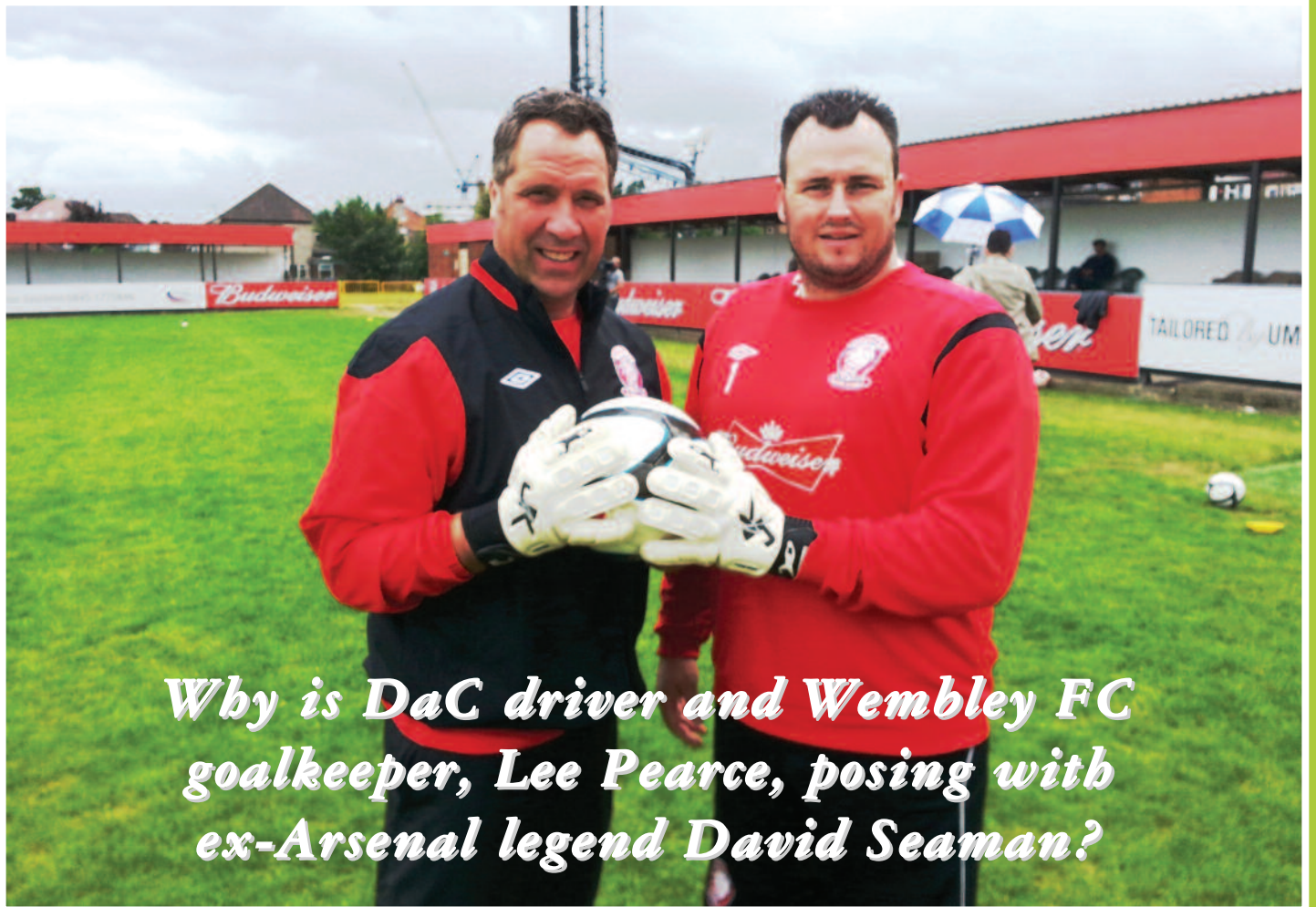


August 2012



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



Why is DaC driver and Wembley FC goalkeeper, Lee Pearce, posing with ex-Arsenal legend David Seaman?



Another batch of DaC staff receive long service awards



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

New valid Eurostar arrivals timetable to December 2012, plus the 'Special Olympics' arrivals time table. For more info, see bottom of this page...

Eurostar Olympics Time Table 27/07/12 to 12/08/12

From	Arrival	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	From	Arrival	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Brussels	08:05							✓	Paris	16:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Brussels	08:06	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Brussels	16:12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Paris	08:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Paris	16:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brussels	08:58	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Brussels	16:58	see Note 3						✓
Paris	09:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Paris	17:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paris	09:47	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Paris	18:05					✓		✓
Brussels	10:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Brussels	18:12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Paris	10:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Brussels	18:12	see note 2					✓	
Brussels	10:58							✓	Paris	18:33	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Paris	11:05					✓			Paris	18:40						✓	✓
Paris	11:33	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Brussels	19:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Brussels	11:58	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Brussels	19:12						✓	
Paris	12:33	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Paris	19:33							✓
Brussels	12:58	✓				✓			Paris	19:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Paris	13:05	see Note 1					✓		Brussels	19:58	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Paris	13:05					✓			Paris	20:12							✓
Paris	13:33	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Paris	20:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brussels	14:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Brussels	21:05	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paris	14:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Paris	21:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Paris	15:05							✓	Paris	22:33	See Note 4						✓
Paris	15:33						✓	✓	Paris	22:33							✓
Brussels	16:05						✓	✓	Paris	22:40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Note 1 27/7/12 & 10/8/12 only

Note 3 5/8/12 & 12/8/12 only

Note 2 4/8/12 & 11/8/12 only

Note 4 12/8/12 only

Eurostar Time Table 08/07/12 to 08/12/12 excluding Olympics above.

From	Arrival	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	From	Arrival	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Brussels	07:57	✓	✓	✓					Paris	16:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paris	08:00	✓							Brussels	16:57							✓
Paris	08:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Brussels	17:03				✓	✓		
Brussels	08:57	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Paris	17:36	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paris	09:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Paris	18:00							✓
Paris	09:39						✓	✓	Brussels	18:06						✓	✓
Brussels	09:57	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Brussels	18:09	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Paris	10:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Paris	18:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Paris	10:36	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Paris	18:39							✓
Paris	11:30						✓	✓	Paris	19:00		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Paris	11:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Brussels	19:03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Brussels	11:57	✓	✓				✓		Paris	19:30							✓
Brussels	11:57	see Note 6		✓	✓	✓			Paris	19:36	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Paris	12:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Brussels	19:57			✓	✓	✓		✓
Paris	13:00	see Note 5				✓	✓		Brussels	19:57	✓	✓		see Note 6			
Paris	13:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Paris	20:00							✓
Brussels	14:03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Paris	20:39						✓	✓
Paris	14:36	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Paris	20:41	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Paris	15:00	see Note 5						✓	Brussels	21:03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paris	15:30						✓	✓	Paris	21:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paris	16:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	see Note 5			Paris	22:00							✓
Paris	16:00					✓			Paris	22:30							✓
Brussels	16:03						✓	✓	Paris	22:36	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Brussels	16:03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Note 5 until 27/8/12			Note 6 until 31/10/12					

Never has there been a better time to try www.myfav.co Whilst it's best to register and personalise your own best home page using the unlock code of 'taxi' you can also just go there and click the 'Locked' tab and then type 'taxi' in the 'unlock' field. You will find loads of 'Taxi' related and useful iconic links.

from the editor's desk

Olympics and demos...

By the time you read this, seven years of waiting, excitement and no little cursing will have gone and the 2012 London Olympic Games will be upon us. But what about the taxi trade and – just as importantly – the regular passengers that rely on us? The question is how we can even make going to work worthwhile, because we have been well and truly screwed!

Call Sign has been writing about these games since 2003 when we were told that London would be bidding against Paris, New York and Moscow to hold the 2012 Olympics. We have been for them and against them, depending on the next piece of information we received.

I really believe that LTPH Director, John Mason, did his best in trying to get London's licensed taxis the best deal under almost impossible circumstances. I doubt there was a chance for us getting into the *Olympic Route Network* and perhaps if trade groups had read our 2003 issue when we explained what had happened in those Sydney 2000 Games, their initial response may have been different.

I share the UCG frustration and they are right in saying that London is too important to just stop, but demos are never going to get more than just some publicity. The time for warnings for what we would do was before winning the bid in 2005 when the UCG weren't even born! Even as an in-house mag *Call Sign* had already known about the ORNs for two years and if we weren't given some sort of assurances then, that's when we should have issued threats of disruption which in turn would have affected our ability to win the bid.

If in 2005 LOCOG had been POCOG – in other words had Paris won the bid – things would have been different for our French equivalents. They may well have had a few drive-ins, but their trump card would have been the threat to stop the Games. How? Well, I was recently speaking to a Parisian driver on French radio circuit G7 about the London Olympics. This was before I saw the sudden emergence of banned right and left turns in thoroughfares such as Baker Street and Kingsway and the closure of Great Cumberland Place. But there was the sop of being allowed to pick up passengers going down Park Lane southbound, however, should they dare to want to go north we do not have access to Achilles Way where we could have swung back up towards Marble Arch. Buses can, but we are obviously just honorary members of London's transport system! The G7 driver's view is that we are too soft and that even though the ORNs were untouchable, we should have insisted on access to everywhere that buses can go!

I told him about the three planned drive-ins of which at the time the second at Tower Bridge had just completed and he laughed! He said that other than three days of inconvenience, the authorities would just bite their lips and put up with it. I asked what the French drivers would do? I saw his eyes in my rear view mirror and could see that he was serious, but his answer still made me shudder.

"We would threaten to block the Olympic Lanes by parking our taxis there, taking out the ignition keys and walking away so that the lanes became unusable. We would not be afraid if we thought they were taking away our living!"

Generally speaking, drive-ins just cause a few hours inconvenience and rarely achieve much. That G7 driver's view of what his fellow drivers would do would probably have given us a chance of gaining a bit more access – at least to be allowed to go everywhere that buses could. But of course it would never happen over here, mainly because they are



French and we are British. And the British are gentlemen – aren't we???

If a DaC account user phones from a Games exit, please try to cover it. The Games may possibly kill us for a month, but lets try to keep something for afterwards – mainly our reputation.

DAC Credit Union

Can I thank all those Dial-a-Cab members who do not belong to the **Credit Union** as their absence means there is more money available for those of us wishing to partake of the excellent rates!

There are now over 1000 members of what **Appleby and Wood** accountant **Terry MacPherson** calls one of, if not THE best credit union in the country! That is somewhat better than being the best in the cab trade or even the best in north London – the best in the country? That's like wow!

Recently Linda and I decided that our 15 year + old boiler should be replaced before it packs up on Christmas Day in minus 5 degrees! **British Gas** gave us details of an excellent repayment scheme which they were proud of and quite rightly so, because it gave the borrower the option of paying back the loan as quickly as you wanted with no penalty attached. They told us how much extra we would have to pay and it seemed fair. But I thought I'd give our credit union a call just to see what they were offering. The phone was answered by DACCU Treasurer **Brian Flanagan (T79)** and I told him how much I wanted. Even the nice British Gas salesman said that they couldn't compete with the DACCU rates and asked if he could join! Sadly the answer was no as you have to have a link to DaC.

I had the forms by the next day – this was no complicated HP agreement form, just a straightforward few details and a signature. Absolutely brilliant!

So for those of you who aren't members because you haven't seen the ad in every issue of *Call Sign*, please don't look for it now in case we 1000 members want to borrow more at DACCU's cheap rates...!

This issue...

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Call Sign*. Last month we were snowed under with stories – so much so that I had to shove an extra four pages on! But at the time of writing, things have slowed down - no doubt because many drivers are beginning their summer holidays without a single thought for poor old Alan struggling to entertain those of you who are left!

Besides Addison Lee's Judicial Review result, one interesting piece that could cause some controversy is **Richard Potter's (T51)** article in which he suggests splitting LTPH in half with us and PH going our separate ways and our half becoming privatised!

There is also a fascinating piece of radio taxi history inside this issue. In memory of **Millie Dunn**,

whose sad death we reported on in the July issue at the age of 100, we are republishing an article about her husband Lou from the March 2003 issue. In it, Lou told us about his work with the **Radio Owner Drivers Association (RODA)**, the group that within months led to the formation of ODRTS and Dial-a-Cab. Lou died in June 2003, just months after telling his story as the only person who was still left to do so. Those of you who just assumed that this trade exists because it's here, well believe me it owes much to people such as **Lou Dunn** and his story is well worth reading.

Last month, **Peter Begley (K98)** gave his views on what the best buy was between the Vito and the TX4. He also went on to look at the E7 – which could come to London if the Conditions of Fitness are changed. It would be fair to say that he wasn't impressed with the Peugeot taxi and within 24 hours of the magazine being published, we received a response from **Donald Pow** of the E7 suppliers **Cab Direct**. He has also offered Peter the opportunity to test drive the E7 and hopefully the DaC driver will take up the offer. The response is also inside this issue.

What else? Well **John Addis (K97)**, whilst enquiring about roadworks causing early closing at the Limehouse Link and huge disruptions to our Canary Wharf service, has made an astounding discovery about the contractors who undertake those repairs. Read **Now that's what we call a contract** to see if you agree with us that it is just mind blowing!

As you'd expect, **Nash's Numbers** is keeping you updated with all the Eurostar train times in what will undoubtedly be the busiest ever time for the train. **Alan Nash (A95)** is amazing in that he has been with us for the whole of my 15 or so years as editor and he keeps coming up with stuff that taxi drivers find extremely useful. His website is also a boon and details of how to access it is at the bottom of his page.

Last for a mention – although there is much more inside the issue – is the story that made the national press, radio and TV! **Lee Pearce (J71)** is the goalkeeper for Combined Counties football team **Wembley FC**. *Call Sign* revealed a few months back that their sponsors, **Budweiser**, had bought in no less that former Spurs and Barcelona manager **Terry Venables** as technical advisor! But that wasn't the end because they have now brought in for their FA Cup matches some former players that every football fan will know. **David Seaman** is Lee's personal goalkeeping coach, whilst actually playing for them will be **Ray Parlour**, **Martin Keown**, **Graeme Le Saux**, **Brian McBride** and Argentinian superstar **Claudio Caniggia**! His closest friend is **Diego Maradona** – say no more!

There is also a programme on ESPN called **The Wembley Dream** beginning on August 2 at 10pm and it will follow the team's progress in the Cup.

And finally...

To all of you who are now on your holidays, have a great time. To those who are sitting at home watching the Games – a six pack close by with driving a taxi the last thing on your mind, enjoy. And to those braving the unknown and working through the London 2012 Olympic Games, I hope you strike gold. And dare I say something I never say, try and give priority to DaC's account clients if they too are brave enough to open up and need our help! With much talk of legacies, one of being the most reliable isn't a bad one!

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Olympics

I suppose my report would seem strange had I not mentioned the Olympics, even though by the time you read this we will be almost a week into the Games. However, as I write this, the Games are still a week away.

I just hope you are all doing well and the traffic is not too bad, but at the moment we do not know what to expect. The plans of many commuters seem to be either to work from home or go away on holiday. Will it be really quiet so far as work is concerned but with gridlocked traffic, or will it be very busy and the traffic quiet? I hope it's the latter but it could be a combination of both. No doubt as you read this, you'll have a pretty good idea what to expect for the remainder of the Games.

You will also know whether we have been allowed into the Zil lanes, something I very much doubt regardless of how much protesting was done prior to the Games. As I have stated on numerous occasions, part of the deal for us to hold the Games depended on the fact that officials and delegates could reach all the Olympic sites in a pre-determined time. For this to be achieved, the roads have to be clear of other users, hence the Zil lanes.

Prior to the Games, there has been so much negative publicity regarding this sporting occasion; what with the lack of security and coaches full of athletes getting lost etc so I must say that as I sit here writing this, I am not particularly looking forward to the period when the Games are being held. However, LOCOG and the ODA have had a logistical nightmare on their hands and I will be interested to see how the event progresses. I just hope it all goes well and there are not any unforeseen circumstances.

Law Commission

I have written in the past regarding 'Reforming the Law of Taxi and Private Hire Services' being conducted by the Law Commission.

This could have far reaching consequences for the Licensed Taxi industry, as the Law Commission wish for a national standard for both taxis and private hire. They are currently going through a consultation process to see if it is feasible to introduce a standard that would apply to the whole country.

I have had two meetings with solicitors from the Law Commission with a further meeting planned



for 9th August.

They have issued a 240 page document and asked 73 questions; responses to the consultation have now been extended to 10 September. What they are aiming for is the same standard across the country so that drivers and vehicles will be the same in Plymouth as they are in Carlisle or Manchester or indeed any city in the country.

The London Radio Circuits have also employed the services of a lobbyist to further enforce our view to the Law Commission.

Obviously I cannot pre-empt their findings, but I believe there is an overwhelmingly strong case for London taxis to be 'ring fenced' and the status quo to remain.

However, with Private Hire it is a different story. The Law Commission are considering allowing them to use the word 'taxi' and 'cab', so that they could quite legitimately use the phrase *Pre booked Taxi*. As you can imagine, so far as I am concerned that is totally out of the question.

They are also suggesting PH could have meters with the individual operator setting their own tariff. In addition, when a minicab driver is licensed by a particular local authority, he will then be free to work anywhere in the country! For instance, a minicab driver could be licensed in Liverpool and then come to London to work.

As you can see, the Law Commission's suggestions could have some very serious consequences

for us, not just because of what is being suggested for taxis, but what is also on the agenda for the Private Hire industry.

I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to put our view across to the Law Commission before they publish their findings, that is why the three radio circuits are taking this so very seriously. Not only are we submitting our view to the Commission, but I am also extremely hopeful that there will be a united trade response from all interested parties within our industry. I am totally confident that all parties within our trade will have identical opinions regarding the document that has been published.

Apps

Our IT department has now produced and built our own App, which is superior to anything currently on the market. The customer will be able to book ASAP taxis and also pre-book a taxi, something I understand is not available with other Apps at the moment.

Initially, we will trial the App with Credit Card customers and the current charges will apply, in other words the customer will pay for the service and not the driver. However, we will not launch it until after the Olympics although some of us here will be trialling the system.

My biggest concern is that the App will work well, but that drivers do not cover the work. Although the App might be a good product, if it is used by the public and a taxi does not arrive, then the whole App will be castigated in the media. Consequently, the success or failure of the DaC App will be in your hands!

The Island

Last month I informed you that a Dial-a-Cab client was in the process of moving their operation to the *Island* and that they wanted a rolling rank similar to the one their new Canada Square neighbours had.

I wrote that implementation could be as early as 1st July, but I've now heard that the commencement date looks like being in September. You will of course be given details as soon as we know anything for certain.

Brian Rice
Chairman, Dial-a-Cab

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FREE QUOTATIONS

Spare DaC taxis

Drivers often ask about taxi garages where Dial-a-Cab taxis are available for use while your cab is off the road, so if you need a DaC-fitted terminal try phoning one of the following garages for availability...

For any non-fault accidents try either:

Chief Taxis: -----0800 055 6221

Cab Aid: -----0800 028 3253

Overhauls or accident repairs:

Cricklewood Carriers: ----- 0208 452 5461

KPM: ----- 0207 375 1179

Justcabs (formerly L&P):-- 0207 739 0210

Howard Kott of Justcabs is also happy to rent out a DaC taxi if not being used as a loan cab

Gay cabs hit London!

Call Sign doesn't know how many gay drivers there are on **Dial-a-Cab**, although almost undoubtedly there will be a proportionate number. The reason this Society doesn't know the number is because nobody really cares nowadays. So we don't suppose anyone will care much that London now has gay taxis as well – but we bet they'll make tourists look twice!

Canadian organisation **Pride Toronto** recently unveiled a new London taxi advertising campaign to promote Toronto to gay Londoners as host city of **WorldPride 2014**. London recently handed over the mantle after Toronto beat Stockholm to host the next WorldPride, having won the majority vote from leaders of gay and lesbian organisations around the globe.

Advertising agency **Crispin Porter & Bogusky**, who in addition to Boulder, Miami, Los Angeles, Toronto and Gothenburg, also have an office in London's York Way, designed



three adverts to run on the capital's taxi fleet. It includes the rainbow flag colours of *Pride* in a glitter effect, a black studded cab mimicking leather fetish wear and a bright pink cab with a fur effect, while the inside seat ads will say: *If you think this cab is gay, wait until you see Toronto in 2014!*

Sadly London's finale as WorldPride host was

spoiled by poor weather and a low turnout at the Soho parade. The event was said to have been poorly attended and just eight days before the big day, the organisers were told that **Westminster Council** declined the permits needed for the parade. Floats and vehicles were no longer permitted and the parade was downgraded to a march of about 15,000 rather than the 40,000 originally expected. Official celebrations in Old Compton Street and Golden Square were cancelled with the main celebration venue at Trafalgar Square having its celebratory events severely reduced. It was instructed to end at 6pm sharp or face a fine.

Hopefully Toronto has a local council that doesn't compare to the meanies at Westminster, who were probably worried that closing streets to traffic would cost them in lost PCNs!

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign Online

Loz's keep fit classes

Dial-a-Cab's Paul Taylor (M01) has reminded us about **Phil Hewson** - more commonly known in the cab trade as **Loz**. Phil has been running keep fit classes for taxi drivers for over 30 years – the last fifteen of them at the **John Orwell Sports Centre** in **Tench Street, Wapping**. Paul said:

"If you are thinking of trying to shed a few pounds and need to get fit after all those years stuck behind the wheel, or even if you are already fit but need to find a new class, then this will be the one for you. Phil's classes are suitable for all ages and all levels of fitness abilities, regardless of your current fitness status. From the very fit to the very fat, you can feel rest assured that you will get a thorough but safe workout, because you are able to work at the pace that suits your level of fitness.

The workout starts from a free standing position (there are no apparatus), consisting of exercises ranging from aerobics, muscular strength and stamina, reaching every body part including those all-important lungs!

If you are a bit overweight and feel a bit shy or embarrassed about joining this type of class, then don't be. There are no targets and there is definitely no 'peer pressure'. In fact it is a very warm and friendly atmosphere.

Loz's classes are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, all starting at 1.15. The added bonus is the price at just £5 per session. You can attend as many or few times as you like to suit your work patterns and fitness levels, so if you are a beginner and you only fancy once a week, then that's fine. You only have to pay for the sessions you attend, so if you don't attend, then you don't pay. Just pay as you go. There are no membership fees and no contracts, but importantly there is ample free parking so you don't have to watch out for wardens!

I think £5 represents excellent value for money. If you are thinking of joining, come along and enjoy a week's free trial from the Loz..."

Paul Taylor (M01)

The Loz's keep fit classes are held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday beginning at 1.15 at the John Orwell Sports Centre, Tench Street, Wapping...



CallOver available at DaC

May's **Call Sign** contained a small article on the launch of new magazine, **CallOver**, aimed at those on the Knowledge. But when a message went out via driver's terminals to say that there were some copies in the **Dial-a-Cab** driver's reception and that if they knew anyone on the Knowledge, this magazine would be a useful tool for them, all the copies were snapped up before you could say leave on the left Northumberland Avenue!

The magazine is now left at DaC every month, so if you have a son, daughter or even a neighbour who is doing the KoL then keep a look out for **CallOver** in Driver Reception and pass a copy along to them. **CallOver** is a welcome addition to all the stuff Knowledge students accumulate...

Baghwat Singh
Call Sign Online



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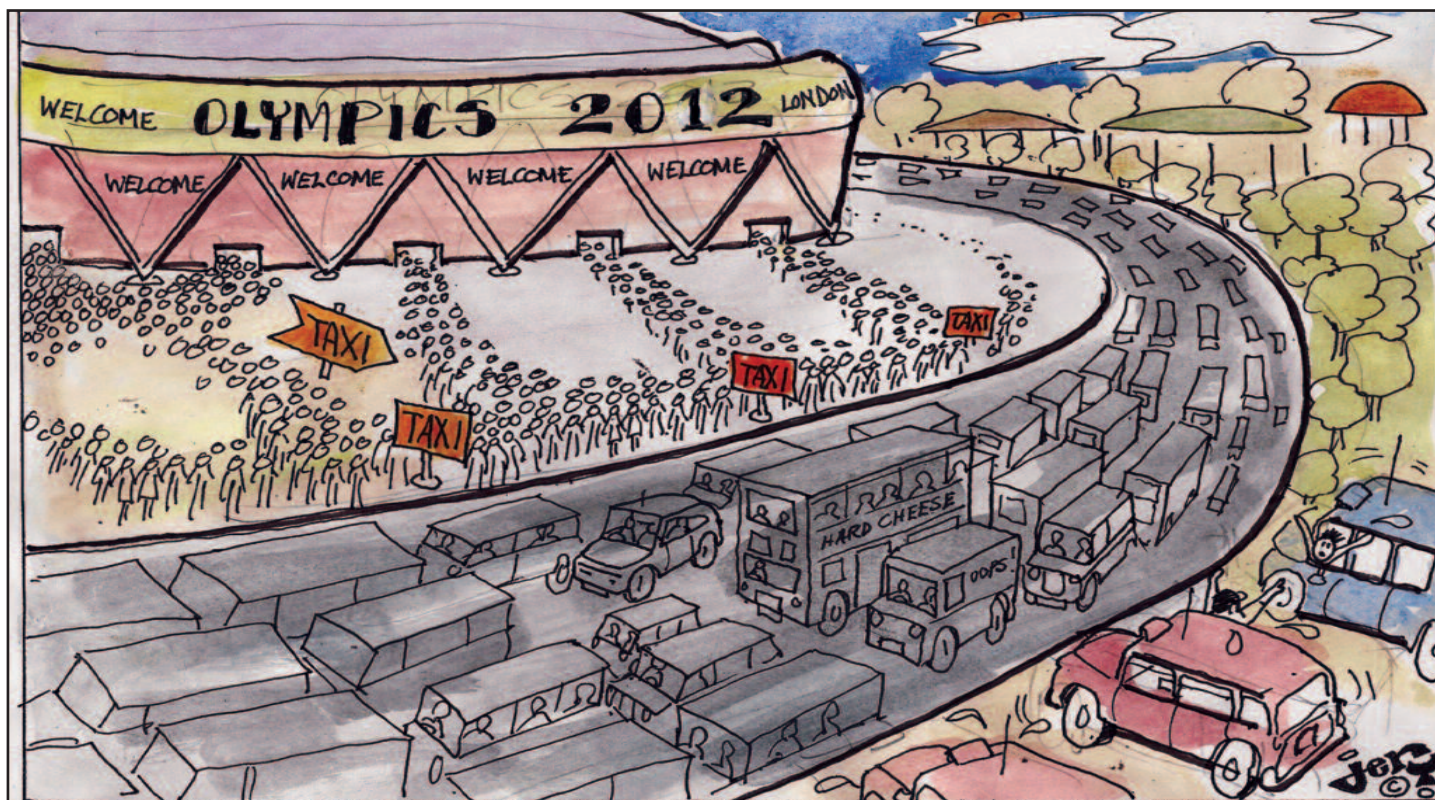
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Jery's World



"Yeah, Boris said there would be lots of people looking for cabs, he must 'ave just forgotten to tell us how to reach them!"

ALPHA POWER PILL IS BACK

If there is one question we get asked more than any other, it's whatever happened to the amazing Alpha Power Pills. These pills are among the most amazing things we have ever tested with numerous readers having used them and telling *Call Sign* how happy they were with them.

We began testing in 2005 and by 2007 it seemed that half the fleet were using them. The pills worked then just as they work now. The biggest problem is getting hold of them!

However, *Call Sign* has traced another supplier in **Steve Vale** and the first person to order some was **Dial-a-Cab** Chairman **Brian Rice**, who uses them in his diesel car. He ordered some via the website and received the pills two days later.

For those who have never used the pills, they help to clear carbon that builds up in the engine, with the result of better mpg. But far more importantly, they help to cut emissions and users of the pill can see the results in their wing mirror as the smoke from the exhaust begins to clear. These were some of the comments from drivers the last time we tested the Alpha Pill. Not all the drivers are still on DaC and we have just picked their comments out at random.

"Better Emissions and Fuel Economy." (*J Bailey D47*); "The Pill definitely works." (*M.Barker G06*); "I would definitely recommend Power Pill because of the smooth running and the lack of visible smoke emissions from the very smoky TXII." (*J.Burt E59*); "My cab definitely runs better since I've used Power Pill." (*G.Cluer E66*); "I am still waiting for the black smoke to reappear – I can't quite believe it's gone!" (*T.Davidson J31*); "I am very pleased with the performance since using Power Pill. I shall continue using it and buying it from JVBright." (*R.Francis L92*); "Cab feels sharper and now has far less emissions. On my last two smoke tests, the cab has struggled through, but since using Power Pill it fast-passed the test with a 1.45 reading." (*M.Harvey E87*); "Lower emissions and better mileage." (*B.Irving N42*); "The engine feels much more willing, with less noise and in all aspects performs much better. I would recommend Power Pill to anyone because of the results I have experienced for myself first hand. It is a good product that delivers what it says, which is quite unusual these days." (*K Jackman B29*); "Does everything it claims!" (*Divyesh Ruparelia V59*)

If you would like to order the amazing Alpha Pill, just go to OnlyCabs.co.uk and click on the 'Order Page'. Or you can phone your order to Stephen Vale at Only Cabs on 020 3239 6101.

Just for August, Steve has held the price for DaC drivers at £14.95 – incredibly the same price as it was all those years ago. However, it will then go up to £16.95 – still a bargain for what you get.

See the ad in this issue...

Call Sign

August 2012

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TfL measures to help taxis during the Games



John Mason: "We have worked hard to secure as many concessions as possible."

Following months of extensive dialogue with taxi driver associations, Transport for London has announced that London's licensed taxis will be able to access the dedicated Games Lanes at the following key locations:

* Park Lane (southbound)

from Culcross Street and South Street.

* Grosvenor Place (northbound) between Wilton Street and Hyde Park Corner.

* Vauxhall Bridge Road (southbound) between Bloomberg Street and Causton Street.

* Vauxhall Bridge Road (northbound) between Drummond Gate and Rampayne Street.

* Gloucester Place (northbound) between Dorset Square and Rossmore Road.

* Use of the M4 Olympic lane.

Through monthly Olympic liaison meetings between TfL, the Olympic Delivery Authority and taxi driver associations, a huge effort has been put into addressing the concerns of the taxi trade regarding the Games and in particular, the operation

of the Olympic Route Network and its impact on taxis and taxi passengers.

Following the constructive dialogue, TfL has now enabled taxis to make important turns along the network, which other road users are not permitted to make; reviewed all planned restrictions on the nearside (kerbside) Games Lanes and agreed to allow taxis to access a number of these. These measures are in addition to the opening of the dedicated lanes to all traffic when possible, using 150 electronic variable message signs. They are reducing to an absolute minimum the times the dedicated Games Lanes will be in operation.

TfL has also taken on board the concerns raised by taxi drivers with regards to accessing nearside Games Lane in Park Lane, which, under the original proposals could have prevented drivers from picking up or setting down passengers along a part of the network where there is likely to be significant demand for taxis.

John Mason, Director of London Taxi and

Private Hire said: "The Games Lanes were a stipulated requirement of the host city contract with the International Olympic Committee and we have been working with the LTDA, LCDC and Unite to review the restrictions that prevent taxis entering Games Lanes and to make changes where possible and appropriate."

"We know that some drivers feel very strongly that they should have full access to all Games Lanes but this simply isn't possible. We have worked hard to secure as many concessions as possible and have done everything we can to ensure that Games Lanes, which will be vital in getting athletes and officials to venues on time, are operating only when they have to. I would like to thank the taxi driver associations for their understanding and patience and would ask drivers to now join all Londoners' in getting behind the games and making the most of opportunities we are confident they will provide."












CX forecourt shut during Games?

At the time of writing, it looks as though Network Rail will be closing the forecourt of Charing Cross Station and the taxi rank during the Games. Also shut during the tenure of the Olympics is platform 10 at Liverpool Street. The McDonalds rank remains open.

St Pancras International will not just be open, but should be heaving with spectators using the high-speed Olympic Javelin train to and from Stratford International and the Olympic Park. This will have up to 12 trains per hour, transporting up to 12,000 spectators per hour.

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Perhaps the world-wide reputation for professionalism and intimate knowledge of our city travels ahead of us, because the depth of trust - or even expectancy - that the general public place in London's licensed taxi drivers sometimes amazes ... well, even London taxi drivers!

Every driver has a story to tell and judging by the experiences related to *Call Sign* recently, *Dial-a-Cab* drivers get their fair share!

Jonathan Radcliffe (G09) was sitting in Pepys St EC3 early one morning, when an Orthodox Jewish man calmly walked over to him and politely asked Jonathan where he might have parked his car? Apparently the *Chasid* had been late for a meeting and in the rush to make up time had not taken note of the location where he had parked.

"I must have had a blank look on my face, because this total stranger repeated the question as if I absolutely *knew* where he had left his car," a bemused Jonathan told *Call Sign*. "Assuming it to be a Volvo or people carrier, I



suggested perhaps the Toyota MPV that was parked nearby, but it was the wrong colour, so I asked him if he recalled any landmarks that could give me a clue as to the location, but that idea also drew a blank."

With a giggle in his voice, Jonathan continued with his tale. "The man then asked me how much it would cost to drive him around the streets looking for his car? Yes, I'm sure he was serious! However, I politely explained the impracticality of that exercise! Eventually he walked across the road to ask another taxi for the answer to finding his elusive motor car..."

Jonathan was still laughing at the recollection of this person's faith in the London taxi system as *Call Sign* walked off and came across **Adrian Landau (T14)**. He was waiting for his account passenger at the old Waterloo Eurostar terminal, with the passenger's name clearly written on the DaC nameboard and prominently displayed in the cab window. Like Jonathan before him, Adrian was also laughing as he recounted his story of man's inhumanity to man's nervous system! He explained to

Call Sign:

"A number of passengers had drifted out of the station to join the queue for non-radio taxis waiting on the rank, when a woman who was part of a group of people moving toward the taxi rank suddenly pointed in my direction. She then came over to me and in a strong European accent asked: 'Do you *only* go to Bromley?'"

"I explained to her that I was already booked and thought to myself 'I know where you're going' and that unwittingly, she knew my passengers name! It's lucky my passenger's name wasn't Paris or my laughter may well have frightened them back onto the train they had alighted from!"

© *Call Sign Magazine MMX11*



KPM and Cabvision dispute settled



Eco City Vehicles / KPM have settled a legal dispute over Cabvision, who are the suppliers of television services in the back of licensed taxis. Cabvision had been a former subsidiary of KPM and the dispute went back to the period of the reverse takeover by Pannal PLC – who later became Eco City Vehicles. Court cases had been ongoing since June 2006 before the settlement was announced. Eco said that the settlement, which was not revealed, involved no cost to the group. They did warn though that their cash position remained very tight "following challenging conditions in 2011."

The company's revenue dropped by 10% in 2011 and it made a loss of £2.2 million. Drivers were said to have been holding off buying a new cab before the newer model was launched.

The company added that it still has the "full support of its pension scheme and its bank" but added that it continues to look at "other funding options."

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CONTACT CENTRE CHAT

Within Dial-a-Cab House we have invested a considerable amount of time and effort to strengthen the experience, professionalism and the customer service skills of our *Managers, Team Leaders, Customer Service Representatives and Controllers*. This year especially, we are seeing that investment working to its full potential and have received far more compliments from clients and drivers than I have ever seen before. But those that work within DaC House are only but a few of the total workforce of the Society. You, the drivers, are the main workforce and the service you provide to our client is not only of great significance, but it forms a huge part of the wheel that turns and makes this Society what it has become today.

I have written many times about the service drivers give our clients and recently I wrote about drivers booking into zones incorrectly. Drivers are choosing to book in when their actual position is nowhere near where they are supposed to be. We all know why this is being done; it's because drivers think that if they book in early by the time it takes to travel to get to the right location they will not have to wait too long for a trip. When work was in abundance and the fleet size had not reduced by 35%, this way of working had no detriment whatsoever. Unfortunately, times have changed and it is having very serious issues with service. Our telephonists are presented on their screens with the number of vehicles booked into a zone when they enter a booking into the system. They are all trained to view this time and unless the controllers have instructed differently, they use this facility as a tool to give the caller an estimated time of how long it will take a driver to arrive. This works very well when drivers' work the system correctly. It is also used when passengers call back to ask the status of their cab. While I

With Keith Cain



fully understand why drivers do this, I hope you can all understand the knock-on effect it has within the contact centre and how ridiculous it makes staff sound to customers when we are not telling them the facts as we see them.

This is also causing far more trips to be rejected because the actual position the driver is in, with the best will in the world, means he/she cannot reach the pick-up address within the correct time. It also gives the rest of the fleet false information. When a driver is looking to drop off into a zone or is looking for a zone to book into, if they see a high number of cabs booked in they look elsewhere or head off in a different direction.

The biggest complaint we receive from clients, especially when we have difficulty in allocating a vehicle, is why there are no taxis within their area yet they can see many of our fleet going past their office with 'for hire' lights on? When booking

into a zone in the future, please take into consideration what I have said and try booking into the zones you are close to rather than the ones you are furthest from.

Over recent months, we have started to see a small minority of drivers trying to get out of doing local rides by offering silly delay times. I hasten to add it is a very small number, but nevertheless it is a process that makes our service look ridiculous. You all know that being offered an *as directed* trip means one of the following; it is a wait & return, it is going to a destination within the same zone, it is going to the airport or it is a genuine *as directed* trip and we have no idea where the passenger wants to go. Within the contact centre, we now have procedures in place to deal with drivers offering excessive delay arrival times.

When this happens, the controller is notified and the driver is monitored by his GPS position. Controllers will contact the driver to explain his actions and if the driver has a record of doing this, a complaint is issued. Drivers doing this are only thinking of their own circumstances and giving absolutely no consideration to the client.

When service is paramount, as it is to this organisation, a drop in the service levels - albeit from a very few - does have a bigger impact to the rest of the Society. If we don't all pull together in the future, then I dread to think what the outcome could be...

Keith Cain

Contact Centre Manager
Driver's Operations Manager

Heathrow Hydrogen refuelling station

Five Hydrogen TX4 taxis carrying VIPs to the London Olympics will be able to fill up at Heathrow with the launch of a refuelling station to cater for the hydrogen fuel-cell black taxis. The cabs are on a two-year trial and their first official job is to transport dignitaries across London to the Olympic Games.

The company behind the refuelling station, **Air Products**, has won funding from the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) to upgrade the Heathrow site and an additional planned site in central London to meet car industry standards for hydrogen refuelling.

The cabs are said to be around two years away from production...

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The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children in their 84th anniversary year treated 250 deserving children to a fun-filled day on another of their legendary outings to Southend. As always, Dial-a-Cab drivers were well represented and just as they always do, the children had a wonderful time. The Fund has carried thousands of needy children on this trip over the years with each trip seemingly better than the last!

The drivers began arriving at **Victoria Park** at 7am, the sun was shining and the camaraderie was brilliant as they set about decorating their Jubilee-themed taxis whilst waiting for their special little passengers. On hand to entertain the children was the wonderful **Miss Ballooniverse**, the **Furry Tail Folk**, **Crest Bear** and **Clown Jolly Jack**, who all did a marvellous job keeping them amused. Also there to meet the children and wave them on their way was the Lady Mayoress of the City of London, **Elizabeth Wootton**, the Lay Sheriff of the City of London, **Wendy Mead**, **Councillor Mizan Chaudhury**, office of the Chair of Council of Tower Hamlets and **Michael Henderson-Begg CC**, Clerk to the Worshipful Company of Tin Plate Workers. As Mr Henderson-Begg was due to retire, the fund's Hon Chair **Susan Angel** presented him with a miniature mounted model taxi and certificate making him an Honorary member of the Fund.

Breakfast was then provided by the **Victoria Park Café** and at 10am the **110 taxi convoy** set off with horns blowing! The cabs looked wonderful being adorned with red, white and blue bunting and balloons as the children waved their Union Jack flags! The many spectators lining the route waved and cheered the cabs on their way using hand waving flags kindly donated by John and Mark of the **House of Logos**. Once again the **City of London Police outriders** escorted the cabs along with the **RAC** and **St. John's Ambulance**.

However, there was a sad delay at **Redbridge** on the way to Southend following a road traffic incident. Everyone at the LTFUC sends their sincere condolences to the family involved and best wishes for a speedy recovery to the police outrider.

On arrival at sunny Southend, the group were given lunch at the **Cliffs Pavilion** before the children were ferried down to **Adventure Island** in minibuses provided by **Brian Houssart MBE**, Hon. President of the **Southend Taxi Charity Fund for Children**. Walking around Adventure Island, you couldn't miss the children's laughing faces and hearing their screams of delight as they went from ride to ride whilst demolishing candyfloss, donuts and ice creams at the same time!

At 4.45pm it was back to the **Cliffs Pavilion** for a tea and disco and we thank **Rob** and **Tom** of the **Furry Tail Folk**, **Clown Jolly Jack**, balloonist **Tony Hanscombe**, **Miss Ballooniverse**,

DAC ON LTFUC 2012 SOUTHEND TRIP



A police outrider explains how his motorbike works to two excited children



Four of the many DaC drivers on the trip: L-R Ivan Sobell (P69), Alan Yuchetel (L44), Adrian Landau (T14) and John Radcliffe (G09)

Southend's **Salvo the Clown**, **Sarah (Snow White)**, **Ruth** and her two **Pat-a-Dogs** and the two face painters, **Joanne** and **Sarah** of **Mr Crafty's Kid's parties** for keeping the children amused while **DJ, Dave Davies**, was on hand to provide his usual brilliant disco. In addition, **Alan** and **Sheila Jones** of the **Southend Carnival Court** brought along the **Queen** and two **Princesses** to meet the children.

The Fund were delighted to have the Mayor of Southend, **Councillor Sally Carr** presenting prizes to the best decorated taxi, **Steve Pulham**, who in addition to holding the **Terry Stapleton Rose Bowl** for a year, also won and a voucher from **Vince White Taxis** of Waltham Abbey for a full engine service and front brake pads or a choice of £150 in cash! The runner up was **Marvin Houstin**. He gets the **Peter Lucas Shield** for a year and a bottle of Champagne. The raffle prize winner was **Dial-a-Cab's Salvatore Trupia (S89J)** who grabbed an overnight stay with breakfast for two at the **Connaught Hotel** in Mayfair!

At 6pm the weary but happy children were each handed a stick of Southend rock - donated by Southend's **Paul Van Looney** - as they left. Foil 'Taxi' balloons on sticks were also given to each child

donated by **Chris Smalley** of **Amscan International Ltd**.

Radiocom Systems Ltd kindly loaned communication equipment and the **Essex Police outriders** then escorted the group of taxis out of Southend. Special thanks also goes to the anonymous donor for providing £25 to each driver for their fuel and to ex-committee member **Larry Abrahams** for coming out of retirement to give us his help.

To all the wonderful sponsors whose donations help the Fund to make the outing possible and also to the many radio stations for their coverage in the morning, the LTFUC have asked **Call Sign** to send their sincere thanks.

Last, but not least, the Hon President, Hon Chair and Committee would like to give very special thanks to all the wonderful drivers and helpers. They just could not make the outings happen without them and the children, who have such a memorable day, all know that.

Many images of the day can be seen on the Fund website at www.ltfuc.org.uk. Remember, none walks so tall as he who stoops to help a child...

Our thanks to **Raymond Levy** for the info...

The case involves the arrest of a minicab driver for touting. He claimed he had a booked job for "Jenny." He was then approached by two licensing investigators who enquired if he was a cab. The driver's claim was that as the two "passengers" were going to the same place as "Jenny" therefore he assumed one of them was Jenny. But the judge's slant turned the case upside down. The case was brought under the *Town Police Clauses Act 1847*. It states:

Private hire vehicles - Whilst the offence under section 45 of the *Town Police Clauses Act 1847* (*"If the proprietor of any carriage permits the same to be used as a Hackney Carriage plying for hire within the prescribed distance without having obtained a licence as aforesaid for such carriage, or if any person standing, or plying for hire with any carriage within the prescribed distance for which such licence as aforesaid has not been previously obtained, every such person so offending shall be liable to a penalty ..."*) is a strict liability offence, whether a particular vehicle is plying for hire is a matter of degree - the essence of "plying for hire" being soliciting or waiting to secure passengers without any prior contract with them; where, therefore, the driver of a private hire vehicle attended a particular location to pick up a booking in the name of "Jenny" and to take her to a particular destination, where he was

Louie Christian (A48) has a legal background and an Honours degree. He has sent Call Sign details of an article from Criminal Law Weekly. It makes strange reading and also...

A STRANGE CASE



approached at the specified location by two females (licensing investigators) who asked him to take them to the same destination. And where he did so without asking their name, it had been open to the magistrates to find that he had not been plying for hire: *Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council v. Arif* [2012] R.T.R. 261(20), Q.B.D. (Beatson J) (01/12/2011).

The matter was considered by the court of appeal, but the appeal from the local authority was dismissed. Louie considered that the case was probably best regarded as a decision on its own.

A legal expert commented after the case: "The justices had apparently found as fact that at just after midnight, a booking had been made for a person giving the name 'Jenny' who wanted to be picked up outside a particular cinema and to be taken to a particular place, and that when the defendant turned up outside the cinema at the appointed time, he was approached by two females (the investigators) who just happened to want to go to the exact same place."

Counsel for the local authority submitted that this was a finding of fact that no reasonable bench could have reached. It seems abundantly plain that either the investigators had made the booking in order to test the driver who turned up, or the entry of the booking in the car hire company's records had been made *ex post facto*. However, none of this appears to have been investigated and his Lordship was not prepared to go behind the findings of the magistrates."

As we said at the beginning, a strange case indeed..

Is it security or just cashing in on the Olympics?

TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT AT STRATFORD STATION



One way or another they are going to get you!

The **London Borough of Newham** has said that camera enforcement in the area around Stratford Station, including **Meridian Square** and **Great Eastern Road**, is being conducted and **Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs)** will be issued by the borough to vehicles that are illegally stopped or waiting in areas where this is not permitted. This includes taxis (and private hire vehicles) parked in the bus lane or parked in the *kiss and ride* spaces and PHVs (or other vehicles but not licensed taxis) parked on the taxi rank.

In addition to camera enforcement, Newham will also be deploying mobile

CCTV enforcement vehicles and Civil Enforcement Officers around Stratford Station.

Is it security or just cashing in on the Olympics? **Call Sign** readers will have their own views.

Dial-a-Cab's PCN expert, **Barrie Segal**, added that while licensed taxis are permitted to stop on a bus stop to pick up a passenger, drivers should not wait there if on a DaC booked trip or if asked to wait while passengers go to an ATM etc...

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Shelby and "Poppa" before she left for her prom

PROM AND POPPA!

...or the advantage of your grandfather being Editor!

When Shelby, granddaughter of Call Sign Editor Alan Fisher called to say that she was going to her School prom in Chigwell's posh Woolston Manor and wondered "whether the press would be there," we knew what she meant – could Poppa get her photo into the magazine. I called Alan immediately and told him of the request...

"Nope," he replied immediately, "this is a serious magazine aimed at the drivers of Dial-a-Cab. No one but no one gets in just because they are related to the Editor, otherwise before you look round I'll have a queue of 100 prim and proper young ladies telling me that their father's best friend knows someone who used to work with a taxi driver and can I

get them into the mag? Sorry Baggi, I will not be held to ransom and the answer is no!" So I told Shelby and she took it very well.

"Tell Poppa that I still love him and that he is the best grandfather in the world and not to worry that this will probably be my first and last prom and that this dress cost a fortune and that even if all my friends laugh at me, I respect his decision and that when I open my first patisserie, he can still have the first cake!" Gorgeous dress Shelby! And was that a tear I saw in the Editor's – sorry, I mean in Poppa's - eye...!

Baghwat Singh
Call Sign Online

BERSEY AT SCIENCE MUSEUM

Who says electric taxis are new!



The Bersey

A new exhibition at the **Science Museum** in Exhibition Road, SW7 shows that whilst we in the London taxi trade may await with baited breath the introduction of the electric taxi, the concept certainly isn't new. In 1897, **Walter Bersey** changed the concept of taxi driving when he introduced 12 wood-built Bersey taxis. These were not just electrically propelled, but also the first taxis that no longer required horses to pull them along.

Exhibition's curator **Selina Hurley** told **Call Sign**: "We think of electric cars as something really futuristic, but they actually go back much further than we think!"

Around 75 of the Bersey cabs were eventually made and on one day's charge, which they could get at a Lambeth charging station, they were able to cover around 30 miles. As the top speed was 12mph, that was enough for a shift and many would say the average speed in 2012 isn't much more than that!

Walter Bersey's company went bust two years later after the cabbies still driving horse-driven vehicles began to worry and demonstrate about their futures, claiming that if the new electric taxis were too successful, who would want to get into their old **Hansom Cabs**?

The Bersey cab features alongside stories about wind turbines and the now-rare incandescent light bulb at the **Climate Changing Stories** exhibition, which runs to 2014.

For more information on the **Climate Changing Stories** exhibition, visit: sciencemuseum.org.uk.

Just call me Zac!

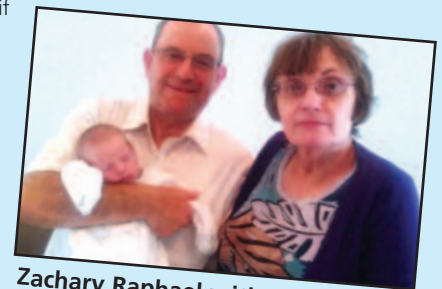
Dear Mr Editor

I'm **Zachary Raphael**, but you can call me Zac... if I can call you Al! And who is this **Paul Simon** I have to apologise to!

I was born to Nicole and Spencer Landau on 26 June 2012 at Watford General Hospital, weighing in at a respectable 7lbs 4oz. My big sister Hannah, who's three and a half, fusses over me but it's my Grandparents Benita and **Adrian Landau (T14)** and Mum's mother, Grandma Valerie (and the late David) Fishman who hardly allow me any peace at all with a regular flow of cuddles and kisses.

Needless to say, my entire family is delighted at my safe arrival. But hey, I had no doubts and was looking forward to seeing those people who kept patting me when I wasn't quite ready to make my first appearance!

Grandpa Ade has shown me how to 'Sign On' to the **Dial-a-Cab** terminal and promised I can work his cab as soon as my feet can reach the pedals! I'm off now to get some sleep...



Zachary Raphael with grandparents Benita and Adrian

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Those **Dial-a-Cab** drivers whose working shift covers the early evening until midnight will know what hassle is and has been caused by the closure of the **Limehouse Link** at 10pm on some evenings for what is usually described as maintenance work. Those drivers will probably agree that on other occasions when the Link has closed two hours later at midnight, then the inconvenience – whilst still considerable – is usually much more bearable.

But have you wondered why then, if the company carrying out the maintenance can successfully do it from midnight, why they have to ever close it at ten? After all, the maintenance probably takes the same time.

Well one DaC driver asked **Transport for London** under the *Freedom of Information Act* to give him an answer and also queried who the company carrying out the maintenance was and for how long was the contact they had been awarded?

John Addis (K97), the driver concerned, told **Call Sign**: "I was flabbergasted with the reply I received. They said that the *Design Build Finance Operate* contract was awarded to **Road Management Services (A13) plc** by the Secretary of State on 12 April 2000 and that in March 2001, the contract had been extended to include Docklands roads, of which the Limehouse Link Tunnel forms a part. The part that shocked me came at the end when they added that the period of the contract was for 30

NOW THAT'S WHAT WE CALL A CONTRACT...

Limehouse Link company there for 30 years!



Company that maintains tunnel has contract for 30 years

years up until April 2030. That means that RMS have the responsibility to operate and maintain the contract facilities - including Limehouse Link Tunnel - throughout those 30 years! Does

that mean they can do as they like until 2030? Sounds like it!

This all began by me wondering why they went back to closing at 10 instead of midnight when the later closing was so much better as regards hold-ups. Perhaps, I also wondered, they didn't actually need the two extra hours but took them anyway – justifying their workload - whilst at the same time causing problems to all our Dockland account clients, including JPM and MS.

I came to the conclusion that they were using a smaller workforce at the expense of everyone else who lives and works in the surrounding areas. This regular extreme disruption does not reflect well on the professional image of Canary Wharf, TfL and ultimately, London. It does seem the contractors have the upper hand over the customers. But the final word must be to wonder how on earth a building company can possibly win a thirty year contract?"

Call Sign asked the Mayor's office what they thought of the contract, but they declined to comment...

LONDON UNFURLED



Matteo Pericoli's first UK exhibition

Part of 35 miles of Pericoli's Thames walk showing the Gherkin

Matteo Pericoli was born in Milan, but moved to New York in 1995 where he worked as an architect. He found fame with his 22ft fold-out drawing of Manhattan's skyline and in 2007 completed his amazing Skyline of the World, a 397-foot-long panoramic mural for American Airlines' international terminal at New York's JFK Airport. Now he has a London exhibition showing till 2 Sept...

A 35-mile walk along the north and south banks of the Thames at the PM Gallery & House, Walpole Park, Mattock Lane, Ealing.

Over two weeks in September 2009, Matteo Pericoli walked from Hammersmith Bridge to the O2 Arena and back again, examining the scene beside the Thames, taking 6,100 photographs and seeing off a pair of shoes in the process! **London Unfurled** is the result of that walk and this is the first time that Pericoli's original London Unfurled drawings have been shown anywhere in the UK. The two resulting 11.5 metre drawings, showing the city as seen from the north and south banks will each be unfurled around PM Gallery.

Filling the gallery with the architectural complexity of the riverside, the exhibition presents a compelling profile of the city. Matteo Pericoli's drawings are packed with buildings that will be very familiar to **Dial-a-Cab** drivers. Contained within the pen-and-ink drawings are some 1,343 individual buildings, 41 bridges, over 27,000 window panes and some 3,000 waves on the river

The hardback book in concertina form, London Unfurled by Matteo Pericoli, with essays by Will Self and Iain Sinclair, is published by Picador and priced £25. A new adapted version, London for Children, has full colour illustrations and funny (if gruesome) facts about London and the river. That is published by Macmillan and priced at £14.99.

A digital companion to the print edition, the London Unfurled App for iPad enables people to scroll seamlessly through the entire drawing, flipping from north to south, jumping from place to place, zooming in on its extraordinary detail and sending favourite views to friends. An audio voiceover from Matteo Pericoli also gives an insight into the creation of the drawings. The exhibition will feature new material from both the London for Children book and the London Unfurled App for iPad.

The exhibition is open until 2 September and has free admission. Tues – Fri and Sun 1 – 5pm. Late openings until 8pm on 3, 17 and 31 August. A free gallery tour led by Matteo Pericoli takes place on Sat Sept 1 at 2pm. Booking not necessary. More info on 020 8567 1227...

T&J's Rescue
24 hour Roadside Assistance
for the London Taxi Trade

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

0845 094 5307

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

Those nice people at Dial-a-Cab's Roman Way depot have passed over a few words of wisdom – well a few hundred wise words actually – to Call Sign that could save drivers their time, some stress and perhaps an unnecessary journey to N7.

Unnecessary use of your index finger!

Now before this magazine gets inundated with emails questioning our sanity, let us explain further. It seems that some of you prefer to use an index finger to operate the MDT keyboard and to 'close' the map facility. Yup, we've all done it, but Roman Way's technical staff have suggested it is better to use the black plastic 'pointer' to select items on the keyboard and especially so when closing down the map pages.

We realise that some *Call Sign* readers have particularly nimble fingers and are able to squeeze their digit finger into the top right-hand corner of the terminal screen, but the MDT screen is calibrated with pin-point accuracy to match the sharp end of the pointer and using your finger not only defeats the object of a 'clean' operation, it blows the calibrations clean out of the window, leading to operational problems with the terminal - including freezing. The pointers are readily available from Roman Way or DaC's driver reception.

Changing your meter

The other piece of advice from our Roman Way technicians concerns the meter and any changes you may make. It may be by way of a

POINTING THE (ROMAN) WAY...



Using your finger to close the map facility could cause problems

Then, when the replacement / new meter has been installed, do the same thing. Power up, meter on, meter stopped.

simple meter change from the same supplier, or a complete change of meter brand - for example were you to change from Cygnus to Viking or vice-versa or for any other meters that are available. But this tip is relevant if you are tempted to take advantage of the special deals regularly offered by fare meter companies.

Before you actually arrive at the meter site, power up your MDT but do *not* sign in. Put the meter in the *hired* position and move it to *stopped*. The MDT will automatically print out a £2.40 receipt with the time and date clearly showing. Leave the receipt sticking out as this shows your meter is 'talking' to the MDT. It's an exchange of information and means you do not lose account trip meter readings.

If the printer shows a £2.40 receipt, then you're up and running and can go back to work. But if the printout shows a blank space where the meter reading should be, it means there is incompatibility with the new meter and you should ask the meter supplier to sort it out because your first receipt shows it was working with the old meter.

Roman Way has said that some drivers are being fobbed off with excuses and being sent to them, whereas they in turn have had to suggest that the drivers should return to the meter company. This easy procedure could save you a lot of time and stress...

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online



CELEBRATION TIME FOR VIKING TAXI METERS



EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR EXCLUSIVE DRIVERS

To celebrate the successful Dial-a-Cab testing of the Viking Taxi-Meter, Cricklewood Carriers Cab Co. Ltd as the sole and exclusive agents of the new Viking Taxi Meter are delighted to announce a totally unique and exclusive package to all of the Dial-a-Cab Drivers.



HIGH 5 ~

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5 Years Full Maintenance Including All Tariff Changes

One Off Payment Of £500.00

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THIS OFFER IS LIMITED TO THE FIRST 500 CUSTOMERS

Call 0 208 208 3600

CRICKLEWOOD CARRIERS CAB COMPANY – YOU'RE IN SAFE HANDS

Call Sign readers interested in football will know that **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Lee Pearce** (J71) is not just a driver on this circuit, but also the goalkeeper for *Combined Counties* Premier league team **Wembley** – who play eight divisions below the top flight English Premier League.

Recent issues of this magazine revealed that thanks to sponsorship from **Budweiser**, former *Barcelona*, *Tottenham* and *QPR* manager **Terry Venables** had been appointed as *Technical Director* at the club. That in itself was a pretty big shock but nothing compared to the news Wembley Chairman **Brian Gumm** later revealed - that Budweiser had tempted six ex-international soccer legends to the club!

The six are former *Arsenal* and *England* goalkeeper, **David Seaman**, ex-*Arsenal* and *England* midfielder **Ray Parlour**, former *Arsenal* and *England* defender **Martin Keown**, ex-*Chelsea*, *Blackburn*, *Southampton* and *England* defender/midfield player **Graeme Le Saux**, *USA* and *Fulham*'s prolific goalscorer **Brian McBride** and possibly the biggest shock with the amazing signing of **Claudio Caniggia**! For those that don't know of him, Caniggia – now aged 45 but still fit for someone who used to run 100metres in 11seconds – played up front no less than 50 times for *Argentina*, including an amazing three World Cup campaigns! He was a regular for top Argentinian teams *River Plate* and *Boca Juniors* and also played for *Dundee* and *Glasgow Rangers* in Scotland. One of his closest friends is no less than **Diego Maradona** – although in all honesty, we can't see the *Hand of God* playing for Wembley!

The six players have been coaching Wembley's 34-player strong squad for some time now, with **David Seaman** specifically coaching **Lee Pearce** (see cover pic).

"He has been absolutely brilliant," Lee told **Call Sign**. "Just when you think you know it all, the supreme professional comes along and shows that in reality you know very little. He has made an amazing difference to my ability and my confidence and I now know far more about goalkeeping than I did and ever thought that I would know!"

The legends have been brought in by Budweiser to see how far they can get

Lee's Wembley bring in the big guns!



Some of the legends: (L-R Graeme Le Saux, David Seaman, Terry Venables, Ray Parlour and Claudio Caniggia...

Wembley in this season's FA Cup – which of course is sponsored by Budweiser. Their first match is an extra preliminary round tie on August 11.

Jason Warner, *Global VP* Budweiser, told **Call Sign**: "As a long-standing supporter of football at all levels, Budweiser is committed to championing the magic of The FA Cup and its ability to create unique memories that players and communities will never forget. We are pleased to continue to support Wembley FC as they strive to achieve their dreams and we think their story will appeal to – and inspire – football fans around the world."

Budweiser has also joined up with **Evan Weinstein**, Co-Executive Producer of *The Amazing Race* and seven-time Emmy Award winner, to document Wembley FC's preparation and progress through the world's oldest

domestic cup tournament in a new ESPN TV programme, *Dream On: The Journey of Wembley FC*. It begins at 10pm on August 2nd.

Ray Parlour told **Call Sign**: "I've always believed grassroots football is essential to the lifeblood of the game, so when I got the call asking if I would like to come out of retirement to help raise Wembley's profile, I jumped at the chance. I'm also looking forward to working with Terry Venables again and helping a group of talented footballers achieve their dreams of playing in The FA Cup and seeing how far they can go in the tournament."

Wembley's FA Cup dream starts on 11 August when they are at home to *Spartan South Midlands League Division 1* team *Langford* in the extra preliminary round with the winners away to *Uxbridge*.

WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVERS

SAFE AND SKILLED DRIVING CHALLENGE

The **WCHCD** recently took part in a driving skills competition at Regent's Park Barracks. The taxi charity has an affiliation with **20th Transport Squadron** and this challenge day sees WCHCD members pit their skills against those of the Squadron. This is the third annual event, although this year the weather presented a bit more of a challenge. Once again the Squadron had devised various tests, both indoor and out. Eight teams took part, with one of the WCHCD teams coming a close second to the Squadron. Events testing skills included a streets navigation course, trailer reversing and taxi manoeuvring, amongst several others.

Everyone enjoyed their day at the barracks and all the teams learned some new skills and entered into the spirit of the day – which included wearing Royal masks during a wheel changing task! It was a very surreal experience to watch the Queen changing the wheel on a 4 x 4 vehicle!

The WCHC was delighted the event was able to go ahead as the Squadron had been extremely busy with preparations for the Olympics. A barbeque ended the enjoyable day in a sizzling way!



The WCHCD team

Call Sign doesn't usually comment on current adverts in the magazine, but the one from the **London Taxi Company** on this issue's back cover just seems so good at a time when a number of **Dial-a-Cab** drivers will be compulsorily looking to replace their 15-year old taxi. The LTC four year deal could well be the answer to many of those problems, while at the same time giving drivers a brand new taxi at an affordable price - which appears to us to make this deal cheaper than renting.

The deal is available on both **TX4 Euro 5 models - Style and Elegance** and is of course available in both automatic and manual.

The calculations below have been formulated based on the **TX4 Euro 5 Elegance** automatic - which is the highest spec, so the cost per week for the other three variants would, if anything, be lower.

The very affordable weekly cost would be **£135**. That allows for a deposit of **£2000** and guarantees a **£13,982** residual value after 4 years.

The price includes a **FREE FOUR YEAR manufacturer's warranty** with an option to buy a **FOUR YEAR Service Plan** which would work you out at just **99p a day!**

Then at the end of the term you can either buy the cab, part-exchange it using any equity

Amazing deal on the TX4 Euro!

At a time when many drivers have to give up their 15-year old taxis...



The answer to your problems? The new TX4 Euro 5

interested in what looks to be a cracking deal at a time when many need some help, should contact the **London Taxi Company** dealership at **Brewery Road** on **0207 700 0888** to either speak to their sales team or to make an appointment. And also see insert inside this issue for an extra special offer.

Calculations are based on annual mileage of 30,000 mile per annum - 120,000 miles over the four year agreement period.

or just hand it back and walk away! That deal sounds as though it could be the answer to a few drivers' problems.

The ad describes the offer as the deal the trade has been waiting for and it could be that they are right! Any **Dial-a-Cab** driver

WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVERS

Mayor at WCHCD Founder's Day

London's Mayor **Boris Johnson**, together with Deputy Mayor for Transport, **Isabel Dedring**, were special guests at the recent WCHCD Founder's Day lunch at the Fishmongers' Hall, London Bridge.

WCHCD Master **Eddie Crossley**, together with his wife Maureen and his Wardens greeted guests to this superb hall, where they enjoyed a champagne reception overlooking the river.

The Prime Warden of the Fishmongers Company, **The Lord Phillimore**, together with his Clerk, **Nigel Cox**, greeted Mr Johnson on his arrival - and as is often the case, Boris arrived on his bike! He then joined other guests for the lunch.

The WCHCD has a diverse membership, many of whom are working taxi drivers. All Liverymen and Freemen of the Company earn their living through the taxi trade.

Eddie Crossley opened his speech by saying: "We celebrate Founder's Day to commemorate our original Fellowship set up in 1654 and then disbanded by Oliver Cromwell three years later. However, by an act of Parliament in 1694, the first Hackney Carriages were licensed and we now as a trade celebrate 318 years of continuous licensing. Over the past few years we have combined this celebration with the opportunity to raise funds for our Charitable Trust. This fund enables us to support those drivers who face financial difficulties due to long term illness or their families at a time of bereavement.

"The fund also allows us to support a number of the other trade charities such as The Fund for Underprivileged Children and the annual outing to Worthing for the War Disabled. I am always amazed at the number of drivers who willingly give so much of their time to participate in these and similar events. It demonstrates to me the pride and generosity of so many in our Trade."

As part of his entertaining speech, the Mayor told guests: "Travelling by black cab is one of the great pleasures of London, both for residents and visitors alike. They are as iconic as the red buses, Big Ben and Beefeaters. This is an historic year for London as we stage a *summer like no other* and I am certain that, as always, cabbies will be ambassadors for this great city and help showcase the very best that we have to offer."

Event sponsors were **Proximo Ltd** and **ComCab**.



The Mayor speaks whilst Master Eddie Crossley looks on

OPEN EVENING AT MADAM TUSSAUDS

Call Sign has been literally inundated to the point where we were thinking of throwing the mag's phone into the Thames! The reason was the hugely successful open evening put on by **Merlin Events** to celebrate the amazing achievement of 250 years of **Madam Tussauds**! Of that time, Madam T has been welcoming visitors to London for over one hundred of those years.

So as part of the celebrations, Madam Tussauds decided they would like to thank London's taxi drivers for the many passengers we deliver safely to their Marylebone Road premises, whilst showing us together with up to four of family members and friends, why that is one of London's top tourist attractions.

Madam Tussauds is filled with 14 exciting, interactive zones and the amazing **Marvel Super Heroes** 4D movie experience, where not only do you see the action in 3D but you also feel it! Madam T's combines glitz and glamour with incredible history with over 300 wax figures - including **David Beckham**, **Lady Gaga**, **The Queen** and many more.

So on behalf of all those drivers that took advantage of the offer, we thank Merlin Events and Madam Tussauds. That just leaves one question... So, who do you want to meet?



Guess who **Call Sign's Danny Fresco** met at Madam T's!

On July 1st 1950, I applied for a taxi driver's licence. I did the Knowledge by car, calling over with **Harry Slowman**, **Monty Corman**, **Maxie Green** and my cousin **Charlie Davis**. I passed out on February 20th 1951 when the flag fall was one shilling (5p). I worked for an owner-driver for 11 months before buying my first taxi, a Morris Oxford (reg. JXD 828) from an old friend of my wife's.

It was towards the end of 1952 and I was having a tea break in Wilton Road, Victoria with a few other drivers. We were discussing the possibility of starting a radio taxi service for owner-drivers to compete with **Lou Levy** of **York Way Motors** and **The London General** of Brixton. Both companies had their own radio circuits, primarily for their own fleets of cabs.

We later spoke to a large number of owner-drivers who seemed enthusiastic about the idea. The prominent members of our organising committee consisted of myself, **George White**, **Mr Frewin**, **Charlie Watson** and a **Mr Woods**. **Cyril Lumley** was appointed Secretary and it was agreed to call the company **RODA Taxis**. That stood for **Radio Owner Drivers Association**.

The Beginning of RODA Taxis...

A meeting was called at **The Barley Mow** in **Horseferry Road**. The same pub would later be used several months later to house a meeting in connection with the setting up of the formative **ODRTS** – later to become **Dial-a-Cab**. Around 120 drivers attended our meeting, of whom 98 agreed to come onto the circuit. Cab drivers being what they are, only 39 turned up and they were fitted. A retired Public Carriage Officer, who was the principal of the **British Legion Taxi Drivers School** in **Harleyford Road**, **Kennington**, introduced us to his brother who was a director of **Pye Telecom** in **Cambridge**. They agreed to install a radio transmitting station at a site that we had obtained in **Townsend Yard**, **Highgate**. Not to put too fine a point on the matter, it was an old Nissan hut! The radio equipment was to be installed by **Imhoff Ltd** of **New Oxford St** and fitted in **Mildmay Grove**.

I became the first owner-driver to be fitted with the equipment. It was placed beneath the driver's seat. I had to take it up to the PCO passing station in **Lambeth Road**, they passed the equipment and it was subsequently fitted to the other cabs. **RODA** was ready to roll.

Our telephone number was **Mountview 3232** and the first call sign to be allocated was **Baker 1**, which was allocated to **Mr White**. I was **Baker 7**. One of our members was **Joe Stern**, who later became the Founder-Chairman of **Radio Taxis (Southern) Ltd** and later still, their Life President.

We operated under great difficulties because some of the members refused to pay their weekly subscriptions. These amounted to 15 shillings per week (75p). We had rented a small one-room office at **9 Torrington Place**, where the drivers paid their subs and where we held our meetings.

The last issue of Call Sign wrote of the sad death of Millie Dunn at the age of 100. As a tribute to both Millie and late husband Lou – the founder of the Radio Owner Drivers Association and forerunner to Dial-a-Cab, we are reprinting a story from 10 years ago which detailed the beginnings of RODA. What follows is a slice of radio taxi history...

CALL SIGN LOOKS AT THE BEGINNING OF RODA...



Lou Dunn on his visit to Dial-a-Cab in March 2003

We started operating at the beginning of January 1953 in preparation for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Within three months, unfounded rumours were spreading around the trade that work was not being allocated fairly. This was untrue, but because some members had now refused to pay their subs, we were asked to attend a meeting with the directors of **Pye** to explain our difficulties and why we had not paid them. They agreed to hold off for a little while longer...

At this time, a number of other drivers were collaborating to start their own circuit. One of those drivers was Bonnie Martyn, soon to be the Founder Chairman of ODRTS. They had apparently approached Pye to negotiate the formation of a rival circuit...

RODA called a meeting at the **Bonnington Hotel** in **Southampton Row**, where we tried to thrash out our difficulties. This was unsuccessful. Meanwhile, **Bonnie Martyn** and his associates had called a meeting at **Denison House** in **Vauxhall Bridge Road** to launch the idea of their new circuit. This was attended by a large number of drivers including me. I offered the assets of **RODA** to form an amalgamation with **ODRTS**, but the offer was turned down. **Pye** then decided to close **RODA** down and removed our equipment.

...And the End

RODA attempted to continue and approached **Hudson Electronics** of **Brixton Water Lane** to provide us with the necessary equipment with which we could carry on.

However, **Pye** had initiated bankruptcy proceedings against us with **Charlie Watson** and myself - the only directors left after the others had resigned - having to swear affidavits as to the cause of the closure of the company. The end of **RODA Taxis** was complete...

After RODA closed, there were still some drivers who wanted to continue with radio but not necessarily with the fledgling ODRTS, who were by now in business. So Joe Stern and others called a meeting at the 'Rifle Range' in Harewood Avenue behind Marylebone Station. It was decided to set up an opposing circuit to ODRTS and to call it Radio Taxis (Southern) Ltd.

They leased a basement flat at 'Highpoint' in **North Hill**, **Highgate** and the new circuit was soon to compete with **ODRTS**, becoming known in the trade as **Mountview**. It took its name from the phone number that **RODA** had originally used and which they were now using - **Mountview 3232**. I joined **Mountview** as **Baker 28**, but only stayed for six weeks. I came off because I was disillusioned with the attitude of the other drivers. I continued as a non-radio driver until retiring at the age of 88.

My recent visit to Dial-a-Cab and the wonderful tour given to me by Brian Rice increased the pride I feel at having been in at the beginning and to see the amazing progress made since then. But there will always be a part of me that is forever RODA...

Lou Dunn

Founder **RODA Taxis**

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Covering London and the Home Counties

COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT



Hello ladies & gents,

Following on from my last article, I would like to confirm that after final testing there are seven taximeters that are now fully compatible with the new Dial-a-Cab driver terminal. They are listed below in alphabetical order.

- * Cygnus
- * Digitax
- * Hale
- * Mattig
- * Sheriff Ultima
- * Taxsim (Lucastronic)
- * Viking

I would like to thank the meter companies who have provided us with the test meters and we do not at this late stage in development envisage adding to the above list.

Booking in

As you know, apart from early morning (7am until 10am) trips with an *As Directed* destination can be local, wait and return, genuine *as directed* or apply to an airport trip. Please also remember that all ranks in the City, when in operation, are physical and that you must be on them before booking in to obtain a queue position.

Over the past few weeks, I have received a small number of grumbles from some members complaining of wrongful booking-in at Canary Wharf, so I'd like to just remind you of the relevant procedure rules for booking-in that are in place for us all to follow and adhere to.

Canary Wharf

When a driver books into *E14C* between the hours of 6am and 9pm (Monday to Friday), he/she **must** be inside the four security entry points. Once inside, a driver will be permitted to drive around the Canary Wharf area, but if

choosing to stop must only do so on an official rank of their choice. For a driver to stop on a rank correctly he/she must have their meter in the *For Hire* mode and be available for hire at all times as stipulated by Canary Wharf Management (CWM). Throughout the night time period (9pm to 6am, each day including weekends) you must at all times be in the E14 postal zone before booking in to *E14*. Please be aware that it is constantly monitored

Olympics

By the time you read this article, the Olympic Games will be well and truly underway. I hope the traffic congestion is not as bad as some of us fear and that the workload during what is generally the quietest month of the year is financially rewarding for you all.

The Mayor is constantly reminding us that a million visitors a day are coming to the capital, so it's just a shame that our job will be made so much harder. After all, we are looked upon worldwide as a London Icon!

Be very lucky and don't get too stressed!

Allan Evans

DaC Compliance Officer

Sticking sliding doors on the Vito?

Tony Sam-Yorke (W95) recently asked *Call Sign* if any other MB Vito owners on *Dial-a-Cab* were having or had previously had a problem with the vehicle's sliding doors. If so, he would like to hear from them. Tony's mobile number is at the end of this piece. Tony told the mag about his problem...

"It's the offside passenger door; it frequently sticks in the 'closed' position making it difficult to open from the inside. It is an intermittent fault, which means I have to get out of the cab and open the door from the outside and when I do that it works perfectly every time, yet trying to open the door from the inside is nigh on impossible.

"I've been to several MB dealerships and left the cab with them all day for testing, but no one has as yet been able to resolve this potentially dangerous issue. The door lock might release perhaps twice in every ten attempts to open it from the inside – something which I find to be embarrassing, dangerous for the passengers – and even myself – and it really doesn't promote the professional image I imagined when purchasing a Mercedes vehicle. I really am at my wits end!"

If there are any Vito owners or operators out there who are experiencing similar grief, or even better, if you managed to resolve the issue, please give Tony a call on 07939 098255.

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Tony is at his wits end. Can you help?

Hungry?
Nellie's waiting!

20% off the bill when you show your badge
Great pastas, chicken, steaks, fish and roasts!

Nellie's Restaurant
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Show your badge and it's 20% off!

Open 9.30 am to 12 pm
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10% discount for DaC drivers and staff

Fellow of the Guild of
Professional Toastmasters

Last month's article followed on from a shock report by Lancaster and Royal Holloway Universities. The results inferred that use of a satnav while driving can impair the user's driving ability.

An experiment using volunteers showed drivers' performances being affected when listening to satnav directions. When the volunteers were following complicated satnav routes, they tended to drive faster with more steering variations as well as being less likely to notice pedestrians who might step out. Although the tests showed that following one simple instruction had no significant impact on their driving, as soon as they had to remember a compound instruction consisting of two sequential directions - a fairly common occurrence on satnavs - a difference in driving ability became very noticeable.

Although **Dial-a-Cab** drivers will soon have a satnav incorporated into their new terminals, it will only be needed occasionally thanks to our *Knowledge of London*. But in common with most other private hire companies, **Addison Lee** drivers rely almost entirely on satnavs. So again we must ask how safe they are when it comes to transporting passengers, because the picture of an Addy Lee car from *Twitter* doing a three point turn in Blackwall Tunnel should send shivers through any of their prospective passengers.

As we said at the beginning, it isn't just the Addy crew who are affected by satnavs. The photo in this article taken by **Steve Sloane (C86)** shows what can happen when a PH vehicle turns sharp left from Duke Street Hill into the part of Tooley Street where the London Bridge Hospital is. Watching his satnav stopped the driver noticing that concrete post sticking up! All we can say is that passengers will occasionally save money using private hire, but they stand to lose much more if the drivers behave like these two...

**Dennis
Latchett
Call Sign
Online**



In case anyone had doubts about which company this lunatic drives for!

In last month's Call Sign, we posed a question.
This month we ask it again...

ARE ADDISON LEE PASSENGERS AT RISK?



Watching his Satnav while turning left into Tooley St!



Addy Lee does a U-turn in Blackwall Tunnel after losing Satnav Signal

Rob Budden (ex-T87) had to leave **Dial-a-Cab** after being forced to hand in his taxi driver's licence when suffering with a rapid heartbeat whilst on holiday in New Zealand. He was diagnosed as suffering from *cardiac arrhythmia* and eventually underwent a procedure to have an **implantable cardioverter-defibrillator** – known as an **ICD** – fitted.

This is a small battery-powered electrical impulse generator that detects abnormal heartbeats and corrects them by automatically delivering a jolt of electricity. The actual procedure is similar to that of fitting a heart pacemaker – although some pacemakers are fitted on a temporary basis, whereas an ICD is generally permanent. It is fitted just below skin level and considered by most in the medical world to be a very successful device that reverts any abnormal beating back to normality.

Rob told **Call Sign** that at the time of his rapid heartbeat, he suddenly felt woozy as though he had overdone it with a bottle of plonk! He also had a dull ache in a tricep, but there was no heart attack.

He was told by **London Taxis and Private Hire** that he had to hand his licence in – which he did. In the meantime, he underwent an ICD procedure and ever since then has had no further problems and told us that he felt very well.

DVLA say Rob is fit to drive a minivan full of kids, but LTPH say...

YOU CAN'T DRIVE A TAXI!



He can drive a minibus filled with kids but not drive his taxi

So well, in fact, that Rob now visits the gym three times each week!

After **St Barts** hospital told him that in their view he was fit to drive a taxi again, Rob applied to LTPH. They told him that the DVLA would not allow him to get his licence back, so he asked Swansea why that was? They surprised Rob by saying the opposite and that there was no reason why he couldn't go back

to his licence. That allows him to drive, among other things, a minibus filled with passengers – be they adults or children!

So he went back to TfL who then told Rob that each case was treated on its merits and that they would look at his case and get back to him. That was some time ago and at the time of publication, Rob had just heard that TfL had refused to re-licence him and told him that in any case it had expired and it was now too late. **Call Sign** had written to TfL on two occasions to ask about Rob's case, but we got no response.

Before his ICD, Rob only drove on a part-time basis and that was all he wanted to go back to as it would have been enough to supplement his pension. Both he and we can't understand why, with both DVLA and St Barts saying they have no problems anymore regarding his safe driving, TfL refuse to return his licence.

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online

Mayor Boris to US and Aussie athletes whose drivers got lost on their way to the Olympic village

“CHILL OUT!”

On Monday 16 July, with Olympic athletes from around the world heading to London for this city's first Olympic Games in 64 years, Heathrow airport handled an amazing 236,955 passengers to make it the busiest day in the airport's history and more than double the number that an average 'flyers' day would normally have to cope with.

All went well until **Call Sign's** phone started bleeping with text after text regarding two coaches of US and Australian athletes who had apparently got lost in an attempt to negotiate their way to the Olympic village in downtown Stratford.

By the time the third message came in, the two coaches had been going in circles for over three hours until **Barry Spear's (Y16)** text upped the ante and raised the time to four hours of wondering through the London desert. Then **Alex Constantinou (N05)** topped them all by telling **Call Sign** that the athletes had gone missing seven hours after getting into the coaches and that police had been called!

It seems that the four hour texts were pretty much on the ball, which left **Mayor Boris Johnson** telling **Call Sign**: "There have been an awful lot of the world's top athletes arriving at Heathrow and if just a few got lost, then that's not too bad and it will have given them more of an opportunity to see even more of the city than they might otherwise have done. Everyone should chill out!"

We have been assured that when Royal Marine **Martyn Williams** – who was severely wounded in a road mine attack

during a deployment to Afghanistan – drops the flame into the Olympic tower, everyone who needed to be there will definitely have arrived. If they're not, then **Call Sign's** texters and tweeters will keep a sharp look out!

The Mayor added that London and the UK's transport network was ready to welcome the world during a visit to the London 2012 Transport Coordination Centre (TCC).



"Chill out!"

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Keith Reading (W76) joined **Dial-a-Cab** in 1996 although he had been driving since 1979. Then around six years ago his life changed when he was about to get a toastmaster to officiate at his son's wedding, but he wanted his dad to do it! He enjoyed the experience so much that he decided to become a toastmaster!

He completed the *Guild of Professional Toastmasters* comprehensive training at its academy, passed two written exams and satisfied observers whilst carrying out his duties at numerous functions. He was then recommended to the Guild for membership. As a result he was invested as a Fellow of the prestigious Guild of Toastmasters. Now Keith is always in demand, but still offers DaC drivers and staff a 10% discount if they use his services.

He has officiated at many different types of functions, but recently carried out his first gay wedding and told *Call Sign* about it – with the full permission of the happy couple.

"A Toastmaster is asked to attend many different types of functions, which can be as diverse as attending a day-long Asian wedding, corporate dinner and dance, retirement party and of course wedding receptions. Within the scope of a wedding reception, a civil ceremony is also the norm.

Many hotels and other such venues are licensed to hold civil weddings and generally the happy couple will continue their celebrations and wedding breakfast within the same venue. With this in mind, I was not surprised to be asked to officiate at a civil partnership ceremony and reception at **The Pendley Manor Hotel** in Hertfordshire.

I met Brian and Steve a few weeks prior to their special day and we had a chat about their reception, their hopes and aspirations on how the day was to go. As it was two guys getting "married," there were a few subtle changes to be made, but otherwise we decide to keep close to standard procedures.

On the day, I was there bright and early to check arrangements with the banqueting manager and also to allow myself plenty of time to prepare.

Guests began arriving and various introductions made. Once the registrars arrived, I summoned the happy couple into the ceremony room to complete the pre-partnership formalities. The ceremony progressed much the same as you would expect, but instead of the vows, declarations and promises were made. Readings from friends were made and we were even entertained by three young ladies who sang a favourite song to the happy couple. Much to my surprise, one of the guys stood up and joined in, singing to his partner! As luck would have it, they all had good voices and indeed it was very enjoyable.

After signing the register they preceded into the gardens for a pre-breakfast drinks reception and of course the obligatory photographs after which I invited guests to take their places in the dining room and formally announced the entrance of the happy couple. As

DaC toastmaster does first gay wedding

Followed by a mystery event at the Iraqi Embassy!



Keith with happy couple Brian and Steve

Inset pic: Keith outside Iraqi embassy



Toastmaster, I welcomed the guests to the occasion, introduced the head waiter and handed over to him.

There were a few subtle differences when the speeches were made, obviously there being no father of the bride speech. Instead Brian and Steve made a joint speech of welcome and thanks. They presented gifts to their two female supporters - best girls instead of men. I then called on the best girls to propose the toast to the happy couple and we concluded that section with the cake cutting ceremony.

Before the dancing began, the best girls unleashed a surprise 20-minute PowerPoint slide show that saw the boys in their youth, misspent youth and early adulthood right up to the present time. I have to say it was very funny. This led nicely into their first dance, not a full blown waltz but more like a couple of dads dancing. Then everyone joined in for party time and the conclusion of my duties..."

Off to the Iraqi Embassy – but for what?

"Just a few weeks later, I was scheduled to attend a function at the Iraqi Embassy in Queensgate, but due to security I was told that there would be a briefing on the day. I wasn't even allowed to see the guest list! So there I was in the Embassy at 10.45 on the morning and still completely blind. Once dressed, I was given a ten minute briefing of the running order and managed to grab another ten minutes to prepare my preambles to the guest speakers who turned out to be the Embassy Charge d'affaires, the Iraqi Foreign Minister and our own **Alistair Burt MP**, Undersecretary of State for the Middle East and North Africa.

Before I could complete my preparations, I was asked to take my place within the entrance to announce the guests as they arrived. I've attended many Asian weddings and

announced Singhs, Patels and Mucherghrees etc, but announcing the Ali al Kabarhi and Abdul Ahmed Al Mansouris of this world was a completely different kettle of fish! There were also a fair share of His Royal Highness the Prince of this and the Rt.Hon Lord of that etc. I even had an Archbishop and Baroness. I'd never heard of any of them, but hey, I'm only a poor old taxi driver!

I then invited the guests outside so they could witness the embassy's name plaque being unveiled and the ribbon cut. I then requested the guests make their way to the first floor reception room for the opening and ceremonial speeches.

By now I'd given up trying to complete the preparation of my preambles, so all the years of giving the old flannel as a cab driver and the formal training I'd had as a Toastmaster came in very handy! I had to stand in front of 200 guests and I don't know how many photographers and completely wing it!

Speeches done, I invited the guests to return to the ground floor dining room where a splendid buffet luncheon was served, after which the guests gradually departed. I was invited to lunch and was served a plate with copious quantities of rice, kebabs, various meats and other delicacies of which I did not have a clue what I was eating. Notwithstanding that, it was absolutely delicious.

Two very different events, but both very enjoyable. So with the job done, it was back to the cab and few more hours behind the wheel - mainly because if I go home too early, the misses will only send me out again!"

*Keith Reading's ad is in every issue of **Call Sign** including his 10% off offer to DaC drivers and staff.*

I read with interest Peter Begley's article regarding the Peugeot E7 taxi, which is popular across 97% of the UK but not yet licensed in London. As the supplier of this particular vehicle, it may not surprise you that we disagree with some of Peter's first impressions.

That said, everyone is entitled to their opinion and clearly Peter is very good at expressing his. Whatever your point of view, his piece is witty and amusing and it was nice for a change to be at work reading something that made me smile. So why not leave it at that?

Well, precisely in fact because everyone is entitled to their point of view – except in London that is. If Peter doesn't fancy an E7, he doesn't have to buy one. Yet already more than 1,000 London cabbies – yes, active, working London taxi drivers – have come forward to say they *would* consider buying an E7.

Now whatever your own views, who is Peter at *Call Sign* or for that matter John at *TfL* to tell other drivers (and fleet owners) what to do with their hard earned dough? As London's largest trade organisation has consistently argued: *"If the driver who does the job doesn't think it can do the job, he won't buy it; if he does, then that should be his decision."*

So yes, the right to come to your own opinion and make your own choice is the bottom line. And don't be fooled into thinking this only matters to the growing swell of people who already *would* like to buy an E7. Competition is what drives quality up and prices down – and lord knows, the London cab market needs competition.

Actually, I sense that Peter's point of view may not be so different from mine here after all (though greatly more amusing is conceded). If there were one or at best two bakers in the capital, my guess is bread would be less tasty and cost a heck of a lot more than it already does. The London cabbie, however, has suffered just that for the last half century and more. I've spoken to literally hundreds of London drivers over recent weeks and am yet to find anyone that reveres **London Taxis China** (LTC) as a shining example of manufacturing and service excellence.

Doubtless neither **Cab Direct** nor **Peugeot** are perfect either, but at least free and open competition makes us survive on our own two feet, constantly striving to innovate with our vehicles and keep prices affordable. More meaningful competition is the only thing that will really make LTC do the same. By meaningful competition, I don't mean rear-wheel **Vitos**.

For years London groaned at the over-priced TX; then, when a turning circle-adapted alternative finally arrived, you got – a £42,000 vehicle!

Now the Vito is a nice base vehicle (we offer one too – price from £35,595). Most drivers, however, prefer the E7, both for functionality and price (from £25,495 manual and £27,495 auto). That, I think you will find, is something that will make LTC sit up and think. Why else would they follow us around the UK, begging local Councillors not to tryst with the evil E7 – just in case a local working cab driver should happen to decide that's actually how he'd like to spend his money? Does anything tell you that if the E7 was as bad as LTC employ people to say it is, they wouldn't be half as scared as they clearly are

DaC driver Peter Begley laid into the Peugeot E7 taxi in the July issue, now Cab Direct Marketing Manager Donald Gow has asked for the right to reply...

CALL SIGN'S E7 CRITICISM



of having to compete with it?

Finally, seven E7 facts to leave you with:

1. In markets where cab drivers have the choice (that's virtually everywhere except London), more choose the E7 than the TX4. You'd think they have good reason for making that choice about their investment.

2. The E7 auto is in fact available at £27,495 on the road, compared with £33,995 for a TX4 and an auto E7 uses 22% less fuel in urban driving than a TX4.

3. The E7 base vehicle, including body, engine and gearbox, was designed and tested as part of a dedicated, 600 million Euro development programme. The TX4 marries bodies from China with engines from Italy and bits and bobs from elsewhere (someone might consider the offset foot pedals quaint, but I've yet to find them!).

4. E7 servicing is £100 - £150 at 12,000 mile service intervals (bit more for a major service). We can offer up-front service packages for London drivers if that's what the market wants.

5. With or without the E7, there is no suggestion of abandoning the *Conditions of Fitness*. All of the key provisions relating to construction and safety will remain. Only one particular feature – created at the beginning of the last century for the earliest motorised cabs – is in question. After all, rank handles are a thing of the past but power-steering is here to stay!

6. Of 180 Vito drivers asked in a survey, *no-one* uses the rear-wheel steer device frequently. If you could grant them one wish, it would be to have Mercedes' axle put back the way it was originally intended to be. So we have hundreds of cabbies driving around London with thousands of pounds worth of steering device they neither want nor need.

Now that makes sense how?

7. Numerous other major cities once had the 'turning circle' rule. In each case, LTI / LTC said if this was changed, there would be accidents and cab drivers would not be able to work as normal. *Nowhere* has this proved to be true. It's scare-mongering, plain and simple, designed to protect LTC's key market – and it's costing London cab drivers millions of pounds every year.

Perhaps you'd prefer to stay with the 'icon' - or maybe you like the prospect of an alternative that's more modern, thousands of pounds less expensive and saves you a small fortune on fuel. Either way, the nub of the matter is that everyone will be better off if we respect drivers' right to choice, embrace competition and let the market decide.

Donald Pow

Marketing Manager, Cab Direct

PS To Peter – you're more than welcome to drive our vehicle anytime; like reading Call Sign, the more people do it, the more they like it!

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List of priorities?

If you asked your next 25 passengers what the biggest annoyance about their taxi experience was, I bet all 25 would say it was the traffic. If you asked the next 25 taxi drivers you met what was the biggest annoyance about their job at the moment, I bet they'd say the same!

So the punters aren't happy about the traffic and nor are we! And what's being done about it? Well from what I see, very little and I am far from being a defeatist. But even I am beginning to think that TfL simply don't care. If you want any evidence of how we have become so unimportant to TfL, take a look at London Bridge station rank and how we have been shunted to one side with the queue for ranking halved. And never mind about the passengers who now have to cross three lanes of moving buses just to get to the rank, then take 15 minutes just to get out of London Bridge Street! Yet 20 years ago we were given priority and the best places to ply for hire, ranks were high profile and we were looked upon as being an important part of the transport network in London.

Recently **Unite** called for a bus strike in support of bus workers getting an Olympic bonus. All the London radio stations reassured the travelling public via their broadcasts that there was - albeit limited - a bus service, the underground was running well along with DLR and the riverboat services. And Boris bikes were for hire if you needed one. No mention of taxis!

Personally, I think TfL use us as a fall-back so when all else fails, the taxi trade will get people home. A good example of this was at the time of the 7/7 bombings in 2005 when LU totally shut down and the streets were all clear by 7pm.

But on a day-to-day basis, the wheels have really come off. The recently refurbished Canon Street station looks great, but what happened to the rank in Dowgate Hill? Are we becoming just an after-thought? Well one thing that came out of the bus strike was that we learned there are 22 bus companies involved with London Buses. That's 22 bus company owners all trying to get their buses on the most lucrative routes with their bus stops closest to the exit from the stations. Ring a bell with London Bridge? I can hear it now: "Don't worry about the taxi drivers, just stick them in the corner; they've had their day." So along with **John Griffin** donating £250k to Boris, what chance do we have?

TfL's "enthusiasm" for taxis...?

One morning recently, I was travelling over London Bridge southbound towards London Bridge Station and was hailed by a business lady on the corner of Duke Street Hill. She was complaining about the rank in general. She had walked down to the road because the exit was so full with taxis and the waiting time unacceptable.. She went on to ask me why TfL had allowed this to happen as she thought we still had an important part to play in surface transport? She explained that she worked for a market research company who had been canvassing people coming to London for the Olympics and on their list of priorities was to take a ride in a London Taxi. So why didn't TfL

Former fireman Richard Potter and life behind the

POTTERS WHEEL



embrace and share the public's enthusiasm? I told her that if she had a couple of days free, I might just be able to give her an answer!

When is a business not a business?

If using a bit of commonsense could be turned into hard cash, **Transport for London** would have gone broke by now! But it beggars the question: When does a licensing authority like LTPH become so small that the taxi trade in London would be better served by turning it into a business? TfL run London buses, which

is really a business disguised as a public service. **Network Rail** runs a national train service with a large number of franchises as a business.

Would it not be better for us if LTPH was split in two, separating us from PH and taken over by a private company that would fight our corner and make us a priority again, whilst answering to TfL in regard to complaints, lack of service etc. The company taking over LTPH would be entitled to charge an annual licensing fee from each driver / garage or anyone else who makes a profit from the taxi trade and these funds would be recycled back to the trade to pay for admin and advertising etc. An authority such as LTPH is good at compliance but what the trade lacks is direction. LTPH's neutrality is holding us back and we are losing ground on big business.

After all, LTPH do outsource much of their services these days, so would things change very much? All I know is that we are losing an enormous amount of work from punters who want a taxi but who won't pay to sit in endless queues of traffic. And who can really blame them.

Richard Potter (T51)

Are electronic printers needed?

Call Sign has been told unofficially that LTPH are querying whether taxis actually need to have a mandatory receipt printer fitted.

Drivers say they rarely use them and that there are a myriad of receipt pads available - including, of course, **Dial-a-Cab's** own pads - even though we have built-in printers fitted to the terminal.

LTPH are now said to have sought legal advice after writing to meter suppliers, proprietors and printer manufacturers informing them that they are looking to make the printers non-compulsory. There is also the possibility of a legal challenge from the manufacturers.

The result matters little to DaC drivers but could be of importance to non-radio drivers...

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

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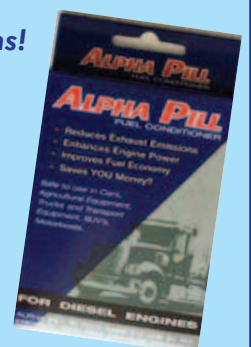
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At a Champagne reception held at Dial-a-Cab's fourth floor Boardroom on Friday 6 July, the latest staff inductees to DaC's long service register came along to collect their certificates and partake in some refreshment – both liquid and solid!

These awards are held twice yearly and it is a strange but true fact that the Society tends to keep staff for a much longer period than most organisations of this nature. If you ask many DaC employees why that is, they'll tell you that whilst they may have the odd moan, generally speaking DaC is a very good employer...

Forty years

The longest serving member was dispatcher and driver, **Ivor Belkin (C97)**, whose certificate read 40 years with a start date of November 1971. There are no prizes for unofficially dispatching, but *Call Sign's* files show Ivor first putting the head-phones on in September 1961! However, in those early days when voice dispatchers were thin on the ground, Ivor was often asked when out driving his cab if he could cover as an emergency dispatcher. He rarely said no and before being officially employed by DaC, he had already been coming in for 10 years!

Ivor also holds a place in DaC's history when on Saturday 29 April 1989, Ivor (together with the late Lou Gitlin) was dispatching on the day DaC went over to data dispatch.

Sadly, due to an illness that he has since recovered from, Ivor was unable to personally collect his certificate.

Fifteen years

There were four staff members celebrating 15 years with DaC. **Pam Campbell** joined on 1 September 1997 and so in a few weeks will have achieved 15 years' continuous service. Pam had been a Trainee Account Manager but is now a fully-fledged Account Manager with DaC's ground floor Administration department.

Also on fifteen years was **David Seal**, who joined DaC in June 1997 as a Customer Services Representative in what was then called the Control Room. It later became the Call Centre and is now the Contact Centre! David was at the presentation to collect his certificate although he has been very seriously ill. Happily David is much better now and *Call Sign* hopes to be able to tell the story of his battle against illness in our next issue.

Bernadene Barthley couldn't attend to collect her fifteen year certificate. She first stepped into Brunswick House in June 1997 as a Call Taker and is now a Customer Services Representative on the evening shift.

Last of the fifteen year inductees was **Les Hazelden** who also arrived in June 1997. Like David, Les has been an evening shift Customer Services Representative in the Contact Centre for the whole period he has been here. Les was also unable to attend.

DaC long service awards

Warren Smith with Antoinette and Pam



Brian Rice and Dana



Keith Cain presents David's certificate



Ten years

There were two DaC staff members celebrating 10 years. **Antoinette Gardner** began her time here on 8 October 2001 arriving as an Accounts Manager and that is a position she still holds within the Society's Administration department.

Last, but certainly not least, is the person most drivers will be familiar with – Depot Manager at DaC's **Roman Way** fitting bay, **Dana Thananjeyan**. Dana started on 17 September 2001 as Assistant Manager at our terminal fitting and software testing depot, but is now in charge there.

Dana has been in *Call Sign* several times over the years giving updates as to the plight of his friends and family at the hands of the Sri Lankan government after many years of bitter fighting for a Tamil homeland. At one point, both his mother and grandmother had been posted as missing – often leading to bad news at that time. Then in our August 2009 issue, a jubilant Dana told us they had been found in a government internment camp after he had lost contact for many months. An emotional Dana told us at the time: "Some might describe the conditions there as a form of concentration camp, but they are safe and that, for the time being, is paramount."

Electric taxi soon???



Two of the Metrocab E prototypes captured by Stan James (courtesy of TAXI)

When the Metrocab TTT finally bowed out of existence, many Dial-a-Cab drivers felt sad claiming it had been an excellent vehicle to drive. The vehicle died on 3 March 2006 when bailiffs walked into Metrocab's premises in Tamworth and took anything of value on behalf of the landlord.

It was April 2004 amidst a fanfare that the new Metrocab company handed over their first TTT since reforming, following Metrocab's previous administration in 2002 with the loss of 100 jobs. The restructured company told *Call Sign* at the time that they were looking to build five taxis a week as against the 100 vehicles a month they had built at their peak, but even that number never materialised.

DaC driver and avowed Metrocab user, Keith White (A16), told *Call Sign* at the time that he was very disappointed to hear the news and said that in his view, the TTT was the best taxi ever produced for the London market and that he would just have to keep his taxi for ever!

Now, in 2012, Keith still has that cab. Circumstances have changed and *forever* now means 15 years – giving him another 4 years to go. But when *Call Sign* told Keith that a new electric taxi under the Metrocab banner had been spotted going out on test, he sounded very interested and looked forward to hearing more.

The electric taxi was spotted by photographer Stan James on behalf of TAXI Newspaper, who were the first to hear that the long-touted vehicle was actually undergoing trials and *Call Sign* thanks LTDA General Secretary Steve McNamara, who kindly gave us access to the photos.

The new Metrocab E is officially known as a Range Extended Electric Vehicle (REEV) and said to have a range of between 70 and 100 miles before the battery, which powers the vehicles electric motors, needs recharging. Plugged into a home electric socket it would

take eight hours, but the new vehicle is said to also take commercial charging when you can find the point, and this would be a while-you-wait job of around 40 minutes. However, also built into the REEV is a petrol generator which will not only drive the motors, but also recharge the battery at the end of its working range.

The Metrocab E is said to use two 35KW electric motors to power the front wheels, which in turn will produce 220NM of torque. Supporting as a range extending generator will be a 400cc petrol powered *Wankel* rotary engine producing 50hp. The batteries will be lithium polymer.

The new taxi, which has been developed by Frazer Nash and Lotus Cars, is said to be in line with the Euro 5 TX4 so far as price is concerned and already compliant with the London *Conditions of Fitness* with tight front wheel turning.

The cab is still in its prototype stage, but six of those are said to be virtually ready for licensing by TfL and if successful will take to London's streets under real life working conditions. If successful, the new Metrocab E will undoubtedly be unaffected by any 15 year rule.

Back to Keith White who is also the proud owner of the first Metrocab prototype, *Call Sign* asked him whether he fancied buying one of the electric prototypes when and if the new E model takes off?

Keith just shrugged his shoulders and said that he liked the shape but thought it might be a tad more expensive than his original Metro!

In *Call Sign's* May 2009 issue, we ran an article under the heading **New Electric Taxi is a Metrocab!** In it we revealed that an electric cab had been unveiled in Amsterdam by Dutch taxi organisation TCA. The only difference between this one and the TCA model appears to be that the back-up motor was touted as being diesel, whilst the Metrocab E is a far more sensible petrol. However, the cabs bear a remarkable similarity.

Also touted to be at a similar stage is the **London Taxi Company's TX4H**, a new emissions-free version of the TX4. This vehicle is

said to drive just like a normal cab, but unlike the traditional engine is powered by a hydrogen fuel cell system that only emits water vapour. The claim is that the taxi is capable of 80mph with a 250-mile range. This cab is the result of a partnership between Intelligent Energy, LTI, TRW Conekt and Lotus Engineering.

So it looks as though the biggest choice for drivers in the forthcoming years will be whether to go for electric or hydrogen. However, neither version are said to be ready yet and in all probability, two years seems a strong likelihood – and of course the Vito electric cab will be waiting!

Go to <http://www.amsterdaminc.tw/2009/04/01/tca-gaat-groen/> to see the TCA electric cab...

Alan Fisher

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Addison Lee lose Judicial Review

Addison Lee has failed in its **Judicial Review** against **TfL** to gain access to London's bus lanes. The court ordered **John Griffin's** minicab firm to meet TfL's costs in defending the claim. Addy Lee had sought the judicial review of the policy that allows licensed taxis, but not minicabs, to use London's bus lanes.

Mr Justice Burton described the reasoning behind TfL's policy as "obvious and compelling." He said:

"There is to my mind a clear distinction between the need of black cabs (and their passengers and the public) for them to be in the bus lanes by way of visibility and availability, and access to black cabs for those hailing a cruising taxi. I consider it makes entire good sense for black cabs to be travelling in bus lanes. Minicabs just do not have the need to use the bus lane and black cabs do."

The Judge added that he was "wholly unpersuaded" by Addison Lee's claim that TfL's bus lane policy affected the freedom of EU nationals to establish themselves as minicab drivers and concluded that "...this has simply been the



attempt to mount a challenge to a London traffic regulation by turning it into a *Euro-point*."

John Griffin said after the Review was thrown out: "We are extremely disappointed with the judgement. The current bus lane legislation is anti-competitive and unfairly discriminates against millions of Londoners who use private hire vehicles every day. There is no reason for black taxis to have a monopoly on bus lanes. We should either all be in or all be out. We still believe that the current legislation is a breach of the EU and UK law. You can't discriminate between two types of taxis and we will continue to fight this injustice."

TfL argued that the regulations did not engage EU law, that TfL had a broad discretion

in deciding how to manage the bus lanes to mitigate congestion and that it had acted reasonably in discriminating against minicabs.

In April, John Griffin ordered his drivers to defy the law that banned them from using the bus lanes saying that he would pay the fines. According to *BikeBiz*, the thought of minicabs using bus and taxi lanes horrifies London's cyclists and they were delighted with the verdict.

Dial-a-Cab Chairman **Brian Rice** told *Call Sign* that he was delighted by the result and felt that putting any prejudices aside, it was the only logical verdict.

LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

With Tom Quigley (Y33)

The key to stress...

It is often stated that the key to a longer and healthier life is to be stress-free. I try to live this philosophy, but generally the cause of stress is the Key itself.

Like most of us, keys have become a cause of instant stress. Simple tasks such as leaving the house brings apprehension; feeling in pockets, searching the house for the key I had in my hand all the time! There are keys for everything - front door, back door, car, taxi, wife's car, garage or the bike lock - and there are the keys we hold to our mums, the mother-in-law, sisters, brothers and neighbours. Then there are the keys I have to my allotment, the football club and even the keys to doors and locks I no longer have - but of which I'm too stressed to throw away!

Each and every one of them brings on a frantic search, with circa around £5 for a simple key, to telephone numbers for a specially cut one. Losing them just brings on more stress.

We have numeric keys to access our bank accounts, ATMs and credit cards, getting one of these wrong can bring a whole avalanche of stress with access *denied* and ending up with new cards where we have to key in a new number to use the new cards. We even log on to our **Dial-a-Cab** terminals at the start of our shift.

The task of working on a motor will generally come to a halt with cries of expletive anger when you don't have the specialist *star* key spanner; in just putting together a piece of Swedish furniture, we are met with the dreaded Allen key (the one supplied snapping or burring at the edges). That results in more stress with shouting and swearing as we search the garage (when we find that key) toolboxes and shelves for the right size Allen key. Who invented the Allen key? Was there a kid in School called Allen Key who had some perverse weird obsession of drawing up and designing a key in a sort of Masonic shape? Whoever he/she was they definitely added to my stress levels.

Even in writing this article, I don't know how many keypads I used - but I at least felt unusually relaxed getting this stress off my chest!



Good service

A recent question was sent out on our **Dial-a-Cab** terminals asking what sort of service does **George the Electrician** give.

Regular Saturday drivers will often get a message about George being at the **Warwick Avenue** rank. George is now my first choice for all things electrical; over recent years he has sorted and fixed problems with my meter fusing, speedo cable, alternator renewal and recently even made a call-out to my home to sort out an immobiliser! He goes about his work in a calm and friendly manner, only using quality parts and his rates are reasonable. Based in Winchmore Hill and mobile, you can give him a call on **07950 750 882**.

You won't be disappointed and on a good day he will be supported by fellow DaC driver **Reno**, whose recycled jokes would give Frank Carson RIP a run for his money!

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

Kupkake's Korner



Olympics and taxis

The first athlete arrivals made confusion some games lanes activated and alive.

TfL has no solution, as to how the cab trade will survive.

They've banned us from so many highways they've banned us from the bus lanes. No set down where the athletes will play, or for those who visit the Games.

No provision for handicapped punters to get close to their chosen event. Moved on by uniformed shunters, paid with money misspent.

No thought for Taxi commuters nothing to do with these Games. And the unavoidable 'fare disputers', with less than half a brain.

No concern for a drop in our wages our frustration, our problems, our stress. No worry it will take for ages, for London to pay for the mess!

I fear for our future and prospects for I care for the state of our trade. I have contempt for those who neglect... and deny the mistakes they have made!

Kopyrlght Kupkake 2012

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

And should we licence cyclists?

So here's the thing; some time ago I was driving along Brixton Road at 2am. It was fairly quiet, not much in the way of traffic or people around when suddenly in the distance I noticed a guy dragging what I thought was a sack across the road.

As I got closer, I could see the sack was actually a woman and this fella was pulling her by her hair. She was screaming and shouting out a few choice obscenities and to me it looked quite serious.

As licensed London taxi drivers, we have sometimes been known as *Knights of the Road*, so I got out of my cab and tried to lend assistance to the 'lady'.

"Unhand that woman," I shouted or maybe something else, but much to my surprise the woman kicked her assailant, knocking him to the ground and then turned to me and in a voice probably heard in neighbouring Streatham, told me to "**pi** off and mind your own business!**" They then both walked off into the Brixton Road moonlight hand in hand. I walked back to my cab feeling such an idiot. But was I?



Reading in the papers and seeing television news items about those individuals who have been mugged or injured in one way or another and bystanders who either walked on or didn't have the knowledge or the capacity to help, does give me cause for concern about what kind of selfish society we have become.

I'm sure that most Dial-a-Cab – and indeed non-radio - drivers have at some time or

other seen a pedestrian knocked over by some uncaring cyclist, especially when the two-wheelers often take no regard at pedestrians crossings or at traffic lights.

One incident I saw was a young mother who was pushing her baby in a pushchair across a pedestrian crossing, when a crazy cyclist who was talking on his mobile, drove straight into the pushchair. The mother fell to the ground and the pushchair freewheeled along the road. I managed to get out of the cab and stopped the pushchair. A passer-by did chase the cyclist – who was trying to flee the incident - and caught him. He got a bit of a pasting from the passer-by, who turned out to be an off duty Community Police Officer.

To protect other road users and pedestrians, there is a need for the licencing of cycles and legislation enforcing all cyclists to obey the law.

Should we mind our own business? I don't think so...

Mike Son
DaC Special Projects

You spend years on the Knowledge to become a London taxi driver. So is it...

A Job for Life???

"Yes, I think it's a pretty good job by and large," **Barry Mehrtens (Y81)** told *Call Sign* referring to taxi-driving as a regular form of employment. "There are few career opportunities nowadays that offer the prospect of a 'job for life', the ability to get an income and the flexibility to choose your own hours. I have been able to see my children grow up and if I wanted to attend their school events or whatever, I could do so and work around that particular activity as the need dictated.

"Mind you, in 1977 when I started on **Dial-a-Cab** in the days of **Peter Fennymore's** chairmanship, the pound in your pocket went a lot further than it does today and it was busier work-wise than it is now. Yet however tough it is, especially in this present economic climate, if you keep your head down, your nose clean and you pass the regular medicals, there's no fear of being laid-off, losing your job or have the spectre of being made redundant hanging over you. And in these tough times, a job for life with the freedom to work as you please has got to be something to be grateful for and I personally have never lost sight of that fact. I would hope that other drivers feel the same way."

Ending, Barry said: "I know it's very hard when you have many commitments such as a mortgage, a young family to feed and clothe and all the other things that can lead to the stresses we hear of, but I still think that given the nature of our job, being a licensed taxi driver in London is something to treasure."

With that, a broad smile spread across Barry's face as he went out to look for his first fare of the day...



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

CALL SIGN EN LA BELLE FRANCE

The message on my voicemail from a panic stricken *Call Sign* Editor suggested that I needed to get my article over by Monday morning if I wanted to be included - it was Sunday evening in a village on the edge of Ashdown Forest - a pie, a pint and a brief flicker of a phone signal after 3 days of relative obscurity!



Therapy after the long hours at Wimbledon fortnight was a cottage on a Farm in **High Hurtswood** - just 35 miles from Marble Arch - but this could have been the Scottish Borders for the scenery, peace and tranquillity on offer! To save you rushing for your

SatNavs, this place is in Sussex nestled between the North and South Downs.

Gearing up for the Olympics is next on the agenda and by the time you read this, you will have received your *TfL Drivers Handbook*! It should be a best seller after a 7-year 'work in progress'!

Talking of the Olympics, while I was at the tennis I heard that LOCOG will be marshalling all of the ranks - be they Stratford, Wembley, Wimbledon or Weymouth! I wonder how much their staff is being paid? I did hear that the LTDA marshals at £25 an hour were far too expensive! Best to get people who know what they are doing then! Some security firm are providing Wimbledon tennis marshals by all accounts! Nightclub bouncers? Why not? They can marshal the ranks during the daytime then

hop into their minicabs to work the graveyard shift. No problem with these guys staying alert - just keep popping the pills boys!

Hoping you all have a lucrative Olympics period despite the potential traffic meltdown - I firmly believe that the best pickings will be during those rate 2 and rate 3 periods - but hasn't it always been like that?

By the way - check out the typo in the Drivers Handbook! Rate 2 starts at 8am? Wouldn't that be worth coming back from the beach for!

A bientot...

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

Bryan Fuller (G38) almost had an encounter from the other side! He told *Call Sign*, his voice still trembling as he recalled the eerie noise: "There was a screeching sound like the scream from a ghost! The high pitched whine rose and fell with the engine speed," he continued, not quite sweating with fear but hardly laughing either! "As I accelerated, the screaming reached fever pitch, but when I slowed down, the noise subsided!"

"I'd heard a faint whine during the previous evening shift, but it seemed to fade as the night wore on. So I intended getting it all checked out when time permitted, especially in view of my upcoming overhaul. Then, the following night, the noise returned with a vengeance and that's when I started investigating in earnest."

"I checked the problem out with colleagues who seemed certain it was a slack drive/fan belt that was slipping as the engine revved up. Someone suggested a silicone spray sold by **Halfords** and it really did the trick. The tin of spray fluid is made by lubricant specialist '3 in1' and has good reviews on the internet. I'm told that WD40 lube is also effective for loose drive/fan belts that can sound like a scalded cat as you rev up the engine."

Beginning to calm down, Bryan said: "I'm also really grateful to DaC evening dispatcher **John Connor (Y11)** from the Call Centre, who took the time to check I was ok and advised me not to ignore the problem, generally making sure that I was safe and sorted. That was a really nice gesture which probably would not have happened at my previous circuit. I've been on DaC nearly 7 years and it really is great like that."

THE PHANTOM SCREAM



John Connor helped Bryan with his ghostly scream!

"I asked my service dealer to change the worn belt rather than simply adjust the old one, as a matter of course, because it's obviously better to be safe than sorry and break down in the middle of the night somewhere, so John Connor's advice rang true," he concluded.

Call Sign then spoke to **Sheldon Posner** of **Cricklewood Carriers** in NW2. He confirmed that a worn or loose drive belt would indeed squeal noisily adding that if the belt was to break it could have serious consequences as it

provides power for the steering and braking systems, which would become less responsive. He also pointed out that other engine units could produce similarly noisy symptoms.

"A seized water pump or alternator or worn bearings in those units might also give out quite a shriek, so it is wise to have the problem looked at by your regular service agent as soon as possible to avoid further damage."

Cricklewood Carriers can be contacted on 020 8452 5461

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE ANNIVERSARY

But the WRONG CBE!

This unusual sight (see pic) was spotted by one of *Call Sign's* roving reporters and is significant because **Florence Nightingale**, for all the many accolades she was awarded during her lifetime, was never granted a CBE!

Florence was named after the Italian city of her birth on May 12 1820. She developed an interest in nursing, a profession of which her wealthy parents disapproved because they felt it was below her status. Eventually they relented and she went to Germany to train as a nurse.

At the outbreak of the **Crimea War** in 1854, reports of the desperate lack of medical facilities for wounded soldiers, many of whom were dying from infections rather than from war wounds, led then War Minister, **Sidney Herbert**, to ask Florence to oversee the care of those wounded in the war.

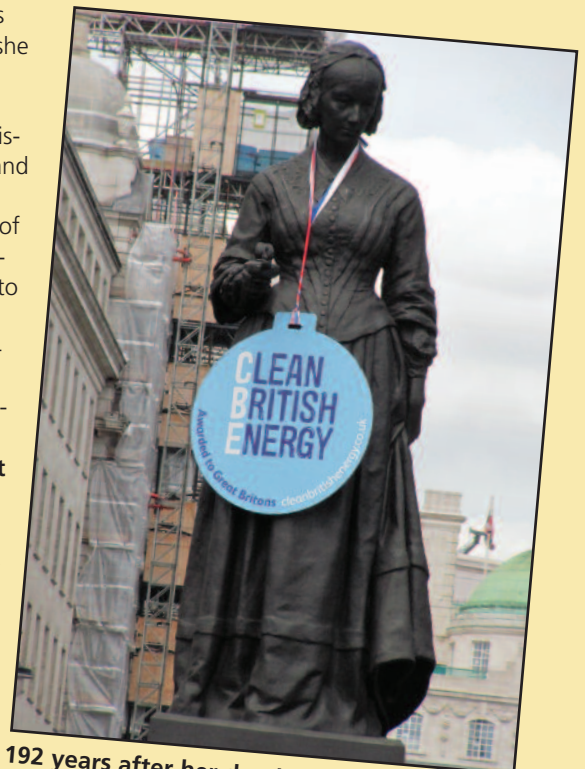
With a team of 38 nurses, she arrived at Scutari (Turkey) in November 1854 and immediately set about improving the conditions of the soldiers and substantially reduced their death rate by attention to hygiene conditions and general cleanliness.

In 1860 she founded the Nightingale Training School of Nursing at St Thomas's Hospital, London and sent qualified nurses all over the U.K. to introduce new ideas of care based on her nursing model.

Her many publications, including the influential 'Notes on Nursing' in 1860, greatly increased people's concerns and awareness of military health, hospital planning and sanitation, many of which are relevant to this day.

In recognition of her many worthy achievements, **Queen Victoria** bestowed on her the honour of the **Order of Merit**, but not a CBE as seen in the photo.

Eventually bed-ridden, blind and in need of constant care herself, she died at her South Street, Mayfair home on August 13th 1910.



192 years after her death and it's the wrong CBE for Florence

Mailshot

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

Vito steering

Dear Alan

I'd like to pass on this message to **Peter Begley (K98)**, author of *TX4 or Vito: What should I buy* from the *July Call Sign* and also to DaC drivers who may have been affected by the problem.

I had exactly the same thing with the rear steering on my *Vito 113*. I was fobbed off on seven or eight visits to the garage with different excuses until I made an angry phone call to Mercedes head office Complaints Department. Then and as if by magic - literally within a few hours - I had a call from KPM who put me on the *exclusive waiting list* for me to be fitted with a new component that is apparently connected to the cut-out switch and that fixed the problem immediately. However, I had to wait a month for the mysterious part to arrive in stock and it is obviously an expensive fix, but my problems are now over.

A happy DaC Vito driver

Because of the nature of the signed letter, we allowed the writer to keep his identity hidden. We know who he is and sadly for him, within 24 hours of having the work done and writing to Call Sign, the same steering problem returned to his Vito.

In the lengthy article, Peter Begley wrote of the Vito steering: *"Then there is the Rear Wheel Steering that the Vito uses to ensure it complies and passes the conditions of fitness test. It plays up on a regular basis - on some days it can go off 10 or more times. The real let down is that no one in the servicing department of the east-end selling dealership seems to know why and they still find it acceptable to leave uninformed customers sitting for hours in their waiting room. This is NOT the Mercedes way. It is, in my view, shockingly bad considering the money the Vito costs."*

Peter now adds: *The mysterious Mercedes Vito part the DaC driver asked about to rectify the RWS is a software update to the Engine Control Unit (part number 02729901). It is a warranty item, but requires ordering. I can't find out why as it seems no one will hold their hands up. My understanding of ECU upgrades is that they are "plug and play" so to speak, but not in this case.*

Call Sign thought it had the answer when our mystery driver had his part fitted by KPM, now we're not so sure ...Ed

Tom and the Olympics

Dear Alan,

Tom Whitbread must have plenty of time on his hands at the moment, sat behind his

cosy desk. What another load of drivel and under-researched nonsense he managed to write about the Olympics in the *July Call Sign*. I would firstly like to remind him that as a nation we compete at the Olympics as Great Britain and not England. That is the same for all the wars we fight in, or does he believe that that is just England as well. It is only our sub-standard football team that competes as England!

Secondly Tom, please take a look at the final medal table from the Beijing Olympics. Who came fourth Tom? Correct, Great Britain and not England. We finished in front of Australia with only the USA, Russia and China finishing in front of us. Tom, why don't you call one of our medal winners from the Beijing Olympics and tell them that you thought that they only won a minuscule number of medals! Try James DeGale, now that would be interesting. A minuscule amount of research may have done you some good, Tom.

Tom's attack on Seb Coe is also unjust. When the Olympics has been and gone, ask the young kids of East London what do they think of the fantastic sports venue that has been left behind? Of course traffic will be bad during the Olympics, but I think the cab trade is getting very close to winning a gold medal for moaning. The traffic is always bad; we just have to get on with it. Let me remind you that we have had a deep recession and a credit crunch for the last 5 years. August is always quiet and this is an opportunity to earn some good money and to showcase our trade as the best in the world. I would rather be stuck in traffic with a fare than sat on a rank without one in August. If the roads are busy going to the Olympic venues, advise your passengers to use public transport and just drop them at the nearest station. You will still be earning money.

Please gents, we really need to make the most of this opportunity to showcase our country, our city and our trade. And finally gents, if you see someone stuck coming out of Asda in Leytonstone on a Thursday night, quaffing his brown ale and steak and kidney pie while struggling to stop his dog trying to grab it, please give him a toot and tell him to cheer up.

Colin Vincent (V62)

Colin, thanks for the email but you have forgotten one thing; when Tom leaves ASDA, he runs back to Dalston in under five minutes - a UK all-comers record! My thanks to Tom as well - drivers may have a go at him, but his columns are never less than controversial while his skin has gotten even thicker in his older age!...Ed

More Olympics...

Dear Editor

With the Games now upon us, I wonder if anybody involved with it would like to explain about the Olympic lanes and how they will affect the residents of East



London. I keep hearing from Boris Johnson and Seb Coe that the Olympic lanes will only use about 12% (?) of London main roads. My question is what percentage of main roads in East London will they use? What these people have not told residents is that around the Olympic site, nearly all roads will be used for Olympic lanes! To get from the City and West End, where most of the officials will be staying, there are only a few roads which can be used: Aspen Way, East India Dock Road and Bow Road/fly-over. The reason for this is that the Blackwall Tunnel northern approach forms a barrier and the three roads mentioned are the only roads which cross this highway. Obviously, the Blackwall Tunnel northern approach can also take you east, but having to pass the Olympic site I would not recommend it. I suppose the Eastway and Homerton Road could be used, but once again these go past the Olympic site. Perhaps I should also mention Lea Bridge Road as a way out of East London, but if the Lea Valley centre is used for the Olympics together with all the other roads I have mentioned, then I do not think this road is going to help. The next road to go east is Tottenham Hale and Forest Road.

Therefore, I would like to repeat my original question: What percentage of the roads in East London will be affected by the Olympic lanes, particularly the roads mentioned? I know it's too late to do anything about these lanes, but I feel that the Olympic organisers should have been more honest with the residents of East London as we are probably the people who are going to be most affected.....

Russell Bamber (N27)

I asked the Mayor's office, but other than trying to find an answer and that inconvenience would be kept to a minimum, no real answer came and as you say Russell, I doubt it would have made one iota of difference! ...Ed

ID at Olympics

Dear Alan

I see from page 6 of the Olympic Handbook that we will have to carry our DVLA licence to undertake Olympic work'

Steve Thomas (N10)

The security will be tight and any driver approaching an Olympic site for a pre-ordered pick-up will have to be wearing their badge, as well as carrying with them a copy of their taxi driver and DVLA licence. Your front and back identifiers must be clearly displayed and you must also be able to prove (I assume from via your terminal) that you have a pre-booked trip from one of the designated pick-up points ...Ed

Mailshot

Continued from page 30

Olympic cars

Hi Alan

I recently had a chat with an Olympic BMW driver who told me that they are allowed to ferry guests around in the evening so long as the car is back at the Village by 11pm! She said she was a volunteer but got free food. I'd have been more jealous except that I hate McDonald's anyway!

David Heath (Ex-W27)

I bet it comes in handy for a quick evening out with the wife in the west end! ...Ed

Joe Skeggs

Dear Editor

On behalf of myself and my family, I would like to thank *Call Sign* for the kind words of tribute from Brian Rice, Allan Evans and Tom Whitbread about my dad. He was a special man and I know he will be missed greatly by all who knew him.

I am hoping you will be able to help me by sending three copies of the magazine for myself and my two sisters to keep.

Mrs Kristy Larkin
Wickford, Essex

No problem Kristy. The three Board members' sentiments were also expressed on behalf of the many drivers that knew your dad – especially those who regularly worked on EC5 ...Ed

Goodbye...

Dear Alan

Nearly missed your article about my retirement after looking at the top of page 10 but not the bottom (*July Call Sign*)! Remarkably it wasn't even the letters page but an article to myself! I am flattered. Many, many thanks and I will still keep in touch by reading *Call Sign*. Nevertheless, this is still a poignant time for me. Thank you once again for the article and DaC for the last 57 years.

Leon Singer (ex-D92)

Retirement should be something to look forward to, so enjoy it Leon ...Ed

Feeling better...

I am writing to thank the weekend staff and all the drivers who made enquiries as to how I was after my recent operation. I would like to thank them all...

Ivor Belkin (C97)

Ivor has been the Saturday day shift dispatcher for forty years officially – and unofficially since September 1961 when he joined the young Lou Gitlin (who had arrived three years earlier in 1958). In those early days Ivor was "called in" while driving his cab as an emergency dispatcher and is the reason his record only shows 40 years rather than fifty! Pleased you're feeling better Ivor ...Ed

Call Sign and E3 Taxis...

Hi Alan

Thank you for your reply to my letter (*May Call Sign*). You were of course right that DaC was not a circuit that promoted cash work. I noticed that when I joined. When I said *historically*, I really meant *all* the circuits. However, I do still think that the extra charges and the licensing of PH, with the reluctance to cover the cash work, was a major factor in the shift from us to them in the public's choice of transport. Whether the likes of *Hailo* will be able to redress the balance is debatable.

What you are absolutely right in saying is that RGT would never have printed such a letter as mine or in fact much of what you publish. Your Editorship is one of the main reasons my partner (in the taxi sense) and I joined DaC. About eight years ago we opened a garage (*E3 Taxis*). I often used to read your magazine that had been left there by DaC drivers using the garage. I was surprised and totally hooked on how you allowed drivers to say exactly how they felt about DaC – whether that was good or bad – and you, the Chairman or another Board member would answer them. When we moved to bigger premises, we needed to increase our customer base. Even though we were on RTG, we thought we would try and advertise in your magazine. I phoned you and said we wanted to offer half price servicing to DaC drivers on a promotional basis. You offered us a free half page advert provided we offered a special deal to DaC drivers. We never offered any promotion to any other circuit – even RTG – which we were still on. For the next year or so, we enjoyed free advertising and offered the half priced service. That is until we sold out to the mechanic who promptly ended the promotion.

At that same time, we decided to trade up from our twelve year old Fairway after 600,000 miles on the same gearbox and engine and buy a new cab. Much as I liked the GPS on RTG, I considered that any circuit which allowed an Editor to publish such a great democratic trade magazine had just got to be the one to join. So when you said in your answer that you don't stop me saying whatever I want, but neither do you stop Tom, believe me I wouldn't have it any other way. Incidentally I'm not sure if you know, but E3 Taxis went bankrupt a few weeks back. Two fortunate moves on our part getting out of E3 and joining DaC...

Ian S Connelly (T21)

Thanks for the letter Ian. I do remember your call and agreeing to your freebie ad because it would help you set up the business in addition to helping out DaC drivers – quite a number of whom asked me about E3 at the time. Even though it isn't you any more, it was still sad to hear that the garage had folded. Thanks for your comments about *Call Sign* as



well. As you point out, it is the DaC Board that has allowed me the freedom to put out a magazine like *Call Sign*. I consider myself to be very lucky ...Ed

How much???

Hi Alan

Can I just ask; we now know that all RTG drivers are to receive £350 to have the chip & pin or £500 if the screen goes in the back too. I understand that Ascott Cab Co have had most of their cabs fitted as they are being paid by Visa. So the question must be... are we going to get anything? Otherwise I'll have to stop looking on eBay for stuff I can't afford.

Mike Appleby (L73)

Hi Mike, I hope you are well. It's the difference between taking a system that many don't want as against taking one that is. I've seen both and given the choice, I'd rather not be in a position where if the passenger says it doesn't work then I have to get into the back of the cab with them. You don't do that with our system. That's worth £1000 over the years – never mind £500. I've also spoken to several of their drivers who are already receiving requests about how they can switch the TV off. I suppose the other option is to either join RTG or give up eBay! ...Ed

Korean editor?

Dear Sir

I have been reading your excellent magazine online for several years, but I wonder whether you can help me. I would like to edit a similar magazine for taxi drivers here in Seoul. Our special city has a population of 10 million inhabitants, many of whom use taxis – in fact a large proportion of South Koreans actually live in the capital. I know many who have never been here think that we are a small backward country, but in fact we were the world's first city to introduce a mobile television service as well as the first wireless broadband. It also has the world's fastest 100Mbit/s broadband network, while our Incheon Airport has been rated as the world's best airport by Airports Council International. But we don't have anything like *Call Sign* and I would like to change that. So when I come to London in September, is it possible that I could meet up with you to discuss how I can begin the process?

Kim So Choon

Seoul, Korea

No problem and I'm sure I can get someone to give you a tour of Dial-a-Cab at the same time ...Ed

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