

November 2013



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*When Kevin the DaC cabby becomes
Kevin the wild west cowboy!*



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Part 2 of central London and some suburb restaurants with most having have 4 or more (out of 5) stars by customer reviews. Seems like Asian and Oriental food are very popular...

CENTRAL LONDON (AND SOME SUBURB) RESTAURANTS

La Sophia, 46 Golborne Rd., W10 5PR	Roux at The Landau, 1c Portland Place, W1B 1JA
L'Absinthe, 40 Chalcot Rd., NW1 8LS	Rowley's Rest., 113 Jermyn St., SW1Y 6HJ
Latium, 21 Berners St., W1T 3LP	Sake No Hana, 23 St. James St., SW1A 1H
Leicester Square Rest.3, St Martins St., WC2H 7HL	Sarastro, 126 Drury Lane, WC2B 5QG
L'Escargot, 48 Greek St., W1D 4EF	Sartoria, 20 Savile Row, W1S 3PR
L'Etranger, 36 Gloucester Rd., SW7 4QT	Scoff & Banter - Bloomsbury, 97 Gt. Russell St., WC1B 3LB
Luc's Brasserie, 17 Leadenhall Market, EC3V 1LR	Scoff & Banter - Canary Wharf, 5 Fairmont Avenue, E14 9PQ
Lutyens, 85 Fleet St., EC4Y1AE	Scoff & Banter - Kensington, 68-86 Cromwell Rd., SW7 5BT
Mala Rest.2 Marble Quay, St Katherine, E1W 1UH	Scoff & Banter - Leicester Square, Hampshire Ht, WC2H 7LH
Mango Tree, 46 Grosvenor Place, SW1X 7EQ	Scoff & Banter - Marble Arch, 19 Granville Place, W1H 6PA
Marco Pierre White Kings Rd 386 Kings Rd., SW3 5UZ	Scoff & Banter - Oxford St., 350 Oxford St., W1C 1BY
Marco Pierre White Steak/Alehouse, 109 Middlesex St., E1 7JF	Scotts - 20 Mount St. W1K 2HE
Marco Pierre White Sydney St. Grill, 4 Sydney St., SW3 6PP	Searcys St Pancras Grand, St Pancras International, N1C 4QL
MareMoto, 562 King's Rd., SW6 2DZ	Seawise -The Stables, Chalk Farm Rd., NW1 8AH
Maroush Live Entertainment, 4 Vere St., W1G 0DH	Sen Nin Japanese Teppanyaki, 35 Pratt St., NW1 0BG
Massala Hut,161 Drummond St., NW1 2PB	Sen Nin Japanese Teppanyaki, 206 Upper St., N1 1RQ
Massimo Rest.,10 Northumberland Avenue, WC2N 5AE	Sergios, 84 Great Titchfield St., W1W 7QY
Matsuri St James, 15 Bury St., SW1Y 6AL	Shaka Zulu,Stables Market, NW1 8AB
Mehek, 45 London Wall, EC2M 5TE	Shezan, 16, Cheval Place, SW7 1ES
Mele E Pere, 46 Brewer St., W1F 9TF	Sichuan-Folk Chinese Rest. 32 Hanbury St., E1 6QR
Menier Chocolate Factory Rest., 53 Southwark St., SE1 1RU	Silka,6 Southwark St., SE1 1TL
The Mercer, 34 Threadneedle St., EC2R 8AY	Stef's Italian, 3 Berners St., W1T 3LD
Mestizo Mexican, 103 Hampstead Rd., NW1 3EL	Suka, 50 Berners St., W1T 3NG
Michael Nadra Primrose Hill, 42 Gloucester Avenue, NW1 8JD	Supperclub, 12 Acklam Rd., W10 5QZ
Mill Lane Bistro, 77 Mill Lane, NW6 1NB	sushinho, 312 Kings Rd., SW3 5UH
Mint Leaf - Haymarket, Suffolk Place, Haymarket, SW1Y 4HX	Taberna Etrusca,9 Bow Churchyard, EC4M 9DQ
Miyako at Andaz, 40 Liverpool St., EC2M 7QN	Tentazioni, 2 Mill St., SE1 2BD
Montagu- Churchill, 30 Portman Square, W1H 7BH	Terrace Grill, 21 Piccadilly, W1J 0BH
Morgan M, 50 Long Lane, EC1A 9EJ	Texture Rest., 34 Portman St., W1H 7BY
Moti Mahal, 45 Great Queen St., WC2B 5AA	Thai Sq. Mans.Hse, Gt.St.Thom. Apos./Garlick Hill, EC4V 2BH
Mumbai Delight, 51A South Lambeth Rd., SW8 1RH	Thai Square City 136-138 Minories, EC3N 1NT
Mumbai Square, 7 Middlesex St., E1 7AA	Thai Square Covent Garden, 166 Shaftesbury Av, WC2H 8JB
Newman St. Tavern, 43 Newman St., W1T 1QQ	Thai Square Fulham, 563 Fulham Rd., SW6 1ES, SW6 1ES
No20 at Sanctum Soho Hotel, 20 Warwick St., W1B 5NF	Thai Square Angel, 347 Upper St., N1 0PD
Northall, Corinthia, 10a Northumberland Avenue, WC2N 5AE	Thai Square Hanover Sq. 5 Princess St., W1B 2LF
Northbank Rest. & Bar, 1 Paul's Walk, EC4V 3QH	Thai Square Putney Br. 2 Lower Richmond Rd., SW15 1LB
Odette's Rest. & Bar, 130 Regents Park Rd., NW1 8XL	Thai Square Soho, 27 St Annes Court, W1F 0BN
Olives - Millenium Baileys, 140 Gloucester Rd., SW7 4QH	Thai Square South Ken., 19 Exhibition Rd., SW7 2HE
One-O-One Rest., 101 Knightsbridge, SW1X 7RN	Thai Square the Strand, 148 The Strand, WC2R 1JA
Osteria dell'Arancio, 383 Kings Rd., SW10 0LP	Thai Square Trafalgar Sq., 21 Cockspur St., SW1Y 5BN
Otto's Rest., 182 Gray's Inn Rd., WC1X 8EW	Thirty Six - Dukes, 35 St. Jame's Place, SW1A 1NY
Palm Rest., 1 Pont St., SW1X 9EJ	Tiger Tiger, 29 The Haymarket, SW1Y 4SP
Palace Spice Battersea, 139 Lavender Hill, SW11 5QJ	Toresano, 130 Boundary Rd., NW8 0RH
Pasha - Islington, 301 Upper St., N1 2TU	Trishna - 15 Blandford St., W1U 3DG
Penny Black Rest. 212 Fulham Rd., SW10 9PJ	Trunk Warren St., 6 Warren St., W1T 5LB
Pera Rest. Islington 170 Upper St., N1 1RG	Truscott Arms, 55 Shirland Rd, W9 2JD
Peridot at the Bentley Hotel, 27 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JX	Tsunami, 93 Charlotte St., W1T 4PY
Pescatori Italian, 11 Dover St., W1S 4LH	Umami, 100 Cromwell Rd., SW7 4ER
Plum + Spilt Milk - Great Northern Ht., Pancras Rd, N1C 4TB	Uno ,1 Denbigh St., SW1V 2HF
Potting Shed Rest.39 Dorset Square, NW1 6QN	Village East, 171 Bermondsey St., SE1 3UW
Quality Chop House, 92 Farringdon Rd., EC1R 3EA	Volupte, 7 Norwich St., EC4A 1EJ
Quince at MayFair Hotel, 70 Stratton St., W1J 8LT	Waterway, 54 Formosa St., W9 2JU
Racine, 239 Brompton Rd., SW3 2EP	Wesley 81 Euston St., NW1 2EZ
Randa Rest., 23 Kensington Church St., W8 4LF	Wild Honey, 12 Saint George St., W1S 2FB
Rasa Malaysia, Inverness Place, W2 3JS	Wiltons, 55 Jermyn St., SW1Y 6LX
Red Fort, 77 Dean St., W1D 3SH	Wolfe's, 30 Great Queen St., WC2B 5BB
Red House, 2 Elystan St., SW3 3NS	Yaneff at DSTRKT 9-21 Rupert St., W1D 6DG
Reform Social & Grill, Mandeville Place, W1U 2BE	Yellow House Kitchen, 126 Lower Rd., SE16 2UE
Rib Room Rest., Cadogan Place, , SW1X 9PY	Zen China - County Hall- Riverside Building, SE1 7PB
Rossella, 103 Highgate Rd., NW5 1TR	Zia Teresa, 6 Hans Rd., SW3 1RX
Rotunda - Kings Pl, 90 York Way, N1 9AG	Ziloufs, 270 Upper St., N1 2UQ

A new section of the UID details the full list of restaurants in both last and this month's issues has been updated. This can be found at: www.nashsnumbers.co.uk/uid/uidpt5aais1.pdf and lots of taxi related information on the MyFav taxi page are at: www.myfav.co.uk/iehome.php?g=taxi or scan these QR codes...



MyFav Taxi page



List of Restaurants

Scan QR code with smart phone...

from the editor's desk

Firstly, I must thank the numerous numbers of **Dial-a-Cab** drivers who emailed and phoned me following the October issue, when I mentioned that my wife (and head proofer), **Linda**, was in hospital. She is now out and once again searching high and low for typos. We both thank you for your concern over her health and hopefully typos will now be even fewer once again! I'm too modest to tell you that they were few and far between last month anyway!

Thanks also to **Darren Crowson** at **London Taxis Private Hire**. He read my Editorial that also appeared in the same issue re the letter from **Mayor Johnson**. It asked drivers to place a sticker on their off-side taxi door explaining to passengers that a cyclist could well be passing as they open the door. I said I would have put one on but received the letter and no sticker. A sticker then magically appeared several days later from Darren, together with a note saying that if any other **Call Sign** reader failed to get one, to let this mag know and I may be able to pilfer one from Darren's LTPH stock!

And thanks to all those who remembered that it was my birthday month!

Licensing problems

Inside this issue is an update from **London Taxis Private Hire** giving various bits of news that we as London Taxi drivers should know about. One piece, though, referring to licensing contains a small piece aimed at drivers who have been "impacted by recent changes to the **Disclosure and Barring Service** and are currently unable to work."

This refers to the estimated 200 or so drivers whose three-year licence renewals have been delayed because unlike the previous system when using the CRB and a temporary cover would have been issued, with the new system that doesn't happen because it is now the driver's responsibility to forward the completed check onto TfL.

Previously, the CRB would have sent it directly to TfL so there would be little chance of any delays – deliberate or otherwise – from drivers. Now the approvals are sent to the drivers and it has become their responsibility to forward them on.

As a result, TfL has become more cautious and will not renew a licence unless the driver produces his or her new certificate and as a result, delays have occurred. LTPH say they are checking every day and treat those drivers whose licenses have expired or are close to it, as a high priority. But some drivers – including at least one **Dial-a-Cab** driver that I have heard of – have been unable to work for weeks because their licence application was still waiting for the Disclosure and Barring Service - which replaces the CRB and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and which is an executive non-departmental public body of the **Home Office**.

So is there no way out of the mess? Well this page has been known to let out our frustration on those at LTPH when we believe something could be done better. But none of the above is really their fault and whatever rumours are out there, most of those at what many still refer to as the old PCO, are reasonable people who certainly don't want to destroy our living.

So whose fault is it? Could it be the fault of some taxi drivers who have their clearance certificate but then put it aside while they go out for dinner and then forget all about it? Suddenly, with



just a few days to go, they remember and forward it on expecting their renewed licence to pop through the post. Well it ain't gonna happen!

If you are online, the whole process can be completed fairly quickly and if you complete it when first notified, then the chances are very good that you will get the new licence in ample time. Yes, it means you have to pay earlier than any of us would like, but hey, you're going to have to pay soon and it does last for three years. If you hang on to your money till the last second, but then end up being unable to drive for even a few days, let alone several weeks, are you any better off?

There will always be some who are delayed through no fault of their own, but I'd bet that many delays are self-inflicted and I think that LTDA General Secretary **Steve McNamara** has probably got it right – if a check box was added onto the application allowing the completed form to go directly to TfL then the problem would be solved, because we could then go back to being issued with temporary licenses.

The Home Office under **Theresa May** displayed their usual unhelpfulness and say it would require Parliamentary approval. Yeah, right! If I had a dog, I'd try to teach it to bark in French. If that failed I'd allow it to bark as it wants... if you get my drift Mrs May...

Hailo branching out!

My views on **Hailo** are well known and haven't changed since day one when I first heard the words "no run in, no gratuities, drivers pay for credit card charges and free waiting time." Sure enough, they have now indirectly caused huge problems for the account side of this business.

It's hardly surprising to hear that account clients quibble when taxis with Hailo stickers pick them up on a **Dial-a-Cab** trip and see a run-in, whereas the day before they may have called a Hailo cab from home and found the same cab and driver turning up with no run-in! Be honest, would you not also be confused if you were the passenger?

Now I hear that we have lost a large account to another radio taxi circuit who won it by agreeing to the client's terms – no run-ins and no gratuities. The fact that Hailo don't do account work doesn't diminish the problems caused – not by Hailo themselves because they just collect any profits – but by the drivers that continually cover work by throwing out of the window conditions that have taken radio circuits fifty years to build up.

I don't know the three people behind Hailo or two of the three drivers whose faces front the system, but I know **Russell Hall** and like to think that anytime we meet we would have a coffee and discuss life as we have done so many times in the past. In fact, Russ wrote for **Call Sign** for many years and has always claimed that's where he learned to write.

Had he still been on DaC and there was no such thing as Hailo, I wonder what Russell's view would be if a suggestion to open accounts with no run-ins or gratuities was put forward? I don't think that if he is still the Russell Hall I knew, that he be too chuffed. In fact I often wonder what some of those old time DaC/ODRTS drivers who are no longer with us, would have said after their years of helping to build up a radio taxi circuit acclaimed as the best by offering an excellent service in return for a 'fare' rate of pay.

I ask myself what DaC/ODRTS stalwarts such as **Alan Boca**, **Morry Kirshner**, **Paul Bishop**, **Lenny Bell**, **Tibor Hajdar**, **Chris Westbrook**, **Derek Chandler**, **John Wells** and of course our founder, **Bonnie Martyn** would think of the way taxi drivers are helping to destroy their own trade. I could add numerous other names to that list, but I think you get my drift.

Many drivers have said to me that they wouldn't be happy, but would put up with no gratuities. However, no run-ins makes radio work rather pointless. But hang on, it's not even that simple now because since the last issue of Call Sign came out, around a dozen drivers have phoned me – one at 3 in the morning obviously expecting me to answer – all either telling me or leaving a voicemail that they have seen queues at railway stations being handed Hailo hand-out cards!

Could it be worse? With work picking up, unsurprisingly their coverage has declined with passengers receiving messages about going to the nearest rank. Sadly, even that gives the rest of us a bad name.

So I revert to last month's point. The way this trade is moving will make the **Knowledge** pointless. More and more people will phone from home for a taxi if there is no run-in and free waiting time, whereas minicabs such as **Addison Lee** with their minimum charge will be a far more attractive proposition to those wanting to drive a cab. Then with fewer on the KoL, this trade will die and the game really will be finished...

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Call Sign November 2013

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reflections of the chairman

Work levels and service...

There isn't any doubt that work levels are increasing, but then they should be as we approach the Christmas period. There has also been a big increase in requests from clients for us to Marshal events they will be holding over the forthcoming weeks; that is always a good sign and something we have not experienced to this extent for a few years.

This is the part of the year when we can show the difference in our levels of service compared to the organisations that are offering a cheap service, cheaper than minicabs and subsidised by the taxi driver.

It is all very well offering a cheap service, but if they can't supply a taxi when it is required, then there isn't much point. However, over the forthcoming weeks it is up to every one of you to do that little bit extra to help supply your customers with a service at the expense of street work and particularly other organisations.

Are you with us?

I do sometimes wonder if we are all endeavouring to pull in the same direction. It's bad enough that our liveried **Dial-a-Cab** taxis transport passengers for other organisations at a reduced rate, but some of you are not only sticking the knife into your Society by offering the above, but some of you are now actually twisting the knife!

I'd like to relay a little story to you that has resulted in a complaint against a driver; I feel justified in relaying this incident to you as the Complaints Meeting would have been completed by the time you read the piece.

The complaint came from a customer who felt they had been over-charged on a trip to Stansted Airport. They produced the receipt to us which had been issued on behalf of an organisation that operates an App. Obviously we informed the customer they should contact the App organisation concerned.

The customer then sent us a picture of his *iPhone* with the Credit Card trip clearly displayed on our App. There was no doubt about it - the customer had ordered a taxi on our App to go to Stansted, but what transpired leaves me exasperated and depressed when I see how some are prepared to do this Society so much harm in favour of the App organisation.

Seventeen minutes into the journey, the driver changed the trip to Cash. Then, when he was outside the Airport, he cleared the trip - that is according to the receipt that was issued by the App organisation. If that wasn't appalling enough, the driver then added a 10% handling charge to the fare and cleared it with the App organisation!

In consequence, we build and supply an App for the benefit of our Members and when we take a booking with that App, some are prepared to add the 10% and clear it with another organisation, thereby giving them any profit for doing absolutely nothing!

My goodness, it has been a tough 4/5 years and yet we have a few of our own drivers attempting to work against us! As I stated earlier, it is so exasperating and depressing for those of us - Members included - who endeavour to service and protect our work while others, it seems, seek to destroy us!

There is no doubt in my mind that this whole episode was pre-meditated by the driver concerned, I will be very interested how three of his peers view the situation when he appears in front of a Complaints Committee.

Under normal circumstances, I would not mention this topic until after the meeting was held, but I am so upset about the situation that I wanted to bring the topic to your attention as soon as I could. As I mentioned previously, the complaint would have been heard by the committee before this piece is published, thereby it will not influencing the outcome.



Whilst I am in this mood - and having a moan - I would like to draw your attention to Rule 5(b) which states that Members should not carry any advertising for third parties unless they have the permission of the Company Secretary. I know this has not been forthcoming to any Member, so if any of you are carrying any type of advertising for any organisation other than Dial-a-Cab, then please remove it. I have had numerous complaints from Members regarding this situation and they quite rightly feel that this type of advertising is doing harm to their Society and I couldn't agree more.

We do not wish to have a heavy handed approach, so we are requesting you to remove this type of advertising for other Apps (you all know what I am talking about).

If some Members do not adhere to our request, then we will review the matter again and possibly adopt a more robust policy.

And finally

Finally, you can all do your little bit for the trade and this Society in particular by offering a prompt and reliable service in the coming weeks. Please endeavour to avert this 'Race to the bottom' that some would like us all to enter!

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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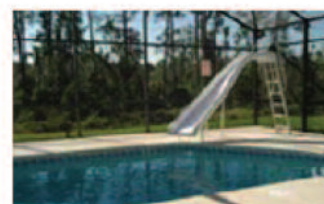
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Further to TPH Notices 07/13 and 10/13, Transport for London has commenced issuing replacement licences and identifiers to all licensed London taxi drivers in October 2013.

The new licences and identifiers will be of a similar design to existing ones but will contain a number of new security features including a hologram and a barcode unique to the driver. In addition, following feedback from the trade, the new suburban identifiers have a larger space to show the areas in which a driver is licensed to ply for hire. The replacement licences and identifiers are being issued as follows:

* From 1 October, any newly licensed driver is issued with the new style licence and identifiers.

* Drivers renewing their licence from 1

Welcome to Ruby Carole-Ann!



The birth by **Debbie Fresco** on **October 21** of the gorgeous **Ruby Carole-Ann** gave **Call Sign** even more of a buzz than we usually get anyway by the birth of a new baby, because in a strange way it involves the whole trade.

Taxi driving dad **Danny** is **Call Sign's** lay out man and has been since June 1997. Ruby's granddad, **Al Fresco**, is a former **Radio Taxis** driver / magazine editor as well as currently writing the *Two Fingers* column in **TAXI**, while Ruby's other granddad is long-time **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Gerry Tobin (L32)**. Gerry's wife **Madelyn** has no taxi link other than being thrilled at her new granddaughter, whereas Ruby's big brother **Harrison** has two toy taxis!

Ruby's middle name, Carole-Ann comes from Danny's much missed mum and Al's wife – not to mention Ed's wife **Linda Fisher's** closest friend - **Carole Fresco**.

Our best wishes go to Debbie, Danny, Harrison and all the Fresco family.

From London Taxis Private Hire...

New Design Licences and Identifiers



October will be issued with a new style licence. Their new style identifiers will be sent separately.

* All other drivers will receive their replacement licence and identifiers together by the end of 2013.

Drivers should display their replacement identifiers and carry the copy of their replacement licence as soon as they receive them. Drivers renting taxis should give the original licence to the owner of the taxi and ask for the return of the existing licence.

Accompanying the new documents will be instructions advising how to return existing documents to TfL.

As the new licences contain a digital image of the driver, we will not be able to issue a replacement licence and identifiers to those drivers who have not responded to our requests to provide passport size photographs.

Any driver who has not yet responded to this request is urged to do so without further delay as until a photograph is provided, TfL will be unable to issue the replacement licence and identifiers. **Photographs can be emailed to TPHphotos@tfl.gov.uk or posted to:**

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

Further information regarding the date by which all drivers will have to display the new style identifiers will be issued shortly. Drivers found not displaying new design identifiers after this date will be liable to compliance action.

Helen Chapman
Interim General Manager

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Jery's World



"And they say **WE** pollute the air! The Mayor should cancel Guy Fawkes this year and convert every cab to gas... 'ere Bert, is that a pig flying among the rockets!!!"

Learning Tai Chi



Bill Cornish with his Tai Chi Champion's gold medal

Dial-a-Cab's Bill Cornish (T76) of the Wu Style Hao Family TaijiQuan Association UK invites any Dial-a-Cab driver or their friends who are interested in Tai Chi or Martial Arts, to attend a seminar on Sunday 24th November 2013.

There will be a free demonstration of form etc from 2 pm and the seminar will commence at 3pm until 7pm at the modest cost of £25 per person. All are welcome from beginners to advanced practitioners.

Tea and biscuits will be provided or you can bring your own snacks.

Hao style TaijiQuan is a distinctive style with small, subtle movements, highly focused on balance, sensitivity and internal Qi development.

It is considered a rare style which maintains the traditional methods to achieve good health and martial skills. The seminar will be held at:

**St Johns Hall,
Bourne Hill,
Palmers Green,
London
N13 4DA**

Bill was the **2005 UK Tai Chi Champion** in the Under 75Kg weight bracket, beating all-comers in this prestigious competition and bringing home a Gold Medal in the process. Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese healing art using a series of gentle focused exercises for mind and body. It is also referred to as the ancient art of wellbeing. By increasing stamina, flexibility, relaxation and overall quality of life, the body's natural healing process is in turn, encouraged.

Anyone who sees Bill around can stop him for a chat and he would be happy to explain further...

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When **Graham Waite (B35)** contacted *Call Sign* and mentioned four words – **Freedom of Information Act** – our ears pricked up because generally speaking, few people apply for information that no one wants when quoting the *2000 Act*.

Graham was enquiring about a CCTV camera that oversees a pedestrian crossing outside Hampstead Heath Station on South End Green. It is fairly difficult to spot being located on top of one of the lampposts in addition to being very small.

But Graham knows it because he got a PCN there when a lady passenger jumped out after seeing her sister just as he was about to do a U-turn and pull up closer to the station entrance for her.

Graham told this mag that he feels his defence was not given a fair hearing and he is currently disputing the matter in Court. He added a belief that most would agree with - some Councils cared more about generating vast incomes than having any real interest in road safety. He also called for a Judicial Review.

Camden provided the information regarding that camera for the Dial-a-Cab driver under the Act. The info provided answers to a number of questions, including the number of appeals and how many of them were accepted (quite a high percentage and something worth remembering).

However, we were just interested in the number of PCNs and how much Camden earned from that one camera. Anyone care to take a guess? Well, the number of PCNs for all

Camden gives a kick in the South End!



Vehicles are up against CCTV centres like this!

CCTV vehicles. CCTV enforcement operates alongside the on-street CEO patrols.

Contraventions that are enforced by way of CCTV are governed by the London Local Authorities Acts 1990 to 2008, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

and Traffic Management Act 2004. All CCTV cameras used in Camden are approved for use by the Department for Transport. Motorists who are observed contravening the restrictions will receive a Penalty Charge Notice through the post instead of finding it on their vehicle."

So how many cams should we multiply that by to get the total income for Camden? To be honest we haven't a clue but it must run well into high three figures – if not more. According to the council:

"We use CCTV cameras to enforce parking, moving traffic and bus lane restrictions in areas where it is difficult or unsafe for a Civil Enforcement Officer to be able to enforce. In addition to static cameras, we also use mobile

contraventions issued by that camera for 5 years ending in July 2013 was 3601 and the revenue they provided came to over £270,000, an average of around £75 per ticket!

We're no wiser, but we suspect that Camden Council could probably loan money to the Bank of England!

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

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Addison Lee's equality battle in regard to bus lane use for their minicab fleet against London's licensed taxis, is heading for **European Court of Justice** after the British **Appeal Court** asked for a ruling on European anti-competition laws and whether making a bus lane on a public road available to black cabs but not minicabs during its hours of operation, involved the use of 'State resources' of *Article 107 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*. Addison Lee's first trip to Court ended in failure and led to this Appeal.

If the European Court comes to a decisive decision, then it could be Luxembourg rather than London WC2 that makes the important decision on our future.

Addison Lee and their owners, **Eventech**, have been battling against TfL for several years in a bid to win equality with taxis. The Court of Appeal has been dealing with the matter since April and has obviously decided that it needs a European ruling to assist in its decision and recently released documents from both sides.

Unsurprisingly, an Addison Lee spokesperson commented on the decision:

"We are pleased the matter has been referred to the European Courts as we believe that the current legislation is a breach of the EU and UK law. You can't discriminate between two types of taxis and we are pleased to have the opportunity to continue the fight against this injustice."

TfL responded after reiterating their case in the original proceedings that taxis were

Addy Lee/bus lanes hit Euro Court of Justice



Europe may decide Addy Lee bus lane appeal

allowed to drive in bus lanes because they can ply for hire, whereas minicabs cannot and how difficult it would be to hail a taxi if the vehicle was not close to the kerb. The Authority added:

"The Court of Appeal has referred to the European Court of Justice the issue of whether or not TfL's policy, which allows taxis but not private hire vehicles to drive in bus lanes, amounts to State aid. Once the European Court has given its judgment on this aspect, the case will be

referred back to the Court of Appeal for a decision on the wider appeal. Pending that outcome, we continue to maintain our policy on access to bus lanes and to contest the appeal."

Interestingly, Addison Lee Chairman **John Griffin** generally refers to his car company as minicabs, while his spokesperson has now elevated them to a taxi company.

A decision is not expected imminently and the judge does not have to accept any Euro decision...

Licencing Fiasco

London's taxi drivers have been through the wars over the past few years. There were the TX4 fires, the Vito's ongoing steering problems and now an estimated 200 or so drivers who just cannot get their licenses renewed - with that number said to be growing.

Most drivers renew their licenses every three years without too much hassle - including the former **CRB** check. But since July, there have been delays in getting the criminal record check - now known as the **Disclosure and Barring Service** - completed. And until TfL get it, no licence is forthcoming to the driver. At least one **Dial-a-Cab** driver has been waiting so long that the Board have suspended his subscriptions. The problem is that drivers now forward licences to TfL as against it going direct.

According to the Disclosure and Barring Service, they claim that they handle 75% of applications within a fortnight and 90% within a month. But they admit that some drag out for longer and won't explain exactly why. Some delays have taken up to ten weeks.

The **LTDA** General Secretary, **Steve McNamara**, told **Call Sign** that he has spent three months trying to get the Home Office to pay attention. He said:

"They find it impossible to understand that self-employed people don't get paid if they don't work. Delays have been common in the system since its foundation, but it never mattered too much because the approvals, when they came, were sent directly to the drivers' licensing authority, **Transport for London**."

"Because of that, TfL was prepared to issue a licence pending the arrival of the certificate a few weeks later because they knew that they would get it and that they could act if a problem had occurred with the driver. Now the approvals go directly to the person seeking clearance. The change has left TfL more cautious and has led them to refuse a licence renewal unless the driver can produce a new certificate."

The LTDA carried out a lobby outside the Home Office building in Westminster where their **Advan** and 200 taxis were painted with a photo of Home Secretary **Theresa May** and the slogan: *How am I supposed to feed my family whilst I am waiting?* An ad- was also placed in London's *Evening Standard*, *The Metro*, *New Statesman* and others. The result got Steve a meeting with **Theresa May**.

"It's funny how quickly you can get a meeting with people when you put a photograph of the Home Secretary on a cab and start issuing statements to newspapers, when those same people ignored you before," Steve told us with a smile.

In the kind of world we inhabit nowadays, most drivers accept the need for checks that reassure the public just how safe you are in a licensed taxi. Most also accept - even expect - that some will take longer than others to process, but the LTDA have suggested the system goes back to how it was up until fairly recently, when temporary renewals were given until the original certification arrived.



Hopefully Theresa May got the message!



You may recall last year I wrote about **Raspberry Pi**, the British-made credit-card sized computer for £30, which has had phenomenal success both here and abroad. Hobbyists of all ages have been using these computers to create some amazing projects, from game emulators to supercomputers.

I use several of them for various tasks, including monitoring my home network, a wireless repeater, a retro game emulator (for my son) and a media centre. The possibilities are endless and most projects only require a few hours' work and a bit of *Googling*.

I like to keep an eye on the Pi community as there are always new ideas emerging. What's great about the community is that everyone shares their ideas – and most importantly – their code. This allows even inexperienced hobbyists to quickly build cool gizmos, especially the younger generation.

One new project idea that has been mentioned on the Internet is the so-called 'Carputer' – a fully integrated computer embedded into your car. Whilst this may sound far-fetched or even a bit dystopian, it's not really; all modern cars have built-in computers, albeit very basic for the most part. **In fact, all drivers on the Dial-a-Cab circuit have sophisticated in-cab computers which we call Mobile Data Terminals. These inter-operate seamlessly with hardware in your cab (meter, GPS, Chip-and-PIN device).**

The Carputer concept extends the idea of a basic computer-integrated car and branches into two sections: entertainment and management. Do you want to build a personalised, fully-featured in-car entertainment system, featuring a 7-inch touch screen display, movies and music, customisable SatNav maps and a rear-view camera? All it takes is a **Raspberry Pi**, 7-inch touchscreen LCD display, a rear camera, a

DaC's Jon Winterburn looks at a car computer...

RASPBERRY PI PROJECT: "THE CARPUTER!"



GPS receiver module, a memory card and a bunch of cables. It'll cost you around £120, a bit of elbow grease and a moderate learning curve.

Before you think it's too good to be true, a hobbyist has already done it and has uploaded the software you need and full instructions, including a video at:

<http://www.engineering-diy.blogspot.ro/2013/08/car-pc-project-august-2013-update.html>

Perhaps you'd like to extend the functionality of your carputer to monitor your car's performance? This will require only a bit more work and learning to achieve. According to another hobbyist's blog:

"OBD or On Board Diagnostics and OBD-II is a standard for communicating and reading data from a car; it's standard across most modern cars and the likelihood is you have a connector in your car which you can read all

sorts of data about the car such as RPM, Speed, Temperature and a million other things you wouldn't guess a car was monitoring." Again, there is a video, instructions and free software to download at:

<http://www.stuffaboutcode.com/2013/07/raspberry-pi-reading-car-obd-ii-data.html>

You can find more about Carputer projects at: <http://www.raspberrypi.org/archives/4462>

Please bear in mind that these are hobbyists and anything you do to your own vehicle(s) is at your own risk! I would advise you NOT to try these projects out on your taxi...

Jon Winterburn

DaC Network Administrator

Fuel duty frozen if...



The **Petrol Retailers' Association** has told **Call Sign** that they welcome Chancellor **George Osborne's** announcement that he intends freezing fuel duty until the next election (May 2015). That would include the planned duty rise of 2 pence per litre in September 2014.

Brian Madderson, Chairman of the PRA, told us: **"We have been lobbying Government and Treasury to make an early announcement about their intentions on freezing fuel**

duty, so it is welcoming news to hear the Chancellor's commitment at last month's Conservative Party conference. It will be the longest period of duty freeze (4 years, 4months) in over 40 years if the announcement goes ahead as planned."

But Mr Madderson added: **"Although this is a step in the right direction, it is disappointing that the announcement was dampened with a comment by Mr Osborne that the freeze was only provided they could find the savings to pay for it. The PRA will continue to liaise with government and we hope to see further developments in due course."**



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I have read Jon Tremlett's letter to Call Sign. I think it fair to say that the weekend Jon refers to was very busy for the reasons he mentions and for staff to help drivers on that day and give our clients the service they were demanding, was not an easy task.

To address Jon's first question; does someone really call us and order a taxi without knowing the destination? The answer is yes. Do we ask the caller for a destination? Yes we do! But there are many reasons why the caller may refuse to give a destination.

I can relate to a trip just a few weeks ago when I was standing with the call-back telephonist who was advising an account client that we were having a problem covering their trip and if they knew the destination, then it could possibly help us to get them a taxi that bit sooner. The answer I was given was that he had ordered the taxi for his wife and he had no idea where she was going! The CSR asked the caller if his wife was contactable and he replied that she was upstairs getting ready and just to get her the cab!

Then there are the occasions when a PA orders a taxi for their boss or their own clients and the PA does not always have the information we require as to where the passenger is travelling to.

The reason why the same trip is offered time and again is partly down to the dispatch system. Trips that are unmatched will flag up to the controller after a set time. It is at this point that the controller will make a decision about how to get the trip covered. On some occasions, they may increase the run in amount or offer the trip with a premium or even unmask the trip. They also have the facility to make the trip non-rejectable and on the day in question, I'm sure Jon will be pleased to note that the controller never used the option, knowing how it would have been received by those out there working. But whatever method they choose to use to get the trip covered, they have to rematch the trip, which again starts the dispatching cycle from the beginning and that is why the same trip is offered again.

It's not uncommon for the first driver or other drivers in the queue to reject a trip and accept it when it's offered to them again. When traffic is bad, it is very common for drivers to reject trips because they feel they will not get to the pick up on time. Then as soon as they have rejected the trip the traffic moves and then they find they would have made it. The rematch trip gives them the option of being offered it again.

John also refers to airport pick-ups and asks why we can't instruct drivers to pick up from the radio taxi pick up ranks rather than stand at arrivals with a name

DaC driver Jon Tremlett (Y32) has written to Mailshot querying Control Centre operations during very busy periods. Control Centre Manager Keith Cain answers...

Control Centre controlling chaos???



card. Within the dispatch system, we have listed both the arrivals barrier and radio taxis pick-up point. These are offered to the caller and more often it is the case they select where they want the driver to be. In the scenario I mentioned earlier when someone orders a taxi on someone else's behalf, the arrivals barrier is the most common and easiest place to find for the traveller. It is also a regular occurrence for us to patch the passenger through to the driver's mobile phone to assist with making contact with each other. I must say that when HALT was manning the taxi information desks, the radio taxi pick-up ranks were our preferred collection point and our staff was encouraged to persuade clients to use them. Now the desks have gone, the only travellers who request being picked up from them are the regular users who know where to find them.

Jon also asks about Twickenham pick-ups. Like many other public venues, this will always be a problem to drivers meeting passengers, simply because the passenger very rarely knows the street name where the stadium is. If we select a street location where to meet the passenger that

has not been marked as a dedicating taxi waiting point, not only is this confusing to them but we find our telephonist has difficulty explaining where the pick-up is as well. That is why we use the main road nearest to the main entrance and wait for the driver to advise where they can park legally and safely. We then inform the passenger and if necessary patch the driver through to the passenger.

While Jon wants everything to run smooth in his working day, so too does our staff. Unfortunately we are in the service industry and as much as we try and make both client and driver's lives easy, there will always be obstacles cropping up no matter what we do.

I like to think it is how all of us deal with the problems of giving a service. We all know what suits one client is not going to suit another and what suits one driver will not favour another. Rest assured, Jon, we all know who should come first but trying to convince the one coming second they are not number one is not only a skill... but virtually impossible!

Keith Cain
Control Centre Manager

TAXI DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Annual dinner and dance

There are still tickets available for the Taxi Driver of the Year Charity annual dinner and dance

It takes place on 30th November 2013 at the

Holiday Inn London Kensington Forum, 97 Cromwell Road SW7

The price: £62.50 per person (includes welcome drink at reception, 4-course meal, half a bottle of wine per person and tea/coffee. Tea/coffee/Danish pastries will also be served later).

Dancing to a live band!

We 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

All money raised is split between the five taxi charities...

Russell Poluck MBE (T55), TDoY Charity Fund Hon Chairman

The biggest but still the best



A successful taxi support company which employs 55 people and provides crucial services to London's illustrious black cab industry has relocated to new, larger premises at Blackhorse Road.

Originally founded by Micky Ascott around 1980 the name changed to Ascott Cab Company in 1991 and has enjoyed great success ever since and is now the largest independent taxi service firm in the area. This proudly independent 'one-stop taxi shop' caters for drivers of London's iconic black cabs by providing vital services including Taxi Sales, with the unrivalled Tower Gold Warranty, specialist servicing, diagnostics and

warranty repairs, MoT's, Cab Rentals, Digitax meter hire and our leading insurance approved body shop. We offer NSL pre-tests, which prepares the vehicle and owner for the stringent government licencing and inspection procedures, also Ascott Cab Company has its own Apprenticeship Scheme associated with Bromley College on day release investing in youngsters for the future. On site is Quotax Insurance services tailored specifically for taxi drivers. This family-run company, who we are proud to be associated with, aims to offer everything that the professional cabbie needs in the most friendly, economical and convenient manner possible.



Over half of Ascott's 55 dedicated staff is drawn from the surrounding area with 33 employees living within five miles of the new premises, which are located just 200 metres from the former site in Evelyn Street. The move forced upon us due to the redevelopment of the existing site has encouraged the company to invest over a £¼ million in this expansion project, which has enabled the company to increase the number of ramps in the workshop from 15 to 19. This means that the 18 fully trained technicians are able to accept an increased workload whilst operating more efficiently, and that waiting times for customers have been significantly cut. The workshop is also

equipped with fully computerised diagnostics systems.

Nearby Ilderton Road is the location of our full body shop facility which boasts a further 16 specialist body shop technicians undertaking personal, insurance and non-fault repair work. Its state-of-the-art facilities make for high quality workmanship and a rapid turnaround, which means minimum downtime and a hassle-free experience for working cabbies.

The Ascott Cab Company has built an unparalleled reputation for customer service and integrity, and enjoys an extremely loyal client base among London's taxi driving community.

For more details call **020 8692 1122** or visit the website at www.ascottcab.com The new premises are located at **Blackhorse Road, SE8 5HY**.



Ascott Cab Company would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all our customers for their continued support, present and in the future.



Last month's *Call Sign* saw Bob Woodford asking for unusual war damage to help him put together a tour for 2014 – the hundredth anniversary of the start of World War 1...

BOB'S WAR TOURS: DAC DRIVERS RESPOND

I was very pleased with the response to my request for war related anecdotes in last month's *Call Sign*. The first cab driver off the rank whose email was received before my own copy of *Call Sign* had even hit the mat was **Richard Potter (T51)**. Richard asked if I was aware of a bomb shelter in **Thirleby Road** off Victoria Street, which could be seen by looking through the bushes.

I had to say that I had no idea whatsoever about this - even though I worked for 7 years right next door at the District Post Office in **Howick Place**! But a recent visit proved inconclusive when I discovered what appeared to be a couple of out-buildings higher than street level - but whatever was lurking in the bushes was well and truly covered up - and I decided against the option of splitting my breeches or impaling my cobbles on the railings to find out!

Richard also reminded me that the last remaining air-raid siren stands in **Bayswater Road**. I can remember when I was on the *Knowledge*, I always made a mental note of where air-raid sirens were in London - be they on tall green poles or on top of police stations. I can also remember when the one in **Algate High Street** was taken down; it lay on its side for what seemed like days.

I wonder if readers can remember the old **Britain at War** museum that was for a time in **Druid Street**. They had an air-raid siren in the entrance hall - and what a noisy thing it was!

Next **Terence West (A64)** wrote: "As you enter the **Shell Mex** building at **80 Strand**, on the wall to the right is a plaque stating that here was the first HQ of the newly formed

RAF in 1918."

I thanked Terry but I did know about the plaque and I would be a pretty rough guide if I didn't - because it is a *City of Westminster Green Plaque* and being a City of Westminster Guide, I should know them all - but I'm sure I don't! The RAF took over part of the old **Cecil Hotel**, which was demolished to make way for **Shell Max House** - apart from the front of the hotel, which is now shops.

Did you know that there is a water-tight tunnel under the Thames linking the two **Shell** buildings that their staff used to use? And did you also know that its clock on the Embankment side has the biggest clock face in London? Its nickname is the **Big Benzene**! And talking of 'rough' guides, did you know that the building is now home to the travel guide publisher *Rough Guide*?

Peter Arnold (F40) got in touch and was wondering if the *General Wolfe* statue in **Greenwich Park** was on my list, as there is some visible bomb damage to the plinth and he thought it was from a **V1** explosion. Well I've been on that hill many times and had never noticed - but images on the internet prove it to be the case. I discovered that a high explosive bomb landed in the Avenue by looking at a fantastic website called www.bombsight.org which maps where all WW2 bombs fell in London - go check it out for yourselves; it is incredibly addictive. Interestingly, many bombs fell in Greenwich Park - probably due to the fact that raiders came down the Thames corridor, when a full moon would be bad news for Londoners! Peter also mentioned rumours about enemy fighters soaring through the park Avenue using the *General Wolfe* statue as target practice! Nasty or what!

Fellow *Call Sign* contributor **Sean Farrell (B39)** also wrote to me. He said:

"Not sure if you already know, but that

Luftwaffe pilot that you referred to in your article who was nearly lynched at the estate near the Oval, was the subject of a documentary - or rather his plane was. If you remember the **Battle of Britain** film, a German plane is seen trailing black smoke as it passes **Trafalgar Square** and **Buckingham Palace**. This was based on the same incident. The plane actually crashed at the crossroad of **Ebury Bridge** and **Pimlico Road**. The documentary was one of those *Time Team* ones and as roadworks were about to take place at the junction, the BBC decided to kill two birds with one stone. They actually found parts of the engine block of the plane buried quite deep. The pilot bailed out and it was he who landed near the-then **LCC** estate."

Unfortunately I must have missed that particular *Time Team* episode, but I responded to Sean:

"You've reminded me about what the old guys in the District Post Office where I used to work in **Howick Place**, called the junction: **Fuselage Corner**. It was they who told me the story of the crash, but in those days I was even more fascinated after being told also that where the **Audit Office** is now in **Buckingham Palace Road** was once a factory that made condoms!"

I've done some digging and found a few internet reports on Sean's **Fuselage Corner**. Look at:

www.westendatwar.org.uk/page_id_146_path_0p3p.aspx
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/3760097.stm>
www.bbm.org.uk/as-holmes.htm

My sincere thanks for all your help, guys - all contributions were very much appreciated!

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online

Confirmed... Two DaC drivers on Hydrogen taxis!

Last month's *Call Sign* revealed our suspicions that two drivers on **Dial-a-Cab** have been road testing the temporarily named **TX4H** - H being for Hydrogen - and will continue to do so for a total of around two years. We have now had it confirmed but have agreed not to name the drivers.

Behind the scheme are **Intelligent Energy**, who specialise in the development of modular, low carbon fuel cell systems. They lead a consortium that hopes to introduce zero emission fuel cell electric taxis to London, featuring a hydrogen fuel cell and lithium battery powered electric hybrid that should provide a 250-mile driving range whilst still maintaining all the passenger and luggage space that London taxis are famed for. Refilling is said to take five minutes.

Whether **Geely** will rejoin is unknown at this time. However, in an exclusive interview *Call Sign* interview last month, Geely Chairman **Li Shufu** told us in response to a question as to how he saw the near future of the TX4:

"It will retain its iconic design and be more light weight, with improved reliability and driveability; it will also have improved fuel efficiency and be a green solution. These are the success factors for the next generation of black taxis."

Whether that means that the two organisations will end up together again is also unknown at this time, however the end result seems similar with drivers being offered a 21st century taxi in which to earn their living. How much will it cost? Nope, we haven't a clue - but if that price is affordable, the TX4H could be a real winner.

The two DaC drivers testing the vehicle are using TX4 taxis during test days. But although licensed, they do not pick up passengers.

The Hydrogen taxi, when finally in service, will benefit from zero road tax, will emit zero CO2 and zero particulates with zero tailpipe emissions. Comfort and reliability will improve compared with conventional taxis as there are no moving parts in the fuel cell and with electric motors driving the wheels. Testing will continue until each taxi has covered a minimum of 50,000 miles.



The publicity photo still has LTC on it - are they trying to tell us something?

The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children had the pleasure of being invited to attend the traditional annual London Pearly Kings and Queens Costermongers' Harvest Festival Parade held on Sunday 29th September at Guildhall and I went along, together with the fund's Hon Chair Susan Angel, committee members Malcolm Shaffron, Steven Bell, Mike Son and our wives to witness this colourful and spectacular event.

Scores of Pearly Kings and Queens from all corners of London had gathered for the festival, more than 130 years on from when road sweeper Henry Croft covered his finest *whistle and flute* (suit) in shiny white buttons in aid of the City's poor, with the modern day Pearlies continuing his mission and doing such great charity work.

The brilliant entertainment was greatly appreciated by the huge crowd that gathered in the Guildhall Yard and included the volunteer Drummers who opened The London 2012 Olympics. Our taxis then joined the very long procession led by the Pearlies around the City to attend St Mary-le-Bow Church where the pealing of the Cockney Bow Bells welcomed the congregation for a thanksgiving service. It was a warm and sunny day and great to see the cheering crowds out in abundance.

Committee member Steven Bell and his wife Wendy had worked tirelessly converting Steve's taxi into a 'Pearly' Taxi adorned with hundreds of magnetic pearl buttons - and what a brilliant job they did. The taxi delighted the

THE LONDON TAXIDRIVERS' FUND FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN & THE PEARLIES...

LTFUC at the Costermongers Harvest Festival

By LTFUC Press Officer Raymond Levy



LTFUC committee member Malcolm Shaffron with the Pearlies and Steve Bell's amazing taxi!

crowds and attracted many people who came over to take photos. Well done to Steve and Wendy for doing such an amazing job, which took hours of hard work and was greatly appreciated by all the Pearlies.

Congratulations must go to Doreen Golding, Pearly Queen of the Old Kent Road,

for organising such a brilliant event. Her late husband, Larry, would have been so proud of her and thrilled to see so many people in attendance. We would also like to thank all the wonderful Pearlies who help so many charities in London and the Greater London Area and for all the continued help they give our charity.



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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 33 years to a 1980 issue of Call Sign and a look at some letters...

CALL SIGN LETTERS PAGE

Dear Mr Emden,

Recently I came in for a credit job unopposed, to pick up at the Eccentric Club going as directed and to make contact at the Members Bar with a Major Timothy Upshott-Bagley. I was directed to the Members Bar and waited rather patiently when a voice said: "Give the driver a pint and I'll be back in a moment." The barman then proceeded to pull me a pint and put it up on the counter. I was halfway through this beautiful foaming pint when I heard from behind me the same voice: "Ah, there you are driver; when you have finished your pint, I am ready when you are."

I turned round and there before me stood the most amazing sight I had seen for years. I nearly choked on my pint.

I was confronted by a 6' 4" hulk of a man, at least 18 stone in weight, his face best described as something that resembled an upholstered skull with a ginger beard. He was wearing a military uniform, which could be described as follows:

A bright red scouts hat, which looked as though it had been placed on his head with a spirit level. It had all the necessary dimples in it, while at its side was a large orange plume! In the centre of the hat was a brass badge with the initials RCMF vividly inscribed on it. Then there was a khaki shirt with RCMF on the collar, red and gold shoulder flashes, sergeant type stripes on both sleeves - gold bordered of course - six black horizontal stripes with gold edging on each wrist and a pink tie complete with woggle and RCMF inscribed on that as well. A Sam Browne belt with knife and whistle, riding breeches with black and gold flashes down each leg and riding boots and silver spurs completing the outfit!

After a careful study of this amazing outfit, I thought of a few army regiments it may have resembled; The Winnipeg Rifles, Vancouver Rangers and the Quebec Infantry (32nd foot) came immediately to mind, so I asked what regiment he was in? He replied: "Well, it speaks for itself surely, old chap".

I asked what RCMF stood for admitting that it had me completely baffled.

"Well think about it," he said as he looked at me still trying to work out what the initials stood for. "Isn't it fairly obvious? It is the Regents Canal Minesweeper Flotilla."

So I asked why he needed the spurs. He just stared straight at me as he responded:

"Well, somebody's got to ride the bloody horse!"

From J L Clifford E45

Dear Phil,

Hi you 'orrible lot! Just thought I'd send you a Christmas greeting from sunny LA, California.

It's hard to describe in a letter exactly what one feels, but here goes. During my time at ODRTS, I experienced a kind of family work unit which does not seem to exist over here, so keep up the good staff relations, you're doing a fine job.

Anyway, another former ODRTS driver, Brian Myers and I are working very hard in the toy shop which he now owns and which is located in the San Fernando Valley in a fairly posh area. With the Christmas trade just a snowflake away, it's a good game to be in. Of course we never play with the toys or throw cream cakes at each other!

So long for now, I will write again when something gooder happens!

From David 'Kupcake' Kupler
Los Angeles, California

Flashback
1980

Lee's cup dreams go for another year

They had a brilliant victory in the FA Cup second qualifying round against Ryman Premier team Harrow Borough. But Dial-a-Cab driver and goalkeeper for Evo Stick Southern Division One (Central) team North Greenford United, Lee Pearce (J71) saw his dream of an appearance in the FA Cup first round proper fall in a heart breaking way in the third qualifying round against Isthmian Premier League team Canvey Island. A win there would have left Lee's team with just one more match before they could have gone into the hat with former FA Cup winners such as Sheffield United, Coventry City and the once mighty Wolverhampton Wanderers. Now Canvey and Biggleswade Town battle it out for that honour and the chance of a genuine FA Cup upset.

But North Greenford certainly didn't disgrace themselves at Canvey's Prospects Stadium. The match seemed set for a replay until Canvey grabbed a controversial last second winner.

Lee Pearce was in action from the first minute when he saved bravely from the home team's Simon Thomas who was through on goal. NGU's Anthony O'Connor then raced in behind the Canvey defence, but their keeper, Josh Vickers - on-loan from Arsenal - made a good save. Then Lee Pearce denied Canvey again by tipping a Thomas' header over the bar.

It quietened down after that and although Canvey had more possession, NGU still created several chances. But Canvey took the lead after 39 minutes when a headed cross reached Spencer Bellotti who steered the ball into the top corner.

The first 20 minutes of the second half were all Canvey. They launched attack after attack but North Greenford and Lee Pearce held out - even on 67 minutes when the crossbar helped to keep out a free kick from Canvey's Sheldon Sellaars. But in the 68th minute, Canvey's Rob Bartley conceded a penalty after fouling Harry Walker. NGU's Liam Hind stepped up for an excellent penalty with Vickers going the

wrong way. Now it was 1 - 1 and Canvey stepped on the gas. But NGU and Lee Pearce kept everything out.

It looked like NGU were going to grab a replay. But in the 92nd minute, Canvey's Jay Curran was closing in on the NGU goal and was tripped. The referee pointed to the spot. Curran took it and Lee Pearce made a great save but couldn't hold the ball and beat it away. Sadly it went to Canvey's Ashley Dumas who sent it back across goal for Curran to get a second chance and this time he smashed it in leaving the DaC man with no chance. North Greenford players surrounded the ref because Curran appeared to be in an offside position when the ball was played, but the ref wasn't having it and with the last kick of the game, Canvey knocked out NGU.

Lee Pearce told Call Sign: "We didn't expect to

reach Wembley but this was really a heart breaking way to go out, especially as I saved the spot kick and the Canvey forward was offside when he received the ball that produced the winner. Had we got them back to our place, we'd have fancied our chances and would certainly have had a good chance against Biggleswade Town, who are just one division higher than us. It's a real choker."



Last second penalty save but Lee's team still go out!

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Hello ladies & gents

I have previously written of the influx of new players in the taxi supply market selling your services cheaply. This now seems to have set a dangerous precedent and that to compete, the major radio taxi circuits have to consid-

Garry White asks DaC members...

Would you work with no run in or gratuity???

er how we move forward with a pricing structure that blue chip companies would be willing to pay for their taxi usage.

As a Board of Management, we at **Dial-a-Cab** try to get the best deal for you as members of this Society. But it now seems that other circuits are willing to tender for work with no run-ins and no gratuities, giving their drivers no incentive to cover work during busy periods – which is obviously when they need cabs most.

The dilemma is whether we do the same to get those accounts. If so, would you, the

members, cover work without run-ins or gratuities whereas previously we have been able to charge clients to make sure we gave them the excellent service they require.

I would like to know if introducing a policy of winning accounts at any cost, so long as the wheels keep turning, suits the DaC membership...

Be lucky...

Garry White
DaC Board Member

BOOK REVIEW BOOK REVIEW BOOK REVIEW BOOK REVIEW

A London Cabbie's Year

If you take away those books written by former **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Alf Townsend** and the prolific writer on taxi trade history, **Bill Munro**, then there aren't many books penned by or about London licensed taxi drivers. In fact, if you go back to June 1930 and the **Anthony Armstrong** – he of the famous 'AA' in *Punch* magazine – book simply called **Taxi**, then you'd be hard pushed to find more than a dozen or so since then.

Let's face it, taxi drivers are a unique bunch. You don't get plumbers meeting up talking about what drains they had fixed that day or milkman comparing their sales of those funny looking orange drinks in bottles. You definitely don't hear of window cleaners telling their fellow cleaners how many windows they had done that morning. But we taxi drivers thrive on stories about ourselves. Yes, we all say that we don't want to go to functions with too many other cabbies in case they talk *shop*, but when it comes to it, we really love it!

And that's why I enjoyed the book from London cab driver Mick Rose, *A London Cabbie's Year* (Earlwood Press £9.99 and online at Smashwords.com or Amazon.com). It was similar to talking to another taxi driver about his year.

Mick's 72,000 + words are aimed at those who either drive a cab, intend being a tourist to our capital city or take an interest in what many outsiders consider to be akin to a secret society. Well if it is, it won't be for much longer because Mick's book goes through the whole business, detailing it on a monthly basis. It also has interesting asides about London itself, such as the secret ghost of Marylebone – something that according to Mick is unpublished stuff coming from someone who was afraid to make his experiences public, probably through a fear of ridicule. What is it? You'll have to read the book but it may stop you ranking there late at night!

He goes through the lot – from prostitutes still out at 7.30 am because it's so quiet to the TX4 fires to minicabs to Mick's view on the majority of us who aren't tour guides. He refers to them as not having a clue – which is also why we are probably the best bullshitters in the world! Is he wrong? Who among us can honestly say they have never made up a story to tell a desperate tourist with a thirst for the most insignificant piece of information!

But there is also sadness with the tragic death of his daughter Katie who seemed just to have an ear infection not long after presenting Mick with a grandchild.

By the time this book has been read, many outside the trade will know almost as much about us as we do... except how to get there! Mick Rose's book will also put the internet out of business when it comes to working out what makes us tick and the amazing part is that *A London Cabbie's Year* is a good read for we taxi drivers as well.

If you want an enjoyable – albeit light read – then *A London Cabbie's Year* by Mick Rose may well be it...



Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online



Keith Reading
Professional Toastmaster
Master of Ceremonies

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One way for minicabs too!



Brake lights are visible as the Smart car shudders to a stop almost outside DaC House, while his telescopic camera keeps recording the scene of a minicab going the wrong way along East Road!

Some licensed taxi drivers seem to think that minicabs get all the benefits – while just as many minicab companies believe that taxis get them all. What we at *Call Sign* know is that the *Department for Transport* and the *Highways Agency* both apparently agree that neither section of the personal passenger carrying section of *Transport for London* are allowed to drive the wrong way along a one-way street! That applies doubly when passing *Dial-a-Cab House* in East Road because besides giving a bad impression, DaC staff tend to look to the left when crossing the road, not expecting the Mayor's minicabs to head northwards from Old Street against the long-standing one-way system!

Rather astonishingly, on the day we obtained the photographic evidence of this rather stupid minicab driver via a taxi video recording system, heading the correct way and also filming the incident was an *Islington Council* traffic smart car – in fact the minicab almost collided with it!

The Islington Council car was forced to brake sharply as the errant PHV driver continued on his way, passing the taxi taking the film rather too closely for comfort.

The Council car stopped for several seconds in the roadway with the driver unable to believe his eyes. But he was quick witted enough to record the scene as a clear breach of traffic regulation and will no doubt forward the footage to TPH, who may well be interested in how the PHV driver found himself in a one-way road, heading in the wrong direction yet when realising it, failed to pull over and turn round in a road that is more than wide enough for any car – even one without our turning circle.

For pedestrians familiar with the one-way road layout and expecting to only need to look in the direction of the usual traffic flow, the outcome of this dangerous manoeuvre might have had a different and more tragic outcome.

These images, taken from a DaC driver's taxi on-board camera footage, prove the value of a valid surveillance device to confirm traffic movements in real time and are increasingly being preferred by insurance companies as a means of verifying events as they occur on the road. Had the minicab collided with the taxi, it would be his word against the driver that he was going the wrong way. This system leaves no doubt...

LTFUC AGM

The Annual General meeting of The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children takes place on Tuesday 3rd December 2013, 7.30pm at:



The New Park Day Centre, 19 Highbury New Park, Highbury N5

Parking is available at the Centre and refreshments will be available. All drivers are most welcome to attend...

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

Kupkake's Korner



Hurdy, Gurdy ...and Gurdy!

Legions of Norwegians,
Swedes and Danes,
arrive each week
on aircrafts and trains,
spending their money
and stewing their brains.

They party in Shoreditch
and the West End,
even in Dalston
now there's a trend,
for youngsters to go there
with mates and friends.

They all speak good English
though their accents are rough:
"Ve are here for the shopping
and oser good stuff.
Ve luv you in London
you peoples are cool,
back home in Oslo
ve have such strick rules."

They have money to spend
like once the Yanks had
till the dollar collapsed
and the economy went bad.
But not the Norwegians
or even the Swiss...
outside the EU
they know what is bliss!

So welcome Vikings; get in my cab,
I'll drive you wherever,
advise you what's bad.
Show the sights of our wonderful City
while reflecting inside that it's a pity,
that we are tied up with the greedy EU
whilst the Norwegians are free to do as
they do...

Kopyright Kupkake 2013

Call Sign was recently chatting to **Edward Rubbings (D25)** about nothing in particular, when the DaC driver managed to make our reporter's face go a rather red shade of embarrassment...

"I must congratulate you guys on producing a really excellent in-house magazine," he enthused. "In fact, my wife reads it before I can get even get to it, just as soon as the postman drops it through our letter box!"

"It's a real family magazine, interesting driver stories, **Dial-a-Cab** updates and information into the bargain; your editor does a magnificent job. And while we're on the subject of **Dial-a-Cab**, I'd like to add that I've been on this circuit for 23 years and not had a single reason to complain or find anything to moan about. It is undoubtedly the best radio taxi firm around!"

Of course we knew it just had to come...

"B-u-t..." Well, there just had to be a *but*! "I just want to take a moment to have a gripe!"

Go on then Eddie, what is it you don't like...

"It's the confounded roadworks that are everywhere, you simply cannot move about easily any more. Every street seems to have been dug up and left unattended for weeks or even longer. It's now beyond a joke and it is choking our city to a standstill."

Well, that wasn't too bad. DaC can't be held

Call Sign: A great read but...



responsible for roadworks!

"But..." Aaaahhhh! This must be it, because we knew there just had to be a *but*...

"I have a problem regarding client pick-ups. Client confidentiality is one thing and one I understand, of course, but I've noticed that when picking up at certain hotels that they ban

the use of *name boards* whilst on their property. I was told by the doorman of one Mayfair hotel that it was because a guest staying there might not be with their wife or husband and that could cause embarrassment!"

Hang on Ed, are you saying that DaC are responsible for client affairs as in *you know what*?

"I was recently ordered to move out of an hotel and onto the street while waiting for an account client and was concerned about parking in the roadway. It might be something other drivers have experienced as well?"

Well Edward, I'd say that would likely be the case if it was always the same DaC account holder and he was beginning to look tired and this Society was blamed for it!!

But...Whoops, sorry, just a force of habit!

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LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

With Tom Quigley (Y33)



Is The Knowledge not easier?

No it isn't...

The saying goes: "Those that can, do; those that can't, teach!"

In previous employment, I have taught brickwork to *City and Guilds* certificate standard at a local college, have numerous football coaching badges and in addition, my wife, tells me I am the master at doing nothing!

It was whilst talking to some friends that I mentioned having previously been used to cover classes for a Knowledge school that I was asked if I would be interested in starting a class up again. Well my classes are now up and running and have been for the past few months, with me playing catch up on points, turnarounds and madly reciting the *Blue* book in my head all over again!

There has been many an article written about how The Knowledge is easier, with SatNavs and technology having superseded everything. In the short time that I have been teaching my new group of students again, I can state that not a lot has changed. The students still endure all the same angst, pain, hardship and fear that we all did.

There is a whole new breed of examiners; some having reputations and questioning the parenthood of Knowledge boys (and girls). Besides going through the regular runs and points that come out, we also have students moaning about appearance delays, not being able to get out on their bikes, telling me they are calling the *Blue* book religiously, whilst then struggling on everything south of Balham!

But in fact I believe that modern technology has made some aspects of The Knowledge even harder. When a student is calling over, the other students will produce some sort of smart phone gadget, laptop, or other device with the route lined up. We never had that pressure in the classroom.

After the run is called, various debates and arguments still occur; strings and lines are pulled out across the large map of London. That is my favourite part; getting the students to actually look at a real map and mentally visualising London inside their brains. No virtual realities here!

Of course, after a successful appearance the same smile and grin comes over a student's face when they are congratulated by their peers and of course me as well. That still remains a precious moment.

In fact it is a real pleasure knowing that some of these students are at the start of a friendship for life, because no matter about any roads or points they drop, they will always remember their callover partner and their moans. Mine was **Stewart Jopling (T72)**. He moaned all the way through... in fact he has never really stopped...!

Minister of the obvious

The **Football Association** have launched a working party / committee to see where we are going wrong at international level.

Whilst there is a real need for proper investigation into finding out the truth of issues at tragic events such as **Hillsborough**, **Bloody Sunday**, the **Brixton riots** and many others, it seem that no matter what happens anywhere, there is an investigation with some lawyers or celebrities involved. We have had **Lord Justice Leveson** for the press, **Mary Portas** for High Street failure and **Jamie Oliver** for school dinners.

I don't know how much these enquiries cost or

what fees if any the celebrities get, but there are times and places where the government could save money by asking the general public / man on the street what they think and listening to what they say. Perhaps even employing someone as Minister for the Bleeding Obvious!

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

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We know what you are thinking... who or what is sonofthewind? Well to start with, it's actually **sonofthewindinc** and he is looking for you – but sadly not in a friendly way. Sonofthewindinc is a cyclist whose life's ambition seems to be to film motorists because he claims they drive too close to his ridiculous looking two-wheeler.

Of course, using the word **ridiculous** is subjective – if you think a bike covered in lights and a video camera is great, then cancel the 'ridiculous' description.

Dial-a-Cab driver **Melvyn Harvey (E87)** thinks that both sonofthewindinc and his bike are both ridiculous and after hearing his story and looking up sonofthewindinc on **YouTube**, we tend to agree with him because this cyclist and his anti-motorist campaign has put hundreds of videos on YouTube – which suggests that he is looking for problems.

In fact, on one of the videos he actually admits he's out there looking for motorists that he considers are wrong and we have to assume that if he doesn't find any, then perhaps he has to encourage them? Pull out a bit sharp perhaps? After all, no one else on the road is as important as sonofthewindinc!

In the case of **Melvyn Harvey**, sonofthewindinc reported him to the **Met Police Roadsafe London** scheme. This is a police information and intelligence gathering tool where members of the public can fill in an online form and advise them about criminal, nuisance and anti-social behaviour on the roads of London. It is said to be staffed by experienced traffic officers. We assume that sonofthewindinc is an experience user of the site.

The original incident occurred in January when Melvyn pulled over to the left to pick up a passenger in Devonshire Street W1. A cyclist pulled alongside and accused Melvyn of being too close. Melvyn was astonished at the complaint because as he told **Call Sign**, the bike was so heavily illuminated that it just couldn't be missed! The cyclist claimed he had filmed the incident and would be putting it on YouTube – something we now know he tells all his victims having watched many of his clips.

We should add that a few *were* dangerous, but most seemed to be caused by sonofthewindinc constantly looking around to film incidents with a camera in his crash helmet and in all honesty, watching too long was akin to standing on the bow of a ship in very rough water!

The cyclist then continued along his merry way as did Melvyn. Then just one week later, the experienced DaC driver – now in his 34th year with this Society – received a letter from the Met Police that said after watching the sonofthewindinc video several times, they came to the conclusion that the distance Melvyn had allowed between his taxi and the cyclist was "not good enough." They then quoted from the **Highway Code** about distances that cyclists should be allowed but

Watch out, watch out; the sonofthewind cyclist is about and...

HE'S LOOKING FOR YOU!!!



Melvyn and Sonofthewindinc



tellingly, added that it may not always be possible but "better was expected from professional drivers."

If that sounds like a friendly warning then forget it. The letter ended by saying that should the police hear of a similar report about Melvyn, then they would inform Tfl That turned the letter into a direct threat on Melvyn's ability to earn a living and all because of a cyclist who obviously enjoys trying to catch motorists with the aim of not just turning them into film stars – together with added captions designed to point blame onto them – but also reporting them to the police.

So as an LTDA member, Melvyn spoke to their in-house solicitor, **John Luckhurst**, who wrote to the Met at their Empress State Building premises in Earls Court.

Mr Luckhurst actually pointed out that the lighting used by the cyclist was probably unlawful but didn't labour the point, preferring to point out the lack of riding skills of the cyclist writing that he appeared to deliberately ride in the centre of the road. Rule 51 of the Highway Code, he wrote, refers to all road users to be considerate. That, pointed out Mr Luckhurst, surely applied to cyclists as well. Having watched the video taken by sonofthewindinc, the LTDA legal eagle came to the conclusion that Mr Harvey had driven his taxi in a correct and safe way and wrote:

"This video by sonofthewindinc is a bias piece of footage from an individual who is quite clearly anti-cab. It is also an individual who quite clearly is inconsiderate in the manner in which

he cycles, both in relation to other road users in motorised vehicles and his fellow cyclists."

He asked that any record of the complaint be deleted from Roadsafe and the fact that the video vanished seems to suggest that has now been done. Even so, watch out for sonofthewindinc because he probably doesn't like us even more now! He might even now be sonofabi*chinc...!

Baghwat Singh
Call Sign Online

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"I did my National Service in the early 1950s and did a lengthy stint in the sun – namely the **Yemen** port of **Aden!**" **Norman Adler (F80)** told *Call Sign*.

"I completed my six weeks basic training at RAF Station Padgate, near Warrington, before transferring to **58 Rifle Squadron, RAF Regiment**, and to this day I clearly remember my service number...2518704 Sir," Norman recalled proudly.

"I then went on a driving course where I trained up on various different military vehicles ranging from cars and jeeps to three ton trucks. Then I went on a **Bofors Gun Training** course down in Somerset before reaching Squires Gate near Blackpool for embarkation to Aden. I spent sixteen months in **Khormaksa RAF Station, Aden**.

"I was a good swimmer and recall snorkelling with friends in Aden and looking down into the clear water when I put my foot onto what I thought was a rock. To my absolute amazement, the 'rock' decided to flap its' wings and move gracefully away while I shot up to the surface like a rocket, heart pounding like a steam train. I had stepped onto the back of a Stingray!

"But it wasn't all fun and games. As a *Grade 1* driver, I was responsible for a wide variety of vehicles ranging from Fordson and Bedford 15cwt vans through to Austin 1-ton trucks and a whopping Bedford 3-tonner. Had I kept up my *all groups* licence, I would still be permitted to drive those categories of vehicles to this day. But I let my licence lapse and fortunately there are no 3-ton taxis!

"All these vehicles were checked daily, including a new Bedford truck with just 36 miles on the clock. One day I discovered the battery was missing and saw another person walking away with it in his hands. I confronted him and he said it was needed for the C.O.'s car. I grabbed it back, saying there were many other cannibalised vehicles in the motor pool he could take a battery from, but not mine. He grabbed it back from me and while both of us had our hands on the battery, the C.O himself appeared wanting to know what the fuss was about and I respectfully explained the situation. I must have impressed him because the next thing I knew, I had become his personal driver!

"I sort of blotted my copybook a little when I took a 3-ton truck and its' trailer a little too close to the Cook house and promptly dislodged the upright posts supporting the roof on the building extension. To my utter horror, the posts fell one by one - like dominoes - and the

So far in this series, which commemorates the soon to come 100th anniversary of the start of WW1, we have featured both past and present DaC drivers and their stories. This issue tells Norman Adler's (F80) story...

DAC WAR HEROES



Norman in his cab and in Aden 55 years ago!

roof collapsed as if in slow motion, hitting the ground in a cloud of dust!

"One time when in **Tripoli** (Libya) I was guarding a **De Havilland Hastings** type aircraft. I had been instructed that it was a top secret machine with restricted access to personnel. I raised my loaded rifle to my shoulder as a uniformed man approached me, requesting permission to enter the aircraft. He explained he was a Wing Commander and the pilot of said 'kite' and that he needed to check various instruments on the flight deck. Even having satisfied myself he was ok, I told him I would have to escort him at all times. He played around with instruments for a few minutes and then left.

"Shortly after that another man came towards me holding a black box. He was a scruffy-looking individual whom I was not at all happy about. He said he was a technician and had to replace the power pack for the communications system. I was apprehensive at first, but he had the right paperwork so I followed him into the aircraft, watching him like a hawk. To my relief he soon left.

"It was only later that I discovered I had been guarding an aircraft that was actively involved in the first nuclear tests at the top secret Woomera Testing Station in Australia!"

*If you have had a military service record, **Call Sign** would like to hear from you. Please email at the usual address and we will contact you.*

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As the latest new terminal upgrade seems to have solved the O2 signal problems, DaC Director of IT, John Banks, explains what this latest upgrade involves...

VolanteMDT Version 7 Upgrade

nal that is available. Obviously our software cannot make a signal appear if there is not one present, but it can lock on faster and hang on longer when a signal is present. The terminal will now lock onto the 3G network and will not migrate to the 2G network.

If you live in a 2G only area, you can override this by going to Settings->Options and pressing the "2G and 3G" button. We recommend that you leave your terminal locked onto 3G only.

* 'Advise Arrival' and 'Delay Advised' now appears in the Action Log (pressing the bottom bar).

* A credit card trip that is less than £100 may now be cleared even if there is no signal. The transaction will take place as soon as the MDT is back in a signal area.

* If POB has not been pressed after 15 minutes, the driver will be notified.

* The layout of the date, time and signed on time has been changed to make it easier to read.

* The zone broadcast is no longer automatic. The automatic feature on the previous release has led to a number of problems, particularly when the signal is weak. You will now need to

press the zone buttons in order to refresh the zone query screens.

* The volume of the terminal has been given greater range and the offer alert volume has been split out so that you can have it turned up louder than the other alerts.

The following malfunctions have been corrected:

* Meter sometimes loses contact with MDT.

* PED loses contact with MDT necessitating a card trip is changed to cash.

* The erroneous '4G' indicator has been changed to correctly display '3G'. Our terminals are not configured for 4G.

* Review trips disappear.

* Error - In Service STC expired.

* Meter on not getting to host prohibiting cash STC.

If you experience problems, please leave a voicemail on our technical problems line (020 7553 7266) or email us at techproblems@dialacab.co.uk. Please be advised that if you are reporting an area of bad signal, your report will be logged but you may not receive a return call.

John Banks
DaC Director of IT

What is this?

VolanteMDT is the name of the software that runs on your new MDT. The software has been developed in-house. This latest upgrade (version 7) includes a new version of the software on the MDT and new software on the Pin Entry Device (PED).

What has changed?

This version contains only a few new features. It is more about correcting problems reported by drivers with the previous release. A list of changes is below:

* Signal Management: The software has been tuned to make better use of the O2 sig-

Now Brisbane calls for the TX4

Last month's *Call Sign* reported on **London Taxi Company** owners, **Geely**, sending a batch of TX4 taxis to **Fremantle Port** (Western Australia) for various trials within the State. According to LTC's man in Oz, Chief Exec **Evan Simeon**, they were in negotiations with various States about the cab.

The news soon arrived in **Queensland**, where a **Brisbane** taxi owner has called for a trial of the TX4 following a firebomb attack on one of his cabs, which forced the driver to flee when his passenger, after arguing with his partner, turned on him.

After the driver ran off, the passenger allegedly set the cab on fire, causing substantial damage to the front of the vehicle. Police were called and it took five officers to detain the alleged offender. He was later charged with arson and common assault.

Taxi owner **John Rahilly** said Queensland should consider following Western Australia's lead and trial the TX4 because of the screen separating the driver from passengers.

"Separating the driver and passenger seems like one of the only feasible answers to the problem of rising violence against cabbies," said Mr Rahilly. "It's an idea worth floating especially given the WA trial."

Another Queensland cab owner, **Andy Allom**, joined Mr Rahilly's call, saying violence against taxi drivers was happening to cab drivers every night of the week.

The Queensland State Government has said they will take an interest in the Western Australian trial.



TX4s land at Fremantle Port WA. Now Queensland may want them too...

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

The Brethren of the Whip

The case of cabman Phillips OR: "A more monstrous, scandalous, infamous, and atrocious exercise of arbitrary power from the magisterial bench, we never remember."



1853 was a pivotal year within the cab trade, not just in London but across the UK. The imposition of a sixpence for the first mile fare as opposed to one shilling, had caused many cabmen to go on strike up and down the country.

London cabmen were not happy about it but everyone was telling them it would create more work, so they were willing to give it a try.

In July 1853, **Thomas Phillips** was called from a stand he was waiting on and told to go to **20 Victoria Grove**, (now Netherton Grove) Fulham. His passenger, **Mr Bond**, did not require him at that time but asked that he report back in the morning to take him to Wellington Street (Strand). Cabman Phillips was happy and duly turned up the following morning – noting that Victoria Grove was half a mile away from the stand and he could add that to the final charge.

The next morning, Bond made several stops along the way and carried an extra passenger. At no point was either the waiting time or the route called into question. When they arrived at Wellington Street, Phillips said his charge was five shillings (25p), this included 2 shillings (10p) waiting time, 6d (2½p) for the extra passenger, 6d for being called from the rank and 2s for the actual journey. Bond disagreed; he thought the fare should only be 4s 6d. Everything that happened next came down to a disputed tanner.

One new aspect of the *1853 Act* was that the passenger could, in cases of dispute, demand



Lord Palmerston was non-committal about the case in response to questions in the House

that the cabman take them to a Magistrates Court and the case could be heard without having the expense of taking a summons out. Note that the passenger could insist on the driver taking them to a court; the driver had no such rights. Phillips was sure the distance was over 4 miles and as Bow Street Magistrates Court was just round the corner, it seemed the simplest option.

Another aspect of the 1853 Act was that all cabmen should carry a book of fares, but as the *Commissionaire of Police* had not printed one, Phillips was covered. Unfortunately it meant that the magistrate, **Mr Henry**, did not have one either! The tried and tested method in such disputes was to have the ground measured. Each party would pay a deposit of five shillings and whoever was proven right, would have their deposit returned. Mr Bond put forward his two half-crowns – Phillips' pockets

were empty. It was his first job of the day, he had no money and cabmen never carried a float. Phillips was so sure of his case that he asked the magistrate to make Bond pay him the disputed fare, five shillings, which he would return to the court to have the ground measured.

Nothing doing! Magistrate Henry turned to Phillips (who, it should be remembered had not been summonsed to court but was only there for magisterial advice) and told him:

"Then, as you cannot pay the 5s deposit, I shall take Mr Bond's statement as evidence of fact and convict you of the overcharge. You must pay 40s or go to prison for 1 month."

After things such as cab rental etc, 40 shillings (£2) was pretty close to 3 days earnings. Phillips was locked up and his cab was taken to the greenyard – the Victorian equivalent of the car pound – with just as exorbitant charges!

It is not recorded how long Phillips actually spent in jail, friends and family began collecting for him and as word spread, complete strangers paid towards his fine.

Two days later in the House of Commons, Home Secretary **Lord Palmerston** was asked about the case, "...the sort of case one would associate with Turkey or Russia." Palmerston was non-committal and stated that the facts may not have been recorded accurately.

This prompted the anonymous court reporter who stated that whilst he had the utmost respect for Mr Henry, all he ever seemed to report upon was the extortionate demands of cabmen – he stood by his report, word for word.

The *Daily News*, no great friend of the cab trade, saw this as an attack on the free press – the same press that is necessary to bring the powers of the magistrates and politicians to question. *Reynolds Newspaper*, always sympathetic to the working class, described the case as *"a more monstrous, scandalous, infamous, and atrocious exercise of arbitrary power from the magisterial bench, we never remember."*

It took a month, but Lord Palmerston had to inform the House that Phillips was right all along. The journey was actually short of seven miles, not under the three miles asserted by Bond and the magistrate, so Phillips could have charged more. The 40 shilling fine would be returned to him plus forty shillings compensation.

The 1853 strike by London cabmen was the first in its history. Many cited the unfair treatment of Cabman Phillips as the reason why they walked out...

**Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online**

WALKING THROUGH THE PAST: JACK THE RIPPER



The *Worshipful Company of Hackney Drivers* is pleased to invite taxi drivers, their families and friends to join former **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Alan Goldsmith (ex-S45)** as he leads another guided walk through London's **Whitechapel** area. The walk will be on **Sunday 3rd November 2013** starting from **Whitechapel Station** at 10.30am. He will trace the footsteps of London's – perhaps even 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 claims this to be the best 'Ripper walk' of all because you get to visit 4 of the 5 murder sites – no other Guides cover more.

Alan Goldsmith, a Liveryman of the **WCHCD** and City of London Guide, assists with **The Cab Guide Course** run by the Company and is a working cab driver. Alan will ask for a small donation for each person (£5 is suggested, but please be generous if you think he's worth more), which he will collect on the day and all donations will 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...

Many Dial-a-Cab drivers knew the **Call Sign** Editor's son **Reed**, who worked in the Control Centre for over 23 years as well as having a rarely used Yellow badge licence. Sadly Reed succumbed to a brain tumour in January of this year, after bravely battling it for three years during which time he returned to work and even began driving again.

For a substantial part of those three years, Reed was helped enormously by **Chai Cancer Care** – a north-west London based charity.

Reed loved music and was a talented keyboard player in a pop group as well as being a better than average classical pianist. Part of Chai's therapy involved a music room – something that Reed really enjoyed. He also underwent counselling at Chai, which helped him to come to terms with his incurable illness. The fact that he outlived initial estimates is testament to the battle he put up together with that vital help from Chai.

Several months ago, Reed's wife **Lara** and a friend of the couple, **Caroline Saunders Rich**, decided to try and raise some much needed funds for Chai with a dinner and ball held at More London's Tower Bridge Hilton in Tooley Street. Caroline, who is also a cancer sufferer, had some experience having already organised four similar charity events. This one was called the **Sugar Rush Ball** and featured what Lara and Caroline referred to as an *intoxicating spectacle of confection!* That meant that whichever way you looked, you were surrounded by sweets – from a chocolate fountain to a candy floss machine to a huge jar of jellies on each of the tables – with a myriad of other goodies between them!

But the evening was about raising funds for Chai and just before and after dinner, there was a raffle and an auction with goods ranging from a holiday to a **Tottenham Hotspur** shirt signed by the 2013 squad. That alone raised some £700 and contributed to an incredible final total of **£20,677.94**.

A representative of the charity told **Call Sign** what the money could do; **£5,000** pays for the charity to furnish a new consulting room with an electronic bed, computer equipment and everything else that Chai would need to support visitors for that accessory. **£15,000** covers the cost of a music therapist for a year and knowing how much Reed enjoyed the facility, it would have been fitting for that figure to be reached. She never expected to be able to afford both!

Among the 300+ present were several DaC drivers as well as Chairman **Brian Rice**, **Allan Evans** and **Mike Son** accompanied by their wives. All acclaimed the evening as brilliant!

It continued with a full dance floor until 01.00 with the Editor leading what he referred to as dancing! Others looked more normal, but all had a brilliant evening.

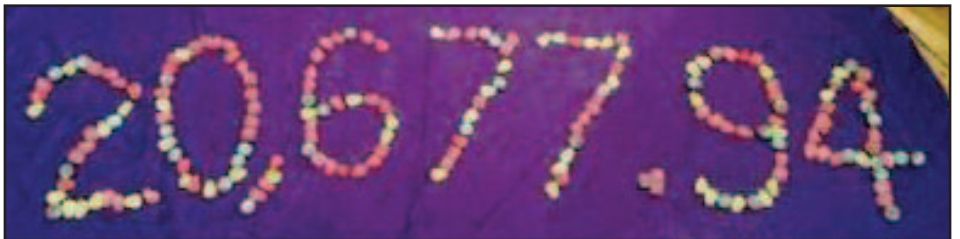
Reed's 'Sugar' ball raises over £20,000



Editor and Linda at the Ball



Lara and Reed; the Ball was held in Reed's memory and in aid of Chai Cancer Care



The final total raised

Alan Fisher told this mag: "Bearing in mind that the ball carried my son's name, I wasn't sure that I could bring myself to enjoy it, but seeing so many friends of Reed there and remembering how hard and for how long Lara had worked, I almost felt compelled to smile. But Reed was the master of

the understatement and he would have undoubtedly looked around and said: That wasn't bad!!!"

Congratulations to Caroline and Lara – and of course well-done Chai...

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online

COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT



Hello ladies & gents,

Leading on from my most recent article in last month's edition of *Call Sign*, I must remind you once again how important it is not to exceed the authorised run-ins on all trips. It appears that there is an increase month on month of trips that are not only captured on in-house reports, but are shown on invoices

and reports that are sent out to our account customers with run-in and arrival amounts in excess of what they should be - for no apparent reason.

All trips are now being closely monitored by the Control Centre and account managers. With clients now not only closely scrutinising their usage, but also demanding no run-ins, a stronger stance will be adopted.

If the arrival figure is higher than it should be and there is not a genuine note on the trip logger that warrants an increase in the authorised arrival amount, they will be adjusted and reduced accordingly prior to invoicing. It appears that some competitors may be offering these terms, so I am sure you agree that we must do everything possible to safeguard our accounts and be as competitive as we can possibly be in what is now a tremendously demanding marketplace.

As you know, we have put a lot of hard work and effort in trying to increase credit

card usage to you the members, it is now an important income stream and it is working. The Board of Management will always do our best to give you the full meter fare unlike some organisations, but It is certainly a violation of the procedure rules and unacceptable to accept a booked trip through the DaC system and then process the same trip through a third party as has recently been brought to light through a customer complaint. Not only has it wrongly brought our Society into disrepute with the customer, it also results in a loss of revenue to the Society.

I know all of you will understand where I am coming from and I hope that you will all weigh up the consequences of this type of action.

Be very lucky and drive safely...

Allan Evans
DaC Compliance Officer

Mystery of the stop/start taxi

"It was all rather scary really," Ian MacDonald (C64) told *Call Sign*, "because one moment I was buzzing merrily along the road and before I could blink, I had lost all engine power and the electrics, so I couldn't even indicate my predicament to other traffic nor open a window to give a hand signal! Anyone remember those," Ian enquired, smiling broadly as he recalled the day the taxi died (*apologies to Don McLean*)!

"With a dead engine, besides no electrics there is also no power steering or power brakes. But with much effort I wrenched at the steering wheel and managed to slide into the kerb. Once I'd calmed down, I thought I'd give the starter a try and to my surprise and relief, the engine started!

"Can you imagine the situation if I had been going at speed, perhaps on a motorway?" He looked quizzically at *Call Sign's* journo.

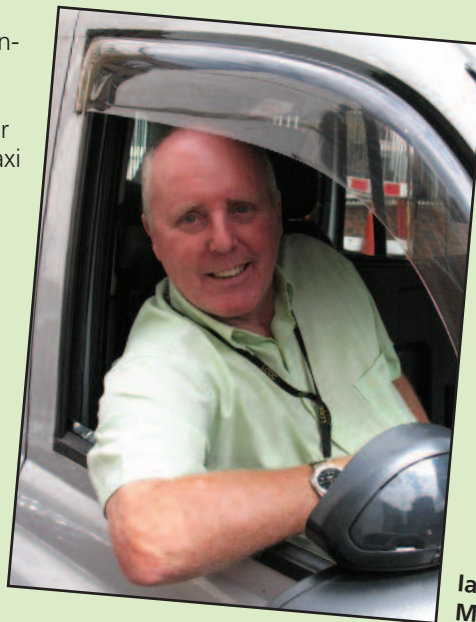
"It then happened a few more times on odd occasions, so I knew it had to be sorted out quickly. I drove very cautiously up to my garage, **A&S Services** in Geddings Road, Hoddesdon who are LTI service agents. I explained what had happened; they looked under the bonnet, diagnosed the problem within

seconds and fixed it within minutes!"

The now knowledgeable Ian explained that there is a power lead from the battery to the taxi main control box, which over time can become loose, especially with older vehicles and that causes everything to fail.

"I was in and out of the garage within 15 minutes and back on the road with complete peace of mind and my mystery solved," said Ian. "So my very grateful thanks to Arnie and the guys at A&S."

Alan Green
Call Sign Online



Ian MacDonald

THE CALL SIGN INTERNET LIBRARY

Want to look up something in an old issue of Call Sign?

Don't want to spend hours looking through old issues? There is a simple answer - the Call Sign Internet Library! Log on to www.dac-callsign.co.uk or www.dac-callsign.com Then either browse through every issue of Call Sign since 1998 by using the Search facility or type in a clue and let our search engine do the rest...

If you want to read each complete issue with ads et al, you can now do that as well. Since May 2006, Call Sign has also gone online in a PDF version. Just click the PDF logo. No search facility for that though!

There are also issues from 1967, 1977 and 1987 as a reminder of the old days! Happy searching!

THE CALL SIGN INTERNET LIBRARY



As children, most of us at some time in our young lives probably played Cowboys and Indians.

Perhaps a kindly relative, parent or grandparent may have bought a cowboy or cowgirl outfit for Christmas comprising a check shirt, fringed waistcoat with a 'sheriff' or 'marshal' star attached and most important of all, a Stetson style hat. TV stars such as Roy Rogers and his wife Dale Evans, Hopalong Cassidy (William Boyd), Tex Ritter, or more recently Rowdy Yates (Clint Eastwood) in the TV series *Rawhide* all portrayed the Wild West herdsman, while movies of the genre abound to this day.

But Dial-a-Cab driver Kevin Dedman (C59) takes the role of cowboy a lot more seriously than just play-acting. Every weekend sees him don wild west clothing and living the life of those pioneers of yesteryear right down to eating the food they would have ate, pursuing activities they would be familiar with and dancing to the music frontier folk such as Wyatt Earp, Wild Bill Hickok or famed sharp-shooter Annie Oakley would have easily recognised.

Talking to *Call Sign*, Kevin explained: "I got the bug as a kid watching with my dad the likes of John Wayne films and many other westerns on TV. After that, I was just hooked.

"Nowadays, together with my wife Christine, we spend our weekends with like-minded people at the Western Trails Group on Bromley Common in Kent. We have an authentic 1880's style town where we all dress appropriately in traditional western clothing, no zips on our jackets or denim because in 1880 zips were not yet invented! We ride our horses and dance to Country and Western music. We also take on the lifestyle of modern cowboys by driving those big ranch wagons you see in films and on television. That's possibly our only concession to modern day western lifestyle."

In July 2008, Christine and Kevin took part in the National Day of the Cowboy Parade at Apache Junction in Arizona. It's a rodeo style event where the skills of the Old West cowboys live



KEVIN THE DAC COWBOY!



Kevin the Cabby and Kevin the Cowboy!

on. Looking back on the event with an obvious fondness, Kevin told us:

"There was stuff like roping steers, bronco-riding and many other associated activities recalling the wild west being re-enacted. But make no mistake you need real horsemanship to cope! And yes, before you ask, I do tote a de-activated Colt .45 Peacemaker pistol just like the pioneers of the 1880s!

"My horse 'Chino' is an American Standard Breed, stabled in Bromley and we form a tightly knit team as we go through our paces at the regular events held at the ranch. He is always pleased to

see me and me him."

We didn't see Billy the Kid or the Cisco Kid, but we saw Kevin the Kid as he and Chino rode off into the distance smiling, giving us a friendly cowboy wink and waving his 10 gallon hat in the air...

If you have an unusual pastime or hobby, *Call Sign* would like to hear from you for possible inclusion in a future issue, so please email us at the usual address: callsign-mag@aol.com.

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You may have seen articles in *Call Sign* about the **London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children's Ranks of Angels** thanksgiving to celebrate 85 years of helping children with special needs.

Complementing the evening service inside the magnificent **St Pauls Cathedral**, the LTFUC was granted use of St Paul's Churchyard to promote the activities of the charity and to make collections. Although it was a cold and windy day, all those that attended did enjoy the experience. I was delighted that *Blue Badge Guide Stanley Roth (ex Y53)* gave his support by creating a *do you know London* competition with a bottle of champagne for the winner. Another competition came from committee member **Steve Bell** and wife Wendy when they turned his cab into a 'Pearly Cab' with thousands of buttons. Visitors had to guess how many buttons there were with the winner receiving a one night stay at any Thistle or Guoman Hotel. Another great piece of cab artwork was the creation by **Steve and Kay Pullan** with a huge birthday cake on the roof of a cab celebrating the LTFUC's 85 years.

There were also five vintage cabs organised by **Doug Cheshire** of the **London Vintage Taxi Association**, with former PCO Head **Roy Ellis** one of the vintage taxi drivers. Also there were the **Pearly Kings and Queens** and 'Charlie Chaplin' who were all happy to pose for photos. Five furry animals entertained visitors and danced with the many inquisitive children visiting the displays.

In the evening, **The 'Ranks of Angels' Thanksgiving**, hosted by the Chapter of St Pauls Cathedral proved to be a tremendous success. Many important guests were present including City of London Sheriff **Adrian Waddingham**, Westminster City Council Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr **Jan Prendergast**, Worshipful Company of Tin Plate Workers Master **Colin Hayfield**, Master of the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers **Graham Woodhouse**, Roger Salmon, Master of the Worshipful Company of Launderers Benevolent Trust Fund, **Jaki Howes**, Master-Elect of The Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects and Redbridge Council Deputy Mayor **Tania Solomon**.

I was very pleased to see **Dial-a-Cab** Chairman **Brian Rice**, **Geoffrey Riesel** CEO of Radio Taxis and the LTDA's **John Thomas** and **Barry Hooper** in addition to a number of licensed taxi drivers.

Other trade charities were there including **The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled** and their guests of five **Chelsea Pensioners**, **The East London Cabbies Outing**, **The Southend Fund for Underprivileged Children** and the **Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund**.

It was also wonderful to see so many children. Heartfelt thanks go to **Pam Mason**,

LTFUC celebrate 85th anniversary with St Pauls concert



Charlie Chaplin and vintage cab in the churchyard & Mike Son making final preparations for the St Pauls concert

Caregiver and her helpers who organised the presence of

such a well-

behaved group. I was equally delighted to see various faith leaders who accepted the invitation to join this unique occasion. After the service, I was told by one of the Ushers of St Paul's that the estimated attendance was around 1000 guests.

The Funds' grateful thanks also go to the 70 musicians from the **London Charity Orchestra** conducted by **William Carslake**, 40 children from the **New London Children's Choir** and 30 from the **Pembroke Academy of Music**, conductor **Ronald Corp**. All donated their time and dedication to make the occasion so special with music, songs and hymns all performed to perfection.

Could I also thank **Tiba and Paresh Dewan** of **Market Financial Solutions Ltd** for their generous donation in sponsoring the *order of service*.

My personal and sincere thanks go to **Reverend Canon Michael Hampel**, **Rev Sarah Eynstone**, **Chaplain Jane Laws**, **Rev Ally Barrett**, **Vicar at St Mary with the Offords and Buckden** for her inspiring sermon and to all the Ushers at St Paul's Cathedral who made the event move so smoothly.

My gratitude also goes to my friends and colleagues, the LTFUC committee members and their partners who supported this once in a lifetime event and to all who attended such a unique occasion in one of Europe's most awe - inspiring and iconic buildings.

I hope it was as enjoyable for all of you as it was for me. Months of planning and lots of sleepless nights... however it was all worthwhile. Here's to the next time...!

Michael Son
DaC Special Projects

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Call Sign's Stephen Berndes (R14) says..

IT'S A CABBIES LIFE!

Pensions

What rarely gets a mentioned via taxi media channels and which affect us crucially in old age, is pensions. I profess to not being an expert on financial matters, but I discovered some extraordinary facts which lay bare the enormity of saving for a meaningful pension.

Current and former public sector workers who drive taxis have less to be concerned about, assuming they are provided with a public sector pension. A 65-year old who retires on a protected inflation and widow's benefits pension similar to the public sector, will need a pension pot of £500,000 just to have an annuity of £15,000 before tax. The average index-linked accumulated private pension pot nationwide at the point of retirement is just £40,000 - little more than £1,200 a year.

You need to squirrel away a constant stream of dosh, be extremely fortuitous in the sector your pension is invested in and the performance of your fund manager, while refrain from paying high charges that significantly eat into your final pension pot.

A stakeholder pension has a cap on charges but a limit on the range of funds to choose from. But it is better to have a personal pension paying high fees with good results than a pedestrian stakeholder pension getting a crap result.

I, and I suspect many others on **Dial-a-Cab**, had put all their eggs in one basket - **The Equitable Life Assurance Society** - and through its mismanagement had 20% of your pension wiped out at a stroke. All without profit pensions had to be scaled down. The Labour government at the time failed all policy holders at every stage of the process by blocking, frustrating and delaying justice.

It has now been established that maladministration occurred and it was left to an elected Conservative government to introduce an Equitable Life scheme to pay out policy holders who suffered loss - sadly some twelve years after the debacle when many of the policy holders may have died.

Throughout that worrying time, I was corresponding with my MP, Enfield's David Burrows. He sent reams of letters relating to this mess. What I discovered is that an excellent local MP is worth their weight in gold.

My pension has since been rejuvenated with the help from my mate, a wealth manager giving me free tips making outrageous bets against the market. For instance, betting my entire pension in the Japanese sector immediately following the aftermath of the nuclear reactor leak when the markets tumbled. A move he said was a no-brainer although risky; he likes to cover both bases.

So what is the difference between a sophisticated investor and an ignorant investor? Just luck! So as we often say in this trade... Be lucky!

Unlikely football hooligan!

During a football match between Fulham and Cardiff on Saturday 28 September, a rather tactless man together with his grandchildren was escorted by ground security "for his own safety" after celebrating by leaping up and down in the home fans enclosure after Cardiff scored.

Lord Neil Kinnock before the match was heard to say: "Decorum will not come into it if Cardiff wins!" He was as good as his word



as the Welsh team ran out 2 - 1 winners.

Of course Kinnock, nicknamed the Welsh windbag, has form when it comes with triumphalist behaviour - notably during the infamous Sheffield Arena rally repeating: "We're alright, we're alright," to his fanatical Labour supporters; an own goal that has been acknowledged as a decisive blunder that cost Labour the 1992 General Election.

I seem to remember Lord and lady Kinnock also did rather well out of the gravy train that is lesser known as the European Parliament. An EU Commissioner for ten years (with Lady Kinnock an MEP), they do not have to worry about pensions, six large public sector pensions being in the bag. An investigative journalist in Brussels noted Lady Kinnock leaving the Parliament building within an hour of signing in on 26 occasions during a period of 2 years while collecting £270 each day using the revolving door.

I thought socialism principles involved a fairer distribution of wealth. I reckon the *nouveau riche* and not-so-recently *nouveau riche*, **Baron Kinnock of Bedwelty** and Lady Kinnock secretly share their good fortune with their Cardiff brethren!

Stephen Berndes
Call Sign Online

Another true story from Geoff Levene

Guess who I just picked up...!!!



God knows there are enough things to moan about.

There's the price of diesel, TfL, Boris, parking tickets, Addison Lee and about it being so quiet out still for the time of year. The list seems to be endless, but there must be some advantages... surely? Well one thing is when occasionally you get to go somewhere interesting or pick up someone famous. Ok, not everyone is as impressive as you think they're going to be, but I suppose when it comes to it we're all only human after all.

I've been lucky enough to have driven some people who really meant something to me. There was **Eric Clapton** and the autograph I obtained to give to my son was treated like the *Holy Grail*. And my favourite living author, some of whose books have been serialised for TV and which have also been made into films not to mention also happening to be a **Dial-a-Cab** account holder, was just an absolute gentleman.

Then there was the classical pianist **Mitsuko Uchida** who was so delighted that I recognised her and knew of her work that she left two tickets at the Festival Hall for me. Simply unforgettable!

And what about **Harold Pinter**? When I was in my early teens, his first plays came out and were shown on TV. My elder brothers and I were fascinated by them and some of his dialogue became so familiar, that it entered our vocabulary. Around the same time, I saw him act in **The Caretaker** in a tiny Theatre in Worthing.

About thirty years later, **The Caretaker** was back on the West End stage and I picked Harold Pinter up. I really wanted to talk to him but was unsure what to say; luckily he asked me something so I was able to get into conversation with him. I mentioned having seen him all those years ago and his eyes lit up as he said to me that anybody that had sat through one of his acting performances deserved a reward and would I like to see the current production? Would I? Wow! Tickets from our then greatest living playwright. Yes, he was considered a controversial figure, but I found him charming and generous.

Sometimes your path crosses with that of a friend. I knew a guy who was a fire fighter at the old Chiltern Street fire station. He had tried to get into the army and the police service, but a slight case of childhood polio ruled him out. However, he was OK for the fire service.

One afternoon as I sat at the corner of Seymour Place and Crawford Street, I heard an emergency vehicle approaching. Round the corner it came, lights blazing and sirens blaring and there was Ian at the wheel with the white-helmeted Senior Officer seated next to him. So what do you do when you see a mate? You wave of course! Ian had both hands full steering the huge red beast, so he merely nodded and went on his way.

The next time we met, I reminded him about that incident.

"Oh yes," he remembered, "and do you know what the guv'nor said? Why is that stupid **** waving at us!"

I no longer wave at firemen...

Geoff Levene (W32)



**London Taxi
Private Hire
has updated
Call Sign with
it's latest**

foray into technology...

New licensing system...

Over the past 3 years we have been working hard to deliver a more efficient and modern licensing service and we now take another large step in this programme of work as we launch our new licensing system for drivers and operators. Whilst our old licensing systems were heavily paper-based and disparate, the new system (TOLA) provides an end-to-end licensing system for TPH staff. While you may not realise the benefits immediately, once we have bedded in the new system and new ways of working, it will speed up the licensing process and make the whole process much more transparent.

You will be able to apply and renew online as well as track the progress of your application. It may take time for the new system to settle in and we appreciate your patience during this transition.

Benefits of the new system

Our new licensing system brings a range of improvements to the way we work. As well as helping us move away from paper based files which can take longer to process than electronic applications, the system will also improve our operational capabilities.

We will be issuing compliance officers with handheld devices. These will enable the compliance team to undertake on-street licensing checks on drivers, operators or vehicles in real time. Handhelds will be capable of scanning barcodes printed on the new licences, which will instantly bring up the licence holder's details. Handhelds will also allow the printing of notices on street, enabling the compliance team to spend less time in the office completing paperwork and more time conducting enforcement activities. Additionally, as the new system will allow operators to upload details of drivers and vehicles online in the future, part of the compliance inspection will be able to be completed remotely.

If you are one of the drivers impacted by recent changes to the **Disclosure and Barring Service** and currently unable to work, we are checking every day for the results of new disclosures. Any results received for renewal applicants whose licences have expired, or are close to expiring, are treated as a high priority case. We aim to make decision on these high priority applications within 24 hours of receiving the results of the disclosure (see page 3 editorial).

New taxi driver licences and identifiers

Transport for London have commenced issuing replacement taxi driver licences and identifiers to all licensed London taxi drivers. The new licences and identifiers will be of a similar design to existing ones, but will contain a number of new security features including a hologram and barcode unique to the driver. In addition, following feedback from the trade,

NEWS FROM LTPH

the new suburban identifiers have a larger space to show the areas in which a driver is licensed to ply for hire.

Drivers should display their replacement identifiers and carry the copy of their replacement licence as soon as they receive them. Drivers renting taxis should give the original licence to the owner of the taxi and ask for the return of the existing licence. Accompanying the new documents will be instructions advising how to return existing documents to TfL.

Guide to new online accounts for licensees

As part of our new vehicle licensing service and modernisation programme, we will shortly be introducing new functionality for licensees. Once live, this system will enable all licensees to manage their licences and applications through a new online account, allowing us to move away from our current paper based file system.

You will receive a letter from us providing details of your individual account and a password. Once you have received this letter, you will be able to use the information to access your new online account through our website. As we have records for a number of licences with the same address or more than one business name linked to an address, you may receive more than one set of account details. If that happens we'll include instructions on how to contact us to get the accounts merged.

We really believe the move to a new licensing system and the imminent introduction of online accounts will revolutionise the way we work and the service we offer, making our licensing process more efficient and effective for you.

Update on vehicle licensing service

Our new vehicle licensing service went live in February and so far we have undertaken 10,900 taxi inspections. Overall feedback from customers is positive and now that the new service has settled into a steady state, we will be looking to undertake a customer satisfaction survey in the near future. The survey will be carried out at each of the six inspection centres over the course of a week. If you are asked to take part, please do take the time to answer the questions as your feedback is important to us.

You can book a vehicle inspection by calling 0343 222 5555. We will also soon be launching our new online service and you will then be able to book your vehicle inspection online.

New TPH contact details

In order to improve the service we give our customers, Transport for London is moving away from higher rate 084 and 087 contact numbers across the whole organisation. These are being replaced with 03 numbers, which are charged as a local rate number and are also included in many fixed line and mobile phone bundles. The new numbers to contact us on are:

Driver licensing queries on 0343 222 4444 with vehicle licensing enquiries on 0343 222 5555.

If you would like to be included on the distribution list for the regular 'In Gear' bulletins, please email TPH.Enquiries@tfl.gov.uk or alternatively all information on our new vehicle licensing service can be found at www.tfl.gov.uk/tph.

General enquiries to Customer Support on 0343 222 4444 or email TPH.Enquiries@tfl.gov.uk.

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November at Ally Pally...

2nd November: The Ally Pally German Bier Festival (Great Hall).

9th November: Alice in Chains + special guests Ghost and Scar the Martyr featuring Joey Jordison from Slipknot (Palm Court entrance).

13th / 14th November: The National - From the new album (Great Hall via Palm Court).

16th / 17th November: Vans Warped Tour 2013 - VWT returns to Ally Pally with headliners including Rise Against and Enter Shikari. 50 bands 4 stages (Great Hall via Palm Court).

28th November: The Lumineers with special guests Thao (Great Hall via Palm Court).

1st December: Antiques, Collectors, 20th Century Art Deco Fair (Great Hall via Palm Court).

London City Airport

The feeder rank at City Airport changed from early October with a new taxi feeder park that will have 10 taxi lanes. This will be located just off of Hartmann Road. Taxis should move from the feeder park to the new small feeder rank on Hartmann Road. Initially there will be marshals on-site to assist.

Finsbury Park Station

LTPH have received reports about problems at Finsbury Park Bus Station. The problems involve taxi drivers and the use of the loading bay outside Costa Coffee, mainly from 20:00 onwards and on all days of the week.

The problems include taxis blocking the cycle lane which runs alongside the loading bay, not allowing delivery vehicles on to the loading bay and not moving up on the loading bay when there is space.

LTPH has been working to try and officially appoint a new night time taxi rank in the loading bay and also a part-time taxi rank in the loading bay in Rock Street. While this work has almost been completed, they have now had to suspend it following reports about the above problems. If the problems continue, then the additional taxi ranks will not be appointed.

Following a significant amount of work and engagement with taxi drivers at Finsbury Park, there was an informal agreement to allow drivers to use the loading bay outside Costa Coffee under certain conditions and for a third taxi to use the designated taxi rank after certain times.

LTPH ranks update

News for November from London Taxis Private Hire

The actions of the drivers causing these problems risk this informal agreement being revoked, the loading bay being enforced and drivers parked on the loading bay being issued with Penalty Charge Notices.

If taxi drivers block the cycle lane in the bus station it means that cyclists cannot use it, are forced around the taxis parked there and put at risk of colliding with buses coming into the station. Taxis parking next to the loading bay also block the entrance to the station, causing problems on Seven Sisters Road and St Thomas's Road.

There have also been reports of drivers using their mobile phone while driving through the bus station, turning left out of the bus station onto Stroud Green Road which is not allowed, reversing out of the bus station, not using their lights when dark and being abusive towards bus drivers and police officers. Those actions are unacceptable and put other road users, including taxi drivers, at risk. Action will be taken by LTPH against any driver caught committing any of the above offences and their fitness to remain licensed will be reviewed.

side of Turnham Green Terrace, meaning that the carriageway and rank are not in the London Borough of Ealing. This means that only 'All London' drivers and those taxi drivers who are licensed for the London Borough of Hounslow are permitted to use the rank.

Prior to 2000, the Turnham Green rank was outside any suburban sector but was designated as an *island rank* which suburban drivers were allowed to use. When the old sectors were converted to the current ones, drivers formerly licensed for Sector 5A who customarily used the rank, could no longer do so as their new sector was Ealing and Hillingdon. To address this disadvantage, these drivers were allowed to apply to be licensed for the London Borough of Hounslow subject to undergoing a knowledge assessment of that one borough. However, this concession was only available to drivers licensed prior to April 2000 and is no longer available.

Any driver first licensed since 2000 for the Ealing and Hillingdon sector only is not permitted to use the taxi rank at Turnham Green Terrace. These drivers would only be permitted to use the taxi rank if they were licensed for the Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames sector or had become 'All London' licensed drivers.

LTPH Compliance Officers will be conducting visits to the Turnham Green Terrace taxi rank to ensure that only drivers who are licensed to use this rank are using it.

Turnham Green rank

LTPH has received a number of calls about which taxi drivers can use the Turnham Green Terrace taxi rank. The rank is in the London Borough of Hounslow and whilst the borough boundary for Ealing is very close to the rank, it actually runs along the far western side of the pavement on the northbound

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Mailshot

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Getting it off your chest!

Dear Editor,

I write in the aftermath of working difficulties that occurred over the 3-day period that included the *Yom Kippur* holiday over Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Those of us who worked were under great pressure because apart from the holiday absence of many drivers, this coincided with the closure of many roads due to the Triathlon in Hyde Park and surrounding areas and the extra demand of Fashion Week. Plus it rained. During this period, we were constantly exhorted to cover the credit work, but it appeared to me that the Control Room either did not understand the situation or have any idea about the psychology of the drivers, or were not instructed or trained efficiently. For example, during this chaos, I was offered several 'genuine as directed' trips. Does someone really ring to say they want a cab, but don't know where they are going? If so, they should be told gently but firmly that a destination would enhance their chances of getting a cab.

Which leads to my point of *As Directed* trips during such chaos - and I mean absolute chaos - with jobs from Paddington or anywhere north of Hyde Park, to even Victoria being impossible to complete. Two of mine ended up at Green Park underground station. I fully understand the reason for *As Directed* during the morning rush hours, but at the end of a day from say 1600 hours onward, I cannot believe any drivers who are getting toward the end of their shift and who are just about heading for home, can afford to take a chance on a job going several miles in the opposite direction. In my case, on Sunday after a difficult long day, I ended up in W8 and while inching my way westwards, I was offered the same as directed trip in W14 several times over a 10 minute period, so thus afraid of a Canary Wharf or even a London Wall, these were all refused and it was bleedin' obvious that other drivers had the same thought; so why not unmask the trip? It isn't rocket science to connect a customer and a driver with similar destinations. I live west by 20 miles and while an airport is a wonderful finish, drawing an arc from Ealing to Richmond, anything going from town within that arc, I'll run for, the same ethos must apply to drivers who live east.

And while I'm on the subject, the rigidity of some dispatchers borders upon the ridiculous. After a lot of wheeling and dealing we now have radio cab pick-up ranks on all Heathrow terminals, so why are we instructed to go into the terminal and stand in among all the other chauffeurs waving a placard when it is so simple to patch the customer and driver together over their

mobiles and to describe where to find us? There is one very helpful dispatcher who will do this; there is another who unhelpfully sticks firmly to the script. I suppose he is only doing his job as told, but for the good of all concerned, please re-write the bloody script!

Can I also suggest that a Board Member takes a half day out and drive to each terminal, judge how long it takes from the feeder, park up, making another note of how long from parking to barrier, go and stand with all the other muppets, observing the morning and afternoon chaos, and then walk back to the car park, noting again exactly what the parking fee is. Plus which, of course, the meter fare will be much higher because the trip is dispatched that much earlier to allow the driver time to park and position himself. This is a dumb system to nobody's benefit.

And another thing while I'm on the subject, do not ask drivers to pick up in Rugby Road after a match. It's closed, it's always closed so that 80,000 blokes can get to the pub in Twickenham, again a Board Member should visit such similar sites and scope out alternative pick-ups. It's no good leaving it to untrained dispatchers with no idea of the on-the-ground problem.

I'm glad that's off my chest; I'm only trying to help, but the radio circuit exists to enhance our working conditions and hopefully satisfy the customers need. But where any dichotomy exists, remember who should come first... us!

Jon Tremlett (Y32)

See Keith Cain's response on page 10 of this issue ...Ed

Is the game finished?

Dear Editor

Regarding the Ron Yarborough article in the *September Call Sign* quoting you as asking if the game is finished? I personally think that the game has finished as we currently know it. As I said in the August *Mailshot*, our trade needs a good kick up the backside! We have sat back whilst the minicab trade has grown professionally and allowed them take hotel, club, airport and account work etc. Yet if one licensed taxi driver mistakenly takes another one's job off a rank, we want to fight each other!

All our so-called trade leaders do is to slag each other off via the trade press, but do nothing about the real issues that affect our trade. Our vehicles are far too expensive to buy, while the cost of road tax, insurance and servicing etc has gone through the roof.

When I moved to Hertfordshire 26 years ago, I wondered how much extra time it would take me to get into town but certainly not how much extra it would cost me in fuel. I am now spending up to £45 a day on diesel. The days when our tips would pay for the day's fuel cost are now long gone. We also have the 15-year rule - yet another nail in our coffin because we older

drivers cannot afford a new cab. Then we have the Law Commission report that is due out at any time. I could go on forever, but I hope that other drivers will add their views.

I would also like to add one further point - this one about *Dial-a-Cab*. We seem to be losing good, long-standing drivers from the circuit who perhaps now want to cut down on their workload. This loss has happened since the £1 subscription rate for drivers who have been Members for over 30 years was changed to one of half subs instead. Would it not have been better to charge them a small percentage of the work they did? At least that way if they didn't go to work they would have no subs to pay.

At this stage I haven't even broached the subject of Hailo and the damage they are doing to our trade!

Paul Hammett (V42)

Interesting letter Paul. During the interview with me, I was asked if I'd recommend the Knowledge to my grandson and I couldn't honestly say yes, because even if it took him two years - which is going some - would he be better off than driving a minicab and starting almost straightaway with a satnav? I'd like to have said definitely to the KoL but I'm not sure it would have been the truth, whereas even 10 years ago I'd have said a positive yes. In all honesty, I wouldn't really recommend either.

You are so right about the lack of fight that most drivers put up to help the trade, caring only about their day's work and then going home. But that's how life has developed with most of the newer drivers being far more savvy when it comes to business than we ever were. And while it's not really for me to defend the trade organisations, without them we would be in a real pickle because they do so much behind the scenes that we don't know about. The LTDA in particular have been in many courts of law over the years fighting for the trade.

As you know, Paul, I was one of those affected by the dropping of the £1 subs and I was as "thrilled" as any of the other thirty year drivers. But times are tough and although I had actually mentioned a similar suggestion to yours at the time, the figures showed that a large number of those drivers were almost in semi-retirement and even when they did go out to work, were covering very little work. It probably would not have mattered had the terminals cost a fiver each, but they are extremely expensive and many were just being wasted, bringing in very little revenue while not being used much in the way of coverage. You're right Paul, we lost a lot of



Mailshot

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really nice guys when the £1 subs went, but while we are a driver's circuit, it still has to be run like a business otherwise it would have gone under years ago. And let's be honest; we are talking about £18 or so a week – hardly life-changing ...Ed

Stickers and the Mayor

Hi Alan

This is a copy of a letter I sent to Mayor Johnson. I think it explains my view...

Melvyn Harvey (E87)

Dear Mayor Johnson,

Thank you for yet another sticker to put in our windows. I'm sure my passengers will take heed. My problem is the lack of enforcement of the majority (yes majority) of cyclists that have a total disregard of the Highway Code. I could stand you at traffic lights, zebra crossings and no entry signs all over London and show you what your elite corp of cabbies see every day - cyclists that think they can do what they like and God help anyone who remonstrates with them.

They take their life in their hands when they jump a red light and the major problem now is when we are indicating to turn left at traffic lights and pull away, they come flying up the inside to go straight ahead. Absolute madness, yet we get a mouthful of abuse if we don't break in time - could we have a sticker for this to put on our cabs please!

Whilst sitting at the traffic lights at Oxford Circus, a cyclist smashed into the boot of my taxi, denting and scratching it. As he drove off through the red light, he told me to claim off my insurance (£350 excess). Until you make it compulsory to have cycles registered and insured, things will not change. Looking forward to your response.

Melvyn Harvey

Badge number *****

And again...

Dear Alan

I recently wrote to Boris Johnson but did so via my MP, Charles Walker (Bromley), as I felt it would have a better chance of being read by the Mayor.

Gary Cox (O46)

Dear Sir

I am a member of your constituency and also a London taxi driver. At the present time I am on holiday in Spain and have just been informed that taxi drivers are to be charged to pick passengers up at the City Airport, which would make a flag fall of £5.40 instead of the £2.40 at the present time. Because you are a Conservative Member of Parliament and the Mayor of London is Conservative also, I suspect you have a vested interest in supporting one another's political campaigns and re-election.

I would write directly to Mayor Johnson but feel if it came via you, there is less chance it will be filed away never to see the light of day.

Gary Cox

Dear Boris

The east end of London has enough complicated problems, as you well know, without having passengers passing through London City Airport paying £3 extra, which would bring a flag fall to £5.40 – shocking, I am sure you will agree. But that is the ambition of the folks who run the City Airport. Plus the fact that it is trying to build up the Yellow suburban areas, with some success I am sure you will also agree. I wish also to point out that we receive no subsidy, unlike all other forms of public transport and which puts us at a major disadvantage when competing for business. You only have to see what a pigs ear has been made at Victoria Station to see that we are less than a poor relation in the eyes of Mr Hendy and his staff at TfL. It jeopardises the good work done in the past by the taxi industry if this charge goes through. But in layman's terms, I do hope you will put a spoke in the wheel of the City Airport authority's ambitions regarding charging.

I would like to apologise for sending this via my MP, but I trust my MP implicitly in doing his best at getting this through to you personally rather than take a chance on getting it binned by some flunky via a return email saying your comments have been recorded.

Well, it's over to you now Mr Mayor. Good luck with our problems and of course with your election campaign in the future.

Gary Cox.

Last month's Call Sign revealed that LCA had outlined plans to double passenger numbers over the next 10 years by increasing the number of flights, taking larger aircraft and providing an aircraft taxi lane to allow more passenger jets to use the single runway while helping to clear that runway much more quickly than at present. But – and it was a big but – they also want to charge taxi drivers £3+ to pick up there. They have suggested a bill that would allow drivers to pass much of the charge over to the passenger, making the initial charge – as Gary Cox points out - £5.40. The question is how many passengers will continue to use the service at that price? ...Ed

And again...!

Hi Al

Ref the October Call Sign and the door sticker warning about passing cyclists; surely the intelligent thing for TfL to have done (if that's not an oxymoron then I don't know what is) would have been to issue two stickers ie one for each door. The largest portion of cost must be the post and packaging with the cost of the stickers being possibly no more than 30% of that total cost. I'm sure we have all had or seen close shaves when passengers have suddenly decided to bale out before we were expecting them to and so were not close enough to the kerb to stop a cyclist getting between the two.

Several years ago, Peter McNamme, a well-known courier company boss died in

seconds when a car door was opened on him whilst he was cycling home. The top corner of the door severed his jugular.

Really, a sticker on each door would have made much more sense...

Eddie Lambert (V37)

Two stickers sounds logical ...Ed

The death of a battery

Hi Al

Re battery messages in recent issues of Call Sign, my cab battery has just died after 6 years, 7 months and 4 days and has departed to that big scrap merchant in the sky. Beat that!

Terry Mears (M63)

Beat it? I'm sorry I ever started it!!! ...Ed

Vito steering problem

Hi Alan,

I noticed on page 29 of the September Call Sign, the headline was Vito: Rear steering problem fixed? I'm glad there was a question mark because as far as I know the same old problems are still there, even after the latest fix. I've had my Vito for over two years now and haven't found a driver who hasn't got some kind of problem. The Mercedes garage I go to admit there isn't a fix as yet and know there are hundreds - if not thousands - of us, all in the same boat having been sold a defective rear steer.

There is a Vito taxi drivers club who are well worth joining. It's the best £20 you can spend; they have been putting pressure on Merc /KPM to deal with this problem and send you regular emails on updates about the rear steer. There are two guys running the club. They are:

Irving Lomon(irving.lomon@me.com) and Mike Canty (mfcanty@tiscali.co.uk).

So if you're thinking of buying a Vito, drop them an email first to find out if there is a fix for the rear steer problem yet, before you end up like the rest of us... waiting for this miracle fix!

Steve Bryant (Y41)

Any Vito owners had a successful fix for the rear steer problem? ...Ed

Not Appy!

Dear Alan.

It is now 5 years since I retired from driving a cab and there have been many changes in the trade since then, most of which make me glad I got out when I did. However, there is also one new innovation that I am at a loss to understand and that is the so-called Apps. My understanding of these things comes largely from what I've read in Call Sign Online, but it appears there is no run-in and you wait 5 minutes before starting the meter. Is that right? Surely things



Mailshot

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can't be that bad that drivers are willing to do this? My only hope is that when the work finally picks up (and it will - it always has in the past) these things will disappear like so many other fads I've seen in the 35 years I drove a taxi.

Terry Farmer (Ex-T55J)

Nice to hear from you again Terry. You ask if it's right that the taxi Apps have no run-ins and you then must wait 5 minutes before starting the meter. Well it's partially right... except that you also have to pay 10% for the privilege! Do yourself a favour Terry - stay retired! ...Ed

Sliding doors on all taxis...?

Hi Al

Re the Mailshot letter from **Clarence Ishmael (R54)** in the *October Call Sign Online*, he is probably the owner of a Vito or has shares in Mercedes-Benz when suggesting that all taxis should have sliding doors. We've all been there; a dark wet night, poor visibility. We are parked behind a van, be it a minicab Viano/Vito or a licensed Vito taxi. Someone steps out of the vehicle and for a second we can't work out how. Then we realise that when the doors of these vehicles are open in bad conditions, we cannot tell unless we have seen the whole operation.

So we go from a cyclist colliding with a door of ANY vehicle - why single out taxis - to a pedestrian stepping out of a vehicle into the path of a cyclist. Two people hurt instead of one! Two injuries clogging up A & E! I believe a door opening is easier to see than no door opening and someone appearing **Dynamo** style into the road. As an ex-ADI qualified driving instructor, sliding doors make me shudder and should be resigned to the bin with **Gwyneth Paltrow** and **John Hannah**.

A possible solution to this dilemma of cyclists going into taxi doors is something we can perhaps help to stop by taking some responsibility. Keep your foot on the brake, thereby locking the doors until you can see that there are no cyclists around (mirrors) and then only allow people out by the door nearest the kerb. Also try to park tight to the kerb so a cyclist isn't tempted to try and squeeze down the side. Take control; don't let people out in the middle of traffic. It's dangerous.

We witness cyclists everyday who couldn't give a toss about their own well-being, but if they get hit it is nearly always the motor vehicle driver who gets it. Protect yourself, take responsibility, take control.

Mickey Lappin (Ex-E46)

Thanks Mickey. Anyone else have a view on the safety or otherwise of sliding doors? But more to the point Mickey, what have you got against Gwyneth Paltrow and John Hannah! ...Ed

Advertising contraceptives!

Hi Alan

I recently came to the UK to visit some family and friends. While out and about I couldn't help noticing some taxis with illuminated roof advertising. How long has this been? Not impressed at all, it is cheap, nasty and tasteless. I have no idea what the drivers or garages are getting paid for these media monstrosities, but they certainly bring down the status of our industry. No way would the old guard permit this kind of advertising on London taxis.

When can we expect drivers to wear sponsored clothing bearing company logos or adverts for **Durex** and safe sex?

Steve Shaller (Ex-F34J)

Spain

Your sex life is nothing to do with the rest of us señor! As to your other problem, if we all buy the soon-to-be Nissan NV200 then that could solve your problem, as their panoramic glass roof will be unable to take the ad boards ...Ed

Swastikas

Dear Alan

Re *Bob's War Tours* article in the *October Call Sign Online*; if you pick up Hindu passengers from their homes, then the swastika - a symbol of good luck in India - is almost as common a sight on their doors as a mezuzah is on a Jewish home, hence its presence on a plaque on the wall of India House.

Bill Munro

Earlswood Press

Bob Woodford is looking for bombing potholes left over after the two wars that are still there but which few know about. He has already received several leads following the article, but would be grateful for more ...Ed

New terminal

Dear Al

In his reply to Jon Tremlett in last month's *Call Sign*, Brian said that DaC were hoping

to increase credit card work. Well here's one member who won't be doing more because reluctantly after 20 odd years I have decided to take a credit card machine from another provider. This is because taking a card job on the new terminal has turned into a lottery as to whether we can clear it or not.

My main gripe with the old terminal was Ye Olde Map we had and the new one is different class, if a little complicated. But once Captain Kirk lent me Lieutenant Uhuru for a couple of days I worked it out! The problem, as I'm sure you know, is the signals. They are truly shocking. Added to all the old black spots we now have huge swathes of the West End, Knightsbridge and most helpfully Canary Wharf. I can't believe the new terminals were on test for a year without anyone noticing. The other night I took a job off the rank at Terminal 5 to Barnes and tried a *soon to clear* all the way from the Hogarth. I finished the job and cleared it only to find I was still number one in the airport. On the plus side, I can now sign on outside my house in deepest darkest Kent so if a job ever comes out in SE99 again I'm up for it.

Charlton Clark (F25)

Hi Chuck, you will be pleased to know that an update to the software looks to have solved the signal problems. At the time of writing (two days into testing it) I have had not one problem,

Also, last month's Mailshot had a letter from **Steve Bryant (Y41)** asking why the noise announcing an incoming trip was so quiet and I hinted that it could soon be solved. Well this update has cured that too and you can now have it as loud as you want! There is a more technical explanation inside this issue from DaC's Director of IT, **John Banks** ...Ed



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