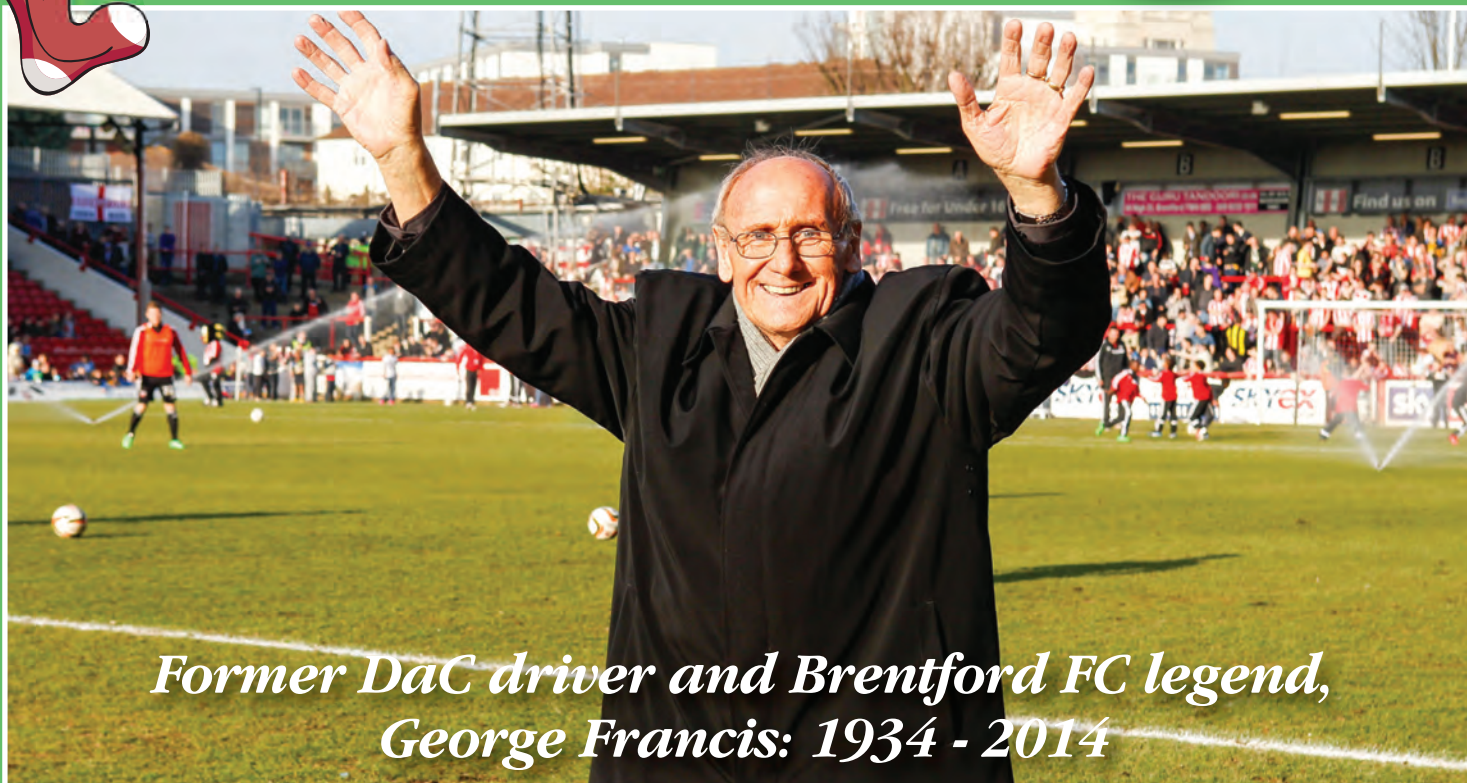


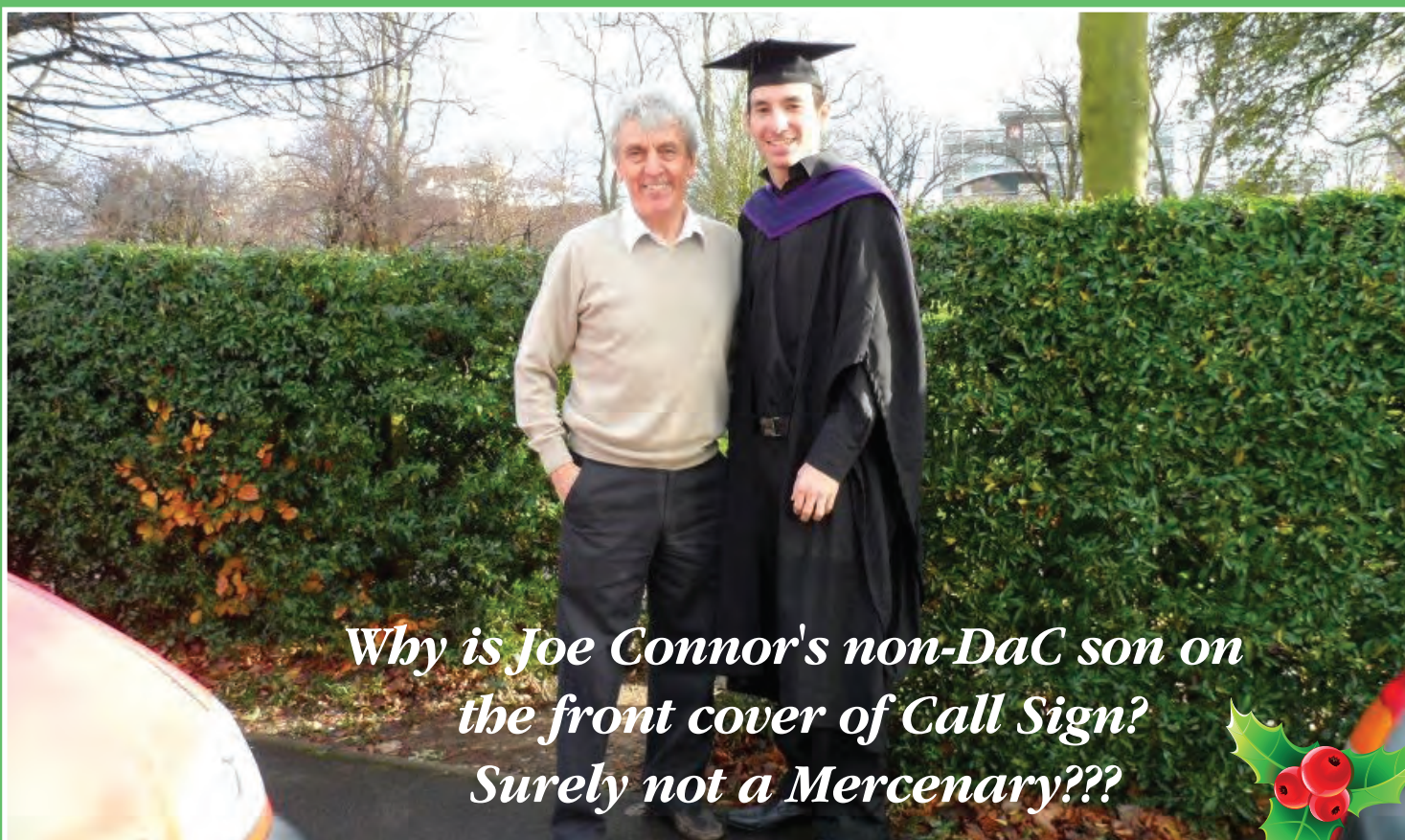
December 2014

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

Call Sign



*Former DaC driver and Brentford FC legend,
George Francis: 1934 - 2014*



*Why is Joe Connor's non-DaC son on
the front cover of Call Sign?
Surely not a Mercenary???*





NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

This month sees West End Night Clubs, which have not been updated for two years. Drivers I have spoken to agree that November seems to be the slackest in years, so knowing where the clubs are we can nick some of our work back from the others (being polite). Apologies to day drivers as these are possibly of no use to you, but today, or in a few days time, you should find the new Eurostar timetable on line at www.myfav.co.uk (click 'Taxi<-----' link in the list under 'Left Screen Selector'). You will be presented with lots of icons relating the taxi trade. Wishing all drivers and staff a Merry Christmas...

West End Night Clubs

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| 229 Club | 229 Great Portland Street, W1W 5PN | Los Locos | 24 Russell Street, WC2B 5HF |
| 100 Club | 100 Oxford Street, Fitzrovia, W1D 1LL | Loulou's (Members only) | 2-5 Hertford Street, W1J 7RB |
| 49 Club | 49 Greek Street, W1D 4EG | Luxe | 3 New Burlington Street, W1S 2JF |
| Alto | 15 Ganton St., (pedestrianised), W1F 9BN | Madame JoJo's | 8 Brewer Street, Soho, W1F 0SG |
| Anaya | 9 Swallow Street, W1B 4DE | Maddox Club | 2 Mill Street, W1S 2AT |
| Annabel's | 44 Berkeley Square, W1J 5QB | Mahiki | 1 Dover Street, W1S 4LA |
| Attica Club | 24 Kingly Street, W1B 5QP | Maya | Maya 1a Dean St., W1D 3RB |
| Automat Club | 33 Dover Street, Mayfair, W1S 4NF | Metra Bar & Club | 14 Leicester Square, WC2H 7NG |
| Bar Rumba | 36 Shaftsbury Avenue, W1D 7EP | Molton House | 43 South Molton Street, W1K 5RS |
| Black Gardenia | 93 Dean Street, Soho, W1D 3SZ | Moonlighting Nightclub | 16-17 Greek Street, W1D 4DU |
| Blow Up Metro | 19-23 Oxford Street, Soho, W1 | Movida | Movida, 8 Argyll Street, W1F 7TF |
| Bond @ 24 Club | 24 Kingly Street, W1B 5QP | No 1 Leicester Square | 1 Leicester Square, WC2H 7NA |
| Borderline | Manette Street, Soho, W1D 4JB | On Anon | London Pavillion Piccadilly, W1J 0DA |
| Boujis Club | 43 Thurloe St., SW7 2LQ | One Alfred Place | 1 Alfred Place, WC1E 7EB |
| British Luxury Club | 70 New Bond Street, W1S 1DE | Opium | 1a Dean Street, W1D 3RD |
| Bureau Night Club | 13 Kingly Court, W1B 5PW | Oxygen | 18 Irving Street, WC2H 7AZ |
| Cafe De Paris | 3 Coventry Street, W1D 6BL | Pacha London | 191 Victoria Street, SW1E 5NE |
| Cameo Nightclub | 48 Margaret Street, W1W 8SE | Pangea | 85 Picadilly, Cargess Street, W1J 7NB |
| CC Club | 13 Coventry Street, W1D 7DH | Paper (Cafe Royal) | 68 Regent Street, W1B 5EL |
| Century | 61 Shaftsbury Avenue, W1D 6LD | Penthouse Club | 1, Leicester Square, WC2H 7NA |
| Cheers | 72 Regent Street, W1B 5RJ | Punk | 14 Soho Street, Soho, W1D 3DN |
| Chinawhite | 4 Winsley Street, W1W 8HF | Rise Superclub | 1 Leicester Square, WC2H 7NA |
| Circus | 27-29 Endell Street, WC2H 9BA | Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club | 47 Frith Street, Soho, W1D 4SQ |
| Cirque Club | 10-14 Cranbourne Street, WC2H 7AG | Roxy | 3 Rathbone Place, Fitzrovia, W1T 1HH |
| Cirque du Soir Club | 12 New Burlington Street, W1S 3BF | Ruby Blue | Queens House Leicester Place, WC2H 7BP |
| Club 49 | 49 Greek Street, W1D 4EG | Runway | 55 New Oxford Street, WC1A 1BS |
| Club Bond | 24 Kingly Street, W1B 5QB | Salsa! | 96 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0JG |
| Club Penthouse | 1, Leicester Square, WC2H 7NA | Silver | 17 Hanover Square, W1S 1HU |
| Corks Wine Bar | 28 Binney Street, Mayfair, W1K 5BW | SIN | 144 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0LB |
| Crobar | 17 Manette Street, W1D 4AS | Soho | Old Compton Street, Soho, W1 |
| Cuckoo Club | Swallow Street, W1B 4EZ | Soho House | Greek Street, W1D 4ED |
| Diu | 12 Greek Street, Soho, W1D 4DJ | Sound | 1 Leicester Square, WC2H 7NA |
| Elysium Lounge | 9 Glasshouse Street, W1B 5EL | Sports Cafe | New Zealand Hse, 80 Haymarket, SW1Y 4TE |
| Eve Club | 3 New Burlington Street, W1S 2JF | Storm Nightclub | 28a Leicester Square, WC2H 7LE |
| Friendly Society | 79 Wardour St. (Basement), W1D 6QB | Strawberry Moons Bar | 15 Heddon Street, Mayfair, W1B 4BF |
| Funky Buddha | 15 Berkeley Street, Mayfair, W1J 8DY | Studio Valbonne | 62 Kingly Street, Soho, W1B 5QN |
| G-A-Y Late | 5 Goslett Yard, WC2H 0ER | Sway | 61 Great Queen Street, WC2B 5DA |
| Gossips | 69 Dean Street, Soho, W1D 3SD | Taman Gang | 141 Park Lane, Mayfair, W1K 7AA |
| Grace | 42 Great Windmill Street, W1D 7NB | Tantra | 62 Kingly Street, W1B 5QN, 020 7434 2056 |
| Green Carnation | 4-5 Greek Street, Soho, W1D 4DD | Teatro | Wingate House Shaftsbury Ave., W1D 5BT |
| Groucho Club | 45 Dean Street, W1D 4QB | Thai Square Nightclub | 21 Cockspur Street, SW1Y 5BN |
| Hedges & Butler | 153 Regent Street, Mayfair, W1B 4QB | Thirteen | 13 Gerrard Street, Chinatown, W1D 5PS |
| Hideout aka Trisha's | 57 Greek Street, Soho, W1D 3DX | Tiger Tiger | 29 Haymarket, SW1Y 4SP |
| Hombre De Bahia | 78 Wells Street, Marylebone, W1T 3QL | Traffic | 1 Vernon Place, WC1A 2EP |
| Hospital Club | 24 Endell Street, WC2H9HQ | Trash Palace | 1 Wardour Street, London W1 |
| Jalouse | 17 Hanover Square, Mayfair, London | Tutu's | Macadam Building, Surrey St., WC2R 2NS |
| Kabaret Club | 16 Beak Street, Soho, W1F 9RD | Umbaba | 15 Ganton Street, (pedestrianised), W1F 9BN |
| Kingly Club | 4 Kingly Court, W1B 5BW | Vendome Mayfair | 85 Piccadilly, Mayfair, W1J 7NB |
| Ku Bar | 30 Lisle Street, WC2H 7BA | Volstead | 9 Swallow Street, Mayfair, W1B 4DF |
| La Capannina | 21 Bateman Street, Soho, W1D 3AL | Werewolf | 215 Piccadilly, Piccadilly Circus, W1J 9HN |
| Langley | 5 Langley Street, WC2H 9JA | Wig Out | 15 Centro Club, West Central St, WC1A 1JJ |
| Lo Profile | 84 Wardour Street, W1F 0TQ | Willa's | 9 Swallow Street, W1B 4DN |
| London Hippodrome | 1 Cranbourn Street, WC2H 7AJ | Windmill Nightclub | 17 Great Windmill Street, Soho, W1D 7JZ |
| Loop | 19 Dering Street, W1S 1AH | Zoo Venom Bar | 13 Bear Street, WC2H 7AS |

from the editor's desk

Saying the right thing...

As it's almost the season of merriment and the Chairman has written about the subject I was going to tinker with – emissions - I thought for a change that instead of the usual moans, I'd tell you of an amusing incident that happened to me recently in a "dispute" with an account client – although I suspect that she might not be phoning too often after departing my cab at the **Savoy Hotel** - rear entrance, as she apparently didn't want to be irritated by anyone recognising her!

I've been driving a taxi in London for almost 44 years and have had my share of good and bad days. But I've had very few arguments because I won't allow myself to have one, however I do believe that over the years I've discovered how to win a "dispute" without the need to raise your voice and also win it by scoring a clean knockout with just a few choice words. Such an event happened to me on that ultra-busy Saturday evening. Whether the passenger knew I'd won is another matter...!

It was reminiscent of the old days – one in and one out all evening. Dispatcher **Curly** was sending 'please cover the jobs' messages all evening. Most people were happy just to get a cab and although I offered any account customers I picked up my usual "grovelling" apology about them having to wait longer than we'd like, I was hoping that most – if not all – would say that the service was very good and that the wait really hadn't been too long at all. Well, six out of the seven account trips I covered that evening said exactly that. But I just knew that the seventh – from a private account I had not heard of before – was going to be unhappy. Her silent entry into the taxi while staring up at the meter, rather than the cursory glance that you'd expect, told me that this was a lady in a foul mood.

I'd arrived with £3.20 on the meter and she came out within a minute or so with the clock just clicking onto the £4 mark. But as the trip offer and my arrival showed that her wait had been some 12 minutes, I wasn't expecting any problems. Then she spoke in a beautifully clear voice, every word almost like silk. Sadly the actual content was more like wire wool.

"Wasn't it bad enough that I had to wait almost 25 minutes for you to arrive," she said, **"but you also have the nerve to have over £4 on the meter and we haven't even moved yet. Hailo would have been here within two minutes and the meter would not have started until I got into the taxi."**

So in my calmest voice, I asked her the obvious question; why, if Hailo was so good, did she bother phoning Dial-a-Cab?

"Hailo had no cabs available," she said in that beautiful voice, **"otherwise I most certainly would have."**

I once heard a joke on the **Two Ronnies** that I knew I'd be able to use one day to a passenger such as this Chelsea lady, and this was to be the day!

"Do you often use Hailo," I asked in as sweet a voice as I could muster? When she replied that she used it all the time and again repeated her claim of our 25 minute wait, which was obviously untrue and later confirmed to me by **Curly** as being less than half that time, I tried to reply but couldn't get in quickly enough because she again brought up my having over £4 on the meter *before we had even moved!*

When I noticed that she was unable to work out where the seatbelts were, I realised that if this woman was indeed a Hailo user, it wouldn't have been the black cab side of their service. So when she actually stopped moaning for one brief



nanosecond, I jumped in.

"I understand your problem now," I said, still with a calm voice, **"and I think I can provide you with the answer. Hailo taxis may well arrive within five minutes and have no run-ins, but they apparently have no cabs either on busy nights. Dial-a-Cab is far better than that because when we have no taxis available, our arrival time is just thirty seconds, we charge a half-price fare and start the meter at minus £3 so we would be halfway up the road before the meter even reached zero!"**

A brief silence was broken when she said that she had never heard so much rubbish and didn't believe a word. I assured her that every word was true but that it only applied when we didn't have any taxis in the area and were unable to provide one.

There wasn't another peep out of her – not even a 'thank you' as she departed the cab at the Savoy. And no, no one pestered her for an autograph – not surprising really as I had not only not recognised her, but had never heard of her!

Doing the wrong thing...

Word reached me very quickly that last month's online version was seen by many at the same time as the hard copy was actually posted. That meant that many former drivers would have seen it before current subscribers – a situation made worse because it was the election CV issue.

In reality it should have made little difference, but we live in a world where online is just another word for instantaneous and I have been told that the LTDF chat site was already talking about **Call Sign's** contents after a former subscriber mentioned the election, while current subscribers were still waiting for the postman to call.

This is something that should not happen and in future those that receive the magazine via PDF will have to wait because they are second to our current subscribers.

I should emphasise that the actual online version itself wasn't available until around a week after the magazine came out and the version received early was the PDF, which eventually becomes that online version but has a limited circulation of around 100, as against the online **Call Sign** which is regularly read by over 8000 people around the world.

If any drivers were upset, then please accept my apology because being responsible for the PDF list and the online version means that it was all my fault!

Borrowing with 118118 or DACCU?

I note with horror that phone directory service **118118** are going into the money lending business. I have just looked at my latest landline

phone bill and was astounded to see that on the one occasion I needed a quick number and called them, I was charged an horrendous £4.45 for a 42 second enquiry! Going by their phone charges, I couldn't help but wonder how much interest they would charge for a loan? According to their TV ads, the APR is 99.9%.

So, being Christmas time and some extra dosh usually coming in handy for many, I looked up the cost of a £1000 loan from 118118. The answer was that if you repay within 12 months, then that thousand quid will cost you an extra £427 - a similar "bargain" to their directory enquiry service!

So I enquired to the **Dial-a-Cab Credit Union** about how much a one year £1000 loan would cost any member of the CU – bearing in mind that it is open to anyone connected to DaC. The answer was that against 118118's £1427 repayment, the same £1000 loan with DACCU over 12 months would cost you just £1070 in total – a saving of £357 - and that is just on a relatively small loan. AND, if you are quick on the draw, they occasionally open up an amazing interest account that pays more – far more – than any other savings organisation in this country! Why there isn't a long queue to join the 1000+ already on there, I have never been able to fathom out! When **ITFUC Patron** and possibly our future **Queen, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall**, recently wrote **praising credit unions, she was 100% right.**

Does anyone remember back in 2003 when it cost 40p for a directory enquiry? Then busybodies **Oftel** poked their noses in and demanded more competition so as "to help keep prices down." Three months ago, **BT** put up the cost of calling 118118 from £3.58 to £4.45. And it isn't just **BT** because **Sky, TalkTalk** and **Virgin** all make huge profits out of the 118118 service. So is anybody surprised at how much profit they intend making on loans? Do yourselves a favour and join DaC's credit union...

Fare increase

I see the April increase is slated to be around 0.3 percent - and possibly less if fuel costs drop further. I know I've said it before, but would we not get far better publicity by announcing that London's taxi fleet were foregoing any increase this year? On a £100 fare (as if!), the increase would be 30pence...

Celebrations...

To Christians and to everyone else that celebrates it, I wish you a happy Christmas; to Buddhists I wish you a happy Bodhi Day; to Catholics at DaC I wish you an enjoyable feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and to those of the Jewish faith, I wish you a happy Chanukah. If by chance there are any Zoroastrians on this circuit, then I wish you all a successful Yalda as you celebrate the winter solstice and the birth of the Sun God. Unfortunately Eid fell a bit early, but I hope Ramadan proved to be a good time for our Muslim drivers and the Diwali Festival of Lights proved to be the same for Hindus.

I doubt that we have many followers of the Kemetic Orthodoxy on Dial-a-Cab, but if there are some then I hope that the Day of the Return of the Wandering Goddess turned out well.

If you are not included in the above, then I just wish you a Happy Holiday and see you in 2015...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Air Quality

It was back in January 2011 that I informed Members of the Mayor's intention to introduce the 15 year age limit on London Taxis as from 2012. I know that at the time it seemed the Mayor was intending to initiate a 10 year age limit, consequently all organisations within the trade, with the exception of the RMT, combined to present a document to the Mayor calling for the age limit to be 15 years and not 10 as suggested.

I can remember at the time feeling quite pleased that the Mayor and his team agreed with us, not simply just because they had agreed, but because the whole trade had united to present their case to the Mayor and which he then accepted. I had not seen a united taxi front for some 14 years, ever since the T&G (Unite) left the Taxiboard back in 1997. I had been hopeful that this new found unity would continue. There isn't any doubt in my mind that had it continued, our trade would not find itself in the turmoil it is experiencing today.

The reason I bring this topic up now is because the Mayor is suggesting there should be a 10 year age limit on London Taxis, something I explained he was enthusiastic about in the past. Consequently, I have re-printed the actual point we made in the original document when we did our submission on behalf of the trade organisations. It read:

The Trade, having carefully considered the impact of various vehicle age related options, contends that, without the assistance of extensive funding, the only sustainable age limitation policy for taxis would be 15 years from 2012, with no possibility of further tightening of this criteria. Any additional restrictions on the fleet would make it impossible to mitigate the serious negative economic impact which our industry is experiencing during one of the worst recessions in recent history.

As you can see, we were quite clear in our belief that the age limit should not be reduced further from the 15 years. So why have I brought this topic up? Simply because the Mayor's *Air Quality Strategy* could have quite serious effects on our trade and indeed there has been considerable reporting on the issue, especially within the cab trade. This has materialised even further, brought on by the disagreement between the Mayor and Green Party MP for Brighton Pavilion, Caroline Lucas.

The Mayor has written to the Environmental Audit Committee claiming that he had reduced pollution by 20%, this figure was taken from a predicted measurement taken in 2008. However, Caroline Lucas had already stated the true figure was 3%. Personally, I do not have any way of actually knowing who is correct, but what I do know is that the Mayor claims the reduction in pollution is due to the scrapping of older taxis!

What is also very interesting is, as we are all aware, the Mayor has stated that all new taxis purchased from 2018 onwards will be zero emission, even though there is not even one



zero emission taxi on the road at the moment. If and when these zero emission taxis are produced, what will be the cost, especially if drivers have to depreciate that cost over a 10 year period. It will lead to more expensive rental charges from fleet owners as they will have to recoup their outlay over a shorter time frame.

It is very difficult to argue about having a greener environment and zero emission taxis, but if that is what the Mayor wants and he wants us to contribute to the cause, then we deserve to be subsidised by TfL. In my opinion, the trade cannot cope with any extra financial burden.

What seems very suspicious is when the Mayor states, when speaking about the 15 year rule:

I informed the Committee about my ambitious proposals to require all newly licensed taxis to be zero emission capable from 2018. This complements my existing policy of retiring taxis over 15 years old. On current turnover this means that by 2033, all taxis in London would be zero

emission capable.

I am currently considering what further steps may be appropriate to accelerate this turnover and to support early adopters.

What I have reproduced in red actually suggests to me that the Mayor intends implementing the 10 year rule for taxis. With all the burdens that have been placed upon our trade in recent years, a trade that has not yet recovered from a deep recession and the introduction into our trade of the established business disrupters, the 10 year rule should not be on anyone's agenda at the current time - especially as the Mayor intends introducing his **Cycle Superhighways** from east to west and north to south across London, something the authorities admit will add to motorised vehicle journey times and which in turn must add to pollution. But that doesn't seem to matter as it involves pedal cycles! If only TfL would spend on our trade just a little of what they spend on cycles, perhaps the taxi trade would be just a little happier and even increase its morale from an all-time low!

Christmas

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and a healthy New Year. I hope the run-up to Christmas is busy for you all, traffic jams ease somewhat and that you can get about, because it has been horrendous in recent times due in no small part to the fact that half of London is being dug up at the moment. Obviously it has been co-ordinated extremely well by the authorities!

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

You may not need us now, but cut us out for when you do!

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TfL once claimed that there were more licensed taxi drivers over the age of 60 than there are under 30. Some called it just a sound bite, but judging by the number of drivers looking at the possibility of, or actually going ahead and retiring, we could be heading into dangerous waters.

Having said that, the latest retirees are somewhat different – at least as far as Dial-a-Cab are concerned - because **Kurt (B80) and Bert Goldschmidt (B80J)** are the only twins on the Society's books – or they were until mid-November when they announced their retirement and stripped out.

The owner of the cab was Kurt Goldschmidt and since 2007, his brother Herbert was his journeyman having previously had the call sign of C83. They both joined in 1973 and now have retired together.

There is one rather strange story concerning the twins and *Call Sign*. It goes back almost ten years – to June 2005 to be precise - when this magazine was the only one to have total internet access to its pages and a 50 year search for Kurt and Bert by relatives in New Jersey (USA) came to a successful conclusion thanks to this magazine's mention of the twins.

Sateside, the twins' cousin **Dan Mayer** in New Jersey knew he had relatives somewhere in the world, but did not know where or even if they were still around. So he put their names on the 'net, sat back and waited...and wait-

Kurt and Bert Goldschmidt The DaC Twins Retire!



Kurt and Bert (with beard, otherwise how would we know)!

Kurt also made an amazing discovery when telling *Call Sign* at the time: "It's funny, in 1965 I was in Israel for the Maccabi Games and we've since learned that our aunt was there at the same time! Isn't it spooky that we should both be in a small country for the same event and not know each other? Maybe we even passed each other on the street!"

Dan Mayer contacted Driver Services at DaC and told them about the article he had seen in *Call Sign*. And indeed the article and the internet brought the family together and into contact.

But that was then. Now Kurt and Bert are stepping back from the rigors of driving a taxi and we wish them both a long and happy retirement.

But could it be that TfL were right...?

ed...and waited. Even with the USA using the Internet as an everyday tool for far longer than the UK, nothing materialised. At least not until the December 2004 issue of *Call Sign* in which we conducted a survey regarding drivers views on passengers smoking in their taxis. This was long before it became illegal to do so. Fate then intervened when two of the drivers interviewed were Kurt and Bert. Suddenly Dan's internet provider went bingo!

Bert told us at the time that he thought they had an aunt somewhere in the Americas and that she'd had children, but both he and Kurt were very young as it was some 60 years earlier.

NOTICE OF 2014 DAC AGM



By now, all members should have received an individual notice of the Dial-a-Cab 2014 Annual General Meeting advising that it

will be held at:

The HAC, Armoury House, City Road, London EC1Y 2BQ on Sunday 8th February 2015 at 11:00hrs.

The meeting this year will consider an agenda including the Election of Officers and any proposed Rule Changes and Propositions, all of which should have been received at Dial-a-Cab House by 09:00hrs on Friday 10th October 2014 and in accordance with Society Rules.

As a reminder, if you do not vote by post, then you must attend in person. If you do neither, you may be subject to a £50 fine...

Howard Pears
Company Secretary

REMEMBRANCE

A Knowledge Boy's view

This is the Remembrance Sunday story of one of the Knowledge students at Dial-a-Cab driver and *Call Sign* contributor Tom Quigley's (Y33) KoL school, David Birch...

"After seeing a request on a Knowledge forum asking KoL boys and girls to volunteer to help out on **Remembrance Sunday**, I didn't hesitate and immediately replied to organiser **Mike Hughes**. I was asked to Marshall **Euston Station** and find volunteer London taxi drivers who were prepared to take veterans, service men and women, widowers and military families to Admiralty Arch for a free Poppy cab ride, partnered with the **Royal British Legion**.

I'm delighted to say that 99.9% of those drivers I asked obliged and that this year we had ten deep of drivers on the rank who were only willing to take a poppy cab rather than take paid trips, which is a great testament to the trade. My fellow Knowledge boys and girls and I opened the cab doors for these service personnel as our sign of respect and thank you to them. I was just overwhelmed at their appreciation, considering all that they and their comrades had sacrificed for us.

This service was provided by the Poppy cabs at all the mainline stations and the **Victory Ex-Services** and **Union Jack** clubs. After the service had finished at the stations, all the volunteers congregated at **Westminster Bridge** for the 11th hour two minutes silence, which is a very, very special moment. On the Bridge stood all the London cabs along with knowledge bikes and vintage cabs, which gave tourists the opportunity to take photos and make a voluntary contribution to the Royal British Legion.

Following their Remembrance march past the Cenotaph, those that had come in a Poppy cab returned to Westminster Bridge and were put into another Poppy cab to return them back to the station or club they had come from. The day was very well organised by the many volunteers, especially the taxi co-ordinator Mike Hughes. It was a complete honour to be part of this day and it again showed me the calibre of the trade I am working hard to become part of. One day I'll be there in my taxi as well..."



KoL 'boy' David Birch

David Birch, Knowledge Boy

Jery's World



"I fort the merger talks were just wiv Radio Taxis. This one must be to make sure we get a present for Christmas!"

GUIDE DOGS

Over the past year, TfL has been liaising with the London mobility team of the Guide Dogs charity to understand issues faced by passengers with guide dogs or other assistance dogs. It has therefore come to our attention that some private hire drivers are refusing a passenger because the passenger has a guide dog or other assistance dog.

This notice is intended to remind all private hire drivers and operators and taxi drivers that:

- It is an offence to refuse to take a booking or refuse carriage of a guide dog or other assistance dog.
- All taxis and private hire vehicles must carry a guide dog and other assistance dog; they must allow the dog to remain with the passenger during the journey and cannot charge an additional fee for the dog.
- Any driver that has a valid exemption certificate from TfL on medical grounds must carry this exemption with them at all times while working.

Exemption certificates are available from Transport for London and are issued only if the driver has a specific medical condition that has been certified by a medical specialist.

Any complaint received by TfL of refusal to carry a passenger with a guide dog or assistance dog will be investigated. Any driver or private hire operator found to be refusing a fare or trying to charge an additional fee for the carriage of a guide dog or other assistance dog faces prosecution by TfL and the possible revocation of their licence.

In addition, in the coming months TfL will also be working with the Guide Dogs London mobility team to carry out some mystery shopping exercises.

Helen Chapman
GM LTPH



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Covering London and the Home Counties

It is very sad to have to report not just the death of a former **Dial-a-Cab** driver, but of a footballing hero of his time. **George Francis**, who died on 22 October at the age of 80 following a long battle with bowel cancer, was undoubtedly one of Brentford's finest ever players and together with his **Brentford FC** strike partner, **Jim Towers**, created havoc to opponents defences; between them scoring an incredible 250+ goals for *The Bees*.

Towers was famed for his shots from outside of the penalty area, whereas George was another **Jimmy Greaves**, with the enviable ability of just being in the right place at the right time.

A minute's applause was held for George before the home game with **Derby County** on 1 November to mark his passing. There was also a three page write-up in the *Bees Review* program. Fittingly, Brentford defeated the league leaders in front of almost 11,000 fans.

George made his Brentford debut in 1955. Just as it seemed that *The Bees* were set to lose to **Walsall** in the old Division Three (South), he scored a late equaliser that made it a double reason for George to remember the game.

Current Premier League high flyers **Southampton** probably have memories of George Francis that they would rather forget because in 1956, not only did Brentford demolish *The Saints* by 4 - 0, but George Francis scored all four goals! In fact, such prolific goal scorers had the "terrible twins" become that in the following season and out of the total number of goals the team scored of 77, George and Jim scored 51 of them just

GEORGE FRANCIS



George began scoring goals again – 15 in 37 games, but in actual fact everything had changed. Few of his old team-mates were still there and the team spirit that had helped them so much had vanished. Then in 1962 and after scoring 124 goals in 260 games for *The Bees*, George was transferred to **Gillingham** and became an invaluable part of the team that won the Fourth Division Championship in 1964. Unsurprisingly, George scored the goal at **Newport County** that won the title and clinched promotion.

He ended his career with two Southern League sides **Hillingdon Borough** and **Hastings United**, where for one match he teamed up with former **Tottenham Hotspur** legend, **Bobby Smith** before the ex-Spurs striker was suspended by the club for disciplinary reasons and never returned!

Once George's playing career ended, he went on the **Knowledge** and later joined **Dial-a-Cab**. But George's biggest honour came in March of this year when he was deservedly inducted into the **Brentford FC's Hall of Fame** (see cover pic).

George Francis was undoubtedly a brilliant footballer, but every bit as importantly to all the DaC drivers, both football and non-football fans, that knew him, he was a lovely man. George's son, **Lee Francis (L45)**, is also on **Dial-a-Cab** and has been since 2003. To him and all of George's family, we send our sincere condolences.

Rest in peace George...

between the two of them!

DaC Chairman and **Queens Park Rangers** season ticket holder, **Brian Rice**, told *Call Sign* that he had spoken about football to George on several occasions, but we suspect that George, being the gentleman he always was, didn't mention how he almost single-handedly destroyed **QPR** in a league match when scoring a hat-trick in a 4 - 2 win at **Loftus Road**. But **QPR** must have remembered that match more than perhaps was thought at the time, because just over 12 months later in a move that created sensations in London's three evening papers, **QPR** bid £8000 to buy both George and Jim and amazingly the bid was accepted. Living near **Acton**, the move suited George. But **Rangers** didn't use George as much as he had hoped and he moved back to his first love – **Brentford**.

Nothing seemed to have changed and

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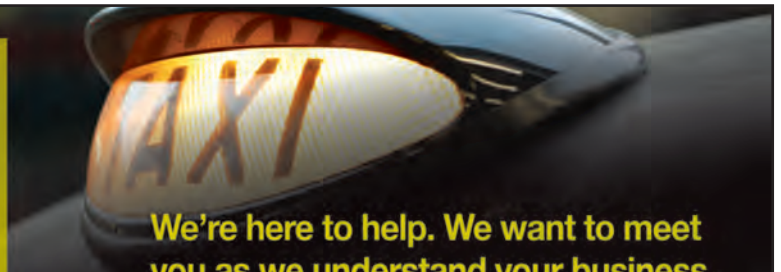
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Regular readers will know that Bob Woodford and his partner Steph attempted to walk Peru's Inca Trail to try raising the £1400 needed to sponsor a taxi taking children with life-threatening illnesses on the WCHCD Magical Taxi Tour to Disneyland Paris. This is their story...

My recent trip to Peru was certainly an experience – and the Inca Trail was definitely a challenge! But despite the fact that I would not wish to undertake this event again, I would recommend it to anyone that has a sense of adventure!

It took 3 flights via Madrid and Lima to arrive at the Inca capital, the City of Cusco, which would be our base before and after the Trek. It was to last 4 days with 3 overnight camping stops in the Andes Mountains before arriving at our ultimate goal – the magnificent lost City of Machu Picchu.

A solid base of 10 weeks training, consisting of long distance hill walking and sweaty gym sessions, seemed ideal preparation for the 43km Trek. But no amount of preparation can prepare you for altitude sickness, which affects people in different ways – and it certainly affected me!

Drinking copious amounts of the local Coca tea on arrival in Cusco (3,400m above sea level) seemed to do the trick – for a couple of hours at least – but a slow saunter around the town centre found me suddenly feeling sick just as our 14-strong 'Global Adventure' group were about to enjoy lunch.

It was nothing to do with the choice of Guinea Pig or Alpaca on the menu – but the shortness of breath, headache, feeling of nausea and loss of appetite (which is never like me) had caught up with me, meaning that it was time to break out the Diamox tablets (prescribed pre-Tour by the Travel Doctor in Borough High Street).

One of the side-effects of Diamox is a gradual lead down the slippery slope to diarrhoea, but it seemed a risk worth taking at the time – and after an afternoon nap I felt so much better and ready for the following day's Acclimatisation Day.

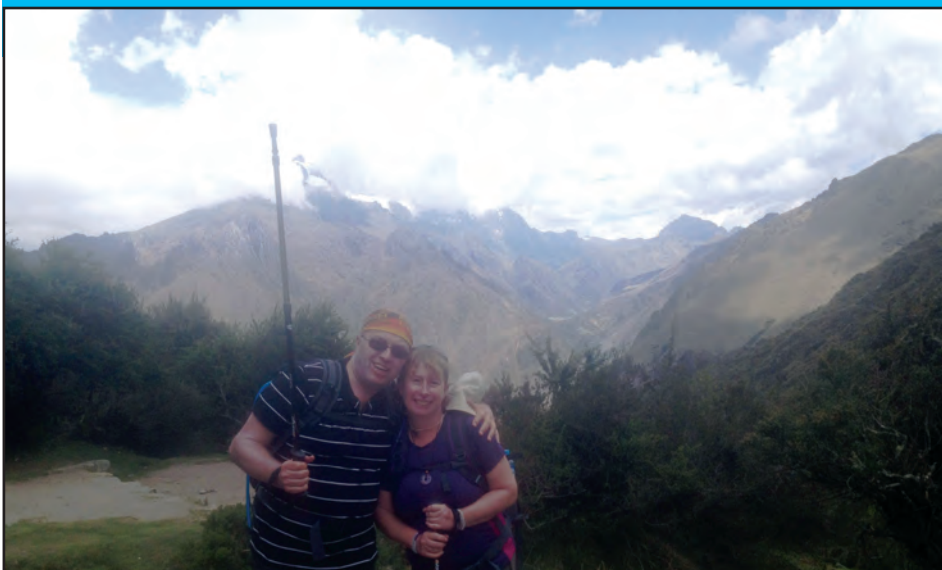
Fortunately our group had an amazing Guide, Wilfredo Cardenas Torres (otherwise known as Willow), who would not only lead the group throughout the trip, but constantly refer to the history of the Incas with his outstanding knowledge.

Willow took us on an 8km walk the day before the real thing in the high ground above the City – a place known as Sacsayhuaman (which when you pronounce it, sounds like 'sexy woman') and all seemed well. Then after a final briefing at our evening meal, it was time for a good night's sleep before starting the Inca Trail the following day.

Inca Trail: Day One

Following breakfast, we transferred to KM 82 – which is the Checkpoint where we registered for our permits for the Trek. Armed with sun hats, sun shades and a factor 50 sun

Inca Trail to Machu Picchu: Part One



Bob and Steph up in the Peruvian rarified atmosphere



Bob (rear left) and Steph (front left) raring to go – in Bob's case straight to the loo!

protection, it was time to follow the River Urubamba to begin our trekking adventure.

The distance covered was a mere 11km – via the archaeological site of Patallacta – to our first overnight campsite at Wayllabamba. There were more ups hills than down dales on that first day, but it did seem to most that we were taking this trekking lark in our stride. However, there were surprises in store enough the next day...

Inca Trail: Day Two

This was to be a seriously challenging day because we had to climb the infamous Dead Woman's Pass to 4,200m in the impressive Cloud Forest. The ascent took nearly 7 hours – and the feeling of elation of conquering the pass will stay with me forever.

It was a relief to be walking downhill in the late afternoon, but the 3,500 crooked steps made treacherous trekking following a downpour, which included quite vicious

rough-edged hailstones!

Phew! What a relief to make it through another 11km but the longest day was to follow. But now I had a different problem – those side-effects from the Diamox tablets had led to a bout of the *Eartha Kitts*, which seriously threatened my progress on the forthcoming day - plus a sleepless night!

I felt really rough at this halfway stage, making regular trips to the base camp's chemical toilet and I just could not contemplate getting back onto the Inca Trail that would lead us along gushing rivers, through ancient tunnels and over more high mountain passes to the Sun Gate to the sight of Machu Picchu through the morning mist in 2 days' time. I was starting to feel that my trekking was over.

Continued next month...

You can still donate to help Bob and Steph at:
www.justgiving.com/robandsteph

Mike Higgins not only edits New York's Taxi Talk magazine, but also runs a chat show for cabbies on NY's public service MNN1 TV channel. He also writes for Call Sign about problems in the NY cab trade...

The Speed Cam \$cam!

I know you London guys at Dial-a-Cab have your problems with speed cams, but I've started digging to find out who is cashing in on the speed cam 'scam' in New York City and apparently *that* is the multi-million dollar question over here...

All I know is that a fellow NYC cabbie told me he had to call Connecticut to fight a bogus red light ticket and added *that* is where the New York City 'camera' data is sent initially and *then* processed for summoning for the red light stuff. One of the speed camera 'kings' are apparently out in Arizona!

But again, who signed off on this mess and where are the contracts!??

So that begs these question(s):

1) IF a red light camera nails a driver at 09:45am, and a cop issues a ticket at 09:45am, can the driver plead guilty to the \$50.00/ no DMV points camera fine (Dept of Motor Vehicles) and not have to pay the other, 'double jeopardy' NYPD issued, real ticket (ditto for speed cameras)?

2) MANY drivers say the incentive is there for the yellow light to be *faster* at 'trap locations... and it has happened on many occasions!!

3) WHY are NY-ers being policed by out of state, private firms? What the hell is that all about??

4) MANY drivers are slamming on the



Sounds like our US cousins have the same problems as us!

people to speed and run red lights just for the money would they??

6) Lastly, in the words of a great comedian... 'WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?' I mean, if I'm

brakes at red light locales, creating the potential for rear-end collisions (ie the westbound Belt Parkway exit at Ocean Parkway and their FIVE speed / red light cameras, where you literally have to slam on the brakes in a hairpin turn to avoid a camera ticket).

5) WHY aren't the cameras ALL marked with a large warning sign on them? Usually, they're just a beige box sitting on a lamp post. If the City truly wants to protect the public, put a large warning sign for speed zones / stop zones on the cameras - and even 1,000 feet *before* the camera zone (like they were *forced* to do in Nassau County).

I mean, gee whiz; they wouldn't want

getting a ticket from a cop, at least *that* cop is occasionally throwing a crackhead in jail to keep the streets safe. But WHY should NY-ers be shoveling \$\$\$ to a group of invisible geeks who've been incentivized to punish good drivers? I've also noticed that many people are not driving into the City anymore because of that nonsense!

And guess what London; we also say that cars and not bicycles are the backbone of the American economy...

See ya soon...

**Michael Higgins
New York City**

Uber more expensive than Taxis in London

According to a **Rob Gill** article in the UK's leading online and printed publication for travel and buyers, **Buying Business Travel**, London is the fifth most expensive city to travel around according to research carried out by online transport platform **Go Euro**.

The company ranked sixty of the world's major cities based on the cost of their urban transit options including public transport, **Taxis** and peer-to-peer platform **Uber**.

London's average cost for a single journey public transport ticket was £4.68 while a 10-kilometre taxi ride cost £17.91. However, a similar length journey using Uber came to £20.78.

Only Stockholm, Zurich, Gothenburg and Rotterdam were more expensive for similar journeys. Manchester ranked as the 18th most expensive for urban transit with the average public transport costing £2.58 per ride, while taxi and Uber journeys were similar at £12.94 and £12.61 respectively.

So why does everyone think that Uber is cheaper than taxis? Good marketing perhaps? If you keep telling people that one is cheaper, they will eventually believe it...

Our thanks to Rob Gill...

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COMPLAINTS MEETING RESULTS



A complaints meeting took place at Dial-a-Cab House on Monday 3 November 2014. These are the results...

Name:

Jetmir Rama (T17)

Rules broken

2, 11

Description of complaint:

Driver was in SW11 near St Johns Hill (GPS) when messages went out regarding a trip from Heathrow Airport to Birmingham. The driver immediately put his meter on and 'soon to cleared' into W50C, which is a back-up zone to WW00. The driver was then offered and accepted the trip and then offered a delay of 45 minutes. Heathrow Airport is a physical zone and you must be within the Perimeter Road or the Feeder Park to book-in. Many warnings have been given in Call Sign and via the terminal...

Verdict:

Rule 2: One week suspension

Rule 11: Two weeks suspension (reduced to one week on Appeal)

Name:

John Davis (V41)

Rules broken

7, 9

Description of complaint:

Driver cleared a Fixed Priced staff trip before reaching the final destination. Driver has been warned about this practice on numerous occasions...

Verdict:

Committee decided no complaint to answer due to incorrect Procedure Rule submitted...

London's electric car charging infrastructure...

BREAKING DOWN???



We have to get electric taxis - but where will we charge them???

At a time when TfL are pushing their **ULEZ** Consultation, an interesting article by **Julian Rendell** appeared in the **Daily Telegraph** regarding London's network of electric vehicle charging points. It claimed there was confusion over who has responsibility in London for electric car charger maintenance, with the result that the network is breaking down.

The article claimed that many charging points are currently not working and that there was little prospect of them being repaired anytime soon – even though the network was sold off last month for £1million and the new owners, French company **IER**, were said to have ambitious expansion plans. In fact, in some areas the number of broken points outnumbered those actually working!

At the time of Julian Rendell's article, south of the Thames between Southwark and London Bridge saw 10 of 12 chargers out of action, while all eight chargers around the Barbican were unserviceable. Camden added that just 70 percent of its charging points work at any one time.

These problems with chargers mean electric car owners are finding it difficult to get around. It also seems that TfL can get little right - and these are the people we pay to look after us!

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OF YEAR AGAIN!



Christmas Opening Times

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
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| Christmas Day | Closed |
| Boxing Day | Closed |
| Monday 29th | 7.30am til 3pm |
| Tuesday 30th | 7.30am til 3pm |
| New years Eve | 7.30am til 12pm |
| New Years Day | Closed |
| Open Monday 5th January 2015 | |

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from all the staff
at Ascotts*

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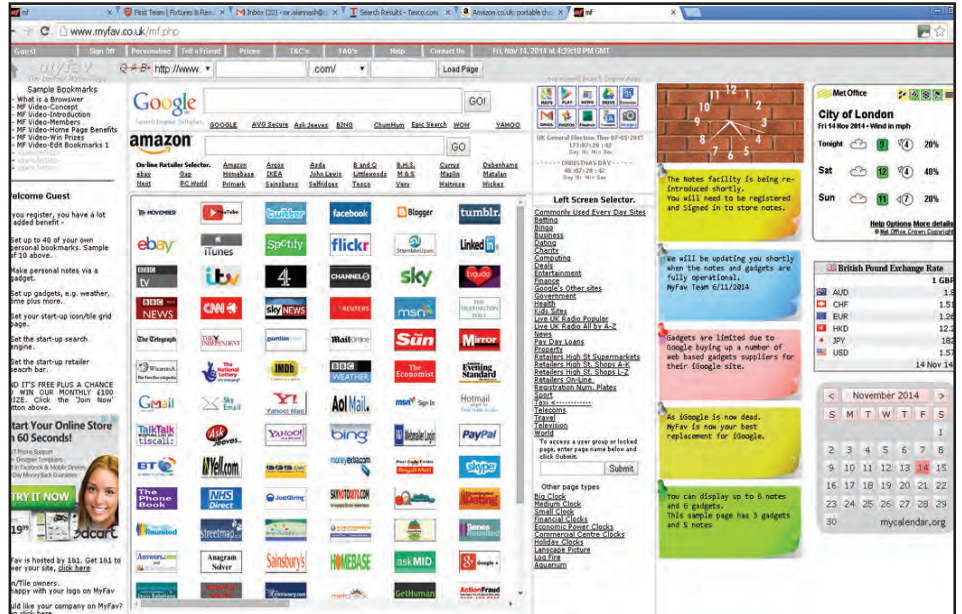
You may have seen that the *What's On, Useful Information Documents* and other useful taxi related websites are all accessed from the www.myfav.co.uk website, which is regularly mentioned on page 2 of *Call Sign*. Well this website has an awful lot more to offer. It was designed to be "Your Ideal Home Page".

Google is the majority of PC and Mac users Home Page. This is great for specific searches, but for your everyday regulars like **Mailbox, eBay, Amazon, TV guide, lottery results, weather and directory enquiries** etc, the *MyFav* website makes it so much easier and has lots more. The default page has a genuine Google search box, the font size is the same as Google's but is surrounded by everything you could ever need.

There are currently 7 other search engines (**Bing, Yahoo, Ask** etc) search bars available with just one click. Below the Google search bar is a retailer search bar. The default being Amazon, but currently 24 other retailers search bars are also available, again, with just one click.

Below the retailer search bar is what is called the **Iconic Grid**, usually up to 72 icons or tiles as they often known. Just click on the icon to load that webpage in a new tab, so that the *MyFav* page remains loaded for further use.

The default icons are the most commonly accessed websites. To the right is a list of other categories and with just a single click on the link, a new grid of icons appears. On it's own it's useful, but if you become a *MyFav* member by clicking the "Join" button, you can customise your page with your own regularly used bookmarks, post-it style notes and gadgets such as clocks, weather, dialling



codes, exchange rate converter, maps, etc.

The other major advantage of joining is that your customised *MyFav* page is stored online, so it's available from any internet connected computer in the world, very useful when on holiday using an internet café.

Not only is it free, your personal information is kept secure and not passed on to third parties.

And very importantly, you can actually gain financially. First we offer a £100 per month prize just for recommending *MyFav* (see site for T&C's) and coming soon and unique to *MyFav*, purchases from selected retailers will accrue a com-

mission to your account when ordered through the *MyFav* site!

For a time and to enable you to see how the page looks customised, we are changing the usual defaults being different on almost every visit you make, to see how the page can be customised. Very soon you will be saying:

"This is MyFavourite website" and "MyFavourite Home page."

Go try it now!

Then make it your "Home Page"

www.myfav.co.uk OR
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www.myfav.uk

Alan Nash (A95)

KPM and Mercedes

Following last month's news that Peter DaCosta had re-emerged from retirement to purchase the remains of the old KPM from Administration and re-launch it as a new company, a number of Dial-a-Cab drivers asked *Call Sign* if we knew when Mercedes had stopped providing the old KPM with Vitos, as they did not want to feel that their order – complete with deposit - may have been accepted after Mercedes had stopped the flow of vehicles.

So we asked Caroline Pidgeon at the London Assembly, who in turn asked Transport for London. This is the response – including something of a surprise at the end...

"In September this year, Mercedes Benz UK informed TfL of the withdrawal of its dealership franchise from the KPM Mercedes Vito Taxi London dealership. However, MBUK have also confirmed that after sales support and warranty repairs for the existing Vito Taxis will continue to be carried out at MBUK dealerships and we are aware that MBUK are liaising with taxi driver associations in London to offer support at this time. MBUK have also provided additional contact details to TfL to ensure taxi drivers and owners of this vehicle can obtain further information if required. As such, TfL is satisfied that the level of support provided to London Vito taxi owner/drivers by MBUK will enable them to continue operating with confidence.

"There are currently five vehicle manufacturers who have advised TfL of their intention to develop and manufacture new taxis for sale and operation in the London taxi market. The majority of proposed vehicle designs and production plans are now at an advanced stage and TfL is working closely with manufacturers to assist, wherever possible, in the launch of these vehicles into the taxi market."



Esther Johnson
 Correspondence Officer at the MD's Office

Hello Ladies & Gents

This year is coming to an end with Christmas fast approaching and a New Year soon to begin. And it has certainly been nothing less than an interesting 2014! Our trade as a whole is being attacked from all sides; to say that our competitors are offering reduced pricing is an understatement and for the Board of Management to offer you a fair rate for your expertise is becoming increasingly difficult.

The market place has changed out of all recognition and the fare structure seems to be moving further and further away from the meter, with some of our competition offering free rides and gifts as a way to disrupt the Licensed taxi business.

Coverage (again)!

Our coverage during the busy morning periods remains a cause for concern and although I have frequently mentioned this in many previous articles, it is important that you know that lucrative trips are being scrubbed, in many cases without even offering the clients a time - which seems senseless. I have constantly instructed despatchers to help you out as much as possible and I am asking you once again to please help them to help you, especially in the busy build-up to Christmas.

Credit Card fraud: New procedures...

Over the last month or two, we have encountered a number of fraudulent on-line transactions. Unsurprisingly perhaps, it seems always to be on longer journeys when picking up from the more obscure locations. We have had some success in catching one or two of the guilty parties, no more so than when Fox 39 contacted me regarding a trip he thought was not as it should be. He managed to hold his nerve for quite a while until the police finally appeared at the scene to arrest the three chaps in the back of his taxi. The 40 minutes we spent on the phone to each other and the police must have seemed a long time to him, especially when the three guys were becoming more and more agitated; but on this occasion we were successful, they were charged and are due to appear in court very soon.

Credit Card bookings

From early December, Credit Card Bookings (CCB) through the system will appear on your terminals as normal account journeys. This not only means the destinations will be shown throughout the day (other than between 7am and 10am Mon - Fri when they will be As Directed in the normal way), but that the passenger will no longer have to produce their credit card.

Credit Card trips via street hails will still operate as they do now; that is at the end of the trip the card is put into the PED and the pin number is entered.

If you are scrubbed, you will now retain your original queue position in exactly the same way as a normal account ride. The trips will be shown as CCB and although a normal run-in is mentioned as part of the terms and conditions, the run-ins will be totally discretionary. I hope that these changes will not only assist you, but also help with coverage. The average credit

Operations Manager Report ...and chat from the Control Centre



card trip is now almost £27, so it is certainly not to be sneezed at.

Promoting DaC

To further promote our services and in particular the credit card and account app, re-designed to run in conjunction with the Supersides we have a large supply of hand-out cards and rear seat adverts available from DaC House and RomanWay. Please pop in to either location and pick up a set. The adverts are available in both TX and Vito format and do help to generate additional work.

Mailshot answer

James Griffin (T97) wrote in this issue's Mailshot: *Ref morning coverage problems, has any thought been given to a facility to accept a booked job a few hours before the booking time ie if I know I've got a job from near home at 7.45am, I will adjust my start time to then rather than drive in empty only to see a 'please cover SW19 job or account in danger' messages once I'm in town.*

Pre-allocation of trips is what James is asking despatchers to do, something which in my honest opinion I believe to be against the spirit of the circuit. I can understand that sometimes it can be frustrating to travel into town and then see a trip that is uncovered or in the Bids in or near an area that you have driven in from, but zonal despatch assigns all trips 100 per cent fairly and equally, be it a pre-booking or an ASAP journey. The lead-in times are varied and can be adjusted depending on the area and all members have an equal chance of a trip into central London or out of town if there are trips available, irrespective of their sign-on times. The Control Centre try their utmost to give prior warning messages on certain problem trips, they will unmask journeys and in addition give street names for the actual pickups to help all members, with absolutely no favouritism to anyone on the fleet and this should never change. Experience tells me that this is the fairest way to allocate trips, there will never be a perfect dispatch system for everyone, but as long as we are all equal and free of any bias, in the main it still works. Lots of things could happen in a few hours and again this is another obstacle that could arise; either the driver waits for a lengthy period and then he or she is scrubbed or conversely the member may not be able to carry out the journey that they have been given because in those two or three hours after it was allocated, something important turns up. The Board are always happy to consider new ideas (see above piece on Credit Card bookings), but I do believe that on this occasion the membership would consider pre-allocation to be unfair.

Lastly, can I wish you and your families a very happy festive period... and be very lucky!

Allan Evans
DaC Control Centre and
Operations Manager

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There seems to be fashions in lost property. When I started as a cab driver, it seemed to be umbrellas and gloves. The police were sometimes less than keen to do the necessary paperwork when you turned up at the Police Station - remember those places? So a friend of mine once handed in one glove...just to wind them up!

These days you have to explain to the PCSO or SPCO or HMSO - you know, that guy behind the counter, how to fill out the forms!

Then came the **File-o-Fax**; in reality it was a glorified diary, but people packed so much vital information into them that losing one meant your life was apparently ruined!

And then came the **mobile phone** and it all went mad. How many of us have never found one lying on the back seat or been alerted to the ringing when the owner phoned the number to retrieve it. These days an **iPhone** can be traced via a computer. A colleague of mine once answered a knock on his front door. The man standing there said: "I think you might have my phone!" They looked in the back of the cab and there it was - amazing or what!

And now people are even losing laptops. It seems surprising they can mislay fairly large and valuable items like that. Of course this kind of thing would never happen to streetwise guys like us, would it? Well would it...?

When we go on holiday, we like to fly from

Another true story from Geoff Levene

LOSING IT ALL...



Luton. It's only about 40 minutes away, so we take a cab and I pay the going rate. If we have to go from Stanstead or Gatwick, I man-up and drive.

So one year, a few days after Christmas, Stanley turned up at 5.30am to take us *en-route* to Tenerife. Snow was forecast, but it was dry as we made our way up the M1 amongst the trucks and coaches. But as we left the motorway and approached the first roundabout, I looked around the cab and couldn't see my hand luggage. That was because it was sitting on a chair in our living room!

"Stanley," I called out, "we have to go back." Not quite *Houston we have a problem*, but a bit closer to home.

By now the snow was falling in big clumps,

but Stanley was brilliant and we made it. There was about £170 on the clock and I gave him £200. He didn't want to take it but I persuaded him and put it down to experience. It was a lesson and it certainly wouldn't happen again.

So this year we decided to return to the **Hotel Spanakopita** on our favourite Greek island of **Soutsoukakia**. At **Keftedes Airport**, the travel rep escorted us to the minibus and off we went. We were the last to be dropped off and as the bus drove away, I felt something was missing. It was my hand luggage that I'd left on the floor of the bus! I found myself doing what I'd seen people do at stations and airports - waving frantically and hoping the driver would see me. Some hopes! There was a thud as the good lady wife's jaw hit the ground.

We soon established that the driver had found the bag, but had to return to the airport. I asked Fortis, the owner's son, to get me a cab. But he said he would take me because I might have to wait a long time. Obviously "airport wait and return" didn't create the same excitement as it would on a **Dial-a-Cab** trip! There followed a hair-raising 25 minute drive. I hoped I wasn't looking as scared as I felt!

The bag was at the **Olympic Airways** building - which I discovered was a wooden hut! Then back we went to the hotel, but Fortis wouldn't take a cent. A real gent - whatever that is in Greek.

So the moral is: Don't think it won't happen to you. It just might...

Geoff Levene (W32)
Call Sign Online

Watch out at Ropemaker Street

Go down **Ropemaker Street** in the City at any time of day or evening and you will find taxis parked. Most are either waiting for their passengers, or to be offered a radio trip. **Call Sign** had heard of very few drivers being sent **Penalty Charge Notices** for waiting. Wardens often pop by but we're not even sure if there are warning signs informing drivers that there are also CCTV cameras about.

But at least one driver, **Gerry Tobin (L32)**, has now received a **City of London PCN** for being parked in a restricted street where waiting restrictions are in force via a CCTV camera - ie

Ropemaker Street. The fine is for £130 (or £65 if paid within 21 days). The photo sent to Gerry with the PCN (taken opposite 28 Ropemaker Street) and timed at 22.37, clearly shows the wheels of Gerry's cab parked by a double yellow line, but we saw no warning signs suggesting that cameras were watching. However, the cameras are there so we can assume that the City of London Corporation are no longer going to bother with warning signage and together with their 20mph speed limit, are obviously going all out to increase their kitty.

So watch out at Ropemaker Street...



The CCTV camera (circled) is watching even though there is no warning of it being there

Immaculate White Cab Available for Weddings



Female driver

10% reduction for Dial-a-Cab drivers

Contact Debbie (W18) on

07956 317040

Call Sign could fill many pages with photos sent in by drivers giving examples of how the licensed taxi trade is being brushed aside by **Transport for London** in a way that the old **Public Carriage Office** never did. The question we are constantly asked is whether we're being taken for mugs?

It is undoubtedly true that we had more than our share of problems with the PCO, but compared to the way we are treated by Mayor of London **Boris Johnson** and his team, it was kid's stuff!

So we are going to publish two of the many photos that have arrived here recently and see whether we get any response. We somehow doubt it.

Pic one shows an advert designed to fit on the rear of a pedicab and apparently with the Mayor's blessing as it displays the official TfL / Mayoral logo.

Pic two shows a minicab with its PH roundel correctly displayed, but also with a sign suggesting that the vehicle was purchased from Birmingham's Taxi Warehouse – but only the word readable is Taxi and we know what impression that gives to the man or woman in the street. The question is what impression it gives to Boris and co.

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

MUGS?



Drive (London Taxis) like an Egyptian...



Another sale for the LTC

Hot on the heels of an order for another 500 TX4s into **Azerbaijan**, the **London Taxi Company** is pleased to announce that it will supply a further 60 black TX4s into **Egypt** before the end of 2014. The London Taxi Company's newly appointed Director of International Sales, **Stephen Copley**, sealed the deal with existing Egyptian franchise partner, **Mohamed Abou Ghaly**, of the Cairo-based **Abou Ghaly Motors**, following the successful implementation of the first 65 vehicles.

Commenting on the new order, Stephen said: "Mohamed is an excellent operator who has leveraged every benefit of our Black Cab, from its safety for drivers and passengers alike to the fantastic iconic shape, recognisable the world over. As well as running a highly popular London Taxi fleet, Mohamed ensures that standards remain high by running his own driver training academy. He invites passengers to rate their experience in the

cabs via his *Facebook* site, using the feedback received to continuously improve service. We are both confident that the addition of these new vehicles will further strengthen the reputation of his fleet and the London Taxi as a viable, profitable franchise business proposition."

The automatic transmission Egyptian TX4s, which are available for hire in both **Cairo** and **Sharm-el-Sheikh**, are all fitted with passenger plasma television screens, which provide relevant location based advertising information as well as an additional revenue stream for Abou Ghaly Motors.

Commenting on his London Taxi fleet, Mohamed said: "We are very pleased with the success of the London Taxis; they have been embraced by both residents and

tourists as they provide a unique, secure, peaceful, comfortable, air-conditioned environment – a safe haven contrasting with the heat, hustle and bustle of the city traffic and hot climate. The TX4 is an excellent alternative for metered, chauffeur-driven transport and sits very well within our retail portfolio, which includes Chrysler and Jeep vehicles."

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



As promised in last month's Call Sign, these are the questions regarding candidates for the 2014 DaC AGM elections that were received. Answers will be in the next issue. No more can now be taken. Comments are in the Mailshot pages...

DAC ELECTIONS: QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

From Alex Constantinou (N05) (For Garry White)

Regarding the forthcoming elections, I would like to ask two questions of DaC Compliance Officer **Garry White**. In 2008, together with around ten other DaC drivers, I was put on my one and only complaint by then-Compliance Officer **Allan Evans** for booking into what was then the E140 zone (Docklands within the security boundaries). I was at the traffic lights at the eastern end of the Limehouse Link and within just a minute or two of reaching the entrance. I felt rather miffed at the time, but on the plus side I have never done it again and realise that there have to be some rules that we abide by so as to make our system as fair as possible.

So my question to Garry is this: I'm not sure how long you have been running the Complaints department, but I'd guess it must be close to a year if not longer, yet I can only remember reading complaints results just once compared to the regular ones we had when Allan Evans was in charge.

Or do we no longer have any drivers that break any rules?

The second question is regarding tenders that you say are done in the "same old way." I have never filled in – or even seen - a tender, but I always believed that they were a direct answer to questions. How can you fill one in differently?

From Martin Freeborn (C67) (For Garry White)

Re the BoM election, personally I think now

is not the time to change Chairman, with so much experience vital in getting us the best deal. All credit to Garry for standing, but please get a few more years on the Board first. I would like to offer an example...

I was recently on a Complaints committee, something that I would not usually comment on, but with elections coming up I feel I have no choice but to at least put this into the public domain.

The information supplied by the Compliance Officer (**Garry White**) was sub-standard and nowhere near what was expected. Considering that Garry wants to be Chairman, the Complaints committee as a whole were very disturbed to find that he seemed unable to print or read a logger – often a vital part of a complaint. As a result, the information provided was totally inadequate and the complaint fell apart without even being looking at. The other complaint of the two also had no information and it was purely the driver holding his hands up that meant a 'guilty' verdict was arrived at.

I don't know how long he has been our Compliance Officer, but it is some considerable time. However, his performance on that day was nowhere near what was needed just for that job, let alone running the company.

From Jaweid Iqbal (D65) (For Javid Raja)

Why is BoM candidate **Javid Raja** (N72) against the merger? What does he plan to do with subs, which he calls a dis-incentive to

cover account work and could he please explain his concept of dealing with our enemies?

From Colin Jenkins (Y22) (For Pat Graves, Michael Parkins, Javid Raja and Garry White)

Pat Graves: How many AGMs have you attended?

Michael Parkins: How many AGMs have you attended?

Javid Raja: How many AGMs have you attended?

Javid Raja: How long you been a cab driver? How long have you had the business and financial acumen to destroy minicabs? Why have you not shared this information with the trade before? Who is it you intend carpet bombing as per your CV?

Garry White: Can you be honest with the membership and explain your reasons for standing against Brian Rice as alluded to by Keith Cain in his Call Sign article?

From James Griffin (T97) (For all candidates)

The CVs of candidates understandably reference past achievements, it's what CVs usually do. But short of saying things like you have some ideas, "so please elect me," there does not seem to be a plan. Can all the candidates for the Board elections give us their top two ideas to improve DaC?

ALFIE HIZER: SPURS MASCOT!



Alfie is standing in front of Ryan Mason; the middle duo of the five

Long-time Dial-a-Cab driver **Martin Hizer** (M47) has for even longer than being here, been a supporter of Tottenham Hotspur. Hoping that one day Spurs will actually win something, Martin has persuaded his 7-year old son **Alfie** to follow in his footsteps!

Before the recent home game against **Stoke City**, Alfie took his place as a team mascot. The photo shows him standing in front of **Ryan Mason**, a genuine home-grown talent and Spurs man that cares about the club rather than one of the team's foreign mercenaries, who seem to care more about the money!

Tottenham lost the game 2 – 1 but Alfie loved the day and stepping out in front of 36,000 cheering fans...

Call Sign

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I advised you in the last issue of *Call Sign* that we had opened a small number of accounts with no gratuity and were in the process of marking these accounts with the 'N' attribute. The update to this is that we have received the file that will add the 'N' to everyone's attribute list and as soon as this is done, drivers will only need to contact Driver Services if they do **NOT** wish to be offered these types of trips and to have the attribute removed from their list.

With the busy period being upon us, the above implementation has been held back until early on in January. That is because there are very few accounts this applies to and installing the attribute will mean taking the despatch system down and restarting it. Experience tell us that the last thing we want to happen is to bring the system down during a busy period and then find that it does not come back up!

It may seem that we are being over cautious, but as with the temperamental nature that many despatch systems can sometimes have, it isn't a good idea to tempt fate heading into one of the year's busiest times. I'm not saying there is anything wrong with the despatch system - in

DAC SALES REPORT

With Keith Cain



fact it's very robust and functioning very well - it's just me suggesting that it can wait till after Christmas to do it!

We have been very active in Sales recently

and trying to meet with as many existing and prospective clients as we can. I have to say that service is starting to become more prevalent in our conversations. It does seem that promises that were offered by competitors over the past year or so are not always being delivered, however, costs are still very high on the agenda and questions are still being asked of us about how much or how low in price we are prepared to go.

We all know the meter is the killer blow to the taxi market, but I am offering a much simplified administration charge which, when combined with journey costs, is allowing us to compete more.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Keith Cain

DaC Head of Sales

DON'T BE LIMITED BY AGE!

As news of a possible reduction in the age limit for hackney carriage vehicles emerges from the Mayor's Office, The London Taxi Company offers the trade a worry-free way to buy their next new vehicle.

As the last Fairway leaves the roads of London following the initial 15 year age limit restrictions laid out in the **Mayor's Air Quality Strategy**, the trade had the news that **TfL** have announced a consultation to review whether the age limit should be reduced by a further 5 years to 10, as officials strive to meet strict European air quality limits by 2020.

This news, coupled with other uncertainties both within the taxi trade and the wider economy, mean that the decision to simply invest thousands of pounds in a new vehicle is made all that more difficult.

That's exactly why **The London Taxi Company** has continued to offer a variety of options for drivers looking to update their vehicle. Drivers can buy their new **TX4** for **£37,995** outright with either cash or via HP (available for up to five years), or they can take advantage of the Black Cab manufacturer's most popular current deal and have the option to simply walk away in 4 years. **Here's how the deal works:**

Buy a new TX4 Elegance from £139 per week with a £2,995 deposit and get:

- * A 4 year, 120,000 mile vehicle warranty which you can extend at point of purchase up to 180,000 miles with a one-off payment
- * An unlimited mileage core engine warranty

* 12 month's road tax

* 12 months' RAC cover

In four years' time, choose to:

* Buy your TX4 for a Guaranteed Residual Value of £14,450

* Use your vehicle to part-exchange against a new LTC vehicle

* Hand back the keys and simply walk away



TX4 has market leading residual values of more than 60% on average, so now is the perfect time to talk to the LTC team about releasing the capital in your current vehicle. For example, LTC are paying approximately £3,000 more for three to four year old vehicles than in 2012.

For more information, contact The London Taxi Company's Customer Relationship team on 0207 700 0888 or email london@london-taxis.co.uk.

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It is not often a father can brag that his child is a published author, but **Dial-a-Cab's Joe Connor (N64)** can say exactly that (see cover pic).

"It was a complete shock," Joe told *Call Sign* "when Ross told his mother and me of his chosen career path. But we're mightily proud of him and his new book, which will be published on the **28th November 2014**. Published by **Top Hat Books**, an imprint of **John Hunt Publishing**, **Mercenary** is a work of historical fiction. Though unlikely to topple the likes of Bernard Cornwell and Conn Iggulden in terms of book sale numbers at this early stage, it is being sold by giants of the industry **Waterstones** in the UK and **Barnes & Noble** in the US.

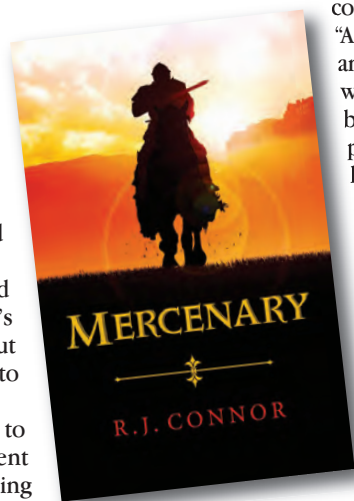
Joe went on to explain that Ross had been studying Sport Science at St. Mary's University in Twickenham, when quite out of the blue he told him of his decision to leave.

"Within 4 months, he had decided to leave and enrol at Southampton Solent University, where he would study Writing Contemporary Fiction. I guess he chose right."

Five years down the line, a degree and 120,000 words later and Ross' book has finally

As a DaC driver sees his son's debut novel published, Joe Connor proudly talks of...

My son the author!



Ross's first novel: **Mercenary**

come into fruition. "All the research and hard work that went in to the book are finally paying off. I really hope he makes a name for himself."

Mercenary, the first in a proposed series, is set in the aftermath of the Wars of the Roses, during the early 16th century. The protagonist, **Richard Longsword**,

is a Spanish knight who sets out on an epic adventure that incorporates most of medieval Europe, with the inclusion of many notable figures such as **Henry VII**, 'the great' **General Cordoba** and the **Borgias**. Long lost battles are also explored, including the **Battle of Flodden**, which last year celebrated its 500th birthday, while reference is also made to the likes of **Richard III** whose remains were unearthed last year in a Leicester car park.

If Historical Fiction is your thing, **Mercenary** is available to pre-order in paperback on Amazon UK, with the eBook version available to purchase from the 28th. If you wish to find out more about the book, please visit its page on **Goodreads** or to find out more about the author himself, please search for **R.J. Connor** on **Facebook** or **Twitter**.

Mercenary is published by Top Hat Books on 28 November...

NOT THE TOWER OF LONDON AGAIN!

Try the Radar Tower!

No **Dial-a-Cab** driver will be surprised to hear that the UK's most popular sites are located in London. Even less surprising are what those sites are: 2013 figures show that the UK's most visited attraction was the **Tower of London** (2.9 million visitors), followed by **St Pauls Cathedral** (2.1 million) and **Westminster Abbey** with 1.8 million visitors going through its doors.

But there is another end to that league table – the least visited – with the worst tourist attraction being the **Radar Tower** in Harwich. That saw just six visitors in 2013 – although 2014 could see an improvement as five have already gone there with three months to go! And it isn't as though it has no history, because it was built in 1941 and used by the Royal Navy to detect German 'E' boats within 15 miles of the approaches to Harwich Harbour during WW2. Yet, sadly there is no interest.

Then there is the **British in India** museum in Nelson, Lancs, where you can see a variety of swords, kukris and commemorative boxes, not to mention a large collection of Indian regimental neckties as well as lots of other stuff. That had almost a dozen times more visitors than the Radar Tower... with 70 visitors!

At the **National Trust's Long Crendon Courthouse** in Aylesbury, you can enjoy the venue for their annual manorial court where those responsible for horrendous crimes such as selling bad fish or brewing beer without a licence found out their fate some 400 years ago. 153 visitors wanted to know more in 2013.

So far as free entry attractions are concerned, top of the pile was the **British Museum** with 6.7 million visitors followed by the **National Gallery**, the **Natural History Museum** and the **Tate Modern**.

Outside of the capital, the most popular attractions in 2013 were the beautiful **Durham Cathedral**, York's **National Railway Museum** and the **Museum of Liverpool** – no doubt with the help of a certain pop group!

Chief Executive of **VisitEngland**, **James Berresford** said following release of the report: "Attractions in England are core to England's tourism offer and we are fortunate to have such a wonderful and wide variety of indoor and outdoor attractions to suit all visitors, from the rich history and heritage and local relevance associated with smaller, sometimes ancient sites, to the international appeal of our stately homes, castles and places of worship."

Anyone fancy a trip to Harwich...!



153 visitors went to Long Crendon as against almost 3 million to the Tower!



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

Brethren of the Whip



Carter the informer...

Ever wondered how the law was enforced before the Metropolitan Police were formed, before traffic wardens prowled the streets and definitely before CCTV cameras! The

bain of the working *hackney* man in the 19th century was the 'informer'. But they were not a nineteenth century invention; the Act of 1662 states that informers would be rewarded for assisting in bringing successful prosecutions against coach proprietors. Ironically, the informers came into their forte in the years following the foundation of the Metropolitan Police, giving the *hackney* coachman an adversary on two fronts.

Informing was a veritable industry, with the most successful informers having offices and employing clerks! They were educated people who tended to direct their attention to a few specific trades, publicans, carmen (the white van man of the time) and *hackney* coaches.

Their *modus operandi* was to find something at fault; an illegible plate was a common complaint. They would study certain Acts of Parliament, particularly new ones where drivers etc were not aware of the changes. If the law stated the plate number should be black on a white background, then an informer would jump at the chance of bringing an 'information' against the owner of a plate if it was white lettering on a black background.

They made their money by receiving a moiety, their half of the fine that was inflicted on the person found guilty. They never hesitated to inform the magistrate of the maximum fine available, but usually the magistrate - who often had little time for informers - would pass a mitigated fine, much to the chagrin of the informer. Besides the moiety, they could also claim expenses, the 2 shillings (10p) for bringing the summons, the charges in bringing witnesses and for their own time in attending court. It was often an expensive process for the *hackney* coachman if there was an information against him. Many drivers often accused the informers of taking bribes from drivers in order not to make claims against them.

In 1833, Charles Dickens has his eponymous reporter, Samuel Pickwick, ask a *hackney* coachman for details of his employment and his horse. The coachman, convinced that Pickwick was an informer, stopped his coach and wanted to fight him! Such scenes were not unheard off and Dickens may have based it on fact.

In January 1839, Carter the Informer wanted a cab to take him from Palace Yard to his home in Paradise Street, Lambeth. There were two ranks in Palace Yard at the time, one

for the four wheel *hackney* coaches and another for the two wheel cabs (in 1846 it was reported that the stand in Palace Yard could hold 200 cabs). Many of the coaches were empty, the drivers were in the King's Arms Tavern. Seeing rich pickings with the unattended coaches, Carter began recording the plate numbers for a future prosecution. Driver Charles Ashton seeing what was happening, rushed into the King's Arms and shouted out "informers, informers." As a mass, the *hackney* men left their beer and entered the street. They were in no mood for appeasement. Carter's understudy, Felstead, was attacked by the mob using bludgeons and heavy sticks. Where these weapons came from is not mentioned, but cabmen would often wield their heavy bronze badge at the end of its leather strap and this was sometimes mistaken for a stick. Carter's wounds were much more serious, someone had used a knife to his face, cutting his chin "very near to the bone."

The most serious charge resulting from the affray was against Thomas Edsell. He was charged with maliciously and feloniously assaulting Carter and if convicted, could face transportation for life. The only evidence against Edsell was that he held a grudge against Carter who had brought an information against him previously, and that he was wearing Carter's hat. In the affray, Carter had lost his hat and picked up Edsell's and *vice versa*. In his



The Cabman is surrounded!

defence, Edsell said he was not in the Kings Arms but was on the point of the rank - if he had been then surely Carter would have got into his coach to go home. Fortunately for Edsell, this contradiction was not raised and the jury found him not guilty of all the charges.

Informing, as Mr Pickwick found out, could be injurious to one's health...

Sean Farrell

Call Sign Online

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-A report in the Evening Standard claimed that comedy agent and producer for Objective Talent Management, Corrie McGuire, had been attacked by masked activists during the anti-capitalist Million Mask March protest organised by the group called Anonymous. She was said to have had "the wrong accent."

She told the paper she had been appalled to see hundreds of masked people being very violent. That was just one of several reports claiming of attacks by masked demonstrators, but many suspected – including *Call Sign* after listening to plaintiff demonstrator's cries of innocence and police "brutality" from demonstrators – that some were making up the stories. Most of the protesters were wearing masks, which apparently became a symbol of civil disobedience following the movie, *V for Vendetta*. Others claim it makes cowards feel brave.

However, after speaking to Dial-a-Cab driver Peter Evens (H97), we now believe that the claims made against the marchers probably carry a great deal of truth.

Like most Dial-a-Cab drivers working that evening, Peter watched for updates on his terminal and after hearing that the masked demonstrators were heading to Buckingham Palace from Parliament Square, informed his passenger, who was going to South Kensington, that he would avoid using the Royal Park and would go up St James Street and then turn left into Piccadilly instead, hopefully missing the demonstrators.

It went to plan until they turned left to hit Piccadilly and the traffic. Suddenly Peter saw lots of demonstrators in masks running through the traffic and causing as much trouble as they could. They smashed the rear window of the taxi in front of Peter that had attempted to turn right at the 'no right turn' lights into Albemarle Street to try to escape these demonstrators that now resembled rioters.

Peter locked his doors and attempted to move forward hoping that the traffic would move, but he got stuck behind a bus outside the Ritz Casino. Masked attackers began hitting his taxi with lumps of wood while at the same time others tried to force open the rear doors to get at Peter's French passenger. Like Corrie McGuire, his accent would not have pleased them.

Unable to move and not knowing what to do, Peter laid on his hooter and within a surprisingly short time, fifteen riot police turned up and sent the masked hoodlums packing – no doubt straight to the newspapers to complain about police brutality! The police enquired how Peter and his passenger were and when they said ok, they moved on to the next problem.

Peter safely dropped his passenger, who Peter told us had said surprisingly little else other than to tell the DaC driver to be careful! In the morning, Peter examined

DAC DRIVER'S CAB KICKED

...as marchers try to pull passenger out!



the cab to find several dents and scratches to his cab.

"I was just pleased to get out of there in one piece," Peter told us before shooting off

A masked attacker caught on camera confronting Peter while others are kicking the cab in an attempt to pull out the passenger!

back to work as part of the life of a London taxi driver in 2014.

Our only question is this? Should those demonstrating in London be allowed to wear masks to keep their identities concealed? Our answer must be fairly obvious...

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign Online

Lee's cup dream lives on!

Colliers Wood Utd 4
Ringmer 3 (AET)

Dial-a-Cab driver and goalkeeper for Combined Counties Premier Division team Colliers Wood, Lee Pearce (J71), has made no secret of his desire to play in a Wembley final. The FA Cup seems rather improbable and even the prestigious FA Vase seems difficult.

But their first FA Vase game saw them grab an amazing 4 – 5 away victory in extra time over

Holmesdale in which Lee saved a last minute penalty. That was followed by a home tie against

Shoreham where the team came back

from a goal down to win by 2 – 1. But that was only part of the story

because Lee Pearce couldn't play and the number two failed to show, leaving the left back to go between the sticks! But that hard fought victory earned Colliers Wood another Wibbandune home game – this time against Sussex League club, Ringmer.

In the first few seconds, Lee parried a half volley which Joe Mead managed to clear. Lee was kept busy and soon claimed a dangerous low cross. But Colliers Wood went ahead on 10 minutes when a Mead corner was headed home by Darren Caesar. Then and within 60 seconds, it was 2-0 when Dan Harding lobbed the keeper. Suddenly Ringmer started to believe in themselves and Lee Pearce made one point blank save before also tipping a free kick over the bar as the away side piled forward. Soon after, the DaC man made another good save – this time from Hopkinson, but a Ringmer goal had to come. And it did on 36 minutes when Jordan Woodley stabbed home from close range following a corner that should have been cleared. Then on 42 minutes, Ringmer equalised when yet another badly defended corner kick let Jordan Stubbings turn the ball in. After being 2 – 0 up, 'Wood were lucky not to go in behind at half time.

The second half saw CW putting some more effort in and a Lee Pearce long clearance found Sam Harding but he was pulled back by Vickers, who was sent off with a straight red giving 'Wood a penalty. Harry Wise took a poor spot kick which was easily saved by the goalkeeper. Cousin Dennis Wise wouldn't have been pleased! But Colliers Wood made it 3 – 2 when Sam Harding took a brilliant through ball from Eli Ogunseye and scored a beauty for his second goal of the game. But CW failed to keep control and five minutes later the defence was again caught dithering allowing Woodley to drive home from the edge of the box making it 3 – 3. Fortunately for the team, Lee then made another two saves – the first being an excellent one where he managed to just tip a Woodley free kick round the post before making a brilliant one-handed save from Woodley.

Then with just over 15 minutes to go, Sam Harding scored his third of the match and this time the team held out and earned a tough away match against another Sussex team, Pagham.

Stop Press: At press time, we heard that the team had defeated Pagham by 2-1 to move into the National section of the FA Vase. So Lee's Wembley dream lives on...



Lee made at least three world class saves to keep his team in the cup!

Compliance with Garry



Hello Ladies and Gents

It's our busiest time of the year and one where I would like to think our good service gets you brownie points for the year ahead with our account clients for the service we provide in

dealing with all the extra traffic that enters the capital over the festive period.

Arrival notifications

Please make sure you press your arrival button ASAP at your pickup location and you receive back an acknowledgement to your terminal to show your correct run-in, then do your advise arrival. If at any point you have to move your taxi, please inform dispatch re your new location as clients are not all familiar with pick-up points when they are away from their office. So the more info we have as to where you are parked helps the client and dispatcher.

Arnavut Fadil: 1 Jan 1957 – 9 Oct 2014

I attended the funeral of Fadil, proprietor of **Framewright Taxis**, on 14 October 2014. The funeral took place at the **Sulemaniye Mosque** on Kingsland Road and was attended by drivers and various people associated with the trade. If you ever had the pleasure to meet Fadil, you would have known why he was so well respected both as a man and also in the taxi trade.

He will be sadly missed by many...



Holiday period

I would like to wish all those that celebrate Christmas, a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Be lucky...

Garry White
DaC Compliance Officer

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

IT'S A CABBY'S LIFE

Stephen's view on the possible merger

If a company is struggling in the market place, is it sensible to asset strip its own assets and distribute the equity raised to its employees (members), then to merge with another company? It's a question I asked my wife, a company accountant. She gave a wry smile and just said **Dial-a-Cab**, as she continued about her business.

It is this unconventional or radical proposition that we find ourselves contemplating on the ranks and watering holes around London town - a merger of equals with **Radio Taxis**. So let's examine the facts about Radio Taxis and profile a case study about their demutualisation in 2004...

The Chairman, **Geoffrey Riesel**, demutualised Radio Taxis with backing from **Brian McBride**, an American taxi operator in the US. Mr McBride is an educated man who has attained accountancy qualifications, together with being a trained lawyer. He and Mr Riesel are chums from working with each other via the **Taxicab Limousine and Paratransit Association (TLPA)**.

The 2,500 driver members of Radio Taxis were given £1,100 and issued with 1000 shares each. The deal had been constructed to ensure members retained about two thirds of the company.

As a minority investor, Brian McBride agreed to a closed share trading market where only he, the drivers and staff were able to trade shares.

The deal was sold to Radio Taxi members that their shares were confidently predicted to be worth in excess of £5 in good time. Sadly ten years on, the shares are being traded for 8p each, reduced to penny share status.

So the essential questions that need to be asked are:

1. What percentage of shares do the drivers (former members) own?
2. How many shares and percentage does Brian McBride own?
3. How many shares and what percentage do Mr Riesel and the other directors own?

By chance, I recently spoke to an RTG driver who said he owned 2000 shares because his friend was only offered 8p when he stripped out his terminal, so he was given his 1000 shares for nothing!

It is on record (Daily Telegraph) 30 April 2004 at the time of demutualisation that Mr Riesel said:

"If I say so myself, for members this is a great win /win deal, with no loss of control. I think they would be crazy to turn it down."

Mr Riesel was right about that, because Brian McBride and the directors have absolute control. Mr Riesel controversially was the first to introduce private hire - albeit driven by trained Knowledge drivers from their own fleet. It

resulted in costly abject failure, never to see the light of day.

I am sure we've all read in the trade papers about **Mountview House Group Limited**. Its liabilities far outweigh their assets and this can easily be confirmed by doing a simple internet check if you have a moment's time at hand.

They appear to own a mews in Lennox Road N4 consisting of a portfolio of buildings, which offer substantial development potentials. I presume these assets are lost to the members of old. The one jewel in their crown is a company called **One Transport**, primarily a consolidator for private hire. It is unduly reliant on the **BBC** account for success.

In a previous edition of **Call Sign**, I wrote about Radio Taxis using **Addison Lee en masse** on August Bank Holiday at Kings Cross Station. A friend worked on the day in question. I was told that the Radio Taxi's "man on voice" was desperate to cover jobs, giving an ultimatum to the drivers re bringing in Addison Lee. My friend was told that Addison Lee was the only private hire company in London that guarantee 10/12 minutes arrival. So let's not be shy to say that Addison Lee is the default service provider for Radio Taxis.

In the light that the American private equity giant **Carlyle**, who own Addison Lee, are spending fortunes trying to gain access to bus lanes, contesting the existing rule of law through the High Courts of England and beyond in Europe, perhaps Radio Taxis ought to apply some loyalty to the trade?

Forty trips

We now have an anachronistic rule that needs to be repealed in our official rule book that due to the paucity of work the vast majority of our fleet cannot adhere to; that is that each driver must complete 40 credit account hirings each month. The rule could be rewritten in the rule book after the next AGM, when I suspect more entries may be made.



Stephen Berndes
Call Sign Online

LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

With Tom Quigley (Y33)

Move over Victor...

Having laughed at many of the ridiculous situations that **Victor Meldrew** found himself in during the long running BBC series of **One Foot in the Grave**, little did I realise that as I got older, I would be finding myself in various similar circumstances.

Once, whilst walking in my street, two policemen approached me asking whether I knew anything about a neighbour whom they were trying to get hold of. Apparently he had been ill and his wife, who was at work, couldn't get hold of him and was very anxious. So she phoned the police.

Knowing the couple, I informed them that another neighbour had a key for feeding their cats and just then, as if by magic, that neighbour pulled up in her car. After the police explained the situation, she tried to open the door but unfortunately the key didn't work, so the police borrowed a hammer from me and just broke the door down as apparently the man was supposed to be on suicide alert. Fortunately there was no body or man in the house, as the police had the wrong address! Once again, and as if by magic, the household of the now smashed up front door came driving up, got out of her car and looked at the scene in shock – I was standing there with a hammer in my hand, two policemen standing



As Victor would say: "I don't believe it!"

an elderly neighbour in her late 80s being taken to hospital the previous night, the following morning I saw another neighbour looking distraught and crying with a bunch of flowers and a card at the elderly neighbour's front door and enquiring how the old lady was.

The distraught neighbour ran off crying that she was too upset to talk as the neighbour was dead! Well I'm no Colombo, so I just put two and two together about the poor old lady's fate and being a good neighbour, I then told another neighbour and so the message went around the street.

Later that day and talking to the daughter of the elderly lady who also lived in the same

next to me, our other neighbour looking on and of course, this person's front door was smashed to smithereens! Explaining was kind of difficult!

Another time, after having seen

house, I naturally expressed my condolences, whereupon she looked at me and said that her mum wasn't dead but that it was in fact her husband's birthday (hence the card and flowers) but the distraught neighbour's cat had died and she was extremely upset.

Then on 4th November at about 9 o'clock in the morning, I heard a very large crashing noise. Knowing that there were builders working two doors away, I went outside to find not a problem with the builders, but a skip sitting on the back of my cab! Further up the road was a bemused BT phone installer in a state of shock; he had left the handbrake of his large van off. It was filled with equipment, began rolling downhill gathering speed until it reached the builders skip, crashed into it and pushed that into the back of my taxi!

Luckily no one was hurt, the cab is repairable and the builders were witnesses. But please excuse me because I just have to say: "I don't believe it...!"



Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

The Mayor's Ultra-Low Emission Zone suffers its first victim

NISSAN SUSPEND THEIR NV200 TAXI...

In a move that must have shocked **Boris Johnson**, car makers Nissan have suspended the launch of their NV200 petrol taxi which had been scheduled for a December launch, because of doubts surrounding the Mayor's Ultra Low Emission Zone.

In a statement, the company also claimed that they now had doubts over the feasibility of developing a zero-emission electric model, which Nissan had planned to introduce into London next year – a project that the Mayor had said was the way forward for the London taxi trade.

However, Nissan now say that finalisation of their launch plans for both the petrol and electric cabs was impossible until they knew what the conclusion of the consultation document would be. The consultation itself will close in January, but the finished product is not scheduled to be approved by Mayor Johnson until April/May 2015.

Although Nissan have already spent multi-millions on the development of their NV200, which is certainly selling well in New York, the problem for the car giant is that although the ULEZ doesn't come in until 2020, rules regarding new taxis are scheduled for 2018 and that would undoubtedly affect sales of their petrol model, which in theory at least would become obsolete within three years. Certainly its second hand value would plummet drastically with possibilities of the fifteen year rule being reduced down to ten years.

The statement said that until they knew the requirements for new cabs under the ULEZ regulations, they would be suspending any further development of the electric cab. There were also concerns over a lack of clarity on whether there would be a minimum requirement on what range the electric taxi would need, in



addition to the disappointing number of rapid charging points available in London – which is said to be appalling compared to other countries planning for the onset of electric vehicles.

The statement continued: "Nissan is a strong supporter of air quality and CO2 reduction measures and is encouraged to see the recent consultation launched by the Mayor's office.

"However, if this were implemented then our planned petrol taxi, designed to meet the challenging London taxi standards, would be obsolete within a few years of its introduction."

Somewhat contradicting what Nissan say, Chief Operating Officer for Surface Transport at Transport for London, **Garrett Emmerson**, said: "Nissan are one of a number of manufacturers we've been working closely with to

develop a zero emission capable taxi. We welcome their support for our proposals to introduce an Ultra-Low Emission Zone in central London from 2020 and their continuing commitment to develop zero emission capable electric vehicles. We look forward to continuing to work closely with them in the future."

According to page 12 of this issue of **Call Sign** and a leaked email, there are in fact no less than five manufacturers including Nissan that are planning advanced green models of London taxis with TfL "...working closely with manufacturers to assist, wherever possible, in the launch of these vehicles into the taxi market."

Rather than assisting, the question must now be whether TfL are actually hindering the introduction of e-cabs and if the five will continue with their current plans, or follow Nissan and put everything on hold. That would leave just the one question: Will the Mayor of London's plans actually kill the London taxi trade???

Consultation on London Ultra Low Emission Zone

A public consultation on proposals for the “world’s first” ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) in the centre of the UK capital from 2020 has been launched by London Mayor Boris Johnson and TfL. It continues until 9 January 2015 and is available to access on the TfL website at: tfl.gov.uk/ultra-low-emission-zone.

According to TfL, the proposed ULEZ would halve emissions of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter PM10 from vehicle exhausts in central London. Cars, taxis, private hire vehicles, buses, motorcycles, vans, minibuses, heavy goods vehicles and coaches would all have to meet new emission standards or pay a daily charge to drive in the zone, which will have the same boundaries as the existing congestion charge zone. It is set to come into force on September 7 2020 and operate for 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

TfL claims the zone will “significantly improve air quality and in turn the health of Londoners” by reducing the number of people living in areas of where NO₂ levels currently exceed legal limits by 74% in central London, 51% in inner London and 43% in outer London.

There have been calls from some politicians and air quality and health campaigners for the ULEZ to be introduced sooner than 2020, but the Mayor stated his intention to give motorists “adequate time” to switch to greener vehicles that will not incur a charge under the proposals. Furthermore, according to TfL, many vehicles would already meet the proposed standards in 2020, but it states that introducing the Zone will *accelerate the take up of low emission vehicles and stimulate the low emission vehicle market*. Criticism has also been levelled at the proposals for not encompassing a wider area but TfL says the ULEZ will not lead to a reduction in air quality or increased congestion outside the zone. According to TfL: “The majority of traffic entering the ULEZ will be from outside the zone – so the benefits of cleaner, greener vehicles in the form of reduced emissions will be delivered right across London, so benefitting Londoners’ health.”

Mayor Boris Johnson said: “Introducing the world’s first ultra-low emission zone is an essential measure to improve London’s air quality and reduce NO₂. Safeguarding Londoners’ health and well-being is a top priority for my administration. I understand that people need adequate time to switch to greener vehicles and help is at hand for those who will be hardest hit, but let’s be clear; we need to make these important changes ASAP to continue to improve Londoners’ quality of life and give everyone who lives in or visits the city the cleanest possible air to breathe.”

The final proposals will be confirmed in spring 2015, giving a five-year notice period prior to the ULEZ coming into operation in 2020. Following the consultation, TfL will analyse the results and make recommendations to the Mayor, who will then make a decision on whether to confirm the plans, with or without modifications.

The ULEZ proposals would require vehi-



cles travelling in central London to meet the following emissions standards, or pay a daily charge:

* Cars and small vans – Euro 6 for diesel engines (registered from 1 September 2015 so 5 years old or less in 2020) and Euro 4 for petrol engines (registered from 1 January 2006 so 14 years old or less in 2020). Non-compliant vehicles could still drive in the zone but they would be required to pay a daily charge of £12.50;

* Large vans and minibuses – Euro 6 for diesel engines (registered from 1 September 2016 so 4 years old or less in 2020) and Euro 4 for petrol engines (registered from 1 January 2007 so 13 years old or less in 2020). Non-compliant vehicles would be required to pay a daily charge of £12.50;

* Heavy goods vehicles, buses and coaches – Euro VI (registered from 1 January 2014 so 6 years old or less in 2020). Non-compliant vehicles would be required to pay a daily charge of £100;

* Motorcycles and similar vehicles – Euro 3 (registered from 1 July 2007 so 13 years old or less in 2020). Non-compliant vehicles would be required to pay a daily charge of £12.50.

Responding to the ULEZ proposals, **Jenny Bates**, Friends of the Earth London campaigner said: “An ultra-low emission zone is just the sort of initiative we need to stop around 4,000 Londoners dying prematurely every year due to air pollution – but this weak version does not go far enough. The Mayor should ban not just charge, the dirtiest vehicles and the zone should be introduced sooner and extended to cover a bigger area. To protect Londoners’ health the Mayor should also bring in a London-wide congestion charge, invest more to encourage walking and cycling and public transport use and scrap road-building plans for East London that would worsen traffic and pollution.”

TfL, as the licensing authority for London’s taxi and private hire vehicles, will decide whether to make changes to the licensing requirements for these vehicles.

Licensed London Taxis: The proposal is that from January 2018, all vehicles presented for licensing as taxis must be zero emission capable. Since 2012, a 15 year age limit has removed over 6,000 of the oldest and most polluting taxis. TfL proposes to reduce the age limit for all non-zero emission capable taxis from 15 years to 10 years (irrespective of date of licensing), with effect from 2020.

The taxi requirement will apply London-wide as well as in the ULEZ. It is proposed that all taxis will be exempt from the ULEZ standards and charges.

Private Hire Vehicles: The proposal is that from January 2018, all newly manufactured vehicles under 18 months old presented for licensing as PHVs must be zero emission capable. Other vehicles presented for licensing as PHVs must comply as a minimum with the ULEZ standards and also continue to meet the 10 year age limit. The PHV requirement will apply London-wide as well as in the ULEZ. Every PHV driving in the ULEZ will be required to meet the ULEZ standards or a daily charge (similar to other cars, vans etc) must be paid.

TfL and LTPH are proposing a specific fund to assist taxi drivers to replace their vehicles. They will work with representatives from the taxi and PHV trade in order to shape how this funding will be apportioned. They have also been in regular dialogue with the Office for Low Emission Vehicles to ensure their new £500m funding allocation specifically supports taxi and PHV drivers to purchase zero emission capable vehicles. This is in addition to a supporting fund for on-street rapid charging infrastructure.

Call Sign Comment

*No one could possibly argue that if the figure of over 4000 people dying prematurely each year is due to air pollution caused by vehicle emissions, then something must be done. But the question must then be asked: If 6000 old taxis have already been removed due to pollution, why has that made no difference? Could it be that they weren’t the problem and that many older drivers such as **Ray Sorene (ex-A83)** (see this month’s Mailsbot) have been forced to retire far earlier than they needed to on the whim of a Mayor who seems to believe that he can try anything and damn the consequences?*

From 2020, the age limit for taxis will go down to 10 years losing the trade another 8000 vehicles. So who will buy a new but non-electric cab in 2017 for over £40k knowing that in four years it would become worthless? Even more pertinent... who will build them knowing that no one will buy them?

The answer isn’t difficult; just keep the 15 year rule and eventually taxis will all be Euro 6 and hybrid or electric anyway. Why ruin people’s livelihoods when the difference is going to be negligible when modern taxis will arrive on the scene anyway. Then the 15 year rule can be done away with as all cabs will be zero emission anyway...

The Mayoral election in 2016 – so far as this trade is concerned - will be the most important ever. The current Mayor, having taken this trade to the brink of destruction, is moving on. We have to forget normal voting tendencies and cast our votes for the Mayor that shows he (or she) cares for this trade, because the occasional disruption via demonstrations isn’t working other than causing a brief embarrassment for TfL. We need more information from trade organisations. We need to find out candidates policies regarding taxis. Just so long as it isn’t the Friends of the Earth who would probably want to replace us with “greener” pedicabs...!

Every issue of Call Sign takes a look back at ODRTS history through the pages of the magazines of the time with a Flashback. This month, News 'n Views...



DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

This month's Flashback goes back to July 1978 and a court case involving an ODRTS driver...

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Peter Fennimore A79

On 7th July 1978, one of our drivers was found guilty of two offences arising out of the **booking fee**. One summons was for demanding more than the proper fare, the other for taking more than the proper fare. He was fined a total of £5. The magistrate, **Mr MacDermott**, reminded us that he could suspend the driver's licence, but would not do so this time.

After the case was dealt with and in the lobby of the courtroom, we held a conference between prosecuting counsel, our counsel and two sergeants from the enforcement branch of Scotland Yard. We were told that as from that moment, it was considered illegal to have a booking fee. We were also told that even if we lodged an appeal, prosecutions would still take place against drivers if they demanded a booking fee. Furthermore, if the Boards of Management of all three circuits authorising the fee did not stop, the police would consider seeking an injunction against us. Counsel, **Mr Basil-Hillman**, advised us to be very careful and to consider dropping the booking fee. Our solicitor advised us most strongly to drop the booking fee immediately.

I called a meeting between the three major radio circuits, **Mountview, London Wide** and ODRTS. We considered all the implications and both Mountview Chairman, **Martin Souber**, and I felt it was in the best interests of all concerned to stop the radio booking fee. London Wide was undecided.

I then called a special Board meeting at which it was agreed that the booking fee would no longer be authorised and an announcement to this effect was put out over the air to all our drivers.

Before the case was heard, we were lead to believe that if we lodged an appeal, no cases would be proceeded with pending the outcome of that appeal; we now know that this is not so. As I said earlier, we were informed that cases would be proceeded with and whilst there was a very slight possibility that another magistrate may find the next driver not guilty, there was a greater possibility that another driver could appear before Mr MacDermott and he would almost certainly find that driver guilty and not deal with him so leniently. In all probability, he would also take away his licence. The **Public Carriage Office** would then take an interest in the next driver found guilty of this offence, for the PCO also now say it is illegal to charge a booking fee, whereas before this case was heard, they were not sure. However, in this instance they would not be taking any action against the driver.

We also had to consider the reaction from the public if any publicity followed the result of this case, with the likelihood of more and more people reporting drivers for demanding a booking fee. All in all, we felt it was wrong to jeopardise the livelihood of you, the drivers, remembering that there is a vast difference in defying the law as opposed to testing the law. Up to now we were testing the law, if we continued it would have been in defiance of the law.

The **Joint Radio Committee** will now be seeing leading counsel on Thursday 20th July to get his opinion on the question of an appeal. The Joint Radio Committee will also approach the Home Secretary with a view to having a legal surcharge for radio hirings.

Call Sign tests new leather driver seat

Call Sign was recently invited by **Sheldon Posner** of **Cricklewood Carriers** to exclusively 'road test' an all-leather driver's seat he has developed for the **London Taxi Company's** TX2 and TX4 models.

"The original driver's seat is stripped down to the bare metal frame in our trimming shop and any necessary repairs such as welding broken sections of the frame, are then carried out before completely rebuilding the seat with new - not recycled - materials and then recovered in top grade leather," Sheldon explained.

The first thing **Call Sign** noticed when sitting on the seat was the unmistakable scent of the high quality leather that pervades through the driver's compartment.

The seat squab is firm, without being too hard and offers good thigh support. The leading edge of the seat has double curves for additional comfort.



The new leather seat

The backrest also offers comfortable lateral support, without the high profile lumbar sidebars seen on some other independent manufacturers' products that require a certain acrobatic technique to 'drop' into the driving position.

Our long-term testing period proved the seat to be durable, comfortable and relaxing, even after several hours of non-stop motoring.

Each seat is built to customers' personal choice from the wide range of colours available in the leather swatch on display with a demo seat at Cricklewood Carriers NW2 base. The panels are stitched in industrial grade thread, also to personal preference. Naturally our test model thread was in **Dial-a-Cab** yellow, of course!

All further details from Cricklewood Carriers on 0208 452 5461.

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“Yes, the £60 non-payment of a fare is a hard bilk to swallow,” Dave Stewart (M13) dejectedly told *Call Sign*, “but I have my ‘artificial eye’ right there keeping a vigilant watch and hopefully it will help catch those thieves.”

Dave pointed to the windshield of his cab where an insurance camera peered out through the glass.

“I took two young ladies out to Ruislip and as they got out, I was expecting them to come to the front and pay me, but instead they just walked away. Clearly they did not realise my CabCam had recorded their images. I went to the police and showed the officer the images and to my amazement he told me he thought he recognised the women concerned; so while I cannot say any more just now, just watch this space!”

This wasn’t the first time that Dave’s CabCam has helped to give him some peace of mind.

“It just quietly sits there, ever watchful,” Dave continued. “I was in Leadenhall Street a while back when a Private Hire car cut me up and promptly reversed into the cab, causing some damage. Again I took the images to my insurers, showing clearly what had happened and to my astonishment, the third party insurers paid out the next day! Can you believe that?”

“On yet another occasion, some security personnel tried to stop me going into a road where an event was going on, even though I knew I had the right of way and posed no danger to the public. When I informed them that they were on camera, they suddenly stepped aside and I continued on my way!”

But Dave isn’t the only Dial-a-Cab driver to have this type of technology fitted to his cab. Jackie Kott (Y88) is one of our female drivers who regularly works late into the night and is delighted with her Taxi Witness camera system.

“It’s a fairly basic model,” Jackie told this magazine, “but it does what it says on the tin! I got it for my own peace of mind really and thankfully I have not had any real incidents, but it’s there just in case. It looks forward and backwards so I feel comfortable and secure.”

“I recently had a rather chatty young man who was also a bit flirty, so I told him that my husband wouldn’t talk to me like that while also pointing out that he was on camera. He immediately quietened down! And of course, if someone did try to walk off without paying, then I’ve got their image.”

Call Sign’s photographer, Alan Green (E52), has a Novus system in his cab and has captured several incidents - some of which have been published in *Call Sign*. Readers may remember the minicab travelling the wrong way up East Road or the Finchley Road bilker.

Insurance companies are increasingly recommending the fitting of these devices as a means of defending bogus insurance claims and thereby reducing insurance premiums. Whichever make of CabCam you go for, be it a basic or top of the range model, you can at least defend yourself from spurious or fraudulent claims. And, of course, you have a fighting chance of catching up with bilkers...

Michael Toomey

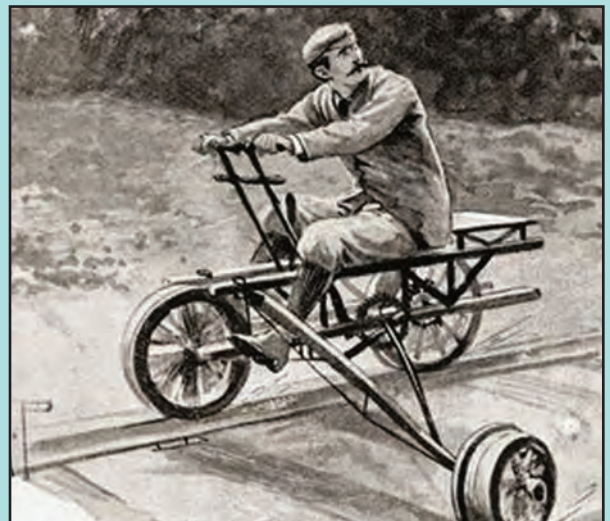
£60 BILK CAPTURED BY DAC DRIVER’S CABCAM!



Dave Stewart, (bottom) Jackie Kott and Alan Green all have CCTV CabCam protection

PEDICAB???

Call Sign would never, EVER, dream of accusing any of our readers of being economical with the truth, however, to the Dial-a-Cab driver who sent us the picture on this page which he claimed was to be the replacement for taxis in Dartford, we have this official statement to make...



You \$%£)& ^^^ %*?@ liar!!!

Paul Charters (J08) is heading into his fifth year on **Dial-a-Cab** and has made the pages of *Call Sign* several times, the most recent coming in our series commemorating the 100th anniversary of the beginning of WW1 and about the exploits of DaC driver's families. Paul told us of the exploits of his grandfather, **Private Edward Charters**, who was posted to France to join his unit on **The Somme** where thousands were injured and killed. His unit was later involved in holding the **Flesquieres Salient** and in the **Battles of Amiens** before eventually taking part in the liberation of **Lille**. He was later awarded the *British War* and *Victory* medals. His grandfather must have been on his mind when Paul told *Call Sign* his story...

"It was just after 6am and still dark. I was at the top of Tottenham Court Road just turning right into Euston Road when an **Army** guy with a red tunic decorated with medals suddenly put his hand out. He came to the cab with his wife and asked for the **Radisson Hotel**. They both looked to be in their early forties and had obviously been to a celebration of some kind. While not paralytic, he had obviously sunk quite a few glasses of something! I explained that there were a number of Radissons in London and did he know which one he wanted? He then said the **Radisson Blu**, which my terminal told me was in **Portman Square**. He asked if that was around ten minutes away and when I said yes, he said that must be it and off we went.

Very little traffic in town still and a few minutes later I pulled up outside the hotel. He still wasn't sure, so he told his wife to wait while he went in to check. By now the drink was sinking in and he was wobbling a bit! Two minutes later and he came back out accompanied by the night porter who told me that they weren't registered there and perhaps I should try the Radisson at **Granville Place**, Marble Arch.

We got there but it wasn't that one either. I tried to explain that there were a number of Radissons, the next two nearest probably being in **Great Russell Street** and **Bloomsbury Street** – I don't know where I'd have been without the terminal's Points of Information! But the result at both those two was the same. Neither were his hotel and by now there was around £25 on the meter!

He wasn't mentioning the money, but it was starting to get light and they just wanted to get back to their hotel. I'd been chatting as much as you can to someone who'd obviously had a 'skinful' and discovered that he wasn't in the army but in the **Royal Marines**, that he had been there for the past 25 years and had recently been on a tour of duty in Afghanistan.

While tracing my grandfather's history, I had been on many battlefield tours and I decided that I couldn't charge this guy, so I told him that I was turning the meter off and that when we found his hotel, there would

It was close to Remembrance Sunday when Paul Charters picked him up...

THE LONGEST SHORT JOURNEY OF THE DAY!



Paul Charters

be no charge. He was adamant that he wanted to pay his fare.

In the meantime, I was now trying to work out where there was a Radisson Hotel within minutes of the top of Tottenham Court Road and Euston Road and suddenly it hit me – it had to be the one at the top of Tottenham Court Road –

literally some twenty yards from where I picked them up!

So back across Tavistock Square and Howland Street, turning right into Tottenham Court Road and stopping just before the spot where I had picked them both up an hour earlier! Although neither he nor his wife recognised it and I was definitely showing signs of panic as we were running short of Radissons, he went in and returned with a smile – it *was* their hotel!

When I saw his smile and a 'thumbs up' to his wife, I got out and helped her out. She gave me a big hug while he gave my hand a real Royal Marines squeeze! He took his wallet out but I said that I wasn't going to take money for what should have been a twenty second walk from someone who had spent the last 25 years in the service of his country. He insisted on pushing £10 into my hands and I told him that I would put it into a trade charity box, which I did the next day.

As I drove away, they gave me a final wave and I thought to myself that it didn't matter what else happened during the rest of the day, I felt really good that I had done something nice!"

It wouldn't surprise Call Sign if a certain Private Edward Charters was looking down at his grandson, winking and proudly saying: "That's my boy...!"

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Michael Cunningham (D67) looked decidedly forlorn as he sat waiting for his Dial-a-Cab MDT equipment to be stripped out from his TX1.

“We’ve been together since the cab was just eight months old and now we have to say goodbye because of the fifteen year rule. I don’t mind admitting that it really is quite a wrench, especially coming towards Christmas,” Michael explained, his voice displaying some emotion.

“I’ve covered 330,000 trouble-free miles and apart from the usual wear and tear items like tyres, brakes, batteries and light bulbs, the only expense in all that time has been £80 on an injector seal. I have certainly never pampered it, other than the occasional service schedule when I’ve remembered!”

The smile on his face told *Call Sign* he had been joking and that he had really looked after his faithful cab.

“I work nights, so reliability is important to me and this cab has delivered that in bundles; so you can understand why I’m loathe to say farewell. I can only hope that my new cab proves to be the workhorse that this one has been.

“We’ve seen off drunks, nutters, cyclists and plenty of traffic in our fifteen years together, and of course I’ve done my share of

Goodbye old friend!



Michael's taxi is yet another casualty of the Mayor's 15 year rule

counselling passengers who have needed a shoulder to cry on!”

Michael pointed towards the driver’s seat and reiterated his hope that any new taxi would be as good as his old friend. The look

on his face suggested that he wasn’t too sure that it would be...

**Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online**

Uber in press smear controversy



Travis Kalanick

Thanks to Call Sign’s NY correspondent Mike Higgins for this item from the New York Post...

The bad boy reputation of Travis Kalanick’s Uber is starting to backfire. Across the country on Tuesday 17 November, users of the taxi-hailing app either boycotted the service or

deleted it entirely from their smartphones after it was reported that a senior executive suggested spending \$1 million to smear the reputations of journalists who were critical of the company.

Emil Michael, Uber’s senior vice president of business, told guests at a dinner which Kalanick hosted on November 14 about a plan to hire opposition researchers and reporters to dig up dirt on journalists and their families when they wrote bad things about the \$17 billion startup.

The startling remarks, first reported by BuzzFeed’s Ben Smith, were made at a meeting that included blogging mogul Arianna Huffington and actor Edward Norton. Most attendees were told the comments would be off the record. Smith was not invited directly by Uber and wasn’t told of the protocol.

Kalanick, Michael and an Uber spokeswoman quickly apologized and said the suggestion - which was never acted upon - did not reflect Michael’s views or the company’s approach to business.

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

Election comment

My name is **Allen Togwell** and I would like to take this opportunity to say hello to all those who remember me and who supported me during my 27 years on your Board. I'm no longer associated with DaC in any way, but like those who have been actively involved with a company for many years, the interest is still there and I like to keep abreast with what's going on 'back at mill.' Fortunately I am able to do that because your Editor has included me on his list of those that get a copy of *Call Sign Online*.

It's because of what I read in last month's *Call Sign*, that **Brian Rice** is being opposed for the position as Chairman, that has prompted me to contact Mr Fisher and ask if he would kindly allow me a little space in *Call Sign* so that I could have my two pennyworth on the subject.

I have known Brian Rice both as a subscriber on Dial-a-Cab before he joined the Board and as a Board member and subsequently Chairman; he is the fourth Chairman I've served under and by a mile the best. And when I say the best, it's easy to make the comparison without undermining his predecessors because of how he has applied himself to the role as Chairman.

18 years ago when Brian first made his intentions known that he was going to stand for the Chair, I asked him in private a few questions before I was confident of giving him my vote, bearing in mind it is the Board that propose the Chairman and also, I have to confess, I was seriously thinking of standing for the Chair myself.

One question was if he would break with tradition and adopt a hands-on role like that of a CEO rather than just a figurehead that chairs meetings. He said if the Board agreed, then he would do that. And I'm delighted to say he has adopted that role with distinction.

There is not one department within DaC - be it IT, Accounts, DP, Control Centre or Sales where he does not have his finger on the pulse with what is happening daily. That's one hell of a lot of knowledge and experience - and experience being the operative word. I also said I would like to see him getting some extra mileage out of his dinner jacket in the evenings networking and to get DaC on the map, because at that time DaC were forever in the shadow of ComCab.

And he did that brilliantly; when dressed up he strikes an imposing figure, people remember him and it wasn't long before DaC were getting calls from the media when they wanted comments on a particular issue concerning the cab trade.

You don't have to like Brian Rice - and

I'm sure a few don't. The reason for that in some cases is because of the way he dresses. Many members didn't like me and have a thing about cab drivers wearing suits and "getting above themselves," which quite frankly is daft because as a Board member, and particularly as Chairman, you have to wear two hats - one for the Members and the other for when representing the Society. But they elected me because I did my job. And that, Ladies and Gentlemen, is what Brian Rice does well - his job.

There is no substitute for experience and from what I've heard of the Society in recent times with lost accounts and the threats from the likes of Hailo, Uber and all the PH Apps as well as competition from within such as CC and RTG, your Society needs all the experience it can get.

The other thing I feel needs mentioning is that there is no transition period when a Board member is replaced. The moment they lose their place at the AGM they pass their keys, ID and all DaC effects to the Secretary and from that moment on they don't set foot again on DaC's premises unless as a driver.

That means that whichever way the Chairman leaves his office on the Friday before the AGM, all the meetings he's arranged in his diary or contracts he might be in the process of completing, and where all his files are kept, etc would be left for his replacement to sort out.

That leaves the Society very vulnerable and I personally feel that when a Chairman, whoever he/she is, leaves office, they should be in a position to hand over the reins to a successor who has been groomed so that there is a seamless transition.

May I also take this opportunity to thank all those members that supported me over many years on the BoM and to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year...

Allen Togwell (ex-W45/ex-Q08/ former DaC Board Member)
London SE10

Election Comment

Hi Alan

Re the BoM election, personally I do not think that this is the time to change Chairman, but a new Board member or two could be good. As a 30 years plus driver, I am not really happy with the new pay method, but as always and like most drivers, I support the BoM.

Just a few words about the *November Call Sign*; first the bike superhighways together with all the changes to traffic turns etc are going to make our job so much harder. It certainly is not the same as when I started in 1967. I feel my generation had the best years, but I wish the trade well being attacked from so many sides.

Martin Freeborn (C67)
No further comments re the DaC elections were received. Questions to candidates are on page 16 of this issue ...Ed

Whose fault?

Mr F

We will all be in danger of becoming ex-cab drivers soon if we don't pull our fingers out

of our you-know-what and big ourselves up a bit. Some of the blame should go to the trade associations for failing to educate their members and those members that feel they are experts in other folk's jobs.

We are at the next stage of the evolution of the working man and women, commonly known as industrial revolution of our time. The question is whether we have the character and ability to be led into the furnace of progress and if we have the leadership with enough energy to truly splice the main sail into what some would call uncharted waters. However, anyone with a modicum of intelligence would know that the ship we sail on the seas with is built on years of modifications.

Perhaps just as **Grant Davis** cast aside the LTDA with whom he had profound disagreements, we should leave on the harbour wall those who do not have the stomach for the seas anymore. Maybe we should all look towards ourselves and think true and hard - what are my weaknesses and whom should I employ to make me a bounty? The locker door is swinging open, because one of the hinges is broken. Do I close it; do I get advice or do I let the cold in?

Commonsense dictates that you make a judgement call and hope that at the time of decision, you look to your right and find trusted friends with a proven track record holding a sexton in one hand and a paddle in the other. Then on your left, someone prepared to be ready to relight your lamp in a storm.

Some would cast an eye in my direction and see **Fletcher Christian**. Sailors don't have civil wars, they have shipwrecks if they do not sail a true path.

Gary Cox (O46)

I'm not often speechless Gary, but I'm now definitely going to cancel that row boat trip on the Serpentine! ...Ed

Merger et al

Dear Al

I voted against exploring the merger, but I fully understand and respect why the majority voted to explore the offer further. But to merge with a proven loss-making firm in my book makes no sense. Yes, potentially twice the fleet size and twice the account base, but does that equate to more work per mobile? The Board have to put offers to the members, but how about an offer from the Board?

Also I agree with **Richard Potter (T51)** re the number of drivers actually driving taxis. It must be shy of 20,000. As I see it, the trade size has stayed the same for years whilst the little people's numbers have grown. The only notable decline in their ranks was when they had to be licensed!



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Over the years there have only ever been a certain amount of die-hard radio men. Tfl stated that there are more drivers over the age of 60 than under the age of 30. Young drivers no longer come into this trade. Unless you're a leather arse, in real terms wages now at best are average. In my opinion, you could advertise on Facebook, Twitter, Gumtree, Lost and Found and the lonely ads etc, drivers new or old just don't want to subscribe to radio circuits as we know them.

Finally, credit cards being offered blind whilst account work being offered with a destination ain't for me. I can go into any retail outlet, insert my card, press 4 digits and job done. Our procedure is painful. I read the literature and almost watched the whole DVD; sadly I fell asleep two minutes in! So in conclusion, I find the (r) button a most useful feature.

Colin Jenkins (Y22)

You're entitled to your view Colin, but I do a lot of street credit card trips and find they take seconds. When you go into a shop, you do indeed just press four buttons; however, the person accepting the card has to do the work. They don't moan at how long it takes because it really doesn't take that long. And of course, street card trips are free to drivers! ...Ed

Questions, questions and more questions...

Hello Alan

Hope you don't mind me picking your brains, but in a recent article Brian Rice mentioned the name of Mike Galvin working for Addison Lee. Is this the same guy that used to be in the LTDA and worked on ComCab? Also is Victoria Borwick related to Jamie Borwick, late of M&O? You miss out a lot in retirement!

Terry Farmer (ex-T55J)

Hi Terry, nice to hear from you and I hope you are enjoying retirement. The answer to your questions is yep (yep and yep)! Mike Galvin, now of Addison Lee, used to be the head honcho on ComCab. Victoria Borwick - aka Lady Borwick - is indeed the wife of Jamie Borwick, the former Chairman of LTI and who is now Lord Borwick of Hawkshead (coincidentally Jamie was in the letters page of the October issue). Both Victoria and Jamie are passionate supporters of the London taxi trade...Ed

Ultra-low emission zone and the hokey cokey!

Hi Al

Re the ULEZ; Boris wants us all to drive electric taxis, meanwhile recent news headlines suggest possible power cuts

this winter with some companies being paid to close at peak electricity times in order to save energy! During the severe winter of 2010, four coal-fired power stations had to be bought back into use, yet those four are no longer working. How can London power a fleet of electric taxis within a few years?

Some of us will have to pay £12.50 a day to drive our taxis into work and what's going to happen when you try to hire a yellow badge taxi in an outer suburb? Will you have to pay the driver an extra £12.50 to get into town? Will we even be able to buy an electric taxi by 2018? Then I hear that Nissan have had to go back to the drawing board with their NV200 because of lack of floor space to turn a wheelchair backwards?

I sometimes wonder whether the hokey cokey really is what it's all about!!!

Jon Robinson (E88)

I can't bend my knees nor do an arm stretch any more Jon, so you're asking the wrong man! ...Ed

Taxis or minicabs...

Hi Alan

After reading Taxi Leaks regarding the BBC referring to minicab drivers as taxi drivers, do you think it would be possible to gather a like-minded group of individual cabbies to constantly complain to the BBC about their reporting errors? If the Beeb get a lot of independent viewers complaining, they might consider reporting more accurately. What do you think? Also, would the threat of legal action bring them to book? Maybe the LTDA could be brought into a joint action and perhaps even the LCDC. Is it worth considering?

Roy 'The Boy' Manix (now retired ex-K98)

Hi Roy, sadly you'd have more chance of winning the 100 metres at the next Olympics than getting anything out of this! The BBC, Evening Standard, Sun, Mirror and co sometimes apologise, but do it again anyway or say - as the BBC did on this occasion - that most people refer to minicabs as taxis. What's even worse is that there is some truth in that. On the other hand, the *London Cab Act* makes it illegal for a minicab driver to describe themselves as a Taxi driver, just as PH operators cannot use the word Taxi even in an advert. However, in my view it would be unfair to ask a trade organisation to spend thousands on an unwinnable court case. It made a good story for Taxi Leaks, but Thomas the Taxi knows as well as I do that nothing we do will ever stop it because 'taxi rapist' makes a better headline grabber than 'minicab rapist'.

That's not to say that we shouldn't complain, because if every taxi driver who sees a BBC programme where the word Taxi was used when referring to a minicab, were to then go online and fill in the BBC complaint form every time it happened, they might start to realise when their systems ground to a halt! Go to:

www.bbc.co.uk/complaints/complain-online
or phone 03700 100 222 ...Ed

Citi Group

Hi Alan

You said in *Call Sign* that Citi are using us again? How much so? I mean are we talking enough to include the Wharf in my nightly regime again?

John Stowers (K40)

John, I mentioned it because a number of drivers had said that we should have offered ultra-low terms to Citi in our submitted tender, which would have included no run-ins and no gratuities. Since then it has become busier and *Call Sign* has had to publish begging articles from Board members asking drivers to please cover the work. The two obviously don't go together and we have to assume that had we kept the Citi account with its no run-in terms, then we would have struggled to cover any work from the Wharf. Those drivers that were there anyway would have had no problem, but demand outstrips availability there when the trips begin pouring out and with no run-ins and outstretched hands along the route, how many would have switched their 'for hire' signs off to run to the Wharf empty? Judging by the number currently running to help cover account work, the answer has to be very few. My point was that although Citi have begun using us again, they are doing so under our previous terms because otherwise their service would go down the tubes. I hope they realise that you can squeeze to the pips from taxi fares when it's quiet, but if you want an excellent service all year round - and DaC always provided them with the best service possible - then that comes at a cost. If they realise that then perhaps they could be welcomed back whenever they decide to put service first.

The answer to your question John is possibly not, but they are currently using a significant number of up to thirty cabs a day. What I can tell you is what one of our drivers recently told me. He was given a trip from Citi at the Island and welcomed by a smiling Brunel Marshal who thanked him for coming! Gritting his teeth, our driver just gave a polite nod and continued waiting in his cab. Within minutes, the back door was opened by the Marshal for the Citi passenger. But instead he walked to the luggage window and in full earshot of both the Brunel rep and the DaC driver said how nice it was to have a proper taxi again! Our driver again nodded but



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this time added a broad grin, whilst the Marshal's smile seemed to wane somewhat! That passenger doesn't control the account, otherwise we'd still be there. But I'm sure he wasn't alone in his view and so long as we make sure our service is top notch there, then you never know. It wasn't an answer to your question John, but it's the best one I have ...Ed

Cycling Superhighway consultation 1

Hi Al

Re the November *Call Sign* and the latest idiotic ideas from TfL. These will be very damaging to our trade and if we bury our heads in the sand, we will get what we deserve... nothing! I have put my tuppence-worth in for the first time in 26 years and urge all cab drivers do the same. It may do no good, but at least we've tried. This is my answer to their Consultation.

Why are you creating LEZ? TfL are creating more pollution than vehicles? I have read about your idiotic idea on the Blackfriars Underpass and beyond and for the other Superhighways! Already in place, Temple to Tower and reverse are already too congested with two lanes each way! How the hell is anyone supposed to navigate this area with one lane each way? This would also affect the surrounding areas creating a mushroom effect (I don't know why I'm writing this, because if whoever is promoting this can't see that then they shouldn't be in this job). As a taxi driver, this would be disastrous for our business as people would not bother to just sit in a taxi going nowhere fast. And not just taxis but also every other business would be affected and prices would have to go up. And this is all to do with cyclists!

Cars and lorries are necessary in London for delivering people and services. In Dial-a-Cab's in-house magazine, the Chairman, Brian Rice, has put my comments into print. This could be a start in making the roads safer for cyclists AND for everybody else.

And last but by no means least, it's very easy for you to penalise everybody who doesn't comply to your LEZ rules, but at the same time subsidise your buses!

I wonder if I have wasted my time writing this.

Dave Humphries (A69)

Cycling Superhighway consultation 2

Hi Alan

If you want proof that the traffic planners live on another planet, take a look at TfL's 'visualisation of the proposed segregat-

ed two-way cycle track on Tower Hill'. It looks very pleasant with people strolling around and just a few vehicles. But we all know that the reality will be somewhat different, a seething mass of frustrated traffic with the Embankment and surrounding roads gridlocked. The cab trade gets very worked up about the vehicles we drive and the threat from private hire, but I believe that the constant eroding of the road system threatens our very existence. I have driven a London Taxi for 28 years and have experienced the difficulties and frustrations caused as the road system gets constantly chipped away by various 'improvement schemes.' If the cycling superhighways go ahead with all the planned closures, and if you add in the proposed closure of **Tottenham Court Road**, then central London will grind to a halt.

Early in October, **Woburn Place** was closed northbound and this resulted in massive delays giving us a just a taste of things to come! I have always endeavoured to take my passengers from A to B with quiet efficiency in a reasonable time and for a reasonable price, but it is simply becoming impossible. We will lose passengers as they give up on us as a means of getting from A to B. London should be a place where people can work and do business. £Billions are going to be spent on HS2 knocking a few minutes off the journey from Birmingham to Euston - only for the passengers to arrive at a gridlocked city. Mick Kennedy (M30)

Hypocrisy in high places???

Is there hypocrisy in high places with London's vanity projects? TfL have announced that from 2018, vehicles not zero tolerance on emissions will be charged for entering the congestion zone. Oxford Street is undoubtedly the worst polluted area of London, mainly frequented by buses, yet Boris has now said that his beloved new Routemasters will be exempt and allowed current dispensation! I rest my case.

David Heath (Ex-W27)

The Mayor has stated that allowed vehicles must be Euro 6. Routemasters are only Euro 5 but that Mayor says they are "almost Euro 6! But I understand what the Mayor means; I almost bought JPM last year, I was only a few billion quid short!" ...Ed

Pre-booked morning trips

Re morning coverage problems, has any thought been given to a facility to accept a booked job a few hours before the booking time ie if I know I've got a job from near home at 7.45am, I will adjust my start time to then rather than drive in empty only to see a 'please cover SW19' job or 'account in danger' message once I'm in town.

All the best to one and all in the elections...

James Griffin (T97)

See Allan Evans report on page 13 ...Ed

Taxi driver medicals

I recently had a rather snotty letter from TfL asking me if I would like to hand in my Badge and Bill as I hadn't returned my completed medical form. The only reason I hadn't sent it was because I hadn't actually received the form in the first place. Following a phone call, I got the form, had the medical etc and sent it in via Recorded Delivery. Having read reports in both *Call Sign* and the general trade press regarding drivers being out of work for up to a few months due to delays in getting their renewed licenses, I had been concerned but fortunately I now seem to be ok.

Can I suggest to drivers waiting for a medical form - I believe they are due at 50, 55, 62, 65 and then yearly - that if they haven't heard at least two months before the medical is due, that they contact TfL to ask for the form.

Larry Miller (S35)

Thanks Larry, you are the second driver to tell me that they hadn't received the medical form, so giving TfL a call isn't a bad idea - provided you can get hold of them! Incidentally, I have been told that if there has been a delay in getting a normal 3-year renewed licence and there are no reasons why it might have been stopped, then there would be no problem driving on your old taxi licence ...Ed

New identifiers

Alan

I'm not having a very enjoyable retirement having spent nearly two weeks in hospital with pneumonia and I definitely needed cheering up. That came in the form of a letter from TfL. When I left DaC, it was because my TX1 was sixteen years old and not able to be re-licenced again. In July this year, I returned my licence and copy to TfL telling them that due to poor health I was not intending to drive a cab again, even though the licence did not expire until next April (2015). So imagine my good fortune when a letter from TfL arrived a few days ago with two brand new licences and two new identifiers for a cab which came off the road in February this year! It's plainly clear that TfL don't know what they're doing and whoever runs it is unfit to do the job.

Then on 29th October I got a letter from TfL thanking me for my letter dated 14th July telling them I was enclosing my licence and retiring from taxi driving. They thanked me very much for my service to the



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public etc and informed me that I was entitled to a refund of the remaining period of my licence (April 2015). It came to the grand sum of £50. It's nice to get something back for a change!

Ray Sorene (ex-A83)

TfL may have left your licence in abeyance because your reason for leaving the trade was not a medical one. As such, the two identifiers meant that should you have wished to, you could in fact have still hired a cab, put the identifiers in the front and back screens and gone to work. You may not have wanted to, but it may have been a useful implement to keep in your toolbox until next April. But I suspect that retirement is even nicer! So I hope you are feeling better Ray and starting to enjoy that retirement. ...Ed

Subscriptions

Dear Mr Rice

I know this question was asked by **Mark Tiller** a few months back, but since then circumstances have changed, whether we liked it or not. So how about giving back an extra bonus to the loyal drivers who are prepared to cover the account work! Over the last 2 days I have taken 2 credit card jobs from Heathrow to the West End, generating a further £14.58 for the Society. As I

have now seen my subs double within the last few months, I think it's only fair that I receive something back for taking credit card jobs off the street. So without being greedy, I think we should receive 50/50 and the money I receive could be then offset against my subs, bringing them down even further. I wouldn't mind, but on both jobs the customers wanted to give me a gratuity but I had already cleared the job, meaning I lost even more money and those 2 jobs don't even count to my 15 jobs total a week! Where's the fairness in that?

I understand that you can't please everyone, but by implementing the above idea at least you would be making the 15% of drivers you made unhappy... happy again! This would be a nice Christmas bonus, as I do remember the days when we used to get jackets, torches, new cars and someone even told me that Dial-a-Cab gave away a taxi once!

Happy Christmas to you, the Board and to everyone at Dial-a-Cab...

Richard Barford (R39)

Brian Rice replies: Dial-a-Cab giving away a new taxi? Yes, I remember it well, Richard; it was a brand new TX2 Gold and you were the lucky person that won it! I hope it served you well. You are also correct once again when you say we gave away cars - it was three Rover 25s - and in Christmas 2007 we paid to Members £521k in bonuses to cover the



work. Consequently, I think you will agree your Society was generous to Members when times were better. But circumstances have changed.

If a Member does a Credit Card transaction off the street, we do not charge the Member but charge the customer 10%, out of which we have to pay a Merchant Fee to the Bank. Incidentally your Society paid in excess of £450k to purchase the 'chip and pin' machines; that expenditure has to be recouped. There is no doubt about it that looking at your figures, you are an excellent radio man and the new Payback scheme will go some way to making your subs more bearable. Obviously, the reason your subs have increased is because you do a great deal of account work, which helps your Society and of course is also advantageous to you.

Richard, I believe your Society represents excellent value, it was just so inexpensive to an excellent radio man such as yourself in the past, but even today it represents very good value to you.

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?
- Do some of your thoughts burden you and get in the way of day to day activities?
 - 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?

Any of these and many more could be an indication that your well being needs some attention.

It maybe a surprise to hear that there needn't be anything wrong with you for you to see a counsellor. Counselling could simply enable you to become happier, healthier and a more fulfilled human being.

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