

September 2010



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

Joyce leaves DaC after 24 years!



*It's the DaC
BBQ...
but who
is doin'
the
cookin'???*





NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Whilst DaC appeal and pay your parking fines when on an account pick up, it not only costs DaC considerable time and expense, but also several visits to the office or several stamps and envelopes by you, the driver. It's therefore better not to get a PCN in the first place! With the help of Nuala in Driver Services, the list below is where drivers have picked up PCN's via camera. So if you need to pick up in these streets, be aware ...be very aware!

ABBEY ROAD NW8	GROSVENOR PLACE SW1	PARK ROAD NW1
ALBERMARLE STREET W1	GROSVENOR STREET W1	PARK STREET W1
ALBERT ENBANKMENT SE1	HAMPSTEAD HIGH STREET NW3	PENFOLD STREET
ALDWYCH WC2	HARLEY STREET W1	PICCADILLY W1
APPOLD STREET EC2	HAYMARKET SW1	PORCHESTER GARDENS W2
BAKER STREET W1	HERCULES ROAD	PORCHESTER ROAD W2
BEAK STREET W1	HEREFORD ROAD W2	PORTMAN SQUARE W1
BERKELEY SQUARE W1	HIGH HOLBORN WC1	PORTMAN STREET W1
BERKELEY STREET W1	HOLBORN VIADUCT EC4	PRAED STREET W2
BRESSENDEN PLACE SW1	JERMYN STREET SW1	PRIMROSE STREET EC2
BREWER STREET W1	KENNINGTON ROAD	QUEEN STREET PLACE EC4
BRICK LANE E2	KENSINGTON GARDENS SQ W8	QUEENSWAY W2
BROADWICK STREET W1	KENSINGTON HIGH ST W8	RATHBONE PLACE W1
BROMPTON ROAD SW1	KENTISH TOWN ROAD NW5	READING LANE E8
BROOK STREET W1	KING STREET WC2	REGENCY STREET SW1
BRYANSTON STREET W1	KINGSLAND ROAD E8	ROMILLY STREET W1
BURLINGTON GARDENS W1	KINGSWAY WC1	ROPEMAKER ST EC2
BURWOOD PLACE W2	LAMBETH ROAD	SACKVILLE STREET W1
CARLISLE STREET W1	LANCASTER GATE W2	SALEM ROAD W2
CAVENDISH SQUARE W1	LANGLEY STREET WC2	SEYMOUR PLACE W1
CHALK FARM ROAD NW1	LEADENHALL STREET EC3	SEYMOUR STREET W1
CHAPEL STREET W1	LEINSTER TERRACE W2	SHAFESBURY AVENUE W1
CHARING CROSS ROAD WC2	LEXINGTON STREET W1	SMITHFIELD STREET EC1
CHISWICK HIGH ROAD W4	LIME STREET EC3	SOHO SQUARE W1
CIRCUS ROAD NW8	LOMBARD ST EC3	SOHO STREET W1
COMMERCIAL STREET E1	LONDON STREET W2	SOUTH PLACE EC2
CONDUIT STREET W1	LONDON WALL EC2	SOUTH WHARF ROAD W2
CRAVEN ROAD W2	LONG ACRE WC2	SOUTHAMPTON ROW WC1
CRAWFORD STREET W1	MADDOX STREET W1	ST JAMES SQUARE SW1
CURSITOR STREET EC4	MARE STREET E8	ST JAMES STREET SW1
CURTAIN ROAD EC2	MARGARET STREET W1	ST JOHNS WOOD HIGH ST NW8
CURZON STREET W1	MARSHALL STREET W1	ST JOHNS WOOD ROAD NW8
DAVIES STREET W1	MARYLEBONE HIGH ST W1	ST MARTINS LANE WC2
DEAN STREET W1	MARYLEBONE LANE W1	ST PAULS CHURCHYARD EC4
DUKE OF YORK STREET SW1	MAYFAIR PLACE W1	STANHOPE GATE W1
EDGWARE ROAD W2	MILL STREET W1	STRAND WC2
ELEPHANT ROAD SE17	MOLYNEUX STREET W1	STRATTON STREET W1
ELGIN AVENUE W9	MOOR STREET W1	TOOLEY STREET SE1
EVERSHOLT STREET NW1	MOORFIELDS EC2	TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD WC1
FARM STREET W1	MOSCOW ROAD W2	TURNER STREET E1
FARRINGDON ROAD EC1	MOUNT STREET W1	UPPER BERKELY STREET W1
FENCHURCH STREET EC3	MOXON STREET W1	UPPER ST MARTINS LANE WC2
FINSBURY SQUARE EC2	NEW BOND STREET W1	UPPER STREET N1
FLEET STREET EC4	NEW CAVENDISH STREET W1	WANDSWORTH ROAD SW8
FRITH STREET W1	NEWARK ST E1	WARDOUR STREET W1
GEORGE STREET	NEWNHAM TERRACE SE1	WELBECK STREET W1
GILLINGHAM STREET SW1	NOEL STREET W1	WEST SMITHFIELD EC1
GLOUCESTER PLACE W1	OLD BAILEY EC4	WESTBOURNE GROVE W2
GLOUCESTER TERRACE W2	OLD BOND STREET W1	WESTBOURNE PARK ROAD W2
GRAYS INN ROAD WC1	OLD BROAD STREET EC2	WESTMINSTER BRIDGE RD SE1
GREAT CUMBERLAND PLACE W1	OLD BURLINGTON ST W1	WIGMORE STREET W1
GREAT MARLBOROUGH ST W1	OLD COMPTON STREET W1	WILTON ROAD SW1
GREAT TITCHFIELD STREET W1	OLD STREET EC1	WINSLAND STREET W2
GREAT WINCHESTER ST EC2	ORANGE STREET WC2	WYNDHAM STREET W1
GREAT WINDMILL STREET W1	OXFORD STREET W1	YORK WAY SE1
GREEK STREET W1	PARK LANE W1	

For your What's On guide to September 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...

from the editor's desk

As thankfully September approaches, the kids get ready to return to school and the business gets busier, hopefully **Call Sign** readers begin sending in their stories and letters once more! In the meantime...

The things you learn about John Griffin!

For as long as I can remember, Addison Lee boss John Griffin has stated his aim that taxis should only pick up street work whereas private hire should do all the radio work. Amazingly, even though I obviously disagreed strongly, I actually believed him. How stupid was I?

In a recent *Sunday Times* interview, he let it all out by saying in response to a question on his financial priority: "We're working on a court case where we'll argue that minicab drivers should be able to use bus lanes and pick people up on the street – just like black cab drivers. It's time for us to be given the opportunity to compete fairly. The case is being heard next month."

Of course, they actually have the opportunity already – it's called The Knowledge!

Even Big Brother would get embarrassed!

Anyone out there in DaC-land know much about the National Fraud Initiative data matching exercise? No? Well you soon will because Transport for London says they are required by law to release information about licensed taxi drivers (and private hire) to the Audit Commission. Next month TfL will pass over to the Audit Commission the name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number of every one of you out there reading this – and every one who isn't!

The idea is to prevent fraud and info has been passed over to the NFI since 1996, but now they've reached T for taxi (picking up M for minicab along the way). Of course, whilst looking at T, they will have to bypass our other "friends" known as touts. I know what you're thinking – perhaps if they spent more money on policing instead of spying via the National Fraud Initiative or CCTV, they could rid our beautiful capital city of all those pieces of dirt we refer to as touts.

But back to the NFI; the idea is to match electronic data between audited bodies with the aim of preventing and/or detecting fraud. If anything is shown about you, you will then be investigated, no doubt losing your Bill until such time as you are cleared. Neither will you have much chance of being compensated when cleared, because they will now be within their right to investigate anything or anyone they consider has done anything dubious – that could even be for claiming money if you are sick.

According to TfL, they consider the security of data as being very important and will ensure that the data is transferred securely to the Audit Commission. So we have obviously just been imagining all those cases where data has been lost, only to turn up later on a rubbish tip or train carriage and then handed over



to *The Sun* or *The Daily Mirror*.

I truly believe that the original Big Brother of 1984 fame would have been embarrassed at how our freedom is just melting away...

Tiger Tyres

I needed some tyres recently and thought I would try Tiger Tyres just downstairs from the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union offices at 472 Hackney Road, E2 (in a small estate at the Cambridge Heath end). It was convenient for me and it was nice to be treated as a customer – not as someone who had no choice. And the prices seemed pretty good to me! One advantage is that if money is a bit tight and you are a DaC Credit Union member, you can nip upstairs and they will pay the bill for you as a loan! Now that that's what I call convenient...

Anonymous letter

I recently received an anonymous letter filled with poison about someone (not me!) and I just wanted the writer to know that his effort went straight into the nearest bin. If you don't have the balls to sign your name when making slanderous accusations, then I have no time to even think about it – other than as trash!

CCTV and speed limits

Oxford may be cutting back on cameras, but London certainly isn't. After all, why do you think the three lanes each way A13 has the ridiculous 40mph speed limit? It's because within the next few months the average speed cameras will have finished their test period on that road and will begin catching thousands of motorists – no doubt including many Dial-a-Cab drivers who forget that a road that would not be unfairly described as being of motorway standard, has such a ridiculously low speed limit.

The same principle applies to the rash of 20mph streets springing up everywhere. Any local authority that claims we are being watched by CCTV cameras purely for our safety is lying. There is just one reason and that is to get more revenue. We now have Mansfield Road in Kentish Town not just with a 20mph speed limit, but also being watched via average speed cameras. But of course, that comes

under Camden, the council that enjoy giving tickets to unsuspecting taxi drivers for doing U-turns at Southampton Row whilst making sure that the warning sign is well covered in case we saw it and cost that authority some more income.

According to TfL, average speed cameras will help cut accidents and are an alternative to speed humps. I'll accept that if they can tell me why the A13 has a 40mph speed limit. On second thoughts, I probably wouldn't believe them anyway...

Cyclists beware

Regular readers will know that I am not the biggest fan of cyclists. I have long spouted out about the dangers they put themselves into by having little or no road sense and finally TfL has now begun a campaign to ask us to look out for bike riders, while at the same time asking them not to undertake on the inside.

However, there can be little doubt that this administration under Boris Johnson is very pro bike and the new cycle super highways show that. So I have a question – not that Boris bothers answering now that the election has gone: There are three types of super highway cycle lanes – *Mandatory* (bordered with a solid line) and where you will receive a PCN if you enter it. *Advisory*, where the border is broken and where we mere mortals on our smoky, killer machines should not enter unless safe (and necessary) to do so and *Virtual*, which is similar to *Advisory* but where it has been impractical to mark out a border.

So as I was saying, I have a question: If I were to get a PCN for entering a *Mandatory* cycle lane, would a cyclist be fined if he strayed out of the cycle lane to overtake another cyclist and entered the section of road that we mugs now pay £425 a year road tax for? Thought not...

That Hut...

I've had several drivers telling me that they are fed up with my apparent war with internet blog, the Nissen Hut. So in future I won't mention them again, although it seems that after my last pop at them they retreated and have not been seen since. Well I suppose that is the way of most cowards that are afraid to give their name. So goodbye to the Nisse... whoops almost forgot!

Thank you...

Those of you who know me personally will know that at the stressful time of moving home, I had two pieces of devastating news. My sincere hope and belief is that both will now work out ok, but it has been an awful time. So I just wanted to thank all those drivers who had such kind words for me and also the writers of the absolute mountain of cards received for Linda at our new home.

There has always been a heart full of kindness beating under this trade that separates it from the rest. I know because I've just seen it...

Alan Fisher

callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Quiet time again!

As you read this, we will hopefully be coming out of the quietest period of the year - the holiday month of August. This particular month has always been a quiet one in the taxi industry and this August has been no exception, although I am happy to report that at the time of writing we have been a little busier than last August.

Because it has been so quiet with so many people away, it makes writing the Chairman's Report a little more difficult and no doubt editing the magazine even more so. I even looked at last year's Chairman's Report for September and I could quite easily have duplicated that article here, because I was saying exactly the same thing about it being so quiet!

However, our Editor has had a very busy and traumatic month because his wife Linda had an emergency quadruple heart bypass operation. It goes without saying that I wish Linda a speedy recovery and I understand she is making good progress at the moment. I'm also hopeful that Linda is well enough to continue to proof read the magazine, at which she is excellent because as you all know, we do not have many mistakes in **Call Sign**, due entirely to the Editor and the eye for detail of proof reader, Linda – get well soon!

End of Year...

As most of you are aware, 31st August is the end of our current financial year. Once again it has been a very tough one for everyone in the taxi industry, although perhaps slightly better than the previous year. I am writing this piece before the end of the current year, but I do have a very good idea what the figures will show come the end of August and I'm extremely pleased to report that we will show quite a substantial surplus for this current financial year.

Unfortunately, the surplus has not been because of increased turnover, but is due to



the fact that we have substantially cut our overheads in order to facilitate the fall in demand.

Although naturally no one can be pleased at how tough the situation is out there, aligned to it also being extremely competitive, Dial-a-Cab has demonstrated that it can still return a surplus under very difficult trading conditions. I am hopeful, however, that business will improve in the coming year with confidence slowly returning to the financial sector, although if the press and media are to be believed then we are due to face massive cost savings in the public sector, which will inevitably lead to more job losses. That, in turn, will have a knock on effect in the private sector, which has already taken the brunt of the current downturn.

But we have to be optimistic; we've all seen how we can talk ourselves into a recession by making everyone nervous and too frightened to spend any money, thereby making the situation worse.

Tenders

One of our largest accounts has informed me they are going out to tender in the very near

future, in fact I have already signed their Non-Disclosure Agreement in preparation for the tender. It's always a rather nervous time when a large account goes to tender because although we give a first class service, cost seems to be playing an even more important part today than it even used to. As we are the incumbents, the client knows what we can do whereas our competitors can promise the earth in order to gain the account - a little like any political party that is in opposition to the Government – and then worry about it afterwards.

However, the shoe can also fit onto the other foot as there is another very large account that has gone out to tender for which we had to complete by 30th August. This particular account is serviced in the main by one of our competitors, with just a small part of the account using us. So yes, I suppose you could say it's a little like swings and roundabouts when it comes to tendering for these large accounts nowadays!

Gone are the days when you had to submit three very large identical binders containing all the information the client required. Today, you are sent a password and a sign-on and the whole tender has to be completed electronically online, while the information required by the prospective client is quite phenomenal. They ask for past annual accounts, your diversity policy, green policy, corporate social responsibility, details of back-up systems and the list goes on and on. So as you can imagine, there is a colossal amount of work to do and it can take several weeks to complete. Naturally it does become extremely disappointing if all this work is completed and submitted and you do not win the tender, still I suppose it is the same for everyone.

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

Back to the Sixties

Earn some money with that old 60's photo

Last month's **Call Sign** ran an article on **London 60s Week**, which took place between 16th and 25th July. The 50th anniversary week saw a relaunch – if brief - of the best of Britain in the 60s, with an explosion of the fashion, music, film and design of a decade that put Carnaby Street, Kings Road, the Beatles, Rolling Stones, David Bailey, David Hockney, Twiggy, the Shrimp et al onto the world map. In the swinging sixties, London was the only place to be!

At the same time, **Bill Harry** was PR for many London clubs including Tiles, Speakeasy, Revolution and Blaises. He has handled press campaigns for every major record label and was personal press agent to over 40 major artists, including The Kinks, Pink Floyd, The Hollies and David Bowie. And 50 years on, all lent support to the London 60s week vision of intergenerational fun!

Now Bill Harry and **Robert Orbach** – who in the 60s worked for John Stephen in Carnaby Street and was a Director in Portobello Road's I was Lord Kitchener's Valet - are launching the **Harry & Orbach** archive campaign **60s On The Record**. All you have to do is go to your PC keyboard – or just use a pen and paper - and look into those souvenirs / mementoes you may have kept all these years and contact **60s On The Record** to present your stories for 60s On The Record 2011. **London 60s Week** is even supported by Mayor Boris!

And if you weren't around to experience those heady times, ask your mum and dad what it was like and send in their memories for inclusion in 60s On The Record! You could have a photo that might be earning you money. The best stories, photos and film clips collected over the next 12 months will take centre stage at an exhibition in 2011's London 60s Week. Send your stories to:

enquiries@london60sweek.co.uk. Mention the reference *On The Record*...



Robert Orbach
(left)
with
60s Tiles
DJ Jeff
Dexter

Battling DaC driver defeats Westminster after stopping to see terminal details...

Monty Sets a PCN Precedent!

Over the years, **Call Sign** has written of numerous *Penalty Charge Notices* sent to **Dial-a-Cab** drivers. However, since the UK's undisputed expert on parking fines - **Barrie Segal** - penned an article for this magazine and DaC were so impressed that they began working with him and his website, our PCN fines have been slashed and along with that, so have the number of articles. For those that don't know, Barrie's website at **www.appealnow.com** is said to be the only website in the world where you can appeal your parking ticket on line in 4½ minutes!

But travesties still occur. **Monty Dobrin (B56)** has been on DaC since June 1973, but has rarely been as upset as he was in early May following an incident. It was lunchtime and Monty was driving around Norfolk Crescent in Paddington when he was offered a trip on his terminal. The sun was shining and he couldn't see the screen clearly, so he stopped on a single yellow line to read them - being careful not to cause any obstruction. It was for a Westminster Account with the pickup round the corner at the Water Gardens in Burwood Place. Monty accepted the job, wrote the details down and then drove the few hundred yards to pick up the passenger and took her to Bond Street.

Six days later, Monty received a PCN from Westminster City Council stating that his cab was seen via CCTV as being parked for 2 minutes and 30 seconds before moving off. Monty appealed explaining that he did not get out of the taxi or even turn the engine off, he just read the details and wrote them down before going to pick up a Westminster disabled passenger.

Westminster's record of allowing appeals is almost non-existent and this one was no exception. Monty received a rejection notice because as Westminster explained, reading his terminal on a single yellow line in Norfolk Crescent is not an "exempt activity." Two photos accompanied the reject notice showing that no activity had occurred during the few minutes.

He was fined £120 - reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. They said he should have looked for a "pay for parking" bay.

Monty was very unhappy with the decision and decided to use the PATAS independent Arbitration service. On 24 July he attended Angel Square, Islington for his case to be heard. He explained the situation to the Arbitrator, Michel Aslangui, and after he also examined the Westminster version, the Arbitrator allowed the appeal and cancelled the PCN.

Monty told **Call Sign** that he was delighted with the verdict. We also spoke to Barrie Segal. He said: "Clearly the adjudicator understands the law better than Westminster. Moreover the Adjudicator's reasoned decision adds an important facet to the interpretation of the 'passenger boarding' rules." Barrie went on to say that whilst an Adjudication decision isn't the same as one in a court of law, in his view Monty Dobrin has set a precedent and anyone being given a PCN for a similar incident, could use Monty's case as a precedent and in 99% of the time, it will be accepted.

Monty's case details are: PCN number WM61315533, case



Monty's PCN cancellation can be used as a precedent

number 2100274666 and his cab reg is P151 SHV.

In his summing up, the Arbitrator said that taxi drivers are permitted to stop in restricted streets so as to pick up a fare and for which process they are allowed one minute, adding that Westminster say that the exemption that applies for picking up passengers (found in article 12 of the Traffic Management Order) does not include waiting or seeking out the passenger.

Mr Aslangui then described the DaC procedure for accepting a trip, that there is only one minute to decide whether to accept the incoming trip or not and that there was no time to find a meter or other bay in which to park.

In his decision, the Arbitrator said he was satisfied that the exemption included the waiting or seeking out of the passenger as part of the process of boarding and added that he was satisfied on a purposive interpretation of the exemption because otherwise the exemption would not be able to apply in a practical and meaningful manner. He then allowed the appeal and ordered Westminster to cancel the PCN and Monty to return to work a much happier DaC driver!



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4 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 8/9



6 Bedroom 5 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 12



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Jerys World



I remember the days when there were only about a million of 'em in London!

The havoc in Knightsbridge began in June 2006, now it's almost finished...

NUMBER ONE HYDE PARK

For over four years, traffic has been attempting to do the 3-minute journey from Kensington Gore to Knightsbridge Station in less than 15 minutes. However, blocking the way since June 2006 has been the demolition of Edinburgh Gate and Bowater House – followed by the building of THAT luxury development known as **Number One Hyde Park**.

The original completion target of October 2010 looks as though it will be met and hopefully end the nightmare of getting through the lights at a rate of around 6 cars or 4 buses at a time!

Admittedly, some of the apartments in the development from the Candy Brothers – Christian and Nick – do look quite nice. For example the four bedroomed flat that set the new buyer back some £30+million thanks to the most astonishing views of Hyde Park it provides. The glass in the windows overlooking the park weighs some two tonnes – the same as a TX4!

Another four flats – the penthouses overlooking Hyde Park – were up for £84million each with one said to have reached the £100million mark! For that you get brilliant views of the Serpentine as well.

Designed by Lord Rogers, the flats have bulletproof windows and eye scanners in the lifts. If the residents can't be bothered to cook, a tunnel links them to the Mandarin Oriental



Hotel next door, which will provide the concierge service. Air conditioning in the apartments will be specially purified and one point that will impress Dial-a-Cab's **Allen Togwell**, the fridges are said to be large enough to hold a 3-litre Jeroboam of Champagne!

Of course standards needed to be maintained, but in order to gain planning permission originally, the developers had to agree to include "affordable housing" in the project where first time buyers would be able to at least afford a shared ownership. So that section was built in Pimlico and has been described as "pleasant". However, the windows are said to weigh less than a TX4 – perhaps more akin to the weight of a pedicab!

What have they done to Bowater House!

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Ivan Sobell (P69) last appeared in *Call Sign* one year ago when he told us about the pain he was suffering due to sciatica. He told us he would beat it and as the picture shows, he can bend and twist with the best of them now. So Ivan isn't a man to be messed with, especially when he knows he's in the right!

However, the camera operator at **Camden Council** obviously didn't know that as he spied on Ivan setting down a passenger in Shaftesbury Avenue and courtesy of that council, sent Ivan a £120 PCN!

Ivan explained to *Call Sign*:

"I had set down the passenger in Shaftesbury Avenue, taking a few extra moments to write out a receipt. I was then immediately approached by a Japanese hair-dresser who wanted me to take his female client from his salon in Endell Street to the Barbican Theatre.

"Trouble was, Endell Street was closed due to roadworks and I was seen on Camden's video getting out of the cab to explain that I could not wait where I was - on a double yellow line - and that I would meet the passenger on the taxi rank outside the Shaftesbury Theatre."

"As there was a bit of language difficulty, this explanation went slowly, but I was clearly then seen to get back into the cab and pull away," he continued, "taking about three minutes in all."

"So when I received the PCN in the post, which claimed I was there for twenty five minutes, I was less than impressed! I tried going online to see it for myself, but the sys-

PCN MISTAKEN IDENTITY - CAMDEN APOLOGISE!



If sciatica couldn't beat Ivan, Camden must have been easy!

tem was unavailable and even telephoning their help line got nowhere. So I demanded they send me the full video and made it clear I would not be paying any money until I had viewed it all.

"In the meantime, I sent back the *Grounds for Representation* form, claiming that as my vehicle is a licensed London taxi, I could stop long enough to execute my duties as a London cab driver as stated in the *Transport for London* regulations. When the DVD

arrived, it actually took me several viewings before I realised that the cab seen pulling away from the scene, twenty five minutes after me, was not me!" For the first time, Ivan began smiling.

"It was a Fairway taxi with no **Dial-a-Cab** logos on the doors, as the profile views from the camera clearly showed and there were other vehicles in the vicinity that were not on 'my' video." Ivan's smile became a grin of satisfaction, steadily spreading across his face as he waved the letter of 'humble apologies' from Camden towards *Call Sign's* reporter.












"Needless to say," said Ivan, "Camden went home with their tail between their legs, and I saved a whole wad of money!"

Sadly, Ivan isn't the first and most certainly won't be the last to be taken in by Camden's CCTV crackdown against anyone that council can get money out of. The difference was that in this case, they came up against someone who wasn't prepared to roll over and just pay up...

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On the very same day that Addison Lee boss **John Griffin** once again showed his dark side, **Call Sign** Editor **Alan Fisher** had his own run-in with that company. Sadly, the support he expected from fellow taxi drivers failed to materialise.

Alan's problem began when he picked up a rare (for him) Heathrow trip at around 6.30pm from the even rarer location of the *Le Meridien* at Piccadilly. He dropped his French passengers, politely thanked them for the 20p tip, turned around and began driving back to town. He was surprised to see the traffic so heavy, but soon crossed into the bus / taxi lane. Alan takes up the story:

"Even the bus / taxi lane wasn't exactly flying, but that seemed to be more to do with what looked to be a van with seats - but no visible licence plate - in front. Because the traffic was so heavy, I couldn't pass it but at least we were moving at a reasonable rate, although I was feeling rather irritated at seeing it there. Then, glancing in the interior mirror, I saw another non-taxi closing the gap behind me and was pretty sure it was an Addison Lee car - which indeed it was. Because an airport trip is so rare for me, I had heard about - and indeed seen - John Griffin's letter to his drivers instructing them to use the M4 bus lane, but hadn't seen examples of it. Suddenly I felt irritated, because Addison Lee are a PH company and I have in the past nagged TfL and before them, the PCO, to put a stop to these vehicles using a lane designed for buses and taxis only. They both blamed the Highways Agency and police for the lack of action and said they were waiting for a possible court case to decide the situation. Whoever is to blame for allowing Addison Lee to do whatever they like, I decided that for me enough was enough!"

Alan went on to say that he slowed right down to 30mph and eventually the AL cab began hooting. Suddenly the traffic on his nearside had one of its spurts and the minicab pulled out into the traffic to attempt passing Alan's TX4. Then Alan speeded up and the AL cab again went back in behind

The Editor, the M4 & Addison Lee...



John Griffin

him at which time Alan again dropped to 30mph. The PH vehicle began hooting and flashing and by this time there were 3 or 4 licensed taxis also behind.

"I was pleased about that," Alan continued, "because eventually I knew the traffic would end and I'd be face to face with the AL driver. And that's what happened. Griffin's gorilla looked huge - even sitting in his car - but fortunately just screamed obscenities and threw in a few hand signals. His passenger seemed to smile, perhaps understanding what had happened. But the shock was to come. Two taxis behind the AL car pulled alongside and called me every name under the sun!"

Ending his story, Alan added: "I don't go to Heathrow very often, but I sincere-

ly hope that all those drivers who moan about Addison Lee using the M4 bus lane and who have been writing in droves to the trade press and indeed to **Call Sign**, have some more savvy about what John Griffin is trying to do than those two misguided drivers. I admit that my driving on that day was not to be recommended, but surely the two drivers must have felt something about minicabs using bus / taxi lanes?"

On that same day, the *Evening Standard* reported that a pedestrian, Rosie Dalling, was almost run over on a zebra crossing by an Addison Lee driver. Ms Dalling, who works at the Donmar Warehouse in Covent Garden, was said to have previously been a "fan" of Addison Lee and wrote to John Griffin to complain about his driver. Mr Griffin's response was that the driver was unidentified and in any case he would not have sacked him even if he knew who it was. But it was three short words that John Griffin put into his response to Rosie Dalling that really shocked her. "Get a life," were the hurtful three before the AL boss added: "Your complaint is just wasting valuable time!"

That from a man who not too long ago was the star of a TV program where he gave away money to "deserving people." It's a pity he isn't as generous with his manners...

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign online

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Call Sign

September 2010

Editor: Alan Fisher

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

Tel: 0207 251 0581 **Fax:** 0207 553 7293

Email: callsignmag@aol.com

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Tel: 07958 300 428

Email: danny.fresco@dsl.pipex.com

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Russell and Barbara Poluck

There can't be many on Dial-a-Cab that don't at least know of **Russell Poluck (T55)**. He has been with the Society for almost 20 years, is Chairman of the *Taxi Driver of the Year Charity* and for his work with both that organisation and the *War Disabled* charity, in 2001 he was awarded the MBE.

In March of this year, Russell – who is diabetic – was taken to hospital after fainting. His blood pressure was, unusually for him, very low and his heart was beating irregularly. However, he was sent home.

Russell Poluck's Heart Attack

Wife Barbara gives a warning...

Russell's wife Barbara takes up the story...

"Two days later the same thing happened, but this time we went to a different hospital where they took a blood test straight away. This showed he'd had a mild heart attack. Diabetics do not always get the obvious signs leading to a heart attack, such as pains in the chest or arm."

Barbara asked *Call Sign* to put out a warning to drivers – adding that although she is not medically trained in any way, she has learned a lot since Russell's heart attack.

"Taxi drivers aren't always the healthiest of people, sitting in their cabs while driving around London and doing very little exercise. But if

you get any of the symptoms that Russell had – especially if you are diabetic – please demand a blood test before the hospital sends you home. This will show if you have had a heart attack. Please do not leave it. I know you would be worried about losing your licence, but your health comes first and I'm sure that once you are fit again, you will be able to pass the 9 minute treadmill test to get behind the wheel again."

Barbara told us that Russell is now well on the road to recovery and hopes to be back behind the wheel very soon. She also asked *Call Sign* to thank everyone that had emailed and phoned asking after Russell's health, as that was an encouragement for him to get back to work...

Lee off to Ashford Town

Two seasons back, Dial-a-Cab driver, **Lee Pearce (J71)** was starring in goal for non-league Bedfont Green and helped them gain promotion as Champions. Yet towards the tail end of the following season and in a move that may not have shocked football, but certainly shocked *Call Sign*, Lee was dropped from the team following a defeat where he admitted fault for two of the opponent's goals. Exactly 12 months earlier, Lee had been bubbling when *Call Sign* spoke to him after Bedfont Green had gone top of the *Combined Counties Premier League* and were well on the way to that promotion.

Lee admitted to us that his performances at the time hadn't been up to the high standards the DaC driver sets himself, but his form had been improving before the bombshell hit – manager Dennis Bainborough dropped him.

Soon after, Lee was signed up by **Egham** but there was no love affair there and following a dressing room bust-up, Lee was signed by Middlesex team **Ashford Town** who play in the *Zameratto Central League* along with two of his old clubs – Bedfont Green and Hitchin.

"I'm looking forward to the new season," Lee told *Call Sign*, "I really feel that this team can go places. It's professionalism leaves my former clubs standing!"

One of Lee's first games for Ashford was against *Football League division 2* outfit, **Bradford City** and Ashford slaughtered **Peter Taylor's** Bantams by 3 – 0. True it was only a pre-season friendly, but a win is a win and one as clear-cut as that needs heading by the other Zameratto Central teams. Ironically, Ashford's manager, **Jamie Lawrence**, was a former Bradford City player. Incidentally, Peter Taylor was very successful in managing the England under 23 team several years back and made also one appearance as the full England coach, famously making David Beckham his captain for the first time..



Lee in action against Division 2 Bradford City. Pic courtesy Andy Nunn

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Allen Togwell's Marketing Place

This started off as a sick note because in my 20 odd years on your Board, I cannot recall ever failing to meet the Editor's request to submit an article for **Call Sign**. That is until now. In fact it's a surprise that **Call Sign** should even be crossing my mind as I lay in my third week in a hospital bed connected to tubes keeping me in the land of the living, unable to communicate without pad and pen, a lost mobile phone and an enthusiasm level of zero due to medication.

For some reason, the date on the newspaper I was reading suddenly conjured up the vision of a visit from the Editor with a bunch of grapes and stern reminder that an article was due and my scribbling urgently on my pad requesting leave of absence. I'm not suggesting for one minute our Editor is heartless, but from experience I knew the response was going to be:

"Get a grip man! What possible excuse can anybody have for not knocking out a lousy 1500 words, here's a bigger pad and I'll extend the deadline for seven more days!" And how do I reply without a voice and the knowledge that I've never failed in the past? In fact, when I think back to all the years of submitting regular articles for **Call Sign**, it really has been quite a feat really when one considers the subject matter being restricted solely to **Dial-a-Cab** and the cab trade in general. Its hardly surprising when I hear members say they don't always read my articles, I don't think I would either unless it was something contentious, then it seems the whole membership seems to have read it and the Editor is bombarded with letters, emails and phone calls demanding that I be hung drawn and quartered!

In years past when I ran DaC Sales, there was always plenty to write about, much of it often negative, including of course my relentless pursuit in trying to raise our member's image. But no longer. Times have changed, due mainly to the success gained under the leadership of our present Chairman and in part to the eradication of the militants amongst our membership when so much of Board member's time was spent putting right the upheaval they were causing, rather than doing what we were elected to do – running a business. A prime example were our AGMs, where the majority were there under protest or be fined, the minority being there to do nothing else but protest. Looking back at that period, it's a wonder the Society still exists and it could have been so different. It has been proven what can be achieved if everybody, drivers and the BoM, ignore politics and focus solely on the business and how doing so deprives militants an audience or a voice, forcing them eventually to move onto the only place available these days – blogs or internet chat rooms!

Had something similar happened 30 years ago, imagine how far DaC could have developed. We could have quite easily have had a present fleet now in excess of 5000 vehicles and of such force as to have prevented the big PH firms of today from becoming little more than the average minicab outfit operating from above a fish shop. Personally, I've never seen a blog or chat room, but of course have heard about them, including how so few subscribers use their real names, which whilst typical,



what credibility can it possibly give to a grievance if it's signed Mickey Mouse? But then I've never quite understood the mentality of militants anyway, how they seem to carry so much bitterness and spend a lifetime making everybody's life a misery. Or their never-ending battle trying to beat the establishment. Easy done I guess.

I remember as a young man I could so easily have developed such a mentality towards the police. It was over 50 years ago, I was standing outside where I lived on the corner of Camden Street and Plender Street. It was a Sunday with very little traffic when I spotted a little old van kangarooing down Camden Street. Behind it was a police car. As it neared where I was standing, the police car pulled the van over and asked the driver to get out of the vehicle. As the driver did so, I recognised him as my best friend so I said hello. I also knew he was in trouble because he didn't have a driver's licence. It transpired that he had borrowed the van to deliver some furniture for his mother. The police did not believe him and wanted my friend to take the van back to its owner and they would follow, but of course they couldn't allow him to drive the van so they approached me as they now knew he was my friend, asked me if I had a driver's licence and would I mind driving the van back to the owner – just a short way up Plender Street. I agreed. On arriving at the owner's house, they all went inside while I sat outside minding my own business. A little later, one of the coppers came out and told me I was nicked! I thought he was joking, but he wasn't. He said it was for driving a vehicle without insurance, so I ended up in a magistrate's court, disqualified for 6 months and fined £25 – a substantial amount 50 years ago. Needless to say I was very angry and my hatred of the police and authority was intense, but I knew even at a young age that you couldn't beat the establishment, so I simply put it down to experience.

NHS and my tumour...

And talking of experience, barely a week goes by when there is not an article in the press castigating the much-maligned National Health Service, but rarely if ever do you see any words of praise. Which I feel compelled to do now regarding my three weeks in the UCH, because it truly warrants it. Initially it was meant to be three days, but such was the

nature of the operation and how I responded that it ended up as being three weeks. Originally I was a patient at the ENT in Grays Inn Road where I have attended on and off for over 40 years – mainly for my ears. On this occasion it concerned my throat. Some drivers on DaC who I've interviewed over the past two years, would have noticed towards the end of the interview the difficulty I was having with my voice from talking. So I asked my ear consultant to look at my throat. He did and his opinion was that a more in-depth examination under anaesthetic was necessary, where it was discovered the problem was not my throat but a tumour at the base of my tongue. A biopsy followed, which was benign thank God and arrangements made for the tumour to be removed by laser. I was informed that the procedure was going to present a challenge, so much so that it was decided to transfer me to the UCH, who had more state of the art equipment. Two weeks later, I was up in the Head and Neck ward on the 14th floor of the new UCHL Hospital with unbelievable views of London. The beds were made up in units of four with plenty of space between them and a 5-nurse's station for each unit. Each of the beds were fitted out with every piece of medical equipment imaginable, including suspended from the ceiling over every bed a TV, which was ideal as I was in there during the World cup and Wimbledon. Wards were immaculately clean, added to which was the quality of the food. There were six choices on the menu for lunch and dinner plus I had a visit from the manager of the ground floor restaurant that supplies the food informing me that if there was anything not on the menu that I would like, they would get it for me! Unfortunately the nature of my operation meant that apart from a tracheotomy in my throat to breathe and a tube in my stomach to administer medication and liquidised food, I was unable take advantage of the offer until I was well enough to go on solids. I was also offered free holistic massages, but more importantly above all else, the doctors, nurses and staff were absolutely brilliant. I've been in private hospitals on three occasions in the past and none could match the quality and care of my stay in the UCH.

And Barclay's bikes!

And talking of hospitals, as you read this the Mayor's bike hire scheme would be in full swing with literally thousands more cyclists over and above those that already make your life difficult as you pull into and away from the kerb throughout your working day. Please be extra vigilant, because you cannot rely on the cyclists being the same. Far too many are lunatics and carry a death wish as they cross red lights at speed. Please don't be the driver of the vehicle that puts these idiots into a hospital bed or worse... into a morgue.

Allen Togwell
DaC Marketing

Yet another successful *Worshipful Company of Hackney Drivers* **Magical Taxi Tour** took several hundred children suffering from life threatening illnesses on their trip of a lifetime to the magic kingdom of Disneyland Paris

September 24th saw a long convoy of licensed London taxis gather at Canary Wharf for the Big Breakfast send off, with many of the sponsors who have assisted in raising the funding necessary for the trip lining the pavements to watch Alderman Nick Anstee, the current Lord Mayor of the City of London, cut the ribbon marking the start of the WCHCD 17th Disney trip. The convoy included 100 taxis, ambulances, police support cars and motorbike outriders. Excitement levels had grown as drivers collected their passengers from London hospitals before daylight had even broken.

Following breakfast, the children were given pocket money by M&O and packed lunches supplied by The Marriott West India Quay Hotel. Then it was off to Dover where a P&O ferry transported the convoy to France. Having disembarked, the convoy that by then was an astonishing 5 miles long, made its way down the motorway, much to the surprise and delight of other French motorists, down past Paris and into the theme park. As the convoy arrived at the Disneyland Paris resort, the car park filled with 100 London taxis for two days!

All the taxi drivers taking part in the Magical Taxi Tour are self employed and have given up several days of work to help make those dreams come true for their passengers. Funding the trip isn't easy and events are held throughout the year to raise money. Sponsorship is always being sought and bearing in mind the current economic climate, it becomes very rewarding to see that so many people are still prepared to dig deep to ensure the children enjoy their trip of a lifetime. P&O

ANOTHER WCHCD MAGICAL TAXI TOUR



The 100 London taxis leave Cabot Square for the Disneyland Paris resort

were once again very generous in their support and the convoy certainly surprised the other passengers waiting to board the ferry!

The 2010 trip brought the number of children who have enjoyed the event up to around 3500, with some of the taxi drivers having been on every Magical Taxi Tour, no mean feat as that adds up to around 85 days of unpaid work. Drivers all say the same thing - the looks on the children's faces as they enjoy the theme park, the Gala Dinner with the Disney characters, as well as a trip in a

taxi, makes it all worthwhile. The trip is organised by a small Committee of unpaid members including **Phil Davis (F10)** and **Jim Rainbird (F25)**. Many drivers from **Dial-a-Cab** are always among those in the convoy.

You can learn more about the Magical Taxi Tour at www.magicaltaxitour.com where there are details of previous trips and info on how you can help by donating towards next year's outing.

For further information contact the press officer, Sandie Goodwin, on 07860 439839 or by email to: sandiegoodwin@hotmail.com.

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Call Sign was already asking questions about how the 2012 London Olympics would affect the taxi trade in the **January 2005** issue. Following an interview we ran with a taxi driver in Sydney where the 2000 Games were held, we were left with concerns involving the *Olympic Route Network (ORN)*, how much work we would actually get and whether the roads would be improved as promised in the intervening 7 years? So in 2005 we put those questions to *London 2012*, the group set up to try to win the Games for this city.

The group told **Call Sign** 5 years ago that some 22,000 people would be arriving at Heathrow Airport *every hour* during the Games, all the Olympic venues would have taxi loading and unloading zones and that we would continue to have access to bus lanes throughout event.

Also scheduled was to be a cultural festival and other international sporting events, which would attract visitors to London in the years both before and after the Games.

Other plans for the following 7 years we were told of back in 2005 included a new urban parkland stretching from Hackney Marshes to the Thames, plus six major new sports venues with the Olympic Park delivering a legacy of more than 9,000 new homes after the Games, many of which would be affordable. There would also be new and improved bridges and underpasses enhancing accessibility, a new road network within the Lower Lea Valley in East London and the restoration of polluted waterways. An estimated £1.4 billion would be spent in the Greater London area to improve the road network. So get your diaries out. **Call Sign** is looking for new roads built in the past 5 years because if they haven't started them by now, then it ain't gonna happen! Er... road works don't count!

In response to our question (following on from our Australian interview), it was at least admitted that a fleet of special limousines and not taxis would be used for those VIPs who are designated as being of importance to the Games and just to rub it in, they added that public transport for those with tickets would probably be included in the price!

We kept returning to the *ORN* and worrying how much it would affect us? Competitors are an obvious priority, but we were also informed that people such as starters (as in on your marks etc) and timekeepers also came into the category as well as many people who are "involved" although they don't actually have jobs. Also using the *ORN* will be technical officials, sporting media - and sponsors! We were not given an answer as to whether it would be more convenient if those elements stayed in hotels closer to Docklands rather than West London.

Now details of the Olympic Route Networks have been revealed and they seem far more extreme than even the estimates made in 2005.

Some 60 miles of routes in London are being turned over to Games VIPs with "sponsors" now apparently including around 25,000 "marketing partners." **Call Sign's** suggestion around that time (more in fun admittedly) that **Dial-a-Cab** should consider sponsoring some of the Games transport might have, if accepted, given us access to the special lanes! The Network - costing around £25million - will be operational for 17 days of the event, covering the two weeks competitive period and several days either side. The Paralympics *ORN* will cover a much shorter period.

ORN colour-coded roads

ORN routes will be colour-coded yellow, red and

As we approach the home straight with under two years to go, Call Sign wonders:

London Olympics: Were we told the truth?



Victoria Embankment, Blackwall Tunnel approach, A2203 through north Greenwich, Stratford High Street and all roads around the Olympic Park.

The following lanes will operate as ORNs from 7am- 7pm on event days and 7am - 4pm on other days:

A4, A40 Westway, A406 North Circular, M4 and M11.

Other roads will be open but face restrictions designed to speed up traffic. Traffic lights will be phased green for Games vehicles (which means red for ordinary mortals and those merely going in taxis to watch the Games), parking bays and

Undoubtedly the Olympics will be great - but will it be worth it???

blue. Roads on *yellow routes* will have a dedicated Olympic-only lane and operate from 6am until midnight.

Roads designated as *red routes* - said to be the ones to cause the biggest hold-ups - will be affected by major restrictions to speed up Olympic traffic, but will be left open to the public. Expect parking and right turn bans, plus traffic light phasing that make The Mall look good!

Roads on the *blue route* will only be affected on competition days. They will run from the athletes' accommodation to Wembley Arena, Earls Court and Wimbledon.

Most of the routes will operate between 6am and midnight and cover many major roads causing huge amounts of congestion. Even Mayor Boris Johnson has warned drivers that they will face inconvenience for 17 days of the Games.

He told **Call Sign**: "I can't pretend that during that period you will still be able to bomb along the Embankment and I hope that Londoners will understand that some modest inconvenience at Games time is a price worth paying for a happy Olympic and Paralympic Games."

The main jams will be along these core routes with ORNs open 6am to midnight to and from major venues on all days:

pedestrian zones will be suspended and side roads will be closed. Routes will be monitored by CCTV mobile patrols and motorists flouting the rules will be fined £200. Buses will face diversions, while taxis are banned from ORNs, which suggests that many bus lanes - which, remember, we won't be banned from - will be closed anyway!

As they unveiled the Olympic Route Network, Games chiefs said it was essential for the smooth-running of the Olympics and would let them guarantee travel times.

A spokesperson said that just 2.6% of London's roads would be affected by the restrictions and 1% would have priority lanes. Non-essential roadworks will be banned. The network will be used by 82,000 athletes, officials, VIPs, sponsors and media in chartered buses or cars - but of course, not taxis.

The network will also extend by 172 miles outside London to the rowing in Eton, white water canoeing in Broxbourne, mountain biking near Southend and sailing in Weymouth.

So as we said at the top of the page, with less than two years to go, we wonder if we were told the truth back in 2005 when London 2012 wanted our support?

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AA For the road ahead

Gareth Jones (P11) was delighted with his new MB Vito taxi as he drove gently into the Roman Way fitting depot to have his **Dial-a-Cab** equipment installed. While the engineers busily fitted his new MDT and support post to the interior of his cab, Gareth chatted about the trade in general to **Call Sign's** reporter.

But it was only after the sturdy MDT support post was fitted in its usual position on the luggage side and close to the central console, that a problem arose that had everybody at Roman Way scratching their heads to resolve.

As a regular commuter between Manchester and London, Gareth had requested a front passenger seat be fitted by KPM for his wife or young son to occupy during the long journey between the two cities. This KPM had done.

But he told us that after careful thought, he tried to cancel the seat fitting the day after ordering the cab but was told that it had already been fitted and couldn't be removed.

"I accept that there is a great deal of work involved in fitting the front seat with new interior body panels, *Perspex* central division, fixings and hinges etc," he said, "so I agreed to keep the seat."

However, when the Dial-a-Cab terminal was fitted, it encroached into the passenger space and the support post rubbed up against the seat when in the occupied position! A totally unacceptable - and indeed dangerous - situation.

Call Sign's reporter, sensing a *Stop Note* on its way to Gareth, offered to call a contact at the PCO to clarify the unique

Sitting Comfortably? Gareth's Vito hits a problem...



Gareth once again is a happy cabbie!

situation. The PCO admitted they had not encountered a Dial-a-Cab / Vito front pas-

senger seat scenario and offered to investigate the legality of the set-up if we could supply details. Meanwhile, a disgruntled Gareth was on his mobile to KPM and as soon as his DaC installation was completed, Gareth was out of Roman Way like a bat out of hell and on his way back to KPM to demonstrate the problem.

A calmer and delighted Gareth phoned **Call Sign** a few hours later to say that, to their credit, KPM had agreed to remove the front passenger seat and re-instate the original body panels. Gareth confirmed that KPM had also instructed their accounts dept. to refund the seat's cost.

Having sorted the issue satisfactorily with KPM, Gareth then called the PCO to advise them that the matter was resolved and that the cab was to be put back to normal, at which news the PCO declared no further interest and probably breathed a quiet sigh of relief that they did not need to proceed with an individual *Approval* process for Gareth's front seat.

So what had started out as a major headache for all concerned, had a happy ending with Gareth delighted with the outcome from KPM and the installation of his DaC terminal...

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She's a Girl!



Welcome to Ellie Rose!

"She's a girl," **Alf Cook (A62)** told **Call Sign** excitedly, perhaps rather stating the obvious! He was referring to the arrival of his and wife Barbara's first grandchild **Ellie Rose Haward**, who was born at the Peterborough Hospital maternity wing on 27th July 2010 to their daughter Alissa and her Rob! "Ellie has a good sense of timing too," Alf continued, "because she arrived at 7.38pm, which was a bit convenient for all concerned - none of this middle of the night stuff for our granddaughter!"

Weight enquired our reporter?

"No," said Alf, "we didn't have to wait long after she was born to get a cuddle!"

Finally understanding our question, Alf told **Call Sign** that Ellie Rose weighed in at a very healthy 7lbs 15oz. But as Alf was obviously impatient to get back to caressing the latest family member, **Call Sign** and everyone at DaC wished the newest arrival and her extended family all the very best for the future and left them to enjoy their newest cuddles!

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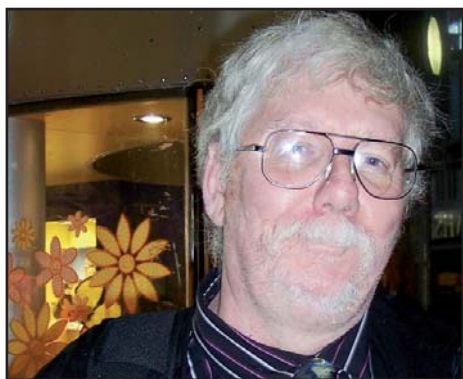
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Viruses or Trojans?**



Following a request from the Department For Transport (DfT), the RMT's London Taxi Branch recently attended a meeting with Paul Lowry, DfT's Director of Taxis/Private Hire Division at Great Minster House, Horseferry Road. Three delegates attended: Branch Chair John Kennedy, Vice Chair Paul Walsh, and Assoc. Branch Sec Dave Vidgen...

M4 bus lane

Top of the agenda was the M4 bus lane fiasco. John Kennedy opened up the discussion by reiterating the issue of John Griffin writing to Addison Lee drivers and actively encouraging them to break the law by telling them that should they get any tickets for using the bus lane, Addison Lee would pay them. This was increasing the risk of a serious accident with PH drivers pulling out of a slow moving lane into the faster moving bus lane. If this was done in front of one of the many large coaches used by companies like National Express, it could lead to a serious accident with many casualties and huge access problems for emergency services trying to reach the accident site.

Paul Lowry then gave details of a study carried out as to who was actually responsible for enforcement on this stretch of highway. Although the *Highways Agency* is responsible for the upkeep and general control of the road, they are not an enforcement agency. It seems it is down to TfL and the Met Police to do this. TfL are carrying out research into what methods can be used for enforcement by cameras.

Pedicabs

The issue of Pedicabs was next on the agenda, with the accident in Scotland that led to the death of a young man in Edinburgh brought up. It is the RMT's position that it is only due to the high level of congestion caused by pedicabs that there have not been more fatalities - not just in London, but other areas too that have become infested with these things. We added that we felt all accidents involving pedicabs should be recorded separately and not as, at present, under cycle accidents as this was making it very difficult to collect and collate details of incidents involving them. We also informed Mr Lowry that we would petition Parliament

DaC's Eddie Lambert (V37) has sent Call Sign this report...

RMT Visit Department for Transport...

when the Bill moves back to the Commons. We believe that it is suicidal to any attempt to get these thing banned to agree with any form of licensing with a view to later trying to making a case for banning. Even if there were any merit in this stupid idea (which there isn't), the two taxi organisations adopting this position seem to forget that there will be other consequences that will not go away, even if the pedicabs (miraculously) did.

Westminster and other local authorities are prepared to allocate highway space for pedicab ranks. Just look at the changes that have happened to Shaftesbury Avenue recently to see for yourself the preparations that have been made. Once these things gain this privilege (in order to ease traffic flow by moving them out of the actual road whilst looking for work), how long before the Road Tax, insured, CRB checked, income tax paying, licensed Private Hire sector with any number of legal eagles lining up behind them, demand parity at the very least? Once achieved, they will not give this up even if pedicabs are finally consigned to history or at the very least, the parks.

John Kennedy then brought up the DfT's own advice to HMV when the original bill was presented in 2005. This was that a proper licence scheme be put into place, but as this was not forthcoming the bill was pulled. This 2010 bill has no compulsion for rickshaw owners or riders to register, so we are in the same situation as 2005. Paul Lowry said the department would raise the issue with the

London Minster.

Satellite offices

Satellite Offices (SO) were the next subject to come up. The blatant illegal touting that goes on within and outside clubs with satellite offices was mentioned, with the main problem being the allowing of PH vehicles to stand outside the premises creating a rank with no enforcement from the Met Police or any other authority that could move these vehicles on and/or issue tickets. There are many precedents of PH prosecutions with vehicles making themselves available for hire by parking on the public highway and we believe authorities should start taking action.

Vocational licenses

It also appears that the DfT would look favourably on the issue of Taxi drivers having a Vocational Licence similar to that held by the Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance Services so that endorsements gained whilst working would not appear on a drivers DVLA licence. Unfortunately this would then also be available to PH drivers as well. It's not certain at present how this would work, but we would expect at the very least that it would only be available to holders of a British driving licence of at least 2 years that had also passed a Driver Standards driving test as all London Hackney drivers do before passing out.

Eddie Lambert (V37)

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DaC Staff at the Barbie!

On a very pleasant August evening, **Dial-a-Cab** Chairman **Brian Rice** and the Society's Financial Controller **Warren Smith**, put away their pin striped suits and replaced them with chef's outfits in time for the annual DaC staff barbecue.

Twenty-four hours earlier and a similar number of hours later would have seen the car park at Dial-a-Cab House awash as the

heavens opened, but on this one day, the heavens smiled and the evening staff took full advantage during their lunch breaks of the twosome's gourmet delicacies. Other staff just popped in to have a nosh and a glass of something before going back to whence they had come from!

The usual barbecued fare was on offer with hamburgers wrapped deliciously in wads of

soft fried onions, sausages delicately spiced with tastes of the Orient (possibly from Leyton) and delicious chicken wings. Wafting through the evening air was the wonderful aroma of freshly barbecued food.

All the staff that **Call Sign** spoke to told us that they had really enjoyed themselves and were sorry that they couldn't spend their whole shift there...!



The Chairman likes well-cooked food!



Good here, innit???



At least Bonny had time for the poor photographer!



Better than working!



Food and drink finished? It must be time for the Cabaret!



I suppose I've always been taller than you!

compliance officer's update

Hello ladies and gents, a few reminders for you...

EC5

As both Keith Cain and I have often mentioned, to book into EC5 (Finsbury Square) you must physically be in EC1, EC2, EC3 or EC4 before you can gain a queue position. The Call Centre regularly monitors the situation and whilst the vast majority of you do book in perfectly correctly, there are still a few that don't and unless that minority start booking onto our City rank in the correct way - rather than trying to gain an advantage over their fellow drivers - they will face appropriate action. The system is designed to make it fair and equal for all of us and no more warnings will be given. Both Keith and I have spoken to many of you in the past and with the queue numbers much more manageable, the system works well. Please don't spoil it. The Board is mindful of your needs and concerns and any changes will only be implemented for the benefit of you, the members.

Weekend working on E14

As some drivers seem unsure about working on E14 during weekends, can I just remind you that since August 2009, E14C and E14S no



longer operate on Saturdays and Sundays. E14C and E14S are still open Monday to Friday 06:00 to 21:00 and at all other times the work will be dispatched into E14, which remains as a physical zone between 9pm and 6am (Monday to Friday) and at all times on weekends.

The changes have been made to assist drivers at weekends and to prevent them from being forced to sit on the E14C rank when the majority of street work comes from the underground station and Canada Square areas. This zone will be constantly monitored and it is

important that you book in correctly at all times to avoid any procedure rule violations.

Displaying the Society logo...

Finally, can I please remind you that any taxi reported as not displaying the Society logo is violating Procedure Rule No.18 'Not Displaying the Company Logo' and without genuine reason, it could result in a complaint. Only a small minority of members who joined prior to January 1996 and pay increased subscriptions are exempt from this ruling. It is not surprising that taxis spotted picking up from various account addresses that have logos missing on one or both doors are very often reported by those that do sport them. The rules are in place for a reason and after all, together with the cash booking number it helps to promote our Society, which is surely a benefit to us all particularly in this economic climate!

If you have any queries on the above please contact me on 0207 553 7222 or email at Allane@Dialacab.co.uk

**Allan Evans
DaC Compliance Officer**

LONDON ACCORDING TO DAVE

Who pays the ferryman?

As a London taxi driver who ferries people to different areas of the capital, it's often said that we are a financial barometer as to how the economy is performing. We are already seeing financial cuts to the public sector biting, just as we see our own earning capacity fall.

As any budding DIY expert will know, when it comes to turning the screw, the first few turns are slow to begin with but once the screw has a seating, it turns much quicker and harder. The skill is in knowing when to stop as you can overdo it and pull out the rawplug and plunge everything back to square one.

We have now signed up to a coalition government without reading the small print in the summary box; ie we are not abolishing free travel passes, just changing the rules to age 65 instead of 60!

Are 0800 numbers free? You bet they aren't! Networks vary, read the small print!

We now have two leaders in charge who have as much experience in big decision-making as Paris Hilton has in deciphering which is the best food to feed her pet ferret! But that seems unimportant in today's PR politics where you can go from bland to tanned in minutes. That's not to say commercially speaking blends don't work, they can.

Conservative cabinet sauvignon vintage 1980 blended with Lib Dem Merlot, that utilises modern fermentation methods, exceedingly smooth on the palette and draws you in like a velvet claw.

But what of these people who ferry information to one another in the corridors of power, shrouded for decades in secrecy and mythology? Are their jobs under threat like the public sector with pay freezes imminent?

The number of MPs as of now has not been reduced. So no cuts there then, just an increase in the number of those apologising unreservedly for making false expense claims.

Local councillors are now, however, getting bumper pay rises of up to 60%, with London's Barnet Council leading the pay surge. Councillors are now almost on a par with MP's pay. As for peers in the House of Lords, although unsalaried, more than 100 last year claimed in excess of £50,000 expenses. That's not bad to notch up when you are being given a £300 daily tax free attendance allowance courtesy of the tax payer.

So call it what you like: The big society, the green society, the fact remains that so long as the west's economy is run on oil that has to be bought at relatively cheap levels from the middle east, someone somewhere has to pay the ferryman.
David Heath (ex-W27)



Well, We Knew That Anyway!

London taxi drivers voted the best for the third consecutive year...



For the third year running, a *Hotels.com* survey by 1900 of their travellers has shown that they believe London's Taxi drivers and their vehicles to be the best in the world.

The survey results had 59% of travellers giving us the thumbs up as being the best, although just as last year, the question of being expensive was mentioned. However, the fact that we have to undergo the Knowledge and then purchase hugely expensive vehicles is probably why we are the best. The London taxi trade doesn't have a 'value' section!

Praise came about our friendliness, driving ability, knowledge of where we're going and our clean vehicles. London's finest slaughtered New York (27%) and Tokyo (26%) in the poll.

How we achieved it in the face of competition that seems to walk over the rules, is anyone's guess. However, we should give ourselves a pat on the back because quite simply, with or without a survey, we ARE the best...



Keith Reading
Professional Toastmaster
Master of Ceremonies

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Mobile: 07774 860 374
Email: kgr.2@virgin.net

10% discount for DaC drivers

**Fellow of the Guild of
Professional Toastmasters**

Danny Fresco has worked with *Call Sign* since June 1997 – the same month that editor Alan Fisher took over from previous incumbent, Jerry Craig.

Danny may not be as well known as his *Taxi* columnist dad Al, but that's how he likes it. However, his layout designs have helped *Call Sign* reach tremendous heights for an in-house magazine.

Sadly, on Sunday 9 August 2009, Danny's mum, Al's wife and Ed's wife Linda's closest friend, **Carole Fresco** passed away in Barts Hospital, just six weeks and three days after being diagnosed with breast cancer. The diagnosis came on Linda's birthday and means we can never forget her.

After Carole's death, the family were greatly helped by **Chai Cancer Care** and in return Danny ran the British 10k charity run and raised around £700 for the Hendon and Redbridge-based organisation that provides so much care for Jewish cancer patients and their families. He ran down Piccadilly, through St

Call Sign's Danny runs 10k

In Memory of Carole...



Danny approaches the Cenotaph at the end of his 10k run in memory of his mum, Carole

James's to Trafalgar Square, out along Victoria Embankment, then back along the river to Westminster Bridge and Parliament Square before running into Whitehall and finishing at the Cenotaph. Danny completed the course in just over 55 minutes.

Anyone wanting to add to his sponsorship total can do so on Danny's charity page at: **www.justgiving.com/Danny-fresco**.

GOODBYE JOYCE!



Joyce with team leader Emma and Keith Cain at her retirement party

Friday 30 July was both a happy and sad occasion for **Dial-a-Cab** call taker **Joyce Jarvis**. At "59 and a bit" she had decided that the time had come to hang up her headset and sample the joys of retirement!

Joyce arrived at Brunswick House in July 1996, having just been made redundant by BT. Speaking to *Call Sign* at her retirement party, Joyce told us:

"I will never forget how DaC gave me the opportunity at a very low period in my life of becoming employed again. Being made redundant at 44 is soul-destroying, but DaC took me on. Whilst I'm looking forward to retirement, I also have some sadness at leaving behind so many friends

that I've made over the years. DaC are lovely people to work for and the staff are equally as nice."

Her first position was that of Customer Service Representative on the Night shift. Then, and having been with the Society for less than four months, Joyce was promoted to Assistant Night Shift Supervisor – no doubt her BT experience helping her with such a quick promotion. Some time later and for personal reasons, Joyce returned to the role of CSR - this time on the Evening shift. She remained in that position and shift up until her retirement, when the BoM threw a small party for Joyce as a thank-you and also presented her with a bouquet for

her excellent service to the Society.

Joyce's 80-year old mother lives with her and she intends that the pair should spend some more time together.

"There are no plans," she said, "I'm going to take it one day at a time. But I am looking forward to taking life a bit easier."

Good luck Joyce...



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Contact Steve on 07939 503 132

With the closure of the counter services at Penton Street, some words of discontent were coming into **Call Sign's** office that drivers were experiencing problems when renewing their cab Bill at designated Post Offices dotted around London via **Check & Send**. So a reporter went out onto the capital's streets to gauge the experiences of Dial-a-Cab drivers...

Ian Macdonald (C64)

had no problems at all and was happy with the service he received.

"I got my renewed Bill back within a few weeks after taking the paperwork into my local **Barnet Post Office**, but was surprised to see there was a letter enclosed stating that due to delays with the CRB checks, they reserved the right to review my status if anything untoward was found, or words to that effect. Isn't that great? I could have murdered my wife while my CRB check was still pending, but I can drive a cab in the meantime. Are they seriously going to ask me to return mine, or anyone else's Bill if they find something they don't like? They'd have to catch me first! Did I say murder my wife? Oh, dear, she'll probably murder me first for saying that!"



Anthony Bishop (J62)

filled in his renewal documents and took them into **Leyton Post Office** for them to **Check & Send**, duly handing over the £7 fee.



"I got my application back where the PCO had highlighted the boxes that had been omitted. I had to re-fill the document because a different coloured CRB form had been introduced during the time of my renewal and the old colour became unacceptable. So I went back to the Post Office, told them in no uncertain terms that they should check it again, this time properly, and I would not be handing over any more money when it should have been done competently in the first place! They gave me another receipt and I got my renewed Bill back shortly after that. That was the good news. I kept copies of my old Bill, which was just as well because I was stopped for a Badge and Bill check on the City Airport rank and had to show the TfL officer where my badge number was on the Post Office receipt! The system is new, so nobody's sure what's what. The copy of my old Bill at least proved who I was!"

Pat Murphy (J83) had his renewal documents sent to him in April, before the PCO closed its doors.

"The CRB form was green in colour and I acted quickly by filling in all the forms and physically putting the envelope through the let-

DaC Drivers and Post Office Procedure

ter box at Penton Street because I don't trust the Post Office! I made copies of everything for my own records and security and shortly after that the PCO sent me my DVLA licence etc and a covering letter for while my Bill application was being processed. Imagine my surprise when I discovered the CRB checks were ongoing, but my Bill was renewed anyway – although for which I was grateful. The letter included a clause saying they would like my Bill back if the CRB checks reveal something the PCO/TfL don't like. So I *could* have a criminal record and still be driving a cab. Well, they'd have to find me first if they wanted it back!"



hadn't recently renewed his Bill at the Post Office, but posed the question why we couldn't do it online?

"We can do banking online, get road tax, shop, almost everything else we can now do online. It's not as if TfL don't know who we are. It shouldn't be that hard, it should be kept simple."

What became clear in our mini and admittedly fairly un-scientific survey is that drivers should keep copies of everything. Also, a backlog in workloads at any agency will cause delay, so deal with all applications in good time.

According to the PCO successors, **London Taxi & Private Hire** – henceforth known as LTPH – they have stopped issuing cover notes and the renewal application advises drivers of the change in addition to informing them to retain their existing licence. The packs are said to be sent out two months in advance of the old licence expiry date and provided the application is sent back early, the new licence will be posted one week before the old one expires. Drivers should then destroy the old one. If you choose to use the Post Office, you can still keep your old licence.

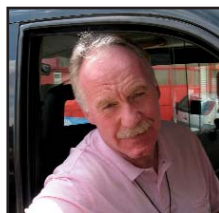
For further information, go to the TfL website at www.tfl.gov.uk or call 0845 602 7000 during office hours.

© Call Sign Magazine MMX

Len Ahearn (T62)

said he would not be using **Check & Send**, preferring instead to send all documents via Recorded Delivery.

"I live in West Sussex. It's easier for me to send in the documents when necessary. I can recall a time when you had great difficulty getting the cab taxed because the Post Office counter staff insisted on an MOT certificate! I keep copies of everything I send in and that does me."



Peter Franklin (L61) told us that although he



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"Some time ago, my family and I went on a cruise holiday. Looking through the ship's newspaper for events of the day, I spotted a lecture on **Memory** to be given by **Dominic O'Brien**, who has been crowned World Memory Champion on no less than 8 occasions and who has the ability to memorise the correct order of 54 packs of playing cards.

I thought this sounded very interesting, so I entered the theatre and was greeted by the gentleman himself! He asked for my first name and occupation (retired) and requested I take a seat. He spoke to everybody entering the theatre and fairly quickly the audience had built up to around 200.

Then the show began. Following the usual introductions, he asked that when he called out a name from memory, that person should stand up and then resume their seat. Soon everybody and their occupation had been accounted for. A very impressive start!

He then asked the audience to name ten items in the kitchen and another ten in the bedroom before calling for two volunteers. He showed them the list and demonstrated his learning technique. Both then went backstage to practice. In the meantime, Mr O'Brien asked another volunteer to shuffle a pack of cards and then show each one to him so that he could memorise them. He then quoted them back in the order they had been shown to him and in just 45 seconds! The two volunteers soon returned to show their newly found

former DaC driver Norman Kerstein raises an interesting topic..

Memory Versus The Knowledge...



World memory champion Dominic O'Brien can memorise 54 packs of playing cards in the correct order. Would his technique help with the knowledge?

memory skills to an appreciative audience.

Dominic O'Brien then went on to explain how his technique worked, whether it is a

shopping list or a list of the Kings and Queens of England and added that London taxi drivers had an excellent ability to learn.

Following the lecture, I had the pleasure of speaking to Mr O'Brien and asked him why he had picked on taxi drivers? He said that when a driver did a run, his mind could travel to the to the middle of the journey and then run up or down or even reverse or branch off. This was the basis of creating a mind map – just like the maps we study on the KoL.

I later googled and bought one of Dominic O'Brien's paperback books, learning that the brain is a big muscle that also has to be exercised regularly in order to create techniques and storage space to accommodate any information. Learning to remember, for example, before learning the Knowledge - or anything else – could provide fascinating results.

It would be interesting to look through my 50-year-old *Blue Book* to see what has changed in the runs..."

Norman Kerstein (Ex A81)

Terry's granddaughter number two!



Terry with Robyn Dawn-Angel

The difference a month makes! In the last issue, **Terry Catherall (Y90)**, together with his friend Chris McKellick and son-in-law Dean Saunders, completed a bike ride from London to Brighton in aid of the **British Heart Foundation**.

Now just four weeks on and Terry presents to the world his second granddaughter – with Deano being the dad. How the pair kept it quiet on the bike ride we'll never know!

Baby **Robyn Dawn-Angel Saunders** was born 30th June 2010, weighing in at 6lb 12 oz.

This is Daughter Laura and hubby Deano's first baby and the photo shows Terry getting his first cuddle when the baby was just hours old, with wife Dawn and mum Laura in the background.

Terry's only quote? "She's gorgeous!"

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

Kupkake's Korner



The Elephants have gone!

There were Elephants on the corners,
Elephants in the squares;
Suddenly, no warnings
Elephants everywhere!

Elephants in bright colours,
Elephants in disguise;
Elephants like flowers
Right before your eyes.

Elephants like tigers,
Elephants like sharks:
Elephants like rainbows
Elephants in the Parks.

And then they disappeared,
But I know just where they went;
I saw a load in Chelsea
where so much dough is spent.

Bought by arty- fartys,
And displayed in SW6;
Conversation points at parties
where Hooray Henrys mix...

Copyright Kupkake 2010

An interesting scenario was made in the August *Private Hire & Courier* magazine, which as the name suggests is aimed at the minicab side of the industry. Referring to a letter they received from the LCDC – not sure how pally they actually are – an editorial suggests that the London taxi trade is trying to gain support for a ban on PH vehicles using vehicles already in use as London taxis trade?

The magazine admits that *“...it would be one thing to stop private hire drivers from using TX4s or anything that looks like a black cab, but to ban them from using people-carrier style cars simply because the hackney trade now use them is completely unacceptable.”*

PH&C say that the Mercedes Vito has proved popular with the taxi drivers *“...but that is no reason for TfL to bow to any demand to stop private hire drivers from using them as well.”*

The magazine adds that PH *“...were using them first and that TfL simply cannot allow itself to be bullied!”*

Interestingly, on several pages of the minicab mag, they claim that John Mason, Director of Taxis and PH, favours the taxi trade whereas in our trade mags, we claim he does the same – but to the PH sector instead!

VITO WAR???



The minicab version of the Vito

The magazine goes on to ask why London's taxi drivers should be able to dictate which vehicles can and cannot be used by private hire drivers and ends by suggesting that *“...some sort of confrontation with the taxi industry is on the cards.”*

The suggestion was originally put forward by the RMT, which suggests that by 2015, no Vito be licensed as private hire because of the similarity to licensed taxis...

TfL defends against PH legal challenges

TfL London Taxi and Private Hire has demonstrated its commitment to take the strongest possible action against touts by successfully defending two legal challenges against its decision to revoke private hire licences.

His Honour Judge Hone rejected the appeals from the two private hire drivers at the Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey) on 16 July 2010. The two private hire drivers had initially appealed TfL's decision to revoke their licenses for touting at Magistrates' Courts and then launched a secondary appeal at Crown Court level.

TfL took the decision to revoke the private hire driver's licences after their conviction for touting offences in 2009, following an investigation by the Metropolitan Police Cab Enforcement Unit in the Safer Transport Command funded by TfL.

Director of London Taxi and Private Hire, **John Mason** said: “I am delighted that the Crown Court judge agreed that our actions were justified. It sends a very clear message to licensed drivers who think they can go out on the streets of London and illegally tout. Working with the police, we will catch you, you will get prosecuted and we will take away your licence. We will also robustly defend any legal challenges as demonstrated by these cases.”

The courts have upheld TfL's decision to revoke Private Hire licences in 90% of appeals before Magistrates' Courts and in 75 per cent of appeals before Crown Courts.



John Mason's message to touts: We will catch you, you will be prosecuted and we will take away your licence

Geely pulls out of Manganese share placing

In what many had thought was a done deal, Chinese car group Geely has pulled out of a £14m financial deal to acquire a controlling stake in Manganese Bronze Holdings. MBH shares dropped to 45p, valuing the business at £14million on the news after the company's Chinese joint venture partner pulled out of a deal that would have seen Geely take a controlling stake.



Geely Chairman Li Shufu

Geely currently owns 23% of Manganese and had been in lengthy talks over the share placing that would have provided MBH with financing in return for a 51% stake.

However, through their Chief Executive **John Russell**, Manganese stressed that its international growth plans are remaining on track and that Geely's decision would have no bearing on the two companies joint venture.

Last month Manganese said that it is likely to remain in the red for the rest of this year amid “challenging trading conditions” and anyone that drives a taxi will understand what they are. MBH did have a strong first quarter until the Icelandic volcanic ash cloud caused such a detrimental effect on taxi trading and that reverberated through to sales.

Geely is led by **Li Shufu** who earlier this year completed a deal to buy Volvo, the Swedish car maker, from Ford for \$1.8bn (£1.2bn).



Not a Penny Black, just High Speed Broadband...

I remember when I was in Australia and New Zealand some 45-50 years ago and I had to send a letter home, you wouldn't know if it had arrived there for about 5 to 7 days - if you were lucky. This was assuming you didn't forget to put the little blue airmail sticker in the top left hand corner of the envelope, otherwise you were looking at a 3 - 4 week delay!

This was at a time when airliners did not have the range or the speed they do in these modern times. In those long, forgotten days that many a reader would like to forget, planes had to land frequently for fuel, which gave passengers stopovers in different countries. Whilst you were on the plane, food might only be salads or sandwiches as there was no such thing as a microwave cooker!

The only keyboard that you had access to was on a typewriter, with a bottle of *Tipp-ex* fluid to paint out any mistakes you may have made. You also had the added task of putting one sheet of paper at a time very awkwardly in between the solid rubber roller and the metal guide. Also, there was only one typeface on the early typewriters, so there were no fancy changes to highlight a phrase or sentence.

But nowadays, with the advent of *Broadband*, *Facebook*, *Bebo*, *Twitter*, *MSN* and many more, you do not have to leave your home or office to have a face-to-face talk or visual contact with someone in another country. Broadband allows you the speed to send mail, photographs or documents to a person in America or Australia within seconds. If you really want to be flash, you can add a microphone and webcam and see the person as you talk to them.

So why book a taxi to the airport to book in 2 hours or more before the flight is due to leave, then be confined to an uncomfortable seat for a 6 hours or more journey only to end up with jet lag? The time and money that can be saved is unbelievable, so unless you are combining this with a holiday or having a junket, why put yourself through all of that hassle.

Now you can see why a lot of your trips to the flyers are disappearing; businessmen can save time and earn money quicker. They can transfer money by internet banking so there is no delay in waiting for a cheque to arrive. If the money is to purchase goods, it can be done in minutes instead of days so that the goods arrive quicker and the purchaser starts earning money faster.

So now it isn't just the flyers that are disap-

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

The World According To Tom Whitbread

DaC's answer to Victor Meldrew!

pearing, but also the shorter journeys as people do not have to go and view the purchases, this can be done with a virtual screen. This allows you to view your item from any angle and once again is done within seconds.

Dial-a-Cab clients, whilst on their computer, can also work on the same document on a white board, or they can have the equivalent to a telephone conference call with a group of people all involved in whatever is being shown on the screen. These options can be done without a run-in and 10% gratuity, so money conscious clients can cut back on their transport needs. This means that the licensed taxi trade and private hire will have less work to fight over.

Because of the lower amount of work, it is more essential to give our clients a service that is first class, a service that makes them feel like they are the most important client in the world. Doing this will make them see that although they may be paying a little more for the Dial-a-Cab service, you have to pay for excellence. Yet sadly we still have a minority of scruffy, couldn't care less drivers who believe that passengers should think themselves lucky they have got him. So what if the route was a little longer than usual? Tough...

If you know of a driver who falls into one of the above categories, let a Board Member know. It can be done in private or on an anonymous basis. But if we find you are doing it to be vicious or vindictive to another subscriber, you will be treated the same as any other person on complaint. The compliance officer's email is AllanE@dialacab.co.uk or you can email me at TomW@dialacab.co.uk. Your information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

You have to remember that these drivers do as much damage in making your work disap-

pear as does private hire going in and undercutting our prices. Do not think you are a grass or squealer; you are safeguarding the earnings that pay your mortgage, food bills, your children's upbringing and even your wife's anniversary present.

Getting together on the internet...

On a lighter note, *Facebook* allows you to gain friends around the world so that you can gain information about places you have not visited yet. The donor can supply you with information that could save you money or a wasted holiday. I have built up a group of some nice people that I converse with, whether it be idle chit chat or helpful information.

There's also *Friends Reunited* where you can find lost friends and relations; they also have firms, companies, schools, clubs, the military and various other groups that a lost friend could belong to.

Never be frightened to try something new and have a look at what these websites contain that may be of interest to you. It could widen your outlook, but remember that if you have children, keep a check on what websites they go onto, not all users of the internet are genuine. There are ways and programmes set into your computer and connected to web browsers that will give you a rundown of which websites your children are frequenting.

Be lucky in the coming months and remember that every job you reject is another nail in the radio taxi coffin.

Tom Whitbread
DaC Board member



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"It is at the edge of a petal that love waits" - William Carlos Williams

Mark Stansbury (M94) is no stranger to the pages of *Call Sign*. Readers may recall the horrific accident some time ago when his MB Vito overturned after being hit full on in the side at New Bond Street. This time though, Mark has a more pleasant experience to relate to *Call Sign* as he enacted the role of good samaritan to a friend whose Vito had suffered a punctured tyre.

"My friend's tyre was punctured by a wood screw that had been discarded in the roadway. The puncture fix bottle stuff that comes with the Vito proved totally ineffective against such a large hole and my pal was immobile," he said.

"Over dinner that evening during our shift, I offered to lend him my own spare wheel so that we could both continue to work the rest of the night. The plan was for him to get a new tyre the next day and return my wheel," he continued. "I chided him about being too mean to get the proper frame and space-saving spare wheel that can be fitted in the rear of the Vito to save him and me a whole lot of trouble, just as I did when I bought my Vito last December. But my pal joked that there was no point in him spending £300 when he could always borrow mine!"

Roaring with laughter at his own joke, Mark made a relevant point...

"We quickly fitted my spare wheel to his cab and off we went our separate ways into the night. And then it hit me! I now had no spare

THE GOOD SAMARITAN



Mark Stansbury - the good Samaritan!

wheel in case I had a flat tyre! I spent the rest of the shift keeping an uneasy lookout for roadworks and other potential troublespots just in case I had to request my wheel back!"

Finishing off, Mark told us: "It worked out alright in the end as my pal got himself sorted

and duly returned my wheel without delay. But he has been very unlucky recently by having a spate of several punctures and has had to buy two new tyres because the punctures were unrepairable. Well at least he didn't damage *my* tyre," said Mark, "but I did quietly ask myself where he roamed to, getting so many problems in such a few short weeks? And no, I still don't think he has had the spare wheel frame fitted even now! Some people just never learn," he giggled, "but I feel good for helping him out..."

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DaC drivers and their chip repairs

Last month in *Call Sign* we reported on **Autostone Chip Repair**, the new mobile windscreen repair service that attends **Dial-a-Cab's** Roman Way depot every Tuesday and Friday. This month, having received several positive reports from drivers, we decided to do a follow up on how things have been going.

First to give us an optimistic review was **David Lessman (D19)** whose cab screen had suffered a nasty chip in the lower left corner. Our reporter caught him



David Lessman

just as he was checking the fix with **Mark Davis**, the Managing Director of Autostone Chip Repair.

"The service is brilliant," he enthused, "no sooner had I driven in than I was attended to right away. My cab bodywork was protected with a blanket and the damaged windscreen repaired quickly. I've no idea how it happened, except that I was moving in traffic, heard a ping and guessed immediately what it was."

Within a few minutes of David leaving Roman Way, **Stuart Miller (N01)** arrived, expecting to have to wait for his three chips to be attended to. In fact he didn't have to wait long at all before receiving attention from Mark Davis.

"I was on the A13 following a lorry, when I

heard three pings in quick succession from the front of the cab and I knew immediately what had happened," he explained. "To pick up three windscreen chips in one incident is a little shattering" he quipped, grateful that the verdict from Mark Davis confirmed that all three splinters could be repaired.

When shown the finished repairs, Stuart was amazed at how well they all turned out. Rubbing his finger over the fixes, he marvelled at the smoothness of the repaired surfaces.

"Wow," he exclaimed, "that's brilliant!" While Stuarts' repairs were curing, another hopeful, **Tom Macdonald (Y76)** came into Roman Way, concerned that his splinter was irreparable.

"It happened just a few days ago while I was going out on the M4 and got hit by a stone from a lorry travelling in the nearside lane," he explained. "I was moving, err... briskly shall we say? I heard the impact on my windscreen and was half expecting the glass to shatter as I was bowling - I mean *going* along," he added, quickly correcting himself!

"I checked out the damage when I reached my destination and it seemed to be safe enough to drive on, but I did have a bit of a panic when it occurred. However, this repair



Stuart Miller

service is brilliant, quick, convenient and I've been spared the expense of a new windscreen!"

Tom drove out of Roman Way with a big grin across his face!



Tom Macdonald

The most glowing praise though, came from **Jonathan Raymond (S39)**, whose cab windscreen had suffered several serious problems, necessitating a replacement windscreen. We spoke to Jonathan on the phone.

"I had previously telephoned a local auto glass repair company who answered my call with a simple *Yup*, which did not impress me very much and when they quoted me about three hours to replace the glassware, I was even less enthusiastic! So I made an appointment at Roman Way for the new windscreen to be fitted because I realised it had to be ordered beforehand. I drove into Roman Way and the cab was immediately worked on by three technicians. I was in and out, new screen all sorted, in just 38 minutes," he told *Call Sign*. "I was so impressed, I wrote 'fantastic service' across the insurance paperwork after I had signed it!"

The Autostone Chip Repair Service visits our Roman Way Depot on Tuesday and Friday or can be contacted on: 0800 612 7950 or 07971 538 544.

For those new to **Dial-a-Cab**, **Call Sign** has been following the progress of West Ham Boxing Club's **Sam Bezzina** - son of Dial-a-Cab driver **Dean Bezzina (M10)** - and his ambition to box for England. But how it came about is a story of real grit and determination. Dad Dean takes up the story...

"Barnsley's Metrodrome was the venue for the 2010 Junior ABA finals – the event Sam has been training for all season. With temperatures soaring and 1000 people packed into the arena, this was going to be a tough task for all the competitors – but especially Sam. It was extremely hot, humid and very uncomfortable and these guys were about to give it their all under intense lighting. Sam decided to have a cold shower prior to his bout...

Sam, in the *class 4 U57kg* classification boxed **Macaulay McGowan** from Jimmy Egan's BC. It was a lively first round with Sam struggling to find form against his awkward opponent. Sam was losing after the 1st round and had to chase it in rounds 2 and 3. Although Sam finished strongly, it was McGowan who took the title winning 17 - 12.

Fortunately for Sam, the tri-nations were to be held in England, which meant England would have two representatives at each weight category, so both Macaulay McGowan and Sam Bezzina were selected to box for England.

The Institute of sport in Sheffield is where Sam went to get his first chance to proudly box for his country in an England vest. But disaster struck – it was announced that the tri-nations was to be boxed over three days, but on the very same days that Sam had his final GCSE exams! Sam needs the grades for entry to college where he wants to take his A levels. In reality his education has to come first. I spoke to Sam's sports teacher at school who knows how important Sam's boxing is to him and he offered to arrange transport after the exams from Sam's school to the airport, with a plane to Sheffield. Unfortunately Sam would still not make the weigh-in on time, so after much deliberation and a tremendous amount of effort from several of Sam's teachers, they managed to have all of Sam's exams rearranged so he could take them in a Sheffield college.

Tri Nations

Day one in Sheffield meant an early start with Sam getting up at 5:45am to weigh-in at 6am. Straight after making the weight, Sam was taken to college to sit one of his exams. After an hour and a half of educational pressure, it was time to get back to the Institute of Sport to focus on whom and at what time he was boxing. The draw had been made and Sam was up against Welsh champion **Chris Marden**. It was now some 14 hours since the weigh-in and it was fight time. Would he feel tired? Not at all! Sam dominated his opponent from the first bell and the longer the fight went on, the more comfortable Sam was looking. Combination punches, speed and power proved to much for Marden and at the final bell, Sam had won and booked his place in the Finals with a convincing 25pts to 6 victory.

Day 2 in Sheffield was much of the same. A 5:30 start for the weigh-in, then a cab ride to the exam rooms for his final exam. This was a

SAM WINS SILVER FOR ENGLAND!

In a race against time with his final GCSE exams...



Sam leads with a big right



On the podium with his silver medal

very big day for Sam; he was looking for the double - an A* for his exam and a gold medal for England. He was up against **Mark Mckeown**, the Scottish champion who has a very impressive record with many of his wins coming by way of stoppage. Sam and I had watched him box on day 1 and as his record suggested, he was a strong talented lad who would surely be Sam's toughest test to date.

Sam's game plan was to go on the offensive from the off and give Mckeown a fight he would remember. The first bell sounded and both lads raced to the centre of the ring and began unloading with heavy shots, neither lad wanting to take a backward step. They continued until the end of the first round with Mckeown taking it by 9pts to 6. Out for the second and both lads continued at pace, using the whole ring this time with both boys looking evenly matched. Sam had no choice but to up

the pace, but this left him vulnerable and the second round ended with Sam trailing by 5 pts at 21 to 16. Out for the third and final round and with gold slipping away from Sam, he needed to pull out the performance of his life. For the next two minutes Sam was chasing the match, giving it his all and more. The crowd was on its feet cheering a spectacular display of skill fitness and courage by both lads.

Unfortunately for Sam, the final bell sounded with the score 34 pts to 23 in favor of Mckeown. Sam picked up a Silver medal for England and should be very proud of himself, certainly we all are! He boxed superbly and I guess it will give him something to aim for next season, with a possible rematch against Mckeown being one to look forward to. We have to wait for his exam results, but if he puts half as much effort into them it will be A* all round."



LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE...

With Tom Quigley

Taxis and TfL???

Are we just outsiders paying in? Have you sat in your cab and looked and wondered if we are part of Transport for London? Easy visible items to us such as when you drive in a bus / taxi lane, the sign on the ground states *Bus Lane* and not *Bus / Taxi Lane*. Is signing the road that much more expensive? You could argue that it should add cycles and M/Cs too, however these groups do not pay a fee to TfL who are responsible for the red routes. When you come to some of these junctions, the signs state *Buses only*. This leaves a grey and dangerous area for us, do we leave the bus lane at that point and endure the abuse of other drivers believing we have cut them up, or stay there and be subject to possible traffic fines and abuse by bus drivers?

Log onto the TfL route planner and see how routes offer alternative forms of transport while omitting taxis – remembering that our fees help pay for this service. When you log onto a computer, you are not means or disability tested. The website should bear this in mind as it may well be easier and cheaper for a family with a pushchair or someone in a wheelchair going from Madame Tussauds to the London Zoo to take a taxi. Route planners instruct passengers to take an 8-minute walk to catch a 274 bus, then alight 12 minutes later for a 2-minute walk to the Zoo. That doesn't include waiting time for the bus. A taxi is probably 8 minutes door to door.

As a visitor to London, how do you know where to access a taxi? We're not mentioned on the London Underground map, there are no symbols or signs to inform the passengers / tourists of where taxi ranks are. They could argue about the cost of changing all the Underground maps, but I argue that they've done it before with logo changes for TfL and the Mayor of London logo in addition to the recent zone colourings that have all been added to the maps. Also, as most passengers / tourists look online and print out a PDF form or even download them to their phone, the least that TfL can do is change the website or update *Apps* on mobiles to include us and importantly, keep the public up to date...

Cycle hire scheme and getting fit...

Has Boris unwittingly provided we Taxi drivers with a very cost effective way of keeping fit?

Having looked at the TfL website for the Barclays rent-a-bike scheme, annual membership registration is £45 along with a £3 Key

fee. The first 30 minutes is free and only £1 for an hour hire. This could enable us to park up on a new resting rank (I don't believe there is a rule saying you cannot exercise during your break), hire a bike, have a quick ride around one of the parks and return it for free - or a £1 if you feel energetic enough! This works out a less than 15 pence per day. So look on the positive side of the scheme and use it to get fit...

Getting rid of old cabs or old cabbies...

It appears to me that those involved in the Mayoral policy of age limits to cabs seem to be overlooking a serious issue that could impact the income potential and force a large percentage of drivers into retirement or even unemployment. Should this ruling come to force, the dilemma facing drivers in their 50s, 60s and beyond is whether they should remain in the industry?

This group of owner drivers (I confess to being 54 with an X-Reg TX1), having worked to finance the vehicle and who with pride spent much of their hard-earned income maintaining and running their taxis ensuring they pass the already stringent standards for overhauls and Conditions of Fitness and then having paid out around £2000 for exhaust modifications, now find that the whole exercise was pointless and that their cabs are virtually worthless.

As proprietors, they have financed the PCO (is it me or does TPH somehow relate to tupence ha'penny? I must be getting old), employed numerous mechanics, kept trade suppliers in work and made the profits of trade papers through adverts viable. I could go on and believe me, meet me on a rank and

I will because in the present economic crisis, the finances just don't add up.

As an example, take a 60-year-old driver driving an early TX1, Fairway or Metro who is looking forward to taking it easy, working fewer hours and possible early or semi-retirement. He/she now faces the prospect of financing a new cab that will have a large depreciation value along with a low trade-in value for their existing vehicle (I was offered £4000 for mine) and working a 5-shift week if they're lucky in the present climate.

To buy with a loan or rent, either way means they will have to find each and every week around £200, another £15 towards the colossal £750 tax to put a new TX4 on the road, add fuel of £100 plus another £50 for the nominal costs of meal breaks etc. And all this before they even show an income. It adds up to increasing their time on the road and with rank space at a premium, this will increase congestion and produce more emissions.

I am not ignoring other age groups and I know we all have our own financial and family commitments, but the simple fact of life is you can buy most things, but you cannot buy years or hide from the fact that as you get older, your health problems increase. In an industry where records show it can be the most stressful job in London, finance companies will make the decision on this basis and choose not to lend or make insurance / medical cover so expensive that many drivers will be forced to lose their jobs.

Alongside all that, the present government's desire to increase the retirement age to 70 years old will leave many of our colleagues in a state of limbo...

Tom Quigley (Y33)

Patsy Emerick

Call Sign is sad to report the death of **Patsy Emerick**, who had at one time owned the **Cockney Cab Garage** in Bohemia Place, Mare Street, where his son Tony was also one of the mechanics. Many **Dial-a-Cab** drivers used the garage.

Whilst owning the garage, the floor was painted and always spotless with any oil got being mopped up immediately. The toilets and office were also kept in immaculate condition – something of a rarity in taxi garages.

Out on his cab, Patsy was easily spotted when his British Racing Green Fairway was seen with its wood panelling - even on the dashboard and along the doors. He was a great one for golfing and adored Jazz.

Patsy was laid to rest at Basildon Crematorium on 19 August. Our condolences to his family..

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 a 1960 ODRTS advertising card that was put through prospective passenger's doors by drivers. It contained an approximate price list aimed at those who thought taxis were a "posh" persons transport!



APRIL 1960

These prices are an example and inclusive for a taxi carrying up to four passengers for the single journey from the Central London area and will vary accordingly to the district.

	£	s	d
London Airport	2	0	0
Blackbush Airport	4	0	0
Gatwick Airport	3	2	6
Ascot Races	3	0	0
Epsom Races	2	5	0
Brighton	5	10	0
Clacton	8	0	0
Dover	8	5	0
Oxford	6	10	0
Southampton	8	10	0

Southend	4	5	0
Stratford-on-Avon	9	10	0
Tilbury	3	10	0
Windsor	2	10	0
Richmond	1	5	0
Harrow	1	10	0
Royal Docks	1	10	0

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GO TAKE A RUN, DIVYESH!

Divyesh Ruparelia (V59) is a man who cannot see or hear of a terminally ill child suffering without trying to help. But he has found a way to help combat this by raising money to realise the dream of a lifetime for that child and perhaps help them to believe that the world is not all bad.

On Saturday 11th September at Hackney Marshes, Divyesh will be completing a 5K run and donating any sponsorship he raises to **Dial-a-Dream**. This charity has children waiting for their dreams to be fulfilled and if any **Call Sign** reader would like to sponsor Divyesh now or after the event, go online to **www.CAFonline.org**, search for Dial-a-Dream and you'll find Divyesh. As a UK taxpayer, if you fill in your details when donating then the Charity Aid Foundation claims back the 28p tax paid on each pound. This then goes to help realise a dream for that terminally ill child, one that sadly could be his or her last.

Next year Divyesh hopes to raise even more money for Dial-a-Dream by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. This really is a driver who hates to see a child suffer.

Email TomW@dialacab.co.uk if you would like more details or information about Dial-a-Dream...



Divyesh is running 5k for Dial a Dream

FRED WHITE



Call Sign is sad to report the death of former Dial-a-Cab driver **Fred "Chalky" White** at the age of 74. Many DaC drivers will remember Fred through his always-smart appearance and immaculately clean taxi. He had been driving a cab for 44 years and drove for all the radio circuits spending around 5 years on Dial-a-Cab whilst we were at Shirland Road.

Interestingly, Fred's wife had worked at one of DaC's old accounts, Classical Music Impresario, **Harold Holt** and used to tell her manager how good DaC were until eventually they opened an account – one that we kept for many years. Fred's chocolate coloured 'Perkins' taxi could often be seen outside the account as he waited for his wife to finish work to take her home.

Our condolences go to Fred's family...



Important Information for Taxi (and PH) Drivers

As part of the 2010 *National Fraud Initiative* data matching exercise, Transport for London is required by law to release information about licensed taxi and private hire vehicle drivers to the Audit Commission. In October 2010 we will provide the Audit Commission with the name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number (if available) of every licensed taxi and PHV driver.

Since 1996, the Audit Commission has run the NFI, an exercise that matches electronic

data within and between audited bodies to prevent and detect fraud. This includes police authorities, local probation boards and fire and rescue authorities as well as local councils. Further information about the NFI is available on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nfi.

Data matching involves comparing computer records held by one body against other computer records held by the same or another body to see how far they match. This is usually personal information. Computerised data matching allows potentially fraudulent claims and payments to be identified. Where a match is found it indicates that there is an inconsistency that requires further investigation. No assumption can be made as to whether there is fraud, error or other explanation until an investigation is carried out.

The use of data by the Audit Commission in the data matching exercise is carried out with

statutory authority under its powers in Part 2A of the Audit Commission Act 1998. It does not require the consent of the individuals concerned under the Data Protection Act 1998. Data matching by the Audit Commission is subject to a Code of Practice, which can be found at:

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nfi/pages/codeofdatamatchingpractice.aspx.

Further information on the Audit Commission's legal powers and the reasons why it matches particular information can be found on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/fairprocessing.

TfL considers the security of data as very important and will ensure that the data is transferred securely to the Audit Commission.

John Mason

Director, Taxi and Private Hire

The Name's Addison, Dean Addison... *just call me 003...*

"Yes, I've had three James Bond's in my taxi," **Dean Addison (K57)** nonchalantly told **Call Sign** recently.

All at once? Asked our reporter incredulously. "No, over the years," Dean replied quickly, obviously unshaken by the mega celebrities he has transported across London.

In the true tradition of discretion, for which **Dial-a-Cab** drivers are renowned, Dean was a little reticent to divulge trip details or destinations, but once assured of **Call Sign's** tact, he offered an insight into his travels with the 007s of the film world.

"There was **Sean Connery** and his wife fairly recently," said Dean, "they went from the Belgravia area to the cinema on Fulham Road. That was quite funny actually because although it was an account trip, Sean started to pay me!" A smile crept across Dean's face as he recalled the incident.

"When I told him the fare was taken care of, he quietly said ok and walked off to catch up with his wife who was wandering across the pavement towards the cinema door! I don't think it was any sort of premiere or opening night," Dean continued, "he was just a normal guy going to the cinema."

Taking a breath and making sure that Miss Moneybags wasn't around, Dean moved on to his encounter with JB number 2, **Roger Moore**. "Now he was a whole different ball game," Dean said, his face lighting up as he spoke. "I had stopped at traffic lights on Old Church Street when Roger and his son came over to me and asked for the White Elephant Club in Curzon Street. My wife is a big fan of his and so I politely asked for his autograph for my spouse, and he was happy to give it. He



Dean Addison - aka 003

has the most beautiful speaking voice, you know, very clear. And as it was a street trip, he paid me."

And the third James Bond, our female reporter asked tentatively, her mind racing through the cast of hunky actors that have played the British secret agent and by now quivering with the thought of who it could be.

"He was **Timothy Dalton**," Dean replied, "we went from the Chelsea area to somewhere in Chiswick as I recall," his eyes deep in concentration as he tried to remember the destination.

"He was a really nice chap, made a bit of small talk, quite chatty actually and with no

airs or graces. Really very down to earth, yes, a nice chap," Dean concluded on a positive note. "You'll have to excuse me now, I think that might be **Pierce Brosnan** over there looking for a cab!"

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Since last year, **Call Sign** has run several articles about **Andy Apsey** and the **Barking Physical Therapy Centre**. **Graham Ellis (S95)** was the **Dial-a-Cab** driver who introduced Andy to this magazine and its readers.

Graham was facing a major operation on his back and was told that if it didn't work, not only would he never drive a taxi again, but he could also end up in a wheelchair. Then Graham met a fellow driver and mentioned his back problem. The driver recommended physiotherapy with someone he had been using for some time and who had helped his back problem. Ready to try anything, Graham went to the Barking Physical Therapy Centre and saw Andy Apsey.

Graham told **Call Sign** at the time that he was in constant pain, unable to work or even walk more than a few steps and that his GP inferred he would have to learn to live with the situation. Then after being given Andy's name, he went to Barking and said that even after just one treatment, he felt some improvement. Graham has been going to Andy for physiotherapy treatment on a regular basis ever since and is now pain free and able to work.

Next up was DaC Chairman **Brian Rice**, who for a long period had a shoulder problem that meant he even needed help to put a jacket on and as someone who wears a suit five days a week, that comes to a lot of jackets! He read about Andy in **Call Sign**, made an appointment and from day one, his shoulder began improving and today he no longer has the problem.

This magazine has heard from other drivers too numerous to mention who say they are grateful to Andy Apsey. Astonishingly, Andy is blind and although he has a wicked sense of humour, visits to the Barking Physical Therapy Centre are professional, but relaxed and informal.

Because cab drivers seem prone to back and general muscular problems, **Call Sign** spoke to Andy to find out more about the **Barking Physical Therapy Centre**. He told us that he qualified as a physiotherapist in 1983 and established his own physiotherapy and complementary medicine centre based in Barking in 1994 after 16 years working within the NHS. Over those years he has helped numerous taxi drivers with their various physical problems, having developed a technique of working using a combination of massage, manipulations, advice on exercises and posture and the use of up-to-date electrotherapy equipment back-up with evidence based research on its effectiveness in the promotion of tissue repair.

Andy has also undertaken further qualifications in massage and gained a diploma in sports massage from the London School of Sports Massage (with honours). Many of the cab drivers he has helped in the past with specific problems now attend on a regular basis to have neck and back massage, which has various therapeutic benefits as well as giving the opportunity to discover potential issues before they become problems.

He has completed an orthopaedic medicine course and gained expert skills in manipulations for neck, back and joint problems as well as deep transverse frictions massage for ligaments, muscle and tendon injuries, which

The Amazing Andy Apsey



Graham Ellis thought he may never have driven a cab again until going to Andy Apsey

he has used to great effect. All the therapists that work at Andy's centre are experts in their own right and fully qualified. They are encouraged to attend regular courses so that they can offer the best possible service to clients. He considers personal professional development to be essential.

For those interested, in addition to physiotherapy, the centre offers acupuncture, shiat-



Brian Rice couldn't put a jacket on without pain before going to see Andy

su, Indian head massage, osteopathy, reflexology, sport and remedial massage.

If you think Andy and his team can help you, the Barking Physical Therapy Centre is at 90 Longbridge Road, Barking, IG11 8SF. If you are interested in more details or want to make an appointment, see the ad in this issue. Andy Apsey gives a huge 30% discount on treatments for Dial-a-Cab drivers.

Mark Fryer leaves MBH

LTI parent company Manganese Bronze Holdings PLC have announced that Group Finance and Business Development Director, Mark Fryer is to take up a new position outside the Group and has stepped down from the Board.

John Russell, Chief Executive of MBH, said: "Mark Fryer has resigned to embark on the next stage of his career, having made significant contributions in his eight years with the Group, most notably leading the negotiations of the JV agreement with Geely Group. We thank Mark for the skill and effort he has applied to the benefit of Manganese Bronze and we wish him well for the future."

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It was a warm summer's day as **Daniel Young (F45)** pulled up beside a passenger waiting on the street. The man popped his head through Daniel's open nearside window to give his destination and almost as an afterthought, asked Daniel if he could smell gas?

"I had smelt a whiff of what seemed like mains gas that's true," Daniel told **Call Sign**, "I had the aircon going full blast and decided it was perhaps a local leak from the street that the aircon had directed into my cabin. But as we moved out of the area, the smell was still there, which made me convinced it was the aircon unit, so I turned it off. But it was to no avail, the stink stayed with me."

With the merest sign of a smile, Daniel continued to describe the mystery. "I went to my garage, **CF Taxis** in Cudworth Street and while I waited, they took my cab to their own aircon specialist who serviced the system and diagnosed that the smell was not the fault of the cooling system. This was good news, but it was also not such good news because I still had the odour."

"However, I have an extended warranty

Anyone Smell Gas???



Daniel has finally got rid of the smell

with M&O so I went back to them to see if they could help. Their letter stated that it was my *economical driving technique* that had caused a build-up of deposits within the

Exhaust Gas Recirculator and it would need to be thoroughly cleaned out," he said.

"So back I went to Cudworth Street. They stripped and cleaned out this EGR thingy and bingo, the smell had gone! Now my cab runs beautifully and smoother and it's even a bit quicker too," he said with the same smile as earlier.

"So it seems my economical driving technique, namely a light touch on the throttle pedal, is not necessarily the way to treat a TX4. Apparently - and this goes for the TX1 and 2 as well - the cab needs a good throttle opening 'whizz' every now and again to clear the exhaust deposits from the system. However, I think I'll do that when I'm on my own as I doubt if passengers will appreciate me rolling them about on the back seat as I tell them about 'clearing out my EGR!' Then Daniel drove off laughing...!

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Are You Struggling with Obesity?

...and don't mind the world watching while you lose at least 10 stone?

If the above applies to you, then a documentary series that is about to be made by a TV production company may well be of interest to you. The programme will follow a group of men and women for one year as they aim to dramatically change their bodies and their lives with the help of a dedicated team - including personal trainers, nutritionists and round the clock medical supervision - and all at absolutely no cost to you. Consider it a boot camp coming to your own home!

Eyeworks are currently looking for people

to take part and are hoping to find some **Dial-a-Cab** drivers who are ready and willing to make a dramatic change to their lives. **Eyeworks** have asked **Call Sign** to see whether you, your friends or perhaps someone in your family would like to be considered for this amazing opportunity to change things once and for all.

One of the UK's major broadcasters is to

launch this brand new weight loss TV show that will take body transformation to a whole new level.

So if you know someone whose size stops them living life to the full or whose weight is putting their health in jeopardy and feel they just can't lose the weight on your own, then this programme could dramatically change their lives.

Eyeworks are looking for men and women for this brand new series. Applicants must be 18 or over and UK Residents

Interested? Email Amy at obesityproject@eyeworks.tv or call her on 0207 644 0064...

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

Call Sign En La Belle France

The Bean Machine... anyone for coffee?

It's a great passion of mine – you can buy some really good stuff at the little bars and cafés in the south of France – the perfect start to the day!

But every time I have a mooch around the City of London these days, I am staggered by the explosion of seemingly endless new chains of coffee bars opening up all over the place. It seems that you cannot turn another corner without glimpsing yet another Starbucks, Costa or Caffè Nero.

Let's face it, all these places provide overpriced weak coffee, yet they are in your face every which way you move. Of course they are convenient for the addict, and that probably includes many taxi drivers who get snared in the ever-growing habit of patronising these places.

I got used to drinking really good coffee along the Mediterranean and if you really want a decent cuppa in London



while pushing the droshky around, then in my experience you won't do better than to grab a takeaway from **The Espresso Room** in Great Ormond St or the **Monmouth Coffee House** in Stoney Street. But the next time you are gagging in the City, take my advice and hang your Cab up on either the Sweetings rank or Temple of Mithras rank, both in Queen Victoria Street and walk over to **The Bean Machine**.

When I first glanced over at the

mobile coffee unit sponsored by Illy parked up outside St Mary Aldermary Church, I didn't really give it much of a thought at first, but as usual I gave it a try. Stuart is the name of the guy that has 'taken a punt' – having spent a small fortune on the kit and then asked the vicar to rent him a pitch. He now provides what in my opinion is one of the best cups of coffee in the square mile. If I wanted a double shot latte from Costa in Bow Lane it would set me back £2.65, the same drink with Stuart not only tastes hugely better, but only costs £1.90.

Don't just take my word – give him a try. He's there from 7am till 6pm, making the short trek each day from his home in De Beauvoir Town. Mine's a large latte – no sugar, thanks!

Vive la café...

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

Taxi Overhauls at SGS

NEW ADVISORY NOTICE SYSTEM

A new warning system is to be trialed by SGS on behalf of LTPH. This will allow some 'fail' notices on taxis that do not involve safety, to be replaced by an 'advisory' notice for the owner to get the work done. The Director of Taxi & Private Hire, John Mason, told **Call Sign**: "One of the key objectives for London Taxi and Private Hire is to ensure that we apply a consistent, common sense and reasonable approach to all our licensing activities and ensure drivers and operators comply with the relevant rules and regulations that govern the licensing of vehicles as London taxis. To this end and following extensive discussions with various members of the taxi trade, TfL is pleased to announce the implementation of an advisory notice system for taxi vehicle licensing inspections.

This new vehicle advisory system will commence on 24 August, providing a formal and consistent approach for LTPH when making decisions on the roadworthiness and condition of taxis. Vehicle inspectors, working for our vehicle licensing service provider (SGS), will now be able to use the electronic

inspection system to identify whether certain failure items should be classified as a "pass advisory" or a "failure". The selection of the "advisory" option for certain (non-safety related) failure items during a licensing inspection will result in the issuing of licence plates accompanied by an advisory notice. The notice will inform the vehicle owner/driver of the defect, which may require attention and rectification within a reasonable amount of time.

Every effort has been made to ensure we provide this additional flexibility through the annual licensing inspection without reducing and/or compromising the standards, quality and safety of the vehicles used by the travelling public.

A similar system for on-street compliance inspections is being developed and will be implemented in September.

As part of the ongoing development of the annual licensing inspection process, we have also aligned a number of the existing LTPH inspection standards with the more accepted current VOSA MOT standards. An updated and amended

version of the taxi inspection manual, which incorporates the new system can be found on www.tfl.gov.uk/tph.

The components and system areas that have been amended to allow the use of the advisory notice option are:

Auxiliary front lamp	Ashtray
Engine oil leak	Interior fixtures/fitings
Coolant system	Cushion / upholstery
Boot lid	Chassis under body
Coach lines	Reservoir levels
Boot floor	Exhaust assembly
Window markings	Gearbox oil leaks
Driver mirror	Spare wheel
Badges / motifs	

We will keep this new system under review and amend or adjust if necessary. We hope that drivers and operators will welcome this new approach to annual inspections and are happy to receive and comments or suggestions regarding it via tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk."

John Mason
Director, Taxi & Private Hire

Mailshot

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

Adios Steve?

Membership of all radio taxi circuits is essentially transient. Members come and go. Some stay on for longer than others. Some achieve high profiles while others prefer a degree of anonymity. I joined Dial-a-Cab in 1979 (then known as LORDS) and apart from a brief break in my membership, have been a shareholder ever since. Apart from giving me work, the Society has also given me the opportunity to meet some really nice people and establish enduring friendships.

Prior to Data Despatch, the 'social' aspect of our Society was unique. Drivers knew each other and even Board members had a healthy camaraderie with the members. Dispatchers had cultivated their own style of dispatching and in many cases even knew the face behind the call sign. Alas, Data Despatch put paid to all of that. A more objective and callous style of conducting business is now the norm. Drivers are merely call signs, symbols on the computer monitor - nothing more, nothing less. Not for a moment am I saying we should go back to the pre-Data Despatch era, I am merely lamenting the price paid for progress.

Recently, I had to adjust my allegiance to Dial-a-Cab from a shareholder to a Journeyman. This was necessitated by the fact that I spend more time out of the UK than in it. Which brings me to the reason for writing this letter. I would like to thank all the members of the Society who have given me their time and assistance. Particularly the many with whom I spent blissful time "on the Finsbury." To BMs past and present who have been particularly helpful, to those in the control room and administration who so unstintingly helped me with my queries and above all, particular gratitude to the Society which gave me the opportunity to meet my wife Yvonne who had worked at Brunswick House as a Call Taker on the night shift. Now you know why I enjoyed dispatching so much!

I wish the Society continued success and it is my passionate desire that it continues to trade as a Licensed Taxi circuit for many years to come.

Steve Shaller (F34)

Computer repairs

Dear Alan,

I was having trouble with my computer and tried ringing Bob Crabtree who advertises in the *Call Sign* ad: *PC running slowly?* He was a very big help so thank you very much.
Jon Trevor (W94)

Thanks for that Jon. I've used him as well and found him to be very good at a very reasonable price ...Ed

Getting stressed over PCNs

Hi Alan

I keep getting PCNs while setting down or picking up at Primrose Street EC2. Ok, if it's a radio trip then I can hand it in, but sometimes it is a street job and it really is stressing me out. Help!

Do you know any contact details for the European Court of Human Rights? I keep appealing but to no avail and feel like I'd rather go to jail than pay. If successful, I'd want compensation for the stress caused. Can you help?

Stephen Field (F68)

Stephen, you sound ready to burst! If you are serious about the European Court of Human Rights, then you can get everything you need at <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr>. However, the last I heard there was a delay of around 2 years and only 1 case in 20 was deemed "worthy" of being put forward! Perhaps a better idea would be to email Dial-a-Cab's parking expert Barrie Segal for his advice. He has now saved us a fortune in fines. Don't forget that he isn't a cab driver and doesn't know the situation of where yellow lines etc are placed. But he wins most of his cases! You will also have to be prepared to go to arbitration because appealing to councils is a waste of time. Barrie is at barrie@appealnow.com ...Ed

Nissen Hut

Dear Alan,

Can I just say that your war of words with these blokes on *The Nissen Hut* is becoming a bit boring. Why do you take any notice of what they say? I doubt whether half a dozen people read TNH, but every time you rise to the bait it just encourages them to write more crap.

Terry Farmer.(ext T55J)

Thanks for that Terry, but would you deprive me of some enjoyment! It's also interesting to hear that you estimate 6 people read it and I just wondered who the extra one was? I also received your email over a month after TNH put out their rubbish about me and Dial-a-Cab and the same article was still there. Either the author has been sacked or the group behind it have given up through embarrassment! ...Ed



Parking on ranks

Hi Alan,

I was sorry to hear about Martin Leat's (P35) cab being involved in a 'hit and run' on the Sheraton Park Towers Hotel (*Aug Call Sign*). However, this is a working rank, so he shouldn't have parked there in the first place. Will he be letting his insurance company know he was illegally parked?

Steve Bryant (Y41)

Hi Steve, I have always been irritated by drivers who park on working ranks and while I agree with you that he shouldn't really have left it there, it was just for a few minutes and the driver that hit him should have left his details on the cab - especially as it was another DaC taxi. Martin will be covered because being against cab rules doesn't make it illegal ...Ed

Memory v The Knowledge

Dear Alan

Greetings from the wilds of the New Forest. I thought you might like this for *Call Sign* regarding Memory versus the Knowledge (*see elsewhere in this issue ...Ed*). From personal experience I can agree how the Knowledge can help you with other aspects in life in addition to cabbaging. In 1956 I started at Alex Samuels (Mr Traffic) Garage in Shoreditch. Once I had finished my night shift, along with another driver we would catch the last night bus home.

After some time of following the same routine, the other driver said that he wanted a better life. His wife was a nurse and with her help he wanted to go into the medical profession.

Around four years later, I was in Bart's Hospital having a spinal operation and I met him again, yes, he was now a junior doctor! After some cheerful banter, he said that studying the Knowledge was harder to do and it had helped him with his studies by treating the human body like a map of London!

In my opinion, Alan, I feel that the media should be made more aware of the Knowledge and how it works in 21st century London. I wonder what Dial-a-Cab drivers would say about it? It should provide good material for an interesting and lively article.

Thank you for a magazine that is witty, interesting, engaging and a joy to read.

Norman Kerstein (ex A81)

If you have any comments after reading Norman's article in this issue, feel free to send any comments to Call Sign ...Ed

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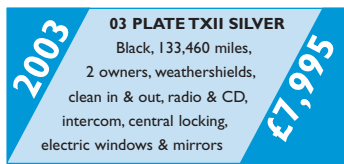
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2 owners, full service history,
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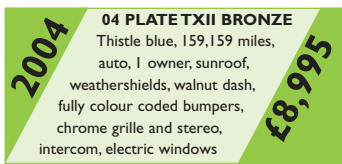
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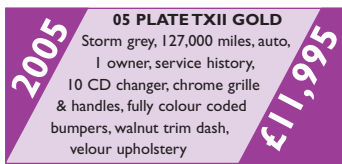
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power steering, remote central
locking, electric windows,
intercom, CD, new carpets
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£13,595



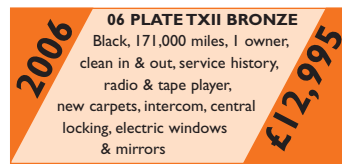
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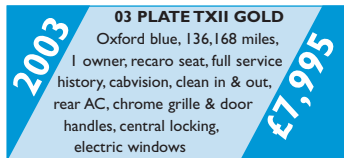
2004 04 PLATE TX11 BRONZE
Thistle blue, 159,159 miles,
auto, 1 owner, sunroof,
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fully colour coded bumpers,
chrome grille and stereo,
intercom, electric windows
£8,995



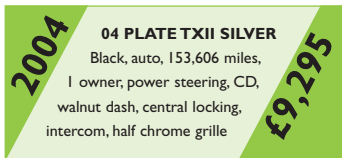
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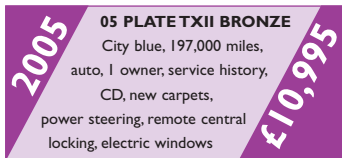
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locking, electric windows
& mirrors
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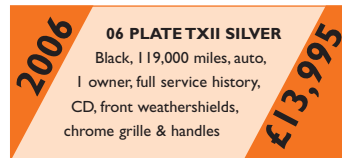
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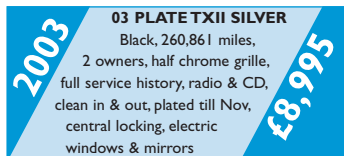
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1 owner, power steering, CD,
walnut dash, central locking,
intercom, half chrome grille
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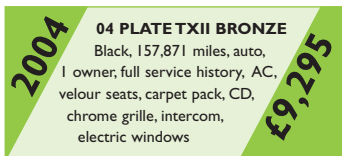
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City blue, 197,000 miles,
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CD, new carpets,
power steering, remote central
locking, electric windows
£10,995



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1 owner, full service history,
CD, front weathershields,
chrome grille & handles
£13,995



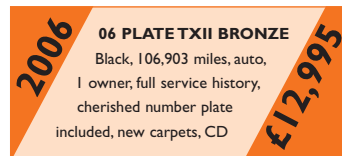
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Black, 260,861 miles,
2 owners, half chrome grille,
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central locking, electric
windows & mirrors
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