

December 2010



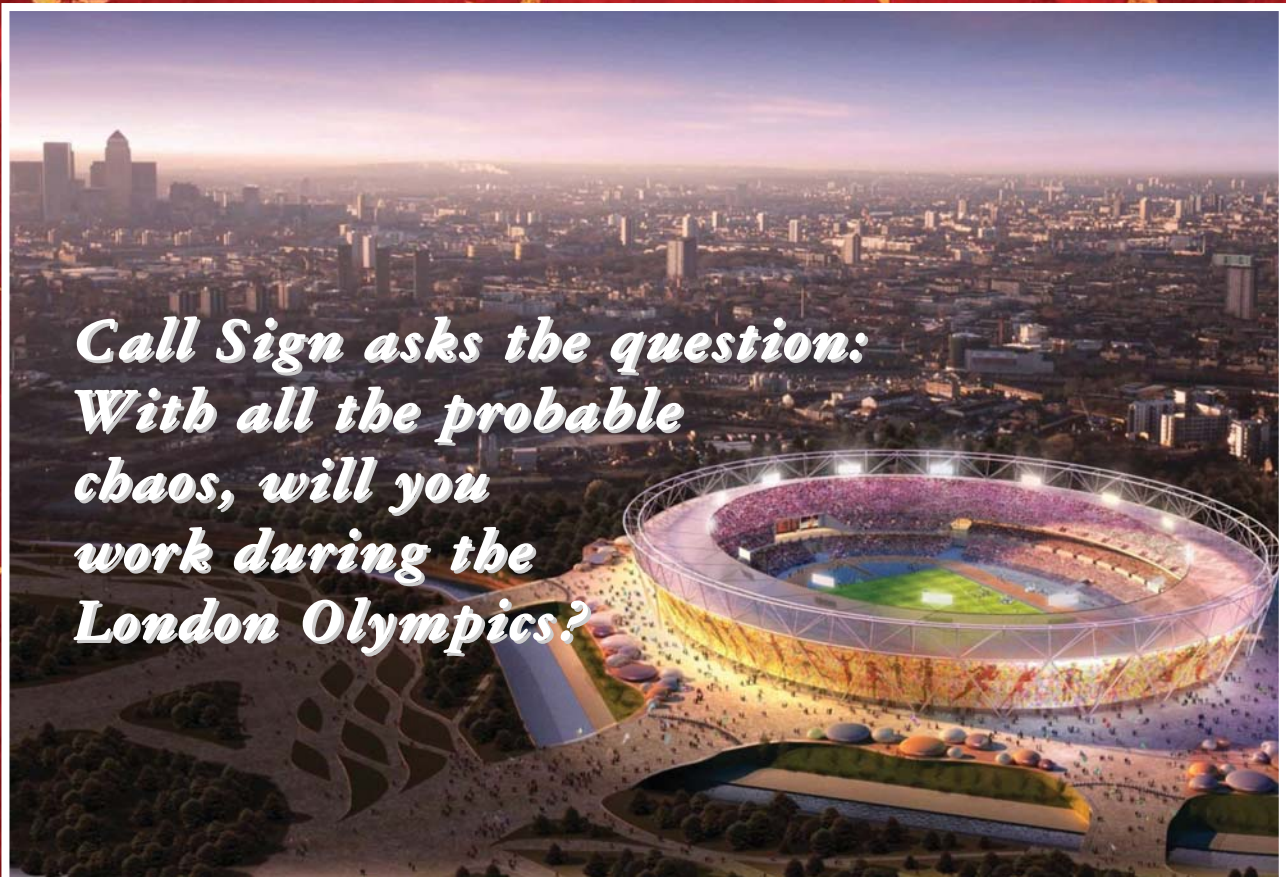
# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*What's Ricky app to now!!!*

*Call Sign asks the question:  
With all the probable  
chaos, will you  
work during the  
London Olympics?*





# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

With the Christmas season here, bars & clubs part 2 of 2. For a fuller list subscribe to the UID...

Bar/Night Club & Address	Bar/Night Club & Address
O Bar, 83-88 Wardour Street, W1V 3TG	Sound, 1 Leicester Square, WC2H 7NA
Obeah Club, Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0LB	Spice House, 270 Mare Street (Ocean), E8 1HE
Oh! Bar, 111-113 Camden High Street, NW1 7JN	St Moritz Club, 159 Wardour Street, W1V 3TA
Old Truman Brewery Studio 95, 150 Brick Lane, E1 6QL	Storm, 28 Leicester Square, WC2H 7LE
Opium, 1a Dean Street, W1D 3RB	Strawberry Moons, 15-17 Heddon Street, W1B 4BF
Oxygen, 17-18 Irving Street, WC2H 7AU	Stringfellows Soho, 201-203 Wardour Street, W1
Pacha London, Terminus Place, SW1V 1JR	Studio 4, 4 Great Queen Street, WC2B 5DG
Paper, 68 Regent Street, W1B 5EL	Studio 57, 57 Jermyn Street, SW1Y 6LX
Papillon, 11a Queensbury Place, SW7 2DL	Studio 88, 88-89 Chalk Farm Road, NW1 8AR
Parker McMillan, 47 Chiswell Street, EC1Y 4SB	Studio Valbonne, 62 Kingly Street, W1B 5QN
Parker Place, 51 Parker Street, WC2B 5PS	Taboo, 25-27 Brewer Street, W1F 0RR
Passion, 251 Amhurst Road, N16 7UN	Tamarai, 167 Drury Lane, WC2B 5PG
Peacock Club, 1a Chesterfield Street, W1X 7HG	Thirst, 53 Greek Street, W1
Phoenix, 37 Cavendish Square, W1G 0PP	Thirteen, 13 Gerrard Street, W1D 5PS
Pigalle Club, 215-217 Piccadilly, W1J 9HN	Three Arches, Plough Yard, EC2A 2BG
Pitch, 30 Lisle Street, WC2H 7BA	Tiger Tiger, 29 The Haymarket, SW1Y 4SP
Piya Piya Lounge, 1 Olivers Yard, EC1Y 1HQ	Touch Bar, 254 Edgware Road, W2 1DS
Plastic People, 147-149 Curtain Road, EC2A 3QE	Traffic, 1 Vernon Place, WC1A 2EP
Play Room, 10 Air Street, W1R 5AB	trafik, 40 Hoxton Square, N1 6PB
Play, 58 Old Street, EC1V 9AJ	Tramp, 40 Jermyn Street, SW1Y 6DN
Player, 8 Broadwick Street, W1F 8HN	Trap, 201 Wardour Street, W1F 8ZH
Polka, 58-59 Poland Street, W1V 3DF	Trash Palace, 11 Wardour Street, W1D 3PG
Profile, 56-57 Frith Street, W1D 3JN	Troubadour, 263-267 Old Brompton Road, SW5 9JA
Public Life, 82a Commercial Street, E1	Troy Bar, 10 Hoxton Street, N1 6NG
Punk, 14 Soho Street, W1V 5DA	Tryst, 222 Fulham Road, SW10 9NB
Quad, Houghton Street, WC2A 2AE	Tudor Rose, 68 The Green Southall, UB2 4BQ
Raffles, 287 Kings Road, SW3 5EW	Umbaba, 15-21 Ganton Street, W1F 9BN
Reflex, 17 Watling Street, EC4M 9BB	Under Solo, 22 Inverness Street, NW1 7HJ
Revolution, 140-144 Leadenhall Street, EC3V 4QT	Underbelly, 11 Hoxton Square, N1 6NU
Rhum Jungle, 70 Exmouth Market, EC1R 4QP	Valmont Club, 266-266a Fulham Road, SW10 9EL
Roof Gardens, 99 Kensington High Street, W8 5SA	Vanilla, 131 Great Titchfield Street, W1W 5BB
Roxy, 3-5 Rathbone Place, W1T 1HJ	Vault, York Way,
Ruby Lo, 23 Orchard Street, W1H 6HL	Vendome, 85 Piccadilly (Clarges St), W1J 7NB
Rumi, 531 Kings Road, SW10 0TZ	Venue, 5 Leicester Place, WC2H 7BP
Rush Bar, 25 Frith Street, W1D 5LB	Verve, 1 Upper St Martins Lane, WC2H 9NY
SE1, Weston Street, SE1	Village Soho, 81 Wardour Street, W1V 3TG
Secret Location (Buttoned Down), Inverness St, NW1 7HJ	Village Underground, 54 Holywell Lane, EC2A 3PQ
Secret Location (Lost), New Inn St, EC2A 3AE	Virgos Nightclub, 148 Old Kent Road, SE1 5TY
Secret Warehouse Location, Brick Lane (Bacon St), E1 6SB	Volstead, 9 Swallow Street, W1R 7HD
Shadow Lounge, 5 Brewer Street, W1F 0RF	Vox, 43 South Molton Street, W1K 5RW
Shed, 17-20 Ironmonger Lane, EC2V 8EP	Wax, 4 Winsley Street, W1W 8HF
Shoreditch House, Ebor Street, E1 6AW	Way Out Club, 9 Crosswall, EC3
Shoreditch Warehouse, Plough Yd., EC2A 2BA	Wayout Club, 9 Crosswall, EC3N 2JY
SIN, 144 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0LB	Wessex House, 1 St Johns Hill, SW11 1TN
Sirocco, 39-45 Shaftesbury Avenue, W1D 6LA	West 5, Popes Lane, W5 4NB
Smiths, 66-67 Charterhouse Street, EC1M 6HJ	Zebrano, 14-16 Ganton Street, W1F 7QY
Social, 5 Little Portland Street, W1N 5AG	Zeta Bar, 35 Hertford Street (Hilton), W1J 7SD
Soho Lounge, 69 Dean Street / Meard St, W1D 3SE	Zoo Bar and Club, 13-17 Bear Street, WC2H 7AS
Soho, 12-13 Greek Street, W1D 4DJ	Zyrus, 102 Clerkenwell Rd, EC1M 5SA
Sound Shaft, Hungerford Lane Craven St, WC2	

Great News! You may have read in last month's Call Sign about the new website [www.myfav.co.uk](http://www.myfav.co.uk). Go to the website, click "Launch MyFav" and on the main page click "Register," Then fill in your email, name etc. In the text box for 'Code\*\*' you need to enter - taxi - (just the four letters no spaces or dots), this will enable when you log in, the taxi related iconic grids that include all the Nash's Numbers UID document, over 70 pages of useful information plus other useful taxi related websites with just a click. If you make this your home page, not only will it be your launch pad to the most popular parts of the internet, you can add your own bookmarks to store online and you will also have immediate access to lots of taxi related information and all the other features of this site. What's On is also available at this site without being registered, but from January you will need to register using the 'taxi' code to get it...

# from the editor's desk

## One law for them and another for us???

As I mentioned last month, the *United Cabbies Group* – an internet-based group – have come out in support of the bikers' Wednesday demos that cause havoc in central London as they continue to block all roads round Trafalgar Square. The UCG claim to have evidence that private hire are being given more leniency by traffic wardens than taxis are when stopping for whatever reason in town and that by joining forces with bike riders, Westminster Council will get a taste of their own medicine.

There is little doubt that some wardens are influenced by groups of PH drivers hanging around outside late-night clubs and deliberately look the other way. But is this official policy? I would find that hard to believe. However, the UCG have every right to try to influence Martin Low, Westminster Council's Head of Transport.

But there is no way I would support the bikers in any battle. No doubt they would be delighted if we joined them, but their beef is being charged £1 to park in London and they believe it should be free! To suggest that there is a similarity between the complaints of cyclists/bikers and taxi drivers is, in my view, bending arguments to suit circumstances.

But I have another complaint – my beef being with the police. It was early evening on November 3 and a day when London's traffic was gridlocked for most of the day thanks to a tube strike. Roads such as Strand westbound – slow at the best of times – were becoming virtually unusable. Then at around 5pm – incredibly – the pop-pop cyclists came out for their regular demo and that was it. Absolutely nothing moved while these selfish people – joined by normal cyclists and skaters for a fun-day out – drove round and round wearing fancy dress and blowing whistles. All that was lacking was info on why they were doing it. Was it to avoid parking costs of £1 or just because they liked the sense of power? Well I have no doubt that some are genuine, but the majority looked to me like they were just there to have fun on a day when the rest of us – especially our passengers – were suffering. Can you imagine if the public saw us behave like that on a tube strike day?

**But my real problem was in understanding why the police had given them permission to have the demo – which according to the cyclists the police do each and every week. Not only was it peak hour, but there was that tube strike – and the boys in blue allowed a cycle demo? Tell that to Sid Nathan (K88) who was given a Penalty Charge Notice at St Pauls because his rear wheels were touching the zigzags when a passenger decided to get out while Sid was stuck in traffic. You can read about that elsewhere in this issue. Ok, CCTV isn't the police, but you can see the connection.**

Then on the following Wednesday (Nov 10), London was brought to a standstill yet again when the Embankment through to Millbank was shut following the student demo at Tory HQ. Just to improve matters, Chelsea were playing at home to Fulham and with just six weeks



to Christmas and it being a fine – if cold – day, London was thronging with shoppers. Nothing moved for hours, until at around 6pm when things improved from impossible to just terrible! And then guess who came along to take things back to impossible? Right first time – and apparently yet again with police permission. If you were watching Chelsea, you'd have been surprised at how many fans arrived late – with many just giving up and having a walk along Kings Road instead.

I suppose some might say that as the police made a total cock-up in their assessment at the possibility of trouble for the student demo, what chance is there of them getting it right with the bikers? Even so, doesn't it sometimes feel that there is one law for them and another for us...?

Incidentally, speaking of the UCG, what a magnificent gesture to offer a free taxi shuttle service from both the Union Jack and the Victory Services Clubs to the Cenotaph on Armistice Day (14th November) because of TfL's thoughtless decision to carry out maintenance work on the Jubilee Line on that day. As the Chairman has written more on the subject, I'll just say to the UCG, well done!

## 150 not out...

As I approach my 14th year as Editor, this issue represents a special milestone for me being my 150th *Call Sign* and the first time any Dial-a-Cab editor has reached that milestone. Even more incredible is the fact that I recently took a look at all the photos used of me throughout the years only to realise that I still look the same! Mind you, Linda – without whose patience I doubt I'd have reached 15 issues – has suggested for sometime that I should consider wearing glasses!

When I realised about the 150th issue, it didn't sound that much until I worked it out at 11 issues a year. Then it seemed almost impossible! But I have enjoyed most of it and especially the friendships it has brought me.

I have been extremely lucky in working for a Chairman and Board who have just let me get on with it and have never tried to influence or edit me in any way. I have also been very lucky to have so many loyal drivers writing for me. Guys like Alan Nash and David Kupler have been around since the beginning, my photographer Alan Green, who also covers daytime stories for me, previous editor Jerry Craig whose standard of cartoons never drops and the continental touch with Bob Woodford's monthly col-

umn. Incidentally, if you never put your name down for his delicious plonk brought over from a French vineyard, then your Xmas will be missing some great refreshment! There have been many other drivers over the years who have also done their bit to keep you entertained and informed.

Then there are the other trade editors. We may all be in opposition but often try to help each other out. So to Bob Fisher, Sandie Goodwin, Dave Allen, David Millward and Stuart Pessok, my thanks. Oh yes, there is one other huge vote of thanks due – to all of you out there who for many years have made this magazine's *Mailshot* pages by far the most popular letters page in any trade mag. I can't say here's to the next 150, but I can say thanks to everyone...

## AGM

In the November issue, *Call Sign* offered any member putting forward a rule change, proposition or nomination to stand for the Board the opportunity to support it by writing an explanation in the January 2011 issue. The official cut-off date was midday on Friday 19th November 2010 and other than one candidate standing for the BoM, there was nothing else. So it looks like CVs all round for that one new candidate and the current BoM who are all re-standing. So chaps, I won't be counting exactly, but please try to keep it to around 250 words (or less).

## Breaking my own rule?

Many years ago (*December 2000 Call Sign*), after writing what I considered to be a rather innocuous piece at the end of an editorial wishing everyone a Merry Christmas or Happy Chanukah, I was taken to task in a very polite way by the 15-year-old daughter of a DaC driver for failing to wish a happy Eid to those who celebrated it. **Pinar Misiri's dad Zekai (W58)** is still on DaC. Pinar also berated **Mike Son** for asking in a later issue if drivers had a nice Christmas and Chanukah.

At the time, Eid was something of an unknown quantity in the UK but has now taken off. Eid Al-Fitr marks the end of the month of Ramadan and is a happy celebratory time but at the time of the complaint, much to the chagrin of several drivers, I swore never to again mention Christmas, Chanukah or Eid just in case I upset someone else!

But now, ten years on, I've changed my mind and would like to wish all our drivers, staff and Board members a very Happy Christmas, Chanukah or Eid Al-Fitr. Can I also add to the list any Sikhs on DaC who celebrate the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru who was born in 1666 and also any DaC Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and the many others who celebrated Diwali last month.

To all of you, whatever your religion or beliefs, I hope the celebrations brings you nothing but happiness. Finally – and especially to Pinar Misiri who must now be a 25 year old woman – my special thanks to you for opening my eyes with your lovely letter all those years ago. Your dad is a very lucky man...

**Alan Fisher**  
callsignmag@aol.com

# reflections of the chairman

## Remembrance Day

I have been in the taxi trade for almost forty years, thirty six of them with Dial-a-Cab and I have always endeavoured to patronise the taxi trade charities that do such a sterling job for those less fortunate than ourselves, while at the same time do such a fantastic PR job for the London taxi trade in general.

The taxi trade has always been fairly vociferous, but it seems to be more so today than it ever was in the past. This is probably due to the fact that media outlets such as the internet and email make contacting colleagues so much easier. Going back not that many years, drivers would meet in cafes or in the back of their cabs to discuss cab trade politics and to plot the demise of some poor individual!

But as I said earlier, that has now changed - probably for the better - as mass communication is open to all and much good has come from that.

As you are all aware, 14th November was Remembrance Sunday and whilst it has always been observed - I believe the Cenotaph is 90 years old - it just seems more pertinent at the moment both to my generation and those younger that have never experienced a World war. Now of course we have troops in Iraq and Afghanistan who appear to be losing their lives on an almost daily basis in an attempt to keep us safe in our cities, whether that be in Europe or North America.

So what, you are probably asking yourself, has mass communication, taxi trade charity and Remembrance Sunday have to do with anything, let alone a Chairman's Report? Has Brian Rice run out of things to write about? No, not at all, but from time to time events happen that can make you especially proud to be associated with individuals or an industry and so it was for me on Remembrance Sunday!

On this particular day, many ex-servicemen were endeavouring to get to the Cenotaph by 11am for the service while TfL in their wisdom - together with the London Underground - had decided to perform maintenance on many tube lines on that particular day with the result that many stations had to be closed. Why was the maintenance so pressing that it had to be done on that particular day? And if it was so pressing, why was there not alternative arrangements made for our ex-servicemen?

That point is where we get to the mass media part. There is a chat site for taxi drivers that I believe has been in existence for over two years and they have formed a group called the United Cabbies Group (UCG). This particular group were obviously aghast as to what was going to happen on Remembrance Sunday, so they decided to set up their own free



shuttle service from Waterloo Station, The Union Jack Club and the Victory Services Club going to the Cenotaph and of course, not forgetting the return trip as well. Because of the mass media, they were able to get volunteers to drive the servicemen and marshals for the event in a very short space of time. I'm told that the turnout by taxi drivers was excellent and extremely well organised. As you would have come to expect from the London taxi trade at times of any adversity, all those involved gave their time free of any charge.

The above is not the type of thing I would normally write about, but I believe that on this occasion as many of you as possible should be aware of what this group of taxi drivers did on our behalf for those ex-servicemen on Remembrance Sunday. I admit to not being sure what their politics are, but that is totally irrelevant at this moment because I feel humbled, grateful and proud of their actions on behalf of myself and everyone else in the London Taxi industry - and I'm sure that applies to all DaC subscribers as well.

## Work is improving but...

There is no doubt that the work is improving, the traffic however seems to

get worse by the day! But of course, if it is going to get busier, then now is the time during the run up to Christmas.

Some of our larger accounts showed an increase of up to 30% in October compared with the same month last year, so let's hope this trend continues up to and hopefully after Christmas.

It seems such a long time ago since I used to ask you every year to cover the radio work before Christmas as we would need those account clients afterwards, but that will be the case this year. The difference this time is that there are some drivers out there who didn't know what it was like to have quiet periods if they obtained their licence prior to 2007, but after 1995. Things just seemed to always be busy then and there wasn't really such a thing as a 'kipper' season, just a few weeks when it wasn't quite as busy. Well those same drivers now know what it's like to be quiet! That's why it is so imperative that we look after our account customers in this run-up to Christmas as they will be with us twelve months of the year and make the period after Christmas more bearable. Many of those passengers you pick up in the streets with their bags of Xmas shopping will vanish back onto the buses and tubes in January, so yes, it really is so important that we support our regular clients when they need us, because there will come a time when we need them!

Having said that, 2010 has still been quite a tough year but things do show signs of improving as the year comes to an end and let's hope that continues into 2011.

*Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members and staff a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.*

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

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	<p><i>"It is at the edge of a petal that love waits"- William Carlos Williams</i></p>

# Road Spraying to lower particulates?

Most **Dial-a-Cab** drivers will know of the problems facing London, said to be caused by diesel vehicles emitting PM10 particles – known as particulates. Most taxis – in addition to trucks and many buses – currently suffer from this soot expulsion and it has led to Mayor Boris Johnson threatening a 2015 cut off date for older cabs and a minimum Euro 5 engine for new cabs sold after January 2012.

However, as an experiment *Transport for London* has announced a trial for a new method of trapping those particulate emissions with the hope of improving the City's air quality. The road surface at two locations in London – the A501, which includes Euston Road and Marylebone Road and the A311 Victoria Embankment – will be sprayed between midnight and 6am with a dust-suppressant solution that it is hoped will assist the emitted PM10 particles to stick to the road. The roads will first be swept and then a **calcium magnesium acetate** (CMA) solution will be sprayed onto the carriageway using modified salt gritters. The solution sticks to particulate matter and prevents it re-circulating into the air. The particulates then stick to the roadway to eventually be washed away by rain. The CMA is a biodegradable saline solution that is said to not be harmful to human health.

**The two above sites are possibly the worst in terms of poor air quality and are in danger of exceeding European Union legal limits and costing London a huge fine.**



**Stanley Roth at the old PCO explaining about his CNG taxi to Nigel Wetherall and Dave Stock**

Mayor Boris recently said he would ban heavy trucks from the city and now says:

"We have scoured the globe to find new ways to tackle pollution and found this wonderful contraption that tackles air quality head on, sticking particles to the roads' surface and preventing their dastardly escape back into the air we breathe. We expect this new measure to have an immediate impact

on air quality in the most polluted areas of central London."

The two sites will be sprayed overnight several times each week. The trial is costing around £300,000 with roadside particulate monitors collating the results.

PM10 levels will be monitored during the test period by the London Air Quality Network, which has 100 monitoring sites. If results follow those in Europe, TfL hope that PM10 levels will be reduced by up to 20 % and that could well be the best £300K TfL has ever spent. The trial will last for six months and results will be reported in autumn 2011.

Former DaC driver **Stanley Roth (ex-Y53)** has been a one-man band in trying to promote the use of natural gas taxis, having been driving only CNG taxis for several decades. His quotes used in *Call Sign* many times over the years revolved around CNG cutting down on air and noise pollution. Can anyone now deny that he has been right all along?

## Master Jim lays a cross **THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE**

Each year on the Monday before Remembrance Sunday, Masters and Clerks of the City Livery Companies attend an open air remembrance service in the garden at the east end of St Paul's Cathedral.

Dial-a-Cab's **Jim Rainbird (T25)**, the new Master of The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers, attended the service along with its Clerk, **Mary Whitworth**. Also at the service was The Lord Mayor of London, St Paul's Clergy, many VIPs and Royal British Legion personnel. Jim was amongst the Masters who placed a small wooden cross of remembrance in the garden.



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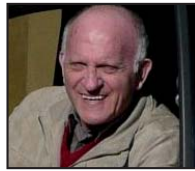
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# Jery's World



"Look, I have already told you... I'm not electioneering for the AGM, this is my job!!!"

## Electric Vito Success in Brighton to London Rally

A Vito electric taxi – the E-Vito – finished among the winners in the UK's first *Future Car Challenge* in which 63 low emission vehicles made the 60 mile trip from Brighton to Pall Mall in London.

Although said to have been passed by the PCO, the E-Vito is a prototype developed by a consortium including automotive engineering specialists ZyteK and technology experts Penso. The vehicle won the prize for *Most Economic & Environmentally Friendly Multi-Purpose Electric Vehicle*.

ZyteK MD Neil Heslington, who drove the E-Vito, said: "This is the biggest challenge that we've given the E-Vito to date and despite our expectations of it achieving 80 miles from a single six-hour full charge, the regular stopping caused by traffic signals from the outskirts of London did raise initial concerns. However, it was a very smooth ride and all partners are incredibly proud of how it performed. ZyteK is



committed to working with other vehicle companies to take this technology forward and we hope that this rally is further evidence of the great service it could give to taxi operators in the future."

The E-Vito incorporates a battery power pack beneath the vehicle's floor,

leaving interior space for passengers and luggage virtually untouched.

The development of the E-Vito has been part-funded by the Niche Vehicle Network, which was established with £2.5 million funding from Advantage West Midlands and is managed in Coventry by Cenex, the Centre of Excellence for Low Carbon & Fuel Cell Technologies.

More recently, the Mercedes Vito taxi distributors - Eco City Vehicles - raised £1.5 million through a share placing to fund a campaign to win orders from the Middle East for the Mercedes vehicle - more specifically Abu Dhabi.

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The *November Call Sign* penned an article suggesting that **Addison Lee** Chairman, **John Griffin**, would have been delighted to hear of the abandonment of the M4 bus lane. Our view was that his fleet would then take the same time returning from Heathrow as licensed taxis did and that he could at least now tell his passengers that there was now no difference in the time it took to get back to town between a licensed taxi and a minicab.

Within 48 hours of the decision to scrap the lane, the *Crown Prosecution Service* announced that they had also dropped the 216 penalty notice fares and 130 court summonses against Addison Lee, leaving John Griffin to claim: **"I have no doubt that the decision to scrap the M4 bus lane was at least in part the result of the pressure presented by this case."**

We agreed with that view, feeling that the Government via the *Highways Agency* did not want to risk losing a court case, however we suggested it might have been prudent to run more buses along the lane rather than scrap it because there weren't enough.

Former Conservative Minister of Transport for London, **Steve Norris**, is a *Call Sign* reader and told one of our drivers that he disagreed with the article and that he didn't consider John Griffin had won – as our headline had claimed.

We contacted Steve and he gave us his reasons.

**"I am sure that what John Griffin wanted was to win on the M4 bus lane**

**M4 bus lane: Steve Norris tells Call Sign...**

## I DON'T THINK JOHN GRIFFIN HAS WON!



Steve Norris on a DaC visit during his tenure as Minister

**(which was frankly hardly enforced at all toward the end) and then fight TfL in the courts over access to bus lanes. By effectively abolishing the bus lane, the DfT have - perhaps unwittingly - removed John Griffin's ability to use that precedent. So he loses big time.**

**"The fact that we will all now get to town from Heathrow roughly at the same time is not much of a victory for Addison Lee, because the minute you hit London bus lanes, the taxi rightly moves ahead."**












Mr Norris ended by saying: **"Buses and taxis are a function of demand. You can't simply run more buses - presumably empty - just to justify the bus lane."**

In 1993, Steve Norris as Minister of Transport for London with responsibility for taxis and private hire, launched a Green Paper on the licensing of private hire. The rest, as they say, is history! However, Steve is still an admirer of the taxi system in London and famously told this magazine at the time that PH would never be allowed to pick up in the streets so long as he was a Minister.

Soon after Boris Johnson became Mayor, he asked Steve to coordinate between the TfL and London Development Agency boards. As still a member of both, he now helps when the two bodies occasionally have to negotiate, although not to the extent he used to.

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**Sid Nathan: Couldn't avoid being on zig zags**

**Dial-a-Cab** driver **Sid Nathan (K88)** has written to *Call Sign's* *Mailsbot* pages many times with problems and suggestions, but his latest problem is one that can so easily affect any DaC driver – that of being stuck in traffic and your passenger suddenly deciding to exit the taxi even though it is on zigzag lines. So we felt it was worth getting an expert's view.

Sid was recently stuck in traffic by the rank at St Pauls with his handbrake on and just waiting to move forward. Suddenly his rear doors opened and the passengers got out. Before Sid could say get back in because his wheels were on the zigzags, they were by the front window paying him. And of course, *sod's law* dictated that at that precise moment the traffic began moving!

Several days later, Sid received the PCN with a photo showing his wheels on the zigzags. He wrote to *Call Sign* asking whether our parking expert, **Barrie Segal**, thought he had a chance at arbitration? Barrie now deals with DaC's PCNs that drivers receive when on a radio job. He is also the founder of *AppealNow* at [www.appeal-now.com/signnup](http://www.appeal-now.com/signnup) - a website that hugely assists any driver with a parking problem. In response to Sid's problem, Barrie told us:

"It would have been useful to see the video, but here are my general thoughts in the absence of it to contradict my view. On the face of it from what Mr Nathan has said, it appears that the driver has two defences – and by the way, in his position I would appeal immediately!

**(1)** The driver was prevented from proceeding by circumstances beyond his control (ie the passengers jumped out) and...

**(2)** It was necessary for him to stop to avoid injury or damage to persons or property. If he had moved off whilst the passenger was at the window, there could have been an accident caused by him or the vehicles behind.

For completeness, the exemption is in regulation 27(3)(b) of the *Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002*. Here is the legislation:

Road marking shown in diagram 1001.3: Zigzag lines - no stopping...

**27 (1)** In this regulation and regulation 28 "controlled area" means a length of carriage-way:

**(a)** Which is adjacent to a signal-con-

**Sid Nathan asks DaC's parking expert Barrie Segal for some advice that could affect any taxi driver...**

# Stopping on ZigZags???

trolled crossing facility and has a zigzag line marked along each of its edges (with or without zigzag lines also marked down its centre).

**(b)** In or near where no other signs or markings have been placed except ones comprised in the combination of signs and markings indicating the presence of the facility or shown in diagram 610, 611, 612, 613, 616, 810, 1029 or 1062;

\* "Local service" does not include an excursion or tour as defined by section 137(1) of the Transport Act 1985; and...

\* "Vehicle" does not include a pedal bicycle not having a sidecar attached to it, whether or not additional means of propulsion by mechanical power are attached to the bicycle.

**(2)** Subject to paragraphs **(3)** and **(4)** and without prejudice to *regulation 28*, a zigzag

line shall convey the requirement that the driver of a vehicle shall not cause any part of it to stop in the controlled area in which it is marked.

**(3)** Paragraph **(2)** does not prohibit the driver of a vehicle from stopping it in a controlled area:

**a)** If the driver has stopped it for the purpose of complying with an indication given by a light signal for the control of vehicular traffic or the direction of a constable in uniform or a traffic warden;

**(b) If the driver is prevented from proceeding by circumstances beyond his control or it is necessary for him to stop to avoid injury or damage to persons or property;** or

**(c)** When the vehicle is being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes."

## New MBH Directors from Geely

*Manganese Bronze Holdings* has announced the appointment to the Board of directors of Jie (George) Zhao as Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Wenming (Frank) Cao as a non-executive director with immediate effect.

Mr Zhao was an Executive Director of *Geely Automobile Holdings* between 2005 and 2010, in which year he became Vice President. Prior to this Mr Zhao was Vice President of *Zhejiang Geely Holding Group* and General Manager of *Geely International Corporation*.

Mr Cao is a Board member and Executive Deputy General Manager of the *Shanghai LTI Automobile Components Company*. Prior to that, Mr Cao had held senior positions with *BMW Brilliance Automotive Company* and *Brilliance China Automotive Holdings*.

Manganese CEO, John Russell, said: **"The combined background and experience of Mr Zhao and Mr Cao will be real assets to Manganese."**

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[www.london-taxis.co.uk](http://www.london-taxis.co.uk)

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). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 211 - 233 g/km.

## In a right Piccadilly with no 'park and ride'

There is no doubt that the changes to Piccadilly Circus with the extra bus lanes and widening of pavements, have not been the success that the planners and campaigners for improved air quality and reduction in traffic to the area had hoped for. In fact, evidence to the eye seems to indicate a complete failure, with traffic sometimes backing up beyond Green Park westbound and Princes Circus eastbound, while the northbound queue spreads across Trafalgar Square into the Strand blocking southbound traffic leaving Charing Cross Road. Regent Street southbound backs up to Oxford Circus, totally cancelling out the money spent on the system there. The whole area just becomes gridlocked. The authorities could probably show figures and statistics that there are less pedestrian accidents, but the fact is that if traffic is not moving, it can't run anyone over!

For us, this has created a situation where you have a shop full of customers with no till counter and no door to serve them. It began a full 3 months before the Christmas rush and now as we hit December, the traffic has just become horrendous with the apparent policy that advocates buses first, with any other vehicle coming into the area being penalised either by horrendous delays or CCTV fines when you inadvertently drive into a bus lane where the signs are poorly positioned and unlit. What it does not do is offer alternatives for business and visitors to leave their vehicles within easy reach of the centre so they don't have to drive in.

As much as they want people to use public transport, there are a vast number of people who do not want to use it, especially when dressed up to the nines on a night out. This is why I question whether the policy is flawed? If *park and ride* schemes were introduced to central areas, this would significantly reduce the number of cars and especially coaches, for whom picking up and parking for theatres must be a total nightmare. It would only take a few locations to allocate coach parking, offering either public transport or shared taxi fixed fare schemes to theatres.

As an example, I offer these areas where coach - and in some places car - parking could possibly be made available for a taxi share scheme between the hours of 6pm and 11.30pm, especially at venues when there is nothing on. The Zoo car and coach park at Regents Park sits empty when coaches could easily park and leave by 23.30. Outside Madame Tussauds eastbound, Russell Square on the westside, Earls Court or Olympia, Battersea Park, Lincolns Inn Fields, the NB bus lane on Vauxhall Bridge, Albert Embankment EB from Tingle Street to opposite the Riverbank Plaza Hotel with a serving feeder rank on the westbound side and Southwark Street WB from Borough Market to Southwark Bridge Road.

It does not have to be a swamped coach or car park area, there could be options to park for one or two coaches in some of these places just to drop passengers off and then go and park elsewhere for later pickups at a Taxi stopping area with fares highlighted.

These are just some of the places; a fuller survey could probably produce more. I believe with the right mindset and a different approach by those concerned, this option could offer real alternatives to alleviating traffic problems.

## Yubadubadoo!

At the age of 54, I've never really been that worried about my age or felt old. As the alternative is death, I'll take *old* every time! Keeping active

# LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE...

with Tom Quigley



by running football teams and mixing with different ages - young and old - my wife has always said that I never waited to be old to be grumpy! As for reaching forty and having a mid-life crisis, growing up as one of seven in a large Irish Catholic family, you just stumble from one over-rated crisis to another!

What really hit home to me as to how old I really am was the news that the **Flintstones** are celebrating their fiftieth birthday!

I am now totally depressed that when I sit down to laugh at Fred, Barney, Wilma and co in the back of my mind, there will be a woodpecker tapping away (how old is Woody?) with a reminder that I am older than Fred! If I have any grandchildren, I think I'll keep it a secret...

## Third world country?

When one of the Pope's envoys said that landing at Heathrow was like arriving at a third world country, there was an outcry about the audacity of *Johnny Foreigner* making such comments about our great country.

We have all watched undercover investigative programmes about how we, as tourists abroad, are fleeced and conned out of our money by scrupulous car/bike hire dealers hiring unsafe and uninsured vehicles, youngsters being lured into clubs with dodgy drinks, hotels not being cleaned and dozens of other scams that go on. But I wonder what other countries TV shows could reveal about London and the ways we treat tourists / visitors to this country?

Recently, on a late Sunday night flight back from Spain, the airline were selling tickets for the Stansted Express train to Liverpool Street. I informed a Spanish couple next to me that due to the late time there would not be a train, just a bus and that they could probably buy a cheaper ticket at the airport. This comment was quickly picked up on by others and the air crew were none too pleased with their lack of sales following my information, when surely the airline shouldn't be selling tickets to their customers for a service that they know is not available.

After catching the coach, those buying the tickets were probably dumped at Bishopsgate or

Buckingham Palace Road, confused with the language, currency and with no clue as to where they were. The first people they then come across are the dozens of touts who are allowed to loiter and prey on unsuspecting tourists and offering their services as "taxis." If a camera crew were present, they could also scan the area and show how this goes on opposite two police stations - and that they were parked next to police cars and vans.

Still after a good night's sleep at one of the wonderful hotels around Paddington or Russell Square - advertised as being only one kilometre from Oxford Street and all the major tourist attractions - they can enjoy a nice walk around the shops, visit the sites and get on one of those fun pedicabs. I mean a tourist can only assume they must be safe as there are so many of them! Large companies would not advertise on them if they weren't insured and they must have vehicle safety certificates or the police would stop them operating, wouldn't they?

The driver is cute, even if they can't understand him and I would be sure that he must have passed all the relevant child /sex offenders and criminal checks, so it must be safe and its only £20 back from Covent Garden to Russell Square!

If their luck is really in and they are here on a Saturday, they can take advantage of one of those open bus tours - hop on, hop off, see all the sites in an afternoon. Then £25 lighter and one hour later they are stuck in Piccadilly or the Embankment as the guide never told them there was a march and rally, so all the roads including Trafalgar Square and Whitehall and most of the sites are closed off and won't be open till 6pm. Still they can always jump on a tube. We know how reliable they are! Oh, the lines are closed for upgrading? Shame!

This may look like a negative report on our city, but unfortunately these practices go on every weekend and our Tourist Board and authorities really need to be addressing these issues to make a visit to London enjoyable and giving good value for money.

*Till next time, a very merry Christmas to you all...*

**Tom Quigley (Y33)**

## Call Sign

**December 2010**

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The Birmingham Stage Company's new stage version of **Roald Dahl's George's Marvellous Medicine**, adapted by David Wood, broke all records last Christmas at Birmingham's Old Rep and since then has been touring the UK with huge success.

**Now it comes to London's ultra-comfortable Bloomsbury Theatre for a very special 6 week Christmas season from 14 December – 23 January.**

First published in 1981, George's Marvellous Medicine is one of Dahl's funniest and most exciting stories. It's all about a young boy who makes a marvellous new medicine to cure his grandmother of her terrifying temper, but when the grandmother drinks his special new potion the results are explosive and the most incredible things begin to happen - it's the start of George's amazing adventures, which provide a wonderful knockabout comic romp for the audience!

George's Marvellous Medicine is directed by Phil Clark, who also directed both BSC's last Dahl show, *Danny the Champion of the World* in 2007 and the company's new *Horrible Science*, which is currently touring. The new stage version of George is by David Wood, one of the UK's leading children's playwrights - who was even dubbed the *national children's dramatist* by *The Times*. He won the AATE Distinguished Playwriting Award for the second time for his adaptation of *Danny the Champion of the World*.

George's Marvellous Medicine has Clark Devlin in the title role and Erika Poole as Grandma. Other parts will be played by Alison Fitzjohn, Jason O'Brien and Colin Campbell and is one of three productions BSC has on this Christmas, including its co-production of *Bagpuss* at the Soho Theatre in London. George will continue touring for another 3 months after its season at The Bloomsbury finishes. George is brilliant family entertainment for all over 4s + well behaved grown ups - particularly non-grumpy grannies!

**Win one of two family tickets for Xmas to see Roald Dahl's comic masterpiece...**

## George's Marvellous Medicine



George gives granny some of his marvellous medicine

You can win two family tickets (2 adults and two children) for this wonderful children's show. Just tell us who wrote George's Marvellous Medicine and either send it to Call Sign at DaC House or email to [call-signmag@aol.com](mailto:call-signmag@aol.com). Entries by 10 December (with 3 date choices) please.

For everyone else, the box office is on 020 7388 8822 or you can book online at [www.thebloomsbury.com](http://www.thebloomsbury.com).

### Performance dates and times:

Wed 15 Dec to Fri 17 Dec  
at 10.30am and 1.30pm  
Sat 18 Dec at 2.30pm  
Mon 20 to Fri 24 Dec at 2.30pm  
Wed 29 Dec to Fri 31 Dec at 2.30pm  
Sat 01 Jan at 2.30pm  
Thu 06 Jan to Fri 7 Jan  
at 10.30am and 1.30pm

Sat 08 Jan at 10.30am and 2.30pm  
Mon 10 Jan to Thu 13 Jan  
at 10.30am and 1.30pm  
Fri 14 Jan at 1.30pm  
Sat 15 Jan at 2.30pm  
Mon 17 Jan to Fri 21 Jan  
at 10.30am and 1.30pm  
Sat 22 Jan at 10.30am and 2.30pm

## M&O MONTHLY £1000 GIVEAWAY

**Just for leaving your name!**

London Taxi driver **Sarjit Singh** has scooped £1,000 in a monthly prize draw held by **M&O** and LTI Vehicles just for giving them his name! Sarjit follows last month's winner, Andrew Downer, who also picked up a very welcome £1000.

Mr Singh, who hails from Hayes, Middlesex, bought his latest taxi - a TX4 - from M&O at Brewery Road in 2009 and allowed his contact information to be added to the company's *In It To Win It* database.

Each month, one winner is picked from the entire network and that lucky driver wins £1,000! Anyone who makes a new or used taxi purchase, or simply makes an enquiry at any Mann & Overton dealership can be added, provided that they are a licensed taxi driver.

Mr Singh said: "I was genuinely surprised. I had no problem giving them the information when I bought my TX4 and just expected them to send me product updates, not that I would actually win the £1,000. When they called me and gave me the news, it really did make my week. I haven't stopped smiling since!"

Mr Singh received his £1,000 prize from M&O London GM Mark Brown, who said:

"This is a great incentive and it's not often that you get something for nothing in this life. I bet the odds are better than the National Lottery, so giving us your contact information could be more of an investment than you think!"



Sarjit collects his £1000 from M&O's Mark Brown



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# Keith Cain Looks at Zone Timings

**B. Spear (Y16) has asked in Mailshot why lead times during the early morning peak time have been increased. Call Centre Manager, Keith Cain, provides the answer...**

Many of you will have noticed – just like **Barry Spear (Y16)** – that lead times in a very few number of zones have been increased from either 12 to 15 minutes, or in the case of SW11 from 15 to 18 minutes. The reason the zones were increased was because of the constant pressure our account managers were putting on Call Centre controllers.

The morning coverage in these areas has always been a problem over many years. Recently, with work picking up again, the early morning problem of our cabs arriving late or trips being cancelled has brought about a large number of complaints from customers. Our account managers who receive the complaints were at their wits end in knowing how to respond to the clients, all of whom have been clearly informed by drivers as to the reason why our service is poor. Since the implementation of the Data Dispatch system, controllers have dug their heels in about extending lead times because drivers say they are not sitting around waiting for a client while not being paid. Following lengthy and heated discussions – where the air turned rather blue – DaC controllers reluctantly decided to make alterations to a very small number of zones to see how it would affect coverage. Initially the



zones were increased by a full 5 minutes and SW11 was increased by 10 minutes. These in my opinion were too high and I instructed controllers to reduce them. Since the lead times were altered and despite what some drivers may think, it has helped considerably with coverage and complaints from clients regarding this have virtually stopped. What is more encouraging is the number of drivers who have contacted the day shift controllers complimenting them for taking this step.

Drivers have said that with the number of road closures, on-going road works and the increase in traffic, the extra minutes have allowed them to accept more trips with the confidence of being able to reach the pick up addresses on time.

Lead times will constantly be monitored and can be adjusted to meet the demands for service and while I respect the feelings some

members have about this, we must all be mindful of the service we provide to our clients.

The last strike was the busiest so far and coverage was exceptional. The strike was scheduled, if you recall, from a Tuesday evening to the Wednesday evening. It was during the previous week that Call Centre staff were advising clients to expect delays and encouraged all callers to allow additional journey times. This definitely worked very well and it was also surprising how many customers followed our advice. Even those clients who booked on-line read and followed our advice, which helped us manage the service during the strike so much better.

**Keith Cain**  
**Call Centre Manager**  
**Driver Operations Manager**

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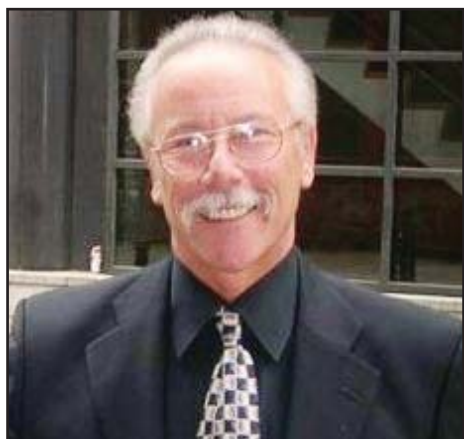
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**As LTFUC Chairman, DaC's David Lessman writes his annual Chairman's Report...**

## LTFUC 2010 Chairman's Report

As the current financial year draws to a close, I once again have the task of writing my report and it is with immense pride that I extend a warm welcome to *Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall*, who has agreed to become *Patron of the Fund*.

From a personal point of view, this year is perhaps more significant than previous ones as in 2010 I will have been a trustee of *The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children* for 25 years, serving as Hon Treasurer for 10 years and then Hon Chairman for three terms of office - 1999 to 2001 and 2004 to the end of this financial year. No words can express the satisfaction derived from being part of such a worthy and well known trade organisation and I thank my fellow trustees, their wives and partners most sincerely for their loyal and unstint-

ing support. Sadly during the year Barry Levine, a well respected past member of the committee, passed away and on behalf of the committee I send condolences to his wife Annette and his family, as I do to all those who have suffered a loss.

Taking into account present world and domestic financial situations, all of which affect London's licensed taxi trade in some way, I'm delighted to report that generated income has maintained last year's level. The total amount spent on charitable activities, grants and other costs did increase by about 10%, but nevertheless our reserves are in good shape. This is due not only to the kindness and generosity of our numerous benefactors, but to many of those London taxi drivers who freely give their time when taking part in outings for which the LTFUC is so well known. In previous reports I have asked drivers to please think about giving up just one day in the year and although it was gratifying to see new drivers this year, it would be even better to see more in the future.

The events organised by the LTFUC or those in which the Fund participated during the year, all met with the same success, giving pleasure and excitement to many hundreds of disadvantaged children. The annual party at the *Grosvenor House*, the regular summer outing to *Southend-on-Sea* and this year's trip to *Woburn Safari Park* in May were complemented by a number of events to which the Fund was invited. These included a theatre visit to see *Sister Act*, the *Pearly Kings and Queens Harvest Festival* and another *Fun Day* at *Covent Garden*. I was also joined by Hon Secretary *Malcolm Shaffron* at the *Hilton Foundation Round the World Bike Ride* where we helped to raise funds. The LTFUC was also invited to undertake a number of speaking engagements during

the year, ably conducted by Malcolm and Press Officer *Ray Levy*, who were delighted to make other organisations aware of the Fund's activities. As on so many previous occasions, several committee members attended the barbeque / prize-giving at the *Giving Kids a Break Summer Camp* for deserving children from East London. I was also honoured to represent the LTFUC as a guest among distinguished company at a *Buckingham Palace Garden Party*, accompanied by Ray Levy and our wives. Reports on all these events can be found in much greater detail on [www.ltfuc.org.uk](http://www.ltfuc.org.uk) and I'd like to thank *Maureen Levy* for her diligence in ensuring this website is continually updated and well-maintained.

During the course of the year, many appeals for funding were received and as much as the LTFUC would like to support them all, it is just not possible. Among the successful were *Woodfield School* - granted £5,000 in the form of sports equipment and *dependants of taxi drivers* unable to provide through death or injury, who received £3,500. I am very proud of the fact that yet again general administration costs have been kept to below 2%, due in no small part to Hon Treasurer *Sim Yiannikaris*, who has reluctantly decided to relinquish this post. I thank him for his input, wish him and his family well.

Although I was looking forward to joining the 'back benches', I have undertaken the Treasurer's role for the next 12 months ahead of trustee *Lilian Julier* accepting the position. I also take this opportunity to wish my successor good luck for the next 3 years and most importantly, to thank my wife Sandra for her welcome support over the last 25 years.

**LTFUC Honorary Chairman,  
David S. Lessman (D19)**

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

### Kupkake's Korner



#### Halloween in Camden

When it's Halloween in Camden, the Goths are out in force, an army of 'em gathering... around the water course.

The bars are overflowing, they're drinking in the street, with bits of body showing... and Jack Boots on their feet.

Blood make-up on white faces, black shadows 'neath dark eyes, tattoos in hidden places... each Goth in their disguise.

They celebrate with relish, happy in their cups, snacking on things Hellish... Until they can't stand up!

When the dawn is breaking, they disappear from view, tired from partaking... of their very special brew!

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## Put the wrong fuel in your tank?



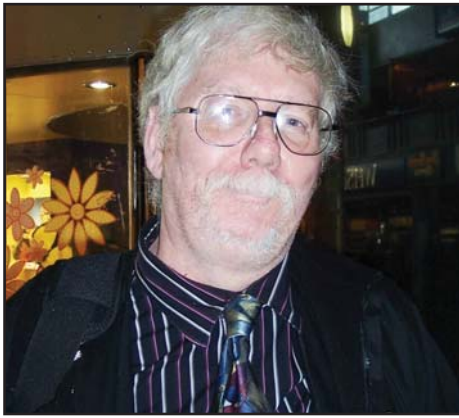
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**Dial-a-Cab driver Eddie Lambert (V37) asks about a possible software addition to the next generation of DaC terminals – one we'd need to begin on soon...**

## Competing with the likes of Addison Lee!

Several times over the past year I have been contacted by journalists seeking to get some background to the on-going struggle between London's finest and the likes of **Addison Lee** and other premier PH companies, over the mega corporate accounts in the City and Docklands. Quite why they have contacted me I'm not sure, possibly they want a driver's perceptive to put alongside the views of people like Chairman **Brian Rice**.

One thing that came up in conversation a few times was something **John Griffin** appears to be putting great store by - what they are calling **SatNav Plus**. From what I've been told, this is a computer programme that is used in conjunction with their booking system. When an AL driver is given a job, they have access to more details about the pick-up point than just the address. I'm not sure if these details are given automatically or the driver uses his equipment to request them if the address is not one they are familiar with. This speeds up response times by bringing their PH Vehicle to the customer's door that bit quicker.

**Obviously those who were talking to me were just saying what they had been told, so my information at best is third hand, but it seems to work something like this.**

I'll base it on a job I did earlier this week as an example. A driver in WC1 is given a job in High Holborn. As we all know, High Holborn numbers up one side and then back down the other, so it's not straightforward even if you know which end number 1 is. Also, some of it is one-way so you don't really want to get into that bit if you are not sure of the actual location.

My pick-up was a national building society. Having located it, I pulled up outside and did an *Advise Arrival*. In due course I received a *cannot contact, please make own contact* message. Ok, no problem. I was able to leave the cab parked ok with no wardens in sight. I entered the premises to try and make my own contact. Two *Customer Service* counters are open but busy with customers. Another counter for enquires only was manned but dealing with an enquiry. Luckily I only had to wait about 30 seconds for this query to be completed, so I was then able to ask for my passenger at the desk. I was told my passenger was not in there but to try the frosted glass double doors just to the left of the their front entrance. It turned out the society had offices above with a reception just inside those frosted doors. No problem, I go in to speak to the receptionist and returned to wait for my passenger. Ok, it didn't take long but I might have had to wait considerably longer to make contact at the enquiry desk to be directed to the

actual pick-up point.

What SatNav Plus does - so I believe - is that the driver would be given or can request more details if required from a stored database. These details would be available before a job is accepted so a driver might not refuse a job if they are the wrong side of a closed-off road or one-way system. I guess the stored message would go something like this.

**"In the one-way part of High Holborn offside (or perhaps north-side), west of Southampton Place just before the New Oxford St lay-by. Office and retail unit sharing same address. Frosted glass entrance east side of retail unit."**

These details may have only saved me a few minutes, but that can seem a long time to someone sweating on making a train or plane. Passengers are always pleased and usually comment when you are able to get to the pick-up point very quickly. The ability to do this frequently must help when it comes to retaining accounts. When an account changes hands, the new company's drivers servicing the account have to learn the pick-up, which costs time and perhaps gives an opportunity to regain the account if senior figures have experienced delays whilst waiting for a vehicle.

I also think better details might help with coverage of Westminster work. As many of these jobs start in residential areas, there can be many separate addresses very close together. Also the names of residential blocks are often missing, vandalised or badly sited so light does not pick them up. A detail like "second block from corner with road / street etc. On left facing Edgware Rd" or simply a clue as to which end of the street and which side would help the driver find the block much quicker.

We should also talk to account companies about better identification for their premises eg prominent numbers outside their office blocks and not just building names. This will help drivers know they are moving down the street in the right direction or looking on the right side of the street, as in any older areas numbers don't run odds and evens but up one side and down the other as per High Holborn. I won't even try to explain the numbering in Cadogan Gardens! If accounts have many pick-ups from residential addresses, perhaps the front door is well back from the road, so is there a number on the gate or pillars etc adjacent to the pavement so drivers can identify the house quickly? I think that with these accounts where we pick up from residential addresses frequently - if not daily - our system should be able to give driver better details as above. Some addresses even have the actual entrance round the corner in a different road altogether - I know we often get this detail, but not always. So details such as WB

Elgin Ave between Oakington Rd and Edbrooke Rd would speed up pick-ups. This would also help stop drivers possibly going to the wrong address if there are several addresses with similar names in close proximity. Or as I came across recently, two residential blocks sharing the same name, separated by a road with the individual numbers of flats so small on a board that one had to get out of the cab to be able to read them. My passenger was outside the other block, at an entrance around the corner telling the call centre they could not see me.

A facility to do similar with set-down addresses when we are given them would also be helpful. Another help to drivers would be the ability to name a road, street, place etc from the postcode. I don't use a SatNav (yet) and increasingly customers are giving postcodes as destinations. It would also be a big help to be able to put the start of the postcode eg E1-SE18 - W13 etc after a road name as it's a right so and so trying to scroll down a full list of Church Rd or Station Place *et al* whilst on the move and of course if you accidentally go to the wrong one, you then have to start all over again! Very annoying if not dangerous, as it takes your concentration off your driving.

I would call this built-in info **Knowledge Plus**, as we always make play on the superiority of the Knowledge over SatNav, so it would be superior to Griffin's SatNav Plus. But how would we build up this Knowledge Plus?

Firstly, get all drivers to report when they have a problem locating an address. Ask them to give **Dial-a-Cab** the details that would help the next driver locate the address much easier. Perhaps we could have a designated email address where we could send the info to or possibly have a box in East Road or Roman Way where drivers could leave the info for an insert in **Call Sign**?

Maybe we could even use a couple of Knowledge boys or girls to go to addresses where problems with pick-ups often occur and collate better and clearer instructions? Some accounts are in awkward places such as Red Routes etc so perhaps a dedicated pick-up point just round the corner or perhaps outside the back door could be given to drivers? If you needed it, it would be stored and just take the push of an *extra info* button. Otherwise nothing else needs to change. Of course this would be a long-term project and obviously more suited to our new terminals when they arrive, but we could start collating the info sooner.

It should not be overly costly and may well have financial value to DaC as a whole. But it would help drivers by enabling them to arrive at pick-ups quicker and thereby helping and encouraging them to cover more trips.

**Eddie Lambert (V37)**

As October came to an end, Virgin boss (and taxi lover) **Sir Richard Branson** gave London's regular taxi commuters a surprise free lift in a Ferrari or Aston Martin as **Virgin Media** celebrated the launch of 100Mb/s broadband with a fleet of the supercar taxis!

The vehicles included a *Ferrari 430 F1 Coupe* and an *Aston Martin DBS* but with a traditional black cab-style makeover and offered lucky passengers a free ride to their destination.

Virgin Media's executive director of broadband, **Jon James**, told **Call Sign** that the company just wanted to do something funny and iconic to celebrate the launch of its super-fast network, but no, they weren't attempting to take the trade over!

**"The speedy taxi idea was designed to offer Londoners some excitement to liven up their working day together with the opportunity to get a taste of life in the fast lane - all courtesy of Virgin Media."**

The company announced plans to bring internet speeds of 100Mb/s to more than 12.7 million homes across the country within the week, but in the meantime, **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Jon Robinson (E88)** spotted one of the supertaxis out on the road and took this exclusive photo for **Call Sign**. He told us:

**"I was a bit shocked when I saw the taxi 'for hire' sign on top of the car, but soon realised it was a publicity gimmick for Virgin Media. But the thought did occur that as DaC is the Ferrari of the cab trade,**

**Jon Robinson (E88) spotted the Virgin Supercar taxi and says...**

**"We should give one of these to Brian Rice!"**



Jon (inset) snapped this Aston Martin and suggested we buy it for the DaC Chairman

this would be an ideal vehicle for Brian Rice to go and meet prospective clients with – after all he did say last month that DaC were well

back in the black!"

Brian told **Call Sign**: "It sure is a beauty, but I like our taxis and I'm proud of our fleet. But for taking the wife out....hmmm?"

## ROAD PASSENGER NVQ LEVEL 2

### Knowledge Point Cab Driver

**School** is shortly concluding its current series of free **NVQ** courses. The course, whilst meeting national standards, has an emphasis on the units that best suit the needs of the London cab trade. Just from word of mouth recommendation only, 228 learners have participated in the course and at the present moment 201 have completed the full course (88.2% retention), which is a remarkable achievement for a group of self-employed people. Of this number, 172 (85.6%) are male and 29 (14.4%) are female. 100% of learners who carried on to the Assessment Stage have achieved their NVQ certification.

The course is delivered via interactive group sessions and workshops, lasting for approx 16 hours over a number of weeks. As the programme is run in conjunction with the City of London, a number of qualifiers have also moved onto other additional courses, ranging from guiding courses to languages. In addition to attracting a healthy male / female ratio, there has also been a wide ethnic mix.

All current courses are now full until the new programmes commence in 2011...

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On Thursday 4 November, **Call Sign** was invited along to an astonishing press conference held at M&O in Brewery Road. We've been to many of these conferences and usually they tell you little that you don't already know. On this occasion, we knew that Manganese Bronze Holdings and M&O were going to change their name to the **London Taxi Company**. **Call Sign** was told the change was coming many months ago and actually published the story.

Chief Executive Officer **John Russell** told the large attendance that the reason was the obvious one – when you tell someone you are with MBH, it is meaningless. But tell them it's the London Taxi Company, then it presents a different picture! Mr Russell added that following last year's dealer network rationalisation, customers would now be able to deal direct with The London Taxi Company, buying their taxis straight from the company's now extended dealer network – the M&O network in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, and the further three retail outlets recently opened in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Coventry.

But there was one huge surprise waiting for us that no one guessed was on the way – a huge price reduction in the cost of their taxis! If you have bought a new TX4 in the last few months, you'll know the prices: The **TX4 Bronze** came in at £32,995, the **Silver** was £35,495 with the **TX4 Gold** weighing in at a hefty £37,495.

It was left to the London

Taxi Company Sales Director, **Rob Laidler**, to make the shock announcement. From the day of the press conference, they were launching a new model range of vehicles that had been simplified and cut from three derivatives to just two. According to Rob, the new models represented the culmination of all the work they had been doing to bring the vehicle cost down.

"It's important that our customers understand that we have not only changed our name, but how we deal with them. We wanted to pass on the benefits of dealing direct and cutting out the middle men when drivers talk to us about buying a new TX4."

The new version of the TX4 range consists of two models, an entry level **Style** and a higher range **Elegance**. Both vehicles are available with manual and automatic gearbox options.

But it was the price announcement that bought audible gasps from those present.

**The Style starts at £28,995 on the road for the manual and £30,995 for the auto, while the Elegance comes in at £30,995 for the manual and £32,995 for the automatic. The Style model has black bumpers, trim and cloth seats. The Elegance has full air conditioning, a chrome pack, colour coded mirrors, bumpers and optional metallic paint option as standard.**



## £5000 off the price of a TX4!



The two new models that replace gold, silver and bronze - The Style and The Elegance

Inset pic: John Russell addresses the press conference



"With this pricing, we have passed on the cost savings to our customers and have launched an aggressive transparent pricing strategy that does away with huge discounts and artificially high retail prices. Drivers now benefit from knowing exactly how much a vehicle costs and not having to haggle or negotiate," continued Mr Laidler.

The news continued to get better as The London Taxi Company senior personnel explained that drivers buying a Style or Elegance before the Government VAT increase in January would get an extra saving as the quoted rates included the forthcoming 20% VAT. So buying before January with a 17.5% rate would mean that the Style and Elegance would start even less at £28,403 and £30,361 respectively!

To save the press working it out, Rob chimed in to say that any driver buying and taking delivery of a Style or Elegance before the VAT increase would gain an added benefit of up to £671 additional savings. By **Call Sign's** reckoning, that put the difference

**between the old Gold and the new Elegance at over £5,000!**

Reverting to the new company branding, we were told that the new logo had been designed specifically to reflect a clear, sustained message and reinforce the company's new focus. It incorporates three main colours - red, white and blue - plus two additional auxiliary colours, gold and silver. These colours represented the core colours of the British and Chinese flags – a clear confirmation of the importance of the company's joint venture with Geely.

Images were chosen to reflect the heritage and history of the two companies. Britannia – an indisputable and recognised symbol of Great Britain, and the Geely six principles or "flags" of leadership – all signifying aspiration and the global future of the company, intrinsically linking the partners, illustrating their shared vision and goals.

Rob ended by saying: "We have been able to reduce the entry level costs considerably on both the TX4 Style and the TX4 Elegance, offering a competitively priced vehicle that is still the best purpose-built hackney carriage in the world."

**Dial-a-Cab** driver **Bernie Silver (G08)** has been around the block a few times since coming to DaC on 31 January 1975. He told **Call Sign** that while he still has the occasional moan, most of those moans revolve around the conditions we work under in London rather than anything in DaC itself.

One pet hate is the hole in the road in Finsbury Pavement just as you turn left from Bernie's second home at Finsbury Square!

**"I've written to fixmystreets.com several times and they're just trying to fob me off,"** an irritated Bernie told us, **"so that's one current moan that irritates me. That hole has been there so long, many drivers are beginning to think it's just a normal dip in the road!"**

But just a few weeks ago, Bernie called this magazine to tell us of a small survey he had just completed. Of eight drivers, seven told him that they didn't think they would be working during the *London Olympics and Paralympics*, which will be held from **27 July to 12 August 2012**. And bearing in mind that in just four weeks time it will be

2011, it isn't as though we are talking years for those planning to book a holiday during the London Summer Games.

If you live to the east of the capital, you must have noticed the way the Olympic site has been developing – the stadium itself – which is even taller than Nelson's Column – the amazing velodrome and BMX circuit, the aquatics centre, the competitor's village and just the site itself, which gives the impression that London is well ahead of schedule in its building work.

However, we aren't athletes. Our concern is that at a time notorious as being the quietest part of the summer when the kids are on holiday from school, will all the extra work the Games bring in be worth the hassle we will get through horrific traffic conditions? These will be exasperated by the *Olympic Route Network* that ban everyone – including taxis – except those linked to the Games, from athletes to Olympic committee members. That means we will be sharing road space with thousands of extra vehicles heading towards Stratford and without any doubt into massive traffic jams. Then when we arrive at the Games, where will we be setting down and will there be provision for picking up – perhaps as Wimbledon tennis fortnight has?

We know that DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** has spoken to the organising committee on several occasions about possible problems involving taxis, but as yet there is still nothing definite about picking up or setting down. But he was told that licensed taxis will definitely not have access to the *Olympic Route Network*. Among those routes will be the Blackwall Tunnel, Marylebone Road and of course, our former pal previously known as the M4 bus lane!

**So back to the headline and will you work during the Olympics? Call Sign asked 132 drivers on the night of Sunday 7 November. The question we posed was this: If trading conditions remain as they**

Call Sign asked Dial-a-Cab drivers...

# Will you work during the Olympics?



**Bernie Silver (inset) gave Call Sign the idea to ask drivers if they intended working during the London Olympics?**

**are, do you expect to work over the four-week period covering the 2012 London Olympic Games?**

The result was possibly surprising, bearing in mind Bernie Silver's informal survey. Out of the 132 drivers, 103 said that they would be working, leaving just 29 who said they wouldn't be working over the Games duration – although **Mark Cutler (N03)** did add the proviso that his *yes* vote assumed he wouldn't scoop top prize in the lottery!

Some of the *yes* drivers also added that if traffic conditions became so unbearable that passengers were complaining at the length of time journeys to Stratford were taking, they might reconsider. Equally, there were several *no* drivers who told **Call Sign** that if taxis

were seen to be moving well, they could think again about whether they should work.

**It may not have matched the thousands surveyed by some organisations, but this was big enough to give a good clue as to what the taxi situation would be like in 2012. The Call Sign survey has 78.3% of drivers working, which translated into hard figures suggests that 19,575 drivers out of the 25,000 fleet will be out there during those four weeks.**

Perhaps TfL and the organising committee will look at this 132 driver survey and say that 19,575 drivers working during the Games are worth helping...???

**Alan Fisher**

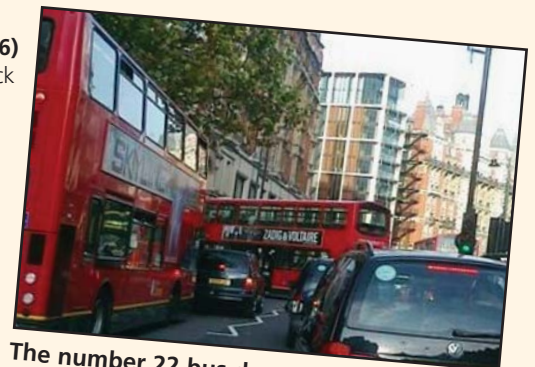
## Anyone Seen a number 22 bus???

It was just another Thursday afternoon and Dial-a-Cab driver **Barry Spear (Y16)** had just passed *Harrods* on his way back towards Piccadilly. Suddenly the traffic came to a halt when a number 22 bus seemed to be attempting a u-turn in the ultra-busy Brompton Road!

The westbound bus had apparently missed the left turn into Sloane Street and was now trying to do something that even taxis can't always manage easily when there's so much traffic – attempt that u-turn!

"Eventually it managed the turn whilst causing chaos to the traffic going in both directions," Barry told **Call Sign**, "but at the risk of humiliating the bus driver, I just had to take a photo!"

And here it is...!!!



**The number 22 bus does an 18 point turn!**

## Escaping it gets Peter into trouble with the law!

It was a rather frazzled **Peter Turnham (O83)** who met **Call Sign** at the coffee vending machine in Dial-a-Cab House. We suspect he was speaking for many other drivers too...

"I've just about had enough tonight," he wheezed, "I've struggled through the most horrendous traffic along the M4 from Heathrow, taking a passenger out into deepest Essex and just about made it back to here without having had a nervous breakdown!"

"I don't know what's gone wrong lately, but the sheer volume of traffic seems to have gone mad. Only last week I was making my way back home up the M1 late at night, when there was an incident northbound, which pretty much brought traffic to a standstill. Yet there were no warning signs whatsoever. If there had been the usual illuminated signage at the Staples Corner end, I would have been able to divert away from the trouble spot and saved myself a whole lot of grief," he said while expelling a deep sigh!

"Anyway, I unwittingly drove straight into the problem and everything came to a stop. Then I suddenly spied a tiny gap on the roadway between the stationary vehicles directly in front of me and the

# TRAFFIC, TRAFFIC EVERYWHERE!



**Escaping the traffic gives Peter a run-in with the police**

slip road exit that I intended to use to escape the mayhem ahead. But it meant using a tiny stretch of the hard shoulder as my nearside wheels crept over the prohibited area," he continued.

"I thought I would only just infringe into that hallowed space at the side of the road and be off up the tarmac and away before anyone else had the same idea, so I sneaked onto the hard shoulder and gently began to proceed. At that moment, there was a blast of two-tone horns and

blue flashing lights behind me. Alas, while concentrating on my escape I had not seen the police car on my tail! He pulled me over onto the hard shoulder and we 'chatted'! Well actually he began to chew my ear off about being a professional driver and showing responsibility on the road, going on to point out the dangers of causing another potential hazard to the emergency services," Peter explained.

"I let him have his say, while inwardly cursing myself that I had been so careless as not to check my rear-view mirror before turning! Eventually the lecture ended and we both went on our way. He probably felt happier that he had shown me the error of my ways, while I arrived home considerably later than usual, but grateful that I did not get booked, so it was quite a result really!"

With that and a now empty plastic coffee cup in his hand, Peter allowed **Call Sign** to see a rather satisfied grin spreading across his face before remembering his initial outburst...

"But that doesn't mean the traffic isn't just horrendous!"

© Call Sign MMX

## LTC EMPLOYEE RUNS 4K IN 100 DEGREES!

### Terry's Saudi Arabian run to benefit cancer charity...

At a recent charity fun run in aid of the **Terry Fox Cancer Relief Charity**, over 200 people took part including an employee of **The London Taxi Company** (formerly known as LTI).

**David Bentley** was able to complete the 4 km run and raise over £200 in sponsorship along with other competitors who braved the 38C heat (100F).

The event was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and David had a London Taxi on hand to pick up any struggling competitors. Thankfully it wasn't needed, although it was a welcome sight as competitors crossed the finish line.

This was the first time David has taken part in the event, which has been going for 30 years. To offer a further incentive, the London Taxi Cab Club (operated in the Kingdom by Ujra Holdings) also offered 10 Gold and Silver membership packages to the Club as raffle prizes.

"It's a very meaningful charity," said David after the event, "and I'm glad that **The London Taxi Company, London Cab Club and myself** were able to give our support and raise some much needed funds to this worthwhile cause."



**Terry and taxi in Riyadh**

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# compliance officer's update

Hello Ladies & Gents,

## Credit Cards

The use of Credit Card for taxi trips is becoming more and more common and the journeys can often be fairly substantial and lucrative. With this in mind, I have been once again asked to remind you all of certain measures that you need to take that will guarantee payment. Naturally that is even more important on trips outside of the London area when signals are flaky or simply not responding at all.

On trips from London postal zones, the card is swiped through the terminal and once you have estimated the cost of the journey, authorisation is received in the normal way. If you reach the destination and are unable to clear the trip and print a receipt through the terminal, it is imperative that you take a rubbing of the card on a manual receipt and match the signature up with the one on the card to safeguard payment. Furthermore, if you are handed a credit card at the actual destination or at the end of the journey if that is different and are out of signal range, then in addition to the manual receipt it is very important to gain authorisation from the Call Centre. It can at times be quite intimidating if passengers are in a hurry



to catch a flight and you ask them to wait until the authorisation is received back. But to find a few weeks later that the large payment for the trip you received has had to be taken back because the bank has refused to honour the payment, well to say it can be very hard to accept would be an understatement. Unfortunately, if you don't follow the guidelines, then it can happen.

## Rule violations

You will see below that quite a large number of DaC members attended a recent Complaints Hearing and that the results have been published. With so many terminal messages going out on a regular basis, there really isn't any excuses for certain rule violations and as harsh as the sentences may seem, there is only one answer – **Play by the rules!**

In the busy lead-up to Christmas, we really don't want to lose any of the fleet but as I have mentioned so many times previously, these rules are in place to make it fair for us all. I could keep reminding you that you must be in the correct zone before booking in, that you must only press arrival when you are physically outside of a pick-up or that outlying zones are physical, but I am sure you have read it all before. But there you go, I've said it again!

*It only remains for me to wish all of you and your families a very happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year. May you all be very lucky...*

**Allan Evans**  
DaC Compliance Officer



## Complaints Results

A Complaints meeting was held on 28 Oct 2010. The results are below...

Abbreviations: Rep – Reprimand, Susp - Suspension

**Name/call sign**  
Paul Pryor (E05)

**Nature of Complaint**  
Booked into EC5 when position was Strand by Charing Cross  
Rules 3, 11

**Verdict**  
Rule 3: 1 week susp  
Rule 11: 2 weeks  
**Total: 3 weeks susp**

**\*Reginald Oliver (F51)**

Booked into EC5 when position was St James Square SW1 Rules 3, 11  
Booked into EC5 when position was Great Portland Street. Rules 3, 11  
Booked into EC5 when position was Kensington Rd/Exhibition Rd Rules 3, 11

**\*Three complaints heard as one**

**\*Reginald Oliver (F51)**

**\*Three complaints heard as one**

**\*Reginald Oliver (F51)**

**\*Rule 3 total: Rep**  
**Rule 11 total: 3 weeks**  
**Total: 3 weeks susp**

**Colin Sparks (H22)**

Booked into EC5 when position was Great Dover St SE1  
Rules 3, 11

**Rule 3: 1 week susp**  
**Rule 11: 2 weeks susp**  
**Total: 3 weeks susp**

**Keith D'Urso (M57)**

Booked into EC5 when position was A40 by Edgware rd flyover  
Rules 3, 11

**Rule 3: 1 week susp**  
**Rule 11: 2 weeks susp**  
**Total: 3 weeks susp**

**George Attrill (W29)**

Booked into EC5 when position Essex Rd by St Pauls Rd  
Rules 3, 11

**Rule 3: Rep**  
**Rule 11: 2 weeks**  
**Total 2 weeks (Upheld on Appeal)**

**Anicetus Mathurin (M51)**

Booked into EC5 when position was Store St / Gower St WC1  
Rules 3, 11

**Rule 3: Rep**  
**Rule 11: 2 weeks susp**  
**Total: 2 weeks susp**

**Murvel Clarke (M83)**

Booked into S99 when position was Heathrow (WW00)  
All outlying zones are physical Rule 11

**Rule 11: 2 weeks susp**  
**Total: 2 weeks susp**

**Kevin Molyneux (B20J)**

Passenger complained driver spoke to him in an aggressive manner when he asked to go locally from Citigroup rolling rank Rules 2, 3, 9

**Rule 2: 1 week susp**  
**Rule 3: 1 week**  
**Rule 9: Not guilty**  
**Total 2 weeks susp**

**Jeffrey Chandler (K03)**

Driver accepted trip and first refused to cover journey. Then became abusive towards Call Centre staff  
Rules: 1, 2, 3, 9, 12

**Rule 1: 2 weeks**  
**Rule 2: 1 week**  
**Rule 3: 1 week**  
**Rule 9: Not guilty**  
**Rule 12: Rep Total: 4 weeks susp**



For the second consecutive year, DaC Customer Service Representative **Fiona Mclachlan** has come up trumps with another cross-stitch Disney picture for the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* to auction at their Christmas Gala Dinner Dance at the Marriott Hotel, West India Quay, on Saturday 11th December.

Last year's cross-stitch was of *Mickey, Minnie and Pluto* with this year's moving over to a **Winnie the Pooh** scene featuring *Pooh, Eeyore, Piglet and Tigger* with the phrase *Friends come in all shapes and sizes!*

Dial-a-Cab driver and this year's WCHCD Master, **Jim Rainbird (T25)**, told *Call Sign*:

"Mickey, Minnie and Pluto caused a fierce bidding war last year between the M&O and DaC tables, with the winning bid of £270 coming from our Chairman, Brian Rice, who had just become a grandfather. It just so happens that another Board member has become a grandfather - three times over - recently, so there could be an internal bidding war before we even get to the auction! At least that's what we're hoping for, but if anyone who is not attending the dinner would like to enter a sealed bid for the silent auction, please let me know before Friday 10th December. Get yer wallets out!"

Jim added that the WCHCD also wanted to thank Fiona for turning up at Canary Wharf at a ridiculously early hour.

"This wasn't to do her usual job of organising taxis for Citi Group passengers, but to give out tee shirts at our Big Breakfast send off to 200 sick children

## Fiona's Cross-Stitch for the Magical Taxi Tour



Fiona with her amazing cross-stitch. Inset WCHCD Master, DaC's Jim Rainbird



who were about to depart on the 2010 Children's Magical Taxi Tour. Thanks Fiona..."

If you have only just received your Green Badge, you may not know, but the **Children's Magical Taxi Tour** is organised each year by the **Worshipful Company of Hackney**

**Carriage Drivers** when it takes around 200 children - many of whom suffer with life-threatening illnesses - to the Disneyland Resort, Paris. Many of the volunteer drivers, in addition to the organisers, are from **Dial-a-Cab** but the Company has grown enormously and now covers every facet of our trade...

## London Bridge Station Redevelopment

TfL has told *Call Sign* that the preparatory work for the new London Bridge bus station and taxi rank has now begun.

Completion is expected to be in May 2012 with a new modern looking station, more space for buses and taxis, improved waiting facilities and an improved road layout to ease congestion. The upgrade will also include improvements to the railway station concourse, making the area more open, attractive and welcoming to passengers.

According to Kulveer Ranger, the Mayor's transport advisor, using the current station is a fairly "grimy experience."

"However," he added, "this work will deliver a landmark station next to a landmark building, with a far better design that will improve both its efficiency and experience for passengers. We appreciate people's patience while work is carried out, but can assure them that by 2012 the improvements will be such that the area will be totally unrecognisable when compared to the station we have now."

Preparatory work on the improvements will take place overnight and during weekends until spring 2011. While the works are being carried out, there will be temporary bus shelters installed although bus routes and taxis will be able use the bus station as normal, although the exact positions within the station will change as work progresses. TfL say they will try to leave buses and taxis as untouched as they can during the work.

Although the new bus station will occupy the same site, it will be rotated by 90 degrees meaning passengers will be able to see departing trains from the bus station.

The work will be delivered in two main phases with work to prepare the site and remove the existing canopy carried out between November 2010 and April 2011. The main construction works will take place between September 2011 and May 2012.



An artist impression of the new London Bridge Station (courtesy Sellar)

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010



All members should by now have received an individual notice of Annual General Meeting 2010 advising that the meeting will be held at The HAC, Armoury House, City Road, London EC1Y 2BQ on Sunday 6th February 2011 at 11:00hrs.

The meeting this year was to consider an agenda including the Election of Officers and any proposed Rule Changes and Propositions.

Proposed Rule Changes, Propositions and Nominations for the Board, should have been received at Dial-a-Cab House on or before 09:00hrs on Friday 19th November 2010 and be received in accordance with Society Rules.

However, none were received and no more of the above can now be accepted. There was one nomination for the Board of Management in addition to the sitting Board received by the due time.

Howard Pears  
Company Secretary

So Christmas is almost upon us and before we know it, 2010 will be over! So before it's too late I thought I'd enter into the festive spirit by writing about some great bargains I have found online that will save you literally hundreds of pounds!

## Cheap Software

First up is an excellent website called Software4Students ([www.software4students.co.uk](http://www.software4students.co.uk)) which has academic agreements with Microsoft, Adobe and other big names to provide the latest software at massive reductions. For example, *Microsoft Office Pro Plus 2010* costs £429.99 retail, but you can get it for a mere £38.95 (currently, but prices do fluctuate). Or perhaps you'd like to upgrade to *Windows 7 Professional*? You could pay £219.99 in the shops or at Software4Students you could buy it for £38.95.

So what's the catch? Well, you have to be a parent, guardian or grandparent of a UK student who is in full-time education at primary, secondary, home-school, college or university. Microsoft, Adobe and others sell copies of their software at heavily reduced prices under academic licensing so that you pay the same price as schools and colleges do for the software. As long as you do not use the software for business purposes and meet the above requirements, you qualify.

## Free Apps

Up next is a group of websites I check every evening. If like me, you are an *iPhone* or *iPod Touch* owner, then you'll know how addictive apps can be and how it's all too easy to spend your hard-earned cash on the app store - especially if you have kids! Well, help is at hand. Every day, some app developers give their games / apps away for free for just one day to advertise themselves. Providing you download the app from the app store during the free period, it's free forever, including all subsequent updates. So, check out the following

As Xmas approaches, Call Sign decided to ask DaC's IT Network Administrator for some hints at filling an imaginary IT's Christmas stocking – especially of the younger variety!

# Jon's Stocking Fillers



websites regularly, especially close to and over the Christmas period, as there will be literally hundreds of free-for-the-day apps available.

**Slide to Play:** [www.slidetoplay.com/games/price-changes](http://www.slidetoplay.com/games/price-changes)

**Free App a Day:** [www.freeappaday.com](http://www.freeappaday.com)

**Free Game of the Day:** [www.freegame-oftheday.com](http://www.freegame-oftheday.com)

**Great App a Day:** [www.greatappaday.com](http://www.greatappaday.com)

## PC & Mac gaming

Finally, if you are a PC gamer like me, then this will interest you. I use a free games management client called *Steam*. This is a piece of

software that you can safely install on your computer, which allows you to purchase all the latest PC games in one intuitive interface (via credit card or PayPal).

All games are in digital format, so you can download them instantly and you legally run them on as many computers as you want! In addition, all your settings and purchases are "cloud-based" meaning that if your computer dies on you, no problem. Simply login to Steam on another computer and re-download all your games (and settings) for no charge! And the best bit is that many of the latest games have free demos, so you can spend hours trying out great games for free! Perfect for testing out that game you're thinking of buying, but are not sure if it's worth the price tag.

They also have regular sales of up to 80% off (especially around Christmas). The Steam software even has a massive online community, which you become a member of when you join Steam. You can then chat to friends, arrange online games and discuss tactics! You can get the software or find out more at: [www.steampowered.com](http://www.steampowered.com).

*I hope you found this useful and that I've managed to save you some money this Christmas. I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year...*

**Jonathen Winterburn**  
DaC Network Administrator

### CAB GUIDES...

## 100% PASS RATE!

The latest **Cab Guide Course** organised by *The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* has culminated with a 100% pass rate success. This is a testament to the hard work of the students who began their course back in September 2010. The written exam took place on 6th November, followed on Sunday 7th when the students took a practical exam walking around the City. This was quite a nerve racking experience, but all of them did well – particularly as some of them were competing against the bells of St Paul's Cathedral as they talked about Paternoster Square! All of the students agreed that they had really enjoyed the course and learning more about the City. They will receive their certificates and badges at the Liveryman's Dinner on 25th November.

**A new course will begin in February 2011 and anyone interested in joining can contact The Clerk, Mary Whitworth, for further details and an application pack. Please telephone her on 01494 765922 or email [wchcd@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:wchcd@tiscali.co.uk).**

# 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...**

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***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 May 2009, **Call Sign** published an article that was to change the lives of many drivers both on **Dial-a-Cab** and the trade in general. That was the month we published an article about **Ricky Manetta (N16)**. At the time, many just knew him as the friendly marshal on Bank Street E14 or for the more observant among you, the good looking one sitting on the back of the police motorbike to protect the front runners at the London Marathon! But the biggest clue to what this article is about is if you are a fan of the UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship), because you may well have seen him with another DaC marshal, **Stefan Fitt (P88)**, walking fighters into the Octagon and co-coordinating the event!

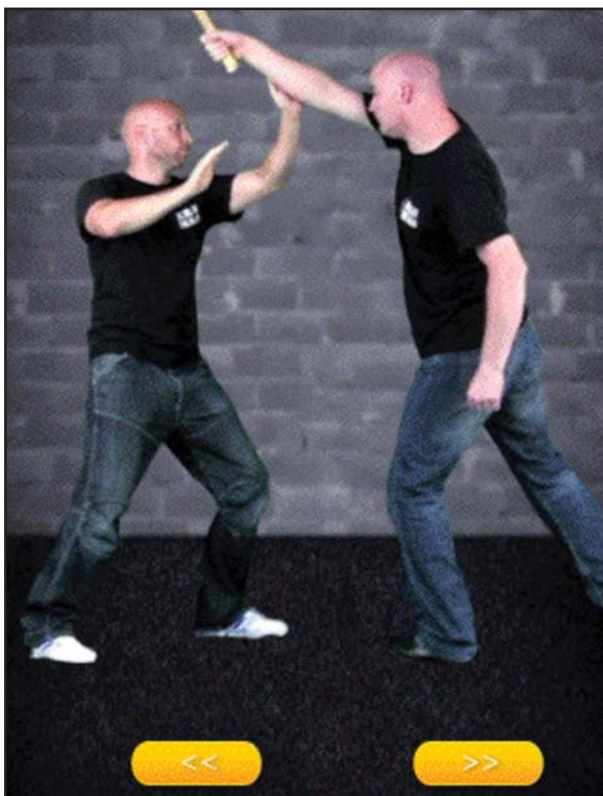
Ricky also had two classes in Essex teaching **Krav Maga**, the defence system that Israel's special forces use. Delving deeper, we found his history in martial arts went back some 20 years, including boxing, jujitsu, wrestling, mixed martial arts and Thai boxing. Ricky went on to run his own self-defence classes and soon after the **Call Sign** article telling drivers about the classes, the LTDA read it and offered to supply premises and allow members to attend the course free of charge! There was a large uptake for the offer with many of those still attending Ricky's classes today.

The classes are not just martial arts; they are about defending yourself against anyone carrying a weapon as quickly and efficiently as possible. Ricky explained that age, weight and fitness did not matter because the classes were designed to get drivers fitter, stronger and more flexible - the emphasis being on techniques and once learned, you'd be confident of being able to deal with any situation - even if you still had trouble running for the bus!

**But now Ricky has also revealed some astonishing news. Together with Apple, he has released the ultimate interactive MMA Krav Maga training video App - State of the Art Self Defence. In it, Ricky will teach you all you will ever need to know about how to protect yourself and you won't even have to leave your home - although when learning a new martial art, you should really train with a qualified**

## RICKY'S SELF DEFENCE APP

All you will ever need to know to defend yourself



One of the screenshots from Ricky's new app

should always be your last resort.

Speaking to **Call Sign**, Ricky said: "The App has 21 different self defence moves against different weapons including guns and baseball bats down to fists and elbows. In fact this App can teach you what would take you six months to learn if you came to my classes. The more you replay the App, the better you will become and for just £2.99 you can become proficient at defending yourself against any eventuality of being attacked. In fact, many of the guys who come to my classes also have downloaded the App so that they can also

practise at home.

I could probably put the lessons onto a set of DVDs, but that would probably set you back around £45. With the App and for £2.99, you can take it around with your iPhone so that it's always with you to look at when you get some spare time."

To download Ricky's App, go to iTunes and type in Pocket MMA Krav Maga or for more info you can contact Ricky on 07950 267 574.

instructor first.

This App teaches state-of-the-art self defence techniques for both the beginner and the seasoned martial artist who wish to add to their arsenal. The technique is already used by special forces from around the world and also used in movies such as *The Matrix* and the *James Bond* films.

The essence is **Krav Maga** with its no nonsense, forward attacking style of defence, but there are also techniques and adaptations from other arts. Ricky will always be the first to tell you that you should always do your best to avoid any type of aggressive or violent confrontation and that physical self defence

## London taxi fares consultation

TfL has put forward proposals regarding changes to taxi fares and other regulations. Subject to approval by the TfL Board in mid-February, changes to the tariffs and other regulations will be implemented in early April 2011.

Luke Howard, Senior Strategy & Integration Manager at TfL Taxi & Private Hire, has sent out a consultation document covering the 2011 tariff revision and other matters connected with taxi fares and regulations. They are seeking views on any of the matters covered in the document or other related matters. In particular, TfL seeks views on the following proposals:

- The proposed tariff revision based on the cost index;
- The proposed renewal of the provision for abnormal fuel price increases;
- The proposed revision to some of the fixed fares for shared journeys from Buck Palace;
- The proposed revision to allow agreed fares for longer journeys in association with the fixed fare scheme for journeys from Leicester Square late on Friday and Saturday nights;
- The proposed promotion of the possibility of agreeing fares in general, to be capped by the metered fare;
- The proposed freedom for certain organisations to agree fixed fares for booked taxi journeys, independent of the metered fare.

The document in its entirety forms the consultation document and any part of it may be referred to in a response. Comments or information are invited by 20 December. The document can be viewed on the **Call Sign** website at [www.dac-callsign.co.uk](http://www.dac-callsign.co.uk) and found at the bottom left of the home page. Questions to Luke Howard on [luke.howard@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:luke.howard@tfl.gov.uk).

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

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

## Ladies &amp; Gentlemen

I hope you will forgive me being rather indulgent this month, but as a Committee member of the London Taxidriers Fund for Underprivileged Children I would like to 'plug' the Christmas Gala Concert we are presenting at St John's, Smith Square, Westminster on 15th December, commencing at 19.45.

When I first thought about organising a concert, I didn't realise what was involved in the planning of such an event and how exciting it would be, but the support I have received from the LTFUC Committee has been very gratifying.

The Gala Concert has developed into being what I believe to be one of the first major concerts ever to be organised in the London taxi industry - let alone our charity. The tremendous support received from **Dial-a-Cab** and others in our trade and beyond has been outstanding.

As for the concert itself, we are extremely lucky to have maestro Conductor **William Carslake**, together with Lead violinist **Simon Kodurand** and the *BBC 2010 Young Musician of the Year Concerto Finalist Emma Halnan* as guest soloist. These will be performing many beautiful pieces together with 55 musicians of the **London Charity Orchestra**.

We are equally proud that 60 children from the *Finchley Children's Music Group* under the direction of Conductor and Musical Director **Grace Rossitor** will be singing songs we love. The evening is going to be fun for all the family.

# Mike Son's bits and pieces...



## Some of the compositions to be performed:

*Cecile Chaminade Concertino; Tchaikovsky Sleeping Beauty; Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols; Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy; Arr. Bob Chilcott Aka-tombo; Arr. Betty Bertaux S'Vivon; Rachmaninov Tebe Pojem; Arr. Sir Michael Tippett Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen; Shostakovich' Romance from The Gadfly; Tchaikovsky's Symphony no. 5, movement 3 and Extracts from Nutcracker Suite including Waltz of the Snowflakes.*

There will also be a few surprises so if you have never been to a live concert, then please do not miss this exceptional opportunity.

Tickets are priced at £30, £25 and £15

and, subject to availability, can be booked on 020 7222 1061, online at [www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk), by post to St John's, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HA (please enclose SAE) or from any Committee member of the LTFUC.

## Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall

I know it was in last month's issue of *Call Sign*, but it is worth repeating. The Honorary President (**Bill Tyzack C06**), Honorary Chairman (**David Lessman D19**), Committee members and the children represented by the Fund are honoured and delighted that **Her Royal Highness Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall** is now Patron of the London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children.

It must be said that this honour could not have been achieved had it not been for the help of many London taxi drivers, carers and indeed our benefactors...

*As we enter the Xmas holiday season, I hope that whatever religion or holiday you are celebrating, that this season is a happy and healthy one for you...*

**Mike Son**  
DaC Special Projects

## Bill Munro asks Dial-a-Cab drivers...

# Help me write about taxi trade history!

### Help me write about taxi trade history!

The London cab trade often runs in families. If it does in yours, can you say 'yes' to any of these questions?

- \* Did your father, your grandfather or maybe your great grandfather drive a taxi or even a horse cab in the capital?
- \* Did your family run a fleet of cabs or did any of them work for taxicab dealers such as Mann and Overton or Beardmore Motors?
- \* Did they work in a knowledge school or for the PCO in some capacity? Or did they have any other job or business related to the London cab trade?
- \* Can you trace your family's connections with the London cab trade back to the 19th century, or even earlier?

If you can answer 'yes' to any of these questions, or have any historical connections to the trade and have stories you'd like to share, I'd love to hear from you. I've written extensively about the history of the London taxi and have answered many family history questions sent via the website of the *London Vintage Taxi Association*. Now I'm writing a book about the people in the London cab trade going back from 1970 to the very earliest days of the hackney coach in the 1630s. It's a book aimed at helping the family historian trace their London cab trade ancestors, as well as those with a special interest in the history of the London cab trade.

If you want to share your stories with me, or would like some help in researching your cab trade ancestors, please contact me directly, (details below) or go to my new blog. It's at: <http://cabdriverhistory.blogspot.com/> While there, you can also find out more about me and what the book is about.

Through the blog you can also request some free downloads that I have prepared that will help you with your research. They are:

\* **Trade Names:** Listing the names and description of cab trade-related professions you might find in your research.

\* **Cab and Taxi Dealers and Makers:** Listing the names of some hansom cab makers, most London taxicab dealers, taxi makers and some of the bigger proprietors.

**Bill Munro**  
Email: [bill.munro99@btinternet.com](mailto:bill.munro99@btinternet.com)  
Mobile: 07748 782437



**Keith Reading**  
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Professional Toastmasters

"I could have eaten in a posh restaurant for that price," **James Barwick (J68)** told *Call Sign* recently, referring to the PCN he received after being observed by a CCTV camera stopping in the Essex Road bus lane.

"I was hungry and saw a kebab shop, so I stopped to quickly grab a takeaway," he explained. "The next thing I knew was when the brown envelope dropped through my letterbox!" "However," Jim continued, "the wording on the PCN was 'being in a bus lane' and that is something taxis can do, so I decided to appeal on the grounds that the wording was incorrect. Ok, it was a technicality perhaps, but I thought it was worth a try."

"I had a reply from Islington Council who just didn't want to

## JAMES £60 KEBAB!



'play ball', stating that taxis were not allowed in bus lanes and then later in the same letter going on to state that taxis *are* allowed in bus lanes under certain circumstances,

so how ambiguous is that," James rhetorically asked our reporter?

"They claimed I was parked 'as a matter of convenience and no activity could be observed' and demanded payment within 14 days. I spoke with **Nuala** in *Driver Services* who kindly ran my problem past our parking guru **Barrie Segal**, but the general consensus of opinion was to pay up the £60 before it got even more expensive!"

Ending with a smile, James said: "I bet The Ivy does a kebab for less than £60 quid! Anyway, in future I shall be very careful where I park up to eat..."

© Call Sign Magazine MMX

## VITO ADVERTISING?

In 2003, **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Howard Kott (B74)** made history by becoming the first London licensed taxi driver to become *Taxi Driver of the Year* in three consecutive years – a feat that has never been equalled. Nowadays he is more involved with renting out taxis than with driving them, but nonetheless is still a DaC member.

Howard recently contacted *Call Sign* to share his concern over a recent full page Vito advertisement in some trade papers. The headline of the ad reads: **At £99 a week it'll keep you in the black.** After the word 'week' there is a small asterisk that provides a link to the tiny print at the bottom of the page. It was that print that concerned Howard, including the part that reads:

*Finance based on 20,000 miles per annum.*

A sub headline added: **Includes Service 24h, 36 month / 150,000 mile warrantee and 36 month / 100,000 mile Vito Taxi Service Package.**

Howard told *Call Sign*: "I have just read the full page advert in a trade magazine (not *Call Sign*) for a new Vito, which is advertised at £99 per week. Reading the small print at the bottom of the page, it would appear that the total cost payable over 60 months at £429 p/m, including the deposit of £7,672 and an optional final payment of £9,725, comes to over £43,000 and possibly more if you do over 20,000 miles per annum.

Furthermore, the large print at the top of the ad states that the price includes a 36 month / 100,000 mile Vito taxi service package. So if you do only drive 20,000 miles a year to keep your costs at £99 per week, then your service pack is only good for 60,000 miles.

The real weekly outlay for this deal when adding the deposit and final payment is £165 per week, but if you want to take just four

weeks holiday per annum, then this rises to £180 per week - and then if you only do 20,000 miles a year.

Add to that the cost of insurance, road tax, PCO fees, tyres, out of warranty repairs, meter rental and anything else you might have to lay out for during the five years and you have to ask yourself if it's worth buying your new cab or whether you are better off renting and having total flexibility? Five years is a long time and circumstances change..."



Howard Kott after winning his second Taxi Driver of the Year title

## CHIPPED WINDSCREEN?

Just go to DaC at Roman Way

*Autostone Chip Repairs can almost invisibly fix a chip in your windscreen with most insurance companies paying for it.*

*They are at Roman Way every Tuesday and Friday from 8am to 5pm.*

**More info at [www.autostonechiprepairltd.com](http://www.autostonechiprepairltd.com)  
Or phone at 0800 612 7950**

It was appropriate that **Call Sign's** elusive snapper-in-chief and roving reporter, **Alan Green (E52)** should celebrate his 65th birthday on October 31st – Halloween!

As well as being a Dial-a-Cab colleague and friend of Alan's for more years than I care to remember, our wives and families have also become close friends and have shared many holidays, social events and celebrations together. So when Alan's wife Marilyn - who he affectionately refers to as his 'Chief' - mentioned to my Chief, Maureen, that she would like to throw him a surprise 65th birthday party, they both donned their best witch's hats and over a boiling hot caldron of oil, concocted their dastardly plan!

That plan was to take advantage of Alan's good nature of putting himself before others. Many drivers who know Alan may not be aware of the tireless support he gives to the trade charities and organisations, as well as the various committees he sits on - especially for the elderly.

Coincidentally, I together with my family was celebrating my Mother's 90th birthday party on 31st October as well. The plan was to ask Alan to transport my Mother-in-Law - who is wheelchair bound - from her nursing home in Barnet to the party venue in Wanstead, wait, take a few snaps and then return the aforementioned lady back to her nursing home, sober and respectable!

Such is the benevolence of the man, he didn't even bat an eyelid and agreed to do the task willingly. What he may have said under his breath I dare not have asked, but he must have thought why the \$&\*& I was not using

# Halloween havoc for Call Sign's snapper!



**Dracula - sorry Alan - and Marilyn at Alan's Surprise 65th birthday party**

- were transforming their semi suburban house into a Halloween themed cavern, complete with zombies, witches and skeletons hanging throughout the house.

Everything went to plan as Alan entered his house in darkness; the snapper was well and truly "snapped" when all was revealed with family and friends eagerly waiting in all forms of Halloween costumes.

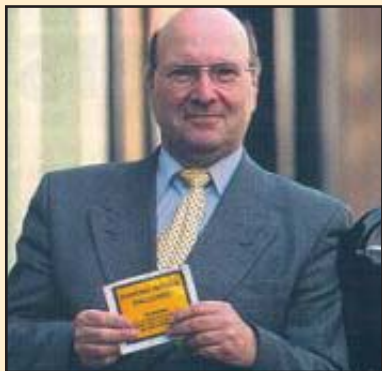
For the first time that I can ever recall, Alan was left speechless! But a great time was had by all, so well done Marilyn and congratulations to the now renamed Alan "Dracula" Green!

**David Burnetts (S43)**

my own **Dial-a-Cab** taxi for this wait and return trip!

**Whilst we were celebrating in Wanstead and keeping Alan occupied, Marilyn and her family - including one or two goblins**

## Barrie: Watch out for CCTV in Pimlico Road!



**Barrie Segal issues a warning**

**Call Sign** recently received a phone call from **Dial-a-Cab's** parking expert **Barrie Segal**. He told us of a new manually controlled CCTV camera being operated by Westminster Council in **Pimlico Road**.

This is a regular stopping place for taxi drivers with restaurants, a Starbucks coffee house and a toilet. Those who have received PCNs around the Queensway area – especially after a three minute stop at the public convenience lay-by at the top end – will have seen how the operators are trained to record every detail of the "offence" by closing in on the registration plate and street name. The same system now operates in Pimlico Road with several DaC drivers having already received PCNs.

Barrie told **Call Sign**: "Around 18 months ago, Government guidelines via the *Traffic Management Act of 2004* specified that CCTV

cameras had to be of a minimum resolution and that 100 of the Westminster cameras failed to meet those specs. As a result, the 100 were turned off and had to be replaced. They are obviously trying to recuperate some of that lost cash and taxi drivers are suffering because the nature of their job means that they occasionally

have to stop for a break."

**Barrie Segal deals with DaC's arbitration appeals and has won virtually all of those he has been involved with. He is also the founder of [www.appealnow.com](http://www.appealnow.com) - the only website in the world where you can appeal your parking ticket online in 4½ minutes.**

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

## LOCKHOUSE SECURITY

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Inbound tour operators are rubbing their hands together with delight at the news of a Royal Wedding next year, while those trying to sell overseas holidays fear that many will choose to stay at home at least until after the wedding of **Prince William** and **Kate Middleton**.

The calendar of Royal events suggested that August, accepted as the peak month for the holiday industry was the most likely month with the 13th looking to be the day. Of course they were wrong with April 29th turning out to be the one. An **ABTA** spokesman told **Call Sign** that as with many major sporting events such as the World Cup, the wedding could well cause people to delay booking overseas holidays until after it has taken place. Then with the Olympics following soon behind, London could be the place to be for the next few years.

"However," the spokesman continued, "this is the best possible showcase for the UK as a travel destination and will present great business opportunities for inbound and domestic tour operators and for ABTA travel agents wanting to sell packages to London. In addition, all of the thousands of hotel rooms that are being provided for the Olympics in 2012 will mean that there will be extra bed space available. It all means more work for London taxi drivers too."

**Sandie Dawe**, chief executive of *VisitBritain*, said: "This is absolutely wonderful news for William and Kate. It will also be an enormous boost for the British tourism industry!"

# Royal Wedding Good News for Taxi Trade

And does it mean an invite for the Chairman!



Renewing old acquaintances!!!!

**Dial-a-Cab** Chairman **Brian Rice**, whilst sending congratulations to the royal couple, reiterated that the royal account the family have with DaC is always at William and Kate's disposal.

Rumours suggested that Mr Rice could well be on the royal invitation list, giving him an opportunity to renew old acquaintances...!

For those new to Dial-a-Cab, **Call Sign** had been following the progress of **Sam Bezzina** - son of Dial-a-Cab driver **Dean Bezzina (M10)** - and his ambition to box for England. He has now achieved that and has won a silver medal for his country...

## SAM LOSS IN EUROPE!

**Call Sign** has been part-sponsoring **Dean Bezzina's (M10)** son **Sam** for almost two years - the first one of which he remained unbeaten for - and we have watched his progress. Losses have been few but whenever they have occurred, Sam has learned from them and come back stronger. But a recent bout against his fellow **West Ham Boxing Club** teammate and old rival, **Alfie Price**, proved to be something of a shocker so far as the verdict was concerned.

The 2010 boxing season got underway with CYPs - formally known as the Feds. Winning one of these championships used to carry a substantial amount of prestige with the finals being held at the Grosvenor House Hotel in front of a dinner-suited crowd, including many top boxing professionals both past and present. Although a title is still up for grabs, the CYPs have lost substantial kudos and are now better known as a precursor to the Junior ABA Championships.

**Sam's first bout in the tournament came in the Northeast London final, and in an all West Ham affair Sam faced Alfie Price in the U57kg Class 4 category.**

The first round was a cagey one with neither boxer wanting to commit themselves, being weary of the opponent's counter punch. So it was pretty much an even round, but the second round proved to be much livelier with both lads this time trying to take the initiative and throwing far more punches. It got the crowd cheering and was heating up into a great contest. But it was still even and whoever won the third and final round would take the East London Championship title.

The bell sounded with Sam and Alfie rushing to the centre. The leather was flying once more and this was where the training, groundwork and all those early morning runs paid dividends. Sam was landing the sharper, cleaner shots and it looked as though things were going his way. As the final bell sounded, it was over to the judge's scorecards with most ringsiders assuming that Sam's last round was more than enough to take the title. But the crowd were shocked to find the judges with a split decision and then giving the majority decision to Alfie.

The crowd continued arguing afterwards, but the two boxers hugged in the centre of the ring knowing that they had given of their best.

Sam is now looking forward to meeting Alfie again in March for the most important date of the year - the **Junior ABA Championships**. In the meantime, Sam will probably be boxing on a few club shows just to keep fresh and ready for those ABAs...



Sam (claret vest) throws a straight left at Alfie Price

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"I would like to say a very big 'thank you' to those DaC guys who got me out of trouble recently," **James Crawford (M18)** told *Call Sign*. So in our usual nosy and intrusive way, we asked James what the thanks were for?

"I was travelling southbound down Park Lane," he explained, "when I heard a strange noise from the engine. Suddenly and quite frighteningly, the steering went very heavy and I just about managed to steer the cab into South Street. I guessed immediately that it was a broken power steering belt and sure enough, when I looked, the belt had split apart," he continued.

"Thankfully no other damage had occurred, so I called the AA and was told they would be with me in about an hour but that he was unlikely to have a taxi replacement belt on board. However, they would be happy to fit one if I could get it myself."

So James thought he'd try to get a message put out on his DaC terminal asking if anyone had a spare belt? Within just five minutes **Peter Douglas (C57)** appeared on the scene offering two belts of differing sizes suitable for the TX1. A few minutes later, another three DaC drivers showed up to see if they could assist. Then, astonishingly, yet another driver buzzed in to say he was on his way! Also, while we were at the roadside, a couple of DaC drivers had gone out of their way to specially cruise by to check me that I was ok. When they saw everything was in hand, they carried on working, but I was touched that so many fellow DaC men had showed concern. So I had all the attention I needed to get me back on the road!"

Sounding genuinely moved, James told us

## Camaraderie on Dial-a-Cab



**James and broken fanbelt. Amazed at how many drivers offered to help!**

that he had been on Dial-a-Cab for 15 years, "...and this incident endorses what I knew all along, they're a great bunch of guys and gals and that DaC is a great company. After all, I bet not all radio circuits would have even put my message out!"

"Nobody was sure what the belts cost to buy, so I gave Peter Douglas some money to cover the cost of replacing the belts and told him that any change left over should go towards the British Legion Fund. Only when the attending drivers were happy that I was alright and merely had to wait for the AA to arrive, did they then go on their separate ways."

James story continued on the following day when he took the cab to his garage, **Just**

**Diesels** in SW2, where owner Lee Norrington checked everything out and made up an 'emergency kit' for him to keep in his cab comprising water hoses, spare light bulbs and those infamous rubber belts ... "all suitable for my TX1," James said with a broad smile. "It's the sort of personal service Lee provides."

Ending up, James told us: "Having been on DaC for fifteen years, I love it and this experience has shown me what Dial-a-Cab camaraderie is all about, even though it just confirmed what I already knew. So again I say a big thank you to everyone who helped me out on that dark November night."

© Call Sign Magazine MMX

## Ex-DaC driver's brave battle

*Call Sign* recently received a letter about the condition of former **Dial-a-Cab** driver **David Brown (ex-B13J)**. David used to drive the taxi of another former DaC driver and CS correspondent, **Ron Colman (ex-J09)**.

David now lives in Gorleston near Yarmouth and became well known in the trade as the only driver who had been allowed by the PCO to drive a licensed taxi following the amputation of a leg. Just a stump was left for a false leg to be fitted.

Sadly though, complications set in and he later went back into hospital to have the remaining piece of leg also removed. Several years later, David again had to go into hospital and had his other leg removed.

But now yet more complications that necessitate another operation for David to remove the final part of that second leg too and while that final amputation will hopefully stop further problems, because there are no stumps left on either leg, it will probably mean that David can't have any false legs.

According to David's daughter Samantha, there has been no whining about his condition from her father, while Ron Colman says that even though David will be in a wheelchair for the rest of his life, you can only stand back and admire his upbeat way of talking.

"I really take my hat off to one of the bravest men I have ever had the honour of knowing," Ron told us. "He certainly joins the ranks of the very bravest - in this instance an ex-licensed DaC taxi driver."

**If you know David but have lost contact over the years and would like to say hello again, Call Sign would be happy to pass on any emails for him...**



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

Greetings from the lovely old Spa town of Moffat up in Dumfriesshire. I came up here to chill out halfway through making this year's wine deliveries and chill out is SO accurate! As I type these notes, it is 5C outside but don't worry, it's plenty warm inside! The log cabin is perfect for a break but it's business as well – the owner of a restaurant in town has put in a good order for wine, so it was well worth the journey!

Just before I headed north last week, I got chatting to a cab driver at City Airport who was telling me how he lived as far away as Scotland and he put me onto a little nugget that may be of interest to **Call Sign** readers.

## Live out of town and need a hotel?

Well how about a lovely two-bed town house on the river! Flat-share available...

It is amazing how many **Dial-a-Cab** drivers live literally hundreds of miles away from their regular work place. We have some who live in Devon, Cornwall, France, Spain and one even in Switzerland! And of course, living in those places means you don't go home nightly.

Some stay in small, reasonably priced hotels such as the Etap in Docklands. But although nothing will ever be home, wouldn't those drivers prefer something a bit more friendly?

**Well Call Sign has been told of a two bed double room Town House on the river, with**



**ensuite, river view and close to Surrey Quays.**

It has a relaxed, laid-back atmosphere and is close to many amenities such as a 24-hour Tesco, cinema, ten-pin bowling etc. Just two minutes for the ferry to Canary Wharf, Jubilee and East London Lines close by and importantly, off-street parking.

A warm, cool flatmate - homely chilled atmosphere. Everything is inclusive - linen etc. All you need is your suitcase. Weekdays only would be great...

If that sounds like it might work for you, then why not give Thelma a call on 07939 551053.

## Christmas wine deliveries

I recently returned from the south of France with a long wheel based transit filled with bottles of the finest grape! If you are unfamiliar with my wines, they are organically produced from a small family run vineyard in the *Corbières*. The soil in the shadow of the Alaric Mountain is perfect for the final outcome - that wonderful glass of organic wine!

I have been taking Christmas orders for several weeks already, but the holidays are getting ever closer so don't delay if you want something really special! The full-bodied fruity red and the crisp dry rosé are both superb value at £5 per bottle or £55 for a case of 12 (*Ed's note: And they are delicious...*).

In previous years I made deliveries on certain evenings to Finsbury Square. I'm happy to mix the boxes to whichever your favourites are. And of course, you cannot get these bottles anywhere else in the UK.

**Drop me a line. The email is: woodford19@btinternet.com or phone on 07853 128 823 to get some in before Xmas.**

**A bientot...**

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

# 150 NOT OUT!

In April 1997, eight **Dial-a-Cab** drivers faced a grilling by the-then Board of Management to decide who would take over the helm of **Call Sign** from outgoing Editor **Gerald 'Jery' Craig**. Jery had been there for almost 14 years and 117 issues, although for several years due to cost cutting by the BoM, Jery was only allowed to publish every two months.

At the time, there was a feeling among the Board that future editors should be awarded short-term contracts so that fresh faces could be brought in after three years rather than have the same face and formula year after year. Jery was given the news and invited to re-stand for the position. He declined but "nagged" **Alan Fisher** to put himself forward – something he declined to do until eventually after the 101st phone call from Jery when Alan gave in!

Alan did admit that he shocked himself by coming out on top. He had been on DaC for 22 years at the time, involved in the mag as *Big Al* since the 1980s and its predecessor, **News and Views** as a poet for several years before that. Although he had worked for the *Daily Mirror* and even had a novel published by the time he was 18, his experience at editing was nil. But the interviewers must have seen something they liked because they put him on a three-month trial.

Now as Alan equals Jery's 14-year tenure, he has also achieved something that is unlikely to be beaten so long as **Call Sign** stays monthly; this December issue marks his 150th. Alan proudly told me that he publishes 11 **Call Signs** a year and has never missed an issue – even when a close relative suddenly died, when his wife and proofer Linda had her quadruple heart by-pass or when he moved home. I asked Alan how long he thought he would be editing DaC's mag?

"I really don't know," he said, "just as they decided in 1997, I still operate on a contract and that could be terminated with very little notice. What I do know is that I won't be doing this in 14 years time and in fact I probably wouldn't have been here now had I not had such brilliant assistance from my regular contributors, drivers who constantly send me stories for publication and especially my photographer **Alan Green (E52)** who also does so much running around for me! The BoM also help by giving me unlimited freedom!"

Alan admitted that he felt proud at reaching the 150-issue milestone.

"I hadn't even realised until a driver asked me last month how many issues I had edited. At the time it didn't seem a lot until I realised how many batches of 11 issues a year it takes to reach 150!"

And was there anything he had published over that time that he was particularly proud of?

"I'm very proud that **Call Sign** was the first trade magazine to accept letters via email – that was from our first issue in 1997 – and also the first magazine by many years to provide an on-line version and library facility back in May 1998, thanks to Vince Chin. We have also had many touching stories and campaigns – some of which were successful and others that weren't, but at least where we could say that we tried. But one success comes to mind. In 1999, **Call Sign** ran a campaign claiming that the PCO's stance towards insulin dependant diabetics by taking their licenses away was unfair and should be replaced by a policy based more on commonsense with each case taken individually depending on medical advice. Even the head of the PCO Roy Ellis appeared in this mag to put the PCO point of view. Several insulin dependant diabetics on DaC later got their licenses back following court action based on that principle, followed by other non-radio drivers. All said that it was the campaign in **Call Sign** that had started the ball rolling. When I received several thank-you letters from drivers who had gotten their livelihoods back, that meant more than anything else I have ever had..."

**Ron Yarborough  
Call Sign on-line**



Alan's first 'Big Al' photo!

## MOTORHOME FOR HIRE



4/5 berth luxury fully loaded autotrail motorhome available to rent 58 registration, all dates currently available. Available for domestic and euro use Good rates for DaC drivers Call Dick Francis (T15) on **07976 444313**

This issue of **Call Sign** contains the result of a survey suggested by DaC driver **Bernie Silver (G08)** in which we asked 132 **Dial-a-Cab** drivers whether they would be working during the London Olympics? Within that article, we made mention of Bernie's battle to get an oversized pothole in Finsbury Pavement repaired so that as drivers turning left from their traditional waiting grounds of the Finz, would not have to endure their taxis dropping several feet into a 'hole' lot of nothingness!

However, since the survey article came into our office, yet another has come in which suggests we may have to live with the hole because London Mayor, **Boris Johnson**, has apparently slashed the pothole repair budget – or at the very least, frozen it.

Boris has announced a reduction for local road maintenance - street repairs etc - by 22% and local councils will have to get the money by cutting other projects, otherwise London's streets – should we suffer a frosty winter - could resemble those of a third world country.

The amount given to local authorities by TfL

# Bernie's Pothole at the Finz forever?



**A fed up Bernie realises his battle may be lost**

will fall from £169 million in 2009/10 to £132 million in 2013/14 and whilst they claim they will keep the roads in good repair through greater operational efficiency, a TfL

spokesman also added that the funding they provide to London's boroughs through the *Local Implementation Plan* process would be reduced in line with the General Grant TfL received from central Government.

The spokesman added: "Funding allocations for programmes such as road maintenance, bridge strengthening, major schemes and the borough discretionary fund have been safeguarded. But clearly there will be some areas funded through the *LIP* where schemes will need to be prioritised and to support this, TfL has provided greater flexibility and local accountability in the use of formula funding provided to London boroughs."

We think that means that Bernie's battle has been lost!

## Sovereign Automotive there to help drivers

**Sovereign Automotive Ltd** has entered the accident management arena with a specific focus on setting a new benchmark in product innovation and customer service in the licensed hire market, all with the help of some familiar faces.

Sovereign has recently been acquired by three of the previous owners of **Cab Aid Limited**. Dilip Patel, Steve Bilham and Steve Johnson were the founding directors of the company that was successfully sold to Helphire Group plc in November 2007. Cab Aid was founded in 2004 and rapidly expanded from just 40 vehicles to a fleet over 300 strong by the time of sale. During that period, turnover grew to £7m with net annual profits in excess of £1m. Under the guidance of the management team, the company excelled in service delivery, customer relations and process management, all of which were seen as market leading within the industry. All three directors remained within the business for 18 months post sale before completing a successful handover to the new management team.

Having pursued other interests, the three were ready for a new challenge when the Sovereign opportunity presented itself. Drawing on their vast experience in this field, they are determined to move the boundaries of customer service even further forward and to assist this Sovereign is developing new product offerings to provide a greater range of services to accident victims. Mobility solutions and requirements are continually changing and Sovereign is at the forefront of these developments.

Steve Johnson told **Call Sign**: "The opportunity to return to the industry and develop exciting new products was one we could not resist. We saw the huge potential to build and grow a business in a sector where we have knowledge, expertise and no shortage of enthusiasm. There are interesting times ahead and quality of service is going to be paramount to us succeeding in our ultimate goal of innovating the market."

**"Assisting innocent victims of road traffic accidents is still a core service and we are keen to help any licensed driver who has been deprived of the use of their vehicle through no fault of their own. Our committed team is available to assist and provide replacement vehicles to keep drivers mobile."**

**Further information with Sovereign Automotive on 020 8661 1111 or [www.sauto.co.uk](http://www.sauto.co.uk).**

## Winter Wonderland back!



**Up until 4th January 2011 between 10am and 10pm every day, Winter Wonderland is back at Hyde Park illuminating the dark winter evenings and filling them with happy people looking for taxis!**

Last year's Winter Wonderland saw an incredible two million visitors wandering through the 20 acre site. With no admission fee, Winter Wonderland offers a great Christmas day-out in the capital. As you walk through the QM Gates at Hyde Park Corner, you can wander round the Angel's Christmas Market featuring over 100 wooden chalets - many run by the artisans themselves – offering unusual and handmade gifts with a number of the stalls also featuring traditional Christmas items such as wooden toys, nativity scenes and decorations. Festive music fills the air as visitors are tempted by the sweet smells of freshly cooked gourmet festive treats including gingerbread, sweets, fresh breads and pastries.

There are many rides for those who aren't happy just looking and of course, they aren't free. Also there is London's largest outdoor ice-rink, the iconic Giant Observation Wheel that can be seen from the other side of the park and beyond, a new and exciting rollercoaster ride and of course, as his work elsewhere is completed, Santa Land for kids has set up shop.

Winter Wonderland also sees the return of the traditional **Zippos** circus show. Last year saw most of the circus shows sell out so pre-booking is advised. There are two different performances. Daytimes see a family festive circus show during the day, featuring Timoni the Elf and Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer who will open up a magical toy box to reveal a thrilling line up of colourful circus stars.

Evenings inside the heated Winter Wonderland Big Top can watch the amazing **Cirque D'Hiver**, a brand new world-class circus with the world's finest artistes bringing with them a single breathtaking performance spectacle set inside a sleeping mind. Contortionists, aerialists and acrobats, the heart-stopping Wheel of Death and a final battle of fire are all part of this stunning visual spectacle.

Back outside, the evenings also come alive when choirs and bands perform and the trees along the Serpentine Road sparkle with thousands of Christmas lights, highlighting the beauty of London's best-loved park. Then they can climb their taxis to get home, far happier than when they arrived!

**Enquiries re bookings can be made on 0871 620 7064...**



Charlie at one

It's nice to have the occasional good news, so can we offer congratulations on two events that were separated by days... yet also by 44 years!

First up was **Charlie**, the grandson of Chairman **Brian Rice** and wife Brenda. He recently reached the magical milestone of being one-year old at a party thrown by mum and dad – Sam and Billy.

## From one extreme to the other...



Mike and Maxine celebrating 45 years of marriage

Following just a few days behind was another party – this one thrown by Board member **Mike Son** and his wife Maxine, who celebrated with their own magical milestone

of 45 years wedded bliss.

There's an awfully big distance between the two celebrations, but both are magical milestones and worthy of inclusion.

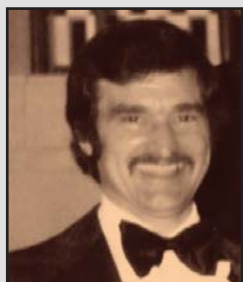
*Every issue of Call Sign takes a look back at ODRTS history through the pages of the magazines of the time with a flashback*

## DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

As this issue talks about the current Editor's 150th issue, Flashback goes back to 1974 when there was another change in the hot seat of Call Sign's predecessor, News and Views...

From News and Views – Christmas 1974

### Welcome to a New Editor



Taking over the pen from Joe Toff is not going to be easy as Joe is a natural. Nevertheless, I wanted the job and now I have got it, so it's up to me to continue the high standard. I have some ideas to make the monthly Newsletter even more attractive, so do me a favour, when you see the News Sheet in the front shop at Shirland Road, take one, maybe your night man cannot get to the office, so take one for him too. I shall inform you when the edition is out (very professional, what!). Seriously, nothing is more frustrating when work has gone into a project, but it is not supported. Your contributions, letters, ideas, will be most welcome.

For my first News and Views, there seems to be plenty of goodies as we have had an exciting month. Items will include Board reports, 21st Anniversary Dinner and Ball, AGM report, Joint Board meeting (JBM) and thank you letters, etc. We have also gone to 8 pages, so I must get on.

Joe Toff, as you know, took leave of absence from the BoM. A member at the AGM thought that more should have been done for Joe after his long service with the Society. Having heard the spontaneous ovation Joe received when he vacated the platform, I am convinced he got more pleasure than from having an organised reception. Any member leaving the Board, experiencing such acclaim, would be more than satisfied. Thank you, Joe, don't stray too far.

On a personal note, may I thank you all for the magnificent vote you gave me at the

AGM. Having been co-opted on by the Board in June, your support gave me an enormous boost. So read on.

**Phil Emden**  
News and Views Editor

Flashback  
1974

For a great deal in taxi tyres

## TRY THE TIGER!



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

The Christmas spirit had arrived early in the Craven household.

"For gawd's sake," Terry shouted yet again, "what's the matter with you, woman! Don't you understand English or something? If I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times - we are not throwing a Christmas party this year."

A tiny cough was followed by a tearful female voice.

"But Terry, you know we always have a party on Christmas Eve, the Craven's Christmas bash is almost legendary. I've even told most of our friends that we're having one and I'm going to look so silly telling them that we've changed our minds."

For about 10 seconds all was quite, then the explosion came...

"What's up with you woman? I've said no and that's that. If you weren't so blinkin' thick, you'd have kept your mouth shut in the first place, wouldn't you! I'll tell you once more, seeing as how it takes you so long to take anything in and then I don't want to hear another word about it."

Terry took a mocking deep breath: "Now if we hadn't just had two weeks on the Algarve, and if you hadn't talked me into buying you that Vivian Westwood dress, and if our Janice hadn't gone and got herself in the 'club', and if her Peter hadn't offered to make an honest woman of her, and if old muggins 'ere hadn't offered to splash out on a wedding nosh-up and been lumbered with a bill for over 9000 quid, then maybe I'd have thought about a party! But stone me, woman, I'm Terry Craven the taxi driver... not Boris Johnson! I'm skint and that's that!"

The tears from his wife were becoming more pronounced with throat clearances substantially louder. Terry still went on: "And another thing! To tell you the truth I'm getting a bit browned off with this whole Christmas lark. I mean look at Christmas nowadays, what's it all mean? It's just a glorified nosh up. You give presents and you get the needle if they don't give you equally good presents back. Let's face it, even the kids don't believe in Father Christmas anymore. Yep, the more I think about it, the more I think I'm right about workin' the cab on Christmas Eve". With that, Terry let out a huge sigh as though a huge weight had been lifted from his shoulders; he had finally admitted the truth to himself. What was Christmas anyway? Even his misses surely had to agree with him now. The decision had been made for them by the realisation that the whole thing was meaningless.

Then Christmas Eve arrived. The radio was filled with Bing Crosby and Slade so it felt strange to Terry knowing that he would be working, but at least he'd faced up to the truth, Christmas was a man-

A Seasonal tale for Christmas...

# Christmas? Naaahhh I'm working



made holiday for commercial purposes and as a businessman of sorts, he was going to earn some money out of it for a change!

He walked to his four month old TX4 clutching his moneybag, flask and sandwiches - after all, even Queen Victoria Street's 24-hour cafe wouldn't be open tonight. It was freezing cold, with the falling snow so thick you could hardly see. But the thought of earning money instead of spending fortunes on rubbish cheered him up! The cold air turned into steam as it escaped from his open mouth. He put the key into the ignition and turned it but nothing happened. He tried again and still nothing.

"Damn," he thought, "not a flat battery tonight of all nights?" He lifted the bonnet and looked. But then a voice interrupted his train of thought asking if he wanted a jump start? Terry turned round startled. There behind him was a shiny X reg TX1.

"Thanks pal," said Terry, "I've got the jump leads. Can you just open the bonnet for me."

In seconds, Terry had fixed his two ends on whilst the other driver did his two. He turned the key and the cab came to life.

"Thanks pal," Terry shouted above the roar of the firing engine while undoing the jump leads, "you've saved my nights work. That's a lovely quiet cab you have there for an X-reg, I didn't even hear you coming!"

Suddenly the snow began to ease. Terry had unhooked the jump leads and turned round once again to thank the other cab driver, but he'd gone, leaving Terry to wonder if he'd been dreaming. But he

couldn't have been because his cab was now running.

Then a gush of wind turned his eyes upwards, just in time to see a shiny TX1 being pulled silently by 5 reindeers. In the evening's stillness, he heard the drivers voice boom out:

"I'm sorry Rudolph, I know jump leads make your nose red, but we can't have cabbies missing Christmas Eve, otherwise they won't believe in us ... will they?"

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

The **London Transport Museum** at Wellington Street, Covent Garden, has sent **Call Sign** some gift ideas designed for someone you know who could be considered a "transport lover."

## New model buses

The Museum has commissioned three new highly detailed 1:76 (OO model railway scale) die-cast bus models from Exclusive First Editions. They are RM5 on Route 8B, DM1238 on Route 207 and DMS1644 on Route M1. All buses cost £29.99 each and are available from the Museum's Covent Garden store and online at [www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk).

## The Underground film map poster

A Tube map with a difference – all the station names have been changed to represent the past 70 years of cinematic history. Most of the stations represent films, but in some instances they have been given the title of British television series and the names of actors, directors and producers born nearby. Unsurprisingly, the map includes Notting Hill and Wimbledon – but there are some clever reinterpretations with Bow Road becoming Walford East after the television soap, Earl's Court renamed Repulsion and Baker Street becoming

# XMAS GIFT IDEAS FOR TRANSPORT LOVERS

All available at the London Transport Museum



A peek at the Underground film map poster

Sherlock Holmes.

The Film map poster costs £9.95 and has been produced by a partnership involving Transport for London, Film London and the BFI London Film Festival.

It is available at [www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk) and [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk).

## Book - London Underground Stations by Stephen Durnin

A photographic celebration of the wonderful and varied architecture of London Underground stations dating from 1868. Photographer Stephen Durnin spent over a year travelling around the Underground to compile this visual record. The book costs £25, is published by Capital Transport and is available at [www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk).

London Transport Museum is open from Saturday to Thursday 10.00 to 18.00 (last admission 17.15) and Friday from 11.00 to 18.00 (last admission 17.15).

Admission prices: £13.50 for adults, £10 concessions. All tickets allow unlimited admission for a 12 month period from date of purchase. Children under 16 are free but an adult must accompany under 12's.

A world first for Call Sign readers...

# Alan Nash's MyFav Website

You may have read in last month's issue about

**www.myfav.co.uk** - the new

website that I am launching.

Whilst it's aimed at all internet users, it is also your access to a page of links specifically aimed at **Dial-a-Cab** drivers. If you click **register** and enter **taxi** in the **Code\*\*** field, it will unlock a specific page titled **Taxi**. This page contains all the **Nash's Numbers Useful Information Documents**, over 70 pages of day-to-day lists of restaurants, clubs, hotel and lots more, plus iconic links to **Call Sign** Magazine, **Dial-a-Cab's** website, **London City Airport** Arrival times, etc, etc. Plus you can suggest sites to be added to this taxi page. The main purpose of the new website is to be your ideal **Home Page**, allowing you direct access to most sites you need every time you go onto the internet.

It is not a search engine or in competition with the **Googles** and **Microsofts** of this world, but aims to be an unbiased **Launch Pad** to all of the most popular and most used sites of the 'net.

There are also some short videos to help you appreciate **MyFav's** features. As an incentive to promote the site, I am awarding £100 Amazon Vouchers to



users who promote the site by recommendation (*terms & conditions apply*).

Try it for a few days. After those few days you'll wonder how you used the internet without this launch pad to all the pages you ever wanted!

Don't forget...**www.myfav.co.uk**. Register now!

Alan Nash (A95) - aka Nash's Numbers

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## Mailshot

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

### Phone numbers and private hire...

*Hi Alan*

Just a couple of comments. First re Keith Cain's answer to **Mick Kennedy (M30)** who wanted drivers to be given client's phone numbers to save time when a ring out was needed. Only last week, a lady from our account in London Wall told me she now only used Dial-a-Cab as she'd had a nasty experience with her phone number being given to private hire drivers. That ended with the boys in blue sorting out her late night phone calls.

Secondly, the ease in which the authorities just scrap any fines and summonses concerning the M4 bus lane because it's the easy option. How long will it be because we're all licensed in the same building, do similar jobs and now drive the same sort of vehicle, that we're all classified as private hire?

**Colin Lewis (N55)**

**Allen Togwell's article in the last issue on many drivers seemingly relying on SatNavs was very interesting and backs up what Colin is saying. TX and Fairways with SatNavs are bad enough, but when I see a Vito with a SatNav, I cringe because your last sentence will eventually come true. A Vito with a SatNav is a minicab. Incredibly, it won't be LTPH who finally put the final nail into the licensed taxi business, it will be our own shortsightedness. It is we who are taking away the difference between the two sides of the business. After all, we may have the Knowledge, but if we are using SatNavs anyway, then what is the difference? Steve Norris, the former Tory Minister of Transport for London, told me many years ago that once SatNavs got over the problem of poor signals, then our trade would face its biggest battle because the KoL would no longer be needed. What he hadn't foreseen was that our own drivers would start using them. The only thing I don't understand is why??? ...Ed**

### Lead times

*Hi Alan*

During mid-October, someone on the Call Centre's morning shift decided to increase lead times in certain zones by 25%. Some of the zones that increased were SW3, SW10, W8 and W11 - although for some reason SW7 escaped this measure. I did complain to a Board member by voicing my views, but as of 5th November the increases were still in place and I assume the Board has endorsed the move - even through the quiet week of half term.

So there we have it; if you accept a job in

these zones when dispatched, you wait an extra three minutes on top of the six minutes you already have to wait now on tariff 1 before you can start your meter. Personally, I'm not prepared to wait nine minutes unpaid during my busiest periods to start my meter knowing there are jobs on the street waiting for me. My view is that longer lead times do not improve coverage and a complete review should be undertaken.

Another question I'd like to ask is whether through bad coverage we lost any accounts during the three tube strikes so far? One thing is for sure; by doing miniscab work during these strikes, we have saved plenty of their accounts, so it's about time we told them where to go on strike days and the busy Christmas period. Please don't tell me that if we don't do them someone else will, because when the strikes are on all firms are at full capacity.

**B. Spear (Y16)**

**See Keith Cain's article inside this issue ...Ed**

### Goodbye from Tom

*Hello Alan,*

I have finally left Dial-a-Cab. I would like to say how much I enjoyed reading your magazine and also adding to it in a small way from time to time. Can I access *Call Sign* online? I would like to keep up with events if possible.

Keep well Alan and take care...

**Tom Reynolds (O85)**

For those that don't know how to access *Call Sign* online, it is very simple. Just go to <http://www.dac-callsign.co.uk>, click on *Call Sign 2010* on the left side of the page (or any year you want to look at) and then click on the little red PDF underneath the month you want to read. If you just click on the icon but not the PDF, you will get a 20-page version of the mag but you will then also be able to use the *search* facility. Good luck to you in the future Tom and thanks for the interesting articles you have written over the years ...Ed

### A question to the Chairman...

*Dear Brian,*

I was very surprised to read in *Reflections of the Chairman* (November *Call Sign*) that we are advertising for new drivers as at the moment there seems to be very little work coming through for our existing drivers and I feel this situation is not going to get any better. What is the reason behind this? Is it to bring in more revenue via subs? If so, can I make a suggestion and we perhaps do what Sovereign advised and do some housekeeping by looking at how many Board members we have and exactly what their roles are?

I look forward to your comments...

**Dave Bull (D33)**

**Brian Rice replies: As I explained in my Chairman's report, I knew not all mem-**

**bers would be happy with us fitting more members even though we did allow the fleet to diminish in size during the last couple of years. It is being done purely and simply to improve coverage and for no other reason. If we wanted to increase income from subscriptions, then we would increase the cost of subs, but that is not the case.**

September was the busiest month we have had since November 2008 and we are beginning to get complaints regarding our service levels, consequently we have recruited more Call Takers and Members to accommodate the increase in demand. If we had not instigated the above, then there is not any question we would lose accounts and in this climate that would be criminal.

You state we should perhaps reduce the size of the BoM. Well Dave, the ball is in your court on that one, all you have to do is introduce a rule change so that members can vote on the issue and believe it or not, you would get some support from the BoM on the issue.

Over the years some of the business that was conducted by individual Board Members has been moved to staff that have been employed to do a specific job, so much so that two Board Members attend Board meetings only, one attends the office four days a week (Compliance/Complaints) the fourth for two days a week with the remaining Board Member and myself being the only ones to attend full time! Now I bet that surprised you!

When you receive the *End of Year Report*, you will see how good our Housekeeping has been with our overheads being reduced quite dramatically to the extent that we have shown quite a sizeable surplus this year. This has, in my opinion, been due to the fact that your business has been run in the correct manner, which includes determining the size of the fleet.

### A wee problem...?

The problem of where to visit a loo as a Taxi driver (*Nov Call Sign*), has been in existence for a thousand years. Speaking from personal experience and appreciating that numerous guys within the industry have experienced problems on this subject that have eventually led to severe medical problems, one has to accept that there is no one out there that is interested or able to help the individual driver - except himself!

Years ago when on the rank slope leading down into Paddington Station on a day when it was slow and stop all the way through, I recall the guy immediately in



# Mailshot

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front of me getting out of his cab, leaving his door slightly ajar so all you could see was his feet! He remained there a while and then with a smile on his face and obvious relief, he looked at me and said: "Fantastic! I feel so much better now!" I then noticed a large sized McDonald's drink carton in his hand! This gave me an idea of which I used from that very day until my last day of driving a cab - I bought from *John Bell and Croydon*, the famous chemist in Wigmore Street, a *Urinal Bottle* and then popped across the road to buy a length of black cloth from *Alexanders Curtaining Shop* for covering oneself. I never ever experienced the problem of where to wee again! I respectfully suggest that one and all can bid goodbye to the variety of unhelpful establishments including hotels, clubs, pubs, the Iron Lung and simply just drive into a quiet and safe spot away from the public glare and you can enjoy yourself to your hearts delight!

Also, with a bit of practice - and I can assure you I have done this several times - you can 'do a wee one' whilst driving if the situation becomes desperate - even the M4 on route to LAP is easily possible! Sadly I have not resolved ladies problems yet!

Cheers for now - maybe I'll see you in a wee while...

**Ronald S Colman (Ex-J09)**

**Before leaving the trade, Ron Colman spent several years writing Colman's Mustard for Call Sign. He always said it would one day make him an expert in something. But who'd have guessed in what! Nice to hear from you Ron ...Ed**

## M4 bus lane

*Alan*

I read your *Call Sign* story about the scrapping of the "dedicated bus lane" on the M4 freeway. I saw that there were black cabs running with the buses in the bus lane, so I understand why you would want the bus and cab lane to remain. But apart from the cabs losing that benefit, why is it "bad for the environment" to let the bus lane revert to being an ordinary lane? Is it the argument that the cabs carry more passengers than private autos?

Here in San Francisco, many places have HOV lanes (high occupancy vehicle lanes) aka car pool lanes. Only cars carrying the minimum number of occupants can use them.

**Jack Barry**

**San Francisco**

**Jack, there are two reasons. The first is the obvious one; those passengers arriving from an airport and using a taxi, expect to get to where they are going as quickly as possible. The M4 was always a terrible motorway as it narrowed into two lanes from three when it got into London. The traffic always went back a few miles. Then they made the outside lane for buses and taxis only, allowing**

**us to bypass the hold up. But because putting 3 into 2 caused the hold-up, the traffic changed very little because it just became 2 lanes that bit earlier. The real problem wasn't more traffic but the jealousy of seeing taxis flying past and because minicabs wanted to use it too. There was also the possibility of a court case by the Chairman of a large minicab co and the Government were afraid of the consequences had they lost it. The second reason is that buses and taxis let out more particulates into the air because of their diesel fuel, especially in traffic, so putting them into traffic would increase the amount of rubbish in the air and the bus lane helped eradicate that problem.**

**Jack Barry is a former taxi commissioner in San Francisco and rather astonishingly, a Fulham supporter!...Ed**

## Addison Lee?

*Hi Alan,*

I understand that Addison Lee is now being used alongside Dial-a-Cab in servicing one of our major accounts. This account uses the Concierge system for its transport services, so are we now taking bookings for one of our major competitors?

As we are constantly being told: "We are all in it together." Never a truer word spoken...

**Paul Smyth (R11)**

**Brian Rice replies: It always amazes me how these rumours begin, the only problem is that they are usually incorrect - as in this case. However Paul, you have done the right thing by asking the question instead of believing the rumour. Also, you can always telephone me to ask a question instead of writing - something many members already do. We do not take bookings for AL and never have, neither do we do work for AL. Where the confusion arises is that as from 9 November, Morgan Stanley has included AL in their list of minicab operators that service them in the evening, along with us as taxi supplier. Morgan Stanley is not on the Concierge platform but on an independent platform called Oscar. We have been requested by MS and other accounts to service the Oscar platform, but we have refused.**

**After all, it has taken us over 50 years to build our fleet, why would we then hand it over to an independent software house so they can dictate and just give us what they fancy? That is why we must have our own platform to compete against these companies.**

**To the best of my knowledge, there are three clients (not ours) that use the Oscar system exclusively with cars, as taxi circuits do not wish to be added to Oscar, probably for the reason I have already stated. In addition, why would any of us go onto these platforms when they are in direct competition with us? That is why, in my opinion, it is imperative we have our own system to compete**



**with the independents, after all, with the Concierge system the client can have taxis and cars. I know it's hard to digest, but that is what being in the service industry is all about - the client has the choice!**

## DaC at Butlins Golf Day in aid of The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

*Hi Alan*

Firstly can I apologise for only getting back to you now. *Call Sign* was received in our office on 3 November but I've been on annual leave, so it was a lovely surprise to come in and find it waiting for me today with a report of the *Butlins Golf Day* in aid of our *Princess Royal Trust for Carers* (November *Call Sign*).

Thank you so much for sending me my very own copy of the issue. What a fantastic article, this is such an added bonus for us as you have given us such a great platform to raise awareness about unpaid carers. I can't thank you enough for this and to say that I and my colleagues are delighted is a real understatement.

I have sent the copy onto Lesley at Butlins and also a link to the online PDF versions. We have been so lucky to have the support of Butlins as their chosen charity, they work tirelessly to raise funds and awareness for unpaid carers and they are just a joy to be involved with. I sit back in amazement at their energy.

*Call Sign* is very impressive and must be a full time job, especially as you publish one every month. It's full of really interesting articles and gives a real insight into Dial-a-Cab. You seem like one big family.

Please convey my thanks to the DaC team - Peter Boxall Junior and Senior, Keith Cain and Howard Pears. It would be wonderful to see them all again next year and winning trophies!

**Trish Brown**  
**The Princess Royal Trust for Carers**

## Tie pin measurements?

As a regular reader of what must be the best magazine in the cab trade, *Call Sign*, just one thing puzzles me. In all the photos of Chairman Brian Rice, his tie pin is always in exactly the same place on his tie. How does he do this?

**Barry Epstein**

**Volunteer General Manager, DaC Credit Union**

**Brian Rice responds: That's very observant of you Barry, my valet will be so impressed that you noticed!**

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