

March 2013

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

Call Sign



*After 34 years Allen Togwell
says farewell to Dial-a-Cab*



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

An update of hotel addresses, now including the DoubleTree by Hilton chain...

APEX HOTELS			
Temple Court	1-2 Serjeants' Inn, Fleet St, EC4Y 1LL	City of London	1 Seething Lane, EC3N 4AX
London Wall	7-9 Cophall Avenue, EC2R 7NJ		
DOUBLETREE HOTELS by Hilton			
Courthouse	19, Gt Marlborough St. W1F 7HL	Ealing	2-8 Hanger Lane, Ealing W5 3HN
Hyde Park (not Coburg)	St Petersburg Pl, W2 (Entrance)	Heathrow	745 Bath Road, Cranford TW5 9QE
Marble Arch	4 Bryanston Street, W1H 7BY	Regent Street	19, Gt Marlborough St. W1F 7HL
Tower of London	7 Pepys Street, EC3N 4AF	Victoria	2 Bridge Place, SW1V 1QA
West End	92 Southampton Row, WC1B 4BH	Westminster	30 John Islip Street, SW1P 4DD
DOYLE HOTELS			
Bloomsbury	16 Gt Russell Street, WC1B 3NN	Kensington	109-113 Queens Gate, SW7 5LR
Marylebone	47 Welbeck Street, W1G 8DN		
GUOMAN HOTELS			
Charing Cross	Strand, WC2N 5HX	Royal Horseguards	2 Whitehall Court, SW1A 2EJ
Cumberland	Great Cumberland Pl., W1A 4RF	The Tower	St Katharine's Way, E1W 1LD
Grosvenor	101 Buckingham Palace Rd, SW1W 0SJ		
INDIGO HOTELS			
Paddington	16 St, W2 1HL	Tower Hill	142 Minories, EC3N 1LS
Kensington	34 Barkston Gardens, SW5 0EW		
MERCURE HOTELS			
City Bankside	71-79 Southwark Street SE1 0JA	Bloomsbury	130, Southampton Row, WC1B 5AF
Gatwick	Povey Cross Road Horley RH6 0BE	Greenwich	Catherine Grove, SE10 8FR
London Bridge	71-79 Southwark Street SE1 0JA	Kensington	1a, Lexham Gdns, W8 5JJ
Paddington	144, Praed St, W2 1HU	St. Ermines	2 Caxton Street, SW1H 0QW
NH HOTELS			
NH Harrington Hall	5-25 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JW	NH Kensington	202-220 Cromwell Road SW5 0SW
PREMIER INN HOTELS			
Angel Islington	18 Parkfield Street, N1 0PS	Blackfriars	1-2 Dorset Rise, EC4Y 8EN
Borough Market	34, Park St, SE1 9EF	Beckton	1 Woolwich Manor Way, E6 5NT
County Hall	Belvedere Rd, SE1 7PB	Docklands Excel	Festoon Way, E16 1RH
Ealing	22 Uxbridge Rd, W5 2SR	Euston	1 Dukes Road, Euston Road, WC1H
Gatwick Airport Way	Longbridge Way, Crawley, RH6 0NX	Gatwick East	Balcombe Road, Crawley, RH10 3NL
Gatwick Manor Royal	Fleming Way, RH10 9DF	Gatwick North	Northway, RH6 0PH
Gatwick South	London Road, Crawley, RH10 9ST	Greenwich	43, Greenwich High Rd, SE10 8JL
Hammersmith	255 King Street, W6 9LU	Hampstead	Ornan Rd , 215 Haverstock Hill, NW3
Heathrow Bath Rd	15 Bath Road, Hounslow, TW6 2AB	Heathrow Hayes	362, Uxbridge Rd, UB4 0HF
Heathrow M4/J4	Shepiston Lane, UB3 1RW	Heathrow T5	420 Bath Road, W. Drayton, UB7 0RF
Islington Green	18 Parkfield St, N1 0PS	Kensington(Earls	11 Knaresborough Place, SW5 0TJ
Kensington Olympia	32, West Cromwell Rd, SW5 9QJ	Kings Cross	26- 30 York Way, N1 9AA
Leicester Sq	1, Leicester place, WC2H 7BP	Old St (City)	Corsham Street, N1 6DR
Putney Bridge	3 Putney Bridge Approach, SW6 3JD	Southwark	34, Park St, SE1 9EF
Stratford	International Sq, Montfichet Road, E15 1AZ	Tate Modern	34, Park St, SE1 9EF
Tower Bridge	159, Tower Bridge Road, SE1 3LF	Tower Hill (City)	24, Prescott St, E1 8BB
Victoria (Gillingham St)	82, Eccleston Sq, SW1V 1PS	Waterloo	Belvedere Rd, SE1 7PB
Westminster Bridge	Belvedere Rd, SE1 7PB	Wimbledon	27, Chapter Way SW19 2RF
TRAVELODGE HOTELS			
Aldgate East	6, Chamber St, E1 8BL	Bank	19 St Swithin's Lane, EC4N 8AD
Balham	177, Balham High Rd, SW12 9BX	Battersea	200 York Road, SW11 3SA
Bethnal Green	231, Cambridge heath Rd, E2 0EL	City Airport	Hartmann Road, E16 2BZ
City Road	1-23 City Road, EC1Y 1AE	Covent Garden	10 Drury Lane, High Holborn, WC2B 5RE
Clapham Junction	155 Falcon Road, SW11 2PD	Docklands	Coriander Avenue, E14 2AA
Euston	1 Grafton Pl. NW1 1DJ	ExCel	1016 Dockside Road, E16 2FQ
Farringdon	Gwynne Place, WC1X 9LN	Fulham	290 North End Rd, SW6 1NQ
Gatwick	Church Road, Lowfield Heath, RH11 0PC	Gatwick Central	Povey Cross Road, RH6 0BE
Greenwich	Blackheath Rd/Deal's Gateway SE10 8EF	Heathrow T5	Calder Way/Horton Rd, Colnbrook, SL3
Heathrow Central	700 Bath Rd, TW5 9SW	Kings X Royal Scot	100 Kings Cross Road, WC1X 9DT
Kings Cross	356, Grays Inn Road, WC1X 8BH	Liverpool Street	1 Harrow Place, E1 7DB
Marylebone	Harewood Row, NW1 6SE	Stratford	High St /Park Ln, E15 2JG
Southwark	202 Union Street, SE1 0LH	Tower Bridge	1 Goodmans Yard, E1 8AT
Waterloo	195 -203 Waterloo Rd, SE1 8UX	Woolwich	125, Powis St, SE18 6LQ
TUNE HOTELS			
Paddington	41-47 Praed Street, W2 1NR	Liverpool St	13-15 Folgate Street, E1 6BX,
Westminster	118 Westminster Bridge Rd, SE1 7RW	Kings Cross	324 Gray's Inn Rd, WC1X 8BU

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from the editor's desk

AGM and

Allen Togwell

You can read all about the AGM elsewhere inside this issue, but the undoubted shock was that long standing Board Member **Allen Togwell** lost his place on the Board to **Garry White** with just one vote separating the two of them in this year's elections.

Allen has both irritated and excited members over the many years he has been on the BoM. His views on a driver's dress code are well known and you either agree or disagree with them, but there can be little doubt that we all look that bit smarter nowadays.

His computer skills, all self-taught, have saved this Society many thousands each year and probably reach hundreds of thousands in total. So it was nice to see a driver stand up at the AGM, admit that he hasn't always agreed with AT, but suggest that Allen's undoubted skills should not be lost to DaC unless he no longer wanted to pursue them. The driver went on to say that perhaps we could pay him to produce the *End of Year* report brochure and other items that he did so well.

However, other than thanking Allen for the many years he has devoted to DaC, this piece isn't about that. It's just to say - in as modest a way as this magazine can - that after years of drivers saying that there was no point in attending an AGM as it was impossible for a sitting BM to lose their seat under the postal ballot system and me disagreeing, I can now officially say that I was right! With just a single vote separating Allen and Garry and Tom just 15 votes ahead of the duo, the results were obviously settled in the hall even though there weren't even 70 members present.

Hopefully that will make those who refuse to attend AGMs, believing that it makes no difference, now think again. It's your Society; you should take an interest...

Manganese Bronze and Geely...

There's only one trade story in town at the moment - unless you are the supplier of the **MB Vito**. As autumn 2012 arrived, so it seemed that the autumn of the life of the **TX4** taxi had arrived at the same time. **Manganese Bronze** was taken into administration, but the circumstances disturbed us at *Call Sign* far more than just the initial sadness and in a November 2012 *Call Sign* article, reporter **Ron Yarborough** wrote:

"You have to feel sorry for Manganese Bronze. LTC's parent company discovers a fault with some new TX4 steering boxes exactly four years after solving the problem of the eight TX4s that caught fire. Now 316 TX4s in London have to come off the road until a steering investigation is completed and that has sent Manganese over the edge into adminis-



tration. Hopefully, the administrators will sort the company out, but it seems that it was 20% shareholder Geely's refusal to loan £15million to Manganese that has caused the problem. I think that many London taxi drivers would feel justifiably annoyed if Geely now ended up buying the company at a knock-down price."

Well that is exactly what has happened with the Chinese car makers, **Zhejiang Geely Holding Group** - who already own **Volvo** - purchasing MB from administrators **PriceWaterhouseCoopers** for a knock-down £11.04 million and on a debt-free basis.

So are we upset? Well, yes, we do still feel sorry for MB, but we also realise that business is business and no one would pay more than they have to when you are talking in £millions. According to Geely Holdings Chairman, **Li Shufu**:

"We are determined to restore the fortunes of this totemic marque. We are a long-term and committed investor and believe the illustrious past of the London black cab can be matched by a successful and healthy future."

He also inferred that the cab would be brought up to date using the latest technology. No, we do not regret speaking out with our initial view - especially as it turned out to be correct - but the bottom line is that the long-term future of the TX4 has now been assured and that can only be good news for the London taxi trade.

Inside this issue, there is an open letter to the taxi trade from the UK operations Executive Vice President of the London Taxi Corporation Ltd (T/A The London Taxi Company), **Peter Johansen**. If they do indeed follow Mr Johansen's views of the aims for the new company, then the TX4 will undoubtedly well and truly have arrived in the twenty first century. But as always, the proof of the pudding is in the eating so let's hope this pudding is a tasty one...

Fare increase

I can't help wondering whether we'd have

been better off refusing the 1.7% fare increase because even pro-taxi radio station **LBC** has been having a pop at us and going on about other people not having had a wage rise for several years.

No mention, mind you, of buses, tubes and overground trains getting above inflation fare increases for years and seemingly at will. However, an average 22p per trip increase is better than nothing, but wouldn't the publicity of rejecting that increase this year been worth more than 22p a job in positive publicity?

Ah well, it's not as though we have the choice, so keep rowing...

Reed

Even allowing for the most awful of personal circumstances, I would not want *Call Sign* readers to think that I was attempting to take over this page and turn it into a sort of shrine to my dear son Reed. As much as I loved him, last month's tributes took up several pages and as he was a long-time Dial-a-Cab employee, hopefully most of you agreed that I wasn't taking advantage.

Yes, I have published a few more of the hundreds of condolence messages to come in, but I also feel that I have to mention something that DaC staff have done without any fanfare, but just because they wanted to. They had a collection in Reed's name and raised around £150 which has been donated to **Chai Cancer Care**, the charity that helped Reed so much towards the end of his life. To all who contributed, I thank you...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

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reflections of the chairman

AGM and the 30 year rule...

It was another very good AGM, unfortunately there were just 70 members in attendance and when you consider it was an electable AGM, that turnout was pretty poor. However, as expected, the behaviour of all those present was exemplary and everyone appeared to be extremely interested in the workings of **Dial-a-Cab**.

I must confess that of those 70 members present, there were several that had served in excess of thirty years for the Society and as a consequence enjoy £1 per month subscriptions. So you can imagine their dismay when I stated that due to the current economic climate, the BoM might have to review their subscriptions and possibly increase them during these extremely recessionary times.

I informed those present that we had 116 members who enjoyed the reduced subscription, which cost the Society in excess of £180k per annum.

This reduced subscription was introduced by the BoM in November 1996 to reward long serving members, however, at this current AGM **Pat Keefe (G01)** informed me that when I announced the new subscription at the 1996 AGM, I stated it was "for life" and that it would never be removed. I know we have moved on by almost 17 years and our memories get a little worse as time goes by, but mine is not that bad and the words "for life" were never mentioned!

What makes the situation worse is that in this issue's *Mailshot*, I believe **Martin Freeborn (C67)** also implies the same thing, probably because it was mentioned at the AGM and he believes it was gospel - and it wasn't. I have known these two members for many years and they have both been great ambassadors for your Society, shame about their memories!

I've been looking at the work that is covered by the long serving members and between the 116 of them, fewer than 1000 trips a month are covered. So not only is the Society not receiving income from subscriptions, we are not receiving much income from the trips that are covered by them either.

This reduced subscription regime was introduced in 1996 when times were better and for the next twelve years those better times continued so the Society was happy to continue with the reduced subscription scenario. However, for the past four years the economic situation has worsened and the reduced subscriptions will be reviewed; that is not to say they will be returned to full subscription level because some sort of recognition for long service should be acknowledged and we have another 34 members who will reach the milestone of thirty years within the next few months.

The BoM wish to generate more income and the last thing we want to do is increase member's subscriptions during these difficult times, but I believe the time when the 'normal' member subsidises the long serving member could be coming to an end, but there will be some recognition.

It was also decided at the AGM by the members that there should be a new Board member when **Garry White** beat **Allen Togwell** by



just one vote. I have been a member of this Society for 39 years and have never known such a close vote.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Garry to the BoM and will do all I can to assist him in becoming acquainted with the BoM and the workings of **Dial-a-Cab**. It will be an extremely steep learning curve and I know that Garry will be very surprised regarding the knowledge required to run an operation such as **Dial-a-Cab**.

Allen Togwell

I can't finish this piece without thanking **Allen Togwell** for his contribution to **Dial-a-Cab**. Allen has been a constant member of the BoM since I became Chairman in 1996 and always supported me, especially in the early years when politics and intrigue was commonplace at DaC. As the years rolled on and much of the politics were removed from the Society, Allen remained a staunch supporter.

To some members, Allen was like Marmite - you either loved him or hated him! But over the years I grew very fond of Allen and realised he had a loud bark but just a small bite!

In my view, Allen was beaten for one reason only - and that is age. If he had not been the oldest Board Member, then he would not have gone and it may have been someone else.

Allen will always be welcome at **Dial-a-Cab House**. His wit - and indeed his swearing - will always be remembered fondly by me! It has been a pleasure to work alongside him, with barely a few minor hiccups on the way.

And finally...

GetTaxi has recruited two of the young ladies that used to work for **Dial-a-Cab**. They were enticed away with the offer of higher salaries - nothing wrong with that! But it would now appear they have been promised commission for every driver they can recruit, so they have now taken to the task of telephoning some of our members in an attempt to get them to join **GetTaxi**.

I would like to remind members that they cannot be a member of both organisations; it is one or the other due to the simple fact that **GetTaxi** is attacking your credit account clients together with the accounts of the other two radio circuits. So it appears that they are looking to become the fourth radio circuit in London.

The choice is yours; you can be either a member of **Dial-a-Cab** or **GetTaxi** - but it can't be both...

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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While *Call Sign* was told last month that a deal for the **Zhejiang Geely Holding Group** to take over the business of **Manganese Bronze Holdings** minus its debts was imminent - even

though a second company were still in the mix - for financial reasons the deal could not be completed until 1 February and we had to let it go as publication couldn't wait!

So by now the whole world - from the **New York Times** to the **Sydney Morning Herald** - knows that the TX4 has been saved in addition to the 107 jobs at the Coventry manufacturing facility with Zhejiang Geely paying £11.04 million to buy the package, including the **London Taxi Company's** head office production, M&O dealership and property in Holloway, plus all related dealership assets in Manchester and Edinburgh including plant, equipment and property, intellectual property rights, trademarks and the goodwill of the business. The last time Manganese shares were traded on the Stock Exchange was on 11 October when they closed at 10p, valuing the company at around £3m.

Mr Shufu added: "We have ambitious plans for the business and despite there being a number of challenges to overcome, we are committed to working with all stakeholders to build a solid future for the black cab business that will enable it to return to profitability and grow substantially."

Geely Automobile Holdings Ltd, which is the Hong Kong based trading

TX4 SAVED



Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Chairman Li Shufu - TX4's new owner!

unit of Zhejiang Geely, already owned a 19.6% stake in Manganese following their 2006 joint venture. Under that deal, the UK Company bought Chinese made components and vehicle body parts. Some blamed that deal for the steering problems that caused 400 right-hand drive TX4s to be recalled, leading to the MBH administration. The new replacement parts were UK sourced. But MBH former group finance director, **Peter Johansen**, who is now executive Vice President of the new venture, **UK Black Cab Operations**, claimed that the majority of Chinese parts were now world class and the days of them being looked down on were long gone.

Mr Johansen also said that the new company would continue with the project that London Taxi Company were following - that of the possibility of Hydrogen-operated taxis. He reminded us that five hydrogen taxis were success-

fully running around during the London Olympics and that Boris Johnson as London Mayor was looking for London's taxis

to be virtually emissions free by 2020.

Zhejiang Geely already own **Volvo Cars** in Sweden and also manufactures its own auto brands - Geely, Emgrand, Gleagle and Englon - the vehicle said to be based on the TX4.

Li Shufu is a great believer in collective wisdom but is also someone who does not give up when he has an idea - a heady mix that will bring a new interesting slant to the cab manufacturing business. He is also a great believer in charity and as this trade is famous for its supported charities, there could also be an involvement there.

Geely's chief financial officer, **Donghui Daniel Li**, will become Chairman of **Geely UK** - a name we are going to hear much more about in the future...

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

Vacancies for three DaC Arbitrators



As a result of the recent Board election and the early retirement of two long standing members, there are vacancies for three members to become Dial-a-Cab Arbitrators.

Should you wish to put your name forward and you meet the minimum criteria of **five consecutive years** of membership, then please apply in writing expressing your interest to be received by me at Dial-a-Cab House no later than first post on **Monday 18 March 2013**.

A postal ballot will then be conducted at a later date and the three candidates with the highest number of votes will be duly appointed.

Candidates wishing to send their CV for publication in *Call Sign* should send it to the Editor at callsignmag@aol.com or to the usual Call Sign postal address by Friday **12 April 2013**, keeping to a maximum of around 200 words.

If you have any queries regarding this process, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Howard Pears
Company Secretary



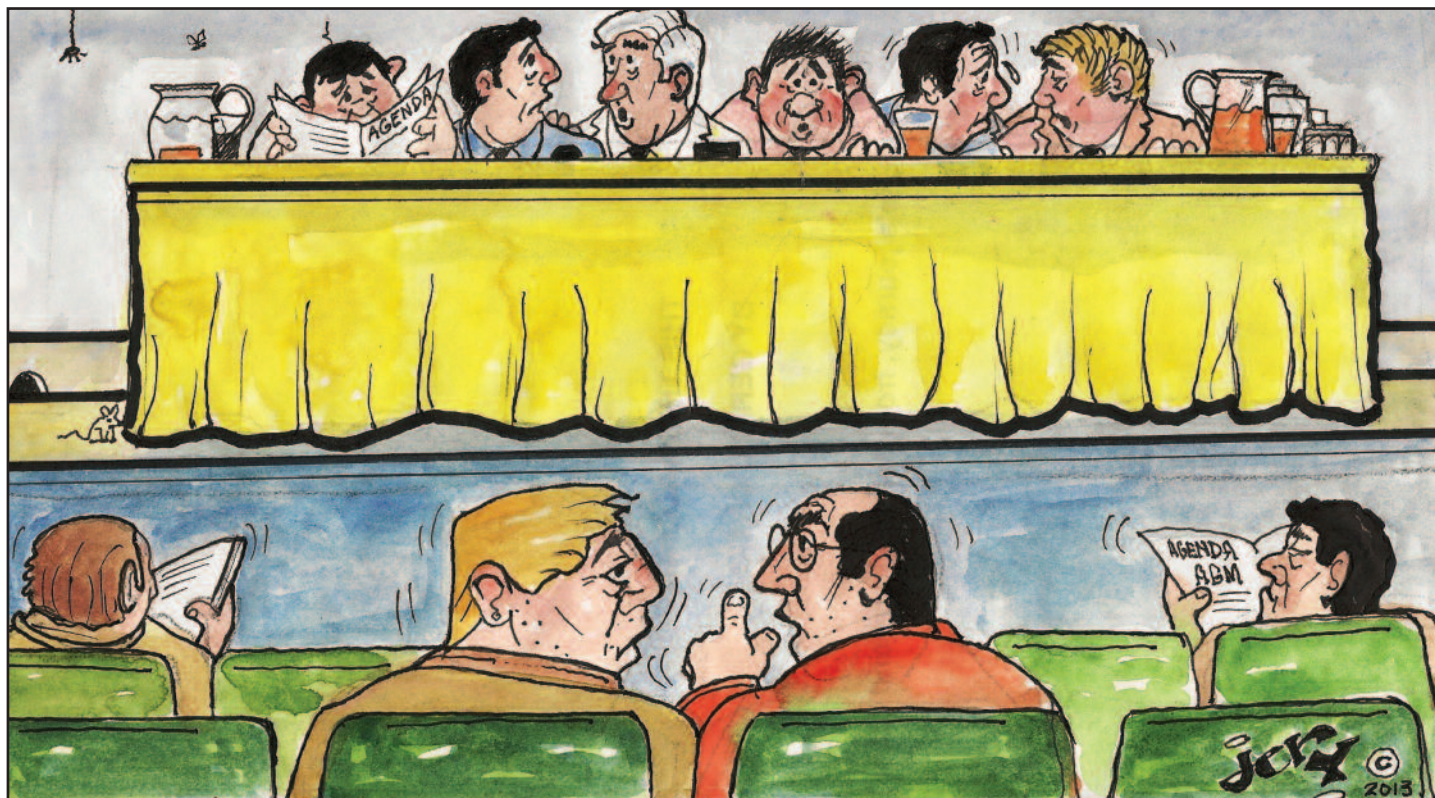
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"I don't care what anyone says; it's impossible for any sitting Board member to lose their seat while we've got postal balloting!"

New design licenses and area identifiers

In March 2013, TfL will commence issuing replacement licences and area identifiers to all licensed London taxi drivers. The new licences and area identifiers will be of a similar design to existing ones but will contain a number of new security features. In addition, following feedback from the trade, the new suburban area identifiers will have a larger space to show the areas for which a driver is licensed to ply for hire.

One of the key reasons for replacing all taxi driver licences and area identifiers is to combat fraudulent licences. The introduction of the area identifiers has highlighted issues that have existed within the trade for a number of years. Between March and December 2012, some 27 arrests have been made by the police for the use of fraudulent documentation. Of these, a number were completely unlicensed drivers that had received no character and medical checks or undertaken the Knowledge of London. These drivers are putting the public at risk and also damaging the earnings and reputation of legitimate taxi drivers.

Accompanying the new documents will be instructions advising how to return existing documents to TfL. Any driver who has not received his or her replacement licence and area identifiers by 31 March 2013 should contact us via support@tph.tfl.gov.uk or 0845 602 7000.

In order to facilitate this change, a number of drivers were recently asked to submit passport size photographs which will allow a digital version to be reproduced on their licence. Any driver who has not yet responded to this request is urged to do so without further delay. Until a new photograph is provided we will be unable to issue the replacement licence and identifiers. Photographs can be emailed to TPHphotos@tfl.gov.uk or posted to:

Taxi Driver Photographs
4th Floor, Green Zone
Palestra
197 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ

After 31 March 2013, any driver not displaying new style identifiers will be liable to compliance action therefore it is imperative that drivers provide a photograph as requested. Through the issue of the new licences and area identifiers which contain additional security features, along with continuing to undertake regular compliance checks,

we will be able to safeguard the public from rogue drivers and protect the reputation and the earnings of the taxi trade.

John Mason
Director Taxi and Private Hire



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Call Sign has been supporting Dial-a-Cab driver Keith Reading (W76) since December 2007 when he announced that he was on the way to becoming a professional toastmaster.

When his son got married earlier that year, Keith said that he would get a toastmaster to officiate at the wedding but his son wanted dad to do it – and Keith said yes! He enjoyed the experience so much that he went online to see whether there were any sites that could assist him in taking it further and he came across *The Guild of Professional Toastmasters*. He went to their academy where he learned the trade through their intense course and eventually qualified as a toastmaster.

Nowadays, Keith is recognised as one of the top toastmasters in the business and can often be seen officiating at many prestigious events. One recent event was at the Institute of Directors...

"Yes, a prestigious location indeed," Keith agreed with *Call Sign* as he recalled his January engagement at the Pall Mall venue when he was Toastmaster at the Financial Mail on Sunday Made in Britain awards.

Hosted by Lisa Buckingham OBE, Editor of the Financial Mail on Sunday, the event recognised companies in the SME (Small to Medium Enterprise) sector who had shown innovation and ideas for new business. These ranged from a company recycling plastic bottles, to one turning reclaimed waste liquid into bio-fuels through to a company manufacturing low energy LED lighting systems that

Keith's toastmastering reaches a new high!



Keith with Jim Cunningham (S88) after toastmastering at Jim's daughter's wedding

any of the entrants had ventured into the Dragon's Den, they would have had no problem at all securing funding!"

The eventual winner was the company producing the LED lighting

could be used for street illuminations and many other applications.

"I was in there with some very big players in the business world," Keith told this mag. "There was coalition Business Secretary Vince Cable, along with the Director General of the IOD, Simon Walker. They were joined by James Caan from BBC TV's *Dragon's Den*.

"Vince Cable made a short speech about business enterprise and what the government could do to help promote the entrepreneur succeed, while Mr Walker spoke about the vital role of SMEs in the national economy by providing many thousands of jobs for people.

"James Caan presented the awards, praising the exceptionally high standards of the competitors while at the same time remarking that if

system.

Keith ended by telling *Call Sign* that he wasn't nervous, but did feel excited and honoured to have been invited to preside at such an important occasion.












"I did my homework in preparation beforehand, of course, but being a Fellow of the Guild of Professional Toastmaster's, you learn these things!"

Keith has performed his toastmastering with several DaC drivers and his ad is in each issue of *Call Sign*. He still offers a discount to DaC drivers and staff who need the services of one of the top toastmasters...

Alan Green
Call Sign Online

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All you need to know about the 2012 DaC AGM

Sunday 3 February 2013 saw the 2012 Dial-a-Cab AGM held again at the HAC Barracks on City Road. What follows are not the official minutes, but an unofficial record of the meeting as captured by Call Sign Editor Alan Fisher. It is not a full record and neither should it be taken as including every word said or indeed the exact wording spoken. Some paragraph grammar has been sacrificed in order to make the report as compact as possible. Approximate attendance taken by Call Sign was 68, not including the BoM.

The meeting opened at 11.00 with Chairman **Brian Rice** asking for the traditional one-minute silence to remember those that had passed away during the previous 12 months. Approval was then requested and given for the presence of a sound engineer and two young ladies from DaC. The Chairman asked that those that had already voted by post should not vote again...

2011 Minutes

Minutes of the 2011 meeting were passed with 99.1% of the total membership voting in favour. There were no matters arising...

Annual Report including the Chairman's Report

There were no questions regarding the Chairman's Report within the Annual Report and the Report itself. They were passed with 98.7% of the membership voting in favour.

Auditor's report and reappointing Chantrey Vellacott



Mike Tovey spoke briefly concerning the Financial Report within the Annual Report. He said that it had been a very tough financial year and

that our turnover was down leaving us with a deficit of £150,000 compared to last year's surplus of £850,000, but added that the Society's reserves were strong at around £13million. He said the deficit

made a relatively small dent and that the balance sheet remained strong. He added that many commercial businesses would envy our position so far as strength was concerned from cash resources and asset base. He reiterated how tough times were but said that DaC was as well placed as any of the businesses that Chantrey Vellacott dealt with. Mike then asked for any questions.



First up was **Roy Hayden (L38)** who asked Mike whether the £13million reserves was cash in the bank? Mike responded that it referred to general assets including the building and that we had just under

£8million in actual cash at the bank.



Martin Freeborn (C67) was next up. He asked about drivers who had left over the past year, the income their departure had cost us and whether

there would be a subscription increase to make up any loss? Brian gave the numbers but added that the Board appreciated how tough conditions were out there and would not be increasing subs. He said that the Society had that £8million in the bank and added that we also had a building that "every developer out there seems to want to purchase!" The Chairman said that in his personal view, he would rather subsidise the subscriptions to their current levels out of our money at the bank. He reminded those present that we were a non-profit making organisation and why else would we build up such large deposits if they weren't for extenuating circumstances such as the way things were at present.

He also mentioned the cost of the new terminals that were currently out on test and how their depreciation worked. He said that on paper they would mean showing reduced figures over the next five years, but that we could well-afford the purchase. He also said that if too many drivers left it could produce coverage problems and that they were watching that aspect closely as there had been a few recent instances of coverage suffering.

Next to ask a question was **Laurence Kelvin (W88)** who suggested that one way



of increasing membership would be to ease the restriction on owner drivers only? Brian responded by saying that in order to

do that you would need a change of rules. They currently read that in order to join ODRTS, you need to own at least one taxi and no more than two. Whilst not dismissing the idea out of hand, Brian did remind those present that one of our selling points was that being owner drivers meant better maintained taxis. He said that if there were any future fleet cabs on DaC, we would have to be selective, bearing in mind no logos etc. That selectivity could apply to those people renting out taxis who we know well.

The Chairman went on to say that another way of raising money would be to look at those 116 drivers on DaC who only paid a nominal £1 per month and which cost the Society £180,000 in a full year. He said it was just a personal point of view but that he felt that given the current conditions, those on the 30 year+ rate should get a discounted rate but pay enough to provide funds to DaC.

Laurence came back and asked about those whose cabs were approaching the new age limit and who couldn't afford new ones and would have to rent. Would they have to leave? Brian said that if they rented straight after selling, then he felt something could be done to allow them to remain on DaC.



Pat Keefe (G01) then stepped up to the mic and claimed that when the £1 a month subs were given to long-serving members, Brian had said that it was for

life. Brian responded by saying that he'd have to check the minutes – adding that he too was a £1 a month member – but that his only desire was to protect the long-term interests of DaC. He said that even if those members paid half subs, that would produce an extra £90,000 per annum. Then if things improved, we could reduce it again. However, the Chairman did add that it was only being looked at and nothing had been decided.

It was **Martin Hizer (M47)** next and he asked what was being done to increase

All you need to know about the 2012 DaC AGM continued from previous page

usage of DaC by our clients, mentioning specifically no run-ins, capping gratuities and more fixed prices. He said that drivers on the new Apps were doing no run-in work and that we should follow. Brian responded that many of our gratuities were capped on bigger accounts but that he was "100% against no run-ins or gratuities" because it would lead to a loss of service. He said he didn't want to lose any accounts but that if we did, it was better to lose it on price rather than because our service wasn't up to scratch. He re-emphasised an earlier point that far from what Martin was saying, we were having a problem with coverage at certain times of the day citing in particular a trip on a Friday morning from SW11 to EC4. The job had a £5 run-in and £10 premium, but we still couldn't cover it! Martin then mentioned Hailo and how they covered no run-in work, but Brian came back to say that when they couldn't cover their work – which was either cash or credit card only - they told prospective customers to go to the nearest rank to catch a cab!

"Imagine what our account customers would say if we told them to do that as we had no cabs," said Brian! "It's a totally different ball game," he continued explaining that our customers were looking for good service. Martin interjected saying that account work was down, but Brian quickly came back to say that with no run-ins or gratuities we would struggle to cover work and our service would suffer. He pointed out that Hailo were covering work at less than minicab prices as Addison Lee were charging an £11 minimum while Hailo drivers were doing the jobs for £6, £7 or £8 with no run-ins. The Chairman added that yes, Hailo and co were taking work from Addison Lee, but they were also taking street work from cruising taxis. Passengers with Hailo now just wait at home for the same price as it is now cheaper than a minicab. And their drivers, in addition to taking work that we would have already had anyway, were also paying 10% for the privilege. Brian also spoke about ways in which we advertise our work and also about the new account App we were soon to begin using in addition to the DaC credit card



App that was already working well..

Graham Waite (B35) was the last driver in this section and he asked whether

the BoM had any contingency plan if things did not improve. He also asked what we did to try to stop drivers leaving. Brian explained the procedure and said there were drivers out there still doing really well and that was one reason why the BoM had spoken of, but rejected, the idea of paying subs on a per job basis. Some drivers would pay even more than they currently paid in subs.

The subject of blanket advertising came up, but Brian said that again non-coverage has proved that policy did not work in the past. He added though that all options were open.

To approve the Annual Report

This went through on a 98.7% majority.

To re-appoint Chantrey Vellacott as Society auditors

This went through on a 97.2% majority.

Board of Management elections

The next item on the agenda was the election of a new Board of Management to cover the next two years. Putting themselves forward were the outgoing BoM and one subscriber, **Garry White (L65)**.

The Chairman had already been returned unopposed and subscribers were invited to question the six members that were standing for the five remaining positions. Questions came from **Peter Bond (L67)**, who asked all the candidates about their views on the T attribute, while **Pat Keefe (G01)** questioned them on their views on Hailo and Apps. **Laurence Kelvin (W88)** asked if the outgoing Board could tell of any decisions they had personally been involved with that had later been adopted. **David Kupler (Y74)** asked about dispatching procedures while **Tony Sam-Yorke (W95)** asked about Apps. **Colin Jenkins (Y22)** asked what Board members did and **Jim Cunningham (S88)** queried why some of the



Board apparently did DaC work for nothing and perhaps they should be paid and do more. **Tony Sam-Yorke (W95)** was last up when paying his second visit asking whether the new terminals would make any difference to the way the Board worked...

Those few dri-



vers in the hall who had not already voted via postal balloting then did so. No one in the hall could have guessed of the

drama that was about to unfold and that those few drivers would probably decide the result.

As was the norm at DaC AGMs, *Any Other Business* commenced while the relatively small number of hall votes were counted and added to the huge majority of drivers that had already done so. Suddenly a member of the **Electoral Reform Services**, who are responsible for the count, came out and began whispering to Company Secretary **Howard Pears**.



ERS explains single vote result to Howard Pears



Brian tells drivers there is just one vote in it

Then having been given a sheet of paper with the results, DaC Chairman Brian Rice spoke and told the drivers that in all the years he had been on the Board, he had never known such a close vote and that there was just one vote between the bottom two candidates. After telling members that there had been two recounts following the initial count, Brian read out the votes.

They were: **Allan Evans (Y83)** 963 votes, **Keith Cain (Q07)** 798, **Mike Son (V52)** 737 and **Tom Whitbread (Q09)** 700. After reading out each name, the Chairman added the word "elected."

Everyone in the hall was now waiting for the next name! Then it came: **Garry White (L65)**, 685 votes – elected, **Allen Togwell (Q08)**, 684 votes – not elected.

There was an audible gasp from those present as drivers realised that **Allen**

All you need to know about the 2012 DaC AGM continued from previous page

Togwell, who had first been elected onto the BoM in 1986, had not been re-elected. As is the custom, Brian then invited



Garry White to take his place on the platform with the rest of the elected members. That meant that Allen Togwell had to give up his seat – which he graciously did with due speed and walked towards the door. There was some applause, which gradually grew in volume until every single person was on their feet giving someone who had given so many years to the Society, a deserved standing ovation that lasted a full two minutes. A surprised looking Allen Togwell smiled and acknowledged the tribute before walking through the door.

Any Other Business

Stuart Cameron (R31) was first up. He asked Brian about the Chairman's earlier comments regarding allowing those drivers who have been

with the Society for over thirty years to pay just a nominal £1 per month. He was approaching the 30 year mark and said that these drivers were those who stuck with the Society when things were very bad and who never complained when we went to data with its initial problems. He said that staff got a form of recognition after being with DaC for various numbers of years and that our 30 year subs reduction was the driver's recognition and he hoped the BoM would keep it as it was. To laughter all round, Stuart joked that he would accept a *Rolex* watch instead!



Ray Sorene (A53) spoke about the new credit card App and suggested that destinations should be given. Brian came back and said that experience showed that

As Directed trips were covered quicker than those where the destination was revealed – not every single time, but in the majority of cases. The Chairman added that dispatchers were told to do everything they could to cover trips, bar unmasking the destinations. Ray also asked about the likelihood of him being one of the first drivers to get a new terminal bearing in mind that his cab had just one more year left. To laughter – including

from Ray - Brian said the new terminal was probably worth more than Ray's cab and that his request was "unlikely!"

Pat Keefe (G01) continued in the same vein as Ray regarding credit card trips. He queried why back-up zones didn't have trips unmasked and Brian said that drivers would then book into back-up zones to find out where jobs were going to. Pat said that it was unfair to expect drivers in the suburbs to run miles to cover a job where they didn't know the destination. The Chairman said that no one would ever be forced to cover a trip where they were running further than the distance the trip was going to. He reiterated that unmasking trips affected coverage and while he accepted everything Pat was saying, the system would not be changed unless there was a proposition put forward at an AGM, but he believed that any such proposition would be detrimental to our business.



As the meeting entered its third hour, **David Kупler (Y74)** also spoke about credit trips that were called *As Directed* and suggested that all trips called in the primary zone should be unmasked, but that if you rejected it then you would have to go to the back of the zone – in other words no rejects. The Chairman slightly backed down from his previous stance saying that it could be done but then gave an example of a quiet mid-afternoon trip coming out where the driver had waited some time and it was only going locally. He said that drivers would scream blue murder whilst David insisted that the coverage would be really good and compared it to responding to a street hail which was always *As Directed* and that unless the prospective passenger was drunk, he would take them wherever they wanted to go.



ideas, suggestions involving such a major change that could affect coverage had to be looked at very carefully. He said his main concern was that some drivers knew the pick-up points and rejected on that basis. He spoke of an unidentified driver who came out at 4am and by 9am had been offered thirty trips and rejected all thirty! Keith said that he would never dismiss any suggestion that David put for-

ward and David asked if a vote to get driver's views in the hall could be taken. The majority voted against the suggestion.

The announcement about the election then followed and Brian spoke of his gratitude to Allen Togwell who he said had always supported him.

Dennis Heavin with the prestigious call sign of A01 then spoke. He began by congratulating **Garry White** on his election but commiserated with **Allen Togwell**, whom he said he hadn't always seen eye to eye with but whom he said had done a great job over the



years. Dennis then directed his comments to Keith Cain and asked that dispatchers should take a leaf out of former dispatcher **Gary Gates** book who, when it was busy, sent a constant stream of messages out about where and when jobs were and pleading for them to be covered rather than just a general 'please cover work' message. Dennis admitted that some drivers didn't like Gary's constant messages, but he considered that they worked. Keith said that he had not said anything about fewer messages going out and said that he would speak to controllers about putting out more specific messages where needed. As an example, Dennis pointed out how often drivers would have been in a south London zone making their way back north when a trip would come out where they had been earlier, but which didn't then get covered. He said that a message that a trip was shooting out in Wandsworth or wherever in 10 minutes could solve the problem. Keith confirmed that he would speak to controllers.



John Davis (V41) picked up on Dennis Heavin's point when saying that night dispatcher **Dave Ivers** told him several years ago that drivers

had complained about him putting out too many messages. Brian confirmed what Keith had said that they encouraged dispatchers / controllers to do everything they could to cover work and added that both he and Keith received a daily report on every single ride that hadn't been covered and they would then check to make sure that everything possible had been done to try to cover that trip.

Dennis Heavin (A01) then came back and spoke about the possibility of a driver's App with drivers paying a commission per accepted job with Dennis suggesting 5%. Brian said that he had

All you need to know about the 2012 DaC AGM *continued from previous page*

written about the possibility in his last *Call Sign* report, but added that there could be the problems of outside drivers turning up with their taxis covered in ads! Neither did he want drivers on other circuits with their logo on display going round to one of our clients because we couldn't cover it. He said that DaC could do it but it would have to come from drivers proposing a rule change because some of those using the App would obviously have to be associate members rather than full members of DaC. You would then be diluting the work, but if it appeared that drivers wanted it then a postal vote could be put into motion. Putting a driver App into motion very quickly would be no problem should drivers want it. Dennis thought it would be a good idea provided the system operated on GPS. Brian confirmed that DaC now had the ability on our new O2 system to go to GPS and that the Board were in favour of going that way. It would involve a big change but that going GPS would probably be the next step.

Dennis also asked that the DaC Marshals should be recognised somehow for the sterling work they do, sometimes in the face of adversity, while always representing DaC with complete professionalism.

Stuart Cameron (R31) then returned to the mic and also spoke about a drivers DaC App and asked about who would be allowed to join if it wasn't just for DaC drivers. He was concerned about non-members letting the real DaC drivers down. Brian confirmed that nothing was definite and only the drivers could decide and also added that non-DaC drivers would only be able to do cash work with just DaC drivers being able to cover account work. Stuart asked whether it might be an idea to give it a totally different name from Dial-a-Cab with the Society just pocketing any profits. Brian said it was worth looking at the suggestion.



Peter Bond (L67) was next and began by saying that he didn't always agree with **Allen Togwell** but was sad to see him go. He asked whether the Society could still utilise his graphic talents for the End-of-the-Year report and other things he did. Brian agreed that it would be a shame to lose his talent and the BoM could ask him to do some projects with a negotiated fee.

Peter also spoke about the 30 year rule

and said that perhaps those already on it should stay on it, whereas after a given time new entrants approaching 30 years could get half subs. Brian said that the Board were only looking at ways of saving money and had come to no conclusions yet, but added that if those drivers currently paying £1 a month paid half subs instead, that would gain the Society £90,000 and that was the equivalent of gaining a £1million account.

Brian then gave a brief update on the new terminals and explained that *Call Sign's Alan Green (E52)* was testing the first one with a few other drivers about to join him. Then between 50 and 100 drivers will be fitted and it would have to be seen whether it ran ok as they would be on O2 whereas the rest of the fleet would still be on our own PMR (Professional Mobile Radio) network. It was in DaC's interest to transport everyone onto the O2 network as soon as possible as it would save up to £250,000 a year. But the BoM wanted to get as many teething problems out of the way as possible before going over *en masse*. He also explained how it would work for drivers, explaining that if you were offered a trip and you were perhaps in an area you were unsure of, you would just push a 'take me in' button and the terminal would guide you into the pick-up. The terminal would, should you need it, guide you to your destination but Brian didn't think that DaC drivers would be using that too often! But the system actually draws you a line showing you the route, which is very useful when out in the "sticks."

David Kupler (Y74) then asked if the new terminal had been tested on a Metrocab yet and volunteered his cab.



Rob Roney (C14) then also spoke on the 30 year subs debate and a time when his engine blew up so that he had to become a journeyman for a period of several months. He was concerned about his own qualifications for the 30 year discount as he had never left the Society. Brian explained the rule and said they would look into Rob's case. It all depended on whether the driver's share had been returned and if it has been, then that counts as broken service. But if they became a journeyman during the period between owning their own cabs and kept their share, then their service would be considered as being unbroken.

John Davis (V41) was the last to speak and brought up the situation with the HoC account. We had lost the account to a minicab firm, but their service was so



poor that we had been asked to recover it in its entirety again. However, currently there is no contract. John ended by thanking **Tom Whitbread** for providing theatre tickets throughout the year – the yes's that filled the room showed that others agreed with John...

The meeting ended at 2pm...

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

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LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE



Ireland won... and lost!

Born in the fifties, raised at home in the sixties and early seventies, I was always aware of how my parents' Irish accent could bring out different

reactions, depending on the education of the respondent we faced - the obvious comments being thick, a navvy, Gypo or even terrorist amongst many other stereotypes.

However, through the passage of time we have seen a major sea change. In 2009, the Irish accent won the sexiest in cinema film, knocking the French off their long-time pedestal, due mainly to the quality of acting from **Daniel Day-Lewis**, **Colin Farrell** and **Liam Neeson** amongst many others.

A recent poll by **RoxyPalace.com** asked 1000 people for their most popular accent. The Irish accent came out on top with a quarter of the votes! Unfortunately for me, the Essex accent - which I seem to lean towards - came out lowest with just one percent!

Women were particularly keen with many saying they enjoyed listening to the words of singer **Danny O' Donoghue** and **Niall Horan** of *One Direction*, **Ronan Keating** and *Westlife*. Many will remember in days of old, the only Irish voices on TV were **Eamonn Andrews**, **Val**

With Tom Quigley (Y33)

Doonican and **Dave Allen**.

Nowadays it seems that the Irish are everywhere on TV with **Graham Norton**, **Sir Terry Wogan** and **Eamonn Holmes** - and even if not actually born in Ireland, the next generation of primetime Saturday Evening TV presenters keep throwing up the names of **Dermott O'Leary**, **Paddy McGuinness**, **Paul O'Grady**, great London actress and regular taxi user, **Barbara Windsor**, **Anthony McPartlin** and **Declan Donnelly** - better known as **Ant and Dec**! Then there were the American Presidents, **Kennedy**, **Clinton** and **Barack Obama** all of whom have their roots in Ireland. Yet for some reason, there is no resident Irish family in **EastEnders**, despite a cast having contained a **McFadden**, a **McCutcheon**, a **Ritchie** and many other Irish surnames. And having lived in London all my life, the *Queen Vic* must be the only pub without an Irish presence in it, not even an Irish landlord.

But these success stories seem to have come at a price to Ireland. There was a massive outcry recently when it was revealed that the second language spoken in England was Polish - but at least English was still the most popular! A similar poll in Ireland revealed that the most common language spoken in Ireland was English, Second was Polish and the Irish Language of Gaelic coming third!

Only in Ireland can you come first and third...!

Traffic light... stop... tweet... stop... text... stop...

When we first learned to drive, one of the most important things we were taught was not to jump a red light or to be too quick away from a red light; this was in case there was a cyclist, pedestrian or other vehicle doing the same at the set of lights running across the other way.

This now seems to have changed given that the most common form of car accident is a rear end shunt, resulting in whiplash being the top claim from such accidents.

It also appears that the most dangerous thing to look out for is the driver in front who does not want to go through the lights, as a red light deems them an opportunity to stop and do some form of social media messaging ie *Twitter*, *Facebook*, text or to make a call! How often do you stop behind someone who does that or starts typing into their SatNav?

The average text message for most people (not the Editor) takes 9 seconds with an average person (again not the Editor) sending 80 texts a day. *Ed's note: What are you suggesting!*

You can see why they need to stop at the lights and I have finally seen the benefit of the American style *Countdown* clocks at traffic lights set on normal one minute countdowns, as it gives them the opportunity to send 6½ messages...!

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

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Winner 2010

Winner 2011

As he prepares to leave Dial-a-Cab after almost 34 years and 47 years as a driver, this must be...

Allen Togwell's Goodbye

To all you members who voted for me this year and over the past 25 years, I would like to say a big thank you. It was an honour and a privilege to serve you all. I say that because you not only appreciated the work that I did, but you didn't abandon me simply because of my views on drivers appearance and image, which I honestly believed and still believe is an issue that seriously needs addressing if the cab trade is to compete with private hire.

When I first came into the trade, there were very few mushers. The majority of drivers drove for garages and worked on the clock. We didn't directly pay for anything. We just collected a cab that was filled with fuel, made a note of the units on the clock and at the end of the shift calculated the units and paid the garage what was owed, which with tips was more or less 50/50 of your earnings. The state of the cabs at the garage I worked for, which was typical of most garages particularly in the winter, were so bad that when I collected the cab each day, I was forced to wear overalls, a pair of marigolds and galoshes! Then for the first half hour I would clean the outside, then the inside and when finished I would douse the whole cab with air freshener to kill the smell of gunk and diesel. When finished, I'd remove the overalls which I wore to prevent my suit, shirt and tie that I always wore, from getting dirty.

The reason I mention the above was because the state of that cab was common, including heaters that didn't work and gaps in the well of the driver's section that would let in the rain - hence the galoshes! And because of this, the vast majority of cab drivers dressed to accommodate these conditions and it was perfectly acceptable. That was why the epitome of a cab drivers dress was cloth cap and muffler, having earlier applied to the horse drawn hackney carriage.

Forty odd years on, practically every cab driver is a musher and the cabs they drive have advanced in style and comfort equal to that of top of the range cars. And yet the majority of drivers have done very little, if anything, to improve their own image. I'm not saying all, but unfortunately enough to create a generalisation. I think most licensed cab drivers - me included - have an inbred dislike to the point of hatred of private hire companies and their drivers. Mine goes even deeper, because I was constantly hearing the managers, directors and senior staff of companies I visited in the hope of getting their account, praise these minicab drivers for the way they were smartly dressed compared to the unshaven scruffy rude black cab drivers! As for minicab drivers not being rude, that was mainly due to the fact that most could hardly speak a damn word of English!

In last month's *Call Sign*, Mr Levene (W32) accused me of not just having a bee in my bonnet, but a complete beehive over



my attitude towards driver's appearance. I don't have a bee in my bonnet, it's the frustration of hearing cab drivers forever whinge at the work they are losing to the PH but do absolutely nothing to prevent. I don't know Mr Levene, but I find it hard to believe that he doesn't know anything about selling. So on the assumption that he doesn't, then I need to enlighten him a little, that when selling a product - particularly a non-tangible product like the service industry - in a very competitive market and especially a service with costs practically set in stone as is our meter, run-ins, waiting time and gratuity, then quality of any description is all we have to offer.

There have been times when out looking for a cab, I would hail one of our cabs to take me back to the office and on the odd occasion I'd find myself praising the driver for the spotlessly clean cab and his smartness, I would sit back and dream of what I could do, marketing wise, if we had a whole fleet of drivers and cabs in that condition. I guarantee I could get an advertorial in the centre spread of the *Evening Standard* for free. And if Mr Levene doesn't know what an advertorial is, it's an advertisement that is written and presented in the style of a journalistic report.

The feedback from that advertorial - even if we did have to pay for it ourselves - would be

priceless. Not just in the work it would generate, but it would also do wonders for the **Dial-a-Cab** image. But that of course is my opinion and incidentally an opinion of someone who has been in sales for over 50 years and a *Fellow* of the **Institute of Direct Marketing** for the past 20 years. Perhaps Mr Levene would agree with a former senior well respected Board member who 27 years ago offered me some advice when I first joined the BoM. He told me:

"Allen, if you want to remain on the Board, don't upset the members, tell them anything so long as it makes them happy. Treat them like spoilt petulant children."

I refused and subsequently became unpopular and have remained unpopular ever since. I'm surprised I lasted so long! But to be perfectly honest, it has been a great experience and especially the period when Dial-a-Cab was on the very edge of going bankrupt and I played a major role in getting the Society back on track, then years later seeing the Society end up in a plush new building with £millions in the bank.

I sincerely hope every one of you appreciates being a shareholder of a Society that has survived such tough times and will do your part in putting Dial-a-Cab back up to a level where it was when I first joined when there was an 18 month waiting list for new members.

You can start by ignoring the **reject** button and covering the work. And possibly - just possibly - having a second look in the mirror before leaving for work and asking yourself if that is really the best you can look to represent the last remaining taxi drivers co-operative in London?

Finally, may I take this opportunity of wishing all of you and your families a prosperous future and above all good health.

Be Lucky

Allen Togwell (ex-W45 and ex-Q08)

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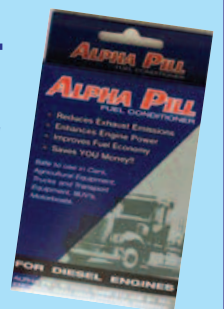
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Views on life as seen through the eyes of David Kupke (Y74) at...

Kupkake's Korner



Who plans for the planners?

Westminster or Camden

I'm not sure which,
have strange ideas
about Aldwych!

They plan for BAFTAS
a year in advance,
held in the Theatre
of the ballet dance...

So close to Soho
and China Town
roadworks and diversions
all abound.

Where tourists come
from all around
to see and hear
the Chinese sound
of Dragon dancers
and the clowns
in the rain
that's pouring down!

Traffic builds
while Police frown
drivers pour in
from out of town
looking for parking
that can't be found!

Total gridlock
but that's not all
buses form
a mile long wall.
Along the Strand
down to the Mall,
each almost empty -
not one full!

I've got the answer
It's an easy call,
hold the BAFTAS
in the Albert Hall!
Tons of parking
in the Park
Limos silent in the dark..

For London to move
without a hitch,
Take the BAFTAS from
Aldwych...

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MY CHEAP OVERHAUL...

"I'm well pleased," Tom Burns (R98) told **Call Sign** when we met as he handed in his most recent taxi Proprietor licence to Jackie in Driver Services – a yearly subscriber responsibility that allows **Dial-a-Cab** to keep its records updated.



"True, I cover just about 10,000 miles

a year nowadays as I've eased up a bit work-wise and live near the Barbican, which obviously saves mileage travelling in from the suburbs. But I'm still very satisfied with the result of a £530 overhaul including VAT for a six year old cab!" Tom grinned, proudly waving his service receipt from **Hexagon Taxis** in Lukin Street E1.

"The most expensive item was the bodywork repair to the nearside door, where I caught it squeezing into my garage. Just a moment's lack of concentration and... bash," he motioned with a closed fist into the palm of his free hand!

"I've been driving many years, 36 of them on DaC, and I have a theory that if you look after the cab, the cab will look after you - certainly in terms of reliability. So I have my cab serviced regularly on a time basis, not mileage, because of my reduced workload and it seems to work for me as I've needed the minimum work done to the cab for this overhaul."

With all those years of DaC history under his belt, Tom recalled our old Shirland Road days and some of the larger-than-life characters who made the place buzz.

"I remember John Saunders, Dennis Samuels, Ivor Belkin and his colleague Lou Gitlin who dispatched jobs via our voice channels. And there was somebody whose name escapes me at present, but if he couldn't cover a trip, he would entice drivers with the promise of 'a Blue Peter' badge!" A smile came over Tom's face at the memory!

"Having finally coaxed a driver to cover the trip, he would say 'go to the back channel, get your journey details and collect your Blue Peter badge! Yes, those were the days!'"

Does anybody out there remember this dispatcher's name? Send answers to **Call Sign** at the usual address please. No prize, just some peace of mind for a happy driver!

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

Call Sign

March 2013

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An open letter to the trade from The LTC

From Peter Johansen, Executive Vice-President The London Taxi Corporation Ltd

I wanted to write this letter as an introduction, not only for myself, but also for our new company. Geely have appointed me as the Executive Vice President of UK operations, so my focus is solely on **The London Taxi Company**. I am relatively new to the industry but I hope to bring a new approach to how we operate and interact with our customers and stakeholders.

Firstly, I would like to say that I am sorry that the sudden collapse of Manganese Bronze Holdings may have caused you inconvenience and financial loss. The last few months have been a huge trial for all parties concerned and I want to take this opportunity to say a big thank you for the support you have shown to us over the difficult recent past. I would like to thank everyone who has supported us; from our customers, to trade bodies, unions and organisations across the UK. Thank you also to our partners, suppliers and staff who continued to work diligently with very limited resources through these uncertain times.

In return for your loyalty and forbearance, we want to repay our gratitude to you through improved service delivery and products.

Last but not least, I'd like to thank Geely, not just for their pledges as new owners to invest in and develop The London Taxi Company brand and products, but also for their unwavering support over the last few years. They also share our vision for The London Taxi Company to be recognised as the leading global provider of purpose-built taxis, on a sustainable, profitable business model.

We have a lot of hard work and challenges ahead of us in order to re-establish ourselves and to win back your much needed trust and respect. I believe that our very first step is to express the trust and respect that we have for our customers and the industry as a whole. We can only truly do that by demonstrating our focus on customers and quality in everything that we do from this point forward.

With that in mind, I'd like to give you an update on the progress we've made so far, so please read on.

RETAIL:

- London, Manchester and Coventry dealerships are now fully open for retail and trade vehicle sales, servicing, warranty and parts sales
- The Black Horse Taxi Finance team are back still providing the best finance for drivers

PRICES:

- We are pleased to confirm that we have absorbed costs increases on improving the quality of parts and components, and have therefore been able to hold the 'on the road' price for all models

WARRANTY:

- All existing manufacturer warranties and guarantees for previously purchased vehicles are now fully reinstated
- New vehicles purchased from now on will also have 3-year, 100,000 mile warranty cover and our 3-year, unlimited mileage Core Engine warranty
- Used vehicles will be quality checked through our Approved Used Programme and will be covered by a 12-month, 50,000 mile Guarantee



PRODUCT QUALITY:

- All stock vehicles have been fitted with new steering boxes; we have also taken the opportunity to address some other product issues to ensure that vehicles sold going forward are the best possible quality

APPROVED SERVICE DEALERS:

- Approved Service Dealers are crucial to our success and we are working with the network to reinstate as many as possible - call **02476 572008** to find your nearest one

Actions speak louder than words and we are going to focus on demonstrating our passion and commitment to the trade through improvements in customer satisfaction and product quality.

We believe that the future of this business depends on these fundamental principles.

Peter Johansen
Executive Vice-President
The London Taxi Corporation Ltd
t/a The London Taxi Company

TALK TO PETER: Email peter@london-taxis.co.uk or leave him a message with the Customer Contact Centre team on **02476 572008**.



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London tourist guide and taxi driver, Bob Woodford, on everything you always wanted to know about London...

BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!

Do you ever cruise west along Piccadilly, paying careful attention just after the **Ritz** in case there might be an airport ride on account of the tube playing up - but you only get off to Paddington? Yeah, I've got that T-shirt too!

Green Park Station opened as **Dover Street Station** in 1906 and changed its name when the station was rebuilt in 1933 - the new sub-surface ticket hall was built a little further west from the original station entrance, where *Caffè Nero* is now, beneath Piccadilly.

The station was the scene of tragedy in 1975, as some of you will recall, when the IRA detonated a bomb in a bus stop dustbin, which killed 23-year old **Graham Tuck**. **Al Guenther** and his family from Cleveland, Ohio, were enjoying a drink in the bar in the Ritz when the bomb exploded and the blast shattered glass all around them. Guenther brushed himself down and told reporters:

"The last time I stayed at the Ritz, V2's were coming over. It doesn't seem to have changed!"

The recently refurbished Olympic station cost £60m - maybe you were lucky enough to have tickets for the Triathlon event which took place just up in Hyde Park - or maybe you were VERY lucky enough to have tickets for the Beach Volleyball just over at nearby Horse Guards!

The Ritz was founded by a Swiss national by the name of **Cesar Ritz**. He was upset at being fired as General Manager of the **Savoy Hotel** and a few years later opened the Ritz to rival the Savoy. The Architect was **Charles Mewes** - who also designed the Ritz Hotel in Paris - which is of course where the late **Diana, Princess of Wales** dined shortly before her death 30th August 1997. Is it really that long ago?

So, why is Green Park called *Green*? One story is that **Charles II** would quite often come into the park to pick some flowers to take to one of his many mistresses. But his Queen, **Catherine of Braganza**, got to hear about it, went berserk and ordered all the flowers to be removed from the park!

Talking about Charles II, he and his brother **James, Duke of York** used to go strolling about in Green Park (known as **Upper St. James's Park** back then) and one day Jimmy said to Charlie: **"You shouldn't be swanning about in the open like this, someone might bump you off!"**

To which Chas replied: **"I wouldn't worry about that, nobody is going to assassinate me, otherwise they will end up with you as King!"**

James II acceded to the throne upon his brother's death in 1685 - our last Catholic monarch felt the 'wind of change' coming with Protestant **William III** and **Mary II** setting sail from the Netherlands - James was last seen scarpering down the **Old Kent Road**!

By the way, Charles II used to go for a daily walk around Green Park, what he would call his 'daily constitution' - and that is why we get **Constitution Hill**. I checked out a map of the area dated 1730 the other day - Constitution Hill was simply called **'Road to Kensington'**!

Green Park in Victorian times was a haunt for **prostitutes** - but it wasn't 'fanny by gaslight' - they operated in the shadows



The now departed Dover Street station

so as not to expose the ravages of time, the defects of their personal appearance and the shabbiness of their dilapidated attire. Far from being slender beauties and willing whores, these women were so brutalised by alcohol and disease that parks were the only venues left for them to operate in.

Going back to the subject of the tube; I do think it's a bit rich that **Transport for**

London are celebrating '150 years of the tube'. The 'underground' wasn't called 'the tube' until the 1890s when the deep level **City & South London** line (now the **Northern Line**) was constructed. Up until then the lines were built using a very shallow 'cut and cover' method - the steam trains were only just below the road surface. They also had 'blow holes' that allowed trains to vent off now and again - and ladies needed to avoid these when crossing roads - skirts would often fly up giving the guys a treat!

Keep your eyes on the road fellas!

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online



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Since the AGM when Chairman Brian Rice announced I had been invited to road test one of the very first of our new generation of in-cab terminals, *Call Sign's* Editor, Alan Fisher asked if I could write a report of my impressions so far on our upcoming new work tool. So, putting my camera down and picking my pencil up, here goes!

Firstly, let me say that mine is a *Beta* (pre-production) version and is constantly being monitored for performance and tweaked as necessary based on my own observations and suggestions as a working taxi driver. It is also subject to a rigorous testing regime from those clever whizz-kids in the *Dial-a-Cab* IT department.

My regime is usually to give feedback twice a day on how the new terminal is behaving, with any suggestions I have being noted either for immediate action, or logged for possible future changes as subsequent software versions are brought online.

That said, the Terminal has continued to work admirably over the several weeks I have used it. The screen graphics are excellent, the information regarding queue position, zone information and mapping are good, while the SatNav facility is comprehensive - but more of that later.

To my amazement, the signal strength weakened only in the very depths of the *Limehouse Link* tunnel and like most other times when phone signals dip, the system recovers almost immediately - usually instantaneously. There is a screen icon that rotates like a windmill, telling you what the MDT is doing - locked onto the cellular network, trying to locate the network or sending a message etc.

There are various bell sounds alerting you to trip offers or messages and the screen flashes insistently to draw your attention; this is particularly useful if the bell volume is set on low.

The touch screen is easy to read and requires only the lightest, yet positive touch to operate and asks you twice - ie 2 taps - to confirm your action.

The printer, in the same position as at present, is much faster and quieter than the current one.

The map is easily accessed with the single press of a button, can be viewed immediately

Call Sign's Alan Green (E52) was asked to road test the first of DaC's new terminals...

CALL SIGN TESTS THE NEW MDT

and is extremely clear to read.

Alongside that button is the SatNav activation with the usual comprehensive array of choices. Mine has a female voice whom I have dubbed *Lady Penelope* as her directions sound almost instructional and I jokingly often reply with a quiet "Yes M'Lady!" Me a *Thunderbirds* addict? Oh please, don't be ridiculous. Hmm, I wonder if there's a *Parker* voice...

There are numerous buttons on the screens that are at present disabled, but as further software versions come on stream, these will become active, widening the ability of the MDT to achieve even more and allowing for future development and capacity of the system.

I have been made aware that there are apparently - and seemingly as usual - the doom and gloom brigade out there who have already offered negative opinions on this technological leap forward for our Society. As I was at one time the only driver to actually be *working* the system, I fail to see how anyone else is qualified to offer an authoritative comment on the success or otherwise of this new technology!

I did ask if there would be a software program incorporated that could brew a coffee while waiting for the passenger to come out and was sternly told that HR claimed it was a *Health & Safety* issue and that anyway I should not be drinking and driving!



Alan Green gives a 'thumbs up' to the new terminal

And the sunshine reflection problem of the old terminal? Well if the sun shines brightly, it's never going to be perfect but with its non-reflective glass, it is certainly much improved on the old one with the option of a shaded clip-on screen soon to become available, which I think should get rid of any problem altogether.

So in my humble opinion, the new Terminal and the technology behind it will offer our Society great potential for the future.

Finally, I would like to thank the powers that be for allowing me to pioneer this testing/trial project and look forward to using the fully active system in the near future.

Alan Green
Call Sign Online

Lovely Lilah!

Hello Mr Editor,

My name is Lilah Jane Hayes. My mum is Stacey who works in the Contact Centre and my dad Lee, well, he just works to keep my seven year old big brother Bobby and me in the comfort we expect! Oh yes, I was born on November 8 2012 at Queens Hospital in Romford at the sensible hour of ten minutes after five in the late afternoon and weighing in at a nice 6lbs 8oz.

My Grandparents Jane and Bob Bower together with Kim and Tom Hayes think I'm the bee's knees and, like the rest of the family, make a big fuss of me. Grandma Jane also works at *Dial-a-Cab*, so I already feel a part of the wider DaC family and considering asking Brian Rice for a position!

I asked mum if I could see her workplace and maybe suggest some improvements, a woman's touch etc, and that's when my problem started. You see, people began leaving their positions to give me a cuddle and a coo coo and I kinda got carried away smiling and stuff. I overheard something about disrupting the smooth running of the Contact Centre, so I beat a quick retreat downstairs!

I mean, I can't help it if I'm cute and cuddly can I? So please have a word with the Boss on the top floor because I might like to visit again in the future!

Yours with a dribble,
Lilah



Lilah and mum Stacey

On Sunday 3rd February, my day started early. As a cab driver who works nights, I got up when I normally go to bed, walked the dog and then started to think about the day ahead with excitement and trepidation knowing that my fate lay in the hands of the membership of **Dial-a-Cab**. Would I get enough of the votes needed?

On arriving at HAC City Road, I felt good and composed with my thoughts about the AGM that was now only 40 minutes away from starting. I met **Alan Fisher** for the first time and we had a brief conversation. I also spoke to a few drivers whom I hadn't met before and then it was time for the AGM to start.

I thought it started off well with some interesting questions coming from the floor. I was the first to speak about why I wanted to join the Board, which I appreciated. Then I listened with interest to the Board giving their reasons for staying in their position. On a few occasions I was asked to go back up and answer questions from members. By then we were getting very close to voting time, therefore the members in the room who hadn't already casted a postal vote were then asked to make their decision on what they had heard from the Board and me as a prospective candidate. The AGM then progressed onto *Any Other Business*.

Chairman **Brian Rice** was then given the vote to read out and did so in no particular order. There was just one place left on the

I HAVEN'T STOPPED SMILING YET!

Garry White's first column as a DaC Board Member

Board for the Chairman to announce and he said that this was unprecedented. He stated that the remaining Board Member's place had gone down to just one vote between the two remaining candidates. He didn't prolong the wait, but said my name swiftly. The smile quickly spread across my face and I got a few handshakes and pats on the back from fellow members.

I just can't express enough how honoured I feel having received enough support to become a Board Member.

Allen Togwell acted most gracefully and left the top table and I was asked to join the Board. I was still smiling as I walked up! I would like to personally thank Allen Togwell for the years he has served as a Board Member and wish him all the best for the future.

I would also like to thank the members who helped me in my campaign to join the Board, giving out flyers and bestowing my virtues by word of mouth. I'm looking forward to work-



Garry smiles as he takes his place with the Board!

ing with the Chairman, the other Board Members and reporting to you, the members, with my progress as I get to know the staff and the workings of Dial-a-Cab House.

So thank you once again for voting for me, I still haven't stopped smiling...

Garry White (L65)
DaC Board Member

TAXI FARE INCREASE

Transport for London has agreed a below inflation taxi fare increase for the coming financial year. The **1.7%** average increase is the lowest in the decade that TfL has been licensing taxis and seeks a balance between maintaining income levels for drivers while ensuring passengers still get a fair price for the high quality and unique service provided by the capital's taxi drivers.

This year both fuel prices and operating costs have increased, raising the costs associated with driving a taxi. The Board approved the new fares following consultation by TfL with the taxi trade and others including **London TravelWatch, Age UK, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, London Boroughs, London Assembly** and **London MPs**.

John Mason, TfL's Director of Taxi and Private Hire, said: "Taxi fares are reviewed annually and in making a recommendation we take into account a range of factors that include taxi drivers' running costs including vehicle costs, parts and fuel. This year's increase is the lowest for ten years and seeks to cover increases in the cost of running a black cab while continuing to provide passengers with value for money."

The Board also approved changes to taxi fares for journeys starting at Heathrow and the extension of a special provision linked to diesel prices. To help compensate the upfront charge that drivers have to pay when entering the Heathrow feeder ranks, which is increasing in April, an additional charge known as the 'Heathrow Extra' is added to passenger's Heathrow fares. This 'Heathrow Extra' will increase by 80 pence, taking it from £2.40 to £3.20.

Since July 2008 a special provision has been in place to allow taxi fares to be increased if diesel costs reach a specified level. To date this provision has not been implemented. The Board approved an extension of this provision for the coming year. Therefore a 40 pence increase to all taxi fares will be implemented if diesel reaches 179.7 pence per litre.

A final change will see the automation of the £4.00 charge added to fares over the festive period (20:00 on 24 December to 06:00 on 27 December and 20:00 on 31 December to 06:00 on 2 January) – previously this set charge was added manually by the driver.

Taxi fares are reviewed annually and calculated by TfL based on a cost index that has been used since 1981. The new fares will come into effect from Saturday 6 April 2013.

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Question: What do Alan Lewis (A44) and Bill Tyzack (C06) have in common?

Answer: They are the only two drivers left on **Dial-a-Cab** from the days of ODRTS Chairman, **Eli (Trixie) Solomons** – whose ‘reign’ lasted from 1959 until 1962.

But the two recently became one when Bill Tyzack announced that at the young age of 85, he was retiring from his ‘day’ job of driving a taxi, mainly through health problems. Bill stressed that his charity work will continue – he has been the honorary Life president of the LTFUC since 2002. In 1987 he accepted a BEM at Buckingham Palace in honour of his charity work.

Bill arrived at the ODRTS offices in **Pentonville Road** on **19 September 1962**, just three weeks after Alan Lewis. Third in line, Ray Sorene, is a relative newcomer, not having signed up until 9 July 1969!

Bill first became interested in the children’s fund when along with wife Grace, he was invited to go on a children’s outing to Southend in the early sixties. The outings had been running since 1928, thanks to the hard work of previous committees; however Bill felt that they could be improved and so began a relationship that started when he was invited to join the committee serving as Assistant Secretary and then becoming Secretary.

The Committee started running stag nights – drivers that remember those probably still feel too embarrassed to admit it - and various other functions at places such as the Royal Garden Hotel and the Lyceum. Some of these functions drew up to 900 guests and took much organising. But Bill was around...!

Bill then became Vice Chairman and eventually the Fund’s Hon Chairman and along with his fellow committee members and their

Bill Tyzack calls it a day!



Bill and wife Grace

Frank Duncan, Jack Russell, Jack Taylor, Martin Gellman, Peter Fennymore, Phil Messias, Ken Burns, Aubrey Siteman and of course **Brian Rice**. And they always assisted when anything was needed by the LTFUC. I offer my sincere thanks to them all.”

Bill was also honoured in 1984 when he was awarded a **Community Involvement Award** by the **International**

Taxicab Association – nowadays known as the prestigious **Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association** – for his work on behalf of the LTFUC. Bill told *Call Sign* at the time that he was accepting the award on behalf of the whole LTFUC committee – many of whom were on DaC. He refused to accept that he was any more or less important than any other committee member.

The presenters of the award finished by saying that not only was Bill Tyzack a good cab driver and an outstanding community servant, he was one of the world’s finest ambassadors of the taxi industry!

How can we argue with that! Our best wishes to Bill and Grace for a long and happy retirement...

wives, helped organise the first Fund trips abroad. In addition, there were the first Woburn outings for deaf children and the wonderful Christmas parties at the Grosvenor House for needy children that have now been running for 40 years.

You only have to see Bill working at one of the functions to know how important the Fund is to him. However, he is always happy to help other charities get started and has indeed done so on many occasions.

He is also passionate about his time with DaC: “I have never wanted to work with any other circuit and have some wonderful memories of my time with the Society. I have been privileged to work under the Chairmanship of every DaC Chairman other than our founder, **Bonnie Martyn**. That takes in names such as

Another true story from Geoff Levene...

THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF MY LIFE!

A couple stopped me in Baker Street the other day.

“We’d like to go to Lonsdale Road NW6,” the man said. **“Do you know it?”**

I smiled, told him that I did and suddenly it wasn’t a miserable day in February any more, but a brilliantly sunny day in early October 1971...

I no longer remember how I got from my Mum’s place in Neasden to a house off Hale Lane, Edgware where I was to pick up a full-flat cab for my first day’s work as a taxi driver. The plan was for me to drive the brand new **JLM 519K**, but the guv’nor had decided to run it in himself so in the meantime I would drive **AGP 304G** with its ‘bunny ears’ indicators and little round wing mirrors.

So I paid my £21.50 for the week and I was suddenly on my own, armed just with a cloth bag full of change (including pre-decimal coinage), an A-Z and a **Tuckers Guide** - that little book with all those points that were so useful on the Knowledge, but which I don’t think I ever used in anger once I began doing the job for real.

So I had the taxi; what should I do next? I decided to drive to the VIP garage next to Kilburn Station to get some diesel - or Derv as it was often known. This stood for **Diesel Engined Road Vehicle**. Not surprisingly, there was no similar abbreviation for petrol! So I filled up, got back in the cab, turned my *for hire* light on and then saw an elderly man and woman running across the road waving at me frantically.

The man was holding on to his homburg hat and wore a black coat. The lady was dressed in brown. He spoke with a slight German accent.

“We would like to go to Lonsdale Road NW6. Do you know it?”

I looked blank. **“I show you,”** he said and five minutes later I’d done it. My first job! What a doddle!

In Maida Vale, a tall girl asked to go to Harley Street and from Portman Square I took a Scottish woman to Gloucester Road. She also gave me my first rollicking!

Apart from getting a bite to eat in Finchley Road, the only thing I can remember from that period was on day two. The cab was on **Dial-a-Cab** - or rather **Lords** as it was known in those days and I dared to do a cash job from Mill Lane (Kilburn again) to St. James’s Square.

There was a procedure sheet in the cab which explained that you could arrive at the pick-up with **24 pence** on the meter. I got there with 18 showing, made contact and waited. When the meter got to 24p I wondered what to do, so I decided to start it again. I did that three times!

When the passenger came out, he looked at the meter with some surprise and I soon realised my mistake. I made plenty more mistakes in the days to come, but didn’t repeat that one!

Geoff Levene (W32)



With the current spate of unsolicited phone calls and text messages, emails and extensive media advertising regarding Payment Protection Insurance, *Call Sign* has done some research into this area of finance with some revealing surprises along the way. If you currently have repayments on your cab, or any other purchase - be it furniture, home improvements or an item of domestic equipment (fridge, freezer, washing machine et al) you *may* have PPI included in your repayment schedule!

Where to look for it and how to determine how much it is can mean you could possibly claim this amount back from the lending bank if you believe you were mis-sold such 'protection'. This situation could be effective on any HP agreement.

At present you can actually go back over a number of years to previous HP agreements, even if they have already matured, to see if PPI was included without your knowledge or consent!

There is, however, a proviso regarding certain credit cards such as *Vanquish* and the like where these type of cards were issued regardless of a person's credit rating and the risk was considered high enough to justify PPI in case of repayment default.

While there is currently no set time limit for re-visiting past HP agreements, the time slot in which you can make representation to the finance house is steadily diminishing. Banks have applied to the courts for a ruling on the closure of claims and a decision is expected, possibly either later this year or early in 2014. The banks want to reduce or

Call Sign looks at a subject that could mean you paid too much for your cab...

PPI AND YOUR TAXI???



limit their exposure to such claims and have set aside £billions to settle claimants' demands, but this scenario of unrestricted time slots for claims will not continue indefinitely.

When *Call Sign* spoke to *Investor Compensation UK Ltd*, a spokesman explained that to calculate if any PPI is included in your repayment schedule, you should note the amount borrowed and the interest rate quoted to calculate the total repayment and any differential is PPI. This is usually phrased differently by individual finance houses, so you need to view your repayment schedule carefully to see accurately if PPI is involved - even hidden - somewhere in the schedule.

As a basic example: The loan is £3000, interest quoted at 10 percent is £300, total repayment = £3300 over the life of the loan. But if it works out you have paid more,

that's the PPI element. It might be phrased on the document as 'Protection' or 'Insurance' or even another terminology. Some repayment schedules will actually state 'No PPI' - which is clear enough.

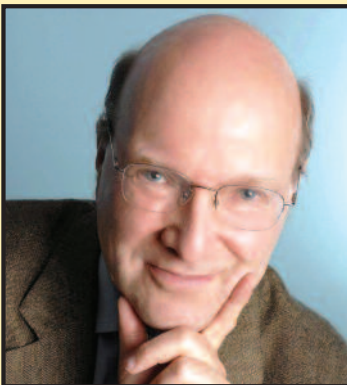
A wealth of information is also available on the Financial Ombudsman Service website. Just punch in 'FOS' and pages of useful info will come up.

If you find you do have a claim against a finance house, you *can* pursue it yourself but it is not necessarily an easy road to travel, which is why claims companies such as *Investor Compensation UK Ltd* will charge 30% + VAT for recovered money - albeit on a 'No Win No Fee' basis. If your claim goes back over a number of years and is of considerable value, then it may be worth investing in professional help to secure your refund. Certainly our talks with *Dial-a-Cab* drivers gave us the impression that very few had given the subject much thought.

Call Sign would like to thank Vernon at *Investor Compensation UK Ltd* for his considerable help and advice on this important financial topic. They can be contacted on: 0800 083 0800 or www.ppiclaimback.co.uk.

Alan Green
Call Sign Online

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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2 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 4/5



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

The Brethren of the Whip



Fouling the rank...

We have all been there, sitting on a rank whilst another cab comes and takes your fare! Sometimes you remonstrate with the driver, sometimes you just wipe your mouth. In August 1857, Antonio Miller, badge 11941, went further. He summonsed the other driver to appear before the magistrates to answer the charge of stealing his fare...

Miller testified that he was on the stand at **Notting Hill** by the **Castle Tavern** and he had just opened the door to his cab to let a passenger in, when another driver on the stand, **Thomas Gaywood**, badge 12378, physically prevented the passenger from entering the cab and forced him into his own. There then followed a slanging match between the two on who had the best horse, and therefore the most comfortable cab. It appeared to be a clear cut case, but then Miller was asked where on the stand was his cab? Miller replied that his cab was the last cab on the stand and that there were six cabs between him and Gaywood.

Thomas Gaywood then testified that he had been waiting on the rank for over three hours and had worked his way up to be first. Miller had arrived, and since the waterman, who was in charge of policing the rank, was not present, Miller left his cab, crossed the road and began "to ply for hire" – **touting!**

He denied touching the passenger, but on explaining that he was first cab, the two men willingly climbed into his cab. Miller, he said, was a regular on the stand and would often leave his cab and go looking for passengers.

Not to be outdone, Miller called a witness to back his story up, but this backfired as **Henry Cates**, badge 11624, appeared to back up Gaywood's version. Cates stated that he was third on the rank and at first thought that the two men



Pic courtesy Vince Chin at www.netxposure.net

cabs on the stand, so he told the drivers to return to their cabs and any other men were told to leave the area. **PC Down** testified that Cates was drunk and began swearing about **Lord Palmerston** and the police. It was whilst Down was taking the plate number on Cates's cab that a large stone hit him on the side of his head, causing him pain and damaging his hat to such an extent it could not be worn again!

By now, PC Down had assistance from fellow officers and Cates was arrested. In court Cates denied all the charges saying that somebody else had sworn at Palmerston and thrown the stone. He also denied being drunk. He had been in the army and if accused of being drunk, he was taken to the guardhouse and put through his facings (drill). The police sergeant should have put him through his facings "...had he known anything about drill."

Cates produced three witnesses, all cabmen, who backed up his version of events, though it is doubtful that one of them was Miller, but to no avail. He was found guilty and fined £1 or fourteen days imprisonment. The fine was paid and life on the Notting Hill stand returned to normality...

were coming to him. As the argument between Miller and Gaywood progressed, he just watched on with stoicism. He did not get involved as he "had been on the stones a long time" and when he lost a job he "wiped it off afterwards." He corroborated Gaywood's testimony of not touching the passenger and that Miller was not with his cab at the time as he was "on the cross." To this the magistrate asked him if plying for hire was the best way to pick up a job? Cates replied it was, but such actions were not allowed.

Ingham, the magistrate, dismissed the summons, meaning all were free to leave. Miller lost out on the two shillings it cost to take out the summons but was perhaps fortunate he did not have to compensate Gaywood for loss of earnings incurred answering the summons.

And Henry...???

The rather stoic Henry Cates was up before the magistrate himself a fortnight later. A policeman saw a crowd of men creating a disturbance outside the Castle Tavern. There were several unattended

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

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Dial-a-Cab driver **John Gerber (N62)** was recently issued with a PCN via a CCTV smart car for dropping a female passenger with a large suitcase in **Ganton Street W1**. John hadn't realised that he was contravening any traffic regulations until reversing the short distance back out into the street, which is when he noticed in his mirror the smart car parked and looking straight at him.

As John reached the junction with **Marshall Street**, he saw the sign prohibiting motor vehicles and within a few days received a PCN from Westminster Parking Services. John was incensed, especially as the smart car driver must have seen the large suitcase the passenger was carrying out of the cab. He decided not just to appeal but also to write to the Lord Mayor of the City of Westminster, **Councillor Angela Harvey** and copy in London Mayor **Boris Johnston**. John wrote:

Dear Lord Mayor

I'm writing to you today because of a PCN I've just received from your council and although the normal procedure is to appeal via Parking Services, I feel in this instance the need to explain to you, the Lord Mayor of the City of Westminster, how your Council adds more unnecessary stress to an honest, hardworking licensed taxi driver who during the course of my day, serves your residents and the people who visit Westminster.

I was dropping a female passenger with a large suitcase off in Newburgh Street W1 at about 10.30pm on Sunday 6th January. I turned into Ganton Street W1, a dead-end street of no more than about 25 metres and dropped the passenger off at the junction with Newburgh Street. At that point I started to reverse out of the street on the account that is all you can do. When I looked in my rear view mirror, I noticed one of the Smart Cars your council like to use to film drivers who contravene road signs etc. As I got to the end of the road, I saw the sign that prohibits motor vehicles at certain times of the day. From the angle I came in, the sign wasn't noticeable because it was turned slightly away from the direction I was approaching from. I might be slightly cynical, but was the sign deliberately turned away to catch the drivers out by one of your enforcement officers?

My question to you is why would the council feel the need to place a smart car in that area late on a Sunday night, when in truth the only reason you would go in that street is to drop off and reverse out (no doubt it is mostly taxis that would be doing that). In my job I see many areas around Westminster where there is a real need for the use of such vehicles for traffic enforcement. I often wonder how the thousands of minicabs that frequent Westminster and are often parked on double yellow lines or even double parked in some instances, yet seem to be immune from your very eager enforcement officers. Again call me cynical but could there be some favourable financial agreement going on? As you can tell from the tone of this email, I am very angry.

I ask you, Lord Mayor, all I'm trying to do is go about my job. I'm not asking for immunity from any traffic indiscretions, but just a more sensible approach to traffic enforcement and feel that in this instance it was a very heavy handed approach. I wasn't parking, I wasn't

A lady carrying a heavy case cannot be driven to her front door... but more importantly, is there a clash between PCNs and having our taxis passed following the new twice yearly MOTs?

PCN for dropping passenger off at home!



Should John have made his passenger walk with her heavy case?

nearby Newburgh Street, then reversed out and that this manoeuvre took a relatively short length of time to conduct in a seemingly quiet road. Nevertheless, even on a Sunday evening, the vehicle access restriction is in place to help ensure the safety of pedestrians. With this in mind, the contravention was observed and the PCN correctly served.

That being said, Parking Services have exercised their discretion and cancelled the PCN, you are no longer liable for the charge and no further action is necessary on your part.

Thank you for bringing this issue to my attention and affording me the opportunity to address your concerns. I trust I have clarified the City Council's current position and that my comments have been helpful.

Leith Penny

Strategic Director for City Management

blocking the road to any other road user and I was in and out of that road in less than a minute!

We are living in very stressful times because of the financial mess this country is in and when you get notices like the one I received from your council, it just adds to my stress level I have to endure in trying to carry out my job.

John Gerber

Westminster Parking Services Customer Relations responded that they would investigate John's complaint and put the PCN on hold until the results become available. Two weeks on and John got his response...

Dear Mr Gerber

Thank you for your email to the Lord Mayor dated 15 January 2013 regarding the above PCN issued via CCTV-smart car. In light of your concerns, the Lord Mayor forwarded your correspondence to me, as, in my capacity as Strategic Director for City Management, I have overall responsibility for Parking Services.

*The CCTV Smart car was deployed at that particular junction as a result of drivers not complying with the restricted access times. Having carefully examined the footage of the PCN and in acknowledgement of your concerns about the angle of the access restriction sign, our on-street enforcement contractor, **NSL Limited**, conducted a site visit assessment. The inspection was carried out on 22 January 2013 and confirmed that the sign is perpendicular to the road and sufficiently visible to motorists as they round the corner into Ganton Street. Furthermore, the Department for Transport approved the placing of this single sign at this location.*

I appreciate you dropped off a passenger at

Quite noticeably, even though John was let off the fine, there was no mention of the heavy suitcase his lady passenger would have had to carry to her house. And has anyone noticed the name of the company carrying out the PCN procedure? They are the same people you will have to present your taxi to each year after the two new MoT examinations – NSL Ltd!

In the March 2012 issue of *Call Sign*, Dial-a-Cab's PCN guru, **Barrie Segal, shocked readers when writing of a sensational legal verdict against *Kensington and Chelsea Council's* parking enforcement contractors, **NSL Limited**. An employment tribunal judge had issued a devastating judgement against NSL, who in court had been named as employers of parking attendant **Hakim Berkani**, who claimed he was sacked from his job as a parking attendant for not issuing motorists with enough PCNs!**

According to the judge, NSL maintained a 'clandestine quota system' to issue parking tickets to motorists in a 'predatory and dishonest' way. He said it showed that NSL Ltd had set its civil enforcement officers a minimum quota of ten parking tickets each day per warden.

It cannot help but make you think and after our warning at the time, how NSL Ltd were ever given the account to pass anyone, let alone taxis! After all, we'd hate to think that they had to have a certain number of 'failures' each day...

**Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online**

The main section of **Dial-a-Cab's** 2012 **Annual General Meeting** had passed fairly uneventfully and other than the usual *Any Other Business*, all that was left of the meeting were the election results and after all, drivers often voted by post because they claimed it was impossible for a Board member to lose his seat under our **postal balloting** system. Well this year proved those drivers to be wrong as it seems probably that the voting in the hall was the decider!

When a member of the **Electoral Reform Service** crept onto the stage and whispered to Company Secretary **Howard Pears**, something important seemed to be in the air. But when Chairman **Brian Rice** interrupted the proceedings and said that in all the years he had been associated with DaC, he had never known a situation like the one that had suddenly materialised – that he had the results and the difference between the bottom two names was just one single vote – the atmosphere turned electric!

Reading out the numbers of votes cast, he arrived at the last two; they were that **Allen Togwell** had 684 votes but that **Garry White (L65)** was elected onto the Board with 685 votes. Never before in our almost sixty year history had a vote been so close. The results were counted three times to make sure but there was no mistake – but DaC definitely had a new Board member in 47-year old **Garry White (L65)** who, while relatively unknown to the majority of drivers, had been on DaC for some 23 years.

In the meantime, a rather shocked looking Allen Togwell got up to leave the platform. Suddenly and en masse, the entire attendance got up and gave him a two minute standing ovation, until he disappeared through the doors.

Allen had been with DaC since 1979 and on the BoM since 1986. Although he was in our Sales department for many years and later moved to Marketing, over the past few years he has been responsible for putting together printed matter that had previously gone out at a huge cost to the Society, whereas Allen helped reduce the cost substantially. You only have to look at the **End of Year Report** to see how well he did his job.

But no matter what he turned his hand to, he will always be remembered for his campaign to make taxi drivers dress respectably rather than the scruffy look that he hated so much. Allen was never seen dressed anything less than immaculately or without a pocket handkerchief and he believed we should all follow suit – although he didn't push the handkerchief bit! And it has to be said that there has been a noticeable improvement over the years.

When **Call Sign** spoke to Allen after the meeting, he admitted feeling shocked but wished Garry White the best of luck. He also admitted to feeling very moved at the standing ovation. Dedication to a cause such as that which Allen Togwell gave to Dial-a-Cab, deserved his huge thank you...

Baghwat Singh
Call Sign Online

Dial-a-Cab AGM sensation as Allen Togwell loses his position on the Board...

BEATEN BY ONE VOTE!



Allen Togwell as a young man - note the pocket hanky!



Allen and pocket hanky on his DaC arrival



Allen more recently - still with a PH!

*Firstly may I take this opportunity to thank the half of the circuit that took the time to vote for me to stay on and represent them as a Board Member for the next two years. The voting was quite close with just 278 votes between the top and bottom votes. I'd also like to welcome **Garry White** onto the Board, but also say that I was sad to see **Allen Togwell** leave. I have served with Allen since the beginning of the 1990s and found him to be a man of great artistic talents that saved Dial-a-Cab many £thousands by him producing door logos, seat plaques, window messages, AGM paperwork and many other pamphlets, with no need for us to use outside contractors. I enjoyed his dry wit, which many may have mistaken for abrupt or bad manners. I wish him well with whatever he decides to fill out his time with, whether annoying his doctor, MP or local councillor!*

Beware Boris!

Over the past 40 years or so, I have come across many great characters in the taxi trade with the largest number being associated with DaC, ODRTS or *Lords*, as we were also known in the past. This name was linked to the telephone number we used whilst our office was in Maida Vale.

At the recent AGM, it was nice to have subscribers come up to me and say they enjoyed reading about the many friends of theirs that had passed away but who had been part of the history of our circuit.

But not all the characters have died, some are still around and on the circuit. If you were at the AGM, you will have seen one who can give the Chairman a quick reply to any humorous retort made against him. I think this subscriber was wearing a disguise this year, as he sported a multi-coloured beard and moustache. But he couldn't disguise his enthusiasm to keep the Society in the forefront of potential clients' minds. His name is **David Kupler (Y74)**, ex-despatcher, ex-American cab driver and dreamer of being DaC's first *Poet Laureate*.

I was night despatching at Shirland Road when I first got to know David; my first meeting was as I descended the stairs to the basement of the office and confronted by a 2 foot 6 inch high by 3 foot long mass of grey/white and black long hair. Its hair was so long I could not distinguish which end I was looking at! This was **Boris** - Dave's Old English Sheepdog.

Despatchers in those days knew all the drivers by name or call sign and that built up a friendly family-like association where drivers knew one another and went out of their way to assist any that were in trouble. Every despatcher had his own way of working, which was either loved or loathed by drivers. David had his own way of joking with them and had a gentle way of embarrassing or putting down a driver who had made a complete hash of a journey.

When I spoke to David at the AGM, I reminisced about the now departed Boris. One night David left the office at 11.30pm to do a few hours on his taxi with Boris sitting in the luggage compartment! His first passenger wanted to be dropped off at Shepherds Bush Green, but on arrival decided that he wanted to do a runner. So David, quick as a flash, opened the luggage door and told Boris to get

THE UNTOLD HISTORY OF DIAL-A-CAB

Bits you may not know as remembered
by Tom Whitbread



him! Off ran Boris at the speed of light, hair flowing in the wind to apprehend the miscreant – until he remembered that he had been in the office for a good few hours and hadn't relieved himself! So paws digging deep into the earth, Boris screeched to a halt and watered the local building instead allowing the bilker to run off. David was left standing on the pavement not knowing whether to laugh or cry!

David later went to America to see if he'd like to live there permanently; he had a fellow DaC cab driver friend in **Brian Myers** already there and he had started a business. David ended up driving a taxi over there but couldn't keep out of the limelight. He made newspaper headlines as an Englishman driving an American taxi who had stopped to assist someone who was being mugged. David chased the mugger down the street in a country where most people do not want to get involved in case violence rears its ugly head and they get hurt. This was some years ago, but goes to show another side of a person you work with and where you just do not realise their caring side.

Brian Myers also had a dog, a slobbering loveable boxer dog. When you wanted to get into the office in Shirland Road, you'd ring the doorbell and they would buzz you in, so they had prior warning you were on the way down.

Brian had been doing the evening shift and knew I was coming in, which gave him time to set up a ruse. As you got to the top of the basement stairs, you got a perfect view of the control room. As I looked across the telephonist positions towards where the despatcher was, I was thrown as I saw the despatcher for the west channel was a light brown boxer dog, sporting a headset and microphone! Was he was looking for jobs to Barking and the Isle of Dogs for all his friends!

David also told me that Brian, who first started a toy business in America, is now a hard working multi-millionaire entrepreneur

who does business deals in many European countries as well as the US. This was a man who used to be as mad as a hatter, but it goes to show how people change and shows what I know about realising someone's potential!

Marks time...

During my time at Shirland Road, there was a driver, **Stephen Marks**, who used to come out to work at 2am in the morning and was so regular you could set your watch by him. He was closely followed out by **Mickey Walsh** who always asked over his radio: "Is he out before me!" The two of them would rush into London from the north to catch the last of the late night stragglers trying to get home. This was just before the early starters began going in to work at hotels, businesses or antique markets. It was also at a time when newspapers were printed in and around Fleet Street and with the money their workers earned, they could afford to catch a taxi home. Most of this money was marked down to some fantastic workers, who in those days didn't want the tax man to know they had a second job! So we had M Mouse, D Duck even W Churchill working on the Mail, Telegraph and News of the World!

Stephen and Mickey really contributed to building up the circuit and keeping its good name at a time when we serviced most of the West End hotels. The account was to bring them in the early morning and take them home late at night. I could guarantee if these two drivers were out working, we would never scrub a journey. They didn't care how far they ran; if the meter was running they were earning!

One Sunday morning I called **Carshalton Beeches** back to one of the West End hotels, on *assistance*. Stephen came in offering 20 minutes. I knew that not long before I had given him; a job back to the Churchill, so I told him it wasn't possible. He said to give him the job and he would call when he was outside. The drivers did the jobs week after week, so they knew where the pickups were. True to his word, 19 minutes later Stephen asked me to ring them out and to confirm he was there!

This hard work paid off as the hotels that we did not have were serviced by Radio Taxis (Southern) – known as Mountview. Their drivers had a similar attitude to that which a few of our drivers have now. So at 6am on a Sunday morning, the Mountview despatcher would call me up and give me 20 or more jobs, some of which were airports as his view was if they were not covering the account work, they would not cover a cash ride to the flyers! And when looking at the balance sheets of ODRTS and RT now, you realise the drivers

continued on page 25

Yes, pretty much most of us have suffered from stress or even panic, but it usually ends up as a distant fading memory. But for Freddie Jones (A49) this is a daily hell that has haunted him for the past two years. Freddie explained to *Call Sign* the background to his problem....

"I was playing golf with some friends some fifteen years ago and just keeled over while bending down to find my golf ball. I got up ok but heard a strong buzzing noise in my ear. However, that did not stop me from finishing the round.

"However while at home two days later, I suddenly had heart palpitations and struggled to breathe. I was rushed into the *Resus* ward at my local hospital and after extensive tests was moved into *A & E* for further tests and was kept under observation, only being sent home after assurances I had *not* had a heart attack but *just* a panic attack." Freddie grinned at the memory of the word 'just'.

"I was then referred to *General Medicine* for consultation with a doctor, accompanied by students, who conducted numerous tests for *Vertigo*, all of which proved negative. I was prescribed Valium and Diazepam and told I would not be driving any vehicle for a long time. Not the best news a taxi driver can hear!

"Eventually and on a reduced dosage, my doctor told me that I could return to driving if I felt comfortable and confident enough to do so - which I did until two years ago."

But his recovery didn't last and no longer displaying and signs of a grin, Freddie continued with his story to *Call Sign*...

"In 2010 I attended a function on a Saturday night at my **Dulwich and Sydenham Hill Golf Club**, but on the Sunday I felt unwell, jumpy and nervous. I was however ok on the Monday until around midday, when I was hit by a major panic attack while at **Coachline Taxis**. I was dizzy, nauseous and confused with the heart palpitations I had experienced all those years previously suddenly returning. But knowing from my past ex-

Most of us have suffered from stress or panic attacks from time to time. Remember the nerves before your PCO Knowledge appearances or perhaps your wedding? But for some it's far worse than that...

FREDDIE JONES AND HIGH ANXIETY...



perience by now as the memories began returning.

"I've tried driving my taxi occasionally, but I very soon start to lose confidence, start shaking and sweating and am unable to concentrate, with symptoms of hunger brought on by anxiety and then the need to return home before things get really bad. I have driven my taxi just 20 days in these last two years due to what I call my *grem-lins*," Freddie admitted solemnly.

"I have learned to recognise when symptoms are building up and try to occupy my mind with little activities such as washing the cab or walking down to the shops, anything that will allay the onset of a full blown anxiety attack. I have had all the basic tests for liver function, glucose, cholesterol, kidneys and prostate, all of which have returned negative, so I know there is nothing physically wrong with me. Even the enzyme test, which is supposed to disclose if a person has had heart attack, came back negative; so it really is all in my mind.

Ending, Freddie gave *Call Sign* some helpful advice for anyone who may feel that they suffer from high anxiety problems. He said:

"All the consultants I have seen - and there have been quite a few - tell me it is something deep down in my subconscious mind of an early, possibly childhood experience of fear or something unpleasant which remains unexplained so far, yet haunts a person in later life. I have read widely on the subject, and found a series of helpful guides and internet sources. I also have a pamphlet published by **Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS** entitled **Panic - A self help guide** that is full of very useful information. Also, if anyone would like to contact me, perhaps a fellow sufferer or carer, they can do so at hilight@02.co.uk."

THE UNTOLD HISTORY OF DIAL-A-CAB continued

were correct. ODRTS has a good amount of cash in the bank to pay any debts we may incur, while Radio Taxis seem to use a red pen for their financial report.

If Stephen - with his ultra-wide hair parting - and Mickey together with their mates were still on DaC and working, our Chairman would not have to berate anyone at an AGM for giving clients an excuse to go to PH due to service issues.

Another win double we had were the **Levine** brothers, **Henry** and **Barry**. Henry was the comedian - his one aim in life being to get one over on me and humiliate me during busy periods. Henry was the day man while Barry did late afternoons. During my 8 years despatching on nights at Shirland Road, I had a driver who would come out in the early morning and drive me mad by using a funny woman's voice. This was before vehicle identification so the despatcher had to use his knowledge of all the different voices and attach them to call signs. It took me six months to get this one, due to them not doing it all the time only when I wasn't expecting it.

One morning Henry signed on and just a syllable he used gave me the clue, so then I

had the upper hand remembering this was voice despatch. When I called a good job and Henry came in, I would just ignore him. I could hear his voice being raised and imagined his heart rate increasing up to the speed of a Formula 1 car. I'd leave it for as long as I could and then asked him if he was trying his breathless voice! That was all I needed to make it a joyous achievement for me.

Mickey Faust

In one of my previous articles, I said I'd been told that **Mickey Faust** had died. At the AGM, David Kupler said he had not died as he had seen him recently! Mickey was a great friend of mine, living in Stoke Newington not far from me and was always joking. He once popped round for a visit after I had just purchased a beautiful three piece suite of Danish design, solid wood arms, legs and back. The seats and backing were a lovely brown material filled with solid foam, which looked great in our living room - we weren't posh enough to have a lounge in Dalston! Mick, who was far from being small or light - he would have two large doner kebabs for half way through the night and then at 9am he would be in the **Granby Gill** for his two breakfasts.

Mick entered the room and spied an armchair in the far corner and made a beeline for it, turning as he got to it and lowering his posterior onto the seat swab. At that moment, a series of sharp steel and wood cracks filled the air and Mickey disappeared through the solid wooden frame, his posterior on the floor and legs flapping in the air - not a pretty site! I didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the sight of Mickey on the floor or the cost of the suite. I was lucky that I had done an extended course in carpentry at Holloway County School before going into the Merchant Navy, so I was able to salvage the chair. This stopped 6foot 3 inch Mickey being battered to within an inch of his life by my 5foot 3 inch wife!

I hope these memories are enjoyable for you. I know I'm enjoying remembering these characters and how they helped ODRTS reach the position we are at now. More soon...

Tom Whitbread
DaC Board Member



Jim, Chris Walker and Tommy Hill

Dial-a-Cab driver **Jim Rainbird (T25)** has often appeared in *Call Sign* after being involved in various filming promotions, going right back to 2001 when he astonishingly turned up on a Japanese TV station quiz! He and his cab were also used by a newspaper to chase Princess Diana and on another occasion appearing alongside motor racing F1 stars **Lewis Hamilton** and **Mika Hakkinen** in a **Johnnie Walker** anti-drinking campaign alongside another DaC driver, **Janet Ramsden (G35J)**.

Of late, his work with the **Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers** has taken away much of his free time, especially during his year as *Master*, but as a lover of speed he just couldn't turn down a filming job promoting February's **MCN Motorcycle Show** at the Excel Centre.

Motor Cycle News copyright restrictions meant removing his DaC logos and replacing them with the number 33, but he did manage to sneak a quick pic of himself (left) with two of the sport's amazing riders, **Chris 'The Stalker' Walker (centre)** and **Tommy Hill (right)**.

Tommy was the British Champion in 2011 and won it in the most amazing last race, last lap, last corner drama of any motorsport race that most people have ever seen! The breathtaking climax to that race is on **YouTube** and well worth looking up.

Chris Walker has been runner-up in the championship four times and runs his own Moto Cross circuit in Lincolnshire. The week before our filming, he took part in an amazing 'undertaker' stunt for **Alfa Romeo** when he rode his bike almost underneath the car - which was going round on two wheels! The car is the official safety car in this year's Championship and you can see the astonishing clip at: <http://youtu.be/7Tm0LMKyLNC>.

As for Jim's part in the promotional film, Chris Walker hailed a cab (amazingly it was our Jim) and asked to be taken to the show at Excel. With some very clever cutting room expertise (and a little dressing up on Jim's part) the cab driver becomes Tommy Hill!

JIM AND THE MCN MOTORCYCLE SHOW



Chris Walker and his incredible 'undertaker' stunt



Tommy Hill - 2011 British champion

Jim told *Call Sign*: "It was hilarious because he wasn't insured on the cab so we shot his 'driving' scenes in the Asda car park on the Island. I was press ganged, along with two of the crew, to rock the cab from side to side and hold up reflectors to cast brief shadows on Tommy's face and then take them away to give the impression of movement. While all that was going on, Chris was changing into his racing leather suit in the back of the cab, being thrown all

over the place. Even the director was impressed with the two Superbike riders' acting abilities! Considering their normal working activities take place at 175mph using amazing skill, technique and enormous amounts of courage, they were up for a laugh and got right into their 'roles'."

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online

Stephen Berndes (R14) with a another collection of...

Berndes Bargains!



Quizzing the quizzer...

Late last summer I hitched onto the back of the Tower of London rank at Lower Thames Street, poured a lukewarm cup of tea from a thermos and hobbled over to the taxi in front to engage in small talk - a diversion from driving a prolonged stint without a rest.

"Been waiting long," I enquired?

"Just driven down from Pevensey Bay, Eastbourne," he responded.

"Eastbourne? East Sussex? I can see why you need a blow," I replied.

"Yeah," he responded, "I only work three days and stay over in Croxley Green near Watford."

I dissimulated his brief words.

"You're Fred Housego," I said, half asking and half telling!

Still beavering away self-learning at the age of sixty eight, his daughter had emailed all the generals in the world wars on all sides of the conflict; Fred was absorbing the information on his vast memory bank. He also told me that in 1984, he won best London tourist guide of the year award.

Still competitive, he was competing on BBC Radio 4's **Round Britain Quiz**.

I chided that he still had yet to win, coming second on numerous occasions with his quiz partner, the eminent lawyer and legal journalist

Marcel Berlins. I asked why he didn't go for the big payday quizzes, but he said that he only did them for fun.

Fred is still in high in demand as an after dinner speaker, doing regular radio work and quizzes but sadly his recognition has not been used enough for the betterment of the taxi trade.

For those of a certain age, who could forget Fred's display in the 1980 final of **Mastermind** as **Magnus Magnusson** fired questions in his inquisitorial manner at the notorious black leather chair inhabited on that day by a nervous Fred. But the taxi driver cutely answered the questions using surnames, thus saving vital seconds in a mesmerizing metronomic fashion.

On receiving the winner's glass bowl, Magnusson famously told him: **"They'll be rejoicing on the ranks tonight!"**

Given that **Peter Hendy** has now been bestowed with a lofty knighthood from the Queen for services to transport, his ineptitude in wasting tens of millions of taxpayer's pounds on free combustible bendy buses - which lead to millions of working hours being lost due to traffic congestion - seems perverse.

Fred Housego, still a household name over thirty years after succeeding in winning Mastermind, is singularly responsible for giving dignity to the London taxi trade.

Surely there is no more deserving case for a gong unless - like man of the people, painter **LS Lowry**, who famously refused honours from an MBE to a Knighthood - unbeknown to us, Fred has done likewise. I suspect Fred Housego would prefer to be called Fred Housego.

But the vacant plinth at Trafalgar Square? Hmmm...

Stephen Berndes
Call Sign Online



CREDIT UNION UPDATE

Once you're in, you're in...!

Hello once again ladies and gentlemen of Dial-a-Cab,

I hope you are all well and not struggling too much in these relatively hard times - which leads me on nicely to my article heading! Unfortunately, there have been a number of drivers leaving **Dial-a-Cab** for one reason or another, but before they leave I often get a call from them (and staff too) asking if they also have to leave the DaC Credit Union?

So we have widened the rules to keep in any DaC leavers. As regular users of DACCUCU know, we use a **standing order** system, which is different from a direct debit in that **you** have total control on the payments to **us**. A **direct debit** would give the CU the control, but it would also cost us to use that method. So we don't! I hope that is clear for you; if not, please give the CU office a call on **0207 729 8171**.

We are still actively looking for members, so if you're interested, come down to the office or call us and we'll give you any information you require. It's generally open from 1 - 7pm every day although we do endeavour to get there earlier, so keep trying as our answerphone is currently not working!

The 7% investment account

We've been running a very successful 7% investment scheme for the last 3 to 4 years. That account re-opened recently, but if you were thinking of putting money in as soon as it did then you would only have been accepted if you were already a member and saving with us. After all, it's **your** savings that we lend out to enable us to pay the 7% interest! In the past we've allowed people to join the CU and put their investment money straight in, but we now feel we'd prefer you as a member first.

As soon as we re-opened the account, a message went out on your terminals giving a phone number to text. Members who are no longer on DaC were contacted by phone. If still open, that number is 07887 421 614 - text your badge number and how much you would like to invest.

Tiger Tyres

As you may know, **Tiger Tyres** share our building and they help us pay the rent and bills, which in turn helps us to be very close to the City. There is good free parking and hopefully a good service.

In addition to tyres, they are also doing brake pads for the TX1, TX2 and TX4 and as members of DACCUCU, you can utilise your savings and pay for any tyres or pads from your account, especially if you come to work and realise you don't have enough money with you to pay. We can make things easy for DACCUCU members with hardly any down time. And you never know, being booked into E2 you may get a job as well!

In this issue of **Call Sign**, if you bring the Tiger Tyres ad in with you, you'll get a 5% discount on your tyres! That can't be bad, so hopefully we'll see you here.

Harp Credit Union

And for my last throw of the dice to help you save and prosper! In previous articles, I've mentioned the **Harp CU** as a credit union anyone can join if they aren't connected to DaC. The FSA had asked us to take it over, which we duly obliged - with some caution I must add - but it is now doing well and showing a good profit from its previous minus one, when we took over, to a healthy one now. So if you know someone who wants to join a Credit Union then get them down to the Harp office - which is in the same place as DACCUCU.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. In case you have not got our address and phone numbers, here they are:

DACCUCU (0207 729 8171), Tiger Tyres (0207 729 5237), Harp Credit Union (0207 033 9434)

**Unit 14 Peterley Business Centre,
472 Hackney Road, E2 9EQ**

John Riley (K38)
Vice-President DACCUCU

COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT



Hello ladies & gents

Can I start by thanking you once again for your support at the recent AGM elections and for having the confidence to vote for me to represent you on the Board of Management for a further term in office. In my address to you, the members, I did say that I would not let you down; that as a member of this present Board we are fully committed to steering our Society forward and my views have not changed. I firmly believe that under the guidance of the Chairman, we are up to the task and have the experience and know how to not only consolidate, but to guide the

Society forward in what is now a highly competitive workplace that is very much price driven. But to do this successfully, we most certainly need your help along the way.

New Board Member

As you are by now aware, we have a new Member on the Board of Management (**Garry White**) and I would like to go on record to wish him every success for the future. We met very briefly and I am sure that coming onto a vastly experienced Board will help him enormously over the coming months, as it did me when I was first elected. Because believe me, it is a continuous learning circle.

To say farewell to **Allen Togwell** was also quite hard, as he has done much for this Society over the years and as a friend and colleague I would also like to pass on my regards. Above all, I would like to wish him well for the future...

Booking in

Since my last report, it has been brought to my attention that a small number of you have been booking in from long dis-

tances and remaining in certain zones for long periods until a regular trip is offered. The Contact Centre has been consistently monitoring specific trips for some time now and the regular offenders will be dealt with in the correct manner.

Please remember that outlying zones are physical at all times of the day and to correctly book into inner zones, you must be able to reach the furthest part of the zone within fifteen minutes. This is very easily established by GPS and quite honestly there really is no excuse, it is unfair to the vast majority and not in keeping with the spirit of the Society.

Door logos

Finally, can I again remind you that it is a Society rule that the door logos are displayed on both sides of the taxi, it surely must make sense to advertise your circuit and if it is easier to pick the replacement logos up from this office rather than Roman Way, please contact me and I will arrange for a set to be left for you to collect at a convenient time.

Be lucky and drive safely...

Allane@Dialacab.co.uk

TX4 "ALMOST BACK TO NORMAL!"

There is an open letter from Peter Johansen, Executive Vice-President of the London Taxi Corporation Ltd in this issue giving an update which infers that things are almost back to normal.

In the meantime, those interested in purchasing a new or used TX4 can register their interest by calling the Customer Contact Centre on **02476 572008** or by going online to **www.london-taxis.co.uk/new**. These customers will be amongst the first to know when sales restart and will receive a personal phone call to advise them of the news and help them progress their order.

To find your nearest local Approved Service Dealer or for information, call the Customer Contact Centre team on the above number or email **enquiries@london-taxis.co.uk**; alternatively, information and updates are also available at **www.london-taxis.co.uk**.



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Area Covered - Hornchurch and 8 miles out - others by appointment

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

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

This issue harks back to probably the weirdest story Call Sign has ever published...

From Call Sign, May 2001...

WHAT A BUMMER!

Call Sign's editorial office has been inundated with phone calls and copies of either **Private Eye** or **The Times**. Why? Well if YOU were the driver in this photo that was published in both papers, then you would know, but it's up to this magazine to explain it to everybody else!

It was a bit of a bummer to have to write about the experience, but we tried to make it easier for the driver by asking him if he would like to write about it in two halves! And while we have solved the mystery of the photo and who the **Dial-a-Cab** driver was, we have been told that he doesn't want his name and call sign revealed.

"It was hardly a job to be proud of," a friend of the driver told *Call Sign*, "and he was as astonished to see his passenger as his facial expression describes. It was rather apt that the photo in *Call Sign* was at the bottom of the page!"

It was also made clear to *Call Sign* that the photo wasn't – if you'll excuse the expression – touched up in any way!

The gentleman with the exposed buttock area and described by some hacks in the courtroom as a 'low-down bum', had apparently



just appeared in the Court where he had famously won the right to walk around in the nude! Who said only the Yanks have 'em!

A respectably dressed lady had hailed a Dial-a-Cab taxi outside the Court and asked the driver to wait. Then she came out and jumped into the cab followed by

the male nude and a bevy of photographers who had obviously been warned about what was to happen.

If any *Call Sign* readers have photos of any aspect of DaC that might raise a smile, please let us have them – but not the view from the other side of the accompanying pic...!

And you think life's tough!

This seems to be one of the poorer kipper seasons, but things could always be worse! The following item comes from the 1930 book by Anthony Armstrong called TAXI!

"Every London taxi driver is currently earning his living under one of three systems; the owner driver (mushroom or mush driver), a journeyman or a flat-rate driver. Below are the average weekly expenses of a mush. They will of course be criticised, but I think the greater number of experienced men will agree with them in substance.

They are:

	£	s	d
Weekly garage and servicing	1	5	0
Road licence		4	0
Meter rent		3	0
Insurance		7	6
Overhaul and repairs	10		0
Tyres		8	0
Average weekly petrol	1	1	0
Weekly cab hire purchase	2	10	0
Total	£6	8	6



The 1930 taxi driver should earn at least £5 a week...

Therefore the mush has to take £6:10s (£6.50 ed) a week before he can begin to even earn. But if he is a good driver and knows his London, by which I mean he knows the times and places to catch the taxi riding public, there is no reason why he should not take at least £11 or even £12, which gives him a living weekly wage of around £5 – although that will probably involve at least a 12 hour day.

A driver who always goes to the nearest rank may be lucky to earn £4 a week, however an extremely clever driver working from say 9am until 10pm each day could make as much as £6 a week profit.

Anyway keep your fingers crossed that somewhere in your daily workload are a few £1 jobs. Perhaps when it gets busier?"

A.A.Armstrong

Punch Magazine and author of TAXI!

Mailshot

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

Airport set-downs...

Hi Al

Can you believe we can no longer drop off passengers at Stansted Airport unless we pay wonga! Plus there are cameras on the road outside to stop you dropping those passengers off. You have to go into the short stay car park where the charge is now £2 for 10 minutes or £3 for 15 minutes - even for taxis. Who would have believed that Heathrow would have been cheaper - although for how much longer!

Gary Cox (O46)

I must be honest and say that I didn't believe Gary's story at first, assuming that he had just gone to the wrong set-down, but he is right! Stansted Airport introduced that £2 charge for dropping off or collecting passengers at the terminal doors last November. The airport said it wanted to encourage more people to use public transport, reduce traffic emissions and discourage parking in nearby streets.

It claimed to be the UK's best performing major airport for public transport with over 49% of its passengers arriving by train, coach or bus. Taxis obviously don't count! ...Ed

Manganese sale

Hi Alan

So Geely have bought the remains of **Manganese Bronze** for just £11.4 million! Dial-a-Cab could have beaten them with the reserves it has and then sold drivers brand new cabs every six months for a knock-down price! N'est pas!

Roy 'the boy' Manix (Ex-K98)

Hey Roy, I told you getting that Monopoly set for Xmas was a bad idea! ...Ed

Insurance quotes

Hi Alan

I am writing to you regarding **Stephen Bernades' (R14)** article in the *February Call Sign*. As taxi drivers, we can usually only get insurance from the handful of insurers that advertise in **Taxi** or are able to scour from the internet to look for their cheaper quotes. So I was wondering - as I think it would be beneficial for all readers to know - whether there are any cheaper insurance companies out there that are not explicitly advertised, leaving us to believe that we can only use those half a dozen or so insurers that are promoted to us. Perhaps drivers out there know of some?

Martin Powell (G40)

Does any driver in DaC-land know of any insurance companies that don't advertise in the trade press but which provide good London taxi cover? ...Ed

Sent to Hans Dooren, LVTA PR

Hi Hans

Just a word of thanks to you for your efforts in sending out PDFs of *Call Sign* and *Taxi Globe*

and the time you devote to doing them. Both magazines are always full of interesting items for both the London working cabbie and **LVTA** members and my compliments go to the editors of both magazines for always producing a worthwhile publication. I am amazed by all the changes and developments that seem to be putting an extra burden on the licensed guys earning their living and having to keep up with all of it.

I also read that Manganese Bronze has now been sold to the Chinese company Geely. Let's hope this will be a good thing for the London taxi trade in general.

Barry Elson (Membership no 1077)

AGM and the thirty year rule

Hi Alan

Following the AGM attended by around 60 members, I feel I should write to *Call Sign*. The £1 per month rule for those having completed 30 years started in 1996 and was voted on by the attending members of that AGM and was said to be for life. The Chairman has now hinted that the Board might consider charging a fee to those drivers as a way of helping the finances. But it seemed to me that the percentage of £1 members present showed that we care about what's going on more than the rest! If the current number of subscribers was the max and we were stopping others joining, then a charge would seem reasonable but it is not and we are covering work to add to the Society's income. But the Chairman said that we had taken on about 30/40 new drivers in the last year.

It is also a fact that some of us now work part time, so a charge may just mean we leave and that would not be in the Society's interests - in fact counter-productive as we need drivers and we DO cover work that we were told by drivers at the meeting, they do not run to cover - especially AD jobs! I do hope that if this matter is being considered, it will have to be voted on by the members again. It was suggested that a new rule be introduced that present £1 drivers stay the same and that new 30 year men be asked to pay a very reduced fee. Also, my personal thanks to **Allen Togwell** for all he has done over the years for us and I am sad that he has been voted off the Board, however, my best wishes go to the new member, **Garry White**.

Gentlemen and ladies, as was pointed out again at the AGM it does not matter a jot what the Board do to get work - if we do not cover it we will lose it! The little jobs come with the big ones, so please do them all. These are my thoughts as a driver since 1970...

Martin Freeborn (C67)

Thanks Martin, but even speaking as a fel-

low 'pounder' I have to disagree with your memory. The year may be correct, but it was never voted on. It was just introduced by the BoM and as such they could take it away. Will they? Well those of us old 'uns who don't yet have arthritis in our hands should perhaps keep our fingers crossed! I wrote this before receiving the Chairman's Report but I would be surprised if he hasn't also written about the 30 year topic ...Ed

AGM and Allen Togwell

Hi Alan

I can't understand why **Allen Togwell** failed to get re-elected to the BoM as he always used to get the most votes. However, I would like to thank him for everything he has done over the years for Dial-a-Cab. Yes, he was outspoken but he told the truth and that sometimes hurts. I remember him once saying that private hire would in time become a big threat to the licensed taxi trade and that has come true. Also, when we introduced the £8 minimum (a good few years ago now), I remember him saying: "If you lot smarten yourselves up, always have a clean cab and are always polite and courteous, I can get you a £15 minimum!" Typical cab trade apathy rules - except when things go wrong, then the biggest screamers are the apathetic, so here is something for the apathetic to bear in mind.

Good old **Jack Taylor** was as outspoken, possibly even more so than Allen Togwell. I remember being in the front office collecting my credits in cash in Shirland Road while Jack was talking to another driver about a cab demo regarding a massive increase in licencing fees. The driver's licence had gone up from 15p to £40 in one hit - almost 26,566.666%. It should have made the *Guinness Book of Records*! At the same time the cab licence went up from £zero to £48. Jack asked the driver whether he went to the demo and the driver said he couldn't be bothered as he was busy that day. Jack exploded and said: "You're a ****, it's ***** drivers like you that bring this trade down. You don't need a £40 fee, you should be paying £200, then you'd scream, you *****".

By the way, how much are we paying for our licences now? Seems like Jack was also right...

Brian Marcantonio (R73)

I remember those days well - and the language! Yes Brian, a 26,566% rise was a bit much! ...Ed

Christmas working

Dear Alan

I would like to thank **Tony Arnold (F03)** for his kind remarks about me in the *February Call Sign* regarding the help I gave him and other drivers while dispatching at the Christmas period. It's nice to feel appreciated by the drivers



Mailshot

Continued from page 31

and in turn I'd like to belatedly thank them for helping to cover the work at that time...

Ivor Belkin (C97)

Top Hat

Hi Alan

Through *Call Sign*, I would like to thank **Tom Whitbread** for tickets to a really amazing and enjoyable show, TOP HAT, at the Aldwych Theatre. The show sticks firmly to the original film storyline, and although no one can match Fred and Ginger, the leading couple are fantastic and pay a great homage to their "Heroes of song and dance."

I got my tickets on 4th February for the show on Tuesday 5th and was told by the box office that all other tickets for the shows on 6/7/8th February had all gone. So thinking I would be helpful and stop any other drivers going on a fool's errand, I sent a message on my terminal to the dispatchers to let other drivers know the situation! After 10 minutes no message was put out, so I phoned the control room to ask if this could be sent out as a fleet message to stop anyone having the trouble of parking up and wasting their time as all other tickets had gone. The telephonist (female) I spoke to flatly refused to put the message out saying "we don't put those kind of messages out." I thought this was rather unhelpful and would like to know why, as it would have stopped other drivers going there and stop Tom getting an earful from disappointed drivers!

Pat Keefe (G01)

Keith Cain responds: It is very unusual for a controller to receive such a message informing us tickets are sold out. While there is no reason why the message could not have been sent out, controllers have been advised to forward a driver who has any information appertaining to theatre tickets to a Board Member. That way it will avoid the possibility of any incorrect information being sent out.

New design licences and area identifiers

Hi Alan

This is a copy of an email I have sent to TfL...

I have just read the TPH notice with regards to the new identifiers. It talks about some drivers being requested photographs for the identifiers. The Taxi drivers licence has a scanned picture on the new style licences and therefore TfL already have them on file, surely these source files could be used without asking drivers to spend time and expense on providing duplicates.

Alan Nash Badge (A95)

The original press release Alan is referring to is on page 6 of this issue ...Ed

Reed

Hello Alan

I do not know you personally, neither did I know your son - although I read some of his messages in *Call Sign*. However I was moved to write to you to express my condolences at the sad loss your family has suffered. I admire you greatly and congratulate you on producing another excellent issue, despite extraordinarily difficult circumstances. As all cabbies know, there is no greater camera or video recorder than the human mind, so Reed will always be with you. I hope that those memories help you and your family to gain inspiration at this very sad time.

Paul Howe (O78)

Dear Alan

I have just read *Call Sign Online* and was very sorry to read about the sad loss of your son Reed. I would like to wish you and your family a long life and hope this will be the last of your troubles for many years to come.

Monty Dobrin (ex-B56)

Hello Alan

I just wanted to offer my condolences and sincere sympathy to you and

your family at your loss. Sunday evenings were much easier with Reed's messages and quips.

John Addis (K97)

Dear Alan

I was extremely sorry to hear of the sad loss of your son, God rest his dear soul. May I wish you and your family a long life.

Faye Messias and family

Faye was the wife of the former late DaC Chairman Phil Messias (1990-1992) ...Ed

Hi Alan,

Just read the February *Call Sign Online* and more so than any other issue, this one made me realise that all of you at DaC are part of one great big family. You are amazing for bringing out this issue that was filled with so many words about Reed and who in spite of all his suffering and along with his family, was endured so bravely. And how wonderful to have in the same issue such happy pictures of the LTFUC Grosvenor House party that was so well captioned by your granddaughter Imogen. This was truly a *Call Sign* to keep and treasure.

Daphne Sherman

Daphne was the wife of world famous shirt designer and trademark name, Ben Sherman.

...and Bob

Dear Alan

The February issue of *Call Sign* has brought back memories of my 15 years with the Society; albeit I have been retired now for 12. The death of your son is absolutely tragic and I join all of the members and friends who have sent in their condolences and may **Reed**, whom I knew as a young man making his way in the world, rest in peace.

The same issue showed the passing of **Bob Branwhite**, who I had the honour of working with for many years when we first started the **Dial-a-Cab Credit Union**, a man who put a lot of work into this to make it the success that it still is today and I offer Lynne and Paul my sincerest condolences. May he too rest in peace.

Trevor Clarke

Bishops Stortford

Trevor Clarke was DaC's Company Secretary from 1986 until retiring in April 2001 ...Ed

Dear Alan

On behalf of everyone in the **Dial-a-Cab Credit Union**, I would like to say how sad we were to read of the passing of **Bob Branwhite (F29)** in the February *Call Sign*. Bob was one of the early members whose hard work and belief in the concept of DACCU helped to make it the success it is today. Our sincere condolences to Bob's family...

Terry Dodd (W15)

DACCU President

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