

July 2011

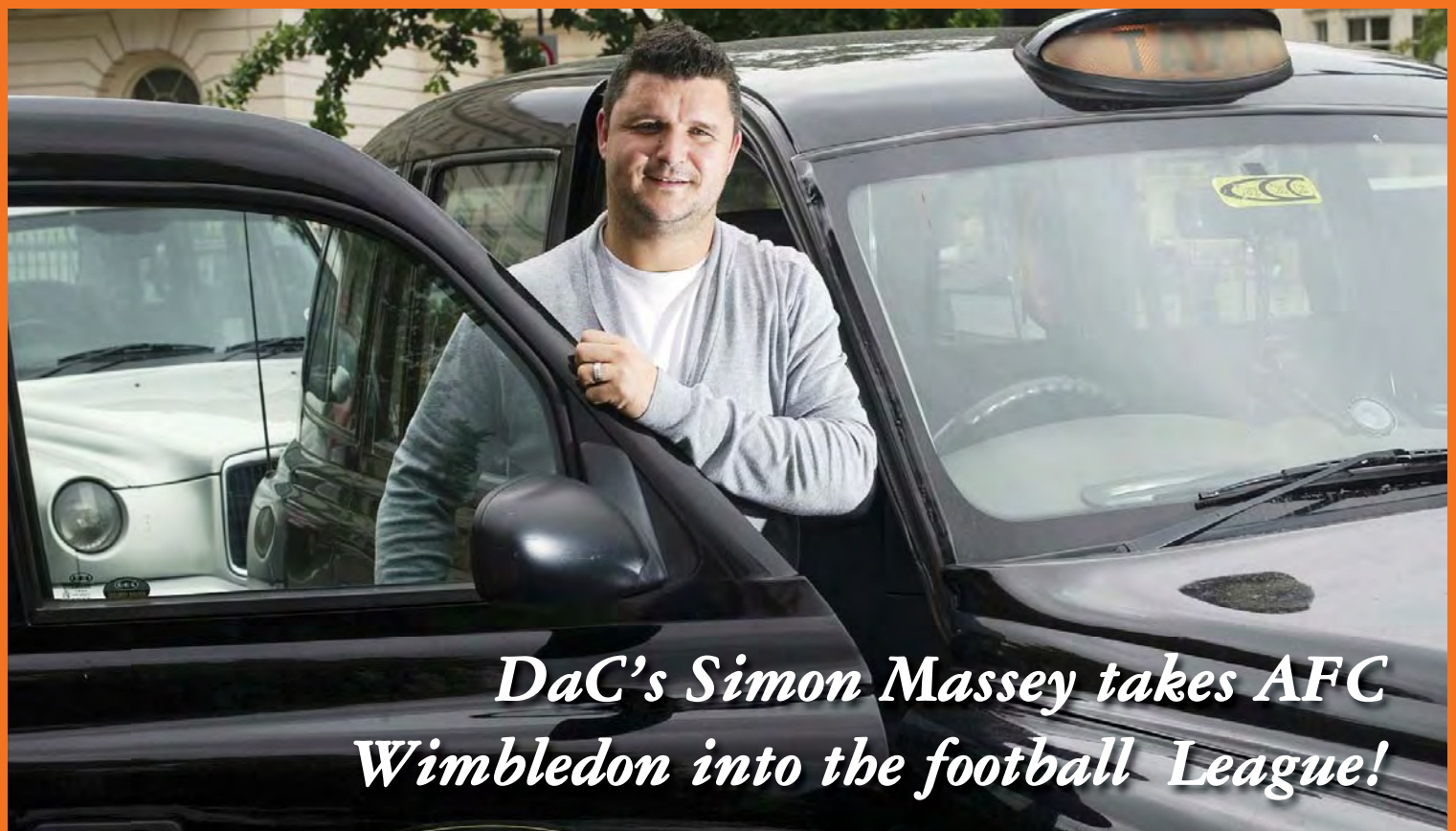


Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*DaC driver
wins
£50,000
in poker
tournament!*



*DaC's Simon Massey takes AFC
Wimbledon into the football League!*



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

A quiet month so here is a "What's On" guide to try and give you the edge...

Venue	Event	Day	Date	Venue	Event	Day	Date
O2 Arena	Here and Now	Fri	01/07/2011	Business Design Cntr	Event & Exhibition Show	Thu	14/07/2011
ExCel	NEO Excellence Awards	Fri	01/07/2011	Oval	Surrey v Kent starts 15:30	Fri	14/07/2011
Business Design Cntr	New Designs	Fri	01/07/2011	O2 Arena	James Taylor	Fri	15/07/2011
Wembley Stadium	Take That	Fri	01/07/2011	Olympia Grand Hall	50+ show	Fri	15/07/2011
Tricky	A Night of White Collar Boring	Fri	01/07/2011	Olympia Two	Arhangini	Fri	15/07/2011
ExCel	National Achievers Congress	Sat	02/07/2011	Business Design Cntr	Event & Exhibition Show	Fri	15/07/2011
Business Design Cntr	New Designs	Sat	02/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	First Night of the PROMS	Fri	15/07/2011
Wembley Stadium	Take That	Sat	02/07/2011	Olympia Grand Hall	50+ show	Sat	16/07/2011
Royal Albert Hall	Janet Jackson	Sat	02/07/2011	Olympia Two	Arhangini	Sat	16/07/2011
Tricky	Julian Assenge starts 15:30	Sat	02/07/2011	Wembley Arena	Revelation	Sat	16/07/2011
ExCel	National Achievers Congress	Sun	03/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 2	Sat	16/07/2011
Royal Albert Hall	Janet Jackson	Sun	03/07/2011	Olympia Two	Arhangini	Sun	17/07/2011
Lords	England v Sri Lanka starts 10:45	Sun	03/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 3 Starts @ 15:00	Sun	17/07/2011
ExCel	National Achievers Congress	Mon	04/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 4	Sun	17/07/2011
Wembley Stadium	Take That	Mon	04/07/2011	Business Design Cntr	Association Congress	Mon	18/07/2011
Irwin Apollo	Lou Reed	Mon	04/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 5	Mon	18/07/2011
Oval	Surrey v Sussex starts 17:40	Mon	04/07/2011	Business Design Cntr	Association Congress	Tue	19/07/2011
ExCel	Dermatologists Annual Meeting	Tue	05/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 6	Tue	19/07/2011
Olympia Two	Civil Service Live	Tue	05/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 7 Starts @ 22:00	Tue	19/07/2011
Earls Court Two	Imbibe	Tue	05/07/2011	Business Design Cntr	Association Congress	Wed	20/07/2011
Wembley Stadium	Take That	Tue	05/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 8	Wed	20/07/2011
Lords	Eng. Wm. v Ausn starts 10:45	Tue	05/07/2011	Oval	Surrey v Mdx Starts 11:00	Wed	20/07/2011
Hampton Court	Flower Show (10am to 7:30pm)	Tue	05/07/2011	Business Design Cntr	It's All About Art	Thu	21/07/2011
ExCel	Dermatologists Annual Meeting	Wed	06/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 9	Thu	21/07/2011
Olympia Two	Civil Service Live	Wed	06/07/2011	Oval	Surrey v Mdx Starts 11:00	Thu	21/07/2011
Earls Court Two	Imbibe	Wed	06/07/2011	Lords	England v India starts 11:00	Thu	21/07/2011
Business Design Cntr	New Designs	Wed	06/07/2011	Olympia Two	Hyper Japan	Fri	22/07/2011
Wembley Stadium	Take That	Wed	06/07/2011	Business Design Cntr	It's All About Art	Fri	22/07/2011
Irwin Apollo	Chicago	Wed	06/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 10	Fri	22/07/2011
Hampton Court	Flower Show (10am to 7:30pm)	Wed	06/07/2011	Oval	Surrey v Mdx Starts 11:00	Fri	22/07/2011
ExCel	Dermatologists Annual Meeting	Thu	07/07/2011	Lords	England v India starts 11:00	Fri	22/07/2011
Olympia Two	Civil Service Live	Thu	07/07/2011	Olympia Two	Hyper Japan	Sat	23/07/2011
Business Design Cntr	New Designs	Thu	07/07/2011	Business Design Cntr	It's All About Art	Sat	23/07/2011
Lords	Mdx v Surrey starts 18:15	Thu	07/07/2011	Wembley Arena	Championship Boxing	Sat	23/07/2011
Hampton Court	Flower Show (10am to 7:30pm)	Thu	07/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 11	Sat	23/07/2011
Business Design Cntr	New Designs	Fri	08/07/2011	Oval	Surrey v Mdx Starts 11:00	Sat	23/07/2011
Wembley Arena	Biggest Band	Fri	08/07/2011	Lords	England v India starts 11:00	Sat	23/07/2011
Wembley Stadium	Take That	Fri	08/07/2011	Olympia Two	Hyper Japan	Sun	24/07/2011
Royal Albert Hall	Superjam	Fri	08/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 12 Starts @ 11:00	Sun	24/07/2011
Irwin Apollo	Steve Martin	Fri	08/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 13	Sun	24/07/2011
Oval	Surrey v Hampshire start 15:30	Fri	08/07/2011	Oval	Surrey v Warks Starts 15:45	Sun	24/07/2011
Hampton Court	Flower Show (10am to 7:30pm)	Fri	08/07/2011	Lords	England v India starts 11:00	Sun	24/07/2011
O2 Arena	Neil Diamond	Sat	09/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 14	Mon	25/07/2011
Earls Court Two (5th)	Film & Comic Con (LFCC)	Sat	09/07/2011	Lords	England v India starts 11:00	Mon	25/07/2011
Business Design Cntr	New Designs	Sat	09/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 15	Tue	26/07/2011
Wembley Arena	Selva Masters Football	Sat	09/07/2011	Lords	MCC v Hong Kong starts 10:30	Tue	26/07/2011
Wembley Stadium	Take That	Sat	09/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 16	Wed	27/07/2011
Hampton Court	Flower Show (10am to 7:30pm)	Sat	09/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 17 Starts @ 22:00	Wed	27/07/2011
Earls Court Two (5th)	Film & Comic Con (LFCC)	Sun	10/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 18	Thu	28/07/2011
Royal Albert Hall	Carmina Burana	Sun	10/07/2011	Lords	Mdx v Derbyshire Starts 15:40	Thu	28/07/2011
Oval	Surrey v Kent starts 11:00	Sun	10/07/2011	O2 Arena	Dominic & Ghangini	Fri	29/07/2011
Hampton Court	Flower Show (10am to 5:30pm)	Sun	10/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 19	Fri	29/07/2011
O2 Arena	Neil Diamond	Mon	11/07/2011	Lords	Mdx v Derbyshire Starts 15:00	Fri	29/07/2011
Oval	Surrey v Kent starts 11:00	Mon	11/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 20 Starts @ 10:00	Sat	30/07/2011
Irwin Apollo	Ricky Martin	Tue	12/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 21	Sat	30/07/2011
Oval	Surrey v Kent starts 11:00	Tue	12/07/2011	Milwall	v Charlton	Sat	30/07/2011
O2 Arena	Neil Diamond	Wed	13/07/2011	Lords	Mdx v Derbyshire Starts 15:00	Sat	30/07/2011
Business Design Cntr	Event & Exhibition Show	Wed	13/07/2011	Wembley Arena	One Love Peace Festival	Sun	31/07/2011
Irwin Apollo	Katrina	Wed	13/07/2011	Royal Albert Hall	PROM # 22	Sun	31/07/2011
Oval	Surrey v Kent starts 11:00	Wed	13/07/2011	Lords	Mdx v Derbyshire Starts 15:00	Sun	31/07/2011

By the time you read this the new Eurostar Arrivals timetable should be available on the www.myfav.co.uk website, but you need to be registered with the unlock code 'taxi'.

from the editor's desk

Yep, it's nice to be back and while the month off does recharge the batteries, it's amazing how much I miss putting out a mag in June. I'd also like to thank those drivers that took the trouble to tell me that while they enjoyed reading **Call Sign**, also told me to enjoy the month off.

So as I do what no other editor of this magazine has ever done – start a 15th year in the hot seat – let me thank everyone that has always been so nice to me...

Fixed prices...

Call Sign is not an independent magazine, however it is uncensored by anyone other than me. It proudly supports Dial-a-Cab, but also supports the taxi business as a whole. But this issue is slightly different in that it pits Board member against Board member. Mike Son is someone who considers that more fixed price trips could help in the battle against private hire. Keith Cain disagrees and in this issue both views are put forward. In addition, the Chairman, Brian Rice gives his view with an assurance to those disbelievers who will say that Mike's article is there purely to get drivers ready for the introduction of fixed prices. All three articles are interesting.

Call Sign policy

I doubt there is any trade magazine or paper where the readers put themselves out more than those from **Call Sign**, be that writing an article for publication or forwarding an advertising enquiry. There is rarely a month that goes by when I don't get a phone call from a company enquiring about advertising after a **Dial-a-Cab** driver has told them how well-read this mag is.

However, whilst I don't want to seem ungrateful, I feel I should repeat the views that I have held from day one. I'm certainly not a prude but I do realise that unlike every other trade paper, **Call Sign** is delivered by post and is read by all the family. As a result, I feel it would be wrong for me to accept advertising from table dancing or strip clubs – and I've had enquiries from both varieties over the past few months. I understand that a possible "thank-you" to drivers is always useful and I wouldn't refuse one from a club, but I've made a decision and nothing I have seen has made me change my mind.

The same applies to online casinos and a recent **Radio 5Live** programme has reinforced my view that these casinos present a danger to children. What the parents do is not my business and I have no doubt that many enjoy a flutter via the internet, but I have also heard horrific stories about teens using credit cards that belong to their parents and who have then lost small fortunes. My stand won't stop them, but at least they won't have gained the info from **Call Sign**.

However, that has nothing to do with our story on DaC's **Alan Mansbridge (M61)** who recently won £50,000 in the **Grosvenor UK Poker Tour** when he beat 171 opponents to take home that huge amount. Alan plays against real people and not in front of a screen. Neither can he try to recoup any losses, because once you lose your chips in that tournament, then you're out! So well done Alan...

STaN Watch?

Those of you who read the UCG mag will have read a piece from the group regarding what has become known as STaN (Safer Travel at Night). This part revolves around the action of minicab



touts in Kingston who are said to be making life very difficult for the local yellow badges.

The article claims to have "exposed" the STaN Report in their first issue and adds that none of the other trade papers even mentioned the situation. They specifically mentioned *Taxi*, *The Badge* and *Cab Trade News* – in addition to taking a dig at the RMT for having no magazine!

No mention of **Call Sign**, of course, because we showed concern about the Kingston situation way back in the April 2006 issue when **Brian Rice** wrote in his Chairman's report:

"It appears to me that some organisations within our industry are extremely vociferous when it comes to certain topics that quite honestly seem insignificant to me. Yet when something extremely important comes along - such as the situation in Kingston, which is the first step to PH picking up in the street - I do not see or hear of any action. It just seems strange to me!"

Perhaps things may have been different had one of the trade organisations taken notice then, although it was nice to see *The Anderson Shelter* website acknowledge the fact recently.

Speaking of the UCG new mag, *United Cabbies News*, like their first issue the May mag was very interesting but they still write anonymously. If you are going to criticise John Mason or anyone else, then at least have the balls to put your name to it, because in my view that is a cowardly way of writing and detracts from a good story's believability...

Addison Lee

In this issue's *Mailsbot*, DaC driver **John Stowers (K40)** asks about an email he read on a taxi chat site which purportedly dissects Addison Lee's financial report and asks **Brian Rice** if he could comment on it. As I don't go onto that site, the first time I saw it was when I read John's email. What I do know is that Addison Lee have unlimited funds behind them and part of their success has been bought. As an example, **Call Sign** has seen a document from the *Ford Motor Company* which says that AL have just taken delivery of the first of 1200 new Ford Galaxy MPVs they have ordered. The delivery began last month at the rate of 28 cars per week. Yes, you read that correctly – 28 new MPVs each and every week for around 43 weeks!

Then up against us driving a variety of vehicles that are known throughout the world as *black cabs* but which in reality are a variation of different colours and/or wrapped in adverts and to which some would like several other cheaper

models added, by November Addison Lee will be 100% Ford Galaxy and 100% black. They will eventually take over as being 'black cabs' then those who object to the name will be able to say that we are again licensed London taxis. The only problem is that the general public call us all cabs or black cabs. No one except some trade papers refers to us as licensed taxis and we're now in danger of even losing our 'black cab' title.

And in a **Call Sign** memo to our taxi manufacturers, AL's new Ford Galaxy 2.0 140PS TDCi PowerShift cars in test mode achieved an average fuel consumption figure of over 57mpg on the MPG Marathon – accepted as the UK's premier economy driving event.

The next time you pass the old Granby Grill, you will see all their 2007-2009 minicabs up for sale. They refer to them as "older models." Need I say more...?

Memo to the Mayor

Sometimes you have to wonder just who's kidding who? I like the Mayor; he may sometimes give the impression of bumbling, but let's not kid ourselves – there is a very intelligent man under that blond thatch, one who I believe wants the best for London. But to be Mayor, you also have to be seen to practise what you preach. We see the odd letter with his name on planted into the trade papers, but we need more than that. We need to see that he doesn't just want to see London moving, but that as Mayor he is prepared to do something about it and that involves getting a grip on roadworks because someone, somewhere has to show that they care. Take the late afternoon and early evening of Saturday 4 June...

It was a beautiful sunny evening and Londoners were getting ready to go out for the evening. The radio was beginning to buzz again and drivers were doing their best to clear the mounting backlog of prospective passengers waiting for their cabs to get them to their theatre or restaurant. So my question to the Mayor is this: In a 2008 **Call Sign**, leading up to the Mayoral election, we questioned you as to why roadworks seemed to be just a 9 – 5 job? You agreed that where possible, 24 hour working could cut the time that the roads were up for and promised to look at the suggestion if elected. Even though you were then elected, that still doesn't happen. And so back to June 4 and the roadworks in the City. Blackfriars underpass was shut both ways, so the traffic was heavy along all the remaining roads. But wait! Cannon Street was also shut eastbound with all traffic being forced left into New Change. That closure put extra pressure on Newgate Street – or it would have done had that not also been shut both east and westward with traffic along Cheapside being forced left into New Change! Motorists were going round in circles trying to find a road that would lead them to some kind of sanity. Fortunately **Dial-a-Cab** drivers had a helpful dispatcher in Curls who at least was keeping us up-to-date, but even she couldn't do miracles and if you were picking up from London Wall or Aldermanbury, then you were already in a hold-up with cars trying to find their way out of the City.

So Mr Mayor, my question is this: How the hell could those closures all be allowed to happen at the same time? Does anyone at City Hall care? Will we get an answer at any time other than prior to the Mayoral election? **Call Sign** is waiting for an answer...

Alan Fisher
Callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Fixed prices... and the Editor!

The current **Call Sign** Editor, Alan Fisher, has been in the 'role' for 14 years and I must say that I believe he still performs an excellent job for us. Quite simply, I believe it is still the best publication within the cab trade and hopefully will remain so.

In recent years, Alan has not produced a magazine for the month of June as he is normally on holiday and I must say that I do look forward to that month, as it means that I also have a month where the Editor doesn't drive me mad for my contribution to the magazine! I have written a report for him for every edition of the magazine and sometimes I struggle to produce something of interest during the quiet periods. So imagine my joy when I had a ready made piece responding to Michael Son's article regarding Fixed Prices in this issue. It is always easy to produce an article once you have a topic to write about.

However, my joy was short lived when the Editor sent me a preview of Keith's article regarding Mike's contribution - his views are exactly the same as mine and of course how boring would it be if I just reiterated his sentiments! But there are one or two points I would like to add...

Foremost, I would like to make it abundantly clear that Mike is not being used as a *stalking horse*. The BoM do not have any intention of introducing mass FPs and are just testing the reaction of the membership. Also there is not any 'split' on the Board.

I believe most of you are aware of my sentiments regarding gratuities and run-ins etc, I do not believe they should be scrapped because when the economy improves, the abolition of gratuities and run-ins will have a detrimental effect on our service. It is very easy to scrap something, but it becomes a very difficult task to reinstate it at a later date.

I must confess that besides contributions from members in the magazine, I have received two emails from members requesting we abolish gratuities etc. Consequently, I was intrigued when Michael introduced the topic at the last Board meeting. He believes passionately that the abolition would lead to increased workloads, but I must say that he was a lone voice in the Boardroom. However, I am delighted to say that my relationship with Board members is such that I said he could put his personal view to members whilst still toeing the party line, which he is happy to do, hence the article elsewhere in the magazine. I know there are some, mostly non-members of Dial-a-Cab, who will come up with all sorts of rumours as to why his article was included, but they will all be false. The above is the only reason.

As I stated earlier, Keith has given an excellent response to Mike, but I just wish I had completed my article earlier! However, I do not wish to go over old



ground but there are just one or two points I would like to make.

I do not have any problem with FPs for longer journeys, in fact I welcome them - especially if it means claiming something from the minicabs. The problem I have is when clients start demanding a FP from every post-code to postcode, that is a very slippery slope and makes us just another minicab company - albeit more expensive - especially as Mike states that the FPs should be getting close to the meter price. What it actually means is that we are still considerably more expensive and our service to clients will suffer. Of course, at the moment we do give some FPs to clients, but generally to just some of their more frequently-used destinations because at the end of the day they are our clients and we must never appear to be intransigent, but it is not something we commit to as a matter of course.

I believe most of the FPs we have in place are reasonably priced, however, just as the public think minicab cheap - taxi expensive, so some of our members believe FPs cheap! But as Keith has explained, they are sometimes even a little more than the meter.

It can be very difficult to give a FP, even though we now have the facility to offer three different prices for the same trip depending on the tariff. Recently, one of our clients wanted some FPs to certain destinations, consequently some archived trips the client had made were scrutinised and I know it will come as no surprise to you daymen, but the trips were more expensive on tariff 1 than on tariff 3, obviously due to the traffic conditions!

Finally, I began this piece by talking about the Editor and sometimes how difficult it can be to write an article when you do not have a topic in mind, especially during the summer months when things are quiet. He must now be sitting back rubbing his hands after reading Mike, Keith's and my contribution this month! It will probably encourage debate, or Mike swapping his cab for Obama's *Beast*!

Olympic Route Network

I have attended several meetings that have been organised by the London Organising

Committee Olympic Games (LOCOG) and Olympic Delivery Association (ODA), which concerned the Olympic Route Network (ORN). I wouldn't call them consultations, more of 'this is what is going to happen' meetings. You are all probably aware of the routes, some of which will operate from 6am to midnight. The only vehicles allowed in the special lanes will be those transporting competitors and officials and I believe there will be a £200 fine for unauthorised vehicles entering the lanes. I do not want to appear churlish, but I certainly have reservations as to how you are going to cope with the conditions when serving DaC clients that are with us throughout the year. Nobody knows what to expect, especially as both the Olympic and Paralympic Games are taking place during the quieter months - particularly August - but I have a feeling your lives will be extremely difficult. Hopefully very busy, but difficult.

I couldn't attend the last meeting on the topic, as I already had a pre-arranged client meeting. However, it was a trade meeting to discuss the proposals before we put our view to the respective bodies. That is probably where the *Evening Standard* thought up the story regarding the trade having a demonstration regarding the ORN.

Fortunately Allan Evans attended on my behalf and the next day when we had a little meeting to discuss what transpired he simply said: "Brian it will be chaos!" Well that's two of us with the same opinion...

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

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TfL lose driver CRB disclosures!

In a development that will cause consternation among licensed taxi drivers, *Transport for London* have admitted that a batch of **Criminal Record Bureau** forms sent from Palestra House in Blackfriars to the CRB HQ in Liverpool, have been lost.

Dial-a-Cab driver Marc Turner (R97) was the first to discover the loss when he applied for his new Bill in early April. Marc continues the story...

"I filled in the CRB disclosure form, enclosed photo copies of documents and sent it off by recorded delivery to Palestra House. I knew it had been received because after three days, a lady from TfL rang me in regard to a question I had failed to answer.

By the end of May, I received my new Bill notwithstanding that should my CRB check – which was still not yet completed - show any problems, I might be obliged to return my badge and Bill.

On June 14, I recieved a letter from the TfL Licensing Support Manager **Marcia**



Marc Turner had to give his CRB details twice after the first form was lost

Coelho requesting my attendance at a meeting with her on Tuesday 28 June, at which time I should also bring my DVLA driving licence, National Insurance number, passport and five years address history. Alternatively, I could complete and return another CRB application form, which was requesting original documents!

On Thursday 16 June, I rang TfL and spoke to a man, who to his credit was very upfront regarding the situation. I explained how irritated I was at having to attend Palestra or complete another CRB application - and to send original docu-

ments! His revelation was nothing less than astounding.

He admitted that TfL had lost a batch of CRB disclosure / application forms!

He blamed the **Royal Mail** and informed me that TfL had no longer any trust in them. He also added that once CRB batches leave Palestra House, then they are no longer the responsibility of TfL. He said that Royal Mail was trying to find the missing batch, but in the meantime all Taxi drivers whose CRB forms were in the same batch as mine would have to redo them. But my concern is that there is a substantial amount of information on the forms that you wouldn't want to get out into the wrong hands!"

In the meantime, Marc has now been told to send the new CRB form via recorded delivery but not to send any original documents – just photocopies. He was also told that all the original documents were at Palestra House so they weren't lost, just the forms. Even so, the CRB form is by its very nature a document that you wouldn't want strangers to see. In it can be found your NI and passport numbers and any info that could be used as passwords, together with your home details, so the loss of a batch is a big concern even if in reality it was the fault of the Royal Mail rather than TfL...

Mary Dowdye leaves LTPH



Mary Dowdye, Head of Standards & Regulations *Transport* has now left *London Taxis and Private Hire*. Before leaving, Mary told **Call Sign**: "I really appreciate the opportunities I've had over the last ten and a half years and would like to thank everyone for making my time in the organisation such an interesting and pleasurable one. It has been a privilege to work with all of you."

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Jery's World



"I like these taxi chat sites, they give me the chance to pass a worthwhile opinion!"

Speeding offences? Blame the taxi business!



Speedy Jacob!

On January 28, 1896, **Walter Arnold** of East Peckham – then in Kent rather than south London – was whizzing along at a disturbing 8mph when he knew he was in a 2mph zone! This act of devilry cost Walter a one shilling fine and sent him into the record books as the first ever speeding offender!

Then just three years later, 26 year old **New York taxi driver Jacob German** was driving down Lexington Street in Manhattan in his *Electric Vehicle Company* electric taxi. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, several people were looking for cabs and the world

seemed a very pleasant place. Even President William McKinley was still looked upon as a hero for leading the nation to victory in 90 days in the Spanish American War!

No wonder Jacob's attention wandered and his cab's speed began to creep upwards until exceeding the speed limit. It was May 20, 1899 and with his attention distracted through sheer happiness, he shot along at a blistering 12mph when he obviously must have known that the speed limit was 8 miles per hour on straight roads and 4 miles per hour when turning!

A police officer on a bicycle saw the taxi shooting along and promptly arrested Jacob. He was taken to the East 22nd Street station house where he was locked up for several hours. He wasn't fined as the "crime" wasn't yet on the statute books!

A fining system was brought in after Jacob's case, but the first known paper speeding ticket was issued to another cab driver in the United States - **Harry Myers** in Dayton Ohio. It was four years after Jacob German had been caught. Harry was also driving at 12mph when he was spotted by the police and much to his surprise, was given what was to become known as a

speeding ticket and much later, a moving violation.

So thanks to Jacob German and Harry Myers, it's really is the fault of the cab trade – after all, everything else is!

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In the *March Call Sign*, we told of the victory DaC driver **Sid Nathan (K88)** achieved over the *City of London* after his passengers had opened the taxi rear doors to get out while he was stuck in traffic. Sid was on the zigzags outside St Paul's Cathedral when suddenly the traffic moved forward, leaving Sid stranded on the lines and unable to move as the tourists were still exiting his vehicle. Thanks to advice from DaC's parking expert, **Barrie Segal**, Sid appealed the PCN and won his case.

Several months after Sid, another **Dial-a-Cab** driver, **Russell Bamber (N27)** also began his battle with the *City of London* following his PCN for stopping by the zigzags just before Sid's – those by the layby entrance to Paternoster Square and before the rank. Russell had tried to squeeze into the layby but a white van was causing a problem with room. However, Russell's fight against authority was very different from Sid's.

Russell appealed to the CoL complaining that the PCN he received (dated 29 January) for the alleged offence contained a photo that obviously showed his cab, but failed to show any evidence of the presence of zigzag lines. As Russell put in his appeal (dated 31 January), he had even used a magnifying glass but couldn't see any indication of zigzag lines and that under those circumstances the CoL had failed to show that any contravention had taken place.

What Russell failed to realise in asking for the PCN to be rescinded was that he wasn't dealing with an organisation famed for its' use of commonsense! So when almost one month had passed, Russell assumed the matter had faded into obscurity. But he was wrong

Mystery of the Vanishing zigzags?



The "evidence" failed to show any sign of zigzag lines...

because on February 28, the City authority answered Russell's appeal - not by agreeing with him but by sending further images that appeared to prove their point. But Russell hadn't denied being there, his claim was that they failed to send any credible evidence, so should cancel the PCN.

On 7 March, Russell again wrote to the *City of London*. In this appeal he pointed out yet another irregularity in addition to the obviously incorrect photo being sent as evidence until over a month after the "offence." Writing that there surely had to be a time limit for sending out additional evidence when they obviously had better photos, Russell also pointed out

another procedural irregularity. He wrote in his appeal:

"The last letter sent by the City of London enclosed a *Notice of Appeal* but when looking on the internet, I came across an item saying that I should have received a *Notice to Owner* before I actually received this *Notice of Appeal* — is this correct?"












His letter obviously struck a note – but not the correct one. Instead of allowing the appeal, on March 10 the CoL sent him a form to fill in to see the arbitrator on May 20 at Angel Square! Then on April 13, the bumbling bureaucrats of the CoL sent Russell a *Charge Certificate* which said that his £120 fine (reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days etc) had now increased to £180 because he hadn't paid it! Again Russell had to explain that because he was going to the arbitration service, he could hardly pay the fine which would then admit any guilt! He also spotted that the PCN *Date of Notice* read 29 January 2011, whereas the *Charge Certificate* date said 28 January 2011. Polite to the end, Russell asked whether this further discrepancy would have any bearing on his appeal?

On May 13, almost 4 months since the PCN issue, the City of London sent Russell a two sentence terse response. It read: "It has been decided not to contest the above appeal. This decision is not to be taken as a precedent for the future."

All *Call Sign* can add is that we agree with the CoL in that we hope their actions do not set any precedents, because on this showing they are nothing but a bunch of incompetents...

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Due to *Call Sign's* month off in June, you may have read in the trade press of the sad death of former ODRTS driver and author of many books featuring virtually everything you'd ever need to know when researching or just taking an interest in the history of the London taxi trade, **Phil Warren (ex-A08)**. His death leaves an unfixable hole in this magazine...

Over the years, *Call Sign* has had many requests from various people both in the UK and worldwide asking how they can find out about this trade's 350 history and there has only ever been one answer – a Phil Warren book, or if the question was intriguing enough then it would give us the chance to have another chat with the man himself. He used to laugh when we referred to him as the man who knew everything about this business – yet it would be a rare occasion for him not to know the answer. That brain filled with so much knowledge, made his death from the Alzheimer's he contracted two and a half years earlier seem even sadder.

Even though he had left *Dial-a-Cab* – still known in those days as **ODRTS** – many years ago, his funeral in Bexhill-on-Sea was considered to be of such relevance that Chairman **Brian Rice** and DaC Marketing Manager **Allen Togwell** both made the trip to the Kent coastal town to attend. Many others from the trade also attended.

In a moving service, Reverend Angela Cooke spoke of Phil's life and careers emphasising his work for the cab trade, its various charities and his legacy of published titles. **Tim Warren (M44)**, Phil's son, read the eulogy, while Phil's other son – also Phil – read the poem *I Am* by **John Clare**, before their father was interred with first wife Joyce who died in 1992.

Later at the local British Legion there was a display of Phil's life that Tim had laid out. His paintings, alongside a photographic display depicting some of the salient events in his life, together with all his published books and war medals and trophies won at pistol / rifle shooting.

As Tim told *Call Sign*: "Although the occasion was one of sadness, it also felt like a celebration of my father's life. He would have heartily approved of it."

Phil was born in Guy's Hospital in August 1927, the eldest son of Frank and Rose. Frank was also a licensed Taxi driver.

But it was at the time of the biggest problem this trade had ever come up against – the advent of Michael Gotla's Welbeck minicabs in their red Renault Dauphines – that Phil rose to prominence in the trade when, with the Crisis Committee, he played an active role in their eventual demise. Sadly the genie was now out of the bottle and the minicab industry proliferated.

The Second World War played a major formative role in Phil's early life as the family, to avoid the worst of the blitz, relocated to rural Oxfordshire. This was where Phil discovered the first love of his life, gardening. In 1944, already an accredited marksman with both pistol and rifle, he volunteered to join the Rifle Brigade, but owing to defective vision in his left eye he was unable to sight a Bren gun and was forced to accept an enforced move to the Royal Engineers. He had a lively six months after completing basic training as a bomb disposal sapper, engaged mostly in mine clearance from English beaches before being transferred to Continental Europe where he built pontoon bridges to facilitate transport links into the newly defeated Germany. In July 1945 he was transferred again to what he thought would be the Far East. However the troopship stopped at Port Said, Egypt and Phil

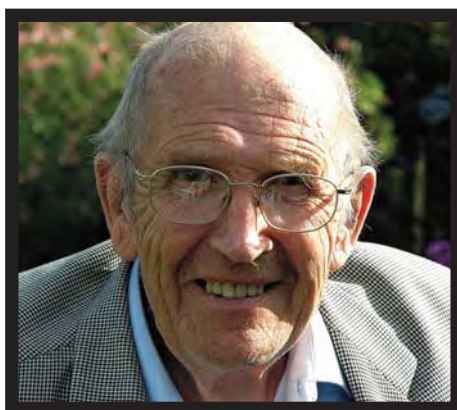
As author and former DaC driver Phil Warren is laid to rest, Call Sign looks back at his life...

PHIL WARREN: THE MAN WHO KNEW IT ALL...

spent the rest of his service career in the British Mandated Territory of Palestine, where he stayed until demobilisation following the creation of the state of Israel. He said afterwards that the most traumatic event of his army life occurred there following the bombing of the *King David Hotel* in Jerusalem by members of the Jewish terrorist group, *Irgun Zvai Leumi*, when as one of the first on the scene he helped search for the dead and injured amidst the scenes of carnage.

Whilst in Palestine he began – via sister Betty – to correspond with a young woman called Joyce who worked at Lambert and Butler's cigarette factory alongside Betty. Following a short home leave where the couple met for the first time, Phil proposed and when he came home for good, they became engaged and married in July 1950.

Phil was by now a gardener working on Lord Esher's estate at Watlington, Oxfordshire, but following a difficult first pregnancy the couple were forced to relocate to London. He continued in gardening following the birth of his first son



Philip, rising to become head gardener at a Wandsworth old people's home, a post he held until a fateful decision led him to follow his father (and grandfather) into the taxi trade. He completed the Knowledge in nine months, obtaining his licence in January 1956.

In November 1958, his second son Timothy was born. Then, with the advent of the unlicensed minicab industry, Phil became increasingly politicised joining first the *Crisis Committee* then the cab section of the **TGWU**. He rose through the ranks becoming Chair of the No.1 region and a close political ally of then-General Secretary **Jack Jones**. Along the way Phil discovered the third great love of his life; the written word. An aspiring trade journalist, he wrote small articles in various trade publications under the pen name *Cockayne*. Following the revival of the *Cab Trade News* in the early seventies, the cab section of the **TGWU** approached Phil with a view to his becoming editor. He accepted and launched his career in journalism. By now his long standing interest in history led him, with the late **Tommy Hare**, to research a definitive history of the taxi trade, a project which became his all-consuming passion.

He became increasingly frustrated with the direction in which the union had moved in the late seventies and when approached to take over editorship of *Steering Wheel* he grabbed the opportunity, restoring that magazine to some-

thing of its old glory until a falling out occurred with the proprietor. Brief spells as CEO of *Cavalier Meters* and superintendent of the *Royal British Legion Knowledge* school followed, before he was headhunted by M&O's **Andrew Overton** to set up a regional sales structure for the sale of taxis in the provinces.

He was by now a published author of the highly successful *Taxicabs; A Photographic History* written in partnership with Malcolm Linskey. He was also highly active with various charities as well as organising the Trade exhibition for the Taxi Driver of the Year Show. He was also commissioned to write a history of the London General Cab Co and still found time to edit the well regarded *Newslink* magazine.

In 1983, wife Joyce was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and Phil was forced to retire early and care for her, a task he carried out with much love and care until her untimely death in 1992 at age of 62. He briefly went back to driving, but after meeting second wife Valerie, he retired for good and edited the regional edition of *The Cab Driver*.

He was a founding member of the *Fellowship of Hackney Carriage Drivers* and when that became a livery company, a long cherished ambition of Phil's had been achieved. In 1995 his long researched *History of the Taxi Trade* was published to critical acclaim within the trade. A source of great pride for him was the licensing of son Tim in 1993 as a taxi driver. This created an amazing four generations of London cabbies and following Tim joining *Dial-a-Cab* in 2004, a second generation there as well!

In 1994, Phil's Mastership of the Fellowship coincided with the 300th anniversary of London taxi trade's continuous licensing by Parliament and a celebration at the Guildhall. This, for Phil, was the apotheosis of his career within London's Taxi trade. So many ambitions had been fulfilled and realised that he felt able to take a back seat and with Valerie he set off around the world revisiting the countries last seen when he was in the King's uniform.

Phil settled in Bexhill whilst Joyce was still alive and together with Valerie they formed a local writer's group, which collectively researched and subsequently published a comprehensive history of the town of **Battle** dating back to the conquest. His last book, *A History of the London Knowledge* was published in 2003, but by now Phil was beginning to show signs of having contracted Alzheimer's as his prodigious memory began to fail him. He settled in Australia briefly, but a series of strokes reduced his capacity for living an independent life. He was taken into care in 2008, where following a short illness he died on 13th May 2011.

He will be greatly missed by his children, grandchildren and surviving brothers and sisters in addition to all who knew him. His family were moved by the respect in which he was held and have asked *Call Sign* to thank all those who attended, in addition to those who donated to the family's choice of charity. Should anyone else wish to make a contribution, they can contact the Co-op Funeralcare at 178 Addington Road, South Croydon CR2 8LB. Cheques should be made payable to *The Alzheimer's Society* and marked Phil Warren on the reverse.

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If you have ever made a function, be it a wedding, engagement, barmitzvah, masonic or charity event, perhaps even a dinner party in your own home or indeed any other event where a Toastmaster would be a welcome addition, then you will be aware that the men in red jackets can be another hefty expense in a long list.

If you have no thoughts of making any function in the next few years – and these things are sometimes planned for up to two years in advance – then sadly this competition is not for you. But if sometime between now and 2013 you intend making a celebration of any kind where a Toastmaster is needed, then this *Call Sign* competition could cut your costs by several hundred pounds and leave you with one less thing to worry about as your big day looms.

Dial-a-Cab driver Keith Reading (W76) is now a fully experienced Toastmaster and came up with the idea of offering his services to one lucky driver or member of staff who is making a function. Why would anyone offer their services for nothing, you may ask?

“I am very grateful for all the helpful publicity that *Call Sign* gave me when I first started several years ago. Now as a fully qualified Fellow of the Guild of Professional Toastmasters, this is my way of repaying it.”

HOW WILL IT WORK?

1st prize will be the exclusive service of Keith Reading as your Toastmaster at any of the following functions in which the winner (or his / her family) may be involved:-

- Wedding reception (any religion, culture or type)
- Civil wedding reception or civil partnership reception
- Renewal of vows
- Masonic ladies festival - Rotary or Round Table

The strangest competition in Call Sign History???

WIN A TOASTMASTER FOR YOUR FUNCTION!



Captions must be in by July 15 and the best one will win the services of a Toastmaster at their function

Toastmaster Keith Reading and DaC Chairman Brian Rice. The first prize will go to the person who sends in the best caption. All entries must be in by midday on Friday July 15. Entries received after this date will not count.

All entries will receive a £25 discount voucher (valid until 2013) to be used at a function as previously described. Members (and staff) may also use this voucher in conjunction with the existing 10% discount offer as stated in the regular *Call Sign* ad.

Please include your name / callsign, email address (if available), telephone number (mobile or land line) and also the date of your function and location venue.

Keith Reading is a Fellow of the Guild of Professional Toastmasters and is both confident and qualified to assist you in the planning and running of your event. He has the experience and sensitivity to provide the correct level of attentive service whatever the occasion.

Knowing that your function or event will be looked after by your Toastmaster will allow you, as host, to give your full attention to your family, friends and guests and more importantly, enjoy the occasion, stress free.

The Editor's decision is final...

- Golf club captain's dinner dance
- Wedding anniversary or other family celebration
- Private or family dinner party
- A charity event that a member may be involved with
- Bar / Batmitzvah

The competition is open to all DaC drivers, staff, Board members, security staff and all persons who work within DaC House – except, sadly, the Editor!

The offer is limited to London and the Home Counties for functions held before the end of 2013. Dates are subject to availability. There is **NO** cash alternative.

HOW TO ENTER...

Take a look at the photo featuring

Phil Warren

A tribute from Canada...

Since news of the death of taxi historian and former **ODRTS** driver **Phil Warren**, *Call Sign* has had a number of calls from taxi drivers asking about his books and their availability. However, as an example of Phil's deserved fame, we are printing this tribute from **Norman Beattie** who lives in Canada and who has never met Phil...

*“I recently heard of the sad news of Philip Warren's death. I have been a fan of Mr Warren since reading his *History of the London Cab Trade* (Taxi Trade Publications, 1995). As a cab historian he was one of a kind.*

The literature of cab history falls into two main categories. One category is made up of personal memoirs in which cab drivers set down their day to day experiences and their perspective on the world as seen from behind the wheel. An early example is *Herbert Hodge's Cab, Sir?* (1939).

The other category comprises formal histories of the trade in general or of some particular aspect of it. These are usually written by people outside the trade. Examples are the books on London cabs written by the automotive historian *G.N. Georgano*.

Phil Warren was unique in his ability to bridge the gap between



the personal and the scholarly. On the one hand he was thoroughly steeped in the trade, being not only a veteran cab driver himself but also the third generation in a family of cab drivers.

On the other hand, he had a deep interest in London cab history. In pursuit of this interest, he brought to bear some formidable abilities; a scientific curiosity, an analytical mind and great skill as a researcher.

He was also a captivating writer with a knack for pulling a good story out of dull facts. Whether he was dissecting evidence ferreted out of an ancient

document or describing events that he himself had lived through, Mr Warren conveyed his delight in discovery and a passion for his chosen line of work.

Mr Warren's family and friends will feel the deep personal loss that we all feel at the death of a loved one. In Philip Warren's case, the ripples of loss extend to people who, like me, never even met him.

Phil Warren had a lot more to tell us about the London cab trade. But while we mourn Mr Warren and the books he might have written, we must also be thankful for what he has left us.”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As many are aware, although a Board member I still work my taxi. Therefore when I make the following comments, they are from 46 years' experience as a London taxi driver and a member of the BoM for many years.

As I'm sure you are also aware, London's radio taxi services are being squeezed out of the market month on month by minicab companies, so much so that I have now decided to put my head above the parapet both as a Board member and **Dial-a-Cab** subscriber. The past few weeks have been fairly busy so far as street work is concerned, probably due to more tourists in London - especially from Europe. It also seems that clothes etc are less expensive in London than Europe. This summer has also been busy due to various events that have taken place in the capital. But it was just a few years ago when London had the same influx of visitors, yet that was very short lived and in just a few months, tourists left and the cab industry went back to the hard sell of their services to an ever-decreasing number of customers. Dial-a-Cab was no different. Yes, street work will be around to a greater or lesser degree, but radio work will continue to diminish in favour of car firms.

So now back to my question to you: We need to win back our work and yes, I have been banging on about this for some time. You of course know the main reason why we are losing much of our work to car companies - cost. I had always considered that the customer would pay a little extra for a good service and they did. Unfortunately that is no longer the case. The customer is now wise to the fact that they don't have to pay extra charges just to get a cab outside their premises at a time when they want it.

Also, with a licensed radio taxi company, they are often charged different rates for the same regular trip; it could be £20 on one day and £30 on another. I know the same situation arises with street cash hirings, nonetheless our core business is providing a service to account clients. Although customers appreciate the service and technology Dial-a-Cab provides, reducing their costs is now the priority. So that is the main reason why customers seeking an account facility for their transport requirements open accounts with Addison Lee and the like.

Dial-a-Cab has been very fortunate to have such a hands-on Chairman as Brian Rice who has been able to secure the permanence of some of our larg-

With more and more drivers suggesting fixed pricing after showing concern at the way private hire is snatching work from the taxi business, Board member Mike Son gives his personal view on ways of fighting back and asks the question of the whole circuit...

What do you think about fixed prices???



er clients. But other than the shrinking number of customers opening accounts via our website, we need to increase our market share of the radio taxi market and win back some of what we have lost.

We need to have a different strategy when trying to secure new accounts and I believe that offering more fixed rate journeys is now something we must consider. They may not be the panacea to all our problems, but they may begin to claw some customers back.

As a member driver, do I like the direction I am proposing to you? Of course I don't. We have a meter, therefore we should charge the meter rate, but if we continue to bury our heads in the sand our account work will diminish even more. It would not be my intention to offer cheap minicab rates. That would be unacceptable and reduce the service you provide because quite simply drivers would not accept the trip. In my view, the fixed rate calculation could include a gratuity plus a reduced run-in. I believe if the fixed rates could be calculated as near to the meter fare as

possible and just like now if the customer doesn't enter the waiting cab within ten minutes the meter fare prevails, then I believe the customer will accept the charges due to the fact their journeys will be budgeted, in other words they'll know what the charges will be. Our service is good, our technology is far and above what others can offer but nevertheless we are expensive. Unfortunately, whether we like it or not we are not competitive and continue to lose more work.

If we offer realistic pricing, we will win back work. The question is whether members will accept more fixed rate trips bearing in mind there are already some in the system now. My colleagues on the BoM - including myself - have never been too keen on promoting fixed rates to clients fearful that drivers wouldn't cover the work.

So the question is whether you would give this course of action your support? Please let me know what you think either via Call Sign or my email address which is at the bottom.

If I receive enough favourable responses, I will ask the Chairman and the rest of the Board to consider using our data dispatch system - which also has a voting application - for a formal vote on whether we should pursue this sales drive. All the data results will be calculated and could be submitted to the membership via the driver's terminal. In closing, I will not be surprised to have bullets fired at me, nevertheless I am concerned about our future as radio taxi drivers.

**Mike Son, DaC Special Projects
michaels@dialacab.co.uk**

TX4 SALES DROP

But international ones are up...

Sales of **Manganese Bronze** TX4 have dropped by 5.2% in the UK for the first quarter of 2011. The company says that driver earnings and confidence has been negatively affected by the economic climate. During the period from 1 January to 16 May 2011, they built 524 vehicles - 29 less than in the comparable 2010 period.

MB went on to add that March and April were impacted with taxi driver earnings and confidence "negatively affected by generally lower disposable income, higher fuel costs, concerns about job security and the potential impact of public sector spending cuts."

But there was also some good news with the announcement that TX4 sales overall - including international ones - were up by just over 10% to 686 vehicles - 63 up on the same period in 2010. MB added that international sales orders for 2011 were now over 1,300 and well ahead of the expected 1,000 units set at the start of the year. All the figures were said to be broadly in line with their expectations.

A spokesperson told **Call Sign**: "Sales in other international markets already exceed last year's total. Demand from customers in the Middle East currently remains strong, but recent unrest in the region may negatively impact sales prospects in the coming months."

Ventures with **Geely Automobile Holdings** and **Shanghai LTI Automobile Components Company** continue to be very positive, said the Coventry based company's spokesperson.

The company says it will continue to collaborate with Geely senior management to develop the launch plans for its saloon car based-taxi, scheduled for introduction in 2013.

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For details on sponsorship please contact Iain on 07947 400 822



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Peter Straiton (F31) is a former police officer from the **Met**, but retired in 2002 since when he has been driving a taxi full time. One year later, in March 2003, he decided to join **Dial-a-Cab**. **Call Sign** isn't sure how he got the call to assist **US Secret Service Agents** before and during the time of the State visit by US President **Barack Obama** and First Lady, Michelle, but it certainly gave Peter the most exciting two weeks of his taxi driving career so far!

The drivers – Peter was one of twenty including a number of other taxis – were recruited by a former special branch officer. Peter never actually saw the President, although he was within a few hundred yards of him on several occasions. He was, though, close enough to Michelle to see her but not close enough to speak to her – whether those Secret Service Agents would have allowed him to in any case is another matter, but no doubt given the opportunity he would have tried to get her to open an account with DaC!

Peter also went to **Christ Church College**

MAYOR'S AIR QUALITY STRATEGY

Exemptions Consultation



In December 2010 the *Mayor's Air Quality Strategy* was published and contained a wide range of initiatives aimed at reducing harmful emissions in London. The actions outlined in the strategy included initiatives focused on reducing harmful emissions from licensed taxis and private hire vehicles.

You can find a full copy of the *Mayor's Air Quality Strategy* on the GLA website at: www.london.gov.uk/publication/mayors-air-quality-strategy.

The air quality initiatives for taxis (and PHV) included the following age limits:

From 1 January 2012 a 10 year rolling age limit will be introduced for private hire vehicles and a 15 year rolling age limit for taxis unless exempted

From 1 April 2012, unless exempted, all newly licensed private hire vehicles must, as a minimum, meet Euro 4 standards for emissions and be no older than 5 years and all newly licensed taxis must, as a minimum, meet Euro 5 standards for emissions

LTPH are now consulting on a limited number of proposed exemptions to these age limits and a full copy of the consultation document is available on the TfL website: at tfl.gov.uk/tph.

The closing date is 18 July 2011 and responses to the consultation should be emailed to tph.consultation@tfl.gov.uk before the closing date.



DaC driver, US Secret Service and the Prez!



Peter at Christ Church College Oxford. In the background, the closest we could get to secret service cars...

in Oxford when the First lady visited. At that time the President was meeting David Cameron at 10 Downing Street.

Peter and his Vito taxi were at the beck and call of the Secret Service agents for most of the two weeks as they went around London, including being part of President Obama's high speed motorcade procession as it travelled from the US embassy in Grosvenor Square to the Ambassador's residence at Winfield House where he stayed for his first night having come in early due to the Icelandic *Grimsvotn* volcanic eruption. Sadly for **Call Sign**, he wasn't allowed to keep his

DaC logo on whilst photographs were taken and unsurprisingly, he certainly wasn't allowed to photograph the Agents!

One particular journey included carrying members of the US **Secret Service Counter Sniper Unit**, together with their luggage! They travelled to Mildenhall RAF base which, despite its name, primarily supports United States Air Force operations. They told Peter that the Vito was the preferred choice for travel of the Secret Service Agents. He asked **Call Sign** to pass that message over to the Editor and mentioned something about putting it in his pipe...!



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Singers Asset Finance

Jon Trevor (W94) has appeared in *Call Sign* many times over the years, but rarely in any connection with driving his taxi, because at his peak Jon was one of the country's top Triathletes. One Triathlon *Call Sign* reported on took place in Swindon several years back and involved Jon swimming 2.4 miles, followed by a 112-mile bike ride in his wet swimwear and ending with a 26 mile marathon! Jon's comment to us after that was: "It was rather tough, but I finished fairly well up the field and just broke 12 hours! But yeah, it WAS rather tough!"

Jon also used to be a boxer fighting at bantamweight. Although most of his career was as an amateur, he had a few pro fights but eventually gave it up and began his Triathlon career instead! And now, even though his Triathlons aren't as frequent, there is no doubting his fitness – something his passenger on Thursday 9 June obviously didn't take into consideration when he decided to run off without paying!

It had been just another day for Jon as he worked his way along the Fenchurch Street Station rank until reaching the point.

"St Bart's Hospital please," came the request when Jon's turn came. So off they drove through the traffic along Fenchurch and Cannon Streets towards St Pauls, when the passenger's raised voice "informed" Jon that he was going the wrong way! Jon has been on DaC since 1997, substantially longer as a cab driver and had probably done the trip thousands of times so he knew there was nothing wrong with the route and he told the passenger so. It soon

NO ONE RUNS FROM JON!

...as passenger darts off to save £7 fare



Jon doesn't like runners!

became obvious that the passenger had made a mistake and meant the Royal London Hospital, but that wasn't Jon's fault. Most passengers would have apologised and just asked for the correct destination – after all, it was hardly miles away. But this chap didn't do that. As Jon pulled up on the left at the top of Cannon Street to await the passenger's decision, he suddenly opened the rear doors and with his bag in one hand, made a bolt for it!

For a brief moment, Jon sat there motion-

less. After all, this hadn't been a roader and there was only just over £6 on the meter. But that moment passed and super-fit Jon left his cab and chased what is generally known in the taxi business as the "runner" and within a few short seconds he had caught hold of him. The passenger must have wondered what had happened as he was probably about 10 years younger than Jon! The DaC driver forced the passenger's bag out of his hands and the "runner" stopped running!

He then asked for the bag back – which Jon offered in return for the fare, but in a rather more colourful language! The passenger then proffered a £10 note and Jon let go of the bag. Then, according to Jon, came the most astonishing part of the whole incident when the "runner" stood waiting for his change.

"Are you serious," our hero asked, "you want change after attempting to rob me? You're lucky I don't call the police!" With that, the former "runner" slunk away to rather distasteful looks from those walking by.

Jon also asked *Call Sign* to thank the driver who pulled up quickly to offer help, although Jon had sorted his problem out by then.

"It's still nice to know that the camaraderie between taxi drivers is still there. Luckily the same camaraderie between runners doesn't exist!!!"

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Many **Dial-a-Cab** drivers working on the Saturday afternoon of June 11 and floating around the west end, would have felt a slight chill in the air. The recent warm weather had cooled and a few drivers had even put their jackets on.

It was the day after Snowdonia in Wales had taken after its name and provided tourists with a blizzard! Bristol had hailstones and London had heavy showers. Nope, it wasn't the best day to get your kit off – especially whilst riding your bike around London!

But that's what around 700 cyclists did from 3pm that day when they left Hyde Park as part of the London naked bike ride to raise awareness of the need for more tolerance of bicycles on the City's roads, many carrying slogans expounding *Real Rights for Bikes*.

The event was part of the **World Naked Bike Ride**, which sees many thousands of naked cyclists riding all over the world. So far as the UK was concerned, they were also in Brighton, Manchester, York and Southampton.

It was **Ian Thomson (A14)** who started the

NUDE CYCLISTS HIT LONDON!



Even the chilly weather couldn't stop them!

mass drive towards town at around 4.20 that afternoon when he coolly put out the message – as you do – lots of nude cyclists at Trafalgar Square!

Ian Gray (C61) was next when he proclaimed on the DaC terminal that it was slow-going around the naked two-wheelers, although he failed to mention that everyone else was travelling at normal speeds and passing him!

They were followed minutes later by **Call Sign** photographer **Alan Green (E52)**. He circled around the nude cyclists three times in order to get a close-up shot. It was just as he was beginning his fourth circuit that he remembered he hadn't got his camera with him!

And it was the same day that hundreds of partially clad ladies took part in the first **slut-walk** at Hyde Park Corner – a somewhat better cause than the bikers. All in all, just another day in London...

For those new to Dial-a-Cab, Call Sign had been following the boxing progress of Sam Bezzina - son of Dial-a-Cab driver Dean Bezzina (M10) - who has already won a silver medal fighting for England...

Sam back in winning ways



Sam (left) is presented with best boxer of the evening by Billy Morgan

There was a good victory for **Sam Bezzina** on *West Ham Boxing Club's* home show, winning by unanimous decision against **Anthony Ward**, a tough opponent from the local Islington BC. To make things even harder for himself, Sam had to move from his usual 57kg up to 60kg to take the fight.

With Ward being much bigger than Sam, the first round saw Sam boxing on the back foot drawing Ward in while slipping his shots and counter punching well. He was also finding his range with the jab and scoring effectively.

The second round was very similar with Sam having to use his footwork and speed to keep out the way of Ward's lunging assaults, as his opponent rushed in trying to unload his own shots. Sam was scoring well with a solid jab to keep his opponent at bay. As the bell sounded for the end of the second, Sam returned to his corner feeling sure that he was well ahead but knowing that a big finale would ensure that victory.

The bell went for the third and final round. Ward, sensing he was behind rushed in once more but came off second best as Sam works well on the inside, alternating his shots from body to head. Sam slipped out and finished the round with a great display of boxing at range with superior head movement. At the end, Sam took a unanimous decision and was rewarded for his efforts by being announced as 'best home boxer of the evening' and presented with his trophy from former West Ham amateur boxer and now undefeated Pro, **Billy Morgan**.

It was a great win for Sam. His last outing saw him eliminated from the Junior ABA Championships in a very close bout losing on a majority to Repton's 57kg National Champion Romario Wallace.

Approaching the end of the boxing season, Sam can look back at another successful year for the West Ham Boxing Club with 6 National Schoolboy Champions, 3 National Junior ABA Champions and 1 Senior ABA Finalist with the results of several Tri Nation and European bouts still to be decided...

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At the recent monthly **Dial-a-Cab** Board meeting, there was a lengthy discussion regarding how we can attract more business. As you would expect, there were mixed feelings amongst us as to what would be the best direction to take with regard to attracting more work. **Michael Son**, as you can read by his article, is very passionate about us offering more **fixed price** journeys to clients, which will enable them to budget their transport expenditure better. Michael believes that if we offer more realistic pricing, we will win back work. How I wish it were that simple!

In our approach to obtaining new clients and holding onto existing ones, there has been the policy to offer clients a variation in our charging. If there are regular journeys taken, we have offered a fixed price. The common factor here is not only for us to offer a client what we believe is a reasonable cost for a journey, but to offer what the client feels is a reasonable cost for them to pay. Whatever price has been agreed, it has to have been cost effective and set at a figure to be attractive enough for the driver to supply a service. Having listened to Mike's views at the meeting and with the Editor providing a preview of the article before going to print, I think it only correct that because Mike has looked towards the members for input, that I should add to the debate and make members aware just some of the problems our call centre controllers face on a daily basis with the current work at the prices we have now.

Mike refers to a meter fare journey cost being different on a daily basis and he is correct. The same journey can differ by as much as £10 due to the length of time it takes to go from A to B in London or delays caused by passengers when getting into the cab. The big question is what is a realistic fixed price? The answer to this will differ from every driver you talk to and to every client you sell to. In addition, Mike states that he feels prices should be set at the equivalent meter cost, including a driver's gratuity but reduced run in - basically as close to the meter fare as possible and just like the charges are now. Included also is that if the client keeps the cab waiting for longer than 10 minutes, the meter fare then applies. The majority of fixed prices are set in this way now although some clients do have some skinny ones, which are priced more in line with the prices quoted by private hire. Taking the different approach that Mike suggests and introducing more fixed price journeys will, in my opinion, not increase work but lead to the demise of this organisation.

We occasionally have a regular fixed price journey picking up from Belvedere Road SE1 going to EC2, the F/P being £15. On the very morning I write this article, the controllers had to remove the F/P from the trip to get it covered. As soon as it was offered with a meter fare, it was snapped up immediately. The driver arrived with a £4.40 run in and the journey cleared at £13.80. Add the gratuity and the trip cost is only pennies different to the fixed price. Another trip today was picking up from Knightsbridge SW1 to EC2 - fixed at £20. That too had to have the F/P removed because drivers constantly rejected it. Again as soon as the F/P came out, the trip was immediately accepted. The driver took 10 minutes to arrive at the pick-up, making it 6 minutes late. At the end of the trip, the driver cleared it for £17.80. Add the gratuity and the trip cost is actually below the F/P.

On this very day again, there were five account rides - NOT fixed prices - all picking up from the SW1W area that were not covered. As I

Keith Cain's view on the subject fellow Board member Mike Son writes of in this issue

Fixed Prices...



write this, it is mid-morning and I can overhear a call-back telephonist saying to an account client who will be billed the meter fare, that we did not have a cab available in their area and would they like us to keep trying to get one? That pick-up was in NW8.

The F/P trips we altered took place around 9 o'clock in the morning, but it makes no difference what time of day it is, drivers just do not like doing F/P work. Our evening and night shift controllers will tell you they all have the same problems with covering F/P trips. Even our weekend controllers have to put premiums on meter fare trips before drivers will accept them. There are trips in the system where the fixed price is skinny; for example W2 to the City for £22 - cost on the meter £30. This particular trip frequently has the F/P removed and the additional cost is paid by the Society. If we have trouble covering fixed price trips now, what sort of service are we going to supply if we go along Michael's route and offer more of them? So I have to ask, if our prices are fixed at reasonable prices close to the meter cost and our private hire competitors still offer their trips at a much lower price than ours, why would an account client pay more to Dial-a-Cab who would still be more expensive?

Mike knows I am not a person to knock an idea if I do not have an alternative solution. Another possible avenue that could be followed is regarding administration charges. Unlike private hire companies, we charge an administration charge on top of the journey price, which is set at a lower charge for the higher user and higher charge for the lowest user. I know from experience, having been in the Sales team for many years, that if we were to offer no administration charges whatsoever, we could gain additional work. But even suggesting this, I know its shortcomings. To simplify it; let's say it costs on average £5million to run the Society, that's £2.5million made up from client's administration charges and £2.5million from driver's subscriptions. Stop charging the clients their £2.5million and who do you think will have to meet the short fall? Yes, you guessed it... the drivers! It would mean drivers looking to pay a possible £30/£40 more per week on their subscriptions. This method would retain the meter fare cost for the journey, there would still be a run in and the driver gratuity would remain. Would this be acceptable to members if there was an abundance of additional work? I don't

honestly think so.

My argument has always been that we offer the product of a professional driver who has studied and learned his profession. There is a specially designed vehicle regulated to meet the highest standards with a pricing tariff set by a governing body to be consistent. We are a company with the technical ability to enable its clients to request their vehicle quickly and efficiently. Basically, we have a product that is still far better than any other taxi or private hire company can offer. But our product comes at a cost and I do not think that this organisation is at a time in its history when we should consider selling itself cheap.

I have no doubt in my mind that to offer more fixed rates will lead to cheaper fixed prices just to compete. Meter fares will be a thing of the past so why would a driver go on radio to work for less journey costs than they can pick up from the street? It would be a downward spiral. It is my opinion that we continue to ride the storm. Work will come back to the radio circuits albeit slowly, because when work is difficult for us to cover, it's equally hard for private hire firms to cover their work. When it rains, we see our account clients coming out of the woodwork to use our service, with their policy of cost-cutting being forgotten.

We have been contacted recently by a very large account that left us some three years ago for a private hire company. They are asking us for an update on our service and to see if we can technically meet their requirements. They don't do this if they are happy with their current supplier. It used to be a common practise for account clients to move from black cab circuit to black cab circuit, only to return back to the original supplier. I believe we are starting to see that happen again, only this time clients are realising the cheaper supplier is not necessarily the best.

As a Board member, I speak to many drivers who ask the question what we are doing about getting more work because they are finding it difficult on the radio. When we look to see what their work pattern is like, we notice a lot of these drivers like to sit at the airport for long periods or constantly reject trips. It was interesting to see recently that one driver, who was very passionate about the need for the Board to increase our work, was a driver who during the buoyant years when work was in abundance had received several letters reminding him that he was not completing the minimum number of trips per month!

We know that work is vital, but no matter what work we have it has to be acceptable to the whole membership. If it is not, then we cannot provide a service. Currently, it's all about cost and clients pushing the cost down. We have one of the best products out there in our industry and like all good things, it comes at a price. I apologise to you all if you think I am wrong when I say I do not want to sell this Society cheap...

Keith Cain
Call Centre Manager
Driver Operations Manager

Saturday 21 May 2011 was a day that Wimbledon football fans will never forget. In front of a crowd of 18,195 at the *City of Manchester* stadium, their team achieved the impossible. Barely nine years after forming in a pub following what many supporters had considered the treachery of the original Wimbledon team when they moved out of south London to become the MK Dons, their team – **AFC Wimbledon** – beat **Luton Town** in the Blue Square play-off final to reach the hallowed grounds of the Football League. In the penalty shoot-out at the end of a scoreless game, skipper **Danny Kedwell** smashed the ball past Luton 'keeper Mark Tyler and the impossible became reality!

Of course, most hard-core AFC Wimbledon fans don't actually recognise the Dons as being part of the team's history and refer to the promotion as regaining their FL status. Either way, the achievement is nothing short of amazing. Ironically, the original Wimbledon team were elected to the Football League in 1977 and nine years later reached the old first division. Their most famous day came in the 1988 FA Cup Final when they defeated the mighty Liverpool, who were League Champions, by 1 – 0 at the old Wembley to become only the second team in football history to win both the FA Cup and the FA Amateur Cup behind Old Carthusians.

So what does all that – incredible as it is – have to do with **Dial-a-Cab**? Well the first team coach is none other than DaC driver **Simon Bassey (C79)**! Known to all at their Kingsmeadow *Fan's Stadium* at Kingston as Bass, Simon had been a trainee at the old Wimbledon and can claim to have been with the club since day one, having also been at Charlton, Aldershot, Carshalton and Tooting FC. Simon's playing days were at full back and central midfielder. He also has something in common with DaC Board member **Allen Togwell** in that he doesn't like players to turn up looking as though they have just climbed out of bed!

Second only to manager **Terry Brown** – “we work very well together” – Simon confirmed his feelings to **Call Sign** that AFCW had regained their rightful place after having their original position “stolen” from them!

“Wimbledon is in my blood,” he said, I was there at Wembley in 1988 as a kid when we won the cup and amazingly the team we beat in the semi-final were Luton Town – who were then in the first division!” Luton were actually riding on a wave of success having earlier that season defeated Arsenal 3 – 2 at Wembley to take the Carling Cup Final!

So how did the 2011 team react back in the dressing room after defeating Luton and gaining the promotion? “It was just brilliant,” Simon told **Call Sign**. “Former goalkeeper and now club President, **Dickie Guy** was there and whilst he doesn't say much, you could see the pride in his face – a look that said we're back!”

DaC's Simon coaches AFC Wimbledon back into the League!



Simon has coached AFC Wimbledon into the football League

Alambritis has now officially apologised for allowing the old Wimbledon FC to leave the borough 20 years ago for Milton Keynes, which then led to the old club's demise and reincarnation. He says the council would welcome back AFC Wimbledon to the borough. It wouldn't be to the Plough Lane ground, but it would be an amazing story – probably the most amazing comeback in soccer history and we'd bet that the old “Crazy Gang” of **Dave Bassett** and co would be thrilled.

Simon had to give up playing for the team when his knee gave way following a diagnosed cruciate ligament injury. He moved into coaching, taking on the club's reserve team before being pushed up to first team coach following Terry Brown's appointment as manager. But he still works in his DaC taxi whenever he gets the chance.

“I've got no choice,” he told us, “no one at AFC Wimbledon is suddenly getting rich, so even though we went full-time last year, we all have jobs to do. But if we do well, then who knows!”

Merton Council leader **Stephen**

As for Simon, he's looking forward to the future with AFC Wimbledon and their first league match against Bristol Rovers, but insists that those Crazy Gang days won't be returning. **Vinnie Jones** and co used to enjoy the occasional ‘tanking’ up in the boozier, but the promoted batch are mainly non-drinkers who prefer the quiet life. Mind you, we're not sure how quiet **Dial-a-Cab** would be if the new team emulated the old one to shoot through the leagues and in just three or so of them end up playing **Brian Rice's QPR** in the Premier League. Now that would be something! Perhaps **Call Sign** would be the official program!

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Barrie Smith (K06)

I could not help having a wry smile on my face when reading **Allen Togwell's** reply to my letter in *April's Call Sign* article, *Old Cabs and Pin Stripes*. The reason being that I've seen this stock reply so many times before.

I could very easily write a monthly column using the indefinite article, so that should I upset any of the membership I could retort that as I only used the descriptive *some* or *could* and even *the majority*, I would therefore have an escape route to avoid criticism. But let me ask you, what is the point? Surely anyone with a modicum of intelligence would be able to detect exactly the direction of Mr Togwell's editorial and to use the indefinite article is being trite in the extreme.

If an author is prepared to make a comment, he or she should in my opinion nail their colours to the mast and stand by their convictions. To reiterate, I feel that the *Marketing Place* editorial is not a vehicle for Mr Togwell's suppositions and personal prejudice, but that it should be used as a platform to inform the membership only of developments within the Sales department.

Mr Togwell goes on to make the point that when tendering for new accounts, an important consideration is the age of our fleet. This is a totally erroneous argument as statistically our fleet will proportionally have exactly the same number of older vehicles as the two other leading radio circuits, which must therefore put us on a level playing field.

I just cannot - try as I might - know how Allen can come up with the analogy that- **"I would say the vast majority of smartly dressed cab drivers are those that drive new cabs, which makes sense."**

Who says it makes sense? On what do you base this observation? Do you have factual evidence? I have seen many drivers with new vehicles looking as though they haven't had a change of clothes for months. In my opinion, your totally subjective comment has no foundation!

If you have to make an analogy (I don't like analogies), it is more likely that a driver who is unprepared to keep his or her vehicle clean could be an extension of his or her own appearance.

Mr Togwell asked me to recommend a good tailor, but before I do so I'm terribly disappointed that he confuses constructive criticism with impertinence. I can assure you it is not in my nature to be impertinent - it does seem that Allen has once again misunderstood my dictum.

Regarding the photograph of the model in the article, I really do feel that Mr Togwell should pop down to his local ophthalmologist. The one thing that strikes me about this gentleman is the discreetness of his attire. I notice the pinstripe is so unobtrusive that it's almost invisible and the tie subdued. I'm sure that for every photograph that can support Mr Togwell's argument, I could supply two that would not. I recently followed the Royal wedding and try as I might, I couldn't see any gentlemen in the congregation wearing anything like a chalk stripe suite with outrageous accessories - maybe they were having lunch at their St James club! I must add that if Mr Togwell was wearing his regimental tie on the cover of the March *Call Sign*, then let me

It began in the April Call Sign - now the debate continues...

OLD CABS AND PIN STRIPES

CONTINUED

apologise (although I must admit it wasn't recognisable to me).

Now for my recommendation for a good tailor: May I respectfully suggest Doug Haywood of Mount Street, Turnbull and Asser in Jermyn Street for shirts and John Lobbs of St James's Street for shoes.

Oh yes, and Specsavers for glasses!

Remember, if one is prepared to put one's head over the parapet, then expect to be hit by a little flak!



Allen Togwell's first photo as a DaC Board member. He looks just as smart today

Allen Togwell (DaC BoM)

My goodness what a response! This April makes 25 years that I've been on the Board and in all that time I seem to be the only Board member that attracts so much bitter diatribe. Why I'll never know and frankly, to keep this diatribe going couldn't possibly appeal to anybody other than masochists. The editor must be desperate to fill the letters page! So I'll keep it short.

Firstly, with regards my articles being restricted solely to the activity within the Sales Department, Mr Smith you are absolutely correct and for the majority of my 25 years I did exactly that and it was very easy to do because there was a lot to talk about and especially to moan about, particularly the poor coverage, which back issues of *Call Sign* will prove. I was forever being castigated by people like yourself for having the temerity to speak my mind. But times change, Sales is for younger energetic people, which I'm not! I'm 74 and my two days a week on your Board are now taken up with other duties, which whilst interesting and beneficial to the Society, frankly would make boring reading matter. So your editor, Mr Fisher, suggested I use my old space (perhaps with a different heading) to write about subjects of my choosing, which I

do and at times I agree it's often banal and also like you, I write it in my free time.

Secondly, I have no factual evidence that the majority of people who spend a lot of money on a new vehicle bother to keep it and themselves clean. If they don't, then in my ignorance I would assume them to be odd (as in peculiar) spending so much money on something they have so little respect for.

Thirdly, as for supplying our clients with old vehicles, I was making the comparison with the age ratio of the saloon cars and comfort supplied by private hire, not with aging taxis on other radio circuits.

Fourthly, the pinstripe suit appeared unobtrusive because of the low resolution of the photo. I could have submitted a bolder stripe, but assumed, wrongly, that you as a gentleman would have taken my word.

Fifthly, as for the suits, shirts, shoes etc, am I to assume your recommendations are made from experience? If so, I'm impressed. However, as for Specsavers my dear chap, surely not. You really must try David Clulow in Wigmore Street, the service and selection is absolutely divine.

And finally, as I appear to be falling below the standards of how I should be representing your Society, I would truly appreciate it if you would be so kind as to propose at the next AGM an increase in my hourly rate. After 25 years of buying clothes solely to represent Dial-a-Cab, I am reaching a point and age where I need a little financial support. Thank you...

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

There may be just one **Lady Gaga**, but DaC now has its own *Poker Face* courtesy of **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Alan Mansbridge (M61)** who won the £50,000 top prize at the Grosvenor Casino in Walsall in the latest stage of the Rank PLC sponsored *Grosvenor UK Poker Tour*, when he beat 171 opponents to take home that magical 50k!

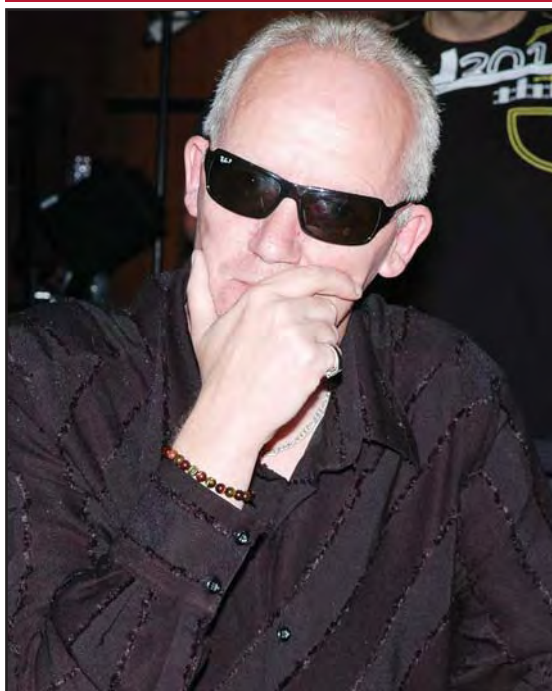
Alan had done a few hours work in town before driving up to the West Midlands in his DaC taxi and booking into a hotel for just the first two nights of the three day tournament. He had won a smaller tournament at the Sportsman Casino, Marble Arch a few years earlier, picking up a handy £15,000 but this one was top drawer and filled with the UK's top poker players.

"I didn't really expect to get beyond that second night," Alan told *Call Sign*. **"Of course I hoped that I might, but with 171 other poker players in the tournament, the odds were stacked against me. I think I was as surprised as anyone when I had to book in for that third night stay, but even then I never thought about winning, but maybe coming in the top nine where even that ninth place paid out £3440."**

All the entrants paid £1000 each for their 15,000 poker chips with the competition being run on a knock-out basis leaving the last person standing – or should that be seated – taking home the huge cheque. Even the runner-up prizes were worth the drive up from London, with second place paying £35,000 and third well over £20,000!

But Alan was on top of his game and perhaps with his *what have I got to lose, I didn't expect to get this far* attitude, he began the last day in ninth place with 67,000 chips whereas

DaC driver wins £50,000 poker tournament!



Alan deep in thought on his way to £50,000!

Call Sign was told that Alan played a slow *flopped straight* to get most of his opponent's chips. No, we didn't understand that either, so we asked Alan to explain.

"I had a blinding hand that had to be a winning one, but I didn't want to waste it so the idea was to make Martin believe that his hand could be better than mine, so I bet slowly as if I wasn't sure. And sure enough Alan's plan worked to perfection and his taxi drove out of Walsall with £50,000 more than it came in with!

The biggest attraction of the *Grosvenor UK Poker Tour* for Alan is that whilst you stand to lose your initial £1000, you can't lose more because after getting your initial chips, that's it. You either win or lose, but you can't lose any more - unlike some poker games where the temptation is always there to *double-up* to try and win back any losses.

"It was a lovely win," Alan told *Call Sign*, "but nowadays £50,000 isn't life-changing and I'll still have to go to work – but I did take the next day off!"

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As usual, DaC drivers are on the annual trip to the seaside with the LTBAWD...

WARM WELCOME TO WORTHING FOR WAR VETS



Jim Rainbird with Dame Vera Lynn



DaC's Paul Jenner with his war vets

120 taxis set off for **Worthing** on 14th June carrying war vets for the 63rd annual outing organised by **The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled**. As usual, the number of taxi drivers prepared to donate a day of their time and their taxi to transport the war vets included several **Dial-a-Cab** drivers. **Jim Rainbird (T25)** was also on the outing in his role as the Master of **The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers**.

The taxis gathered at South Holmwood, where villagers organised a breakfast stop before the trip and a *comfort stop* on the return – although the bar is then also open! A warm welcome was extended to everyone as they arrived in Worthing, especially to the charity's Patron, **Dame Vera Lynn**. Lunch was served as the *Wurlitzer* organ emerged from the stage at the Assembly Rooms with visitors tapping their feet and joining in the well-known songs.

After lunch and speeches, it was down to the seafront to take in the fresh air. The day was warm and sunny and soon the veterans and taxi drivers were enjoying ice creams on the promenade and pier. Then back to the Assembly Rooms for tea and cabaret - once again by the brilliant **Jive Aces** - as well as a fund raising raffle.

DaC driver **Paul Jenner (L19)** told *Call Sign*: "It is an amazing day that is well deserved by these amazing war vets."

Sandie Goodwin

COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Hello ladies & gents,

Logos

I have over the last two months received a number of calls and emails complaining that a number of **Dial-a-Cab** taxis are waiting outside large accounts with both, or at least one, of their logos missing. Can I please remind you once again that it is a procedure rule that all members joining the Society after January 1996 must at all times display the company logo. It advertises our circuit, making Dial-a-Cab taxis instantly recognisable, but more importantly helps to generate additional work. So apart from the rule violation, it really is a *no brainer*! The small number of Dial-a-Cab members who have the option of not displaying the logo on their taxi are actually paying a substantially increased subscription for that.

Parking difficulty

On a different note I, like you, fully appreciate that it is becoming increasingly difficult and sometimes almost impossible to park immediately outside or close to a particular pick-up and over the last period this has caused quite a few problems. Please remember that if you are not directly outside the account address or parking is restrictive, you must use your terminal's **Parked** facility. It is important that the Call Centre is aware of your location at all times and it is also imperative that you only press the arrival button when you are physically outside of a pick-up. Pressing **Arrival** when you are about to reach the allowed run-in amount but still some way from



the address can and does cause a major problem, especially if high amounts are showing on the meter when the client enters your taxi or at the booked time.

DaC terminals on 'spare' cabs

As you may be aware, both main taxi dealerships - **KPM** and the **London Taxi Company** (formerly Mann & Overton) - had a small number of their courtesy vehicles fitted with our terminals. The Board agreed to fit the taxis to give all of our members the possibility, subject to availability, of a taxi on the circuit while their vehicle was being

repaired or serviced. KPM still have three vehicles available, but unfortunately the LTC have now chosen not to fit any of their fleet taxis. I was quite surprised that they made this decision as many of our members use the Brewery Road dealership for this reason alone, so it was with this in mind that we have agreed to fit a number of taxis from other suppliers to fill the present void.

Over the coming weeks, taxis may be available from the **Ascott Cab Co** and **Cricklewood Carriers Cab Co** for your repairs / servicing and two no fault repairers, **Cab Aid** and **Chief Taxis** - who I believe work with all insurance companies - will also have a Dial-a-Cab fitted taxi amongst their fleet. All of these taxis will be exclusively for the use of our members subject to availability, which we hope will help you out whilst your taxi is off the road.

Specs offer

Finally, you will see in this issue of **Call Sign** that there is an ad offering very good deals for Dial-a-Cab drivers and staff on all types of spectacles. You will need to present an up-to-date prescription, but I have had several pairs made there over the years and the savings are well worth having, comparing very favourably against the main retail shops on the high street.

Anyway, until the next edition, enjoy your well-deserved summer breaks and be very lucky...

Allan Evans

Allane@Dialacab.co.uk

DAVID SULLIVAN

Before **Call Sign** took its' summer break, **Dial-a-Cab** terminals contained messages about the sad death of long-time subscriber, **David Sullivan (W25)**. We invited Dave's wife, Claire, to write a few words about her husband...

"Dave had been a cabbie for nearly 40 years and a Dial-a-Cab member since April 1978. He loved his job, he always maintained that you got out of it what you put in and always said that it had given himself and his family a good quality of life.

He loved London and never tired of its amazing history, but first and foremost he loved his family. We were married for 45 years during which time we produced 3 daughters and a son and 5 wonderful grandchildren. Dave would happily bore any punter, given the chance, to boast about how proud he was that all his children had managed to get to university and it was only in May last year that he gave his youngest daughter away in marriage at Fulham Palace. The theme of the marriage revolved around London tourist spots and black cabs and it was, on reflection, a trib-



ute to how much his children respected him and appreciated how hard he had worked for them all their lives.

Dave had been a prolific sportsman in his young life - an ABA finalist, footballer, gymnast and a swimmer and after family and work, he loved nothing better than to watch a game of football or watch his grandson play tennis. He had few cab driver friends, but those he had were the best. They were there when they were needed and it would have been impossible to do without them.

Dave had faith, which stood him in good stead. He was such a quiet, gentle fellow, but somehow managed to fill our Church at his funeral service and raise approximately £1,500 to go to chosen charities - namely St Luke's Hospice in Kenton and the Raynauds and Scleroderma Association.

Dave died on March 18th following a 6 month battle with cancer, fought like the sportsman he used to be. He was 67 years old and the happiness he bought us all has made our sorrow that much greater..."

Claire Sullivan

London Taxi Company...

Transparent pricing on used vehicles



The London Taxi Company has announced it has now revisited its entire portfolio, applying its transparent pricing to all used taxis in its seven retail outlets across the UK, including the London outlet at Brewery Road N7.

Sales Director, Rob Laidler said: "We launched the new **TX4 Style** and **Elegance** range from £28,995 on the road - that's up to £4,500 less than its closest comparable predecessor and making a new top of the range London Taxi cheaper than it was a decade ago. We felt the time was right to apply transparent pricing across our used taxis portfolio, not least because of the increasing number of local authorities implementing emissions or age restrictions, therefore putting additional pressure on our used stocks." The transparent pricing strategy exploits the costs saving that the company is now able to achieve through dealing direct with their customer base.

Rob added: "It has been a thorough project, spanning a couple of months, which has created some cracking used taxi prices across a range of ages and mileage. Residual values remain strong, given the high demand for our used stock, which is important for buyers and also great news for those looking to part-exchange. We'd urge owners to visit any of our dealerships or for our full used taxi range visit

www.london-taxis.co.uk/used."



LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE...

with Tom Quigley

Mother Nature rules...

As Government, Councils and different authorities look to save money, I always smile that for whatever measure they bring in to save it, one thing is for sure - Mother Nature comes along and exposes their inadequacies and short-sightedness!

For many years, there has been a lack of maintenance and neglect of trees in towns, parks and other areas with authorities trying to save money by putting stupid warning notices on trees being low, instead of maintaining them with regular pruning. Savings have also been applied in the guise of preservation areas. This policy has forced many trees striving for light against each other and even higher buildings, being too top heavy and imbalanced.

As the long dry spell continues, it has left many of those trees at a dangerous level with a lack of water, coupled along with the natural clay and chalk in most of the London area they are now very weak at root level. With trees in full leaf, this creates a fulcrum with the slightest of winds causing trees to fall or branches to snap off. I predict that this year will see many delays to rail and road travel with more and more trees falling, as most Councils and local authorities have long since got rid of direct labour in their tree and park maintenance teams, instead relying on outside contractors. This will further delay the response in dealing with incidents.

I expect there will be drought measures introduced with hosepipe bans brought in and we will get the usual "experts" telling us not to run the tap and to flush toilets less. I have no problem with that, but I question the collection of water in the London area and the tubular system that has been adopted to collect water.

Years ago, all our roads had deeper gutters and alongside most roads were open ditches and hedgerows (London is famous for its ditches, namely Houndsditch and Shoreditch). When younger, I would often come home with a wet foot after trying to jump a ditch and failing. This was a system that worked as it kept the water table high by collecting it over a larger area and helped maintain a healthy natural habitat for birds and other wildlife. It dates back to Roman times and was adopted by them from the Moors in Europe, who were brought up in the deserts and knew how to preserve and channel water. Now we have large paved areas with tarmac to the kerb, when it rains, minimal amounts of water is being diverted to the tubular system, which then relies on evaporation of puddles and

wasting this vital commodity.

The collection of water through closed tubular systems is purely for financial gain, as the distribution can be metered and controlled. If ever visible proof were needed of this, the next time you step onto a golf course in Spain or Portugal, ask yourself how the greens look so immaculate yet the outlying countryside looks so barren? The simple answer is that tubular systems bypass the poor farms and valleys to direct the water into the playgrounds of the rich who can afford it. Unfortunately Britain and London in particular have adopted this system. There are many other factors that have effected this change such as the closure of reservoirs to build housing estates, sports fields converted to supermarkets and even as I write this column, large areas of Hackney Marshes - a vital natural organ of water collection and control to the Lee Valley - are being developed (sic) for the Olympics.

Enjoy summer, but if you get thirsty remember the poor water companies; they need the profit.

Students

It's the time of year when students return from their studies and come back to the real world.

This often entails being a good relative and picking up them and their clobber. As a good uncle, it happened to me recently having dropped a niece off in Southampton and having the pleasure of doing the return journey. The reason, I call it clobber is because that's what it was; the price of fuel probably outweighing the items being brought back!

As we loaded up our stuff, I watched other parents and relatives loading their vehicles. It seemed as though the students must have been taught everything - except the ability to be able to pack and wrap things properly. The scene was of bursting supermarket carrier bags stuffed with clothes; TV sets with cables and plugs loosely dangling, ironing boards and plastic linen baskets with dirty clothes in ready for mums to wash. All the men looked exasperated under strict instructions not to say anything as the little angels could do no wrong and we don't want an argument as soon as we see them!

Of course, to round the day off you have to foot the bill in an overpriced service station as they can't afford it on their student loan! Ah... sweet family moments!

Tom Quigley (Y33)

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Some years ago I used to use a garage in the NW6 area. They did a crash repair for me and when my regular garage shut down, I decided to go there.

It was run by Dave and his younger brother Frank (not their real names for reasons that will become obvious). Dave was a fairly pleasant sort of chap, but Frank was - how can I put it - an animal! Here I'll repeat what a learned judge once said when passing sentence on some miscreant also referred to as an animal: *"That is probably an insult to the beasts of the field!"*

The final straw for me came when I was having the cab serviced one afternoon. As I've said, I'd previously had a crash repair done there, in addition to an overhaul and new diff. As I stood in the yard, Frank sidled over and said "Your cab's a pile of sh*t!"

Now I had no sentimental feelings about my cab. Perhaps it was a pile of sh*t, but it was my pile of sh*t and I was apparently paying him to keep it that way! So I paid my bill, vowed not to return and took my valuable business elsewhere - well to Kingsland Road actually.

Around 5 or 6 years passed. It was a Friday afternoon and as I drove up Heath Drive there was a roar from the cab's nether regions - the unmistakable sound of the exhaust blowing through. I didn't fancy trekking over to E8 at that time on a Friday and I had other plans for my Saturday.

I knew I was onto a loser, but I thought I'd try the place opposite Cricklewood Bus Garage. I had already assumed that in those pre-Sheldon Posner days they probably only worked on their own taxis, and I was right. There was a Kwik-fit nearby, but they didn't have the part. There was just one option...Dave and Frank's!

A friendly young chap whose face I recog-

Another true story from Geoff Levene

"YOUR CAB'S A PILE OF SH*T!"



nised from earlier visits introduced himself as Adam. He soon had the cab up on the ramp and a new down-pipe fitted. I was impressed. As I wrote the cheque, I mentioned that I used to go to this garage when Frank ran things.

"Oh that's my Father," said Adam.

I smiled. "I won't say anything then!"

Adam smiled back and said: "Don't tell me, he upset you too!" So I told him what'd happened.

"That's what everyone says," he replied, "what can one say other than I'm sorry."

I felt a bit better knowing that at least it wasn't just me! A while later I was talking to a cab driver who had moved in nearby to me. I

noticed the colour of his wheels and asked if he drove for Dave and Frank?

"Yes," he said, "Frank's a friend of mine."

I couldn't stop myself. "But he's such a horrible so-and-so," I said and then saw the driver's smile fade very quickly. In fact he looked as though he wanted to hit me!

He could have said: "How dare you, I don't know what you mean, Frank is a really nice guy."

But he didn't. What he did say was: "He's changed since the heart attack."

As Adam had said some years earlier: "What can one say...?"

Geoff Levene (K43)

Could this be the next London Taxi???

PLEASE TELL US YOU'RE JOKING!!!

This is the French **U-Box**, which has been developed by the **D3 Group** in a co-operation with **Huntsman Advanced Materials**. The idea was to show that it is possible "...to build an electric car incorporating environmentally sustainable components employing series production techniques."

It was put on show at this year's **JEC Composites** show in Paris, where the designers claimed that the U-Box can make extensive use of carbon composites, as well as flax and basalt reinforcement components, along with a new halogen-free, fire-resistant resin developed by HAM for the infusion process.

Flexible organic light-emitting diodes (OLEDs) are said to be integrated into the composite structure, consuming up to 70% less energy than conventional light sources and made using high-performance, thin barrier coatings also designed by the same group at HAM.

Frédéric Robin, D3 Group General Director said: **"It also runs at minimal cost and we've already designed a taxi version with a fully glazed roof to explore the city. Who knows, in ten years this could be the new London taxi."**

Call Sign may not know what any of us will be doing in 10 years, but let's all pray that quite possibly the ugliest vehicle ever designed hasn't approached *London Taxis and Private Hire* for a licence!

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online



Have you ever seen an uglier "taxi" in your life!!!



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Nuala Glavin answers some FAQs about PCNs...

DRIVER SERVICES AND PCN'S

claim they have not received our first appeal. **Barrie Segal** sends everything by email and has a confirmation to prove it has been received. So again bring, post, fax or email to Driver Services.

I've got a Bailiff's Letter! Will they repossess my car? My TV? My wife?

Don't Panic!!! If you receive a **Charge Certificate** from Westminster Council, you may receive a letter from a company called **Philips** - they are not Bailiffs, they are a debt recovery agent. They send out 3 letters and then refer the case back to Westminster Council. They have no rights, it's just a scare tactic to make you pay. **DO NOT** at any stage panic and pay or contact **Phillips**.

Northampton County Court sent me some forms, does this mean I will get a CCJ?

No! The **TE9** form they have sent you is simply to cancel the **Charge Certificate**. Just sign the form and bring it to Driver Services. You will then receive a letter from Northampton County Court cancelling the Charge Certificate and reducing the ticket back to £60 - although the Council may send the original PCN and start the process all over again.

I've got a letter about a Court hearing date, do I have to attend?

No! Just bring, send, fax or email the letter to Driver Services and we will send a representative on your behalf.

What Happens next?

After the hearing date, you will receive a letter saying that the PCN has been cancelled or that we have lost the case and the PCN needs to be paid. **DO NOT** pay the PCN, just bring or send it to Driver Services and we will pay it for you. If you receive a cancellation letter, please contact Driver Services in the usual way or call us with the PCN number so we can update our records.

Do DaC dispute all PCNs?

Unfortunately not. We do not pay PCNs received for parking on **ZigZags**, two wheels on the pavement or traffic contraventions. Also please note we will no longer reimburse drivers that have not followed the correct PCN procedure and who have paid a PCN...

Nuala Glavin
DaC Driver Services

I've got a parking ticket (PCN), what should I do?

Don't pay it! You need to get the PCN to **Driver Services** asap. You can bring it into Driver's Reception between 9-5 or leave it with Driver's Reception 24 hours a day. Alternatively you can post it, fax it (**0207 553 7295**) or email it to **nualag@dialacab.co.uk**.

What happens next?

You probably won't hear anything for a few weeks and then you will receive a **Notice of Rejection**. With the **Notice of Rejection** you will receive an **Appeal Form**. Sign the back of the form and either post or bring both to Driver Services as we need the originals.

Now they want £180! Help...!!

This is called a **Charge Certificate**. The Council usually send one of these when they

NEW ROYAL OAK OPENS!

John Anderson, who ran the very popular Royal Oak down the slope in Harrow Road until Crossrail construction works forced its closure, has now opened the **New Royal Oak** nearby on Hermitage Street W2 just off **North Wharf Road**. Access is via the slip road from Bishops Bridge Road and left into Hermitage Street then left again through the car park gates. The venue is clearly signposted, so you can't get lost!

Speaking to **Call Sign**, John told us that since he threw open the doors of his new eatery in mid-June, the word had steadily spread through the cabbie grapevine and he has been delighted to welcome many of the regular faces that had frequented the original restaurant.

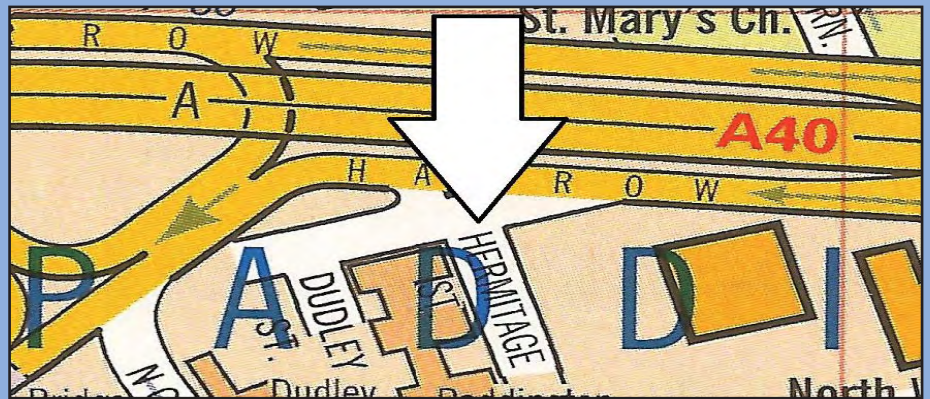
"There are a few things I'd like to clarify," John told us. "Firstly, drivers are a bit confused about car park charges. There are no charges for taxis! Just drive straight through into our area, simple!"

"And secondly," he continued, "we have spaces for 50 cabs during the day. If there is no individual bay available, drivers can park across the line of cars, that's fine. Then after 17.00 hours there is enough space for 200 cabs as the cars vacate the car park."

The current Royal Oak is huge, with a vast seating capacity and beautifully appointed fittings and fixtures. Oh yes, and the food is pretty good too! A wide variety of dishes can be chosen from the extensive menu, all freshly cooked.

Currently the New Royal Oak is open from 07.00 to 19.00 in keeping with the car park opening times, but John is expecting to be able to extend those hours in the near future. So watch this space...

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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

'Donald, where's yer troosers?'

I bet there are lots of **Call Sign** readers out there who can remember that song, expertly sung by Glaswegian **Andy Stewart** (1933-1993). Younger cabbies will be more familiar with his actor-son **Ewan Stewart** whose film and TV credits include *Rob Roy*, *Titanic* and *Only Fools and Horses*.

Anyway, back to the trousers – the lyrics of that legendary ditty includes the line *Well I've just come down from the Isle of Skye*. Well in reality I had just



returned from a week long holiday on the Isle of Mull to do a long weekend shift in the saddle before heading off back to France.

My Friday night hero, after driving without a job from Southfields Station, flagged me down outside the Trafalgar Arms in King's Road:

"Can you take me to Battersea Square please driver and then on to Annabel's?"

My *certainly* *guv'nor* was said in our time-honoured and expected fashion, while at the same time assuming that my latest punter would need to change from his 'casual' dress sense that seemed more fair game for a pint and a fag outside a pub in Chelsea rather than an upmarket Mayfair club. But - and surprise, surprise (and I might be a little *old school* about these things) - when he emerged from his apartment on the river side of Lombard Road, I could have sworn he had changed from his jeans into, er, jeans! I then considered the fact that maybe Mayfair standards had dropped alarmingly as we made our way from Valiant House to 44 Berkeley Square while discussing the merits of England wrapping up the 2nd Test against Sri Lanka.

Well, well - and I'm relieved to say that after a 10 minute dispute with the doorman on the street outside that separated the nearside of my TX2 and the entrance to the club - my punter was told in no uncertain terms that gentlemen members **MUST** wear a suit or jacket **AND** tailored trousers to go inside "...and if I say you are wearing denim **SIR**, then take it from me, you are wearing denim!"

With the meter still running, I must admit I found it difficult to concentrate on reading my most recent issue of **Call Sign** as I listened to the pair of them sounding off, and it was after some time that Mister Denim caught sight of the pair of trousers and jacket that I had on a coat hanger in the luggage department (I had been guiding some pre-booked tourists earlier that day before changing into night shift mode).

"Cabbie, looks like my problems are over! How much can I offer you for your trousers?"

I was laughing as I told him that my \$28 pair of Ralph Laurens bought in Macy's sale two Novembers ago were not only a size or three too small for him, but they were also staying on the hanger!

Needless to say my clock continued to run all the way back to SW11 so that 'Donald' (and that could well be his name for all I know) could put on a 3rd pair of strides in an hour before returning to his nightclub. As he went off into the night having weighed me in with £79 (exactly), I decided there and then to download Andy Stewart's classic from iTunes to my iPhone... that cost just 79p!

Where's Woody?

Do you know which part of the City Bob Woodford was passing when he snapped this saucy little note? The answer is on page 31...



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

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

Kupkake's Korner



Remembering winter 2010

It felt so quiet
I could hear the snow,
falling, falling
no place to go.
In the distance
I heard the fox call
heralding winter
from a churchyard wall.

As I walked
into the pristine white,
I was the only human
out that night.
My dog trotting at my right
staying close
lead pulled tight.

Beneath my feet
the pavement creaked,
frozen stiff
deprived of heat.
And the snow still fell
and filled our tracks
lay on my shoulders
...and on my hat.

Under a car
a homeless cat,
sought shelter from
the thick snow mat.
Probably hungry
he wasn't fat
just peering as we
headed back...

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Call Sign

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

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

This month's Flashback returns to 11 September 2001- forever entrenched in the mind as 9/11 – and a letter from an American cab driver that arrived on Call Sign's desk soon after that dreadful day. He asked for it to be published in Mailshot...



From Call Sign October 2001

MAILSHOT

New York – 11 September 2001

Here in Cleveland, Ohio, as in many US cities, we have a lot of Arabic drivers. On September 11 they were in their cabs trying to make a buck just like the rest of us hacks. I was sitting at a local hotel when I saw people come out, take a look at the first cab in line and go to the next cab. It happened eight times and then it was my turn to be number two on the stand. Again a passenger came out, saw the driver, came back to my cab and got in. I tried to explain to him that the first cab is the one he should be in since that driver had been there the longest. The man looked at me and said: "I ain't riding in no cab with a f*****g camel jockey behind the wheel. Besides haven't you seen what those bastards did in New York and DC?" I looked at him and replied: "I've seen what has been on the news and heard it over and over again on the radio and I can assure you that little Mohammed has been right here in Cleveland all day trying to make a living driving a cab, just like he has every day for the last five yours that I know of, in fact ever since I've known him. I suggest you get your fat bigoted ass out of my cab and into his before I tell the rest of the drivers in line what an a-hole you are and then no one will drive you anywhere."

He got out of mine and in to Mohammed's cab. It hurt to do that in more ways in one. It turned out he was a good cab ride going out of the county and me not really liking Mohammed as it is. You see, Mohammed is the kind of driver that will steal a fare when he can and then overcharge for his services. But we all, as drivers, need to make sure that no drivers are being overlooked, or passed by because of where they are born or the colour of their skin or the languages they speak. They're just hacks like you and me...

**Papa Bear
Cleveland, Ohio, USA**

A message from Charlie Rice...

START AS YOU MEAN TO CARRY ON!



Charlie shows off his TX7

On Monday 14 March, **Molly Jane Rice** arrived as the second grandchild to **Brian and Brenda Rice**. But just 17 months earlier their first grandchild knocked on the door, promptly announcing himself as **Charles William Rice** and added: "But guys, you can call me Charlie!"

Now much older and wiser at the age of 21 months, Charlie has made his intentions clear by releasing to the world his future plans and just how he thinks the next London taxi should look. Speaking to **Call Sign** and without any sign of dribbling,

Charlie told us:

"Granddad will have to watch out because I quite fancy being a Chairman. It looks like quite a nice office, but is there somewhere that I can keep my toys? And can I have a bigger logo please, I'm not a baby...!"

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The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) established a taxi (and private hire) transport strategy group in 2009 with stakeholders from both industries. This group facilitates communication between operators, trade associations and other stakeholders such as TfL, DfT, local authorities and the ODA.

Work has been undertaken to estimate the likely demand for taxi travel to and from individual Games venues and at transport hubs such as rail interchanges. The ODA is working closely with its delivery partners and stakeholders to identify and plan for the role of taxis during the Games. While TfL leads on taxi facilities at rail interchanges in London, the ODA is liaising with TfL to ensure that the requirements for the Games are taken into account.

It is envisaged that taxis (including pre-booked ones) will be able to pick-up/drop-off at specific zones at all of the Games venues. There will also be facilities at most transport interchanges.

The ODA will ensure that adequate information is provided to taxi drivers and operators about the Games. This information covers specifics such as venues, event scheduling, expected demand, location of designated taxi ranks and other pick-up/drop-off points as well as giving information about the likely impacts of the Olympic Route Network, road events like the Marathon and 'Live' sites with public screens etc.

Security and safety will be essential during the Games and to make sure that only authorised licensed taxi drivers are transporting spectators. The ODA is working with security, the police forces and licensing enforcement officers for each of the venues on this matter. In addition, the ODA will make available to all spectators information on the safe use of taxis (and private hire).

Introduction to the Games

The London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games will attract millions of visitors to London and other locations, with over 10 million tickets being sold. This will result in the largest peacetime logistics operation ever seen in the UK. For the duration of the Games, road and rail networks in London and elsewhere will be under far more pressure than normal. The huge number of athletes, officials and visitors attending the Games, along with the temporary Olympic Route Network, road events and the operation of 'Live' sites will add to the existing challenges of transporting passengers by taxi in already very busy urban areas. While the Games may seem a long way off, the sheer scale of the event means that early and detailed planning will be essential in order to operate effectively in the run-up, during and immediately following the Games. Individual taxi operators and drivers need to start thinking about the opportunities that will result from the Games and how their existing activities may be affected, what the impact will be and how to manage it. This article is designed to start the process by providing some background to the Games, its potential opportunities and impacts for taxis. It is not designed to provide all the answers, but to heighten awareness and encourage stakeholders to take some initial steps that will stand them in good stead for the journey ahead.

The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) give an update... TAXIS AND THE OLYMPICS



The London 2012 Olympic Games will officially open with the Opening Ceremony in the Olympic Stadium at Stratford on Friday 27th July 2012. The Olympics will then be held over 16 days, ending with a closing ceremony on Sunday 12th August. There will then be a two week transition period before the Paralympic Games start on Wednesday 29th August. With 11 competition days, the Paralympic Games will end on 9th September. The competition schedule for the Olympic Games can be found on the London 2012 website:

<http://www.london2012.com/games/olympic-sport-competition-schedule/>

As part of the consultation process, the ODA issued a draft of the second edition of the Transport Plan for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This provides more background information about the Games, as well as more detail on transport arrangements. It can be found via the following link:

<http://www.london2012.com/making-it-happen/transport/transport-plan>

In May 2011 the third edition will be issued. The strategy for the Games is to transport all ticketed spectators to the competition venues by public transport, walking or cycling. There will be no private car parking for spectators at any venue except for some Blue Badge (disabled motorists) parking.

What effect will the Games have?

Businesses and public travel may be affected by the Games in a number of ways, such as staff finding commuting more difficult due to large numbers of spectators using transport networks. However, this article will focus on the challenges and opportunities for taxi vehicles.

Taxis will have a part to play during the Games where individuals require a level of flexibility to supplement public transport modes. In particular, taxis provide accessible travel alternative for those with special needs and impairments. In addition, there will be a requirement for taxis to make various types of trips, including airport transfers, journeys between public transport and accommodation, plus venues, cultural events and sightseeing tours during the Games.

The Olympic/Paralympic Route Network

The most significant impact on taxis may come from the Olympic Route Network and

the Paralympic Route Network (PRN). The ORN/PRN network of roads will be used during the Games to provide athletes, technical officials, media and marketing partners with safe, reliable transport between venues and accommodation that is critical to the Games success. They will ensure athletes spend their time competing rather than commuting, but the vast majority of roads that make up the ORN/PRN will be available for use by all other traffic during the Games.

The ODA is already working with TfL and alongside key taxi stakeholders, host boroughs and other representatives to assess the impact of the planned temporary changes. In conjunction with TfL, the ODA is working alongside utility providers and local authorities to minimise disruption caused by road and street works during the Games, including the scheduling of planned work ahead of the Games and the development of traffic-sensitive procedures for emergency works.

Venues

Local Area Traffic Management and Parking plans, which include special parking and access controls, will be implemented around each venue for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. These Games-time access and parking controls will be similar in nature to event day parking schemes that are regularly implemented at Premier League football grounds on match days.

Road Events

The Olympic and Paralympic Games will feature road-based events including the Marathon, Road Cycle race, Road Cycle time trial, Road Walk and parts of the Triathlon. In addition, there will be non-competition road events, notably the Torch Relay, which will also use roads outside of the Capital. It will be necessary to close some parts of the public highway for the build up to, and the duration of, road events and this will affect travel along these routes. Further info on road events is available on the London 2012 website at www.london2012.com.

'Live' Sites

A number of official 'Live' Sites will be in operation during the Games to allow the public to view events on large temporary screens. The proposed London 'Live' sites for the Olympics are Hyde Park, Victoria Park and Potters Field besides City Hall. For the Paralympic Games the 'Live' sites will be at Potters Field and Trafalgar Square. All these sites are expected to attract large numbers of people and likely to have an impact on traffic flow in adjacent streets.

Moving towards London 2012

During the lead-up to the Games, ODA and LOCOG will be communicating information to taxi drivers through articles and web-based links. This is to enable you to start planning on how you will maintain your normal service to existing clients, while at the same time taking advantage of the opportunities during the Games.

*Worshipful Company of
Hackney Carriage Drivers*

WCHCD assist Company of Security Professionals



WCHCD Master Jim Rainbird with some of the Woolwich Academy children

Each year the WCHCD assist the *Worshipful Company of Security Professionals* with the *Whittington Project*, which is part of their charity work. The Security Professionals are keen supporters of the WCHCD *Magical Taxi Tour* charity and a good relationship has developed between these two Livery companies.

The Whittington Project is to show students from the *Woolwich Academy* that there is more to life outside their area and those who are fortunate enough to attend the Academy have been very successful academically. These students are taken to all sections of the business community to see the opportunities that they have in their future working lives. This year the students had lunch at the Guildhall with Alderman Brewer before visiting Wood Street Police Station for a tour of their different departments.

Led as usual by current WCHCD Master, **Dial-a-Cab's Jim Rainbird (T25)**, the WCHCD supplied 7 taxis to pick the students up opposite the Millennium Bridge, transport them to the Guildhall and then pick them up again at Wood Street later in the day to take them to Millennium Pier at Blackfriars. The taxi drivers enjoyed meeting the students and all said how glad they were to help with the transport aspect of the visit.

FIRE DANGER TO VITOS

KPM recall early models...



Mercedes are recalling Vitos prior to the new model due to a fire possibility

Mercedes Vito drivers who bought their cabs from KPM between 1 Jan 2007 and 31 December 2010 have received a letter informing them of an urgent recall on their taxis.

The recall is because there is the possibility of an air conditioning bracket chaffing the wiring harness for the three phase alternator. According to the *Vehicle & Operator Services Agency (VOSA)*, if not rectified there is the possible risk of a short circuit which could result in a fire.

All affected vehicles will be recalled to check for damage to the wiring, which will be replaced if found to be damaged, together with the installation of an additional Spacer Clamp.

It was in 2008 that the LTI TX4 had a recall also due to the possibility of fire. They were finally given the all clear in November of that year.

KPM's Customer Service number at Mercedes Benz is 00800 977 77777.

£30 commission ...for tour recommendation

Black Cab Heritage Tours offer DaC subscribers a fantastic incentive to refer any clients you pick up who would like a **Sightseeing Tour of London**. Send us the job and we will reward you with **£30** cash!

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The cost is £155, which includes up to 5 passengers. You or your tourists just phone our office on 01707 696034 or 07766 332938, give your name and call sign then you call our office to claim your £30 commission. We'll do the rest!

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Most would have noticed by now that to go along with the many taxi trade organisations we already have, there is now another called the UCG. I am all for people getting together to get things done in union and showing solidarity, but it doesn't matter how well intentioned this latest group is, it's not what the trade needs right now.

On the run up to last Christmas, the RMT held a number of strikes along with the TSSA union in response to the London Underground Ltd (LUL) withdrawal of a number of station staff. The RMT had legitimate reasons for striking as it would leave some stations unattended, lead to job losses and put public safety at risk. Well, on strike days things didn't go according to plan with many services running as normal. As taxi drivers we expect gridlock, but it didn't really happen. The reason for this was that ASLEF members were working during the strikes because their members are drivers and not station staff and therefore could not be balloted for industrial action. Since Margaret Thatcher, led by Norman Tebbit changed the employment law in 1981, secondary picketing was made illegal thus the RMT/TSSA were left to get on with it. The result was that LUL brought in the changes to station duties at the beginning of March and the strikes stopped. So as a trade what can we learn from this? Well we can have as many union bodies as we like, but if we don't sing from the same hymn sheet we will be wasting our time. We need to bury our differences when it comes to the big issues, if we don't the slide will continue.

At the roadside not far from my house, there is a little white post with what looks like a *City of London* crest on it. For those who don't know, it's a coal post. In years gone by, revenue collectors would stand by these posts and take money from people who passed by and wished to transport coal from one location to another. Well the modern day equivalents sell sweets, newspapers and litres of fuel while collecting revenue for the Treasury. They occasionally throw in some petrol and diesel in the process! With the cost of fuel these days, petrol stations may as well have a big sign saying *revenue collection point*. Just think about the amount of revenue the petrol companies collect on behalf of the Government - and free of charge!

But the big talk at the moment is about synthetic petrol and diesel. Why has no one thought of this before? Well the answer is pretty simple; when synthetic petrol or diesel hits

Unions and yellow badges...

the forecourts at 50p per litre the Government will lose a large amount of their tax take. Then it won't be long before they simply raise the revenue on these products to regain their losses, thus costing the same as refined fuel, so there will be no advantage. Remember when LPG was 42p per litre? Then the more popular it became, the more the price increased.

Even if we went back to the steam driven car, the government would make the water available from special water filling stations only and it would have to be dyed green with fines dished out for those using red dyed water instead! You guessed it, we're not gonna win!

And...

Over the years I have always thought the PCO - now TPH - were always pretty fair in their approach to us. In light of the fact that green / yellow badge identifiers are on their way, I was somewhat amazed to find TPH telling

green badge holders that intimidation of yellow badge holders will not be tolerated! How can they start to lay down the law before the system has started and when there is absolutely no evidence that anything has or will happen?

I often work down at my local station, which has yellow badges on it. Believe me, I think TPH should reverse their notice and I have evidence to support that. The **Dial-a-Cab** logo is a giveaway and I have been told to "go back to town" a number of times. In fact one passenger said that local drivers often tell her not to tell a green badge where to go if they don't know! The other Saturday I got a taxi from Waterloo Station to Borough High Street and down Stamford St. He wasn't wearing his badge. All I can say is the quicker the identifiers come in, the better...

Richard Potter (T51)

Leytonstone 'Log Cabin' saved!

Dial-a-Cab drivers who tend to work towards the east side of London, will be happy to hear that the 24-hour food shelter, **The Log Cabin** in Whipps Cross Road that was scheduled for demolition to make way for yet another new cycle lane, has been saved.

Many taxis are often seen parked outside during the night, alongside staff from the nearby Whipps Cross Hospital. The plan was to "improve the road for cyclists and pedestrians" in time for the Olympics. Waltham Forest Council wanted the cycle lane but the Corporation of London, which manages Epping Forest, refused to release the land.

A widely supported campaign began to save the Log Cabin and that has now led to an agreement, which enables it to remain in its position while the cycle lane runs in front of it.

Jamie Phillips, who owns the eatery, said: "This is brilliant news. A few weeks ago I felt like my legs had been cut off, but my livelihood has now been saved. I never believed it would get to this stage."



Mission accomplished!

Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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

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

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

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Goodies on the Horizon

So this month I thought I'd tell you about three of the latest and greatest tech goodies that are currently in development and expected to become available in the next year or so. I'll give you a brief overview and you can watch video footage of them in action on the YouTube links.

Nintendo Wii U

When Nintendo released the *Wii* back in 2006, it was ground-breaking. No other console could match it. Of course since then we've seen the *PlayStation 3* with "Move" and *XBOX 360* with "Kinect" and both have made the *Wii* look dated - especially as both *PS3* and *XBOX 360* support HDMI whereas the *Wii* doesn't.

So it was a pleasant surprise when Nintendo announced their next console: the **Wii U**. Not a very compelling named, granted, but it doesn't do their new console justice. The *Wii U* is simply brilliant. Instead of the *Wii* and *Wiimote* controller, you will have a next-generation *Wii* and a tablet (a bit like an *iPad*) which is the controller. This will allow you to play your game on your TV or the tablet, or

On behalf of all Call Sign gamers, DaC's Jon Winterburn asks...

Gaming: What's worth playing?



Jon says the Nintendo Wii U is awesome

both together, plus it interacts *with* the *Wii* in many clever ways. You really must see the video to appreciate the ability of this new gaming phenomenon; it is just awesome! Take a look at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4e3qaPg_keg.

Windows 8

Yep, no sooner have you bought your shiny new laptop with *Windows 7* and gotten to grips with it, than Microsoft announce the next version! It's still very much in development and apparently *Windows 8* is just its code-name, so who knows what it'll end up being

called. But it does look very swish indeed and so far removed from the current *Start Menu* and desktop approach that we're used to. Check out this Microsoft developer video showing footage of *Windows 8* in action:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p92QfWOW88I>.

OnLive

For the last year or so, I have had a beta tester account with *OnLive*, but work and life constraints meant I'd neglected this service for several months. It seems that *OnLive* is now available to the public. So what is *OnLive*? It's a groundbreaking new service which provides "cloud-based gaming." What this means is that instead of having to have a super-powered computer or an expensive console to play video games, *OnLive* streams high-end video games to your PC, Mac or TV over the Internet (aka "the cloud")! No need to buy a console or graphics card for your PC and no need to buy games from the shops!

Admittedly, as a die-hard PC gamer, I doubt I'll switch to *OnLive* permanently, however, it is ideal for casual gamers who want access to great games with minimum hassle. At the time of writing this, they have a free trial available at:

<http://www.onlive.com>.

More news next month!

Jon Winterburn
DaC Network Administrator

Steve's super injunction fails!

Those long-time **Dial-a-Cab** drivers who worked on the old Finsbury Square rank – now EC5 – will know **Steve Shaller (formerly R75 and now F34J)**. Always ready for a moan and a chance to have a pop at the Board, Steve is now in semi-retirement and shares the cab of **Steve Sharpe (F34)** on an occasional basis, having decided to domicile himself in sunny Spain.

But a recent development has shed light on his personality when it was discovered that in reality, Steve was a really nice guy who got on with everybody and in actual fact, thought the world of DaC! But Steve became the first licensed taxi driver to take out a super injunction against **Call Sign**, when he discovered that we were about to publish an article saying how nice he actually was.

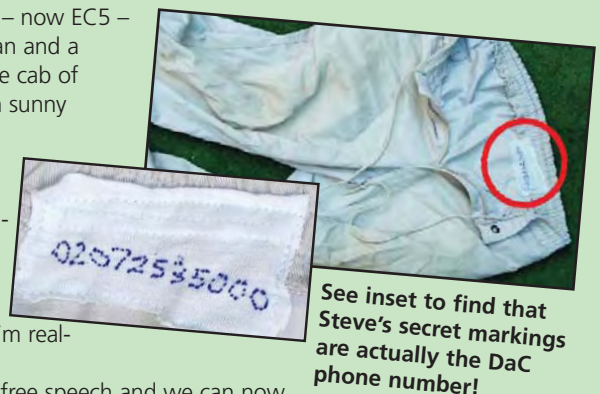
"It has taken me years to build up a reputation as a tough nut, who isn't afraid to ask pertinent questions and our magazine is going to ruin that by saying that I'm really quite nice. This calls for a super injunction!"

Fortunately, an appeal put paid to Mr Shaller's attempt to block the passage of free speech and we can now show the world the evidence of Steve's true allegiance to this Society. It was discovered in a pair of trousers he had discarded into a rubbish bin and which were then taken out by a passing tramp. He took them to show his friends at Lincoln's Inn Fields where one spotted secret markings on the trousers. None of them could understand the meaning, so they decided to ask a taxi driver who had parked on the new rank in order to relieve himself in the not-so-new public convenience.

The driver – also on DaC – took just seconds to explain.

"These belong to someone who is proud to be on Dial-a-Cab," he said, "a true devotee...!"

Call Sign's reporter obtained photographic evidence to confirm the driver's diagnosis and to show why Steve Shaller's deliberate moaning personality was just a cover-up for being nice. Thanks to winning the super injunction appeal, we can show it above...



See inset to find that Steve's secret markings are actually the DaC phone number!

Exactly one year ago, **Call Sign**, published an exclusive story based on the words of *Bas Vos*, then-director of Dutch radio circuit *Taxi Centrale Amsterdam* (1200 cabs / 2000 drivers) in which he claimed he was purchasing 50 electric TX4s. Mr Vos told us that he had visited the LTI factory in Coventry where he claimed he had ordered 50 TX4s, however, when we questioned LTI about the order, they refused to confirm or deny its existence but assured us that if it existed, the taxis would certainly not be electric.

Mr Vos also wouldn't go any further and the project was shrouded in secrecy, but we found out enough to know the plan was that the driving mechanism of the rear wheels of the proposed left-handed electric TX4s would be carried out by two battery-operated electric motors that were being developed in Germany and which were expected to give around 150 kilometres before needing to be recharged. In addition, a one-cylinder diesel engine was to be added as a generator and that would recharge the batteries while driving along, increasing mileage between overnight charges to around 200Km (125 miles).

The only question was whether the mechanics would be fitted by LTI or would they just provide the body? Now **Call Sign** has learned that the vehicles were purchased as normal diesel taxis from the LTI/Geely China factory and later converted to electric.

The engines have now been replaced, but we believe that the cost has put each

ELECTRIC TX4 ARRIVES

But it's in Holland!



TCA's electric taxis arrive in Amsterdam. Note the 'e' sign on the driver's doors

vehicle up to an astronomical 100,000 euros (£87,000), but that half will come in a Dutch government subsidy. The good news is that the electric TX4 will now go for 300 km (185 miles) without a recharge – more than enough for most drivers. All that's left is for the Dutch government to licence it.

Will we see it over here? Perhaps Mayor Boris would like to contribute something? It would be far cheaper than being fined for London's dirty air...

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign Online

Sam's family for the high jump!



The trio after their abseil down 20 Cabot Square

Call Sign usually follows the boxing progress of Sam Bezzina - son of DaC driver Dean Bezzina (M10). But as it is for such a good cause, we are giving this piece over to Sam's family...

Sonia and Antony Bezzina, together with Sue Winzar, recently abseiled the 230ft of 20 Cabot Square at Canary Wharf – home to DaC client **Morgan Stanley** – in aid of the London Air Ambulance service based at the Royal London Hospital.

All three were new to abseiling and rather anxious of heights so at the top of the building, after being given some brief training and instructions, they looked over the edge and reality kicked in – this was even higher than it looked from the ground! But with so much money already pledged for the trio in the weeks leading up to the jump, it was time for action and they all abseiled down perfectly. Also jumping in aid of the Air Ambulance was TV celebrity **Jodie Marsh**. Between them, they helped raise a staggering £36,000 towards their target of £75,000.

London's Air Ambulance is London's Helicopter Emergency Medical Service providing pre-hospital care to victims of major trauma throughout London – servicing the millions of people who live, work and commute within the M25. Based at the Royal London, London's Air Ambulance has saved countless lives and is supported by rapid response cars. The helicopter carries a Senior Trauma Doctor and specially trained Paramedic delivering pioneering medical procedures that have been adopted across the world.

Any help from Call Sign readers would be greatly appreciated as the charity receives no funding and relies on the public to keep the service going.

Anyone wishing to donate may do so using this JustGiving link:
<http://www.justgiving.com/Sonia-Bezzina>

Donating online by debit or credit card through JustGiving is quick, easy and secure and any donations are sent directly to the charity. Please remember to tick the Gift Aid box, which is then reclaimed for every eligible donation. Thank you for your support...



2 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 4/5



4 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 8/9



6 Bedroom 5 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 12



Pool and conservation view at 6 bedroom home.

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

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

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Most long-term **Dial-a-Cab** drivers will recognise **Bob Ambrose (V13)** for his annual participation at the DaC AGM. No subject was off-limits to him and if he didn't like something, he was never afraid to voice that dislike to the Board. But just because he had offered criticism at the meeting, he was still happy to shake hands and discuss man-to-man his problem with any Board member.

Of late, Bob has been dogged with some health problems and has now decided that this is the time to hang up his driving gloves and head off into retirement. Bob told **Call Sign**:

"It was with a certain sadness that I sold my old 'steed' to K06 and began the long holiday, but at least 'she' gets to stay on the circuit!

Following 14 years of flying solo, I joined DaC in March 1988. My only regret is in not doing it sooner because it brought another dimension to the job. The camaraderie, the characters, the wit of the dispatchers, the pioneering of data, its crash and then rebound. The fat years, the lean years, **Call Sign**, stand-

As Bob Ambrose heads off into retirement, he says thanks for the memories...

BYE BYE BOB!



Bob speaking at an AGM

ing room only AGMs and again the wit, the

intrigue, the power struggles, the fight for survival and through it all – a touch of class.

It is a great circuit that uniquely still belongs to you, the members. Its fate is in your hands and it is worth fighting for. Don't let the little people nick it!

Good luck to you all and thanks for the memories..."

DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** told **Call Sign**:

"Bob has always been the perfect gentleman, always asking questions at the AGM and often at great length. However, Bob was never personal and certainly never showed any malice, he will be missed at Dial-a-Cab. We sincerely hope that his retirement is a long and happy one..."



City of Westminster

Success for Gerry!

The May **Call Sign** reported on the CCTV PCN given to **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Gerry Tobin (L32)** for waiting outside pharmacists **John Bell and Croyden** in Wigmore Street with his passengers – a grandmother and grandson – while the child's mother had rushed in to get some medicine for her son. They were also in a

rush to get to Kings Cross Station so Gerry waited.

However, there was a queue in the chemist but Gerry was reluctant to move in case the mother couldn't find him. The result was a PCN, which **Call Sign** advised Gerry to fight – and which he did, all the way to Arbitration.

On May 31, Gerry explained his case, leaving the Adjudicator - Edward Houghton - in a difficult position because there was no doubt that Gerry was waiting somewhere that he shouldn't have been, yet it was part and parcel of the job we do.

His decision was that Gerry's Appeal had failed but recommended that the City of Westminster should cancel the PCN under *Regulation 7 (4) of the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) Representations and Appeals Regulations 2007* because he was satisfied that there were compelling mitigation reasons in the particular circumstances that Gerry found himself in – in other words he was doing his job!

Westminster have now reconsidered Gerry's case and accepted the Adjudicator's decision. What a pity that all this time and money had to be wasted before Westminster were made to see sense.

Also...

Call Sign will also be interested in the case of the Westminster Smart Car - complete with CCTV camera poking through its roof - that was left illegally parked by its warden driver outside a Mayfair branch of **Sainsbury's** while the driver went shopping! The report in the *Evening Standard*, together with photos showing the driver with the distinctive orange carrier bag exiting the store, makes us wonder whether he gave himself a PCN???

Ashford Town: Manager stays, but what about the goalie?

Although their season never really took off, it certainly ended up in the clouds! **Ashford Town's** supporters had little in the way of excitement last season with the team never being close enough to chase promotion or needing to fight off relegation! But the **Surrey Combination Cup** proved that the season wasn't a total let-down as the team battled their way through to the final where they defeated *Combined Counties* Premier division team **Hanworth Villa** by a **Jim Mann** goal to nil to pick up their only first team silver of the 2010/2011 season.

More good news was that first team manager **Jamie Lawrence** has agreed to continue with the club for at least the next season, however, **Dial-a-Cab** driver and Ashford goalkeeper, **Lee Pearce (J71)**, who missed the last two months with a knee injury isn't sure about whether he will still be with the Middlesex club next season. He told **Call Sign**:

"I should be fit for the beginning of the new season and it all depends on whether I am first team choice. I'm not getting any younger and after such a bad injury, I need first team soccer – so if Ashford can't give me that, it will have to be with another team. However, I have to say that Ashford have been very good to me throughout the injury and I've been very happy here."

However, Lee's previous team **Bedfont Green**, have recently sacked manager **Dennis Bainborough** – someone who seemed to have issues with Lee – and replaced him with **Kevin Cooper**, who the DaC driver has played with at BG. Could it be a recall is on the cards???



Lee doing stretching exercises, but who will he be playing for next season?

London's busiest railway stations

Ever wondered which were the busiest railway stations? Well wonder no more! These are the top London stations based on exits and entrances last year, courtesy ORR...

Waterloo – 83,397,666
Victoria – 70,224,543
Liverpool Street – 51,596,155
London Bridge – 48,723,068
Charing Cross – 36,459,945
Euston – 30,068,092
Paddington – 29,104,198
Kings Cross – 24,817,616

Where's Woody?

The answer to *Where's Woody* in this issue's **Call Sign en la Belle France** is the **Evening Standard** vendor's stand outside **Mansion House** station, Bow Lane.

Mailshot

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

Moving home?

Hello Al,

Just wondering why SE75 was moved from one crowded page (zone 2) to an equally full one (zone 3) when zone 1 - where all the other SEs are - is only ever half full? I reckon there are more drivers interested in SE75 than NN99, which apparently now takes preference!

John Addis (K97)

Allan Evans responds: Hi John; just as you mention, zone broadcasts are on three pages (zones 1, 2 and 3) with each page capable of showing a maximum of 60 different zones. Over the years, with special zones and ranks added to the message pages, they have become full and certain zones are shown on a different page. Generally, zone 1 is east and southeast, zone 2 is central and north and zone 3 is southwest and west. Although SE75 (HoC) is shown on page 3, it is by its location a southwest zone...

Early morning PCN

Hi Alan,

Thought you'd like to know that I contested my PCN (Marc's early morning PCN, May Call Sign) where I was ticketed via CCTV outside Whiskey Mist in Hertford Street W1 at 3.13 in the morning. However, my appeal was denied so I requested a Saturday morning appointment with the Adjudicator - well it works for Barrie Segal! I was given a slot at 9-30 on a Saturday in August, but surprise surprise, a few weeks ago I received a letter cancelling the PCN!

Also re your April Call Sign story on Westfield threatening to use private hire if the licensed taxi service didn't improve, I recently drove a director of Westfield Leasing Department who was in UK from the USA while dealing with the Westfield Stratford operation. She was horrified at the prospect of PH servicing Westfield and said it was the first she'd heard of it. She told me she would be looking into it next day. Her words to me were: "Westfield view their customers going home in licensed taxis as part of the shopping experience."

Marc Turner (R97)

Thanks for letting us know about the PCN Marc. It goes to show that if you don't just pay up when you believe the PCN was undeserved, then there is a good chance that either the Adjudicator will dismiss the ticket and an even bigger chance that the council won't proceed, knowing that they haven't a chance. Too many drivers just pay up because they can't be bothered and councils rely on those people to keep their coffers topped up, which is why they rarely allow a first appeal against a ticket no matter how good the explanation.

Thanks for the Westfield info. Whilst

that is good news, it's still just as important as ever to provide Westfield with a service when it's busy and not just when we drop off there ...Ed

Twitter and DaC?

Hi Al,

Whoever wrote the article on *Can Twitter be a danger to DaC* (May Call Sign) is a bit misguided and maybe should have researched it a bit more in depth. Twitter is mainly used for passing black cab related info around to those that want it and who are licensed taxi drivers - which is not something that Dial-a-Cab do too often even though they have the means to do it. If a Twitter driver spots something like roadworks or people looking for cabs, everyone signed on will get it, unlike DaC where it only goes out if the dispatcher can be bothered. So what if the original message (*taxis needed at the Savoy riverside entrance*) comes from DaC? Surely the important thing is that licensed cabs are being alerted that people need them?

As for the DaC App, AL already has one. It also seems that Tweetalondoncab is a bit more innovative than DaC and you should be supporting anything positive for the cab trade rather than knocking it, AL.

I am nothing to do with Tweetalondoncab and neither am I on any forums, but what chance do we have if people knock something that is trying to get people out of private hire and into taxis? We are all licensed taxi drivers - it's not all about DaC. We are all up against it together - remember Nobu and Smiths etc. It also works the other way, a non-radio driver puts out a message on Tweetalondoncab and a DaC driver puts it out on DaC. It's a win-win situation. Better us than PH. In any case, just because a DaC driver puts out a message that a cab is wanted somewhere, that doesn't mean that DaC own that job.

Mickey Lappin (E46)

Thanks for the letter Mickey. First let me say that the writer of the original article was me. My research involved speaking to DaC drivers who are also on Tweetalondoncab in addition to receiving a press release from TaxiStop. Two years ago I spoke to Talc co-founder Richard Cudlip, so I had a good idea about why it was set up. I have also spoken to him again since the last issue came out and in fact also spoke to Mickey Lappin on his views. The story wasn't aimed as criticism of Talc when doing what they were set up to do. The question was twofold.

Firstly, should messages about work that go out on DaC driver's terminals be put out on Tweetalondoncab if the DaC driver is on both? In the case quoted, a non-DaC driver saw the message put out by a DaC driver on Talc, shot round to the Savoy riverside - where you wouldn't normally go late at night - and took the job. I have no problem with a non-radio driver passing, seeing the job and taking it, but our drivers pay subscriptions and

part of that includes any messages that go out on our terminals. Why should someone paying nothing on Talc have that advantage? It's nothing to do with PH because a taxi would have got the job.

Then even worse, the driver boasted on an internet chat site that he chatted the passenger up about using Twitter rather than phoning a taxi circuit. Speaking again to Richard Cudlip, he assured me that isn't Talc policy and that they are not looking to open accounts with passengers and I believe him, however the driver concerned undoubtedly tried to get the passenger he picked up before a DaC driver got there to phone Talc in future. The passenger is the director of an insurance company, so what if he takes the driver at his word and uses Talc for his company workers? The chances are that they wouldn't be able to cover the work, the director would assume that all taxi companies are the same and THEN private hire would receive a call and another company would cross over. That was my concern and my view hasn't changed. If Talc work as per Richard Cudlip's original idea, then there is no problem. In the meantime, TaxiStop seem keen on pushing the system so time will tell. The last company to attempt it were Zingo and they are no more ...Ed

Gratuities, fixed prices and Luke Johnson...

Dear Al

The last issue of *Call Sign* was not the first time you have featured the thoughts of Luke Johnson. After the Mayor introduced the 3-way tariff, you re-printed an interview that Johnson gave to *The Times* in which he complained that his staff at Belgo were finding it very expensive to get home after finishing work. Not long before that, the BBC had made a documentary at Belgo in which waiters and cooks complained about wages and working conditions. When Johnson was challenged about it, he refused to answer and tore his mic off.

But what does Allen Togwell feel about his points regarding smart attire and the lower prices charged by Addison Lee? Presumably in favour of the former but against the latter. At what point will he bite the bullet and decide to offer Fixed Prices to all clients?

And what about gratuities? I agree with those who think they should be scrapped (Ivor Belkin May Mailshot). Look at it this way. If getting rid of them generated one more job per driver, it would almost



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certainly compensate for any loss and would also be excellent PR.

Another bit of PR would be to consign the booking fee to the bin. I know that cash and credit card work make up a small proportion of our business, but how do potential customers feel when they learn of the £4.20 run-in plus £2.00 booking fee and oh yes, if it's a credit card then there's the 12.5% handling charge with a £2 minimum.

I don't charge the booking fee any more. I know it costs me £1.50, but if I'm lucky enough to get an airport job or a decent one in town, then it doesn't mean a lot.

Geoff Levene (K43)

Thanks for the letter and info about Luke Johnson Geoff.

I could ask Allen Togwell for the views you've asked for but as he has been asked the same questions so many times before, I can save him the trouble and me the job of having to chase him! If we offered fixed prices and then it gets busy, it will become very difficult – if not impossible – to ever put the prices up again. And as for the booking fee, why would anyone ever open an account when they can get a credit card cab turning up for no fee at all? They'd all move over to credit cards. As for the cash trips, the money pays for the hire of cash call takers and as all the circuits charge it (they keep the whole £2), customers know they will be charged it. And, to save Mr T saying it, what we object to isn't the charge, but having to collect it ...Ed

And speaking of Luke Johnson...

Dear Alan,

I think I picked Luke Johnson up a couple of months ago (*Risk Capital Partners and the taxi trade – May Call Sign*). I was heading south down Kensington Church Street by Vicarage Gate when he hailed me and asked me to be taken to Emperors Gate. When we arrived, I asked where he would like me to stop and he said to "just stop by that taxi." So I continued driving, hoping to see the taxi he was talking about. Then he started shouting "by the taxi, by the taxi" I said what taxi to which he replied: "That taxi!" I still couldn't see it and again asked him where it was? Then he pointed and said "over there" and was pointing - yes you've guessed it – by an AL car. I said that was not a taxi and that although they try to be taxis, they haven't got the balls or brains to do what I had done, ie The Knowledge. He went into a building where they have faith healers and quacks – probably like AL, they want to be doctors but...

It seems he uses people who do things by half measures, ie AL quacks etc. In the article, you mention he uses AL because he claims they are better value. Funny that, why did he hail me? Is it because AL's minimum charge is £13 - £15 and I took him for £6-40?

Needless to say, I didn't get a tip. That was no surprise, I would not have expected anything else from such an a*****.

Brian Marcantonio (R73)

Thanks for the email Brian. Your view seems to suggest that the *Call Sign* article written about Luke Johnson was probably correct ...Ed

Addison Lee accounts

Hello Alan,

It would be very interesting to see a response from Brian Rice to these Addison Lee accounts and for him to give the drivers on Dial-a-Cab some reassurance that they have not just bent over and allowed this to happen without trying to safeguard DaC.

Also, how about being informed as to how the Sales team are doing (if anything) or if they even continue to exist.

John Stowers (K40)

Brian Rice responds: As you can appreciate John, I can only respond to what you have sent to the magazine, I do not know if the figures are correct or indeed who took on the task of interpreting them. However, you did bring a smile to my face when you stated "...to give the drivers on DaC some reassurance that they have not just bent over and allowed this to happen without trying to safeguard DaC." Do you mean me or my members? I suppose you must mean me, as my members never do anything wrong - just joking fellas!

AL is a success story and will continue to be so as long as they have access to cheap, unskilled labour. You must also bear in mind that their turnover will include car rental the drivers pay to the company, plus radio fee and insurance - which comes to approximately £270 per week and which will vastly inflate their figures.

The biggest difference between our radio circuits and the minicab circuits is their drivers are prepared to do as they are told and taxi drivers are not. For instance; at 2am on a Saturday night there is a cash ride going from Surrey Quays to Deptford, we would be very hard pressed to cover that trip (you know all the reasons as well as I) but a minicab company would cover the trip because the driver would be told to do so. No ifs or buts, it's yours... just do it! That is why they are successful and whilst that system prevails, they will continue to be so.

I always find it amazing that many taxi drivers compare us to minicab circuits and love to 'talk up' minicabs to the detriment of the taxi radio circuits as if minicabs know what they are doing and we don't. Well it's not true, they just operate under a different set of 'easier' rules. I would just love for John Griffin of AL to endeavour to run DaC for a year. I wonder what would 'give' first - JG or the members of DaC? My money would be on JG giving way first. I do not believe he could possibly run a business



where he had in excess of 2000 Managing Directors!

Finally John, regarding new accounts; we are not doing too badly under very difficult circumstances because believe it or not, in this day of technology we open most new accounts via the internet from our website. You should also bear in mind that it is not only what you open, but also what you retain and as you know we have in recent times retained JPMorgan, Morgan Stanley, Citi and extended the 'House' contract for a further year despite the interest shown in these accounts by AL.

Finally, apologies for being a little blunt John, but believe me I have not stated anything that most sensible taxi drivers are not aware of.

Editor's note: Although I passed the letter to Brian Rice for his response to John Stowers letter, it should be pointed out that the figures John refers to were taken from the LTDF website and I have no way of knowing who the writer was and whether the figures are indeed accurate. Part of the website email (with no name) John forwarded stated:

ALs turnover and profit rose enormously over the year, with a nearly £17 million (19%) increase in turnover to £105 million and an almost £1.7 million (94%) increase in profit to £4.23 million. There has been a significant shift in the way the three divisions - minicabs, insurance and training services - contributed to this performance. The minicabs saw a 21% increase in turnover to £101 million and a 400% increase in profit to just under £5 million. The insurance division saw turnover increase by 1% to £3.6 million and profit increase by 21% to £396,000.

Against this, the training division had a torrid time last year. Turnover fell by 45% to £684,000 and went from a 2009 profit of £984,000 to a loss for 2010 of £613,000. So, the training operation pretty much cost £2 for every £1 of business it did. It looks like AL have severely slowed down their staff turnover or they are not bothering to give their new drivers even the most basic of training they have given them in the past. However, we cannot escape the fact that AL have hugely out performed our circuits in 2010 and they are not far off being a bigger concern than our circuits combined.

Call Sign Online

Dear Sir

My name is Millie Bruce and I'm a regular reader of *Call Sign online*. I'd like to thank you for the excellent information I've found at dac-callsign.com; it's always a great pleasure to read your articles and I have subsequently become a loyal reader. I live in Banffshire, Scotland where I try to

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increase the awareness about cholesterol and heart disease amongst my family and friends. It occurred to me that you might be interested in including a guest article about a study from the American Heart Association that states heart disease is the world's No. 1 killer and causes more deaths than all forms of cancer combined. For example, I could provide an article in the form of a little guide to help your readers learn more about the issue - hopefully, this would spark a discussion about the topic at hand. Please, take a minute to consider this proposal. Any support would be much appreciated. With your help, we can educate the public about the dangers of heart disease and cholesterol, this hopefully can help someone avoid them. Either way, thanks for reading and keep posting your excellent informative *Call Sign Online*.

Millie Bruce

Banffshire, Scotland

Thanks for the offer Millie, but similar articles have appeared in other taxi trade mags over the past 12 months and I wouldn't want to think that people are skipping over such an important topic because they're fed up reading about it. Perhaps next year ...Ed

Getting on a bit!

Alan

Thank you for the reminder of just how long I have been on DaC (*May Mailshot*). It makes me feel even older than I am! I'm still waiting for my gold watch, but I don't think it will ever come! With reference to the **James Whiting (E83)** letter in the same issue about cabs on the Bank Street rank who sit there with their *for hire* lights off, some things never change. It brings back memories of when the Shepherds Bush rank was used for the BBC. It was the west London EC5, except that you had to keep your *for hire* light on.

When we worked the rank in early mornings in the 70s and 80s, many drivers would do the same thing there - keep their lights off - including the Mountview drivers who were also up to the same tricks! At least we had early morning work in those days. Now when a very early morning job appears on the screen, it just reminds you that the system is working!

Ray Sorene (A53)

I'd be careful if I were you Ray. It's only you that stops me moving up the seniority list! ...Ed

Who is it???

Dear Mr Fisher

A contributor to *TAXI Newspaper* complained that his radio circuit undermined him by pre-allocating work, particularly to Vito taxis. He does not identify the circuit but asked what happened to *first cab, first job*? We can assume his circuit is not ComCab, which uses a *closest cab* system

and we can also assume it isn't Dial-a-Cab, since this is a democratic open Society and that all members would have been aware of the practice.

This leaves one other circuit I suppose, but it may benefit drivers slightly more cynical than myself if you could publish the Board's stance on this matter.

Jeffery Pettit (L77)

Hi Jeffery, I showed your letter to Brian Rice and he unusually declined to give an official viewpoint other than to say that assumptions do not always prove to be 100% accurate, but that it was 100% certain that the reference was not DaC. And call me Alan! ...

Mrs Rice and the Finz!

It seems on a recent Thursday night that Mrs Rice must have gone to bingo, leaving Brian at a loose end so he came out to annoy us night drivers! Yes, we are a different lot from the morning / day drivers (only joking boys)! Brian was going on about covering an S.J.Berwin job. As all traffic is currently forced left over Southwark Bridge after 9pm, I can understand why, if on the Finz, you would pass that one up. I do fixed prices all the time (look at my stats) and one thing I was thinking was why not put that account into SE1? It's easier to get to from the south and as most of the EC5 lot seem to sit on the Finz and pick up close-by trips, anyone booked into SE1E /W would get to the address much quicker. It must be worth a thought, methinks.

And by the way, did Mrs Rice win at bingo???

Mike Appleby (L73)

Brian Rice responds: Hi Michael, you're almost right. For many years even - before we were married - my wife did karate and kick boxing and is now extremely skilful in the art and teaches it. The night you refer to was one of her nights at the Martial Arts Centre - so you were nearly right! Regarding the night in question, I had visited two of our largest clients that were intent on moving large tranches of their work over to the cheaper option. I fought tooth and nail with them and fortunately retained the status quo - at least for the time being anyway. I then went back to the office and into even worse problems. That was why I was still around at 10pm.

So can you then imagine my frustration when I see trips that are being rejected 42 times? I accept the traffic conditions, but are you saying we only service customers when we have a fair wind behind us, because I do not believe there was not one of those 42 cabs within striking distance. You won't like this, but the difference is that a car would have serviced that trip because he would have been given that trip - no ifs or buts - and he would have to get on with it. Don't read anything into that remark; it is just a fact of what actually happens with Private Hire.



Regarding SJ Berwin specifically, you are the second member who has mentioned that the account should be moved. It can be done, but I wonder how many members agree, because from experience I know that for every one that does agree with the idea, there would probably be one that doesn't.

I can understand your frustrations as I did the job for many years, but you perhaps do not understand mine. You see situations from one perspective - yours - I see them from two, yours and the client's.

I'm now at home answering your letter. It's a Sunday morning and my wife has just walked into my study and I've shown her your letter. How can I put this because to say she is not impressed is an understatement! She would like to know what time you start work, as she would like to pop round and have a little word in your ear! If I were you, I should purchase a few drinking straws - they will come in handy when you want to eat!

By the way Mike, the above about my wife isn't true - but it could have been!

Spanish licence?

Hi Alan

As a resident of Spain, I am legally obligated to exchange my driving licence for a Spanish one as you can see from the article below. I am reluctant to exchange my licence for a Spanish one for fear of incurring problems with driving a taxi on such a licence. How would fines or endorsements be applied? I wonder if there are other licensed taxi drivers driving on non UK licenses?

Driving Licences/Spanish Residents

Once you become a resident, you will be required to either present or exchange your current UK licence. Both involve a trip to Trafico in Alicante. In the first instance, the licence will be inspected and stamped, or if you exchange your licence you will receive a new Spanish version. If you own a British or non-Spanish registered vehicle, you have six months in which to import and re-register the vehicle with Spanish number plates.

Steve Shaller (F34J)

Director, Taxis & Private Hire, John Mason responds: It is not necessary for you to hold a GB driving licence as our requirement is that drivers must hold a driving licence issued by DVLA or another member state of the European Community (EC) or one of the other countries in the European Economic Area (EEA). However, if the driver has an EC or EEA licence, we require him to obtain a GB counterpart document. The

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counterpart document allows us to see any driving convictions in the UK and also allows the driver to accept fixed penalty notices. The problem with this is that in order to obtain a counterpart, the applicant must be resident in the UK so to facilitate this, those few taxi drivers who live elsewhere in Europe tend to use a 'care of' address in the UK.

Notwithstanding our requirement, I am surprised that your member is having to exchange his GB driving licence as it was our understanding that EC licence holders can drive indefinitely on their EC licence in all member states.

Remapping...

Hi Al

I thought I would share a conversation I had with my son some time ago. My son works at Ford's Dagenham diesel plant as an engineer and I mentioned about the remapping that's being offered to the trade by some establishments. After a little chuckle, he asked if they knew what they were getting into and why would they want to do that? I said it had been claimed that remapping gave the cab better mpg, quicker acceleration and a higher top speed. He said yes but that with a light right foot you would get better mpg, but not if you used the acceleration and higher top speed claimed. He added that the cabs are set up as they are for good reason:

1. To achieve Euro 3/4/5, any alteration would no doubt mean it would be out of the Euro limits.
2. This in turn would mean missing the excise duty band (higher road tax).
3. Most diesel engines are designed for longevity and durability, so increasing power can only shorten its life. And don't forget that extra power goes through the gearbox and axle and then will the brakes stop it? It's no wonder the warranty would be void.
4. Yes there is a 4 and that is when you renew insurance and they ask whether the vehicle has been modified? Well yes, it has and it could then attract an increase of 10 - 20% on the premium. I don't think there is a roadside test that could tell it has been remapped, but I would not be boasting about it either. I hope this is not too late to save some drivers from going down this road, as I think it will end in tears with the driver picking up the bill...

Terry Wright (P39)

Thanks Terry. Does anyone out there disagree with Terry's son? ...Ed

Gratuity debate

Hi Al

Re the gratuity, I'm totally in support of Alan Lipscombe (T50) when he said in *Call Sign* that we should retain the gratuity. Our holiness, aka Chairman Brian is

right when he says that something given up is never coming back. Customers are used to paying the gratuity and they like paying it as a thank you for the quality service drivers provide. Ivor Belkin (C97) suggested an account customer could save 100K by not paying the gratuity and could then possibly use that money to order more taxis. This in my opinion is extremely short-sighted. I believe that if a customer wants a cab he wants a cab and he ain't counting how many cabs he's used that week - he's getting a cab regardless. And yes, I can also confirm that 10percent of nothing - as Ivor Belkin quite rightly stated - is still nothing (just checked it using my fingers). But I agree one thing with Ivor, I have noticed that we take a lot of people to account addresses and they then ask for a receipt and add a tip! This confirms to me that people like paying a tip.

I feel that to abandon the gratuity would lead to a loss of drivers who would deem account work less viable. As older cabs get deregulated along with many of their drivers, the ones who take the plunge and upgrade to a newer vehicle are going to find their running costs greatly increased and they will then need every extra penny. I also feel that a lack of response by drivers in the letters pages to reply to a request made about the gratuity by the Editor sadly paves the way for the Board to phase the gratuity out!

On a different note, why is it my taxi is deemed ok when "climax" cars can't supply a vehicle? Is it because after reading countless articles in *Call Sign* about alternative fuels blah, blah, blah, customers know that

my cab runs on pig sh*t and that after every job I do for them, to fulfil my green credentials I plant a daffodil?

Lastly, all this constant bickering about the Vito versus the TX4, wake up people the TX2 is the ACE in the pack!

Colin Jenkins (Y22)

The offer to give your views on the gratuity being automatically added onto the fare is still there should anyone have a point to make. But let me make one thing clear; the offer is from *Call Sign* to get a point of view from drivers. There are no Board members hiding around the corner waiting to jump on you! ...Ed

Starting a radio circuit

Dear sir

I am a long-time reader of *Call Sign on-line* and have been considering starting a radio circuit here in Ankara. I am often in London and wonder whether it would be possible to arrange a visit to Dial-a-Cab sometime in the future to get an idea just what is involved, as your company seems to be the best. It would really be appreciated...

Malik Camberk

Turkey

Call DaC next time you plan on coming and I'm sure someone will be able to help ...Ed



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