

September 2011



# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



Does comparing the Holocaust yellow star with a yellow badge taxi identifier insult Jewish drivers???



*DaC staff celebrate long service awards*



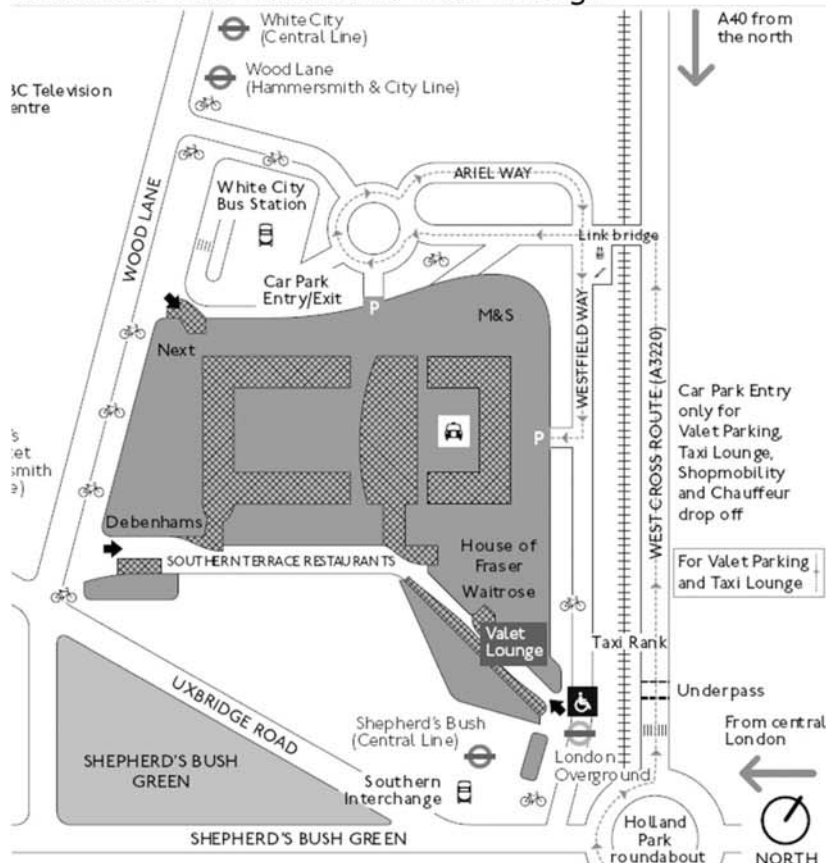


# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

I've had some requests for both the Westfield Shopping Centre rank and the O2 exit route...

## Westfield Taxi Rank and Taxi Lounge



### Westfield Opening hours

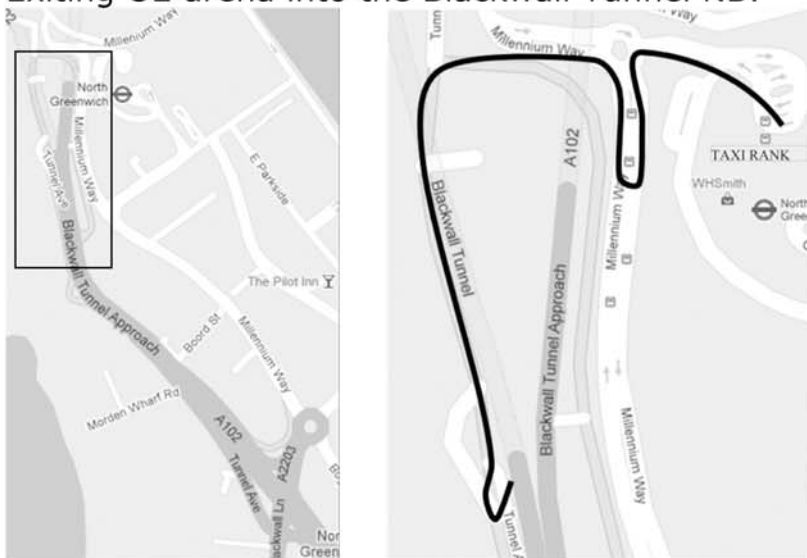
Monday	10:00 - 21:00
Tuesday	10:00 - 21:00
Wednesday	10:00 - 21:00
Thursday	10:00 - 22:00
Friday	10:00 - 22:00
Saturday	09:00 - 21:00
Sunday	12:00 - 18:00

The busy time is around closing especially on Sunday.

Enter from Wood Lane or the West Cross Route and follow the signs to "Valet Parking" as shown by the arrows on the map.

Map courtesy of Westfield Shoppingtowns Ltd.

## Exiting O2 arena into the Blackwall Tunnel NB.



To pick up from the O2 rank and go north through Blackwall tunnel, instead of taking Millennium way back to the roundabout and onto the A102, at the first roundabout you are forced left due to a central reservation, but do a U turn and take the first left. Follow this road to the little one way bit and you meet the A102 at the entrance to Blackwall tunnel. There is a lot of development in this area and may be closed on occasions.

Skint after a poor August, then why not win £100! Not only can you get a great internet launch area for your PC's general everyday use and useful taxi related sites with lots of useful info, but just by clicking the 'Recommend' button you could win £100. Go to [www.myfav.co.uk](http://www.myfav.co.uk) and register with the unlock code of 'taxi'. This is definitely a win win!

# from the editor's desk

## Olympic question...

In 2002, after hearing that London was going to bid for the 2012 Olympics, **Call Sign's** Australian correspondent **David Gawthorn** told this magazine of the Sydney experience for licensed taxi drivers at *their* 2000 Games.

It was he that first warned this magazine of the Olympic Route Network (ORN) that brought Sydney's traffic to a virtual standstill, unless you were travelling in one of the *Olympic Family's* fleet of special luxury cars that just sailed through the jams. David then went on to say that Olympic ticket holders were given free public transport travel tickets for the day of travel and that virtually destroyed the cab trade's involvement. After all, with traffic stationary, who is going to use a taxi to get to Stratford when they have a free ticket for the tube? David's two warnings have now happened for London and the 7-minute Javelin train to Stratford from St Pancras will probably make the situation even more certain.

As for those few cabs that do get to the Games, we have been promised ranks 'close-by' for setting down and picking up, so at least that will go some way to compensate – although we can see a huge number of spectators doing the 'roader' from the Games to Stratford Station and vice-versa. At least a cab sharing operation may bring in some funds.

But those 'close-by' ranks, how close is close-by? Well our friends at the *New Zealand Taxi Federation* recently told us of their equivalent to our **Olympic Games** in terms of excitement and that is the 2011 **Rugby World Cup**, which kicks off on Friday 9 September when the host nation's All Blacks face Tonga at Auckland's famous Eden Park. The following day, England kick off their pool game against Argentina at Dunedin's Otago Stadium. All 24 teams will be hoping to play in the Eden Park final on Sunday October 23.

But what, **Call Sign** readers are asking, does this have to do with our Olympics – especially if you are not a rugby fan? Well New Zealand's taxi industry were promised taxi facilities that would allow them to get 'close-by' the entrance to Eden Park. Of course, the NZTF would be the first to admit that the two events are a bit like chalk and cheese, but almost 50,000 rugby fans will fill Eden Park to capacity and like our Olympic ticket holders, they have to get there.

Now we hear that 'close-by' to the Eden Park entrance will involve walking up to half a kilometre from the taxi drop-off point whereas bus passengers will be taken right to the ground – in fact buses have had a special parking facility built especially for the matches.

Just like in 2005 when **Call Sign** was told about the possible 2012 Olympics coming to London, NZ taxi drivers were also told that they had a vital role to play in welcoming Rugby World Cup supporters to New Zealand and providing transport for them while they were there. Yet despite strong protests from Auckland's taxi operators and the NZ Taxi Federation, they have been kicked in the teeth – or as it's rugby, kicked into touch!

Their equivalent to Lord Seb Coe is Aussie Bruce Barnard. He told the NZ trade that taxis will need to move about 3000 people for each game, but that the drop-off points were as close as they would be able to get because they "didn't get on with buses!"



Half a kilometre isn't too far for a fit person, but older fans won't be pleased and many may not even be able to cope with that distance. Bruce told the NZ cab trade how much of an important role they had to play and how in many cases they would be the first contact for people arriving in the country for the World Cup and how important it was that they made the right impression. In fact, it was 'close-by' to a speech from London Mayor Boris Johnson telling us how wonderful we were and how important we were to be for the Game's success!

**Call Sign's** question to the Mayor is how well we will be treated at the Olympics? Will it even be worth us working? Like Sydney, we have the ORNs to kill the traffic and Olympic spectators will be given free transportation. All we now need is to hear that our set-down will be around half a mile away and the pick up somewhere near Plaistow!

Meanwhile to our NZ friends, I hope that despite all the problems you have a successful taxi World Cup and that ending as runners-up to England satisfies you!

## Rioters or robbers?

There isn't much I can say about the recent riots that hasn't already been said, so I'm just going to quote Paul Speed. Paul was working in a Soho cinema on the worst night of the riots – Monday 8 August – and managed to get a taxi to take him home to north London afterwards. He usually goes on the bus but admitted that he didn't think it would be too safe. He said via email that grabbing the cab "...was the only concession to these gangsters I would make. These are kids, not freedom fighters. They are able to drygulch some drunken fool alone in an alley or a school kid half their size, but facing armoured and eager baton-holding boys as big as them with angry dogs? No way, the punks will stay well away"

Comparing the 1981 unrest with the events of this August, Paul noted a huge difference between the two. He said: "Riot is a word with too noble a lineage for these guys. Violent robbery is what it amounts to."

Me? I just wonder how many of these stupid idiots actually believed that they were playing a real life version of the video game *Grand Theft Auto*, where rioting and thieving are portrayed as fun? There's not much else to add...

## Mr Miracle Man?

In the September 2009 issue of **Call Sign**, DaC driver, **Graham Ellis (S95)** told how he had been facing a major operation on his back and

being told that if it didn't work, not only would he never drive a taxi again, but he could also end up in a wheelchair. Then, speaking to another driver about his back, that driver recommended physiotherapy with someone he had been using to help his back problem. Graham was in constant pain, unable to work or even walk more than a few steps and his GP hinted that he might have had to learn to live with the situation. So ready to try anything, Graham went to the **Barking Physical Therapy Centre** and saw **Andy Apsey**.

The nature of our job means that many cab drivers are prone to back and general muscular problems and since Andy's ad began appearing in the mag, more DaC drivers have been going there – and now that includes me!

I have suffered with back problems for years and while nothing compared to those Graham suffered, I have to always be ultra-careful when bending to pick up something because it doesn't take much for my back to start playing up and for around two weeks I walk in a crooked line with my body and legs seemingly facing different directions. During those 2 weeks, a course of 400ml *Ibuprofen* tablets generally cleared things up. But on this latest occasion, nothing happened and after 6 weeks of suffering I decided to try Andy Aspen. I can now feel a real improvement without the need for drugs.

I haven't really spoken to Andy about whether his being blind helps because I'm sure he'd rather be sighted, however I do believe that it means he feels and senses things that sighted people would take much longer to find. The fact that he gives a special price for DaC drivers of £20 per session (instead of £30) does make the treatment less painful, but having now been several times, I'd go regardless of the price. **Brian Rice** suffered for years with a shoulder problem that meant he often needed help just to put his jacket on. Three sessions with Andy and Brian was cured!

Is he, as the caption says, Mr Miracle Man? Probably not, but he's bloody good at what he does. Graham Ellis would probably disagree with me and say that Mr Miracle Man is a rather apt title! Either way, Andy's ad is in most issues of the mag and if you have a physiotherapy problem, it might be worth your while giving him a call...

## Fixed price airports from the Cumberland?

The LTDF chatsite has often taken my name and that of **Call Sign** in vain. I can live with that. But I certainly won't let it stop me congratulating the trade's latest organisation – the *United Cabbies Group* – for organising fixed price airport runs from the Cumberland Hotel. This hotel has rarely favoured the London taxi driver – unless your name was Cumberland Willie or others whose monikers suggested an agreement with that hotel to the detriment of other drivers waiting on the rank.

So if that now means we get all the taxi work, then well done UCG. It's a shame Cumberland Willie isn't around to offer a comment!

If any **Call Sign** readers take an F/P from the Cumberland to an airport, perhaps you could let this magazine know whether the porters are still holding their hands out?

**Alan Fisher**  
callsignmag@aol.com



# reflections of the chairman

## End of year...

As you are probably aware, the end of our financial year is 31 August. I know you don't need me to tell you that it has been another difficult trading period, but under the circumstances **Dial-a-Cab** has performed quite well. Of course our figures have not been audited as yet, but we have made a reasonable surplus without any increase to member's subscriptions and yet we were still in a position to give an increase in salaries to your staff in April. The above is coupled with the fact there has been a small increase in top line turnover. I believe there are many organisations that would like to be able to report the above and also be in a position of having substantial cash reserves that have been carefully reserved over the years in order to be able to weather any financial downturn, as indeed our industry has experienced during the past three years. I was determined this organisation would not have to repeat the experience of the early nineties when we were close to going out of business. We will also be re-equipping the fleet in the not too distant future and will not require any finance in order to accomplish the task!

## And whilst on the subject of figures...

I recently read an article by someone called Mr Walker. This is an individual whom to the best of my knowledge I have never met. In fact I'd never even heard of him until he wrote an article that was forwarded onto me. Consequently, I did some investigation regarding this Walker and it would appear that he is the self-appointed Guru of the taxi industry and an academic who believes he is an authority on everything! In reality he is a ComCab driver who according to him, passed his 11+ with a record score and went to a top Grammar school for two years until he decided to attend the local comprehensive – oh yeah!

Anyway, you no doubt get the picture regarding this highly qualified individual. However, I digress; he recently published an article regarding the three radio circuits and came up with the extremely scientific fact that the turnover of all three taxi radio circuits had fallen in the last couple of years. That is quite amazing and I can't think how that could have been! He then went on to state that **Dial-a-Cab's** turnover had fallen by 40% in a two year period. Does he not realise as a self-proclaimed intelligent man that it was due to the fact that Dial-a-Cab alone service most of the major banks in London and when they went through their financial crisis, they cut back on their taxi usage? It would appear that this person for some reason has a dislike for Dial-a-Cab and me in particular! But I'll come to that later.

It is a shame that he did not discuss how well we have done during this downturn and of course the reserves that we possess, but obviously that did not serve his purpose. To cap it all, he used the figures that were compiled up to August of last year - obviously a fast mover as it has taken almost a year to produce his nonsense.

Since making my enquiries regarding this individual, I have learned that some time ago



he attacked me on an internet site – I do not have any problem with that, but I'm told he did get a little personal. A member of the site apparently had the audacity to speak up on my behalf and support me (thank you, whoever you were). This person, Walker, then came back with this:

***"I understand that most paedophiles are like a kindly old uncle during a grooming process. Not that I am suggesting that Rice is one of those, god forbid."***

Who does this person think he is mentioning my name in the same context as a pervert? He then believes that he is excused by adding that final sentence. You now have a pretty good idea about this individual. As I stated earlier, I have never met or even heard of this Walker, but I just hope our paths never cross. If they do then I think it would be quite appropriate to replace just one letter from his name and then he would be a Wa\*ker!

## Olympics again

We have all heard stories regarding contracts being awarded to car companies for the forthcoming Olympics. This was probably started by the Mayor who remarked on a radio programme that a contract *may* have been awarded to Addison Lee. You can imagine how our industry acted on hearing that! His statement was clearly incorrect and was immediately denied by AL. I never doubted the statement was incorrect, as I knew any contract for the Olympics would have to go to tender before being awarded. On that note, the first notification of tenders (transport) that will be distributed have been released, while the tenders themselves will be released in the next few weeks. The first one is quite unusual in that they are looking for an organisation that can supply 'sufficient qualified' drivers to convey 5,000 vehicles from Tilbury to Olympic Fleet Depots. I can only assume these vehicles will be the BMWs to be driven by volunteer drivers during the Olympics and Paralympic games.

There will also be a tender issued to taxi and private hire companies to offer a service from Paddington Station to the Bloomsbury area. This will be for the foreign media who will reside in and around Bloomsbury. I don't know if you are aware, but the main media communications site will be Russell Square, consequently all media will be located in that area.

I hope the above will put a few rumours to bed regarding contracts being awarded to private hire without also offering our industry the same opportunity.

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

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# Yellow identifiers and the Yellow Star



It was in late 2008 that **Call Sign** received several letters from **Dial-a-Cab** drivers complaining about the encroachment of yellow badge suburban drivers trying to poach work in green badge areas – ie touting.

In fact it was a driver's wife who first blew the whistle, writing to this magazine twice telling us of yellow badge drivers whom she knew were working in town. **Simon Bugey**, the PCO's Senior Driver and Operator Policy Manager at the time responded with the usual guff about what would happen to them if they were caught. Following issues contained articles and letters from DaC drivers who also knew yellow badges that worked out of their area.

**Mary Dowdye**, then *Head of Standards & Regulations* at the PCO, came back to reiterate what Simon Bugey had already said, but the problem continued.

Another DaC driver then wrote to **Call Sign**: *"I gave them (PCO) details of one yellow badge driver, his cab, his address and when and where he goes each day. They do nothing. So much for their tough threats to act on information given to them. To me, these drivers are no better than minicab touts. I have no sympathy for them and if they are finding it hard, well so are we all. But let them do what we all had to do - get off their lazy backsides and do the 'green badge' Knowledge or leave the trade. Don't steal our work. There's little enough to go around as it is."*

Last month LTPH announced that finally there was to be identification between green and yellow badges using the simple idea of a green sticker in the front and rear screen of a green badge driver's cab and a yellow one for suburban.

It sounded simple enough until **Call Sign** received an email emanating from an organisation we hadn't heard of before – **The London Suburban Taxi Association**. It had been sent to **John Mason** at LTPH and leaked to us by a Jewish DaC driver in order to gauge our view. Signed by **Melvyn Stanley** of the LSTA, it contained one of the most ridiculous statements this magazine has ever read. Writing of what he referred to as the minority Jewish Suburban taxi drivers, Mr Stanley said:

*"These drivers are outraged that you are trying to force the introduction of identifiers on the front and rear of their taxi's (Hackney Carriage Vehicles) to identify them to the General Public, not only that, but you propose to make them YELLOW. Are you aware of the significance that this implication has, if not we will enlighten you. In 1940 YELLOW IDENTIFIERS were forced on people of the Warsaw Ghetto, these people were a minority race, all being Jewish, so that they would stand out from the crowd and be identifiable. This brings back horrendous stories into our minds of which our parents and grandparents told us about. I am sure you know and have read of the well documented atrocities that were inflicted not only of the Jewish population, but*



## Does this offend Jewish drivers?

*others who were made to wear yellow identifiers. If you think that we are going to allow this situation to arise again in a different guise, you are very sorely mistaken. Families who went through this life changing trauma still have relatives alive who not only work but use our services, how do you think this appears to a so called free society."*

Mr Stanley goes on to infer that LTPH "...may well be institutionally racist or that members of the staff may be racist." He added that "the forced introduction of these YELLOW Identifiers infringes the civil liberties of a minority race and all people of this Great British multi-racial country. It most certainly infringes one's human rights."

He ends by accusing John Mason of using a sledge hammer to crack a nut!

I wrote a response to the DaC driver who sent me the copy. I said:

*"Thanks for passing this statement onto me but I have to wonder if it is a wind-up? I have never read such rubbish in connection to the cab trade. This sounds like a desperate move by some yellow badges to avoid having a licence to tout in green badge territory taken away."*

*In fact I suspect that many Jewish drivers would find it insulting to have yellow badge stickers used in the same discussion as that of death camps. Whoever this group are, let them come out and put a case based on taxi ability and not desperation...*

*I have forwarded the LSTA statement onto several others, all of whom should feel free to*

*respond if they so wish..."*

And I was inundated with responses – especially from Jewish drivers with not one of them finding yellow badge stickers as being remotely offensive.

**Steve Shaller (F34J)** put it best when he wrote:

*"I totally agree with you. Who is this idiot with a big chip on his shoulder? Who does he represent and in what year is he living? 1945? If he is opposed to a yellow identifier being attached to his taxi, then I must assume that he doesn't like to wear his yellow badge on his chest."*

Other responses were in the same vein with not one writer even hinting that he/she thought the idea would bring back memories of the Warsaw Ghetto. As for me, I'd go further and say that the disgrace wasn't LTPH putting the suggestion forward, but for this crackpot organisation daring to insinuate even the merest link, because THAT is the biggest insult of all. This group are using the Holocaust to try to avoid being identified when breaking the law. As Steve Shaller wrote, have they refused to wear their yellow badges for the same reason?

Walking round **Yad Vashem** in Jerusalem, I saw many things I'd sooner not have seen but I know that it is important that we remember. Had I seen a suburban driver's yellow badge or yellow identification sticker, I would have walked out in disgust at it's presence there.

If anyone would like to comment on my views, these pages are always open...

**Alan Fisher**  
Editor

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## Call Sign

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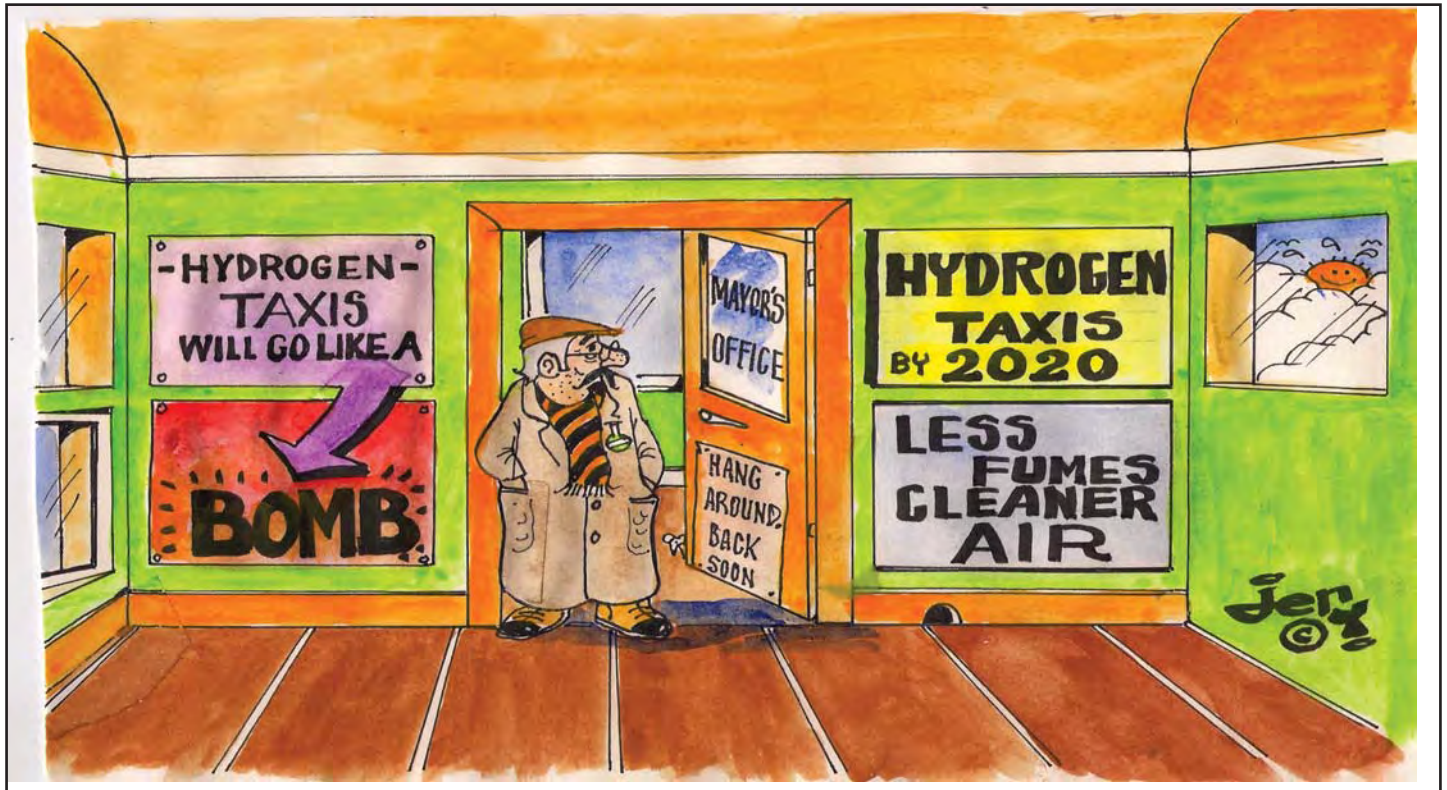
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# Jery's World



The missus made me choose between 'er and me old Fairway. Anyone 'ere know where I can get it serviced???

## RMT: RICKSHAWS WILL "JAM LONDON SOLID!"

*As capital heads towards the Olympics...*

The taxi branch of the RMT has warned that central London will be "jammed solid" with unlicensed and uninsured rickshaws as it heads towards the London Olympics with the authorities refusing to lift a finger to clamp down on the unregulated trade.

The union claims to have a clear position of opposition to rickshaws in London and in July the RMT parliamentary group convenor, **John McDonnell**, successfully objected to the TfL *London Local Authorities Bill* at *Second Reading* - specifically on the grounds that it would lead to the continued proliferation of unlicensed and unsafe rickshaws clogging up central London.

This was an important and significant victory in the battle by RMT's Taxi Branch to end the London rickshaw trade all together. Now the union is demanding urgent action to clear the rickshaws off the busy streets of the capital before there is a fatality.

RMT General Secretary **Bob Crow** said:

**"There is a very real danger that the whole of central London could be clogged up with unlicensed and unregulated rickshaws in the run-up to the Olympics if the authorities don't get an urgent grip on the situation. Alongside the threat to the livelihoods of our licensed taxi branch members, there is also the threat of serious injury to unwary members of the public who have no idea that they are climbing into uninsured and unregistered vehicles on London's busy streets. We've heard reports of rip-off fares of up to £50 for a journey of a few hundred metres!"**

**"Our taxi branch is demanding action now before this chaotic situation spirals out of control and we will be leading a campaign on the streets and in Parliament to raise public awareness of the rickshaw threat and to force the authorities to end this trade before we have a tragedy on our hands."**



Bob Crow:  
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campaign on  
the streets!"

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Britain's image as a tourist destination was given a major blow following the recent rioting. The country's tourism officials, who just a few weeks earlier had begun a countdown to the 2012 Olympics, now face the challenge of overcoming the damage of riots that hit headlines around the world.

Mary Rance, CEO of *UKInbound*, told **Call Sign**: "The Riots, particularly in London, were most unfortunate for the global image of the UK – and not just ahead of the Olympics but for the country's short term and long term inbound tourism industry. With scenes of looting, violence and lawlessness flashing across TV screens around the globe, it is absolutely vital that the Government and its agencies, as well as the UK tourism industry, work hard to put things into context."

The international press has been dominated by images of burnt-out double-decker buses, cars and buildings and of police in riot gear under attack. Fortunately few taxis were involved and so far as drivers on **Dial-a-Cab** were concerned, that could be thanks to the Society's dispatchers who constantly kept updating drivers on those parts of London where there was trouble.

**Barry Spear (Y16)** told us: "I saw a group of youths in the Hallfield Estate, Bayswater, looking as though they were about to start trouble and soon after, I saw a message about the estate and Queensway where it mentioned petrol bombs being thrown. I must thank the DaC dispatchers. Their assistance in helping us to avoid trouble spots was just invaluable."

**Steve Wright (B36)** lives close to Croydon

# RIOTS & DAC!



**Steve Wright was shocked when he saw Reeves the following morning**

and was shocked when he went to Reeves Corner the following morning. "It looked like a bomb had landed on top of it. Working on that awful Monday night, I consider myself lucky that our terminals were keeping us so up-to-date that I managed to keep out of trouble. Then on the way home, I was going through Purley when some yob hit the cab with an egg! But I suppose it could have been worse..."

**John Davis (V41J)** came across some severe rioting at Ladbroke Grove station with

police battling yobs but managed to turn round and bypass it.

"As for the rest of the night and thanks to the invaluable messages going out over the terminal, I managed to avoid any more trouble. The dispatchers were brilliant. I just wish those drivers who waste our time by saying there's 'work at Eurostar' when there are more than enough cabs queuing round the block to take care of them, were as good!"

On the way home, John could see the fires in Enfield.












"It was just horrendous and brought home the danger and sheer futility of what was going on."

**Call Sign** spoke to several other DaC drivers who all also said they saw very little trouble thanks to DaC's dispatchers. So we thought that we'd give credit where it's due and say thank you to the three people in the dispatcher's box on that Monday evening – John Connor, Talitha Cohen and Mujahid Ali. In addition, when the police heard how successful our warnings were, they asked the DaC call centre to keep them informed as to where trouble was springing from. It was a day that radio showed how much it's worth...

*Call Sign's Tom Quigley was hired for the whole four days by a TV crew – but he had to go to the riot hot-spots! His amazing and exclusive report is on page 13...*

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Disagreements between husband and wife normally play out between the two combatants in the privacy of their home and not – as was the case between **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Jon Farmer (H69)** and his wife **Yvonne** – in front of several million television viewers on peak time Saturday evening viewing!

Jon has two problems – he enjoys appearing on TV and he loves his parking space! Several years ago, Jon was in **Call Sign** after appearing weekly in a program that tried to create a chef from “ordinary” people! Jon reached the final and almost won. Just like that appearance, Jon applied for this latest TV slot after reading a **Tom Whitbread** appeal on DaC terminals asking for husband and wife or partner volunteers to appear in a TV program. This latest one was about household disputes.

In **The Marriage Ref (ITV)**, where a celebrity panel vote on whose side they take between a warring couple's dispute, Yvonne started the ball rolling by telling several million Saturday evening viewers that she was becoming sick of Jon's obsession with his parking space! Jon responded that he objected to anyone parking either in or near his parking space outside their home because that's where he kept his Vito taxi and added that he had to pay the council £1500 for them to adjust the kerb height.

“It's my space, my castle” said Jon “and I'm going to guard it. It makes me so wild when people think they can just invade my space!” Just to warm things up, Jon - obviously appealing for a panel 'sympathy vote' - added that he had been married to Yvonne for 32 years, which he said was the equivalent of “four life sentences!” Mind you, he did add that he still fancied her, but whether that was as a wife or parking attendant, Jon didn't say!

Yvonne then entered the fray telling the panel, consisting of comedians **Jack Dee** and **Jimmy Carr** together with *Coronation Street's* **Katherine Kelly**, who plays Becky McDonald,



Dial-a-Cab driver's wife tells the world...

## “He cares more about his parking space than me!”



Jon with his pampered Vito

Inset: Yvonne lays into Jon on The Marriage Ref

that Jon would stand in the couple's porch just waiting to see if anyone would dare to try and

park over the line that Jon considered his private parking area.

“He goes mad even if someone goes 3 inches into his space and I sometimes have to go out to measure whether someone is overhanging Jon's space! And when he goes out in the cab, I have to go out in my dressing gown to place wheelie bins in his space. Then I can't use our car to go out – even shopping – because I have to use the car to park in Jon's space to guard it in case we need the wheelie bins for rubbish! So I walk to the shops and struggle home with bags

hanging everywhere.”

Jon's response was that he was doing Yvonne a favour by helping her to keep fit! Jimmy Carr raised a laugh by suggesting that it was unusual to find a London taxi driver with strong opinions, while Jack Dee chimed in to say that Jon's conversation about his parking space probably livened up a few conversations in the cab - ending with passengers begging to be let out!

The panel eventually sided with Yvonne. After the cameras stopped rolling, Jon admitted to **Call Sign** that while he really did get irritated if anyone tried to park in his space, the argument was one they laughed at and that after all those years, they were still very much in love...

### 15 year rule and your cab...

**Call Sign** often gets queries about how the new 15 year rule will affect drivers with older taxis. We believe this guide to be correct. Check before giving up any taxi...

R reg (1997):	Last plate <b>2012</b>
S reg (1998):	Last plate <b>2013</b>
T & V reg (1999):	Last plate <b>2014</b>
W & X reg (2000):	Last plate <b>2015</b>
Y & 51 reg (2001):	Last plate <b>2016</b>
02 & 52 reg (2002):	Last plate <b>2017</b>
03 & 53 reg (2003):	Last plate <b>2018</b>
04 & 54 reg (2004):	Last plate <b>2019</b>
05 & 55 reg (2005):	Last plate <b>2020</b>
06 & 56 reg (2006):	Last plate <b>2021</b>

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# Call Centre Chat

normal reminder letters to drivers regarding us not seeing their cab licenses. While the letters have been reworded as an attempt to not offend anyone, it is very difficult to beat around the bush when a driver does not contact us after two reminders. The cab licence is the proof that you are the owner of the vehicle and therefore eligible to be a member of the Society.

Anyone failing to contact us after the second reminder will be deemed to not be the registered owner and therefore his/her membership will also be deemed to have ceased. It is very important that if you are experiencing any problems with renewing your cab licence, you must contact Driver Services immediately, so that we can update our records.

This also applies to any driver changing their personal details, especially a change of mobile telephone number. It is essential our records are fully up-to-date so that should we need to contact any of you in an emergency, controllers can do so much easier.

## Rioting and the call centre

I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Conner, our evening shift controller who just happened to be in charge on the evening of the 8 August when the rioting commenced. It was John who took the initiative to send messages out of all the trouble spots as they happened. John also took it upon himself to change the working practises. That evening was not one any of us would like to experience again, but John kept a cool head and called the shots with the interest of both drivers and our clients in mind. It was a difficult evening for all of our call centre staff and not wishing to name each of them, I would like to thank them all for their efforts. Well done!

**Keith Cain**

**Call Centre Manager**

**Driver Operations Manager**

We are now leaving the quiet period but it is still essential that everyone follows and complies with our procedural rules. Focus should be on booking into zones correctly, especially the outer zones where you have to be physically in the zone before booking in. Even as we become busier, controllers will still be monitoring the system.

## Cab licenses

We have been sending a higher number than

# FISHING: THE MOCATRA OPEN

The 2010 Mocatra Open Championship was held once again at Coleman's Cottage at Witham in Essex thanks to the obvious advantages of all nets being supplied, room for over 70 anglers, a good restaurant for breakfast and space for presentations after the match. And thanks to an excellent response in tough times by the sponsors - including **Dial-a-Cab** - the high standard of prizes awarded to winners was maintained.

We spread ourselves out over two lakes - Wood and Copse - but it became obvious by the start time of 10am that it was going to be hard work holding the pole in the gusty conditions. So for most of us fishing in the cross wind, the feeder rod came out along with the cage or method feeders using crumb or pellet.

By midday there was nothing between the two lakes, Wood and Copse, but those using the feeder were having it all their own way. **Dennis Fisher** on Wood Lake and DaC's **Mick Branchley (R57)** on Copse were forging ahead, both using 8mm pellet and taking carp to 8lb.

The clock moved round to 4pm and it was all over. Poor weather conditions limited the weights but there was no doubt that the feeder boys had it all their own way.

Top weight went to Dennis Fisher with 105lb and Mick Branchley second with 90lb 2oz, however Mick didn't go away empty handed having won the **Dial-a-Cab Shield**. George Manoli (copse) came third with 88lb 12oz.

*The Mocatra Angling Society would like to thank all the sponsors for their generosity; they were Dial-a-Cab, LTDA, Halt, Eva Lawrence (Doug Sherry's at Heathrow)*



**2010 winner Dennis Fisher. You can still enter this year's Championship**

**Alan Butcher aka Grizzly Adams**

**For those interested in competing in this year's Mocatra Open, it will be held once again at Coleman's Cottage on 14th September 2011. Entry is £30, if you are interested please contact Dave Cronin on 07838 277563...**

## Reporting minicab touting online

Illegal minicabs touting for trade in London can now be reported on the TfL website. Anyone with access to the internet will be able to visit the Cab Enforcement web pages to report any illegal activity or for updates on enforcement operation results. Over seven thousand arrests have been made in the last eight years for touting and cab offences in London.

The new web pages are part of a wider initiative between TfL and its policing partners that aims to promote the safety of the travelling public, highlight the activity that has been undertaken to tackle touting and publicise the results. They are available to view at the following address: [www.tfl.gov.uk/cabenforcement](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/cabenforcement).



"I was sitting on the Bank Street E14 rank reading **Call Sign**," **Keith Perry (W07)** told our reporter, "when suddenly both carriage doors flew open, two men in their thirties jumped in and told me to 'go go go! Get moving quickly.... now!' So I decided to pull away and then ask them where they wanted to go because they did seem to be in an awful big hurry!"

"I only got about 40 yards down the road and was then aware of a great commotion behind me. Looking in my rear view mirror, I saw a group of people, some in suits, others in Canary Wharf security uniforms running towards my cab, shouting and waving their arms at me to stop!"

Having gained our attention, Keith continued his tale. "I started to slow down, wondering what all the fuss was about but the two passengers demanded that I kept going. I explained that I had to stop because my cab and its' licence numbers of course, would be on the security cameras and could easily be traced. As the cab ground to a halt with the two passengers shouting for me to keep going, we were immediately surrounded by the posse of people who had been chasing us, with Canary Wharf security personnel leaning across the rear doors to prevent my passengers from escaping. At the same time, a CW security truck shuddered to a stop across the front of the cab, preventing me from moving another inch, not that I was going to! It was absolute mayhem," Keith added.

"There were still lots of noises, raised voices and the 'wow-wow' of a police siren as the boys in blue arrived on the scene. Still confused about what exactly was going on, I thought it might be some sort of filming job and then it dawned on me that I might unwittingly be

# Keith and the great taxi getaway!



**Keith Perry - unwittingly involved in a Jewel robbery?**

involved in something less honourable!"

"Then a man came up to me and introduced himself from the CW Security Centre and asked if I had witnessed anything. I told him I did not even know from which direction they had come before entering my taxi. Then it was my turn to ask questions; who were my passengers and what was this all about? The man then explained that my passengers were alleged to have robbed a jewellery shop in the precinct. At that point a lady came forward saying she was from the shop, had seen what had happened and it was all on security cameras."

Keith continued his amazing story: "By this time the police had handcuffed and presumably arrested the two passengers while the lady I had

spoken to earlier requested she search the back of the cab - I assume for jewels - but she found nothing. The police were not too happy when they found out though, because she had inadvertently entered a 'crime scene' which may have affected any subsequent forensic evidence. Then while one of my 'passengers' was still handcuffed to the police officer, the officer also asked me if I had witnessed anything, to which I again replied in the negative. It was only after I had convinced everybody concerned that I had nothing to do with the incident, other than to transport the men 40 yards or so, that I was allowed to go on my way. I also searched the back of the cab very thoroughly indeed, but sadly found no jewels, only a DLR single journey train ticket! I have no idea what happened to the two men, I only know that I went back to work and without any 'treasure' on board, it was no early finish for me!" With that, Keith smiled philosophically and drove off...

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

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## The PH battle

As the children start drifting back to school, that means its September and if we need a real litmus test as to the state of the economy, it's from now until the New Year. Personally I think that we as a trade have dealt with the downturn with great dignity and maturity with everyone accepting, whilst not liking, the situation we were have been placed in. We lost much of our market share through no fault of our own and also had to watch the authorities turn a blind eye, whilst PH take even more. **Peter Hendy** recently said that lines of PH vehicles outside venues are untouchable and the police have no right to question them. In his words, they are waiting to be booked from within that venue. We all know different and maybe he has an answer to the following scenario that contradicts that statement.

I was covering an account job on a busy Sunday night and the doorman at *The Four Seasons* was looking for a taxi for a customer. Unable to find one, he whistled up the first PH vehicle in the queue opposite. It came over and took the job. Need I say more?

When I first came into this profession, I was surprised by the animosity the public show towards us, especially the cost of some journeys. Over the years the reoccurring theme is that foreign visitors and the more well-off Londoners are more than happy to pay the cost of a taxi journey and fully understand that in a major capital city, traffic can sometimes be at a standstill, journey times can be different and fares more expensive. On the other hand, there has always been a section of the public who leave me scratching my head wondering just what they want!

I was at Terminal 3 recently when a retired couple came up asking for a price to Betchingley near Redhill in Surrey. I looked in the diary and quoted £100 and the red-faced fella stormed off saying he could get a local firm for £75. Taking into account that he had probably spent £100s on a holiday and that he would have to wait an hour or so before his cab turned up - what's £25?

## How much???

Interestingly in the *August Call Sign*, I read the preposterous statement of *Addison Lee* accusing DaC drivers of cherry picking. Is that right! I recently did a cash ride off the terminal from Parsons Green to Tudor Street and after arriving at the destination, the lady passenger said that £29 was a lot of money and she usually used Addison Lee who charged a fixed price of £22 but they didn't have any cars available that morning. I pointed out that the traffic was bad and £25 would have been the normal fare. I also made the point that DaC were available to take her because Addison Lee were too busy doing Heathrow Airports rides (cherry picking), but that DaC were more than happy to cover what they would not cover as, in my eyes, we have a greater sense of public service. She may have paid a bit more but she got where she wanted and you get what you pay for!

*(Ed's note: Richard, you should have told her that when we don't have any cabs available then we only charge half price!!!)*

## My TX4

Four years ago I went into **M&O** and for the first time brought myself a brand new TX4. This went against the grain with me but I had no choice as trade-in values on my TX2 were so bad and M&O were the only people who would

Former fireman **Richard Potter** and life behind the

# POTTER'S WHEEL



give me anything. Well, after a couple of radiators and 140k miles, I have to say that the TX4 is still going great guns and is without doubt the best taxi I have ever driven. Of course there could be improvements, but compared to my TX2 that by then had smoke pouring out of the gearbox if you went over 50 MPH and started up like someone had poured ball bearing into the filler cap, my TX4 still runs really well. Also, with the scrapping of all taxis pre-1997, the resale market for early TX4s is buoyant and I

have had 2 offers for it already.

**And finally...** I don't know about you but getting a conversation out of your children can be difficult when they spend most of their time on laptops or their iPhones whilst emailing and texting! On my way home from work I received a phone call from my son who told me that we had a snake in our pond. I queried it but he insisted although I thought it was a small slow worm or something similar. But when I got home there was a huge snake swimming around in the pond! I didn't know what to do so I slowly walked over to the pond and looked this reptile right in the eyes. The stand-off was broken when I jumped out of my skin at the sudden shock of my phone receiving a text. It read: "OMG you have a snake in your pond!" What! I hadn't even dealt with the problem and I'm already receiving texts from my daughter because my other daughter had posted something on *Facebook*! Next time I want their attention, I will use electronic means because talking is far too old fashioned, boring and slow...

**Richard Potter (T51)**

## MANGANESE AGREEMENT WITH GEELY

*The only question is this... an agreement of what?*

Manganese Bronze Holdings, parent company of LTI / London Taxi Company have announced the signing of an agreement with Geely International Corporation relating to the potential distribution in the United Kingdom of Geely's vehicles and spare parts and the provision of after-sales service. They will be starting with the Emgrand series of cars.

Under terms of the agreement, MBH has been granted exclusivity to develop and agree a business plan with Geely, covering all aspects of the potential launch of Geely products in the UK and their ongoing after-sales support. MBH and Geely will establish a project team in due course to determine the scope of any future distribution arrangements.

Whilst it is the clear intention of both parties to agree the business plan, should this not be possible, the agreement will lapse on 1 August 2012.

Commenting on the signing of the agreement, John Russell, Chief Executive Officer said:

"The signing of this agreement is a further example of the growing relationship between MBH and Geely. We look forward to successfully establishing and agreeing the business plan for the launch of Geely vehicles into the UK and to the implementation of that plan."

**Call Sign's** only question? After the Emgrand, will it be the Chinese TX4 on sale in London???

## London Taxi Company: Free online valuation...

The London Taxi Company has launched a new FREE online service to help customers get the true part-exchange value of their vehicles, quicker, slicker and easier than ever before!

Owners can now find out their taxi's value in just a few short clicks by visiting the leading manufacturer's website at **www.london-taxis.co.uk**. Customers can complete a short form, which is then sent directly to the nearest London Taxi Company dealership and a valuation prepared and relayed back to them by a member of the company's experienced sales team.

Commenting on the continually evolving website, International Market Development Director, Matthew Cheyne said: "This is another great demonstration of the benefits of dealing direct with The London Taxi Company. We've already proved this with the pricing of our new model range TX4 *Style* and TX4 *Elegance* from £29,995 on the road. Not only is this our lowest priced TX range for more than a decade, but for the first time in years it means you can buy a brand new automatic transmission TX4 for less than £30,000!

"The next biggest message for us is to reinforce to our customers that we have also reviewed our used and part-exchange pricing too. In fact, we're confident that our part-exchange prices have never been better! More and more customers are finding out every day for themselves the benefits of dealing direct with us. Initiatives like this help us to spread the word even further."

To find out more about London Taxi Company's free valuation service, visit **www.london-taxis.co.uk** or alternatively contact your local dealer direct!



On the evening of Sunday 7 August, I was hired by an International TV crew with a request to take them as close to Tottenham as possible (the scene of the previous night's riot), then wait and return them to their office.

On our way, this quickly changed to Enfield as reports came in of disturbances there. As we got closer to Enfield, there were sporadic gangs of young men and women running through the streets causing carnage by breaking the windows of shops and damaging cars etc. In the town centre, police had set up a road block, but strangely allowed pedestrians to go through. The TV crew alighted whilst I parked up as close as I could get to a row of police vans assuming that to probably be the safest place.

A short while later, the crew returned with an instruction to get to the retail park on the A10 as this was being raided. Using my local knowledge, I managed to avoid roadblocks and get into the centre - which was quite shocking because if I could do that, then so could anyone else! Parking outside *Toy R Us*, the scene was one of mayhem with many shops damaged and raided, whilst the youths had dispersed just leaving TV crews and police, who were then beginning to cordon off the area. The rest of the night was similar as we drove through Edmonton and Tottenham to Stoke Newington, sometimes driving through mobs, burnt out vehicles and always police vehicles that, like us, seemed to be chasing the tail of a mysterious dragon.

The next night (Monday) was a far more sinister night. We covered the scenes at Clarence Road and the Pembury Estate in Hackney. Here you could see and sense the air was even more violent and filled with hatred. There was a large police presence armed with riot shields and heavier equipment, larger amount of youths - while mostly black, they were not exclusively so. I would say as someone brought up in the Clapton area, it was a representative mixture of whole of the area. Pavements were covered with onlookers, some families with children as young as 4 or 5 years old were watching this grotesque saga of events.

Our TV crew were then attacked and so we fled to a quieter position returning at around 3am to film the now-quieter main streets. But the side streets were still full of mobs milling around.

Left on my own while parked up, I was approached by three young black guys "informing" me that I had a puncture. I wasn't going to fall for that old chestnut and I drove off only to find that I actually did have a puncture! Sweating profusely, while laughing and praying to myself about the predicament I was in, I parked next to a row of police vans and changed the tyre in double quick time as I don't think my breakdown company would have sent a truck out!

With reports of vigilantes roaming the streets on Tuesday, we headed back to Enfield arriving in a town with no roadblocks. So we drove to the town centre where there were large groups of young men all wearing white tops, this time they were mostly white-skinned but with a few black and Asian kids too. The TV crew set off filming while I spoke to a small gang about reports that a racist political

Call Sign's Tom Quigley was hired by an international news channel's TV film crew to drive them around during the four days of rioting. This is what happened...

# Call Sign at the Tottenham riots!



Rioting in Clarence Road, Hackney

party had set this up? They laughed and said it was decided on a media website to wear white, as most of Enfield locals supported Spurs and the Arsenal fans would generally have an England shirt or at least a T-shirt. The idea being a visual for the police and locals to know they weren't there for looting etc.

After reports of clashes between different groups in the Lewisham area on Wednesday, we headed off to Catford and Eltham. It was at Eltham where we were met by a large group of white youths running towards us, but this time being chased by a very different police outfit - these were organised, heavily kitted out and very intimidating, made up of forces from Wales and Yorkshire. These guys knew what they were doing. I stood alone for about an hour as the TV crew went looking for stories, watching the police isolate and segregate troublemakers. Like hyenas in packs, the Police were cunning, effective and big. Although certainly not passive, they weren't outwardly aggressive or violent towards the guys they caught.

After 4 days in the most violent spots in London, my summary was that the TV crew members I worked with were by a long way

some of the most polite and courteous people I have ever picked up and I would go as far as to say probably ever worked with. They were also very brave and went to the hearts of all the areas. Watching playbacks, their reports were unbiased and fair. As for the whole situation, I could not believe it took so long to stir the apathy of our politicians to return from holiday to answer and front the media and if these events were in Kensington or Richmond, would they have taken so long? I was also appalled and shocked by the behaviour of some of the parents we saw with young children at their side abusing the police. Then there was the way groups were allowed to walk past police lines only to meet later and form large gangs. There was a total lack of protection given to small shops and trades as they watched their life's work being destroyed. I watched working class families crying on the street as their homes were burnt out by their own people - hell bent on wanton destruction.

As a Clapton lad, who has family from the Pembury Estate, it wasn't nice seeing your home town left to burn.

**Tom Quigley (Y33)**

## Do you want to share a new TX4?

**Glen Robertson (E54)** has appeared in *Call Sign* several times over the years advertising one or two berths left on the 50 foot sailing cruiser, *Ascendon*, that he shares with four friends. The last we heard it was the Greek islands, whereas this year's jaunt involves four weeks cruising around Sardinia and Corsica.

**But it's a more land-based reason that Glen makes our pages this month - he is looking for a partner in buying a new TX4 Elegance at the end of September, so if you are interested in jointly buying a new cab as a partner or perhaps you fancy just driving a new cab as a nightman, then give Glen a call by phoning or texting him on 07850 722 207.**

**Glen lives in Chadwell Heath and starts early in the morning. The cab will be fitted on Dial-a-Cab...**

# Channel 4: Can we borrow your call centre?

**Call Sign** just happened to pop into **Dial-a-Cab House** recently and bumped into a **Channel 4** film crew making a programme called *Life after God*. So naturally, we asked whether it involved Chairman **Brian Rice**!

But no, it was nothing to do with this Society! It was a production company called **Clear Story** who were working on a philological documentary for Channel 4 to be televised later in the year.

**Philology** is the study of language in written historical sources, so why



did they need our call centre? There wasn't much ancient Greek spoken there the last time we heard, although rumour had it that Call Centre Manager **Keith Cain** had once been to Corfu!

"I'm not sure," said the female member of the C4 crew, "we were just told to get some close-ups of people on phones and hands on keyboards, and as DaC is such a well-known taxi company with a nice call centre, we came here!"

## London 2012 torch travels by TX4!

As *National Presenting Partner* for the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay, **Lloyds TSB** is giving hundreds of people who have made a difference in their community the chance to carry the Olympic Flame in the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay.

In support of the campaign, Lloyds TSB has been taking the London 2012 Olympic Torch on a tour of more than 70 communities across the UK this summer thanks to a unique partnership between Lloyds TSB and **The London Taxi Company**.

The state of the art London TX4 has been specially modified to help promote the Lloyds TSB London 2012 Olympic Torch Tour which continues until the end of September. The tour is an interactive exhibition designed to build up momentum for the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay for local communities across the UK. Visitors can have their photo taken with the prototype London 2012 Olympic Torch, learn about the history of the Relay and find out how to nominate someone who has made a difference in their local community to carry the Olympic Flame as part of the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay next year. The TX4 *Elegance* taxi has been modified to turn it into a video booth, allowing visitors to film their Torchbearer nominations.

As part of Lloyds Banking Group, leading point of sale motor finance firm **Black Horse** helped engineer the partnership, resulting in the specially branded taxi. Their Transport Manager Robert Doyle commented: "The Lloyds TSB London 2012 Olympic Torch Tour is a great opportunity for people across the UK to connect with the London 2012 Games, as it visits almost every community across the UK. It has come about through the great working relationship we have with London Taxis, who have provided us with a top class means of transport. The specially tailored cab is much more than taxi – it's a mobile interactive hub, which we hope will inspire people across the country to get involved in the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay."

*Coming back from serious injury too soon...*

## Has Lee crocked himself???

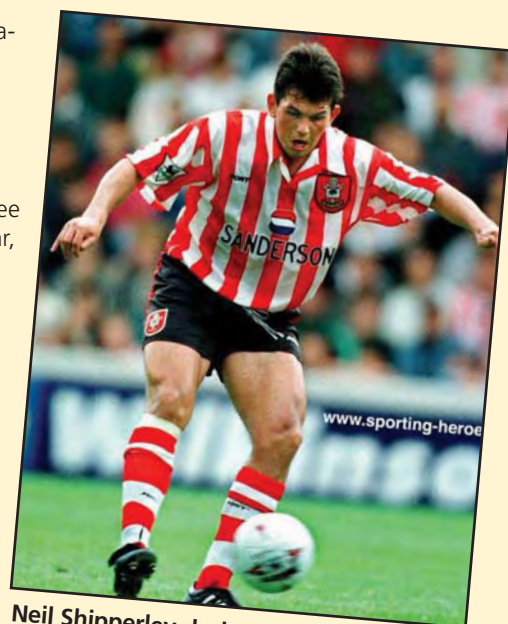
**Dial-a-Cab** driver and **Ashford Town** goalkeeper **Lee Pearce (J71)** ended last season with a lengthy lay off due to a cruciate ligament injury to his knee. He missed the tail-end of the season and was told he would probably miss the beginning of this one.

But an assurance from manager **Jamie Lawrence** that he would regain his first team place once the injury had healed kept Lee in hope that his hard work in attempting to rebuild the leg's strength would pay off in the long term. But then Lee heard that contrary to what Jamie had said about staying for at least one more year, he had left the club's employ before the season began.

Then Lee heard from former **Chelsea** and **Southampton** player, **Neil Shipperley**, who is now the manager at **Walton Casuals** of the *Ryman South* league. He invited the DaC goalie down to train and according to Lee, the knee felt good and he did some running on it with no problems and was selected for a pre-season friendly against Northwood.

After 15 minutes of the match, Lee's knee gave way leaving him in pain. The club's physio wrote him off until at least Christmas but doesn't think it's the cruciate again. He told Lee that he believes the treatment he had been undergoing wasn't good enough for the injury.

Lee told **Call Sign**: "I've got the results of an MRI scan to come, but I've been working really hard to try and strengthen the knee. The physio looked at it again and has now said that if I carry on like this, then I could be back around September or October. I hope so because this is the first time I've had to sit out the beginning of a season..."



Neil Shipperley during his time at Southampton. Neil is Lee's new manager



**Tony Shalloo (P79)** is probably like many other **Dial-a-Cab** drivers who are proud of their kids. In Tony's case that applies to son **Jack's** progress in the world of entertainment having first performed professionally at the age of 8 in a show at the Hornchurch Queens Theatre. That was followed a year later with the part of Spider in *Oliver* at the London Palladium and then Jackie in the original London cast of *Whistle Down the Wind* at the Aldwych Theatre!

Since then **Jack Shalloo** has appeared in award winning musicals, cult TV shows and three feature films. In addition, he has jointly written and released the album **London Soul** along with **Spesh Maloney** and is a co-writer and producer on the hit YouTube show *thesketchbank*.

Now aged 24, he took a lead part in last year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival production of *Hamlet the Musical*, in addition to playing roles in Dougal Irvine's *Departure Lounge* at The Waterloo East Theatre, where he appeared alongside *Coronation Street* star **Chris Fountain** (Tommy Duckworth in *Corrie*) and former *Emmerdale* siren **Verity Rushworth** (Donna Windsor in the soap). He has also appeared in the West End production of *The Kissing Dance*. Jack Shalloo has become a regular and recognised name in British musical theatre.

**Jack is opening on October 5 in *Stand Tall* at the Landor Theatre in Stockwell; dad Tony refers to it as a theatre above a pub whereas those with more soul than London taxi drivers describe the intimate 60-seater as trendy and edgy! The rock musical is described as a modern day David and Goliath tale.**

The debut album, **London Soul**, is available on *iTunes* (£12.99) and *The Dress Circle* in Monmouth Street - [www.dresscircle.co.uk](http://www.dresscircle.co.uk) if parking there is too difficult! Along with **Spesh** and **James Muller**, Jack is also writing a musical called *London Time*, using songs from the album and which Tony thinks might be based on the life of a London taxi driver. Did Jack have his dad in mind when he penned the tracks?

"I couldn't possibly comment," Tony Shalloo told **Call Sign** before adding quietly, "but he might have done!!!"

**Call Sign** listened to the album recently and while we are no NME, we were blown away by two things – someone who sounds different and who writes lyrics pertinent to real life. Yeah, and the tracks are great! If we were the NME, we could say they were effingwell great!

The album opens with *Dad Song* which tells of Jack's upbringing with dad giving him the advice of "keeping his zipper done up!" We couldn't possibly comment any further!

*City Boys* tells of the time a few years back when Jack was working in a wine bar during the recession and City workers were dropping in at lunchtime spending £2000 on booze! He doesn't portray them as being too nice. In addition to the moral side, *City*

# Tony's son on verge of stardom?



**Tony Shalloo is proud of son Jack. Inset: Jack's album is available on iTunes and from the Dress Circle in Monmouth Street**

*Boys* is a very catchy track which you could find yourself humming to later after the CD has been put away.

**Call Sign's** staff also enjoyed the very clever *She Takes Care of Me*, which sounds like the memo of a lazy so-and-so but musically is also bluesy and very catchy. But the undoubted big hit track must be the brilliant

duet with former *Jagged Eyes* lead singer **Beth Morrissey**. *Sweet Sick Love* is nothing less than excellent and very different from the rest of the album, Beth's beautiful voice contrasts perfectly with Jack's rugged edge. But there are no bad tracks on this terrific album just some that are better than others – *Summer Girl* being one that you could imagine as a hit single.

So how can we describe Jack's voice other than different? Well how about a mix of Michael Caine, Jona Lewie, Rod Stewart and Madness! We said it was different and if you are looking for a sweet voice, then we suggest you look elsewhere. Jack's voice has been described as rough and ready and that's pretty close. But it is also soulful with a tinge of fun. If *London Time* matches up to the album, Jack's name could become very big.

Jack was recently asked who had been his biggest inspiration, the answer came quickly.

**"There are lots of actors, but I only have one Dad and he is a big inspiration to me. He works extremely hard in his taxi to give us everything he didn't have. He's a great man."**

If Jack wants to base *London Time* on a **Dial-a-Cab** driver, then we can undoubtedly help! Either way, no wonder Tony is proud of Jack...



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**Through *Call Sign*, Michael Son has asked for views on the introduction of more fixed prices.**

In principal I have no objection to sensibly priced fixed priced account work. What I am opposed to is doing fixed price work only within the London postal codes and not on rides that go further afield. *Call Sign* magazine is indeed a successful in-house magazine. Its readership embraces the trade, more importantly, our account customers and is even online. Therefore I see no reason why I cannot address my views more directly to our account customers...

**As a licensed London taxi driver of some 40 years standing and a dedicated subscriber to DaC, I am experienced enough to explain to our account customers exactly why we, the members of DaC, pay monthly subscriptions.**

Firstly, I would like to emphasise that I and my fellow members appreciate and value the work we have been given over the years.

**DaC's Steve Shaller adds to the discussion on fixed prices and addresses our account clients...**

# WHAT DO I THINK?

Rides to outlandish destinations would not have been possible without the radio. I and many members like myself joined DaC when the account customer gave us *all* their work - whether it was going to Kent, Essex or just around the corner.

Thanks to your custom, I have seen and been to places that otherwise without the radio I would never have been to - destinations that our newer members can only dream of.

Do our customers no longer live in the Home Counties? If we were given a job going to West London, we would drive all the way back empty to the City (ignoring hailing hands on the way) to service our account clients. It made economic sense because *at that time* one account ride was better than three street rides. That is because we were given *all* your work.

Now however, when we are given a ride to West London, unless we trap one back to the City we continue to work as and where the work takes us. It is no longer viable to drive back empty, wait and then be allocated another local journey.

The London taxi industry cannot claim to be the cheapest mode of transport, but we can proudly boast to be the best taxi service in the

world. Nevertheless, I am confident that most members would be more than pleased to do longer rides outside the London postal codes below the meter price and based on the time factor in doing the ride. I certainly would.

Unlike Licensed private hire, we are in a position to take hirings off the street, but drivers on the circuit may prefer to do radio account work to street work. The reasons for doing so vary. Maybe it's because of the safety factor of knowing who you have in the back of your cab at night and knowing you will be getting paid.

The most important reason for subscribing to a radio circuit is to enhance one's earnings, shorten your working hours and make the job less irksome. Why pay for a hiring going to E1 or SE1 when we can get this work off the street for nothing?

I am not and would not tell you, our account customers, how to spend your money but by giving us your longer jobs (with fixed prices), I believe the benefits would be mutual.

Fixed prices for London postal codes only? No! Fixed prices for local and longer rides? Yes!

**Steve Shaller (F34J)**

## JIM GOES ON THE SWAN VOYAGE

**...as the DaC driver's WCHCD Master swan song!**

Dial-a-Cab's **Jim Rainbird (T25)** ended his term as Master of the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers*, when recently invited along with WCHCD Company Clerk **Mary Whitworth** to the *Worshipful Company of Vintners Swan Voyage* to witness their *Swan Upping* ceremony. According to ancient custom, all the swans on the Thames are owned by the Sovereign, the Dyers' Company and the Vintners' Company.

The health and population of the swans is monitored while the new cygnets are marked with rings to denote ownership. This used to be done with 'nicks' on the birds bills - no nicks for the Sovereign, one for the Dyers' and two for the Vintners'. All birds are now marked on the right leg with a British Trust for Ornithology stainless steel identification number ring. In addition and so that the tradition continues, the Dyers' and Vintners' birds have similar rings fitted on their left legs. The Dyers' bird's rings have one Coat of Arms and the Vintners' have two. These ring marks are still referred to as 'nicks'. The cygnets are measured, weighed, marked and then transported back in the skiffs along with their proud parents, to where they were found and then released with no fuss.

Thankfully, swans are no longer widely consumed as food. Jim informed *Call Sign* that it was Henry VIII who forbade the eating of Thames swans other than by the Dyers' and Vintners' Companies. The Vintners' still have an annual 'Swan Feast' but swan is no longer on the menu!

Jim ended by saying that this special day as a guest of The Vintners' on their Swan Voyage was his last official engagement of his year as Master of The *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* and he asked that we send his thanks to the Vintner's Master, Clerk, Wardens and Swan Uppers for an experience he says he will never forget.

**As for Jim Rainbird's term of office as WCHCD Master, which seems to have flown by, *Call Sign* considers that it has been a brilliant success and we send our congratulations on a job well done!**



**Jim at the Swan Voyage on his last official visit as WCHCD Master**

## Simon's AFC Wimbledon on the march!

Dial-a-Cab driver **Simon Bassey (C79)** is also the coach for **AFC Wimbledon** and he, together with manager **Terry Brown**, has seen the club gain promotion into the football league from the relative wilds of the Blue Square Conference (see *July's Call Sign*) after just being in existence for 9 brief years.

Having lost their first league match, they bounced back to take the next two games. It was left to **Luke Moore** to score their first-ever league goal when he blasted in a penalty against Dagenham and Redbridge. **Rashid Yussuff** doubled the score to give them the 2 - 0 win and their first league points. Then just 3 days later, they defeated Plymouth Argyle by the same score and move into fifth place after those three games.

Well done Simon, Terry and the team...







## Gaming as a Sport: eSports

In previous months, I've talked about games on different platforms from the sole perspective of an active gamer. This month, I thought I'd introduce you to something that some of you might find incredible to believe exists; televised professional online gaming (better known as *eSports*).

I came across this phenomenon recently when I started playing a new PC game by *Blizzard* (the makers of *World of Warcraft*) called *StarCraft 2*. This is an online, real-time strategy game based in the far future and involves managing resources and armoured units to protect your base and conquer your enemy by destroying their base. If you're a PC gamer, I highly recommend *StarCraft 2*; you can play the starter edition for free. Take a look:

<https://us.battle.net/account/sc2/starter-edition>

Anyway, during the process of playing *StarCraft 2*, I began to realise that not only

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

# Gaming: *What's worth playing?*



## Battling in StarCraft 2

do people play this addictive game for a living, but that these games are organised into structured, televised tournaments where the winners take away big cash prizes! Coincidentally, *Blizzard* was televising the European *StarCraft 2* championships in Poland that same weekend, so I spent some time watching the big boys playing. It was an amazing experience seeing professional gamers fight it out against each other for the trophy (and the cash)! Some of these guys practice 8 hours a day and complete up to 400 actions per minute during a game – imagine playing computer games for a living!

After doing some more digging around, I came across the *Major League Gaming* website – [www.majorleaguegaming.com](http://www.majorleaguegaming.com) which provides leagues for many top PC,

XBOX and PS3 games (including *Call of Duty: Black Ops*, *SOCOM 4* and *Halo Reach*, to name just a few).

Just like *StarCraft 2*, anyone can play these games and anyone can enter the leagues. However, to be able to compete at the top, you have to work your way up the ranks and defeat all the competition – and there is some *stiff* competition out there!

But even if you're not into playing games or just not championship material, you can still enjoy watching the professionals and listen to the commentators in much the same way as you might watch professional league football. As a gamer, I've picked up many tricks and tips from watching these matches.

Considering I work with computers all the time at **Dial-a-Cab**, I shouldn't have been surprised by the size of the professional gaming community. As the only sports currently on TV are traditional physical sports, I suppose I never thought I'd see the day that gaming could enter the same arena. It seems that whilst *eSports* is not yet broadcasting on television networks (it's limited to the Internet), due to the rapidly growing member base it's only a matter of time before this phenomenon comes into the mainstream media.

**Jon Winterburn**  
DaC Network Administrator

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You may or may not have known it at the time, but most of us have probably picked up someone from legal firm **Davenport Lyons** who are based in Old Burlington Street. In fact this leading business law firm have been in existence for over 75 years and are accepted as one of the most successful firms of its kind. They are now offering their services to **Dial-a-Cab** drivers - and indeed the licensed taxi trade as a whole if they happen to read **Call Sign**! But this is a legal service with something

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of a difference.

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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...

## LVTA at Dial-a-Cab



Lloyd in something different for him – a taxi under 50 years old!



Lloyd and family are shown the dispatcher's office by Allan Evans

The **London Vintage Taxi Association** – surprisingly to some – probably contains more non-cab drivers than it does real cabbies.

The LVTA brings together people interested in 'retired' London-type purpose built taxis and related vehicles built on a taxi chassis. Perhaps you would also expect its members to all live in the UK – it was indeed founded over here – but you would be wrong again because they can be found all round the world. There is a very active American section headed by **John Freeston** of Windham, New Hampshire. They have their own section in the LVTA mag and John will undoubtedly be reading this article in our online version. His section in the magazine advertises members who need parts or garages that can deal with old cabs in the USA.

The oldest of the taxis comes from the Edwardian period, but most come from the 1930s through to the 1980s. Dial-a-Cab's **Keith White (A16)** for example has the first *Metrocab* prototype. Members take their prized taxis to classic car shows with the most recent being in Uxbridge last month. It was that show that brought LVTA member **Lloyd Powell** to the UK. The deal was that he turned it into a vacation so that wife Mardy, son Kevin and his lovely girlfriend Tricia could also come along! Lloyd is also a **Call Sign online** reader and he asked this mag if there was any chance of the group paying a visit to **Dial-a-Cab** whilst here?

**Allan Evans** gave them a two-hour tour of DaC House including a question and answer session in the Boardroom and the group – especially Kevin – certainly had plenty of questions to ask DaC's Compliance Officer.

"It was a great," Lloyd told **Call Sign** as they came to the end of the visit, "and we really appreciate the time that Allan has taken showing us around and **Call Sign** for organising it."

DaC's **Steve Bearman** gave the guests a tour of the IT department just before they left.

There was only one way to really finish off the visit before they moved onto Kings Cross Station to see where **Harry Potter** boarded his train to Hogwarts at platform 9<sup>3/4</sup> and that was to be photographed in a TX4, with the editor quickly volunteering his cab before dropping them at the Kings Cross *W.H.Smith*, where the famous platform is said to be.

**Anyone interested in becoming an LVTA member or just reading about them can do so at <http://www.lvta.co.uk>.**



Last month's **Call Sign** contained an article based on a **Dial-a-Cab** driver who told us how he and other drivers on the Kings Cross rank were approached by an individual who suggested a £350 referral fee for personal injury claims and £250 for motor claims with the assurance of a replacement taxi 'within four hours' while your cab was being repaired following an RTA. He gave out business cards to drivers who discovered his company was based in Liverpool!

Around a dozen drivers came back to tell us about offers sent to them via automated phone calls or text messages, claiming that they were entitled to several thousand pounds "following your recent accident" and that it didn't matter how small or insignificant it had been!

At the same time, BBC TV's *Panorama* aired a report highlighting a scam known as *Cash for Crash*. Using hidden cameras, it showed several men in a breakers yard deliberately crashing a similar car to one involved in a minor scrape to cause far more damage than existed after an initial collision. Photos of the extensive damage were taken and added to an accident report. The repairers then claimed far higher fees than repairing the original damage would have suggested.

At the same time, **Call Sign** Editor **Alan Fisher** was appearing in court to fight a claim where an accident claimed for never actually happened – not to save himself money because he had a protected maximum bonus, but because he felt annoyed by another motorist inferring that there had been a collision between the two when there hadn't even been a slight touch!

Before the case, Alan told **Call Sign**: "Insurance companies aren't my favourite people but nevertheless they are a necessity and claims for non-existent crashes are one of the reasons that premiums are so expensive. If my insurance company (Acromas) has to pay out on this claim where there was no damage, it will just continue the upward route of insurance premiums."

## Cash for Crash???

# EDITOR WINS HIS CASE!



### A happy Alan wins his case

Alan's case was mentioned in a *Cash for Crash* article last year in this magazine. He had been moving forward into a parking space in

Wanstead High Street as someone else pulled out, when another car tried to zip into the gap in front of Alan. The **Call Sign** Editor braked and managed to avoid a collision but was surprised to hear the other driver claim that he had been hit. When Alan got out to look, he confirmed there had been no accident and pointed out that no damage to either car proved that. But Alan became worried when the other driver came back to say that there "may have been damage underneath the dirt!"

**Alan told his insurance company and filled out a form just in case, but it was 6 months later when they wrote to say that the third party had put in a claim for £1200!**

"I was fuming," said Alan, "there had been no damage because there had been no accident! I was told Acromas would try to settle it on the best terms they could get as there were no witnesses and it was my word against his, but confirmed my no claim premium was protected and would not be affected. After several phone calls to them, they finally agreed that if I was prepared to go to

court, then they would provide a barrister for me. They pointed out that it would cost them money either way but were prepared to take a stand if I agreed to appear at Ilford County Court. I wasn't sure that the other guy would show up as he must have realised he had been rumbled... but at 10am, he walked into the Court."

Both sides were heard by the District Judge and indeed he did say it was difficult to prove which side was telling the truth, but eventually said that Alan Fisher's version seemed more plausible – especially after the driver admitted saying that any damage may have been under the dirt on his car! He also came armed with photos showing deep dents, but couldn't answer the question from Alan's barrister as to why he had not wiped the dirt off at the time to see whether there was any damage, why such deep dents could not be seen through the dirt and also why he hadn't had the car repaired until 6 months after the alleged accident?

**The judge turned down the claim for an amount that had now crept up to over £1400 following the alleged accident that had not happened some 19 months earlier!**

Following the case, Alan told **Call Sign** he was delighted to have won a small victory in the battle of high insurance costs, saying that these people rely on insurance companies just paying out because of the cost of legal action. He asked us to thank *Acromas* for backing him and added that in future he would be taking photos of any alleged damage even if there was none...!

**Dennis Latchett**  
*Call Sign online*

**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 October 1969 and the letters page to show that nothing changes, perhaps except change itself...**

**From ODRTS Monthly, October 1969**

### LETTERS

#### Poor Coverage

One of the main reasons behind our poor coverage of cash work is that if one "blows out" on a cash job, unlike a credit ride, you do not get paid. A "sorry mate" from the dispatcher does not compensate one, especially when people have tried to hail you from the street en route to your pick-up point. So inevitably one must be within striking distance of the job in order not to go along with that "I wonder if they are waiting for me" feeling. \*A 3/- scrub would, to some degree, encourage drivers to put themselves out to cover cash work and therefore give a better service to our customers. I do not profess to know where the money would come from to pay for this, but perhaps someone, somewhere will come up with an idea.

**G.Webber (E11)**

*\*For those not around in 1969, 3/- is 15p ... 2011Ed*

#### Bank jobs under the meter?

We recently lost an ODRTS driver to Mountview because he was not prepared to undertake bank jobs for slightly below the meter. These

tend to be the longer jobs but the driver wanted to be paid the full meter fare. Soon after that we lost the valuable Midland Bank account due to poor coverage by other drivers who also refused to do some long rides at slightly below meter price. It would seem that some of you want blood, as I wrote a few months ago. If you feel some shame at reading this, it could pay you to reflect on the jobs you could have covered but didn't because we soon will have no long rides left! But then again you may have been too busy making snide remarks about other drivers who try to cover account work that you won't do and which end up in us losing a good account customer. Those drivers at least get out of the radio what they put into it. The rest of you might just as well leave the trade unless you realise that taxis are for the benefit of the public as well.

**E.Ives**

**ODRTS Secretary**

#### D&B

ODRTS are having their 11th annual Dinner and Ball on Tuesday 11th November 1969 at The Rainbow Room, Derry & Toms in Kensington High Street. There is a three course meal with dancing to Nat Temple and his orchestra. Tickets are £3 each.

**Joe Toff (B04)**

**Editor**



No! Contrary to the headline, this isn't a personal attack on your younger life! **Call Sign** was recently invited to *Cricklewood Carriers*, a major taxi fleet operator and service garage in north London to observe the much maligned TX2 engine undergoing repairs to resolve that familiar clattering noise of which many TX2 owners will be aware...

The problem in this case was speedily identified as worn valve rocker arms, causing the engine to run unevenly and reducing its efficiency, together with high fuel consumption.

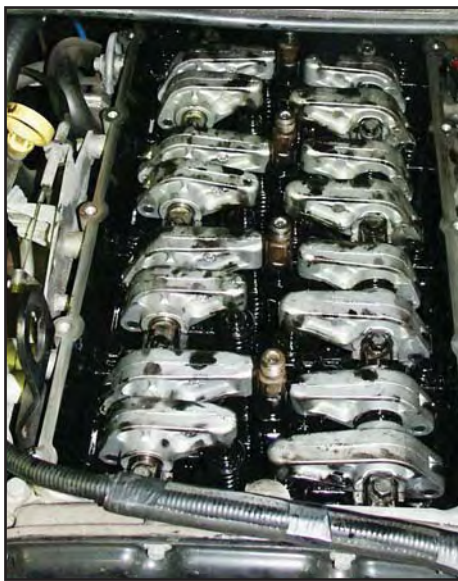
Firstly though, we should briefly explain the role of these valves and their rockers. Each of the engine's four cylinders has two valves per cylinder, an inlet and an exhaust, allowing the fuel/air mixture into the combustion chamber and then out again after the fuel is burned. It is the rocker arms that pivot, literally rocking to and fro on a central shaft, opening and closing the inlet and exhaust valves at high speed and at just the right time, allowing the engine to run.

So when these little rockers wear out, things start to go wrong - difficult starting, poor fuel consumption, shakes and rattles. You probably get the picture...

The top of the engine was quickly dismantled to reveal the inner workings of Dagenham's finest! With the engine running at idle, the offending worn parts were speedily identified and the strip-down began in earnest.

Firstly the central rocker shaft, upon which

## An old worn-out rocker!



**All new replaced rockers**

everything attaches, was unbolted and put on the bench, before each individual rocker arm was removed, inspected and then replaced on the shaft with a brand new rocker arm. John, our engineer and guide, together with his colleagues Tim and David, took great care to set everything up exactly as it should be for opti-

mum engine performance. Engines, we were told, run at very small tolerances throughout all their moving parts, usually with only fractions of a millimetre to spare. The valves are no exception, so everything has to be just right!

With the central rocker shaft now completely re-assembled with all new rocker arms, the task of refitting the parts to the engine began, ending only when the shaft had been carefully tightened down on its' securing bolts to the correct torque - that's tightness to you and me!

Finally, all the pipes, wires and cables were gently put back in their place around the engine bay and the ignition key turned on.

To **Call Sign's** amazement the engine fired up immediately and was ghostly quiet compared to the original clatter and hollow bop, bop, bop noise when the cab drove into the service bay.

"I've done many of these valve replacement jobs over the years," John told **Call Sign**, "but I've never seen parts as badly worn as these," he admitted, lifting small parts between his fingers to show our reporter. "It's astonishing the engine ran at all!"

A grin of satisfaction slowly spread across his face...

© **Call Sign Magazine MMX**

**Black cab support from the House of Lords!**

## Peer puts ORN case for cabbies

**In a House of Lords debate prior to their summer recess, Lord Bryan Davies of Oldham recommended that London's taxi drivers be allowed to use the Olympic Route Networks during next summer's London Olympic Games.**

The Labour Peer had taken part in the debate regarding transport plans for the 6 weeks of the Games and Paralympic Games where he said that black cabs should be permitted to use the controversial ORN lanes.

Lord Davies said that many years ago he had the "misfortune" of introducing the London bus lanes but had left black cabs out of his proposition!

"I still bear the scars to this very day," he said with a smile, "so I warn the Minister lest he should wish to bear such scars!"



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Following on from the August *Call Sign* issue with regard to my previous article on fixed prices, first let me thank all those that wrote to me personally and via *Call Sign* - both for and against the promotion of fixed rates - and say how much I appreciated the comments from various members both for and against that course of action. It was also gratifying to know that those responses received by myself and other members of the Board were thoughtful and constructive in their responses. Even those disagreeing were polite.

Although I am well aware that some of my fellow Board members and drivers are against such a move, I am still of the opinion this option to offer clients will be something we will have to consider sooner rather than later.

Let me begin with the *Mailsbot* response from **Colin Jenkins (Y22)**. I haven't got a problem with anybody disagreeing with my point of view, in fact I welcome it and of course there are two sides to any issue. But does Colin think that because I was elected by the membership to the BoM - and bearing in mind I still drive a cab - that I shouldn't have a voice or present views even though that could be different from others? I'm sure most would agree that any member of our Society, whether on the BoM or not, is entitled to air any opinions or observations. So far as his comments re the BoM *singing from the same song sheet* as Colin puts it, on any committee I have ever been on you give your honest opinion and even if colleagues do not agree with your beliefs, as a member of any team you should always support the majority decision.

**Some other responses I've received but which weren't in *Mailsbot*...**

**Dear Mike**, just thought I would drop you a few lines regarding your *Call Sign* article on fixed prices. I am opposed to any increase in the use of FP jobs as stated in your latest article. Prices calculated as near to the meter price as possible, in my view, would not win back any work as we would still be more expensive than the minicab price, so what would change? As I see it, the client will still choose the cheapest option. I am a realist not a *head in the sand* person, work levels have dropped on the street as well as the radio but I do believe that all work will pick up once the country gets back on its feet and the big clients shift their focus away from just cost cutting. But that's not to say radio work will be back to the level of five years ago or so, because the minicab industry have their foot right in the door and are never going to take it out, but as volumes increase, I'm sure our slice of the pie will get bigger due to our quality and efficiency. If we give up our meter fares now, we will never get them back. What could you ever say to a client to get them to change back?

**David Bruton (H99)**

**Hi Mike**, I've just read your article in *Call Sign* regarding fixed price jobs to win some work back. I think you are right. I have worked days now for the past few years and I do lots of Westminster work. I have days where if I didn't do Westminster work, I wouldn't be offered a job of any description and I can't believe it's come to this. I've been

**Mike Son continues from his July article and last month's *Mailsbot*...**

## FIXED PRICES: THE DEBATE GOES ON



on DaC for quite a few years and am actually thinking of coming off. I often have to run further than the job is going or park up and wait ages to get an offer of a job. When driving round, these Add Lees seem to be everywhere and with a job on. It's busy on the streets at the moment, but how long will that last? In the early mornings I can be out at least 3 hours before having a job offered, so I think fixed prices are the answer. Drop the run-ins and maybe cut the lead time, perhaps raise the minimum fare as Add Lee's minimum is about £14. I do feel that some companies only use us on very local work as our min price is cheaper. When it's a pre-booked job it's a killer - £8 but 12 mins in advance. £12 is not so bad.

**Dave Raymond (F56)**

**Hi Mike**, I think Fixed Prices are a good idea. It would win us more work, therefore less waiting about for a job. We have to compete with minicabs so if we could match them on some prices then it just leaves the difference of whether they want the driver of a taxi or minicab - I think we all know who would win that one.

**Ricky Rands (H81)**

**Hi Michael**, if we don't do fix prices I fear A/L will take over. He wants to do all account work and leave street work to the black cabs. Soon he will have 3,500 cars on the road. The only way we can stop the rot is to price match. How have we kept JPM? By giving fixed prices. I know 75 London Wall wants fixed prices; if we don't give it to them you can bet next time it comes to new contracts we won't retain them. Even when the good times come back the scabs will still be there, so the pressure will still be there to remain competitive. The other week I did a job to Heathrow from Primrose Street. That job went £80 plus. It's nice, but what if they said DaC are too expensive, we won't use them for Heathrow work anymore? I did a fixed price job to Heathrow from London Bridge, it was £65 and that's fair. I bet if the job was £65 from Primrose Street it

would not have stayed there, it would have still been covered.

I hope the right decision is made, I love DaC.

**Keith**

**Hello Mike**, I agree with much of what you said re FPs, however there are a few reservations that I have. I don't believe pre-booked and fixed prices should be combined. For instance, pre-booked jobs on Parliament are sent out (to me, anyway) twelve minutes before the PB time.

As 99% of drivers are within yards of the House, it means a 27 minute wait before reverting to the meter. This is unacceptable to many drivers and a few friends of mine don't work SE75 because of the anomaly. I recently did a £22-odd job that my meter read as £47, there was £3.80 at the PB time and when the additional 12 minutes are taken into account, I think I'd be better off doing a couple of street jobs and probably not ending up where you're wise to extinguish your hire light. Also, the SE75 jobs should show the destination, but only if it's in an outer zone. They will always be covered, I'm sure. These problems on SE75 can put drivers off FPs elsewhere. I could go on but I'm sure you are busy with replies.

**John Addis (K97)**

I have included this one even though this fellow is not on DaC anymore but is obviously still interested in our Society via *Call Sign Online*.

**Dear Mr Son**, I've had a bill for 50 years and was a journeyman driver on DaC until I left 7 years ago. I totally agree with your recommendation for introducing more fixed prices. By doing this the customer will know exactly the cost of a trip. This will also do away with the high run-in charges that some drivers have on their meters when they arrive for a job. I remember once saying to Brian Rice that we should arrive with an empty clock for the 'big' customers and he politely argued against this. I believe that there are many drivers who will always go that extra empty mile to get a credit job. It cannot be denied that the three major radio circuits have to introduce modern ideas to fight the private hire companies.

Good luck with your suggestion.

**Ron Pummell**

**I certainly seemed to have stirred up something of a hornet's nest, but let me re-emphasise that there is no hidden agenda behind this article. It's purely my own opinion that I have put forward for debate and your views are always welcome, whether to me or *Call Sign*...**

**Mike Son**  
**DaC Special Projects**



# LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE...

with Tom Quigley (Y33)

## Cyclists... Brain dead?

Can I be the only person that thinks TfL and the Mayor's office are giving the impression that those who ride bikes in London have the memory and navigational skills of a goldfish?

As the owner of a couple of bikes and with two sons who like to go out on their bikes and join in the odd fund raiser, and probably like a lot of taxi drivers who when on the knowledge used to spend a lot of time checking out points and shorter routes with a minimal income and a family to bring up, so a bike was a cheap necessity and an alternative to walking. So contrary to some media and political views, most taxi drivers are not anti-cycling and if you undertook a survey, I would assume about 99% of taxi driver families own or have owned a bike.

The much lauded super cycle highway schemes are painted in blue with the support of Barclays Bank - though not far removed from a soft Tory blue painted over Red Ken's red bus lane areas! So is there a political point being made? If so, when we park on a blue / red zone should we pay any PCNs as we are not sure of the clarity or the colour of the road? I am waiting for some nice blue /yellow lines around Parliament Square to keep the ConDems happy!

But back to my original point as to cyclist's memory span. In the stretch of the super highway, namely CS8, from Clapham North to Stockwell station going northeast towards Vauxhall, the CS8 and *cycle* symbol have been painted no fewer than 40 times and with just as many going in the other direction - this on a straight piece of road just over one mile long. I suspect that most cyclists using this route are going to and from work, so one can presume they know where they live, where they work and which route they are taking. The need to have this painted every 20 odd metres on the floor is totally unnecessary and what's more, if you take that policy for all the super highways throughout London, this has surely to be a massive carbon neutral failure as the paint and motifs have to be manufactured, produced and installed - the latter would have involved road closures, narrowing of lanes and untold amount of heavy machinery and organisation.

Furthermore, Lambeth Council seem to have jumped on the bandwagon with new fancy cycle racks spelling out the words Lambeth, as if a cyclist wouldn't know they left their bike in Lambeth! It could be said that the remote chance of the bike still being there is a clue! Anyway, it's nice to have pretty street furniture, but maybe a few more conventional cycle racks would have been a better use of money from a council that pleads poverty. You can imagine the number of meetings, coffee, biscuits plus specialists commissioned to arrive at the outcome. The word Lambeth? They were hardly going to opt for Tower Hamlets! Mind you, if you patent across all the boroughs in England, not bad work if you can get it.

## NIGEL (ALMOST) MEETS THE QUEEN!



The Queen almost meeting Nigel!

**Nigel Walters**, Export Logistics Manager for **The London Taxi Company** recently attended a Royal Garden Party held at Buckingham Palace. Through his integral role within the International team for **The London Taxi Company**, Nigel became an active member of the Institute of Export and was subsequently invited to join the Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce International Trade Committee. It is through his dedication and commitment to these societies that the Chamber nominated

Nigel for an invite to the Royal Garden Party.

Nigel told **Call Sign**: "Exporting taxis has taken me to many exciting countries around the world including Singapore, South Africa, Russia and more recently Azerbaijan, but I'd never have thought it would have led to having tea with the Queen! I was next to Princess Anne as she arrived at the event and I mingled amongst the many other special guests watching Her Majesty stop and speak to a random few before making her way to the Royal tea tent, where she met with further guests to make presentations. With tea, cakes and a beautiful garden to stroll in, I found the whole event to be a wonderful experience which was (of course) only complete by arriving and departing from the Palace in a London Taxi!"

## Olympic Opening ceremony

So **Sir Paul McCartney** has been chosen to be the star act at the opening ceremony of the London Olympics. Note the *London* Olympics not the *Liverpool* Olympics.

The London Olympics, where all London ratepayers had to bear an additional charge on their council tax, even though it appears that a lot of the events are not in London.

Considering the amount of great London musicians there are, such as **Roger Daltrey and The Who, Iron Maiden, Ray Davies and The Kinks, Dizzie Rascal, Adele** and **Sir Elton John** - who has supported sport throughout his career - to name but a few of probably several hundred. Not to mention **Heather Small**, a Londoner whose great rendition of the song *Proud* in our bid was memorable and uplifting. So Sir Paul appears to be a strange choice.

I am not against Sir Paul doing a slot, but to headline this event is to me a snub to Londoners. I'm sure that when they run the Marathon past all the iconic sights of London, we will not expect to see or hear *Ferry across the Mersey*!

Whilst we are on the subject of music, my thoughts go to **Mitch Winehouse** and family after the tragedy of Amy's passing. When all is said and done, fame or not, **Amy** was a taxi driver's daughter who had a tremendous gift. I wish Mitch all the best in the new Foundation being set up in Amy's name. He is completely correct in his statement about the help needed for working class people with addictions. I would proudly wear a polo shirt or any other clothing to promote and support this Foundation.

Tom Quigley (Y33)



2 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 4/5



4 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 8/9



6 Bedroom 5 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 12



Pool and conservation view at 6 bedroom home.

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For several years this trade has battled against the menace of **pedicabs** and told anyone prepared to listen that they are a danger not just to themselves, but also to members of the public. The **LTDA** has spent many £thousands in court, but the three-wheeled menaces are still here.

**Dial-a-Cab** driver **Barry Spear** (Y16) recently sent us some hastily taken photos of a strange looking motorised vehicle that looked like something between a pedicab and a Smart car. We now know that was a **Tour Buggy**. You can see this strange vehicle at [www.tourbuggies.com](http://www.tourbuggies.com).

Unlike pedicabs, these motorised vehicles seem to be reasonably safe. However, **Call Sign's** problem is that they are advertised as self-drive and will take you on a tour of London's hotspots via a fitted satnav. A two-hour "tour" costs £59, but you still have to drive them yourself – even if you have never driven in London and only have an International licence! It's true that they have no

## Tour Buggies: Fun or a menace???



Are they safe? Pic courtesy [tourbuggies.com](http://tourbuggies.com)

gears or pedals to worry about, but they do have a top speed of 30mph – faster than most traffic can go through town. Going round a track they sound like fun, but mixing with buses, lorries, taxis and London's many learn-

er drivers on the road? And that is what they will have to do. What then if the traffic is so bad that it even holds these mini-minis up? Will they then be forced to mount pavements like pedicabs in order to get back within their two hour limit? If you see them, let **Call Sign** know your view...

Book Review Book Review Book Review Book Review Book Review

## London Taxis – A Full History by Bill Munro

There seems to have been a spate of taxi-oriented books lately, but none have been about the history of taxis. We've had books concerning the war, photographs of passengers and even quotes by passengers. But this new book is one that is really all about taxis.

**Bill Munro** is no stranger to writing books on the cab trade and **Call Sign** would dare to say that along with **Malcolm Linskey**, **Nick Georgano** and the late **Phil Warren** few authors writing about the London taxi trade can be as authoritative about our trade's long history.

Bill Munro's latest book does exactly what it says on the tin; **London Taxis – A Full History (Earlwood Press £15.99)** gives the history of the London taxi business! Not only that, unlike some published books on taxis, this one looks as though it was professionally put together!

Some of the information is fascinating. For example, we know we have LTI's taxis and also the Vito and Metrocab, but did you know that over the years there have been over 100 different types of cabs? But Bill starts in 1897 with the Bersey – amazingly an electric cab and 115 years before LTI's **Rob Laidler** said in this very magazine that if he were to say how much electric taxis would be at their current developmental stage, "...it would make your eyes water!" Yet there it was in 1897 attempting to take over from horse cabs.

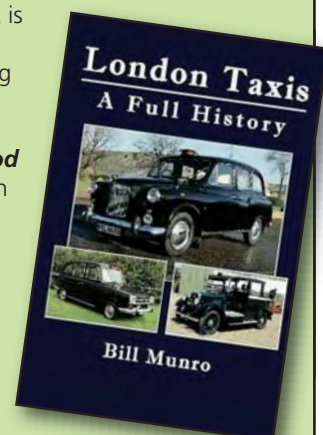
Using 150 excellent photos, the book goes right through the years making welcome stops along the way at cabs such as the first petrol taxi (*The Prunel*) through to *Fiat* and *Humber* and *Mann & Overton's* reintroduction of the *Unic*, whilst along the way Bill visits historical facts such as the *London General Cab Co's* introduction in Brixton Road.

Of course, most drivers reading this will know little about our business other than how the meter works – in which case Bill takes you back to the *Argo* meter that most used in the 1950s - but most will know of words that keep re-appearing in our trade's long history. Words such as *Beardmore*, *Asquith*, *York Way Motors*, *LMCPA* and many others. They are all here.

There's also a piece that is connected to **Dial-a-Cab** in its own way. When this Society's founder Chairman **Bonnie Martyn** first turned up, it was in an Oxford cab and Phil's book contains a piece on that cab as well. In fact it includes pretty much every cab ever spoken of in London, right down to the *Mercedes Vito*. The books 240 pages also include details of the prototypes that never actually made it onto the capital's roads.

But this book isn't just about the taxis, it contains practically everything you could ever want to know about the people that have been involved over the 350 years we've been plying for hire in London. Messrs **Mann**, **Overton**, those involved in founding **LTI**, the first person at the **PCO** to try and take fear out of the equation, **Bryan Phillips**, taxi garage **W.H.Cook** and even mentions of the radio circuits.

**In fact London Taxis – A Full History gives you a full history of London taxis! And Call Sign thoroughly recommends it. Available at Amazon or £12 + p&p from Bill Munro's website at [www.billmunro.co.uk](http://www.billmunro.co.uk).**



## Knowledge appointments speeding up

**Call Sign** has heard from **London Taxis & Private Hire (LTPH)** that following recruitment of new examiners and improvements made to their admin support following the recent reorganisation, they are making good progress on the time taken while students wait for their knowledge appointments. 21s are back at 21 days, 28s back at 28 days with just the 56s still lagging behind by around 10 days at 66. LTPH say they are hoping to get those also back on target very soon...



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

# Kupkake's Korner



## Sirens...

We had riots on the streets  
hoodies thinking with their feet,  
looting, breaking, stealing  
all they could take,  
fire and destruction  
in their wake  
and the coppers stood  
as the mob destroyed our town  
standing down  
then came the sound of sirens...

Coppers arriving from miles around,  
all from different northern towns  
16,000 to defend us all  
each one answering the call,  
and the coppers drove  
around in their fast cars  
near and far  
with the sound of sirens...

Then the arrests and trials began  
like some preordained military plan.  
The captured thieves from west and  
east  
gang members snarling like wounded  
beasts.

As their crimes were called  
like children they cried and bawled  
and pleaded for their mums  
but no sound comes  
except the sound of sirens...

Now it's time to count the cost,  
small shops ruined, buildings lost.  
And what of the people killed  
by mindless thugs seeking thrills  
and DEMANDING some respect  
while pleading neglect  
ignoring the sound of sirens...

The politicians fret and moan  
"These kids come from broken homes,"  
"But not our fault," they say  
and Teresa May states  
"The cuts will go ahead."  
Go tell the dead...  
as we hear the sounds of sirens.

**Kopyright Kupkake 2011**

# UK TRIUMPH???

Great news for the UK...we may soon be getting nicked by cops on Triumph motorbikes if the new Triumph *Trophy Tourer* model lives up to its name and expectation!

The return of the name after an absence of quite a number of years for a brand that has been flying the flag for Britain all over the world with great success can only be good for a nation attacking the recession. So if you pick up a Member of Parliament with a huge grin on his face, you can take a safe bet that it's **David Tredinnick**, who has the Hinckley Triumph factory in his Bosworth constituency!



No wonder MP David Tredinnick has a smile on his face!

Seeing the Queen going down the Mall in her *Roller* with police outriders on British built bikes - now that would be a statement of intent! And if you think that's good, hold onto your horses because there's a new bike ready to challenge the now famous old TV program *Long Way Round*, where Ewan McGregor (my old woman thinks he's a dish) and Charley Boorman biked 19,000 miles from London to New York on BMW motorbikes!

So ladies and gents, please be upstanding for the boss who rescued Triumph from the scrapheap in 1984 after the original manufacturer *Triumph Engineering* went into receivership and who has now turned it into a British success story - **John Bloor!**

So it may soon be: "Nice bike officer, give us a go!" Maybe, just maybe he will have a smile on his face and forget the ticket. Two chances, no chance and slim chance - and slim just left town!

According to a report in *Motor Cycle News*, the police service have only bought shaft driven and Triumph have a propensity towards chain technology. We wait and see...

**Gary Cox (O46)**

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# COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

*Hello ladies & gents,*

## London disturbances

I can't start this article without first mentioning the terrible troubles we recently faced in the capital. It seems now to be under control, although we all work and live near to areas that were badly affected and it was rather close to home - in fact too close for some of us and quite unnerving.

I am sure many of you would have seen the messages on your terminal that I sent out at the request of both the Metropolitan and City of London police asking all members for their assistance. In many ways we are the eyes and ears of London and can often witness possible disturbances in their very early stages or even before they actually boil over, which would be valuable information in times such as these. I can only thank you and the Call Centre on their behalf, it definitely has not gone unnoticed and it only adds to the profile of our Society in a positive and worthwhile way.

## Phones

In recent times, a number of clients have complained that during a particular trip the driver has been actively talking on a mobile phone, which in their opinion distracts the driver from carrying out his or her job in the normal manner. I know that **hands free** is at present



within the law, but it is becoming more of an issue and is something that you should be made aware of, especially when clients complain that they are unable to converse with the driver because he or she is busy on a call and any instructions during the trip that they may wish to give go unheard for that reason. I'm sure you all know where I am coming from.

## Courtesy DaC taxis

I have mentioned in a previous edition of **Call Sign** that there are a limited number of companies that have a **Dial-a-Cab** terminal fitted in their courtesy taxis. **Ascott Cab Co** and

**Cricklewood Carriers Cab Co** for your repairs and servicing together with two no-fault repairers, **Chief Taxis** (who had an insert in the last issue) and **Cab Aid** for general accident repair work - both of whom I believe work with all insurance companies.

All of these taxis are exclusively for the use of our members and subject to availability. I would be grateful for any feedback, good or bad you may have over the months ahead.

## Rules are rules...

As usually happens now that schools are on the verge of going back, work should soon pick up. I can only reiterate what I refer to in most of my articles that **all** zones are regularly monitored, booking-in procedures are frequently checked and any member that chooses to ignore the warnings will be dealt with in a true and correct way.

My job is to give every member an equal opportunity during their working day, to try my hardest to prevent any unfair advantage between drivers and with the help of the contact centre, that's what I intend doing. At the risk of repeating myself (again) please follow procedures, they are there for a reason.

Drive safely and be very lucky...

**Allan Evans**  
DaC Compliance Officer

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



## CALL SIGN EN LA BELLE FRANCE



### Riots through French eyes...

I had already seen on my laptop what was happening on the streets of London, from the comfort of my bar stool in a catering establishment in Beziers. It was almost lunchtime and coffee cups were giving way to beer glasses in a place I know well and locals I'm on first name terms with.

The TV monitor at the end of the bar had been showing a typically rubbish programme along the lines of the *Jeremy Kyle Show* - the exact same format and just like in England, I'm quite sure the researchers of this one find their audience by standing outside *Lidl* with a net! The volume was turned down.

At the stroke of midday, the national news replaced the Neanderthals in the studio, and then I viewed even more Neanderthals - but this time on the streets of London as news crews were commenting on the utter mayhem that was unfolding before our eyes.

Frank (pronounced Fronk) was sitting next to me at the bar and had been reading his sports newspaper before glancing up at the screen.

He turned around to me and said: "**Ou est ca, Lebanon?**" I replied: "**Non Frank, c'est Londres!**" In his disbelief, Frank exclaimed: "**Ce n'est pas vrai, Robert!**" but I had to confirm to Frank that it was very true. By now the locals were beginning to take notice with sheer disbelief!

I was now catching up with texts regarding the war zone that had overtaken parts of London

that I knew so well. Some of them were of course jokes, both in good taste and bad. Another mate of mine was sitting in the bar looking at the TV, while likewise sending and receiving texts.

Pat, a Dubliner and top maintenance man it seemed for all the Irish-owned property in these parts, was having a chuckle as he sidled up to me and started to read a text. '*Bad news, the rioting has spread to Ireland*', but before he could finish I said '*Poor Paddy has just smashed his laptop screen after trying to loot EBay!*' I had already been sent that one at breakfast time!

Talking of smashed screens, the last image I saw on the TV as I was getting up to leave the bar was that of a smashed plasma lying on a

street which resembled

Northcote Road in Battersea. Pat said 'What a shame that one's broken'. 'Yeah, I replied, it must have been a Sam-Slung!'

### Where's Woody???

Where does Bob Woodford get a view like this while sipping on his glass of Merlot? Answer on page 29...



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



**Keith Reading**  
Professional Toastmaster  
Master of Ceremonies

**Tele: 01279 465 938**  
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What's the connection between **Dial-a-Cab**, **Brands Hatch** and **Barry Sheene**? The answer? Me... **Jon Robinson (E88)**! Apart from my family and DaC, my other passion is motorcycles. Ever since I was a teenager I have been a petrol head, it even helped with my GSE Physics exam (explain how a 2stroke petrol engine works). Within 2 weeks of leaving school, I had a **50cc sports moped** – and don't laugh, they're worth £1000's these days! Then one week after my 17th birthday I had a brand new **Suzuki GT250 X7**. When launched in the autumn of 1978, it was hailed as the first 250 to top the ton! The first 250 to do 100 mph with L plates on! It cost £850 new and with L plates tied on, I was off down the road like Barry Sheene.

Thirty years later, I still have the same bike. I've seen a few bikes come and go including my old Honda step-thru Knowledge bike, but for some reason I've only hung on to this one. Now a member of *The Vintage Japanese Motorcycle Club*, I meet with the Kent section who were invited by *The British Motorcycle Racing Club* to set up a club stand in the paddock of Brands Hatch race circuit along with several other clubs and the **Brooklands Museum**.

In addition there was a lunch time parade taking place for older race and road bikes, this was my chance to be Barry Sheene proper and my oldest son David to be **Valentino Rossi** for the week-end. It was also a chance to promote **Dial-a-Cab** courtesy of *Call Sign*.

We entered as **Team Dial-a-Cab** complete with pit crew wearing DaC polo shirts and a logoed team van. Van I hear you say? Well we needed something to put the picnic chairs in - and somewhere to change!

Saturday 30 July was an early start as we entered Brands Hatch paddock and I wondered how many famous names had gone before us. After unloading the bikes and helping with the club display, I put the kettle on and waited for the team cook to serve the bacon rolls. At 10am it was down to scrutineering in full race kit to have our bikes and leathers, crash helmets and even gloves and boots checked. Told we needed dog tags, these quickly made a race card stamped. We could sign in and then go on to see the chief Marshall for a rider's briefing. A bit much you might think for a parade? Well these parades are run under full race conditions, which means a full flat out blast for 15 minutes.

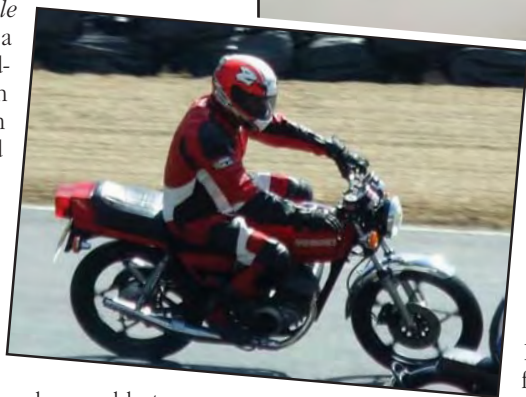
Just before 1pm, club members taking part in the parade lined up for a photo. I couldn't resist putting my DaC umbrella up for some shade from the sun, my wife - sorry team cook - Tracey kindly volunteered to be my brolly dolly. Funny thing is that other wives were soon using my DaC umbrella as a prop for pictures. Then the final call for all paraders to go to the waiting area and the nerves started as the seven of us, including my son David on his **Yamaha TZR 125** set off through the track

Nope, this isn't an ad for Stars in their Eyes but nevertheless...

## TODAY MATTHEW, I AM BARRY SHEENE!



Jon at Brands Hatch. Inset Jon gets ready to overtake



tunnel, then behind the pits and along the pit road with spectators and racers having a break by watching us. Luckily we were first there, the biggest bike being

a **900CC Honda**, some 500cc and 250 machines, right down to a **100cc Yamaha**. Soon there were nearly 50 bikes and riders waiting behind us, including some famous old English names like **Triumph, BSA, Norton, Rudge** and **Velocette**, the oldest being a 1930's **Scott**. A red flag went up, the clutch went into first gear and the brief wait that seemed to last for ever before we were then waved out onto the track.

Just a few yards before the end of the straight, the steep downhill right turn Paddock Hill bend, my bike accelerating so quickly that the suspension and my stomach compressed at the bottom! We charged up the hill for Druids hairpin bend, around that at 55mph and down the hill for the left hand Graham Hill bend. I find this the hardest bend to get right, then along the back straight with some of the bigger and faster bikes beginning to pass me, changing up gears before changing down again, flick left and then lean over to the right around Clearways bend. At first the camber makes you feel like going faster, then at the exit the camber falls away or off camber making the front wheel feel a little light. Then change up to fourth gear; at the start of the straight there's a big bump that makes race bikes weave and move around under their riders, but no problem for me, I'm just not going fast enough. Then fifth and sixth gear and about 90mph when you hit a crest in the road at the end of the straight that makes you want to lift off and brake early before leaning right and falling off what feels like the end of the

world at Paddock Hill bend, a double apex so you remember not to turn too early otherwise you run way out to the left pushing you to the edge of the track. Lap done, you go again passing some older bikes trying to keep up with ex-racers in the corners. A very loud racer goes thundering past catching me by surprise.

The day was just fantastic and when it was all over I just couldn't wait for Sunday to do it all over again! I'm just hoping that I don't fall off in front of that grandstand full of spectators. Paddock Hill is great, but falling over in front of people? Don't fancy that! I'm a DaC driver!!!

Jon Robinson (E88)

## PC running slowly?

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Although it took place some months ago, I haven't had the opportunity to write about the wonderful and memorable commemorative service at Westminster Abbey to which I was invited for a service to mark the 40th anniversary of the coming into effect of *The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970*. This was a most moving and memorable service in one of the most beautiful buildings in the land.

**During these past months, there has been foreboding about the future of our Society with riots on the streets of London and elsewhere and a general mayhem caused by selfish individuals who are hell-bent on trying to bring out the very worst in law abiding people. So I thought it important to write about this occasion and how some members of our community can and do make a difference for the benefit of others.**

Those with disabilities must be forever grateful to the many people that fight for the rights of those less fortunate than us. In 1969 Alf Morris, then Labour MP for Manchester Wythenshawe, won first place in the ballot for a *Private Members' Bill* in the House of Commons. He chose to introduce a far-ranging Bill for chronically sick and disabled people. Drafted in less than three weeks, the Bill secured a *Second Reading* on 5 December 1969 and became law just ahead of the dissolution of Parliament for the General Election of 1970. The key provisions actually came into force early the following year.

**Since its implementation, official statistics show that it has helped over 60million people - more than the present population of this country. Its principal provisions were:**

- Right of access for disabled people to the built environment, including schools and universities
- The world's first statutory provision for purpose-built housing for disabled people and help in adapting their homes
- Practical help as of right for disabled people in their homes, including the installation of telephones for those house-bound and access to transport and other services outside the home
- The world's first recognition in law of autism and dyslexia
- The world's first legislation for the needs of children who are both blind and pre-lin-gually deaf
- The world's first *Institute of Hearing* research

The Bill's philosophy was memorably expressed at Westminster Abbey from the former MP and now Lord Morris of Manchester in the final words of his speech commending his

**Following the disturbing riots,  
Mike Son looks at the good side of life...**

## Riots, the disabled and making a difference



**Lord Alf Morris - the former MP who introduced the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970**

Bill to the House of Commons on 5 December 1969, which we again heard in this service.

Since passage of the *Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970*, over 180 countries have adopted similar legislation and a series of international agreements have given recognition to the rights of disabled people. The organisers of the service believed that the legacy of this legislation should be to inspire future generations to remove prejudice wherever it exists and to create a just and more compassionate society.

**Me? I just wanted to show with a small but significant article that however appalling the actions of a few rioting youths, this world is basically a good place and we shouldn't forget that...**

**Mike Son  
DaC BoM**

**Another true story from Geoff Levene**

## Where there's a devil, there is a taxi driver!

One of the interesting things about our game is that you never know what's going to happen next. Even in these troubled times, you can sign-on, book into one of the zones on your **Dial-a-Cab** terminal and be offered a job immediately. Similarly, when you knock on a client's door you can still be amazed by the person that opens it.

I remember an evening some years ago when Mr Harris turned out to be *Whispering Bob* on his way to *The Old Grey Whistle Test*! Or when picking up *Miss Smith* in Queen Elm's Square I was greeted by her boyfriend... *Albert Finney*! Then when the passenger came out, next door's window shot up and *Dame Maggie Smith* in a white robe fresh from the bath called down a quick message!

Famous faces turn up in the most unusual places. It must have been 35 years ago when my then wife and I were invited to a *Tarts and Vicars* party and decided to hire fancy dress from *Bermans & Nathans* in Leicester Square. As we waited by the changing rooms with our two year old son, a male voice boomed out that he was going to need a silver lamé jock-strap with his outfit! At which point a curtain



opened and clothed in a full length silver lamé evening dress slashed to the thigh, out stepped late theatre critic *Kenneth Tynan* who on 13 November 1965 in a live TV debate broadcast on the BBC's late-night satirical show *BBC-3*, became the first man to use the f-word on television. He was a handsome man, but made a really ugly woman and our toddler stared in shocked wonderment - as did we all.

"Oh my God," exclaimed Tynan as he hastily retreated back behind the curtain. I read later that he had worn the dress and jockstrap at a Dorchester Hotel ball.

For our *Tarts and Vicars* party, I chose a monk's habit complete with cowl in addition to a Death head mask. We then got into my taxi and drove there with me in the full outfit. At a set of lights in the Archway Road, I turned to look at the car next to me as I could feel the driver staring at me with some amazement. His eyes widened and his mouth had dropped open. There on the A1 he had come face to face with the grim reaper - and he drove a London taxi!

**Geoff Levene (no longer K43 due to hopefully temporary medical reasons)**

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

**Bring 10 individual reservations, receive £50 voucher to spend at the Restaurant**

**Bring a further 10 individual reservations, receive £100 voucher to spend at the Restaurant**

**Register your details with your driver number at the Restaurant or by email or telephone**

# STAFF CELEBRATED AT CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION



Theresa Whitfield with Brian Rice and DaC IT Director John Bankes



Warren Smith with Brian and Company Secretary Howard Pears



Albert with Human Resources Director John Rogers and HR Officer Dionne Bennett



Annita with Brian and Howard

**Friday 5 August saw the latest batch of staff members to celebrate with a Champagne reception in the Boardroom following a presentation of long service certificates by the Board of Management.**

Pride of place went to **Albert Kyei-Kankam-Poakwah** who celebrated **20 years**. Albert arrived at **Dial-a-Cab** on 1 July 1991 as a cleaner and who along the years has become the stationary storekeeper and handyman in addition to now working in the Admin department.

Celebrating **15 years** with DaC was **Theresa Whitfield**, who amazingly began in the Call Centre as a temporary call taker for the anticipated Christmas rush in October 1995 and in the January was asked if she wanted to stay! She has moved onwards and upwards to become a trainer in the Call Centre before moving to our IT department as assistant to the IT and Data Systems Managers. Soon after that she became involved with Data Systems and IT Support. Theresa is currently a DaC Business Analyst.

DaC's Financial Controller, **Warren Smith**, began in March 2001 to celebrate **10 years**.

"And I have enjoyed every minute" Warren told **Call Sign**. "This is a lovely place to work, surrounded by so many lovely people."

Also celebrating was **Annita Young**, who began her 10 years as a receptionist. Annita then became what was described as a *Woman Friday* before becoming a Sales Administrator in DaC's Admin department. Annita is now one of our Account Managers.

Unable to attend were two Customer Services Representatives on the night shift, **Geraldine Haley** and **Jemma Rushton**, both having been with the Society for **ten years**.



Last month's **Call Sign** saw an unusual appeal from DaC Marketing Manager **Allen Togwell** in which he wrote of an article by **David Burnetts (S43)**. David had written about his cab driving father-in-law who had died from **prostate cancer** while also writing of his own experience with prostate problems. Because Allen has often highlighted male problems with prostate cancer, David wrote to him expressing his concern that so little research was done in the UK on prostate cancer compared to other types such as breast cancer. He wanted to play a part in raising awareness, while at the same time help raise money towards prostate cancer research.

David's idea was based on the group of Yorkshire women who posed nude for a calendar to raise funds for leukaemia and lymphoma research and who became known as the **Calendar Girls**. He asked Allen for some help and the DaC Board member duly mentioned the idea in the August issue.

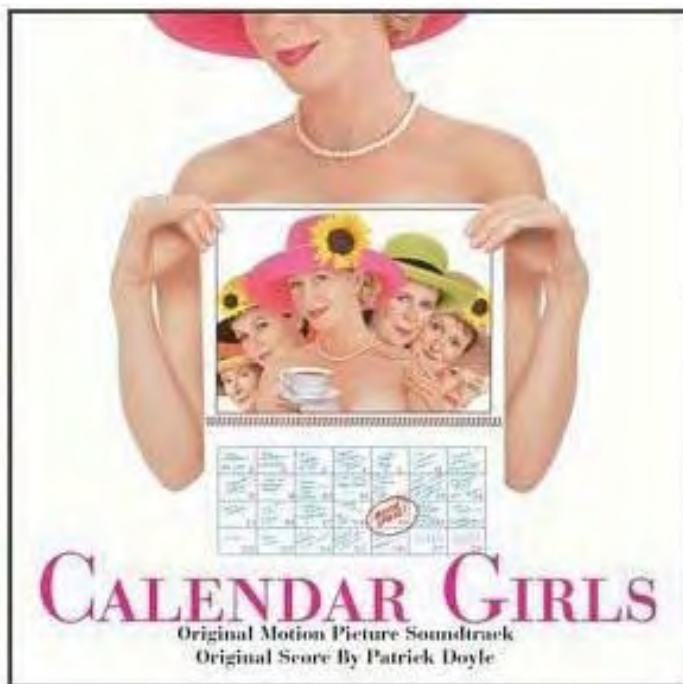
Allen did point out that the idea should really be open to the whole trade with maybe the trade organisations taking an interest, because DaC rules do not allow us to promote commercial products outside of supplying a transport service. But so far it has only gone out in **Call Sign** as a test to see how many brave

## DAC DRIVERS AS NATURE INTENDED???

souls we have who are prepared to get their kit off in aid of a very good cause.

Of the twelve "months" needed, five have already stepped forward – one of whom is not on DaC. They are **Alex Constantinou (N05)**, **Colin Salmon (N81)**, **Ricky Manetta (N16)**, non-radio driver **Stephan Fitt** and of course **David Burnetts (S43)**. All will be provided with a small DaC logo to cover their modesty. "Xmas" may need a larger version should the temperature drop below zero!

If anyone else is interested, just let **Call Sign** know...



A taxi driver's version perhaps

## First 100 TX4s arrive in Azerbaijan

As part of the record order of 1000 *Shanghai LTI* Chinese built TX4s, the first hundred have now arrived in the Azerbaijan capital city of Baku just several weeks behind the agreed date. They have already caused a sensation there with the hundred selected drivers in their *Baki Taksi* uniforms and London-style taximeters transporting passengers to their desired locations. It seems that everyone wants to travel in these new TX4s!

The Azerbaijan taxis are coloured purple and the iconic TX4 shape stands taller than all other private hire cabs - or *bombila* - on the road and are easily spotted amongst the bustling traffic.

*Baki Taksi* launched their *London Taxi Service* at the Caspian International Public Transport exhibition and the TX4 was undoubtedly the main attraction throughout the three day event. The event attracted over 5,000 professionals from Russia, Turkey, Iran, Georgia, central Asia and other parts of Azerbaijan.

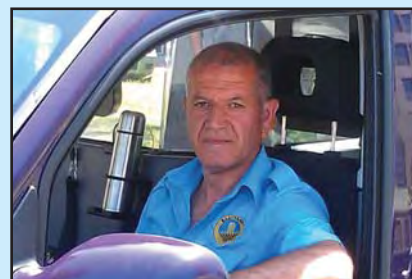
*Baki Taksi* was set up to help develop the Azerbaijani Transport System and update the taxi fleet in Baku with these London TX4s. Azerbaijan's Minister, *Ziya Mammadov* attended the opening ceremony gave several radio and TV interviews throughout the day regarding the country's newest attraction!

*Maria Holmes* and *Nigel Walters* of The London Taxi Company attended the exhibition to support the *Baki Taksi* Company and were excited to see the London Taxi positioned at the first stand you saw on entering the exhibition.

*Maria*, who **Call Sign** knows well, told us:

"It was amazing to arrive in Baku and see London Taxis operating in the same way that I had seen it in the UK several hours before taking my flight. I felt safe and reassured in a country I had never been to before simply because I recognised The London Taxi and the Service."

The deal was the single largest contract the company had received for their TX4. The £16 million agreement sees 1,000 TX4 London cabs supplied by the joint venture at Shanghai LTI to the Baku Taxi Company. The balance of the order is expected to be built and shipped by the end of the year with the next batch of 200 due shortly.



A Baki Taksi driver in his Azerbaijan purple TX4!

### WHERE'S WOODY?

The answer to where **Bob Woodford** was in *Call Sign en la belle France*: Sipping a glass of Chilean Merlot in the '360 degree' bar on the top floor of Milbank Tower...

## 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...?  
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**Dial-a-Cab** driver **Paul Gould (R58)** was feeling pretty bored. It wasn't just that the work was fairly quiet, but on this particular day it was also just so predictable and if he was truthful, fairly dull. We all look for that one job in the day which, if it doesn't actually provide you with lots of dosh, at least brings a smile to your face!

That job arrived for Paul on that early August day when a representative of French television channel *Canal +* phoned DaC to order a taxi for a three hour filming job. In itself, filming jobs aren't too unusual because the London taxi is accepted as an icon and even though our cabs are used in other cities as well, viewers in other countries will accept that if it's a TX4 then it must be London!

Paul accepted the job and met a young French lady together with an American guy in Shoreditch and immediately began wondering about which strange places he would be visiting in these three hours. He admitted to **Call Sign** that he was rather disappointed to be told that it was to be a trip around... Shoreditch!

"I had been feeling so bored," Paul said, "it had been a so-dull day and I really thought that a 3-hour filming job would at least take

# Ou est la Shoreditch???



me to some interesting places. But amazingly, the three hours going round a place that young people refer to as the west end in the east end turned out to be really interesting. Fortunately, the two people in the back who were commenting on the tour spoke perfect

English and the longer it went on, the more interesting it became – especially when they filmed me!"

So what was the following day like for Paul?

"Dull, predictable and boring," he told us with a wink!

## John gets his City Guiding Course

"It took nine months hard slog, but it was worth it," **Dial-a-Cab** driver **John Dixon (B67)** said as he proudly showed his newly acquired City Guiding shield to **Call Sign**. "It goes well with my Green Badge and the WCHCD Company shield don't you think," he asked rhetorically, grinning broadly as he said it? "The Course is supported by the City of London and is therefore strongly oriented around the square mile as its name implies. However, before a candidate is accepted onto the course, you are expected to devise a short walk of your own choosing and to take a group of fellow students on the tour, pointing out historical architecture, statues and some interesting snippets along the way. The guided tour gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their communication skills, as if they were really taking visitors to our great city on a real sight-seeing tour."

John went on to tell **Call Sign** about his tour.

"I chose 'London Bridge to Liverpool Street - a journey through time' being my theme. I began at Fish Street Hill, site of the original London Bridge in Roman times, the Roman Forum at Leadenhall Market, then on to the 13th century St Helens and the Great Eastern Hotel, which was the site of the first Bethlem Mental Hospital, finally ending up at The Pinnacle, an example of 21st C architecture. Hence my 'through time' associated theme."

"Once accepted, the guiding course itself starts in September through till the following June, nine months in all and yes, you can produce a baby in the time it takes to do the course," he said laughing.

"We met each Wednesday night for two hours at the Guildhall, everyone together and the occasional Saturday City walk to visit points, but it depends on the number of people as the groups are split morning or afternoon to make them more manageable. The walks generally last about two hours but could be a bit longer if someone asked a question or two," he added.

"We took in the Guildhall and its various areas, Clock Museum, roof, the many statues including the guardians Gog and Magog, covered the history of the Livery companies, the three Financial Institutions, Stock Exchange, Metal Exchange and Baltic Exchange, Leadenhall and Smithfield markets and the Barbican complex. Yes, quite a lot, and more!"

"An interesting aside I learned about the Guildhall was that there was a Roman amphitheatre below the present courtyard, the remains can still be seen today. Gladiators fought there and visitors can imagine the tense atmosphere of the occasion from the roar of the crowd played over loudspeakers. Actually it's a sound recording of the US Open Golf Championships of a few years ago, but it gets the message across," John said with a mischievous chuckle!

"Candidates sit three exams to achieve success as a guide," he continued, "firstly there is a verbal test on items within the Guildhall upon which you are expected to speak confidently and authoritatively for 4/5 minutes. Then there is a two hour written exam of fifty questions and then finally questions on any three of five churches, so you need to swat up on all of them pretty comprehensively," he asserted.

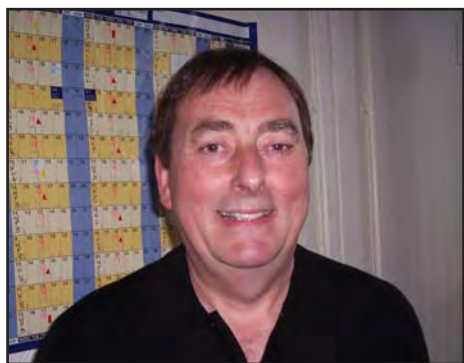
Success is acknowledged with a certificate, the shield and the right to act as a Guide in the City of London. You can register your interest to offer guiding services through the City of London information desk or online. Visitors can access tours the same way. An additional perk is that a registered guide can enjoy free entry to many City venues. Yes, it is a very comprehensive course and I have learned a great deal about the city in which we live and work, but it has been an enjoyable 'journey,' John concluded.

Details for future Guiding Courses can be found online at [gerald.jones@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:gerald.jones@cityoflondon.gov.uk) or write to Gerald Jones, Curriculum Development Manager, City of London Adult Skills and Community Learning, 2nd floor North Wing, Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ



John with his City Guiding shield, Company shield and badge





## Come and join us!

**Yes, come and join us! We are now one of the most successful Credit Unions around and you as a Dial-a-Cab driver or family member or staff member, can be a part of it.**

Many of those who come in to the **Tiger Tyres** workshop on the ground floor of our office for their tyres but who are not DACCUs members, they are the ones we target to get them to join us. Of course they all ask the same question: Why should I join? Well I like to think that this is the easy part! Firstly, once you start saving and need a tyre or four, then get them fitted and come upstairs to either draw out your savings or get a loan to pay for them. Secondly there aren't too many places you can go and get a loan within 5 minutes and either have that money in your bank account within the hour via a *chaps* payment, or a signed cheque or by most people's preference - a BACS payment, which takes around 3 days to get to your account.

**Most members have their Credit Union money savings stopped via their credit work and while on the subject, I would like to take this opportunity to thank DaC's Financial Controller Warren Smith for his hard work and help in the smooth running involved in sorting out our driver's payments and getting them over to us so we can put your hard earned money into your DACCUs account.**

One of the arguments I often hear against joining DACCUs is that it's just another debt or that they don't take loans or even sometimes ask just what the committee are getting out of it! We are here for one reason - to help you and not to turn you over. We who work in the DACCUs office - that's Terry, Brian, Derek, Lily and me are all licensed as deposit takers by the FSA. If you're not sure, go online and look us up on the FSA website. We have over 900 members but would like to have all you DaC drivers on our books, because you never know when you might need a bob or two. And that applies to your families as well.

It reminds me of something that happened to a driver. I had the devil's own job to get him on board and he saved with us for about 3 months before coming to me and saying that he didn't really need to be saving and could he have his money out? Naturally I said yes, but advised him to leave a pound in just to keep the account open. He did that, probably just to avoid upsetting me! Well just two days

# DIAL-A-CAB CREDIT UNION

later he came back asking if I could help him as his gearbox had packed up and as our regular borrowers know, we have a special fund for those moments. So I gave him a loan of a £1000 spread over one year, which in interest cost him £65. In reality, this driver had just £1 left in his account and our criteria is a 3 to 1 ratio! So if you have £100 in savings, you can borrow £300. All I can advise you is to never say never!

**Many of you have been enquiring about when the next 7% account we are running will open? We are currently unsure of what we can or can't do as regards that account and we await an FSA decision. We are working closely with them on this matter and as soon as we know, then you will be notified. Our thanks for your patience...**

## Tiger Tyres

I'd just like to mention **Tiger Tyres** just in case you don't yet know who they are. They supply all your cab tyres at reasonable rates. They also sell batteries and window wiper blades. All tyres are balanced with a new valve. They also do laser tracking for all FX4s, TX1s, TX2s and TX4s in addition to the Vito - but only the front wheels. They are situated

on our ground floor and I'm sure Jamie would love to see new and old customers alike.

## Harp Credit Union

The HARP Credit Union is one that the DACCUs has taken over. We were asked by the FSA if we could help, in fact this is the third credit union we have helped out, but in this case we have actually taken over the reins. We are using the HARP for non-DaC drivers, their families and friends so if you know of anybody looking for somewhere to save then please get in touch with Lilian at the office. You never know, if we can get HARP as successful as DACCUs then we may be able to offer a 7% interest scheme as well.

**I think that's all for now but if you have any queries on the above, don't hesitate to call us on 0207 729 8171 or call in as we love to see your lovely smiling faces. If you don't know the address yet, it's Unit 14, Peterley Business Centre, 472 Hackney Road E2 9EQ. The entrance is next to the Docklands Office Furniture shop.**

*I'll finish with the usual be lucky but be very careful out there..*

**John Riley (K38)  
DACCUs**

## The loneliest TX4 in the world?

Over the past few years **LTI** - and its successor the **London Taxi Company** - have been very successful in selling the TX4 overseas. Most exported models are made in their Chinese factory in Shanghai and the company's publicity department (*hi Asha and Maria*) do a very good job in notifying the trade should it want to publish a story. But **Call Sign** was told that LTI's Export Logistics Manager **Nigel Walters** actually tried to dissuade buyer **Subhash Sanas** from purchasing his TX4, as there was no back up in his Indian home city of **Pune**!



**Subhash and his new cab in India**

Pune is the second largest city in the state of Maharashtra, renowned as India's cultural capital and probably famous for being home to **Venky's** - owners of English Premier League team **Blackburn Rovers**.

But now the city has a new claim to fame with city businessman Subhash Sanas, apparently bored with seeing Audis, BMWs and Merc E classes on the streets of Pune, buying himself a new metallic blue TX4, the first of its kind in India. Even more astonishingly, the cab is said to have cost Subhash around Rup 5million including substantial import duties - around twice the price London drivers pay!

The millionaire has been a passionate collector of rare vintage cars since his youth, but getting the TX4 to Pune was no easy task. For a start Mr Sanas had to conduct a number of meetings with Nigel Walters and convince him that he really wanted the taxi at any cost!

Nigel Walter was said to be reluctant to sell it to Subhash because there is no service centre in India. The meeting was followed by months of negotiations before Subhash made the long trip from the sub-continent to the London Taxi Company's Coventry factory! Indian government policy and tough import restrictions made it difficult for him to bring the TX4 to India and in fact he had made several previous attempts over the years. As a regular visitor to London since 1973, he fell in love with the traditional London taxi icon many years ago, but every time he tried to buy one, restrictions were put in his way - until last month!

**"I saw the cab and was an instant fan," he said. "It is unique and has a class entirely of its own. I made up my mind to purchase one and today I am proud to own it. Am I a snob? Well if I am, then I'm proud of it!"**

Famous Bollywood star **Dharmendra Singh Deol** has asked Subhash if he can borrow the taxi! Whether he intends making a Bollywood star out of the icon, he wouldn't tell **Call Sign**, but Subhash Sanas' taxi has now acquired a celebrity status in Pune - as has Subhash himself. He even asked if he could have a **Dial-a-Cab** logo in gold. I said **Call Sign** would let him know!

**Baghwat Singh  
Call Sign Online**

Three years ago, **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Colin Salmon (N81)** bought one of the first Mercedes-Benz Vito taxis – now he has become one of the first to benefit from the mpg and road tax savings offered by the latest, Euro 5 version.

The 2011 Mercedes-Benz Vito wears a fresh new 'face' but the main improvements are beneath the surface. Thanks to its innovative driveline technology, Colin's new Vito 113CDI with factory-fitted five-speed automatic transmission returns 27.7mpg in the urban cycle, a 2.9mpg improvement on the Euro 4 111CDI it has replaced.

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, meanwhile, are down from 229g/km in the outgoing model to just 216g/km, moving the vehicle from Road Fund Licence Band L to Band K. As a result, whereas the Euro 4 model cost £790 to tax in its first year and £445 annually thereafter, Colin has paid £580 to tax his Euro 5 Vito in year one and will only have to find £260 for the second and subsequent years.

Over the three years that he intends to run his new Vito, the tax savings alone will be worth £580. As for the reduction in his fuel costs, Colin typically covers around 650 miles a week, during which he could expect to use 106.4 litres (23.4 gallons) of diesel – that's around 12.7 litres (2.8 gallons) less than his previous Vito might have used and worth £18 at the pumps.

Increased efficiency does not come at the expense of performance though – Colin's Euro 5 Vito 113CDI puts out 136hp and 310Nm of torque, both significantly up on the 116hp and 290Nm offered by the 111CDI model it has replaced.

"My previous Mercedes was great to drive, but this new one is even smoother," confirmed Colin. "It's another step forward in terms of fuel consumption too. The last Vito was a lot more economical than any taxi I'd driven previously but my new cab is even more frugal, so I'm definitely filling up less frequently."

The Mercedes-Benz Vito Taxi was launched to widespread acclaim in August 2008 – for the first time the capital's cabbies had a genuine alternative to the traditional LTI taxi, which had always been their only option as nothing else met the

# Colin and his Euro 5 Vito



strict regulations laid down by the PCO.

These stipulate, among other things, that a taxi must have a turning circle of no more than 25ft from kerb to kerb. The Vito ticks that box thanks to its innovative steering rear axle, which makes an already nimble vehicle even more manoeuvrable – Euro 5 versions benefit from enhanced software and improvements to the actuator and other components, including a new anti-roll bar and machine-cast trailing arm, all of which are contributing to increased comfort and improved reliability.

More comfortable and spacious for driver and passengers than its rival and significantly more cost-effective to operate thanks also to its longer service intervals, the Mercedes-Benz contender quickly became a familiar sight on London's streets. To date specialist taxi dealer KPM-UK has sold 1,236 Vito Taxis, including 86 Euro 5 examples.

Colin, of course, is now an ardent admirer. "I wouldn't go back to an old-style cab, not in a million years," he asserted. "The Vito is the best taxi I've driven by a mile. I'm 6ft 2in and used to get out of my vehicle after a 10 or 12-hour shift feeling crippled; now I'm fresh and relaxed because I've so much more room to move. The customers certainly love having all that space too. Those of us who drive Mercedes certainly seem to pick up more five and six-handers but there are plenty of individual passengers, too, who tell me they'll wait for a Vito rather than get into an LTI.

"It's also much easier to get wheelchair users in and out of the vehicle," he added. "That used to be a bit of palaver in the old cab, because you had to move the seats, but they can access the Vito with ease, using the lightweight ramp I carry in the boot."

**It has always been smart clothes, smart cabs, smart everything! But now it's...**

## Cake Maker Allen!

**Had you asked Call Sign to guess Allen Togwell's latest hobby, cake making wouldn't have come top of our list. So we asked Mr T to impart some of this new-found knowledge to us.**

"There has been some banter of late amongst colleagues on the Board and staff about my latest hobby – namely cake making. It's great fun, therapeutic and extremely satisfying – especially the results. Having in the past spent many a year in bachelorhood, I was forced through necessity to learn to cook a roast, pasta, fish or whatever else even though I had no real interest in cooking, least of all in cake making. However that was until recently when I realised how much I spend at the bakers and decided to attempt this new hobby, prompted by my sister who gave me a very easy recipe for a fruit cake that your granny might remember as a Porter Cake – except in my recipe it's minus the Guinness. When I told my partner I was gonna bake a cake, I got the usual rolling of the eyes in disbelief, but when she saw I was serious the threats came as to what would happen if I mucked up the kitchen!

But I was determined to give it a go and of course like many men when attempting something new, we go the whole hog and get things that are totally unnecessary. For example, I didn't have a food mixer and you won't believe this but I wondered that if I just got the attachments, would they work in my Black and Decker drill on a slow speed? So off I went to my local pots and pans shop to purchase a set of attachments and was told they all differ according to the models. And when asked what model did I have and I said a Black and Decker, the shop owner must have thought he's got a right Del Boy here! But he humoured me and said that a Black and Decker might just be a teeny weeny bit too powerful to use to mix cakes and the guaranteed mess on your kitchen ceiling could take some cleaning. He then said he had a special offer of a complete hand mixer for £15, which I took but have not yet used because I've since discovered mixing by hand gives the best results. Another simple fact about this cake is it involves no scales for measuring; it's done the American way – they have no understanding of mls, grams and fluid ounces etc. They use cups. And the small cup I use is approx 8 fluid ozs.

I couldn't believe how much pleasure I got out of baking my first cake and particularly the result and the surprising thing was my partner, who doesn't eat cake, commented how nice and moist it was. So for a bit of family fun why not give it a try. I've since become quite a dab hand at cake making and have progressed onto making more fanciful cakes using a Bundt pan as in the photo.

**Ingredients: 1 cup of sultanas, 1 Cup of raisins, 1/2 cup of brown sugar, 1 cup of water, 1/2lb of hard Stork margarine chopped into small pieces, 2 cups of self-raising flour, 1 tsp bicarb of soda and 2 large eggs.**

*Put the sultanas, raisins, sugar, water, chopped margarine, into a saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring occasionally. When boiled, let simmer for 10 mins, then transfer the ingredients into a mixing bowl and leave until cold, stir occasionally. Don't try putting it in a fridge to get it cold otherwise the margarine will congeal. When cold, mix in the eggs, bicarb of soda and then the flour a small amount at a time and through a sieve. Mix well by hand and put the mixture into a greased and floured 8inch round tin. Bake in a moderate oven (C/325 F/Gas3) for one hour or until a skewer comes out clean."*



**Allen and cake**



# A SMASHING TIME FOR PATRICK!



Two into one doesn't go!

**Patrick Foy (B93)** has had what could be referred to as a run of bad luck recently. What would you call notching up three motor accidents in as many weeks and capping it all by having a motor cyclist throw his helmet at the cab and straight through the driver's window glass!

Patrick took up the story as **Call Sign** listened incredulously...

"The first incident happened when I collided with the cab in front while swerving to avoid a pedestrian who had stepped off the kerb and right into my path," Patrick began before moving straight into knock number two.

"That occurred while I was turning left out of St Pancras station trying to avoid the bus lane when a car, also turning left, cut across my bow forcing me to swerve and collide with the cab in front of me. Another cab driver stopped and offered his details as a witness, but unfortunately with recent on-going events, I have misplaced those details. So if he is out there and reads this, I'd be very grateful if he could get in touch!"

And then there was prang number three. "It was just a few days later. A really large 4x4 tried to squeeze into a gap between me and a traffic island as I stopped at a pedestrian crossing! The traffic island didn't move, but my cab lurched forward with the impact, severely damaging the offside body panels!"

By now Patrick was reeling the incidents off as though they were just everyday events – although in Patrick's case they probably were! But worse was to come and any hint of a smile at the sheer ridiculousness of his situation soon vanished as Patrick relived the frightening experience of being attacked in the early hours of a Friday night/Saturday morning.

"It was about 01.30 hours and I was empty in Balham Hill looking for a fuel station," Patrick told **Call Sign**. "I saw one on the right further along the road and checked my mirror before moving into the centre of the road. I had noticed a motor-cyclist some distance away and manoeuvred my cab accordingly to give him plenty of road-space. He drove past me about four car lengths before suddenly skidding quite a long way down the road and then coming to a stop. He was dressed in full leather gear and walked back to me in an aggressive manner. I apologised profusely to him not being sure if he blamed me. I made sure my cab doors were locked although my driver's window was slightly open," Patrick continued.

"He turned away from me as if accepting my apology, but then suddenly threw his helmet through my window showering me and the cab interior with glass fragments." Patrick took a deep breath as he recalled the event. "Then he tried to force my door open to reach inside the cab shouting out that he wanted his helmet back! I pulled away quickly, reacting more by instinct than thought due to the shock and then stopped further down the road to take stock of my situation. There were shards of glass everywhere and I then realised I was bleeding profusely from the numerous cuts on my face and arms," he said.

"I called the police and they turned up in minutes as did the ambulance crew who did a good job cleaning me up and attending to my wounds, but I declined a hospital visit as the crew agreed there was not much more the medical staff could do and that a thorough wash at home would remove the glass fragments from my head and body." Patrick added that the police claimed they would probably have to add 'actual bodily harm' to the list of charges against the cyclist, raising the bar even higher than the young man was already facing.

"I didn't want to go that far as he was in enough trouble already," Patrick conceded. "In the meantime, the police had arrested and hand-cuffed the motorcyclist at the fuel station before charging him with assault and criminal damage. He readily admitted the offences, holding his hands up when interviewed by the police. I was asked if I wished to press charges, which



Patrick still smiling at the end of a lousy week!

would have led to him having a criminal record. It turned out he was only 26 years old, of previous good character with a regular job and I didn't want that to go against him for the rest of his life, so I'll settle for the court sentence and cab repairs.

"Replacing the drivers' window cost me £211" Patrick said, adding that the police told him the motorcyclist gave them a similar version of events to his own and that he admitted losing his temper momentarily and that the taxi driver had looked 'petrified'.

"And yes I was," Patrick admitted to **Call Sign**, a smile slowly spreading across his face. "It was almost day-break by the time I got back home and it took several showers to get rid of the glass particles, but I'm healing nicely and the cab is being repaired so I guess I'm lucky!"

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## TAXI DRIVER OF THE YEAR CHARITY

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# Mailshot

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

## Nice or...?

*Dear Alan*

I have been sitting in front of my laptop devoid of a shirt (due to the heat here in Spain), reading the July issue of *Call Sign online*. I am very disappointed that the super injunction I took out against DaC was blocked by the Society. Through *Call Sign* I wish to take the opportunity to clear my name and set the record straight. I am not in any way a "Nice Guy" and have never been so. Making such a statement is an act of defamation. In fact I am a moaning old f\*\*t. If you insist on referring to me as "Nice" I shall produce a number of fellow subscribers who will speak on my behalf to confirm that in the past I have crossed swords with them. "Nice" doesn't get you anywhere in this world.

As for those trousers that were found in my dustbin by a passing tramp - I refer to the trousers found with telephone numbers written inside the lining. These trousers may have been found in my dustbin, but on closer inspection you will see that they had belonged to a much taller man than myself. I had that very week been entertaining friends, amongst them being a Mr O B Laden, a close friend and confidant.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to clear my name and allowing me to continue moaning. Having been cabbage for 40 years, I think I have earned that right. "Nice" indeed!

**Steve Shaller (F34J)**

**Nice? I was joking! In just two days I have found 17 drivers, 12 of whom are prepared to pass wind on your Rich Tea biscuits as soon as you turn your back, whilst the remaining 5 would be happy to shout rude things at your neighbours! ...Ed**

## Nash's Numbers

*Alan*

Could you send me the 'unlock' code for the up to date fare table in *Nash's Numbers* please.

**Derek Oldfield (D32)**

**Hi Derek, go to [www.myfav.co.uk](http://www.myfav.co.uk), click the register button, enter your name, email address and put the word taxi into the 'unlock code' field. You should then be sent a password which you use to log on. Then click on the button marked Taxi and you should find lots of icon links to the UID and other useful taxi related websites... Ed**

## Alan Nash and Westfield

*Hi Alan*

I'm a new driver on the Dial-a-Cab circuit having been here since January. I must say I'm very impressed with the whole setup of DaC, it is very professional in all departments. My only regret is I didn't join when I had the chance 20 years ago, instead I stayed with the other muppets! In the past few weeks, we have had messages saying that Westfield needs cabs, but is it just me that doesn't understand the workings of the centre - ie how to get in, where the rank is and how to get out! It would be much appreciated if *Call Sign* or *Nash's Numbers* could print a map. I've been in the trade 25 years and I admit there's a lot I still don't know!

**Steve Denison (W65)**

**See this issue's Nash's Numbers. Hope that sorts out your problem ...Ed**

## Thanks Roy

*Dear Sir*

I would like to thank the cab driver that took us from *The Royal Horseguards Hotel* in London to Heathrow Airport on July 19. We inadvertently left our camera in the cab, but he brought it inside the airport to return it to us while we were in the security line. I have obtained his contact information from the credit card receipt and I hope this is enough to identify him and to please thank him and his management on our behalf. You have a very fine, trustworthy, dedicated service! Thank you!

**Dr Mark J. Johnson**

**Vice President, L-3 Mission Integration, Greenville, Texas**

**Well done to Roy Bostock (V83) for helping to maintain the excellent name of London's taxi fleet. Not for nothing are we considered to be the best in the world ...Ed**

## Touts?

*Alan*

Re the *Call Sign* article in the August issue, *London's most stupid tout jailed*; I consider the most stupid touts are black cab drivers who hang it up in Canary Wharf and other places. Don't these people realise that if the tout squad catch them then that's it... goodbye licence???

**Stephen Field (F68)**

**Since Allan Evans article several months ago concerning some drivers who hang up at Canary Wharf, I have had a number of emails and phone calls on the subject. The strange part is that up until now, none were prepared to put names to their comments and I refuse to use *Mailshot* as a way to pass anonymous letters onto readers. If you are happy to accept a local walk-up while someone**

**waits with their light out for an account ride, then that's fine. If you are unhappy, then just ask that driver to put his light on ...Ed**

## London riots

*Dear Sir*

Can I thank the Dial-a-Cab driver who gave me *Call Sign* to read on the Eurostar as I made my way back home to Brussels following our conversation regarding the years I spent at Coward Chance in Aldermanbury Square. To read the history of that office made a fascinating change from my usual reading material.

I have to say that it was lovely to be home - albeit very briefly. Brussels is beautiful, but there is still nowhere like London. Sadly you had those terrible riots which I hope will end as suddenly as they began, but nothing will ever change my view of London being the most beautiful city in the world.

But can I also add two observations following my first trip home to London in almost 4 years. I don't like your new taxis; they don't look like London cabs and even worse, I felt I was suffocating when I was in one due to the lack of any proper open windows. And why do so many of you now use satellite navigation systems? Whatever happened to your Knowledge of London?

**Jack Barratt**

**Brussels, Belgium**

**Sadly you were here when London was at its worst, but as for your other two comments re the Vito and SatNav... are you related to me! ...Ed**

## London riots

*Alan*

I always thought England's society was more civilized than ours in the states. So it is shocking to see that the police killing of a crook would set off what it has and that it spread from Tottenham throughout London and over across England. Worst is the "I will rob and destroy until caught..." There must be tons of young folk who feel "not a part of the system."

Jobless? Or are they just thugs on vacation, bored, waiting for school to start?

**Jack Barry**

**San Francisco, California**

**I think your last comment may be closest to the truth. Jack is a former Commissioner to the San Francisco Taxi dept ...Ed**

## London riots

*Hi Alan*

I trust that everybody is safe and well and that no drivers, DaC or any others have been attacked or had property stolen or damaged.





# Mailshot

continued from page 34

Ex-patriots and Australians alike are appalled at what is happening in London and elsewhere in the UK. The riots have been widely broadcast by all the news channels here with nightly updates from reporters in the UK. I have been keeping up with family and friends on Facebook. Our thoughts and prayers are with everybody over there...

**Howard Sales (Ex-A11)**  
Brisbane, Australia

Thanks Howard, I think there has probably been more damage to our workload than to ourselves, but thanks for your concern. To those that don't remember him, Howard was one of the driver-trainers at the time we went over to data dispatch ...Ed

## Minicab booking scheme

Is this legal and is it another nail in our coffin? It comes from our local Gazette...

### TOUCHSCREEN CAB BOOKING

*An innovative new booking system has been launched by a private taxi company. The computerised invention, known as The Kiosk is a touch-screen podium which can be installed in a range of venues including pubs, bars, restaurants, hotel foyers and business receptions in order for customers to make instant bookings by filling in a drop-off location and contact number. It's the creation of private passenger car hire company WestOne, based in Scrutton Street, Clerkwenwell and the company is inviting customers to contact them about installation.*  
**Chris Caselton (O24)**

Chris, the only part about it that is illegal is the use of the word taxi and that is probably more to do with your local paper looking for sensationalism rather than WestOne's advertising. I think you'd have an almost impossible task proving that this is any less legal than actually phoning or booking online for a cab.

Technology means that we are becoming surrounded by gadgets similar to Kiosk - Kabbee being a prime example. I still believe it proves that what I've been constantly slagged off for "daring" to say was right. We have kept the same number of taxis for years - in fact the numbers are slightly down - whereas minicabs must be approaching 70,000. If there was no need, there wouldn't be that huge number. The licensed taxi trade has always worried about today, but it's now tomorrow and we are stuck at yesterday! We are and always have been our own worst enemies; the only difference was that technology wasn't so advanced before. Now it is. Perhaps the only consolation is that from what I've heard, WestOne's record in IT is second only to Dougal in The Magic Roundabout ...Ed

## Tweeting at QI

It was interesting to see a tweet from Alan Davies (alandavies1 on twitter) of QI fame on Saturday 13th August. It read: *Dial-a-Cab is Dial-no-Cab it turns out. Book the night before, doesn't turn up and they say: "Did you read the terms and conditions?" What service!*

Not good for business, but I wonder what this job was?

**James Whiting (E83)**

At first I thought this was the email that has been doing the rounds for two or more years, one which turned out to have been made up and put out by a minicab driver. Sadly it wasn't and this tweet is based on fact. Alan Davies booked a credit card trip from N7 to Kings Cross and we failed to cover it. I don't suppose we can really blame the call centre for our not covering this trip. However, the underlying problem - the one Alan Davies is making fun of - is that DaC really cannot guarantee a service because if we did and didn't cover that job, then a promise of a cab could end up with the Society being sued. What if someone missed their flight and a £multi-million deal after a cab failed to turn up and we had guaranteed it? The original email that has been doing the rounds added "that's why I use Addison Lee" to try and give the impression that they turn up 100% of the time. I'm afraid that's not true either. It's just a fact of life that there is no such thing as a 100% taxi or minicab service. That doesn't stop you claiming that you are 100% but you'd be lying and leaving yourself open to a legal challenge. And of course, the day following Alan Davies tweet, the expected tweet from someone called Goldilocks appeared - 'I don't use DaC, I use Addison Lee!' I still like Alan Davies and letting him down was a real shame at a time when good publicity is so important...! Ed

## Old cabs and Liverpool Street...

Regarding the 15 year cab rule, do you know if that will prohibit you from using your old cab as a private vehicle? Also, does the regulation cover the whole country or just London? Can we still sell our old cabs to Liverpool & co?

And speaking of Liverpool, Bishopsgate by Liverpool Street Station now has a wide red line which means no stopping at all. Old Broad Street also has signs that forbid taxis setting down during roadworks that will obviously be there for some considerable time while Crossrail is being built. So other than driving down the slope inside the sta-

tion, that just leaves Liverpool Street itself, which gets very crowded at best of times. Any official suggestions from LTPH?

**Bernie Silver (G08)**

I passed your letter over to John Mason, LTPH Director. He told *Call Sign* that the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy sets an age limit for taxis of 15 years, but this applies to licensed London taxis only. Any unlicensed taxi (whether 15 years or any other age) may be used as a private vehicle. If, however, it entered Central London it would be subject to the congestion charge and would face the same restrictions as other vehicles in the use of bus lanes. And to save you asking, Bernie, it is unlikely that a 15+ year old taxi could legally be used as a PH vehicle because the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998 specifically prohibits the use of vehicles which by design and appearance resemble a taxi.

As for Liverpool Street, a member of John Mason's team says that she was aware of the situation with the recent closure to taxis of Old Broad Street so that Crossrail vehicles can use the road. One issue was that the Old Broad Street signage was not very clear and she had a site visit with TfL's Crossrail project managers recently to discuss that. Her sympathies, she said, were with the trade on that problem and she expressed her view to the Managers that it was difficult to justify this closure to taxis since there didn't seem to be much activity in the road. They admitted that an August closure was probably premature and while she tried to have the decision reversed so that taxis could drop off in the road, nothing came of that other than a statement that in September Crossrail traffic would be so busy around there that it would have become too difficult to sustain access for taxis. However, the Mayor's office has now confirmed that it is just the section between Liverpool Street and Broad Street Avenue and NOT London Wall that is banned ...Ed

## DAB radio

I have a Blaupunkt Nashville DAB35 digital radio in its box that is fitted to taxis and need a buyer. I believe they are about £350, but I would be happy to sell for a reasonable offer.

It is very true that DAB radio is so much better than the rest, things like test matches, football, rugby and the sound quality for music is so much better. Call me on 0208 922 0547.

**Martin Freeborn (C67)**



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