

February 2014



# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

*DaC in Dutch Film  
Festival movie*



*Is this how you will charge  
your new TX4 in 2018???*







# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

*Apologies that the 'Eurostar' timetable could not be published earlier, this was due to the January issue printing schedule necessitating publication before the new schedule was released...*

## EUROSTAR ARRIVALS 15th December 2013 to 24th May 2014

From	Arrival	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Note	Train#	From	Arrival	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Note	Train#
Brussels	07:57	✓								9109	Paris	16:00	✓	✓	✓					P6	9037
Paris	08:00	✓								9005	Paris	16:00				✓				P8	9037
Paris	08:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			9007	Brussels	16:03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		9141
Brussels	08:57	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			9113	Paris	16:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		9039
Paris	09:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				9009	Brussels	16:57							✓		9145
Paris	09:30						✓	✓		9011	Brussels	16:57	✓	✓	✓	✓				B4	9145
Brussels	09:57	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		9117	Brussels	16:57						✓		B6	9145
Paris	10:00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				9013	Brussels	17:03					✓			B7	9149
Paris	10:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		9015	Paris	17:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		9043
Paris	11:00						✓		P5	9017	Paris	18:00							✓		9045
Paris	11:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			9019	Paris	18:00					✓			P1	9045
Paris	11:39							✓	P7	9019	Brussels	18:09						✓			9149
Brussels	11:57					✓	✓			9125	Brussels	18:10					✓			B4	9149
Brussels	11:57	✓	✓	✓	✓				B3	9125	Brussels	18:10	✓	✓	✓	✓					9149
Paris	12:00					✓			P5	9021	Brussels	18:10					✓			B8	9149
Paris	12:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		9023	Paris	18:30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		9047
Brussels	12:57							✓		9129	Brussels	19:03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				9153
Brussels	12:57						✓		B5	9129	Brussels	19:10							✓		9153
Paris	13:00	✓			✓	✓	✓		P1	9025	Paris	19:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		9051
Paris	13:00							✓	P2	9025	Brussels	19:57							✓		9157
Paris	13:30							✓		9027	Brussels	19:57	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			B3	9157
Paris	13:30					✓			P2	9027	Paris	20:00					✓		✓		9053
Paris	13:30						✓		P5	9027	Paris	20:00		✓	✓	✓				P3	9053
Paris	14:00	✓				✓				9029	Paris	20:39						✓	✓		9055
Paris	14:00		✓	✓	✓				P3	9029	Paris	20:41	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				9055
Brussels	14:03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				9133	Brussels	21:03	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		9161
Paris	14:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		9031	Brussels	21:09						✓			9161
Paris	15:00							✓	P2	9033	Paris	21:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		9059
Paris	15:30						✓	✓		9035	Paris	22:00							✓		9061
Paris	16:00					✓				9037	Paris	22:39	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		9063

### Notes

B1- from 12/4/14
B2- until 5/4/14
B3- until 4/1/14 & from 8/2/14
B4- from 29/3/14
B5- until 28/12/13
B6- from 9/2/14
B7- until 4/1/14
B8- until 28/3/14

P1- fom 30/3/14
P2- from 20 to 29/12/13, from 14 to 23/2/14 and from 30/3/14
P3- until 4/1/14 and from 9/2/14
P4- from 12/4/14
P5- until 29/12/14 & from 14/2/14 to 23/2/14
P6- from 14/2/14 to 23/2/14 & from 30/3/14
P7- until 4/1/14 & from 2/2/14
P8 from 20/12/13 to 4/1/14, From 14/2/14 to 23/2/14 and from 30/3/14

There's a lot more taxi related information; just go to [www.myfav.co.uk](http://www.myfav.co.uk) and click on the 'taxi' link. Make [www.myfav.co.uk](http://www.myfav.co.uk) (my favourite home page) your home page and you have a great asset to quickly surf the rest of the internet. Not only better than having Google as your home page, you get the Google search box plus lots more including four other search engine search boxes and lots of retailer search boxes, many grids of tiles for direct access to all your favourite web pages. Don't forget you can also win the monthly £100 Amazon voucher...

# from the editor's desk

**My thanks to all those drivers who contacted me on 12 January. It really was appreciated on a rather unpleasant day...**

## Emission-free taxis

The Mayor's exhibition of emission-free taxis at City Hall was certainly interesting and gave the trade a sneak view of what life will be like after 2018. After 1 January of that year, you will no longer be able to purchase a new taxi unless it has the capability of being emission-free. That allows for a small petrol motor that could be used in some taxis to recharge the battery that will operate the taxi. Taxis already in circulation will come under the 15 year rule, which means that by 2030, London's taxi fleet will be almost emission-free and apparently London will easily escape the EU fines it often faces.

However, *Call Sign* heard nothing at the exhibition to suggest that private hire will have the same responsibility. Some of their firms have done so, but the majority haven't. Do they not have emissions??? We look forward to hearing any follow-up from the Mayor.

## Hailo accounts

During the holidays when there was a dearth of trade reading about, I took a look at the recently released Hailo accounts for the year ending December 2012. Although my views on Hailo are well known, I have no intention of gloating about their huge loss (£7.6million) because as much as I disagree with their way of working, I realise that after just one year, those accounts were hardly likely to show anything other than a big loss. And anyway, they aren't short of a bob or two.

But it's what the accounts *don't* say that confirms my belief to me that Hailo isn't there for drivers, who happen to be a necessary by-product and without whom the system as a taxi app wouldn't work, it's primarily there for the three directors/entrepreneurs whose money started the business and has now been supported by investors such as Richard Branson, venture capital firm Atomico and Union Square Ventures (backers of Twitter and Facebook among others). Coincidentally, if you look at the Union Square website, there is a piece that declares: "*We invest in networks that disrupt existing industries.*" So your 350 years is an anomaly that will soon be gone – the addition of private hire perhaps unless current drivers work even cheaper?

**After all, two of the three entrepreneurs have experience of that side having moved across from their e-courier private hire venture. So John Griffin shouldn't give up hope of moving over!**

Where was I? Oh yes; so as you'd expect, the names of Jay Bregman together with Messrs Woolley and Zeghibe are prominent in the report; but call me silly, I would have expected to read somewhere in its 27 pages about the three drivers, led by Russell Hall, who were used to convince London taxi drivers that working cheaply was good. Besides, it was also their idea.

But as *Call Sign* has repeatedly said, their positions as taxi drivers were being used – although no doubt being well-paid for their efforts. Otherwise they don't really exist according to Bregman, Woolley and Zeghibe. If they do exist, then I couldn't find them in the accounts!



And that doesn't bode well for this trade because it seems improbable that their names would be left out accidentally. It's more likely to show who is in charge.

If this country really is progressing as well as analysts claim, then this year is going to be much busier and Hailo's coverage according to many passengers who use it, was quite poor leading up to the holidays. So that suggests either introducing a run-in for their trips or extending the fleet to those that will work even cheaper? Hmm, who could that be?

In the meantime, it is still only London and Dublin where the driver rather than the passenger pays as they do elsewhere; and now Hailo Dublin's Upper Mount Street HQ have told their drivers that the trip charge is going up from 10 to 12.5%. Does that mean that London will also increase it? Of course, should the position begin to look too problematic, I can think of three gentlemen who would have long sold up and moved on to their next money-making venture.

## Power Pill

I have been using the Alpha Power Pill for several years, mainly because it keeps cab smoke to a real minimum. Yes, it also increases miles per litre and definitely gives the cab more power while running smoother, but it's the smoke reduction that I like.

But I ran out of the pills and got into the habit of not bothering. I was cruising along the A13 when suddenly two cars in front of me collided after one had pulled in too quickly and I had to pull out ultra-quickly. Fortunately no one was overtaking me at the time, so I put my foot down to speed up and carried on safely having left the two cars behind me. What shocked me was the smoke thrown out from the cab as I accelerated sharply. So I ordered another pack from supplier **Steve Vale** (who occasionally writes in *Call Sign*). The pills – which are a fuel conditioner and not an additive – now come in half sizes and are much more convenient than the old method of breaking one in half. Within 4 days of restarting on the pills, I deliberately tried to reproduce my A13 incident and the smoke had almost gone – not totally because that wouldn't be a diesel conditioner but a diesel miracle. But it had been hugely reduced.

Many years ago when older taxis were being forced to fit exhaust systems costing a few thousand, most of which never really worked, I spoke to then-PCO head **Roy Ellis** and suggested that if the taxi licensing authority tested Power Pill and agreed that they worked in helping to reduce emissions, then they could be a far better alternative than the exhausts and if so, perhaps the Mayor's office could subsidise some of the cost.

Roy came back to me several weeks later and agreed that the pills did what they claimed, but then added that the PCO couldn't recommend them because of the possibility of some drivers not using them other than at overhaul time!

So if you want to use Power Pills, then you have to buy them. There is an ad in every issue of *Call Sign* if you are interested. It makes no difference to me, but I can tell you that they work...

## The new and the old...

The *new* is the launch of **Nissan's** new taxi, the **NV200**. It raises interesting possibilities because the London Taxi Company's new owners, Geely, aren't likely to roll over and give up. Perhaps the old bunch at Manganese Bronze – pre-Geely – may have looked the other way and hoped that the new venture would just go away, but Geely Chairman, Li Shufu, certainly won't and I now expect their Hydrogen, battery-charged taxi to be released by 2017.

While the new Nissan resembles a smaller version of the Mercedes Vito due to its rear sliding doors, it certainly isn't as large and tends to look far more like the traditional London cab. Those that know the NV200 van and how it operates say that the MPG for the taxi could approach forty and almost certainly clear 35MPG.

**But the price could cause the biggest surprise by costing a similar amount to the TX4. That could pose a serious concern to Mercedes. However, as the old saying goes, the proof of the pudding is in the eating and we will keenly await reports of the NV200's performance after one year on the road.**

The *new* continued when just before the Nissan announcement came an even more surprising one; **Ecotive** and **Frazer-Nash Research** revealed their new taxi to the world – an electric-powered taxi named after the Metrocab – the **Range-Extended Electric Metrocab** to be more precise! This new cab, that is also said to be ready to go on sale before the end of 2014, runs on a powerful, near-silent electric motor that you will be able to recharge at home via a normal electric socket, although a small petrol engine will be fitted just in case the batteries get a bit low and they will then kick in to recharge the lithium-ion polymer batteries. Like the Nissan, the price for the e-Metrocab has been hinted as being around the same as the **TX4** or just slightly more.

The *old* refers to the taxi driven by **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Eddie Lambert (V37)**. If you read his story in this issue, you will understand why he could soon be driving the only original Metrocab left on the road.

## AGM

Yes, it's AGM time again and I look forward to seeing many of you on Sunday 9 February at the HAC in City Road. There are no elections this year and neither has anyone put forward any Rule Changes or Propositions. But that usually means more time for *Any Other Business*.

So if you want to make a point, you won't have a better chance. If you can't spare a few hours on just one day a year for your Society, then there's not much point in moaning afterwards. But you might be surprised at how interesting the AGM can be...

**Alan Fisher**  
callsignmag@aol.com



# reflections of the chairman

## Zero emission taxis?

Probably like some of you, I attended Potters Field on 16th January to see the new generation of zero emission taxis. The TX looked the same as normal except that it runs on Hydrogen. There was also a new Metrocab on display, which was quite interesting, but of course it is not in production yet as indeed nothing that was on display was being made at the moment. There was also a Turkish built taxi on display which looked very futuristic; problem was it never had an engine! So in reality it was just a figment of someone's imagination.

**The Mayor paid a visit to the exhibition and I must say I was somewhat surprised to learn that all new taxis sold after 2018 had to be zero emissions. It appears to me that our trade seems to be taking all the blame for pollution in London, which is totally unfair.**

I spoke with **Leon Daniels**, Managing Director of Surface Transport for TfL, whom I have known for many years - even before he worked for TfL. I asked him how they would deal with the task of making all private hire and taxis compliant with zero emissions, especially at the same time as the introduction of **Crossrail**. His answer did not surprise me in the least - zero emissions would only apply to the taxi trade!

I believe that it is a disgrace to single out the taxi trade, never mind just being totally unfair. It's almost impossible to argue against greener vehicles, but the rules should apply to everyone and not just the taxi trade. Perhaps it could be argued that this would cause us to suffer a restriction of trade and I believe it is quite feasible for our taxi associations to look into this whole scenario. We should also bear in mind that Boris Johnson will not be Mayor in 2018!

The zero emissions question will lead to a serious shortage of working taxis in London; drivers will be reluctant to sell their vehicles and trade up to a new taxi as the cost will probably be prohibitive. Added to that, there will undoubtedly be teething problems that are associated with all new vehicles. As drivers keep their vehicles for longer - although some will not have any choice due to the 15 year rule - that in turn will lead to a shortage of fleet cabs with very few second-hand cabs being available for garages to purchase. Few garages will want to go to the expense of purchasing new and expensive zero emission taxis.

I don't believe that we should just sit back and do nothing, as the above will place a huge extra burden onto the taxi trade and I really think that we should start lobbying now. If zero emissions are introduced in 2018, then it should apply to all, but who would like to bet that we do nothing, which appears to be the norm in our trade.

I'm led to believe that there will be a full public consultation regarding all new taxis having zero emissions from 2018. The consultation will take place later this year and all interested parties will be able to submit their views. But if the decision has already been taken, then what will be the point?



## Lost account...

You all know the worst kept secret regarding the lost account on the Island. I was called to their offices at the end of September and told we had lost the account due to price. The contract expired at the end of September and I was asked not to publish anything regarding the loss, to which I agreed. However, I did say that if I was asked a question by a Member then I would not lie about the situation.

I was told by the account that they did not wish to lose Dial-a-Cab as they liked everything about us, but the whole process was decided by the dollar (their words)!

We agreed a four month handover period, which would have taken us to the end of January. I was then approached at the beginning of January and asked to extend that for a further month as their new system was not ready to be installed. I declined the request as we had catered to lose the account at the end of January and to alter everything for a month was just not a viable proposition. I did offer to

give them a three month extension should they want it. That seemed to cause some consternation on their part, but they did eventually agree to my request so the contract should now come to an end at the end of April. They have stated they will send me a contract extension for three months. This comes from New York. However, at the time of writing, I have not received it so I will probably have to remind them, as I do not wish to arrive at the end of February without a contract in place and then be told our services are not required any longer. That, after we have made changes to accommodate the three months extension.

I have been told that some Members say I should have asked their opinion regarding run-ins and gratuities before submitting the Tender. They obviously have not thought the problem through as you only find out the outcome once the Tenders have been submitted and compared. You are not aware of the content of other submissions until after the process has been completed. I trust the above explains the situation and clears up any rumours circulating.

## AGM

Just a reminder that the AGM is on Sunday 9th February, 11am at the HAC City Road. It would be nice to see as many of you as possible there. I know you must all be aware but you should either vote by post **OR** attend the meeting, failure to do either will result in a £50 fine being levied.

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

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# HAMMERSMITH RANK: STEVE WINS HIS CASE!

In the *December Call Sign*, we asked whether any of you use the rank at **Hammersmith Broadway** because some were seeing it as a cash booster for **Hammersmith and Fulham Council**. The reason was that the council had a CCTV camera pointed at the rank and any driver silly enough to believe he or she was offering a service to those coming out of the station but put on 'foul' because the first cab looked as though it was getting a job but was possibly a bit slow, received a PCN through the post.

Undoubtedly there are some taxi drivers who push the bounds of probability and ask for trouble when they parked on double yellow lines when the rank was moving slowly, but **Dial-a-Cab's Steve Thomas (N10)** raised an interesting point in that issue of the mag by suggesting that the rank was incorrectly marked out and that all those who had received a PCN should claim a refund.

Anyone looking at the rank will see that the front section is far too narrow for a taxi to get on and while the PCO rank notice says that the rank should extend 16.5 metres, Steve pointed out that the length of a TX cab is 4.58 metres - with



Perhaps the front of the rank was designed by a former Pedicab driver!

Vitos even longer. So just going by the 'shorter' TX cabs, 4.58 times four comes to 18.32 metres and that doesn't fit easily into a rank legally marked out as extend-

ing 16.5 metres!

Steve Thomas told *Call Sign* that he would appeal and if successful, then it should create a precedent for anyone else who had received a ticket on the rank.

Well, in early January Steve's appeal was held at the **Parking and Traffic Appeals Service (PATAS)**, who administer independent tribunals to hear appeals against Penalty Charge Notices issued by the London Local Authorities and TfL. AND STEVE WON!

All parties agreed that the rank was incorrectly marked while the London Borough of Hammersmith failed to provide the Adjudicator with a full traffic order re the yellow lines at the rear of the rank. The result was that Steve's appeal was allowed and that should result in Hammersmith Council being inundated by taxi drivers.

Steve asked *Call Sign* to thank the **LTDA**, who covered any extra costs he encountered by appealing, but Steve would have appealed anyway as a matter of principle. Sometimes it's easier just to pay up and forget it, but Steve Thomas showed that if we all did that then we'd be paying fines forever.

So well done Steve...

## More imposter taxi drivers convicted

Following a report in *Call Sign* several months ago detailing how several unlicensed men had been caught and found guilty of fraudulently being in possession of taxi licenses and badges, three others have now been caught as part of Operation Excalibur in a joint investigation with the Metropolitan Police Service Safer Transport Command (STC) and Transport for London (TfL).

**Melios Themistokleous** (58) appeared at City of Westminster Magistrates Court on Tuesday 7 January charged with fraud by false representation and possession of articles for use in fraud. He was sentenced to four months imprisonment on both counts, which will run concurrently. He had previously been convicted of two counts of fraud in May 2013 following an investigation by the STC and had been sentenced to a community order for 12 months.

**Michael Audsley** (59) was sentenced to a community order for 12 months after appearing at Central London Magistrates Court on 13 December 2013 for fraud by false representation and possession of articles for use in fraud.

A third man was due to appear at Central London Magistrates Court on 28 January 2014 to be sentenced after also being convicted of fraud.

These sentences follow ongoing intelligence led work to crack-down on this type of illegal activity, which uses Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras to target fraudulent taxi drivers who are posing as legitimate drivers. All three men were arrested in possession of forged items such as taxi driver licences, badges and plates.

**Chief Inspector Colin Carswell** of the Safer Transport Command told *Call Sign*:

"This case demonstrates how seriously we take this type of illegal activity and how important the intelligence we receive is to our operation. We will continue to crackdown on fraudulent taxi drivers who are illegally working in the Capital."

## AGM REMINDER



All members should have received the *Notice of Annual General Meeting 2013* advising that the meeting will again be held at The HAC, Armoury House, City Road on Sunday 9th February 2014 at 11am.

The meeting this year will consider an agenda *excluding* the

election of officers. It would normally include proposed Rule Changes and Propositions; however none were received by the closing date of 09:00hrs on Thursday 5th December 2013 at Dial-a-Cab House as per the Notice of Annual General Meeting 2013 letter.

Please remember that if you do not vote by post then you should attend. If you do not attend or vote by post, you will be liable for a £50 fine.

Howard Pears  
Company Secretary



# Jery's World



Hmmm... perhaps these electric taxis will need a longer cable!

## Bank of England Museum Reopening



Ever wondered what it's like inside? From March 31 you can go and find out...

Following a three month closure to enable essential property maintenance work and the refreshment of several displays, the **Bank of England Museum** will reopen on **31 March**. The work sees changes to several galleries, with new features, guides, children's activities and a new display within the Museum's full-size reconstruction of Sir John Soane's 1793 Bank Stock Office.

The Museum will also make closer links between its galleries and website, with new gallery interactives developing further online so visitors can continue their explorations of the Bank at home.

**The Museum will reopen on Monday 31 March with a new exhibition featuring some of the more unusual items from the Bank's vast collections.**

*Curiosities from the Vaults* will present a varied collection of exhibits from deep within Threadneedle Street, to illustrate the sheer scope and diversity of historic objects gathered by the Bank throughout its history.

### Visitor Information

There is no charge for admission to the Museum or for any event. Enter via Bartholomew Lane. The museum is open from 10am-5pm, Monday to Friday. Last entry is at 4.45pm.

### Website:

[www.bankofengland.co.uk/museum](http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/museum)

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# John Pace

I was so sad to hear of the passing of trade journalist and taxi driver, **John Pace**. He was also a friend and we had many chats about the **State of the Trade** – the name of his regular column in *Taxicab News* - over the years.

When I got the call that John had died, I wasn't surprised as I'd been at St Clare's hospice in Epping along with his family just the day before and could see that his brave fight against **Motor Neurone Disease** was coming to an end.

During the course of his illness, I often went to meet him at the Chigwell home he shared with his partner **Mandy**. Whilst you could see that the illness was debilitating, for a time it looked as though it had stabilised and the hope was that if it stayed as it was, then he could have a reasonable quality of life – albeit with much assistance – because his mind stayed sharp. But he suddenly deteriorated and for that last time I saw him, I can only hope that he heard me and knew that he had friends with him in addition to the many members of his family who were in the room on that penultimate day.

John was often controversial in his views, but cared passionately about the taxi business and its future. Even during his illness and at a time when he could no longer get around without help, he would still ask if I could bring any trade papers with during a visit.

My sincere thanks also go to daughter **Keeley** for keeping the trade informed. John's funeral was held at Green Acres Woodland Burial site in North Weald on January 22. Unsurprisingly the hall was packed with his family and friends.

If anyone wants to make a donation in John's name, then his family have selected two charities. There is **St Clare's Hospice**, where he spent his last days being cared for and the **Motor Neurone Disease Association**.

The sincere condolences of *Call Sign* go to all John's family...



John with Brian Rice at a trade function

Alan Fisher  
Call Sign Online

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# Dial-a-Cab: The movie!

Regular readers will recall that some months ago, a Dutch documentary film-maker had approached *Call Sign* with regard to making a film about the financial district of London through the eyes of the London taxi trade - that being one of our drivers.

**Thomas Vroege**, an award winning movie maker with a long list of film credits to his name discussed his vision of the story with *Call Sign* Editor **Alan Fisher**, who subsequently involved the magazine's photographer, **Alan Green (E52)**, as the driver.

From the outset, we made clear to Tom that DaC had a policy of client confidentiality regarding our account holders, a proviso Thomas fully understood and was willing to accept quoting the oft-used phrase: "What goes on in the cab, stays in the cab!"

## City and Canary Wharf

The first task was to drive around the financial hubs of the City and Canary Wharf, filming general street scenes to give an overall view of our great metropolis and the international financial institutions based there. For this initial recce, Tom used a hand-held - though upmarket - digital camera in video mode to capture images of various sights of particular interest to Tom's story. Moving steadily around the City was no problem at all and we filmed extensively at will. However, while filming at Canary Wharf, possibly because of the size of the camera, we were stopped by a member of the estate security staff who questioned Tom intensely on his motives, probably suspecting he was a terrorist agent selecting targets! After several tense minutes of



scrutiny and finally satisfied of Tom's innocent intentions, we were advised to leave the Island, an opportunity we wasted no time in pursuing!

Truth is, we beat a very hasty retreat west-bound through the Limehouse Link and back to the safety of the City Walls!

**Later, over extended periods of time, various discussions either in person when Tom visited London or via email and text, the direction the story would follow began to take shape.**

Finally, dates were set for the actual filming around our city. This time Thomas brought his sound engineer, **Taco Drijfhout** (pronounced Dryfoot) to record the sounds of the city as it went about its daily business. Revving car engines, the urgency of emergency services sirens and the steady rumble of buses and heavy commercial vehicles trundling through over-crowded streets, blended with an assortment of taxi sounds from the tick-tick of the turn indicators to the regular swish-swish of the windshield wipers during rainy squalls. Invariably in the background, always the familiar rattle of the taxis' diesel engine.

Then there was the 'voice-overs' to be dubbed over the visuals in the 'final cut' of the film. Vocal descriptions and explanations, a potted history of city landmarks as viewed by Tom's camera from the interior of the taxi, and 'in studio' recordings were often repeated several times until the complete satisfaction of Taco was achieved and he would give a broad smile or a 'thumbs up' sign!

"We must get it right or I will make you sound like Donald Duck!" he laughed to the muffled giggles of Thomas standing quietly in the background. This light-hearted comment became a running joke whenever we needed a re-take... 'don't make me sound like DD' was an often quoted plea!

Also discussed - and recorded of course - was the stringent Knowledge of London examination, what it's like to drive a taxi in London, and some of the experiences of a 35+ year career.

Coping with the ups and downs of passengers' moods, stresses of driving and other topics were all freely talked about - although discreetly - however client confidentiality was never breached!

Documentary filming is not like cinema movies where everything is pre-planned down to the very last detail. Documentary techniques differ in that it is more life-like and 'edgy', yet still a great deal of planning and accuracy goes into each project and scene.

There were certain scenes that had particular visual impact to the overall story, such as pedestrians walking slowly along the street, heads down, carrying bags; city workers gripping briefcases or others on their mobile phones, and always with the buildings of the metropolis blurring into the background as Tom's camera, pointing sideways out of the taxi window, caught people candidly going about their familiar routines. The taxi moved gently along the streets, often moving at barely a crawl, keeping pace with these involuntary actors as they unwittingly played their part in the documentary. Again, many retakes to give the director scene choices to 'stitch' together, while our sound technician grinned merrily, obviously delighted with the vast library of audio compilations he was amassing.

The massive collection of visual and sound recordings taken in London will now be pieced together in the editing suite back in Holland to make a smooth flowing, coherent documentary-style film, featuring the hustle and bustle of life on the streets of one of the world's major cities... and *Dial-a-Cab*! The film is expected to be premiered at the *Netherlands Film Festival* later in 2014...

**Photos: Thomas Vroege + camera by Alan Green's DaC taxi.**

*Alan Green gets wired up.*

*Cover pic: Documentary maker Thomas Vroege and sound engineer Taco Drijfhout in the DaC taxi.*

© Call Sign Magazine MMX1V

## Police Appeal

Police are keen to trace the driver of a taxi in the Greenwich/Lewisham area who witnessed an assault in the rear of his cab on 30 November 2013 at around 00:30 hours.

The white, middle-aged male victim hailed the cab on Blackheath Hill and got in, but was immediately followed by a black male who assaulted the passenger in the rear of the taxi and stole his possessions. The driver took the victim home to Amersham Road in SE14. Police would like to speak with the driver and ascertain more details surrounding the incident.

**Anyone with information should contact TDC Bryant of The Serious and Accusative Crime unit in Greenwich on 0208 284 9500 quoting reference 3227177/13.**



# COMPLIANCE WITH GARRY

*Hello ladies and gents, I hope your year has started well!*

## New terminals

We will be fitting the rest of the fleet with the new terminals in the coming months. To assist with this, please try your best to keep to the fitting date given to you for attending **Roman Way**. This will help the fitters and of course minimise your down time.

For those drivers already fitted with the new terminal, I do hope you are now finding the initial teething problems to be behind you and that you enjoy using the terminal with its new updated mapping and satnav facilities that are built into the terminal.

## Credit cards

Please be aware that if you get a **VOID** message on your PED, it does not necessarily mean the card is no good for payment, but possibly that it has just not connected with the bank.



However, if you get the message on your PED: *Unauthorized, the card payment has been declined*, then you need to seek an alternative card to process payment or take the payment in cash.

## Parking / waiting

Loading bays in the **Smithfield** area are vigorously enforced by CCTV cameras, so please try to avoid these when picking up account clients or stopping for a tea break as there is no grace time given.

## AGM

I do hope to see as many of you as possible at the AGM, which will be held on 9th February at the HAC in City Road. The meeting begins at 11am.

Please remember that if you need to speak to me or wish to come into DaC House to see me about a job query or to liaise over another related DaC matter, then I'm at DaC on Mondays.

However, you can leave a voicemail and your query will be dealt with accordingly by a member of staff, Allan Evans or Keith Cain.

*Garry White DaC Compliance Officer*

# RETURN OF THE METROCAB

In a move that shocked the cab world for more than one reason, **Ecotive**, and **Frazer-Nash Research** revealed their latest taxi venture to the world - a new electric-powered taxi that could revolutionise black cab travel in London. Almost as surprising was the fact that it was named the Metrocab - the **Range-Extended Electric Metrocab** to be more precise - and some 13 years after the last Metrocab company folded. The new vehicle was built and designed in the UK and runs on a powerful, near-silent electric motor.

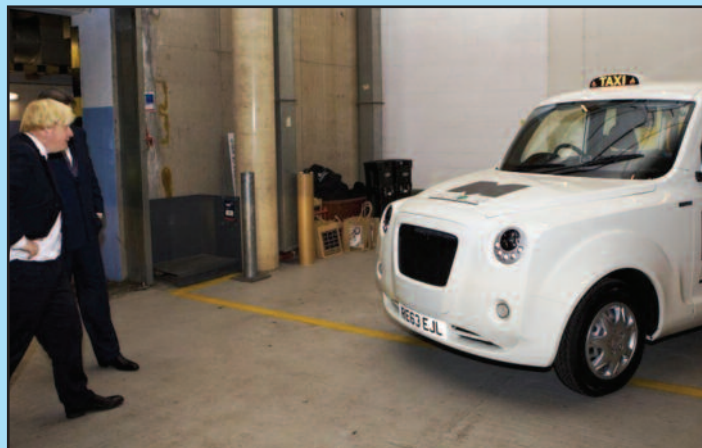
The cab's lithium-ion polymer batteries recharge via a small petrol engine that kicks in when the battery gets low after its 50 mile limit, although it can also be recharged at home via a three pin plug.

Ecotive and Frazer-Nash Research, who are based at Mytchett, in Surrey, claim their new electric taxi will reduce fuel costs substantially and say that a driver doing 200 miles will reduce daily fuel costs from £50 down to £10, while also giving an enhanced and more comfortable performance.

The cab is said to be ready to undergo trials early this year and if successful, could also go on sale before the end of 2014. Perhaps surprisingly, the price has been hinted as being around the same as a **TX4** and substantially cheaper than the **Vito**.

Metrocab chairman, **Sir Charles Masefield**, told the waiting press and London Mayor, **Boris Johnson** that the new electric Metrocab was designed as the next-generation taxi and represented a revolution in the market as the first electric-powered cab to meet the regulations that London taxis operate under and where cabbies typically drive many miles outside the city, making pure electric cars impractical with current technology and infrastructure.

Power is sent to the rear wheels via two electric motors. Ecotive, and Frazer-Nash Research claim that the passenger compartment, with seating for six, has generous 'panoramic' glazing



## Boris Johnson looks at the new electric Metrocab

for good views by passengers. They also claim it has increased luggage space compared to the previous discontinued Metrocab and of course, full disabled access. Metrocab will reveal further details later this year when London trials begin, but say the vehicle fully complies with LTPH rulings, including the 25foot turning circle.

**Dial-a-Cab Chairman, Brian Rice**, told *Call Sign*

that he welcomed anything that helped to make London a cleaner and greener place, but would need to see the electric taxi perform trouble-free in London for some time before feeling able to recommend its purchase. He also said that he was somewhat surprised that no one from the cab trade has apparently been consulted during the Metrocab's development stage...



## Keith Reading

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Another true story from Geoff Levene (W32)

# WESTMINSTER COUNCIL AND THE IRON LUNG!

You couldn't fail to have noticed that 22nd November last year made fifty years since the shooting of **JFK**. The TV and newspapers were full of it, with surviving eye-witnesses being interviewed along with anyone else who was around at the time and who remembered where they were when they heard the news. I suppose the death of **Princess Diana** and the events of 9/11 provoke similar memories.

Of course, we can also remember happier events. I'll never forget when and where I first set eyes on the good lady wife (Compayne Gardens), although it was more than a year later that we met again.

And of course there was **19th May 2012**. You don't remember? Some clues. Munich? A Saturday? A penalty? A big guy from the Ivory Coast? Ok then, how about Bayern Munich? Chelsea? Didier Drogba? Oh yes, now you remember!

But all these things pale into insignificance compared to that moment in December as I drove along the Outer Circle. Luckily there was nobody in the cab as I hit the brakes when *that* message came up on the cab's data screen:

**IRON LUNG SHUT FOR REFURBISHMENT**



**Like Dr Who's Tardis the new Iron Lung will be bigger on the inside!**

Whaaat! It's not even ten years since they installed a sink! And soap was scheduled for 2015! After I'd gone for a somewhat shaky walk, taken a few deep breaths and then sat in the back of the taxi to recover, I decided to investigate this cataclysmic announcement. So I phoned **Westminster Council**...

"What are your plans for the urinal in Horseferry Road," I asked?

"I'm afraid I cannot give out any information," said an official.

"Nothing at all," I queried back?

"No, absolutely nothing, it's embar-goed."

Well, I was determined to find out more, so I made an application under the **Freedom of Information Act**.

A few days later, a thick envelope landed on the mat. It made fascinating reading. The work was to be designed and supervised by **Monsieur Philippe Starke** - the man responsible for the **St Martins** and **Sanderson** Hotels. But he wasn't approached for the task, he demanded it! As he said afterwards:

"I 'ad gone into **ze Astral Cafe** for my usual bacon sandwich when I was - 'ow you say - taken short. So I popped into *ze pissoir* for *ze Jimmy*. I was impressed, but felt I could make a few more improvements based on the **Dr Who Tardis** philosophy, ie bigger on the inside than it is on the outside!"

*And so the plans were revealed...*

1. Suede covered walls - colours to be decided by a committee comprising Boris Johnson, Samuel Eto'o and Jessie J.

2. Underfloor heating - requires work by Thames Water. Horseferry Road will be closed for 6 weeks.

3. Gold fittings - a team has been sent to Abu Dhabi to look at designs.

4. Armchairs covered in the hide of virgin Tibetan Yaks

5. A forty inch 3D Plasma TV connected to Sky and BT Sport (bring your own 3D glasses).

6. Attendants have been headhunted from One Hyde Park and will keep the place in the manner to which we have been accustomed.

7. Coffee, tea and a selection of filled rolls will be available *and...*

8. On Sundays, a choice of smoked salmon or cream cheese beignets!

*I can hardly wait!*

**Geoff Levene**  
Call Sign Online

## Two out of three for DaC's Mr Boxing

*But Cassius misses out in title eliminator*

**Danny 'Cassius' Connor** was said by many to be unfortunate not to add another win to his record after being outpointed over 10 rounds by **Tyler Goodjohn** on Saturday 14th December at the **Matchroom Sports** show at London's **Excel Arena**, which many **Dial-a-Cab** drivers would have seen as the bout was shown live on **Sky Sports**.

Connor, who is trained by DaC's **Alec Wilkey (W83)** and **Goodjohn**, battled it out in what was a highly anticipated third contest between the two and an eliminator for the English light-welterweight title.

It was 27 year-old Cassius who landed the first significant blow, a straight right in the first round and it soon became evident that both fighters' styles would make for a close and compelling contest. Most rounds were visibly hard to score as Connor relied on his work rate and combinations behind the jab, whilst Goodjohn picked his shots more carefully focusing on his power punches.

Rounds were nip and tuck throughout the contest, with Connor producing some effective straight arm shots, notably in the sixth round. Goodjohn varied his attacks whilst backing Connor onto the ropes, with one of his standout shots being an uppercut in the same round. At the end of the bout, the referee scored it 98-93 in favour of 22 year-old Goodjohn - a score many found difficult to understand in such a closely fought bout.

**Tyler can now build on this win as he goes for the English title whilst Connor showed the heart and resolve needed to come again as he has done before.**

Although Danny Connor went down, two of Alec's other fighters added wins to their records in spectacular fashion back in November as **Adam Salman** and **Johnny Coyle** both recorded TKO victories on **Miranda Carter's Fighting Spirit** show.

Salman proved to have too much for **Sam Sharpe** in his second pro fight as he piled on the pressure in round four when forcing the referee to stop the contest. Coyle produced some slick boxing behind his jab before upping the pace in the third round to stop **Rick Boulter** in his tracks. This was only Johnny Coyle's third fight and his first camp as part of **Team Wilkey**.

**Pic: L-R Matt Marsh, Derek Grainger, Danny Connor and Alec Wilkey**



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## The biggest but still the best



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

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

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



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

equipped with fully computerised diagnostics systems.

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

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

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



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



In the *November Call Sign*, we featured a verbal battle between Dial-a-Cab driver Melvyn Harvey (E87) and a cyclist who specialises in "catching out" motorists whom he claims act dangerously towards the two-wheeled variety of road users.

The gentleman cycles around using CCTV cameras attached to his person and when he considers he has caught out a motorist, he puts the CCTV footage online! The fact that many of his online videos show him looking sideways far more often than he looks straight ahead seems irrelevant to him.

To give him his full internet identification, he is actually Sonofthewindinc and he rides a ridiculous looking two-wheeler that looks more like it has escaped from a film set – that being due to the amount of lighting it has.

Sometime ago, Sonofthewindinc accused Melvyn of driving too close and following an argument in Devonshire Street, Marylebone, Melvyn retorted that he hadn't been close at all citing the fact that Sonofthewind's bike was so bright that it was impossible to miss. But the cyclist put the video on his YouTube site anyway alongside 100s of others. In one of the videos, he is seen telling a tourist that he is out there looking for motorists that he considers are wrong. So should we then assume that if he doesn't find any, perhaps he then has to encourage them?

However, he wasn't just content with the video (which showed very little) because he then also reported Melvyn to the Met Police Roadsafes London scheme. This is a police information and intelligence gathering tool where members of the public can fill in an online form and advise them about criminal, nuisance and anti-social behaviour on the roads of London. It is said to be staffed by experienced traffic officers. We believe they know of sonofthewindinc as a regular visitor.

One week later, the experienced DaC driver – now in his 34th year with this Society – received a letter from the Met Police that said after watching the sonofthewindinc video several times, they came to the conclusion that the distance Melvyn had allowed between his taxi and the cyclist was "not good enough." They quoted from the Highway Code about distances that cyclists should be allowed, but tellingly added that it may not always be possible but that "better was expected from professional drivers."

The letter ended by saying that should the police hear of a similar report about Melvyn, then they would inform TfL. That turned the letter into a direct threat on Melvyn's ability to earn a living and all because of a cyclist who obviously enjoys trying to catch motorists with the aim of not just turning them into film stars, but also reporting them to the police.

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

Mr Luckhurst pointed out that the lighting used by the cyclist was probably unlawful but

As London's filming cyclist meets his match...

## SONOFTHEWIND IS NOW JUST SONOFAB\*TCH!



The Met police have pulled the cyclist's claim against Melvyn (inset)

didn't labour the point, preferring instead to point out the lack of riding skills of the cyclist who he said appeared to deliberately ride in the centre of the road. Rule 51 of the Highway Code, he pointed out, referred to

all road users to show consideration. That, wrote Mr Luckhurst, surely applied to cyclists as well. Having watched the video taken by sonofthewindinc, the LTDA legal eagle came to the conclusion that Mr Harvey had driven his taxi in a correct and safe way and wrote:

"This video by sonofthewindinc is a bias piece of footage from an individual who is quite clearly anti-cab. It is also an individual who quite clearly is inconsiderate in the manner in which he cycles, both in relation to other road users in motorised vehicles and his fellow cyclists."

The LTDA barrister asked that any record of the complaint be deleted from Roadsafes and in a response dated 9 December – 11 months after the original incident – the Met Police, through Inspector David Osborne, agreed that the matter had been deleted.

Melvyn Harvey told *Call Sign*: "Of course we should always be aware of cyclists; however this guy seems to go out onto the streets just to antagonise drivers. The fact that he has so many clips on YouTube, with many of those clearly showing that he is looking sideways rather than ahead, appears to prove that point. His aim was just to show his power and I thank the LTDA for the use of barrister John Luckhurst and also the Met for finally seeing sense."

Even so, watch out for sonofthewindinc because he probably doesn't like us even more now! He might even now be sonofabi\*chinc...!

Baghwat Singh  
Call Sign Online

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

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*This series commemorates 2014's centennial beginning of WW1 hostilities and the heroics of those connected in some way to Dial-a-Cab. This month, DaC's longest-serving driver Alan Lewis...*

# DAC WAR HEROES

## My Egyptian experience

Astonishingly, Alan Lewis (A44) is now in his fifty third year with Dial-a-Cab! But nine years before first arriving at the ODRS offices at Pentonville Road, Alan was to begin a much longer journey after being called up to do his compulsory National Service.

"I was called up to play my part for Queen and country, completing the six weeks basic training at Hednesford in Staffordshire, but was soon posted to Lytham St Annes near Blackpool," he told *Call Sign*. "I was hoping that I might be able to work out my National Service just being based in the UK, but the RAF had other ideas. I was posted overseas to Egypt and the Suez Canal zone - at the time of the Suez crisis! Plenty of sunshine but not much fun...

The Suez crisis - aka the Sinai War - involved a confrontation between Egypt on one side and Britain, France and Israel on the other, while the USA, USSR and the UN attempted to politically force the three countries to withdraw. It had followed Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's decision to nationalise the Suez Canal following the withdrawal of an offer by Britain and the USA to fund the building of the Aswan Dam. The back-down by the two countries was said to be in response to Egypt's new friendly ties with the Soviet bloc and sudden recognition of China during the tensions between the island of Taiwan - formerly known as Formosa - and mainland China. The attack was an attempt to regain Western control of the canal and to remove Nasser from power. Western access to Middle East oil without the canal was in danger.

I spent the entire length of my National Service time at 'Fayid' - a huge RAF Station where some 5000 of us were based. I was deployed in the Stores, which meant being responsible for just about everything that made the place tick... food distribution, aircraft and motor vehicle spare parts and re-ordering items to replenish our stock as they were used and the multitude of other products that kept the base running efficiently.

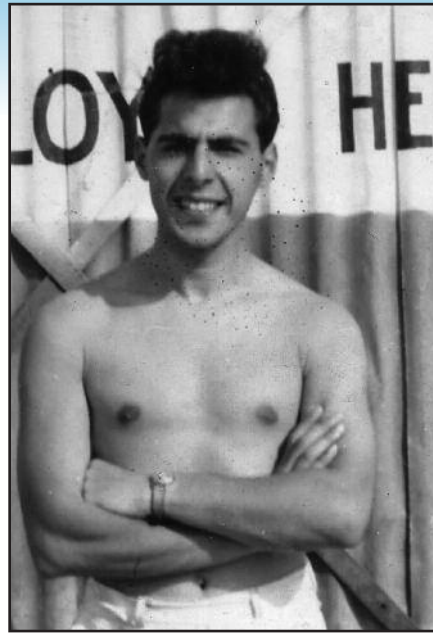
I was treated very well on base by all of the five thousand men I served with, although there was only one other Jew on the base. His name was Alan Vant. He became a market stall trader when he left the service and I believe he also subsequently did the Knowledge to become a cab driver.

We used to also employ local labour as well and there was a young Arab on base whom I originally became quite friendly with. However, bearing in mind the tensions between Egypt and Israel, he once uttered to me in a threatening voice that if I ever went to his village, he would slit my throat. It was obvious from his tone that he meant it! Until then, I thought we had been friends, but after that comment the friendship evaporated. He would often fall asleep on base when he should have been working, and I would wake him up by pointing the muzzle of my rifle at his nostrils and cocking the activating bolt. That usually woke him up!

We would frequently be required to load a truck with supplies - food, tyres or whatever had been requested - and make the dangerous jour-



Alan Lewis with his Canal Zone medal and in 1956 at Fayid



ney to Port Said. No matter how carefully we checked the manifesto before leaving Fayid, there were invariably some things missing by the time we reached our destination due to Arabs jumping onto the trucks and offloading goodies without us ever knowing!

You always had to be on your guard because you never knew who was your friend or possible enemy, but I became close buddies with a Robert Elliott-James. Over time we lost contact but he was finally able to locate me through the Salvation Army and we remain good friends after sixty years.

It was he who told me about the award of the *Canal Zone Medal*, of which I was previously unaware, but I do remember the jazz musician Acker Bilk being in our Unit, and apparently it was he, together with others, who were the driving force behind our quest to being officially recognised for our efforts in that conflict."

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*With all the help and advantages buses have over the rest of us, Tom Quigley (Y33) asks why 1889 people have still been killed or seriously injured by London buses over the past five years...*

# LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

For many years, we taxi drivers and the general public as a whole have seen the road system being changed and rearranged with priority given to buses. Designated bus lanes, bus stands and railway station areas, while at the same time the rest of us have had many more restrictions applied to us. No other group of private companies have had so much assistance in making their movement around London easier.

These, along with subsidies on fuel and other benefits, have helped the bus companies reach their profit targets while being fully supported and

With Tom Quigley (Y33)



endorsed by the many different committees that make up TfL.

So it seems absolutely startling, shocking and incredible that the number of people that have been killed or seriously injured by London Buses over the past five years is 1,889!

Yes, that's killed or seriously injured (not minor or unrecorded incidents) by London Buses in the last five years.

*Year by year breakdown, incident totals:*

2008/09 - 441; 2009/10 - 324; 2010/11 - 334; 2011/12 - 431; 2012/13 - 359; 2013/14\* - 137 (up to August 2013).

Strangely, some may think, these numbers and all records of them were not in the public domain and only emerged - not via some so-called left wing trade organisation - by the Mayors own party! On November 13th 2013, the figures were released to the Conservative group on the London Assembly under the Freedom of Information Act and cover 2008 up till August 2013.

The group have further requested

that TfL should reveal records to show which Bus companies they apply to together with a Borough by Borough account to show more clarity and to give regular updates of all incidents.

As of yet there has been no breakdown as to the number of people actually killed, although all such incidents are recorded and files will have been kept. Obviously, not all the incidents will be the fault of the bus driver or company, but with the sheer numbers, it is equally as obvious that they must be accountable.

There are questions that need to be answered and addressed and these are just some of the subjects amongst many:

Where in London are the worst areas?

Is the bus route layout correct?

What training is given?

What are the staff numbers?

Policy of late running - does it encourage speeding?

How many people have been killed and why?

When HGV companies and many other road users are under scrutiny with all the recent bike tragedies, a proper and clearly detailed analysis of the safety of Public Transport in this area is needed...

2013 was the Mayor's Year of the Tube. Now Mayor Johnson has launched 2014 as the Year of the Bus. I wonder what the Mayor will allocate to 2015? We all know what it won't be!!!

**Tom Quigley**  
Call Sign Online

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

## Kupkake's Korner



I was sitting on St Pancras  
Playing Scrabble on my phone,  
When the bloke in front came over...  
To have a rant and moan

His face looked familiar  
But I couldn't place his name,  
Our ages were quite similar...  
Showing too long in this game!

He started off with Rickshaws  
Moved on to A&L,  
He mumbled about Boris...  
And the cyclists as well

He said the game was finished  
And went back to his cab,  
I trapped my job to Euston...  
Life really ain't that bad!

*Copyright Kupkake 2014*

## Triathlon Plus Show at ExCel The London Bike Show!

The London Bike Show will take place from  
13 - 16 February at ExCel London.



The London Bike Show is the UK's largest cycling exhibition and in 2013 attracted over 38,000 visitors. Whether road cycling, mountain biking, BMX, cycle cross, a family cycle at the weekend or commuting to work is your thing - you'll find plenty to interest you and to have a great day out. There will be celebrities appearing, including Sir Chris Hoy.

More details/book at [www.thelondonbikeshow.co.uk](http://www.thelondonbikeshow.co.uk) or ExCel.



**Ingrebourne Links** is a family golf complex in Rainham, Essex. This exciting new project is set on 350 acres of land and currently includes a superb 30 bay driving range and 9 hole 'mini links' par 3 golf course. And we have a special offer for taxi drivers...

There are also 27 full championship holes with a major clubhouse in construction and we have the best practice facility and par 3 course in Essex! Our 30 bay driving range is fully covered and floodlit for lessons and practice all year round. There is also a chipping green and a putting green for you to get the most from your practice.

Ingrebourne Links also boasts a fully fitted coaching studio equipped with the latest technology for you to experience a premier service from tuition and/or club fitting, run by our Head PGA Professional, **Nick Moncur** along with our other PGA Pros **Glen Brown** and **Darren Turner**.

Our superb 9 hole par 3 course is a true links design by PGA Master Professional **Alan Walker**. The 'mini links' course is also the venue for the PGA of England East Par 3 Championship. There are rolling hills, pot bunkers, heather, gorse and small USPGA spec greens, similar to the famous *postage stamp* 8th hole at Royal Troon.

Just like the driving range, it has full irrigation, keeping it in top condition and also has

## SPECIAL GOLF OFFER

*At Ingrebourne Links, Rainham, Essex*



**Head PGA Pro Nick Moncur**

excellent drainage making it playable all year round. It boasts spectacular views over the Essex countryside and the City of London, with the feel that you are by the coast on a genuine links.

This course can suit everyone. It's a great place to start your golf and for families to enjoy a sporting activity together, as well as test a low handicapper or Professional...

**There is something for everyone at**

**Ingrebourne Links; New Road, Rainham, Essex RM13 9FL. Open Monday - Friday 8 am - 9 pm. Saturdays and Sundays 8 am - 8 pm.**

**More info: [www.ingrebournelinks.com](http://www.ingrebournelinks.com) or Tel: 01708 552054.**

**WE ARE OFFERING LICENCED TAXI DRIVERS 3 FOR 2 ON INDIVIDUAL LESSONS AND A MONDAY SPECIAL ON OUR GOLF COURSE – AN ALL DAY TICKET FOR JUST £5.00!**

## LTFUC Hon Chair Report



The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children celebrated 85 glorious years of helping disadvantaged children in 2013. The fund was started by a handful of drivers in the Leicester Square Shelter who decided to give something back and take a few underprivileged children from the Norwood Orphanage to London Zoo. From this small beginning, the charity grew to what it is today, but our main objective is still the same. We are now a charity comprising of 13 trustees who are licensed London Taxi drivers and our time and expertise is given freely, keeping overheads down and ensuring that each child we help gets approximately 99p out of every pound we receive in donations. In December 2012, I had the great honour to attend (with my husband **Gerald**) the **Worshipful Company of Tin Plate Workers** (alias Wireworkers) Christmas Dinner and I thank them for being both past and present great supporters of our Fund. Also in December, the trustees and disabled children from the **Bridge School** were invited once again to attend **Clarence House** to help our Patron, **HRH the Duchess of Cornwall**, decorate the Christmas tree in the downstairs apartments. HRH has such a rapport with disabled children and a great time was had by all.

On 20th January 2013, our 85th anniversary celebrations really began with our **Mad Hatters Tea Party** held at the **JW Marriott Grosvenor House** and in spite of Arctic weather conditions, the party was a brilliant success. The children had a wonderful time and I must thank all those involved, too numerous to name, who made it such a special day.

The **Southend** outing was again full of fun and laughter. The taxis were covered in balloons and all sorts of decorations, but driver **Steve Pulham** and his helper **Kay Molyneux** went one step further and made an excellent wooden 85th birthday cake for the roof of their taxi and won first prize for their efforts. Thank you and well done to everyone who participated on the day.

My husband Gerald and I had the privilege and honour to be invited to **Buckingham Palace** as part of **Her Majesty the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations**. The sun was shining; the **Royal Family** were all in attendance and as a taxi driver I felt very humble and appreciative to be part of this fantastic day.

In August we took children to see **Matilda the Musical** at the **Cambridge Theatre** and we thank the **Royal Shakespeare Company** for inviting us. The show was funny, poignant and just plain amazing and we thank all those involved in the day for giving the children a fantastic, unforgettable afternoon.

In September, the team behind the famous English farce **Run for your Wife** hosted a Gala screening for the LTFUC at the **Stratford Theatre**. The cast and writer, **Ray Cooney**, made it such a special night and I cannot remember laughing so much at a film for a long time. My thanks go to all involved, with a special thank you going to Ray Cooney for also donating a large cheque to us.

Also in September, a few committee members and their wives joined me at the **Pearly Harvest Festival**, which started at the Guildhall and ended with a service being held at the **St. Mary-le-Bow** (Bow Bells) **Church**. This is such a traditional day for London and we are grateful to the Pearlys for giving us such great support every year.

In October we held **The Rank of Angels** interfaith service at **St Paul's Cathedral** to celebrate our **85th anniversary**. During the day we were granted the use of **St Paul's Courtyard** to promote the charity and raise funds, which attracted many people. In the evening there was a Concert by the **London Charity Orchestra** conducted by **William Carslake**, including the new **London Children's Choir** and the **Pembroke Academy of Music** conducted by **Ronald Corp**. To just say thank you to all those involved does not seem enough. The day was wonderful with a serene and magical evening. We thank them all most sincerely.

Of course my thanks also go to those of you too numerous to name for the help and support you give the LTFUC. I must also thank the Trustees, their wives and partners for their support; they are the best team ever. I also thank the drivers and their partners, as without you there would be no Fund. Last, but not least, thank you to my husband Gerald for his total support.

**I have had three hard working, humbling and glorious years as Hon Chair and it is now time to pass the mantle on. I look forward to working alongside and giving my total support to Simeos Yiannikaris, who will take on the position of Hon Chair with as much gusto as all of us who have enjoyed the privilege before.**

**Susan Angel, LTFUC Hon Chair**

# LTFUC Mad Hatters

**C**all Sign has been attending the **London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children Mad Hatters** tea party at the **JW Marriott Grosvenor House** for many years – in fact we have been sponsoring the guest's nosh on the balcony for the past five years, which this year was being supervised by **David Lessman (D19)**. Invitations had gone out for 700 children (plus carers) and usually around 10% don't come, Last year saw atrocious weather conditions with a blizzard prior to the party and that kept the attendance down, but for this year it felt as though everyone turned up and the hotel's **Great Room** heaved to a full house!

Welcomed by the new LTFUC Chairperson, **Sim Yiannikaris**, who took over from **Susan Angel** in December, the children and their carers tucked in to sandwiches, pizzas, cream cakes and trifles! It The hotel deserves huge thanks for their continued support of the Fund over many, many years.

Then the entertainment began with the drummers who made all the noise at the Olympic Park when working as **London 2012 Olympic volunteers, Pandemonium**. It made for a real fun start!

**Amanda's Action Show** provided some brilliant singing and dancing from youngsters who obviously were looking for a future in the entertainment business. And speaking of "just last year," following Amanda's super kids were a band who have been providing musical fun to the Mad Hatters for more years than most can remember; the amazing **Bournemouth Carnival Band**. Dressed as Spiderman and Spiderwoman (was there ever a Mrs Peter Parker), this band never fail to entertain - and as most entertainers will tell you, 700 kids aren't always the easiest to please!

When it comes to entertainment, this next act was just absolutely brilliant. **Act Now** is a performing arts program that has inspired the talent of young performers over the past 30 years. They are trained by professionals and it certainly showed as they put on their brilliant version of **Hairspray**. **Call Sign** was told afterwards that one of their young actresses had received the **Laurence Olivier Award for Best Actress** in the West End version of **Matilda**!

Next up was something new for the Mad Hatters – **The Epika Fusion Dancers**. This all-female group presented their **Bollywood** dance show. It was dynamic and unique for the Mad Hatters. A

really great act appreciated by the audience who were singing. But it had hardly started because next up was **Stavros** and his son **Lagi**. Just as they did on their first appearance, Stavros act tore the house down! They went from **Grease** to **Shm Elvis** guest appearance along with two vocalists. **Shm Elvis** writer smile! When BGT's **Simon Cowell** says so, the rest of us – and Stavros is that!

Was that it? Of course it wasn't because this was still young; so following Stavros were two regulars during the blizzard - **Gabriela** and **Monica** – **The** in a 20 minute set that certainly pleased the male audience. The duo are growing out of them! Either way, they were a great act.

With a rest for the sound engineers, the **Mad Hatters** floor to lead the longest conga ever seen – at the

Young **Lily Jewel** - who we think is now 13 years old - had her first appearance at the Tea Party several years ago. She was out of all measure and she must be one entertainer!

Another Britain's Got Talent success came on stage in the semi-finals with their street dancing, travelled down from London. Five girls – the oldest one being 18 – were dressed in the older watchers whose only street dance applied to them.

What can I say about **Fulcrum** that could justify their name? They who take acrobatics to an amazing new level. **Fulcrum** has been performing for almost 8 years and are former British champions. They have even represented Great Britain in international batic adagio and static trapeze act. It is nothing like anything else!



Stavros and Elvis? You're pulling my plonka!



The amazing Fulcrum look fused!



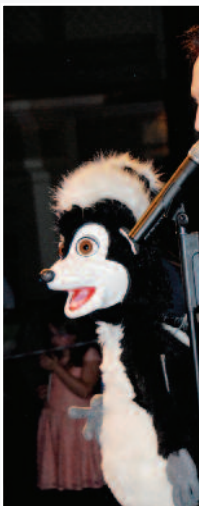
Hairspray from Act Now



"I've had this headache all day!"



More Cheeky than ever!



"I told you not to with a 'w' in it!"



# Hatters Party 2014

couldn't believe the entertainment they were seeing as everyone's favorite twosome – **Stavros Flatley** appearance on **Britain's Got Talent** in 2009, their week dancing to the Blues Brothers to an **Elvis** volunteers from the audience that still makes this something is funny, then it must be hilarious to the

the Mad Hatters Tea Party and the afternoon was stars who even turned up and performed last year **Cheeky Girls**. They performed their biggest hits the carers as their outfits either get skimpier by the way, they were really entertaining once again. **Mad Hatters characters came out onto the dance floor at least at the Grosvenor House!**

ers old - showed how much she has matured since ago. Her voice and stage presence have improved her who could have a big future.

next. **The Shockarellas**, who reached the BGT own from Manchester to entertain the party. These ed from head to toe in leather and amazed even ies to drunken night outs!

ify the brilliance of this male/female partnership shley and Sarah have been working together as sh champions in Sports Acrobatics and Aerobics. rnational competitions and now present an acro- ss than sheer, total, amazing brilliance.

Ventriloquist **Steve Hewlett** and his assortment of clever puppets deservedly reached the final of Britain's Got Talent. The BGT audience went wild when he turned up with a **Simon Cowell** puppet – yes, even Mr Cowell! It's hardly surprising that he went down so well at the Mad Hatters!

Finally, we reached the last act. Host for the afternoon, **Dave Davis**, introduced them by explaining to the 700 bopping kids just who **The Beatles** were. Boy, did that make some of us feel old! But **The Silver Manatees** came on to sing five of the mop heads greatest hits. They were dressed just as the Liverpool foursome had been during their days at **The Cavern** - and the joint just rocked!

**Dave Davis** also interviewed on stage some of the guests at the party. Among them were fabulous actress and taxi-user **Barbara Windsor** and her fellow **EastEnders** star **Jasmyn Banks** who played naughty **Alice Branning**. The script says Alice is currently in prison but she was obviously let out for the party! Also there was **Joe Swash**, yet another former **Walford** resident as **Mickey Miller**. Joe is also a former winner of reality show **I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here** but is proud of the fact that he used to attend the LTFUC Mad Hatters as a child and says that he never forgot the wonderful experience he had at the time. Former World Heavyweight boxing champion **Frank Bruno** gave us an "ullo 'Arry" to almost complete a brilliant day. We say almost because still to come was a disco where the floor filled with children and characters – unless you still wanted some face-painting, a portrait, perhaps a ride on a police motor bike, a marsh Mallow covered in the chocolate fountain or an animal balloon! And not forgetting a bag full of toys as you left!

**The Fund** have asked us to thank everyone involved, which we do, but let's not forget LTFUC's **Raymond Levy** and wife **Maureen** who put the show together and the rest of the LTFUC committee and their wives who work like Trojans on the day to make sure everything runs smoothly. It did and 700 children and a few hundred carers all say thank you...

*Alan Fisher (and official helper, Samuel Fisher)  
Pics: Alan Green and Alan Fisher*



say anything



Dave Davis  
with  
Barbara  
Windsor



Headaches are us!



Did John look like this?



Editor's helper / grandson Samuel with Joe Swash and Jasmyn Banks





Brian Rice chats to LTDA Gen Sec Steve McNamara

Call Sign was at City Hall, along with Dial-a-Cab Chairman Brian Rice, to watch the London Taxi Company, Frazer-Nash and Karsan show Mayor of London Boris Johnson the taxis that will have the capability of being emission free by 2018.

By 1st January of that year, all *new* taxis – although not apparently private hire – will have to be capable of zero emissions in order to get a licence. The Mayor had previously stated that following the introduction of an *Ultra Low Emission Zone* in central London by 2020, London taxis would be emission free by then. Two years have now been eclipsed from that original estimate for new ones.

The Mayor and TfL are said to be exploring a number of supporting measures with the **Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV)** and are in discussion with the **Green Investment Bank** concerning possible financial assistance for drivers.

The Mayor told the waiting press: “The London taxi is iconic in so many ways - not least in terms of its eye-catching looks and the way it is piloted by wily experts who know the capital like the back of their hand. But its one Achilles heel, particularly of older models, has been the pollution generated by chugging diesel engines. As part of my mission to improve our air quality and drive innovation, I’m making a firm pledge to Londoners that from 2018, all taxis presented for licensing should be zero emission capable. The cleaner, greener vehicles I’ve seen today are proof that the evolution of the great London cab is well and truly underway. But it won’t work unless taxi drivers can buy them affordably.”

London Assembly **Green Party** member, **Baroness Jenny Jones**, said that although electric taxis would be available by 2015, London’s 1,300 charging points were insufficient to support them and asked the Mayor to speed up his original target of 25,000 charging points.

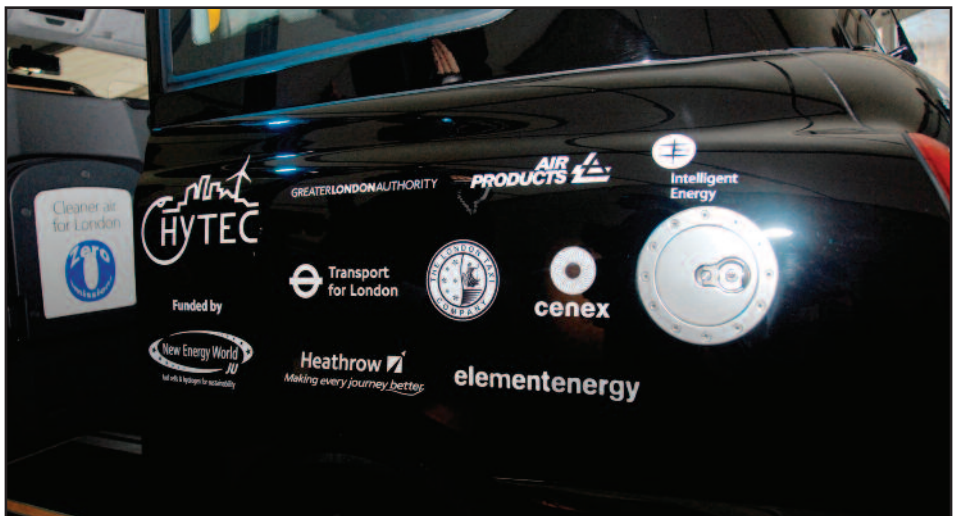
# Emission free new taxis – by law!



Boris talks to the world about electric taxis



The Karsan



Partners in the battery-charged, Hydrogen fuelled hybrid TX4

Perhaps the strangest of the five taxis was the Turkish made *Concept V1* from **Karsan**, which was developed by design engineering company **Hexagon Studios**

working with London’s **Royal College of Art** to deliver a bespoke taxi design for London.

*Pics: Alan Green*



*In an issue featuring the new generation of hybrid taxis, this is...*

## THE LAST METROCAB!

Now in his eighteenth year with DaC, Eddie Lambert (V37) has always been seen driving a Metrocab. But he explained to Call Sign that his cab could become unique...

"I don't know if any Dial-a-Cab drivers know this, but I have the last Metrocab of the old production line. It was found in the old factory in late 2009 when the site was sold and a taxi parts dealer was asked to clear the site - I guess in exchange for what was there.

My cab was found in the corner where it had been left apparently when staff were informed that the business had folded yet again.

Apparently it was hawked around several garages including GJs, but any sale proposed fell through. I heard about it and put in an offer which was accepted. That was when my problems started.

Got an MOT on it (not a problem - even without a number plate). Then I contacted the DVLA; they said I needed to contact VOSA first for a test. VOSA wanted to crash test it. This was because European Type approval expires two years after the last vehicle off the production line and mine had



not been registered as it came off the line, due to the shutdown.

**Nightmare! It wasn't a one-off or a restricted run and as a production line product, it needed a crash certificate.**

I eventually managed to get it passed by the VOSA station in North London (on the same industrial complex that GJ's in Harbet Rd is situated, but opposite the canal).

However, they wanted to say it should have a 03 plate as the only date marked product they could find was the glass. This was despite paperwork I had that showed

the original order and production line details from August 2005. Anyway, they do not actually issue the plates so the cab had to go back to my local DVLA office - luckily in Peterborough about a mile from home. I'm not sure what went on between VOSA and DVLA but after another inspection by DVLA (!!!) they agreed to issue a plate and said that if I could get a letter from Eddie Crossley as the last garage retailer of Metrocabs confirming that the cab was as per a 2005 spec and not 2003, they would give me an 05 plate.

So in August 2010 my cab took to the streets of London. Strangely, the registration number of the brand new electric Metrocab was RE63 EJJ and my initials are EJJ...!

I suppose that we must now wait to see if the E-Metrocab will live up to the hopes invested in it. I certainly hope it does or I could be looking at a period of about 5-6 years as the only Metrocab on the streets of London!"

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

*Thanks from Eddie to Gary and crew at MAG Diesels, Eddie Crossley and lads at Richmond Road and Vince at GJ's for advice and help*

## NV200 ready in December

Nissan has unveiled its new London taxi - the NV200. Learning from driver's comments following the Vito launch, the New York Taxi of Tomorrow has been re-designed to make it instantly recognisable as one of the capital's iconic black cabs, or as they now call it, the Taxi for London.

After first revealing their plans in 2012 and in response to London Mayor Boris Johnson, TfL and other key organisations that have put their backing behind the new taxi, Nissan redesigned the vehicle to better reflect the iconic nature of the traditional London black cab.

The NV200 newly-redesigned taxi has been developed for London in Paddington by Nissan Design Europe (NDE). However, Spain celebrated the news, as the vehicle will be built in the Nissan factory in the Catalan city of Barcelona.

The new taxi will be launched in December 2014 with a modern, clean, 1.6-litre petrol engine equipped with an automatic gearbox. The engine is smaller than the New York NV200's 2.0-litre four-cylinder powertrain, presumably for the sake of increased fuel economy.

Nissan already has a rich pedigree in the London taxi market with many drivers having fond memories of its excellent 2.7-litre TD27 diesel engine in the FX4 Fairway and some in the 1980s and '90s TX1. Naturally the new Nissan adheres to the London Conditions of Fitness including the required



25-foot turning circle.

Among the new changes are round headlamps and a re-modelled grille mirroring the traditional 'face' of the London taxi, LED lighting to improve visibility of the traditional taxi sign and completely new front bumper panels.

Nissan intends putting the NV200 on sale in the capital in December 2014 and from its launch the new taxi will be available with a 1.6-litre petrol engine and an automatic gearbox. Compared to current diesel taxis, this engine will be far cleaner, with lower levels of NOx and particulates. The vehicle operates with a sliding rear-door set-up and seats five passengers.

Nissan franchised dealer group, Glyn Hopkin, has been appointed as the exclusive retailer to sell the Nissan NV200 Taxi for London from a purpose-built, ultra-modern showroom facility based in Canary Wharf.

The cost has not been revealed but is expect-

ed to be slightly less than the TX4 and return a fuel consumption pushing 40mpg. Low emissions will mean a road tax of £220.

Nissan is also forging ahead with its pioneering work in the sustainable motoring field, developing a 100 per cent electric taxi - the e-NV200 - which it aims to have on the streets of London years ahead of the Mayor's new target of 2018 for the development of a zero-emissions taxi. Nissan's electric taxi will be on the streets of a UK city in 2015.

From a total of around 23,000 currently licensed London taxis, the Mercedes Vito accounts for 2,177 with the rest made by the London Taxi company. There will soon be a third option...

### Call Sign

#### February 2014

Editor: Alan Fisher

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

Tel: 0207 251 0581 Fax: 0207 553 7293

Email: callsignmag@aol.com

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Tel: 07958 300 428

Email: deborahfresco@gmail.com

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DaC's Richard Potter (T51) looks at taxi meter prices and asks...

## ARE WE TOO EXPENSIVE???



When **John Mason** recently left **LTPH**, one thing he got spot on was when he said that we care about the trade we work in. I believe **Dial-a-Cab** drivers and staff care about the trade more than most.

Recently I came across some old minutes of a meeting between trade reps and TfL regarding our annual fare increase. If we get a 3% fare increase this April, over the past 3 years the increase would have been 10% overall. Take that increase to my accountant and my gross earnings will have increased, but my net earnings would have stayed virtually the same because of the increased cost of diesel. In reality I am no better off.

**So when we tender for accounts and they complain about the increase in costs, it's a hard one to explain because the taxman gets our increase via our fares whilst costing the firms more. But that's no concern of theirs.**

I was interested to read that one of our former accounts in E14 recently made a record £12 billion profit before deciding to use a cheaper form of surface transport. So in this very difficult trading environment, should we get the consultants in to look at our product and our fares? But how long do you think it would take before we started to tell them what was wrong with our trade rather than vice versa, because our trade is like no other due to our monopoly on plying for hire. I'm sure that there are many people from outside who think they can change our trade for the better overnight; however, on closer examination they then retreat with their tails between their legs.

So should we change our product, our service, our fares? Well, most of us agree that the TX cab is the traditional way forward and we want what we have already - but a much better version. There is much room for improvement and the interviews with their Chairman **Li Shufu** in **Call Sign** show that **Geely** are fully aware of this. The public like what we give them and our ratings with TfL are high and we are regularly voted the best taxi service in the world. The Knowledge is highly respected and cabbies are well thought of when it comes to knowing where we are going.

Then there are our charges, should we change them...?

**When I started taxi driving, there was some competition from minicabs but not much and the public have always complained about our fares even when Terminal 3 to SW5 cost £20 and EC2 to Snodland cost £45. One thing for certain is that whatever price we charge, PH will charge 25% less so we are the benchmark and it makes getting involved in a price war totally futile.**

Look in the windows of some PH companies in WC2 offering a trip to Heathrow for £32. How can we compete with that and in reality, who wants to compete with that! It doesn't mean that we should charge the earth, but I believe that all fare increases are justified because why should it cost me more to come to work and besides, most companies pass on increases to their customers and genuine reductions usually come about because suppliers sell products more cheaply in the first place.

So how can we pass on reductions via our fares? Looking at the recent cost index, some things - such as insurance - do go down, but balanced out overall there is always an increase. So in reality the answer is that we can't. But are we expensive?

**Well my local taxis are nearly as expensive as ourselves mile on mile and Luton Taxis are even more expensive, considering that neither do a 3 year knowledge. I guess the question is how much firms are prepared to pay for their taxis and why do companies decide to jump ship when they can clearly afford the best?**

The coalition government came into power with a magic wand, but it quickly became apparent that their ideas would do little and the reality set in that they have little power to control the economy. So if our product is good and our fares are affordable and the service very good, should we not just sit back and wait for the economy to return to something that resembles normality?

**Richard Potter**  
**Call Sign Online**

*Let Call Sign know your views; are we too expensive or should we give up trying to compete with PH?*

## LTFUC Hon Treasurer's Report

**E**ven though the economy seems to be picking up, many charities are suffering. **The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children** is no exception. However, as a result of the prudent safeguards of the past few years, the Fund has maintained strong reserves to enable continued support for the many disadvantaged children of Greater London. General administration expenses add up to just over 0.5 % of generated income, allowing nearly every penny of income to be spent on improving the quality of life for those in need.

Over £4500 of grants were made during the year ending 31 October 2013, including supporting the children of taxi drivers who have been unable to work. The **Grosvenor House** children's party expenses were greater than the previous year with transport costs increasing due to the really atrocious weather, while the cost of the annual outing to **Southend** was virtually the same as the last year, although the one-off item of china mugs to celebrate our 85th anniversary did increase the total.

However, thanks to the generosity of its many benefactors, the Fund was able to recover much of these outlays and has been able to maintain its high profile within the London licensed taxi trade, giving hundreds of disadvantaged children many great memories of the year's events.

**Lilian Julier**  
**LTFUC Hon Treasurer**



THE HERTFORDSHIRE

### Winter Pro Am Series

The Hertfordshire Golf & Country Club is pleased to announce dates for the 2013/14 Winter Pro Am Golf events

**2014**

Friday 28th February 2014

Friday 28th March 2014

The format of each event will be in teams of three amateurs with a Professional played as a team with the best two Stableford scores to count and an individual Professional competition

*Each event will follow the below itinerary:*

09.30 Coffee & bacon roll on arrival  
10.30 Shot gun start  
15.00 Two course meal

Team prizes and Individual cash prizes for Professionals

For team of 3 Amateurs visitors £135  
Members & **Dial-a-Cab drivers** £105.00  
(£25 for professional)

Maximum handicap: (3/4 handicap) of Gentlemen 24, Ladies 30.

You may enter an amateur team only (we will allocate a Professional for you) or Professionals can bring their own team

**Please call Elaine on 01992 466666 ex 249 for an entry form.**  
**To confirm entry, full payment will be required with your entry form**





I spent quite a lot of time in 2013 researching material for two Tours in 2014 – both to *commemorate* the 100th anniversary of the start of WW1. One will be a Walking Tour and the other a Taxi Tour.

*Commemorate* is the correct word because I did hear one radio station recently label the event as a *celebration* – which I consider to be a disgusting turn of phrase in the context of such a brutal conflict. Is it just lazy journalism? The same medium wave channel in their same hourly news broadcast mentioned a report from **St Thomas's Hospital** that they said was based in Westminster!

I find it quite insulting that a radio station based in west London, employing researchers from the outback, can tell me that Lambeth is no longer the home of one of the capital's biggest hospitals – just because you can see Big Ben from its windows! But then I suppose those researchers couldn't give a 4 XXXX either! I tend to flick through radio stations when in the saddle, but I won't bother with that one anymore! Besides, they spent 24 hours regurgitating the same old drivel about 4 football teams!

But I digress – back to the War theme. I was grateful for all the emails I received last year from *Call Sign* readers pointing out various observations and anecdotes relating to both World Wars. But it was a weekend trip down to **Whitstable** that reminded me of some of my

## WW1, WHITSTABLE AND RADIO CAROLINE!

*Bob Woodford and his WW1 commemoration thoughts..*

own research, which led me to recall that it was at **Seasalter** (next door along the coast) where occurred the last skirmish involving a foreign invading force to take place on mainland British soil.

**The not-so-well-known 'Battle of Graveney Marsh' took place on the night of 27th September 1940 when the crew of a shot-down Nazi Junker fought a squadron of soldiers from the London Irish Rifles.**

Our boys arrived at the crash landing site from their billet at the **Sportsman Inn** to find the four crew members unexpectedly ready to fight and armed with machine guns! But after a heavy exchange of fire and with one of the enemy seriously injured, the Germans surrendered and were taken prisoner.

Three years ago, the **London Irish Rifles Regimental Association** marked its 70th anniversary by unveiling a commemorative (not celebratory!) plaque at the 'Sportsman'.

The pub – unlike many others these days it seems – survives, which is fitting because there's evidence of a pub on this site since 1642, around the time of the **English Civil War**.

Much of the Whitstable that I knew from summer holidays as a kid though is long gone. The **Oxford Cinema** where mum forced us to endure *The Sound of Music* is now a

**Wetherspoon Pub** (and named after one time celebrity resident **Sir Peter Cushing**), while the old café that was once called **The Lantern** is no more and its famous sign 'There is always a bite when the lantern is alight' has now been replaced by the obligatory Tandoori announcement. The Lantern also claimed publicity between 1964 and 1967 when it became a drinking base for the disc jockeys of the radio pirate ship **Radio Caroline** who broadcast pop music from their ship, the **MV Mi Amigo** several miles off the coast of **Frinton on Sea**. Among the DJs were **Tony Blackburn**, **Roger 'Twiggy' Day**, **Simon Dee**, **Spangles Muldoon**, **Johnnie Walker**, **Robbie Dale** and **Dave Lee Travis**. From Frinton to Whitstable by car was over 100 miles, but from the ship it was just a short trip in a tender.

You can of course enjoy a curry there if you must, but I would always recommend **The Crab and Winkle** down by the harbour if you fancy a weekend in the fishing and harbour town of Whitstable.

More about the commemoration tours in later issues of *Call Sign*...

**Bob Woodford**  
**Call Sign Online**



*London's newest, best lapdancing Club has just opened!*

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

# Brethren of the Whip



**The  
younger  
they  
come...**

1832 had not been a very good year for 63 year old Lady Barham. Her husband had died five weeks previously and still dressed in mourning black, she was now busy sorting out his financial affairs. As she crossed Margaret Street walking towards Cavendish Square, a cab, said to be "driven at the gallop," came out of (John) Princes Street, struck her and she fell under a wheel.

Several witnesses rushed to Lady Barham's aid and helped her into the house of a banker. A local fishmonger ran after the cab, which had failed to stop. He caught the attention of the driver who refused to return to the scene and drove off.

Lady Barham was later placed in a coach and taken to her residence at 26 Queen Anne Street. She was sitting in a chair when her physician arrived, but he sent her straight to bed and diagnosed a broken wrist, several broken ribs and possibly internal bleeding.

Despite failing to get the cab to stop, the fishmonger did make a note of the plate number (897). He gave this to the (only recently formed) police along with his statement, for which he was paid 5 shillings (25p). He later got a friend to write a letter of complaint to the police and he was rewarded with a further 20 shillings for doing his public duty.

Furnished with the cab number, PC Hooker, dressed in plain clothes, hung round a cab yard in Kepple Mews North (later rebuilt as Malet Street). He did not have to wait long as cab 897 pulled into the yard. He walked in and began questioning the driver who readily admitted that he was the driver responsible and that he had known of the accident but was too afraid to return to the scene. Perhaps his apprehension could be understood when it was confirmed that the driver, Henry Bartholomew, son of the proprietor, was just 15 years old! Young Henry was taken into police custody.

Matters took a turn for the worse when, after three days, Lady Barham died from her injuries. The subsequent inquest found Henry Bartholomew guilty of manslaughter, whilst expressing their disgust that the father should allow his young son to drive a cab on the streets of London. To show their dismay, the inquest jury levied a *deodand* of £50 against Henry's father. This ancient right survived till the 1860s and allowed the victim's family to receive money forfeited from the sale of the

weapon used to kill the victim, whether it be a knife, sword, gun, or as in this case a hackney cabriolet and the horse! So Bartholomew senior was deprived of one of his cabs (but kept the licence owning two plates) and young Bartholomew was deprived of his liberty. Bail was refused and he was incarcerated in Newgate Gaol.

A few weeks later, a tearful Henry Bartholomew appeared in the dock at the Old Bailey. Many testified to his safe driving skills and others stated that it was impossible for that particular horse to ride at a gallop (after all, the fishmonger had chased and caught up with it). Henry was found not guilty of manslaughter by the jury who felt that his father had acted irresponsibly in sending out a cab driven by one so young. They recommended that both licences held by Bartholomew should be revoked. After some heavy petitioning by Lady Barham's relatives, this eventually occurred, though as Trevor May in his *Gondolas and Growlers* suggests, it may have been the only instance of this ever happening.

The case did not stop other proprietors

sending out youngsters. Whilst Henry was imprisoned in Newgate awaiting trial, Thomas Horne, described as "a mere lad," was found guilty of furious driving. As was the norm before drivers were licensed and therefore responsible for their actions, his master was fined 40shillings (£2).

But the record for the youngest cab driver must surely go to 12 year old John Robert Amos, who driving his father's cab with his permission, crashed into a Phaeton. Amos senior was fined £2 with £5 costs. Unable to pay, he was sent to prison for one month with hard labour.

Despite the problems facing youngsters driving a hackney coach or cab and the physical strength needed to control a horse, the *Hackney Carriage Act 1838* set the minimum age for a driver's licence at just 16 years old. Henry Bartholomew had been less than one year from escaping opprobrium because of his age.

Sean Farrell  
Call Sign Online

## KEEP FIT

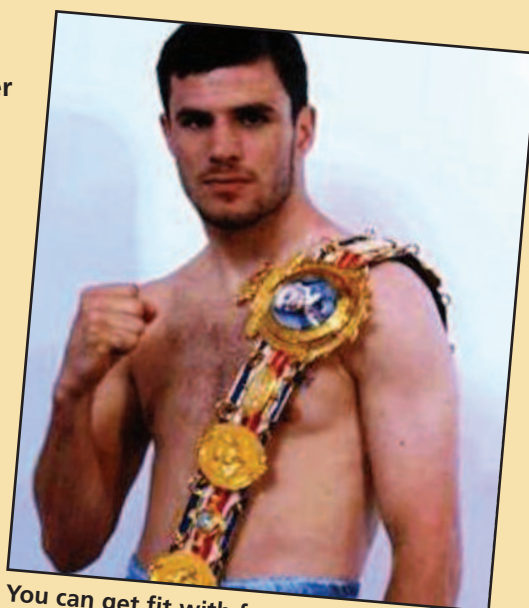
With former British boxing Champion Matt Marsh...

Did you enjoy the holiday period and all that delicious food that went with it? After all, you told yourself that once they were over you would knuckle down to regain the fitness that may have mysteriously escaped after that third portion of Xmas pud!

Well you now have that opportunity as Dial-a-Cab drivers / staff members can get fit for 2014 with former super bantamweight British boxing champion and six times national champion, Matt Marsh.

Matt's gym is in Welling and he offers training based around pad work and circuits. There are one-to-one sessions or you can train in twos or threes.

You can call Matt on 07850 683 440 for advice and information on times etc. Mention Dial-a-Cab and you will get a special deal...



You can get fit with former Super Bantamweight Champion of the World Matt Marsh

# Feeling a bit chafed!

"It was rather baffling at first, really weird," Scott Charlton (A75) explained to *Call Sign*, referring to the red and yellow engine warning lights that beamed brightly from the instrument panel of his three and a half year old TX4.

"I wondered what was happening and then almost immediately after the two warning lights came on, I suddenly lost engine power too, which made me realise things were pretty serious. So I staggered carefully into my regular dealership close to where I live to get it sorted rather smartish, my heart still pumping rather wildly at what the fault might be – not to mention the likely cost of repair!"

"I know now it all had something to do with the **Engine Control Unit (ECU)** and I'm very grateful to **Stanway Engineering** in Chingford for getting me back on the road fairly quickly and saving me a mega amount of money into the bargain! I had \$, £ and € signs flashing in front of my eyes as I crept up to the garage!"

Scott's tone lifted noticeably remembering how he felt both before and then afterwards! But to clarify what had gone wrong with Scott's cab and also for the benefit of *Call Sign* readers who may come across the same problem, we made contact with a spokesman at Stanway Engineering who went to great lengths to explain what had happened and how the fault was resolved.

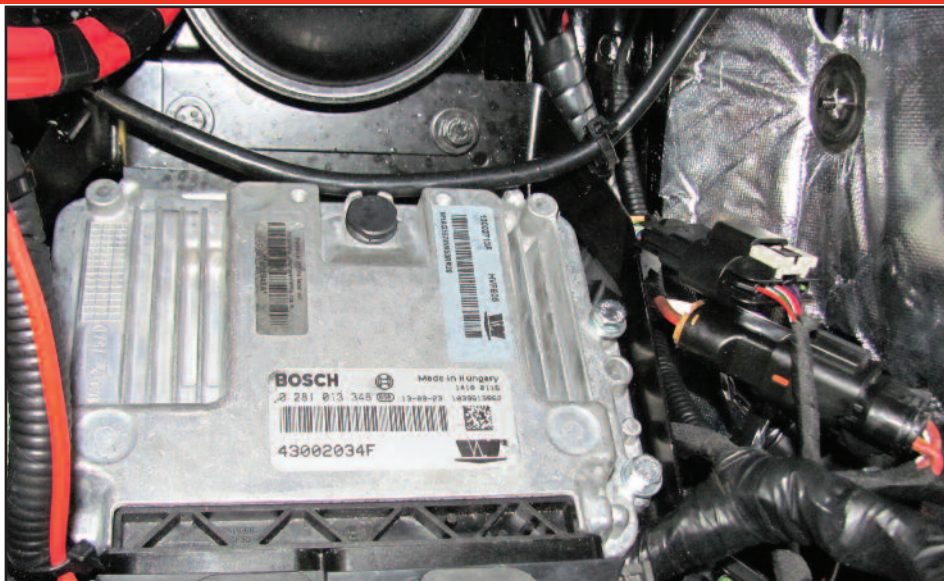
The spokesperson began by explaining that it had been an electrical wiring fault.

"The ECU is the 'brains' of the cab to a large degree, controlling many aspects of operation within the taxi, particularly engine management. There are some 150 wires that connect the ECU to other components and engine management/performance is one of them. So when there is a failure within the system, the ECU automatically goes into 'limp' mode to prevent further damage to the engine, while still allowing the cab to be driven to a maximum of 1500 revs (about 25/30 MPH) in order to get you home – or as in Scott's case, right here!"

"We found that the wiring from the ECU had been chafing against part of the metal bodywork of the cab causing a short circuit, and that was the root cause of Scott's woes. It's a reasonably common fault. We resolved the issue by insulating the chafed sections of wiring and re-routing the main cabling away from the bodywork to prevent a re-occurrence.

"Scott was lucky because we managed to save the ECU itself, which is a very expensive item to replace (£920 + VAT). We actually keep a spare unit here in order to keep taxis on the road while we order a new replacement part, which can take a little time but at least that allows the driver to continue working.

"If I can just give a word of warning to *Call Sign* readers," the spokesperson ended by saying, "do not get the ECU wet when cleaning



the engine bay, such as prior to an overhaul. Cover the unit with waterproof material and be careful where you aim that hosepipe!"

*The photo shows the taped-up unit. Most*

*of the wiring on the right goes via the unit. Or thanks to Stanway Engineering. They can be contacted on 0208 559 4988...*

© Call Sign Magazine MMXIV

## LTBAWD take vets flying!

In September 2013, **The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled** invited around twenty members of the armed forces who are currently at **Headley Court Rehabilitation Centre** to a day of Micro light flying at **Damyns Hall Aerodrome** near Upminster, Essex. It had been organised by committee member **Gary Belsey**.

The members of the forces arrived and after registration and instructions as to what to do in the plane, they were eager to participate in the flying. It was great to see them enjoying themselves and there was a continuous queue all morning! Then after lunch it was back into the planes - flights taking them over parts of Essex and across the Thames into Kent and over the Dartford crossing.

All too soon it was time for the guys and girls to leave and make their way back to Headley Court, all saying what a very enjoyable day it had been and how they would love to do it again.

**The Chairman and committee of the LTBAWD would like to thank all the staff at Damyns Hall for all their work on the day.**

*Derek Leone, Taxicharity.org*



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*Every issue of Call Sign takes a look back at ODRTS history through the pages of the magazines of the time with a flashback*

# DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

*This issue harks back to two 1999 issues of Call Sign. The question is whether Addison Lee would have been as they are now had we ever gone ahead...*

**From Call Sign, August 1999  
FROM THE CHAIRMAN**



## **Ground Transportation**

**Dial-a-Cab have had some enquiries from very large corporate clients for us to manage their ground transportation. That means anything that moves will be ordered by Dial-a-Cab - that includes taxis, cars, couriers and even coaches. The BoM will have a simple choice; either we organise their ground transport or someone else will!**

If the contract were to go to another organisation, we would have to hope that they ordered their taxis from Dial-a-Cab and not from Com Cab or Radio Taxis, or if it were someone from the unlicensed trade, that they did not cream off some of the more lucrative work for themselves. That is the simple choice that we have to make.

I believe that we have no alternative but to offer the client what they require in order that we maintain the work levels that we have at the moment. There is no-one in the market place that has the know-how or the technical capabilities or the ability to supply the corporate account client with as much technical information as Dial-a-Cab and make no mistake, given the opportunity I will offer the account client this new service in order to maintain or even improve upon your existing workload.

I believe that we will all have to get used to the fact that DaC will be sub-contracting work to other organisations.

**From Call Sign, September 1999**

## **TALKING TO BRIAN RICE**

*Dial-a-Cab editor Alan Fisher has questioned the Chairman on his statement from last month...*

You say that DaC have had enquiries from very large corporate clients re organising their ground transport departments. Did they approach us or did we approach them after hearing about it through the grapevine?

**Brian Rice:** We were actually approached. One particular corporate that approached us spends in excess of £5 million a year on ground transport (ie not including flying) and this is now very big business. Organising it could provide them with a very large headache indeed. Just as we wouldn't tell these clients how to buy or sell Euro bonds or Junk bonds, they realise that we at Dial-a-Cab are now the experts in the field of transportation. That is why they approached us to tender for the business of organising their complete ground transportation system.

**Call Sign:** Is this purely a business venture in the sense that we would be earning money out of it?

**Brian Rice:** We would certainly be earning money in management fees, but I also believe that it is our duty to give as much work as possible to our members and I have a very simple choice: I either tender for this business in order to retain £2 million of taxi business or I can tell them that we are not interested because my members do not want me to sub-contract work out to other forms of transport - which could include minicabs. I believe that the majority of DaC members would want me to tender for this contract in order to retain this £2 million of taxi business for them.

**Call Sign:** You said in the article that we were probably the only company who could actually organise the transportation system now. Is it possible that another licensed taxi company could actually give themselves a quick brush-up and then put in their own tender?

**Brian Rice:** The answer is yes! Indeed, there are possibly several upmarket private hire companies who could also make an effort. They certainly couldn't do it anywhere near as well as us, but I'm sure that they wouldn't admit to that. We have the very latest in accounting systems that others cannot match and I believe that we could do an excellent job for these corporate accounts if asked to...

**Call Sign:** Thank you...



## Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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

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The London Taxi Company has revealed its vision of the future London Taxi; a plug-in range extended electric Black Cab, destined to hit the streets of London in 2018.

The company, part of global automotive group Geely Automobile Holdings, is confident it has the technology, experience and investment to manufacture and retail a globally-dominant and iconic Black Cab, which meets Mayor Boris Johnson's air quality ambitions for London. LTC Vice-President of UK Operations, Peter Johansen said:

*"Given Geely's green credentials and their commitment to invest £200m in green taxi technology over the next 5 years, coupled with our own extensive experience and enviable heritage, we feel comfortable that we will provide London with an environmentally-sound Black Cab, which can meet the future air quality demands of our capital city whilst also delivering a vehicle that is recognised by the general public as a taxi."*

*"Geely's investment has allowed us to do what we do best; create purpose-built vehicles. It's not a van conversion; it's designed from the ground up to be a London Taxi and it will be robust and durable in order to survive the demanding taxi duty cycle. It responds to Mayor Boris Johnson's vision for improving London's air quality and the future global environmental challenges. It also delivers against the needs and expectation of the taxi trade and is an evolution of*

## The Future Zero-Emissions Capable London Taxi



The cab will be able to charge its battery at street charging points

*the iconic, instantly recognisable London Taxi that is loved, admired and respected the world over.*

*"Geely's investment means that we have the funds and the capabilities required to further improve the eco-credentials of our existing vehicle. It also means that we will be able to fulfil our aspiration to relocate from our Coventry factory to another UK production facility, invest in state-of-the-art tooling and further bolster the domestic manufacturing industry and economy through recruitment and global export opportunities."*

Many details of the exciting new icon are being kept firmly under wraps, but the fol-

lowing specification information for the future London Taxi has been released by LTC:

It will be a plug-in range extended electric zero-emissions capable London Taxi that will be purpose-built to be a taxi and not a car/van conversion. It will also have a new lightweight body structure with exceptional fuel economy.

There will be a lower overall cost of ownership with outstanding driver comfort and ergonomics. It will seat six passengers in the rear, and have advanced technological driver and passenger features including an evolution of the iconic London Taxi shape.

The London Taxi manufacturer, based in Coventry, already retails its Euro 5-compliant TX4 across the UK. This vehicle represented a major milestone for the UK firm, as engineers have reduced harmful Diesel Particulates emitted from the TX4 tailpipe to a negligible 0.0005g/km and

NOx to just 0.28g/km, representing a reduction of 99% and 80% respectively versus the iconic Fairway London Taxi.

The next version of the TX4 is being developed in tandem with the company's engine supplier

VM Motori. It will be Euro 6-compliant, deliver further emissions reductions and will be available from 2015.

## JON WINTERBURN LOOKS AT...

This year, I'm going to research a different subject each month and tell you about the best apps you can download for your iOS and/or Android device. Hopefully there'll be something for everyone! Every app I mention I will have tried out myself. However, be sure to read the reviews and ensure your device will run any app before purchasing. This month...

### My Top 5 Astronomy Apps

For all the astronomy buffs amongst you, here is my list of the top apps currently available.

**Star Walk HD** is the best stargazing app I've used. This is what augmented reality was designed for; the app follows your every movement in real-time. As you explore, you find extensive information about 200,000 celestial bodies. In addition, there is a calendar of celestial events and **TelRad**, which will help you find the exact position of an object when stargazing with your telescope. Star Walk HD is a must-have app for any astrogeek; we use it all time in our home.

**Available on iOS and Android for £1.99**

**Solar Walk 3D** is made by the same developers who created Star Walk HD. This 3D Solar System model lets you navigate through space and time, see all the planets in close-up, learn their trajectories, inner structures, history of their exploration, points of interest and more. It even has detailed 3D models of the most interesting man-made satellites. You can even use 3D mode to get a more realistic experience and zoom out to view and spin the entire Galaxy.

**Available on iOS for 69p**

**Emerald Observatory** displays a wealth of astronomical information all on one screen and in a unique but understandable format. Although some of the statistics will be overwhelming for the amateur astronomer, this is one gorgeous app which will impress your friends. Features include the rise and set times of the planets, local sunrise and sunset times as well as the times of civil, nautical and astronomical twilight.

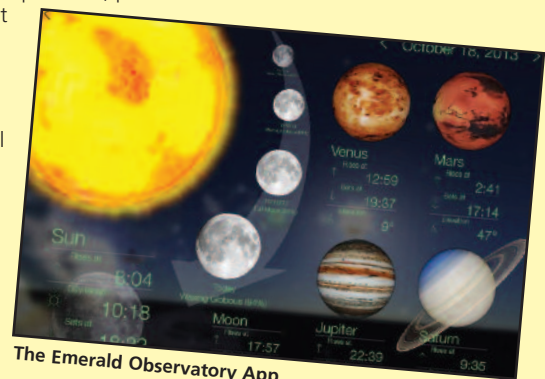
**Available on iOS for 69p**

**Mobile Observatory** is one of the most complete astronomy apps on the Android market and the perfect tool for anybody interested in the sky's wonders - from the occasional sky gazer to the passionate amateur astronomer. The app includes a live, zoom-able sky map telling you what celestial body you are looking at. Plus there's lots of detailed extra information on stars, planets, deep sky objects, meteor showers, comets, asteroids, lunar and solar eclipses as well as detailed ephemeris of all included sky objects. Also included is an interactive top-down view of the Solar System.

**Available on Android for £3.99**

**The NASA App** showcases a huge collection of the latest NASA content. There is a ton of information available, including images, videos on-demand, NASA Television, mission information, launch information and countdown clocks, ISS sighting opportunities and satellite tracking. Best of all, it's completely free! The NASA app is an absolute must-have for astronomers of all ages.

**Available on iOS and Android for FREE**



The Emerald Observatory App

Jon Winterburn  
DaC Network Administrator





**So it was a few weeks ago and I'd had some problems with my Metrocab. Consequently I had to leave the cab at a London garage for repairs.**

A few days later and the cab had been repaired so I had to travel down from Westcliff to London by train to Fenchurch Street. Admittedly, I hadn't travelled on a train for some time, but what surprised me was the number of passengers using their mobiles and the total lack of privacy that other passengers had to endure.

The supposedly private conversations these individuals were having for all to hear were unreal and just trying to relax by reading the paper was nigh on impossible. As a rough estimate, I reckon that 35percent of passengers were on the phone - at least in my carriage. Many of them were shouting down the phone and using animated expressive gestures while talking. It's lucky that no one had their eyes poked out!

My respect for **Brian Rice** is even higher now with the realisation that he has to put up with this for five mornings each week travelling

*Mike Son looks at people's privacy and wonders who actually takes their privacy seriously...*

# Phone Hacking

in to Dial-a-Cab House from Hampshire!

*Just a few examples of the conversations available for all on the 8.32 from Westcliff to bear...*

**"Hello darling, I'm on the train so don't forget to iron my shirt; see you tonight."**

Then there was this masterpiece - possibly taken from the latest issue of *True Life Romance*:

**"Yeah the party went ok, but I wouldn't sleep with him on a first date!"**

And what about:

**"Yes that's me; what do you mean my application for the mortgage has been declined."**

Or: **"Hello John, what's wrong? I told you it's got to be a million, you effing idiot. Don't do anything else; I'll be in the office in 20 minutes."**

Finally one that shows class in abundance - I don't think: **"Yes, I did. What a slag!"**

**There were so many other conversations that you just could not help but overhear, so privacy certainly doesn't seem to be much of an issue for most passengers traveling by train.**

You may ask why I've written this article, but it does have a bearing on what we do as taxi drivers. Most of us have hands-free mobile phones, some with earpiece's while others are

synchronised with satnavs etc. And although our first priority is to our customers, there is always the temptation to answer the phone.

So it really is important to remember how we can easily become engrossed within the conversation we're having with the other party and that the conversation can easily become animated and loud and sometimes with the odd bit of foul language thrown in without us even realising. You can easily forget that somebody is sitting in the back of the taxi and that they can't help but hear.

**Most of Dial-a-Cab's account clients, as well as those picked up as street hails, are not interested in our private conversations. Over the years, there have been a number of complaints against drivers for using the phone during an account ride. Your privacy is paramount - but so is everyone else's.**

We all know that there have been a dearth of phone hacking scandals that have put the perpetrators into a mire of disreputable actions. But I have a far better and safer way of getting information from other people's phones rather than doing anything that could be deemed illegal. All they had to do is was to go on the 8.32 from Westcliff...!

**Mike Son**  
**DaC Special Projects**

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

## IT'S A CABBYY'S LIFE!



### **Cabbies lifestyles?**

**So it's now post-Christmas/New Year and the resolutions are either in place or inactive with, I suspect, health being the number one on our guilty list. A sedentary lifestyle sat in a metal box, breathing in a giant pool of polluted air with pulse racing to the rhythm of clogged traffic is not necessarily conducive to a long life.**

I had a disturbing conversation pre-Christmas with a driver who was at that time suffering from **Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)**. He was taking anticoagulant medication to treat and prevent blood clots. What I've now learnt is that a journey of more than four continuous hours carries a risk of **pulmonary embolism** or a blood clot. Surprisingly perhaps, a higher proportion suffer from DVT in a car journey than on a plane- flight. Last January it was reported that a taxi driver died from DVT after doing a 230 mile fare. Drivers are vulnerable, especially in automatic vehicles, because the left leg doesn't move and clots can occur.

**There are number of ways to try to limit DVT:**

- \* Exercise your calf and foot muscles regularly.
- \* Every half hour or so bend and straighten your legs, feet and toes while driving.
- \* Press the balls of your feet down hard against the floor. This helps blood flow in your legs.
- \* Rotate your feet (caution applies to this while driving for obvious reasons).
- \* Drink lots of water to avoid dehydration and fatigue.
- \* Every two hours walk around (difficult with few rest ranks and no parking signs).

DVT is more common in the elderly, the very overweight and those with heart disease. **John Scurr**, a consultant vascular surgeon at the **Lister Hospital** in Chelsea advises taking an **aspirin** before a long journey because it thins the blood. Aspirin seems to be a custom made drug that is unrivalled in its advantages to maintain the health of taxi drivers, although it has to be balanced with the slight chance of internal bleeding. Aspirin reduces the risk of heart attacks or strokes. Three studies in *The Lancet* also show benefits in cancer prevention. I starting taking aspirin on a daily basis on my own volition at the age of forty-eight and when I eventually sought the opinion of my doctor, he said it was a good idea.

**All the stuff I've read says don't take before aged forty-five unless proscribed by your doctor. The directive from the NHS is that aspirin should not be taken unsupervised on a daily basis, even at low doses.**

By coincidence, I picked up **Professor Magdi Habib Yacoub**, the preminent Egyptian-born cardiothoracic surgeon who became the world's leading transplant surgeon. I asked him about aspirin and he told me that he had taken aspirin for as long as he could remember. When I asked why, he just replies longevity.

**As a disclaimer, I must add that you should consult your GP if you want to permanently take aspirin.**

**Stephen Berndes, Call Sign Online**

# Mailshot

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

## GPO charge

*Hi Alan*

While checking my December credits, I noticed a deduction of £13.20p as taken out of my payments for GPO/SATNAV. Now I know this payment has been taken out every year that I've been on DaC and was to cover for our radio frequencies. As such I fully understand that payment. Now with our new terminals we work *Mobile Data Networks* ie O2. So are we blindly paying out of habit or what?

Most of us on DaC have smartphones on one of the five major networks and to my knowledge not one of us pay any GPO/SATNAV fees to a networks - and they all have a Twatnav facility!

As a matter of interest, I've checked with a couple of drivers who use Taxi Apps and they don't pay fees to their networks for GPO/SATNAV. So can someone on the BoM please explain why?

**Pat Keefe (G01 Twatnav)**

**Brian Rice replies:** You are correct Pat; we have always charged for 'GPO Licence and Insurance' and again you are correct when you state it was charged annually and that charge should have gone away now we have moved to O2, which it has.

Unfortunately we are now committed to another licence fee and that is the fee for having Geographers mapping on your terminal, hence the charge of £13.20 (£11 plus VAT) for part payment of the licence until 1 Jan 2014 (as you had already paid £15, we added another £11).

The full cost of the licence is £130 for five years, hence we will charge £26 per annum to Members (as above), Members that have the old terminal will still pay £15, then a further £11 when they have the new terminal. I know you had mapping on your old terminal which you didn't pay for, that was simply because I purchased a 'lifetime' licence for the mapping in 2000 for a one off payment of £10 per terminal, which was absorbed by DaC. Geographers have now changed their policy and you now have to purchase the licence for a hugely more expensive fee (£130). If you download their App on your Smartphone, I understand there is a one off payment of £19.99 that applies to an individual user only. Unfortunately, DaC have to pay considerably more because we are deemed to be a business user and they (Geographers) will not budge on their stance. Anyway, I hope that clears up any confusion and I wish you a happy New Year.

## DaC for sale???

*Dear Alan*

I have received a letter informing me that

there are two parties interested in buying **Dial-a-Cab**. If such an important decision is to be taken by the membership, I hope it will not - or cannot - be made by a postal vote. Something as important as the sale of Dial-a-Cab should be made at an EGM with all members present, with arguments for and against heard and then a decision made. It would be a travesty if Dial-a-Cab were to be sold on a postal vote. Also there is the question of carpetbaggers only joining DAC because there is a few quid in it. I hope you or a Board member will allay my fears.

**Brian Marcantonio (R73)**

**Hi Brian,** the letter you refer to was just to inform drivers that two offers had been made for DaC. The Society had not been advertised as being up for sale and it is just a coincidence that two offers came close together. If enough drivers ticked the 'yes' box, then that just means the BoM will investigate the offers and pass on the information to drivers. It would then be up to the drivers but would involve a change of status. I know no more than that as the Chairman had to sign a confidentiality agreement - and apparently that meant he couldn't tell me even with my usual begging! However, it doesn't take much working out to see that both offers are valued at over £10,000 per driver and that both prospective buyers are connected to the taxi trade. If it's a yes, then there will probably be an EGM - possibly more than one ...Ed

## LPG conversions

*Dear Alan*

I was interested to read the articles in the *December* and *January Call Sign Online* about converting older cabs to LPG. Younger drivers might not know it, but this is nothing new. I drove a gas cab some 40 years ago when I worked for **Cooks Garage** in Goldhawk Road - they had a fleet of them. The tank was in the boot, which meant that the spare wheel was up front in the luggage compartment and taking up vital room. If you had a lot of luggage, you frequently had to put cases in the back with passengers. The other problem was that they were a real cow to start in cold weather and very often you could smell the gas in the back, which many passengers remarked on. Overall they were not that popular with drivers as they were all manual gearboxes, but I'm sure that with new technology, the latest conversions will be much better.

**Terry Farmer (Ex-T55J)**

Thanks Terry, I hope you are still enjoying your retirement. I've had a number of drivers with cabs approaching 15 years old asking for details so they are once again in this issue (page 31) ...Ed

## Spurs and Samuel

*Hello Al*

Just read in the *January Call Sign* that your

grandson Samuel is a fellow Spur. I've got last year's programme versus Manchester City here collecting dust. It's signed by **Pat Jennings** - not the best signature but authentic. If you want it, tell me where to send it.

**Barry Spear (Y16)**

Thanks for the offer Barry but Samuel wasn't born till many years after Pat retired! I actually have a signed photo at home of Pat Jennings and his son (also Pat) taken in the Spurs corporate lounge some years ago. However, if you have any signed pics of Miley Cyrus twerking, I'll happily pass them over to Samuel - after I've inspected them for suitability!...Ed

## Slipping gearboxes and bus lanes!

*Hiya Al*

Could you put this in *Call Sign* for any drivers that have trouble with their gearboxes. When you go to the garage and tell them your gears are slipping, you are probably looking at £1000. My Y reg gears began slipping and my first thought was what a lousy time for it to happen and the garage is gonna do me for a grand! But I went on the internet and onto *Ebay* and found a product called **Lucas transmission Stop Slip**. It cost £15 delivered and I had my fluid replaced with this treacle - but it works and no more slipping! It won't work if the belts are burnt out, but it has saved me a grand. I don't know how long it lasts, but it's got to be worth 15 quid.

Something else I had on my mind; you know the Euro court case re bus lanes and **Addison Lee**, why has nobody mentioned that if they win it won't just be AL that will be able to use them but every other mini-cab company. Then Boris will get the hump because the buses can't move. So what will he do - he will stop everyone from using the lane, then AL will get their way and be equal with us. I don't think he cares which way it goes so long as we are all equal. We did around 3 years of the KoL; was it done for nothing? We must have some advantages otherwise what's the point? Happy new year to all...

**Keith Hancock (R47)**

According to the blurb: "**Lucas Transmission Fix stops slip, hesitation, rough shifting in worn transmissions and completely eliminates most seal leaks and lowers operating temperatures in hard-working units. Ideal for motor homes and commercial vehicles, Lucas Transmission Fix is excellent for preventative maintenance and extends fluid life by up to four times. It also**





# Mailshot

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*extends needed protection to planetary gears."*

However, I have to say that although most online reviews of this product are positive, any decision to use it must be your own. But if any other DaC drivers have used it, let Call Sign know whether it worked.

With regard to Addison Lee and the bus lanes, yes, many have thought about it and believe that AL Chairman John Griffin would be just as happy if we too are banned, just so that we have no advantage ...Ed

## Meter Maids in Surfers Paradise

Hi Alan

Regarding the meter maids that **Bob Heath** met up with in Australia's Surfers Paradise (*December Call Sign Online*), they began back when the Gold Coast had the parking meters installed. The local tradespeople thought that if visitors kept getting fined then they would stop coming back to the Coast. So they employed the girls in bikinis to walk around checking the meters and topping them up. The council didn't mind in those days as they still got the revenue, but as more and more people got cars and came to the Coast, it started to get out of hand so today's Maids are to a degree a tourist attraction.

I must say that in the same issue, **Tom Whitbread's** article made me chuckle, sounding very much like my own time in hospital - especially when it came to being woken up for the obs and the blood vampires coming round! I wish him a speedy recovery.

Re the £50 pound note on **Pat Keefe (G01)**, several years ago I did a film job for the Bank of England - a video about how to spot a dodgy note. I had two different passengers, each proffered a note for the fare; with the first one - a tenner - I just had to look for the strip, the watermark and then the feel and colour. The second was a twenty and I had to do the same as before, but this time I was unsure so had to compare it to another twenty. The video went out to companies as a training video for their staff.

*A Happy New Year to all my old pals at Dial-a-Cab...*

**Howard Sales (Ex-A11)**  
Brisbane, Australia

Hi Howard, it's nice to hear from you. For those that don't remember him, Howard was one of DaC's driver-trainers at the time we first went over to data dispatch in 1988. He later emigrated to Australia ...Ed

## Sales department

I was very impressed with Keith Cain's Sales article in the *January Call Sign*. It's about time we had a Sales exec who was a go-getter rather than one who sits on their backside!

With deference to US banknote providers; in Keith we trust...

**Stephen Field (F99)**

Thanks for that Stephen. I'm sure Keith will appreciate your sentiments and I also feel sure that everything he wrote in his Sales Report - having recently taken over the position - he means ...Ed

## Bye Bill...

Dear Alan

It is with sadness that my much shorter working hours no longer make it worthwhile being on the radio and after 37 years on Dial-a-Cab, the world's greatest radio circuit, I have decided to strip out. As a parting shot, I'd just like to say that we are in tough trading times and that any DaC members on Hailo should make up their minds as to who they want to support, but I would urge them to concentrate all their efforts on DaC. I have wonderful memories of my years on the radio and some terrific memories of our drivers. Also Alan, my thanks to you for all the pleasure I have had reading *Call Sign* over the years. Finally, to you all and especially to whoever the new E65 is, be lucky...

**Bill Russell (Ex-E65)**

Sorry to hear you're going Bill. Unfortunately we all get older and whilst our job allows us to do the odd few days each week, it's nice to be able to cut down and enjoy life more and that's what I suspect will be happening to you. If that means enjoying your QPR season ticket even more, then you'll have to put up with that! At least it will mean that you always have **Brian Rice** on your side! It has been a pleasure knowing you Bill ...Ed

## Mike Son rescue

Hi Alan

Lots of good stuff in the *January Online* issue as usual, including an interesting history about the abortive parking system, the story on electric taxis and a nice one about **Mike Son** rescuing the woman. His rubber dinghy rescue reminded me of a story that a friend of mine, a Winnipeg ambulance driver, experienced.

One winter, many years ago, he and his partner were called to an accident on a bridge over the **Red River** but when they got there they were horrified to see a big section of railing missing - a truck had gone over the side. Before they had even stopped, someone pulled open the back doors from the outside and pushed a sodden, babbling truck driver into the ambulance. The driver kept calling out that he looked up and saw the bottom of the ice! It really was a miracle that he survived the impact because it was about 50 feet from the bridge deck to the river below. The truck had crashed through the thick ice and sank. Somehow the driver escaped from the submerged truck and was able to get onto a floe of shattered ice, but there he got stuck - he couldn't swim

to shore and probably would have succumbed to hypothermia before a rescue crew got to him.

Amazingly, the next car that came along must have been the only one in Winnipeg with a rubber dinghy in the trunk! The family had used it at the beach the previous summer and five or six months later the owner still hadn't got around to putting it away, despite his wife's complaints. He quickly inflated the dinghy, fetched the truck driver from the ice floe, put him in his car and turned up the heater! Perhaps you guys at **Dial-a-Cab** should carry dinghies - after all, you never know! Ask Mike Son...

**Norman Beattie**

**Brandon, Manitoba, Canada**

Thanks Norman, but I'm not sure about that because **London Mayor Boris Johnson** could well say that as the dinghies don't have any emissions, we should go out in them instead of taxis! ...Ed

## Buying taxis with DaC

Dear Sir

Regarding **Brian Rice's** comment about lost drivers (*January Call Sign*), we don't seem to offer anything to drivers anymore - not even a diary at Christmas. Our thirty-year drivers are now paying half subs. If drivers keep leaving, how long will it be before they have to pay full subscriptions?

In the February 2012 *Call Sign*, there was an article about me being stopped by police because one of my lights wasn't working and I took the opportunity of saying how expensive it was to buy a new taxi and how that the cost put us at a disadvantage compared to the cost of a new private hire vehicle.

So I wonder if it would be possible for **Dial-a-Cab** to loan drivers (who have been with the Society for a qualifying period of around two years) the finance to purchase a new taxi at a low rate, as a way of attracting and keeping new drivers. If the drivers were to leave, then the interest rate would revert to match that of the **London Taxi Company**. This would make DaC the leader in this field of which the other companies couldn't match.

**Paul Hammett (V42)**

**Company Secretary Howard Pears** responds: Dear Paul, what we do offer to drivers is the lowest level of subscriptions and the best value for money of any of our competitors. The Board do acknowledge that a reduction in members does impact on the Society's overall performance and whilst a great deal of effort is made in cost control to mitigate the loss of income, there could be a situation where subscription levels have to be reviewed.





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**Regarding your suggestion to provide low rate finance for new taxi purchases, the objects of the Society do not include the operation of this type of financial entity and consequently it would require the membership to vote on the necessary rule changes. Notwithstanding the arduous procedures and legal costs to achieve approval for the changes, the formation of a fully compliant, FCA registered Credit Union would be required, together with a structure of controls to safeguard the member's interests.**

**I am all for members saving money and the Society receiving additional interest income, but the processes required to achieve these aims are not practical or sustainable as the costs and risks involved would far outweigh the benefits.**

## JPM et al

Dear Alan

Just when things (workwise) have started to pick up, we lose a major account in JPM. If no run-ins would have secured us keeping the account I'm sure more than a few drivers would have accepted that. As up to 50% of my account work is JPM, I too would also have been tempted to compromise, on both run-ins and gratuities - more so if we were back at the beginning of the recession. But now is the wrong time and I agree with the BoM's stance of maintaining run-ins as part of the negotiations regarding Company accounts. I like many Green Badge (GB) drivers must have found it hard to believe that to win an account, ComCab would set such a disturbing precedent by giving up run-ins. How difficult will future negotiations for accounts now be, not just for us, but, for all radio circuits? Then I read that said company is recruiting more Yellow Badge (YB) drivers to add to their membership. So does that mean a YB who only has a licence to work in, say, Orpington and no knowledge of London, can be on ComCab and put himself in the GPS sector of E14 or any GB sector and be offered a job? If this is the case, then a YB would have access to the whole of our GB sector, 24 hours a day. Like Addison Lee, they could just hang around Marsh Wall and the side streets and wait for a job. Few passengers are aware of the difference between YB and GB drivers, so JPM will be getting a second rate service - no better than minicabs. Are JPM aware that some of the drivers will have little or no knowledge of London? Their staff may wonder why their driver of a 'Black Cab' gets stuck in traffic and has to resort to his SatNav if there is a sudden change of destination. Stories like "my Black Cab driver got lost" will only become more common as our reputation goes further down the pan! Again, if this is the case then why would anyone bother doing the KoL for 3 odd years when you can get a YB for any sector and still work the whole of GB London - albeit via a radio

circuit. I, like many, thought that without the run-in, GB drivers on ComCab would not be able to give JPM such a good service as we've given in the past. But with an influx of YB drivers, then the jury is out!

It makes me wonder what the future holds for a circuit like ours who are totally GB. Unlike the other circuits, we do still have some say. My own opinion is the future is somewhat rocky for us, especially regarding account work. I pay subs mainly for account work (which may well start to diminish even more) and a little bit of radio cash work (which costs me £1.50 and which many customers assume is a £2 tip) and for the credit card facility. If I do a credit card job via the street, I make DaC (I am guessing) at least 7% of my fare. In my experience, passengers now prefer to pay by card and don't mind the extra 10%. To them it's the same as a tip (which they then don't feel compelled to pay as with cash). Except, of course, in reality the driver doesn't get it.

I also see how DaC would like to encourage more coverage of their credit card Apps. They get at least 7% with very little administration. I know credit companies are prompt at paying out and they are the ones to invoice the customers. DaC also hold back 10% from drivers' street card fares to add to a £1000 roller bond. So paying the driver before the credit card company pays DaC should not be an argument. To my mind, a part of our future is the easiest and quickest method of payment, be it credit card, fingerprint scan or whatever the innovators come up with. What I am sure of is that in 5 / 10 or so years, few passengers will want to pay with cash. So I am wondering whether DaC could win some accounts by offering a one credit card type account to the companies. Administration costs could be cut for DaC (although it could result in some job losses) and as with Apps, we as drivers would lose gratuities but keep the run-ins. Credit card providers are starting to offer taxi drivers more incentives to use their machines and as card usage increases, the more incentives they will offer.

If our circuit was to move more to credit card offers of jobs, it would then need drivers who were willing to cover such jobs. I believe a driver was expelled from DaC for using his 5% charge machine while charging our normal 10%. So the message I get is that we drivers need incentives; run-ins may not be sufficient. If DaC were to maybe give a percentage of the credit card charge for every job via the circuit and a higher percentage for any street created jobs with that and the nearest cab gets job, I believe that would go a long way to encourage drivers to give better coverage. Also, unless we are finally going GPS (nearest cab gets job), I feel credit card jobs should be unmasked and the £2 surcharge on cash work scrapped.

Lastly, DaC is blaming many of the trade's present problems - some maybe legitimately - on Hailo. What Hailo did was to find a way of giving work to drivers when there was very little work being offered by the radio circuits.



What surprises me, back in 2008 we and the other major radio circuits did nothing of any significance to try and get we drivers work, we were never consulted on what concessions we would or would not make at a time when any job would have been better than no job. Now six or so years later when things seem to be getting better, we are being asked what concessions we would make by a new Board Member in Garry White. Hailo and PH have done well through the recession and if things improve more, I'm sure PH will continue to prosper. As for Hailo, I agree with Brian that unless they change, their service will suffer and they will fall by the wayside. What I ask the Board is this: What can we learn from Hailo and PH (if anything).

**Ian S Connelly (T21)**

**Brian Rice replies: An interesting letter, Ian, but then your letters normally are. Neither can I disagree with a lot that you say. Regarding YB's and covering trips, providing they accept a trip whilst in their sector they can pick-up in a GB area. No doubt CC will monitor this and make sure they are in their sector when accepting a trip. Hmmm....!**

It is interesting that you state you might have compromised on run-ins and gratuities in the past, but not now as hopefully the economy is improving so you would not be prepared to compromise. Just think, if both forms of inducement were withdrawn by Dial-a-Cab in the past, we would be losing accounts in the future due to bad service, once something is removed it is really difficult to reinstate.

Regarding Credit Cards, I agree with your sentiments and credit card transactions is our largest account in its own right. Some account customers already require us to bill their employee to their corporate credit card as they feel this makes the employee more responsible and aware of their usage and avoids abuse of the account. I also happen to believe that credit card transactions are the growth market, however, where we differ Ian is that I don't believe the trips should be unmasked as that will impinge upon service to the customer. At the moment you quite rightly state the customer pays 10%, out of which we pay the Merchant fee; there is not a lot left to pay our Members an incentive, unless of course we pay an incentive but raise subscriptions to compensate.

You ask what can we learn from Hailo and private hire? I think what they both have in common is they both work cheap at the drivers expense, not really a road I wish to go down. However, I have just

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seen Hailo's figures and until December 2012 they lost £7.6m and it is not even their money but money raised from Venture Capitalists (VC's), one of whom is Union Square and part of their philosophy, which has been taken from their Website is 'We invest in the disruption of the global economy caused by the increasing liquidity of information enabled by the internet'. I think that says it all, because I don't think we in the taxi trade should be endeavouring to disrupt our own trade at the drivers' expense – do you?

Finally, some PH will continue to do well, but at the drivers expense as the Corporate's force their prices down, because in general terms the driver gets 60% of the fare charged, the Operator gets the remainder. I know we have been accused of 'propping up' some of the PH companies, but that is ridiculous. However, there are some that have something in common such as Burgundy, Premier, Chauffeur Force, WestOne and Lewis Day – they all went bankrupt and were bought out – so we didn't make a very good job of propping them up – did we?

Incidentally Ian, I have been in negotiations with JPM and the account has now been extended until 30th April 2014 as they have been unable to install their new system. The contract originally expired on 30th September 2013 and there was a four month 'changeover' which expired on 31st Jan, that date has now been extended to 30th April as their new system is not ready to install. No doubt some will say I should have told them to stick their account 'up their jumper' but that would not have been the professional approach, as installing a new system can prove difficult to some (although not to us) and as the saying goes; you don't know what you've got till it's gone! No doubt the JPM Travel department are cursing their Procurement department for awarding a contract on price alone!

## JPM and TaxiCard

Hi Alan

After reading an article in *Call Sign* saying that Yellow Badges may be covering our lost account on the island, I was flabbergasted! That was until later that night when, while still flabbergasted (lol), I picked up a street job who told me on the fairly short journey that she was often sent minicabs instead of, as she put it so well, *proper taxis* to cover her TaxiCard jobs. Surely this can't be right? Yet I believe that it's the same radio circuit that deals with both these instances. By the way, I have been on Dial-a-Cab for five years and I love it still!

Jonathan McNiff (J17)

Thanks for the email Jonathan. As I have already said, I don't believe that any

radio circuit would deliberately try to get an account by cutting its own throat, but whereas a few years ago it was so busy that the circuits held the whip hand, it's very much the customers now. However, the difference is that pre-recession, there was nowhere near as much relevant PH competition capable of covering corporate accounts; now they can – at least they say they can. When accounts were queuing up, we still provided an excellent service even though we usually knew that if our service ever slipped up, clients would rarely go elsewhere. But now that the power has moved across to them, I get the feeling that they couldn't care less if they ruined a taxi (yes, or even a minicab) company. Those behind the finance for these companies don't seem to care about the quality of service, only the cost, even though some are turning over huge profits again. In fact in the case of JPM, the decision makers are not even based in Europe – let alone London – and in all probability have never even used the account. We know that those that used our facilities – and that includes TaxiCard – have always been happy with our service and even expressed their dissatisfaction with the decision to move the account elsewhere. So for your two examples, I don't believe that ComCab wanted their acquisitions to come the way they have, but I agree with you that if they are using both YBs and minicabs then things have really got bad.

If you read Brian Rice's answer to Ian Connelly's letter above, you'll also see that there has been a three month extension to the JPM contract, which tends to prove that cheap isn't always enough! ...Ed

## Call Sign and RTG

In the *January Call Sign* Editorial, you wrote of Dial-a-Cab entering its 51st year, which caused a friend of mine on Radio Taxis to say that he thought we had been around longer than them but he remembered reading in their magazine that they had celebrated 60 years. Who came first?

Alex Constantinou (N05)

Sorry Alex, it was a typo and should have read 61st and not 51st year. DaC, as ODRTS and under the Chairmanship of Bonnie Martyn, arrived on the scene around 6 months before RT (Southern) under Joe Stern. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Bonnie and Joe never got on as they battled for drivers who really knew very little about radio. More amazingly to me, Alex was one of a number of DaC drivers who queried the year. I get away with very little here! ...Ed

## Pay as you go...

Dear Alan

Brian's piece about switching to pay as you go in the *January Call Sign* was very inter-

esting. As a low user, a Pay As You Go system would be beneficial to me, but I recognise that it would be unfair to those drivers who do a lot of radio work. So how about a mix of subscription and PAYG? I suggest that everybody including those with 30 years service, pay a base subscription of £18. Drivers without 30 years service would pay an additional 6% including VAT per job. The flat rate subscription is disheartening if one takes any time off for holidays, sickness, etc. If you take a week off, you start the next Monday morning feeling that you are £72 down. If things continue as they are and drivers are leaving because they feel that they cannot justify paying the subs, then coverage will suffer, accounts could be lost, more drivers may leave and so on. Maybe an element of PAYG would help to sustain fleet numbers.

Mick Kennedy (M30)

Brian Rice replies: It's not something we are against Mick, otherwise I wouldn't have written about it, but just a couple of things. Does the £18 represent £15 subs plus VAT? I suspect it does and I also suspect that is per month and not per week as it is now? So to stop the 6% including VAT, Dial-a-Cab would get 5% of the fares, I assume that is also correct?

Incidentally Mick, if you take a week off you are not £72 down, you are £30 plus VAT down and if you are sick and send in a certificate, we do not charge subs.

Now, using the above criteria with our current numbers and NOT taking into account your suggestion for 30 year Members and also NOT putting a cap on subs for big earners (yes we still have them), then by a quick calculation I believe the Society's income would fall by £750k per annum. However, in the above scenario, I would need to put a cap on the maximum subs payable by a Member and that calculation would be time consuming for me to obtain as quite a lot of homework would have to be done on who earns what, I would also have to obtain figures that 30+ year Members earn. What I can definitely say Mick, looking at your earnings, is that your suggestion would definitely benefit you and I assume that was the reason for writing.

Finally, I totally understand and agree with your sentiments; it is just a matter of finding a solution that will be acceptable to most. What I can assure you is that whatever we do, there will be a section of Members that will not be happy...





# Mailshot

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## Shhhhhh! It's a secret...

Hi Al

In *January's Call Sign*, you, in response to **Paul Charters (J08)**, said: "DaC have agreed not to publicise the name until after the contract has ended in January." Did no one at the annual jolly-up tell **Keith Cain**? On his page, he says: "After receiving the disappointing news about JPM..." Oops, I said it.... is the cat not out of the bag?

Disappointing is not the word I would use, more like disaster! Fixed prices, no run-in, no gratuity, all work AD, nearest cab. Yuk to all...

I remember **John Rubini (F55)** saying at an AGM many years ago that minicabs hang on to our shirt tails in respect of prices. This now no longer seems to be the case. Sadly, the trade is on a road to ruin when you have taxi drivers working at a cheaper rate than minicabs. **PAYLO** would never have taken off had work levels been higher, that's for sure.

Also Al, I've noticed that for the past 3 years you seem to have dug out the TX2. Can you now kindly start on the TX4 as the TX2 is a far superior carriage and does not deserve the constant bashing it gets! And please don't get me started on those dreadful roof signs or the gas cabs that conk out when it rains!

**Colin Jenkins (Y22)**

Colin, I told you not to tell anyone but that if you did, to tell them not to tell anyone! And while I don't remember digging out the TX2, I certainly remember saying many times that working cheap with no run-ins etc may be good for the passenger who no longer has to even bother going out onto the streets to get a passing cab, but it is a disaster for the licensed taxi trade as a whole. And Colin, we are at one with regard to those appalling roof signs. It they were twice as nice, they still wouldn't classify as awful!

## Kings Cross bus lane

I have just read **Tom Quigley's** piece in *January's Call Sign* and was interested in his quite correct description of the dangers to eastbound drivers at the Kings Cross, Euston Road, Pancras Road junction. It's not just on the inside lane that drivers can face problems though; the outside lane also has a problem - although this problem is pedestrians.

As we all know, the junction for eastbound drivers here has a double set of lights. One set adjacent to the bus stop outside Boots, with the second set approximately 10 yards eastward on the actual junction. The problem is that the two sets of lights do not turn green at the same time. The set outside Boots turns green about 5 seconds before those on the actual junction. The danger is that pedestrians walking east on the south side of Euston Road outside Camden Library but wanting

Kings Cross or St Pancras Stations, can't actually cross the road till they are forward of the first lights (outside Boots because of railings in centre of road) and so cannot see these lights. They step into the road looking at the lights at the junction, which will show red not realising the lights just behind them have turned green and the traffic is moving straight towards them.

A reversal of the traffic light sequencing would help prevent possible accidents at this point.

**Eddie Lambert (V37)**

**Iain Blackmore**, Head of Traffic Infrastructure at TfL, told *Call Sign*: "The junction of Euston Road, Pancras Road and Argyle Street is designed for all road users to share the space and allow for cyclists to turn right onto Euston Road from Argyle Street. Re-sequencing, these signals would make this impossible and put cyclists at risk. We continue to monitor all roads across London to ensure that they remain as safe as possible and, as always, ask all road users, whether they be pedestrians, motorists or cyclists, to obey the rules of the road and ensure they travel in a safe, shared environment."

# FIVE YEAR TAXI EXTENSIONS

Last month's *Call Sign* exclusively revealed details of a new engine that has been developed by Gastech for fitting to older taxis approaching their 15th year or that were on their fifteenth and final plate. That would usually mean the cab was in the final throes of its life and on the verge of making its way to the eternal taxi scrapyard. As so many drivers have asked us about it, we are repeating some of the details.

The new engine was recently passed at **Millbrook** and LTPH/TfL will accept it for fitting into London taxis. It will also give the taxi an extra five years of life.

The engine runs on **Liquefied Petroleum Gas** with a small additional petrol tank with the ability to switch between the two. However and importantly, you cannot bring your taxi out of retirement once it has finished its 15th plate. But provided it hasn't yet reached that birthday and you want to convert it and gain the extra 5 years, then the cab owner must write to TfL and tell them they wish to convert the cab to the Gastech LPG system and up to Euro 5+ standard.

The Gastech TX1 NOX emissions are 0.0254 gr/km. That is claimed to be 91% lower than diesel Euro 5. Their TX2 has 0.014041 gr/km - some 95% lower than diesel Euro 5. It is significantly lower in Oxides of Nitrogen than any modern day diesel engine and there are zero particulates / smoke.

The price of the TX1 conversion is £6,300 plus VAT, while the TX2 is £6300 including VAT. Former Dial-a-Cab driver, **Stanley Roth (ex-Y53)** is one of the people behind the engine, having himself driven a gas cab for far longer than any other licensed taxi driver.

Those interested should email Stanley at [gastaxi@gmail.com](mailto:gastaxi@gmail.com) and he will furnish you with all the info you need. If you aren't sure, then Stanley will be happy to email you general information about the Gastech engine by return...



Stanley Roth

## Spurs fan Bill raising money for LTBAWD

At every **Spurs** home game at White Hart Lane you will find 82 year old **Bill Parr**. Before kick-off, he positions himself next to the Spurs Megastore where he collects money for **The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled**.



The Charity began in 1948 and has an outing to Worthing every year for 450 people among many other projects each year. Thanks to the Spurs programme for the info...



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#### Terms and conditions:

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

#### Fuel economy information:

TX4 (Euro 5) in mpg (l/100km): Urban 25.7 (11.0) - 27.7 (10.2), Extra Urban 40.4 (7.0) - 42.8 (6.6), Combined 33.6 (8.4) - 35.3 (8.0), CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 209-222 g/km

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