

July 2014



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*Why were Peter Bond and Brian Rice smiling at the June 11 demo?
Could this be the answer!*

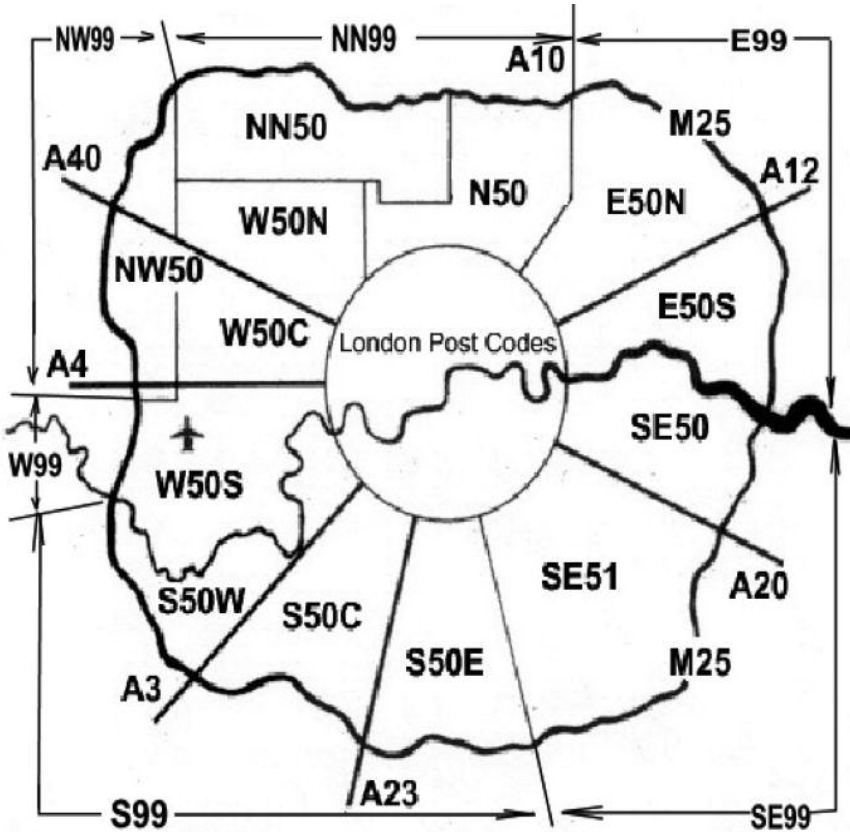




NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

By popular request I'm reproducing the famous DaC zone map first copied into Nash's Numbers December 2003. Also included are some outer London Post Codes. If you're offered a job to eg SL7, it will be going to Marlow.



Physical Zone	Description
CC00	LCA when on rank
E50N	Essex N of A12 inside M25
E50S	Essex S of A12 inside M25
E99	Essex outside M25
N50	Middlesex N inside M25
N99	Middlesex N outside M25
NN50	Hertfordshire inside M25
NN99	Hertfordshire outside M25
NW50	Buckinghamshire inside M25
NW99	Buckinghamshire outside M25
S50E	Surrey E of A23 inside M25
S50C	Surrey A3 to A23 inside M25
S50W	Surrey W of A3 inside M25
S99	Surrey outside M25
SE50	Kent North of A20 inside M25
SE51	Kent South of A20 inside M25
SE99	Kent outside M25
W50C	Middlesex A40 - A4 inside M25
W50N	Middlesex N of A40 inside M25
W50S	Middlesex S of A4 inside M25
W99	Middlesex outside M25
WW00	Within Perimeter Rd Heathrow

Code	Town	Code	Town	Code	Town	Code	Town	Code	Town
BR 1	Bromley	DA 16	Welling	KT 5	Surbiton	RM 8 to10	Dagenham	TW 9& 10	Richmond
BR 2 prt	Bromley	DA 17	Belvedere	KT 6	Surbiton	RM 11 &	Hornchurch	TW 11	Teddington
BR 2 8x	Keston	DA 18	Erith	KT 7	Thames Ditton	RM 13	Rainham	TW 12	Hampton
BR 3	Beckenham	EN 1 to	Enfield	KT 8	E & W Molesey	RM 14	Upminster	TW 13 & 14	Feltham
BR 4	W.Wickham	EN 4	Barnet	KT 9	Chessington	SL 0	Iver	TW 16	Sunbury-on-T
BR 5 & 6	Orpington	EN 5	Barnet	KT 10	Esher	SL 1	Slough	TW 17	Shepperton
BR 7	Chislehurst	HA 0	Wembley	KT 11	Cobham	SL 2	Slough	TW 18 & 19	Staines
BR 8	Swanley	HA 1 to 3	Harrow	KT 12	Walton-on-T	SL 3	Slough	UB 2	Southall
CR 0	Croydon	HA 4	Ruislip	KT 13	Weybridge	SL 4	Windsor	UB 3 & 4	Hayes
CR 2	Sth Croydon	HA 5	Pinner	KT 14	West Byfleet	SL 5	Ascot	UB 5	Northolt
CR 3	Caterham	HA 6	Northwood	KT 15	Addlestone	SL 6	Maidenhead	UB 6	Greenford
CR 4	Mitcham	HA 7	Stanmore	KT 16	Chertsey	SL 7	Marlow	UB 7	West Drayton
CR 5	Coulsdon	HA 8	Edgware	KT 17 to19	Epsom	SL 8	Bourne End	UB 8 & 9	Uxbridge
CR 6	Warlingham	HA 9	Wembley	KT 20	Tadworth	SL 9	Gerrards Cross	UB 10	Southall
CR 7	Thornton	IG 1 to 6	Ilford	KT 21	Ashtead	SM 1 to 3	Sutton	UB 10	Uxbridge
CR 8	Purley	IG 7	Chigwell	RG 27	Hook	SM 4	Morden	WD 5	Abbots Langley
CR 9	Croydon	IG 8	Woodford	RM 1	Romford	SM 5	Carshalton	WD 6	Borehamwood
DA 1 to3	Dartford	IG 9	Buckhurst Hill	RM 2	Gidea Park	SM 6	Wallington	WD 7	Radlett
DA5	Bexley	IG 10	Loughton	RM 3	Harold Hill	SM 7	Banstead	WD 17 to 19	Watford
DA 6 & 7	Bexleyheath	IG 11	Barking	RM 3	Harold Wood	TW 1 & 2	Twickenham	WD 23	Bushey
DA 8	Erith	KT 1 & 2	Kingston-u-T	RM 4	Romford	TW 3 to 6	Hounslow	WD 24 to 25	Watford
DA 14	Sidcup	KT 3	New Malden	RM 5	Collier Row	TW 7	Isleworth		
DA 15	Sidcup	KT 4	Worcester	RM 6 & 7	Romford	TW 8	Brentford		

Check out www.myfav.co.uk and click the "Left screen selector" link "Taxi<-----". By the time you read this the new Eurostar timetable should be online. Watch out for new facilities coming soon; 1) get commission on some purchases through MyFav and 2) have you own web page on the MyFav platform free of any charges.

from the editor's desk

Hailo

As you'd expect, when *Call Sign* closes for its one month hiatus, the world virtually collapses around us with shocks and demos and certainly no shortage of material to write about! Of course, by the time we return I can hardly print lots of news that you've already read while Linda and I were sunning ourselves in sunny Suffolk! But **Hailo** using private hire - well I could hardly ignore that!

It all blew up following an LCDC tweet where those receiving it were advised to delete the Hailo App because it claimed that **Russell Hall** had applied for a PH licence. The tweet was passed over to me so many times from drivers who knew I didn't do *Twitter*, that I was almost tempted to briefly switch my phone off. But I didn't.

Soon after, we heard that someone had broken a window at Hailo's Southwark office and scrawled the word 'Judas' in paint. Anger against Russell Hall was almost at fever pitch and something had to be done, so Hailo Chairman **Ron Zeghibe** sent out his open letter to the trade telling anyone prepared to listen that drivers were losing their livelihoods because passengers were moving to apps that didn't offer both taxis AND cars as an option. He wrote of taking unpopular decisions.

My first thought was why drivers were surprised. I published a piece in the May Call Sign that said Hailo in New York was about to use cars as well as cabs. I had also heard that Chicago was doing the same and confirmed it to all the drivers that phoned me to ask if I'd made a mistake! It was no real shock to me anyway because I knew it would happen as soon as Hailo London announced they were going to chase corporate work and in reality become a radio circuit.

They would then discover that very few corporates want just taxis and that even though some drivers (including me) didn't like **Concierge** when it was first invented by **Dial-a-Cab's** IT department some ten years ago, I could see then that it was the only way to get large accounts - and we did! The only reason we are now finding it difficult to keep them all is because ten years on, the rest of the market has finally caught up and many now have their own versions of Concierge.

I think most of us realise that PH aren't going away and rather ironically, at the time of the LCDC tweet, their newspaper, *The Badge*, published an appeal from **Steve Wright**, Chairman of the **Licensed Private Hire Car Association** in which he issued a warning about the dangers of **Uber**. In fact, had there been a June issue I probably would have published his letter too.

So no, the news doesn't really surprise me because without corporate work **Ron Zeghibe** and **Caspar Woolley** won't make enough money to make their system pay. Russell's backing down on his original 'never using minicabs' did upset me, but I don't think for a second the decision was his, although he was the one taking all the flack - no doubt something his paycheck includes!

So let's get a few things straight. I don't and never have believed that **Russell Hall**, **Gary Jackson** and **Terry Runham** were anything other than three taxi drivers whose names were used to forward Hailo to the world. After all, one of the three entrepreneurs behind Hailo - **Jay Bregman** - ran an online minicab business before moving over to taxis and this magazine has mentioned that fact several times, so why the shock? I've also said that Messrs Zeghibe, Woolley and Bregman had one aim and that was to make money - after all, that's what they do. In reality we're all out there trying to earn money while the rumour mill suggests that Bregman could be on his way to greener pastures.



I've no doubt that Russell Hall would have been 100% against the current suggestion but had to do whatever he was told. I have been told by someone who knows him well that he has earned over £1million so far and for a taxi driver that represents huge bucks. His only alternative was to resign as a matter of principle and lose far more than any driver who just deleted the app would. It will also be interesting to see how many taxi drivers take up the Hailo offer to drive an executive car. **Radio Taxis** tried it but the money wasn't good enough. That will also be the case here.

There is apparently another app in development said to be about to compete against Hailo, but where all profits are reinvested into the app and perhaps Russell could have been invited to help with that. The question is how much is principle worth and how many drivers out of the 26,000 of us would put that principle against another million smackers, knowing the money meant you wouldn't have to work in your taxi again? I can't honestly say I'd have done any differently, although I like to think I would.

But my views on Hailo have never changed - drivers were queuing up to join a business that forced them to work cheap, taking money off them and giving it to an ex-minicab proprietor and his two entrepreneurial friends. I've had lots of letters over the past two years saying that drivers pay subs to DaC so what's the difference if they pay their 10 percent to Ron Zeghibe and co? Well, the main difference is that all the subs money goes back to Dial-a-Cab and is then re-used on technology or new terminals or anything connected to a Society that we all own. Hailo's money - using you as cheap labour - goes to the three businessmen.

Now they want to earn even more and using cars will undoubtedly get them extra work and profit, but drivers will have to give away even more because prices have to compete against their PH "partners."

Their *Hailo for Business* brochure offers fixed prices to airports so when they offer £45 or so from Cabot Square to Heathrow, will there be lots of taxi drivers profiting? Will pigs fly? Will Jay Bregman leave?

So because principles have now gone out of the window, if Hailo gets through this and keeps enough taxi drivers to continue as a dual system, here is another *Call Sign* forecast: Within 12 months, Hailo will attempt to force pressure on the Mayor's office asking that minicabs are allowed to use bus lanes - always assuming the **Addison Lee's** appeal fails. But of course, whatever we think of AL, they are at least legitimate opposition. I always assumed that even if disagreeing with their methods, that at least Hailo was one of us. Yep, I admit I was wrong!

Is Camden Council mad?

Inside this issue of *Call Sign*, we have confirmed that Camden Council's "experiment" of shutting Warren Street to stop taxi drivers avoiding the congestion of Euston/Marylebone Roads and to preserve the safety of pedestrians using the rat run, has now been made permanent. We had discovered that when the scheme was originally mooted some 18 months ago, only 15 residents were in favour, while others - residents and commercial enterprises alike - saw inconvenience to accessing their properties, a drop in passing trade to shops and the difficulty of services such as waste disposal and recycling agencies being able to service the affected roads. When a public consultation was launched, just 84 responses were received. But Camden closed it anyway.

But compared to their latest brainwave, Warren Street's closure is a total nothing - they now want to shut **Tottenham Court Road** to all traffic except buses until 7pm and make Gower Street two-way! That could also pose problems when southbound traffic reaches **Princes Circus** at the junction of Shaftesbury Avenue and High Holborn because that could become pedestrianised with some pretty flowers put in!

Astonishingly, Camden Council uses the reason that Tottenham Court Road currently suffers with narrow pavements, a lack of public spaces and poor air quality. Well the 'narrow' pavements look quite wide to me. Lack of public spaces - it's a shopping area, not a park! As for air quality, what the hell does Camden think closing TCR is going to do to the area? We'll all need smog masks! According to the Mayor of London's office, over 25,000 people have died because of air pollution in London since he came into office six years ago. So how will forcing even more traffic into Gower Street and the surrounding areas help? The heading sounds about right. Is Camden Council mad? There is a public consultation taking place and if you care about the future, then take part.

Go to www.camden.gov.uk/westendproject and let them know what you think, but the consultation closes on July 18...

Call Sign apology

In the last issue of *Call Sign* we published details of a weekend event at Upminster (We are FSTVL). It sounded like there would be much work there and when TfL passed over details saying taxis would be needed, we were happy to pass them over to DaC drivers even though the event was outside of the usual area. I spent several hours at **Costa Coffee** in Upminster and was delighted to see **Dial-a-Cab** taxis among the Yellow Badges. One told me he was doing well just going from the station to the airfield where the festival took place. Then late in the evening, there was a taxi rank at the event with passengers going all over the show.

However, the following day, several DaC drivers phoned to ask if I knew that there was also a minicab rank there for the going home rush. As that is illegal, I never considered the possibility of TfL allowing a minicab rank. But the licensing authority used the excuse that there must be a phone somewhere at the airfield and as such they would provide a temporary licence using a tent as the operating hub! I don't blame **Addison Lee** for taking advantage, but I do blame TfL for misleading me and I will look very carefully at future events passed over to me by TfL...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

It seems as though no sooner the Editor misses an issue of *Call Sign*, than a whole host of news stories break involving the Taxi industry.

Initially, we had the story regarding **Hailo** where they announced they were also going into the market to supply cars. This led to a howl of protest from within the taxi industry because many felt they had been misled by the three taxi drivers who would have anyone prepared to listen, believe they were the founders of Hailo. Hailo's premises were attacked and vandalised and graffiti was scrawled onto the building. Whilst I can understand the feelings of some, I don't believe we can possibly condone that type of behaviour.

As soon as Hailo announced they were going to offer **Hailo Business** in an attempt to win business from the three radio circuits, I just knew they would have to change their philosophy. They have now said they are going to supply the corporate customer with both cars and taxis. So if the corporate is already using taxis - which I assume they are - then Hailo will only be taking that work from the three existing radio circuits and completing that work a lot cheaper than the client is currently paying due to no run-ins and free waiting time etc with all of that coming at the driver's expense. They will force down the price of a taxi, but of course the driver will be paying.

I'm sure you can understand why the three radio circuits have now banned the use of Hailo; how can any of those circuits be seen to be operating at Hailo prices? If any of our logo'd taxis are seen to be picking up and operating at Hailo prices, then customers will expect exactly the same price (at the drivers expense) when they are picking up on behalf of the radio circuit.

The three taxi drivers have been accused of being hypocrites; I do not subscribe to that theory and genuinely believe that when they first started they had every intention of putting all their trips into Licensed Taxis. However, as time progressed the three American owners decided they were going to allow cars on the App so they could go after corporate business and the three taxi drivers were absolutely powerless to do anything, which goes some way to show the type of influence they had over the business - absolutely none. The only sin the three taxi drivers were guilty of was being gullible and naïve.

Demo against TfL

I have been writing for years in *Call Sign* about how ineffective TfL are and how they are just not enforcing legislation. All you nightmen know that touting has reached pandemic proportions at almost every public venue in London. TfL then allowed a taxi App to introduce a minimum fare, but to charge more than the metered fare is, in my view, illegal. Consequently, it could appear



to onlookers that TfL were an easy touch and would allow almost anything illegal regarding ground transport in London to prosper.

Consequently, an American company called **Uber** that had started out in San Francisco, sought an Operator's licence in London. I remember reading at the time that Uber claimed TfL were the easiest and most co-operative authority in the world to deal with!

What Uber were endeavouring to do was have a trip ordered by a member of the public via their App appear on a Private Hire driver's phone without a record of the trip being kept by the Private Hire operator. Neither were they in a position to give an advanced quote for the trip if required, both of which are required by legislation. In addition, the driver's smartphone would record the time and distance and produce a journey cost at the end of the trip, the driver's mobile phone then becoming a device for recording time and distance - something that to most people is a meter (although not to TfL). It is illegal to have a meter in a minicab. When Uber sought an Operator's Licence, they should have been refused by TfL due to the above reasons, Uber would then have had to take TfL to court. However, in the meantime Uber would not have been granted a licence and would not have been

allowed to operate until a verdict was reached by a High Court judge.

What did TfL do? They granted the licence and when there was uproar from not just the Taxi trade but also the Private Hire industry, they decided to pass the buck to a High Court judge, the difference being that Uber can still operate until the judge reaches a decision, which will probably not be until the end of the year. Even if the judge finds in our favour, which I am not convinced that he will, Uber can then appeal and the process will drag on and on and in the meantime Uber will still be operating.

In my view, TfL were not brave enough to make the correct decision of not granting a licence. I would like to think that it had nothing to do with the fact that Uber is backed by Google and Goldman Sachs.

The taxi trade quite rightly organised a demonstration against TfL, stating that the licensing authority were not fit for purpose and that TfL were not carrying out their obligations correctly. However, TfL and Uber somehow changed the theme of the demonstration from being against TfL to being against Uber, which was not correct - although quite clever. The Taxi trade was portrayed as resisting progress and every interview I saw or heard began by why they were resisting Uber. The demonstration was very well attended by the trade, but due to the way the theme of the demonstration was manipulated, the publicity Uber received was enormous. Members of the public that had never heard of Uber suddenly became aware of the name and exactly what they did. So whilst I totally agreed with the demo due to the lack of enforcement by TfL, I was somewhat aggrieved at the way in which TfL and Uber out manoeuvred the Taxi trade. Hopefully, we have all learned something from this.

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



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

Taxi demo stops London



Charing Cross Road completely blocked southbound by taxis

The promised taxi demo on 11 June that organisers had warned was going to block London, did exactly that. Although good natured in the main, its underlying point of accusing **Transport for London** of capitulating to corporate business rather than looking after the world's finest and most respected taxi service, was made throughout the day by drivers being interviewed on various media outlets and the **LTDA** General Secretary, **Steve McNamara**, possibly becoming one of the most recognisable faces on TV having appeared on everything throughout the week!

For once, the taxi trade was united in its condemnation of TfL and by inference, of **Mayor Boris Johnson** for what **Unite** called a capitulation to **Uber**, aligning that to its multi-billion dollar backing from companies including **Google** and **Goldman Sachs**.

Although the trade bodies emphasised that the demo was against TfL, most still linked it with **Uber** - whose CEO, **Travis Kalanick**, was filmed referring to taxi drivers as a***holes. Also in the media spotlight was a young lady from Uber who claimed to be in

charge of UK operations. **Jo Bertram** told anyone prepared to listen that not only did Uber pay "all the taxes they should be paying" in the UK - even though the company is registered in the Netherlands - but that on the day of the demo, there was an increase over the previous Wednesday of their app being downloaded, of 850%. The **Evening Standard** reveled in the unsubstantiated figure but missed the story on the same day of the two white mice who swam the Atlantic and back in a record 47 mins - shaving 850% off the previous record for a white mouse!

TfL is seeking a High Court ruling on whether the use of an app that does the same as a meter is legal. However, drivers were united in asking why TfL didn't just say to Uber that they were using a meter and therefore were breaking the rules. If they didn't then agree, then *they* could go to court and pay the £100,000 approximate costs! Although the result won't be available for a few months, if Uber win then the trade suffers but if the court decides that it *IS* a meter, then it seems probably that the cost will be added to our licence renewals anyway. Heads

we lose and tails we lose!

Leon Daniels, MD at TfL's Surface Transport admitted that the taxi trade did not agree with his decision of whether the Uber app was a taximeter and called the demo pointless, inconveniencing London as well as damaging the economy. He claimed that TfL didn't think the app Uber use was a taximeter and that the rules had not kept up with technology. So they referred it to the High Court.

Dial-a-Cab Chairman **Brian Rice**, who went on the demo, has gone on record several times over the past few months in criticising TfL for allowing apps to get away with things taxis would never be allowed to do. He compared TfL to the old PCO whom he said would never have allowed apps to get away with so much.

Although no arrests were made in the peaceful demo, Steve McNamara was handed a *Section 14* order under the *Public Order Act*, which would have meant him carrying the can if trouble occurred. It never did and taxis got their point across.

Just to add fuel to the taxi drivers complaint, Call Sign was shown an online instruction from Uber to its' drivers which clearly states: "Enter the fare as per the meter." Some would say that it's only TfL who can't see what is plainly in front of them...

Alan Fisher

London and the Tour de France

The Tour de France hits London on Monday 7 July and all roads involved in the race will be fully closed to ensure the safety of riders and spectators.

The large number of road closures will affect the boroughs of Redbridge, Waltham Forest, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Westminster, Lambeth, Southwark and the City and although most of the streets on and near the race route in London will be open that morning until 10:00, they will then be closed until at least 18:00. Parking restrictions will also be in place.

Vehicles (including taxis and buses) will not be able to cross the route while the road closures are in place, though local access will be maintained for as long as possible. Access for emergency vehicles will be maintained at all times and pedestrian access to properties will not be affected.

Key strategic roads will remain open all day, including the Rotherhithe and Blackwall Tunnels. However, the road closures will result in displaced traffic and make other parts of London busier than usual.

Call Sign

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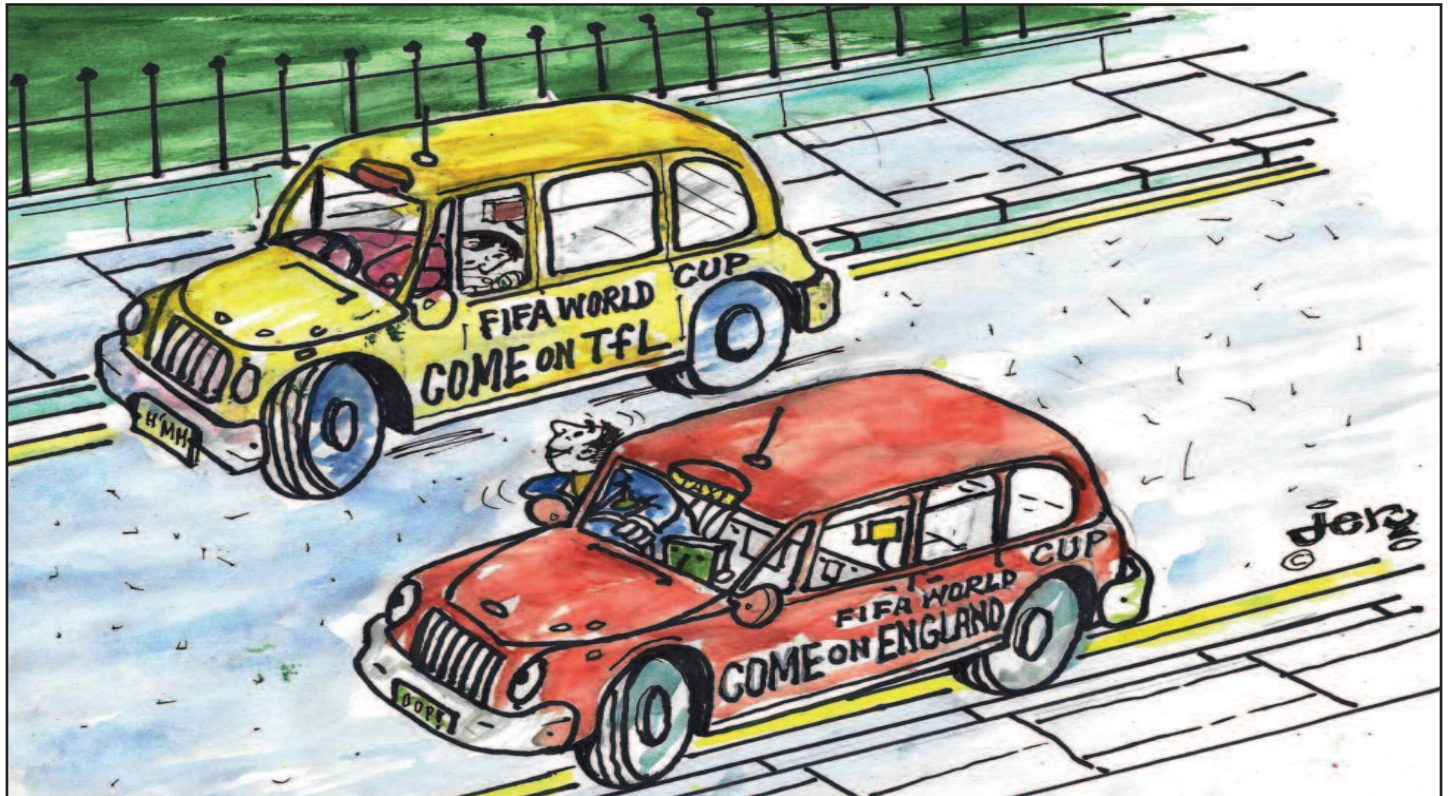
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Jery's World



"I fink we've got more chance of winning the World Cup that your lot 'ave of gettin' sumfing right!"

USING THIRD PARTY APPS

For those that may have not received the letter from Chairman Brian Rice regarding third party apps, Call Sign is reprinting it here...



During the last few years, the Taxi Trade in London has changed dramatically with the introduction of third party Apps. Throughout this period, Dial-a-Cab has taken the view that the Apps, particularly Hailo, have focused more on the cash side of the market rather than the corporate side. So the Board of Management took the decision that Members could have the Hailo App providing they did not display their logo. We also prohibited our Members from having hardware installed in their taxi from another App supplier.

However, the situation has now changed with the recent announcement by Hailo that they will be entering the business sector in an attempt to sign corporate clients on an account basis. This will, of course, be in direct competition with Dial-a-Cab and a situation that the BoM cannot ignore. We couldn't possibly condone liveried Dial-a-Cab taxis picking up on behalf of Hailo, as this without doubt, would be prejudicial to the Society. This situation will cause confusion to our clients and also raise the question as to why Dial-a-Cab cannot operate under the same terms as Hailo, which in our view is detrimental to the driver.

We, the Board, realise that we are unable to dictate that you do not subscribe to a third party App. But what we can say is that you only use one; you either use the Hailo App or remain a Member of Dial-a-Cab. But you cannot do both.

Consequently, as from Monday, 9 June 2014, any Member or Journeyman that endeavours to use or advertise any App other than Dial-a-Cab's will become the subject of a complaint.

As I am sure you can appreciate and fully understand, the Board cannot possibly tolerate this latest situation whereby your account clients are being actively canvassed by a competitor. Therefore it is imperative the above is adhered to so that we may endeavour to stem the damage that has been done to the Radio Taxi circuits by the introduction of third party Apps, which will be exacerbated even further as they attempt to enter the corporate sector.

To conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your co-operation in this matter.

Brian Rice
Chairman,
Dial-a-Cab

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**Covering London
and the Home Counties**

The late **Marie White** was a former **Dial-a-Cab** Board Member and held the distinction of being, in 1978, London's very first lady cab driver when breaking into the 'ranks' of a previously all-male profession. She did the *Knowledge* and went through the system like everyone else and came out the other end... with a Green 'All London' badge.

So you'd be forgiven for thinking that after all this time and with equality of the sexes gaining momentum almost weekly, the sight of a licenced female cab driver would be nothing new.

However, while *Call Sign* was making a routine pit-stop at our Roman Way depot, it was refreshing to see female DaC driver **Jackie Hill (S34)** offering a view on what it's like to be driving a cab around the streets of London and the reaction she attracts from members of the public and male cab drivers alike! She explained her views to *Call Sign*...

"Is it different for us women, or just worse," Jackie mused. "I'm often asked by passengers what it's like to be a female London taxi driver. In respect of being a driver, I'm sure I can speak for us all when I say it is definitely something you get used to, keeping those eyes in the back of your head wide open at all times and especially keeping a sharp look-out for the boy racers looking to score points! Even now, after more than eight years of driving a cab, I sometimes give a sideways glance at other drivers and frequently catch the males laughing into their phones or over the steering wheel," she confided.

"Hey fellas, wake up and smell the coffee, this is the 21st century! Our bras have been burnt and we're also allowed to vote, remember? If they're not laughing, the look on some of those drivers is clearly telling me to get off home to my pots and pans and that a woman's place is in the

A DaC lady's view of male taxi drivers!



DaC's Jackie Hill is proud of being a taxi driver

kitchen! It really is comical to see some of you male drivers react in this way. As for me, I have become immune to what other drivers think and just get on with my work. But what makes me really laugh is when the PHV drivers start giggling as I pull up alongside them on the road. But it is obvious to me - and my passengers too - who has done the hard work and doesn't need to rely on that satnav stuck to their windscreen to find Buckingham Palace!" By now Jackie was in full

flow and grinning broadly!

"My own experience has been that the general public are absolutely fine about having a female driver, and in fact many out-of-town visitors are unaware there are so many of 'us' now. When questioned, I often say 'we are trying to break the mould, but have got a bit of a way to go yet!'" Jackie continued.

"But it's a great job, especially if you are a mum with kids at school. If you live fairly central then you can get in a few hours' work in between the school day and be back home in time for the children. And, of course, it's great for financial independence too," she added, almost as an afterthought.

"So ladies and gents, if you know of a female who is thinking of doing the *Knowledge*, tell her to get started. It's great to be your own boss, to call your own hours and if you need a bit of space from those indoors, get out on the cab for a while until it is safe to return home!

"So, be lucky all of you, and the next time you come face to face with a female driver, just remember, we have had to work just as hard as you guys, going out on our bikes in all weathers to get our Badges without any special favours, just the determination to make it!"

With that, Jackie got back into her taxi and drove off - but not before displaying a glint of pride in her eyes that said she was proud of being a licenced London taxi driver...

Alan Green, Call Sign Online

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While we all recognise that there is a small element of danger when at work in the taxi, most of us soon learn to adapt our work to nullify as much of that as possible. The opening in the partition is small and keeping the front doors locked is as good a protection as we are likely to get. Incidents of drivers being robbed are very small compared to private hire. However, there comes a time of the day when you finish your day's work and have to get out.

Brian With (Y84) came up against that problem. He told *Call Sign* what happened...

"On 21 May at 1am, I arrived home in Woodford Green, parked outside my house, took a few minutes to put my stuff into my

DaC driver mugged outside his house!



Brian was mugged outside his home

bag, got out of the cab and walked towards my front door. I then saw two men come from behind my cab. They had their faces covered but I could see that they were Afro-Caribbean.

They grabbed and pushed me to the floor with one of them sitting on me and putting his gloved hands over my nose and mouth. I found it very difficult to breathe. The other assailant grabbed the strap of my watch and was pulling my arm so much that I thought my shoulder was going to pop out of its socket.

They then grabbed my bag and ran off. Police were called, but the thieves were long gone. I lost my night's takings, my Badge, Bill and iPhone, as well as my glasses.

The Police told my wife that Redbridge Council had housed a large number of problem families in the Broadmead Estate and they were being called there on an average of ten times each night!

The attack on me was obviously planned as I usually get home around that time. My next door neighbour's daughter was woken by the noise and told Police that she heard a car door slam and drive off in a hurry. I know I will not get any of my possessions back but I want to warn any cab drivers who live in the vicinity of Broadmead Estate to be very careful when getting home at night.

I am getting a CCTV camera installed outside my house and have also purchased a body alarm for £12.50, which I have been told is a good deterrent.

So to all Dial-a-Cab drivers and any others reading this; please be very careful when getting home at night!"

John Vigus is DaC's parking expert and the person that fights to appeal our PCNs. He also writes for Call Sign and is clarifying the successful victory a driver gained himself...

Beating PCNs: What to remember...



The driver was Steve Albasini (V02) and he had written to *Call Sign* for assistance after reading about two incidents where DaC drivers had been caught via CCTV after stopping on zigzag lines, yet won their appeals.

On one appeal, the driver pointed out that he had stopped for eleven seconds in Waterloo Road to pick up a lady coming out of the station with a heavy case. That driver – Editor Alan Fisher – pointed out in his appeal that buses were pulling up at the stop and often a third bus would have to stop on zigzags so why couldn't he as a licensed taxi driver also do so.

The second driver was Sid Nathan (K88) whose passengers opened the door in traffic outside St Pauls when the traffic suddenly cleared leaving Sid in full view of the CCTV cameras. DaC's parking expert at the time, Barrie Segal, gave Sid the advice he needed to appeal and both drivers won those appeals...

Steve Albasini had been spotted by CCTV on a zigzag in Waterloo Road waiting for the lights to change when suddenly his passengers opened the cab door and got out. As the whole of the section of road is closely watched by cameras, a PCN dropped through Steve's letter box soon after. Steve appealed to the council and lost but when taking it to the Adjudicator, he was successful. After reading articles about all three cases, John Vigus called the magazine to explain a few relevant points that may not be as clear cut as we think. He told us:

"I'd like to clarify one point raised in Alan Fisher's appeal when he pointed out that buses were stopping within the zig zag crossing controlled area. The *Zebra, Pelican and Puffin Pedestrian Crossing Regulations 1997 (section 22 1 b)* gives an exemption to local buses as follows:

Vehicles must not stop in a controlled area except:-
If the vehicle is a public service vehicle being used;

(i) in the provision of a local service; or

(ii) to carry passengers for hire or reward at separate fares (i.e. each passenger pays his own fare and boards or alights independently of the others but **does not** include an excursion or tour) and the vehicle, having proceeded past the crossing to which the controlled area relates, is waiting in that area in order to take up or set down passengers.

The exemption also applies to any vehicle if stopped while waiting to turn left or right. So it is no good moaning that buses 'get away with it' because they have the exemption."

When I pointed John Vigus's comments to the Editor, his only comment was that fortunately Lambeth Council must know even less about their own regulations than he did! But he also asked where that left cab sharing schemes where each taxi passenger pays separately? He always was a bit of a pain!

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online

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Dial-a-Cab driver **Alec Wilkey** (W83) isn't just a nine-year veteran of this circuit, but also a very respected trainer in the world of professional boxing. His latest success came via 20 year old **Johnny Coyle** (6-0-1) who took home the **Prizefighter Welterweight** trophy along with the £32,000 winner's purse after a sensational night of boxing at a sweltering **York Hall** in London's Bethnal Green.

Coyle and the 7 other fighters in the knockout tournament showcased their skills live on Sky Sports with another of **Eddie Hearn** and **Matchroom Sport's Prizefighter** tournaments providing the first-class entertainment that it has become renowned for.

The exciting format of the one-night tournament, which consists of 3x3 minute rounds, has four quarter-final bouts, the winners proceeding to the semi-finals and then the final if victorious.

Alec Wilkey's **Stanford le-Hope** southpaw, **Johnny Coyle**, was rated as a 20/1 outsider to take the championship, but used his boxing skills to beat experienced Welshman **Jason Cook** (30-6-1) on points and then scored a narrow victory over **Sam Eggington** in the semi-final. This set up a showdown with tournament favourite **Paddy Gallagher** after he stopped **Marc Douglas** in the other semi-final bout.

The raucous York Hall crowd came alive time and again throughout the bouts roaring the fighters on and this was the case once again as we reached the final. And it was **Johnny Coyle** who produced the outstanding final performance by flooring his man twice in the first round, both times with right hooks. **Johnny** showed his punch variation and boxing skills as well as the ability to stand and trade against his strong punching Irishman opponent.

A proud Johnny Coyle was crowned

JOHNNY COYLE CROWNED PRIZEFIGHTER CHAMPION!

Another success for DaC trainer Alec Wilkey



DaC trainer Alec Wilkey (right) holds up his victorious boxer Johnny Coyle with help from Derek Grainger. Promoter Eddie Hearn is on the right

champion after getting the decision with the judges scoring 30-25, 30-26 and 30-26 respectively.

Alec Wilkey told *Call Sign*: “**Johnny fought really well and I'm proud of him because he went in as the rank outsider and was up against some really tough opponents. But although the bouts were close, he came through. And he will keep on improving...**”

Alec also made some European history when another of his fighters, Greek Super-Featherweight female boxer **Areti Mastrodouka** (7-0) was declared the winner in the first ever professional bout to be held

in her home country of Greece on the *Gods of War* show promoted by **Stelios Politis**. The 37 year-old outpointed Slovakian **Claudia Ferenci** 60-53 in her 7th fight as a professional over the six rounds as she continued her journey towards a World Title.

The Master, as she is known, fights and trains in London under the tutelage of Alec Wilkey and sold over 200 tickets to supporters who witnessed a part of Greek boxing history at **Athens Dais Arena**.

**David Wilkey
Call Sign Online**

Taxis face Tottenham Court Road ban

Camden Council have unveiled plans to turn **Tottenham Court Road** into a buses only road until 7pm each night and forcing everyone else - including taxis - into the new two-way **Gower Street**.

The Council are looking to complete their plans to coincide with the arrival of **Crossrail**. The claim is that the new interchange will make Tottenham Court Road station busier than Heathrow.

The current TCR northbound one-way system will become two-way, but cars, lorries and vans will be banned between 8am and 7pm.

The Labour run council say that TCR suffers from traffic congestion, narrow pavements, poor air quality and a lack of public spaces, adding that the proposed measures would make it a much safer area. However, those travelling southbound down Gower Street will face a further problem with Princes Circus (junction of Shaftesbury Ave and High Holborn) being closed and replaced with a new public open space. Completion would be tied in to the Crossrail opening in 2018.

A consultation is taking place and if you would like to be part of it, send your views to www.camden.gov.uk/westendproject before July 18.

See Editorial on page 3...



Artist's impression of the proposed buses-only Tottenham Court Road (pic courtesy ITV News)

VITO: FREE REAR-STEERING UPGRADE?

Mercedes-Benz Vans are offering a free upgrade for the rear-wheel steer system on all the Euro 5 Vito taxis that seem to have had so many problems.

The company say they have improved both the near side and off side actuators together with the electronic control unit responsible for their operation. Testing is expected to be completed by August and drivers will then be invited to visit their local Mercedes-Benz commercial vehicle dealer to have the parts fitted.

An MBV spokesperson said that they had worked tirelessly to ensure that Vito Taxis have remained safe and roadworthy.

The free upgrade will only be applicable to cabs that have been fully maintained by an approved MB service dealer and which have covered fewer than 150,000 miles.



Well I want to start by saying that I am leaving Dial-a-Cab because the Chairman did not phone me to wish me

happy birthday - nor did he send me a cake. Only kidding, but if it's good enough for Manchester City's YaYa Toure! So welcome back to what you can expect from Premiership footballers, now that Queens Park Rangers are back in the big time...

Hailo problems

On a more serious note, by the time you read this the police would have left Great Suffolk Street, the graffiti will have been cleaned off the wall and everyone at DaC would have taken off their 'told you so' T-shirts. Are we all disappointed at Hailo applying for a PH operator's licence? Very much so. Are we surprised? Not at all...

What I find most ridiculous is that in a statement to Hailo drivers, the app Chairman Ron Zeghibe said: "Drivers like you are losing their livelihoods because passengers are moving to apps that don't offer taxis as an option." Well as far as I know, you don't need a PH operator's licence to supply taxis to PH companies, as DaC have been doing this for many years. What he is not telling you is that if a punter wants a Hailo taxi and there is not one available, Hailo will dispatch that job to a private hire car, which is something completely different. It may not have occurred to Mr Zeghibe, but there has been a general con-

Ron Zeghibe, Caspar Woolley and Jay Bregman...

Hailo: Is it all about a return on their investment?

sensus of opinion from the London taxi trade that TfL have a long term ambition to merge private hire and taxis into one system as is the case in most other European capital cities. So what would be the need to have a dual system if a taxi company supplied both? It may not have occurred to him either, but we have everything to lose, PH has everything to gain and he is playing straight into TfL's hands.

In his statement, Mr Zeghibe goes on to say that "...every free thinking driver knows that you've got to be in it to win it. Passengers want a choice and if we don't give them what they want, they will take their money to the car apps."

So far as I know, if the public book a taxi then that's what they should get - not a PH car. Like I said, it looks like these people don't care if the London taxi trade lives or dies, just so long as they get a return on their investment.

As I write, there has been a huge backlash against Hailo with drivers peeling stickers off their taxis, buying themselves out of their livery contracts and leaving complaints from the public about an even worst level of coverage.

And then there is Uber - while TfL bury their heads in the sands. I picked up a punter recently who was paying by credit card. He was using DaC for the first time because he was using a non-PIN credit card from the USA. He told me that Hailo don't take USA swipe credit cards and allegedly Visa don't authorise Uber payments by card in the US, so he has lost confidence in them. But DaC does take US swipe cards, so here he was. What's the point of having all the modern technology if the passenger can't pay for the journey? There is only one London taxi company, silently keeping its counsel and digni-

ty, whilst providing a sound level of service the public appreciates - and you know who that is.

Congestion Charge

It had been a well-kept secret and it doesn't really affect us, but from the 1st June the congestion charge went up by £1.50 to £11.50. It's been a long time coming, but finally TfL has created enough congestion to justify putting up the CC. You only have to look at the deliberate way the lights phase at Exhibition Road and Cromwell Road southbound and at Canon Street Road with The Highway eastbound to see that many delays are unnecessary. Don't forget that if the congestion charge really worked without some kind of intervention from Victoria Street, there would be no need to put the charge up. It falls in nicely with TfL's plans to spend £millions on improving junctions and road layouts to speed up traffic outside of the congestion charge zone. Personally, on the run up to the opening of Cross Rail, I can only see the traffic jams getting worse. Need I say any more?

Speaking of The Highway, I was recently driving my taxi along there with a tipper truck a cigarette paper away from my rear bumper! The aggressive way those people drive reminds me of a film I saw when I was a kid. Hell Drivers was a 1957 film starring Stanley Baker, Sid James, Sean Connery and Patrick McGeehan. It was about tipper truck drivers racing around the streets and being paid by the trip. It's a great film and really worth a re-run. It proves that very little has changed over the years.

Richard Potter (T51)
Call Sign Online

Call Sign's Bob Woodford takes a look at how we are apparently

EMBRACING SOCIAL MEDIA...



I am guessing that most of Call Sign's readership is now embracing the social network media phenomenon. I have to admit it took me a long while to start riding this train - but our web designer at www.blackcab-heritagetours.co.uk recently told me in no uncertain terms that both the Company and we as individual Guides needed to have a Twitter presence (Facebook now less so it seems).

Believe me I'm all for embracing technology - even though my preferred subject is history. But even I, as a 59-year old male, was reluctant to start with Twitter - until about 3 months ago.

I was told at a recent seminar held at the City Business Library that for business purposes it would be a 'slow burner' - but eventually it would pay off. Indeed it has in some respects. BCHT recently needed 50 black only in colour TX cabs for a corporate event on a bank holiday Monday - and my regular Tweets leading up to the event (coupled with an Ad in Call Sign courtesy of the Editor) started to gain responses and allowed me to build up a new list of 'associates' that could be called on for future events.

Oh yes, there is quite a lot of nonsense being mouthed off within the allowed 140 characters per text by certain individuals, but this is equally



balanced by some good humour - plus some key information for working cab drivers with regards to updates on traffic issues, marshalled ranks and notice of planned events.

So given all the pros and cons, I am in favour of it and if you have not yet taken the plunge then go for it - I believe that it can only enhance your working life in effect you are 'managing a community'

and can choose to follow whoever you like - quite handy if you want to keep up to date with what's going on gossip-wise within the cab trade, national or local news or even your favourite football team.

Give it a go if you haven't already - but while you are at it please follow me @black_cabs or @cabbie_walks.

The picture recently formed part of a Tweet and shows the fleet of cabs that gathered for a corporate event in May in Whitehall Place - thanks to the power of Twitter.

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online

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Help LTFUC and the kids Fancy a run to Southend?



On Thursday 10th July 2014, The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children will once again be going on their legendary outing to Southend-on-Sea, giving 300 'special needs' and underprivileged children a fun-packed day out at the seaside.

They are currently looking for volunteers and would welcome any Dial-a-Cab drivers to join them.

As well as giving a great deal of pleasure to so many children, you will also have a brilliant day with prizes given for the best decorated taxis and also to the driver wearing the best fancy dress!

Without volunteers there are no outings, so if you would like to help with the children's trip to Southend on 10 July, contact the LTFUC Driver's Liaison, Steve Bell on 07811 508772.

You can also enter your details at www.ltfuc.org.uk on the volunteer page of the LTFUC website

Remember the Fund's motto: None walks so tall as he who stoops to help a child..

Camden Council has made the Warren Street closure permanent, previously claiming it was being used as a 'rat run' by taxi drivers that could damage the environment as well as pose a danger to pedestrians. So Call Sign asked Camden Council a simple question...

HOW MANY INJURIES AT WARREN STREET?



Now permanent even though the reasons have been disproved

If you read the last issue of *Call Sign*, you will have seen an article from Camden Council claiming that their experimental closure of Warren Street had proved successful and was now permanent. Bollards placed across the middle of the street just to the east of Fitzroy Street forced traffic down Whitfield Street and back into the one way system of Grafton Way and Maple Street.

So *Call Sign* decided to ask Camden Council an obvious question: How many pedestrians had been injured by traffic in Warren Street for the 12 months prior to Camden Council closing it and how many have been injured since the closure? If the figures were that bad then we'd be forced to agree with the closure. Council Traffic Engineer Raymond Cheng gave us an answer...

"Regarding the number of pedestrians that have been injured by traffic in Warren Street in the 12 months prior to the road closure of Warren Street, according to the collision records held by the Council (up to December 2013), there were no collisions resulting in injury to a pedestrian 12 months prior to the closure of Warren Street. There was one minor collision involving a pedestrian with a vehicle which occurred on 3rd October 2013 at Warren Street's junction with Tottenham Court Road. This was due to a pedestrian crossing Warren Street who was struck by a vehicle travelling the wrong way along Warren Street. Additional signs showing one-way on Warren Street were placed after the closure was implemented in order to reinforce the message to drivers. We are now also looking into putting in place no entry signs on Warren Street at its junction with Whitfield Street facing east."

In other words, the bollards are not assisting safety and actually caused the only accident after being put up when a driver assumed they meant you had to go back the way you came! But the closure is now permanent regardless of what anyone thinks and even though *Call Sign* has disproved Camden's story of that 'rat run' compromising safety, in doing so we have also shown that Camden's overtures of being 'green' are little short of ludicrous because they are now forcing all vehicles into the main road traffic jams with its sad side effect of even more emissions – and they then threaten to shut Tottenham Court Road to all traffic except buses! Emissions? You ain't seen nothing yet!

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online

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Think Frank Sinatra and what springs to mind? Malibu? Palm Springs? Las

Vegas? New York (New York)? Sammy and Dean? Kilburn High Road! Did I just say Kilburn High Road!

Yes Kilburn High Road! He was there on the 21st June 1953 appearing at the **Gaumont State** because as well as being a huge cinema, it also hosted the biggest names in music from **Django Reinhardt** through to **Black Sabbath** along with **Duke Ellington**, **Count Basie**, **The Beatles** and even **Marilyn Monroe**.

So for all of you **Dial-a-Cab** drivers that are wondering what Frank did on that day in the few hours before going on stage; well, he came out of the **Dorchester** and asked his driver to just take him to **Baker Street Station** from where he was "gonna take the Toobe."

Actually, he could have taken the Number 16 bus all the way but he would have needed to cross **Park Lane** to catch it. In those days as I remember from my childhood, all traffic in Park Lane used what is basically today's southbound lane. It all changed when the Hyde Park underpass was built and what was formerly the East Carriage Drive of Hyde Park became the northbound lane.

So Frank got out at Kilburn Station. If he had turned sharp left, he would have passed my old barber, whose guvnor would one day give evidence at the trial of murderer **James Hanratty**, one of the last people to be hung in the UK. Next door he might have admired the boats for sale at **Raymond Way's** premises and then he could have popped into **Foxley's Record Shop** where my older brother and my late Father-in-law bought their classical 78 rpm records.

But he turned right and found himself by the **Envoy Cinema**, which showed films that were not on general release. It later became a **Classic Cinema** and is now a petrol station – and where I was to trap my first job 18 years

Another true story from Geoff Levene
FRANK SINATRA GOES TO KILBURN!



Before going on stage, Frank looked around Kilburn (apparently)!

later.

There were lots of little shops along there; butchers, bakers, greengrocers and on the left was yet another cinema - the grotty old **Grange**. But Frank was getting thirsty and popped into **Biddy Mulligan's** pub. His footsteps were muffled by the sawdust and he noticed ruddy-faced men staring morosely into glasses of black liquid. He approached the Irish barman:

"Set 'em up Joe. I'll have a vodka martini on the rocks."

The barman narrowed his eyes: "We don't serve that nancy-boy Yankee stuff. Do you want a point or half a point of Guinness?"

Half an hour later and slightly swaying as

he stepped out into the fresh air, he got to **B.B.Evans** store and bought some curtain material before moving on to **Lyons** cafeteria where he has my favourite from those days, a 'milk and dash' - or a latte as it's now known – and an iced bun. The State was cinema number three, but Frank gave up before he got to number four - the **Essoldo**, which is now the **Marriott Hotel**.

After the show, he went to **Nat's Fish Shop** for a portion of rock 'n chips, which he ate in the back of the car as it whisked him back to Park Lane.

So that was one celeb in an unlikely place. What about two unlikely celebs together...

One evening back in the seventies, I had to pick up at the **Garrick Club**. My passenger was then DaC account holder **Robin Day**, the fearsome TV interviewer. He was with a lady - I won't say who it was but I'll give you a few clues. She was a beautiful blonde actress who still turns heads in her seventh decade. She played a monstrous character in a long running sitcom featuring three women and is noted for her charity work.

So we got to **Robin's flat in Eaton Square** at about 11pm and I expected him to ask if I could take the lady home, but no, they both went in.

Of course, it was probably entirely innocent - and he was not yet married anyway. Perhaps he was going to show her his well-known collection of **Millwall FC** programmes! As I say, an unlikely couple. Now if it had been her and Frank, that would have been really interesting...

Geoff Levene (W32)
 Call Sign Online

Airport taxi demo

June 11 not only saw a huge demo in Central London, but many Heathrow-based drivers did their bit as well by driving between Hammersmith Broadway and the Hogarth roundabout. So much congestion was caused that the police had to be called in to sort it out!

Like London, they also finished their demo at 3pm and returned to the feeder park...

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In this series commemorating the 100th anniversary later this month of the start of WW1, we have featured both past and present DaC drivers and their stories. This one tells of the selfless bravery of James McCarthy BEM – brother of DaC's John McCarthy (L29)...

DAC WAR HEROES



John McCarthy told us of his brother's bravery



James McCarthy after being presented with his BEM

Every mother's worst fear...

So far in this series, we have featured heroes that survived the conflicts of both world wars in which they were involved and played a significant part. Many found it difficult to return to normality in peacetime and rarely spoke of the horrors of battle, probably not even many years later. But they *were* able to return to Civvy Street and continue to enjoy life with their families. Not every combatant - or every family - was so lucky. War can be very cruel...

John McCarthy (L29) told *Call Sign* of his elder brother's story of remarkable bravery and selfless heroism.

"My big brother, *Leading Aircraftman James John McCarthy*, was born in London in 1921 and enlisted in the **Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve** in the early stages of WW2. He was later sent to Canada to complete his Navigator's training. But it was here, in England, that my brother Jimmy earned his *British Empire Medal*.

It was about lunchtime on the 8th March 1942 when a Miles Master aircraft crash landed on the tarmac near a hangar at the-then RAF Station Heston and immediately burst into flames with the pilot still trapped inside the cockpit.

"My brother Jim was standing nearby and witnessed the incident first hand. Despite the intensity of the fire and without regard for his own safety, Jimmy rushed toward the burning aircraft in an attempt to rescue the injured pilot. All he was wearing at the time was his tunic, which he hastily pulled over his head as his only protection and approached the stricken aircraft. Only when his uniform caught fire from the intense heat, his hair singed and his scalp burned did he retreat from the scene.

"I believe there were other personnel close by who also attempted to pull the pilot out of the craft, but were forced back due to the extreme heat and flames. Jimmy then grabbed a fireman's asbestos headpiece which was nearby, donned the kit and returned to the inferno - this time succeeding in getting the pilot out and clear of the wreckage. He must have been aware that the petrol tank could explode at any moment, but he got stuck in there just the same. Anyway, Jimmy did it. Sadly, the pilot died of his injuries two days later. But in recognition of his heroic actions on that day, my brother was presented with his BEM at Buckingham Palace, accompanied by my parents and other family members.

"Then, on August 15th 1943, while Jim was airborne in an aircraft that was towing a marker for target practice used by anti-

aircraft gunners, the aircraft itself was accidentally hit by the gunnery team on the ground and my hero brother Jimmy was killed.

"My wife Patsy and I have family memorabilia and have done some documentary research; we have his BEM and various telegrams about pensions, funeral expenses claims and the list of his personal effects left in his locker back at his barracks on that fateful day.

"It's hard to imagine how much it must have saddened my parents, but the telegram that really cuts like a knife is the one that starts: *'We regret to inform you.'* That must surely be every mother's worst fear when her son goes to war. I remember very little of the events I've recounted because I was only seven years old when Jimmy was killed. Yet, knowing how I feel now and so proud of my brother's brave deed, my Ma must have been distraught beyond belief when that telegram arrived.

"Jimmy's name is inscribed in a book in St Clement Danes, the RAF church in Strand and he was 'Gazetted' in the London Gazette on December 1st 1942 in recognition of his bravery award in saving another person's life. Soon after, he lost his own life aged just 22 years old."

As John finished telling us about Jimmy, we couldn't help but see the look of pride in his older brother spreading steadily across John's face...

Alan Green (E52)



Keith Reading
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On 2nd May 2014, 80 taxis – including several from **Dial-a-Cab** - with 160 veterans began arriving at **The Railway Club** in Harwich ready to board a ferry for the overnight sailing to Hook of Holland for a five day trip to the Netherlands. The committee of **The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled** would like to thank **Fiona** and the club staff for all their hard work on the day.

On arrival at the Dutch quayside, they were met by **The Dutch National Police**, passport control was quickly dealt with and soon they were on their way to the **National War Museum** at Overloon, which was around 110 miles from Hook of Holland. The police escort held traffic back on the motorway so that nobody could overtake the convoy!

Inside the museum, the group looked at the vast number of military vehicles and equipment and also heard of the tank battle that took place in the area. The museum is located in a large park which is also the site of the **Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery** and some of the veterans and drivers visited the site. Then it was back to their hotel, **The Papendal** in **Arnhem**.

The next morning after breakfast, the vets in their taxi convoy left with its police escort to make their way to **Oosterbeek Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery** for a British Military Service that was conducted by **The Royal British Legion** (Holland Branch). It lasted for an hour beginning with **The Pipes and Drums** of the Dutch Royal British Legion. The congregation was welcomed by **Mr J.P. Gebben**; **Captain Ray Waller** made an introduction; **Mr Robin Ammerlaan** read the poignant poem *In Flanders Fields* and prayers were conducted by **Reverend Canon Geoffrey Allen**. After the sounding of the *Last Post*, the silence and reveille, the exhortation was given:

They shall not grow old, as we are left to grow old, Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun, and in the morning We will remember them.

Mr Gebben, accompanied by two children, then placed a wreath on behalf of the people of the Netherlands. All the local children are taken to the cemetery each year where they each look after a headstone and leave a bunch of flowers. They are taught of the sacrifice these men paid for their freedom. The vets then placed wreaths in remembrance on behalf of the **Royal Navy**, **Army** and the **RAF**. **LTBAWD** Vice Chairman **Gary Belsey** placed a wreath on behalf of the War Disabled charity and a large number of veterans then placed their own personal tributes.

Then it was back to the taxis for the short trip to **Arnhem** where the group boarded a cruise boat for a 6 hour trip on The Rhine after which the police escort took them back to the Papendal to prepare for the next day, which would be one to remember...

It was Monday morning at 11am and apart from four taxis that were scheduled to be in the parade, everyone else travelled in coaches to the town of **Wageningen** for the Dutch Liberation celebrations and parade. Wageningen normally has a population of 30,000 – on this day it swelled to around 200,000.

LTBAWD return to Dutch battlegrounds



Vets at the Oosterbeek service

At 3.30pm, the four taxis with eight of the veterans on board formed up with The Royal British Legion to begin the two mile journey through the streets of the town. The taxis consisted of Red, White, Blue and one with the Union flag motif on the bonnet. **LTBAWD** thanks go to **Long Lane Taxis** for allowing them to use that vehicle in the parade and thanks also to the drivers **Ian Gray**, **Steve Painter**, **John Harris** and **Derek Leone** for agreeing to give up their time and assist in taking part in the parade. It was very moving to see small children handing small bunches of flowers to the vets, while the adults present thanked the vets for what they did for the people of The Netherlands. All too soon their part in the parade ended and it was time to return to the hotel.

After dinner, singer **Matt Cutler** entertained, followed by a talent show organised by **Janet Hodgson**. A number of vets participated in singing and telling stories and jokes. Then Committee members were called onto the stage to be presented to everybody in the room. They then proceeded to sing, which almost cleared the room but assistance from **Matt Cutler** saved the evening - and the reputation of the committee!

The following morning was time to return home, but first a small presentation was made to the Dutch Police in thanks for their help and then it was back to Hook of Holland and the ferry. During the return trip, the Captain slowed the ferry so that they could hold a short service of remembrance, read by **Rev George Parsons** and a wreath of poppies was thrown over the side.

The President, Vice Chairman, Officers and Committee of The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled have asked **Call Sign** to thank all the veterans who collected donations in stations. Also thanks to **Bernie Waterson** and **Camberfield Taxis** and of course the 80 drivers, without whom the **LTBAWD** could not undertake outings like this. Gratitude also goes to paramedics (**John** and **Elizabeth Stubbs** and **Gary** and **Penny Extence**), to **Kenny (spanners) Flemwell** and his breakdown team, all the garages that allowed drivers to take rented taxis on the trip, **National Dutch Police** and **Stena Line** for their assistance.

Call Sign thanks LTBAWD PRO Derek Leone Hon for the information...

Caption Contest Winner



The winner of the May **Call Sign** photo caption contest was **Gary Heath (W42)**. Gary picks up a cheque for £100 for his caption to the photo of **David Lessman (D19)** and two furry friends:

David gives his approval as he test drives the new sporty Zimmer frame...

COMPLIANCE WITH GARRY

Hello Ladies & Gents

Trade matters

The taxi trade worldwide is going through unprecedented changes brought on by the app market with big money wanting to invest in car booking platforms ie Uber and Lyft to challenge the traditional licensed taxi trade. London is seen as a city with the best taxi service in the world and if they can achieve their foothold in London, I believe it will give them the platform they desire to start going into the corporate taxi market.

Transport for London

The lack of willingness by TfL to enforce the rules/law over immediate hirings with meters only being allowed in taxis and not private hire vehicles, has allowed Uber to use an iPhone to calculate the fare with time and distance travelled while at peak times introduce surge pricing, something the travelling customer isn't always aware of until the journeys ends and is then charged for as they have already pre-logged credit/debit card details.

This has galvanised the trade organisations in a way I haven't seen before in holding a demo on 11th June over Transport for London's inept way of dealing with these matters! As a working driver, I was proud to attend it...



Hailo

It was decided by the Board that as of 9th June and as they have now introduced Hailo Business, putting them indirect competition with Dial-a-Cab, taking work from Hailo in a DaC liveried taxi is no longer allowed. I do hope you understand our position and act accordingly, as otherwise complaints will be issued.

Thanks in advance for your co-operation as I know it's tough going out there at the moment.

Run-ins

Please be mindful when running into an account job to check your meter and only have the allowed run-in amount on arrival, or if on a pre-booked trip to have no more than the maximum amount at the pre-booked time.

DaC offer

You would have received a letter last month updating Members of the state of play as to where we're at. I do hope this situation of third parties wanting buy DaC is resolved sooner rather than later and then you the Members getting to vote on which way you want the Society to go in the future.

World Cup

At the time of writing this article, England have begun to make their way home after failing to claim a single point following their first two games. Had they got through, the country would have been in the middle of a feel-good factor. I sincerely hope that the current busy street work continues even though the team failed. If your team isn't England but are still in the tournament, I wish them well.

Drive carefully and be lucky...

Garry White

DaC Compliance Officer

Touts tout the cops!

If you spend your working life as a minicab tout, then who's the one person you don't try to pick up? Right first time - plain clothed police officers from the Met police Cab Enforcement Unit!

But that's what minicab tout **Konor Ali** tried to do. As a reward for his stupidity, he was fined £700 and disqualified for 12 months, but with an address in England's Lane NW3 we doubt that he will starve!

It was back in September 2013 when Ali touted plain clothes police officers from the CEU on Camden High Street. When the officers identified themselves, he attempted to drive off, almost running over an officer and colliding with an unmarked police vehicle – hence a dangerous driving charge in addition to that of touting. He was subsequently detained and arrested. Ali appeared at Highbury Corner Magistrates Court on 5 June and was found guilty of touting for hire, possessing no insurance and also dangerous driving.



MOON BEEVER SOLICITORS

Do you know the importance of making a Will? Are you sure that those you intend to inherit will do so if you haven't made a Will? And do you know if tax will have to be paid on your assets on death? You may be surprised at the answers if you have no current will.

- Wills
- Inheritance Tax planning
- Advice for Executors/Trustees/Attorneys
- Long Term care issues
- Powers of Attorney
- Conveyancing and all property issues

We rely on you to get us from A to B so you can rely on us to steer you through the best legal routes too.

To discuss Wills, Inheritance Tax planning, Executorship, Trustee and Attorney matters, long term care issues or any related matter please contact Alexandra Bartrope or Julian Hay on 0207 400 7770
Or email abartrope@moonbeever.com or jhay@moonbeever.com

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

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Admiral Multicar Insurance is currently running a series of TV ads and it took us back to 2012. That was when **Call Sign** received several calls from **Dial-a-Cab** drivers complaining that following an earlier series of ads from Admiral proclaiming their cut price car insurance, they had applied and when it came to being asked what they did for a living and replying that they were part of the finest taxi driving service in the world - probably the world's only truly professional taxi drivers - they were informed that Admiral would not insure them!

Perhaps the Admiral phone reps in Cardiff were unaware that we don't use our cars as taxis and that our safety record at work is second to none. But when pointed out, it made no difference to Admiral - they just weren't interested in London taxi drivers when in their cars. And needless to say they won't insure your taxi!

Then we come up-to-date and 2014. A Dial-a-Cab taxi was hit by a private car at Hyde Park Corner. The incident was fairly minor although a substantial amount of damage occurred to both vehicles when the car, driving in the offside lane of the southbound roundabout carriageway, suddenly decided that it wanted to turn left into Piccadilly and cut straight across three lanes, hitting the taxi

ADMIRAL: WE DON'T TRUST TAXI DRIVERS!



No thank you!

in the process. The car driver admitted liability to DaC's TX4 driver - although many often do that and later change their mind when it comes to filling in the claim form. However, another passing taxi driver in a Vito was right behind and offered our driver his name as a witness, making it what should have been a fairly straight-forward claim. At least that's how it should have been - until Admiral declined to accept the taxi driver witness because they claimed "we all stuck together!"

The result was that the non-fault accident had to be passed over to the regular insurance company, who called Admiral's

decision "despicable" and said that they would fight it.

We don't know the result of the claim, but compared to the Admiral statement that was akin to calling London taxi drivers dishonest, **Call Sign** phoned Admiral to ask whether their no taxi drivers policy had changed? And it has!

Call Sign readers will undoubtedly be delighted to know that Admiral now insure your car but will not allow you third party coverage for any other car you drive other than your own. If you weren't a London taxi driver then you could do that with their blessing, but just as they don't trust you to tell the truth, they don't trust you with someone else's car.

May we humbly suggest that the next time Admiral offer you a deal, you tell them where they can place it!

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

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

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK



This issue harks back to an historic meeting that some older drivers may have heard of but few, if any, were at - the meeting that saw a group of drivers leave the T&G and start the LTDA in 1967

From ODRTS News Magazine, May 1967

LICENSED TAXI DRIVERS ASSOCIATION IS BORN

On Sunday 23rd April a mass meeting was called at St Pancras Town Hall by the 12,000 group. This initially was working as a ginger group within the **TGWU**. The chairman was **Mr Bill D'Arcy (A19)** who opened the meeting and introduced the committee individually. He thanked the police for their co-operation on the day of the lobbying and **Mr Sam Cooper** who lent us £50 for the use of the hall.

The first speaker was **Mr Harry Kaufman** who thanked both **ODRTS** and **Radio Taxis (South)** for their help. He said this committee was also concerned about the trades' internal disease as well as its external one. He slated the union for little or no action and accused the men for continuing their bad practices; airport men, radio men who jam their systems, men answering a Rank telephone call and not turning up to do the job. He said we wanted some say in the cab's production, we need a PRO and stressed the fact that we are treated as second class citizens. Mr Kaufman received an ovation.

The next speaker was **Mr Joe Bloom** who didn't want to break away from the union. He wanted militant action against mashes that did not join the union. He was not given a very warm reception and has since retracted the statement and apologised.

Mr Harry Benjamin then got up and said it was our own fault for being in this position; we had been too apathetic and divided. He continued that in 1965, 13 prosecutions were instituted against mini-cabs for illegal plying for hire. He said we should press home an attack now and not accept a brush off.

The press were then let in to hear **Mr P.Healey** from Orpington who has been in consultation with his MP, **Mr Eric Lubbock**, who is most interested and believes we have a strong case. Mr Healey and his wife were up all night sending 750 recorded delivery letters to every M.P and a complaint against the **Home Secretary (Mr Roy Jenkins)** has been lodged with the Ombudsman. Mr Healey then read out many letters and received tumultuous applause. The press were then asked to leave.

The treasurer **Mr Stanley Stone**, then appealed for funds and collected **£437 10s and 2 dollars**, which coupled with the balance of Mr Healey's own personal collection, totalled **£456**. **Mr Bill D'Arcy** then spoke and told of the committee's decision to give the meeting with the Home Secretary on the following day, a chance. However, if negative, then they would go ahead with the formation of an association of licensed cab drivers. This suggestion was greeted with roof-raising applause.

As we now know, it was negative and so has been born the **Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association**.

Joe Toff (B4), Editor, ODRTS News Magazine

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Dial-a-Cab driver Tony Arnold (F03) is coming up to 30 years with the Society and is certainly no stranger to Call Sign, having been involved in some of our most unusual stories.

The one that comes to mind first was in 2002 when he drove a TX2 from Beijing (China) to Trafalgar Square with two Chinese students who had won the trip in a competition. That trip was filmed and shown on the CCTV channel in China over 15 weeks, with Tony becoming something of a cult hero.

Along the way, Tony drove his taxi through Outer Mongolia, Russia and the Arctic Circle. Then he continued via much of Europe from Finland down to London!

A few years on and Tony was off again, this time taking his TX2 to Nigeria and Ghana where he taught the locals how real taxi drivers operate and left them with what both African governments had agreed was a hugely improved service. Amongst other places, Tony has also visited Melbourne in Australia, where once again he showed the Oz 'cabby blokes' how real taxi drivers operate!

Tony is incredibly proud of being a London taxi driver and of the way the London taxi trade always tries to behave to a much higher standard than the opposition. That is one of the reasons why we are siding with Tony and his TX4 against a Radio Taxis Group driver who was recently involved in a 'showdown' with Tony - one that we consider brought unnecessary

Tony Arnold and the ranker!



Tony in Beijing's Tiananmen Square publicising his taxi trip to London in 2002

shame to a trade that Tony has spent so much time promoting. Tony takes up the story...

"I was in Marylebone High Street having just passed the rank outside Waitrose. Some 10 or so feet beyond it were a couple with a young

baby. I saw that the RTG cab sitting on the rank had no *for hire* light on and I assumed he was either waiting for someone or taking a short break. So I stopped for the passengers. They boarded the taxi and we moved off. I had just turned right into Weymouth Street when the RTG taxi squeezed past and cut in front forcing me to break sharply while hoping that the baby was safely secured.

Then this red-faced and fairly elderly driver let out a tirade of abuse that included my parents, whilst all the time my young clients and their thankfully safe baby were looking and listening from within the cab, no doubt finding it hard to believe that this was a licensed taxi driver. But they had seen nothing yet because I was just about to say - without using his rather basic language - that he didn't have his *for hire* sign on so how was I supposed to know that he was working, when this supposed 'gentleman of the road' suddenly spat into my face before reversing against the Weymouth Street one-way system, obviously assuming - quite correctly - that I wouldn't pursue him.

My passengers were obviously afraid that I might follow the RTG driver and pleaded with me to continue the journey. I assured them that there was no way I would attempt to catch him and tried to explain that they had witnessed just one driver out of a total of 25,000 professionals and that very few out of that total would have behaved like that, even if they had a genuine complaint.

I know things haven't been that good of late, but is there any excuse for that driver's behaviour of swearing out loudly in front of passengers, spitting at a fellow driver and then reversing the wrong way down a one-way street? I would be the first to agree that had he had his *for hire* sign on, there is no way I would have stopped for those passengers. What have we become...?"

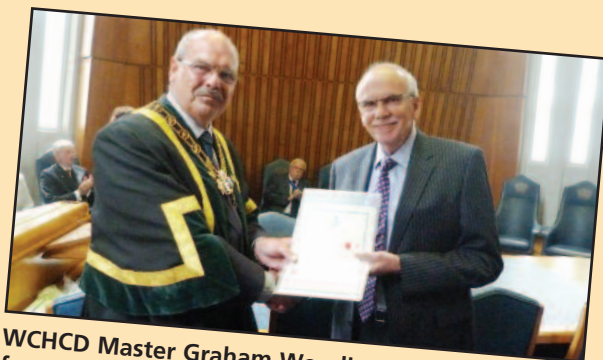
Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers WCHCD Election Court at Guildhall

On 22nd May, the WCHCD held their annual Election Court Lunch. **Graham Woodhouse**, Company Master, together with his Wardens, members of the Court of Assistants and the newly qualified Cab Guide Course students, enjoyed lunch in the private members dining room at Guildhall.

Prior to lunch, the Election Court had been held and the Master read out some of the wonderful thank-you letters he had received from guests at the recent **Royal Charter Presentation** and celebration. These included a letter from the **Duke and Duchess of Cambridge**, thanking the WCHCD warmly for the gift of a painting for their young son **Prince George**, which had been presented to **Prince Charles** during the ceremony in April.

Graham Woodhouse was presiding over his final full WCHCD Court meeting as Master before handing over office to the new Master in September, **Malcolm Paice**. His Wardens during his year will be **Colin Evans** as Upper Warden, **Alan Roughan** as Renter Warden and **Dave Cannell** as Lower Warden. After the meeting two new Freemen were sworn in, **Steve Bilham** and **Bob Oddy**.

Graham was also delighted to be presenting the successful **Cab Guide Course** candidates with their Badges and Certificates. All of them had enjoyed the course and were looking forward to using their new skills in the near future. Graham is one of the tutors of the course and has managed to combine his duties as Master with still running the course thanks to the team he has to assist him. The next Cab Guide course begins on 1 September. See the ad on page 20...



WCHCD Master Graham Woodhouse swears in former LTDA Gen Sec Bob Oddy as a Freeman

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

Brethren of the Whip

Cab drivers getting the sack...



In 1851, **John Leary**, a cabman of 5 Brook Green Lane in Hammersmith, was up before the magistrates charged with theft. He had found an empty sack in a yard and kept hold of it. It was later found to be outside his house and he admitted that he had picked it up. Prosecutors were, believe it or not, **The Association for the Prevention of Sack Stealing**. They claimed that lost or stolen sacks cost the industry many thousands of pounds each year and not only were they used to hold goods, but those in dirty trades used them as aprons to keep their own clothes clean, while cabmen used them as leggings to prevent the cold getting to them!

The court was informed that the name of the owner of the sack was emblazoned in several places, but Leary said he was illiterate. The magistrate, **Mr Beadon** (Beadon Road W6 is named after him) said that if Leary was honestly disposed, he would have shown the sack to the first person he met or to a policeman, either of whom would have told him where the sack came from – it actually belonged to a miller in Isleworth.

The Association for the Prevention of Sack Stealing had wanted a hefty fine to act as a deterrent to other cabmen, but a semblance of common sense prevailed and Leary was fined 2s 6d with 2s costs.

The Association for the Prevention of Sack Stealing was not alone in its endeavour to save sacks. Around 1845, **The Sack Protection Society** was formed by a group of millers in London and the Home Counties. They employed a professional sack collector who would enter mills, delivering sacks if that mill was a member of the society and taking away the sacks of other society members for later delivery.

Each sack was said to be worth 3s and all would have the name of the owner both on the outside and the inside. But once a miller's sack was used to carry anything else, then that sack could never be used to carry flour again.

In 1860 The Sack Protection Society prosecuted what they referred to as "... a batch of people, in various grades of life, *some of them cabmen.*" **The Times** does not mention how many of the batch there were, or how many were found guilty for having a sack without a legal excuse. Each of them was fined 5s plus costs. The paper also reported that in aggravated cases, the court could impose a prison sentence of two months.

A cabman, **James Kollen**, was up before the magistrates at Mansion House in March 1865.

Prosecutors for the Sack Protection Society then estimated that lost or stolen sacks were costing millers and corn dealers £20,000 – £30,000 a year and the chief culprits were said to be cabmen! Kollen was fined 10s for being in possession of a sack.

In November of that same year, **Walter Mitchell** was up before the magistrates, again at Mansion House and the Sack Protection Society was once again the prosecutor. Mitchell said he had picked up the sack and had not known who it belonged to. **Mr Carden**, a magistrate who was generally sympathetic to cab drivers, said that people in unlawful possession of a sack always told that story. Mitchell was luckier than Kollen and was fined 2s 6d plus costs.

The Sack Protection Society, despite its numerous victories, appears to have died

out shortly after the Mitchell case. There had been a case in the summer of 1865 in which Messrs Hadleys, of the City Flour Mills in Upper Thames Street were prosecuted for having over a 1000 sacks belonging to other members of the society, a society to which Messrs Hadley & Co were subscribers. It would appear that if they could not prevent their own members stealing thousands of sacks from each other - there was little point in going after a cabman using a sack to keep his legs warm.

It appears that after this period, cab drivers could give their bodies a little molecule protection from the cold without risking a fine.

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

Selling the TDYCF charity single

Chairman of the Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund, Dial-a-Cab's Russell Poluck MBE (T55), has asked Call Sign to thank some of the young helpers who have been helping to sell the Fund's charity CD by The London Cabbies, We'll Take You There. All proceeds go to the five trade charities.

"I would like to thank, Emma, Matt, Sam, Ross and Ethan for helping us to sell the charity CD at Paddington Station. They all worked very hard and did very well. The more we sell, the more money the five taxi charities that TDYCF support will receive at our annual dinner dance."

You can still buy a copy at the Dial-a-Cab driver's reception or get it on iTunes.

Go to:

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/album/well-take-you-there/id833516296?i=833516481&ignmpt=uo%3D4>

Russell also added that the 2014 Taxi Driver of the Year Dinner and Dance will take place on 6th December at a new venue: The Holiday Inn Regents Park at Carburton Street W1. See page 21 for details.



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Oh no... not another piece about the state of the cab trade!

WELL YES THERE IS!



Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

So the Trafalgar Square demonstration with drivers raising their total dissatisfaction with the activities - or perhaps I should say lack of them - from Transport for London is now over. What the response will be from TfL and their lack of any proactive leadership was unknown at the time of writing.

What they should be doing is to protect the transport needs of London's citizens in addition to the business interests of our iconic London taxi industry which is respected the world over, against the unregulated technologies that are being introduced in an effort to take revenue from unsuspected members of the public who just want to use a safe and secure vehicle to take them to their destination. TfL's lack of action is unforgivable.

The lack of control of the likes of Uber and its obvious meter gadget, car sharing apps and many others, is a dangerous direction that TfL are taking.

As a Taxi and Private Hire Licencing Authority, TfL must realise that because of their apparent *laissez-faire* attitude, they will be putting members of the public at risk.

I have to say that although several trade associations claim to represent the taxi industry, this is one of the first times for many years that there appears to be some unity.

For years I have been banging on that all taxi drivers should join one organisation that protects the interests of the whole trade, which should include drivers, manufactures, suppliers, support services, radio circuits etc, and dare I say it, the Licencing Authority!

Back in the day, some may remember the **London Taxi Board**, which was a well-respected trade organisation. However, for one reason or another, members representing their various interests began to leave – often for what appeared to be rather minor political reasons - after which time the Taxi Board disbanded.

If there was one unified body that was in existence now with one sole purpose and that was to protect our trade, I do not believe the trade would be in the dire straits it is in now.

Nonetheless, I do commend those who are trying to safeguard the future of our trade...

**Mike Son
DaC Board Member**

THE CALL SIGN INTERNET LIBRARY



Call Sign often gets drivers asking how they can get onto our online library because they have only just gone on the internet. Astonishingly, our online

department headed by **Vince Chin** has kept this magazine's website going since 1998 – by far the longest of any trade magazine including the one that is apparently read by more drivers than any other! Even though the last time we looked, CS had over 8000 online readers, never mind hard copy readers!

So, you want to look up something in the latest issue or in an old issue of *Call Sign*.

Go to www.dac-callsign.co.uk or www.dac-callsign.com

Then either browse through every issue of *Call Sign* since 1998 by using the *Search* facility at the top left of the page, type a clue and let our search engine do the rest. Or go straight to the issue you want.

If you want to read each complete issue with ads, you can do that because since the May 2006 issue, you just need to click on the PDF logo under the issue you want to see. No search facility for that, but if you know the page then go to it, press CTRL F and a box will appear. Just type in the word and the text you are looking for on that page and it will be highlighted.

If you just want to see the latest issue, just click on the year, then the month or click on the PDF sign at the end of the introduction. There are also issues from 1967, 1977 and 1987 as a reminder of the old days!

But beware, looking back at old issues can be addictive!

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers

CAB GUIDE COURSE



**Enhance your KoL,
become a qualified Taxi Tour Guide
The next Cab Guide Course is due to
start on 1st September 2014.**

**If you would like more information on joining the course please contact The Clerk, Mary Whitworth by email wchcd@tiscali.co.uk or Tel: 01494 765922
Classes held at Museum of London every Monday, with walks on Sundays.
Course runs for 8 weeks**



Hailo: The last word?

Is it the 'embattled' or 'beleaguered' **Russell Hall**? Actually there are a number of descriptive words that I should refrain from using for reasons of decency. Perhaps we'll stop at 'holed up' in his bunker at Somerset House as he says rather pathetically: "It wasn't me that applied for the private hire licence..."

He has been duplicitous on every long-winded missive he has put out; a discredited figure that continues to refer to himself as a 'founder' but who seemingly makes no company decisions.

His yank boss, **Ron Zeghibe**, has produced an app that focuses on taxi street work - the bedrock of our very existence. I suspect that what Ron Zeghibe really thinks is that **Uber** have a superior and more lucrative business model, so to compete they now have to supply cars *and* limos.

Like many of you, I have now seen liveried Hailo yellow taxis with 'Hailo scabs' emblazoned on the rear window. I thought at the time this was going too far, but having consorted with the **Oxford English dictionary**, is 'scab' really too far?

Scab: A derogatory word meaning a person who refuses to strike or join a trade union or who takes the place of a striking worker.

Now I am not so sure! Incongruously, our views are aligned with **Licensed Taxi and Private Hire** who describe apps that circumvent the law as *cowboy cab apps akin to hi-tech touts*.

On the **London Bridge** taxi rank I recently noticed a clean taxi with the driver frantically jabbing his smart phone. When I questioned

Call Sign's Stephen Berndes (R14) says...
It's a cabby's life

whether he was still on Hailo, he sheepishly admitted he was and when I said there was a principle there, he just shrugged his shoulders. Alarming, another driver I spoke with actually bragged that he was cleaning up! With selfish, greedy individuals like these who obviously do not have the taxi trade at heart, it will inevitably allow outside forces to destabilise us.

Ok, I am playing *devil's advocate* here, but maybe it's time to do some introspective navel gazing ourselves. Our **Concierge** platform looks to some suspiciously like a minicab fourth emergency service. We also do the minicab reject work. Yes, admittedly it may have been and still be a valuable asset, but isn't retaining -respect a valuable commodity too? As I said, just playing *devil's advocate*.

Taxi demo

The taxi demonstration on 11th June that brought central London to a standstill has now passed and I see its success - the number of TV, radio and news crews with helicopters being present guaranteed that - as having been the most important stand our trade could have done against the weak ineptitude of **Transport of London**. Interesting times...

Crassness?

I am sure we all say crass things to the luminaries of the day who invade our personal fiefdom

and which we later regret. My excruciating *faux pas* moment came when I picked up **Lady Antonia Fraser** with her husband **Harold Pinter** from a street in Holland Park.

I had just read Antonia Fraser's book, **The Gunpowder Plot**. What I knew and had read about Harold I didn't like. He appeared to be portrayed as a conceited, arrogant man of letters. There was a gap in their conversation and I rudely steamed in saying rather provocatively: "I liked your book on the gunpowder plot Lady Fraser, but Harold Pinter plays with pregnant pauses I don't really understand."

After a fairly long pause, Harold Pinter apologised for my ignorance. I changed my opinion of him after that encounter!

Books

I recently read an extract from **Richard Littlejohn's** book, **Littlejohn's Lost World**, in the *Mail*. Likewise, **Rod Liddle's** book **Selfish Whining Monkeys** had extracts in the *Sunday Times*. Both books are a social history of their times from infancy to the present and look like good reads. I ordered them at the local library paying 60p each to reserve. That's good value...

Stephen Berndes
 Call Sign Online

TDOY Dinner and Dance

'Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves'

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

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

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

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

RSVP by 1st November

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Dietary requirements: Veg Fish Meat

Dress smart

For further information, contact **Russell Poluck: 07850 056 765 • Tel/fax 020 8952 1357**

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When Donald Dacas (P76) was summoned to the head of Liverpool Street Station rank by the late night taxi marshal to take a credit card trip, little did he realise that the journey would end with Donald destroying the passengers bank card!

"When the taxi marshal asked if I would take a credit card trip, I jumped at the opportunity and promptly moved to the front of the rank ahead of all the other cabs waiting to take on passengers," Donald told *Call Sign*. "The marshal had recognised my Dial-a-Cab door logos and called me forward," Donald continued.

"With the old style terminal, we used to be able to authorise the trip at the beginning of the journey, but nowadays it is cleared at the end of the trip - and that's when my problems began. We had reached the destination - Pont Street - and I passed the PED through to the passenger for him to enter his card and PIN.

"After an unusually long time he said he couldn't remove his card and I could see from my MDT that the card had not been recognised. The passenger was adamant that it was stuck and so with traffic building up behind me, I offered to try to remove the card.

Donald and the disappearing chip...



"I gave it several gentle pulls but it wouldn't budge, so I gripped it firmly between finger and thumb and gave it more of - shall we say - a determined tug! Sure enough, the obstinate little blighter did shoot out of my PED. But it left a gaping hole in the card where the data chip used to be! I could see daylight through the square hole in the gen-

tleman's credit card!" Donald was now laughing heartily at the memory!

The passenger's electronic chip was still firmly inside Donald's PED and he prepared himself for a verbal assault from the passenger, but the passenger said that it was a well-used card and he realised it wasn't Donald's fault.

"I did feel slightly uncomfortable that it should have happened in my cab," Donald added, "but that's life I guess. It has certainly never happened before to me, but I'd bet supermarkets, shops and fuel stations have had the odd jammed card," Donald mused.

Fortunately, the passenger had another bank card which he used at a nearby ATM machine and Donald went to Roman Way the next day to get a new PED fitted.

"It's funny," Donald ended, "I always assumed that chips went missing when someone ate them!"

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Taxi driver's licences...

WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT!

"Firstly, let me say what an excellent, readable and informative magazine *Call Sign* is," **Graham Leonard (J20)** stated cheerily while our young hack humbly and graciously accepted the accolade on behalf of the Editor.

"I have read about and heard of drivers having real problems renewing their taxi driving licences," Graham continued "some apparently taking several months to complete the procedure as the process steadily wound its way through the various agencies. As a result, I believe some drivers have been unable to work if their current taxi driving licence had expired and they were waiting until the new licence arrived, something which must have caused untold hardship.

"So for me to get my renewed taxi driving licence back in just two weeks was absolutely amazing," Graham enthused, smiling broadly while thrusting the smart, shiny document out of the cab window!

"My CRB papers had come through the letterbox early on the Saturday morning and without further ado I filled it in and sent it off that same morning, concerned I did not delay because of those horror stories I'd heard about.

"To my surprise the CRB papers came back by the following Wednesday, so again, without delay I forwarded the document to TfL and quite astonishingly, my renewed licenced dropped through the door just a few days later. The whole process took just two working weeks, which is pretty amazing really.

"True, I didn't hang about getting the paperwork sorted at my end, but it does show how the various agencies have got their act together as they said they would, and this is the result - although perhaps I should also give due credit to the Royal Mail for their speedy service too!

"My existing driving licence is good until August and this licence carries on from the date of expiry of my present licence, so I will not lose any time at all! And that is all good news worth reporting."

LTPH Interim General Manager **Helen Chapman** told *Call Sign*: "It is always good to hear of the good experiences after interacting with us. We have been working very hard behind the scenes to get the new systems and processes working more efficiently so we can get the service to an acceptable level. We still have some work to do but it is good to see that the hard work is starting to pay off."

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LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

With Tom Quigley (Y33)



Time for a cough?

I know the government have to make the population aware of health matters and it's apparently all in our best interests.

The latest campaign showing someone coughing with the message that if you have had it for three weeks then it could be cancer isn't so much enlightenment, but more like a threat. Starting out through the winter months and into spring when many of us have colds, flu or early signs of Hay fever alongside any Asthma sufferers, it seems that everyone has a cough.

But now when I - or anyone I know - cough, I immediately do a quick mental calculation counting back the days, weeks or months from when I first noticed it.

If a passenger gets into my **Dial-a-Cab** taxi and starts coughing, where I would usually and subtly try and close the partition window and open my front windows, I now find myself behaving like a doctor, asking questions about their complaint - even offering advice and tips. No doubt I will soon be carrying spare bottles of water and lozenges etc.

The campaign obviously works, but in the back of my mind I can't help but think that like me and probably the rest of us, since it started we have all been to our GP, had an X ray, left the surgery with a prescription and a couple of items on it and before you know it, you are nearly £16 worse off than you would have been. It's one way to boost the pharmaceutical coffers, but probably a small price to pay for the reassurance of good health...

Songs ain't what they used to be...

It's often said that the songs of today aren't as good as the ones before them; no lyrics or rhythm - just beat, bass and noise and certainly not as good as the songs of previous generations.

Well maybe the reason lies in the fact that you wouldn't be allowed to sing those songs before?

I mean, could **Frank Sinatra** sing the **Paul Anka** song of doing it *My Way*? Today they would have to do it someone else's way first, probably a politically correct way to maintain fairness! Would **Andy Williams** be allowed to *Watch the girls go by*? Sexist or what! And I'm sorry, but **Neil Sedaka's** *Oh Carol* would

probably be considered as stalking! What about **The Carpenters** *Solitaire* being the only game in town? Well you would no longer be able to sit quietly in your room without the internet to play *Candy Crush Saga*, *Angry Birds*, *Word*, *Mine Craft* or any other of the thousands of on-line games.

Then there would be the problem if **Billy Jo Spears** put her *Blanket on the ground* because the world would be up in arms about the promiscuity she was preaching! Crooner and Rat Pack star, **Dean Martin**, would undoubtedly cause shock over being the *Little old wine drinker me*. And what about **Doris Day**? Could you imagine her being allowed to warble of her *Secret Love*? *The Sun*

on *Sunday* would have a field day!

Imagine the outcry and blame for violence that would beset **Bobby Darin's** glorifying of *Mack the knife* - worse still, imagine the outrage and horror that would have been thrown at **Pattie Page** for asking *How much is that doggie in the window?* She would have to go into hiding!

It's a shame that your generation's music is the best to you exclusively, but at least you can enjoy them for what they were. I'm off now to listen to **The Smiths** 'to cheer myself up'.

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

A Dial-a-Cab driver looks back in time and asks the question...

Who are we???

"I wish my ancestor's would have written down their life stories, exploits, and just everyday snippets,"

Garry Farr (R87) - a 26 year veteran of DaC - suggested to **Call Sign**, "that way I would know about my historical relatives a whole lot better than I do and be able to pass that genealogical history onto future generations.

"It was really my wife who started the ball rolling so to speak, and I got a big slice of the ancestry bug from her," Garry said thoughtfully.

"We have researched both the Welsh and English sides of my family and have been able to achieve some successes, but unfortunately the older generations didn't really speak about their lives very much so as to pass bits onto us in the modern age, so I can only go on what I can determine from official records, which is a bit 'cold' really and does not let you get to the person, which is a great shame," he told us with a trace of genuine sadness etched on his face.

"I know for instance that on my mother's side of the family, both my Grandfather and his father - my Great Grandfather - were coal miners in Wales, and my Grandfather and Great Grandfather were glass-blowers here on the English side. And my Great Great Grandfather was a 'cow herder' in Clapton!" Garry smiled at the thought, recalling with amusement when Clapton Pond was probably just a large puddle...

"So yes, it's true that I know their occupations, when certain family members were married and of course, their demise. But there must be so much more to the fabric of life than just plain facts," Garry continued. "I would so much like to know more about what went on within both sides of the generations through their inter-action with each other.

"Using documentation, I have visited some of the addresses of my ancestors but alas the passage of time has changed the scenery considerably. Old houses knocked down to rebuild modern properties, while farming land has also changed too," he mused.

Garry ended by passing some basic info to those **Dial-a-Cab** drivers that are interested.

"There are several official lines of research including **The National Archives** at Kew, the **Family Record Office** and sites such as **Ancestry**, **Findmypast** and several other resources, although some have subscription options as well. Put 'family history' into the internet and there are a range of possibilities, the local library and numerous books on the subject, but beware because once you get started it becomes very addictive and time consuming indeed. But it can also be very rewarding!"

Alan Green (E52)
Call Sign Online



Garry went back to his great great grandfather - the Clapton cow herder!

On 7th December 1681, **King Charles II** issued a Royal Warrant for the foundation of a hospital for soldiers who had become old and infirm in the service of the Crown. Then in 1682, work began on a site which had been purchased by the King, the architect responsible being **Sir Christopher Wren**. It was modelled on **Louis XIV's** Hotel des Invalides in Paris, but it would be another ten years before the 66 acre site was completed.

In 1685, following the death of King Charles II, his brother **King James II** carried on with the development of the hospital; he was also responsible for the scarlet coat which is still worn to this day as the uniform of the **Chelsea Pensioners**. It was in 1692, during in the reign of **William and Mary** that the hospital received the first of the Pensioners.

There are 286 in-Pensioners currently at the Royal Hospital, - the oldest being 102 and the average age being 82 and 6 months. 104 of the Pensioners fought in WW2. There are also survivors of the many campaigns that took place between the two World Wars and after 1945.

The statue of King Charles II, which was originally in Whitehall Palace, was moved to Founders Court in the grounds of The Royal Hospital following the death of Charles II. The statue depicts the King as a Roman and was gilded in **Queen Elizabeth II's** Golden Jubilee year.

On Thursday 5th June 2014 and due to their involvement with the Royal Hospital, members of the committee of The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled were invited to the Founders Day parade, held to remember the Founder, **King Charles II**, who after the battle of Worcester in 1651 took refuge in an oak tree to escape his pursuers; the statue on this day is decorated in oak leaves.

At 10.30am, the band of the **Grenadier Guards** under Director of Music, **Major K.Davies LRSM ALCM**, commenced playing and at 10.45 the Pensioners under the command of the Adjutant Colonel, **S.C.Bate RRC**, paraded on **Figure Court**. Those able to march formed four Guards while the rest of the Pensioners occupied seats around the parade ground.

At 11am, His Royal Highness **The Duke of Kent** entered the parade ground with Governor **Sir Redmond Watt KCB KCVO CBE DL** and Lieutenant Governor **Major General A.P.N. Currie CB**. The Secretary and Mayor of **Kensington and Chelsea** were received with a fanfare from the Fanfare Trumpeters of the **Band of The Coldstream Guards** under the Director of Music **Major D. Wolfendale BA (Mus) LRSM ALCM**. His Royal Highness then inspected the parade, which was followed by the march past with the band playing **The Boys of the Old Brigade** with the assembled 600 guests clapping in time to the music.

Following an address by The Duke of Kent, the Governor responded that the Pensioners engage in various outings throughout the year and recently twenty of them were part of a visit to Holland in London Taxis organised by the **London Taxi Benevolent**

The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled

LTBAWD AT ROYAL HOSPITAL FOUNDERS DAY PARADE



Part of the parade with the Duke of Kent

He ended with the traditional three cheers for the Founder, King Charles II, and also for Her Majesty The

Association for War Disabled (you can read about that trip on page 15) and thanked the charity for their part.

Queen. Finally there were three cheers for The Duke of Kent. The day ended with a long fanfare and the National Anthem.

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The Internet began in 1969 in America when the United States defence department found the need for a method of exchanging military data and research information between different sites. This removed the reliance on a small number of central computers and would be more resilient to a nuclear attack in which key installations would be a primary target.

The general public in the UK started tinkering with the 'net in the early 1990s and on **12 November 1997**, *Call Sign* – thanks to its IT guru **Vince Chin** – developed the first taxi

DISCUSS: It isn't us!

internet list in Europe where questions could be asked and answers given. Named **Discuss**, the bulk of those using it were drivers, but also on it were garage proprietors, radio circuit Chairmen, representatives from trade organisations and even the then head of LTI, **Jamie – now Lord – Borwick**. However, few had the internet and could go online at that time.

Discuss proved to be a useful tool, but somewhere along the line as more joined, the initial respect and friendliness departed and it became more argumentative until a time when it deteriorated to such a degree that following several warnings Vince, as moderator, closed it down with the words: The inmates are beginning to run the asylum!

"It was a long time ago," Vince told *Call Sign* recently, "but if I remember correctly there was a lot of slander made against Dial-a-Cab and also talk of me being taken to Court. I asked everyone to tone down their comments, but they ignored me. So I closed it down."

The reason we are mentioning this is because an advert for a taxi list called Discuss was recently seen by a driver who used to be on the original list and he asked *Call Sign* if it had returned. Apparently it is around again but is nothing to do with Vince or *Call Sign*. Although they claim to have been around since 1997, as it was closed that seems unlikely. However, that doesn't mean it isn't worth looking at – but it ain't us!

NEW IN OLD STREET!

But where will it stop???



A recent report in the Islington Gazette probably caused drivers reading it to shrug their shoulders and exclaim that the world had gone mad and perhaps it was time to just look the other way!

The reason? Well it may not be **San Francisco** but **Old Street**, the home area to **Dial-a-Cab**, is still the closest we have to a UK **Silicon Valley** and according to a report in the paper, a new start-up app is available to download that the paper says is not only a danger to licensed taxis, but also to Uber!

The new app – called **Funryde** – is said to offer a minicab ride with a driver who has similar interests to the passenger but will charge 70% less than taxis with an average cost of under £1 a mile. Those behind the app say there will be no need for any TfL licensing and certainly no CRB check. The company say it is non-profit making and will only set out to cover its expenses. Its drivers would be covered by their own insurance.

One of the people behind the mobile phone app, **Bassem Barake**, said that he thinks their app will make taxi drivers angry, but claims that it is a totally different experience to that of a black cab.

"You might be picked up by a doctor or an engineer and you can meet new people and talk about your interests."

It's nice to know that the NHS, which we are told is being overrun, has doctors who have the time to be minicab drivers!

Prior to the article coming out, Funryde had only 15 drivers even though the app had reached over 1,000 downloads. If you are waiting to see the doctor at your local surgery and have been told he is running late, then have patience as he or she is probably just dropping their last fare off!

We can't help but wonder what London Mayor **Boris Johnson** or **Leon Daniels**, Managing Director, Surface

Transport at TfL think about it, because many would say that the way they have allowed Uber to take control, rather than be controlled, has been the start of an anything goes policy regarding taxis and minicabs.

BLACK CAB
Heritage Tours



Black Cab Heritage Tours

Black Cab Heritage Tours have some pre-booked corporate work in 2014 and we need to increase our list of associates to help cover that work.

We only use owner drivers - but our client has requested black (in colour) taxis only. However, your **Dial-a-Cab** logos are fine provided the taxi is black and has no other ads of any kind.

If you would like to join our contact list please email me (Bob Woodford) at:

rob@blackcabheritagetours.co.uk

No guiding skills are required and I should add that this client is a Kensington based events Management Company and fellow member (together with BCHT) of **UK Inbound**, so the trips are totally different from normal taxi work. Therefore there is not any direct competition whatsoever with Dial-a-Cab work.

Bob Woodford

rob@blackcabheritagetours.co.uk

You know the one; you've been asked about it by your passengers and that bloke down the pub who knows everything. Yes, that one! The bale of hay you are supposed to carry in your taxi because the law that required you to carry one in the days of the horse and carriage has never been repealed.

Yet no matter how often you tell people that there never was such a law, the legend persists. Like all good myths, there is usually an element of truth. In London, for example, there never was a law that allowed you to pee up the back wheel of your cab with a policeman shielding you with his cape – but there was such a law in Brighton, though the copper wasn't necessary.

So if myths have a basis in fact, what about the bale of hay?

Firstly, the law. There never was a law that required the hackney coach and Hansom cabmen to carry a bale of hay. This is obvious, but most people will ignore that sentence because it destroys the myth in one fell swoop. But let's assume that they did carry a bale of hay. A bale of hay must weigh pretty much close to a ton; imagine loading that onto your cab everyday and then taking most of it off at the end of the day as the horse obviously would not need that much. Then, where would you put it? On the roof of a hackney coach perhaps, the place where the luggage was stored. But a Hansom had no such space.

In the pre-Hansom days, coaches were apt to turn over when taking a corner too fast or even when a passenger leaned out of the window. In none of these cases which were reported in the press at the time, is there mention of a bale of hay. Had there ever been one present, then the driver, passenger or pedestrian would have been crushed under the weight of it. No one was ever crushed because there never was a bale of hay in the first place.

A law was passed in the time of **William IV (1765 - 1837)**. It decreed that feeding a hackney coach horse "... in any street, road or common passage, except with corn out of a bag or with hay held or delivered with the hand," was deemed illegal and punishable with a heavy fine. This law probably never was repealed, but there is no compulsion of the driver to carry hay in the first place. But if he did, he could only use his hand or a bag to feed the horse.

In 1963, **Maurice Levinson**, a taxi driver and

The number one question that taxi drivers are asked by passengers must be whether we have picked up anyone famous! But close on its heels must be the timeless: Do you still have to carry a bale of hay? Call Sign's Sean Farrell looks into what he calls...

The Fifth Myth



later editor of the LTDA's **Taxi** newspaper, published *Taxi!* an angst ridden description of his life as a taxi driver. In the book he writes about the numerous contradictions in law that the London cab driver faced in trying to earn a living. So successful was the book that questions were asked in the House of Commons and a simplified book of rules was later published.

In *Taxi!* Levinson recalls how he wanted a policeman to arrest a minicab driver for touting. The policeman responded by saying that he (Levinson) could be arrested for not carrying a bale of hay in his luggage compartment. Levinson was *non-plussed* about the policeman's statement and fears that he could be fined for not carrying a whip either. Levinson knew the hackney carriage laws and knew this was not one of them, but he still included it in his book – probably to show the indifference of

the police to nick a tout.

Despite the success of *Taxi!* many more people would have read its review in the national press such as the Daily Mirror on June 10th 1963, in which the bale of hay story was featured. It was from these reviews that a legend was born – the fifth greatest myth of the 20th century!

And the other four myths?

- 1 *Lemmings do not commit suicide, either singular or en masse – it's anti-Darwinian.*
- 2 *You cannot see the Great Wall of China from space – several astronauts have tried.*
- 3 *Bumblebees do not defy the laws of physics – if they did the laws would be changed. If Thunderbird Two can fly, so can a bumblebee.*
- 4 *Elvis is not dead and lives in Peckham!*

Sean Farrell (B39)

Mayor: "Banning Uber would be difficult!"

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said at the launch of London's Tech Week, that it would be difficult to ban Uber. He said he could understand taxi drivers' concerns, but admitted any attempt to ban Uber would risk a judicial review.

"I think it's very difficult," he said, "we've gone to the High Court to get a ruling on this and the issue is whether the driver's mobile in the cab is equivalent to a taximeter? I can see why m'learned friends might think so, because it's receiving data about, or it's calculating the distance and time and the fare. And there are other lawyers who say that it isn't, and that was the advice of the counsel to TfL. And so we've got a legal problem."

So **Call Sign's** question has to be whether a judicial review would be that bad? After all, when Uber were licensed in 2012 for limousines, they were totally unsuited for the job. The only way they could be contacted was via their app and with no records of any note kept, no reputable licensing authority would have issued a licence to operate. But here they are two years later holding London to ransom because they have already said that nothing will stop them..



No ranks at CrossRail

Having heard that **Camden Council** are proposing a daytime ban for all traffic other than buses from **Tottenham Court Road** because of the oncoming **CrossRail** station being built there and the fact that according to Camden, the area will be busier than Heathrow, you would have thought that if nothing else, **TfL** would have made sure there would be taxi ranks at every **CrossRail** station.

However they say that ranks will not be put in, their priority will be to accommodate bus stops and there won't be the room for taxis.

Second class transport? The way things are going we'll be lucky to reach those giddy heights! And besides, with **Gower Street** proposed as becoming two-way and the southern end partly pedestrianised, we'll probably be stuck in so much traffic that we won't be able to reach the station anyway!



Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

We won't see this at CrossRail stations as buses are more important!

World naked bike ride hits London!

June 14 in central London saw the tenth yearly run of the **World Naked Bike Ride** and no less than 12 **Dial-a-Cab** drivers sent in photos! We don't usually get that much co-operation!

The ride is a form of protest but contains many different groups protesting about whatever it is that affects them. Groups represented road safety for cyclists to protection of plants and a large selection in between. The naked aspect represents the vulnerability of cyclists in traffic and the demo is held in



Had the weather been bad it would have been a bummer, but hey...!!!

over fifty cities around the world.

Those riding are linked by their determination to all be naked on their bikes on **WNBR Day**, riding in celebration, jubilation to deliver a vision of a cleaner, safer, body-positive world to the masses.

How naked you are depends on you and no one criticises if you are wearing too much (and definitely not if you aren't wearing enough)! Many paint their bodies and it usually is a fun day. June 14 in London didn't disappoint.

Uber taxi driver mystery

When **Uber** announced it would be taking black cabs onto its system, few in the licensed taxi business believed anyone would join. So it was a shock when a tweet recently announced a welcome to the first black taxi to join the Dutch-based app.

What was even more surprising was that the tweet not only gave out the driver's name but also his taxi registration number. Within minutes another tweet said he was near Fleet Street, followed soon after by a second saying he was at St Paul's Cathedral.

The driver soon realised that he had become public enemy number one and put his own tweet out saying that he was allegedly working under cover for **Radio Taxis** and that they had asked him to join and see what happened. He then announced that he had already parted company with Uber.

Soon after, **Call Sign** saw an email from an Ealing Yellow Badge driver saying that Uber would be prepared to take them on and give them London work! He went on to explain how drivers could join Uber. This was followed by a response from someone called Pritesh at Uber's office on the first floor of 21 Calendonian Road explaining that they could join and would be given a fifty pound activation bonus. The only question is, if genuine, how many will be silly enough to cross that line. And since when were Uber licensed by Islington?

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Darren Johnson: Lease electric taxis to drivers?



Going back to 2010, London Assembly member and representative of the Green Party, Darren Johnson has appeared in *Call Sign* several times with his views that were often interpreted as anti-black cab. He has always denied that and claimed that he just wanted to help clean up London's air.

He has now asked the Mayor and TfL to come up with 'imaginative' ways to help London's taxi drivers to buy environmentally friendly cabs. This follows on from **Boris Johnson's** plan announced last year that all taxis registered from 2018 would have to be zero emission capable and operate in their greener mode while in pollution hotspots.

The former Green member of Lewisham Council from 2002 until this year when he didn't stand wants the Mayor to ease the financial burden on taxi drivers by TfL bulk buying electric taxis and leasing them out to drivers – similar to the process they do for buses.

The Mayor had previously said they were exploring a number of options to encourage introduction of new zero emission capable taxis as quickly as possible.

One possible action would be to provide financial incentives to ease the initial cost of moving to greener cabs.

Darren Johnson said: **"We need action on air pollution sooner rather than later and taxi drivers need to be given assistance to switch to zero emission vehicles as soon as possible. TfL need to think imaginatively on this, such as bulk buying electric black cabs and leasing them out to drivers, which could help deliver clean cabs at an affordable price."**

Win £100 with a caption...

Call Sign won't be paying for your upcoming holidays but we'll give £100 towards the spending money for the best caption to the photo of DaC Board member Mike Son chatting to Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. The competition is open to drivers and staff.

Entries to callsignmag@aol.com, post to Call Sign at the office address or leave your entry in the DaC driver's reception. Closing date is July 14 and the editor's decision is final.



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Goodbye engine!

Hi Alan

Well it's finally happened! On Tuesday 8th April 2014 after hearing many stories of the problems with the TX4 engine, my one gave up the ghost outside my house with a few clunks and vibrations. No warning lights came on, nothing. Just short of seven years old with 175,000 miles on the clock, I am told I have done well, as some drivers have had this problem at 70,000 miles. But now I have to shell out over £4,000 for a recon engine - why buy a new one? The original engine was serviced every 10,000 miles with the correct oil, the correct anti-freeze mixture and everything else that is asked for at my garage (Whitfords of Hoddesdon).

Why would I buy another one? How long will this recon engine last? How many will I need to see out fifteen years? I feel once again that the cab driver is being fobbed off with inferior goods. In my 37 years of cab driving, the Nissan Fairway stands head and shoulders above all else, so I ask why do we have to put up with this inferior engine and what is my recourse? Or are we just hanging on for the hybrid / electric taxi?

Melvyn Harvey (E87)

Most would agree with your comments on the Fairway, but I think that many might also consider that 175,000 miles on a TX4 with constant stopping and starting wasn't too bad either! The new electric Metrocab claims to be almost ready for a virtually unlimited existence, but that will also be provided the battery is looked after. Otherwise you can replace the word engine with battery so far as cost goes ...Ed

Credit Cards

I recently had a credit card job through the system. My passenger said how fantastic and easy it was to use. I know it's on the App, but is the facility being offered to present and future corporate accounts?

Stephen Field (F68)

Keith Cain replies: This is a simple one to answer, Stephen. When I came back into Sales, I knew I couldn't do it alone so I have Natalie Ezekiel who is responsible for new business and Carol Carpenter who is developing customer relationships. Both are promoting not only the new App, but absolutely everything we can offer to clients - and they are doing exceptionally well.

Changing Credit Card trips to cash?

Hello Alan.

I don't know about other drivers, but I have noticed an increase in the number of jobs that are booked as Credit Cards and then revert them to cash. When this happens, I don't put £2 on the extras because DaC don't charge me. Should we not start charging the £2 extras to Credit Card customers who revert to cash as they are getting a cash cab for no booking fee.

Richard Potter (T51)

Control Centre Manager Allan Evans replies: As far as I am aware, if a Credit Card trip is changed to cash, unless the driver adds the £2 onto the extras, then nothing is charged. In effect the driver loses 50p and the Society loses the £1.50 hence the passenger does not pay the booking fee. If it is becoming a regular problem, the system may need to be updated.

Talking pumps?

Dear Alan

I recently went into a garage at the end of a shift and had to fill my cab up from the off-side of the pump because the normal sides were busy. Don't ask me how, but I accidentally filled it up with petrol. I've been told that a small amount of petrol wouldn't do too much harm if there is a substantial amount of diesel still in the tank, but mine was virtually empty! So I phoned someone who towed me to a place where the tank could be emptied out (it is apparently illegal on the garage forecourt). It cost me almost £150 plus the cost of the wasted petrol, which couldn't be recycled as it had diesel mixed in with it.

So I just wondered whether it would be feasible to put speakers in pumps that say this is a diesel or petrol pump. I remember once hearing a 'this is a diesel pump' message in a garage, so surely it wouldn't be that difficult to put them into every pump so that no one can make a mistake. I know they are coloured green for petrol and black for diesel, but when it's dark and you're going home after a long day, you aren't as alert as you were on the way out to work.

Sid Nathan (K88)

I spoke to a representative of Esso who told me that the talking pump facility is available but when they tried to implement it as an experiment in a Manchester garage, customers complained that they could never tell whether it was their pump or the one next to it that was "talking" because they were all constantly in use. Sorry Sid, but you'll just have to be more careful. Every taxi driver does it at least once, so you're probably ok for the next 20 years! ...Ed

Call Sign Online

Alan

Just to say thank you for providing Call Sign Online, but it was sad news reading about Dave Kupler in the May issue. I remember him well from our voice dis-

patch days. Incidentally, was this issue a first with no moans about EC5! Hopefully they will disappear totally when you go GPS. I think it should have been done years ago. All I now have to look at is my home computer screen with not a data terminal in sight! My best wishes to everyone at Dial-a-Cab...

Ray Sorene (ex-A53)

Thanks Ray. I hope retirement is as enjoyable as you hoped it would be ...Ed

David Kupler and Ray Marks

Dear Ed

Like many I was surprised and shocked to read in the *May Call Sign* of the sudden passing of David Kupler and Ray Marks. Whilst I've heard of Mr Marks, I don't recollect ever meeting him other than maybe to say hello at an AGM. David, on the other hand, was someone who whilst I had never met socially, I'm hardly ever likely to forget as Jon Robinson (E88) points out in the same issue, because I was often on the sharp end of David's quick tongue.

However, unlike many of my other adversaries on DaC over the years, I never once detected any hostility or malice with David. I think he just liked to hear his own voice at AGMs and I was the obvious target.

Allen Togwell

Former DaC Board Member

Hello Alan.

I did not have the pleasure of getting to know Mr Kupler but always enjoyed reading his poetry in *Call Sign*. I have to admit feeling a little sad to hear about his death and was very moved by his two final poems published in the last edition. Can I take this opportunity to offer my sincere condolences to the family of Mr Kupler and I pray he will rest in peace.

He appears to have been a very colourful and much loved character and it seems to be true when they say that the good die young.

Clarence Ishmael (R54).

Hi Alan

Thank you so much for the copy of *Call Sign*. I read it and thought it a shame that my dad never mentioned his family much - especially his 12 grandchildren. My dad was a unique character but you probably already know that. He spent most of his life searching for something; unfortunately he didn't know he already had it until it was too late to enjoy it. Thank you again for making such an effort with my dad, I truly appreciate it.

Ozzie Chavez (David Kupler's daughter)
Los Angeles, Cali



Mailshot

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Dear Alan

David was so proud of Dial-a-Cab and would have been chuffed to see his photo on the front cover of *Call Sign*. I know that he held you in such high regard and saw you as a true friend and I have to say that had you not stepped in, I could have faced some serious financial problems after he died. Many promised they'd help, but only you and John Riley came through. I will never forget what you've done for me.

Mrs Janet Kupler

Ozzie, your dad dictated his own obituary and those two final poems, but suddenly deteriorated towards the end at which time I thought it better to be at his bedside as a friend rather than as an Editor. He mentioned all his family to me, including his grandchildren, but just never went into detail preferring to talk about his taxi driving career first because of the nature of the mag. He hoped to personalise it later, but sadly we never got to go beyond that.

What Janet Kupler is referring to is the help that the DaC Credit Union gave at such a terrible time. All I did was to make a few enquiries and then John Riley and the DACCU did the work. They were brilliant and I'm sure David would have been delighted to see his name publicised the Credit Union because of the insurance policy they have for just such a terribly sad event. So I also offer my sincere thanks for the help they gave Jan. That would have impressed David far more than seeing his photo on the cover ...Ed

Lyft...

Hi Alan

In your May *Editorial* you talk about Uber and then add: "God knows what they will make of Lyft when they come over, as they undoubtedly will." What is Lyft?

Alex Constantinou (N05)

The Lyft app is Uber with a subtle difference in that drivers also use their own cars to act as cabs, but do not make any charge! Instead they claim that what they are actually offering is a lift – hence the name Lyft. What passengers then do to get round the law of unlicensed vehicles is to make a "donation" towards expenses.

What we as taxi drivers have learned is that whereas in years gone by, people were concerned about which vehicle they got into, nowadays it is purely a matter of price. The question of safety, drivers that can be trusted and who know their way round come second – even to institutions that should know better. Anthony Newley once exclaimed: Stop the world, I want to get off." I think I now know what he meant. The question is whether LTPH understand and

their recent dictates re Uber suggest that they don't! ...Ed

Cab App offer

Dear Sir

I feel compelled to write to *Call Sign* after reading Cab App's absolutely derisory so-called offer to 'buy us out' with our own money! Do Mr Schive and co really have such contempt for Dial-a-Cab and its members to think that his share-out is a fair deal? You do not have to be a genius to realise that we are in the eye of the greatest storm of our lives with regard to our future. Mr Schive does not give us anything that we could not give ourselves. For example, as Mr Paul Hammett (V42) in the February issue suggested, we could restructure and finance our members for new cab renewals ourselves. There is also much more we can and should do, but DaC members must shake themselves out of the lethargic state that the cab trade seems to have fallen into. But I will leave it at that for now. But please, let's start to think like the businessmen we pretend we are!

Bruno Manfredi (F23)

Cab App had their offer given out to cab drivers on ranks, put onto driver's windcreens when their cabs were parked, had it published in *The Badge* and also released it on Twitter. Two other bidders were tied in by Non-Disclosure Agreements but Cab App wanted their offer to be released at the DaC AGM. The Board decided that it would be unfair to release their offer when the other two couldn't be mentioned and that Cab App's was the lowest of the three. Also, Cab App's accounts showed a deficit of £96,000. Not a basis for buying a company out ...Ed

What's the answer?

Hi Alan

The subject I am about to mention may not be very popular with many drivers, even with some of our Board Members. Run-ins! Somebody has got to open driver's eyes to this delicate subject. To start, it seems that we have lost two big accounts because we won't give in when clients ask not to have run-ins included in their contract. So what do they do? Phone another circuit! What would you rather do, get a job and start the meter when you get to the pickup or lose £millions just because we want that extra couple of quid on the meter? We will just keep sitting on our backsides or riding round in circles as time goes on because other circuits are cutting out run-ins - and I include the PH mob's prices – resulting in us literally giving them the work that we used to have.

Just think, lads and lassies, you don't need a run-in on the island, you're usually already there. In the City, if you're there you don't have far to run normally. You will probably ask about all the traffic. Well if you think you're too far away then just don't



accept the job - there will probably be another cab that is nearer.

When you think about all this, the run-in and gratuity came in when our circuit first started up over fifty years ago when there was no other competition. Well boys and girls, times have changed and now there is competition - lots of it! The only way I can see us keeping our work and winning some of our lost accounts back, because we won't get it all back, is to beat our opponents at their own game and eliminate the run-in. Once you are outside the pickup, the meter will soon start to tick up and once word gets round that we don't have run-ins, I'm sure we will see our work pickup.

So please open your eyes; look at all the Addison Lee cars with passengers in while we see empty taxis driving around or ranking up. It's a no brainer boys and girls, so talk to your Board or within 3 years we will only have half, if not less, of the accounts than we have got now.

Gratuities? Well that's another subject and I don't want to upset you all too much; perhaps another time if and when we get our work back...

Chris Passfield (Y25)

What's the answer?

Hi Alan

Two massive accounts gone from E14. How much longer can we continue the way we are trading? We lose accounts and tenders one after the other! Can DaC be sustained the way it is? The recession has changed business expectations. Hailo is going to offer cars to their customers, how long before they offer taxi drivers trips home at minicab prices? Then possibly airports at car prices?

As for DaC, we will have to change the way we charge customers. Are the days of the massive million pound accounts at DaC now a thing of the past?

I still think DaC should use our money in the bank to buy a large profitable private hire company and use the profits to subsidise DaC booking fees. Maybe some DaC accounts would pay the meter fare; it would be nice to know if this would help or if it is the £4.20 run in that makes us unable to compete?

Jon Robinson (E88)

What's the answer?

Dear Alan

When will the Board of Management realise that they must challenge the opposition by going the same way and do away with tips, waiting time and run-ins! No doubt some drivers will be up in arms, but I bet most of those drivers had been on Hailo! But if it

Mailshot



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

means we retain our work and in all probability get even more from these accounts, then maybe we wouldn't have lost those two big E14 accounts. If the Board don't take the bull by the horns and do something drastic quickly, then we won't have a business to sell anyway!

I would appreciate it if our subscribers would just take a few minutes to think about it; no run-in work is better than just sitting around waiting for some jobs that may come out.

Ivor Belkin (C97)

What's the answer?

What can we do? Well there's service, smartness and we should take on no new drivers unless they have full aircon. If they don't like it then they can join GetTaxi. Seriously, I have no real idea but what we are doing now obviously ain't working. We may have healthy cash float now, but it's not a bottomless pit. Perhaps we should set up a stately smaller office or something. It's not just the big E14 accounts; it's the ones in the city. Addy Lee is not cheap yet it has no problems, so it has to be us.

AL has most of DB and MS, their drivers pay £250 per week plus insurance, plus they have to give a deposit on the car. They are probably – after administration – more expensive than us. Lastly Citibank was taken by Brunel, our Concierge partner, disgraceful...

Stephen Field (F99)

I have had many similar emails and phone calls to the above, but who didn't want to go into the magazine. I understand all the points and I'm sure that no gratuities, no run-ins and no waiting time could help regain some work. Some have also added that the driver shouldn't put the meter on until the passenger comes down. In other words ranks outside the buildings! If you are outside the door then it's fine, but if it gets busier in the streets as it seems to be doing, who will bother running to do the jobs? I run to cover quite a lot of account trips, but I can tell you that I wouldn't run from E1 to cover an E14 trip with no run-in, waiting time or gratuity and not putting my meter on until the passenger comes out!

If we did give up all those 'extras' to encourage accounts, then before long they would want discounted fares as well. How do I know? Well Keith Cain showed me a list of prices that a prospective new account had sent him to ask if he could match them. He compared them to previously 'cleared' trips, removed run-in costs and gratuities and still couldn't compete!

There is an answer out there and we have to find it somehow – perhaps via our IT dept, which is by far the best in the business - but working for nothing isn't it, although I suspect that fixed prices may become one answer. Then we'll see how genuine some of the comments to Call Sign have been, because as the hot weather hit and it got busier, coverage didn't exactly go through the roof. We are all businessmen and often use that as an excuse as to why we won't cover radio work. But sadly we can't have it both ways. You can't just give passenger the above 'perks' when it's quiet but then not cover the work when it gets busier on the streets.

As for Stephen's comment on Concierge itself, DaC has no partners. It is our system. Citi elected to have Brunel as their PH company on it. Ten years ago, when DaC built and introduced its platform, there would have been no question that Citi and co would have stayed with us because Concierge was a brilliant concept that gained us a huge amount of taxi work, even though it meant dealing with those clients' preferred PH companies. In fact the only people arguing against it were taxi drivers, led by internet non-members who refused to understand the reasoning behind the concept. Ten years on and Concierge is still as good as any platform out there, but sadly is no longer the *only* one, so customers can again look at price – and we know the rest. As Concierge proved, DaC has the finest IT department in taxiland by far... so watcha got boys??? ...Ed

Uber and Hailo

Dear Alan

My dad was at D-Day (Caen) so it now irritates me at this particular time when many remember the 70th anniversary of the landings that some geek from San Francisco can try to make our industry obsolete. Uber don't even have a landline. As for Hailo, it was set up for black cabs and became a success, so what do they do? They pass it over to minicabs! It takes a huge amount of believing and I'd go as far as to say that it stinks...

David Heath (Ex-W27)

Hi Alan

I guess some of you saw Hailo's open letter to the trade. My personal comment is that the three London drivers who have played an immense part in getting Hailo accepted by London drivers and public must be feeling very shame-faced at the moment. Well and truly shafted! They may well put a brave front up and just think of their personal positions and long term prospects, but deep down I'm sure they are horrified at this turn of events. I don't know the other two drivers, but have always found **Russell Hall** to be very passionate about the cab trade and willing to put his hand in his pocket to help support ideas that benefit the trade. I am not and never have been on Hailo, but if I was I'm sure I would have deleted the app as soon as I finished reading the open letter.

Passengers / customers of Hailo in my personal opinion used their app for one reason and one reason only - to book a London taxi. If they just wanted transport from A to B then there are any number of minicab companies they could phone or use the ever expanding number of PH apps on the market.

Eddie Lambert (V37)

See Editorial on page three ...Ed

The future

This is my first ever letter to *Call Sign* but with the work situation that we now all find ourselves in with the recent loss of the two leading accounts, I think we are in need of an EGM to put the views of the membership directly to the Chairman and the BoM so that they can tell us just what we are facing as an organisation. My own view is that there is now no way back to our previous position and before our cash assets are eaten up, we should call it a day and divide the assets among the members or be told if there is still any chance of a sale. We must be told what is happening before it is too late.

Chris Caselton (O24)

Because of a confidentiality agreement, the BoM can't comment on your letter, Chris, but yes I believe that prior to the time of writing one of the companies involved had their auditors at DaC for in excess of two weeks. As that is a somewhat expensive procedure, then you would have to assume that progress is being made. No meeting would be allowed to tell you more than that. I believe that Brian Rice also sent out a letter to drivers giving an update on what appears to be the main sticking point. As for what we are facing, I think we all know what's out there. Competition by the bucket load! Chris, if you read all the letters above, you'll see that everyone has their own views on what is the best way forward. Sadly, it isn't that easy because the real bottom line is that PH drivers are happy to work for far less than us and pay their bosses whatever they ask for. No doubt if we doubled our subs, we'd get more work because we could then charge customers less. In other words subsidise ourselves! I don't think so!

I have a personal view that I can't put onto paper at this time, but it certainly isn't anywhere near as dark as yours and I have spoken about it to any driver that asked me. I have no doubt that DaC has a future ...Ed



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