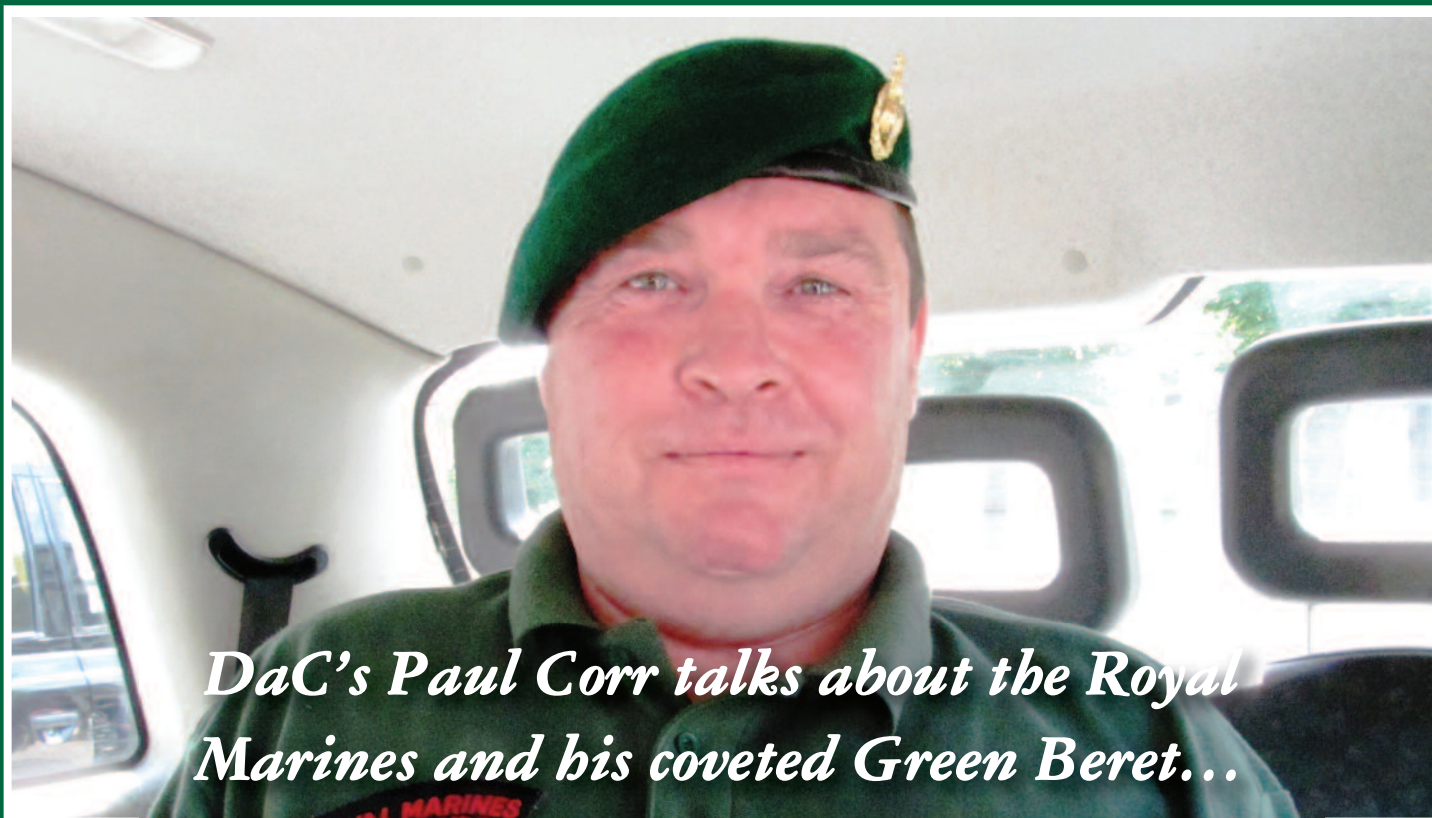


September 2013

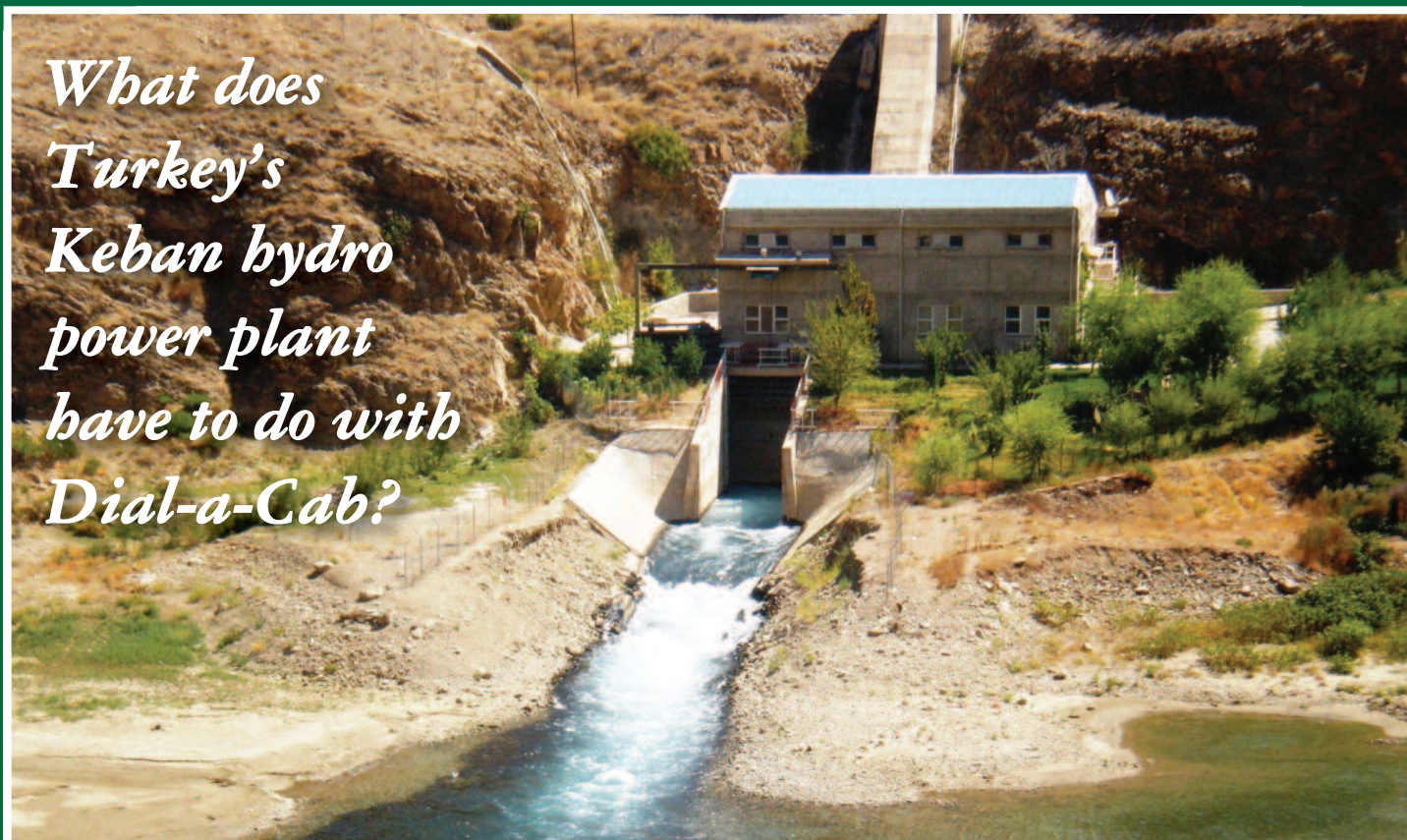


Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



DaC's Paul Corr talks about the Royal Marines and his coveted Green Beret...



*What does
Turkey's
Keban hydro
power plant
have to do with
Dial-a-Cab?*



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

"Dirty Dancing please cabbie." Not sure where it's on? Well this article could help. Also shown where possible are the burst times, so you can get a bit of extra work... and boy could we do with it!

London Theatre Guide

Burst Times Calculated from published start times and length of show, actual burst may be a few minutes later than shown.

| Show | Theatre | Sun | Sun | Mon | Tue | Tue | Wed | Wed | Thu | Thu | Fri | Fri | Sat | Sat |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 39 Steps | Criterion Theatre | | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 17:00 | 22:00 | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 18:00 | 22:00 |
| Barking in Essex | Wyndham's Theatre | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Before the Party | Almeida Theatre | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Billy Elliot - The Musical | Victoria Palace Theatre | | | 22:30 | | 22:30 | | 22:30 | 17:30 | 22:30 | | 22:30 | 17:30 | 22:30 |
| Blue Stockings | Globe Theatre | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bodyguard | Adelphi Theatre | | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 19:30 | 23:00 | 17:30 | 22:00 |
| Book Of Mormon | Prince Of Wales Theatre | | | 21:50 | | 21:50 | 16:50 | 21:50 | | 21:50 | | 21:50 | 16:50 | 21:50 |
| Charlie & the Chocolate Factory | Drury Lane, Theatre Royal | | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 17:00 | 22:00 | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 17:00 | 22:00 |
| Chimerica | Harold Pinter Theatre | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Commitments | Palace Theatre | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Confessions of Gordon Brown | Trafalgar Studios 2 | | | 21:00 | | 21:00 | | 21:00 | 16:00 | 21:00 | | 21:00 | 16:00 | 21:00 |
| Curious Incident of the Dog | Apollo Theatre | | | 22:15 | | 21:45 | | 22:15 | 17:15 | 22:15 | | 22:15 | 17:15 | 22:15 |
| Dirty Dancing | Piccadilly Theatre | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Dolls House | Duke of York's Theatre | | | 22:10 | | 22:10 | | 21:50 | 17:10 | 22:10 | | 22:10 | 17:10 | 22:10 |
| Jersey Boys | Prince Edward Theatre | 19:35 | | | 17:35 | 22:05 | | 22:05 | | 22:05 | | 22:05 | 17:35 | 22:05 |
| Lady Killers | Vaudeville Theatre | | | 22:05 | | 22:05 | 17:20 | 22:05 | | 22:05 | | 22:05 | 17:20 | 22:05 |
| Les Miserables | Queen's Theatre | | | 22:30 | | 22:30 | 17:30 | 22:30 | | 22:30 | | 22:30 | 17:30 | 22:30 |
| Let It Be | Savoy Theatre | 17:15 | 21:15 | 21:45 | | | | 21:45 | | 21:45 | | 21:45 | 17:15 | 21:45 |
| Life | Arts Theatre | | 20:50 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lion King | Lyceum Theatre | 17:15 | | | | 22:15 | 17:15 | 22:15 | | 22:15 | | 22:15 | 17:15 | 22:15 |
| Mamma Mia | Novello Theatre | | | 22:15 | | 22:15 | | 22:15 | 17:30 | 22:15 | | 22:15 | 17:30 | 22:15 |
| Matilda The Musical | Cambridge Theatre | 17:40 | | | | 21:40 | 17:10 | 22:10 | | 22:10 | | 22:10 | 17:10 | 22:10 |
| Midsummers Night Dream | Noel Coward Theatre | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Monty Python's Spamalot | Playhouse Theatre | | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 20:00 | 23:00 | 16:30 | 22:00 |
| Mousetrap | St Martin's Theatre | | | 21:45 | 18:15 | 21:45 | | 21:45 | | 21:45 | | 21:45 | 18:15 | 21:45 |
| Once | Phoenix Theatre | | | 21:50 | | 21:50 | | 21:50 | 17:20 | 21:50 | | 21:50 | 17:20 | 21:50 |
| One Man, Two Guvnors | Haymarket Theatre Royal | | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 17:00 | 22:00 | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 17:00 | 22:00 |
| Othello | Olivier, National Theatre | 17:20 | | 22:35 | | 22:35 | 16:50 | 22:35 | | 22:35 | | 22:35 | 16:50 | 22:35 |
| Peckham | Royal Court Upstairs | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Phantom Of The Opera | Her Majesty's Theatre | | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 17:00 | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 17:00 | 22:00 |
| Pride | Trafalgar Studios 1 | | | 21:40 | | 21:40 | | 21:40 | 16:40 | 21:40 | | 21:40 | 16:40 | 21:40 |
| Private Lives | Gielgud Theatre | | | 21:30 | | 21:30 | 16:30 | 21:30 | | 21:30 | | 21:30 | 16:30 | 21:30 |
| Resistible rise of Arturo | Duchess | | | 22:20 | | 22:20 | | 22:20 | 17:20 | 22:20 | | 22:20 | 17:20 | 22:20 |
| Richard III | Barbican | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ritual Slaughter of George | Royal Court Downstairs | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Rock of Ages | Garrick Theatre | | | 22:15 | | 22:15 | | 22:15 | | 22:15 | 17:30 | 22:15 | 17:30 | 22:15 |
| Romeo & Juliet | Ambassadors Theatre | | | Various dates all start at 14:30 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Same Deep Water As Me | Donmar Warehouse | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Saucy Jack & Space Vixens | Leicester Sq. Theatre | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Season in the Congo | Young Vic (Main House) | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Stomp | Ambassadors Theatre | 16:45 | 19:45 | 21:45 | | | | | 16:45 | 21:45 | | 21:45 | 16:45 | 21:45 |
| Strange Interlude | Lyttelton, National Theatre | 16:45 | | 22:15 | | 22:15 | | 22:15 | | 22:15 | | 22:15 | 16:15 | 22:15 |
| Sweet Bird of Youth | Old Vic Theatre | | | 22:20 | | 22:20 | 17:20 | 22:20 | | 22:20 | | 22:20 | 17:20 | 22:20 |
| Thriller Live | Lyric Theatre | 18:00 | 22:00 | | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 18:30 | 22:30 |
| Top Hat | Aldwych | | | | 17:20 | 22:20 | | 22:20 | 17:20 | 22:20 | | 22:20 | 17:20 | 22:20 |
| Turn Of The Screw | Almeida Theatre | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| War Horse | New London | | | 22:10 | | 21:40 | | 22:10 | 17:10 | 22:10 | | 22:10 | 17:10 | 22:10 |
| We Will Rock You | Dominion Theatre | | | 22:10 | | 22:10 | | 22:10 | | 22:10 | | 22:10 | 17:10 | 22:10 |
| Wicked | Apollo Victoria Theatre | | | 22:20 | | 22:20 | 17:20 | 22:20 | | 22:20 | | 22:20 | 17:20 | 22:20 |
| Woman In Black | Fortune Theatre | | | | 17:00 | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 17:00 | 22:00 | | 22:00 | 18:00 | 22:00 |

Key - ✓ = Show on but unknown finish time. No shows have a Monday matinee

A similar but more detailed article is available as Part 16 of the UID, which also includes theatre addresses. Visit www.myfav.co.uk/iehome.php?g=taxi or www.myfav.co.uk and click the locked button. Use the unlock code of 'taxi' to get in. Better still, register and set the taxi page as your default page...

from the editor's desk

Holiday time

By the time you read this, most DaC drivers will have finished their holidays and settled back into the usual routine... no, I don't mean driving the drosbky but giving Call Sign information that Dial-a-Cab drivers would want to read about! These last two months have been really tough in the magazine business and besides, why should I suffer because you want to have a break! What's fair about that! So what about if I say please or help the aged or perhaps just offer an out and out beg!

PS. I'm hoping that your returns will coincide with the busiest Christmas run-up we have seen for several years...

Cyclists

If you read *Call Sign* regularly, then you'll know that my love of cyclists never really progressed beyond hate! Well, I don't really hate them, but I have been moaning about the two-wheeled menaces for almost as long as I have been in the Editor's hot seat and long before it became fashionable to criticise them.

I was even been threatened by one **Dial-a-Cab** driver after a particular missive about cyclists. He told me that his son was an excellent cyclist and that he (the driver) would knock some sense into me if he ever saw me! Needless to say that he never gave his name.

But this piece isn't about them going through red lights or using our road when they have a cycling lane. It's not even about the few who think they can cycle along the pavement. It is, without really going into it, about the tragedy of the five cyclists who have died so far in 2013 and even more about the people who make – or help to make – the laws that govern cyclists.

Inside this issue are two pieces that refer to cyclists and shows the battle we have to not just control them, but to also help keep cyclists safe. We'll never be able to stop some cyclists, who obviously have no road sense whatsoever, attempting to overtake on the nearside even though a vehicle has a left indicator on to show it intends making a left turn. In many cases – especially if it is a truck turning left – the cyclist cannot be seen in the vehicle's mirror. It doesn't take much imagination to see how that can turn into an appalling tragedy.

One mention on the *Mailshot* page comes from **Eddie Lambert (V37)** and refers to London Assembly member, **Jenny Jones** and her apparent attitude towards wearing cyclist's helmets, whilst an article by **Tom Quigley (Y33)** tells how **Mayor Boris** turned up at the recent **Pru 100** cycling trip and his lack of a sensible mode of dress.

Both just go to show that cyclists are looking to take over the world! And if you think that is an exaggeration, just speak to one of their marshals when you get stuck behind a cycling "reclaim the streets" demo...

TX4 fire claims?

I'm not sure how true this is, but I have been told unofficially that the claims put in by drivers who lost time over the 2008 recall following a small number of 56 registration TX4s catching fire, is about to be settled.

The reason I say unofficially is because I



believe that those drivers whose claims have been agreed, have been asked to sign confidentiality agreements. If true, then I'm delighted that the matter has been put to rest and that the TX4 can reclaim its rightful place as the real "official" London taxi!

Hailo

It isn't often that I agree with **Micky Walker** in *The Badge* – or in this case that he agrees with me – but many others are also beginning to realise that what I've been saying ever since Hailo first appeared is becoming a reality.

One of the reasons August has been so quiet on the streets is that people are phoning Hailo rather than standing around waiting for a passing cab. What's that, you cry in unison, **Dial-a-Cab** does the same thing? Well, that's the whole point. DaC – as well as **RTG** and **ComCab** – charge for the facility by having a run-in whereas Hailo does it for nothing. Even waiting time comes free up to the first five minutes – although I also hear that some drivers are disregarding the waiting time and starting their meters on arrival. No doubt some will say that should make me happy because it puts the prices up that Hailo drivers are charging. Well, no, actually, because the average passenger thinks we are all the same (black taxis) and the assumption is that we are all "on the make."

One Hailo driver, on a particularly quiet August evening on the streets, told me that he had completed six Hailo trips. One came to £22 while the other five totalled £37. Yep, that's still £59 but for six door-to-door licensed taxi journeys, but it must be well below even minicab prices. Of course, for six street rides it is fairly average.

So can't these drivers see how they are damaging the trade? Why did they bother doing the Knowledge if they are happy to charge cheaper fares than PH? The only certainty is that the three entrepreneurs who started Hailo aren't losing; the three drivers whose faces are used to front the operation aren't losing; the passengers aren't losing – in fact the only people losing are those drivers who can't see the long term damage they are doing to the radio trade and who are subsidising Hailo.

Since writing this piece, I have now also read this month's Chairman's report and one particular sentence with regard to tender documents and what our clients want from us has totally shocked me. It won't take you long to work out which one that is...

Twitter and Facebook...

No, I haven't backtracked and begun using *Twitter*. And no, I still can't see the point. But yes, I do have a presence on *Facebook* that I rarely use. But hey, if knowing what others have for breakfast turns you on then that's great. However, I feel concerned for friends on *Twitter* and *Facebook* who feel that everyone in the world is their friend – because they patently are not.

I recently looked at something on *Facebook* and was shocked to see friends that I regard as being sensible, virtually admitting that their home was empty because they had posted photos of themselves on holiday in another country. The photos were dated and included everyone usually living in their northwest London abode. They might just as well have put a notice up on their front door saying: *Gone on holiday. House empty...*

What is wrong with people who have to say what they are doing at any given time? Believe me, ask anyone who has ever been burgled how it leaves you feeling and that might make them wait until they get home before showing off photos that few really want to see anyway...

Lousy year...

We are now heading towards the tail end of another year and I hope you will forgive me for including this personal piece, because business may well be up from the last few years but it could be tearing busy and I would still have had a lousy year.

Regular *Call Sign* readers will know what I am talking about, because the loss of a child puts everything else into perspective. I think of **Reed** every single day, but just very occasionally some of those thoughts and memories now have a smile attached to them.

But this piece isn't about my son, it's about all you out there and the thoughtfulness and kindness you have shown and I would just like to offer my thanks. There was the huge number of **Dial-a-Cab** drivers that attended **Reed's** funeral on January 14, many of whom I didn't even know.

There was the whole DaC Board of Management who turned up, as well as people from outside this Society such as **RTG** Chairman **Geoffrey Riesel** and **LTDA** General Secretary **Steve McNamara**.

Then on August 4 and right in the middle of the holiday season, as we laid a stone in **Reed's** memory, there was another large crowd including many DaC drivers and with **Brian Rice** and **Mike Son** representing DaC. I also had phone calls and text messages from around Europe on the day of the stone setting from those on holiday, but who had taken that brief moment out of their vacation to think of me.

But this piece is also about the eight months in between those two dates and aimed at the numerous drivers who have come up to me and offered me their condolences – again, many of them I had never met before. It has been a lousy year for me, yet a chink of light has shone through thanks to people I didn't even really know. To everyone, I offer my sincere thanks...

Be lucky...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Tenders

I am writing this in mid-August but I'm sure I don't need to point out that business is fairly quiet at the moment, but as we all know it's fairly normal for that month. However, during this quiet period we have completed two tenders and there is another one in the pipeline for completion.

We have completed the tender for your largest account together with another that is in our top five. The one still for completion is our second largest account.

You may well be asking yourselves why I am mentioning this as surely it is normal for us to complete tenders. Well it is, but something new is creeping into client's requests.

After the tender was completed for our largest client, I was asked to attend their premises to give them a presentation on a system that they have been using for years. However, I suppose that in fairness, all vendors have to be treated equally and if our competitors were required to give a presentation, then for the sake of equality we had to be treated in the same manner.

Our presentation went very well. I also knew some of the people present; however, they did have staff from their procurement department there whom I had never met before. They, obviously, are just interested in cost as it is taken as the norm that we supply an exceptional service. Sometimes clients can forget what bad service is when they have received such good service for such a long time.

As I stated earlier, I believe our presentation went well, but after a couple of weeks I was asked back to consult with the head of their procurement department.

The meeting was very amicable, but he was adamant that they did not wish to pay for a run-in, neither did they wish to pay a driver gratuity. I was equally adamant that both were needed to maintain service levels to the high standards they currently experience and demanded. I can assure you that it would be so easy for me to just sit in front of the client and agree to their demands, it is much more difficult to say no! However, I did agree to 'cap' the gratuity but nothing else and went on to explain that the run-in and gratuity was paid in its entirety to our members to entice them to give an extraordinary service. I reiterated that these payments were for members and not for Dial-a-Cab as an organisation.

Unfortunately, that is how I left the meeting. Although extremely amicable, we could not come to an agreement and at the time of writing I have not heard from the client.

I know some of you will disagree with my sentiments, whilst others will agree. It just appears that sometimes I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't.

Our second largest client, that I also referred to earlier and whose tender is also in the pipeline, has only gone so far as to make us sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA). However, I have been informed that not only will this client be looking for a no run-in agreement, but they also require five minutes of free waiting time at the pick-up point - I don't even want to think about that one at this stage!

You are all capable of drawing your own conclusions as to why our clients are now demanding more for less, especially when some of our



own member's vehicles display the Dial-a-Cab livery, yet operate with reduced rates on behalf of other organisations customers. It's hardly surprising that our own customers believe that DaC itself should extend the same rates to them.

So it now appears that the latest trend is to offer a first class taxi service to the customer that will be subsidised by the driver. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the corporate sector wants the same service carried over to their corporate accounts and to again take money out of the driver's pocket. Of course, they still require and expect all the reporting we give them in addition to their own DaC Account Managers and Implants etc.

It goes without saying that there is a tremendous change going on in our market place and I know that some of you consider that it may be for the best. We will have to see whether, in time, that is correct or not. What I do know is that it appears the driver is subsidising the whole change at the current time.

I just hope that when business eventually picks

up - and it was getting a little better before the holiday season started - that some have not gone too far down the road of the customer expecting a subsidy at the driver's expense and I just hope there will be a way back!

Concierge

I know that mention of private hire sometimes gets drivers feeling rather irritated, but like most things in life, there is good as well as bad in that side of the trade.

As you know, we have a number of car companies on our platform and our clients can order cars from their chosen vendor. One of the best companies on the platform is **Brunel**, which started in business thirty years ago by **Bill Edwards**. Bill started with one vehicle that he drove himself and gradually built his business into a market leader.

Over the years I got to know Bill very well and I came to accept that his word was his bond. He ran a very professional company, but sadly he was diagnosed with cancer some five years ago and he battled with it ever since - a battle he appeared to be winning as he endeavoured to always keep himself fit.

Bill recently went on holiday to Spain with his wife Jackie. One morning he went out for a bike ride, only to suffer a fatal heart attack. He was 58.

Bill was a true gentleman and a man I had the utmost respect for; the Private Hire industry will be all the worse for his loss. My sincere condolences go to Jackie and children Alex, Nicola and Anthony.

We have lost a truly good man and I for one will miss him enormously...

Brian Rice
Chairman, Dial-a-Cab

THE SALIERI RESTAURANT

376 Strand, WC2

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

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

We are certain that you will be delighted



Please bring along your badge or Bill as ID

Salieri Restaurant
376 Strand, WC2

Reservations: 020 7836 1318

Just missing last month's issue, *Call Sign* is pleased to note that TX4 production is about to restart again at the **London Taxi Company's** Coventry facility. The cab will also continue to run on the **VM Motori** engine. However, LTC have been made aware of some concerns from TX4 drivers regarding the 2.5l engine, so have been working closely with the Italian engine manufacturer and a number of partners across the trade, investigating methods to improve the engine's efficiency and effectiveness.

LTC have identified three important principles which the company say that when correctly combined and applied, have led to dramatic improvements in performance and reliability as well as reduced risk of possible engine failure.

COOLANT: Getting the right mix...

If any vehicle does not have its coolant concentration maintained at a 50% coolant and 50% water mix at all times – regardless of the season – oxidation of aluminium components can occur which causes particles to slowly build up within both the heater and radiator matrices. This in turn triggers a sequence of events which can lead to blockages in the oil gallery, rising engine temperatures and eventually, engine failure. It is therefore vital that drivers understand the importance of maintaining a 50/50 coolant/water mix all year round...

OIL: Getting the right specification...

Gone are the days when you could use any 20w/50 specification oil in your vehicle. It is now vital that you use a fully-synthetic, low SAPS (Sulphated Ash and Phosphorus-Sulphur), 10w/40 specification oil in your engine. Failure to use the right oil can result in a number of issues, including bore glazing, bore polishing and, specific to Euro 5 vehicles, blockages in the Diesel Particulate Filter. As well as ensuring that an engine runs smoothly, the right oil will also keep your engine clean and free from contaminants...

TX4 PRODUCTION TO RESTART AT COVENTRY



Back to work at Coventry!

and, therefore reduce or eliminate maintenance and parts costs.

The London Taxi company has launched a campaign in order to drive home these fundamental principles of engine maintenance to new and existing customers that will be supported by their *Approved*

SERVICING: Getting the right maintenance...

Ensuring that your TX4 is serviced correctly and in line with manufacturer's servicing schedule is vital in order to protect the integrity of your engine. Servicing your vehicle correctly dramatically improves vehicle and engine life expectancy. It also acts as a preventative measure providing an opportunity for mechanics to diagnose potential failures early

Service Dealer network. It will also be raising awareness of its range of oils (£5.95 for 1litre) and coolant (£4.45 for 1litre) created by Morris Lubricants, which are available from any London Taxi Company dealership or Approved Service Dealer.

You can read more about the importance of coolant, oils and servicing at www.london-taxis.co.uk.

An amazing collection of pictorial maps from a 1915 Theatreland map, to a 1937 map of World Steamship routes, to a Post Office Radio Telephone Services map from 1935...

MacDonald Gill: Out of the Shadows...

Perhaps not the usual type of article from *Call Sign* but one which we feel sure will interest many *Dial-a-Cab* drivers – especially those who are artistically inclined or who perhaps have children that take more than a passing interest in painting and design.

From **20 September until 2 November 2013**, the PM Gallery & House at Walpole Park, Mattock Lane, Ealing runs a retrospective of the work of illustrator, designer and architect **MacDonald 'Max' Gill** (1884 – 1947). Admission is free.

The collection features rarely-seen original artwork and includes Gill's amazing *Wonderground* map of London (1914, his pictorial maps of Theatreland, London Underground stations, bus and postal services, tea routes, countries of Empire and many others, including a wealth of original posters, personal papers and artefacts that were unearthed by his family from the remote Sussex cottage in which he lived, after his death.

Gill's work was famous in his day, but not so much nowadays, so the exhibition is aiming to continue to shed some more light on his career and indeed this is the first London exhibition to display the full range of Gill's work.

Out of the Shadows presents Gill's captivating and innovative range of graphic designs in many forms, across four decades. They cover political and social issues and the fields of transport and communication. His work was celebrated in his lifetime but, unlike that of his elder brother, sculptor and typographer **Eric Gill**, it faded from view after his death.

MacDonald Gill was best known for the richly-coloured and highly-detailed, light-hearted pictorial maps he created for the London Underground, but his work also includes the design of the alphabet for standard military headstones (for the Imperial War Graves Commission); the procession map and title page for the official programme for the Coronation of **King George VI**; painted wind-dial panel maps commissioned by Edwin Lutens; a new logo and posters for the General Post Office; and a huge painted map of the North Atlantic for the First Class Dining room on Cunard's *Queen Mary*.

This is an exhibition that is well worth seeing...

Out of the Shadows: MacDonald Gill runs from 20 September until 2 November at the PM Gallery & Pitzhanger Manor, Walpole Park, Mattock Lane, Ealing, London W5 5EQ.

Opening times are Tues - Fri 1-5pm; Sat 11am-5pm; Sundays 1-5pm.

More info at: www.ealing.gov.uk/pmgalleryandhouse or phone 020 8567 1227.



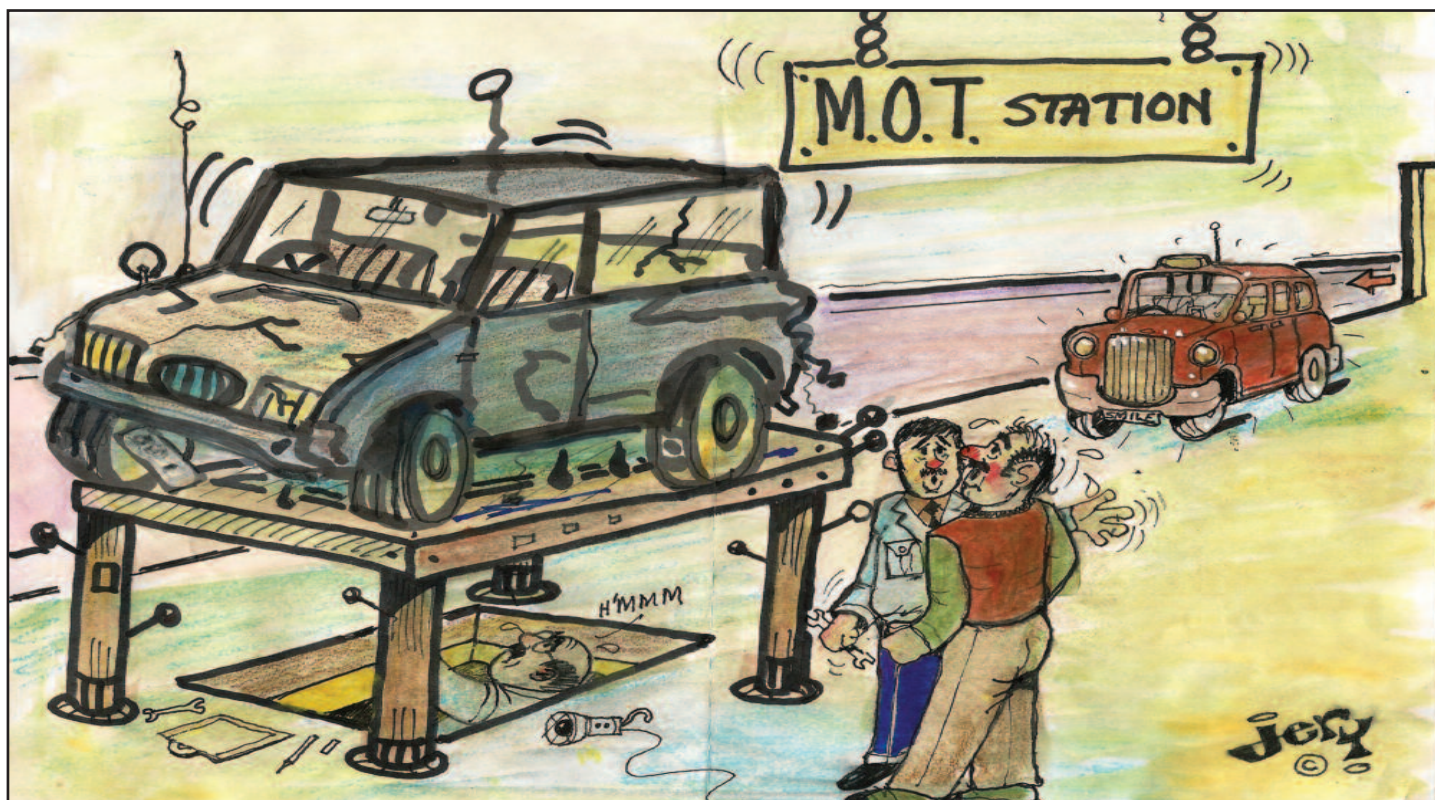
Viewed in full size, the Theatreland map from London in 1915 has incredible detail

Police Enquiries: Marylebone Road

Police were called at approximately 18:40hrs on Saturday 27 July to Marylebone Road NW1, opposite Madam Tussauds, following reports of a motorcycle in collision with a pedestrian. The pedestrian, a 50-year-old man, was taken to a central London hospital where he remains in a critical condition. Officers are appealing for witnesses and in particular a licensed black cab driver who was close to the collision, to contact them. The motorcyclist stopped at the scene.

Anyone with information is asked to contact officers at the Southwest Traffic Garage on 020 8941 9011.

Jery's World



"Thank Gawd, a decent vehicle at last! You can't beat a Ford Escort! I'm getting fed up wiv these taxis..."

Androids taking over the world!

Yes, it does sound like the heading for a new **Doctor Who** story, but it is much more frightening than that! Why? Well when it comes to smartphones, it seems that everyone now has to have one, feels compelled to look at them 24x7 and apparently feels obligated to collect as many Apps as they can – hopefully along with DaC's! But accepting that, it also seems that of the types of smartphones available, **Android** has the business sewn up with almost four in five gadgets running on the platform in the second quarter of 2013 (courtesy *International Data Corp*).

According to the research firm, Android shipments soared 73.5% on an annual basis to 187.4 million units between April and June, which enlarged the operating system's market share to 79.3% from 69.1% in the same period of last year.

Apple's iOS stayed in second place with a 20% jump on the year to 31.2 million units in that second quarter. However, there is a new product and refreshed platform scheduled for later this year, so the belief is that Apple will be able to re-capture market share.

Windows Phone came in third over the period with the strongest annual increase among the top-five platforms. Gadgets running on Microsoft's mobile operating system jumped 77% - thanks to **Nokia** - reaching 8.7 million units.

Overall, smartphone shipments grew 51.3% on the year and 9.3% on the quarter to 236.4 million units between April and June 2013. So there seems to be little chance of pedestrians looking at where they are going as they cross the road any time soon!

AVAILABLE IN APP STORE

More smart-phones equals more Apps - some better than others!

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

Call Sign September 2013

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Alan Nash (A95) has been on Dial-a-Cab since 1996, just one year before he joined Call Sign and began producing the monthly info sheet, Nash's Numbers. But besides producing facts and figures for this mag, Alan also drives a taxi and has told us about why he is going brown on top!

"The offer with a new taxi at the-then M&O in 2000 of a free factory fitted vinyl roof sounded good. Looked fairly smart (well, this was 2000) and I have been pleased... until recently.

Being factory fitted, I have to assume that they do not finish the roof off to the same standard as a nice shiny one. But everything has been ok - until this year's annual test that is.

I like to keep my cab tidy, always getting faults rectified quickly and keeping it clean, although I am not overly fastidious - it is after all, just my workhorse.

CAN YOU SING???



Are you a licenced taxi driver who can sing? The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund has been asked to find the best singers in the taxi trade, so if the answer is yes would you please be

kind enough to get in touch with one of the TDOYCF contact numbers below. Please also remember to book your tickets for the TDOYCF's dinner/ dance on 30th November 2013. For more info, phone or email TDOYCF Hon Chairman, Russell Pollock MBE (T55).
Phone/ Fax: 020 8952 1357 / Mobile: 07850 056 765 / Email: brussella@talk21.com

Most DaC drivers eventually go grey on top, but Call Sign's Alan Nash (A95) went brown!

Beware the factory fitted vinyl roof!



Notice the circled lump below the vinyl

I had noticed a small rusty lump by the For Hire sign (see picture with lump circled) and thought this was a bit of a one-off. But I did not expect what NSL found on inspection. They just reported a failure due to a rusty roof. But as it was covered by vinyl, none of us (NSL, me or the garage) had any idea until the vinyl was peeled back.

The rust was above the passenger door on both sides of the cab. You can see from the picture that the extent of the rust had gone through to the interior lining.

So my thanks to Martin at Stanway Engineering for sorting out the problem. The vinyl was peeled

back, the rust removed and glass fibred over. Then he re-glued the vinyl back down and it was almost as good as new. Well it did pass.

The proverb to this story must be to beware of taxi salesmen offering free gifts!

You can get a much more detailed version of Nash's Numbers containing most of the things you need to know for a day's work by going to [www.myfav.co.uk /iehome.php?g=taxi](http://www.myfav.co.uk/iehome.php?g=taxi) or www.myfav.co.uk and clicking the 'locked' button. Use the unlock code of 'taxi' to get in. You can also set it as your default page...

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CALL US FOR A FREE FIRST CONSULTATION IN PERSON OR OVER THE PHONE

As shock emission figures hit the Vito, projected Olympic boom figures don't actually happen, the 15-year cab rule causes drivers to look at the future with trepidation and the Law Commission threatens our livelihood, DaC's Eddie Lambert asks whatever next...???

I know it's not December 2012 when it would have been traditional to look back over the year and comment on its ups and downs, but it certainly seems that 2012 will long be remembered in the cab trade for two events - or perhaps in the case of the Olympics, non-events so far as work levels went!

The Olympic shambles obviously went much further than just in the cab trade with restaurants, hotels, theatres and many other businesses suffering a chronic lack of trade. What it did do, in my opinion, was to show up the powers-that-be to actually be seen as a totally double-dealing, self-seeking, shower of totally shameless people.

Prior to the actual events, London was promised a bonanza of economic opportunities, with the whole of London going to be stuffed to the gunnels with people. Then, when it became blatantly obvious that this was not happening, out came the spin doctors saying that they didn't actually mean the benefits of the Olympics would arrive during the Games, but over the following years! Well it's

WHATEVER NEXT!!!



now over one year on and I haven't seen anything so far this summer and I doubt whether anyone else has either.

The other event which has caused major problems to the cab trade was the introduction of the 15-year age limit to taxis. Done on the back of a problem with air quality, it was said to have been to remove the old dirty taxis and buses. Unlike the buses, which are owned by huge often multinational companies who ask for and receive massive grants to purchase new vehicles, the taxi trade receives nothing.

Now figures from Department for Environment show that the new boy on the block, the Mercedes Vito, actually emits much higher levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) than taxis built before 2005.

Also, many drivers faced with a shortage of vehicles went into retirement when they would have preferred to just slow down and work a few hours a day to supplement their non-subsidised pensions.

On the back of the DfE statement, the RMT have asked their legal advisers if there is a case for a "class action" against TfL/PHTD. They are asking all ex-drivers who have quit and those that suffer financial hardship because of this event to contact them so they can build up a case.

Oh well, on to this year and now we have the Law Commission to deal with and make no mistake, they must be considered as big a threat to the Hackney trade as anything that has happened in the past. I know that the LCDC is not very popular in *Call Sign* but at last they seem to be taking the threat posed by the Law Commission seriously, unfortunately their fellow **United Trade** reps don't seem to take it quite so seriously. The LTDA have been very quiet and **Unite** (London) appear to be very reluctant to cooperate with the trade as a whole unlike their northern brethren who have really gone out and put a hell of a lot of effort into educating drivers across the country about the threat the Law Commission poses.

So the question is still... whatever next!

**Eddie Lambert (V37)
Call Sign Online**



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Vitos and air con...

Further to Jon Robinson's (E88) letter in last month's Call Sign regarding Vito taxis being requested for local journeys because customers are using them for the air conditioning facility in the back, rather than their ability to carry six passengers...

Before putting an answer together, I thought it would be best to try and ascertain the number of journeys this may apply to, so I had reports written which showed me the total number of Vito trips from the 1st up to the 21st July, which is roughly the period when the hot weather began to kick in.

There had been 235 Vito trips in that 3 week period that were specifically asked for by the client and 17 of those trips were cleared for less than £20, although more than £15. There were just 14 trips cleared for below £15. Therefore taking off the 31 trips that in total were cleared for £20 or less, that still left 204 trips with an average fare of £55.

Jon refers to local journeys being the problem and I am not clear what is being classed as a local. Are they trips clearing for less than £20 or less than £15, or is Jon perhaps referring to £8 minimums? But whatever trip is classed as a local, the numbers are still small compared to the total journeys that have been taken.

I think it's reasonable to make the assumption that if account clients did request a Vito taxi to travel a short distance because of the air con, the number of occasions this occurred is so minimal that any suggestions Jon is saying we should consider, would in my mind have a detrimental effect on the service we provide and would impact on Dial-a-Cab members. I also believe that if we began questioning our

CONTACT CENTRE CHAT

With Keith Cain



Credit Cards

Some of our drivers - with new terminals especially - are not following the procedures we have gone to great lengths to get out to you by publishing them in the magazine, producing hand-out information sheets and also having a DVD made that demonstrates what you need to do when handling payment via a credit card.

It is essential that credit card receipts from your terminal are read clearly before you hand back the card. If a receipt says **Void** or **Cancelled** you must repeat the process. More often than not, it is just that the PED has not connected with the clearing bank and drivers just need to repeat the process.

However, it is also advisable that every driver carries a manual credit card docket book with them at all times because in the unusual event that the electronic process fails completely, then you can revert to the manual docket, take a rubbing of the card, write in the cost and journey details and get the card holder to sign the docket. Ensure the signature matches with the one on the back of the card and then bring it to the office ASAP so that we can deal with the transaction for you.

If there is any trouble with the electronic transaction, the manual procedure in the **ONLY** way we can get your money for you...

Keith Cain

Contact Centre Manager
Driver Operations Manager

Dutch electric TX4 company goes bust!

The February 2009 issue of **Call Sign** revealed that then-director of Dutch taxi company *Taxi Centrale Amsterdam*, **Bas Vos**, was considering placing an order for 50 electric TX4Es and that his claim was that they would be on the roads of Amsterdam later that year.

Mr Vos had claimed that the rear wheels of his electric taxi would have two bat-

ttery-operated electric motors that were expected to give around 150 kilometres before needing to be recharged. In addition, a one-cylinder diesel engine was to be added as a generator that could recharge the batteries while driving along. This would increase mileage to around 200km or 125 miles. Overnight charging would take around 6 hours, but *quick loaders* would be available to do the job in 15 minutes at taxi offices and ranks.

The engine was set up by a company called AGV who were said to want to use TX4 body parts with their own engine. However they have now gone into bankruptcy. Parts of the company have been taken over by the Utrecht-based **Electronic Power Holland**, but they will no longer be involved with electric TX4s.



Bas Vos with a TX4 in Holland

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DaC Network Administrator Jon Winterburn enjoys playing the latest computer games

GAMING WITH JON

Call of Duty comes of age

If you or your kids are PC, XBOX or PS3 gamers, chances are you'll know about the **Call of Duty** series of games. These first-person shooter games are arguably the most popular premium games around, with around 40 million worldwide online gamers all plugging in to virtually shoot the crap out of each other!

In the past I've reviewed various titles in the Call of Duty franchise; sometimes I've raved about them and other times I've ranted. I've played almost every one of the 14 iterations of COD (as it's known by us gamers), but the only one I really enjoyed was **Modern Warfare 3**. Even though this game is a couple of years old, I still play it almost daily along with my friends.

However, the latest edition - released last November - **Black Ops 2**, is plagued by *lag* (that's jargon for a noticeable delay between the action of players and the reaction of the server) and *nerfed* guns (weapons that are under-powered).



You see, there are two publishers who make the COD games: *Infinity Ward*, who make the *Modern Warfare* series and *Treyarch*, who make the *Black Ops* series.

As I write this, *Infinity Ward* (who I consider the superior publisher) has just publicly revealed the new multiplayer features of their latest offering - due this November - called *Call of Duty: Ghosts*.

This next-generation game sports cutting edge graphics and gameplay. More importantly, they've revealed some exciting new features never seen before in a multiplayer shooter. These include customisable soldiers, attack dogs you can control, squads of up to 4 players you can take with you into battle, maps with scenery you can actually destroy and use to your advantage, new weapons and much more!

Perhaps the biggest change is the publisher's attitude to female gamers. For too long, people have assumed women don't play shooting games - or if they do, then they're in the minor-

ity. Statistics say otherwise and that 40 percent of online gamers are female. That's a massive number of gamers that are under-represented because all the soldier avatars (the character you play as) are men. Too often in games, women are portrayed as eye candy or helpless wimps or scantily-clad bimbos. At last this is changing.

Finally, gaming is coming of age and realising that women are just as good at gaming as men - and often better! What does this have to do with *Call of Duty*? Well, in the upcoming *Ghosts* release, gamers can select a female avatar for the first time in a premium shooter game. I think this is excellent, as it recognises that women like to play these kinds of games too.

So if you're a man reading this and you want to play *Call of Duty: Ghosts* when it's released in November, but you're concerned your wife/girlfriend won't approve, fear not! Why not invite her to play with you? Together you can destroy the opposition with all manner of guns, grenades, drones, attach dogs and bombs - all from the comfort of your sofa.

Go to <http://www.callofduty.com/ghosts> for more info on the multiplayer (and single player) campaign. And happy gaming...!

Jon Winterburn
DaC Network Administration

BARKING BATHHOUSE: A TRIP TO HEAVEN!

A trip to heaven was how **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Alex Constantinou (N05)** described his **Deep Tissue massage** at the **Barking Bathhouse**. Other DaC drivers were waxing just as lyrically after paying them a visit at the **Barking Learning Centre** in **Barking Town Square** following a special offer in **Call Sign**.

While we may not have to worry about the world's finances, there is undoubtedly much stress involved in driving a London taxi. It may come from a harassed passenger who hasn't allowed enough time to get to his destination or perhaps be that nothing has gone right for you when you have some big bills to pay.

People recognise London taxi drivers as the world's best, but that in itself brings its own stress when passengers expect you to know everything. But one of the effects of stress is that familiar tightness in the neck and shoulders, often with an irritating backache. If the pain becomes unbearable, then medical assistance should be sought, but very often the best remedy can be an expertly applied **back, neck and shoulder massage**. The problem very often is where to go because the word 'massage' in a window has all sorts of different connotations!

The price for a thirty minute therapeutic back, neck and shoulder massage at the Barking Bathhouse is £25 (or £35 an hour). It could be the best investment you have made this month.

In addition to the *Deep Tissue massage*, the Barking Bathhouse also specialises in *Indian Head massage* and *Reflexology*. There is also *Thai massage* in addition to a nail lounge and Neal's Yard facials. Waxing is carried out on request.

Always tell them that you are a taxi driver on **Dial-a-Cab** and that you read about them in **Call Sign**.

The spa is closed on Mondays and open Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 7pm, Saturday from 10am to 5pm, with some Sunday bookings available by appointment.

The Barking Bathhouse is at the Barking Learning Centre, which is at Town Square, Barking IG11 7NB. For bookings, call 0208 227 2991 / 07889 008 828 or visit www.barkingbathhouse.com.





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It has almost become the stuff of legend; taxi drivers saw a Knowledge Boy on his bike and asked why he was bothering; after all, the game was finished! With the more modern breed of driver, the expression is said more as a joke rather than a way to talk KoL students out of the idea of becoming a licensed taxi driver and what those old timers perceived as a possible decrease in their takings.

Newspapers back in those days were considered to be a closed shop – ie you couldn't get a job there unless your father worked there. The same used to unofficially apply to the taxi business; son followed father but the trade didn't need outsiders. Minicabs were an irritation, but we had plenty of work and didn't want to dilute it by taking on new drivers – hence the expression from some drivers that the game was finished. But the game is still here. Now the question, according to **Call Sign's** Editor Alan Fisher, is for how long...

The question reared its head again while chatting to Alan over a coffee in the Dial-a-Cab reception area. He was talking about his four grandchildren and more specifically about his oldest, 19-year old Taylor. He is currently with a firm of accountants but doesn't feel that a life behind a desk might be what he wants. So he asked Alan about whether going on the Knowledge for perhaps three years was worth considering.

Naturally Alan told Taylor to think twice as an accountant wasn't a job to throw away lightly, but what shocked me was what Alan told him about the Knowledge. I asked the Ed if he minded me writing about his views and he said they were his views and not a secret.

Perhaps, unsurprisingly, they involved **Hailo**. Alan felt that as time passes and if Hailo is still around – as it seems likely to be – then the value of taxi fares will drop and continue to do so. The problem he felt was that the three entrepreneurs behind it, **Jay Bregman** and co, will make more and more money but that it won't come from the passengers; it will come from the drivers as they continue to subsidise the fares. If that continues, then the radio circuits as we know them will have to change and begin competing by undercutting fares. That, Alan claims, will lead to at least one of them closing its doors for good.

Jay Bregman has no particular loyalty to the taxi trade; he is an entrepreneur and actually entered the trade as the co-founder of the online minicab company *eCourier*. Alan pointed out that he had no problem with Jay Bregman's business, but he felt disappointed with those drivers who were making Mr Bregman and his two partners a fortune at the expense of a 350 year business.

And that, according to Alan's current thinking, means that you might just as well become a minicab driver rather than spend three years on a bike just to work at minicab rates, because when it does get busier – and according to the Bank of England we could be going in that direction this year – it will already be too late. Alan pointed out that the **Radio Taxis Group** are currently testing their own

The expression 'the game is finished' has been passed down for almost as long as there has been a game. But this time things are different and we really can ask the question:

IS THE GAME FINISHED???



Is Alan right? Tell Call Sign...

cash App, which they believe will compete with Hailo. Why? Because like Mr Bregman's baby, there will be no run-ins and 5 minutes free waiting time. The *Call Sign* Editor, with some of his famed sarcasm, then asked who would be the first to pay passengers in gratitude for them using taxis!

Alan now believes that the number of KoL students will begin to drop once prospective students realise that there is a narrowing in the money between taxi and minicab drivers and that in addition to working cheap and taking work from the radio circuits, Hailo drivers will also be taking street work because why would those looking for a taxi bother going

out to look for one when the cab will come to them for nothing, will even wait 5 minutes before putting the meter on and then add insult to injury by paying 10% for the privilege!

If you disagree with Alan, please write to the usual *Call Sign* email address. All responses will be published (so long as they aren't rude or offensive).

Write to callsignmag@aol.com and put 'Finished' in the subject line..

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign Online

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FUEL PRICES TO INCREASE



According to **Brian Madderson**, the Chairman of the **Petrol Retailers' Association**, diesel and petrol prices are expected to increase

substantially. Mr Madderson told *Call Sign*:

"Fuel prices are expected to increase as external factors have a great impact on the price of crude oil. The civil unrest in Syria and Egypt, the reduction by one third in Libya's oil exports and the demand for oil slowly returning to some Asian markets, have all had an impact on crude oil prices. The cost of Brent pushed through the critical \$110/barrel level

Are the oil companies into price fixing?

in mid-August, which equates to a 10% increase since the end of June."

The PRA's predictions come on the same day as Dial-a-Cab client, Goldman Sachs, forecast that Brent crude prices may rise to \$115 a barrel in the very near term.

Mr Madderson continued: "UK petrol prices have not yet seen the full impact of this crude oil increase due to the rapid and slightly unexpected revaluation of pound sterling from \$1.48 to \$1.56. Therefore it was concerning to read recent comments from the City that the pound is overblown and will soon come hurtling down towards the \$1.45 level.

"We calculate at current wholesale prices that this will add a further 5pence per litre at

the pump before the end of September and hit businesses and households in the pocket at a time when pundits are forecasting a continued increase in retail sales to drive growth in the economy. Should the Middle East tensions escalate further and crude oil prices react accordingly, the **Bank of England's** new inflation targets could be significantly challenged."

Somewhat controversially, Mr Madderson ended by saying: "**The sooner the EU competition investigation into allegations of oil price fixing is completed, the more certain we can be that our retail fuel prices are only being influenced by macro-economic and political factors and not anti-competitive actions of the oil companies.**"

As part of their 85th anniversary celebrations...

LTFUC and Matilda...!

Nope, this isn't a piece of exposed scandal, it's about a trip by the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children as part of their celebrations to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the taxi charity.

The **Royal Shakespeare Company** kindly invited the LTFUC to take 50 underprivileged and special needs children to see a matinee performance of **Roald Dahl's Matilda: The Musical**. The excited children were collected from the East End of London and taken to the Cambridge Theatre to see the show in a convoy of 18 balloon-decorated taxis, passing the time by waving to amazed onlookers as they passed through the crowded streets.

The show was brilliant and the children all loved it. It was a magical and memorable afternoon and also a very special one for the Fund in this special anniversary year.

The Hon President, Hon Chair and Committee would like to express their gratitude to the **Royal Shakespeare Company** for making this wonderful trip possible. They have also asked *Call Sign* to pass on the LTFUC's grateful thanks to the Management and staff at the **Cambridge Theatre** for their co-operation and they were especially grateful to cast members **Annette McLaughlin** (Mrs Wormwood) and **Steve Furst** (Mr Wormwood). They were met with loud cheers and screams when making a surprise appearance after the show to meet and greet the children.

Thanks go to **Lydia Cassidy of Lydia Cassidy Co. Ltd**, **Chloe, Ryan and Charlotte from the Corner Shop** and **Jessica Nowell of The Really Useful Theatres Group** for their input and help in making the outing happen. Also to **Tristian Arnold and the National Car Parks Ltd**, who donated 18 complimentary parking spaces for the taxis at the **Drury Lane NCP** – something that was really appreciated by the group.

The **Royal Shakespeare Company's** production of **Matilda: The Musical** has captured

the imagination of young and old alike and continues to play to packed houses at London's Cambridge Theatre. It has captured a total of 47 awards in Stratford-Upon-Avon, London and New York including 24 awards for the London production alone, including seven Laurence Olivier Awards. Over 800,000 people have seen the show in the West End since it opened in October 2011.

With many of the children never having been to the theatre before, this was an unforgettable and cherished afternoon for them. They had an amazing day and the Fund asked us to pass on their grateful thanks all the drivers and helpers who came and made this outing possible.



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LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE



With Tom Quigley (Y33)

Immigrants? We British? Never...!

There is little doubt that one of the most volatile of subjects in the current political arena is that of immigration, with arguments accusing immigration of all the woes and faults of the nation, be that a lack of jobs for the young, a lack of hospital beds for the elderly and a shortage of affordable housing for everyone else!

Immigration seems to be at the heart of these problems - or could it just be the negative way that the media use the word immigrants?

Many of us are descendants from some form of immigration; we only have to look at our surnames to get an idea of where we originate from.

During the recent riots in Tottenham, which spread to other parts of Britain, many a TV Interview or bulletin was started with prefixes describing an area as having a large West Indian / African immigrant community. Also, the bombings in London brought many a news-flash highlighting the Asian / Muslim population in some areas.

My family and I lived through the troubles of Northern Ireland and the IRA bombing campaign of the 70s and 80s. County Kilburn was often visited by the media. What highlights the difference in reporting and the stance taken by the media is when an event happens elsewhere in the world such as the collapse of the economy in Cyprus or land grab cases in Valencia. Or in places such as Dubai or Australia when interviewing British people who are basically immigrants there, the word immigrant isn't used because those communities are referred to as ex-pats.

Now in my fifties, spending the majority of my youth as an Irish immigrant along with my many friends and colleagues who are descendants of the Windrush and Asian Kenyans etc, even though we have always been legally British, if we all moved abroad we would now all become ex-pats!

On a lighter side, recently the **London Gaelic** Football team reached



Ilan Worth celebrates at the end of the Pru 100 mile bike ride

the provincial **Connacht** final, a major achievement almost akin to **Leyton Orient** qualifying for the Europa League! The London Irish press referred to the London side as ex-pats, though not all are named Pat. I could not but smile at the term.

Pru 100 bike ride:

Boris let us down....

Just to point out that not all taxi drivers were against the recent closures of London and Surrey for the entire August 4th weekend. As a keen cyclist and avid follower of the major tours and races, my wife Wendy and I went along to enjoy the Sunday spectacle and to support fellow **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Ian Worth (A74)** who completed the 100 mile journey, despite the misfortune of two early punctures.

Standing cheering and applauding for as many cyclists as I could for almost three hours at the 500 metre marker, it was a pleasure to see Ian come through Admiralty Arch and onto the last leg. A quick chat, hugs and congratulations and off he rode to enjoy his own personal triumph in crossing the finish line.

Ian was suitably attired with the full kit, but it was somewhat misguided of our Mayor Boris - the self-elected cycle champion - that he was not. He rode wearing a number 1 on his helmet - your own thoughts on that - but the Mayor wasn't wearing any reflective clothing just a light blue top and baggy shorts. The shorts I didn't mind as Boris in Lycra would have been too much!

I know it was sunny, but he should have had some lights on his bike to promote the lack of safety issues of cycling without them.

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

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For many transport companies, reducing carbon emissions is challenging. As one of the largest taxi providers in London, Dial-a-Cab recognises that its fleet of cabs has an impact on the environment. In 2008, the Society decided to take action by offsetting all of its carbon emissions, including, of course, taxi journeys booked by our customers. But why did Dial-a-Cab take that step? *Call Sign* has taken a look at the benefits of offsetting for DaC and its customers.

What is carbon offsetting?

Offsetting is the process by which people and businesses can balance out their carbon impact by buying carbon credits. These credits fund projects which reduce or remove emissions in developing countries. Put simply, carbon offsetting balances out CO₂ emitted in one place with the equivalent emission reductions in another place.

A carbon credit is equal to one tonne of carbon dioxide and can be purchased to balance out the impact of carbon emissions released into the atmosphere. To know how many carbon credits to buy, DaC has to measure how much carbon the company emits by calculating its carbon footprint. Once they know what the annual carbon footprint is, Dial-a-Cab then makes a decision about where to offset its emissions, such as the country where the project is located and the type of technology.

By offsetting all carbon emissions since 2008, the Society has saved over 27,300 tonnes of carbon. That's the equivalent to 360,000 taxi journeys from London to Manchester!

So why is it important?

Carbon offset projects not only reduce carbon emissions, but also have other benefits for communities wherever they are located, such as improved living conditions, access to education or improved infrastructure to name just a few.

DaC has been working with the leading carbon management consultancy, **Carbon Clear**, since 2011 to calculate and offset its carbon footprint.

The Carbon Clear account manager for Dial-a-Cab, **Cameron Wilson**, explained to *Call Sign*:

"Dial-a-Cab has offset its carbon footprint with three different projects located in Turkey, India and China in the past few years and all the projects have had additional social and economic benefits, as well as reducing carbon emissions. Without the carbon finance generated from buying these credits, the projects would not have been implemented, resulting in more carbon emissions being emitted into the atmosphere."

DaC and carbon neutral taxi journeys



Delhi's Metro System & (inset) China's Diaobingshan wind farm are both helped by DaC offsetting carbon

Dial-a-Cab has bought offsets from the following projects:

* **The Diaobingshan Wind Farm** project in China contributes clean renewable electricity to the regional grid, whilst also improving infrastructure such as roads and access to health care and providing jobs in the local area.

* **The Keban Hydro** in Turkey, another renewable electricity project, contributes to Turkey's low carbon economy as well as facilitating jobs and building a sustainable trout fishery on the banks of the project reservoir.

* **The Delhi Metro** project lowers energy consumption and carbon emissions from its trains through regenerative braking technology, improving city air quality and making travel quicker, safer and more comfortable for residents.

Carbon offsetting - important for your business

Cameron Wilson added: "Offsetting carbon emissions is not just an environmental decision for companies. It also adds value to the business,

helping to retain clients, drive sales and build relationships. Dial-a-Cab works with many professional service companies that are concerned about their carbon impact. These companies often prefer to work with businesses that have strong environmental credentials and that take managing their emissions seriously. By demonstrating the company's environmental commitment through measuring and offsetting its emissions, DaC is in a great position to retain their current client base, is well placed to win new business and to remain competitive."

There are commercial reasons for Dial-a-Cab to offset emissions, but it's important to also remember that these offsets reduce carbon emissions and improve the lives of communities where the projects are located. If your passenger is interested in London's amazing black taxis and more specifically in Dial-a-Cab, perhaps you could inform them of the work that DaC does in offsetting its carbon...

For more on carbon offsetting, visit Carbon Clear's website at www.carbon-clear.com.

TAXI DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Annual dinner and dance

There are still a few tickets available for the Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Funds

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

Another true story from Geoff Levene

MY DOG IS DEAD!



Look at the picture that adorns the side of this piece. Do you, like the good lady wife, detect an enigmatic *Mona Lisa*-like smile playing around my lips - or am I a miserable old curmudgeon?

The fact is that I'll happily chat to passengers and in the *Grill* I am more than prepared to give or receive the pee taking. But I'm the first to admit that I don't drive around with a huge grin on my face and I don't really

trust those who do - I think they're either crazy or have something to hide. You know the type; when you ask how they are they reply with the annoying phrase of "I'm good." Good at what?

But down the years, passengers and drivers - complete strangers all - have had the effrontery to make remarks about the look on my face. Would I say to them that they were looking fat or that their perfume was so strong that I was having trouble breathing! Perhaps I could utter: "Do you know there's lipstick all over your teeth?" Of course I wouldn't... ok, I have been tempted, but at the time they said them, I would just meekly reply that I was ok thank you.

Until one day when a woman said that I didn't look very happy and I suddenly thought to myself that she didn't really care whether I was happy or not, she just wanted me to look like the legendary Cheshire cat. So I immediately replied: "Well my dog died this morning..."

She couldn't have been more distraught if I'd told her my entire family had been wiped out by Lassa Fever.

"Will you get another," she asked? With my saddest voice I said that I didn't know and that it was a bit soon.

And then there was the time I was outside a **Dial-a-Cab** account address waiting for my passenger. Another DaC driver drew up and got out to chat. He was a man with all the style and charisma of a young **Arthur Mullard**.

"Wasser matter mate, lousy set-down?"

"No, but my dog died this morning."

He considered momentarily and then asked what breed it was? I wondered whether he knew any more about dogs than I did, so I decided to chance it.

"It was a *lapsang souchong*," I said, knowing that was of course a Chinese tea.

"Oh yeah," replied the driver, "they're nice. Sorry to hear it."

Dartford Crossing charges up again

The Dartford Crossing, joining Kent to Essex, was opened as a tunnel in 1963 and since then has been expanded several times to cope with increased traffic - charges for crossing expanding along with it.

As of October 2014, the toll barriers where the fees are paid will be disbanded and crossings will have to be paid via phone, text, online or by purchasing vouchers from local shops. Non-payment will entail a £70 fine.

Although it will still be free between the hours of 10pm and 6am, the rest of the time will increase from £2 to £2.50 each way.

I should, at this point, mention that I've never owned a dog. I've always been a bit nervous of them. The only one I've had much to do with belonged to an account customer and I would either take it to, or bring it back from the grooming parlour. It was a nice dog. In fact a lot nicer than its owner - but that's another story.

Then I was on the point of **Waitrose** in Finchley Road a few years back and a scrawny little woman approached with a trolley full of bags and asked if I took Taxicards? I said I did.

"Marvellous," she said, "you've saved my life!" I began transferring bags to the cab when she said it:

"Cheer up! You look like you've lost a shilling and found sixpence." I wasn't going to take it. I asked her what she had said and she repeated it word for word.

"What exactly has the look on my face to do with you?"

"Right," she yelled, "get those bags out!"

And I did! As she pushed the trolley away from the rank she let rip with a volley of abuse. The other drivers looked shocked. Even a platoon of troopers marching by went red with embarrassment!

And finally there was the camp young Aussie that I dropped at Kings Cross. He paid me, I thanked him and gave him the change. He looked at me, hissed the word 'smile' in my direction and minced off. I shouted after him to come back.

"Do you realise my dog died this morning?"

"I'm sorry, I didn't know."

"Well you shouldn't utter such hurtful mutterings."

And before he went, all sort of **Larry Grayson**, he said: "Well I hope he goes to doggy heaven."

That certainly put a smile on my face, but there was no one left to take a photo...

Geoff Levene (W32)



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COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT



Hello Ladies & Gents

By now the schools are ready to start a new term, the summer holiday period is coming to an end and work should begin to pick up in the normal way.

We know and expect that traffic conditions never get any easier and that it is not always easy to judge the amount of run-in showing

on the meter on arrival at a client's address, but it is so important to keep an eye on those amounts and to remember that the maximum run-in is no more than £4.20 at booked time or on arrival for an ASAP trip.

Also, forgetting to PoB when you start the trip can cause so many problems. If you have less than the allowed amount or it needs to be adjusted, please do not add the difference on at the end of the journey.

I have previously mentioned that there are quite a number of journeys that need to be re-validated before they are invoiced and a high proportion of these cause delays in invoicing and more importantly, your payment.

Again I ask you to notify the Control Centre of any adjustments to the fares, of any problems that may impact on the cleared meter fare during or at the end of the journey. They will, in turn, add notes to the trip loggers and it will then be a straightforward process with no unnecessary delays.

Credit Card trips are now an important addition of our earnings and to improve cov-

erage and make it easier for you, as soon as the DaC IT department can make the necessary changes to the system, any cancelled trips will be treated the same as a normal account journey and you will gain your number one queue position back as well as the scrub amount on the meter.

With new technology, you can now pay for a fare of up to £20 with a Contactless card via the PED on the new terminal. We have produced a clear Contactless sign which you will be asked to display on your front window screen (replacing the yellow CCC sticker).

This is not a gimmick; it is there to generate extra income for you. In this current climate, we must do everything possible to generate additional income, so if you have the new system please either pop in to Roman Way or come to our East Road office and pick one of the stickers up.

Please drive carefully and be very lucky!

**Allan Evans
DaC Compliance Officer**

Call Sign's Bob Woodford on the progress of...

LONDON BLACK CAB SIGHTSEEING TOURS



In July 2009 'London Black Cab Sightseeing Tours' were a new kid on the block as a London visitor attraction - in what is a very competitive market!

We decided not to be 'understated cool' - instead, set out to make a splash and hired the ground floor exhibition space at central London's 'Visit Britain Tourist Information Office' on Regent Street for a week in the heart of London's West End. The public would have been surprised to find a taxi with its hire sign glowing inside the building! Well it was *half a taxi* anyway or *Arfur* as he's been nicknamed - the iconic London Black Cab sliced down its centre. An unsliced one would never have fit through the main door! *Arfur* lives at the *London Ambulance Museum* in Ilford - surely the best place for a sliced taxi? He gets his chance of the limelight at events such as ours.

We had pre-invited other London tourist industry dudes to come and check us out - and many did, including *Encore Tickets* (thanks guys). We dished out our new shiny leaflets to all and sundry - some to their obvious looking bemusement. We went out in turns canvassing the very top London hotels in Mayfair and St. James's, who in the main were very pleased to see us (once they found out about our commission rates)! We bagged a vital 10-minute slot on the Robert Elms Show on **Radio London** - the popular broadcaster could not do enough to promote us (glad to hear you back on the air mate).

We were up and away!

The Sofitel Hotel in Waterloo Place St James's can proudly boast of being our first tour supplier (many thanks Concierge Oliver). More Tours started coming in and our team of qualified *London Taxi Guides* with their new shiny green and gold badges, certified by the *City of London University*, part-funded by the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers*, began escorting punters around on panoramic sweeps of London.

We conducted continued running commentaries throughout the Tours (well, you just try to shut us up) through crisp, clear intercom systems in our gleaming polished chariots that can comfortably sit up to 5 people (or 3 if you include a passenger in a wheelchair), not only stopping for popular photographs with famous London landmarks as a backdrop - but also negotiating tiny medieval streets that the tourist buses just cannot go - London comprises a much larger canvas than the well-known neighbourhoods of Westminster.

A great little product ideally suited for folks looking to get close and personal with our London - looking to enjoy a presentation that is not only interesting and factual, but fun and entertaining too! We not only take in all of the obvious, but include secret haunts that the rush of modern London has yet to engulf!

And guess what? Our Tours did not seem at all expensive for the happy campers that rolled up. In fact five sharing pay the same price as the bus tours, with one huge difference - their questions do not get lost on a bus loaded with 50-plus people!

We started to develop **Theme Tours** - *Harry Potter* London Film Location Tours is still the most popular. Our **Royal London** Tours went down a hoot while *Wills* and *Kate* were getting married or when *Her Majesty* was celebrating her Golden Jubilee. Bespoke requests are also handled with care, whether you are a *James Bond* movie buff, a *Jack the Ripper* rascal or a devout *Downton Abbey* addict. One of our Guides is currently writing a *Beatles in London* Tour - yeah, yeah, yeah!

Day trips outside London are accommodated too - **Windsor, Bath, the Cotswolds, Stonehenge** and **Oxford** are all in reaching distance from a central London bolthole, with ample time to get you back for Let it Be, Jersey Boys, Billy Elliot or whatever else takes your fancy on a night out in London - unless of course you would like your London at Night Tour of the Capital - we have a rather good **London by Night** Tour as well.

Since our radio debut, we have featured on Belgian, Dutch and American TV - have been interviewed by the travel guide website **Europe Travel** and our customers have found us from as near as Mayfair and as far as Melbourne, Australia.

During our first (nearly) 4 years, we have gone in for a whole new name: **Black Cab Heritage Tours**. We have also taken on a USA-based partner with direct sales offices in Georgia and Florida (941-227-6038). But now, just ahead of our 4th birthday, we are going Social Media - something us oldies have taken time to adapt to! With just a *Facebook* presence to our name so far, that is all about to change. It's all well and good being *old school* but there is a train running and we need to get on it! So watch out for our Blogs and Tweets!

In the meantime, you can check us out on www.blackcabheritagetours.co.uk or call Sandie right now on 01707 696034 (or 07766 332938) to book one of our Guides. Go on - treat yourself or maybe someone special - is it their Birthday too?

**Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online**

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 looks back to August 1980 and a poignant piece from Alf Townsend regarding the death of former ODRTS dispatcher, Johnny Thwaites...

Goodbye Johnny

At the age of 68 and after enjoying only two years of his retirement, **Johnny Thwaites**, the best-known voice on the **Lords** radio circuit, passed away on Tuesday 9th August 1980. For over twenty years, *Thwaitsey* had been the night dispatcher on **Lords** and a generation of radio men will remember and respect him for his unquestioned integrity and his raw cockney humour. The Cab Trade has a habit of throwing up characters and Thwaitsey was certainly a character.

Many's the time his familiar and comforting voice has brought a smile to our cold, miserable faces in the early hours of a black winter's morning with a fruity oath or another gem from his endless collection of long-forgotten Arsenal players.

"Yuss boy," he'd say, "you pick up 'a name of Copping – used to play for the Ass-noo before the war. Remember him? Bit of a hard nut was our Wilf; gor blimey, he'd eat your present day pansies for breakfast! Fed 'im on raw meat, they say!"

You never forgot a passenger's name when Thwaitsey gave it to you. If it wasn't an ex-Arsenal player, then it was an old Music Hall star – Johnny knew them all. Mind you, he'd sometimes deliberately mix up everything for the sake of a story to tell:

"Yuss" he'd go, "we took our birds up into the 'Gods' at the old Collin's Music Hall to have a bit of slap and tickle for a penn'orth of sweets and five Woodbines and listen to Marie Lloyd and Vesta Tilley and all the others. Great names they were. Bit of a night out - especially if you got your oats after the pie and mash!"

Sometimes you would hear him tearing a strip off one of the drivers for giving a vague position. "Who's that messing Johnny abaft," he'd shout, "that's a bit of a road that Old Kent Road. Where shall I put you on the map, down by the bleedin' Hop Fields?" Then he would chuckle and say, "Now don't lark Johnny 'abaht!"



To the casual unknowing listener, this continuous stream of quick-fire repartee, delivered in a low, rasping voice, conjured up a picture in the mind of a rather large, healthy middle-aged gent. What a shock they would have got if they had ever met Thwaitsey. Pale and drawn from the pain of a dodgy ticker, tipping the scales at around the featherweight minimum and about as high as six penn'orth of coppers, what he lacked in stature he made up for with guts and the will to live. Thwaitsey was a fighter and he lived his life the way he wanted to. I remember what he told me the last time I picked him up...

"Look boy," he said, "my card's marked, what's the bleedin' good me listening to the quack and packing up smoking and drinking and having a bet? I'll still die anyway - only that way I'll die miserable."

We are all going to miss you, John, most of all we drivers. Better dispatchers may come along, but there will never be another Thwaitsey. Knowing the little man as I did, I feel certain that Johnny will be as chirpy and abrasive in the next world as he was in this one. And woe betide the man in charge of the Pearly Gates if Thwaitsey can't get his copy of *The Sporting Life* or *The Brewers Weekly*. And he will put some verbal about if he can't find a betting shop or a boozer!

Our sincere condolences go out to his wife and family...

Alf Townsend

Goodbye CCC...Hello Contactless



As part of the advertising campaign for our Dial-a-Cab App, we are changing the front window sticker from the yellow CCC one to a new sticker representing the Contactless sign.

This should help us to target customers who are in a rush, from needing to look for an ATM along the route for an under £20 fare, when they perhaps don't have the cash to hand. They can then make use of the more viable option and that is DaC's **Contactless** facility.

The stickers can be obtained from Roman Way or Dial-a-Cab House Driver's Reception. The Contactless facility only applies to the new terminals...

Garry White, DaC Board Member

Chinese TX4s go to... China!



Not that long ago, the mention of a London taxi suggested exactly what it said on the tin – the traditional "black cab" that the world knew as a London taxi. But time and money has changed that!

When **Manganese Bronze** called in the administrators last year and its TX4 manufacturing base at Holyfield Road in Coventry closed with most of the staff being laid off, it seemed to be the end of the road. But then **Zhejiang Geely** - the company that MB's trading arm, LTI, had an agreement with in **Shanghai**, China - stepped in and bought the company. Now they seem to be selling the cab all over the show in addition to reopening Holyfield Road again.

Geely's latest success is to sell 500 TX4s to the ancient Chinese capital of Nanjing. The story is that the Mayor of

Nanjing, Ji Jianye, first saw the TX4 when visiting London to watch the Olympics and fell in love with them. So much so that he ordered 500 of them! And why was he at the London Olympics? It was because Nanjing, the second-largest commercial centre in the East China region after Shanghai, will be home to the Youth Olympic Games of August 2014.

The taxis arrived in Nanjing on July 31 and **Call Sign** believes that they will be converted to run on a natural gas fuel system. The deal is worth some 80 million yuan (£8.4 million).

According to **Shanghai London Taxi Company GM, James Lin**: "In the past we just focused on the UK market, but after the Geely takeover we looked at the Chinese and global markets."

Geely often flies in engineers from the Coventry facility to oversee large orders in order to protect the essence of the brand. TX4s are now also being manufactured at Coventry again...

And just behind DaC's sixtieth...

It's Radio

Taxis!

2013 represents Dial-a-Cab's sixtieth year in the taxi business, however on 14 December 1953 and just a few weeks after ODRTS opened on 12 November 1953, the fledgling Radio Taxis (Southern) Limited – forever known as Mountview – announced their arrival in the radio taxi business by registering as a company. Although we are competitors in business, there has always been a friendship between DaC and Radio Taxis. So in DaC's mag, this is the Radio Taxis story...!

It begins by going back to the time when ODRTS Founder-Chairman Bonnie Martyn and his opposite number from Radio Taxis (Southern) Ltd, Joe Stern, were just ordinary London taxi drivers without a single thought of running their own radio circuits.

Radio manufacturing rivals, Marconi and Pye, had run early experiments with two-way radio in vehicles. Marconi was first into the taxi business and used the services of long-time Stratford cabbie Alf Smith in 1948, putting a basic receiving / sending radio set into his cab. The signals were awful, but the experiment of being able to pass "dummy" jobs to Alf was deemed a success.

Pye came back with a bang in 1950 when they took the fleet owner of York Way Motors, Lew Levy and his son Wally to New York to see how cabs there had adapted to radio. They were impressed and on returning to London put the wheels into motion that would see the capital's first radio circuit - York Way Radio Cabs – hitting the streets. But it wasn't for owner-drivers...

Soon after, two more radio circuits were formed; Metropolitan Radio Taxis - which came and then went almost as quickly - while the second circuit, Radio Owner Drivers Association (RODA), seemed to be an answer to the prayers of owner drivers. But RODA hit financial trouble and closed as Pye were about to take their equipment back from the office at Townsend Yard, Highgate.

After RODA closed, there were still some drivers that wanted to continue with radio, but not necessarily with the fledgling ODRTS who were by now in business under Bonnie Martyn.

So Joe Stern and several others called a meeting at the 'Rifle Range' in Harewood Avenue behind Marylebone Station. It was decided to set up an opposing circuit to ODRTS and to call it Radio Taxis (Southern) Ltd.

Joe Stern was elected "leader" and his first job was to talk Pye out of taking their equipment back from RODA's Townsend Yard premises. He successfully managed to persuade the Cambridge group to allow RT to keep it for a six month trial. Rumour at the time had it that Bonnie Martyn had asked Pye not to let Joe have the equipment. Many years later, Bonnie admitted to *Call Sign* that the rumour was true!

"It was nothing personal," said Bonnie, "just business!"

Joe Stern, who by then had become Life President at Radio Taxis, told me in 1987 how he met a sailor at Liverpool Street who was trying to sell a radio transmitter cheaply! No one asked where it had come from and demand was low, with most cabbies just asking if he had any fags or booze! But Joe bought the transmitter from the sailor, tied it to the cab's roof rack and took it to Townsend Yard.

Soon after and just weeks after ODRTS, Radio Taxis (Southern) were registered as a company on 14 December 1953 and Joe Stern became their first Chairman with a fleet of around 50 taxis.

The Mountview name came from the telephone number that RODA had originally used and which RT continued using - Mountview 3232. The name Mountview stuck just as the Lords number stuck with DaC. They soon moved and leased a basement flat at Highpoint in North



Joe Stern (with moustache) in the old Mountview call centre in 1987

Hill, Highgate with an aerial that reached a height of 100 feet.

Radio Taxis (London) Founder-Chairman, Joe Stern, told me in 1987 during an interview with him for *Taxi Globe*, that he wasn't too keen on Bonnie Martyn...

"He showed off too much for my liking," said Joe, "but he certainly knew how to run a radio circuit!"

In January 1998, DaC's Founder-Chairman Bonnie Martyn admitted to *Call Sign* that Mountview's first Chairman Joe Stern and he were never close.

"I always found him to be bit abrasive, not caring too much if he upset someone, so we never really hit it off," said Bonnie, "but I still admired the work he did for Mountview. The fact that they are here today is testament to the foundations that Joe and his early Board laid down."

So a very happy 60th birthday to the Radio Taxis Group. DaC Chairman DaC Chairman, Brian Rice, told *Call Sign*: "I send my congratulations to RTG on the excellent achievement of reaching sixty. We may be in competition, but we are still friends and that is important when there are so many outsiders trying to get in."

Alan Fisher

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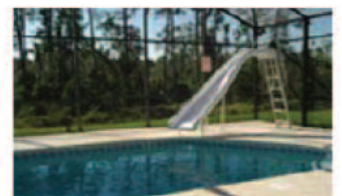
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DaC driver Sean Farrell (B39) looks at trade history from a different angle

The Brethren of the Whip

The wild, wild West...End (part two)



At one time, Hollywood was trans-fixed with the Western – cowboys, injuns and gun fights! But they missed out on the opportunity of the tales of cabmen in London and their

own exploits with six-shooters...

In last month's **Call Sign** I related the cases of the suicide in 1886 of the **Earl of Shaftesbury** when he shot himself in **Samuel Wakelind's** cab in Regent Street, and the £2 fine levied against cab driver **William Wilson** when he accidentally fired a gun he had been asked to deliver by **Lord Mandeville** with the bullet narrowly missing another cabbie, **Henry Spinks!**

Shortly after these two episodes, an actress of somewhat limited renown shot herself through the head whilst riding in a cab, then just two months after that, a passenger in a cab put a gun to his heart, but the bullet glanced off his ribs and he survived. In a separate incident, a cab driver walked into Vine St police station saying that he had been shot in the hand whilst trying to stop a dispute between a couple. The police did not believe his story.

Of a more serious nature was the fare **Thomas Shovelin** picked up in February 1889. As he drove down Pall Mall, Shovelin heard the flap between him and the passenger compartment open. He bent his head down only to come up against the barrel of a gun.

"Would you mind me having a shot at you," asked the passenger? Shovelin, for somewhat selfish reasons answered in the negative! He watched as the passenger put the gun down and the cabbie was told to drive on. After failing to get the attention of a policeman, the passenger was refused entry at several hotels on the basis that he was slightly drunk, had no luggage and no money for a deposit. Shovelin could have left his passenger at any time, but he needed to be paid as his Master would not employ him again if he came back with no money. The passenger was still without a room and Shovelin without his money, when at the **Union Hotel** in **Charles Street** (now Charles II Street) the passenger stood at the top of a set of stairs and threatened to put four shots into anyone who came near him. Shovelin by this time was pleading to be paid off and fortunately for him, a stranger at the hotel took pity on him and gave him two shillings (10p).

Eventually a policeman arrived and the passenger meekly gave up his gun, but on the way to the police station he put up a violent struggle, injuring one of the arresting PCs. The passenger was fined £15 for his assaults and threats with a gun, but three weeks later he was at it again. This time the cab driver, **Henry**

Andrews, saw the passenger with the gun when he looked down inside the cab. But on this occasion the passenger threatened to kill himself. Both Andrews and the passenger entered **The Harp** in **Jermyn Street** and when the gun was placed on the counter, Andrews grabbed hold of it. At his subsequent court appearance, the passenger did not escape with a fine but was locked up for a month.

These two occurrences sandwiched a much more serious crime in **Oxford Street**. **Cabbie Joseph Carter** had just picked up two men by **Rathbone Place** when within seconds one of his windows was smashed. At that moment, the door of the cab flung open and one man jumped out. He was followed by the second man who pulled a gun out and fired two shots into the air before levelling his aim and firing two more shots. One hit the first man in the thigh; the second hit a man - apparently an

innocent bystander - in the chest. The gunman, an American, then ran off into the **Horseshoe Hotel** in **Tottenham Court Road**, where he was soon arrested. The American informed the police that a group of men had tried to rob him and that he was acting in self-defence. The police informed the magistrate that the man shot in the chest was part of the same gang and was known as **Brummagen Bill**, an ex-convict with a very violent past. **Brummagen Bill** informed the doctors that he was so drunk he could not remember being shot. His condition, however, worsened and he later died from his wounds. The American was now facing a murder charge, but at his trial the jury accepted that he had acted in self-defence and he walked from the court a free man...

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

After DaC drivers asked for it...

Power Pills resized!

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

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

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

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

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

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

Steve Vale



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"It is at the edge of a petal that love waits"- William Carlos Williams

To drivers, it's just a new terminal, but it is substantially more complicated to Dial-a-Cab itself. DaC's new Mobile Data Terminal project relies on a 3G connection via a private network through O2. In order to make this network and **Dial-a-Cab's** core infrastructure work together securely and reliably, the Society needed to implement a robust **firewall** solution and recently announced the company selected to provide that as **Fortinet**, the world leaders in high-performance network security.

They will now help to secure DaC's new and advanced taxi booking and payment system, which includes a smartphone application enabling customers to book taxis and to make secure payments from any location.

Dial-a-Cab has been providing taxis since 1953 and with a fleet of over 2000, has been setting the standard for high tech systems and operations since 1989, when the Society became the first taxi organisation in Europe to install a completely computerised booking and dispatch system, with an MDT in every taxi.

When DaC decided to implement a major infrastructure upgrade of the dispatching system to move to the 3G mobile network (we previously used radio sites and leased lines), we also needed to upgrade our security system as the previous firewalls and *Websense* solutions were proving inadequate, difficult to manage and also expensive.

So we asked DaC's Senior Network Architect and regular *Call Sign* contributor, **Jon Winterburn**, to explain why and exactly what it was that Fortinet were going to provide...

"Confidentiality, integrity and availability are of prime importance. We need to ensure our network system has 24/7/365 availability

DaC choose Fortinet firewall solution



many security functionalities into a single device, such as Active Directory integrated Web filtering and SSL VPN, as well as comprehensive, user-friendly log analysis. We found the set-up of Fortinet firewall to be reliable and easy to use and configure, while log analysis was fantastic, making diagnosis much easier.

"Fortinet was an excellent choice to address the complexity of the system and the need for superior levels of security, with clear and concise user interface and real-time logging."

Fortinet is a worldwide provider of network security appliances and a market leader in unified threat management. Their products provide broad, integrated and high-performance protection against dynamic security threats while simplifying the IT security infrastructure. Fortinet's customers include enterprises, service providers and government entities worldwide, including the majority of the 2012 Fortune Global 100, which consists of an annual ranking of the world's largest corporations.

ty but without compromising our internal systems and data. Moving to the 3G network gives us a greater assurance of availability, plus scalability and future-proofing.

"However, our legacy Virtual Private Network was not secure enough and diagnosis was proving difficult. The security solution we had was reaching its end-of-life and becoming increasingly costly and difficult to manage. We needed security that could match the sophistication of our system while delivering high levels of diagnosis and log analysis.

"Guardian Internet Support Services (UK) Limited recommended Fortinet as the best security solution that could provide us with

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Travel & Tourism

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WINNER 2010

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From the moment Call Sign met Paul Corr (N83) we knew he was not the sort of person to mess with - but a good buddy to have around in a sticky situation! As a former Royal Marine Commando, Paul's demeanour projected soldierly bearing and personal confidence (see cover pic)...

"Even at a young age I knew exactly what I wanted to be, so at sixteen years old and with my parent's consent, I left school on the Friday and enrolled at State House, Holborn on the following Monday morning. I recall it was 16th July 1979. But the history of the Royal Marines goes back to Tuesday 28th October 1664, when the Unit was known as the infantry arm of the Royal Navy and it has seen action in many campaigns over the centuries since then.

I joined the Junior Marine Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, Devon and embarked on the gruelling 38 week training programme. To give you an idea, for regular Army recruits it's just six weeks basic training, but I had aspirations to make the grade. Indeed, of the fifty two candidates that started out, just eighteen of us reached the required standards, finally being awarded our coveted **Green Beret**. So my utter determination paid off! A bit like *The Knowledge* I guess...!

I joined **42 Commando** (pronounced four-two) and my first deployment was stopping illegal immigrants making their way from China into Hong Kong.

I have been all over the world in a variety of deployments, such as the USA and right throughout Europe/ I did several months on a Royal Navy Protection Vessel and also had a tour of **Northern Ireland** to mention a few 'jobs' - although some things must still remain confidential due to covert activities, as I'm sure *Call Sign* readers will understand, even through the passage of time.

Then there was the **Falklands** war. We went out there and back on the **S.S.Canberra**, which had been a cruise ship originally that was requisitioned by the M.O.D. as a troop ship while she was still cruising in the Med! She took us and our **Parachute Regiment** colleagues to **San Carlos Water** in early May 1982. We were in a support role to the Paras and saw action at **Goose Green** amongst other places."

At that moment, Paul paused briefly as *Call Sign* was shown graphic photographs from Paul's personal album of dead Argentinian soldiers and various battle scenes from the Royal Marine's involvement in the

Call Sign looks at past and present DaC drivers who fought for their country. Last month saw Army sergeant Jack Russell; this one sees Royal Marine Paul Corr (N83)...

DAC WAR HEROES

From Green Beret to Green Badge...



Paul receives his coveted Green Beret from Lt Gen Sir John Richards



Paul (circled) arrives at the Falklands in 1982 after the Argentine invasion

conflict. They were shown with respect and not a hint of any gloating.

Paul has three service medals; The General Service Campaign Medal for Northern Ireland, the United Nations Medal and the Falklands (South Atlantic) Medal.

"I still keep in touch with men from

my unit from all those years ago and they are my best mates to this day as we have so many shared memories from our time on active service together..."

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MMX111

Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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

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Although driving a cab these days is frustrating, especially negotiating London's ever-increasing roadworks, occasional tetchy passengers, the numerous cyclists, pedicabs and of course our own financial needs, it is sometimes good to just take time out and maybe listen to your passenger - that's if they want to chat - because it can occasionally be so interesting.

For example, some time ago I picked up a passenger and while taking him to his destination, we began chatting. The conversation was mainly about music and the fact that the fella used to be in a marching band. I mentioned about the two concerts I had organised at St Johns Smith Square in an effort to raise revenue for the *London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children*. I also mentioned that this year the charity celebrates 85 years of helping children with special needs. I must say he was extremely interested in the efforts of the taxi drivers who support the outings.

Although it wasn't a particularly long journey, we seemed to cover an awful lot of ground starting with his early life as a member of a marching band in the north of England. Consequently, when we reached his destination, we continued chatting and if anybody asks... yes, I did stop the meter!

He told me he learnt the cornet whilst at junior school but didn't play again until in his teens.

He became a member of a Methodist Scout group and that at every church parade a few of the scouts and guides would lead the parade playing drums and other percussion instruments. In the mid-1980s, the band incorporated bell lyres (a sort of upright glockenspiel). Following that success, they added brass instruments. The group had very little money as it was in a very deprived part of Oldham. Fundraising was hard work but necessary for every new instrument that they wanted to buy. They spent hours washing cars at the local car park and collecting old newspapers for recycling etc.

As the band grew, they started playing in carnivals and competitions in the *British Youth Band Association League*. Every year they competed and finally ended up at the Wembley national finals.

As time 'marched' on, many players left but the band still remained a remarkable part of their lives. Almost 30 years later, some of the band members are still best friends. We exchanged details and in a letter I received from the passenger I now know as Keith, he

BLOWING HIS OWN TRUMPET?

Ask Mike Son...!



wrote:

"As a band, we had to work for everything that we achieved. Donations were rare but welcome. When I heard you talking about the orchestra that you were associated with whilst a passenger in your taxi and the fact you are organising a major event at St Paul's Cathedral, it reminded me of my old trumpet which sits lonely in a dark corner of a cupboard. So when you mentioned that you were searching for instruments, I resolved to send it to you. I do hope that someone can enjoy it as much as I did. It was well travelled and had such a lovely tone. I recall playing Harry Nilsson's 'Without You' as a solo at the finals at the NEC in Birmingham.

"I wish you all the best with your event. I will try to come to your concert in October and let you know if I hear of any more instruments!"

So not being aware of the letter, I came home from the shops one

Saturday and waiting for me was a large parcel. I wasn't expecting any deliveries and became a bit suspicious, so naturally I asked my wife, Maxine, to unwrap it just in case it began ticking - just kidding... she shook it first!

Anyway after opening it, we saw a case and inside was this beautiful silver trumpet accompanied by the letter. I was speechless to think that this passenger had bothered to send something that had been so precious to him for such a very long time.

I have now had the trumpet refurbished and will give it to perhaps to a youth orchestra or an individual who will enjoy playing an instrument that has given so much pleasure to both the player and those that listen.

So why have I written this article? It doesn't necessarily relate to **Dial-a-Cab** or the cab industry, but it was just a very nice thing to have happened in our usually frustrating day.

If anyone would like to attend the Ranks of Angels thanksgiving service for the LTFUC at St Paul's Cathedral on Thursday 10th October 2013, then you can. Tickets are free. Just go to:

<https://lufuc.eventbrite.co.uk> where you can download and print off the tickets.

The Fund is also hosting a Gala Dinner at the Guildhall in the City celebrating 85 years on 24th October. To apply for tickets, go to <https://lufuc-galadinner.eventbrite.co.uk>.

Mike Son

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IT'S A CABBIES LIFE!

Stephen Berndes (R14)

Horror trip...

If you push a cab around long enough there will be at least one scary incident that indelibly marks your driving experience thereafter. Mine was an innocuous moment many years ago that turned nasty.

It was a sunny afternoon and I was caught in heavy traffic on Euston Road outside the British Library. A guy sprinted up and got into the offside of the cab. He looked a dodgy geezer from the outset.

"They're after me, get me out of here quick," he shrilled.

I looked around and saw two large figures in parkers, hoods up and running towards us. I engaged the central locking system, leaving my window just ajar.

The guys started yanking at the door whilst my passenger was pleading with me to drive, but I was boxed in. One of the two guys shouted out that if I didn't open the door, then he would kick it in!

Having recently purchased a new cab with an obvious wrong 'un inside, I negotiated with the tykes and told them to walk a hundred yards up the road and that I would disengage the locks when there. They agreed.

As my head was turned trying to encourage the customer to get out, the two 'lumps' ran back and opened the door. One was stabbing my passenger with a pair of scissors while the other sprayed ammonia into his face from a lemon squeezer. Like a cornered rat, the passenger dived through an opening and vaulted over the metal central reservation fence, followed closely by the big guys.

The stench of ammonia was overpowering, so I hit **Doug Sherry's** Kings Cross car wash for a clean-up. Questions were raised by the smell, so I relayed what happened and the suggestions were to report it to the police.

Arriving at Penton police station, a family of people were explaining to the sergeant on duty what they had witnessed on Euston Road. I quick-

ly piped in that I was the taxi driver involved.

The sergeant took a statement and advised me that I should take a few days off because of potential delayed shock. I laughed, saying that I was self-employed and sure enough I was back at work the next day.

A few weeks later, a chief inspector contacted me and said they were conducting a surveillance operation. All were known criminals and apparently my passenger had sold the guys bad drugs. It was now get even time and the police said they would rather ignore what took place in my taxi and get them on more serious charges. Such is life...

Cappuccino month?

Friday 19th July saw me playing the dutiful son when taking my father to **Moorfields eye hospital** for his monthly check-up. My 2 years 7 months son **Conrad** was in tow.

Conrad has the concentration of a gadfly, so I decided to hit **Pret a Manger** in City Road, clutching my badge for the generous offer of a free coffee. However, the assistant seemed ignorant of the promotion so I helpfully suggested that he should refer to the manager. This again was met with incredulity. Nevertheless with persistence they relented and forthwith a cappuccino and one of those foamy choc concoctions was extended as a goodwill gesture. I paid for a packet of hand-made sea salt cheese crisps to show goodwill.

Noshing my way through the crisps (strictly rationed to Conrad for obvious health reasons, you understand!), it suddenly dawned on me that the promotion was for the month of August! I sat uncomfortably, realising that I had blagged a freebie.

Fair play to Pret a Manger who are prepared to give the drippings of their noses away, whereas **Starbucks** keep their drippings for a rainy day.

Bless them...

Stephen Berndes
Call Sign Online



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

Kupkake's Korner



Prejudice at Eurostar???

The cab in front was red,
mine's metallic grey.

Behind us was a livery...
and I heard some punters say.

"They told us to get a *black cab*.
but none of these is black.
Are the coloured cabs gypsies...?
Ah, there's a black one at the back!"

Now I speak fluent American,
so in my best Southern drag
I explained that all these were licensed
and they must take the first cab...

By now I was on the point
and loaded up some cases,
they noticed there was no front seat...
I saw doubt upon their faces!

"It's made this way... we're special
only the driver sits in here.
You can still see where you're going...
through the windows all so clear."

Their hotel was in the City
so I told them of the past,
a little of the history
of our square mile, now so vast.

As I drove I explained the KoL,
I could see they were impressed.
I said goodbye and wished them well...
'cos that's what I do best.

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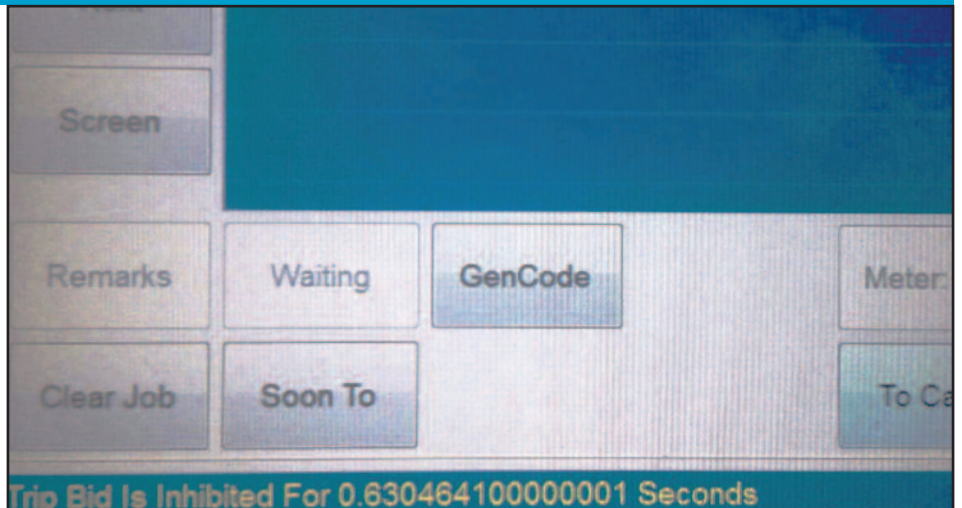
Quick or Quick!!

By now, the first few hundred new terminals will be in use by Dial-a-Cab drivers, but the original testing was carried out by a group of just eight – one of whom took this photo during the test period to show how quick the terminal was responding to a *bid* trip.

The unnamed driver had bid for the trip but was unsuccessful, so he bid again but this time he was too quick – by a matter of **0.630464100000001** of a second!

The driver told **Call Sign**:

"I know we are being controlled more and more by computers, but do they have to be quite so fussy!"



This new terminal has banned bidding for 0.6304641 of a second!

Magical Taxi Tour Disney Trip

In just under three weeks, around 100 licensed taxi drivers will be taking over two hundred children with life threatening illnesses on their trip of a lifetime, as the 20th annual **Magical Taxi Tour** sets off from Canary Wharf and makes its way down the A2 to Dover.

Once there, the excitement will mount as the taxis and their special passengers board a generously donated **P&O** ferry that will take them across *La Manche*, where the taxis and their passengers will disembark and drive the rest of the way with *Le Gendarme* and our own constabulary from the *Met* escorting them to make sure all goes well. Their destination is the magical kingdom of **Disneyland Paris**.

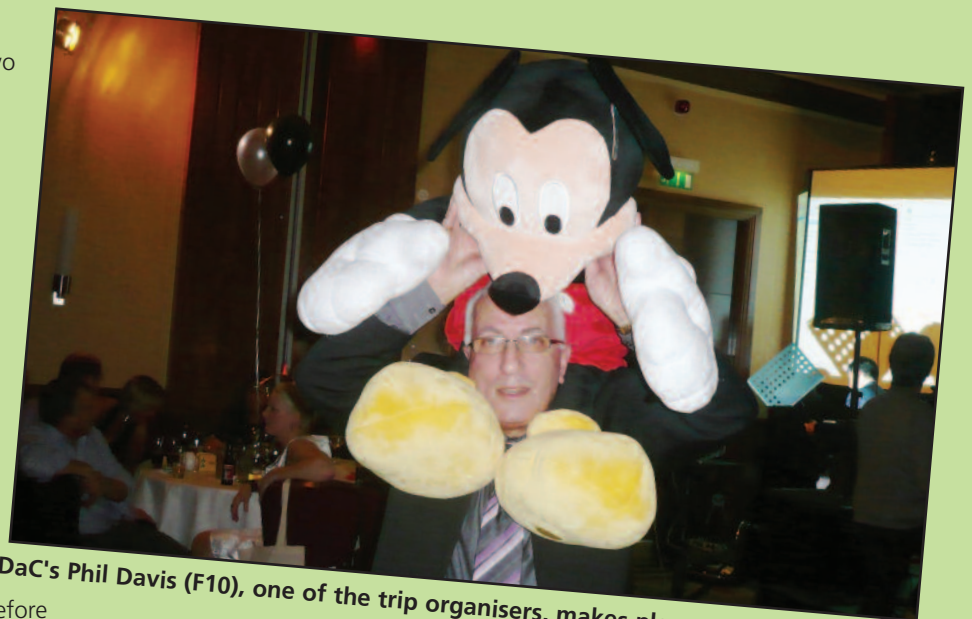
However, prior to departing from the Wharf, the children will plough through the traditional "Big Breakfast" before clapping eyes on Lord Mayor *Locum Tenens* Alderman **Sir David Howard**, who will officially cut the ribbon to set the convoy on its way.

The convoy will be joined by medical back up teams, ambulances, a tuck wagon and breakdown services as they head down to the ferry port. All the taxis for the trip are sponsored by generous businesses and individuals.

The children, together with their carers and cabbies will then enjoy that visit to the Magical Kingdom, as well as a Gala Dinner – attended by a certain well known mouse and many of his friends – during their stay. The taxis will enjoy a well-earned rest, filling the car park at the Disney hotel, an unusual sight in *La France* to say the least!

The Magical Taxi Tour is organised by **The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers** and every aspect is arranged by unpaid volunteers. Over the course of the 20 years, 2000 taxis have taken around 4,000 children to Disneyland Paris. Amazingly, when the convoy is in motion on the motorway, it is said to stretch back for around seven miles!

As usual, there will be quite a number of **Dial-a-Cab** drivers on the trip and there will be a report in the next issue.



DaC's Phil Davis (F10), one of the trip organisers, makes plans with a friend!

You can learn more about the Magical Taxi Tour at www.magicaltaxitour.com where you will find details of previous trips and also how you can help by making a donation to help fund next year's outing...



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Call Sign could fill up pages with instances of Dial-a-Cab drivers telling us about amazing coincidences and what a small world it is. The story that Jon Trevor (W94) told us isn't the most amazing we've heard, but nevertheless makes a nice story.

It began for Jon on August 1st this year when his copy of *Call Sign* dropped through the letterbox. Looking through it, Jon came to an article called *Scout About*, which was written by **Jason O'Brien** from DaC's IT department. Jason, who has been with the Society for 23 years, has been on DaC's first floor for the past 12 of them and currently looks after our telephone systems, customer and executive reporting, invoicing and driver's statements. However, Jason wasn't writing about DaC but about his tenure with the **5th Dartford Scout Troop** from his position as Scout Leader for the Earley Scout Troop in addition to looking after British Scouting's most comprehensive website.

But what Jon Trevor noticed more than anything else was when Jason mentioned his father, Colin O'Brien, who had been on DaC for many years including spending some time as a Board Member. Sadly Colin passed away many years ago, but the name immediately struck a chord with Jon because Colin had been instrumental in helping his father, Cyril, many years previous.

Cyril had been a taxi driver, but suffered constant pain through a severe wound he picked up fighting in **World War 2**. Soon after the cessation of hostilities, he was told to report to Hackney Town Hall where it was agreed that he should receive a regular war disability pension. While Jon doesn't remember the actual amount, he remembers it wasn't much. And, to rub salt into the wound, Cyril had to go back to Hackney Town Hall each year to have the wound inspected to make sure it was still there! He considered it to be undignified and eventually told the **Ministry of Works and Pensions** to stuff it where the sun didn't shine! It just wasn't enough to waste his time collecting and checking the wound was just an insult.

It was around 1990 and the pain had just become too much for Cyril and he had to stop driving altogether. Whilst he hadn't given up hope of driving a cab again, he knew it was unlikely especially as he was now over 70. But what made him even sadder was the feeling of being left out of everything with the only conversation anyone had with him, according to Jon as his memory went back, was to ask if he was ok or if he wanted a cuppa and almost treating him like a child! Everyone, that is, except a representative from the **LTDA** who used to come round regularly to chat and see if there was anything they could do to

From a Boy Scout story to a WW2 pension to Dial-a-Cab...

It's a small world



Jason's father and former DaC Board member, Colin O'Brien

It took some time, but Colin not only got Cyril's pension reinstated for the rest of his life, but also got him a large lump sum to make up for the years he had missed out!

"It made such a difference to my dad," Jon told *Call Sign*, "suddenly he had a few bob and while it wasn't a fortune, it gave him the opportunity to pass some of it round and whereas he used to struggle to pay the bills, life suddenly became much easier. And that was all down to Colin O'Brien. I was so pleased to see his name in the last issue because it brought back some lovely memories of a truly wonderful man and I just wanted Jason to know."

Cyril Trevor died in 1997 but thanks to Colin, his last years were spent in comparative luxury compared to those earlier years. As Jon said after reading the magazine, it certainly is a small world...

help. The organisation offered some monetary assistance, but it wasn't anywhere near enough to make a difference.

But Cyril looked forward to the **LTDA** rep just coming round and chatting because he spoke to him as though he was still a valuable member of society and not a sick child. That rep was Colin O'Brien.

One day during a visit, Colin asked Cyril about his time in the war; Cyril told him the story about the pension and instead of just agreeing with the ex-cab driver, Colin took the case up.

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

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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

Who said romance was dead! After many years of contentedly living together, former **Dial-a-Cab** Board Member, **Allen Togwell**, has made an honest woman of long-time partner **Sue**, when the pair finally tied the knot at a registry office service at the Bexley Manor House on Tuesday 20th August and replaced the word partner with that of wife!

Forever gallant, Allen told *Call Sign*:

"£49 for 7 minutes! Whatever happened to value! But I don't think there's much point of a honeymoon at my age, so I might go for a game of golf. But now that we're married, I suppose I'll have to carry my own clubs!"

The low key affair saw Sue and Allen accompanied by Allen's son and daughter, Jason and Sarah, who acted as witnesses. Unfortunately the chef at the restaurant selected for a celebration afterwards had to close due to a family emergency, so they went for lunch at Blackheath Village and walked home!

"It was very pleasant," said Allen, **"and probably made the day even nicer with the lack of formality."**

Congratulations to the happy couple from all at *Call Sign* and DaC..

At last! Toggers ties the knot...



Sue and Allen with witnesses Sarah and Jason at the wedding



"Homophobic...?"

A gay couple have been kicked out of an **Addison Lee** minicab after allegedly being accused by the driver of acting "dirty."

The driver from London's largest private hire company is under fire from the gay community for his alleged actions on 21 August. According to one of the two men on Twitter, he and his boyfriend were doing nothing worse than just holding hands.

The incident took place after the couple had left Soho's late-night **G-A-Y** club/bar. They then got into the Addison Lee car that we assume had been pre-ordered. Soon after, the driver ejected the couple after calling them dirty.

One of the two men then went onto Twitter, where he wrote:

"Just been ejected from an @AddisonLeeCabs for being gay. Thanks for the homophobic treatment!"

He also put a photo of the AL driver's license plate and soon after posting the tweet, he was inundated with hundreds of tweets giving their support.

"Thanks to everyone for your messages of support," he wrote, **"they mean a lot. We're home now after a very nice black taxi journey."**

He later spoke to **Gay Star News**, who called Addison Lee. A spokesperson there said the company was investigating the incident and added that the driver had been suspended from duty, but said they did not know how long the investigation would take.

"We are also in contact with the customer to understand more about what happened. Addison Lee does not tolerate any form of discrimination. We pride ourselves in delivering the highest possible level of professional service, and we take matters like this very seriously."

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Stephen Vale at Only Cabs **020 3239 6101**



LTI FIRE CLAIMS SETTLED?

In 2008, a small number of 56 registration TX4s caught fire with the result that all the 56s were recalled for a safety check. However, until that check and any modifications were carried out, the TX4s involved were not allowed to work.

A number of drivers made claims for loss of use etc and *Call Sign* has now been told that the claims are on the verge of being settled. However, due to drivers being asked to sign confidentiality contracts, we are unable to confirm anything over that. However, if correct, it will not be before time and we are pleased that at last the matter looks to be behind us...



Claims settled

Grosvenor Gardens shelter changes

For those that don't know, the **Grosvenor Gardens shelter** has a special significance to **Dial-a-Cab** when on Sunday 29 March 1953 on that rank, a meeting was held in the back of a taxi belonging to Bonnie Martyn to discuss the possibility of forming an owner drivers radio taxi circuit. Bonnie would later become our Founder-chairman.

But back in the present day; some changes to the rank have been made with the new rank being in three portions...

The first portion is in Grosvenor Gardens for 6 taxis that should face north west.

The second portion is outside number 2 Grosvenor Gardens and is for 2 taxis also facing north west.

The third portion is in Hobart Place on the northern side of Lower Grosvenor Gardens (opposite the **Noura** restaurant). Taxis should rank facing east.

Please don't forget the rules regarding refreshment shelter ranks:

* Only drivers using the refreshment shelter can park their taxi on the refreshment rank.

* Drivers can park their taxis on the rank for a maximum of 45 minutes.

TOBACCO DOCK FUNCTION

4th September 2013

On Wednesday 4 September a large corporate event is taking place at Tobacco Dock, 50 Porters Walk E1. Approximately 3,000 people will be attending and there is expected to be a high demand for taxis.

A temporary taxi rank has been set up for the event and this will be in the Tobacco Dock car park on level 6, access is via Pennington Street.

The event finishes at 23:00 but people are expected to start leaving before this and the rank will be marshalled by professional taxi marshals from 20:00.

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NO LONGER MISSING!

Last month's **Call Sign** ran a story on a former **Dial-a-Cab** Chairman, but one we had few records on. **Eli "Trixie" Solomons** was undoubtedly the Chairman of **ODRTS** between the years of 1959 and 1962 and while we had records of all the previous Chairman - **Bonnie Martyn, Frank Duncan, Jack Russell, Jack Taylor, Martin Gellman, Peter Fennymore, Ken Burns, Phil Messias, Aubrey Siteman** and current incumbent **Brian Rice** – we had nothing on Trixie, including any photos.

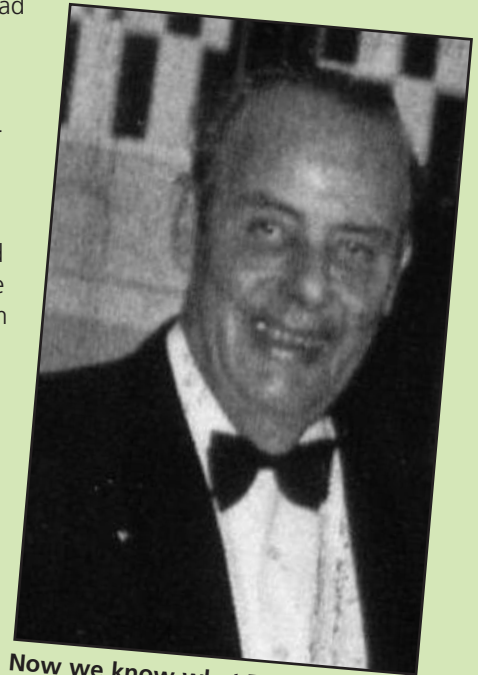
Then in July we received an email from **Janet Baine**. She had been looking at the online **Call Sign** and decided to write in to see if anyone remembered her uncle, **Harry Croft**. So far no one has responded, but Janet also mentioned that Harry and Trixie Solomons had been close friends and kindly provided some information on the man we had described as a missing DaC Chairman. Janet provided details about him in the August issue...

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

Janet also provided a photo of Trixie together with his wife Minnie and Harry with his daughter Bettina. Whilst it was nice to see our missing Chairman at last, he was partially hidden behind the two women!

But now a former driver from our Pentonville Road days, **Harry Glover**, has sent in a photo of Eli. Harry told **Call Sign**: "**Trixie was very popular but he wasn't someone who would shout from the rooftops and some mistook that quietness for weakness. But he was far from weak. Although I didn't speak to him that often and when I did, it was about taxis and ODRTS at the office, you could tell that he was a nice man.**"

We don't know when the photo was taken and we know it isn't the best quality, but it does mean that there are no longer any missing Chairmen!



Now we know what Trixie Solomons looked like!

VITO: Rear steering problem fixed?

Call Sign has been told that the problems which beset **Euro V Mercedes Vito** owners, has now been isolated and that a 'fix' is available from most Mercedes commercial dealers. There will be no cost to drivers for replacing the dogtooth – which has caused all the problems.

More info at 008009 777 7777 or email the customer services team on atvitotaxi@daimler.com.



Steering problems are now hopefully solved for the Vito

Mailshot

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

History lesson

Hi Alan

Just read the latest *Call Sign*. It's great to see *Dial-a-Cab* reaching the 60-year mark, but I must point out a glaring inaccuracy in the caption accompanying the picture on page 8 (*Dial-a-Cab: The Timeline*). One of the men in the cab was, as you correctly say, named **George Turnbull** (he is the one wearing glasses), but this man was never at the PCO. In 1953, Turnbull was employed by diesel engine maker **Petters**, but he returned to where he started work, the **Standard Motor Company**. By the late 1960s, Turnbull was the MD of the company, being responsible for such great cars as the **Triumph 2000**, **Herald** and **TR6**. In 1968 he moved to the new Austin-Morris division of **British Leyland**.

The man he was talking to was not **Bonnie Martyn** but **Bill Lucas**, then director and General Manager of **Carbodies**. During that conversation, held at the 1970 Commercial Motor Show, Turnbull was offering Lucas the manufacturing plant of the **FX4** chassis because Turnbull wanted to close the **Adderley Park** factory where it was then housed. Lucas bought it, making Carbodies the complete manufacturer of the **FX4**.

Turnbull left British Leyland in 1974 and went to Korea, where he set up the **Hyundai** car factory. There may have been a George Turnbull at the PCO, but it wasn't the man in the picture!

Bill Munro

Bill Munroe has been involved with the London taxi trade as both a driver for over forty years and a writer for over 20, having written and published many fascinating books on the history of our trade. So if he says we were wrong then we probably were! The information was given to me during an interview with DaC's Founder-Chairman **Bonnie Martyn** on his 90th birthday (June 1999) and knowing how clear Bonnie's memory always was, it was probably me that got it wrong! **Bonnie** died in August 2002.

As for **Bill Munroe**, he has an amazing collection of taxi-orientated books available at his **Earlwood Press** website, amongst which are **Taxi Jubilee**, which details the 50+ year history of the **FX4** and **London Taxis: A Full History**, which does exactly what it says on the tin and details this trade's history since 1897. Both are excellent reads if you take more than a passing interest in our trade.

More details of **Bill's** many books can be found at www.earlwoodpress.co.uk. My thanks again to **Bill** for clearing up our inaccuracy ...Ed

And another!

Dear Alan

You made a slight error when you said that **Alan Lewis (A44)** was the only subscriber left from our **Trixie Solomons / Pentonville Road** era (*August Call Sign* article; *The Missing DaC Chairman*). I actually dispatched from Pentonville Road, having joined the Society in December 1960.

Ivor Belkin (C97)

Astonishingly, Ivor not only dispatched from our Pentonville Road office, but also from Shirland Road, Brunswick Place and now still dispatches here at East Road on Saturdays. He must be older than he looks! ...Ed

Long life taxi batteries

Hi Alan

Re the *July Call Sign* editorial item on your **TX4** battery lasting close to five years, I've beaten that record having just had to replace my original **TX4** battery after six years and two months and 149,000 miles! Can anyone better that?

David S. Lessman (D19)

Sounds unbeatable to me... unless YOU know better??? ...Ed

Receipt sir... and something for the weekend...!

Dear Alan

I was interested in your recent receipt problem (*August Call Sign* Editorial). Spending a large amount of my driving hours between 10pm and the early morning, I occasionally pick up male passengers who are looking for female company. Not wanting to just turn work down (particularly during our current quiet period), I usually hand over a sheet of scanned and printed off **A4** paper complete with four "calling cards" taken from a West End phone box. These give phone numbers etc of women offering services that the customers apparently want. Then I tell them to phone one of the numbers, get an address and that I'd then be happy to take them. There is then no risk of curb crawling etc.

As for the rude passenger demanding a receipt and your scribbled message written on it, the result of my scanning and printing the cards sometimes means I have the original cards as it seems to make sense to reprint every few months. If I get a customer similar in manner to the one you had, I apologise that the printer is not working but I offer to write one out, which I do on the back of a folded over telephone box "calling card," timing the handover so that I can make a quick exit as they read the receipt before turning over to discover the nature of the calling card. I doubt if they then present the receipt to their accounts department!

Name and call sign withheld



As regular readers will know, I rarely publish letters that do not have a name. However, this would appear to be one of the exceptions and the driver has made his identity known to me. *Call Sign* does not endorse either of the writer's suggestions – even if they do sound sensible! ...Ed

A gentleman editor!!!

Hi Alan

Loved your 'fracking' front cover of the *August Call Sign Online* - what on earth would **Boris** hope to achieve other than to be the Mayor of London who causes the second fire of London?

Re your editorial section on rudeness to passengers, I would say that the brat and his carer deserved more than they got... but then again, you are obviously a gentleman.

Daphne Sherman

London NW6

Thanks **Daphne**, I've been called many things, but rarely a gentleman! ...Ed

Going part time

Dear Alan

After some twenty years on *Dial-a-Cab* and having reached the age of 65, I decided to go part-time with the result that it was no longer financially viable to remain on the circuit. But what I will miss is my copy of *Call Sign* coming through the letter box each month. I know I can access it via the internet but it just isn't the same as being able to turn real pages! In my opinion it is the best of all the taxi publications. Your views on many subjects are close to my own and the stance you have taken re gambling and lap dancing ads that do not befit a quality magazine are to be admired. Have you considered becoming the first taxi broadsheet?

Finally, can I send my best wishes to yourself and everyone at *Dial-a-Cab*. I am convinced that once the country is out of this financial crisis that **DaC** will come through stronger than ever, thanks to a strong Board led by a more than capable Chairman, **Brian Rice**, and backed by its drivers.

Mike Lyons (Ex-Y52)

Hi Mike, I wish you the best of luck in your semi-retirement. For your information, there have been several broadsheets published in the taxi press and they all have one thing in common. There has been **Taxi Times**, **London Cabbie News**, **National Cab** and a few others - and that one thing they all had in common was that none of them still exist! ...Ed

Mailshot

Continued from page 30

IT Flashback

Blimey Alan!

The August *Call Sign's* Flashback (my closure of the DISCUSS internet taxi list) did bring back memories – I can't believe that was 13 years ago! But speaking of the Internet, I went out for a drink with *The Brethren of the Whip's* Sean Farrell (B39) recently and told him the story of when I went to **Radio Taxis** in around 1996 to see their IT guy. I explained the Internet to him and how it – and I – could help the cab trade to keep us ahead of minicabs. His reply was that the Internet was a waste of time and would not last. How wrong he was!

I then went to **Dial-a-Cab** and although **Brian Rice** also said they didn't need me, it was because they already had plans and he said they were looking into the best ways of using the Internet. I now hear that around half of all DaC trips are entered into your system by customers via the 'net.

Changing tack, I've known Sean since we were both 12 years old. It was Sean and a guy called **Chris George** that instigated the resurgence of the **WCHCD** – then called **The Fellowship**. They were the two people who went around the trade drumming up interest. Just look where the WCHCD is now!

Vince Chin

Call Sign Online

Vince has looked after the *Call Sign Online* website – which he designed in late 1997 – for 16 years. This was at a time when many hadn't even heard of the Internet and years in front of any other taxi mag going online. He has virtually turned CSO into an online library facility. Although Vince is a Green Badge holder, most of his time is spent in IT ...Ed

Spanish licence...

Hi Alan

I wonder if you can help me. I have been to the TfL website but cannot find an email address to suit my query. It appears that the Spanish authorities now require all residents to exchange their driving licences for Spanish ones. I would like some confirmation that I could drive a taxi on a Spanish licence. Who's the man to write (or email) to?

Steve Shaller (Ex-F34J)

Espagne

Simon Buggy, Driver and Operator Policy Manager at LTPH, replies:

This is an interesting development as one can normally drive anywhere in the EU on an EU licence for an unlimited period, but there will be no problem with Steve continuing to drive a taxi with a Spanish driving licence and an address in Spain. The e-mail link is at: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/businessandpart->

[ners/taxisandprivatehire/26929.aspx](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/businessandpart-ners/taxisandprivatehire/26929.aspx). Our Customer Support team will then make sure all our records are updated. I suggest that Steve waits until he has the Spanish licence and then sends a scanned copy of it (or if he can't do, that just lets us know the number).

A bike ride with Jenny...

Hi Alan

I thought you might be interested in this. **Jenny Jones**, the **Green** member on the **London Assembly**, attended a recent **RMT** branch meeting to be questioned about (in the main) cycling policy at **TfL**. The meeting let her know that RMT's taxi branch thought it was a dereliction of TfL's responsibility to ensure the safety of all by not making the wearing of safety helmets a legal requirement when hiring out **Boris bikes**. She refused point blank to even consider it and you could not help but notice that as she left the meeting, she sailed away on her cycle – helmetless!

While not being one to encourage the making of laws that will then just be ignored by enforcement agencies, I would like to see one brought in that makes it an offence punishable by the use of spot fines for cyclists who fail to use dedicated cycle lanes when there is one available. I'm sure I am not the only one who gets very irritated when stuck in a long line of vehicles that are crawling along roads such as Tavistock Place because a cyclist chooses to ignore the cycleway constructed at vast expense.

Eddie Lambert (V37)

Jenny Jones attitude is truly a sad indictment of TfL policy when five cyclists have already died so far this year ...Ed

Boris the Bike and the IRA!!!

Dear Editor

My views on the recent cycling fiasco and a message to Mayor Boris: You have succeeded where a twenty year bombing campaign by the terrorists of the IRA failed! You have created more disruption in London than they ever did. The commanders in the IRA must be laughing to themselves and wondering why they didn't buy bicycles instead of Semtex!

PS. Who is Andrew Gilligan??

David Hughes (A73)

Pedicabs might have been even better – the bikes, a carrying compartment and the ability to do whatever you liked without anyone in authority caring! Andrew Gilligan? Isn't he the cycling commissioner for London who doesn't seem to commish anything! ...Ed

Thanks for helping...

Dear Al

Can I thank three drivers who helped me

out following a strange incident at Morrison's filling station in Stanmore. To cut a long story short, I was filling up and had locked the cab with my phone inside when 'white van man' at the adjacent pump stole my filler cap and ignition key from between the pumps. He looked like one of those guys with the pixelated faces on *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. In fact that might have been an improvement! Yeah, I know a spare key would have helped, but I didn't have one. Then while I was wondering what to do, **Alasdair Kay (C47)** drove in. Using his phone I was able to contact the cab owner **Terry Vale (J29)** who came from the other side of London with a spare key. Whilst waiting for him, a Mountview driver, **Stanley Silverman**, arrived. He had a selection of keys on him – one of which opened the front and enabled me to get my phone and keep my wife informed of the situation!

Thank you guys one and all. The garage CCTV clearly showed the theft. More worryingly, it also showed my bald spot is getting bigger...!

Geoff Levene (W32)

You can joke all you like Geoff, but this really is a serious problem that is happening more and more and the police can't help. How do we stop those bald spots getting bigger! ...Ed

Corinthia Hotel

Dear Al

My wife Joy and I have just returned from a free taxi driver breakfast at the Corinthia Hotel, SW1 courtesy of a special offer in 'Taxi' mag. It was just magic to be made so welcome and to have such a great meal and time. The hotel is truly superb in style. They do a pre-theatre meal at around £30 including a glass of champers and 3 courses. There is also a Sunday lunch carvery.

I do hope that some others from Dial-a-Cab took the opportunity as I understand many drivers in the trade have. I also hope that our tee shirt/vest, unshaven lot did not go in and let us down. So guys and girls, when around there take a look and give the hotel a good service.

Martin Freeborn (C67)

Are they paying you Martin!!! ...Ed

Privatisation

Hi Alan

Is TfL going for privatisation and going to either Northampton or Coventry???

Roy 'the boy' Manix (Ex K98)

Am I missing something here, Roy? I heard the Mayor say they were keeping London's traffic moving, but I didn't realise he meant they were following it ...Ed



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