

August 2014



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*Tom Whitbread
reverse operation
shock!*



*DaC's Colin Salmon was one of several DaC drivers
taking children on the LTFUC trip to Southend*



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Apologies the Eurostar Timetable was not issued in the May edition as it is valid 25/5 to 13/12/2014, but here it is so you know when the train is arriving whilst sitting trapped in the rank under the station in Goodway.

Eurostar arrivals timetable up to 13th December 2014

From	Arrival	Train	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	Notes
Brussels	7:59	9109	✓							
Paris	8:02	9005	✓							P1
Paris	8:32	9007	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Brussels	8:57	9113	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Paris	9:00	9009	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Paris	9:30	9011						✓	✓	
Brussels	9:57	9117	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Paris	10:00	9013	✓							
Paris	10:00	9013		✓	✓	✓	✓			P1
Paris	10:00	9013						✓		P3
Paris	10:39	9015	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Paris	11:39	9019	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brussels	11:57	9125	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Paris	12:30	9023	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brussels	12:57	9129							✓	
Paris	13:00	9025	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	P3
Paris	13:30	9027							✓	
Paris	13:30	9027					✓			P3
Paris	14:00	9029	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Paris	14:00	9029						✓		P3
Brussels	14:03	9133	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Paris	14:39	9031	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Paris	15:00	9033							✓	P3
Paris	15:30	9035						✓	✓	
Paris	16:00	9037					✓			
Paris	16:00	9037	✓	✓	✓	✓				P3

From	Arrival	Train	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	Notes
Brussels	16:03	9141	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Paris	16:39	9039	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brussels	16:57	9145					✓		✓	
Brussels	16:57	9145	✓	✓	✓	✓				B1
Paris	17:00	9041					✓			P3
Paris	17:39	9043	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Paris	17:39	9043					✓			P5
Paris	18:01	9045				✓	✓			P3
Paris	18:02	9045							✓	
Brussels	18:09	9149	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Paris	18:30	9047	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brussels	19:03	9153	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Brussels	19:10	9153							✓	
Paris	19:39	9051	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Brussels	19:57	9157	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Paris	20:02	9053		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Paris	20:02	9053	✓							P3
Paris	20:39	9055						✓	✓	
Paris	20:41	9055	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Brussels	21:03	9161	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Brussels	21:09	9161						✓		
Paris	21:39	9059	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Paris	22:00	9061							✓	
Paris	22:00	9061					✓			P3
Paris	22:39	9063	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

Notes P1 Runs from 1/9/14
P3 Runs from 20/9/14

P5 Runs from 5/9/14
B1 Runs until 28/8/14 and from 23/10/14 to 30/10/14

Prudential London to Surrey cycle ride

Sunday August 10th is the 'Prudential London-Surrey Cycle' ride. It starts at the Olympic Park and road closures are massive. Too many to note here but TfL's maps can be found at: <https://www.tfl.gov.uk/campaign/prudential-ridelondon/travel-disruption-and-advice>

Or you can go to www.myfav.co.uk then click "<---taxi" for the taxi page which has an icon to TfL's page. TfL has their very useful and regular advice which is to "Find an alternative route."

From the start at the Olympic Park it uses the A12 WB (A12 closed from Green Man) to the A13 Aspen Way, The Highway, Upper and Lower Thames Streets, Vic Emb, Parliament Sq, The Mall to HPC, A4 to the A316 then onto Surrey.

Return is via Wimbledon, Putney, Putney Bridge (only open to cycles), Kings Road and Chelsea Emb to The Mall finish. There is also a fun ride that goes round loads of road closures in the City. In addition, Saturday 9th August will see a 'Free Cycle' event around St James Park.

All in all, if you work on that weekend, then prey for a Kings Cross to Hampstead...

from the editor's desk

Uber and the High Court

The recent intervention by the LTDA into the High Court ruling that **Transport for London** intended using to sort out what they claimed was a legal App used by **Uber** – an App most people recognise as a taxi meter which makes it automatically *illegal* unless used in a licensed taxi – has been condemned by TfL as delaying the due process of law and sorting out the mess that we currently find ourselves in. Well I disagree.

I asked in the last issue of *Call Sign* why TfL didn't just tell Uber that they were unsure about the legality of the App/device, which works out mileage and distance etc to give a price – ie acting as a taxi meter – so in that case they would refuse to authorise it. Then Uber could – had they wished – have taken the High Court action and spent the huge amount on legal fees that TfL offered to pay by bringing the action, money that comes partially from our licence fees.

On top of that, if as we were warned is the norm and the final decision wasn't expected for many months, then had Uber initiated the High Court ruling they would not have been allowed to use the app unless a decision eventually came in their favour. Then – and only then – TfL could have spent our money on an Appeal. But until a final decision was arrived at, then Uber would not have been able to use it. As it stands, they can do whatever they like until a final decision is arrived at and it would have cost them nothing, unless an Appeal was needed on their behalf.

Now TfL's MD for surface transport, **Leon Daniels** has said that a separate challenge by the **Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association** against three Uber drivers under section 11 of the 1998 Act will delay an end to the dispute because it prevents TfL "proceeding as we had intended as the High Court will not consider the issue while there are ongoing criminal proceedings on the same issues of law."

As I've said on this page many times over the years, I remember being stopped by PCO officers for 'important' things such as having a tiny **AA Relay** sticker on my back windscreen after which I was banned from working until I'd removed it AND taken it to Penton Street to prove that it had gone! Doing it in front of the officer wasn't good enough.

Then there was my overhaul failure when the luggage strap was missing from the front of the cab. What's that, you ask? Well in the days of 'Carry on Cabby' when **FX3** taxis had an open platform where the luggage door now is and any trip involving suitcases needed to have them strapped in for when the cabs went round corners too quickly, those straps were important. Once the **FX4** with its four doors came into use, the strap became irrelevant but was kept fitted in the cabs and continued even into the **Fairway**. Why it was kept is a mystery that perhaps only *Call Sign's* brilliant historian **Sean Farrell** (B39) can answer. However, it served no purpose and when mine broke, I didn't bother replacing it. But my cab got a stop until I had a new one fitted – which I found at **M&O** at a ridiculously expensive price because it also had to be fitted and unsurprisingly, no one had ever done one before! I still remember **M&O** telling me that it would be easier just to take the broken remnants away – not realising that all cabs had to have the strap even though it wasn't needed.

Yes, I remember those two instances along with many others that I'm sure long-time **Dial-a-Cab** drivers can also remember from their own experiences. Now our "Masters" have gone so much the other way that anyone in the PH busi-



ness can apparently do whatever they like, with TfL going so far as to launch their **Judicial Declaration** whilst telling the world that they believe Uber are innocent of breaking any taximeter laws. Well I must admit I have heard more independent views pending court proceedings than that!

According to LTDA General Secretary, **Steve McNamara**, TfL are biased in the matter and their legal advice is that a Judicial Declaration in the High Court was not the correct route to reach a solution. The result is that the trade's largest body has instigated its own private prosecutions.

No one knows how this will end, but I trust the LTDA to fight for us far more than some of those at TfL and I hope the rest of the trade organisations will support them. What is a great pity to me is that there are some very nice AND very helpful people at TfL. Sadly they can do little against those acting close to the Mayor...

And speaking of TfL...

Adding to the above, you will read inside this issue a piece from TfL's COO of Surface Transport, **Garrett Emmerson**, telling drivers that they must not put up unauthorised stickers or printed material. Although he doesn't say as much, he seems to be referring mainly to the *Failo, I've deleted the app* or the *I was there at the Square* mini posters. He doesn't mention **AA Relay** but includes a warning on using the TfL roundel. While many agree with the sentiment of the stickers, they are quite unbecoming on such a respected form of transport as London's licensed taxis. But I just wish that TfL had been as strict to Uber when the American app walked straight over them and began using what is a meter in all but name.

As it is common knowledge that Uber have the multi-millions of **Google** and co behind them, this new 'reminder' sounds more and more like one law for the rich and one for the poor. Perhaps even friend or foe? We can't put a small sticker up but the Uber minicabs can use a meter. Hmmm...

Saving fuel

Call Sign is proud that when the **Energy Saving Trust** wanted to run classes on how taxi drivers could save fuel in 2012, that they picked it and **Dial-a-Cab** drivers first before moving on to the rest of the trade. Many drivers told this magazine that the classes – funded as part of the *Cleaner Air for London* initiative – really worked and some were saving considerable amounts of fuel that their driving had previously meant they were wasting.

So I'm going to face serious amounts of flak for saying this, but drivers creeping up to traffic lights in the hope that they don't have to stop are just being

selfish as well as driving me mad. And as for those (few) taxi drivers who insist on driving in the offside lane of the A13 eastbound late at night when the road is empty and at a speed that they have decided is quick enough, well I am astonished because they remind me of those car drivers we used to address as weekenders! Perhaps I'm just getting old...

Speaking of fuel...

I am now the owner of a new iPhone since my old and loyal Nokia gave its final croak. But no, I haven't gone on Twitter as I get more than enough rumours without it, thank you. However, I do get some *Tweets* passed over to me by anxious drivers. A recent one apparently said that the writer (or is that the Tweeter), a DaC driver, was perturbed to see an ad for **Power Pill** in *Call Sign* as he didn't approve of additives being put into the fuel tank.

I believe his name is Lee and although I'm not sure why he sent a Tweet rather than just write to this mag, after all, it takes around the same time on a smartphone, let me tell him anyway that my TX4 will be 6 years old this month and I've been using **Power Pill** since day one, just as I did on my previous taxi. On my last MoT 6 months ago, the guy doing the smoke test said my cab presented the lowest emissions on the smoke test that he had seen that year (albeit we were only just over 2 months into 2014). I still get a reasonable mileage of 23 – 25mpg and up to 30 on a run. That is all down to **Power Pill** – and there are quite a number of other drivers that will probably tell you the same.

So I'm sorry you disapprove – that is your right – but *Call Sign* will continue to advertise the product until those behind the ad no longer want it in the mag. And I will continue to use it.

Namby, Pamby London?

Yep, I admit I have become something of an old grouch, moaning at everything. But I really am fed up with London going so far over the top that we soon won't be able to cross the road unless a policeman is watching! Traffic lights at junctions stay red far longer, pelican crossing lights go red when no one presses the button, yet people stroll across main roads looking at their phones and no one says a thing. But it's those that pay road tax who suffer each and every time. Non-taxi drivers pay **Congestion Charge** to avoid traffic that the Mayor causes because no one at City Hall knows about the real world and if they have their way, we'll all go over to bicycles. Now the City of London has a 20mph speed limit that City police say they will enforce as well as a new **Pedestrian Safety Action Plan**. As the Mayor's deliberate hold-ups usually prevent anywhere a speed of twenty, I just wonder if *Iycra Lad* will be able to manage to keep to under that because they will now be the new kings of the road. So look out because they don't take prisoners...

Buy-out falls...

I'm a bit sad that the proposed buy-out of DaC appears to have failed because I had almost spent my share! However, it has failed and we can only but guess why. And my guess contains just four letters – Uber. I think the prospective buyers were frightened away by talk of the San Francisco company, which took place at the same time as whoever the prospective buyers were, were preparing their due diligence. I think it just frightened them off. Will we ever know? I doubt it unless they return. That wouldn't surprise me either...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Subscriptions change

When I wrote to you regarding offers made for **Dial-a-Cab** that did not materialise, I also wrote that the Board had decided to alter the way in which we charge subscriptions. It appears that the model the Apps adopted has proved to be very popular with drivers, although of course there were not any run-ins or gratuities and they give free waiting time. Yet the method of only paying a percentage of trips completed does seem to have proved to be very popular with drivers.

Consequently, the BoM have decided to adopt a similar model for Dial-a-Cab in the future, although we will be supplying you with a terminal equipped with Sat Nav and mapping and of course a PED for processing Credit Cards and all the Data that is used, but with the difference to the Apps being that our work will still carry a run-in, gratuity and the usual waiting time charge. So what is this going to cost you?

We have decided that the cost of the terminal together with the PED, Sat Nav and Mapping and of course Air Time will be charged at £10 per week and there will then be a charge of 7.5% for the work you complete. Going into more detail, any trips you receive via your terminal will be charged at 7.5% of the total fare for all Credit Rides and Credit Card trips; any cash work will be charged the same as it currently is now.

However, if you take a Credit Card off the street, you will not be charged the 7.5% but the usual handling charge will still apply to the customer.

There will also be a maximum charge so that regardless of how much account work a driver does, no one will pay more than £50 per week (plus the initial £10). Anything over this amount will not attract any charge at all. Those currently paying half subs having being with DaC for over thirty years, will pay £5 for the terminal etc plus 7.5% per job.

We understand that some will complain because they will be worse off, others it will suit as they will be better off. But you should remember that unless the trip carries a fixed price, it will have a 10% gratuity which will more than compensate for the fee charged to you. And as I stated, there will be a ceiling of £50 so no one will pay more than that per week.

As a Board, we understand the complaint from some that at present the subscription does not warrant the amount of work you receive, so we believe the new system to be fairer because you will only pay for what you do.

For various reasons, there has been a huge exodus of drivers from the three London Radio Taxi circuits over the past six years or so. That number must be halted, so if a Member only has to pay for what he completes, it does seem a fairer way of



doing things, although some will not agree.

With the exodus from the Radio Circuits and ongoing turmoil over the Apps, coverage by licensed taxis to the public and corporate sector will suffer. This in turn will drive even more clients to use the plentiful - and cheap - Private Hire companies. Goodness knows, it is difficult enough maintaining your client base, let alone attracting new clients. What that means in reality is there will be less work for licensed taxis, so the circuits will lose more drivers, which would mean that coverage suffers and we would lose even more clients. Losing those clients would then result in the circuits losing even more drivers due to that lack of work and it could carry on *ad infinitum*! So maintaining numbers for the Radio Circuits is now of vital importance and we believe this new system to be a better way of maintaining the *status quo*.

New Terminals

At the time of writing, we are just coming to the end of our fitting programme for the new terminals. Consequently, as we will now be operating on a public network we are in the process of closing down our aerial sites. These sites are located in and around London and the cost of renting and maintaining them over the years has

increased significantly. Not only do we have to pay for a very expensive Kilostream (telephone line) to every site, we also have to pay maintenance on the Comms Controllers at every venue and pay a rental fee to have our equipment installed and located at the various venues.

I must say I am looking forward to the considerable savings that will be made when all the sites and equipment become obsolete.

Whilst it is difficult to maintain and acquire new work, it is imperative that we look at all ways we can to reduce our overheads. If any of you out there still do not have one of the new terminals fitted, then please make arrangements to have one installed because when we make the old equipment and sites redundant, you will no longer receive a signal which will obviously result in you not being offered any trips. For the past two years we have been running on a dual system – the private and a public Network; it will be a relief and a substantial saving when we close the Private Network down!

Holidays

It has probably been extra quiet during the past couple of weeks and if previous years are anything to go by, then we probably have even worse to come during the month of August. Some consolation could be that I am told we can expect record numbers of tourists during the month, so hopefully the streets will be busy.

If you are going on holiday during the month, then I hope you have a good relaxing time and that when you return, radio work will have begun to pick up from September through to Christmas.

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

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MAYOR: TAXIS MAY BE FORCED TO ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS

Will TfL pay all the expenses???

Under the auspices of Mayor Boris Johnson, TfL have said that within 18 months all London taxis may be required to accept debit and credit cards. Dial-a-Cab and both other circuits provide facilities for accepting credit/debit cards and this manner of payment has proved to be very popular. However, many drivers not on radio circuits have chosen not to accept that manner of payment possibly due to the cost of installation, running costs

or even an aversion to providing credit. As one non-radio driver told *Call Sign* at Paddington: "I'm a taxi driver, not a banker. Why should I loan a stranger money?"

According to the Mayor's office, introducing the facility across all taxis would have benefits for both passengers and drivers, including reducing the risk of drivers being robbed and ending the need for passengers to stop off at cashpoints during their journey.

As part of their proposals, TfL say they would scrap the surcharge currently levied when paying by card and include the average cost of a card transaction in the standard fare,



meaning passengers would pay the same amount regardless of their payment method. The question remains as to whether they will pay radio circuits for their costs? In terms of amount needed, by TfL standards it would be tiny.

The TfL board will be asked at its September meeting to approve a public consultation on introducing compulsory card acceptance from 2016 and according to Leon Daniels, TfL's MD of Surface Transport, they are keen to utilise technology to improve the experience of passengers. He said:

"We are exploring a proposal to make this a mandatory requirement across the entire taxi fleet from 2016. It would also see card transaction fees considered when we calculate overall taxis fares meaning passengers would pay the same fare regardless of how they chose to pay."

If TfL guarantees to pay the radio circuits costs for credit/debit card acceptance, then it will become even more popular.

But TfL's record of passing funds to the taxi trade for anything has been on the negative side of non-existent for many years. What would be nice is for TfL to pay rather than passing the costs over to the passenger. After all, I've yet to hear of a bus driver paying for his own bus...

Jamie Corum

Pedestrian Safety Action Plan for London

Transport for London has published London's first **Pedestrian Safety Action Plan** following consultation in the Spring. One of the Mayor and TfL's top priorities is to reduce by 40 per cent the number of people killed or seriously injured on London's roads by 2020 and action is being taken to prioritise the safety of the most vulnerable road users - pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

The plan has been compiled by TfL working alongside key stakeholders and looks to address the concerns and challenges faced by pedestrians across London, helping to turn the capital's streets into a safer, more pleasant place for all. It outlines 31 key actions which will directly target the key factors in collisions and help further reduce pedestrian casualties across London. The actions include:



Looking after pedestrians and cyclists?

- * Building on TfL's innovative crossing technology trials, a new 'gold standard' for all new and upgraded pedestrian crossings will be developed. This would look to include Pedestrian Countdown timers to give pedestrians a clear indication of how much time they have to safely cross the road, as well as ensuring that all pedestrian crossing times take account of national safety standards and the level of pedestrian demand. TfL will also expand the use of Pedestrian Countdown across London to more than 400 sites, which will be roughly 10 per cent of all pedestrian crossings in London.

- * Producing the first **London Pedestrian Design Guidance** to plan and design safe and comfortable walking environments. TfL will then use this guidance for all TfL funded streets and public realm schemes and strongly encourage London boroughs to adopt these guidelines for their schemes.

- * Carrying out ground-breaking trials of innovative collision detection software on London Buses this summer. The innovative trials will build on research previously carried out by TfL on detection equipment and will look to test the effectiveness of radar and optical technology to reduce collisions with cyclists and pedestrians;

- * Trialling **Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA)** on London Buses, to understand the potential role of this technology on buses in promoting adherence to speed limits across the road network. Subject to further discussions and technical approvals, trials could be carried out on-street during 2015.

TfL has also launched an updated 'Digital Speed Limit' map for London to help spur the development of the next generation of in-vehicle technologies and mobile phone apps for the road. Making such information freely available and keeping it accurate, means existing services such as satnavs and GPS can provide drivers with the best information on the speed limit of the roads they are travelling on, giving them greater certainty, helping them to keep safe and avoid speeding penalties.

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said: *"This plan enshrines the raft of actions that are being taken to improve pedestrian safety in the capital. From new 'gold standard' crossings, expanded use of Pedestrian Countdown clocks and buses kitted out with the latest gizmos to reduce collisions, this is all about prioritising the safety of the most vulnerable road users - pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. The publication of a speed limit map for London is also a great example of how the capital is leading the way in helping vehicle technology to move forward and encouraging innovation in the digital sphere."*

See Editorial on page 3..

Call Sign August 2014

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Jery's World



Uber, schmuber, what are you guys worried about. We'll look after you if we can. Of course we can't promise, but there's a good chance that we will. Well, maybe a reasonable chance. But isn't that better than nothing...!

INSURANCE PREMIUMS DROPPING?

Not taxis!

According to the **Confused.com** insurance price index, UK motorists are enjoying continued reductions in comprehensive insurance prices for the second quarter in a row. The index claims that car insurance premiums are now down to their lowest prices in almost five years.

Three years ago, motorists were left facing some of the highest average insurance premiums on record, but now they are said to be more than 30% lower with the cuts going right across the board regardless of age, gender or location.

Call Sign asked several taxi drivers on **Dial-a-Cab** how much their taxi insurance had gone down by of late and not one said that it had. We phoned one taxi insurance broker to ask what he knew of the drop in premium prices and the answer was that it wasn't something he had heard of. Is something going on that we don't know about?



Are London taxi insurance costs following the downward trend?
Apparently not...

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Once again the powers that be have inflicted changes to the legislation that affects our trade with hardly any consultation whatsoever. Whilst the changes may make little difference in London, outside the capital they could have a quite significant effect. The main reason they will have little effect in London is the shockingly poor enforcement record and disgracefully poor signage identifying Private Hire Vehicles.



Anybody and their uncle can already drive a vehicle with a single small roundel in the rear window, often sighted under window wipers on glass that is heavily tinted, making it almost impossible to read details from even 3 feet away unless in perfect lighting conditions. Indeed, it is quite possible to purchase second hand vehicles with these stickers still attached!

The biggest change, and one that could easily endanger passengers and possibly other road users, is the allowing of drivers *without* a Private Hire drivers licence to drive licensed PHVs. Previously most (although not all) Licensing Authorities made it a condition of licence that only Licensed PH drivers could drive a PHV.

Although all the Hackney trade organisations raised objections to the proposal, supported by many Labour MPs and some from the other parties, HMG steamrolled the amendments through. The prime reason the trade and sympathetic MPs

The De-regulation Bill was making its way through the Lords while the Law Commission was attempting to sort out stuff that didn't need sorting, so we asked Eddie Lambert to explain...

Just what is going on??

opposed the move was for passenger safety. This move at a stroke removed the safeguard that anyone driving a PHV was a licensed PH driver and so had been vetted by their local LA and the national safeguarding bodies.

The government's announced reason for this was to remove the possible need for families of PH drivers to need two vehicles so they had one available for family and other use, whilst the PH driver in the family was out working. The government's claim was that they felt this was an unnecessary financial cost. I guess most taxi drivers won't agree with this as they usually also have a second vehicle, a family car as taxis are often likely to have two working drivers - certainly outside London in areas that restrict taxi numbers.

Although many interested parties outside of the trade itself were opposed to it, the government just bulldozed it through. These groups included Chief Constables, disability groups, many Licensing Authorities, the Suzy Lamplugh Trust and many others. Most of them described the proposal as a touts and rapists charter and who from inside the trade could disagree with that?

Another serious reason for opposing the

move - although I did not see any mention of it at the time - is the practise of **Point Swapping** on driving licences. In the case of offences recorded by roadside cameras, if a family member can say they were driving rather than the PH driver of the family, then it is possible for PH drivers that have accumulated a large number of points through committing traffic offences to escape punishment. I'm sure they would recompense financially anyone who takes their points for them. This must be especially likely in areas where family members or close friends perhaps, live a large portion of their lives outside the country so penalty points on their licence would be fairly meaningless.

While these changes are almost certainly going to happen, another set of proposals - those of the Law Commission - have been kicked into the long grass. That's not to say they will be lost forever, far from it. But that fact that the above changes have been rushed into being shows that it is likely to be awhile before they are resurrected, or they would have just been tucked into the Law Commissions proposals...

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

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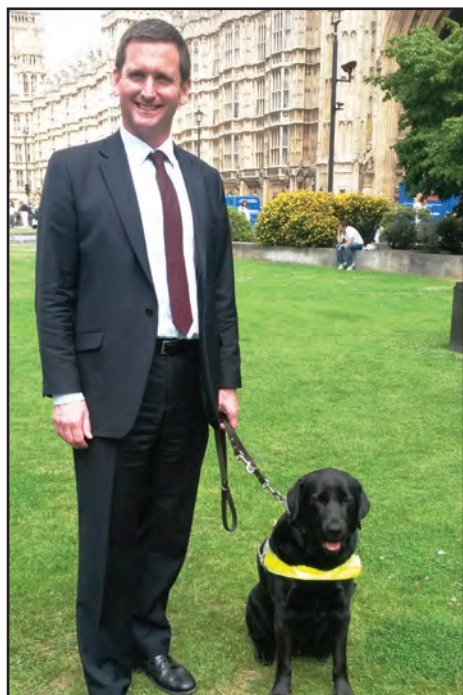
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Lord Holmes of Richmond and Guide Dog Lottie

Dial-a-Cab driver Peter Straiton (F31) entered Lords – that's the radio circuit known better nowadays as Dial-a-Cab – in March 2003.

At that time, Chris Holmes had recently retired from being our most successful ever Paralympian swimmer having represented Great Britain at four suc-

cessive **Paralympic Games** – 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2000. During that time he won an incredible total of nine Golds, five Silvers and one Bronze medal. In fact, at the 1992 Barcelona Games he actually won an amazing haul of six Golds!

As a young 14 year old swimmer, Chris was suddenly struck down by an hereditary vision disorder. *Familial exudative vitreoretinopathy* affects the retina and it eventually took his sight, but never did he allow that to affect his life any more than it had to.

If you're wondering where you may have heard his name, take your mind back to the London 2012 Olympics, to Lord Coe and LOCOG. Chris Holmes was director for the LOCOG Paralympic integration.

Chris Holmes became a Conservative Peer as **Lord Holmes of Richmond** in September 2013 at the age of 42 after deservedly being appointed to the **House of Lords**. Along with his Guide Dog **Lottie** – the first one ever in the HoL - he regularly takes part in the debates and unsurprisingly is a lifelong

campaigner for equality and inclusion. He is also the Head of Disability at the Equality and Human Rights Commission. He was awarded the MBE in 1993 for his services to swimming for the disabled.

So what is it that links Lord's Peter Straiton to the HoL's Lord Holmes?

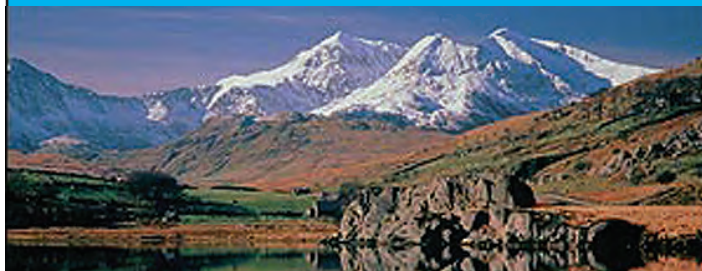
Well last month Peter picked up Lord Holmes and took him home from the House of Lords and they were soon speaking about the London taxi business – including the meter problem involving **Uber**.

Lord Holmes told Peter that he and his colleagues were about to introduce an amendment to the De-regulation Bill that was going through the House of Lords and in which they hoped to define what was and what wasn't a meter in relation to the cab trade.

Peter told *Call Sign* that the good Lord gave him the impression that the intention was to make it clear that meters should relate to black cabs only.

We have asked Lord Holmes if he can write about it in this magazine but at the time of publication, we had yet to hear from him...

The 3 Peaks Challenge in 24 Hours!



Wendy Sorrell, Leigh Dargan, Dan Fosker, David Williams and Steve Vare are to embark on the Three Peaks Challenge next month to raise money for **The Children's Magical Taxi Tour**. This is quite a challenge for a team of 5 novices who are to take on the extraordinary climb of 3 mountain peaks in just 24 hours! Gruelling physical and mental demands lie ahead, but the team say that it is the knowledge that the monies their efforts will raise towards an amazing charity that make it worth the extreme effort. **You can text TAXI 88 to text quickly and safely or click the DONATE NOW button on their Just Giving page which can be found at:**

<https://www.justgiving.com/magicaltaxi3peaks>

Their schedule starts at 3pm with Ben Nevis, then onto Scarfell Pike and ending with Mount Snowdon.

Donating through JustGiving is simple, safe and fast. The money goes directly to the charity to ensure maximum benefit for the children. If you are a UK Taxpayer, make sure you tick the Gift Aid box.

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Entering below the sign saying **Homerton Hospital** was causing my stomach to complete a few cartwheels. This was because of my last encounter some five months previously with the surgical team in a clinically clean operating theatre. It was then they took away a length of my intestine and rerouted a section of my stomach, ending up with me having a **colostomy bag** fitted. Now unless you know me personally, you will not know how much I detest these life-saving appliances. I think they are intrusive, degrading, messy and embarrassing.

But as the *Call Sign* Editor reminded me, they are a necessity with the alternative possibly involving me meeting the Grim Reaper somewhat earlier than I had planned! This being the case, I'm sure some members of *Dial-a-Cab* who had come into contact with me during my tenure as Complaints Officer might even have wished I *had* met that dusty, musty original hoochy with his scythe!

But on this day, I was entering the hospital to see my consultant regarding having that procedure reversed, ie no more plastic bag. The consultant had said to me that if I kept myself healthy, he would consider the reversal of the Hartmann procedure in 6 months. So I sat outside his consulting room on tenterhooks trying to do a crossword, but my mind didn't want to toil with the clue to 4 down.

After our meeting and an examination, the surgeon read the senior colostomy nurse's report before he made his decision. This very smart, dapper man looked up from the report and said it all looked very good, so he booked me in for the reversal op on 20th March.

On that day I attended with my *Dial-a-Cab* sports bag containing night attire, washing facilities, *Kindle Fire* and a head set to attach to the television. My estimated stay was to be 10 days, but so was the one the previous September which ended up as over 3 weeks.

I climbed the stairs to the pre-operative general ward at 7am where I met my nurse for that morning. After doing all the pre-operative checks and tests, I was told to await my turn to enter the operating theatre. I waited until the afternoon as the consultant wanted his registrars to complete their other operations before he would take over for mine. I entered the pre-op room and was asked by the anaesthetist if I was happy to have an epidural? I looked at her and asked if she was sure I was going to have the correct operation as I wasn't having a baby! But she said this was now standard practice for painful operations. Then for the next 20 minutes she tried to insert the needle into the correct spot - apparently they only have one centimetre or less around the spine to insert it. After a 20 minute pricking session, she informed me she'd get the consultant anaesthetist to try to find the right spot! It should have been then that I got off the trolley and left the hospital! It took him another 10 minutes before I was then given a further injection that sent me to La-La land.

It was after 9pm when I came round. I was in the intensive care unit with my own dedicated nurse. My feeling at that time was that I had gone 15 rounds with Frank Bruno when he was feeling angry. My wife was sitting next to the bed not looking too happy; this made me worry as she being a nurse for over 50 years, nothing much usually worried her.

The nurse noticing I was now conscious decided to check my vital signs and ask me to do some simple exercises. It all went well until she asked me to raise my left leg, which I did, but when she asked me to raise the right one, I couldn't. It felt paralysed. Naturally this worried me. The nurse began checking what could cause the problem and all the clues led back to the epidural. It seemed I was given too much and from above my right hip to below the knee was completely numb. A doctor immediately stopped the epidural and some 1½ hours later I began to get sensation back in the leg.

In the December Call Sign, DaC Board member Tom Whitbread wrote of being rushed into Homerton hospital with stomach pains only to be told that he needed a colostomy bag for six months. Now waiting for a reversal op, he has been given more devastating news..

TOM: A COLOSTOMY BAG FOR LIFE



But this was just the start of my bad news. When I saw my consultant the next morning he told me that as he began the reversal operation, he had found one end of the intestine had shrunk and gone slightly hard. So the little machine they use to reattach the two ends of the intestine was useless and he had to stand there like a Taiwan dressmaker and insert 72 stitches. When he had completed the rest of the operation, he inserted 36 staples through my skin to seal up the wound, making it look like a zip fastener. All of this work took over 6 hours during which time it put immense pressure on my heart - bearing in mind that this was the second operation of this length I had endured within 6 months.

After the op I was transferred back to my old general ward for the remainder of my stay where the nurses fussed over me like a returning friend! Three days later I was asked by my male nurse to get out of the bed and walk around. I started to walk away from the bed but my forehead then began feeling warm, sweaty and a little light headed and I was suddenly back on the bed. Once again I felt I was back in La-La land. I could hear the Sister and her nurses telling me to move my hands, arms and legs. Although I could hear and distinguish all of their voices, I couldn't respond. Oxygen was put into my body and I rallied round to find some 20 minutes had passed. Some of my medical team were summoned to try and ascertain what had been the cause. They thought it was a Vasovagal Syncope - a faint caused by extreme emotional distress such as a long operation. Another two doctors then came from the cardiac unit and suggested it could have been a minor TIA - a mini stroke. But a few hours later they said they doubted that diagnosis.

Within a few days I was sent to The National Heart Hospital in Marylebone for a heart check. This is a very swish hospital with an abundance of staff - somewhat different to the Homerton. The surgeon I was reunited with was one I had met some 7 to 8 years ago when he put some stents in my arteries and as I lay on the operating table this time having an angiogram, he told me that they were standing up well to my pace of life. He continued poking around and said that another of my arteries would need some attention in the future but as I was there anyway, he could do it now and save me a long wait when they were needed. I agreed as he had done a good job previously, but this could have been a big mistake.

On my return to the Homerton later that day, I was reminded how atrocious the food was. It may

have been fresh and tasty at the beginning, but by the time they cooked it and warmed it up in a steam microwave, it was disgusting. I just couldn't eat it. During my time there I lost 10 kilos in weight and due to not eating, the bile in my stomach was building up being a substance that the body produces to break down fats into fatty acids and helping digestion. I knew the feeling as I had experienced it on my previous visit, so at 8pm I asked the male nurse if he could arrange for me to have a Nasogastric tube. This is passed through the nose and down through the nasopharynx and esophagus into the stomach. He phoned the doctor on duty and said the reply was I needed an x-ray first, so we waited and waited, making repeated phone calls. I didn't get the tube inserted until 5am so I asked the male nurse to get the doctor's name as I was going to report him. The tube produced nearly 2 litres of bile and that was why I was feeling so annoyed.

On Saturday the 5th April, I began to get a pain in my groin and a leakage from my intestine, which got into my bladder. I was sent for two specialist x-rays which consisted of dye and going into what looked like a giant polo mint, but neither could locate the leak or the fistula. But even so they decided to send me home.

The hospital then contacted me and asked that I go to outpatients to have a cystoscopy - which is a camera up your wedding tackle. I went and had the procedure done on April 17th - one which I assure you is highly embarrassing as the young nurse keeps peeking under the hospital gown. I watched the progress on a monitor while the doctor explained everything. But he also couldn't find the leak or hole. Just as he was finishing, he inserted a catheter and bag and it was at that moment that my patience finally failed me and I lost my cool. I asked what he was doing and he informed me that this was part of the procedure in case it was needed.

Due to the little bag he had fitted, I was forever in the toilet emptying it. Then on Easter Sunday, it blocked up completely causing me to go to the A&E department where I sat in a cubicle for 4 hours waiting for a 2 minute operation to flush it out. This was only completed when I reminded them of the 4 hour deadline. To get their own back, they admitted me back onto my previous ward.

On the following Tuesday, I was given the worst news I could have expected by my consultant; I would have to have another reversal operation and have the colostomy bag put back for life. The next blow was that because I had agreed to the stents, the operation could not be completed less than 3 months after and possibly not before 6 months. Then a consultant cardiologist and anaesthetist would have to agree that I was fit enough to go ahead with the operation.

My own Consultant had provisionally booked the operation for Thursday September 18th, this was so a silly administration person could not cancel saying they were overbooked. It has since been delayed again! The Editor asked me to give you an update on my 2 months in the Homerton, but as you see it is still a continuing story...

Tom Whitbread
DaC Board Member

In the final paragraph of my last *Call Sign* article, I wrote that we had tendered for two accounts and were waiting on their decision and as soon as I knew anything I would let you know. As of this minute, we are still waiting for decisions to be made. One informed us their decision would be made by the end of February while the other said by the end of May.

Both did say that the process was taking longer than expected and we would hear very soon - that was in June. Not wishing to speculate, it could mean the bids are close and that we are in with a chance. If that isn't the reason, then I have no idea why they are taking their time. But it does show that whilst accounts can close very quickly, it is the complete opposite when attempting to gain new ones.

I had a driver leave me a message via his terminal about getting an account on the island because he had done a considerable amount of time waiting for a trip. If it were that simple to gain accounts, I assure you I would be doing it. It is certainly not for the want of the whole Sales team trying.

I also wrote that I had taken on board the mixed feelings of drivers with regard to run-ins and gratuities. One would like to think an offer to customers like that would spark a lot of interest. I selected companies that we know were big players in using taxis and cars

DAC SALES REPORT

With Keith Cain



to offer them a very good deal. My correspondence with them did explain what a fantastic deal we were offering and I thought it would spark interest, even if it was to generate a meeting.

But just one prospective client responded and a meeting has indeed taken place with arrangements now made for a full demonstration of our systems at the end of September. Again, you can see that accounts do not change suppliers that quickly.

We have been on trial for the past month with one account that has offices in the City and West End. So I'm pleased to report that we have done exceptionally well and they are now looking to take us to the next step of being their sole supplier. I would like to name them so you all know who they are, however, I am equally sure you can understand why I won't but that you will in time get to know them very well.

Carol Carpenter, who deals with Customer Relations, has been working extremely hard to introduce herself to as many of our clients as possible. She is also surveying our clients and asking how they are finding our service. In the main, they have all been very complimentary about us, how courteous and helpful our drivers are and how polite and efficient the staff are in the call centre; which is exactly what we all want to hear. Carol told me that she would love a pound for everyone she has spoken to who said the same thing: "You would soon hear from us if we had a problem!"

The next few weeks are going to be very testing for all of us with the school holidays in full flow and work slowing down due to clients coinciding their vacations with the children's hols. But we have to take a positive viewpoint in that from September it will improve.

While we have lost two big players, we still have to be mindful that we are operating a £20 million company. Our individual trip average is still approximately £30 on average, which is far more than others can offer. We must concentrate on looking after our clients and others will come on in time. Unfortunately, not at the growth speed we saw not that many years ago...

Keith Cain
DaC Head of Sales

LTC TX4: 1000 up since restart!

With the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) reporting a year-on-year positive output for UK automotive production of 3.5% growth in May, the London Taxi Company's own production team reached their first milestone, having produced their 1,000th vehicle since the manufacturing of the TX4 restarted last September.

Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive was quoted as saying "New UK-built models will benefit from growing demand across Europe, while significant investments in UK manufacturing operations are moving closer to production readiness."

This is certainly the case for the Coventry-based Black Cab manufacturer. With sales in the UK and international markets continuing apace, the future looks bright for The London Taxi Company, its customers and UK manufacturing in general.

Director of Retail **Rob Laidler** commented: "Given the challenges of restarting production, as well as the implementation of new quality monitoring and management processes, we are all extremely proud of the hard work and determination demonstrated by our colleagues working in Production."

"This is an exciting period of development and progress for the entire company. We still have much we want to achieve and implement, however, this milestone should quite rightly be a moment for the team to pause and reflect on positively."

The passing of the 1000 cab milestone coincided with news that the Mercedes Vito sold just 18 taxis in June compared to 84 TX4s...



LTC UK Exec Vice President, Peter Johansen, in the 1000th taxi surrounded by the workforce



TfL private prosecutions

Two men have been prosecuted for not holding operator licences following TfL private prosecutions. Mr Jan was fined at Westminster Magistrates' Court on 4th June 2014 after pleading guilty to plying for hire and holding no operator licence. He was caught touting on the 6th October 2013 by TfL Compliance Officers who observed the driver accepting to take four passengers without a booking made via an operator.

In the early hours of Sunday 16 September 2013, TfL Compliance Officers were in Derry Street, Kensington W8 conducting on street compliance checks when they witnessed a woman with her children being touted by Mr Charles. He was referred for prosecution and appeared at City of London Magistrates Court on 29th May 2014 where he pleaded guilty to accepting a booking without an operator licence. He was fined and ordered to pay costs to TfL.

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TEXACO

London Taxidriver's' Fund for Underprivileged Children LTFUC AND DAC GO TO SOUTHEND!

July 10 saw the LTFUC annual outing to **Southend**. It was a rather dismal morning but with 300 happy children beginning to arrive at **Victoria Park**, their smiles soon brightened things up.

The 100-strong taxi convoy with its usual smattering of **Dial-a-Cab** drivers began arriving at the Park from 6.30am and the drivers began decorating their cabs with hundreds of balloons. After a quick breakfast at the Park's **Pavilion Café**, it was back to the taxis to welcome their special little passengers for the day. On hand to greet the children were the **Furry Tail Folk**, **Blanco the Clown** and **Misiz**, **Clown Jolly Jack** and **Miss Ballooniverse** – most of whom carried on entertaining the children in Southend as well joining us all day in Southend.

We were also delighted to have **The Worshipful Company of Tin Plate Workers** join us. They were the Chairman of their Charity Committee, **Diana Hughes**, the Company Master **Jeremy Balcombe** and their Fund Raiser Co-ordinator **Nick Perry**. **Get Taxi** sponsored and **Costco** supplied and handed out bottles of water, while **Sainsbury's**, **Low Hall** (Chingford) donated bags of fruit. We were helped and supported by **Tower Hamlets Council**.

At 10am, the 100 horn-blowing taxi convoy set off along with the **Essex Police** and **Blue Knights Law Enforcement Motor Cycle Club (England 7 Charter)** escorting us safely to Southend in record time! **Green Flag** worked for over an hour to fix one taxi and another one which broke down on the way home. The **Red Cross** were also on hand for the day. Meeting the children at the seaside and joining the entertainers that travelled with us were **Salvo the Clown**, **Balloonist Colin Jones** and the gorgeous **Snow White (Sarah Hart)**. Together they created a magical arrival atmosphere.

After LTFUC Hon Chair **Sim Yiannikaris** had welcomed everyone, **Dev Singh** came on stage and presented £800 to our charity. Dev had his very long hair cut in order to raise money for us and we are very grateful to him for that wonderful gesture. His hair was donated to the **Little Princess Trust** to make wigs for children with hair loss – a lovely thing to do.

After a quick lunch at the **Cliffs Pavilion**, the children were ferried down to **Adventure Island** for a fun filled afternoon. Thanks go to **Brian Houssart MBE**, Hon President of the **Southend Taxi Charity Fund for Children** for his support in supplying the transport and also to **Southend Council** for the use of the Shorefield Road Car Park.

As you walked round **Adventure Island**, all you could hear were screams of laughter – especially as vouchers had been given to supply the children ice creams, donuts, candyfloss and drinks!

At 4pm it was back to the **Cliffs Pavilion** for a tea and disco and our longstanding DJ **Dave Davies** and his team who kept the children entertained. We were also pleased to welcome the **Mayor of Southend**, **Councillor Chris Walker**.

It was now time for the presentations. The first one was for the best dressed taxi and this went to **Marvin Houston** and **Michelle**, winning the **Terry Stapleton Rose Bowl**. It was Champagne for

Hussein Hussein (H48) with David Lessman (D19) standing alongside



Young candidate for Strictly Come Dancing!



Marvin and chocolates for Michelle. Marvin also received a voucher from **Vince White Taxis** of Waltham Abbey with a choice of £150 or a cab service and MOT. The second prize went to **Paul Cresswell** with **Julia**. He won the **Peter Lucas Shield**, with champagne and chocolates. **James Poole** won a large bottle of wine for dressing in a brilliant Union Jack suit. All the drivers' names went into a general draw and the winner was **Jacqueline Gray**, who won an overnight stay at Mayfair's **Connaught Hotel**. Jacqueline kindly donated her prize to the parents of the children in her taxi as she felt they deserved a special treat and some quality time together – a lovely gesture.

The final presentation was our 2014 **Certificate of Honour** – presented by the Mayor to 10 members of the **Westcliff High School for Girls, Year 10 School Council** for raising a magnificent £2,450.63 for the LTFUC. We are very grateful to those wonderful girls for their generosity and time.

Then there were our face-painters **Jacqueline Walsh**, **Asha Lai**, **Kat Sinclair**, **Nicky Gardner** and **Fran Heaver** who worked tirelessly painting children's faces and the four members of **Danno Scordino Productions** who spent the day with us to video the whole outing. A short promotional video can be seen on our website at www.ltfuc.org.uk, but a full length one will be available very soon. We also thank the press and media and especially **LBC** for their coverage – including overnight presenter **Steve Allen**, whose wit always entertains night drivers.

There was also the anonymous donor that

donated £25 to each driver to cover the cost of their fuel and **Radiocom Systems Ltd** who loaned us their communication equipment.

At 5.30pm, a long conga led the children out of the hall towards their taxis, but not before each child was handed a stick of rock, kindly donated by Southend Councillor **Paul Van Looy**, to bring to an end a wonderful, brilliant, amazing and fantastic day.

Unfortunately, our Hon President **Bill Tyzack BEM** and his wife **Grace** were unable to join us due to Bill's poor health and the Hon Chairman and all the Committee wish Bill a speedy recovery.

The London Taxidriver's' Fund for Underprivileged Children would like to sincerely thank all those mentioned above for their help and assistance in making this such a memorable day for the 300 children. The Hon Chairman and Committee also give very special thanks to all the wonderful drivers, as these outings could not happen without you. I must also congratulate the wonderful team on the LTFUC Committee who do such an incredible job, not only on this outing, but all year round and I know the children would want me to thank absolutely everyone for enabling them to enjoy such a magical day.

Many images will be on our website at www.ltfuc.org.uk along with a full video in due course...

Raymond Levy LTFUC Press Officer

None walks so tall as he who stoops to help a child

ALBANY OUTING TO HASTINGS



This year's outing by the **Albany Taxi Charity to Hastings** took place on a cloudy, sometimes rainy day, but that did nothing to spoil the event. Back in 1972, the Albany undertook their first outing - which went to Margate; twenty years on and the trips began going to Hastings.

Starting out from **Charlton Athletic FC**, the taxis were brightly decorated and a great atmosphere marked the start of the 2014 out-

ing. Not to mention a great breakfast thanks to the generous **LTDA** sponsorship. Outing sponsorship is given by a number of organisations; **Ascotts**, who sponsored the diesel this year, **Dial-a-Cab**, **Allied Bakeries** and **Quotax**. Also helping out on the outing were breakdown services and **St Johns Ambulance**. The committee are extremely grateful for all the donations and sponsorship that make the Albany outings possible.

The convoy made a stop at beautiful **Bewl Water**. Then it was off to Hastings where the **Mayor** and **Beauty Queen** of the town were ready to greet us as we arrived. The whole

day is one of relaxed fun and the committee are also grateful to **Gina**, from the **Licensed Victuallers** in Hastings for her help. Another thank you goes to the **Hastings Fairground** who kindly allows the children free rides throughout the day. With a disco and lunch for the children to enjoy, the day was fun-filled including for the drivers who take part and the committee is grateful to all who give up their time for the outings. Heartfelt thanks to one and all.

If you would like to help out on future outings, contact Ray Ali on 07779 798872 for more details.

ELCO'S ANNUAL TRIP TO MALDON

When London taxi trade charities organise their outings there are sometimes moments at the last minute when things can go awry. This year the **East London Cabbies Outing (ELCO)** to Maldon - known in the town as **Taxi Day** - had a last minute change of departure venue and the committee are extremely grateful to **West Ham United Football Club** for helping out at short notice. As a result, a great day was enjoyed by everyone involved.

So the Boleyn ground was the starting point where the children and carers gathered before setting out towards Essex in a convoy of over 75 taxis with the Blue Knights Motorcycle Club and of course, a police escort alongside for company!

As the taxis drove through East Ham, local fire-fighters made a good deal of noise with their sirens to welcome the convoy. A comfort stop for refreshments was made at **The George and Dragon** in the village of **Mountnessing** and then it was on to Maldon.

In the town, the High Street was brightly decorated and the streets lined with locals waving and cheering. The cabs arrived at **The Plume School** for lunch, then it was off to the **Promenade Park** where there were birds of prey, magic acts, children's entertainers, pony rides and a disco, followed later in the afternoon by more food.

ELCO Chairman **Ken 'Spanners' Flemwell** said the event brought pleasure to everyone involved. "These are very special children and we were delighted that West Ham provided their car park to enable us to take them on this very special day out. The Outing was started



Smiling faces tell the story

over 60 years ago by my father, Charles, at the Elizabeth Fry School in Canning Town, with the first event featuring eight cabs and 16 children. At our peak, we had over 100 cabs and this year we have about 75 cabs altogether with kids from Havering and Dagenham as well. The people of Maldon always welcome us and line the streets when we get there it makes everybody feel special."

Dial-a-Cab driver and long-time ELCO Committee member, **John Dixon (B67)**, told **Call Sign**:

"There was a presentation of £3450 from **Roding Lodge** to ELCO for which the charity was extremely grateful. This came because taxi driver and Roding Lodge member, **Steve Keys**, has been on many ELCO outings and this year got the Lodge to agree that ELCO would be their principle charity. So our sincere thanks to the Roding Lodge (3090) and also to all the drivers and sponsors for their support in making this outing so successful. That, of course, includes **Dial-a-Cab** for their ongoing sponsorship."

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(To be sung as a hymn please)



Hello and hallelujah to one and all...

I've heard from a certain Editor that some drivers wish to know how our wonderful Credit Union works so they can join our already 1000+ members. Well it's quite simple really, but some may have trouble grasping it as it's so different from the High Street banks and building societies.

Firstly you need to save; as a rule we like £20 per week going into your savings. The **DaC Credit Union**

calls them shares (that's the first difference). Those savings are how we lend money out, unlike High Street banks that tend to buy money in.

When you require a loan, we lend against your savings/shares, so if you have £1000 saved, we lend against that by 3 times so you could borrow up to £3000. But this again is another difference because your £1000 savings stays in to your account/shares and we give you the £3000, so in effect you have only borrowed £2000. Please God you are not sitting there scratching your heads, I've got a bit of religion going on here (I think)!

Hopefully you now have the information you require, or if you are still unsure come down to our little office in downtown Hackney Road and I will do my best to show you on our computer if you still aren't sure. I will then bash you on the head (Amen to that)!

So if you wish to join our merry band of brothers and sisters, give us a call on 0207 729 8171 or call in at Unit 14, Peterley Business Centre, 472, Hackney Road E2 9EQ. We really are very nice people whose only aim is to help you when you need some.

New tyre shop opens...

Due to huge demand, we have brought back the **Tyre Shop** downstairs as users of it will know how useful it is. We do **Austones** for TX cabs and **Barum** for the Vito, plus **4-wheel laser tracking** for the Vito and **2-wheel tracking** for the TX. We have a small number of **Michelins** and **Contis**, but we can order anything you require very quickly.

One of the advantages of a downstairs tyre shop is that if you are a DACCU member, you will be able to pay for the tyres through your savings, or if required, take a small loan so there's no need to worry about paying an unexpected bill. How bad is that! As I said, we have started the tyre shop up again to help the hard working Taxi drivers out there – ok, and perhaps to help persuade drivers to become members of the Credit Union. And why wouldn't you when you are saving your own money but knowing the benefit those savings could bring you.

Harp Credit Union

The **Harp Credit Union** is for **non-Dial-a-Cab** drivers, their families and friends. The-then **Financial Services Authority** asked us to take it over at a time when it was going to be closed down due to poor running. So we decided to take it on and since then it has gone from strength to strength.

This Credit Union works in exactly the same way as the DACCU, so if you know someone who you think could benefit from being a member of a credit union, give them our number as above and they too can join in the success.

That's all for now. Please be very careful out there...

John Riley
DACCU Vice President

Ricky Manetta self-defence course



Ricky (left) demonstrates Krav Maga

Some of you may know of Dial-a-Cab driver **Ricky Manetta (N16)** who runs self-defence classes for taxi drivers. **Ricky** has now started master classes in the City for all Dial-a-Cab members who wish to attend.

Ricky is head of the **MMA Krav Maga Federation**, which is the system used by the **Israeli Special Forces**. He is presently running special classes for complete beginners up to advanced level; the classes are limited to twelve people only, so they are almost a large private lesson.

Contact **Ricky** on 07950 267574 or email him at:

rickymanetta@hotmail.co.uk if you are interested. The classes are held at **Fight City Gym, Worship Street** each Wednesday between 2.15pm - 3.45pm and 7.30pm - 9.00pm. The cost is £15 per class. You can also check **Ricky** out on YouTube...

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

On Saturday 21st of June, I received a text message from a friend, Dave Bedford, telling me that his Brother Peter had sadly passed away. Peter was one of five brothers who grew up in SW London; both David and Peter went on to become London cabbies.

Peter Bedford (ex-K02) had been a cabbie for over 30 years and was the first Chairman of the **London Cab Driver's Club** (LCDC). Before he got his Badge at the beginning of the 1980s, Pete had jobs in the print and as an area manager for a fuel company. He also had a spell running his own garage before becoming a cabbie, so he knew his way around vehicles and it was this knowledge that he put to such good use on behalf of his fellow drivers.

I first met Peter when he was on **Dial-a-Cab** and already involved with the **Metrocab Club** which had been formed by a group of Metro owners having difficulties with the manufacturer of the box-shaped taxi that first appeared in the mid-eighties as competition to LTI's FX4.

At that time I was a dispatcher on DaC and had been introduced to Peter by other DaC drivers at the **Royal Oak**. It was in the days before mobile phones and for drivers to keep in touch, messages would often be exchanged over the airwaves as finding phone boxes that worked and being able to catch a driver at home at the right time could be a bit of a pain. It was often much easier to catch up over an arranged cup of tea in order to minimise downtime.

So by default, I became Peter's personal messenger! I got to know about gearbox problems that needed fixing at **KSM's** in Carshalton and tracking that would need to be taken to have the chassis adjusted. I knew all about Putney Bridge's **Brian Brown**, aka 'Bloodless' before I ever met him and how **LTI** tried to buy his disc brake prototypes that many drivers now take for granted on their taxis. It was never quite that simple back then and Peter Bedford was one of the first people to challenge the **PCO** and their obsession with the turning circle at the test centre.

Messages would go back and forth over the DaC airwaves as Pete sought to represent his growing membership. Half the time I had no idea what he was going on about and whether someone's big end would last out the week or their diff would need welding. But if someone needed help, I knew the bloke to ask and even got used to knowing where he would be and with whom. I could even advise drivers without reference to Peter as I heard the advice again and again! But I also became aware that his selflessness was starting to cost him money as he started later and later each night having spent hours listening to drivers problems at night and spending his day trying to resolve issues on the phone, only to try and get some sleep before his phone started ringing and causing him to go to work later than he should have.

He became a 24 hour helpline as more and more drivers learned of his growing reputation and the success of the Metrocab Club legal scheme. It was mainly down to Peter and his small band of willing helpers that the Metrocab Club became the London Cab Drivers Club that most people now know.

When LTI changed their FX4 model with the much better **Fairway**, the Nissan engine that was much quicker and a better unit than had

FORMER DAC DRIVER PETER BEDFORD DIES



Peter gigging at a London club

previously been fitted caused problems with the differential and brakes because they were not up to the power a 2.7 lump produced. Again drivers turned to Peter for help and his phone rang off the hook!

In the end, the Metrocab grew into the LCDC and the legal scheme became a powerful weapon against both manufacturers. In fact, it was because of Peter's dogged tenacity and refusal to accept the usual excuses about problems being caused by the way cabbies drove their taxis that Metrocab were closed down and LTI were forced to up their standards.

I speak from personal experience as one of the Fairway owners who had problems with a cab that would not stop due to an ineffective braking system and benefitted from Peter's help. Having been at my wits end over the amount of downtime I had experienced with the cab, I eventually called Pete. Within a few hours of him calling M&Os, I'd had a call from the dealership offering to take my vehicle and give me a brand new replacement until it was

fixed. Several months later, my cab was returned in pristine condition with new disc brakes fitted and a further year's warranty plus a year's free servicing! That was the power of Peter's negotiating skills backed up by his knowledge - and also his pit bull-like mentality!

Peter was always a dogged character. When he first came into the trade, he was commended by **Chief Superintendent Kruger** at Harrow Road police station for his action in catching a knife-wielding mugger who had committed a series of assaults on London cabbies. When they picked on 'Pit-bull Pete' they picked on the wrong cabbie. He excelled at running and weight lifting and had a black belt in Karate. Not only did he wrestle one mugger to the floor, his actions led to the capture of the other one! Both of the youths involved received custodial sentences for their particularly nasty assaults and Peter was thanked for his valuable assistance.

Being Chairman of the LCDC eventually took its toll on Peter and he quit cab trade politics as an unpaid rep once the organisation had found its feet. His whole family had helped the club grow; I remember his wife and kids helping out with the refreshments at one of the first AGMs.

His first love was his family; his wife **Diane**, who he met in 1967 and married in 1976 and his two boys, **Daryl** and **Ryan**. He also leaves behind two grandsons, **Finley** and **Milo**.

This was followed by the love of his music. Peter sang in a local band playing harmonica and keyboards. He loved soul, Motown and the blues and would take every opportunity to play a gig in the South West London area that he grew up in. Some drivers may also remember him as the bloke who paid out **HATDU's** credit cards in between cleaning his harmonicas at Heathrow!

Mark White (ex-B86)

Brian Rice represented Dial-a-Cab at a service held for Peter at the North East Surrey Crematorium, Lower Morden on 7th July...

20mph speed limit for City

From 20 July, the City of London - with the exception of Victoria Embankment and up through Tower Hill to Mansell Street - became a 20mph zone. Authorities claim it will increase road safety and cut accidents by 7%. It will also assist in the Mayor's aim of putting more and more cyclists on the road and keeping them safe.

Unlike other 20mph schemes, this one is said to be supported by the City police and will be enforced.

See Editorial on page 3



More and more bikes on the road thanks to a reduced speed limit?

In last months' issue of *Call Sign* we were given an insight into what it's like to be a female taxi driver in what is still considered to be, despite their expanding numbers, a primarily male occupation.

Each of us has, from time to time, picked up an awkward passenger and dealt with the situation in our own way.

Being a female probably puts a different aspect on the passenger/driver relationship and this month Jackie Hill (S34) tells us of her own 'rider from hell'.

"It was a few years ago now but I remember the incident as though it were yesterday," Jackie recalled.

"I was in Eldon Street one evening when a hand went out and a 'suit' waved me down. He gave his destination as Denmark Hill and we set off with the passenger immediately beginning a phone call. Traffic at the Bank junction was at a standstill, so I diverted towards Queen Victoria Street to take Blackfriars Bridge. Oh dear! By now he had finished his call and belted out where the hell did I think I was going? I told him that I hadn't wanted to disturb his phone call but had he not seen the traffic heading towards London Bridge? Surely he would want me to keep moving but I added that I would be happy to turn around and go sit in the traffic jam!" Jackie's voice took on the same indignant tone as with which she had obviously spoken to her passenger.

"At this point he huffed and puffed, mumbled something incomprehensible under his breath, so I said I would just carry on then and we continued on our far-from-merry way because I was now well aware that I had picked up the nightmare fare of the day!

"As we approached Walworth Road, he became even more aggressive. Close to

We've all had them; so if you want to share yours with Call Sign readers, tell us about...

My Journey from Hell!



Jackie Hill: Would she have had the same hassle had she been male?

Camberwell Green there is a bus lane that is denied use to taxis, but this guy could not accept that fact and demanded I used it, wanting me to 'speed up' even though I was hitting 35 mph as it was because I could not wait to get him out of my cab!

"We came up to a set of traffic lights and anticipating the amber that suddenly appeared, I came to a stop. That's when Mr Know-all in the back yelled that I could have made that light! I told him quite firmly that I was not going to jeopardise my licence for him and

added sweetly that I had his safety in mind, although nothing could have been further from the truth at that moment in time because my blood was boiling!

"That's when he accused me of not being a 'proper' cab driver at which I burst out laughing and offered him the opportunity to find another means of transport once he had paid me. But he said he was not going to pay and that's when we ended up at Walworth Police Station, having called his bluff about daring me to do so.

"The desk officer listened to both our versions of events and explained to Mr Doughnut that taxi drivers do not need hassle from drunks like him and made him pay me. The passenger then stormed out of the police station and I thanked the officer for his assistance.

"Yes, I was happy that I had prevailed, but was fuming at how badly the evening had ended and went home feeling still irritated at this passenger's attitude, knowing the incident could affect my driving.

"So the point I'm making is that had I had been a burly male driver, would I have been subjected to a tirade and aggression such as I experienced from Mr Nasty? Probably not, but the only way is to laugh off these idiots who cannot handle their booze and hope they have the hang-over from hell the next day!"

**Alan Green (E52)
Call Sign Online**

In an era where more and more signs are appearing on taxis, TfL tell us about...

UNAUTHORISED SIGNAGE ON TAXIS (1)

It has recently come to our attention that some taxi drivers are choosing to display stickers or printed papers in their vehicles which include use of the Transport for London (TfL) roundel (which is an unauthorised use of a registered trademark) and which may state the driver's negative opinions about taxi and PHV apps.

The London Cab Order 1934 paragraph 14 (l), states the licensee shall not, otherwise than in accordance with the directions of TfL, cause or permit any object, or any printed, written or other matter to be displayed on the outside or inside of the cab, or be presented to any passenger by way of advertisement. Drivers and owners of taxis are able to place advertising and other material on their taxis as long as it meets the TfL taxi and private hire guidelines for advertising.

Anyone wanting to display or provide any printed or written material (including advertising or other signage) on the inside or outside of their vehicle or to passengers, which does not meet the advertising guidelines, is required to seek prior approval from TfL before doing so.

In light of the above, TfL requires that all drivers/owners remove all unauthorised objects, printed, written or other matter from their taxis with immediate effect. The licence of any taxi found to display any such material that has not been authorised by TfL may be liable to suspension or revocation.

Garrett Emmerson, COO, TfL Surface Transport

See Editorial on page 3...Ed

UNAUTHORISED SIGNAGE ON TAXIS (2)

This was sent to us by a Dial-a-Cab driver who says he took offence at TfL's letter to the trade regarding unauthorised signage and asked whether the firm in the photo were told off for use of the TfL logo..



August 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of the start of **The Great War**, but what sort of state was the cab trade in at the time? In 1914, the largest taxicab company in London was **The British Motor Cab Company (BMCC)** whose business was based in **Grosvenor Road**. They were said to control over 4,000 of the 7,000 motor cabs that were then plying their trade in London with garages in Chiswick, Farm Lane Fulham and Brixton Road (**The London General**, which the British Motor Cab Company had taken over in 1913).

Despite grumblings from drivers that they were being fleeced by the garages as to the rates they had to pay, several of the smaller businesses collapsed under the pressure of trying to run a small fleet.

In 1913, BMCC brokered a deal that ended a ten week strike over the drivers paying 1s 1d (6p) for a gallon of petrol instead of 8d (4p). They found that once the engine had started, it could run efficiently on a mixture of petrol and paraffin and the drivers were only to be charged the original 8d a gallon for this new mixture. For their 8d, the drivers were told that they would get 18 mpg from their cabs but the men found out that they averaged only 12 to 14 miles per gallon. The BMCC had agreed to give a rebate to those drivers whose cabs were averaging less than the 18mpg, but payments were often slow or not forthcoming at all.

The 2500 journeymen of the company agreed to hold a meeting at **Lambeth Baths**, then at the corner of Lambeth and Kennington roads. But many men complained about the all-too-frequent union meetings held there, which always began at midnight when the men were not working. So it was decided that the cab trade would have a *holiday* and not a *strike day*, and meet up there and discuss strike action "during daylight."

In the end the strike came to nought as the company agreed to improve the quality of its petrol, presumably by adding less paraffin to it. So the men returned to work. The cabmen however were not the only ones to complain about the quality of the petrol. Taxicabs were being blamed for an increase in the numbers of people suffering from coughs and sneezes – which were put down to exhaust emissions from taxicabs. Sounds familiar?

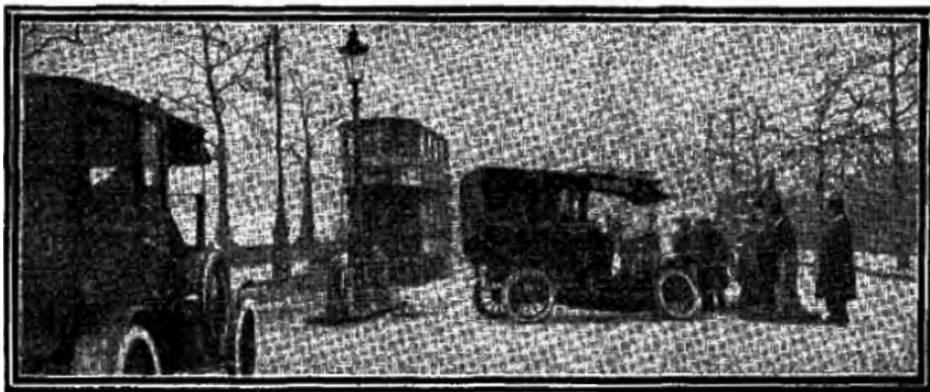
If some things have not changed, then how about the musher who crashed his cab into a bollard along **Victoria Embankment** by **Cleopatra's Needle**? The cab had stopped perpendicular to the roadway forcing other road users to go around it. It was still in the same position five days later much to the amusement of the public and the press – particularly the **Daily Mirror** of 17th February 1914 – which remarked that the meter was supposedly still ticking away!

In 1912, the **London Yeomanry** – at a meeting at the **Royal United Services Institute** in Whitehall – argued that the advent of the motor cab had meant the "better class of cab horse" they relied on had by that time virtually ceased to exist. They had no joy with

Over the past year, Call Sign has been looking at the part families of Dial-a-Cab drivers played in times of war. This month, Call Sign's historian, Sean Farrell (B39), looks at the trade itself as what would become known as **The Great War of 1914 – 1918** war broke out...

1914

DESERTED TAXICAB: VEHICLE'S WEEK-END ON THE EMBANKMENT.



The **Daily Mirror** dated 17 February 1914 reports on the perpendicular cab!

omnibus horses either as all but one bus company had switched over to motorisation. There appears to have been an increase in horse cabs during the strike of 1913, but no such increase once the hostilities of 1914 began and petrol became hard to come by.

Accidents were ever-present. Henry White cranked up his cab, as he did several times each working day, but the cab lurched forward and crushed him against a wall, killing him instantly.

Once war was declared, many cabmen began to sign up. Those that remained carried recruitment posters on their cabs. This sparked a debate from some who said they would refuse to get in a cab that carried such posters. These *refuseniks* were shouted down

almost immediately by other members of the public who said they would only get into a cab if it was carrying the war posters.

Although the arrival of the taxicabs had meant the end of the cab horse, it also meant that cabmen had a skill that many members of the public did not have – they could drive a motor car. Many cabmen enlisted as the call for arms went up and it was estimated that by the end of 1914, over 3,000 cabmen – about a third of the workforce – had joined the Army, many of them in the transport and medical regiments. It remained to be seen how many came back and returned to their former trade...

Sean Farrell (B39)
Call Sign Online

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

It's a cabby's life

Whatsisname told me!

I know many drivers' faces, but few of their names as I drive around the streets of London. This is the nature of our trade, acknowledging colleagues with a *bail-fellow-well-met* greeting, but then we may not see them again for ten years!

Recently whilst ranked up on **Stratton Street** a **Dial-a-Cab** guy I hadn't seen for years was listening to music, decibels up high. He had just purchased a life changing gadget on the internet - a digital radio. It involved a plethora of wires connected to an amplifier, connected to an interior aerial that was connected to the radio. He was rather proud of his ingenious handiwork and said he was used to the exposed wires both high and low. The sound admittedly was great and he advised me that if I got one then it should be a **Pure Radio** as it had won all the prizes.

With that in mind and being in possession

of an archaic factory fit JVC radio that cuts out momentarily when you are intent on listening to something, that seemed a justifiable reason to splash the cash. So the next day I hit **Halfords** on the Great Cambridge Road. The sales manager advised a **Pure Radio** because it has won all the prizes!

So I Bought the **Pure DAB Highway H240Di (without Blue Tooth)** for £95; the **Pure DAB Highway H260DBi with Blue Tooth** can be purchased for £129. I also purchased an **Autoleads DAB Film Antenna** for £19.99.

I was told a fitter could install the kit for £40. I initially baulked at the cost but remembering my friends DIY efforts, I submitted and James installed the radio/aerial in 30 minutes, doing a first class job and leaving no wires in sight. He was also polite and helpful with any questions I asked.

For a total of £160 and with a 3-year warranty, it has changed my working experience.

But I still didn't catch my friend's bloody name...

Cabby lingo?

I must tread carefully here as **Call Sign's** content must adhere to the strict criteria for family consumption; but a new euphemism has been added to the colourful lexicon of language used by taxi drivers.

A taxi with the roof-top advertiser is now affectionately known as *knob head* with several of them together collectively called *Dick heads*.

To qualify as a knob head, you need a TX4 with no exterior advertising and for this you receive the princely sum of £1,500 per year for three years and free MOTs. Rather a trifle sum in return for losing your pride.

First reserve???

Finally from a good source, I recently heard that a disgruntled employee of the **Bank of England** had to wait over an hour for a contracted **Addison Lee** minicab to arrive. Fortunately, an emergency service was borne into play; a licensed taxi...

Stephen Berndes
Call Sign Online

A fifteen year rule for taxis? DaC's Jon Robinson asked Call Sign...

WHAT ABOUT THE 40 YEAR OLD MINICAB!

Jon Robinson (E88) has been on **Dial-a-Cab** for 10 years and says that in that time he has seen enormous changes in the London taxi business - one of - if not the - biggest being the advent of a fifteen year age limit for licensing taxis.

But he went on to ask what type of limit there is on minicabs because he recently took a photo of an estimated forty-year old **Morris Minor** with a private hire roundel on the back. Jon said:

"I'm guessing that it had one careful former owner! But it's now on London's street as a minicab. Wasn't there a ten year limit set on cars being used as minicabs at the time our 15-year rule came in? Whatever next from TfL - WW2 amphibious trucks that randomly catch fire doing tours on the river Thames?"

Jon is right that as from 1 January 2012, a 10 year rolling age limit was introduced for private hire vehicles while a 15 year rolling age limit came in for taxis unless exempted. Then from 1 April 2012, all newly licensed private hire vehicles had to, as a minimum, meet Euro 4 standards for emissions and be no older than 5 years. At the same time, all newly licensed taxis had to, as a minimum, meet Euro 5 standards for emissions. However, **Call Sign** believes that Morris Minors are one of the exempted PH vehicles, even though we can't find anything about it on the TfL website.

But it's a beautiful car albeit small, cramped, very uncomfortable and prone to overheating. But hey, Jon, you can't have everything because if Camden Council has their way, our age limit will drop from 15 years down to 10. Then we'll all have to buy old Morris Minors!!!

Baghwat Singh
Call Sign Online



This old Morris Minor is a minicab!

Geely sell their cabs to... Shanghai!



Many claim - probably with huge justification - that the **TX4** London taxi could have faded away into insignificance had the former LTI vehicles not been rescued by **Geely** and their Shanghai factory. But now it isn't just the factory that is involved with the London icon, it's the City itself as **Shanghai** - via the **Shanghai Qiangsheng Taxi Co** - prepares for the arrival in October of the first 50 taxis from a 200 cab order.

Qiangsheng's Director of Company Operations, **Zhou Wenhua**, says that the vehicles will give priority to elderly and disabled passengers thanks to the extra interior room the TX4 provides. He added that the fare will be slightly higher than normal Chinese cabs but in addition to the extra room, the company will hold training sessions to make sure drivers know exactly how the cab operates and how to use its facilities. It will also have a specialist team of mechanics.

The TX4 is now sold all around the world, so it seemed strange that Shanghai wasn't included. But now it has!

Well, how was it for you? No not the World Cup or Wimbledon, I refer to the **Le Tour de Limehouse**. Did any of the estimated one million visitors get into your cab? Did any of the huge £13million they were supposed to be spending find its way into your back pocket?

Don't get me wrong, I'm immensely proud of the way we dominate the world of cycling. It's just that I don't understand how the **Tour de France** begins in Yorkshire. Or is it me?

I wouldn't now be surprised if there were reciprocal arrangements for future sporting events. Will next year's Cup Final take place in the Parc des Princes in Paris? I suppose if TV has anything to do with it, the kick-off will be at 11.40 on a Thursday morning in January!

However, I have seen a dossier which is so secret that I have had to promise not to give details to anyone unless they, in turn, make the same promise. So I'm hoping you will all keep to the promise that I know you will give. The plan shows that City Hall is thinking of allowing certain events that are popular in other parts of the world to take place here. Next year is Spain and here are a few still-secret details.

The Running of the Bulls

As you may know, this happens in **Pamplona, Spain**. Strangely enough it started at about the same time as the Tour de France. Fifteen bulls are released at one end of the town and thunder down to the other end. Local young men (also known as raving lunatics) are sometimes joined by equally crazy visitors running alongside the huge beasts and attempting to complete the four minute trip in one piece - and sometimes they do! The bulls always do, but being Spain things don't always work out well

Another true story from Geoff Levene

UK and Spain to exchange events?



for them anyway because the end of the run just happens to be the local bull-ring! So there will be steak on the menu that evening.

So the 2015 Running of the Bulls will be held on **Highgate West Hill**. The animals will be delivered to **The Grove** with local residents **George Michael, Annie Lennox and Sting** providing drinks and sandwiches. They had intended doing a barbecue but some suggested it could be in bad taste because after all, we're British! Wooden barriers will be erected right down to **Parliament Hill Fields** where the bulls will be stopped. Police marksmen will be on hand just in case so it could be steak on the menu again!

TfL say that traffic disruption will be kept to a minimum with only the following few roads being closed: Highgate Road, Kentish Town Road, Hampstead Lane, Archway Road, East Finchley High Road, Falloden Way, Great North

Way and the M1 at Junction 4. Pedestrians may be allowed to cross roads if proof they are going home can be proffered.

Throwing Donkeys off Church Towers

The Spanish have come up trumps again, even though I'm not too sure what this one's about. But I've been told it does what it says on the tin. City Hall couldn't find a church willing to get involved, but **BT** have offered the use of their world famous **BT Tower**, hoping for plenty of free advertising. A safety net will be erected so the donkey could be ok. If not there will be donkey meat on the menu.

Traffic? The still-secret report says that all roads will be closed in the square formed by Marylebone Road, Euston Road, Gower Street, New Oxford Street, Oxford Street, Regent Street and Portland Place. Shoppers to Oxford Street will be offered a **TfL**-sponsored **Uber** helicopter for those major stores with landing pads on the roof.

One suggestion was turned down though. It came from that nice **Mr Anjem Choudary** who is in the news so much these days. He has recommended the quaint Iranian custom of burying adulteresses up to their necks and then throwing rocks at them. It was rejected for two reasons. Firstly City Hall was concerned that a rock could bounce off and hit a passer-by. Secondly, it was pointed out that there are just not enough rocks available...

Geoff Levene (W32)
Call Sign Online

JACQUELINE HART COUNSELLOR

BA (Hons), Dipl in Transactional Analysis
MBACP, EATA

- Do you feel as though things are getting on top of you?
- Do you find yourself becoming increasingly more angry?
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 - Do you find yourself asking "why does this always happen to me"?
- Are you noticing your behaviours changing, maybe using alcohol, food or drugs to make you feel better?
- Are there any of your relationships ie with your husband, wife, partner, boss, manager, son, daughter, mum or dad that make you unhappy and question yourself too often?

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The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled

LTBAWD TAKE VETS TO WORTHING

Mid June 2014 saw the LTBAWD hold their 66th outing to Worthing. From 8.30am, the first of 110 taxis filled with veterans began arriving in the village of **South Holmwood**, while the residents had been busy preparing food. Two hours on and the taxis began the journey down to Worthing.

On arriving at the coast,, the drivers and vets went into the Civic Hall for lunch. MC, **Melvyn Zeff**, then called for a one minutes silence in remembrance of those no longer with us before introducing the Mayor, Councillor **Victor Walker**. **George Parsons** then said grace and lunch was served during which we were entertained by **Phil Kelsall MBE** on the magnificent Wurlitzer organ. Our thanks go to **Jim Buckland of The Sussex Organ Trust**.

LTBAWD secretary **Paul Davis** read out messages from **HM Queen Elizabeth II** and **HRH Prince Charles** and the **Duchess of Cornwall** sending regards to the charity and hoping that everybody would have an enjoyable day.

After lunch, LTBAWD President and former **Dial-a-Cab** Board member, **Harry Joel MBE**, said that 66 years ago he and five friends raised £160 at a pub in North End Road Fulham and arranged to take some war disabled to Brighton. With money left over, they then arranged another outing - this time to Worthing and now 66 years on they were still returning. Harry thanked the London taxi drivers for giving up their time, while also welcoming 27 members from **Headly Court** and the **Queen Alexandra Gifford House**, **Princess Marina Home**. The President also made a presentation to **Melvyn Zeff** who has retired from his role as an MC but decided to continue just for the charity at Worthing

The Master of Ceremonies then announced the guest of Honour, **Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns**, KCB, CBE, Knight of St. John, ADC who thanked the Association for what they do for the veterans in addition to the veterans' carers and volunteers.

LTBAWD Vice Chairman **Gary Belsey** then thanked everyone including **Sir Adrian Johns** and his wife and The Mayor and Mayoress of Worthing. He said that the Association's Patron, **Dame Vera Lynn**, was unable to be with them but went on to thank **Johnny Rowland** for his golf day proceeds which were donated to the charity. Gary also thanked **Audrey Sherry** for driver's fuel costs and all the collectors who help raised funds for the charity.

He said that 2014 was a year to remember two world events; 100 years since the start of WW1 - a generation no longer with us but always remembered; the second being the 70th Anniversary of D-Day. Gary said that some of those who took part were with them in Worthing.

"You didn't just help to win the war, you helped turn the tide of history," the Association Vice Chairman said. **"You landed as boys but by the end of that day had become men. Thank You..."**

Gary went on to say: **"Since WW2 there have only been two years when armed forces have not been involved in conflict and there are a group of young people with us today who I would call the Best of British - the men and women of her Majesty's Armed Forces from Headley Court."**

He ended by announcing that **Sir Adrian** and **Lady Johns** had agreed to become Charity patrons.

Then it was off to the seafront with drivers supplying a ferry service to the vets before they all returned to the Assembly Rooms for afternoon tea, during which they were entertained by **The Swing Time Sweethearts** who sang old time favourites and with everybody joining in.

At 6.30pm, it was time to leave Worthing for another year with drivers taking the veterans back to their homes. The President, Chairman,



The Swing Time Sweethearts entertained the Vets at Worthing

Officers and Committee would like to thank all the sponsors who advertise in our diary - the LTDA, St Johns Ambulance and Millwall Football Club. Also the villagers of South Holmwood, the catering staff, the British Legion outriders for the escort to Worthing, Fuller's Brewery and once again of course, the drivers of the London taxi trade who give up their time so freely. Without them, the charity could not function and they should all be proud of upholding one of the oldest traditions of the cab trade.

You can read about the LTBAWD at www.taxicharty.org

Our thanks to LTBAWD PRO Derek Leone

Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers

Magical Taxi Tour Wimbledon collection



The **Children's Magical Taxi Tour** recently organised a collection at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships for their children's Paris trip to Disney. The trip, organised by the **WCHCD** will be taking place again this year on 12th September.

Dial-a-Cab driver and Magical Taxi Tour Organising Committee Chairman **Phil Davis (F10)** said:

"It was amazing that in just three hours, the collection raised £500 for the Disney trip. Thanks to everyone who generously dug deep to help raise such a great amount."



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LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE



With Tom Quigley (Y33)

ing parts fenced off and inaccessible alongside a notice from a local charitable trust set up to reinstate the pier to its former glory (one day) - obviously requesting some sort of donation.

When you look at the sums required for regenerating our holiday tourist industry, they don't seem to be huge and I wonder why the government doesn't just put the money up front with a scheme to employ local people, get the pier built and opened fully to generate income and then let the charitable trust have repayment arrangements at a subsidised rate - if not just fund it all.

We had that great series on BBC, The Coast, promoting the virtues, history, splendid scenery and places to visit, so it seems a no-brainer for the government to invest in our seaside resorts.

The colour of Boris Bikes

So the Mayor has invited tenders for the so called **Boris Bikes** - even though it was Ken's idea once - with sponsors Barclays no longer interested in renewing the contract. Part of the contract terms are that the new sponsor can change the colour of the scheme to suit their company colours, so I wait with interest; does changing the colour mean changing just the bikes or also changing the road colours as well as we've all been subject to what I see as political graffiti. We had Ken make his mark with 'Red' Ken routes, then Boris' Tory blue Barclay colours painted over the red.

If **Santander** opts to get it, will the whole town be painted red? The colours of a company logo are very important, with leading internet search companies such as **Google** and **MSN** opting for rainbow- type logos, **Amazon** (yellow) and **Glam media** (pink). Perhaps the contract should just be given to **Bassetts Liquorice Allsorts** and leave them all black! Will it become just an urban myth that from space you can see the colours of the streets of London?

There is a serious point in that to change it all will result in many road closures and huge delays. I wonder if they build that 'price' into the contract...

Judged by your piers?

More and more people are choosing to stay in Britain for their holidays, having been put off by long waits and security checks at airports - not to mention recent delayed passport problems. Personally, there is nothing more enjoyable than to pack your bags and spend a few days by the sea. But what do you get when trying to book a break in Britain?

Well, most holiday camps or parks for families have a booking system regimented to a 4 day break, 3 night weekend or a 7 day package, whilst similar sites in France etc allow you to arrive any day and generally at any time. Hotel groups are only slightly more flexible - albeit at a premium price. I say hotel groups, but when you walk along any seafront or promenade in Britain, especially those nearer to London, the majority of property has been converted to living accommodation, retirement homes and even fancy offices for large conglomerates, leaving far less room for independent hotels.

As for the seafronts themselves, the first place you usually head for is the pier, most of which seem to be in sorry state of disrepair, often hav-

per child for this 'offence' - a staggering £480 for a 3 child family. It probably worked out at about the cost of the holiday for taking the family out of school time, depending on where they went.

Whilst it may be deemed an offence to take your child on holiday in school time nowadays as apparently they are disrupting the class levels of learning, there is many a school and many a child who has been disrupted when the school organises a trip across Mexico, up Kilimanjaro or wherever the latest fad is. Those children whose families can't afford such trips, surely their levels of education is disrupted due to lack of class numbers or teachers and assistants who have been unfortunate - or is that fortunate - to be selected to go on these great, all important pilgrimages.

What further adds to the hypocrisy is that the rich private and public schools along with universities all close up 10 days to two weeks before state schools. This year, as we all know judging by numbers of cab for-hire lights being on, most of those closed on Friday 11 July with State schools not breaking up till 23 July - some not till the 25th. This not only gives the rich and privileged the chance of cheaper dates, quieter beaches and lighter evenings, but they almost certainly also miss the Bank Holiday weekend rush at the end, which is when working classes factories and industries are traditionally compelled to holiday.

A complete review of holiday companies pricing and equal term times are needed before such draconian measures are subjected on the poorer. When I ran my building business, it wasn't the times you were there, but what you did *when* you were there that mattered...

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

MOON BEEVER

SOLICITORS

Do you know the importance of making a Will? Are you sure that those you intend to inherit will do so if you haven't made a Will? And do you know if tax will have to be paid on your assets on death?

You may be surprised at the answers if you have no current will.

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Or email abartrope@moonbeever.com or jhay@moonbeever.com

To discuss conveyancing and all property issues please contact Daniel Moore or Ahmed Anwar on 0207 400 7770
Or email dmoore@moonbeever.com or aanwar@moonbeever.com

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For the past year, Call Sign has commemorated the 100th anniversary of the start of WW1 hostilities by telling stories of DaC drivers and their family's heroic actions at times of war. With the anniversary on 4 August, we wind the series up with sincere gratitude to them all...

DAC WAR HEROES

On **August 4th 1914**, England declared war on Germany. As we draw to a close this series of **Dial-a-Cab** connected war heroes' exploits commemorating the centenary of the start of World War 1, there are a few more men whose bravery and devotion to duty must also be mentioned...

First, there was **Private John Casey** of the **East Surrey Regiment**, a relative of DaC driver and dispatcher **John Connor (Y11)**. Private Casey was awarded the



John Casey

Distinguished Conduct Medal for gallantry in the field. In early 1916 in France, he bombed an enemy working party and later, with the assistance of a Corporal, captured 12 German soldiers as prisoners of war. He was killed in action on 20th November 1917. The DCM is only one level below the Victoria Cross, the highest military service award for action in the face of the enemy.

Then there was **Lance Corporal Alfred James Hickey**, grandfather of **Keith Hickey (T59)**. He enlisted with the **Kings Royal Rifle Corp** Special Reserve and saw action at Neuve Chapelle in France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. His memoirs recall the trenches being so close to the German ones that shelling enemy trenches caused German soldiers body parts to sometimes land in Allied trenches. Others of his first-hand recollections of the true horrors of war do not make easy reading and are too graphic to put here. He sustained shrapnel wounds in Givenchy and was medevac'd back to the UK. He died in a Birmingham hospital 19 days later on 29th March 1915 from septicaemia, leaving a wife and young children. He was just 23 years old. His name is inscribed on the tablets at **Le Touret War Memorial** cemetery in the Pas-de-Calais region of France.

Able Seaman Tommy Neighbour, uncle of **Keith Robinson (C76)** served on **HMS Dasher**, a vessel converted into an aircraft carrier.

However, aviation and diesel fumes leaked into the hangar of the ship through faulty workmanship. On



Tommy Neighbour

27th March 1943, a lighted cigarette was carelessly dropped, causing an internal explosion and either killing those in the hangar instantly

or throwing immediate survivors and the bodies of dead sailors into the sea, which was alight with burning oil. The force of the explosion ripped open the deck of the ship like a can opener. Tommy was just 21 years old. His fate was unknown.

Interestingly, a **Jack Melville** also served on **Dasher** and was killed in the same disaster as Tommy, but his body was used in an elaborate hoax - *Operation Mincemeat* - where the Allies hoped to convince the **Axis Powers** (Germany, Italy and Japan) that the invasion of Europe would go through Greece. His body was dressed as an emissary with a sealed briefcase containing 'secret' papers attached to his person and released from submarine **HMS Seraph** with a *Mae West* life jacket into the Med as if on a top secret mission that went wrong. The Germans were duped by the rouse and many Allied lives were saved as a result because the Germans had not re-enforced troops there and the Allies landed in Sicily as planned. His story was told in the 1956 movie, *The man who never was*.

Able Seaman James Frederick Clark, father of **Steve Clark (G02)**, saw active service throughout WW2 on **HMS Waveney**, a frigate that carried out numerous escort duties in the Atlantic including the notori-



James Clark

ously hazardous Arctic Convoy routes. He was also present at the surrender of Japan on 15th August 1945 after the USA dropped atomic bombs on the cities of **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**.

As this year-long series ends, Call Sign would like to thank everyone that has taken the time to give us stories of either their own wartime exploits or those of their close family members – some who made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our freedom...

In addition to those above, there was **Sid Nathan (K88)** with the **Israel Defence Unit**, **Paul Corr (N83)** who was with the **Green Berets**, **Norman Adler (F80)** who did his time in **Aden**, **Lou Sherman** who was a fireman in war-torn London, **John Smith** whose story of being a Japanese POW and being forced to work on the infamous Burma railroad was told by his nephew **Eddie Smith (Y56)**, **Alan Lewis (A44)** who was at **Suez** in 1956, **Mike Walsh (Ex C77)** with the **Kings Royal Rifle Corp**, **Paul Charter's (J08)** uncle **Edward Charters** who fought on the **Somme**, **Ian MacDonald's (C64)** great grandfather **Fred MacDonald** who was involved in hostilities in **Courcelles, France**, **John Connor's (Y11)** dad **John James Connor** who was with the **Royal Navy** and **James McCarthy BEM**, brother of **John McCarthy (L29)**.

Appeal to locate taxi driver to assist investigation

Police investigating the sexual assault of a woman in Prince of Wales Drive, Wandsworth are trying to trace a taxi driver who may have information that could assist them.

The victim, a 28-year-old woman, reported being assaulted after travelling in a taxi (black cab) with a man from Mews of Mayfair, New Bond Street to Battersea Park SW11 on Saturday 19 July between 01:00 and 03:45hrs. Police would like to locate the taxi driver as he may be able to assist police with the ongoing investigation.

The woman was wearing a blue and white patterned dress with a belt and the man with her was wearing a suit.

Detectives from the Sexual Offences Exploitation and Child Abuse Command are investigating.

Detective Constable Ben Hawkins said: "We are very keen to hear from the taxi driver who picked up a white man and woman from Mews of Mayfair in the early hours on Saturday 19 July and dropped them off near Battersea Park."

The driver, or anyone with any information that could assist the investigation, is asked to contact DC Hawkins who is leading the investigation on 020 8649 0424 or 07789 935492.

A 31-year-old man from Kensington and Chelsea has been arrested in connection with the investigation. He has been bailed to return on a date in September pending further enquiries.

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Chat from the Call Centre

Hello ladies & gents,

Call Centre

We are in the middle of the school holidays and many of you that have young children have already been or arranged to go on a well-deserved summer break. There does seem to be quite a high number of tourists in London at the moment, so let's hope that they will generate extra income for everyone.

It has now been over six months since I took over duties as Call Centre and Operations Manager. My main aim was to make it more driver-friendly while streamlining the operation to make it more efficient, fair and equal for everyone. I believe we are succeeding and I have taken on board requests and opinions from a number of members to help us achieve that aim and will continue to do so. I must also commend Call Centre staff that have certainly helped me on the way.

Credit Cards

Credit Card work is steadily increasing and the numbers of App bookings are rising at a similar rate. In the very near future, all Credit Card trips will be treated the same as normal account rides and any scrubbed journeys will be charged in the normal way. But more importantly, you will also gain the number one queue position back for cancellations, thereby mirroring a normal account ride. DaC's IT department are constantly working on new technology and it won't be too far down the road until a new dispatching system is written that will prove to be a further advancement on the present system.

You sometimes read on public forums that **Dial-a-Cab** are lagging behind in new technology when in fact our IT Department, headed by **John Bankes**, is in my opinion the best in the business. So please don't believe all you hear or read on these forums.

New Terminals

The fitting programme on the new terminals is almost concluded and we have opened **Roman Way** a little later to help those members that find it difficult to attend during office hours. By the time you read this article, everyone should have been fitted. The old terminal is now obsolete and the remaining base stations that are still in operation will soon be de-commissioned, so it is important for you to make the appointments at Roman Way otherwise your (old) terminal will simply not function.

Rogue Drivers?

Finally, I am sure you are all aware that there are some rogue drivers out there who have fraud identifiers on their taxis or even none at all and the Met Police have asked for your assistance to track these drivers down. If you come across a taxi that you think may not be legitimate, they would appreciate any information you may be able to give them either by email or phone.

Please contact
Alistair.strange@met.police.uk or
Sean.molyneux2@met.police.uk
Otherwise phone
07770 701281 or 07826 535561

Allan Evans
Control Centre, Operations Manager



Mike Higgins edits New York's Taxi Talk magazine...

Uber: The ride-share* fiasco...

Greetings **Dial-a-Cab** drivers from the cabbies of **New York City**. We heard about your big Taxi demo! Do you know about the shared-rides fiasco here? You soon will. Anyway this is my opinion...

I've been studying this share-ride thing like a freggin' grad student the last few days. It's a BIG hype machine - with deep investor pockets - and cowardly politicians afraid to do anything. An outrage!

The bombardment of media buzz words 'powerful taxi fleet lobby,' 'taxi monopoly,' 'working moms,' 'work from home,' 'love,' etc are found within the context of many recent pro-Uber related articles - running simultaneously with so-called columnists venting on how horrible legitimate taxi service is.

Coincidence? In the words of a great comedian... who are these people! Are they real people, real writers - or just good 'ole fashioned corporate shills doing their master's bidding?

Meanwhile legitimate yellow cab drivers, who are allowed to ply for hire like your guys, are getting hammered with tickets - while apparently no one else is!

The ride-share app / crap should have been thrown outta here six months ago for a variety of reasons. In fact the foundation of ride-share success is the fact that they are allowed to work doing stuff the yel-lows are *not* allowed to do! They can pre-arrange calls, use older cars, can charge triple the rate when it's busy and can even refuse passengers!

And what about dispatching and responding with a hand-held cell phone where the driver has fifteen seconds to get the job? Isn't that the epitome of distracted driving? And they can't tell me it's mounted on the dash. I've seen those characters fiddling with and watching the device in one hand, while waiting for their fifteen second window to respond! Oh nooooo, that's not dangerous at all... right?

And are ride-share drivers paying the state their fifty-cents-per-trip tax? Are they drug tested? Crime tested? Road tested? Are their cars inspected properly? The list goes on and on and on...

My main concern is that there is a lack of business now - good jobs are drying up for the legitimate operators and this mess is creating a dangerous, long-term environment for everyone!

Yet the Taxi Commission is doing nothing about it... Why not? Who or what is in their wallet?

Mike Higgins
Taxi Talk, NYC

**Ride-sharing companies like Uber and Lyft use smart phone apps to despatch drivers who use their own personal vehicles to take passengers. The drivers then share the fares with the companies.*



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Win £100 with a caption...



Call Sign won't be paying for your holidays but we'll give you £100 towards the spending money for the best caption to this Patrick Blower cartoon of Buck House, originally published in the Evening Standard. The competition is open to drivers and staff.

Entries to callsignmag@aol.com, by post to Call Sign at the office address or just leave your entry in the DaC driver's reception addressed to Call Sign.

Closing date is August 11 and the editor's decision is final...

Azerbaijan buys another 500 TX4s

The **Baku Taxi Company** in **Azerbaijan** has bought another 500 **TX4** taxis from the **London Taxi Company**. According to their Financial Director, **Vugar Ibrahimov**, Baku is preparing itself for the 2015 European Games and they would like this delivery to add to the previous 1000 TX4s they have purchased over the past three years. They will again be coloured damson.

The sale was negotiated following discussions between Azerbaijan's Ministry of Transport and LTC Vice-President of UK Operations, **Peter Johansen**. A contract was signed on 26 May.

The taxis first appeared prior to the 2012 **Eurovision Song Contest** held in Baku. Now the capital city is hosting the multi-sporting **European Championships** and wants to continue to be a popular tourist destination. Their MoT believes that a modern taxi system will assist and 300 of the instantly-recognisable iconic London taxis will be reserved for VIP use during the Games. Perhaps London Mayor **Boris Johnson** could have taken a leaf out of Azerbaijan's book prior to our Olympics when taxis suffered via the Olympic lanes.

Peter Johansen told us: "This repeat order signals a strengthening of the partnership between The London Taxi Company and Azerbaijan. When officials looked to improve Baku's taxi system, **President Aliyev** was integral in the decision to use the world's most iconic and recognised Black Cab. It's only fitting that these vehicles will form the basis of the VIP fleet during the prestigious European Games next year. We're proud to be able to support the ambitions of Azerbaijan to raise the standards of the country's taxi system replicating the world class service delivered by drivers every day in our vehicle on the streets of London."

The 500 TX4s will be delivered in three batches during the second half of this year. The London TX4 has so far been exported into more than 40 markets worldwide



Baku TX4s rank up outside Park Bulv shopping centre

July Caption Winner

Picking the winner of the July **Call Sign** photo caption contest showing **Mike Son** and **HRH Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall** having a chat was rather difficult because there were so many good entries. We even liked one that suggested HRH hadn't seen Mike since their last time at Walthamstow dogs! But we value our neck!

However, after narrowing down the 141 entries to a final three of R73, R47 and S35, we finally selected **Brian Marcantonio (R73)**. Brian picks up a cheque for £100 for his caption:

I don't care who you are, Dial-a-Cab no longer accepts TaxiCards...



As we come towards the final stages of updating our in-cab data despatch terminals, the more curious and indeed computer savvy amongst Dial-a-Cab drivers may be wondering what happens to our old' MDTs as they are steadily replaced with the latest incarnation of data transmission.

Are they thrown into a skip and simply driven away? Are they discarded ignominiously on a council tip somewhere after serving us so well for many years? What about security; is driver and client account information safe?

For answers to these and many other questions, *Call Sign* asked those who know, John Banks, DaC's Director of IT and Dana Thananjeyan, the manager at our Roman Way depot.

John confirmed that all the units were being recycled - both ecologically and in an environmentally friendly manner - while Dana gave *Call Sign* details of the replacement program.

"Firstly, let me assure everybody that there is no risk of sensitive information being leaked," Dana told *Call Sign*. "The terminals in driver's taxis were just running an application program, that's all. All confidential information such as driver or client details are

Goodbye to DaC's old terminals



Dana helps Computer Disposals to load up our old terminals

securely held in our main servers at **Dial-a-Cab House** so, as I said earlier, there is no risk of leaks."

"Furthermore," he continued, "the terminals have to be destroyed according to the *Data Protection Act* requirements - almost certainly electronically - to remove all traces of data and therefore render them useless. This is done by a company in Warrington, Cheshire called **Computer Disposals Ltd.** They are a certificated company and remove and recycle our old terminals for free, which is an added bonus of course, so Dial-a-Cab isn't involved in any additional expense to the change-over program."

Finishing, Dana added that the applications the old terminal had were unique to Dial-a-Cab and would be useless outside of the Society anyway.

"I remember having to physically smash with a hammer the hard drives on the MDI MDTs we had prior to the one that we are replacing now. It was both dangerous from a personal safety viewpoint - and hard work! Fortunately, things have changed," he said with a smile...

Alan Green
Call Sign Online

TDOY Dinner and Dance

'Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves'

The *Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund* presents their *Annual Dinner and Dance* on Saturday 6th December 2014 at a NEW venue: The Holiday Inn Regents Park, Carburton Street, W1.

Reception begins at 6.15pm with dinner at 6.45pm followed by dancing to a live band. The cost of tickets is £65 per person and includes a 4-course meal with half a bottle of wine per person.

With your support, *The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund* is able to make substantial donations to the taxi trade charities that support them. Don't miss one of the year's great nights. Great food and great company! It will prove to be an enjoyable and memorable occasion for all.

For tickets, please send completed form and cheque made out to T.D.Y.C.F to:
Russell Poluck MBE, TDYCF Hon Chairman, 5 St Brides Avenue, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 6BT

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As DaC's Network Administrator and regular Call Sign contributor prepares to leave

It's goodbye from me and...

After just over 10 years' service at **Dial-a-Cab**, I will shortly be moving to pastures new. I started at DaC back in July 2004 as Network Administrator, taking over from **Roy Masterson** (I'm sure some of you will remember him). At the time, DaC's internal network was a tad neglected; the servers were running the already obsolete Windows NT4 and the business used Microsoft Exchange 5.5 for email. The call centre and other employees were using Windows 98 or 2000. Even back in 2004, you can see that the business' technology was aging. So I kept the network ticking over, adding improvements and consolidating technologies wherever possible, to reduce DaC's operating costs.

In 2006, my boss - **John Banks** - instructed me to begin the lengthy process of upgrading the business to Windows Server 2003, Exchange 2003 and Windows XP in preparation for the inevitable building move in 2007. Whilst this in itself was feasible - I'd already performed a similar process in a previous role - doing so whilst keeping the business online 24/7 seemed almost impossible. Nonetheless, with enough preparation and support from the business, the migration to the latest operating systems was achieved without loss of availability.

The following 8 months were the most intense in my career as we in IT made the preparations to move the business from Brunswick Place to Marten House (which later became known as Dial-a-Cab House). The entire IT department was pulled into managing massive parts of the move, obviously due to DaC's complete reliance on the infrastructure. It was an exciting, yet exhausting time for us all; we clocked up many 12 or 14 hour days and many times several of us didn't even go home at night! There were simply so many things to consider. Both the new data centre (30-odd brand new servers) and contact centre (75 desktops) had to be planned and built. The building's network infrastructure (cabling, switches, firewalls) had to be purchased, built, configured and tested. All these servers and desktops required building and installing and we had to ensure it would all function correctly with DaC's incumbent ecosystem and dispatch system.

At the same time we were planning the building move, we were migrating the radio infrastructure from archaic technology (which we could no longer repair and which couldn't cope with the amount of work being generated) over to modern, modular, high throughput equipment.

I could write pages about those experiences, but I'll spare you the boring technical details. Suffice it to say that during the final cutover from one building to the other, we never lost connectivity with the fleet, our customers or any critical services. It was a proud moment in DaC's history; no other black cab circuit could boast 100% uptime during an infrastructure change, especially one so huge in scale. Business was booming. We couldn't cover the work. The contact centre was swamped with bookings. Customers demanded more services, and we delivered. They wanted highly bespoke reporting, we delivered it. They wanted a unified system where they could book a taxi or a PH vehicle (not ours but via their already established contracts), and we gave them this. **Concierge** generated millions in revenue and took work away from other circuits, putting it into the DaC driver's cabs. They wanted a booking app for iPhone, Android and BlackBerry devices, and we delivered that too.

Then came the credit crunch. Suddenly every penny counted and every operational cost and business process was scrutinised. Our biggest customers wanted to audit our operations from an *Information Security* perspective. Due to breaches of *Personally Identifiable Information* (PII) in some of the world's largest businesses and the collapse of many banks, they wanted to know that the data we held on their personnel (profiles, billing, and trip data) was being handled securely, and rightly so. We were subjected to annual audits by three of our biggest customers, each unique and in-depth. I'm talking about 400 questions per audit, each one requiring detailed answers and evidence to back up our claims. I took the lead in these audits, referring to management when needed. It was a huge learning curve and I found I not only excelled at it, but rather enjoyed it too! The last audit we had to complete resulted in our customer giving us

a stamp of approval, informing us further audits would not be required as we had adhered to such a high standard of information security.

So why I am leaving?

This leads me to my reason for leaving DaC. I feel that my work here is done and I wish to move into *Information Security* full time. I've been involved in every project DaC has delivered over the past decade; network architecture and maintenance, MDT deployment, Website and App development, Information Security and Compliance. It's been a truly unique and exciting experience. I've learned so much and had an amazing number of opportunities. But the time has come for a change and so I'm moving to an American firm with an office here in London. They specialise in career websites, so you'll be pleased to know they have no links to the taxi industry. I'd never work for the competition - DaC is, and always will be the finest black taxi circuit in the world. The private hire companies and one-hit wonder Apps will come and go, but Dial-a-Cab will remain.

I've worked with some of the finest IT minds in the city and for the most progressive Chairman I've ever met, all of whom I shall miss. I wish you all the best for the future.

Jon Winterburn

We wish you well Jon and thank you for all the fascinating articles written for Call Sign over the years. Dial-a-Cab 'Gamers' will also be bit hard! Good luck for the future...



HACKNEY ROAD TAXI TYRES

FOR THE BLACK CAB TAXI TRADE

- Austones for the TX
- Barums for the Vito
- Michelin and Continental also supplied
- 4-wheel laser tracking for the Mercedes Vito
- Puncture repairs
- Also free tyre checks

Find us downstairs the
DaC Credit Union at
The Peterley Business Centre,
472 Hackney Road, E2

0207 720 5237

John Gilbert (W72):

No, not for me. I do not have a fancy phone and I'm not computer literate. Anything technological like that and I ask my grandchildren.



Stephen Field (F99):

Absolutely nothing! Is that it? Have a nice day...



Gordon Thompson (K48):

Nothing! Why would I want to join them, I'm a creature of comfort and don't like change. I'm an elite black cab driver; otherwise I could have joined Addison Lee all those years ago and not bothered with the Knowledge. But I chose to be a *real* taxi driver. No one else does what we do and as we do it here in London.



Edward Gibson (O70):

I think they are the biggest threat to the cab trade for a very long time and would never join them, full stop. I have held my PCO licence for 50 years, so I don't think I'll be changing my mind!



Dennis Camps (S21):

That's a hard question... I don't think I would but I do wish that *we* had a bit more work. No, thinking about it I would definitely not join them.



John Williams (L36):

I would *never* join a private hire company.



Call Sign asked the first eleven Dial-a-Cab drivers it came across and who were prepared to give a view, whether there was anything Uber could do to persuade them to join...

CALL SIGN UBER SURVEY

Richard Levy (Z50J):

No nothing from Uber, thank you. I've no need to; I've got Dial-a-Cab and street work; it's enough for me.



Terry Buffin (S16):

No, nothing. Why would I want to join them, I'm a black cab driver and have done the Knowledge of London, so I have not the slightest inclination to join such an outfit.



John Walker (B87):

They would need to drop the private hire element. They have done us a great deal of harm since starting late last year and now it all makes sense to me because last Christmas was not as busy as usual. I would never join them anyway because the Uber CEO, Travis Kalanick, insulted us all by referring to taxi drivers as *a-holes* (the footage appeared on most social media sites). He rides roughshod over everyone and I believe he has instructed his drivers in Brussels – where Uber was banned – to continue working and that he will pay any fines and replace any confiscated vehicles. So he has effectively put two fingers up to a sovereign European state. Great!

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MMX1V



Barry Carpenter (Z27):

Huh? About 10K a week and I might *think* about it! No seriously, no chance really. Done the Knowledge of London and all that, been driving a taxi 30 plus years, I've been on most of the radio circuits and Dial-a-Cab is the best as far as I am concerned. Don't need Uber, thank you...



Ian Thomson (A14):

There is nothing Uber could say or do - nothing at all. It's against my ethics because I am a London licenced taxi driver and anyway, I know very little about Uber.



TAXI TYRES BACK IN HACKNEY ROAD

Many Dial-a-Cab drivers were using the tyre garage in Hackney Road that was handily situated downstairs from the DaC Credit Union offices. Handy because with the cost of new tyres nowadays, members of DACCU could just pop upstairs to the CU office and get them to pick up the tab knowing that the CU interest rates are among the lowest anywhere and that the repayments would be relatively easy.

Suddenly the garage announced it was closing. But now, because so many drivers expressed disappointment at the closure, it has reopened under the name of Hackney Road Taxi Tyres.

So the next time you need any tyres for your cab within five minutes of the City, you can find Hackney Road Taxi Tyres and be back in the work minutes after fitting.

Hackney Road Taxi Tyres are situated at the Peterley Business Centre, 472 Hackney Road E2



COMPLAINTS MEETING



A complaints meeting took place at Dial-a-Cab House on Monday, 23 June 2014. This is the result...

Name

Paul Faulkner (O13)

Rules broken

2 (x2), 3 (x2), 9, 11 (x2)

Description: Driver had prior knowledge of trips to gain an unfair advantage over his fellow members. Consequently the driver was booking in from long distances to acquire lucrative journeys.

Verdict:

Rule 2: Two weeks suspension; Rule 3: Two weeks suspension; Rule 11: Expelled



By the time this edition of Call Sign hits your doormat, I will have commenced providing public Walks that are run in conjunction with the Royal British Legion to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of World War One.

The Royal British Legion has joined forces with the City of Westminster Guide Lecturers Association to run a series of guided walks during the second half of 2014 in an attempt to bring history back to life. The theme of

Call Sign's Bob Woodford's series of walks to help understand what was behind WW1...

BOB'S WAR WALKS



Meet Bob 11am at King George V statue. Old Palace Yard

these Walks is to use Westminster's iconic landmarks to chronicle a brief account of World War One – a commemoration in this, its centenary year.

We shall be trying to understand how the War started, how it evolved and the sentiment of the nation when the War finally ended on 11th November 1918.

We shall be

highlighting some key characters and discovering some emotive statues and memorials to relate the tragedy that was the Great War. The Walk will be circular, starting at the King George V statue in Old Palace Yard and ending outside the west door of Westminster Abbey.

Here is a link to the RBL web page which advertises the Walks -

<http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/calendar-of-events/ww1-centenary/first-world-war-commemorative-london-walks>

The next dates that I shall be leading the Walk in person will be Saturday 23rd August, Saturday 20th September and Saturday 11th October. The Walks begin at 11am and last around two hours.

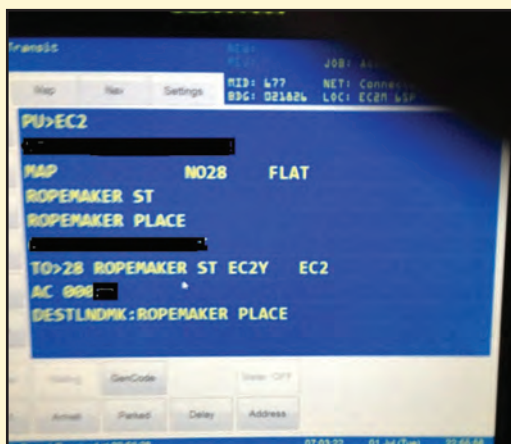
Any DaC subscribers interested would benefit from a 50% discount and £3 out of your £5 is to be donated to the Royal British Legion.

Email me at:

rob@blackcabheritagetours.co.uk if you intend coming along.

Meet at King George V statue in Old Palace Yard at 11am...

Job of the week!



Howard's job of the week!

wait and return. But as Howard told *Call Sign*, there's local and there's local and 28 Ropemaker Place going to 28 Ropemaker Place is just about as local as it gets!

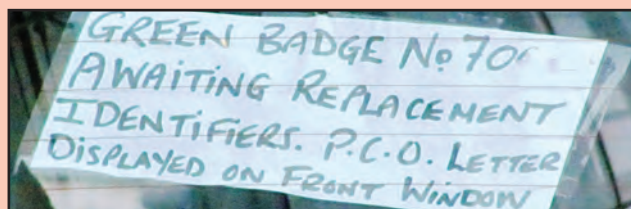
"Fortunately the customer saw the funny side when he got in and I then went round to open the door to let him out," Howard added with a grin!

You'll be pleased to know that it was an error on someone's part and it went into town!

Dial-a-Cab driver
Howard Flavin
(A18)

accepted an 'as directed' account ride and like most drivers knew that AD meant a local, an airport or a

New Identifiers



Spotted on a taxi rear window

The promised new identifiers for the front and back taxi windscreens should begin being sent out to drivers by the beginning of September. They are said to include new security features but LTPH have warned that when received, they must not be laminated but displayed as they are sent.

There seem to have been a larger number than usual of taxis not displaying their ID and these have been assumed to be Yellow Badges by Green Badge drivers. However, it does seem that some drivers who had laminated their ID have been asked to remove them by TfL Compliance teams, but allowed to work on with the assurance that a new one would be sent. These haven't always arrived.

However, please do not assume that no ID means "dodgy dealing" and even if you are certain, please do not confront other drivers you suspect of malpractice.

A (literally) steaming Pat Keefe (G01) recently contacted Call Sign with a hot topic. Pat tells the the story of his Vito, the hot weather and LTPH/TfL. This of course is the same TfL that allowed Uber to use what the world recognises as a taxi meter, but are apparently ultra-hot on what they call safety reasons. Pat takes up the story...

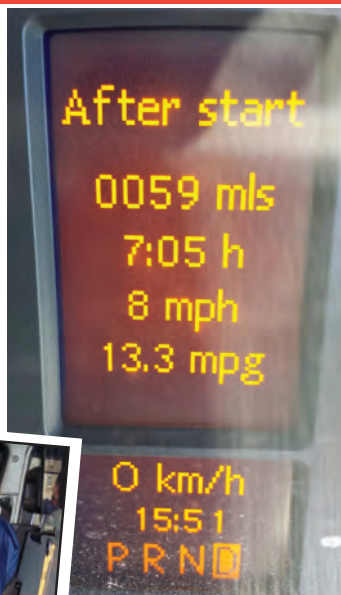
"Friday 19th July, the hottest day of the year so far with temperatures according to news reports hitting 33C (92F) and Air Conditioning suddenly becomes a must for we Vito drivers. We have no option but to use our Air Con in this heat as the Vito's rear windows do not open and LTPH will not allow us to fit optional small sliding windows or a sunroof. They say that is for safety reasons!

So the extra price of fuel is the price I have to pay, as all Vito drivers pay and as do most Gold TX drivers who use their Air Con.

I have taken a photo of my Vito dashboard's computer display and it may surprise some of our Dial-a-Cab members when they see my fuel consumption being as low as 13.3 mpg – a figure that has been quite nor-



Pat (inset): His Vito on-board computer shows 13.3 mpg



Hot under the collar!

mal on hot days such as the 19th was. Before anyone thinks the computer or display may be wrong, well it has been checked by KPM, SG Smith, as well as an independent garage.

By this time next year, we should have a choice of four new cabs on the market - a new TX hybrid, Vito, Nissan and Metrocab. We will be spoiled for choice as never before. A good thing for the trade, although only time will tell. It's too late for oldies like me, but I do believe anyone buying a new taxi on DaC should be made to have A/C as a standard fitting – that's both front and rear - as our competitors offer it as standard. Who would buy a new Volvo, Merc or BMW etc without it?

But why am I writing this? In *Call Sign* of late it has been muted about the possibility of no run ins, no waiting time and no gratuities etc. Well with my fuel consumption so low in the hot summer months, I can't afford to run long distances or sit in heavy traffic for no remuneration. End of rant!"

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 goes back to October 1997 and a *Call Sign* article by former Sales Exec Allen Togwell...

A WEEKEND TO FORGET



Saturday 30th August 1997 was a complete disaster so far as I was concerned. I arrived at Battersea Park, the site of the Taxi Driver of the Year competition, with a frame and two back-drops (one was a spare design concept in case the original could not be used). On arriving at the site, I was unaware that there was no main tent so in the process of driving round the site looking for it, I suddenly became immersed in a foot of mud. After a few minutes of spinning wheels and splashing mud all over the cab and in the process being buried even further, I eventually got out of the cab and needless to say, went knee deep into the awful stuff.

I noticed a tractor standing around and finding a representative of the show, I asked for his help to get me out of the mud. I didn't expect much help and wasn't surprised when I didn't get any! I searched for another rep who promised help. An hour later I was still waiting. I eventually freed myself.

If you are smiling at this stage, then it's as well you weren't doing it at the time because the chances are your testicles would be in the same vicinity as your tonsils!

I was told that *Call Sign's* **Vince Chin** was to be there around 12. At two o'clock he still hadn't shown. I spoke to **Mike Son** who contacted him by mobile. He apparently knew nothing about being there at twelve.

As previously explained, the stand was in a mess, however I managed to erect it as best I could and when Mr Chin arrived, we managed to get it into a presentable state.

I intended to get there early on Sunday to see if everything was okay. Unfortunately the tragic news about Princess Diana's death left me feeling gutted and affected my plans.

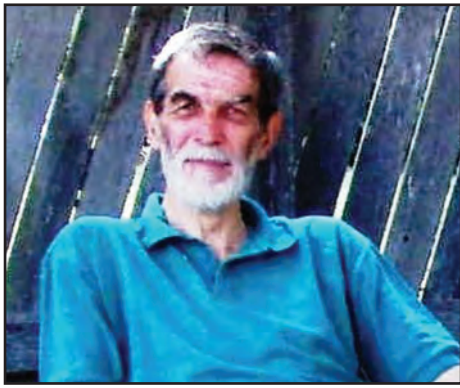
As a client of **Dial-a-Cab's**, I wanted to get some flowers and pay Princess Diana our respects, but had trouble finding a florist. I eventually found one at Sloane Square which involved a nice gesture. I asked the florist to make a wreath to the value of twenty pounds which he did. I then asked him for a card. When I told him what I wanted them for he gave me ten pounds back. Nice touch.

I laid the flowers at Kensington Palace and being there relatively early dressed in my Dial-a-Cab blazer as I was still intending to go to Battersea, I was approached by the press. I explained that the Princess had an account with us and that it seemed ironic that one of the reasons she used us was to avoid the paparazzi – the very people who it is alleged were responsible for her death. I was too upset to say anymore.

I eventually got to the show and stayed till around 2.30. I didn't think it was very good although the death of Princess Diana obviously had an effect on the attendance. My concern is that when minicabs eventually get licensed, they will put on a show that will make ours look a disgrace. By then it will be too late anyway.

All in all, a lousy end to a lousy weekend...

Allen Togwell



Hi from Australia...

I was only thinking the other day that I haven't written to *Call Sign* in a while and hopefully there are still some that remember me! So here we go! In March 2012 we sold our garage business and in October I took my HGV licence - over here it's called an Medium Rigid and it enables me to drive a truck or bus up to 20 tons, so long as it only has 2 axles. I then got a job as a relief school bus driver for special needs students. In the December, I was given a run carrying 18 students in a Toyota Coaster 20 seater to a special needs school for the last 3 weeks of the final term, they were all walk-ons and all had learning difficulties and / or behavioural problems.

When we started back in the New Year, I was asked if I would like to do the run on a regular basis and I said yes. Unfortunately, prior to starting the new term, I had to go to hospital for a liver biopsy as my 3 monthly blood tests had shown an abnormal reading and they wanted to be sure that the liver wasn't being rejected. The biopsy was a day procedure but unfortunately they pierced a bile duct within the liver which released bile into the abdomen.

I came out 15 days later and for a fortnight returned every day for an antibiotic injection and changes to the two drain tubes. However, the results of the tests, scans and MRI showed that the liver wasn't being rejected, but the condition that required a transplant had returned. As the cause is unknown, they believe it's an auto-immune problem that can't be treated, so I now wait until the problem gets me. That could be several years or not, depending on how fast it spreads.

As a result I started the bus run in February and continued to do it until Easter this year when I was asked if I would like a home bus run. This meant I kept the bus at home. The run was for 5 kids ranging in age from 7 to 15. I have two girls in wheelchairs and two boys and a girl that are walk-ons. All of them have mental and / or physical disabilities.

I now drive a Toyota Commuter and do around 442 kms (275 miles) a week, it takes approx 3 hours a day split between morning and afternoon. I have a carer on the bus with me to keep an eye on the kids in transit and to assist in getting them on and off. We get paid for 4 hours a day. There are 84 runs which vary in distance, time and student numbers on the bus, but we all receive the same amount. We are all casuals and as a result don't receive sick or holiday pay.

And the Oz cab trade...

The cab trade over here has gone through the same dramas as the UK; nightmen being attacked and robbed, even being convicted

Howard Sales (ex-A11) was a former DaC driver trainer who emigrated to Oz and opened a garage. He keeps in touch with *Call Sign* and sends the occasional update including about his liver transplant...

Howard's Oz Update

of sexual assaults and overcharging. Brisbane cabs have actually been fitted with meters that give a GPS location of the cab to prevent drivers overcharging punters! In a utopia that may be the case, but in reality as we know, there will always be unscrupulous drivers trying to beat the system. The vehicles used as cabs are gradually changing from Ford Falcons and Holden Commodores to smaller 4 cylinder and dual propulsion vehicles such as Toyota Prius and Camry Hybrid; more are in the pipeline. LPG is used a lot and an increasing number now use diesel, the price of which is \$1.63 (90p) per litre. We too are being hammered by the government with cuts in services, rising unemployment, increasing illegal immigration and closing businesses, but overall I believe from what I have read that we are in a better fiscal position than the UK, Europe, Japan and the USA. Judging from what I read in *Call Sign Online*, it's becoming increasingly difficult to work in the London cab trade with the private hire trade, CCTV cameras and traffic wardens.

It was already getting difficult before I left to even stop and pick up passengers,

let alone set down without being nicked. I got threatened with a PCN by a warden whilst setting down a TaxiCard customer in a wheelchair at the post office in Victoria Street. It was a wait and return and I was told I couldn't wait and had to park round the corner on a meter, then go and collect the passenger from the post office and wheel her back to the cab. I have a lot of sympathy for drivers that are still trying to earn a living as the best taxi service in the world.

I do miss the regular customers and the chats with a wide selection of the general public, as well as the interaction of drivers and people at Dial-a-Cab. I'm still in touch via Facebook with a few friends as well as some DaC drivers, but not the difficulties of the job.

I also have to admit that I am still wearing the DaC jacket that we were given many years ago with the logo and web address on it! You never know, somebody may see it and contact DaC for a cab on a visit to London!

Be lucky,

Howard Sales (Ex-A11)
Brisbane, Australia

DIESEL COSTS SINCE 1996

Each year at around this time Call Sign look s back through its files at the cost of diesel since 1996.

1 st June 1996	- 51.9p per litre - £2.36 per gallon
1 st June 1997	- 54.9p per litre - £2.50 per gallon
1 st June 1998	- 65.9p per litre - £3.00 per gallon
1 st June 1999	- 72.9p per litre - £3.72 per gallon
1 st June 2001	- 77.9p per litre - £3.54 per gallon
1 st June 2002	- 75.9p per litre - £3.45 per gallon
1 st June 2003	- 77.5 per litre - £3.52 per gallon
1 st June 2004	- 89.0 per litre - £4.05 per gallon
1 st June 2005	- 89.7 per litre - £4.08 per gallon
1 st June 2006	- 96.9 per litre - £4.41 per gallon
1 st June 2007	- 97.9 per litre - £4.45 per gallon
1 st June 2008	- 128.9 per litre - £5.86 per gallon
1 st June 2009	- 101.9 per litre - £4.61 per gallon
1 st June 2010	- 121.9 per litre - £5.51 per gallon
1 st June 2011	- 140.9 per litre - £6.37 per gallon
1 st June 2012	- 143.9 per litre - £6.87 per gallon
1 st June 2013	- 138.9 per litre - £6.27 per gallon
1 st June 2013	- 135.9 per litre - £6.14 per gallon

With prices varying from garage to garage, these can only be averages...



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Mailshot

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

Licence wait

Hi Alan

I read the story from **Graham Leonard (J20)** in the *July Call Sign* (*What's all the fuss about*) where he says his renewed taxi driver's licence came back almost straight-away after hearing stories about long delays. Just to add to that, I got my licence back seven weeks before its starting date having also sent it off early to be on the safe side. Perhaps LTPH really are starting to get it right?

Bernie Silver (G08)

It would be nice if we didn't have to send it off quite so early, but yes Bernie, it is welcome progress ...Ed

Thanks to LTFUC

Hello

My 10 year old son and I were lucky enough to go on your Southend trip and if I'm honest, I'm feeling a little overwhelmed by the day. I am a single mum and my son, Tommy, has high functioning Autism. His life is difficult and he doesn't feel good about himself. It breaks my heart to see him suffer and to feel that he is different.

But today Tommy has been made to feel special. From the beginning to the end of the trip, he was made to feel like he mattered. Our taxi driver (Bradley - I stupidly did not get his last name) and his 17 year old daughter Rachel, were absolutely lovely. With Tommy's condition, to plan a trip to somewhere like Southend creates so many issues that it was a dream come true and apart from the many benefits to Tommy, it made me feel special too.

Thank you so much to everyone who played a part in making it such a wonderful day. Please don't under estimate the positive effect that it has had on our lives.

Lesley Robinson

LTFUC Press Officer, Raymond Levy said: Lesley's letter sums up what the day meant far better than I can myself...

Getting busier?

Hi Alan

Hopefully it isn't just me but in addition to street work picking up, account work seems to be getting much busier as well. Losing those two big accounts in E14 was a real bummer but fingers crossed that this resurgence isn't affected (as this time of year usually is) by the children's school holidays.

I have also been told that closure of the Limehouse Link throughout much of July has affected ComCab's coverage to JPM. Can't say I'm that upset if the rumour is true that this US bank thought our service was excellent but that they were just cutting costs.

One of the world's busiest banks saving what must be chicken feed to them in exchange for a poorer service and poorer quality of driver - because with no disrespect meant to Yellow Badges, they are nowhere near as proficient in their knowledge of London as every single Dial-a-Cab driver must be, all being Green Badges.

Had I owned a JPM credit card, I might have cancelled it and gone for a Mickey Mouse one with a lower interest rate, after all, isn't that the be all and end all of business now - never mind the quality, just save the extra penny? And no offence meant to Mickey Mouse!

Alex Constantinou (N05)

Brian Rice replies: What would you like me to say Alex, other than I agree with you! We provided a first rate service to the 'Island' by both Members and back office. However decisions regarding the account were made by people that do not use the service and are based in New York. It appears at the moment that service and loyalty take second place to cost, but events are cyclical and who knows what the future might hold?

This cost cutting which exists at the moment can be traced back to the licensing of minicabs; gone are the days when corporates would not risk putting their staff in uninsured vehicles. Then overnight they became legitimate and grew to nearly 70,000 in number - plentiful and cheap as they do not compete on a level playing field with licensed taxis. During the intervening years and coupled with a recession which commenced at the beginning of 2008, the licensed, plentiful and cheap minicabs forced prices down to the consumer, which obviously had a detrimental effect on the three licensed taxi circuits. In an attempt to compete, one of the radio circuits on some occasions, scrapped gratuities and run-ins; this of course has been at the expense of the driver. Perhaps we are entering a period where run-ins and gratuities only operate during certain periods? We still maintain run-ins and gratuities. One day last week it rained and our coverage suffered, what would have happened without run-ins and gratuities?

Anyway, getting back on track, it does seem to have got a little busier but that will probably change as we get into the school holidays. But what do you think has seen the largest increase in business? It is the work that has been generated by Members with the street hail Credit Card, I am glad you are getting more familiar with this type of business because I believe it will be mandated for taxis in the not too distant future.

Black Cab Heritage Tours

Dear Alan

Thanks very much for the publicity re **Black Cab Heritage Tours**. We needed quite a

number of drivers but thanks to *Call Sign*, our list is now filled.

Bob Woodford (Ex-P49)

Thanks to Tom and DaC

Hi Alan

I would like to thank **Tom Whitbread** and **Delfont Mackintosh** theatres for the free tickets for **Miss Saigon**. My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed the show. I'd also like to say a big thank you to all concerned in developing the all new computer equipment. It is a brilliant job. Well done.

Mo Abrahams (R85)

Pleased you enjoyed the show Mo. If you read the article by Tom regarding his medical condition inside this issue, it will amaze you that he had the patience or desire to organise anything, let alone theatre tickets ...Ed

Lost property

Hello Alan

I am one of your online readers and let me first say what an interesting read it provides. I was with **ODRTS** from 1959 until we moved from Pentonville Road to Shirland Road. A heart problem saw the end of my taxi driving career but I still follow DaC via *Call Sign Online*.

Nowadays my nephew is doing what I did - although he is not on any radio circuit. He was one of the many (so I have been told) who joined **Hailo** and just as quickly left when they announced they were moving into the Executive car market. He tells me that drivers were offered the opportunity to drive the cars and even though he wasn't at all tempted, it made his decision so much easier when he saw some of the cheap car fixed prices that even undercut taxi fares - this with BMWs and Mercedes!

However, I have moved away from the point I intended making. My nephew recently found a laptop in the back of his taxi and on his way home to Chelmsford in the evening, he stopped at three police stations to attempt to hand it in. All three were shut and he ended up giving it in the following morning, but not before he had to queue up for over thirty minutes. He said he was so fed up that he felt like just leaving it in the police station waiting area. Naturally he didn't but it does make a mockery of the Met Police logo of Working for a safer London seem rather trite. With hardly any cop-shops open, how do they expect that to work?

Ronnie Robinson

Burnham on Crouch, Essex





Miles better.

TX4 with market-leading warranty from £139pw.

Get a four year, 120,000 mile warranty and unlimited mileage core engine warranty on your new TX4 from just £139 per week. And if 120,000 miles isn't enough cover for you, you can extend the vehicle warranty up to 180,000 miles. Plus, you'll get free road tax and RAC cover for a year. And in four years' time, you have the option to buy, trade up or walk away.

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[y LondonTaxiCompanyUK](https://www.youtube.com/LondonTaxiCompanyUK)



Terms and conditions:

Figures based on TX4 Elegance (Automatic) at £36,790 OTR with a £2,000 deposit, resulting in weekly payments of £139.44 over 4 years, based on maximum annual mileage of 30,000 (120,000 over term) with a Guaranteed Future Residual Value of £13,983. Business users only. Terms and conditions apply. Finance subject to status. Other models are available - please ask for more details. © TX shape is a registered design; TX™ and The London Taxi Company logo are trademarks of The London Taxi Corporation. The London Taxi Company is the trading name of The London Taxi Corporation.

Fuel economy information:

TX4 (Euro 5) in mpg (l/100km): Urban 25.7 (11.0) - 27.7 (10.2), Extra Urban 40.4 (7.0) - 42.8 (6.6), Combined 33.6 (8.4) - 35.3 (8.0), CO₂ emissions: 209-222 g/km

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