

August 2013

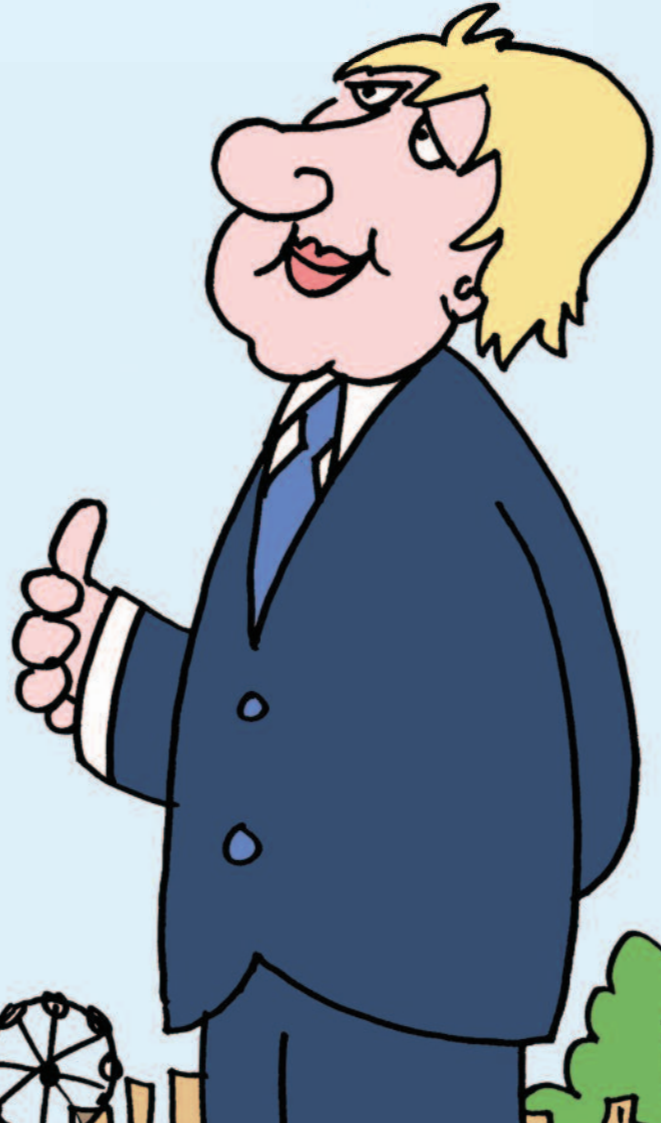
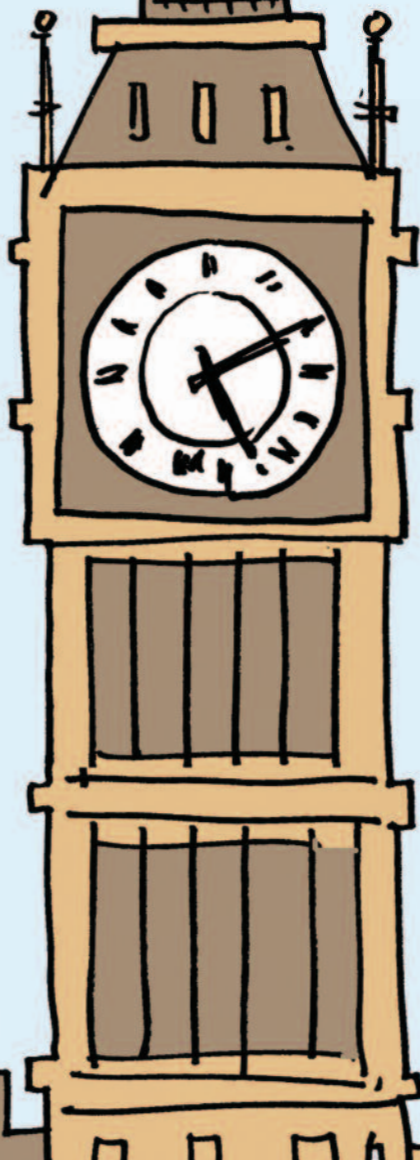
From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

Call Sign



Westminster
FRACKING PIC
www.wedrillanywhere.com

*Boris shocker:
"We may dig up
London for gas!"*





NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Flights into London City Airport continue to increase (last visited by Call Sign in Oct '12). Below is the latest arrivals timetable. A larger print version with departure cities and flight numbers is available on the 'TAXI' page of the MyFav website. Visit www.myfav.co.uk/iehome.php?g=taxi

LONDON CITY AIRPORT ARRIVALS (correct as of 12/07/2013)

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Notes | 1- until 29/9/13 | 2- from 1/9/13 | 3- until 30/8/13 | 4- until 8/9/13 |

from the editor's desk

I don't usually like August and September so far as Call Sign is concerned because for some strange reason drivers seem more concerned about their own holidays than they do about writing to me! I can't understand it! But life goes on...

Profit and cheap...

Hearing House of Commons disclosures concerning the Government and its reliance on the private sector to run its services and to – at least in theory – save money, reminded me of something that happened in 2011.

HMG accusations are being levelled at two Jack-of-all-trade companies – G4S and Serco – who between them are said to have charged UK taxpayers to monitor non-existent electronic tags. In addition to non-existent names, others said to have been tagged with HMG being given the bill, were actually dead! The Serious Fraud Office has been called in to investigate G4S over contracts dating back since soon after the millennium. They are said to be the world's largest security company and became famous during the London Olympics because of their lack of staff.

Serco, also one of Britain's largest companies, faces an auditing inquiry over its tagging charge. Serco and G4S are said to receive around £1.5 billion a year, although both have contracts scheduled to run for several years.

Those allegations brought back memories from 2011 when private hire organisation Lewis Day, who had shown a turnover for the previous year of around £36million, saw allegations levelled against them of charging the NHS £50,000 for trips that had not actually been made.

LD was billing an NHS Trust for sending four ambulance workers to take a patient for dialysis treatment at Hammersmith Hospital three times a week although they were only sending two. Some of the trips were charged at £400 each and the NHS alleged that hundreds of trips were falsely claimed for. Lewis Day was given leeway to decide how many ambulances were needed for each job and the allegations suggested that this was where the overcharging totaling £50K took place. It only came to light during an internal transport cost audit by the NHS Imperial Trust, who managed the hospital.

A former Lewis Day worker, Dave Amphlett, actually told his bosses what was going on but they did nothing about it and it was allowed to continue.

Lewis Day eventually repaid the NHS Trust £49,921.74 but refused to explain publicly why they had continued to overcharge even after being told by Mr Amphlett, claiming it would compromise patient confidentiality! However, previous to that, a *Sunday Mirror* investigation had shown how Lewis Day had also defrauded NHS Imperial Trust out of over £200,000 in the same way as it had with Hammersmith Hospital ie charging for journeys that never took place.

Lewis Day claimed that an error in the patient booking system had caused the problem. Soon after, Lewis Day was taken over by Addison Lee.

Sometimes, huge conglomerates believe that they can save money by taking cheap offers. That applies in our industry as well and was well illustrated with the House of Commons account presenting their account firstly to Radio Taxis and latterly to a minicab company, both who had undercut our prices but who then couldn't cover the work coming out. We currently service the HoC again.



I have no doubt that some of our other large accounts will be trying to save money by looking around, just as I have no doubt that should there be offers substantially lower than ours, then it would affect the new suppliers' coverage – especially as it now seems to be getting busier than it has been for several years. Nothing is for nothing and the facilities that **Dial-a-Cab** offer may be dearer than some, but they are also superior to anything our opposition can serve up. Our customers are getting something that others can't provide in our accounting system and excellent coverage.

I have always believed that you don't get much for nothing, because on most occasions that is how life is. But we all know that the grass always looks greener on the other side...

Rudeness to passengers

I am never rude to passengers, even though there are occasions when they may deserve a response to their own rudeness – and of course as representatives of London Taxis and Private Hire read this, I'd be a bit daft to say otherwise! However, I broke that rule recently and I thought I'd tell you – which really means telling the world as more people read *Call Sign Online* than even get the mag delivered.

I know some drivers still get miffed when they don't get a gratuity, but in all honesty "tips" seem to be getting fewer and fewer and I expect future generations to drop the custom all together. When we get to the situation where Americans don't tip (and many no longer do it over here, although they'd be scared not to at home), then you know it's on the way out so far as London is concerned. In any case, I have never said anything about not receiving a tip, even when I have actually deserved one! No, my rudeness came in a face-to-face confrontation at the luggage window.

It began as just another normal street ride from Sloane Street to Ennismore Gardens. The passengers were a very loud lady who appeared to be a carer/maid for the young boy in her charge who was apparently in training for young fog horn voice of the year! Heading north up Exhibition Road, I turned right into Princes Gardens and continued into Ennismore Gardens. As they said nothing, I continued to the end where most of the houses are, even though I could have also turned right before that. Either way makes little difference.

Suddenly fog horn junior – who was probably aged around 9 or 10, shouted out: "Hey fatty, you've passed the turning. Are you an idiot?"

I said nothing expecting the woman to tell him off. Silly me, she said nothing other than to shout

out that I should turn right, then right again and stop. So in reality we did an extra 10 metres – if that. They got out and the boy ran to the door, shouting at the carer to hurry up. Meanwhile the woman proffered the exact money. I said nothing except a quick thank you whereas she remained silent. I then cleared the cash ride and got ready to move off. Suddenly she came running back.

"Receipt," she barked. I picked up my copy of the *Evening Standard* and pretended to read it. A voice 100 times worse than fog horn junior's repeated the instruction of 'receipt!' I slowly looked up at her.

"Are you talking to me," I asked?

"Of course," she replied, "can you see anyone else here?"

Remembering my licence, I carefully folded my ES so that Linda shouldn't have to complete her crossword on a crumpled newspaper. Well that was one reason!

"I forgive that little brat who travelled with you because he obviously learned his manners from you and that must be a huge disadvantage in life, but if you want something from me, then you will have to ask properly."

She plainly had no idea what I was talking about and I led her by suggesting that most people asking for a receipt offered the words please or thank you – sometimes both. She rejected the suggestion out of hand and said she would report me if I failed to give her the receipt. I have only on one other occasion refused a passenger a confirmation of the taxi cost and that must have been over 20 years ago. But that was for a different reason in that they wanted me to give them a receipt suggesting I had taken them to Luton airport whereas in reality I took them the one mile from Russell Square to St Pancras for the legal fare.

But this was different. I repeated that I required a please and she mumbled something totally inaudible. So I hand-wrote a receipt with my own signature, folded it neatly and gave it to her. She took it and walked off. Suddenly she returned, her face the colour of ripe strawberries, her precious receipt held tightly within her sweaty palm.

"You taxi drivers make me sick and if I had a choice I would use cars."

I then realised that she was working for someone and that my original guess of her being a carer or maid was probably right, so I wondered what her boss would say when he looked at her precious receipt upon which I carefully wrote: "Carried free to compensate for a world shortage of pigs!"

To TfL, I plead guilty and you obviously know where I am...!

Richard Pomerance

I rarely mention non-DaC drivers on this page but I must say farewell to fellow taxi driver Richard Pomerance. Richard wasn't always understood by everyone and certainly wasn't your average guy. He began going down that road by doing the Knowledge on foot, once telling me how many pairs of shoes he had gone through. On another occasion, after waiting for a passenger inside a London estate, someone threw a TV set over their balcony. It landed on the roof of his taxi and Richard's first thought was to see if it was repairable!

But Richard wasn't at all strange, he was just one of life's characters and his early death is tragic. My sincere condolences to his family...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Terminals

We are now in full flow regarding the fitting of cabs with our new terminals and I must say that the majority of the feedback we have received has been extremely positive.

As I've explained on previous occasions, there are bound to be some bugs and anomalies creeping in and we will rectify these as soon as we are aware of the situation. Like anything new, there will be some 'fixes' that need to be made and if you have any suggestions then please mail our IT department on: techproblems@dialacab.co.uk.

They will endeavour to implement the better suggestions, but please remember that just because a suggestion has been made, it does not automatically follow that it will be implemented. After all, one member has complained the screen hurts his finger and he has to use his thumb – not sure what we can do about that one!

Mailshot

There is a letter in this month's *Mailshot* from **Paul Hammett (V42)**, who is a long serving member and I believe his letter deserves more of a response than merely being answered on the letters page.

Paul raises some interesting points which I have heard before, consequently, I feel they are worthy of a more detailed answer as some of his suggestions have been raised by others.

Regarding loaning money to members in order for them to purchase cabs, this is not as straight forward as it seems. Not just anyone can set themselves up as a moneylender, they would have to be licensed and regulated by the FSA and we would be attempting to turn **Dial-a-Cab** into a bank, which is certainly not our primary objective.

Paul also mentions that perhaps we should move to smaller premises as during the last five or six years there has been a downturn in our account work, plus the emergence and success of on-line booking and of course the size of the fleet has diminished.

When we first made plans to move from Brunswick House in 2006, we were in dire need of more positions to become available for call-takers, consequently we found our current premises which were able to more than double the positions available to call-takers.

However, since then the need for that amount of space for call-takers has diminished and Paul is quite right in that respect.

Moving buildings is a mammoth task, I know because I did it in back in May 2007! It most certainly is not just a matter of moving a few desks to a new building, we have to move our whole IT and infrastructure, an absolutely monumental task and something which could prove to be a considerable risk to your business.

We would be far better off utilising our Contact Centre for other purposes and I am sure that facility would prove attractive to



some. After all, it is not as if we have a massive mortgage on the building and we need to downsize in order generate some cash; the building is paid for, we do not have any debt and to move premises would incur considerable expense.

Even to just move our fitting bay here would be expensive. Our car park backs onto residential property and that in itself could form an obstacle, however, I would not rule out moving the Roman Way fitting bay in the future. The current cost to Dial-a-Cab for the lease of Roman Way is roughly equivalent to the cost of employing one member of the administration staff. I think that statistic probably puts things into perspective.

Paul is also correct in that I mentioned at the AGM about an App for drivers who are not on Dial-a-Cab and that situation is ongoing.

Finally, Paul mentions there is concern amongst some in the trade regarding who is going to be the first to 'fold' RTG or Dial-a-Cab? I can't or wouldn't speak for RTG as that has nothing to do with me, but for some to suggest that Dial-a-Cab is financially embarrassed is at best misleading and at worst a downright lie! Unfortunately, there are some very negative people in our trade who would wish for nothing more than one of the big three circuits to go to the wall. So don't believe everything you hear or indeed read on the anti-Dial-a-Cab forums.

August

We are now entering the quietest month of the year, but I am optimistic that it will better than last August and the traumatic time we suffered due to the Olympic Games. It was undoubtedly the worst August for work that I had ever experienced, so let's just hope this one is much better. We can't expect it to be busy but we have experienced a lot of visitors coming to London this year.

I know many of our members with children are forced to take their holidays in August and pay inflated prices and those members that remain here may experience the quietest month of the year – I'm not sure which is worse?

Either way, I hope you all have a pleasant summer...

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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Three men who posed as taxi (black cab) drivers have received severe sentences in court as the result of an investigation undertaken by the Metropolitan Police Safer Transport Command (STC), which is funded by Transport for London (TfL). The three men, who had never been licensed taxi drivers, forged taxi driver licences, badges and plates to hire black cabs but had their illegal activity curtailed by the intervention of STC officers. The sentences follow a five month investigation led by the STC in partnership with TfL's Taxi and Private Hire Directorate (TPH), resulting in the sentencing of one of the men. They were jailed for a total of two years for fifteen offences under the Fraud Act.

The investigation began in December 2012 when **Peter Speer**, 62, from West Sussex was stopped driving a taxi with the light on by officers from Southwark Safer Transport Team. Officers checked his licence with TfL's Taxi and Private Hire Directorate who confirmed Speer was not licensed and his documentation was a forgery. He was arrested and charged.

The STC investigation led them to a second man, **Terence O'Leary**, 51, from Epsom, who was seen by officers on 11 January driving a taxi displaying forged area identifiers in the vehicle. He was arrested and a search of his home address revealed a forged taxi driver licence and three forged taxi driver badges. Whilst on bail, information was received that O'Leary was attempting to hire a taxi from a company using a licence that appeared to be forged and he was arrested again. Then on 13 May, further information was received regarding a fraudulent taxi driver plate on a vehicle already known to police. Officers identified the driver as **Melios Themistokleous**, 58, from Kentish Town who was arrested the same day in possession of a forged licence whilst driving a taxi that was displaying forged plates and identifiers. **Speer pleaded guilty to 3 counts of fraud and using a motor vehicle without insurance. He was sentenced on 27 June at**

Bogus Taxi Drivers Sentenced



Peter Speer



Terence O'Leary



Melios Themistokleous

Camberwell Magistrates' Court to 4 months imprisonment, suspended for 12 months to carry out 200 hours of community service and disqualified for 12 months.

O'Leary appeared at Kingston Crown Court on 4 July 2013 and was jailed for two years for nine offences under the Fraud Act.

Themistokleous appeared at Highbury Corner Magistrates' Court and was sentenced to a 12 month community order and ordered to carry out community service for two counts of fraud. STC Chief Superintendent **Sultan Taylor** told *Call Sign*: "This investigation has resulted in three men who illegally operated as taxi drivers receive substantial sentences for their crimes. The Safer Transport Command continues to work with Transport for London to improve passenger safety by identifying illegal activity and bringing offenders to justice." TfL's Acting Director of Community Safety, Enforcement and Policing, **Siwan Hayward**, added: "The sentences given to these men

sends a clear message that fraudulent activities that put the travelling public at risk or undermined the legitimate and law abiding taxi trade will not be tolerated. The result highlights the important work that the police and TfL do every day to enforce the laws relating to taxis and private hire vehicles and identify and deal with those who act outside the law." TfL's Acting Director of Community Safety, Enforcement and Policing, **Helen Chapman** said: "We welcome the sentences handed down to these people illegally posing as licensed taxi drivers. Clearly they went to great lengths to try and portray themselves as legitimate taxi drivers but were still caught as a result of rigorous action by the Safer Transport Command and TPH teams. Today's sentencing is a stark reminder that the only way to become a legitimate taxi driver is through hard work and dedication by passing the world famous Knowledge of London."

Vicky Barnes, STC Media and Communications Assistant

Notting Hill repairs almost finished

It was 9 April 2013 when a water main burst along Notting Hill Gate and the road was shut. Taxi drivers have suffered with burst water mains before and we prepared ourselves for up to a week of traffic chaos. But when **Thames Water** discovered what they referred to as a huge cavern beneath the road, we knew that one week had gone out of the window and that we were looking at months.

Now heading into the sixth month of closing the road, Thames Water have told *Call Sign* that they have filled in one of the 'voids' under the road with expanding concrete, as well as fixing one of the two water mains. Explaining the problem, Thames Water's Head of Programming, **Jason Aldred** said: "It was a hugely complicated job because in addition to the void under the road which needed to be repaired, on top of the water pipes was a 24-inch gas main which we had to ask the National Grid to remove before we could get the repairs done."

They now hope to complete repairs by August 20, with the west-bound carriageway opening by the end of July...



A void beneath Notting Hill

REED FISHER STONE SETTING

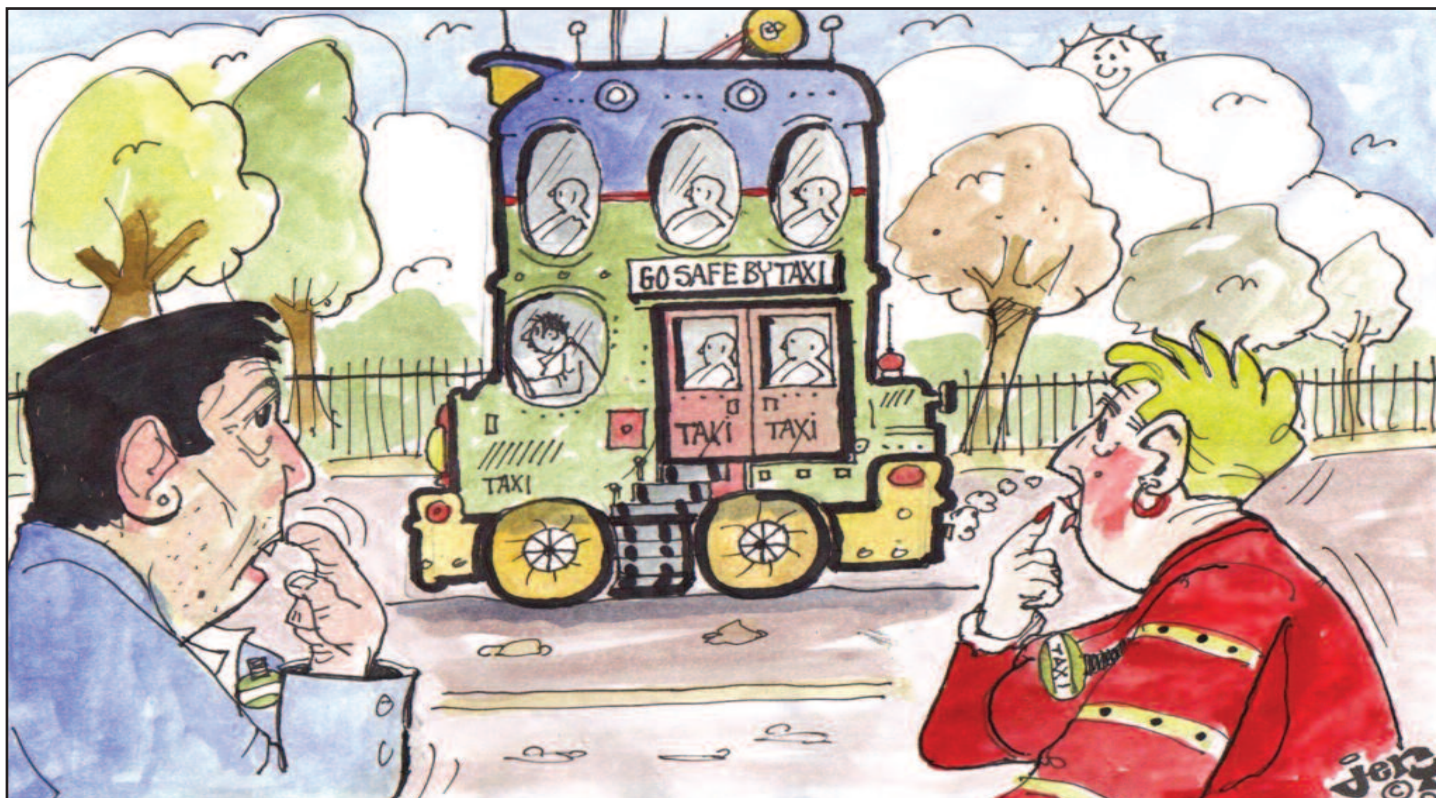
The setting of the memorial stone to Editor's son and Dial-a-Cab weekend dispatcher, Reed Fisher, will take place at 2pm on Sunday 4 August 2013 at:

**The Western Cemetery,
Bulls Cross Ride,
Cheshunt, Herts.**



Reed and wife Lara

Jery's World



"I heard that Boris was looking at reducing taxi emissions, but I think he may have gone a bit over the top...!"

Bank of England App

To save you asking, nope, there are no free samples on offer, but yes, former **Dial-a-Cab** client, the **Bank of England**, has launched its first App to give downloaders an amazing look behind the scenes with a virtual tour of the Threadneedle Street building, its design features, architecture, working rooms and yes, its gold and cash vaults!

The virtual tour looks at the Bank's inner workings with a new iOS, Android and web App. The tour is - perhaps surprisingly - free to download and use and offers a rare chance to see the inner workings of the UK's foremost economic institution.

Included in the tour is a 360-degree picture of the gold vaults, which houses more than 400,000 bars of the precious metal deep within the bank. The gold is held for the UK government, central banks and members of the London Bullion Market Association. The bank itself only owns two standard bars and two Roman bars. A gold bar is currently worth around £350,000, making the total value of the room at around £140,000,000,000 - although none has ever been stolen other than in an episode of **Thunderbirds** and in the movie, **The Lavender Hill Mob**. The bank say their security was updated after M'lady informed them!

The tour also includes pictures of the cash vault, where some of the bank's vast cash hoard is held, as well as the Garden Court, which is at the heart of the building.

A Bank of England spokesperson told **Call Sign**:

"Most of the Threadneedle Street building is a working space devoted to monetary and financial stability. But it is a recognisable landmark to many people and the app provides a unique glimpse of some of the Bank's more significant locations behind its familiar facade."

The App and virtual tour is at: www.bankofengland.co.uk/virtualtourapp



The Bank's gold vaults with an estimated value of **£140 billion**

Call Sign

August 2013

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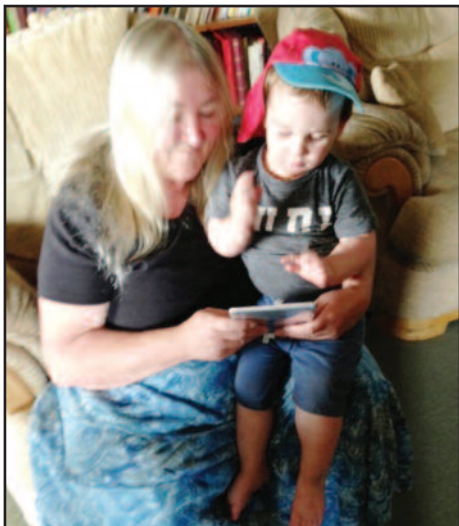
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DaC Twitter competition winner Jean Beer shows iPad mini to her son

As many of you know, **Dial-a-Cab** has a *Twitter* presence. In fact, we've been on *Twitter* since 2009. Admittedly, this account has been neglected somewhat; posting regular tweets of interest to Members and the public is no mean feat in the noise that is *Twitter*!

So we decided to do something about it. Recently we've been tweeting about our App, the 'Supersides' we've installed on some of our Member's cabs and the progress of the new Mobile Data Terminal rollout. Of course, this is of interest to customers and Members, but there's only so much you can say about these subjects!

We realised that in order to gain more followers (many of whom are potential new cus-

DaC Twitter Winner

Expanding DaC's social media presence

tomers and Members), we would have to tweet out something more interesting alongside our *propaganda* tweets. This is why, if you follow us on *Twitter*, you will have noticed that every day we tweet something different. Often this is DaC-related, but we're also sharing anything we think may interest you and the public: free Apps and games, interesting blogs, articles and so on.

However, it doesn't matter how interesting or regular your tweets are if you don't have many followers! So we decided to find a way to gain a respectable number of followers quickly in order to get our name out there. One very successful model in use by a number of organisations is competitions. As this is Dial-a-Cab's 60th year, we decided to arrange a *Twitter* competition to celebrate 60 years of providing a world-class black taxi service to London.

On 1st July we announced the competition on *Twitter*, which would end when we reached 1,000 *Twitter* followers. On 12th July, we passed that goal and the lucky winner was randomly picked from all the entrants. She is Jean Beer (@jeansmiles) of Bristol. We sent her a white and silver iPad Mini direct from the Apple Store. Congratulations to Jean!

We designed the competition in such a way that every single entrant would have to visit our Website and be presented with adverts for our App and services. This type of targeted advertising ensured our brand and services were being seen by potential customers. We saw an increase

in our customer App downloads during this period, so clearly the campaign worked.

Unfortunately we couldn't open the competition to Members or staff. This was our first *Twitter* competition and we didn't want it to backfire with followers crying foul if a Member or employee won! However, based on the success we've had with this competition, we will be holding further competitions on *Twitter* and Facebook. Some of these will be for Members only, some for the public.

We have increased our social media presence and will be using these platforms to communicate more with our customers, Members and the public in general. It would be great if you could follow us on whichever platform(s) you use and spread the word a bit. If you have any suggestions for content, please feel free to let us know; we want to use these platforms to promote the DaC.

On *Twitter*, you can follow @DialaCab at: <https://twitter.com/dialacab> On Facebook, you can 'like' our page at the following site:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dial-a-Cab/143343275702145>

On LinkedIn, you can link to us at: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/dial-a-cab>

On YouTube you can subscribe to our video feed (including MDT training videos) at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/dialacabUK>

Jon Winterburn
DaC Network Administrator

One-to-One Personal Service.

Martin Cordell & Co.

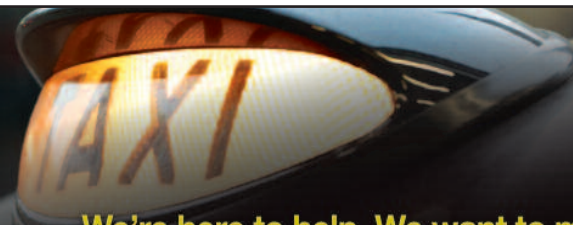
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With Dial-a-Cab now well into its sixtieth year, Call Sign thought it would give a brief historical timeline of this Society's progress...

It was Thursday Jan 29 1953; taxi driver **Bonnie Martyn** met a friend **Albert Hall**. They were both members of the **Radio Owner Drivers Association (RODA)** but had heard of discrepancies in the accounts and that the circuit was in financial trouble. They decided to call a meeting in the back of Bonnie's taxi, which was to be parked on the **Grosvenor Gardens shelter rank** on Sunday 29 March. Joining them were fellow drivers **Eric Stoffel** and **Arthur Cutmore**.

They concluded that **RODA** was finished and that a radio circuit for owner drivers was needed. They advertised for anyone interested and set a date for those drivers to attend the **Albany Tavern** at the northern end of **Great Portland Street**. It was to be on Sunday 7 June 1953. A collection was made to go towards any costs and £200 was raised. A second meeting was called for Sunday June 21 at the **Barley Mow** in Horseferry Road where drivers were signed up and it was agreed that they should look for an office from which they could dispatch work.

On Monday 10 August 1953, estate agent **Jack Rose** calls Bonnie Martyn and tells him he has found an ideal property for them to rent at **172 Pentonville Road**. The offer is accepted. Following a meeting at Dial House in Shaftesbury Avenue, it was agreed to install phone lines at the new offices on Thursday 1 October – by then the premises had been repainted and had new pipes fitted outside – all done under the stewardship of **Frank Duncan**.

Then on Thursday 12 November 1953, the first-ever committee meeting was held at Bonnie Martyn's home. They were told that for £2400 they could actually buy the lease rather than pay a monthly rent. The committee agreed

DIAL-A-CAB: THE TIMELINE



A piece of history: Bonnie Martyn meets the PCO's George Turnbull on 13 November 1953

tied into the taxi trade.

ODRTS then grew until on Monday 8 March 1965, - exactly 11 years since the official launch - the organisation moved to a four-storey building at **144 Shirland Road, Maida Vale**.

to go ahead and were granted a bank loan, but all the committee had to offer security against it. In addition to the original four and Frank Duncan, they had now been joined by **Doug Naismith, Alec Cobden** and **David Fiertag**.

The following day, November 13 1953, **Bonnie Martyn** met the **PCO's George Turnbull** to inform him of our progress.

Then on Friday 18 December 1953, the first jobs were dispatched, but most of the cabs couldn't receive the signals. **Pye Radio** stepped in and just over one month later on Tuesday 26 January 1954, the first official job was dispatched. The pick-up address was responding to local advertising and went from Pentonville Road to Gamages store in Old Holborn (now just Holborn).

On Tuesday 8 March 1955, **ODRTS** was officially launched by **Sir Ian Fraser MP**, famous for his work on behalf of the disabled. He had been blinded during active service in WW1 and worked tirelessly to promote welfare for blind people and ex-servicemen. He was also a founding member and national president of the **Royal British Legion** – an organisation forever

Following a Board meeting on Friday 1 June 1984, it was decided that as of Monday 11 June, **ODRTS** would adopt the catchier trading name of **Dial-a-Cab**.

Two months later, on 11 August 1984, **DaC** moved to their third home at **Brunswick Place** and the builders moved in to turn it into the type of place that **DaC** needed with its increased staff numbers..

Following a great deal of preparation, 22 Nov 1988 was the day when **DaC** attempted to leave voice dispatching and to go live with **data dispatch**. The system failed due to an incorrect **MDI** calculation.

Five months later, on Saturday 29 April 1989, **DaC** made its second data dispatch attempt. This time it proved to be successful and has stayed on ever since.

Saturday 7 June 2003 saw **DaC** celebrate its 50th anniversary with a ball for 160 people at **Vinopolis** in the City, organised by **Brian Rice's** secretary, **Jacqui Chart**.

On Saturday 5 May 2007, **Dial-a-Cab** moved to our current premises at **Dial-a-Cab House**.

And the story continues...

Call Sign says...

UBER: MADNESS OR SUICIDAL?

In our April 2011 issue, **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Jon Robinson (E88)** sent us a *Sunday Times* article concerning San Francisco cab company **Uber**, in which it said they intended coming to London with their US app system of hiring stretch limo cabs. Well, over two years on and **Uber's** Head of Operations **Ryan Graves** says that **TfL** have given them the permission they needed, except that the stretch limos have been replaced by a car service.

Although **Uber** has been available in London in a small upmarket way, they now intend running a **UberX** service, which is a cheaper version using – they claim – **BMW 3 Series** or the **Toyota Prius**.

The reason for this article isn't to offer publicity for **Uber**, but to show why we believe their service is madness and suicidal. They say they will be 40% cheaper than **Addison Lee** and up to 50% less than taxi prices and as an example quote **Gresham Street** in the City to **Kensington Church Street** for a price of £13. They talk of a minimum £3 and then £1.75 per mile.

Mr Graves calls their new service a "game changer." Well if they can pay their "chauffeurs" and make a profit on that £13, then we may as well all go home. So can they survive at those prices, unless they work as they do in Los Angeles? Over there, the **UberX** service is banned, but that seems to matter little to them. Why are they banned? Well it seems they use ordinary people with a car but without the correct licence. Surely **TfL** would be fussier should **Uber** attempt that here?

Mr Graves went on to say that in regard to getting their initial licence for operating in London, **Uber** found **TfL** 'to be the most progressive regulatory system they had worked with!' He added that unlike the **UberX** service in some countries, London's would not involve passenger sharing and that their first job here would be to take on **Addison Lees** and then us!

Call Sign asked San Francisco driver **Charles Rathbone**, who at one time drove a **TX2** up and down the city's famed hills, what he knew about **UberX**. He told us:

"**UberX** operate here in SF and they can survive quite nicely in London - even at those prices! In fact, you can be sure that London's cyberspace is awash today with emailed offers of free **UberX** rides, sign-up freebies and generous referral bonuses. Their cars may be fancy models on day-one, but by day-two they will be picking up passengers in virtually any model car. The cars are private passenger vehicles with non-commercial insurance and plates, no inspections, no training, no hack permits or any other kind of permit and no numbering or signage of any sort. Rates are set by **Uber** and can rise at will, notably in times of public disaster. The drivers and vehicle owners are just about anyone with a used car, an email address and a few hours a week to kill. **UberX**, **Lyft**, **Sidecar** and other faux-rideshares are direct challenges to regulators. They use blitzkrieg tactics to overwhelm regulators and force an immediate de facto deregulation of for-hire services. The roguish nature of their businesses makes them irresistible to the twenty-something generation."

It's not often that we and the Griffin family chase after the same enemy, but there's a first time for everything...!



Charles Rathbone: "Blitzkrieg tactics!"

PAM CAMPBELL

10 July 1951 – 1 July 2013

Although **Dial-a-Cab** staff knew that former account manager **Pam Campbell** had been diagnosed with lung cancer, news of her death was greeted with shock as well as sadness.

Pam began her employment with DaC on 1 September 1997 as a Trainee Account Manager before eventually becoming a fully-fledged account manager, taking care of a number of important accounts.

Following her diagnosis, Pam was given an extended period of sick leave, but on 30 November 2012, having notched up 15 years' continuous service, she announced her retirement and came to a special ceremony in the DaC boardroom. She looked surprisingly well and enjoyed the presentation and party afterwards.

Pam was a popular member of the ground floor accounts department and we asked



Antoinette Gardner to pen a few words about Pam.

"Pamela was my dearest friend. She and

I had been friends at work for over eleven years and she will be so dearly missed. Pam was a hard-working, intelligent, caring and very thoughtful person. She was very close to her friends and so many people cared about her.

One of Pamela's best traits was that she always lived her life to the fullest and loved to laugh and smile. It isn't possible to put the importance of friendship and how much Pamela meant to me. She positively influenced my life in so many ways and I will miss her with all my heart.

Pamela, thank you for your friendship, I will miss you forever and never forget all of the time we spent together. God Bless..."

Pam leaves a husband, John and their two sons, Colin and Darrell. Our sincere condolences go to them all..

Changing London!

This pictorial look at our city and shows just how much things have changed over the years. There was a time when the roads were filled with cars, buses and taxis with the odd bicycle weaving its way through the traffic.

At the same time **Dial-a-Cab** taxis needing to stop briefly to pick up their radio passenger would take the chance and stop wherever there was a safe place to do so – often resulting in a PCN.

And there was a slight buzz in the air if a Rolls Royce or Bentley came out to take its owners to one of London's posh restaurants or hotels.

Now it seems that Mayor Johnson is intent on giving priority to cyclists, Pedicabs can do as they wish while we still get presented with PCNs and Rollers are no longer exciting with Ferraris and Lamborghinis brought over from middle east countries such as Saudi Arabia by their owners to be paraded around Knightsbridge are the vogue and show Londoners what a triple exhaust system sounds like!

Yep, London sure is changing...!!!



Bikes now take priority



Pedicabs can stop on double yellow lines with impunity



One of many Ferraris parading around SW1

COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT



Hello ladies & gents

We are now well in to the school holiday period and I am sure that this August will certainly be an improvement on last year. Having often mentioned that coverage at certain times of the day seems always to be a problem, it is even more important now that it is as good as it can be. The Contact Centre encounters more problems in the busy morning period (predominantly in the West and South West areas) than at any other time of the day but I have always believed that you, the members, will try your best to help dispatchers and I continue to do so.

I am asking you to accept and offer appro-

priate times on any problem trips without the need to time your meter out or engage the meter if you feel that the trip may not be to your liking. Reasonable delays will normally be accepted, unrealistic times to force the dispatchers to recover or scrub a trip may well jeopardise an account. In this job you can never be too clever and a journey that starts out as a short trip, often turns into a roader. It is so important that you play your part.

New terminals...

The fitting programme for the new terminal is well under way and quite a number of you have now been fitted. To answer to some of your queries, the list below explains important changes to the MDT software that the IT department have implemented to improve the day-to-day operation. All new fits will have the upgraded software but for those fitted before 22nd July, you will need to pop in to the fitting bay at Roman Way. It takes around 5 minutes.

Map search of offer: When a trip is offered, if the driver presses the Map tab, the street will be copied into the search box enabling a map search prior to accepting the trip.

Zone screens will refresh automatically every minute.

Charge card C code entry has now been enabled giving support to accounts like Goldman Sachs (EC10).

Dispatch messages now automatically move to next line at end of previous line without having to press the down button.

Since the introduction of the *Superside* campaign together with regular information on *Twitter*, downloads of the DaC App have risen in a very positive way. This has further increased the number of trips ordered or taken on Credit Cards, which I hope will continue month on month. With this in mind, it really is very important that all Credit Card receipts via the new PED (Pin Enabled Device) are checked before the passenger leaves your taxi.

If you see a ****Void**** or ****Cancelled**** transaction at the bottom of the printed receipt or the words ****No Connection**** the transaction has not gone through successfully and you must either repeat the process or arrange alternative payment.

For those of you taking a well earned summer break, have a good one. For those still working, drive safely be very lucky...

Allan Evans
DaC Compliance Officer



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Do we need the Conditions of Fitness???

This issue's Mailshot has TfL's Managing Director of Surface Transport, Leon Daniels, replying to a driver's query regarding the Nissan NV200 and the Conditions of Fitness. Mr Daniels adds that there are always companies that approach him who would like to see the CoF – especially the turning circle – abolished so that more vehicles can enter the licensed taxi market. Call Sign knows of several that are "ready" for London, but minus the 25 foot turning circle. It's also no secret that the Vito has ongoing rear steer problems, so we asked the first seven Dial-a-Cab drivers we came across whether we still needed the CoF...

Stuart Miller (N01 + TX taxi)

We should definitely keep the 25' turning circle. It aids manoeuvrability and therefore safety. For example allowing us to get close to the kerb and other tight spaces so that passengers can get in or out safely and with ease. I've seen Vito owners struggle to make the turn downstairs at Euston Station rank, choosing instead to take the wider of the two lanes so as to make the turn, even at the expense of losing a place in the queue by allowing TX drivers to go first!



Stephen Young (E02 + Vito)

We should keep the CoF even though my own Vito has continued to have rear steer problems at 19000 and 26000 miles. I do still use the rear steer when necessary and luckily can use any MB dealership for servicing and repairs, a far nicer experience than some establishments I could mention!



Dave Jennings (S91 + TX)

Relax the Conditions of Fitness? Absolutely not! I have two friends with Vitos and I'm told that even though the rear steer can cost £1300 to fix, they are keeping their cabs and seek to defend their choice of taxi. I've seen PHVs struggle to fit into spaces to pick up or set down that I know I could get into with ease!



Adam McGann (J09 + Vito)

We must keep the CoF – I do not think we should flood the market with many different types/shapes of taxis as in the provinces. We should keep the distinctive Vito/TX from the viewpoint of public recognition and safety to be beyond doubt. I've got enough problems already convincing the travelling public that I'm the real thing!



Steve Regan (K25 + TX)

We should definitely keep the CoF, otherwise we lose our identity. As I see it, the obvious benefit to volume production vehicles being introduced would be cheaper running costs and a wider choice of service facilities, but at the expense of our iconic recognition as *real* taxis - and that's not good.



Dave Willett (T27 + TX)

We should without doubt keep the CoF as they are. However, the TX4 should be more economical and have a bit more 'torque' with perhaps a 1.5 or 1.8 litre turbo-charged engine and even four-wheel drive for winter or adverse



conditions, which would give drivers greater confidence and be more re-assuring for our passengers. While I accept we have a duty to carry disabled passengers, I personally have never used the 'step' which takes too long to set up and the ramp which takes up too much room in the boot. But yes, to get back to the original question, we must keep the Conditions as they are.

Stewart Lewis (D20 + TX)

The CoF should be kept, yes, but revised by somebody with a brain! One of the things I learned during a visit to the *Museum of London* while on the *Cab Guiding Course* was that in 1906, when the *Renault Unic* cab was introduced onto London's streets, it didn't have a reverse gear! So to compensate and allow easy access to the narrow streets, the cab was designed to turn to face the opposite direction in one continuous movement, hence the 25ft turning circle! Another point to bear in mind is that with saloon cars used as taxis, there is often no physical division between the driver and passengers as in purpose built cabs, which can leave the driver vulnerable to assault or attack by less polite fares...



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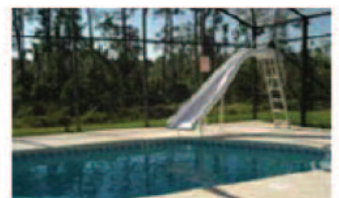
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We each have a hobby or other interest away from the cab and DaC Roman Way technician **Steve Thomas** has two – Welsh Rugby and a passion for fishing. Steve takes both seriously, but his fishing is almost akin to a religion! When *Call Sign* saw a photo of Steve with the ugliest fish we had ever seen – albeit a really poor quality photo – we had to know the story and Steve was happy to tell us...

"I recently spent some time at **Cleverley Mere** in the beautiful Essex countryside of Hatfield Peverel, I fish there regularly; the gravel lake covers about fifteen acres with lush green reeds, an island and overhanging trees that offer shade for fish and anglers alike on warmer days. It's all very peaceful.

The lake varies in depth from four to eighteen feet, so the fish, of which there are plenty, have loads of room to tease the angler and challenge us to catch them. There are Rudd, Perch, Pike and plenty of Carp, some of them very large indeed. Some of these fish can attain 30 - 40lbs or even more. There are several Mirror Carp in excess of 40lbs and they even have names, yes, fish with names!

On the day in question, I set up my gear and made up my bait. Carp like hotdog and sour cream bolie on a bed of chilli hemp; it's an irresistible delicacy to them!

Anyway, once the trap was set, I erected my tent and settled down to wait and wait. It was thirteen hours before my 'bite alarm' went off and it took me almost forty five minutes to reel in **Big Joe**. At 50lbs 8oz he's just about the biggest **Mirror Carp** in the lake. **Chester** and **Hendrix** are two others that weigh in on the hefty side as well.

I pulled him in steadily, lifted him gently out of the water and grabbed him firmly as best I could with both arms while we had our picture taken and then lowered him equally carefully back into the lake and held him gingerly by his tail for half an hour or so while he caught his breath, before finally releasing him back to freedom.

After a forty-five minute fight against a rod,

CALL SIGN MEETS Big Joe!



Fortunately the poor quality of the photo covers the ugliness of Big Joe!

the blighter is pretty tired and so if I were to simply release him immediately after catching him, he would be unable to catch his breath, be confused and dis-oriented which might not be too good for his health, so I eased him back into the water and gave him a chance to settle down. But I still got 'im!"

Steve beamed proudly with a twinkle in his eye as he told us about his brief liaison with Big Joe! For any aficionados out there, Steve's kit comprises **Fox Warrior** fishing rods with

3lb test curve, **Shimano** 10,000 bait runners and **Amnesia** line with 15lb breaking strain. Completing the set is the **Snake-Bite** hook line and **Delkim TXi** bite alarm.

More info from Cleverley Fisheries on: 01245 424881 email cleverleyfisheries@hotmail.com

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

The Dalston flower display

Of Anne and Tom Whitbread...

Many drivers have asked *Call Sign* if Tom Whitbread's wife Anne has replenished her usual floral display this year on their Dalston home balcony. The answer is that yes she has!

So if you are sitting at the traffic lights on the corner of Queensbridge Road and Dalston Lane, just look up to the right. The balcony runs along the side of their house overlooking Parkholme Road. If you are unfortunate enough not to be travelling that way, Tom has sent us a photo of this year's display...



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Drilling for gas... in London???



Matthew Pencharz:
"We won't dig up
Trafalgar Square!"

In a fascinating response to Nilima Choudhury in *Responding to Climate Change*, Mayor of London **Boris Johnson's** Environmental Advisor, **Matthew Pencharz**, refused to deny that parts of London could be dug up in the search for shale gas. The recovering process, known as *fracking**, is covered in controversy and following a huge deposit discovered near Blackpool that is awaiting a decision for fracking to begin, it is claimed that there could be considerable supplies beneath the streets of the capital

– quite possibly beneath the very spot that your **Dial-a-Cab** taxi is currently parked! Mayor Johnson is expected to decide early next year where London should apply for a permit following tests that are expected to be completed by the end of 2013.

Mr Pencharz admitted that it was unlikely central London would be overrun by drilling rigs but added that all options needed to be explored if they involved any possible help with providing low carbon.

"If there are deposits in London – there might be, but we won't know until later in the year – but it's certainly worth having a look. The government is obviously talking about the future of shale gas and there may be deposits on the very outer edges of London. But we're not going to be digging up Trafalgar Square!"

Boris Johnson gave a clue in a *Daily Telegraph* article when he said that no stone should be left unfracked to keep the lights on following a scare story about future power cuts. The Mayor said:

"It's glorious news for humanity. It doesn't need the subsidy of wind power. I don't know whether it will work in Britain, but we should get fracking right away!"

Following on from the legacy of 2012, Mayor Johnson published his *2020 Vision* paper where it tells about the future of London's energy. Emphasising the point, Mr Pencharz added that the power from shale gas had the potential of giving us cleaner, greener, more secure and cheaper retail energy and City Hall has applied to the UK energy regulator for a licence to allow the GLA to buy excess electricity produced by residents and public bodies which it could sell on cheaply to organisations such as railway operators and hospitals etc.

Air quality concern is going to be an even bigger topic over the next 12 months with average nitrogen dioxide levels in the capital said to be over twice the European legal limit and much of the blame being squarely aimed at diesel vehicles such as buses and lorries – and of course taxis. By 2016, the Mayor has says that he wants 20% of London's buses to be hybrid, which his office says emits four times less nitrogen

dioxide compared to diesel buses and half the amount of CO₂. However, the new buses are said to cost over £350,000 each and as any taxi driver can already tell you, London is totally flooded with buses that outside of peak hours are running around well over half empty. Mr Pencharz also said that City Hall might be testing some single decker electric buses which are much cleaner than even the current hybrids – he admitted that there was currently no such thing as an electric double decker to look at – but added that the electric route could well be too costly.

The Mayor's Environmental Advisor then spoke to RTCC about taxis and said that the vehicles we earn our living with are also London's heaviest polluters. He added that they had not found a definitive replacement, but mentioned the London Taxi Company's hoped-for development of the hybrid taxi it displayed at the London Olympics and which, in the long term, would be powered by hydrogen. He said that substantial progress has yet to be made.

The climate change problem was brought up with mentions of the recent hurricanes in the US and a question as to what would happen to London if a *Hurricane Sandy* ever hit our shores.

The Thames Barrier was mentioned but Mr Pencharz also said that the Mayor has initiated other flooding-related initiatives quoting '*Drain London*' which looks at parts of London where flooding could happen and to put in plans about how to make current infrastructure more resilient.

**Fracking is the process of drilling down into the earth before a high-pressure water mixture is directed at the rock to release the gas inside. Water, sand and chemicals are injected into the rock at high pressure which allows the gas to flow out to the head of the well. The process is carried out vertically or, more commonly, by drilling horizontally to the rock layer. The process can create new pathways to release gas or can be used to extend existing channels. It would also create many new jobs. However, it also is said to have some dangerous by-products – especially in water pollution...*



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Works at Palestra

Until October 2013 there will be works around TfL's **Palestra** building, starting on the side of the building facing Blackfriars Road. As a result, the nearside southbound traffic lane will be suspended for about three weeks.

From early August to early September, work will be carried out on the Union Street side of the building and Union Street will operate eastbound only between Blackfriars Road and Nelson Square. Signage at the Great Suffolk junction will advise westbound vehicles that entry into Union Street is for access to Nelson Square only, with other westbound traffic diverted north along Great Suffolk Street and via Southwark Street and Blackfriars Road. A contra-flow cycle lane will operate westbound on Union Street, with a barrier to segregate this from the main eastbound traffic.

Union Street will be returned to two-way operation as soon as possible and remaining works on Gambia Street and the north side of the building will be carried out in September and early October.

THE MISSING DAC CHAIRMAN!

Eli 'Trixie' Solomons

Call Sign is proud of the files it keeps on Dial-a-Cab's past history. It has taken many years for this magazine to get such a complete picture of its past and those that helped build DaC up. We have had 11 Chairmen since the Society's beginning in 1953 and many Board Members.

The Chairmen were Bonnie Martyn (1953 – 1957), Frank Duncan (1957 – 1959 and 1962 – 1964), Eli (Trixie) Solomons (1959 – 1962), Jack Russell (1964 – 1969), Jack Taylor (1969 – 1972), Martin Gellman (1972 – 1976), Peter Fennymore (1976 – 1984), Ken Burns (1984 – 1990), Phil Messias (1990 – 1992), Aubrey Siteman (1992 – 1996), Brian Rice (1996 - present day).

Ken Burns, Aubrey Siteman and current Chairman Brian Rice survive the list. But *Call Sign* has photos and information on all of them - except for one. We have never been able to track a photo or grab any info on Eli 'Trixie' Solomons. He had been Chairman from 1959 until 1962 and was a cousin to Martin Gellman, but Martin hadn't any photos of Trixie, nor could he tell *Call Sign* much about him. Only one driver currently on DaC was here in the days of Trixie Solomons and that is Alan Lewis (A44), but he was a mere youngster at the time.

But in July we received an email from Janet Baine, who had been looking at our *Call Sign Online* facility and asked if we could get any info on her uncle, Harry Croft. But the email mentioned that Harry and Trixie Solomons were good friends, so we grabbed the opportunity of getting some info on DaC's "missing" Chairman...

Janet, who lives in Shirley, Croydon wrote:

"I was interested to see your various articles mentioning Trixie Solomons. He was a lovely man who lived opposite my uncle - who we always called 'Bon' but whose real name was **Harry Croft**. I just wondered if there were any drivers out there who remember Harry. I read the article about jokers putting a couple of kippers in **Trixie Solomons'** engine and must say that was exactly the sort of thing my uncle used to do!

Harry drove a taxi in the 1950s and 1960s. One day he was hailed by two Americans dressed as GIs who 'hired' him to go to an address near London Airport but obviously had no intention of paying the fares. He was beaten up very badly and robbed but not before he broke his assailant's nose. Both men had escaped from a prison ship docked in London and were trying to get to the airport to get back to America. They severely beat Harry and stole his takings. The beating was so bad that it was reported on in *The Evening News*. Harry was never the same after that.

Trixie Solomons was a good and kind man who was a great friend and support to my uncle, as was his wife Minnie. They were both much loved by our family. He was a tall, Jewish man with a long face that often looked sad and thoughtful, but it would crack into laughter very easily. He was so lovely to us. Trixie kept encouraging Harry - who had been a bus driver during the war - to do the Knowledge. Eventually he did and Harry's daughter, Bettina, used to walk through London with her father so she could help him memorise streets and landmarks! If it hadn't been for Trixie's kindness and help, Harry wouldn't have had his business, which meant the family had a much lovelier way of life than if he had stayed in his job as a bus driver.

Later on, with cars still few and far between, my uncle Harry would travel to Shirley and pick us all up in the back of his taxi and then drive us up to Whetstone, all the while poking fun at those who lived south of the river! Trixie's wife, Minnie, was always very welcoming. Whenever we visited them (living just across the road from Harry), Trixie would give me a ten shilling note.

My uncle Harry had a very rough life after the death of his parents had effectively split the family up. He lived for a while in the workhouse before re-joining my mother. He and a friend had acrobatic skills and their variety act 'The Great Warzans' had them going round the halls. Harry's life in his 20s and 30s is lost to me, but after the war Trixie encouraged him to buy that cab. The rest is history.

If anyone at Dial-a-Cab knows anything about my uncle Harry, I would love to know about it and perhaps you could let the Editor know. And if nothing else, your former Chairman Trixie Solomons is not quite as much of a mystery as he was before..."

Janet Baine
Shirley, Croydon



Trixie (back left), Harry Croft, Harry's daughter, Bettina (front left) and Trixie's wife Minnie

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

Kupkake's Korner



Going to work!

My mate bought a Vito
now he likes to go to work,
wears the shirt and ties complete
in his silver, shiny Merc.

Shame about the steering
It sometimes lets him down,
So even though he looks the part
He comes home with a frown.

Another mate got a TX4
sooner him than me,
sitting cramped against the door
just like the TX3.

Best cab I had was a Beardmore
Hand-made and built to last,
had only 3 doors - not 4
with wings of fibreglass.

Red leather upholstery
Petrol-engined hush,
economical and speedy
perfect for a mush.

Long before speed cameras
I was in Queensbridge Road,
in the early morning hours
empty without a load.

I hit the bridge at 60
and the Beardmore left the deck,
4 wheels wildly spinning
I thought I'd have a wreck!

But she landed in a straight line
and I just motored on,
no damage, everything fine
that's why it's my number one.

But I'm happy with my Metro
even though it's 10 years old,
Like me, it's a retro
from a time when we were bold.

Copyright Kupkake 2013

We asked what you gain from having a Novus camera installed in your taxi...

- * Get a discount off your insurance premiums using the camera
- * Provides undisputed evidence
- * Reduces thefts, attacks on drivers and 'crash for cash' schemes
- * Provides clear facts as to what happened in an accident
- * Resolves liability disputes immediately
- * Prevents spurious whiplash claims, including those from third parties not even in the vehicles
- * Clarifies where impact occurred and extent of damage
- * Provides proof the passenger hasn't followed safety procedure such as wearing seat belt

Why a Novus camera....

- * No on-going cost – one off payment
- * Free software and PC player
- * User friendly
- * Installation time approx 30mins
- * Discreet camera

Features

- * Continuously records onto SD card
- * Automatically overrides old non important clips and keeps clips with incidents
- * Records vital data such as speed, incident location via Google map, real time and date via GPS
- * Records audio for additional evidence
- * Easy to remove from vehicle every night or to transfer to another vehicle
- * Simple and easy software to use
- * Easy to send clips of incidents to organisation such as insurance companies

Fact: Every day in the UK there are over 1200 whiplash claims and annually there are over 30,000 'crash for cash' fraudulent insurance claims. Taxi (and private hire) vehicles

CALL SIGN LOOKS AT NOVUS CCTV CAMERAS

Approved by TfL, insurance companies and affordable..



Fitting time is around 30 minutes and it will probably reduce insurance costs

are regularly being targeted and damaged, which is costing huge sums in increased premiums. On top of that, drivers are being attacked and have no way to prove that they are not at fault.

Novus Automotive Ltd now has a range of CCTV cameras which are approved by Transport for London. This means Novus Automotive Ltd now have an approved, affordable, easy to use camera for taxis.

And the benefits don't stop there! The **Novus View-I SSL Ruby** is also insurance approved and recognised. This means drivers

can contact their insurance company to see if they can get a discount off their premiums if using the Novus View-I SSL Ruby camera.

Novus has a number of qualified engineers on standby to professionally hard wire the camera into ignition. All cables are hidden from view providing a neat, clean and professional installation.

You can get more information with no obligation whatsoever by contacting Jason, James or Aimee on 0208 515 7827. Tell them you read about it in Dial-a-Cab's Call Sign magazine...

Danny beats clock in Chai run

Call Sign's Danny Fresco recently did a 10 kilometer run in aid of the **Chai Cancer Care** charity. Running in memory of his mum **Carole** and Editor's son **Reed**, Danny completed the run in a personal best time of 54 minutes and 16 seconds - not bad when you realise that the temperature was closing in on 90 degrees! At the time of going to print, his efforts had raised £365 for Chai on top of the £700 he raised last time.

Danny has been with **Call Sign** ever since current Editor **Alan Fisher's** first day in the hot seat in June 1997 and while **Danny** may not be as well-known as his *Taxi* columnist dad **Al**, his layout designs have helped **Call Sign** reach tremendous heights for an in-house magazine.

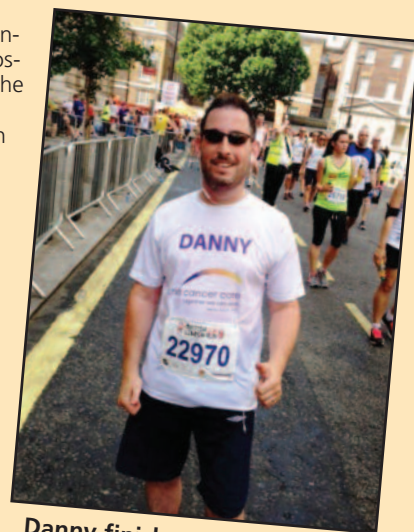
On Sunday 9 August 2009, Danny's mum, **Al's** wife and **Ed's** wife **Linda's** closest friend, **Carole Fresco** passed away in Barts Hospital, just six weeks after being diagnosed with breast cancer.

After **Carole's** death, Danny's family were greatly helped by **Chai Cancer Care** and in return Danny ran the **London British 10k** charity run and raised around £700 for the Hendon and Redbridge-based organisation that provides so much care for Jewish cancer patients and their families.

For his latest run, Danny decided to add Editor's son **Reed Fisher** to his memory list. **Reed** died last January, three years after being diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour. He had worked in the Dial-a-Cab call centre on Sundays for 23 years in addition to being an IT analyst with the Ford Motor Company.

Danny told **Call Sign**: "Chai Cancer Care are a small charity, but do such a fantastic job looking after families and patients who are, or have been, affected by cancer. Without them, I would have struggled to come to terms with the sudden loss of my fantastic mum who I miss so much. And in **Reed's** case, not only did they help his family but I know how much Chai helped **Reed** during his illness and gave him the support and comfort he needed. I will always be indebted to Chai for helping me and I feel honoured to run in aid of them."

Chai currently supports around 1600 patients at any one time at its 8 UK sites or in their own homes. This number is added to at the rate of around 80 new patients each month. Over the past 12 months, Chai provided over 12,000 individual therapy and counselling sessions. You can still donate to Danny's charity page at: <http://tinyurl.com/avatjvp>



Danny finishes the 10k run in 90 degrees!

Credit/Debit Card Step by Step Guide

4-page pullout repeated from last month



New terminal credit and debit card transactions

Daren Morley

Card Transaction Hail and Ride

With the imminent rollout of the new MDT I thought it would be a good idea to make drivers aware of the changes to card transactions.

Once you have the new MDT, you will also have a Pin Entry Device (PED) installed in your cab. This will sit in the front of the cab and you will pass it to the passenger at the end of the journey. There should be no need for you to handle the passenger's card in future.

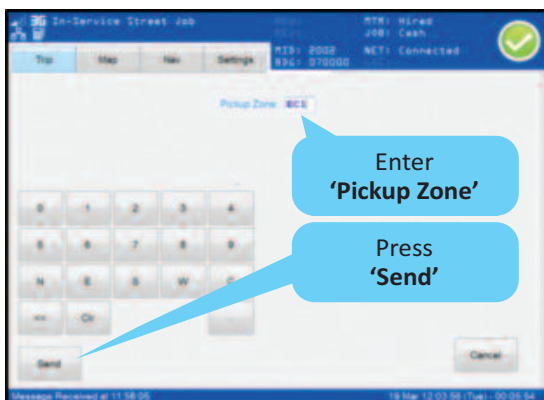
You are no longer required to pre-authorise a credit/debit card trip at the start of the journey.

The **'To Card'** button can be pressed at the start, during, or at the end of the journey.

1. Press the **'To Card'** button.



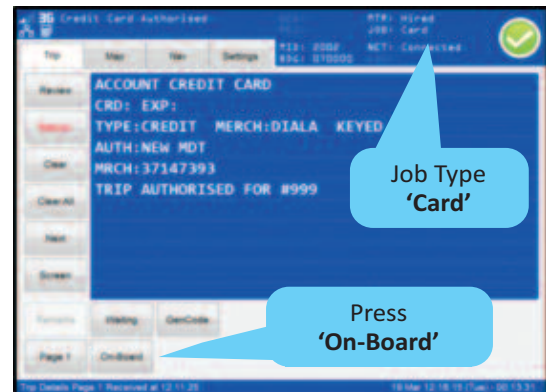
2. Enter the **'Pickup'** zone. Press the **'Send'** button to update the information.



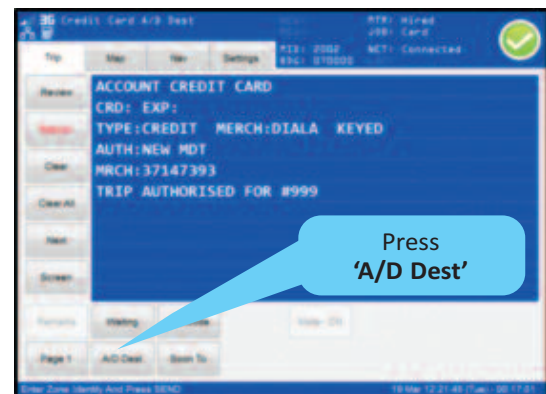
Now the terminal is in card mode, the trip detail screen changes to **'Account Credit Card'**. The job type is also displayed as **'Card'**.

Note: Although the screen shows **'Trip authorised #999'** no form of authorisation request has gone through the terminal. Only after the passenger enters their pin number on the chip and pin device is an authorisation requested.

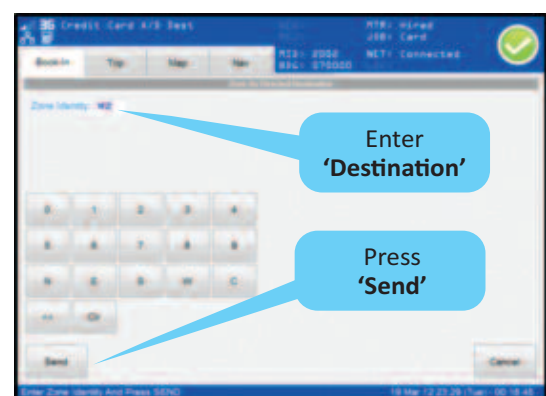
3. Press the **'On-Board'** button.



4. To add the destination of the trip, press the **'A/D Dest'** button.



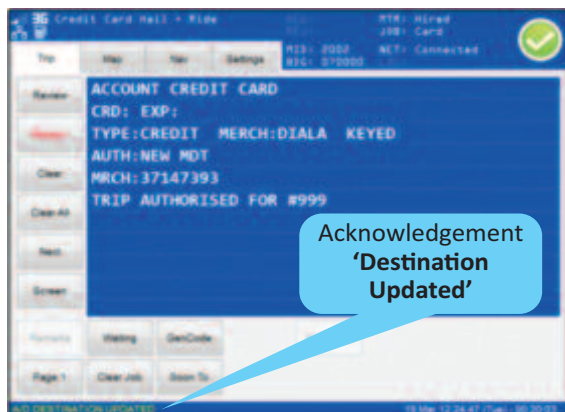
5. Enter your destination into the **'Zone Identity'** field. Press the **'Send'** button.



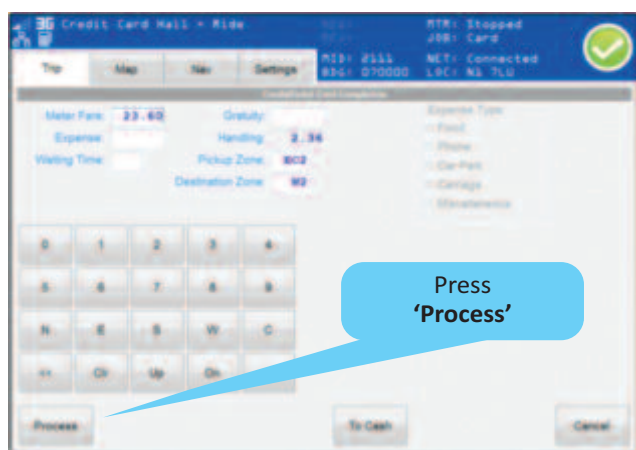
At the bottom of the screen you will see an acknowledgement confirming that the **'As Directed Destination'** has been updated.

Note: If you do not update the **'As Directed Destination'** the terminal will not allow the trip to be cleared.

Credit/Debit Card Step by Step Guide



6. You also have the option to **'Soon to Clear'** into the zone, when you are no more than **15** minutes away from the destination.
7. At the end of your journey stop the meter.
8. Press the **'Clear Job'** button.
9. The screen will change to the **Credit/Debit Card Completion** screen. Check that the amount is correct, then press the **'Process'** button.



Note: The handling charge of **10%**, minimum of **£2**, is automatically calculated.

10. The **Confirm Amounts** pop-up box will appear. Press the **'OK'** button to send the amount to the Chip and Pin device. Press **'Cancel'** to return to the **Credit/Debit Card Completion** screen.



11. The **Credit/Debit Card Completion** screen will turn grey and the following message appears at the bottom of the screen:

Use PED to Process Card

Note: If the transaction times out, the following message will appear at the bottom of the terminal screen:

Transaction Status Error: NotProcessed

Just re-press the **'Process'** button to resend the information to the Chip and Pin device.

Pass the Chip and Pin (PED) device to the passenger through your partition window or luggage door. The device will instruct the passenger and yourself through the process.

12. If the trip is under **£20**, and the passenger has a Contactless Card, they have the option of making a Contactless payment. All the passenger is required to do is touch their card onto the screen.

The terminal will print a merchant copy, which you retain. Press the green **'Enter'** button to clear the trip from your screen and send the information through to Dial-a-Cab.



Note: On a Contactless payment, the passenger does not receive a receipt. If the passenger requires a receipt, they should insert their card into the device.

13. Alternatively, if the card is not Contactless, or the transaction is over **£20**, the passenger inserts their card into the Chip and Pin device.



14. Once the passenger has entered their pin and pressed the green **'Enter'** button, and the transaction is authorised, the **customer copy** receipt will be printed on your terminal.
15. Tear off the **customer copy**, and ask the customer to press the green **'Enter'** button and then remove their card, and pass the **customer copy** receipt to the passenger. Ask the passenger to pass the Chip and Pin device back to you.

Credit/Debit Card Step by Step Guide



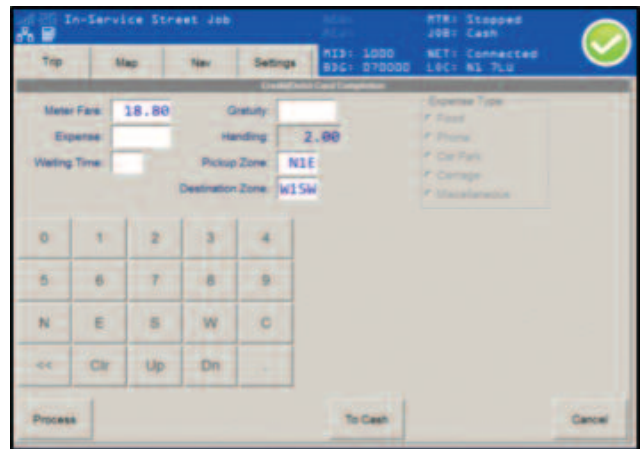
16. Once the passenger has removed their card, the **merchant copy** receipt will be printed. Tear off the **merchant copy** of the receipt and retain for a minimum of **12 months**.
17. Press the green **'Enter'** button to finish the transaction and send the information through to Dial-a-Cab.

Note: Always ensure when the receipt is printed that the receipt does not show ****Void**** or ****Cancelled**** this can occur when a connection to the host is lost or the customer presses the **'Cancel'** button.

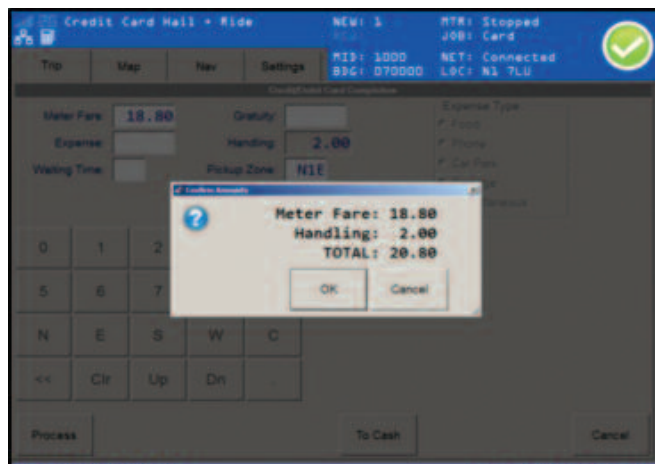
If the receipt does indicate that the transaction was unsuccessful. Pass the passenger their copy of the **'Voided'** receipt and explain that you need to carry out the transaction again. Press the green **'Enter'** button on the Chip and Pin device (PED) and then press **'Process'** on the terminal. Follow steps **10 to 17** to complete the transaction.



As soon as you press **'To Card'** the screen will switch to the **Credit/Debit Card Completion** screen.



2. You now need to manually input the **'Pick Up'** and **'Destination'** zones. Press your finger in the **'Pickup Zone'**, once the cursor is flashing in the field, enter where you picked the passenger up from. Carryout the same procedure for the **'Destination'** field. Check all the information entered is correct and then press the **'Process'** button.
3. There will be a few second's delay whilst the trip is created by the host at Dial-a-Cab House. Once the trip is created the confirm amount box will appear.



Change Cash Booking to Credit/Debit Card Booking

Cash trips can be changed to Credit/Debit card transactions even when the meter is in **'Stop'**.

1. From the **'Cash Completion'** screen press the **'To Card'** button.



4. Once you see **'A/D DESTINATION UPDATED'** at the bottom of the screen. Press the **'OK'** button and pass the Chip and Pin device (PED) to the passenger.
5. Follow steps **11 to 17** to complete the transaction.

Credit/Debit Card Step by Step Guide



Swipe Cards

As I am sure you are aware the UK and the majority of Europe are now Chip and Pin.

However if you ever have a visitor from the U.S. they currently don't have Chip and Pin cards. To process a card without a Chip and Pin follow the same procedures up to step 11.

Instead of putting their card into the Chip and Pin device the passenger must swipe their card down the right hand side of the B, with the magnetic strip facing inwards.

It is essential that the passenger does not swipe the card until you have pressed the **'Process'** button and the terminal states at the bottom of the screen **'Use PED to Process Card'**.

If the passenger sees the message **'Abort Card'** this indicates that they have swiped their card too early.

Press the **'Process'** button again to re-swipe card.



Charge cards

Dial-a-Cab Charge cards cannot currently be swiped through the PED. If you are hailed in the street by a Dial-a-Cab Charge card holder you will need to go to Gen Code and press the Charge card button.

You will then need to manually input the card details into the terminal.

There is a video on the DaC Member's Portal and a DVD, which will be available at the time of fitting.

The new terminal is now being fitted



Daren Morley
DaC Trainer

DaC driver Sean Farrell (B39) looks at trade history from a different angle

The Brethren of the Whip



The Wild Wild West ...End!

Part I

At one time, Hollywood was transfixed with the Western - cowboys,

'injuns' and gun fights! Tales of a gun fight at the OK Corral and suchlike gave script writers much fodder to peddle out to the masses eager to read about those exploits. But they missed out on the opportunity of the tales of cabmen in London and their own exploits with six-shooters...

In 1886, Samuel Wakelind was hailed in Regent Street by a smartly dressed man with an umbrella. He was told to drive to Upper Regent Street, which he did and was then told to turn around and drive to Waterloo Place. Once there, the passenger asked to go back up Regent Street.

By now, Wakelind was becoming slightly suspicious of the fare and made his feelings known to the gentleman. His passenger, the Earl of Shaftesbury, assured him that everything was OK and that he was willing to pay a shilling for each trip up and down Regent Street.

However, as they were passing the Polytechnic, a shot rang out and Wakelind looked about him to see a bullet had passed through the bodywork of the cab, missing him by inches. He jumped down and demanded to know what was happening. The Earl, who was not recognised by Wakelind, apologised, saying that the revolver (he had just purchased it for £3 from a shop in Piccadilly) had accidentally gone off and that if he would continue driving him he would be paid the princely sum of a fiver.

Wakelind responded by saying: "I value my life more than your fiver." At that moment, a policeman who had heard the gunshot appeared and as he looked into the cab, Shaftesbury placed the gun against his own temple and pulled the trigger. The policeman told Wakelind to drive round to the Middlesex hospital, which he did and both cabbie and PC carried the still-living earl into the hospital. But he was pronounced dead some three minutes later.

The Earl of Shaftesbury had just six months previously succeeded to the title following the death of his philanthropic father, who had helped establish several of the cab shelters that were appearing throughout London as well as being involved with several cab trade charities.

Less than a month later and in the same street there was another gunshot involving a

cab driver. William Wilson (badge 6379) had taken Lord Mandeville to the Café Royal. Whilst the Lord dined, he told Wilson to drive to his house in Great Stanhope Street (now Stanhope Gate) and pick up a revolver that he had forgotten to take with him (he was about to embark for Ireland and the Fenians – an Irish Republican Brotherhood splinter group – were a major threat). This Wilson did, but the gun, which was wrapped in a bit of paper, was unbeknown to him, fully loaded.

On returning to the rank outside the Café Royal, he could not resist showing the gun, which he described as "a pretty thing" to Henry Spinks, another cabman who was also waiting for his fare. Wilson pulled the gun out of his pocket and as they were inspecting it, the gun fired, missing Spinks by inches. The police were happy to accept Wilson's version about not knowing the gun was loaded but the magistrate said it was one of the most extraordinary stories he had ever heard and could not tolerate cabmen firing off loaded guns in the busy streets of London. Wilson assured the magistrate that if he would wait

for the return of Lord Mandeville from Ireland, all would be explained. Fortunately for Wilson, the magistrate adopted this course and released Wilson on his own recognisance. But Wilson's hope that Lord Mandeville would come to his aid was all in vain.

Mandeville never did attend court, even though a warrant was issued. He did send a letter which the magistrate refused to accept in which he apologised for the foolishness of the butler in not informing Wilson that the gun was loaded, but that the accident would never have happened had not Wilson "foolishly and inadvertently toyed with the revolver." After several legal arguments, the warrant against Mandeville was dismissed and Wilson was fined 40 shillings or to be imprisoned for one month in default. As Wilson did not make any comment, it is most likely that his fine was paid by Lord Mandeville's legal team...

(To be continued)

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

O2 rank relocated

Some essential works must be carried out in the area where the **North Greenwich Station taxi rank** covering the **O2** is, so during August the area will be closed and the taxi rank temporarily relocated.

August has been chosen as the time to carry out these essential works as there are fewer events taking place at The O2. We are working closely with AEG and colleagues in TfL to manage the temporary relocation and make sure there are clear and direct signs to show people where the temporary taxi rank is. The temporary rank will be in the area used by taxis during the 2012 Games and which is normally used as the private hire pick-up area after events. During events, the coach area will be used for taxis to provide more space for drivers and passengers.

The rank will be relocated from 07:00 on Monday 5 August until the end of August and along with the essential works the taxi rank lanes will also be re-marked

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Now even better!

Helps cut the cost of diesel – and reduce Emissions!

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Dial-a-Cab drivers with the amazing Alpha Pill

Order Today to take advantage of the special price of £16.95

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Or telephone your order to:
Stephen Vale at Only Cabs **020 3239 6101**



Down Wimbledon Way...



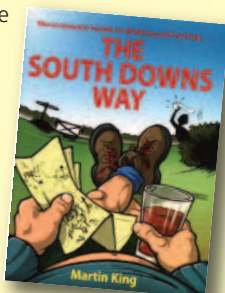
My regular stint on the ranks at Southfields Station and down at Gate 4 was my 27th consecutive Wimbledon Championships. Same old faces (ones you hadn't seen in 50

weeks), same old banter (all the old ones resurface) and the same old coin bags going over the counter in the bank on the '3rd Monday' - although you now have to pull out the fake pound coins before the counter clerk confiscates them!

One of my fellow cabbies, a guy that has helped me Marshall the Augustus Road rank for many years, is Martin King - who doubles-up as an author.

This year we got talking about keeping fit and the need to do regular exercise at our age (both 58) and the fact that it would be unlikely that I would consider adding to my 13 Marathons any time soon, preferring the more leisurely challenge of walking the Severn Sisters hills down on the south coast near Beachy Head some time later this year.

The subject came round to Martin's **South Downs Way** - a humorous tale



about a self-confessed couch-potato London cabbie who decided not only to cycle the 100-mile long bridleway and footpath running between Eastbourne and Winchester, but to walk it as well!

This historic route is visited by over a million people each year - and runs through some of southern Britain's most beautiful countryside. People with families seeking a day out and serious walkers alike visit the Way, its chalky soil making it ideal for cycling, horse riding or a leisurely stroll.

Martin's book is full of hilarious anecdotes and the truly eccentric characters he met along the Way - it will have you in stitches! As well as entertaining you as you walk, 'South Downs Way' is a comprehensive guide to the route, including handy tips, useful addresses and walking maps - ensuring that even the poorest navigators won't get lost!

Often bawdy and always amusing, this book would be the essential alternative guide for anyone experiencing the beauty of the Downs for the first time.

Martin has also written '**Hoolifan - 30 years of hurt**' - based on London's history of football violence and a complete contrast to his 'South Downs Way'.

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online

Arthur Willmoth

1935 - 2013

Arthur was a well-known and very well-liked member of Dial-a-Cab, especially to those who regularly used the Finsbury Square Rank.

Up until Friday 12th April, he was still working 4-nights a week as a journeyman (B65J) and leading a full and active life outside of cabbaging. But after complaining of feeling exhausted, Arthur was soon to be diagnosed with terminal cancer, the aggressive nature of which took his life on Tuesday 9th July at the age of 78.

Arthur started driving a cab in 1968 and joined Dial-a-Cab in May 1977 as B71. He loved the job. He was a 'people-person' who enjoyed conversing with customers and fellow cab drivers alike. He was also well known for his love of Arsenal, for whom he had a season ticket.

People who spoke to him always said what a lovely man he was.

Arthur leaves his wife of 55-years Maureen and three sons Russell, Glyn and Jonathan, who is V18 on DaC. He also leaves five grandchildren.

Rest in Peace Arthur...



Arthur (on left) with DaC son Jonathan

Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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

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

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

The cost?

Just 1% per month on the outstanding balance (or APR of 12.7%).

Loans can be paid back early AND there can be an annual dividend on your shares.

The question is: Can you afford NOT to be in it...?

Call us on 020 7729 8171 or 020 7749 0585

*Members of the Financial Ombudsman Service
Member's funds protected up to limit set by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme
DaC Credit Union Ltd, Peterley Business Centre, 472 Hackney Rd E2 9EQ
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority
Registration number 213263*



My name is John Vigus. I have been involved in appealing parking tickets for over ten years for myself and since 2005 on behalf of various carriers and other business operators. Having dealt with nigh on 10,000 appeals, my percentage success rate is in the high 90s, both at local authority level and at adjudication. During this period, I have gained knowledge of parking regulations and exemptions as laid down in local authority traffic management orders and the relevant traffic Acts.

Licensed Taxis (and private hire vehicles) are treated in much the same way as ordinary cars in as much as they are all subject to the same parking regulations but for a few exceptions. For example, a vehicle (any vehicle) may stop for as long as is necessary for the purpose of allowing a passenger to board or alight on a single or double yellow line, but

With Barrie Segal moving on, Call Sign introduces John Vigus...

DAC PCNS: INTRODUCING JOHN VIGUS

may not stop on red routes during controlled hours. Taxis, of course, are not restricted to stopping on red routes to pick up or drop off passengers, but there is a reasonable time limit for this to happen. In the case of taxis and PHVs, since the judicial review hearing in the High Court on 29th November 2010 (*Makda v the Parking Adjudicator*), there is a period of time allowed to make contact with the passenger and also to take payment at the drop off. This period is limited to around three minutes and may be slightly longer in certain circumstances.

However, each case will turn on its own merits. If your passenger does not appear at around the three minute mark, then you are expected to move your vehicle to another location (across the road) and begin another short period to wait for the passenger. This is not how taxis have operated, but since the introduction of CCTV this is now the world we live in because of the over enthusiastic use of these cameras.

Here are some basic rules to follow that will help you to avoid receiving penalty

charge notices:

Red routes: No more than three minutes where taxis are allowed to stop.

Yellow lines: Maximum time waiting for passengers to arrive is three minutes.

Bus stops: Avoid! Bus stops boarding and/or alighting should be almost immediate.

Loading Bays: You cannot stop in loading bays to pick up or drop off passengers.

Footway parking: NEVER! There is no exemption for you to park on the footway for any reason.

Dropped kerbs: You cannot stop to pick up or drop off passengers at dropped or raised kerbs.

Double parking: You cannot double park while waiting to pick up passengers.

Yellow zig zag markings outside schools: Never during prohibited times.

Zig Zags at crossings: NEVER! This is still an endorseable offence.

John Vigus
DaC PCNs

After DaC drivers asked for it...

Power Pills resized!

Many **Dial-a-Cab** drivers have been using **Alpha Power Pills** ever since **Call Sign** together with **Cricklewood Carriers** taxi garage conducted tests on two old taxis and showed the difference between a cab on the pill and one that wasn't. Power Pills clean the entire fuel system, break down carbon build-up in the engine, greatly cut down smoke and assist with a better fuel burn rate.

No one has ever suggested that the pills could be improved, but some drivers had suggested the pills were too big for the amount of diesel most drivers use in one day.

Steve Vale, who is the online supplier, has contacted **Call Sign** and told us that after hearing from all the DaC drivers who made the same suggestion, the new packs now contain twenty half-size pills instead of the ten previously, with each pill now designed to put in with around 35 litres as against the previous 70 litres.

Steve told us: "When PowerPills were first introduced, the idea of putting 10 plus gallons in at a fill up was not that exceptional, but now with the price of petrol and diesel being what it is, realities have changed and we received many requests for smaller pills because it's easier to use half a tablet if you are putting in smaller quantities.

I have also completely revamped the website at **www.OnlyCabs.co.uk**. While it will always be a work in progress, it's now much better than it was. So please visit, have a look around and if you have the time, send me any suggestions you may have on how you feel it could be improved. Also, if you have a Power Pill story you would like to share, please send that to me.

I thank all you Dial-a-Cab drivers for your custom and please remember that I'm always here to help or just have a chat on 020 3239 6101."

Steve Vale

Granddad Garry

June was a good month for **Dial-a-Cab's** newest Board Member, **Garry White** and his wife when they became grandparents for the first time. Their middle daughter, **Fay**, gave birth to a handsome 8lb 3oz baby boy, **Mason William**, on 28th June at Basildon Hospital.

Congratulations to all the family...



Garry with Mason

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Sun, sea and Adventure Island? It can only be one thing...

LTFUC 2013 trip to Southend!

Fun, laughter and jollity were the order of the day on Thursday 27th June, when a convoy of 100 decorated taxis took 300 children on the **London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children's** legendary outing to **Southend-on-Sea**. This year the Fund is proudly celebrating its 85th anniversary and this was the charity's 47th outing to Southend. And what a fantastic outing it was!

The taxis assembled very early at **Victoria Park** and after decorating their taxis and having breakfast, the drivers waited for their special little passengers to arrive. The sun was shining and the atmosphere was great. On hand to entertain the children were the **Furry Tail Folk** and **Clown Jolly Jack** and we are grateful to them for entertaining the children for the whole day.

We'd also like to thank **Colin Hayfield**, Upper Warden of the Tin Plate Workers and their Clerk **Piers Baker** (alias Wire Workers) for giving up their time to meet the children and wave the convoy off. Can we also thank **Alison Denning**, Festival and Events Officer for Victoria Park and of course the Park's management and staff who provided the breakfast.

The huge horn blowing convoy departed at 10am and the LTFUC would like to thank **Essex Police** and the **Blue Knights Law Enforcement Motor Cycle Club** (England 7 Chapter) for escorting us so quickly and safely to Southend. We'd also like to thank **Karen Hill** (**Green Flag**) and **Brian Bernard**, Operations Manager and drivers from **Kavanagh Motor Group** who joined the outing at the last minute to help. Our grateful thanks also go to the **Red Cross** for accompanying us. People lined the streets waving and cheering as the children smiled and tried to master the 'royal' wave!

At midday we arrived at sunny Southend and after parading along the seafront to cheers from a delighted crowd, we arrived at **Cliffs Pavilion** for a lovely lunch. Out thanks to **Southend Council**, **Derek Kenyon** and the **Parking and Highways Team** for the use of Shorefield Road Car Park and of course, the management and staff at the Cliffs Pavilion for all their help and assistance.

Snow White, the **White Queen** and **Mad Hatter**, the **Furry Tail Folk**, Southend's **Salvo the Clown** and **Clown Jolly Jack** were all on hand to greet the children as they arrived and had photos taken. Hon Chair, **Susan Angel**, gave a welcome speech and 300 excited children were ferried to **Adventure Island**. Our gratitude goes to **Brian Houssart MBE**, Hon President of the **Southend Taxi Charity Fund for Children** for his support, along with **Cooks Coaches** for use of one of their coaches and also MD **Bill Hiron** and the drivers of **Stephenson Coaches** for the use of their vehicles.

Vouchers for ice creams, donuts and drinks were given to drivers and children; all you could hear was children's laughter, their faces covered in ice cream and candyfloss! Our gratitude to management and staff at **Adventure Island** for their help and assistance in making the outing possible.

At 5pm it was back to Cliffs Pavilion for tea and a DJ **Dave Davies** disco. We thank him and his crew as we also do to **Jackie Walsh** and her son **Jake** for kindly coming at the last minute and working tirelessly at face painting and balloon modelling, which the children loved.

We were also pleased to welcome the Mayor and Mayoress of Southend, Councillor **Brian Kelly** and wife **Ann**, who were joined by **Adam Tregoning**, the Mayor's Mace Bearer and our thanks go to



Children with the prize-winning taxi

them for giving up their time to join us.

The winner of the best dressed taxi, displaying an 85th anniversary cake, was **Steve Pulham** who won the *Terry Stapleton Rose Bowl* named after a longstanding member of the LTFUC who sadly passed away in 1988. Steve also received a voucher from **Vince White Taxis** of Waltham Abbey – whom we sincerely thank – with a choice of £150 or a cab service and MOT. A final

prize was a draw for the drivers. The winner was **Stewart Murray** who won an overnight stay for two with breakfast at Mayfair's **Connaught Hotel** to whom we thank for their generosity in donating the prize.

But all good things come to an end and at 6pm the children were led out of the room in a giant conga after getting an 85th Anniversary mug from the Fund as a gift, together with a stick of rock kindly donated by Southend Councillor **Paul Van Looy**. Our thanks also to Chingford **Costco** for donating bottles of water that were so welcome in the warm weather.

Special thanks go to our anonymous donor for giving £25 to each driver towards their fuel bill and also to the wonderful sponsors whose donations helped to make this outing possible. And huge thanks to **Radiocom Systems Ltd** for the loan of their communication equipment.

On our 85th anniversary, we are especially grateful to **ITV** who featured the outing on their London and Anglia evening news and also to all the radio stations who gave us such great coverage.

Last, but not least, the Hon President, Hon Chair and Committee would like to give special thanks to all the wonderful drivers and helpers. We really could not make these outings happen without you and we know the children would also want us to give special thanks to you on their behalf. They had a magical day that they will always fondly remember – their smiles, laughter and the sheer happiness on their faces throughout the day was a joy to behold. Congratulations and a pat on the back to the Committee for a brilliant outing... and roll on the next year!

More images can be seen on our website at www.ltfuc.org.uk along with details of future events...

LTFUC Press Officer, Raymond Levy



Keith Reading
Professional Toastmaster
Master of Ceremonies

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10% discount for DaC drivers and staff

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Terminal and card payment

Last month we began fitting the fleet with new terminals and the response I have received to the terminal, mapping and satnav while out working, has been very positive.

The taking of street hails for credit cards has changed, but hopefully after last month's pull-out in *Call Sign*, which the Editor tells me is reprinting this month, members with the new equipment and those waiting to be fitted will both understand how to process a credit card using the new terminal and PED (Pin Entry Device). Further training is available if needed

ALL WHITE WITH GARRY...

to assist if any difficulties are experienced. I have noticed that more customers are currently using cards as payments in taxis and it will certainly become more popular as a method of payment.

Card types

AMEX cards issued outside of Europe do not have *chip and pin* technology, therefore are still swiped. When clearing the payment, the PED prompts you to put in the last four digits on the front of the card and then to press *enter*. Once the payment has been authorised, the merchant copy receipt is printed first and customer copy second, this is reverse to pin enabled cards. Please always check on your merchant receipt that it does not have VOID or CANCELLED printed at the bottom as this represents that the payment will not be PAID.

Advertising

By now, hopefully, you have all seen our taxis around London carrying the superside ads for the DaC app, which has had a great response with downloads. But we need to give good coverage to make this campaign a success, while other app-based companies cannot due to drivers not being willing to run for work with the meter off and also giving free waiting time

when the streets are busy. The DaC app can establish a reputation for giving a great service during both peak and quieter times.

Roof advertising

If, like me, you work nights, you cannot help but notice some taxis in London with the *Bright-Move Media* advertising fins mounted on the roofs of cabs. This is giving a new look to the taxi advertising market however, with the taxis needing much more height clearance it could prove a problem – even though I am assured they fit under the low entry point at Euston Station. Drivers with this form of advertising on the roof of their taxi can never be sure what exactly is being advertised as it can be targeted to the area you are in or specific events and products.

DaC 60 years

With her majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, celebrating 60 years since her Coronation, we at Dial-a-Cab are sharing the same celebration as this year sees 60 years since the Society was established. What a great achievement, especially being in the same year as the Queen makes her own 60 year celebration.

Garry White
DaC Board Member

ELCO OUTING TO MALDON

It's Taxi Day!

The Essex town of **Maldon** welcomed the **East London Cabbies Outing (ELCO)** once again in July. The streets were lined with cheering, flag-waving people as the taxi convoy made its way down the High Street to **Plume School** where everyone had lunch. Pupils kept visitors amused and entertained during lunch and held a raffle for the drivers taking part in the outing. Maldon calls it *Taxi Day*.

This annual outing began in 1952 when Charles Flemwell started the first East London Cabbies Outing with 8 taxi-cab special needs East End children for a day out in Maldon. Since then the trip has grown and Charles son Kenny is now one of the organising committee.

Children from various schools and specialist centres within London's East End meet up in the morning ready for the outing. The convoy is always colourful with cabs dressed up for the occasion and some drivers spending hours preparing them. This year's the best dressed winning taxi attracted much attention with its Dalek on the roof! For everyone involved in the outing, it is the welcome in Maldon that is so amazing. Balloons festoon the shops, along with flags and bunting. There is a real carnival atmosphere with everyone lining the streets to wave. The Mayor of Maldon is also on hand in his robes and it makes for a fantastic sight to see all the taxis dressed up and driving along in convoy.

The trip is supported by the **London Ambulance Service** and **motorcycle police** providing an escort alongside the cabs, as well as breakdown services just in case! A comfort stop is made at the **George and Dragon** pub in Mountnessing. After lunch at the school, the convoy moves to the **Promenade Park** where the children are given goodie bags before entering for the entertainment. Although this year's weather wasn't sunny, it at least stayed dry so a good time was had by all. Shortly before departing, the committee thanked everyone involved in making the trip a success and awarded the best dressed cab shield. Thanks were given to everyone for their support and to the sponsors in making the day possible. The afternoon ended with the convoy taking tired but happy children back to their London homes.



The children had a great day!

It was also announced that former **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Jimmy Pullum** was standing down from the committee and grateful thanks went to him for time and efforts in helping over the past few years.

Call Sign's thanks to Sandie Goodwin

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

Looking back over my years at **Dial-a-Cab** and **Lords** (as it was called) remembering the characters I've met and the incidents that have happened, some were humorous, some were sad and others just good for relating at one of the many taxi meeting places. But stories are only as good as the narrator; if they can add expression and movement then they can hold an audience, making the listener forget all worries of their growing traffic problems. This is the art of a good storyteller - to make the story come alive and real so the recipient can actually image themselves being within that scenario.

Some of the drivers who could achieve this included **Patsy McCarthy C01**, the late **Dennis Samuels (F25)** and a group of mature drivers who frequented the **Granby Grill** when it was in Hampstead Road. These men were past masters in the art of making a story come to life, turning a Sunday morning breakfast into such an enjoyable use of a few hours.

These men transported you into working for an undertaker with the pitfalls that could befall you whilst transporting a body from a home to the back of their hearse. Or perhaps chasing a bilker who was on crutches or helping a lady with her cases who was a regular going to the airport. But her cases were full of car engine parts and weighed a ton!

There must be a thousand true stories out there that are just waiting to be told and I'm sure that the Editor of **Call Sign** would love to see some of them relating to your time as a driver on DaC in the magazine. So if you have been caught out by a council spy camera or a new regulation that hinders your work as a taxi driver, then this is what the magazine is for - to keep you informed with information and matters of interest - as well as entertaining articles.

Theatre tickets

During the end of June and beginning of July, we were lucky enough to be offered tickets to some of the top shows in the West End. Even those that were not smash hits, it is still wonderful to be able to go to the theatre after having had a nice meal. If you have not found out yet, there are websites where you can get vouchers for large reductions in restaurant meals. If you have used **Amazon**, they have one called **Amazon Local** or another one is **bookatable.com** and look for the star deals. You can go to the **Little Sicily** in Rupert Street with their voucher for a 3 course meal for two, then onto a show for £20. Now that can't be bad. The only catch is you have to go when the tickets are available. But if you watch your Dial-a-Cab terminal screen you will see when that is.

However, something you may or may not believe; I get requests from drivers who have their wife, girlfriend or relation's birthday, anniversary or special occasion but they do not want to spend any money - so unlike a taxi driver! So they ask if I can get them special free tickets. My reply is that I'm good, but it's Jesus who realises dreams! Now and again you have to spend your own money!

Life at 70...

If any of you are approaching the age of 70 then beware pitfalls that originate from TfL. You need a yearly medical but are not always sent the appropriate forms. Also, if you've had stents put into your arteries or any heart surgery, you need to have a stress test. I found this wasn't available to me as in the last 2 months I discovered I have *plantar fasciitis* (problem with my right heel). Last November, I had a Stress Echocardiogram and my GP gave me a copy of all the reports. I forwarded these with the normal GP medical test report, which was on 24th June 2013 and I'm still awaiting acknowledgement or to be told all is correct. But as they had never asked for this year's medical reports, I completely forgot that another year had

TOM'S TRIVIA

Tom Whitbread looks at everything



they will be calling me this afternoon. Ho hum...

Ivor Pearce

The Editor recently sent me a newspaper cutting from the *Evening Standard* of **Friday 17 December 1965**. The story was about an ODRTS taxi driver who was murdered in his taxi whilst working late at night. The story relates how driver **Ivor Pearce** was discovered by a police officer walking his beat in Warren Lane, Stanmore. This would not happen nowadays as police officers rarely walk the beat, you only get Community officers walking and they are more interested in playing with their mobiles or standing on a corner in groups of 3 or 4 just chatting.

The officer found Mr Pearce with a bullet in the back of his head and slumped over the steering wheel. Although a murder investigation was launched, they could not find a motive. Had he overheard something he should not have heard being talked about in the back of the taxi? Or maybe the assailant was someone he knew as a friend who had a dubious background? After an extensive investigation, no reason or culprit was ever found. I did find out that Mr Pearce had worked for a short period as a journeyman with **Ivor Belkin (C97)**, but even he did not have any further information to relate.

This got me thinking how many other taxi drivers had died or were found unconscious in their taxi.. One ODRTS driver's wife phoned the call centre in Shirland Road to ask if we knew where her husband was as he had not come home. His wife was worried as he always came home at the same time every night from his taxi shift. As well as being a taxi driver, he and his wife had just been given the job as managers of a Bethnal Green pub.

I relayed his taxi registration to all the night drivers and asked if they would look out for him as he was not answering his radio. A short while later a driver called in and said he had seen the cab parked at Paddington by the tea stall. I asked him to go and look again just in case the driver had fallen asleep. The driver returned to say he had not seen the driver but blood was coming from under the back door. I asked if he had looked inside, to which he replied no, so I quickly sent a more sensible driver around who found the driver on the floor in the back of the taxi with slashed wrists. We had him quickly rushed around the corner into the St Mary's casualty. I am sorry to say that I do not know how the driver fared.

There was also another driver who was travelling towards the Blackwall Tunnel with his son in the back, when he crashed with fatal results. There was also actor **Bernard Bresslaw's** brother who suddenly died while relaxing in the back of his taxi at the London General garage.

These are sad incidents to be talked about, but it does strengthen the case to be very careful when out working. It also highlights not taking on too many debts, which in turn cause you to have to chase every pound. You can still have a good life without trying to keep up with other drivers, who may even be spinning you a yarn whilst being up to their neck in debt. So just keep healthy and remember the family you leave at home when you go out to work.

Have a wonderful Summer...

Tom Whitbread
DaC Board Member

gone by, the first I knew was a threatening letter stating that my licence was to be terminated. This was due to my not returning the forms from TfL that I had not received.

Also when you reach 70, you have to renew your DVLA driving licence. There are pitfalls with this too. They tell you that it can be done online with no hassle; not for me, as the website crashed 4 times and when eventually I did get to the final question, it asked if I wanted all my previous classification groups added. I wanted light lorries and minibuses kept on my licence, it then stated that website was no good and I had to phone up and ask for a D2 form. I did this, spending the obligatory 7 minutes pressing buttons 1 to 7 before being able to explain what I wanted. The D2 form arrived and I filled it in, correctly affixing a photograph of myself and my passport details. Some questions on the form were regarding my sight and health, all completed correctly I sent it off and received my new licence some 2 weeks later. But when I looked at the categories and classifications, I noticed they'd changed motorbikes; they were not rated in CCs but now in 30Kw - something I had not a clue about.

So I telephoned to ask, only to be told by a young lady to phone the Department for Trade and she gave me a phone number. When I called, a recorded message said they were only there until midday!

I did find out from an ex-work colleague that I was covered for any type of motorbike. It was then that I noticed the classification for minibus and light lorries was not included so I contacted DVLA again and a young lady asked if I'd had a medical. I told her that I was never asked to do that. She asked if my GP had filled in my medical report to which I replied I hadn't received one to give him. So it was back to square one. She said she would send me one; three weeks later I was still waiting. So I called again and spoke to a young man who said I should have received it by now, but that he would send another one! His one arrived 4 days later, the original lady's one arrived two days after that - a total of 3 weeks and 2 days. I then realised that what I should have been sent was what they call a **VOK Pack**, which includes all the forms and a medical examination form.

I completed all the relevant facts for a second time and added the medical examination report, but I deliberately left out the new pink plastic licence. This way they would get in touch with me to say I had forgotten it, but I would then know they had received all the other documents. As I write this, I have a message on my phone to say

In Jon Robinson's (E88) article of the July issue of *Call Sign*, he offers us the opportunity to put the world to rights, or perhaps more accurately putting **Dial-a-Cab** to rights - that is always assuming that it's broken.

I am ambivalent about Dial-a-Cab subscribers using **Hailo**. That App is an aggressive competitor that is actively trying to wrestle our work away from us with what seems to be something of a disloyalty factor, with the three former drivers who started up Hailo knowing much about our system thanks to one disaffected DaC shareholder. So it is a bit like the reverse of the **Trojan horse**, but the paucity of the work is difficult at Dial-a-Cab and we all have to pay our bills.

Then there is **GetTaxi**, which is a different type of App in that it makes no secret of going after our accounts even though it came into existence to take work back from private hire. Well **Addison Lee's** work is down even though finance is up, but that isn't through anything GetTaxi have done but much to do with Hailo offering cheap fares with no run-ins and 5 minutes free waiting time. Now that it is getting busier, it isn't surprising that Hailo's coverage is going down. Why should drivers run past an outstretched hand to lose money?

But returning to GetTaxi, they had even hired our former Sales Manager and followed that up by poaching our Diver Services Manager. So I perhaps think that we need to be more belligerent and compete head on with GetTaxi, offering the same terms and conditions to Joe Public who use their credit cards and cash. Cost is king to the general public.

At the last AGM, we finally initiated a new

The last issue saw Jon Robinson (E88) responding to the Editor in wondering what might have happened had DaC accepted the buy-out offer from Sovereign Capital. Now Stephen Berndes (R14) joins the debate..

WHAT IF...???



Board Member, but unless I am mistaken we still have two BMs who only attend Board meetings, so you have to wonder what the purpose of that is and whether two new and younger BMs could help bring fresh ideas to what is a good Society. Or failing that cut the Board down and bring in a paid Sales executive from outside of the organisation.

We are the leading suppliers of black taxis to corporate London, having built up an enviable reputation over many years while offering a superb service; reliability has been our forte and our premium service with DaC

should be retained. But what if we also offered a parallel service called (for arguments sake), *Thumbs Up Taxis*. This is not an attempt at flippancy; it could work by incorporating a thumbs-up logo within Dial-a-Cab's logo on our fleet. So all work from the general public offered at the same competitive prices as our rivals.

With our outstanding new technological advanced terminals coupled with the huge new volume of work, overnight fellow cab drivers would be banging on DaC's doors to go onto our waiting list. The Board may well have cogent responses to dispel all of the above suggestions and if so, I'd be interested in hearing them. After all, we all want the same thing.

Returning to Hailo and Get Taxi, it has been drawn to my attention that those cheeky yellow badge holders who refuse to display their yellow identifiers have come up with a ruse to continue picking up in town. They have joined *en masse* Hailo and GetTaxi, this is a back door cynical abuse of the rule book and someone should investigate that appalling breach of rules...

Stephen Berndes (R14)

Another true story from Geoff Levene

DECEITFUL USE OF A LOO!



There are far too many things in the taxi game that cause me to slap my forehead and cry out 'oh no!'

Like coming out to the cab and noticing it sitting at a crazy angle. So out comes the spare tyre, jack, wheelbrace and scaffolding pole for extra purchase. Then forty five minutes later - sweating, filthy, greasy and shattered - I'm ready to start work! These days I wait for *Orange Van Man*!

Then when you are at work and accepted a **Dial-a-Cab** job, arrived, done an *Advise Arrival* and suddenly realise you're waiting in the wrong place! So it's foot down and scream round to the correct pick-up to meet a none-too happy passenger to whom you mumble an apology while trying to think of a plausible reason. UFOs causing unforeseen hold-ups don't usually work!

And there's that moment when you uncross your legs having finally made it to the toilet, only to find that it's shut.

I recall crossing from Broad Lane to Seven Sisters and noticing an open Ladies loo with presumably a Gents behind it. So I parked up and walked round there and of course it was closed. I don't know how long the iron grill had been in place, but

the old leaves and newspapers blown in had all turned brown and crispy! I saw one headline: LADYSMITH RELIEVED - well lucky for her, she could use the front entrance. The loo had obviously been in service during the Boar War!

We all know about the dearth of public conveniences but at least there are 24 Hour McDonalds, big supermarkets and of course hotels. But some hotels are not too keen on nasty cab drivers using their facilities. So here are Levene's Golden Rules for using hotel toilets...

- * Try not to park too close but if you do, walk away, cross over and come from a different direction.
- * Don't look like a cab driver. Hide the money bag and badge.
- * If you know where the cloakroom is, stroll in as though you own the place - glance around the foyer as if you're searching for a colleague and then make your way.
- * Don't draw attention to yourself. If you see your mate, resist the urge to yell out: "Aw right mate! Ow ya goin' you old tos*er!"

Be discreet. Don't look lost. If you don't know your way around, march up to the receptionist and ask if Doctor Hackenebusch has arrived yet? She will look at her computer and ask how you spell it. You reply H-A-C-K-E-N-E-B-U-S-C-H (he was actually a horse doctor played by Groucho Marx in *A Day at the Races*). She will probably say that he doesn't have a reservation, so you smile and say that you are supposed to be meeting him at the hotel so you'll just hang around.

"Oh, by the way, where is the toilet?"

Of course this could beg the obvious question - what if there is a Doctor Hackenebusch staying there? Naturally you respond by saying: "It must be another Hackenebusch. Any chance of using the gents...?"

I hope these suggestions help to make your day more pleasant...

Geoff Levene (W32)

Last month's mag featured an article by one of our founder subscribers, **Norman Kerstein (Ex-A81)**, who recalled the days of 48 years ago when ODRTS moved from its original base at 172 Pentonville Road to 144 Shirland Road. Norman also offered some historic photographs from those far-off days.

Norman – now aged 83 – came to visit us at Dial-a-Cab House and was given a guided tour around the building by Compliance Officer **Allan Evans**. He brought memories and anecdotes from those long-gone days and also artefacts relating to cabbaging almost 50 years ago. Together with a specimen fare chart from 1968, Norman brought his 1955 PCO **Blue Book** detailing Knowledge runs – even though the book itself is actually beige in colour! Flipping through the pages was like peering back into Edwardian London, with many of the points now gone.

Norman gained his prized Green Badge on April 5th 1956 and worked for the Great Cambridge Garage in Geoffrye Street E2 before moving to Levy's at York Way a year later.

"I joined ODRTS as a nightman in 1958 with the call sign *Apple 81*. In 1961, I met my wife and moved over to day work. Living in Neasden, Shirland Road was only down the road. I remember going down a rickety old staircase to get to the basement's control room or occasionally climbing a creaking flights of stairs to reach the Shirland Road Boardroom," Norman recalled.

While Norman was impressed with our cur-

Having joined ODRTS in 1958, Norman Kerstein asked if he could look at us now...

Founder subscriber visits DaC House!



Allan Evans explains to Norman how current technology works

rent HQ offices and use of technology, he was positively amazed when the elevator doors

slid open to reveal the huge, open-plan Call Centre and almost silent buzz of activity from the call-takers and ancillary staff.

"My goodness" he beamed, "we never had air conditioning either! Back in my day, it was a conveyor belt system that took paper dockets with passenger details from telephonists to the dispatchers, who then allocated jobs to cabs via voice. You then had to change to another channel to get the job details – often involving an annoying wait! My hobby is amateur radio so I appreciate what the set-up here involves, but wow, the technology is real cutting-edge stuff for sure!"

Still visibly incredulous at the growth of ODRTS and the innovative technological advances we have made since his time on Lords so long ago, Norman bade his farewells to return to the peaceful tranquillity of his home in the New Forest.

**Alan Green
Call Sign Online**

Best in the World

Yes, when it comes to the art of taxi driving, there is but a short list of one if describing the best in the world – the licensed London taxi driver. For over three hundred years we have been described as amazing when it comes to knowledge of the city we work in and we suspect we could have picked any of the drivers on **Dial-a-Cab** and got a similar story to the one below.

But we asked **John Dixon (B67)**, who is now into his 21st year with the Society, for some instances that would probably amaze passengers, but which we would just consider to be part of the job...

"I do sometimes wonder what people expect when they get into my cab," John told **Call Sign**, "they obviously know of our reputation as being the best, but must think it's a rumour!"

"I recently stopped for a street hail and the lady asked me for **Nell Gwynne House** in **Sutherland Avenue**. When I questioned the address, she was insistent that it was W9 and so off we went. I soon noticed in my rear view mirror that her young son was busy scrolling on his mobile phone and whispering something to her. Then the question I had been half-expecting when she suddenly asked me where I was going? I said we were going to the destination she had insisted on even though I had explained to her that the only Nell Gwynne House I knew was in Sloane and not Sutherland Avenue.

"She then accepted that my knowledge was a bit better than hers, but when we finally arrived in Sloane Avenue I was still expecting her to moan, but she said the London taxi drivers' understanding of London just blew her mind!"

Continuing with his reasoning as to why the world knows we are the best, John told us about a passenger who got in and asked for **Shillibeer Place** and queried if John knew where it was? When the DaC driver simply responded by telling the passenger without any hesitation that it involved going left into Harcourt Street from

Seymour Place and then turning right into Shillibeer, the passenger looked stunned. Rubbing in his superior knowledge of the streets, John even asked if he wanted the odd or even numbers before they were even near it!

The passenger's reaction? "Well blow me down," he muttered as he settled the fare! John just grinned impishly.

"Mind you," John continued, "I do have to work at it sometimes. Last week an elderly couple got in and I was pretty sure they wanted the **Ibis Hotel, Earls Court** but asked them to confirm the address as Ibis is a popular hotel chain and I wondered if there were a few other Ibis hotels nearby.

"Ell Eye Ee Road they told me after fumbling for the paperwork. I repeated it back to them: L-I-E Road? Of course it just confirmed what I had originally thought – Lillie Road! The couple didn't have the correct address from the internet so they were a bit confused, but I got them there easily enough and it all ended happily. As the male passenger was paying me off, he said he thought I must have been some sort of mind-reader to be able to decode his incorrect travel documents and very limited information yet still get them to the correct hotel."

"You London taxi drivers are just amazing," the passenger said as he walked slowly in the Ibis!

"I could only smile modestly in agreement," said John as he got ready to pick up his next trip, "but I reckon any London taxi driver would have done the same. That's what gets us acknowledged as the best in the world!"



**John Dixon:
"We're the best in the world!"**

Alan Green, Call Sign Online

TAXI DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Annual dinner and dance

The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund is pleased to announce their 41st annual dinner and dance on 30th November 2013 at the Holiday Inn London Kensington Forum, 97 Cromwell Road, London SW7 4DN.

The price again this year is just £62.50 per person. That includes a 'welcome' drink at the reception, 4-course meal, half a bottle of wine per person and tea/coffee. Tea and coffee with Danish pastries will also be served later in the evening. There is dancing to a live band.

We also have arranged a special deal if you would like to stay at the hotel overnight. For more information please call (phone/fax) 020 8952 1357 or mobile 07850 056 765

Remember all money raised will be split between the five taxi charities...



With five cyclists already killed on the roads this year, Call Sign's Gary Cox (046) went to a cycling trial day in Wokingham to help test experimental Dutch style roundabouts...

Cyclists: Can we keep them safe?

Before you **Dial-a-Cab** lot start on me, yes I know you're going down Liverpool Road and being overtaken by cyclists, that electric bicycles have no number plates, push bikes no insurance and traffic lights have not yet been invented that can be seen from the handle bars of some bikes!

So let's agree from the start that 'old Bill' would love to nick rickshaws given a chance, but the money for the overtime to do the paperwork has all gone on Boris bikes. Last year it racked up £11million, of which Barclays pay one sixth.

Anyway, the reason for this article is whether we should we go Dutch? On 16 July, given a packet of marmite sandwiches and a bottle of posh water from her indoors, I found myself at the gates of the transport research lab at Crowthorne House, Wokingham in the heart of the stockbroker belt and where they are testing Dutch roundabouts.

On arrival, the first impression was that if they ever did a follow-up to The Good Life, Felicity Kendall in those wellies and dungarees on wheels, this could just be the place to do it! How much does one's agent get? I'll settle for 5 per cent.

You can't help but think at first sight that this place doesn't take any prisoners and that you would never know if they were going to be jolly good mathematicians or not, because you are kept well away from anything remotely looking like a tape measure, let alone a laptop. So I guess they must have done the maths for the blind spot on the Vito van and to leave enough road surface for the Knowledge students to circumnavigate oil leaks from foreign lorries and coaches who proudly display their eastern European routes via the exhaust pipe and sump plug!

Once it was explained to me what I was going to volunteer for – even though my old man always said never volunteer for anything – but being sick of spending my working life watching Darwin's theory of evolution being practiced by cyclists constantly throwing themselves along the road like lemmings off a cliff face, that was probably a good enough reason to give up a whole day of my life just once.

I found myself in a small car going around and round in circles on roundabouts with cyclists getting priority and pedestrians going in all directions. I was filmed on my best side and worst side... and rear side. It was interesting that staff did not want to divulge thoughts or opinions on the experiment.

The only thing I got of interest was out of one staff member who said they wanted to build 200 houses on the site! Funny what privatisation does for a business that's just been flogged off. I guess our jobs will go abroad.



Dutch style roundabouts with cycle lanes

After a little digging, I sussed out that they had another 11 layouts in addition to saying proudly that they had bus drivers there the previous week!

So wait for the letter via Boris. Hmm. Now what was it he said before the last election? Any problems please write to me. Hmm, interesting...

I left the establishment thinking that if the roads don't go down to one lane in both directions like Millbank, this could just work so long as cyclists toe the line and ride like the Dutch, or the perception we have of them. But the million dollar question is are we going to be left sitting three days behind a bus going nowhere on a round junction? That will bang the price of fares up, you can see the smile on the cyclist lobby's face from here. If you can't, then you don't know how well organised the London cycling campaign is when it suits them to be.

Let's just hope that Islington and Camden councils don't come up with their own version – because then God help us all. May I suggest we send for Littlejohn of the *Daily Mail* to report on that one.

A few days later it hit me between the eyes as I was passing through the Bow gyratory, which is hell for all and sundry, lest we not forget the death of **Brian Dorling** and **Svitlana Tereschenko** in 2011, which in turn became a political nightmare for Boris who, realising something had to be done, may well have found his get out of jail card in this research establishment.

The irony is that if cyclists all had third party insurance, when they sat down at a public debate chamber to talk, money would then be involved and consequently they'd have the backing of big insurance institutions such as specialist motorbike insurers, **Carole Nash**, who understand the phrase of 'speculate to accumulate'.

Twenty year old **Phillipine de Gerin-Ricard** may well have been laden down with shopping on her Boris bike as reported in the *Evening Standard* when she lost her life at Aldgate by coming into contact with a lorry, but she never deserved that, did she? I never sent flowers, but

I gave up a day – she gave up her life chasing the dream of living in the greatest city in the world.

Then there was cyclist **Alan Neve** who was killed in High Holborn at 0925 in the morning. Mr Neve, who was 54, lost his life when in collision with a dumper truck. How long will it be before an enterprising lawyer stands in the pulpit, waves his magic wand and offers to sue a cyclist on a no-win no-fee basis claiming that the cyclist caused the accident by not riding in a safe way? So whose insurance would go up? I'd bet anyone a fiver that if Red Ken stands, he will force cyclists to have insurance – that's a fiver I'd lose but it was worth the fiver to prove a point, methinks.

The report from the transport research establishment will soon be done and dusted with work on the roundabouts commencing in early 2014 if a little bird at TfL is bang on the money.

If you fancy going along and being the guinea pig (and get £50 for 6 hours research) go to: enquires@tri.co.uk or website at www.tri.co.uk. Be warned, it's a long day and a lot of hanging around, but then again you could just wait to see what they throw at us.

Now about that stupid taxi lane at St Pancras... or was it Paddington? Tell a lie, it was Victoria. Then again I hope I've got it wrong and its St Pancras because that one stinks...

Gary Cox
Call Sign Online

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Having worked for **Dial-a-Cab** for the last 23 years, many members will have either spoken with me, received a terminal message from my contact centre days or will have known my father **Colin**, who was a member and served on the Board but who sadly passed away many years ago. For the past 12 years, I've been hiding away

in your IT department looking after our telephone systems, customer and executive reporting, invoicing and your statements, so I guess in one way I'm the guy that pays your wages - a term I've often heard from members of old! However, what you won't know of me is my passion for Scouting and how rewarding working with young folk can really be.

Like most Scout leaders, my call to join up and rekindle the adventures of my youth came when my son, **James**, joined the **5th Dartford Scout Group** as a Cub Scout aged 8 and the notices went out for the annual *Family camp*. There's little like the smell of the morning dew and bacon being fried on a camp stove to awaken the senses and soon memories of my experiences as a boy came flooding back.

Soon after, an offer to assist with the Scout section's target shooting came and I jumped at the chance, after all the point was to do an activity that would allow me to spend more quality time with my kids - and having fun myself was the icing on the cake! That hour or so a week, soon grew and I was invested as an **Assistant Scout Leader** and later took on the principal role of **Scout Leader** for the **Earley Scout troop** and became the webmaster of what is arguably one of the most comprehensive online

Scouting archives (www.5thdartfordscouts.org.uk) outside the associations main website.

The 5th Dartford Scout Group was founded in 1916 and has provided continuous service to the community for 96 years, even during the blitz when the lads acted as fire watchers. Over the years we have grown to one of the largest groups in the South East with 3 **Beaver Scout** sections, 3 **Cub packs**, 2 **Scout troops** and an **Explorer Scout** unit, with a current diverse membership in excess of 200 young adventurers regardless of gender, ethnicity, culture or ability. They include the sons of two DaC subscribers, one of whom sits on our Executive committee and helps with our 5-a-side team and other sporting activities and his wife, also on the committee, heads our fundraising team. Scouting is infectious and once one member of the family gets involved, it's easy for the rest to follow so my daughter **Megan**, having been a Beaver, is now a Cub Scout and my wife **Kay** is now an Assistant Cub Scout Leader too. James, now almost 14, has just completed his **Chief Scout's Gold Award**, the highest award attainable for a Scout of his age and he's ready to move on to the Explorer Scout unit.

Like many Scout Groups, we like to go camping as frequently as possible and irrespective of weather, we battle the elements and go out with a smile on our faces. This year we will be camping in style with six brand new tents, generously funded by the **London Taxi Drivers Fund for Underprivileged Children**, with our ethos of providing everyday adventure and excitement to the youth in our community being very much in line with the **ITFUC's** own ideals.

With **Target Shooting Instructor** being one of the many activity permits I hold, my favorite camp of

the year is the **National Scout Target Shooting Championships** in October, held at the NSRA's facility at **Bisley**, which is attended by over 800 Scout youth competitors from all over the country. This will be our 6th consecutive year at the tournament and our standards have improved year on year and brought home trophies with competitors placed in the top ten in many categories.

This year we've had competition shirts designed for the team of 30 with sponsorship received from **Dial-a-Cab**, **Call Sign** magazine and local businesses. When we return from **Bisley**, I'll update **Call Sign** on our performance with a photo of the team in their smart polo shirts.

Fundraising for our group is an ongoing challenge, but even more so than for most groups as we need to replace our hall that is suffering from irreparable subsidence. In the current climate, it is a struggle, but we're making headway with over £80,000 raised already and we're on our way to the £360,000 target to build North Kent's most comprehensive Scouting facility, which will ensure we can continue Scouting and providing valuable community services for many years to come.

Anyone with any fundraising initiatives we may have overlooked is welcome to contact me; you never know, a lottery winner or wealthy philanthropist with a desire to help may be your next fare!

Feel free to look through our website's archives, with pictures from 1920 to date and see if it rekindles any of childhood memories. Who knows, perhaps you'll get hooked again on everyday adventure...

Be lucky...

Jason O'Brien
Scout Leader / DaC IT Dept

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

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

This month's Flashback goes back to October 2000 and the internet taxi chat list that **Call Sign Online's Vince Chin** had set up in 1997 - the UK's first such list...

From **Call Sign**, October 2000

THE ENEMY WITHIN?

Beware the enemy within! **Call Sign's** computer expert **Vince Chin** recently said these words as he pulled the plug on the taxi trade's first real effort at uncensored speech. With publicity from **Call Sign**, Vince set up **DISCUSS** almost three years ago (Xmas 1997) to enable the taxi trade to enjoy uncensored discussion. For two years it worked well. It solved little, but enabled drivers to get their ideas across to other drivers, manufacturers, radio personnel - even **Manganese Bronze** Chairman **Jamie Borwick** joined.

Then during the third year, a very small, disruptive element moved in. They were happy to give their views and delighted to hear anyone who agreed with them. My view on the LTB for example, didn't coincide with theirs. I believe that while it is far from perfect - especially since the **LTDA** walked out - it is the best of a bad bunch. That is my view, rightly or wrongly. This small group carried on and on accusing me of giving my views because of my position as Editor. I continued to give my personal view while they obviously didn't like it. Fine! That is democracy at work.

Even Vince, who in addition to driving a cab and writing for **Call Sign**, is a whiz with the computer keyboard and builds websites

like I used to build sand castles, was against the LTB and spoke out several times in the **DISCUSS** forum. But by the time the list closed, Vince had changed his view. NOT, I hasten to add because I had convinced him, but because of the antics of this small group. Vince's closing remarks on his last email were these:

"I've listened to all the arguments and received some private emails describing some of the intimidating tactics being used against members of this list. It appears that if you disagree with certain members then you will experience a tirade of physical threats and racist taunts. This is certainly not discussion and therefore I have no other alternative than to shut the list down tonight at midnight. It was good whilst it lasted, but too many members have hidden agendas and there are too many s***-stirrers on the list for it to be productive.

I finally agree now that the best way forward is with the current LTB as this list has shown that we have no future anyway. Beware the enemy within!"

I too learned a valuable lesson. 99% of drivers are regular nice guys, but the other 1% can so easily pull them down. My apologies to those who didn't understand a word of the above story, but we are dealing here with the enemy within. Be assured that now they have won this battle, they will be looking for fresh meat.

Alan Fisher
Editor



Jack Russell

1914 - 2008

*Jack was ODRTS Chairman from 1964, when he took over from **Eli Solomons**, until standing down in 1969 and handing the reins over to **Jack Taylor**. He stayed on as a driver and died in November 2009 at the age of 94. He had been honoured with the Military Medal for his exploits during WW2...*

Jack never really liked talking about his war exploits but as Sgt Russell, he was awarded the **Military Medal** and also given a **Citation* for undertaking a mission in 1943 against the enemy in which he returned with his entire unit alive. Jack spoke about it to *Call Sign* many years later...

"It was March 1943 and one of the patrols I went on together with another Sergeant and a Fusilier involved us going out at dusk together. We concealed ourselves on the slope of a hill overlooking another hill, which at just 300 yards in front of us was occupied by the Germans. Another patrol from our group was sent out 100 yards to our left and opened fire with automatic weapons at the German positions just to get them to fire back. The job of my patrol was to try to pinpoint exactly where the German firing positions were located.

The job did not finish there; we had to stay put for the rest of the night and all of the next day until dusk to plot any governing features on the ground and to make enemy firing positions easily identifiable for our attacking troops. We were fortunate in finding some fairly tall bushes and thick undergrowth in which to conceal ourselves. It was a very trying 24 hours.

On another occasion, an officer and I had to really put ourselves on offer to find out if any of the farms in an area defined as *no-man's land*, were occupied by the enemy. To help understand the situation, these farms were all on a vast plain, each one covering many acres with the farmhouse itself and surrounding buildings all on a raised plateau surrounded by a very large and deep moat. They were constructed like that because of the torrential rains that North Africa is plagued with. When it rained, these moats would fill to a depth of 5, 6 or even 7 feet in just minutes. The object of our patrol was to find out if any of the farms were occupied. There was no cover at all for us when approaching the farms, we just had to trust to luck that if anyone was there and they took a shot at us, then they would miss! And that happened!

We reached the moat and were walking round it, looking up at the farm buildings when we came under fire. The Officer leapt over the moat, but I reacted differently. I dropped into a prone position hoping I would see something or somebody. As I lay there, a bullet went into the ground by my left shoulder, followed a second later by another one hitting the ground by my right shoulder. I thought the next one would be in the middle, so I decided to get out of there as quickly as I could! However, as I got up and leapt into the moat, I looked up at the point from where I thought the firing had come from and saw a tin hat. As I joined the Officer, I told him I had seen a tin hat and that I was sure it was a British one. The young Officer was just out from *Blighty* and sent out with me to gain

A suggestion in this issue's Mailshot asks if there are any DaC war heroes who would be happy to share their experiences with Call Sign, so we start with former DaC Chairman Jack Russell (Ex-B24)...

DAC WAR HEROES



Jack (front centre wearing a kilt) and the patrol he brought back alive and for which he received a citation...

experience. He asked me what was the best thing to do and I said to shout out that we were British and see what happened. If they weren't British, we'd have to think of something else. Well, he did this and after a period of silence, back came a British voice telling us to come out with our hands up. We were pretty relieved! It turned out they were another patrol from a different regiment doing the same as us!

These two patrols may seem to be nothing looking back, but they were very dangerous as most of the areas we had to move into were devoid of any cover at all. We were part of a special patrol group that was set up at Battalion Headquarters for a period of 7 days. During that period, there was a patrol of some sort or another out in *no-man's land* 24 hours a day, for the whole 7 days. The patrols consisted of any number of soldiers from 2 to 30, depending on what information was required at the time.

The last patrol I was on was also the last scheduled one for this 7-day group. We had obtained most of the information about the enemy that we required. Our Battalion Commander had received his orders for attack and this last patrol was a fighting patrol sent to recon the actual route of the attack on our section and to fight for that information if we had to. Up to that time, we had been very lucky; we'd had very few casualties and none serious. However, our luck ran out on this last one when we walked straight into a minefield. Of the 30 men on that patrol, four were killed with many injured - of which I was one. I became deaf in one ear from a burst eardrum gained on that day and still have shrapnel in the walls of

my lungs, which causes some discomfort at times if I exert myself too much. However, I thank my lucky stars that I survived that hell-hole!

Let me say that for every one of us who received any award, there were hundreds who are no longer here, deserving of far higher awards. I am witness to their great bravery..."

**Jack's Citation was dated 1 March 1943 as a Sergeant in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. It was passed on to Call Sign after Jack's death...*

CITATION: SGT JACK RUSSELL

On the night of 11 March 1943, Sgt Russell took out a recon patrol to investigate increased enemy activity. Half way up the slope of Pt 286, enemy voices were heard. Sgt Russell then went forward by himself to reconnoitre and found a position occupied by at least some of the enemy. He then returned to his patrol to lead it back to within 6 yards of an occupied enemy trench where they lay for over an hour listening to the enemy and pinpointing their position. The enemy was too alert to obtain a prisoner, but just before first light, Sgt Russell ordered every man on the patrol to lob grenades at the enemy position. Sgt Russell then succeeded in withdrawing his patrol without loss under heavy fire. The information which his patrol gained was of considerable value during the ensuing operations. Sgt Russell has been on a considerable number of patrols since December 1942, on all of which he has displayed an outstanding degree of initiative, leadership and resource.

LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

ET tweet home?

There is no doubt that most of us will remember the iconic image of ET phoning home.

The phone in the movie was of a simple nature, I wonder how he would fare now with the new generation of smartphones! Would he email, app, tweet, video call or simply try the impossible and just phone home!

Could he find a street phone booth, nowadays apparently just used for holiday photo snaps by tourists or become advertising centres for less than salubrious businesses apparently run by Luscious Lucy!

Whatever ET decided on, it would probably be met with either *no signal, call diverted* or an endless amount of numbers and options to press, before then being put through to the wrong planet!

If the smart phones were not bad enough, it's the not-so smart ones of us who decide to push this technology onto our elderly relatives for their home phones, a whole generation of adults who were brought up on buttons A and B and money slot phones made of Bakelite with a fixed cord that when it rang you could actually hear, as it was a simple loud ring with one tune for the whole world!

They answered the phone in a polite manner, quoting the number back to the caller and even remembering the whole families numbers, but now we brainwash and cajole them into having a cordless rechargeable phone with two extra phones so they can get to it in an emergency, wherever they are in the house or garden. We also set a different ringtone for every member of the family so they know who is calling and in real life, who to ignore.

Every time they go out, they come back to a bleeping noise telling them they have a mes-

With Tom Quigley (Y33)



sage or have missed a call. It all sounds so easy, but in real life there are just too many numbers stored to remember who is number 2 or number 3. Of course they always remember number 1, as that is the idiot who bought them the phone and set it up the first place! The new phones then get lost under a pillow, seat or are never in the room they were supposed to be in; slowly they all get lost and the batteries run out so the elderly couple are left stranded, worried that no one is calling them and that they are being ignored, with us at the other end going frantic as they haven't answered.

So panic sets in and we drive round to the people, search and find the phones, charge them up and explain how to work them for the umpteenth time, only to go through the whole saga again a week later. In the end we just give up and go back to the shop to buy a new overpriced retro looking phone - exactly the same as the one we threw out, but instead of dialling all they have to do is push the numbers. You can see their faces light up whilst

underneath you know they are thinking:

"Push button phones - you can shove them and dial M for Murder...!"

Black box delivery

All workers should be protected by the *Health and Safety at Work Act*. Certainly those working at **Dial-a-Cab** are and if there are problems, there is a *Human Resources* department to assist them.

Most firms abide by it, but here in London in particular and the country as a whole, it seems that a certain group of vulnerable employees are having their life and welfare put in jeopardy and no one is doing a thing to protect them - be they large or small companies.

Most at risk are the hot food take away motor scooter delivery riders, who seem to have little in regard of high visibility clothing provided; their uniform (if they have any) is generally a cheap dark rain jacket and possibly leggings - rarely with boots.

There is not a supermarket trolley collector, railway employee, lollipop person, meter reader amongst many other employees, even driving licence examiners, who would be allowed to carry out their duties without wearing high visibility clothing. Yet these poor youngsters have to take risks every night, no doubt under pressure to deliver quicker for a minimum wage.

I think that the mindset of their employers for their workers welfare is quite evident in that most of these bikes are fitted with a 'black box' on the back - and we all know what black boxes record?

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

WCHCD FOUNDERS DAY LUNCH

And the presentation to the Company of a Royal Charter!



In the magnificent surroundings of Trinity House, Trinity Square, **The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers** held their *Founders' Day* celebration lunch. WCHCD Master, **Brenda Bartlett**, together with her Wardens, greeted guests with a champagne reception before the lunch itself. Principal guest and speaker was **Camila Batmangheli CBE**, founder and director of **Kids Company** and an advocate for vulnerable children.

Camila is an inspirational charity leader who spoke of the work her charity carries out and the difficulties faced by those using the service. The event was sponsored by Proximo Ltd and ComCab, for which the WCHCD is grateful.

The day is celebrated to commemorate the original Fellowship of the WCHCD, set up in 1654 but then disbanded by **Oliver Cromwell** three years later. However, by an act of Parliament in 1694, the first Hackney Carriages were licensed, so now the taxi trade celebrates 319 years of continuous licensing. The WCHCD have combined this celebration with the opportunity to raise funds for their Charitable Trust during the past few years. This fund helps support those drivers who face financial difficulties due to long term illness or their families at a time of bereavement.

Master Brenda Bartlett also announced that the WCHCD had been granted a **Royal Charter**. Since the middle ages, tradesmen who have acted as suppliers of goods and services to the Sovereign have received formal recognition. In the beginning, this patronage took the form of Royal Charters given collectively to various guilds in trades and crafts, which later became known as livery companies. Brenda said: "This is the last of my official lunches for the WCHCD, as in September our new Master Elect, **Graham Woodhouse**, will be installed. It is therefore with great pleasure that I am able to announce that the Privy Council has informed our company that we are to be granted a Royal Charter by **Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II**." The news was greeted with delight by all those present, particularly the Liverymen and Freemen of the Company.

Taxis at Paddington Station

TfL has received an increasing number of complaints regarding problems caused by taxis around the Paddington Station area and specifically in Praed Street, Edgware Road and Harrow Road.

The complaints and issues reported include emergency service vehicles being obstructed and delayed, buses being obstructed, the junction at Praed Street and Edgware Road being blocked, taxis parking in cycle lanes, construction traffic from worksites in the area being obstructed and delayed, road users being delayed on Harrow Road and complaints from local businesses.

On-street compliance activity and camera enforcement in the area will commence and drivers should take all possible steps they can to avoid over-ranking and causing an obstruction.

Mailshot

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

LTDF: Democracy and free speech?

Hello Alan,

After a number of years sticking up for and putting forward a balanced point of view about Dial-a-Cab on the LTDF taxi site, the former Chairman of the United Cabbies Group and man known as Dizzy, decided to ban me without giving any reasons or warnings. Should I be surprised? Well not really because the LTDF always had an anti-DaC point of view as its editorial agenda. The main DaC detractors are ex-DaC members who now support the app companies and really want DaC to fail. The LTDF does not support any radio drivers and is anti-radio circuit, however they are happy to have ex-radio members who have stripped out in protest at what they call "working hand in hand with PH companies."

As we know, the LTDF champions itself at being 'The voice of the London Taxi trade' - well that's so long as you toe the line and don't speak out against its editorial or stick up for DaC. Dizzy made no friends when Chairman of the UCG with his abrasive manner. His apparent understanding of the phrase 'democracy and free speech' is to shut people up by banning them! It's no wonder only a handful of LTDF members post these days and personally speaking, I think that he has brought the forum to its knees whilst *Call Sign* continues to be one of the most read taxi trade publications. How I lasted so long surprises me!

Richard Potter (T51)

Even though I have never been on the LTDF list, apparently someone uses my name - probably the only real name on there from what I've heard (!) - so I rely on drivers passing me any info relevant to this mag. But I had to think long and hard about publishing the following LTDF message that was passed over to me after Richard Potter was 'expelled' from it, because quite honestly their stance against DaC makes them rather boring and I'm usually happy to let them get on with it. This is a group who are said to have around 4000 members out of whom a dozen or so regularly take part. But this message put out to LTDF members shows what the list is about, which is why I have decided to publish it. My apologies to any DaC driver who feels it should have been consigned to the bin, but it shows so well the anti-DaC propaganda put on there. I've had to 'bleep' out some bits

because Mr Crothers language isn't suitable for a family mag, although undoubtedly fine for the LTDF taxi list. The strange thing is that he seems to believe that Richard Potter has or had an official position within DaC - possibly because he used to write for *Call Sign* and like many others, was an occasional part of a three-driver complaints committee. Apparently they seem to hold that against him. This issue's Flashback may also be a useful read ...Ed.

This is the email posted on the LTDF site following the Richard Potter (known on the list as SlimJim) 'expulsion'...

Post by Dizzy on Jun 24, 2013 at 3:25pm

*I would just like to thank SlimJim for making my decision for me. Potter I hope you believe in karma cos yours is just about to bite you on the arse. I am delighted to kick your sad arse out of here just like you kicked plenty of drivers off of DaC. And the reason is for no more than you are an annoying agitating pr*ck who doesn't deserve to breathe the same air as the good honest hardworking forum members that you thieved off of. Goodbye Pr*ck. And if anyone else has a problem with this they can suck on my testicles cos I couldn't give a flying f*ck!*

Leon Daniels and the NV200

Hi Alan

Do you have any definite information on when the Nissan taxi is being launched please?

Stephen Brady (N31)

Hi Alan

A friend of mine recently picked up TfL's Leon Daniels. Mr Daniels told him that the Nissan NV200 would not be passed for use as a London taxi and that the turning circle part of the Conditions of Fitness would not be around much longer. Do you know if either or both are true...?

Scott Fisher (H32)

Leon Daniels, Managing Director Surface Transport, replies: I know that Nissan are working hard on the NV200 with plans to enter the London taxi market and if they are able to produce a model that meets all the relevant criteria, including the Conditions of Fitness, then there is no reason that they would not be licensed. Currently, however, it does not conform so it cannot.

We continue to work with and encourage all existing and interested taxi manufacturers to develop zero emission capable taxis and this includes Nissan.

As far as the turning circle is concerned, there are no current plans to change this, but we receive regular representations from people who claim it should be abolished (to allow other manufacturers to enter the market) and from people insisting it should be retained (to ensure cabs can operate effectively in our crowded streets). There are strong views either way and of course our current position could be challenged by anyone in court.

Clean living with Eddie!

Hi Alan

I have just read your July *Call Sign* editorial and would like to point out that Unite's Cab Trade News has also never accepted ads for strip clubs and girly bars. I know from my involvement in the distant past that they regularly used to receive unsolicited approaches from most of the usual advertisers appearing in the other trade papers.

Eddie Lambert (V37)

Thanks Eddie. I should point out that it isn't the info I'm against, it's the actual ads, especially when accompanied by a scantily dressed female - I haven't been offered any male pole dancing club ads yet but the same criteria would apply ...Ed

New terminals

Hi Alan

The four page pull-out guide to credit card transactions in the July *Call Sign* was most informative and credit to Daren Morley for its production. I look forward - albeit with some trepidation - to using the process in due course. However, one situation that could arise seems to have been overlooked. At present a card has to be approved at the start of the journey, regardless of whether a street ride or through the system. Should there then be a problem the opportunity is there to request an alternative card, convert the trip to cash or decline the job. Unless I have missed a point somewhere, with the new MDT the card does not get authorised until the journey is completed and if the card was stolen, or unacceptable for whatever reason, the



Mailshot

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driver has no redress. Will DaC reimburse any loss?

David S. Lessman (D19)

DaC Trainer Daren Morley responds: David, thank you for your letter. You are not the first driver to bring this point up. Unfortunately, changes to the way credit cards are processed are down to Payment Card Industry (PCI) standards. The chip and pin device does not have the facility to reserve amounts from a card prior to a customer taking a journey.

The old system where amounts were reserved on a card prior to journey being made caused considerable inconvenience to our customers and the accounts department. Drivers were always instructed to overestimate the amount, which then meant that the amount reserved on the card was not put back into the customer's card until the following day. The accounts department would then receive numerous calls from customers stating they had a receipt for one amount from the driver and that their online banking was showing a different amount!

With the new MDT using mobile O2 GPRS network, so long as you have a mobile signal, you will be able to clear a trip anywhere in the UK and the passenger will only be charged for the trip taken. Using the Chip and Pin device will also work as a deterrent to card fraud and the number of chargebacks we get from the bank (if the correct pin is entered, the bank guarantee the payment). On the rare occasion a card is declined, you would need to ask the passenger for an alternative card or revert the trip to cash. So long as all the procedures are followed as provided in the July issue of Call Sign your payment will be honoured. I believe the pull-out has been repeated inside this issue. It is also worth pointing out that owing to Payment Card Industry standards, we no longer hold any card details for the passenger. So it's essential that you do not let the passenger leave the cab until you have a valid receipt for the passenger and yourself.

Also see Allan Evans article for further info on the new terminals ...Ed

New terminal mapping

I now have a new terminal – which after a slow start I now think is great – and couldn't think of Church Road in SW13, so I put it into my new terminal. But

when I typed in Church Road, it brings up every one of them beginning with postcodes starting from A. Is there any way of shortcutting to the Church Road you want?

Antony Hizer (E63)

Hi Antony and the other drivers that asked me the same question: In the A-Z application after typing Church Road, tap the key on the bottom line that looks like an open bracket sign as (and then the first letter(s) of the post code – in your case that would be SW. This then reduces the number of hits where there are duplicated road names in the index. In navigation, tap 'space' then as above...

Driver's Southend outing 'well done'

Just like to congratulate everyone on a most professional and slick children's outing to Southend. Perfect in every way! Best ever journey there! Special thanks to the police and other outriders. Definitely did not need toilet break on journey there. New route helped. Quality of driving fantastic! I have done approximately 30 taxi charity outings and this one scores 10 out of 10. Weather, atmosphere, food, vouchers, communication, service at Cliffs, bus service, welcome, goodbyes, even journey home without police escort (I was at rear of convoy), breakfast, disco, not too much back slapping, etc. So well done to all who contributed, however big or small, it was a fantastic job. How to improve next year? Impossible! It was spot on and well done again. Very proud to have been part of this year's outing...

Paul Faith

A report on the LTFUC outing to Southend is inside this issue ...Ed

Taxi driver's war records

Hi Alan

I've just finished reading John Edwardes remarkable serialisation of 'My Life as a Taxi Driver' from Call Sign 2009 - 2010, courtesy of Call Sign Online - a fantastic and well written read. In one episode he describes how he is up in front of the COs following a complaint. According to John, the CO informs him that "because of his war record" he would be dealt with leniently. Unfortunately for us, he never discloses what he did during the

war. With the ongoing **Help for Heroes** campaign and forthcoming centenary of the Great War, how about a series of articles on our war heroes who then became cab drivers? It need not necessarily be from WWII, I know of people driving a cab today who saw military action whilst doing National Service or in Kenya etc. Just an idea...

Sean Farrell (B39)

It seems unlikely that we have many drivers who were involved in WWII – although we did have at least two – but if you have fought for your country in perhaps the Falklands, Gulf, Afghanistan, Iraq or even if this isn't your native country and you were involved in Vietnam and don't mind writing about it, then I would be happy to put it into the magazine. Any photos would be great. We start this month with former Chairman Jack Russell ...Ed

DaC House tour

Dear Alan

As an 'old timer' from Pentonville Road and Shirland Road days, I was given an opportunity to visit **DaC House** thanks to Alan Fisher. I googled its street view and wow - how **ODRTS** had grown! On arrival I was given a tour by Compliance Officer **Allan Evans**, but stepping out of the lift into the vast area of what we used to refer to as the control room, I was amazed to see how serene and quiet it was even with all those extra telephonists. It was explained that some telephone operators are also dispatchers. My, how things have changed from the analogue era into the digital age!

Dispatcher **Wayne Gruby** gave me some tuition on a work screen of how the system operates. I was also given the privilege of meeting **Brian Rice**, which was indeed a highlight for me having read so much about him in **Call Sign Online**. Then there was the training school programme for staff and drivers and their welfare. It gave an impression of excellent care and understanding. Then onto the IT department, the incredible engine room where all the new technology is tried and tested, ahead of current trends.

In the late 1950s I was a night driver; when work was sparse, the dispatcher would put his microphone near a radio set, which was entertaining until brought down to earth with work. Later on he was told to stop it.

I am very grateful to all those people who made the tour such an enjoyable



Mailshot

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experience and a cherished memory. I came away from DaC House with a sense of pride of how ODRTS has grown and how, as a past member of the Society. I was part of it. Coincidentally, I was born in City Road in a spot nearby to DaC House. Now they have built a roundabout over it. But it was nice of ODRTS to put the building close by!

Thank you again Alan, you have made an old man very happy. Also please thank Allan Evans and your photographer Alan Green.

Norman Kerstein (Ex-A81)

Pleased you enjoyed it Norman and I hope your wife is feeling better. Incidentally, Contact Centre manager Keith Cain has long had an open invitation to any drivers that would like a tour of the building. Just get in touch with him and he'll try to arrange it ...Ed

Pam Campbell

To a dear friend, Pam, what can I tell you about her, barely five feet tall, coming up to my shoulder,

Her sense of humour we had to tickle So she'd make us laugh with her silly giggle!

If you had a problem you wanted to share

You can bet your life she'd always be there.

A tiny person she might have been,

But she stood so tall as part of our team.

So goodbye dear friend, we send all our love

And there's another 'big' star in the heavens above...

Annita Young

DaC Accounts Dept

What if (1)?

Dear Sir

Regarding the fall in work levels (**Jon Robinson (E88) July Call Sign**), I wonder whether we are developing strategies to at least maintain our position in the transport arena. Many drivers are concerned about the deafening silence from all quarters of our trade organisations with regard to the way forward. Perhaps we at DaC could convene an EGM to discuss possible changes to the way we work eg dress code, using our resources to finance our drivers for new cabs, developing an App to challenge Hailo, best use of our buildings and non-rejectable jobs in busy times. Some of our colleagues do

reject reasonably good work unnecessarily - if you are paid for a job then it cannot be a bad job. All this and more is being discussed in the cafes, shelters and on the ranks. None of us have the answers but we must become active and respond to the crisis.

Bruno Manfredi (F23)

See answer below and also Allan Evans report in this issue where he tells how successful our App is becoming ...Ed

What if (2)?

Dear Sir

With regard to Mr John Robinson's (**E88**) views in the July *Call Sign* headed "What if?"

I am in full agreement with John's views here and would like to ask whether Dial-a-Cab needs such a large building? Is it not possible to incorporate Roman Way into East Road? Our fleet is now much smaller than when we were in Brunswick Place. I also agree with his comment on loaning drivers' money to buy taxis, indeed this was mentioned at the AGM. We only earn 1% on our reserves, so maybe Dial-a-Cab and its drivers' could benefit by using our reserves to buy new cabs? Perhaps the time has come when we should be getting together at an Extraordinary General Meeting to discuss the way forward. I have spoken to many drivers who are really worried for the future of Dial-a-Cab and have also heard many comments on who would be the first to fold ie DaC or Mountview.

At the AGM, Brian Rice mentioned that we could have an App for outside drivers charging 5percent, which I thought was a great idea. I would also like to point out that I think we, as a Taxi trade, need a kick up the backside as our trade is very outdated. Our vehicles are far too expensive and with all the different coloured cabs we are reminiscent of Gotla's old Renault Dauphin minicabs with adverts all over them, whilst the big private hire companies are now all Black cars and their drivers are appropriately dressed. Unfortunately our trade is still stuck in the 20th century.

I do not pretend to have all the answers but I do feel we should be talking about this sooner rather than later.

Paul Hammett (V42)

Hi Paul, Brian Rice has addressed your letter in his Chairman's Report on page 4. Re your question on loaning finance to DaC members, although Brian will also address that question as well, Company Secretary Howard Pears has sent me the following:

"The 'objects' of ODRTS Ltd do not include the operation of this type of financial entity and consequently it would require the membership to vote on the necessary changes to the rules. Notwithstanding the arduous procedures to achieve approval for the changes, the formation of a fully compliant, FSA registered Credit Union would be required together with a structure of controls to safeguard the members' interests. I am all for members saving money and the Society receiving additional interest income, but the processes required to achieve these aims are not practical or sustainable as the costs involved would outweigh the benefits."

Vito jobs

Having spoken to a few Vito drivers about radio trips they have covered specifically asking for a Vito - especially during the recent hot spell - I have to wonder how many of those callers are using the cab because of the air con rather than for the 6-seats. That is especially annoying for those drivers when the trip is just a normal local trip called *As Directed*, perhaps because the passengers order their own cab online or maybe ordered via a DaC App. Perhaps our telephonists could ask how many people are traveling when the passenger phones and asks for a Vito and a message could be inserted by the online ordering facility. If nothing else, it is taking a Vito away from a customer - perhaps a large corporate account - who genuinely needs 6 seats but we can't provide it because of some people's selfishness.

Jon Robinson (E88)

Unfortunately Contact Centre Manager Keith Cain was away at the cut-off date, but I have passed your suggestion over to him ...Ed

John Pace

Many will know John Pace either as a friend or through his writing with many trade newspapers. Sadly John has been struck down with Motor Neuron Disease, an illness that affects voluntary muscle activity. Visiting John at his home recently, he asked Call Sign to sincerely thank the group of drivers - many of them on Dial-a-Cab - who made a collection for him at the Piccolo sandwich bar in Gresham Street and raised an astonishing £500. We are happy to do so and we also send John our very best wishes... AF



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