

February 2013



# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

*DaC's Divyesh  
Ruparelia at  
the top of  
Mount  
Kilimanjaro!*



*Mike Son and some lovely ladies! It must  
be the LTFUC's 85th birthday party!*





# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

It's West End shows this month, listed in alphabetical order. Burst time based on Saturday finish times calculated on start plus length of show, so some may be a few minutes out. See bottom of page to find out how get a more detailed schedule...

Show	Theatre	Address	Burst	Notes
39 Steps	Criterion Theatre	Piccadilly Circus, W1	22:00	
American Justice	Arts Theatre	Great Newport St. WC2H 7JB		closing 03/2/13
Audience	Gielgud Theatre	Shaftesbury Ave, W1D 6AR		opens 15/2/13
Billy Elliot - The Musical	Victoria Palace Theatre	Victoria Street, SW1E 5EA	22:30	
Bodyguard	Adelphi Theatre	Strand, WC2E 7NA	22:00	
Book Of Mormon	Prince Of Wales Theatre	Coventry Street, W1	22:00	
Captain Of Kopenick	Olivier, National Theatre	Royal National Theatre, SE1 9PX		
Chorus Line, A	London Palladium Theatre	Argyll Street, W1A 3AB	22:05	opens 05/2/13
Effect	Cottesloe, National Theatre	Royal National Theatre, SE1 9PX		closing 23/2/13
Feast	Young Vic (Main House)	66 The Cut, SE1 8LZ		closing 23/2/13
Fiesta	Trafalgar Studios 2	Whitehall, SW1		closing 2/3/13
Great Expectations	Vaudeville Theatre	The Strand, WC2R 0NH	21:50	
Henry V	Noel Coward Theatre	St Martin's Lane, WC2N 4AH		closing 15/2/13
If You Don't Let Us Dream	Royal Court Downstairs	Sloane Square, SW1W 8AS		closing 03/3/13
Jersey Boys	Prince Edward Theatre	Old Compton Street, W1V 6HS	22:05	
Judas Kiss	Duke of York's Theatre	St Martin's Lane, WC2		
Julius Caesar	Donmar Warehouse	Earlham Street, WC2H 9LD	21:40	closing 03/2/13
Kiss Me, Kate	Old Vic Theatre	The Cut, London SE1 8NB	22:20	closes 02/3/13
Les Miserables	Queen's Theatre	Shaftesbury Ave, W1V 8BA	22:30	
Let It Be	Savoy Theatre	The Strand, WC2	21:45	
Lion King	Lyceum Theatre	Wellington St, WC2E 7DA	22:15	
Low Road	Royal Court Downstairs	Sloane Square, SW1W 8AS		
Macbeth	Trafalgar Studios 1	Whitehall, SW1		
Magistrate	Olivier, National Theatre	Royal National Theatre, SE1 9PX	22:10	closes 10/2/13
Mamma Mia	Novello Theatre	Aldwych, WC2	22:15	
Matilda The Musical	Cambridge Theatre	Earlham Street, WC2	22:10	
Midnight Tango	Phoenix Theatre	Charing Cross Rd, WC2H 0JP	21:20	closes 02/3/13
Monty Python's Spamalot	Playhouse Theatre	Northumberland Avenue, WC2	22:00	
Mousetrap	St Martin's Theatre	West St, WC2H 9NH	21:45	
Much Ado About Nothing	Old Vic Theatre	The Cut, London SE1 8NB		
My Perfect Mind	Young Vic (The Maria)	66 The Cut, SE1 8LZ		
No Quarter	Royal Court Upstairs	Sloane Square, SW1W 8AS		closing 03/2/13
Old Times	Harold Pinter Theatre	Panton St, SW1Y 4DN		
Once	Phoenix Theatre	Charing Cross Rd, WC2H 0JP		opens 16/3/13
One Man, Two Guvnors	Haymarket Theatre Royal	Haymarket, SW1Y 4QL	22:00	
People	Lyttelton, National Theatre	Royal National Theatre, SE1 9PX	22:00	
Phantom Of The Opera	Her Majesty's Theatre	Haymarket, SW1Y 4QL	22:00	
Port	Lyttelton, National Theatre	Royal National Theatre, SE1 9PX	21:40	
Privates On Parade	Noel Coward Theatre	St Martin's Lane, WC2N 4AH	22:05	closing 02/3/13
Quartermaine's Terms	Wyndham's Theatre	Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0DA		
Richard III	Apollo Theatre	Shaftesbury Avenue, W1D 7ES		closing 16/2/13
Rock Of Ages	Garrick Theatre	Charing Cross Rd, WC2	22:15	
Shrek The Musical	Drury Lane, Theatre Royal	Catherine St, WC2B 5JF	22:00	closes 24/2/13
Silence Of The Sea	Trafalgar Studios 2	Whitehall, SW1		closing 02/3/13
Singin' In The Rain	Palace Theatre	Shaftesbury Ave, W1V 8AY	22:00	
Stomp	Ambassadors Theatre	West Street, WC2H 9N	21:45	
Tailor-Made Man	Arts Theatre	Great Newport St. WC2H 7JB	21:30	opens 14/2/13
This House	Olivier, National Theatre	Royal National Theatre, SE1 9PX		opens 23/2/13
Thriller Live	Lyric Theatre	Shaftesbury Avenue, W1D 7 ES	22:30	
Time To Reap	Royal Court Upstairs	Sloane Square, SW1W 8AS		opens 22/2/13
Trelawny Of The Wells	Donmar Warehouse	Earlham Street, WC2H 9LD		opens 15/2/13
Turn Of The Screw	Almeida Theatre	Almeida Street, N1 1TA		
Twelfth Night	Apollo Theatre	Shaftesbury Avenue, W1D 7ES	22:35	closing 09/2/13
Viva Forever!	Piccadilly Theatre	Denman Street, W1	22:00	
War Horse	New London	Drury Lane, WC2B 5PW	22:10	
We Will Rock You	Dominion Theatre	Tottenham Court Rd, W1P OAG	22:10	
Wicked	Apollo Victoria Theatre	Wilton Rd, SW1	22:20	
Woman In Black	Fortune Theatre	Russell St, WC2B 5HH	22:00	

Go to [www.nashsnumbers.co.uk](http://www.nashsnumbers.co.uk) and click the 'MyFav' Taxi button. Continue to the 'MyFav' website taxi page and you will find a 'Theatres' icon to click. Don't forget! [www.myfav.co.uk](http://www.myfav.co.uk) and register with the 'Unlock' code of 'taxi' then make 'MyFav' your home page for: a) Your ideal home page that can be personalised, b) Easy access to all the 65+ taxi related icon links to useful taxi information and c) A chance to win the monthly £100 prize...

# from the editor's desk

## Significant or otherwise?

Because *Call Sign* rolled off the Christmas presses much earlier than its usual schedules require, I missed an article in the *London Cab Driver's Club* magazine - *The Badge* - that had a pop at little old me! As usual for that paper, the article was unsigned.

Now while I don't see every issue of that paper I have to say that when I do get it, it's usually quite an enjoyable read seeing who's in their bad books for the month - and of course, anything I need to know about *Dial-a-Cab* I can be sure to read it there! As a bonus, on one occasion (albeit several years ago), the item was correct! Mind you, it WAS a press release!

However, in saying that, I have to also be honest and ask what the purpose of the organisation itself is? Perhaps I've missed something, but to me the LCDC just seem to hang onto the LTDA's coat-tails. All I hear its Chairman, former *Dial-a-Cab* driver **Grant Davis**, talking about is what "we and the LTDA" do together to help the trade. Don't get me wrong; before the LCDC were even thought about, I was going on in *Call Sign* about the LTDA and T&G needing to work together as they often deliberately disagreed with each other. But that was a long time ago and the LTDA really don't need the LCDC and could undoubtedly do everything they currently do with the LCDC, on their own.

Anyone knowing anything about how this trade works will know that LTDA General Secretary **Steve McNamara** leads the LCDC around for the sake of peace. But does he need them? Nope, not for one second. The LCDC are, in reality, pointless. And as we get more and more organisations coming into being, we will eventually end up back where we were in the 1970s and 80s - organisations slugging off each other while trying to sell sickness insurance!

I have never denied being an LTDA member and if they weren't the best organisation by far, then I'd join whichever group was the best. But that is the LTDA - and most certainly not the LCDC!

**So what of their little pop at what they call my "misinformed nonsense."** I said in the *December Call Sign* that it was nice to see the LCDC eventually accepting that we are black cabs. Now they tell me they have been saying it for a whole four years! Like wow! Four years!

Well Grant, I've been battling in *Call Sign* over the past ten years for this trade to accept that being described as "black cabs" was brilliant and that you couldn't buy publicity like that. It told the world that you were a London taxi driver in just two words - black cabs. The rest of the trade - including even some of our own DaC drivers via *Mailsbot* and especially then-Editor of *TAXI*, **Stuart Pessok**, insisted that the term was derogatory and that we drove licensed taxis. But as I said - without meaning to be sarcastic in any way - I welcomed the LCDC finally accepting the black cab scenario and their newly launched *Back to Black* campaign. Better late than never is better than never.

The *Badge* also pointed out that I replied to a *Call Sign* reader that the TX4 was a better taxi for London than the Vito. Sadly we know what happened to **Manganese Bronze**, but that doesn't alter my answer at the time - and if the TX4 returns as it looks like doing, then my answer would remain the same because a £42,000 taxi where many feel compelled to disconnect the rear steering fuse is no wonder cab. If I couldn't get a TX4, I'd wait to see what the *Nissan* was like because £42k just to go to work is ludicrous.

Last but not least, *The Badge* brought up my view on *Hailo*, but as usual only put in the bits that suited their argument. They responded to my comments about no run-ins on *Hailo* and there being a five-minute wait before you put on the meter. Their argu-



ment? £146 DaC subscriptions meant you would have to be taking £1460 a month before you would be better off at the 10% charge. And where did they get that comment? Well they pinched it from a **Steve Shaller** letter in a recent issue of *Call Sign*! Not surprising mind you, as they don't appear to get any letters other than on their website, which are several months out of date with some apparently being censored because the good old Chairman won't allow his readers to attack any other organisations! Well fancy that!

As usual, they make up their own arguments - yes, as I said, entertaining to read in the paper but nonetheless silly. As I wrote last month, it isn't just the 10% you have to pay to the three clever Yanks who managed to convince London drivers to work by subsidising the passenger's costs, when our equivalents in Chicago said "up yours, Charlie" with the result that the passenger there pays a surcharge. No, they also missed me pointing out in that next issue - which also came out before *The Badge* - that in addition to the 10% and taking an average £3.60 run-in (rather than the £4.20 maximum) and the five minute wait, a DaC radio job was already £3.60 ahead and that's BEFORE the 10% is snatched. As many drivers on a day shift tell me that *Hailo* rides often go under £10, you can probably add a minimum of £1, making a loss of £4.60 on each *Hailo* job compared to a real radio job. So if you do four *Hailo* trips compared to four identical DaC, RTG or ComCab radio jobs, then I estimate that you would probably be between £18 and £20 a day worse off. There is undoubtedly a substantial amount of work on *Hailo* and so long as drivers are happy to work cheaply, then that will continue. If it suddenly got busy then **Jay Bregman** and his two fellow entrepreneurs would very quickly do a Chicago and try to get passengers to pay. Then there would be a gradual loss of work back to minicabs, although Messrs Bregman and co would be off to their next money-making scheme and not concern themselves too much. That's what entrepreneurs do.

The *Hailo* system reminds me of the phone system that arrived in the taxi trade in 2002 - *Zingo*. Developed by **Manganese Bronze** under the shrewd eyes of Chairman **Jamie** - now **Lord Borwick**, the technology involved a nationwide phone number that prospective passengers used to hail a taxi via GPS and speak to the actual driver that would be picking them up.

Drivers were given a hands-free cell phone that they were allowed to use for personal calls and through which a passenger called them. They also had a smart card swipe with ultra-rapid validity confirmation. But there would be no run-ins. Sounds familiar?

But if *Hailo* works, then why did *Zingo*'s £7million

venture fail so miserably? The answer was that London was busy in 2002 and in 2012 it was quiet and drivers were happy to take anything. So while London is quiet, systems like *Hailo* will work but if it turns busy, then it will go the way of *Zingo* because otherwise if we are going to charge minicab rates, there is no point in doing the Knowledge...

## MoT

When *Call Sign* first heard of the two MoTs in addition to a TfL visual check, we were somewhat concerned but listened to everyone who said it was an improvement to the old overhaul system. So all we now need to know is whether it will cost us more, because the 'passing' cost used to be £154 and we now have two MoTs at a cost of anything between £40 and £55 - depending on where you go - to add on. According to LTPH there will be a reduction in the £154 cost - the question is by how much?

## Can we live in DaC's new terminals???

I was reading about the Oxford University British philosopher, **Nick Bostrom**, who some ten years ago wrote a paper suggesting that our universe could actually be a computer simulation run by our descendants. University of Washington physicists are now said to have devised a new experiment to test the theory. I would explain how that works, but I got a bit confused after reading the piece about the supercomputer using a technique known as *lattice quantum chromodynamics* and which starting from the fundamental physical laws that govern the universe, can simulate a tiny portion of the universe on the scale of one 100-trillionth of a metre. That leaves us with the possibility that as there are billions of worlds around billions of suns, it seems likely that if the theory is possible, then it has already happened.

That begs the question; does this supercomputer have a touch screen and can *Dial-a-Cab* drivers pop into the Society's new terminal to have a quick kip if it's a bit quiet out!!!

## Reed

This has undoubtedly been the hardest issue I have ever done. The death of my son Reed on 12th January ripped a hole in my heart and the thought of filling *Call Sign* was a million miles from my mind. But within hours, I became inundated with messages of condolence from drivers and members of DaC's staff via text, email and even Facebook. It gave me the incentive to want to continue with the issue.

My thanks also go to **Brian Rice** who immediately called and said that if I wanted to skip February, then I should. I don't know if it is up to the usual standard, but I sincerely hope it is because for a short time after Reed died, doing the magazine saved my sanity.

Those of you that don't work on Sundays may not know Reed, but for 23 years he did the evening dispatcher's job and became known as Mr Message because there was no time in the week where so many messages went out! Some didn't like it, but the majority seemed to enjoy the stream of traffic reports and updates on where the work was etc. But if radio work wasn't covered, his annoyance became obvious!

My thanks to everyone for their thoughtfulness and also to the estimated 300 people, including many drivers, staff and the BoM, who came to Reed's funeral or to see the family afterwards. It was very much appreciated...



# reflections of the chairman

## Reed Fisher

As most of you are probably aware, January saw the passing of **Reed Fisher**, son of *Call Sign* Editor **Alan Fisher**.

Reed started working for **Dial-a-Cab** over 23 years ago; he worked part time as System Supervisor on Sunday evenings, his full time occupation being an IT Analyst at the Ford Motor Company.

Reed was very good at his job and also very popular with the small team of staff that worked on the Sunday evening shift and he did love to send a fleet message should a job need covering!

It is a travesty that Reed was taken so young; he was just 40 years of age with a lovely wife Lara and two small children, Samuel and Imogen whose ages are just 9 and 7 years. It just seems so unfair when someone so young who has everything to live for is taken away.

Reed had been diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour and there was a slow deterioration over a period of time and I found it quite amazing how positive and strong both Reed and his family were during that traumatic period.

I am grateful that Alan brought Reed to the office for a few hours some weeks before he passed away and I had the opportunity to see and talk to him.

His whole family have remained very strong throughout this whole tragic experience and I hope they can continue along that path, although it must be terribly difficult. It is always very traumatic when you lose a loved one, but probably even harder when one is so young with such a young family.

I can only offer my sincere condolences to Alan, Linda and Lara and the remainder of their family over such a tragic and unfair loss.

## Terminals

By the time you read this piece, we should have received our first delivery of the new terminals - although we have had several on test for some time.

**Keith** and **Allan**, together with **Shelagh Adkins**, are constructing a fitting programme and you will be notified when it is your turn to have the new equipment. We will fit a designated number of units and then stop to see how they perform before we fit the remainder of the fleet.

The system is basically the same as the current one and I'm sure most of you will be able to use the new equipment without any instruction. However, we will have staff on hand to give you some instruction regarding the new mapping and satnav facility, together with the **chip and pin** should you require it.

We are also moving away from our private network and onto the **O2** facility.

This new facility will give us greater capacity and the opportunity at a later date to upgrade our current despatching system. A great deal of capacity is needed for GPS and that was unavailable to us under our own private network. You no doubt remember that there were signal problems in the past when business was better and the infrastructure did not have the capacity



to handle keep polling the fleet to obtain a taxi's position for despatching purposes.

With the new infrastructure, we will have that capacity. However, you must remember that this is a new system and no matter how much we have tested it in the past, we are still expecting to have some bugs in the early days. If we do, then I hope we can all show a little tolerance.

## Account Customer App

We launched our **Credit Card App** in December and it is working really well - a credit to our IT department who built the whole App from start to finish in-house. So if you have taken a credit card booking off the system, it could be that it was ordered by the customers App, because the way the trip is despatched the member would not know how we received the trip, whether we receive by phone, on-line, e-mail or App, the trip will

look exactly the same to you.

To add to the above, our IT department have now built an App for our credit account customers so they can also have the facility to book their account taxi via our App, whether that be an ASAP or a pre-booking. We are looking to go live with the **Account Customer App** at the beginning of February.

The next stage is more contentious and that is whether we should build and launch a **Driver App**. That would mean that all taxi drivers that had our App could receive certain work from Dial-a-Cab on their iPhone or Android without having a Dial-a-Cab terminal in their cab. They would not need to be a member of Dial-a-Cab.

I realise the foregoing is an extremely contentious issue and our rules might have to be changed to accommodate that facility, but only you, the members, can do that. Those drivers with the Dial-a-Cab App might have to become associate members or something similar.

Don't think the above is our course of action, because it isn't. I am merely floating the idea so you can realise the course that could be open to the Society. A Driver App would not be and could not (in my opinion) be launched unless you, the members, agree.

## AGM

*Finally, I would like to remind you the AGM is on February 3rd at the HAC City Road at 11am and I hope to see as many of you as possible there on the day...*

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

## THE SALIERI RESTAURANT

376 Strand, WC2

We Invite Dial-a-Cab drivers and their guests to our restaurant where you can partake of the finest food and wine

And as a thank-you for helping our clients come and go over the years, we are happy to be able to offer you a genuine 25% discount on your bill

*We are certain that you will be delighted*



Please bring along your badge or Bill as ID

**Salieri Restaurant**  
376 Strand, WC2

**Reservations: 020 7836 1318**

*December's Call Sign wrote of the forthcoming MOT tests for taxis. They are now here!*

## NEW TAXI LICENSING SERVICE FROM 1 MARCH



**This notice provides important information regarding the forthcoming change in the taxi licensing service, which will commence on 1 March 2013.**

In 2010, the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy (MAQS) was published which announced a number of changes for taxis and private hire vehicles including the introduction of age limits. Following requests from the trade through the MAQS public consultation, one such change was that with effect from early 2013 the current taxi licensing system would change to introduce two MOT tests per annum and an annual licensing inspection.

The new taxi licensing system, which will commence to coincide with the changeover of the vehicle licensing and inspections service from SGS UK Ltd to NSL Ltd, will require all vehicle owners to ensure their vehicles have passed two standard (Class 4) MOT tests per year. The London Cab Order 1934 has been amended accordingly.

The first MOT test must be issued no more

than 14 days prior to the taxi licensing inspection and the second MOT test is to be issued six months from the date the taxi licence is granted. The six-monthly MOT tests help to ensure that taxi and private hire vehicles remain safe and road worthy for passengers and other road users.

In addition to the two MOT tests, NSL will carry out a taxi vehicle specific inspection on an annual basis prior to a licence being issued. This annual inspection will only be carried out where there is clear evidence that a standard MOT has been issued within the 14 day period, unless the vehicle is new. If the taxi is new then it is exempt from the requirement to undertake an MOT test for the first 12 months from the date of first registration.

Please note as part of the transition to this new system, it will not be possible to have a taxi licensing inspection between 14 and 28 February 2013. This period will be available for taxi re-tests only.

All taxi vehicle licences due to expire within this period will need to be booked in for a licensing inspection before the 14 February to ensure continual licensing.

As part of the changeover in service provider

from SGS to NSL, TfL have set up a separate booking number for vehicle inspections depending on when you want the inspection to take place.

To book an inspection now to take place on or after 28 February 2013, ring 08432 241 777.

For any inspection to take place before the 28 February, continue to use the existing telephone number 0845 378 2345. From the 28 February you will be able to continue to use the current 0845 378 2345 to book all vehicle inspections

The fee payable for taxi and private hire vehicle inspections is reviewed annually and is based on the cost incurred by TfL to deliver licensing services. New fees will be applicable from 2 April 2013 and TfL are currently in the process of approving these. While we anticipate there will be a reduction in these fees we are unable to announce details at this stage. Please note all inspections undertaken prior to 2 April 2013 will be charged at the current fee.

**John Mason**

**Director, London Taxis and Private Hire**

## London Bridge bus station

**L**ondon Bridge bus station is currently closed as the result of a sewer collapsing in London Bridge Street. The station is expected to be closed for a total of approximately 12 weeks to allow the sewer to be repaired. The taxi rank in the bus station will not be operational during the closure and there has been some confusion about what the temporary arrangements for taxis are.

During this closure, a temporary taxi rank has **not** been set up in Tooley Street and the loading bays in Tooley Street have not been suspended. This means that taxi drivers must not stop and wait in the loading bays in Tooley Street, as the normal loading bay restrictions apply and any driver who stops and waits risks being issued with a *Penalty Charge Notice* by police. Taxis parking in the loading bays in Tooley Street are also obstructing other road users, including taxis, and causing congestion in the area.

**Whilst the bus station is closed, a temporary taxi rank has been set up in St Thomas Street with the head of the taxi rank next to the bus stop shelter (stop K) and the bus stands have been suspended. All passengers wanting a taxi will be directed towards the rank in St Thomas Street**

LTPH will inform the trade as soon as the works in London Bridge Street are completed and the bus station reopens.

## Knighthood for Peter Hendy

Mayor of London, **Boris Johnson**, has welcomed the award of a Knighthood in the Queen's New Year's Honours list to the **London's Transport Commissioner**, who now becomes **Sir Peter Hendy CBE**. The award was for services to transport and the community and takes him a long way from his first job as a bus conductor on the number 11 bus route!

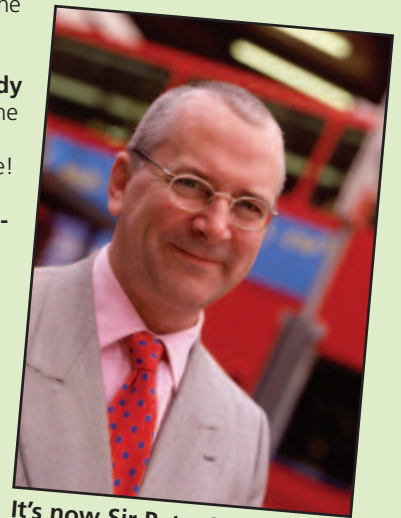
Mayor Boris said: "**Sir Peter Hendy richly deserves this honour. He has shown outstanding leadership as London's Transport Commissioner, including overseeing the largest ever investment programme in the capital's transport network and record breaking passenger numbers and operational performance. He also led the successful operation of the transport network for the London 2012 Games, demonstrating to the world that London is the best city to live, work, visit and invest in.**"

It was back in 2006 when Sir Peter left his job as Director of Surface Transport - ie London's bus network - to take over from **Bob Kiley** as the man in charge of London transport. That included the bus and tube networks as well as making him responsible for the congestion charge. At the time, Sir Peter was somewhat anti-cyclists and in a Guardian interview that year in response to criticism of bus drivers by a cyclist organisation, he said: "**Cyclists are the bloody last people to talk about bad behaviour on the roads with the way they jump red traffic lights!**"

Now aged 58, Sir Peter is a very down-to-earth man who once famously asked a newspaper taking his photo not to make him look 'ponsey'! He certainly isn't afraid of getting his hands dirty and will roll up his sleeves if something needs doing, rather than waiting and telling someone else to do it.

However, many in the taxi trade will remember him for being the person most responsible for bringing in the 18metre long bendy buses - which now must be looked on as a failure following their removal from service.

A self-confessed bus man all his working life, Sir Peter Hendy has shown that there is no limit to where you can go if you try hard enough and **Call Sign** congratulates him on the honour of his knighthood...

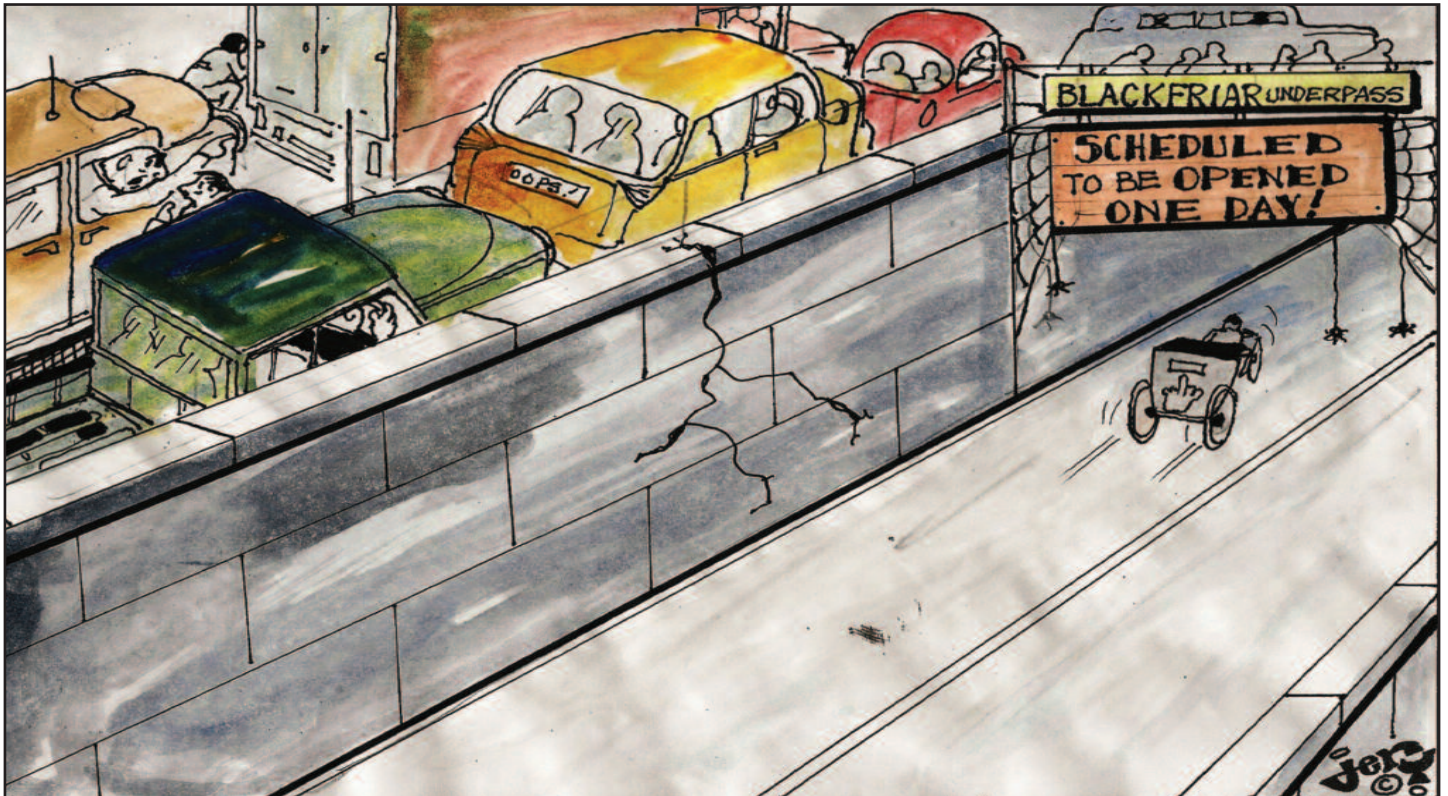


*It's now Sir Peter Hendy*

**Jamie Corum**  
**Call Sign Online**



# Jery's World



"Yeah mate, I fink the underpass will reopen permanently again to coincide with celebrations of London getting the Olympics again – possibly in 2048!"

## NEW OLD STREET!

*As Call Sign's story proves to be almost correct!*

In the November 2011 issue of **Call Sign**, we exclusively revealed that London Mayor Boris Johnson was looking at proposals to turn the **Old Street** roundabout – just around the corner from **Dial-a-Cab** - into the equivalent of San Francisco's **Silicon Valley**.

Whilst our informant slipped up when he said that **Google** were to be DaC's new neighbours, the only reason was that the American multinational search engine corporation later pulled out of the deal, calling it overpriced.

Now our IT unit at Dial-a-Cab House in East Road under the manership of **John Bankes**, looks as though its acknowledgment as the taxi trade's most high-tech IT department will be joined by the world's leading hi-tech outfits as the Old Street roundabout becomes a tech city hub.

Both **David Cameron** and **Boris Johnson** have jointly announced plans for a £50million high-tech institute with the area getting a makeover on its way to becoming a centre for technology start-ups and entrepreneurs.

The Prime Minister said: "**As well as backing the businesses of today, we are creating an aspiration nation and also backing the innovative, high-growth businesses of the future.**"

Messrs Cameron and Johnson also revealed that major technology firms, including **Microsoft** and **IBM**, are investing in the area. But sadly for **Call Sign's** reporter, not Google!



DaC's home zone is to become the UK's centre of technology

Michael Toomey  
Call Sign Online



## Obituary

# REED FISHER

For as long as I have been the Editor of *Call Sign*, I have always made it a policy that if anyone connected to **Dial-a-Cab** should die and there was someone that could write about them, then that article should be a priority – and if at all possible, accompanied by a photo because we often don't know names but immediately recognise faces. Never did I think that my dear son **Reed** would come into that category and be written about by me.

Reed was a wonderful young man who at just 40 years of age was still years away from reaching the prime of life. I loved trying to embarrass him by calling him *my little boy* and pinching his cheeks when in company. But he defeated my attempts by not minding in the least!

He always had an inbuilt need to constantly work and whilst he enjoyed holidaying with his wife **Lara** – whom he met in 1994 and who she described as her soul mate – and his children **Samuel** and **Imogen**, he worked full-time as an IT analyst for the **Ford Motor Company** as well as having been the Sunday evening dispatcher at **Dial-a-Cab** for over 20 years. There was something about the DaC job that he just couldn't give up – possibly the endless stream of messages he constantly put out!

Then to pass the time he also did and passed the Yellow badge suburban Knowledge, rarely ever using it but hinting that he would like a crack at the Green badge as a challenge,



**Reed, Lara, Samuel and Imogen on a 2012 holiday**

although he had no intention of leaving Ford! He just loved challenges.

He started working life in the music biz, learning to play the piano and general keyboards while recording late-1980s pop group **The Pretty Things**. But the money was dire and eventually Fords came along.

Reed fell ill almost three years ago but doctors put it down to stress. His insistence that it was something more serious led to a closer examination and discovery of an early – but due to its position, inoperable – tumour on the brain. But that early find meant that Reed had three good and happy years whereas had he accepted the stress finding, that could well have disintegrated into just several months.

A letter from DaC Trainer **Daren Morley** about Reed told me about his dry sense of humour but also how he wasn't afraid to speak of his illness and his amazing positivity. There was a time when we began to think that perhaps Reed could outlive all of us, but it was

n't to be and he deteriorated fairly suddenly but thankfully, free of any obvious pain. However, the tumour affected one side of him, stealing the use of his arm, leg, sight and speech.












But that wasn't enough to stop him and he continued doing the things he did before – holidays, going out to eat and shopping. But sadly work had to stop. And on 12th January, the world stopped.

Everyone in the family loved Reed, but he was my little boy...

**Alan Fisher**  
Editor and Reed's dad

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# DAC'S NEW TERMINALS ALMOST READY!

## And the most advanced taxi system anywhere!

You will recall Call Sign announcing some months back that Dial-a-Cab's fleet would soon be fitted with new terminals incorporating the unique 'Cabbie's Mate' combined A-Z maps and navigation software.

We now hear that engineers are in the final stages of testing the new terminals and fitting will commence in the very near future.

*In addition to dispatched work, DaC drivers will, after fitting, benefit from the following:-*

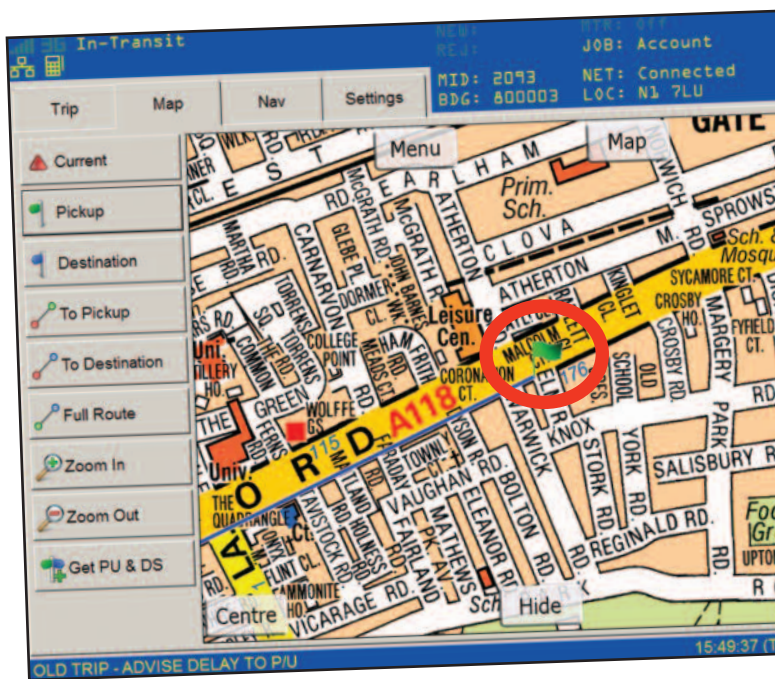
MDT's will display pick-up locations on radio jobs on both A-Z and navigation maps. Where customers have provided the destination location, MDTs will display a blue 'cotton line' in both applications and will automatically plan a route from your location.

When a destination becomes known and is entered into the system, either by the contact centre or the driver, the MDT will display the blue 'cotton line' from the GPS position and automatically calculate a route to the destination to anywhere in the UK.

*Even better, all facilities built into the 'Cabbie's Mate' software will also be available to DaC drivers when picking up street fares with a fastest or shortest route option!*

Drivers will also be able to either hear the satnav voice, or if you'd rather your passenger didn't know you were using the device, keep it on silent. Greater London will also have a built in database of around 25,000 points that will be periodically updated. There is also a built in reminder of the speed limit wherever you are – not that, of course, you would need that!

In addition to those points of interest, all the maps have been fully updated for the Dial-a-Cab release.



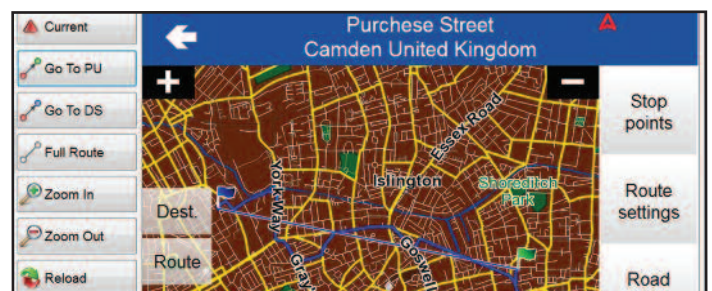
Zoom map shows pick up (green flag) centred



Terminals ready to go!



Satnav screen



Cotton route and the best route



## Reed Fisher

I would like to send Alan and Reed's wife and family my sincere condolences on the death of Reed. Although he only worked for us on the Sunday evening shift as a controller, he was very much part of the whole team who work within the contact centre.

Reed began working for us as a telephonist more than 23 years ago and through his determination, worked through the ranks to shift controller. With Reed in control of the Sunday evening shift. I knew full well the Society was in very safe hands. There was no question that Reed always took his position very seriously and did his job to highest standard possible. He will be sadly missed by us all.

## Trying to beat the system...

There are still a very small minority of drivers who are trying to beat the system by booking-in incorrectly to gain an unfair advantage over their fellow members.

Some drivers adhere to just being spoken to by a controller, who will tell them that they have booked-in incorrectly. Others, for reasons best known to themselves choose to ignore the friendly warning, which then leaves our controllers with no option but to issue a complaint against those that continue to do it for a second time. Please don't do it.

## New terminals

I am pleased to inform you that we are cur-

# CONTACT CENTRE CHAT

## With Keith Cain



rently in the process of planning the new terminal fitting programme. Very soon, every driver will be sent a letter with an appointment date and time. The fitting will take approximately one and half hours and Dana, our Roman Way manager, informs me that they hope to improve on this time as more and more drivers are fitted.

The functionality of the new terminal is very similar to that of the existing one, with the exception of the new hand held Chip and Pin machine we are fitting and the map facility upgrade.

For Dial-a-Cab to meet the compliance

rules for accepting payment via credit card, the new PIN Entry Device (PED) is a requirement that sees the passenger entering their PIN number into the machine at the end of the journey.

We will have staff available at Roman Way to go through the credit card acceptance process and the other enhancements we have made with every driver while the terminal is being fitted. Literature explaining how to take a credit card will also be available for you.

In order to speed up the fitting programme, please try and not alter the appointment we have made for you. We will be taking into account whether you drive primarily days or nights, so unless there is a significant unforeseen problem preventing you from keeping your appointment, please try to attend at the time given. We look forward seeing you.

There will be no need for any driver to call Driver Services to see where they are on the list. We will ensure all drivers are fitted as soon as it is possible.

Keith Cain

Contact Centre Manager  
Drivers Operation Manager

THE LAST MORRIS OXFORD TAXI IS ABOUT TO GO UNDER THE HAMMER...

# 'UNCLE LIMA' UP FOR SALE!



Pic left: Bonnie Martyn greets Cyril Nathan in 1957 with his Morris Oxford

Saturday 9 March will see a piece of history take place in the taxi trade as the last **Morris Oxford** taxi goes up for sale at the **Historics** auction house at **Brooklands Museum** in **Ivor, Bucks**. There is also an inescapable link to **ODRTS** history as the one hundredth driver to join this Society, **Cyril Nathan**, arrived at our **Pentonville** offices in his **Morris Oxford (JXD 949)** in 1957 and was greeted by founder Chairman **Bonnie Martyn**. Even in 1957, the cab was fairly old.

While not **Cyril Nathan's** taxi, the history is undoubtedly similar as both would have been around during the 1940/41 German Blitz on London and come through it unscathed.

The **Morris Oxford** was originally built for export in the days when the UK was the main exporter of cars after the USA and the vehicle was known as the **Empire Oxford**, but sales were disappointing and many of the 1,700 vehicles manufactured were returned and put onto the UK market.

Now there is just one left. **UL8 563** was built in 1929 and nicknamed **Uncle Lima** by Morris supporters. It was used as a taxi for around 10 years before being bought by a farmer for use as a tractor to help support the war effort. So much so that when the war ended and the Oxford finished its farming duties, some scrap iron in the adapted rear of the cab turned out to be two unexploded mortar bombs in addition to an anti-tank rocket!

Historics say that the former taxi is something of a celebrity and has made many appearances at shows and they anticipate strong interest and expect offers of up to £30,000...

Ron Yarborough  
Call Sign Online

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London's latest tourist attraction opens to the public in February 2013 and I, together with many other licensed London taxi drivers, was invited courtesy of the *London Taxi Drivers Association*, for a viewing of the **Shard** on **Monday 14th January**.

I arrived at 18:30 via the London Bridge concourse and was directed by security to the lower level via an escalator at St Thomas Street. Once in the building, I was greeted by staff in smart uniforms who were issuing tickets that were scanned to count the number of people going up to the viewing area.

You first go through very efficient airport style security and once through, you can have your photo taken. You are then shown to the first lift, which takes you up to the 33rd floor where you enter from one side of the lift and leave on the opposite side. Lift attendants are very knowledgeable about the speed at which it elevates and yes my ears did pop as the lift stopped - you go up that quick!

You then take a short walk to the second lift, which takes you up to the 68th floor. This then leads you to the enclosed viewing platform with its 360 degree view of London. You can hear the wind whistling outside of the Shard and on a clear day you can see for 40 miles.

There are viewing aids that are very easy to operate and which allow you to set them to

# GARRY AND THE SHARD



Garry tests his head for heights!

sleet - in your face is some experience and if you look up from this point, you can see the top of the Shard.

When leaving, you take the lifts back down and are then directed to see your photo which was taken on entry. As you can see, I did buy mine for a memento of the day.

You can now browse the souvenir shop, which has many items to choose from. Upon leaving you go up a small escalator to find yourself back on the London Bridge station concourse, wanting to look back up at the shard to where you have been looking down from with amazement! I would highly recommend it as a must do experience - providing you have a head for heights!

**Prices: Advance adult £24.95, advance child £18.95**

See you at the AGM...

**Garry White L65**

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Winner 2010

Winner 2011



Years before the UK fell in love with the Paralympics as well as the London Olympics themselves, **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Bernie Silver's** (G08) daughter Melissa was being written about in *Call Sign* after taking part in what were then known as the Special Olympics – a smaller version of today's Paralympic Games.

Melissa suffers from Angelman Syndrome. It was first recognised in the 1960s with symptoms in young people showing a developmental delay, severe speech impediment with no, or minimal, use of words. There will usually be a movement or balance disorder and those suffering from the neuro-genetic disorder become easily excitable – although very often, like Melissa, with an apparently happy demeanour. Those with the syndrome also have a very short attention span.

Bernie often takes part in fund-raising activities to assist in raising funds to help advance knowledge into Angelmans and several years ago *Call Sign* reported on his successful attempt at swimming the equivalent distance of the English Channel at his local baths, eventually covering 1600 lengths.

Bernie regularly travels from his house in Essex to pick up Melissa at the residential home she has been in for many years in leafy Berkshire to take her back to the family for a weekend before returning her back to Berkshire. He uses his taxi because of its wheelchair accessibility – but on one recent occasion, Melissa didn't have her chair with her.

**Bernie wrote to *Call Sign* about that recent trip involving Melissa that doesn't show a motoring organisation in a very good light.**

"On Sunday 16th December, I was taking my daughter back to her residential home in Berkshire when the engine on my cab blew up.

## KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD? Not the RAC!



**A true knight of the road!**

I was stuck on the North Circular Road unable to move.

So I phoned the **RAC** to tell them what had happened and that I had a disabled passenger on board who was unable to walk, stand or talk and that I did not have her wheelchair with me.

They told me not to worry and that we would classify as a priority breakdown. So we sat and waited – and waited! It was freezing cold with heavy rain falling. Then I got a text saying they would be yet another hour.

So I then phoned fellow DaC driver and to me now *knight of the road*, **David Marks** (R22). I just didn't know what to do. We were

really cold by then and the thought of yet another hour was just awful. Perhaps had Melissa not been with me, I might have been able to put up with it, but the RAC had said we were a priority!

All David said was for us not to worry. The next thing I knew was when just 15 minutes later David pulled up behind me having been to my home, collected my wife and had now come to take the two of them back to Berkshire and then bring my wife back home!

With my daughter now taken care of thanks to David's kindness, I sat and sat for a total of 2.5 hours. Finally an RAC a contractor turned up with a low loader and put the cab on it. But there was only one passenger seat on board. They didn't know that someone had taken Melissa so how would I have got her to climb up into the seat? They then informed me that they would only drop the cab at my garage but that we would then have to make our own way home!

I am still waiting for a reply to my letter of complaint to the RAC, but through *Call Sign*, can I thank **David Marks** once again – a true *knight of the road*..."

Times may be hard in the taxi business, but the spirit of helping each other still surfaces occasionally - times such as Bernie and Melissa's taxi trip..

# HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN?

You may have seen media reporting of the ongoing search being carried out by detectives from the **Counter Terrorism Command** for a man who has absconded from a Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures notice (TPIM).

It is now believed that **Ibrahim Magag** may have used a London taxi in the vicinity of **Osnaburgh Street** and **Triton Street NW1**, at around 17:20 hours on **Wednesday 26 December**. On **Wednesday 2 January**, officers spoke with cab drivers at **King Cross** and **Euston** stations in an attempt to identify the driver.

The taxi is described as a classic shaped London taxi - not a Mercedes Vito - which had its fog lights on. Police were alerted on the evening of **Wednesday 26 December** when **Ibrahim Magag** failed to meet his overnight residence condition and the Counter Terrorism Command immediately launched inquiries to trace the man and these continue.

**Ibrahim Magag** is not considered at this time to represent a direct threat to the British public. Public safety remains the priority. At the request of the police, an anonymity order imposed by a court was lifted on **Monday 31 December** to allow a public appeal. Anyone who sees this man or knows of his whereabouts should not approach him, but call 999 immediately.

If anyone has other information which they think could be relevant to police efforts to trace the man, they should contact the confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321. **Ibrahim Magag** is described as a black man of Somali origin, 6ft 2ins tall, of slim to medium build with a beard, although it is possible that he may try to change his appearance.



**Have you seen this man**

**Nick Henegan**

Directorate of Media and Communication, Metropolitan Police Service

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"Hello, my name is **Ian Lawrence**, this is Ray and another twenty-plus guys who make up the **Nissan taxi** team. Welcome to the forum!"

I stood there along with 14 other drivers and it made me ask: Just what are you flogging son! The reply came from Ray, whom I got the impression would probably be just as happy working in a garden shed banging up the next big invention! You know the type: "Ray, I've lost a bolt, have you got one?" "Nah, I'll make you one better than that!"

Ray interjected into my private thoughts and amazingly for this type of presentation, asked the gathered drivers to tell him what we *didn't* like about the Nissan cab standing there in front of us and to offer any tips we could using our experience of driving current models!

I'm not sure if waving my LTDA diary - after all it was their Assistant General Secretary Bob Oddy who set us up for this stunt in the first place - or just wearing my **Dial-a-Cab** polo shirt was going to save me from the possibility of money-sucking vampires. But it was too cold for a polo shirt and being a licensed London taxi driver was guaranteed proof that I had no blood left! Well, after 30 years of dealing with the PCO, TfL and folks in sheepskin coats under cold arches, what could you expect?

"Mr Cox (please call me Gal, dear), tell us what's wrong with our Nissan and not what's right with it. Compare those over there with our taxi. Looking 'over there' I espied a TX4 Chinese model and a Mercedes Vito van (did someone say van? It's £42K and made in Europe - it can't be a van... can it?)"

At this point I wanted to shout out that I think they mean me - although not sure the blue gingham dress or red shoes were mine, but Toto - sorry, I mean Ray - was asking for my hand in a marriage of convenience and wanting to be part of the cab driver's family! We had already left Glyn Hopkins dealership in Romford and flown over the first speed bump on the yellow brick road, leaving for the bright lights of London Town.

**Ok I'll get round to the objective - whatever your ambitions hopes and aspirations are for a younger model, it's you that's going to have to ask the other half if you can move in a younger model should you wish!**

The facts are that it's called the **NV200 taxi** at the moment. It's made in Spain for the first build with the second build most likely done in England. A quote from Ian Lawrence, who works at the Nissan tech centre at Cranfield and whose responsibility is to organise vehicle durability tests on the new taxi, told **Call Sign** that the Mayor sees their new cab as part of his Olympic legacy.

The length is significantly shorter than a Vito; the width is also much less and she's not such a tall girl. Because of that, the weight will be significantly less although it carries 5 passengers and a lump (that's you) and is said to be capable of getting around 55 miles to the gallon. The rear seat is retractable, giving more boot space - great for those golf clubs; but I'm not sure that passengers will be happy gazing into one other's eyes from such a short dis-

**Call Sign was recently invited to take a close look at the new Nissan taxi and take part in a forum, so we sent Vito driver Gary Cox (O46) to give his view...**

## LOOKING AT THE NISSAN TAXI



Gary Cox in the Nissan



Trying it for size

tance. Mind you, it could be a real winner down the **Vauxhall Tavern** and you never know; we could earn a few bob from doing gay marriages!

*"The engine, the engine," you shout, "what about the engine? It's a Nissan, isn't it, cos we liked the Fairway?"*

Well no, it's not actually; it's a Renault diesel 1500 made in Spain - but they have made on the way to a million of them. The point seems to me to be that we'll take the engine, but poke the rest of that Renault or Nissan petrol 1600 made in Japan, thanks! Or were those engine sizes the other way round? Let's face it; I was surrounded by more blokes who seemed to be asking me more questions than the Spanish Inquisition.

The NV200 also has a glass roof that does not open, the reason is said to allow enough headroom for wheelchair punters and a swivel seat. Well let's face it - the Mayor did sell the Olympics on it!

Time for a job on the third floor I hear you cry. Hold your horses; you can't see anything apart from the odd head when someone is balanced on the tip up seat - still with no arm rests!

And why, you may well ask, in the 21st century has it got ugly side windows that open about 9 inches - or should I say centimetres for those of us that have woken to the fact we're in Europe, sort of, but anyway not enough to throw up out off!

And the *Conditions of Fitness*? So far as the full lock is concerned, it is in fact more than is required for fitness as a London taxi re the steering; there is full air conditioning; the service schedule is open to debate due to the way we drive and the tyres that are a dinky sized 175 /70. But the question is that if the ratio of tyre on the ground is longer, will we be forever changing them? Mind you, if they're half the price it's ok as I'll have an oil change and another set of rubbers please at the same time as a set of brake pads because I am doing a long one this weekend! The quote from **Jetyres**: Expect to pay around £50 per tyre at present prices, if not less.

But can I change a head light bulb, Mr Mercedes driver asks? Well it's a yep once someone has shown you and I suspect someone will impart the knowledge at the dealerships, not moaning at 3am on the rank. The headlight canopy is connected magnetically to

the roof.

Oh yes, the doors are manual - they may be electric if you so desire to shell out - either way the doors are sliding on runners and running boards - not electric steps. Well what's to be expected for a suspected price they have floated of £34,000 all but a penny?

**Take a tip from someone who's been mugged more times than the average citizen in his life time, if you're thinking of taking the plunge then drive a very hard bargain and buy a black one. Do say to the dealer: 'Remember credit is debt' and smile. He will probably say: 'But our wheels work' once the bitching starts over flogging them.**

So that leaves the question: "Would I buy one if the price was right? Well I may! In fact you should write to Nissan and say that you are interested in their thirty grand cab (less a penny) - fully loaded of course - and await his reply. Nissan have chucked a lot of money at this taxicab and you must commend them for that fact alone, I just wonder how much credit we should give the Mayor of London for pushing Nissan Europe with this project. Mind you, he's a sharp cookie and knows Nissan will probably be the first to deliver an electric cab in London. Because one thing is for sure, this cab has had a lot of cups of tea over the boardroom to get to this point.

Must dash, the phone's ringing... bet its KPM telling me to stick a date in my diary for their updated model. I do love a new model and soon you will be able to find out if a Japanese model is as good as a German ride. The expected launch of the first one was to be mid-summer - but rumour suggests October to be more likely. One thing is for certain - they won't launch until they think they have got it right on the money and product.

Funny thing is that our Chairman **Brian Rice** said to me in the yard before going to see this new taxi that if you're going to slag it off, make sure you stick your name onto the article. That's a bit different to those mobs on the blogs who write under pseudo names!

So hello, my name is **Gary Cox (O46)** and I'm not slagging it off!

**Gary Cox**  
**Call Sign Online**



Confirmation of the new taxi inspection sites as published in the December Call Sign...

# New Inspection Sites Announced



As previously announced in February 2012 and following a comprehensive tendering process, NSL Ltd were awarded the contract to provide the taxi and private hire vehicle licensing and inspection service, replacing the existing service provider (SGS) when their contract

expires in February 2013.

This notice provides taxi and private hire vehicle drivers and owners with important information regarding new locations identified by TfL and NSL for the inspection of Taxis and PH vehicles.

#### New and additional vehicle inspection locations:

Through the new contract with NSL, extensive work has been undertaken to improve and expand the number of vehicle inspection sites available to the taxi and private hire trade. Locations for a total of six new vehicle inspection centres have been identified and these will be managed and operated by NSL under the new contract.

All six sites will offer inspections for both private hire and taxi vehicles, expanding the current availability of sites from 3 to 6 for taxis and from 4 to 6 for private hire vehicles.

These include sites in the north, south, east and west of Greater London and two additional sites in a more central area, providing a better spread of sites across the Greater London area.

#### The six inspection centres will be at the following locations:

**North site, Enfield:** This site is based in the Watermill Business Centre, close to distance of the current SGS inspection centre. The site is 10,000 sq ft with space for 6 inspection bays and parking for up to 17 vehicles outside.

**South site, Coulsdon:** The site is 22,000 sq ft, however, not all will be used for LTPH services. There will be 5 inspection bays and sufficient parking for waiting vehicles.

**East site, Crayford near Dartford:** The site is 9,000 sq ft and has sufficient of parking space for waiting vehicles. There will be 5 inspection bays.

**West site, Heston near Hounslow:** This site is in the Air Links Industrial Estate and within easy reach of the M4 motorway. The site is approximately 14,500 sq ft with 25-30 parking spaces and capacity for 6 inspection bays and a limousine bay.

**Second east site, Canning Town:** Slightly more central in the Canning Town/Bromley-by-Bow area. With the total grounds being approximately 22,000 sq ft, it will have sufficient parking for 18 parking spaces with the inspection centre itself having space for 3 inspection bays plus a limousine bay.

**Second west site, Staples Corner:** This is based in the Aquarius Business Park in the Brent Cross area, which allows for access via major roads. The site is approximately 10,500 sq ft with parking for 18 spaces, 3 inspection bays and an additional limousine bay.

The key factors that both NSL and TfL took into consideration are the size and accessibility of the site, access to facilities and parking spaces for vehicles to wait etc.

#### All sites have the following facilities:

Air conditioned waiting and viewing areas equipped with televisions, high quality seating with a supply of newspapers and magazines, toilets (including wheelchair accessible ones), parking facilities, electric car charging points, limousine inspection bays and coffee, tea, cold drink and snack vending machines.

We will be sending out further communications and reminders of the new taxi licensing services that will be provided by NSL Ltd in the lead up to the changeover on March 1st.

**John Mason**

**Director, London Taxis and Private Hire**

## NOTICE OF 2012 DAC AGM



All members should by now have received an envelope containing the DaC AGM Agenda, Ballot Form, Annual Report and Minutes of last year's AGM.

**The meeting is at the HAC, Armoury House, City Road, London EC1Y 2BQ on Sunday 3rd February 2013, commencing at 11:00hrs.**

The meeting this year will consider an agenda including the Election of Officers and any proposed Rule

Changes and Propositions, all of which should have been received at **Dial-a-Cab House** on or before 09:00hrs on Monday 12th November 2012 and in accordance with Society Rules.

**As a reminder; if you do not vote by post in the pre-paid envelope, which must be received at the Electoral Reform Services by first post on Friday 1 February 2013, then you must attend in person. If you do neither, you may be subject to a £50 fine...**

**Howard Pears  
Company Secretary**

An Exclusive for Dial-a-Cab drivers!



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We are soon to be an MOT testing station for taxis and class 4 vehicles...



Isn't it strange how you sense tension in the back of the cab - especially between the opposite sexes? There are many occasions when passengers in the rear of a **Dial-a-Cab** taxi don't communicate with each other, but you just know that there is no reason other than a nothing-particular-to-say scenario.

But then there's the young couple sitting in the back who leave room for two passengers between them. They go out of their way to look totally natural, yet that very action makes them look strained. He looks out of the window pretending to notice things, whereas if a totally naked female ran past he wouldn't even realise. In reality, he is trying to think what to say. She, on the other hand, is looking straight ahead with a look that seems to be aimed at the driver (who she must assume is watching interestedly) that says: *"Why am I with this pillock? Do you treat your partner like this?"*

**Occasionally you may sense them gradually making up when they start shouting at each other - at least they're now talking. But sometimes it goes beyond that when the warring couple are looking for someone to act as an arbitrator. And in a cab, who is there other than the couple themselves? Right on brothers and sisters - the good, old driver who is carefully trying to mind his own business! The following happened to me recently...**

We arrived at Haverstock Hill and the silent couple exited the cab, neither having said a word all the way from Fenchurch Street. She walked off leaving him to pay the fare.

"Do yourself a favour, mate" he moaned, "don't get married."

I just smiled. I didn't fancy getting into a conversation with someone whose wife looked ready to bite his bum! Then his wife ran over to the cab.

"What's the big sh\*t told you? I don't suppose he told you about Angela, did he?"

"Sorry" I replied, "I don't know any Angela."

She was bright red by now with previously held in anger.

"Well he certainly knows Angela - don't you darling," she said with a rather heavy hint of sarcasm. "You know quite a lot about her otherwise why would you have bought her that set of lace undies?"

Whoops, I thought, this is about to get bloody! I still had my hand out for the

Call Sign was sorting through its old files and came across this article from 1998 that was written by DaC driver Len Bell, who sadly died in 2005. For some unknown reason - too racy for 1998 perhaps - it wasn't published but could so easily have been written yesterday...

## All in a day's work!

£10.20 fare.

"It was only a token of friendship, darling. I don't even know if they are her size. It was her birthday, you know it was. I've told you enough times."

"Really," she snarled, "so if I bought John a large packet of condoms for his birthday, you wouldn't think that strange? Don't you agree driver?" I was about to say that I didn't know John either, but Mr Passenger beat me to the punch.

"Of course not," he lied in obvious desperation while battling to dig himself out of the large hole he was digging for himself.

"That is £10.20," my totally ignored voice asked again...

"And anyway," Mr Passenger went on, "I don't like the way you are all over John when he pops round. The least you could do is dress decently."

With that, she let loose making what went before seem rather quaint!

"You are a \*\*\*\*\* for saying that. You've seen Angela in her undies - you even buy them for her! I never want to speak to you again." With that, she slapped him round the face and got back into the cab! My meter was already on 'stop' with that £10.20 still showing.

"Dean Street please, driver," she quivered, "we're going out!"

I looked at him. He shrugged his shoulders and walked away. So I edged forward when suddenly there was a bang on the side of the cab. I thought someone had hit me. Just as I stopped, I saw him standing outside the cab screaming *bitch* at her before saying the nastiest thing he could think of:

"I bet the undies look better on Angela than they would on you!"

With that she opened the door and got out and stared at him.

"At least John knows what a woman

wants," she screamed to his face.

By now a crowd had gathered. Even I wanted to know what was what! **Oprah Winfrey** had nothing on these two.

"And he treats me like a woman" says she. Mr Passenger took up the cudgels while raising the stakes.

"Angela definitely knows what a man wants," he said with more than a hint of utter vindictiveness before Mrs Passenger added her next piece of prose.

"That slag wouldn't know how to please a man unless there was money involved. You pay her, do you? That must be why you couldn't afford to pay the gas bill - the smallest one of the year!"

"I wouldn't worry about me" said the man, "start worrying about yourself. John must have been with every woman this side of Soho! I'd go to the clinic if I were you to have a check-up. It's not conceivable that he wouldn't have passed on something to you!"

With that, she burst into tears and got back into the cab - followed closely by him.

"Hampstead High Street," said the young lady.

They said nothing for the rest of the five minute trip. When we arrived they both got out. He paid - the *stopped* meter only went up another 40pence and of course I got a legal. I decided to say nothing!

They walked off saying nothing to each other until slowly but surely, his right hand moved towards her left one. Their hands touched and clasped followed by a quick peck on her cheek. She then put her arm around him in a cuddling motion and their lips met.

Me? Well it's all in a day's work...!

**Len Bell (L01)**

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"We left London (a group of 12 strangers with the exception of 2 brothers) on January 9 by Ethiopian Airways to **Kilimanjaro Airport** via **Addis Ababa**. At Kilimanjaro we were met by the chief guide who took us to our lodge, a lovely coffee plantation outside **Arusha**.

We left next morning at 8.30 am and were given holdalls to carry our mountain gear, sleeping bag, down jacket and other essential items. This bag would be carried on the mountain by a porter, so the weight limit was 15kg. The porters quite rightly (and I don't say that lightly) only carry 20 kgs including 5 kg of their own, thanks to the limits set by *The Kilimanjaro Porters Association Project*. Prior to the setting up of the KPAP, porters were made to carry huge loads with very little pay! That's all in the past, but they still do an amazing job lugging all that weight up the mountain!

**Day 1:** Leave the lodge by 4WD vehicles to **Londorossi** and a 4 hour journey to the west of the mountain. After completing registration, we were driven a further 5 km on a back and butt massaging road to the Lemosho road head (2250 meters). **Lemosho** is the name of the mountain route we took. After a short break to enjoy a packed lunch and meet our support team, it was the start of the trek - some 4-5 hours through the tropical rainforest to the next camp at **Mti Mkubwa** (the big tree 2650 meters). On reaching camp, the process was the same every day. You signed in and went to your tent (which would be ready for you courtesy of the porters). They brought you hot water to wash your face and feet before going to the mess tent for some popcorn and tea. Then 2 hours later, dinner is served. After a short briefing about the next day's climb, you go to sleep for a good rest.

**The support crew included 1 chief guide, 5 assistant guides, 1 cook, 9 senior porters and 33 porters! A total crew of 49!** While the porters carried your holdall, you'd carry a back pack containing 0.75 litres of water, toilet roll (in case you need to go behind the bush/rocks) hand gel, camera, first aid kit and a lunch box on longer trek days. The weight was around 7 kg. The water and walking slowly (*pole pole*) are very important in avoiding AMS (acute mountain sickness). I was so determined not to fail due to AMS that I took walking *pole pole* to a whole new level!

**Day 2:** Woken at 6.30 am with a cuppa and hot water to wash after which you pack your holdall and your day pack. Breakfast at 7.30 and start the trek around 8.30. Today we left the lush mountain forest behind, ascending into the moorland zone of giant heather. A steady climb to **Shira Plateau** at a camp called **Shira 1** (3550 meters). It was a walk of about 7 hours (8 hours for me)!

**Day 3:** We lost the first member of our team to AMS and the poor chap had to be escorted down by a guide (so we lost a guide too). This was a day of acclimatisation. We trekked up to **Shira Cathedral**, a huge buttress of rock surrounded by steep spires and pinnacles (3862 meters). A proper climb on rocks with hands and feet. It's both scary and exciting. Then a long walk to the next camp at **Shira 2** (3895 meters). It rained all day, which made climbing the rock interesting with the rain eventually

The December Call Sign told how DaC driver **Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)** was attempting to climb Africa's highest mountain, **Kilimanjaro**, in aid of **Great Ormond Street Hospital, Help for Heroes**, the **WCHCD's Magical Taxi Tour** and **Dial-a-Dream...**

# DIVYESH BEATS KILIMANJARO!



**Divyesh beats Kilimanjaro (see cover pic)**

getting right through, making you wet, cold and miserable (7-8 hours of walking and 9 for moi)!

**Day 4:** Another day of acclimatisation. A long steep trek up to the **Lava Tower** (4550 m). Spent 10 minutes here experiencing the lack of oxygen before another long downhill trek to the **Barranco camp** (3900 m). This is where the 2 brothers in our team started showing signs of AMS.

**Day 5:** The day when we tackled the great **Barranco Wall** - a steep 800 ft climb up a rocky face. Trekking poles tucked away, this was hands and feet job with grappling on to secure rocks to lift yourself up. I stopped feeling sorry for myself after watching the porters with luggage on their hands and HEADS clambering up the rock! You can check a 30 second **YouTube** video (just Google Barranco Wall). Once you're over the wall, you carry on trekking on volcanic scree to the next camp at **Karanga** (4000 m). Around 5 hours trekking, so after lunch and a rest, we went for a short 200 m acclimatisation walk. This camp is the last water point, so no washing water at the next camp! To be honest, after 6 days without a bath or shower, not washing your face and feet didn't really matter! And it was too cold anyway!

**Day 6:** The start of the trek to the final camp. The base camp of **Barafu** (ice in Swahili). A 4 hour steep trek to 4600 m to arrive by lunch, after which we had to prepare and rest ready for the summit climb at midnight. Ha! Easier said than done! Try sleeping when you're both excited and scared about being so close to the summit. It's all or nothing now... the most important 24 hours of my life!

**Days 6/7:** Woken at 11 pm (did somehow sleep). After putting on every available layer, it was to the mess tent for some porridge and tea. The bag was packed with 3 litres of water in a platypus bottle, energy bars etc with a litre of water in the inside pocket of the down jacket (the platypus would freeze in 3 hours). We left soon after midnight and after 5000 m one of the brothers was in a bad state, so he had to be taken down to lower altitude ASAP - the

only way to relieve the symptoms and possible death. Credit to his brother, who in spite of feeling ok, decided to go with his brother. This was also the day when I took walking slowly to the next level! The trek after 5200 m to **Stella Point** 5745 m was relentless and energy sapping. It's a steep gradient walking on scree, shale and gravel

making it a hard slog. The last half hour to Stella took the biscuit. In fact someone described it as taking the entire tin! I eventually got to Stella point at 8.45 with still 220 m to go to the summit at **Uhuru Peak**. Uhuru means independent in Swahili. The chief guide tried to put me off, by saying I'd done enough by reaching Stella and I'd get a certificate. I think he realised I hadn't got any sign of AMS when I very calmly explained to him about the charities and the fact that even though I was devoid of any energy, I wasn't about to give up even if it meant crawling to the top! He called me a dogged mother\*\*\*\*\* and smiled as I carried on. My guide kindly carried my back pack for me to make it easier and I made the summit at 9.55 am, a whole 2.55 hours after the rest! But on the plus side, I had full sunshine and freedom compared to the mist and crowds at 7am. Winning or what!

After 10 minutes at the top, it was now a 7 hour downhill climb to **Millennium Gate** via a short break at base camp. Boy did I sleep well that night. The next morning we had a short ceremony to thank and tip all the crew. Then there was another 4 hour trek downhill to the **Mweka Gate** to sign out and a lunch with beer and back slapping followed by a 4 hour drive back to the lodge. A hot shower to scrub off 8 days of dirt and more beers!

**Remember, go to [justgiving.com/teams/divyeshmidlifecrisistreupthekilimanjaro](http://justgiving.com/teams/divyeshmidlifecrisistreupthekilimanjaro) - my Just Giving page - is open until the end of March or you can donate directly to Dial-A-Dream.**

I have also organised a charity gig at East Village in Shoreditch on 14 February with some of the top drum & bass & bass music DJs performing for free downstairs. And don't worry, there's soul, funk & jazz upstairs where the **back2backfm.net** DJs will be performing. B2B FM includes 2 cabbies as DJs. Ticket prices are just £5 via ticket sellers or the flyer link on page 19 of this issue of *Call Sign*..."

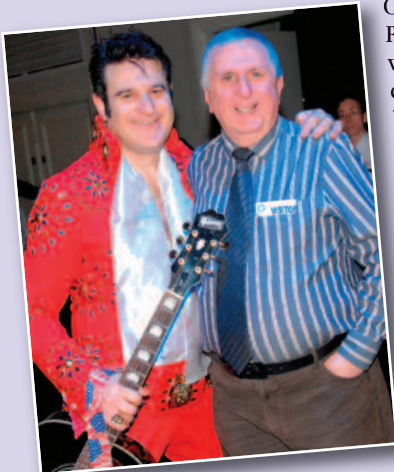
**Divyesh Ruparelia (V59)**



*As the LTFUC celebrated its 85th birthday, 450 h  
enjoy a brilliant party and shou*

# ALL WHITE ON

Photos Alan Green (age 67) and Samuel Fisher



Who's that with poppa

Once again *Call Sign* enjoyed the party of the year at Park Lane's JW Marriott Grosvenor House hotel along with 450 disabled or underprivileged children and their carers. The **London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children's** annual shindig, which also celebrated an astonishing 85 years in the London taxi trade for the LTFUC, was hit by a snowbound London! But around 450 of the 600 invited children got there and enjoyed every minute of the 4-hour spectacular!

Like last year, this magazine sponsored guest's food on behalf of **Dial-a-Cab**, but the entertainment, together with the sheer professionalism of the **LTFUC committee** and partners is what makes it a day to remember. Fund PR man, **Raymond Levy** and wife **Maureen**, somehow get hold of acts to appear for nothing who would normally command large fees, while the rest of the committee - several of whom are DaC drivers - run around from 8am till late to make sure everything goes well.

Word about the loss of my son reached the ears of Fund Chairlady **Susan Angel** and she got DaC's **David Lessman (D19)** to invite **Reed's** two children - my grandchildren - **Samuel** and **Imogen**. It was a kind gesture that was really appreciated and certainly cheered them up. We were welcomed by beardless **Gerry Dunn MBE** and DaC Board member **Mike Son** - both LTFUC committee members.

Before talking about the entertainment, huge thanks to the staff of the JW Marriott Grosvenor House who for the evening cleared the **Great Room** over to the Fund. Clearing up afterwards are truly appreciated.

In addition to all the food and drink dished up, though the snow kept away some of the expected guests, a brilliant afternoon, which as usual was held together.

Warming up the kids was the wonderful dancing act that everyone loves each year, the **Bournemouth** young lady with a big voice and one to look for in the **Act Now Entertainment** then entertained the children with part-time performing arts training programmes. 'T'ious voice, with the rest singing, acting and dancing. **Academy** proud.

The winning pair from ITV's *That Dog Can Dance* **Indie** made a 4-hour snow-interrupted journey from home. But suddenly Indie got a touch of nerves. After several attempts, Lucy gave up and told *Call Sign* that it was down together with a lack of toilet activity for Indie at home at 11pm - around 15 hours after leaving for the attempt at getting there.

As in the previous 10 years, the **Cheeky Girls** surprised them when presenting the duo with the members of the LTFUC!



It was snowing outside and my brother Samuel had to throw a snowball at me!



Poppa told me it was ok in the rehearsal



This man looks like the two cats were



Auntie Sue was very nice, but the other girls get dressed!



Happy children battled through snow blizzards to get out to the world that it was...

# ON THE NIGHT!

(age 9). Photo captions Imogen Fisher (age 7)

Thanks must be given to the management and for the 21st year gave the hotel's prestigious awards must be a nightmare and the hotel's efforts, the four hours are just one big party and even entertainers and guests, it was still an excellent night by Dave Davis.

ing of **Amanda's Action Club**, followed by the **Youth Carnival Band**. Then came a 12 year old in the years to come, **Lily Jewel**. The brilliant crowd with their 40+ boys and girls who are on. They were led by a girl singer with a tremendous in a way that would have made the **Fame**

nce, **Lucy**, together with her gorgeous dog from Lincoln so that they could entertain the es and ran off stage! After several unsuccessful may have been a combination of the long trip die. They then travelled back to Lincoln, arriving out with the gratitude of everyone that appreciat-

ls sang their hits, but this year Sue Angel n a certificate as deserved honorary mem-

Then it was 12-year-old **Shaniah Williams**, who wowed everyone with an amazingly mature singing voice. Shaniah was the winner of *Hertfordshire's Got Talent* and it was easy to see why. Also on were excellent cheerleader group, **Crystal Girls**, who appeared with several of the acts – and **Mike Son** - to show how adaptable they were (cover pic!)

We must mention young **Cara**. If you thought the **Hula Hoop** died with the tea strainer, think again as this young girl went through a mesmerising musical routine with her gold hoop! Perhaps more for the carers, party regular **Elvis Shmelvis** sang some of the King's hits that saw adults mouthing along to the words! **Magic and Dance (MAD)** then brilliantly did everything the name suggests!

As usual, around the Great Room's periphery were a range of **face painters** – one of whom came all the way from Norfolk to do his art at no charge - a **Police and Army** presence and a **10-minute portrait artist** and **Mr Balloon**, both of whom had queues around them all afternoon. A **chocolate fountain** and completed another memorable party, which proved that even Mother Nature's worst can't stop the LTFUC's brilliant party – and their birthday cake was lovely!

**Alan Fisher (age 27... and a bit!)**



My brother likes a boogie - but he isn't as cool as poppa!



too heavy for him



er two girls must have forgot to

Don't know how he got in!



Grown-ups do dress so funny!



Another true story from Geoff Levene...

# The DaC driver and Carlos the Jackal!

I really haven't had that much to do with international terrorism...well maybe just the once...

The early 1970s were a particularly torrid time in the seemingly never ending struggle between Israel and her enemies - shootings, bombings, hijackings and the murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

One evening in December 1973, a man forced his way into the St Johns Wood home of Edward Sieff, President of Marks and Spencer, and shot him as he lay in the bath. Then as he prepared to finish him off, his gun jammed and he escaped just minutes before the police arrived.

It must have been the Spring or Summer of 1974 when I was driving up Queensway in my taxi and was stopped by a woman in her 40s. She ushered a girl of about 20 into the cab and in a Spanish or South American accent asked me to take the girl to 13 Hereford Road, wait and then bring her back to Queensway. The two spoke a few words of Spanish to each other and off we went.

Two things were obvious. She was very pretty and very nervous - in fact she was shaking with fear. At Hereford Road, she went down to the basement of number 13. Five minutes later and she was back and looking greatly relieved. I dropped her back at Queensway and thought no more about it.

Meanwhile the outrages continued in London and across Europe. Then at the end of 1975, one of the most audacious incidents of terrorism happened when a gang attacked the headquarters of OPEC in Vienna, killing three people and kidnapping the oil ministers of several countries. They were flown to Tunis and after threats to murder more of the prisoners, the hijackers' demands were met and several terrorists were released.

The leader of the gang was a stocky bespectacled young man who before flying off with his comrades tuned to the waiting cameramen and declared: "Tell them it was *Carlos*. They will know who I am!" Indeed they did. Carlos was the code name for a Venezuelan Marxist revolutionary born Illych Ramires Sanchez and Scotland Yard soon announced that he was the man they wanted for the Sieff shooting - a man who became known as Carlos the Jackal. Things were falling into place.

It was perhaps 18 months later that I noticed an item in the *Evening Standard*. Two South American women aged 42 and 21 had been found guilty of hiding and aiding the escape of Carlos. He had been living at some stage in a flat in Hereford Road. No wonder that girl had been so scared; she was just a waitress who had got mixed

up with some very dangerous people. The older woman had been Carlos' lover. A young man staying at the flat had opened a cupboard and discovered an arsenal of weapons and the police were brought in.

Carlos was finally captured in 1996 in the Sudan by French Special Forces and sentenced to life imprisonment for the 1975 murder of two French policemen.

Then last year he was also found guilty of 11 more murders and will be in prison until he is 80. At his second trial, he expressed his

admiration for Bin Laden, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and Nicolae Ceaucescu.

Was he really there in Hereford Road that afternoon? I think he probably was. Why else would that girl have been so nervous? But just suppose he had decided that she might give the game away and bumped her off, would the cab driver waiting upstairs have knocked on the door to see when she was coming out? Thankfully I never had to make that choice...



The 1996 arrest of Carlos the Jackal

Geoff Levene (W32)

## PCN request from Barrie Segal



Dial-a-Cab's PCN expert, Barrie Segal has an incredible record of getting Penalty Charge Notices cancelled. However, he is asking for some assistance from DaC drivers and asked if *Call Sign* could put a message out:

"Can I ask that all drivers please write the date of receipt on all Penalty Charge

Notices (PCNs), Notices to Owner, Notices of Rejection Charge Certificates, Orders for Recovery and any other correspondence they receive relating to a PCN and then take photocopies before they send it to Jacqui Franklin in Drivers Services. This will help enormously, particularly where councils claim they never received an appeal or where they say they sent out a notice of rejection which they claim was ignored."

Barrie Segal



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

# The Brethren of the Whip

## Going the distance...

Boxing and cab driving have always appeared to be closely linked and there is often an article on boxing in *Call Sign*. But never one like this...

Back in the 1860s, Henry Mayhew noticed that when a pugilist retired from the scene, he would either run a pub or drive a cab – **Tom Cribb** and **Ben Caunt** famously became publicans but boxers / drivers such as **Joseph Rough Diamond Arnold** or **Augustus Long Fisher** (“a thief, pugilist and a cab driver”) have long been forgotten.

**Holmes** was another to be forgotten, so much so that even his first name is not recorded in the press of the early nineteenth century. We know he was a Hackney coachman and that he lived in Knightsbridge. We also know that he took on a bet for a boxing match for 20 guineas against a sailor, **Thomas Blake**.

It is January 1804 and the fight is to take place on Paddington Green. This was pre- Queensbury, bare knuckle and the ring was whatever space there was in the crowd. The Hackney coach trade, as usual, turned up in force when one of their own was fighting. There were Hackney coaches all over the place, with drivers either bringing their friends or talking their passengers into watching the spectacle.

But it was nearly over before it even began – the owner of the land objected and the whole ensemble, boxers and spectators, decamped from Paddington Green and in a fleet of about twenty Hackney coaches and many other types of carriage, arrived at Willesden Green where the bout began in earnest.

Round 1 was chalked up to Holmes - there was no points system in these days; last man standing was the winner and at one point during that opening round, the sailor was knocked to the ground. Round two was more balanced with tough fighting between the two, Holmes giving the sailor several good bare knuckle punches to the head. Round 3 and Holmes rushed at the sailor who parried the punch and dealt the coachman several hard blows that knocked him to the ground. By Round seven, Blake the sailor was deemed to be the clear favourite with odds of 1 to 4.

In the eighth round, Hackney coachman Holmes rallied and hit the sailor with several hard blows, knocking the tar to the ground. He carried the advantage into the next round as well. The sailor then found inner strength and was judged to have had the better in rounds 10, 11, 12 and 13. Round 14 began before the seconds were ready, such was the eagerness of the two protagonists towards each other. Still Blake had the upper hand. Round 17, *the most desperate round thus far*, saw Holmes going for the ribs and head of the sailor who replied with a blow to Holmes head, which knocked him down but many thought that the coachman still had the upper hand.



With tiredness creeping in, the pace of the fight diminished but resurged again by round 27 when Holmes knocked Blake down again. The next round saw Blake go down yet again and this time sprain his knee, looking like he would have to retire. The betting had now switched in favour of Holmes.

By Round 37, Blake was not only still fighting but had actually turned the tables on his opponent and looked the more likely to win. Round 40 was a severe round with Holmes getting cut above the eye and falling. Another

severe punch to the eye followed in round 48 and again Holmes fell, but in the next round he rallied and knocked Blake down.

By Round 51, both fighters were blind in one eye; by the 53rd round Holmes could barely see out of either eye, but still he fought on. Then in round 60, Holmes's second called it a day as he saw his man get weaker and weaker.

The fight was said by many to have been one of the best ever witnessed and despite the number of rounds, the fight lasted just seventy minutes. Blake had to be brought back to London in a Hackney coach, his injuries preventing him from celebrating his win. Holmes was actually up and about shortly after, no doubt pondering that pushing a Hackney coach over London had got to be an easier way of making money!

**Sean Farrell (B39)**

## London Taxi Co working again

The London Taxi Company has informed us that the Service Workshop at Brewery Road is now fully operational again and is accepting service work again including work on vehicles which qualify for the interim Goodwill Policy during administration. The Parts Department is also fully operational. They are at 39-41 Brewery Road N7. Tel: 0207 700 0888...

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# COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT



Hello Ladies and Gents,

## Flat batteries

The first snowfalls of the year did help to generate more work, however it left road conditions far from ideal which made the job that much more difficult. So please be careful as we may well yet see more icy conditions.

In a similar vein, I recently suffered a flat battery on my taxi. Whilst you don't necessarily have to completely disconnect the battery, it may be good advice to remove one or both radio fuses if the taxi isn't being driven daily, or even if it is left unused over a weekend. The auxiliary fuses (5amp and 20 amps) are in the fuse compartment or by the battery, dependent on the actual model of the taxi. It doesn't

take long to drain a battery and a simple precaution may save you time - and as we all know, in our business time is money.

## DaC logo

Please remember that it is a rule of the Society that all members must display the **Dial-a-Cab** logo at all times. I have recently received a number of calls from fellow subscribers who have spotted a Dial-a-Cab taxi without the company logo. As I have mentioned before, apart from advertising our circuit, it also greatly helps clients locate their particular taxi. Roman Way will be only too pleased to replace any missing or damaged logos and arrangements can also be made for a set of logos to be picked up at this office for evening and night drivers.

## New terminals

Adding to both Brian and Keith's comments in this issue regarding the new terminals, can I just say that our IT department is now in the final stages of testing before the fitting programme commences for the terminal and indeed the contactless credit card reader.

The new terminal will be very user friendly and will incorporate a Satellite Navigation as well as the Cabbies Mate system and chip and pin credit card reader which will be linked into the terminal. There will be someone on

hand during fitting to assist you with any queries and a number of people will be available at this office to further assist should you encounter any problems, so don't concern yourself over the changeover. Help will be readily available.

## Customer care

I have mentioned a few times previously that as professional drivers, we at Dial-a-Cab need to keep our Society at the head of the pack, so customer care is essential and discretion vital.

At both *Rolling Ranks* all trips are *As Directed* and as you know many journeys can be of varying distances. If a trip is reasonably local, please do not aim your displeasure at the passenger in the back of the cab, it is embarrassing for the client and can cause problems with the account and if it continually happens, could even jeopardise two of the most prestigious accounts in the cab trade. It is currently working extremely well and with your full support it will continue to do so. Please keep up the good work.

*With the AGM upon us, I look forward to seeing you there. Drive safely and be very lucky!*

**Allane@Dialacab.co.uk**  
**DaC Compliance Officer**

## Lee Pearce's sliding doors!

Back in 1998, one of the most surprisingly popular movies around was a *Rom-Com* starring **Gwyneth Paltrow** and **John Hannah**. **Sliding Doors** alternated between two parallel universes and showed the difference in a central character's life depending on whether or not she caught a train. The movie became one of the biggest hits of the year.

**Now Dial-a-Cab driver and goalkeeper for Evo Stik league team North Greenford United, Lee Pearce (J71), has told Call Sign that he feels a bit like the Sliding Doors movie!**

In 2008, Lee was starring in goal for non-league **Bedfont Green** and helped them gain promotion as **Combined Counties Premier League** Champions. But following a bust-up with the manager, Lee was signed by **Egham**, but soon left them as well to join Middlesex team **Ashford Town** who played in the *Zameratto Central League*.

Sliding doors? Well, one of Lee's first games for Ashford was against *Football League division 2* outfit **Bradford City** and Ashford slaughtered the Bantams 3 - 0. Yes, it was only a pre-season friendly, but a win was a win and one as clear-cut as that sent a warning to the rest of their league, while Bradford City looked more than likely to lose their position as a Football League club and indeed had already battled through - and only just - two administrations.

**Ashford's manager, Jamie Lawrence, was a former Bradford City player and tried to convince them that it was only a friendly, but it looked likely that the Bantams were on a long slope downwards and heading into soccer oblivion.**

"Look at them now," Lee told **Call Sign**, "Ashford are still where they were, I'm at North Greenford while Bradford City are in the League Cup Final at Wembley! Don't get me wrong, I enjoy playing for NGU. It's a great club with a great set of players and a great manager in former **Chelsea** and **Southampton** star **Neil Shipperley**.

"But somewhere along the way I must have got on the wrong train! Last season I was at Wembley in a Budweiser sponsored penalty shooting contest - well, in the car park outside the main stadium - and now the team we slaughtered are at a *real* cup final! And should the miracle continue, they could even win and go into Europe! The nearest I'll get is the taxi rank at *Eurostar*. Having said that, I sincerely wish Bradford City the very best of luck in the final against Swansea because - wrong train or not - they are representing all we players who will never get that opportunity. Mind you, Bradford City also fell into that category! Hmmm, will it be Upminster or Hainault!"

And did we mention Greenford's next game? Last Saturday against Ashford...!

**Baghwat Singh**  
**Call Sign Online**



Did Lee get on the wrong train!

## SAVINGS!

- ★ KITCHENS & APPLIANCES
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Stephen Berndes (R14) with a collection of...

# Berndes Bargains!



**Stephen Berndes makes his first appearance as a Call Sign columnist...**

## Cab insurance...

My renewal of insurance falls on the first day of the New Year, which means I go through a stressful period waiting for correspondence to arrive close to the Christmas holiday period. This year I received no post at all so I rang my Brokers, **Emrose Insurance**, and questioned the delay.

**Trident** are my underwriters and in order to extend insurance, it is now mandatory to have a **Smartwitness** camera fitted, but firstly I had to accept the terms and conditions relating to the camera and claims procedure with a signed agreement. So rather than wait for arrival of the renewal policy, I decided the next day to visit **The London Taxi Co** in Brewery Road, which I was assured was open for business.

On arrival, I was directed to an unorthodox entrance - a hole in an electric door - and then walked the entire length of the building! Rows of immaculate shiny taxis like the *Mary Celeste*, but apparently with less future. Eventually I spoke to a solitary lady who informed me that Emrose Insurance was short of staff and nobody was there.

I was now doggedly determined to conclude arranging my insurance and headed to another office in Dunbridge Street, Bethnal Green. I signed the legal document acknowledging responsibility of the camera working at all times, that camera was the property of Markerstudy Insurance and paid a fitting charge of £40 + VAT. The same charge will apply for each installation, strip out or reinstallation. And if the policy is cancelled, you can buy the camera for £155 or return it undamaged for the aforementioned amount at £40 plus VAT, which I thought slightly cheeky if premiums suddenly jump, making the policy costly.

The good lady of Emrose said to expect a call from Smartwitness within two days to arrange an engineer to visit my house. We arranged an 8am appointment for Friday 4th January. The evening before, Smartwitness called and changed the time to 11am. I lost a working day because I work mornings, nevertheless I agreed; the camera had to be fitted within ten days of the start of the policy.

The chap turned up, took twenty minutes to fit, explained that the camera is fixed, has a visual picture of only the front of cab and a limited peripheral view. I also have no access to video images and in the advent of an incident, the insurance company sends an expert with a key and takes the evidence away.

**In the interest of comparisons, I rang two other leading insurance broker companies...**

**Tradex / Westminster:** They offer 10% off premiums, but you must arrange your own camera fitting. They do not recommend any service provider, but give a company called *Daltec* a plug at 5 Oxford Road, Wealdstone, Harrow HA3 7RG. Phone 02085157820; they will install it for £200.

Their camera is removable and has images at front as well as inside the cab. They provide a key to release images and download onto your personal computer. All the equipment is yours thereafter, which allows you to swap policies to another insurance company.

**Sutherland Brokers:** They seem to be dismissive of CCTV, gave only one enquiry that led nowhere. **The general consensus is that CCTV will be part of most insurance policies fairly rapidly.** Given the precarious situations drivers get into through no fault of their own, the video evidence against say the ignorance of the tragic Spanish family getting flattened by a bus on Charing Cross Road whilst allegedly looking the wrong way,

can only aid the feeling of security.

You pay your money and you take your choice, but it will probably be us who absorb the cost with the insurance companies liabilities protected from fabricated accidents.

## Costco

I entered Costco; my thoughts filled with the expectation of four filled nitrogen tyres at bargain basement prices alleviating the constant checking of tyre pressures.

I discussed the price and time with the Costco tyre man when my eye caught sight of a row of batteries. I said that those batteries were brilliant, that I'd had mine for five years and it was still going strong. The salesman looked at me in surprise and said I must be the only cab driver then!

He told me that a significant percentage of cabbies claim for defects before the three year guarantee wears down and that they now no longer supply cab drivers.

Now I consider there are three reasons for this;

**1. The cheeky chappy London cabby being opportunistic given the chance.**

**2. It is only slight deception, after all everybody is capable of that.**

**3. After all, I'm only getting back a small amount and I've spend lots of dosh there!**

There may be a forth reason. An amoral taxi driver with no shame and an embarrassment to his family. This is a classic example of selfishness impacting directly an excellent service which has now stopped.

**Stephen Berndes  
Call Sign Online**

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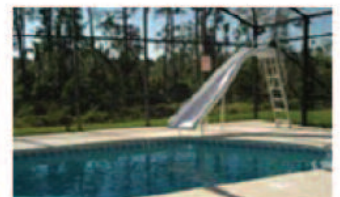
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## Obituary

# BOB BRANWHITE

When I started to work in our Shirland Road office during the 1970s, I got to know many staff and drivers well. One of these was a subscriber, **Bob Branwhite (F29)**.

Bob was a lovely man who had joined ODRTS in 1973; a bit of a joker but he held the Society high on his priority list.

Some years back he suffered a minor heart attack, but in April 2012 he was diagnosed with cancer. Although he had a consultation with specialist **Dr Peter Harper** in Harley Street – the same consultant who had been treating Bee Gee **Maurice Gibb**, even Dr Harper could not supply the cure.

Bob was a subscriber who would always make his point known at an AGM, on many occasions going up against the Board of Management to retain the rights of other subscribers. But he never held grudges and at the end of the meeting, his point having been forcibly put, it was handshakes all round.

Bob was a great friend of the late Board member, **John Saunders** and current subscriber **Patsy McCarthy (C01)**. John often held parties at his house in All Saints Road NW10 on weekends to which Bob and a few other drivers and staff used to attend. These parties became quite renowned within the Society.

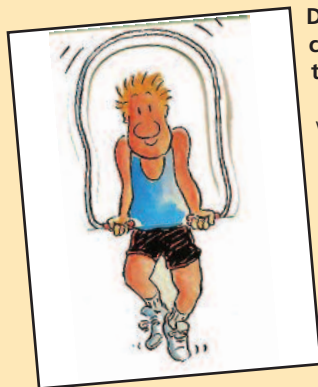
During this time, Bob had a partner on his taxi, Dave. He was the dayman who would start at the same time early each morning, a man so laid back he nearly fell asleep! Their working partnership lasted some ten years or so until Dave died.

**Bob, 69, leaves Lynne his wife of 46 years and son Paul, to whom we send the condolences of all the subscribers and staff of Dial-a-Cab...**



Tom Whitbread

## LOZ'S KEEP FIT CLASSES



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

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

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

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

**Loz's classes are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, all starting at 1.15. The added bonus is the price at just £5 per session. You can attend as many or few times as you like to suit**

**your work patterns and fitness levels, so if you are a beginner and you only fancy once a week, then that's fine. You only have to pay for the sessions you attend, so if you don't attend, then you don't pay. Just pay as you go. There are no membership fees and no contracts, but importantly there is ample free parking so you don't have to watch out for wardens! £5 represents excellent value for money. If you are thinking of joining, come along and enjoy a week's free trial from the Loz...**"

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

## SMALL INCREASE IN MERC SALES

With Manganese and its' TX4 in administration at least until the end of January, **Mercedes** claimed a small increase in November sales with 14 more **Vitos** sold than in 2011. However, with a total of 82 **TX4s** sold in that month last year, it begs the question: What are drivers waiting for?

Some say that the promise of the new **Nissan** taxi – probably an automatic petrol version with a diesel manual and then auto to follow – is the reason, although *Call Sign* now believes the launch may not happen until October.

But another reason could be some driver dissatisfaction with the service side of the Vito – especially where it applies to the ongoing steering problems. However, a recent meeting between drivers and Mercedes ended with MB promising to increase its Vito parts availability.

In the meantime, there is an article by DaC's **Gary Cox (O46)** on the Nissan on page 12 of this issue...





No doubt many Dial-a-Cab drivers and their families will have watched the BBC One TV programme, Britain's Brightest, on the prime-time Saturday evening slot where contestants pit their wits to answer challenging questions posed by presenter Clare Balding.

Featuring prominently in the very first edition of this programme were two of our own Dial-a-Cab star performers, Chris Ferrugia (S11) and Bill Frampton (P71).

The challenge they both faced was to drive from West Ham Rugby Club to a given destination through the medium of an iPad! But while Chris was able to both hear *and* read his destination on the device screen, Bill had to rely on his hearing alone to inform him of his ultimate goal, because he was blind-folded for the purposes of the experiment!

Chris later met with Call Sign to explain the procedure of the trial and give us a behind the scenes insight into the filming of their TV appearance.

"There were actually several cabs on standby just in case Bill and I failed to achieve the objective of the experiment, which was to prove that you cannot always take for granted what you hear and see," Chris explained.

"I clearly heard my destination as Vale Road E7 and saw the movement of the person's lips as I looked at the iPad screen forming the letter V. So off I went, confident that I was heading in the right direction. Bill on the other hand, being blind-folded, heard Bale Road E1 and confidently made off towards his point!

"So imagine my complete disbelief when I was met in Vale Road by the shows' presenter, only to be told I had come to the wrong street, while Bill had got it right just by only listening. It proves that your eyes can sometimes deceive you," Chris exclaimed, the disbelief still echoing in his voice.

"We both thought that, in our opinions, we had gone to the correct address we had been told to go to, but it's how your brain interprets what you see and hear and I must admit - and you can put this in Call Sign - I have never taken anybody to the wrong location yet in all the years I have been driving a cab, and I doubt that Bill has either!"

So we asked how was the programme made and Chris explained.

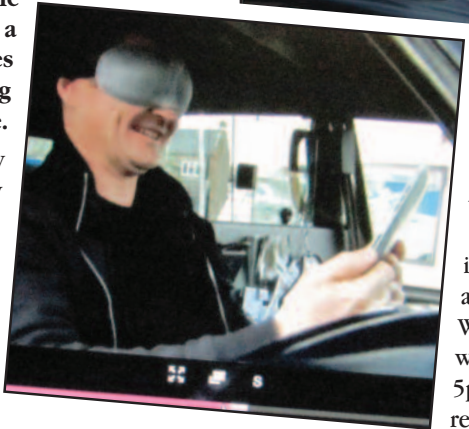
"Firstly, we were not told the point of the experiment and instructed not to talk about it between ourselves during the long lapses between scenes. We were just told that all

## Britains Brightest...

Is seeing believing?



Chris checks where Vale Road E7 is  
Inset pic: Bill hears Bale Road E1 - the correct address



did our own thing on the road, with separate film crews recording our every move at our allotted destinations. However, we did not repeat any part of the actual experiment as this would have defeated the object," Chris stated firmly.

Amazingly, the producers obviously expected the two DaC drivers to do exactly what they actually did, making the experiment a fascinating success.!

would be revealed later on. That's all we were told," Chris said.

"We filmed the show in November 2012 for airing in January 2013. We began at 9am and went on until around 5pm, with several repeat shots along the way as the film crew

wanted different angles or if things did not quite go according to plan.

"Each cab was fitted with a tiny camera in the top corner of the windshield as each of us

"This hearing/seeing thing is called the McGurk Effect and there is a wealth of information on the internet about the subject, but in actual fact it just confirmed what I was told when I was on the Knowledge - always repeat the passengers' destination and that is indeed something I have always done, and did on the TV show as well."

With that, Chris made his way home and had no doubt that he knew where that was!!!

Alan Green  
Call Sign Online

## Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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

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Although I've written about cyclists in a previous issue of Call Sign, I am still waiting to see what legislation the authorities will decide on - if anything. Various cycle lanes that were introduced some time ago have not really been maintained. Licensing of cyclists and cycles has been talked about but still not been introduced.

*I recently witnessed an accident between a taxi driver and a cyclist and realised as many others also do, how cyclists flout the law - especially at junctions - and how they often show a total disregard for other road users. Many of them also appear to have a death wish while showing a total ignorance of any form of commonsense when using the public highways; so I took an online look at what reports others have investigated...*

Every year in this country, around 19,000 cyclists are killed or injured in reported road accidents. In 2011, 107 were killed with another 3,085 very seriously injured. A further 16,000 were injured, but far less seriously. These figures only include reported incidents and it is a well-established fact that many cyclist casualties are not reported, even when the cyclist is injured badly enough to be taken to hospital. Although the number of deaths will be accurate, there could be many more seriously injured cyclists and possibly double the number of slightly injured.

About one fifth of the cyclists killed and injured are children. Cycling accidents increase as children grow older, with 10 to 15 year old riders being more at risk than other age groups including adults up until the age of around 60 years. To some extent, this reflects increased cycling as children grow older followed by a switch to motorised transport from the late teens onwards. It also coincides with the age when children attend secondary school and may indicate riskier behaviour by this age



group.

**Another fact is that males are far more likely to be involved in cycling accidents than females; four out of five cyclist casualties are male.**

Most cycling accidents happen in urban areas where most cycling takes place, with around half of cyclist's deaths occurring on rural roads.

Almost two thirds of cyclists killed or seriously injured were involved in collisions at or near a road junction, with T-junctions being the most commonly involved. Roundabouts are also particularly dangerous for cyclists. Not surprisingly, the severity of injuries suffered by cyclists increases with the speed limit, meaning that riders are more likely to suffer serious or fatal injuries on higher speed roads.

Perhaps surprisingly, around 80% of cycling accidents occur in daylight - but of course that is when most cycling takes place. That figure increases to 90% for child cyclists.

In collisions involving a bike and another vehicle, the most common key contributory factor recorded by the police is a *failure to look*

*properly* by either the car driver or cyclist, especially at junctions. *Failure to look properly* was attributed to car drivers in 57% of serious collisions and to cyclists in 43% of serious collisions (at junctions). Other common contributory factors attributed to drivers are classified as *poor turn or manoeuvre* (in 17% of serious accidents involving a cyclist) and *careless or reckless driving, exceeding the speed limit or travelling too fast for the conditions*.

HGVs present a particular danger for cyclists, especially in London where around 20% of cyclist fatalities occurring involve an HGV. These often occur when the HGV is turning left at a junction. Around 25% of accidents resulting in serious injury to a cyclist involved an HGV, bus or coach passing too close to the rider.

The above figures were provided courtesy of ROSPA, the Royal Society of the Prevention of Accidents but with the introduction of the Mayor's *Boris Bikes*, there was an increase in cycle accidents during 2012.

With so much data submitted and so much concern by the public, what on earth is being addressed to save lives and to make London a safer place for cyclists, pedestrians and other road users?

At this time most cyclists are still uninsured, have no identifiable marking on their bikes and with no legislation to wear crash helmets. 122 cyclists died in 2012 - a five-year high - and Transport for London has admitted that the figures were "an area of concern" for the Mayor. But action is needed now!

Oh, by the way, I also ride a bike...

**Mike Son**  
DaC Special Projects

## LONDON UNDERGROUND'S GREATEST DESIGNS!

With Poster Art 150...

London Underground has a long tradition of commissioning memorable advertising posters. Now the London Transport Museum is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Underground with an exhibition featuring 150 of the best posters produced for the Underground. These have been chosen by a team of experts drawn from a variety of backgrounds, including Art on the Underground, Christies and Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, to name a few. A film introducing the panel and their choices can be seen in the exhibition.

The posters were chosen from over 3,000 posters in the collection, which represent some of the best graphic art of the last 150 years and will be the most comprehensive poster exhibition the Museum has ever done. *Poster Art 150* is judged to be arguably the best of London Transport and Transport for London poster output since 1908.



The posters go back 150 years

The public will be able to vote for their favourite poster by voting in the gallery or online in the

Siemens Poster Vote and the winning poster will be announced at the end of the exhibition.



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# LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

## London drama

I do like a TV drama series with good actors and a gritty storyline and if it has London as a backdrop, then even better. At the moment I'm hooked on **Ripper Street**, set in the Jack the Ripper era of Whitechapel.

With the use of *BBC iPlayer*, I can watch this on my own without any disturbances; mind you, it's not that I don't want any of the family around when I watch, more that they don't want to be in the same room as me when I watch anything with London in it. I tend to scream at the set when I see a building - just as if I am on an appearance at the PCO - letting the TV know that the getaway car can't leave on the left, or that road is now one way going the other way! If they use a building for a scene, I knowingly inform them that it really is an insurance and not a coroner's office!

With constant repeats of *Minder*, *Sweeney* and *The Professionals* getting the worst of my treatment, not only do the buildings get it but I also run through the cast - especially the villains or bit part actors - as I turn into an expert from *Equity* rolling out details of their careers before and after, who they're related to and where they lived! There isn't a fact - interesting or not - that I leave out!

Ealing Comedies, Sparrows can't Sing, Steptoe and Son through to the present day's *Law and Order*, which always seems to show **Bradley Walsh** outside *Prêt à Manger* on High Holborn. Should anyone interrupt me, I tell them to keep quiet as I am watching a programme! But worse still, when a passenger get in and starts talking about a programme, I have the audacity to say that I don't watch much TV! Now where's the remote...?

## With Tom Quigley (Y33)



## Aqua Aerobics - life saver?

Like most of us after years of manual work and then transferring to a sedentary job, overweight and bad eating habits took their toll resulting in me having back pains with Sciatica and disc problems.

After hospital visits and MRI scans and costly trips to physios and chiropractors, I was recommended to take up swimming.

With gym membership cheaper than the medics, I started swimming regularly. One of the instructors then recommended I try an **Aqua Aerobic** class as the exercise in water would help my back and disc problems. I was apprehensive at first as being the only male in the class of 26 women, putting up with mick-ey-taking from the guys and more than my fair share of not politically correct banter

from the ladies - they take no prisoners! I still stuck at it and noticed a rapid improvement in my mobility and gradual weight loss which then allowed me to do other classes.

For the past few years, I've had small skin pigmentation on my back but as it was not hurting or getting any bigger, I gave it no serious thought although my wife and sons had told me to get it checked. Luck had it that one of the ladies in the class was a nurse at a private clinic and told my wife to insist I get it checked. A visit to my doctor resulted in an appointment within two days at Whipp's Cross Hospital, where on inspection the mole was removed immediately. In a state of shock, I was informed that it would be tested for melanoma (Skin Cancer) and the results would take six weeks and to make another appointment for then.

Six weeks later I was informed that I had a malignant melanoma and although they were sure they had caught it in time, further surgery was necessary to make sure, after which there would be constant checking every 3 months for a year. Gratefully on 19th December I was given the all-clear with the instruction to keep a check and not to go out in sun without a strong SPF cream. They were in no doubt that was the cause of melanoma.

I am now a lot fitter, almost 3 stone lighter and able to do a lot more. I still do an aqua class at least once a week and if any twinges appear in my back or legs, I go more often.

For me it's been a life saver...

**Tom Quigley (Y33)**

London taxi guide Bob Woodford looks back at London's past...

## London's posh 18th century prostitutes!

"Next time you head up **St James's Street** you will probably be going slow enough to take a glance down **Park Place** - snuggled between **Justerini & Brooks** whose own house blend (**J&B**) is the world's second best selling whisky - and **Brook's Club** whose architect, **Henry Holland**, laid out much of **Hans Town** near Harrods.

**You won't find much going on down there - apart from the odd cab coming or going from the Royal Overseas League - but Park Place was a hell of a place for goings-on back in the day!**

Back in the early 1700s, Park Place was home to the most notorious brothel in London! Its procuress was **Elizabeth Needham** - one of the world's most notorious brothel keepers and her house was the most exclusive of anywhere with clients coming from the highest strata of fashionable society. The artist **William Hogarth** was a fan! I'm not saying he was a punter - although he may well have been - but Liz Needham was identified as the whore in his series of satirical etching's **A Harlot's Progress**!

Yes, Mother Needham liked a pound note, but she was also quite ruthless towards the women that worked for her. They were forced to hire their dresses from her at exorbitant rates and if they failed to make payments, they would have to take in more punters or face being committed to a debtor's prison - wicked old bag!

**One of Needham's most celebrated prostitutes was Sarah Salisbury. All her clients were notable members of the aristocracy - but it was a violent London in 1722 and Sarah stabbed and wounded a client which led to her trial and subsequent imprisonment. She died 9 months into her one year sentence.**

Old Mother Needham was arrested herself a few years later - Justice of the Peace Sir John Gonson was a fervent supporter of the *Society for the Reformation of Manners* and had been conducting raids on brothels all over town. Liz was eventually convicted for keeping a disorderly house and sentenced to stand twice in the pillory at the top of St James's Street. The crowds gathered and she received such a pelting that she died in prison before she could be pilloried a second time. It wasn't just rotten fruit that was slung in the direction of pillory victims - it was just about anything a drunken mob might get hold of!

Talking about prostitution, I heard a guest on radio recently trying to convince me that we must now start calling prostitutes by the much more politically correct term of sex workers! Well I'm sorry, I'm old school - I'll carry on calling a prostitute... er, a prostitute! My **Call Sign** readers can call her whatever they like, but the end product is still the same: She gets the money and she gets the clap!"

**Bob will be leading a Westminster Guides Association Walk on Saturday 2nd March - St James's Gentlemen's London. Interested? Then meet Bob at the Green Park exit to Green Park Station at 14.30 - DaC subscribers will enjoy the concessionary rate of £5.**

"We shall be getting up close and personal with the Gentlemen's Clubs and Posh Shops as well as finding some hidden gems of this unique area of London. On my Walks there is always more than a whiff of scandal - and of course there is always sex! Let me entertain you..."

**Bob Woodford, Call Sign Online**

Everyone likes a gadget, so we asked Jon Winterburn to look at some of them...

## JON LOOKS AT UPCOMING GADGETS

Now that 2013 is in full swing, I thought I'd tell you about some of the slightly futuristic but totally genuine gadgets anticipated to arrive this year. So welcome to the world of tomorrow!

### The Ubuntu phone

For those of you who are not familiar with the free **Linux** operating systems, **Ubuntu** is probably the most popular and easy to use version. You can install it on laptops, desktops and servers and do just as much (if not more) on it as you can with Windows or Mac. The only difference is that it's 100% free.

The team behind Ubuntu (Canonical) are working on a project to bring a complete unified ecosystem to the end user. This means that everything you do and all software you use will run *exactly the same* on your desktop, your laptop and even your phone. Ubuntu Phone will be sporting a *fully-functional* desktop operating system in your pocket. If this phone works as well as they promise, it's the one gadget that could tempt me away from iPhone. More information, including a video is available at <http://www.ubuntu.com/devices/phone>.



Magic Google Specs

### BlackBerry 10

The fruity-named phone from **Research in Motion** had its heyday until the explosion of iPhone and Android smartphones eclipsed the BlackBerry market. Add to the mix a number of issues with RIM's enterprise services last year and the BlackBerry seemed all but doomed. However, there is a ray of light that will either make or break the company - BlackBerry 10. The number is actually referring to the operating system; it is my understanding that RIM will launch around six different handsets, all using the BlackBerry 10 operating system. None of these devices will be available until February at the earliest (the Z10 is the likely first device). However, I have used a simulator running the most recent development build of BlackBerry 10 and I must admit that I was impressed. Gone is the clunky interface, tiny physical buttons and rubbish web browser. The new interface is very clean, intuitive and easy to use and I can't help thinking that if RIM deliver the goods with the handsets, that this might well get Apple and Google hot under the collar! Only time will tell. More information is available at <http://global.blackberry.com/blackberry-10.html>.

### PlayStation 4 / XBOX 720

I've listed these two consoles together because they're essentially providing the same solution and not much is known about either, other than they are in development. In the rapidly changing technology industry, the XBOX 360 and the PS3 are both oddities; they've outlived their expected timespan. Considering both consoles were released in 2005 and have both sold 70 million units to date, their respective owners have certainly milked their products for all they're worth. Think back to 2005 - the iPhone did not even exist back then; this came out in 2007 and there have been 6 variants out since then! So there's no doubt that new consoles are well overdue, not least because game design technology has moved on in leaps and bounds. Being able to play PC-quality, triple-A titles on a home console is the dream of many a console gamer. Perhaps now that dream might become a reality.

### Wearable computing

The concept of "wearable computing" might sound a bit sci-fi but it is rapidly becoming a reality. There are various concepts out there, but the idea that is looking to become a real product is *augmented reality glasses*. These "glasses" - being developed by Google (known as *Project Glass*) as well as other companies - look a bit like headsets. They project an image in front of your eye, displaying pretty much anything you could wish to see via a Bluetooth feed from your smartphone. Talk about true hands-free computing! More information on Google's variant of this concept is available at <http://plus.google.com/+projectglass>.

### Ultra HD TV

I only bought a HDTV a couple of years ago and I haven't bothered upgrading to 3D, yet on the horizon is the new Ultra HD TV! Known more commonly as "4K UHD TV" and "8K UHD TV", these new formats provide the viewer with a resolution of 3,840 x 2,160 pixels (this is 4K) or 7680 x 4320 pixels (this is 8K). To put these numbers into context, 4K UHD TV is *four times* the pixel density of current HDTV (1080p) and 8K UHD TV is *16 times* the pixel density of HDTV. The clarity of picture you can expect when these TVs come out (and when UHD content is available to watch on them) will make HDTV look positively fuzzy by comparison. Remember switching from standard definition to HD? What a contrast that was for me - it was like I'd been watching TV without my glasses all these years and HD was like watching with them on!

*Well, that's it for now. See you next month!*

Jon Winterburn  
DaC Network Administrator

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

## Kupkake's Korner



### A window on life....

I was driving home on Boxing Day after a very busy shift, it began to rain so I pressed the button to make the window lift.

A whirring sound was all I heard and then a sort of bang, the window dropped inside the door with a mighty clang!

"Oh no," said I "not what I need" as the rain came through the frame, "the garage is closed till the 2nd of Jan and there's no one I can blame!"

I tried to pull the glass in place but I just couldn't get a grip, I got home wet eventually - a nightmare of a trip!

Next day I got up early determined to fix the window, with a screw driver and some pliers I just hoped it wouldn't snow.

It was hard work removing the panel but then I saw the fault, the 'worm' was completely broken - perhaps something had caught?

I raised the glass and wedged it with two screws in the channels, now at least it couldn't drop - so I then replaced the panel.

But now I can't open the window although at least I'm protected from rain, I'll get it repaired next week for sure... and be an 'elbow out' cabby again...

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"Yes, some folk can be *very* strange," Ken Bateman (C8) told *Call Sign*. "In the nearly thirty years I have been on Dial-a-Cab there are two really unusual incidents that stick in my mind."

*With that, Ken's mind went back...*

"I recall some years ago when I was driving a Fairway cab, the type with the rear carriage heater console below the glass division. Some Japanese gentlemen stopped me in the West End to go somewhere in the city - Moorgate I think. Anyway, off we went and along the way they apparently decided to change their destination. I could hear them calling me, but those older cabs could be quite noisy so I looked around into the passenger compartment to better understand where they wanted.

**Imagine my surprise when I couldn't see them sitting on the back seat as I had expected, but huddled on the floor of the cab talking into the heater grille as if it was a radio speaker!**

At that point I was approaching the one-way-system of Newgate and King Edward Street, so as I began my turn they started to roll with the cab, hanging on to the handles to stabilise themselves.

Thankfully, they too saw the funny side of the situation when I set them down and explained what the heater did! They walked away from the cab still laughing."

**Still with the broad grin on his face at the**

**We all pick them up from time to time, so we asked the first Dial-a-Cab driver we came to if he remembered any...**

## ECCENTRIC PASSENGERS!



**Ken Bateman remembers some taxi eccentricity!**

**memory of his story, Ken went straight into his next eccentric passenger's tale.**

"This time came soon after we had our data terminals fitted and I remember setting a man down in South Kensington. He paid me off and waved as I pulled away and then disappeared into a shop while I began making my way north through Hyde Park towards Paddington Station. I was aware of another

Dial-a-Cab taxi behind me, but could not figure out why he was frantically flashing his lights as we drove north over the Serpentine Bridge. Suddenly a message flashed up on my terminal screen advising me there was a briefcase still perched on my cab roof!

It was only then that I realised what the following cab had tried to tell me and why the passenger had been waving! Who puts a briefcase or any item of baggage on the roof of a cab? Surely you would put it on the pavement or your arm?

Anyway, I quickly spun around and headed back to where I had set the man down and returned his briefcase. So it all turned out right in the end. But it's nice during these difficult times to be able to look back at some of the more amusing and eccentric events..."

**If any driver has some taxi tales that may amuse Call Sign readers, send them in – with a photo of you if possible – to [callsignmag@aol.com](mailto:callsignmag@aol.com) or just drop it into driver reception at Dial-a-Cab House.**

**Alan Green  
Call Sign Online**

### Book Review \*\*\* Book Review \*\*\* Book Review **Memoirs of an Independent Contractor**

By Steven G Chervenka (Smashword E-Book, \$4.95 USD)

Steven Chervenka's opening paragraph goes a long way to describing the tone of his self-published E-book: **"This is a true account of my life. Because I wrote this narrative non fiction from memory, the time line of events may not be accurate."**

'Memoirs' charts cabbie Steven's life growing up in Philadelphia, the child of second generation immigrant parents and whose grandparents originally came from Eastern Europe - his grandfather from Czechoslovakia and his grandmother from Lithuania. Like many immigrants, they fought hard to gain a decent life in the USA. We pick up Steven's story as a youth growing up in Philly. His parents run a successful restaurant, frequented by the Philadelphia *cognoscenti*; but his father dies of a heart attack. Not long after, his mother also dies leaving Steve traumatised, withdrawn and introspective.

At college, he gains a BA, but it's boosted by drugs that are easily acquired from dealers in the murky park opposite his family home. Steven battles his addiction and with the help of dedicated Christian organisations, gets clean. He's encouraged to get a 'hack' licence and cruises the streets of his hometown, facing reality away from the chemically enhanced world in which he's been existing, fighting his personal demons and trying to come to terms with them.

**With his faith renewed, he arrives back home in Philadelphia and reconnects with the cab trade. He battles as an 'Independent Contractor (hence the book's subtitle) to improve his and his fellow 'self-employed drivers' 'impoverished' status. It's an uphill struggle against the authorities and against crooked cab proprietors out to get as much as they can from their 'captive' fleets.**

Steven changes tack and through his contacts in the 'transportation industry, gets himself a trucker's licence, carrying freight and furniture day and night around Philadelphia. Somehow in all this to-ing and fro-ing from cab unions to trucker's fraternities, he finds the time to marry and have children.

Then the Revenue guys crack down on him and he takes them on to reduce the astronomical tax bill they've presented him with. But the stress causes another heart attack. Again, despite the seriousness of his ill-health and the lack of private medical insurance (through being self-employed), Steven has to tackle the social services to gain some sort of financial help.

At the end of the book you're left breathless by the intensity of Steven's journey – all 74,000 words of it - the faith he has in himself and the people along the way who try to reinforce that faith and in equal measures, destroy it.

To download this book, follow the link at:

**<http://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/StevenGC>**

**Al Fresco, Call Sign Online**

## Advanced Varta taxi battery launched



**A new Varta battery with advanced AGM technology specifically designed for taxis has been launched by Johnson Controls. Whether it's starting and stopping during rush hour or waiting on ranks with additional electrical consumers such as heating etc in operation, taxis have much greater electricity requirements than cars in conventional use.**

Compared to conventional batteries, the Varta Taxi battery is characterised by its high resistance to deep cycling, so offers a significantly longer service life. Practical tests in various countries, including some under extreme climatic conditions, have shown that the Varta Taxi battery with AGM (Absorbent Glass Mat) technology is up to three times more durable than standard batteries.

Johnson Controls is launching a full range of five different types of the new Varta Taxi battery offering 60, 70, 80, 95 and 105 Ampere-hours (Ah) enabling them to cover the full spectrum of popular taxi applications.

# Mailshot

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

## Hand brakes and bad backs...

*Hello Alan*

For a number of years I was driving a Fairway taxi and for many of those years I suffered with a bad back. Someone said to me it was in connection to where the handbrake was and the way it had to be pulled up. Now I believe my backache *was* caused by the handbrake as since I have been driving a TX1 with its differently positioned handbrake, my bad back has all but vanished! Has any other Dial-a-Cab driver had the same problem with the Fairway...?

**Sid Nathan (K88)**

**If you have, let Call Sign know – although sadly there are now fewer and fewer of them around ...Ed**

## Credit card charge

*Hi Alan,*

Can you explain something for me. Why do Dial-a-Cab charge a £2 minimum charge for credit and debit cards when the fare table states: 'Some taxis accept credit or debit cards and there is a maximum of £1.00 or 12.5% whichever is greater.' So for example:

£6.00 fare + 12.5% = 75 pence.

Maximum charge = £1.00

£9.00 fare + 12.5% = £1.125.

Maximum charge = £1.12

The fare has to reach £16 for our £2 minimum charge to comply with the rules. Whenever someone wants to use their card for a short journey, I feel embarrassed and warn them about the £2 charge and they usually elect to use a cash machine. If the charge was reduced, usage would increase and Dial-a-Cab would make more money.

**Mick Kennedy (M30)**

**Allan Evans replies:** Dear Mick, when the credit card charges were discussed at TfL some time ago with the three main circuits present, it was brought to their attention that on the fare chart there was in fact an oversight and that at that time the £2.00 booking and 12.5% fee would still apply and remain unchanged by all three radio circuits. TfL agreed that there were significant charges to process credit card transactions and the tariff chart was due to be corrected this year. As you mentioned, the fact that it only applies to a minority of really short trips and that even though we are now charging 10% the majority of longer jour-

neys will exceed £2, which probably means it's a non-issue, but it is an oversight that needs to be rectified when the TfL tariff chart is next printed....

## Memories...

*Hello Alan*

I was interested to read **Brian Marcantonio's (R73)** story about **Peter Ustinov** in the January *Call Sign*, as it reminded me of a similar incident. I too have been successful in the **Taxi Driver of The Year** competition - winning the title in 1989, 1991 and 1992 - and also had the plaque affixed to the tip-up seat, which prompted many conversations with my passengers.

On one memorable occasion, I mentioned to a fairly short but stout lady in the back of the taxi, that it was good to win a competition that was judged by one's peers. She replied that she knew what I meant as she had won a BAFTA! I had failed to recognize **Miriam Margolyes** and spent the remainder of the journey quite humbled...  
**David Lessman (D19)**

## More memories... and EC5!

*Hi Al*

I read with interest the article by **Brian Marcantonio (R73)** with his passenger **Peter Ustinov**. When anyone asks me who my most famous passenger was, I reply either **George Michael** or **Peter Ustinov** - according to the age of the person asking. Of the two, Sir Peter was my favourite (although the **George Michael** story is something else).

I picked Sir Peter up at the Coliseum going to the Berkeley Hotel. It was just a year or two before his demise and he was quite unsteady on his feet, assisting himself with two walking sticks. I had a *Fairway* at the time, which had the useful small step unlike the huge unusable TX type. I kept the step in the front at all times. Just before arriving at the Berkeley, I told him that when we arrived the hotel the doorman would rush out and open the door for him, but that he should remain seated as I would bring the step round to aid him leaving the cab. This was exactly what happened and as he left the taxi, he put his hand on my shoulder and said with his usual wit: "I shall call you my step-son!"

Changing tack, after the letter in the *January Call Sign* from **Bernie Silver**

(G08) re the EC5 rank and its reinstatement, you joked that you would now probably receive letters from drivers who preferred the new system. Well I am one of those drivers in favour of having EC1, 2, 3 and 4 rather than EC5 in the evening, but am I really in the minority? I met a friend the other evening who was leaving DaC and he said the same as me – the individual zones were better while work was quiet. So that makes at least two of us. My main objection is this ludicrous lottery; if the work is light and the quiet time from 20:00 to 21:30 is upon us, you 'hang up' in say EC2 while waiting for a job with your queue position gradually decreasing, but still no job offer at 20:50. Your option then is to join the lottery and hit EC5 and jump from (eg) number 3 in EC2 to number 76 on EC5. At least on the Island you retain your position.

Whinge over, lets vote on it or as the main gripe is the early morning lull with little traffic and work, perhaps we could have a switch over to EC5 at midnight or 1am?

**Alan Nash (A95)**

**Sorry Alan but I think the decision has now been taken and there is more chance of you winning the lottery than getting the reversal reversed! ...Ed**

## Thank you Ivor

*Dear Alan*

I'd like through *Call Sign* to give a mention to **Ivor Belkin (C97)** for his excellent determination and helpfulness to we drivers during his Christmas Day dispatching shift. It not only made the day go very smoothly, but hopefully will have assisted Dial-a-Cab to retain the customers that took advantage of the excellent service provided that day.  
**Tony Arnold (F03)**

**Ivor was recently presented with a DaC long service certificate to celebrate 40 years dispatching with his official starting date being November 1971. That was probably because of a lack of details when we went over to and transferred information onto computer. In reality, Ivor first dispatched on a Saturday in 1961 at our Pentonville Road base, standing-in for the regular dispatcher. He joined the young Lou Gitlin, who had been dispatching on a part-time basis since 1958. Ivor did his first ODRS dispatching shift in 1960 on a weekday and followed**





# Mailshot

continued from page 28

that by taking any shift where the regular dispatcher was away sick. But he seemed to pop up more often on a Saturday. Ivor remained an occasional face on the box until several years later when he was offered the permanent Saturday day shift spot. He has kept it ever since ...Ed

## Clothing maketh the man or the crook?

Hi Al

Reading Allen Togwell's piece about the tieless Jeremy Paxman interviewing a suited and booted Conrad Black confirmed two things I have always suspected. Firstly, he doesn't have a bee in his bonnet he has the entire hive. And secondly, he regards clothes as more important than the people inside them. Remember that Black is a convicted thief and fraudster, but so far as I know, Paxman is neither. Yet if Allen did not know them, he would appear to have more respect for the criminal.

I don't suppose Bernie Madoff's victims would have handed over their billions to a man in a t-shirt and jeans, but stick him in a Savile Row suit and they couldn't wait to write the cheques!

Geoff Levene (W32)

**Allen Togwell responds:** Mr Levene has taken my tie-less comment completely out of context, influenced I would imagine by his obvious dislike of my views concerning the cab trade needing to change its image. My mentioning Mr Paxman being tie-less was solely because of the caption in the article I was reading that said *'there is nothing more pathetic than an old man trying to be groovy'* which is a comment I could see aimed at me if I followed the advice of Mr Lyons (Y52) who suggested I dress casual rather than always being seen wearing a suit. I also mentioned one of the reasons I wear a tie is to hide my unseemly old lizard neck. The fact that Mr Paxman's tie-less interview just happened to be with an ex-convict whose mode of dress made Mr Paxman's choice of clothes look noticeably odd, particularly as he is usually suited and booted, is totally irrelevant. I have no bee in my bonnet whatsoever, for all I cared Paxman could have been talking to Kermit the Frog and still looked a mess.

## Chinese takeover?

Hi Alan

Re your comments in previous *Call Signs* about the possibility of Geely

deliberately refusing to help LTI when it needed more funds to get it through a difficult period and causing it to have to call in administrators. The Chinese obviously aren't fools; they buy into legitimate companies for peanuts and reap the benefits at our expense and it looks as though Geely is trying to bid for the remains of Manganese Bronze at a knock down price, possibly via an intricate method of supplying second rate items to M&O in order to weaken them financially and make them vulnerable to a takeover bid. That, allied to the fact that a class action is being taken to gain recompense for faulty vehicles being supplied (re the TX4 fires in 2008).

That is in addition to the black hole discovered in the company's accounts. Just who was responsible for a diabolical 'mistake' like that? Was it a firm of accountants or the management of MBH? And who will be made to compensate the losers – ie the drivers – or do those highly paid directors get away scot free? And what about the workers at Coventry and the London outlet at M&O? They seem to have been left high and dry with no job and few prospects – a real shame.

So without an iconic vehicle in London, the legitimate licensed London taxi trade will be weakened forever, no longer having a real trade identity and the aggressive minicab people will be there to decimate our trade, gaining even more ground and street credibility, with all that ensues – ie ranks for AL cars...

Roy 'the boy' Manix (Ex-K98)

## Hailo and the booking fee...

Dear Al

Over the last few editions of *Call Sign* there have been articles written that were critical of Hailo. Let me make it quite clear – I have been on Dial-a-Cab for 51 years and have no intention of coming off, but many are saying that there isn't enough work to justify subscription fees while Hail seems to be going from strength to strength, with many drivers who use it telling me that they are more than satisfied with the system and that it is taking a tremendous amount of work away from minicab companies such as Addison Lee. I have to assume that to be true and if so, then I am all in favour of it. I am not

critical of our Board because they really do have the very difficult balancing act of keeping subscribers and customers happy.

I am not sure about what we can do about it, but I believe that removing the £2 cash booking fee as we have done on credit card rides may help. Drivers don't like having to charge it and as a result I believe our coverage of cash work suffers. After all, how can we justify giving a passenger a DaC hand-out card when not only can there be up to a £4.20 run-in, but then a £2 charge on top when you know that if they call Hailo it will be just the £2.40 flagfall? Even if drivers decide to arrive with no run-in, we still have to explain the £2 when Hailo has nothing.

Gerald Webber (E11)

**Brian Rice responds:** I don't blame you for not wanting to come off Dial-a-Cab Gerald, for £1 per month subs, neither would I!

You state how well Hailo are doing and I'm pleased for them, however, no-one knows how well they are actually doing because as far as I am aware there have not been any figures published.

Hailo have invested millions of pounds into their 'start up' and I would be extremely surprised if they were showing any sort of profit at the moment. The three Americans who started Hailo have been very clever with their Marketing by stating that every trip completed is another trip taken from the minicabs; that may be true to a certain extent, but they are also covering taxi street work that was ours initially. What is actually happening is that instead of the passenger coming onto the street for a taxi, they are using their App with the taxi they would have hailed off the street now going to their front door to pick them up – for nothing! Then, of course, the driver pays 10% of the fare to the App supplier for the privilege! And you think that's good?

Regarding our cash work, for some reason it has never been popular with the Members of Dial-a-Cab. You wrote that Members do not like charging the £2 booking fee. Unfortunately, I will have to disagree with you Gerald, Members do not mind charging, what they object to is collecting. If DaC collected the £2 instead of them, then there



# Mailshot

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wouldn't be a problem. Incidentally, the £4.20 run-in does not have to be charged, neither does the £2 booking fee. I know you pay £1.50 to Dial-a-Cab for every cash trip but surely that is not a lot different to the 10% that is charged by the App supplier to the driver?

How can we expect Dial-a-Cab to gain nothing from a cash booking, whilst an App can take 10% of the fare and gratuity? You must also bear in mind that with an App, the driver bears all the overheads including supplying the Smart Phone and paying for the Air-Time, unlike radio circuits that pays (via Members subscriptions) for hardware in the cabs plus air time. What you must remember is that radio circuits charge the customer whereas this App charges the driver.

However Gerald, since your letter to the magazine I have personally taken a look at the situation and there could be a way around it; we could abandon all charges for cash and to recoup that income, we could scrap the £1 per month for members with over 30 years' service which would produce an income of just over £181k per annum to the Society. So thank you for bringing this to my attention...

## Power Pill and fuel filters

Hi Alan

Could you advise me regarding Power Pill, which I have just purchased, and the instructions advising to change the fuel filter after five pills have been used. Have you found this to be the case as my garage has told me that this can cost £40 a time?

Morris Abrahams (R85)

*I suppose the biggest problem with Power Pill is that it works and the rubbish it clears out of the system has to go somewhere, but I have to say that I have never changed my fuel filter in between services. However, I asked Steve at Power Pill and this is what he told me:*

"One of the functions of the Alpha Pill is to clean and maintain the fuel delivery system and an important component of the fuel system is the fuel filter designed to prevent impurities in the fuel reaching the engine. Over time, various forms of impurities will have adhered to the inner surfaces of the fuel system; upon introduction of Alpha pill to the fuel, these impurities will start to be stripped and cleaned away to be trapped in the fuel filter. Purely

as a precautionary measure, we suggest a once-only extra fuel filter replacement after 5 tank fulls of fuel have been used. Then revert to the vehicle manufactures recommendation.

This is for advice only, each owner will know the state of their own vehicle. If it's brand new, then ignore the above. If it's ill maintained, barely starts and runs badly they may want to change the full filter earlier than we suggest."

## Euro car parts

Alan

Don't know how much of a car DIY man you are, but I have found out that Euro car parts, who are suppliers to both to trade and DIY and who have many stores in and around London (as well as being online), will give trade discount for most car parts to London taxi drivers. They provide parts for every make and model and if they don't have the part, they claim they will get it the same day. I purchased some cabin filters for my car that they priced at £29 including VAT and asked if they gave discounts to taxi drivers? I was told they did and paid £21 - a good saving. Not sure if all parts qualify, but it's worth a try and all helps. There's a list of parts at [www.eurocarparts.com/car-parts](http://www.eurocarparts.com/car-parts) and their oil looks to be of a very good quality.

Changing tack, I spoke to Edna Mitchell's daughter Jill yesterday. She told me that both she and Ronnie had seen the obituary on Edna in last month's *Call Sign* and how nice they thought it was. They asked me to say thank you...

Jon Robinson (E88)

Thanks Jon ...Ed

## Courier licensing

Dear Al

I wonder if you could get someone to explain the situation regarding private hire courier companies. I recently saw a white Fiat van (reg EJ62 AOT) which I took to be a courier. But it had the regulatory green roundel disk in the back window yet only had two doors. I was under the impression that LTPH licensed vehicles had to have a minimum of 4 doors and I find the situation confusing.

Your help would be appreciated...

Colin Jenkins (Y22)

Hi Colin, I asked both Simon Buggery of LTPH and Steve McNamara, General Secretary of the LTDA

because I had a feeling what the answer was but wasn't sure what I believed was correct! It's probably not what you want to hear! Simon's response was that there is no minimum number of doors for PHVs. The regulations simply say that 'the number of doors must be sufficient to allow safe access and egress for the number of passengers that the vehicle is licensed to carry'.

Steve confirmed the no-4 door rule, but added that over the years many people had taken advantage of the exemption from Congestion Charging by licensing all manner of delivery vans, smart cars and even pick-up trucks. So sorry Colin, your confusion may now still be there but headed in a different direction ...Ed

## RFID and the new terminals

Hi Alan

Do you know if our new terminals will have the RFID 'touch and go' facility as I have just seen a video showing someone demonstrating a device that sells online for under \$100 that can scan the RFID chip without even touching it. It then gains your credit and debit card details. Does our IT department know about this?

Pat Keefe (G01)

DaC's IT Director, John Bankes responds:

Pat, how could it affect us? We are not a credit card provider. Our new PEDs will be able to read contactless (as they are known here) credit cards, but responsibility for the security of credit cards in peoples wallets is firstly with the credit card provider and secondly with the individual. The passenger does not have to use the contactless card in a Dial-a-Cab if they don't want to. The situation in Europe is very different to that of the States anyway. The US do not use chip and pin and that is why the guy in the film was able to clone the card and use it based on just the PAN (credit card number) and the expiry date. Since we use chip and pin in Europe it is much more difficult to clone a card and you certainly can't do it with a mag card reader/writer. So in answer to your question, I would say it has no effect and has nothing to do with us.

Ed's note: RFID - Radio Frequency Identification





# Mailshot

Continued from page 31

## BoM salary?

Dear Alan

If memory serves me right, it was agreed at an AGM some years ago that the BoM would receive an annual salary increment in line with the annual meter fare rise. At the time it seemed - and indeed was for many years - to be a system that worked very well with drivers increasing their takings year on year and Board members increasing their salaries in line with that.

However, since 2008 there have been massive changes with drivers struggling to maintain their takings even after allowing for the annual percentage increases, whereas the Board have continued to reap the benefit of the adopted system. May I emphasise that this has happened through accident and not design and is in no way a criticism of the BoM, who like the rest of us work hard to achieve in what are such difficult circumstances.

If my facts are correct. I think the Board should consider forfeiting their increment for this year only in order to redress the anomaly.

Mike Lyons (Y52)

Hi Mike, while I agreed with your last letter decrying the 50p charge to use the Aldwych toilets, I disagree strongly with your suggestion about the BoM, even though in actual fact it will automatically happen by default. I haven't asked anyone on the Board to answer but personally speaking I wish they wouldn't accept no increase as it makes the Society appear to be in trouble, when that certainly isn't the case. We currently have a BoM consisting of the Chairman and five Board members. Of the five, two currently come in only for monthly Board meetings, a third comes in between 1 and 2 days a week, Allan Evans works 4 days, leaving just Contact Centre Manager Keith Cain as the only full-time member on the BoM in addition to the Chairman. None

of them have salaries as all are on hourly rates - well below other radio circuits that do indeed pay very large salaries.

From the top of my head as I don't have actual figures in front of me, Dial-a-Cab will save around £600 over a full year by the Board not accepting the increase. A company with £7million or so in the bank asking its Board to save that fairly paltry amount gives a false impression. Struggling like everyone else, yes, but to tell the BoM that they should forfeit such a small amount? If you want to know about savings, go and ask Brian Rice how many £thousands have been saved since 2008. Believe me it makes your £600 look like pennies. Perhaps we should charge drivers 50p to use the DaC loos - that would raise far more than £600 - and yes Mike, that was just a joke! So for your info, the BoM only take an increase when DaC makes a surplus and the staff get an increase. If there isn't a surplus and the staff do not get an increase, then the BoM also forfeit theirs ... Ed

## Taxi offer

It isn't just taxi drivers that are suffering. I recently saw a South Ken hotel doing a £35 a night offer to get people in! But in the same area, there is a deal that benefits taxi drivers and is worth a mention in *Call Sign*. Café Deco in Gloucester Road (opposite Elvaston Place) is offering black cab drivers any large coffee and a large bacon and sausage bap for £2.50. Sounds good to me...

David Heath (Ex-W27)

## Reed Fisher

We were all profoundly sad to hear that dear Reed is no longer with us. The only consolation is that his suffering is over. I will always remember him as a kind, gentle man for whom no one ever had a bad word. I wish you a long life...

Martin Hizer (M47)

## Reed

We are so saddened to hear of the loss of such a dear friend and colleague, Reed. I have known him for over 20 years; he started out working Sunday's as a telephonist until Joe Brazil, the former evening shift controller took him under his wing in despatch and showed him all the ropes. Reed then took over and became the main Sunday evening shift controller when Joe left.

Reed will be sorely missed by us all. Rest in peace dear friend and God bless.

Curlette Villiers

DaC Senior Night Shift Controller

I picked Martin and Curlette's tributes out at random from literally hundreds that I received within hours of a message going out saying that my dear son Reed had died. It was also astonishing how many non-radio drivers had also heard and wrote to me in that brief time. My sincere thanks to everyone ...Ed



## Call Sign

### February 2013

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