

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

May 2014

Call Sign



Goodbye Kupkake

19 May 1947– 1 April 2014



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

June 4th 2014 sees the opening of Terminal 2 at Heathrow. The first airline to move to T2 is United Airlines. Other airlines will move on a timetable through to October. Knowing HTR, the move dates may change and as there is no June edition of Call Sign, this is the best advance information that I can give you. The list below is valid as of 10/04/2014...

Heathrow Airline Transfers of Terminals

Date of Transfer	Airline	To	From
30/03/2014	British Airways to Tel Aviv	Transferring to Term 5	from Terminal 1
02/04/2014	Delta Airlines to Boston, New York and Seattle only.	Transferring to Term 3	from Terminal 4
04/06/2014	United Airlines	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminals 1 & 4
18/06/2014	Air Canada	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 3
18/06/2014	Air China	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 3
18/06/2014	ANA	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 3
24/06/2014	US Airways	Transferring to Term 3	from Terminal 1
02/07/2014	Avianca	Transferring to Term 2	New entrant
02/07/2014	EVA Air	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 3
02/07/2014	Thai Airways	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 3
02/07/2014	Turkish Airlines	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 3
09/07/2014	Aer Lingus	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
23/07/2014	Aegean	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
10/09/2014	SAS Scandinavian Airlines	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 3
10/09/2014	Virgin Atlantic Little Red	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
17/09/2014	Egyptair	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 3
17/09/2014	Ethiopian Airways	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 3
17/09/2014	Singapore Airlines	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 3
01/10/2014	Austrian	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
01/10/2014	Lufthansa	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
08/10/2014	Germanwings	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
15/10/2014	Brussels Airlines	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
15/10/2014	SWISS	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
22/10/2014	Air New Zealand	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
22/10/2014	Asiana Airlines	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
22/10/2014	Croatia Airlines	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
22/10/2014	LOT Polish Airlines	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
22/10/2014	South African Airways	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1
22/10/2014	TAP Portugal	Transferring to Term 2	from Terminal 1

May 2013 was the last time the HTR departure terminals article was published; little has changed from that issue which is still available from www.nashsnumbers.co.uk. However, the following changes have occurred.

BA to Bangkok, Bucharest and Tel Aviv now depart T5.

New airline Air Serbia T4 code JU Tel 020 8976 6000

Airlines just cannot stop changing their phone numbers, here are their latest changes.

Air Mauritius	020 7434 4375	Bulgaria	+359 2402 0400
China Southern	+86 2022 3956	Ethihad	0845 608 0644
Iran Air	020 8741 8000	Libyan	0871 222 9222
Tarom	020 8745 5542	Turkmenistan	020 8577 2211
Uzbekistan	0844 482 1695	Avianca (Columbian airline)	0871 744 7472

And finally Saudi Arabian Airlines is now called Saudia

The www.myfav.co.uk website is going through a major revamp, please bear with me whilst the update is fully implemented. The "Taxi" page can now be displayed without signing in. Just click the "Taxi < -----" link in the list below "Left screen selector". New facilities are being regularly added which will make this website your ideal "Home Page".

from the editor's desk

Awful April

After *Call Sign* slipped in its *April Fool* gag about a six-wheeled taxi that could park sideways and the phone calls from drivers enquiring about this "amazing taxi" had slowed, I assumed that April would slide away along with the first three months of 2014. But not in a million years did I expect April to herald the two most appalling pieces of news concerning the deaths of two very long-standing *Dial-a-Cab* drivers – *Call Sign's* poet David "Kupcake" Kupler (Y74) and Ray Marks (K80).

Ray had been working in his cab just days before he suddenly collapsed and died. David had suffered since last November when a small shadow appeared on his lung and within three months had quickly spread. Both drivers had been with the Society since the 1970s, although David had left in the 80s to try life in California before eventually returning.

There was a huge turn-out of drivers at Ray's funeral with many of his old friends from both the Finsbury Square rank and the Gresham Street Piccolo sandwich bar. **Terry Bezant** even drove down from Wales, while **Brian Rice** came in from Hampshire to the Waltham Abbey cemetery.

David had decided many years ago that when the time came for his passing, he would ask for his body to be donated to medical science. Having worked in a mortuary many years before starting his cabbage career, he always queried how prospective consultants could ever learn with nothing to practice on. Then again, David always had a mind of his own and looked at life somewhat differently than most – something that often showed in his poetry for *Call Sign*. He even dictated his own obituary from a hospital bed and that is inside this issue, as well as two poems that he dictated to me just days before he died.

Ray's passing was very sudden compared to David's, which involved the sad sight of his physical condition gradually deteriorating although his brain kept its sharpness right till the end. His passing could have been made so much easier had some pen pushing twerp in the UK allowed his daughter, **Ossie** – who lives in California – to get an emergency passport and help David to get all three daughters together to say his goodbyes. He had organised one last trip where *Call Sign* was going to take them to Southend to have a fish and chip lunch at a beach-side café, something they used to love doing in their younger days. But that was denied to them because someone insisted on keeping strictly to protocol – something a fit David Kupler would have created merry hell about. By the time it had been okayed, it was far too late.

Both drivers have left their mark on this Society and all we can but do is to wish both Jan Kupler and Frances Marks long lives with the sincere hope that these two losses should be their last...

Money? No thank you...

In what must be considered to be a rather surprising move for the number one tourist destination in the world, Transport for London have decided to make all bus travel cash free from July 6. TfL say that the move follows a considerable drop in the number of people paying their bus fare in cash.

According to **Leon Daniels**, TfL's Managing



Director Surface Transport: "As Londoners and visitors change the way they pay for goods and services in the capital, I am proud that we are at the forefront of that change. Customers will not only benefit from a quicker, cheaper and more convenient method of paying their bus fare; it will also enable us to save millions of pounds each year – which will be reinvested in further improvements to the capital's transport network."

I know that Leon Daniels has been castigated by some taxi trade papers, but I have always found him to be someone who, when asked a question by *Call Sign*, gave an honest answer. So I have just have two things to say to him. Firstly, not every tourist is going to have an *Oyster* card, so thank you because that decision may well make this trade busier. And secondly, please PLEASE don't invest the money you are saving in even more buses because we can't move in London as it is for empty ones running around. So if you want to save even more money, cut the numbers of buses running around – which will get Boris closer to his emissions target – while also helping to cut traffic jams. Yes, taxi emissions aren't good, but ask any motorist and they will tell you that it is the unnecessary number of empty buses causing hold-ups everywhere that exacerbates the problem.

PS Mr Daniels: If you could get someone to teach bus drivers how to pull out safely, we'd appreciate it...

Signals

This issue has O2 responding to an invitation explaining why signals aren't as good as we expected from our new terminals. Whilst they can be like lightning at times, at other times they seem to be the opposite. I spoke to drivers on both **ComCab** and **Radio Taxis** and both circuits seem to be suffering from similar problems, with RTG also having problems with the same job occasionally being duplicated and going out to two different drivers.

The answer? I dunno, but I'm hoping that O2 do and can sort it out because I think the terminal itself is excellent, as is the mapping and satnav. My thanks also to DaC IT Director **John Bankes** who not only got O2 to write, but who has also backed it up with a relevant article of his own.

Who teaches the teachers?

Call me silly – you can stop now thank you! – but I can't understand this situation where **Uber** drivers seem able to use their smart phones as a form of meter, while TfL apparently consider that device to not actually be a

meter. So that has to make one ask what it actually is then?

My view is that if a smart phone can tell a taxi passenger the fare it has gained from a combination of time and distance, then it is a taximeter. Otherwise what is it and what other purpose could it be used for?

When **Uber** first approached TfL, their spokesperson claimed they couldn't get over how easy and accommodating the licensing department was. If TfL is now saying that **Uber's** meter isn't a meter – and there are passengers who will assume **Uber** to be a reputable company purely on the strength of them having meter facilities – then perhaps they could explain what it actually does, because there is an act – *The Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998 (section 2)* – that specifically forbids PH companies using meters.

Uber CEO and joint founder, **Travis Kalanick**, gained a reputation for doing whatever he thought would be best for his business and not allowing red tape to stand in his way. That philosophy seems to have crossed the Atlantic along with the **Uber** name and meters will be the first stop along the road if no one takes a stand now, because it seems that TfL won't be doing anything other than approving whatever **Uber** wants. So I'm pleased to note that that the **LTDA** are contemplating a judicial review and looking at a possible private investigation into **Uber's** actions, which seems to drive a coach and horses – with a meter – through the Private Hire Act.

Even the **Licensed Private Hire Car Association (LPHCA)** through **Steve Wright** says it has lost confidence in TfL's ability to bring cab apps into line and – obviously referring to **Uber** – accusing them of masquerading as private cabs without following the same rules. God knows what they will make of **Lyft** when they come over, as they undoubtedly will.

The problem is that the taxi trade is regulated and if done in a correct manner, is beneficial because our passengers know what they are getting. We put up with a lot of unnecessary stuff in order to get the excellent name that we have. But if TfL through LTPH are going to let **Uber** do whatever they like, then there seems little point in taxis remaining as they are. LTPH like to think of themselves as our teachers. So the question must be: Who teaches the teachers???

Hailo and PH

Call Sign has often wondered aloud in print about what would happen if London's **Hailo** fleet failed to cover work during busy periods because of the poor returns involving no run-ins and free waiting time.

The question was how long would it be before **Hailo** began using cars? Well, if **New York's** **Hailo** fleet is anything to go by, then the answer could be fairly soon, especially as **Hailo** say they are moving into the corporate field!

We should add that it wouldn't be the fault of **Hailo**, but of greedy taxi drivers who don't want to go and pick up passengers for nothing!

Hols!

As usual *Call Sign* closes in June for the annual hols, but we'll be back in July. Wherever you go and whatever you do, enjoy yourself...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Selling DaC and Twitter

You are all aware that there are three organisations interested in becoming involved with **Dial-a-Cab**. I later informed two of the organisations that we had received a better indicative offer than they had submitted. The first organisation came back with an increased revised offer; however, the second organisation responded in a rather different manner.

They decided to release their offer on **Twitter**, which so far as I was concerned was entirely unethical and most certainly unprofessional. In addition, they distributed the letter to any Member they saw and I am also informed they were leaving copies of the letter on any unattended Dial-a-Cab vehicles.

The organisation in question is a 'start up' company called **CabApp**. They were the only organisation out of the three that did not have a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) in place and they intimated that I should make their name known at the AGM. I didn't do that as I felt all three organisations should be treated equally and the other two had NDAs in place.

I also felt CabApp were endeavouring to treat our AGM as a Public Relations exercise to get their name known in the trade for when their App is finally up and running in London - or anywhere else come to that - other than to process credit cards, which is all they appear to do now.

Not only did they release their offer on Twitter, they also took to emailing an individual DaC Board Member with defamatory and derogatory remarks about me, which in turn put that BM into an awkward position. However, since then every Board Member - with the exception of myself - has received a hand delivered letter from CabApp with a chronological summary of events, even though I have kept the Board fully informed every step of the way!

It is obvious they are new to the trade, as I have had to tolerate that type of character assassination for the past twenty years and of course you do tend to develop a thick skin after such a long time. They gave a presentation to the BoM in January, after which every single Board Member felt it had been very amateurish and we all agreed they did not understand the taxi industry - and certainly not in London at the very least. After they released their letter, I learned subsequently from both **ComCab** and **RTG** that they too had been approached by CabApp in the past!

I have looked at their abbreviated accounts for the year ended 31/3/2013 and they show that CabApp is in the red to the tune of £96k. In my view it would have been irresponsible for the BoM to have even considered putting this offer to Members as there doesn't appear to be any substance to their organisation.



Credit Card pre-authorisation

The fleet is almost fitted with the new equipment, we have around three hundred mobiles to go and the task will then be completed.

You all now seem to be getting familiar with the chip and pin facility, but if any of you are still nervous regarding the Pin Enabled Device (PED) then please come in to see Daren Morley who will be happy to give you a refresher on the system.

According to the Banks, the chip and pin facility is far more secure than just having the swipe. However, although Members are becoming more familiar with chip and pin, some have stated they miss the pre-authorisation whereby funds can be reserved before the trip has been completed. We took note of your concerns and the Bank has now finally agreed to allow Dial-a-Cab the pre-authorisation facility, even though we are equipped with chip and pin. There is no doubt it will make some Members feel more secure when they can reserve an amount of money before completing the trip.

Unfortunately, to install this latest facility will initiate us doing an upgrade to the equip-

ment you have in the cab, consequently, the 'pre-auth' facility will not be installed until we do a recall to install version eight onto your in-cab terminals.

Apps

I have never known so many changes in the taxi industry within such a short space of time as have occurred in the last few years. We've had the licensing of minicabs through to the introduction of Apps, including Uber which in my view is totally illegal as their minicabs are equipped with a meter - albeit on the driver's mobile smart phone.

Some taxi Apps have introduced minimum charges, even though it is illegal to charge more than the metered fare. All this is going on in our industry and yet LTPH seem powerless to do anything, or indeed can't be bothered to do anything! I don't believe this would have been allowed to happen under the regime of the old PCO.

It appears that a new development, although not illegal, has now been introduced by one of the taxi Apps. They have recruited a nucleus of their drivers that do the highest amount of work to agree to work certain hours and accept and complete every trip that is offered to them. Consequently, the remainder of their drivers are being offered much less work and I'm led to believe it has caused some resentment.

What that taxi App has actually achieved is to turn itself into a Radio Circuit with the driver working specified hours, every trip As Directed as well as being non-rejectable and of course with no run-in and an amount of free waiting time for the customer - clever eh?

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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	<p><i>"It is at the edge of a petal that love waits"- William Carlos Williams</i></p>

APPS: TfL look at regulatory framework...

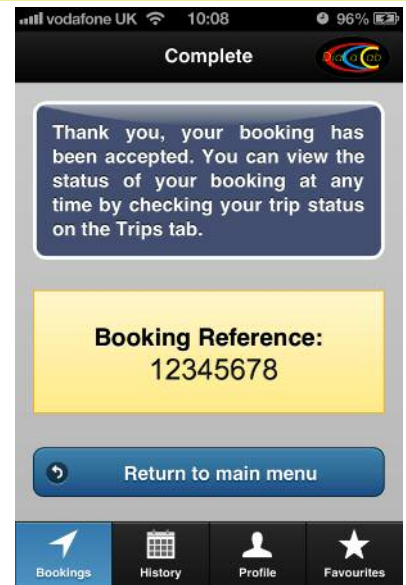
Transport for London has confirmed that it welcomes the use of taxi and private hire apps to benefit passengers, subject to those apps meeting the high standards of public safety TfL expects.

The licensing authority is inviting the taxi (and private hire) trade to provide their views on how the regulatory framework should be applied to this rapidly developing technology, while ensuring that the current highest standards of public safety and customer service in the trades are maintained.

However, the rapid pace at which smart phone based technology has been developing

in recent years has led to a need for clarity about what is required in order for apps to comply with the regulatory framework in London. TfL is seeking to clarify that position and has asked the two trades for their input to formalise the regulatory framework and ensure there is a level playing field for all operators.

Leon Daniels, TfL's Managing Director of Surface Transport, said: "We welcome developments that make life easier for passengers. As in many other areas of transport and retail services, apps can offer passengers the potential of better and more convenient services. We are asking the trades to embrace these advances in technology, which have the potential to further improve London's taxi and private hire services and have asked them to be part of the



DaC App via smart phone

formal process to help shape the regulatory framework in this rapidly developing area."

While it is perfectly legal for an app to put a customer directly in touch with a licensed hackney carriage driver, any app that puts a customer directly in touch with a private hire driver without the booking being accepted by an operator first is illegal. Even if the licensed driver is also a licensed operator, the booking must be accepted at the licensed premises. A booking cannot be accepted by a private hire operator in a vehicle or through a mobile phone on the street.

More controversially, TfL say that smart phones used by private hire drivers – which act as GPS tracking devices to measure journey distances and relay information so that fares can be calculated remotely from the vehicle – do not constitute the equipping of a vehicle with a taxi meter. That is something Uber have been pushing for and apparently would have gone ahead with whether they had permission or not.

Further discussion with both trades are set to take place in the coming weeks to help clarify the regulatory framework for this rapidly developing technology to ensure that the current highest standards of public safety and customer service in the trades are maintained.

Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers

PRINCE CHARLES PRESENTS ROYAL CHARTER TO WCHCD

HRH the Prince of Wales, **Prince Charles**, could only arrive one way to commemorate the presentation of a Royal Charter to the **Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers** at the church of **St Bartholomew the Great** – and that was, of course, in a London licensed taxi.

It was **John Sheen** who was selected to pick up HRH from Clarence House to take him to the West Smithfield church. Among the liverymen awaiting the Prince's arrival was **Dial-a-Cab** Chairman, **Brian Rice**.

"We were delighted that the Prince of Wales could fit this ceremony into what is always a busy schedule. And as he apparently gave the driver a £10 tip, we must assume that like his father, he is a fan of licensed taxis."

Speaking to the congregation, Prince Charles called the drivers an institution and said they were one of London's great traditions. He also spoke of the yearly children's **Magical Taxi Tour** where around 100 taxis drive chronically sick youngsters to Disneyland Paris for a magical weekend.

The WCHCD received a Grant of Livery in February 2004 and followed that with a Royal Charter in 2013 and it was that charter that was presented on 3 April...



Brian Rice joins in applause for the Prince

Call Sign

May 2014

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TFL LICENSING SERVICE APOLOGY

Been waiting for your renewed licence?



We would like to apologise for the delays people have recently been experiencing when using the TfL taxi (and private hire) licensing service and are sorry for any inconvenience this has caused. This notice provides an update on the steps we have taken to address these delays...

Background

The **Disclosure and Barring Service** changes introduced by the Home Office last summer led to a large increase in the number and type of phone calls we received from September 2013 and affected the processing

time of other 'non-urgent' applications. While we introduced a number of measures to help minimise the impact that these changes would have, including issuing licence renewal packs four months before expiry, it has still had a significant impact on our licensing service.

We also introduced our new licensing IT system in late September 2013. This had been planned for several years to replace the paper-based processes and systems that had been in place and which were no longer fit for purpose. We anticipated a short term fall in service levels while we fixed any issues with the new system and staff became familiar with it. However, the impact of the new system combined with the DBS changes has had a much more serious effect than we anticipated.

Additional Measures

A number of measures have now been put in place to help address the situation and return the service to acceptable levels, including:

- * The recruitment of additional staff that are helping to deal with the backlog of applications.

- * Additional temporary staff have also been hired to help answer phone calls and reduce call waiting times. Training is currently underway and we hope you will see an improvement in our call answering times within the next few weeks.

- * We are working closely with NSL, the provider of the new IT system, to address any problems with the system, including any issues with receiving and scanning applications. We have changed the way we process licences to prioritise those that are due to expire in the near future. This will help to ensure drivers will have their new licence before their old licence expires.

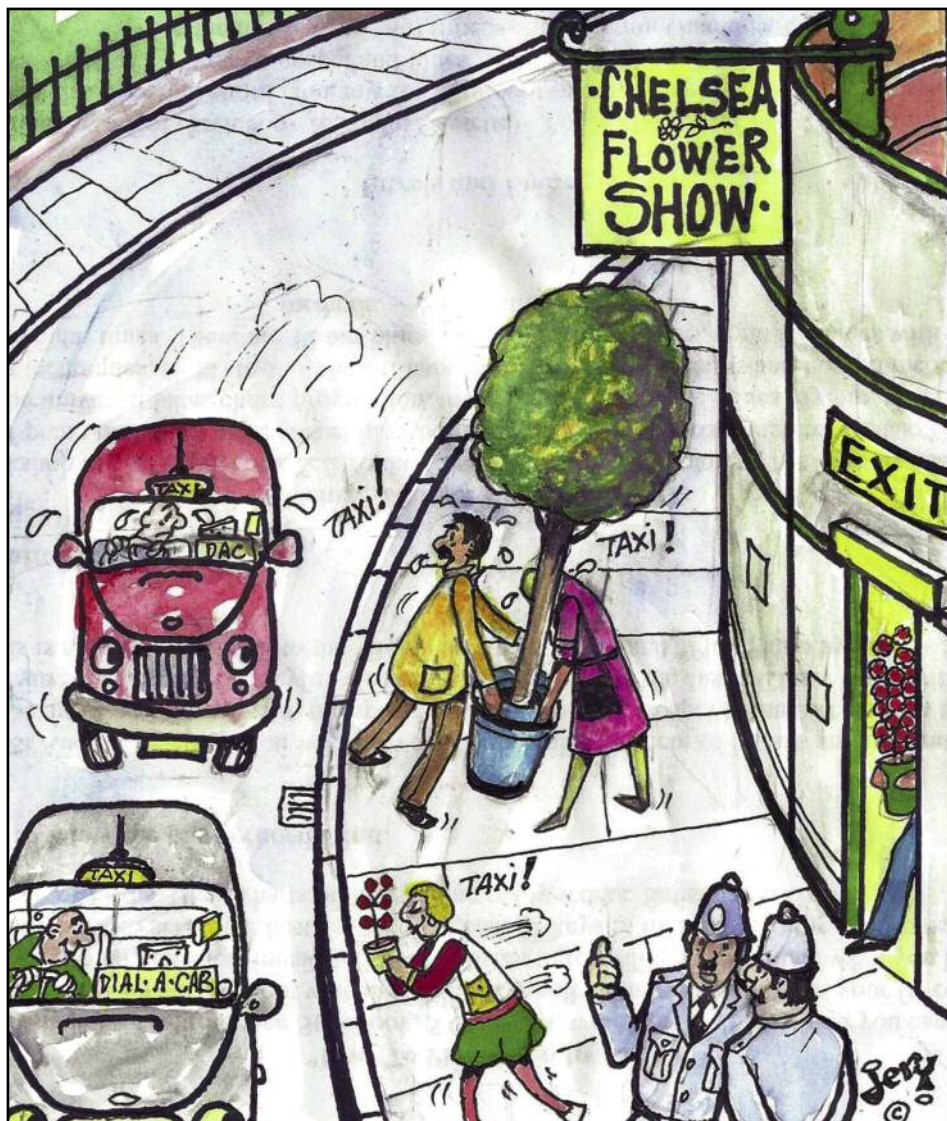
Improvements to your service will start to happen over the next few weeks. We are grateful for your continued patience. Once the backlog of applications has been addressed and the service is back working within acceptable levels, we will introduce the previously promised on-line application process. This will give you the ability to apply and renew your licence on line and to track the progress of your application.

Summary

Once again, please accept my sincere apologies for any difficulties you may have experienced in contacting us or making licence applications in the last few months. Please rest assured we are doing everything we can to address the problems you have been experiencing, and once the new system is working to its full potential, I am confident you will experience a much improved level of service, including the ability to apply on-line.

Helen Chapman
Interim General Manager

Jery's World



'Ere Bert, I know this is supposed to be the start of their season, but which one? The busy season or the silly season...!

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Following a consultation in which just 83 people responded, a 12 month government-backed pilot scheme involving a road closure pushing traffic from Fitzrovia's Warren Street out into the main Euston Road, Camden council have now announced that the closure of that street is to be made permanent.

It had been described as a *rat run* – which few taxi drivers or their passengers would deny – when being used to cut off part of Euston Road and leaving the alternative of joining the traffic by sitting in the Euston underpass when traveling west. The same council showed their “neutrality” by allowing buses to avoid any traffic by traveling westbound past the front entrance to the University College Hospital, whereas taxis still use the congested underpass.

Camden council say the closure is welcomed by local residents and that it has stopped around 300 vehicles an hour going down the quarter-of-a-mile-long street at busy times and even though just those mysterious 83 people cared enough to respond to the consultation, they are pressing ahead with the permanent closure following the 12 month test period when Warren Street was blocked half way down by bollards and hardly surprisingly, the traffic disappeared! However, when this magazine carried out a survey in our May 2013 issue, amazingly most of the shop owners we spoke to were against the scheme and wanted taxis to use the route – they all said the scheme was killing their businesses. They said they would be taking part in the consultation and expressing their anger at the scheme.

The 83 people who can... **BRING LONDON TO A STANDSTILL**



83 people took part in a consultation - enough for Camden to make a closure permanent!

According to Camden Council's transport leader, **Phil Jones**, traffic data gathered during the experimental closure confirmed that a majority of the traffic was using Warren Street as a

cut-through, although he failed to say how they worked that out.

Call Sign asked Camden Council how many of the 83 members of the public that took the time to take part in the consultation were in favour of the permanent closure. We are still waiting for a response...

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

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DAVID 'KUPKAKE' KUPLER

19 May 1947 – 1 April 2014



David Kupler (Y47) began putting his thoughts into poetry mode for me in October 1997 – just four months after I began editing Call Sign. He has missed just two issues since then.

He wasn't always easy; a staunch **Dial-a-Cab** man but with views that often put me into a difficult situation. But if he felt criticism was necessary, then it went into his poem! There were no romantic flowery poems for **Kupkake**, his poems were ballsy. But I knew nothing about balls yet...

It was in November 2013 when he told me a small shadow had been discovered on his lung. By February 2014 it had grown so quickly that there was no treatment available that could help. But I was stunned when he told me that he had just weeks to live and that he wanted to put some "final" poems in the mag and that he also wanted to write his own obituary.

Visiting him in hospital, I found the diagnosis difficult to believe because whilst looking far from well, neither did he look that ill. Had it not been for the oxygen pumping air into his nostrils, he looked nowhere close to the ending that he kept reminding me was imminent. But he insisted on showing me the doctor's report that said his life span was now expected to be measured in weeks.

He explained that he was a *Taoist* – although not a strict one – and said that he didn't believe in any supreme being. His belief was that you are born, you live and then you die. In David's words, what you see is what you get! But he believed strongly that while we are here, we should try our best to help each other and as such, he showed me the form he had signed that said after death, his body should be donated to medical science.

"How else can future doctors learn," he asked me. "How do we eradicate these types of illnesses if they have no bodies to look at? What good does a grave and a headstone do for the world? Those who want to remember me need just look into their hearts and I'll be there, not to visit a cold cemetery to read nice words on a piece of stone."

He was discharged from hospital and went home with Janet. There was nothing more they could do and he wanted to spend what time he had left with his beloved wife. Numerous texts flew between our phones over the next two weeks – his always saying the same thing: "Still here!" Then on one very poignant visit in March, I took with my tape recorder on a visit as he had requested and sat and listened while he went through his life. I had never before agreed for someone to write their obit while not only still alive, but so sound of mind that they could remember every detail of their life.

There were many personal details that he asked me to leave out, but insisted on telling me anyway. It was something David needed to do. I have respected his wishes and what follows is a straightforward – although much abbreviated – résumé of his life. It doesn't tell everything because sadly David ran out of time on 1st April – a date that would have amused his sense of humour. However, I will put two pieces of personal detail in. Firstly, besides loving his three daughters, he also loved his wife **Janet** very much and his one regret was that he didn't marry her much earlier when they met while she was a telephonist at Shirland Road. He said she would understand what he meant.

Secondly, to show how associated he was to ODRTS, he reminded me that his sister **Samantha** was married to a former DaC secretary, **John Bernardout** and that his daughter **Rachel** was a former telephonist at Shirland Road – as indeed was Samantha!

Knowing David, I realised he could have rattled on for hours, but I tried to keep it as brief as I could because I could see that breathing was becoming a problem, his voice was losing strength and was now a whisper. But not enough to stop him! So this is the obituary of David Kupler... by David Kupler.

"I was born to Mary – always known as Mickey – and Judd Kupler on 19 May 1947. They were both born in the UK but my grandmother on my mother's side came from Russia while my grandfather on my father's side was from Pesorabia, which is now Transylvania. They actually met in a Jewish café in Paris, where they had been domiciled while trying to get to New York where they had families.

I got my Bill on 12 January 1969 and joined Dial-a-Cab – or ODRTS as it was back then – in 1972.

There is a strange story of how I began as a dispatcher at Shirland Road. I was out working one day and trying to understand the dispatcher who was calling out work. He was awful and I understood very little of what he was saying, so the next time I was close by I went to the office to have a moan. When I got there, the person I spoke to was not only the evening shift manager, but also the Chairman – **Peter Fennymore**! But I hadn't a clue who he was! I explained about the poor pronunciation of the dispatcher and the Chairman asked if I thought I could do better? I told him I KNEW I could. So he told me that I would have to go into the office several days a week to learn how to use the phones – all at my own expense – followed by a period of learning on how to use the back (details) channel and that if I was any good, they might hire me as a dispatcher – and I would then get paid! I was given a trainer known by the nickname of *Mumbles* – **Brian Gillette (ex-A71)** – and he taught me all I needed to know and taught me well. We also became friends, as I also did with **Charlie Reuben** and **John Saunders**, and I eventually became evening supervisor.

In 1976, I left ODRTS and went to **California**, but missed my kids so much that I came straight back and resumed my job on the evening shift. But a taste of America was then in my blood and I returned to that US state three years later in 1979 and worked for a former DaC driver who had emigrated there several years earlier, **Brian Myers**. He ran a very successful toy business in the San Fernando Valley and for some time we worked closely together.

Then one day I saw an ad outside a cab company in Culver City – where I was staying at the time – asking for a driver and I got the job as a Santa Monica licensed cabbie! I said that I was also an experienced dispatcher having done it at DaC in London, but the boss said that the drivers wouldn't understand my accent and they got someone else! While there, they lost a dispatcher with appendicitis and I offered to do the job and as there was no one else, the boss agreed. Problems? Naaah! The drivers loved my accent and I was given the job permanently!

I went on to help start the **LA Sky Cars** company, which turned into a big success and then the **LA Checker Car** service. The idea was to cover all the local cab rides at **LAX Airport** that the regulars didn't want to do. They only wanted to go into the City, so we covered those locals but gave them all a card to call us whenever they wanted to regardless of the journey length. And they did! But where I was supposed to share in any success, somehow that financial promise never materialised and in 1986 I returned home to the UK with the first intention being to renew my Bill. But the PCO made me retake the Knowledge – which I did! My time in LA had ended, but my everlasting memory in the City of Angels was cruising in my 1976 8.2litre **Eldorado 'open top' Cadillac** with its red leather interior, thick carpets and more gadgets than most of today's cars could even think of and driving it from LA to San Diego in cruise control along the Pacific Ocean's Highway One. That was just priceless! Then I was back in London driving a taxi along the Embankment. Not quite the same!"

I could see that David was weakening and made pretence that we would continue at a later date, but at those later visits it was obvious that he was not in a fit enough state to continue but just wanted to listen to what was happening in the world of taxis. Had he been strong enough to continue, he could have told about his time dispatching at the formative **Metro** radio circuit in Docklands in addition to much more. But to me, he was just David Kupler, a really stubborn so-and-so who would do anything to help others. He was also *Call Sign's* poet and insisted on whispering two poems for publishing after his death. They are inside this issue.

Two weeks later, David's daily "still here" text changed to one from Janet saying that David had been taken back into hospital. The end was obviously near. I went to see him and sat there with Jan and Rachel. I joked that he still owed me a poem and held his hand; he tried to grip my hand but was very weak. I left and he died several hours later.

When Rachel, Ossie and Fiona – as well as Jan – read this, they will know how much he loved them all. And as David said...

"Those who want to remember me need just look into their hearts and I'll be there..."

David Kupler and Alan Fisher

We have been working very hard within the Dial-a-Cab Sales department to persuade clients who left us purely on cost, to use us again and experience how our service is far superior and how it can also prove to be cost effective.

All the clients we have spoken with did say that they felt by using a cheaper company, their service would not be affected. I'm pleased to say that two clients have now started to use us again - one in Basinghall Street and the other in **Lincolns Inn Fields**. For obvious reasons, I won't name them, but you will I am sure get to know these accounts very well in the future. Early feedback has been very good, so please keep up the service.

We are also spending a lot of time gathering information on our competitors charging methods and it really is very interesting the type of information you can actually find out. I would like to be able to reveal all to you but it would not be in our best interest - especially when negotiating with a customer - if we revealed all that we know.

All I will hint towards is that we think not everyone is as transparent in their charging as we are at Dial-a-Cab. I would also like to say something to our drivers who offer their ser-

DAC SALES REPORT

With Keith Cain



vices to other taxi companies. Those companies are actively building up to be radio circuits, servicing both the public and corporate sectors and dare I say it, that is with the help of some of our drivers!

Clients on a very regular basis are questioning us and comparing our charges to others, which makes retaining and acquir-

ing new businesses so difficult.

We recently tendered for both **Camden Council** and **The Labour Party** and despite offering very low charges - and they were very low - we were advised that our bids had been unsuccessful (on cost yet again).

One wanted fixed price work for all their trips 24/7 and even though our fixed prices do not carry a gratuity, we still never got close. We priced many trips at the meter fare as if the trip had been taken from the street and yet we were still informed we were not the best priced. I am fairly sure that both these clients selected private hire companies.

There are two tenders submitted that we are still waiting decisions on and I will advise members as soon as we are made aware of the outcomes.

In the meantime, those of you going on holiday, have a great time...

Keith Cain
DaC Head of Sales

Bank Holiday work in Essex

If you work on Bank Holidays and perhaps find them not quite as busy as you might have expected, this could be of use if you live in Essex and fancy some extra work out that way - some of which could be really lucrative.

This year's 'We are FSTVL' event takes place at its usual venue of **Damyns Hall Aerodrome, Aveley Road in Upminster** - known as **The Lanes** by the locals. It will take place over the Bank Holiday weekend of **Saturday 24 May and Sunday 25 May 2014** and because the District line is having engineering work over those two days, there is expected to be a high demand for taxis.

There will also be taxi marshals at Upminster Station in addition to the festival site and a large space will be set aside in the dedicated transport hub for taxis - easily accessible from Aveley Road. There will also be a one-way system in place to make it easier and quicker to drive to and from the site and help reduce congestion on the surrounding roads.

The weekend is a complete sell-out so there should be lots of work. Among those scheduled to appear on the eight stages are **Timo Maas, Black Coffee, Apollonia (Dan Ghenacia, Dyed Soundorom and Shonky), Clive Henry, Tania Vulcano, Matthias, Tanzmann, Kerri Chandler, Davide Squillace and Fatboy Slim**.

Damyns Hall Aerodrome's postcode is RM14 2TN.



With no District Line, FSTVL could be the place to work!

You taking the Pee!!!

<http://tfl.gov.uk/cdn/static/cms/documents/taxi-ranks.pdf>

TfL have received a complaint about taxi drivers urinating against the wall that runs between the entrance and exit to the forecourt at **Charing Cross Station** and alongside part of the taxi rank.

Urinating in the street is unpleasant, unacceptable and also a criminal offence and TfL will advise the public to report all such offences to the police, as well as to the licensing authority, so that drivers responsible can be charged and appropriate action taken. Any licensed taxi driver who is charged and subsequently convicted will have their fitness to remain licensed reviewed. Information about TfL-appointed rest and refreshment ranks,

which provide spaces for taxi drivers to stop and take a break, is available in the Taxi Ranks Booklet which you can access at the website below the headline.



Keith Reading
Professional Toastmaster
Master of Ceremonies

Tele: 01279 465 938
Mobile: 07774 860 374
Email: kgr.2@virgin.net

10% discount for DaC drivers and staff

Fellow of the Guild of
Professional Toastmasters

George Best

I had the misfortune - and good fortune - to reject picking up **George Best** and then accepting the great man! The rejection came about because of silly principles to abide with unwritten laws of taxi driving - accepting the first job offered. There ought to be exceptions to the rule when dealing with your boyhood hero!

During a busy Christmas evening some ten or so years ago, I stopped to set down a customer. Five eager punters anxiously in need of a cab were patiently waiting. A slippery guy with sharp elbows pushed his way to the front saying that he had George Best - who lived in Oakley Street, Chelsea at the time - there waiting for a cab. It was dark but through squinted eyes I could see a diminutive bearded man, slightly overweight - but obviously George. Nevertheless I took the five punters because they were first. I heard the passengers talking amongst themselves, one wondering why I didn't take George Best. Somebody else replied that I must have been a Liverpool supporter or something. I was gutted!

A few years went by, then one late afternoon I trapped a slim, distinguished chap in a green tracksuit. It was George Best.

"Beaufort Street please," he said in the lovely Irish lilt that he had. This time he looked much fitter and without the *hirsute* look. I asked him if he ever got fed up with people noticing him all the time. He went on to tell me that he had just given an autograph to a lady and that she said it had made her day. Whilst travelling to his home, he made an ad-hock decision to change directions to **Tramp**

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



nightclub in Jermyn Street. On the journey, I said to George that the only footballer in recent times with his ability must have been Paul Gascoigne. He agreed and at Tramp's he parted with a fiver tip.

Shortly after that meeting, George Best died in the Cromwell Hospital aged just 59 and suffering from multiple organ failure brought on

by relentless drinking.

I found him an engaging, generous and unassuming man who let his football abilities do the talking.

Enfield to Holland...

The GLA has awarded £30 million to my home borough of Enfield to turn it into a 'mini-Holland.' The main High Street, Church Street, is to be closed to traffic with the exception of buses, with segregated cycling lanes in place.

The foolhardy scheme will continue down Green Lanes (A105) creating a cycle super highway with the removal of street parking. There seems to be muddled thinking in Boris Johnson's plan with the potential loss of hundreds of jobs from the businesses that will be affected.

Cycling is a fair-weather solitary activity, whereas cars enable families and groups to travel together more easily and in less danger, considering what our inclement weather does to the conditions of the roads...

Stephen Berndes
Call Sign Online

New Clapham Common taxi rank

A new taxi rank in Clapham High Street close to the Infernos nightclub has been appointed. The rank, which is in a loading bay, is operational between 19:00 and 07:00 and is for nine taxis. This rank is not in a suburban area and has not been designated as an island rank. Please take a look if nearby..

Phil 'cycles round the world'!

Phil Stern spent many years on Dial-a-Cab and together with Bob Woodford, John Dixon and Paul Bishop raised large amounts of cash for the baby life support system (BLISS) - where they raised enough to purchase an incubator for Greenwich hospital. Following the tragic death of Paul from Motor Neurone Disease, they also ran for MND.

Now following his wife's recovery from cancer, Phil Stern was part of a huge charity attempt to cycle around the world in 80 days on state-of-the-art static bikes. Fortunately for Phil, he wasn't doing all 24,902 miles on his own! The **Around the World in 80 Days: Static cycle challenge** has been taking place around the Southend area since February and ended in April with riders cycling 60 miles each.

Phil's cause was to assist Southend General Hospital purchase a Sky Ceiling for their radiotherapy department.

Sky ceilings are photographic illusions of real sky views that trigger beneficial relaxation responses for mind and body and transform enclosed interiors into more spacious feeling and memorable environments. Research has shown that the sky ceiling instantly interacts with the *pineal* gland in the *hypothalamus*, which in turn starts the release of the hormone *Melatonin* into the blood stream. That promotes a calming process for the patient; a very beneficial effect during radiotherapy treatment. Evidence has shown that access to nature or nature imagery supports healing, reduces stress and anxiety and also the use of pain medications.

Southend General have several treatment rooms within the radiotherapy unit that have no access to natural light and they are hoping to raise enough funds to install the Sky Ceilings in those areas. However, they cost from £1000 up to £10,000 depending on size.

Phil, together with Bob, John and Paul used to run in a group known as the **Green Badge Hailers** but used those legs for running and not cycling! Now **Call Sign** has persuaded John Dixon and Bob Woodford to come out of retirement to help Phil. Also there was DaC's **Mark Raynor (V57).**

Anyone wishing to help Phil and co raise money for the hospital Sky Ceilings can do so on: www.justgiving.com/phil-stern



Phil, Bob and John bring the Green Badge Hailers out of retirement to help Southend General Hospital's Sky Ceiling appeal

The biggest but still the best



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

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

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



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

equipped with fully computerised diagnostics systems.

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

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

For more details call **020 8692 1122** or visit the website at

www.ascottcab.com The new premises are located at **Blackhorse Road, SE8 5HY.**



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

MDT REFRESHER



For drivers just getting their new terminal or those that aren't sure exactly how it works, Dial-a-Cab IT Director,

John Banks, provides a Mobile Data Terminal refresher...

What the spinner means:



If the spinner is green and is spinning, the MDT is sending a message to the host and is awaiting a response.



When the message is acknowledged by the host, the spinner will stop, the success sound will be heard and the status will change back to the connected white tick in a green background.

If you see the icon spinning green, this is as it should be and does not mean that there is a signal problem.



If the message is not acknowledged by the host after 30 seconds, the message will be resent and the spinner will turn amber. Messages that are not sent successfully in the green will go to amber and countdown a further 30 seconds.



If after a further 30 seconds no acknowledgement is received from the host, the icon will change to red to indicate that the message has failed to be sent.

What the bars and NET: indicators mean:

Bars:

The signal strength is indicated by how many bars (top left) you have just like on your mobile phone. The more bars you have the better the signal strength. It is possible however to have a strong signal but still experience slow response due to high levels of traffic on the cell.

NET: statuses...

None: You should only see a status of None when the terminal has been turned on or re-booted and is yet to connect.

Connected: Indicates all is well, we have a connection and are waiting for new messages.

Sending: This will appear when a message has been sent to the outgoing queue. It will remain in this status until the message has been sent and an acknowledgment received. If an acknowledgment is not received in 30 seconds, the status changes to Re-sending.

Re-sending: This appears after 30 seconds when an acknowledgment has not been received. It remains in this status until a response has been received. If an acknowledgment is not received in 30 seconds, the status changes to Failed.

Failed: This is displayed briefly when a message has not been successfully sent.

Down: This will occur when the radio signal has been dropped. The MDT should recover from this status as soon as a signal becomes available again.

Additional points to consider

It is not normal to regularly go from Connected to Down throughout the day, regardless of location. It is normal to experience this occasionally, but should it happen every 15-30 minutes it would be best to contact Roman Way. They can take your logs and IT will investigate the problem.

It is normal for you to see Sending and Re-sending during busy periods on the network. This can be caused by high levels of network activity. The terminal should not remain in a Down status in the London area for more than a few minutes. If it does, it is possible that the modem needs to be reset.

You can do this by selecting **Settings > Options > Modem Reset**.



Resetting the modem will remove any queued messages and will take at least 40 seconds.

Meter Connection MTR:

The meter communicates with the terminal via the meter interface. The terminal will query the status of the meter

frequently and display the status on the screen, e.g. MTR: Hired.

If there is no meter status next to MTR: i.e. it is blank or keeps flashing, the meter is not responding to the meter interface properly.

You should do the following. Firstly check that the cables that go into the bottom of your MDT and those going into the silver box (PU) are pushed in properly. If the problem is not rectified, you should go to Roman Way.

Other indicators of meter issues are:

Frequently received error message **ERROR – IN-SERVICE STREET JOB** whilst on a cash hail and ride. This will be accompanied by the success sound.

Frequently received queue position whilst Soon To Clear on a cash hail and ride. This will be accompanied by the success sound.

Inability to POB although your meter is on.

Remain booked into a zone although you have turned your meter on. (This can also happen due to signal problems causing a delay getting the meter on message to the host).

When this problem occurs, it is often due to a meter replacement which does not have the up to date firmware. However Roman Way can check this for you and will advise you if you need to return to your meter agent.

Modem Mode

It is recommended that the terminal be left in '3G Only' mode. This is the default mode when the terminal is started. The mode you are currently in is shown in Settings > Options. If you change it to '2G and 3G' mode, you will almost certainly have a worse experience in London. That button is there only for the rare occasion, perhaps outside your house, where only 2G is available.

How do I report a problem?

Techproblems@dialacab.co.uk is available for contacting IT if you feel there is a problem with your MDT. You can also report any tech problems by leaving a voicemail on **020 7553 7266**. If you are reporting an isolated incident, we will log the report and location but we may not return your call. If you are experiencing ongoing issues, we will contact you and ask you to come in either to DaC House or Roman Way and we will take the logs off your MDT. Only by going through your MDT logs will we be able to identify a specific problem that can be addressed.

John Banks
DaC Director of IT

With just a few hundred drivers yet to be fitted with our new terminal, DaC Director of IT John Bankes describes some of the challenges of the project and addresses some of your concerns about the 3G MDT...

The development and implementation of the 3G MDT has been one of the most challenging projects my team and I have worked on. By necessity, a number of outside suppliers and their products had to be brought together to deliver one cohesive integrated system.

Of all the third party products that we had the challenge of integrating, the one that we expected to be the most straightforward turned out to be the most problematic. Of all of the cellular networks available, only two delivered the levels of service that we required. That was **O2** and **Vodafone**. Both companies presented detailed proposals to **Dial-a-Cab** and due diligence was performed on both companies. We visited the support and control centre facilities of both companies, interviewed existing corporate customers and analysed future network development. Of the two, O2 offered the Society the most flexible, technically sound cost effective solution and so they were commissioned.

The fact that so many drivers feel that the radio service they have received from O2 is of a lower standard than that they received from our private radio network in London is disappointing, surprising and concerning. When the new system was being heavily tested by my department, the results were excellent. We drove our test cab all over London at all different times of the day and night. Our experience was that it was a significant improvement over our private network. In addition to that, the service offered a nationwide service rather than an inside M25 service only. We were sure you would love it.

Unfortunately for us all, the rollout of the new Dial-a-Cab MDT coincided, almost to the day, with the rollout of the new O2 (and Vodafone) 4G cellular service. This has undoubtedly had a negative effect on the 3G service provided to us over the past several months.

Some drivers have suggested that we 'dump' O2 and move to Vodafone. Such a drastic and costly move would have to be motivated by real evidence of improvement by moving to the other supplier and I'm afraid that this evidence simply does not exist. In fact all of the evidence points to the fact that we are already with the best cellular provider in the UK. Also, as O2 state in their article, many of the aerial sites are now shared between O2 and Vodafone.

I can personally testify that the technical and commercial relationship with O2 has been very good. They have always responded to our requests efficiently and effectively. For example, when we raised a complaint about the coverage on the **Appold Street** rank the situation was remedied. When we requested that our hardware and software be tested by O2, they made their £100,000 **Faraday Cage** facility and an engineer available to us. When we requested a meeting to discuss the prob-

DaC's new terminals... **THE CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS...**



lems we had experienced, our account manager attended DaC House along with the Head of Business Services at O2. Dial-a-Cab Chairman, **Brian Rice**, and 2 other Board members were in attendance at this meeting in which a professional, yet frank discussion ensued.

It is my belief that O2 are doing everything they can to improve the service they provide to us and I think that after you read their article in this issue of *Call Sign*, you will also agree. Once the initial disruption of the rebuilding of both the 3G and 4G network subsides, I believe we will have a network capable of meeting the future needs of the Society. Also, as more heavy bandwidth users (such as those streaming videos, movies and music) migrate from the 3G network to the 4G network, we anticipate a gradual improvement in the performance of our 3G service.

So what is the problem?

All of our research and testing on the O2 network issues leads us to the conclusion that the problems we experience are problems of capacity rather than coverage. The vast majority of areas in London and beyond receive good cellular coverage. Like any network, including a road network, the more traffic that flows down it, the slower it becomes. This explains why a location can give good performance at some times of the day and not others. It also explains why some buildings, such as hospitals and sports stadia during a game can impact on the performance of the network in those areas.

Therefore the solution to this problem is to increase capacity and that is exactly what O2 are committed to doing.

Having tested both the software and hardware with O2 in their state-of-the-art facility, I am now convinced that the new terminal squeezes every bit of performance available out of the O2 network and recovers in the best possible way to network problems.

Reality Check

As I wrote in *Call Sign* in 2008, when we were experiencing capacity problems on our PMR network, no radio system will ever be perfect. The private DaC network wasn't, the current O2 network isn't and neither will it ever be. There will always be areas in any network where the reception is bad. There will

always be areas and times where the service is slow. Of course if you are in one of these areas or times when you want to accept a trip, or process a credit card, it is obviously very frustrating. We totally understand that. However, the reality of the situation is that disconnected radio linked terminals will never experience the level of connection reliability that you experience with your PC at home wired into the internet. Having said that, the overall experience from O2 - particularly in London - is at a reasonable level. Our logs show that 98% of all messages sent from the host to the cab succeed on the first attempt. When we look through MDT logs, we see that the vast majority of messages from the cab to the host go first time. If therefore, you are experiencing prolonged periods of the dreaded red exclamation symbol, there is probably something wrong with your setup. Also, if the majority of your messages go into the amber spinner and then the red, there may also be something wrong with your individual setup.

Please see the Technical Refresher pages for an understanding of what the MDT is telling you.

Moving Forward

We are currently testing a new version of the MDT software. This version brings improvements in zone management and improvements in the way the Pin Entry Device (PED) performs when confronted with an intermittent signal. We are also hoping to integrate a newly negotiated credit card pre-authorisation service we have just received approval on from **Barclaycard**. We will also explore the possibility of adding a gratuity function to the PED as **Steve Albasini (V02)** requests in Mailshot.

We are also working on developing a complete replacement for our 'Elected Zone' based dispatch system. The new system will be GPS Position based and should provide the customer, the driver and the Society with a much improved way of working.

Conclusion

I would like all of our members who have experienced teething problems with the new equipment to know that we feel your pain. I think that this is obvious to any driver that my staff or I have spoken to personally. There is a huge amount of effort going on at DaC House, Roman Way and O2 to improve the service that you receive. I also want you to know that the majority of drivers have enjoyed a good experience with the new kit. My team and I, along with the Board of Management, remain committed to providing our members with the best equipment in London. Nothing less is good enough for the best circuit in London!

John Bankes
DaC Director of IT

DaC's IT department asked O2 for an update...

O2 Network Update

O2 has over 23million customers in the UK using our 2G, 3G, and 4G services for their mobile devices. On average, our mobile network carries 120 million voice calls and 170 million text messages every single day. And, with the increasing reliance on mobile communications combined with the improvements in smartphone capability, the demand for data on our mobile network is rising. We've seen an increase of 70% for 3G data traffic overall compared to the same time last year and this is generated across a number of different applications such as social media websites and video access on the move.

The sustained growth in data usage, along with the need to ensure we deliver the best possible network experience to our customers, resulted in an agreement being reached in 2012 with Vodafone which was to share the build and operation of both networks. In terms of scale, there is no other comparable agreement in existence.

This involves much more than simply running the existing network as it allows us to deliver our 4G network quickly. But it doesn't stop there. As well as building a new 4G data network, we are also completely re-building our 2G and 3G networks to improve service and the experience for our customers.

We are constantly benchmarking our network performance against our competitors through our Customer Experience Testing Team. This helps us to identify where we need to make future investments to improve the quality of our service.

We have exciting plans in place across London and the entire country that will see the delivery of new masts as well as upgrading existing masts. We've spent over £1 billion in the past several years and continue to invest over £1 million every single day in our network. London has already benefited from the delivery of a 4G network and this rollout will continue to gather pace throughout 2014.

Our 4G network now reaches over 19 million people in the UK. That's 185 cities and towns up and down the country. We've reached 32.7% indoor population coverage and there's even more to come. We'll continue rolling out to reach an additional one million customers every month until we reach our target of 98% of the population covered (indoors) before our 2017 regulatory requirement.

The work we are carrying out to build a better network may cause some disruption to normal service; however, every effort is made to keep this to a minimum



The 24x7 O2 Network Monitoring Centre

as businesses like Dial-a- Cab rely on the service we deliver.

The O2 coverage checker gives you the latest information on mobile coverage and O2 status checker provides information relating to any planned or unplanned issues on the network.

We're the least complained about network operator for the last 3 years according to Ofcom's quarterly reports*.

We're proud of our network and throughout this change we remain committed to working closely with Dial-a-Cab to ensure you receive optimum performance for your terminals and give specific focus on problem areas and capacity so that we can make changes and adjustments where we can to benefit drivers.

**Ofcom's telecoms complaints figures – 26 March 2014*

THE SALIERI RESTAURANT 376 Strand, WC2

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

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

We are certain that you will be delighted



Please bring along your badge or Bill as ID

Salieri Restaurant
376 Strand, WC2

Reservations: 020 7836 1318



Lee holds the Middlesex Premier Cup
Congratulations to Lee Pearce (J71) and the Bedfont and Feltham team for their victory over Staines Lammas in the final of the Middlesex Premier Cup played at Uxbridge.

CUP WINNERS!

DaC's Lee wins silverware as the Yellows take the Middlesex Premier Cup

A hard fought match that threatened goals ended with just the one scored by B&F's **Sebastian Philogene** after 67 minutes to beat off the challenge of **Staines Lammas**. But that was enough to take the prestigious **Middlesex Premier Cup**.

Although the first minutes were even, it was Staines that threatened first, but **Dial-a-Cab's Lee Pearce** refused to allow anything to pass him and rob him of his first silverware since winning the championship with **Bedfont Green** in 2009! Staines were beginning to dominate the play and found it far too easy to penetrate the **Yellows** defence. But Lee was there every time playing one of his games of the season.

With a scoreless first half, you would have expected Staines to continue their offence

but that never happened and the second half was a reversal of the first. Perhaps the Yellows of Bedfont began to realise that however bad they had been, they were still in the match and they gradually took control. By midway through the second half, Bedfont and Feltham were on top – but it still needed that Sebastian Philogene goal when he beat Lammas keeper **Liam Stone** to decide the game and as it turned out – to retain the cup that they won last season.

After the match, a delighted Lee Pearce told **Call Sign**: "It's always nice to win a cup and I'm pleased that I managed to keep out some good shots. Staines are undoubtedly a top quality side, but we held our nerve and I think that we deserved the win."

Samuel and Harry...



Editor's grandson Samuel with Spurs hotshot striker Harry Kane

Tottenham Hotspur young sensation, **Harry Kane**, is someone who puts himself out to help the young and is always ready to have a chat with supporters. For example, he recently visited White Hart Lane's Community Sports Centre to speak and encourage players from the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation's

Education and Football Development Centres.

In his first three starts for Spurs, Harry scored each time – once against Sunderland and then at West Bromwich Albion followed by another against Fulham. Harry also plays for England Under-21s.

He also recently met Editor Al's grandson and Spurs supporter Samuel, who gave Harry the benefit of his football knowledge – always score more goals than the opposition and you can't lose! He seems to have listened!!!

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

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

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This afternoon, Tuesday 1st April, my terminal made its familiar bell-like noise to let me know of another message; this one came from **Dial-a-Cab** Chairman, **Brian Rice**, and its contents made me more than a little sad.

It informed us of another member who had passed away. I often think about the member and try to put a face to the name but I'm hopeless with names - some you know, some you don't. But this time it was someone I knew well. **David Kupler** - Kupkake to many.

David had a long association with DaC, stretching back to the mid-70s at Shirland Road where he dispatched before going to

Remembering David Kupler...

GOOD THIS RADIO, AIN'T IT!

America where he drove a cab and worked as a dispatcher for a company in California, I believe.

I first met David in around 1987, when as a butterboy of about 6 months I joined **Metro Radio Taxis** - a fairly new radio taxi outfit based in Docklands. David was a dispatcher there and gave me my training on radio procedure - no Data Dispatch there! For you younger drivers, the dispatcher had to quickly decide which call sign was the nearest to the pick-up and give the pick-up details to the closest driver. Often, if it was a good job, drivers would want to disagree with the dispatcher. David's quick reply would be: "You can't argue with me 'cause I've done the Knowledge twice!" And he had!

There were a few short school trips needing a wheelchair cab, a facility that only Metrocabs had as it hadn't yet been made compulsory. So those trips could be very difficult to cover but David would promise the driver that they wouldn't lose out, often guiding them on to an Airport trip as their reward. David later returned as a driver to DaC.

What I liked about David was that he always had time to hear what you had to say and treated you as an equal. I mentioned this to DaC

Driver and Marshall **Chris Grote** (C66)...

"You're right," he said, "David always had time for you. A true gentleman."

Before I joined DaC, I would see David from time to time at **Stable Taxis**; he would be standing in **Ronnie Mitchell's** smoke filled office waiting for his taxi to be serviced. It was there that he convinced me to join DaC and not Mountview following the closure of Metro Radio Taxis.

Kupkake's Korner was a favourite of my Mum's monthly read of **Call Sign**; she has been reading **Call Sign** ever since my 2007 article about taking my Dad to Holland to visit his friend's World War 2 war grave, who by coincidence also died on April 1st - just like Kupkake.

"I will miss his poems," she told me after I mentioned that he had died.

I also remember David at DaC AGMs where he would clash with former Board member **Allen Togwell**, who would often be on the sharp end of David's quick tongue.

David gave me my first radio trip to the flyers and after giving me the pick-up details, he simply said to me: "Good this radio ain't it...!"

Jon Robinson (E88)

HAILO MOVES INTO NY PHV MARKET



Will London follow NYC and use minicabs on Hailo?

Hailo have started testing out a new service in New York City - 'Appers can now call a car rather than the usual cabs! According to the *Twit Longer* blog, Hailo have said in a statement:

"Over the past few weeks, many of our passengers have noticed that we've been testing

out a new Licensed Car option. This test offers you even more ways to get a ride. The latest version of the Hailo app includes a new feature that lets you select a Licensed Car. You'll find the cars (usually town cars and sedans) to be comfortable and spacious and the drivers to be professional and friendly.

"Hailo can now help you get to and from the airport with Licensed Cars. Next time you land at LGA or JFK, you're only two taps away from a ride home.

"What's fare is fair. During the beta, you'll only pay about 15% more than a regular taxi ride with us. Make sure you're opted in to receive Licensed Cars. Once your driver accepts, you'll see a license plate number on the screen. That's how you'll identify your driver."

The question now is whether that will spread over to London because it isn't something we perceive that drivers will welcome...

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Be Kind To Your Cab

Times have changed along Old Street EC1. Dial-a-Cab's building currently shows an increase in value of over £3million since its purchase as Marten House in 2007. The City itself is said to be 'on the up' and once again is becoming flushed with loot!

But *Call Sign* has discovered that the area was not just one of London's poorest, it was also home to a notorious medical institution that bore little of a medical nature about it. There was no disguising its nature with the name of **St Luke's Hospital for Lunatics**.

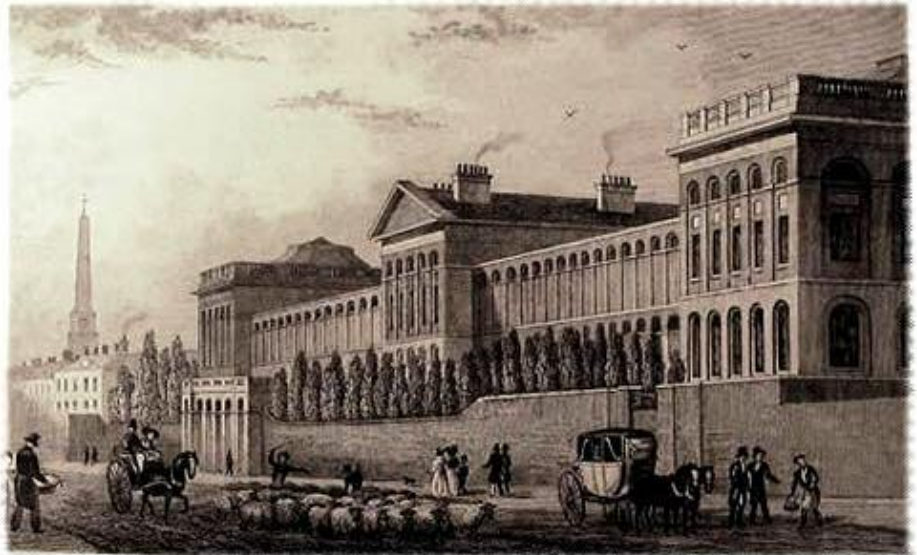
It had originally been situated close to where **London Wall** and **Finsbury Circus** are now – then called **Windmill Street, Upper Moorfields** – and was called **Bedlam** or **Bethlem**. In around 1700, it had 130 patients whose treatment included ice cold plunges that were said to "shake lunatics out of their insanity." It had originally been built to house 25 patients, so overcrowding was a huge problem. But little was done.

However, in 1786 it moved to **Old Street** between **Bath Street** and where today's **Old Street roundabout** is situated. The new 'Mad House', as it was referred to, was under the very strict care of the Master and Matron, **Mr and Mrs Thomas Dunston**, who immediately separated males and females, but had room for 300 patients with their own rooms – said to be more akin to prison cells. The rooms were cold with loose straw on wooden bedsteads.

By 1815, the 300 limit had been reached. But the area was changing and the poor had been pushed further east and the middle classes were taking over. St Luke's began catering for a more up-market clientele and by 1865 it had a population of around 160 middle class patients. With the wealthier of society using the more spacious facilities, the proportion of cures increased to 70 per cent compared to just 15 per cent when it was a

Dial-a-Cab's office is in the centre of an area famed for its hi-tech expertise – often referred to as the equivalent of San Francisco's Silicon Valley. But before that, the area was home to...

St Luke's Hospital for Lunatics!



The spire of St Luke's Church (still there) can be seen in the background...

"lunatic asylum for the poor!"

The beginning of the end came with the *1913 Mental Deficiency Act* which categorised three grades of sufferers into idiots, imbeciles or feeble minded people. Five years later, the hospital was sold to the **Bank of England**

and later became their banknote printing works before moving to Tower Hill.

Now the area is the UK's centre for technology. Is there a moral there somewhere because we have heard it said that you have to be a bit mad to make money!

Just Push the Button!

"I'm new to **MB Vito** ownership," **Terry Hill (K94)** admitted to *Call Sign*, "in fact, in the four days I've had the cab I'm only still slowly finding my way around its switches and things! But I've already 'broken down' in it – so to speak – because I had great difficulty with the gear lever selection.

"I stopped to set down passengers," he continued "and you have to follow a set procedure to allow the doors to open. Anyway, the passengers paid up and went, so after a bit of fumbling I managed to get the gear lever back into *drive* and moved away from the kerbside. The lever continued to be a bit of a problem, which I thought was wrong on a brand new cab, so I decided to try it out while I was alone in the taxi. While sitting at a red light in Sloane Street, without the added pressure of picking up or setting down passengers, it seemed a good idea to try and sort it all out as to whether it was me being silly with an unfamiliar vehicle, or if in fact, there was indeed a problem with the gear selection lever." Continuing in a sombre voice, Terry continued with his tale...

"Sure enough, I had very great difficulty moving the lever into *drive*. It just simply would not budge, which meant that the cab didn't budge when the lights went to green, leaving me well and truly stuck and causing all sorts of chaos behind me!"

Then the first sign of a smile spread slowly along Terry's face.

"So by then I knew it really wasn't me and I decided my only recourse was to phone the dealership and see what they had to say, because at that moment I wasn't best pleased as you can imagine! Vitos don't come cheap!

"Anyway, I was told to prise open the base of the leather gaiter that surrounds the gear lever and push firmly on that little white button just there." The **Dial-a-Cab** driver pointed to the relevant nodule protruding from the gear selection gate on his taxi.

"Apparently that button frees off the gear lever. I did have a struggle with it at first, but succeeded to get mobile eventually. But clearly it will need attention sooner rather than later, but I guess it's one of the teething troubles that comes with a new motor, but I think it is worth mentioning to other DaC Vito owners in case they too get stuck."

And we now have done just that...



The arrow marks the spot where the button is...

The trade's first look at the new battery operated Metrocab came at the Mayor's Tower Bridge HQ some time ago and at a time when questions were difficult to put forward – unless you had blond hair and were named Boris! So it was appreciated when Fraser Nash invited taxi trade editors to their Camberley test track to evaluate the vehicle.

It was nice to hear straightforward clear answers and not just a marketing pitch. The design team are also keen to hear opinions from the taxi trade and to make improvements to the vehicle for the driver before it hits the road.

During this visit, minor adjustments were suggested. As the taxi is about to begin real life trials in London, no doubt there will be more suggestions from drivers. We can but hope that the Metrocab team will be responsive to any suggestions the trade makes. They were certainly keen to point out that the vehicle has been built with the driver in mind, as well as providing a good ride and comfort for passengers. Everyone who drove the taxi on the day was duly impressed with its responsive handling and the smoothness of the powertrain. The passenger compartment was extremely comfortable, light and airy.

The Fraser Nash company is at the forefront of electric powertrain development. So what does this mean for the driver? The technology means using batteries as efficiently as possible; this has been seen most recently in vehicles such as Bristol cars as well as a range extended electric monorail known as Metrail. The Fraser Nash group also owns Whitfield Solar Panels, an innovative solar system which is also being put to good use charging the cabs at the test track. Fraser Nash bought the Metrocab back in 2004 with the intention of keeping the brand alive. To date, the new Metrocab is the vehicle most ready to come to market to meet the Mayor's new 2018 deadline for new cabs to meet the requirement of being zero emission capable.

The taxi has two motors on the rear which are linked by computer software. Regenerative braking means free energy recovery and the software displays on the dashboard display how much energy the taxi has left. But even if this gets low, it doesn't mean having to stop and recharge; there is also a small petrol engine to back up the batteries. Although Fraser Nash have not yet said which engine might be under the bonnet, it will be extremely efficient. In real life, looking after the batteries correctly will be the key to saving money when driving. The cab can be

NEW FRASER NASH 'E' METROCAB



The New Metrocab at the test track



The driver's cabin

recharged overnight to save more money but can recharge itself in 8 to 12 minutes via the petrol engine. The drive motors are brushless sealed units and the life expectancy is around 30 years. The Metrocab will need a normal mechanical service, but there will be minimal wear on brake pads so these will need less attention.

No service intervals have been set. The vehicle will 'say' whenever it needs any attention. It has predictive maintenance, based on engine hours. The new Metrocab is an extremely clever vehicle; it knows all about itself thanks to the core technology and so it will always be able to warn the driver of any problems. The warranty is yet to be defined, but Fraser Nash is so confident in their product that they assured us it would be a lengthy warranty. They would also like to make the life of the Metrocab unlimited. At a time when there has been mention of the current 15 year life of diesel cabs possibly going down to ten, that could be worth hanging on to.

Miles per gallon is said to be over 70 while emissions of 50g/KM Co2 is a huge improvement on anything else available. That leaves just one more question - how much will it cost? Well, Fraser Nash say the price will be targeted between the TX4 and the Mercedes Vito.

Real life road trials with taxi drivers are

soon to start and once these have been completed, Metrocab will know if any further changes are needed. It is anticipated that production

will commence in 2015-16, subject to the completion of the trials and at that time the appropriate dealer and service network will be appointed.

Bob Fisher
Call Sign Online

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RAY MARKS

On the 4th April 2014, my close friend **Ray Marks (K80)** passed away. To say it was unexpected, was the understatement of the year.

I had known Ray for 25 years and spent at least a part of every working day in his company and in all those years, I've never heard a bad word said about him by anyone.

The terraces of Chelsea FC will certainly miss his colourful commentary! His two sons - Simon and wife Laura and their children Chloe and Jacob, together with Michael and his fiancée Katie - will miss him terribly. His lovely wife Frances will miss him enormously. Everyone that knew him will miss him. And those of you that never met Ray, sadly you missed out! Rest in peace Ray, I'm gonna miss you too!

Dave Creber (C46)



LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

Quiz rage!

I have taken part in many competitions and sports at all levels - boxing at school district bouts, lucky enough to have played at **Wembley Stadium** representing **London Minors Gaelic football team**, played football in many a park or open space and even graced the hallowed **Brisbane Road** - home to **Leyton Orient**. I have also played darts at 17 years of age in competition against an upcoming future World Champion in **Eric Bristow** (yes, he won)!

I later went on to referee and coach football teams, experiencing the whole spectrum of enjoyment, passion and rage - especially what I considered to be the worst sight I've seen in sport, where parents, families and friends vent their anger and abuse at myself and other referees in what was after all a local weekend children's game!

All these examples - as bad and good as they were - could not have prepared me to what I and a Dial-a-Cab friend, Ian Worth (A74), were to experience when asked to run a local quiz.

It's only been a few times so far and the emphasis has been on making it fun. There were a whole spectrum of questions covering the usual subjects ie music, beat the intro and general knowledge - the full range of topics. I should add that we don't do Greek Gods or questions with an H in them as we can't pronounce them!

With teams ranging from 17 to 80 years of age, you would think that nothing could go wrong. Well so far the abuse from youngsters of age inappropriate has been to the effect of too easy or too hard or the groans from all when Ian throws in his favourite subject of cycling or the odd one from me on Irish history! But the last quiz

With Tom Quigley (Y33)



night we had saw me set a question and later give the answer out, which resulted in a lady in her 70s (well maybe not a *lady* at that moment), rushing up to our table with her internet phone waving in the air, shouting at the top of her voice that her answer had been correct. I looked around for support from Ian, who somehow took the stance of either a chameleon disappearing into the background or not least, a fifth official in a Champion's League game; he just smirked as if to say you're on your own there ref!

I took the stance, like all good quizmasters and referees, and stood by the correct decision and answer. Mine...

New Pound coins

So the government have announced that we are going to get a new 13 side pound coin based on the old threepenny bit, apparently because of the high number of forgeries of the original coins. Well in our

industry, we must all have had some pass through our hands unintentionally or otherwise without even realising it.

The cynic in me seems to believe it is a backdoor way to induce the economy - if you then think of all the vending machines, supermarket trolleys *et al* that will have to be changed, it will result in an awful lot of engineering work - no bad thing to boost jobs.

But I reckon it will be the working classes who will really kick start this strategy into fruition. We are not the ones with stocks and shares hoarded up in our safety boxes, we are the ones with the £1 coins in our piggy banks and oversized plastic soft drink replica bottle bought by a relative in a gadget shop or trip to the seaside, having a dig at how mean we are with our money.

As I said in a previous article about euro coins lying around in our homes not being spent, imagine the number of £1 coins that will flood back into economy once the government put an end date to the existing ones. I mean who is going to bag them up and take them to a bank to get them weighed in case the machine detects they're forged. So we will spend them at a very quick rate.

What bugs me is if and when the trolley slots change, will I to have buy a whole new range of charity token ones to replace the ones I will have to throw away as they will become useless! Unless of course they resurface as priceless like the **Matchbox** cars I threw away.

Or it could be a sly way to let us older ones know what we already think - that a Pound coin is really only thruppence (3d) anyway...

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

London Taxi Company Executive Vice President, UK Operations, Peter Johansen...

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE TRADE

It has been just over a year since Geely acquired **The London Taxi Company** and I wrote my first letter to the taxi trade. What an exciting and positive year it turned out to be!

Twelve months ago I set out our priority of putting customers first with a focus on quality in everything we did. At the start of this journey, my first step was to listen and learn from the trade. I visited cab ranks, chatted with you over cups of tea in your favourite cafes, received and responded to more than 400 emails and read numerous tweets. You certainly were not shy in coming forward with your views on how we could improve and I would like to thank everyone for their contributions. We have taken your ideas on board and this has helped us to focus on what is important to you.

Given our previous standing and reputation, 2013 was a golden opportunity for us to demonstrate through actions and not just words, the trust and respect that we have for our customers and the industry as a whole. We shared with you our vision for The London Taxi Company to be recognised as the leading global provider of purpose-built taxis, on a sustainable, profitable business model and we have grasped this opportunity with both hands. Our efforts were not in vain; in the seven months of 2013 that we were fully operational, we sold more than 1,200 taxis.

2014 has started well for us and we are already ahead of budget; in March 2014 we delivered more than 200 new cabs in London alone and we have a healthy order book with in excess of 150 drivers waiting to take delivery of a new TX4. In order to meet this demand, we have worked an extra day each week throughout February and March to build more TX4s. I would like to thank all of our customers who contributed to this success for their loyalty and support.

I'm delighted that so many of you have now recognised the improvements we have made both to the TX4 and the other services that we provide. We started by giving our Brewery Road dealership a much needed makeover to brighten it up and we are proud of the improvements to the waiting lounge in the customer service area where you can catch up on the latest news or football results on the TV and help yourself to tea and coffee. However, this expenditure would have been wasted if we did not also focus on the human elements of improving our customer service. When we began to rebuild our sales team, we chose to focus on recruiting people who had experience in customer service from a range of industries. I am delighted with the talented pool of individuals who work for us, as they are dedicated to making sure that we meet your every need. It really has made a difference to our business and I am grateful to all of you who have commented positively on these changes. If you haven't visited Brewery Road in the last twelve months to buy a cab or have your existing cab serviced, I strongly recommend that you do so; I know that you will be welcomed and well looked after.

We recognise that your taxi is not just a vehicle but also your livelihood. When your taxi needs to be serviced or repaired, it is vital that we get you back on the road as quickly as possible. We have an obligation to check every taxi thoroughly when it comes in for repair and sometimes what was



booked in as a simple service may identify other jobs that need to be addressed. It is important in these situations that we communicate clearly with you what we have found and provide you with a reasonable estimate of the time and cost required to rectify the problem. In recent months I have been pleased to hear that you have noticed the improvements that we have made to our Service Department and that you appreciate the care and attention that we are showing to you in this area.

We have also improved our After Sales services, investing in better training and technical support to the Approved Service Dealer network, to make sure that you receive the best service possible. We promised that we would prioritise improvements in vehicle quality. Our product enhancement initiatives, coupled with changes made at our Coventry production facility, have all increased the product quality significantly. In Coventry we have an army of engineers and production staff working tirelessly to continually upgrade and improve the London Taxi. Our rigorous internal processes and regular quality audits ensure that issues are flagged, prioritised and resolved quickly and effectively.

Drivers have commented that the current TX4 is the best taxi that we have ever built, and it is! The latest TX4 rides smoother, handles better, and is quieter than any other taxi we have ever made. If you don't believe me, ask your fellow drivers or better still, arrange a test drive and try one of our new cabs yourself. You won't be disappointed.

All of this would not have been possible without the unwavering support of Geely, both operationally and financially. Geely have committed to spend in excess of £200 million over the next five

years continuing to improve the existing TX4 and on developing the next generation iconic London Taxi.

In 2015, the TX4 will be upgraded with a new Euro 6 engine, offering not only lower emissions but better fuel economy as well. This represents an investment of more than £11 million in new engine technology and other improvements to keep the existing TX4 up to date.

The Mayor of London has announced that with effect from 1 January 2018, all new taxis registered in London will have to be zero-emissions capable. We will meet this challenge by offering a brand new, no compromise, purpose built, fully-accessible, plug-in range extended electric hybrid taxi. The new vehicle will continue to reflect the iconic design of the London Taxi with everything you would expect to see and much more.

This project also gives us an opportunity to address some of the more difficult challenges that we have had to live with for far too long with a particular focus on driver comfort and fuel efficiency. However, this will not mark the end of the TX4 on the streets of London because we understand from TfL that new vehicles registered before 31 December 2017 will still be able to operate up to the 15 year age limit.

Our 2013 strategy required us to focus our attention on the London trade in order to ensure that we could create a sustainable commercial platform. This year, whilst we will continue to build on our achievements in London, we will also look to apply the lessons that we have learnt to our regional markets in order to further strengthen our position across the entire UK.

The London Taxi is recognised the world over and we are beginning to harvest the opportunity that this brings us by exporting TX4s throughout the world. We may have lost the Ashes, but there are now 100 white TX4 London Taxis in operation on the streets of Perth, Australia and we are hoping to expand this success into other major cities throughout the world.

I hope you agree that we have achieved a great deal. I can tell you that we want to achieve a great deal more.

Thank you all once again for your continued loyalty and support.

Peter Johansen
LTC Exec Vice President (UK)

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This series commemorates the soon to come 100th anniversary of the beginning of WW1 hostilities and features past and present DaC drivers or their families. This issue tells of the great grandfather of Carol Macdonald, wife of Ian (C64)...

DAC WAR HEROES

He won the Military Medal – twice!

"That series of WW1 hero stories you're running in the magazine," **Ian Macdonald (C64)** stated nonchalantly to *Call Sign*, "you may want to speak to my wife because her great grandfather won the Military Medal twice!"

So we went to see Carol, who was delighted to impart what information she had but warned that some documentation had been damaged and other aspects of her great grandfather's exploits had been lost to history and time.

"But I do have a photo of him in uniform and he is mentioned in a book too," she said displaying a real sense of pride as she told us what she knew...

"My great-grandfather was **Frederick Albert James**. He was born about 1885 to **Frederick and Rose James** and married **Elizabeth Nixon** at St.

Phillips Church in Clerkenwell on 19th January 1913.

"He enlisted as a volunteer in the army at Shoreditch in the **13th (Service) Battalion (West Ham), the Essex Regiment** on 11th February 1915. We know that from his cap badge. Such was the fervour to fight for King and Country that young men would eagerly sign up in groups based on the fact that they were usually neighbours from nearby streets and knowing each other, hoped to serve together as well," Carol continued, almost whisking us back in time as we listened intently.

"And of course there was that famous recruitment poster with the finger of **Lord Kitchener** pointing at you. That was a real puller at the time.

"They trained on Wanstead Flats, acclimatising to the rigours of army life, but I doubt they had the faintest clue as to what was to come as the country entered into a state of war. We know today of those terrible times," Carol added sombrely, "but those people signing up couldn't have known in their wildest dreams what they



Frederick James and his WW1 medals

were letting themselves in for."

Records show that the Battalion moved to France in late 1915 and would have been in mud and water up to their knees in the trenches. Their first real taste of war often saw them just a few hundred yards away

from the opposing forces.

It was during a period of intense and particularly fierce fighting in an area known as Delville Wood around Courcelles, where land was bitterly fought over and frequently taken and re-taken, that between July 28 and 31 1916 and his later actions again at Guillemont on August 8 - 9 the same year, that **Frederick Albert James** was awarded his Military Medal for '*Conspicuous Gallantry in the Field*' for tunnelling operations.

He then won a 'Bar' to his MM (denoting a second win) during the Battalion's capture of the village of **Oppy** on 28th April 1917. There is no record of just what he did to achieve such distinction, but it is known that by that time he had been promoted to Lance Corporal.

Frederick was later wounded in France and discharged from active duty due to his injuries and later re-enlisted as a Corporal in the Labour Corp.

"Like so many of that generation, my great grandfather kept his military service and those honour awards so secret that it was only as recently as 2011 that the family discovered the bravery of our WW1 veteran."

With that, Carol Macdonald smiled – the sense of pride in her great granddad, Fred James, shining through....

Alan Green
Call Sign Online

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Registration number 213263

It was just another night travelling from the city to the West End and then over to Kensington, picking up workers on their way home or passengers on their way to enjoy themselves on a well-earned night out. As I made my way back from Kensington, I was hailed by a well-known Shakespearian actor who asked me to take him to the Albery - now the Noel Coward - Theatre.

As I stopped outside the theatre, the passenger got out and passed me a pouch which he said was in the back of the cab. I said it must have belonged to a previous passenger so we opened it and inside was a passport, US\$300, airline tickets and some other personal items. I recognised the photograph in the passport as one of a group of girls I had dropped off at a hotel in Victoria some 3 jobs back. I thanked my passenger for being so honest, as some passengers may have been tempted to pocket it while ruining someone's day further than they could imagine.

I decided to run down to the hotel from my location in St Martin's Lane; on arrival I went in and asked for the young lady by name and waited. Eventually she appeared so I gave her the pouch and asked her to check the contents. She opened it, glanced inside and said it looked to be all there. She said she never expected to see it again before walking off towards the stairs!

That allowed me to see the other side of doing a good turn where a rude young lady could not even bother to say thank you. I wasn't looking for a reward; I was just trying to save her a lot of hassle.

From that moment on I decided that if I ever found anything else in the back of the taxi, I would hand it into the police station and see the expression on a police officer's face as he filled out the paperwork - in triplicate! The exception would only be if I knew the item belonged to an old person, who would not know what to do or be able to afford the 10 percent reward to the cab driver.

Over the years I've found many items in the back of my cab, from the most needed objects to the most embarrassing. I even found a large sheath knife tucked down the back of the seat and a bradle with a very sharp point, these sent ice cold shivers down my back as in those days of the FX4, the window slid open right behind the driver so you could easily be stabbed in the back.

I was also particular about food in the back of my taxi, especially fish and chips and doner kebabs. The amount of grease that gets on the passengers hands and then they put them all over the seats, handles and windows. My taxi was always immaculate and I had many passengers ask if it was new. But I have always prided myself on my cab and tried to instil the value of attitude and cleanliness.

Going east?

My routine on a Sunday was to have a day of relaxation, so at about mid-day I'd go and pick my mother up in Dalmeny Avenue, where she had a flat overlooking the exercise yard of the woman's prison at Holloway. I would bring her to our flat in Dalston, where she could have Sunday dinner with her three grandchildren and spend time playing with them afterwards.

At about 10pm I'd take her home and on a regular basis I would be accosted as I came out of her flats by an Irish gent who

Tom's Tales



asked if I was for hire to take him to work. My reply was always the same - it was my day off and I was just doing a family trip. This went on for months and one evening curiosity got the better of me as I wanted to know where he went every Sunday night.

He wanted to go to the back of the BBC in Langham Place; his persistence had paid off with me. I dropped him off at the destination and decided to drop down Great Portland Street and shoot along Oxford Street towards Hackney. I had my Dial-a-Cab (voice) radio on just for company listening to the other drivers trying to earn their money before they made their way home.

As I got to the junction of Oxford Street, the despatcher called Queen Anne Street going as directed. I thought I'd take a chance that it went east around so I took the job. It was one of our top clients and I had to collect 3 letters and deliver them before 9am in the morning. I assumed he was joking so I drove around to Queen Anne Street and rang the bell. A man came out and deposited 3 letters in my hand saying I must give them to the person named on the envelope. said the dispatcher asked that I delivered them by 9am - some 11 hours away. He said that was correct and closed the door!

On getting back in the taxi, I turned the light on to look at the addresses and felt stunned. The first drop was Hale (Cheshire), the second was Manchester and it ended at an address in Leeds! And of course there was no satnav back then. I decided that if I was going on a journey

like that, I could do with some company so I shot home and told my wife she would not see me until the next day and then took one of my Labradors - the yellow one - leaving her the black one as protection.

As I trundled up the M1 it started to rain, making it a boring journey. But the thought of how much the job was going to make gave me the incentive to push on.

When I got to Hale, I did not have a clue where the address might be located and with no one about, I looked to be in trouble. But then I saw a man standing at a bus stop obviously waiting for the early morning bus, so I pulled alongside to ask him the way. As he approached the taxi, a yellow flash appeared from the back seat and hit the window snarling and growling. Cindy, my Labrador, was just protecting her space and my possible helper dashed away!

A few minutes later I saw a railway signal box with a light on, so I climbed the steps and knocked on the door. At this early hour on a pitch black moonless night, my banging on his door must have relieved the signalman of any constipation he might have had. After he got over the shock, he was able to direct me to the mansion I needed.

I drove through the gates with the loose gravel cracking under my Michelin tyres. The front door was large and all glass. I found the bell and pressed it. After some minutes I saw a man in his pyjamas and dressing gown appear at the top of a flight of stairs, he very slowly came down towards me. I pointed to the letter I was holding, to which he called out for me to put it on the step and walk back 6 paces. He opened the door about 6 inches, put his hand out and grabbed the envelope with the speed of my wife taking her house-keeping money!

Then I was off to Manchester and onto Leeds, successfully finding the correct recipients. I was later to find out that those documents were contracts and the moment they were signed, they would make the recipients £millions. But I was happy with my few quid... as was the wife!

**Tom Whitbread
DaC Board Member**

POLICE APPEAL

The police are investigating an allegation of assault made by a male who claims that following a night in the Funky Buddha nightclub, Berkeley Street, he and another male got in a cab and were taken to Gower Street. They want to locate the driver of the cab who took these males as he could hold vital information. It was on 2nd February 2014 at around 0230 - 0300 hours from Berkeley Square area going to Gower Street area. The male states they were dropped off just past the British Museum.

The passengers were both male. One is American and thin in appearance, the other was dark haired with a Southern Europe appearance. He paid the fare.

If you can help, please contact DC Jo Dell of Sapphire Command at Holborn Police, Lambs Conduit Street or call 020 8733 6625. Email Jo at: Jo.dell@met.pnn.police.uk

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..

David Kupler (Y74) died on 1 April but requested these two final poems be published after his death...

THE LAST KUPKAKE'S KORNER

GOODBYE WORLD

In the quiet of confinement
of this sterile plastic space,
I hear the nurses distant
as they prepare another day.

I've showered and I'm waiting
for breakfast to appear,
sitting contemplating
as the inevitable draws near.

There's still so much to organise
though I know there's help at hand,
who else gets a chance like this -
who else could understand?

For most there is 'spaced time'
between discovery and demise,
when resignation to the fatal
is seen within their eyes.

And others like myself
turn towards the foe,
and challenge 'it' to stop them
from reaching any goal.

In the quiet of confinement
of this sterile plastic space,
I hear the nurse's attendant
as they check my pulse and face.



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN...

Now Kupkake's gone
never again will there be the like,
definitely a unique one
behind wheel and mic.

A sense of fun
seen through bifocals,
a fast retort
and fluid vocals!

An honest man
not known to flinch,
swift to help
and assist.

So long Kupkake
you have left a space,
wherever you may be
in whatever place...

*Remember me for what I am
Never think I didn't give a damn...*

David Kupler
Always Kupkake...

THE CALL SIGN INTERNET LIBRARY

**Want to look up something in
an old issue of Call Sign?**

Don't want to spend hours looking through old issues?
There is a simple answer - the Call Sign Internet Library!
Log on 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 or type in a clue and let
our search engine do the rest...

If you want to read each complete issue with ads et al, you can now do that as well. Since May 2006, Call Sign has also gone online in a PDF version. Just click the PDF logo. No search facility for that though!

There are also issues from 1967, 1977 and 1987 as a reminder of the old days!
Happy searching!

THE CALL SIGN INTERNET LIBRARY

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

Brethren of the Whip



“There’s been a murder, Mister...”

Tragedy seemed to follow **Alfred Chatterton**. His first

wife had run off with the lodger leaving him to look after his two small daughters on his own. Unable to cope, he had them placed in a home in Kensington, where soon after they both contracted *Scarlet Fever*. He took them out of the home but one of the girls died shortly afterwards from the disease.

He later met and moved in with **Lydia Venables** - an unmarried woman with a child. They seemed a happy couple and it was Lydia who cared for him when he was laid up for four months with *Rheumatic Fever*.

In the early hours of 6th August 1872, Chatterton was stopped by the police for driving his hansom cab *at a furious rate*. Later that day he was fined 20s (£1) in a police court. Fortunately, he was able to pay the fine thus escaping the default of several weeks in jail.

The following day a friend of Chatterton, known only as **Stevens**, was also arrested. Some newspapers said it was for dangerous driving, others said it was for assaulting a policeman. He however could not pay the

40s (£2) fine, and faced imprisonment if the money could not be found.

To save his friend from being incarcerated, Chatterton pawned his wife’s boots as well as the boots of their two children; he even pawned his whip and great coat. Such dedication to help a friend was admirable. Neither Chatterton nor Steven’s returned to work that week, instead the pair of them - with their respective wives - went on a drinking spree. Where their money came from was never mentioned or even if Lydia was in possession of a second pair of boots!

By the weekend, Chatterton was getting angry that his drinking partner of the week, Stevens, had not repaid him and having spent all his money on beer, he, Lydia and the two children could afford just a couple of slices of bread over the weekend.

With nothing more than a crust of bread in his pocket, Chatterton went to work on the following Monday. He later returned with 10s (50p) which he gave to Lydia and told her to get his whip and coat out of hock. Lydia did this, but according to Chatterton she also went to the pub. Chatterton went back to work and returned home an hour later. Lydia had still not appeared. This time he waited in for her and she came through the door just before 9pm. Chatterton later admitted slapping her and telling her she should be spending money on food instead of gin and beer. Just before going out to work for a fourth time that day, Chatterton shouted at Lydia that she better not be there when he

returned - and to take her kid with her!

When Chatterton did return to **67 Roman Road** (now Roman Way) it was not Lydia that he saw, but a policeman who informed him that there had been a murder.

After receiving what she had apparently believed was an ultimatum that would apparently mean her and her three year old daughter would end up on the streets, Lydia took a knife and cut her daughter’s throat, killing her instantly. A neighbour heard screams from Chatterton’s own daughter who was not harmed. Lydia did not put up any resistance.

At the inquest, Chatterton broke down in tears as he told the court how Lydia had cared for him and was a loving mother to his own child, but that she liked to drink. The landlady of the local pub, in which according to Chatterton Lydia had been drinking all day, testified that Lydia had been at the pub but was there to wash her underwear as she wanted to go to the hospital to have her bruises looked at. It seemed that Chatterton had treated Lydia far worse than he let everyone believe.

Despite this evidence, no further action was taken against Chatterton. As for Lydia, just eight days after committing the murder, she was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey. The plea of manslaughter was not accepted but the jury’s recommendation to mercy was, and the death penalty was later rescinded to life imprisonment.

Sean Farrell
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 a 1999 issue of Call Sign and the historic result of a membership ballot vote to decide whether drivers could in future vote by post at AGMs...

From Call Sign December 1999

FROM THE SECRETARY’S OFFICE



Following the circular to all members regarding a possible change to the Society’s Rules allowing postal voting to be included at Annual General Meetings, I would advise all members that by 3 pm on Friday 29th October 1999, the following number of envelopes had been returned:

1210 envelopes returned; 25 were disqualified and 1185 accepted as being in order

After ensuring that each was a bone-fide vote, the envelopes were destroyed and the votes counted with the following result:

993 in favour (83.8%) with 192 against (16.2%)

Therefore, as the required 75% of members returning their envelopes had voted in favour, the ballot has been carried and will take effect from the forth-coming Annual General Meeting to be held at the Hilton London Metropole Hotel, Edgware Road, W2 on **February 20th 2000**. As a result, you will now be able to attend and vote in person or to cast your vote by post not less than 48 hours before the meeting in the envelope that will be provided by the agency that will be used to deal with these matters.

Failure to attend the meeting or to vote in advance will leave you open to the fine of £50 which will be applied in accordance with the Rules of the Society.

Trevor Clarke
Secretary to the Society

Towards the end of 2013, **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Steve Albasini (V02)** got in touch with **Call Sign** after reading an Editorial from **Alan Fisher** about a PCN the Editor had successfully appealed against after picking up a passenger along **Waterloo Road** outside the station – an area filled with bus stops and zigzag lines.

Alan had pointed out in his Appeal that there was nowhere to stop to pick up anyone exiting from the station. He asked **Lambeth Council** how many PCNs had been issued to buses when too many had stopped at a bus stop at the same time – ie doing their job as best they could - and the back ones were forced to become stationary on the zigzags.

Steve had been spotted by CCTV with passengers leaving his cab whilst on a zigzag – an appeal the trade has long believed to be almost impossible to win! However, his passengers began to exit the cab while Steve was waiting for the lights to change; he hadn't pulled into the side. As the whole of that section of road is closely watched by CCTV, a PCN dropped through Steve's letter box soon after.

Unsurprisingly, Steve's Appeal to Lambeth Council failed, so he appealed his PCN again, this time to PATAS (Parking and Traffic Appeals Service) and again used a *Call Sign* article – this one from the December 2010 issue where **Sid Nathan (K88)** had asked about stopping on zigzags outside St Pauls because his passengers began getting out while Sid was stuck in traffic. Sid later won his appeal.

Steve used information that *Call Sign's* parking expert at the time, **Barrie Segal**,

Steve beats Lambeth PCN!

Thanks to 2010 Call Sign article...

had responded with and sent it explaining why he felt the PCN should be cancelled.

Steve has now told us that the adjudication went in his favour! He shared the PATAS response with Call Sign...

"This PCN was issued for the alleged contravention of being stopped on a crossing area marked by zigzags. The CCTV footage shows that Mr Albasini's taxi

was stopped on a zigzag area. I am however, allowing the appeal.

I accept the evidence of Mr Albasini that he stopped his taxi because of the red traffic light. The CCTV footage shows passengers alighting from the taxi, but Mr Albasini has explained that they opened the door to get out after he had stopped at the red light. In those circumstances, he had no option but to wait while the process of alighting the vehicle was com-



The whole stretch of road by Waterloo Station is closely monitored by CCTV

pleted, even though the lights had by that time changed. I am satisfied from Mr Albasini's evidence that the alleged contravention didn't occur."

Well done Steve. It shows that even though councils rarely allow appeals, it pays to go to adjudication even with appeals that are apparently impossible to win – ie stopping on zigzags!

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online

Bob Woodford's London walks are some of the most fascinating anywhere. You can see what's on his menu at the website at the bottom of the page. Meanwhile, just a small taster...

THE HANDSOME HOAXER OF HARLEY STREET



Let me take you on a trip back in time to the first half of the 19th century, when one man took a large portion of polite society for a ride with his pointless and pernicious cures for consumption (tuberculosis).

Allow me to introduce the King of The Quacks, The Handsome Hoaxer of Harley Street - Mr John St John Long.

It is **October 1830**; London society is gripped by a dramatic manslaughter trial at the **Old Bailey**. The accused is one **John St John Long**, who has long been touted as the most successful *quack* practitioner in the London of his day. He is one of the first to set up on **Harley Street**, the area still synonymous with high class private clinics of both reputable and less orthodox natures.

The manslaughter case is brought by a **Mrs Cashin**, a wealthy society lady who comes to London in August 1830 seeking a cure for her daughter's consumption. Having heard much about Mr St John Long's wonderful cure, she brings her daughter to him and he commences his treatment - by applying a mixture of egg yolk, vinegar and turpentine on the back shoulders and front!

The intention is to create a wound to bring the lung infection to the surface, with the resulting blister to be soothed with cabbage leaves - but Miss Cashin's wound, unsurprisingly perhaps, gets only worse and spreads. She becomes extremely ill and after several days, dies.

What the Cashins didn't know is that St John Long has no medical training whatsoever. In fact he is a downright charlatan! A good looking charmer, he had come from Cork, Ireland to London in 1822 to work as a painter, but subsequently in 1827 and not earning enough from his art, he turns his anatomical skills learnt, we assume, from life classes to medical use and sets himself up in practice.

It is at this point that St John Long claims to have found a miraculous cure for tuberculosis, known at the time as consumption. He soon develops a prestigious clientele of aristocratic young ladies, like Miss Cashin, treating them in the same way as that unfortunate young woman. In fact you would have struggled to weave your Hackney Carriage through Harley Street with so many posh women in their carriages queuing up for Dr John!

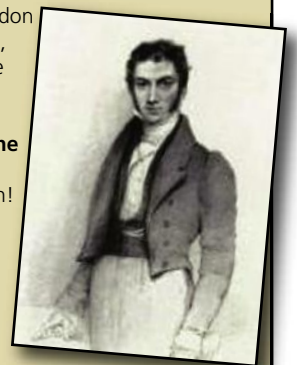
Within a few years, however, Mr St John Long's methods are exposed in the expert medical journals, provoking a campaign by *The Lancet*, which publishes an article on him entitled 'The King of Humbugs'. Then in 1830, in the midst of scandal, two of his patients - including Miss Cashin - die.

Despite testimony from tens of Mr St John Long's high class patients in his defence, he is found guilty of manslaughter on the 30th of October 1830 – only to be fined £250!

Though this was not an insubstantial sum back then, the evidently wealthy Mr St John Long flamboyantly paid the debt on the spot. He gave up his practice in 1831 and his life in 1834 (from consumption), being buried in a grandiose tomb in **Kensal Green Cemetery**.

John St John Long, the 'King of the Quacks' is just one of the infamous characters featuring on my walk'. Check out our website for Walk schedules and details. I look forward to seeing you... www.discovermedicallondon.com.

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online



Another true story from Geoff Levene

I remember you!



I'm cursed with a memory for faces. I'll pass someone in the street and think that I know that guy from somewhere - and then at 3 o'clock in the morning I'll remember that he served me in a shop a few months earlier. Totally pointless! But my biggest problem is that I also remember people I'd rather forget...

There was the cab driver I was unlucky enough to have a conversation with years ago and decided I'd rather not repeat the experience. So when I see him from time to time, I make sure to avoid making eye contact. But I needn't worry because he never recognises me! Either that or he feels the same as I do!

But sometimes there's a nice result. Twenty odd years ago, a cab passed me and I caught a glimpse of the driver. My God, I thought, that's a face I remember from my childhood. Someone who lived in my area but who I was sure I'd never even spoken to. I mentioned it to the good lady wife and told her that I was sure she'd know him. Then by chance, a short while later there was a little item on the TV about cab trade charities and there he was taking part in an outing.

"That's the fellow," I said and she did indeed know him. Admittedly he had one of those memorable faces - but in a nice way! Hope you're reading this Ronnie!

Just the other day a man stopped me in **Hamilton Terrace** and I instantly remembered the time I'd picked up him and his wife sometime in the early 1990s and was to take them to the old **Eurostar** Terminal at **Waterloo** for a weekend in Paris. As she came down the path, the *au pair* called out that she had forgotten her coat. She half-turned to go back and but stopped and continued getting into my cab while calling back to the *au pair* not to worry and that she would buy another one in Paris! Now that's style!

And then there was the **Dial-a-Cab** account job from the **Cundy Street** flats. Down came my passenger; about 50ish but still with a floppy public school hairstyle. Over his pin-striped suit he wore a British warm coat - that's the fawn coloured one with epaulettes and brown buttons. Like the other type with the velvet collar, they can only be worn by paid-up members of the Tory Party!

He chatted as we drove along and I looked briefly at his face in the mirror. Finally I asked him if he had ever lived off **Battersea Park Road**. He looked surprised and asked how I knew? I explained that around 25 years earlier I had picked him up in **Soudan Road** at about 8am. He had looked a little glassy-eyed and slightly unsteady on his feet. We went to South Lambeth Road.

"I'm a very happy man today," he had said, "my son was born last night and I'm off to register the birth."

I congratulated him and some 25 minutes later we arrived at the Registry Office. He got out of my cab and had asked me to wait for him saying that he shouldn't be long.

"Are you sure it's open," I asked? He just said that they'd open up for him and with that he went to the basement entrance and I sat there and waited. After about 5 minutes I heard shouting and a door slamming. He appeared at the top of the stairs and glowered at the building. It had a frontage of some 40 feet and iron spiked railings. Suspended by plastic hoops from the spikes was a huge banner declaring: 'Save the GLC. Tell Maggie No!' This was the period when **Margaret Thatcher** was at loggerheads with our old pal **Ken Livingstone**. My passenger had begun removing the banner by snapping the hoops...boing, boing, boing they went. When he'd got the banner off, he folded it into four, jumped on it to make it flatter still and then hurled it down into the basement.



He then stomped back to the cab and slammed the door so hard that the windows shook!

"Careful," I said, "you'll damage the cab."

"Don't worry," he replied, "I'll buy you another!"

Back in the present and when I had finished relating my story, he looked stunned.

"Did I really say all that," he enquired, "I must have been drunk! Trouble was that I was drunk a lot of the time back then. But that boy is a fine young man now," he said before adding rather wistfully that he was no longer with his mother.

Why didn't that surprise me?

Geoff Levene (W32)

Call Sign Online

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

Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

To borrow or not to borrow? That is the question...

Hello all you lovely **Dial-a-Cab** drivers, young and old. I hope you're not all cutting one another up to get that job, because unfortunately that's what I'm hearing from the drivers that come to the Credit Union office. The last time I remember it being this bad was way back in 1989 when I sold my 18 month old pride and joy FX4 and also downsized my house! I can hear you thinking to yourselves; what the hell is he going on about and why would I get a loan in these times? Well let me tell you. Sometimes you need a little help with a long term debt, just to give you that little bit of time to get yourselves straight, because believe me, in all the years I have been driving a taxi, it all comes good again - maybe not as good as it was 10 years ago because the trade has changed so much - too many people trying to do the same type of work!

I'm not trying to tell you how to suck eggs, just to reassure you that it will improve, so back to the crux of the matter. If you need a little help with credit card payments or any kind of debt, just give us a call on 0207 729 8171 or come down to the office in Hackney Road and maybe - just maybe - we can give you that little bit of help you need.

In my last article I mentioned about taking a charge against your house, but this is generally for amounts exceeding £10,000. We tend to



look at each case as to whether or not we need to do that, but we have to be seen as responsible lenders and after all, we are only the custodians of the money held by the Credit Union and that is your money as members.

Debt management

After what I have just written, I have to also mention that there are a few occasions when we lend out money to members and some then seem to feel that once they have the loan, they can then forget to repay it! Over the years, we have been pretty lenient and always give people the benefit of the doubt. We do understand that times have been tough and we know you can have a sudden tragedy in the family that makes you just want to sit and gaze out of the window. I think northerners have a word for it. They call it *maudling*. But life does go on, there

are bills to be paid and the mortgage - or even Sainsbury's - has to be paid. As with the Credit Union, something is better than nowt - northern again, too much Corrie I think! So if you are struggling, at least try and cover the interest on your loan, it will keep you away from our new debt collecting agency that we have brought in, so before we put anyone over to them, please **CALL US**. I hope you all understand what we are trying to do for you...

New blood

In the last issue of all **Call Sign**, DACC President **Terry Dodd** was calling for younger members than ourselves to help out in the office and learn how the Credit Union works. Unfortunately, this is unpaid for at least 24 months or until we feel it safe to allow you loose onto our computers! We only need someone every other week for a few hours to check loans - or make the tea! We've had a small response, but the volunteers have been of the older variety and the idea is to get younger people who will be available for more than a few months. But our sincere thanks to those that offered.

That's all for now, so don't forget if you get any money problems, don't hesitate to give the Credit Union a ring - after all, this is *YOUR* Credit Union, so use it.

I'll sign off for now and hope to see or hear from you, so be safe and above all, be very careful out there.

John Riley
DACC Vice President

Win £100 with a caption...



Looking to pick up some dosh for the upcoming hols? Well **Call Sign** won't be paying for your holiday, but we'll give £100 to the winner of the best caption to the photo of David Lessman (D19) and the two young lady cats, which could go towards your spending money. Entries to callsignmag@aol.com or post to **Call Sign** at the office address. The editor's decision is final..

AVAILABLE FOR RENT CLOSE TO DISNEY IN FLORIDA



2 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 4/5



4 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 8/9



6 Bedroom 5 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 12



Pool and conservation view at 6 bedroom home.

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(Prices are for the villa and not per person.)

www.dialadream.co.uk



Tel: 020 8530 5589



John James Connor

The 70th anniversary of the D-Day Landings in June 1944 seems an appropriate time to highlight the efforts of the Royal Navy crews, the critical part they played in the operation to liberate Europe from the grip of Nazism and the supreme effort of the convoys to maintain the supply of goods of every kind for the welfare of this island.

John James Connor, father of Dial-a-Cab driver and Call Centre dispatcher John Connor (Y11), enlisted in the 'senior service' in 1942 as an eager young 20 year old, keen to serve his country. Little did he know what was to follow...

Signing-on to battleship **HMS Duke of York** in early March 1942, he immediately saw escort service to Convoy **PQ12**. However, as the German battleship **Tirpitz** put to sea on March 6th there were serious concerns at the Admiralty that the convoy might be intercepted, as a British submarine had reportedly sighted the German ship on the high seas. Further convoy escort duties took John James Connor on several more ice-bound journeys between Iceland and Norway, protecting the vital merchant ships that took munitions and other critical supplies to Russia.

When her sister ship **King George V** sustained extensive damage after being involved in an accident with the destroyer **Punjabi**, it was the Duke of York that was sent to relieve her enabling KG5 to withdraw from front line operations and effect repairs. The Duke of York continued her various convoy escorting duties over several more months.

September 1942 saw John James escorting Arctic Convoy **PQ18** from Britain to Russia. During the journey they came under repeated attack from a considerable German force of air and sea-borne craft, losing some ships to enemy action but eventually arriving in **Archangel** in late September.

In October 1942, while supporting the allied landings in North Africa, Duke of York came under attack from Italian aircraft on numerous occasions.

A return to further Arctic Convoy duty followed. With ice formations building up on the ships' superstructures, railings and decking, sailors had to hack away the snow and ice with axes or any other implement that could be found to prevent the ship from becoming top-heavy and capsizing. Regular journeys to **Murmansk** and **Archangel** often saw temperatures plummet to -40°. In a heavy, rolling sea, this was no easy task.

As we approach the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Landings in June 1944, DaC's John Connor (Y11) tells Call Sign about his dad's wartime exploits in the Royal Navy...

THE WORST JOURNEY IN THE WORLD...



Churchill described it as the worst journey in the world!

"When you consider how cold a domestic freezer can feel at typically -18/20°, you get an idea of what my dad and his fellow matelots suffered," John Jnr explained. "Prime Minister **Winston Churchill** called it 'the worst journey in the world' and I think he may have been right!"

"I know dad also served on another capital battleship, the aforementioned **King George V**," John continued to *Call Sign*, "and experienced plenty of action on that craft before transferring to **HMS Scylla** in time for the **D-Day Landings** on June 6th 1944. The constant action of the guns as they pounded the **Normandy Coast** caused him to suffer a perforated eardrum. The ship was badly damaged when it hit mines off the **Normandy Coast** on June 23rd during the ongoing operation.

"The damage must have been very considerable because she was declared a total write off and was scrapped. Thankfully, my dad came

through it all, more or less in one piece, going on to do the **Knowledge** and driving a taxi after a stint at running a pub," John Jnr continued.

"In all, my father served for seven years in the Royal Navy, being discharged in 1947. Along with his medal cluster, I have only recently collected his hard-earned **Arctic Star** as previously the MoD considered the award of the **Atlantic Star** sufficient recognition for RN personnel, but strenuous lobbying by veterans and their families finally proved successful! I just wish my dad could have been around to receive it himself, but sadly he passed away in 1990."

As he recounted the tales of his dad, you could see the pride in John's eyes. We should all feel that sense of pride in those that put their lives in mortal danger to protect these islands from tyranny...

Alan Green
Call Sign Online

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New terminals 1

Dear Alan

The new terminal has had many problems, but none of these are the fault of DaC IT Director John Banks or DaC itself; it seems to be totally due to the inability of O2 to give an adequate signal. When I pass a major hospital or any organisation that has a high signal usage such as an embassy or Scotland Yard, the signal disappears. Can someone please ask O2 why that is? O2 may have promised us a perfect platform but they have fallen well short. I am sure O2 are being paid as per terms of the contract, so are they not in breach of that contract?

My other concern is that John Banks may be too much of a gentleman when speaking to O2 and could have the wool pulled over his eyes. A Board member should go with John and tell these people to get their act together.

Incidentally, I recently took my Vito to Manchester to visit the grandchildren and had a signal all the way. The satnav is just brilliant.

Stephen Field (F68)

Hi Stephen, an update on signals etc is in this issue. But take it from me, John Banks is nobody's pushover! ...Ed

New terminals 2

Hi Alan

I know that the facility is on our screens, but I wonder if it would be possible to put a gratuity facility onto our PEDs. The problem I've been encountering is that as I'm sorting out a credit or debit card at the end of the journey, the punter suddenly asks if they can add on a tip. But more often than not the transaction is already being processed. My feeling is that if there was a prompt on the PED, then any potential gratuity wouldn't be lost.

Steve Albasini (V02)

Read John Banks article in this issue, Steve ...Ed

New terminals 3

Dear Editor

It is obvious by now that some remedial work is needed to make the new terminal more 21st Century user friendly for the drivers. I assume that enough feedback has now been received by the Board and I wonder if someone could update us about the proposed solution to these problems. In the very unlikely event that not enough feedback has been received, and since this forum is not the proper place to discuss them, can you provide me and other interested parties with an email address of someone to whom we can send our concerns.

I have obviously always accepted the need to push the meter button twice to stop and clear, but another three actions to clear the screen; hardly 21st Century computing. Also, from talking to many other drivers, I would

Mailshot

not be surprised if our income is down on revenue from credit cards, due to the complexity.

Why is it necessary for the Board to know where a card customer is picked up and dropped - information that Verifone manage without. And how does Verifone manage to make the customer do all the inputting work and we don't - yet more examples of needless button pushing by the drivers.

And as for having to repeat 'Yes that's what I meant' when refusing a trip or booking off, it's like having your mum in the cab!
Jon Tremlett (Y32)

Read the update inside this issue Jon. Hopefully you will find it interesting ...Ed

Help to save Debbie

Hi Alan

I am writing this to see if **Dial-a-Cab** members and their families could possibly help out a fellow cab driver whose wife needs urgent treatment. My brother-in-law, **Tony Weeden**, has been a green badge taxi driver for over twenty years. For much of that time he worked the airport and has done a lot of charity work. Tony also has three sons, one of whom is disabled and who takes a lot of time and care for both he and his wife Debbie. But Debbie has an inoperable tumour in her brain. There is one glimmer of hope though, in that there is a procedure called **Proton Therapy** which has quite a high success rate but only takes place in three countries - all of them abroad. They have opted for Prague in the Czech Republic. However, the treatment comes at a huge cost - £50,000. We are currently in the process of organising events to raise money for this procedure so that Tony and Debbie will not have to sell their home. So can I please refer DaC members to a link which is called the **Save Debbie campaign**. It can be accessed by going to:

<http://gogetfunding.com/project/saving-debbie-campaign>

We would urge people please to donate as little or as much as you can and I would like to thank you in advance for your much needed help.

Ricki Rands (M81)

Lee Pearce

Dear Alan,

Through **Call Sign** can I wish **Lee Pearce (J71)** well in his new team **Bedfont and Feltham FC**. I saw Lee play for **North Greenford United** a couple of times when he came up against my local team, **Rugby Town**. He is remembered well by my friends and I as he showed both times he was quite a character who took a lot of stick from the crowd good naturedly - and he gave it out too! He played well earning his struggling team a creditable draw in his last visit. I hope he carries on enjoying his football for some time to come.

Nigel Walters

**The London Taxi Company
Coventry**

Thanks for that Nigel. I passed your com-



ments over to Lee and he told me that the attitude he displays is because after many years between the sticks and for many different teams, he still loves the game. Inside this issue, you can read about some silverware his team, Bedfont and Feltham, recently won ...Ed

Radio Caroline

Dear Alan

I often read **Call Sign Online** thanks to years of hearing about your magazine from my late uncle Pat McGuire who was always talking about Dial-a-Cab. However, in your April issue I was more than just interested in the article on the fiftieth anniversary of Radio Caroline's birth because I worked in the Chesterfield Gardens offices from early 1965 and well remember your ODRTS taxis coming to pick up our 'guests' - who were usually trying to get their clients records played on the ship! As you point out, it was fifty years ago and in reality much of my time there has faded from memory, but two things are still there - first is the Caroline House phone number of Hyde Park 9721 and secondly speaking to your lovely drivers who were always so friendly and helpful.

I did also work "round the corner" in Curzon Street for Radio London - better known as Big L. But Caroline will always be in my heart and I thank you for bringing back so many happy memories...

Doris Berger

London SW20

Pleased you enjoyed it Doris. I also worked at Caroline House - albeit for just two months - and I know what you mean about it being such a great place to work ...Ed

Lost phone

Hi Call-Sign Magazine

I am writing to ask if you could publish the following in the next edition of your magazine...

Hello to the taxi driver who took me from Brixton to Battersea Bridge / Parkgate Road on Saturday 22nd March at about midnight. My card wasn't working and so I gave you my phone as 'insurance' that I would pay you. But it turned out that my account had been defrauded! Please get in touch as I am still trying to transfer you the money - and to get my phone back!

Thanks and please email me at: cf.roberts@live.co.uk.

Cordelia Roberts

If you were the driver, don't have email but have info on the phone, get the office to contact me and I'll be happy to contact Cordelia for you ...Ed

Mailshot

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

Dear Editor

In the *March* edition of *Call Sign* – such an informative read about what is going on in the taxi trade - I read with great interest the remarks of **Stephen Berndes (R14)** on the DaC AGM concerning the positive benefits of a Friendly Industrial and Provident Society such as DaC and by inference, the Credit Union.

Although separate both by law and regulation from ODRTS, the Credit Union is a Friendly Industrial and Provident Society, mutually owned (one owner member, one vote) co-operatively and professionally run (through duly elected Committees) savings and loans 'Firm' (a legal regulatory description given to all fund holding bodies).

You will have read in the *April Call Sign* how successful that credit union is. The Credit Union is a complete answer to Stephen's dream; also by law it can't be taken over or bought.

This is from an individual owner-member of the CU and not a statement from a Credit Union BM.

Yours in credit union and co-operation

Barry Epstein

Volunteer GM, DaC Credit Union

Thanks Barry. As one of – if not *the* – longest standing members of DACC, you don't have to convince me as to how good it is. When I joined, you would have struggled to borrow £500. Now you can get £40,000! ...Ed

Tea for two from the Board!

Hi guv'nor

Having read in the *April Call Sign* that Brian and the Board are not taking any increase this year, the question must be to ask if they can spend those savings on an updated tea machine in Drivers Reception – one that pokes out choccies! I await your reply with great anticipation guv'nor...

Gary Cox (O46)

Hi Gazza, I thought your Vito came with some so that you don't go hungry while your rear steering was being repaired!!! ...Ed

Lead-in times

Hi Alan

Allan Evans' response to **Brian Marcantonio's** query regarding lead-in times prompts me to ask if it would be possible to print a complete list of said times, or at least those zones that are not the customary 12 minutes. Even after 20 years on the circuit, it always amazes me how there are suddenly numerous taxis booked into a previously unoccupied zone as soon as a job appears.

Furthermore, bearing in mind the dearth of work at present and the erosion of the value of the run-in, what about reducing the lead-in to 10 minutes for the inner zones?

Can I also ask why, with my new terminal and the O2 technology, are there so many occasions when I lose precious minutes waiting for a connection? My mobile (also on O2) doesn't suffer from loss of signal.

Just to add to the debate over Hailo and the 10% charges to the driver, my credit work for the last three years has been between £17K and £20K, with subs to DaC of £1800+ per annum. Not being an accountant, or even a paedophile, I make that about 10percent!

David S. Lessman (D19)

Hi David, I get many drivers pointing out the 10% as you have, but they rarely point out how much they lose through no run-ins or the 5 minutes free waiting. That could cost up to £4 per trip depending on the time of day. Hopefully **Allan Evans** will put together a guide of lead-in times for the next issue ...Ed

David Kupler

I would like to pass my sincere condolences to the family of David 'Kupcake' Kupler (Y74) following his sudden passing. A very sad day...

Bruno Manfredi (F23)

David Kupler appears on several pages in this issue and in all honesty, I could have filled the magazine with tributes. His family, from Essex to California to Colorado, thank everyone ...Ed

Clearing credit cards

Dear Alan

Would someone please explain to drivers that when they do a credit card job they are supposed to clear it at the end of the journey. But what happens when they put the card straight through is that they are told it is denied.

Who is responsible for the fare if, let's say they got off to Gatwick and the card is denied. Who pays the driver?

Ivor Belkin (C97 and Saturday dispatcher)

Hi Ivor, I've had no credit card probs since first having the terminal - a long time including testing. What I have seen is drivers telling me that the card has been denied and the reason has always been exactly as you say – because they forget that you have to clear the trip in the normal way first and then follow instructions re putting the card into the PED. They think that you just put the card straight into the PED. But it will always be rejected if they do that. Also, cards from the US have to be swiped and the last four numbers on the card put in as they don't seem to have pin numbers. ...Ed



Remember Cunningham's of Curzon Street?

Dear Sir

My name is James Cunningham, son of the late Captain Owen Cunningham. I recently read an article in *Call Sign Online* from March 2012 and written by **Michael Son** where he stated that a restaurant nowadays was considered a success if it lasted more than two years and not as in the old days with the likes of **Cunningham's**, which had been around for over twenty.

I was eleven when my father passed away in 1974. I remember little of my father since he was always at the restaurant, but I have started a book to record his past and path of success as he built up **Cunningham's**. I would very much like the opportunity to learn of any stories your readers may recall about **Cunningham's** of Curzon Street....

James Cunningham

If you remember Cunningham's, which was just east of the old Playboy club, and have any stories, let Call Sign have them and we'll pass them over to the Captain's son. The restaurant provided much work for the licensed taxi trade during its years in Mayfair ...Ed

Wake up the sleeping monster!

Hi Alan

Re selling Dial-a-Cab. I believe we can wake up the sleeping monster and keep the dinosaur. My suggestion is to convert the business to a partnership/cooperative where every member feels personally committed to building and maintaining a professional and reliable service and let all members enjoy a profit share. It's time for change... we must change our attitude and charging system or become extinct.

We are waiting 30 mins to 60 mins for a £4.20 run in and gratuity job, whereas if we work to winning the accounts back we could easily have plenty of work. We have become negative, almost excepting defeat at the hands of the minicabs and new taxi app firms.

Also, *Call Sign* is being used to play down the rise of Hailo and the personal slating of non-DaC gentlemen- which is non-productive and pointless.

Let's get DaC - the gentleman's circuit - back where it belongs as the first port of call for a cab. Even if our earnings only increase by 3 jobs a night /day, that equates to approx £30-£40 a day - that's £200 a week x 48 weeks and that is virtually your five figure sell off figure in the first year. If we sold the Society, we would probably be tied to the new firm for a year before the pay-out or given shares that you

Mailshot

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

can't sell for a year.

Let's cut out all the slating of the opposition and get real about what we need to change. It's time for a dedicated sales team with a proven track record who are up for the challenge to turn things around. Let's not lose what has always been a professional and successful cab service. We have lost the goodwill and confidence of the customers - which is mainly due to cost, but also because of the attitude of some drivers. Citigroup staff don't want to hear "effing West Ferry Road again." We all know that on occasion, that happens. Let's get the 'gentleman's circuit' back on top where it belongs. Wake up the sleeping monster and keep the Dinosaur. It's time for a change. I'm proud of our past and poised for the future...

Terry Vale (J29)

Thanks for a very interesting letter Terry and hopefully it will bring in responses from drivers whether they agree or disagree. My own view is that you have tried to simplify the situation surrounding cost. Compared to the opposition, we are expensive and it's no good pretending that a polite driver who charges £40 or so more to LAP from Docklands than a minicab, is going to win work back by just being nice. If it gets busy and service is once more paramount, then we'll get back our rightful place at the top of the pile. Perhaps other drivers disagree, that's what *Call Sign* is here for.

As for the mag, let me say once again that it is totally uncensored so anything you don't like is down to me. I try to put together an interesting read. I certainly don't think I underestimate the rise of Hailo and have said many times that they are causing more harm to this trade - especially street work - than good with their no run-ins and free waiting time. Now Uber are undercutting Hailo. Where will it end and where does it leave licensed taxis?

Do I slate other taxi companies? Certainly not deliberately unless I believe they have done something to the detriment of the trade. I am currently being inundated with drivers phoning me concerning them seeing Yellow Badges picking up at our former Docklands account. Even worse, several drivers are now saying that some of these have no identifiers. Should I say nothing? Sadly, being a driver of 43 years on May 21st, I find that difficult to do because I care about the business and about this Society that I have been on since 1974. Any drivers who would like to write on the subject, please feel free ...Ed

Ray Marks

Dear Alan

I had known Ray Marks for many years, not as a friend in the sense that we socialised outside of the trade, but as a friend within the trade. Most of the time spent together would have been at the Finsbury Square venue where we

would all kill time swapping anecdotes or he would be defending his beloved football team and fending off criticism with non-Chelsea supporters. Great banter!

I never heard Ray speak about anyone in a bad manner, which is a great virtue. I am sorry that I never had the opportunity to be closer to Ray and had got to know his family, to whom I send my sincere condolences and wish them all a very long life.

Rest in Peace...

Steve Shaller (ex F34)

I spoke to Ray's wife Frances at the funeral and she was very appreciative that so many DaC drivers had come to pay their respects ...Ed

Dear Alan

I have had the privilege of knowing Ray for 25 years, for more than 20 of those years we used to meet for dinner along with Mick Daly, Dave Creber and various others over the years. Ray was always good company and very happy to talk of family and of course his beloved Chelsea.

One story that he told was when as a teenager on Saturdays he would go with his father to the synagogue; his father, who was a widower, liked to spend the day there. After a couple of hours Ray would make his excuses and leave. He would then run to Chelsea to watch the match, Ray swore he was the only fan cheering on his team wearing his Barmitzvah suit! He would then run home and his father never asked where he had been, although he was sure he knew where he was.

My deepest condolences to Frances, Simon, Laura, Michael and Katie and all the family. Ray, taken too soon and sadly missed.

Val and Alan Lipscombe (Ex-T50)

Dear Alan

I was shocked and saddened to hear the awful news of Ray Marks passing. I've known him through work for close to 30 years and have many happy memories of our banter re football and anything else. I loved his dry sense of humour and friendly nature. I'm sure his family are all going through a terrible time, but I hope that their memories of happier times will help them through. Wishing them all a long and healthy life free from any more grief.

Howard Taylor
Howard is the son of late former Chairman Jack Taylor and a former DaC driver ...Ed

Hammersmith rank – Another victory!

Following my recent letter to *Call Sign* concerning an appeal against a PCN when my taxi was allegedly "fouling" the Hammersmith taxi rank even though all four wheels of my cab were actually within the rank markings, just to let you know that the PCN was cancelled by Hammersmith and Fulham council just days before my scheduled meeting with the parking adjudicator.

I had sent the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service copies of **Steve Thomas (N10)** Hammersmith Rank parking appeal decision papers as published in *Call Sign*, who then

forwarded the copies to Hammersmith and Fulham council. The result was cancellation of the PCN. Thank you...

Karen Menpes (E01)

Karen is just one of several drivers who received PCNs at Hammersmith taxi rank and appealed following the Steve Thomas article in Call Sign where the rank measurements were shown to be incorrect for the number of cabs allowed ...Ed

Credit Card charge

Dear Al

At last the Cab Trade is united! And it's all down to the so-called tariff increase. Those that wanted it got it and those that didn't must be happy as well. Because if you compare the old and new fare charts, you will see that they are exactly the same apart from a 2-mile journey on Tariff 2.

But there is one thing on the new chart that is puzzling me. It states that the minimum handling charge on a Credit Card job should be £1 and no more than the driver (or in our case DaC) is being charged. If a Hailo driver gets a Credit Card job off the street, he or she must pay the handling charge which is only 4%. Our minimum now seems at least £1 and maybe 6% too much.

Geoff Levene (W32)

Brian Rice replies: I knew this topic would raise a query on some occasion; I am just surprised it has taken so long! All the Radio Circuits charge a £2 minimum and we have never deviated from that. It was either 2010 or 11 that LTPH made a mistake with the fare chart and showed the £2 on the chart as £1. All three circuits pointed the error out to LTPH at the time and we have also advised them accordingly every year since. It is their mistake, which we can prove and none of the three circuits intend to alter their minimum charge of £2.

We are quite entitled to charge 10% as we have the Merchant fee to pay out of that and also recoup the cost of equipment, air time and administration. I'm not sure if I understand your point correctly, but I can assure you that member/drivers are not doing anything they shouldn't as DaC is making the additional charge and not the driver. So everyone should carry on as they are now.

Regarding the 4 percent, that will just about cover their processing cost as unlike the circuits they don't have any other overheads. If we were to charge only 4 percent, then all your account customers would want to switch to credit card usage as it would be cheaper; we would then have to start charging the driver as the Apps do and not the customer.





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