Leatherhead goals. And yes, Chris Kelly was there to watch!

BG manager Dennis Bainborough dropped Lee for the next game, which saw them battle against early promotion favourites, **AFC Totton**. They still lost 2-1.

And Lee? He was too upset to talk and within a few days had moved to Egham Town, back in the *Combined Counties Premier League*, where Bedfont Green were promoted from last season! And the future? We know he wants to return to BG, but time will tell. As we said, a footballer's life can change quicker than an airport trip on a quiet Monday would get covered!

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Allen Togwell's Marketing Place

It's remarkable how the words of one person - albeit a very powerful one - namely Barack Obama, can have a profound effect on a twenty-year fashion style even when it wasn't exactly intended. As was the case when he said *brothers should pull up their pants*. A statement, which appears to have brought about the downfall in USA, and I've noticed in the UK, of the wearing of those ridiculous jeans with the crotch dangling around the knees. A fashion that supposedly originated in American prisons, indicating the wearer's sexual preference and availability and later favoured by rappers, hoodies and of course the young and not so young on both sides of the pond.

The president was speaking literally, but his directive was interpreted figuratively as well along the lines of: *Stop complaining, pull up your pants, roll up your sleeves and make something of yourselves*.

The problem with fashion is the moment it becomes an accepted style, it then goes to extremes. For example, during the 60's fashion designer Mary Quant had a shop in the Kings Road called *Bazaar*. It was the first in the UK to introduce the mini skirt, a style that was to cause a sensation when top model of the time, Jean Shrimpton, wore a white mini dress at a race meeting in Melbourne with the hem 3" above the knee. Women of all ages and sizes became so attracted to the style, they began cutting the bottoms off their dresses and skirts and it has remained popular to this day. However it wasn't long before 3inches became 6inches, 10inches, 15inches and more. Which might be appealing to your average hot-blooded male, but not exactly appropriate for the work place or even in public, especially since in addition to showing an exorbitant amount of thigh, we have the added exposure of excessive midriff or in males - builder's bum. A style, which because they dropped to such ridiculous extremes, several states in the USA such as Dallas and Florida made it an arrestable offence for exposing underwear in public.

Having once designed and manufactured a whole range of womens wear, I have a fair knowledge of what makes a woman look attractive and frankly, showing off one's backside or underwear in public is not fashion, it is exhibitionism. Every week in my local shopping centre, I constantly see women of all ages with jeans and skirts hanging so low, particularly when bending, that they are showing almost two thirds of their G-string plus a whole variety of tatoo's, some so oddly placed that I'm curious to know for whose pleasure they are meant to be, obviously not the wearer unless they are contortionists! So where lay the line between fashion and indecent exposure?

In the meantime, to those of you that support the view that image plays an important role in the service industry; firstly, showing off your *Calvin Klein* underwear is now most definitely uncool. High waistband snug fitting jeans or trousers aka Simon Cowell are now in vogue. As for you ladies, I personally have



nothing against shoulder tats, in fact if you are looking for something really unique, a small Dial-a-Cab logo would I'm sure attract more attention from your male passengers than a thousand give away cards! I'm joking of course...

When interviewing new applicants wishing to join our circuit, I ask the obvious question - why Dial-a-Cab? Occasionally I get a shrug of the shoulders and a nondescript - I just wanna give it a try. But generally, the three most common answers are;

a) I've decided to join a radio circuit and as I'm always seeing cabs carrying your logo, I assume you to be the best, b) I have a friend or relative on DaC who convinced me I should join and c) I like the DaC system of having peo-

A multi million pound industry, which in my opinion had every cab driver in London from the moment they got their badge joined a radio circuit, I truly believe minicabs would never have existed.

ple on the Board who understand what it's like driving a cab, unlike the circuit I'm on at the moment who have no idea - and worse don't care a dam.

That last comment I've heard quite often of late and its sad to hear, especially when the drivers in question have been loyal members of their respective circuits, in some cases for twenty or thirty years. It's also a cause for concern because it is attitudes such as this that has been the reason why for many years only a third of all green badge drivers have ever been attracted into joining a radio taxi circuit. A multi million pound industry, which in my opinion had every cab driver in London from the moment they got their badge joined a radio circuit, I truly believe minicabs would never have existed.

Over the years, whenever I've used a non-radio cab, I always ask the driver

if they have ever considered joining a radio circuit, and it's surprising how many comment that they were put off by a whole range of mistaken beliefs. Such as loss of freedom, the feeling of being employed, forced to do jobs and lastly and the most common assumption, that the circuits were hooky with only the 'faces' getting the best work. In the majority of cases that last assumption had been perceived during an era when radio circuits used two-way radios. And to be honest, when I first joined DaC there was many a time when I was of a similar opinion. Especially on the occasions I missed out on a roader, not only to a face, but a face who just happened to be passing the very address the trip was being called from, no matter how obscure the area! Or on other occasions for example when being of equal distance to the point with another driver, the dispatcher would insult my intelligence by rattling what was supposed to be a coin and asked me to choose odds or even! It was a ridiculous system and understandably left many cynical about the honesty of the dispatchers, especially in my case as I never once won a toss.

However, I feel it prudent to add that when I joined the Board and seeing first hand the dispatchers at work, not once, in my presence at least, did I ever see anything other than complete fairness. In fact the system of dispatching in those days with the use of dockets, at times was so frantic there was no time to indulge in favouritism. Nevertheless, when computerised dispatching was first mooted and I and the rest of the Board went on fact finding missions around the world looking at various computerised systems, the speed and fairness in the way trips were dispatched played a significant part in convincing me that data despatch was the way forward. Unfortunately for many, old attitudes still remained. Which is a pity because had every cab driver been on radio, as is the case in many European cities, it would it have given the public and business's a greater level of service and the drivers less dead mileage and an extra source of income.

Allen Togwell
DaC Marketing



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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*

Continued from September...

The year seemed long with my *Low Loader*. But never mind, at least I was learning to be a cab driver! One of the things I learned the hard way was how *not* to set the clock. My clock had an arm from the centre, on the end of which was a piece of red-painted tin with *For Hire* printed on it in white. The scenario went something like this. Goody, goody, a gentleman has hailed me! Pull up smartly...

"Yes sir." *The Eccentric Club*. "Certainly sir." Whack the arm smartly, so smartly that it passed the stop at the bottom and continued round until it hit my hand. It did so hard enough to draw blood and I learned why it was painted red! Another thing I learnt was that if you forgot to wind the clock at the beginning of your shift, half way through it would stop running and until you noticed it, you would have had no waiting time.

My memory is a little uncertain - it was a long time ago - but as I recall it, there were three ways to get a cab to drive.

One: You could hire from a garage at 1/5d a mile (7.5p). Therefore if every mile cost you 1/5d, obviously you tried to do as few miles as possible without a bum on the back seat. So, find the nearest rank and put on it. This was no hardship as nearly all the work started from ranks. Few people hailed you on the streets; they would walk to a rank or phone.

Two: Work for a garage on the clock. The garage would take the figures from the clock at the beginning of the shift and again when you returned. The figures taken were the number of jobs, units and miles. This way the garage was able to work out how much you owed them. If I remember correctly, the split was something like 60:40. It also made it easy for them to work out if you had done an unusual number of miles. If you had, it meant you were possibly doing stalkers!

Stalking...

What were stalkers? Well, occasionally some crafty so and so would suggest you didn't put the clock on, he would then pay you slightly less than the correct fare - but equally you would not have to split it with the garage! If the garage found out you were doing that and could prove it to the PCO, you would be called in to explain the difference. If the PCO decided you had been doing stalkers, they considered it as stealing from the garage; this meant you were not a fit person to drive a cab with the result that your licence was revoked. Personally, after all the hard work to get my badge, it seemed crazy to jeopardise it in any way just for a few extra bob.

Many drivers preferred one or other of these methods. They had no worries. When they arrived at the garage, the cab would be waiting for them - spotlessly clean and ready to go. They did not have the bother of washing, maintaining, insuring, taxing and fuelling it, all that was done at no extra cost to them. If the cab had a day and a night man, it had to be washed inside and out twice a day. The PCO made sure that garages complied with this law. Most did have day and night drivers.

Three: You could own your cab. This had advantages and disadvantages. The advantages were that you could drive the cab any day and any time you liked. In addition, you could use it privately so long as you covered the meter with a towel. To buy a new or second hand cab, you had to apply for a proprietor's license and ensure you had a lock-up garage for the cab. If not, then forget it. Unless being used, the cab had to be securely kept behind locked doors.

The disadvantages included such items as the costs of the annual overhaul, insurance, HP, Road Fund Tax (this was half the cost of a car's road tax). Your proprietor's licence at five shillings a year (25p) and saving towards the replacement, which had to be done after roughly ten years. Therefore, if you were sensible you put by some money every week to cover these overheads. Another disadvantage -

now it was you washing and cleaning the cab each day!

But that way was my choice and after a year I went to collect my new cab.

The first thing was to find and rent a suitable garage to keep a cab in. When I found one, I trotted up to Lambeth Road to apply for my proprietor's licence, having informed the Carriage Office of the address of the garage. Next it was off to *Mann & Overton* in Wandsworth Bridge Road to collect my first cab. In due course came the letter to confirm that the cab was waiting - passed, new and mine! I said goodbye to York Way and the low loader and arrived at M&O, paid the balance owed and drove off happily in my new *FX3* that had just cost me £860.

But what luxury! I actually had windows! There was also a sliding window between the luggage compartment and myself and a heater! Oh heaven, a heater! What more could any driver wish for? Then there were wind-screen wipers that worked - even if you were accelerating - and brakes that allowed you to stop in a straight line and not try to pull right or left. Finally, the luxury of built in hydraulic jacks. If you got a flat tyre, you could lift up the front or back of the cab with a lever you just had to push backwards and forwards. This was the life...

Continued next month

LMCPA AT THE PCO...

The *London Motor Cab Proprietors' Association* met recently so that the executive could brief members of a meeting that took place at the PCO regarding taxi emissions as part of the Mayor's Clean Air Strategy for transport. The Mayor proposes his MTS should improve journey experience and improve the health impacts of transport and his strategy talks of introducing or promoting stricter performance standards for vehicles controlled, procured or regulated by the Mayor and the scrapping of older, more polluting vehicles.

LMCPA Chairman, Ivan Kovler, told members that the executive had made clear their concerns to the PCO and had said that in view of the London Olympics in 2012, it would be unwise to take any older cabs off the road, especially as the trade had recently spent around £60million converting them to Euro 3. He added that it was the older generation driving the old taxis and they could not afford to buy new Euro 4 taxis. He also stated that drivers and taxi fleets were only just starting to recuperate from the enormous expense they had encountered in complying with the recent conversion requirements.

Another issue of concern was that despite assurances from the authorities that only companies who would give the trade full back-up and after sales service were to be approved by the PCO to supply conversion kits, two of the companies went bust after having taken driver's money, but leaving them with no warranty.

Ivan continued that it was important the trade was united in its stance against any proposals that carried a large cost for the trade and that he would meet with other trade organisations representatives as he had in the past.

In the mid-1960s, ODRTS – as DaC were then known – was the only trade organisation to have its own publication. Editor **Joe Toff** was well known for his writing capabilities and used to put out his 24-page **ODRTS News Magazine** on the dot every 4-weeks. You can see a 1967 issue of the magazine on **Call Sign's** website.

The early 1970s saw the magazine fade away to be replaced by the occasional newsletter put together by the BoM until one Board member, **Phil Emden**, was asked to produce something cheap, yet more regular. He came up with a 4-page stapled Xerox newsletter called **ODRTS News and Views**, but constantly complained it wasn't enough and that ODRTS subscribers wanted something more substantial, many of whom harped back to the Joe Toff era. A 1977 version is also on the website.

In the early 1980s, Phil asked subscribers to think of a more suitable name that would reflect the Society as a radio taxi organisation. As all subscribers had call signs, the name **Call Sign** came up. But it was still the 4-page Xerox effort.

Then in January 1983, everything changed. **Call Sign** went glossy and doubled in size to 8 pages. The printers, **Fulltrack**, were also doing **Cab Trade News** and the newly relaunched **Mountview News**. But Phil wasn't happy and one year later, the Board asked **John Brown Printers** of Battersea,

A New Era For Call Sign



Alan Tarrant – worked with Call Sign from 1997 until losing his job in 2009
inset: Jan 1983 and the first glossy Call Sign



who were already producing our stationery, if they could also publish a magazine?

In the meantime, a proposition at the AGM suggested that the Editor should not be on the BoM and after asking for volunteers, **Gerald "Jery" Craig** was selected as the new

Ed having been the Society's cartoonist going back even to Joe Toff's News Magazine. From day one, Jery dealt exclusively with **Colin Gormley** at John Brown and Mr Brown himself became a good friend of ODRTS, going to any functions and even representing the Society in any golf tournaments. Other than JBP moving to South Norwood, that situation remained unaltered for the length of Jery's 14 years of editorship.

The current Editor, **Alan Fisher**, took over in June 1997 and dealt exclusively with JBP's **Alan Tarrant**, as did occasionally **Allen Togwell** when dealing with DaC's End of Year Report. Alan Tarrant became a **Call Sign** necessity with his knowledge of computers and printing. His patience was unending and the magazine hovered between 36 and 40 pages and gained its first traces of colour. Several years ago, John Brown retired, but so long as Alan Tarrant was there, it did not affect **Call Sign**. Sadly for the Ed, Alan Tarrant's retirement came ever-closer, but even sadder, several months before it was due to happen and like many other printing companies, JBP hit financial problems and merged with another company. One of the casualties, much to Alan Fisher's vocal disappointment, was Alan Tarrant. Colin Gormley followed soon after.

Over the next few months, the name of the company changed several times and ended up being swallowed by a larger printing firm in Kent. Dial-a-Cab had stood by the remnants of the company they had been with since 1984, but the move to Kent added to the loss of Alan Tarrant was the final straw.

Brian Rice then put the account out to tender – a change from the situation we usually find ourselves in! Three companies were in the running until a firm close to Mile End came out on top, offering a magazine no longer limited to eight colour pages. Should their trial period be successful, then they would represent just the third printing firm to work for this Society in over 25 years – surely the sign of a company that approves of loyalty.

But the proof of the pudding is in the eating and while the contents will be similar, the appearance should dramatically alter – hopefully for the better.

Ian Salter

Boris: Perhaps We Don't Need So Many Traffic Lights?



Mayor Boris is rethinking London's traffic lights strategy

Mayor of London, **Boris Johnson**, is having a rethink about the number of traffic lights across the capital. Areas of London such as Oxford and Regent Streets have become overloaded with traffic signals over recent years, leading to further increases in traffic congestion.

Now the Mayor has asked the question that Dial-a-Cab drivers have asked for years; just why are there so many traffic lights along those west end streets?

The area bordered by what taxi drivers used to refer to as the golden square – Oxford and Regents Streets, Park Lane,

Piccadilly and Charing Cross Road – is to

be part of an experiment that will involve removing some of the traffic lights. If successful and traffic begins moving faster, Mayor Johnson hopes that more people will be encouraged to leave their cars at home, knowing that buses and taxis will be able to get around much quicker and that they will be saving on congestion charging, parking charges and on fuel.

The Department for Transport has launched a study into the problem of traffic signals and will report to town planners.

Call Sign

October 2009

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When Dial-a-Cab driver **Salvatore Trupia (F22)** told *Call Sign* that he had picked up a passenger who was 8ft 1inch, well to be honest it sounded like a bit of a tall story – and indeed, according to the recently launched 2010 edition of the **Guinness Book of World Records**, it was a very tall story! His passenger, **Sultan Kosen** from Turkey, wasn't just tall; he was officially the world's tallest man! The fact that he also has the largest hands and feet in the world was of no consequence to Salvatore – although he did mention to *Call Sign* that with those hands, he could have cleaned his taxi in around 2 minutes!

Mr Kosen's exceptional height is due to a medical condition known as *pituitary gigantism* and there is little that can be done, although an operation several years ago stopped him growing further. But the new record holder's biggest problem isn't medical, he admitted that he would like to find love as no girls came anywhere close to his height. He also wanted to buy a car that he could fit into – although he managed in Salvatore's taxi with a little push! He added that the biggest disadvantage was trying to get clothes to fit, but a big plus was his ability to change light bulbs without a stepladder!

Salvatore had the job of transporting Sultan

Sounds like a

TALL

and translator around town to press shoots.

"Ok," said Salvatore, who at 5ft 3inches was rather overshadowed, **"he may not have been very comfortable, but other than an open top bus, only a London taxi could have been used to take him around!"**

Pushing his luck when Mr Kosen offered the DaC driver a cigarette, Salvatore told him he should give up or they would stunt his growth! Fortunately the world's tallest man laughed. He'd heard it before somewhere....!



story!

Salvatore at 5ft 3 inches with Sultan, who reaches 8ft 1 inch!

Revised Parking Outside DaC House

Drivers may have seen recent MDT messages about new parking arrangements when visiting Dial-a-Cab House. If you missed them, you may be perplexed at the sudden disappearance of the taxi parking facilities in Chart Street, previously so convenient when coming in to the office.

Well, fear not! It's just that the spaces have been moved down the road a bit due to pending building work. It means a trifle further to walk, but think how much fitter you'll be with the additional exercise! No doubt the extra 40 metres walk will also make that cup of coffee even more welcome! Ok, ok... we have to fill the mag with something!

The new taxi parking spaces are now on the corner of Baches and Chart Streets. There is clear signage on the road surface. But please remember, this is a facility originally arranged by Mike Son for the purpose of those coming to Dial-a-Cab House and not for a three-hour visit to Moorfields etc!

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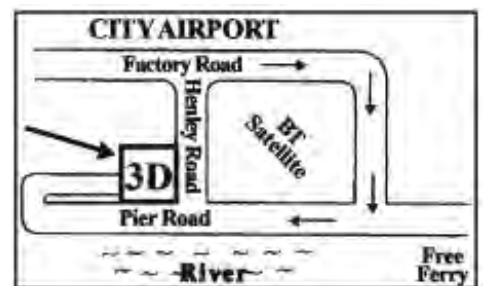
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Barrie Segal has long been recognised as the UK's leading expert on parking tickets and parking ticket law, as well as being the founder of the www.AppealNow.com website. He is often on radio phone-in shows regarding unfair PCNs and more importantly so far as **Call Sign** is concerned, has been assisting Dial-a-Cab in trying to cut down the number of PCNs our drivers receive by successfully appealing them. That success has been phenomenal, with a huge majority of the tickets DaC used to have to pay for now being cancelled!

His website, www.AppealNow.com, has been recognised as the best of its kind and has led him to submitting evidence on parking matters to both the *London Assembly* and the *Parliamentary Transport Committee on Parking*. He also regularly represents clients before the Parking Adjudicator.

Barrie has now sent some advice for **Call Sign** readers, regardless of whether a PCN was received whilst working in your taxi or in your private car for a day out. It involves keeping the envelope that the parking ticket comes in. Barrie told us:

"Due to the increase in the incidence of CCTV cameras being used to enforce decriminalised parking, more and more penalty charges are being issued by post. If you get a

PCN's Issued by Post

Some advice from Barrie Segal...



Barrie Segal: The UK's expert on Parking tickets

Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) in the post, keep the envelope that it came in. The reason is that under *The Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General Regulations 2007*, the PCN must show the date of the notice, **which must be the date on which the notice is posted**.

You should especially remember that PCNs issued via CCTV and sent by post, are treated for 'appealing' purposes as if they were a *Notice to Owner*. So deal with them immediately, because you don't get a second chance to appeal or pay like you could with a PCN that has been placed on your vehicle.

Notices to Owner

The 'date' rules for *Notices to Owner* ("NTO") are the same as above. An NTO is the notice you receive if you have not appealed against a PCN that had been put on your car or given to the driver, your initial appeal has been refused, you haven't paid the PCN or you just ignored it. So if you receive a Notice to Owner in the post, keep the envelope that it

came in. The 'date' rules for Notices to Owner are similarly contained in *The Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General Regulations 2007* which states that the NTO must show "the date of the notice, **which must be the date on which the notice is posted**." It is very easy to put an NTO aside and intend to deal with it later. I always recommend that you deal with them immediately if you intend to appeal or pay it.

What to do if the dates are not the same?

So what do you do if the date on the PCN or NTO does not tie up with the date shown on the envelope? In my view, the PCN or NTO is then unenforceable and should be appealed immediately on the basis that there has been a procedural impropriety and that the PCN should be cancelled. Of course, also include any other reasons you may have for appealing. Send a photocopy - never the original - of the envelope with its postmark and a photocopy of the original PCN or NTO. The council may well argue that they posted it on that day, but it was after the last collection. In my view again, this is not a good enough excuse and will fail. If for any reason the authority refuses to cancel the PCN or NTO, then my advice is to take the appeal all the way to the Parking Adjudicator.

Incidentally, I have a free newsletter if DaC drivers want to sign up. All you have to do is click on to the 5p piece on the www.appealnow.com website.

Barrie Segal

www.AppealNow.com

DaC Driver Could Lose us Theatre Ticket Perk

Thanks to Dial-a-Cab's unofficial theatre agent, Tom Whitbread, this

Society gets far more freebie

theatre tickets than any other organisation in the cab trade. Tom's phone number is known by every theatre and agency in London and is the first number they call when wanting to publicise a production by offering drivers complimentary tickets.

That almost came to an end recently when one uncouth - and we have to assume DaC - driver decided that because the allocation of free tickets had run out for *Hairspray*, that he could abuse the theatre box office staff.

The situation was made clear to Tom Whitbread, who then went to the theatre to make an apology and hoped that it was enough. Tom told **Call Sign**:

"I have made apologies all round and hope that this one man's bad manners does not make the majority of our drivers suffer. I have to say that whenever I see our drivers at any of these shows, they are always polite and grateful for the tickets and I have no doubt that the vast majority would be disgusted to know that this was a fellow driver. My sincere hope is that the rude driver wasn't on DaC, but heard about it from one of our drivers."

Tom ended by saying: "So please, if you are the unlucky one who gets to the box office when the last freebie has gone, remember that it isn't the staff who allocate numbers and that when they're gone they're gone. We'd also appreciate it if you kept details of offers to yourself..."

And a message to that driver from everyone **Call Sign** spoke to: "Thanks for nothing!"

Sylvie McIntyre



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No, Brian hasn't resigned!

Where they originated from is unclear, but on Wednesday 16 September, a rumour began

BRIAN RICE RESIGNATION RUMOURS UNTRUE!

spreading throughout the cab trade that DaC Chairman, Brian Rice, had resigned.

By Friday, the rumours had reached fever pitch with Board members having heard and asking Brian if he had anything to tell them! But he still hadn't heard them!

In the meantime, *Call Sign's* phone was overrun with queries on the

Chairman's position, rather than news stories! One trade writer even phoned the editor at 1am to ask him if it was true!

Call Sign asked Dial-a-Cab's Chairman if he knew where the stories had come from, but he had no clue. One trade organisation leader also received a stream of queries asking the question: Has Brian Rice resigned?

So the answer is no. But it does mean another photo in the mag...

BOOK REVIEW... BOOK REVIEW... BOOK REVIEW...

TORRES

An intimate portrait of the kid who became king...
(Corinthian Books, £7.99)

If you can break into the first team of the world's greatest soccer teams by the time you are 18 years old, the chances are that you are a pretty useful player. If by that age you're made captain, then you are more than just useful!

Fernando Torres is more than just useful, with adjectives such as brilliant and superb constantly being used to describe him. Indeed, the sub title of sports journalist **Luca Caioli's** new book on Torres calls it; *An intimate portrait of the kid who became king!*

Fernando Torres was born in 1984 and was already playing junior league football at an age when most kids are still looking for a wall to kick their ball against! He was spotted by a scout and signed junior forms for top Spanish club **Athletico Madrid**, where in addition to dreaming of representing his country at football one day, an added dream was that of becoming a pop star! But his football skills were such that there was never going to be a choice and at the tender age of 17, he was selected to make his Athletic debut against Leganés. In his second match just one week later, he scored his first goal and a legend was about to begin.

His final tally for Athletic was 82 goals in 174 games and that was good enough for Liverpool manager **Rafa Benitez** to sign him and give him what many described as the 'honour' of continuing in the number 9 shirt, worn with such distinction by previous centre forwards of the Anfield Reds such as Ian Rush, Robbie Fowler and Michael Owen. The contract was for 6 years and paid him 6.5 million euros. He proved his worth by knocking in 34 goals in his first season!

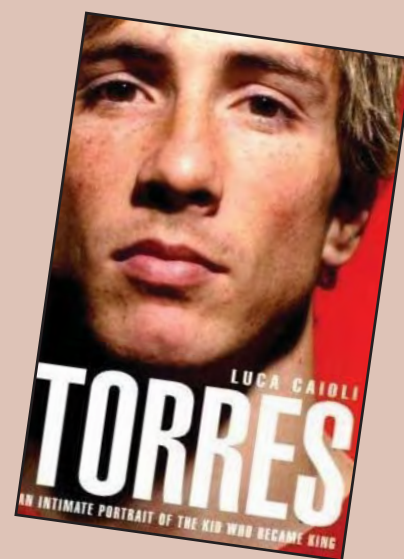
This book tells a story of one of very few footballers that transcend their ability from being very good into being a footballer that their team could not be without. Indeed, when Fernando left Athletic Madrid, the fans arranged a mock funeral! Yet he kept his name as a diplomat by actually attending the funeral, dressed in black and saying that he felt of his old club exactly how the fans felt about him. He added that one day he would return.

He still has that ability because according to the book, when recently asked whether he would prefer to leave Liverpool for Barcelona or Real Madrid, his answer was that he would only want to stay with Liverpool! In March of this year, he showed why with one of the 4 goals Liverpool scored in the Champions League against the might of Real Madrid.

The book contains many quotes from top sports journalists as well as Liverpool fans, it also has 8 pages of colour photos taken through his career and so far as the football life of Fernando Torres goes, this book covers it all. Ok, a few more photos might have been nice, but the bottom line is that this book does exactly what it says on the cover and for football fans, that represents a good read...

CALL SIGN HAS THREE COPIES OF 'TORRES' TO GIVE AWAY!

Just tell us how many goals Fernando Torres scored in his first Liverpool season. Name, Callsign and postal address to callsignmag@aol.com by October 10.



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compliance officer's update

Hello Ladies & Gents,

Now that the holiday season has come to an end and schools are back, our taxi work should definitely begin to pick up. August did not see as many tourists as one might have hoped for, especially as the euro and dollar were so strong against UK currency. Unfortunately the swine flu scare erupted and that didn't help, however most of the regular accounts are certainly now beginning to get back to the levels that we would have envisaged.

Attempting to take advantage over fellow subscribers...

Over the past few months, the system has been constantly monitored and this next period will be no different. All drivers that are found to be violating any of the current procedure rules will be dealt with and the appropriate complaints will be issued if they are justified. Booking in to zones and ranks incorrectly and hanging up for regular trips are two common complaints and quite honestly, after numerous warnings, there really are no excuses. Our trip loggers and GPS tracking are both precise and very accurate and any misdemeanours are easily substantiated. The complaints committee are not easily swayed if the evidence is there.



EC5 and LAP

You are all by now aware that when EC5 is operative, you must physically be in one of the four city zones (EC1, EC2, EC3 and EC4) and also please be mindful that when the trip is actually offered to you, your position should still be within the relevant boundaries of the four postal zones in question.

Recently we have had a number of members asking for clarification on booking in procedures at Heathrow Airport. Can I please remind you that you must be within the perimeter of the airport before booking in to gain a queue position. The daytime

controllers are again regularly monitoring this zone and anyone that books in from areas outside of the perimeter (eg Heston or Feltham) will almost certainly have to answer a complaint. Rules are rules and they are there for everyone, so please work within them.

Goldman Sachs rank

Finally and to prevent any misunderstanding, can I remind you again about the rank that services Goldman Sachs. When EC5 is not in operation, this rank in St Bride Street is EC10 and operates between 06.00 and 20.50. After 20.50 when EC5 takes over, you are quite within the rules to book into EC5 and then have the option of a trip offer through the system as well as a G/S walk-up from the rank itself.

During other periods of the day, EC10 is a physical rank in St Brides Street and not – as some drivers seem to believe – by St Pauls Cathedral.

All ranks and any changes to procedures updates are listed in the drivers manual and can be found online via the Dial a Cab website at www.dialacab.co.uk. Just follow the link to the Members Portal and then Drivers Manual.

Allan Evans
DaC Compliance Officer

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER SPENCER PERCEVAL COMMEMORATING THE ONLY BRITISH PM TO BE ASSASSINATED

On the evening of 11 May 1812, **Prime Minister Spencer Perceval (1762 – 1812)** was on his way to a meeting at the House of Commons. As he entered the lobby of the House, a man stepped forward, drew a pistol and shot him in the chest. Perceval died almost immediately. The assassin, John Bellingham, made no attempt to escape and was later found to be a man with an obsessive grievance against the government's "poor money handling." Perceval lived at Elm Grove, Ealing Common during his three years as PM and the borough is laying on a series of special events to commemorate the 200th anniversary of him becoming PM in 1809. Among the events are:

An evening of words and music to mark the 200th anniversary him becoming PM...

This is by the Ealing Symphony Orchestra and Ealing North MP, Stephen Pound, who will talk on Perceval the Parliamentarian. A plaque from the Ealing Civic Society in honour of Spencer Perceval will be unveiled. The evening is on 3 October 2009 from 7 – 9.30pm at the All Saints Church, Elm Grove Rd, Ealing Common. Admission £4. Tickets 0208 992 2333...

Spencer Perceval and All Saints Church...

A new exhibition about the life of Perceval and the building of his memorial church, All Saints, including rarely seen exhibits. From 3 October 2009 to 3 January 2010, 11am to 4pm at Gunnersbury Park Museum, Popes Lane Acton. Admission free...

The Perceval family in 19th century Ealing...

A guided heritage walk led by local historian, Paul Fitzmaurice, from All Saints to Pitzhanger Manor – the 'Dream House' designed by Sir John Soane – on 8 October. Times are 10.30am to 1.15pm. £2 includes refreshments at Pitzhanger

Manor. Booking: Dr Jonathan Oates on 020 8825 8194.

If you never realised that a British Prime Minister had been assassinated, some or all of these events may interest you...



British PM
Spencer
Perceval
was assassinated in
May 1812

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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 returns to 1993 with a Call Sign Editorial by former editor Jerry Craig celebrating DaC's fortieth anniversary...

From Call Sign, November 1993...

40 years of public service

Having the Transport Minister, Steven Norris, attending our 40th birthday celebration at the Guildhall turned out to be an unintentional coup for Dial-a-Cab, considering it was just one day before that the government had published the important Green Paper containing their 'inclinations' on taxis and PHVs. In more ways than one, it was interesting having such an important government member at our exhibition.

Aubrey Siteman, our incumbent chairman, proudly guided the minister around our various exhibits. He had explained to him all about the advances in technology that our Society had made over the past 40 years. Mr. Norris appreciated the excellent service we give to the public, disabled passengers and female card users. He saw this as a very important part of a modern taxi service. The minister was equally intrigued by our unique customer invoice service and liaison with the London's emergency services.

Mr Norris came over as a very personable man who is willing to listen and understand our trades' problems. He is in fact the con-



Steven Norris poses with ODRTS Board and staff at the Guildhall

summate politician, with a lot of patience. His job at the Transport Ministry is not an enviable one. If all that he has conveyed to us as a trade comes about, then we hope his commonsense prevails regarding our future as a licensed taxicab trade.

That notwithstanding, this, our great day at The Guildhall, went off very well indeed. Drivers, customers and passers-by came to see what Dial-a-Cab were displaying. Mr. Norris

spoke to a great many of them, also giving a great deal of his valuable time to us as a licensed radio taxi society.

The media and trade press who were straining to speak to him got their turn later.

And to all our members: You would be advised as cab drivers to read the Green Paper that Mr Norris spoke about at our show because it contains much that could affect the next 40 years of our radio society and trade in general. Let us hope that Mr

Major's government can get the economy right so our country will return to a more prosperous and vibrant business state than it has been in the South-east of England for the past four years. If this happens, our trade will be the first to see the long awaited changes that are so desperately needed by us.

Green Paper on Taxis and PHVs: This paper is intended to be a discussion paper. Mr Norris wished to hear from everybody in our trade who are sufficiently interested to make their comments known to him.

Buy a copy, discuss it with other cabmen and maybe there will be something really worth writing to Mr Norris about.

In the meantime, here's to another 40 years of the ODRTS. Cheers!

Jerry Craig, Editor

LTI URGE DRIVERS TO BUY NOW

Before Scrappage scheme ends...

LTI Vehicles is urging taxi drivers to take advantage of the Government's *scrappage* scheme, which is widely expected to end this month. The news came as the *Department for Business* announced that over 200,000 vehicles have been sold under the *scrappage* scheme and the Government's budget is expected to run out by mid-October, as car owners take advantage of the subsidy on offer. Over two-thirds of the £300 million budget set aside for the scheme has already gone. The scheme gives drivers a £2,000 incentive towards a new vehicle if they scrap a vehicle over 10 years old as part of the deal. **Rob Laidler**, Sales Director at LTI Vehicles, told **Call Sign**:

"The scrappage scheme has been a real success for LTI and the taxi trade, with many drivers taking advantage of the £2000 incentive. It will end shortly and we are advising drivers looking to participate in the *Scrappage* scheme to take advantage of this deal and purchase a new TX4 before the funding runs out."

This must be the best time ever to purchase a new TX4. In addition to the £2000 scrappage incentive, there are also strong offers from LTI and a 15% VAT rate until 1 January 2010.

In the meantime, John Russell, CEO of Manganese Bronze Holdings, is asking the government to consider extending the scheme.

He told **Call Sign**: "The Government's Car Scrappage Scheme has provided real help for business over the last few months, accounting for over 20% of London Taxi sales during the period of the scheme and has supported sales volume through one of the deepest recessions in living memory. As a British manufacturer based in Coventry, with dealerships across the UK, we are calling on the Government to extend the Scrappage Scheme while the automotive market remains fragile. While other countries are moving out of recession, the OECD have released data to show the UK economy will shrink more than the Treasury has forecast this year and our exit from recession will be slower than the US or European recovery. Given the position of the UK economy and British manufacturing, it would appear prudent to extend the Scrappage Scheme to support the British automotive sector."

"LTI Vehicles is an excellent example of the success of the Government's Scrappage Scheme and a reason to extend its operation in the current economic conditions."

Predictions show that the Scrappage Scheme will run out of funds in October. The automotive sector will also be hit by a return to 17.5% VAT on 1 January 2010 and a new Road Fund Licence regime in April 2010, which will introduce a new first year rate, adding £740 onto the cost of a new taxi at the point of sale.

No other support packages announced by the Government for the industry this year have achieved the same success as the Scrappage Scheme.

Ricky Manetta (N16) has had a substantial amount of space in recent issues of *Call Sign*. That's due to the two self defence classes Ricky takes at the LTDA offices in Woodfield Road. One is on Tuesday with a second on Wednesday from 2pm to 3.30pm. With a large air-conditioned area and lots of parking and washing facilities, the sessions are in a perfect setting. They are also free, but you have to be an LTDA member.

The classes consist of small warm-up of exercises and a revision of the previous week followed by a new technique and some drills so that everything you learn becomes an instinct and not a thought. In a real life situation, by the time you've had the thought, the instinct has already dealt with it.

With many drivers now already attending the classes, we turned our attention to something else that Ricky does – chaperoning the Ultra Fighting Championship (UFC) guys. He not only meets them at whatever airport they arrive at, but at the actual event, he walks them down to the ring – or should we say cage!

When it first arrived in the UK, UFC fighting was banned as being too violent, but its popularity has grown to the point where it sells out any arena it appears in. Of late, it has even drawn in those used to watching the American WWE wrestlers, when former WWE

RICKY AND THE UFC



UFC Champ Brock Lesnar inset: Ricky Manetta

fighters in less than three minutes. This is literally the biggest heavyweight title fight ever and it may also be the most explosive."

Brock Lesnar, who has made himself the most unpopular champi-

Heavyweight Champion, **Brock Lesnar**, crossed over from the entertainment side to the real stuff and after just a few bouts, won the UFC Heavyweight title as well.

Brock is scheduled to defend the title in Las Vegas on November 21 against **Shane Carwin** in a fight that looks to be his toughest one yet. According to UFC President **Dana White**:

"Brock Lesnar has been tearing through everyone over the last year, but in Shane Carwin he is not only fighting someone as big as he is, he's fighting someone who has ended all of his

on in Mixed Martial Arts history thanks to bringing his WWE style of talking to the UFC, said he was looking forward to facing Carwin and ending his undefeated MMA run. "Undefeated? I'm the man who is going to put an end to that," said Lesnar.

Ricky won't be in Las Vegas that day, but he will be at the LTDA on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. If you'd like the chance to train with Ricky but aren't an LTDA member, he has another day class and two evening classes and you can get details by calling Ricky on 07950 267574. He'll be glad to talk to you...

Burglars at the DaC Credit Union

DaC Credit Union Vice President, John Riley (K38), has told *Call Sign* of a break-in at the Credit Union's Stratford office.

"There are quite a number of different companies in the building in addition to DACCU and when we noticed one of those office doors open as we left our office, we didn't take too much notice. However, the following morning I received a phone call from the office manager to say that we had been broken in to. I went in with **Terry Dodd (W15)**, the CU's President and the place had been left in a bit of a mess with drawers etc on the floor. However, other than computers, there is nothing there worth taking and they didn't even take those – probably too heavy for them to bother with. Other than the mess, they took around £100 of stamps, as there is rarely any money left there. I almost felt insulted because I collect brass airplanes and several were on display, but they didn't bother with them!"

The burglars broke into five offices in total, probably getting in via the roof. However, the police have found some

prints on a ceiling tile and are hopeful a DNA check could give them a lead. Both Terry and John asked *Call Sign* to apologise to anyone who went to their offices on the following Monday, only to find them closed due to the break in.

John added: "We were thinking of moving before this happened. The break-in has now made our mind up for us..."



John Riley before the break-in. He lost his smile after!

TAXI DRIVERS LEGAL PROTECTION

After only ten months of operation, Taxi Drivers & Owners Legal Protection Ltd is now firmly established, with an ever-increasing membership.

Founded by **Alan Fleming**, former Chairman of the LCDC and **Dave Cohen**, former Membership Secretary and Treasurer, we are now providing legal representation for our existing members.

Taxi Drivers & Owners Legal Protection Ltd is a non-political organisation, which has been set up to provide legal representation for London's licensed taxi drivers.

For further information and membership enquiries, take a look at our new web site at:

www.taxidriverslegalprotection.co.uk

Alternatively, our Email address is **topsltd2009@googlemail.com**.

Alan Fleming and Dave Cohen

I'd like to voice my concern over the beginning of the introduction of the ISA (Independent Safeguarding Authority). I see that Ed Balls has announced he will review the catchment groups to be included in this ridiculous legislation after criticism from many sections of the public, but not from our representatives I hasten to add...

Let me begin by saying that I have recently received my file from the PCO, going back 44 years. I asked for all of it without exception (not sure if that has been fulfilled), but it takes time to peruse through it and work - or the lack of it - is more pressing at the moment! But I have found some interesting literature that will need to be explained by the PCO sometime in the future, when the time is right.

My MP, the excellent **Lee Scott**, helped me in this quest. What is apparent is that I was investigated back to the womb, I have no problem with that because in those days the Carriage Officers were mainly ex old school police officers who really cared about the type of drivers they turned out, unlike the current incumbents - seemingly too many of Livingston's leftovers who in my opinion have let this trade down and seem to have an end goal of amalgamating us with the PHV Trade.

However back to the ISA; we now have to undergo the CRB every three years and pay for it. What more do they need to find out about us if the normal procedures of acceptance into this trade is followed? When Plato used the phrase *quis custodiet ipsos custodies* (who guards the guardians) in his work (*The Republic*) exploring Government and morality, he may not have realised how many times in the future this question would be asked.

MIKE POLLINGTON LOOKS AT THE ISA

That's the Independent Safeguarding Authority...



Ilford South – and Mike's MP – Lee Scott is assisting him

I now ask it again? Who are these people who are going to ask the question of 11 million people: "Prove you are not a paedophile or risk a fine of £5,000 if you want to continue your business."

There can be no one who was not horrified by the Soham murders, but this Government - known for its knee jerk reaction to most things - seems to have done it again. Sir Michael Bichard, who was asked to produce this legislation, has said he didn't mean it to take this form, but he drafted it so it's a bit late to say *Not me Guv!*

Without knowing him personally, I see that he worked for Brent Council and the Department of Education, Works, and Pensions - no success there then! But before

anyone says that I am just having a rant for the sake of it, let me explain my objection. Firstly, I believe we are moving into a Police State and that this is just a ruse to further the DNA database idea with everyone being fingerprinted etc. If you are one of those people that believe the old chestnut of *if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear*, let me remind you that we live in a country where you are innocent until proven guilty. Be aware that if a database becomes law, that you reverse a centuries old *Act* that was laid down to protect you.

Imagine the scenario whereby you shake hands with a stranger one-day only to find they were murdered soon after and the only DNA on them was yours. Now prove your innocence. Couldn't happen...???

Secondly and more importantly because this is a serious subject and I am sure the parents of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman do want to ensure that we do everything in our powers to stop this happening again - and so we should - let's look at the main flaw in the legislation that no one has addressed. There are still many paedophiles out there that have never been detected, they have no criminal record and they are probably rejoicing in this bad legislation. They can now pay £64 and get a licence to work with children for life. Won't happen? I sincerely hope not...

Michael Pollington (K17)

Crash, Bang, Wallop: DaC Driver's Lucky Escape...

Debbie Hope (W18) is a very lucky lady - and she knows it too! While travelling west along Craven Road in Paddington, her TX4 was in collision with another lady motorist at the junction with Gloucester Terrace.

"At around 07.15 hours on Thursday 4th September," she told *Call Sign*, "I was approaching the junction at about 25/28 mph and suddenly saw a car coming at me from the left. At about 25/28, it was right on top of me and I felt an almighty impact in the left side and front of my cab, the force of the impact thrusting me out of my seat and causing me to hit my head on the cab headlining. The other driver was also shaken up of course, and we both ended up in hospital. We were released later on that day."

Debbie continued: "Thankfully I wasn't seriously hurt, even though I was not wearing a seat-belt, but I do have a sore head to remind me of the incident! My cab didn't come off too well from the crash, though. It had to be recovered from the scene and towed to the garage as it was quite undrivable."

The Dial-a-Cab driver added that both parties are claiming that they had the traffic lights on 'green' in their favour and it appears that the traffic cameras in the area were not working at the time. Surprisingly for that time of the morning, there seems to have been no one around who might of witnessed the collision or as Debbie added, at least no one offered their details at the time!

"Some Dial-a-Cab drivers did kindly stop after the crash to see if they could help," said Debbie in appreciation. "My husband Duncan (R52), put out a message over the MDT later that morning to thank all those drivers who showed such concern for my welfare. I'm currently resting at home, but through *Call Sign* I would like to thank them personally for their concern. Judging by the state of my cab, it could be some while before things are sorted out."

Debbie is looking for any witness's who perhaps couldn't stop at the time, but who remember seeing the accident. Were you in the area at the time? Did you see or hear anything? If so, please contact *Call Sign* and we will pass your details onto Debbie.



Debbie's TX4 leftovers show what a lucky escape she had!

DaC Training Manager **Daren Morley** is a running nut! It doesn't matter where it is, he's happy to go and run it. Whether the London Marathon or Gateshead's Great North Run, Daren just enjoys them all. His only problem is one that many athletes face.

"As you get older, your muscles seem to pick up strains and pulls so much easier and when that happens, your best bet is to find a cold water tap and let it run over the affected muscle. So I was delighted to discover what to me is a new product – **Ice Bandage**. It fits easily into my sports bag and is ideal for treating sprains and strains, in addition to helping to reduce swelling and pain really quickly.

"You just undo the sealed pack, take out the Ice Bandage and put it around the affected area. It gets colder as you wait and within 10 minutes it was really cool and it stays like that for up to two hours. You don't have to refrigerate it, so it really is convenient for any sudden emergency strains. It isn't for open wounds though. Once you've used it, it loses the ability to get cold again but can still be used as an ordinary bandage and at under £4, it really is a bargain and I'd recommend it to anyone who does running or keep fit where a pull or strain is possible."

Runner Daren: Ice Bandage is what I've been searching for!



Daren Morley with Ice Bandage where he was having muscle problems

LTI Creates New Aftersales Division

In order to allow LTI to concentrate on developing a direct sales operation and improved aftersales network, the company recently announced radical changes to its UK franchise operations. This included issuing twelve months notice to end the contracts of all independent main dealers.

LTI have now announced the next steps in their plan for an improved customer-focused UK operation with the internal reorganisation necessary to deliver these operational changes.

John Blight has been appointed to the position of *Aftersales Director* and is tasked with the creation of a new *Aftersales Division*. John relinquishes his former role as *M&O Group Director* so he can concentrate on his new role to deliver improvements in the general aftersales care for drivers. To achieve this, John will have overall responsibility for the *Service Dealer* network, along with parts, warranty, training and customer service both in the UK and abroad.

LTI has stated that better customer relations, improved product quality and a higher quality of aftersales provision for drivers is their number one task and John told *Call Sign* that he is keen to take up the challenge.

"I have a strong background in Aftersales and parts and feel we can improve the experience for our customers. I intend to develop better technical training and diagnosis for our Service Dealers, so we deliver more right-first-time repairs for the driver."

In addition, **Rob Laidler** is expanding his role as *Sales Director*

and assumes the additional responsibility for the Mann and Overton Group in order to develop the direct sales operation for both new and used vehicles.

These changes take immediate effect in order to allow John to work with existing members of staff and to recruit further key personnel necessary to develop the Aftersales Division.

Managing Director of LTI, Peter Shillcock, added:

"The new organisation we have announced means there will be even more focus on quality and reliability issues that directly affect our customers. We will be expanding the Aftersales team to ensure we deliver the highest quality service to drivers and increase the quality of what is still the world's best taxi."

You can find out more about LTI Vehicles at their website: www.lti.co.uk

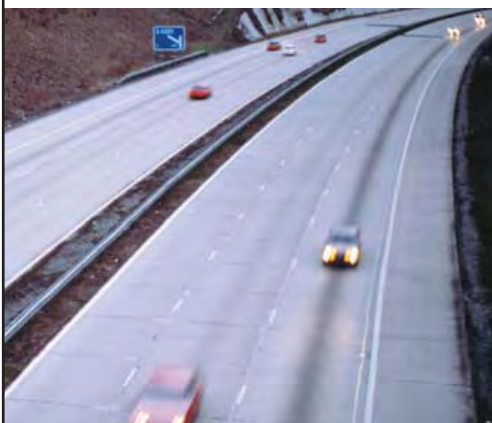


John Blight is now *Aftersales Director*



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Call Sign Editor Alan Fisher gives his view on the Black Cab Fuel Card...

The last two issues of *Call Sign* have contained articles about a new fuel card scheme that guarantees to slash your diesel costs. The new card is for Licensed London taxi drivers only and claims that you can now take advantage of an exclusive commercial diesel rate.

Many **Dial-a-Cab** drivers applied to join the scheme and recommendations from them meant that non-DaC taxi drivers have also begun joining the scheme. And there is no reason why they shouldn't if the scheme works. So does it?

Well, as the saying goes, I can only speak as I find. The card's only downside is that I can only use Texaco or Morrisons. Having said that, I pass two Texaco stations on my way home, so that's no hardship. One of them is in Mare Street Hackney, where the pump price is usually around 2p per litre more than other garages. Most garages were selling diesel at 107.9, whereas at this east London outlet it was 109.9. But it didn't matter a jot to me! My rate was 100.9 because regardless of where I fill up, I only pay the price the card company text to me each Friday.

I use around 18 litres a day, which means that on the Hackney price I save around £1.62 each working day, or at the cheaper garages, I still save £1.26 a time! If you do six days a week and in all likelihood, more miles than I do (I spend time on the mag) then you could be looking at close to £40/50 a month savings – enough over a year to pay for most overhauls! And that doesn't even take into account that you can also use the card to fill up your car!

But what if you get a job that doesn't involve you passing a Texaco or Morrisons garage, but you need to fill up? Well, the only problem there is that you will have to pay the normal price, because if you don't want to use the card, then you don't. There are no penalties, other than your fuel bill for that day will suddenly seem expensive! What makes this Black Cab Fuel Card so good so far as I am

SLASHING YOUR DIESEL BILLS!



Editor Al giving his views on the Black Cab fuel card

concerned, is that not only is it absolutely free with no monthly fees or hidden costs, but you can decide if and when you want to use it! There are no minimum obligations or penalties for non-usage.

When you fill up at a **Texaco** or **Morrisons**, you hand over the Black Cab Fuels card and instead of paying cash or using your own card, you sign for the fuel purchased and the amount is debited from your bank account 2 weeks after the end of the week via direct debit, in effect giving you 2-3 weeks interest free credit! It matters not how much the fuel is advertised at outside the garage, you pay whatever the Black Cab fuel card rate is for that week. You can also manage your transactions online if you wish by accessing your account details and purchases at any time.

Yes, as some Dial-a-Cab drivers have point-

ed out to me, you have to give your mileage and registration each time you use the card. So what? Last week I used the card four times and used an Esso garage on two occasions. Even if I had something to hide – and I doubt that applies to many – the mileage info is relatively useless unless you are compelled to give it every day. And of course, no one is compelled to save money on their fuel, if you are happy to spend an extra £500 - or even £600 - a year on fuel, then no one should be able to stop you. And yes, I was a bit nervous about using a card I had never heard of before, but I soon got used to the savings, thank you! I think it's great and certainly not before time.

For more information on how to open an account, visit www.blackcabfuels.co.uk or call 0800 987 5701 and speak to John Murphy. Terms & Conditions apply and are available on request.

DaC's Janet Fox Gets Hitched

Janet Fox (G35J) has been with Dial-a-Cab for many years and photographed doing many different things – all legal! Most were either with the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* or during her work with the *London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled*. *Call Sign* has never had one of Jan getting married before!

The wedding took place on Friday 4th September when Jan married Frank and became Janet Ramsden. Family and friends - including cab drivers - enjoyed the reception! None more so than daddy – better known as DaC's **Brian Fox (G35)**. Ahhh bless!

Using the assistance of Taxi Globe editor, Sandy Goodwin, who was invited as a friend, we declined the offer of a photo of Jan with her wedding car, as that turned out to be her brother-in-law's taxi. Not because it didn't look great gleaming in the sunlight, it was the RTG door logos that put us off!

To Jan and Frank, we wish you many happy years together. To dad Brian... get back to work!



Janet and Frank after the Wedding

As licensed taxi drivers, one of the ongoing problems we face is that of finding a loo where not only can we stop for a few minutes, but also stop without the risk of receiving a Penalty Charge Notice – one of the reasons that the ground floor toilet at Dial-a-Cab House is so popular! That was on **Dave Willett's (T27)** mind when he picked up a job from Upper Thames Street to Islington's Business Design Centre on Upper Street N1 – drop off and shoot down to DaC at East Road for a quick wee! Sadly for Dave, things didn't work out too smoothly...

He set the account fare down and sent the fare clearance via his terminal. Then he switched his meter off and was about to make the short trip to the office, when a passenger in an electric wheelchair tried to hire him. Dave said he wasn't working and didn't even ask where she was going. However, she kept on at Dave who had explained that if she wanted a taxi, it would be no good waiting somewhere with no kerb, as the ramp would be too steep. She continued complaining so much that Dave eventually said that he would take her if she moved 50 metres away to where the kerb began. She ignored him. In the meantime, the doorman from the Hilton – situated in the same complex – asked Dave if he could take a passenger to Paddington. Again he said no because he wasn't working.

According to the lady in the wheelchair, Dave showed "attitude" towards her in a complaint sent to the Public Carriage Office. She told Penton Street that the driver's body language and tone of voice indicated that he was

The Mystery of Dave Willett's PCO Complaint



Dave (left) with former Newcastle star Warren Barton taken during their coaching course

unwilling to take her.

"The wheelchair was irrelevant to me," Dave told *Call Sign*, "I was pretty unwilling to take anyone. I just wanted to get to DaC and use the loo there!"

According to the passenger's statement, the driver did not flatly refuse to take her "...but did not indicate that he would either!"

Even stranger, the passenger claimed that the incident happened on Friday 29 May. Dave never works on Fridays as he is taking a football coaching course, as long time readers of this mag will know from his reports to us. But Dave didn't use that to wriggle out of anything and told the PCO that he remembered the woman and that it happened on a Tuesday, 2 June. But

that still left one final query; the incident occurred on 2 June, yet the passenger wrote out the complaint on 29 May with the PCO forwarding it to Dave for a reply on 1 June?

Yet with all that, the PCO took the passenger's word and although they discharged the complaint as unproven, they told Dave that it would remain on his file! After Dave issued his own complaint to the PCO, explaining that if you are innocent then you are innocent and saying that he would take the matter further if they did not remove the complaint, the PCO suddenly claimed that they had sent Dave the wrong letter and that it would not now remain on his file.

Yet another PCO mystery for the ever-growing files of the London taxi trade...

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

Kupcake's Korner



Enough is enough!

I've had enough of pirates,
I've had enough of scabs,
enough of C.O. tyrants
and enough of pedicabs...

Enough of diesel prices,
enough of ancient laws,
enough of traffic crises
and enough of new cab flaws...

Enough of Station cab ranks,
enough of drunken fools,
enough of getting no thanks
and enough of obeying rules...

Enough of camera smart cars,
enough of CCTV,
enough of caught by radar
and enough of fining me!

Do you feel the same way?
Is YOUR life really tough?
It's time you had YOUR say...
I say enough's enough...!!!!

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Back in April, I decided I wanted to take part in a physical challenge for charity. Having never raised money for charity and being quite unfit from 10 years of working in IT, I thought it was about time I got myself fit, experienced something different and did something useful for charity. I decided I would cut out all alcohol for 4 months, cut right down on junk food and commit myself to a strict fitness regime during all available spare time. The only decision left to make was what physical challenge I would undertake and for which charity?

Deciding on the charity was simple; the **British Red Cross** is close to my heart. Being born in Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe) and spending the first 8 years of my life there before my parents moved back to the UK, I have seen and heard accounts of the plight of the people less fortunate than I – those who could not escape the abject poverty, destitution and violence. Also, my late grandmother volunteered for the BRC for a number of years and every summer holiday I would stay with her in Devon and often heard about her work with them.

So I visited the British Red Cross website to see what upcoming challenges were available. I came across the 'Beat the Brecons' event to be held in Wales during August and as soon as I read the description of the event, I knew I'd found my challenge! What made this challenge unique was the fact that it was 3 diverse events over 3 days, as opposed to one single event. I felt then that if I could cope with a 20 mile hike, followed by 20 miles of canoeing and finally 20 miles of mountain biking – all in the rugged Brecon Beacons – I could cope with anything as it would likely be a real test of stamina, endurance and commitment.

One week before and disaster strikes!

I trained steadily for the 4 months leading up to the event and only then did I begin to realise the uniqueness of this event and just how much was involved. Needing suitable kit for each of the 3 very different events was in itself a challenge! I started a blog online to record my progress both through the training and the event itself; this provided my sponsors – including **Call Sign** – with updates on my progress and helped to keep me focussed.

Unfortunately, one week before the event and during my final training session – a 20 mile bike ride in Hadleigh Country Park – I crashed my mountain bike and fractured a rib. I rested for the rest of the week and relied on Paracetamol, Red Bull and good old adrenaline to keep me going through the event itself. The Red Cross event organisers were really supportive and ensured I was up to the events, because there was no way I was going to drop out after all the training and fund-raising!

The event itself was the single most physically challenging experience I have ever been through. The hiking was hard work and our progress was hampered by relentless rain and gale-force winds. The canoeing was almost a pleasant change! I quickly learnt to read the water because events change so rapidly when you're on quite fast-moving water, but how I

DaC's Jon Winterburn 'Beats the Brecons'

In the British Red Cross adrenaline challenge...



Jon toning up for the event with an assault course! Pic Clare Allen

My target was £500 and to date I have raised £620. I still have to collect some of the money and I'm hoping to gain a few more donations, so fingers crossed!

Equally I'd like to thank the **British Red Cross** for not

never capsized I will never know! (see cover pic). The mountain biking was extreme – I thought I'd mountain-biked before, but I quickly realised that this was in a completely different league altogether! The terrain was always changing and often treacherous. The majority of the bike ride was uphill into the mountains and it was the most exhausting of all the events. Due to this, I felt it was also the most rewarding of the 3 events.

All in all, it was very enjoyable and I really felt alive! Certainly, I've achieved a lot by taking part in it, but I could not have done this without the fantastic support of my wife and son, family, friends and colleagues. So I would like to say a HUGE thank you to everyone who supported and sponsored me; I'm touched by the generosity of so many people.

only providing me with such an excellent experience, but for the first-class support we received during every step of the event. I certainly feel it was worthwhile and will continue to support the BRC in the future; their work is so important – not just far away from home in Africa, but in your local neighbourhood too. You never know when you will need them, so please support the British Red Cross.

Thank you all. Should you wish to read more, my blog of this event is available at <http://jonwinterburn.wordpress.com>.

Jonathen Winterburn
DaC Network Administrator

DAC CUT-PRICE TRIPS WITH...



You can now travel from the world's newest and most exciting railway station – St Pancras International – to Calais in 58 minutes, Lille in 1 hour 20 minutes, Brussels in 1 hour 50 minutes or of course Paris – now just 2 hours and 15 minutes away!

You can take family and friends with you, but the DaC driver must be in the party. Booking forms are available only from the DaC Driver's Reception...

The prices to DaC drivers?

Just £59 return standard class OR...

If you would like a bit of luxury, £99 return 1st Class!

The magic of Dial-a-Cab and Eurostar together...

A bit bendy...

You know when you are getting old when you see everyone else by their failings, before seeing any of their good points. In fact they usually show their bad points before you ever find out if they have any good points. And sometimes this is even a good point! (*Ed's note: I think I'll go back to bed!*)

This was highlighted on a recent bus journey when riding on the number 38 bendy from Dalston to the West End. During any bus journey, I love to study people, their actions and facial expressions.

I think that everyone now realises that the nickname for these bendy buses is the freebie bus. From my selected seat at the rear of the bus, I had an excellent view of the passenger's movement around the vehicle. You will notice that when a freebie bus pulls up at a bus stop, the majority of passengers rush to the entry doors towards the rear of the bus, as they have no intention of paying for a ride on these Ken Livingston white elephants. As law-abiding taxpayers will have noticed, these days you are paying more and getting less in return. But the lazy and work shy are getting more and paying less with more and more incentives to stay out of work.

There is also an increase in the bad manners that seems to pass from the insolent groups to this once polite nation. It does not seem that the polite persons will try and get the others to come up to their standard, so they seem to lower their standards as that becomes easier and causes less confrontation. If you hold a door open for someone to pass through, or stop to let another vehicle out of a side street, do you expect a thank you? If you do, then you will most probably be sadly disappointed. Nowadays, getting a thank you is like winning the lottery!

On bendy buses, you have some sets of seats that face one another, which lead to further bad manners. Into one of these groups of seats sat a couple of foreign lesbians who began cuddling. Up to that point I did not have a problem.

Whilst walking our dog in the morning over London Fields, I'm often accompanied by gay and lesbian friends. During the walk we have interesting conversations interjected with jokes and humour. I have never had a problem with a person's sexual preferences. But back to the bus...

The two females put their shoes up onto the swabs of the seats opposite, leaving dirt, spit and dog's excrement on them. It then gets transferred onto the next item of clean clothing of the following passenger; this action is seen as the norm, no doubt due to the lowering of standards that have been taught to them as children. Will anyone say anything to these offenders? Of course not, due to the increase of so-called *politically correct* individuals and human rights persons. You may even think that these offenders might be concealing a knife within their clothing. So those bad manners increase to the point where growing infants take this as the correct way to act.

Why do parents not train and educate their siblings in the correct standard that should be the only one accepted by others? Is it because you hear parents say that it's the job of the teachers to show them how to behave, negating their own responsibility? Over the past decade or so, we've had children as young as 10 years old murdering other children of a similar age, this is because right from an early age, they have not been taught right from wrong by their parents or guardians. These children are then put into a secure unit and when released, will be given a new identity and a free secure address, plus police protection at our cost. The guardians or parents are also given a secret address whilst the children are awaiting trial, this is with expenses and the cost down to the working taxpayer.

In my mind this is just encouraging the parents to show neglect in their child's upbringing. I

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

The World According to Tom Whitbread

...and DaC's answer to Victor Meldrew!



believe that if the child is under the age of being sent to an adult prison, then one or both parents should be incarcerated as well as the child being sent to a secure unit.

If the present trend is allowed to continue, the next 20 to 30 years will see an out-of-control nation where the bullies and criminals will rule the land and civilisation in this country will have taken a retrograde step. This has been allowed to happen by weak governments giving in to so called *political correctness*, or maybe Prime Ministers being brow beaten by their partners for a financial gain.

In Hackney, the borough in which I live, on a recent Saturday there were 2 incidents that involved 3 stabbings and 1 shooting. Is this not taking away my human rights to walk along a street without the fear of being attacked and possibly even murdered? This being the case, what chance do you stand as a taxi driver with every mugger, drug addict or 14 year old with a knife looking to score? They know you will be carrying some cash around the dark streets of London, so you are an ideal target.

Unless there are sharp drastic changes in the law, unless politicians do the job they are paid to complete, any person serving the public whilst carrying cash will be in a high-risk situation. These days bus drivers rarely collect money and neither do other delivery drivers, the buyer pays over the phone by credit card. But because of the nature of a taxi driver's job, he has to collect a certain amount of cash, putting him or herself at risk.

As I warned you years ago about losing of work to private hire because you stick your heads in the sand and do not want to address problems as they arise, you allow these problems to develop until they are insurmountable. We need to put pressure on the people who can change the situation or dismiss these politicians for others who will change the situation and then perhaps our daily lives would become much safer, as would the places we live. Do not put up with weak, cheating, lying and thieving people who purport to work on your behalf to make your life better and safer.

Regents Park Open Air Theatre

On a much lighter note, I was given tickets to the Regents Park Open Air Theatre, by a friend who

could not use them due to a sad happening in his life. I had never been to the theatre in the park and was a little apprehensive due to the changeable British weather and - being in the open - the sound quality.

The show was *Hello Dolly*, starring Samantha Spiro as the overpowering Dolly Levi. Accompanied by my daughter, her partner and one of my grandsons, we set off on the warm Saturday evening in August through the paths towards the centre of Regents Park, past happy crowds enjoying their picnics - something encouraged by the theatre management, with tables provided as well.

I was surprised at the size of the show's audience, not realising how large the theatre was inside. We passed through the bars, restaurant and souvenir shop - all of which I doubt would be recommended for their low prices. On entering the seating area, I was pleasantly surprised that the seats had been staggered to allow a clear view above the patrons sitting directly in front of you.

The show started and I was amazed at the clarity of the 4-piece orchestra and the clear voices of the singers, this was due to the well placed speakers around the auditorium. The show was excellent, with the cast giving their all into making it a memorable occasion.

If you do have the opportunity to go to the Open Air theatre, it might be worth remembering to take a jacket or light travel rug, as the temperature can drop quite rapidly in late summer and that could detract from your enjoyment. You can buy lightweight rugs at the theatre, they are the ones available in Argos for £5, but at this venue the price is £20. So if you address that one hazard, you will have a very pleasant evening - weather permitting.

Two other very good shows in London at the moment are *Sister Act*, where you should watch out for Ian "you stupid boy" Lavender from Dads Army; he plays the priest. Then there is *Hairspray* in which Brian Conley has taken over the part of the mother from Michael Ball. Did you know that John Travolta played the part in the film version? Both shows are well worth seeing.

How to save money at PC World...

By a piece of luck, I recently found out how to save a little bit of money if you buy any computer or electrical gear from PC World. If you know what item you want and need it quickly, phone their main number in Sheffield on 0844 561 0000 and ask for it to be reserved at the shop that you wish to pick it up from. By doing this, you will be given the same price as if you were buying it online. I saved £17.02 on a Netgear DGN2000 router in-store price of £79.99. It is reserved immediately, all you need is the reference number that you get over the phone and you save a fair bit of money.

Drive safely and remember it cost no more to be polite. If the other person screams and shouts, imagine how superior you will feel not acting like an animal...

Tom Whitbread
DaC Board Member

Call Sign has published some strange stories in its time – see our last issue about the DaC driver and a group of aliens if you don't believe us – but this one is up with the best of them!

A Dial-a-Cab driver called to tell us that he was driving along Queen Victoria Street towards Friday Street, when he suspected that he was being followed by a policeman on a motor bike. As he continued driving, the motorbike followed until his blue light began flashing and the DaC driver was signalled to pull over.

Understandably, the driver does not want his details published, but what happened next is a total mystery – and not for the reason you'd expect.

Our driver asked the policeman if there was a problem and he was told no. He then pulled out a piece of paper with both the Transport for London and Mayor of London logos on and asked the driver to read it. It was a Mayoral *Directive* addressed to the City of London police at Wood Street. It said that as of the beginning of September, police could stop any taxi (or private hire vehicle) to see whether they had their licence and badge. The driver complied and whilst he thought it was a bit pointless, he also told **Call Sign** that it wasn't a real problem for him.

Our problem was that we'd had no warning and couldn't understand why a *Directive* from the Mayor's office should creep in without prior notice to the trade press. So we asked the Mayor's office what it was all about. Their answer was what stunned us. They had never

The DaC Driver, The Police and the Mayor

And an unsolvable mystery...



How do we know who is real?

heard of it. Neither had the PCO or Wood Street police station!

That begs the question; just who was the policeman that stopped our driver? Was he not really a policeman? If he was, then where did he get the *Directive* from? According to our driver, it looked very genuine to him.

Sadly, the mystery seems to be unsolvable, but if any DaC driver is stopped, we'd appreciate it if you could make a note of the bike's number – and the policeman's if possible. I have to say that getting stories about aliens is far easier!

Alan Fisher

Smile Leslie, You're on Camera!

Westminster City Council may have temporarily reduced their parking camera activities while those artificial eyes are being upgraded, but as **Leslie DeVere (C21)** found out to his cost, the **City of London Traffic Management Department** continues their Big Brother actions with enthusiasm!

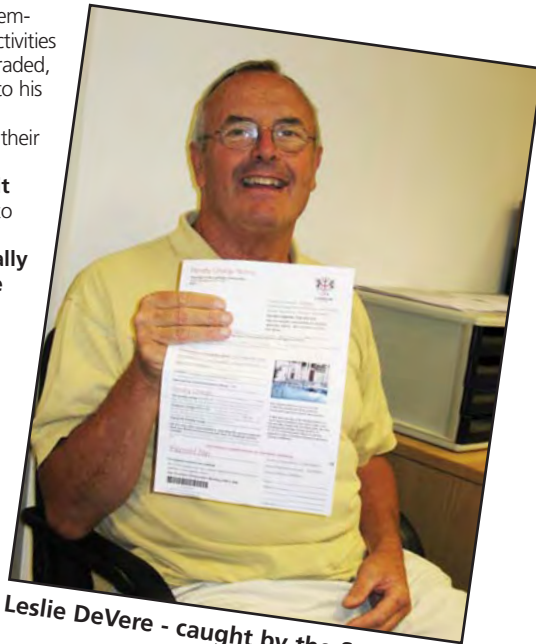
"At the end of the day, I guess it was down to me," Leslie admitted to **Call Sign**. **"I saw a space behind another cab on a rank that is usually full, so I put on as you do in these quieter times. The camera angle does not tell the true story, I was not on the footway as the PCN alleges, but how can you dispute it,"** he continued, almost shaking with rage as the memory returned.

He passed the PCN to our reporter for scrutiny. The document says that Leslie's cab ...*was parked with one or more wheels on or over a footpath or any part of a road other than a carriageway.* A photograph accompanied the £120 fine, which relates to St Paul's Churchyard rank by the Cathedral.

"There are usually several cabs on that rank, but on that occasion I saw a space so I grabbed it, being careful not to straddle the zigzags of the pedestrian crossing. The way the work is right now, it's almost impossible not to be foul of any rank," he added.

The warning is clear; drivers must be ultra careful not only where they rank up, but also how they rank up. With cameras installed on almost every street corner and Councils eager to boost their bank balances, it is very tempting for parking operatives to issue PCNs at will.

What do you mean why are buses not penalised when three bendies pull onto a bus stop only marked out for two and block the road up at the same time?



Leslie DeVere - caught by the St Pauls!

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PORTRAIT & WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

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Are you getting married? If you want something a bit different and contemporary, then look no further. My speciality 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 taxi user, I will offer you a special deal on portraits.

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



CALL SIGN EN LA BELLE FRANCE



There are no other words for it...I'm shaking a tin and I need the help of **Call Sign** readers. Not a lot - just a little will do! You see I am running (well, jogging and alternating with walking more likely) in the **New York City Marathon** in just a few weeks time for a very worthy charity called **Get Kids Going!**



Get Kids Going! is a national charity that gives disabled children and young people the wonderful opportunity of participating in sport. They help promote sports for disabled children by providing them with specially built sports wheelchairs, so they can do marathons, triathlons, tennis, athletics, mountain skiing, rugby and basketball etc. **Get Kids Going!** also helps and encourages British disabled children to compete, by supporting them with their sports training, physiotherapy, travel, design and development of sports wheelchairs. With our help, many could become record holders and Paralympic champions!

Get Kids Going! support children with all disabilities and make sure that any equipment which is outgrown is recycled to other children, so supporters' valuable donations are never wasted.

Yes, I know I've rattled the odd collection pot under **Call Sign** noses quite a few times since my first London Marathon in 1991 and over the years in my eleven previous marathons and countless half marathons - oh yes, and the never to be attempted again



Back in 2000, Bob risked his life in the infamous Marathon de Sables by running across the Sahara Desert for Charity!

Marathon de Sables - I've raised a sum approaching £50k for various good causes. But, these old legs are now 53 years young, so it may be my last! However, the training has gone really well; I've cut down on the Guinness and found a treadmill in a gym that is positioned in front of a TV monitor showing Sky Sports! Millwall aren't on too often, but you never know...

Seriously, it would be great to knock up a good haul here for **Get Kids Going!** with this run. I don't care if you sponsor me 50p or £50 - if everyone in my email address book bungs in a small amount, I know I would have a very good fund raising campaign! I don't even mind if you don't contribute - just please don't be offended by the spiel or the appeal!

Donating through **JustGiving** is simple, fast

and totally secure. Your details are safe with **JustGiving** - they'll never sell them on or send unwanted emails. Once you donate, they will send your money directly to the charity and make sure Gift Aid is reclaimed on every eligible donation by a UK taxpayer. So it's the most efficient way to donate - I raise more, whilst saving time and cutting costs for the charity!

Just click on the link: <http://www.justgiving.com/Rob-Woodford-NYC/>

Oh yes, wish me luck... I may need it!

A bientot...

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

Hornby Taxi 2012!



Toy makers, Hornby, are to release a set of 30 'Corgi' die-cast replica toys to commemorate the 2012 London Olympics.

A TX4 will be one of the 30, with a double-decker London bus being first for release. The bus was seen by billions around the world when handed over by Mayor Boris Johnson at the end of the Beijing Games as a symbol of London becoming the next host.

The miniatures will be released in limited editions of 5,000 in London 2012 style packaging and will go on sale at £30. Other products will include the athletic stadium at Stratford's Olympic Park as well as the velodrome.

Hornby Chief Executive, Frank Martin, said that since winning the retail contract, many large retailers had already expressed an interest. They hope to have the first batch in stores by November...

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...?

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August 15 was just another Saturday evening in the middle of the quietest month of the year. A Dial-a-Cab driver (we have agreed not to reveal his identity) had only been on the circuit for around 8 weeks having recently arrived from a north London competitor and was cruising in south London.

As he reached the junction of Wandsworth Road and Union Street, for a split second he thought his luck had changed as a group of people came towards him. It was dark but dry and for that moment everything seemed ok – until he noticed that there were six of them and they all had their faces hidden by hoods.

The driver told **Call Sign** that although he always kept his front doors locked, the passenger compartment was usually unlocked.

“As they got closer,” the driver told us, “I saw them all much more clearly. It wasn’t because they were black that made me quickly locked the back doors, it was because they were deliberately making it difficult for me to see their faces. Had the six been white and doing the same thing, I’d have still locked my doors.”

The driver went on to tell **Call Sign** that the six reached his cab, which was still at the lights, and immediately spread out trying to open the taxi’s front and back doors.

“When they found them locked, they just started laughing and moved off to what I assume would be the next cab driver that stopped at those lights. It may be quiet out at

A Dial-a-Cab driver’s lucky escape causes him to tell Call Sign...

Why You should Keep Your Doors Locked...



Keep at least your two front doors locked. London may be 95% safe, but somewhere they will be after your money

think my previous circuit would have been so accommodating and believe me, if you thought it was quiet here,

you should try them. It was stone dead.”

London is 95% safe, but someone, somewhere is going to try to get into that other 5%. For those that don’t already do it, at least keep your front doors locked...

the moment and that could so easily lead to drivers taking unnecessary risks.”

“One good thing though,” said the driver as he finished his worrying story, “no sooner had I told the DaC dispatcher, than they put it out over driver’s terminals as a warning. I don’t

London Restaurants Still at the Top

Says The Good Food Guide...

With **Dial-a-Cab** drivers always being asked to recommend a good restaurant, there is one book that can be relied on to help - *The Good Food Guide 2010*. For example, the **Harwood Arms** in Fulham has been awarded Pub Newcomer of the Year by *The Good Food Guide 2010*. The pub enters the guide for the first time by using exact cooking techniques and a degree of ambition, showing balance and depth of flavour in dishes while using quality ingredients. In total, there are 361 London restaurants in *The Good Food Guide 2010*.

Indeed, the London restaurant scene appears to be buzzing with 15 restaurants making it into The Guide’s UK top 50 list. Four of these are brand new entries to the list: L’Atelier de Joel Robuchon, Covent Garden; The Ledbury, Westbourne Park; Galvin at Windows and Murano, in Mayfair.

L’Etranger in South Ken has already won *The Good Food Guide Readers’ London Restaurant of the Year*, while Gordon Ramsay at Royal Hospital Road was the highest rated London restaurant with Marcus Wareing at The Berkeley at number 3, Mayfair’s The Square at number 5 and La Gavroche at number 7. The Maze at Grosvenor Square is at number 11.

Elizabeth Carter, editor of *The Good*



After you! Snail porridge at the UK’s number one restaurant - The Fat Duck *Food Guide* told **Call Sign**:

“London has an extraordinary wealth of top restaurants and chefs, so it is particularly impressive that The Harwood Arms stood out so much to win such a prestigious award.”

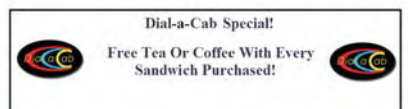
The top UK restaurant was Heston Blumenthal’s The Fat Duck. This restaurant has three Michelin stars and employs 45 chefs in addition to 25 front-of-house staff. It also has a 17-course taster menu that will set you back £130 per person. However, it does take around three hours or so to finish! The Fat Duck is also renowned for owner Heston Blumenthal’s gastronomic inventions such as sardine on toast sorbet,

scrambled egg and bacon ice-cream and snail porridge!

The Good Food Guide 2010 can be ordered on 01903 828557 (£16.99, free p&p) at www.which.co.uk/gfgbook or bought from bookshops.

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Thursday 1 August 2002

brought the sad news to Dial-a-Cab that this Society's founder-Chairman, **Bonnie Martyn**, had passed away following a stroke three days earlier at his north London home. He was 93.

Bonnie had been a teacher at the University of the Third Age in Holloway and was still working there right up until his death. But whenever he had the time, he would like nothing better than to come to DaC and talk about the old days. Even into his 90s, there was little that Bonnie didn't understand about the cab trade and Chairman **Brian Rice** was often heard to say that it wasn't surprising how Bonnie managed to start ODRTS with his undoubted business acumen.

So successful was Bonnie in forming this Society in 1953, that just three years later he was invited by a businessman from Bermuda to go over there to help set up a similar organisation. He did and Bermuda Radio Taxi Cabs still operate today.

However, there was one thing that he didn't know and often asked **Call Sign** whether we could help – where was XX

Call Sign Keeps a Promise to Bonnie

Seven years after his death...



Brian Rice shows Bonnie how the DaC terminal works. Inset pic The sign for XX Place

Place? He had a book of street name origins and one of those was XX Place E1, famous only because it had been the home of a cooper – someone who made and repaired barrels. We

had no idea where it was until we recently found a sign in Globe Road, Stepney, pointing to the XX Place surgery. We followed the sign and went into the surgery. Sadly no one knew the history and even the name no longer applied to the road – now called Stayners Road – but it was the site of the original XX Place and now, seven years after his death, we can now say to Bonnie Martyn that wherever you are, we've found it for you...

Taxi Driver of the Year Dinner Dance

The *Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund* is proud to present its 36th annual Dinner/Dance on **Saturday 5th December 2009**. Reception 6.15pm, dinner 6.45pm It will be held at the: **Holiday Inn London Kensington Forum**
97 Cromwell Road
London SW7 4DN

Included in the price is a 4 course meal and half a bottle of wine per person, with after dinner tea /coffee. Later in the evening, tea / coffee and pastries will be served. Ticket are £60 per person and include a complementary drink on arrival

With your support, the *Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund* will be able to make donations to the taxi trade charities that support us.

Don't be the one to miss one of the great nights out. Come along and enjoy good food and great company. This event will prove to be an enjoyable and memorable occasion for all.

Please complete and return to Russell Poluck MBE, Hon Chairman, 5 St Brides Avenue, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 6BT

Please reply by 2 November 2009. Dress is smart. Cheques to T.D.Y.C.F. Please print...

Name:-----

Title:-----

Company (if applicable):-----

Address:-----

Tel:-----

Email:-----

Number of tickets (@ £60 per person):-----

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

For further information contact Russell Poluck MBE (T55) on 07850 056 765

or email brussella@talk21.com

The TDOTYCF is registered with the Charities Commission No: 1000761

Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves

THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM

Britain's original home for abandoned children and London's first ever public art gallery...

Free entry to Dial-a-Cab drivers on production of your badge or bill

Tues-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 12-6pm
(closed on bank holidays)

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

The Foundling Museum is at 40 Brunswick Square WC1

Tel. 020 7841 3600

Visit their website at

www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk

On Friday 4 September, Jan Veleta - a member of DaC's IT department - left Dial-a-Cab for the last time to return to his native Czech Republic, but only after stopping off at many different places and cities world-wide along the way!

"I have really enjoyed my 3½ years here," he told *Call Sign* when we met him in the Driver Reception as he was saying goodbye to his work colleagues.

"I have family in the Czech Republic and I hold the national passport, but I want to see a little of the world before I settle down back home," he said. **"Well, quite a bit of the world actually,"** he added with a broad grin!

Call Sign enquired if he had job offers waiting for him in the Republic?

"No, I have not made any plans for employment at this time. I am going to travel round first, but I expect good job prospects when I do settle down. I don't think there will be any problems with a stint at DaC on my CV," he said confidently.

Call Sign and Dial-a-Cab wish him all the best for the future. No doubt we will soon get

Jan Returns to the Czech Republic from DaC



A Smiling Jan with Jahar, Albert and Aki in Driver Reception

emails from Jan telling us he is surfing the sea waves of California or Australia, instead of mak-

ing waves over the Ethernet in DaC's IT dept!

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LTI Appoints The International Taxi Company

As the official distributor of the London Taxi in Egypt...

The London Taxi is still the world's only purpose-built taxi and can not only seat up to five passengers but has accessibility features to suit everyone's needs. This iconic vehicle will soon be seen on the streets of Cairo, where passengers and drivers can enjoy the benefits of the specially designed vehicle.

Orders have already been taken as *The International Taxi Company Limited* reports unprecedented interest by Egyptian drivers and businesses wanting to benefit from owning one of the unique purpose built taxis. It is hoped that hundreds of the instantly recognisable vehicles will be seen on the streets of Cairo as the soon to be launched *London Taxi Service* plays a major role in the development of the country's transport and taxi services.

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

"Many international businesses, drivers and passenger groups have been quick to realise the benefits that a purpose-built taxi and a professional taxi service can deliver. As we look to spread the success of the London Taxi, The International Taxi Company Limited is a welcome addition to our rapidly expanding global network."



In the photo from left to right: Mohamed Abou Ghaly (Vice Chairman and Chief

Executive Officer, Media Motion), Maher Abou Ghaly (Chairman, Abou Ghaly Motors), John Russell (Chief Executive, Manganese Bronze Holdings), Seif Coutry (Chairman, Media Motion), Ihab Gohar (Co-Managing Director, Mediair-Carat), Matthew Cheyne (International Market Development Director, The London Taxi Company) and Ahmed Agiez (Business Development Director, Abou Ghaly Motors).

REDBRIDGE HAND CAR WASH

Roding Lane North (from Woodford Ave, half way down o/r)

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

Inside and outside including a free air freshener:

Usually £10... The DaC price is £8

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

Full valet service available

Open Mon – Fri: 9am to 7pm

Sat: 8am to 6pm and Sun: 9am to 6pm

Call Sign was recently invited to the opening of the **Churchill Museum at the Cabinet War Rooms, Clive Steps, King Charles Street SW1.**

The exhibition recounts Sir Winston Churchill's life and achievements as a son, husband, father and world statesman, from birth to death, through a series of historic photographs, film clips, documents, memorabilia and many personal artefacts. It gives an insight into the man, not only as a renowned politician whose speeches, leadership and vision inspired this nation during one of its darkest periods of 20th century history, but also gives you a peek into his private life, through his many hobbies - including his paintings - and describing his personal habits in detail!

As the occasion marked the grand opening of this new exhibition (an extension to the existing Cabinet War Rooms), **Call Sign** was able to meet some of the (now elderly) surviving members of his staff - especially gathered together for the event - who had actually worked down in the bunker, under Churchill and his Chiefs of Staff, during WW2. Their recollections of jobs within the underground complex, the Blitz and other events throughout the six-year conflict made for fascinating listening.

The Cabinet War Rooms operated around the clock, from the beginning of the war in 1939 right up till August 1945, when hostilities ceased. It was here that Winston and his War Cabinet slept and ate, planning their next moves and plotting in the Map Room, events as they unfolded across the globe.

The Cabinet War Rooms and the Churchill Museum are open 09.30 – 18.00 daily.

Tel: 020 7930 6961

or www.iwm.org.uk/cabinet

©Call Sign Magazine MM9

Call Sign Visits the Churchill Museum

Two of the posters the British saw everywhere during WW2



Planning the next action against the enemy



GETTING 'WELL CONNECTED'

As we enter the Autumnal season, it might be an idea to give the cab's main battery a basic check to minimise (hopefully!) the chances of problems when starting the engine from cold during the height of winter, when the cab may possibly be covered in snow.

Call Sign is not a maintenance manual, but the topic was prompted by the arrival of a **Dial-a-Cab** subscriber to **Roman Way**, complaining his MDT wasn't functioning correctly and was 'powering off' intermittently during his shift. You can imagine the frustration at losing his queue position after being in a zone for any length of time.

The Roman Way team spotted the cause of the problem as soon as they opened the bonnet. Both the battery terminal cables were loose on the battery posts! The DaC engineers tightened the connections, ensured the contacts were clean and within minutes the driver was back to work, visibly relieved that he hadn't had to buy a replacement battery unnecessarily. But to save you having to travel to the depot for a job you can easily do yourself, we spoke with Roman Way Manager **Dana Thananjeyan** for some tips to pass on to **Call Sign** readers.

Dana began by saying that during hot weather, engine bay heat can evaporate distilled water in the battery cells, leading to a flat battery as the chemical reaction that generates electricity and allows the battery to hold its charge, is reduced. If your battery has 6 screw type caps along the top, you can check the water level regularly, but do not overfill. This dilutes the chemical content of the battery, weakening it further. The correct water level is just above the lead plates, which you will see when looking directly into the screw cap holes. Some batteries are of the sealed design and can only be checked by a battery specialist.

Battery cable security is vital if the battery is to perform efficiently, as the driver mentioned above found out. Regularly give the cables a gentle wiggle to ensure they are firmly on the posts. They can easily loosen from cab vibrations as it goes over road bumps etc. This is the root cause of so many problems. Use a **10 mm** spanner to check the bolts that attach the cables to the battery posts, but do not over-tighten; just enough to keep the cable in contact with the battery.

Dana also stressed the importance of keeping the battery connections clean and free from corrosion, as the acidic, white powdery deposits on the battery terminals and supporting tray will cause poor contact with electrical components and damage your cabs' bodywork - all at the same time. A smearing of grease over each terminal will help reduce the problem.

Finally, Dana emphasised that Roman Way can only carry out a basic battery inspection and is not a battery specialist facility. The information he gave is intended to allow drivers to carry out their own simple checks before making a trip to the depot, only to be re-directed to a specialist battery outlet.

Thanks to both Dana at Roman Way and M&O for their assistance with this article...

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For the second year running, the London Taxidriers Fund for Underprivileged Children have held a 'fun day' at the Covent Garden Piazza, and what an enjoyable day it was.

The committee arrived at the Piazza at 8am and immediately set about erecting two gazebos alongside their taxis, together with photo boards displaying images of numerous children's outings they have run over the years. Tombola and quiz tables were set up in the gazebos and on sale went ladies belts and accessories, mugs, t/shirts and fun aprons, which had been donated to help the LTFUC raise funds. There were also lots of free goodies and sweets being handed out to all the delighted children that passed by.

Doug Cheshire, Chairman of the **London Vintage Taxi Association** had joined us with his 75 year old vintage Austin taxi and this attracted great interest, especially among the many tourists present who were making donations and taking non-stop photos. The LTFUC are very grateful to Doug for giving up his time to spend the day with us.

Congratulations go to winner of the quiz, taxi driver Carl Buttigieg, who won a Clicquot Traveller case containing a Bottle of Reims France Champagne and two glasses, while runner-up Denise Hunter won a bottle of Lanson Champagne. The Fund is very grateful to Charmaine and Cathy of **Costco, Chingford** for donating the two prizes and for all the continued help and support they give us. I would also like to thank Carol Burwood of **ABC Imaging UK** for the free

LTFUC FUN DAY AT COVENT GARDEN



LTFUC Life President, Bill Tyzack, with wife Grace take their turn at minding the stall...

printing of the quiz papers.

The Hon President, Hon Chairman and Committee extend grateful thanks to Janine Pires of **Capcount** (Covent Garden Management) for her assistance in planning the event and the company for allowing us to use the site, enabling us to raise much needed funds.

It was an extremely hot and sunny day, the crowds were out in abundance and although very tiring, the day proved to be highly suc-

cessful and rewarding with many funny moments to remember. We'd also like to thank all the drivers who came along to support us and are very grateful to all the people who made donations to us. Hopefully we will be back next year.

You can see more photos of the day on our website at www.ltfuc.org.uk.

Raymond Levy
Press Officer

Taxi Driver Licences: Late Renewal Applications



The PCO receives many applications to renew taxi and PHV driver licences that are submitted by drivers after the expiry of their existing licence. Once a driver's licence has expired, he or she is no longer licensed, their hire and reward insurance will be invalid and they will not be able to work as a taxi (or PHV) driver. All drivers are therefore urged to submit their renewal (re-licensing) applications in good time.

In the event of a driver submitting an application for the renewal of a licence after the expiry of the previous licence, the immediate issue of a new licence will be at the discretion of the PCO. However, it is possible that the driver may have to wait until all processes, including the return of a satisfactory *CRB Disclosure*, have been completed before a licence can be issued.

Any driver applying to renew his or her licence more than three months after the expiry of the preceding licence will be treated as a new applicant. Any benefit of being continuously licensed

will be lost and the driver will have to wait until all necessary checks have been completed before a licence can be issued.

If a taxi driver has been unlicensed for a significant length of time, he or she may also be required to undergo a Knowledge of London re-test to ensure that their Knowledge remains up to date.

The PCO licensing teams will send a re-licensing application pack to a driver's home address 8 weeks before their licence is due to expire. This will contain all the forms and information a driver needs to be licensed for a further three years. To allow time for it to be processed, it is imperative that a driver submits his or her application at least 21 days before their existing licence expires. To

ensure that they receive their re-licensing pack, drivers are reminded of their responsibility to notify the PCO in writing of any change of address during the period of the licence. Any driver who has not received their re-licensing pack 28 days in advance of the expiry of their licence, should contact the PCO as a matter of urgency.

If there is reason why a driver will not be able to submit their re-licensing application on time (e.g. because of illness, extended holiday, etc.) they should advise the PCO at the earliest opportunity.

Mary Dowdye
PCO Head of Standards & Regulations

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Mike will never forget that day in Haymarket!

When **Mike Holleyoake (M06)** joined Dial-a-Cab some 12 years ago, he was most impressed with the way he was greeted. Not only was he given the call sign prefix *Mike*, but also the number 6.

"I thought it really kind to allocate me a call sign reflecting my name and as my house number was 6, I really was impressed," he told the *Call Sign* reporter! "I wondered if all the Charlies and Dans on the circuit were also allotted similar numerical associations! I thought that if they treated all their drivers like that, it couldn't be a bad set up!"

With coincidences on the agenda, keen football fan Mike told *Call Sign* about the time some years ago when, over breakfast, he read in his morning newspaper that the legendary Hungarian footballer **Ferenc Puskas** was visiting London to promote a book on his life.

"Now that's someone I'd really like to meet," he had confided to his wife who was far more interested in finishing her ironing than hearing about another football player.

"I told her of his legendary status, that he was captain of the Hungarian national team in the 1950s that were known as *The Magnificent Magyars* and how they beat the previously unbeatable England at Wembley in 1953 with a 6 goal thrashing! I told her that he left Hungary after the 1956 uprising and played for Real Madrid, but she remained unmoved," said Mike!

"He was probably one of, if not *the* finest player of all time," he enthused to DaC's mag.

Later that same evening while out working in his taxi, he was driving down Haymarket towards what was then a sports venue called *Football Football* (now *Tiger Tiger*), when he was asked

Did you know that about London?

The person who published the first **Geographers A – Z book of London maps** in 1936, was **Phyllis Pearsall**. She did so by walking every street in London, rising at 5am each day setting out from her bedsit in Holloway Road and allegedly walking until midnight. In total, she walked just over 3000 miles. A – Z now publish guides for over 300 cities from their Grays Inn Road offices...

Mike, DaC and a Football Legend!

to take two men to the Cumberland Hotel.

"Imagine my amazement when one of those gentlemen turned out to be none other than the very person I'd been telling my wife about earlier in the day!" With almost a tear of respect in his eye, Mike repeated it to us in case we never heard... "Imagine, Ferenc Puskas and his interpreter, right there in my cab!"

Mike's hero didn't speak any English, but he understood his cab driver's request and Mike is the proud owner of a Puskas autograph! Sadly, Ferenc Puskas died in November 2006, but according to Mike, his name will live on with all the great legends of football...

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Taxis: More emission cutbacks?

At a recent Mayor's Question Time, in addition to confirming that the 6-month mid-year check has been confined to history, Boris Johnson also said in response to a question from London taxi new public enemy number one, Murad Qureshi, regarding cleaner air:

"TfL is actively pursuing initiatives to reduce emissions from the black cab fleet. It is my intention to reduce CO2 and other emissions from all vehicle fleets over which I have any control or influence. By summer 2008, the almost all London taxis met Euro III standards for emissions of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. I will shortly be producing my *Air Quality Strategy* for consultation with the Assembly and Functional Bodies. This will include

further proposals to reduce emissions from taxis and other vehicles.

In June 2008, I announced TfL's Public Carriage Office's *Carbon Reduction programme*, with funding of up to £1 million to trial low carbon technology in London's taxi fleet and promote smarter driving among licensed drivers. Reductions in fuel consumption by taxis will lead to correspondingly reduced exhaust emissions."

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Tel: 01708 371115

The **Magnum Frog-Eye mirror** has now been approved by the PCO for use on the Mercedes Vito after also being recently granted PCO permission for fitting on the TX range. Sharon Hennessy, MD of suppliers Magnum, told **Call Sign**:

"We're really pleased that the PCO has given us permission to fit the Frog-eye mirror for the Vito. Safety is a prime concern for all professional drivers and we're pleased that the PCO has recognised the potential to prevent accidents that our mirror provides."

The **Magnum Frog-Eye mirror** is the first auxiliary clip-on mirror of its type to be given official approval to be fitted to PCO licensed vehicles. It is easily fitted to the existing wing mirror and aimed at the professional driver to give increased vision. It is already in use amongst driving schools, the Highways Agency, the army and a number of police forces throughout the UK.

Made from top quality optical glass and using anti-glare technology, the mirror is designed specifically to increase vision and eliminate blind spots, therefore making driving safer for both passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. The benefits include easier parking, a complete view of kerb, a full wide angle view, no distortion, and elimination of blind spots - plus being very easy to install.

Apparently since the approval for fitting to the TX range a few months ago, word of mouth has been a strong element for sales of the auxiliary mirror.

"We've found that our sales to licensed taxi drivers has been increasing week on week, even after just a month or two since **Call Sign**

Frog-Eye Mirror for the Vito



The Frog-Eye mirror on a TX4. Now Vito owners can also buy it...

first publicised it," said Sharon Hennessy. "The strong cabbie community means that we're getting drivers recommending them to taxi driving friends. We could ask for no better endorsement than from the drivers themselves."

The **Magnum Frog-Eye** is now available for the Mercedes Vito, TX1, TX2 and TX4 taxis

with Metrocab PCO approval pending and hopefully coming in the next few weeks.

To contact Magnum, call 0208 7445230 or visit www.blindspotmirrors.co.uk.

You can also purchase the Frog-Eye at JVBright, Great Suffolk Street, SE1...

London/New York Tourism Agreement

Mayor of London Boris Johnson and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg have announced a two-year tourism agreement to boost travel between the two cities. This should also assist the London taxi trade, who have noticed a dearth of visitors from the USA in the last year.

The cities will provide each other with outdoor media advertising space with NYC & Company and Visit London - the respective tourism arms - sharing best practices as a way to maximise travel between the two destinations. They will also assist each other with at least one publicity event in each city.

The two Mayors made the announcement during an international conference at Columbia University, where they met to discuss their financial sectors, the diversification of their economies, building and maintaining their capital plants and expanding housing affordability. Visit London CEO Sally Chatterjee and NYC & Company CEO George Fertitta, together with Columbia University President, Lee Bollinger, joined the Mayors for the announcement.

Mayor Johnson said: "London and New York City share many similarities, including a strong sense of optimism and determination, along with a great appreciation for diversity and innovation. Our common cultural ties, not least absolute dedication to providing world-class services and experiences for both residents and visitors, make the two cities exceptionally well poised to combine knowledge as well as resources to impact the economies and future of the cities."

THE CALL SIGN INTERNET LIBRARY

Want to look up something in
an old issue of Call Sign?

Don't want to spend hours looking through old issues?
There is a simple answer - the Call Sign Internet Library!
Log on to www.dac-callsign.co.uk or www.dac-callsign.com
Then either browse through every issue of Call Sign since 1998 by using the Search facility or type in a clue and let our search engine do the rest...

If you want to read each complete issue with ads et al, you can now do that as well. Since May 2006, Call Sign has also gone online in a PDF version. Just click the PDF logo. No search facility for that though!

There are also issues from 1967, 1977 and 1987 as a reminder of the old days! Happy searching!

THE CALL SIGN INTERNET LIBRARY

Mailshot

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

Fuel discount card?

Sir

I am amazed that you are promoting a Texaco discount scheme that involves direct debit payment from one's bank account without explaining the implications that one may have to convince the Special Compliance gentlemen as to why such quantities of fuel have produced such meagre income. HMRC may well have thought up this no-brainer themselves, but it would be a wise move to consult one's financial advisor – no, not the wife – before committing to this scheme. Not, of course, that any upright and honest Dial-a-Cab mincer would have to...

Joseph Batty (W90)

The Cayman Islands

Joseph, the terms of the card say that you can use it as little or as often as you want. I'm happy to save the money and if anyone is interested in my personal habits, then they are welcome to them. I am saving at least £1 a day. So see you at the club old chap... Ed

And speaking of the fuel card...

Hi Alan

Just thought I would update you on our progress – we are receiving a steady daily flow of applications and telephone enquiries asking about Black Cab Fuels and our fuel card. Seems most callers are asking - is this real? They can't believe there are no charges and they get a discount, especially with the recent rise in fuel duty. We have had some additional editorial in Taxi Globe (we have posted articles on our website) and the really good news is that we are getting more calls saying a friend has referred them, so word is spreading.

Some of the online applicants seem to forget to post in their bank details (we don't take bank details over the internet) so this delays the processing. Once we have the application and bank details, it takes a couple of weeks to process and get the cards out as we have to get them embossed. So as we launched in late June, things are beginning to pick up now in terms of usage as more and more taxi drivers actually use their cards.

John Murphy
Black Cab Fuels

And more!

Thanks for recommending the Black Cabs fuel card. I'm saving around £10 a week!

Bernie Silver (G08)

Our work?

Referring to fares as 'our work' really annoys me. The fact is that it's not and never will be 'ours' to own. David Kupler is right about the Knowledge and that a shirt, tie and suit doesn't turn you into a taxi driver, but the only right the Knowledge gives us is that of plying for hire - and if he thinks that means

'all' the work, then he's mistaken. If the public want to use a touting minicab, then they will regardless of all our protests. We need to show the public we are worthy and appreciate their business and then maybe we will win them back. Just look at the amount we've got back from Smiths and Abacus etc, but if we weren't in a downturn I bet you wouldn't see one cab at any of those clubs. That's the problem we face; it is 'our work' only when we want it to be.

I believe this downturn shows that this trade needs change, it needs to lose its arrogant attitude and offer a service rather than make the public think we are doing them a favour. The circuits, I believe, have not performed well. I'm one of the 27 cabs with the Dial-a-Cab phone number on the door, but if the Board think it will generate more calls, then why not make it compulsory to have it on driver's doors? Private hire have never let up in their fight to get signage, we currently have the right to signage yet we don't enforce it. Why?

As already said, we're called Dial-a-Cab, but what's the point? The public see the name ie 'dial' yet see no number to dial. Change our logo! To the public, what does a giant CCC mean? Make our logo stand out and make every cab on the circuit have it. Go to Addison Lee and say you'd like to drive a car for them but want no logo on the back; see how long you last! The bottom line is that the whole trade need to become more competitive, noticeable and available. A bigger downturn may see many drivers shouting "it was our work" whilst going under.

Michael Beevor (N76)

Brian Rice replies: Wow Michael, what an interesting letter! You do realise that some will say that it is a letter composed by me with your name on the bottom! Am I being too cynical? Seriously, I do not disagree with anything you say and find it extremely refreshing to know there are members that think as you do. I know that most members do think as you, the only difference is they will not go into print as you have.

Regarding the logo, as I have stated in the past I have made enquires about changing our name and logo, but have been advised that we have such a good name and such an identifiable logo that we should not tamper with either, I must say that I did find that research quite pleasing. Consequently, I was pleased and a little disappointed at the same time.

All members fitted to DaC after January 1996 must carry our logo and if anyone that was fitted before that date and does not carry our logo, then they pay an increased subscription of nearly £40pm. I believe the number of our vehicles that are not logo'd could be counted on one hand and I also believe in the carrot and not the stick and ask all members to fit our cash number to their vehicles.

However, I must point out that in the past many of our members were not interested in cash work, a bit like the scenario you have illustrated with the clubs. Consequently, a customer would ring and we would not be able to cover

the trip. That is counter productive, as the customer would then be under the impression that we supply an inferior service and in turn, that would have a bearing on our good name.

Finally Michael, thank you again for your letter. It is nice to know that others think as I do and oh so pleasant to get a letter such as this and not, for a change, be attacked! It gives the BoM and certainly myself a little burst of enthusiasm during a period that has been extremely worrying, although going by the amount the banks have increased their usage of taxis recently - we have now passed the worst of it.

Best ever?

The September issue of *Call Sign* must have been the best issue ever – and that includes all the trade papers as well. Our magazine is always a good read, but last month's was even better than usual. The article by Keith Cain – *Why drivers were expelled* – was excellent. Suddenly a clear and concise explanation as to why several Dial-a-Cab drivers had all been expelled. Whilst sad that some drivers feel a need to cheat the system, how they were caught made compelling reading and I congratulate those involved in the time-consuming efforts that must have been involved in catching these people. Surely any clients reading it must have been convinced that in rare cases of any instance involving drivers breaking rules, that they will be caught and appropriate action taken.

Two other points from that wonderful issue. Tom Whitbread in the article about his appearance in the newspaper over the work he does for children with *Dial-a-Dream*, he looked far too pleasant standing next to a DaC taxi and with a big smile. I didn't realise he could be nice! Then on page 30, the *Flashback* article involving the Editor and his work at St Josephs Hospice. He looks so young and handsome...what happened since! Thank you again for a wonderful read...

Sid Nathan (K88)

I've come over all funny!!! ...Ed

Fascinating?

I've just had the opportunity to read the latest issue of *Call Sign Online* magazine. Once again I find it very fascinating to read all about the failures, successes and yes, even fears that the typical London cabbie faces doing his (or her) job. I also find the Letters to the Editor especially fascinating, as it seems these columns are about the same worldwide. Sometimes it's someone with an axe to grind or maybe someone just venting an opinion - right or wrong. But keep them coming!

Lloyd Powell

Palm Beach, Florida, USA

Hi Lloyd, you seem to be becoming a regu-



Mailshot

Mailshot continued from page 34

lar on the page you find so fascinating! ...Ed

Have the lunatics taken over the asylum?

Thursday 10 September saw the London cab trade return in numbers to the Public Carriage Office in Penton Street, just 6 days after the successful drive-in and picket carried out by the RMT's *London Taxis Branch*. The streets and pavements around the headquarters of TfL's, *Taxi and Private Hire Licensing and Administration* were taken over by an incensed taxi trade protesting about a convicted killer being allowed to join the Knowledge. Both protests were a result of a story that had been rumbling through the trade for a few weeks. When it finally broke cover in London's *Evening Standard* even the most hard bitten drivers found it hard to believe.

No one believes every London driver is as white as the driven snow and every one of them can tell you a tale of someone they met when they were doing the Knowledge who had a bit of previous and how they had been made to sweat it out and wait up to 10 years before being accepted on the Knowledge. Usually their indiscretions were fairly minor (by today's standards, anyway) perhaps of alcohol fuelled violence or pranks, but occasionally one met someone who had done some time at Her Majesty's Pleasure for a more serious crime. These Knowledge students knew they would have a hard time on the KoL and it would take them a bit longer than their peers to get out, but they accepted that.

What got the trade to protest at the PCO was that a man who had strangled his wife in 2000 had been accepted by the leading lights of the PCO and TfL as suitable to become a London Taxi Driver. They found it even harder to believe that he had been diagnosed as a Paranoid Schizophrenic and had escaped a murder charge on the grounds of diminished responsibility. He had been detained at a secure unit until released after two and a half years. It seems that after his release from the secure unit, that he applied for a Private Hire Licence and was turned down. He appealed to the Crown Court and they upheld the first refusal, but a few years later he reapplied and was granted a PH licence. He then applied to go onto the Knowledge and was accepted. The PCO were then handed a *Get out Of Jail Free* card, but incredibly they chose not to use it when in June of this year he was cautioned by the police for assault. A TfL spokesman said: "The man made us aware that he had received a caution for assault. As a result we suspended his Knowledge appearances for one month and warned him that if he came to our attention again, he would not be allowed to continue taking the exam."

Jeroen Weimar (the man said to be head of TfL but which is doubted by many who think that in reality, John Griffin of Addison Lee

really runs TfL) said: "The independent medical opinion is that this man poses no danger to the public." This statement was made only a day before the headlines in two of London's freebie evening papers carried the story of another paranoid schizophrenic who just three hours after been discharged from a London mental health unit, killed a friend and then cooked part of his brain. Medical sources claim that part of the illness is that the patient can feel the reason they feel the way they do is down to the medicine that are compelled to take and is the cause of their illness, and they often develop manipulative practices to fool those in charge of their cases into thinking they are responding to treatment, when in fact they are actually deteriorating and becoming dangerous again.

As I write this, there are rumours going around that the man has now decided to drop out of the Knowledge, but this has not yet been confirmed. The PCO/TfL have announced that they are to undertake an enquiry into the issue with two former employees coming in to undertake it. The RMT feel that this is not good enough. We have no direct argument with this man, just the system that allowed him to start the Knowledge. I'm not so sure that the Private Hire trade will be over the moon that he was able to get a Private Hire drivers licence either, but that is up to them to take issue with. The RMT feels that this move to have an enquiry on this one issue is not good enough. We want a Public Enquiry into the running of the PCO in its entirety. This case is just one example of how it's felt within the London hackney trade that they (the PCO) are not *Fit for Purpose*. Ever since the control of London's taxi trade ceased to be run by the Met Police for public safety and became a political plaything of the GLA and TfL, there have been many decisions taken for reasons other than public safety. We will now be starting a major campaign to bring about this enquiry.



Eddie Lambert (V37)
Chairman RMT London Taxis Branch

Thanks to DaC...

Two days ago I stayed in the office until late and asked reception to call me a cab on my way home. Reception booked a Dial-a-Cab taxi and during the ride I enjoyed a courteous and entertaining conversation with the driver, who later proved to be an extremely kind and professional person. What happened is that I accidentally forgot my bag in the cab, leaving all my credit / debit cards, ID, keys, driving licence, gym / office and other passes behind, in addition to some £200. It is just unimaginable what kind of hassle, waste of time and red-tape I would have had to go through if I had lost my bag.

Even before I realised what had happened, approximately 30 minutes after I had stepped out of the cab in front of my home, Suzanne Campbell from our reception called me saying that the cab driver was there with her and had just handed over my bag. I obviously asked Suzanne to let me have a quick word with the cab driver to thank him for his admirable honesty and civility, but also wanted to let you know about the cab driver's exemplary behaviour in those circumstances.

When I checked my bag, I confirmed that everything was in there and that it was perfectly intact. I don't remember the name of the cab driver but I am really very grateful to him.

Francesco Lione
Cravath Swaine and Moore LLP
Thanks for letting us know, Francesco.
We can tell you that it was John Gay (V36) and it's no more than you would expect when you use a licensed taxi ...Ed

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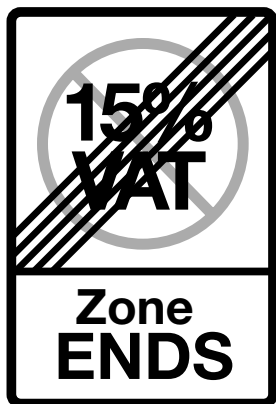
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