

April 2010



# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

BLESS YOU,  
KIND SIR.

TAXI

*Allen Togwell asks:  
Is there a difference  
between begging  
and tipping?*

*Steve Wright:  
One of three  
taxi drivers  
whose cabs  
were broken  
into within  
hours of  
each other*





# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

The April 2010 tariff rate is an average 2.3% increase. The usual table below shows a mileage chart for estimating fares for passengers. Remember this is purely on mileage and does not include waiting time in traffic...

Miles	T1	T2	T3
1	£4.20	£4.80	£5.40
2	£6.60	£7.60	£9.00
3	£8.80	£10.40	£12.40
4	£11.20	£13.20	£16.00
5	£13.40	£16.00	£19.40
6	£15.80	£19.00	£23.00
7	£19.00	£22.20	£26.20
8	£22.20	£25.40	£29.60
9	£25.40	£28.80	£32.80
10	£28.80	£32.00	£36.20
11	£32.00	£35.40	£39.40
12	£35.40	£38.60	£42.60
13	£38.60	£41.80	£46.00
14	£42.00	£45.20	£49.20
15	£45.20	£48.40	£52.60
16	£48.40	£51.80	£55.80
17	£51.80	£55.00	£59.00
18	£55.00	£58.20	£62.40
19	£58.40	£61.60	£65.60
20	£61.60	£64.80	£69.00
21	£65.00	£68.20	£72.20
22	£68.20	£71.40	£75.60
23	£71.40	£74.80	£78.80
24	£74.80	£78.00	£82.00
25	£78.00	£81.20	£85.40
26	£81.40	£84.60	£88.60
27	£84.60	£87.80	£92.00
28	£87.80	£91.20	£95.20
29	£91.20	£94.40	£98.60
30	£94.40	£97.80	£101.80
31	£97.80	£101.00	£105.00
32	£101.00	£104.20	£108.40

Miles	T1	T2	T3
33	£104.40	£107.60	£111.60
34	£107.60	£110.80	£115.00
35	£110.80	£114.20	£118.20
40	£127.40	£130.60	£134.60
45	£143.80	£147.00	£151.00
50	£160.20	£163.40	£167.40
55	£176.60	£179.80	£184.00
60	£193.00	£196.20	£200.40
65	£209.40	£212.60	£216.80
70	£225.80	£229.00	£233.20
75	£242.20	£245.60	£249.60
80	£258.60	£262.00	£266.00
85	£275.20	£278.40	£282.40
90	£291.60	£294.80	£298.80
95	£308.00	£311.20	£315.20
100	£324.40	£327.60	£331.80
110	£357.20	£360.40	£364.60
120	£390.00	£393.40	£397.40
130	£423.00	£426.20	£430.20
140	£455.80	£459.00	£463.00
150	£488.60	£491.80	£496.00
160	£521.40	£524.60	£528.80
170	£554.20	£557.60	£561.60
180	£587.20	£590.40	£594.40
190	£620.00	£623.20	£627.20
200	£652.80	£656.00	£660.20
Additional miles at all rates			
1	£3.20	6	£19.60
2	£6.40	7	£23.00
3	£9.80	8	£26.20
4	£13.00	9	£29.40
5	£16.40	10	£32.80

It is important not to exceed the run in on account jobs. Below is the time to a £4.20, £3.80 and £3.40 run in. The figures are very useful for Pre-Booked account jobs.

## Run-in £4.20

T1 5:30m to 6:00m

T2 4:29m to 4:52m

T3 3:37m to 3:56m

## Run-in £3.80

T1 4:30m to 5:00m

T2 3:39m to 4:04m

T3 2:57m to 3:17m

## Run-in £3.40

T1 3:30m to 4:00m

T2 2:51m to 3:15m

T3 2:18m to 2:38m

## Waiting time is:

T1 £ 24.00/hr (for 34:00m)

T2 £ 29.50/hr (for 34:00m)

T3 £ 36.54/hr (for 34:00m)

Then at the "Higher Rate" at £34.12/hour.

T1 first hour of waiting = £ 31.25\*

T2 first hour of waiting = £ 35.59\*

T3 first hour of waiting = £ 39.59\*

Subsequent hours on all three rates = £ 34.12

\* includes the £1.80 flag fall surcharge.

Venue	Event	Date
Earls Court 1	Ideal Home Show	01/04/2010
Earls Court 1	Ideal Home Show	02/04/2010
Earls Court 1	Ideal Home Show	03/04/2010
Arsenal	v Wolves 15:00	03/04/2010
Earls Court 1	Ideal Home Show	04/04/2010
Earls Court 1	Ideal Home Show	05/04/2010
Tottenham	v Arsenal 12:45	10/04/2010
HMV Apollo	Ultravox	11/04/2010
Royal Albert Hall	Joan Armatrading	12/04/2010

Venue	Event	Date
Chelsea	v Bolton 20:00	13/04/2010
Tottenham	v Chelsea 17:30	17/04/2010
Arsenal	v Man. City 17:30	24/04/2010
O2 Arena	Whitney Houston	25/04/2010
Chelsea	v Stoke City 16:15	25/04/2010
O2 Arena	Whitney Houston	26/04/2010
Royal Albert Hall	Grace Jones	26/04/2010
O2 Arena	Whitney Houston	28/04/2010

For a full list of 125 events on this month in date order for easy reference at O2, ExCel, Earls Court, Olympia, Albert Hall, Wembley Arena, Wembley Stadium and all Football match home games in London postcodes, plus also Horticultural halls and HMV Apollo, go to [www.nashsnumbers.co.uk](http://www.nashsnumbers.co.uk) and click What's On. It is also now very easy to sign up for the Free 70 + page Useful Information Document, simply visit [www.nashsnumbers.co.uk](http://www.nashsnumbers.co.uk), click on UID and fill out the form...



# from the editor's desk

## Mr No Name strikes again!!!

My thanks to the two Dial-a-Cab drivers who forwarded me links to the Nissen Hut blogsite, however, as I have said before, the ramblings of "Russell Wilson" do not interest me in the slightest. Most *Call Sign* readers know I have a rule that says if you cannot give your name, then I will not print your letter. I have made the very occasional exception, but only rarely. "Russell Wilson" obviously has a grudge against DaC and by the sounds of his ranting, was probably expelled by fellow drivers on a complaints committee.

He'll probably say that anyone who criticises DaC or its Board will end up as being expelled, but won't be able to name anyone in that situation - because it is untrue. If it were true, I would not have stayed in this job. But of course, on the internet you can say whatever you like and it suits some to pretend that their expulsion was because they "stood up to the BoM" rather than just being caught breaking the rules - and probably more than once. One wag even boasts that he hasn't returned his terminal. Yes, nice people!

"Russell Wilson" criticises without having the balls to reveal his identity and doesn't allow responses on his blog. Following the link sent by our two drivers, I read how "Russell Wilson" describes *Call Sign* as a "well spun piece of propaganda to limit the damage to a board of management exposed as inept, spent, and devoid of any direction." Everyone has the right to an opinion if they give their name, "Russell Wilson's cowardice removes that right from him. So please guys, no more links to Mr No-name unless it is written without his *nom de plume* - and I doubt he has the intestinal fortitude for that...

## Don't get me going, Mickey!

DaC driver **Mickey Lappin (E46)** is someone that *Call Sign* can always call on if we need a new appliance tested or for most things connected with music - especially if that involves Paul Weller! In this issue, Mickey is testing out the *Cabbies Mate* satnav system. He starts his article with: "It has been known for me to disagree with the Editor of this fine magazine on a few things, but we also agree on a few; our dislike of Vito cabs and SatNavs used in Taxis around London.

But after testing what seems to be an excellent piece of equipment in the *Cabbies Mate*, Mickey has changed his mind and is recommending this SatNav to drivers. I'm happy to publish Mickey's review, but I have to say that it doesn't change my mind one iota. I will never accept that we, universally accepted as the finest taxi drivers on the planet, need to have SatNavs on display. Didn't we do the Knowledge so that most of what SatNavs tell us, we should already know?

Of course I carry a SatNav in my bag in case I get a job out of town and on the off chance that after dropping that one, I get a radio job from somewhere else out that way and I need to know the best way to get there. But when I don't need it, I leave it in my bag. I have no problem with anyone who does that. But keeping it on display makes you look no better than one of "them" and I will never accept that as being the way forward. How insulting it is when passengers offer you a postcode when you know the address anyway. But that doesn't detract from



the *Cabbies Mate*, which sounds like an excellent piece of equipment.

Speaking of testing new stuff, Allan Evans has road-tested the Novus speed camera detector in this issue as well...

## Good advice?

Perhaps I'm a bit old fashioned, but I found Barry Hooper's advice in a recent issue of *TAXI* to be quite worrying. Writing of the overhaul, Barry offers his views to those he says keep their cabs "...to a good standard, especially those with newer cabs that are not so prone to rust." His advice is that rather than give the cab to a garage to have it brought back up to standard after a year's work on London's unforgiving roads, the musher should just valet the cab, steam clean it and check it has the right documentation. Then the driver should take it to SGS and if the cab fails, they'll give you a job card listing the faults. He goes on to say that failure now costs an extra £50 but infers that you can save a lot of loot by not having a complete check on the cab.

As the first time pass rate is down to 38%, I don't think Barry's advice is going to do much for our reputation, because thanks to the internet, his words are now out there and the impression will be that all we care about are the savings we can make and that the safety aspect is no longer paramount. I don't think that is particularly sensible advice...

## Salieri

I recently visited the Salieri Restaurant and yet again Linda and I - together with two friends - had a magnificent meal. Many of you often tell me how delighted you are with the amazing offer given to Dial-a-Cab drivers by the Salieri of a 25% discount. Some drivers are still not sure though, so here goes one more time! It's simple and there are no catches.

The Salieri is at 376 Strand (almost opposite the Savoy). It is a family run restaurant specialising in mainly Mediterranean cooking and the family who own it just want to repay our drivers for taking passengers to and from their establishment, so they will give you a genuine 25% off your bill provided that you (the driver) are in your party of guests and can show your Badge or Bill. You can book to be certain of a reservation, but I have been assured that they will always try to find you a table if you mention DaC and *Call Sign* (see their ad in every issue). In addition to the discount, you will enjoy an excellent meal in a beautiful restaurant. And of course,

if you do enjoy it as much as I think you will, then please recommend it to your passengers. After all, nothing is totally for nothing in this world...

## Trade organisations

I have mentioned several times recently that I believe the Taxi and Private Hire Director, John Mason, can be good for our trade and certainly seems to be a huge improvement on his predecessor. However, his recent announcement that he is only prepared to talk to the LTDA, Unite or LCDC and not the newest one, the RMT concerns me.

That concern isn't because of the RMT, but because it is becoming more and more apparent that we do not need so many trade organisations, because they are all basically in agreement with each other and as a result, inconsequential. I also believe that TfL/PCO use that as a weapon against us, whereas with just one trade organisation we would carry much more clout and they would not be able to push us around as much as they do.

The M4 bus lane scenario is a perfect example. If there were only the one trade organisation - which by sheer membership numbers would have to be the LTDA - those above us would have to take more notice. To stand by, afraid to take action against John Griffin for telling his drivers to use the bus lane regardless of the signs, makes a mockery of the law. We only have to have a small "unauthorised" notice in our cabs or they don't like the way an exterior signage has been put on and suddenly the TfL/PCO crack down on us. Excuses such as they are "waiting for court case decisions" carry no weight. They should be the ones taking legal action now - or are they afraid of losing the case?

In the meantime, having joint trade meetings with the LTDA, Unite and the LCDC over tea and biscuits with the occasional joke thrown in is a good way of letting us think we have control - whereas in reality we have none.

## Londoners and the Olympics

I write this as someone who was against the idea of London holding the Olympic Games, because like most people I realised that it would cost us an absolute fortune and that whatever cost we were told would be involved, could be at least quadrupled by 27 July 2012 when the Games of the XXX Olympiad commence in Stratford. But I gradually changed my mind and am now concerned about something other than finance.

Londoners are paying for much of the cost through Council and income tax, that doesn't mean that the Games belong to us - they belong to the country. However, having paid so much, the very least we deserve is a slightly better than average chance of getting tickets for the top events - especially the opening and closing ceremonies. According to the Olympic Committee, that won't be happening but a meeting to be held soon could change that. I hope it does because if nothing else, we've paid for them to come over here, disrupt our traffic and stay in the plushiest hotels. The least they can do is to let us have some tickets!

**Alan Fisher**  
Callsignmag@aol.com

# reflections of the chairman

## No increase!

The last occasion member's subscriptions were increased was in September 2008. It has been customary in recent times to have a small increase in line with inflation from time to time, however, the BoM are aware that business is not as good for members as it has been in previous years, consequently we are reluctant to increase your subscriptions. There have been significant cost reductions carried out by the BoM during the past eighteen months in an attempt to reduce our operating costs and with some success. So much so that we are in the position to grant your staff a small percentage increase in their salaries without making an increase to member's subscriptions. The increment will be effective as from 1 April this year.

The BoM discuss annually whether or not the Society is in a position to grant a salary increase to staff and for the past fourteen years - excluding last year - a raise in line with inflation has been granted. Of course, we only raise subscriptions if it is felt to be absolutely necessary and fortunately this year, due to extremely prudent housekeeping, there will not be an increase in member's subscriptions. However, should circumstances deteriorate rapidly (which I hope they don't), then the situation would have to be reviewed.

## Taxis and private hire...

Elsewhere in this issue are what I believe are two very interesting articles regarding taxi and private hire vehicles. Before anyone from outside this Society states that I am priming our members for an announcement, well no, that is definitely not the case because it was the Editor's decision to publish them. However, I believe both articles will be of interest to members and go some way in demonstrating what we are up against.

The first story concerns Glasgow Taxis, a member's co-operative operating similarly to us. Initially, I had an email from Robert Dunabie, their Secretary, asking if I could telephone him regarding a problem they had and he was interested in my view. If you read the story, it is self-explanatory. Initially I was a little concerned at the content, but Robert has assured me it has been sanctioned by their legal advisers who are quite happy with the content.

In a nutshell, Glasgow Taxis completed approximately 15,000 trips per month for the NHS, however, the account went to tender and the bottom line was the account was going to be split around half each between a private hire company and Glasgow Taxis. As you can imagine, the management of Glasgow Taxis were a little perturbed at the situation and decided to call a meeting of members to discuss the situation.

Unlike us, Glasgow taxis do not have postal voting and any decision taken was decided upon just by the members present. According to Robert, not all members attended, consequently some members that held very strong views regarding not working with the private hire company were very vociferous and the majority of members at the meeting voted to give the NHS twenty eight days notice that they intended to withdraw their service to them. This



decision was obviously taken in the hope the NHS would capitulate and Glasgow Taxis would retain all the work. However, things worked to the contrary and the NHS accepted their 28-days notice. As a result, the private hire company now have the whole account and Glasgow Taxis have nothing.

There is a moral there somewhere; it's all very well having very strong views on an issue, but we must always remember we are in the service industry. Just as we have the choice of who we service, clients always have the choice of what mode of transport they will use and in the majority of cases, they will not be dictated to by a vendor - especially if that vendor is also more expensive.

The second article was in regard to a letter we received from an account we had serviced for many years. They had a change of management and the man at the top decided that he did not just require taxis, but cars as well and he was only interested in giving the work to a company that could provide both. Contrary to what many believe, we do not supply cars to clients unless they are such a large customer that in order to retain a huge amount of taxi work, we supply cars from vendors of their choice when they require them.

This particular account in question, although not huge, was a very

nice one to which we supplied an exemplary service, but to no avail. We still lost the account because we were not prepared to supply exactly what they required. They wanted just one vendor to supply taxis and cars and not have to deal with two vendors, two invoices and two management stats. But I'm sure you are not surprised by this turn of events as I've been warning of this particular scenario for some considerable time. Yes, it's all very well the taxi trade saying they will not work with private hire, so long as they are prepared to lose work. I know there are some - especially outside our Society - that accuse me of being a friend of the private hire industry, but I have to be pragmatic and do what I consider to be best for the majority of members and the Society as a whole. In other words: I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't!

Finally, I would like to reiterate the above two scenarios were included because the Editor wanted them and for no other reason. However, from my point of view, I am pleased with that because I believe both articles will help to keep members informed of how our industry - especially the radio taxi industry - is changing around us...

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



2 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 4/5



4 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 8/9



6 Bedroom 5 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 12



Pool and conservation view at 6 bedroom home.

**Three properties owned by UK Registered Charity Dial A Dream. Reg. 1011637**

Your opportunity to rent one of these villas and at the same time making it possible for this charity to continue its work with children from all over the UK all of whom are suffering from a life limiting illness. All villas within minutes of the main Disney theme parks, golf courses and restaurants.

We can offer car hire and theme park tickets for you and your family at very competitive rates.

So, if you are considering a Florida based holiday in the near future then call us and you may be helping us to give a very sick child the will to say "Let me live another day".

Prices from £56 per night through to £237 per night  
(Prices are for the villa and not per person.)

[www.dialadream.co.uk](http://www.dialadream.co.uk)



**Tel: 020 8530 5589**



# 1...2...3...SMASH & GRAB

## As three cabs are broken into in the same area

If you have been driving a taxi for more years than you perhaps care to remember, you may well have found yourself in the position of finding that a "chancer" has broken into your cab and taken anything he could find. But it becomes more worrying when several are reported all with shouting distance of each other.

Dial-a-Cab driver **Steve Wright (B36)**, lives in Selsdon (South Croydon) and was one of at least three drivers that he knew of who were robbed at the same time. It could well have been more. Steve takes up the story...

"I had finished work around 2am and went to bed about an hour later. I normally wake up at 11am but my wife called me soon after 8 saying that someone had smashed my nearside luggage door window. The door itself had been left open as was the consul lid inside. However, I don't leave anything in the cab overnight so there was nothing they could take - well almost nothing. I keep a pair of old glasses in there because I'm slightly shortsighted and they took those! I've been meaning to replace them for some time, so even that wasn't terrible!"

Steve went on to say that soon after he awoke, a woman who lived nearby was walking past his house and noticed his taxi with the



**Steve Wright: Takes everything out of the cab...**

smashed window. She rang Steve's doorbell and explained that her husband – a local Croydon yellow badge – had also had his taxi broken into, but unlike Steve he'd left his satnav and wallet with all his credit cards still inside and was at the bank at the time trying to sort things out.

She went on to tell Steve that a third cab – also just around the corner – had been broken into and that driver was in the habit of leaving his badge in the cab overnight! Needless to say that was taken - although later found in the street. This third driver, however, heard the miscreants at around 3am and was going to go out to tackle them but his wife wouldn't let him.

The second cab was probably broken into first and because they found the credit cards and satnav inside, assumed that all taxi drivers leave valuable stuff inside overnight.

Steve added that he has now spent a large sum having an alarm fitted, but wanted **Call**

**Sign** to warn drivers not to leave anything in their cabs overnight. These people who think they can make a living out of robbing others will, if they find something of value in one taxi, assume that we all leave stuff overnight – even in leafy Selsdon. So take it in with you..

## Elgar £20 banknote to be withdrawn



**Goodbye to Elgar from 30 June**

The £20 banknote carrying the portrait of composer Sir Edward Elgar is to be withdrawn from circulation from 30 June this year. This note has been gradually replaced by the Adam Smith £20 which was introduced in 2007. Announcing the withdrawal, the Bank of England assured holders of the Elgar £20 banknote that they could certainly use the notes up to, and including, 30 June. After that date the note will no longer have 'legal tender' status. The note will not have to be accepted in payment, or in change, in retail outlets after this date.

For several months from the end of June banks, building societies and Post Offices will accept Elgar £20 notes for deposit to customer accounts and for other customer transactions.

Agreeing to exchange the notes for non-customers is at the discretion of the individual institution. The Bank of England will always give value for these notes (and all other banknotes the Bank has issued). Andrew Bailey, the Bank of England's Chief Cashier, said, "The Elgar £20 banknotes were first introduced in 1999 and we introduced the Adam Smith £20 banknotes three years ago. We said at the time that the two designs would circulate in tandem, with the Elgar notes gradually being withdrawn over the next few years. It is time now to withdraw the Elgar £20 notes completely, with the Adam Smith £20 banknotes to be the only £20 note design continuing in circulation."

Details of the Elgar £20 withdrawal are also included on leaflets and posters highlighting the 30 June final withdrawal date. Copies of these are available free of charge by calling 020 7601 4878. Further information is also available on the banknote pages of the Bank's website at [www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes](http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes).

**TAXI**

## NOT JUST MORTGAGES FOR LICENCED TAXI DRIVERS

**RECOGNISING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF DRIVERS WE OFFER SOUND ADVICE ON THE FOLLOWING SERVICES WITH A FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION:**

Life Assurance and Family Protection,  
Wills, Home Insurance, Accident and Sickness cover,  
Pensions & Investments, Secured Loans,  
Further advances from your existing lender  
and a Debt Management Service

To find out more about these schemes and other services we can offer, please call Helen Laycock of Griffin Mortgages

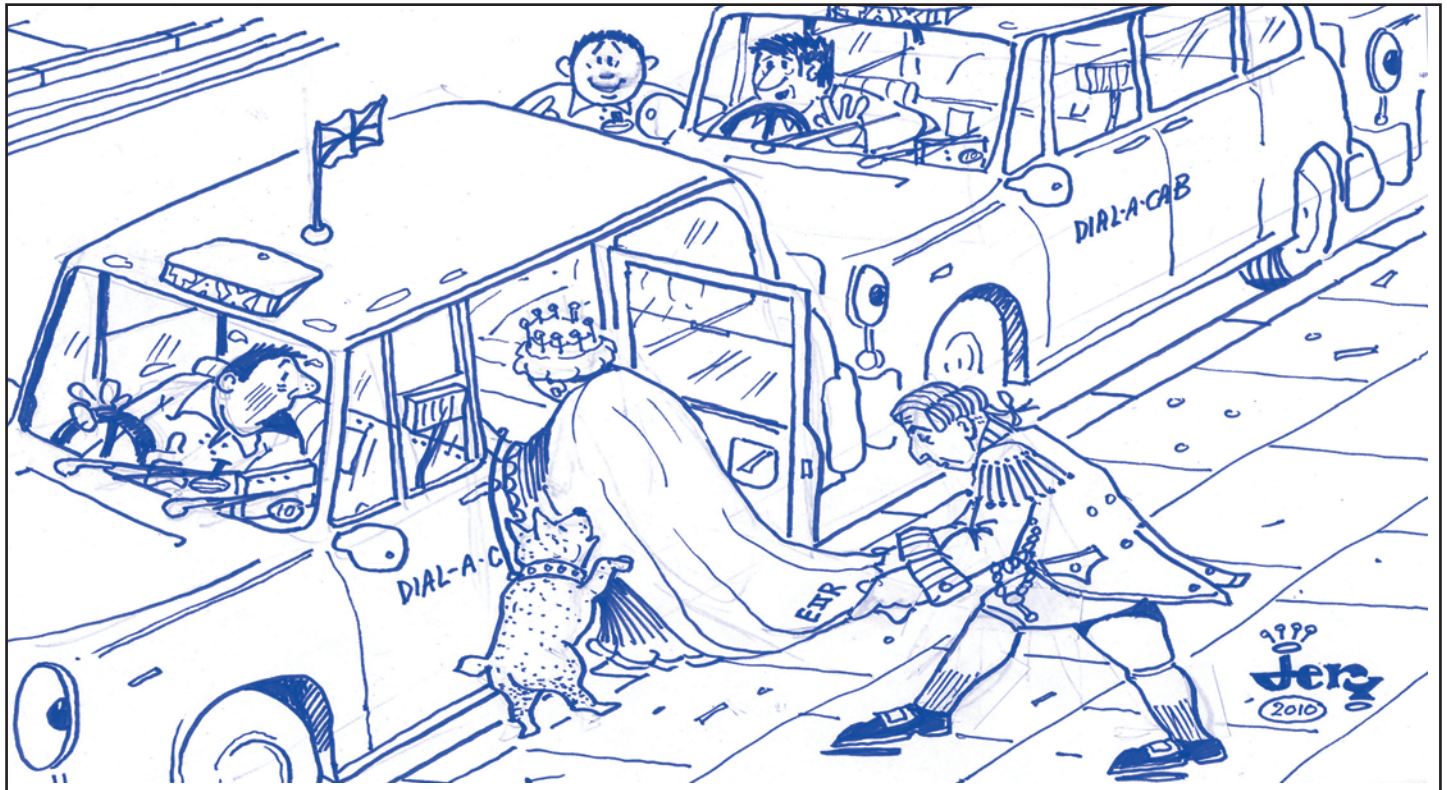
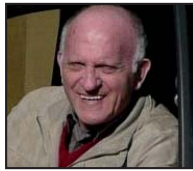
**020 8300 4300 / 07855 639528 (mobile)**

**Helen Laycock Ltd t/a Griffin Mortgages  
Suite 3 Tudor Cottages, Foots Cray High Street, Sidcup, DA14 5HN**

YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE

Griffin Mortgages is an Approved Representative of Openwork Ltd. Openwork Ltd offer insurance and investment advice on products from a limited number of product providers and advice on mortgages representative of the whole market.

# Jerys World



"Blimey Fred, I read in Call Sign that the Royals were usin' us more now. But when they said a VIP was comin' I fought they meant Brian Rice...!"

The Director of Taxis and Private Hire gives advice to new drivers...

## SHUT UP!!!

It has been said that London's taxi drivers can talk the hind legs off a donkey – sadly no one can really tell us whether that is good or bad. But yes, most of us are more than capable of listening to a passenger's point of view and then explaining to them, as nicely as possible, where they are wrong!

But now we hear that the PCO are thinking of teaching that old philosophy to those who have just passed the Knowledge of London, that the customer is always right and that as taxi drivers, we should know when to shut up!

The advice would come as part of a *customer service skills* program that would include such aspects as how to welcome passengers – as against the more usual "where to pal" – and how to deal with awkward situations.

New TFL/PCO Director of Taxis and Private Hire, **John Mason**, says that the old PCO may have taught drivers the best way to take passengers, but failed to prepare them for life in a modern service industry.

Speaking to the *Financial Times*, Mr Mason said he was considering mandatory classes on customer service as part of a revamp of the taxi licensing system. In addition to knowing when to shut up, new drivers would also be taught the best ways to make their taxis fuel efficient and how to carry the disabled in a correct manner.

Mr Mason added that London's taxi drivers were a "...world-renowned service with drivers who were always perceived to be some of the



**John Mason: It is useful to know when to keep your mouth shut!"**

great characters you come across in London."

But no doubt with a smile, Mr Mason added that there was always room for improvement and that it was useful to know when to keep your mouth shut and how to read the signs that a passenger was having a bad day!

**Call Sign** asked Editor **Alan Fisher** for his views. He told us:

"I know what John Mason must mean about the *old PCO* because those as old as me will remember Knowledge examiner Mr Finlay, whose speciality was to antagonise candidates to see whether they could control their tempers under passenger pressure! I can't help but wonder what his advice to Mr Mason would be –

although I think the second word would be off! However, it has to be said that John Mason seems to be the best thing the PCO has had in years. Let's hope things can improve for us as taxi drivers – even if that means knowing when to shut up!"

**Ron Yarborough**  
Call Sign Online

**T&J's TAXI Rescue**  
24 hour Roadside Assistance  
for the London Taxi Trade

- Roadside repair
- Roadside assistance
- Running repair recovery
- Accident recovery
- Pay as you go to membership
- Credit card taken at roadside

0845 094 5307

**We make wheels turn  
so you can earn.**



As work on the ground becomes less and less, so our job becomes even more difficult and stressful. Added to this, we are surrounded at night by touts who purport to be taxis just



because they have a roundel in the front and the back windscreen. After February's bad weather with rain, heavy snow and frost - no doubt caused by global warming aka climate change - we are left with road conditions containing more potholes than after the bombings of Iraq and Afghanistan!

To add to the woes of driving a cab in these conditions, we have councils closing tunnels and bridges across the Thames for far longer than necessary. Albert Bridge is closed for 18 months, Waterloo much the same and although one lane is in operation, with the underpass closed yet again, it might just as well be closed! Hammersmith closes at weekends and the A316 also closes spasmodically at night. The A40 is a joke westwards and sometimes it seems quicker to walk. Southwark Bridge is wasted as it cannot be accessed from the city properly southbound and northbound you can only turn left or right. This was done at the height of the Irish troubles, but today's terrorist just straps explosives to their body, so what good does no access to vehicles do? That can also be said for the permanent closures around the city.

With the building of Crossrail, Oxford Street

Chas Kissin looks at the current building works and wonders about the stress caused...

## Stressed Taxi Drivers

by Tottenham Court Road is a joke. Try going east towards the city and the diversion is a joke - although I'm not laughing. The extra money on the meter may seem good at the moment, but the public won't wear it for too long. It's not as though you can cut south and use Soho, as those roads are also closed due to construction. Try getting to Greek Street from the west of town; Old Compton is as close as you can get.

As for Blackwall Tunnel being closed nightly for 3 years, again this is insane. Try getting to Bexley from around the Island, an extra seven miles at least to get almost back to where you started. Can't they operate single lane traffic in each bore as they used to do before the second tunnel was built? I'm led to believe it is an EU directive, so it's all down to Brussels meddling in our affairs yet again.

Recently I have noticed yet another road development/improvement scheme. This time it is Wilton Road at Victoria Station, where the sign states buses and taxis only for the next eight months. Can't see Addison Lee and the rest of them sticking to these rules. Chaos will rule here again this summer.

Have you also noticed the width restriction around Piccadilly Circus recently? This is because they are re-introducing it as a circus, (roundabout) and there will be two-way traffic again in the area. Of course it won't really be two lanes, as the bus will have its own lane, thereby creating even more congestion. It

seems traffic will come from Shaftsbury Avenue into Piccadilly and vice versa. There will also be a kerb/wall running along the middle, so that traffic will not be able to straddle from one lane to the other, as this will be specifically for the bus. All the while, the congestion charge/tax will be in force and although taxis are exempt from this, they get you another way on the emissions and smoke. Councils are the ones causing the congestion and all the while making Joe Shmoe pay for it.












Who are these people in charge and can they be charged with negligence? Can't the different agencies at least talk to each other or are they all hell bent on making not just our lives miserable, but the general public's as well? Maybe it's this Government's way of making us all use public transport, but as we know this doesn't work well either, with buses breaking down daily and causing even more congestion while many trains don't run on weekends.

And just don't get me started on the chaos being caused by the closure of Bedford Street. Try getting out of Convent Garden, especially when the smart car is waiting at the bottom of St Martins Lane and the traffic lights at Trafalgar Triangle still have NOT been put back to work properly. Is it any wonder that London's taxi drivers are stressed and burnt out - a heart attack waiting to happen?

Chas Kissin (P99J)

## Martin Cordell & Co. ACCOUNTANTS

**Does your accountant supply you with the following?**

-  Over forty years of experience with the Licensed London Taxi Trade.
-  Processing of self-assessment returns.
-  Advice on trading as a Limited Company with its tax advantages and potential pitfalls.
-  Preparation of accounts.
-  Initial consultation dealing with loss of earnings claims (due to accidents on the road etc.)
-  Letters to banks, building societies and other lenders.
-  Specialist in-house facilities to deal with Inland Revenue enquiry cases.  
(This is expensive and time consuming. Ask your accountant how much he will charge should this unpredictable event occur).
-  A three hundred and sixty five days a year service.
-  A 'nightshift' service.
-  Offices in North and East London.
-  First consultation free of charge.

**Martin Cordell & Co ... Do!**  
**All for one yearly fee**

**The London Taxi Trades Premier Accountants**

**020 8980 7161**

(24 hour answering service for prompt service)

(24 hour answering service for prompt service)

1-5 Alfred Street, Bow, London E3 2BE also at

Front Office, First Floor, 9 Church Road, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 4AS

[www.martin-cordell.co.uk](http://www.martin-cordell.co.uk)

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

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



### *Ladies and Gentleman*

It has been some time since I have reported any 'sales gossip' and it goes without saying that the last year has been a difficult one for the Sales team. Attempting to win new business when companies that are looking to cut their spending before we even have the opportunity to get through the door, has not been an easy task. Even some of our existing clients have been in contact with us because they have been instructed to make reductions. Therefore, over the past few months and while sales have been slow, I have been steering my resources in a different direction - one that I feel is just as important - to ensure we retain our existing business.

So, along with DaC Account Managers, I have been closely monitoring client's usage and looking for any changes. In the majority of times, a call to the client is all that is required - even if it is just to let them know that we are here and that we are aware of the changes to their account. And of course to verify with them that their spending cuts are the reason for their drop in usage and nothing sinister.

While speaking with them, it also gives the client the opportunity to discuss any minor issues they may have and hopefully, if I can resolve them before they become a major problem, this makes the call very worthwhile and perhaps alleviates the possibility of them moving to an alternative service provider.

When I meet with any of our clients, the main topic on their agenda is cost and service. My aim when meeting with clients is to assure them of a good, reliable taxi service and great customer support - and Dial-a-Cab are very good at both. Although I cannot reduce everyone's service charges or change the meter fare, I can often offer them the tools to manage their account more cost effectively.

### **New Business**

New business is obviously very important and we are opening many new accounts each day. So to end on a bright note, after submitting several Tenders last year, I am happy to inform you that we have retained the Westminster Council account for another year along with Turner Broadcasting...

*Until next time...*

**Natalie Ezekiel**  
DaC Sales

# IT'S ALMOST THE CHINESE TX4!



It used to be just spares, now it's also the chassis and body

The news that no one wanted to hear was released a few weeks ago - the manufacture of bodies and chassis for what is always described as the iconic London taxi - the TX4 to us - is to move to the **Geely/LTI** factory in Shanghai. Coventry will now just assemble the vehicle. The result of the move means sixty jobs will go at the factory, with the total number of staff now below 300. Just a few short years ago before the recession, there were around 500 people working there.

In Manganese' audited annual results for the year ended 31 December 2009, the group said that the decision to move was taken after the only viable UK supplier of the primer coating - which is the first undercoat sprayed onto the vehicle and something many **Dial-a-Cab** drivers have seen being done on *Call Sign's* regular trips to the factory - said it would stop production from August. However, CEO John Russell did add that underlying economic pressures had also forced their hand. He said that 2009 had been a difficult year for their UK taxi manufacturing operation, with significant discount and sales incentives to stimulate the TX4 market, combined with price pressure and restricted terms from fragile UK suppliers, helping to push their operating loss up from £5.4 million to £7 million. The company are now said to be considering a deal giving Chinese partner, Geely, a majority stake in the company. Geely currently has 23% of Manganese and owns 51% of their joint venture Shanghai LTI.

But the news wasn't all bad, because the report also mentioned a reduction in cost on the Shanghai version. Hopefully some of that will be passed on to drivers? But however you look at it, the decision represents a sad day, not just for taxi drivers because no doubt there will be little - if any difference to the TX4 - but because it is yet another part of the UK that is vanishing. Anyone for a bar of Cadburys...?

## Barking Physical Therapy Centre

**EARLY TREATMENT MEANS SPEEDY RECOVERY**  
**Treatment for pain & discomfort doesn't have to be expensive**

**The Centre offers fully qualified therapists in Physiotherapy, Osteopathy, Sports Massage, Reflexology, Shiatsu, Remedial Massage, Indian Head Massage, Hydrotherm, Massage Therapy, Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine.**

**Call us on 020 8507 8169**  
**or mobile 07973 639 473 for an early appointment**  
**Email: andy@bptconline.co.uk or fax: 020 8507 9650**  
**Out of hours enquiries welcome**

**Barking Physical Therapy Centre**  
**90 Longbridge Road, Barking, Essex, IG11 8SF**  
**Opening Hours: Monday - Friday 9am till 8pm and Saturday 9am till 2pm**  
**[www.bptconline.co.uk](http://www.bptconline.co.uk)**



# Ascott Cab Co Ltd



**Service Your Taxi With  
Ascott Cab Co Ltd &  
Receive Your Yearly  
PRE-TEST FREE (saving £49)\***



## **Tx4 Servicing**

Valid From Dec 2009

10.000 - £75.00 20.000 - £110.00 30.000 - £85.00  
40.000 - £189.00 50.000 - £105.00 60.000 - £85.00  
70.000 - £388.00

- \* 1 Hour Service Slots
- \* Full LTI Diagnostics
- \* All Parts Fitted are  
GUARANTEED

### **Servicing LTI TXI**

Standard - £38.00

### **Servicing LTI TX2**

Minor - £64.00 Major - £99.00

## **No hidden charges for sundries....**



We only use Texaco Fully Synthetic oils  
& LTI Genuine parts on all our  
Servicing.



**"What you see is what you Pay"**

Bodyshop:Sales:NON-Fault Accidents:Insurance:Adverts  
Taximeters:Running Repairs:Taxi Rental:Overhauls:

*Check out our web for future deals... [www.ascottcab.co.uk](http://www.ascottcab.co.uk)*



125-127 Evelyn Street London Se8 5RJ  
0208 692 1122



\*All Prices Subject to VAT

To Receive Free pre test offer you must have 2 services with ascotts in the last 12 months..

## Should we give to beggars?

Several years ago on a visit to New York, I was in a stretch limo travelling through a part of Manhattan where the streets were full of homeless people huddled in doorways, laying on the pavement or sitting by the kerb with begging cans. We'd stopped at traffic lights and I had my window down, which my driver advised me not to do. As I was about to close it, a dishevelled fearsome looking guy appeared out of nowhere, stuck his can under my nose and said 'spare a dime'. I was speechless for a moment and then said, "I'm terribly sorry old chap but I have no change" and without skipping a beat, having heard my English accent he said with a smile, "I'll take sterling!" I was so taken aback by his quick response, I told the driver to wait a moment while I looked for some coins, which I gave the poor soul and wished him good luck.

I was told there are over 100,000 homeless people in New York. 38,000 sleep in New York City shelters, 16,000 of whom are children. The rest sleep on the street. Which is hard to believe in a country known as the *Land of Opportunity*. I was given cause to remember this incident recently after reading an article in the press about beggars in the UK and the dangers of sparing change to those we see on our city streets - particularly London - with many claiming to be homeless. Those in authority say we shouldn't do it; claiming that passing the panhandler your pennies perpetuates their dependency and they will only spend it on booze and drugs. The more benevolent among us disagree, arguing these poor street people are victims, deserving of whatever crumbs of redistributed wealth come their way.

But what of those with no firm opinion either way? Those like myself who give occasionally, but more often than not hurry guiltily past the sign reading *hungry and homeless*, trying not to catch the supplicants' pathetic eye. And by suppliant, I refer not necessarily to your typical tramp or vagrant but in far too many cases, young people of both sexes. Quite often when I cross Old Street via the subway, I've seen young women who look as though they are still in their teens, huddled in a blanket - begging. I'm often in two minds whether I should give something or not and by the time I've thought about it, I've walked well past. But why the delay in deciding? What exactly am I afraid of? It can't be parting with money; most of us can afford to part with loose change. Nor the time it takes, because reaching into my pocket takes but seconds. One reason I think is the fear of being too close to someone so demonstrably worse off. The fear of catching their bad luck. Or is it perhaps when we do give, we do so as a means of being able to rid ourselves of guilt and are able to forget about the beggars more easily as if they don't exist? What I don't do, however, is assume that all beggars are drug addicts, alcoholics, lazy, thieves and rogues. I thank God I've never been homeless, so I am in no position to judge.

## Is tipping begging?

But what about *tipping*. Is not holding your hand out waiting for a tip a form of begging? *Begging is expecting something for nothing, which is what a tip is if nothing is done over and above the norm to warrant it.*

In some countries, such as Australia, it isn't

DaC's Marketing executive, Allen Togwell, asks:

## Is there a difference between begging and tipping



customary to tip taxis, hairdressers or restaurants, which is probably the reason why so few Aussies tip cab drivers in London. Yet in the UK, everybody in the service industry expects a tip irrespective of whether the service they give deserves it or not.

How many people, even hard up pensioners, have a haircut and don't give a tip? How many people get a lousy service in a restaurant, yet still leave a tip? How often do we hear the phrase in the cab trade that the driver *only got a legal*?

I can understand the logic of giving a tip for a service you use regularly such as a hairdresser, because you want to make sure your hair looks as good as possible and in the style the hairdresser remembers from your previous visits. But when using taxis for example, how likely are you to hail the same driver more than once? Restaurants can be the biggest culprits when it comes to tipping, especially many of the upmarket restaurants that leave a space at the bottom of the bill for a gratuity when a 15% service/cover charge has already been added. And where's the logic of giving a tip at a restaurant where no personal service was given, for example at a Carvery, where having collected the food yourself, the only connection you have with a waiter is to ask for the bill? Conversely, consider the personal service you get from flight attendants, in many cases over a lengthy period if it's a long haul flight. Yet how many get tips? I would guess very few - if any.

Personally as a cab driver, I disliked the principle of tipping. I disliked being told to wait while the passenger rummaged through their pockets or purse for loose change totalling fifty pence. I would rather no tip and accept it as the person's principle, than a meagre amount bordering on insult.

I remember many years ago an incident that many of you, I'm sure, have had one similar to. I dropped a guy and a very attractive lady at Quaglinos restaurant. As he paid me, he said in a booming voice 'keep the change driver' no doubt hoping to impress the lady, and when I looked at what he had given me, I just couldn't resist responding. So I called out in an equally booming voice, which attracted everybody outside of the restaurant: "Excuse me Sir, I think you will need this thirty pence more than I do." It was childish on my part, but I got a lovely smile from the lady.

Many cab drivers of my generation would remember the bowler-hatted gents in the City who used to carry threepenny bits in their waistcoat pockets, which they used as tips when travelling in a cab. And it's probably in the City of London where one could say the tradition of tipping began. As for the origins of tipping, it's difficult to be exact. Like so many things, in the mists of antiquity, there's evidence that tipping goes back at least to the Roman age, but human nature being what it is, it could just as easily date from the invention of money.

For me, the most charming explanation refers us back to the days of Dr Johnson and his eighteenth century circle of wits. Upon entering his local coffeeshop for a session of epigram-flinging, Dr Johnson (or rather, one presumes, his flunky, Mr. Boswell) would drop a few pence in a box labeled "To Insure Promptness" (TIP--get it?) in order to encourage a greater display of vigor on the part of the generally listless attendants.

Americans are usually big on tipping and it seems the custom spread from England to colonial America up until the revolution, after which it was frowned upon (temporarily) as a hangover from the British class system. One only tipped one's social inferiors, which, lest we forget, did not exist in the brave new world. In recent times before the minimum wage was introduced, the low-paid, particularly in the service industry, depended on tips for a substantial part of their income.

But this no longer applies, especially in the cab trade. In fact it is a charge that is often treated with derision by account clients, the gratuity, especially on the night rate, is a viable amount that the offer to discard it during the economic downturn, would have been a welcomed ploy when attempting to generate new business. Instead of resorting to the only area available to us, fixed prices, which when comparing like for like with PH - particularly to destinations such as airports - we often found it hard to compete.

A question was asked at this year's AGM by one of the 51 members present, about what could be done to win back the work now the recession is coming to an end? One answer and one that doesn't have a negative affect on your pocket, is for every member of this Society to play their part in putting *Emphasis on Quality*. There will always be a market for quality and *Quality is our Strength*. I'm not suggesting you wear a shirt and tie, heaven forbid, even though that one act alone would give us a front page spread in the *Evening Standard*! No, I refer to how we distribute our work; make every trip AD and non-rejectable. In addition to improving service during the busy periods and every trip being equal, it would be a selling tool that we have never been able to use in our 57 years of trading. It will never happen of course, because being a friendly society, when it comes to progressive decisions, the management will always be shackled by political restraints.

**Allen Togwell**  
**DaC Marketing**



Those of you among Dial-a-Cab's ballroom dancing fraternity will know all about *slow, slow, quick, quick, slow!* We have **John West (B07J)** and his wife **Linda, Dial-a-Cab's** answer to Fred and Ginger! They won the **British National Latin Dance Championships** at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool at the tail end of 2007. They know all about *slow, slow, quick, quick, slow.*

On the other hand, while the majority of us would perhaps like the glamour of being British National Latin Dance Champions, we are probably more like **Steve Hall (J87)**, who associates *slow, slow, quick, quick, slow* more with driving his taxi.

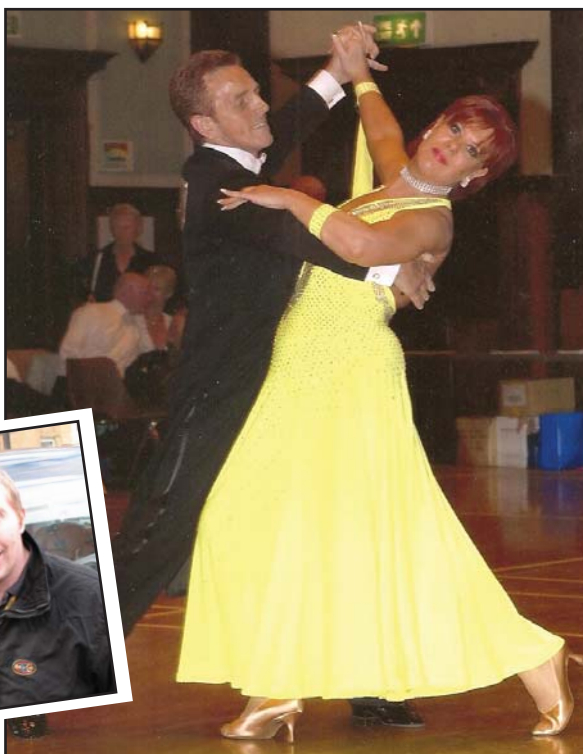
"I've saved myself three points and £60," Steve excitedly told **Call Sign** when our paths crossed recently.

**Call Sign's** ever-alert reporter enquired as to whether those three points would be with Nectar or the Tesco variety and wondered aloud as to whether the £60 Steven saved could have been for an overnight stay at Butlins?

But no! The points Steve had saved were the variety that go onto your licence and if collected within three years, could give you a compulsory holiday when you reach twelve. Steve explained what had happened...

"I was in a line of traffic buzzing through the Blackfriars underpass from Lower Thames Street when I caught sight of the brake-light reflections from several vehicles ahead of me. It had been raining earlier so the road was still wet, but I managed to reduce my speed down to a leisurely 29 mph just as I came towards

# Slow, Slow, Quick, Quick, Slow...!



**John and Linda West winning the British Latin Championship**  
Inset pic Steve Hall



the exit of the tunnel on to the Embankment. I guessed immediately what was happening and sure enough there was PC Plod standing at the roadside, determinedly pointing his six-shooter directly at *me* and looking very disappointed that I was cruising happily along with-

in the legal limit!"

Grinning with obvious self-satisfaction, Steve continued: "He must have been there quite some time without a 'catch' because he looked pretty fed up to me and rather damp from standing out in that rain! I have to admit that it was a pretty close shave though and I was lucky to have the road space needed to reduce my speed so quickly without causing an incident."

The moral to Steve's story? "I learned my lesson that no matter how much of a hurry the passenger is in, I'm going to be watching my velocity when travelling through there in future."

Of course, Steve could always ask John West to teach him his version of *slow, slow, quick, quick, slow!* It may not be as exciting as driving a taxi, but it looks nicer and sounds much safer!

**Alan Green (E52)**

# E3 TAXIS LTD

## CREDIT CRUNCH OFFERS!

*Reduced servicing prices to help all our customers get through this difficult period...*

**FWD & TX1: Minor £68, Major £130**

**TXII: Minor £90, Major £135**

**TX4: 10,000 £120... 20,000 £135... 30,000 £160... 40,000 £260**

**50,000 £140... 60,000 £170... 70,000 £535 Prices inclusive of VAT**

*Some of our services include:-*

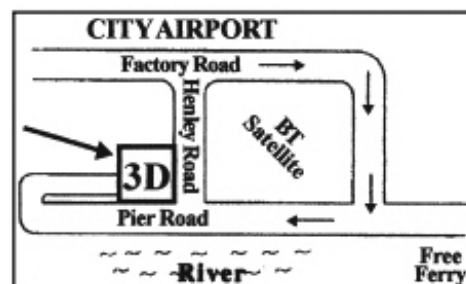
- \* Overhauls \* Tracking/4 wheel alignment \* MOT testing on Class 4 vehicles \* Smoke test
- \* TXII timing chains/belts \* TXII heater control valves \* TX4 servicing \* Tyres supplied/fitted

*We can service your cab from new without affecting your warrantee*

*And we will advise on any warrantee work needed*

**To book: Ring Christine on 0207 474 6592**

**E3 Taxis Unit 3D Standard Industrial Estate, Henley Road, E16 2ES**  
**Open Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm, Saturday 9am – 1pm**



*Following the recent decision by the NHS to continue using the services of a London private hire company who had been exposed in the national press as charging them for non-existent trips, another taxi story involving the NHS has now come to us. This one involves Glasgow Radio Taxis, a driver's cooperative run on similar lines to Dial-a-Cab. The Glasgow company have a fleet approaching 1000 and only use purpose built taxis. Their involvement with an NHS tender is nothing short of astonishing and having read their account, Call Sign decided that it should be published. It has been written by their Secretary, Robert Dunabie...*

"For the past 50 years and more, the licensed taxi industry in Glasgow has provided taxi service requirements to the various health boards in Glasgow and surrounding districts. During this period, such was the mutual trust between the parties, that contracts as such were rare. However during 2007, Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS Trust, to comply with European law, invited interested parties to submit tenders for the supply of taxi services for the various hospitals under their control. The contract to transport urgent specimens, ambulant patients, emergency standby doctors surgeons and nurses etc, was valued at approximately £2 million and accounted for around 15,000 hires monthly.

**Glasgow Taxis Ltd** duly submitted a tender as required and were in fact advised shortly thereafter that their tender for the 2 year contract had been successful. This decision was quickly rescinded following a legal challenge from a private hire (mini-cab) company that alleged the procurement dept had not properly followed the due tendering process. We were asked to continue providing support until the contract could be re-tendered. We agreed to this request.

During the summer of 2008, the Health Board conducted a second round of tendering with the closing date being September. As the wording of the contract seemed heavily weighted in favour of the Hackney vehicle, ie seating for five or six persons with sufficient floor space to allow passenger's free movement, a partition between the driver and passengers and wheelchair accessibility etc and since our main competitor could not comply with these requirements, we were quietly confident that we would again be successful.

However, somewhere along the line the goalposts were moved and price became the deciding factor with all other considerations, including the alleged background of the rival tenderer and the fact their vehicles did not meet the required specifications, being pushed to one side. We were advised that the contract was to be awarded to Network private hire and that they would be given time to comply with the required elements of the contract, such as a percentage of vehicles must be fully accessible. We were expected to continue providing taxi services until they could come up to speed. *The contract is allegedly weighted as follows:*

**Cost 40% ... Service & Delivery 40% ...**

# TAXIS AND THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE



## Quality 15% ... Equality and Diversity 5%.

*Since we were ahead on 60% of the whole, the decision to award to Network was to say the least, baffling.*

We then began the process of challenging this decision, including asking for assistance from the **Scottish Taxi Federation**, of which we are founder members. They in turn referred the case to the **Scottish Government** and since the NHS is a publicly funded body, they were asked for assistance. To be fair, they tried all that could be done from a political perspective and in addition, **Strathclyde police** issued a warning to the Health Board that they should be wary of dealing with a group that were alleged to have "links to organised crime."

In all, the challenge lasted for eleven months, but in the end the NHS board refused to bend to political pressure and advice from the police and so on 15th December 2009, the decision to award the

contract to Network private hire group was ratified. We were advised that they would cover around 8000 hires per month and we were asked to provide services for the remaining hires until such time as the Board could arrange a second round of tendering.

It was decided to call a meeting of our members to inform them of the outcome of discussions and the offer on the table. Following a debate, our members made it clear that they were not prepared to be used as a prop in this way. We were instructed to give 28 days notice of our intention to withdraw our services.

As it can perhaps be imagined, feelings within our trade are running high at this time, since it appears that operating a legitimate business whose sole source of income is derived from members subscriptions appears to count for nothing with the procurement types in the NHS. It is indeed a sad day and one in the eye for decency. As it is obvious that Glasgow Taxis Ltd are unable to compete on price, it may be that the only way to combat private hire is to form our own private hire company and provide competition for drivers at a price level they will find hard to match. This will be put to our membership at our forthcoming A.G.M."

**Robert Dunabie**  
**Secretary,**  
**Glasgow Radio Taxis Ltd**

**You may not need us now, but cut us out for when you do!**

## LOCKHOUSE SECURITY

**All types of locks, opened, repaired and replaced**

**10% discount on keys and locks for DaC drivers**

**Transponders / chipped keys**

**On site key cutting services including taxis**

**Locks replaced / fitted to insurance specifications (BS3621)**

**Burglary repairs / boarding up**

**Additional security / security upgrades**

**Safes opened, repaired and serviced**

**Grilles and security gates**

**Specialists in UPVC doors and windows / patio doors**

**Free estimates / no call out charge**

**24hr service**

**You can find us at:**

**8-10 The Arcade, Farnham Road, Harold Hill**

**Tel: 01708 371115**





**Baroness Gardner: Cabbies must have the Knowledge**

In an interesting article from *The Press Association*, Baroness "Trixie" Gardner said during Transport Questions in the House of Lords, that any suggestion of London's black cab drivers no longer be required to learn the Knowledge, should be resisted.

**With SatNavs becoming more powerful, Baroness Gardner says in the Lords...**

## "SatNavs? Cabbies must still have the Knowledge!"

Baroness Gardner of Parkes said she would be 'very sorry' if the London's taxi drivers had to rely on satellite navigation devices instead of their memory. The former Trixie Gardner highlighted problems with taxi drivers in her native Australia, who she claimed relied on map-reading instead and told Transport Secretary Lord Adonis: "Many of us do not agree with the sug-

gestion that black cabs should stop acquiring the Knowledge."

The Peer added that she would be very sorry to see us change over to SatNav or to the Australian system, "...where the driver gets out a map and starts looking for where you want." Lord Adonis responded that most people respect London taxi drivers and their knowledge.

## CALL SIGN TESTS...



Neat and compact, the Piccolo could save your licence

### The Novus Piccolo speed camera detector

**Call Sign** was recently offered the chance to road test the Novus Systems 'Piccolo' speed camera detector, so we asked Allan Evans to try it for a few weeks. This is his view...

"For most of us, speed cameras and red light cameras add to our daily stress levels. Over the past few weeks, the Editor had asked me to review a new GPS based speed and traffic lights camera detector and one which, in my opinion, is very good value.

The **Novus Piccolo** is a voice-activated system that enters the market at the bottom end (£59.99). It plugs into the cigarette lighter console and warns of speed cameras, red light cameras, possible hidden mobile or fixed cameras and average speed cameras. Although not applicable for taxis, it also warns of congestion charging, so that could be useful if you took the Piccolo into your car. There are also regular accurate GPS time checks on the hour.

#### How does it operate?

At 500 yards it warns you of the camera and the actual speed limit in mph (voice-activated at three different volume levels). Five red lights initially flash, reducing in numbers every 100 yards with a confirmation bleep heard at 200 yards when the two red lights appear. Eventually a single red light and bleep warns that you are now 100 yards from the camera. You will be warned to reduce speed if you are driving over the safe limit. The system then beeps and resets as you pass each camera.

As for traffic lights, when you approach them you will hear: 'Warning, red light cameras ahead' if applicable.

Unfortunately this system does not show the mph although Novus do produce detectors that do give the speed and many other extra features, but for ease of use and value for money, the Piccolo is well worth your consideration.

If you require the all singing and dancing model, then more expensive models are an option, but this is a very small and compact device that I would definitely give the thumbs up to."

**Allan Evans**

**If enough drivers are interested, Call Sign may be able to get the Novus Piccolo for £47.99 – a discount of £12 per unit. Please email the editor at [callsign-mag@aol.com](mailto:callsign-mag@aol.com) with your name, call sign and contact phone number...**

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

## Kupkake's Korner



### One over the six...

At St.Johns Wood circus  
by the roundabout,  
I saw some people and  
heard one shout.

I pulled over  
as they crossed the road,  
counted SEVEN  
too many to load.

"You'll need two cabs  
I can only carry six."  
"Please take us all  
for sure we'll fit!"

Now I'm an obliging  
kind of bloke,  
but SEVEN is  
beyond a joke!

"Sorry mate  
I won't back down,  
it's getting late  
I'm back to town."

With doors locked tight  
I drove away,  
but as I left  
I heard one say...

"Take his number  
he can't refuse,  
I know the law  
he can't pick and choose."

They'd sell your soul  
and not admit being wrong,  
It's all old news  
same story, different song...

**Copyright Kupkake 2010**



*Continued from March*

## The PCO and keeping cool!

Many things that drivers today take for granted were not allowed when I started. No inside rear mirror in case we intruded on the privacy of our passengers. This lasted until the EU made it compulsory for all vehicles to have one, so we got one but it was positioned so the driver could not see anything of actual use! Eventually, we did get a useable mirror.

No form of entertainment or personal comfort was allowed. No radios or even fans to keep you cool. This ruling was still in force as late as April 1982. I know this exact date as I was driving a company cab while mine was in overhaul. The Falklands war was in full swing and I wanted the news, so I had a small portable on the floor and an aerial clipped onto the driving door window. I was spotted and got a *stop* note for "...an unapproved radio aerial fitted to the front door frame contrary to the Commissioner's Conditions of Fitness."

Another example came in the summer of 1992. It was very hot and I was stuck in traffic with the inside of cabs being akin to the entrance to hell. Buses could have fans fitted in an attempt to keep the drivers alive! So I wrote to the PCO and requested permission to fit a fan. The PCO refused on the grounds it might encourage other cabbies to fit even bigger fans, adding: "*Such a proliferation of gadgetry would be beyond the means of the PCO to control.*"

## Welbeck minicabs

The first threat to the cab trade was from a firm called Welbeck Motors. They began to employ students to drive their cars. These so-called cabs became known as minicabs. They were small French Renault Dauphines with outside advertising claiming they only charged a shilling (5p) a mile. Newspapers had a field day. *Cab Wars, Taxi drivers declare war on minicabs* etc. Well we did declare war - but carefully because we could lose our licences, whereas they had nothing to lose. If we could *accidentally* block one in using 3 or 4 taxis, making it difficult for them, then we did. That was the start of

**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*

what in my opinion, helped begin the death process of the taxi trade and if we're not careful, could soon bury it.

Then the police withdrew from controlling us and the civil service took over. Their attitude seemed to be solely what they could do next to enlarge their empire. That is now in practise with the licensing of minicabs. As far as I remember, the total number of policemen in the original PCO at Lambeth Road was only 60. Today's PCO employs a staff of 204 - 64 of them Managerial. Sixty-four managers to control 140 other bodies and all on gold plated pensions - is it any wonder the costs to taxi drivers of today are through the roof!

## York Way Motors and co...

Another factor that helped spread the gloom of the cab trade was the death of the big cab companies and drivers working on the meter. York Way Motors (about 400 cabs), London General (about the same), to mention just two. Think of the overheads of just one of those companies. Never mind the cost of a new cab, just say all their cabs at today's prices were second-hand at say £20,000 each - a total of £8million. Then take the real estate value of their property. London General's little estate covered the

area between Brixton Road, Camberwell New Road and Cranmer Road - a huge area. What was the value in millions of that? York Way Motors had a similar estate. Couple that with the fact that not a week went by without each of these organisations buying at least one new cab. They and all the other big and small garages could - and did - wield a very heavy hammer that the authorities could not ignore. When they collectively demanded a fare rise, they could produce audited accounts to validate it and the increase was always granted. Remember, it was done by Act of Parliament and with Parliament and the police looking after our interests, cab drivers were in safe hands. Then one small garage got the idea of renting out cabs for a weekly sum. This was known as *the flat* and it caught on. In no time, many other garages copied the idea, resulting in the death of the big garages and the loss of the big hammer, leaving the trade at the mercy of the civil service. Much later, they allowed cabs to be painted any colour and to carry advertising. Who in their right mind would want to arrive in an evening dress at some top do in such vehicle? The answer was very few and so the limousine trade began to grow...

*Continued next month*

**John Edwardes (ex H05)**

## Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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

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

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

### The cost?

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

**The question is: Can you afford NOT to be in it...?  
Call us on 020 7729 8171 or 020 7749 0585**



*In the February Editorial page, Alan Fisher – under the sub-heading of Black Power – wrote of a complaint made against him by a call taker for publishing the account of a DaC driver who had been threatened by a gang of 'hoodies' and the driver's comments that he "...locked his doors because they were trying to hide their faces rather than because they happened to be black." The Editor accepted responsibility for everything in the mag and inferred that it could have been written in a better way, but then added his own complaint when considering a report in Southwark News that wrote of this year's Black Power list and of the 100 most influential BME (Black and Ethnic Minority) candidates. He asked whether that amounted to a form of inverted racism and questioned what the uproar would be if a top 100 influential white list was announced?*

*Now long-time DaC driver Louie Christian (A48) responds...*

Hi Al,

Just a few lines in response to your February Editorial in relation to the use of the word 'black' in certain circumstances.

I really do believe you missed the point about when the black community uses the word black in recognition of its own success. It is not used to exclude whites or anyone else for that matter, it is used as way of encouraging the black ethnic population to do well and aspire to achieve, especially young black men. In the scheme of things, the white population of the UK is 92%. The black population in the UK is just 2% of the population, that's approx 1,200,000 black people (not including Asians) in the UK. Therefore, if there were a general best entrepreneur competition, it would be most surprising if any black achievement would be noticeable or recognised.

Before it lost its way and identity, the *Music of Black Origins Award* (MOBOs) were introduced for this reason. There were many musical awards where the black community would be left aghast at the exclusion of black music and/or artist. It was obviously felt by the black community and others that black music was not being recognised or appreciated, except for Michael Jackson and Prince and a few others. Hence the creation of the MOBOs.

We are a small minority, Al. Our children, like all others, need inspiration, aspiration and role models to look up to. They need to see the positive side of their blackness, not just the negatives reported in the press, news and seen on TV and films. It is for these reasons, amongst others, why the "Black" awards were introduced. Is this so wrong?

There is a top rich list published every year; are there likely to be any blacks on that list? I have never seen one. There is absolutely nothing wrong with a top white entrepreneur list. Do you really believe the 100 most influential people in the UK (or Britain as you put it) is likely to contain any blacks? I really don't think so! This does not mean for a moment that blacks are not doing well; it's just about the numbers.

I wonder if you feel the same way about the use of the word black when it is associated with negatives? Why is it black ice? Black clouds? Black day (recently the blackest day on the stock exchange)? They are all used in the negative. No doubt, because it is a part of the English language, it seems perfectly normal. Well ask yourself: Is it? Have you ever seen black ice or a black day? Perhaps this is what McPherson meant when he stated inherent racism, because I dare say

# Black Power or Black Empowerment...?



much of the white population would not see anything wrong with the use of these words. However, to much of the black population, the use of these terms are highly derogatory. By the way, when I am driving my cab the first priority is my safety. Therefore, if I sense danger I will not stop to pick up certain people, irrespective of their colour. As you are aware, you have a split second to decide whether to stop and pick up someone. Even though I am black, there have been many times when I have not stopped and

picked up passengers white or black. I have to think of my safety. Thus, if the driver who prompted the earlier article feared for his safety, he had a right to lock his door or not stop.

Finally Al, it's not about 'black power', it's about 'black empowerment' of the young blacks so that they could aspire to be whatever they want to be! Thus, do not believe for one moment that the word is used to exclude anyone. It is used to encourage the young blacks in the UK.

The award to Mr Roger Lynch is for being both black and good at his job. I believe I am worldly and well read, yet I have never heard of Mr Roger Lynch or his award. What of the young blacks who we are led to believe do nothing but commit crimes? If there wasn't such an award, who would have known that Roger Lynch was good at his job? Where would the recognition have come from? If we lived in an ideal world where everyone was treated equally and fairly, then I dare say there would be no need for the use of the black word or special recognition for black achievements, but you and I know we as a nation and world are far from that!

**Louie Christian (A48)**

## APRIL EVENTS AT THE BANK OF ENGLAND

**Trying to keep the children occupied during the school holidays isn't always easy, but the Bank of England have a few events going on that could help...**

**Egging you on** is an invitation to follow a treasure trail around the Museum with prizes to be won, in addition to a free chocolate egg for every child taking part. That's on for four days from April 6 – 9 inclusive and from 10am till 4.30pm.

**Is the Bank on your case** asks children to draw and colour a favourite Museum exhibit onto a pencil case that they can then take home. A free pen and pencil with a Bank of England theme will be thrown in as well. Sadly for those accompanying the children, none will be stuffed with freshly minted £50 notes!

The Bank of England Museum is also open. It tells the fascinating story of the Bank's origins in 1694 to its role today as the UK's central bank and also includes a section on Wind in the Willows author, Kenneth Grahame, who worked at the BoE for thirty years.

*All the above events - including Museum - entry are free...*



## LONDON LEGEND Limousine Taxis



London Legend specialises in wedding transport. Our magnificent Asquith Limousine Taxis and Landaulets with drop hoods are replicas of the legendary 1930's Austin Low Loader Hackney Carriage. Special rates for Dial-a-Cab drivers on mid week and out of season weddings. We cover all areas of London and the south east.

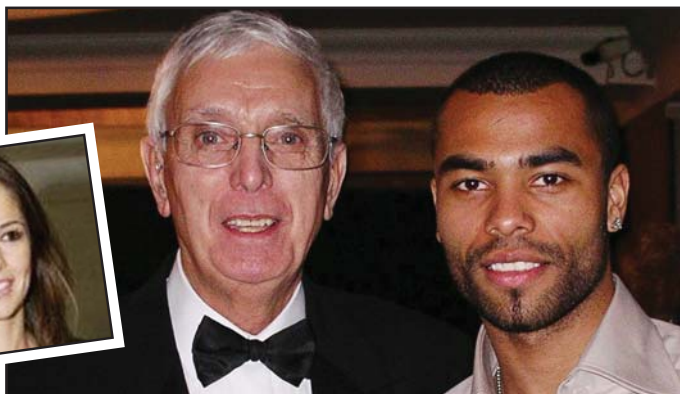
**Tel: 01628 471632 Mob: 07974 348974**

Most **Call Sign** readers will be fed up with reading how Cheryl and **Ashley Cole's** marriage has fallen apart, apparently following his sending a photo of himself in the buff to a topless model and allegedly having *naughties* with an American local government worker.

Our problem is that we believe **Cheryl Cole** – then Cheryl Tweedy – may have mixed up her choice of man when in 2004 she saw both Ashley Cole and DaC Board member **Allen Togwell** at a party. Because it was dark, the **Girls Aloud** singer inadvertently picked the wrong one of the duo to go out with. She already knew Ashley Cole as they were living in the same north London apartment block and meant to ask him if she could borrow a pint of milk from his apartment in case Allen Togwell accepted her invite to a coffee! Her signals got mixed and Ashley Cole assumed that she wanted him to deliver the milk personally, totally missing her desire to meet said Mr T in quieter, lighter surroundings!

**Call Sign** had tracked both Ashley Cole and Mr T to the party and discovered that the DaC Marketing Manager's reason for attending was to tap the Chelsea player into working at Brunswick House – our

## DID CHERYL PICK THE WRONG MAN?



**Did Cheryl Cole (inset) pick the wrong man due to the poor lights?**

home at the time.

"It's a fair cop," Mr Togwell told us at the time after realising that the game was up, "we offered him a substantial amount – I cannot say how much but it was over twenty five quid – to come and work for us. In return, we offered him the opportunity of training the DaC football team and free access to the sand-

and sometimes you have to break the bank in order to get what you want in life!"

But would the X Factor star ever have become Cheryl Togwell? Allen's better half, Sue, told **Call Sign**: "Give my Allen away for a pint of milk? No chance! I'd want a packet of biscuits as well at the very least...!"

wich machine in the staff canteen. He was considering the offer – hence the decision to include corn beef sandwiches within the very bowels of the machine. These are apparently his favourite

*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 November 1993 and the publication of the Government's green paper - a consultation document on the future of the taxi and private hire services in England and Wales that eventually led to minicab licensing...



**From Call Sign November 1993**

### Steve Norris launches taxi and minicab green paper

The Government's consultation paper on taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) was launched by Steve Norris, the Minister for Transport with special responsibility for taxis and PHVs in England and Wales. The Green Paper describes how taxis and PHVs are regulated in England and Wales, reviews the legislation governing them and invites comments and proposals for a new framework for the industry that will:

- \* Address the needs of the public, in particular issues of safety, accessibility and consumer protection
- \* Be readily understood by the public
- \* Be reasonably easy to enforce
- \* Enable the taxi and PHV trades to adapt and grow, with a minimum of regulation

**In particular, the document addresses two important issues:**

1. Should taxis and PHVs be licensed at all and, if so, should there be a single licensing regime throughout England and Wales, including London?
2. What standards should drivers and operators of taxis and PHVs be required to meet?

Launching the Green Paper, Mr. Norris said:

"Taxis and private hire vehicles provide essential public transport services to a large section of the population. And in London, the familiar black cab - with its facility for carrying people in wheelchairs - leads the world in its contribution to transporting disabled people.

But the law on taxis and PHVs is a mess. It is antiquated, complicated, difficult to understand, difficult to enforce and totally unsatisfactory.

The industry should be allowed to provide whatever forms of service the public may require, without outdated or unnecessary controls. But the issues are complex.

This consultation document is not a statement of Government intentions, although we have made our views known on some issues. We believe, for example, that wheelchair accessibility is important and should remain a feature in any taxi licensing regime. We also think there is a strong argument for having as near to a single framework as possible for the whole of England and Wales. Above all, we believe the law should be understandable, relevant and enforceable.

I want to hear the views of everyone with an interest in taxis and PHVs - those who use them as well as those who drive and operate them."

One driver who met Mr Norris, Alan Fisher (F7) – Call Sign's Big Al - told Jerry Craig:

"I like the Minister, but I'm not quite so sure about his green paper!"

*Responses to the Green Paper should be sent to the DoT by 1 March 1994...*



**Call Sign's 'Big Al' Fisher discusses the Green Paper with Steve Norris**



A public meeting at Harrow School on 3 March, chaired by London Assembly member **Navin Shah**, heard Mayor of London **Boris Johnson** give his views on several topics from a third Heathrow runway ("not while I have a single breath in my body") to the weekend tube closures for engineering work ("a rip off") to Londoners getting preferential treatment regarding tickets for the 2012 Olympics ("it's illegal").

However, just one topic provided more than the usual interest to **Call Sign**.

Changing the topic to 'green' issues, Mayor Johnson made a rather strange statement bearing in mind the recent arguments regarding taxis aged over twelve/fifteen year old. He said:

**"We are being absolutely militant in our championing of low carbon, zero carbon, vehicles of all kinds. London leads the world and has an incredible reputation at the moment. At the Copenhagen summit, people were very impressed with what we were doing with electric cars. By 2020, I'd like to see all 32,000 taxis in London**

## Boris: "You have eight years to go zero...!"



The Mayor wants us all to be emission-free by 2020

going to zero-carbon either by electric or some other means."

By **Call Sign's** reckoning, that statement

from the Mayor of London means that within the next ten years our numbers will increase by around 7,000 and all 32,000 of us will be out of our Fairways to TX4s and be in zero carbon emission vehicles. The Mayor didn't actually say that he'd pay for us to do that, but we know he's a great guy who likes nothing better than to spring a surprise! After all, besides the European School of Brussels, he was also educated at Eton College yet was happy to hold the public meeting at Harrow School!

Mr Mayor, if it helps you, then Dial-a-Cab has the facility to enable you to pay the necessary funds direct into our accounts. Mine's a hydrogen cab...

**Ron Yarborough**  
Call Sign online

## BOOK REVIEW...BOOK REVIEW...BOOK REVIEW...

### The Top 100 Cricketers of All Time...

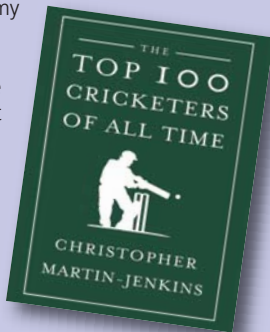
I spent many of my early summer Saturdays encamped at The Oval – the cricket ground and not the station – to watch Surrey County Cricket Club play and win championship after championship!

Those were the days when the rest of the cricket teams out there were just in it to make up the numbers. Was it really seven consecutive championships that we won?

They were the days of Peter May, Bernie Constable, Tony Lock, Peter Laker and the Bedser twins – Alec and Eric. Soon to follow were players of the ilk of Ken Barrington and John Edrich and between them all, those heady days of the late 1950s saw Surrey totally dominate cricket.

In those days, I would not have admitted that there could be other cricketing "greats," but being older – if not much wiser – I now know that the world of cricket wasn't just about Surrey CCC and a new book due to be published on 6 May confirms that!

Test Match Special commentator **Christopher Martin-Jenkins** has penned **The Top 100 Cricketers of All Time** (Corinthian £14.99) and while I was delighted to see some of that unforgettable Surrey team included, I have to admit that there were others out there who could be considered as being every bit as good!



Not all the names were known to me and I have had to take CM-J's word that they were as good as he says. Charlie Macartney, for example. He may have scored over 15,000 runs and taken 419 wickets at a time when nowhere near as many cricket matches were played, but as his time was in the early 1900s, perhaps my lack of knowledge about Charlie isn't surprising. But in addition to many of my Surrey heroes, there are the stories of players such as Imran Khan, Len Hutton, Freddie Trueman, Walter Hammond, Don Bradman, Geoff Boycott, Garfield Sobers and many other all-time greats that CM-J puts into his top 100.

There is also one with a link to **Dial-a-Cab**. At number 51 you can read about Curtley Ambrose, who just happens to be the cousin of dispatcher, **Curls Ambrose**.

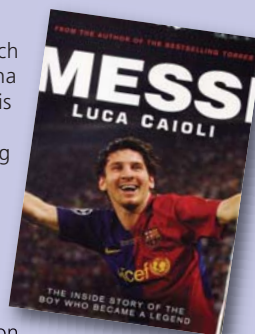
If you don't like cricket, this book most certainly isn't for you, but if you are someone who does enjoy the sound of bat on ball on a glorious summer day, then this fully illustrated book will tell you everything you ever wanted to know about the who's who of cricket.

For cricket fans, this is a recommended read...

Alan Fisher (F07)

### Messi...

When a player such as Diego Maradona refers to you as his natural successor, then the one thing you know is that player must be pretty hot as a footballer. That praise was labelled to Barcelona sensation,



Lionel Messi and now even though just 22 years of age, the first of what will undoubtedly be many books about him, was recently published.

Written by renowned Italian sports journalist, **Luca Caioli**, his book **Messi** (Corinthian £7.99) gives the lowdown on this incredible footballer. Probably already the most valuable player around, Messi is not just the holder of a European Championship with Barca but also an Olympic Champion with Argentina and holder of the unofficial title greatest player on the planet!

If reading about brilliance on the soccer pitch is your thing, then you will enjoy Messi...

**Ron Yarborough**  
Call Sign online

For a great deal in taxi tyres

## TRY THE TIGER!



**Tiger Tyres**  
472 Hackney Road, E2  
**0207 729 5237**



As owner-members of the **Dial-a-Cab Credit Union** would expect, the major item on the agenda of the Annual General Meeting, held on 11 March 2010, was the report submitted to it by **Terry McPherson**, Chartered Accountant from the auditors **Appleby & Wood**, who declared the following information from the accounts:

There was an increase in income of 19.47% in 2009 over 2008.

During the current period, expenditure was 8.59% up on the year before, represented primarily by an increase in insurance rates and premiums worldwide. It is necessary for the Credit Union by law to effect various insurances to protect the savings of members.

Trading surplus for the year was up by 111.83% over the year before – a phenomenal result.

Loans outstanding to members rose by 16.86% over the period. This is essential growth, as the loan book is the major asset of the Credit Union.

Provision for bad debts was only 3.68% and the auditor told the meeting: **"This is phenomenal during the current economic downturn and is a reflection of the pru-**

# Dial-a-Cab Credit Union AGM



**Terry McPherson: "DACCU is now phenomenally strong!"**

**dent management exercised over the affairs of the Credit Union by its owner-member Board of Directors, loan-granting and internal audit committees."**

A dividend was proposed by the Board of Directors of 1.75%, based upon the shares held by each member for a pre-determined period. This proposed dividend is up from the 1% proposed in the previous year. But the payment of the dividend was rejected in a resolution passed by the great majority of the members present, in favour of trading surpluses being allocated to the reserves of the Credit Union.

**"Last year's working overdraft is no more,"** declared the auditor, as the 7% inter-

est rate offered on shares periodically for term deposits has overcome the need for an active overdraft facility. The Auditor went on to state: **"Thanks are due to our members for the support given to the Credit Union by investing in and taking loans from it."**

As noted earlier, the entire trading surplus for the year was allocated to the reserves of the Credit Union. This means that there was an increase of 23.49% in reserves from last year. The overall percentage of reserves to gross assets is 9.69% and is the envy of most clearing banks.

The auditor concluded by saying: **"This was always a financially strong Credit Union. It is now phenomenally strong, with support increasing for it at all times - 85 new members signed up in the last year. Well done to all concerned."**

Finally, full copies of the audited accounts are available legally only to owner-members and can be viewed on the website of the **Financial Services Authority** when they are filed.

As I always say to those involved in the Dial-a-Cab network that are not yet members of the Credit Union, you've got to join it to enjoy it. And as always, be careful out there...

**John Riley (K38)**

**DACCU Vice-President**

**Unit 14, Peterley Business Centre,**

**472 Hackney Road, London E2 9EO**

**Tel: 020 7729 8171 or 020 7749 0585**

## LONDON ACCORDING TO DAVE

### The untouchables – who are they???

**Here are 20 definitive facts about them...**



1. They are a minority, but are rapidly growing.
2. They are a group within a group.
3. They are sometimes seen as intolerant.
4. They have a brother in high office.
5. They seek to have more brothers in the corridors of power.
6. They give out their literature at tube stations under the guise of other parties.
7. They target the young with *join us it's cheaper and more healthy* and give financial aid.
8. They neglect to speak of the fatalities - 108 over five years.
9. They are a source of embarrassment to some of their own.
10. They have a mission to proliferate themselves and their pathways across the capital and have exemption from existing laws.

11. They have a common bond with the capital's Black cab drivers - a hatred of bendy buses!
12. They often wear Lycra and can suffer with numb 'bits and pieces' syndrome!
13. They jump traffic lights!
14. They go both ways up one-way streets!
15. They ride on pavements!
16. They ignore speed limits!
17. They are unlicensed, uninsured and untested!
18. They are untraceable!
19. They are unstoppable!
20. They are the untouchables!

**David Heath (ex-W27)**



**Surely he doesn't mean us???**

### Did you know...

...that the Northern line was actually two different lines – *The City and South London Railway* and *The Charing Cross, Euston and Hampstead Railway*. The former was the first deep tube line and opened in November 1890. At the time, it linked King William Street with Stockwell. The two lines merged in 1937 with the name to be either *The City and South London Railway* and *The Charing Cross, Euston and Hampstead Railway* or the *Northern line*. Guess who won...

## City Style Dry Cleaners

**We give DaC drivers and staff a big discount...  
Just look at our prices!**

<b>Suits</b>	<b>£6.50</b>
<b>Trousers</b>	<b>£3.50</b>
<b>Shirts (min 5)</b>	<b>£1.25</b>
<b>Skirts</b>	<b>£3.50</b>
<b>Dresses</b>	<b>(from) £7.90</b>

**City Style 206 City Rd, EC1  
0207 490 8791**



When Dial-a-Cab driver **Tony Arnold (F03)** drove his then-TX2 from Beijing to London in 2002, **Call Sign** – along with Chinese television – followed every step of his amazing journey.

When he later went to Africa and drove a TX2 in the Nigerian capital of Abuja to help train the local cabbies, we were there and almost felt the heat when his aircon packed up in 125°F!

Then last year in Australia, **Call Sign** was there when he attempted to teach Melbourne's taxi drivers how real cabbies operate! Of course, when we say we were there in all those countries, we mean in spirit. But for Tony's latest project, we're not sure whether we should have even been with him in spirit!

He plays the part of a London taxi driver (ok, that might not have been too difficult) who picks up Enrique, someone that has been living in Spain for the past 25 years and who has decided to return to London to get an answer to a problem that involves him and a small number of other males around the world. Tony had around 25 lines to learn – none of which included the phrase: "Where to Guv?"

The movie, **Solito**, deals in a semi-humorous way with the serious problem of pornography and its effect on society. Enrique has a sexual problem that he believes he picked up through watching porn movies and decides to attempt to collectively sue the porn companies with the help of a London feminist lawyer and

# DAC'S TONY IN NAUGHTY MOVIE!



From China to Porn!

any one else with a similar problem.

Our only concern should be that the cabbie he plays doesn't have his DaC logo showing!

Then again they say there is no such thing as bad publicity...

Everyone's talking about it, so Call Sign asked Mickey Lappin (E46) to check it out...

## Cabbies Mate... by Navigation Master

It has been known for me to disagree with the Editor of this fine magazine on a few things, but we also agree on a few; our dislike of Vito cabs and SatNavs used in Taxis around London.

Well you can now scrap that last one, but to call the **Cabbies Mate** by **Navigation Master** just a SatNav is not doing this fantastic piece of technology justice.

Designed by London Cabbies for the Taxi trade, it is an essential aid for the London Taxi driver, old and new. Priced at £299.99 including VAT and delivery – it comes complete and ready to go.

Of course it has a Satellite Navigation system built in and a whole host of other features including:

**4.3 inch High resolution Touch Screen ... Speed Camera Alerts ... Predictive Keyboard ... MP3 Compatibility ... Excess speed warnings ... Voice Guidance ... Covers UK & Ireland.**

**It also comes with a 12 months "No Quibble" Warranty...**

But what sets this little gem apart from the rest is that it is actually three useful tools in one. The

**Geographer's A-Z** mapping facility is exactly the same as the one we have on our **Dial-a-Cab** terminals, only much faster and easier to use with predictive text in larger characters. It's **Points of Interest** database, which contains over 20,000 points, is superb for the new driver just finding his feet, or the older one that is beginning to forget everything! You just tap in the name of the place you want, like the street map, and instantaneously it appears marked by a little flag. You can then enter the destination to the navigation side to actually guide you directly to your destination. The whole system switches from GPS to map to points very easily. If you just want to know the **shortest route** or "line" you can put in your destination and a blue line will show you the shortest route as *the crow flies* – ideal for anybody on The Knowledge. Touch the screen and the map 'scrolls' instantly.

**There are also updates available for both the map and the points of interest section:**

- \* A-Z Geographers' map updated annually + additional points of interest & speed camera info
- \* Speed camera warnings can be updated 3 times monthly by subscription to PocketGPSWorld.com
- \* A – Z Maps, Points of interest and speed camera updates for £65 annual fee
- \* Satellite Navigation map updates can be purchased when released

This great little gadget has so much to offer it is impossible for me to do it justice on paper.

**To find out more go to**  
**www.navigationmaster.com** or ring Lindsay Todd

**on 07941412865 for a demonstration.**

They say it has been designed for Cabbies by Cabbies – the Knowledge in a box. And they're right!  
**Mickey Lappin (E46)**



## THE SALIERI RESTAURANT

376 Strand, WC2

We Invite Dial-a-Cab drivers and their guests to our restaurant where you can partake of the finest food and wine

And as a thank-you for helping our clients come and go over the years, we are happy to be able to offer you a genuine 25% discount on your bill

*We are certain that you will be delighted*



Please bring along your badge or Bill as ID

**Salieri Restaurant**  
**376 Strand, WC2**

**Reservations: 020 7836 1318**

**John Hudson (W34)** has been on **Dial-a-Cab** for many years and has only written for **Call Sign** as an occasional restaurant critic. But something recently *got his goat* and irritated him so much that he says he just had to write to the PCO and us.

"I agree with **Call Sign** when it says that the **Mercedes Vito** may be a nice vehicle, but that doesn't make it a taxi any more than sticking a *For Hire* sign on a delivery van makes that vehicle a cab. I don't think that any vehicle private hire use should also be used as a taxi. However, I haven't gone around spouting that view, it's just my personal opinion."

But something happened that made John change his mind about keeping quiet. That came in early March when John saw what looked like a Vito parked round the back of St Pancras. Looking again, John was so shocked at what he saw that he took a photo of the offending vehicle – even though the driver was in his cab, apparently having a snooze.

"It wasn't a Vito at all, it was an upgraded Peugeot E7 that looked like the Vito, right down to the orange 'flash' along the side, albeit saying Eurocab rather than taxi. I have reported it to the PCO because I am astounded that they could licence something that is obviously made to look like a taxi. It shows the danger of using vehicles that PH were already using. If anything has confirmed my view of the Vito not being a real taxi, it was this!"

Writing to John Mason at PCO/TfL, John said:

**Dear Mr Mason,**

On Wednesday 10th March, in Goodway, I

**DaC driver John Hudson asks the question...**

## WHICH ONE IS THE REAL TAXI!



**The E7 looking like a Vito and on Addison Lee PH Cab on a Taxi Rank - are they real taxis?**

*spotted a Peugeot E7 minicab parked at the side of the road (reg supplied). At first glance it looked like a Vito Merc Taxi, but a second look and I realised it was a private hire. I feel that the PCO should not have licensed this vehicle due to its resemblance to a Hackney Carriage licensed taxi. It has become apparent to me that the owner of the Peugeot is out to deceive and confuse the general public with the words of Eurocab on the sides and back and with the orange strip along the doors.*

*I feel the PCO should not licence vehicles that resemble taxis by looks or, as in the Fiat Scudo TW200, with partitions that copy Hackney Carriage vehicles.*

*At this present time when touting is at epidemic levels, minicabs looking like taxis is not*

*helping the general public to distinguish who is legally allowed to pick up off the streets and who is not. I feel a rule should be implemented to stop these vehicles being licensed before all hell breaks loose. Perhaps only taxis and no PHVs allowed to be black could be a start?*

**John Hudson**

John also told **Call Sign** of an interview he had read in *The Guardian* with **Addison Lee** Chairman, **John Griffin**. In it, Mr Griffin had called his fleet the real cabs, because every one of them looked the same, whereas taxis were no longer like that.

**Call Sign** is publishing the photo John took, alongside one of our photos and asks: Which one is the real taxi? The answer should be neither of them, but do passengers know that...?

## Election Time is Almost Here!

**Richard Potter looks at the current situation**



In just a few short weeks, the British public will have a say about who will lead the country - and it's about time too. The British political system is being reformed as regards to MP's expenses, so maybe someone should take a look at how a political party can select a Prime Minister with no regard to what the public wants or why we were not given the chance to choose? Any change in leadership, for whatever reason, should trigger a general election.

When you vote at a general election, you vote for the leader of that party and the party itself. And even though the recession seems to be over, it has to be said that we, the British Public, were unlucky to have to suffer it but very lucky in that it took place 18 months before the general election! Labour have had a very short time to save themselves and should the recession have

happened at the start of a new political term, I don't think that we would have seen the measures introduced that have incurred such high levels of debt. There could have been much greater levels of cuts in public services, jobs and a total halt to investing in schools, hospitals etc. If I stick my neck out, I'd say that labour will win and Gordon Brown will continue as Prime Minister because the British people tend to vote parties out rather than vote parties into power after taking a good look at any alternatives.

Rather than ripping Gordon Brown to shreds over his policies, David Cameron has spent most of his time at the dispatch box personalising his argument and to be honest, he and George Osborn look like a couple of newly graduated six formers with little new to offer.

The Tories big mistake was allowing David Cameron to lead the party when in my eyes David Davis would have made a much better leader. This election will be nothing if not interesting...

**Richard Potter (T51)**

## POWER PILL *Now even better!*

**Helps cut the cost of diesel – and reduces smoke!**

Chris Hayball is happy to supply any Dial-a-Cab drivers with the amazing Power Pill & at an even better rate than before!

You can buy 1 pack for £16, 5 packs for £70 or 10 packs for £120 – and all prices include postage!

You can order by phone on  
01246 856 153 or 07737 956 298

You can order via post to: Chris Hayball, Grove Bungalow,  
Mansfield Rd, Heath, Derbyshire, S44 5SF

Or by visiting [www.powerpillonline.com](http://www.powerpillonline.com)

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

(Enter promo code DAC 10)





# compliance officer's update

*Hello Ladies & Gents,*

Every month I receive varying types of complaints, some more serious than others but they must all be dealt with correctly. As the Compliance Officer, I am trusted to access the severity of each complaint and make a judgement on whether I can deal with it myself or if it should proceed to a hearing. I am guided not only by the rulebook, but also a list of twenty procedure rules. I pride myself on treating every member exactly the same and all complaints are judged on their merit.

## Which way?

We are all in a service industry and should be aware that in order to keep our Society ahead of the competition, we must all go that extra mile. So many times I have mentioned how difficult it is to drive in London without running into a diversion, road works or temporary signals - these are the bane of our lives. Many clients use our services on a regular basis and are used to taking a particular route for a set journey and may suggest you drive a particular way at the start of the trip. But if not, it is always a good idea to ask the passenger what route they prefer if there are several alternatives. Everyone has his or her preferences and although it may not be of your choosing, it will prevent any confusion and



after all, as professionals most of the time, the passenger is quite happy to trust your judgement.

## M25 please driver!

Occasionally clients will ask you to take a preferred route that although quicker in time, is substantially longer in distance and can significantly increase the actual meter fare at the end of the journey. Can I please remind you that it is very important to get correct authorisation on these requests. Using the M25 for a

journey to Heathrow or Gatwick may well seem to be the quickest route even though it is longer in distance, but the metered fare can almost double and sometimes without the accounts approval can result in the amount being reduced further down the line.

## Outer zones

I have mentioned on numerous occasions that all outer zones (SE50, WW99 etc) are physical and that if you are not actually in the zone when the trip is dispatched and unmatched, you must wait firstly until it is offered to the back-up zones before being able to bid for the trip and offer a possible delay in the normal way. Prior to booking-in to inner and outer London zones that have postal codes, you must be able to reach the furthest part of that zone within fifteen minutes. The same rules apply to zones that you 'soon to clear' in, whereby you are fifteen minutes from the furthest part of that zone when you clear the trip. The call centre are continuously monitoring the system and anybody who violates the rules to gain an unfair advantage over their fellow members, will be dealt with in the correct manner.

**Allan Evans**  
DaC Compliance Officer

## Now the TX4 Reaches Ukraine!



Another  
country  
and  
another  
TX4...

up. This is a unique opportunity to gain an advantage over your competitors and we are sure that very soon we can have a full launch of the vehicle and start seeing the taxi being used on the streets of Kiev."

The excitement has been building in Ukraine with the imminent arrival of the newest vehicle on their roads - the London Taxi aka the TX4 - as the streets of that nation's capital prepare to see the legendary London Taxi, as Kiev becomes the latest city from around the world to introduce the iconic vehicle.

This version of the TX4 is built in China by LTI and their joint venture company Geely to British standards and will be operated by both individual drivers and limousine companies to introduce a new London style service. Drivers will be trained in customer care techniques and given lessons on sightseeing tours, so they can point out places of interest to their passengers.

Kiev hotels already want to take advantage of the unique service as they extend the facility to their guests to make their stay in Ukraine even more enjoyable.

The *London Taxi Company's* Matthew Cheyne, told **Call Sign** regarding the Chinese version:

"We have been working for a long time to produce a cost effective vehicle that doesn't lose any of the values that the taxi has in the UK. It is the same design and is as robust as the one we build in Britain, but at a lower cost."

Matthew added: "We know it is going to prove popular here in Kiev as we've had numerous advance enquiries about how to buy the vehicle. Now we are looking for a partner who will import the vehicle into Ukraine and provide sales and aftersales back

## PC running slowly?

Internet or email not working?

**Affordable home  
& business solutions**

- **Wired/wireless networks**
- **PC setups • iPods**
- **Digital photos**
- **Video • Music • Upgrades •**
- **Buying advice • Training**

**Call in Bob Crabtree**

**Wanstead-based**

**World-renowned expert (really!)**

**T: 020 8989 8196 M: 07516 157012**

**Email: [enquiries@bobcrabtree.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bobcrabtree.co.uk)**

**For all Windows/Mac problems  
Viruses or Trojans?**



## Royal Warrant

I read **Al Fresco's** Royal approval article in **TAXI** magazine with some interest and amusement where he wrote of Dial-a-Cab having royal connections through its client accounts. In that article, he writes of DaC being given a Royal Warrant for its work in supplying licensed radio taxis for transporting members of the Royal Household while carrying out their duties.

What Al Fresco may not have been aware of was that there was a member of Dial-a-Cab who held a Royal Warrant for supplying a Royal Household with motor vehicles. I know this for a fact, as it was I who held the Royal Warrant, which allowed me to supply new motor vehicles (not private hire) and relief chauffeurs to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

I still have the Royal Warrant framed on my office wall at home; it reminds me of the 17 years of service that I gave to one of the most respected Royal family members. During that time I met most of the Royal Family, whether it was in London, Sandringham or Scotland, it also allowed me to view them whilst they were out of the public gaze and in a relaxed mood.

The residences were as far apart as Dover to Mey, which is close to John O'Groats in Scotland, and as varied as castles to mansions to log cabins! Then to be able to walk leisurely around the grounds and gardens of the most protected estates in Great Britain, this was a pleasure that not many are allowed in this country.

A Royal warrant is issued to only one named person in a company and if that person dies or leaves the company, then the company has to reapply with a new named member of that company. If the Member of the Royal family that issued the Royal warrant dies, then the holder may continue to hold the Royal warrant for another 5 years. But the holder has to change their notepaper and any signage to state it was supplier to the "Late" royal member.

So once again **Call Sign** has the most up to date news and in depth information, and to Al Fresco, who is a friend of mine, apologies. It seems that the scoops are always in the magazine that belongs to London's premier licensed radio taxi service.

*(Did you know? Sheep will not drink from running water; squirrels can't see red and polar bears cover their black noses with their paws for better camouflage?)*

## Nasty Editor!

It's difficult writing an article for **Call Sign** when Alan Fisher begins nagging you to submit some copy around 3 weeks before publication of the actual issue. This makes it difficult for the writer when they try to add some topical news that will

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

# The World According To Tom Whitbread

## DaC's answer to Victor Meldrew!

not be too stale before the reader gets the issue on their doormat. When I submitted my last issue, I was happy with the content; but as the month continued I noticed in **The Sun** newspaper that some of the comments I had made in my article were duplicated in their columns. Could it be just coincidence or has the Editor of **Call Sign** got a secret sideline - supplying hacks with items of interest for their columns?

*(Did you know? Pigeons can fly 600 miles a day, chickens that lay brown eggs have red ear lobes, ostriches urinate on their legs to keep cool and penguins have sex twice a year?)*

## It's a Fairway to Waterloo!

On many Sunday evenings, I pick up my eldest grandson at Kings Cross Station and take him down to Waterloo to catch his connecting train back to his base and ship at Portsmouth. I know many of you will say that I do not look old enough to have a grandson in the Royal Navy; mind you, others will say I look like Uncle Albert in *Only Fools and Horses*! Be that as it may, I was shocked that at 9pm at Waterloo on a quiet Sunday, you still have to pay parking fees. They even employ a parking warden to patrol with just a few cars parked anyway.

But what I also noticed whilst walking into the station from the back of the taxi rank, was the number of filthy old Fairways, driven mainly by old fellows who probably just work on weekends. Thank God all the Dial-a-Cab vehicles I saw were clean, as were it seemed, taxis on other radio circuits. I glanced inside some of these Fairways to see interiors as dirty as the outside, some with ripped seats/head lining. Imagine the impression this must give to overseas visitors; they must think we have slipped back to being a third world country. This is not how we should be thought of, even though we are travelling through a recession.

*(Did you know? Julian Clary, Sir Roger Moore, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Eddie Murphy, Burt Reynolds, Selina Scott, Ross Kemp and Terry Waite all had fathers who were policemen?)*

## Tom's moans...

How are these and other retrograde steps that are happening at the moment, affecting you in your working and home life? Firstly, protection for you and your family whether you are at home or out working. You expect, if trouble happens, that you can dial 999 and a policeman will appear from a car with flashing lights and two-toned hooters. Well in the next couple of years, 3500 police officers will disappear as we are told that the Government cannot afford to pay these officers - that is apart from the 1000 or so that are off long term sickness.

But they can find money for the plastic policemen (PSCO), who have no power of arrest and if you are getting beaten up, they will just stand back, as *Health and Safety* states they could oth-

erwise get hurt! But they can vote for the persons that gave them this cushy job.

As I write this article, the Jon Venables scandal has broken. He has been returned to prison whilst on licence and Secretary of State for Justice, Jack Straw says that he will not give the reason for his incarceration as it is not in the public interest. No, he does not want to admit they were wrong to let Venables out of prison and waste thousands on a new identity.

You also have Maxine Carr, who assisted Ian Huntley with his alibi after he murdered the two schoolgirls, Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman. We paid for her to have a new identity, new teeth and breast implants. All the money for these new identities and cosmetic surgery could have paid for a patrol car or two AND two qualified police officers to protect our community.

If you get hospitalised, you will need to get back to work as quick as possible to pay the bills and get some money for a well deserved holiday, but the NHS pen-pushing employers say they cannot afford more qualified nurses. So they will be reducing the General Registered Nurses and replacing them with unqualified nurse assistants. This follows the scandal in the north of England where hundreds of patients have died through lack of nursing care after administrators cut costs on medical care, but not on their own wages or bonuses. These patients not only died through a lack of medical care, but in filthy beds and in some cases, malnutrition. Do you think anyone will ever be charged with the deaths of these beloved family members? So far as I am concerned, these corporate killers will not be brought to justice, but they will be left to vote for the ones that will protect their jobs.

Then you have the greatest tax of all - the one that can even be charged after you are dead by taking a lump sum from your estate. This so-called tax is for looking after you when becoming demented through driving your taxi 18 hours a day and having to be cared for in a council home! You need to drive 18 hours a day to pay taxes during your working life and then when you think you have provided for your partner's life after your demise, you can forget it as they will grab another chunk of any money you have left!

Then there are the councils who say that they do not have the money to repair the roads you drive on or to supply the grit for when it snows. Yet they have £millions to rent mansions for large families who should not even be living in this country. Or a Government that says it has no money to build enough jails to accommodate thieves, murderers, rapists and those committing benefit frauds. Remember the days when if you murdered someone, you faced the hangman? Nowadays you could get as little as 2 years in jail.

These are people you could meet when out driving your taxi, people who have been given a

*continued on p23*





**David Kupler (Y74), David Ballard (N28) and Alex Constantinou (N05) are Call Sign's restaurant reviewers. These DaC drivers and their guests will visit restaurants periodically and give their honest opinions. This month David visited the Tike by Fenchurch St Station**

## EATING OUT WITH CALL SIGN

The Turkish **Tike Istanbul, Grill & Bar** must be one of the very best restaurants that **Call Sign** has sent me to review! Situated in **Fenchurch Place** next to the Taxi rank, the imposing glass fronted Tike might suggest a cold minimalist atmosphere from the outside - until you enter the premises, where a warm friendly welcome is to be had. The ground floor has a modern bar with the dining area located on the first floor. We were escorted to our window table where ultra-comfortable seats would make our dining experience so enjoyable, that we were hesitant to leave at the end! The manager, Thomas, came to our table and spent some time discussing the wines and huge variety of dishes on offer. These included some very interesting authentic homemade Turkish and Mediterranean hot and cold starters - as one would expect in a Turkish eatery! The possible difference being that these were delicious! Jan chose the *Cherkez Tavugu* to start, this was a creamed chicken dip with walnuts while I went for the warm *Pastirmali Houmus* topped with sliced sausage. We devoured these with an unusual Turkish bread - somewhat similar to a small Pita - and accompanied it with a delicious fruity white wine.

There was no rush to get into the main courses and we were content to relax as the restaurant filled with groups of people intent on eating their way through the generous menu in the beautifully decorated room with its ambient lighting.

The *Mixed Grill* that we had selected, along with the *Adana Kofte Kebab*, arrived on a bed of delicate rice and was more than enough for two. We could have chosen a salad to go with the meats from the veggie section on the menu, but felt that there might be too much to eat. And we were right, seeing the table behind us with its 3 young diners choosing and attempting to engulf the *1 metre long kebab* between them!

Jan and I enjoyed every mouthful of the delicate lamb and chicken pieces in our grill; together with the fruity red wine Thomas recommended, it provided the perfect combination of tastes.

I needed a little break from this feast and asked for a *Turkish coffee*. It arrived hot and bitter - the way I love it! Not that sweet porridgy stuff that so many Turkish restaurants often offer. The desserts were interesting. Jan went for a *Chocolate Baklava*, again made in-house, whilst I selected a *White Mastica Ice Cream*, flavoured somewhat similar to pine kernels. It was not just refreshing, but truly delicious. We finished an excellent meal with a Baileys on ice for Jan and a perfect Brandy for me.

**Up until the end of June, Tike is offering DaC drivers a 20% discount on the bill, with dishes ranging from around £3 for starters, £7.25 for 'big plates', plus various Zurna Wraps of Lamb and Chicken at under £6 - very good, tasty food all round and a far cry from the tired rotating greasy grey 'elephant leg' Turkish kebab shops elsewhere in London.**

We went on a Monday evening and had expected the Tike to be empty, but were surprised at the level of business there. By the time we left, we knew why it was so busy!

*The Tike Istanbul, Grill & Bar is at 5 Fenchurch Place, London EC3.*

*Reservations: 0207 702 9965 and their website is at [www.tikerestaurant.co.uk](http://www.tikerestaurant.co.uk).*

*And don't forget, there is a 20% discount for DaC drivers until the end of June...*

## The World According To Tom Whitbread (continued from page 22)

caution, community service, ASBOs or a leg tag. These are people who should be incarcerated to protect you and others so that you can go about your lawful business. It seems as though all the laws are being implemented for the criminal fraternity and penalising the law-abiding taxpayer. Maybe a certain party should be renamed The National Criminal Party.

*(Did you know? Mark Twain was born on the day in 1835 when Haley's comet appeared and he died when it reappeared again in 1910?)*

### PCO v HoC

If you overcharge by 50p, the PCO will hang you out to dry, but if you work in that big building in the shadow of Big Ben, then you can fiddle as much as you like with no penalty. So if you have a decent education, why not consider joining a political party and putting yourself up to become a Member of Parliament? If you do, I hope you remember your mates who are still driving taxis and that little old fellow who lives in Dalston Lane that gave you the idea!

### Dial-a-Dream luxury Villa hols

On a lighter vein, elsewhere in this magazine you will see an advert for **Dial-a-Dream's** villas in Florida and I assure you that if you intend going to Florida for your holiday, you will not get better value for your money. If you know anyone who has stayed at one of these villas, ask them how well furnished they are and all the extras that are available.

**These villas are only minutes from the Disney theme parks, not like others that say as much in travel brochures, but which in**

**reality can only be achieved if you travel at midnight on the freeway!**

We bought these villas when we had some money behind us, which turned out to be very good thinking as it is now the main income we have to allow us to fulfil the dreams of terminally ill children. Due to the recession, we have been restricted to the number of dreams we can fulfil, but we are still in there giving the children the will to try and live another day.

As with other taxi charities, nobody on the five-person committee gets a penny in payment for the work that is done on behalf of the children.

**If you'd like the chance to win a free holiday in one of these villas accommodating 4/5 people, we'll be holding a raffle during the spring and summer to win a one-week stay in sunny Florida. For tickets, contact me on [TomW@dialacab.co.uk](mailto:TomW@dialacab.co.uk). All money raised by Dial-a-Dream go to realising the dream of a child with a life threatening illness; for many of them, it is the last dream in their very short lives, so that is why it's so important.**

### Thinking of having a pop???

Over the 30+ years I have been on Dial-a-Cab - 24 of them as a Board Member, I have seen many subscribers try and fail to bring the Society down with spurious complaints. At the moment, we are the most buoyant and powerful radio taxi company in England, with MPs, leaders of Transport for London, heads of businesses and media services asking for our advice on serious money issues in connection with the taxi trade. Not about potholes in the roads or bicycles on the pavement, although if asked we could give some serious answers!

So before you think of knocking the Society and the Board, look around at the companies that cover the same type of work and if you can find a better one, I will praise you in my next article. And to the drivers over the past years who have ridiculed us for letting large companies get us to allocate their work through our Concierge system, I suggest you look at the article that I believe the Editor has published regarding the Glasgow Licensed Taxi drivers and the Private Hire NHS contract...

*(Did you know? A year contains 31,557,600 seconds and that 'eleven plus two' is an anagram of 'twelve plus one'?)*

**Tom Whitbread  
DaC Board member**

## TAXI AIR CONDITIONING

**All makes and models  
Serviced and Repaired  
Mobile Service –  
We Come to You!**

**Call Mick Wheeler  
on 020 8715 0079  
Covering London and the  
Home Counties**

The arrival of TX4s from the UK to the streets of the Kosovo capital, Pristina, has led to regular taxi drivers crying foul. An article in *Balkan Insight* tells how London's trademark taxis have begun operating in Pristina – to the delight of many passengers, but to the dismay of established cabbies.

Luan Berisha, MD of the Elm Group, launched his *London Taxi Service* earlier this month with 15 right-hand drive black cabs, but other taxi drivers have complained that the firm received their licence to operate the vehicles “too quickly!”

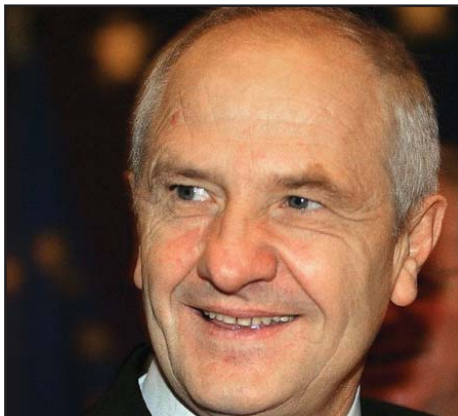
Rumours have been going round Pristina that the real owner of the new company is the President's son and that those connections helped him secure the right to ply trade by leapfrogging his competitors.

Mr Berisha strenuously denied the accusations but the other taxi firms remained unconvinced. *Gezim Babiqi*, the owner of *Radio Taxi Roberti*, told *Balkan Insight*:

“We all know this company is registered under the President's son's name and that is why the municipality has given permission so quickly to it, while other taxi companies who have worked here for ten years aren't allowed to expand their service.”

He added that while he does not fear the competition, it is so wrong for a firm to be given preferential treatment. He said: “We have no ranking spaces for our cars, but there

# TX4 Causes Royal Road Rage in Kosovo!



**Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu: TX4's are nothing to do with him**

are many other taxis who work illegally and nobody controls them. The municipality should first regulate these issues before it allows other companies to operate here.”

He said his company and others had not been allowed to increase the size of their fleet due to a lack of parking, while the London Taxi had been awarded permits without any

problem.

Mr Berisha told *Balkan Insight* that it was his time spent living in London and using its famous taxis that inspired him to bring 15 of them back to Pristina, dismissing allegations of political connections as just pointless rumours. He said there was no law in Kosovo that denied the right to any political son to open a private business, but that if his firm had been connected to the President, he would not hide it.

He went on to say: “My taxis are 100% English, they also support people with disabilities so that we meet all the conditions that Kosovo requires. The only difference to the London version is the right hand drive. Passengers must love it because we have already taken over 15,000 bookings!”

Muhamet Gashi, a spokesperson for the Pristina municipality said they had given a work permit to the company after the London Taxi has met all the conditions required.

A spokesperson for President Fatmir Sejdiu said that he had no connection to his son's company.

## What is DaC Up Against???

With much talk of late about *Concierge* both from within Dial-a-Cab and even from those outside of the Society who don't really understand what *Concierge* is but are just irritated by the word cars – *Call Sign* asked for - and was given - permission to reprint a letter addressed to the DaC sales department. That permission was given on the understanding that we did not reveal the company's name. DaC received the letter five days after the AGM.

No one should assume that because *Call Sign* is printing the letter, it means a change of Dial-a-Cab policy is imminent, or as some on the internet would like you to believe, that DaC drivers are being primed for an announcement. Whilst that is not true, those who write from behind *non-de plumes* in blogs would disbelieve us anyway, so we do not aim this at them. *Call Sign* is publishing it purely because it isn't the first such letter we have been shown and because it appears to represent the way companies are thinking, so we feel that our readers should be aware of the situation. It begs the question of whether - or even how long - all-taxi radio circuits can survive? Is excellent service enough compared to a luxury car with a satnav?

We at *Call Sign* become irritated at even the mention of cars – licensed or otherwise - taken in the same breath as taxis, but that does not stop us becoming concerned.

The letter is printed below and this article has been forwarded onto Brian Rice, who will hopefully comment on it in his *Reflections of the Chairman*. As usual, driver's comments are always welcome...

Alan Fisher

Hi xxxxxxxx,

Thank you for your tender application for the provision of taxi services at xxxxxxxx xxxxxx. We apologise for the delay in our response, but I can confirm we have now come to a decision.

Unfortunately, we will not be taking your application forward but wish to thank you for your time and interest. We were, however, very impressed and grateful for the high calibre of your submission.

One of the key requirements expressed to us by our executive was for a business class service with luxury cars, as well as more standard vehicles such as the black cabs you offer. We felt you were unable to facilitate this specific requirement.

As you are our main taxi provider and we were happy with the service levels, we would like to keep your details on file for future reference. We would also like to continue to use your service until the completion of the changeover.

Once again thank you and your team, and wishing you all the best for the future.

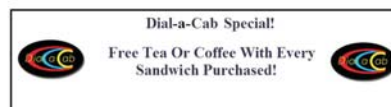
Regards,

Steve xxxxxxxx



**THE SANDWICH SHOP**

**HOT & COLD FOOD  
TO TAKE AWAY**



19 Dacre Street SW1H 0DJ  
Tel/Fax: 020 7233 0363  
sandwichshop1@yahoo.co.uk



In the November **Call Sign**, **Dial-a-Cab** driver and then **Bedfont Green** goalkeeper, **Lee Pearce (J71)** told us that he had been dropped from the team following a defeat where he admitted fault for two of their opponent's goals.

Just a few months earlier, Lee had been instrumental in helping BG win promotion to the **Zamaretto Division One South & West** league with some brilliant displays. But even a week is a long time in football, let alone 3 months and Lee admitted that he'd had a bad game, but that his form had improved again before BG manager Dennis Bainborough dropped him.

The team's performances also dropped, but there was no recall for Lee and when he was offered a transfer to **Egham Town** – back to the Combined Counties Premier division from whence BG had come – he still jumped at the chance.

"Sure I wanted a prolonged crack at the Zamaretto league," Lee told **Call Sign**, "but while 32 isn't old for a goalkeeper, you still need regular football or life can soon become difficult."

Lee is now Egham Town's first team choice and while it may be too late for them to achieve much this season, their March 13 win over Chessington and Hook was their fourth consecutive victory with 8 goals scored and just 3 conceded. According to one local newspaper, Lee has made several brilliant saves including one that was described as "world class." And having shed around 7lbs, Lee also feels fitter than he has for some time.

With another former Bedfont Green player, **Adie Barrance**, knocking the goals in, Egham Town look a good bet to go places next term.

## Different Club - Same Great Show For Lee!



Another great save for in-form DaC driver Lee Pearce

In the meantime, Lee is also the goalkeeping coach to **Isthmian Premier League** hotshots, **Hendon FC** – recognised as one of the top non-league clubs. "I really enjoy coach-

ing," Lee told us, "and that may be the way I'll go once my career between the sticks begins to go down. But hopefully that won't be for some time...!"

## HOW MUCH ARE YOU PAYING FOR DIESEL?

*So why aren't you saving money with a Black Cab Fuel Card?*

The **Black Cab Fuel Card** has been in use for some time by **Dial-a-Cab** drivers and many of us now have one, in addition to the hundreds of transport companies and fleet operators who supply them to their drivers in order to help cut their costs.

Our question to you is this: Think back to the first two weeks in February and how much you were paying for diesel – around £1.13 or £1.14 a litre? Well that was the average then, but if you'd had a **Black Cab Fuel Card**, you would have been paying £108.8 and saving around £2 a day – possibly more! And you can use the card to fill up your car as well – making even more savings!

**It does mean using either Texaco or Morrisons for filling up, but most drivers have one or the other within easy distance.**

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 – on average around 5p per litre less than many garages. You will be notified via text message what the following week's price per litre will be. You can also manage your transactions online if you wish by accessing your account details and purchases at any time.

For more information on how to open an account, visit [www.blackcabfuels.co.uk](http://www.blackcabfuels.co.uk) or call 0800 987 5701 and speak to John Murphy. Terms/ Conditions apply and are available on request.



## DIESEL COSTS SINCE 1996

With the cost of diesel going ever upwards, Call Sign has looked back through its files at the cost of diesel over the past 14 years...

1<sup>st</sup> June 1996 - 51.9p per litre - £2.36 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 1997 - 54.9p per litre - £2.50 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 1998 - 65.9p per litre - £3.00 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 1999 - 72.9p per litre - £3.31 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 2000 - 81.9p per litre - £3.72 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 2001 - 77.9p per litre - £3.54 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 2002 - 75.9p per litre - £3.45 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 2003 - 77.5p per litre - £3.52 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 2004 - 89.0p per litre - £4.05 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005 - 89.7p per litre - £4.08 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 2006 - 96.9p per litre - £4.41 per gallon

1<sup>st</sup> June 2007 - 97.9p per litre - £4.45 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 2008 - 128.9p per litre - £5.86 per gallon  
 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009 - 101.9p per litre - £4.61 per gallon  
 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010 - 121.9p per litre - £5.51 per gallon

**We dread to even think what 2011 will bring...**

© Call Sign Magazine



Seen in E8 - Diesel at 121.9p per litre. Last year it was around 101.9p.

# COPYCAT!

Charlie shows dad he's a quick learner!

Before



Billy teaches Charlie how to say go away



After

Most parents in DaC-land will want their children to be able to learn quickly, so that they can pass onto them a few early reminders about what's what and what's not! Such mundane stuff as how to dribble correctly or how to ask your parents for permission not to have to go and watch Queens Park Rangers - unless you have been really naughty!

But you have to start somewhere and former DaC call centre operative and Chairman's son, **Billy Rice**, has obviously been busy teaching son **Charlie** about the important things in life. By-passing the section on dribbling, the pair moved straight onto how you can tell someone that you are getting bored with their constant chatter.

The two photos above tell the story of their progress...

## Reduction in Test Fees for First Time Passes

*Other taxi licence fees frozen at 2009 rates*



Transport for London's Board has recently approved changes to taxi (and private hire) licensing fees to come into effect from 1 April 2010. Inflationary pressures would have ordinarily justified an overall 1.4% increase on most licence fees, but given the current economic climate, a freeze, and in some places a reduction on fees, has been agreed.

**The fees to be frozen at 2009 rates include the taxi driver three year licence fee and the taxi annual licence fee.**

All funds generated from taxi and private hire fees are used to cover licensing and administration costs. The additional funding generated by an increase in these fees would have been around £261,000, however TfL is confident of being able to make up the difference via efficiency savings instead, including reviewing existing business policies and processes, identifying and reducing waste and ceasing non-business critical activities.

The TfL Board also approved a £10 reduction on the London taxi licence application and inspection fee, bringing it down from £111 to £101. Tied to that will be the introduction of a £50 re-test fee to encourage more taxi drivers and vehicle owners to ensure their vehicles are in top condition and pass their annual and on-street or

other inspections first time. This stems from a concern at the low first time pass rate, which is currently at 38% and to encourage drivers and owners to ensure the general standard of the vehicle is compliant at all times.

John Mason, TfL's Director of Taxi and Private Hire, said: "Every penny TfL receives from licence fees is spent on providing the services we deliver and I am committed to providing the best quality service whilst reducing back office costs. This is why I felt that we should freeze most licence fees this year and work hard to find savings instead. I know there will be many in the trade that may be wary of the introduction of a taxi re-test fee, but we have to do everything we can to increase the first time pass rate and

encourage everyone in the trade to do all they can to keep the standard of vehicles maintained at all times. By making these changes, those who pass their annual inspection will benefit from a £10 reduction in the current cost and will no longer subsidise those drivers that continually fail. Whilst we expect that over the course of the year, the income from taxi vehicle tests will cover the cost of providing the service, if there is any surplus at all then this will be used next year to make further reductions to the test fee."

In addition to these changes, the one-off Knowledge of London 'appearance' fee for Suburban (Yellow badge) taxi driver applicants will increase to £200 to be in line with the fee for All-London (Green badge) applicants.

## SIZZLES

*The barbeque that comes to your home!*

Sizzles comes to your home to prepare a sizzling hot charcoal barbeque in your garden using our own equipment.

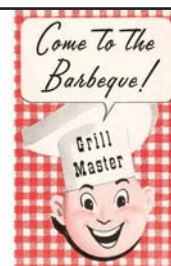
Sizzles can provide all the food and salads or we can cook your own food. The decision is up to you.

We can barbeque for any number of guests, so book now for your next party. Bookings being accepted for 2010 now!

If you are a fan of charcoal cooked barbeques but want someone else to do the hard work, call Oscar now!

**Bookings and information at Sizzles:**

**0208 518 8765 or 07902 246 354**





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

I was sitting in a bar in Pezanas recently and was turned around by some fantastic music emerging from the stage, so I decided to get a closer look and listen. I found out they were a band from the Garden of England – **Sneaky Pete and the Shotrods!**

For most people who are not necessarily into the music, rockabilly means **Matchbox** singing *Rockabilly Rebel*, **The Stray Cats** *Rock this Town* and if they are a little more knowledgeable then there's *That's alright Mama* by **Elvis**. However, there is a mountain of music out there which is classed as rockabilly, which is equally as good - if not better - and which unfortunately, mainstream radio does not play.

When Elvis stepped into the SUN studio to record *That's alright mama* in July 1954, he cannot have imagined that he was opening the floodgates as he did. Although *That's alright* only received regional airplay, it was heard by the regions that mattered. Within a few weeks, musicians had come out of the closet, performers such as **Gene Vincent**, **Buddy Holly** and later **Jerry Lee Lewis**, **Johnny Cash** and **Roy Orbison** all appeared performing rockabilly. And they were just the tip of a very large iceberg. Most country and western stations, having heard what Elvis was doing, dragged their stable musicians into the studio and began recording their own style of rockabilly. Nashville's *Grand Ole Opry*, the self proclaimed masters of country music, hated this brash new music and for many years banned the performers. Names, such as **Charlie Feathers**, **Joe Clay**, **Mac Curtis**



and **Wanda Jackson**.

Rockabilly (later called rock 'n roll) was a mixture of rhythm and blues music, jump jive, big band swing and hillbilly. Its performers were mostly poor white teenagers from the southern states of America, with too much energy and time on their hands. They hated the bland, staid music that their parents listened to and wanted something they could call their own.

Whilst **Bill Haley** was the first to hit the airwaves and the charts with *Rock around the Clock*, it was soon realised that he was hardly the iconic figurehead that this social rebellion was looking for. Cue **Elvis Aaron Presley**, a teenage truck driver from Memphis with surly good looks and a drawl. He could sing as well. Every young man wanted to be him; every young girl just wanted him!

Rockabilly's star burned fierce and bright for

just a few short years, between 1954 and 1958; after that Buddy Holly died in a plane crash, Elvis had been drafted, **Chuck Berry** was in Jail, Jerry Lee Lewis had been vilified for marrying his 13 year old second cousin and **Little Richard** had found God. Rockabilly had evolved into rock 'n roll and was hit by the 'payola' scandal. This was when unscrupulous record companies bribed disk jockeys to push their records.

In the 1970s, the whole genre was revived and today many of the second generation that re-discovered the music then, are still listening and performing it today. It may come as a surprise to know that in the UK alone, there are more clubs playing rockabilly than there are modern night-clubs!

If you'd like to hear some of this great music, then get onto the internet and tune into **www.rockabillyradio.net**. There the music plays 24/7; many of the DJ's are British. In addition, take a look at **www.crackerjackmagazine.co.uk**. There are plenty of links to the world of rockabilly and there is a bi-monthly magazine published online, which is free to download or read. There are links to clubs, pubs, DJ's festivals, events and band... bands such as Sneaky Pete and the Shotrods

(<http://www.theshotrods.co.uk>)...

A bientot...

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

## New Marshalled Taxi Rank in Haymarket

Transport for London has taken the decision to move the existing Cranbourn Street marshalled taxi rank to Haymarket in response to concerns raised by the taxi trade about touting in the area. This new rank, near **Tiger Tiger** at beginning outside **Café Nero**, began operating last month and DaC Compliance Officer, **Allan Evans**, sent out terminal messages to our drivers. It operates from 10pm until 3am on both Friday and Saturday evenings.

**John Mason**, TfL's Director of Taxi and Private Hire, said: "I've seen for myself that any marshalling schemes we have provided have been very popular with drivers and passengers alike. We will be moving the existing Cranbourn Street scheme to Haymarket as a direct result of concerns raised by the trade. As I'm sure the trade will understand, we only have a limited amount of funding for such schemes, so it's vital we are flexible and able to respond to changes in demand. In addition, TfL will continue to seek funding for future schemes in other key areas."

The rank is no longer a going-home one and usual taxi rank regulations apply – ie first passenger, first taxi with no sharing, fixed fares or directional arrangements.

TfL have asked **Call Sign** to remind

drivers that **Tiger Tiger** is currently licensed by TfL as a licensed private hire operator, which means that private hire bookings can legally be taken from inside the premises.

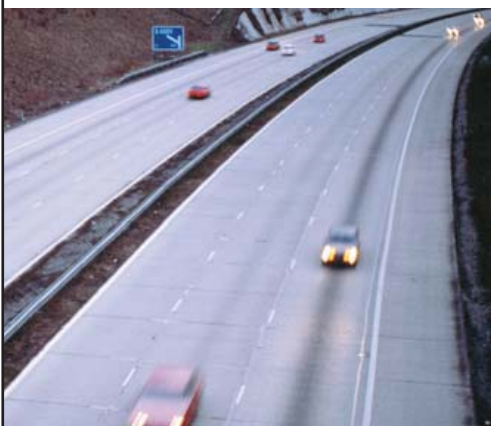
**Other London late-night marshalled taxi rank**

**schemes are at Liverpool Street (outside McDonalds) on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays between 22:00 - 02:00 and at Old St (near the 333 club opposite the town hall) between 22:00 and 03:00 Friday and Saturday.**



## Fentons Solicitors LLP

a leading UK personal injury firm



Had a road traffic accident?

Keep 100% of your compensation

Leading Personal Injury solicitors

19 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2NS

**FREEPHONE 0800 557788**

**[www.fentons.co.uk](http://www.fentons.co.uk)**



# Terry's Bike Ride for the British Heart Foundation

Dial-a-Cab driver **Terry Catherall (Y90)** pointed out to **Call Sign** that a forthcoming date had made him sit up and think – he was fast approaching the age his father was when a heart attack ended his life. So he has decided that with his friend Chris Mckellick and son-in-law Dean Saunders - he would do a London to Brighton bike ride on June 20th in aid of the **British Heart Foundation** and that they would add some spice to it with a friendly rivalry between the three as to who can raise the most money for this very worthy cause.

Terry's friend Chris is involved with the City's banking fraternity and looks as though he will top the list, but Terry thinks that London taxi driver's reputation for giving to good causes will make the competition closer than Chris realises. **Call Sign** is chipping in with £50 to get Terry's ball rolling and he is hoping that **Dial-a-Cab** members will also support him by making a small donation.



Terry told **Call Sign**: "As Bob Geldof once said: "Give us ya f\*%king money!" Yes I'm on the earhole for some of your hard earned wonga, but please don't just turn to the next page in the magazine. The **British Heart Foundation** needs all the financial help they can get and I bet there isn't one of us in Dial-a-Cab-land who hasn't lost someone to a heart

attack.

Hopefully my heart will be ok on the day, but after 70 miles on a bike another part of my anatomy may need some TLC! Is there such a thing as the "British Bum Foundation!"

Terry is doing the hard part, but if you want to help the **British Heart Foundation** and show the bankers how generous we are, go with your credit card to Terry's website. And don't forget that when donating through *Justgiving*, besides being quick, easy, totally secure and the most efficient way to sponsor Terry so that the **British Heart Foundation** gets your money faster, if you are a UK taxpayer, *Justgiving* makes sure that 25% in Gift Aid, plus a 3% supplement, is added to your donation.

Just go to <http://original.justgiving.com/terrycatherall>. Good luck to Terry, Chris, Deano and of course, Terry's backside...!!!



## TfL and Silly Old Rules



A recent issue of *Readers Digest* in an entertaining article on ridiculous rules, pulled two out of the bag that referred to the taxi business. So we asked **Transport for London** how true they were!

1. According to section 33 of the 1843 London Hackney Carriages Act, the driver of a licensed cab with its 'For Hire' light on is only allowed to seek trade when at a standstill or face a £200 fine.

**TfL replies:** With regard to plying for hire, a taxi can only ply for hire when found standing in the street or standing on a designated rank. What this means is that when a taxi is moving, it isn't actually plying for hire and doesn't have to stop if hailed. Plying for hire is an overt act, so once a driver reacts to a hail and stops to offer his services, he is then plying for hire. This is outlined in the *Taxi Driver's Abstract of Laws* on the PCO website.

2. An addition to the same act ten years later makes it illegal for cab drivers to take two consecutive days off 'without just cause'. They face a

fine of £1 a day unless they have given ten days notice.

**TfL replies:** Section 16 of the 1853 (No 2) Act still exists. However, to clarify the original point, it refers to owners of cabs withdrawing them from service rather than anything to do with the drivers.

And one we found on the internet...

3. Drivers may not throw money out of the cab in order to cause a scramble by the public.

**TfL replies:** We give up and cannot find mention of it anywhere. Having said that, it is not a problem we come up against too often!

Our thanks to TfL...

## Butterfly Exhibition at the Natural History Museum

On 8th April, the **Natural History Museum** will open **Butterfly Explorers**, a new family exhibition featuring hundreds of butterfly species, the vast majority of which are never seen in the UK. A highlight will be the warm hatchery room, which will give a close-up view of the butterfly life cycle, from pupae to butterfly, a rare opportunity to see tropical butterflies emerging from chrysalises and if you enjoy the beauty of butterflies, then this is an opportunity not to be missed – especially the *Danaus plexippus* monarch butterfly (see picture)...



**Keith Reading**  
Professional Toastmaster  
Master of Ceremonies

Tele: 01279 465 938  
Mobile: 07774 860 374  
Email: [kgr.2@virgin.net](mailto:kgr.2@virgin.net)

10% discount for DaC drivers

Fellow of the Guild of  
Professional Toastmasters





We know that John Griffin does and says whatever he likes and that he seems untouchable, especially as over 100 tickets have been issued against his drivers for using the M4 bus and taxi lane yet they still do it albeit with his insistence that he wants a legal decision via a court case to decide. But it must surely still be important that we try to educate the public in knowing the difference between private hire and taxis.

John Griffin (again) refers to his Addison Lee as a taxi company even though he knows it isn't, but who is out there to stop him? Have the PCO told him not to use the term taxi, because they are certainly like lightning when it comes to telling real taxi companies that they are doing something wrong?

However, when it comes to places such as **Euston Station**, where taxis provide a 24-hour excellent service for their customers, surely they

## WILL THEY NEVER LEARN???



**Need a taxi? Well you won't get one from Kings Cross Radio Cars! This ad was in Euston Station...**

must know the difference between real taxis and minicabs? Yet they still allow those same minicab companies to advertise themselves as taxis. Dial-a-Cab driver **Eddie Lambert (V27)** is also the Chairman of the RMT's London taxi branch. He told **Call Sign** that his branch intend following through on this form of illegal advertising and would appreciate any photos of sim-

ilar advertising where private hire pretend to be taxi companies.

Undoubtedly, much of the blame rests with us because through the years we've tut-tutted but then just gone along our merry way. So if the RMT mean what they say and they can end the scourge of PH referring to themselves as taxis, then good luck to them..

## The London Taxi Service Arrives in Riyadh!

A high profile launch of the *London Taxi Service* recently took place at the Kingdom Mall in **Riyadh**. The occasion was marked by a special ribbon cutting ceremony performed by Ambassador Sir William Patey KCMG, Sheik Nasser Alkahtani (President of the *London Cab Club*) and the CEO of Manganese Bronze Holdings, John Russell.

The *London Taxi* has been operating in Riyadh for some months now and the special event marked the official launch of the service throughout Riyadh.

The *London Taxi Service* uses the unique *London Taxi* to provide a high-class premium transport service in the city. Trained and courteous drivers in smart uniforms open doors, carry luggage and drive carefully to ensure the passenger always experiences a comfortable, safe journey.

**"The London Taxi has been designed for the task of providing the ultimate in comfort, convenience and privacy,"** said John Russell, **"but here in the Middle East it has also been adapted to cope with the extremes of temperature and operation conditions."**

There are currently over 100 *London Taxis* in Riyadh and more are on their way. The vehicles are all part of the *London Cab Club*, a uniquely designed loyalty club that rewards passengers for using the service. It has proved a huge hit and plans are now underway to launch it in other cities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Middle East.

Poland, Spain, Ghana, and Malta are just some of the other countries where the *London Taxi* and the *London Taxi Service* have been proving a hit with passengers and drivers alike.

Photo (right to left): Ambassador Sir William Paten, John Russell and Sheik Nasser Alkahtani



### LTFUC outing to Woburn Safari Park



#### Can you help???



We would love you to come and join us to help give 300 *special needs* and disadvantaged children a wonderful day out on our *Taxi Safari* to **Woburn** on Tuesday 25th May 2010. As well as giving a great deal of pleasure to so many children, we promise you will have a brilliant and fun-packed day out yourself.

**Without you, there are no outings! So please contact our drivers' liaison:**  
**Susan Angel on 07958 280881**

You can also enter your details on the volunteer page of our website at **www.ltfuc.org.uk**.

The Hon President Bill Tyzack (C06), Hon Chairman David Lessman (D19) and all the Committee look forward to you joining us for a fun day out 'On Safari'.

### Call Sign April 2010

Editor: Alan Fisher

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

Tel: 0207 251 0581 Fax: 0207 553 7293

Email: callsignmag@aol.com

Website: www.dac-callsign.co.uk

Printers: Premier Print Group

25 - 31 Violet Rd, London E3

Design: Aldan Publications

Tel: 07958 300 428

Email: danny.fresco@dsl.pipex.com

Views and opinion expressed in Call Sign must not be assumed to represent those of the Editor or Board. No part of Call Sign may be reproduced either manually or electronically without the express permission of the Editor.

Following on soon after DaC Chairman Brian Rice announced the arrival of his first grandson, Board Member Mike Son has stepped in and told **Call Sign** of the safe arrival of his and Maxine's second grandson.

Born to son Jeremy and daughter-in-law Karin, Oliver was born in their home city of Norrtälje (Sweden) a healthy 8lb 4oz brother to Elliot.

Mike and Maxine also have another son (Darren) who is currently working in Portugal and a daughter, Samantha, who lives in Barcelona. Neither of those two have produced any offspring yet and are currently happy to be uncles and aunts!

Congratulations to Mike and Maxine...

# Another Grandson For Mike Son



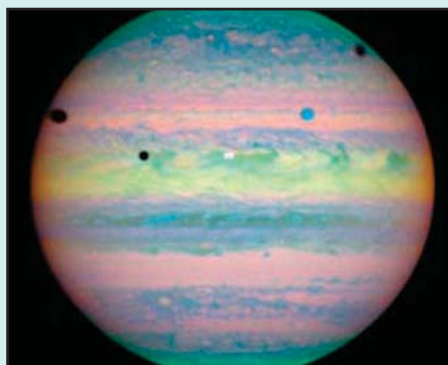
Maxine and Mike with grandson Oliver

## What's On at the Science Museum?

Looking for somewhere to take the kids at Easter? Well the Science Museum in Exhibition Road has some great sounding stuff in addition to its ongoing exhibitions.

### Stephenson's Rocket

Until **April 18**, you can enjoy an exciting steam ride on a replica of Stephenson's famous 1829 locomotive train *Rocket*. Visitors will be transported back to the time of the great steam age on this enjoyable 15 minute train journey based in London's Hyde Park. Visitors can then venture inside the Science Museum to find the original Stephenson's Rocket in the *Making the Modern World* gallery. The cost is £5 and that includes a goody bag...



The planet Jupiter as seen via the Hubble telescope pic courtesy NASA

### Hubble telescope: 3D at the IMAX Cinema

Journey through distant galaxies and explore the mysteries of the universe on this mission to service the Hubble Space Telescope. Using incredible 3D technology, you can accompany space-walking astronauts as they attempt the most difficult and important tasks in NASA's his-

tory, whilst also experiencing never-before-seen 3D flights through awe-inspiring Hubble imagery. Leonardo DiCaprio narrates the film. The IMAX 3D Cinema is located on the ground floor of the Wellcome Wing. The IMAX booking line is on 0870 870 4771. £8 adults and £6.25 children/concessions.

More info at  
[www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/imax](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/imax)

## Taxi Drivers & Owners Legal Protection Ltd

- \* Up to £25,000 Legal Insurance Cover for Hackney Carriage offences
- \* Cover for all motoring offences while working as a licensed taxi driver
- \* Representation for revocations and suspension of your cab driver's licence
- \* Monthly subscription rate of just £7 payable by standing order

For further information and membership enquiries, see our website:  
[www.taxidriverslegalprotection.co.uk /](http://www.taxidriverslegalprotection.co.uk/)  
email [topsltd2009@googlemail.com](mailto:topsltd2009@googlemail.com)

Or call Alan Fleming on 07831 092123 or Dave on 07956 894701

# SMILE



### Dumb blondes?

A young ventriloquist was touring the northern clubs and one night he arrived in Leeds. With his dummy on his knee, he went through his usual dumb blonde jokes when a blonde woman in the fourth row of the stalls stood on her chair and began shouting at him...

"I've heard enough of your stupid blonde jokes; what makes you think that you can stereotype women that way? What does the colour of a person's hair have to do with her worth as a human being? It's people such as you that keep women like me from being respected at work, in the community and from reaching our full potential as a person. And that is all because you and your kind continue to perpetuate discrimination against not only blondes, but women in general ...and all in the name of humour!"

The embarrassed ventriloquist began to apologise, when the blonde yelled out again...

"You stay out of this, mister! I'm talking to that little guy on your knee!"



"It's a nice cab, immaculate and I look after it as you can see," **Anthony Parkinson (B29)** told *Call Sign*, "but it's just too big for me!" And that is the main reason why Anthony put up a 'Vito for sale' message on the driver's notice board in the Dial-a-Cab House reception.

"I have to sell it," he added, referring to his one year old Mercedes cab. Explaining in more detail, Anthony went on to say that at 5' 5" he felt swamped by the Vito's sheer size.

"It's all around and particularly *behind* me," he said waving his arms in a circular motion to emphasise the length and breadth of the Vito. "This cab is ok for someone a bit taller, but I feel more comfortable in an LTI product," he confided to our reporter. "It's all about personal taste and I cannot wait to get back into a TX model," he added.

"I actually took it back around 3 months after I bought it because I just could not - and still can't - get used to it, but I would have lost far too much money on it then, so I've kept it until now - almost one year old. It's really good on fuel though and I reckon I'm saving about £6 a day diesel wise, but we just cannot live together any longer," the DaC driver said wistfully.

"The other thing I have experienced, and I suppose this says more about fellow drivers,

# ANTHONY: MY VITO IS JUST TOO BIG



**Anthony Parkinson and his Vito**

is that a few times when I have been on the point of a rank, fares will walk past me and go straight into the LTI cab behind. Some drivers do not re-direct the passenger my way and so the job has gone. These Vito cabs have been around quite a while now and passengers should recognise them, but this is more about colleagues who will still 'nick' the job, despite the obvious PCO plate being on the back. I

think that is very unsavoury and something I would never do when I am back in a TX4," Anthony said as he drove off for what he hopes will be one of his last times in a Vito...

**For further details of the Vito sale, call Anthony Parkinson, on 07956 370438...**

**©Call Sign Magazine MMX**



## UAE Women "feel unsafe in their own taxis!"

Following a survey in Asian website **Daijiworld.com** that claimed 37% of United Arab Emirates women had felt unsafe whilst travelling in the country's regular taxis, **The London Taxi Company** - formerly LTI - has offered reassurance to them via the company's International Market Development Director, Matthew Cheyne. He said:

"Women living in the United Arab Emirates would feel a lot safer if The

London Taxi Service operated throughout their country. We pride ourselves on the security and passenger comfort that our vehicles deliver. In fact, the London Taxi recently came out top in an international survey commissioned by **Hotels.com**. The poll showed that a quarter of travellers surveyed considered the London Taxi to be the safest

in the world."

Some Emirates already use a version of the TX4 driven by fully trained uniformed drivers who always open doors and help with luggage etc. With the partition and intercom added to its upgraded aircon system, it seems that the LTC have found a ready market...

## 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**

**Saunders**  
solicitors  
LLP



## Licence in jeopardy?

Drink Driving  
 Speeding  
 Failing to Notify Driver Details  
 Driving without Due Care  
 Use of a mobile phone whilst driving

These are just a few of the areas where we can help make a difference if you find yourself on the wrong side of the law

**Gary Bromelow can provide expert legal advice on motoring issues**

Fixed fees available / Credit cards accepted

**bromelow@saunders.co.uk**

**020 7710 6300**

**www.traffic-motoring-law.co.uk**

**www.saunders.co.uk**

The February issue of **Call Sign** told of **Dial-a-Cab** call taker **Danielle Barton** and her three-year battle to complete the Knowledge. When we left her, she was almost there but now we have heard from **Malcolm Linskey** at **Knowledge Point**, that Danielle has made it and is a fully qualified London taxi driver, joining mum **Jeanette** who passed out several years ago. Malcolm takes up the story...

"It was appropriate that mother and daughter, Green Badge drivers Jeanette and Danielle Barton, should arrive at Knowledge Point School to thank everyone for their help on the same day as the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day whose slogan is *Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities and Progress for All*.

"As far as we are aware, Jeanette and Danielle are the London taxi trade's only mother and daughter duo. Jeanette completed the Knowledge in 2002 and encouraged Danielle to join Knowledge Point as soon as she expressed an interest in following her mum's footsteps and becoming a London taxi driver. Supported by her part-time job in the Dial-a-Cab call centre, it took Danielle just over 3 years to qualify – that magical moment coming in February of this year."

# It's Danielle and Mum!

## And on International Women's Day



**Danielle (right) with mum Jeanette and the Senior tutor at Knowledge Point, Derek O'Reilly**

Proudly displaying their Green badges, both Jeanette and Danielle say they enjoy being cab drivers, especially with the flex-

ibility of hours. As for Danielle in a goodbye to her DaC friends, she emitted the plaintiff cab drivers cry of *where to guv!*

# TRAFFIC FLOW?

**Richard Potter asks: Are TfL telling us the truth???**



**Next time you are enjoying the drive down Piccadilly...!!**

Apart from Top Gear repeats on *Dave*, the BBC news channel, Scrap Yard Challenge, Myth Busters and Sky Sports, I spend little time watching TV on the usual terrestrial channels these days. But recently whilst flicking channels, I came across *Seven days in Traffic* on ITV 1.

It had all the usual stuff about drivers blowing their tops, white van man etc, before they took a visit to TfL's underground bunker in Victoria Street. I shouldn't ridicule, but it made me laugh to be told that the TfL staff, who loved the power of their jobs, were doing their level best to keep London's traffic moving and it was all done at the touch of a button!

It was all the proof I needed that not only have TfL got the ability to speed traffic up, they have the ability to slow traffic down. I remember on numerous occasions Ken Livingstone vehemently denying the latter when it was put to him that traffic speeds had hardly increased since the introduction of the congestion charge. And how could someone have the audacity to suggest that if the congestion charge was working, why the need to increase it? Or that TfL was deliberately slowing things down to add weight to their argument.

Was TfL's intention to clear the streets of traffic to provide faster journeys and cheaper fares for taxi users so that more would use

us? Well, the next time you are waiting in the long queue to turn right into Duke St Saint James from Piccadilly and the green light is facing the bus lane with nothing in it, remember its all down to those helpful people at TfL for keeping the traffic flowing!

**Richard Potter (T51)**

## PONDERS END TAXI SPECIALIST SPECIAL OFFERS!!!

Front pads Fairway / TX1 / TX2	£25
TX1 small service	£40
TX1 big service	£70
TX2 small service	£50
TX2 big service	£85
Fairway small service (oil & filter)	£35
Front pads TX4	£40
Diff Fairway / TX1	£250

**Cheapest overhaul in the UK  
Small service free + 10% off total**

**Fleets 15% discount  
Call now for more details on  
0208 804 1752**

**or Mustafa: 07939 875 461 / Cetin: 07897 459 804  
48 Alexandra Rd, Enfield EN3 7EH**

**Opening hours:  
Mon – Fri 08.30 to 17.30  
and Sat 08.30 to 14.30**



# Mailshot

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

## To tip or not to tip...

Hi Alan

Following the article by **Mark Hinds (C50)** in the *March Call Sign*, I'd like to add my own thoughts as well. My letter may not go down too well with some drivers, but I'd like them to think about it before responding.

My personal opinion is similar to Mark in that I also think that we should do away with the 10% gratuity, but before drivers answer, they should take a look at the street cash work they do in one day, put the tips to one side and then see what that one day adds up to – not a lot.

I believe that if we were to tell our clients that the gratuity element of the fare has been stopped, it would encourage them to increase their usage. It's no good moaning that these people do not use us, when they know that private hire does not add on a gratuity for the driver. Some may say that the 10% gratuity doesn't represent that much to a big account, but if you spend £thousands or even £millions on taxis, then that 10% represents a great saving. We should try to encourage clients to use us over the opposition and perhaps dangling a carrot in front of them might help. Some drivers may decry the idea, but I'd like them to do as I suggested earlier and add up the total of their cash tips for just one day. I doubt that it will come to much.

We have to begin thinking like business people and if we were seen to be cutting our prices, it would show us in a good light. After all, how many would choose to pay 10% extra to get a similar service – at least similar in that it gets people from A to B. I'm sure many would prefer to use us given the choice. Perhaps we should help them by making the decision easier.

**Ivor Belkin (C97)**

**Allen Togwell has joined in the discussion with his article in this issue; 'Is there a difference between begging and tipping?' And to save anyone writing in unnecessarily, everything that goes in Call Sign does so because I consider it might help to make an interesting read and not through some devious Board plot to give notice of a change of direction! ...Ed**

## How to win back our work

Hi Alan,

Let me start by thanking Mike Son for starting the ball rolling on this. I would also like to thank you for publishing Martin Cox's letter, as it gives us an insight into how PH perceive us. I agree with most of what Mike and Mark Hinds have said in their letters (*March Call Sign*). If I may, I'd like to comment on

some of the points raised.

**1) Fixed Prices:** This should be left to the BoM re who, how much and when to offer a client a FP, as they are best placed to know which account is in danger of being lost due to cost.

**2) £4 Station and Theatre extras:** There is absolutely no justification in carrying on with this charge for picking up at stations. I would hazard a guess that a majority of members would only be too happy to get a job from any mainline station irrespective of whether we get £4 extra or not. And the minority who might have an issue with it can opt out by using the reject button! In my opinion, we probably need to keep the extra for theatre pick-ups, as they seem to be harder to cover (again the BoM have the stats, so if I am wrong then get rid of that too).

**3) 10% automatic gratuity:** Why do we need this? How many of us go to a restaurant and get annoyed because they have slapped a 12.5% cover charge on, especially when the service has been dire (which is often the case in London eateries)? How many street hirings give you a 10% tip? And if we don't get a tip, would we refuse to pick up the fare if by chance the same person hailed us again?

**4) Waiting Premium:** Again why do we need this? The meter is ticking while we wait, that is getting paid while you relax by reading, having a stretch or a fag outside and NOT using fuel! So why would we need a premium on top of that? Get rid!

**5) Meters in PH vehicles:** Now I am a big fan of Richard Potter's writings in *Call Sign*, but in this instance I would disagree as putting meters in PH would be a precursor to them then asking to be allowed to use the bus lanes. The public have had a choice between private hire and us, but now the PH industry is really giving us stiff competition in terms of cost, quality of service and cars and by sheer numbers. We need to start the fightback now. We have already done so on the streets at night by starting to claim back the clubs and restaurants. Now we must carry on with that same fight to keep and win back more credit work by improving an already excellent service and by improving what to a lot of companies is the bottom line – cost. And lastly, in response to Stephen Berndes' letter (*March Call Sign*); I can't talk about days because I am a night man, but I am managing on average 5 – 6 account rides a night (from 5pm to around 1am), so the work is still there...

**Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)**

## And how to win back our work

Like many other subscribers, I found it interesting to read the conflicting views of the two drivers who wrote in to comment on the letter from Martin Cox. I found myself in almost total agreement with the opinion of Mark Hines and this started me thinking of practical ways in which his ideas could be implemented. Here are some of them...



Firstly, we have to look at what we can offer clients that others can't; our greatest asset is that in a business world where you can buy everything but time, we can move people around our city quicker than any of the competition. Unlike satnav, we know when to use the embankment or two bridges, when to sit it out on Piccadilly or go through St James and many others of the tools of our trade that we use daily. How many times do grateful punters thank you for 'doing the impossible!' We have the talent, the knowledge and the bus lanes! These are all imperative in the battle to win new and existing business onto the books of DaC. While all of the above is great, it is irrelevant if the person we want to pay us for our wonderful service is sitting in the back of a PH vehicle. This is where DaC come in.

My idea is for a kind of *DaC PLUS*. This will involve a dynamic, highly motivated sales and procurement team; a new competitive and client-driven package to offer potential clients and a service orientated, smart, helpful and professional group of drivers.

Firstly, the sales team: In my opinion, these people will be very highly motivated ie low basic salary, excellent commission, results-driven people who are willing to go as far as is needed to generate and recapture the business that will benefit us all. In order to give this team the tools they will need to get a foot in the door with new clients and to offer ex-clients a reason to come back to us, I have some radical strategies. What we can offer:

**No run in:** These jobs will be allocated 10 minutes before booked time. They will be non rejectable to DaC+ drivers and the clock starts at the booked time. For ASAP jobs, the clock starts when you get there. This is not the purgatory you might think it is, you are actually losing two quid.

**No gratuity:** Again, would you really miss it? It's generally absorbed into one's subs anyway.

**Fixed price discounts:** ie any W1 postcode to LCA = £35, any City postcode to WWO = £45. Would you rather have 80% of something or all of nothing?

I'm sure more imaginative people than me can come up with other ideas to help this new sales team to win work, I've just come up with one or two of the more obvious ones.

The Drivers (what we can offer and what's in it for us?): Firstly, DaC+ will be an extra service a driver can subscribe to subject to certain criteria. A well presented driver in an immaculate cab, this is exactly what private hire offer and we should be able to match it. It doesn't matter if your ripped jeans cost £200, you look better in a shirt and tie (fact).

# Mailshot

## Continued from page 33

A helpful and pleasant manner. You will be amazed how important this is. The client (and his or her luggage) is not a pain in the arse, it is the reason you can pay your mortgage. Open the door for 'em, shmooze 'em a bit... In a world where service is often useless, this is an area where we really can make a positive difference.

What's in it for the driver? Apart from the obvious, ie more work, securing a long-term client base and protecting one's future income, DaC+ could offer incentive based subscription discounts. For example, for every 20 DaC+ jobs you do, you get a fiver off your subs, £10 minimum fare etc, etc.

Reading this back, I realise that it will probably upset the luddites amongst us. Rather than just telling me what a bad idea all of this is, let's hear your alternative suggestions. Also, if any of the more progressive drivers have anything to add or ways of bettering my ideas, please let me know.

**David Martin (J72)**

**It has been a fascinating discussion and if anyone would like to agree or disagree with Divyesh or David or offer further suggestions, then you know the address ...Ed**

## And how to win back our work...

*Hi Alan*

I would like to make a suggestion on how to win our work back (*Mike Son, March Call Sign*). I think we can help do this by advertising on our cabs by a Led matrix system, which we could operate via our computer; ie when we pick up say JPMorgan, we would advertise their company website etc.

A Led matrix system could be installed on the roof by fin or along door panels. The advantages would be instant advertising for various uses such as TfL reports on train / bus delays, theatre bookings and Olympics schedules and results etc. Dial-a-Cab would be more visible as a company.

Old technology would go and we'd have screens thin as a card that we would be able to attach to the doors, giving full TV screen quality, albeit very expensive at the moment.

Perhaps we could also look into iPhone applications where clients would be able to look for the nearest taxi for hire via live sat-nav mapping? I could be talking out of my hat here, but companies tend to have bigger advertising budgets than transport budgets, so it could give us the edge on minicabs. I did bring this up with Allen Togwell a few years ago, but he said we would have problems with drivers not wanting the strips on their cabs and the PCO might not let us advertise, but things have moved on since then and the PCO needs to throw us a lifeline and save the cab trade.

Just an idea; what do other drivers think?  
**Jim Reid (A74)**

**Brian Rice responds:** Some years ago we did look into the fact that name boards or something similar when picking up passengers could be programmed from the drivers terminal. I thought this was a very good idea and very progressive, having say, the customers name displayed by LED matrix. However, it was pointed out to me quite correctly, that some wag of a driver could send a message (display) to one of his pals that stopped alongside him at traffic lights - you can imagine what some of the messages might say, especially if it was displayed by a roof fin for all to see.

As you are probably aware, Jim, I am all for the latest technology, but I am not sure if your suggestions would actually put more passengers in our cabs. However, what I am confident in saying is that the technology you suggest would be very expensive (and prone to damage on the exterior) and of course it would all have to be agreed by the PCO.

## Black cab fuel card

*Hello Alan,*

I'd like to bring something to the attention of all DaC drivers who use the (Black Cab) Fast Fuel card. When is the price of fuel different to the price agreed / advertised? When the forecourts submit their receipts later than the Sunday cut-off date! In this age of electronic data transfer, this seems incredulous. However that was the response I got from Fast Fuels. Although this can work either way as far as pricing and final price paid per litre, it still seems wrong. I still feel that Fast fuels is giving us a good price compared to the open market, however one must be aware that the final price paid can be different to the one advertised. Thus it's not advisable to forecast price paid per litre. It's best to wait for the weekly invoice to see what the actual price will be according to that week's price and depending on when fast fuels receive the invoice from each garage. Then one can transfer that information into our daily record. Hope this is clear and of use...

**Salvatore Macaluso (J63)**

**For those who have not yet discovered the Black Cab Fast Fuel card, drivers are sent a text message on the Friday that gives the price per litre as of the following Monday and for that complete week. What Salvatore is saying is that if you fill up in a Texaco or Morrisons garage towards the end of the week and the garage pays their accounts in late, then it is possible that you could be charged the following Monday's price. As Salvatore also points out, that could be higher or lower depending on how the wholesale price is going, but that you need the correct amount to keep for your own accounts.**

**Salvatore wrote to Fast Fuels and they apologised, happily repaying the £1.25 for the one-day overpayment - after a jump in the price of fuel the following**

**week - because the garage had sent it in late. The Fast Fuel spokesperson explained that the invoicing system was not sophisticated enough to pick up on these earlier dates in order to price it at the correct rate, adding that all the relevant info was contained on the weekly statement so that it wasn't necessary to go through files to see the exact date that you filled up and check whether it was in a different invoicing period. Although the "fault" lies with garages that send in accounts late, Fast Fuels said they would be happy to pay Salvatore back any money that he felt he had overpaid. And if Salvatore overpaid by £1.25 AFTER getting a big discount anyway, it shows just how much drivers can save with this card. But it would be nice if in this age of computer technology, they could get some software to sort out the problem ...Ed**

## Where is Martin Cox?

*Hi Alan,*

I read your Editorial on page 3 of the March *Call Sign* about Martin Cox, but don't remember his letter in the February issue. I did try the internet still to no avail; any chance of letting me know where to look please?

**George Georgiou (L01)**

**Hi George, the Martin Cox letter appeared in the February issue on page 35. The issue is at Call Sign's website: [www.dac-callsign.co.uk](http://www.dac-callsign.co.uk). If anyone else hasn't yet visited it yet, most Call Sign mags since 1998 appear there in an abbreviated form with a search facility provided. As of May 2006, you can find two versions of each issue - a 20 page version including the search facility, plus a PDF version that gives readers the complete version but without a search button. There are also issues there from the 60s, 70s and 80s for your delectation ...Ed**

## ...and not related to him either!

I'll only say this once more... I am not related to Martin Cox. Mind you, if his great-great-great Aunt Edna pegs it in Australia, he may find me in the next seat to him on the plane! As my Vito would say... don't you just love me?

**Gary Cox (O46)**

**No!!! ...Ed**

## LTFUC

*Dear Alan,*

On behalf of Hon President Bill Tyzack and my fellow trustees, I thank you and Alan Green for the excellent coverage in the current *Call Sign* of the Grosvenor House





# Mailshot

Party. Any subscriber unaware of the Fund's activities can log on to [www.ltfuc.org.uk](http://www.ltfuc.org.uk) for more information, but I take this opportunity to advise that Tuesday 25th May will be the next outing to Woburn Safari Park. There are many drivers on DaC who regularly join the Fund, and there will always be room for new drivers, who will be most welcome. Please ring me on 07831 867723 or Susan Angel on 07958 280881 to register your interest.

**David S Lessman (Hon. Chairman) (D19)**  
**The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children**

## Paul for Music

Dear Mr Fisher

I am writing in regards to an article on page 3 of your February edition of *Call Sign* titled **Paul for Music**. I am Paul Shoben's granddaughter and we were really touched to read such a nice article about my grandad. Betty Shoben (my grandma and Paul's wife), has asked if I could drop you a quick email to find out whether it would be possible to get the contributor of the article's email address as my grandma would really like to thank him personally. I don't know if this is possible and if not then maybe could you pass on a message that Paul's family thought the article was really lovely!

Many thanks for your help...

**Leilah Shoben**  
**Ilford, Essex**

Hi Leilah, the piece you mention was written by me and I'm delighted that it somehow reached your family, because your grandfather did indeed play an important part in my younger life – even though he probably never even realised it ...Ed

## Surcharges and rubbings!

Hi Alan,

I would like to give you some feedback for improvements on job deployment to members. Twice in February I was offered pre-booked jobs that would normally attract a £4 surcharge, one from Eurostar and one from the o2 - in both cases the ranks were moving so in the 30 or so seconds I had to make my decision, I decided that in effect, an £8 run in would outweigh the 10-15 minutes waiting time. Both jobs were for JPM and it wasn't until the jobs were locked on me that the full details emerged - no £4 surcharge on this account! I feel that info like this should be visible on the trip offer as in both cases I may have decided not to accept these jobs. It was explained to me that not enough space was available on the 'front' screen to insert this detail but I'm sure a code such as *no4* would suffice. Maybe if this is a problem, a software update is necessary. As a member, I feel that hiding info that affects me is wrong. I fully understand that this is an important account, but please don't hide no surcharge, pub pickups etc.

Whilst I'm rambling, can I respond to an article in the *March Call Sign* from **Keith**

**Cain** regarding credit cards. The wording of this insinuates that us naughty members are not listening! I only joined in November 2008 but am a keen reader of the mag, however I do not recall seeing anything saying that all hail and ride card jobs need a rubbing taken and I am 100% certain that Darren, on my training day, said that a rubbing is only necessary when out of range and therefore no receipt could be printed for customers to sign. Having confirmed this with three drivers on my course from the same day, this fact seems to be new to a lot of drivers.

Many thanks for reading my rants, but for this *family* to move forward, it needs us all to point out possible improvements...

**Ian Sealey (K10)**

**Keith Cain responds: Ian, the reference in my article that all drivers should use our own credit receipts for street pickups was not aimed at "us naughty members who do not listen" as put by you. It was solely to prevent drivers from losing out. During a recent conversation with our finance dept, the issue of the clearing banks not paying for the credit card trips was discussed. It appears that despite all the procedures we have in place, there have been occasions when a card user has refused to pay for the transaction. When this occurs, we have to go to great lengths to prove to the banks that the trip was genuine. They only accept our credit card receipt as proof, even though a card is swiped and authorisation obtained. I was attempting to bring this to everyone's attention with the hope that drivers would not lose out in any way. All the procedures drivers follow are correct and everyone must continue to do so, but where trips come to a large amount and the destination is within signal range, it is advisable for added security to complete one of our credit card receipts. If I confused any drivers then I apologise, but please don't shoot the messenger...**

## Tiger Tyres

Hello Alan

I read the letter from **Keith Hancock (R47)** in the *March Call Sign* regarding his getting Michelin Tyres cheaper at Universal Tyres than Tiger were selling them at. I'd like to put the opposite view because I was on my way down to Jetyres to buy some Valiant Kingpin remoulds for my overhaul, when an ad came up on the DaC terminal for Tiger Tyres. I gave them a call and they quoted me £118 for a set of four, including valve balance and vat. That's £29.50 per tyre, which is a considerable saving. I doubt you will find them cheaper than that anywhere...

**Richard Potter (T51)**

## Roman Way weekend?

Dear Alan,

Here's a story that no doubt some of our drivers can surely relate to. I purchased a new cab with a view to making life a little easier

after my thirteen year old Fairway decided it was time to 'go' and took delivery of the new taxi on Friday 12th March at around lunchtime. All excited, I decided to go straight home and start afresh Saturday after three days of running around organising things for the new cab. I was happy with the way the DaC side had worked out ie stripping out and fitting etc and having generously contributed to the workshop staff collection box, was now looking forward to Saturday and all that goes with the Saturday working day - for example the 118 118 boys and of course, our resident head of Saturday daytime operations, Ivor.

I rang the office when my screen informed while signing on that the GPS receiver was not working and to go to Roman Way to have it checked. I rang the office and was told to attend during the hours of 0830 and 1630 at Roman Way "on Monday." Surely a £multi-million organisation like ours - that by the way I am proud to be a member for the last 32 years - could provide a service for at least a Saturday half-day to help drivers perhaps through the weekend? I fail to understand why not.

I would like to reiterate that I am not a moaner and I love the circuit and all that goes with it, but if George the electrician can provide a service at Warwick Avenue rank come rain, snow, shine and all else the British weather can throw at us, I'm sure the Roman Way staff could give a few hours on a Saturday morning to help the lads over the weekend.

**Roy Martin (R42)**

**Allan Evans responds: Hi Roy, as you know prior to my present position of Compliance Officer, I was down at Roman Way for over two years and in that time we did trial extended opening times, which also included opening later in the evenings and on a Saturday morning. Due to current Health and Safety legislation, a minimum of two members of staff needed to be in attendance at all times. It soon became clear that most evenings and more so on a Saturday, this facility was not used and most times the fitting bay was open all morning without a single visit from a DaC member, which proved to be a waste of resources. The problem you encountered with the GPS failure is not common and it is thoroughly checked before the taxi leaves the fitting bay, but for security purposes it is password protected and can only be reset by an authorised person at Roman Way. Finally, good luck with your TX4...**



# The No.1 Choice



**No.1 for New Taxis    No.1 for Used Taxis**  
**No.1 for Service    No.1 for Deals    No.1 for Parts**

**LTI dealers will never be beaten, to find out why visit your local LTI dealer**

For a list of LTI Authorised Dealer and Service Agents in your area visit  
[www.lti.co.uk/dealer-locator/servicing/](http://www.lti.co.uk/dealer-locator/servicing/) or call us on 02476 572000

**Mann & Overton - Manchester & NI**  
**Mann & Overton - Birmingham & West**  
**Mann & Overton - London**  
**John Paton Ltd - Edinburgh**  
**John Paton & Son Ltd - Glasgow**

tel: 0161 831 3434  
tel: 0121 322 0700  
tel: 020 7700 0888  
tel: 0131 558 8005  
tel: 0141 553 4000

**Taxifix Ltd - Liverpool**  
**Conders Garage Ltd - Peterborough**  
**KPM UK Taxis PLC - London**  
**Smith & Humphrey Ltd - East Sussex**

tel: 0151 482 5101  
tel: 0870 850 5457  
tel: 020 7377 2182  
tel: 01424 210 746



Vehicles

**HAILED THE WORLD OVER**

[www.lti.co.uk](http://www.lti.co.uk)

\*Business Users Only. At participating dealers only. Finance Subject to Status.

© LTI Limited reproduced with permission. Fairway & TX shape are registered designs. Fairway™, TX4™, TX4, the LTI device, the LTI logo and the London Taxis International logos are all trademarks of LTI Limited

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