

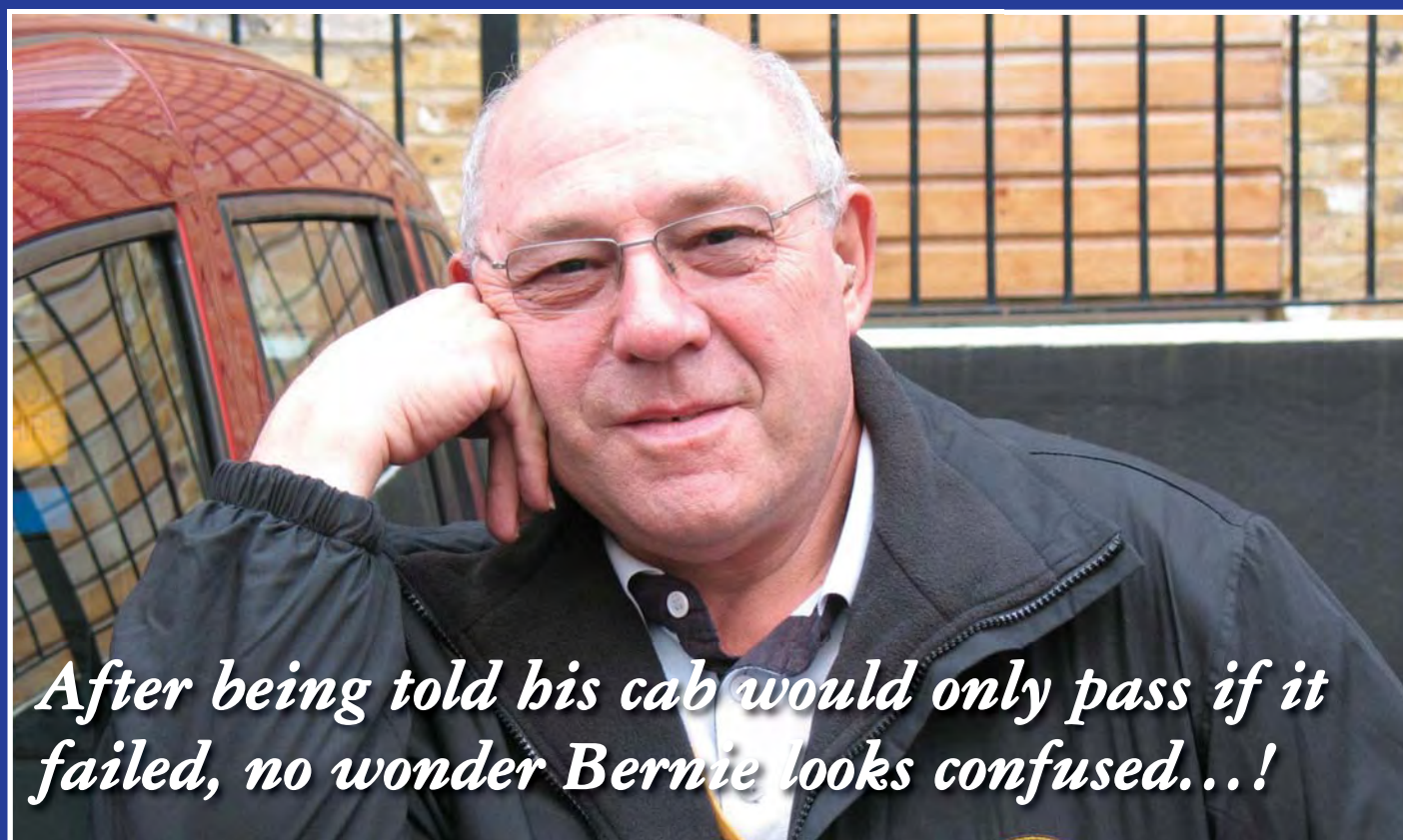
October 2011



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

*Just a few years after being mugged
at gunpoint and two years after open
heart surgery,
Sid Gold
celebrates
his 90th
birthday...*



*After being told his cab would only pass if it
failed, no wonder Bernie looks confused...!*



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

This issue sees hotel chains revisited. "Hilton please, driver." Well there are 27 Hiltons! Get confused with your Travelodges and Premier Inns? Holiday Inn Heathrow? There are 3 of them! To help you out, here are some of the chained hotels. Bold italicised hotel names are soon to, or are recently opened hotels. For a more comprehensive list of around 368 chained hotels, see the information below the grid.

DOYLE HOTELS			
Marylebone	47 Welbeck Street, W1G 8DN	Was	Clifton Ford
Kensington	109-113 Queens Gate, SW7 5LR	Was	Jury's
Bloomsbury	16 Gt Russell Street, WC1B 3NN	Was	Jury's
EXPRESS BY HOLIDAY INN			
City	275 Old Street, EC1V 9LN	Docklands	1 Silvertown Way, E16 1EA
Earls Court	295 North End Road, W14 9NS	Hammersmith	124 King Street, W6 0QU
Limehouse	469-475 The Highway, E1W 3HN	Park Royal	Victoria Road, W3 6XU
Royal Docks	1 Silvertown Way, E16 1EA	Southwark	103-109 Southwark Street, SE1 0JQ
Swiss Cottage	152-156 Finchley Road, NW3 5HS	Victoria	106-110 Belgrave Road, SW1V 2BJ
Wandsworth	Smugglers Way, SW18 1EG	Wimbledon South	200 High Street, SW19 2BH
GALA & NH			
Duke of Leinster	20 Leinster Gardens, W2 3AN	NH Kensington	202-220 Cromwell Road SW5 0SW
La Reserve	422, Fulham Road, SW6 1DU	NH Harrington Hall	5-25 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JW
Royal Park	3 Westbourne Terrace, W2 3UL	Brunei	79-81 Gloucester Terrace, W2 3HB
GRANGE HOTEL			
City	Coopers Row, EC3N 2BQ	Holborn	50-52 Southampton Row, WC1B 4AR
St. Pauls	10 Godliman Street, EC4V 5AJ	Tower Bridge	45 Prescott Street, London E1 8GP
HOLIDAY INN			
Bloomsbury	Coram Street, WC1 1HT	Commercial Rd	261 Commercial Road, E1 2BT
Camden Lock	30 Jamestown Road, NW1 7BY	Heathrow	Bath Rd/Sipson Way, W. Drayton, UB7
Heathrow Ariel	118 Bath Road, Hayes, UB3 5AJ	Heathrow M4	Sipson Road W. Drayton, UB7 0JU
Kensington-Forum	97 Cromwell Rd, SW7 4DN (Courtfield)	Kings Cross	1 Kings Cross Rd. WC1 9HX
Mayfair	3, Berkeley St. W1 8NE	Oxford Circus	57 Welbeck Street. W1 9BL
Regent's Park	Carburton Street W1 5EE	Stratford City	10a Chestnut Plaza, Westfield, E20 1GL
INDIGO			
Paddington	16, London St, W2 1HL	Tower Hill	142 Minories, EC3N 1LS
INTERCONTINENTAL			
Park Lane	Hamilton Place, W1J 7QY	Westminster	22, The Broadway, SW1H 9JS
MERCURE			
City Bankside	75-79 Southwark Street SE1 0JA	Gatwick	Povey Cross Road Horley RH6 0BE
Bloomsbury	130, Southampton Row, WC1B %AF	Paddington	144, Praed St, W2 1HU
Kensington	1a, Lexham Gdns, W8 5JJ		(NthSide by London St.)
MINT			
Tower of London	7 Pepys Street, EC3N 4AF	Westminster	30 John Islip Street, SW1P 4DD
PREMIER INN			
Beckton	1, Woolwich Manor Rd., E6 5NT	City	24, Prescott St, E1 8BB
County Hall	Belvedere Rd, SE1 7PB	Docklands Excel	Festoon Way, E16 1RH (by Connaught)
Euston	1 Dukes Road, Euston Road, WC1H	Hammersmith	255 King Street, W6 9LU
Hampstead	215 Haverstock Hill, NW3 4RB	Heathrow Bath Road	15 Bath Road, Hounslow, TW6 2AB
Heathrow Hayes	362, Uxbridge Rd, UB4 0HF	Heathrow M4/J4	Shepiston Lane, UB3 1RW
Islington Green	Parkfield St, N1 0PS	Kensington(Earls)	11 Knaresborough Place, SW5 0TJ
Kensington	32, West Cromwell Rd, SW5 9QJ	Kings Cross/St	26- 30 York Way, N1 9AA
Leicester Sq	1, Leicester place, WC2H 7BP	Putney Bridge	3 Putney Bridge Approach, SW6 3JD
Southwark	34, Park St, SE1 9EF	Tower Bridge	159, Tower Bridge Road, SE1 3LP
Victoria	82, Eccleston Sq, SW1V 1PS		
TRAVELODGE			
Aldgate East	6, Chamber St, E1 8BL	Bank	19 St Swithins Lane, EC4N 8AD
Battersea	200 York Road, SW11 3SA	City Airport	Hartmann Road, E16 2BZ
City Road	7 City Road, EC1Y 1AE	Covent Garden	10 Drury Lane, High Holborn, WC2B 5RE
Docklands	Coriander Avenue, E14 2AA	Euston	1 Grafton Pl. NW1 1DJ
Farringdon	Gwynne Place, WC1X 9QN	Fulham	290 North End Rd, SW6 1NQ
Heathrow Heston	Moto Service Area, M4 Motorway, TW5	Heathrow Central	700 Bath Rd, TW5 9SW
Heathrow T5	Calder Way, Horton Rd, Colnbrook,	Kings Cross	Grays Inn Road, WC1X 8BH
Kings Cross Royal	100 Kings Cross Road, WC1X 9DT	Liverpool Street	1 Harrow Place, E1 7DB
Marylebone	Harewood Row, NW1 6SE	Southwark	202 Union Street, SE1 0LH
Tower Bridge	1 Goodmans Yard, E1 8AT	Waterloo	195 -203 Waterloo Rd, SE1 8UX

The latest issue 4 of 'Hotels' with circa 368 chained hotels listed is available by registering at the MyFav website. Go to www.myfav.co.uk and click the register button. Enter the details using 'taxi' as the unlock code. You will be sent a temporary password. When you log in you will see the 'Locked' button change to 'Taxi'. Click this and a number of useful taxi related icons will appear including 'What's On' and the UID plus a separate icon for the new 'Hotels' section. New feature! You don't have to register, click the 'Locked' button and you can enter 'taxi' to unlock the page. BUT... if you register and recommend others to sign up to the MyFav website, you can win our £100 monthly prize, and it is an ideal home page...

from the editor's desk

Not too 'appy???

Sorry to go on about all the apps floating around, but it would be difficult to just stand by and watch the trade make fools of itself. There are now so many apps claiming to link drivers with passengers that if it wasn't so serious, you could almost laugh.

I'm not going into them all, but I've heard of at least 10 apps that are all vying for you to sign up and most of which will involve you using your phone. Hands-free phone use is currently legal, but that may not always be the case and even if it stays, there is a certain amount of danger. The only system involving an app I can find that actually doesn't involve you needing your phone is *GetTaxi*, where you get a terminal of some kind fitted while the passenger needs the app. You will have to pay a weekly charge for the equipment.

If every driver that took an interest went with *GetTaxi*, then this editorial wouldn't exist. According to their blurb, they are signing up 300 drivers each week, which means that by the time you read this they will already have more drivers than Dial-a-Cab and by the end of next month they will by far outnumber the largest radio taxi circuit in the world! Really? Then what if the other apps claim similar numbers? Do we believe them all because Billy Paton's *Taxiworld Hailing* app claims that it intends launching when it has 2000 drivers signed up, but that it cannot work unless there are 3000 drivers registered? Really? We now have *Hailo* smiling at us from the latest trade press as well as *Cabapp*. Will they need 3000 drivers each? And if they say they only need 30, how will they cover any work they get? Believe me, I admire the technology and in some cases the fact they have been developed by cab drivers. But sadly, I believe they will all strangle each other.

Both *GetTaxi* and *Taxiworld's* systems sound very good, but on an almost daily rate we're getting more companies advertising apps for "black cabs." The app that received most publicity through advertising first, *LDNTaxi* will also claim many drivers signing up. But what about the *Black Cabs* app where you even get a uniform to wear! Will they run out of their black tops after 3000 drivers sign up?

As this column pointed out last month, *GetTaxi* are telling passengers that they can save between 17 – 24% on the fares of the three major radio circuits. What has yet to be explained to me is where that 17% (let alone 24%) is going to come from? After all, you can discount any VAT as that would be refundable and that just leaves administration. As I have never heard of a 17% admin let alone a 24% one, it stands to reason that much of that amount saved has to come off the driver's fare. Are we talking no gratuity and no run-in? Shouldn't we at least be told? In the meantime I think I'll stay where I am, thank you...

The pipe and nothing but the pipe!

As *Alf Townsend* says in a recent issue of *TAXI*, he was Black 62 "with the pipe" in the days of ODRTS and Lords before it became Dial-a-Cab. But for someone now so associated with the most expensive airport taxi tariff anywhere in the world to criticise the cost of taxis working in London - compared to minicabs - sounds like the ramblings of someone who had nothing to write about that month and so



thought he'd have a go at the radio circuits.

He seems to be under the impression that the radio circuits invited their clients to start using minicabs and not because clients wanted to cut back on costs.

Perhaps he should have asked to speak to someone at DaC rather than just taking the figures and facts of someone totally unconnected with this circuit, as gospel? Of course, that might have spoiled his story and forced him to look elsewhere for something to write about...

Don't do as I do!

Warnings obviously mean nothing to me because I cocked up big time since the last time we spoke. My TX4 was due for its overhaul and I took it to Hansom Cabs (formerly L&P) in Dunbridge Street. I didn't expect there to be much wrong and indeed there wasn't. So up it went for passing – the only problem was that it failed! Why? Well I stupidly renewed the taxi disc for twelve months and replaced the old disc with the new one. The only problem was that the new one started on 1 September and it was only 26 August – just prior to the Bank Holiday weekend. So they failed it unless I could produce the old one. The Hansom mechanic phoned me to ask if I had it, but I couldn't remember which dustbin it had gone into! Fortunately I still had the renewal letter which said it was time to renew my tax. I faxed it across. Surely they could phone Swansea for confirmation? Well, no, they couldn't – or make that the passing station wouldn't!

The only way out was to buy another 6 months tax disc - and as it was still August it would begin from that month – and then claim a refund. And that's what I had to do via the mechanic who fortunately had the cab's logbook.

I still think that Deptford passing station could have been more helpful, after all my tax usually runs concurrently with my overhaul date and not once in 40 years have I ever been pulled up for it before. Having said that, there have been warnings over the years about not throwing the old disc away until the expiry date. I hold my hands up... I was stupid. I'm not sure whether that's better or worse than Deptford's total intransigence.

However, my sincere thanks to LTPH for phoning me to ask if they could pass my mobile number over to the mechanic so that he could contact me. Unlike Deptford, they obviously possess common sense...

And speaking of cock-ups!

Perhaps this one wasn't strictly my fault, but as

the Editor I take the blame. *Call Sign* sends out around 90+ courtesy copies of each issue. These go to some clients together with some drivers who were perhaps with the Society for many years and who wanted to stay in touch.

Well they would have had to work pretty hard to stay in touch last month because due to a fault with the franking machine, the 'stamp' appeared as a stripe and Post Office intransigence declined to admit that we had stamped them and made many of those receiving a courtesy issue have to drag themselves down to the PO and have to pay double the usual postage.

Amazingly, most actually did that and I hope they thought it was worth the effort. I know that at least 59 of them did because they emailed me – not to complain but to ask if I knew! Most of them also told me that they had given the Post Office initials a new meaning. Fortunately I'm too much of a gentleman to repeat what they claim PO stands for. As always, my sincere thanks go to *Call Sign's* readers for their amazing ongoing loyalty...

Olympic warning

Look, I know that *Call Sign* has been going on about the *Olympic Route Network* and that the chances of the *organising committee* (LOCOG) reversing their decision (they overrule the Mayor and even the Government on Olympic policy) are just above nil, but that won't stop us trying. Last month we wrote about the transport problems expected in Auckland, New Zealand during the tenure of the Rugby World Cup – a huge tournament yet still nowhere near the size and complexity of the Olympic Games. We wrote about poor siting of taxi ranks in Auckland after promises about how "important" the taxi service would be, even though there would be a big demand for cabs at the end of the days' events. Buses were given the places where taxi ranks were expected to be sited.

We were recently sent a statement from Auckland City Police. I'm not sure why we got it, but that isn't important. It advised people on the state of transport following the All Blacks – Tonga match at Eden Park and read:

"Given the earlier and ongoing disruptions to public transport (ferries, trains and buses were all delayed through rowdy behaviour) and in the interests of public safety, people are advised not to return to downtown unless they absolutely have to. If Eden Park patrons had a travel plan in place before tonight, think about revising it and perhaps use alternative means to get home safely - ie walk with a group of friends or pay a little more money and use a taxi."

"The city is full of revellers - some of whom are less well-behaved than others - and anyone who doesn't need to return to the city should stay away from it after the rugby match finishes."

I don't think I need to say how important we will be – especially after the days' events. Do you want to be stuck in hold-ups with the possibility of "revellers" going into town? I don't and if just one taxi has serious problems involving the driver's safety because of LOCOG policy, there will be a court case in the offing...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Merging the radio circuits?

Elsewhere in the magazine you will see an article from **Lou Christian (A48)**, a member of many years standing, who asks the question whether all - or at least some - of the taxi radio circuits should merge?

In my years in this trade, it is a question that has been posed many times and I must admit it does hold some merit, but conversely there could also be a downside. Lou seems to believe that the three circuits have petty differences; well in actual fact that is not the case as we have a very good working relationship. Of course we are in competition with each other, but there is not any animosity involved... well, certainly not from me.

Over the years there have been many mergers, but they do tend to take the course of a takeover. One that springs to mind is the *Evening News* and the *Evening Standard*. They merged but then the paper became the *Evening Standard*, so in reality it was a takeover.

In the case of the radio circuits, it is quite unusual as Dial-a-Cab is the only Mutual Trading Co-operative amongst the three; consequently, if we were involved in any way it could lead to some complications. We would probably have to demutualise first and then merge, but it is a topic that would need legal advice. However, I suppose Dial-a-Cab could make an outright purchase and then have no need to change our status. But whatever the course of action, advice would have to be sought.

Lou seems to think that we would become much cheaper as a service should there be a merger and I would have to agree that there would be economies of scale, but the determining factor on cost would be the metered fare and as we are all aware, we are more expensive than private hire. Consequently, my view is that if there were any mergers in the taxi industry, we would still not be able to compete on price alone.

Lou also brings up the subject of *Addison Lee* and how **John Griffin** "...is an astute businessman who will not rest until he controls the majority of the transport network in London." That may well be the case, but he operates under a different regime; his drivers do not have choice whereas we do. His drivers are instructed to complete a trip and that is what they do, if we are to compete, then we would have to do the same and I believe that would be unacceptable to the majority of DaC members.

If taxi drivers do not like a new procedure that is introduced by the management of their particular circuit, they will not participate and work the streets instead. Private hire drivers do not have that alternative - not legally anyway.

As we know from time to time, drivers/members of a particular circuit may have a gripe with something that is happening on that circuit, at present they have the alternative of leaving and if they so wish, to join another. With takeovers and mergers, their alternatives would diminish.

Finally, I do not have strong feelings about Lou's question either one way or the other, but if the scenario were ever to arise I would certainly not dismiss it until it had been thoroughly investigated and if the Board of Dial-a-Cab thought there was some merit in the situation, then the scenario would be put to the members of Dial-a-Cab for them to decide.

As a final word on the subject and just for the record, I have not been approached by either of the other two circuits regarding this topic, neither have we approached either of them.

Low Emission Zone

I have today received a press release from TfL regarding the Low Emission Zone (LEZ), however, I have not had time to adequately read and digest the content as the Editor is chasing me for this article. But here are some of the pertinent points.

There are an estimated 150,000 vehicles across London that will not comply with the new emissions that come into force in January 2012.

The LEZ will be in force every day of the week for the whole of the twenty four hour period across the whole of greater London.

From 3 January 2012, vehicles that are already affected by the LEZ -



HGV's, buses and coaches - will have to meet a Euro IV standard for particulate matter (PM) to drive within Greater London without paying a £200 daily charge, the penalty being a £1,000 fine.

From the same date, larger vans, minibuses and other specialist vehicles will have to meet LEZ standards for the first time. They will have to meet a Euro 3 standard for PM in order to drive in Greater London without paying a £100 daily charge or a penalty charge of £500 if they do not comply.

Whilst most of the vehicles that are affected by the scheme are already compliant, for the minority that are not the Mayor has announced that he has obtained significant discounts off a range of new vans and minibuses. Eighty per cent of vehicles that will be affected by the LEZ for the first time in 2012 are vans and their owners will be

offered significant discounts on new models from manufacturers, which could amount to thousands of pounds.

The press release then goes on to give a raft of manufacturers that are offering discounts. Two caught my eye; Vauxhall are offering up to £7,500 discount across their range, but one that made me smile was that Mercedes Benz are offering a van swappage scheme which is based around a weekly payment of £60, which then allows operators to swap into a new Mercedes Benz Vito.

Just can't wait to see what Boris Johnson will negotiate with manufacturers on our behalf - a new Vito at £42k?

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab



TAXI DRIVER OF THE YEAR CHARITY

5 St Brides Avenue Edgware Middlesex HA8 6BT
Tel/Fax: 020 8952 1357; Mobile: 07850 056 765
Email: brussella@talk21.com

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TAXI DRIVER OF THE YEAR DINNER DANCE

To be held on 3rd December 2011 at Holiday Inn Kensington Forum,
97 Cromwell Road,
London SW7 4DN

Tickets are priced at £62.50

A special rate will be available for anyone attending the function
wanting to stay over night at the Hotel.
For any more information please call Barbara or Russell Poluck,
numbers above.

Darren Johnson represents the Green Party on the London Assembly and according to many drivers, is anti-taxi. See what you think after reading this...

Pollution and London Taxis

By Darren Johnson AM

I have spent the last decade raising concerns about the impact of air pollution on Londoner's health and the failure of politicians at all levels of government to do something about it. I am a Green Party member of the London Assembly. It is one of things I am elected to do. I use the figures produced by London Mayor Boris Johnson 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.

The result is that I get a lot of grief from cabbies who feel that I am always having a go at them. I'm not complaining about it. I can understand their reaction. Their cabs are their livelihood and for owner drivers it is a huge investment. When I highlight the need for new regulations or pollution tests, then they worry about who is paying the bill for it all?

Just for the record, I want to point out that on the issue of air pollution and how to deal with it, I have a better track record of asking the Mayor questions on behalf of people involved in the cab trade than any other Assembly member. When black cab drivers complain about the Public Carriage Office and Transport for London letting them down, I can understand many of their concerns. It has been a two-mayor problem in that neither Ken Livingstone nor Boris Johnson has moved fast enough or far enough. A whole series of mistakes has been made along the way by the PCO and both the current and former Mayor in handling London's air pollution problem. The biggest let-down is that innovation has been blocked, partly because of the rigid adoption of 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.

I have pushed both Ken Livingstone and Boris Johnson to put the environment first on this issue, but neither responded and cab drivers are now faced with having to sell their old vehicles and buy one of the expensive and still polluting TX series.

The infrastructure for gas fuels, like LPG, has not been supported. TfL have shown little willingness to support those drivers who for several years have wanted to reduce pollution by switching fuels rather than buying a new vehicle. Instead, cabbies have been required to fit clean-up devices of dubious worth.

I have asked over 20 questions of the Mayor, establishing that these filter devices only work properly when the engine is cleaned to high standards, but no checks are made on whether this is done. The devices remained untested on the road where they are faced with working under load. The lack of



such conformity testing and rigorous 'on the road' tests, have supported a tick box culture within the PCO, which has failed to deliver on pollution reduction. The result is the 15 year age limit ban, which the mayor has been forced to introduce. The Mayor's push for an electric taxi attracts column inches, but in the short term (and the timescale set for reducing pollution by the European Commission) sadly they will contribute very little towards real change. The Mayor's £1m pot of money for the electric cab got a lot of publicity when it was announced in 2009 and even more publicity when it was re-announced in 2010, but the last time I checked, none of it had been spent. The promise of an electric vehicle in the future has taken the place of a simple-to-fit hybrid device in the here and now.

Hybrid devices designed to fit existing engines sounded the most promising innovation of all the solutions to tackle air pollution in the short to medium term when I discussed it with TfL in 2007 and was being taken forward when Boris was elected in 2008. This device was cheap to install and designed to keep the engine ticking over when the taxi was idling.

Given that the cabs in inner London spend the majority of their time idling, rather than moving, this could potentially have been a cheap and very cost effective way of cutting down pollution dramatically. Unfortunately, the TfL procurement process was faulty and was challenged. Since then, the Mayor's office has simply dropped the project, despite the obvious benefits to cab drivers. This decade of failures by both mayors and by TfL has led to the current mess we are in. Pollution in London has not reduced fast enough and black cabs are still one of the major problems, despite the efforts by people involved in the cab trade to put forward positive solutions.

The failure of the Mayor to help fund a scrappage scheme for drivers forced to sell their old cab is just another let-down. However, if pollution levels do not get reduced quickly, then expect the 15 year age limit to turn into a 10 year age limit.

One area where black cabs drivers must take the blame is when they got Boris Johnson to make the abolition of six-monthly inspections a manifesto commitment. It may have saved cabbies a bit of money in the short term, but it has done long-term damage to the credibility of both the Mayor and the cab trade.

Over 2,300 cabs a year were being pulled up and fixed, as they did not even meet the minimal standards that we have. Given the number of cabs pulled off the road and cleaned up, scrapping the test sent out a very negative message that many cabbies really don't care.

My advice to everyone involved in the cab trade is not to make the same mistake again. Cabbies should be demanding that their health and that of their passengers is protected. The solutions are there, we just need the political will to make it all happen...



- Preparation of wills and codicils
- Elderly Client Advisers
- Inheritance Tax / advice about
- trust
- Lasting Power of Attorney

- Advice for executors/trustees/attorneys
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Or email acoakes@moonbeever.com or jhay@moonbeever.com

To discuss Wills, Inheritance Tax planning or any of the above range of legal issues.

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Jery's World



"Yers mate, I remember it well. We all kept sayin' that if the Mayor gave these blokes on bikes any more room, we might just as well swap lanes! And 'e did!"

Help for young people via national charity



Not *Call Sign's* usual type of story, but if just one young reader finds it of use, then it will have been worth publishing. Britain's biggest business networking organisation, *Business Networking International*, has established a charity partnership in London and Birmingham with *Get Connected*. BNI believes young people are vital to the UK's economic recovery and as *Get Connected* is the leading helpline service for under 25s in the UK, the organisations complement each other. Together they plan to apply the BNI principle of *Givers Gain* to engage over 1000 businesses to support children and young people in the community.

Established in 1985, BNI operates over 5,866 chapters with 139,971 members worldwide making it the most successful business referral organisation in the world.

Get Connected is the free, confidential helpline service for children and young people under 25 in the UK, who need help for any problem but don't know where to turn. Get Connected's service is available via phone, email, text, Webchat and WebHelp 24/7 and its online directory every day of the year. Calls to Get Connected are free of charge from all landline and mobile phone networks.

Get Connected's Helpline Volunteers help with a wide range of issues such as abuse, drugs, bereavement, bullying, depression, disability, eating disorders, emotional problems, rape, self-harm, homelessness, mental health, pregnancy, suicide and violence.

Last year, *Get Connected's* team of 118 volunteers were contacted by more than 60,000 young people – over 160 every day! Now awareness building, volunteer recruitment and fundraising are the charity's three vital goals in order to meet continuing demand.

The partnership will launch in Central London on Wednesday 12 October 2011 at The Long Acre pub, Covent Garden with the first ever BNI-Get Connected Quizzers *Gain Extravaganza*. Entry is open to all BNI members. Tickets are £10 per person and £50 per team of 5 in advance.

There will also be a BNI-Get Connected 'Dragons' Den' Dinner at the end of November 2011 with a chance to pitch to the 'Dragons' and win a fabulous prize. To register your interest as a BNI member or for Quizzer tickets, email oboyl@getconnected.org.uk.

Get Connected. Head Office: PO Box 51719, London, NW1 5UH.
If you need help call 0808 808 4994 from 1pm-11pm every day.

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**We make wheels turn
so you can earn.**

Several years ago, former **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Mickey Gordelier (ex-L27)** was given between one and three years to live after being diagnosed with *Motor Neurone Disease* (MND). He then began a long association with **Greenwich & Bexley Cottage Hospice** in Abbey Wood.

Mick told **Call Sign** that while he accepted that he needed hospice care, he had no intention of leaving this life anytime soon! Although he shared his time between the hospice and home with Sue, his loving wife of 32 years, Mick told us that the care he received at the hospice was nothing short of magnificent. So much so that he wrote to us last year to see if we could help a campaign the hospice was running – aptly named after Mickey because the suggestion of raising funds for another hospice nurse came from him! His aim was £30,000 and he beat that total raising almost £32,000.

Mickey also beat the odds with his own life, living with his illness far longer than the doctors thought until finally slipping away peacefully in his sleep on 22 August.

Mick began fundraising to demonstrate his appreciation of the care that he had been given at the Hospice. He told **Call Sign** at the time that the public just didn't know enough about hospices and palliative care and that the care he received there was just unique. As well as benefiting from the dedication and expertise of the nurses, Mick thoroughly enjoyed his visits to the Day Centre. He told us: "I feel I owe it to Sue, my family

Mickey Gordelier's brave fight for life ends



Mickey and Sue in happier times

and all the staff at the Hospice to carry on making the most of what I have. The level of care, support and friendship I receive at the Hospice is nothing less than magnificent and I've made so many friends from all walks of life. I'm proud to be here. If I had to say thank you to all the staff and volunteers who are now so close to my heart 1000 times, it would not be enough. I am so lucky and grateful to have met each of them and will always be in their debt."

His time at the hospice was often based around his appeal and last year he was quoted as saying:

"The most telling thing is that in the three years I've been coming here, I've not once watched the television. I come in to talk to people. Before you know it, it is quarter to three, you're putting your coat on and you're wondering where the time went!"

Mick never complained about his situation. He was 56 and together with Sue they had three children. He told this magazine last year that he'd had such an enjoyable life, a wonderful family, friends and even said how much he had enjoyed his job as a licensed taxi driver on Dial-a-Cab.












But on 22 August Mickey's brave fight for life came to a peaceful end.

Hospice care is free, so fund raising is how they have to get most of their much-needed revenue. As we all know – because Mickey told us last year – taxi drivers aren't famous for minding their own business! So Mickey Gordelier decided to step in and launch his appeal! What a memorial it would be to him if we all decided to help our local hospice whenever they asked for help. One way or another, Mickey will be there to thank you.

His journey for this world ended on 7 September at Eltham Crematorium. Rest in peace, Mick...

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In the *January* issue of *Call Sign*, **Dial-a-Cab** Board member **Tom Whitbread** told of his pride in son **Russell** and how hard he had worked to gain his flying wings. However, getting a job that involved flying turned out to be difficult until gaining a position with **Susi Air** - a fast growing company in Indonesia that flies passengers and cargo to remote areas around Borneo, Sumatra and Java - some with runways that are just rough airstrips in jungle clearings. Now *Call Sign* has been told that two of Susi Air's pilots were killed last month after their **Cessna 208B Grand Caravan I** crashed in the jungle shortly after taking off with food and diesel for a remote village that relies on the flights for provisions.

Tom Whitbread continues the sad story...

"In the January issue, I wrote about missing relatives over Christmas due to them working abroad because they could not get work in their chosen occupation in England. This was because my son, Russell now works for Susi Air in Indonesia.

On Friday 9 September I received news that a Susi Air flight from Wamena in Papua went missing in the jungle on route to Kenyam - usually a 40 minute flight. The two young pilots - Australian David Cootes and his co-pilot Tomas Munk from Slovakia - were doing their job of delivering supplies and diesel to the little village of Kenyam. They would have taken off with no thought of the tragedy that was to befall them just minutes later.

The weather over there changes quickly and can be deadly when cloud suddenly covers views of the nearby mountain range so the pilots always remain visual with the terrain by climbing above both the clouds and the mountains. It was then that the Susi Air GPS monitoring system showed the aircraft was not moving and changed colour; this alerted staff that a plane was in trouble. Because the area is so remote and mainly jungle, there are no repeater aerials for radio signals or mobile phones, so ground staff couldn't contact the aircraft.

After the flight time had passed, ground staff knew this was not a GPS failure and put into operation the procedure for a downed plane. A search and rescue plan was instigated, which began by sending a plane to the last known co-ordinates and within 45 minutes of starting, the plane was discovered.

Due to the harsh terrain, a helicopter was sent to the location to see what it could do, but that too caused a scare when it had to land due to bad weather and was unable to radio base to say all was ok. But the rescue continued into the next day and the helicopter had another try but could only land the rescue team in a village 3km from the crash area due to the jungle. The rescue team now had an 8-hour walk to the

Tom Whitbread's son in horror flight reminder



Villagers greet a Susi Air flight carrying provisions.

Inset pic: The wreckage of the crashed flight



downed plane. Several villagers having heard of the crash, begun walking to the site to see if they could help, while another rescue

team waited at Kenyam to start the hike to the crash scene at first light. A further village was also selected - some 8km from the crash site - with the thought that there might have been some easier paths through the jungle. The pilots would already have been without medical attention for a day, so if injured could be in dire need of help.

Susi Air sent out a plane to try and locate the exact crash site, but that was driven back by bad weather. However, when a break in the weather came, a helicopter pilot saw an area he thought he could use to land a rescue team and watched as villagers on the ground set about clearing the site. This was thought to be some 600 meters from the area they needed to reach, but due to heavy jungle they lost time and as nightfall came they camped and waited for the following day.

Due to bad weather and harsh jungle terrain, rescuers didn't reach the crash site until 07:30 on the Monday morning - two days after the crash - and their worst fears were realised when they found the bodies of David and Tomas. They then had the awful task of trying to get them to a landing space so the helicopter could get them back to a main airport for transportation to their homeland and to allow their relatives to bury them.

In my previous article, I said how lucky these pilots were to be flying over golden beaches, crystal clear ocean and having great views of the huge jungle. What an ideal job! It wouldn't go through your mind that the plane might crash in those idyllic

situations and then if it does, a medical team can be a long time coming as these areas have not yet reached the twentieth century, let alone the twenty first.

Russell, who has worked as David Cootes' co-pilot, was shocked to hear of the tragedy and very upset at losing two workmates and friends. But it hasn't changed his views of working in Indonesia. He is now back in the classroom in Pangandaran studying for his Captain's position, which will give him extra status. Has the crash put Russell off at all?

"Susi Air is a very safe airline and this is its first fatal accident. David and Tomas were friends and workmates, but this is what we do and I know they'd have expected us to carry on. There are people out here who rely on us just to carry out their daily lives. How could we not continue? If Susi Air used old banger planes it would be different, but they are an excellent, safety conscious company with one of the most modern fleets of aircraft and helicopters in the area, the oldest being 8 years old with the newest just 1 month."

Going back to my January article in *Call Sign*, a young gentleman named David Burns read it online (I don't think it's the same David that used to work in the call centre). After reading the article, he was so impressed by the description of the country and beaches together with the description of Susi Air, that he applied for a position with them! Soon after, he met Russell and told him that he had been very taken by my article and that was why he went to Indonesia.

So once again, well done Alan for putting the magazine online. I believe he has several thousand people worldwide who wait for the new issue each month!"

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Call Sign has heard of some strange pieces of advice given over the years regarding **Dial-a-Cab** drivers and the authorities that licence us, but we have to admit that the explanation given to **Bernie Silver (G08)** leaves it all standing by the proverbial mile.

Bernie has been on DaC since January 1975, but admits that the advice **London Taxis and Private Hire** recently offered him was the strangest he had ever heard in that time and left him open-mouthed in shock. That advice.....?

If your taxi fails then it will pass... but if it passes then you won't be able to licence it again!

Bernie's strange story began with the **September Call Sign** in which we published a list of cab registrations and what their final overhaul year would be as they approached the Mayor's 15 year rule. The chart also included a warning that drivers should get confirmation about their cab's finishing date, rather than just accept the chart as final.

According to the chart, Bernie's S-reg TX1 would get its last plate in 2013, whereas he was under the impression that the 15-year rule would make 2012 the last one for his cab. So Bernie phoned LTPH to try and get confirmation as to whether his last plate was in 2012 or 2013. His question was really whether the rule was 15 years or plates – the latter obviously giving him an extra 12 months and financially

A message from TfL/LTPH about your 15 year old cab's final overhaul...

"IT WILL ONLY PASS IF IT FAILS!"



Bernie's biggest problem now - how to get his cab to fail on something small...

it would obviously make a big difference.

Bernie explained to us that his cab was first registered on 12 August 1998 and assumed that 2012 would be his last plate as the end of that year would make fifteen years, so after

reading the piece in **Call Sign** he phoned LTPH to enquire – was it 2012 or 2013?

"They told me that if I put it in for an overhaul on the day the plate runs out in August 2013, it wouldn't be accepted as it would break the 15-year rule on expiry. Even if I 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."

So was that just because of the 15-year rule? Bernie shrugged his shoulders and continued with his big BUT...!

"BUT.... I was then told that if I was to take my 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 me up to July 2014. Yet if I took it up at the correct time, it wouldn't even be looked at. I mean, is that stupid or what???"

Bernie ended by telling **Call Sign** that in all his years as an owner, his priority had always been to get his cab up to a standard where it would pass its overhaul. Now, according to LTPH, he has to make sure it doesn't. Who said that you really couldn't make it up...!!!

TESSA JOWELL: "LET TAXIS INTO OLYMPIC LANES!"

Or it will cause tension between motorists....

According to Labour's Shadow Olympics minister, **Tessa Jowell**, the *Olympic Route Network* that will be used by athletes and VIPs during the 2012 Games could cause tensions between motorists throughout London while turning the capital into a two-class system.

The MP for Dulwich and West Norwood said a certain number of taxis should be able to access the ORN lanes, which have travelled to every Olympic Games since Atlanta in 1996 via the dictate of the *International Olympic Committee* – the group that will virtually run London during the Games tenure. The official spin on the necessity for ORN lanes is so competitors and VIPs can escape traffic jams and get to their events on time. Of course, many of those traffic jams during what is the quietest month of the year anyway will be actually caused by the ORN!

Ms Jowell pointed out that most visitors to the Olympic Park would travel by public transport but said that the rest had to be kept up-to-date with road closures and delays as a result of the ORNs. She also put forward an amendment to the *London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Bill*, allowing London deliveries to be made out of the usual allowed hours whilst the Games were on. Sports Minister Hugh Robertson said the Government would



Shadow Olympics Minister Tessa Jowell - Let taxis into ORN!

agree to the changes.

Tessa Jowell also told the Commons: "I think we should draw attention to those who have eligibility to use the Olympic lanes that actually the rest of London will be getting to the Olympic Park on the fantastic new transport system in which so much has been invested."

But the MP added: "I think we have got to anticipate that if there is a sense of two classes of travellers to the Olympic Park, those whose journeys are hell and those who glide down the Olympic lanes, it will very quickly become a source of tension because that's the kind of city that London is."

The IOC have been totally intransigent and refused to even discuss taxis and the ORN...

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Since the first trip in 1994, around 3,500 sick children have enjoyed the **WCHCD** annual **Children's Magical Taxi Tour** and together with police from both sides of the Channel, the convoy isn't just an unusual sight, it actually sends a feeling of warmth to anyone witnessing it – and that applies to those motorists who under normal circumstances would hoot in annoyance. But instead, they watch in admiration and hoot to show how delighted they are to see the unusual sight of smiling kids in London taxis!

This year's trip to Disneyland Paris saw around 100 taxis and several hundred children, all suffering from chronic and life-threatening illnesses, leaving Canary Wharf for their weekend at Disneyland Paris early on 23 September together with the usual accompaniments of the AA and London Ambulance NHS Trust vehicles and medical back up doctors and nurses, including specialist paediatric doctors and nurses from the hospitals where the children receive their treatment. Of course, the weekend would have to be in Dover without the annual generosity of P&O Ferries who take the convoy over to La belle France. M&O providing the children with spending money undoubtedly helps as well! In addition to all that, there was also a new *Master* in **Eddie Crossley**, with **Jim Rainbird (T25)** seeing his tenure ending the previous month.

The trip is all the more remarkable because the funding is raised by the volunteer group of committee members who organise the event each year and the taxi drivers who all give their time freely. At a time when things are tough out there financially, the charity was once again touched by the number of drivers who willingly donated their time to take part

Children's Magical Taxi Tour 2011

Off to Disneyland Paris we go!



"S'cuse me Goofy, can I have your autograph please!"

by English and French police, ambulance crews, the AA and a tuck wagon, the three day trip undoubtedly brought much happiness to the lives of those youngsters who are undergoing various treatments and therapies.

This year's trip was the 18th time the Magical Taxi Tour has taken place. Even

in the trip.

The ferry crossings are donated by P&O, the packed lunches by The Marriott Hotel West India Quay, with the sponsors names all emblazoned on the sides of the taxis making the trip.

After being collected and taken to Canary Wharf, the children and their carers enjoyed the usual *Big Breakfast* send-off by The Right Honorable Alderman Michael Bear. Escorted

the drivers who have made all of these trips find the journey a rewarding experience thanks to seeing the smiles on the faces of the children – and the grownups too!

You can learn more about the Magical Taxi Tour at www.magicaltaxitour.com where you will find details of previous trips and also how you can help by making a donation to help fund next year's outing.

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GOD SAVE THE KING

In the *August* edition of *Call Sign*, our editor replied to a letter in *Mailsbot* from **John Stowers (K40)** who questioned the future safeguarding of our senior accounts from predatory PH firms such as *Addison Lee*.

Before printing his reply, the editor asked individual Board members whether they agreed with his response and/or if they wanted to add anything. I agreed with his reply and as a passing comment claimed the solution in the short term would be to make all trips A/D and non-rejectable. I still agree with that statement, however had I cared to elaborate I would have also highlighted a far more serious threat to the future welfare of this Society.

I'm sure Mr Stowers and others are aware that the retention of clients is not just dependant on cost, service or the peripheral services supplied, but also continuity, strong management and especially rapport with the decision makers at large and important accounts. Building a rapport isn't easy; it requires skill, patience, perseverance and sincerity and once achieved constant hard work to keep it maintained.

It was around twenty odd years ago when I was in the process of building a *Sales and Marketing* department at DaC, which for the benefit of our newer members didn't exist before I came onto the Board. I was in my office early one morning when I received a phone call from a gentleman asking if I would care to meet him for a business lunch. He refused to give his name or the reason for the meeting. As head of Sales I was reluctant to turn down the likelihood of capturing a new client, so I asked when and where?

"Today 12:30," he replied and I'll have you collected. 12:30 on the dot a chauffeur driven Rolls Royce arrived at Brunswick House and drove me to *Scotts Restaurant*, where I was ushered to a table that was occupied by three men. Names were exchanged and it was suggested that we start by enjoying the lunch together with small talk and after which they would enlighten me on the reason for the meeting. Being partial to good food and quality wine - particularly if someone else was footing the bill - I readily agreed. Two hours later I was to discover that the three gentlemen represented a consortium involving many millions of pounds to start a Private Hire business. There was mention of purchasing 400 saloon cars, 300 new un-plated taxis and a number of motorbikes. They were offering me a position as Director of Sales and Marketing!

At the end of the very interesting meeting and I might add worrisome because minicabs were yet to be a serious threat, it was obvious that I wasn't being headhunted because they considered me to have the sales and business brain of Alan Sugar. Of course I had the sales experience of running my own business and that of being in the cab trade, but my value to them was my knowledge of Dial-a-Cab's entire client-base including Terms & Conditions, usage, costs and more importantly, the contact names and rapport I had with those names! They would certainly open doors. I had already been kicked off DaC's Board once at an AGM. I wasn't and still am not a popular Board member, so I had no moral obligation to the members that would prevent me from accepting their offer. But I refused simply because of my having a green

As this Society heads towards a crossroads, Allen Togwell asks...

WHAT OF THE FUTURE FOR DIAL-A-CAB???



badge and what that green badge meant to me. Plus the likely damage I would do to Dial-a-Cab, a Society built up by dedicated cab drivers who I had enormous respect for such as **Bonnie Martyn, Jack Taylor, Aubrey Siteman** and many others. Attitudes are different today of course, as proven by an ex-senior executive of ComCab who has a green badge but is now working for AL.

I mention the above because we now have a similar situation where there is a person on our Board who not only has a greater knowledge of our client base and a much bigger rapport with our senior clients than I had, but also has an in-depth knowledge of every other department within our company including our technology, very much like that of a CEO. And for those who are not familiar with the responsibilities of a *Chief Executive Officer* it covers operations, IT, sales, marketing, financing, creation of company culture, human resources, compliance with safety regulations, DP, PR, in fact almost everything to do with running a major company.

Of course the person I refer to is our Chairman, **Brian Rice**, who made it known from the start of his Chairmanship that he would be acting more like an MD than a Chairman of the old mould, and with the blessing of the Board he was given the freedom to do exactly that - a blessing incidentally that involved several Board members forfeiting their jobs and consigning themselves to attending Board meetings only, while others accepted having their hours reduced. In my case that was down to two days a week, until such time as it was out-sourced to one of a dozen firms in just Hackney alone that could do the work I do.

The only other full time board member apart from Brian Rice is **Keith Cain**, who is responsible for the Control Centre, a department that operates 24/7. These are positive changes compared to how the Society operated for the past 50-odd years.

So where lays the threat to this Society's future? The threat in my opinion - and it is only my opinion - lays in Brian Rice suddenly deciding he's had enough of the crap from some of these morons within the cab industry and takes early retirement, or he gets hit by a bus or even takes a senior position with a competitor with all the perks that involves, be it within our trade or PH.

Our Society has enjoyed considerable success during Brian Rice's tenure, apart from changes in management, a huge increase in

turnover, acquiring state of the art technology with exciting plans for the future, particularly regarding our on-board technology. But - and excuse the pun - Dial-a-Cab still needs to go that extra mile. Being a friendly society with a Board of management who are voted bi-annually onto a role, which in reality is meant to be secondary to driving a cab, was often used by our competitors who claimed Board members of DaC, by having no vested interest and with policies being dictated by members, lacked the enthusiasm, desire and even the power to meet a client's needs.

In 2 years' time - 2013 - Dial-a-Cab will have been operating as a radio taxi service for 60 years; we have an impressive new building, we lead the field in technology, we have a fleet of vehicles and drivers whose geographical knowledge is second to none, yet we have a management structure that was introduced in 1953 when we had less than a dozen drivers.

Over the years there have been members who were wary of Board members making themselves *jobs for the boys*. If that ever was true, then it certainly is no longer the case. The Society has grown too big to allow it to happen.

For example, many years ago a member could be elected onto the Board and immediately become the Treasurer. Today, that role is undertaken by an employed certified accountant, a position that a member will never be able to replace. When that happened, we should have made other radical changes such as employing an MD/CEO. We need to instil confidence amongst our clients that we have people in place who are able to make long terms plans and to be there to see those plans take effect. Having said that, finding a CEO with the right qualifications and knowledge of our industry won't be easy because it isn't just the knowledge that is required. Building a rapport with senior clients, networking, meeting the right people, wearing a dinner suit almost as often as wearing a business suit takes a special type of character. It requires confidence, panache or as my Jewish colleagues would say when I was in the schmutter business *Chutzpah* - a characteristic that you've either got or you haven't! It isn't something you learn.

Should our Chairman decide to leave Dial-a-Cab suddenly, whether by circumstance or design, there is I regret to say nobody amongst those eligible - myself included and I mean no disrespects to my colleagues on the Board - capable of stepping into the position that Brian Rice has had for the past 15 years to develop. The consequences of this would mean electing a Chairman of the old school, Board members being allocated duties, politics rearing its ugly head again and Dial-a-Cab reverting back to how it was during my early years on the Board, which was a nightmare. The Society won't fold, of course, but from experience I feel with weak management and nobody to drive it forward, Dial-a-Cab will fall further and further behind - not just RTL and ComCab, but far worse, the top firms in the private hire sector.

Allen Togwell
DaC Marketing

According to a report in the London *Evening Standard*, the **London Taxi Driver's Association** - the trade's largest organisation - are apparently on the verge of winning concessions with regard to getting taxis priority in the battle with *Transport for London* over road restrictions during the 2012 Games where the *Olympic Route Network* is expected to cause probably the biggest traffic chaos this city has ever seen.

In return, London's licensed taxi drivers will drop a veiled threat made earlier this year to blockade the capital during the Olympics.

The article claimed that after talks with the LTDA, Transport for London - who are working with the IOC and LOCOG - is close to agreeing to make taxis exempt from the rules that until now had given official Games vehicles priority on a 109-mile road network. Some of the exemptions are said to include allowing taxis to use a third of the network where the lanes are shared with buses. We would also be allowed to turn right across the Marylebone Road to access the West End, while TfL are also looking at ways to make it easier for taxis to pick up and drop off at both Baker Street and Park Lane.

Speaking to the LTDA, Call Sign was told

LTDA win "concessions over ORN"

in return for dropping blockade threat...?



that talks have been ongoing for over a year and that contrary to the ES story, nothing definite has come up yet but they do expect that some concessions will be made.

With the Olympic road restrictions now revealed, this trade will need all the help it can get. There will be times when taxis west of Hyde Park Corner will need to travel east, yet there will be times when Constitutional Hill,

The Mall and Birdcage Walk will all be shut together with the section of Pall Mall from St James Street to St James Square. That is in addition to Westminster Bridge and the Victoria Embankment containing an ORN, just as Park Lane will also have together with many side streets around the Hilton and Dorchester being closed or partially shut.

If your passenger wants to catch the fast train from St Pancras to Stratford, well you will have to negotiate that without using Russell Square, three sides of which will be used to park coaches with the fourth side (Southampton Row) in use as an ORN with taxis considered to be undesirable! And contrary to TfL's promise that restrictions will begin just two days before the Games, Russell Square will shut three weeks before the starting date! The word chaos may have to be redefined...

TAXI DEMO AGAINST LOCOG

UCG organise it in hours via tweets and texts

The *United Cabbies Group* recently organised a demonstration outside the **Grange St Paul's**, but contrary to messages that several **Dial-a-Cab** drivers put out over the Society's terminals, it wasn't a demo against the hotel because it has no taxi rank, but very unusually, against some of the people inside the hotel!

It was called after the group were told that a meeting was to take place at the hotel by LOCOG - the *London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games*. The demonstration was to show what the trade feels about the *Olympic Route Network* and the banning of taxis from it during the 2012 London Games.

The majority of drivers were contacted via tweets and texts and while *Call Sign* hasn't seen exact numbers, drivers we have spoken to told us that they estimated around 80 - 90 taxis turned up but that the congestion caused around the area was more than enough to cause havoc.

According to the UCG, it was pointed out to a LOCOG official that the London taxi trade are aggrieved at the banning of taxis from the ORN. With the Paralympics following the main Games, it was also pointed out that the licensed taxi trade were 100% wheelchair compatible in a way that no other transport is, yet we have been banned!

The demo ended after 45 minutes so as not to cause too much inconvenience to the public.



LTPH REMINDERS

Two reminders from London Taxis and Private Hire / Transport for London regarding the cycling superhighway and setting down in Old Broad Street...

We are aware that there has been some confusion regarding access to Old Broad Street, EC2 and some drivers have been issued with Penalty Change Notices (PCNs). In addition, enforcement of the Cycle Superhighways has commenced so we're issuing the updates below to help drivers avoid being issued with a PCN.

Enforcement of Cycle Superhighway

The cycle lanes along Millbank and Grosvenor Road, which make up part of route 8 of the Cycle Super Highways, have Traffic Management Orders

in place prohibiting vehicles from driving in them. The orders are in place between 07:00 - 19:00, Monday to Friday and these lanes are now being enforced. Taxis and private hire vehicles can still enter the lanes to pick-up and drop-off passengers. Further information about the Cycle Superhighway routes can be found on the TfL website at www.tfl.gov.uk.

Setting down in Old Broad Street for Liverpool Street Station

Access to Old Broad Street has been partly restricted. Taxis and private hire vehicles are allowed to drop off passengers in the section of Old Broad Street between London Wall and Broad Street Avenue but should not pass Broad Street Avenue to avoid being issued with a penalty charge notice.

Lee Pearce:
"I think the
knee is back
to normal!"



Happy times at Wembley with the FA Cup – now Lee is happy again at Walton Casuals

Dial-a-Cab driver **Lee Pearce (J71)** was *Wembley Football Club's* goalkeeper for several years. In fact at one point, **Call Sign** was a part-sponsor of the team and our huge Dial-a-Cab posters scattered around the ground were shown on the *BBC's Match of the Day* when Wembley began their FA Cup run several years ago and the football program showed highlights. At that match and as sponsors, we were introduced to former Spurs striker **Garth Crooks** and had photos taken with the FA Cup!

Eventually Lee moved on and having stopped at *Ashford* and *Egham* amongst others, Lee has now been signed by former *Southampton* and *Chelsea* player, **Neil Shipperley**, who is the manager at *Ryman Division One* South team, **Walton Casuals**.

However, last season had been a disastrous one for Lee when a cruciate ligament went and he played very few matches. However, when Neil Shipperley heard about Lee's plight, he put Walton's medical team onto it and they supervised a training regime that, according to Lee, has strengthened his knee – although Lee admits that a game he played last month was probably a mistake as the knee was in constant pain.

But on 19 September, Lee was given the call to ask if he felt ready to play again and he appeared for Walton reserves. He made several good saves but more importantly the knee posed no problems.

"I was delighted with the way things went," Lee told **Call Sign**. "I felt a bit rusty at first but as soon as I made my first save, I felt fine and at the end of the match the knee still felt good. So now I'm back and aiming for a first team place!"

Simon grabs West Ham player..

AFC Wimbledon manager **Terry Brown** together with his head coach, **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Simon Bassey (C79)**, recently watched and immediately grabbed on loan, young **West Ham** starlet **Callum McNaughton**.

Mr Brown said he was first alerted to Callum McNaughton by a good friend of his and after doing some research with Hammers' coach **Ian Hendon**, Terry and Simon Bassey went to watch Callum playing against **Queens Park Rangers** earlier in the week.

The Wimbledon manager said: "Callum had a fine game marking **Heidar Helgusson**. He won a number of aerial battles with him and this has proved an ideal opportunity to bring the lad in for a short loan to cover the fact that we have two centre halves currently unavailable and a heavy work load during September at least."

Simon added that Callum had trained very well with the squad and even for the short term loan, considered that he would be a useful acquisition.

Terry Brown continued: "Coming out of West Ham, you would expect Callum's distribution to be good and after watching him play, I would also say that his aerial ability is one of his main strengths. I am sure he will do very well for us in his time here."

AFC Wimbledon may well be hoping to extend the loan period. In the meantime, the team have settled into their football league status well having been promoted from the Conference last season in only their ninth season of existence. Now in the **Npower league 2**, they are currently just a few points of the play-off places.



AFC Wimbledon head coach and DaC driver Simon Bassey. Inset: West Ham starlet Callum McNaughton



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Sid Gold (ex-E20) recently celebrated his 90th birthday with 50 family and friends around him. Sid had open heart surgery almost two years ago at the age of 88, while several years earlier he caused shock and concern after being mugged and left lying on the pavement in Cheshire Street by two jobs – one of whom held a gun to Sid's head. They attempted to rob him of his night's takings after he had left his cab briefly to pick up a cardboard box he saw lying around and which he needed to put a few bits in.

As he lay on the ground, one pushed a gun to his head and asked him for his wallet. Sid had fallen onto his back and cut his arm hitting the ground. As one of the two tried to push their hands into his pocket, Sid kicked out catching him on his shins. Meanwhile the other was looking through his cab! Then two cars drove up and the kids ran off empty handed. The next night Sid was back at work and phoning **Call Sign** to ask if we wanted a story!

Then in 2008, after 42 years and at the age of 87, Sid finally announced he was leaving **Dial-a-Cab**.

"At 87 years of age, it's a bit of a responsibility," he told **Call Sign** at the time, "and although I have regularly

passed my PCO medicals with flying colours, driving a radio taxi carries much responsibility with it. Dial-a-Cab has been a big part of my life and I am so sad to let it go, but that time had to come one day."

Then just 12 months later, we had a phone call from Sid's son telling us that his father was undergoing open heart surgery. His chances were slim, yet as each week passed he got stronger until the day he was discharged. He even joked to **Call Sign** that he would have to wait 6 months before he could get his licence back – at least we think he was joking!

Sid was born at the London Hospital in 1921 and at the time of leaving DaC, was



Sid at 90

London's oldest driver. He began driving in 1939 but never passed a test as there were none then. He was in the RAF throughout the war although not as a flyer.

Leaving the RAF in 1946, Sid went into radio and TV sales in addition to repairs from two different shops in Brick Lane.

"In the early 1960s, I decided to do the Knowledge of London on a part-time basis because of my other businesses. I did it with two friends, but not on a bike - we bought an old FX3 between us and did the KoL in that!"

Sid joined DaC in 1965 and was here for 43 years. From everyone at **Call Sign**, happy birthday Sid...

Photo here and on cover courtesy Harvey Lexton Photography & Video

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Commercial Banks throughout Europe were told by the ECB (European Currency Board) that they must hold a certain amount of *Sovereign Debt* (debt that is held by sovereign nations such as Greece). This then forced these banks to loan huge amounts to countries like Greece and Ireland. The Greeks used the money for almost ten years, providing a disastrous financial fest to just about anybody, including the provision of full pensions for virtually everyone over 50 years of age as well as funding a bloated public sector. Now the chickens have finally come home to roost.

The Italians are in much of the same boat, they borrowed a huge amount knowing that for ten years the average GDP (gross domestic product) in the Italian economy was averaging just one percent! In no way could they come even near to paying off the interest on the debt they were borrowing. In fact, Italy has mustered just 0.3% growth between 1999 and 2007 and now is weighed down with a public debt burden of 120% of GDP.

One argument was that banks were not at fault when they were told to take on the sovereign debt of those countries but - and it's a very big but - they knew that before the Euro came into being that the rates charged on these loans to countries likely to default such as Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain or 'PIGS' were always much higher than those charged to more fiscally sound countries such as Germany, France and the UK. So if they always knew of this, why did they lend! The most likely answer was that they would receive a much higher rate of return (interest) from countries like Greece, who ordinarily would have been naturally downgraded compared to the big three in Europe. The answer

We've heard politicians and "experts" talk about it, but this is...

A CAB DRIVER'S VIEW OF THE DEBT CRISIS!



Are we heading towards an even bigger financial catastrophe than the last one?

put simply was just greed.

To overcome the problem, one solution is for the current debt holders of all these nations to take a major 'haircut' (serious financial loss to bond holders and institutions both private

and government), but with pressure from the centre, the current ECB will not allow it because many of the banks and institutions in Britain, France and Germany hold a massive amount of this debt already. RBS (Royal Bank of Scotland) is one such bank that could fail; all of this could lead to another catastrophic financial situation, even larger than Lehman Brothers.

So what is a cab driver's answer?

Well I just drive a cab, but even I know that someone somewhere has to stand up and be counted, otherwise the problem will only get worse - much worse. When financial institutions lent money to countries such as Greece, Portugal and the other weaker EU nations, they were actually entrusting their money to subprime borrowers (an American term for high risk individuals) masquerading as high quality sovereign nations. Too many people believed the propaganda of a brave new world with financial deregulation spewed out by supporters from the US and EU. It is always thus that the majority of people will convince themselves that the world, especially the financial world, has changed but in fact basic rules of finance and economics have always existed. What you cannot afford... you cannot have!

David Paul Baker (D22)

CAB SALES BATTLE!

Following the increase in price of the latest Mercedes Euro 5 Vito, the London Taxi Company's TX4 appears to have pulled away in terms of new cab sales.

Released figures show that **May 2010** saw 67 TX4s against 26 Vitos sold. One year later in **May 2011**, Vito sales were almost unchanged (down 1 to 25) whereas the TX4 shot up almost 30% to 93 vehicles.

June 2010 saw 32 Vitos sold with the TX4 showing sales of 89 taxis. In **June 2011** the figures showed the Vito up 6 to 38 sales while the TX4 went downwards to 80 cabs sold. **July 2010** saw 33 Vitos sold with the TX4 totalling 82. Twelve months on and **July 2011** saw the Vito drop to 25 and the TX4 also go downwards to 67.

August 2010 saw 25 Vitos against 84 TX4s but in **August 2011** the £42,000 Vito price tag seemed to have sunk in with just 24 Vitos sold, whereas the TX4 saw a 32% jump up to 111 cabs sold.

With the TX4 scheduled to shoot up by £3000 early next year as the Euro 5 version hits the market, comparisons will be interesting...



The TX4 is currently leading the sales battle



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

On 8th September, **Eddie Crossley** was installed as **Master** of **The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers** for the coming year. Eddie has been involved in the cab trade for over 40 years including time as a cab driver, which gives him an insight into the trade and driver's needs. His family heritage can be traced back over 150 years of involvement with the hackney carriage trade. Today he is a proprietor and runs the **Richmond Road Cab Centre** along with his son Paul and their team. The business has now been trading for 75 years.

At the Installation ceremony prior to the dinner, last year's Master **Jim Rainbird (T25)** wished Eddie a good year. He said his year had been memorable and enjoyable. Becoming Master of a Livery company is an honour that is earned by Liverymen within the

As DaC's Jim Rainbird steps down and becomes a Past Master...

EDDIE CROSSLEY BECOMES NEW WCHCD MASTER



Outgoing Master Jim Rainbird ponders with new Master Eddie Crossley

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

Kupkake's Korner



Just what is our licence for???

I found a cab rank
but couldn't stop there,
it was full of PH - all touts.
There were no coppers
or traffic wardens,
in fact no law enforcement about!

They have no regard
for our status
only contempt for the law.
How have we got here,
why do they hate us,
what the hell is our licence for?

If there's no money
increase PH licence,
they are the ones breaking the law!
Then hire attendants
to ticket offenders,
protect us or we'll be no more.

We've done the Knowledge
proved our commitment
showed we're from the right stuff.
We need some enforcing
and licence endorsing
I say to TfL - enough is enough!

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company. The Court of Assistants, who support the Master and the Wardens in their duties, are the organising body of the company. There are opportunities for members within the WCHCD to sit on various committees within the Company, including Education, Magical Taxi Tour, Charity, PR, Awards and Membership. The WCHCD continues to thrive because of the commitment of its members, but new members are always welcomed.

Following the Installation of The Master, the Upper Warden was installed. This year the position is held by former DaC driver **Brenda Bartlett**, whilst that of Renter Warden is held by **Graham Woodhouse** and Lower Warden is ComCab's **Malcolm Paice**. Following the brief ceremonies, two new Freemen were welcomed to WCHCD - DaC driver **Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)** and M&O General Manager **Mark Brown**. DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** resigned his position as Lower Warden several months ago after deciding that it would be unfair to the WCHCD if he had to share Master duties in two years' time with that of being DaC Chairman, as DaC would always have to take priority.

Brian remains a member.

Freemen of the Company are always encouraged to take the Livery and so it was when Eddie Crossley clothed **Matthew Cheyne**, **Paul Collins**, **Stephen Plumb** and Eddie's own son **Paul Crossley**.

Ceremonies concluded, the new Master and his Wardens welcomed guests on board the HQS Wellington for his Installation dinner. A reception was held on deck before eating. The principle guest speaker on this occasion was **George Zhao**, deputy CEO at Manganese Bronze. George told guests how pleased he was with the progress that has been made in the joint co-operation with Geely to ensure the future of the iconic traditional black cab. Overseas operations and sales continued to grow and the factory making parts in Shanghai now supplies the Coventry factory where the TX4 is built for the UK market.

More info on joining the WCHCD is on website www.hackneycarriagedriverscompany.com or you can contact The Clerk, Mary Whitworth on 01494 765922...

The man motor cycle fans call 'Rocket' Ron Haslam is offering Dial-a-Cab drivers a special deal at his Silverstone motor racing course!

The **Honda Ron Haslam Race School** offers the experience of riding on the Silverstone international racing circuit and an introduction to high performance bikes, giving you the opportunity to improve your skills and understand the finer points of riding. They offer expert tuition with experienced instructors at Silverstone, one of Europe's finest bike racing facilities.

The aim is to give you an enjoyable and memorable time, whilst also having improved your riding skills and giving you a better knowledge of these magnificent machines and the circuit.

Together with Honda motorcycles, 'Rocket' Ron's school has designed a programme to suit all needs from the introductory through to a more advanced level, catering for all ages and abilities.

Dial-a-Cab driver Paul Hodge (D46) recently went up to Northamptonshire and ended up trying two of Rocket Ron's courses and told Call Sign of his experience.

Paul is something of an adrenalin junkie having completed over 100 sky dives and bungee jumps, but he was looking for something else to get his pulse racing and someone mentioned Ron Haslam's motorcycle racing school. The last time Paul had been on anything that relied on just two wheels was when he was on the Knowledge – and his 59cc Honda Express was nothing like the type of superbikes available on 'Rocket' Ron's course where you can take out a **Honda CBR600RR** machine - or if you really are good enough (and brave enough!) the awesome £11,000+ **Honda CBR1000RR Fireblade!**

Paul tried two courses in the day. The **'On Track'** course takes riders from aged 12 upwards and introduces them to motorcycling. Everything is provided; you only need to bring yourself - and payment of course! Paul began on the school's fleet of new **CB500s** (13 – 14 year olds will start on smaller engines but must have had some experience on a motorbike and must be able to ride using clutch and gears). The cost for the course was £189.

It began at 8.15am. By the start time, Paul had kitted up and been through a briefing session before going onto the pit lane to meet his designated instructor. For safety reasons, between 0900 and 0940 there was no other course traffic apart from those on the **On-Track** course. Paul's comment to **Call Sign** that it was frightening failed to stop him touching 110mph on the straight! Neither did it stop him from putting his name down for the afternoon **Premier** course where they use the more-powerful **Honda CBR600RR** machines complete with ABS.

The **Premier** is a more advanced session with longer track time than the **On-Track** experience. It also has a more intense instruction course that gives the rider a greater knowledge of machine and riding techniques, a detailed classroom debriefing, plus a more in depth introduction to the track and the bike.

That was followed by the bit Paul had been waiting for - re-location to Stowe corner where the CBR600RR racing bikes were waiting and there's no holds barred so far as speed is concerned, but the track sessions are followed with de-briefs in-between as your speed picks up and as your skills develop. The 'Premier' course lasts for half a day and involves going what Paul described as REALLY fast – hinting to us that it made his morning session's 110mph feel rather sluggish! But he did add that with the extra speed comes far more tuition compared with the **On-Track** course. The Premier course will set you back £279, so together with the morning's £189, it amounted to a fairly hefty day's cost of £468. However, Paul told us that if doing both

PAUL HAS A BASH AT ROCKET RON'S!



Paul returns to normality after a day's motorcycle racing!

courses and you tell Rocket Ron that you are with **Dial-a-Cab**, there will be a welcome discount of £100 bringing the total down to £368 and that makes a brilliant present for a driver's birthday – or of course for those like Paul who have adrenalin instead of blood! 'Rocket' Ron will also throw in a pillion ride - but as a warning, he goes 60mph faster than anyone else!

But even Paul didn't book in (at least not yet) for the school's ultimate course – the **Elite** – should you wish to hone your skills further and going onto the awesome **Honda CBR1000RR Fireblade** complete with telemetry, its one to one instruction and top speed of an eye watering 180mph! For that, you must have taken the Premier course within the previous two years.

Complimentary refreshments and snacks are provided through the day and you will receive a Ron Haslam Race School certificate to take home as a record of your achievement at the school. You will also receive a goody bag at the end of your course!

Paul's final comment to **Call Sign** seemed pretty self-explanatory:

"The whole day was just brilliant and worth every penny but don't forget to say you are with **Dial-a-Cab** to make it even better. I should add that for constipation sufferers, this could also be a great cure...!"

You can read more about Rocket Ron Haslam's courses at www.haslamraceschool.com and some leaflets are in Drivers Reception...



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As taxis prepare for two MOTs a year...

ARE CARS GOING OVER TO ONE MOT EVERY TWO YEARS???

Most **Dial-a-Cab** drivers know that as of 2013, all taxis will be required to have two full MOTs tests every year plus what has been referred to as a "basic" LTPH examination. These will replace the current once yearly overhaul. As **Call Sign** understands it, the MOTs can be carried out at local garages rather than inspection centres.

However, just as drivers consider a future of MOT testing for their taxis, the **Department for Transport** are said to be considering an extension between the intervals of MOT testing for cars and vans up to 3.5t from three to four years for the initial test following purchase and then every two years instead of once yearly.

Naturally, many car retail organisations under the banner of the *Retail Motor Industry Federation* are against any increase because while they correctly mention the safety aspect, it also seems reasonably obvious that those concerned about the possibility of spending an exorbitant amount on having their car "passed" and who would possibly have decided on a new car instead, could possibly decide to wait if MOTs were every two years instead.

Whilst we do not disagree with the RMIF view that safety should be a paramount requirement, **Call Sign** feels that if the DfT do decide to allow cars one MOT every two years, then at the very least, London's licensed taxis should be asked to undertake just one MOT test each year rather than two in addition to the LTPH basic check.

A spokesperson for the MfT told **Call Sign** that at present they have made no final decision...

Department for
Transport

FRANKIE SHAPIRO

Over the past few months, **Call Sign** has been supporting **Melinda**, the daughter of **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Laurie Shapiro (H62)**. She successfully completed the *Race for Life* through the City of London on 12 June in aid of *Cancer Research UK* taking 56 minutes to complete the 5K course that began at the Guildhall.

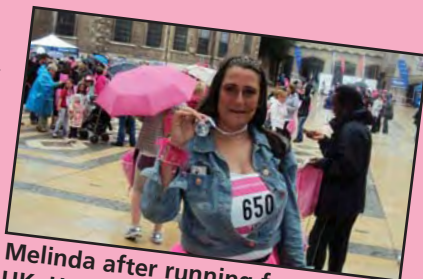
Dial-a-Cab drivers contributed generously to the collection tin in Driver Reception and helped Melinda raise over £850.

At the time, this magazine wrote simply that the Shapiro family knew all about the battle against cancer, while Melinda herself told **Call Sign** how touched she had been by the donations placed into the tin.

What we didn't say was that at the time of the run, Laurie's wife and Melinda's mother, Frankie, was battling cancer – something she had been bravely doing for two years.

Sadly, Frankie's battle for life ended in September with two highly emotional speeches from Laurie and son Ian (H62J), at her funeral.

To all the Shapiro family, our deepest sympathy for the loss of a very brave woman...



Melinda after running for Cancer UK. Her mum was battling cancer at the time...

Manchester taxi drivers face retraining... BECAUSE THEY USE SATNAVS!

Manchester's licensed taxi drivers – who undertake a shorter version of a London-type Knowledge and drive the same taxis as us – could face stricter training amid fears they have lost their way thanks to their love of sat navs!

Licensing officials in the city are considering a crackdown on drivers after a series of failures have been reported by both officials and passengers. One officer at Manchester council's taxi licensing department claimed that once the drivers had undertaken the Manchester Knowledge they were no longer paying attention to where they were going, but relied more and more on their satnav systems. A new report also claims that drivers are no longer developing their route skills and are relying instead on satellite navigation technology for journey planning.

Passenger complaints also claimed that Manchester drivers were not disability aware and a voluntary course at Manchester College to create an awareness class was ditched because too few drivers showed any interest.

Now general training is to be reviewed. That will include disability awareness training and basic route knowledge testing.



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 some-

Preferential rates for legal services

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

thing 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:

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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...

I've lost count of the number of times I'm asked by friends, colleagues and drivers what I recommend as the best methods of protecting yourself against online threats. The trouble for both layman and techie alike is that there are so many different products out there with so many different combinations that it's overwhelming knowing which products to use and how best to use them. Add to the mix the seemingly endless bombardment of viruses, Trojans and worms, it's no wonder a large proportion of computer users are infested with all manner of nasties.

In the 21st century, protecting your computer and your online identity cannot be achieved by one product or one method. The only way to counteract the myriad of risks out there is to have a multi-speared approach to online and offline safety. There are many different strategies out there, so I'm not going to be so arrogant as to claim that my strategy is the best one. However, I've worked in IT for 12 years and been a heavy computer/Internet user for 16 years and I've *never* had a virus or lost any data in all that time.

The 10-Step strategy

1. Change your DNS server addresses from your standard provider's to those of **OpenDNS**. This is a company that provides free DNS services to the home user. Essentially, DNS is what allows you to browse to a web address; it does the lookup for you, directing you to the correct server to view the content you're looking for. OpenDNS by default blocks all malicious and dodgy websites it knows of, updating its databases hourly. If you sign up for a free account, you can even configure further categories to block (like porn, gambling, weapons etc), which is an excellent way of protecting your little ones from accidentally viewing unsavoury content online. Go to www.opendns.com for more info.

2. Make sure you are behind a hardware firewall. This should be done as standard; your Internet Service Provider should provide you with a router for your Internet connection, so the firewall should be on already. But check with them to be sure and also enable Windows firewall as well – it doesn't hurt to be doubly protected.

3. Buy and install some decent anti-virus software. If you wonder why some anti-virus software is cheap as chips in the High Street, it's because the software is probably rubbish! Don't rely on this junk. Use industry-strength anti-virus software and know you're protected! It's better to spend a bit extra on anti-virus software and be protected with up-to-date protection. My recommendations are **Sophos** (www.sophos.com) or **F-Secure** (www.f-secure.com). All this other "all-in-one" protection is not worth it, in my experience. You don't need software that provides anti-virus, firewall, anti-malware, parental controls all in one package because in my experience all-in-one packages are more likely to go wrong and mess up your computer. I place my trust in "one application, one job." Windows provides a suitable firewall already for free, as does your router. OpenDNS provides you with parental control for free. Sophos or F-Secure provide you with anti-virus, anti-malware protection.

4. Don't use Internet Explorer. Use **Firefox** or **Google Chrome** and install **AdBlock Plus** (a free add-on available for both), which will block

With the internet now more popular than ever, DaC's Network Administrator Jon Winterburn leaves gaming for this month and explains the best ways to...

PROTECT YOURSELF ONLINE



out all adverts on web pages, protecting you against infected ads as well as making the web page easier on the eye!

5. Don't download and install free applications on your computer unless you are sure they are safe and you've either read the terms and conditions or you have it on good authority that the software is legitimate. Think about it – very few developers will give software for absolutely nothing. Unless the software is open source (community-driven) or provided by a big firm with the hope of getting you to buy the full package, there's got to be a price somewhere. If you're not paying in cash, you're likely paying by allowing them to install adware at best and malware / spyware at worst. You don't need all those toolbars in your web browser! The address bar and search bar that come as standard with your web browser are sufficient – trust me, you really don't need additional search bars cluttering up your browser.

6. Don't click links in emails. Seriously, don't click them. It doesn't matter if the email is from someone you know and trust – don't click links, because even though they may look legitimate, they could very well be hiding a malicious web address. For example, the link may say www.paypal.com (which is fine) but behind that (if you click it), could be www.dodgy-thieving-gits.com (for example)! Your best bet is to copy and paste the address into your Web browser. That way, what you see is what you get.

7. Don't pirate software, movies, music or games. Downloading pirated material is damaging for the creator (loss of earnings), damaging for those who don't pirate (costs rise to compensate) but most of all, it is very risky for the end-user. Yes, you could probably download the latest film, game or application for nothing, but as I've said before – everything has a price! Often malicious users will alter the pirated content to contain a hidden virus which will allow you to use it as normal, but also infect your computer and steal your data in the background.

8. Don't re-use your passwords. This is the most widespread security risk I have seen. Because users have so many passwords to remember, they often share passwords across

websites (like making their Facebook and Twitter passwords the same) or their passwords are guessable words. This is bad practice; if your account is hacked on one website, the hacker will try the same credentials on other websites. The best thing to do is download the free software **KeePass** (<http://keepass.info>) and create a password database within the software. Then you can create complex, random passwords for all your accounts (which you don't have to remember) and protect them all in this database with one master password (which you do need to remember). Once this is done, whenever you want to log into a website, you just need to log in to KeePass and copy the password for the relevant website and paste it into the password prompt on the website. This way, no two passwords are the same, they're complex and secure, you don't have to remember lots of password (only one) and your accounts are better protected. I've been using this method for a year now and highly recommend it.

9. Protect your home network. If your router has wireless capability and you don't need wireless, turn it off. If you do need wireless for your laptop or other device, then make sure that your wireless password is strong – not a memorable or easy to guess word. Ensure that encryption and password protection is on and that the encryption is at least WPA, preferably WPA2 – **don't use WEP as this is easily hacked**. You can configure this on your router (ask your ISP for help if you're not sure where this is). Don't share your wireless key / password with anyone else and change it regularly. Remember, if cyber-crime is committed on your Internet connection, you can be held responsible if you didn't suitably protect your wireless network.

10. Backup, backup, backup! I cannot iterate this enough. If the worst should happen and your computer is infected with a nasty virus, it's only a matter of time before it becomes even more infected, or worse, your data gets stolen. The best thing you can do is run a regular backup (once a week or once a month). You can either use the built-in backup software in Windows or if you want to back up your entire hard drive as a snapshot image you can restore back to, then download the free **DriveImage XML** from <http://www.runtime.org/driveimage-xml.htm> and buy a removable hard drive that is bigger than your computer's hard drive, then backup your computer. That way, if you do get infected you can simply wipe your computer clean and restore from backup without having to reinstall Windows, all applications and potentially lose your valuable files.

Remember, this strategy will only work if you:

Adhere strictly to the strategy (or to your modified/improved version of it)

Remain vigilant online at all times

Keep your computer and all software updated and all your files backed up

I hope this helps!

Jon Winterburn
DaC Network Administrator

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 August 1987 and to a time when Dial-a-Cab were preparing to go data...

From Call Sign, August/September 1987

Data Dispatch here we come!

Since the signing of the contract with Mobile Data International (MDI) of Vancouver, things have been moving at a fair old trot! An assortment of taxi meters of all shapes and sizes have been purchased by MDI, wiring diagrams of those meters obtained along with wiring maps of all Carbody's taxis and of course the Metro Cammel Wayman cab.

A mobile data terminal, especially designed for ODRTS, has been submitted to the PCO for their initial view and the helpful advice given by them has been paramount in our getting closer to the day when full approval can be given to the data dispatch system.

Whilst we do not pretend to understand the complexities of our soon-to-be conversion to data from voice dispatching, we have to admire the patience of the two Board members whose job it is to enter the name of every street reference in London into a database that will then act as a guide as to driver's pick-ups.

Both **Johnny Saunders (B20)** and **Steve Sanders (G02)** have been working flat out for several weeks already and claim to be not

even halfway through the task! Hopefully it will be worth it. The system is scheduled to go live early next year and it will make this Society the second most advanced radio taxi circuit in the world behind Blue Bell in Texas...

**Flashback
1987**



Johnny Saunders and Steve Sanders entering thousands of street reference into a database

MBH Chief Executive Officer John Russell writes about...

Manganese Bronze – The Future!

The company has made significant progress in recent times. The benefits of the re-structuring are returning the TX4 business to profitability and the relationship with **Geely** continues to strengthen as evidenced by the recent signing of the agreement for the company to distribute Geely's range of cars in the UK (see *Manganese agree-ment with Geely – September Call Sign*).

We have many opportunities to develop in the future, but it is important that we marshal our resources in the most effective manner possible and make the most of these opportunities. We have reviewed our strategy for the company and identified four areas of potential that we wish to pursue. Firstly there is the core, current TX4 business in the UK and International markets. We need to continue to nurture and grow this business by focussing on the key issues of effective team working with SLTI (Shanghai) and improvements in quality and sales. Secondly there is the opportunity to broaden and grow our presence in the world taxi market by launching successfully the new TXN saloon car taxi. Thirdly, there is the opportunity to grow our business in a different sector of the automotive market, distributing Geely's expanding range of cars in the UK. We are all aware of the success that the Korean brands of *Kia* and *Hyundai* have had and we can work with Geely to achieve similar success in the future. Finally there will be other opportunities to partner Geely and create business growth opportunities in many other areas.

If we are to make a success of all these opportunities, we need to ensure we have the right resources in place, including and starting with organisational structure. To begin the process and with immediate effect, we are redefining the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team to make best use of the many and varied skills of the team and ensure that each of the key strategies is appropriately managed.

Peter Shillcock, reporting to me, will focus on the engineering, manufacturing, quality and purchasing functions and in particular create a new capability within these functions to address the significant growth in product development activity, which will far exceed anything in our history. Peter continues in his dual role as *Managing Director of The London Taxi Company* and *COO of MBH PLC* and *Board Director*. Peter is currently undertaking a review of his organisation in order to align the structure with the key work streams and planned activities and an announcement of the outcome of this review will follow in the near future.

Also reporting to me will be:

George Zhao, the *Deputy CEO* who will continue in his current role, but who will be developing with **Gang Wei** an effective structure within SLTI and Geely to improve team working and support the delivery of our key strategies.

Finance Director Tony Pearman continues his current role and **Matthew Cheyne**, the *International Director* will continue to be responsible for the current TX4 International markets and the launch of TXN. Matthew will also now be responsible for the distribution of Geely cars in the UK and the commercial aspects of any other new business ventures with Geely.

Rob Laidler is now responsible for all *Sales & Marketing* activities in the UK and aftersales worldwide. **Gang Wei**, *Strategy and Director Business Development* and *Company Secretary Mark Devlin* will both continue in their current roles.

These changes are the first stage of a process to ensure that we have the right resources and plans to deliver our strategies. The leadership team will now commence discussions with their teams to take this process to the next stage and will consult widely to ensure that we correctly staff the key activities we need to undertake and ensure that employees have the best possible opportunity for personal development.

We have weathered very tough times in recent years and come through thanks to the support of Geely and the remarkable contribution of the people in this company. I am confident that the future offers tremendous opportunities for business improvement and it is up to us all to make the most of these opportunities.

John Russell
Chief Executive Officer



John Russell: "Need to have the right resources in place..."

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

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO TOM WHITBREAD

Getting the needle...

Just over a month ago my youngest daughter phoned to ask if I would help her fellow students in their *Traditional Chinese Medicine* exams, which encompasses *acupuncture*, *tui na*, and *herbal medicine*. I was fit and well and hardly a cadaver, so how could I help? Then I was told it was for students doing their acupuncture exams at the *Westminster University Poly Clinic close to the Post Office Tower.

Now I'm not a coward, but I do have a fear of hypodermic needles. This goes back many years to when I was an LAS Accident Ambulance Driver/Attendant stationed at Lyons Place, St John's Wood. This covered the Kilburn High Road area - famous for its Friday and Saturday night fights! So much so that the police had a riot wagon parked there every week on both nights.

One evening as we sat in the station, the emergency phone rang informing my partner and me of a 999 call to the Red Lion (now shut) in Kilburn High Road where a man had serious head injuries. On arrival at the scene, we were met by police using their well-formulated plan of waiting down the road until the Irishmen in the Red Lion had knocked seven bales of s*** out of each other! Then they'd go in and arrest a token group to appear at court the next day on a drunk and disorderly charge.

As I looked into the drinking area of the pub, I could see a rainbow of bottles, glasses and ale flying over the fighting Irishmen. The pub's clientele was mainly Joe and John Murphy's builders and road menders, many of these men had hands the size of shovels and the bodies of Olympic weightlifters! From the door I could see our patient prostrate on the far side of the public bar, but we were reluctant to move from where we were, so my partner and I planned our next move - trying and make sure we would not get injured. So we got under a table and slid it along the floor towards the patient like a wooden umbrella. As we moved across the floor, the bottles, glasses and bodies were bouncing off the table top. We had none of the protective wear they have nowadays and our police style uniforms made us targets as well.

Arriving at the patient, we saw he had severe multiple wounds to his head and a leg injury that was in keeping with being run over by a road roller. Both of us, using one hand each on his collar, slid him along with us under the table back to the pub entrance. Once on the pavement, we were able to stem the bleeding and immobilise the leg with its multiple fractures. Then into the ambulance to the old Paddington General Hospital in Harrow Road where he was transferred to the minor operations room for work to be completed on his leg. At this point you should know that an Irishman who has consumed 10 or more pints of porter and been injured, gets an aversion to anyone in uniform or a doctor with a very large hypodermic needle! With that in mind, the doctor requested we restrain the patient while he attempted to anaesthetise part of the leg so that he could do some temporary work. This was to be done before he was sober enough to go into the main operating theatre.

The sight of the needle was enough for the patient; he called on his inner strength, lifted his good leg - to which I was still attached - with the ease of a dried leaf in a hurricane! It was at this point that his foot connected with the doctor's



jaw, sending him one way across the room and me in the opposite direction. Seeing this, my partner - who was lying across his chest - went deathly white with fear. As I was helping the doctor up, more assistance arrived. We then discovered that a third of the hypodermic needle was missing. It had been left deeply embedded in the patient's leg and had to be cut out with a probing scalpel. From that moment, I've had a phobia of hypodermic needles. So whether it's a blood test or an inoculation, that little trickle of ice cold fear creeps down my spine.

So when I was offered a session of acupuncture as recompense for acting as a patient at the Poly Clinic, I was more than worried. But Christina, the Chinese acupuncturist - who had the same sick sense of humour that I possess - said if I did not lay still, she would use knitting needles!

I must say that before she took the pleasure of inserting the needles, she told me to breathe in and out, it was when breathing out that she completed the task of inserting the needles painlessly. With her reassuring manner, I've now had a few more sessions to assist my digestion. I have also signed up to have a course of Tui na, which is massage for the stiffness in my neck region. Well everyone says that I am a pain in the neck.

I think this proves you can overcome phobias even if I am still closing my eyes, gritting my teeth and clutching the edge of the couch whilst they put the needles into my tender body!

***Poly Clinic: Mondays and Thursdays at 7 Hanson Street, tel 020 7911 5041. Acupuncture or Qigong Tui na £21 (OAPs or patients with disabilities £14)...**

Respect la Diva

I noticed that some newspapers slated the musical *Respect la Diva*. Well, I went midway through the short run and not just me, but everyone in the theatre seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves! I believe it will be returning and although I may not be the *Evening Standard* theatre critic, I have no hesitation in saying go see it as soon as it does!

The word diva began life describing a rather large, voluptuous lady who reached high notes and held them for almost an eternity. They were regarded as types of goddesses in the music profession, but then it went onto describe ladies in other fields of music - blues, soul, jazz and now modern music. This show was to be a tribute to some of the great female Divas in music including Ella Fitzgerald, Shirley Bassey, Dusty Springfield, Tina Turner, Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey, Diana Ross and Aretha Franklin - as well as many more. The band is on stage for the whole show with singers and dancers performing around

them. Also the stage lighting is excellent.

I was sitting in the front row with the rest of the seats in that row occupied by *Dial-a-Cab* drivers and their wives or partners. As the music began, we jumped as it was certainly at full volume and grabbed our attention as **Shelia Ferguson** of *Three Degrees* fame shared the stage with ex-*Five Star* singer **Denise Pearson**, **Katy Setterfield** from *The One and Only* and **Zoe Birkett** - a past winner of *Pop Idol*. Compere for the show was **Andy Abraham** of *X Factor* and *Eurovision Song Contest* fame.

The songs come fast and furious with over 30 classics - all great songs that had the audience jumping in their seats - although if you go to the show expecting the songs to sound exactly like the originals, you could be a little disappointed because the artists sing in their own styles.

A great surprise was the scene with **Katy Setterfield** singing and accompanied by two male dancers. **Tom Clark**, who was acting as a TV cameraman with his assistant and besotted fan of the singer, **Tosh Wanagho Maud**. As Tosh appeared from the wings, the audience's eyes were fixed on him and to say the theatre rocked with the sound of laughter would be an understatement. I predict this man will go much further than just being a dancer. He is a natural comedian just by his facial expressions and body actions. If you are old enough to remember the great black TV duo *Amos and Andy*, then you will know exactly what I mean.

If show producer **Adrian Grant** - his other success is *Thriller Live* - happens to read this, I suggest that when the show returns next year that you change *Miles Brown*, the excellent tap dancer in the pilot scene with Sheila Ferguson and put Tosh Wanagho Maud in his place. Tosh's facial expressions interact with the audience participation part of the scene and give a little break from a show with all songs. I'm sure Sheila Ferguson is a big enough star to accept being upstaged for a few minutes to take this show from being very good into a smash hit!

I watched the audience as well as the performers and you could see them looking for Tosh in every song, awaiting him to add his most welcome extras. During the interval, this was also repeated to me by other actors and dancers who had come as members of the audience. This does not detract from **Kate Morris** and the other athletic and gifted dancers.

At the climax yes, I was up doing my Dad Dance along with the entire DaC front row and other theatregoers, who for two and a half hours had been transported back to happier times.

As we left the theatre, I was wiping tracks of laughter tears that had burnt into my cheeks as I re-listened to the songs that were still repeating in my brain. Yes Adrian, I think you and your cast could have a hit on your hands when it returns full-time. It will be well worth any theatregoer's money to watch *Respect la Diva* and be able to say they have seen a great West End show.

It was only on until the 24 September but should return next spring. I tell it as I see it, there's no bias and I say that as soon as you see it advertised next year, book some tickets for *Respect la Diva* and you will have a great night...

Tom Whitbread
DaC Board member



We think George is trying to make a point!

"It was all pretty scary," **George Davidson (O33)** told *Call Sign*, "I thought at first that the cab had caught fire! There was just so much smoke from beneath the cab and it was drifting into my cabin and also the rear carriage. The passengers thought their luggage had ignited! The whole cab was filling with smoke."

Realising that we weren't there at the time, George went back to the beginning...

"I was doing about 60mph along the M4 out to Heathrow when I was suddenly engulfed by acrid smelling smoke that was starting to make driving the taxi difficult, so I pulled onto the hard shoulder to investigate. Satisfied there was no immediate danger, I plodded on at a more sedate pace and things seemed better."

With something of a grin and feeling much calmer having since become aware of the cause of his earlier panic, George continued his story.

"I had recently had the cab serviced and it seems that the automatic gearbox was accidentally over-filled causing pressure to build up internally, which led to excess fluid being leaked out onto the hot exhaust system, hence the smoke!"

To check things out for the benefit of our readers, *Call Sign* spoke to Stan, the auto gearbox specialist at **Cricklewood Carriers** in NW2. He was familiar with the problem, which is apparently peculiar to the TX11. He explained that the gearbox has a vent pipe that allows excess gear oil to escape when

Dac driver: "The whole cab filled with smoke!"



For those who don't know where the gearbox dipstick is housed

pressure builds up within the gearbox, particularly - although not exclusively - at sustained high speeds.

"Problem is," Stan explained, "the evacuation pipe runs up the top of the gearbox and winds its way between the engine bay bulkhead and the rear of the engine itself, before then turning downwards and spilling excess fluid directly onto the exhaust pipe - hence making a lot of smoke and that must really frays driver's nerves when it happens!"

Call Sign suggested that the experience could more than fray nerves and that perhaps it could actually scare the hell out of a driver who was unaware of this phenomenon and Stan, with something approaching a smile, readily agreed!

"The answer is to check the gearbox fluid level yourself very carefully indeed, even after servicing, although I would expect that the service agent would know what they were doing," he added sombrely, "and always make sure to check the level when the cab has thor-

oughly warmed up and is standing on level ground," he advised.

The mechanic continued: "Keep the engine running at idling speed, while **ensuring the handbrake is firmly applied** before moving the gear selection lever slowly through each gear position, pausing a while before going into the next gear position and then back again so that you end up returning to *Park*. Wipe the gearbox dipstick clean as you remove it from its tube with a clean, non-fluffy material such as kitchen roll paper and push the stick all the way home when you return it into the dipstick tube. Pull it out after a moment and carefully inspect the fluid level on the 'hatched' area of the dipstick."

Ending with the obvious, Stan cheerily added: "Anyway, it's all on page 59 in the TX11 Owners Handbook!"

With grateful thanks to Sheldon Posner and Stan at Cricklewood Carriers Ltd

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London taxis voted best in the world...again!

London's iconic licensed taxis were rated the best (albeit most expensive) in the world for the fourth year running. They took three times as many votes as second placed Yellow cabs of New York. The annual survey is from *Hotels.com*.

London was placed top in five out of the seven categories including safety, friendliness, cleanliness, quality of driving and knowledge of the area.

Hong Kong, Tokyo and Singapore completed the top five cities but none came anywhere close to London's famous 'black' cabs. The survey showed that although London's taxis are the most expensive, they're thought to be the best anywhere and that it was our personality and knowledge of London that gave us the edge.

Americans and especially Koreans were our biggest fans with 37% of Koreans surveyed voting in favour of talkative, friendly London taxi drivers.

What perhaps the survey doesn't point out is that it costs to be the best...



For the fourth year running - we are the best!

Dial-a-Cab client **JPMorgan Chase** has agreed with **Vince McMahon's WWE** organisation to allow them a \$200million credit agreement, even though the American wrestling organisation has yet to use any of the funds.

Although WWE television programming - *Raw* and *Smackdown* - have storylines showing Vince McMahon as having been sacked as Chairman with his son-in-law **Paul (Triple H) Levesque** taking over, in the real world Mr McMahon is still Chairman and CEO of the business. In fact his earnings for past 12 months were \$1.1million, with his personal worth estimated at over \$1billion.

A WWE spokesperson said this was a favourable climate for potential loans of the JPM type, even though they do not have specific plans for using the money. WWE will have to pay substantial commitment fees each quarter on the unutilised portion of the loan.

Some of the money could well be used for bringing **Dwayne "The Rock"**

JPM TAKES A 'HIT'!

But this is from World Wrestling Entertainment!



As it's wrestling, it could be a bout between JPM's Jamie Dimon and WWE boss Vince McMahon!

Johnson from Hollywood movies back into the WWE wrestling ring - where he made his name - for the WWE *Survivor Series* and also the main event against **John Cena** at *Wrestlemania*. Movie stars don't come cheap and even with the predetermined nature of WWE's business, insuring The Rock against injury is going to cost a small fortune. However, WWE are rich enough to probably just use the JPM loan as an emergency fund.

But as is the nature of WWE business, JPM should watch out in case the wrestling organisation send some of their 'bad' guys out to its' head office in New

York's Park Avenue where Chairman, President and CEO **James (Jamie) Dimon** hangs out. However, with some 240,000 employees, even World Heavyweight Champion **Mark Henry** - billed by WWE as the 'world's strongest man' after he won that title in 2002 - may have a job even getting a small *bodyslam* onto Jamie! And perhaps a future *Wrestlemania* could see Vince McMahon face up to Jamie Dimon with 'WWE v The Loan' being the stipulation and the winner takes all! After all, this IS wrestling and they can always give it back afterwards!!!

Baghwat Singh
Call Sign online

Goldman's profits down to £745 million

Joint **Dial-a-Cab** and **ComCab** account client, **Goldman Sachs**, have announced a fall in pre-tax profits between January and June for their London operations of 17%. The six month period showed a profit drop down to \$1.21billion (£745million). This is the third year in a row that Goldman's European operations have seen a drop in their profits. The Wall Street bank blamed significantly lower revenues from commodity trading and clients in fixed income currency. Actual revenues fell by 31% from \$4.4billion 12 months ago down to \$3billion over the six month period this year.

Goldman Sachs International, the London-based European division based in the City has some 5,000 staff in the UK. The company warned that the Eurozone crisis in addition to inflation worries, have added to problems already caused by the Japanese tsunami and general uncertainty with world economies.

Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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

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

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

The cost?

Just 1% per month on the outstanding balance (or APR of 12.68%). Loans can be paid back early AND there is usually an annual dividend on your savings.

The question is: Can you afford NOT to be in it...?
Call us on 020 7729 8171 or 020 7749 0585

Win £100 in Call Sign's caption competition

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE???

Viewers to BBC's amazingly successful program **Who Do You Think You Are**, may wonder how you start the process of digging into your past? Of course there are online search facilities, but if you watch the program, you can see that there are also archive facilities that you can go to where there will also be someone on hand to guide you if needed.

Two such places that **Dial-a-Cab** drivers can visit to dig into their family histories are the **London Metropolitan Archives** at 40 Northampton Road EC1 (020 7332 3820 and www.lma.gov.uk) and the **Guildhall Library** in Aldermanbury (020 7332 1863 and www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/guilhalllibrary). Both provide essential services for family historians. These are the libraries used by **Barbara Windsor** and **Stephen Fry** as they began their 'who do you think you are' journeys.

Both hold 80km of archives and their genealogy collections are the biggest in London, including important family history sources such as parish and electoral registers, land tax records, parish poor relief and boards of guardians that include workhouse records. Also available at the libraries are photos, maps, prints and many other sources you would need to build a family tree.

DaC Board member **Tom Whitbread** recently visited the **London Metropolitan Archives** at Northampton Road and described it to **Call Sign** as fascinating.



Win £100 for the best caption. Pic courtesy Provident Place

He also passed over this photo from the library which he retitled 'East End taxi wives waiting to see how much their husbands are coming home with'

Can you think of a better caption? Call Sign will give £100 to the funniest one received by October 12. Open to drivers, staff and families.

Name, call sign, DaC position or relationship + a contact number to callsign-mag@aol.com or drop/post to Call Sign, Dial-a-Cab House, 37/47 East Road, London N1 6AH.

The most amusing caption will receive £100. Entries by Wednesday 12 October. The editor's decision is final...

SAM ENDS SEASON AS BEST BOXER OF THE YEAR

...as well as signing off with another win!

Call Sign part-sponsored amateur boxer, **Sam Bezzina**, ended the 2010/11 season on a high with a convincing unanimous decision over **Tottenham & Enfield Club** opponent **Sam Giley** at Alexandra Palace, as the north London stadium hosted the *International Boxing Cup*.

Sam's dad, **Dean Bezzina (M10)** told **Call Sign**: "It was a great way to end the season and also a great confidence booster for Sam in anticipation for the CYP Championships in early October.

"Whilst Sam will enjoy the break with boxing's closed season, he's had to be busy at college studying BTEC Sports and Personal Training which Sam hopes will enable and suit him well in future employment as he progresses through his boxing career.

"Sam's commitment and dedication to his sport and studies were acknowledged at the **Priory College / Frank Bruno Boxing Academy** when he was rewarded in this year's ceremony by being presented with **Best Boxer of the Year** and also voted **Sports Personality of the Year!**" Sam was presented with the trophies by **Charlton Athletic** midfielder, **Danny Green**.

Dean went on to tell us that during the summer break, Sam and his team mates from the Priory College were selected to attend the **TKO**



Sam (left) presented with Best Boxer of the year by Charlton FC's Danny Green

Pro-Boxing Gym in Tenerife on the Canary Islands. The gym has been temporary home over the years to the likes of **James Degale**, **Nigel Benn** and **Amir Khan** to name just a few. The intense training program usually began with an 8-mile high altitude run up *Mount Teide* - some 12,200 feet above sea level. Up top, it warms the boys up for some extreme gym and core training sessions - made so much more challenging by the heat and altitude.

Back home, an average day in Sam's hectic lifestyle as he pursues his dreams of becoming a top class amateur boxer and hopefully going on to becoming a successful professional boxer, includes the more mundane five hours on public transport each day. Leaving home at 6am, there's a 2 hour journey to college, then another 2 hours travelling to the West Ham boxing gym followed by another hour home to Wickford.

The weigh-in for the CYP Championships is on 13 October and with Sam back from Tenerife and looking to be in the shape of his life, this is going to be an important season and Sam told us that he couldn't wait. "I'm really up for it this season," he told us, "and I've never felt so fit."

Good luck Sam...



I wish I could have been a hoodie...

After all the press coverage of hoodies in the riots, the usual chorus of 'it wouldn't have happened in our day' came belting out loud and clear. Well, the simple fact is that London has a history of riots and protests and it probably did happen in yours and everybody else's day.

The difference today is that the very thought of lifting a telly - never mind stealing it - would have given you a hernia! Even if you tried to move the TV, it would probably have been in a massive cabinet with bulbs and fuses in the back that would have blown (the microchip still being decades away in the future). I can remember when most people never actually owned their TV, just rented one. At one time, our family had a TV with a coin meter on its side. God help if you switched on too early and the money ran out during an episode of *Raubbide*, as your dad would have left you with one coin.

As for wearing a lovely soft hoodie to wrap your tender cold head in, that would have been luxury! We had to wear rough woollen balaclavas that itched and scratched your face off, normally knitted from another relative's old jumper or cardigan. When wet, they used to weigh a ton like chainmail, stretch to about four times its size and there was no way you could run with it on. If you had a cold and runny nose or if it was cold and snowy outside, it would stick to your upper lip like a leech and you would end up with frostbite. Rumour has it that our editor's mum made him a pair of swimming trunks out of an old pullover. I'm not sure how the young Alan would have coped coming out of the water in that with its clingy doubled weight - not a pleasant thought!

I grew up in a large Northern Irish Catholic family living in London at the height of the IRA bombings. To lay awake hoping that there wouldn't be a police or army raid on our home, with them coming in and finding a balaclava under the bed, would bring the sweats to anyone!

Back to the fuss about what to do with hoodies: Jail them? National Service? Army? I'd like to see them be made to walk the streets in heavy duffle coats, old army great coats or an old donkey jacket with *Murphy* or *McAlpine* on the back! Or worse still, if their trousers were hanging below their rear, as is the fashion, they should be made to wear a striped snake belt from *Woolworths* with the lovely 'S' buckle logo, which came in one size fits all and left a nice red welt on your side as it cut into your skin. No lovely latest style trainers to walk about in; the summer was normally a pair of crepe sole sandals, winters, army surplus boots and if you were going somewhere special, a pair of plastic winklepickers from *Curtess* shoe shops. Yes I would love to have been a hoodie...

Pre-nuptials no longer for the rich?

Is it time that those so called working-class par-

LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

with Tom Quigley (Y33)

ents, grandparents and indeed the bride and groom, should enter into pre-nuptial agreements? There is a saying: "Never do business with family and friends." It's not our business minds that get us into problems, but our hearts. It's with these hearts that we enter an area of pleasure, which unfortunately is really a place of business and usually pain.

Pre-Nuptial agreements were once the exclusive domain of the rich, I won't say idle, but the rich nonetheless. Is it time that the so-called working class had them?

The majority of us have made provisions in the form of a Will, be it our own or an elderly relative. We are more preoccupied about where our money goes when we are dead than when we are alive. Is that because we would feel too embarrassed or prefer to adopt an ostrich *head in the sand* approach to finances and the family?

Nowadays with the rise in house prices, the average for a 3-bedroom house in Greater London is around £420,000. The general likelihood and increasing probability is that working class parents help to provide the deposit for their heirs to get a foothold onto that property ladder.

But all they have worked and strived for, in one bitter and unfortunate marriage or partnership, could disappear to a complete stranger, or counting the cost of the legal fees involved, several law firms. It is said that the average cost of a divorce is estimated to be £13,000, with the more expensive ones costing anything from £25,000 to £50,000.

It is a real thought that although the divorce rate is dropping, fewer people are getting married and instead are entering into a partnership regardless of gender and it is right that when entering that partnership, both parties are equal.

It is at this point that the whole scenario gets into a grey area when money donated from the parents of (say) the bride, who only want the best for their daughter, have put by the money from their late Uncle Lou and Aunt Tilly's Will to pay for the wedding and a small £10,000 deposit on a house. Five years later the relationship has gone pear-shaped, while the property value that Uncle Lou and Aunt Tilly's money went into has quadrupled and is now being carved up to provide a home (in this scenario) for the new girlfriend-partner of the groom, someone who is not related, unknown and probably despised by the very family whose money (and wealth) they now have an entitlement to. The scenarios as we are all aware are endless and probably more realistic when it's not Uncle Lou or Aunt Tilly's money, but more than likely it could be our own, generated with hard work, endeavour, scrimping, saving and doing without to do what we have always believed to be the right and proper way to provide the best for our families.

The reality is that our properties involve large sums of wealth, with ongoing changes to capital gains tax, inheritance tax, plus stamp duty. Many Sunday newspapers will devote pages of financial advice on the subject, but even as we read it we do nothing to protect our and the whole family's greatest financial asset.

Wendy and I have been married for 34 years; we have 2 sons and a 3-bedroom house in Chingford. Maybe we should opt for the infamous headline of Viv Nicholson and 'spend, spend, spend!' Knowing my lads and their girlfriends - probably the same as your relatives too - they would prefer to see us enjoy it... As long as we have it in writing!

Tom Quigley Y33

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COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Hello ladies and gents,

Mickey Gordelier

In recent times we have sadly lost some former members of **Dial-a-Cab** who will be greatly missed by family and friends. The taxi trade is renowned for its companionship and no more so than in times of grief.

I recently attended the funeral of **Micky Gordelier (ex-L27)** and was quite taken aback by the numbers of family and taxi driver friends who had come to say farewell to a fellow driver who was obviously so well thought of. I met drivers who I had not seen for a long time, but it made me feel very proud of my profession.

It was well publicised in *Call Sign* by Mickey himself, that he had a long standing illness. But during that time he helped raise an enormous sum of money for the *Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice* that had cared so well for him and others who were also suffering with terminal illnesses and needing palliative care.

In fact his initial target sum of £30,000 – known as *Mick's Appeal* – was exceeded, which was testimony to the man himself. In addition to the Greenwich Hospice supporters and those who donated after reading about Mick in *Call Sign* – the article of which was then generously reprinted by the editors of *Taxi Globe* and *Taxicab News* – Mick managed to include a number of fundraising events such as a golf day and charity skydives. Using his gift of the gab, which never really left him, he even got the Pearly Queen of Greenwich to organise a boat party! Mickey Gordelier will certainly not be forgotten.



Complaints meeting

You will again see from the results of the last complaints hearing that the committee have handed out quite severe sentences to those members that were in violation of the relevant procedure rules.

Quite honestly, consistent reminders in both *Call Sign* and on your terminal screens seem at times to be conveniently ignored. The committee – and remember they are all fellow members – become more and more immune to excuses and tend to issue stronger sentences. Eventually they will get the point across to the minority who feel the Society rules do not apply to them.

I have constantly reminded you all of how accurate the loggers and GPS print outs are and this has not changed. It is very easy to prove or disprove any inaccuracies or anomalies and those found guilty really do not have

a leg to stand on.

Having said all that, we are certainly not ogres waiting to pounce and if there is something you are not sure about, either phone the office and ask for me or alternatively email me at the address given at the end of this article.

Olympic meetings

I am sure that like me you have already received a letter from **John Mason**, Director of *London Taxis and Private Hire* at *Transport for London* regarding next July's Olympic Games.

In the letter, he outlines some of the details and proposals in the lead-up to and during the Games.

I have attended a number of meetings over the past two months representing our Society and at the last workshop, it was agreed that the fullest possible information would be provided in a pack to be sent to all London taxi drivers prior to the Olympics, with additional information and updates available on-line. Options for real time communication was also discussed, which would be a big help to all taxi drivers.

As representatives from the taxi trade, we have discussed relevant proposals laid down by the *Olympic Route Network* (ORN) technical team that are in place across London and beyond. We have also responded with our own suggestions of relevant changes or alternatives that we feel are necessary and we await the response over the coming weeks.

Allan Evans

DaC Compliance Officer

allane@dialacab.co.uk



COMPLAINTS RESULTS



A Complaints meeting was held on 8 September with Appeals on 22 September...

Anthony Verrier (V98) – 3 weeks suspension

Complaint: Driver booked into EC5 when his true location was Parliament Square

Neil Pearce (D70) – 4 weeks suspension

Complaint: Driver booked directly into S99 and accepted a trip when his true location was by M4 near to Sipson Lane

Lee Rule (V89) – 3 weeks suspension

Complaint: Driver booked into EC5 when his true location was Whitehall

Gary Heard (Y07) - Expelled but reduced to 2 weeks suspension on appeal

Complaint: Driver booked directly into WW99 when his true location was Ken High Street

Terry Gibbins (H95) – 3 weeks suspension

Complaint: Driver booked into EC5 when his true location was Regency Street SW1

George Vincent (E44) – 3 weeks suspension

Complaint: Driver booked directly into EC5 when his true location was Elephant & Castle

John Sykes (S92) - Expelled but reduced to 2 weeks suspension on appeal

Complaint: Driver booked into E14C and EC5 incorrectly on several occasions after having been previously warned by the Contact Centre

Critically acclaimed new British restaurant has launched a brilliant incentive for licensed London taxi drivers

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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



Hair we go, hair we go, hair we go!

On my travels, I'm always on the lookout for a bargain - you have to these days don't you - especially with the price of fuel! So if I can pass on any cost-saving gems for DaC subscribers then I will and here is one that might interest a few of you - that is for those of you that still have hair left on your head! 'Reeds Hairdressing' in Waterloo Road (opposite the old Fire Station) are offering half price haircuts at just £10 - a tenner to get your *bar-net* sorted out! There are toilet facilities on site, plus your lady stylist will organise a cuppa for you!

Owner Russell Reed is a green badge and knows all about the difficulties in parking, but the Southwark rates at £2.40 per hour are much lower than Westminster. So if you make an appointment (020 7981 9814), tell them you are a cabbie who has read Bob's article, show your badge and you'll soon be back into the work with a decent haircut to impress the punters!

*Tip - I parked on the rank in Upper Ground which has no time plates and Russ himself occasionally leaves his cab on the feeder rank to the War Museum in Lambeth Road. But whatever you do, DON'T leave your sherbert in the car park at Southbank Services in Great Suffolk Street and definitely not on a

regularly worked rank.

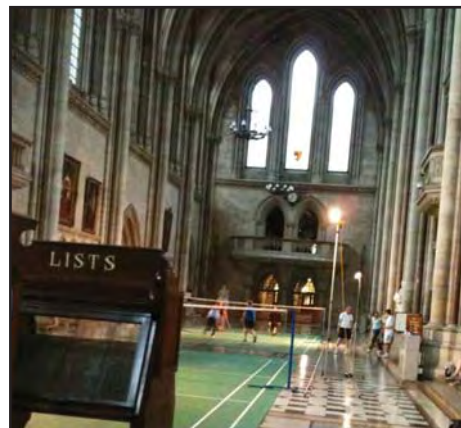
Also, coming soon to Reeds Hairdressing (for the more 'metrosexual' taxi driver), you can experience a manicure, pedicure or even a back, crack and sac wax - and this will all be taking place downstairs in the basement away from the gaze of passing window shoppers in Waterloo Road! I understand our Editor will be delaying his visit to Reed's until all of these treatments become available! Alan, you would look a riot with a Mohican up top and a Brazilian below!

Millwall vigilantes?

Talking of riots as we did last month, wasn't it heart warming to read about the Millwall football fans who took to the streets of Bermondsey and Eltham during the disturbances to kick the looters out - especially after the police had lost control of the streets and disorder was allowed to go unchallenged for days! These lads (and lassies) decided enough was enough and while the vast majority of London was very frightened and at the mercy of violent looters, down in SE16 the looters got chased away while in SE9 Millwall's vigilantes patrolled the length of the High Street while the riot police followed at a discreet distance! "No one loot's us - we don't care!"

Where's Woody???

This is the lobby of a non-secular building in WC2 - can't see too many of you getting this one first time and don't let the badminton courts put you off! Answer on page 30.



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

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Knowledge Boy killed doing 'Blue Book' run

Raja Miah was a minicab driver who had two aims in life - to provide for his family and to become a licensed London taxi driver. The minicab driving went some way towards achieving the first, but sadly, the second contributed to his death when a lorry hit Raja whilst he was out on his bike doing a run. He had been doing the Knowledge for two months.

The lorry collided with Raja in Broad Lane, Tottenham by the gyratory system, but failed to stop. An arrest was made later.

Raja is survived by his wife and four children.

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Riots

Because I was away at the time, I didn't really know much about the London riots except for the information texted to me by a fellow DaC driver. When I got home and saw the archived video footage, I was really saddened to see such violence. I remember back in the days of the IRA and how the number of tourists coming to London increased dramatically when they announced a ceasefire and ever since then things have been getting better year on year.

With the Olympics coming up, these riots must be a major setback so let's hope things stay quiet. What was very unusual was that for about 3 weeks following the riots, it appeared that London was being policed by officers from Norfolk to Lothian and Borders, from Sussex to Lancashire and even the Heddli from Wales! Obviously the Met needs to start recruiting! However, what I found most alarming were the number of fires started and which eventually developed into major incidents. Fire crews being unable to attend quickly - fearing for their own safety - may have caused this. Over the years the Fire service has been proud of its neutral status but that's not good enough for these hooligans, who were quite happy to let bricks, bottles and you name it, rain down on people who were at the scene to help. Makes you wonder doesn't it.

Top Gear

After waiting some time, I finally managed to get my hands on some tickets to see *Top Gear*. It's strange to think that one of the Beeb's most watched programmes is made in a half warehouse unit on an occasionally used airfield somewhere between Horsham and Godalming! Luckily for me I went to the edition with *Rowan Atkinson* who spoke about his McLaren F1 car - which he subsequently wrote off a few weeks later - and the Skytrain. If you fancy being in the audience for *Top Gear*, *X Factor*, *Britain's Got Talent* and many other TV shows, go to www.applausestore.com. This company arranges studio audiences for various programmes on all channels, so if you would like to take part go and try their website.

Nail extensions for men???

Driving round town I've seen many shops offering ladies pampering services such as American nails and at one place I saw a lady getting a foot massage. I thought it looked relaxing and it occurred to me that there wasn't that much avail-

Former fireman Richard Potter and life behind the POTTER'S WHEEL



able to men and wondered whether I'd look good with nail extensions or if I'd had my legs waxed and then went to the pub in shorts!

So I took the plunge - no, not nails or waxing - and went to my local barbers and had a hot towel wet shave. Since then it has become a monthly ritual. It really is refreshing and extremely relaxing. I don't know if it was ever that popular, but most barbers still do the traditional hot towel shave but you rarely hear of anyone getting it done anymore. If you have never tried it, you will be pleasantly surprised.

Olympic Route Network

Well the Olympic route network (ORN) is really causing a stir and the fact that we will not be allowed to use it is somewhat disappointing, but the writing was on the wall for a long time.

Fortunately I got some Olympic tickets through the sales process and last week I got an email informing me that each ticket holder will be given a free all-zone travel card for that day. I think we all will earn money from the Olympics, but in what form remains to be seen because I feel we are being side-lined

even though we are being told we will play a major part. After all, even though we are not allowed in the ORN, Royal Mail vehicles can!

One test a Police Officer goes through is the junction test. You are directing traffic at a 4-way crossroads with a police car coming from one direction, an ambulance from another, a fire engine from a third and all on lights and bells. From the fourth direction is a Royal mail vehicle. The question is which of the four gets priority? The answer is the Royal Mail vehicle because you can't stop the Queens mail. Where that puts us I'd hate to think...

Bitten by a police dog???

Have you ever let a police dog bite you? Well having a friend who is a Police Dog Handler can make you feel safe, unless he needs to do a demonstration in front of 45 Scouts and needs a robber for his dog to chase and bite! All I can say is that it is a little unnerving having a 4 year old German Shepherd Police dog running at you at 15 MPH with its chops wide open and saliva dripping from the sides, but you do these things for your friends... don't you! It was a good job I used a protective sleeve, because I could feel the dogs teeth through it and the power was incredible. To show me how much he trusted his own dog, the handler allowed me to set it on him. Oh the power! But in all seriousness, they are highly intelligent animals and extremely obedient and after that experience, I have the utmost admiration for the both dog and handler.

Richard Potter (T51)

ROMAN BATHS FOUND AT LONDON BRIDGE ROADWORKS!

The roadworks on the south side of London Bridge that any **Dial-a-Cab** driver will tell you have been going on forever and which have caused awful hold-ups for taxi drivers and their passengers, has finally come up with something good. Engineers have unearthed the remains of a Roman bath that once stood on the corner of London Bridge Street and Borough High Street.

Going back around 2,000 years, the ruins of the Roman bath were discovered on land being re-developed as part of the £5.5bn Thameslink programme and are believed to be one of the biggest Roman finds on the south side of the Thames - most seem to appear on the north side.

A new office block has been penciled in on the site and the baths will now be incorporated into the building. A new railway bridge will also be close by.

Network Rail has commissioned a team of specialist archaeologists from Oxford Archaeology and Pre-Construct Archaeology to excavate the site and although work is at an early stage, the bath house appears to include a range of rooms including a cold plunge bath as well as hot rooms warmed by under floor heating. Elsewhere on the site, substantial walls are thought to belong to predecessors of St Thomas's Hospital, which also used to stand on the site.

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Louie Christian (A48) is in his 27th year with Dial-a-Cab and has never been afraid to vent an opinion in Call Sign, regardless of how controversial. Now he asks a question that was first asked in 1957 at a meeting between ODRTS and Radio Taxis (Southern) and again in the mid-1980s. Whether unofficial approaches have been made is not something this magazine would have been told, but now Louie has asked the question again. He writes:

"With the debate raging on in *Call Sign* about fixed fares and Addison Lee ever-present and marching on without hindrance, should we not be looking at the bigger picture?

Is it inconceivable that the licenced radio circuits could put their petty difference aside and sit in discussions with the view to a possible merger of all of them? Yes, there would

Should the radio circuits merge???



be operational and legal difficulties, but nothing in my view that could not be overcome. Would that not put the licenced trade in a better position to tender for credit (and cash work for that matter) with account holders,

whilst at the same time being more competitive and thus challenging the likes of Addison Lee? Or am I just dreaming and being totally unrealistic?

Love him or hate him (and I know there are many in the cab trade that hate him), the Chairman of AL, **John Griffin**, is an astute, aggressive businessman who is determined to achieve his goal of becoming the number one provider of passenger carrying vehicles - and by any legal means necessary.

So unless we wake up and do something... well I think I have said enough!!!!"

We showed Louie's article to Brian Rice and he has responded on page 4.

If readers have a view, send them to Call Sign and we will publish them...

DAC DRIVERS AND THE LONDON OLYMPICS

A recent release from *London Taxis and Private Hire* regarding plans for taxis during next year's London Olympic Games has brought some responses from Dial-a-Cab drivers to *Call Sign*. As most were similar in content, we are publishing this one from David Baker (D22). David, who has a BA (Hons), wrote directly to LTPH and copied this magazine in...

"Thank you for your recent correspondence (Important information regarding London Taxis and the 2012 Games) which I must say I read with some incredulity.

The key paragraphs I noted were as follows:

1. *We are confident there will be a significant demand for taxis in the lead up to, and during the Games.*
2. *No contracts have been or will be awarded to taxi or private hire companies that will enable them to drive in Games lanes.*



David is angry about the effect the ORN will have on the taxi trade

"The statements, as any right-minded individual can see, are wholly incompatible for providing any sensible taxi service to and from the Games areas. I, like many of my colleagues, will be taking a break during the Games period as working within the framework laid down for the trade by the Games organisers appear to be totally unworkable.

"Many London taxi drivers already realise as will eventually the general public also, that whilst the Games are taking place London will suffer road transport chaos. I have also read in many recent newspaper publications that advice from the *Olympic Delivery Authority* (ODA) and the *London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games* (LOCOG) to many companies within the London area regarding the *Olympic Route Network* is to get sufficient supplies of goods into their businesses before the Games begin as there will be - in the words of the ODA - "some disruption!" This I believe is an open admission of what is to come.

"So thank you for your communication, but I am fairly certain that many of us in the licensed taxi trade see this type of letter for what it really is - a sop to keep as many cabs running as possible while the Games are in play. Even if many of us did continue working, our customers will not be happy to remain for long periods in hugely congested traffic queues.

"I do not blame LTPH/TfL, they are merely pawns in this whole media related hype, but I am certain that our great City and its famous iconic black cab trade will suffer immeasurable damage for many years to come to our hard won image and reputation.

"I have recently heard of a group of individuals who are considering a challenge to the *Olympic Route Network* decision and possibly try to sue for loss of earnings during the period of the Games..."

David Paul Baker (D22)

WHERE'S WOODY?

Where was Woody in this issue's Call Sign en la belle France...???

The answer was The Royal Courts of Justice - a wonderful example of 1870's Victorian Gothic architecture by George Edmond Street, a Woodford-born lad who was also responsible for the impressive Parish Churches St James-the-Less in Pimlico and St Mary Magdalene in Paddington.

The reason for the badminton courts? This grand hall gives way to the Civil Service Club in the evening.



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Going away on holiday should be a relaxing and exciting time for all concerned. Yet for the manager of **Dial-a-Cab's Roman Way** depot, **Dana Thananjeyan** and his family, it was anything but relaxing.

"Exciting, yes," Dana told *Call Sign*, "but you couldn't say the whole holiday was relaxing because I had my wallet stolen, which caused us a great deal of inconvenience – to put it mildly!"

Describing the events that led up to the theft, Dana told us: "We were on our way to Valencia by road and stopped at a motorway filling station on the outskirts of Barcelona for fuel. I was at the rear of the car, filling the tank and sent my wife Chentha to pay at the kiosk by the top end of the forecourt, just like here in the UK," he explained.

"Our children were sitting happily in the back of the car," Dana continued, "when suddenly our daughter Kamsi started shouting excitedly that someone had stolen my wallet and was pointing towards a man running away from our car at high speed. I dropped the fuel nozzle and began chasing him, shouting to the many people who were also on the forecourt to stop the runaway! They probably didn't understand what I was saying or what had gone on as no one did anything to apprehend the bandit. I rarely have reason to chase DaC drivers at Roman Way, so I was probably out of practise!"

Dana had left his travel wallet containing Euros, UK passports, credit card, Dial-a-Cab clock-in card and several items of personal property in the central console of the car, thinking it to be safe while they were in what

Dana and the Barcelona Bandit!



Dana and his passport to replace the stolen one

he believed to be a secure area, especially so with their two girls still sitting in the car. Suddenly the man appeared at the door of the car, flung it open and reached inside to grab the wallet and ran off at Olympic speed!

"When the Spanish police arrived, there was something of a language problem and we

needed the services of a police interpreter, which we got via the attending officers' mobile phone to explain what had happened. The interpreter said that it wasn't such an unusual occurrence even at a motorway service station. In fact, I got the impression that it happens fairly regularly. There was even some humour in the situation with the phone being constantly passed from one to the other so that we could all understand each other," Dana continued with a hint of a smile on his face!

"We went to the British Consulate to report our stolen passports and amazingly, while we were there, British TV station **Channel 4** were making a documentary and interviewed me on our loss. So there was an upside to this unsavoury adventure and I may be on a small screen near you sometime soon!"

Dana and his family collected their new passports the next day and were able to continue the holiday journey. But learning their lesson fairly quickly, they kept the car doors locked whenever and wherever they stopped after that.

Dana's lesson should also apply to DaC drivers whenever you leave your cab, no matter how briefly...

© Call Sign Magazine MMX1

Gratitude???

Steve Bryant (Y41) is obviously the grateful sort of **Dial-a-Cab** driver and wanted to emphasise that he wasn't complaining.

"Far from it," Steve told *Call Sign*! "Just because there are several big signs saying licensed taxis only and just because Addison Lee are minicabs, that doesn't mean that I'm complaining that they are taking up space on OUR waiting area. Oh no, I'm just grateful that the two Addison Lee minicabs left a tiny space for me, but unfortunately the editor has refused to published the few words I wanted to use as an expression of gratitude to the minicabs..."



BLUE BOOK RUNS

Now in two new sizes from Taxi Trade Promotions

As licensed London taxi drivers, we all have one very important thing in common – in order to get our licence we all did the Knowledge of London. Some older drivers may have forgotten most of the runs, but every single one of us remember that first run from Manor House to Gibson Square and can probably recite it just as we did when calling it over – even though it's doubtful that any Knowledge boy was ever asked the run in that form!

But the Knowledge is still there and **Taxi Trade Promotions** have now put out their famous 'Knowledge Point Blue Book Runs' in two simplified compact A6 or A5 size booklet formats.

Showing the routes only, they have been designed to assist with revision and / or study whilst on the move, at work, on holiday etc. We on **Dial-a-Cab** may not need them anymore, but many of us probably know someone who does and this is their chance to pick one up whilst at the same time learning where Pentonville Prison is!

Knowledge Point Blue Book Runs are available from Taxi Trade Promotions, 431 Caledonian Road N7

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Paying for Call Sign

Hi Alan

Many thanks for sending me **Call Sign** over the years, it makes a very good read. Unfortunately the August issue was not delivered as there was no postage put on. We received a post office non-delivery card so my wife went to the sorting office and was told that they no longer knock on the door to collect the unpaid postage for health and safety reasons (they may get mugged)! She paid the demanded £2 but was not happy and demanded the money back from me - fat chance! I just thought I would let you know as more drivers may complain. There may be a fault with the franking machine - or are you cutting back on postage!

Keep up the good work on a very good magazine...

Alan Cohen MBE

Project Organiser, LTFUC

I wish I could say that yours was the only complaint I had, Alan, but I was inundated! Fortunately it was only the courtesy copies and not the 2000+ driver's copies that are sent directly from our printers. But they still number around 90 or so. Yes, there was a fault on our franking machine and my only consolation is that everyone on that list that I heard from seems to have paid the £2 - even after seeing what the envelope contained! As for the post office, they must have known that the strange marking was a franking that had gone wrong, but I guess they must need the money! Apologies to all those affected and my sincere thanks for still taking the mag ...Ed

Texaco card

Hi Alan

Last year you published details about how to get a Texaco card that allowed you a discount on each litre. Can you let me know how to get one please?

Tommy McDonnell (T30)

The online contact is www.blackcabfuels.co.uk and you can do everything necessary there or you can call 0800 987 5701. You can also contact them on 0845 450 5755 ...Ed

Fifteen year rule – cab numbers...

Hi Alan, could you please ask Brian Rice if

he can get an answer from the Mayor about this?

Dear Brian,

Since the announcement of the 15 year rule, I have been looking at the fleet working around me in town on workdays. My cab is a 'W' reg so I have a few years left before Boris destroys it for no good reason. The emissions on my cab were better before the new exhaust system was fitted at a considerable cost. I can't help but notice that in my opinion, at least half the day fleet will be taken off the road by the time my final plate runs out. For that reason, I wonder if it would be possible for you to ask Boris how many cabs will be removed in years one, two, three, four and five of the impending legislation? And what would be the total amount left ending year 5?

For question two, has TfL consulted with the owners of these cabs to ascertain if the cabs will be replaced with drivers attempting to buy, hire or leave the trade? I have a theory that due to the impending allocation of minicab ranks being implemented, it will not be long before TfL decides there is an unmet demand (due to them forcing the scrapping of perfectly good taxis) and allow these "ranked up, waiting for allocation of jobs minicabs" to ply for hire off the rank. By decimating our trade, a unique selling point for London will be lost, the disabled community will lose thousands of wheelchair accessible vehicles and I fear that eventually the job will have prohibitively expensive overheads to attract new drivers. We will find ourselves in the same position as many major cities where cab driving will become a part-time vocation and the skills of the licenced London taxi driver may indeed cease to exist.

Stephen Hassan (P95)

Brian Rice responds: After reading your letter, Stephen, I am not sure whether to cut my throat or jump out of the window! Before I do, I'll endeavour to answer your questions!

It is likely there will be between 1500 and 2000 taxis that will be over the age limit in 2012, so will not be relicensed. In 2013 – 2015, there will probably be around 1,000 per annum that will exceed the age limit, which reflects the large number of taxis that were originally licensed between 1998 - 2000. In 2016 and a few years thereafter, it is expected there will be approximately 700 taxis per annum that will exceed the age

limit. To the best of my knowledge, individual owners have not been approached to enquire as to their future plans. I can understand your frustrations, however, initially the Mayor wanted a 10 year age limit but settled for 15 when it was explained the trade could not afford the 10 year rule unless it was financed with some sort of scrappage scheme. Of course the trade was informed there was not any money available for that. Whether anyone agrees with this policy or not - and I know many drivers do agree - it is a very difficult argument to convince the authorities that our taxi fleet should not have to be more modern and greener. Personally, I have never let myself get dragged into this argument because I believe I could give an extremely plausible argument for both points of view and what is more annoying, I partly agree with both parties as I can see both sets of pros and cons! So it's not an ideal situation. However, what is certain is that this legislation will not be changed; consequently the trade will not have any alternative other than to comply.

On your observation regarding minicabs and ranks, I do not disagree with you as I have been warning of this for many years. But for this to be the norm, legislation would have to be amended as it is illegal for minicabs to form a rank and there would have to be some sort of kiosk as they have to be pre-booked, although some Operators now seek to circumvent legislation with their satellite offices. In the future, this could also change again with the introduction of the App culture.

On a brighter note, I do believe that minicabs will never be allowed to legally pick up off the street, that is due to the fact that our trade does not wish for this and probably more importantly, neither do the major Operators. Why would they want their cars picking up off the street when they could be servicing the corporate sector and members of the public alike and the Operator could be 'creaming off' his 40% share of the fare?

Finally, I must say that some of the problems we now face and will face in the future were forecast years ago by some of us in this trade, however, we were accused of being 'vested interests'



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and wanting to flood London with taxi drivers - which I can assure you was never the case. In reality, the authorities used a sticking plaster to address the problem and the ensuing void has been filled by the minicab to the detriment of our trade.

Unfortunately, we only have ourselves to blame alongside the apathy that has always persisted within our trade – how depressing!

Visiting DaC

Dear Alan

Thanks so much for emailing me a pdf of the latest copy of *Call Sign*. The write up on our visit to Dial-a-Cab House was much appreciated. The article will soon be printed in the LVTA magazine and become a part of my LVTA scrapbook. Many thanks once again to the DaC staff and employees that made our tour of your facilities a wonderful experience – especially to our guide Allan Evans. It added so much to our visit to the Uxbridge show and the sights and sounds of London. A holiday not soon forgotten.

Lloyd Powell

Palm Beach, Florida

Pleased you enjoyed it Lloyd ...Ed

Yellow star / yellow badge

Hi Alan

Re your yellow badge / yellow star debate (*September Call Sign*), I suspect that Melvyn Stanley is actively working outside his area and is using every trick to avoid getting caught. I am a yellow badge driver (have been for almost 40 years) and was on the suburban branch committee of the LTDA for several years. I work an island rank, The Arndale in Wandsworth and know the risks and temptations of living, geographically, on the edge. But if I wanted a bigger area to work, I know what I would have to do. Like you, I've never heard of The London Suburban Taxi Association, but I've come across several similar organisations over the years that wanted to get something for nothing and usually in the depths of a recession. Mr Stanley should be ashamed of himself for bringing the suburban driver and himself (and probably Jewish cab drivers) into disrepute.

Bill Munro

www.billmunro.co.uk

Whilst I don't necessarily agree about what Melvyn Stanley is or isn't attempting to do by bringing into play this absolutely ludicrous argument about the yellow star, I agree with Bill that he is certainly bringing the majority of suburban and Jewish drivers into disrepute. Bill Monro is the author of an excellent new history of our business – London Taxis: A Full History ...Ed

Never mind yellow...!

Dear Big Al

Never mind yellow identifiers; as a lifelong (42+ years) user of fossil fuels - particularly diesel - I wish to object to the *green* identifier proposed by the LTPH office. *Green* is now associated with a need to preserve the planet and I have no wish to be connected with the *green* party ad or their loony ideas as to the future! I have a certain amount of street cred, which would evaporate faster than 3-star petrol spilled on a summer's day forecourt if anybody thought I was *green*! As an *All London* Taxi driver, the very thought of being *green* is totally alien to my lifestyle, as the smoky diesel-engined taxicabs we are forced to drive are an icon to pollution and the past must never be forgotten - alongside the Dunkirk spirit, Winston Churchill and spam.

A *green* identifier might attract council workers to my property with a view to forcing me to recycle! Green wheelie bins would hamper my driveway, *green* refuse bags, *green* garden waste bags, *green* bottles separated from all others! This is the thin edge of the wedge for sure and I shall be writing to everybody to complain of this trespass on my human rights to be any colour but *green* in the 21st Century...

David Kupler (Y74)

I'm green with envy at your cheek! ...Ed

Remembering...

Hi Alan

You may not remember me. I was with Dial-a-Cab for 20 years but a heart attack going round Hyde Park Corner put paid to that. I wrote a couple of articles for *Call Sign* mag in the late 90s. I'm sorry to see that a few of my DaC mates have passed on – it probably shows how lucky I am! All the best to you and all at DaC...

Gerry Patmore (ex-A17)

Of course I remember you Gerry. You wrote for me between 1997 and 1999 as the former 23887896 Pte Patmore GF of the 1st Battalion Queens Royal Surrey Regiment when you were sent to the British Colony of Hong Kong to protect it! Then there was the report on you meeting HM Queen Margrethe of Denmark! Nice to hear you are well ...Ed

Nice one???

Hey Al

The September *Call Sign* raised the bar to new heights for taxi trade magazines - one that I suspect Stuart at *TAXI* newspaper and the others can only dream of! Well done old boy...

Gary Cox (O46)

I always said you weren't as silly as you looked! Thanks Gary ...Ed

Olympics and the DLR

Dear Alan

I dropped a job at Canary Wharf on Friday 2 September right in the middle of the evening peak hour, but even so I was astounded to find myself the centre of a battle between hordes of prospective passengers over who saw me first! It didn't take me long to realise that the Docklands Light Railway was down yet again! According to official Olympic literature, the DLR is being pushed as being a highly accessible service that will help disabled people get to the Games. I'm not being picky, but doesn't that assume this system actually works? The embarrassment of the system going down during the Olympics – or even worse if it's the Paralympics – would haunt us forever.

Personally, I'm not sure if I can face the trauma - already staring us in the face – if the Olympics problems that we fear come to fruition. Yes, it will be a very busy period, but working will be non-stop hassle and I'm unsure whether I can face it. After all, which member of the International Olympic Committee are going to phone us to take them back to their Park Lane hotel in all that traffic when they can get a volunteer-driven BMW to take them back via the Olympic Route Network? After all, can they really afford to miss their Knightsbridge restaurant appointment for the sake of the Olympics? Naahh, I didn't think so either – although I did wonder at one point why they couldn't



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use any of the many local hotels instead of the west end. After all, the Holiday Inn at Newbury Park is supposed to be quite nice???

Alex Constantinou (N05)

There is an article on the subject by a DaC driver inside this issue ...Ed

Olympics in Sydney

Hi Alan

September saw another interesting issue of *Call Sign*. It will indeed be interesting to see how you guys fare during the Olympics. It will definitely not be the feast one would expect, but nor will it be a famine despite free public transport and government cars. If Sydney is anything to go by, it will be relatively quiet during the day while the Games are on, but very busy in the evening. A lot of interstate cabbies here came to Sydney to drive government cars. They told me after it was like having a long well paid holiday and they met a lot of interesting people. Can't say I blame them.

Peer Lindholt

Publisher, OZ Cabbie, Australia

Thanks Peer, but I suspect that many London drivers will regret working and find that the money they thought they would earn throughout the Games just won't be there due in main to the appalling traffic hold-ups they are going to experience. I also suspect that as we get closer to the Olympics and hear of all the street closures, many drivers will just take the time off in the belief that they could end up putting more diesel in their cabs than they will take! As Teyve puts it in *Fiddler on the Roof* while addressing God: It's no great shame being poor – but it's no great honour either! ...Ed

English American!

Dear Alan,

I am slowly catching up with reading *Call Sign online* out here in Spain. Being subjected to the sounds of Coronation Street and Eastenders in the background, I have found this is a good time to write a letter for the magazine. I have been reading your editorial (*August*) with reference to the FT journalist Mathew Engel and the Americanisation of the English language.

You are definitely not on your own when it comes to disliking American English - whether it is written or spoken. It's the little

unimportant things that annoy me - such as when did the humble beigel (pronounced bigel) become a bagel? Go to Brick Lane and ask for a cheese bigel. Watch the heads turn and sneer at you. "Who is this *putz* who refers to the American bagel as a bigel?" Like it never came from Poland!

Even nouns being Americanised annoy me. It's only a matter of time before we shop at Tesco for our tomatos and potatos rather than tomatoes and potatoes.

I am very pro-American (should anyone be in doubt) and despite having a limited vocabulary, I also object strongly to the constant corruption of the English language. When *all* Americans learn to eat their food with a knife *and* fork then I shall tolerate their bad spelling and slang expressions. Know what I mean man? Must catch up with some rays. Cool!

Steve Shaller (F34J)

Nevertheless, there are some Americanisations that still make me almost smile because of their habit of downgrading sad events. For example, in some US hospitals the death of a patient is referred to as a *negative patient outcome*, whereas a plane crash was once described as the *involuntary conversion of a Boeing 727*. Top of the list must be the Pentagon's description of a toothpick as a *wooden inter-dental stimulator*! Having said that Steve, we are obviously on the same page and should put our diaries together! Mind you, I quite like eating with just a fork! ...Ed

Getting your logos out!

Hi Alan,

Re the project to get 12 drivers for a Calendar Girls type calendar featuring taxi drivers and in aid of a prostate cancer charity (*DaC drivers as nature intended – September Call Sign*), I can't believe that out of 2000+ members of DaC, the project has only 4 volunteers (and 1 other). So if you're still short of Calendar Boys, I'd be happy to represent subscribers over 50 as I am presuming your volunteers are younger...

Marc Turner (R97)

Thanks for the offer Marc, what size logos do older drivers require for modesty protection! For those unaware of what Marc is referring to, Allen Togwell

has attempted to push a suggestion originating from David Burnetts (S43). David had written about his cab driving father-in-law who died from prostate cancer. He also wrote in *Call Sign* of his own experience with prostate problems. He expressed concern that so little research was done in the UK on prostate cancer compared to other types such as breast cancer and he wanted to play a part in raising awareness, while at the same time help raise money towards prostate cancer research. He thought of the Calendar Girls and wondered if a similar idea could work for male taxi drivers - possibly holding DaC logos in strategic places! Marc is correct that we had just 5 volunteers – which included one non-DaC driver – dunno what logos he could use! ...Ed

Westfield

It was nice, as usual, for *Call Sign* to respond to **Steve Denison (W65)** and his request for *Nash's Numbers* to show drivers how to access the Westfield taxi rank at Shepherds Bush (*September*). However, I too don't know how to get to the rank and while I don't know about Steve, I found the map too confusing to follow, so could you please explain how we get to it?

Sid Nathan (K88)

I'll have a go Sid. Go onto the A40M from the Holland Park Magic Roundabout, bear left up the Westfield slip road and then turn left by the lights at the top of the slope. Keep to the right and follow the sign for Valet parking, which will lead you onto signs for the Taxi rank. If that fails, then taxis are taking passengers there throughout the day, so my tip is to drive up the slope and wait till you see a cab pass you. Then just follow him! ...Ed

Fixed prices – and engines!

Hi Al

I've re-read all relevant articles and have to respond to comments made by Michael Son in the *September Call Sign*. Look Michael, I'm not against anyone having - and voicing - an opinion. It would be ridiculous to even suggest it. I have attended 21 AGMs during my 22 year membership of DaC and have often asked for more members to attend,



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discuss and promote ideas! As for your comment on what you do on committees, I can't comment as I've never been on one. The Chairman wrote about Mike (and fixed prices) and I quote: "You were a lone voice in the Board room." Now as I see it, having your say is of course no problem. Where I'm at odds with Mike is when he says – and again I quote: "If I receive enough favourable responses, I will ask the Chairman and the rest of the Board to consider using our data dispatch system for a formal vote." Maybe I'm wrong (although I doubt it), but the way I see it you are trying to override a majority decision made by the Board by stating the above and courting votes through the pages of *Call Sign*.

Speaking of the *September* issue, there was an interesting article about the TX2 engine problem (an old worn out rocker). In the interest of balance, can we also have an article about any TX4 engine problems as they seem to fail completely at around 100k.

Colin Jenkins (Y22)

Thanks for the letter Colin. Because *Call Sign* is uncensored, Mike Son is free to write exactly what he likes - just as you are. I don't know whether his vote suggestion will or will not take place, that will be a Board decision. But if it did take place, it would then become a driver decision. That's democracy and if the Board really are against the suggestion and say no, then knowing Mike and his philosophy, I have no doubt that he will accept the decision as the majority one because that's what he also wrote in the article.

As for your TX4 question, I've heard stories and rumours about TX4 engines having problems at 100,000 miles, yet there are many TX4s out there that have gone well over 100k with no trouble, so you pay your money and takes your choice. All I know is that my TX4 still sounds pretty much as it did when I bought it three years ago ...Ed

Parking problems

I have recently received parking tickets outside both 1 Appold Street and 5 Old Broad Street. On both occasions the PCNs were issued via CCTV cameras and both times there was very little traffic and my cab was causing no hold-ups or inconveniencing any other traffic. Ok, so I get the money back if on a Dial-a-Cab job, but I am getting fed up with receiving these tickets.

So now if I have to wait for a passenger at any place where I know I am being watched, I will do what others are doing while waiting – open my boot lid because then cameras can't see the registration plate.

Sid Nathan (K88)

I don't think you would be doing anything illegal Sid, but so far as Old Broad Street is concerned it might be a bit pointless because the camera is pointing at the front of the cab and leaving your boot open would make no difference at all. I cannot be seen to condone anything that begrudges the City Corporation their deserved income from this trade, so I won't tell you that if you were to stop just before number 5, there is a bend in the road and the camera can't see round it. I really would tell you that if I could, but I can't! ...Ed

Call Sign ads

Dear Alan

Whether or not you publish this in the next *Call Sign* is, of course, entirely up to you, but through the medium of our house magazine I would really like to thank and thoroughly recommend **Ian Learmouth (R50)**,

whose ad is in every issue under the general heading of 'Savings' before going on to advise on all the appliances his company offers.

If anyone is thinking of having a new kitchen fitted, Ian organised and costed our new kitchen and with his friend and superb workman, Chris, has given us a kitchen to die for. He was also very competitive with his prices and I understand he also offers toilets, bedrooms and bathrooms. If I need any of those, I now know where to go.

Once again, many thanks to Ian.

Michael Harris (F79)

Nice of you to take the time to tell us Mike. It always amazes me how many Dial-a-Cab drivers also have other jobs ...Ed

Radio gone!

Dear Al

Just to let you know that I sold my DAB radio to **Malcolm Levan (F24)** as soon as my letter appeared in *Call Sign*. Both parties were satisfied!

Martin Freeborn (C67)

I omitted to mention my commission! ...Ed

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