

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

May 2013

Call Sign



*Addison Lee is sold for £300 million.
Did DaC drivers miss their chance to cash in
with this man? See 'What If' on page 3...*



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Heathrow departure terminals - last updated in May 2012 and prompted by Virgin now operating Little Red. New version correct as of 02/04/2013 from data obtained via BAA website.

**** British Airways:** All BA flights depart **Terminal 5** *except* those listed below.

The following **British Airways** flights depart **Terminal 3:** Bangkok, Bucharest, Budapest, Gibraltar, Helsinki, Lisbon, Prague, Vienna and Warsaw.

The following **British Airways** flights depart **Terminal 1:** Amman, Baku, Belfast, Cairo, Dublin, Hanover, Luxembourg, Lyon, Marseille, Rotterdam, Tbilisi and Tel Aviv. *Contact no: 0844 493 0787.*

***** United Airlines.** All United Airways depart **Terminal 1** *except* those listed below.

The following **United Airlines** flights depart **Terminal 4:** Houston and New York (Newark). *Contact No. 0845 844 4777*

Heathrow terminals by airline excluding BA & United Airlines (see above).

Airline	T	Code	Telephone	Airline	T	Code	Telephone
Aegean Airlines	1	A3	0871 200 0040	Iran Air	3	IR	020 7409 0971
Aer Lingus	1	EI	0871 718 5000	Japan Airlines	3	JL	0844 856 9700
Aeroflot	4	SU	020 7355 2233	JAT Airways	4	JU	020 8976 6000
Aeromexico	4	AM	0800 977 5533	Jet Airways	4	9W	0808 101 1199
Air Algerie	4	AH	020 7486 8068	Kenya Airways	4	KQ	020 8283 1818
Air Astana	4	KC	01293 596 622	Kingfisher Airlines	4	IT	0800 047 0810
Air Canada	3	AC	0871 220 1111	KLM Royal Dutch A'lines	4	KL	0871 231 0000
Air China	3	CA	020 3275 0200	Korean Air	4	KE	0800 413 0000
Air France	4	AF	0871 663 3777	Kuwait Airways	4	KU	020 7412 0007
Air India	4	AI	020 8560 9996	Libyan Arab Airlines	4	LN	020 88972700
Air Malta	4	KM	0906 103 0012	LOT Polish Airlines	1	LO	0845 601 0949
Air Mauritius	4	MK	020 8834 5800	Lufthansa	1	LH	0871 945 9747
Air New Zealand	1	NZ	0800 028 4149	Malaysia Airlines System	4	MH	0871 423 9090
Alitalia	4	AZ	0871 424 1424	MEA Middle East Airlines	3	ME	020 7467 8010
All Nippon Airways	3	NH	020 8762 8977	Oman Air	3	WY	0844 482 2309
American Airlines	3	AA	0844 499 7300	Pakistan Int'l Airlines	3	PK	020 7287 3342
Arik Air	4	W3	0844 482 2324	Qantas	3	QF	0845 774 7767
Asiana Airlines	1	OZ	020 7304 9900	Qatar Airways	4	QR	0844 846 8380
Austrian Airlines	1	OS	0970 124 2625	Royal Air Maroc	4	AT	020 730 758 00
Azerbaijan Airlines	4	J2	0870 760 5757	Royal Brunei Airlines	4	BI	020 7584 6660
Biman Bangladesh A'lines	4	BG	020 7629 0252	Royal Jordanian	3	RJ	0871 911 2112
British Airways	**	BA	0844 493 0787	SAS	3	SK	020 8990 7000
brussels airlines	1	SN	0905 609 5609	Saudi Arabian Airlines	4	SV	0871 200 4433
Bulgaria Air	4	FB	020 7637 7637	Singapore Airlines	3	SQ	0844 800 2380
Cathay Pacific Airways	3	CX	020 8834 8888	South African Airways	1	SA	0844 375 9681
China Eastern Airlines	4	MU	020 7935 2676	Sri Lankan Airlines	4	UL	0330 808 0800
China Southern Airlines	4	CZ	+86 20 22 39 56	Swiss International A'lines	1	LX	0845 601 0956
Croatia Airlines	1	OU	0844 371 0310	TAM	1	JJ	020 8741 2005
Cyprus Airways	1	CY	020 8359 1333	TAP Air Portugal	1	TP	0845 601 0932
Delta	4	DL	0871 221 1222	Tarom	4	RO	020 3102 5480
Egypt Air	3	MS	0844 822 1110	Thai Airways International	3	TG	0844 561 0911
El Al Israel Airlines	1	LY	020 7121 1400	Transaero	1	UN	+7 495 788 8080
Emirates	3	EK	0844 800 2777	Tunisair	4	TU	020 7734 7644
Ethiopian Airlines	3	ET	0800 635 0644	Turkish Airlines	3	TK	0844 800 6666
Etihad Airways	4	EY	020 3450 7300	Turkmenistan Airlines	3	T5	+993 12 94 00 39
Eva Air	3	BR	020 7380 8300	United Airlines	***	UA	0845 844 4777
Finnair	3	AY	0870 241 4411	US Airways	1	US	0845 600 3300
Germanwings	1	4U	0906 294 1918	Uzbekistan Airways	4	HY	020 7034 2090
Gulf Air	4	GF	020 8976 5100	Virgin Atlantic Airways	3	VS	0844 874 7747
Iberia	5	IB	0870 609 0500	Virgin Atlantic Little Red	1	VS	0844 874 7747
Icelandair	1	FI	0844 811 1190	Vueling	3	VY	0906 754 7541

Whilst this table looks like last May's Call Sign article, 8 airlines have gone, there are 2 new airlines, 12 telephone number changes and BA now operate out of T1 as well as T3 and T5...

from the editor's desk

Car sitting?

You may have heard that **Aspect**, a London property maintenance firm, has been employing young people with clean driving licences to 'van-sit' their fleet of vehicles so that while the engineer is inside the premises to carry out work, the van-sitters watch out for wardens and just drive round the block if one comes along. According to company MD **Will Davies**, they can even double park if necessary.

Mr Davies claims that it is cheaper to pay a young person £8 an hour than to keep paying PCNs of up to £120 and even more if clamping is involved. He also claims that the scheme is within the law and justifies it by adding that the money they would have paid out in fines "...goes to excellent use paying for young people to have meaningful employment. Everyone wins." Aspect says it has approached traffic enforcement offices for TfL and the City of Westminster to ensure the scheme is within the law and is even thinking of rolling out the scheme to include anyone who needs a car-sitter while they attend their meeting!

Sounds like a brilliant idea – but what will it do to London traffic if everyone with a car-sitter double parks wherever they want? The simple answer is that it will bring chaos to London's streets and I am 100% against it – unless taxis can do it as well! Perhaps we could offer passengers a discount on the fare if they taxi-sit the cab while we pop out to get a cuppa or use the loo! I wonder what NSL would say...

Westminster wee problem solved...

Quite a number of **Dial-a-Cab** drivers have contacted **Call Sign** of late to complain about the inconvenience of public conveniences under the Westminster banner! Several drivers pointed to articles in trade press reporting that public toilets in the Westminster area had been privatised and that the new owners, **Carlisle Support Services** – which is owned by former Conservative Party Chairman **Lord Michael Ashcroft** – were not opening them as they had been before privatisation and even those that actually opened, were closing early. Many taxi drivers mentioned Lincoln's Inn and Queensway as two examples.

Wording on the privatisation contract said that at least half the toilets should remain free to use, leaving the suggestion that 50 percent of Westminster toilets would now charge for usage – Aldwych, Great Marlborough Street and Hyde Park leading the way with a 50p entrance wee-fee.

In response, Carlisle claimed that toilets in Westminster were open "during the agreed hours" and said that stories to the contrary were "completely false."

A Westminster spokesperson said that the council expected Carlisle to abide by the terms of the lease and that their lawyers had been working to try and sort out any "problems."

Soon after the articles appeared, public conveniences in Westminster reopened when what had been described as a legal row between Westminster Council and Carlisle was said to have been resolved following a four-week closure at many toilets.

Westminster had also threatened to bring in temporary loos after many public toilets across the borough had been locked, but the dispute has now been settled. However, there is a suggestion that Carlisle wanted bigger profits and the result is that toilet attendants will now be replaced by a



mobile cleaning service that travels between facilities. The inference of that is that if a sudden mess appears in a toilet, it will stay there indefinitely until the cleaning service visits the toilet again on its never-ending rounds, rather than an attendant getting out his mop and bucket! That, of course, is on top of the 50p admission charges at all the popular toilets!

A Westminster Council spokesman said: "Positive talks took place resulting in toilets being reopened across the city and a new cleaning operation being put in place. We will continue to monitor the situation."

Looks like everyone is happy, except those who need to use the loos because the fragrances are going to become substantially stronger and you will be paying for the pleasure of sniffing them up!

What if...

Inside this issue you will read of the sale of **Addison Lee** to US private equity firm, the **Carlyle Group** – not to be confused with the Carlisle group in the above wee story! The cost is said to have been £300million, which will probably make Addy Lee an even more dangerous adversary. Am I jealous? Of course I am. Do I begrudge it to them? No, not if I'm honest because whilst this magazine isn't famous for being nice to **John Griffin** and co, no one can deny that his achievement in building a company up from one car is remarkable.

Towards the end of 2002, **Brian Rice** and the Board of the time informed drivers of an offer to subscribers on this circuit made by UK private equity firm **Sovereign Capital**. Their MD, **Peter Brooks** (cover pic), held several question and answer sessions with DaC drivers and explained that his company were prepared to pay £11.4million for our circuit, giving drivers several thousand pounds each – more for long-term members.

According to Peter Brooks, Sovereign – then in Buckingham Gate and now in Victoria Street – would have pumped £millions into making Dial-a-Cab a huge success, while seemingly wanting little in return so far as working practises were concerned. In an interview with **Call Sign** at the time, he said that there would have been no change in subscriptions and no change in who ran the company – ie **Brian Rice**. Every DaC driver would retain their vote because as they pointed out, if drivers just took the money and ran, there would be no company left, so it was in their interest to keep us happy. He said that **Call Sign** would continue to be published and remain uncensored – as it still is.

He did say that there would undoubtedly be decisions taken with a more commercial view –

capital investment being an example, but added that since we were all interested in the same thing – ie success – Sovereign were confident that opinions would be sought on a broad basis with decisions taken openly and sensibly.

AGMs would have continued with members able to put their views forward with Mr Brooks telling this mag that Sovereign would be stupid to disregard sensible suggestions from drivers with all their knowledge of the taxi business. He also denied rumours that DaC would abolish gratuities and run-ins and re-iterated that they needed drivers to be happy.

But what about minicabs? Would Sovereign bring private hire onto the circuit? Peter Brooks was nothing if not honest in his answer. He said:

"It is not our current intention to take on private cars, but we have to respond to market forces and give the customer what they want. We understand that Deutsche Bank, your largest customer, gives private hire car operators almost half as much business as they give you. Some trips lend themselves to private cars and some individuals amongst your customers prefer them. Dial-a-Cab have been asked by their largest customers if they can provide such services because they like the way you do it – they like your style, your service, your systems and support. You might even get new customers for the circuit by offering a private car service. We would all benefit from controlling a small fleet of well maintained, clean and professionally driven cars rather than see a steady leakage of your business to the better managed of the private hire fleets. You could offer customers what they want, when they want it, for the variety of reasons that they now seek to use ground transportation."

We asked if Sovereign would introduce uniforms? The answer was a definitive no. Would they strip us of our assets? Again the answer was no. Would we leave our then-home of Brunswick House and move into a call centre leaving Sovereign with the money? Nope!

Then the question that everyone wanted to know the answer to and the one non-members said we wouldn't have the balls to ask: Just what would Brian Rice get out of this? The disappointing answer to those non-members was that he was doing it to give drivers the option of deciding their future. If it went through, he would get the same as us!

And finally, what were Sovereign's long term ambitions? Mr Brooks said they invested in businesses to expand them and fully expected to do that with DaC and to make profits for themselves and the drivers. He said in the interview that we would all directly participate in the growth of the company.

In the end, the bid faltered due to a disagreement over who should pay the substantial costs of £175,000 although the BoM probably sensed an anti-feeling with PH being a definite no-no at the time.

But do you ever stop to wonder what might have happened had we said yes? And I speak as someone who would probably have voted no at the time. But look at the Griffins...

See you in July....

As usual, **Call Sign** doesn't publish a June issue so if you are going away to recharge your batteries, then have a great time and we'll see you again in July...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Dial-a-Cab and GetTaxi...

I feel duty bound to inform Members of an event which occurred after the last edition of *Call Sign* was published. In the March edition I stated that **Dial-a-Cab** would not permit our Members to carry in their vehicles equipment belonging to GetTaxi (GT) (as would be the case with the equipment of any other organisation that was in competition with us). Members had a simple choice - they either had (in this case) Dial-a-Cab equipment or GT equipment; they had to make a choice, one or the other but not both.

In the April issue, the Editor wrote that he had been informed that GT had received work via the Addison Lee platform. As I explain below, GT have explained to us that this is wrong and so there is a correction published in this regard on page 16, which is in the same place as the original article.

I received a letter dated 4 April from GT's solicitors stating they intended to take Dial-a-Cab to Court unless certain issues were rectified. They stated that the Editor's remark was untrue and together with the stance Dial-a-Cab had taken regarding the fitting of GT's equipment to Dial-a-Cab vehicles, it had resulted in a loss for GT as some drivers then had GT equipment removed from their vehicles.

Obviously with the threat of Court action, I had no alternative but to pass the correspondence over to our solicitors and a series of letters went back and forth between the two parties.

I do not intend to dissect every letter, but just to relay the pertinent points. Otherwise this magazine would be filled with the correspondence concerned. In fact I did not intend to say anything about this, but given the statement released by GT on the LTDF website, it is important that I set out Dial-a-Cab's side of the story.

GT said we could not forbid our Members to have their equipment fitted to our vehicles and that what our Editor had printed was also untrue.

GT wanted us to allow their equipment into our vehicles; they wanted us to publish an apology and a correction in the next edition of *Call Sign* (this one) in relation to what I said about forbidding GT's equipment in our taxis and also in relation to what the Editor said. They also wanted compensation and for Dial-a-Cab to pay their legal costs, otherwise proceedings could be escalated.

I refused and stated we would refute their claim regarding the fitting of their equipment to our vehicles and refused to pay any compensation or costs, neither would we agree to the apology and correction they had demanded.

We indicated - as I think is right - that we would print a correction about the comments of the Editor in the next edition of *Call Sign* (ie this one), which in my opinion should be the case as he wrote the original piece. They would know what it contained when they read our magazine. GT subsequently stated that it was minded to accept this proposal provided that Dial-a-Cab agreed to pay GT's solicitor's costs (of 5k) and also for me personally to sign an apology and correction about the Editor's comments. I have refused these demands and pressed ahead with the correction, which is now on page 16.

It would appear this situation has now



been resolved, although I have a feeling GT might take exception to me writing this piece. I know they are new to the Taxi industry in London, but what they must understand is that as a custodian of this Society I must inform my Members regarding anything that is pertinent to their business.

It is a great pity that solicitors had to get involved in this situation as all GT had to do was pick up the telephone and speak to me. We could then have arrived at the point where our Editor would state that he had been contacted by GT and they said his piece was untrue, which is exactly where we are now!

Law Commission

As you are all probably aware, the Law Commission is doing a study of Taxis and Private Hire in England and Wales and will make a recommendation to Government, which could become law.

The three radio circuits have spent considerable time in meetings with the Commission in an attempt to relay our feelings and have also completed a written response to the Commission.

It would seem their investigations has caused considerable consternation within our trade, they have even received over three thousand written submissions from the trade nationwide.

The Law Commission has now published an interim report, which in the main is extremely favourable to the Taxi trade in London. It would appear that TfL will retain their powers within London, the radio circuits in London will not have to be licensed and cross border hirings will not be allowed.

Consequently, with the release of their *Interim Report*, it looks pretty positive for London, which is quite gratifying after all the work that has been done by the radio circuits in an attempt to influence the Commission's view - work that has been aided by some other organisations within our trade that have also presented their written submissions to the Commission.

After speaking with some of those other organisations, it would appear that our views are almost identical, which I hope will have a bearing on the outcome of the inquiry.

Summer

Well summer looks to have finally arrived and to those of you going away for a holiday, I hope you have a great time and come back with your batteries fully charged up for what I hope will be a much busier time than we have had of late...

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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John Griffin, who founded his mini-cab firm of **Addison Lee** in 1975 with just one car, has now sold the company for a reputed £300million. Although publicly advertising a fleet of 4500, the recent appeal case revealed the total as 2900. The new owners are US private equity firm, **The Carlyle Group**.

Mr Griffin will retain a minority stake in the business and share the proceeds of the sale with his two sons and the family of Addison Lee joint partner, **Lenny Foster**. He will also remain as company Chairman.

Much of the rest of the money paid by Carlyle Group – who are based in Washington close to the White House and which also owns the **RAC** and health food chain **Holland & Barrett** – will be used to reinvest in the business and drive expansion plans.

According to company MD **Liam Griffin** – who will also be staying in the business alongside his father and become CEO – the company will look to expand outside of London. Addison Lee already has joint ventures in New York and Paris and is said to be looking to expand into other international cities.

ADDISON LEE SOLD



Liam Griffin is CEO

The drivers do not have any shares and will not be included in any windfall.

The Carlyle group are said to have around

\$170 billion in assets with over 1,400 employees in 33 countries globally. As of last year, they had investments in over 200 companies.

For almost 5 years, traffic passing number One Hyde Park was held up to the Nth degree so that London's most luxurious apartments could be built and earn the Candy brothers a fortune. Now another set of brothers are going to do something similar, but...

It won't be in an out!

The havoc in Knightsbridge began in June 2006 and for around five years saw traffic attempting to make the 3-minute journey from Kensington Gore to Knightsbridge Station in less than 15 minutes! Blocking the way was the demolition of Edinburgh Gate and Bowater House, followed by the building of the luxury development known as **Number One Hyde Park**.

With at least one of those penthouses and its magnificent views of the park and Serpentine said to have been sold for in excess of £100million and others for over £80million with £30million coming on the cheaper side, **Christian and Nick Candy** seem to have done ok – even allowing for the horrendous inconvenience to the rest of us for all those years!

Now another set of brothers are looking to do something similar – albeit on a much smaller scale – with billionaire brothers **David and Simon Reuben** looking to turn the former **Naval and Military Club** on Piccadilly, known to taxi drivers as the **In and Out Club** because of the signs on the gateposts and a name that even members began using, into an ultra-luxury residence.

The building was the London townhouse to Prime Minister **Lord Palmerston** from 1784 until 1865, then the following year and until 1999, it became the In and Out Club.

Now the Reuben brothers plan converting the building to an eleven bedroom, nine bathroom development complete with an underground swimming pool. Just in case the buyers enjoy watching *Strictly Come Dancing* with a nice glass of 2004 vintage *Chateau Margaux* – sold at a very reasonable £650 – to hand, then the redevelopment comes complete with an 85foot ballroom and a 35,000 bottle capacity wine cellar!

But the question has to be whether the development will make the already awful traffic conditions along Piccadilly even worse. In theory, the work should be contained within the building, but theories don't cause hold-ups. However building work does...



Will rebuilding work cause traffic chaos?



MARTIN CORDELL MOVING

Formed almost 50 years ago, the taxi trade's premier accountants, Martin Cordell & Co, are moving from their home at Alfred Street, Bow to new offices around two miles away in Limehouse. The distance is short but the facilities and comfort are much improved. In addition to providing their clients with modern surroundings, there is now also free and secure parking in Kilner Street E14.

Martin Cordell & Co can now be found at:

Unit 5/6 Quebec Wharf, 14 Thomas Road, Limehouse E14 7AF

Their phone number of 020 8980 7161 remains unchanged as is their 9 Church Street, Stanmore office.

Jery's World



Cabbies Cabinet? I fink that's where they kept the cabbies files!

After just 215 out of 25,000 taxi drivers respond to his idea, the Mayor says..

Cabbies Cabinet? Not Enough interest!

Late last year a meeting was held with taxi drivers regarding Mayor Boris Johnson's proposal of what he called a **Cabbies Cabinet**. In November, the Managing Director of Surface Transport, **Leon Daniels**, wrote to every licensed taxi driver and outlined the commitments made by the Mayor in his manifesto - which included the proposal to set up that Cabbies Cabinet.

Sadly, just 215 drivers responded - fewer than 1% of all drivers - to the letter and although it was claimed that those responses contained many positive comments and ideas as to the constitution and role of such a cabinet, the Mayor felt that there was not a significant consensus across the table on the formation of a larger representative body and that the arrangements already in place served the needs of the taxi trade as a whole. As a result, TfL will continue to meet with representatives from **LTDA**, **Unite** and **LCDC** on a formal, regular basis and TfL will continue to liaise and meet with all driver groups, associations and representatives as required.

TfL will also continue to hold regular open forums with all driver groups, individual drivers and trade stakeholders providing anyone involved in the taxi trade the opportunity to meet with TfL to raise and discuss key issues on a regular basis.



"Not a significant consensus across the table."



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KPM, THE VITO AND EVERYTHING ELSE!

Call Sign's Vito driver Gary Cox (O46) asks a relevant question...



Just as **Mann & Overton**, the sole provider of London taxis to the London market, moved into its posh new premises in **Carnwath Road SW6** - just a stones' throw from their old house, come office, come shed on Wandsworth Bridge Road - **KPM** were merging with a finance company in Matthias Road, Newington Green. The alarm bells must have been ringing loud and clear for all to hear. The fact that the **FX4R** taxicab on offer was having asthma attacks at the thought of Highgate West Hill and PM **Margaret Thatcher** was demanding competition from the pulpit of the Conservative Party conference, it was the first and last thing M&O needed with letters starting to arrive at their Coventry based head office, not unlike **Harry Potters'** first film. Mind you, this time it was n't via owl post but via the lawyers!

So Coventry conceded that the market had to be opened up and with a bag of spanners being offered as a taxi, who could blame them. Let someone else sell them and halve the blame!

So KPM emerged as a sales force and having built up a reputation for solving small prob-

lems such as leaking boots and servo and engine bracket upgrades, having a finance licence and possibly the most important plus for them of being on the *right* side of town, it was rubbing M&O's face in it!

But time moves on, KPM's big boss, **Peter DaCosta**, comes out bravely and confesses via the newspapers that all he ever wanted was to be a dress designer but that KPM - aka **Eco City** - have a love affair with **Mercedes Benz** and the **Vito**, which only came about with a long and protracted courtship with **Boris Johnson** being the best man at this marriage of convenience.

On the wedding day, KPM gave Mercedes a turning circle all the way from the Midlands via **Uncle Penso**, who held the patent.

The marriage has endured for five years. Will it survive the seven year itch? The question, some thirty years later being asked by other Mercedes dealers across the south is why can't they sell them? Also, those same dealers who only have the licence to service and repair the cab are screaming why they can't get the rear steering parts for three weeks. They must be thinking that it's all pain but not much gain.

The question is whether KPM/Eco City will allow anyone else to sell the Vito taxi or will Mercedes come up with a better turning circle? Everyone is leaning on the gate just talking. But one thing is for certain; Mercedes never

got this big without the odd compromise - then again neither did KPM!

Mind you, what if **Nissan** with their **NV200** began courting KPM, just as they had courted **LTI** all those years earlier? Then the seven year itch could become no problem for anyone.

Whatever happens, one thing is for certain. Still watch out for one name - **DaCosta**. But it's not Peter, it's daughter **Sara** who is described as the Service Manager in KPM's literature.

One warranty dealer told me with a wink in her eye that they have applied for six proprietor licences due to the fact that Mercedes have demanded a request courtesy cab for its dealers. Plus they have had no trouble knocking out second-hand cabs. But an interesting remark in passing from the young lady was worth noting. She said in her view all Merc taxicabs should be black. When was the last time you heard a dealer call it a taxicab? Mind you, I suspect that a dealership close to Heathrow and open 24/7 will still struggle to understand the needs of we impatient drivers - ie I want it yesterday!

Fancy a job as a consultant or a salesman? Contact a Mercedes dealership near you because one thing is certain; at present they are fishing in deep water without a boat. But never forget that KPM supplied the life raft to the cab trade when it was needed.

Gary Cox
Call Sign Online

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LEN DAVIS

Call Sign was recently contacted by long-time Dial-a-Cab driver, Bill Chatterway (A43), who gave us the sad news that former DaC driver **Len Davis (ex-A86)** had died in February just short of his 86th birthday. He was laid to rest at Eltham crematorium on 15th March.

Bill told *Call Sign*: "I had a phone call from Len's wife Barbara who told me the sad news that Len had passed away on 19th February 2013. I know that he retired many years ago, but I thought some of the old boys would like to know about the sad news and perhaps have a quiet thought about Len."

Those drivers may remember him better as 'New Fetter' Len because he always said that he did all the locals from one of our biggest accounts at the time – Salomon Brothers in that street – and he meant it!

When he retired, most of the lads on the old Finsbury Square rank clubbed together and gave him a very expensive camera to retire with. I seem to remember that *Call Sign* came along to the Finz that evening and took some photos of the presentation to put into the magazine."

Former dispatcher and current driver Neil Davis (F50) is Len's son and to him, Len's widow Barbara and to the whole Davis family, we send our deepest sympathy...



The Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

DACCU AGM

Share 3 – the 7% account

While on the subject of the 7% account, we get calls almost every day about it to ask if it is open or when is it going to re-open? To be honest with you, we just don't know until the last minute. As you probably know, we pay this ultra-high interest through loans. So when our bank account gets a little low, we open it up again and close it when in our estimation it is enough.

We can't just take in loads as it will not work, so when we know we will let you know either via your terminal or for those who are no longer on Dial-a-Cab, by phone. I hope this clears up any queries you may have, if not just give the DACCU office a call.

Don't forget that if you want to put money into the 7% Share 3 account, you have to be a member and have been saving as well. These are in the credit union rules and those parts of your savings are different to the 7% account and refer to the **Share 1** account, which is where you can take a loan – usually on a 3 to 1 basis. So if you have £1000 of savings, we would grant you a £3000 loan. The £1000 savings will stay in your account and when the loan becomes equal with your savings, you can if you want to pay off the loan.

I hope the above all makes sense to you, if not and you want more info on DACCU then either give Terry, Brian or myself a call on 0207 729 8171. If you have trouble getting through, just keep trying.

I think that just about covers everything so i will finish with my usual be lucky but be careful out there...

John Riley (K38)
DACCU Vice President

Hello again all you happy campers, I hope you didn't become frozen to your steering wheels during the bitterly cold winter and early spring! When I first heard about global warming, I wondered – just as many of you no doubt did – whether we would all be going to work in shorts and having BBQs at Christmas! Not quite like that is it!

So what has that got to do with the DACCU AGM? Well as this year was the worst attended meeting that I can remember with you all either being huddled up at home or frozen to your cabs, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who did turn up. But as much as I like seeing their little cherubic faces, some new ones would have been nice.

The meeting was over in 25 minutes and once again a no-interest on Share 1 was given by the members. Auditor Terry Macpherson congratulated the DACCU Board for their work over the past year with once again a surplus being made for the DaC Credit Union, meaning yet another successful year. As the meeting closed, refreshments were served.

Our credit union has grown into one of the largest in the country – that is savings per member – so I would like to congratulate you all on that. It really is an amazing achievement.

The **7% high interest account** – or what we in the CU office call **Share 3** – has been an outstanding success and is yet another reason why I fail to understand how those who put money into the scheme fail to show up at the meeting. All I can say is that you must think we're doing an excellent job and trust us! Still, there's always next year.

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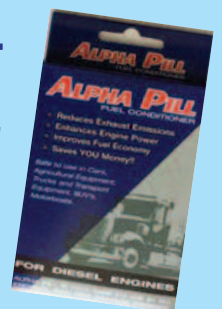
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When I joined the **Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Service**, I became a member of an exclusive band of men - there were no women on the circuit at that time. I had also acquired a brand new FX4, all black and shiny with built in draughts and running water whenever it rained!

If I can recollect correctly, the Board consisted of Chairman **Martin Gellman**, **Jack Taylor**, **Aubrey Siteman**, **Phil Emden**, **Phil Messias**, **Peter Fennymore** and I think **Ken Burns** plus two others. Jack acted as the Salesman / general dog's body and Aubrey was Treasurer. It seemed as though some of them had been there since Moses came down from the mountain with the two tablets of stone. I think it was Aubrey who said to Moses that if he was giving away those commandments for nothing, why did he not go for a job lot!

The Secretary was **John Bernardout**. He worked in a little room at the back on the ground floor of Shirland Road. In this room was also a young French girl who went by the name of **Denise Zemma**. If you go to **Dial-a-Cab House** now and look on the ground floor, you will still see Denise working at managing our accounts!

It wasn't long after I began working in the office that John and Aubrey decided to start a small business of their own renting out videos. No, they never made it to the size of *Blockbusters*; in fact it barely got off the ground.

During that period, John Bernardout wanted to portray the image of Roger Moore in the television programme The Saint, so he bought himself a sports car. I think it was a Lotus, which at that time had an aluminum head on the engine, this was his big mistake.

It soon incurred a slight engine problem and John asked *Gentle Giant* dispatcher, **Mickey Faust** - who had been a mechanic - to try and fix it. All went well until it came to Mickey needing to tighten down the engine head. Not realising his own strength, he turned the ratchet socket with his 20 stone baulk to find he was stronger than the engine head, which took on a completely different shape!

During that time, there were two brothers on the circuit, one of whom used to come into the control room to dispatch; his name was **Russell Poluck** and his brother was **Gordon**. Russell was the driving force behind the **Taxi Driver of the Year** show while Gordon was a Toastmaster overseeing many functions - including the yearly ODRTS dinner and dance. Both were larger than life characters with Gordon also becoming a Board member. Sadly in recent years, Gordon's health has deteriorated and he now resides in a north London nursing home. Russell is still on DaC and still organises the annual TDoY dinner and ball.

Two other brothers in the 70s and 80s were the **Griffiths brothers** (D08 and G80) who I became great friends with. They were the *Del Boys* of the taxi trade, always ducking and diving but always in a friendly and humorous way. Their base was Heathrow Airport, although they lived way out east. If they were not at the flyers, you'd find them at one of their favourite central London hotels where they treated the doormen as their brothers! I got to know them well through the Society and also because they used the same Dalston garage for work to be

THE UNTOLD HISTORY OF DIAL-A-CAB

Bits you may not know as remembered

by Tom Whitbread



done on their taxis. This garage was **Tommy Whitfords** and I first went there when it was part of **Sam Cooper's** garage in Ashwin Street. Sam was one of the garages that kept open during the fuel strikes and taxi drivers were supplied with their diesel. Many ODRTS men were customers of Tommy Whitford and Sam Cooper, in fact when Tommy moved to Tyssen Street, I joined him for around 6 months to do valeting on cabs due for overhaul. During that period I was able to put faces to callsigns I knew whilst dispatching as they came in for their yearly overhaul.

When Martin Gellman left the BoM, Peter Fennymore became Chairman and his son Bob became evening supervisor in the control room.

Bob was rather a large young man who enjoyed his food. I became quite friendly with him and when he married a young telephonist from the control room, he asked me to be an usher at the wedding. It was a shame that during their marriage, Bob's mother died and not long after that his wife moved out and moved in with Peter. When it happened, Bob was badly affected and left DaC. I lost track of him, but someone once told me he ended up working for a minicab company.

I have never said that licensed London taxi drivers are saints and if they think that they can gain an unfair advantage over another driver to trap a job, many will do it. After 30 years as the Complaints / Compliance officer for the Society, I reached the point when I could think just like those who were out to cheat their colleagues. Whether this was a good or bad point, I don't know, but after all those years I had reached the level where I could read a drivers body language. Lying to me was pointless.

In those early years of being a taxi driver, I would be pushing one of my children in the pram up Dalston Lane or walking them to school when I'd hear a taxi hooter and a friendly hello or on occasion, a much richer and fruitier acknowledgment! In those days, drivers

were much closer and friendly; if you broke down it would not be long before a fellow *Lords* driver would be offering their services to get you going or trotting off to get you a coffee.

It was so nice to know you belonged to a great band of friends, if you worked nights and you called in with an emergency, the despatcher would keep his foot down on the transmission pedal so you could guarantee that someone would hear it and be with you in minutes. There was a sense of camaraderie that you got because drivers could hear their friends and what was happening to them. Nowadays, because of technology, you are isolated in your metal cage.

Over the past few weeks, a number of DaC drivers have asked me if my wife is going to decorate our balcony - on the corner of Dalston Lane and Parkholme Road - with her usual floral display.

I think that will be dependent on the water company and wherever she buys the plants. When you have 11 window boxes, 11 hanging baskets and 8 half-moon baskets, it takes a lot of water to keep them fresh and we have found that this has caused our water bill to shoot up to a cost that makes us wonder if it is worth doing just to keep the other inhabitants of Dalston happy.

Anyone passing my address will see the lower windows boarded up; this was after a passerby had rang the police to say they had seen some drug addicts breaking into the basement. The first I knew was when five police cars, two police vans, a dog van and helicopter turned up to arrest six youths by chasing them into the back garden and then dragging them out via the windows! Perhaps they didn't like the colour of the doors!

This was a bit different from a month previous when we had another break-in, which turned into a riot with youths bouncing dustbins on cars at the traffic lights! They also threw a table through a window and broke up street furniture to use as batons to hit one another with. It took three 999 phone calls from me and 1 hour and 15 minutes before the first police car turned up (well done Mr Cameron on reducing the police - although I bet not in the Chelsea area). Other neighbours had also called 999 but to no avail. On my third attempt, the operator said: "Oh, is it still going on!"

So if we have a lottery windfall, my wife will hopefully do her floral display so that you have a nice view to look at whilst sitting at the traffic lights.

Have a nice month to come and I hope the work and weather improve...

Tom Whitbread
DaC Board Member

We are repeatedly told that we are the eyes and ears of the City and Metropolitan Police and we should be diligent of suspicious activity. Constant appeals are directed at us for information following various incidents; they rely on our quick-witted decisions on the road putting ourselves in danger by allowing police and emergency vehicles to pass at speed unhindered; reducing delays is a given.

We give the police a one-way reciprocal agreement, yet you and I know that at times we are treated as underclass and with disdain.

As recently as March 13th at 14.15 hours this year, I positioned my taxi correctly in Bridge Street ready to negotiate Parliament Square. A rather irate 4x4 was attempting to invade my space aggressively lane crossing, incessantly sounding its horn. I ignored this provocative act, kept my cool and ignored this road rage blockhead. The lights changed, I accelerated quickly indicating to turn at Great George Street, all the time being aware that the 4x4 was trying to overtake on the inside. At both the Birdcage Walk lights and QVM the 4x4 screeched alongside me. A young lady thrust a police warrant in my face and in a fit of pique said:

"You tried to run me off the road, you nearly killed my baby daughter; I'm going to report you."

She repeated the accusation like a practiced mantra and in that moment I felt vulnerable; maybe a court case, my licence could be in jeopardy or even revoked.

Fortuitously, my VIP **Dial-a-Cab** account passenger confirmed that the 4x4 driver was in the wrong lane and gave me her business card

Police enquiry: Burglary in Barking

Police appeal for witnesses and information following a burglary and assault in Barking

Police were called at approx 23:00hrs on Monday 1 April to Ripple Road, Barking, close to the flyover, following reports of a residential burglary. The suspects were chased from the address by two men who were subsequently assaulted by the suspects. It is believed that the suspects fled in a black taxi which they had parked on the pavement next to the bus stop which serves the Route 173 and 287 services towards Dagenham.

Anyone with any information is asked to call PC Townsend at Barking CID on 020 3276 1043, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Road rage of an off-duty police officer...

leads Stephen Berndes (R14) to come to a remarkable conclusion!



asking me to keep her informed. I also notified my CCTV provider to retain images on the memory card.

So now, after 23 years of driving a taxi and for peace of mind, I have decided to apply for membership of a taxi driver's association. But which one?

Having trawled through the taxi publications, three stand out as campaigning papers offering heavyweight legal protection;

Cab Trade News (Unite – The Union): They align themselves too closely with private hire and anyway, I don't know the words to keep the red flag flying. So that will never do...

Taxi (LTDA): Headed by that pugnacious General Secretary, Steve McNamara. An all-round 'class one' egg. Possibly...

The Badge (LCDC): That amiable accomplished thespian and all round bundle of tal-

ent at the helm, Grant Davis. Maybe...

I'm unable to make a definitive decision. But as luck would have it, a punter regaled me to the exploits of Steve McNamara in the boxing ring during his youth, so I called the LTDA Gen Sec and asked about his pugilistic past. His response? "I was useless, absolutely hopeless," he said! I have heard that Steve McNamara's modesty is said to be legendary and this was no exception.

Now I know that Grant Davis was said to be more than useful in the ring, so there seems to be an obvious match there! A charity event at York Hall or even Wembley Arena (subject to ticket availability) with Steve Bunce, the finest competitor on Radio 5Live's Fighting Talk, doing a running commentary. The thought seems compelling - a colossal media event raising money for taxi charities being the result.

From memory, our Henry Cooper was wont to use two metaphors to decide which fights to take on ie a big one will always beat a good little one and choose a good looking opponent, not an ugly one!

My money is on Steve McNamara, but the decision to which organisation I join will be made up for me. So let's get ready to rumble... and I don't mean from the protagonist's stomachs!

Stephen Berndes
Call Sign Online

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0203 487 0111



No volunteers for DaC Arbitrators!

When last year *Call Sign* ran a piece asking for Arbitrators, **Garry White (L65)** came first in an election where he was the only candidate and automatically became the tenth Arbitrator.

Arbitrators are used twice a year - when the situation arises - in final Appeals and having ten names available usually means that a meeting can always be convened at short notice with the five members required.

Now Garry has become a Dial-a-Cab Board member, so another Arbitration election was advertised in *Call Sign* to not just replace him, but also two long-standing DaC members - one who has decided to retire from taxi driving with a second who has become a journeyman and so no longer classifies as a member.



Garry and two others have to be replaced as Arbitrators - but no one has volunteered!

Sadly not one member has decided to put their names forward, so at present there are just seven Arbitrators.

Whilst rule 30 (b) mention ten Arbitrators, it doesn't actually specify that number as being a minimum, so it will have to be discussed to see whether the Arbitration committee can get by with just seven members.

However, if anyone out there fancies the idea of becoming an Arbitrator for the Society, speak to Company Secretary **Howard Pears** and he can then decide whether it is worth calling another election.

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers

Jack the Ripper tour...

The WCHCD is pleased to invite taxi drivers, their families and friends to join former **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Alan Goldsmith (ex-S45)** as he leads a guided walk through London's Whitechapel area.

The walk will be on Sunday 5th May 2013 starting from Whitechapel station at 10.30am. He will trace the footsteps of London - and perhaps the world's - most notorious killer, Jack the Ripper. Jack's gruesome crimes began in the Autumn of 1888 when prostitute **Mary Ann Nicholls** was found with her throat cut. As you walk through the areas where Jack carried out his crimes, be prepared to learn more of his heinous actions - luckily you will be walking in daylight!

Alan says that this is the best Jack the Ripper walk of all because you will visit four of the five murder sites - no other Guides cover more. And was there a link between Jack the Ripper and Charles Dickens? Possibly - but you will have to come on the walk to find out about it.

Alan Goldsmith, a WCHCD Liveryman and City of London Guide, assists with The Cab Guide Course run by the Company and is a working taxi driver. Alan will ask for a small donation for each person (£5 is suggested, but be generous if you think he's worth more). He will collect donations on the day and they will all be passed onto the WCHCD Charity fund. So bring as many friends and family as possible. No need to book - just turn up on the day..



COMPLAINTS RESULTS



A Complaints meeting was held on 26 March 2013. The results are below...

<u>Name / Callsign</u>	<u>Nature of Complaint</u>	<u>Verdict</u>
John Kiel (V76)	Driver signed on at home address in Romford, engaged his meter and then STC SW3 to gain a queue position <i>Rule 6, 11</i>	2 weeks susp
David Francis (T15J)	Driver booked into S50W from Olympia W14 and accepted a trip <i>Rules 3, 11</i>	2 weeks susp
James Forman (D60)	Driver signs on in early hours of the morning from Beckenham, books directly into SW12 and completes trip on a regular basis <i>Rules 6, 11</i>	2 weeks susp
Richard Chamberlain (C96)	Driver booked directly into S99 and accepted a trip from Kings Road, Fleet, when his true position was Sipson Lane near Heathrow <i>Rules 3, 11</i>	2 weeks susp
John Davis (V41)	Driver accepted fixed price trip, then POB and cleared it within 5 mins while still POB. Then booked into E14 and EC5 whilst in Sidcup <i>Rule 11</i>	Reduced on Appeal to 2 weeks susp

Written by it's editor George Lutfallah for the Chicago Dispatcher and reprinted by Call Sign

The homosexuals in my cab...

When I started driving a cab more than 20 years ago, dispatched calls came over the radio. Every driver could hear the dispatcher and talk to each other on the radio system we had. When a call would come, the dispatcher would give you an intersection to go to but wouldn't tell you at first exactly where the passenger was. They did it this way because if they announced on the radio where the fare was specifically, another driver who heard the order would often race to steal it. So the dispatcher would wait for you to announce back on the radio that you were at that intersection, and then he'd tell you the address.



It was 1992. I was 21 – half the age I am now. It was very late one night and I was next in line to get a fare. The dispatcher told me to go to Higgins and Busse. There was a hotel in the area where we got a lot of our calls so I suspected that's where it was. I got to the intersection and said on my radio, "Higgins and Busse, base." The dispatcher responded with "Hunters" and then came the laughter from the other drivers on the radio. Hunters was known to be a gay bar. Whenever a driver got a call to pick up from there, the jokes started flying over the two-way radio. It was common to hear something like: "I bet this will be your last fare of the night," implying the driver would go home with the gay patron!

When I pulled up to the door, two young men came out and got in my cab. They gave me their first destination where I was dropping off one of them. Then they started making out in the backseat of my cab. I was disgusted. It always bothered me when people would get intimate in my cab, but I admit it bothered me even more that it was two men. Even worse than that to me, they started whispering in each other's ears. No matter who the passengers were, I always hated, hated, hated it when I heard whispering coming from the back of my cab. What did they need to conceal from me? Did I do something wrong? Were they conspiring to run? Rob me? Or were the whispers just sweet nothings? You never knew.

Anyway, I didn't say a word as we drove to the first destination and they were so much into each other that they didn't say a word to me other than to give me the destination. When we arrived at the first stop, the men kissed each other goodnight and one got out.

I asked for the next destination and he gave me an address in Schiller Park. As I drove there, it went quiet for a while. Then the young man spoke to me: "So you know...you know that I'm..." He couldn't bring himself to say it, so I helped him and said, "Yeah I know." Then just to confirm, he said: "You know that I'm...gay?" I said that I did. Funnily enough he asked me how I knew - which was astounding to me! I had just picked him up from a gay-friendly bar and he had been making out with another dude! He thought he was being discreet, which was why they were whispering.

When we got close to the address, he asked me not to pull up to the door. Instead he asked me to pull into a nearby parking lot and to pull to the back where it was dark. I got angry. "What? Why?" I demanded.

He said he had to wait until his dad left for work. He said if he came in now, his dad would know where he had been and would beat him. "You can leave the meter running," he said unnecessarily. Of course I would.

I pulled into the lot and turned my cab around to face the front door of his apartment building and we waited. We sat in dead silence until my passenger blurted out, "Yeah, I hate it." "Hate what?" I asked. "I hate being gay," came the response. I was bewildered. My first thought was, 'then don't be gay.' I asked him what he meant.

He said he would never choose this life. He couldn't admit who he

was to people or he'd be ridiculed, and that was if he was lucky. He hated that he was such a disappointment to his father whom he said was otherwise a good man. He described his mother as a beautiful woman and said his parents had a great marriage. He wanted that for himself, but he simply couldn't. He was attracted to men and had no interest in women. That was all there was to it and he couldn't do anything about it.

We talked for about 45 minutes and then the lights came on in his apartment. A few minutes later his father

was out the door. He paid me, said thanks and left.

I thought a lot about what he had told me. Who would choose that life? The way society was in 1992, nobody would. He just wanted to be tolerated and I thought at the time that perhaps that really wasn't too much to ask. But over the years I changed my mind and eventually came to believe that was actually too little to ask.

Should gay people only be expected to be 'tolerated'? Should the best they can hope for is not to get beaten by their fathers? Is it really too much to expect liberty and equality under the law, just like the rest of us? I don't think it is.

What I do think though is that regardless of one's sexual orientation, you should never whisper in the back of my cab...

**George Lutfallah
Chicago Dispatcher
And for Call Sign Online**

**LONDON TAXIDRIVERS' FUND FOR
UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN**



NOTICE TO ALL DRIVERS

Come and celebrate our '85th Anniversary'

Thursday 27th June 2013

We welcome you to join us on our legendary outing to Southend-on-Sea, giving 300 'special needs' and underprivileged children a fun-packed day.

There will be a prize for the best decorated taxi, which has been kindly sponsored by VINCE WHITE TAXIS. Win a free engine service and MOT, or £150 – the choice is yours!

How about wearing fancy dress for the children as well?

In case you have any doubts, we welcome all drivers with liveried taxis, coloured taxis and those that have adverts on. This applies to all our outings.

As well as giving a great deal of pleasure to so many children, we promise you will have a brilliant and fun-filled day out.

~~~~~

**WITHOUT YOU THERE ARE NO OUTINGS**

**SO PLEASE CONTACT OUR DRIVERS' LIAISON:**

**Steve Bell on 07811 508 772**

**OR ENTER YOUR DETAILS ON THE VOLUNTEER PAGE OF OUR WEBSITE AT: [www.ltfuc.org.uk](http://www.ltfuc.org.uk)**

~~~~~

The Hon. President, Hon. Chair and Committee look forward to seeing you.



In last month's Call Sign I showed you how to protect your children from unsavoury websites on an iPad/iPhone. This month I'll do the same for Android tablets/phones.

The difference between **Apple** and **Android** devices is that Apple devices all have the same operating system (iOS), whereas Android devices support a multitude of Android-based operating systems (Gingerbread, Jellybean, Ice Cream Sandwich and other such sweetly-named variants). In addition, all iPhones and iPads are built by one entity: Apple. Android however, is supported on several hundred different types of hardware by many different vendors. Consequently, the Android market is somewhat fractured. Bear this in mind when following my guidelines! I've focussed on a **Google Nexus 7** tablet running **Jellybean** as this is a popular Android device - especially with children.

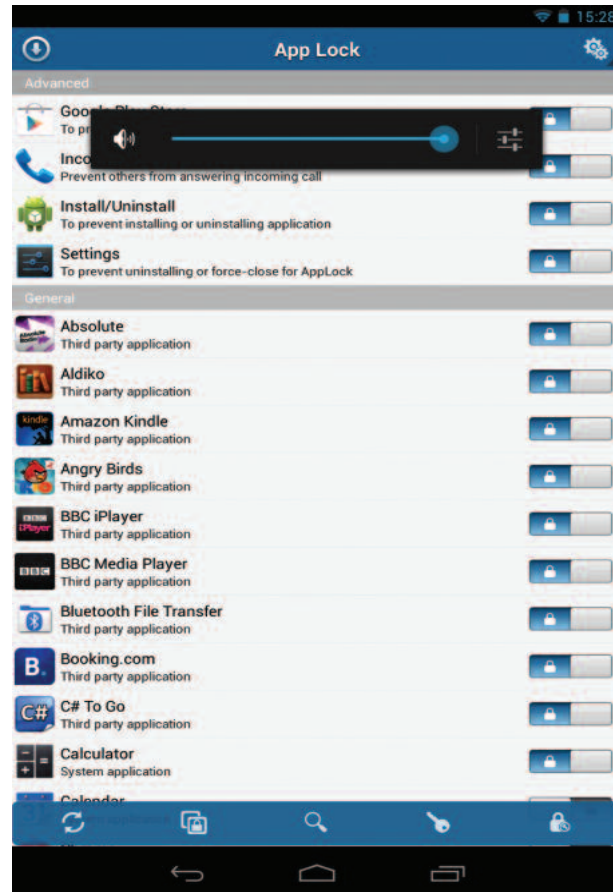
On to the suggestions:

1. Create a new user on your Android device for your child. When you sign in for the first time, you can choose not to sign into Google if you wish (this will ensure they don't have access to your Google account or the Google Play store).

2. Switch back to your user account and download and install an App from Google Play called '**APP Lock**' (free version - there's also a Pro version for £1.27). This will allow you to lock down every installed App you don't want your children to have access to. All you need do is set a password, then switch the lock to 'on' against any apps you want locked down under your child's account (see the screenshot). I would advise you to lock down Google Chrome and any other installed Web browsers. When you want to use the device yourself, you simply log out of your child's account and log back in under your own account. Here is the link to the App: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.domobile.applock>

The Internet has a myriad of information – however not all of it is suitable for the young. DaC Network Administrator Jon Winterburn concludes his articles...

Protecting Your Children Online (Part 2)



m.domobile.applock

3. If you do decide to log into your Google account under your child's device account (perhaps you want your kids to be able to access Google Play), it is still a good idea to switch off In-App purchases to prevent unwanted purchases. To do this, open the **Google Play store App**, then press **Menu**, **Settings**. Scroll to the **User Controls** section and tap '**Set or Change PIN**'. Set a code of your choice. Once this is done, tick the box that says '**Use PIN For Purchases**'.

4. Download and install an App from Google Play called '**Set DNS**' (free version - there's also a Pro version for £2.28). Run the App and change the DNS to: 208.67.222.222, 208.67.220.220. This will set the device's DNS (the method used to look up website addresses) to OpenDNS – the provider of safe, secure web browsing. See step 6 for more information.

5. **Back-up the device** so that all these settings are saved. This allows you to restore all these settings back to the device should something go wrong with it.

6. Finally, create a **free account**. You can do this at www.opendns.com. Once you have done this, you can add the IP address of your home internet connection (you can find this at www.whatismyip.org) to your profile and then you have the ability to further control internet access to any device on your network using the aforementioned DNS addresses (see step 4). You can also view reports of all internet access on this website. I would recommend you use the DNS addresses listed in step 4 on **all** devices in your home, as this will provide all your family with this layer of protection.

Previously, I advised you on a specific Web browser App to use in place of the default browser. Unfortunately that App (Sandbox Browser) is only available on iPad/iPhone and not on Android. However, there are a whole host of

child-safe Web browser Apps available on Google Play. Just take care to choose one that suits your needs and comes from a reputable source. A few I can recommend:

K9 Web Protection Browser is at:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bluecoat.k9.android>

Ranger Pro Safe Browser is at:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.gp.it.android.safe.Ranger>

KIDO'Z Play Mode-Safe for Kids is at:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.kidoz>

Disclaimer: Make no mistake, no system is fool proof. Any system will need to be vigorously enforced and monitored. However, I do hope these two articles helped...

Jon Winterburn
DaC IT Dept



Hello Ladies & Gents

Reflecting on my short time as a Board member, I have now attended two Board meetings of which I have taken much from in the

way the Society is run from the top under the Chairman's guidance. I am currently going into **Dial-a-Cab** House one day a week, learning the computer systems and getting to know the staff and fellow Board members.

I have been given all of the help needed to settle into DaC House. We are very fortunate to have staff members who care about the taxi trade and Dial-a-Cab as much as we, the drivers, do. Brian, Tom, Mike, Keith and Allan have given me time to adjust to Boardroom life as there is much to learn as to what it takes to run a successful taxi company like DaC. I am grateful that you, the members, have given me the chance to join the Board as a working driver.

Complaints

I have had a day with **Allan Evans** showing me how he gets a complaint passed to him

ALL WHITE WITH GARRY...

from the contact centre and how he goes about dealing with it once establishing the facts from all parties involved. I also attended a complaints meeting as an observer to see how a complaint is handled.

New terminals

My taxi is now fitted with one of the new terminals and it seems to be working very well, the mapping and satnav are excellent. I'll be happy to show any driver the terminal in my taxi if you see me out working...

Advertising

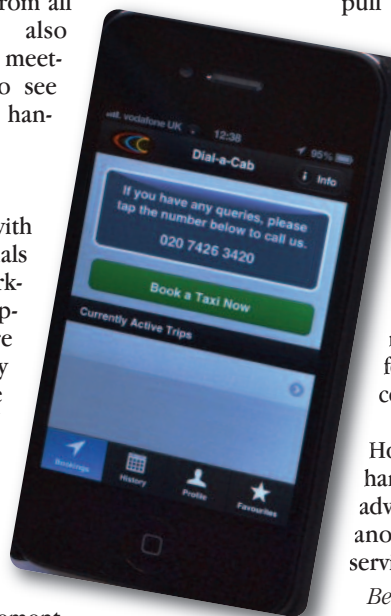
It would be nice to see all Dial-a-Cab taxis with a full complement of CCC stickers in the front windscreen, door logos and tip-up seat adverts to promote the Society. I have noticed DaC taxis driving around with window stickers advertising

app-based taxi booking systems. This does not reflect on the Society too well when you pull up outside our major clients with advertising on your taxi for a rival company!

If you feel that you need to supplement your income with app-based work - and I understand we all need to do what is best for us during our working day - then I do hope that DaC will be busier in the forthcoming months with the new credit card app which has now been launched. You will feel you don't need the other companies to stay busy.

So please, if passing DaC House, then pop in and get some hand-out cards and tip up seat adverts so that we can help one another promote the new app service.

Be lucky...



Garry White.

DaC Board Member

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers

WCHCD Spring Court Dinner

On 21st March, Master of *The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers*, **Brenda Bartlett**, together with her Wardens welcomed Liverymen, Freemen and their guests to the **Spring Court Dinner** at the **Saddlers Hall** in Gutter Lane. As diners enjoyed their meal in the wonderful Great Hall, an entertaining interlude was played on the harp by **Ms Keziah Thomas**.

Prior to the dinner, new members joined the Company - Nyasha Pitt, James Dennison, Trevor Hatterley, Davis Neale, David Hawthorne and Peter Johansen. All the new Freemen were extended a warm welcome by the Master and the Court of Assistants after the ceremony. Both Nyasha and Trevor are well known to **Call Sign** - Nyasha for her LTI publicity work and Trevor for his help in answering questions when **Dial-a-Cab** drivers made the trip to LTI's Coventry factory.

Guest Speaker for the dinner was the Recorder of London, **Judge Brian Barker QC**. This is an ancient legal office in the City of London with the Recorder being appointed by the City's Court of Aldermen. The Recorder is now the senior Circuit Judge at the Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey). Judge Barker was called to the Bar by Gray's Inn in 1969, took silk in 1990 and was appointed as a Senior Circuit Judge in 2000 and Common Serjeant to the City of London in 2005.

Each year, the WCHCD makes a **Military Award for Excellence** to a member of the **20 Transport Squadron Royal Logistics Corps**. This year it has been awarded to **Private Deniston Francis**. Although awaiting imminent news of a new arrival with his wife expecting at any moment, Private Francis was at the presentation and dinner.

The Worshipful Company of Saddlers is one of the oldest Livery companies in the City. The earliest surviving records of a Guild of Saddlers in London date from circa 1160 AD and the guild could even pre-date that.

The WCHCD has a diverse membership and if you would like to know more about the Company, contact Clerk Mary Whitworth on 01494 765922.



Private Deniston Francis receives his Military Award from WCHCD Master Brenda Bartlett

GetTaxi

Last month's Call Sign contained an article headed "GetTaxi crosses over!" which explained that GetTaxi was now part of the Addison Lee platform. This was published following information we received from a reliable source. We have since been contacted by GetTaxi who wish to make it clear that they are not part of the Addison Lee platform. We are happy to set the record straight.

RANKS INFORMATION FROM TFL



London Bridge station

In case some of you haven't yet been to the repaired London Bridge station following completion of repairs to the collapsed sewer in London Bridge Street, it has now re-opened. Don't forget we are now on the right-hand side of the station as against the old near side, but please

do not over-rank as it impedes access for buses and taxis etc. The temporary rank in St Thomas Street is cancelled.

Hammersmith Broadway

Emergency repair works are taking place at Hammersmith Broadway during which time the taxi rank will be unavailable. A temporary taxi rank has been provided in Queen Caroline Street. Please use the temporary taxi rank until repairs have been completed. You should be warned that the rank is being closely monitored, so over-ranking could be costly.

Liverpool Street marshalled rank

The late night marshalled taxi rank in Liverpool Street continues to be popular with drivers and the public, but since the scheme first began more bars and clubs in the area have opened on Saturday evenings. In response to an increase in the late night activity on Saturday evenings and following TfL discussions with the City of London Corporation, there has now been a change

and instead of the rank being marshalled on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings, marshalling will now be trialled on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings with the possibility of making the change permanent.

Whitcomb Street

Following a public consultation by Westminster City Council, the taxi rank in Whitcomb Street (outside the Thistle Piccadilly Hotel) has been revoked. The council proposed a number of changes in Wardour Street and Whitcomb Street including removing the Whitcomb Street taxi rank, extending the Blue Badge parking bays and relocating some residents parking. The taxi rank ceased operation on Monday 8 April 2013 and drivers should not park where the rank had been located.

Could drivers using the rank as their personal parking space have been responsible? It can take years to get a rank, but just a short consultation period to get it removed...

Muswell Hill Broadway

The Muswell Hill Broadway taxi rank has been moved to Dukes Avenue. The relocated taxi rank is for two taxis, operates 24 hours a day and a new taxi pole has been installed at the rank.

And...

Over-ranking at Selfridges by parking on the pavement or at the bus stop, or queuing on the corner of Hans Road/Basil Street by Walton Place will probably cost you a PCN. So beware...



Taxi driver of the Year dinner and dance

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

We have also been able to hold the price again this year at just £62.50 per person. That includes a welcome drink at the reception, a 4-course meal, half a bottle of wine per person and tea/coffee.

Later in the evening to quench your thirst, there will be more tea / coffee served with Danish pastries.

There is also dancing to a live band.

We also have arranged a special deal if you would like to stay at the hotel overnight.

For more information please call (phone/ fax) 020 8952 1357 or mobile 07850 056 765

Remember all money raised will be split between the five taxi charities: The Albany Taxi Fund for Children with special needs, LTFUC, Benevolent Association for War disabled, East London Cabbies Outing and the Southend Fund for Underprivileged Children.

Russell Poluck MBE (T55) TDoY Hon Chairman

Call Sign

May 2013

Editor: Alan Fisher

Address: 39 – 47 East Rd, London N1 6AH

Tel: 0207 251 0581 **Fax:** 0207 553 7293

Email: callsignmag@aol.com

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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!

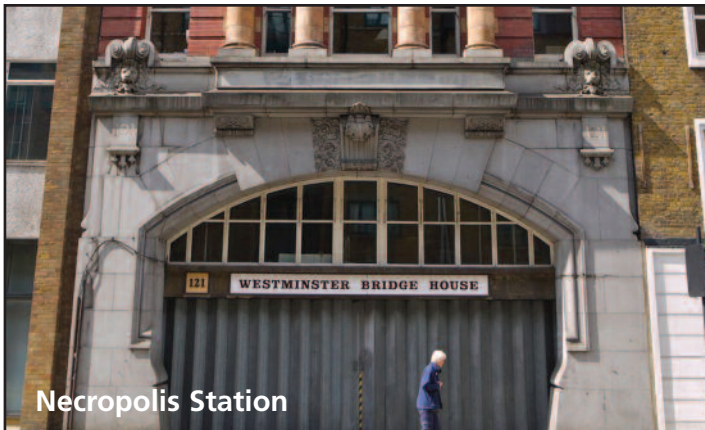
More ghostbusting!

I enjoyed writing about some of London's 'ghost' railway stations last month. We took a circular route *east* of the **Palestra** building – because of starting with the old **Blackfriars Road** station, whose entrance for many years was a post office and in more recent years, a snack bar called *Toast Office*!

So let's head *west* this time – again from the Palestra. It was the *South Eastern Railway* who opened **Waterloo Junction** station in January 1869 to replace **Blackfriars Road** station. The newly formed *Southern Railway* renamed it **Waterloo Eastern** station in July 1935 and it took its present name of **Waterloo East** in May 1977. So our first station is still in use – but with a ghostly past!

Previously, a rail connection ran across the concourse of the main **Waterloo** station. This saw little service – although **H.G. Wells** in his novel *War of the Worlds* describes its use to convey troop trains to the Martian landing site! That bridge, which carried the line over Waterloo Road subsequently became the pedestrian walkway between the two stations – until replaced by the current high level covered walkway. The old bridge remains and is now used for storage – check it out next time you set down a fare near the junction of **Sandell Street** and nip out of the cab to pick up your *Evening Standard*.

Let's cut through the station and out into Westminster Bridge Road – where regular listeners to the *Robert Elms Show* on *BBC Radio London 94.9* would have heard on occasion our next ghost station crop up in conversation.



Necropolis Station

Of all the stations covered in these 2 articles, none is more apt for a ghost story than the London Necropolis Railway Station. The entrance can still be seen at 121 Westminster Bridge Road.

The railway line was opened in 1854 by the London Necropolis Company (LNC) to carry coffins and mourners between London and the LNC's newly opened *Brookwood Cemetery* in Surrey. The station waiting rooms and train compartments were both for living and dead passengers!



Grosvenor Road Station

Our next stop is reached by crossing back over the river and heading west along the Thames and down Grosvenor Road. That impressive white building just past Lupus Street – and just before Grosvenor Railway Bridge – was once **Grosvenor Road** station. It was opened in 1867 by the **London, Brighton & South Coast Railway** and lasted until 1911. The elevated platforms are long gone and that bold looking station building is now nothing more than a storage dump. Incidentally, the next time you go underneath the first railway bridge to be built across the Thames in central London, look up (safely) to note that it is in fact 3 adjacent bridges carrying 10 railway tracks! It takes its name from the Grosvenor family, who once owned large parts of Pimlico.

Next up is **Brompton Road** station – a disused one on the Piccadilly Line – the building of which is still there at the junction of Brompton Road and Cottage Place. It was opened in 1906, but saw little traffic and was closed in 1937. There are plans to revive this old station building (one of many tube stations to be designed by **Leslie Green**) to house the *London Fire Brigade Museum* in the basement, while using the above-ground space for a restaurant.

Heading back towards Hyde Park Corner, do you remember the old *Pizza Express* on the south side of Knightsbridge just before the *Lanesborough Hotel* heading back east? It's now been converted to the new *Wellesley Hotel* of course – but it was once the original entrance to **Hyde Park** station – another Piccadilly Line station which opened in the early 1900s – and another designed by Green and finished with those iconic ox-blood coloured tiles. When the station underwent a major subterranean make-over just before WW2, not only did the old station entrance become surplus to requirements, but also the old little-used **Down Street** station was taken out of service. The station building is still there for you to observe, but was last used in earnest as an air-raid shelter, even at times by **Winston Churchill** and his Cabinet during the early periods of the war.

Dover Street station once stood where *Caffè Nero* is now sited, but another revamped sub-surface ticket office not only moved the station entrance 200 yards further west, but included a name change to **Green Park** station.

Finally onto **Aldwych** station; I wonder how many readers are aware that this one was in fact a terminus. It was a short branch line extension from **Holborn** station, opened in 1907 as **Strand** station, but finally hit the buffers as recent as 1994. You can check out the old station entrance in Surrey Street. Today the old station and its tunnels are fans of film makers – *Battle of Britain*, *Superman IV*, *The Krays*, *Attonement* and the TV Drama *Mr. Selfridge* are just some of many to have scenes shot there.

Our 'West Side Story' finishes here and not at Palestra because it's close to St. Mary le Strand, location of the first ever cab rank in London – and leads on nicely to my next article that will feature this heritage that sadly *butterboys* and experienced cab drivers are unaware of.

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online



Keith Reading
Professional Toastmaster
Master of Ceremonies

Tele: 01279 465 938
Mobile: 07774 860 374
Email: kgr.2@virgin.net

10% discount for DaC drivers and staff

Fellow of the Guild of
Professional Toastmasters



"In the early 1970s, **The London Taxidriers Fund for Underprivileged Children** had an appeal from a school/home for handicapped children at Arkley in Barnet. They urgently required a substantial amount of playground equipment and asked the Fund if we could help with at least some of the cost.

Following a committee meeting of the Fund, we decided that we would buy them everything they needed. We went to a supplier and after much haggling for the best price, we took everything back to the school playground and attempted to put it all together.

As it was to be an almost new playground, it was decided that the *Minister for Education* of the time, Margaret Thatcher, should be asked whether she would open the new playground and centre. Representing the Fund and to witness the event were Jack Taylor and myself, along with my wife Grace and Jack's wife Edna.

However, Jack and Edna's son **Howard** - who was in his early teens at the time - heard that his dad was about to meet Mrs Thatcher

LTFUC President and former DaC driver, Bill Tyzack, remembers Margaret Thatcher!

Me and Mrs T...



Jack Taylor: His son Howard wanted more chips!

warranted more than just a try!

The message was simple: Howard and his fellow pupils at the school they attended were upset because their school lunches usually contained just four or five chips with the meal and as growing lads, they needed more sustenance!

The day of the opening arrived and we did get the chance to tell Mrs T about Howard and his serious chip problem. But we didn't think that Howard and his pals would believe that we had actually asked, so we got Mrs Thatcher to sign a piece of paper!

Whether she ever got a chance to do - or want to do - anything about the chip situation for Howard and his pals, we will never know. What we do know is that this was the lady that stopped free milk for infants. And Howard's chips? Well you have to wonder just how much that piece of paper promising to look at the quantity of chips at Howard Taylor's school would now be worth!

Howard Taylor became a **Dial-a-Cab** voice dispatcher many years later and never really looked too close to starvation! So maybe his allocation of chips did increase thanks to Mrs T..."

Bill Tyzack (Ex-C06)

Maggie's Cat and me!

DaC driver **Jon Robinson (E88)** asks in this issue's *Mailshot* whether anyone had ever picked up Maggie Thatcher on her DaC account? Well we sort of found someone!

Staring straight into the eyes of a **Call Sign** reporter, **Ivan Sobell (P69)** spoke to us as if it had been the highlight of his 20 year tenure with **Dial-a-Cab**. Uttering the well-worn phrase used by the **Mollie Sugden** character of *Mrs Slocombe* in the TV comedy *Are You Being Served* and showing the first signs of a grin, Ivan told us:

"Yes, you could say Mrs T's pussy has been on the rear seat of my taxi!"

Ivan recalled the two occasions he had taken Margaret Thatcher's pet cat from the former PMs' Chester Square home on her DaC account, to the veterinary practice in Elizabeth Street.

"It was a very fat cat indeed, probably because it looked to have been too well fed," Ivan continued rather undiplomatically.

"I believe Mrs Thatcher was always concerned that her pet should not go hungry and fed it quite frequently. The result was that it just got bigger and bigger. As it obviously didn't like exercise either, that is possibly why it had so many frequent visits to the feline doctor on Elizabeth Street!

"The cat was always accompanied by a carer of course, and I remember being requested to wait while the animal was tended and then to whisk them both back to Chester Square."

Ivan ended by looking skywards and suggesting that were now both up there somewhere, still keeping each other company - one probably drinking a saucer of milk ultra-quickly remembering its owner's fame as the milk snatcher..."



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DaC drivers
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Call Ian (R50) on **01689 897111...**

COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT



Hello Ladies & Gents,

At the last complaints meeting, there were a number of members that received suspensions for varying rule violations (*see page 12*). I've mentioned numerous times before that the system is continually monitored and any member who regularly abuses Society procedures at the expense of their fellow members will be brought to task in a fair but just way. The system loggers and GPS coordinates are very accurate. Quite honestly there really is no reasonable excuse for breaking these rules. As a gentle reminder, I have listed below the 20 procedure rules. Please remember a single complaint may consist of one or more of these violations.

1. Rudeness abuse or violence, threatened or actual, towards clients, other members or staff of O.D.R.T.S.

2. Conducting him or herself in a manner likely to bring the Society into disrepute.
3. Conduct liable to prejudice the Society.
4. Arriving at the pickup point with more than the authorised amount showing on the meter.
5. Taking a job allocated to another member or pulling off a job without the consent of the Call Centre.
6. Making a journey which is the property of the Society his / her own.
7. Data inaccuracies and anomalies.
8. Misuse, non-accidental damage, or tampering with the O.D.R.T.S. equipment.
9. Failing to complete a journey as per trip details.
10. Using a badge number other than their own or allowing another to use their badge number.
11. Booking into a zone contrary to the Society's procedure or placing him / herself in a favourable position of which they have prior knowledge to gain an unfair advantage.
12. Accepting, then failing to complete or trying to have recovered an As Directed trip.
13. Trying to reject a non-rejectable trip by engaging the meter or timing out.
14. Failing to accept a Company Charge Card trip (Hail & Ride).
15. Failing to keep his / her taxi in a good mechanical, clean and presentable condition.
16. Not adhering to a Rule as specified in the Company Rule Book.
17. Not producing his / her Motor Cab Licence within the time limit set by O.D.R.T.S.

18. Not displaying the company logo.
19. Failing to use the delay advised facility when anticipating being late for a pickup.
20. Not transporting the passenger by the shortest route without authorisation from the Call Centre.

Tip-up seat ads

Lastly, the rear tip up seat ads for both TXs and Vitos are available from Roman Way and this office, so can I please ask all of you to display them in your taxis. There are two different adverts for the TX with the one showing the red arrow at the bottom going on the left tip-up.

If you have a Vito, the advert with the text fits in the middle of the three seats and the one showing the iPhone graphic fits on either side of that. They advertise the **Dial-a-Cab Credit Card App** and as a standalone account it is right up there with the top accounts and will, I am sure, grow in size as we further market and advertise it. I mentioned last month that the average Credit Card trip is now almost £28, so it is certainly not to be sneezed at, but please remember that the £2 booking fee no longer applies and should not be shown as an extra or added to the fare.

Please drive safely and be very lucky...

Allan Evans
DaC Compliance Officer

Call Sign reviewer Alex Constantinou (N05) takes up an invitation from the Barking Bathhouse to see if their many treatments really do make you feel like a new person...

My massage from heaven!



When *Call Sign* Editor **Alan Fisher** asked me if I fancied a massage, I raised my eyes and told him that I was a happily married man! Then when he said I should take my wife **Jackie** along as well, I really did begin to get worried! But I needn't have been concerned because I've now discovered that having a proper massage by a qualified masseuse really can leave you in a state of utter relaxation.

The **Barking Bathhouse** spa was originally commissioned for the **Olympics** by Barking Council for the local community to enjoy and experience the benefits of spa treatments. It has been such a success that it is now in two rooms in the **Barking Learning Centre** awaiting funds for the next structure, which is soon to be commissioned. So when I received that invite to experience the benefits of a "pop up" spa in the middle of Barking, I cautiously accepted and along with Jackie, we made our way over to the Barking Learning Centre to have our treatments.

Once you have found your way through the library to the two rooms that comprise the spa, you soon lose yourself in the decor that gives the feeling of being thousands of miles away from not just Barking, but our overlong spell of un-summerlike weather.

As we entered, we were greeted by Rochelle and made to feel very much at ease and at home. While giving me a rundown on the history and a glimpse into the future of the Barking Bathhouse, Rochelle also gave an insight into plans for the new spa, which will include a sauna, ice room, bar and treatment rooms all housed under one roof – something of an oasis in Barking.

While chatting, Jackie and I were introduced to **Bob** who was going to be my masseuse. The treatment I was about to have was a **Deep Tissue massage**! Bob learned his trade at the *Royal National School for the Blind* and is also qualified in **Indian Head massage** and **Reflexology** as just some of the many therapies he expertly applies.

As I lay face down on the treatment table with the sound of tranquil music playing in the background, I vaguely remembered that I was there to work and review the facilities. I had questions floating around inside my head ready to ask Bob, but once his expert hands began the massage, I could feel myself drifting into a deep relaxation – almost a trance! I came out totally at ease and relaxed. The Deep Tissue massage gets into all the nooks and crannies of your back and shoulders and eases away a heap of knots that had certainly built up in my neck and back.

Another part of Bob's portfolio is Reflexology where he can tell via your feet whether you have any ailments. And I can confirm that it works! But speaking as a taxi driver suffering the daily stresses and strains that we all go through, I have to say that the Deep Tissue massage really gets to grips with all manner of strains that we tend to suffer with driving all day – especially this time of year when we often drive with the window open.

While I was floating on my heavenly cloud of relaxation, Jackie was having a **Thai massage** and **Facial** both administered by **Farrah** who opted out of the rat race as a lawyer in the City to concentrate on her therapies. Farrah was taught by a lady who studied with monks in Thailand and my wife just couldn't believe the way Farrah teased and manipulated her joints into position. After the Facial, she told me that her face felt like glass and as a whole, she felt wonderful.

The Barking Bathhouse has been featured in the *Telegraph*, *Guardian*, *Grazia* and believe it or not, the *New York Times*!

The prices for their body treatment range are from £25 for 30 minutes to £35 for an hour. There is also a nail lounge, Neal's Yard facials and waxing on request. The spa is closed on Mondays and open Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 7pm, Saturday from 10am to 5pm, with Sunday bookings available by appointment only.

The pop up spa was also sponsored by **Deutsche Bank** and I was informed that there have been many visitors from the bank for sessions - hopefully driven by **Dial-a-Cab**.

For bookings call 0208 227 2991 or 07889 008 828 or visit www.barkingbathhouse.com.

Alex Constantinou (N05)

CABALCADE HITS LONDON

Organised by the London Vintage Taxi Association, months of planning came to fruition on Sunday 7 April 2013 when a convoy of 50 FX4 and Fairway taxis paraded through London, celebrating fifty five years of service to the capital prior to their retirement later this year.

Starting from Chelsea Harbour, the parade meandered through historical cabbie landmarks such as the various premises of taxi dealers M&O, the old PCO buildings at Lambeth and Penton Street and TfL's current Palestra building at Blackfriars. Guest speakers gave potted histories at each stop before the taxis finally gathered at Marble Arch, much to the delight of the public. LVTA Chairman, **Doug Cheshire**, gave a welcoming speech.

Among the other speakers were **Andrew Overton**, who spoke about M&O and how the Nissan engine came to the Fairway making it such a popular cab. Also speaking was trade historian **Bill Munro**, former number two at the PCO, **Sandy Kennedy**, former MBH Chairman **Lord Jamie Borwick** who also brought along his wife **Lady Victoria** – who just happens to be **Boris Johnson's** deputy Mayor! Victoria gave a short speech praising the London taxi's constant ability to renew and reinvent itself and how it always seems to adapt to the changing demands of the City. Current LTPH Director **John Mason** also gave an update.

LVTA members from around the world flew in to witness the event and all those that *Call Sign* spoke to said that it had been well worth the trip. Event Secretary **Gary Zylberszac** thanked *Dial-a-Cab* for our gold sponsorship. He told *Call Sign*:

"Without it, this celebration could not have happened."

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online



(Far left) Sandie Kennedy, Lord and Lady Borwick, Bill Munro (behind), Andrew Overton and Doug Cheshire (behind)

WCHCD
Master
Brenda
Bartlett and
Andrew
Overton



A view of Marble Arch we are unlikely to ever see again!

Taxi Drivers Open Forum



The Taxi Drivers Open Forum was held at TfL's Palestra on April 24th and chaired by **Helen Chapman**, currently deputising for **John Mason** who is apparently juggling more balls at the moment than QPR are picking out of the net!

The meeting was well attended, with a great deal of enthusiasm from certain sections. A vast range of questions were asked, mainly regarding licensing, ranks and private hire licensing. It was pointed out from the floor by DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** that a topographical knowledge was originally part of the remit to be a Private Hire driver.

DaC Compliance Officer, **Allan Evans**, also attended to predominantly network on behalf of the Society, which he seemed to do rather well.

Attending on behalf of *Call Sign*, I pointed out during the meeting that it was not fair on Helen Chapman that she should have to chair the meeting and answer questions at the same time - something she seemed to agree with.

I suspect that the rest of TfL staff were quite happy for Helen to take the brunt of the questions. At the end of the meeting, she did look as though she had been put through the mill! Mind you, with 50 cab drivers baying for blood, I'm not sure what the meeting actually achieved.

I did find out that 60 or so policemen are employed in the tout squad, mainly on a weekend. Helen said she would invite the police force to attend the next forum.

Gary Cox (O46)
Call Sign Online

Dial-a-Cab driver **Jim Rainbird (T25)** has often appeared in *Call Sign* over his 19 years on the circuit, be it his time as **WCHCD Master**, his various filming promotions – including that rather astonishing time in 2001 when he turned up on a Japanese TV station quiz – or the times when he and his taxi have been hired by newspapers because it looked less conspicuous than flying around on a motorbike with a huge camera lens hanging around their neck! The best example of that was when a newspaper hired Jim's taxi to follow Princess Diana.

More recently, Jim appeared on these pages while his cab was used by *Motorcycle News* to promote their show at the Excel Centre when he worked with motorcycle stars **Chris 'The Stalker' Walker** and **Tommy Hill**. He has also appeared alongside motor racing F1 stars **Lewis Hamilton** and **Mika Hakkinen** in a **Johnnie Walker** anti-drinking campaign!

Of late, his most exciting moment was having one of the new DaC terminals fitted – that was until he was contacted for a film shoot by **Barclaycard Contactless** – a company that Dial-a-Cab have good relations with because of the new terminal's facility re payment by card and our new PED (where the card fits into while being checked).

Jim told *Call Sign*:

"I've had the new DaC terminal fitted for a few weeks and thought I had discovered an amazing new feature – a virtual woman holo-

It's a tough job but...
SOMEBODY HAS TO DO IT!



Nope! She's not a hologram provided by DaC's new terminals!

add that as an expert at her job, although she looks as though she's using our new terminal as a resting device, it's just the camera angle that makes it look like that!

"So I then had to spend the next hour or so driving

gram. But sadly not! However, the real thing is even better...

"The young lady is a cinematographer (camerawoman to you and me) who was part of a shoot I did for **Barclaycard Contactless**. To get the shots she needed, she insisted on being as close to me as humanly possible within the luggage compartment! I should

around with this young blonde lady sitting next to me and giving me instructions. It was only afterwards that she told me she had actually been filming the "passenger" using DaC's new PED with the contactless card!

"Ah well, it's a tough job... but somebody has to do it!"

CALL SIGN'S DANNY RUNS FOR CHAI...

In memory of his mum Carole and Ed's son Reed



Danny on his last 10k run

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

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

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

Now Danny is going to do the 10K run again in memory of his mum, but is adding Editor's son **Reed Fisher**. Reed died this January, three years after being diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour.

Danny told *Call Sign*: "This year I've decided in memory of my mum, Carole, and the recent passing of Reed Fisher to run the British 10k to try and raise awareness and money for Chai Cancer Care. They are

a small charity but do such a fantastic job looking after families and patients who are, or have been, affected by cancer.

"Without them I would have struggled to come to terms with the sudden loss of my fantastic mum who I miss so much. And in Reed's case, not only did they help his family but I know how much Chai helped Reed during his illness and gave him the support and comfort he needed. I will always be indebted to Chai for helping me and if I can raise anything in return, I will be happy and honoured."

Chai currently supports around 1600 clients at any one time at its 8 UK sites or in their own homes. This number is added to at the rate of around 80 new clients each month. Over the past 12 months, Chai provided over 12,000 individual therapy and counseling sessions.

You can find Danny's charity page at:
<http://tinyurl.com/avatjvp>

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

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An interesting story in London's Evening Standard newspaper shows the difference between Dial-a Cab and indeed all taxi drivers stopping in Brick Lane usually to pick up a takeaway tea and bagel, and the Tower Hamlets Mayor Lutfur Rahman.

Using the *Freedom of Information Act*, the paper came up with some apparent wasteful behaviour from the Mayor of one of London's most impoverished boroughs, one in which a report found four in 10 children live in poverty with the mortality rate of local residents among the country's highest.

Unlike the *Evening Standard* report, *Call Sign* isn't criticising the Mayor for his use of cabs, we understand that any Mayor should have access to transport even though we doubt that many 'black' taxis come into his reckoning with the multitude of so-called cabs he uses probably being private hire and the fact that a number of the trips do seem to be particularly wasteful. Two we must mention, though, involve Mayor Rahman crossing the Whitechapel Road by car, which according to Tower Hamlets Conservative group leader Peter Golds would have taken one minute to walk. Councillor Golds also said the Rahman administration was forever complaining about cuts, yet many of his trips were made when there was abundant public transport available. He added that Lutfur Rahman drove around in a Mercedes, yet also needed official transport to and from his Old Montague Street home.

Are you one of the many DaC drivers given a PCN after a quick snack in Brick Lane?

Bagel shop PCN mystery solved???

The other trip was his £121 cab fare from the council's Mulberry Place office near Blackwall Tunnel to the Tower of London. Perhaps the traffic was heavy? The journeys came at a time when the council was slashing services by up to £70 million.

Neither are we interested in the Mayor's expulsion by the Labour Party for alleged links to Islamic extremism – not because we condoned it, but because that isn't what this magazine is for. We are interested in taxi drivers who pick up PCNs from Tower Hamlets – according to **Barrie Segal**, a notoriously difficult borough to appeal against. Of course, if a **Dial-a-Cab** driver did what the Mayor did and had something at the Commercial Road **McDonalds**, we assume they would have safely parked away from prying cameras – although we doubt they would have charged Mayor Rahman the £28 a minicab charged back to Mulberry Place.

But if you have ever parked in Brick Lane for 3 minutes to pick up that snack, picked up a £130 PCN (£65 if paid within 28 days) you'd be interested in knowing that the Mayor may well have used your taxi, because the only reasonable fare we could find was a claim for £4 from Brick Lane to the Whitechapel Mosque and we know of no minicab that charges £4 – many now having a £14 minimum. So that would have left you just £61 out of pocket.

Mayor Rahman, on the other hand, probably couldn't give a toss!

Our thanks to the Evening Standard for the info...

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

Kupkake's Korner



Just another Saturday night...

It was a cold rainy Saturday night everyone was soaked, when two blokes waiting at the lights asked for Sevenoaks!

Now I don't live in rural Kent but I've been there in the past, so heading south off we went light traffic... moving fast!

I found my way to Borough Green then some village further on, not a street light to be seen - they paid and then were gone.

I set the *TomTom* to go home I followed the satnav voice, I was clueless as to where I went I was lost... I had no choice!

Then at last... M25 ahead! Soon I'd need some fuel, the gauge was pointing to the red - and fate is often cruel.

I missed my turn and headed south 'Gatwick' the sign showed, I swear my heart was in my mouth and to make things worse - it snowed!

I made the turn and pointed north back to the interchange, counted exits, took the fourth... I was going east again.

Eventually I found a place to fill up at an extortionate £1.55, bunged in a score, that'll do for sure at least I'll get home tonight.

Then two hours after setting down I pulled onto my drive, I was really glad to be home... And quite pleased to be alive!

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Peter DaCosta stands down as Eco City CEO



Eco City Vehicles, supplier of the Mercedes Vito taxi, have appointed Trevor Parker to replace Peter DaCosta as the company's Chief Executive Officer.

Mr DaCosta is standing down 38 years after starting the business he founded as a small east end taxi repair garage - KPM.

He has become a non-executive director and will continue to provide ECV with consultancy services. Non-executive director, Jeremy Fenn, is also retiring from the Board.

Several drivers have telephoned **Call Sign** to express surprise after being caught out by the recently installed bollards preventing them from using Warren Street to access Euston Road west-bound, and so avoiding the road works of Tottenham Court Road.

To investigate further **Call Sign** went to Warren Street to appraise the scene and gauge the views of the local shopkeepers to see whether they have been affected.

The bollards have been placed across the middle of the road in Warren Street just to the east of Fitzroy Street, forcing traffic down Whitfield Street and back into the one way system of Grafton Way and Maple Street! The alternative would be to U-turn in Warren Street and re-join the traffic in TCR.

Call Sign discovered that when the scheme was originally mooted some 18 months ago, only 15 residents were in favour, while others - residents and commercial enterprises alike - saw the downside of inconvenience to access their properties, a drop in passing trade to shops and the difficulty of services such as waste disposal and recycling agencies being able to service the affected roads.

This view was borne out when we spoke with two local shop keepers - Ian at All Flutes Plus and Romil at JAI News.

Ian complained that his biggest problem was now the delivery trucks and couriers inability to negotiate the narrow streets causing difficulty in off-loading supplies, together with the problem of recycling trucks trying to turn around, which according to Ian often means that they tend not to bother!

"But our biggest problem are the larger delivery trucks where they really do have difficulty trying to turn around or are forced back into the one-way streets," he mused.

Warren Street Blockade!



Warren Street no longer a cut-through

"The bollards were installed several weeks ago after the council sent out a consultative document quite some time ago and from what I hear, it seems that very few locals were in favour. However, here we are. The council are trying to regenerate the area to look like the Marylebone model."

Romil at JAI News told **Call Sign** that he thought it was a traffic calming measure and just a temporary experiment to see how things worked out.

"I bought this shop around two months ago and did not see any previous letters from the council regarding this proposed closure. For the first month I was here, trade was very

good. Taxis and passing motorists, together with my local clientele, popped in quickly for drinks, newspapers and cigarettes etc, but I've noticed a very definite drop in trade since the road block was put in place a few weeks ago.

"I have a letter from the council inviting comments on the bollards and I will either consult my neighbours or make my views known on my own behalf. I think we have until sometime in May to make representations to the council and express our opinions..."

Alan Green
Call Sign Online

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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 the November 1999 issue of Call Sign and an interview with what used to be known as a former telephonist and who would now be called a former call taker...

A TRIP BACK TO SHIRLAND ROAD

With former telephonist Martha Harris

In the mid-1960's ODRTS left its birthplace office at 172 Pentonville Road with its Terminus 6444 phone number and moved to the luxury of Maida Vale and 144 Shirland Road. I was a telephonist there and I'd like to relive a few memories before they fade forever...

We used to have three direct lines, one to the BBC at Television Centre, another to their studios at Ealing Green and the final one to Buckingham Palace. One day dear old Millie Harris answered one of the lines and believing that it was Ealing Studios, answered in her usual cultured voice saying: "Allo, Milleee 'ere" and a very posh voice replied: "Yes, hello, Buckingham Palace here." Millie refused to answer the direct lines for a long time after that!

Zena Newton took a call one day (she hadn't been on the phones very long) and turned to me and asked if there was a driver on the circuit called Charley Furzerio? I said that I hadn't heard of him but it sounded as if the owner of the name was of Italian descent. When Zena told me who the message was from - a girl who had worked with us at one time - the penny dropped and I realised it was Charlie three zero she wanted! He had left the circuit many years previously having gone to work in Europe, so if there is a current Mrs Charlie three-zero, she can breathe easily!

Speaking of the BBC, they were very particular and precise when they made bookings and it was important that the numbers in our books corresponded with their docket numbers. One afternoon after I had finished my shift, a new girl took over the BBC book - although why she was put on that job I do not know, but



Lorraine Carruthers was stunned at BBC mistake!

Flashback 1999

she was completely lacking experience in that field. Then the Beeb rang to order a cab and she made an error in writing out the docket, tore it up (which was fatal) and carried on using the next numbered docket without informing her opposite number at the BBC - an even bigger gaff!

She then took another order while completely ignoring the docket numbers and proceeded to make further errors. The balloon went up when she was relieved for her lunch break and another telephonist took over. That was Lorraine Carruthers and she was stunned when none of the docket numbers corresponded and the net result was that the telephonist who cocked up had to spend hours trying to sellotape the torn dockets together, which then had to be sent back to the BBC!

Seeing all those screens and technology present in today's Brunswick House call centre, I don't think that I could have coped, but I would have enjoyed trying. And no doubt the BBC are impressed...

Martha Harris (one of the old girls).

Late nights at the London Taxi Company!



The London Taxi Company has been trialling late night openings with the view to operating them regularly. The Brewery Road dealership's first test night was Wednesday 27th March, opening at 8.30am and staying open until midnight. Quite a number visited afterwards to discuss vehicle sales or to buy parts, some taking advantage of late opening to get their servicing done. The success allowed another two late nights on 10th and 24th April and LTC hope to open late on a more regular basis.

UK Retail General Manager, James Dennison, told *Call Sign*: "We made the decision about late nights following direct feedback from some of our customers that our hours weren't always convenient for them. We're not sure how many nights a week we'll do it, but it's definitely worth doing. It was great to see some new faces and some night drivers who under normal circumstances wouldn't be able to get in to see us. We will be having another two test nights on Wednesdays 8th and 22nd May when we shall be open from 8.30am until 11.00pm.

All areas of the dealership will be open on the late nights, so customers can buy new and used TX4s or parts; they can also pre-book servicing or warranty work to take place during the longer evenings.

To find out more or to make an appointment, drivers can contact the Customer Relationship Team on 0207 700 0888 or email lon-don@london-taxis.co.uk.



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

The Brethren of the Whip



Metal tickets

The issuing of the Green and Yellow identifiers has given a prominence to badge numbers and whilst many at first believed they were a waste of

time, it is probably agreed that they have a beneficial effect on the trade. Much the same could be said for the badges themselves when they were first issued.

Most of you on Dial-a-Cab are probably aware that cabs - or coaches as they were back then - were first licensed back in 1654 during Oliver Cromwell's reign of office. There had never been any need to licence the driver. If the number of the hackney carriage could be taken, then it was down to the proprietor to bring the driver to court. Such an inadequate system - proprietors seldom knew who was driving their coaches so long as they got their money - was to last nearly 200 years.

It finally dawned on Parliament that issuing licences to drivers would create a better system and make drivers responsible for their actions, with the public being the beneficiaries - not to mention the extra revenue the licence system would accrue. And if licences could be issued - they could also be taken away.

The 1838 Hackney Carriage (Metropolis) Act was duly passed and the 7000 drivers who had paid their duty to the Stamp Office were issued with a metal ticket (badge) and licence. So if any of you at DaC have a badge number below 7000, you can trace your pedigree back to 1838.

Within weeks of the badges being issued, the first drivers were appearing in court. The earliest instance I can find is when a driver named Jackson took his master, George Walter of Hampstead Road to court, claiming that he had withheld his licence and so could not obtain work elsewhere. As this was before the days of photography, a drivers' Bill contained a description of the driver. It was noticed that Jackson was twelve inches shorter than the height given on the licence and neither the size of his nose nor colour of his eyes matched his physical description. Jackson argued that the *Commissioner of Police* must have *"...drawd it wrong on paper, vy, he must halter me and that's all about it, or return the five bob I paid him for doing it."*

His Master then went into the witness box and stated that Jackson had spent his takings on beer and came back drunk and as he had originally lent him the five shillings to take out the licence, for which he had not been repaid, he felt he was right to hold back the Bill. The court agreed with him and on hearing this, Jackson, taking the badge from his neck exclaimed: *"Here, take this too; it's no use without the licence."* So unfortunately

the earliest mention of a badge in the newspapers was not accompanied by a badge number.

The earliest instance of a driver in court with a badge number that was recorded was just a couple of days later. Edward Aymer, who had badge number 5, testified that he had fallen ill and gave his badge to a friend to work the cab for a "day or two." This was in direct contravention of the Act and he was fined 20 shillings (£1) which he could not pay. His sentence was then defaulted to fourteen days hard labour in the House of Correction in Clerkenwell. Perhaps by issuing such a stiff sentence, the authorities felt that they were putting a strong message out. It could have been (slightly) worse; the magistrate had decided not to endorse Aymer's licence - to which he would have been the first person to have such a mark on his Bill.

In the next few days the police arrested several bucks - unemployed men who took the cab out for a few hours whilst the driver had his lunch. None of these displayed a badge and so were easily spotted by the police. It soon dawned on cab drivers that they could lend the horse and cab out (so long as their master did not hear of it) but they learned to keep hold of their badges.

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

Another true story from Geoff Levene

The most unpredictable job in the world!



As we Dial-a-Cab drivers all know, there is only one thing of which we can be certain and that is the fact that you can't be certain of anything! But it's the unpredictability that I love about our job...

Oh sure, it would be great to know there was a job waiting at the end of the road every morning, but that doesn't seem to happen too often. And if I do happen to pick up the same person more than twice in one week, I get the feeling they might think I'm stalking them. Or

am I being paranoid? But what can be better than being in an unlikely place when a hand goes up or the DaC terminal bleeping with an unlikely trip? The feeling is just priceless!

But the most unpredictable thing of all is the great British public. Why does a man on the way to the airport ask to stop to buy some sausages? Why when you drop someone at the address they've given you, do they get out and look everywhere but the very place you've stopped at? And how could that couple have dared to do what they did in the Lea Bridge Road that evening? Perhaps I'd better draw a veil over that one - which is more than they did!

But an incident in the dim and distant days of Dial-a-Cab's voice despatch left me with my mouth permanently agape. The late Dennis Samuels (F25) gave me details of a 2 o'clock booking.

"Go to 310 West Kensington Mansions. Pick up a Catholic priest, Father O'Halloran, and then go to 254 Old Brompton Road where you'll get paid and take him on to Euston." Simple!

So I went up to the flat and rang the bell even though the door was ajar. I could hear loud voices, the clatter of crockery and the rattle of cut-

lery. Nuns were wandering about but it seemed a funny time for a party. A grim looking woman came to the door. I smiled and said there was a taxi for Father O'Halloran. She glared at me.

"He'll be down at 2 o'clock and not a second before," she said before slamming the door in my face. "Hmm," I thought, "obviously not enjoying the function!"

I waited downstairs and eventually people began drifting out. A man in a big black hat approached the cab, escorted by Mrs Hatchett-face. He asked if I was his cab to Euston.

"Yes," I replied, "but we have to go via Old Brompton Road,"

"I haven't got time for that," he said and called out to the departing guests if anyone was going to Euston? And then he was gone. I must have shown my look of shock.

"Serves you right," said the woman, "coming into the flat on the day of a funeral shouting and smoking."

Well I didn't shout and I certainly don't smoke! But now I knew that it was a wake and I should have gone to the Old Brompton Road first. Dennis suggested I now went there to try and get something out of it.

It turned out to be Funeral Directors premises. The taxi fare was obviously part of the deal. I found a woman in a back office and told her my story. She thought for a moment.

"Oh that priest. I've had trouble with him before. He's a right *****." Now I'm pretty sure at that time I'd never heard a woman use language like that - but an undertakers! Then she said something much more acceptable.

"How much do you want...?"

Yep, unpredictability is certainly the name of the game...

Geoff Levene (W32)

LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

Useless Eustace

It's now the time of year when our thoughts turn to getting away from it all and grabbing ourselves a holiday; be you a sun lover, adventurer or sightseer, the choice is endless.

Fortunate that we are, we generally have the freedom of times to go, unless you have children in their school years. Even so, apart from paying the extortionate school holiday rates there is normally a six week range to choose from and with the closure of our major industries, there is less of the great surge for the same two weeks off in the summer when all factories used to close down.

This time of year always brings back memories of my childhood; when most on the council housing estate where I grew up could not afford a holiday, so we looked forward to the *big day out* to the seaside. To us children it was the only time we saw the seaside, but to the adults it was *the big beano!*

The adventure would come about via enthusiastic volunteers from the estate who would run bingo, raffles and jumble sales etc to raise money towards paying for the coaches. My particular favourite was **Useless Eustace**. Like a modern day scratchcard in its little bluey/green folder, we would buy these from the seller who came around every week. Inside the card were two letters which had to match the cartoon that was printed in the Daily Mirror. If your letters came up, you won money equal to the amounts on the bottom of the card. The cartoon portrayed *Useless Eustace* as a man getting into all sorts of mishaps with his profession changing to suit the caption, with no trade or profession escaping lightly.

Every year we went to Walton-on-the-Naze with around six coaches setting off early for what we then considered to be a long journey, each group pulling faces and jeering at the other if we overtook them with the adults having side bets on which coach would get there first!

Arriving at the coach park, the day would be spent with rides on the amusements, a go on the slot machines (no one asked your age back then), a paddle in the sea, some fish and chips and of course, those jam sandwiches!

One year, for some reason, we went to Hastings instead. This stuck in my mind for two reasons; one because Hastings had no sand, just pebbles, which to a young lad on his only trip all year was a major disappointment. The second reason was quite funny and rather naughty

With Tom Quigley (Y33)



at the same time.

The coaches pulled into the car park; after listening to the usual instructions about meeting times for lunch and returning home etc, we were let off the coaches. Well, like a swarm of locusts or even rabid hounds, the entire youth section swept through the first lot of *Kiss me Quick* hats and seaside rock stalls and literally robbed them of all their stock! We hadn't been in Hastings an hour yet before the local police rounded us all up and took us back to the coaches, where we had to return all the goods (even if you had actually bought them)! We were given a severe warning that any more trouble and we would be escorted to the county border.

Every time I go to Hastings or someone mentions it, that thought brings a smile to my face; it's funny how in your thoughts, a one-day trip can last a lifetime.

Euro for change

I am no economist; whilst I hear and read about the countries I have visited in Europe - Ireland, Italy Spain and Cyprus - struggling with huge debts since converting to the *euro*, I can't help but wonder that we who visit these countries change up our currency in a banking system that only deals in notes, yet like all of us I return home with a load of coins unable to change them back, so they sit in bottle or draw unused under the illusion that I'll use them when I go again. But when I do, I'll put a few in my pocket for tips etc but leave most of them at home only to return with even more to top up the stash!

My last count showed over 50 *euros* in change but given the fact that the countries I have mentioned attract over 100 million tourists each year, if every one of those tourists are the same as me, it's no wonder the system is failing if by simple mathematical equation, the banks will not collectively accept over five thousand million pounds back into the economy!

Having budgeted for my holiday, I would quite willing donate the 50 *euros* I have at home to the poorer countries hospitals, public services or even charities, than have it doing nothing at all...

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

DaC's ticket man, Tom Whitbread, on the show that is burning up the capital...

Burn the Floor!

I went to see the show 'Burn the Floor' at the **Shaftsbury Theatre** and was delighted to see the changes they had made since I had seen it previously around two years ago.

It has been transformed into a much more professional and slick musical with the choreography having been transformed from good to absolutely brilliant!

The show has dance duos from all over the world, including some amazingly spectacular dancers, although I have to admit that my favourites were from Cuba and the USA. But that takes nothing away from the others, the speed and energy they put into every routine would make Mo Farah look unfit.

The show runs through until September and I would encourage anyone, young or old, to try and get to see it. You will have a wonderful night out and probably come away feeling a little out of breath with the sheer energy pumped out on the stage in front of you.

At the moment there are an abundance of very good shows in the West End of London, but you must enter this onto your list of shows to visit. Its one failure was that it hasn't had the amount of promotion that other shows in the area have had. Otherwise there would have been little chance of getting any tickets.

If your passengers are looking for a good show, Burn the Floor is well worth a recommendation...

Tom Whitbread



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Covering London and the Home Counties

As BBC Television Centre ends its broadcasting life, Call Sign looks back at its DaC connection...

Bye Bye Auntie!

With the removal of the BBC's Television Centre from Shepherd's Bush up to Manchester's Salford Quays, a piece of **Dial-a-Cab** history has gone up there with them.

The BBC was the first corporate account that the young Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Service had opened. That was way back in 1959, some six years after Bonnie Martyn, Arthur Cudmore, Doug Naismith, Albert Hall, Eric Stoffel, Alec Cobden, David Fiertag and Frank Duncan had formed the first Committee of Management at 172 Pentonville Road.

There had been the odd private account opened back then but they weren't considered to be accounts in the way we know them; they were just passengers considered to be big users and well-off enough to be trusted with time to pay. It may sound the same, but it wasn't ever voluntarily offered!

Most BBC work at that time came from **Lime Grove** studios and many jobs involved picking up celebrities with **Wilfred Brambell** and **Harry H Corbett (Steeptoe and Son)** being two of the biggest regulars ordered via the Beeb. Then there was **Spike Milligan** who seemed to enjoy sending ODRTS telephonists mad with weird conversation after ordering his own taxis back to his Bayswater home.

But in 1960 Television Centre opened and many of Lime Grove's entertainment programmes moved to the new building, leaving mainly current affairs programmes at the Grove. ODRTS still did most of their BBC – known as **Auntie** – pick-ups from Lime Grove but gradually got more from TVC.

But with that came problems and the Beeb began complaining that drivers were going to incorrect pick-ups. Drivers had become used to going to the main reception at the Centre and telling the taxi rep, an elderly chap called **Gerry**, who we were picking up. As you looked around, you could see familiar faces waiting for their taxis (and occasional limo), but it left a feeling of embarrassment when Gerry picked up his megaphone and shouted a celeb's name through it as though they were in a doctor's surgery!

An issue of **ODRTS Monthly** from 1964 had driver **Alf Levy (D80)** telling of going into TVC and asking for **Mr Starkey**. Sure enough Gerry picked up his megaphone and called out 'taxi for Starkey.' Suddenly a young man reading the soon-to-be-defunct **Daily Herald** stood up and walked towards Alf and nodded. The ODRTS driver looked twice but not being a pop fan couldn't quite remember where he had seen his passenger before. It was the broad Liverpool accent asking for **Abbey Road** that suddenly made Alf realise that Mr Starkey was actually the **Beatles'** drummer, **Ringo Starr!**

But yes, our biggest problem at TVC was the fact that there were so many different pick-ups within the actual complex and it wasn't unusual to be sitting on the official BBC rank at Shepherd's Bush Green (where the **Westfield** exit is now) and be given a job from one building to another – both within the TVC complex. And if you didn't know your way round, you'd have a job because even Beeb employees didn't know them all!

However, fares were somewhat cheaper back then. As an example, BBC TVC receptionist **Janet Goldspink** wrote to **ODRTS News** in May 1967 apologising for having no money with her when she took a radio cash taxi from Victoria back to TVC and enclosed "...one pound to cover the fare that I owed you." And that probably included a tip!

On the downside, in the late 1980s with ODRTS having become **Dial-a-Cab**, **Call Sign's** infamous **Big Al** column, which often specialised in nefarious gossip, told of a BBC producer who had exposed himself to a young girl on the tube on his way into work at TVC. The producer was sacked, but the BBC weren't keen on the story being broadcast in a taxi mag and threatened to close the account. Fortunately an apology - together with some begging - did the trick! Considering how much money he could have cost the Society, quite astonishingly, **Big Al** went on to become **Call Sign Editor!**

At that time, **Radio Taxis (Southern)** - aka **Mountview** - were also involved with the Beeb account and a meeting between TVC transport



Big Al's column almost cost DaC the BBC account

and the two taxi companies was called for. The suggestion was that a rank outside the main gate would be used but that **minicabs** would also be pulled in. DaC and Mountview said no and went on strike – the first time action like that had ever been contemplated.

However, the BBC then went to **Computer Cab** (now **ComCab**) and asked them if they were prepared to work with minicabs. They said yes and won the account.

TVC came back to DaC briefly, but by then cars had almost taken over and taxi work had been totally decimated. But on the few occasions we went back in, a million memories come flooding back. The Salford Quays building may be exquisite, but there will only ever be one **REAL** Television Centre...

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30-year rule

Hi Alan

No hay mal que por bien no venga...

I might as well brush up on my Spanish as I could be spending a lot more time there. Having served 35 years on DaC, I have enjoyed £1 subs for the last five of them. Two years ago I wanted to give up mushing and sell my cab and rent it back retaining DaC equipment and my membership. I was told that this was not allowed and I had to have my own cab. Not being ready to retire, I shelled out 33 big ones on a TX4. Two years on and I am fed up being forced to work full time or paying £700 per month to leave my cab in the road whilst I am away for three or four weeks, which grieves me somewhat. The only reason I am still mushing is because of DaC.

I appreciate that times are difficult and an increase in line with inflation or even a modest jump to £10 per month would not cause me to bat an eyelid, but an extra £80 per month whilst it is standing idle gives me some concern. If perhaps some concession such as compulsion to subscribe only to half a year or a year off to reflect on one's situation without compromising one's membership might be plausible, after all, not too long ago we were offered £4,000 for our share - although I don't think that will happen again.

On the point of membership, where do we stand if we give up mushing and drive part time for another DaC driver? I don't object to the Society hanging on to my £500 to cover any credit work I may do as long as I don't lose any benefit.

Brian says that the reason for the increase is because we don't do enough work on account. Last year I did in excess of £12,000. I would have done more had it been available. On this point I don't share the Board's opinion that it is all due to the recession. I think the problem goes much deeper and affects the taxi trade in general. Unless something is done about the tariff, minicabs will take it all. You only have to see how many fixed-price fares we have to do to see that. But then nobody listens to me.

So it looks like the end to a 35 year marriage and I shall have to retire from Dial-a-Cab.

So as I said at the beginning: *"It is an ill wind that blows no good at all."*

Glen Tew (E54)

Brian Rice replies: Nice to hear from you Glen. We do actually listen to drivers, so I will attempt to answer your predicament. If you are a long serving member that has been with the Society in excess of 30 years and you decide to sell your vehicle and become a second driver on another Member's taxi, we will still honour the half subscriptions. The subscription for a second driver is usually £32.31 per fortnight plus VAT, however, if you have served 30 years or more we reduce that by half to £16.15 per fortnight plus VAT.

However, as you can appreciate you cannot retain your membership (perhaps that's where the initial mis-understanding came in), but you will enjoy half subs as the second driver.

I wish you well in your part-time capacity and I am sure you will enjoy your time in the sunshine...

...and

Dear Alan

I write as a retired DaC member who joined at Shirland Road and left when I retired some 12 years ago at the age of 70. Prior to my taxi driving career, I was involved with man-management and was shocked to read in the March *Call Sign* that the BoM is considering reneging on the thirty year rule. I feel that the Board should carefully consider the impact this will have for all members old and new. They must realise that they need to retain the long-servers if they are looking forward to the good times returning, for it is they who inject

loyalty, goodwill, dependability and reliability etc, etc into the Society and you cannot put a price on these valuable attributes.

To analyse the income of the 116 drivers involved, of which my son is one, is nit-picking; for slowing down as one gets older is a natural process. The BoM should consider using their reserves to cover the costs, to stop sending out signals of desperation to other interested competitors and hopefully prevent any potential migration of our drivers over to other circuits. Then we should look forward to the good times returning.

Tony Whytock (Ex-W20 / G76)

Thanks for the letter Tony and I'm pleased you still read the magazine. As you know from my response to some of the similar letters *Call Sign* has received on the subject, I too am £1 a month driver and don't relish having to pay extra. But whilst it's true that DaC has substantial reserves in the bank, I suspect that had it not been for the fact that we are purchasing new terminals this year, then perhaps the topic may not have arisen - but we have and it did! As a driver from - if you'll excuse me saying it - the old days, you may remember hearing of a former Mountview stalwart, Board member and a much-respected figure in the trade, Jack Moss. I happened to bump into him recently and the subject of DaC's 30-year drivers came up. He made the point that while he has a reduced subscription with Radio Taxis, it's nowhere near as low as our £1. But I do take your point regarding loyalty etc because I - and I'm sure many other long-time drivers - used to run distances to account trips rather than see them scrubbed. But I have to emphasise that £1 subs was always a goodwill gesture given in the good times ...Ed



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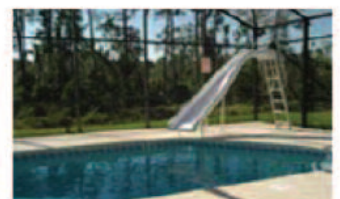
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Mailshot

Continued from page 28

...and!

Hi Alan

It's unbelievable! You wait all those years for £1 subs to come along and then another 71 come along together!

Alan Sullivan (F20)

Hey Alan, I always knew you really wanted to be a bus driver! ...Ed

...and the other side

Dear Brian

I would like to show my support to yourself and the Board on increasing the 30 year subscription rate up to 50percent. Any clear thinking driver knows that the £1 per month was just unsustainable in a recession. Also, getting a 50percent reduction should stay forever and drivers should be thankful for any reduction.

Roy Davis (D99)

This letter was originally sent to Brian Rice but I asked Roy if I could publish it – not because his view backed the BoM on the 30 year topic, but because Roy's was the first letter sent by someone who hasn't been here anywhere near 30 years. His comments reinforce my view that any such vote on the subject would fall in dramatic fashion and make the Society look mean, something that after almost 17 years of virtually free subs for those drivers, DaC is far from being ...Ed

Gratuities

Dear Alan

When will drivers on Dial-a-Cab realise that we have to do something very soon to increase the work and that could be to do away with the automatic gratuity. When you think that customers would save up to £100,000, they could then use that to increase their use of taxis. If Hailo can get a lot of work by offering no run-ins together with - in most instances - no gratuities and you hear drivers say they are doing 7, 8 or 9 jobs at a time, why then can't we do the same while still keeping the £4.20 run-ins? When I ask drivers, many say they can't do without the tips, but I'm afraid they are being a little small minded. I ask drivers to give serious thought to abolishing gratuities on account rides.

Gentlemen and ladies, look around you. Everywhere you look, shops are offering 50, 60 and even 70 per cent off their goods, that way they get customers in who probably spend more than they may have wanted to because they can see what bargains they are getting. Why then can't we offer cabs with no gratuities and hopefully get them to start using us that bit more? Before you boo-hoo the idea, please give it some thought...

Ivor Belkin (C97)

Thanks for that Ivor. While you obviously have a point re cost, you really can't talk about Hailo's workload being due to no gratuities. It's the no run-in and free 5 minute waiting time that does it. If DaC adopted your no gratuity suggestion – which the Board have said on several occasions they are reluctant to do because it would be so difficult to get it back when things pick up – but you kept your £4.20 run-in, after 5 minutes waiting you would have £6 on your meter whereas the Hailo taxi would have £2.40. So if your informants are doing 9 jobs a day, they would be taking £3.60 less on every journey, which means a loss on a five-day week of around £160. What you are saying, Ivor, is that we should start working cheaply, in which case there would not be much point in doing the Knowledge anymore and we may as well all drive minicabs and work on their App, Kabbee. So far as gratuities are concerned, it should also be pointed out that many drivers use it to pay their rollerbond. So I don't think everyone will agree with your suggestion.

But as I said, you do have a point and I have started to accept cash rides that I would previously have rejected. I swallow the £1.50 and have a normal run-in instead. I've not had one complaint yet, whereas on the rare occasion that I used to do a radio cash ride and added the £2 radio circuit charge, I would have kept restarting the meter rather than taking a chance of getting hassle from the customer.

Two years ago when things were looking even worse, I said in *Call Sign* – and was criticised for daring to say it – that we should have forgone that year's increase and clawed it back when things picked up. But we didn't and lost a lot of work, so I certainly thought we could have done it with this year's 1.7% award and *that* would have given us much-needed publicity while giving passengers a far better view of taxis as being reasonably priced. We took the increase two years ago and lost huge amounts of work. I don't think just getting rid of gratuities now is going to help ...Ed

A load of bollards...

Hi Alan

Read in a recent *Call Sign* about the bollards that have been put up in Warren Street to prevent it being used as a cut-through. One of our account holders who lives there has told me that the bollards were put in at the instigation of a mere 15 residents, but that local businesses are

against the closure as it takes away passing trade. Do you know anything about it?

David Ballard (N28)

I sent a *Call Sign* reporter there to see what he could find out. A report is on page 23 of this issue ...Ed

Tattoos

Dear Alan

Having seen the article and picture of DaC driver Gordon Thompson (K48) in the *April Call Sign* (*Tatt's enough*), one doesn't need to wonder too much why Addison Lee is doing so well with their smartly attired drivers who always look nice with their shirts and ties! Come back next year for re-election please Allen Togwell...but by then it might be too late if we don't smarten ourselves up.

Roy Martin (R42)

There is no disputing that tattoos have had a huge resurgence in popularity. You either like them or you don't but the question isn't whether taxi drivers should have them, but whether they should be displayed. The clarity of Gordon's tattoos shows how well done they have been, but I have no current view. However, David Beckham hasn't helped the cause of the antis and no one knows whether AL drivers have tattoos under their nice shirts and ties! ...Ed

BOM changeover time after AGM's

Hi Ed

Your suggestion (*April Editorial*) that a changeover period be agreed for candidates losing and gaining a seat on the Board is, I think, a good idea, particularly with regards the outgoing member. It may not be an issue for Board members who don't have a hands-on role, but it could be for those that do and even more so for the Chairman should he one day be opposed. He could have left a whole stack of unfinished business on his desk on the Friday before the AGM, including important appointments that nobody but him would know what was involved. What if one of those appointments concerned the likelihood of DaC losing its biggest account? If there was a changeover period, he would have the opportunity to personally introduce his successor. As regards to myself, I had just finished designing the seat ads for the DaC App. On completion of that project I was going to propose to the Board that we follow it up with a drivers giveaway card to match the ad, to give the DaC App marketing impetus, but of course I never got the



Mailshot

Continued from page 29

opportunity to do that.

I remember when I was first voted off the Board; I was in the middle of a project which concerned a reciprocal service with cab companies in German cities. I had sent out hundreds of letters and the response to one, which involved me making a visit to Frankfurt to a large taxi firm who were extremely interested. A month after I came off the Board I bumped into the Board member who had taken my place and I asked him about the German project. He said: "Oh, I wondered what all those foreign letters were about; I dumped them in the rubbish bin!" I also received a nice letter sent to my home from our then largest account who thanked me for the way I looked after their account and it also mentioned how deeply concerned they were at the manner in which I was dismissed, nine months later the account went to ComCab.

Speaking of the *April Call Sign*, I was delighted to read of **Claire Ottley's** interest in life/figure drawing. For many years I had an example in my office of the period when it was one of my hobbies. It was interesting to note that she attended Goldsmiths College, as I did (I was also there for German Language). I was also a student at Blackheath Art College and a small studio in Greenwich Village that catered for five students. On one occasion during a break I was talking to the female model and discovered she was also a hairdresser and we came to an arrangement that I would pay her to pose for me in private and also cut my hair. People often wonder why a woman would want to pose naked in front of a dozen or so adult students when the pay is half the minimum wage. Well the reason is the majority are art students themselves. The strange thing is that I often looked at an attractive 18 year female stripped naked for two hours and the only thoughts in my mind was capturing the form on canvas, yet it was only when the model started to get dressed in bra and panties that it would occur how physically attractive she was.

Allen Togwell (ex W45 / Q08)

Allen was referring to my suggestion that we take a mini version of the US Presidential elections where there is a long changeover period should the sitting President lose the election. I suggested a two-week changeover ...Ed

LTDF

Hello Alan

Just finished reading the *April Call Sign* and have to agree with the sentiments in your Editorial regards the LTDF. Recently I was contacted by a member called

Lightbulb who asked if I could facilitate a meeting between Brian Rice and **Roy Manor** from **GetTaxi**. I just said that I didn't think it was the Chairman's style to do things through a third party and suggested he made his own contact. Personally, I think he was trying to glean if I had any involvement within the day to day running of DaC – which of course I don't. I didn't get involved after asking him to identify himself, but he (*Lightbulb*) refused. How people can take themselves seriously, but then keep their identity unknown beats me!

Tony Crothers (Dizzy) who is the UCG Chairman, appears to have a strong dislike for **Dial-a-Cab**. I had found out that the UCG is actually a PLC and asked whether the reason he, the UCG and the LTDF have an anti- DaC agenda might be because other companies that get a positive press such as some of the Apps, could do so if they pay sponsorship money to the UCG? Unlike the RMT, whose members control what the RMT supports through branch meetings etc, the LTDF editorial gives the impression of being based on the highest bidder. When asked about this, Mr Crothers could have denied it but chose not to respond. He also recently criticised the DaC accounts, however the UCG accounts should themselves be made available for scrutiny soon.

Regarding **Allen Togwell's** venture into the LTDF, I would say he was brave. Former DaC driver **Mark White** said that he helped Allen onto the LTDF, but in reality he helped him walk straight into the lion's den and you were spot on in what you said about it. They simply won't allow you to say anything positive about DaC, but that's not going to stop me from trying. Personally I feel that *Dellone* should come back and the more DaC members we can get on there, the better.

Finally, I hope all your personal issues are becoming easier to deal with. As they say, time is the greatest healer.

Richard Potter (T51)

Thanks Richard. Call Sign also had a second letter from a DaC driver that was just as anti-LTDF, but the driver later felt that he would not want to cause problems for himself. Of course I respected his view and have not published it. The so-called voice of the taxi trade (LTDF) seems to have an agenda that goes much further than being just a forum on taxi-related subjects because if drivers are afraid to offer criticism, you have to wonder just what it is all about. If DaC drivers want to join, then they are free to try. But I won't be one of them ...Ed

DaC drivers and rented taxis

Dear Alan

Last month Brian Rice was kind enough to reply to my letter in *Call Sign* containing some ideas for changes this Society could implement and it was gratifying to find that he agreed with my suggestions. Unfortunately, in the end it sounds as though there will be no action taken on any of my points. He says that my proposal whereby drivers with 10 years service can remain on the circuit even if they start to drive a rented taxi should have been introduced at the AGM. But as I read rule 29 [b] [ii], a proposal for a rule change originating from a member needs to be proposed by 25 existing members, and I do not even know half a dozen. If this is a desirable course to take, and Brian agrees that it is, then a postal ballot should be held before more long standing drivers leave the Society.

As regards enclosing some hand out cards with copies of *Call Sign*, I agree with Brian that drivers *should* collect cards from the office or Roman Way, but as most drivers just do not do so, it may be necessary for the BoM to be proactive. Long gone are the days when all drivers visited the office every fortnight to collect payments, and now it could be five years or more between visits, so a new approach should be considered.

Laurence Kelvin (W88)

Brian Rice replies: As I stated last month, we can cater for your suggestion already although a Member that ceases to own a cab cannot remain a Member, but if the changeover to journeyman is straightaway, then they can retain their seniority. If they did not own their own taxi but remained as a member, it would compromise the whole fabric of Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Service (ODRTS). If you wish to endeavour to change that, then you are free to do so! However, if you feel that strongly then you will have to put a rule change yourself, but you are correct in that it would have to be supported by 25 Members. As with the hand-out cards, you should not always rely on the Board and me carrying out your suggestions. As I wrote last month, Members should sometimes help the BoM to help them. It is all very well coming up with suggestions, but you wish for others to execute them on your behalf.

Laurence, if the above sounds abrupt, it is not meant to be but there really isn't any other way for me to put it!



Mailshot

Continued from page 30

What's the answer...?

Hi Al

Recent *Call Signs* have contained much about new terminals, but the way the work is at the moment perhaps the new terminals should go on hold. I've been on DaC for 18 years with many of those on nights, although over the past few years I have moved over to days. In the last few months I have been having trouble covering my subs. I used to do loads of Westminster trips, now I can go a few days without a job at all. I've noticed quite a few drivers have left because of this. Like others, I've tried Hailo and it seems to work. So what if DaC fitted more drivers but charged 10 percent like Hailo with no run-ins etc? I would rather have a job with no run-in than no job at all. Have the Board got any new ideas in the pipeline to try and get some more work or are they hoping to sit it out until the recession is over? The trouble is that our money in the bank won't last forever. Quite often I check the computer to make sure I've turned it on as I haven't had a job for so long. I can't be the only day driver who is thinking of getting stripped out because of that. If things don't change, how will DaC survive? We really need to do something and it needs to be sooner rather than later...

Dave Raymond (F56)

DaC's newest Board member, Garry White, replies: Hello Dave, we now have the new terminals so they will be fitted very soon to drivers. I myself have recently been working some days after 20+ years on nights and it really is a different job with more downtime, but if you are prepared to work unsocial hours there is work available on DaC. The Board are thinking of new ideas all the time and have recently launched a credit card app available from the App Store.

Dave, please don't take this the wrong way but when times were busy, some drivers were far choosier than they should have been and licensed taxis lost valuable work – the trips we didn't fancy doing - out to private hire. It isn't the only reason but it certainly hasn't helped us during this never-ending recession.

I'm still learning, so I used your letter as a reason to try and understand more. So I looked to see how much credit work you covered when times were busier and we had that forty trip minimum per month. You were actually advised on four occasions to cover more trips. That's not to have a go at you but just to show how these things can come back to bite us on the bum! With Easter behind

us, let's hope that things now start to pick up and that we don't make the same mistakes this time round. Be lucky...

Speaking of Blue

Peter badges...

Hi Alan,

Re David Marks (R22) and Geoff Levene (W32) writing about Warner Harris and his offer of *Blue Peter* badges for drivers who covered 'difficult' trips - even though no badges ever arrived (*April Mailshot*). I have some other memories of those days including Manny Conway struggling one Christmas time and having to give the destinations of jobs from the Finsbury Square rank – something that was almost unheard of - in an effort to clear the work.

While not missing the poor signals and static on voice, I do miss the humour. There used to be a regular job from 2 Alexandra Avenue SW11 picking up Doctor Voller, a very old and infirm gentleman who had to be helped in and out of the cab. He caught a cab several times a day just crossing Albert Bridge to the Phene Arms on the other side. One day the despatcher was trying to cover a job from another number in Alexandra Avenue – this one going to *La Valbonne*, a disco/ club in Kingly Street W1. After calling the job, the dispatcher queried if Dr Voller had miraculously recovered and was now going dancing... Well it sounded funny at the time!

Unrelated, but to show how traffic has changed over the years; on one particular Sunday the despatcher was trying to cover SE13 back to 74 St James Street, where McKinseys were based before moving to Jermyn Street. I happened to be driving past number 74, offered a time and ran to

SE13 to cover the job. I'm afraid I wouldn't even attempt it today. I wonder if anyone would run such a distance with today's traffic?

Alasdair Kay (C47)

Have you ever run a ridiculously long way to cover an important account? A Blue Peter badge for the longest! ...Ed

Margaret Thatcher

I believe that Margaret Thatcher once had an account with Dial-a-Cab. I just wondered whether anyone ever picked her up and whether she said anything of note...

Jon Robinson (E88)

Yes Jon, she used it occasionally after her resignation. There is an article on ferrying her cat inside this issue as well as another on Maggie and some chips! ...Ed

Call Sign Online

Hi Al,

I'm making myself busy by reading *Call Sign Online* on my iPad whilst answering my regular call of nature shortly after I awaken each morning. Other than having something to do whilst contemplating, nothing more should be read into any other connection! I must say it is a brilliant resource and congratulations should go to you and Vince Chin for making it possible. Long may it continue...

Sean Farrell (B39)

Call Sign Online is at www.dac-call-sign.co.uk. It contains issues going back to 1998. It also has one Call Sign from 1987, an ODRS Monthly from 1977 and a News and Views from 1967 for comparison. Vince does an excellent job in keeping it looking good ...Ed

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