

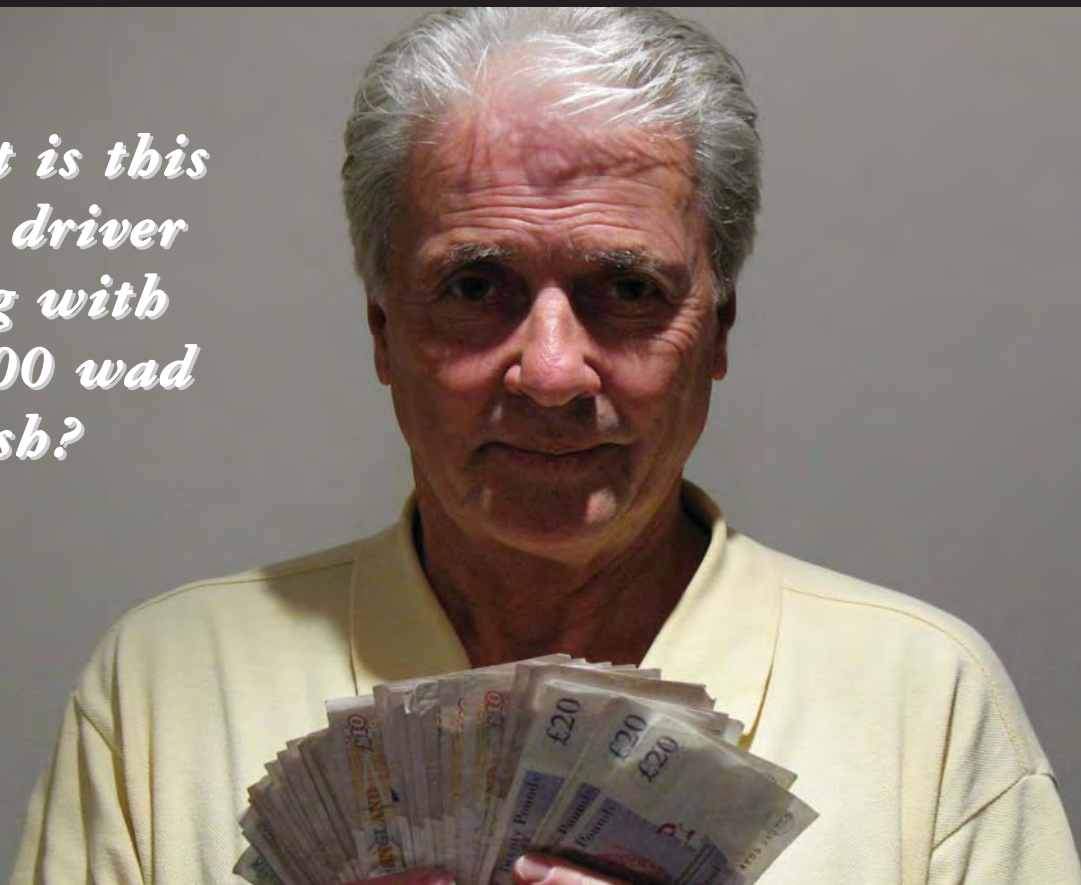
October 2010



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

*What is this
DaC driver
doing with
a £600 wad
of cash?*



More DaC staff receive long service awards



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

With up to 119 flights arriving at London City Airport each day, here is the arrivals timetable. Be lucky...

From	Arrive	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	From	Arrive	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	From	Arrive	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
BSL	07:00						✓		AMS	11:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			JER	17:35	✓						
BSL	07:05	✓	✓	✓	✓				ANR	11:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			ZRH	17:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
RTM	07:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			ORY	11:15		✓	✓	✓	✓			DUB	17:50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
FRA	07:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			ORY	11:20	✓							RTM	17:50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
LUX	07:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			LUX	11:35						✓		ZRH	17:50							✓
ANR	07:15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			AMS	11:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			ZRH	17:50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
GVA	07:15						✓		GVA	11:45						✓		CPH	18:00		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
JFK	07:15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	GLA	11:45	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			GVA	18:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
AMS	07:20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			LUX	11:45	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			DOL	18:05							✓
BSL	07:20	✓		✓		✓			ZRH	11:45						✓		EDI	18:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
MUC	07:25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			NCE	11:50						✓		MAD	18:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
LUX	07:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			EDI	12:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			EDI	18:10							✓
ORY	07:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			BCN	12:10						✓		GVA	18:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
AMS	07:35	✓	✓	✓	✓				ZRH	12:10	✓	✓	✓	✓				AMS	18:15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
FRA	07:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			ZRH	12:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			BVE	18:15					✓		
EID	07:45	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			FRA	12:20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			ANR	18:20							✓
RTM	07:45	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		IBZ	12:25					✓			EID	18:20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
EDI	07:55	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			PMI	12:25					✓			ANR	18:25	✓						
ZRH	07:55	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		GVA	12:35							✓	JER	18:25		✓	✓	✓	✓		
ANR	08:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			DND	12:45	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			AMS	18:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
EDI	08:05	✓	✓	✓	✓				EDI	13:10							✓	BLL	18:35	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
GLA	08:05	✓	✓	✓	✓				DOL	13:20	✓				✓	✓		CMF	18:35							✓
AMS	08:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			GVA	13:20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			LUX	18:35		✓	✓	✓	✓		
EDI	08:10						✓		GLA	14:00							✓	BCN	18:40							✓
GVA	08:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			BLL	14:05							✓	EDI	18:40							✓
LUX	08:10						✓		AMS	14:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			FRA	18:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
ZRH	08:10						✓		BCN	14:25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			FRA	18:45	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
CPH	08:15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		DUB	14:25			✓	✓	✓			DUB	18:50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
DUB	08:15	✓	✓	✓	✓				LUX	14:25							✓	LUX	18:50							✓
DND	08:25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			EDI	14:30							✓	ORY	18:50	✓						
GVA	08:25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			LUX	14:30		✓	✓	✓	✓			EDI	18:55	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
ZRH	08:25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			CMF	14:45	✓							RTM	18:55	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
LUX	08:30						✓		DND	14:50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	ZRH	18:55							✓
NTE	08:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		LUX	14:55							✓	DND	19:00							✓
FRA	08:35	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			NCE	14:55	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			IOM	19:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
EDI	08:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			IOM	15:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	IBZ	19:10							✓
EDI	08:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			ANR	15:05							✓	LUX	19:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
IOM	08:45	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		LUX	15:05	✓							MUC	19:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
AMS	08:55	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		ORY	15:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			AMS	19:15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
LIN	08:55	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			ANR	15:10		✓	✓	✓	✓			GVA	19:15							✓
MAD	09:00						✓		EID	15:10							✓	LUX	19:15	✓						
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BLL	09:10	✓	✓						LUX	15:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			EDI	19:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
RTM	09:10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			AMS	15:35	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	FRA	19:35							✓
ANR	09:15						✓		RTM	15:45			✓	✓	✓		✓	ZRH	19:35	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
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GLA	09:15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			EDI	15:50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			DND	19:55	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
ORY	09:15						✓		EDI	15:50							✓	BVE	20:00							✓
ZRH	09:25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		FRA	16:20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			EDI	20:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
DND	09:40						✓		AMS	16:25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			PMI	20:00							✓
CPH	09:45		✓	✓	✓	✓			ZRH	16:25							✓	BSL	20:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
JFK	10:05	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		ZRH	16:35	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			RTM	20:05		✓	✓	✓	✓		
EDI	10:10	✓	✓	✓	✓				ORY	16:50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			DUB	20:15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
RTM	10:20	✓	✓		✓	✓			LIN	17:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	EDI	20:20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
DUB	10:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			RTM	17:15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	RTM	20:20							✓
EDI	10:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			AMS	17:20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			NCE	20:30							✓
CMF	10:35						✓		NTE	17:20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	GVA	20:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
CMF	10:55						✓		GLA	17:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			GVA	20:50							✓
DUB	10:55						✓		ANR	17:35		✓	✓	✓	✓			ZRH	21:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
EDI	11:00						✓		CPH	17:35	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			DUB	21:10							✓
																		EDI	21:10			✓	✓			

For your *What's On* guide to October go to www.nashsnumbers.co.uk and click on What's On. Don't forget to sign up for the 70+ page free download of useful information... See page 6 for a great new Nash's Numbers website.

from the editor's desk

Well, it's that month again – my birthday on 9 October! The question is whether I'll get more cards from readers than last year? Mind you, I don't suppose 3 should be that difficult to beat! Far more importantly, my sincere thanks to the many drivers who emailed, phoned or even sent those funny things that go into envelopes – real letters – all sending their best wishes to Linda for a speedy recovery. It really was appreciated and extremely touching...

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As an Editor, I see the above message numerous times. It means exactly what it says on the tin – it's their story and if you want to use it, you do so via *The Press Association*. Sometimes there's a charge, sometimes there isn't. The same applies to their photography department. Either way, no one can deny the excellent credentials of that organisation – especially the *BBC* who took and used the following story from the PA. It was headed *Taxi driver helps passenger give birth* and explained how a London taxi driver told of his shock after picking up a pregnant customer going to Chelsea and Westminster Hospital to have her baby – which then popped out a week early, whereupon the driver helped to deliver it in the back of his cab.

However, the PA story quoted driver Iain Coombes as saying: "I've had many experiences as an *Addison Lee* driver, but nothing like this!"

Addison Lee are no friends of *Call Sign*, but on this occasion I have nothing but admiration for the driver and I don't blame him for the story. But LTPA should have a polite word with the Press Association and explain the difference between private hire and real taxis. As for the *BBC*, I gave up on them long ago...

Mobile phones and driving...

I try not to preach, so this is just a friendly warning. If you are unlucky enough to be involved in a serious incident while driving your cab and one in which the police are called, there is every chance that they will check your mobile phone log to see if you were on a call at the time. And if by chance you were, then be prepared for the worst. Even if you can show you were using a Bluetooth, then that still doesn't mean you are



in the clear. Whether you take any notice is up to you, but if you are silly enough to still hold your phone to your ears while driving, then you are probably asking for it...

Anti-smoking minicabs?

I don't think I have ever said anything nice about Addison Lee (well, maybe the baby story above). I don't like the way the management force themselves onto the world in a "we do what we like" way, however I really found it difficult to do anything other than admire the clever public relations exercise they pulled off with their 16,000 free "Addison Lee cigarette bins" outside many public places – including the exit to the Dial-a-Cab car park!

Did it stop people throwing their cigarette butts onto the floor? I don't know, but I do know that at around the time this issue of *Call Sign* goes to press, Westminster Council are scheduled to take AL to court because councillors say that the free cigarette bins breach planning laws.

Because the case could be imminent, I'd better leave discussion on it there, but I'd just like to make two points:

Firstly, doesn't Westminster Council have anything better to spend their money on and second, doesn't Westminster Council have anything better to spend their money on!!

The DaC tour

When **Mike Leo (Z09)** emailed *Call Sign* to ask what the chances of a tour of Dial-a-Cab were, in all honesty I didn't know! But fortunately I knew a man that did and following a tour lasting over 2 hours with Call Centre Manager **Keith Cain**, Mike has admitted that his views of the Society have changed – especially on Concierge, which he hadn't been keen on before. The story of Mike's tour is in this issue and I'm pleased to say that Keith has offered to accompany any driver who would like to have a look round and to ask any questions.

Grant him a story?

Grant Davis has been vehemently anti Dial-a-Cab ever since he was expelled, but I found it difficult to believe that even his hatred of this Society would lead him into reporting us to LTPH, because according to the Chairman of the LCDC, we don't have a private hire operator's licence and according to him, we should have. Well, as we have no cars or PH drivers, the request seems to be stretching the facts.

However, his organisation's newspaper, *The Badge*, has published an article claiming that DaC had been asked to apply for a PH operator's licence before we had even been told, and that suggests a set-up – one designed purely to get a story that would show up DaC. So far as I know, we have not signed anything but that isn't really the point. That point is just how far Grant Davis will go to get a derogatory story about Dial-a-Cab.

The story is inside this issue and even Brian Rice has written about it in his Chairman's report.

Alan Fisher
Callsignmag@aol.com

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

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reflections of the chairman

Telling tales?

I recently received an email from a long standing member asking me about a story that appeared in the *London Cab Drivers Club* (LCDC) magazine, *The Badge*, stating that Dial-a-Cab had to obtain a Private Hire Operators licence and that we were also in danger of losing our mutual trading status.

I must confess that I do not read *The Badge* as I have found over the years that it contains so many inaccuracies. How do I know? Well for much of the time they are talking about subjects and issues of which I have some knowledge, yet they report those issues incorrectly.

The email from our member arrived on a Saturday, so I had to wait until the Monday before I could obtain a copy of the newspaper. When I read the article, it appeared that everything was 'cut and dried' yet I had not even had a meeting at *London Taxi and Private Hire* (LTPH) – PCO to you and me.

What the LCDC are saying is that because we are acting as an Agent for five account customers only and booking cars on their behalf, we are a Private Hire Operator and as such need a licence. That is clearly not the case otherwise every hotel or restaurant that books a car on behalf of a client would need to register as an Operator, when quite clearly they do not operate one driver or car. That also applies to us – so how can we be an Operator?

The whole issue revolves around the word *provision*, as legislation states that anyone that makes provision for a booking should be registered as an Operator. However, in my opinion, the person that takes the booking and supplies the car is making the provision and the person that places the order on behalf of the client is the Agent acting on behalf of the client.

How did this all come about, because we have been operating this system for six years without any interference from the LTPH / PCO?

Well, it would appear that someone had made a complaint to the LTPH about all three radio circuits, our two competitors were contacted but not Dial-a-Cab as the person that made the complaint called us Dial-a-Ride, so initially we were ignored – that is how much LTPH were concerned about us. As I stated earlier, we have been operating our system for six years without any problem, why suddenly is there a problem when there has not been any change in the legislation – unless of course someone has complained and is endeavouring to cause a problem for another organisation within the taxi industry.

I'm led to believe the person that is doing the stirring is not a stranger to causing controversy, I am informed there is a forum called the *London Taxi Drivers Forum*



(LTDF) where he used to subscribe under the names of Lulu and Becky (might have been Becky) and proceeded to castigate anyone he wanted to. One of the problems caused was that because of his antics and feminine choice of names, the LCDC has now been renamed the *London Cross Dressers Club*. I am sure his members must be really proud of him.

Why does this individual have such a negative view of Dial-a-Cab and myself? Could it be that he was expelled as a member of Dial-a-Cab - not by me but by three of his fellow members. Yet Dial-a-Cab and I have to endure his wrath as he seeks to spread negative vibes about us at every possible occasion.

As I stated earlier, I am not really concerned about this individual because although he craves notoriety and recognition at every opportunity, he is rather insignificant.

However, what I am aware of is that I will take this situation as far as I need to go and if I am prosecuted and I fight this scenario through the courts, there is only one person that we can thank for that and that is the person that instigated the enquiry originally! Yet he likes to portray himself as the protector of the taxi industry – that's really amusing as he

is only interested in his own self-projection and notoriety and nothing else!

To apply for a licence and have it granted costs £2,500 for five years, but whether we have it or not doesn't make the slightest difference to the way in which your business is run. However, what is particularly impertinent is having an expelled member complain to the authorities about the way in which we run our business – it is nothing to do with him, after all we can't have the tail wagging the dog – can we?

So let me take this opportunity to remind members that if a member of the public or anyone of our account customers were to ring us to book a car, we would not fulfil their request. However, we do have five large account customers where we act as their ground transport provider, whether the client wants a taxi or a car they ring or book on-line with us and we will supply what they desire. I would also like to point out that the client has the contract with the car vendors and not with Dial-a-Cab, we act purely as an agent on behalf of the client. By handling it in this manner, it enables us to control the account. If we were not to do this then the client would ring or book on-line with the car vendor directly and not with us, but they would still get the same car or taxi depending on what they wanted.

Large corporate accounts need and want more than just a taxi provider and as we've seen, they are no longer afraid of handing all their work to private hire if they can't get what they want – and that is a complete ground transportation system. But it does appear to be a fact that some people out there would rather we were destroyed than succeed...

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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DaC driver **Anthony Mitchell (T88)** has spoken to MP **Lee Scott** about a taxi Code of Conduct and will be presenting his suggestions regarding the taxi business to Mayor of London, Boris Johnson. He explains them here to Call Sign. Will they lead to...

Improvements to the Taxi Trade?



Anthony Mitchell with MP Lee Scott (on left)

"During my thirty-nine years of being a London taxi driver, I have seen many changes to the trade. Not all of them good and over the past year I have become even more dissatisfied. With that in mind, I have decided to try to improve general aspects of the trade for the good of the current and future licensed taxi drivers of London.

During the last four months, accompanied by **Dial-a-Cab** Board member **Michael Son**, I have had several meetings with **Lee Scott**, Member of Parliament for Ilford North. At these meetings, I proposed an official **Code of Conduct** for the Licensed Taxi trade.

The Code of Conduct will include, not just the Licensed London Taxi trade, but also bring in recommendations for the Private Hire section.

Some of the key features to my proposals include:-

Identification and Recognition: The London Taxi Cab is an international icon and sits aesthetically in partnership with the iconic Red Bus. Over a 5 - 7 year period I propose to bring the London Taxi Cab back to its original and recognisable colour of black.

Dress Code: As observed over the last 10 years, private hire firms have implemented a dress code for their drivers and have therefore created identification and uniform recognised by their corporate and public clients. We also need to encourage this within the trade. There is nothing like a first impression, be it an airport pick up, corporate account or a street job.

PCN/Local Authorities: Two years ago I petitioned the *City of Westminster* to relax their laws regarding licensed Taxis picking-up and setting-down within their area. This proved successful and there was a rule change as a result. I propose to bring these relaxed rules to the streets of central and greater London.

Fixed Prices: Adopting the practice of New York, I propose

to recommend fixed fare pricing for certain rides including airports, train stations etc from areas within London, ie rides from the City, Westminster etc.

Private Hire Act: The Private Hire Act 1998, which came into force in 2003 is in need of updating after 12 years.

This *Code of Conduct* was received with great enthusiasm and encouragement by **MP Lee Scott** and will be presented to **Mayor Boris Johnson** on 1st October when he officially opens the new traffic system at Gants Hill."

Anthony Mitchell (T88)



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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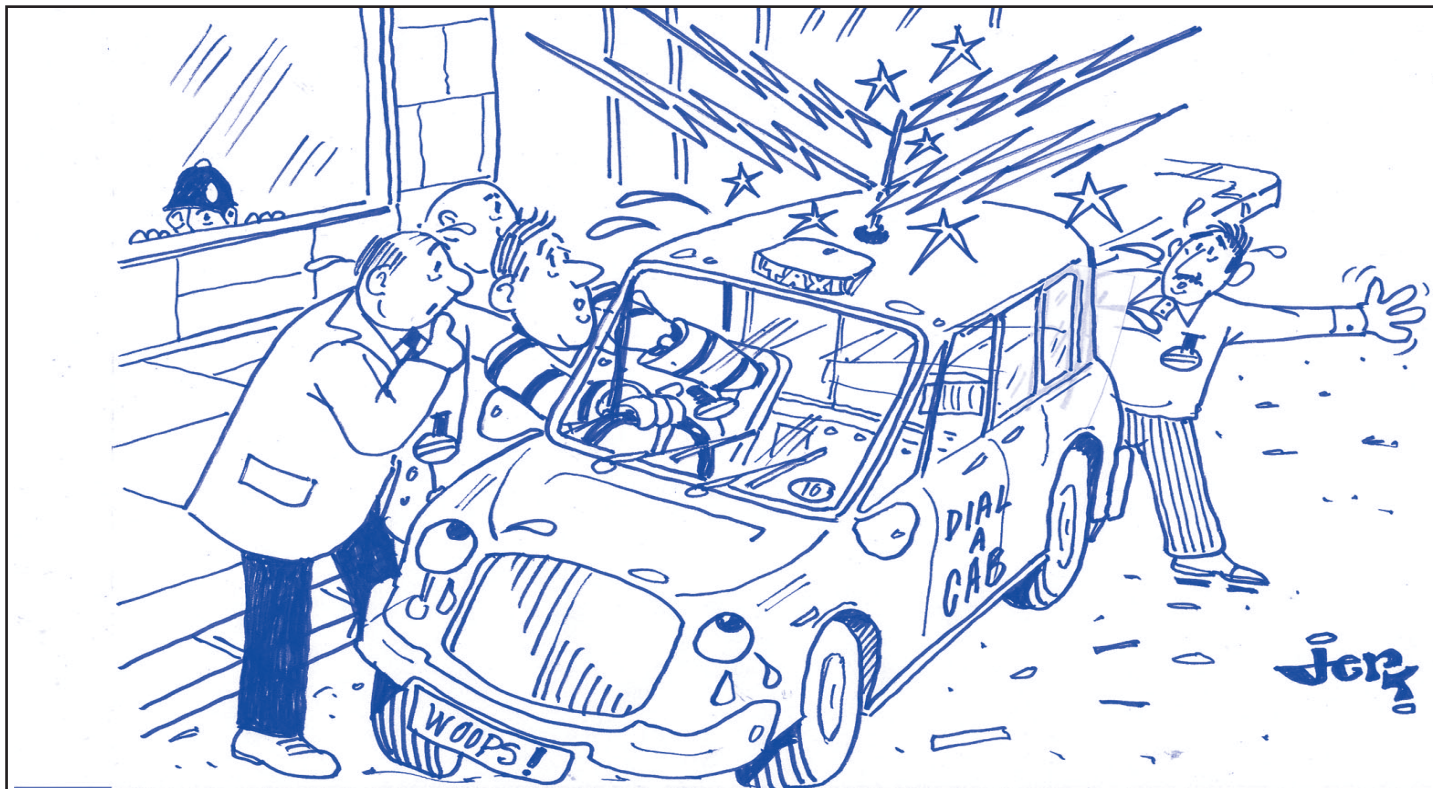
Tel: 020 8530 5589

Barry Levine

Tombstone Consecration

The tombstone consecration to the late Barry Levine will take place on Sunday 24th October 2010, 11.30am at Waltham Abbey Jewish Cemetery, Upshire Hall, Honey Lane, Essex...

Jerys World



I dunno Bert, p'raps you should ask the Mayor first if 'ee's interested in your home-made electric taxi....???

A world first for Call Sign readers...

Nash's Numbers great new website

Alan Nash (A95) has been bringing *Call Sign* readers useful information via Nash's Numbers since 1997 and for the past few years also on his useful information document, available at

www.alan@nashsnumbers.co.uk.

But he has also now put up something special that internet readers will find extremely helpful. Alan explained to *Call Sign*:

"As Thorstein Veblen, the US economist and social philosopher (1857 - 1929), once said - *necessity is the mother of invention*. Some time ago I realised that I regularly went to a set number of websites from my PC and laptop and often when on holiday the browsers, bookmarks or favourites had to be kept synchronised and non-existent on public internet cafés. So I set up my favourite links on a website and this has now been extended in facilities and for everyone's use at www.myfav.co.uk.

That is a conveniently short and meaningful name for 'my favourite home page, my favourite bookmarks, my favourite iconic links and my favourite gadgets'. MyFav has them all and as a good friend of mine said: "Wow this is a short cut to short cuts!"

The site is intended to be your Home Page. You then load all your pages into new pages



or tabs from the MyFav launch area. In a recent survey, 64% of users had Google as their home page and 56% said Amazon was their favourite online retailer. MyFav has both these search bars ready for your use, digital and analogue clocks from separate internet sources that are extremely accurate and a QAB (quick address bar). You can store up to 40 of your personal bookmarks, which are password protected (no prying eyes on your own favourites). Pages of 72 icon links, (it's so much easier to select popular sites visually by an icon) and up to 6 gadgets displaying weather, news etc.

Call Sign readers will be amongst the first to be able to use this service and it's not only FREE, but you can win monthly prizes for rec-

Pic left: Myfav.co.uk launch and info area

ommending new users. Why not try it now. Go to www.myfav.co.uk."



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

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We make wheels turn
so you can earn.

DaC driver Mike Leo (Z09) recently asked Call Sign if he could have a tour of DaC, so we arranged for Keith Cain to show him around. These are his views of what he saw...

My name is **Mike Leo (Z09)** and I have been a taxi driver for 9 years of which the last 2.5 years have been with Dial-a-Cab, with the previous time being spent on ComCab. Those that know me will understand when I say I hate not knowing how an operation is run and at ComCab you were only told the bits you should know and I have often wondered if DaC was the same.

So I sent an email to Alan Fisher at **Call Sign** explaining my problem and how I would like to know the full story. Within a few hours, a visit had been arranged at the heart of DaC with **Keith Cain**.

Once I arrived at DaC and met Keith, I noticed the booking / despatch area was very calm and relaxed. However, my biggest moan has always been the complex system of Concierge and how it works.

I spent a good bit of time with Keith asking many questions on how the booking system works, along with the despatch area. Every single question I asked Keith, I was immediately given an honest answer to. Yes, I even asked questions about the Concierge service that most drivers moan about... including me. Keith not only told me how it worked, I also

A DRIVER'S VIEW OF DAC



Mike Leo is shown around the call centre by Keith Cain

watched how it works and for once I was lost for words because DaC gets most of the work from it! Do I explain? I can do but why? An easier solution is that instead of just moaning about this system, why not contact Keith and arrange to visit the Call Centre for an hour or so and see for yourself how it all works.

I also asked Keith about the ranking system, minicab accounts, call-outs, bid jobs, booking into incorrect areas and all this information was shown to me and explained in full detail. As for cheating, I saw that DaC know where you are and what you are doing. That way, any driver that tries to cheat the system will be

caught. It really opened my eyes.

Another subject I spoke to Keith about was the JPM fixed price trips. For drivers that don't know, the fixed price jobs are for the top 20 destinations that their staff go to. They are set at different rates depending on the time of day. Some may be better than others, but more importantly, we still have the account and still get plenty of normal metered trips in addition to FPs.

So to all my fellow drivers, instead of moaning about customer services, bookings or despatch staff, take an elongated lunch break and see how our set-up works. Our staff get stick from both drivers and customers when they are just doing their job in trying to keep you earning pound notes.












I was at DaC for well over two hours in the afternoon and I plan to arrange another visit in the near future at a busier time so that I can understand more about the system under pressure.

My thanks again to **Call Sign** for arranging my visit and to Keith Cain for showing me round and answering all my questions.

Mike Leo (Z09)

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Shaffique Uddin appeared at Highbury Corner Magistrates' Court on 20 August charged with possession of cocaine, for which he was fined £65. As a result of his appearance, the 53 year old was also handed a post-conviction *Anti-Social Behaviour Order* (ASBO) to stop him from touting. The ASBO was issued indefinitely. Breaches of an ASBO are a criminal offence and are punishable by fine and / or imprisonment of up to five years.

The ASBO was sought by the Metropolitan Police Service Cab Enforcement Unit (CEU), part of the TfL funded Safer Transport Command (STC).

The CEU, who had arrested Uddin for his drug-related charge, provided substantial evidence in court of his previous history of touting. This included information of a conviction on 3 June this year for touting and driving with no insurance, resulting in a 3-month disqualification from driving.

The ASBO also prohibits Uddin from applying for a Private Hire or Hackney Carriage licence indefinitely, as well as displaying any sign in his car that could lead members of the public to believe that he is a licensed cab.

Chief Superintendent Joe Royle, MPS Safer Transport Command, told Call Sign:

"Illegal cabs and touting undermines the legitimate cab trade and raises the fear of crime. This sends out a clear message that we will continue to work with TfL using a number of measures including ASBOs, to proactively target unlicensed and uninsured vehicles."

Steve Burton, Director of Community Safety, Enforcement and Policing added:

"Illegal cab drivers undermine the legitimate cab trade and pose a serious danger to Londoners. This ASBO is a very encouraging result and should serve as a reminder to touts that police officers are out there cracking down on this illegal activity. We are working with the police and other partners to lobby for the strongest penalties for touting. Only black cabs can be hailed in the street. All mini-

Indefinite ASBO for Tout!

Man banned from touting on foot or in a vehicle anywhere in England or Wales!

cab journeys that have not been booked through a licensed operator are illegal, uninsured and unsafe."

Uddin's recent charge for possession of cocaine followed his arrest on 17 June, when officers from the CEU were carrying out plain clothed patrols in Great Queen

Street WC2. Police officers spotted Uddin approaching members of the public. He was stopped and searched and found in possession of cocaine and subsequently arrested. At the time of his arrest, Shaffique Uddin was not a licensed PHV driver...

TOUTING PH DRIVERS

Convicted / cautioned update

On 1 August 2008, the Mayor introduced a *one strike and you're out* policy for licensed private hire drivers convicted of touting. As a result, 320 PHV drivers have had their licenses revoked in the past two years.

In February 2010, Transport for London extended the policy to include Adult Cautions as well as convictions, which has resulted in a further 61 revocations.

Despite this policy, it is clear that some licensed drivers continue to break the law. TfL takes a serious view of touting and will not tolerate such illegal behaviour. Therefore, for the avoidance of any doubt, all PHV drivers are reminded that any licensed driver convicted of, or cautioned for touting will have his or her PHV driver's licence revoked.

An application to be re-licensed will not be considered until at least 12 months after the date of revocation, subject to the driver having had no previous similar convictions or cautions.

This policy does not affect a licensee's statutory rights of appeal against the decision of the Licensing Authority.



John Mason
Director Taxi and Private Hire

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Call Sign October 2010

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Cash for crash refers to an insurance scam that has been going on for some time. But now thanks to media attention, the practice has been highlighted and actually given a name.

It's a simple idea that can leave you vulnerable to an inflated insurance claim by the third party should you be unlucky enough to be involved in a minor shunt. The scenario goes like this. You are following another vehicle in slow moving traffic, perhaps entering a roundabout or road junction and the vehicle in front suddenly and unexpectedly comes to an abrupt halt, pretty much ensuring your taxi 'kisses' it in the backside. There is probably very little damage – if any – so you simply exchange details and off you both go. The next thing you hear is when the third party insurance claim amounts to mega bucks for extensive damage to the vehicle, driver whiplash requiring physiotherapy, damaged vehicle contents that were not mentioned or known about at the time of the incident and possibly medical attention to passengers in the vehicle that you were not aware of because in reality, they were not even there at the time!

Call Sign spoke to a few Dial-a-Cab drivers about the scam. The results may not be scientific, but they give a taste of what goes on...

Andrew Daniels (A02):

"I have a 21 year *No Claim Bonus* on my insurance policy and I've never heard of the *cash for crash* expression, but I did have an incident a while back which was settled quickly in my favour. But then some time later and completely out of the blue, I had a call from a 'recovery agency' telling me I could still claim a considerable amount from the third party insurers for physiotherapy treatment for the whiplash I suffered after the shunt that I had completely forgotten about! I explained politely that I had been ski-ing and mountaineering during the interim period without any ill effects, but the caller was persistent to the point of phoning me three times before I told him I wasn't playing his game. They're all a bunch of ambulance chasers, nothing more."



Robert Moss (D8):

"It's been going on for years but the media people, probably alerted by insurance investigators, have recently picked it up and so the



Cash for Crash???

scam has been highlighted. If they tried it once or twice they'd probably get away with it, but to try it on time and again, you're going to get rumbled aren't you?"

Colin Sims (O48):

"I had a run-in with a cyclist who then claimed £1040 for personal injury, clothing damage and cycle repairs following our minimal contact on the road. Extreme caution is my watchword nowadays."



William Beer (C62):

"I'm sure it happens, although thankfully it has not happened to me. The odd isolated case hits the headlines and in my opinion it is immoral, illegal and of course pushes up everybody's insurance premiums. Any claim should have to be proven beyond doubt before settlement is reached. No proof, no claim. Simple!"



Peter Boxall (B89):

"I was once accused of failing to stop after a road accident that allegedly left a pedestrian with torn clothing and broken toes after he claimed the rear bumper of my cab came into contact with him! The police threatened to prosecute me as the third party claimed to have witnesses stating they had seen my cab involved in this incident. I told the police I had 12 people prepared to say that I was not even at the scene of the alleged 'crime' because I was playing in a golf tournament many miles away! The police eventually dropped the charges, but that's the reason I now keep a digital camera handy at all times. We can be a very easy target."



Joe Connor (N64):

"It's a racket that has been around a long time, but the media people have suddenly picked up the story and decided to run with it. I know of a famous tennis player who



always took a broken tennis racquet with him hidden in his sports bag whenever he played abroad. On his return, he'd claim for the damaged racquet. Now that is a racket! I'm always cautious on roundabouts, pulling out of side roads and other potential hazards."

Call Sign Editor Alan Fisher

is currently going through the scam: "I was pulling forward into a parking space in our local High Street when another car that was passing my offside suddenly pulled in front of me in what I believed was an attempt to get the space. I stopped suddenly and avoided any damage to either vehicle, but the other guy insisted on exchanging details. My insurance company later told me had put in a claim for £1200 - which they aren't paying!"



John Connor (Y11):

I have never heard of the scam, but it must be tempting to inflate a claim for easy gain. Working up in the Call Centre as I do, we are very aware it can be tough out on the streets and that's why we are constantly vigilant if a *panic button* alarm shows up on our monitor screens. We want drivers to know they are not alone out there and we do all we can to offer whatever support we can give."



Call Sign's advice is to keep a digital camera handy and if you are unlucky enough to be involved in an incident, take as many images at the time of the incident as you can to verify any damage to all vehicles and *all* persons involved - however minor it may appear.

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call centre chat

Train strike day...

We started the beginning of our new financial year with 24 hours of industrial action on the underground network. It was just like old times in the call centre seeing the number of extra staff working on the evening the strike began and also seeing the vast number of staff who came in very early to meet the high demands of the following morning.

It remained busy for most part of the Tuesday, which saw our staff having to give up their breaks and work through parts of their lunches! I am pleased to say that everyone went that extra mile to give our clients a really good service. Driver coverage was also excellent, which did impact on the type of calls coming into the call centre. When coverage is poor, this generates more query calls from clients asking where their vehicle is. It also sees us making more outbound calls to say trips have not been matched to vehicles, which in itself upsets the clients who are very quick to express their feelings to our staff.

In those types of situations, staff become low



and more errors can be made. It also becomes very difficult trying to get staff to work longer hours when they feel down, but this last strike day was totally the opposite and I would like to thank all those drivers who worked so hard to give clients that service and for making a difficult 24 hours for our staff so much more pleasurable. Everyone did a terrific job and I'm

delighted to be able to say well done.

Since then, the work does look like it is slightly up on this time last year and hopefully it will continue to improve.

Call centre tour...

It was also pleasing to receive a request via **Call Sign** from DaC driver, **Michael Leo (Z09)**, who wanted to come and see for himself how the call centre operated. I spent some three hours with Michael, answering his questions and then showing him how we handle bookings, ring backs and how the controllers work. Michael's attention was focused for the whole of his visit and he said the visit well worth his time.

Any member or journeyman who is interested in seeing how we operate is welcome to visit the call centre. Please call the office to arrange a day and time...

Keith Cain

Call Centre Manager

Driver Operations Manager

Glasgow Taxis and the PH 'Gangsters'

Police drop objections to Network Cars

In the March 2008 issue of **Call Sign**, we reported on a visit to **Dial-a-Cab** by Scottish radio circuit **Glasgow Taxis**. Led by their Chairman, Bill McIntosh and Secretary Robert Dunabie, the five-man party from north of the border came down to East Road to get a personal tour of the Society from Chairman **Brian Rice** and also to get some advice after deciding to upgrade their *Raywood* system. Since then, their account workload has been decimated due to a battle against a private hire company with alleged links to organised crime.

A merger of several small radio companies in 1997 formed the Scottish circuit and until recently, they operated with around 1000 drivers. Readers may remember previous issue of **Call Sign** where we reported how PH company Network Cars had won two large accounts from Glasgow Taxis – one from the NHS and another that involved ferrying children to and from school. In addition, the PH company also gained some BBC work – all three accounts showing that money was far more important than safety.

However, it was Strathclyde Police Chief Constable Steve House who, referring to Network Cars, said in the *July Call Sign*:

"We endeavour to ensure that inappropriate individuals or groups are not allowed to operate where we have reliable information to show they are not fit to hold a licence."

Those same police have now withdrawn their licensing objections to Network Cars after one controversial member of Network, who was allegedly known to police, left the organisation.

Police had previously convinced Glasgow City Council licensing authority that convicted criminal James Baxter was profiting from Network. He was said to be earning around £800 a week as a handyman for Network up until April and another £5000 a week soon after.

Police now say they are happy that Network has severed all links with James Baxter and a previous regime of the company that saw it raided in 2004 by police investigating money laundering by the McGovern crime family.

A Strathclyde police spokesperson told the press: **"I can confirm that Strathclyde Police has withdrawn its objection to the licence applications lodged with Glasgow City Council by Network Private Hire. This is due to the fact that the circumstances that led to our objections have now been addressed."**

Network previously claimed that police had a vendetta against them, but now say they are happy to draw a line under the matter and look forward "to working with the police and the council to provide a safe, efficient and honest service to the public."

So far as **Call Sign** is concerned, the above may have been Scotland but Glasgow Taxis are a co-op just like DaC and their situation shows just how little some large organisations such as the NHS, care about safety. It's all about saving money. Hopefully Glasgow Taxis can regroup, but it does look as though there is no one out there that can help them...



2008 and Glasgow Taxis visit DaC. Since then three major accounts have been taken by the Scottish PH Company



Grant Davis - did he report DaC in order to get a story?

This month's question is aimed at trade editors and asks how far would they go to get a story? Ok, so we haven't actually asked any of them, but if they are like *Call Sign* then most would put themselves out if they could sniff a decent tale that would fill a page. However, our experience having met all our fellow editors is that although in direct competition with each other, none would deliberately try to get another into trouble just so that they could then report on it as an "exclusive."

Then again, perhaps "none" isn't too accurate a description, because one obviously would. This trade's newest editor is **Grant Davis** of the LCDC's newspaper, *The Badge*. In 2008 Mr Davis took over from **Alan Fleming** as Chairman of the LCDC and also announced himself as Editor, whilst giving himself and his committee a healthy financial increase.

This magazine and *Dial-a-Cab* itself have had many disagreements with Alan Fleming, but we always had to admit that anything Alan said, he believed to be true and we knew that he would never have invented a story in order to gain a headline. Alan's knowledge of legalities is prob-

ably unsurpassed by anyone in this trade and his offer in *Call Sign* from 2008 to assist any DaC driver who had to 'appear' at the PCO, was nothing less than incredibly generous considering the disagreements he and *Call Sign* had been through.

So back to the question: How far would you go to get a story? Well the September issue of *The Badge* had a fascinating one on page 5 where the headline splashed out the gory details: **Could this be the end of Dial-a-Cab's mutual status?** The story went on to say that the paper "...has learnt that Dial-a-Cab has been informed that they must apply for a private hire operator's licence for their six year old Concierge booking system. The decision comes from Taxi and Private Hire following a detailed investigation into Dial-a-Cab's business activities."

The rest of the article based itself on a quote from DaC's auditor taken from *Call Sign's* AGM report way back in February and indeed it is true that as a successful business, DaC has an ongoing battle with the HM Revenue & Customs. That hasn't changed for years although *The Badge* has tried to make out that it represents some sort of disaster, when in reality it is no different to the battle most businesses have with HMRC. However, *The Badge* is within its rights to create a story out of DaC's honesty via *Call Sign* – even though the LCDC website no longer publishes any messages that Mr Davis doesn't agree with.

If *The Badge* wants to publish articles based on half facts, then fine – no doubt we've all

published something that turned out to be only half correct! But what the Editor of *The Badge* appears to have done goes way beyond that.

Yes, he is correct that LTPH have asked DaC to apply for a PH operator's licence. It is also true that our two competitors have signed up because they either operate PH vehicles or have done so in the past. But DaC never has because it does not have any cars or PH drivers. Concierge may well make DaC a form of agent because if one of the 5 customers that use the system ask the Society for a car from one of the authorised names they have on their file, DaC will get in touch with the car company and organise it. But it certainly doesn't make them an operator. More importantly, what made LTPH ask DaC to sign up, after all it's not as though Concierge was ever a secret? Well according to one usually reliable source, the person who told them about DaC's Concierge system was none other than Grant Davis! Why? Well he has never liked Concierge – which was his right – but we suspect his dislike is more to do with his expulsion from DaC on 20 November 2007.

So far as *Call Sign* knows, DaC have yet to apply for or sign a private hire operator's licence. Perhaps more to the point is how far would Grant Davis go to get a story? Well we know the answer now, don't we...?

Alan Fisher
Editor, *Call Sign Magazine*

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When **Mickey Gordelier** was working on **Dial-a-Cab**, his biggest problem was getting people to spell his name correctly! Sadly that was surpassed by a real problem when he was diagnosed with *Motor Neurone Disease* (MND) and given between one and three years to live. Mick is now in **Greenwich & Bexley Cottage Hospice** in Abbey Wood and says that the care he receives there is magnificent and feels he'd like to thank them in a positive way, by helping them pay for another nurse at a cost of £30,000. Mick told **Call Sign**:

"I'm fifty-four years old now, I've been married to Sue for thirty-one years and we have three children. I've had a great life - a wonderful family, friends and a job as a licensed taxi driver on a great circuit - Dial-a-Cab.

Life could not have been better until the day I was diagnosed with MND. The doctor gave me 1-3 years to live and suggested I should stop work, travel the world and do whatever I had always wanted to do. Sue and I didn't say much during the car journey home; we just tried to keep our spirits up. Once inside the house, we put our arms around each other for support and cried. After a while, we thought the bad bit was over until we realised we had to still tell our children. We fell apart again.

As my condition deteriorated I was offered the chance to go to **Greenwich & Bexley Cottage Hospice** at **185 Bostall Hill, Abbey Wood SE20 0GB**, but I declined at first, believing I could cope better at home. Big mistake! At the Hospice, staff and volunteers put me at ease straight away. A typical day starts with nurses getting me up to wash and dress me. I have no use of my arms so throughout the day I'm dependent on those nurses be it for breakfast, lunch, dinner or a trip to the bathroom. Without their help I just could not survive.

I feel I owe it to Sue, my family and all the staff at the Hospice to carry on making the most of what I have. The level of care, support and friendship I receive at the Hospice is just magnificent and I've made many friends from

Mickey Gordelier was a member of Dial-a-Cab for over 20 years. Now Mick is dying from Motor Neurone Disease but is asking for help...

Help Mick Raise £30k for a Hospice Nurse



Mickey and Sue in better times

all walks of life. I'm proud to be here. If I had to say thank you to all the staff and volunteers who are now so close to my heart 1000 times, it would not be enough. I am so lucky and

grateful to have met each of them and will always be in their debt.

This is why I wanted to launch my own appeal to raise £30,000 to help fund a nurse for the Hospice. These nurses are talented and dedicated; they work unsociable hours but are always professional and sincere. All the care the Hospice provides is completely free of charge, yet they have to raise most of their funding from local people - people like you and me.

Please support my appeal and donate what you can, your donation will help to fund a very special nurse to care for more local people with a diagnosis like mine.

With thanks and best wishes - and of course, be lucky...

Mickey Gordelier (a proud ex-L27)

Please help Mick to raise £30,000. We can identify your name and address from this reference:

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The London Taxi Company Arrives!



After a year or so of teasing the name, LTI's alter ego of the *London Taxi Company* has finally made an official entrance with the launch of it's new website at **www.london-taxis.com** with virtually anything you wanted to know about the TX4 London taxi being found there.

The London Taxi Company is the international sales brand for LTI Vehicles, the British manufacturer of the iconic and purpose-built London Taxi and the company is promoting not only the London Taxi, but also the best taxi service in the world. It even allows people to enquire about The London Taxi Service franchise and how they can benefit or apply to join.

"This new website shows drivers and operators how they can operate The London Taxi Service wherever they want in the world," said Matthew Cheyne, International Market Development Director. "We are proving in so many markets around the world that there is a demand for our taxi together with the great service; just like you get in the UK. We will be using The London Taxi Company website to connect to our growing list of partners, so that wherever people go in the world they will be able to hail a London Taxi."

The website also allows visitors to download images and brochures or read the latest press releases.

Visitors to the site can connect to their local operator or apply to become an operator in just a few clicks.

The site is easy to navigate and will soon include videos, more press stories and news of all the latest launches of The London Taxi Service.

Which Laptop?

I've lost count of the amount of times I've been asked by family, friends and colleagues the question: "Which is the best laptop to buy?"

People often assume that someone like me who works in IT can easily provide an answer to this question; after all, surely we should be on the ball and know exactly which laptop is the latest and greatest and best value for money? In reality, this is such an open-ended question that cannot be answered with a mere suggestion for this or that model laptop. Buying a laptop is more like buying a mobile phone than a desktop computer. The reason I say this is because a laptop is a *personal* item, just like a phone. The majority of desktop computers are alike; keyboards and mice and monitors are pretty standard, but laptops are not so standard.

Important questions

What will I use this laptop for? Are you a casual user or a gamer? Will you mainly use the Internet and manage your photos, documents etc? Or will you want to play the latest video games? Where am I going to use the laptop? Will it be used mainly at home or will you be carrying it around a lot and using it on the go? How much am I prepared to spend on it?

If your answer to question 1 is you are not a gamer, then you don't need a high-spec laptop. However, if you are a gamer, then you will need a laptop with sufficient memory, disk space and graphics card to play your games.

If your answer to question 2 is that you'll mainly use the laptop at home, you might as well go for a widescreen 17-inch laptop and not worry about weight. But if you are a commuter, you'd do better with a 15-inch laptop with the lightest weight and highest battery longevity.

If your answer to question 3 is as cheap as possible, then you've a wide choice of budget laptops available. Laptops with the cheaper AMD processor chip (like Acer for example) will save you money over those with Intel processor chips. However, if you're prepared to spend more than the average price, you can get more "bang for your buck."

Tech specs – standard user

On a technical note, if you're a standard user, the only specs you should worry about are memory (RAM), disk space, processor and operating system. Lucky for you, most laptops have standard specs that are way above the needs of the standard or casual user. But here are some tips: Avoid Windows Vista. Get Windows 7 (or XP if you prefer). 4Gb of RAM is more than sufficient and will future-proof your laptop for some time, but you'll save money opting for 2Gb. A dual-core processor of 1.7Ghz or above is easily sufficient. You don't need quad-core. Integrated basic graphics is fine; you don't

In a world where technology moves at an astounding pace, DaC Network Administrator Jonathen Winterburn takes an occasional look at the latest gadgets...

Jon Asks What's New?



need accelerated graphics. Disk space is so cheap, you'd be mad to under-spec your requirements. Go for 160Gb minimum, but aim for 250Gb or more. I cannot stress this final tip enough - make sure you get a 64-bit laptop with 64-bit operating system. This is the future of computing; 32-bit technology will be obsolete in a few years time.

Tech specs – advanced user/gamer

If you're in this second category, then most likely you don't need my advice anyway! But in case you are you interested, here's my two cents. Get a decent spec laptop. Dual-core 3Ghz will suffice, but if you have the extra cash, go for Quad-core or better. 64-bit Windows 7 is a must. 4Gb RAM at least, 8Gb if you can afford it (not necessary though). Get 500Gb of disk space – you will need it for game installations. An absolute MUST is decent accelerated graphics. I recommend nVidia GT 240M or above if you're an nVidia fan (like myself), or one of the Radeon 5000 series if you prefer ATI.

Windows, Linux or Apple?

If you're used to Windows, you're better off staying with it unless you're prepared for a learning curve. Having said that, Mac OSX is very easy to pick up and the switchover will be relatively painless and the hardware is beautifully crafted - lightweight, brushed aluminium and whisper-quiet. But it will definitely cost you much more for a Macbook than a Windows-based laptop. If you're looking for more of a challenge and want to save money on licensing and tech specs, then you could always buy a basic laptop with Linux installed (like Ubuntu).

Final tips

Research, research, research! Look around online and find a laptop that's within your budget and desired tech specs. Then read reviews on different shopping and review websites. Once you've found a few likely contenders, go to your local computer stores (like PC World) and have a look and feel of models that are physically similar to those you're interested in. This is very important; because you need to be sure you'll feel comfortable using it every day. Are the fans noisy? Are they underneath or on the side? Underneath fans will make your legs hot if you sit the laptop on your lap! Do you like the glossy screen or would you prefer matte? How does the trackpad (mouse) and keyboard feel to you? Are the buttons too subtle or too clunky? Is the laptop too heavy?

Once you're happy with the physical attributes, walk out of the store! Don't get ripped off! Instead, browse around online and get the best deal, but please remember to only buy from reputable firms like Dell, Amazon and the like and if possible use a credit card rather than debit card to protect your purchase. Always make sure you buy from a website that displays a valid Secure Socket Layer (SSL certificate) – you can tell this by clicking on the little padlock in your browser.

I hope this has been of some help to you.

Jonathen Winterburn
DaC Network Administrator



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Master and Chairman!

Dial-a-Cab's **Jim Rainbird (T25)** was installed as the new Master of the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* at the Tallow Chandlers in Dowgate Hill on 9th September. Following the Installation Court, the new Master and his Wardens welcomed guests to a champagne reception in the courtyard before dinner was served in the Grand Hall.

Jim has been a driver with **Dial-a-Cab** for 16 of his 20 years in the trade. In addition to Jim becoming Master for the forthcoming year, former DaC driver **Brenda Bartlett** became Renter Warden for the Company while DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** becomes Lower Warden.

One of the new Master's first official roles each year is to lead the *Magical Taxi Tour* as it leaves Canary Wharf. Jim is no exception - although those who have driven on the trip before will be more used to seeing him dressed in his white protective suit and Tigger hat as he refuels the taxis in France.

The Master then took wine with the new Freemen and Liveryman and following dinner, the *Loving Cup* ceremony took place. Jim then gave his first speech as Master. He told guests:

"On Sunday April 1st 1990, I jumped on my trusty moped and started my first 'run' on the Knowledge of London. Manor House Station to Gibson Square. Up until that day, the only Manor House I knew was a fruitcake so I thought that with the combination of April Fool's day and a fruitcake, my latest venture was doomed. Some will say that it was a fitting date, as a brief glance at my employment history prior to gaining my badge, will confirm my proverbial nickname 'Jack of all trades but Master of none'. Well I've finally cracked it!"

This is a very proud day for me and I'm delighted to be able to share it with so many colleagues, friends and family members. It was in that same year - 1990 - that The Fellowship of Hackney Carriage Drivers was revived. That was 336 years after its first incarnation under Oliver Cromwell as the Fellowship of Master Hackney Coachmen. Twenty years on and we are now a respected Worshipful Company that continues to grow in size and regard within The City of London.

Our educational and military affiliations also continue to flourish.

"It was encouraging to see the recent meet-

DAC'S JIM IS NEW WCHCD MASTER!



L-R: Lower Warden Brian Rice, Renter Warden Brenda Bartlett, Upper Warden Eddie Crossley and new Master Jim Rainbird

ing take place with representatives from every recognised group in the trade, signing a submission relating to the Mayor of London's air quality strategy and an age limit on taxis. What was even more encouraging was that among those present at that meeting were two Wardens, a Court Assistant and a Freeman of this company. It shows that we, as a Company, are well represented in all parts of the trade.

A united trade is something we should all strive for. The only way to compete with our rivals in the current economic climate is to improve our service - I realise I am preaching to the converted here but I think

the long term future of this trade depends on two words - service and unity."

Guest speaker, Mr J Shilling, Master of the *Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers*, followed Jim's speech with an entertaining one of his own.

At the end of the evening and before inviting the guests to join him in a *Stirrup Cup*, the new Master made a presentation to the Beadle, **John Sheen**, who is retiring after giving over ten years service to the Company.

Our heartiest congratulations to Jim, who in whatever position with the WCHCD, has always worked hard to promote the organisation and the good work that they do.

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DaC Staff Celebrate Long Service Awards

In an event now held several times each year, Dial-a-Cab Chairman Brian Rice together with the Board (see cover photo), recently celebrated with a fourth floor Champagne reception and certificate presentation to staff with at least 10 years unbroken service behind them.

20 years

Twenty years ago in July 1990, a young dispatcher arrived at Brunswick House who, unless you work through the night, you may never have heard of. **Dave Ivers** has rarely strayed from the 11.30pm till 8am shift and is now the Senior Systems Operator for that shift.

15 years

Carol Carpenter was there to celebrate 15 years' service. She began in June 1995 as a DaC Telephone Sales Representative in our

Admin dept and for many years has been, in addition to others, the Westminster Account Manager and someone most long-term TaxiCard users refer to as "the lovely Carol!"

Many drivers will know **Steve Thomas** from our Roman Way fitting bay as the former rugby player who believes the Welsh team consists only of Gods! Steve began in 1995 as a Security Receptionist on the front desk. Within two years he had moved to Roman Way as a fitter and is now an Installation Engineer there.

10 years

Also among those honoured was **Jeni Albert**, whose employment with DaC began ten years ago on 10 July 2000 as a Customer Service Representative (CSR) in the Brunswick House call centre. Ten months later saw Jeni move to become a Help Desk Representative until October 2005 when she became a Concierge Supervisor. Nowadays Jeni works as a Concierge Account Manager in DaC's

ground floor Admin department.

Also honoured for ten years service was **Joe Mensah**, who many older drivers will remember working at Brunswick House on the front security desk. He has made the astonishing move to gradually working his way up to being IT Support Engineer in DaC's first floor IT dept!

Paulette Semper also began ten years ago as a CSR on the day shift and nowadays has moved up to being a call centre Team Leader.

Another ten-year presentation came with **Val Smith**, who also began as a DaC call centre CSR. Like Jeni Albert, Val later moved to become a Concierge Supervisor and is now a Concierge CSR Manager.

Organisations such as Dial-a-Cab invariably have a high turnover of staff, yet this Society can claim with pride that we have many staff that have been with DaC for years because they like it here! That continuity helps to keep the wheels turning smoothly and they undoubtedly deserve this recognition.



Warren Smith with Carol (left) and Jeni



The Chairman presents Steve with his certificate



Brian and Val



A happy Paulette with Brian

What goes around...?

"You're my witness," **Colin Sims (O48)** said to one of **Call Sign's** snitches as they chatted by the coffee machine at **Dial-a-Cab** House.

"Why's that," #31926 responded cautiously? And so Colin's story unfolded...

"Well, last May while returning from a failed business trip in the Canaries, I accidentally left my wallet containing all the usual credit cards and stuff - plus £4000 in cash at the Gatwick Airport car park pay counter. In a panic, I returned to the parking services counter to find they had kept my wallet securely locked away in the safe. They had counted out the money and told *me* how much was there. Fancy that, them telling me how much was in *my* wallet... as if I didn't know! I offered them a reward but they steadfastly refused, so I got my wallet with all its personal contents and my 4G's back intact!" At that point, Colin looked visibly relieved at just recalling the experience before jumping forward to the present day.

"So now I've just completed a couple of street trips and one of the two passengers has left a leather bag in the back of my cab. It could be a male or female style bag and I've got no idea which of the two punters it might have belonged to," Colin continued.

"I've looked inside it and there are no clues to ownership, but there is a whole heap of cash - £600 to be precise - and I intend to hand it in to a police station because, although I'd have handed it in anyway, I like to think that it's my way of reciprocating the favour and you are the witness as to my honesty and integrity as a person and **Dial-a-Cab** subscriber," he declared, leaving snitch #31926 humbled by the responsibility. Colin then promised to let us know once he'd handed it in and true to his word, Colin called **Call Sign** the very next morning to let us know that he had telephoned the London Taxi & Private Hire (LTPH) folks at Palestra and they had indeed received an enquiry from one of Colin's passengers just 15 minutes earlier! The LTPH staff got the two parties together and Colin was able to safely deliver the bag with all its private contents and that all important £600, back to the rightful owner within 18 hours of the bag and owner parting company!

"He offered me a reward or at least compensation for my time, but I declined and explained about my earlier experience at Gatwick. I added that the look on his face when I handed the errant bag back to him was all the reward I needed and it brought back to me the relief I felt

when getting my own property back."

Finishing, Colin added: "What goes round comes round and the reputation of the London taxi trade and **Dial-a-Cab** in particular remains untarnished!"

Yet another reason why private hire with their rich owners but grossly underpaid drivers could never compete with Licensed taxis...



Colin Sims handed in a bag with £600 inside

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ASHFORD CRASH OUT OF FA CUP

While DaC's goalkeeper is out injured...

Would **Ashford Town** (Middlesex) have progressed further in this season's **FA Cup** – perhaps even as far as a dream game in the first round proper – had **Dial-a-Cab** driver and Ashford Town goalkeeper **Lee Pearce (J71)** not been injured earlier? We'll never know, but even though an 87th minute equaliser from Ashford's 17 year old **Lewis Wombwell** earned the team a replay against Worthing in the home preliminary round, 41 year old stand-in goalkeeper/coach **Paul Burgess** couldn't stop the Sussex team knocking in 5 in the 5 – 1 away replay defeat. Worthing now face the trip that Lee Pearce told **Call Sign** he fancied the sound of – a cup match against Ryman League Division 1 North outfit, **Enfield Town** – a team once known for being the nursery club to **Tottenham Hotspur**. But the FA Cup has now gone for 2010!

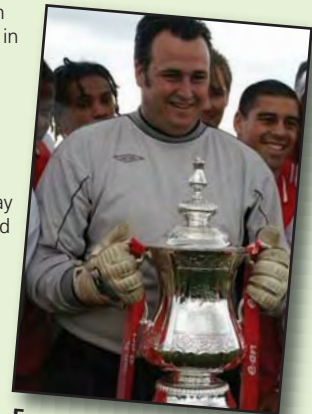
Back in the **Zamaretto Southern League**, the 18th September home match saw Ashford drop more home points when Woodford United scored a 93rd minute winner in a five goal thriller.

Looking to improve the team's current poor results, Ashford Town player-manager, **Jamie Lawrence** has added to his squad with the signing of former **Arsenal**, **Bolton**, **Bradford** and **Brentford** player, **Isaiah Rankin**. Isaiah is at home on the wing or at centre forward. Jamie told us: "Isaiah is someone I have known for a long time, going back to our time together at both Bradford City and Brentford. He is versatile and at 32, still has a lot of football left in him. We have a young team and Isaiah will give us some much needed experience and is someone that the younger players will look up to and learn from."

As for Lee Pearce, when **Call Sign** spoke to him, he'd just taken part in a training session to test out his damaged knee, but it gave way. He was later scheduled to go for a scan to determine how bad the damage was. He originally damaged the knee following a 4-2 win over AFC Hayes. Lee fell heavily in the second half and seemed to aggravate a knock he had already taken in the first half.

Some good news though in that Jamie Lawrence is continuing to play for at least another season. Even at 40, the player-manager's form has been too good for him to drop himself!

Dennis Latchett



Four years ago, Lee Pearce got his hands on the FA Cup when the BBC covered the preliminary round. Sadly the run ended there...

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Gerry Mulcahy is just one of several drivers who have recently contacted **Call Sign** to enquire about the upcoming Euro 5 emission standard that becomes effective from January 2011 and how it might affect taxis.

Having scoured European and UK websites, there is legislation that says from January 2011, Euro 5 will apply to all new cars, with light commercial vehicles and special needs vehicles in January 2012. Diesel powered vehicles in particular seem to be the focus of attention. Some major motor manufacturers including Toyota, Fiat and Mercedes Benz have already pre-empted the incoming legislation with compliant models of their own that are already available.

We also went to the TfL and Department of Transport websites to see if there was any further information that related directly to London and the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy. There are references to the Lower Emission Zone (LEZ) and these refer to Euro III and IV as being compliant so far. However, with the threat of a hefty European fine for not improving London's air quality, Boris may have to think again.

The jump from Euro IV to Euro V is quite a big one, particularly with regard to Particulate Matter (PM) and Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx). Originally, the intention was to bring in the legislation on 4th October 2010, but this has now been deferred until 3 January 2012 for larger vans, minibuses, motor caravans and *other specialist vehicles*, which almost certainly will include taxis. The consultation period has now closed and the Mayor is expected to announce his decision in the autumn.

This deferment is to allow smaller motor

DaC driver Gerry Mulcahy (W78) has asked in this issue's Mailshot for an explanation about the difference between Euro 4 and Euro 5 for new taxis from next year...

Euro 5 Emissions



The TX1 Nissan engine looks normal except for the silver aluminium turbo housing and big black hose lying across the top. inset: The TX1 is on its way to Germany



manufacturers and operators more time to comply, given the current economic downturn and for a niche market manufacturer such as LTI, this breathing space is very welcome.

At the forefront of bringing London's taxi fleet into line with current and foreseeable legislation is **Sheldon Posner** of **Cricklewood Carriers Cab Co** in NW2.

He kindly allowed **Call Sign** ready access to a TX1 he is converting to Euro IV standard and it will be undergoing proving trials in Germany, where emissions requirements are stricter than here. So if it succeeds over there, it is very likely to meet with approval for

London.

"I have developed a modified exhaust filter that will reduce the exhaust emissions to current Euro IV levels, so that cabs will be compliant for 2012," he said. "It will be a viable proposition for non Euro IV cabs and keep them on the road a while longer, giving the owners' time to prepare for further legislation. The filter will be installed into the exhaust system before the catalytic converter where that is fitted, and will be a relatively straight forward fit," he added.

Call Sign will be following the fortunes of this pioneering vehicle and reporting on its' adventures in a future issue, so watch this space! Our thanks go to Sheldon Posner and Cricklewood Carriers Cab Co. They can be contacted on 020 8452 5461.

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TWEET, TWEET DAWN!

"It's very handy," said **Dawn Cooper (C80)** as she gently waved her **Apple iPhone** under the chin of **Call Sign's** impressionable cub reporter. "I use it a lot to Tweet my friends on the @tweetalondoncab social network. We tell each other news items, where there's work or when we're stopping for a break etc. We also help each other out with changing a wheel or a puncture or jump starts when the battery is flat," she continued, swiping her finger across the phone's screen, zapping over the icons of its many Apps.

"It is only available between licensed London taxi drivers and you have to prove you hold a Badge before we let you join us. I say 'we' because I am on the management group and drivers wishing to join are vetted as being *bona fide* taxi drivers before they are accepted. We hold a regular 'twitter school' at the Camley Street cab shelter between 20.00 and 22.00 hours for those unfamiliar with the system and there are some drivers who do not have an **iPhone**, so they can text a conversation," Dawn explained. "There are even a few suburban drivers who are members," she added almost as an afterthought.

Dawn ended by saying that the group had a website at **www.tweetalondoncab.com** where much more information was available. Then she swished her fingers deftly over the phone's keys, obviously in conversation with a fellow member somewhere out there in the Tweeting ether.



Dawn is on the committee of tweetalondoncab

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compliance officer's update

Hello Ladies & Gents,

The summer holidays are now well and truly behind us, schools are back and traffic is now returning to normal. The workload has certainly picked up and after a rather quiet period on the complaints front, I feel I need to remind you all of a few do nots that have started to creep back in. I'm sure none of you have failed to see the regular terminal messages reminding you that certain zones are constantly monitored and that complaints will be processed for blatant misdemeanours and frequent offenders. Two such zones are *EC5* and *E14* and I would once again like to remind you of the booking-in procedures that a small minority of our members seem to have forgotten.

EC5: When this zone is in operation, you must physically be in one of the four EC zones (EC1 / 2 / 3 or 4) before booking in. If trips are unmatched in this zone, they will appear in the *Bids* and you are quite within your right to bid, accept and offer a time on the journeys.

E14: Between the hours of 9pm and 6am Monday to Friday and at all times throughout the weekend, you must be in this actual postal zone before you book in. During weekday working hours (6am to 9pm) the E14C and



E14S ranks are in operation.

Regular Trips: I have mentioned previously that during the course of a week, there are a number of regular trips that may come out frequently or even on a daily basis. It is not in the spirit of our Society, in addition to being a procedural rule, that any member seeking to make this type of trip their own by waiting for long periods before the trip is dispatched or maintaining a queue position to ensure that they are allocated the trip, is in breach of these rules.

It is reasonably simple to check driver log-

gers and accurately monitor the length of time each member is in a zone or if they constantly reject alternative trips and use the temporary off button to maintain a queue position in a particular trip zone - I am sure you know where I'm coming from!

In the very near future, our GPS will capture additional information that will be available to account clients. It will not only show locations at time of *acceptance*, *arrival* and *PoB*, but the amount on the meter at each of these points in sequence will also be registered. It is important that you press the *arrival* button outside of the actual account address and not before and clear each trip as soon as the passenger alights from the taxi. Please remember that the normal run-in (excluding Westminster TaxiCard journeys), or unless otherwise authorised is up to £4.20 at booked time or actual arrival time on an ASAP.

Without further labouring these points, I am sure you will agree that there is stiff competition out in the market place and we must always stay one jump ahead of the rest. Our professionalism should always shine through and we should never underestimate good customer service and understanding the needs of our clients.

Be very lucky...

Allan Evans

Allane@Dialacab.co.uk

John Griffin: "Call Sign is wrong!"

The September *Call Sign* Editorial from Alan Fisher picked up on an interview Addison Lee Chairman, John Griffin, had given to the *Sunday Times*. Alan's comment - based on the article - said that for as long as he could remember, the Addison Lee boss had stated that his aim was for taxis only to pick up street work whereas private hire should do all the radio work. Alan added that even though he disagreed strongly with Mr Griffin on the point, he believed that he meant it but then referred to himself as being stupid for doing so!

That last point was because according to the interview, John Griffin claimed Addison Lee were working on a court case where they would argue that minicab drivers should be able to use bus lanes and pick people up on the street - just like black cab drivers! He added that it was time for minicabs to be given the opportunity to compete fairly.

Alan's answer was to inform them that they could pick up in the street already - his drivers just had to do The Knowledge!

Within days of the issue coming out, John Griffin obtained a copy or read the online version and responded to Alan's article.

"Why does the taxi trade persist in believing that the minicab industry has a secret agenda involving picking up passengers from the street? This work is the exclusive domain of the London Taxi with his knowledge and turning circle.

If minicabs could ply for hire, it would be not only the end of the Taxi trade, but also the end of companies like Addison Lee who rely on their livelihood by charging the driver for agency work. If a journalist gets the wrong end of the stick you should know better than to believe him."

In all honesty, it is difficult to argue with that logic; after all, one of their strengths is that they tell passengers their drivers are more available for radio trips as they are not allowed to pick up in the street. So please do not write to *Call Sign* to tell us you've seen an AL car picking up in the street...it doesn't happen!



Addison Lee boss John Griffin: "Call Sign was wrong!"

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign Online

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

Kupkake's Korner



The only cab on the island...

I was the only cab on the Island,
the only cab on the Island;
nobody booked in E14C
and the only cab on the Island was me!

As I drove along Upper Bank Street,
somebody waved at me;
I lowered my window
gave him a smile
so happy as I drove him 1 mile...

I was the only cab on the Island,
the only cab on the Island;
hundreds of punters looking expectantly
'cos the only cab on the Island was me!

As I dropped off on Westferry,
A man came and said "Terminal three;"
I said "sorry mate, you're too late,
'cos the only cab on the Island is me!"

I was the ONLY cab on the Island,
the only cab on the Island;
with the meter running on rate three
the only cab on the Island was ME!

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Today I have a different hat on to my usual Dial-a-Cab Credit Union one, this time it's about me! As anyone that knows me or who has come in to the Credit Union office and mentioned airplanes, they know that I am mad about aircraft and have been ever since I first saw one - Spitfires in particular.

When I was a kid, all I ever wished for was to go to air shows like Farnborough or Biggin Hill. I must have driven my parents mad, I even applied to join the RAF when I was just 12 years old! Mind you, I did get a lovely letter back that thanked me, but suggested in a lovely tone that it might be better if I came back when I was a tad older! Sadly for me I never did, but my love of all things flying has never left me.

Then four years ago, my wife Beverly gave me for my birthday a flying lesson at my local airfield at Stapleford Abbots. Ok, so it isn't as much a lesson as more of a scenic flight and if you live near the airfield and not in controlled airspace, you get to fly over your house as I did. The instructor that takes you up will tell you all about available lessons and do his best to sign you up, but in all honesty he didn't have to work too hard to convince me! My mind was made up the minute we raced down the runway and he told me to pull back on my joystick - please no rude comments, I'm being serious here! As the wheels left the runway and we went up to the wide expanse of sky above us, I was convinced. The result is that I now have my pilot's licence and I am absolutely thrilled about it.

As you can imagine, this is no cheap hobby and if you decide to have a go, make sure you have the finance in place. I can see you thinking that here we go with the **DaC Credit Union** part! Well, yes, you're right and if you want to do what I have, we can help - onwards and upwards! But my finances came from my parents who had died within a year of each other and God bless them, left me some money and I hope they are pleased with the way I used it. Since my lessons started, I have had three instructors all of whom have become firm friends and who are now delighted with my flying skills.

So how do you start? When you begin the lessons, you have to do seven written exams

John gets his wings

CREDIT UNION JOHN IS FLYING HIGH!



John now has his pilots licence

and if you are like me, then the last serious studying I did was the Knowledge some 30 or so years ago. But before you are allowed to do your first solo flight, you must have done the Air Law exam and I must say that finding the time did hold me up by a year, but eventually I did and one fine day my instructor said the magic words: "Ok that's enough, you can go solo now for one circuit of the airfield! Boy was that the best feeling and as I went going round I began humming the theme to *633 Squadron*! I was slightly nervous beneath the bravado, but it went smoothly and it marked another milestone for me. Navigation was the next thing to learn and I thought that would be a piece of cake. But no, certainly not at first, there's a lot to be taken into consideration when planning a flight. It has to be done the old fashioned way before satnavs - yes they have them for flying as well - and before any smart arse asks if I have to follow the road signs, no you have to read the map, notice the

shapes of towns and villages, there's the upper wind direction to take into consideration and you'd be surprised how easy it is to become disorientated. But there are ways and means to get you back on track, which I won't go into now, but if you are interested, give me a call at the Credit Union office and if you're not a member, we can sort that out easily enough by signing you up.

I can also tell you what you'd be letting yourself in for and how after passing the final flying exam - the skills test - you have to go up with the Chief Flying Instructor and do everything you've been taught - things such as stalling, wing drops, spiral dives and engine failures etc. Coincidence or not, I passed but wasn't it strange that considering my love of Spitfires, Hurricanes and Lancasters, that I should get my licence in Battle of Britain week? My one regret is that my parents were not there to see it - but maybe they were on my first solo flight, humming along to *633 Squadron* with me. I do hope so.

If I have whetted your appetite for all things flying, you can contact Stapleford Flight centre on 01708 688 380. They also do pleasure flights over London as well as trial lessons. I hope you have found this article of some interest and please, please, please no Biggles jokes!

John Riley (K38)

DACCU Vice-President

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London E2 9EO**

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

Divyesh Does The Cabbies Run

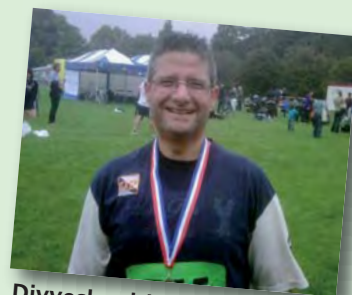
And helps Dial-a-Dream...

On Saturday September 11, Dial-a-Cab driver **Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)** took part in the Cabbies 5K run at Hackney Marshes. The run was organised by *Two2Go*, an organisation whose aim is to raise awareness in exercise, fitness and healthy living in local communities close to the Olympic area with just 2 years to go before the Games open. Hence the name *Two2Go*.

The event had a Marathon, a 10K and a 5K run, which incorporated the Cabbies 5K run, plus there were other fun activities. The weather was threatening, but thankfully the rain stayed away in the main. The route of the run took runners round so that they had the Olympic Village in the background, and that lent a definite buzz to the run. Divyesh told **Call Sign** that he was pleased to complete his 5K in 29 minutes 53 seconds. Mind you, the cab driver that won did it in 18 minutes. Well done him! Divyesh continued:

"I did the run in aid of Dial-a-Dream, which DaC drivers will be aware is the charity run by Tom Whitbread and Bob "the dog" Heath. It makes the dreams of 6 to 18 year old terminally ill children come true. The reason I like this charity is because it's run by the two gentleman with no overheads coming off, so you know every penny goes to the cause!

I have so far raised £60 in cash from friends (with £10 coming from a punter), plus a few have donated directly to the *Charities Aids Foundation* website at www.cafonline.org, so if anyone wishes to donate please do so by going to the website and searching for Dial-a-Dream. I have also had pledges from friends who I have to meet and collect from, so hopefully the final total will be closer to £200."



Divyesh with his medal

Whose job is it?

Well, we have got through a difficult summer with an appalling lack of work both on the radio and street, however at least now the work is getting a little better and hopefully will continue in that vein at least until Christmas.

Yet as the work improves, complacency is once again creeping into the cab trade with drivers refusing trips and quite frankly, some just being plain rude to passengers. As you are aware, I do still work the cab and see at first hand the antics of some drivers. I'm not necessarily aiming these comments at Dial-a-Cab drivers, but just drivers in general.

As an example, I was recently sitting on the *Raft* rank at Victoria with two cabs in front of me; a passenger went to the first cab and the driver shook his head, obviously refusing to take the fare. The passenger then went to the second cab and because my window was open, I could see and hear what was going on. The second driver wouldn't take the fare because the first driver had refused it! An argument ensued between the two licensed taxi drivers and by now there was a queue of returning holidaymakers and business people who were becoming involved by moaning that all they wanted was to just get a cab to go home! The first passenger then approached my cab and asked if I would take him to Finchley Central. My first thought was that it wasn't a bad job anyway, so what was the problem?

Now the first few passengers would not get into the first two taxis and a passenger from the middle of the queue left his partner waiting there, approached the first driver who had refused the fare and took his number. I heard him say he was reporting him, adding that he worked for TfL.

Mike Son's bits and pieces...



What a palaver just because a driver didn't want to go from Victoria to Finchley Central. Incidentally, when the passengers first came out we had been on the rank for almost 20 minutes. It's no wonder that minicabs are so successful.

Code of Conduct

One of our Dial-a-Cab drivers has drawn up a *Code of Conduct* document, which he intends submitting to both the taxi trade and authorities. It may be in this issue of *Call Sign* and if so, I hope it will give many drivers food for thought about the future of our industry. The driver

must certainly be commended for his efforts.

Frustration?

My last point is about the frustration of driving in London. I recently picked up some lads from Kings Cross Station and as I turned right onto Euston Road on our way to Piccadilly, a car drove alongside and the passenger began to scream, shout and wave her arms and adding a V sign! I couldn't understand what her problem was, but neither could I help but laugh. This obviously infuriated the female passenger who got out of the car at the next set of traffic lights and banged on my window. I couldn't understand what she was saying due to the fact that she wasn't speaking in English.

Now this is the really funny/strange part; the lights changed so I moved off as did the other car. My passengers were amazed at these events and when both the other car and my cab pulled up at the next set of red lights, I leaned out of my window and as the window of the car was open, I asked if they had left someone behind? This time the driver got out of his car, banged on his own bonnet and screamed something - I know not what! I then proceeded with our journey. It's a great life if you don't weaken...

Mike Son
DaC Special Projects

EATING HEAVEN AT THE BARBICAN CENTRE!

If you are on **Dial-a-Cab**, then no doubt you'll be aware that the **Barbican Centre** is Europe's largest multi-arts and conference venue, presenting a diverse range of art, music, theatre, dance, film and creative learning events. It is also home to the London Symphony Orchestra. But what you might not know is that a revolution is blowing through the Barbican Centre with the recent opening of two new dining spaces that completely upgrade the in-house eating experience for performance-goers, residents and anyone in or around the City.

The Barbican Foodhall is now offering an amazing selection of foods to buy or consume at the counter-top bars and the deli-tables. Guests can buy anything from an Italian ham and parmesan sandwich to shrimp pad Thai with grilled coconut relish. Upstairs, the Barbican Lounge will feature small plate menus based on dairy, meat, fish, fowl, vegetarian or pudding as well as gourmet bar snacks such as steamed endamame or pepperabica peppers stuffed with feta and Greek country cheeses. General Manager Nikki Woods told *Call Sign*:

"This is now a haven for foodies. The concept is to create a destination for people who have a genuine love of food. Our menu is filled with moreish small plates so guests no longer have to suffer food envy or make any difficult decisions. You can try a little bit of everything...and then just order a little bit more if you fancy!"

The gastronomic experience will be located on the lively waterside and begins on Level G with the Barbican Foodhall. Here you will be able to eat your way around the world in a spectacular street food market that is open seven days a week and overflowing with stimulating and surprising ingredients, deli-tables, counter-top service, a restaurant and even a book bank where you can grab a book to read whilst eating or having a coffee!

As you walk in, you'll find floor to ceiling displays of the finest produce – including succulent and juicy olives courtesy of Olives Et Al, organic oils from the world's premiere producers, award winning cheeses, chutneys, relishes and pastas. There is also smoked salmon from one of the most prestigious producers in the UK, Severn & Wye Smokery and luxury confectionery from 'best of British' sweetie inventors, Hope & Green.

Not enough? How about being tempted by an intriguing choice of food stalls selling Cornish pasties with Branston pickle, marjoram infused mackerel, fennel, glazed damsons and goats cheese pie and New Orleans shrimp étouffée. Visitors can either eat in or take away.

The restaurant seats 200 and is an ideal place to meet friends in an informal, buzzing atmosphere where resident chefs will conjure up a different menu every day, depending on what makes their taste buds tingle that morning! Prices start from £7 for a main course. If you are looking for something a little more formal, then head upstairs to the rather funky looking Barbican Lounge. Both the bar and restaurant walk out on to a stylish terrace area featuring seating pods interspersed with seasonal plants designed by three time RHS Chelsea Flower Show winner, Kate Gould. The terrace stretches along the Barbican lakeside, providing wonderful views of the complex itself and beyond to London old and new.

For those on the go, they also offer a *Dine & Dash* menu where they guarantee diners will be out of the door in 50 minutes or get their money back! If you have a little longer to spare, you could always spend some quality time at the Barbican Lounge bar, which will feature London's first Macaron Mixologist, where the legendary French delicacies are twinned with a range of new and traditional cocktails. There's an eating heaven at the Barbican Centre...



Eating Lake-side at the Barbican Centre

When some of my fellow drivers found out I was contributing to **Call Sign** with regular articles, I was ribbed about becoming another doom and gloom merchant! But the best comment came from **Stewart Jopling (T72)** who jumped on my RMT connections and asked whether the column was going to be called **View from the Crows Nest!** But these are just my views as a driver...

Light duty... or any duty

Each one of us could be subject to any number of health problems that could put both our short or long term livelihood into jeopardy. That does not mean we should be unemployable in the Transport for London industry, I believe it's time for light duty jobs for taxi drivers. The TfL group as a whole (buses, tubes etc), even policeman and fireman plus other established public servants - virtually all these industries have a system for looking after their own should any of them fall ill through a heart attack or any other incapacitating illness

Many of us sat our Knowledge appearances before such members of the Met Police. We have all met messengers and security door-men from our armed forces. Nowadays I believe that TfL should be employing from within the trade, as these people still have so much to offer - such as street marshals at major tourist attractions like Oxford Street, the Royal Park concerts, garden parties and any number of events in London.

I do not know too much about bus and tube routes or procedures and forms when my wallet is stolen or lost, but I'm sure other experienced persons do. Where we differ as self employed members of TfL is that we pay through our fees to subsidise and run the taxi industry, but unlike others we are not fortunate enough to enjoy free / reduced travel passes, sick and holiday pay, pensions and other such benefits. In fact we get nothing in return. You meet colleagues reduced to about £80 from the Social or having to rely on collections and fund raising within the trade.

I feel we as trade could be doing more to support our own. In this group I include TfL, radio circuits and trade groups. Our own radio circuits and trade groups boast of having marshals in attendance at some venues or functions, but we use healthy taxi drivers or trade reps who are already on a living wage; we get messages on our screens requesting assistance, only to be met by a fully fit working driver with his cab standing idle. Surely we could use these opportunities to help our own less fortunate drivers?

I recently tried to pick up at the *Love Box Summer Festival* in Victoria Park, only to be met by road closures and event staff manning the barriers with no experience of when, where and how to get people into a taxi, thereby restricting my access to work and income. With proper qualified taxi drivers / marshals working alongside local

LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE...

with Tom Quigley



Peoples of Windrush, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and Asians from Africa fleeing Kenya and Uganda. If I have left anyone out, I don't mean to offend or be politically correct as they all left their homes and families, often never to return or see them again. So how do we repay them for all the sacrifices they have made?

3.5million pensioners live below the poverty line

Go to www.ageuk.org.uk Once known as *Age Concern*, they disclose that there is a startling £5billion of entitlement (I will not call it benefit to belittle these proud people) that goes unclaimed to Senior Citizens. Among the reasons listed are that the system is too complicated through the lack of computer knowledge and form filling by this generation, many therefore do not know they are entitled to help or are too embarrassed to ask.

Then there are threats to restrict the hours of usage of Freedom passes on Public Transport. As an example, forecasts suggest an end to travel and swimming concessions they receive now thanks to the new ConDems cutback policy, which will mean that a grandparent enjoying taking 2 children under 16 for a bus ride and swim at a local swimming pool will see the cost rise from the current subsidised free to around £15. This policy will increase the deterioration in the health of both grandparents and children, burdening future higher economic costs on us all. It will also remove the wealth of knowledge and social life experiences that these encounters bring.

Recently there was an announcement in the national press by David Cameron on a crackdown on benefit cheats with credit agencies being employed as "bounty hunters" to claw back the suspected £5.2billion that is allegedly being cheated from the State. I am not saying that benefit fraud should not be clamped down on; though surely this government should use these credit agencies to ensure that the pensioners / grandparents get what they are entitled to.

So please go to the www.ageuk.org.uk Age UK website. It's a brilliant site and hopefully it can assist and ensure your family member or friend gets their entitlement. We are all workers and one day will be pensioners too who will want dignity and security in retirement...

Tom Quigley Y33

police and organisers, these closures could be reduced. The Olympics will need proper marshalling for us to get access to work.

I believe all trade organisations and TfL should work towards a proper system to establish a group of light duty marshals. We could then tender for event work and bring income back into the trade and provide some protection for us all.

Grandparents

As we come to a close of the traditional quiet summer period, much of our work came by way of the Arab community - even though Ramadan coming early this year shortened their stay. Another source was the pick-up of families at the many major tourist attractions being treated to a special day out by guess-who? So I feel that a thank-you is due to the unsung heroes of our country - grandparents! Be it day trips to the Zoo, Hamleys, London Eye or even spending their money in the local Pound Shop, this group of people have given up their time by looking after those they love. I won't say without a moan, but their often unpaid contribution to society should not be overlooked as they allow parents to work while as grandparents they play a massive part in keeping the economy moving - more often than not spending their meagre pensions or limited savings in doing so.

Here in London as we remembered the 70th anniversary of the **Battle of Britain**, the majority of these grandparents have probably suffered great personal hardship, such as losing family members in the war; they may well have been Evacuees, endured the Blitz or been part of the great exoduses of religious and racial communities forced to flee from their homeland for safety and economic reasons and then serving the Allies and helping in the war effort. Later still, the

In September 2008, Dial-a-Cab driver **Wayne Garrett (D64)** told **Call Sign** that a regular Westminster TaxiCard passenger he had picked up many times, had reached the grand age of 100. He also told us that **Eileen Pattison** had an amazing past and was the Goddaughter of Hollywood legend **Fred Astaire**!

Eileen had phoned for a DaC taxi for years and was even on first name terms with **Irene Russ**, the Westminster telephonist at the time but of course they had never met. So **Call Sign** asked those upstairs at DaC House whether it would be possible for them to organise something in the form of a celebration for Eileen and thanks to the Board's PA, **Jacqui Chart**, a return taxi and reception was held. Following it, Eileen told us that the day had been one of the happiest she could ever remember.

Sadly, Eileen recently passed away aged 102. Wayne went to her funeral where the small congregation – she had outlived most of her friends and family except for her 82 year old daughter who lived in France and had lost touch with her mother.

The feeling wasn't so much of sadness," said Wayne, "it was more a celebration of an amazing life."

Much of that life came during her time as actress **Eileen May**. "For some reason, producers didn't like the name I was born with, so Pattison became May and suddenly everything was wonderful," she told **Call Sign** during her 2008 visit.

Her parents had also been on the stage and it was they who had the friendship with Fred Astaire. When Eileen's mother fell pregnant,

DaC's Oldest Passenger dies at 102



Keith Cain welcomes Eileen to DaC House in 2008

Inset pic On the London Stage as Prince Charming in a 1936 version of Cinderella

long and healthy life, she told us: "Don't drink, don't smoke, go to bed early and mind your own business!" She also added that "...too much booze and sex doesn't help!"

Wayne went on to tell us that although for her last few months he had heard little from Eileen, prior to that she often phoned him direct – sometimes booking him two weeks in advance – just to go to the hairdresser or doctor. Wayne would never let her down.

"Incredibly," he added, "she rarely used her TaxiCard anymore because

she felt she was taking advantage and that it could allow others worse off than her to get one! However, she was very well organised and rarely forgot to book me in plenty of time, even though her journeys were usually locals!"

Sadly, in her 102nd year, her memory began deteriorating and she became ever more forgetful. Eileen was buried in the grave of her husband Richard, who had been a former Battle of Britain pilot. She died in her sleep of old age – a star to the end.

the Hollywood superstar asked if he could be Godfather to their expected baby – Eileen. It was a natural progression for Eileen to fit into her parent's theatrical lifestyle and during her many years on the stage, she either appeared with or became friends with the likes of **Ginger Rogers, Julie Andrews, Gene Kelly, Joan Crawford, Dora Bryan, Norman Wisdom** and of course **Fred Astaire** in addition many other household names from the theatre and movie industries.

When **Call Sign** asked for her secret to a

CARLA RICE GOES FOR A WALK... and helps to raise £50,000!

Call Sign is probably the biggest regular supporter of charities in the cab trade. Most **Dial-a-Cab** drivers that come to our office and tell us about a sponsorship they intend doing for a worthy cause will end up with a donation from this magazine. But because we support so many drivers and staff throughout the year, we usually have to say sorry but no to those who are not on DaC. But we do make some exceptions... On this occasion it was for the daughter of Chairman **Brian Rice** - and not because saying no might have caused ongoing problems! But we know Carla Rice well and when she came to us seeking sponsorship for the **Midnight Memories Ladies Only Walk** in aid of **St Raphaels Hospice**, we couldn't say anything other than yes after hearing her story.

Carla, her cousins and aunts - 15 in total - met at St Raphaels Hospice at 11.00pm on Saturday 15th September, joining 450 walkers in making the event the biggest the hospice has ever organised. Together they set off to walk the 5-mile course.

Carla told us that although the funds went to the hospice, the family also did the walk in memory of her Uncle Christopher who passed away on Sunday 15th August at St Raphaels:

"The care they gave to him and my family in his final hours was amazing and they do that 365 days a year, caring for around 900 people during that time. They need £4 million a year to run the hospice but are only given £1 million by the NHS, hence these events are so important in raising the money they need to continue their fantastic work."

According to St Raphaels, the group raised in excess of £50,000 that evening.



The Rice family at the end of the walk
Inset: Carla



"Saturday 31st January 2009 was the worst day of my life. I had received news that my son Joseph had been killed in a freak accident at his local park. He was just 15 years old.

At the time, Joe had been training for the London to Brighton bike ride in the hope of raising enough money to work in an orphanage in Borneo for one month. A few weeks after the accident, I received a phone call from a friend who suggested I attempt the London to Brighton bike ride in memory of Joseph; it was a challenge I could hardly refuse.

The first few weeks of training were very tough, but gradually I became more confident on the bike and realised that cycling was a good way to clear my head following the tragedy. Very soon, many friends were offering to join me on the ride, so I entered a team called *Let's Go For Joe*.

On 21st June last year we set off on the 52-mile ride to Brighton. The whole day was a truly unforgettable experience with dozens of friends and family gathering at the finishing line to greet us. I knew then that the *Let's go For Joe* team ride to Brighton would become an annual event and so it proved, with 18 other riders joining me for this year's event. Since the accident, the team have raised almost £9,000 for various charities.

Pedal to Paris 2010...

In May of this year, my cycling partner Greg said that he was entering the British Legion's *Pedal to Paris* cycle ride and suggested that I join him. I must confess to being quite fit for my age after 18 months of pounding the roads on 2 wheels, but was concerned that a 300-mile bike ride to Paris could be a bridge too far. But deep down I knew how proud Joseph would have been of his dad if I could get to the Arc de Triomphe. Reluctantly, I agreed to join Greg...

Thursday 2nd September

We arrived at Greenwich Park at 6.30am in my taxi driven by my dad (ex-E46). At 8am all 276 riders set off for Dover. The weather was beautiful and the atmosphere was electric as a police escort accompanied us all the way to the British Legion town of Aylesford in Kent (30 miles) where we stopped for brunch. Everyone seemed in remarkably good spirits and we were soon back on the bikes heading for our next destination - the town of Sellindge in Kent (65 miles) where we would enjoy a well earned lunch. So far the ride had been quite tough, but I knew the real test was waiting just a few miles further on - the dreaded Capel-le Ferrie hill in Folkestone. On our arrival in the seaside town, the atmosphere became slightly subdued knowing what lay in wait until suddenly, there in front of us was the dreaded hill!

I've attempted many hills over the past 18 months, but Capel-le-Ferrie was as tough as it gets. Somehow I managed to reach the top where I was rewarded with the most welcoming pint I've ever drunk in my life! Following the hill, we had the luxury of an 8-mile flat ride into Dover (80 miles), boarded the ferry to Calais where we checked into our hotel and enjoyed dinner and a few drinks before retiring to bed in preparation for day two.

On 2nd September, DaC driver John Biddle (D73) set off on a 300-mile bike ride from London to Paris. This is his story of an unforgettable 4 days and the events leading up to it...

MY RIDE FOR JOE...



John and friends arrive at the Arc de Triomphe
Inset: John's son Joe who was killed in a tragic accident



Friday 3rd September - Calais to Abbeville (80 miles)

The *Pedal to Paris* bike ride is now in its 15th year. Each day begins with a service and the laying of wreaths at the town's War Memorial by the British Legion president, Sir John Kiszley together with the local mayor. It is always a very moving occasion.

Cycling in France was something I was really looking forward to because for the whole duration we were to be accompanied by police outriders and told that we needn't stop at any junctions or red lights - a bit like London cyclists do anyway!

Day 2 proved to be the hardest one of all with temperatures in the 80s and anyone who tells you that France is relatively flat should try the Calais to Abbeville experience! It was the most physically demanding day of my life and after 78 miles I was totally exhausted. Paris still seemed an awfully long way away.

Saturday 4th September - Abbeville to Beauvais (75 miles)

Day 3 began with the laying of wreaths at the town's War Memorial. Again we were blessed with fine weather. Greg thought that we'd ridden well so far and suggested we join the faster group category and reluctantly I agreed, but soon realised that the pace of that group was much faster, although I did feel quite comfortable at this level.

Today was a very special part of the ride as we stopped at the small town of Auchy la Montagne, where we were given the most fantastic welcome by villagers who still remember that their town was liberated by the British in WW2 and remain eternally grateful. They laid on the most splendid banquet and a good time was had by all. We then cycled into Beauvais and attended a very moving memor-

ial remembering those who had fallen during the war.

Sunday 5th September - Beauvais to Paris (65 miles)

The big day was finally with us! We had cycled 235 miles with just 65 to go. The atmosphere was amazing, but I was made aware that the last day was always a very testing ride and so it proved. With temperatures soaring, the hills didn't seem to be getting any easier but there was no way that I wasn't going to get to the Arc de Triomphe.

One hour from Paris all the riders regrouped so that we could all ride into Paris together. The Royal British Legion *Pedal to Paris* event is held in such high regard, that it's the only cycle ride apart from *Le Tour de France* where roads are closed leading to the Arc de Triomphe.

The final mile leading up to the Arc is a memory that will stay with me forever. The emotion I felt was indescribable and I know that looking down on me - feeling very proud of his old dad - was another great friend...my Joe."

John Biddle (D73)

*The Royal British Legion is hoping to raise £500,000 from the ride. This will help fund their **Battle Back** scheme - a sports rehabilitation centre that helps the long road to recovery of all our seriously wounded service personnel.*

*If anyone would like to make a donation, please leave it at the Dial-a-Cab Driver Reception office c/o of Alan Fisher or **Call Sign**. Cheques should be made to The Royal British Legion and if you prefer, can be posted to:*

Mr Dan Solley, The Royal British Legion, 199 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1AA
*Write **Pedal To Paris / John Biddle** on back of the cheque and thank you for your generosity.*

"I've got 'ologies so that makes me a scientist," Alan Jacobs (P92) told **Call Sign** recently, referring back several years to the series of British Telecom adverts featuring actress Maureen Lipman conversing on the phone as her grandson's school exam results were being discussed!

Readers will recall Alan as having recently competed in the Isle of Wight *Round the Island* yacht race while nursing a broken hip, yet still managing with his team to achieve an incredible 8th place out of the 1800 entrants.

This time though, Alan's news wasn't so upbeat. He told **Call Sign** that his aching hip wasn't healing as quickly as it should have and further tests showed he had cancerous cells in the joint that were thought to have spread from a tumour on his bladder.

"I'm under three different medical disciplines," he said, "Oncology, Urology and Haematology, so you could say I'm a scientist," his cheery voice explained down a crackling telephone line.

"I was out working when my wife called to

Alan the Scientist?



Alan's hip wasn't recovering due to the discovery of cancerous cells

say my doctor had asked to speak to me and was horrified to learn I was out on the cab in case I accidentally knocked my hip and caused even more problems than I'd already got," he continued.

"The doc was adamant that I return home,

so that's where I am now awaiting further medical attention," he added.

And the future? "I will have the tumour removed and continue with my treatment, but I'm likely to be out of action for a while. I was due to retire in October, but I've brought that forward so that I can concentrate on getting over this present problem. The doctors tell me I should be taking life a bit easier, so I think I'll just focus on my other job of delivering \$2m yachts to their owners around the world," he said with a huge laugh, "I can see me laying out on a sun deck in my shorts and Ray-Ban sun glasses on an ocean somewhere, soaking up the sun while watching the dolphins swim alongside the boat!"

Sounds a reasonable way of making a living to us! In the meantime, all at DaC and **Call Sign** wish Alan a speedy recovery to health.

© Call Sign Magazine MMX

I say - that's a big one!

When **Call Sign** monthly contributor Tom Quigley (Y33) asked us if we were interested in his whopper because it had now won a prize, we weren't sure whether to agree or not! But when Tom assured us that he was referring to his giant prize marrow, we relented.

Tom's story began in Chingford at the yearly show of the *Beechwood Allotment Site* with awards on offer for the best vegetables and flowers. Although the event takes place amidst much humour, winning is still the main aim.

Last year was Tom's first in the competition, but he successfully took the first prize for *Largest Marrow*. So this year the pressure was really on him to produce another beauty. However, he'd started the season a little late due to the taxi driver's perennial problems involving backache, in addition to squirrels scoffing his early seeds! Tom then went on to describe how he prepared this year's entry, beginning by saying that his winning seeds had come from last year's winning whopper – adding that the larger seed enhances the chances of a bigger produce. He continued:

"With the seeds growing in a good quality shop-bought compost, they were then potted in a large cold frame prepared with last season's rotted manure and recycled compost, protecting them from late frost until mid-May."

At that point, **Call Sign's** reporter cancelled his lunch appointment while Tom went on to say that regular watering was needed, plus a once-a-week liquid feed of home made Comfrey plant mix at the flowering stage. His advice was to put Comfrey leaves in a bucket full of water, stir, cover and leave for a couple of weeks. A capful in a full watering can is then sufficient. Wait until you get a couple of marrows growing, cut off the smallest and trim any other growth so that the energy goes into the remaining marrow.

Following the early warm weather and regular watering, Tom's soon-to-be-whopper developed. As the date got closer, Tom admitted that he regularly spied on the opposition plots and they returned the compliment by spying on Tom's beauty. However, everyone knows they are being spied on so, according to Tom, most will hide the best crop until show day. And that's what Tom did with big Bertha – his huge marrow. On the actual show day, he cleaned Bertha with sunflower oil and took a final measurement of his beauty. It was an impressive 30 inches and as Tom then gently laid Bertha into a wheelbarrow – along with 3 similar but slightly smaller crops – he knew by the faces of other competitors as he walked to the show that his hard work was going to provide him with another victory! A few hours later and Tom accepted the award of a certificate and medal with immense pride with the sound of "what a big one" ringing in his ears!



Tom with his whopper!

LTFUC COVENT GARDEN FUN DAY!

Come and support our 'Fun Day' at the
COVENT GARDEN PIAZZA
Sunday 3rd October 2010

Tombola stall with many wonderful prizes
'Furry Tail Folk' fun costume characters, Clown Jolly Jack,
Miss Ballooniverse, Vintage Taxi, Police Car and Bike
on hand for the children - plus much more...

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE

Victoria Station Upgrade

From Monday 27 September, Terminus Place will be closed for a period of approximately nine weeks as part of the London Underground Victoria Station upgrade works.

This will result in taxis leaving the front of Victoria Station not being able to turn right onto Buckingham Palace Road and instead having to head south along Buckingham Palace Road at the start of the journey. Therefore some taxi journeys, particularly those to destinations north of Victoria Station, will be longer than usual. During this period, Wilton Road will remain temporarily closed to general traffic.

Taxis departing from the rank at the back of the station (Rail Air Deck), immediately adjacent to the pedestrian exit will be able to depart as usual without being affected by the diversions.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused and if you have any queries regarding this please contact us by email at tph.research@tfl.gov.uk.

London Taxi and Private Hire (tfl.gov.uk/tph)

He's driven his taxi around the world, but Tony Arnold told Call Sign: **THE TWO MILE TRIPS ARE THE WORST!**

Call Sign has followed **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Tony Arnold (F03)** around the world as he carries on his life's passion of teaching the world how real taxi drivers drive! Although Tony has been with the Society for over 25 years, our first realisation of what Tony loves to do was in 2002 when after having his TX1 flown to the Chinese capital of Beijing, he drove it all the way back to Trafalgar Square with two Chinese students as passengers!

Over the following years, he has driven his taxi throughout Europe, Africa and even went to Australia in an attempt to demonstrate what real taxi drivers are about.

But it was barely a few weeks ago when Tony picked up Pakistan High Commissioner Wajid Shamsul Hasan at the Royal Garden Hotel and was told to drive to the "office" in Lowndes Square. Normally it would be just another trip, but this trip came right in the middle of allegations concerning the Pakistan cricketers being involved in spot betting and match fixing.

"The press were like vultures," Tony told **Call Sign**, "they thought nothing of banging my TX4 on its roof just to get me to stop while they took photos of this poor High Commissioner who had probably never



The High Commissioner leaves Tony's cab while a security man tries to stop the Pressmen getting to him. Inset: Tony and TX1 in China in 2002

held a bat in his life! And just to rub it in, **Sky News** caught the incident on video and every 30 minutes you could see my taxi surrounded by cameramen who didn't seem to care if they caused damage - so long as they got their photo! At least the Commissioner had the decency to apologise, because the cameramen certainly didn't."



They then followed him to Lowndes Square where he went through the same routine again.

On his way back from China, Tony and his cab were held at the China-Russian border crossing of Manzhouli, where guards refused to let him through unless he coughed up a huge ransom! Then a restaurant with a sign saying *Pizza Hut*, offered to cook him and his passengers a freshly caught dog!

"At least they didn't act like lunatics," Tony said with a smile as he went to look for his next job...

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

Black Cab Heritage Tours are offering DaC subscribers a fantastic incentive to refer any clients you pick up in your working day who might like a Sightseeing Tour of London. Send us a job and we will reward you with £30 in folding gear - it's as easy as that!

Our qualified Driver Guide will show your punters ALL the main sights in London, whilst they enjoy a factual running commentary that is fun and entertaining! Their tour lasts up to 3 hours and we collect and drop them back at their hotel or any other point of interest or preference. The cost is £155.

So, turn a 5-minute chat into a win bonus - instruct your tourists to call our office on **01707 696034** or **07766 332938** with your name and call sign, then you call our office to claim your commission and we will do the rest!

This is how the *Travel World News* Editor reported matters to their American audience recently - proving that we are starting to make inroads:

"Hackney Heritage LLC, a subsidiary of Black Cab Heritage Tours (London) has announced the opening of its United States-based business. Through its online site, the company will be offering unique theme-based and highly personalized tours within London and surrounding areas. Additionally, the new company will be able to offer a full range of ground transportation services and complimentary offerings such as river cruises, London theater tickets and top restaurant dinner reservations.

Hackney Heritage is focused on providing a totally unique set of products and services to those American tourists who want the



"true London experience." Each tour is undertaken in a traditional London Black

Cab, where the driver is also an accredited City of London Tour Guide. Capitalizing upon the success of its parent, Hackney Heritage will offer tours such as the very popular Harry Potter tour, the "Classic" London tour and the "Royal London" tour. This will be supported by an increasing number of very focused and unique offerings. Each tour can accommodate up to five passengers, which makes the whole experience very personal and highly interactive."

Source - <http://travelworldnews.com/>
A bientot...

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

CHIPPED WINDSCREEN?

Just go to DaC at Roman Way

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

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

**More info at www.autostonechiprepairltd.com
Or phone at 0800 612 7950**

In the *January Call Sign*, DaC driver **Eddie Lambert (V27)** described a campaign against private hire companies that advertised themselves as taxis. You only had to look at *Yellow Pages* or *Thompsons* to wonder how they actually got away with it! If you search through *Google*, the situation is even worse with many PH companies gathered under *Taxi* headings.

All PH operators know that the advertising of their services using the word *Taxi* or *Cab* is clearly not permitted under the conditions set out in section 31 of the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998.

But Eddie gave an example of how the Act was being trampled over by showing an ad put out by a PH company situated close to DaC. In it, **Liberty Car's** proudly proclaimed that they were licensed by the PCO / TfL. However, the word *Taxi* was included in the ad even though they are NOT a taxi company. Eddie's article went on to add that Liberty Cars were by no means the only guilty company.

The article also suggested that if no one did anything, these companies would encroach into real taxi domain and rather sarcastically added that either the PCO didn't have the time, or they were too busy making sure we didn't have any unauthorised signs on our taxis! We added that the only sign of hope we could see was the then new *Director of Taxis and Private Hire*, **John Mason**, who was showing signs of wanting to be fair and that *Call Sign* hoped he would pick up the cudgels and take action against those firms.

Well it seems he has set the ball rolling with an email that has gone out to most of the major PH companies. In it, under the heading Advertising – Private Hire Services, Mr Mason says:

"Despite repeated reminders and clear guid-

LTPH warning to Private Hire...

You're Not Taxis!



One of the PH adverts using the word 'Taxi' from Eddie Lamberts' article

ance and advice issued by Transport for London, we continue to receive a high level of complaints, information and evidence showing that some licensed London private hire operators continue to advertise their services using the words 'taxi' or 'cab'.

*Again we would like to inform all operators that the advertising of their services in this manner is clearly **not permitted** under the*

conditions set out in section 31 of the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998. This section clearly states that no private hire advertising can use the words 'taxi', 'taxis', 'cab' or 'cabs', or words closely resembling any of those words, and that any person who contravenes this is guilty of an offence.

TfL will always take appropriate action against those licensed operators who commit such an offence, but such activity is very time consuming, is not a cost effective use of our resources and has a direct adverse impact on the private hire licence fee.

Operators are therefore reminded that they are not permitted under any circumstances to use the terms 'cab(s)', 'taxi(s)' or any words closely resembling these terms in advertisements and that they must comply with section 31 of the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998.

Failure to do so can result in the revocation of your operator license and / or legal action.

I thank you for your co-operation with this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or queries regarding the above."

Obviously the section that describes the process of catching rogue companies as very time consuming and not a cost effective use of TfL resources is a bit concerning, so Dial-a-Cab drivers can assist by reporting persistent perpetrators to LTPH. In fact, if you have any suggestions that you feel can help to improve our taxi system, send it direct to John Mason at johnmason@tfl.gov.uk.

In memory of his wife Anita, Howard and his three children organised...

The Black & Green Gala Ball

When **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Howard Flavin (A18)** told *Call Sign* about the tragic death from kidney cancer of his beloved wife Anita, he also said that it had been her aim after being diagnosed with the illness to present a gala ball that would raise funds and awareness about kidney cancer.

Sadly Anita never made it to the ball and died in October 2009 at the young age of just 50. But Howard and his three children were determined to make Anita's dream come true and on Saturday 11 September at the Wattham Abbey Marriot Hotel, the Black and Green Ball took place. While it continued Anita's desire for awareness of the disease, there was no sadness and she would have been thrilled to know how much enjoyment and pride the sold out ball gave to Howard, his children and to all the guests who quite literally had a ball.

The substantial funds raised went to **The James Whale Fund for Kidney Cancer**. This charity seeks to help reduce the harm caused by kidney cancer through increased knowledge and awareness, providing patient information and by supporting research into the causes, prevention and treatment of the disease.

Dial-a-Cab were proud to have a table there and all ten guests on it told *Call Sign* that the event had been brilliant, adding that Howard and his children should be proud at how it went.



The DaC table at the Black & Green ball



Keith Reading
Professional Toastmaster
Master of Ceremonies

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10% discount for DaC drivers

Fellow of the Guild of Professional Toastmasters

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 January 1984 Call Sign and gives an obituary and welcome insight into probably ODRTS' least known Chairman – Eli 'Trixie' Solomons...

Eli Solomons - known as Trixie A TRIBUTE

I suppose that a great number of you reading this will ask who was Eli 'Trixie' Solomons, but I would reply that he was one of a group of dedicated cab drivers that helped build this circuit. How he got his nickname I don't really know, but he was a humorous man who could take a joke and be part of one.

Many years ago when he became an ODRTS member, he and a few other radio drivers used to meet for tea in what was then an Express Dairy at the top of Great Portland Street. In those days there was a cab shelter opposite and drivers would leave their cabs on the rank. On this particular day, Trixie and a few other drivers were talking about the amount of work coming over the air. The fourth tea drinker was Bert Frankford, a non-radio man. Trixie looked over to the cabs and said: "Bert, look at those aerials vibrating with all the jobs being broadcast!" Bert immediately left the shop and made for Pentonville Road where he signed up. He never did regret his decision and the yarn always made him grin whenever it was repeated.

Trixie never minded being on the receiving end either. As an instance, years ago it was common to put on a station rank and spend up to an hour or so there and on this particular occasion Trixie put on at Euston. Cabbing then was not the hard grind it is today and you could leave your cab, have a walk along the rank and always find someone to chat to. But while Trixie was away from his cab, a couple of jokers wired a kipper to his exhaust manifold. In came the awaited train and off he went to Waterloo. You can imagine the stink as he drove down Kingsway and what the passengers must have thought! Trixie drove on until he reached the destination. At Waterloo he noticed smoke coming from under his bonnet and taking a look, Trixie found the incinerated remains of a kipper. But the joke was

really on the jokers, for Trixie had no sense of smell and wouldn't have known without the smoke!

He was also a generous man. If ever a subscriber happened to bring his child to the office and by chance met Trixie, he would always put his hand in his pocket and find a piece of silver for him or her. He never had children of his own, but made friends with young and old alike. I remember one regular job we had taking a little girl to school from Upper Grosvenor Street. I once picked this little child up and she asked me where Uncle Trixie was? I understand that while she was growing up, he never forgot to send her a birthday card.

In 1956 he became a Board member, that's when I got to know him better. Across the Board table we would often have heated disagreements. They were exciting days - and nights! Most members of the Board in those days were daymen, so our fortnightly unpaid meetings started at 7pm and would go on until the early hours of the following morning on many occasions. Yet despite our battles, we always remained firm friends. In 1958 he became Treasurer, a tough but fair negotiator with our Pye radio suppliers, someone who was so quick with figures you would have thought that he had worked for a bookie at some time in his life. He earned the respect of the Directors of Pye, who I know kept in touch with him after he finally left the Board. Between 1959 and 1962 he deservedly became ODRTS Chairman.

I last saw him when he was recovering from an illness. We spoke of the early days on the radio, laughed and joked, mentioned old subscribers good and bad, our successes and our failures. I remember something he often used to say: "A man who never made a mistake never made anything." He made a few, we all did, but he helped to create a radio circuit that was the envy of the cab trade.

Frank Duncan (D02)



Book Review Book Review Book Review Book Review

TAXI!

Never a dull day – A cabbie remembers (Douglas J. Findlay)

Well stone the crows, wotcha cock and blimey guv... a taxi book that isn't written by Alf Townsend! But, **Taxi! Never a dull day – a cabbie remembers** (www.Berlinn.co.uk £8.99) is surprisingly entertaining to a London cabbie, even though the action involves an Edinburgh one in his licensed black taxi.

This is the second book by author, *Douglas J. Findlay*, and while the first is probably unknown down here in the south, this one, which recounts his taxi driving days in the 1950s, is certainly entertaining to another cab driver and probably humorous enough for the public at large to have a go at!

The book is really a collection of short stories, each built around a different passenger – and let's face it, we all enjoy the occasional outrageous story about life in the taxi... don't we! Amongst the tales that Douglas tells so well are stories about his meeting with the young dental nurse and where the set of L-plates were found! Then there's the occasional meeting with Charlie the Gangster and the funny story about Mr Goldbaum and the Rokoko vacuum cleaner among many other taxi tales told from the front seat of his Austin FX3!

If you are looking for a deep novel to get your teeth into, then *Taxi! Never a dull day – a cabbie remembers* won't fulfil that need, but if something rather more light hearted that you can pick up and put down as and when you want to is what grabs you, then this book may well be what you are looking for. It certainly put a smile onto my taxi face!



Ron Yarborough
Call Sign online

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Call Sign would like to congratulate the Mayor of London, his deputies and of course all those who were previously at the rather pokey Public Carriage Office, but who now reside at the much swishier address of Palestra, under the much grander moniker of London Taxi & Private Hire.

Congratulations? Yes, because their plan to integrate the taxi and minicab systems has taken far less time than anyone could have imagined. It was already blatantly obvious when Ken Livingstone left office that the two sides of this industry would eventually become one and for all Boris' words of comfort that the licensed taxi arena would stay as the finest service of its kind in the world, those words came because it was election time. Boris was everywhere then, right down to having a cuppa at the former Royal Oak. Trying to get a few words from him now is almost akin to asking him for his bank account details!

Call Sign Comment

The End is Nigh!



Parked beneath the 'pre-booked taxis only' sign, this minicab driver believed that he was a taxi driver!

was that we are now all equal and that he was told he could wait in taxi bays. Worse still, he was probably right.

I got my camera and took a few snaps and hoped against hope that out of the fast-moving rank of taxis

Yes, the Mayor is proud of London's taxis and anyone who has seen his brilliantly funny *Take me there Boris* website advertising ExCel at <http://takemethereboris.co.uk/> will be able to see through the fun. However, the writing has been on the wall for some time – "they" want a one-tier taxi and private hire system.

By the time you read this, John Griffin's court case may be over and we'll know whether his cars can use bus lanes including the M4 and even whether they should be able to pick up in the street! Let's face it, had we as taxi drivers decided to ignore the Bishopsgate northbound bus lane signs that forbid taxis, we'd have had our collars felt within days, yet Addison Lee cars use the M4 bus and taxi lane and no one lifts a finger.

Last month I told of an incident I had with an AL car using the M4 lane when I slowed down in front of him and how all I had from fellow taxi drivers was criticism for delaying them! Recently I was at the Paddington pre-booked taxi rank and pulled up behind a minicab that was waiting for a passenger. I told him that he was on a taxi waiting area and pointed out the sign. He could not have cared less and we ended up arguing. His claim

going towards the large queue of passengers, one or two would come to show their support. A few called out apparent words of support, but were afraid of missing out on a job. In the end I just got back into my cab and waited for my passenger.

Of course not everyone is like that. There are lots of drivers out there who care as much as I do and would undoubtedly have stopped, but drivers such as Steve McNamara, John Pace and DaC's *Nobu* heroine Natalia Shalom (A34) and others of that ilk are no longer in the majority and while there will always be a taxi service, so far as being the best in the world is concerned, that will not be for too many more years because it will soon be totally pointless doing the Knowledge.

So as I said at the beginning, congratulations to the Mayor of London, his deputies and the PCO / London Taxi & Private Hire. You have finally achieved your aim of a one-tier system with no need for a Knowledge of London. The end is nigh...

Alan Fisher

Editor, Call Sign Magazine

ALL CHANGE?

Call Sign has had a request from Dial-a-Cab's **Roman Way** depot to repeat some advice we published a while ago that could save you a trip to N7. If you have recently changed the make of your taximeter, the existing electronic interface may not be compatible with that particular meter and will not therefore transfer the meter readings to your DaC terminal. Different makes of meter require a compatible electronic interface, as a result you might end up losing money. To check for meter/interface compatibility, they advise the following checks:

Do not *sign on* to the system but switch the fare meter on into the *hired* mode as if you were completing a street trip. Then put the meter into the *stopped* mode and the terminal should automatically print out the metered fare. If it does, all is well and you can go to work. If the terminal printer does not print out the fare, the fare meter is not talking to the terminal because there is incompatibility between the two, so don't go to work, go to Roman Way!

Alternatively, *sign on* to the system as normal with your badge number, put the meter into *hired* mode and then into *stopped*. The MDT will now show a *CLJ form* and ask if you want to print a receipt. Press yes and you should get a print-out. Try this several times for confirmation. If all is well, go to work! If not, go to Roman way!

If you have any questions call Roman Way directly on 020 7700 4443.



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Mailshot

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

Renting taxis on

DaC?

Hi Alan

Just a quick note about rental taxis. I am aware that the only way to rent a taxi while on Dial-a-Cab is from another driver, but have DaC looked at changing this rule? The reason I ask is because I have spoken to many drivers who would like to rent, but who also want to stay on DaC. I have been trying to rent a Mercedes Vito on a long-term rental, but nobody on DaC has one available to rent. Therefore the only remaining option is for me to buy one, but £37K is a lot of dough if after 6 months I don't like it! I currently rent my TX4 and having worked both days and nights, I can easily say that my taxi is cleaner than many owner-driven taxis. Would the Board look at local garages to rent to DaC drivers, ie like M&O and KPM? With the cost of running a new cab increasing every year, many drivers are looking to rent. At least they'd know the taxis would be newer and cleaner!
Mike Leo (Z09)

Brian Rice responds: I take your point Mike, but our name is ODRTS (Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Service). As you correctly suggest, the only way forward for you is to have a rule change voted on by members. Unfortunately, as you are a journeyman you cannot advocate this rule change, only members can do that. I must confess that as a Board we would not propose this rule change, as I know from experience how very difficult it is to keep track of our equipment whilst on a garage cab.

So Mike, the only thing you can do is get some friends who are members to propose the rule change you are suggesting. I wish you well...

Powerpill

Dear Alan,

Do you know if Powerpill is still in operation? I have tried their landline and mobile numbers without any success.

Laurence Kelvin (W88)

Hi Laurence, yes, Powerpill are still operating with many DaC drivers using it for their taxis. Extra mileage? I get between 1 and 2 miles extra per litre, but I get it more because of the increased performance and for the way it cuts down on smoke. You can contact Chris Hayball on 01246 856 153 or 07737 956 298, however because he is a one-man band, if he isn't at home then the phone won't be answered! His mobile usually works though or far easier, you can buy from the website at www.powerpillonline.com ...Ed

Cash numbers?

I have noticed that there has been a bit of chat about whether our cabs should all carry the cash phone line number. I had reason to change my cab very recently and had the new sherbet fitted out with DaC radio equipment and door decals. Due to other commitments at the time, I was unable to take the cab to Roman Way personally to have this done and arranged for someone else to do it for me. When I got cab back, I noticed it did not have the cash line number on it. I have no problem with having the number on and had I been contacted to ask if I wanted them on or not, I would have said yes to putting them on.

Perhaps Roman Way should ask all drivers who go there for whatever reason if they are not carrying the number, whether they had any objection to them being put on. No pressure, just a simple question with a yes or no answer.

Eddie Lambert (V37)

DaC's Roman Way Manager, Dana Thananjeyan, replies: It is a shame that Eddie was unable to attend Roman Way himself, because he would have been able, at first hand, to see for himself that we do indeed as and when they visit our Depot, offer the fitting of the 'Cash Number' logos to drivers who do not have them displayed.

As he feels so strongly, may I respectfully suggest that he could have instructed his agent for us to fit the 'Cash Number' logo at the same time as we fitted the mandatory door logos when we installed the DaC equipment into his taxi? Alternatively, he could have telephoned us prior to his fitting date and we would have happily affixed them with the same care we take over the door logos, ensuring they are level and bubble free, projecting a professional image of our Company.

Displaying the Cash Number logo is a voluntary choice the drivers make or decline and as Eddie rightly points out, it is not for us to 'pressure' anybody to have them, but we will happily fit them should any driver wish to have them attached.

Daily Mirror and Addison Lee

Hi Alan

I guess you saw the *Daily Mirror* of September 9. My mum gave it to me and it says that Addy Lee made £83 million last year. Not bad for a recession! However, I think I would sooner drive a double decker bus than work for them!

Jon Robinson (E88)

For those that didn't see it, *Daily Mirror* undercover investigators Andrew Penman and Nick Sommerlad wrote the article. They were questioning exactly how self-employed John Griffin's fleet of drivers actually are? The newspaper

claimed the drivers couldn't use their own vehicles but had to hire them through Addison Lee at £260 a week – yes that's per week and not month! Added to that were weekly additions of £38 for insurance and £12.50 for car washes. Penman and Sommerlad estimated that after paying for fuel, Addison Lee drivers begin the week around £350 down and that the only way to make a profit after that was by working very long hours. According to the *Mirror* duo, many work at least 60 – sometimes 70 – hours a week over six or even seven days, quoting one driver as saying that if he worked five normal eight-hour days, he could end up losing and wondered how could you be self-employed working round the clock for one boss? The article added that drivers couldn't select their own hours or fix their own prices even for cash trips. The bottom line was left at how could that be classified as being self-employed? According to AL boss's son Liam, drivers don't rent their cabs or pay for insurance to Addison Lee – they pay it to John Griffin's company, Eventech, who are conveniently based in the same building! Call Sign's bottom line is that perhaps it isn't so surprising to watch them touting at night and that perhaps, instead of complaining about them, we should have a whip-round to help them out!

And by the way Jon, I drove a double decker RTL and then a Routemaster for 6 years between 1963 and 1969 before going on the Knowledge and I really enjoyed it...Ed

Minicabs and the M4 bus lane

Hi Al

I've just used the M4 taxi and bus lane and there were more minicabs than taxis in it! I thought about taking some registration numbers, but what would be the point? No one at TfL seems to give a monkeys...

Kevin Went (N19)

The problem as I see it is that if the future court case TfL constantly talk about decides that minicabs can no longer use the lane, private hire would by then probably appeal quoting grandfather rights! I believe that TfL do really care, I just think they are scared of getting involved in expensive legalities. I also think my battle described by Ron Yarborough in the September issue headed *The Editor, The M4 and Addison Lee*, probably said it all. When I tried to get a following AL cab out of the M4 bus



Mailshot

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

lane by slowing down, all I got from following taxis was abuse that I'd held them up as well ...Ed

Euro 5?

Hi Alan

Could you give your best technical advice and please explain the difference between Euro 4 and Euro 5 for new cabs from next year and if there are any systems to buy?

Gerry Mulcahy W78

Call Sign doesn't claim to be the What Car of the taxi business, but we've done our best to shed some light onto the situation. The article is elsewhere in this issue ...Ed

Terry's Vito v Terry's TX2

Hi Alan,

Having just bought a Vito, I'd like to give my view. Seven is my lucky number. The seventh cab I have bought over 30 years driving is a Vito, so I have some experience of taxis. I am not going to tell you how good it is, the three-pointed star speaks for its self. I'd just like to tell you what I miss about my last cab, a TX2. I miss the cramped space for the driver, not knowing if it was going to start first thing, the clonking drone of the timing

chain, the noisy tick over, the struggle to clear the windscreen when it's raining, the shakes and rattles when the doors close, the squeaks and buzzing vibration from the dash, doors and partition, the crashing sound and bangs when going over pot holes and speed humps, the clunking noise when the gearbox changes up or down along with the pauses plus the purge as the speed picks up and finally the embarrassment at 60 mph when it's shakes like mad and goes no faster.

I could go on, but as you can see I didn't love my TX cabs, - certainly not the last one. You think I had a dodgy TX2? You got that right! It broke down with just 18 miles on the clock, the RAC man laughed and so did I, after all it only cost £32,000.

To be fair it has some plus points: It was better in tight spaces and turned well. But that's it!

Ok, the Vito looks like a van, but it drives like a car. My TX2 looked like a cab but drove like a tractor! If you love your TX cab, don't whatever you do test-drive a Vito because your love affair will end. I like the Vito, if you think it's a bit big, get over it. You're a professional driver, you can drive anything...

Terry Catherall (Y90)

I wish you luck with your new cab Terry and have to admit that I agree with you - it does look like a van, it's too big and also looks nothing like a taxi. I'd rather have my TX4 any day, but freedom of choice is what it's all about. I think it

says it all that the private hire association are complaining about taxis using a vehicle that is already being used by the minicab side of the industry! So yes, I do sincerely wish you luck but you won't see me in a Vito unless there are no TXs left, because to me it is a minicab ...Ed

Insurance warning

There is a myth that if you have a Non-Fault Accident and you are not making a claim under your own policy, then you do not need to notify your own motor insurers if you are using a Non Fault scheme. This is not correct, as even when you are not making a claim under your own policy, recoveries for the repairs to your vehicle will be made from the negligent party and as such, the claim will be recorded on the Claims and Underwriting Exchange (CUE).

Just by reporting the claim, you should not receive an increase in premium. Also all claims have to be reported to the insurer on any vehicle where you are a driver. That's your wife's car, your own car or Taxi etc. And finally, I would suggest that if in doubt, speak to your insurance broker or advisor.

**Jason Beazley
Cabsurance**

Steve and the Troxy Touts

The last time **Steve Thomas (N10)** wrote to **Call Sign**, it was to complain that Addison Lee were advertising under *Licensed Taxis* in various internet searches - one in particular that seemed rather blatant even by their standards: Under the heading of *London Taxis*, the Hampstead Road minicab firm showed up as *24 Hours A Day 365 Days A Year With Addison Lee!* According to Steve, this was for a sponsored link and not a generally related one.

Since then, LTPH - the former PCO - have sent a warning to all licensed minicab companies about referring to themselves as taxis.

This time Steve has another bee in his bonnet - this time it involves possible touting and again LTPH are issuing a warning to car firms.

Steve told **Call Sign**:

"I recently spent an enjoyable evening watching folk/rock/country band, *The Felice Brothers* at The Troxy on Commercial Road. The performance was great but something spoiled it.

On leaving the venue at the end of the performance (around 11pm), I saw several guys touting around and asking if anyone wanted a taxi. With all the trade press articles on how the Metropolitan Police Service Cab Enforcement Unit (CEU), supposedly part of the TfL-funded Safer Transport Command (STC), I was under the impression that touting was now under control. Well not if my experience is anything to go by!

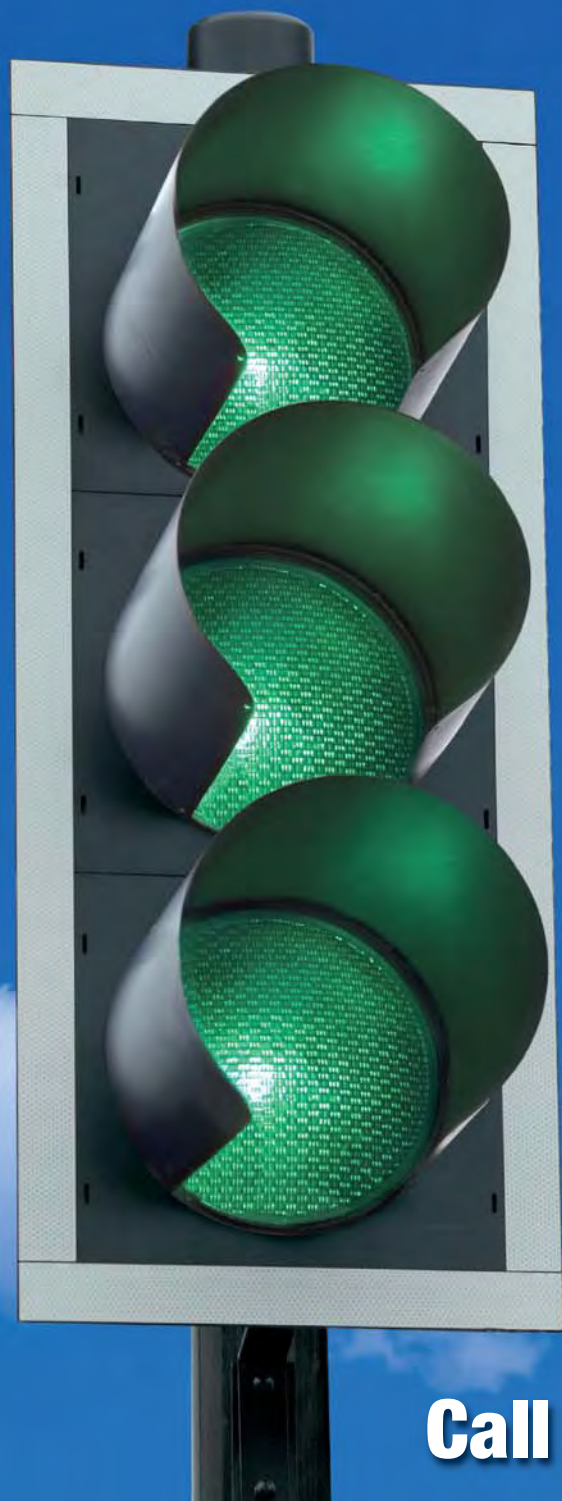
I know the photo isn't of very good quality and the faces of the touts are ugly, but I'm fed up with all their activities and then reading how the CEU capture a handful of them occasionally. I have sent copies of the photos to the PCO or whatever they're called now. I will let **Call Sign** readers know what they say."



Steve's camera catches these gentlemen enquiring whether anyone wants a taxi

Steve Thomas (N10)

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Mann & Overton Leeds
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Mann & Overton Scotland
2 Dunnet Way, East Mains Industrial Estate,
Broxburn, West Lothian EH52 5NN
T: 01506 864 670
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*Business Users Only: Other deals available.
Finance Subject to Status. £99 per week requires
a deposit, weekly/monthly payments and a final
balance payment.



Mann & Overton

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