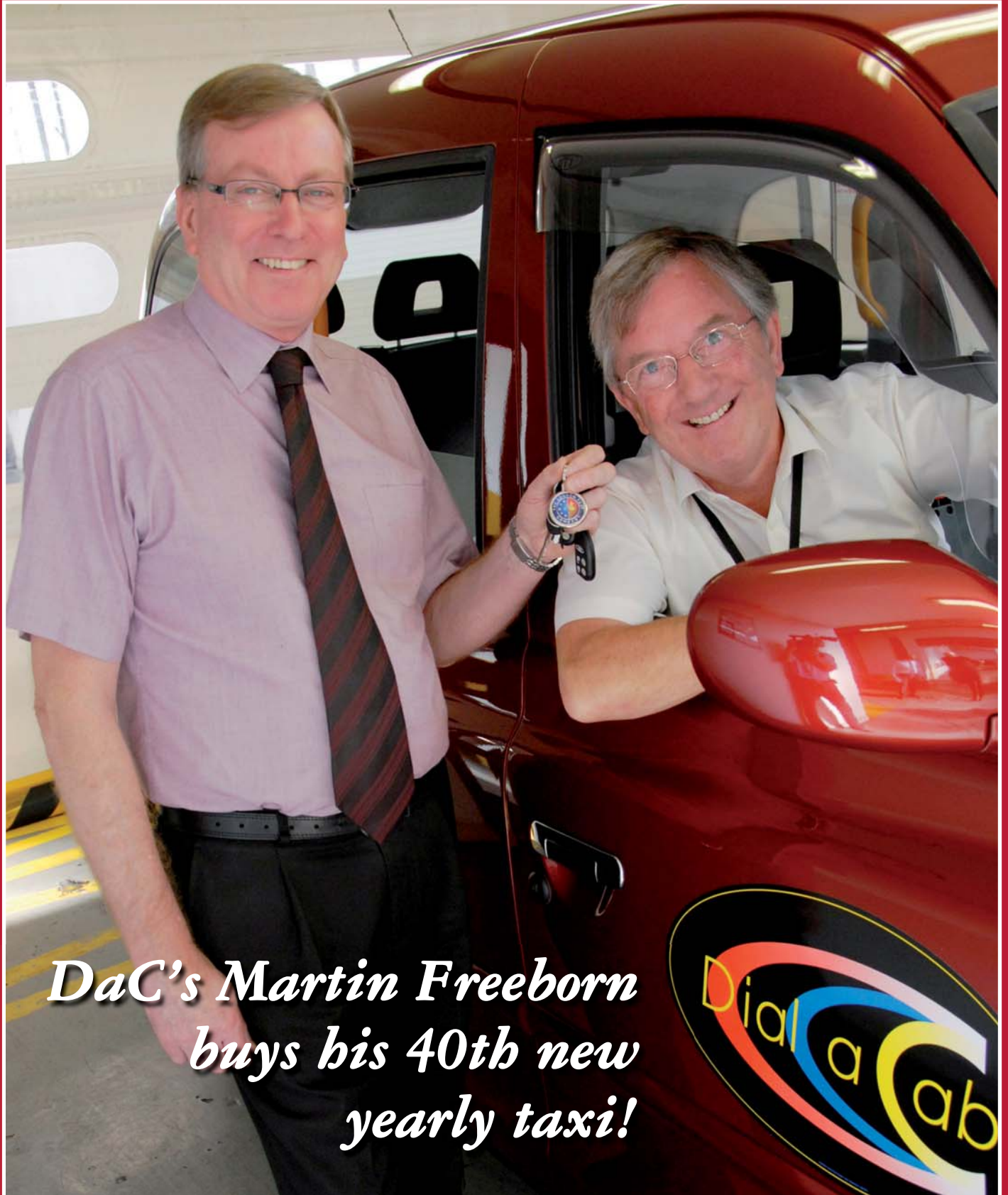


November 2011



# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*DaC's Martin Freeborn  
buys his 40th new  
yearly taxi!*





# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Last visited in 2009, update of large department stores opening times. If Sunday shows open times of 6½ hours, then the first half hour will be for browsing only. Plus London Eye running times...

<b>Apple Store</b> 235 Regent St Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 09:00 21:00 Tue 09:00 21:00 Wed 09:00 21:00 Thu 09:00 21:00 Fri 09:00 21:00 Sat 09:00 21:00	<b>Apple Store</b> 1, The Piazza, WC2 Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 09:00 21:00 Tue 09:00 21:00 Wed 09:00 21:00 Thu 09:00 21:00 Fri 09:00 21:00 Sat 09:00 21:00	<b>Burberry</b> 157 Regent St Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 10:00 19:00 Tue 10:00 19:00 Wed 10:00 19:00 Thu 10:00 19:00 Fri 10:00 19:00 Sat 10:00 19:00	<b>Brent Cross</b> Shopping Centre Sun 11:30 18:00 Mon 10:00 20:00 Tue 10:00 20:00 Wed 10:00 20:00 Thu 10:00 20:00 Fri 10:00 20:00 Sat 09:00 19:00	<b>Debenhams</b> Oxford St. Sun 11:00 17:00 Mon 10:00 21:00 Tue 10:00 21:00 Wed 10:00 21:00 Thu 10:00 22:00 Fri 10:00 22:00 Sat 09:00 21:00
<b>Disney Store</b> Piazza Covent Gdn Sun 10:00 20:00 Mon 09:00 22:00 Tue 09:00 22:00 Wed 09:00 22:00 Thu 09:00 22:00 Fri 09:00 22:00 Sat 09:00 22:00	<b>Disney Store</b> 350 Oxford St. Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 09:00 22:00 Tue 09:00 22:00 Wed 09:00 22:00 Thu 09:00 22:00 Fri 09:00 22:00 Sat 09:00 22:00	<b>Hamleys</b> Regent St. Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 10:00 20:00 Tue 10:00 20:00 Wed 10:00 20:00 Thu 10:00 21:00 Fri 10:00 21:00 Sat 10:00 20:00	<b>Harrods</b> Brompton Road Sun 11:30 18:00 Mon 10:00 20:00 Tue 10:00 20:00 Wed 10:00 20:00 Thu 10:00 20:00 Fri 10:00 20:00 Sat 10:00 20:00	<b>Harrods</b> 9/12 to 23/12/11 Sun 11:30 18:00 Mon 10:00 21:00 Tue 10:00 21:00 Wed 10:00 21:00 Thu 10:00 21:00 Fri 10:00 21:00 Sat 10:00 21:00
<b>Harvey Nichols</b> Knightsbridge Sun 11:30 18:00 Mon 10:00 20:00 Tue 10:00 20:00 Wed 10:00 20:00 Thu 10:00 20:00 Fri 10:00 20:00 Sat 10:00 20:00	<b>Jaeger</b> 200 Regent St Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 10:00 19:00 Tue 10:00 19:00 Wed 10:00 19:00 Thu 10:00 20:00 Fri 10:00 19:00 Sat 10:00 19:00	<b>House of Fraser</b> 101 Victoria St Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 09:30 19:00 Tue 09:30 19:00 Wed 09:30 19:00 Thu 09:30 20:00 Fri 09:30 19:00 Sat 10:00 18:00	<b>House of Fraser</b> City - 68 King Will. St Sun Closed Mon 10:00 20:00 Tue 10:00 20:00 Wed 10:00 20:00 Thu 10:00 20:00 Fri 10:00 20:00 Sat 10:00 18:00	<b>House of Fraser</b> 318 Oxford St Sun 11:30 18:00 Mon 09:30 20:00 Tue 09:30 20:00 Wed 09:30 21:00 Thu 09:30 21:00 Fri 09:30 21:00 Sat 09:30 20:00
<b>John Lewis</b> Westfield E20 Sun 11:00 17:00 Mon 10:00 20:00 Tue 10:00 20:00 Wed 10:00 20:00 Thu 10:00 20:00 Fri 10:00 20:00 Sat 09:00 20:00	<b>John Lewis</b> Oxford St. Sun 11:30 18:00 Mon 09:30 20:00 Tue 09:30 20:00 Wed 09:30 20:00 Thu 09:30 21:00 Fri 09:30 20:00 Sat 09:30 20:00	<b>Liberty</b> Regent St Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 10:00 21:00 Tue 10:00 21:00 Wed 10:00 21:00 Thu 10:00 21:00 Fri 10:00 21:00 Sat 10:00 21:00	<b>M&amp;S</b> 113 Ken. High St. Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 09:00 20:00 Tue 09:00 20:00 Wed 09:00 20:00 Thu 09:00 20:00 Fri 09:00 20:00 Sat 09:00 20:00	<b>M&amp;S Pantheon</b> 173 Oxford St Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 09:00 21:00 Tue 09:00 21:00 Wed 09:00 21:00 Thu 09:00 21:00 Fri 09:00 21:00 Sat 09:00 20:00
<b>M&amp;S</b> Edgware Rd Sun 11:00 17:00 Mon 08:00 21:00 Tue 08:00 21:00 Wed 08:00 21:00 Thu 08:00 21:00 Fri 08:00 21:00 Sat 08:30 19:00	<b>M&amp;S</b> Marble Arch Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 09:00 21:00 Tue 09:00 21:00 Wed 09:00 21:00 Thu 09:00 21:00 Fri 09:00 21:00 Sat 09:00 20:00	<b>M&amp;S</b> Kings Rd Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 08:30 21:00 Tue 08:30 21:00 Wed 08:30 21:00 Thu 08:30 21:00 Fri 08:30 21:00 Sat 08:30 21:00	<b>Peter Jones</b> Sloane Sq. Sun 11:00 17:00 Mon 09:30 19:00 Tue 09:30 19:00 Wed 09:30 20:00 Thu 09:30 19:00 Fri 09:30 19:00 Sat 09:30 19:00	<b>Primark</b> 499 Oxford St Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 08:30 22:00 Tue 08:30 22:00 Wed 08:30 22:00 Thu 08:30 22:00 Fri 08:30 22:00 Sat 08:30 21:00
<b>Selfridges</b> Oxford St. Sun 11:30 18:00 Mon 09:30 21:00 Tue 09:30 21:00 Wed 09:30 21:00 Thu 12:30 21:00 Fri 09:30 21:00 Sat 09:30 21:00	<b>Westfield W12</b> Gen. Hours Sun 12:00 18:00 Mon 10:00 22:00 Tue 10:00 22:00 Wed 10:00 22:00 Thu 10:00 22:00 Fri 10:00 22:00 Sat 09:00 21:00	<b>Westfield E20</b> Gen Hours Sun 11:00 17:00 Mon 10:00 21:00 Tue 10:00 21:00 Wed 10:00 21:00 Thu 10:00 22:00 Fri 10:00 22:00 Sat 09:00 21:00	<b>Westfield E20</b> John Lewis Sun 11:00 17:00 Mon 10:00 20:00 Tue 10:00 20:00 Wed 10:00 20:00 Thu 10:00 20:00 Fri 10:00 20:00 Sat 09:00 20:00	<b>London Eye</b> October to March 10:00 till 20:00 April to June 10:00 till 21:00 July to August 10:00 till 21:30 Closed 8/1/12 to 21/1/12 BH times vary

At the time of compilation (14/10/11) only Harrods had declared their Christmas opening hours. If there are any updates they will be posted on the MyFav website. Visit [www.myfav.co.uk](http://www.myfav.co.uk), click the 'Locked' button and enter 'taxi' as the unlock code. It will then display a page of taxi trade related iconic links. Why not 'Register', 'Recommend' and win £100...

# from the editor's desk

## Menace of cyclists?

**Call Sign** has given its view on what we have referred to as the 'menace of cyclists' many times over the years. In fact, following one instance we were actually threatened by someone claiming to be a Dial-a-Cab driver who, like most bullies, refused to give his name but went into overdrive about his son being a cyclist and how both had taken offence against my article. Read 'Grilled' in this issue.

As I often say, anything written by me on this page is my view and has been written purely by me. And yes, I am beginning to detest cyclists. I detest the fact that many consider that slowing down is an inconvenience that they cannot afford with that philosophy applying to traffic lights, pedestrian crossings and virtually any place where slowing down is a prerequisite to safety.

Is there one person out there reading this who will disagree with me when I say that at least once a day - and often far more - that you haven't been ready to turn left with your indicator flashing, when suddenly a cyclist flying along the inside shoots through just as you were turning? God forbid they have to stop to avoid a collision because it will always be your fault and your ears will become subject to a torrent of abuse.

I have also reported on the tragic deaths of several cyclists over the years, most having been killed while being on the nearside of lorries. Those whose deaths they were are just called cyclists, but in reality they are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sons and daughters. An accidental death at any time is a tragedy and of course that doesn't mean that it wasn't the fault of the lorry. But it is an undisputed fact that many cyclists - not all - drive in a way that is totally unsafe and that had a taxi been spotted overtaking while speeding along the inside and then shooting over a crossing whilst pedestrians were on it, they would quite rightly end up in court if spotted by a policeman. However, cyclists are unidentifiable so all we can do is curse while the cyclist in return curses any pedestrians that dare to cross the road while *lycra lout* is making his way home.

I've often wondered what cyclists waiting at traffic lights think of their fellow cyclists who shoot past them without even a cursory glance to see if anyone is crossing or if any traffic is coming from another direction?

Now with the added problem of the *Boris Bikes* with many riders who have not a clue what road sense means, we are literally surrounded by these two wheeled menaces with riders who consider they can do anything they like.

So perhaps it's about time that cyclists had to ride on licensed bikes? It can't be that difficult to attach a number plate to the rear of the bike and under those circumstances, make it so much easier to report one when riding in a dangerous manner? Boris bikes first???

## And speaking of crossings...

The most famous of all London's crossings (a famous crossing!!!) has to be the one in Abbey Road outside of the Abbey Road studios. This is the crossing where John, George, Paul (minus his shoes) and Ringo were photographed crossing for the cover of the last-but-one Beatles album, *Abbey Road*.



That was 42 years ago and the Beatles are no more, with George and John sadly gone, Ringo still trying to find out where he's going and Paul, incredibly, writing ballet! But yet on a daily basis the crossing is swamped by youngsters - most not even born when the album was released - swarming across the road in groups of four waiting for a friend to take a photo.

Part of me finds it extremely irritating to pull up at a crossing only to find that those waiting do not want to cross until the road is clear of traffic, so your kindness in stopping is somewhat thrown back in your face.

On the other hand, I quite like the idea of something so simple going on around us at a time when doom and gloom are forever being paraded into our faces - be that wars, cabinet resignations or financial meltdowns. These people just want their photos taken crossing the road! How hard can it be to let them by not stopping!

If you want to watch them doing it 24x7 - and believe me it is more entertaining than many TV shows - go to <http://www.abbeyroad.com/visit/>. Can you believe that? A webcam for a crossing! So on second thought perhaps you should stop just to be on the safe side whilst then watching the embarrassed faces of those "waiting to cross" who then have to look the other way! It almost takes you back to an age of innocence.

## No hurricanes and no PH plying for hire...

We're always hearing some wag or other suggesting that licensed private hire should be allowed to ply for hire, but anyone with a modicum of commonsense would know that for several highly important reasons - that readers of **Call Sign** know backwards - it must never happen.

However, rumours have reached this office suggesting that if enough taxi drivers decide not to work during next years' Olympic Games in Stratford, then Mayor Boris will be asked by a group of London Assembly members to allow special private hire ranks where even non-pre-booked fares can go to catch a minicab whose driver may or may not have a clue as to where they are or even actually be who they say they are!

It sounds ridiculous because even if the Mayor considered it, would anyone ever know which car was which? **Call Sign** has - thanks to the ever alert readers of this mag - seen many photos of cars for sale in parking lots with ready stuck-on PH roundels. This issue also contains

an article about a burglary carried out by cretins using their licensed PH car!

But stupidity surrounds us and while I believe that Boris is far from stupid, examples are always reaching this office. For example, during hurricane Irene in New York recently, although the City's mass transit system was shut down taxis still worked. However, the city also initiated "zone fares" and allowed livery cabs - equivalent to our PH - to do street hails.

Hurricanes? Olympic Games? It matters not. If you value the safety of private hire users, then the only ones that the public should ever be allowed to use are pre-booked ones where the passenger knows who is picking them up by having the driver's name and car registration. Even better, they should use a licensed taxi, then they wouldn't even need that info, because as even Boris Johnson knows, we're the safest form of transportation there is!

## Law Commission visit DaC

I happened to be at DaC House recently, only to find that the Law Commission were visiting prior to putting into motion a consultation for next April based on the framework that they say the taxi and private hire vehicle regulations operate under. According to the Law Commission's view, current laws regarding the two sections of the trade appear to be complex and outdated. That isn't their view, it's the views of mysterious "others" - a word that will be used to give some well-paid employment to several high-powered members of the establishment under the guidance of Lord Justice Sir James Munby QC. The part that concerns me is where the Commission refer to the taxi trade as suffering under archaic legislation, inferring that our trade hasn't changed much since Victorian times - yes, that's right, a bit like our court rooms with judges whose biggest addition to modernisation is to ask who The Beatles were (that makes two mentions on one page for the fab four!)

They then go on to say that our being stuck in the past makes us less capable of understanding modern technology such as the internet and GPS technology. Errr, excuse me Commission, but Dial-a-Cab have both and much more besides - and we know who The Beatles are (that makes three!)

I know not what happened whilst they were here as I am not privy to such meetings, however, I was told that the Commission were impressed by our operation. Whether that makes any difference to their future plans, I very much doubt. After all, it would be an awful lot of spending money to lose!

## LTPH PH Consultation

According to answers on the recent *what they can and can't do* LTPH Consultation on Private Hire, cars can now officially be any colour so Addison Lee are officially black cabs! Even more worrying is that the restriction on PHV vehicles resembling Licensed Taxis has been scrapped. That follows on from a silly taxi campaign that PH not be allowed to use the Vito as it could be confused with licensed taxis. Being honest, PH had the car first so how could we complain? But Mr Griffin, should he decide to, can now renew his fleet with TX4s! You were warned...

**Alan Fisher**  
[callsignmag@aol.com](mailto:callsignmag@aol.com)



# reflections of the chairman

## Law Commission

### review

The Law Commission is reviewing the existing framework of taxi and private hire vehicle regulation on behalf of The Department for Transport with a view to preparing proposals for consultation that would begin in April 2012. This will be followed by a three month consultation period. They plan to publish a final report with recommendations and a draft bill by late 2013.

They had their initial meeting in August to which none of the three radio circuits were invited. After we learned of the meeting, we contacted the Law Commission and they visited Dial-a-Cab on 11th October. All three circuits were present and had the opportunity to put their point of view. I also gave the Commission a tour of our premises and explained how a radio circuit functions. I believe (and hope) they were duly impressed.

They were asked outright if the removal of radios from taxis in favour of private hire was to be considered, they assured me that issue was not on their agenda - although plenty of other worrying topics still exist. They describe their work stream in the following way: *"Taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) are an important part of local transport. They operate in highly regulated markets where safety and quality control are paramount. Licensing covers key areas such as the quality of services, the fitness of drivers, fare regulation and restrictions on the number of licenses issued. The current law on taxis and PHVs has been criticised for being complex and outdated. One problem is the multiplicity of legislation. Taxis, which can 'ply for hire' so customers can stop them in the street, have different rules to PHVs which can only be pre-booked. In turn each of the taxi and PHV trades is regulated by multiple statutes. There are also different legal systems along geographical lines distinguishing Plymouth, London and the rest of England and Wales. Whereas some distinctions are clearly justified, others are less clearly so."*

*Some of the legislation, particularly relating to taxis, is archaic. The key statutes date back to Victorian times and refer to "hackney carriages" when taxis were literally horse-drawn vehicles. Case law and guidance are indispensable in interpreting the law. This also makes the legislation less able to reflect more modern technology like the telephone, internet and GPS technology."*

I believe it is extremely important that we have some input into their review, otherwise their recommendations could prove to be life changing for our industry. Amongst the topics they will look at and which were raised at the August meeting are:

- **Single-tier or two-tier and, if two-tier what should be the operational distinctions?**
- **The need to strike an appropriate balance between deregulation and public protection.**



• **If two-tiers remained, how would they be made clearly distinguishable nationally, because current local policies create confusion?**

• **Are geographic regimes necessary for London and Plymouth, as opposed to the rest of England and Wales?**

As you can see from the above bullet points, their recommendations could give cause for grave concern, the second bullet point being of particular concern. Consequently, I am pleased we have now been invited to their next meeting on 22nd November.

## New terminals

We are in the process of taking delivery of unpackaged terminals in order to test our new software - unpackaged meaning a terminal without any casing. When our IT department are happy with the product, we will take delivery of the new terminal with bespoke casing that will mirror the finished article.

Once we are satisfied the new terminal performs and looks how we want, we will then take a small number of terminals for testing on the road. Assuming they function correctly, we will probably begin taking delivery towards the end of the first quarter of next year and fit a hundred terminals a month until the whole fleet is re-equipped.

We will be moving away from our private radio network and onto the O2 network, which will give us nationwide coverage. That will be especially helpful when clearing credit card transactions.

**We will also be fitting a separate unit for chip and pin and contactless transactions; this will be located in the front of the cab in a holster, but which can be passed to the customer either at the luggage door or in the back of the vehicle. The terminal will also be equipped with SatNav - should the member require it. However, we will probably leave that to the individual to decide as I know some members are totally against the idea of SatNav.**

We will not be moving away from a zonal system and despatch by GPS, as do our two competitors. There are pros and cons for both systems (I believe Allan Evans has gone into more detail in his article), but for us to change

would mean a total re-write of not only our despatching system, but also a total re-write of the software on the MDT. The current method has stood us in good stead for the past 22 years.

The best analogy I can give is the difference between the UK and Europe; we drive on the left and they drive on the right, but the outcome is the same when you reach your destination. However, if we were to decide to drive on the right, can you just imagine the disruption to our infrastructure? Changing the way we despatch would have the same consequences as we could not change piecemeal, there would have to be a 'big bang' whereby all the vehicles would be converted and we would switch over to the new system and hope everything worked.

The chances are it would not and if it didn't, I believe the risk to your business would be too great to contemplate. It would not give a better service to either client or member and would in the end achieve nothing.

## 2012 tariff increase

I recently attended a meeting at LTPH where next year's tariff increase was discussed. As you can imagine, the discussion was reasonably confidential but I was somewhat disturbed regarding some of the topics and I would be very interested to see if the majority view of our membership was the same as mine.

Do you think there should be an extra tariff increase of over 20% next year - over and above the usual increase in April - to cover the period of both the Olympic and the Paralympic Games?

Also what do you believe to be an acceptable tariff increase next April: 1% to 3%, 3% to 5% or over 5%?

I am assuming there might be a large response to the magazine and me via e-mail, consequently, you might not receive an individual answer, but no doubt our Editor might wish to print some replies.

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

## Call Sign

**November 2011**

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# Glasgow Taxis back on top!

**Call Sign** makes no apologies for the fact that our main concern so far as news is concerned is about **Dial-a-Cab**, its drivers, staff and anything that we believe will be of interest to them.

So we rarely publish press releases about taxi sales in Birmingham, Bristol, Barnsley or Scotland. But as taxis are our core business, we feel that the progress of the London cab in other countries can be of interest.

**But rarely do drivers ask questions about circumstances that occur out of the London and suburban zones except for one exception – Glasgow Taxis. They first came to readers notice in the March 2008 issue when we ran a story on their visit to Dial-a-Cab to study our dispatch system.**

Past issues of **Call Sign** since then have told how Glasgow Taxis – who use London style black cabs and run a radio circuit similar to Dial-a-Cab – lost several large accounts to firms that **Strathclyde police** inferred had links to organised crime. We also ran an interview with Glasgow Taxis Secretary, **Robert Dunabie**, who told this magazine that one of the accounts they lost was with the Glasgow NHS. The hospitals tender clearly intimated that the requirement was for 'real' taxis with partitions etc, yet a minicab firm using cars won the contract! They later lost another valuable account to the same car company that involved ferrying vulnerable children to and



from their Glasgow schools.

We admit to being surprised at how often DaC drivers have emailed or phoned to ask how Glasgow Taxis are coping. Well things at Scotland's largest radio taxi company – and indeed the largest taxi company outside of London – are definitely on the up!

**Although they are currently fitting a new dispatch system that was scheduled to go live as you read this, more importantly so far as this article is concerned is that the company that has been through so much recently, has won the award as Glasgow's Favourite Business – an annual event that is sponsored by the City's Evening Times.**

**Now up to 1400 taxis and 2100 drivers, Glasgow Taxis beat many nominees from all walks of Glasgow life from department stores to theatres.**

Director Jack Ferguson told **Call Sign**: **"It's so fantastic and down to the people that**

**After battling organised crime, just beating other legitimate businesses must have been a doddle for Glasgow Taxis**

**appreciate our service, because like Dial-a-Cab that's what we strive to achieve – a good service."**

**The company, whose staff organise the annual Scottish seaside charity outing for sick and disabled kids, grew out of Glasgow Licensed Taxi Operators, which dated back**

**to the 1950s and became the company it is today after an amalgamation of city cab firms in 1997.**

Evening Times Editor Tony Carlin, told us: **"The finalists for the Evening Times Glasgow's Favourite Business award were all of an extremely high calibre. Each of the nominees is highly successful in its own field and each has earned a respected and well-deserved reputation for excellence. But there could only be one winner with our readers and congratulations go to Glasgow Taxis, not just for their commercial successes but for their work in the community and in particular, for their long-standing commitment to their extraordinary annual taxis outing which has been a highlight for hundreds of youngsters every year for decades."**

We think we can safely say that Glasgow Taxis never, ever considered rolling over and allowing the world to walk over them. They fought and look to have won, because with this award comes the fame and many Scottish customers will want to be associated with them. Well done to all at Glasgow Taxis.

## Pancras Road update

**Dial-a-Cab** drivers who have tried to pick up at the Kings Cross rank in Pancras Road or attempted to drop their passengers at the Eurostar set down point, will not need reminding about the ongoing gas works to improve King's Cross and the disruption it is causing.

Messages from **Camden Council**, passed on via **London Taxis and Private Hire**, are asking drivers to avoid waiting or stopping in areas that will cause delays to other road users and are reminded that the drop off and pick up bays on the western side of Pancras Road have a maximum time limit of 5 minutes – although the signage seem to suggest just 2 minutes. Camden claim that they are giving out PCNs to anyone caught breaking the 5 minute time limit – including taxis and private hire vehicles – although Dial-a-Cab drivers have the coach park for Eurostar pick-ups. However, a leaked memo from Camden Council suggests that PCNs are averaging around fifty per month – hardly likely to put fear into the numerous PH drivers that wait there.

As for the ongoing works; Pancras Road southbound will remain closed until the end of March 2012 whilst new gas main infrastructure is being placed into the ground. The northbound section of road should be reopening as you read this, but before celebrating, it will close again at the beginning of January 2012 until the middle of March 2012 to complete the change over from the old gas controller to the new one.

Camden Council told **Call Sign**: "In terms of planned works, these remain extensive with significant disruption as a result. Currently, the contractor BAM Nutall on behalf of the developer Argent and the UK gas supplier are relocating and renewing a large Gas controlling station that steps down medium pressure gas from the National Grid to a useable low pressure gas that will supply the development and the surrounding area. The task is a large scale Civil Engineering project in itself and subsequently, the time it will take to complete the works is substantial.

Even more unfortunately for the area, the gas pipes for this move are situated under Pancras Road and as such we have experienced a lot of unavoidable disruption."

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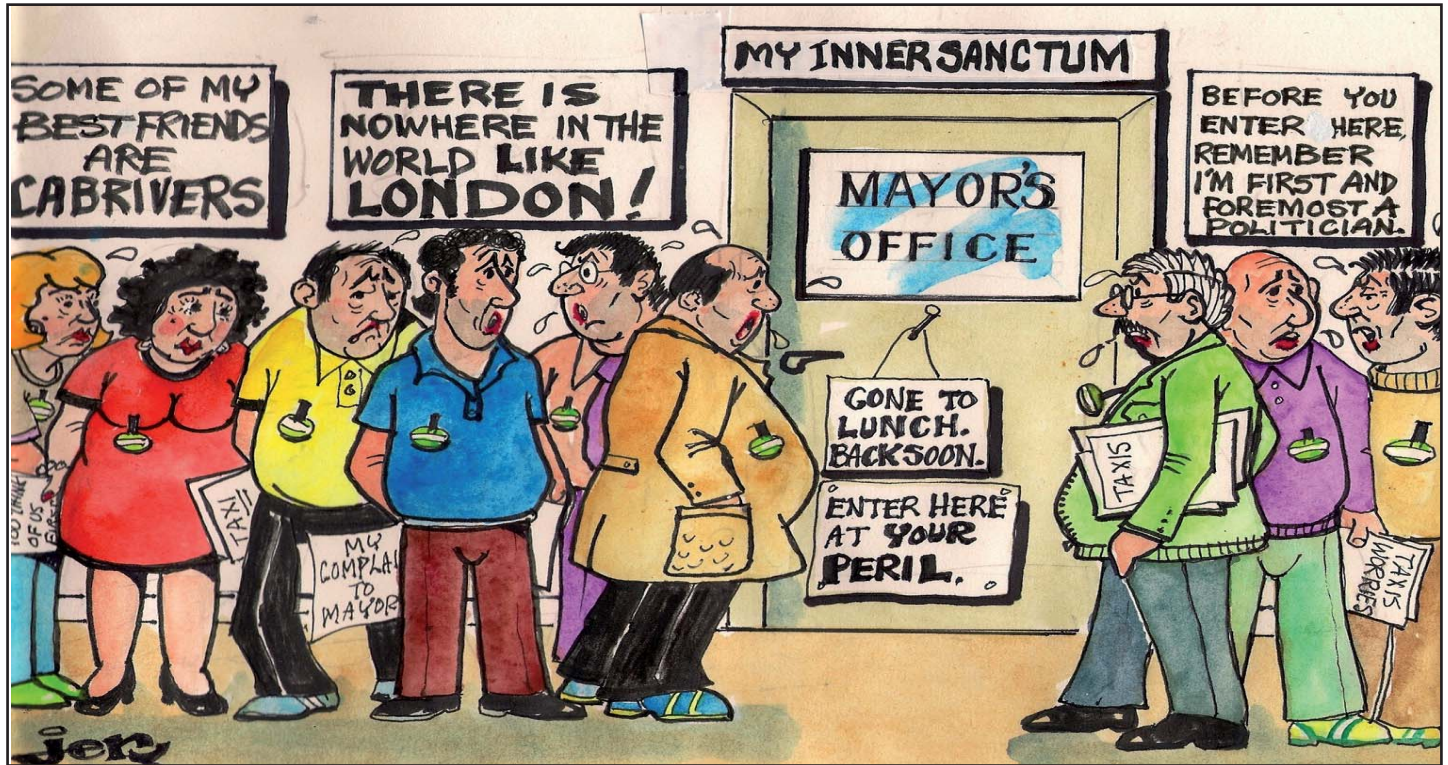
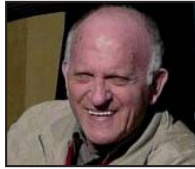
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# Jery's World



Don't worry mate, the Mayor will be queuing up to help us by next April cos the elections are in May!!!

## Hammersmith Flyover repairs until next summer!



Pic left:  
Disruption may be kept to a minimum, but expect delays!

Transport for London are set to begin structural work aimed at preserving and extending the operational life of the A4 Hammersmith Flyover from this month as part of its ongoing maintenance of road structures across London. They have been working to identify the least disruptive work programme that will hopefully extend the life of the 50-year old flyover.

Hammersmith flyover was constructed in the 1960s and elements of the structure are approaching the end of their operational life. In light of this, TfL has been carrying out detailed monitoring inside the flyover since 2008, in particular checking the condition of the internal cables which help to hold the spans in place.

Recent results from the monitoring program have shown that repair work needs to be carried out earlier than anticipated and TfL has now begun the work design and carried out temporary bridge strengthening works to reinforce the spans. This will allow the structure to remain open to the public while a more permanent option is developed.

The preliminary work began in October, with main work commencing in November with a finish date expected to be by summer 2012. TfL say they will try to keep road closures and disruption to a minimum while the works are carried out.

Dana Skelley, Director of Roads at TfL, told *Call Sign*: "Although the flyover remains safe for road users, we are currently developing a temporary solution that will allow it to remain open for the next few years while a permanent solution is delivered."

### T&J's Rescue

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

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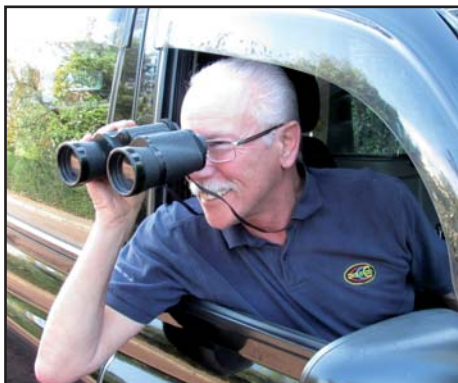
"It was all rather confusing really," **Dial-a-Cab's David Lessman (D19)** told *Call Sign* recently. "I was empty in the nearside lane on Kensington High Street heading towards Knightsbridge. The traffic in the outside lane had almost come to a stop, but I continued to move steadily forward as the road ahead of me was quite clear," David explained, his arms gesturing in a type of semaphore fashion before continuing in the more old fashioned method of vocal communication...

"There stuck in the line of traffic to my right was a silver Vito, which I passed as I made my way forward, not giving the Mercedes vehicle a second thought. Further along the road I stopped to pick up a street job and pulled up at the next set of traffic lights. Suddenly, the silver Vito that I had passed in the traffic earlier pulled up alongside me and shouted 'thanks Dave!' He then drove off without further ado. It was only after I had given the incident a moment of thought that I realised he must have been a licensed taxi with, like me, his *For Hire* light on. He had obviously recognised me and thought I had deliberately turned him over! So it was confusion, a case of mistaken identity more than anything deliberate," David said in a form of confessional.

"That's why I put out a terminal message of apology saying that I did not see him, so that the other guy would know it was a genuine mistake and nothing more," David insisted. "And do you know, within seconds of that apologetic message going out across the fleet, some wag text me: *Should have gone to Specsavers!*" As David recalled the message, he roared with laughter!

## A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY???

...or an ad for Specsavers!



**No chance of any more mistakes for David!**

The conversation then turned to future projects of the **London Taxi Drivers Fund for Underprivileged Children** of which former Chairman David is a long time committee member.

"Yes, we have some exciting projects lined up for the coming months and some surprises," he said trying not to give too much away for fear of tempting fate. "But our *Fun Day* stand at the Covent Garden Piazza was very successful last year, raising our profile with the general public and has allowed us to reach a

wider audience so we were delighted to be given the opportunity to return again this year. So it's a big *thank you* to the powers-that-be who decide these matters.

"Then there's our *Mad Hatters Tea Party* at the Grosvenor House Hotel early in the New Year where 600+ children are entertained throughout the afternoon. Many celebrities from the showbiz and sporting worlds, together with our entertainers always provide the children – whether underprivileged or suffering from a serious illness - with a memorable day.

"Many of these events, together with our fund-raising activities throughout the year involve our spouses as well, so their help and support is invaluable, as is that of our many sponsors and their input is gratefully acknowledged too," David said.












David ended with a sop back to the beginning of the story when saying that without drivers, the charity would be a shell, adding quickly: "And they drive all types of taxis - including Vitos!"

More info on the LTFUC is at [www.thelondon-taxidriver-schildrens-charity.co.uk](http://www.thelondon-taxidriver-schildrens-charity.co.uk)

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DaC Cabs were well-represented at the demo. Pic courtesy The Anderson Shelter

## UCG ORN drive-in causes chaos!

Thanks to messages sent via *Twitter*, email and **Dial-a-Cab** driver's terminals, St John's Wood Circus became gridlocked as licensed London taxi drivers – including many from DaC – met up at 5pm to call for full access to the *Olympic Route Network* that many believe will cause chaos during next year's Olympics.

The messages originated from the *United Cabbies Group* as they staged the drive-in that saw Wellington Road southbound together with Park Road northbound come to a standstill.

The demo was a follow-up to one held several weeks earlier by the UCG outside the Grange St Pauls Hotel, where the *London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games* (LOCOG) were having a meeting. Other than for an Ashes decider at Lords Cricket Ground, St John's Wood hadn't seen so many empty cabs all at the same time for quite some while!

With the Olympic Archery competition due to be held at Lords during the Games first week and an archery contest being tested out in front of LOCOG representatives on Thursday 6 October, that was the signal for the UCG to make a point regarding the *Olympic Route Network* and the ban on taxis using them during the tenure of the Games. The result was chaos!

The UCG pointed out that taxis were fully wheelchair accessible and probably the only way that many disabled people would be able to take up their ticket allocation at the Games. The group added that more demonstrations would take place if their complaints were not listened to.

*Transport for London* answered by saying that "...in common with all other road users, taxis will be able to use the ORN – which itself

only represents one per cent of London's roads."

They went on to add that one third of the ORN has been dedicated as Games Lanes and it was that third that taxis would not be able to access because athletes, officials and the media would be using them to ensure they got to their events on time. Our passengers are obviously nowhere near as important as the media!

The UCG demo was deemed a success by drivers that **Call Sign** spoke to, the problem was that few believed anything would change. The Games are normally awarded only after the host country agree to several demands – one of which is that a designated part of the highway system is given to the *International Olympic Committee* during the Games to use as they see fit.

## GUESS WHAT I SAW ON MY HOLS!

In the *April Call Sign* we wrote of the existence in Malta of a new taxi company called **Dial-a-Cab**. The company were based in St Julians with all English-speaking drivers who were knowledgeable in all the Maltese islands – Gozo and Comino and of course, Malta. Their phone number was fairly easy to remember as well - 234 56789.

And while **Dial-a-Cab (Malta)** are nothing to do with DaC of London, they did offer any of our drivers a 3euro discount on any taxi fare – something we think DaC driver **David Brady (T68)** may have missed out on!

David wrote to **Call Sign** after returning from his holiday to the George Cross island that was so important to the allied forces in WW2.

"On holiday in Malta recently, I found myself in the capital of Valletta where much to my surprise, I saw parked right in front of me a **Dial-a-Cab TX4!** I would like to know why I have never been offered a job to that destination as a fixed price or on the

meter!!!"

Well David, we can answer your question for you – all jobs to the Mediterranean are covered by the editor as Alan feels he has to help the Society out! Well that's what he told me!

Ron Yarborough  
Call Sign Online



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Last month's **Call Sign** ran an article from London Assembly Green Party representative, Darren Johnson, in which he denied being anti-taxi but insisted that we should be concerned about our health if we continued using diesel vehicles. Among items Mr Johnson wrote of in the article was that he used the Mayor's figures "...to highlight the link between black cabs and air pollution because cabs are responsible for nearly a third of particulate pollution in central London. It harms the drivers, their customers and many other Londoners."

Mr Johnson added that because of his views, he got much grief from cab drivers who felt he was always having a go at them. He said he understood the reaction because the cabs were the driver's livelihoods and that they represented a huge investment for owner drivers. He said:

"The biggest let-down is that innovation has been blocked, partly because of the rigid adoption of the conditions of fitness, which favour a monopoly provider. More fuel efficient alternatives (with less CO2 emissions) to the TX series have been consistently blocked because of the PCO clinging to the turning circle."

He also blamed the Mayor for not helping to fund a scrappage scheme for drivers who were forced to sell their old cabs and added that if pollution levels did not reduce quickly, then the 15 year age limit could soon become 10 years. He then went on to blame the cab trade for talking Boris Johnson into abolishing the short-lived six-monthly inspections, claiming that while it may have saved us money in the short term, it did long-term damage to the credibility of both the Mayor and the taxi business.

He also said that the infrastructure for gas fuels such as LPG had not been supported, with TfL showing little willingness to support those drivers who for several years had wanted to reduce pollution by switching fuels rather than buying a new vehicle. Instead, cabbies had been required to fit clean-up devices of dubious worth.

He spoke of various meetings he'd been to where the topic of hybrid devices had been raised and how their design to fit existing engines sounded like a promising solution to tackle air pollution in the short to medium term. Mr Johnson said in the **Call Sign** article that those devices were cheap to install and designed to keep the engine ticking over when the taxi was idling – something he said taxis did for much of the time. The TfL procurement process, he said, was faulty and challenged it, but added that since then the Mayor's office has simply dropped the project despite what Mr Johnson claimed was the obvious benefits to cab drivers.

**Former Dial-a-Cab driver Stanley Roth (ex Y53) has been driving gas cabs for many years and attended many meetings on the subject and suggests that Mr Johnson talks about the subject but does nothing about it. Following last month's article, Stanley told Call Sign of one meeting he attended with Mr Johnson. It was in October 2009:**

"I have sat on this for two years, in fact since the October 2009 meeting. Mr Johnson claims we produce nearly one third of the pollution, which is strange because if you go to

**Former DaC driver Stanley Roth, who drives a gas powered taxi, read Darren Johnson's article in last month's Call Sign and tells this magazine...**

## Darren Johnson Green? I don't think so!



**Stanley Roth - A taxi lifetime pushing merits of gas cabs... and now victory!**

Clearing the Air: The Mayor's draft air quality strategy for public consultation (March 2010) and look on page 42 of 151, it shows that taxis cause 20% of the PM10 while 40% is caused by buses and lorries. Twenty percent is nowhere near the one third he mentions.

**\*\*From Clearing the Air: The Mayor's draft air quality strategy for public consultation (March 2010):** Around 35 per cent of PM10 emissions in 2008 from road transport in central London come from tyre and brake wear. Emissions of PM10 from car tyre and brake wear are now greater than those from car exhaust emissions and over the next five years, this is also expected to become the case with heavier vehicles such as HGVs and buses. This reflects the fact that measures have been taken to reduce emissions from exhausts but similar reductions have not been achieved for tyre and brake wear emissions, largely because there are no technical improvements on the market. Other significant sources of PM10 within central London include cars (responsible for 23 per cent), taxis (responsible for 20 per cent) and LGVs (responsible for 17 per cent)."

As for NOx, the bulk of that is again buses and HGVs. Pages 57 and 58 Policy 2 states a grant be given to the cab trade for cleaning up.

**\*\*From Clearing the Air: The Mayor will encourage central Government to extend its scrappage scheme to target particular vehicles such as taxis, as well as introducing a grant scheme for retrofitting vehicles with pollution abatement equipment.\*\***

It was pointed out to Mr Johnson that by using methane - especially biomethane - we could greatly reduce pollution in London because Los Angeles had reduced its PM10 bus pollution by 80% by having no diesel buses, but a fleet of 2221 natural gas buses. You can read about that at: <http://thecityfix.com/blog/los-angeles-retires-its-last-diesel-bus/>.

Many cities around the world are using Natural gas as well as LPG to run factory built NGV taxis. We in London are light years behind in cleaning up. Darren Johnson asked a question two years ago about extra life for owners who convert to LPG and, I hope,

Natural gas. At the moment the trade is still waiting to hear an answer, despite the fact that as Mayor, Ken Livingstone said that the age limit would not apply to gas cabs.

Any money going into electric taxis is a waste. Darren Johnson was showed the minutes of the New York Carriage Office meeting on the scrapping of the electric taxi project because it did not live up to what the maker's claimed. In China, drivers of electric cabs are having to change battery packs 5 times each shift!

I have tried emailing Darren Johnson several times, but he never responds. Why? Because he really is anti-taxi with the green aspect coming second...."

### Victory for Stanley!

**Then, just days after Stanley had written the article for Call Sign, we heard from the Mayor's office that important changes had been made following the consultation with regard to the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy. It detailed any exemptions.**

We were reminded of the 15 year age limit placed on London taxis with the Mayor's estimate being that some 1,200 licensed taxis were likely to be more than 15 years old in 2012 and added that a minimum emission standard of Euro 5 for newly licensed taxis entering the business would apply from 1 April 2012 (Euro 3 for cabs licensed before that date).

However, the release from TfL said that vehicles powered by alternative fuels would be given an extra 5 years on top of the 15 years already allowed. The fuels referred to are Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Biomethane. Taxis running on petrol do not get the extension.

After we passed the word on to Stanley, he told **Call Sign**: "Yes, I am very pleased with the decision; however I have to say that this is something I spoke about to Darren Johnson around 2 years ago, but absolutely nothing came of it. The maxim that good things are worth waiting for doesn't really apply when the waiting has been unnecessary."

Anyone wanting to convert their taxi to one of the three alternative fuels can only carry the conversion out after consultation with the Vehicle Policy Manager at LTPH. Taxis can only be converted from diesel and not petrol. Successful conversions will then get a 5 year extension following proof that the conversion meets Euro 5 specification.

In addition to the alternative fuel vehicles, the **Asquith** taxi has also been given an extra five years as it comes under the new classification of historic and classic/niche vehicles – although that vehicle is diesel operated.



The third **Princess Royal Trust for Carers** charity golf day, sponsored by **Butlins**, was held on Wednesday 28 September at Berkhamsted GC. As last year, a **Call Sign** sponsored team was entered on behalf of **Dial-a-Cab**.

The team comprised of drivers **Tom Coull (G33)**, **Ray Scott (T34)** and **Iain Champness (G57)**, together with **Company Secretary Howard Pears**.

Howard told **Call Sign**: "It was a superb hot and sunny day and we thought we were in with a chance of doing well. The competition included a team and individual Stableford competition. From 17 teams entered, DaC certainly didn't disgrace itself when coming 5th with 115 points.

However, the individual prize was won with 50 points from an individual playing off a 24 handicap. In all my years of golf, I have never heard of anyone scoring 50 points! We did show our skill in the raffle, however, taking 3 out of the 8 prizes to enhance an excellent day.

If we have the opportunity to enter next year, we must remember to bring our spurs, mask and '6' guns to combat any bandits! Many thanks to **Call Sign** for a most enjoyable day."

Iain Champness told this mag: "I'd like to thank Dial-a-Cab and **Call Sign** for allowing me to play in this charity day at Berkhamsted. It was a great day, fantastic weather and good company. Although we didn't win any prizes for the golf, that wasn't what the day was about. Having said that, Tom, Ray and I did win on the raffle - sorry Howard! Not a bad ratio - about 200 tickets sold, 8 prizes and Dial-a-Cab wins 3 of them!"

**Trish Brown**, corporate fundraiser for the

## DaC at Butlins Golf Day



The DaC team (L-R): Tom, Iain, Howard and Ray  
Inset pic Iain and Tom search for a lost ball!



Trust, told **Call Sign**:

"It was fantastic to have **Team Dial-a-Cab** join us again this year for the annual

only for me but also the staff from Butlins. The fact that many of the teams participated last year enhanced the atmosphere all the more! The sun certainly shone on the "righteous" and it was great to see all of the teams having a great environment to play in.

Our partnership with Butlins goes from strength to strength, we have enjoyed being their chosen charity for four years now and there seems no end to their enthusiasm and determination to make a difference.

However it's people like you at **Dial-a-Cab** who make it so special and I know you will be delighted to hear that you helped to raise a fantastic £6,096 from the event!"

You can find out more at <http://www.carers.org/>

golf day. Thanks to Tom, Howard, Iain and Ray so much for taking the time from their busy schedule (London cabbies are the best in the world) to support the Butlins Golf Day in aid of The **Princess Royal Trust for Carers** at Berkhamsted, and also **Call Sign** for funding them. I hope the team all had a great day's golf.

It was so inspiring to have their support, not

## THE MAQS EXEMPTIONS

From **1 January 2012**, a 15 year rolling age limit for taxis (unless exempted) will be introduced (10 years for private hire).

From **1 April 2012** (unless exempted) all new, or new to licensing taxis, must as a minimum, meet Euro 5 standards for emissions (all new, or new to licensing, PHVs must, as a minimum, meet Euro 4 standards for emissions and be no older than 5 years).

**London Taxis and Private Hire together with Transport for London have now announced some exemptions following a consultation period after the original announcement.**

They apply to alternative fuels and any classic/niche taxis.

- Acceptable alternative fuels are Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Biomethane.

- Taxis licensed before 1 January 2012 must meet Euro 3, taxis licensed after this date must meet Euro 5.

- All conversions to taxis must be approved by TPH via the approval process.

- Conversions must be from diesel.

- Taxis must be converted by the date of their annual inspection in their 15th year.

- The historic vehicle and classic/niche classification applies only to Asquith taxis licensed prior to 1 January 2012. These will be considered and granted on a case by case basis; additional 5 years on existing age limit and then reviewed after 5 years.

- Taxis licensed before the implementation date of 1 January 2012 and before 1 April 2012 with Euro 3 classification will have a maximum rolling age-based limit of 15 years (under current Conditions of Fitness).

- Taxis licensed on or after 1 January 2012 with Euro 3 classification will have a maximum rolling age-based limit of 15 years (under current Conditions of Fitness).

### New Applications and Renewals

The consultation proposed that applications and inspections for re-licensing or to renew a vehicle licence would need to take place within 3 months of the licence expiring. This has now been extended to 24 months as set out below.

A gap of up to 24 months between a licence

expiring and the new licence commencing will be allowed in exceptional circumstances and where the delay was due to circumstances outside the vehicle owner's control, otherwise the licence application will be treated as a 'new' application rather than a 'renewal' application. Taxi (and PHV licences) issued by other licensing authorities will not be taken into account when considering whether a vehicle can be licensed and any application to licence a vehicle that has been previously licensed outside Greater London will be treated as a new application.

### Contact LTPH

If you want to apply for an exemption, have any questions about the exemptions from the age-based limits and emissions standards, or are uncertain as to whether your vehicle is eligible for an exemption, then please contact LTPH by Post to:

Vehicle Age Limit Exemptions,  
TfL - Taxi and Private Hire Office  
Palestra 4th floor (Yellow zone)  
197 Blackfriars Road London  
SE1 8NJ

Email to: [TPH.Enquiries@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:TPH.Enquiries@tfl.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0845 602 7000

Fax: 020 3054 3160

The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children was recently invited to attend the traditional annual *London Pearly Kings and Queens Costermongers' Harvest Festival Parade* held at London's Guildhall. The Fund's Hon Chair, **Susan Angel** and committee member **Lilian Julier**, along with Press Officer **Raymond Levy** went along to witness this time-honoured, colourful and spectacular event.

The annual festival has always been organised by **Doreen** and **Larry Golding**, Pearly Queen and King of the Old Kent Road. Sadly Larry passed away in July, but Doreen has carried on his good work ensuring that another tremendous and excellent festival took place. Larry was the nephew of actor Alfie Bass and had been a licensed cab driver for many years after the war. He did some work for the then Taxi Aid Society, as did his father and uncles while Doreen is a Freeman of the City of London.

It was a warm and sunny day and the Guildhall yard rapidly became a very colourful sight with many Pearlies, Mayors, Chelsea Pensioners and other dignitaries in attendance. Following some excellent entertainment, the decorated taxis joined the long procession and were led by the Pearlies around the City to attend a service at St Mary-Le-Bow Church, Cheapside, where the congregation were welcomed by the pealing of the Cockney Bow Bells. This was a wonderful event and it was lovely to see the Pearlies proudly showing off this often forgotten aspect of London's heritage, its pageantry and costume.

The London tradition of the Pearly Kings and Queens began in 1875 and they

# LTFUC AT THE PEARLY HARVEST FESTIVAL PARADE



Ray, Lilian and Chair Sue together with the Pearlies

are still a very active organisation collecting for many London charities.

The LTFUC were delighted to support the good work the Pearlies do to benefit people across the capital and its surrounding areas. Sue Angel and her committee asked *Call Sign* to thank them for all the help and support

they have continually given to the LTFUC over many years.

Larry Golding will be sadly missed, but his good work will be carried on as expertly as ever by Doreen and he will always be remembered with great pride by everyone at the LTFUC.



## LTFUC AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children will be held on Tuesday 6th December 2011 at 7.30pm at the New Park Day Centre, 19 Highbury New Park, Highbury N5. Parking is available at the centre and refreshments will be available.

**ALL DRIVERS ARE MOST WELCOME TO ATTEND**

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## Soon to clear misuse

I would like to bring to your attention a couple of problems we are experiencing in the call centre with some drivers choosing to book into zones when they are not there.

I am not referring to those who see a trip in an outer zone and book straight in when they are not physically in the zone; I'm talking about those drivers who purposely misuse the **STC** button. Controllers are finding more and more drivers accepting a trip from EC2 that goes to the West End for example and within the 15 minutes of dropping off are using the STC to book into EC2.

We all know why this is being done, but in theory it is wrong. Booking into the inner zones requires a driver to be within 15 minutes of the furthest part of the zone. The same applies to booking in when doing a STC.

The STC function was originally brought in to assist drivers in moving up the queue in the zone their trip was going to or into an adjacent zone. Going to the West End and booking into the zone you have just come from (the City) can only be classed as booking in to gain an unfair advantage.

The dispatch system presents to a telephonist how many taxis are booked into the pick-up zone just prior to them inputting the trip

# Call Centre Chat

into the system. This allows a telephonist to confidently say to the caller how long the taxi is likely to be.

Some of our regular account clients have become very knowledgeable in how our system operates and when we have to advise of not being able to allocate them a cab, the first thing they ask is how many cabs are within their area? They are doing this to try and ascertain how long they will have to wait. The most frequently asked question is that if you have vehicles available, why does the driver not want my trip? Is it because it's not going far enough? Do they only want the cream!

It's not easy trying to pacify a client in these circumstances, let alone try explaining to them what the driver is doing – ie being in the West End but booked into the city with not a chance of being able to accept any trips because they are too far away.

I think the problem would not be such a problem if only a very few drivers were doing it. Unfortunately, it's the reverse and we are seeing more and more doing it, which primarily can prevent giving the client the good service they have come to expect. In addition to drivers having to keep rejecting trips in this scenario, we are also seeing a lot more drivers taking a chance and accepting the very good trips. What happens then is they have to offer delays and occasionally that delay is updated two or three times.

While we have always advocated that it is far better to inform a client we have a cab on its way, this way of working is doing nothing more than antagonising the client especially if they are going to a meeting or have a train or

flight to catch.

## And 'As Directed' too...

Another serious problem that is happening all too often is when drivers accept an '**As Directed**' trip only to find that the trip is staying within the same area. A trick used by some is to offer a 20/25 minute delay hoping the client will not accept this and the driver can get a scrub and retain their queue position.

Where it shows up to the controller that it is not a genuine delay is when the client accepts the delay and the system shows the driver arriving within 5 minutes of accepting the trip. The controllers are now checking driver's GPS positions when they offer a delay and those who constantly do this are being put on complaint.

To add insult to injury, some drivers when informed the client does not accept the delay, are clearing the scrub with the amount showing on the meter. That is outrageous and will not be accepted.

Fortunately, I am pleased to say that this is not the service the majority of DaC drivers offer clients and the minority that do it are doing nothing more than encouraging clients to look elsewhere for an alternative supplier. We all know it's tough out there, but please don't try to get one over on other drivers and most certainly, please don't give clients the poor service that can arise from such activities.

**Keith Cain**

**Call Centre Manager**

**Driver Operations Manager**

## Charing Cross Road marshalled taxi rank

A new taxi rank has been appointed in Charing Cross Road. The rank operates between 20:00 and 03:00, 7 days a week and is split into two portions. The first portion is located on the west side of Charing Cross Road, near Bear Street. The second portion acts as a feeder rank and is on the east side of Charing Cross Road. The new taxi rank will be marshalled on Friday and Saturday evenings between 22:00 and 03:00 and will operate as a normal taxi rank, ie the first taxi takes the first passenger and the fares are on the meter. TfL has worked together with the taxi trade and local authority to appoint this new taxi rank and drivers are encouraged to use the rank and support the marshalled rank scheme.

The fixed-fare marshalled taxi rank scheme in Coventry Street has now stopped as this was only being marshalled temporarily whilst Westminster City Council seek long term funding for the scheme.



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# DON'T SCRATCH YOUR EAR!

As we approach the festive season and time of goodwill to all, this might be an appropriate moment to relate a story that came into the Call Sign office recently regarding the alleged use of a mobile phone while driving. It could serve as a timely reminder...

The **Dial-a-Cab** subscriber, whose name and call sign we have but who for obvious reasons asked us to withhold them, was driving down Seymour Place with a passenger on board who was chatting amicably with the driver. He was running late for a meeting with a business colleague at Portman Square.

Suddenly, from behind the taxi a police van blew its two-tone horn and the blue lights went on. Our driver instinctively pulled over to allow the police vehicle to pass thinking it was on a 'shout' when, to the driver's surprise, the police van stopped behind the taxi and both policemen got out and approached the taxi driver claiming they



**Don't use a mobile phone while driving and certainly don't scratch your ear!**

had seen him using his mobile phone while driving. They said they had been travelling north on Seymour Place and had made a 'U' turn to confront the cab driver who was heading south.

"We're 80% sure you were using the phone - or were you just scratching your ear," was the rather sarccy comment that greeted the DaC man's protestations? Subsequent checks on the handset at the roadside proved that no calls had been made recently. At this point, the passenger got out of the cab and explained to the Plod that the driver had not been on the phone and that in fact they were just having a chat. He then handed the dri-

ver a business card with the offer that if he needed him as a witness to just call, before excusing himself from the scene and walking off in the direction of Portman Square.

Meanwhile the two policemen retreated back to their van for a head-to-head discussion before returning to the taxi driver to "give you a warning about using a mobile phone while driving!" Following the lecture, the duo then backtracked towards their vehicle to - as our driver put it - "find another victim?"

"If I had not had that passenger, who turned out to be a real gent of a witness, I'm sure I would have been framed," our subscriber suggested.

So, as we get closer to the festive season, when road safety and law enforcement campaigns reach a peak, it might be wise not to even raise a hand towards an auditory organ to relieve an irritation, let alone pick up a mobile phone to make a call - unless of course you are safely parked off the Queen's highway!

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## LONDON CABBIES FAVOURITE GARAGE ~ TAXI-CAB RENTALS ~

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## A tale of PCNs...

Well, there can't be a day now that goes by without a taxi driver somewhere receiving a PCN through the door. Once upon a time, if you got one you knew you probably deserved it because the authorities often turned a blind eye to show some sympathy towards us due to the job we do. Unfortunately, those days are long gone and in recent months I've had to deal with 4 PCNs.

As things quietened down, I used to take a break in the car park at Hurlingham Retail Park in Carnworth Road, Fulham. That's the one on the right as you go south over Wandsworth Bridge with PC World in. One morning, another DaC driver pulled up alongside and showed me a PCN that he had received from a private parking firm. And guess what? The very next day one popped through my door as well! Over the next 6 months, I received threats that bailiffs were coming around or that I was going to receive a court summons if I didn't pay up. They might even drain my pond and poke me in the eye whilst sticking their tongues out!

Eventually these threats just stopped after I just constantly ignored them, as these tickets can only succeed if you are taken to County Court. They are not like council PCNs.

Then I received one from the highly inept Camden Council, the cabbies friend! I was accused of doing a prohibited U-turn in Southampton Row and was caught on CCTV. Camden sent me the usual threatening letter and photographic evidence. However, when I looked closely, my cab didn't have a chrome grill nor did the cab in the photo have DaC logos. It soon became apparent that it was not my taxi at all! So I wrote and told them what I thought of them...

The next one was from Camden again. I picked up a fare from Wigmore Street to the Royal National Hotel. After heading down Gower Street, I turned left into Keppel Street, intending to use the Malet Street cut-through to Russell Square. However, it was shut without warning, thus I ended up at the top of Malet

Former fireman Richard Potter and life behind the

# POTTER'S WHEEL



Street at the junction of Torrington Place where there are no right turn signs. So I turned left and then did a U-turn. Low and behold, a PCN dropped through the door. I appealed to Camden Council saying that I didn't turn right but they wrote that I hadn't done a full left turn before turning right and that therefore the PCN would stand.

What I find unreal is that you have to appeal to the person who issued the ticket in the first place. The likelihood of them revoking the PCN? Err, approximately nil! After this I appealed to PATAS, the parking arbitration service and received another nice letter from Camden Council reminding me that in the event I were to lose my appeal, the fine would raise from £65 to £130. So I attended PATAS, unlike Camden who didn't show and the Adjudicator, who you have to address as Sir, allowed my appeal - ie I won! Considering I'd done nothing wrong in the first place and had been subjected to intimidating letters from Camden, they should have been forced to pay compensation for my loss of earnings and travel costs.

**In reality they have nothing to lose by**

**sending out the original PCN because it costs them the price of three letters and one hour's work with a chance of doubling their fee. If compensation were allowed, they might think twice about sending out silly PCNs in the first place.**

Lastly, whilst covering a job at 20 Gresham Street, I received yet another PCN. There is simply nowhere legal to park there, so I was a sitting duck right under the camera. Thankfully, this one is being dealt with by DaC Driver Services with the help of Barrie Segal from *AppealNow.com* and that's what I am doing. I believe Barrie deals with all of DaC's parking tickets and is proving to be a great asset to us, as well as reducing the amount of money DaC has to fork out in fines when we are simply just trying to do our job.

## Playing games with the traffic...

Finally, have you ever played the game of: Give me 50 feet of double yellow lines? With the modern technology we have, how I could improve things...

So firstly, how about opposite *Temple*, thus stopping drivers from parking or loading and thereby allowing two lanes to flow on the Embankment? Or perhaps 50 feet of double yellow lines by Cleopatra's kiosk where the tour buses stop and putting their stop on the other side of Hungerford Bridge? How about opposite The Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington High Street heading westbound?

You've got the idea. The game can be expanded to give a traffic light left filter or take away a zebra crossing and put in a pelican crossing. Let's face it, no one in charge seems to have a clue and this may help them!

**Richard Potter (T51)**

## Sitting Comfortably? Then we'll begin!!!

"I'm delighted with the result," **Terry Jackson (E56)** told *Call Sign* referring to the revised rear seating arrangements in his TX1.

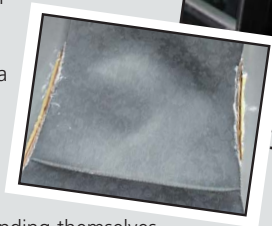
"My old rear seat upholstery was tearing at the seams and rapidly worsened, which was rather embarrassing when fares got in and saw the bright yellow foam beneath the covering," Terry explained. "So I had to do something about it pretty quickly and especially so as the cab is in for overhaul shortly. Also, my garage has told me that the examiner is now looking at such items more closely than previously."

Terry phoned around the usual taxi factors and discovered the cost of a refurbished replacement rear seat was in the region of £100, which for an older cab and/or the more mature driver (sorry Terry!!!) might not be a particularly economical proposition!

"So I enquired about sourcing a decent second-hand seat from a taxi breakers and came up with this perfect match for £40," he said with a grin of satisfaction suddenly spreading across his face. "I discovered that there are several taxi breakers around London - two in the south at London Road, Norbury and Willow Lane, Mitcham, with another one in the east at Forest Road, Hainault."

"There are of course, the specialist upholstery firms who regularly advertise in the trade press, so it shouldn't be a problem for anyone finding themselves in a similar situation to me, although I was very lucky and grateful, that I found a replacement second-hand seat that matched my original upholstery so well and at a price within my budget."

With that, *Call Sign* left the scene with the Dial-a-Cab driver still admiring his newly found comfortable rear passenger seat!



**Terry and the rip in his seat**





Driver Services Nuala Glavin with some FAQs about PCNs...

# DRIVER SERVICES AND PCN's

***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 Services 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@dialcab.co.uk](mailto:nualag@dialcab.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 claim they have not received our first appeal. **Barrie Segal** sends everything by email and has a confirmation to

***I've got a Bailiff's Letter! Will they repossess my cab? 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 CC?***

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

**Nuala Glavin**  
**DaC Driver Services**

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**Dial-a-Cab's** first floor IT unit at Dial-a-Cab House in East Road, under the managership of **John Banks**, has been acknowledged as the taxi trade's most high-tech IT department. But our neighbours are now on the warpath, claiming that the whole **Old Street** area is dowdy, boring and depressing!

But details of a new scheme to turn the Old Street roundabout into an example of ultra-high modernisation have been released. The area is already known as the UK's equivalent to San Francisco's **Silicon Valley** due to the number of high tech companies moving in, yet the 'boring' tag has also been added.

But now plans are afoot to turn the roundabout into a giant interactive billboard that will be controlled by local companies and indeed, the residents! So it won't be a surprise to see 'happy birthday Brian' being illuminated as well as 'Google knows all' – the latter no doubt coming soon when **Google** make the move into their new 10 storey block!

The centre of the roundabout will also be modernised for pedestrians with a new walkway, balconies, offices, bars and as you'd expect from the new Silicon Valley – video

## NEW OLD STREET!

Google to be DaC's new neighbours!



Old Street is the new Silicon Valley

screens set for game-playing as well as those personal birthday messages!

John Banks may have some serious com-

petition. Having said that, *Google* are good... but do they know what DaC drivers like? We didn't think so either. Go get 'em Johnny boy!!

### VACANCY FOR AN ARBITRATOR



There is a vacancy for one DaC subscriber to become an Arbitrator. Should you wish to put your name forward and you meet the minimum criteria of five consecutive year's membership, then please apply in writing expressing your interest, to

be received by me at Dial-a-Cab House no later than first post on Monday 12 December 2011.

A postal ballot will then be conducted at a later date and the candidate with the highest number of votes will be duly appointed.

Candidates wishing to send their CV for publication in *Call Sign* should send it to the Editor either by post or email by Friday 9 December 2011, keeping to a maximum of around 200 words.

If you have any queries regarding this process, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Howard Pears**  
Company Secretary

### Boris wants taxi emissions strategy sponsor!

Transport for London is searching for a sponsor to partner in the creation of a **Cleaner Taxi Fund**. A chosen sponsor would be given high visible exposure to tens of millions of residents within the city with exclusive rights to place their branding on 350 new taxis, as well as having naming rights of the scheme and a joint launch of the scheme.

The fund would help subsidise the replacement of older cabs to new Euro 5 compliant ones as the new 15 year age limit is introduced

Following the implementation of the **Air Quality Strategy**, Mayor Boris Johnson is aiming to reduce air pollution and harmful emissions within the city over a two-year-period.



The Mayor is looking for an anti-emissions sponsor

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Some out there may not believe what we are about to tell you, but we swear that it's true. The last issue of **Call Sign** saw a caption competition using a photo that Board member **Tom Whitbread** found while following his hobby of looking through the London Metropolitan Archives. It was probably dated at the end of the 19th or early 20th century and is of the residents of **Providence Court**, which came off **Stoney Lane**, Houndsditch.

There were 229 entries into the competition, but none of them could have guessed that the photo would actually turn out to be a family picture – albeit of an earlier generation – of Tom's fellow Board member, **Mike Son!** And no one was more shocked than Mike Son! He told **Call Sign**:

"I was looking through the magazine when I came to the page where the photo caption competition was. I stared at it for a moment wondering where I had seen the photo before. Then it suddenly came to me. The people in the photo were some of my relatives! I really couldn't believe it. I had seen the photo many years earlier but it just vanished and is probably at the back of a wardrobe somewhere.

Of course, they were younger in the photo than when I remember seeing them at a much more advanced age – especially Auntie (little) Lily, Uncle (little) Henry and Auntie Katie De Haan. Why were they nicknamed 'little'? Need I say more than we had a big Lily and a long Henry!

As a youngster, I remember Aunt Katie ran a fairground, travelling to many towns. One town in particular was Walthamstow, with the fair setting up close to Hoe Street. I doubt there'd be much room there for a fair nowadays, but back then my dad would take me to the fair and let me help out on one of the stalls – usually the darts stall. I was supposed to look after it while Auntie Katie visited the other fairground stands.

When she returned, my treat was to throw the darts to see if I could hit the envelopes placed on a wooden floor within the stall. Most times there were three penny piece coins inside, but some contained a half-crown. Whether I hit the target or not, Auntie Katie always made sure I 'won' the half-crown!

I recall them being wonderful, no-nonsense characters – very tough but they always cherished the family and were great to be with.

Seeing the photo in **Call Sign** and then writing this piece has brought back many lost memories of visiting the tenements with my father on a Sunday and smelling the aroma of chicken soup.

You may wonder what the thing at the back of the scene is? Well it's a costermonger's stall.

We take for granted all the amenities and advantages we have now, but in those difficult times it must have been a day-to-day struggle just to survive.

It would be interesting to know what memories others may have from those distant days."

# It's a small world... Ask Mike Son!



Providence Place 1900's

Mike Son's family - discovered via an archive photo

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"He seemed to come out of nowhere, right across the front of my cab," **Stuart Waterman (C36)** told *Call Sign*, referring to the pedal cyclist who collided with the sharp end of his taxi.

"I came round Hyde Park Corner and turned left into Grosvenor Crescent before positioning myself on the crown of the road to turn right into Grosvenor Crescent Mews," Stuart explained. "Suddenly a pedal cyclist appeared from behind the scaffolding of the construction site on the north side of the Crescent, darted between the waiting traffic in his haste to get across the road, appeared to lose his balance and crashed into the radiator grille of my cab! I had to brake really sharply to avoid running him over, however one of the pedals from his cycle rammed into the plastic central section of the taxi grille and embedded itself in the vertical struts, smashing several of them beyond repair."

Reddening with pent-up annoyance at the thought, Stuart continued his story.

"The cyclist stood there cursing me while struggling to dislodge his cycle pedal, causing even more damage to the grille as he pulled and twisted his cycle while trying to release the errant pedal," Stuart said pointing toward the cabs' front end.

"How should I put this in a family magazine? Well, let's just say we exchanged words and I left him in no doubt of what I thought of irresponsible cyclists with his attitude. But I

## The DaC driver and an everyday story of cyclists

# GRILLED!



Stuart and new grille

could see I was not going to get very far by way of making him pay for the damage *he* had caused and it became pointless arguing, so I decided to wipe my mouth and sort it out myself."

As Stuart continued his story, his face began to steadily redden with anger as he recalled the incident.

"It really is annoying that we have numbers and identification on ourselves by way of our Badges and on the cab, yet a pedal cyclist can just take to the streets without any form of ID or public liability insurance and wobble around without a care! True, not all of them

are suicidal, but it is more than just the odd one that causes trouble," Stuart opined.

"I have since learned that it could be possible to claim under their household insurance policy, but that assumes you can confirm their personal details, assumes they own a property and assumes they don't just cycle away through the traffic!" Stuart grinned at the thought.

"If they actually waited to exchange those details but were rent-payers rather than owners, you're unlikely to get anywhere. Maybe someone out there in *Call Sign* land knows the answer," he said with a sigh that suggested he didn't think that to be very likely.

"I made enquiries about a replacement silver coloured grille like the original, but they are around £130. However, I went back to my garage - **Pool Motors** in Hornsey - and they very kindly sourced a second-hand one in good condition and also fitted it for me for a fraction of the cost of a new one. Unfortunately it is a plain black one, but I'm still delighted it turned out as right as it could be in the end..."

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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 July 1994 with DaC then-Treasurer Keith Cain looking at the death of founder Board member and long-time Society Treasurer, Frank Duncan...

From *Call Sign* July 1994...

**Frank Duncan: The death of a founder Board member...**



It was a sad moment this week when I heard the news that **Frank Duncan** - founder member and former Treasurer of this Society - had died.

Many will be aware of the dedication Frank gave to the Society and although he stood down from his position in 1990, he always took an interest in ODRTS whenever he could.

My recent and fondest memories of Frank were long before I became a member of the Board. He always had a listening ear and was prepared to offer advice as and when needed. When the opportunity came for me to be employed as one of the Suburban Sales Representatives, Frank and I had many a long discussion of the type of business out there and how to generate it. When I was first appointed as Treasurer, he again volunteered advice and history about Dial-a-Cab. This helped me tremendously in fulfilling my duties.

Frank also had very strong views on the Government's decision to licence minicabs and at our fortieth Anniversary Celebration at the Guildhall, he had to be restrained from having a one-to-one with the Society's guest at the celebration and the Minister behind the minicab green paper, Steve Norris.

Frank will be sadly missed by all of us at Brunswick House and I would like to express my deepest sympathy to his family. Frank will never be forgotten.

Keith Cain  
DaC Treasurer

Flashback  
1994

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## Congestion? Emissions? Or both...???

I am totally confused as to what the main objective is as the end target of the whole policy - without the obvious premise of money. There is no doubt that something has to be done about the congestion and air quality in London, but for every alleged beneficial proposal endorsed and passed by the ruling bodies, it is then those same bodies who, along with other larger companies, then seem to

# LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

with Tom Quigley (Y33)

endorse a different strategy to oppose their first ideal.

Take the **Congestion Charge**; originally introduced I thought to reduce the number of vehicles entering central London, giving the benefits of easier movement of traffic, thereby giving the added bonus of decreasing harmful traffic emissions, better air quality, safer pedestrian and cycling routes.

In reality, this has been surpassed by those same ruling bodies to exempt in the region of 50 different vehicles from the congestion charge. There are even EEC incentives for specialist vehicle manufacturers to enter this market. This number now, although more emission friendly, acts as an increase to congestion.

To put it in real and basic terms - and I will get very basic to highlight the point - if at a set of traffic lights there are 5 of these vehicles, a Donkey, a bus, then a new emission friendly taxi, you will have less emissions (donkey

aside) but still have congestion. Remember, people are paying a Congestion Charge and not an Emission Charge.

To drive home the point, if I go to our bathroom and there is a blockage in the WC, we have both congestion and an emission problem. However, if I clear the blockage and then use the WC but not open the window, my wife will tell you there is an emission problem! But if I open the window but do not flush the WC, we end up back where we started.

If the ruling bodies cannot get this concept, then I think we are all in the proverbials...

## TV ads... I need an ology!

Long gone are the days of a simple advert with the glorious **Maureen Lipman** (Queen of the Taxi trade) as Beattie, dotingly in love with her grandson getting an ology.

Nowadays we cannot use real chimpanzees playing pianos, although apparently cats and dogs are ok - look, I don't make the rules! With the sophistication of the *Guinness* adverts, to the incredible success of the meercats (animated, not real) campaign to compare the market.com, to the two that really puzzle me.

The first is the ongoing saga of the BT family (really just an update of the Nescafe ads featuring Sharon Maughan and Anthony Head). This one has left me not sure if I need the products available or the lifestyle and workload to afford them! It stars the excellent Kris Marshall and gorgeous Esther Hall as Adam and Jane, plus Jane's two children from a previous relationship.

It began with Adam, a single man with a nice flat and probably all the comforts and freedom (well jell) that goes with it. He meets Jane and before you know it has had to take a different job, move to a house while all the time upgrading his BT package to unlimited calls, broadband, laptops in his new family's bedrooms and of course obviously increasing his outgoings.

Further along the story, he is no longer living at home permanently but having to work away to keep everyone in these home comforts. A marriage plus child is on the way, the broadband is not fast enough so he now has the infinity package - probably to run alongside the infinite hours he is now working!

Next up is The M&S campaign. They have switched from Twiggy and Mylene Klass and now have the delectable Charlotte Weston getting dressed to the tune *Me and Mrs Jones*. All this while her husband is waiting downstairs in the bar area of an hotel. It's not really what she wears or what she tries on before her final choice, I just sit there thinking how much clothing has she packed to go away? No sign of the size of the suitcase or even an inkling as to excess baggage charges!

Believe me; I don't think any 'Taxi WAG' needs to be encouraged to pack more...

Tom Quigley (Y33)

TDYCF Chairman Russell Poluck (T55) writes about the...

## *Taxi Driver of the Year Dinner and Dance*



Every year people ask me how the TDYCF was started. Well in 1972, a group of taxi drivers decided to start the charity after one of their friends, Joe Polski, passed away. This is also the only charity that supports five other taxi charities.

Over the years, we have seen the licenced cab trade grow and so has the Charity. Although we do not run outings, for over 38 years we have distributed in excess of £1million to charities, hospitals, private homes and five of the taxi charities.

Our yearly aim is to raise a substantial amount of money at our annual dinner and dance - held this year on 3rd December 2011 at the Holiday Inn Kensington. The dinner dance is open to everyone, you do not have to be a taxi driver or even involved in the trade. To help us raise money, we sell raffle tickets at the dinner and at other various outlets. We also have tombola and an auction at the dinner.

The more money collected, the more we can hand over to the five taxi charities that we support and who have always supported us at our annual event. They are the London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children, the London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled, the Albany Taxi Charity Fund for Children with Special Needs, the East London Cabbies charity and the Southend Fund for Underprivileged Children.

**To support these charities, you will receive a reception drink, a 4 course meal, 1/2 bottle of wine, tea /coffee and of course dancing to a live band. The cost is just £62.50 per person.**

**If you would like to buy dinner dance tickets or help sell raffle tickets please, please phone us on 020 8952 1357.**

You will have a great time while at the same time help those less fortunate than ourselves.

Thank you...

**Russell Poluck MBE (T55)**

**Hon Chairman TDY Charity Fund**

*Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves*

**"Yes, it's quite a milestone, not only for me, but also for Mann & Overton – sorry, I mean the London Taxi Company of course!" Martin Freeborn (C67) was grinning proudly while looking at the recent purchase of his 40th consecutive new taxi.**

"My first new cab was a 'J' registered *Fairway* back in 1971. I actually ran that for longer than 12 months, but then somebody made me an offer I found hard to refuse and I've bought new vehicles annually ever since - and always through M&O - oops, I mean the LTC. Old habits die hard!"

Still beaming, Martin continued: "Over the years I have built up a small circle of regulars to sell my cabs on to. The buyers know they are getting an almost-new taxi with low mileage and full service history together with the remainder of the manufacturers' warranty, while I have the benefit of keeping up with advances in technology."

Soon after LTC's specialist *Dial-a-Cab* salesman, Peter Kendrick, officially handed Martin the keys to his new *TX4* (see cover pic), LTC's General Manager Mark Brown came over to check all was well and to personally thank Martin for his loyalty to the dealership over so many years.

He told Martin and **Call Sign**: "I was speaking to Andrew Overton on the telephone yesterday and told him of your fortieth new taxi being collected today. He sends his congratulations and would have dearly liked to have been here, but said that travelling back from New Zealand - even for an occasion such as this - was just not possible! However, he did think you were almost certainly our most loyal and consistent individual customer and asked me to thank you for your continued support to the company and the London Taxi Company brand."

Just when Martin thought the festivities were coming to a close, Matt Garrett, LTC's new General Sales Manager came over and offered his thanks to Martin for the DaC driver's continued allegiance to their taxis and the iconic *TX4* marque over so many years, while to celebrate the achievement, Mark Brown presented Martin with dinner on the LTC at a London restaurant.

Just before he drove off, **Call Sign** asked Martin if there would be a 41st new taxi in 2012? "Never say never," was the snappy reply as he headed down the road with no sign of the legendary puff of smoke!

# DaC's Martin buys 40th new cab!



Martin gets his new TX4 - he may have to change the reg number!



Mark Brown presents Martin with dinner for two as a celebration of buying 40 new taxis in 40 years

## Barking Physical Therapy Centre

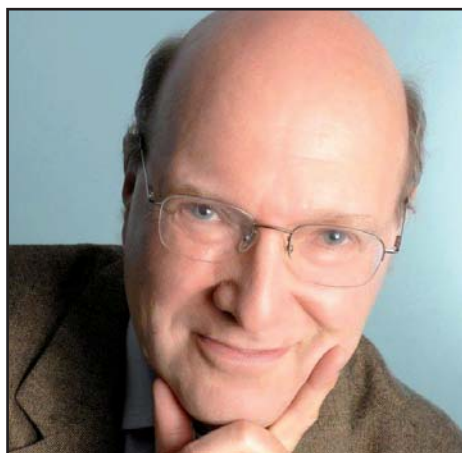
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Several years ago, *Call Sign* was contacted by **Barrie Segal**, quite probably the best known *Penalty Charge Notice* expert in the country. However, the call was nothing to do with PCNs; it was to express gratitude for the years of usage his late mother had seen with her Westminster *TaxiCard*.

At the time – indeed like now – Westminster was having problems subsidising the card and Mr Segal told this magazine that if we ever needed his assistance, he would be delighted to help. We thanked him for his offer and asked whether he would be prepared to write an article for *Call Sign* on what to do if you receive a PCN? That led to several further articles before **Dial-a-Cab** – who were spending a fortune on paying for driver's PCNs given whilst on account trips – decided to see whether Barrie could help cut our annual PCN

At the Adjudication service with 46 appeals...

## BARRIE SAVES DAC £5590 IN ONE DAY!

cost. He now deals with all our PCNs barring the indefensible ones such as stopping on zigzags or on a public footpath. Along the way, he has turned *Driver Service's Manager Nuala Glavin* into a parking expert as well.

**Over the past few years, many Dial-a-Cab drivers have been through the PCN independent Adjudication process at the Angel – the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service known as PATAS. Some have won and others lost, but on one recent Saturday Barrie Segal marched up to the Angel with no less than 46 DaC PCN appeals stuffed into his bulging briefcase. He had to bear in mind that the service finishes at 2pm on Saturdays.**

Whilst the PCNs were from several different boroughs, the majority were from Westminster with each failure ready to cost DaC £130 as the "pay half" offer has gone once you go to arbitration.

Barrie was greeted like a lost friend when the Arbitrator called out a cheery "good morning Mr Segal" as the parking tickets came out one at a time. Barrie knows the procedure backwards and probably knows as well as the

Adjudicator whether an appeal is going well – as indeed 43 of the 46 did, all reaching successful outcomes and saving this Society a whopping £5,590 for the day!

Of the three lost PCNs, one was always going to be a no-win because it was for parking on the public footway in Brick Lane, whereas the other two were not proceeded with by Barrie because he could see that both were what he referred to as 50 – 50s and whereas they may possibly have succeeded, had they not done so would have set precedents in favour of the boroughs that could have gone against us at future Adjudication appeals.

"Yes, it was a fairly successful day," a modest Barrie told *Call Sign* afterwards, leaving that £5,590 safely tucked up in DaC's bank balance, whereas just a paltry £390 went back to the boroughs!

**If you need some assistance with a non-DaC PCN, then go to Barrie's website. He is the founder of [www.appealnow.com](http://www.appealnow.com) where you can get assistance in formulating your appeal to give you a much better chance of success...**

Taxi Trade Promotions Limited...

## Olympic opportunities for the Taxi trade!

**Taxi Trade Promotions Limited has secured a contract to recruit and supply drivers to a very prestigious official hospitality provider for the Olympic Games in 2012.**

All the work will be pre-allocated and unlike other driving jobs, will not be voluntary. Instead drivers will receive a generous remuneration package.

**Successful applicants will drive BMWs, be supplied with a staff uniform (yours to keep), receive staff event tickets and gain some great memories and experiences.**

This opportunity comes at no cost to the driver, other than the require-

ment to attend two short interviews and to receive specific training in 2012 as the Games draw near.

Due to demand, only applications submitted via e-mail to this address will be considered:

**[drivers2012@taxitrade promotions.co.uk](mailto:drivers2012@taxitrade promotions.co.uk)**

**The only people eligible to apply are Green and Yellow Badge holders and bona-fide Knowledge students at an advanced stage in their training. Smart and courteous drivers will be preferred.**

## September sales boost for London Taxi Company

The London Taxi Company saw the trade vote with its feet last month with the Brewery Road dealership experiencing a 27% increase in sales, month on month.

The company stopped producing Euro IV TX4s at the end of September and the Midland's manufacturer expects to see the trend continue with savvy drivers in the market for a new TX4 taking advantage of the £3,000 cost saving before the launch of Euro 5.

General Manager, Mark Brown said: "We're obviously over the moon to start to see the increase in sales, especially because our used taxi sales reflect this increase too. We are keen for drivers to take advantage of the £3,000 cost saving with the Euro IV TX4, however, now that we have stopped production it starts to become a case of 'first come, first served' on finite and diminishing stock.

"We are determined to support the trade through the changes and challenges of 2012. Whether they are in the market because of the MAQS or simply want to ensure that they have the best vehicle possible in the run-up for the Olympics.

"This is our best value TX range and lowest priced Automatic for more than a decade. We've reviewed our part-exchange rates to ensure they are strong. Like our current trade advert says: 'It costs nothing to find out what your taxi is worth... in fact it could cost you thousands not to'. Three thousand to be exact!"

For more information on the Euro IV TX4, available on the road from £29,995, visit any of the London Taxi Company's dealerships in London, Coventry, Manchester, Leeds, Edinburgh or Glasgow, or alternatively visit **[www.london-taxis.co.uk](http://www.london-taxis.co.uk)** and request your FREE valuation online.



**The Style and Elegance TX4 models swelled the LTC market share in September by 27%**

Dial-a-Cab driver Peter Straiton (F31) took this photo on his way into town recently and just to prove that his sense of humour is as outrageous as that of most DaC drivers, he offered it up for a caption competition! All *Call Sign* has done is to add the one hundred smackers as the prize!

So if you would like the chance of winning a very handy £100, send in your caption either via email to [callsignmag@aol.com](mailto:callsignmag@aol.com) or post it to Call Sign, Dial-a-Cab House, 39/47 East Rod, London N1 6AH or you can just leave it with security in Driver's Reception clearly marked Call Sign caption contest.

For those of you that might have trouble reading the sign on the door of the vehicle being towed, it says Southwark Council Parking Enforcement!

Entries must be in by Monday 14 November and the Editor's decision is final...

## Last month's winner

Last month's competition drew 229 entries and many of them were very amusing. The final two came down to Jim Rainbird (T25) and Brian Marcantonio (R73). However, the most amusing entry that also displayed a degree of topicality

## £100 up for grabs in this month's... CALL SIGN CAPTION COMPETITION



came from Jim Rainbird. His caption to the photo that you can see again in the article *it's a small world – ask Mike Son* was: "We don't care if this is the Olympic

Route Network, we're not moving!"

Jim wins a handy £100. Try this month's competition (above) and you could win the next £100...

# LONDON ACCORDING TO DAVE

## Olympic Rat Racing!

On your marks, get set and wait for the click. You've done all the training, you know the rules; it's every man for himself. One false start and you're out.

No, this is not the 100 metre final at Stratford's Olympic Park Stadium; this is Green Park Station's rush-hour rat racing. The click you are waiting for is not the click of the starting gun, but the click of the tube train doors as they open for you to squeeze in. You have positioned yourself as well as you can in the hope of the doors opening in front of you.

You rush forward, avoiding eye contact and elbow your way in. You've made it! Once on board, a voice bellows out through the tannoy: "Move along inside." The voice booms out a second time: "Move along inside. This train is going nowhere until the doors are properly closed." Finally we move off.

It's hot and sweaty, no air-con and hardly an inch to spare. This is the normal scenario for many passengers going to and from work across the capital. Many feel quite sick and ill in the process. Where's the Department of Health when you need them? Well, *they* are alive and well and warmly ensconced in chauffeur driven limousines, snug as bugs in rugs and planning the next phase of cuts as they are ferried across the capital - along with other government departments!

This service is costing taxpayers - while they are packed like sardines in tube train carriages - over £8million. The government, clearly embarrassed by Ministers swanning around in limousines, has said the cost will be cut and has urged more use to be made of public transport.

Londoners have, of course, a good choice of transport as well as the tube. There are the unregulated rickshaws, Boris's bikes, buses and taxis. These choices should be informed ones as to their safety and this is not being done. There are no two ways about it. Riding a bicycle in London is dangerous. Ask many cyclists - and my son is one and also a fan of Boris bikes - what they think of cycle lanes. You will be told they are Mickey Mouse and not fit for purpose compared to those in countries like the Netherlands.

The greatest danger to cyclists is being 'doored' - parked vehicles opening their doors causing the cyclist to swerve into oncoming vehicles. There are also a number of *hotspots* where cyclists are vulnerable to getting crushed.



Speaking of *hotspots*, next year there will be a sixty mile hotspot across London. The Olympic Lanes cost approximately £25million to make sure the offi-

cials, athletes and VIPs get to the games on time. These lanes will penalise other road users, including London taxis. Is this the new frugality? You just keep on spending?

Some of the luxury car fleet will be stored in Hyde Park next to Park Lane, conveniently close to London's crème de la crème hotels such as the Four Seasons and Metropolitan, where many of the VIPs and FIFA officials will stay. I expect some of the fleet will be bullet-proof, with anti-missile devices to protect dodgy Russian VIPs on Interpol's hit-list!

There is, however, one form of transport you can rely on, with the best safety record. You can sit back in comfort, relax, stretch your legs, make a phone call or watch the world go by or, if you are desperate, put the world to rights with the driver - London's world-famous and best in the world taxis.

But we never learn...

David Heath (ex-W27)

## SFM Security Ltd

The Metropolitan Police have informed Transport for London that as of 4 September 2011, SFM Security Ltd had been accredited by the police and given powers to control and direct traffic and require the name and address of people in connection with Road Traffic Accidents.

Staff from SFM Security Ltd will be used at events where there are agreed Traffic Management Plans in place (eg the St Patrick's Day Parade), will be wearing high-visibility clothing and will have the necessary badges and accreditation displayed.

The badges will be credit card sized and similar to those worn by Security Industry Authority (SIA) accredited staff. The high-visibility clothing will be similar to that shown in the photo but with *Traffic Marshal* on it.



The jackets will say *Traffic Marshal*



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

## CALL SIGN EN LA BELLE FRANCE

### GetTaxi revolution???

I've been scanning through the trade papers, including last month's *Call Sign* editorial and been interested in all the talk about these new Apps, plus of course *GetTaxi*. Oh yes, I've heard Tom Baker on LBC booming out across the capital telling London businesses to sign up to the new way of ordering taxis and to 'Join the *GetTaxi* Revolution'.

Don't get me wrong - anything that will win work back from minicabs has got to be a good thing, but after talking to a mate of mine recently I'm not really sure if they have got people involved who are savvy enough about the cab trade!

My mole (Tony) was telling me that he had been signed up for 6 weeks and only did 5 jobs! I began to get interested and keen on learning all about the dispatch unit that was in his bag. He took it out, switched it on and showed me how it worked. Now I know that some of you will be familiar with this, so I will spare the detail.

Tony explained that he recently phoned their drivers services to wonder why he wasn't getting jobs - a female told him that she would check on his usual positioning and work pattern and then report back to him in an hour - 9 days later he was still wondering about her time-keeping.

He also told me that he was called up and asked to cover a job in Boundary Road E2. He was in Blackfriars Rd at 11.25 and the pick-up was at 11.55. The desperate despatcher suggested that he could knock off a couple of jobs on the way to Boundary Road! Are you sure? In 30 minutes! And what if they went the wrong way?

Then I saw something for my own eyes that convinced me this lot are well short of the right staff needed. Tony's unit offered him a job in Bedford Row WC1 in (wait for it) Camden Town! Now I know that Bedford Row lies within the huge borough of Camden, but Camden Town is stretching it! Clearly these people, a bit like BBC traffic announcers, haven't got a clue where places are in London!

### The perils of guiding...

Congratulations to DaC subscriber **John Dixon (B67)** for passing his *City of London Guide Course*. A few more cabbies should have a go at Guiding - you all know where you are going in London, so why not get to know a bit more about the history and traditions of your workplace?

I do a lot of *walks* in and around the capital and these are always very enjoyable and rewarding. Punters ask you questions and you do your level best to answer them.

I recently had a group of people under the Charles 1 statue on Charing Cross giving it large about the civil war, the restoration of the monarch and the usual about all distances from London being measured from this spot.



I asked if anyone had any questions and a middle-aged lady put her arm up. "Oh I say, don't you think the horse has the most beautiful balls?" Nope... I don't have ALL the answers!

### Where's Woody?

This flowing bronze scroll by Edwin Russell in 1970 is a memorial to the Suffragettes... but where was Woody when he spotted it? Answer on page 29.



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

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# COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

*Hello Ladies and Gents,*

## GPS or zonal dispatching???

The Editor has asked me to answer a letter from **Pat Keefe (G01)** and due to its' length, he felt it would be better to incorporate it within this article rather than on the *Mailsbot* page. Pat, a long standing member of over thirty years, asks the question: ***To GPS or not to GPS, that is the question?***

Part of his argument for a review of the current system is due to the results of the last complaints hearing, which lists a number of members falsely booking into zones or booking in to incorrect zones, in both cases to gain advantage over their fellow members. Pat feels this problem could be alleviated if GPS was used to dispatch trips. If - and it is a big if - the nearest taxi to a pick up address or the point taxi on the rank was offered a particular trip, Pat's point would be perfectly true, but signal strength and satellite positioning regularly offers or allocates the trip to a taxi much further away from the pick-up location because the cab's signal is that much stronger. Furthermore on some occasions a single trip offer can be wrongly doubled and offered to more than one taxi. The unlucky driver will not only lose the trip but may also be booked-off the system when the scrub is eventually cleared.

As I have mentioned previously, in a perfect world offering work to the nearest driver would be ideal. However, London is far from perfect with its bizarre one-way systems, roadworks and traffic, therefore surely offering a driver the choice and flexibility of a sizeable area they can reach within 15 minutes is better than limiting them to work based on their GPS position. And surely being able to trust them to be honest is in my opinion what Dial-a-Cab is all about.

As a Board of Management, we have continuously discussed different ways of dispatching, listened to many members and still consider the zonal system to be the fairest way of dispatching. Nothing is perfect, but even in a quiet period, *queue position one* will ninety-nine per cent of the time offer you a trip whereas drivers on a GPS system may work all day and not see an offer on their screens - and that is a fact, you only have to ask ex RTG and ComCab members. Our system is tried and tested over many years and still is in my opinion the fairest way of trip allocation.

Any system is open to abuse but I truly believe that it is only the small minority of drivers that give the rest of us a bad name and lessening one problem will, in my opinion, just lead to another. The system will always need to be monitored and drivers who violate the rules will always look for new ways to cheat the system, but they will be caught and dealt with in the appropriate manner and rightly so, sometimes by the Compliance Office and other more serious complaints judged by a committee at a complaints hearing.

**As an experienced member who has sat on the complaints panel, I am sure Pat will agree that most complaints are best judged**



**by your fellow peers. Society members expect wrongdoers to be dealt with.**

Pat also mentioned the imminent introduction of the new GPRS based terminal and it is worth mentioning that although we are replacing the hardware, the software is still relatively the same to begin with. GPS dispatch is a rewrite of not just the terminal software, but also of the V6 dispatch system. That makes it a much bigger project than just replacing the ter-

минаl and the additional cost to the Society would run into considerable sums of money.

The Board would never say never and will be replacing the dispatch system in a few years' time. This is more likely to be part of a continuing project that could be further discussed.

As a matter of interest, I have spoken to Pat on numerous occasions and I am sure he remembers asking me to check his GPS co-ordinates in the Canary Wharf area because he was getting slightly incorrect readings due to the high rise buildings and bouncing signals from the satellite. Pat, I rest my case...

### Choosing the route

Finally, it is advisable in these days of atrocious traffic conditions to give clients the opportunity of choosing their desired route at the start of the journey. Most of the time they will trust and benefit from your judgment, but from my experience it is always worth giving passengers the option - especially when clients are on meeting deadlines and mindful of cost.

*Be very lucky and drive safely...*

**Allan Evans**

**DaC Compliance Officer**

## Preferential rates for legal services

**While helping LTFUC's underprivileged children...!**



Legal firm **Davenport Lyons**, who are based in Old Burlington Street, have been in existence for over 75 years and are accepted as one of the most successful firms of its kind. They are now offering their services to **Dial-a-Cab** drivers - and indeed the licensed taxi trade as a whole if they happen to read **Call Sign**! But this is a legal service with something of a difference. Davenport Lyons provide bespoke legal solutions service delivered by their market-leading lawyers who understand the challenges that clients - including the world's finest taxi driving fleet - face.

**But now they have come up with an idea that will provide you with the best possible**

**help in your time of legal assistance, while at the same time helping the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children because every fee they receive from a taxi driver client will see 10% donated to the LTFUC! And those fees will be preferential rates and agreed beforehand, so there is no question of Davenport Lyons just adding that 10% to your cost. The 10% will come from the company's profit.**

**Among the services offered are:**

**WILLS • POWERS OF ATTORNEY • TAX ADVICE  
CONVEYANCING • FAMILY & MATRIMONIAL ISSUES •  
TRUST ADVICE • BUSINESS ADVICE • CODICILS**

**If you need any of the above, then ask for Nick Hall on 020 7468 1623. His speciality is wills, inheritance tax planning and the above, but if you are looking for something else he'll be happy to find the right person for you**

**If you have always used the same solicitors and are happy with them, that's great! But if you are looking for expert legal assistance and want to help a taxi trade charity at the same time, then contact Nick Hall on 020 7468 1623...**



# AN EVENING OF MUSIC...



Cabbie Christopher Fulkerson will have his own composition premiered at the Gala



The London Charity Orchestra

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

## Kupkake's Korner



### Fairway to Heaven

There's a cabby who's sure  
that his new TX4  
will earn him even more...  
so he's sending his Fairway to Heaven.

It had its first plate  
in 1988  
now it's passed its sell-by date...  
so he's sending that Fairway to Heaven.

He signs the H.P. deal  
sees the payments are for real  
that the meter has a seal...  
sending his old Fairway to Heaven.

He drives out from the lot  
feeling pleased with what he's got  
and a quick glance at the spot...  
where awaits his Fairway for Heaven.

Before he's trapped his first fare  
his old cab's no longer there  
a fitter's taken it to where...  
they send all the Fairways to Heaven...

**Copyright Kupkake 2011**

**Supported by Dial-a-Cab with much of the evening being organised by Mike Son, the London Charity Orchestra and New London Children's Choir invite you to join them for an evening of classic favourites in aid of the London Taxidivers Fund for Underprivileged Children.**

The evening will feature rousing tunes from stage and screen as well as some favourite Christmas carols. There will also be opportunity for the audience to raise the rafters with song!

**This is a concert to bring your family and friends to, and of course it's all in aid of a great cause – the ITFUC.**

Programme highlights include *Berlioz* wonderful Roman Carnival, the magic of *Tchaikovsky's* Capriccio Italien, *Vivaldi's* Gloria; *Monti's* Tomorrow shall be my dancing day; *Souza's* Liberty Bell; *Elmer Bernstein's* The Magnificent Seven and *Eric Coates'* march from The Dambusters.

*In a special piece, Christopher Fulkerson, who drives a taxi in San Francisco and wrote an article for Call Sign at the beginning of the year, mentioned to Mike Son that he writes music and as a result Mike invited Christopher to send some of his music for the concert. The offer was accepted and it will have its premiere at the concert, courtesy of the London Charity Orchestra.*

**A Gala Festival of Music will be held at the magnificent St John's at Smith Square, Westminster. It takes place on 13th December 2011, beginning at 7.30pm ending approx 10pm.**

**Tickets are £25 (£15 for concessions).**

**Box Office is on 020 7222 1061 or book online: [boxoffice@sjss.org.uk](mailto:boxoffice@sjss.org.uk).**

## NEW £50 NOTE

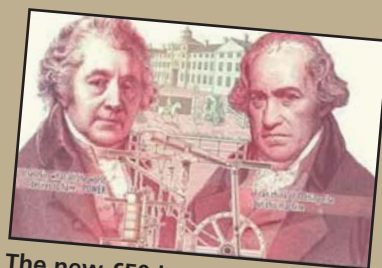
The Bank of England is introducing a new-style £50 note into circulation. The key points regarding the new note are:

The new-style £50 note featuring Matthew Boulton and James Watt - renowned 18th century business partnership - will enter circulation on Wednesday 2 November 2011. As from that date, the new-style £50 note will co-circulate with the current £50 note featuring Sir John Houblon, until further notice.

The banknote will be the second in the *Series F* family, which began with the introduction of the Adam Smith £20 note in 2007. It will be the first time two portraits have appeared together on the reverse of a Bank of England banknote.

A range of new and enhanced security features have been incorporated into the design of the Boulton and Watt £50 banknote. Full details of these will be revealed when the new banknote is introduced into circulation.

This banknote will be the first in circulation to be signed by Chris Salmon, who was appointed as the Bank's Executive Director - Banking Services and Chief Cashier in April 2011.



**The new £50 has a new picture**

**Dial-a-Cab** driver **Jon Robinson (E88)** likes speed and even made the pages of *Call Sign* a few months back when he went motorcycle racing at Brands Hatch. But he obviously likes watching speed as well as being involved and recently told us about a program he had seen on Channel 5 - *Ultimate Police Interceptors*.

The program is about the Essex police as they chase suspects in their high powered police cars and even one helicopter chasing an assortment of miscreants, thieves and just very silly people!

**Jon takes up the story...**

"The *Ultimate Police Interceptors* received a call that a silver *Toyota Aventis* with four men had been seen loading a flat screen TV into the car boot following a suspected burglary in the Ongar area. The program showed the police tracking the *Aventis* onto the M11 southbound as it headed towards London. The police then used five squad cars to sandwich the *Aventis* in and cleverly got it to stop on the hard shoulder while other traffic was held up behind.

They opened the boot and found a 42inch flat screen TV, an engagement ring and what police described as burglar equipment - screwdrivers and gloves. The four men were handcuffed and arrested, but none of the men spoke English. One police officer raised a laugh when he asked a suspect if he knew it was illegal to break into someone's property and steal their

## How PH get a flat screen telly???



**Jon Robinson: "Did burglars use their own minicab to get away!"**

belongings! The suspect shrugged in an "I don't understand English" mode.

**In court they were found guilty and each received four months imprisonment. At no time was there any mention of the car being stolen, so viewers were left to assume that it belonged to one of the four men.**

So can you guess what comes next? What was it that was stuck in the top left corner of the rear window? Yep, right first time... a nice little PCO - sorry I mean LTPH - licensed private hire sticker! So it appears that a minicab driver was using his own London minicab in Essex to commit a crime! No doubt he had a full CRB check?

Make that up? Naaahh! No one would believe you if you did! Perhaps I should contemplate going mini-cabbing as my telly is a few years old now!"

**Soon after this case, Essex police announced Operation Bright Shadow, where known burglars will be tailed for 7 days to see whether they lead the police to any person or persons they might not have known about previously...**

## Remembrance Sunday

**Sunday 13 November...**

As with every November, our thoughts turn to Armistice Day - Remembrance Sunday - and to those who gave their lives so that we could live in peace. We also remember those service men and women who today are serving the British people abroad and those recovering at home due to the consequences of combat.

As the Allies made their successful landing onto the beaches of Normandy and were pushing forward, it was decided to send in an airborne assault over Holland nicknamed **Operation Market Garden**. Its purpose was to capture as many bridges as possible in Holland, thus paving the way for advancing troops to get into Germany and Berlin. It took place from 17th to 25th September 1944 and was the largest airborne operation of WW2.

Some 35,000 soldiers were sent in, either by glider or parachute. These men travelled along **Hells Highway**, which eventually led to Arnhem to become known as a **bridge too far**. Whilst capturing a number of bridges and pushing back German lines, this all came at a huge cost.

**Valkenwaard, near Eindhoven, was the first town in Holland to be liberated by the Allied troops. On the edge of town there is a war cemetery containing the graves of 216 British servicemen. Lieutenant George William Ashmore, aged 26 of The Queen's Own West Kent Regiment; Private Herbert Eric Selig aged 19 of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and Lance Corporal Michael Joseph Delaney of an unknown age from the Irish Guards to name just three, never made it home. Lest we forget.**

The Royal British Legion helps ex-servicemen and women in various ways. For some, the war continues long after they leave active service. Please show your support.

**At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them...**



**Operation Market Garden**

**Richard Potter (T51)**

### Taxi driver's Olympic handbook

Transport for London (TfL) and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) are developing a comprehensive and tailored Olympic and Paralympic Games information handbook for the capital's taxi (and private hire) drivers. It will provide London's cabbies with everything they need to know about the Games, including maps, details of all venues, events and pick up points. It will also include information on dates for key events throughout the 2012 Games as well as expected demand at major stations and other areas which are going to be busy hosting events in the run up to, and after, the Games. The handbooks are expected to be issued in the spring and will also be available for download from the Transport for London website.

A great deal of general information about the 2012 Games, the areas likely to be affected and the Olympic Route Network is

already available on the TfL website, which is useful for everyone in London including taxi drivers. The website will continue to be updated over the coming months as more information becomes available.

TfL and the ODA have also been working closely with the Taxi trade to help them prepare for the Games since September 2009. Later this month, TfL will begin hosting monthly meetings with taxi trade representatives to explore how to make the most of the opportunities the Games represent, resolve any potential problems and to provide updates and information for cabbies.

John Mason, Director of Taxi and Private Hire, said: "London's taxi and private hire trades will have a very important role to play in the summer of 2012. These handbooks will ensure that drivers (and operators) are able to make the most of what the 2012 Games has to offer. We are keen to work with drivers in putting this handbook together and I encourage them to contact LTPH with comments and suggestions to ensure the information is as practical and relevant to their fellow drivers as possible."





## 5 Great iPad Games

### Hello again!

In the last month I have moved from using a computer at home, to doing almost everything on my **iPad 2**; in fact I'm even writing this article on my iPad 2! As an avid gamer (both iPhone and PC), I have been playing some of my **iPhone** games on the iPad, as well as some new iPad-specific games (known as 'HD' games due to the high-definition graphics used). So for all you **iPad** and iPad 2 owners out there, here is a run-down of what I think are the top 5 games currently available on the app store.

**#5 – Starfront: Collision HD** (£4.99, also available on iPhone) – If you recall a few months back, I told you about the gaming phenomenon called StarCraft 2, a PC/Mac game that has become so popular, it has developed into a sport. Well, now StarCraft 2 fans can play an almost identical version of this on iPad. Starfront Collision is a real-time strategy game based in the far future, which essentially involves managing resources and armoured units to protect your base and conquer your enemy by destroying their base. More info at:  
<http://www.gameloft.co.uk/ipad->

[games/starfront-collision/](http://www.gameloft.co.uk/ipad-games/starfront-collision/)

**#4 – Modern Combat 2: Black Pegasus HD** (£4.99, also available on iPhone) – Are you a Call of Duty fan? If so, then this game is right up your street. It's essentially COD for iPad and it is exquisite. Sporting both a solid single-player campaign and excellent multi-player combat, you won't find a better FPS on the app store. More info at:

<http://www.gameloft.co.uk/ipad-games/modern-combat-2-black-pegasus/>

**#3 – Asphalt 6: Adrenaline HD** (£0.69, also available on iPhone) – If you like driving games, then you must give this game a look – especially as it's only 69p! This game has stunning graphics like nothing I've seen before in driving games on the iPad and whilst it's great on iPhone, it really shines on the big iPad screen. You can build your dream collection of cars, race against your friends online and climb the online leadership boards. More info at:  
<http://www.gameloft.com/ipad-games/asphalt-6-adrenaline/>



Asphalt 6: Adrenaline HD with stunning graphics

# GAMING

## What's worth playing?

**#2 – Ticket to Ride** (£4.99) – This is an iPad-only game, a digital version of the best-selling designer board game by the same name. Having played the board game, I found this even more enjoyable. The basic premise of the game is to build railroads across America and gain the most points by building the longest routes. You can compete against the AI or play-and-pass with others or play online against remote players. If you like light tactical games, this is well worth a look. More info at:

<http://www.daysofwonder.com/online/en/t2r/ipad/>

**#1 – Anomaly War Zone Earth HD** (currently on sale for £1.49, also available on iPhone) – If you've ever played tower defence games, you'll know how addictive they can be. Essentially, you build armed towers to protect your city from alien invaders who relentlessly march upon your capital. In this game, the developers have taken a unique twist on the classic tower defence game; rather than you building the towers to hold off the screaming hordes, *you play as the invaders*, marching on the aliens who have infested the city with their armed towers. This game is not only addictive, but also beautifully designed and well thought out. It is an absolute must-buy. More info at:

<http://www.chillingo.com/games/anomaly-warzone-earth/>

See you next month with more games...

Jon Winterburn

DaC Network Administrator

## WHERE'S WOODY???

The answer to this month's 'Where's Woody' is by Christ Church Gardens (corner of Victoria Street and Broadway).



## 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!*

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## The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers Disneyland Trip

# WHY THEY DO IT...

Last month's *Call Sign* contained a report on the 2011 Children's *Magical Taxi Trip* to the Disneyland resort in Paris, where around 300 children and helpers travelled across the Channel in 100 licensed London taxis for the 18th consecutive year since the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* first made the trip in 1994. The children all suffer from chronic and life-threatening illnesses.

So to answer the question as to why they do it, these two pictures say it better than any words of ours ever could...



Call Sign's Gary Cox (O46) pops in to see one of the Games lesser-known sports...

## Olympics and white water canoeing!

Determined to hammer the Olympics, I set off for the Lee Valley white water canoe and kayaking centre on the leafy borders of Essex and Herts. First dig is the car parking, second dig the loos! Probably one pound for a bottle of water and £1.50 for a bottle of Pepsi - sorry Coke, it's the Olympics! Then there's the three quid for a posh sandwich! I wonder if *Call Sign* gives expense accounts?

I just knew I was on sticky ground because all passed muster with flying colours. A quick walk round the course free of bloody charge. What game's this! I sidled up to (30-ish) Kelly behind the counter.

"Hello honey," I asked politely, "who's paying for all this?" She smiled at me. Perhaps she was only 25-ish!

"Well if the teams want to come and practice, it's £400 an hour and we've got 5 teams in today!"

I left with a smile and Kelly knew she had one over me. Mind you, I have to hand it to **FaulknerBrowns**, the Architects who did the buildings and the canoe course located within the parkland setting by landscape architects **Michael Van Valkenburg Associates**. Even if it did cost £31million! Maybe we should throw the Olympic traffic problems their way!

The problems really mounted for me when I turned and bumped into **Johny Akinyemi**. Born in Warrington, he hopes to qualify for the Nigerian canoe and kayaking team in February. Johny gave me a quick explanation of the course, but once he mentioned that it was a 1 in 8 drop, something inside me lost interest in representing team GB. Mind you, if he doesn't win a medal he's gonna win a few female fans - especially Kelly and other 20-year olds!

Bottom line is this and I'll nick the line from the woman who opened it - the Princess Royal: You don't have to like children to do what's right by them! In other words pop in and make your own mind up. Let's face it, you either talk it up or talk it down and like me, you could find yourself converted. But hold your horses Boris; we still need a chat about the traffic dear.

In my mind's eye, this new centre I suspect will grow and develop into a real success - then they may well have the traffic problems and the £3 posh sandwich! Even the loos are free and there are lots of them.

Go to [www.gowhitewater.co.uk](http://www.gowhitewater.co.uk), it's on the Eleanor Cross Road, Waltham Cross EN8 - sure beats a day out on the Serpentine!

I'll leave the last word to Johny Akinyemi: "If I can inspire young Nigerians to rise through the ranks and beat me, then that would be my greatest achievement."

We at *Call Sign* would like to thank Johny and wish him well at the Games and in his accountancy career - if TV doesn't get him first!



White water canoeing in Waltham Cross!

Gary Cox (O46)



**Peter Bond (L67)** got his first *Call Sign* mention in 2001, when at that year's AGM his name was pulled out of the hat as one of three **Dial-a-Cab** drivers who had become winners of a new Rover 25 *Advantage* in a Christmas incentive scheme. We were still several years away from a recession and coverage over the Christmas season run-up was a huge problem!

Then fast forward to November 2006 when drivers phoned this magazine to say that they had seen several different DaC drivers taking **Nigella Lawson** around town in the program *Who Do You Think You Are* with every fare seeming to be £10 – and apparently in a 50 zillion to one chance, the same banknote was always used! Our readers miss very little...

It turned out that all the taxis were really the same one – all driven by Peter Bond and yes, the tenner was indeed the same one as well – a BBC prop with a valuation of... err £10!

And then, just a few weeks back, more phone calls to *Call Sign* giving us the same message – a DaC taxi in *Who Do You Think You Are*, this time ferrying around *Strictly Come Dancing* judge, **Len Goodman**. So was this an amazing coincidence or does Peter have friends in high places! Well it's sort of the second option.

"Yes, it was me with Nigella Lawson and Len Goodman," Peter told us, "but it is also me most of the times when just the cab is seen without my face showing above the steering wheel. In fact I have done seven of this latest batch of ten shows."

It turned out that the production company phone Peter whenever they need him to do the program because they found it easier to use the same driver. It meant they didn't have to waste time looking for a cab – it had to have aircon – and then explaining what he had to do and even when it was busy on the

Who do you think drives the cab in...

## WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE???



Peter's cab as seen on *Who Do You Think You Are*...

streets, Peter would never let them down.

"I love doing it," Peter added. "I certainly don't do it for the money because I don't get much more than I could earn on a reasonably busy Friday evening, but it is such an enjoyable show to be on and I have had such interesting times chatting with stars such as **Bruce Forsyth**, who really is so funny when he's not following a script, **Larry Lamb**, **Nigella** and many others. There are occasions between shooting when it's just me and the *Who Do*

*You Think You Are* subject sitting in the back of the cab talking and we almost become friends! In fact Larry Lamb asked me to babysit his two daughters because his wife had to go out! So I went to his home, picked them up and they just sat in the cab while dad continued filming the show!"

So there is now no need for anyone to phone *Call Sign* to tell us they've seen a DaC taxi on *Who Do You Think You Are*... it's bound to be Peter Bond!

Last month it was the cab that could only pass if it failed! This month it's the...

## Taxi that failed because of new tyres!

"I was speechless," **Raymond Fussell (K64)** said when *Call Sign* met up with him recently. "I had two new rear tyres fitted to my MB Vito taxi about a week before it was due to go up for its' annual re-licensing procedure. On the appointed day, I presented the cab at SGS myself and while the cab itself was mechanically ok, to my amazement they failed the two new tyres! That meant that the cab as a whole failed!"

Explaining further, Raymond told us that the examiner at SGS had been very apologetic because the rest of the vehicle was fine. However, he explained that he had no option but to issue a 'fail' notice because the rear tyres were - in the official jargon - unapproved! And so, as Raymond put it... "that was that!"

**Knowing that it sounded rather confusing, Raymond carefully explained to *Call Sign* so that we could pass the info on to our readers.**

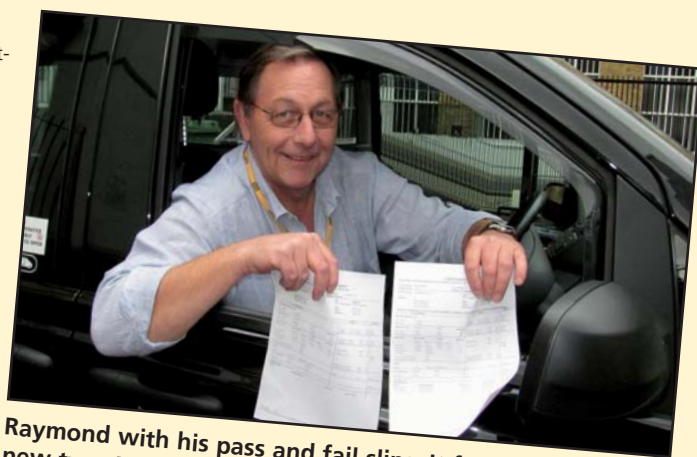
"It's all about the 'Speed Rating' as indicated on the sidewall of the tyre and whether the tyre is the wrong rating. In this case it was confusion over the commercial van model, the taxi and yes, the TX range as well. Then it will fail its re-licensing until the tyres are of the 'approved' type - that is with the correct speed rating for that particular model.

"I went to 'Jetyres' and they fitted the approved Vito tyre, the ones with a 'T' suffix speed rating on the sidewall of the tyre, took it back to SGS the same day and bingo, the cab passed!" Raymond was now grinning happily.

"I then took the two tyres previously fitted back to the supplier, who gave me a full refund without further question. So it all turned out ok in the end other than the time I spent going to and fro, but that's life I guess," he added resignedly.

Finishing, Raymond added a personal point. "Living in leafy south London, I took my Vito to the Mercedes Benz main dealership on Purley Way in Croydon for some work to be done and found them to be very good indeed. I got the impression they were looking to extend their taxi servicing facility, so it may be worth mentioning it to *Call Sign* readers."

**Tyre manufacturers have their own rating systems, for example Dunlop taxi tyres are 'Q' rated while Michelin speed-rate their taxi products with a 'T' suffix. So the moral of the story is clear - always check you have the correct type/speed-rated tyre fitted to your taxi to ensure legal compliance and for complete peace of mind.**



Raymond with his pass and fail slips. It failed for having new tyres!

**Dial-a-Cab** driver **Lee Pearce (J71)** appears often in *Call Sign* - but following his exploits on the football field rather than in his cab. Over the past few seasons, Lee has changed clubs several times but just when he seemed settled, he suffered a major setback in October 2010 when his cruciate ligament went during a match.

Several months ago he made his comeback but did it too early with the knee failing to hold up. In the meantime, he signed for former **Chelsea** and **Southampton** star **Neil Shipperley** who was managing at Ryman league **Walton Casuals** where he had a run-out with the reserves. Neil then sent Lee out on loan to test out the knee and it seemed to be much better.

"I had the occasional twinge," Lee told *Call Sign*, "but generally it was about as good as it's been over the past 12 months and I was beginning to find the form I'd had before the knee went."

Then on 15 October, Neil Shipperley gave Lee his full first team debut in an away match to **Burgess Hill**. The game ended in a 1 - 1 draw, with Burgess Hill grabbing their goal with a disputed penalty but Lee made two excellent saves which earned Walton their point.

"I was feeling great after that game," said Lee, "but just three days later it all went wrong!"

Lee was talking about a home league cup match against high-flying **Bognor Regis**

## Lee: It's a bit much for one week!



Former Hammer's Star Tony Gale is Walton Casual's Chairman

**Town** and before Walton had even begun playing anything like they should have, they were already 4 - 0 down! Lee admitted responsibility for the first, but as a defence unit Walton were a shambles. Then almost as a punishment, Lee's knee went again and he was taken off. Walton eventually lost 5 - 0. Soon after, Neil Shipperley quit as manager leaving the team with huge problems!

According to Lee, his knee isn't as bad as previously thought but he would still be out for a few weeks.

Meanwhile, **Sky** pundit and Walton Casuals Chairman, former **West Ham** star **Tony Gale** is understandably not a happy man and everyone is waiting to see what happens next.

"Nope," said Lee, "it was a bit much for one week and yes we've seen better ones...!"

## Get the best for less...direct!

The **London Taxi Company** has launched a new set of trade advertising, highlighting selected vehicles within their used stock and encouraging customers to go to the company's website to view the UK's largest catalogue of London Taxis.

**Mark Brown**, General Manager at the Brewery Road, Islington dealership told *Call Sign*:

"This is a bit of a test for us, so we're really encouraged by the response we've had so far. The key for us was getting the message out to the trade that we have the best range of used London taxis in the UK, plus of course, with the MAQs (Mayor's Air Quality strategy) taking effect in January, that there is another option to renting.

"We're not naïve - there will be drivers who can afford to make the leap to new and we're now seeing a steady depletion of our remaining Euro IV stock as savvy drivers make sure they get their new TX4 without paying the £3,000 on-cost for Euro 5.

"The drivers who do not want to stretch to a new cab need to know that it will soon no longer be possible to bring used taxis in from outside London. Renting isn't the only, or even the most sensible, long term option. We have used stock at our dealerships up and down the country that we can bring down to Brewery Road, so we'd urge customers to keep checking [www.london-taxis.co.uk](http://www.london-taxis.co.uk) as we can bring their vehicle to them!"

The London Taxi Company recently announced a review of all used London taxi pricing, as well as better than ever part-exchange rates. More recently, the TX4 manufacturer launched a free valuation service available also at [www.london-taxis.co.uk](http://www.london-taxis.co.uk), along with images and details of approximately 200 used London Taxis from across their UK network.

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# Mailshot

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

## Westminster TaxiCard account

*Dear Editor*

All Westminster TaxiCard holders – including me – have been told that future usage of the card may only be provided to those on disability benefits rather than as has always been the case, an inability to use public transport. As those on Dial-a-Cab who have picked me up would testify, I can just about get into a taxi with a small amount of support from your always helpful drivers, but I would never be able to get onto a bus or train. But neither do I choose to claim any form of disability benefit and as a consequence of saving some money for the country, I will be penalised from using one of the most important things I have – the freedom my TaxiCard still gives me. It means I can still go out – albeit not that far nowadays.

So if the worst comes to the worst and I do lose it, then let me take this opportunity of thanking everyone at Dial-a-Cab – from your lovely call takers to your helpful administration staff, but especially to the drivers who are nothing short of wonderful.

My friend has a TaxiCard in Camden, which is operated by ComCab, and she often tells me how she envies the service I get compared to hers. If I am now about to lose it, then thank you Dial-a-Cab for all you have done and bless you.

**Mrs Roma Stephens**

**St Edmunds Close, NW8**

**Brian Rice replies:** Dear Mrs Stephens, thank you for your kind letter. I am sure all staff and drivers will appreciate your sentiments. I must say I do sympathise with your situation and it does seem extremely unfair that people that wish to take less from society seem to be penalised for doing so. Unfortunately, at the present time everyone is endeavouring to reduce their expenditure and Westminster Council is no exception. Let us all hope they have a change of heart and the situation improves in the future.

## ...and again!

It looks like Westminster is to cut back on their subsidy of TaxiCard. I just hope and pray that this does not affect my usage because it is not just a cut-price taxi ride so far as I am concerned. It is my life! Without it, not only will I never get out again but I won't be able to talk to those wonderful drivers from Dial-a-Cab, the people who never fail to make me smile at a time when I have

so little left to smile about after my husband Norman died. Just as my treatment at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital keeps me alive, so do my little chats with your drivers. They keep me going, they make me smile, they keep my spirits up. They are just the most wonderful people and I pray my TaxiCard remains. This is most definitely not just a taxi ride to me...

**Mrs Carol Plaskett**

**London SW1**

**Thanks for the letter Carol and your lovely comments. If you are on any disability benefits, then the Westminster cuts should not affect you ...Ed**

## Private jets?

*Hi Al*

I am not sure if you saw an article in *The Sun* pertaining to Addison Lee offering a full door-to-door service, including a private jet to the country of choice? A price of £36,000 was mentioned. I'm not sure of the truthfulness of the story, but it's well worth watching! We can only imagine the publicity if this ever comes to fruition.

**Louie Christian (A48)**

**No, I didn't see it Louie, however, if I may I'd like to offer a history lesson regarding the subject. In November 1999, Board member Mike Son wrote an article in *Call Sign* informing subscribers that DaC had agreed to pass over any client's requests for a helicopter to a charter company that would represent this Society, although there was never any intention of actually buying our own helicopter (or plane). But according to Mike, we just needed an association with a company who could supply the service to our customers if they needed it. The company was Thurston Helicopters who were based at Redhill, Surrey (nowadays they are at Headcorn Aerodrome in Kent). The idea was that if, for example, a client needed to get to somewhere a bit out of the way, the Dial-a-Cab driver would pick up the customer and take them to Battersea Heliport and in due course, they would receive the invoice for taxi usage and the helicopter service, plus of course our normal service charges. Dial-a-Cab would also have received a healthy commission from Thurston Helicopters. Things have moved on a bit now and no doubt we would have been using private jets from LCA under the same scheme. However, the idea was said by a DaC member to be against our rules and as a**

**result was dropped. As has been written several times in *Call Sign* by different people (Brian Rice most often), Addison Lee drivers do what they are told. We are a different kettle of fish ...Ed**

## Eurostar exits

*Hi Alan*

Several times late at night after picking up at bay 6 in the St Pancras Eurostar coach park, I have had problems trying to leave. Just last week I had a passenger who actually took his case out of the cab and headed out to Midland Road to flag a cab down as there was no one to open the barrier. Luckily before an empty cab came past, a member of the station staff turned up and opened the barrier. Suffice to say my passenger was not happy about the situation.

A couple of months ago, I had some girls on board from a PR company (not one of our accounts but a 'T' job) who had left St Pancras on the first train out in the morning and had arrived back some 18 hours or so later. One of them began to get quite emotional and distressed when it took well over 5 minutes to exit the coach park.

Then of course, there is the safety situation. Should a fire or similar (God forbid a terrorist attack) or even rioting, I'm sure the station could be seen as a viable target with its large number of up-market shops; drivers should be able to exit quickly.

I realise that there are security issues regarding the number of people knowing the codes that activate the exit barrier, but would it not be possible for our call centre either to have this number available to send to a trapped driver so they could activate it and then close it again once out, or for the call centre to have the phone number of someone at St Pancras who could get the barrier opened quickly? Personally, I don't see why it should not be capable of being opened remotely using cameras and a call button on the post that holds the control panel.

**Eddie Lambert (V37)**

**Not sure about the terrorist aspect, but you are quite right about the length of time it takes to exit at times, Eddie. Operating a train that travels at 186mph and which can get you to the beautiful Lille in France for lunch in around 75 minutes, you'd have thought the matter of travelling around 25 metres from entrance to exit would not be too much of a problem. However, at around 0.5mph it seems to take the security guards forever! Allan Evans is currently**



# Mailshot

continued from page 33

trying to speak to someone about the problem, but finding the right person to organise a remote control device allowing the security officer to push a button from where he is to open the exit, is more difficult than you would imagine. Hopefully Allan will have sorted it out by the next issue ...Ed

## Being a computer illiterate!

Dear Alan

Just seen the latest *Call Sign* online magazine which I have just finished reading. The article on Page 20 by your Network Administrator, **Jon Winterburn**, was of special interest to me being a Sunday computer illiterate and I plan on exploring some of those tips to make my computer use easier and more enjoyable. It can truly be said that there is something for everybody in your publication, even a non-cabby like me!

**Lloyd Powell**

**Palm Beach, Florida**

**Pleased we could help ...Ed**

## Should the radio circuits merge?

Re **Louie Christian (A48)** article in the October *Call Sign* - should the radio circuits merge?

"How dare you, Sir! How double dare you!"

Firstly, you will struggle to find any Mountview driver who still believes that demutualisation is a good idea. Secondly you 'dare' to mention in glowing terms the name of a man whose name I will not repeat. Your assertions are infantile and uninformed! To gain information, try going to our AGM and ask questions. By the way Mr Christian, do you know where the Pitcairn Islands are?

**David Hughes (A73)**

**Thanks for the letter David. If I am not mistaken, Lou Christian has an Honours Degree so I'm pretty sure that he knows all about the Mutiny on the Bounty! For those that don't quite understand the meaning of David's last sentence, Pitcairn Island was best known as home of the descendants of the mutineers and the islands now have some degree of fame due to descendants of the original inhabitants seemingly having just four names between them – the most popular being Christian as in Fletcher Christian, the man said to have led the Mutiny**

**against the Bounty's Lieutenant Bligh. However, I doubt that either Fletcher Christian or William Bligh ever attended a DaC AGM – but I'm sure I've seen Louie Christian there. And while I understand your point David, I am certainly not afraid either of him or to mention the name of John Griffin. Believe me, fear won't make him go away – only the success of being better than his Addison Lee – and we most certainly are. Keeping in front is the biggest problem... Ed**

## Using the Mint...

Dear Sir

Please see the letter (below) from the Mint Hotel at the Tower of London regarding cab drivers using the washroom. After an altercation with the porter, I put them into my bad books but they have now redeemed themselves and it may be noteworthy for Dial-a-Cab drivers who work in the area.

**Joseph Batty (W90)**

**Thanks for passing the letter on, Joe, and well done for just not moaning about it but taking action ...Ed**

Dear Mr Batty,

*Thank you for your letter dated 30th August following a recent visit to the hotel. I apologise for the delay in our correspondence reaching you and any subsequent inconvenience caused. Regretfully at the hotel we are unable to allow for taxi drivers to use our ground floor guest restroom facilities, due to having only one Ladies and one Gentleman's rest room in this area to cater to 600 or more guests we may be accommodating on any particular day. This is a policy carried by other London hotels, I am told.*

*We are however very happy for taxi drivers to use our staff facilities. I sincerely apologise if the staff member you had spoken with did not come to mention this to you and for any undue confusion that may have been caused. We would not wish for you to feel unwelcome in any way and your correspondence has been brought to our Management's attention for any necessary follow up with our staff.*

*Mr Batty, I hope this will not deter you from recommending Mint Hotel Tower of London to your clientele, as we do truly appreciate your custom and support.*

*If you have any further questions or queries that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would be delighted to be of any assistance.*

*Yours sincerely,*

**Amy Tregidgo (PA to General Manager)**

## London's Silicon Valley?

Dear Alan

Over the last 18 months, a lot has been talked about the London silicon roundabout (Old Street). All the whiz-kid firms are moving in and the area is becoming another Silicon Valley, yet none of the Board or our Editor has commented on this or think, like me, that winged collars and quill pens will make a comeback. Your views please Alan. And by the way, has our East Road building doubled in value?

**Ian Mossey (A31)**

**Thanks Ian. All I can say is that when I visited San Francisco's Bay area, it wasn't to visit the plethora of hi-tech companies situated there! I'm not sure what you expect me to say but if companies move in, it means more work for us. Old Street has already become one of – if not the – buzziest areas in London and having our office situated close-by has probably trebled its value, let alone double it. Mind you, getting someone to actually pay treble might be a problem because the building has run out of quill pens! However, it seems that the next major resident in the Old Street area will be Google and I have it on good authority that they don't use quills – although I haven't been told about the winged collars. But I bet their cab account will be worth a few pounds of silicon ...Ed**

## Wrong info for Bernie!

Alan

The article on **Bernie Silver** (*It will only pass if it fails – October Call Sign*) was certainly very interesting and I am sorry if he has been given the incorrect advice. I hope this will provide him and others with some clarification.

The 15-year age limit, which commences in January 2012, will be applied to the date of first registration of the vehicle with the DVLA, verified at the time that the vehicle is presented for inspection. Vehicles may only be presented for inspection after or within 28 days of the expiry of the existing vehicle licence.

We are actively trying to assist vehicle owners to ensure their vehicles pass at the first time of inspection and would certainly not recommend any action that deliberately prevents a vehicle from passing the inspection.

**John Mason**

**Director, London Taxi & Private Hire**





# Mailshot

continued from page 34

After phoning LTPH to confirm how the 15-year rule worked, Bernie was told that if he put his cab in for an overhaul on the day the plate ran out in August 2013, it wouldn't be accepted as it would break the 15-year rule on expiry. Even if he booked it in for July, it still wouldn't get through because the date put onto the plate in that case would then match the month of the previous plate - ie August. But LTPH added that if he was to take his TX1 up for passing in early July and it failed, but then passed when represented, it would get a new plate dated from that day for a further 12 months taking Bernie up to July 2014. Yet if he took it up at the correct time, it wouldn't even be looked at! It was hardly surprising that he became confused!

So thanks to LTPH Director John Mason for clearing the matter up in a much simpler way that the person who answered Bernie's call managed to do!

## New dispatch system???

Hi Alan

To GPS or not to GPS, that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to let others give false positions while we, the many, suffer the greed of the few?

If ever there was an argument to go GPS dispatch or stay as we are now, last month's complaints meeting results - printed in *Call Sign* - give a very good reason why I think we should go GPS dispatch. Seven complaints were heard, including two appeals, each one was for booking into the wrong zone with the worst case being a driver in Kensington who booked into WW99. Now just imagine if we dispatched all jobs as GPS, this could not happen as the nearest cab would have had the fairest chance of correctly being offered the job with the chance to *accept* or *reject*, then on to the next nearest cab and so on, I'm sure you all get the picture. This would eliminate most complaints, plus the cost of Complaints Meetings ie a Board member to act as Chairman, Allan Evens to present the case against the accused, plus three members to act as jury. The whole fleet is already equipped with a GPS mushroom aerial on their cab roof. As the BoM are in the progress of investigating new GPRS terminals that in theory will give a correct position from John o' Groats to Land's End, this would be a perfect opportunity to consider GPS dispatch? It has worked for the

other two main London circuits. You could still dispatch to island ranks eg Heathrow, City Airport etc. The Call Centre spends unnecessary time monitoring false positions - this would be eliminated saving more time and money. If a regular job fires out the same time every day to stop drivers '*hanging it up*' it can be called to a roving point, a system that was used successfully many years ago on voice (you have to be a long term member, to know that one) - but it worked. I know how tempting it is when a message comes on your screen that there is an LAP job in SW20 that needs covering and you are in perhaps SW3. Do you wait for it to go into *Bids* or do you jump three or four postal zones and put yourself on offer of going on complaint? With GPS dispatch, the temptation is taken away from you, hence no chance of any complaint. As of yet there has been no debate on this subject, and I think before the BOM spend money on new terminals, they should listen to the views of members who are plying their trade on the streets of London before making a decision on our behalf.

Pat Keefe (G01)

Interesting letter Pat and I have asked Allan Evans if he will answer it as part of his Compliance Officer's report. However, writing as another driver rather than Editor, can I say that I prefer the current system because it suits me. I know that if it gets quiet again - and hopefully it will remain busy until after the Olympics - then I can book into a zone, read the paper or have a coffee and know that sooner or later I will get a job. Thankfully I don't have to make the decision because this way I can't be wrong! ...Ed

## New terminals

Dear Alan

It is now over six months since the last AGM when we were informed that a new terminal with several improvements was being developed.

I recall that it was going to be superior to that available on other circuits, possibly with facility to be compatible with Oyster cards and that it would be able to receive signals beyond the M25. Can we please have an update, with more details of specifications that we can expect and a date when installation will commence?

Laurence Kelvin (W88)

See the Chairman's report on page 4 ...Ed

## A thank you for Maxine...

Dear Al

Could you oblige me by including this little thank you in your *Mailshot* pages as I'm not sure precisely who to thank directly.

My lovely daughter Maxine died recently after a brave, but ultimately losing 6-year battle with cancer. She was cremated at Basildon Crematorium on Friday 14 October and both my wife and I were grateful to see a number of drivers there including Allan Evans as a friend and on behalf of the circuit. Maxine requested no flowers but donations to *Macmillan Cancer Support*.

As a consequence, my good friend Gordon Mowatt (Y08) organised a collection among fellow golfers and drivers who know me. It is to these people that we would like to thank through *Call Sign*.

George Carter (T22)

George, thank you for taking the time to think of others at such an awful time in your own lives. The Macmillan service is one that is close to my heart having been a volunteer at St Joseph's Hospice in Mare Street, Hackney, for six years at a time when the Macmillan service was still trying to get off the ground. There were four of us from Dial-a-Cab, myself and Ken Freeborn (W06) being the only two still around and we worked closely with Dr Richard Lamerton, whose name will forever be linked to Macmillan. Dr Lamerton detailed the DaC driver's involvement in his book '*East End Doc*'. The work usually involves ferrying patients from their home to the hospice for their treatment and for an opportunity to see a doctor. We even put on a Christmas show where Ken had to wear a skirt! But it cheered the patients up and that was all that mattered.

St Joseph's are always looking for drivers and if anyone from DaC - or even retired members who still drive - is interested in giving a few hours each week, the hospice would love to hear from you. If you are interested, you can call them on 020 8525 6000 and ask for the volunteer's department.

In the meantime, everyone at DaC from drivers to staff to Board members will I'm sure join me in sending George and his family our deepest condolences at their tragic loss ...Ed



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