

November 2010



# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

***EXCLUSIVE!***  
***John Mason answers***  
***DaC driver's questions***



***Which one is the DaC board member and what***  
***does it have to do with Hackney Council?***





# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

With the Christmas season coming, bars and clubs are not only in demand but test our memories to the limit. I've tried to list as many as possible without being chastised by the editor for making the typeface too small. More in December...

Bar / Night Club & Address	Bar / Night Club & Address
Abacus 24 Cornhill, EC3V 3ND	Eclipse Club 139 Stockwell Road SW9 9TN
Abbey 30 Minories, EC3N 1DD	Eclipse SW19 57 High Street SW19 5EE
Addies Club 121 Earls Court Road SW5 9RL	Egg 200 York Way N7 9AP
Agenda 3 Mincing Lane EC3R 7AA	Embargo 59 533b Kings Road SW10 0TZ
Aint Nothin But Blues 20, Kingly Street, W1B 5PZ	Embassy 29 Old Burlington Street W1S 3AN
Alhambra 33 Commercial Road E1 1LB	Enclave 25-27 Brewer Street W1F 0RR
Almada 33 Dover Street W1S 4NF	Escape 10a Brewer Street W1F 0SU
Alto Club 15-21 Ganton Street W1F 9BN	Eve Club 3 New Burlington Street W1S 2JF
Amika 65 Kensington High Street W8 5ED	Fabric 77a Charterhouse Street, EC1M 3HN
Annabels 44 Berkeley Square, W1J 5AR	Fluid 40 Charterhouse Street EC1M 6JN
Aquarium Club 256 Old Street EC1V 9DD	For Your Eyes Only 23 City Road, EC1Y 1AE
Arcadia 51, Southwark Street, SE1 1RU	Gem 10 Beak Street, W1F 9RA
Archangel 11 High Street Kensington, W8 5NP	Ghost 113-117 Farringdon Road, EC1R 3BX
Area Club 67 Albert Embankment SE1 7TP	Hidden 100 Tinworth Street SE11 5EQ
Automat 33 Dover Street W1S 4NF	Hub 2 Goulston Street E1 7TP
Bar Rumba 36 Shaftesbury Road W1D 7EP	Infinity 10 Old Burlington Street W1S 3AG
Babble Cnr. Berkeley St/Sq, W1J 6ER	Jalouse 17 Hanover Square, W1S 1HU
Beach Blanket Babylon 45 Ledbury Road, W11 2AA	Jewel - 4 Glasshouse Street, W1B 5DQ
Beach Blanket Babylon 19 Bethnal Green Road, E1 6LA	Juno 134 Shoreditch High Street E1 6JE
Bed Bar 10 Basinghall Street, EC2V 5BQ	Kabarets Phophecy 16 Beak Street W1F 9RD
Beduin 57-59 Charterhouse Street EC1M 6HA	Koko 1a Camden High Street NW1 7JE
Blagclub 11 Russell Gardens W14 8EZ	Kitts 7to12 Sloane Square SW1W 8EG
Blagclub Kensal Rd 222 Kensal Road W10 5BN	Korsan 161-165 Kingsland Road E2 8AL
Blagclub Notting Hill 68 Notting Hill Gate W11 3HT	La Pollera Colora 4to6 London Bridge Street SE1 9SG
Blush 37 Duke Street W1U 1LN	L'Equipe Anglaise 21 Duke Street W1U 1LB
Boujis 43 Thurloe Street SW7 2LQ	Lightbox 6a South Lambeth Place SW8 1SP
British Luxury Club 70 New Bond Street W1S 1DE	Lo Profile 84-86 Wardour Street W1F 0TQ
Bureau 13 Kingly Court W1B 5PW	Loop 19 Dering Street W1S 1AH
Burlesque 29, Farringdon Rd, EC1 3JB (VENUS Lap Dancing)	Luxx 3 New Burlington Street, W1S 2JF
Café de Paris 3, Coventry Street W1	Lost Society 697 Wandsworth Road SW8 3JF
Cameos 50 Margaret Street W1W 8SF	Lounge (Shoreditch House) Ebor Street E1 6AW
Cargo 83 Rivington Street EC2A 3AY	Maddox 3to5 Mill Street W1S 2AU
Catch 22 Kingsland Road, E2 8DA	Mahiki 1 Dover Street W1S 4LD
Catwalk 70 New Bond Street W1S 1DE	Manteca 66 Wardour Street W1
Centro & Den 18 West Central Street WC1A 1JJ	Masters Club 12 Denman Street W1D 7HH
Charlies 9 Crosswall EC3N 2HT	Matt and Matt 112 Upper Street, N1 1QN
Charlies Club 37 Leinster Gardens W2 3AN	Maya 1a Dean Street W1D 3RB
Cherry Jam 58 Porchester Road W2 6ET	Mayfair Club 50 Dover Street W1S 4NY
Cirque du Soir 12 New Burlington Street, W1S 3BF	Miranda Club 9 Kingly Street W1B 5PH
Colosseum Club 1 Nine Elms Lane SW8 5NQ	Mo Bay 139 Wardour Street W1
Crystal Club 78 Wells Street W1T 3QL	Mo*vida Club 8 Argyll Street W1F 7TF
Dingwalls Middle Yard Camden Lock NW1 8AB	Moonlighting 17 Greek Street W1D 4DR
Diva Beach 222 Fulham Road SW10 9NB	My Place 1 Trebovir Road SW5 9LS
Divas 17a Harrington Road SW7 3ES	No 5 - 5 Cavendish Square, W1G 0PG
East Villiage 89 Great Eastern Street EC2A 3HX	Notting Hill Arts Club 21 Notting Hill Gate W11 3JQ
Eclipse 158 Old Brompton Road SW5 0BA	Nomad 58 Old Street, EC1V 9AJ

**Great News!** You may have read in last month's edition about the new web site [www.myfav.co.uk](http://www.myfav.co.uk). Go to the web-site, click **Launch MyFav** and then on the main page click **Register**. To register you will need to fill in 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 page as your home page, not only will it be your launch pad to the most popular bits of the internet, you will also have immediate access to lots of taxi related information and all the other features of this web site. "What's On" is also available at this site.

# from the editor's desk

Thanks to all of you that phoned and emailed to wish me a happy birthday after I jokingly moaned last month that 2009 saw just three! For much of the day my phone hardly stopped ringing - including one caller from Alaska who said they read the mag every month on line! So thanks again...

## Well done LTFUC

If you look back through *Call Sign's* library, you'd spot one thing - outside of Society news - that has remained static. My office has every issue since 1964 when it was called ODRTS Monthly, followed by News and Views until the current name came in the early 1980s. That one thing is the *London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children* - known for short as the LTFUC after its' previous abbreviation of LTDFUC was felt to be open to abuse!

Now we hear the incredible news that Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, has agreed to become the charity's Patron.

The LTFUC Committee are no strangers to the Royal family, having been invited to their Garden Parties in addition to meeting some at various outings, the first instance going back many years when former LTFUC (and ODRTS) Chairman **Jack Taylor** met the young 5 year old **Prince Charles** at a Leicester Square premier in aid of the Fund. But having a Royal as Patron is something very special and *Call Sign* sends everyone involved its congratulations.

Speaking of the Fund, DaC's **David Lessman (D19)** is standing down as its Chairman after a hugely successful few years and Camilla's Patronship is as good a send-off as it gets. David will now revert to being on the Committee...

## Good news from Crossrail?

It seems that Crossrail is now running about one year behind schedule. Whether this is anything to do with the current financial squeeze or just slower than promised working, *Call Sign* isn't sure.

The *Crossrail Parliamentary Bill* received Royal Assent in July 2008 and later became just the *Crossrail Act 2008*. It will provide an ultra-modern railway system running from Maidenhead and Heathrow in the west to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east, with Tottenham Court Road providing the west end link. It is currently planned that four trains every hour will pass through TCR in each direction.

There is no denying that the southeast needs Crossrail. So why is a one year delay good news? Well it's 'cos I'm scared it's going to take too much work from we undernourished licensed taxi drivers! Let's just hope it will bring in as many as it takes out...

## Supporting bikes?

I recently received a press release from a taxi



driving website suggesting that we join forces with the cyclists and motor cyclists who are campaigning against parking charges. I'm not criticising their right in having the view, but I happen to strongly disagree with it. Most of the cyclists I see regularly blocking up Trafalgar Square twice every Wednesday seem to consider themselves as mini-Gods who can do exactly as they wish. Why the police allow it is another matter. The cyclists motto is "Treat us like cars - we'll congest like cars." And they do.

What's obviously worse is that most of them are obviously there because they enjoy it and not for any political reason. You only have to listen to them playing their loud music and of late even some of the Friday night skaters have joined them! It's one huge laugh to them. Not all, but the majority of cyclists - especially the helmet-less Boris Bikers - take no notice of traffic regulations - be that traffic lights, pedestrian crossings or anywhere that involves them having to slow down or (God forbid) stop!

So if anyone expects me to join them in this demo or to recommend it to *Call Sign* readers, then you have another think coming. Gathered together that way these cyclists are a real pest to society in general and if I had my way I'd make them pay double to park!

## Russell Poluck

Best wishes for a speedy recovery to DaC driver and Chairman of the *Taxi Driver of the Year Charity*, **Russell Poluck (T55)**. Russell, who was awarded the MBE in 2001 for his services to charity, recently underwent a quadruple heart by-pass. I know from my Linda's identicle operation in early August that the road to recovery isn't easy, but that it does happen with patience.

I'm sure I speak for everyone at DaC when I say that we are looking forward to seeing him back to full fitness soon.

## John Mason

I recently had cause to ask the Director of *London Taxis and Private Hire*, **John Mason**, a question sent in to me about a private hire website (see *Mailshot*). Whilst in contact, I asked how he felt about a different type of interview - answering questions posed not by me or another trade editor, but by Dial-a-Cab drivers?

He immediately said yes so I put a message

out over the air for two broadcasts a day over three days for anyone who wanted to ask Mr Mason a question? The response blew me away because I could quite easily have filled half the magazine with questions. Fortunately for me many were doubles of ones I had already in the bag, but even by the following week they still kept coming!

So if your question isn't there, it's because it was too late or a double. Otherwise they went in the order they arrived until the closing time. My sincere thanks to all the drivers that took the time to write in and of course to John Mason for answering them...

## DaC PH licensing?

I know some of you don't like inter-trade bickering, but there are times when it becomes unavoidable. Last month **LCDC's** magazine, *The Badge*, published an item that claimed Dial-a-Cab would have to apply for a private hire Operator's Licence.

*Call Sign's* problem wasn't just because the story was incorrect - we haven't applied for any such licence - my problem was that I had heard from a very reliable source that the only reason we were actually approached by London Taxi Private Hire (LTPH) was because LCDC Chairman **Grant Davis** had spoken to them about us and mentioned Concierge! Our two competitors have both had or have links to private hire. DaC has no PH drivers or cars and therefore needs no licence.

According to *The Badge*, DaC has a whole floor dedicated to the system. Even though that is total garbage, no one would have bothered complaining because Mr Davis' bitterness at the Society for expelling him - even though it was a committee of drivers and nothing to do with the Board - is something that will never stop and like much in their newspaper nowadays, is better just ignored.

However, to actually report the Society with incorrect info to LTPH shows morals that are as low as they can get because just like the Inland Revenue, a sniff causes an investigation. So far as I know, DaC do not need any such licence and have no intention of applying for one regardless of who the LCDC Chairman chooses to send his snitching info to.

Interestingly, in *The Badge's* unsigned article about DaC (they rarely sign anything controversial - then again no one else in the LCDC would have stooped so low), they have their usual go at us but not once did "the writer" deny going to LTPH. I don't know whether LTPH will get us to sign any such document, but what I do know is that this trade has enough to combat without going to the teacher to tell on someone else. Mr Davis should feel ashamed of himself and has shown himself totally unworthy to be a trade leader...

*Next month is already December and the Christmas issue! Whatever happened to the rest of the year!!!*

**Alan Fisher**  
callsignmag@aol.com

# reflections of the chairman

## End of year results

As most of you are probably aware, our financial year ended at the end of August and the Auditors have just finished their work here.

I am very pleased to report that we have made quite a substantial surplus measured in the hundreds of thousands, although I will leave it for you to read the final audited figure in our *End of Year Report*, which will be released round about Christmas time.

There is not any need for me to tell you how tough the past few years have been, that is why I believe the above information is all the more pleasing. Unfortunately, the surplus is not due to increased turnover, but to the fact that our overheads have been dramatically reduced, thereby contributing to our surplus.

However, work is now improving month on month, which is leading to coverage problems in some areas. Consequently, we are quite keen to recruit some daymen that live in the southwest area.

I know some of you will be upset that we are recruiting, but you must remember we allowed the fleet to reduce in size during the last few years in order to accommodate for the downturn in our account work. Now that work is beginning to improve, we must keep pace with it by endeavouring to increase the fleet at the time of day and the areas in which vehicles are needed. After all, we do not want to be in a position where we start to lose accounts through service issues.

## Mercedes Vito

Those of you that regularly read the Editorial in this magazine will know that our Editor is not a big fan of the Mercedes Vito; consequently the next piece of information will not be very welcome to him!

If any member purchases a new Vito between the 1 November and 31 Jan 2011, then Dial-a-Cab will not charge for the first three months subscription and as subs are now charged on a fortnightly basis, that means the first six two-week periods. All that KPM will do is to verify with us that the purchaser of the new Vito is a Dial-a-Cab member and they will then qualify for the offer.

Before members who are considering purchasing a new TX4 inundate me with correspondence, I would like to inform you that we did have some dialogue with M&O, but unfortunately nothing has materialised.

## Red Carpet

Every other Saturday I travel along the M4



and over the Chiswick flyover on my way to QPR and I am always amazed how many minicabs I see in the bus and taxi lane and even more so how they do not seem to be prosecuted.

The trade has recently caused quite a storm regarding Addison Lee using this bus lane with impunity and the Chairman of AL (John Griffin) actually being seen on television instructing his drivers to use the bus and taxi lane. So it would appear to me that there has been a concerted effort by Mr Griffin to use the bus lane and of course let's not forget Jeremy Clarkson of *Top Gear* who was also trying to get it scrapped. Let us also not forget the new Minister of Transport, Philip Hammond, who probably wanted to scrap it because it was introduced in 1999 by John Prescott (Labour).

I'm led to believe it has been proven that the bus/taxi lane actually reduces journey times for all modes of transport travelling towards the Chiswick flyover. That is said to be due to the fact that traffic is funnelled into two lanes long before it gets to the flyover and as a result reduces journey times – at least so I'm told.

I must admit I was quite surprised when I heard the lane was going to be

closed and even more surprised to learn that 200 tickets and 130 Court Summonses had been scrapped and every one of the aforementioned applied to Mr Griffin.

I know many in the taxi industry are outraged regarding the above, but the more I think about it perhaps it might not be quite as bad as we first feared.

It is a fact that Mr Griffin did not pay any of the fines aligned to the bus lane simply because he was determined to have his day in court and demand and seek judgement that minicabs should be allowed to use all bus lanes. Whether or not he would have won the day, I have no idea, however, I do know that he will not now have his day in court and I bet he is fuming!

So on reflection, perhaps it is not quite so bad as we first feared. Who knows, had he got into court, he may well have been allowed in bus/taxi lanes for a short period until the authorities realised they were too congested and retained the lanes for buses only and minicabs, together with taxis, were excluded. No one likes having something they already have taken away from them, but I endeavour to console myself with the fact it could have been worse.

## AGM

I am sure this will be mentioned elsewhere in the magazine, but the next AGM will be held on 6 February 2011. So if you wish to make any propositions or rule changes, or indeed stand for the BoM, the paperwork will have to be received by the Company Secretary by 19 November.

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



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# Griffin Wins - M4 Bus Lane Scrapped!

Britain's only motorway bus lane – will be reopened as a normal lane from December 24. The decision was announced at the Conservative conference in Birmingham by Transport Secretary **Philip Hammond**. He referred to the lane as being symbolic of Labour's war on the motorist and said it would be suspended until the Olympics, with the intention of scrapping it permanently after the Games finish. The M4 will be part of the *Olympic Route Network* during the period the Olympics are on, when the lane will be used for VIPs and undoubtedly watched far closer than it is now! The cost of removing it has been put at £410,000. The cost for the 2012 brief reintroduction will be added to that.

**Call Sign** has no doubt that if there is a change of mind and a decision taken to reintroduce the lane comes about after the Games, it will include private hire, giving Addison Lee Chairman **John Griffin** the victory he craves. If it doesn't return, he will still have won because his fleet will then take the same time returning from Heathrow as licensed taxis do.

The bus lane was brought in by **John Prescott** in 1999 in an attempt to encourage people to switch to public transport and ease congestion on one of Britain's busiest roads. It then had a 50mph limit, which was later raised to 60mph.

For many years on his *Top Gear* program, **Jeremy Clarkson** has opposed the lane and many believe that it was Clarkson's popularity that persuaded Mr Hammond to act. Others believe that the authorities just did not want a court case from John Griffin – a view **Call Sign** held.

According to **AA** public affairs spokesman **Andrew Howard**, the bus lane closure was long overdue and the only people to regret its departure would be taxi drivers. However, he did add that the closure of the lane would just move the hold-up closer to town as the decrease from three to two lanes before the elevated section made hold-ups inevitable. The **RAC** agreed with the assessment. Neither mentioned regular taxi passengers as being upset, only drivers!

The **Campaign for Better Transport** called the move ill-thought through and tokenistic, agreeing with the AA's assessment of the hold-up just moving further down the road. Their spokesperson **Richard**



**Not only is the bus lane scrapped but so are all the tickets and court summons against Addison Lee**

**George** added that if not enough buses or coaches were using the lane, it made more sense to invest more in that mode of transport rather than shutting the lane.

Environmental group **Friends of the Earth** also opposed the move, saying the decision would only encourage more cars and lorries to use the M4. The Group's London campaigner, **Jenny Bates**, said: "This threatens to raise emissions and air pollution when London is not on track to meet its target for tackling climate change or bringing

air pollution within EU limits."

**Dial-a-Cab** Chairman, **Brian Rice**, told **Call Sign**: "It is another sad day for the taxi industry when once again something has been taken away from us to the advantage of our competitors. It also demonstrates what can happen when an issue is brought to the attention of the authorities; they do not always come down on the side of those in the right."

Within 48 hours of the decision to scrap the lane, the Crown Prosecution Service announced that they would be dropping the 216 penalty notice fares and 130 court summonses against Addison Lee, leaving John Griffin to say that the CPS decision showed the 'discrimination' between taxis and private hire firms could "not be justified." He added: "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."

## CAMILLA BECOMES LTFUC PATRON

The Honorary President, Chairman and Committee of the London Taxidriers Fund for Underprivileged Children are honoured and extremely delighted to announce that Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall has accepted an invitation to become Patron of the charity.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Her Royal Highness for this honour, her support will be invaluable. We hope in the future that it will be possible for Her Royal Highness to meet some of the children and their parents or guardians at some of our events.

On behalf of the Trustees of the London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children, we thank all within the London Licensed taxi industry and many others for their continued support.



**Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall has agreed to become LTFUC Patron**

**Raymond Levy**  
LTFUC Press Officer



2 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 4/5



4 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 8/9



6 Bedroom 5 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 12



Pool and conservation view at 6 bedroom home.

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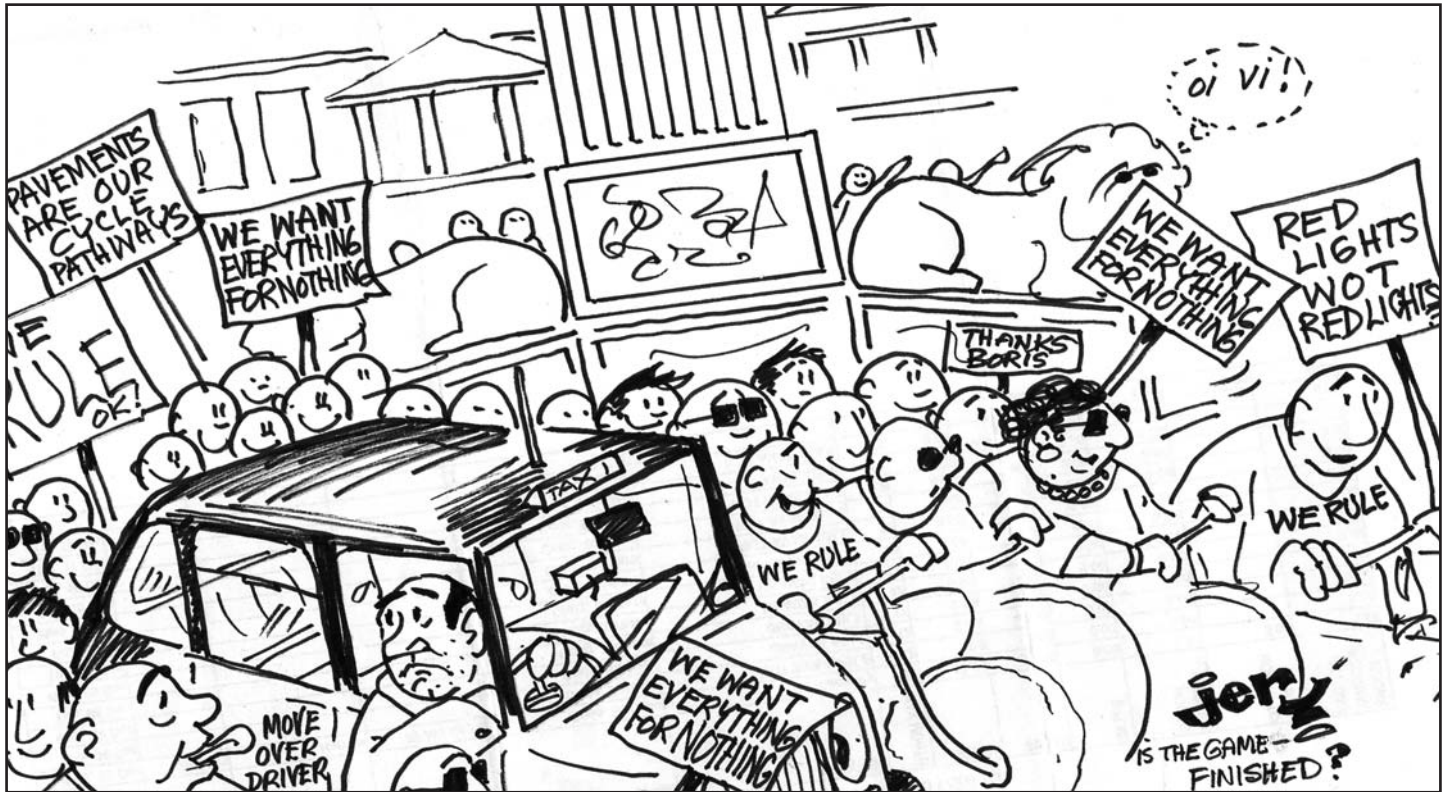


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# Jery's World



We're looking for a patron saint of cyclists but don't know whether to make it Boris or Admiral Lord Nelson!

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](http://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 internet.

There are also now 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*).

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Alan Nash (A95) -  
aka Nash's Numbers

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Within a matter of days of *Call Sign's* reporter meeting **Wayne Healy (K79)** and his accident prone taxi (see page 30), we learned that **Paul Bishop (E21)** had bought a new MB Vito and it too had been involved in an incident, this time with a motorcycle.

"Apart from a minor scrape about five years ago, I've had twenty years of accident free motoring," he said touching a conveniently placed wooden door post for good measure. "At least until now," he added quickly, "because that's when my new Vito suffered a couple of annoying minor digs and now a motorcycle recently collided with my new taxi's offside rear wing and driver's front door!"

"I was stationary on Clerkenwell Road waiting to turn right into St John's Square when the solo biker came around my offside and wobbled down the length of the cab! I can't say too much more about the incident as my insurers are dealing with the claim, but KPM were very good in repairing the damage quickly and insisted to my insurers that new panels were fitted and not the originals loaded with filler, as the cab is so recent," he stated.

"Perhaps your shiny new cab is a magnet," *Call Sign's* junior reporter innocently suggested by way of consolation, pointing out that many new vehicles on

## MY VITO IS A MAGNET!



Paul's Vito is like a magnet for accidents

the road today have plastic panels to save weight and tooling costs, while giving them the ability to 'spring back' into shape after minor impacts. Plastic of course is non-magnetic, which was the irony of the comment.

"I'm hoping this cab will be as trouble-free as the previous ones," Paul retorted as he drove away, probably quietly glad to keep a safe distance from *Call Sign's* less than diplomatic young hack!

The following day, Paul telephoned *Call Sign* to say that, just as our office

junior had predicted, he experienced another two incidents during the previous evenings' shift that convinced him our hack was psychic!

Apparently, during a torrential downpour, a pedestrian had stepped off the pavement into the road, colliding with the Vito's nearside door mirror and then later the same evening, a drunk had staggered across the road into the traffic flow, causing vehicles to swerve in all directions to avoid hitting the inebriated jaywalker. All that is except Paul's Vito, when the offside












door mirror took the brunt of the drunks' anger!

In a family magazine such as *Call Sign*, it is not possible to report *verbatim* the exchange of words between an irate Paul and the slurred speech of the drunken street person. That we will leave to your vivid imagination! However, to the many attributes our office junior has, can be added 'psychic phenomenon'!

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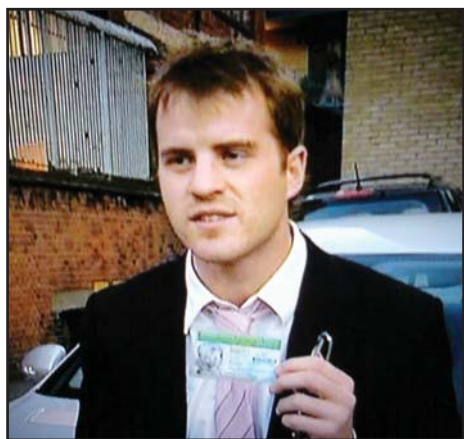
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**Rob Kazinsky holds up the plastic ID card and wonders why anyone would believe that made him genuine?**

**Rob Kazinsky** made his name in the **Sky** football series **Dream Team**, where he played **Casper Rose**. He later became the brooding anti-hero heartthrob, **Sean Slater** in BBC soap **Eastenders**. However, last year he left **Walford** after trying to kill his screen girlfriend, **Roxy Mitchell (Rita Simons)** and baby **Amy** by driving them into a lake after discovering that he wasn't Amy's real dad! Perhaps more relevant to this **Call Sign** story is that Sean played the nephew of **Charlie Slater (Derek Martin)** who plays a licensed taxi driver in the soap.

So putting aside **Eastenders**, Rob recently turned up in a fly-on-the wall **BBC3** show, **The Real Hustle** where he played a minicab driver – not sure what uncle Charlie would have said!

The **Real Hustle** has gained an almost cult following as it attempts to pull off real hustles on camera with members of the public who have no idea they are being hustled or conned.

The episode Rob Kazinsky appeared in (The Diamond Geezer) had him going undercover as a private hire driver – albeit with a nice car – ferrying some “marks” across London to return a cash deposit in return for some hired jewels.

Rob has to somehow get his passengers to believe they had a case of valuable jewels after having been convinced that it would be ok if they laid out the money for a stranger who promised them £200 for just forty minutes work. The duo originally had the money for the purchase of a laptop and the £200 was to be taken off the price. Needless to say the

**Eastenders heartthrob Rob:**

# “Don’t Use Minicabs!”

marks eventually get totally hustled by losing the jewels and their own cash. Fortunately, **The Real Hustle** makes sure that no one really loses out. The participants usually agree to allow the footage to be shown so viewers can see how easily the scam works.

With his suit, glasses and flat cap Rob was virtually unidentifiable until the end of the program when standing in front of the 59-plate BMW “minicab,” he told how easy it had been to pull off the scam. Then in a move that surprised even this mag with its hard-nosed staff, Rob told viewers to wait just a second while he walked back to the driver's seat and pulled out a minicab ID card that private hire

drivers all seem to wear around their necks as a sign of “respectability.”

Rob held the plastic card up to the camera and told **Real Hustle** viewers just how easy it had been to pretend to be a “taxi driver” and just how dangerous it was for anyone to get into a car just because the driver has a plastic ID card. He ended by asking why people are so ready to believe that just because the driver waved a piece of plastic card with their name on, it was ok to get in the car? Charlie Slater would have been so proud!

*The regular hustlers are Alex Conran, Jess Clement and Paul Wilson and the program is an Objective Productions program for BBC3...*

## Eco City Vehicles: Pre tax loss of £340,000...

Eco City Vehicles, the developer and supplier of eco-friendly commercial vehicles including the **Mercedes Vito taxi**, have posted a pre-tax loss of £340,000 for the six months to the end of June. Twelve months ago for the same period, the company declared a profit of £149,000.

However sales of the Vito taxi have risen 34.2% to £7.1m, more than half of Eco's total £12.8m turnover. This has been driven by continued growth in London and regional sales.

The total number of new Vitos sold increased from 167 to 234 vehicles and production at Coventry has been ramped up to 12 cabs a week from the previous 8.

Eco City say that current trading remains encouraging and that demand for the Vito taxi is still growing, with the number of sales expected to reach the 1000 by the end of 2010.

Like LTI, the group are said to be pursuing potential export orders following what they claim to be excellent market feedback, in addition to the development of a left-handed drive version of the Vito.

CEO **Peter DaCosta** said: “Despite challenging trading conditions, Eco City has delivered a satisfactory first half result with continued revenue growth and market share gains for the increasingly popular Vito taxi, as drivers and customers alike recognise its superior performance, comfort and efficiency compared with other taxis.”



**Eco City Vehicles  
CEO Peter DaCosta**

### Call Sign

**November 2010**

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# IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TAXI TRADE?

**The October Call Sign ran a story about Dial-a-Cab driver Anthony Mitchell's (T88) meeting with Lee Scott where he presented the MP with a Code of Conduct for all UK taxis and private hire. So many drivers phoned – some saying it made sense and an equal number claiming the opposite – that we are printing the complete document for DaC drivers to read...**

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Introduction

Reliable service that will provide for the customer a clean and safe environment for their journey with a driver that has suitably been equipped with the full understanding of the journey (as per Knowledge of London, for example).

### Standards

All vehicles will be checked for their reliability by the Licensing Authority (TfL) and not permitted a licence until they come up to standard. That each vehicle will be fitted with a licence plate that clearly marks out all the necessary requirements needed for that Licensing Authority. All drivers to be vetted with a CRB check. Drivers to be suitably attired and displaying their badge.

### Dress Code

A dress code is needed within the Taxi trade, for instance shirt and tie (blouse and tie for women). If a driver belongs to a radio circuit, both attires would carry that particular circuit's logo and of course suitable trousers / skirts with appropriate footwear, ie no trainers.

Our counterparts in the Private Hire trade already adopt this dress code and as major competitors in this industry, we need to present a higher standard of professional appearance.

### Meeting needs of disabled customers

Drivers must know how to handle all sections of the public in a respectful and caring way. All taxis to be fitted with ramps, intermediary steps and fixing devices within the vehicle for wheelchair passengers.

## TAXI CABS IN THE COMMUNITY

My understanding of the word "taxi" refers to the journey undertaken with a taxi on such a journey, which is regulated by a meter (as per taximeter) and cab (*originating from the French word cabriolet, which was originally an open-fronted horse-drawn vehicle*). There are organisations that flout the law by either corruption or misuse of the word or words, so I propose that a taxi or taxicab would mean exactly what it is supposed to and that any vehicle that carries the word "taxi", "taxicab" or "cab" is licensed to do so and has the appropriate equipment, ie a meter.

### Passenger's understanding of a taxicab

The would-be passenger will know what a taxicab looks like, either from advertising by the Licensing Authority or by the shape and displays that the Licensing Authority has approved. Once inside the vehicle, there should be a tariff chart, licence number and telephone numbers referring to the Licensing Authority.

### Taxi ranks and standings

In all cases these should be marked out clearly, both on the road and with appropriate signage. At certain times of the day and at special events, these ranks can be marshalled with representa-

tives from the Licensing Authority (not from any taxi company as we must not be seen to feather our own nests). This would ensure no favouritism and provide a safe environment for the passenger, who in some cases would be given a fixed price for getting to their destination. This happens in the United States and the system works well.

### Working from the streets

You may call this "cruising." Taxis should be allowed to apply for hire with the correct signage and, when hailed from the side of the road, be allowed to stop, help if required (disabled or luggage) without the habitual problem of getting a PCN. This happens, not just in London but up and down the country. Certain rule changes need to be applied as per bus stops, red routes etc. The job requires a taxi driver to do his job without fear of prosecution.

### Driving ability (Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

All licensed drivers must hold a DVLA or EEA (European Economical Area) or a Northern Ireland licence. You may need to apply for a counterpart if a driver has an EEA licence and this must be done before applying to the Licensing Authority.

### Proprietors

*In all cases, any person wanting to apply to become a proprietor must meet certain criteria:*

1. CRB check
2. Be responsible for the maintenance and cleanliness of the vehicle
3. Make the vehicle or vehicles always available for inspection; this will be done at an appointed inspection station that has been vetted by the Licensing Authority (in London we refer to this inspection as *Conditions Of Fitness*).
4. Emission standards will also apply to the above inspection. The vehicle will have to meet Euro 3 emissions standards.

### Change of VRM

*This refers to the change of ownership in a mid-licensing period and requires:*

- \* The completion declaration on the reverse of the existing motor cab licence.
- \* Appropriate evidence from the DVLA that confirms that the transfer has taken place.
- \* Insurance certificate bearing the new registration number.
- \* New tax disc affixed with new registration number.
- \* The registration plate carrying the new number attached to the cab.
- \* Taximeter installed with certificate carrying the new number.
- \* Wheelchair ramps (if applicable) bearing the registration number.
- \* Any vehicle that carries advertising - said advertising must be fitted by approved fitters.

### Inspection centres

These are to be approved by the Licensing Authority. Annual inspection notices should be

sent to proprietors at least 30 days before expiry date. Licensing Authorities, if their budget allows, will provide qualified inspectors to carry out on-street inspection and if a vehicle is deemed unfit, the vehicle will have attached an *unfit notice* which will explain the apparent defect and will ask the proprietor to rectify the defect and present the vehicle to be checked.

## PRIVATE HIRE ACT 1998

*(Came into force 1 April 2003)*

We are now in 2010 and the 1998 Act is somewhat outdated and needs to be brought up-to-date with the London Olympics just 2 years away. If new legislation is not brought into power soon, then when July 2012 happen, we are going to show the world a bad side of London with private hire not having any structure, no recognition, no fare charts etc. The fare paying public will be ripped off by unscrupulous drivers who will dupe would-be passengers into their vehicles charging phenomenal amounts of money. We need clear markings on private hire vehicles as stated before, namely a uniform colour on the body, the bonnet to be coloured black and a plate attached to the rear of the vehicle (*see example photo*).



## PROBLEMS WITHIN THE TAXI TRADE

### Suburban drivers plying for hire within the Green Badge area

There are many drivers that do this on a daily basis. They operate because there are no real checks on who works in the GLA and very few Public Carriage Officers around to check badges and licences. These Inspectors are limited, not only by numbers but also by budget and as previously stated, there is a way that the budget could be funded ie by the collection from the trade itself of £2 a week or £100 to be added to both taxi and private hire licences. Suburban drivers need to be easily recognised. A yellow disc could be affixed to the front screen of their vehicles, but this could also be easily removed in the case of a shared taxi with a Central London driver.

In addition, insurance companies need to change the part of the application form that applies to the difference between suburban and Central London drivers. So if a suburban driver has in any way broken the law, his insurance could be revoked.

With the number of registration recognition cameras, indications would flag up if suburban drivers keep appearing in the Central London area. This can be followed by Cab Enforcement Officers and using the 'one-strike and out', I believe offenders will comply with the law and stay within their own licensed areas.



# compliance officers update

*Hello Ladies & Gents,*

Every morning I receive a report that highlights any discrepancies that may occur, either on a specific meter fare or on an amount that is either not transferred directly onto the terminal or is manually entered at the end of a particular journey. If you are out of signal range or feel that the meter needs to be manually adjusted, can I please ask you to notify the call centre prior to clearing the trip so that they can make a note on the trip event logger and authorise any adjustments. If you are constantly needing to manually enter meter fares, it is also important that you visit Roman Way who will check or replace the interface between the meter and terminal.

Over the past month, those of you that are working during the early mornings would have noticed how busy we have been in the southwest and west areas. If trips are uncovered from the primary zone and their back-up zones, they will appear on the **BID** screen two minutes after the booked time - both on a pre-booking or an asap trip. You are quite within your right to **Bid** for any of these trips and offer



reasonable times, that is certainly better than offering no time at all.

I have recently sent out a number of complaints to members and I have been surprised that some have chosen not to reply.

***Receiving a letter of complaint doesn't make you guilty, it merely asks you for a response.***

By choosing to ignore the letter, it leaves no alternative than to invite the member

in question to attend a hearing. Without a valid reason, failure to attend will normally result in the complaint being heard in your absence, so please answer the complaint and send it back in the pre-paid envelope so the correct course of action can be taken.

Can I finally send my heart felt condolences to the family and friends of **Colin Salmon (N81)**, one of our highly valued Marshal team who sadly lost his dear mother very recently. Both **Shelagh Adkins** and I were amongst a number of Dial-a-Cab members that were present at the service, which was a true celebration of his mother's life. It was so evident by that large number of people in attendance and by the many tributes that were paid to her that she was a much loved lady - Colin, I know exactly how you must be feeling at this sad time.

*Be very lucky and healthy...*

**Allane@Dialacab.co.uk**  
**DaC Compliance Officer**  
**020 7553 7222**

## Toilets and taxi drivers

We all know about the problems working taxi drivers have when they need to use a toilet. Many **Dial-a-Cab** drivers use the Driver's Reception loo at DaC House, but only in exceptional circumstances would the security allow a non-DaC person to have use of them. But it's those exceptional circumstances this article is about.

Early last year there was a demonstration by the RMT Taxis division that was designed to highlight the problems taxi drivers have when needing to carry out a basic human function and about the parking needed to pay that visit to the loo. The result since then seems to have been that the loo probably most used by taxi drivers, the iron lung at Horseferry Road, now has wardens and CCTV cameras surrounding it making it even more difficult to have a wee.

The RMT asked Westminster City Council, and in particular their Director of Transport **Martin Low**, to allow taxis parked in a bay close to any public toilet to be allowed up to 10 minutes before Civil Enforcement Officers or CCTV cameras issue a parking ticket. That doesn't seem to have materialised.

Another problem is that many hotels now ban taxi drivers from using their toilets. Many DaC drivers have been grateful to JPM for allowing us to use their ground floor convenience when picking up there, but not all clients are as generous with their facilities. As we mentioned earlier, what if there's an exceptional circumstance why a driver needs to go?

**Norman Lewis** has been driving a taxi for many years. He now has an aggressive prostate cancer in addition to a bladder infec-



**The iron lung in Horseferry Road is a favourite with traffic wardens**

tion. The result, as he told **Call Sign**, is that if you have to go, then you have to go!

He was driving his cab in Mayfair on Friday September 24, so he pulled onto the rank serving **The Chesterfield Hotel** because he'd used it in the past with no problems. This time they refused saying that they no longer allow taxi drivers into their loos. He explained that he had prostate cancer, but to no avail - they still refused him.

According to the hotel, they previously had no problem allowing taxi drivers to use the hotel toilet, but lately had noticed that the toilet was being left in a condition that they wouldn't want their guests to see. The problem is that while most of us would not dream of leaving a toilet in a mess, undoubtedly some do and those few have spoiled it for others.

**Perhaps Call Sign readers could send in the name of any hotel etc that has no problem with us using their toilets, but**

**please, PLEASE leave them as you would wish to find them. It takes just a second to pick up that paper towel that you threw towards the bin - but missed!**

**Ron Yarborough**  
**Call Sign Online**



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**Call Sign** readers will remember our July issue where we revealed the existence of the Buckingham-based **Superchip** company. They had recently tested their "diverse ECU reprogramming capabilities" with a release that was said to be designed for the TX4.

They claimed that following careful analysis of the LTI TX4's Bosch EDC16 ECU, they had uncovered several ECU optimisation opportunities that would enable Superchip to fine-tune the map settings to remove any inbuilt compromises and boost performance.

They went on to say that in addition to boosting performance, fuel economy could be improved by up to 10%. We were told that the 100 UK Superchip dealerships could complete the upgrade in a matter of minutes and the **TX4 ECU Remap** would be priced at £445 including VAT.

It sounded good, but then we hit a major problem in that while Superchip gave customers a Service Guarantee and warranty, **LTI Vehicles** told **Call Sign** that they had not approved any ECU remap developed by Superchip or any other company and had no knowledge of such upgrades. They went on to say that any alteration to the ECU would affect emissions of the engine, the engine performance and the vehicles' warranty.

So on Monday 19 October, our tester left his own 2-year old TX4 and climbed into a 4-year old early TX4 that according to the driver obviously hadn't been looked after before being bought.

**Call Sign's** driver put his dark glasses on in case he was spotted driving a taxi with a ComCab terminal in, but soon forgot all about that as he listened to what in taxi terms could only be described as the purr of the engine! The gear changes were smooth and accelera-

# CALL SIGN TESTS SUPER CHIPPED TX4

and what a blinder it is!



tion after kicking-down was faster than many saloon cars! The whole experience was amazing, because although the TX4 leaves every one of its predecessors standing, this super-chipped cab was even better.

We obviously couldn't test the fuel consumption in our short test drive, but we saw the driver's figures and they showed an average of 8% less fuel used.

So some four months on, we asked LTI if their view had changed. Spokesperson, **Rob Laidler**, told **Call Sign**:

"There are a number of chipping compa-

nies in the market. Changing the parameters of an engine has a number of knock on effects to the vehicle's systems. In developing the TX4, LTI spent millions of pounds on optimising the vehicle to meet a whole range of criteria including emissions, safety, reliability and fuel efficiency. Re-chipped taxis will not have undergone such testing and we therefore don't know what effect this will have on the engine or vehicle systems and as a result this may invalidate the warranty."

Perhaps someone should take it for LTI to test because if that proved successful, it would undoubtedly win back some drivers that have gone over to the Vito...

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### Finchley Children's Music Group

Established in 1958, Finchley Children's Music Group (FCMG) is London's top children's choir with more than 150 members between the ages of 4 and 18. Performing regularly in all of the major London concert halls this concert sees the return of FCMG to St John's Smith Square under the direction of Grace Rossiter, where FCMG's Senior Choirs will perform extracts from Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols" – one of the most beautiful settings of Christmas music in the choral repertoire.

This prestigious event, in one of London's finest venues, St John's Smith Square will be an evening to remember and should not be missed.



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The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children Committee Members:

Organiser Michael Son – Tel 01702 525776 – Mobile 07710 388588 – Email m.son@btclick.com

Secretary, Malcolm Shaffron – Tel 0208 205 6408 – Mobile 07711 657296 – Email mshaffron@yahoo.co.uk

The Restaurant (and Bar) in the Crypt is open from 5.30pm Tel. 020 7222 2779.

St. John's, Smith Square Charitable Trust, registered charity no. 1045390. Registered in England.

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Whilst a report on this year's *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers Magical Taxi Tour to Paris* appeared in an earlier issue of **Call Sign**, We didn't have the photo we really wanted, that of new WCHCD's Master – Dial-a-Cab's **Jim Rainbird (T25)**.

Jim has actually been on most of the previous sixteen trips where taxi drivers take several hundred children suffering from life threatening illnesses on their trip of a lifetime to the magic kingdom of Disneyland Paris, but never as Master. And of course due to the way the Company runs, he undoubtedly will go on many more trips but they won't be as Master again. So a photo as a memento was doubly important.

Since the first trip in 1994, around 3,500 sick children have enjoyed the WCHCD annual Children's Magical Taxi Tour and together with police from both sides of the Channel, the convoy isn't just an unusual sight, it actually sends a feeling of warmth to anyone witnessing it – and that applies to those watching the taxis pass them in the street or other motorists who under normal circumstances would hoot in annoyance. But instead, they watch in admiration and hoot to show how delighted they are to see the strange sight of smiling kids in London taxis with Gendarmes providing an escort, alongside the AA, London Ambulance NHS Trust vehicles and medical back up doctors and nurses. Of course, the weekend would have to be in Dover without the annual generosity of P&O Ferries who take the convoy over to La belle France. M&O's providing the children with spending money undoubtedly helps as well!

The kids and all with them enjoyed their wonderful weekend at Disneyland Paris amusement park and although the weather wasn't as good as it could have been, nothing but nothing could take away the children's smiles as they found their favourite rides or just watched the magnificent parades. If you have never been there, think about booking a trip. You can go direct via Eurostar.

Then after the day in the park, it was time for the Gala Dinner with its' impressive guest list in addition to the children and their helpers - Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Goofy, Pluto, Donald and Daisy Duck, together with the Chipmunks! The famous celebrities posed for photos and signed autographs throughout the evening.

Master Jim can be truly proud of this year's Magical Taxi Tour. You can read more about the trip and the WCHCD itself at [www.magicaltaxitour.com](http://www.magicaltaxitour.com). Should you know someone who would like to make a donation towards next year's trip, they can do so via the same website...

# Jim's first Magical Taxi Tour as Master!



Master Jim Rainbird with Lord Mayor Nick Anstee



Goofy is kept busy signing auto-graphs!



## LTFUC AGM

The annual general meeting of the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children will be held on Tuesday 2nd November 2010 at the New Park Day Centre, 19 Highbury New Park, Highbury N5. The meeting starts at 7.30pm and there is parking at the centre. Refreshments will be available and all drivers are welcome to attend.

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# Allen Togwell's Marketing Place

## Can't we operate without SatNavs?

Are today's cab drivers that use SatNavs losing their geographical knowledge, or are they taking bus routes rather than chance an alternative route for fear it may no longer be feasible?

Recently I've had to attend a number of visits to the *Royal Nose, Throat and Ear Hospital* in Grays Inn Road and cab drivers that know exactly where the hospital is from **Dial-a-Cab House**, go via City Road, Angel, Pentonville Rd, Penton Rise and Swinton Street. Others who are not so sure go via Old Street, Clerkenwell Road and the full length of Grays Inn Road searching for the Hospital. So to make it easy, I don't bother mentioning the Hospital, I simply say Swinton Street by Grays Inn Road.

Most cab drivers I'm sure find it helpful when a passenger gives a preferred route, but in doing so I would assume that to be a preferred direction, not necessarily street by street. One particular visit to the RNTHE Hospital was on the day of the last tube strike; there was a shortage of cabs working but luckily I trapped one outside Moorfield's Eye Hospital. The driver was a young chap, smartly dressed and with a pleasant manner and as appears to be the norm of late amongst this fraternity, sitting atop his dashboard was the latest *must have* SatNav. I didn't physically see him use it, although I heard him talking and from what I gather there are now SatNavs on the market that can be voice activated. City Road was congested, but it was moving - albeit very slowly - all the way up as far as Angel but we were then stopped there for some considerable time. Eventually we crossed into Pentonville Road. By the time we got as far as Amwell Street there was already over £25 on the meter and we now sat at that junction while the traffic lights changed repeatedly from red to green.

I don't know how many of you guys use cabs when you are off duty so to speak and if you do, whether you would instruct your driver to take an alternative route during the middle of the journey. As a Board member, I have used quite a number of cabs over the years and there have been many occasions when I've had the urge to suggest to the driver to take a particular route, but having a badge I usually feel a little uncomfortable telling a fellow cab driver how to do his/her job. But on the day in question, sitting stationary at those lights and watching them forever changing, I was becoming concerned about my hospital appointment so I finally said to the driver: would you take a left into Amwell Street please and with sigh he said *and then where?* I said that providing it's still possible, go right at Great Percy Street, Percy Circus, Vernon Rise, Kings X Road and Swinton Street. Which he did and as it happened it was a clear run and I was at the Hospital in just a few minutes. The cause of the gridlock was traffic stuck turning right into Acton Street, meaning that had I not said anything, not only would I have been very late for my appointment but the cost of the fare could



have been exceptionally high by the time I got to the hospital, which I don't think for one moment was the driver's objective. I honestly believe he is one of the many present day young drivers who are using bus routes out of habit, influenced I'm sure by the use of SatNavs. This wasn't just a one-off incident because on each occasion I have used a cab since then to do the same journey, by coincidence it has been a young driver with a SatNav who has used a congested bus route both going and coming back. Perhaps someone out there can explain why?

## PSA testing

I've mentioned the following subject before, but because it recently affected a friend of mine who is a member of Dial-a-Cab and because I'm delighted to say it had a successful conclusion, it has a special significance and a good reason for me to mention it again. I refer to those of you who have not yet had a PSA test to check the fitness of their prostate.

I'm entering into my 15th year now since I was treated for prostate cancer and when mentioning this to my friend and asking if he had yet had a PSA test, he said he hadn't. The person in question is a family man, intelligent but, and I say this in the kindest possible way, typical of your average male who shies away from unnecessarily knowing anything about his health. His reasoning, and a common one for not having the test, was because he had no symptoms. Which is the wrong attitude because some men with prostate problems don't have any symptoms whatsoever, even common symptoms such as passing water frequently. Which means you could have a bomb ticking away inside of you that you know nothing about.

So it was with surprise when I learnt that he had taken it upon himself to see his GP about having a PSA test, even though he was convinced it would be a waste of time. Which as it transpired was not the case, because when the results came back he was shocked and naturally concerned to be told that his PSA reading was higher than it should be. It wasn't very high - 8 ng/ml, which is a little above normal but not drastically so. In fact a reading of 8 ng/ml could quite easily be the result of a slightly enlarged prostate, which is nothing serious. It should also be remembered that with PSA tests, you could have an exceptionally high reading and your prostate could be perfectly

healthy. The only difference is that with a reading higher than 5 ng/ml, your doctor would most likely arrange a referral to a urologist who after further examination may suggest you have a biopsy, which is what happened with my friend. He had a biopsy and after two anxious weeks was told that one half of his prostate was healthy but in the other half two small very low risk cancer cells were discovered.

Having been in this position myself, I knew perfectly well how he must have felt hearing his urologist mention the dreaded C word - your brain switches off, you can't think straight, all sorts of morbid thoughts start going through your mind and from that second on you don't absorb a word of what the urologist is saying, hence the necessity to have someone with you who is able to listen with a clear mind and take notes. As was the case in this instance, his wife was present and later was able to repeat what the urologist had said: That there was absolutely nothing to be worried about, the cells were very small and had been discovered early, so early in fact he is able to have a choice of a number of different treatments, something he wouldn't have had if the cancer been more advanced. It should be noted that prostate cancer has the second highest mortality rate in the UK. However, having said that, more men die with prostate cancer than from it. In other words any man living long enough will most certainly have prostate cancer and will likely die of something else. Enormous strides have been made since when I was diagnosed, especially when detected early - I repeat especially when detected early - and there lies the importance of having regular PSA tests. There are no excuses for those of you who have reached the age when it needs to be done, because it's the very age when you must undertake a medical to renew your bill, so whilst at your GP simply ask for a PSA test, which I'm sure your GP will be happy to arrange.

As for my friend, at the time of writing he is now completely upbeat about his problem. He has since been referred to a top urologist who is an expert in several of the more modern treatments, particularly for low risk prostate cancer such as *Brachy therapy*, which involves keyhole surgery implanting radioactive seeds directly into the prostate. It's done under a general anaesthetic and the patient leaves hospital the same day. The success rate is extremely high and recovery period is just a few weeks. There are no long-term side effects such as impotence or incontinence. The other advantage of this treatment is if you are among the very small minority where it wasn't successful, you can simply have the entire prostate removed. It's a grim subject I know, but if you have read this far then it has taken your interest and is quite possibly something you have been meaning to do but just haven't got round to yet. That being the case, you would be wise to do so now

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

**Call Sign** recently sent a team to represent **Dial-a-Cab** at the **Butlins Golf Day** at Silvermere, organised in aid of **The Princess Royal Trust for Carers**. While a great day's golf took place, scores took second place to the event and the money it managed to raise for the charity. The DaC team consisted of two Board members – **Keith Cain** and **Howard Pears** – and two drivers – father and son **Peter Boxall Junior and Senior**.

Fund raising manager for the charity, **Trish Brown**, told **Call Sign**:

"We at The Princess Royal Trust for Carers are delighted that Butlins have been supporting us as their chosen charity for the last three years. Our partnership has gone from strength to strength and the support they provide for unpaid carers, both financial and practical, is ever evolving, exciting and great fun.

"It was also wonderful to have such amazing support from **Dial-a-Cab** and the other teams taking part and seeing everyone enjoying the course and letting their hair down! The enthusiasm of your team created an ambience conducive to a relaxed and really enjoyable day, without some of the strict formalities that can sometimes inhibit the opportunity to play good golf and have fun at the same time. All of the money raised will be used to benefit unpaid and young carers in the UK.

"It is extremely important to us to let you know that through your support you have made a real and quantifiable difference to the everyday lives of the unpaid carers we are supporting through our Carer Centres."

**Two such carers are Charlotte and David. There are many more...**

**Charlotte** is 9 - going on 29 - and like most girls of her age is into music, dance and learning all the things you'd rather she didn't! Her Dad is paraplegic and suffers from hydrocephalus, so Charlotte has to help her mother get him dressed and is very resourceful when it comes to lifting the legs of a 16 stone man! Her brother, Robert, is also disabled and Charlotte has to help out with his therapy that at times is exhausting, even for an adult.

**David** is 70 and has cared full-time for his mother, Nora (93), for the last three years since she had a heart attack and caught pneumonia. Nora has since recovered from those health problems, but is still frail, uses a wheelchair and has diabetes. David relocated from his hometown in Wolverhampton to London to live and care for Nora. David's other siblings do not share his caring role; in fact they hardly ever visit. Doctors, family members and friends have all urged David to put Nora into a care home, but he says that he could not abandon his mum. He says simply that he loves his mother and it is his duty to care for her. He has always had a special bond with his mum ever since they were both evacuated during the blitz.

David administers his mum's medicine - she takes up to 15 tablets a day. He shops, cleans the house and pays the

# DAC TEAM AT BUTLINS GOLF DAY



**The DaC golf team**

bills. He also cooks all his mother's special diabetic meals and cares for her during the night, as she sometimes needs help going to the bathroom or needs a drink. David is partially deaf, so between them they use a light system where Nora keeps her bedroom door open, which David can see from where he sleeps, and turns her lamp on and off if she needs to wake him up.

Paid-care workers visit during the day to help Nora with her intimate and personal care. David describes his life as "being on hold" and akin to "groundhog day." Whilst caring for his mother, he hasn't been out for one evening since his

full-time caring responsibilities began. He no longer has time to pursue any hobbies – he enjoyed drama and dancing. Caring has also had an impact on his health and David now takes anti-depressants. Thankfully he gets support from his local Princess Royal Trust Carers' Centre and also mentors other male carers. He describes his support worker Bruce as being "fantastic."

Speaking for the DaC team, **Keith Cain** told **Call Sign**:

It was an excellent day and while I can't claim that we came top, we all played well and were just delighted to be part of such a worthwhile event."

## Barking Physical Therapy Centre

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Dial-a-Cab driver **Marc Turner (R97)** doesn't like touts – in fact the last time he appeared in **Call Sign** was in connection with an Addison Lee driver who tried to pinch a job coming out of the Holiday Inn Forum hotel in South Ken. When Marc berated him, the minicab driver tried to run him over!

Marc also showed his displeasure when he spotted a Welwyn Garden City licensed taxi driver trying to nick a job near Regent Street. Marc warned him off, but when he refused to stop, Marc reported him and even drove to Welwyn to give evidence to the local PCO about their driver. So no, he doesn't like touts!

Strangely enough, he actually got to know one tout after seeing him regularly "working" at **Nobu** in Berkeley Street before, thanks to DaC's **Natalia Shalom (A34)** and a few other hardy souls, the current successful rank was put into place.

At that time, DaC drivers led the way in forming an unofficial rank outside the restaurant and the tout used to chide Marc that as soon as it got busy, licensed taxis wouldn't bother supporting the rank anymore and they (the touts) would again get

## Tout to DaC's Marc: "You've won!"



Tout-hater Marc

all the work. Whenever Marc put on the unofficial rank, if the tout was there he'd say the same thing about them getting the work back eventually.

Then exactly one year ago (5 November 2009), the trade was given a proper rank at Nobu. Marc was on the rank a few weeks ago when the same tout, who he hadn't seen for many months, came up to him.

"You've won," he told the surprised DaC driver, "we get very little work here nowadays and I rarely come anymore. In fact I hardly drive a cab anymore!"

Marc told **Call Sign**: "I can't say I liked him, but his admission gave me a great deal of satisfaction and I almost wanted to say thank you for his honesty. But I refrained! But I'm so pleased that the rank has been so successful. I just hope that now business is picking up, we continue to support it because give these touts an inch and they'll take a mile..."

## LTFUC Pearly Harvest Festival Parade

The *London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children* was recently invited to attend the traditional annual London Pearly Kings and Queens Costermongers' Harvest Festival Parade at Guildhall and I went along with the fund's Hon Secretary, Malcolm Shaffron, and our wives Maureen and Evelyn, to witness a time-honoured, colourful and spectacular event.

The London tradition of the Pearly Kings and Queens began in 1875 when a young orphan, Henry Croft, admiring the pearl button seams on some of the market traders, decided to go one better and cover his entire suit in buttons. With the attention this drew, he set about collecting money to help others and the Pearlies are still a very active organisation collecting for many charities throughout the London area.

The annual festival was arranged by Doreen and Larry Golding, who are the Old Kent Road Pearly Queen and King and held under the auspices of the Pearly Kings and Queens Society. It is because of Larry's naval background during the war, plus the fact that the navy has an enormous tradition of being very charitable, that they get tremendous help from the Royal Naval Reserve Headquarters, HMS President, to put this event on. I would also mention that Larry was a licensed taxi driver for many years after the war and also did some



The Pearlies with  
**Raymond Levy (centre)**  
and **Malcolm Shaffron**  
(right)

work for the then *Taxi Aid Society*, as did his father and uncles. Doreen is a Freeman of the City of London.

Guildhall yard rapidly became a very colourful sight and after some great entertainment, our balloon-decorated taxi joined the long Pearly-led procession around

the City to attend a service at the famous St Mary-Le-Bow Church, Cheapside, where the congregation were welcomed by the pealing of the Cockney Bow Bells. This was a wonderful event and it was great seeing the Pearlies proudly showing off this often forgotten aspect of London's heritage, pageantry and costume.

The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children are pleased to support the good work that the Pearlies do to benefit people across London and its surrounding areas and the Hon President (Bill Tyzack C06), Hon Chairman (David Lessman D19) and the committee would like to thank them most sincerely for all the help and support they have continually given to our charity over very many years.

**Raymond Levy**  
LTFUC Press Officer

# JOHN MASON SPEAKS



**The Director of London Taxis and Private Hire, John Mason, recently offered to answer Dial-a-Cab driver's questions, so we took him up on his offer...**

**Bernie Silver (G08):** Mr Mason, I was under the impression that Private Hire companies were not allowed to use the words taxi or cab, yet hundreds of them advertise the word minicab outside their premises. Does minicab come under the TPH direction?

**John Mason:** *Yes they do come under our direction and regulation. It's no secret that we get a significant amount of complaints from taxi drivers regarding private hire operators using such words and every time we get such a complaint, I can assure you we take action. In the vast majority of cases, the operators didn't understand the rules and they take immediate steps to remove such wording from advertising. In some cases we get these type of complaints about operators not licensed by us and who fall outside of our legislation. When this is the case, we will refer the matter to the relevant authority. I know it is frustrating for drivers, but I can assure you that we do follow this through and try and ensure that all operators we licence are aware of these restrictions.*

**Alf Allen (A36):** Could Mr Mason please explain to me how it can be that when I parked on the rank outside the Sanderson Hotel in Berners Street, I was told that I couldn't stop there by the doorman as it was for their cars to pick up? I told the doorman what he was doing was illegal, but the nice man told me where to go! I then watched him ask people if they wanted a taxi, after which he put them into unlikely cars with no TfL signs on them. Could Mr Mason please tell me if he allows this to happen?

**John Mason:** *I'm sorry to hear of the action of this doorman. Of course, if you are parked on a rank then you have a right to be there regardless of what he might say to you. I do not condone such behaviour and based on the information you have provided, I have concerns that this activity is illegal and will ask our compliance team and the Met Police to follow it up.*

**Steve Albasini (V02):** I would like to ask Mr Mason two questions...

**1)** Within the M25 there are circa 25,000 yellow and green badge holders with approximately 2.5 times that in PHV drivers. Do you think there is a correlation between the unregulated numbers of PHV drivers and the touting behaviour of the minicab fraternity within London? If so, would you be prepared to introduce a cap on the number of PHV drivers, which would then reduce their numbers thus reducing the temptation to tout for business as they could then survive on pre-bookings alone?

**2)** The PH game is financially a free market, whereas the licensed game is strictly controlled by the meter within the cab. Since joining DaC, I begrudgingly agree with the management that it's impossible to compete with the PH companies on price for certain long journeys. I think parity is needed for the licensed taxi driver to take an equal share of this work. For this to occur, do you think in the future a change in legislation could allow certain jobs (eg Heathrow) to be a pre-set fare from central London, varying only dependent on the origin of the journey?

**John Mason:** *On the first issue, I can understand the concern with regards to the number of taxi and private hire drivers, but the simple answer is that we do not have power to introduce a "cap" and the Department for Transport do not support Local Authorities doing so. There are, however, not 75,000 private hire drivers, the numbers are much lower and this is only the number of people licensed as drivers rather than people actively out and about working. I know touting is a problem and there is always room for improvement, but we do work incredibly hard with our colleagues in the Met and City Police to tackle this problem. I often read articles or get complaints saying we do nothing other than badge and bill checks, but the reality is very different. Since we introduced our "one strike and out" policy 18 months ago, we have revoked over 300 licenses and since they were established, the dedicated Cab Enforcement unit have made over 6000 arrests for touting. However, one of the problems is the level of penalties the Courts hand down and we and the Police need more powers to act as a deterrent such as seizing and crushing touts vehicles and are lobbying Government to get these.*

*Regarding set fares, I agree that we need to look at this issue in more detail as I would imagine not every driver would want to use them, so they would probably need to be optional. One possible solution we discussed internally recently was to introduce an optional scheme that all drivers could participate in where they can enter into an agreement with a passenger to take them to their destination for an agreed amount and not use the meter. Personally I can't see any problem with this, obviously if the passenger wants the metered fare then the driver would have a legal obligation to take them, but if the passenger and the driver agreed a fare "off meter" why would this be a problem even if it ended up being more (or less) than what the metered fare would have been? I would be interested in bearing more views on this.*

*For now, however, you can't charge more than the meter and if you wanted to compete by agreeing a fixed fare for any journey, you can do that as long as you don't charge more than the meter. So you would need to leave that on and make this clear to your passenger.*

**David Ballard (N28):** Mr Mason, what progress has been made in identifying yellow badge drivers illegally picking up

in town and how many have

**John Mason:** *This is one of the things we need to get a lot of stick for from the public. If we don't undertake our responsibilities of badge and bill check then we are letting the cabbies whilst letting the PHVs onto the road! However, the fact is that we do do badge and bill checks but this is a very active activity we undertake which is very focused on touting by private hire. On the other hand, we have caught two yellow badge drivers who didn't even have a license. The Police found quite a number of them and they are worth doing.*

**Stephen Field (F68):** Mr Mason, are pedicabs as the word cab? Or do they describe the black cab? Otherwise, what are these death cycles and what is the risk? Someone is going to be killed

**John Mason:** *I'm afraid TfL are not going to control pedicabs. They are a different type of private hire licensing and they are a different type of legislation we are responsible for. I accept that there is a gap in regards to pedicabs in London and it's one we think we are looking at addressing. I know there is a proposed voluntary scheme in Westminster, that also includes measures for parking offences in such time as the Government is looking at this is better than nothing.*

**Mark Blackett (M16):** Mr Mason, why are TfL petrified to enforce Private Hire vehicles. Apparently they have blacked-out rear windows and there seem to be many Volvo V40s around with window tinting. PH licence! If I were to cover the windows how quickly it would be noticed and how quickly it would be noticed that that with the introduction of the new Vianos will be taken off the road. Finally touting. It goes on and on, very little seems to be done. I hope the companies, if they don't abide by the licence.

**John Mason:** *TfL is not petrified. Quite the opposite and to Steve's question, we do have the power to enforce the regulations. But we need room for improvement.*

*On the issue of Private Hire vehicles, there is actually no requirement for windows in private hire vehicles to comply with the relevant legislation. The bottom line here is that if a driver uses a private hire vehicle they can book one without a license.*

*As I am sure you know, I have been used before the fact and I have heard lots of claims from drivers who are confused but we haven't had*



# AKS TO CALL SIGN

been caught?

*those issues that I feel we drivers regardless of what the checks, then we are abandoning. Yet if we undertake a we are penalising law-abiding touts run riot just down is that we do regular badge a small fraction of the total, quite rightly, is primarily unlicensed vehicles and the last exercise we did we drivers and one bad one dri- licence. I know that the City of cases in September, so*

on, what control do you have or taxi can only be used to wise who does have control on advice are you giving users? on one eventually...

*have no power whatsoever don't fall under taxi or pri- aren't buses or fall under onsible for. However, we do eat deal of concern with London and other cities in the the Government should be ow that there is opposition ry licensing scheme in udes power to issue penal- but I would say that until ent decides to take action,*

ason, can you please tell me force the regulations set for ntly PHV are not allowed to ows for passenger safety, yet olkswagen Sharan and Ford s so dark, you cannot see the r my licence plate, I wonder ed? Also PH cannot use vehi- th black cabs, does this mean the Vito Taxi, PH Vitos and ad?

every night of the week and Don't be scared of Private Hire by the rules, don't give them

*ified to enforce the regula- and, as I set out in response massive amount of work to t as I said, there is always*

*ire vehicles with tinted win- restriction on the use of tint- e vehicles as long as they uws on the level of tint. The passenger does not want to with tinted windows, then them (or use a taxi)!*

*Mercedes Vitos and Vianos y were licensed as taxis. I drivers that passengers are d any complaints that they*

*are or seen any evidence to support these claims. However, I know it is an issue drivers feel strongly about and needs to be discussed and debated, which is why we have included reference to it in our private hire consultation document which is out now and closes on 24 December, which you get via our website: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/businessandpartners/taxisandprivatehire/8832.aspx>.*

**Ian Connelly (T21):** Dear Mr Mason, would you consider applying a visible identification to the outside of taxis driven by suburban drivers? This could be in the form of a large yellow spot stuck to the front and boot lid of the cab. On rental taxis, the proprietor / garage would be responsible for sticking the markings on and the driver would need to sign that the spots are on the cab when handing over the copy of his Bill. They could easily be removed by the garage for green badge driver's rental. This should deter drivers from plying outside their zone and would be self-policing.

I would also like to ask that as most vehicles used by PH have heavily tinted rear windows, isn't the round disc licence now rather pointless? Is it not time to adopt a rear plate as used in outer London with make, registration and expiry date? A few screw holes in the rear should not be an obstacle and may deter the luxury end who are not PH in the true sense, but that use the licence as a means of avoiding the congestion charge.

**John Mason:** When we consulted last year on various matters such as driver identification, in response three of the taxi driver associations all came back to us and suggested such an identification. We are actively looking at this and how it would work. I have to say that as word has spread that we are looking into this, we have had a considerable amount of correspondence with Green Badge drivers generally being fully behind such an identifier and Yellow Badge drivers being against them, so we can not rush this and will need to make sure everyone fully understands how such a system will work.

With regards to private hire vehicle identification, again, this is an issue we cover in our private hire consultation. See the above website in the response to Mark...

**Alex Constantinou (N05):** Mr Mason, can you give me

your views on the closure of the M4 bus lane? I am also concerned that when *Call Sign* enquired in a previous article about who was responsible for the lane, the magazine was passed from one organisation to another – including the police and PCO – all claiming just that it wasn't them. From memory, *Call Sign's* conclusion was that everyone was afraid Addison Lee Chairman, John Griffin, might launch a court battle over the lane's usage and that losing would be a huge embarrassment for the authorities. Can you assure us that this

wasn't why it has been disbanded?

I also remember *Call Sign* publishing a question to the police tout unit asking that numbers of arrests involving taxis and PH should be itemised because I would bet anything that the numbers of taxi drivers arrested is minimal. Yet the total is always published as one number. This is wrong...

**John Mason:** *Ok, let me put the record straight on the M4 bus lane once and for all! It has nothing to do with anyone being "scared" of a Court challenge. In fact, I think such a challenge is inevitable. When I started last September, the issue of private hire vehicles driving in the M4 bus lane all "kicked off". I quickly established that responsibility for the bus lane rests solely with the Highways Agency and illegal use was the responsibility of the Police. Despite this fact and due to pressure, complaints, queries and criticism directed at TfL, I spent a considerable amount of time arranging and attending meetings with the Highways Agency and the Police to raise the concerns of the trade and to push them to resolving this problem. Whilst private hire vehicles continued to use the lane, enforcement did increase and, I understand, over 200 penalties were issued. I have to say that this is EXACTLY what the private hire trade wanted! They had, and have, a very clear view that the exclusion of private hire vehicles from bus lanes is discriminatory and a restriction of trade. So they intentionally drove in the bus lane with the objective of being issued with penalties they could then challenge in Court.*

TfL had absolutely no involvement in the Government's decision to remove the M4 bus lane and was not consulted in any way. I found out about the decision on exactly the same day as everyone else, although I suspected that this might end up being the case.

Finally, on the issue of touting statistics, all I can say is that I agree. Their stats would undoubtedly show that of the activity undertaken and arrests made, the vast majority are non-taxi driver touts. We are working on a new website on which we intend to publish results of all activities, including naming and shaming touts and hope to launch this as soon as possible.

*Call Sign* would like to offer its sincere thanks to John Mason for his time...

## LONDON LEGEND Limousine Taxis



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## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

All members will receive 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 will consider an agenda including the Election of Officers and any proposed Rule Changes and Propositions.

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

Any member putting forward a Rule Change, Proposition or nomination for the Board and wishing to give a brief explanation to support their submission in the January Call Sign, may do so by emailing it to the Editor with a maximum 250 words by midday on Tuesday 7th December 2010.

Howard Pears  
Company Secretary

## Lee tragedy - Out for the Season!

As his **Ashford Town** team walloped **North Greenford United** 6 – 2 in the **FA Carlsberg Trophy** 1st Qualifying Round to set up a 2nd round match against **Bury Town**, 'Tangerines' goalkeeper and **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Lee Pearce (J71)** was waiting to see the consultant about his problematic knee. He twisted it two months back, tried to play in a practice match several weeks later but the knee gave way again.

"The knee was really sore," he told **Call Sign**. "When I tried to run, it just gave way. I'd have kicked myself for not being more patient except that I might have fallen over had I tried it!"

Now Lee has been given the bad news that the injury is his **cruciate ligament** that runs from *femur* to the *fibia* and usually prevents over-bending or over-straightening. Now Lee faces an operation that puts paid to the rest of his season. It has also prevented him from driving his taxi for a few weeks, but because it's his left knee he should at least be able to get back behind the wheel after the op.

"I'm totally gutted," said Lee. "Not only are the team playing well, but so was I and now I can only sit and watch!"

As for the FA Trophy match, the last 45 minutes saw all the action with a brace from Isaiah Rankin and one each from player-coach Jamie Lawrence, Mark Bitmead, Spencer Tauferelli and Russ Canderton. The result kept Ashford's great recent form up, giving the Middlesex outfit their fifth win in six games. While runaway Zamaretto League Central Division leaders **Hitchin Town** have a comfortable cushion at the top, if Ashford can keep winning, then who knows. But for Lee, the excitement will be as a spectator.

"But don't worry," he added, "I'll be back next season better than ever..."



Just as DaC's Lee hits top goalkeeping form, injury sidelines him for the season

## Ken's Change of Mind on Bus Lanes?

*But Boris says he hasn't changed his!*

**Dial-a-Cab** driver **Bernie Silver (G08)** was away at a weekend meeting recently that was totally unconnected to the cab trade. Sometimes that can make a pleasant change! Then suddenly in walked the evening's guest speaker – former Mayor of London **Ken Livingstone**.

Mr Livingstone recently defeated **Oona King** to win the Labour Party nomination for the Mayor of London elections in May 2012 and as soon as Bernie realised who was in the room with him, he phoned **Call Sign** to ask if we had any question for Ken should Bernie manage to get hold of him following his speech.

Sure enough, Bernie was introduced to the former Mayor by MP for Ealing North, **Steve Pound**. We knew that Mr Livingstone had changed his mind when as Mayor he said that private hire could NOT use bus / taxi lanes and more recently said that provided PH vehicles had official signage on, he would – if he won the election – allow them into bus and taxi lanes. This had undoubtedly been bad news for the licensed taxi trade.

The **Call Sign** question was whether he had changed his mind yet again? Surprisingly, he said that he hadn't expected PH to grow to 60,000+ and now, instead of automatically allowing the cars into the lanes, he would call for a Consultation and listen to views of both sides of the trade - could that be John Griffin's legal team?

We then called **Mayor Boris Johnson's** office and after a few hours wait for official confirmation, we were told that the Mayor hadn't changed his view and that private hire were and would stay banned from bus and taxi lanes.

Our thanks to Bernie for interrupting his weekend to keep **Call Sign** readers informed...



Ken now says he will call for a consultation rather than automatically allow PH into bus lanes



## Celebrity Causes

It seems that if you want to further an argument or cause to get noticed, you need a celebrity.

The successful campaign for the Ghurkhas led by Joanna Lumley, David Beckham aligns his name for UNICEF, Emma Thompson campaigns against sex trafficking. Even TFL are using the talents of the X Factor's Dermot O'Leary, Mark Ronson and Edith Bowman to promote their cycling campaign. These are big hitters and even gong down the scale, you will see a local celebrity promoting a cause.

Often on TV we see our iconic taxi being used by the media with celebs being filmed in such high profile programmes as *Who do you think you are*, *Come Dine with Me* and numerous other shows. Instantly the whole world knows they are in London and the celebrity is at home and relaxed in a London taxi.

Every day we pick up some of the world's most famous politicians and stars who often ask how business is or for our opinion on various subjects. Though our responses may differ, by and large we tend to have a united front on traffic and regulation issues that affect our movements and income. Most of London's local radio phone-in shows rely on our contribution to inform and agitate arguments.

It is on these local radio and TV shows where I think that we lose valid points and arguments when our representatives (regardless of which trade group) come up against a fully trained media interviewer. I sometimes feel that the public are losing interest as they listen to another moaning monotonous cab driver. However, if we had a high profile celebrity, perhaps even more than one fully trained and briefed in the points that we want to get across, I am sure that our views would be heard in a more positive manner.

I certainly would not mind throwing in the odd free fare (not Heathrow!) for that celebrity to support us. The big question is which celebrity should have the honour?

## Best drivers? Yes! Worst passengers? More than likely...

The honour and proud position of being *The Best Taxi Drivers in the World* is once again secured, but if there were to be a poll held closer to home by family and friends, what position would we be as car passengers? I suspect we would be closer to the worst...

A simple trip to the shops or any other destination as a passenger is met by a shaking of the head and tut-tutting at the route taken, shouting instructions to *spin it around* followed by the pushing of an imaginary foot-brake and clutch. Our body swerve and winch as we pass parked cars to emphasise that the driver doesn't know the width of the road or vehicle and insist on sitting in the back when someone under 30 years old is driving!

If we hire a vehicle for a holiday or simple removal job, we insist on our name going down as the prime hirer, as we are no doubt the safest driver with the missus / partner only

# LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE...

with Tom Quigley



appearances than anyone else and then go on to slate their system of vehicle checks, bemoaning how much a London cab costs to run and maintain how the game is finished and that there's no money around - just as we pull up outside the five star golf resort!

You may never have picked this passenger up, but I am sure your family have. Just be thankful they weren't surveyed...

**Gilda O'Neill, writer, born 25 May 1951; died 24 September 2010**

May I take this opportunity to remember one of our own - a great Eastender and inspiration to anyone who has read her books or listened to her on radio or TV - **Gilda O'Neill**. Her books such as *My East End*, *Memories of Life in Cockney London* (1999) and its sequel, *Our Street* recorded an oral history of life in the East End during the Blitz and other periods. Her accounts of East End Life have and will continue to prove invaluable to historians and school-children alike. Born in Bethnal Green, the granddaughter of a Thames tugboat skipper and pie and mash shop owner, she left school at 15 doing various office and bar jobs, as you could back then. She returned to education as a mature student achieving university degrees.

Gilda passed away after a short illness....

**Tom Quigley (Y33)**

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

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Following the article in September's *Call Sign*, *Monty Sets a PCN Precedent*, I would be interested to hear **Barrie Segal's** opinion on my case and if he'd have fought it differently or whether the enforcement of the area was illegal as in the past?

I suppose all good things come to an end eventually and that was the case for my unbeaten run of victories against various council parking agencies. I've always been as bold as brass in saying that I'd use any means, fair or foul, to win my cases - including fictitious disabled passengers that I'd helped into buildings, but ironically this was a case I thought I couldn't lose if I told the truth! How wrong I was!

On Saturday July 10 whilst driving in Seymour Place, I received a phone call. Unfortunately I'd forgotten my *Bluetooth* headset, so I asked the caller to wait and I pulled into Crawford Place, as I had to write down some details that the caller had rung to give me. I knew there was a single yellow line, but what I didn't realise was that Crawford Place has one of those little bulb like CCTV cameras mounted on a wall and sure enough, a few days later I received the familiar posted PCN telling me to pay £60. I watched the 2 mins and 30 seconds of CCTV footage that showed me stationary with my brake lights illuminated for 1min and 10 seconds before applying the hand brake and putting it into park. Open and shut, I thought.

I'd just say the caller was a private client, giving me flight numbers and times for his trips to and from the airport. I was already armed with the knowledge imparted by an adjudicator in a previous hearing, that a taxi driver has dispensation to carry out his work duties as long as it is within a reasonable time. So I fired off my appeal ending with the words: *"I feel inclined and determined not to pay this unfair and spiteful fine and so for the moment you will have to continue to fill your coffers with the coin of those with either no time or stomach to fight such blatant extortion! Please waste my time no further or send me the papers to arrange a personal hearing."* Suffice to say that on Thursday October 7, I arrived at PATAS (Parking and Traffic Appeals Service) in Islington High Street and was stunned to receive a judgement against me! The Adjudicator, Andrew Harman, was very sympathetic and acknowledged that I had tried to do the right thing by pulling over as opposed to driving with a phone on my ear, especially as I needed to write!

However, he informed me that in law a vehicle is *parked* when it waits and it is irrelevant whether or not the vehicle is occupied or whether the brake lights are on. He accepted that I was indeed working by accepting the call and taking down the details. Dispensation could be applied to picking up or setting down or deliveries, however he could not give dispensation to any motorist - including a taxi driver - to wait on yellow lines for the purpose of taking a phone call, even if the call was work related. He was therefore satisfied that the contravention had occurred and my appeal was accordingly refused!

"But, how are we supposed to do our job," I pleaded with him? "The whole of London has yellow lines and you can drive for hours and not find somewhere to pull over." He was

**After many years with a 100% success rate for PCN appeals, something has gone wrong!**

# Martin Hizer loses Arbitration appeal!



**Nothing lasts forever - Martin finally loses an Appeal!**

unmoved! "Had I left the vehicle to do a delivery I would have been ok," I asked?

"Yes," he replied, "but that's not what happened, is it," he answered quickly. I pointed out that I had tried to comply with the law by not driving with a phone on my ear, only for him to tell me that I had nonetheless broken the law by 'waiting' on a yellow line!

I hadn't given up yet. "So from what you're saying, next time I receive a phone call - even if I'm wearing a headset - where I need to write any information, I should get out with something in my hand, go round the corner as

if doing a delivery and write the details there and I should be alright!"

In the words of Graham Taylor, *did he not like that* and he very strongly denied that he was implying such a thing! Despite his protestations, I was left in no doubt that honesty definitely is **not** the best policy when dealing with councils or their agents, even if they do claim to be independent!

Although I would never suggest that anybody knowingly do anything dishonest, I would not be surprised if drivers were to get out with something in their hand, go round the corner as if doing a delivery and write the details there! I would also not be surprised if a driver turned off their ignition as if they had stalled in the middle of traffic and wrote the details while pretending to restart the engine and turning the ignition off again to feign another stalling! Apologies in advance if and when I do that and you happen to be behind me!

As I have said in previous articles, London has declared war on its motorists and it does not matter even if you are trying to earn an honest living or if you are trying to comply with the law, because they are happy to criminalise you to steal your hard earned money!

This driver, however, will never turn away from these bullies and I can assure you that I have not been cowed by having my nose bloodied! On the contrary, all they have done is to make me angry ... and they wouldn't like me when I'm angry!

**Martin Hizer (M47)**

## Dial-a Cab Credit Union

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The May **Call Sign** had the happy news that **Dial-a-Cab** Board member, **Keith Cain**, had finally become a grandfather. But he became a granddad with a real bang when eldest daughter **Samantha** - with help from hubby **Andrew** - gave birth to twins who are now 6 months old.

Now, thanks to his youngest daughter **Joanne** and husband **Steve**, Keith has the hat trick with new granddaughter **Ava** appearing on the scene!

**Ava Hannah Scott** was born on 7th September at Darent Hospital in Kent, arriving at a healthy - make that very healthy - 8lb 5ozs.

Keith told **Call Sign** that having 3 grandchildren is keeping he and wife **Tammy** rather busy. "It's a bit like waiting for a bus," said Keith, "you wait ages for one to come and then three come along at once. But it's a real pleasure!"

*Keith Cain's grandchildren*

## IT'S LIKE WAITING FOR A BUS!



1 week old **Ava** hangs on between the 6 month old twins, **Ethan** and **Emily**

### Very Low Emission Zone

## WILL IT GET RID OF TAXIS?

Mayor of London **Boris Johnson** is considering the introduction of a Very Low Emission Zone within the congestion zone area. This follows London Assembly Member **Darren Johnson** asking that if such a zone were to come in, then it should apply to licensed taxis that did not meet the criteria.

If brought in, the strict rules would affect over half the current taxi fleet in addition to many cars and vans. Modifications would be extremely unpopular following the last debacle when even those systems that worked were told that they would soon need updating.

Recent research claims that taxis are responsible for more than a fifth of London's particulate pollution.

**Darren Johnson** told the gathered press: "The Mayor took a big backward step on air pollution when he stopped the six-monthly inspections of black cabs, so he now needs to take an even bigger step forward if he wants to deal with the problem of London's dreadful air quality. A heavy fine to deter the most polluting black cabs and lorries from central London is an essential step towards protecting Londoners' health."

This comes on top of the possible 10-year life for taxis. Are they trying to get rid of us?



Will **Boris** bring a very low emission zone and what effect will that have on taxis

## DO YOU WANT TO INVEST IN A MOVIE?

**Ray Winstone** is starring in a new movie called **The Hot Potato**. It is an independent movie and the producers are looking for investors to invest in the film. They are currently filming in Brussels and finish filming in London later this month (November).

**The Hot Potato** is an exciting new British period 'caper' movie in the spirit of *The Italian Job* and *Two Way Stretch* and is based on real events that took place at the end of the 1960s in London's East End.

This is your chance to be a private investor in the movie - the minimum investment is £2,500 with a maximum of £500,000. The production is fully financed and if any **Dial-a-Cab** drivers are interested, this is the last chance as a private investor to own a stake in the movie and replace industry finance. You can do it through their tax-efficient EIS backed scheme. Speak to your advisor, but it closes very soon. You will be buying shares in **Wardour Pictures Plc**, the Production Company behind **The Hot Potato** and be personally involved in what could well be the next UK and International movie success story.

If you are interested, please contact **Sonita Gale**, Associate Producer of **The Hot Potato** on 07956 602 898. You can also take a look at the website: [www.hotpotatomovie.com](http://www.hotpotatomovie.com).



**Ray Winstone** is starring in the **Hot Potato**. Now you can be an investor in the movie

It was an unusually warm morning on that day in July 2009 when I decided to take my grandson and two young foster children who live nearby to **Whipsnade Zoo**. I had packed a picnic lunch, travel blankets and small chairs into the car that would make us self sufficient as we toured the spacious zoo that overlooks Dunstable Downs.

Whipsnade Zoo is one of the best laid-out zoos so far as animal comfort goes, with acres of grass enclosures for the animals to run, walk and relax - just as they would in the wild. There are many animals available for children to touch and mix with, so they can learn much more about them.

On arrival, we paid to take the car into the zoo as it's rather a long walk to cover all exhibits. There's a free double-decker bus service that runs around the perimeter roads giving a good view and also a train that covers most of the zoo, for which you can buy a ticket while sitting back and pretending you are on safari in some far off land.

After seeing the new cheetah enclosure, rhinos, elephants, sea lions, penguins, lions and chimpanzees we decided to sit on the grass near the flamingo lake and have our picnic, after which we decided to drive through the deer sanctuary. As we drove through the tranquil and mainly empty enclosure, we spied some large black crows swooping down like spitfires in a dogfight. The target for these evil birds? We soon spotted a day-old baby deer frightened and lost, the herd had moved to the other end of the pasture and the youngster had been forgotten.

There are notices informing you not to get out of your car in the enclosure, but I could not bear to see the young fellow being murdered by the crows. So I jumped out of the car and ran across the grass. Even as I homed in on the deer, the crows were still intent on killing their prey. I scooped the baby deer up in my arms and fended off the still attacking crows. The young victim could be felt trembling against my skin.

I could see that though the children were taken by the cute young creature, they were mentally upset by the bird attack. So now it was off to pass on our patient onto the zookeepers where we passed him to one of the female keepers.

The following day at the request of the children, I phoned the zoo and apologised for leaving my car in the enclosure and enquired after the health of our new friend. The man I spoke to was friendly and on hearing of the children's concern, said that when the children returned, they should seek him out and he'd reward them.

## And Hackney Council...

It was at this time that the Hackney Borough Council decided that they wanted me to have a CRB check; I informed them that I already possessed one, which was lodged with the PCO as our job includes transporting lone children. But typical of Hackney Council, they had to waste more taxpayer's funds by having their own CRB completed. I completed the paper work and submitted it to the Council at the beginning of August 2009 and waited... and waited!

During this time I was in touch with a gentleman at Whipsnade by the name of Les, he

During a visit to Whipsnade zoo, Tom Whitbread asks the question

# IS IT A GOOD LIFE???



The children feed the elephants



Little and Large!

September 2010 - it had taken just over a year to arrange the visit. I'm glad that I do not have to deal with Hackney Council when we try to realise a **Dial-a-Dream** for a terminally ill child, as our time scale is sometimes down to months or even weeks.

kept enquiring when I was going to bring the children for their return visit. I was a bit embarrassed as I kept telling him the truth that I was waiting for Hackney Council's approval after they had received the return of the CRB check.

By February 2010 I was fuming with the CRB people as I was still waiting. So I phoned, only to be told that Hackney Council had not sent the request until 28 November, 2010 and it had now been returned to them from the police, requesting that if I was going to be the children's foster parent, I would want them to stay with me all of the time. I explained that I didn't want the children to stay with me, I only took them on occasional days out to give the real foster parents a break. Of course, it was once again a social worker incapable of doing her job correctly that was the problem. Hackney Council are putting unqualified people in jobs they should not even have been considered for in the first place. This is how children are put at risk and into danger and why we come to hear of their tragic deaths. I'm just not knocking Social Workers - my eldest daughter is one in Nottinghamshire, but she had to do years of training including a university course. Eventually I got the CRB check returned from the council in April 2010 along with my wife's, who had gone through the same problems.

Now I had the problem of matching up the children's school breaks and holidays as they went to different schools and had different holiday dates. Les at Whipsnade Zoo was very patient and we eventually settled on 1st

On the day, we arrived at Whipsnade, we paid our entrance fee and parked inside the zoo. Les came out to meet and greet us and to explain he had made up an itinerary that covered most of the day. He ushered us into his four-wheeled drive vehicle and drove us around the zoo pointing out the new attractions and ventures being undertaken to enhance the visitor's day out.

This pleased me no end as it left me free to engage in my hobby of taking photographs, that is when I am in my element! Les then stopped the vehicle and we alighted to enter a building that I had never ventured into before, in fact on my many visits I never even knew it was there! This was the reptile's home; the children were allotted a keeper and taken to feed the snakes with dead mice. Although I took some photos, I was far from at ease near the snakes. In fact I have a serious fear of them, I cannot even watch them on the television.

Then it was on to feed the turtles - boy can they get vicious - followed by the small crocodiles - also fed dead rats from the end of a broom handle. Now I remember why I did not go into the ponds and lakes in Australia!

During this time, the children were taken into a classroom where they were allowed to handle stick insects, large spiders and various creepy crawlies before going on to my highlight of the day, the Meerkat enclosure - my favourite zoo animals. The children were

*Continued on p25*



It was 7.45am at the junction of Ladbroke Grove and Cambridge Gardens – a hand goes out but I recognise the face as someone who believes that fare payment is optional! So I move on.

I'm waiting by lights at the junction with Lancaster Road, the passenger door opens and I look behind. He's sitting on the back seat!

"Westbourne Grove," he says with a wry smile. There's no discussion. I take him. He directs me to the Portobello Estate in Lonsdale Road.

"Just wait here a minute," he says, "I'm picking up my son."

Where have I heard that before!

"I'll need a deposit," says I.

"I'm not giving you one," he replies, "you didn't stop for me. I don't trust you."

"In that case, pay me the fare."

He wrestles with the door handle, but my foot is hard down on the foot brake.

"Take this... and this," he yells through the partition.

The first 'this' are some coins thrown through the partition opening. The second one was destruction of the partition window by way of a size 10 boot, impacted with such force as to propel a 10 inch shard of glass past my head, which then embedding itself in the windscreen!

Casually he strolled off, apparently forgetting about his son and with me pursuing on foot at a safe distance. Emergency services connected me to the local police service, where a 3-way link was established with me giving a running commentary of his route

**DaC driver Philip Benjamin (K20) on following a billk through to the end...**

## A FARE RESULT FOR PHIL!



through the back doubles. Within 5 minutes, blue lights and sirens appeared from all directions.

After spending the rest of the morning in a cell at Paddington Green, he's charged with criminal damage and released on bail. Astonishingly, he intends to challenge on the grounds that no crime was committed as he was trying to escape false imprisonment! The Criminal Prosecution Service disagreed!

At the Westminster Magistrates Court pre-

liminary hearing, he was advised his defence was weak and would only result in a full hearing with additional costs. He changes his plea to guilty, was fined £350 plus costs and ordered to pay £490 compensation for my damage and other losses. He paid up in full.

When arrested, he was in possession of over £200 in cash. The fare? £4.80. It's a funny old world at times!

**Philip Benjamin (K20)**

## Is it a Good Life (continued...)

given a selection of worms and other food to give them while my camera was capturing the moment!

### Not the market.com...???

It was then I heard the crowd outside the enclosure saying look at the photographer, which I thought very strange as they were here to see the meerkats. Surely they had seen someone taking photographs before? I then realised what the excitement was; as I knelt down a meerkat had climbed up my camera rucksack and was sitting on my shoulder trying to look into the viewfinder. I quickly turned the camera around to aim towards my shoulder and fired of a few random shots and was lucky to get at least one nice picture (and guess where it ended up ...Ed).

Then it was lunchtime and we had our picnic by the peacocks and wallabies and as the children ate their food, the animals were allowed to roam free and came over to introduce themselves! With their stomachs full the children were ready to feed the slightly bigger animals.

So it was back to meet Les and off we went to the Giraffe enclosure. The children were given large branches covered in fresh leaves, which the giraffes devoured with glee, sometimes in their excitement a giraffe would tug upwards on the branch, lifting one of the chil-

dren off the ground! A farewell stroke of their necks and off we went to the elephant show that was taking place in front of a few hundred people.

There were two large females and a small baby - mind you the baby probably weighed a ton! After finishing the show, they were led into another paddock with the crowd following behind. The children in my care were taken in to feed the elephants and ask the keepers a multitude of questions as they had done with all of the keepers they had met. I was like a big kid being allowed to get up close to all the animals to take photos. Whilst I was taking one of the elephants, another was tapping me on the shoulder with its trunk, reminding me I had not taken photos of her yet!

Then onto another highlight at the rhino enclosure, these creatures can crush you just by leaning on you. Their diet is vegetables so the children settled down to feed these monster creatures with carrots, cabbage leaves and a variety of other foods before moving to the next pen where they were to meet a one-day old rhino. When the pen door opened, it took 3 attempts to get the mother and baby out into the open. The baby rhino seemed very surprised to be out and I don't know if anyone had been able to get photos up until then, so I may have got the first pictures of this baby.

I did send the pictures to *The Sun* newspaper, but they chose not to print them. It wasn't until a week later that ITV's *Thames at Six* featured the rhino, so once again *The Sun* lost out on a scoop!

On the way home, the chatter in the car sounded as though we had been on a big safari through the game reserves of Africa. I must say that both Les and the Whipsnade Zoo did themselves proud with the way they said 'Thank You' and entertained the children.

So if you want to take the children out for a wonderful day, go to Whipsnade or the London Zoo; there are enough attractions for a whole day's visit.

**I hope you enjoy the few photos that Alan might include with this article and if any driver would like a selection of photos for their children to view or a school project, just contact me at TomW@diala-cab.co.uk**

If you would like to see the whole series of photographs plus other events, go to my Facebook page (Thomas Whitbread). You will know which one by the **Dial-a-Dream** logo and maybe then you will even become a friend and know when new photographs go on.

**Tom Whitbread**  
DaC Board member

# DAC'S RYAN GETS 'SPOOKED BY MI6!

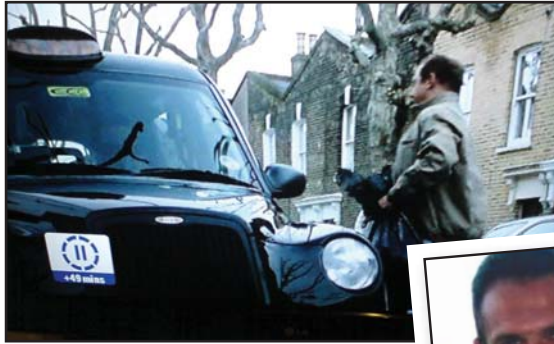
**Ryan Harrison (H84)** has been on Dial-a-Cab since June 2001 and during that time has also done quite a lot of extra work – extra as in the movie and TV world!

But as he modestly says, you'd have to know it was his face in a screen shot, while at the same time not blink or you could miss him. But he laughs that off because regardless of how small the screen shot is, the time it takes to do is always substantially longer and those few days are not just fairly well paid, but also usually interesting with the opportunity of meeting some stars you may not usually get the chance to share a cuppa with!

**But his latest extra work didn't even get him those few seconds – it was his taxi that took the starring role!**

**Call Sign's** phone began ringing just after 10pm on Monday October 4. Like millions of others, we enjoy watching **BBC One's** weekly stories following the exploits of MI6. Although officially called Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), most refer to the organisation as MI6 – a name derived to follow unit 5 of Military Intelligence (MI5). Spooks may or may not tell the true story, but it's none the less enjoyable.

But following that episode, driver after driver phoned to ask if we'd seen the Dial-a-Cab taxi used in attempting to assassinate a Russian spy!



**The Spy goes to Ryan's taxi**  
Inset: Ryan works as an extra

We traced the cab back to Ryan. He told us that a friend of his – not a spy according to Ryan (!!!) – got him the three-day filming job.

"There was a lot of sitting round drinking tea, but among others I also had the opportunity to chat to **Richard Armitage** who plays spy *Lucas North*. I had to drive around Battersea Park and Bermondsey while they filmed the scene. My face wasn't even shown but

the cab was obviously recognised!"

Among his other recent parts was in the **Jude Law** and **Robert Downey Jr** movie *Sherlock Holmes* and an episode of *Law and Order UK* where **Bradley Walsh** had to sit in his cab.

"Strangely, Bradley Walsh, like many who travel in my cab during movie shoots, didn't realise that I was a real taxi driver and thought I was an actor! Mind you, he seemed to be impressed with the Dial-a-Cab logos that I kept on throughout the 'shoot'."



## Call Sign upsets Special Branch!

Many *Call Sign* readers will have come across this magazine's photographer, **Alan Green (E52)**, as he drives around looking for stories as well as passengers! But on one recent occasion he found both at the same time. However, this wasn't to ask a driver his view of the month's hot topic, it was to avoid the ignominy of being arrested by Special Branch and having to explain to Editor **AI** why he had been locked in the slammer! **Alan takes up the story...**

"As most drivers know, the usual place to meet account clients arriving on *Eurostar* is our own dedicated Bay 6 in the Coach Road off Pancras Road. But on this particular occasion the client had specifically asked to be met at the 'set down / departure' point on Pancras Road - renowned for its limited parking arrangements.

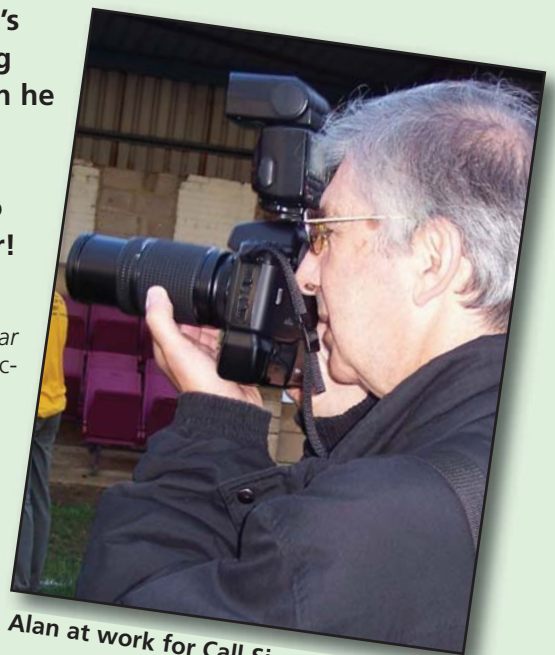
As I had experienced great confusion the previous week with the passenger being at one side of the station and me on the other, I decided to take no chances and as a precaution to any possible repercussions and to establish that I had adhered to my instructions, I pulled my camera from my hip and took a picture of my precise position in the lay-by outside the Eurostar entrance. I included such details as my cab position on the roadway, the huge glass canopy above the station entrance and the passenger nameboard sitting prominently on my dashboard. So far as I was concerned, it was just an *in case of later problems* photo.

Then within seconds of taking the image, a young man walked up to me displaying several Met Police security tags around his neck and a warrant card displaying the Special Branch moniker. He asked why I was taking a picture, so I calmly explained who I was and why I had taken the image and would he like to see the photo? That was calm on the outside – not so calm inside!

He studied the photo without the merest hint of a smile whilst standing at the driver's door in case I should be considering making a run for it. He studied it for what seemed an eternity before nodding slowly after eyeing the image and satisfying himself that I was not a terrorist, especially when I pointed out the technical details of my prowess! At last a smile appeared...

"Well, I understand you guys have to cover your back, what a good idea. This place can be very confusing to travellers not familiar with the station, but you can understand my concern," he added before wandering off towards the station entrance.

While I remained reasonably calm throughout the questioning and was able to justify my actions, I did get the distinct impression that had I not been able to acquit myself so convincingly, it would have been necessary for the call centre to re-allocate the trip while *Call Sign* may have had to look for another photographer... and the chances of an open prison were remote!!!



**Alan at work for Call Sign**

**Alan Green (E52)**





**Gui Sheng Yue is looking to expand.**

Rumours hit the City on 20 October that **London Taxi Company** parent company **Manganese Bronze Holdings** were in talks with their Chinese partners, **Geely**, concerning the possible takeover of the UK taxi manufacturers. However, no one was commenting

at Coventry concerning talk of a fresh takeover approach by Geely

Geely already owns 20%, but earlier this year declined a share placing that would have given it a majority stake. But the Manganese shares that had halved since Geely declined the placing suddenly shot up by almost a third on that Wednesday.

According to Geely Automobile's chief executive **Gui Sheng Yue**, the group wants to

expand their overseas sales – including western Europe.

At the same time, MBH announced an 11% increase for taxi sales in their third quarter, selling 466 vehicles compared to 420 vehicles for the equivalent quarter of 2009. The company called it encouraging and broadly in line with their expectations. They added that they had seen direct and indirect benefits arising from its Chinese joint venture with Geely.

## LTFUC FUN DAY AT COVENT GARDEN



**A great time was had by all**

On Sunday 3rd October, the *London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children* held their third annual *Fun Day* at Covent Garden's Piazza. The Committee had arrived at 8am and immediately set about the mammoth task of erecting the gazebos and we must thank *Sgt. Jack Warner* of the *City of London Police* for his kindness and assistance in not only bringing his police Range Rover for display, but also coming to our rescue with an extra gazebo and table. We are also grateful to him for the money he raised on our behalf during the day.

Thanks also to *Alf Townsend* for coming along to sell signed copies of his book with 10% of book sales going towards our charity and also to the four members of the *Furry Tail Folk*, the wonderful characters who did such a brilliant job entertaining children all afternoon whilst raising money for the Fund. We are also grateful to *Mark Cooper* of the *London Vintage Taxi Association* who brought a vintage cab along and helped by *Hazel Westbury*, did a great job collecting funds on our behalf. We thank them

and *Doug Cheshire* for making this possible.

Thanks also go to Old Kent Road Pearly Queen, *Doreen Golding* and the Pearly King of Bow Bells, *Harry Mayhead*, for coming to join us. We are also grateful to *Miss Ballooniverse* for providing us with balloon 'Elvis' which attracted much attention and laughs. Sincere thanks also go to *Cathy* and the girls at *Chingford Costco* and to *Beryl Bloomfield* for the donation of the tombola / raffle prizes and *Michelle* for supplying jewellery and belts to sell.

Of course, many thanks go to the *drivers* who came along to give us their support and in particular, *Darren Parr* and wife *Jackie* who had walked many miles to reach us as part of their training to climb the Inca Trail ruins to Machu Picchu in Peru. We wish them good luck for the trip. One of our team was celebrating his birthday that day and before leaving we set up a table at the piazza and took the opportunity to relax and enjoy some celebration cake and drink, although we did attract some strange glances! It was his last event as

Hon Chairman so *David Lessman* (D19) took the opportunity to thank all the Committee for their help and support and they in turn thanked David for an excellent job so well done over the past 6 years.

Although the weather was not on our side, we still managed to have a fun day and would like to extend our grateful thanks to *Covent Garden Management* for enabling us to be at the Piazza, making many more people aware of our charity and the work we do.

**You can read more at [www.ltfuc.org.uk](http://www.ltfuc.org.uk).**

**Raymond Levy**  
LTFUC Press Officer

## PC running slowly?

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

Many of Dial-a-Cab's newer drivers will know **Daren Morley** as the staff member who taught them all they needed to know about working on the radio. Others will remember Daren as the long distance runner for Cancer UK, including the Great North Run and London Marathon.

But there's no running here because after seven years of being together, **Daren and Rosie** have finally tied the knot!

The ceremony took place at The York House in Twickenham on 10th September. Former call centre staff Danielle Barton and David Mariner assisted in transporting the groom and the parents to the wedding venue with a vintage Askwith doing the honours.

Good luck to the happy couple from all at DaC.

## DaC's Driver Trainer Gets hitched!



Daren and Rosie after the marriage ceremony

## GET INTO LONDON THEATRE MONTH!

*London's Theatreland reveals exclusive workshops and amazing ticket offers*

Experience the thrill of London's West End in style with **Get into London Theatre** - a month of theatrical entertainment and unbelievable ticket deals to over 50 top shows. From 1st January - 18th February, specially designed activities and workshops will run in conjunction with the tantalising ticket offers to fuel the imagination in the chill of winter.

A wide range of activities and workshops includes acting, singing and dance classes run by West End professionals and a rare opportunity to peek behind the scenes and discover the backstage secrets of a selection of London's historic theatres.

There has been fantastic feedback from last year's **Get into London Theatre** events:

*"It was great to learn a real sequence from Mamma Mia! I think the workshops are a fabulous way for ordinary people to get a taste of what it is like to be part of a show."*

*"The tone of the workshop was very friendly and encouraging, and suitable for all abilities."*

Booking opens on 7 December 2010, so **Get into London Theatre** show and workshop tickets make the perfect Christmas gift for family and friends and are a real treat to look forward to in the New Year. There's something to please everyone, from showstopping musicals such as *Mamma Mia*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Wicked* to much-loved plays such as *The 39 Steps* and *The Woman in Black*. Tickets are priced at £10, £15, £25 and £35 for a choice of musicals, plays, opera and dance.

Visit [www.getintolondontheatre.co.uk](http://www.getintolondontheatre.co.uk) for all the latest news, this year's top line-up of shows and exclusive activities. Get ready to experience the magic of theatre!



Mamma Mia is just one of the shows involved in Get into London Theatre month

## PADDERS RANK TO MOVE FOR CROSSRAIL

From next October, the building of the new Paddington Station that will link the Bakerloo and District and Circle lines, in addition to making the station part of the new Crossrail line, will force the taxi rank to be moved. This will then allow the new station to take the form of a 230metre long underground box, 23metres below the existing taxi concourse alongside Eastbourne Terrace.

The new 25metre wide station box has been designed as a diaphragm wall and secant piles construction, with the current proposal being for the box to be built in two main phases to accommodate heavy traffic flows in the area.

Laing O'Rourke has just started utility diversions under a different contract to pave the way for a start on the main station with the building of the new station expected to go out to tender shortly.

Calling all taxi drivers

LONDON'S FINEST!

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Mon-Sat 11am to 11.30pm  
Sunday 10.30pm

95 Westbourne Grove W2  
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3e Belvedere Rd SE1 7GQ  
opposite Travel Inn by London Eye

Park for free





# BARRY GOLD

**Call Sign** was very sad to hear of the sudden passing of Dial-a-Cab driver **Barry Gold (S52)** at the young age of 61. Barry joined the Society in 1994, some five years after gaining his green badge.

Barry's DaC pedigree runs right through the organisation, having been the nephew of **Sid Gold (Ex-E20)** and brother-in-law to **Howard Kott (B74)**.

Howard told **Call Sign**: "Barry was a lovely guy, a real family man who worked for his wife and children. The world is a poorer place for his loss."

Barry is survived by his wife Doreen and two children Richard and Andrew. All at Dial-a-Cab send their condolences.



## Throwing up in your taxi...?

A rather strange tale landed on **Call Sign's** desk recently and while we usually tend to concentrate on London - and **Dial-a-Cab** more specifically - this one just drew us in because there can't be many taxi drivers to whom it hasn't happened.

This time the unlucky taxi driver was Alan McClure, who was working in the Scottish town of Erskine. Being close to Glasgow International Airport, the "black" taxis that are used there get some good work... they also get some rubbish as shown below!

Alan beat up and took money from his passenger, Albert McCondochie, who had been sick in the back of his cab and who then refused to pay for a valet. Alan took a total of £30 from the passenger - but not while in the cab. In court, Alan admitted the strange offence.

The town's Sheriff Court heard that the taxi driver took the law into his own hands after police said they couldn't do anything about it. After considering submissions of support, Sheriff Susan Sinclair gave Mr McClure an absolute discharge, meaning he will not have a criminal record. His local licensing office had withdrawn his licence pending the case.

The driver had taken his sick passenger to the police station where officers said there was nothing they could do, so he went to the passenger's address on his own, grabbed hold of Mr McCondochie and assaulted him and then took £30.

Alan's Defence said the episode had cost his client dearly as he had lost his licence and was unable to work as a taxi driver or find alternative employment due to the prosecution.

After hearing many people speaking up for the good conduct of the cab driver, Sheriff Susan Sinclair granted him an absolute discharge.

"I do not condone what you did, but



Alan's anger kept him from the £30 but cost him his licence for 6 months

accept that it was a moment of madness. You had never been in trouble before that night and your actions have cost your family considerably. Having considered the large number of references presented on your behalf and all the background in the extraordinary circumstances of this case, I am going to do something unusual and grant you an absolute discharge."

With that, Alan walked free from court with his £30 intact, but having lost wages since last March...

### Taxi Drivers & Owners Legal Protection Ltd

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

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 Good rates for DaC drivers

Call Dick Francis (T15) on  
**07976 444313**

**Wayne Healy (K79)** has good reason to smile so broadly after taking delivery of his new TX4.

"I had the previous taxi for just two years and it got hit twice in that short space of time while in the *residents only* parking area of my apartment block," he told **Call Sign**.

"On the first occasion, my neighbour was sitting out on his balcony when he heard an almighty crash and saw a car smash into the rear of my taxi while it was parked in my resident bay. The driver made several attempts to get out of the way, but he just made matters worse as he revved the engine, shunting back and forth before he finally took off down the road without stopping to leave any details. My neighbour noted the registration of the car and told me what'd occurred. The back end of my cab was in a right mess, but luckily the errant driver realised the error of his ways and came back some time later to apologise and offer his insurance details. It appears he'd had a 'difference of opinion' with his daughter who lives in my block and he just *lost it* big time! In his rage, he impacted my cab," Wayne said.

"And then, blow me down, just a few months later - again whilst parked in the residents bay - another resident who owns a classic car, which is obviously his pride and joy, smashed into the newly repaired rear end of my taxi and pushed my cab into the vehicle parked in front of mine," Wayne exclaimed, still sounding as though he still didn't quite

# Better luck next time Wayne!



**Wayne is wondering where to park his new TX4!**

the back of my cab, this time pushing me into the rear of the car parked in front!" Wayne's voice raised an octave as he recalled the details.

"So I wasn't sorry to say goodbye to the old cab and I am hoping for much better luck with this TX4" he mused. "My only problem is wondering where should I park

in my own apartment block, so that the cab will be safe!" With that, Wayne grinned and aimed the cab towards home and his parking quandary...

© Call Sign Magazine MMX

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

## Kupkake's Korner



### Farewell my beloved!!!

I've got an upgrade, bought a TTT and said goodbye to my series 3.  
For more than 10 years  
we've worked together,  
days, nights  
through all kinds of weather!

Around the country  
east and west,  
Wales and Scotland  
the very best!

Those late night shouts  
from Eurostar  
never knowing quite how far  
the trip might go  
down the road  
springs creaking beneath the load.

But now "she's" gone  
she'll work no more!  
Finished her shifts  
she'll rest for sure.

And I'll reflect on times gone bye  
When we grafted, my cab and I.  
Together each day, like man and horse,  
but it's just a Taxi, a machine...  
of course!!!!

**Kopyright Kupkake 2010**

*Parkers warning on buying new vehicles...*

## WATCH OUT FOR THE VAT!



**George Osborne has slapped £800 on the price of a new cab – but you may be able to negotiate!**

When Chancellor George Osborne announced a VAT increase from 17.5% to 20% in his June budget, he pointed out that it would not come in until 4 January 2011. Suddenly January no longer seem quite so far away and if you were planning on buying a new taxi at around that date, motorist's consumer champions, **Parkers**, have issued a warning aimed at anyone planning to order a new vehicle close to the new year's VAT deadline.

An investigation by the organisation has revealed that because some manufacturers have waiting lists for new vehicles, even if buyers order this year they could still be burdened by the new 20% VAT rate, even though it doesn't come into effect until January.

**Kieren Puffett**, Editor of Parker's told **Call Sign**:

**"The way it works is that dealers don't pay for cars until they are delivered to the dealership, as every car has a unique chassis number. So inevitably, if they turn up after 4th January 2011, some dealers could try to pass the extra cost onto the consumer. As a result, we urge new car buyers to haggle over extra VAT charges."**

Regarding an expensive purchase such as a new **TX4** or **Vito** taxi, the 2.5% VAT increase will add around £800 onto the cost of that vehicle.

The **Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT)** also agree that new vehicle buyers should be aware of this potential price increase and try to get dealers to absorb the extra tax during showroom negotiations.

An SMMT spokesman told Parker's during their investigation:

**"Customers purchasing a vehicle before the VAT increase will be charged at the current rate of 17.5% providing the vehicle is delivered and registered before 4 January 2011. However, if the vehicle's delivery is delayed, through no fault of the consumer until after the deadline, the VAT increase will then need to be charged. It will then become a matter for negotiation between the dealer and customer."**

Parker's team of independent experts analyse 1.5 million car sales every year from dealers, private sales and auctions and the Parker's price guide is trusted by more people than any other



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

# DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

*This month's Flashback comes from the September 1967 ODRTS News Magazine and looks at how a subscriber turned into a holiday hero...*

## Former ODRTS driver

### Harry Joel is a hero!

Former ODRTS driver, **Harry Joel (Ex-B81)** was hailed as a hero by the **Blankenberge** Fire Service when his actions at 1.30am almost certainly prevented a villa from going up in flames.

Prompt action on Harry's behalf saved the hotel in Marie Jose Avenue, Blankenberge, when he rushed into the building before Belgian firemen had arrived and put out the flames from two mattresses that had been spotted smouldering earlier, but which had suddenly burst into flames.

He helped fellow holidaymakers, who had been overcome by smoke, out of the building. His action was also praised by the manager of the Hotel Marie Jose, whose annex it was, who said that but for Harry's action, lives would have been lost.

The Blankenberge Fire Brigade arrived 35



**Harry Joel at Worthing on LTBAWD outing**

minutes later in the form of a jeep with two firemen and a fire extinguisher! That is the way the Belgian fire service work; they send two men to see if they need any more help. Perhaps it's no great wonder that the L'Innovation store in Brussels burnt down

earlier this year with an appalling loss of 322 lives – many of them women and children.

Harry later told friends that he didn't have time to think about any consequences, he just ran into the hotel when he saw the flames.

"I'm sure most people would have done the same," he said.

For those ODRTS drivers who have yet to taste the delights of going abroad for a holiday, Blankenberge is a town and municipality in the Belgian province of West Flanders. More importantly it has a beautiful beach – although the fire brigade isn't up to much!

Harry spends much time helping the war disabled as part of The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled.

**Joe Toff (B04)**



# Half price IMAX 3D offer at the Science Museum

On 6th and 7th November, the Science Museum will be offering licensed taxi drivers and their families, half-price entry to all films at the IMAX cinema. You will be transported deep into the action with **Hubble 3D**. Journey through distant galaxies and explore the mysteries of the universe on this mission to service the Hubble Space Telescope. Using incredible 3D technology, you can accompany space-walking astronauts as they attempt the most difficult and important tasks in NASA's history and experience never-before-seen 3D flights through awe-inspiring Hubble imagery. Narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio.

Other films showing include **Legends of Flight 3D**, which was released this summer giving visitors the chance to take a 3D journey on some of history's most legendary aircraft. For a full list of films, visit [www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/imax](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/imax).

The IMAX cinema is located on the ground floor of the Science Museum and tickets can be purchased from any ticket desk. Drivers will need to present their identity badges at ticket desks to claim free tickets. Tickets cannot be pre-booked, so please arrive early and get your tickets when arriving at the Science Museum to avoid any disappointment. Each black cab driver is entitled to a maximum of one half price family ticket (two adults and two children).

To make the most of a visit to the Science Museum, you can find out what else is on offer by looking at the website [www.sciencemuseum.org.uk](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk) prior to your visit. Why not visit **Making the Modern World**, which displays a series of exceptional objects marking ground-breaking new departures in technology and science? See such iconic items as Stephenson's original *Rocket* locomotive, Babbage's Difference Engine No. 1 and Crick and Watson's DNA model. Or check out the **Flight Gallery** which celebrates both British and international achievements in aviation and features a complete slice of a genuine Boeing 747 jumbo jet! The Science Museum is free to enter and open seven days a week between 10:00 and 18:00.



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



# Call Sign En La Belle France

Ever since I recommended the **Bean Machine**, the *BEST* cup of coffee in the City of London (based outside St Mary Aldermay in Queen Victoria Street), Stuart, the vendor, tells me that many DaC subscribers have made it to the relief rank in the middle of the road in Queen Vic Street and ventured over to sample his very fairly priced quality coffee and he has asked me to thank *Call Sign* readers.

Now, for a drink a little stronger – it's that time of year again and I have just returned from the south of France with a long wheel based transit - full of the finest bottled grape!

For those of you unfamiliar with my wines, they are organically produced from a small family run vineyard in the *Corbières*. If you have never been to this region, then take a flight to the medieval City of *Carcassonne* and seek out the scenery! For this is stunning



hill country, even though it lacks the drama of high mountain peaks. Limestone crags peep through wooded hillside and there are long views of the distant Pyrenees - breath-taking!

Ruined castles and the remains of ancient

monasteries are forlorn reminders of its turbulent past. But I digress; the soil in the shadow of the Alaric Mountain is perfect for the final outcome - that wonderful glass of Organic Wine!

I have started taking Christmas orders once more. 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. In previous years I have made deliveries on certain evenings in Finsbury Square. Drop me a line. The email is: [woodford19@btinternet.com](mailto:woodford19@btinternet.com) or phone on **07853 128 823** to get some in before Xmas.

Bottoms up!

**A bientot...**

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

## M&O monthly £1000 prize draw!

### New Eurostar trains up to 200mph!

At a cost of £700million, Eurostar has announced that it is redesigning its fleet and investing in ten new trains that could reduce London-Paris journey times down to two hours..

The planned redesign will begin next year and see rolling stock receive a makeover by Italian designers *Pininfarina*. The company will also purchase some new trains.

The new **Eurostar e320<sup>2</sup>** trains will be *interoperable* with speeds of up to 200mph, allowing them to operate across the European high-speed rail network in addition to current routes, adding non-stop services from London to Geneva (5 hours), Amsterdam (under 4 hours) and other important routes.

It means Eurostar will not only be providing even more work for taxi drivers, but also become a real competitor to flying with its minimum check-in times and central London base at St Pancras International.

The e320<sup>2</sup> will be able to take 900 passengers plus luggage with capacity increased by 20% over the current Eurostar fleet...



**Andrew Downer** gets ready for a big spend-up thanks to M&O!

**Andrew Downer** couldn't believe his luck when LTI's Marketing Manager **Maria Holmes** contacted him to tell him he was £1000 richer! Andrew had entered the *Mann & Overton "In It To Win It"* promotion - and had won!

"At first I thought it was a joke," Andrew told *Call Sign*, "but I was soon convinced that I really had won their August prize."

Andrew was invited to M&O (Birmingham) to be presented with his prize where General Manager, John Loakes was on hand to make Andrew that £1000 richer.

The competition is easy to enter and there is £1000 on offer each month for one lucky driver. To enter you just need to visit or phone your local M&O dealer and make sure they have your full details on file. There will be another lucky winner in October and every month after that.

To be in with a chance of grabbing that thousand quid, you have to be 'In It To Win It'!

### Taxi Driver of The Year Dinner & Dance

*The above Charity is holding their 37th annual Dinner Dance on 4th December 2010 at the Holiday Inn London Kensington*

*Reception drink, 4-course meal, dancing to a live band...*

*And all for just £62.50 per person*

*Don't be the one left out. Remember the date or phone for more information on 020 8952 1357 or 07850 056 765*

**Russell Poluck MBE (T55)**

**Hon Chairman**

*Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves*



# The trade's most expensive service!



The receipt for the service shows £2,115,019.45

**Dial-a-Cab** drivers can often be heard comparing prices for taxi servicing and overhauls - often with something of the boast: "I paid less than that!" However it's rather rare to get a driver to admit to the reverse - "I've had the trade's most expensive service!"

But that's exactly what one DaC driver told **Call Sign**. Because we are publishing part of his credit card receipt, the driver wants to remain unidentified and because of that, we won't name the garage even - though it was obviously just a mistake.

The driver had the service, which took around two hours. He drove the cab around the block to make sure the brakes had been tightened and that it sounded ok. Then he went back to the east end garage, took out his credit card and paid. He waited for the receipt, looked and went a deathly shade of white. The garage had charged him £2,115,019.45...!

"That's a bit steep," said the DaC driver in all seriousness.

"That's a standard price for the 40k service," replied the garage staff.

"But I don't think my bank will authorise that much. I only have a £5000 limit," came the driver's response.

With that, the garage looked at the receipt and immediately cancelled it, putting in the correct amount.

"The amazing part about it," said the driver, "was that it went through until cancelled! MasterCard must think a lot of me...!!!"

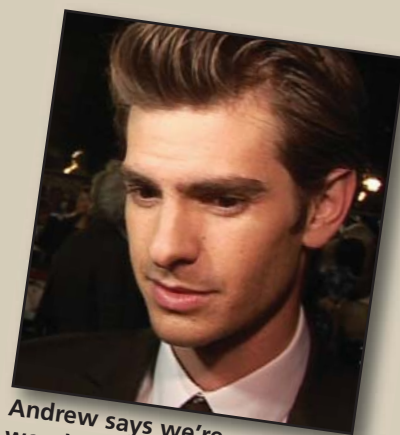
Actor Andrew Garfield tells the world what we already knew...

## LONDON TAXI DRIVERS ARE WONDERFUL!

Whilst being interviewed live on an ITV local news program at the opening night of the London Film Festival promoting his latest film, **Never Let Me Go**, British/American actor **Andrew Garfield** told the interviewer how a London taxi driver had "restored his faith in people."

The actor, who will be playing Spiderman in next year's remake, told how he had left his mobile phone in the back of the taxi and was amazed that just a few hours later, the driver had returned it! "London taxi drivers are just wonderful," he added!

The movie is an adaptation of Kazuo Ishiguro's Booker Prize-nominated novel about three boarding school friends who discover complicated feelings for one another. The film also stars Garfield Keira Knightley and Carey Mulligan.



Andrew says we're wonderful!

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## CHIPPED WINDSCREEN?

Just go to DaC at Roman Way

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

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Or phone at 0800 612 7950**

## Mailshot

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

### Concierge

By having Concierge, does that mean we are keeping our feet in accounts that we would otherwise have lost?

**Stephen Field (F68)**

**Brian Rice replies:** The reason Concierge was built was in order to retain taxi business for DaC. All large accounts in London use cars as well as taxis, but by us controlling the customers ground transport we can ensure they use DaC when they require a taxi. Both our competitors have a Job Distribution Engine (JDE) so if we did not control the clients ground transport needs, then our competitors would be happy to do so.

There is no question at the moment there is a shift by clients to favouring private hire, a lesser service but at a cheaper price. Hopefully this may change if there is an improvement in the economy. However, at the moment by us having a tool such as Concierge, it is helping the taxi industry stem the tide. There are some that say we put taxi work into cars, but that is complete nonsense. We act as an agent to order the car on the client's behalf. If we did not order the car, the client – or a competitor – would, but then they might not order their taxi from DaC. The way we do it ensures they get their taxi from us. Consequently, the answer to your question Stephen is probably, unfortunately, in all honesty I cannot be more precise than that!

### Busy ring outs...

*Hi Alan*

In the autumn when we have busy periods during the early evening, there are times when we have problems with advise arrival. This results in passengers and drivers being kept waiting unnecessarily, adding to the cost of a journey and reducing the number of available cabs.

One evening last week it was very busy with a lot of uncovered trips, particularly TaxiCards in the W2, W9 and W10 areas. I accepted a pre-booked local TaxiCard trip and attempted to make my own contact, but received no response from the intercom (the passenger later informed me that the intercom was faulty). I had advised arrival but it took ten minutes to get a response. While I was waiting and contemplating the futility of human existence, the following message was sent to the fleet: **Ring outs very busy please make own contact.**

When the passenger finally came down, he told me he had tried ringing Dial-a-Cab to ask after his cab, but all lines were very busy. The result was that what should have been a 10 minute round-the-corner job took nearly 30 minutes with the fare going over

the subsidy, something which made me feel very uncomfortable.

I understand that it is not possible to have enough staff to always cope with exceptionally busy periods, but why can't the passenger's phone number be included on the job details so that we can contact them directly? When the system clogs up like this, it is very tempting to just work the street but where would that leave coverage?

**Mick Kennedy (M30)**

**Keith Cain replies:** To show drivers the contact number of the passenger so they can make their own contact seems a very simple solution, but if it were that simple, trust me it would have been implanted many years ago. Before any procedure is implemented, we always try and look at what would happen if the procedure does not work and what the consequences would be. With this suggestion – and this is not the first time we've looked at it – there have been a number of reasons why it has not been implemented.

The first is that we would lose a certain amount of control of the trip. What do I mean by this? Every trip we take, regardless of whether it's account, cash, or credit card, we track and log everything about the trip. This is done so that we can answer any query a client may have regarding getting the cost of a trip reduced or even trying to obtain a full credit.

On all our trips we know who the telephonist was that entered the trip and where they were sitting at the time. This is essential for us to recall a tape recording of the booking. We have the time the dispatch system offers the trip to a driver, we know the exact time of any delays the driver offer, arrival times, any advise arrival requests, the POB time and what time the trip is cleared. All this information may seem to be over the top, but it is paramount for us to be in a position to prove to the client that staff and driver did exactly what was required of them.

With a driver making the call, not only would we lose the time the call was made, but also the proof of who the driver spoke to and what was said. The tape recording of this part of the trip could be crucial if the passenger queries the waiting time. A passenger can say they were not informed the driver had arrived and the only answer we would have is the driver's word. Not that we would dispute what a driver says, but it weakens our argument with the client. Unless we show via the dispatch system and play back recordings to a client, it puts us in a position where we have to give benefit of the doubt to the client, something that can be costly. I know this scenario may sound a little far-fetched, but it happens time and time again.

There is also the scenario of the driver who will only make a call if they are reimbursed for the cost of the call. Not

everyone is willing to offer the type of service that Mike is prepared to offer. We could not leave this to chance and it could take us even longer to deal with the call back. If we did decide to reimburse the driver, we would have an administration problem reconciling a driver's mobile phone bill and we would probably also need another attribute for those drivers willing to do it. There is also a case, which I think may be a small one, that we could have a problem with data protection. I am aware that other taxi suppliers do this and it is very common within the private hire industry, but Dial-a-Cab is classed as an agent and while clients are happy for us to hold personal information about them within the office, to pass on personal contact telephone numbers to anyone other than an employee just might cause a problem. I would also hate to put a driver in a position where accusations could be made against them and we could not vindicate them.

I accept that some clients would welcome this and not have a single problem, but implementing it would require reprogramming of the system. We would also need to differentiate which accounts would like it and then have the facility to recognise which individual within an account would like it. If a passenger has more than one contact number, would we need to show them all to the driver? As you can see, it's another dilemma if the driver cannot make contact. If we were to redesign a brand new dispatch system, I think I would like to put this on a wish list.

We have implemented the automated ring back facility that is working very well and has improved our call back service (Aspect). However, even with this facility, some clients just do not like talking to a computer and require a human voice. The trip Mike refers to is for a TaxiCard user and with the system requiring the person on the end of the phone to press numbers on their key pad, for some it can be very confusing.

Mike, I hope you don't say that you wish you'd never asked, but as I said in the beginning a procedure that seems on the face of it to be so simple, could have many repercussions for us when it does not operate smoothly.

### The minicab route to Chelsea and

### Westminster Hospital!

Regarding the story about the "Taxi" driver





## Mailshot

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

helping to deliver the baby (*October Call Sign Editorial*), did you notice that the couple were from Wandsworth and the driver was quoted as saying he was worried when they reached Chelsea Bridge? Shoulda got a proper cab!

I'm very interested in the tour of DaC House and systems. Should I contact Keith Cain direct? Maybe he could show a few of us around at the same time?  
**Mark Sherlock (W41)**

**I did abbreviate the story for space reasons Mark, but yes, I had wondered which route he took to C&W Hospital from Wandsworth if he became concerned when at Chelsea Bridge! However, I was more concerned about the BBC referring to him as a taxi driver when the driver in an interview said he was from Addison Lee!**

**As for the tour, it would probably be best if any driver interested in a DaC tour (and it isn't a 10 minute gallop) contacts Keith Cain directly. Email to keithc@dialacab.co.uk or phone reception and they'll put you through ...Ed**

### Naughty PHVs?

*Alan,*

I'm not very good with the computer, but recently checked out the following website [www.londontaxidirect.co.uk](http://www.londontaxidirect.co.uk) after seeing it on the back of a VW Sharan PHV and thought you would find it interesting.

**Paul Corr (N83)**

**Thanks Paul, we passed your info onto John Mason at London Taxis and Private Hire who promised to look into it. True to his word, he came back around two weeks later to say that they had now closed it down and were in the process of considering whether legal action against the operator was appropriate ...Ed**

### Where are we?

*Hello Alan*

I don't know how many years I've been asking, but I'm asking our call takers once again. There are times when we need more information on the trip details page than we are often given. I understand that you aren't taxi drivers, but if an address sounds incomplete then it probably is and we'd appreciate it if you could check before sending the trip into the system.

I recently had a trip from Harben Parade NW6; the only question was where it could be because it doesn't show on the map. Ok, there is a Harben Road in NW6 and the chances are that it would be close, but on a main road such as Finchley Road where the pick up was, you only have to slightly drive past it and you then must go round the houses to get back again! So if a passenger gives their address as a parade, can call takers please ask exactly where the parade is,

as it may not show on our maps.

**Sid Nathan (K88)**

**They've read it now Sid! ...Ed**

*Dear Alan,*

Normally when it comes to medical matters I am rather squeamish and tend to bury my head in the sand when it comes to personal health checks and block my ears when friends recount details of operations. If there is a scene in a film involving use of a needle, I avert my eyes and almost faint if there is a discussion about blood loss. So it was with great reluctance and after much cajoling from my partner that I accompanied her to the London Ambulance Service Headquarters in Waterloo Road to attend a short course in Adult Basic Life Support.

We learnt the difference between Cardiac Arrest and a Heart Attack, signs and symptoms of each and basic procedures to follow, including placing patients in recovery position, CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) on mannequins, dealing with a person who is choking, and immediate help that can be provided to someone who is bleeding or has a burn or scald. There was also a demonstration on use of a defibrillator. These can be found in hundreds of locations round London, including underground stations, 121 at Heathrow and in many large offices. All information was given in a lively and informative manner, covering only what you should do whilst waiting for an ambulance to arrive. This course is free, lasts about an hour and a half and I can recommend it to all taxi drivers. It is usually held at 6.00 pm at the headquarters at 220 Waterloo Road, but if there are

sufficient numbers interested a different location and time can be arranged to suit. More info at phone 020 7783 2534 or [resus-training@lond-amb.nhs.uk](mailto:resus-training@lond-amb.nhs.uk).

**Laurence Kelvin (W88)**

### Dressing the part?

I was interested to read about **Anthony Mitchell (T88)** and his efforts towards a Code of Conduct for both the Taxi and PH trades (*October Call Sign*). Imagine then my disappointment when I read about his idea of introducing a Dress Code and yet Anthony himself, when pictured with Lee Scott MP, did not follow his own recommendation and wear a Dial-a-Cab logo'd jacket! I appreciate Anthony was promoting the cab trade as a whole, but I cannot help feeling that displaying our own corporate image would have helped his valiant endeavour.

But all is not lost! There are still a few brand new Dial-a-Cab logo'd jackets left at Roman Way in all sizes, but hurry while stocks last!

**Alan Green (E52)**

**As several drivers have phoned about Anthony's meeting with Lee Scott and the document itself, I have decided to publish it in full inside this issue. As for the jacket, Anthony himself agrees that it is a good point and that he never thought of it...Ed**



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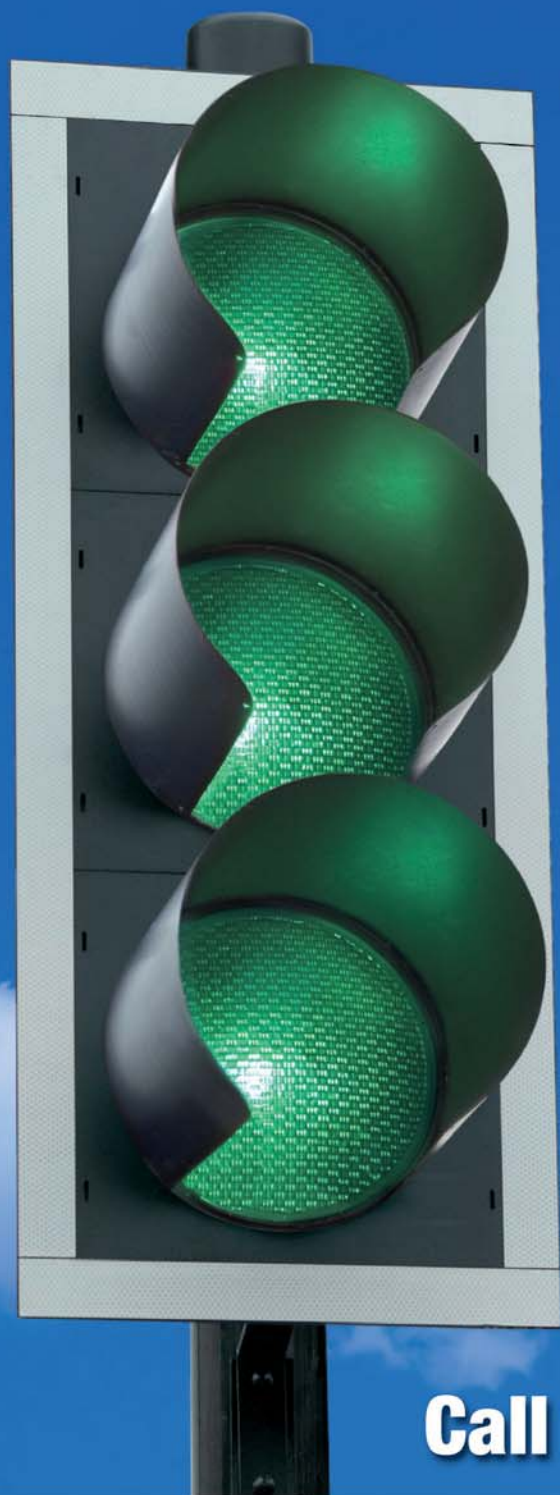


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