

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

Call Sign

November 2014



*After 46 years,
Sid Nathan says
goodbye to taxis
and Dial-a-Cab*



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

By 26/10/2014 the full implementation of Heathrow Terminal 2 will be complete, so this month sees the up-to-date departure terminals list...

Heathrow Departure Terminals

British Airways depart T5 except those shown below.

B.A. T1 - Amman - Baku - Beirut - Cairo - Hanover - Luxembourg - Lyon - Marseille - Rotterdam.

B.A. T3 - Barcelona - Budapest - Gibraltar - Helsinki - Lisbon - Prague - Vienna - Warsaw.

Delta Air Lines depart T3 except Delta T4 - Dallas-Detroit-Minneapolis.

Airline	Term.	Airline	Term.
Aegean Airlines	2	Icelandair	1
Aer Lingus	2	Iran Air	3
Aeroflot	4	Japan Airlines	3
Aeromexico	4	Jet Airways (India)	4
Air Algerie	4	Kenya Airways	4
Air Astana	4	KLM - Royal Dutch Airlines	4
Air Canada	2	Korean Air	4
Air China	2	Kuwait Airways	4
Air France	4	Libyan Airlines	4
Air India	4	LOT Polish Airlines	2
Air Malta	4	Lufthansa	2
Air Mauritius	4	Malaysia Airlines	4
Air New Zealand	2	MEA	3
Air Serbia	4	Oman Air	3
Alitalia	4	Pakistan Int'l Airlines	3
American Airlines	3	Philippine Airlines	4
ANA	2	Qantas	3
Arik Air	4	Qatar Airways	4
Asiana Airlines	2	Royal Air Maroc	4
Austrian	2	Royal Brunei Airlines	4
Avianca	2	Royal Jordanian	3
Azerbaijan Airlines	4	SAS - Scandinavian Airlines	2
Biman Bangladesh Airlines	4	Saudia	4
Brussels Airlines	2	Singapore Airlines	2
Bulgaria Air	4	South African Airways	2
Cathay Pacific Airways	3	Sri Lankan Airlines	3
China Eastern	4	Swiss International Airlines	2
China Southern	4	TAM	1
Croatia Airlines	1	TAP Portugal	2
Croatia Airlines	2	Tarom	4
Cyprus Airways	1	Thai Airways	2
Egypt Air	2	Transaero	4
El Al	1	Tunisair	4
Emirates	3	Turkish Airlines	2
Ethiopian Airlines	2	Turkmenistan Airlines	3
Etihad Airways	4	United Airlines	2
EVA Air	2	US Airways	3
Finnair	3	Uzbekistan Airways	4
Germanwings	2	Virgin Atlantic	3
Gulf Air	4	Virgin Atlantic Little Red	2
Iberia	5	Vueling	3

from the editor's desk

Cycles, cyclists and cycling

I used to be a fairly tolerant person. Each to their own was an expression often heard coming from my lips. I have even, on occasion, been heard to say nice things about TfL's MD for Surface Transport, **Leon Daniels**. I've said nice things about our Mayor, **Boris Johnson**. Twice in my cab he has made me smile, whilst many times at press conferences and on the telly, he has made me laugh out loud – sometimes because the subject is actually funny!

I have also gone into print and said some nice things about the opposition – not too often perhaps, but the comments are there in the records. I have even said nice things about **The Badge**, although in all honesty that's no longer hard to do because nowadays it is a good paper and a really good read. But of course I wouldn't tell Grant that!

But there is one subject that in all my 17+ years in this job and 43 years perched in the front seat of a taxi I can honestly say I've not had one good word to say about – cycling!

Yes, I know there are keen cyclists on **Dial-a-Cab** and perhaps they are the exceptions to the rule. One of **Call Sign's** regular contributors, **Tom Quigley (Y33)**, is a cycling fanatic and I don't want to upset him... but I am starting to move from a quiet dislike of cyclists to a thorough dislike of the two-wheeled pests. And that is just one step away from hate!

I'm not going to write about the usual complaints of going through red lights, failing to stop at pedestrian crossings or to keep to their own lanes, refusing to wear helmets and often having a thoroughly bad attitude as against the wonderful demure people that we taxi drivers are, because I've written about it all so many times before.

You have probably heard about the two new cycling super highways because the news came as the last issue of Call Sign was being printed and with a monthly publication, that makes any missed news really late. But I have to comment on a scheme that can kill this trade.

For those that don't know (or only read **Call Sign**), the new scheme from **Transport for London** has one cycling lane running from north to south with a second going east to west. But these are not ordinary cycling lanes – not that many cyclists keep to the lanes anyway – they will take up so much room that many roads will become single lane and using TfL's own figures, a car or taxi journey from Upminster in Essex to Hyde Park corner will be increased by 16 minutes up to 90 minutes. As the vehicles get closer to town, they will find red traffic lights phased to give cyclists priority. If you think the **Limehouse Link** is bad now, then you ain't seen nothing yet!

Travelling from Knightsbridge to Waterloo will see an extra 9 minutes added to the journey. How much extra that will cost passengers can be added in pounds and not pence. How many will continue to use us? The chances of getting a job in from the east will be reduced from virtually nil to a big fat zero. According to the Mayor, cyclists must have segregated lanes and that means taking up more road space. Not a word about London being one of the world's biggest financial centres where people have to get around quickly, but not necessarily on two wheels. And hands up anyone who believes those cyclists who dress as though they are practising for the 2050 **Tour de France** will actually keep to the new segregated lanes if it means they can't fly along like lunatics and being unable to stop even if they wanted to. They don't do it now and they won't do it with larger lanes either.

The morning east-west lane runs from Barking



to Acton via Tower Hill and the Embankment and work its way up to the Westway – where incidentally there will be speed cameras to make sure you don't exceed the 40mph speed limit. The north-south from Elephant & Castle to Farringdon will see horrendous hold-ups crossing Blackfriars Bridge where a two lane cycle lane will come at the expense of motorists who will share one lane in each direction.

There are many more additions to be brought in that will kill our Westminster trade such as no left turn from the Embankment onto Westminster Bridge. Once the scheme begins, taxis and cars will have to turn right, go round Parliament Square and then go straight across Bridge Street and onto the Bridge. There will also be no right turn on the Embankment from the Bridge when heading north. You will have to – yes, you've guessed it – go round Parliament Square and then turn left onto the Embankment. One day we'll look back and wonder how we ever came up with the cab driver's saying of east-west – Embankment is best!

And of course the two cycle Highways will go the reverse way as well and all in all cause utter chaos and greatly affect the number of passengers that want to pay to sit in traffic hold-ups.

But what puzzles me is that the last I heard, **Thames Water** had been given approval to build what has been called a super sewer commencing in 2016 – just 12 months after the super cycle highways are scheduled to come into being. The sewer is expected to involve road closures around Blackfriars and including the Embankment. The scheduled allocated time for the sewer is three years – yep, you read that right, three years!

Will Boris be worried about that? Will he hell – because he will be Prime Minister by then and attempting to tell Russian President **Vladimir Putin** his latest jokes about how he intends making the M25 for cyclists only!

Maaxi Taxi

Unlike the above story, the **Maaxi Taxi** cab share app broke just as we were getting ready to publish last month and it made the last issue before most of the other papers got it. Such is the fickleness of taxi news publishing. But I have to be honest and say that the response from drivers quite shocked me with many asking what I thought. The answer is that I'm not sure.

Yes, it does make sense to try and compete with **Uber** while not costing taxi drivers money and in theory, three, four or five people sharing a cab makes sense. The problem is that the waiting times at the pick-ups will be stretched and I can see some

passengers who want to get somewhere becoming irritated at the driver if he has to wait for someone to come out while the meter is bounding upwards. Then what if the people coming out have just finished last nights curried chips and to put it as politely as I can, emit strong and nasty fragrances! Or what if they are just plain nasty?

The Chairman of the investment company (JNR) behind the cab sharing app, **Nathaniel 'Nat' Rothschild**, lives in Switzerland and hasn't always been successful in his financial dealings. However, other than designer **Gabi Campos'** costs and a few £million in organising, this scheme, it looks as though it will go ahead and no doubt Mr Rothschild will voluntarily pay any taxes earned from Maaxi Taxi to the UK government and not to Switzerland's financial centre in Geneva.

Coincidentally, Gabi Campos used to be the Chief Executive of the online gaming company, **Pokerstars**; while I met Nat's father **Jacob Rothschild** many years ago in a small fishing village on Spain's Costa Blanca where he taught me how to play the card game Solo. I just hope that Nat is better at cab share schemes than I am at Solo!

Hailo

Some months ago, wherever you looked taxi drivers were cursing **Hailo** after it was revealed that **Russell Hall** had applied for a Private Hire licence of behalf of the Hailo's app owners. Suddenly taxis had notices stuck to their rears saying that they had deleted the app and would not be using its services again. Russell Hall was – in my view – unfairly blamed because he was the one that had to apply for the licence. Since then he has been noticeable by his absence, although I assume that has been compensated for by a large cheque. I hope he has because while we all disagreed with the application for the licence, Russell probably had no choice because there are people above him who obviously didn't want to get their hands dirty.

But this piece isn't about Russell Hall or Hailo itself, but all those drivers who either said they had deleted the app but hadn't and those drivers who didn't delete it "but don't use it." Right!

Then there are those that don't use it "except on their way into town if something comes their way."

It does appear that there are a number of licensed taxi drivers who are rather economical with the truth when it comes to Hailo...

Demos

There has suddenly been a spate of demos – three of late and the successful one at the Shard. The LTDA demos saw thousands of drivers turning out. Another was organised online and as you would expect, saw far fewer drivers showing up. Nevertheless, it still succeeded in making its point of Cabbies Against Boris (CAB).

The problem I found with the latest LTDA demo was that there were too many issues involved, from anti-Leon Daniels sentiments to a lack of minicab enforcement to TfL blaming the taxi trade for poor air quality. Also included were the new bike super highways mentioned at the top of the page.

I believe that a further demo should concentrate on the cycle lanes, not just because of the damage they will do to us but because we will get huge amounts of sympathy from ordinary road users who will be affected almost as much as us and together bring London to a total standstill. Just a thought...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Subscriptions

You will see elsewhere in this issue of *Call Sign* several references to the new PAYG subscription. It has already been pointed out that 85% of the membership will benefit from the new subscription, however, the remaining 15% are our higher earners and most are somewhat dismayed that there has been an increase in their £30+VAT per week subscription.

Obviously the £30+VAT subscription represented exceptional value for the amount of work it was generating for them, but of course the Members concerned are only interested in the fact that they will now be paying more in subscriptions, and of course the BoM can understand that.

The long serving Members with service in excess of 30 years are even more upset, because up until last year they were only paying £1 per month, which was a reduction in subscriptions that had been in place since 1996 and a reduced subscription that had been kept in operation for over sixteen years – a recognition of their contribution to the Society that was kept for as long as we could.

The initial idea behind the scheme was the BoM's belief that Members who had completed more than 30 years' service might be slowing down a little and the nominal subscription would offset that fact in addition to recognising their service to the Society. But circumstances have changed and the Society can no longer afford that recognition regarding reduced subscriptions. Consequently, we have decided to implement a payback scheme whereby following a certain number of completed trips being achieved on a weekly basis, the Society will pay Members a premium for every further trip that is completed.

We have now decided that figure will be £1 for every trip completed over 15 in any one week. It will apply to account trips and credit card trips that have been despatched through your terminal; it will not apply to 'street hail' credit cards, cash trips and scrubs. At the time of writing, we are in the process of writing the software for the 'payback' scheme and as soon as we are happy with the new program we will implement the new system. It could even be implemented by the time you read this piece.

Hopefully, the foregoing will help Members that do the most work and if you are a Senior Member with service in excess of 30 years and are working reduced hours, the PAYG system will be of some benefit. What you must remember - and as I have stated many times previously - whatever system the BoM implement there will be a section of the Society that it does not suit.

New Cycle Superhighways

I have responded to TfL regarding their two proposed Cycling Superhighways. I must say I am very much against the two schemes being implemented in what the Mayor and TfL seem to consider as a village – ie London!

The two proposed routes will run from Barking to Acton, which I believe to be approximately eighteen miles and from Farringdon/Kings X to St Georges Circus/Elephant Castle, which is around three miles. The amount of extra congestion that is going to be created will be enormous and TfL have already stated that the Superhighways will add to journey times for motorised vehicles, which in turn must surely add to pollution in London, something that both the Mayor and TfL wish to reduce - or so they say.

This got me thinking about a conversation I had in the past with one of our Members, **Dave Humphryes (A69)** and a suggestion he made. As we know, cyclists - unlike motorists - do not contribute to the road network, neither are they bound to hold any type of insurance; so Dave has come up with an agenda which I believe contains much merit.

It should be compulsory for all cyclists to wear a protective helmet and undergo a cycling proficiency examination. They



would then have to purchase a 'high viz' jacket that must be worn at all times whilst cycling, the jacket would have to be purchased from some type of TfL outlet and have a levy attached to the purchase price, which could then go towards the cycling infrastructure.

The jacket would also come with a unique number emblazoned on the back that would serve as a number plate or registration, so if the cyclist commits some form of misdemeanour then they could easily be traced because in order to purchase the 'high viz' initially, they will have had to have proof of identity and address. The foregoing might need a little 'tweaking' but I believe the principal and the idea is excellent. It is about time that rules

and regulations applied to cyclists as well as motorists. However, it often appears to be politically incorrect to point any criticism towards the cycling fraternity.

Board of Management

You will see elsewhere in the magazine the prospective candidates for the position of Board Member and Chairman. The CV's appear in this month's magazine in an attempt to give you, the Members, ample opportunity to ask any questions you might have of the prospective candidates in the December edition of *Call Sign* and receive your answers in the January edition.

As you are aware, the AGM will be held on 8th February at the HAC City Road.

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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Nominations for the DaC AGM



The following nominations for Chairman and Board of Management were received at Dial-a-Cab House by the closing date of 0900 on Friday 10 October 2014...

POST OF CHAIRMAN

PROPOSED

1. Brian Rice, Chairman (Q01)

2. Garry White, Sitting Board Member (L65)

PROPOSED BY

Keith Cain, Sitting Board Member (Q07)

Patricia Graves (L53)

SECONDED BY

Allan Evans, Sitting Board Member (Y83)

Mark Partridge (R30)

POST OF BOARD MEMBER

1. Keith Cain, Sitting Board Member (Q07)

2. Michael Son, Sitting Board Member (V52)

3. Allan Evans, Sitting Board Member (Y083)

4. Thomas Whitbread, Sitting Board Member (Q09)

5. Garry White, Sitting Board Member (L65)

6. Joe Brazil (K16)

7. Patricia Graves (L53)

8. Javid Raja (N72)

9. Michael Parkins (Z03)

Brian Rice, Chairman (Q01)

Brian Rice, Chairman (Q01)

Brian Rice, Chairman (Q01)

Brian Rice, Chairman (Q01)

Mark Dodge (L89)

Darren French (F63)

David Morris (M62)

Peter Learmouth (Y10)

Christopher Marquis (G99)

Allan Evans, Sitting Board Member (Y83)

Keith Cain, Sitting Board Member (Q07)

Keith Cain, Sitting Board Member (Q07)

Allan Evans, Sitting Board Member (Y83)

Kevin O'Connor (T75)

Roger Kensit (W31)

Jim Moore (M58)

Michael Leahy (A18)

David Burrell (T60)

CVs pages 8 – 10. Any questions for prospective Board Members will be published in the next issue of Call Sign (1st December), with answers in the following issue (1st January). Questions to callsignmag@aol.com. Please include your name and call sign and say who the question is aimed at. Anonymous questions will not be entertained... Ed

NOTICE OF 2014 DAC AGM



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

will be held at:

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

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

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

Howard Pears
Company Secretary

Happy Birthday Harry

Ninety years young for former ODRTS Board member and LTBAWD Hon President...

If you were in the St. John's Wood area of Regents Park on Sunday October 5th and heard laughter and jollity coming through an open window, it was because the family and friends of Harry Joel MBE, President of the London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled were celebrating his 90th birthday.

Henry Nathaniel Joel (Harry to us) was born on 5th October 1924 to Hetty and Nathan Joel. Harry saw service in the Royal Navy during WW11 as a medic and witnessed many injuries suffered by combat personnel.

He joined the LTBAWD and worked to raise the profile of the charity and the support they offered to war disabled veterans. For his tireless work over many decades with the LTBAWD, Harry was awarded with the MBE in 1981.

He gained his London cabdrivers' licence in 1955, worked with ODRTS as both a driver and Board member and retired from the trade in 2000 after serving the public for 45 years. However his enthusiasm for the charity continues energetically.

To mark Harry's 9th decade, Dial-a-Cab presented him with a special bottle of bubbly encased with the Union Jack. Surprised by the unexpected gift and clearly overcome with emotion, Harry said:

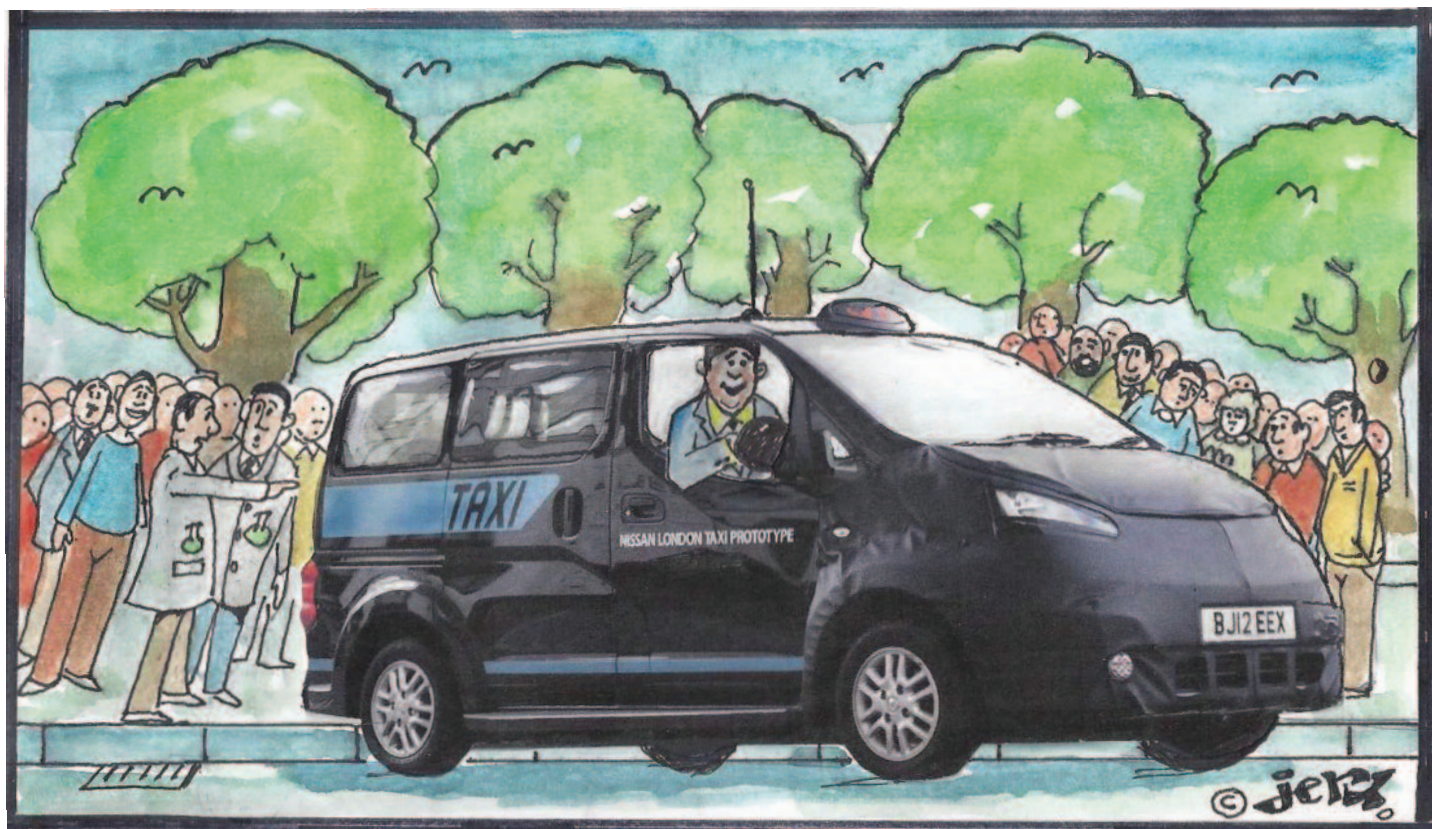
"A big thank you to Brian, the Board and all my friends at Dial-a-Cab together with the many drivers who have supported our outings."

Many more happy birthdays to come, Harry...



Alan Green (E52)
Call Sign Online

Jery's World



"That must be some rich business – one cab company goes under and another comes along straightaway!"

Hailo hits the rocks in North America

As Jay Bregman packs his bags and moves on...

The Hailo cab app that began in London exactly three years ago and spread round the world like the proverbial rash has suddenly gone into reverse, with the company announcing that their North American business is closing because it can't compete with **Uber** and **Lyft**. This comes after a last gasp business enterprise when they slashed their fares by 50% between the hours of 10am and 4pm; however Hailo now say it has become impossible to make a profit in North America!

In a statement, Hailo apologised to its drivers and staff but unsurprisingly ended by talking of "...they and their investors" who would have a bigger impact in Europe.

In the July issue, **Call Sign** had written:

"Messrs Zeghibe, Woolley and Bregman had one aim and that was to make money – after all, that's what they do. In reality we're all out there trying to earn money while the rumour mill suggests that Bregman could be on his way to greener pastures."

Now we hear that **Jay Bregman** – who ran an online minicab service before starting Hailo - has indeed left Hailo and is apparently moving into robotics, where he will no doubt earn his money before doing again what entrepreneurs do and move on again.

The question now is whether Hailo tries to do to others in Europe what Uber and Lyft have done to them in North America. One thing we can be sure of is that the last people to know will be the drivers.



Did London taxis fortell Hailo's NA future?

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As Eco City Vehicles goes into administration

KPM returns from the dead!

It doesn't seem that long ago since **London Taxis International** literally caused a world-wide sensation when suddenly announcing that it had entered administration. It was Friday 22 October 2012 that **Manganese Bronze**, manufacturers of the TX4, and parent company to LTI, announced it was going into administration under **PricewaterhouseCoopers**. The company was in the middle of a recall for 316 new TX4s in London and another 100 out of town cabs. Together with other ongoing problems, including the TX4 fires and the legalities emanating from that, MB felt they had no option but to call in the administrators.

Fortunately, along came Chinese car makers and LTI minority partners, **Geely**, who then pumped in £millions to take the company out of administration and successfully re-launch the **London Taxi Company**.

At the time of MB's administration, **Eco City Vehicles** – always referred to as **KPM** by drivers – unsurprisingly saw an increase in sales of its Mercedes Vito taxi. However, even more surprising was the fact that the increase was nowhere near as big as many had assumed it would be given that there was now no competition. The reason given by those that did not buy the vehicle – yet who were looking for a new cab – was that it was too big and the well-publicised ongoing



problems with the cab's rear-steering.

We later heard that **Eco City** subsidiaries, **One80**, who held the rear-steering's intellectual rights and the garage, **KPM**, had both gone into administration. Shares in **Eco City** were suspended with the **Evening Standard** describing the company as "being on the verge of collapse." Its shares – which had plummeted by around 80% – were suspended. Now **Eco City** has also appointed administrators and the company's finance director, **Jonathan Moritz**, who had previously been an Executive with **Inchcape**, has stood

down from the Board.

As to what the future will be for the Mercedes-Benz Vito Taxi. Rumours abound, but nothing has yet been decided.

Taxi Globe spoke to Mercedes Benz and we were told that warranty work for the Vito will be honoured for drivers whose warranty is with Mercedes. However, those drivers who took out an extended warranty with **KPM** are not covered.

Then out of the blue on 25th October, **Call Sign** heard that **Peter DaCosta** had taken **KPM** out of administration and reopened it as a new company, **KPM Automotive Ltd**.

Although the new company will undertake Mercedes work, it will not do so under warranty. They will also operate an after-sales agency with the **London Taxi Company**.

Warranty information for Mercedes Vito owners can be obtained by calling **Anthony Cunningham** or **Danny Smith** on 0161 975 6996 and they will tell you the best garage for you to use. Those drivers with the **KPM** extended warranty are welcome to call and they will try to help with information on where drivers can go to sort out any problems, but any costs involved will be down to those individual drivers...

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online

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Curriculum Vitae for Prospective Board Members

These are the CVs for those whose names were handed in to Company Secretary Howard Pears as wishing to stand for election to the Dial-a-Cab Board of Management before the closing date of 09:00hrs on Friday 10th October 2014. They are in alphabetical order and all asking for your vote.

If you have any questions or comments, send them to Call Sign for publication in the next issue (1st December). Responses will be forthcoming in the 1st January issue and before any voting has taken place...

Joe Brazil (K16)

*Proposed by Darren French (F63),
Seconded by Roger Kensit (W31)*

If you're a subscriber, the question at the beginning of every address by a prospective Board Member I would think would be "how are you... going to make money for me?" I've been employed within the taxi industry for over 20 years and driven a cab for 15 and I know it's one rarely seen answered or even mentioned once they are elected.

I look at Dial-a-Cab now remembering what it was, and it's obvious to see it has suffered from more than just a concept vacuum. We have seen stagnation in our company, emanating seemingly from the upper echelons; this malaise has drifted through the company and impacted on us at the sharp end. Like a magician's trick, we have been told of buyers who come and go like a puff of smoke and, somehow, like the Magic Circle, nobody can tell you how it's done. Mountview have now appeared, showing over £1.9 million of debt on their 2012 balance sheet, what could possibly go wrong, talk about buying a roof rack for a hearse.

Let's remember, if subscribers should decide to go down this route, the value of your company should exceed £11million, and you are entitled to have someone to fight for you to receive what you have worked so long and hard for.

Don't imagine that there is no future for Dial-a-Cab, we have just not reacted to the marketplace in the way we should have. How many drivers do you know that have had different work distribution engines within the cab, and longed for Dial-a-Cab to have somehow contended with them?



We have a terminal that could have more than one app distributing work onto it, with, terms and conditions that you could decide to opt in and opt out of at will. With good design, we will receive market "buzz" with every new launch, translating into money in your pocket. Don't forget, we are unique within the transportation industry; you just need someone to tell the travelling public what the real advantages we have over a car arriving to pick them up is. Why just a simple reminder, that if they are "serious about business, you're serious about privacy" gives them a prompt on just one of our U.S.P's. (unique selling points).

Dial-a-Cab, with careful management, can deliver for you whichever way you see your future. You as a subscriber can receive not only the legacy you have worked for, but, also leave a company that can sustain generations of drivers through for many years into the future.

I humbly ask you to be diligent with your vote, all our futures depend on it.

Keith Cain (Q07)

Sitting Board Member

*Proposed by Brian Rice (Q01) Chairman
Seconded by Allan Evans (Y83) Board Member*

Ladies and gents

The last two years have been the most difficult period this Society has ever experienced and it has been caused by others wanting a piece of our action. Not only did some want to buy us with our own money, but others felt that offering our majors such a cheap service would damage our Society.

These actions were not planned for, neither could they have been predicted. I certainly learnt a great deal from the last two years, enough to investigate how the hard work we have all contributed to the Society over the years could be fed back to members in some financial way but which would give the Society an opportunity to grow even bigger and be a force to be reckoned with once again. We must turn what has been a negative time in the Society's history into a positive one.

During the past two years, the activity of others offering a cheaper service and stirrings of the Society being sold off have without doubt put unnecessary pressure on us all. I have spent the past year concentrating on calming the fears of our customers and regaining their confidence in us. I think taking the stance of consolidating our existing client base and stemming the flow of losing any more accounts at



least for the time being, has been relatively successful. To say it has been difficult to near impossible at times would be an understatement.

When the Board asked me to head up Sales, I did give it a lot of thought and wondered would it be the poison chalice or was it another challenge being asked of me as a Board Member? Only because I had the full support of the Board did I accept the position. Since first being elected 25 years ago, I have always felt that if you are prepared to stand for the Board, then no task asked of you in the day to day managing of the Society should you shy away from.

With all the possible future changes that may or may not happen, we must still be looking at the way forward. The Society needs to be remarketed, our profile needs to be rebuilt and technology must be at the forefront of our plans. But in doing this, we must keep the philosophy that the customer pays for our service and not the driver. That does not mean being stubborn and not being able to realise that when an opportunity is presented to win new business, we go for it.

I have always been honoured to represent you, the members, and I am very privileged to have held many positions on the Board except one and that is the Chair. But that does not mean I would never stand for the position. If I felt the time was right, I would put myself forward providing, of course, I had the full support of the Board.

I believe I have the experience needed to enhance a new Board. Experience can work alongside fresh faces with new ideas, but choosing the right team with the right balance to work together and who can support each other is what I believe you have to give careful consideration to for the future.

There is the possibility of major changes happening in the future to our Society, but only if you the members so desire. If I am to be re-elected, one promise I can make and which I know I can keep, will be to ensure that whatever information is presented to every member to decide upon, it will be true, full and honest and will consider every member's best interest. But, more importantly, it will maintain the integrity of our Society.

Allan Evans (Y83)

Sitting Board Member

Proposed by Brian Rice (Q01) Chairman

Seconded

by Keith Cain (Q07)

Board Member

Ladies and gentlemen

For the last



Curriculum Vitae for Prospective Board Members

fourteen years I have been very fortunate to represent you the members on the Board of Management. I am a Licensed Taxi Driver with almost 35 years' experience and a member of our Society for 31 of those years. In my new role as Head of Driver Operations / Call Centre Manager, I believe it has further enhanced my knowledge and experience and I hope I have proved to you the members and the staff I now work with that I am totally approachable, fair minded and always willing to listen and offer help and advice. My day to day contact with you the members is very important to me and I will certainly never lose touch with any of you.

During my term in office, the Chairman has trusted me to carry out many significant roles that have provided me with a deep understanding of our Society and more importantly, the needs of you the members - this will never change. Up to December 2013, I served for a number of years as the Compliance Officer and my aim in this crucial role was always to make the system fair and equal for all of us and I was never frightened of making important or difficult decisions along the way. I previously worked as the Head of Driver Training and Marshalling Officer, which gave me the capacity to further promote our Society. I am confident in my ability and have always been totally committed to my position of Board Member; it is a responsibility that I certainly will never take lightly.

In my current role, I have worked hard to make the Contact Centre a more driver-friendly environment and the changes I have recently introduced have, I believe, made a positive impact. I fully embrace new technology and I will always listen and consider any changes that could improve our Society and crucially keep us ahead of our competition.

As you are aware, our trade as a whole is being attacked from all sides; the market place is fiercely competitive and we have seen many changes. The current Board of Management that I have been part of for the past fourteen years, led by our Chairman has achieved so much in my time as a Board Member and I am strongly of the opinion that this is not the time to make changes. I am also confident that with the full backing of you the members, we have the knowhow and experience to make the necessary changes to enable our Society to compete at the highest level.

I once again ask for your support so that I can represent you on the Board of Management for a further term in office, I will certainly not let you down.

Patricia Graves (L53)

*Proposed by David Morris (M62),
Seconded by Jim Moore (M58)*

Dear Fellow members,

My name is Patricia Graves, I have been a London taxi driver for 24 years and I have been on Dial-a-Cab for 22 years. I am asking for your vote to be on the Board as I believe I would bring a fresh and inspiring approach.

I have previously been a teacher of the Knowledge at Knowledge Point in Caledonian Road for 4 and a half years. This involved teaching classes of up to 30 students and I was honoured to have been asked back on three separate occasions. I have also been a new driver trainer for Dial-a-Cab after successfully going through an intense interview process. As well as that role, I have also been a Marshall for almost 13 years at what were our most prestigious accounts, so some of you may know me as 'Pat the Marshall'. I belonged to the Worshipful Company of Hackney carriage drivers for 15 years, progressing on to their Applications Committee and I have attended various meetings at the Carriage Office and the Mayors' Office concerning the cab trade.

I feel that I have a lot to offer Dial-a-Cab with the experience I have gained over the years, not only as a driver but with all the other positions I have held too. I feel I would bring a new energy to really promote ourselves in this market and I would really like to be your voice - remember, without the drivers there is no Dial-a-Cab. So please vote for me, Patricia Graves (L53). Many Thanks in advance.

Michael Parkins (Z03)

Proposed by Christopher Marquis (G99), Seconded by David Burrell (T60)

Dear fellow members

My name is Michael Parkins; I've been a cab driver since 2003 and have been on Dial-a-Cab since 2007. I'm a full time driver who works nights, working on average 50 hours a week. I'm 34 years old and will be working as a cab driver for at least another 30 years. The reason I'm standing as a Board Member is to ensure that in 30 years' time Dial-a-Cab will still be here. The cab trade is changing, Private Hire is now seen as a viable choice for even the largest corporate accounts, whilst smartphone apps such as Hailo and Uber are eating into the private cash work.

My intension is to put Dial-a-Cab back where it should be. The current Board of Management has taken us this far, but I feel



the time is right for a fresh approach. I'm a tenacious man, I feel I've got the passion and the drive to push Dial-a-Cab forward into a new era of prosperity and growth. More importantly, at the age of 34, I'm hungry for the challenges that lay ahead. I've a vested interest, as we all have, in making Dial-a-Cab as successful and as profitable as possible.

Waiting almost an hour for a job on EC5 is unacceptable, having hardly any account work on E14 is scandalous, losing hundreds of account rides every day is the reason why our member numbers have diminished. Vote for me and I promise this will change. We have the right product, which is the best drivers and vehicles in the world. We have the recognised and respected brand of Dial-a-Cab, now all we need is a renewed vigour, to go on the offensive and make the changes happen.

Please vote for Michael Parkins. (Z03)

Javid Raja (N72)

*Proposed by Peter Learmouth (Y10),
Seconded by Michael Leahy (A18)*

Dear members

My name is Javid Raja. I have a BA in German and Economics and have been on DaC for 14 years. During this period I have seen the most dramatic changes take place, not only in our trade as a whole, but also at DaC.

My feeling is that due to the shortcomings of the BoM, we now find ourselves on the brink of disaster.

1) The major mistakes of the BoM: Concierge - Work given to peasant minicab companies, run by parasites. Why?

2) Loss of major accounts on Canary Wharf (no foresight)

3) Increase in subs... A dis-incentive to do account work

4) Supersides done twice

5) Credit card work too long winded, should be simpler

6) No sale or merger of DaC, lose control for £4,000, the shares will be worthless a con-trick already carried out before. Our building will be used to bail out the debt ridden company. If we are merged do not be surprised if we are then resold to a minicab company with a geriatric chairman.

As the BoM have failed, they should now, with good grace, step aside. I believe that my knowledge of the trade and of our minicab friends, I have the business and financial acumen to destroy them. If you like the sound of carpet bombing on our enemies, then vote for me. I have a strategy, let me loose on the minicab parasites. Finally, if you want change please vote for me Javid (N72).



Curriculum Vitae for Prospective Board Members

Michael Son (V52)

Sitting Board Member

Proposed by Brian Rice (Q01) Chairman

Seconded by Keith Cain (Q07) Board Member

Dear Members

It is yet another AGM election; I cannot believe it has been two years since the last election process.

What an extremely difficult period for everyone to say the least.

I am aware that some members think it's time for a change and would like to see a younger Board of Management. Change is sometimes a good thing; however it has to be at the right time.

During these turbulent times and an uncertain future for our industry, it is imperative there is steady management structure with experience and a determination to lead the Society through some major changes of which you are all aware. The next year or so will prove crucial in the future of Dial-a-Cab and the wellbeing of the membership. It is also important to remember our clients do not like change as a taxi service supplier, they need continuity within the management structure.

During the previous period, the Board of Management has had to make extremely difficult decisions that affect both the membership and staff. Those choices have empowered the Society to remain financially stable and I am sure the envy of others within our trade.

The competition, for example minicabs and other radio taxi suppliers, have never been so resolute in taking an ever-decreasing share of the taxi riding service by undercutting the price of taxi trips, using new technologies and enticements to encourage account clients. The responsibility of the Trustee of any organisation must always be to perform his or her duty in the best interest of the majority and not just one individual. I take this opportunity to wish any candidates for the position of Board Member, the best of luck.

I became a cabdriver in 1965 and joined Dial-a-Cab in 1991. During the 1990s I successfully sought election to the BoM. During my term on the Board, my responsibilities have been varied; Driver interviews and training for a few years and then Customer Service, which gave me the opportunity of face-to-face meetings with clients, especially if there were service issues. Those meetings, listening to clients with their needs and expectations of our service, were invaluable for both the customer and Dial-a-Cab.



As we are all aware, times have changed quite dramatically and many organisations have not the financial power to promote their service or products as they were able to do in the past. As well as attending meetings, most of you may be aware I still drive a cab. However, I am and hope to remain a valued member of your Board, to offer new ideas and of course to pick up concerns of the drivers when we meet out on the road.

With all this in mind and looking to a brighter future, I seek your support to continue as your Board Member for the next period.

Thomas Whitbread (Q09)

Sitting Board Member

Proposed by Brian Rice (Q01) Chairman

Seconded by Allan Evans (Y83) Board Member

Ladies and gents

As the amount of subscribers who know of my past record as a Board Member dwindles and a small amount of new ones join the circuit, I need to refresh memories or inform the different categories of my service history, for whichever group you may belong.

I think you will find I am the longest serving Board Member in the Society's history, with over 30 years of serving the electorate and hopefully safeguarding their welfare. I came on in the time of Peter Fennymore as Chairman and have seen about 5 others Chairmen take on the post. I never put myself up for election to parade around, getting drivers to look up to me or for the money. The latter being very low on my joining the Board, drivers were earning more than Board Members. In fact some Board Members left 6 months after being elected, as the money was so bad.

I joined the Board because I could see there was a great waste of money and as still happens today, bad coverage of work. The coverage was the first thing I started to reverse, I did this by convincing the despatchers that they had to be salesmen and sell jobs. This is still true; they should not just hide behind a computer, they should be pro-active. Plus the drivers should go out of their way to cover all the work they can, this enables us to retain accounts and not lose them to Private Hire. I know many of you do not like the new system of collecting subscriptions, well at the moment you are a co-operative, this allows your voice to be heard by informing your Board Members.



During my years on the Board, I was the longest serving Complaints / Compliance Officer and like Marmite, you either loved me or hated me. You can guess which category some of the miscreants who tried to take advantage of the system fell into, because I had no favourites and always tried to keep an even playing field for everyone. Many drivers will leave if they think any other drivers are getting an unfair advantage.

During my serving years, I have seen new Board Members take on jobs, then neglect or give them up due to losing money. I would then take on these jobs, spending long hours which could be detrimental to my family life - sorting out the call centre, the telephones, radio signals, Roman Way, canteen facilities with access to food through the night for the staff. Even down to being on the roof on a Saturday afternoon helping the builders drill holes in the roof of Brunswick House to stop the Call Centre getting flooded out and putting us out of business. If I named all of the jobs that I took on, it would run into pages and bore you.

My main concern has always been the welfare of the drivers, whether it upsets my fellow Board Members or not. Any of the Subscribers who got elected onto the Board will tell you that Tom Whitbread has never been a "Yes" man just to retain his job.

Over the years I have built up friendships with ticket agencies and been able to acquire thousands of free tickets to top shows in the West End. This also encourages drivers to forget about taxi driving for a few hours and take their wife or partner out and relax at no cost to themselves.

I have never backed away from any Dial-a-Cab situation and always told drivers the truth, even if it may seem to them that I am offending their opinions.

Why at my age do I still want to be involved in the Board? Because I have always maintained that Lords / Dial-a-Cab was the best circuit and still retains that position and I do not want us to lose that status.

If you would like me to continue in that position I would be glad to accept your vote.

Garry White (L65)

Sitting Board Member

Proposed by Mark Dodge (L89),

Seconded by Kevin O'Connor (T75)

Garry White's CV can be seen on the page for the post of Chairman, where he is opposing sitting Chairman Brian Rice...



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DaC driver and Mercedes Vito owner, Gary Cox, asks a question...

THE VITO: SHOULD WE NOT HAVE REALISED?



As the nation goes into the most solemn and to many, the most depressing month of the year marking Remembrance Sunday, I have a few questions.

Firstly, anyone who was privileged enough to have gone along the corridors of power of the **British Legion Knowledge School** will, on reading this, wonder why the school does not exist anymore - if only to keep the home fires burning in this time of impending crisis in Europe and the rest of the world. I'm not sure **TfL** would have got away with the shenanigans they posted through the letter box of time for which the cab trade has been obliged to shovel up, had the **British Legion School** still been around.

And then there is this; those that have just read the above are thinking and possibly still talking about the demise of **Eco City** and subsidiary **one80**, who owned the intellectual property rights to the occasionally working rear wheel steering - all commonly known to you and I as **KPM Autos** of Hemming Street. Of course this may well seem rather trivial to you if you are sitting in your **TX4**, unless you're a cab driver sitting in a Vito Taxi with a £42k debt plus HP - not to mention a wife, two kids and a mortgage to service as many have.

So long as you can go to a proper Mercedes Benz dealership to get your warranty work done, well, you know you will of course survive. But you could be skating on thin ice if you chose a **KPM service package** rather than a Mercedes one. You get what you pay for and apparently who you paid it to...

Skip forward a few pages of your memory banks; now what were those words fed to you by the salesman on your day of enlightenment, even if it rained ten minutes after you signed on the dotted line for a £42,000 van containing a built in guarantee that *you* were paying for the repairs to the rear steering for the next three years at no cost to **Eco City Taxis**! Now that's good business! Let alone you returning to McCarthy, the salesman/Sales Director and saying that nobody recognises your van as a taxi and that you will now have those ugly orange stickers on the side.

In defence of Steve McCarthy, he did say that if you brought it back later, you would have to pay for the "help me, I am a cab... honestly" stickers. However on returning, you, like I, never dreamed that someone who had forked out all that money would have to pay for them in blood money seeing as on purchasing a cab-van, they came free if you choose to have them, not forgetting that drivers were supposedly ambassadors for the product. But Steve did so with a Salesman's smile.

Now what were those other famous words? Oh yes: "Well, you've got to come to us for the servicing, we are a **Mercedes Benz** dealer now, that's the reason why brake pads and discs are far more expensive than at a back street garage."

Every service came with a complimentary gold plated bottle of screen wash - that is until the bill was presented with a smile.

"Anything goes wrong, don't go to an ordinary Merc dealer, they just don't understand the cab trade."

Well they were right on that one... in the beginning.

Only a fool couldn't or wouldn't see the rear steering was becoming more and more problematic for **Eco**, **one 80** and **KPM**, with their other subsidiary probably getting itchy feet for the expected tap-up for a bail out. At that point, the alarm bells should have been pealing in everyone's ears as loud as those of Bow Bells in Cheapside. This company was under severe strain financially and would struggle to fulfil its ambition to be a real player.

I must say that the puppets who were left hanging, having been

drafted in to manage the company under whatever name we knew it as after the **KPM** founder, **Peter DaCosta**, sailed off into the sunset of retirement last year, must have been like *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* to DaCosta, knowing that the original director of the play would soon walk back on the centre of the stage, directing things once again within months.

Guess that as **TfL's** **Bodie** was swinging his way around **Victoria** unable to take his eyes of those shiny new £billion buses and his sidekick eyed up becoming master of all the trains in the South West, would they not have found the time or inclination to say: "Do you guys need a technical grant to help you out?"

We all know that Mercedes Benz dealerships will solve our problems one way or another with the help of German support in the end. But what odds on **Peter DaCosta** walking in one day during the next 18 months and asking if anyone fancies one of his **Nissan** cabs! But the next time, Nissan may just be a bit wiser than Mercedes and demand that all the mechanics are up to Nissan standards with bits of paper embossed with logos printed on them.

It will be interesting to watch Peter DaCosta keeping a beady eye on ex-directors Andy and Keith who if my memory serves me right, he poached off **York Way Motors**. But would Keith give up sitting by the riverbank, fishing, to stroll back into town like Clint Eastwood along with ex-customers to make it work again?

Do I, like the rest of the cab trade, have bad feelings? Yep! The question is whether I can spit the bad taste out of my mouth and who should I be really aiming my spit at? If I spit in the ex-Chairman's face, will anyone ever put their heads above the parapet again and have a go? Most unlikely! But you may well find another DaCosta to be mad enough with enough front and balls to have a go.

Harry Fagin, former General Secretary and one of the founding fathers of the **LTDA** once told me: "Son, my door is always open and I'll always listen - even if I don't like it much."

Now where was I? You think you've got problems? Try being the ex-guards officer trying to convince the **British Legion** to open up that knowledge school again, so that his ex-foot soldiers did not have to sleep on the pavement.

We will never know who banged the drum and blew the bugles so loud in the background for the Vito project, but thank you whoever you were and for once, I really mean this, thank you **Mr Johnson** - Mayor of the greatest city in the world - for letting us have the Mercedes Benz. Not sure **Addison Lee** was happy though.

Oh, one last thing; can I - will I - ever walk into **KPM's** again? Perhaps, if Peter puts the kettle on and comes clean and just utters these immortal words: "We all had a go and it cost you and I money and whatever reputation I may have had in the beginning..."

Gary Cox (O46)
Call Sign Online



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Call Sign's Bob Woodford is asking for the help of Dial-a-Cab drivers...

Bob walks Inca Trail for Magical Taxi Tour

Call Sign writer Bob Woodford has asked readers of this magazine for sponsorship several times over the many years that he has been writing for us.

He has run marathons from London to Germany to New York in aid of **Baby Life Support Systems** (Bliss) and even walked across the Sahara Desert in what is known as the world's toughest foot race - the **Marathon des Sables** - in which Bob had to cross 150 miles of the Sahara carrying a 20-pound backpack of supplies on his back! On that occasion, he was running in memory of his good friend, fellow marathon runner and DaC driver, **Paul Bishop**, who on 17 May 1999 died after battling with **Motor Neurone Disease**. All the funds Bob raised on that occasion went to help fight MND.

This time Bob and his partner Steph intend walking the Inca Trail in Peru and have set their sights on sponsoring at least one



Can you help to sponsor a taxi for next year's children's trip to Disneyland, Paris

taxi to go on the 2015 Magical Taxi Tour to Disneyland Paris. The trip takes many young children, often with life-limiting illnesses, to have the weekend of their young lives as a convoy of over 100 taxis take them to the Magical Kingdom for a weekend of amazing fun. Tragically, for some of them, it will be the only opportunity they ever get.

Bob has set up a *JustGiving* page and going by previous experiences when **Dial-a-Cab** drivers were asked, his fairly moderate target of £1400 hopefully shouldn't be that difficult. As a taxi driver as well, Bob knows that times are hard, which is why he has set such a moderate target compared to the £thousands he has raised on previous ventures.

"If things go well," Bob told *Call Sign* before leaving for Peru, "and we raise more than our target, then that will go towards a second sponsored cab for this great WCHCD event and we'll be able to help even more children get to Disney."

If you would like to help Bob raise enough to sponsor at least one taxi for next year's Disney trip, then just go to his *JustGiving* page.

www.justgiving.com/robandsteph

Thank you..

Victoria Station late night taxi rank trial

A one month trial of a marshalled taxi rank is currently in operation at Victoria Station on Terminus Place between the hours of midnight and 4am daily. If deemed a success, the trial may be extended.

For the trial to be successful it is important that all taxi drivers observe the following:

- The rank is for 5 taxis only
- Follow the instructions of the marshals at all times during the marshalled hours of 00:00 to 04:00
- Do not attempt to access Terminus Place outside the marshalled hours under any circumstances
- Do not attempt to access Terminus Place if the rank is already full during the marshalled hours
- Do not enter into any disputes or arguments with any staff or the general public
- Only leave Terminus Place via Buckingham Palace Road and not via bus lanes in Terminus Place

During the trial the marshalled taxi rank will be monitored to determine whether it is operating successfully and whether arrangements can continue on an extended trial. The location will also be monitored outside the marshalled hours to ensure drivers do not attempt to access the rank. If buses, coaches or other works vehicles in the area are impeded by taxis, it is possible that the camera and on-street enforcement will remain in place to prevent issues with over-ranking or use of the banned left turn outside the marshalled hours.

During the trial, taxi drivers are only permitted to make the left turn from Buckingham Palace Road into Terminus Place between 00:00 and 04:00. Taxi drivers making the left turn outside of these times may be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice.

All drivers using the late night taxi rank are kindly asked to observe the terms and conditions set out in this notice in order to help ensure the trial is not terminated early and to increase the likelihood of an extended trial which could benefit taxi drivers and passengers.

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

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

Flashback
2002

This month's Flashback goes back to December 2002 and the story about Marie White...
From *Call Sign*, December 2002

Never to be forgotten: The story of Dial-a-Cab's Marie White...

The first Parliamentary regulation for the Hackney carriages came 309 years ago in 1694 while **Emmeline Pankhurst**, the famed English **Suffragette** leader founded her militant group, the Women's Social and Political Union which culminated in gaining the vote for women, almost 100 years ago in 1903. Yet surprisingly, the first female taxi driver to be licensed in London came just 25 years ago in 1977 when **Marie White** ended the seeming taboo of females gaining the coveted green badge. Today that total has reached around 350...

In 1977, London was buzzing and so was the licensed taxi business - which was considered by many to be the last male bastion. So when news that a lady was on the Knowledge first broke in 1976, drivers scoffed...

"She'll never do the Knowledge," they echoed, followed by the old chestnut, "...what if a geezer asks to meet a bird - how can they possibly ask a lady driver to find 'em a lady of the night?"

But Marie White wasn't to be fazed, her husband **Jack** was already a taxi driver and nothing was going to put her off. But she had one problem, she didn't like the idea of going around on a moped, so she did the first 10 months in an Austin Mini and often spoke about the number of times she was stopped by the police who were wondering why she kept stopping and starting! She once admitted to *Call Sign* that she was afraid that someone might accuse her of looking for "male clients!"

Then exactly 25 years ago, Marie White achieved the impossible - she passed the Knowledge of London and became a licensed London taxi driver with badge number 25292. She and Jack both worked days and were the first-ever married couple to both drive a London taxi.

Speaking to *Call Sign* many years later, Marie smiled at the memory of male faces when they saw a woman driver pull up.

"I remember one gentleman whistling through his teeth to attract my attention when I was going in the opposite direction along Bayswater Road," she said, "then when he saw me he apologised and told me that the whistle was aimed at my taxi and not me personally!"

Marie came to **Dial-a-Cab** in 1983 via **London Wide** - the fore-runner to **Computer Cab**. She became the first woman to stand for a place on our Board of Management and was successful, replacing **Alun Roberts** in 1988. For 2 years she was responsible for the Society's **Welfare** scheme.

Her husband Jack had died some years earlier and the sight of Marie with her pet terrier in the front of the cab became a common sight with drivers. She couldn't bear leaving it at home alone.

Sadly, Marie White became ill and died of cancer in 1993. However, as the first-ever lady taxi driver, her legacy will live on for as long as there are licensed taxi drivers...



Marie at DaC sorting out driver's welfare problems

J.P. Duval

© *Call Sign* 2002

Walking through the Past Jack the Ripper

The **Worshipful Company of Hackney Drivers** is pleased to invite taxi drivers, their families and friends to join **Alan Goldsmith** as he leads another guided walk through London's **Whitechapel** area. The walk will be on Sunday 2nd November 2014 starting from Whitechapel Station at 10.00am. He will trace the footsteps of London's, or maybe the world's most notorious killer, **Jack the Ripper**. Jack's gruesome crimes, which began in the autumn of 1888 when prostitute **Mary Ann Nicholls** was found with her throat cut.

As you walk through the areas where Jack carried out his crimes, be prepared to learn more of his heinous actions. You will visit four of the five murder sites, no other Guides cover more.

And what about the latest news, that DNA evidence has now proved beyond all doubt that **Aaron Kosminski** was Jack the Ripper? Alan is not as gullible as newspaper reporters seem to be. Come and hear what he has to say about it.

Alan Goldsmith, a Liveryman of the WCHCD and a City of London Guide, assists with The Cab Guide Course run by the Company and is a working cab driver. He will ask for a small donation from each person, which he will collect on the day. All donations will be passed onto the WCHCD Charity fund to help towards the cost of the annual Children's **Magical Taxi Tour** to

Disneyland (£5 is suggested, but be generous if you think he's worth more), so bring as many friends and family as possible. No need to book, just turn up on the day...



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No gratuity accounts

driver's gratuity. However, we have managed to negotiate and secure our normal run-in amounts.

In order for us to make these trips recognisable on the trip offer, we are going to change the meaning of the 'N' attribute, which will no longer stand for Cab Phone.

The problem we have is that the majority of the fleet do not have this attribute on their list. We can update a prepared file to automatically give every driver the 'N' attribute and only those drivers who do not wish to be offered 'No Gratuity' trips will be required to contact Driver Services to have the attribute removed.

As soon as the V6 dispatch system has been updated, further messages will be sent to you all. In the interim, all these accounts have had a driver message added to them reminding the driver the account does not carry a gratuity. Unfortunately this message can only be seen once the trip has been accepted. Please go with us on this as it will only be for a very short time before trip offers *will* contain the attribute.

Getting this attribute displayed on the trip offer is being given top priority.

Keith Cain
DaC Head of Sales

Of late, we in the Sales team have managed to open around a dozen relatively small corporate accounts that do not carry a

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

IT'S A CABBYY'S LIFE

Nat Rothschild and Maaxi Taxi...

I had a rather odd encounter with **Nat Rothschild** that tells you something about his character. It was around four years ago, I was late for a pick-up in **Holland Park**.

Driving furiously westbound along Kensington High Street, I came to an abrupt standstill at its junction with Melbury Road where a man with a young lady was vigorously trying to hail my taxi. I recognised the man to be Nat Rothschild – who was the punter I was heading to. He had become impatient and began walking down the road in order to hail another taxi.

He looked harassed as I explained that I was actually his taxi. As he clamoured into my taxi, he called out: "Greedy, deceitful, friggin' cab drivers!" He used a slightly different word than friggin, but I'm sure I don't have to spell it out!

I took umbrage to this slur at the finest qualified taxi trade in the world, so I did something I wouldn't usually do – I answered him back saying that his comments were a bit rich as I had always thought bankers were the friggin deceitful lot following the world banking crisis that peaked in 2007/2008 and which had taken years to sort out.

There followed an awkward silence before he came back: "My sister is a banker and I am a banker, I'm going to give you the biggest tip you've ever had." True to his word, when they got out, Nat Rothschild gave me a £50 note in addition to the fare.

I found him to be a wonderfully arrogant, self-assured man. His blood may be blue and his language certainly is, but I did like his style and he was as good as his word on the tip. I've had bigger tips, but I didn't want to push my luck!

Shortly after my experience with Mr Rothschild, I heard that he had twin celebrations; there was his 40th birthday and his success in business when becoming a billionaire at a Porto Montenegro bash. Nat Rothschild has also taken up Swiss citizenship and is a tax exile.

So naturally I was intrigued to read a recent article about Nat Rothschild's plan to "revolutionise" our trade with a new App service called Maaxi Taxi and how it could only be good for London's taxi users and how it would increase the number of ways there would now be to order a taxi.

On the other hand, Nat Rothschild and partner Gabi Campos are only interested in huge profits and I remain cynical that cab sharing will live up to their expectations, although I do believe that unlike Hailo, they will keep their word to only use black taxis.

What is absolutely certain is that our traditional work of street hails is rapidly being eroded by using these Apps and soon private hire will rightfully ask if we are taxi or private hire drivers.

George Orwell's allegorical book, **Animal Farm**, seems to increasingly draw parallels between taxi driver workers and his farm animals. We are like **Boxer**, the dedicated and loyal cart-horse working longer and longer hours for decreasing returns - while the App owners are like **Napoleon** the pig, changing the rules to increase profits.

As George Orwell famously said in those pages: "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others."

Dispatchers

I recently worked a night shift, the first time for a number of years. You forget how dispiriting and lonely the job it is at such a bleak time, late evening and early morning. The relationship we have with the computer can help offset isolation. Becoming engaged with the despatcher, whether reading an onslaught of messages or sometimes pithy remarks from our fellow drivers; if they are attributed to a despatchers name, then human contact is felt.

This interaction is lost by replacing the despatcher's name being a reference number, turning the computer into a sterile screen loses any feeling of team spirit. That night I sent a message enquiring whether the despatcher was a person or a number, referring to **The Prisoner** TV series starring **Patrick McGoochan**. The message was ignored. Presumably orders from above preclude any response to small talk.

When the late **Dave Parris** was a despatcher and fervent Arsenal supporter, I had an annual bet against Arsenal with him. Twenty pounds in an envelope used to regularly find its way to the despatch room until finally I had won. Then I learnt the crafty Dave Parris upped sticks and joined Holloway prison as a Warden - not an inmate I may add. He is still sadly missed.

The most gifted despatcher in my time was **Joe Brazil (K16)**. To use **Rudyard Kipling's** waffle - if you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs. He operated when **Dial-a-Cab** was seriously busy, the only bloke who could multi-task like a woman! He had time to answer questions no matter how banal or crazy with a succinct reply in his deadpan delivery way.

It is only this week that I discovered **DS0028** is really **Lee Moreland**, that excellent despatcher with thirty years at Dial-a-Cab to his name - now a team leader on days.

Wouldn't it be sensible to reinstate the despatcher's names for the benefit for drivers?

Stephen Berndes
Call Sign Online





The August issue of Call Sign carried some distressing news from long-time Dial-a-Cab Board member Tom Whitbread.

He had previously been rushed into the Homerton hospital with stomach pains, only to be told that he needed a **colostomy bag** for six months while parts of his innards that were causing the problem, healed. Then while waiting for the reversal op 6 months on, he was given more devastating news. Yes, they were removing the temporary bag, but in several

TOM: IT'S GOOD NEWS!

months that would be replaced with a permanent colostomy bag.

"I really was devastated," Tom told this magazine. "A temporary bag was bad enough, but at least I could count down the months until it came off. Then when the consultant told me that the healing process apparently wasn't working and that in November he would fit a permanent one, I felt absolutely awful. I know that people with colostomy bags live normal lives nowadays, but the thought of it really was distressing.

"Then I had to go and see my consultant prior to the op for a chat, but instead of what I expected – a chat to prepare me for the operation – he asked how I was feeling and

how was my passing of excrement. I said that it wasn't quite so bad, but assumed that it was me with wishful thinking, even though it was nowhere near as bad as it had been.

"Then he totally shocked me by saying that the healing process had suddenly started and that if it continued – and he expected it to – then the op would be cancelled and I would no longer need the bag. To say I felt totally exalted would be an understatement! It was a magical moment and whilst there could be the possibility of the healing stopping, it appears to be unlikely. We hear lots about the NHS, but when it works there is nothing in the world as good..."

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers

Three Peaks challenge completed

Each year the Children's **Magical Taxi Tour**, organised by The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers, raises sponsorship to ensure that as many children as possible can enjoy the trip to Disneyland Paris. Throughout the year different fund raising activities take place and some of these are hard physical challenges.

This year a team sponsored by Proximo took on the Three Peaks Challenge with Leigh Dargan, Regional Business Manager at Proximo taking up the challenge, together with Wendy Sorrell from Putney Bridge, Dan Fosker from Quotax, Steve Vare and David Williams from Proximo.

Leigh, Wendy and Gary are all WCHCD Liverymen and Dan Fosker is a Freeman. Leigh said:

"The challenge started at **Ben Nevis**, where the weather was in our favour. Bright blue skies - and nothing like it was forecast! We got up Ben Nevis in good time, taking 3 hours. Once we had completed that part of the challenge, we drove straight to **Scarfell Pike**. We arrived there at 3am - in the pitch black. Gone was the blue sky of Ben Nevis. The weather conditions were awful and 20 minutes into the challenge even the Fire and Rescue team had turned back due to the wind and clouds. However, our mountain leader didn't give up and got us to the top. Our last leg of the journey was to **Snowdon**, taking longer than expected due to the traffic on the M6. Our driver, **Gary Pyner**, joined us

for the last peak. The weather conditions were similar to Scarfell and visibility was extremely poor. We were all completely soaked through on this leg of the trip as well.

"I think we all agreed the challenge was a lot harder than we ever thought it would be and it certainly wasn't a walk in the park. But we have raised £5,000 for the trip now and donations are still coming in. We are grateful to all those who have supported and sponsored us, including Proximo, who funded the travel, minibuses, hotels and mountain leaders."



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Are you of that kind of vintage that means you can remember the **Marylebone Grill**? This was the coffee stall type establishment situated at the northern end of **Great Central Street** almost looking at the station. Despite rather cramped conditions, it served sandwiches, rolls, beignets and platzels etc with a wide range of excellent fillings. I recall one chap who on learning there was no chopped liver beignets, opted for a bacon sandwich. From the sublime to the ridiculous!

I don't know how long it had been open when I first went there in 1971, but it remained in operation until 1976 when the Council said it had to move to make room for a bus stand. So it was hitched up and towed to a site on the corner of **Granby Terrace** and **Hampstead Road** – and the **Granby Grill** was born!

That eatery opened late into the evenings and they started to serve chips. Bad idea because one night, a few years later, the chip pan caught fire and that was the end of that.

So what prompted this foray into the history of cab trade catering? Well, the other afternoon a little grey-haired old lady stopped me in Wellington Road to go to Maida Vale. Although it was probably 36 years since I had last seen her, I recognised her instantly.

"Aren't you **Maggie Murray**," I asked.

She looked and asked how I knew and I told her that I remembered her from the Marylebone Grill. This was the feisty and formidable lady who ran the joint along with her mild-mannered husband, **Stan**. She was thrilled that I remembered her and spoke of the good old days. She is now a hale and hearty 92, but said that if she had the chance she would do it all again.

So what happened after the great fire of

Another true story from Geoff Levene

A HISTORY OF EATING THE TAXI WAY...



NW1? Initially some drivers brought their sandwiches into the site and then a Portacabin appeared, toilets were installed, an automatic car wash was erected and enter **Derek Summers** - The **Granby Grill** was reborn!

Assisted by his daughters **Sherry** and **Elise** and staff from the nearby estates, Derek ran a 24/7 operation, which proved very popular with the trade. The place was mobbed with drivers often queuing to get in and parking in every available gap. If a TV crew wanted to interview a cabdriver, this was where they came to. **Barry Humphries** aka **Dame Edna Everage** and **Sir Les Patterson** even did a book launch there.

So many things happened there. Fun, frolics and the occasional fight. 'Shaking' Sam

Boatman drove in to spend a penny and parked in the car wash. He left the engine running with the cab in gear, but didn't put the handbrake on properly. As he stood in the Gents doing what men standing in the Gents do, the cab slowly moved forward and more or less joined him. **Ray** did something similar and drove the cab through the fence and into **Hampstead Road**! Then there was the very short sighted cook known as '**Pebbles**' who presented a driver with a plate of steak pie, chips and gravy. After just one bite, the driver delved into the pastry and found no steak - just apple! And of course there was '**Hippo**' who stepped into what he thought was a puddle. Unfortunately it was an open man-hole full of water. Down he went to become firmly wedged. He got damages from the freeholders.

Eventually **Derek** moved on and the place was taken over by **Anna**, her daughter **Nicky** and husband **Andy**. One of the staff was a pretty blonde called **Lorraine**. She became pregnant and left. I was the only person who hadn't realised that **Andy** was the father. Amazingly, **Andy** stayed on till he could pay off his ex-wife and mother-in-law - and **Lorraine** then returned. They ran a very tight ship until one day they were suddenly gone. A little problem with the VAT apparently.

Well, we all know who has the site now, but whenever I drive by I always remember the good times I had there. And of course you can't help but wonder if **Liam Griffin** sells tea there...?

Geoff Levene (W32)

Call Sign Online

£100 CAPTION WINNER

Having given away far too many £100 prizes of late, Call Sign is giving its caption competition a rest! The winner of last month's competition was **Terry Pamenter (R44)**, who has been on DaC for exactly 10 years so he cops £10 for every year! Thanks to the other 127 entrants but sadly we can only pick one winner. Terry's caption was:

Ha ha! Ok you win, now it's my turn - rock, paper, scissors...



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07956 317040

Standing for the po

There are two candidates standing for the position of Dial-a-Cab Chairman. One is the
Call Sign has also invited both proposers to address DaC d

If you have any questions, please send them to Call Sign for publication in the next issue (1st Decem

Brian Rice (Q01) Sitting Chairman Proposed by Keith Cain(Q07), Seconded by Allan Evans (Y83)

Although I have been Chairman for the past eighteen years, writing a CV for Call Sign is new to me as I have never been opposed before.

I have been a Member of the Society in excess of forty years and can remember the early nineties when Dial-a-Cab almost ceased trading due to financial difficulties during a recession. Although I was not a Board Member during that period, when I did become Chairman I promised myself that Dial-a-Cab would not face those problems again during my term. Consequently, I went about building funds that would see Dial-a-Cab through tough times if and when they appeared again, as they are usually cyclical.

We began by re-branding in order to acquire a polished, professional, corporate image throughout the Society and establish ourselves in the market place.

It was abundantly clear to me that we were desperately in need of an IT department, something we never had, as in the past most work carried out on behalf of Dial-a-Cab had been outsourced. Our own IT department was built and staffed and is still the best in the business.

We have re-equipped the whole fleet twice with new equipment and on the first occasion we became the first taxi company in the UK to have a touch screen terminal. Since then we have designed and built our own Accounting System, Booking Screens and Customer Platforms together with a Client App; we are now in the midst of building a new despatching system. No-one else in the UK taxi industry is capable of that achievement and it is something I am extremely proud of.

We have also purchased our current building for cash, which incidentally has more than doubled in value, adding several £millions to your assets and something which has proven to be a fantastic investment for your Society.

During my Chairmanship, we have never had a Bank debt or indeed, any debt to service. Even during the past six or so years, a period that has seen others in our industry go into administration, your Society has never had a debt and we can still boast that we are financially secure with in excess of £5m at the Bank - and that is even after re-equipping the whole fleet.

I would like to make it quite clear that everything that has been achieved during the past eighteen years could not have been possible without the total support from the Board of Dial-a-Cab, which I have been fortunate enough to have attained.

With all that is going on in our industry, now is not the time for change within Dial-a-Cab; we need stability. The Society needs experience and a Chairman that has total respect and support from his Board, something that cannot be demanded but which has to be earned.

Consequently, I would like to ask for your support during the forthcoming election for Chairman.

Brian Rice proposer: Keith Cain (Q07)

I am proposing Brian as Chairman and as one of the longest serving Board members, I hope you agree that my knowledge of how a Chairman should conduct themselves in this position is one of value. I would be the first to put myself forward if I felt Brian was not the right person to lead the Society.

Brian has been the longest serving Chairman in the history of our Society and during his term of office has had to deal with some very difficult situations, and dare I say it, some very awkward members. But, Brian has dealt with everything thrown at him in such a way that you cannot have anything other than respect for him.

When Brian was first elected to the Chair, he was given the support of the Board to improve the image of the Society and he has certainly fulfilled that role. Brian has also gained the respect of other trade heads and played a prominent role in representing the trade as a whole when involved in discussions with senior heads of TfL, including the Mayor.

The role of Chairman requires an individual to demonstrate confidence, have an excellent



understanding of the financial side of the business at Dial-a-Cab House and externally to the members, clients, to reassure them of our service and sell to that Brian has all these qualities and he should be

With the challenge of Chairman coming from a rest of the Board – that we are in a positive position solely on Garry's contributions to the Board over his duties as a Compliance officer, he has not inspired the existing Board to merit standing for the Chair. The rest of the Board, has aspirations to become the official announcement that he was intending to support his decision. I will not denigrate Garry in any way as he was with the Board when telling of the reality. At the time did Garry offer anything to the Board as to what would make changes or attempt to improve any

I believe the rule within our rule book which states that two years before they are entitled to stand for Chairman. Garry to Brian, Garry just does not meet the minimum of a Head of this Society.

That does not mean that in the future Garry will be Chair with the support of the Board. There is so much to a business of this size and in my opinion Garry is

I believe our biggest strength within the Society is our weakness at times. This could be one of those times when the business and when such a senior position changes into the role over a period of time. It would then be the role of Chairman knowing he/she has the full support

Timing is everything within any organisation and for a change to stop and think whether such a change together with the rest of the Board, do not and can

Garry White (L65) Sitting Board Member

Proposed by Patricia Graves (L53)
Seconded by Mark Partridge (R30)

Ladies and gents

You will see that I appear 'twice' on the ballot for Chairman and Board Member. I have been asked by fellow Board Members this question:

"Do you have the experience to do what it takes to run a business from the top?"

I am wonderfully naïve to certain aspects of what the Chairman of DaC does; however moreover, I am enthusiastic and willing to rise to the challenge. You do not ever know if you can truly lead a business until you sit in that seat! Nonetheless I am most determinedly up for the challenge.

I do genuinely believe that leaders do not have to be perfect. We have some exceptional people that work for Dial-a-Cab, the Accounts team likewise. But in many ways we tender in the same way as we always have done from a perspective. The old 'one size fits all' era is most definitely over. We tailor an account to where it's based.

How many of you night drivers would sit on 'B' where you didn't need a run-in because you were not? It should be no run-in or no gratuity added, however we are winning tenders where we are failing. We

We have no marketing at the moment other than this costs money but the Society can afford to spend it made by you, the members when times were busy

st of **Dac** Chairman

the current Chairman Brian Rice, while opposing him is DaC Board Member Garry White. Drivers in addition to the candidates providing their own CVs. (number). A response will be forthcoming in the 1st January issue and before any voting has taken place...

s and to show leadership qualities both internally. Equally as important is being able to deal with the Society whenever required. No one can deny elected to continue his exceptionally good work. Another Board Member, I also believe - as does the tion to judge the ability of the challenger. Based the last two years and how he has carried out his d the confidence required to obtain support from r. Garry comes across as a very nice guy and like he Chairman of Dial-a-Cab. When Garry made his stand against Brian, in turn the Board questioned y, but I hope he will be honest with the members son why he wanted to stand against Brian. At no how he planned on leading the Society, how he facet of the Society.

allows a Board Member to serve a minimum of air has been proven to be incorrect. Comparing imum requirements needed to hold the position

ould never have the opportunity to stand for the much for an individual to learn about managing till has a great deal to learn.

y is our democracy, but it can also be our biggest mes. Forward planning is an integral part of any ges, another Board Member should be groomed n help the members to ratify the individual into l support of the Board.

nd I urge those members who feel that it is time change would be in the Society's best interest. I, our belief is that your votes should go to Brian.



just 'one style', there are more ways to succeed! DaC, such as the IT department who do an excel- ny opinion we are not as strong in 'Sales' because one! We desperately need an exciting, fresh new t definitely now over! By this I mean we should

'14' of an evening waiting for an account journey e already there? I'm not saying that every account ver a different approach is needed, as other cir- /why?

an supersedes to taxis and hand-out cards, I know end a little to speculate. After all, the money was usier. Let's see if we can attract the younger app

users to the DaC app by offering some promo codes via Twitter and Facebook.

I'm so pleased that there are fellow members of the Society that are willing to put themselves forward to represent you on the Board. It is essential that we have innovative ideas and an approach that can push us forward.

No, this will not be an easy task, yet it is an exciting challenge that if we do not try, we will never know!

So please, do think carefully before you put your 'X' in the box of candidates of your choice, as we cannot carry on with the 'we will be ok' attitude. Changes are needed and your vote counts.

Garry White proposer: Patricia Graves (L53)

My name is Patricia Graves; I have been a taxi driver for 24 years and been a society member of Dial-a-Cab for 22 years.

I would like to propose Garry White as our new Chairman. I have known Garry for 20 years both privately and professionally.

He successfully applied and was voted by you the members, to become an arbitrator. As you are all aware, he successfully applied and became a Board member in February 2013; this was not an easy task as no one had previously been successful since Allan Evans 12 years earlier. Gary successfully earned this role as he canvassed and spoke to many of you about his goals and vision for promoting our Society.

He was given the job of Compliance officer and has managed to successfully achieve this role in the one day a week that he is in the office.

Garry clearly has his finger on the pulse as not only is he part of the Board, but he still works as a full time taxi driver and continually makes the time to stop and talk to other Society members.

We are all aware of our loss of subscribers and major accounts and even though we still have a huge reputation with customers for being the best, Garry as the new Chairman would have the vision and enthusiasm to take this Society forward.

Garry is always well presented and has a power of presence when he enters a room. He possesses an extremely professional approach and would be very well received by potential clients. One of the unique qualities that he holds is that he always listens and gives you his time - an important trait to have, especially within a position of authority.

I believe Garry would pursue his role as Chairman with positiveness, enthusiasm and drive and so I am asking for you to vote Garry White as the new Chairman of Dial-a-Cab.

Improvements to the Taxi Disclosure and Barring Service

A number of improvements have been made to the Taxi (and Private Hire) disclosure service provided by our third party service provider GB Group (GBG), formally known as TMG.

In recent months, TfL has been working with our disclosure service provider TMG to review the current process and to implement changes which will help improve the disclosure service.

As part of the overall service upgrade, GBG have altered their service name from TMG CRB to Online Disclosures. We are currently updating our documentation to reflect this change.

The key Improvements for Taxi & Private Hire are:

- * The functionality is now Smartphone and tablet compatible.
- * The pages have been re-designed to make them user friendly.
- * The app forms have been simplified, reducing the time needed to complete.

Access to the new web pages <https://gbg.onlinedisclosures.co.uk> will remain the same, as will the contact details.

Helen Chapman
LTPH General Manager



Alan Tarrant was happy to have been laid off!

In our May 2011 issue, we published one of the most shocking stories we have been involved in – mainly because it was so personal to Call Sign. The title gave away the sudden concern: Print firm was really counterfeit business!

For many years, going back to the Editorship of Jerry Craig and for the first 14 years of Alan Fisher's tenure of this magazine's hot seat, the printers of the mag - and much of the significant amount of stationery that *Dial-a-Cab* uses for its day to day business – came from John Brown Printers at West Norwood.

Alan told us of his memories of the time:

"It was in early 2010. I used to take the magazine proofs to West Norwood where between myself and John Brown typesetter Alan Tarrant, we produced the monthly *Call Sign*. Then one day Alan phoned to ask if I'd heard what had happened following a police raid at the premises. There was a door that was always locked but what no one knew except for some members of John Brown's family, was that behind the door was the equipment that enabled three men – two of John's sons, Phil and Christian together with an employee – to print counterfeit £20 notes. A cousin, Daniel Brown, was discovered to be involved in the production of Euro50 notes.

At Kingston Crown Court in April 2011, Phillip Brown pleaded guilty to cultivation of cannabis and abstraction of electricity. He was also convicted of conspiracy to make counterfeit £20 banknotes and conspiracy to deliver counterfeit 50euro notes. He was sentenced to nine and a half years.

Christian Brown pleaded guilty to the same charges and also received a similar sentence. The estimated total of fraudulent notes produced was almost £18million.

Call Sign Editor Alan Fisher told this magazine: "I remember feeling stunned and so sorry for their dad John Brown! I knew Phil and Christian as friendly people who always put themselves out in order to make sure *Call Sign* went out on time! I never dreamed

Call Sign's old printers, prison and a love nest!

FORGER GOES STRAIGHT...TO BED

CON GETS HIS LAG OVER ON DAY RELEASE



Forger... Brown's top mugshot
EXCLUSIVE by JACK DOVETON, SHALIN WOOLLER and ROBERT PATTERSON
A PRISONER started an affair with a married mum of three while on day release. The Sun can reveal.

The Sun breaks the love nest story!

Open Prison in Kent as a day release was supposed to do some building work, wasn't actually just building but was meeting a married woman with whom he had an affair! Day release does include a monthly overnight stop with family, but Phil's interpretation of family apparently included some-

one else's family! The husband is now seeking a divorce. The woman at first claimed that she only saw Phil at his sister's house when he was on day release. However, a newspaper photographer from *The Sun* took photos of the couple at times when Phil should have been working as the builder. She then refused to comment. Meanwhile Phil Brown has been moved to a secure prison while an investigation is carried out.

**Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online**

I was standing on top of £millions of fake £20 notes. Even worse, at the time messages were going out over the DaC terminals about watching out for dodgy £20 notes - and there I was unwittingly sitting down next to the actual printing press that probably produced them!"

The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) closed the business down claiming that it had been a front for the fraud business. Had *Call Sign* been asked as a witness, we'd have said that it was such an amazing 'front' because they did an excellent job in producing our magazine and that Phil and Christian were really nice people. What did we know!

The three men were arrested by City of London Police officers in June 2010, not long after *Call Sign* moved over to a new printer because the satisfaction that this magazine always felt suddenly ended when Alan Tarrant was suddenly laid off and his replacement never matched up to Alan's high standard. The Editor mentioned his concerns to Chairman Brian Rice who decided to put the account out to tender.

Alan Tarrant told *Call Sign*: "I never once suspected that £millions were being printed under my nose. I'm just pleased that I was laid off before the police became involved because I assume that everyone that worked at John Brown Printing would have been a suspect!"

The investigation also discovered the three men were part of a wider organised crime gang involved in a range of organised criminal activities and during the investigation, they found a full cannabis production facility in Phil Brown's home. Christian Brown, who *Call Sign* always relied on to sort out production dates and who Alan Fisher described as always being friendly and helpful, kept what was described as a 'business plan' that set out projections for a £100,000 return on every 2-3 month cannabis plant cycle.

Now it seems that Phil Brown, who as part of his rehabilitation from Standford Hill

Police Appeal

Can you help to locate a taxi driver following a collision in Hammersmith

Police are appealing for help from the public to trace a taxi driver after a road traffic collision in Hammersmith. Officers were called on Saturday 4 October at 03:10hrs to North End Road SW6 to reports of a vehicle in collision with a pedestrian.

On arrival, officers discovered a 39-year-old man suffering head injuries. He was taken by the London Ambulance Service to a central London hospital, where he was in a stable condition. It is thought at this early stage that the driver had spoken to the pedestrian about a possible fare. The driver may not have known the incident happened as he pulled away. The collision is being investigated by the Serious Collision Investigation Unit based at Merton Traffic Garage.

Detective Constable Nicola Linton said; "We are very keen to hear from the taxi driver who stopped to speak to a 39-year-old white man on North End Road, just south of Halford Road on Saturday, 4 October at about 03:00hrs."

The driver, or anyone with any information about the collision, is asked to contact the Serious Collision Investigation Unit on 0208 543 5157 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Following a letter to Dial-a-Cab subscribers from Chairman Brian Rice on behalf of the Board asking for a simple yes or no as to whether they were in favour of the BoM looking further into a possibility of merging with Radio Taxis (now a part of the Mountview House Group Ltd), DaC's drivers voted by a huge majority to look into that possibility.

The responses, which had to be returned to DaC House by 8 October, showed that over 91 percent of drivers had said yes with just 8.8 percent saying that they were not interested.

The letter explained that competition in the workplace was fierce and that some of it was after corporate work. It suggested that the two circuits as one would have a far greater pull with around 2500 drivers, rather than two smaller circuits.

To proceed with a merger would require an EGM with a minimum of 75% + 1 of drivers being in favour. If that were to be successful, a further two meetings would be required in

Merger: Large majority in favour of looking further



order to change the status of the Society. In between would see several other meetings where drivers could ask questions.

If drivers vote in favour and agreement is reached on the details, then DaC would distribute the majority of its cash assets to eligible members and this is expected to be in the region of £4,000 per member. A further £6,000 per member is expected to be raised when DaC House is sold.

The two circuits would then merge their respective turnovers (approximately £46mil-

lion) and move into one shared premises – possibly a leased back Dial-a-Cab House. It is expected that both ourselves and Mountview (including Xeta) would keep their own identities for the immediate future, with the aim of becoming one circuit further on down the line. The letter added that the details were not cast in stone but just a brief outline of how the process could begin.

The first ever suggestion of an amalgamation of what was then ODRTS and Radio Taxis South took place in 1954.

Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

The best Credit Union in the UK!



Christmas is fast approaching

Yes as my title says, it's nearly that time of the year again! I don't know about you, but time is going far too fast for my liking - or is it an age thing? Still, I suppose I'm lucky that I'm only 38 (and I'm just 23... Ed)!

Anyway let's get back to the matter in hand - our wonderful **DaC Credit Union**, which as I have mentioned on many occasions is so successful thanks to all you boys and girls out

there. But that's enough of that - I don't want you getting big heads! As you all probably know, our Credit Union continues to be successful, mostly with the loans that get taken out, so I am expecting the office to be getting extremely busy with the holidays (sorry, is that too American, well no mind).

As I was saying: Loans! There are lots of new items coming into the shops that your kids and grandkids have earmarked for Father Christmas, or maybe that piece of jewellery that your nearest and dearest has seen, so why not come and see us to get that loan in place ready for whatever you want it for.

We are not expensive; £1000 loan over one year works out around £70 in interest, so why use your own money when you can use ours! My favourite piece of advice to members is not to use your own money because once it's gone it's gone and the way things are these days, it's easy to spend but hard to save it back up.

Give the Credit Union office a call on 0207 729 8171 or just pop in and we will do our best to sort you out. Please see our ad on page 22 for details.

Harp Credit Union

We as a Board are putting into motion the amalgamation of the **Harp CU** into the **Dial-a-Cab Credit Union**. We feel that this will be a prudent move, albeit that the Harp is reasonably successful, but the overheads of the running the two ie insurances etc is horrendous. Then there are the **Financial Conduct Authority's** levies and fees plus a separate bank account and its charges. It is coincidental that **Dial-a-Cab** is also thinking of joining with **Radio Taxis** at the same time – perhaps it's the way of the world.

There will be letters going out in the near future to see if there are any objections to this merger; on a personal level I can't see why, as this will make the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union even bigger and stronger.

Taxi Tyre Shop

Don't forget that we have our tyre shop back downstairs, it's been fairly successful since it started but it can use some more sales as it helps the Credit Union pay the rent. Also, if you have savings upstairs in the CU, come in get your new tyres or whatever and pay through your savings so you don't spend your float. Don't say you will do it tomorrow, because tomorrow never comes and if you get a flashing blue light in your rear view mirror, you can rest easy with your new rubber!

Ok enough of my ramblings hope to see or hear from you in the very near future so be lucky... and be careful out there.

John Riley

DACCU Vice President

Fadil Ahmet

Fadil Ahmet, long-time proprietor of Framerright Auto Engineers, passed away on 9 October whilst in hospital after losing his battle with leukaemia.

Although Fadil had no connection to Dial-a-Cab, many of our drivers used his garage thanks to the excellent reputation it held throughout the trade.

The sincere condolences of all at Call Sign and DaC go to his family. RIP.

"I feels very sad at leaving all his," Sid Nathan told *Call Sign* as he was about to leave **Dial-a-Cab House** for his last day as a licensed taxi driver.

"I have been on this circuit since I passed the Knowledge in 1968 at the age of 33. I had met an **ODRTS** driver called **Gerald Lewis** who told me that radio was the best way to work and that the subs on the circuit were £12 a month. I joined and have never regretted it. But that was 1968 and it now makes me ready for retirement.

"I have made so many friends during those 46 years, during which time I was elected onto the **DaC Arbitration Committee**. But you can't carry on forever and it's time to drive my dear wife Ivy mad by no doubt getting under her feet while telling her about my time with the greatest radio circuit in the world!"

Sid arrived at the **ODRTS HQ** of **Shirland Road** during the reign of **Jack Russell** and followed that with **Jack Taylor's** chairmanship before arriving at **Martin Gellman**. It was at that time that Sid felt more at ease as a member of the circuit and got to know Martin, his Board and also the staff of the time. Since then, Sid told this magazine, he has always felt part of the Society's fabric.

In addition to the above three, Sid has also seen out the Chairmanships of Phil Messias, Aubrey Siteman, Peter Fennymore and Ken Burns!

"Of course I have had moans in *Call Sign*, but most of my thoughts on DaC have been positive. I also have to say that the current man in charge, **Brian Rice**, isn't just an excellent Chairman who cares deeply for **Dial-a-Cab**, but he is also someone who cares about his members. I remember on one occasion when I had become involved with the doorman of a **St James' restaurant** and he ended up hitting me. I had to attend a **City of Westminster disciplinary meeting** at **Marylebone Town Hall**. The Board got to hear about the incident and wanted to know what had happened. Not only did Brian accept my side but he even went to the town hall to speak on my behalf. You never forget when someone shows as much kindness as **Brian Rice** did.

"On the day that I went to **DaC House** to say goodbye before going to **Roman Way** to get stripped out, someone asked me if the Chairman knew. I said I didn't want to bother him but someone phoned him to say that I was downstairs and he came straight down and spoke to me for around 15 minutes wishing me good luck and saying that I was always welcome to visit. On the Gentleman's Circuit, **Brian Rice** is a true gent.

"Going back many years, I would also like to say thank you to a driver who was famous for repairing our taxis when they

After 46 years with the Society...

SID SAYS GOODBYE TO DAC



Sid loved speaking at AGMs

broke down whilst working. He was always at the **Finsbury Square** rank if you needed him and I often wondered how he earned a living as he was always under someone else's taxi! Sadly I can't remember his name, but he once came out to me in **Barnet** to fit a new lift pump and other than paying for the part, refused to take anything else! I bought him a bottle of brandy as a thank you for the next day and almost had to force him to accept it. But that was the spirit of **Dial-a-Cab** and although things had to change once we went data, this has still always been the circuit that cares.

"As this huge chapter of my life closes and I move on, I would sincerely like to

thank **Brian Rice** and his Board for everything. Also to the wonderful members of staff including **Roman Way**, who are all always so nice. These are going to be exciting times for **DaC** with talks of a merger etc, and I just wish I could be part of that. But the time has come to go and that is what I must do.

"To all my many friends on **Dial-a-Cab**, I say thank you for being my friend and I wish you all the very best of health and good luck for the future..."

Ed's note: I believe that the driver Sid refers to may have been Steve Sharp (ex-F34).

Have a happy retirement Sid...

Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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

Well wonder no more! If you are a subscriber, journeyman or member of staff at Dial-a-Cab, then you qualify to join the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union. Any member of your family residing at your address also qualifies for membership!

Then if you are over 18, have been a member of the Credit Union for over 3 months and have established regular savings, you can borrow up to 3 times your total savings...

The cost?

Just 1% per month on the outstanding balance (or APR of 12.7%).

Loans can be paid back early AND there can be an annual dividend on your shares.

The question is: Can you afford NOT to be in it...?

Call us on 020 7729 8171 or 020 7749 0585

Members of the Financial Ombudsman Service
Member's funds protected up to limit set by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme
DaC Credit Union Ltd, Peterley Business Centre, 472 Hackney Rd E2 9EQ
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority
Registration number 213263

How many queens?

As I drove up the Balls Pond Road in my very clean red FX4 on a balmy Saturday evening many years ago, my Dial-a-Cab Pye radio suddenly crackled into life announcing that there was a job in N19 going to Paddington for cash.

In those days you ran for what looked to be a lucrative job and this looked to be one. So I ploughed up the Holloway Road, through the back streets of Archway junction in the days when you still could, and stopped outside a rather large house. I was just about to get out to ring the doorbell when a voice called out: "Down in a minute cabbie..."

After some minutes, my passenger appeared at the top of the front steps in a ball gown that was straight out of a scene from a Charles Dickens novel. I think it was what many ladies of the time modelled their hand-knitted toilet roll covers on! With long hair ringlets, fake diamond necklace and bracelets; it was just as you would imagine *Cinderella* went to the ball.

It was a bit of a squeeze getting the hooped dress through the door frame of the cab, but we managed it and I was then directed to a street off Hemmingford Road, Islington, where we picked up another Cinderella in a dress as splendid as the first with all the accessories. As we pulled away, I noticed lots of the neighbours at the windows watching the scene unfold. I felt as though I was transporting celebrities to some major event where there'd be an abundance of cameramen - the word *paparazzi* had not yet become part of the English language!

The next pickup point was a little pub on Marylebone High Street; on arrival I was asked to go inside and tell a lady whose first name I was given, that her friends were waiting in the taxi outside. As there were only two customers and the barman inside, it didn't take much working out to spot my passenger sitting there on a high bar stool dressed in a beautiful full length black velvet dress with a long train carefully laid along the floor.

"Oh, cabbie, would you please be a dear and hold my train so that it doesn't get dirty on the pavement."

Anything that was likely to get me a bigger tip was ok with me - at least within reason - so I duly lifted the train and we crossed the pavement, just like the Queen and her Page. As the cab door opened, one of the passengers called out: "You look beautiful darling, the Belle of the Ball!" It was at that point that I actually listened to the voice, which sounded rather deep! So I scrutinised the passengers a bit closer. They had the best make-up jobs on males I had ever seen. Whoever completed those tasks would have been able to make **Jo Brand** look like **Kelly Brook**!

I remarked on the wonderful transformations they had completed from brawny hairy men to not bad looking women, but what should have given me the clue from the start was the extra heavy odour of perfume, substantially more than a woman would use.

More recollections from the past from DaC Board Member Tom Whitbread

TOM'S TALES



After spending over six years in the Merchant Navy, I was kicking myself that I had not picked up on the clues!

The instructions were then to make our way to the Porchester Hall in Porchester Road. As I had now broken the ice and struck up a conversation with them, they told me it was the monthly **Queens Ball** they were attending.

"Oh, it's a wonderful evening darling, why don't you join us? You will have the time of your life."

To which I quickly replied that I was sorry but if I went home without a nights takings, my wife would remove a certain part of my anatomy and then I would *have* to join their clan!

Over the years that the Ball was held, I picked up many punters going to and from there and always found them to be some of the best customers you could find; always polite, funny and never any problem. They were also very quick-witted with an answer for every situation. But they'd cut you down to size with a quick return and embarrass you in front of everyone within earshot if they thought you were being nasty.

The REAL Queen!

I suppose it was only a short step for me to go from one set of Queens to another - the Royal Family!

As I wrote in my last column, I used to work as a chauffeur for **HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother**. By the time I started to work part-time for her, I was very adept in spotting a gay person by sight or sound. The Queen Mother had quite a collection of gay people working for her and I got on with all of them; why wouldn't you. The only problems that ever arose came because many straight males are frightened or embarrassed to admit that they have a gay friend. I personally do not care and am quite happy - so long as they pay for their round!

Then there is the humour they seem to bring into a conversation. I remember when my wife and I went to see the show **Chicago** when it first opened in the Strand; we were accompanied by the Queen Mothers **Page of the Back Stairs**. He went under the nickname of **Back**

Stairs Billy, was always immaculately dressed and had this high semi-woman's voice. The staff of the Queen Mother led a rather sheltered life away from most of the usual encounters that we see every day. This was due to the royal residences being in such out of the way places - the countryside of Scotland or Windsor Great Park. So the sights and problems that we encounter each day, they do not.

So as we walked down the **Strand** and passed **Coutts Bank**, there was a less fortunate person asleep on the pavement outside the main door. Billy, who was dressed in blue blazer, grey slacks and a yellow Rupert Bear scarf, asked what this man was doing outside the Queens Bank. I had to quickly explain that he was homeless.

Billy then walked briskly across to the sleeping man, tapped him on the shoulder and as he awoke bleary eyed Billy said: "This is Coutts, the Queens bank, can you not go and sleep outside Barclays." He just did not understand the man's predicament.

The Queen Mother liked all of the gays that worked for her, but she often reminded them that she was the only real Queen amongst them and they fully understood their place!

There was one afternoon when we were loading the vehicles with luggage for the annual summer holiday in Scotland which **Reg**, the Queen Mother's Butler, was supervising in the main hallway of **Clarence House**. As I passed him, he called out to one of the Footmen, "Neil, Neil." I thought this is my chance for a laugh, so I dropped to my knees and said what do you want? Everyone around started to laugh but then suddenly stopped. I looked around and saw Her Majesty at the top of the main staircase with a very big grin on her face; even at her advanced years she could see the humour.

This was not to be the only occasion that Her Majesty came up behind me when we were larking about, but as it was in private away from the general public, she could enjoy the occasion.

Drive safely...

Tom Whitbread
DaC Board Member

Call Sign

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Following their amazing 4 – 5 victory over **Holmesdale** in the last round of the prestigious FA Vase where **Dial-a-Cab** driver and **Collier Wood** goalkeeper, **Lee Pearce** (J71), saved a last minute penalty, the team were drawn at home to **Shoreham** in the second qualifying round.

Could this be as exciting as the Holmesdale thriller? The answer was no – in fact it was fairly uninspiring, but in the end a Colliers Wood victory took them one step closer to the dream of every footballer and a Wembley Cup Final.

“DaC’s **Roger Day** (F76) has done it a few times,” Lee told *Call Sign*, “and I’d love to do it just once before I have to pull my boots off for the last time!”

But Lee had to miss the game for personal reasons and the second string goalkeeper failed to show up! In the end, Wood’s right back, **Tim Williams**, played in goal and did a great job, although he could do nothing about Shoreham’s goal. Also missing was captain **Owen Davies** who hadn’t recovered from a groin strain and **Mario Embalo** who had scored four goals in the Holmesdale game but who was suspended for this one.

Shoreham took the lead on the quarter hour mark when the ball landed at the feet of Shoreham’s **Jamie Cradock** who couldn’t miss from just a few yards out. Another Cradock shot was well-taken by Tim Williams and the visitors from Sussex went in at the break with that one goal lead.

Then on the hour mark **Eli Ogunseye** was sent away by **Dan Harding** who rounded the Shoreham ‘keeper to equalise. A **Harry Wise** shot just went wide and the game looked like

ANOTHER CUP WIN FOR LEE

Colliers Wood 2 Shoreham 1 (FA Vase second qualifying round)



Lee still dreams of a Wembley final

petering out to a tame draw, when with just four minutes left Dan Harding managed to put Eli Ogunseye away again and once again he finished it off to give Colliers Wood the winning goal and to take them into the next round with a home tie on November 1st against either **Cobham** or **Horley**.

And Lee Pearce’s dream of a Wembley Final still lives...!

A few days later ‘Wood’ were away to Croydon in the Surrey FA Senior Cup. Goalless after extra time, the game went to penalties and Lee Pearce became the hero saving three of Croydon’s whilst also scoring one of Collier Wood’s penalties. His team came away with a 4-3 penalty victory.

Bob Woodford writes about his Inca Trail preparation from the Peruvian City of Cusco



OFF WE GO!

All the training has come to a head and I am in the exciting and colourful Spanish-built City of Cusco in Peru, about to trek the Sacred Valley of the Incas on a 5-day mission to reach Machu Picchu, the most famous ruin in South America.

Ruin? I honestly felt that I would be ruined after the effects of my strict training regime, which has included long challenging weekend walks and draining sessions in the gym to try to prepare for the unknown. But to be honest, I think I have found the secret to rolling back the years in an attempt to regain fitness, because as I type these notes I am into my 47th consecutive day without bread and beer – it really does work!

As for the unknown, it won’t be the climbing of steps or the distance that will be the surprise, because the 51km are negotiated in daily stages with overnight campsites laid on for rest and recuperation. No, the real unknown territory will be the effects of high altitude – **Cusco** is 2,650m above sea level, which will bring on the first bout of altitude sickness. But the 2nd base camp in **Wayllabamba** is 3,000m above sea level, while the 3rd base camp is in **Paycamayo** at 3,600m above sea level. Ouch!

My research has led me to believe that altitude sickness affects different individuals in different ways with the most common symptoms being shortness of breath, severe headaches, nausea, vomiting and a pretty bad touch of the *Eartha Kitts*!

On the encouraging side, I have also read that young fit people are particularly vulnerable with all that rushing about they get up to, so that shouldn’t effect a languid, laid back 59-year old then! Also *Coca de Mata* Tea is available in the bars and cafes of Cusco – an infusion of this beverage or the chewing of coca leaves before further ascent, apparently helps to fight the sickness. The downside to enjoying copious amounts of Coca de Mata is the fact that one could fail a drugs test a fortnight after returning to Blighty because the mild bitter flavoured leaves are 15% cocaine! When I told the editor of *Call Sign* about the erotic dreams this tea can bring on, he urged me to fill a suitcase for him!

There is a serious side to all this of course and Alan has already contributed to our Appeal Fund. Any donation would be appreciated by visiting our webpage: <https://www.justgiving.com/robandsteph>.

There is a piece elsewhere inside this issue and I again thank Alan for that. Any amount, no matter how big or small, will help us to sponsor a taxi in next year’s Magical Taxi Tour to Disney. Another easy way to donate is by texting CUSC99 £5 to 70070. The Magical Taxi Tour really is worthy of your support.

When my Inca Trail is finally over on the 7th November I would have gone 68 days without a beer – so I know that the local *Cerveza Malta* will go down well after the expected sense of achievement.

I shall report back next month with tales of my experiences from the land of the historic sun-worshipping Incas. But before you ask, I really won’t have any spare space in my suitcase for any more Coca Tea requests!

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online
Cusco, Peru

DARREN, STEVE, RHYS... AND JULIE!

Almost a football dynasty



Ok, perhaps not a fully qualified dynasty - but two out of four ain't bad! Call Sign recently had a word with Dial-a-Cab Control Centre call taker and part-time weekend dispatcher assisting Ivor Belkin (C97), Darren Browne.

Darren has worked with the Society for around eight years, while mum Julie joined in 1994 and except for one break, has been with us ever since. But there are also two other members of the clan that do not work at DaC, but who have connections with football.

Call Sign often reports on Lee Pearce (J71), who is the current goalkeeper for Colliers Wood United in the Combined Counties Premier League, while in the September issue we reported on the footballing life of Roger Day (F76) who had played for England amateurs as well as playing at Wembley in four amateur cup finals and for Great Britain at an Olympic Games.

Then for the past 12 years, Gary Micklewhite (R69) has been at Dial-a-Cab having arrived via Manchester United and Chairman Brian Rice's beloved Queens



Darren with dad Steve (left) and brother Rhys (right)

Park Rangers - although we do not believe any transfer fee to DaC was involved!

Now added to that DaC footie connection is Darren Browne's 19-year old brother Rhys, who was a youth player with Norwich City under the YTS scheme before being spotted by Charlton Athletic, given a trial and who has now signed a professional contract with the Charlton Addicks! As a goodbye gift to the Canaries, Rhys left Norwich by scoring two



goals for them in an away match in the under 18's league against West Bromwich Albion.

Then there is Darren and Rhys' dad Steve. Rhys is just beginning his soccer career, but Steve Browne has been involved with the sport for many years both as a player and manager. He started at Charlton Athletic - where Rhys now is - as a youth player and played as a midfielder for Yeovil Town before going on to manage Slough Town, Aveley, Dover Athletic, Boreham Wood, Potters Bar and being Assistant Manager at Enfield Town.

Then there's the head of this talented family - mum Julie! Many DaC drivers have taken Julie and Darren back to their Edmonton home and the real regulars used to recognise the house by the palm tree outside the door - which was just as well because it blocked view of the house number. What the DaC drivers didn't know was that Julie was becoming irritated by people not finding the house due to the tree - so she cut it down! Darren didn't mention his mum kicking the depleted stump that was left sticking out of the ground, so we assume that she is leaving the football bits to Steve and Rhys!

All we need now is to hear one day that Darren has become Manager of the DaC football team and the dynasty!

Ron Yarborough

Pearly Kings & Queens Harvest Festival

The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children was recently invited to attend the sixteenth annual London Pearly Kings and Queens Costermongers' Harvest Festival Parade at the Guildhall. I went along with the Fund's Hon Chairman Sim Yiannikaris, Committee members Steven Bell, Mike Son and our wives to witness this spectacular event.

Scores of Pearly Kings & Queens from all corners of London gathered for the festival, over 130 years on from when road sweeper Henry Croft covered his finest whistle and flute in shiny white buttons in aid of the City's poor, with the modern day Pearlies continuing his mission and doing such great charity work.

The traditional entertainment consisted of Maypole dancers, Morris dancing and Marching Bands and was greatly appreciated by the huge crowd that gathered in Guildhall Yard. As it finished, our taxis joined the long procession around the City - led by the Pearlies - to attend St Mary-le-Bow Church, where the pealing of the Cockney Bow Bells welcomed the congregation for a thanksgiving service.

It was an unusually warm and sunny day for this time of year, so it was great to see such huge crowds come out in abundance at the Guildhall and also along the City streets cheering the parade along.

Steve Bell and his wife Wendy had worked tirelessly converting Steve's taxi into a 'Pearly' Taxi adorned with thousands of magnetic pearl buttons - and what a brilliant job they did attracting many visitors with their cameras anxious to take photos. Well done Steve for doing such an amazing job.

We also thank BrightMove Media for producing the Fund's advert which was shown on Steve's digital headboard.

Once again our congratulations must go to Doreen Golding, Old Kent Road Pearly Queen, for organising such a brilliant event and we'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the wonderful Pearlies for continuing to help our charity and the many charities in London and Greater London area.



The Pearlies, LTFUC committee and Steve Bell's taxi

Raymond Levy, TGFUC Press Officer
www.ltfuc.org.uk



Jackie with one of the 1939 newspapers

If you are a fan of antique collecting programmes such as the BBC's *Antique Roadshow*, then you will be familiar with the look of surprise when contributors discover that the dusty ornament they found while clearing out their attic was in fact the creation of a famous artist from long ago.

Such was the case when DaC's Welsh Roman Way technician Steve Thomas brought a selection of discoloured and frag-

mented newspapers to show *Call Sign*.

"My wife Jackie is a keen decorator," Steve explained. "She paints and hangs the wallpaper, while I'm happy to watch Cardiff City play football and then complete the refurbishment of our house by stretching up to paint the ceilings!"

Continuing his story, Steve told us that Jackie had re-decorated the bathroom recently and found some newspapers dating from 1980 stuffed into the air vent.

"That was presumably to stop drafts blowing onto delicate half-naked bodies," Steve told *Call Sign* with a broad grin spreading across his face! "Anyway, although we had also re-decorated the kitchen not that long ago, we decided that the kitchen floor needed freshening up, so Jackie started to take up the old lino."

Then Jackie interjected. "As I pulled up sections of the previous floor covering, I discovered some old newspaper cuttings underneath and called Steve to guess how old they might be, bearing in mind the

stuff we found in the bathroom was from 35 years ago!"

They were both astonished to see references to Nazis and a competition for the chance to win a house worth a whole £1,250!

Then Steve came back: "Closer inspection of the assorted newspaper fragments revealed they were from November 1939, which makes them 75 years old and printed during the earliest stages of World War II. Just to think that we've been walking over these historic newspapers, sandwiched between the floorboards and our old Lino floor covering," he said smiling, still trying to work out whether he was too late to enter the competition to win the house!

"Now about that dusty old oil painting in the attic," Jackie teased Steve with a big grin...!

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

With Tom Quigley (Y33)

Am I (and my taxi) on a different planet?

Most of us watched the **World Cup** in Brazil where in order to entertain and bring the sport to the whole populace, the teams and their considerable entourages had to clock up thousands of air miles in order to play games.

I've also been watching the motor circus of the **Formula One Grand Prix**, where they also fly all over the world – not to mention the two or three days of practise rounds before the main event.

Then there is watching the latest crisis, which could be anywhere in the world from Africa to the USA to Europe, with **Cameron, Miliband and Clegg** clocking up loads of miles, even up and down to **Scotland** to influence voters.

We have seen the tragic events of the **Ebola** virus, a contagious disease where containing and isolating it seems to have been totally lost on the world's press and television media as they fly reporters and camera crews to within touching distance!

Watching the crisis in **Syria** and the rest of the Middle East, there seems to be no end of planes, missiles and guns etc with all the world leaders jetting off to some Summit to try and solve the issues.

All these planes, trains, automobiles, guns and bombs are obviously not polluting the atmosphere because it's only our London Taxis that are doing it! That must be why we have to get rid of perfectly good working vehicles because it has been put upon us alone to save the world.

I must be on a different planet...!

Dumbbell Taxi demo?

So the latest protest by the taxi trade on 24th September was described as "...mirroring the image of Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square with Whitehall as the bar in between to give the Dumbbell Image."

All very clever - apart from one thing. Now I know many in the taxi trade do keep themselves fit, but there are also many who don't so may I just point out to them and the designer of the logo seen in the rear of cabs around stations and on the front page of what is supposed to be "the most read paper in the trade," that instead of holding up a Dumbbell, the TFL man was in fact holding a Barbell - that being longer than the shorter Dumbbell. If we are going to be clever, let's not show ourselves to be dumb...



Knowledge Boy success

Finally, as my little Knowledge group / school grows, October saw our first successful student get his req, so with just his suburbs and paperwork to be put in place, he should be out driving a cab well before Christmas. We are all immensely proud and happy to have helped him and I will follow up the story with a name and photo on his completion...

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

LONDON TAXIDRIVERS' FUND FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN NOTICE OF 2014 DAC AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children will be held on Tuesday 9 December 2014 at 7.30pm.

The New Park Day Centre, 19 Highbury New Park, Highbury N5.

There is parking at the Centre and refreshments will be available.
All drivers are most welcome to attend...



Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a consequence of the Mayor for London's **Cleaner Air Strategy**, once your taxi reaches 15 years it will not be eligible for a further **Hackney Carriage licence**. However, as I understand it, if the proprietor writes to **Transport for London** quite some time before the 15th birthday of the original registration, there may be an option for a further licence period. There may also be an option for TfL to consider an extension, providing reasonable grounds are submitted.

There may be some mature taxi drivers considering retirement in the next year or two or perhaps thinking about working part-time, therefore from a financial viewpoint will they be able to afford to purchase a new cab, that's assuming they would be granted a loan and then be able to keep up the repayments. There are many owner drivers on **Dial-a-Cab** working full time who own W, X or Y etc taxis that will reach 15 years age limit very shortly.

One option is renting a cab; however, this is now becoming more difficult due to a jump in 15-year-old cabs being discarded. A while ago, taxi proprietors were directed by TfL to add conversion kits to lower the emissions exuded by London taxis at a substantial cost. Many of those cabs are now reaching 15 years but have been cherished and looked after..

The Mayor for London often states that the London taxi and its drivers are the best in the world and an iconic feature of London, which has served those that live, work and visit our city. But our industry is going through a turbulent period and for the Mayor for London to deprive the public of an ever-decreasing black taxi fleet is extremely worrying. Taxi rental companies seem to be few and far between with the demise of suppliers and garages certainly not helping an already difficult situation.

We read in the trade press that new manufactures are entering the taxi market - although your guess is as good as mine as to when this will happen. Nonetheless, it will not resolve this issue in the short term and help the group of drivers I referred to earlier.

In 2010, the Mayor announced a £1 million incentive fund to stimulate the market for electric black cabs. While £1 million is no longer a fortune, the idea was good. However, it doesn't help resolve those London taxi drivers who now face an uncertain future.

Black cabs always seem to be the scapegoat of problems involving traffic conditions and pollution in London. If Boris Johnson and his TfL are serious in their public comments to maintain the London Black cab service, the European Emission Directive that was specially aimed at London taxis should now be put on hold until such time as new suppliers can adequately fulfil the needs of the public.

In the meantime, if you believe your taxi may qualify for an extension to its taxi licence, I urge all drivers with older taxis to write to TfL and apply for an extension to the 15-year rule. Without a taxi to perform your lawful duty as London taxi driver, the inability to work and earn a living will be a burden to you and your family. Log in to:

DaC Board member Mike Son looks at age and asks about...

Boris and London's decreasing taxi fleet



www.tfl.gov.uk/cdn/static/cms/documents/alternative-fuel-age-limit-exemption-form.pdf

See if you are eligible but in any event, if we all send a letters to TfL stating the issues you will have if you are unable to obtain a taxi to work, then surely the Mayor must take notice.

A cow's view on emissions...

Agriculture is responsible for an estimated 14

percent of the world's greenhouse gases. A significant portion of those emissions come from methane, which in terms of its contribution to global warming is 23 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. The U.S. **Food and Agriculture Organization** say that agricultural methane output could increase by 60 percent by 2030 [Source: *Times Online*]. The world's 1.5 billion cows and billions of other grazing animals emit dozens of polluting gases, including lots of methane. Two-thirds of all ammonia comes from cows.

Cows emit a massive amount of methane through belching, with a lesser amount through flatulence. Statistics vary regarding how much methane the average dairy cow expels. Some experts say 100 to 200 litres a day (or between 26 to 53 gallons), while others say it can be up to 500 litres (about 132 gallons) a day.

In any case, that's a lot of methane, an amount comparable to the pollution produced by a car in a day. Thank goodness herds of cattle don't roam the streets of London...

Mike Son

DaC Board member

Taxi Maaxi Uber!

Copycatting seems to have well and truly arrived in the world of London Taxis. We suddenly saw numerous taxi apps when **Hailo** first appeared – when it was exclusively for taxis. Most of those either folded or faded into insignificance leaving just **GetTaxi** as Hailo's main opposition.

Now we've seen the release of **Nat Rothschild's Maaxi Taxi** – where prospective passengers are matched up and put into a single taxi, so we knew it wouldn't be too long until a second cab share app appeared and we didn't have to wait too long!

Uber's Chief Executive, **Travis Kalanick**, recently announced that his app will introduce a carpool service – **UberPool**. – which sounds similar to Maaxi Taxi and will allow passengers to split the bill of the digitally ordered cabs. The claim is that a "£21 black taxi ride will be cut to around £6."

Perhaps somewhat contradicting himself when introducing the new service, Mr Kalanick claimed that the new service could take one million cars off the roads; however, at the same time he said that Uber were adding 1,000 new drivers each month - his view that another 100,000 drivers being needed to supply the "liquidity" that Uber were chasing, seeming to suggest more, not less traffic.

According to **Jo Bertram**, Uber's UK & Ireland GM, they "love" black cabs and that was why they launched **UberTaxi**, where black cabs apparently joined the Uber platform. She added that hundreds had already joined – although if true, few drivers seem ready to admit it.

Travis Kalanick added that London had a very sophisticated transport framework and he wondered how TfL would want to approach his new app – if at all.

"We have some fights that we have to go out there and fight for what we believe in," Kalanick said with an apparent TfL challenge in his voice.

Astonishingly though, the Chief Exec still claimed that no one would have to wait more than five minutes, which suggests that Mr Kalanick knows more about San Francisco's traffic than he does about that of London!



Travis Kalanick launched UberPool

Hello Ladies & Gents Demonstration

It was good to see fellow **Dial-a-Cab** members attend the demonstration on 24th September in Whitehall and the surrounding areas against **TfL's** lack of enforcement on night-time touting, Pedicabs and how London's Taxi industry has lost faith in the way TfL operates, unlike when we were under the **Metropolitan Police** and there was no conflict of interests!

Merger

You will have all received information concerning the possible merger with RTG taxi division. After the ballot papers with your responses were counted (over 90% in favour), it confirmed the views of members that I've spoken to with the majority wanting the Board to further explore the options.

Maaxi Taxi

I've made my opinion known on this new start up app via twitter; you can follow me @r7garry (all opinions are my own). The tweets I've exchanged with **Nat Rothschild**

Compliance with Garry



and **Maaxi** about how they are going to create a new market for Taxis haven't all been complimentary. However Nat has assured me that they don't want to operate from traditional taxi pick up points ie stations and major venues for which we currently get work, but NEW business from people that don't use taxis for personal use. So if Maaxi operate as they say ie a door-to- door bus style service where passengers pre-lodge credit card details to travel, we'll have taxis on bus routes!

KPM

With KPM being closed for business, I do hope not many of our Vito driving members have failed to find assistance with overhauls and mechanical work etc. You can contact the Mercedes customer service on a free phone number 0800 9777 7777 or 0207 660 9993. Warrantee work information can be obtained by calling **Anthony Cunningham** or **Danny Smith** on 0161 975 6996.

Credit Cards

TfL are looking into making it mandatory to accept credit cards in your taxi with a small meter increase to cover costs to the industry. As you know, we at DaC charge the customer a handling fee, so this could have a bearing on the way we operate and it will be interesting to see the outcome on their consultation.

Be lucky...

Garry White
DaC Compliance Officer

After 17 years, London cabbie **Lesley Bennett** says farewell to her beloved Fairway...

AND THEN THERE WERE FOUR!

Bought from new, the R registration Fairway enjoyed a fine farewell in central London recently with many well-wishers waving and clapping as it went by on its last day. The driver, **Lesley Bennett**, said:

"I became a taxi driver 24 years ago after realising I needed a reliable profession to pay my mortgage and to bring up my two boys. I quit a job in Fleet Street and have never looked back! Passengers and tourists all loved my Fairway and they would fight to get into it on a taxi rank. It was one of the last Fairways on the streets of London. It's done me proud and I feel sad that I have to take it off the road, but I am pleased to say I will still be able to use it for weddings."

The Fairway, which has 400,000 miles on the clock, has hosted passengers including Hollywood actor and Lesley's personal favourite, **Dustin Hoffman**. It will now be decorated with ribbons and flowers - all handmade by Lesley after she recently completed a floristry course - to transport brides to church on their wedding days.

"It has been more than just a taxi to me, it must be the most photographed cab in London and is a part of London's heritage. I shall keep it for as long as it will run!"

Lesley has now invested in a brand new **TX4** once again in white. Her beloved Fairway is one of the circa 3,000 taxis to come off the road under regulations set in the *Mayor's Air Quality Strategy for London*, which aims to meet strict European air quality limits by 2020. Its departure leaves just four plated Fairways still in service.

Lesley's new TX4 - a 64 plate TX4 Elegance - is available with a 4 year, 120,000 mile manufacturer-backed vehicle warranty (extendable at point of purchase to 180,000 miles), unlimited mileage core engine warranty, first year's road tax and one year's RAC cover.

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



Lesley with her old and new cabs

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Email - info@essexpcfix.co.uk
Mobile - 07866 395 831
Office - 01708 444480 (between 8AM and 8PM)
Web - www.essexpcfix.co.uk

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

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

Brethren of the Whip



A Bermondsey Bog Story

Hackney coachman Langley was on a good job; it was not a roader but he was being treated to drinks whenever the party stopped. It was the end of

November 1829 and Langley's passenger has just won a trial at the Court of Kings Bench and wanted to celebrate his victory.

The Court was attached to the prison of the same name and situated in **St George's Fields**, Southwark. If anyone was going to fall foul of the law and find themselves imprisoned at His Majesty's pleasure, the King's Bench prison was the place to go. At this time it had the distinction of being "the most desirable place of incarceration in London." For a fee, you could leave the prison each day and as long as you remained within the Liberties, about three square miles, you could very much do as you pleased.

Despite having missed out on the experience, Langley's passenger - we are not told his name - felt it was only right to celebrate by stopping off at several inns between King's Bench and his home in Bermondsey. As they arrived at each public house, Langley was gratified to join them inside, it being a bitterly cold night. After several such visits, Langley, ever the professional despite being a bit tipsy, got his passengers home safely. He now had to get himself back to where he could pick up another fare.

Langley found himself travelling slowly down **Willow Walk**, just off **Grange Road**. He was travelling slowly as there were no street lights and no houses were sharing their light with the darkness outside. No doubt the cold accelerated his drunken state and had he been able to see anything, it would have been a blur. Then suddenly one of the wheels of his coach went down into a ditch and Langley was flung from his box. He flew through the air and landed feet first in soft mud... *very* soft mud! He had gone in up to his waist but the more he struggled the deeper he was sucked in. In no time at all, the mud was up to his neck.

To make matters worse, his coach, which had been teetering on the edge of the ditch, now came crashing down on top of him - coach, two horses *et al.* If any part of the coach or horses had struck him, the force would have sent him under the mud and into an early grave. As fortune had it, his luck was in. Both the windows of the coach were undone and his drunken passengers, despite the cold, had lowered the sashes. As the

coach fell on top of him, his head escaped injury by being perfectly framed by the empty window. A couple of inches either way and he was a dead man.

Langley began shouting for all he was worth - it was so dark he didn't know if the other window was open and had no idea if anybody would be in those darkened streets at that time of night. He shouted and shouted and as his body grew weaker, his cries became more subdued. It was then that a parish constable passing the ditch heard his stifled plea. After getting a light and seeing what the problem was, he went for help.

With the aid of six local watchmen, the coach and horses were dragged out of the pit. To get Langley out required the assistance of another six. All told it took thirteen people to

get Langley out of the mud - and then he was arrested by the constable for being drunk.

Fortunately, the magistrate took pity on Langley whose coach and two horses were badly damaged. The charges against him would be dismissed if he could come up with some form of compensation to reward the men who rescued him and that the passengers - who had been *subpoenaed* - should likewise contribute as they were the cause of the 'jollification' in the first place! After meeting his "preservers" outside the court, an agreement was reached and the drunkenness charge against Langley was dismissed.

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

New Design Licences and Identifiers

Further to TPH Notice 22/13, we have now begun the rollout of the new design licences and identifiers to all existing licensed London taxi drivers. This new documentation, which incorporates additional security features, is being issued in batches over the next few weeks with the first batch issued on 14 October.

The new licences and identifiers are of a similar design to existing ones but contain a number of new security features, including a hologram and a barcode unique to the driver. In addition, following feedback from the trade, the new suburban identifiers have a larger space to show the areas in which a driver is licensed to ply for hire. The paper licences have also been amended to incorporate an additional security feature.

Replacement licences and identifiers will be issued to all licensed taxi drivers by 10 November 2014.

It is important you display your new identifiers and carry a copy of your new licence as soon as you receive them. From **17 November, 2014** it will be mandatory to only display the new identifiers and carry the new style licence. Any driver not doing so could be subject to compliance action.

In order for our compliance team to verify your identifiers authenticity, it is important you do not tamper with, laminate or alter them in anyway. All identifiers should be placed in the top nearside (kerbside) corner of the front and rear windscreen.

Please destroy your current licence and identifiers upon receipt of your replacements.

The new licences and identifiers will be sent to the most recent address we have on our records. To ensure they are received please let us know if you have changed your address.

Any driver who has not received his or her replacement licence and identifiers by **10 November 2014** should contact London Taxi and Private Hire via tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk or 0343 222 4444.



Helen Chapman
LTPH General Manager



Language of life... and cabbies!

After many months, I recently ventured into the Heathrow feeder park, mainly because I got fed up with doing local after local and then driving in empty. Whilst I was there, I overheard a conversation between two drivers and it got me thinking about what the public might think about cabbies language. Not blue, but stuff like *I only put on if I get off* or *did you blow out last night*. We know what it means... but really!

How about covering the Albert *burst* then heading down to *Vic Hudson* where I *broomed* one before *stalking* one so as to not lose my place in the queue! That's nearly as bad as being told by a punter that they want to stop "...right here on the left," as your cab swerves from one side of the road to the other.

We used to say in the Fire service that you needed to come to a clear and concise understanding of what was going on, however that can't be said of some of our punters.

I was travelling up Charing Cross Road when I got hailed by a man outside Capital

Radio who silently handed me a piece of paper. The slip had The Charing Cross Hotel written on it, so I did a u-turn and made my way there. When we pulled up onto the concourse, I stopped the meter and said we were there, to which he grumpily replied that we weren't. I was still holding the piece of paper and showed him the inscription with Charing Cross Hotel on it. He then said that the address he wanted was on the other side! I turned the paper over and it had The Hilton Metropole written on it. Do you remember those Laurel and Hardy sketches when a bemused Ollie would stare at the camera for ages in silence before saying: "Why don't you do something to help me!" You think he would have... well I'm not going to go on... but I ask you!

Amalgamation?

It seems that the trade is being swallowed up by PH and TfL who regularly tell us that there are 25,000 drivers out there, but how many actually work their badges as I know at least six drivers who do other things. TfL surely can't know for sure, so why not introduce a reward to encourage drivers to hand their badges in, thus getting a better idea of the real numbers of working drivers.

Any money laid out by TfL could be recouped by new drivers paying for their new badges. NYC taxi medallions were fetching \$1 million a few years ago but I am not talking about anything like that, just something more reasonable. I feel that there are many fewer than 25,000 drivers, due to the current economic climate and I am quite concerned at the number leaving the trade.

The question we need to ask is what TfL are doing about these drivers leaving, or is it their big plan to let the trade die through a lack of work, then when complaints come in about coverage, allow the PH to ply for hire and amalgamate both Taxis and PH into one system. I know TfL want us to take credit cards by putting the meter fares up to compensate for the charges, but we simply can't put any more onto our fares as we are deemed too expensive already. I don't know about everyone else, but I feel that as a trade we are fighting for our lives and are being attacked from all angles, like I have never seen. The politicians pay us good lip service, but I am quite cynical about their real motives.

Richard Potter (T51)

Rogue minicab drivers arrested

This year's first phase of Operation Safer Travel at Night (STaN) has resulted in over 40 arrests being made for touting and other cab-related offences over three weekends this autumn. Op STaN involved officers from the Cab Enforcement Unit and 32 Safer Transport Teams, who form part of the MPS Roads and Transport Policing Command, part funded by Transport for London. They checked over 1700 vehicles and spoke with over 10,000 women to warn them that any minicab that isn't booked through a licensed minicab operator is dangerous and puts them at risk of attack, including sexual assault and robbery.

The Safer Travel at Night initiative is a partnership between the Mayor, TfL, The MPS, City of London Police and British Transport Police to improve the safety of travelling at night through industry regulation and licensing, enforcement and education. The 2014 Safer Travel at Night communications campaign aims to make people aware of the dangers of picking up un-booked minicabs off the street, such as robbery and sexual assault by encouraging people to take and share a #HomeSafeSelfie and pledge to never take an illegal minicab home.

In 2013/14, the number of cab related sexual offences in London fell by 15 percent compared to the previous year, with specific rape offences down 30 percent. However, one incident is too many and the STaN initiative is dedicated to driving this down further. Over 700 arrests were made in 2013/14 for illegal touting for hire and over 8,000 since 2003.

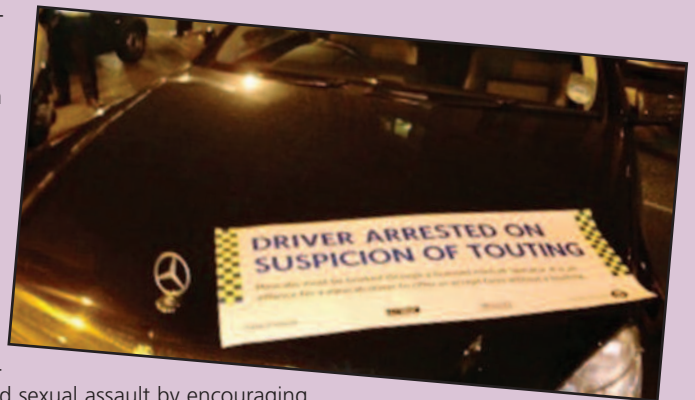
Through Safer Travel at Night and #HomeSafeSelfie TfL wants to remind everyone that:

- * A minicab that has a licence or sticker in the window (or a driver who has a badge) still needs to be booked in advance with a licensed minicab firm.
- * You should never take a minicab offered by a bouncer or someone in a high visibility jacket with a clipboard outside a venue.
- * A minicab driver that approaches you directly on the street is acting illegally.
- * If you approach a minicab directly, only the driver knows where you're going, which isn't safe.
- * If any of the above takes place, your minicab isn't booked and therefore is not safe and illegal...

Acting Superintendent Andrew Johnstone, Roads and Transport Policing Command, said:

"Our increased policing activity by our dedicated Cabs Enforcement Unit and Safer Transport Teams during the Freshers period has resulted in over 40 people being arrested for touting and over 10,000 women being warned of the dangers of getting into un-booked minicabs, covering the Freshers period.

"It is not worth the risk of getting into un-booked minicabs picked up off the street. Any minicab journey that isn't booked is dangerous and puts you at risk of sexual assault and robbery. We will continue to carry out these operations as part of our ongoing drive to tackle illegal minicab drivers operating in London and to ensuring Londoners travel safely at night."



We asked DaC drivers at random, given the opportunity to ask one question...

WHAT WOULD YOU ASK MAYOR BORIS?

Sal Saleem (S46J)

Why has he made PH cars waiting outside night clubs and other venues and satellite offices legal? This is detrimental to the licensed taxi trade. I thought licencing them was to stop them signing on the dole, claiming benefits and to reduce sexual assaults, not to mention working in the 'black' economy. I assumed the idea of PH licencing was to eradicate underground working and not to give them the right to ply for hire through the back door.



Dave Fisher (A59)

With so much technology available out there re Apps, what is he going to do to preserve our right to ply for hire?

Michael Leahy (A18)

I would ask him to sort out the Uber situation and that would be fine because it is a worry to not just we drivers, but also to members of the travelling public alike.



Adrian Jay (F85)

The Bikes! Why has he allowed so many cycles? They unduly take up already precious road space. In Royal College Street or Tavistock Place they have their own segregated lanes to keep them out of harm's way it's true, but at the cost of encroaching on our vital street space.

And why not some form of public liability insurance or road tax? I've had incidents with cyclists and have been unable or it's just not worth the hassle involved of pursuing it so ended up repairing the vehicle at my own cost.

Lee Pearce (J71)

Why is he not doing enough to protect our trade by allowing the Knowledge of London to become weaker? My experience has seen new entrants with poor English speaking skills, no people skills, no communication skills and to crown it all, not much by way of *Knowledge of London* skills!



Eamonn Barrett (K58)

Mr Mayor, do you remember the night I brought your young daughter to meet you at the St James Street restaurant you were dining in? She admitted to me that she did not have any money on her but that "her dad" would pay me at the destination. So I decided that as it was just a short journey and that she could just have easily been my youngster, I happily took her not

overly worrying whether I would get my money or not. Imagine my surprise, Mr Mayor, when you came out of the venue to pay me off expressing gratitude and telling me London cab drivers were '*the salt of the Earth*'. So why do you apparently seek to undermine the reputation of the finest taxi service in the world by allowing almost unlimited numbers of minicabs and pedicabs that risk peoples safety and cause all sorts of traffic congestion by waiting and parking as they please?

Ivan Sobell (P69)

Why don't you re-instate the roads to pre-bendy bus status now that they have gone? I'm thinking specifically about the junction of Gt Portland Street and Devonshire Street, which could revert to two-way as well as other roads around town.



Bill Mariner (M80)

Why don't you take us away from TfL and put us back with the old Public Carriage Office? I really feel that our standards have steadily gone down under the present regime? Like it or not, the old PCO system worked.

Peter Franklin (L61)

Mr Mayor, your traffic management team is a joke! But the serious point is that it is costing industry and commerce £millions because nobody is able to get around anymore due to built-in obstructions such as uncoordinated utility and road works. And Mr Mayor, don't get me on the subject of cyclists – they should have insurance like every other road user and registration plates to make them more accountable. I look forward to the inevitable grid-lock when the Embankment Cycle Superhighway comes to fruition...



Robert Blythe (G37)

Why is there a lack of enforcement regarding Private Hire who appear able to double park outside hotels and other venues whenever they like and pedicabs that wait on the kerbside touting for passengers without hindrance? We as licenced taxi drivers have nothing to hide, but there does not seem to be the regular roadside checks that there used to be.



Terry Parsons (D22)

Why, Mr Mayor, are there not stricter controls on the licencing of Private Hire who seem to be everywhere? Otherwise, I think you are not doing too badly running London; it could be a lot worse!

Taxi Driver of the Year Dinner and Dance

There is still one table left for the Taxi Driver of the Year dinner and dance, which this year will be held at the Holiday Inn, Carburton Street on Saturday 6 December.

The reception begins at 6.15pm and is followed by a four course meal, including a half bottle of wine per guest. There is also dancing to a live band. This is always one of the taxi trade's social highlights of the year. Tickets are £65 per person.

Enquiries to TDoY Charity Fund Hon Chairman Russell Poluck MBE (T55) on: 07850 056 765 or 020 8952 1357

According to LTDA General Secretary, **Steve McNamara**, the new Nissan Taxi has achieved the hardest part of its transformation, that it should look like a taxi.

"I think the Nissan Taxi will be very popular because it looks like a taxi should! To design an icon isn't easy," said Steve, "but to be fair – they seem to have done it!"

The rest of us will hopefully find out in December when the **Nissan NV200** Taxi with its auto gearbox and 1.6-liter petrol engine is scheduled to be released to London's taxi drivers – and that is around one year before the release of the **Nissan electric EV** version with its claimed zero emissions, which is some five years before London Mayor **Boris Johnson's** plan that all cabs be emission free.

The cab was released in New York last year and despite some early skepticism in a US State that is used to big vehicles, it has become popular with drivers and passengers.

According to Nissan, one of their biggest challenges was to make sure that it complied fully with the London *Conditions of Fitness* including its 25-foot turning circle – something that Mercedes found so problematic in their **Vito** Taxi and which played such a big part in the well-publicised financial problems that saw **KPM** and **One89** seek administration.

The Nissan NV200 has suspension modifications to accommodate the turning circle requirement, a side door that has been modified for a wheelchair ramp and front-end modifications that transforms a van into a

Nissan Taxi still on course for December



modern looking London Taxi, yet one that retains a traditional look – again something that many said spoiled the Vito because it was not immediately recognised as a London taxi.

That front-end look of the NV200 includes new bumper pads, round headlamps, a remodeled grille and LED light framing the taxi sign to increase its visibility. So does it really resemble the traditional look of the London Taxi?

According to **Steve Charlton**, MD at **SAC Engineering Design**, a high-end engineering consultancy that worked on the Nissan London Taxi design with **ADV Manufacturing**, one of the key design partners on the project: "Yes, it's a large transformation, but not a lot of panels are transformed."

Specifically, the NV200's door, roof, front-end suspension, inner structure for rear seats, roof and front end surfaces were targeted as part of the redesign project.

Importantly for drivers exploring the possibility of purchasing the NV200 and remembering the Vito's ongoing problems with its added rear steering facility, additional sheet metal licenses have enabled SAC to apply company standards that ensure design quality and address manufacturability constraints early on in the design phase, which accelerated assembly design. The fact that CATIA is so widely used throughout the industry and because SAC has been a user since 1993 positioned the CAD program as a natural fit for this project.

Steve Charlton added: "If we need external help with the suspension, for example, we can enlist partners and share models without a problem. It's pretty much the industry standard for this sort of thing."

Darryl Scriven, Design Excellence Manager for Special Vehicles quoted London Mayor, **Boris Johnson**, in saying that the new taxi should maintain the iconic design of the traditional London cab, while not being generic.

Although no prices have been mentioned, rumours are that it will slightly undercut the TX4. One thing seems certain, the newly revamped **London Taxi Company** with **Geely** really has competition.

Team Wilkey now has a World and International champion...

Double Boxing Success For Dad's Alec Wilkey!

Dial-a-Cab driver **Alec Wilkey (W83)** has been on Dial-a-Cab for nine-years, but in a life away from taxi driving, Alec is also a much respected trainer in the world of professional boxing. Now two championship wins for his stable in October have added greatly to that reputation.

Areti Mastrodouka fulfilled a lifelong ambition by emphatically capturing the world title when capturing the **GBU Women's World Lightweight Championship** in her hometown of **Athens** on 12th October with a unanimous points decision over **Hana Horakova**. The win gave Areti her eighth straight victory. The Gods of War 5 show was held at the **Dais Arena** where the 38 year-old female southpaw made history in her last bout by winning the first ever pro bout to be held in Greece.

Areti dominated each of the ten rounds by out-boxing her opponent and landing thudding left hands to which her Czech opponent had little in response. The unbeaten Mastrodouka has been dedicated to win titles such as this World title after teaming up with Alec Wilkey and travelling to the UK to train and fight for her first 6 bouts as a professional. It was no surprise when all three judges scored the bout for The Master each with a score of 100-90 sparking jubilant scenes in the arena, with Mastrodouka now on the hunt for even more titles.



Alec Wilkey and new World Champion Areti Mastrodouka pose for Call Sign after her victory

Alec Wilkey's successful October was completed when his Light-Welterweight boxer, **John Wayne Hibbert**, scored an emphatic victory one day before Mastrodouka's title win in Greece, to capture the vacant **WBC International Championship** with an exhilarating 5th round TKO win over **Leonardo Gonzalez** at London's **O2 Arena**. Fighting on **Matchroom Sport's** Moment of Truth show on the undercard of Anthony Joshua's 9th contest, the Stanford le-Hope fighter thrilled his army of fans after establishing an early lead with some slick boxing.

His 32 year-old Argentinian opponent remained dangerous, but was troubled by Hibbert's right hand frequently landing. Hibbert used a high and tight guard to nullify the attacks from Gonzalez, who did have some successes of his own at times, but it was in the 5th round that Hibbert really started to up the ante and dominate the exchanges.

With Gonzalez now bleeding and taking heavy shots under pressure, Hibbert backed him up onto the ropes and unloaded with a barrage of punches to body and head causing referee Richie Davis to step in and stop the bout to spare Gonzalez from more punishment.

This win gives the Alec Wilkey trained Hibbert options for some big fights in the division with the possibility of winning more titles.

David Wilkey, Call Sign Online

Mailshot

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

Le merger!

Cher Président

I refer to your recent letter regarding the proposed merger with Radio Taxis. You use the French word *tranche* in the letter, so I would be grateful if you could tell the members *et moi* what this word means. Would it not have been easier to use the English equivalent?

Merci beaucoup...

Monsieur Tony Doltis (Rouge 38)

Are you pulling my plonker guv'nor! ...Ed

Who gave Uber my phone number?

Hi Al

I recently received the text message below on my phone. As I am not, never have been and never will be on **Uber**, how did they get my mobile phone number? Does Tfl sell our numbers? If so, I think that is very disturbing – especially as they are also advertising on the Tfl website.

Hi, have you heard of Uber? We offer London PCO drivers the opportunity for flexible work at the touch of a button. Join in October and Uber guarantees you earnings of £3000 in November. Sign up now to <http://t.uber.com/pcodriver>.

Jon Robinson (E88)

Quite a number of DaC drivers also received the text. Several contacted Uber, who claimed they received (probably meaning that they bought) the numbers from a third party where those contacted had previously registered themselves as London taxi drivers and gave consent to be contacted for marketing purposes.

Call Sign asked Tfl and they told us they have no idea how Jon's number was obtained. They also said that Tfl do not sell numbers and confirmed that they did not even have Jon's mobile number. But they reiterated their privacy statement from the web:

"Your name and contact details may be disclosed to an external research company to conduct research amongst licensees on Tfl's behalf. This research will be related to Tfl's responsibilities for licensing, regulation, and integration between taxis / private hire services and other elements of the transport system. Your details will not be used for any marketing or other research activities."

It appears that Tfl are probably too trusting in assuming that anyone they pass on info to will be honest enough to not forward on that information to third parties. In the real world of real news-

papers, an investigation would be called for; but I doubt that anyone outside of this trade particularly cares about us ...Ed

To Field Marshall Rice

Dear Field Marshall

All those army references you aimed at me in last month's *Call Sign* are really quite apt because being a DaC foot soldier of late really does remind me of being in Dads Army! I concur we are at war, but I never envisaged the troops being under attack from their own commanding officer! To correct you, I was not released from Guantanamo Bay... I escaped! I was tortured relentlessly and to be honest, since returning as a front line foot soldier, nowt much has changed. Your concern for my welfare is overwhelming and I'm touched.

Moving on to the subs increase, we all make mistakes and a man can admit when he's wrong so when are you gonna man up? I recently had an out of body experience and imagined that we had an account that trialed us for just 2 nights? If Major Cain didn't open that account, was it Ghostbusters! As for the names of the two phantom buyers - Pinky & Perky wasn't it!

Yes, I did read your article on page 4 but only after I read my letter first of course! In my humble opinion, mine was better! Next, did we not dispose of some of our installations a few years back whilst still a mutual? You state that any surplus has to be re-invested for the betterment of the troops and I'm all for that. But how then is doubling the subs for the majority better for the troops? If the sale of our great Society was to go through, I assume it would take some time. In that period, if a pay out of £10k was achievable, most members would have to knock off at least a bag of sand in real terms due to the fact we are paying more in subs to get our own money back. And no vested interest here (being a mere 25 year member) but the treatment of 30 + year members is shocking in my opinion. Also to renege on the 2 year deal with the all-over livery members is again in my opinion awful.

The prospect of fighting shoulder to shoulder with some of the dregs we slung off DaC is again an appalling thought. It seems to me we are throwing Radio Taxis a lifeline as they are taking on more water than a Fairway (built in Coventry with pride). Surely we have other options?

Finally in summary I may be agog, but although down I ain't out just yet! God bless 'Amerakee', God bless you and God bless democracy.

Colin Jenkins (Y22)

Hiya Colin, as you know I normally pass letters aimed at one person in particular to that person, but I don't think I can face an ongoing version of War and Peace between you and Brian Rice - unless Leo Tolstoy miraculously returns and starts writing for Call Sign! Much of the answer to your letter is given below to Antony Hizer. Your views on the rest will have been noted on the Chairman's military personnel files ...Ed

Subscriptions

Hi Alan

I have a question for Brian Rice and that is why we weren't given the choice – as were **Radio Taxis** drivers – of whether we wanted to go to *pay as you go* or remain on the previous subs rates. RTG drivers are mixed - some on PAYG and others with other paying a standard rate so it can't have been that difficult to do; after all their IT department can't hold a candle to ours.

I have to say that I feel rather let down with this new way of paying subs, because drivers such as myself who cover everything we are offered are the ones who not only pay more than those that cherry pick and use DaC for their own benefit only, but in my case have a huge increase on the rate I was paying previously. It's all very well asking drivers to cover morning work, but then when they do, they are punished for doing so. No one expects the circuit to run on air, but surely you are pushing away the drivers that regularly cover work – regardless of where it goes – against those that hang up trying to sniff out the occasional airport and may do just 3 or 4 trips a week yet pay far less than they did before. I cannot see how that is fair.

I recently signed a contract to say that if I took a superside ad, then I would pay just £18 a week. That figure has far more than doubled and I have to say that I feel cheated.

Antony Hizer (E63)

Brian Rice replies: Every Member is automatically on the PAYG rate, but once they have done a certain amount of work the charge is capped. In your case Antony, you will be on the higher rate but to expect the subscription to be £15 + VAT (£18) is unrealistic; it was more than that when I took over as Chairman in 1996. In fact, subscriptions were £110 per month + VAT, which equates to more than £25 per week + VAT - and that was 1996!

I really am sorry you feel cheated, that is the last thing the BoM want. But as you are aware we have lost 1100 Members during the past six years because they felt the £30+VAT per week was too expensive. We had to do something to halt the haemorrhaging of Members. We estimate the new system will actually cost the Society between £150k and £175k per annum in the hope we will refrain from losing Members. We have in excess of 1100 Members that will benefit from the PAYG and approximately 195 that will pay more, perhaps it is correct that those that earn more, pay more up to a limit? However, those Members will argue it is to the benefit of the Society



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that they complete a lot of trips and I can sympathise with that argument.

If you remember Antony, you berated me in the car park one day because you stated that you had not done a Dial-a-Cab trip that day, but had completed 7 or 8 trips for Hailo and that we should not have any run-ins, gratuities and some sort of PAYG system. I remembered your remarks and the BoM unanimously agreed to adopt the PAYG system. However, I do recognise the increase in your subscription is not welcome; I believe you wanted PAYG but that higher earners such as yourself should not pay any increase, unfortunately it can't work that way.

Having said that, I trust you will be pleased to know that we are looking at some sort of payback system for the Members that complete in excess of a certain number of trips on a weekly basis. (See page 4... Ed)

Caption Competition

Dear Alan

A few weeks ago during the night shift in the Dial-a-Cab Control Centre, a tourist phoned in asking a colleague (Gareth Jenkins) how much it would cost from somewhere to *St Pancreas*? Gareth asked me why people didn't realise that there was no such station as *St Pancreas*, which is when he came up with the below punch line which had me in stitches! Who said that working on the night shift was the grave yard shift! There's never a dull moment on the night shift! The caption contest entry was:

Alan Fisher says to Brian Rice and Keith Hill: "I'm in my cab and at traffic lights and someone walks towards me and asks: 'How do I get to *St Pancreas*?' So I said 'you just turn left at the spleen!'"

Marvin Severin (Ms)

DaC Control Centre Night shift

Although this entry didn't win Call Sign's caption contest, the story was amusing enough to put into Mailshot ...Ed

Morning coverage

Hello Alan.

I just wanted to respond to complaints by Board members regarding our morning coverage. Doing that shift, it is not unusual to have to wait over an hour for a job because up to 7.45 am, things can be quiet, then suddenly everyone wants a taxi between 07.45 and 09.00. Then it goes quiet again. I have noticed that many drivers have reverted back to days or evenings instead of mornings and I have previously contacted Keith Cain with ideas as to what to do. To me it can't be just coincidence that the coverage is poor at the only time of the day when jobs are masked. Yes, scrubbing £40 rides from NW8 to EC2 is unac-

ceptable but this doesn't really represent what the whole morning's work is like. I would say that coverage would be better if drivers could see where they were going, as it seems to work perfectly well outside of 7.00 - 10.00. As I said to Keith Cain, at least give it a trial just to see if things change, as doing nothing really isn't at option because we simply can't afford to lose any more accounts.

Richard Potter (T51)

DaC Sales Manager Keith Cain replies: Let me say that it's been a very long time since Richard and I have spoken on this topic. I did say I would not be in favour of showing destinations in the morning period and I said this from experience when many years ago I proposed this to the Board. The Board felt at the time that it was wrong, but I managed to persuade them and we tried it. The coverage on that day was the worst we had ever seen. Instead of improving things, it made the situation worse. All the trips had so many rejects on them it really was quite unbelievable and the Call Centre staff spent all of their time calling customers back saying no cabs were available. The added pressure of making more call-back's prevented staff from answering inbound calls, which in turn gave customers more to complain about. The Board immediately reversed their decision for the next day and it's not been tried since. Richard remarks how he feels it is unacceptable to scrub £40 trips and no one would disagree, but there are a number of trips that are covered, which, as we all know that if the destination had been shown, would not have been.

Our controllers are currently trying a new approach by sending out pre-notification messages of areas where trips are going to be coming out from. In addition, they are unmasking trips earlier to show the destination, run-ins are being increased sooner and additional premiums are being added; but this is still not sufficient to get drivers to accept trips. Some are even being made non-rejectable but drivers being offered the trip are then timing out on purpose. So, I cannot see that by showing destinations on all trips, how it will improve coverage especially as there are trips now with the destination being shown that are not being covered. I hate to say it, but if there has to be a significant change then perhaps we should adopt the same way of despatching as we do in the evening, when all the work from the city zones ie EC5, is made non rejectable.

Allan Evans also referred to this in his September *Call Sign* report.

Publication in Call Sign

Three months in a row I have submitted a letter to *Call Sign Magazine*. Fisher refuses to publish any because they all include the Board and what is it doing about the lack of work? Why the money in the bank is being allowed to dwindle? Also I asked him to put

the question to Rice (and publish the answer). Does he regret not putting the Canary Wharf accounts to the vote? Plus a question I have been asking for months, given the state of DaC now we have lost the Wharf through sheer ignorance and misunderstanding of the member's opinions). What will be his reply to any remaining accounts (make no mistake it has to happen) that say they want no run ins and no gratuity? It is for those two reasons and those two reasons alone that DaC lost the Wharf.

No name given – taken from the LTDF site

I am assuming that this letter is genuine as it was passed to me from the LTDF website by three different drivers. I rarely refuse to publish letters and will usually only do so if they are rude or venomous. I certainly don't remember anyone asking me three times to publish a letter, but judging by the tone of the writer, I can think of several reasons why I might have wanted to have banned this "gentleman."

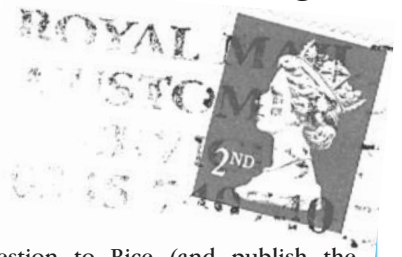
If anyone doesn't agree with anything in the mag, then complain to me and not the LTDF and perhaps I can do something about it – especially as this driver would be happy to run to CW without a run-in even though it is now busy again. Interestingly, I see that Citi have been using us again with run-ins ...Ed

The merger, the future and non-coverage

Regarding Geoffrey Riesel and Radio Taxis, do we really want to merge with a taxi company whose first port of call when having difficulty in covering work is Addison Lee? I firmly believe that we can re-take our premier position in this modern transport industry without Mr Riesel's outfit. Can I also point to the idea of Mr Paul Hammett (V42) (back in the February *Call Sign*) of financing our own drivers for new cabs, thereby helping to renew our fleet with more emission friendly engines. But why stop there? Fuel, tyres, oil - with our buying power we could make some really worthwhile savings, which at the same time would give something back to drivers and encourage loyalty to our Society.

Perhaps we could also supply cars if requested, using our own drivers - possibly the older ones for whom it would be more suitable instead of servicing minicab accounts and making them look good.

With subscriptions having gone up by a tremendous rate without the membership being consulted, we don't seem to be offering anything to encourage new accounts or to be able to hold on to our old base. I have



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mentioned coverage in previous letters and this must improve if we are to succeed. When I started in 1972, the old chaps of that era used to say to me: "Don't forget that many a mickle makes a muckle; you never knew when taking a job that might not have sounded much, where you may have ended up!" We have not just lost a lot of work, but also people's goodwill by allowing the minicab industry to ride roughshod over us for far too long - so let's up our game and move forward.

Bruno Manfredi (F23)

Brian Rice replies: I too have heard the story regarding RTG and Kings X over the August Bank Holiday, I really don't know what happened but sometimes events are not what they seem. I do not have any intention of defending RTG, but in this day and age it is not unusual for a third party to administer the account. For instance, as you are aware we serviced Euston and the 'House' and lost both accounts to a company from Liverpool called 'Cab Find', they do not have any taxis or cars in London but sub-contract the work via their platform (the platform I have been warning everyone about for the last ten years). With both the 'House' and Euston, I do know that Cab Find use Addison Lee, although Cab

Find administer the account. King X could be a similar situation, but using RTG as well. I do not know if that is the case, but I wouldn't be surprised if it was.

Regarding financing new vehicles, I believe that is beyond our remit as we are not a bank or building society and it is not a case of just advancing money to Members, everything would have to be registered and overseen by the FCA. We are a radio circuit and not a bank; after all, we would hardly expect NatWest bank to supply taxis - horses for courses!

It is within our aims and objects to supply tyres, fuel and oil, but you have been around a long time Bruno and you can no doubt remember the LTDA garage at Vauxhall and the LTDA Insurance brokers at Sutherland Avenue? The LTDA had to relinquish ownership of both as they were both a tremendous drain on the LTDA's resources.

Regarding subscriptions, they have increased for 15% of the membership, but 85% are better off under the new scheme, however, I can sympathise with long serving Members such as yourself who have seen an increase in their £1 per month subscription. You must remember that we continued with the £1 subscription for over sixteen years, but times were much better then and I do not believe it is reasonable to expect the remainder of

the Membership to subsidise that tiny subscription whilst current circumstances are more difficult.

It may be reasonable to assume that if a Member has served more than thirty years, they could be 'slowing down' a little and a PAYG subscription would help to ease the pain just a little.

Supplying cars using our own drivers could be an option, however, the problem we have is that our qualified, professional taxi drivers would expect to earn more (quite rightly too) than the unqualified minicab driver and at the moment everything seems to depend on price, but hopefully that will change.

Finally, coverage and goodwill; I couldn't agree with you more Bruno, as I have stated many times we cannot compete on price so it must be on service and of course you are quite right, that does encompass coverage.

You have touched on so many points Bruno, I feel exhausted just reading my answer!



JACQUELINE HART COUNSELLOR

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

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

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

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