

October 2014



Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



Why did this DaC superside cause the cab to fail its annual inspection???



A loving grandfather, dad and staunch DaC man, Call Sign says goodbye to Roy Martin



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Following on from last month with some more hotel chains. Some are a waste of paper such as the Hilton Park Lane, but it is listed in with the others for consistency. But it's amazing how many passengers get dropped off there when asking for the Hilton Hyde Park. Some notes: Comfort Inn Edgware Road is on the east side between Boscobel St and Frampton St. The Holiday Inn Kings Cross official name is Kings Cross Bloomsbury - sometimes asked for as just the Bloomsbury, which is in Corum St. If you are unlucky enough to be on the KX rank and asked for the Comfort Inn, there is a Kings Cross and a St Pancras

Kings Cross which are 1) different hotels and 2) within walking distance! The Comfort Inn (Buck Pal Rd) and Comfort Inn (Westminster) have different addresses, so if you haven't checked the address and are going to the Westminster Comfort Inn, when crossing Elizabeth Bridge you could easily mistake the Comfort Inn on your left as being the place - it's not, that's the Buckingham Palace Rd hotel!

Last month I missed a change. Whilst Jury's still own their hotels, Chelsea (Imperial Road) and Islington (Pentonville Road) are both now called Chelsea Doubletree and Islington Doubletree.

Hotel Chains

Britannia Hampstead	Primrose Hill Rd/Fellows, NW3 3NA	International	Marsh Wall, E14 9SJ
Citadines Ascott	49 Hill Street, W1J 5NB	Barbican	7, Goswell Rd, EC 1M 7AH
Cavendish	Duke St.St.James ,SW1Y 6JF	Holborn-Covent Gdn	94 High Holborn, (by Protor St) WC 1V 6LF
South Ken	35A Gloucester Road, SW7 4PL	St Marks	300 City Road/Hall St, EC1V 2PW,
Trafalgar Square	18 Northumberland Ave, WC2N 5EA		
Club Quarters Gracechurch	7 Gracechurch Street, EC3V 0DR	Lincoln's Inn	61 Lincoln's Inn Fields, (W.side) WC2A 3JW
St. Pauls	24 Ludgate Hill, EC4M 7DR	Trafalgar Sq.	8 Northumberland Avenue, WC2N 5BY
Comfort Inn Buckingham Palace Rd	8-12 St. Georges Drive, SW1V 4BJ	Edgware Rd	450 Edgware Rd, W2 1EG
Hyde Park	73 Queensborough Ter. W2 3SU	Heathrow	Shepiston Lane, UB3 1LP
Kings Cross	31 Argyle Street, WC1H 8EP	St.Pancras-KX	2-5 St. Chad's Street, WC1H 8BD
Vauxhall	87 S. Lambeth Road, SW8 1RN	Victoria	18 Belgrave Road, SW1V 1QF
Westminster	39 Belgrave Rd., SW1V 2BB		
Crowne Plaza City	19 New Bridge Street, EC4V 6DB	Docklands	Western Gateway, Royal Vic. Dk, E16 1AL
Ealing	Hanger Lane, Gyratory, W5 1HG	Heathrow	Stockley Road, West Drayton, UB7 9NA,
Kensington	100 Cromwell Road, SW7 4ER		
Holiday Inn Express City	275 Old Street, EC1V 9LN	Docklands	1 Silvertown Way, E16 1EA
Earls Court	295 North End Road, W14 9NS	Golders Green	58 Regents Park Road, N3 3JN
Greenwich	Bugsby Way, Greenwich, SE10 0GD	Limehouse	469 The Highway, E1W 3HN
Park Royal	Victoria Road, W3 6UP	Royal Docks	1 Silvertown Way, E16 2EA
Southwark	103 Southwark Street, SE1 0JQ	Stratford	196 High Street, E15 2NE
Swiss Cottage	152-156 Finchley Road, NW3 5HS	Vauxhall/Nine Elms	87 South Lambeth Road, SW8 1RN
Victoria	106-110 Belgrave Road, SW1V 2BJ	Wandsworth	Smugglers Way, SW18 1EG
Holiday Inn Bloomsbury	Coram Street, WC1N 1HT	Brent Cross	Tilling Road, NW2 1LP
Brentford Lock	Commerce Road, Brentford, TW8 8GA	Camden Lock	30 Jamestown Road, NW1 7BY
Commercial Road	5 Cavell Street, E1 2BP	Forum Kensington	97 Cromwell Road, SW7 4DN
Kings Cross Bloomsbury	1 Kings Cross Road, WC1X 9HX	London West	4 Portal Way, W3 6RT
Mayfair	3 Berkeley Street, W1J 8NE	Oxford Street	57-59 Welbeck Street, W1G 9BL
Regent's Park	Carburton Street, W1W 5EE	Stratford City	10a Chestnut Plaza, Montfichet Road, E20 1GL
Wembley	Empire Way, Wembley, HA9 8DS		
Hiltons Canary Wharf	South Quay, Marsh Wall, E14 9SH	Docklands Riverside	265 Rotherhithe Street, SE16 5HW
Euston	17 Upper Woburn Place, WC1H 0HT	Green Park	Half Moon Street, W1J 7BN,
Hyde Park	129 Bayswater Road, London W2 4RJ	Islington	53 Upper Street, N1 0UY
Kensington	179 Holland Park Ave, W11 4UL	Metropole	225 Edgware Road, W2 1JU
Olympia	380 Kensington High Street, W14 8NL	Park Lane	22 Park Lane, W1K 1BE
Paddington	146 Praed Street, W2 1EE	Tower Bridge	5 More London Place, SE1 2BY
Trafalgar	2 Spring Gardens, SW1A 2TS	Wembley	Lakeside Way, Wembley HA9 0BU
Walford	Aldwych, WC2B 4DD		

from the editor's desk

Tour of Britain chaos

If you work on Sundays and went out on 14 September, you'd have come across the most horrendous traffic hold-ups caused by the Mayor's office allowing our capital city to literally be shut while a bunch of cyclists circumnavigated our streets in the **Tour of Britain**.

Perhaps the Mayor is correct in saying that these events bring tourists into London and that while here they spend money. Well they would have needed one hell of a small fortune to get around in taxis that could hardly move!

You only have to work it out for yourself – so far as the City itself was concerned, not only the Embankment was shut, but so was Tower Hill, Tower Bridge and many other streets. Aldgate was totally gridlocked as were, no doubt, other parts of town as the Tour reached them.

I was stuck in Eastcheap heading east, not realising at that point that all traffic was being diverted down Mark Lane! Yep, that's right – all diverted down little **Mark Lane**. When I spotted what was happening, I had no intention of following because I had previously escaped from **Fenchurch Street** where nothing was moving! Neither was anything moving at more than a snail's pace (which *Google* puts at 50 yards per hour) along Gracechurch Street and all streets leading to it.

At that point, with around £25 on the meter, my passenger who had come all the way from Moorgate (!!!) decided to walk, allowing me to contemplate a u-turn to get out of this hell-hole. As I crawled across to the offside, a car pulled onto my nearside and a familiar sounding voice called out to me.

Dale Winton is currently back hosting BBC's **National Lottery** program, **'In it to Win It'** on Saturday evenings, but all he wanted to do on that Sunday afternoon was to go from Eastcheap to Blackwall Tunnel. The answer was that I hadn't a clue because had I known, my passenger wouldn't have had to start her trek on foot! Would Dale send me to the *Red Area* for getting the answer wrong? Well no, he just asked why the traffic was so bad and I told him.

But when I said who was to blame for allowing it, he showed another side to the Dale Winton we all know and love, with a view on the Mayoralty that deserved a trip to Winners Row!

DaC anniversaries

Whilst I take little interest in my own birthdays nowadays, I do find anniversaries involving **Dial-a-Cab** to be fascinating. Perhaps that makes me a rather sad person, but when you spend over half your life with an organisation, how can you not take any interest. So when I recently discovered that I had missed an important milestone, I was totally mortified – ok, perhaps that's a slight exaggeration and I was really just a bit miffed! Either way I missed a date that I shouldn't have.

It was back on April 29th 1989 when then-Chairman Ken Burns ordered a switch to be flicked that sent Dial-a-Cab on a one-way trip to the future. Data Despatch had arrived and DaC became just the third taxi company in the world behind one in Houston (Texas) and another in British Columbia (Canada) to dispose of voice and begin dispatching via data transmissions.

Twenty five years on and it now seems very commonplace to see data terminals in cabs - and



even in minicabs - but in 1989, there were a lot of people sweating on the outcome because five months earlier, DaC had also tried to go live. Ken Burns had even made a final official goodbye speech to drivers on voice before flicking the switch that should have dispelled speech to the past forever.

Sadly, that "forever" turned out to be just a few hours because no one at developers - **MDI** in Canada - had thought to test the effect of so many drivers signing on at the same time! It worked perfectly on the bench with three pretend drivers signing on! Throughout the day the system became slower and slower until it had to be taken down.

But five months on - this time very early on an April Saturday morning - DaC went live again. There was no ceremony involved and Ken Burns was far more matter-of-fact, just telling drivers to stand-by and was even cool enough to actually call one last job on voice that had just come in!

Off air, he told telephonists to put their lines on "busy" and then said: "Ok, let's go." The switch was pulled and the rest is history because that was 25 years ago!

Call Sign still has irreplaceable historical videos of both launches that show how things have moved on in the 25 years since 1989. Compared to our modern 2014 call centre, that launch with all its VDUs etc now looks so dated, but nothing can take away the history behind that amazing day in 1989.

Motorised Pedicabs

It was certainly welcome news to hear from **Superintendent Rob Revill** of the Roads and Transport Policing Command after a number of pedicabs that had been adapted with motors to speed them up, that they had been slowed right down – in fact brought to a complete standstill following a swoop by members of the constabulary, where they seized at least nine of them because they were classified as motor vehicles due to their excessive weight.

During the raid in early September, several of the drivers were found to have no driving licences, no tax and no insurance – obviously still believing that a bicycle with an engine was just a bike rather than a real dangerous motor vehicle.

The result was that two of the pedicab owners were fined £200 and given six point fixed penalties at the roadside. Other pedicab owners/drivers were reported with one rider found to be already disqualified from driving!

Superintendent Revill said afterwards that operations against Pedicabs with electric motors would

continue. He also mentioned the anti-social behaviour aspect that was associated with the bikes as they block roads and pavements. Without wishing to sound ungrateful for this welcome action, a big city like London should not have even the non-motorised versions on the road. They should be kept for trips around Hyde Park and not creating the danger they do on our streets...

What a bummer!

There isn't a **Dial-a-Cab** driver out there who hasn't at some time or other been shown a mobile phone by a non-English speaking tourist / passenger who wanted to go somewhere you have never heard of. My turn came on a gloriously warm, late summer afternoon along Islington High Street.

The two Chinese girls had a very small smattering of the English language, probably just slightly less than my knowledge of Mandarin! It seemed to me that they wanted some muesli, but I assumed that wasn't their real aim on that sunny day. Then one of them showed me her phone. Looking, all I could see was a lot of Chinese script – who'd have thought the Chinese had phones written in Chinese!

Anyway, she realised what I meant, took the phone back and made a call. A few minutes later, a text message arrived and she passed it through to me. How can I put this without causing offence because reading that these two young girls wanted the **London Anal Museum** was something of a surprise – mainly because I had never heard of it. It wasn't on the terminal's **Points of Information** and neither did the DaC dispatcher know. The Islington traffic was every bit as bad as usual, but I couldn't bring myself to joke that I would look for the back way to the London Anal Museum – even if I ever found out where it was!

So I pulled into the side and spent several minutes trying to explain that I didn't know any anal museums but then had a brainwave; I phoned the London Hospital and asked where an anal museum was in London. Through what sounded suspiciously like sniggering, a voice said they doubted if there was one and that if there was, then they had never heard of it.

In the meantime, my passengers had phoned the person that had sent the text message and passed the phone to me through the partition opening. The voice at the other end was also obviously Chinese but had a smattering of English. She said that they wanted to see inside a Victorian ice well where they stored ice imported from Norway. My first thought was that it must be to do with painful piles – after all, why would you need ice in an anal museum? Then she mentioned ice cream and I gave up at that.

"I don't know any anal museums," I told the voice at the end of the phone. "Are you sure that's what they are looking for," I queried again before she said she would send the text again.

Seconds later a text arrived on my passenger's phone. This time it had one extra letter on it – a letter that made a substantial difference. It said the London Canal Museum! My passengers couldn't understand why I was laughing, but as the terminal's POI gave an address as New Wharf Road, Kings Cross. I dropped them at the end of the street and everyone was happy! It could have been a bit of a bummer though...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Merger Letter

You should have received a letter from me on behalf of the BoM during the last few days to gauge your reaction to a merger or amalgamation with RTG/Mountview.

I know it is a topic that has been discussed over the years via the various Boards, but I don't think it ever went further than just preliminary discussions, which is the stage where we are at the present time. However, circumstances at present within our industry are different to any time in the past, with the licensing of Private Hire which now makes them legitimate in the eyes of our clients and certainly less expensive.

Gone are the days when we could inform clients that the vehicle might not be insured and the driver probably didn't have a clue where he was going. That scenario may well still apply with the driver's knowledge, but with the proliferation of SatNavs, many clients do not really care. I wonder how many times customer's now get into your cabs and automatically give you a postcode?

In addition to Private Hire, we now have a proliferation of Apps in the market place, some within the taxi industry operating at a reduced rate at the driver's expense. And in addition to that, there are also Apps operating within the minicab industry - some of which should be illegal in my opinion - again operating as a threat to the established licensed taxi radio circuits.

Finally, of course, we have the established and legitimate competition in the shape of the other two licensed taxi radio circuits and it is fair to say that all three licensed taxi circuits have suffered greatly over the past six years due to the recession and of course in trying to compete on an unfair playing field with minicabs and rogue Apps.

It would be reasonable to assume that the three circuits have lost nearly three thousand mobiles and almost £100 million in account work during that period; perhaps it is time to consolidate our efforts in an attempt to prise some of that work back into our trade and as the economy picks up, perhaps clients will realise not everything is about price. However, the decision is yours, but an amalgamation of two of the three circuits would take us back to the days of 2,500 mobiles and account turnover in excess of £50m, the difference being that we would operate from just one building with one fitting bay etc, which would produce economies of scale.

Since the offers to purchase Dial-a-Cab earlier in the year evaporated, it has become apparent that many Members were disappointed they could not realise the assets of Dial-a-Cab. With a merger / amalgamation, those assets would be realised, but of course that decision is yours and on this occasion Non-Disclosure-Agreements have not been signed by either party, so you are all aware of the organisations that are involved.

I suspect some Members would rather we distributed our assets and stayed as we are, but unfortunately that is not the case and cannot be achieved as a Mutual Society.

Your BoM have kept you informed regarding preliminary discussions; the ball is now in your court whether or not this issue should be progressed further.

AGM

You should now all have your paperwork relating to the AGM that is to take place on 8 Feb 2015. I have had many Members state that it appears to have been distributed early, well, it's not really early but it will give prospective Board candidates ample time to register their nomination should they wish to stand, compose their CV for publication in *Call Sign* and give Members ample opportunity to write in with their questions to prospective candidates regarding their CV and have answers published in the following issue of the magazine. In addition, of course, it will also give Members plenty of time to gain the required twenty five



signatures should they wish to register a rule change or proposition.

Although I can understand the sentiments of some who thought they received everything early, perhaps you can now understand our reasoning and why you have already received your paperwork regarding the AGM. There are too many in our trade that wish to cry 'foul' at every available opportunity and there is no way the BoM of Dial-a-Cab will give them that opportunity.

Coverage

I believe you will read elsewhere in the magazine articles from Board Members alluding to the fact that during certain periods of the day our coverage is beginning to suffer. I have heard every reason there is as to why coverage suffers at times, the latest being the way the subscriptions are levied! Still at least that's a new one. The real reason, as we all know, is that Members are not pressing the 'accept' button on their terminal because there is a bit of work about on the streets (remember how not long ago some Members were telling me they didn't want run-ins and gratuities)! When the street work goes quieter, which it will as more and more of it becomes recycled via the Taxi Apps, some Members will wish to resort to their terminal for work - but it then may not be there as accounts would have been lost to the minicab trade due to that bad coverage. The same Members will then whinge and ask where all the work is and what are the BoM going to do about it?

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

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Brian Rice: "It was a waste of time!"

Dial-a-Cab Chairman Brian Rice was one of several members of the taxi trade to be present at City Hall to listen into a Transport Committee meeting on the taxi and private hire industry.

Among the topics on the table were licencing, compliance and passenger safety with LTDA General Secretary Steve McNamara and Addison Lee's Mike Galvin being the only two representatives of the two trades allowed to speak.

The idea was for the committee to explore what the Mayor and Transport for London are doing to address issues faced by the industry, including minicab touting and unsafe vehicles etc. Eight guests were questioned, including London's Deputy Mayor for Transport, Isabel Dedring and Surface Transport COO, Garrett Emmerson.

A team also went into central London to set up a road block for inspecting Taxis and PHVs. Among the usual Compliance Officers were members of the Department for Work and Pensions.

Brian Rice told *Call Sign* after the meeting:

"I thought Steve Mac and Mike Galvin both did very well; they obviously know their subjects. However, the same cannot be said for Garrett Emmerson and Isabel Dedring. They were both very disappointing and waffled.

"Following the meeting, I was told by another guest never to play poker. When I asked why, I was told that there was a look of utter dismay on my face every time Garrett Emmerson spoke and it just gave away my feelings! I think that says it all! It was pretty much a waste of time."

However, one London Assembly member the DaC Chairman did have praise for was Deputy Mayor of London, Victoria Borwick.

"She is not only extremely knowledgeable about the cab trade and London taxis in particular, but is happy to speak up for us. She actually referred to us as the 'gold standard' of taxis the following morning on London Live."

So *Call Sign* spoke to Victoria about her view of London taxis, the current investigation and how she sees us in the future. She told us:

"I think this investigation is very timely, we all admire our iconic London Taxis and the values they represent, thus it is important to sort out the regulations – are there



Victoria Borwick: We all admire our iconic London taxis

too many, are there too few, what do passengers want and if we are making taxi drivers work so hard to be the best, what do they get in return? Please encourage people to write in and give their views on what the future should look like!

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 be 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

No more tax discs!

From October, the paper tax disc will be no more when after 93 years of appearing on wind-screens of UK motorists, the discs will vanish and be replaced by electronic records where ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) cameras fitted along roads and in police cars will check number plates to catch owners that have not paid.



While it is claimed that the move is intended to save £millions in printing and postage etc, many believe that this scheme will help to catch those that do not tax their vehicles and finally nail the "it's in the post" story!

However, despite the demise of the discs, you will still need to tax your car or taxi with the penalty for not taxing standing at a hefty £1,000.

Also as of October, you will no longer be able to use the tax disc of the previous owner when buying a second hand vehicle. However, drivers selling their vehicles will be able to receive a refund for any full months of road tax remaining, while those buying will have to get the vehicle taxed before driving it away. It will become an offence, with steep fines facing vehicle sellers that fail to inform the DVLA of a change of ownership.

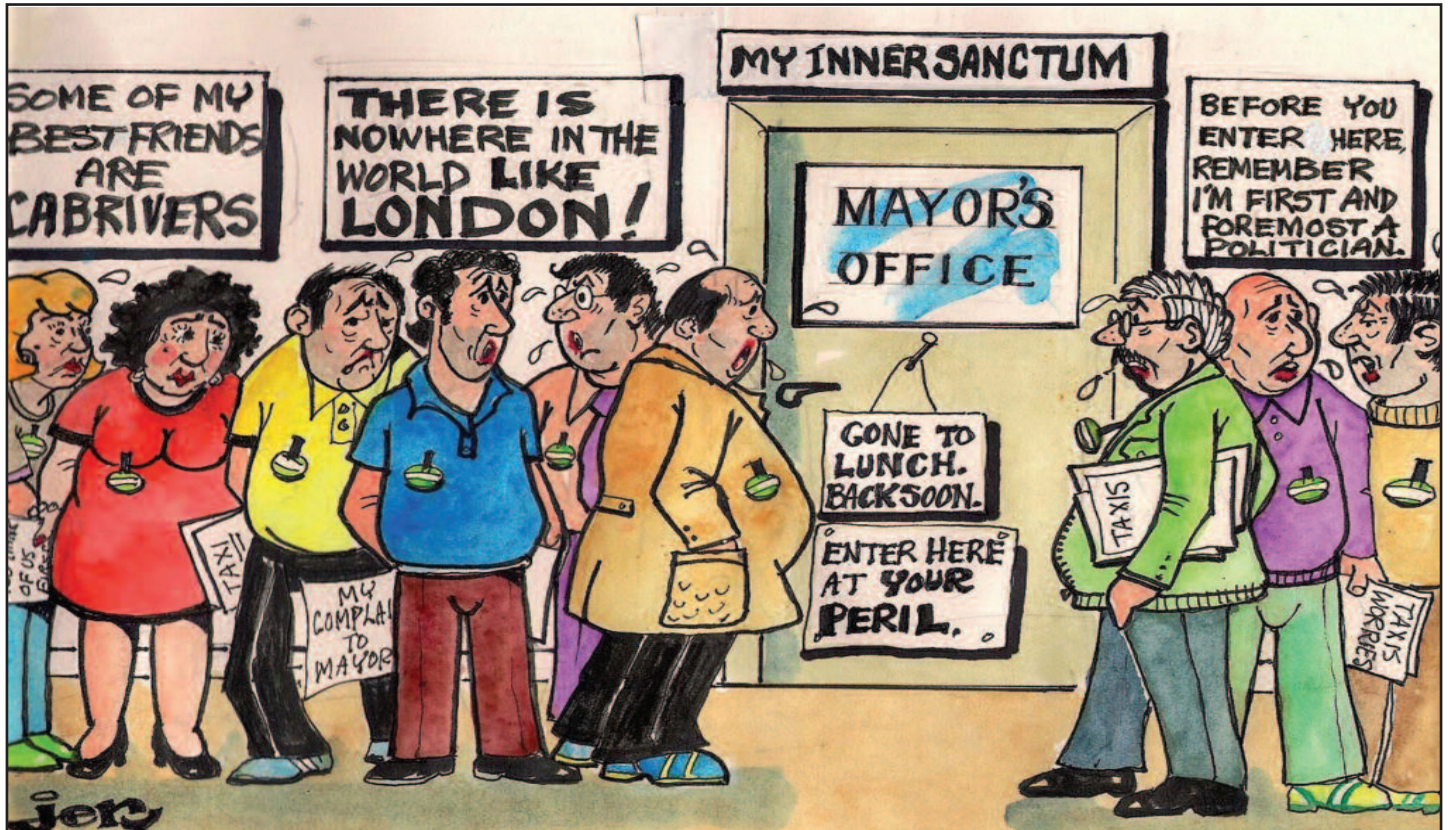
Whilst the number of motorists displaying the disc will gradually decline until the end of September 2015 when the last ones will fade into memory, according to most motoring organisations, it will become easier for police to spot those failing to tax their vehicles thanks to the ANPR cameras.

New methods of paying will include a direct debit option that will include an extra 5 percent charge and be available for paying monthly or biannually. The current charge is 10 percent for not paying the whole 12 months in one go. Credit card payments will still incur a £2.50 surcharge.

The DVLA will still remind you that your car needs re-taxing and you will still be able to tax it at the post office. There will also be a new website where you can tax a new vehicle as well as re-tax your current taxi with both the Government and DVLA being keen to encourage more people to pay online. **A website has been set up where you can check any vehicles state of tax and MOT renewal date. Just go to www.vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk.**

You will of course be issued with a receipt but no tax disc...

Jery's World



"I fink he took umbrage against that demo on 9th September – not 'cos it held up 'is traffic but 'cos it was called Cabbies Against Boris! I fink he wants to be loved..."

Motorised Pedicabs Seized by Police

Rogue pedicabs adapted with motors to make them go faster were seized following a recent operation involving officers from the Metropolitan Police Service's Roads and Transport Policing Command, in partnership with Transport for London. They seized nine pedicabs, which were classified as motor vehicles due to their weight.



Over 50 pedicabs were inspected during the operation which took place in central London on 5 and 6 September. The drivers of those vehicles were found to have no driving licences, no tax and no insurance. Two of the pedicab owners received fines of £200 and six point fixed penalty notices at the roadside. Seven other pedicab owners were reported for summons, one rider was found to be disqualified from driving and will appear at court in due course, while 25 were advised about waiting and parking restrictions. A further raid took place on September 19th with similar results.

Superintendent Rob Revill of the Roads and Transport Policing Command, said:

"Operations checking pedicabs that have been fitted with electric motors like this will continue to prevent collisions as well as reducing the anti-social behaviour associated with obstructing pavements and roads.

"These vehicles have historically fallen outside of the insurance legislation, leaving the public passengers using them exposed to higher levels of risk."

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The last day of August looked to be a pleasant enough Sunday so far as the weather was concerned, but there were fears that an anti-semitism rally outside London's Law Courts could turn the City into a battlefield.

The event was organised by the Campaign Against anti-Semitism and was attended by the Jewish Board of Deputies – who were jeered at over perceived inaction during the Gaza conflict – and the Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis.

Organisers claimed an attendance of around 4,500, consisting of many other faiths in addition to Jewish and including former Islamic fundamentalist and now Lib Dem parliamentary candidate Maajid Naawaz, founder of the Quilliam Foundation, described as a kind of fundamentalist watchdog. He said that the rise in anti-semitism was down to the far-left and far-right together with Islamists finding common cause and that the

reason he had joined the rally was because as a child he remembered being chased due to the colour of his skin, whilst later he had become "the beast" when turning to Islamism, something for which he was jailed in Egypt.

"The rise of anti-Semitism across the world has absolutely nothing to do with you," he told the rally. "It's not your fault. You've done



Martin Hizer's taxi was on i24 News

Hitler was right without any action from the police. The Strand demo was an open rally; anyone could have attended yet I saw not one hate banner. I spoke to mem-

bers of several different religions whilst there, so it wasn't just a Jewish rally.

nothing wrong. Do not let them make you feel you have to hide your Jewish identities."

Dial-a-Cab driver Martin Hizer (M47) was one of several taxi drivers in the parade in addition to many others without their cabs. The rally was covered in detail by international TV news channel i24 News.

Martin told *Call Sign*: "During London marches for Gaza, there were chants of *Jews to the gas* as well as banners proclaiming

"When you watch the TV news footage, you can see banners proclaiming *Christians supporting Israel* and *zero tolerance to anti-semitism*. There was also a total absence of hate messages on banners, but an abundance of Union Jacks being flown by Jews and the singing of *God Save the Queen* as well as the *Hatikvah*. The anti-semitism message went round the world in a peaceful rally – exactly how it should be."

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HARRY JOEL HITS 90!



Happy birthday to a Pentonville Road founder member...

Congratulations from everyone at **Dial-a-Cab** and **Call Sign** go out to **Harry Joel MBE** on the milestone of his 90th birthday on 5 October. Harry was one of the first drivers to sign up to the formative ODRTS radio circuit at Pentonville Road and eventually became a Board Member for the Society. He was also an Arbitrator for the Society until 2006.

Harry is nowadays better known as the Honorary President of the **London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled**, where astonishingly he still plays an active part and still keeps up to date with DaC matters by reading each issue of **Call Sign** as it comes out.

So we know you will see this...
HAPPY BIRTHDAY HARRY!

The LTBAWD was formed in February 1948. Those first few years following the cessation of WW2 hostilities, showed that there were a great many war disabled ex-soldiers. The Charity did what it could to help by providing specialised medical and walking equipment in addition to providing entertainment and outings, the first two coming within the first 12 months.

Harry's father had been friends with the Charity's first Chairman, Stan Davies, so Harry knew him too. He asked Stan if there was anything he could do to help and they had plenty! Harry was soon involved in everything but knew that they needed more help. So he enrolled the taxi trade by publicising how former soldiers had returned from the war disabled. Many cabbies, some of whom had also been involved in the war, volunteered to help.

Harry's sterling work with the LTBAWD for 40 consecutive years was rewarded when he was elected to the office of Honorary Chairman. Then in 1981, he was awarded the MBE for his charity work.



Although they are involved in many activities, the Charity is famous for its annual trip to Worthing, often taking along the Charity's patron, **Dame Vera Lynn** in addition to old soldiers from the Royal Hospital in Chelsea together with many other homes and indeed many that still live in their own homes. They have also made trips back to Dunkirk.

There have also been many special guests that have given their time to the LTBAWD including Prince Philip, Princess Alexandra, Duchess of Kent, Sir Douglas Bader, Group Captain Leonard Cheshire and many others.

But when you think of the LTBAWD, the first name that springs to mind is that of Harry Joel MBE...

The photos show Harry with General Sir Charles Harington in 1987, with Charity Patron Dame Vera Lynn on her 90 birthday in 1997 and more recently proudly

displaying his medals...



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A DaC driver explains to the Conservative Party..

Why I can't donate!

You don't have to watch television for long to see ads asking you to send money each month to help some charity or other. Some you may decide to support while others not. But political donations are something else...

Dial-a-Cab driver John Addis (K97) was recently contacted by his local Conservative Party via MP Sajid Javid to ask if he would care to donate £20 in order to keep Labour out of Number 10. He had already received a similar letter from Labour about keeping Tories away from Downing Street!

There's nothing unusual in those type of begging letters and John didn't kid himself that the letters were only sent to him even though they called him John! But it was John's answer to the Tory letter that interested *Call Sign*. John said that he wasn't expecting an answer from them - just as he never received one from Labour. And he certainly wasn't disappointed because he never received a response from either party. But with John's permission, we are publishing both the Conservative letter and John's reply...



John,

Whatever you did over the summer, I'm guessing you didn't go on a £21 billion spending spree. But unbelievably, that's exactly what Labour did. They made a host of promises, including more spending on benefits, which analysis shows would cost hardworking taxpayers £20.955 billion. In return, they only set out £105 mil-

lion worth of spending cuts to pay for them.

£20.955 billion of spending minus £105 million of savings = £20.850 billion of unfunded spending commitments, which hardworking families would pay for with higher taxes and more debt.

John, we've got to stop Labour getting into power and wrecking our economy again. Donate £20 today and let's make sure Ed Miliband never gets into No. 10.

Labour STILL haven't learnt their lesson. After taking Britain's economy to the brink and opposing every spending reduction we've made, Labour have spent the summer promising £billions of inefficient and ineffective spending.

With just eight months to go until the General Election, it's clear that all Ed Miliband offers is more spending, higher taxes and more debt than our children could ever hope to repay. We can't let him get his way.

Donate £20 today and let's carry on working through the long-term economic plan that is building a stronger, healthier economy and securing a better future for Britain:

Sajid Javid MP

And this was John's reply to Mr Javid...

Dear Sajid,

I can't afford any donation as I am struggling to make a living as a London taxi driver. Unfortunately the cheap labour that is still being imported to our shores are driving minicabs while the previous Labour Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, gave them respectability by licensing them.

Slowly but surely, most of our taxi account work has gone to these amateurs - including, I might add, your own Parliament account.

Giving a contract to a company that not so long ago told their drivers to break the law by using bus lanes is a disgrace. I believe there must be more to this contract and I'm afraid I have grave suspicions as to why it was awarded. You and your fellow Members of Parliament should be thoroughly ashamed.

Regards etc from one of the many licensed taxi drivers who have always backed your party...

John Addis

**John isn't 100 percent correct about which company was awarded the HoC account because that went to a company in Liverpool that doesn't own a single cab but sub-contracts work out. You can guess who they sub-contracted the HoC work to in London - the company John considers whose drivers were encouraged to break the law by driving in bus lanes...*

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Coverage

I finished my last report reiterating how we must look after our core clients and give them the service they are prepared to pay us for. Yet despite all the conversations that have taken place with drivers about how trip numbers were down and the difficulty they were having finding the work and how they were prepared to work for no run-ins etc, I have to say to them and to all members that while schools have only been back a few weeks and the work has picked up considerably, morning coverage is causing many clients to talk to us about how disappointed they are in the time it has taken us to get them their taxi. And in the majority of cases the trips carry the normal run-ins.

Delays of up to 30 and 45 minutes are just not acceptable to them and quite frankly, contact centre staff, account managers and my Sales team are running out of excuses when asked for an explanation.

The main problems are occurring in the mornings during the rush hour period and this is affecting all areas. To gain new business is the hardest thing at the moment, but service like this is the sure way of driving customers away from us. If a client is kept waiting once for a few minutes, they are reasonable people and understand that delays can happen, but when it occurs on another two or three occasions, then in all honesty why should they stay with us and give us their business.

DaC Sales Report

With Keith Cain



Very often, our morning passengers are those individuals who can influence the decision of an account being taken away. Your cooperation is urgently required to give a service, especially in the mornings. Alternative ways have been suggested by controllers about how we should dispatch the work. I know their suggestions would not go down too well if implemented, but unless our service improves I feel sure the Board will implement changes rather than lose an account.

We in Sales are participating in every tender possible and there are two we are await-

ing decisions on. We are completing another at this time and I know I keep saying it, but cost is the only issue that is beating us. We can only keep getting ourselves in front of people and doing what can be done, but I can honestly say I have never experienced a time in all my years on the Board when companies are so cost conscious.

Conversations I have had with people outside of the taxi industry are similar, with them telling me the same thing about how everyone is squeezing suppliers' prices. You only have to walk down a High Street to see notices in all sorts of shop windows advertising cheap products and services. The short-sightedness of a few offering a cheap cost will inevitably put many professional individuals and smaller companies out of business. Only those with substantial financial resources will continue, but cost cutting can only go so far before the customer realises you only get what you pay for. If a quality product or service is what's required, then this has to come at a cost.

Keith Cain
DaC Head of Sales

NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE



Since 1996 the Audit Commission has run the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), an exercise that matches electronic data within and between audited bodies to prevent

and detect fraud. This includes police authorities, local probation boards and fire and rescue authorities as well as local councils. Further information about the NFI is available on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nfi.

As part of the 2014/2015 NFI data matching exercise Transport for London is required by law to release information about licensed taxi and private hire vehicle drivers to the Audit Commission and in October 2014 TfL will be providing the Audit Commission with the name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number (if available) of every licensed taxi and PHV driver.

Data matching involves comparing computer records held by one body against other computer records held by the same or another body to see how far they match. This is usually personal information. Computerised data matching allows potentially fraudulent claims and payments to be identified. Where a match is found, it indi-

cates that there is an inconsistency which requires further investigation. No assumption can be made as to whether there is fraud, error or other explanation until an investigation is carried out. The use of data by the Audit Commission in a data matching exercise is carried out with statutory authority under its powers in Part 2A of the Audit Commission Act 1998. It does not require the consent of the individuals concerned under the Data Protection Act 1998. Data matching by the Audit Commission is subject to a Code of Practice which can be found at:

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/national-fraud-initiative/code-of-data-matching-practice/.

Further information on the Audit Commission's legal powers and the reasons why it matches particular information can be found on the Audit Commission's website at: www.audit-commission.gov.uk/fairprocessing.

Data Security

TfL considers the security of data as very important and will ensure that the data is transferred securely to the Audit Commission.

Helen Chapman
General Manager, Taxi and Private Hire

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TEXACO

A convoy of cabs left the East Wintergarden, Canary Wharf early on the morning of 12th September, destination **Disneyland Paris**. The 21st annual **Children's Magical Taxi Tour** had begun – with hundreds of excited children (and cab drivers) gathering for the **Big Breakfast Send Off**.

This breakfast was attended by sponsors and dignitaries alongside the VIP guests – the children - with The Lord Mayor Locum Tenens of the City of London, **Alderman Sir David Howard**, cutting the ribbon at 07:40 sharp signalling the beginning of the trip. Office workers at the venue were surprised at the sight that greeted them and stood to watch in amazement as the convoy set off, horns blaring to bid farewell, each cab with the sponsors names emblazoned on the side. One was from **Dial-a-Cab** and driven by **Stewart Lewis (D20)**.

More than 400 people set off on this year's trip, taking children with life limiting illnesses on such a magical journey. As well as the children, the Magical Taxi Tour was supported by medical teams, ambulances, breakdown services and carers. The trip, organised by **The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers**, was escorted by police officers from the **City of London Police**, UK and also fellow officers from over the channel, the **Gendarmerie Nationale**. The Big Breakfast Send Off saw the **Royal British Legion Band** from Romford entertain everybody and the charity is grateful for the support from the **Marriot Hotel Canary Wharf** for the provision of packed lunches, the **London Taxi Company** for the children's spending money and **Ampersand** for the breakfast itself.

Each year the tour reaches another milestone; more than 4800 children have been on this trip over the course of its 21 year history. It is thanks to the generosity of sponsors and the taxi drivers who give their time freely that the trip has grown and gone from strength to strength, together with support of the **Livery Companies** and the corporate sector. Some of the taxi drivers have actually taken part in every single trip since the first one in 1994, an amazing commitment. They are used to the cries of "Are we nearly there yet?" that begin as the convoy lands in Calais following the channel crossing on a **P&O ferry**, which they very kindly donate. The car deck full of London taxis is quite a surprising sight to fellow travellers, as is the hotel car park full of cabs over the weekend! This year the convoy enjoyed a lovely sunny day for the journey down to Disneyland and many were on the outside decks of the ferry.

A refuelling stop at the **Aire De Repos Assevillers Ouest** services saw quite a sight to greet the convoy. Giant characters waving and a room set aside especially for the convoy guests where the children found snacks, sweets and drinks waiting. Face painters were also on hand and it was somewhat hard to persuade the children to get back to their cabs when it was time to leave as they were enjoy-

CHILDREN'S MAGICAL TAXI TOUR 2014



"I told you my mum was bigger than your dad!"



It could only be one place!



Stewart Lewis's cab was sponsored by Dial-a-Cab

ing a good time. Then it was onwards to our final destination. Although we were slightly delayed by traffic queues, we arrived at the Disneyland resort in daylight, giving the children their first glimpse of the enchanted kingdom in the distance. As the taxis arrived at the **Cheyenne Hotel** – cowboy themed and decorated - some of the Disney characters were waiting to greet the children and this was greeted by lots of happy faces. Having checked in to the hotel, dinner was in the **Chuck Wagon** where drivers took the opportunity to relax and enjoy the evening before the visit to the theme park the next day.

Bright and early on Saturday, everyone headed into the Park itself. With so many rides and things to experience, this is a real fun day which was enjoyed in beautiful sunshine.

Behind the scenes, the team from the charity are always working to ensure the children have a great time. As the children and drivers enjoyed their time in the park, others were preparing packed lunches for the return journey, with sandwiches donated by **M&S**.

The fun packed day was followed by a Gala Dinner, which is also attended by the Disney

characters who signed autographs and posed for photos with the children – truly magical. During the evening the party atmosphere continued with a disco but all too soon the evening was over and it was time for bed before the journey homewards. First thing on Sunday as drivers packed the cabs with their guests' luggage, the police - both English and French - were showing the children their cars and motorbikes and the hotel car park became a very noisy place to be with sirens blaring and blue lights flashing! The convoy then departed for Calais and the P&O ferry return to the UK.

Fundraising in today's economic climate is more difficult than it has been in the past and without the continuing support of the drivers, City Liveries and the Magical Taxi Tour sponsors this event could not carry on. New sponsors come on board each year as they learn more about the trip and how much pleasure it brings. Fund raising events are held, such as the Dinner

Dance held each December and those involved in the charity this year have done some different things to raise funds, including the Three Peaks Challenge and some ice bucket challenges. The Disney Organising Committee is confident it will be able to carry on bringing smiles to the faces of the children and the supporting team who travel. The Committee is extremely grateful to everyone involved in making this year's trip so successful; every bit of help and support counts in making this the trip of a lifetime for the children. Each year the preparation for the trip sees goodie bags filled, the cabs liveried with their sponsors names, meetings with P&O, lots of telephone calls, vehicles lent to the trip as support, food ordered, a briefing meeting to name but a few. It is this preparation which results in a trip which looks seamless and shows the generosity of the cab trade, as with so many of our trade charities. Long may it continue...

Next year's trip will take place on 18th September 2015 and fund raising has already begun...

Sandie Goodwin

Cab failed for dodgy DaC superside!

Beware! Your ads count as part of the annual inspection...

In addition to being *Call Sign's* editor, Alan Fisher is also a full-time taxi driver and subject to the same restraints as everyone else. And that includes passing the annual inspection - aka overhaul.

After having a friendly laugh at his expense when he told me that the cab had failed, I had to smile again because he'd had the cab checked mechanically and other than a few bits that needed doing, the garage told him that it was ready and he booked a date for it to be presented. But his failure wasn't one that many would have considered as being too obvious.

The problem was that 24 hours earlier, a white van (what else???) was spotted doing a three-point turn close to the cab while Alan was using a public convenience in Westminster and clipped the bottom of the taxi where the two doors meet. Fortunately the damage wasn't that great (although white van man didn't hang around to look) but it needed repairing and it meant that Alan's Dial-a-Cab superside ad would have to come off.

The problem was that they need to be taken off very carefully because they are super-sticky and the garage was reluctant to take it all off. They also said that if they removed one side, then NSL would require both sides to be removed. So they decided that as the damage was to the bottom corners of the doors, they would carefully remove just the bottom half and make it look neat as though the ad wasn't touched. The photo shows that the garage made a pretty good job of it and the following morning the cab was presented at the passing station. It failed.

The reason was that according to the Tfl Vehicle Inspection Manual,



How the cab should have looked



How the cab did look when it failed

nearside doors of Alan's TX4 was incomplete.

Alan felt rather miffed as the cab was mechanically in very good condition as was the bodywork. He felt that NSL could have just told him to get a new ad put on as soon as possible and complained to them.

"I was surprised at how seriously they took my complaint," the editor told us. "I had a long and very polite letter explaining the Transport for London rules they have to comply with and that refreshing attitude helped calm my anger. I went to DaC and picked up another superside ad and then thanks to taxi consultant and advertising expert, Asher Moses, who had been contacted by Allan Evans, the superside was stuck on and the cab returned to the passing station to collect its new plate."

So beware of any logos on the cab. They must not only be in a good condition but they need to be the same on both sides...

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

any external signage must comply with LTPH regulations and guidelines and that in this case, the advert on the

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Nat Rothschild has been described in the Mail on Sunday as a 'party boy' in addition to being the richest Rothchild of all – and that must be saying something in that banking family! But now he is moving into the licensed taxi business with an idea that seems to be loosely based on the early morning station cab share scheme.

Maaxi Taxi has been described as a next generation taxi app that will leave Hailo, GetTaxi and Cab:App in its wake - and in theory it sounds like a good idea. The question is whether it will increase taxi work or actually decrease it.

The app, created by former **Poker Stars** CEO **Gabi Campos** and financially backed by **Nat Rothschild**, is undoubtedly clever. It sends the driver – claiming it will use black cabs only - a pick-up point with others along the route going in the same direction. When

From the "richest and wildest" Rothschild of them all...

SHARING A MAAXI TAXI



Nat Rothschild backs the sharing app

one passenger gets out, the current meter fare is entered onto the app screen and the driver will be told what the chargeable fare is up to that point.

It will make taxi fares more affordable and even compete with train fares. The question

is why anyone would bother calling for their own taxi when they can now share with someone else and get a large discount? Surely that will cut down on the number of available passengers if four callers get into one cab rather than four?

One other foreseeable problem is that the space in a taxi is fairly compact compared to a train. What if a young girl ends up sharing with three lads just back from watching their favourite football team and well tanked up?

But being positive, it could possibly work and if it does, it will undoubtedly take other apps with it. But we won't know if it increases or decreases our workload until taxi drivers report bigger earnings or start to go bankrupt!

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

Not just minicabs



Usually it's minicabs but it could be a taxi

the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras, to target fraudulent taxi drivers posing as legitimate ones.

So the next time you feel irritated at being stopped or you see another taxi stopped, remember that there are other Edward Tolley's out there trying to not only take your business, but in all probability give the trade a bad name with amateurs trying to do the job of the professionals...

We're used to reading occasional reports about minicab touts being caught by the Met Police Service Cab Enforcement Unit, part of the TfL-funded Safer Transport Command Unit; but very occasionally you will see taxis also stopped at their road blocks – be they in Charing Cross Road, the Embankment or wherever.

Whilst it may appear that they are just being picky as they ask for the usual Badge and Bill etc – and perhaps on occasion they may well be – it's more likely that they are looking either for Yellow Badge drivers working in town or those who do not have any licence at all, but have had access to a taxi and are using it to work.

One such "catch" was **Edward Tolley**, who was fined a total of £2185 for 'fraud by false representation' after being stopped in May driving a London Taxi with passengers on board whilst displaying fake green identifiers in the front and back windows.

The sentence was part of **Operation Excalibur**, a joint investigation by the MPS and TfL which follows ongoing intelligence-led work including

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Any Dial-a-Cab driver interested in football will know about the 1914 Christmas WW1 ceasefire match between the otherwise warring English and German soldiers. Now between 8 November 2014 and 10 January 2015, an exhibition at the **Pitzhanger Manor House & Gallery at Walpole Park, Mattock Lane, Ealing** will see a group of artists of different nationalities present their own varied perspectives of WW1 and the humanity behind the 1914 Christmas truce. Mark Anstee, Gabi Cowburn, Paul Hodgson, Thomas Lohmann, Eric Monbel, Marc Palmer, Bruno Van Dijck, Jurgen Vantomme and Robin Vermeersch will be among the artists whose contemporary art at *'Crossing the Field: WW1, Football & the Christmas Truce'* will depict and reflect on the events of the War and explores football, its power and positive influence and ability to transcend the bleakest scenes and most difficult of circumstances.

In the week leading up to Christmas 1914, British and German soldiers on the Western Front in France and Flanders began to exchange greetings and seasonal songs, astonishingly even making their way across no man's land for conversations with their adversaries! Yet even that was nothing compared to when on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, soldiers mingled, exchanged food and gifts and most famously, organised games of football. This almost incredible situation, in which people tasked to kill each other were able to stop fighting for a game of football, is the inspiration for the exhibition which has been co-curated by **De Queeste Art, Belgium** and **Pitzhanger Manor Gallery**.

Among the work to be shown...

On 21 May 2003, **Mark Anstee** (UK) became artist-in-residence at the Flanders Field Museum in Ypres, Belgium, the scene of many battles during WW1. Over the next 72 days, he set to work on a 4-metre-square wall, drawing two opposing armies for his piece 'Encounter'. On 3 July, the drawing was completed and 19,386 figures covered the wall. A few months later Anstee returned to delete the work over two days. On the third day, the wall was demolished. The exhibition will feature **Gabi Cowburn's** film of the whole process.

Belgian photographer **Jurgen Vantomme's** images of football matches taking place across Belgium show the sport at its most run-of-the-mill matches watched by a handful of people, set against austere backdrops of industrial plants or power station chimneys. But at the heart of the stark scenes are people consumed by the game and elevated from their mundane environment.

The beautiful romantic landscapes of **Thomas Lohmann** (Germany) are particularly poignant as they show panoramic French countryside scenes in 1913, the year before the outbreak of war.

The ceramics of **Robin Vermeersch** (Belgium) show scenes of professional football in proper stadia in which all the elements – the stands, pitch, players and crowd – are fused together into a single flowing piece. The resulting work emphasises the sense of the participants existing in their own bubble and suggests a scene of community.

The work of **Eric Monbel** (France) features figures of soldiers painted directly on to the fabric of medical stretchers. His images show the pain and loss caused by war, with his figurative 'Explosions' series of muddy, barbed-wire scenes

100 years on and an exhibition celebrates the most amazing football match in history!

CROSSING THE FIELD, WWI, FOOTBALL AND THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE...



Not from the exhibition, but an amazing photo of English and German troops at war celebrating Xmas together on the 1914 Western Front

also taking on an abstract feel.

Marc Palmer's (UK) paintings are detailed examinations of the passion of the football fan, illustrating the devotion and commitment of the loyal supporter.

Paul Hodgson's (UK) photographs and drawings study the tragic stories which exist beneath wartime moments of great historical significance and supposed magnificence. His work for the exhibition concentrates on the Battle of the Somme, highlighting the tragedy behind deeds and sacrifices, popularly considered to be glorious.

Belgian master painter **Bruno Van Dijck's** installation 'In Flanders Field' features a shrine in which a dismantled mortar bomb sits inside a wooden casket, on which he has created a landscape of war.

Programme Manager **Carol Swords** told *Call Sign*: "For many people, football seems to exist in a bubble in which it is all-important to those involved, yet perhaps baffling to the outsider. The Christmas truce continues to resonate, a century after the event took place – an enduring example of the power of sport during a time of strife."

The exhibition is at Pitzhanger Manor House & Gallery Walpole Park, Mattock Lane, London W5 5EQ between 8 November 2014 and 10 January 2015. Admission is free.

Opening Times: Tues to Fri 1 - 5pm; Sat 11am - 5pm; Closed on Sundays and Mondays.

Information at: www.pitzhanger.org.uk, 020 8567 1227 or @soanesvilla

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With the aim of raising enough to sponsor a taxi in the 2015 children's Magical Taxi Tour to Paris, Bob Woodford is going to attempt the Inca Trail Challenge...

Bob: From East Peckham to Peru! Via the Sahara Desert!

It's one thing pounding the streets of the City of London and the City of Westminster as a **Tour Guide**, but let's be honest; Central London is not very hilly – so I recently took to getting out into the countryside as a way of increasing fitness levels.

The reason for this is two-fold – firstly, a 'boot camp' style training weekend down on the South Downs near Arundel was a real eye-opener that revealed an amazing drop in my fitness since my experience in the **Marathon des Sables** in 2000 – and secondly, my partner Steph and I are heading off to Peru next month to attempt to complete the **Inca Trail**.

But as such an event should be enjoyed and not endured, it was time to step up to a more serious keep-fit regime both in the gym and the great outdoors – and we have found that long weekend walks along sections of the **North Downs Way** and **Pilgrim's Way** are the way to go, especially in areas of outstanding natural beauty that the home counties provide.

A new tool for recording walking activity was also discovered recently, which fellow walking enthusiasts may be interested in downloading. **MapMyWalk** is superb, not just recording all of your workouts on foot in distance, time and calories burned, but even providing you with a map at the conclusion



Bob takes a breather in the infamous 2000 *Marathon des Sables* when he crossed the Sahara Desert on foot for charity!

of your day's activity.

There is a more serious reason to all of this – and I am coming around shaking the old tin can again – because we are fund raising to sponsor the cost of at least one taxi in next year's Magical Taxi Tour. This event, as you know, is always superbly marshalled by Phil Davis (F10) and gives sick children a break from their routine of treatment for a really special weekend in Disneyland Paris, cared for by some really special London Taxi Drivers.

Most of the fund raising I have done over the years has been for worthy causes outside

small target by making a donation, however small, to

<https://www.justgiving.com/robandsteph/>.

In the meantime, those walking boots are going on again to prepare for an event in Peru because of an event in Paris – but I am closer to Peckham than Peru or Paris at the moment – that's East Peckham in hop picking country!

Get your boots on... and start walking!

**Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online**

Special DaC deal at the Drift Golf Club

Cabbies are well-known for enjoying golf, so the Drift Golf Club at East Horsley is hoping to attract more of you by offering vastly discounted rates. We already have several black cab drivers as members, which is what originally gave us the idea of contacting *Call Sign*.

We would love to see more **Dial-a-Cab** members playing here and I am glad to say that I can offer discounted rates to DaC from now until the end of 2014.

If you were to book a four ball during the week, we can offer this for just £80. I realise that it is not always possible to get four players together, so we will offer each individual a special **Dial-a-Cab** rate of just £27.50 per round, but if there are four or more together then the rate drops to £20 per head in a four ball format – and it includes your friends so long as one of you holds a badge.

This is a huge saving on our normal green fee rates, saving a massive £100 on the normal individual rates. To book, all DaC drivers have to do is call 01483-284772 and quote "Dial-a-Cab" when booking. On arrival, all you have to do is show your taxi licence badge.

We think DaC drivers will enjoy playing this prestigious, but very friendly course which is also home to **The Southern Pro-Am**, which hopefully speaks volumes for the quality of the course.

We also offer a great choice of food and beverages in our very comfortable bar/restaurant area, so all in all, a day spent at The Drift is a day well spent.

You can read more about The Drift at www.driftgolfclub.com and we look forward to welcoming DaC drivers and their friends in due course.

The Drift Golf Club, The Drift, East Horsley



92nd minute penalty save wins DaC goalkeeper place in next round of FA Vase

LEE PEARCE – DAC GOALKEEPER HERO!

Holmesdale 4 - 5 Collier Wood (AET)

Dial-a-Cab driver, Lee Pearce (J71) has moved clubs since the last report of his goalkeeping exploits appeared in *Call Sign* and he is now with Colliers Wood in the *Cherry Red Records* Combined Counties Football League Premier Division.

The club recently had a tough away game in the prestigious FA Vase to south London Holmesdale. It became even tougher when the home side took the lead after 9 minutes when a free kick was headed past Lee Pearce. With 21 minutes gone, Colliers Wood equalised when Mario Embalo rounded the Holmesdale goalkeeper to score easily. Lee Pearce then made a great save to deny the rampaging Stewart and did it a second time with his legs to deny the same player again. But the Holmesdale striker could not be denied a third time and in the 32nd minute, a quickly taken free kick went to him, he spun round and gave Lee Pearce no chance. 2-1 to the home side.

Four minutes before the break, Holmesdale made it 3-1 from the penalty spot when Green was fouled and Collier sent Lee Pearce the wrong way. But the referee was losing control of the match with both sides being guilty of cynical fouls that were going unpunished, other than for the occasional free kick.

At one point, tempers almost flared into fighting while Lee Pearce kept out of it and just sat down in his goal! But even-



Lee sits out the fighting!

tually a Holmesdale player was sent off for a particularly nasty challenge.

Four minutes into the second half, Mario Embalo headed home again after meeting a free kick from Harry Wise – cousin of Dennis Wise - and Colliers Wood began to take control. Embalo completed his hat trick when Dan Harding teed the ball up for him and he smashed it home off the post. Now it was 3 – 3. Then on 81 minutes, Eli Ogunseye put Wood ahead following a great individual run and finish but that lead lasted just 3 minutes when Stewart again smashed the ball home. 4 – 4!

Then in the second minute of stoppage time, an innocuous free kick saw the referee award a penalty to Holmesdale. No one could see why, but it looked as though

Colliers Wood brave fight could still result in an exit from the FA Vase. But Lee Pearce wasn't having that and made a great diving save to his left. So at 4 – 4, it came down to an extra 30 minutes.

Colliers Wood took the lead for the second time when Joe Mead put Mario Embalo away. The Holmesdale goalkeeper got one hand to the ball but couldn't stop the Woods' striker grabbing his fourth goal and a place for his team in the next round - a home tie against Shoreham on Saturday 4 October.

Any Dial-a-Cab driver that fancies watching the match, cheering on Colliers Wood and Lee Pearce, would be welcome at the Wibbandune Sports Ground, Robin Hood Way, Wimbledon, SW20 0AA...

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?

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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...

Flashback
1971

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

This month's Flashback goes back to January 1971 and the Secretary's Report from Bill Browne...

Cars on ODRTS / subscriptions

A meeting was recently held between representatives of the Board of Management and car-owning members of ODRTS willing to participate in the pilot scheme for cars on the circuit. Many ideas were presented and discussed and were put on the agenda for the following monthly Board of Management meeting. A good deal of progress is being made and further announcements will be made in due course.

Within the next few years, it will be necessary to re-equip the majority of our mobiles. We may decide to purchase equipment outright rather than hire-maintain them as at present. For this reason, plus increases in wages and extra staff now employed, we are obliged as from 1 April 1971 to raise the driver's subscription rate to £12 per calendar month. We feel that this increase, less than 5p per day, in no way compares with the escalating cost of taxi operating today. It will, however, ensure the continuance and growth of our Society.

Control room

Our control room recently came across a problem when their supply of dockets apparently almost ran out and dispatcher **Dennis Samuels (F25)** had to chase around London to try to get some more, but failed. Eventually it was decided to buy up as many exercise books from the sweet shop in Elgin Avenue as was possible and cut them docket-shaped! Fortunately, within an hour, a new supply reached the office, but congratulations to everyone down there for managing to carry on under such difficult circumstances.

Obituary – Bert Frankford

With deep regret we announce the untimely passing of **Bert Frankford (Ex-D50)**. Bert joined ODRTS in March 1954 and ranked as one of our longest serving subscribers until September 1966, when through ill health he was forced to leave the circuit. In later years he spent some time in hospital and after disposing of his own cab, was employed as a journeyman.

On Saturday 20 February, he was taken ill outside the Houses of Parliament, pulled his cab safely into the kerb and passed away. He was 57 and had been a taxi driver for 36 years. A representative of the Board of Management attended the funeral at Bushey Jewish Cemetery.

We extend our condolences to his wife, daughter and family. Rest His Soul...



Dennis sent out for exercise books!

Bill Browne
ODRTS Secretary

Areti Mastrodouka gets World Title shot

Alec Wilkey has been on Dial-a-Cab for nine years, but for far longer than that he has continued his love as a boxing trainer with professional fighters at the established TKO Gym in Canning Town and of late with Lansbury ABC. Now Call Sign hears of a World Title opportunity for one of his fighters...

Areti Mastrodouka has a 7-0 win rate during which time she has worked her way up through the professional ranks and now has the chance to capture that World Title on 12th October at the **Dais Arena** in her homeland of **Greece**.

The female southpaw, who previously campaigned at Super-Featherweight, is moving up to Lightweight to challenge for the WIBF title in Athens with her opponent to be announced soon. The unbeaten 38 year-old former kickboxer, who has been trained by **Dial-a-Cab's Alec Wilkey (W83)** since moving across to professional boxing, splits her training between the Lansbury ABC gym in London and back home in Athens. Areti will be looking to secure the title after she made history back in March by competing in the first ever professional bout in Greece.

The best of luck to Areti and Alec from all at **Call Sign**.

Areti Mastrodouka is currently seeking sponsorship and would welcome any help from companies looking to get their name out there.

Other members of **'Team Wilkey'** have been busy with **Danny 'Cassius' Connor (11-8-1)** fighting on **Goodwin Promotions** York Hall **'To Hell and Back'** show on 6 September. Connor was up against **Michael 'Chunky' Devine** for the British Masters Lightweight title with a compelling first round fuelling the vociferous crowd. To everyone's disappointment, the bout was halted in the second round after Connor sustained a cut above his left eye due to a clash of heads with the fight deemed a draw. A highly anticipated rematch is looking likely after Connor's wound has healed fully.

Prizefighter champion **Johnny Coyle (7-0-1)** was back in action on Sunday 14 September also at York Hall on a **Left Jab Promotions** show. He remained unbeaten winning 60 - 53 on points in his first six rounder, controlling each round with his superior boxing skills after flooring **Arvydas Trizno** in the second round with an impressive flurry of hooks on the ropes.

Brett Saggs (2-0) also impressed in his second outing against tough **Dee Mitchell** in a four round bout. The tall, rangy Essex fighter used a good jab and targeted the body with Mitchell responding by landing his right hand on occasion. The pick of the action came in the fourth round with a flurry of punches from Saggs forcing Mitchell back on to the ropes. Saggs got the decision 40-37.

Adam Salman (3-1) got back to winning ways in style after a loss last time out winning via a first round TKO against **Adam Cieslak** after just two minutes of action. With Salman clearly superior, the referee saved Cieslak from more punishment after **The Boy Raw** landed his shots with consummate ease, notably the right hand.



Areti gets her shot on October 12th

David Wilkey, Call Sign Online

Hello Ladies & Gents,

Coverage (again)...

I hope you have all noticed the significant increase in work since the start of September and that traffic conditions are not too unbearable. When it gets busier, the usual problems occur and coverage in certain areas becomes a big problem, which is nothing new. Ever since I've been a member, which is now a long time, coverage in all south, south west and western areas often cause dispatchers problems. Unmasking trips, amending run-ins and giving actual pick up locations do not always improve the coverage; neither do terminal messages seem to do the trick and even when lucrative journeys are offered, they can sit in the system for lengthy periods and end up being scrubbed. That happens even though there are taxis booked into not just the trip primary zone, but also in the back-up zones as well.

I know I've said this on numerous occasions, but can I once again *please* ask you to at least offer delays on these trips. It is far better to offer a reasonable time and give the client the option of saying yes or no. Non-coverage can lead to the closure of an account and once gone, it becomes very difficult to regain – something that I am sure you agree is unacceptable. There is now so much competition out there in the workplace offering the world for nothing (and in most cases not delivering what they promise) that we must all try to work together to maintain our share of an ever demanding market.

It seems absolutely ludicrous to scrub trips that are well in excess of £40. Yet it is happening. Please help your Society. It wasn't that long ago when drivers were asking why we weren't offering zero run-ins to get work, yet we are struggling with run-ins. Please do your best to help.

One revenue stream that is increasing is the use of Credit Cards and it is with this in mind that we recently produced some brand new 'Hand-Out' cards to further market our App alongside the Superside campaign. The App is available for download direct from the DaC website and can also be accessed from the card's QR code. The App can be used to book credit card journeys and any account holder can use this facility to book their account trips on their smart phones, which some clients may not be aware of. So please hand out the cards to passengers and clients alike...

Licensed taxis v minicabs: A policeman's view...

A few weeks ago I was lucky enough to be invited to the wedding of a close friend's son's in sunny Spain, at which my eldest son was best man. The groom works in a West End bank and prior to flying out, because he was able to buy currency at preferential rates, he added a rather large order of Euros for friends and family. After leaving his office and spending a few hours with work colleagues in the local bar having a pre-wedding celebratory glass (or four), he was probably a little worse for wear - if you get my drift! So much so that late that night he left over £4000 of foreign currency in the vehicle that took him home to his Bexleyheath address.

Unaware until the early hours of the morn-

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Chat from the Call centre



ing, his father (who lives opposite) was woken by a loud knock on the door. It was a licensed taxi driver who lived well down the A2 in the Medway Town. He had discovered the money and knowing that this young chap had left such a large amount of cash in the back of his cab, rather than wait till the morning to find a police station open, he decided to travel the considerable distance back to

the set-down to return the money. Some might assume that he did so knowing that he would be rewarded; well they did try to give him something but he refused to take a penny for his trouble.

The Police had been notified of the loss but after being informed that a taxi driver had returned the money, they quite openly said that the family were very lucky it was a licensed taxi driver and not a minicab driver! Hmmm, I can't imagine why they said that!

The moral of the story is that the bad publicity we sometimes receive always outweighs the honesty and credibility of the Licensed London taxi driver. We aren't called the best in the world for nothing and it is something we should all be proud of..

Allan Evans
Control Centre and Manager

WIN £100 WITH A CAPTION...

Here's another chance to pocket £100 in *Call Sign's* caption competition. The best caption in the view of the judges will pocket the loot! So get thinking. The photo features Brian Rice, Alan Fisher and the laughing former Transport Minister Keith Hill. So why is he laughing?

Email entries to callsignmag@aol.com, post them to Call Sign's usual office address at DaC House or drop them into the DaC driver's reception addressed to Call Sign's caption contest.

Closing date is Friday 10th October. As always, the editor's decision is final..



No more cash payments at Dartford Crossing

Up until now, drivers have had a choice of payment methods at the Dartford crossing - cash at the booths or by using a pre-pay Dart Card. But as of late November there will no longer be an option to pay by cash and payment options will be similar to the congestion charge.

They will include paying via text, online, phone or at some retail outlets. You will be able to pay in advance or up until midnight of the following day.

Current payment exemptions will be maintained, as will free crossing between 10pm and 6am

"I could have been famous if it wasn't for that bloody Michael Caine..."

Terry Farr ran Point-Man Knowledge School from a church in Bethnal Green some 23 years ago; I was one of his students. Terry kept us enthralled by mixing a few runs together with giving us stories of fantasy - such as the time in his childhood when auditioning for a play at a Walworth Road club where he had to pretend to be a robot. But the bloke who got the part - because he was the tallest - was Michael Caine.

Last month I stopped in Orchard Street outside Selfridges, when a tall distinguished chap in a red peaked cap got in asking for Harrods.

"Blimey, I said trying hard to be original, "it's that Michael Micklewhite!" He laughed and I used the opportunity to relay the story about Terry. He nodded and laughed energetically. Chatting away, I told him that my favourite film of his had been Zulu.

"Funny people, those Zulus," he replied before going into his trademark facts. For an octogenarian, there are still no flies on Sir Michael Caine.

Clubland on Walworth Road had been a youth training establishment run by the Reverend Jimmy Butterworth. Michael Caine had one line in the play, RAR by Czech writer Karel Capek and went on to become a huge movie star. But whatever became of Terry Farr...?

The Hotel

I took a staycation (sounds like an awful Americanism) in Torquay. On Sunday 24 August, my 7-year old daughter and I were strolling harbour side on a deserted promenade when we saw a dishevelled man talking into a camera surrounded by a TV crew. We stood watching and I recognised the chap to be Mark Jenkins, the man from the Channel 4 TV series of The Hotel, which tells of the hap-

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

It's a cabby's life



less owner of The Grosvenor Hotel. He came over and seemed pleased by my recognition; I told him how much I enjoyed The Hotel and he passed us a flyer titled Carnage at the Cavendish, picturing two wrestlers grimacing - Joel Redman v Chris Andrews being the protagonists. He told us that the event began at 5pm that afternoon. I said we were staying at the Toorak Hotel, which was opposite The Cavendish, so we'd be there. We were asked to sign a consent form agreeing to be on TV.

We entered the foyer of The Cavendish and asked at reception where the wrestling event was? The staff were non-committal, brushing us off saying that it was something to do with Mark Jenkins. That comment seemed slightly absurd, so we took a wander to the beer garden where they were starting to erect the ring. Mark Jenkins and his wife Alison Pennell were busily organising in their usual haphazard way with man-mountain wrestler Joel Redman looking bemused. We sat and watched this pantomime with an audience of ten until it began drizzling. I asked the TV crew what the delay was.

Mark Jenkins came over and said there was a problem with the licence, so they had to aban-

don the main event and return to the bar to hold an arm wrestling competition instead. The main wrestlers walked off in disgust, while the undercard wrestlers refused to do the arm wrestling. Mark Jenkins again came over, apologised to my daughter for letting her down and said that when he sets out to accomplish something, he usually achieves his goal. I asked him where he now lived and he said on a farm in Mill Hill with only cows for neighbours. The remaining wrestlers agreed to do a Q and A session and give out signed photos.

The parting words of Mark Jenkins was to ask them why they refused to do arm wrestling? The four wrestlers directed their answers at the cameras asking why Channel 4 didn't cover wrestling. My daughter and I returned to the Toorak for supper.

The new series involves Mark Jenkins taking a job at The Cavendish Hotel as entertainments manager (to be televised early next year). I hope the wrestling kerfuffle stays on cutting room floor!

DaC or Addison Lee???

Late in the evening of Sunday 24 August at Radio Taxis, they were trying to cover Kings Cross railway jobs and needed 170 cabs. After failing to get the numbers, they then got 80 cars from Addison Lee. Is it any wonder AL are so successful when RTG turn to private hire rather than call DaC or ComCab. Incidentally, if an Addison Lee driver is found to be on duty and not wearing a tie, there is a £25 penalty. If the misdemeanour is repeated, it is instant dismissal...

Stephen Berndes
Call Sign Online

Call Sign Online

If you are new to going online and want to find Call Sign's library, well it's easy! Just log on to:

www.dac-callsign.co.uk or

www.dac-callsign.com. Then either

browse through every issue of Call Sign since 1998 by using the Search facility or type in a clue and let our search engine do the rest. If you want to read each complete issue with ads, you can do that. Since the May 2006 issue, you just need to click on the PDF logo. No search facility for that but if you know the page then go to it, press CTRL F and a box will appear. Just type in the word and the text on that page will be highlighted.

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

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Obituary

ROY MARTIN

Dial-a-Cab recently lost another of its elder statesmen drivers with the sad death of **Roy Martin (R42)**. Roy joined the Society in May 1977 and has written to *Call Sign* consistently over the years, very often battling against authority when it came to what he considered to be the unfair issuing of parking tickets.

His first brush with authority came in 1999 when he was issued with a PCN in Lambeth. After failing to convince the council that not only was the ticket unfairly issued, but that the warden's comment that Roy's tax disc was "concealed" was blatantly untrue, he appealed to the Adjudicator – something few drivers had yet attempted at that time. He not only won the appeal, but got the Adjudicator to put into his report that he found it difficult to believe the warden's accusation about the tax disc!

Call Sign will miss Roy as a contributor to this magazine, but also as a lovely person who was always ready to help other drivers with advice if they too were presented with a PCN.

We asked one of Roy's friends, **Martin Freeborn (C67)**, to write a few words about Roy..

"Roy lost his licence several months ago due to an eye problem, but he didn't let that stop him enjoying his golf and even motorcycling. He and his son **Neil** used to enjoy motorcycling events and often went on rallies.

"Sadly Roy's wife **Jean** died eight years ago and that devastating blow slowed him down, but he always said how much he enjoyed the company of his son and three granddaughters.

"His passing came as a great shock to all his friends in the trade and especially those of us who use the **Warwick Avenue** shelter. Other than being so nice, polite and helpful as a person, he represented Dial-a-Cab in the best possible way by always looking smart and coming to work wearing a shirt and tie."

The sympathies of all at Dial-a-Cab and Call Sign go out to Roy's family.

LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

With **Tom Quigley (Y33)**

Is Anything Ours?

Anyone who reads my *Call Sign* articles regularly will know of my opposition to this country selling off our national industries, many of which seem to now be owned by governments of other countries that enjoy the benefits of our railways, waters and even bus companies while charging us more to subsidise their own population.

All that is bad enough, but it seems we actually own nothing or if we do have anything that's ours, we are willing to give it away or blame someone else for giving it to us.

You only have to sneeze; it's no longer a common cold symptom because we, of course, no longer do "common." Obviously the sneeze must be part of some new uncontrollable virus that has been brought in from abroad - we love blaming foreigners for all our ills! Hong Kong, Asian, Bird or any other animal flu; it doesn't matter - it's not ours, someone gave it to us! We never wanted it, so they can keep it.

As a gardener, the general threat to my allotment usually seems to come from slugs, but this year following the early rain and the dry summer we have been plagued by the biggest slugs of all. Naturally it's not a British slug as they only eat enough to survive! No, this is a *Spanish* slug - probably the Spanish retaliation to our all-inclusive binge eating holidays where we polish off all their food! Of course we as Brits never eat all their vegetables, just the chips!

Through the course of the year, we experience different weather conditions; we get a gentle breeze coming in from *France*, a *Mediterranean* heatwave, a gale force wind that began in *America* as a Hurricane named rather unfortunately after the poor aunt of the person who recorded it first!

We are now having a lovely late warm summer - not ours of course, but an *Indian* summer, which makes me totally confused as it could have been a *Native American* summer years ago. Of course, once we leave summer behind, we become prone to getting an *Arctic* winter!

Yes, all we own is not really ours, but at least this year when it rained constantly on August bank holiday Monday, whilst everyone else was moaning, I just sat back and smiled: At least that was a typical *British* bank holiday!!!

Barclays Bikes Advertising? Seriously?

I've had many a moan as a cyclist about the whole structure and safety of the **Barclays** bike hire scheme, particularly if you work your taxi at night like I do. I have seen scores of youths kicking the front bike wheel out of its holder and riding off in gangs for free; I have also seen groups use them for pub crawls knowing that, as was revealed in the last issue of *Call Sign*, they only have to volunteer a breath test and can't be forced into one unless a policeman actually spots them doing something wrong. They can't be breathalysed just because they appear drunk.

All this goes on with the Mayor's office possibly being oblivious to it (they should read *Call Sign*), but when TfL spend absolute fortunes on advocating the need for cyclists to be seen and to ride safely by remembering to 'wear something light at night' from the 1960s ads and the masses of

police at busy junctions earlier this year telling cyclists off for jumping lights, whilst fining car drivers for the same thing, even though both are equally wrong.

What do TfL have on their latest billboards promoting the scheme? A full-sized poster advert of a cyclist wearing cowboy boots, with the slogan: "Membership free, no dress code."

These are the people we are all collectively paying to oversee the safety on our roads...



Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

Call Sign

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Quite a number of years ago, I had occasion to write to the Evening Standard. What happened was this...

I was taking a chap on a short journey through the West End. No sooner had he sat down than he produced a cordless razor and began buzzing away around his face. When he'd finished, he blew out the detritus (nice) and suddenly was tucking into a hamburger. He gobbled that up and wiped his freshly shorn chops before bringing out a mobile and making a call. Thus I wrote to the ES:

"In other words he was using my cab as his bathroom, kitchen and office. All this for £3 and no tip! And they say taxis are expensive."

The paper published the letter and it generated a bit of correspondence. First up was a gentleman from SW7 who said that people paid good money to travel in taxis and what they did in them was their business! But a few days later, someone came to my rescue and declared that the driver had every right to complain about what went on the back of his cab. The original pompous writer from South Kensington went under the marvellous name of **Cyril Henty-Dodd**. This I knew was the real name of former **Radio Caroline** DJ and later **ITV** chat-show host, **Simon Dee**, who had what can only be described as a meteoric fall from grace when his career hit the skids after releasing a rude word on TV at a time when it just wasn't done! He had then failed the test to become a bus driver and I think there may have been a hint of sour grapes!

We're all used to women who get in and spend the journey applying foundation, blusher, lipstick, mascara and perfume before one's nostrils twitch to that unmistakable aroma of nail varnish. So by the time they get out, they look completely different to when they enter the cab! I took Eddie Izzard a few times and he did the make-up bit, but when we got to his destination, he looked exactly like... er, Eddie Izzard! They all think no one can see them - except the driver - and he doesn't count!

Incidentally, the good lady wife would never dream of leaving the house without perfect make-up. When she's nice and relaxed, she'll paint her nails. She scares the life out of me when she balances a cushion on her lap and then balances the open bottle of varnish on top of that, but so far so good...

As I say, some people think they're invisible. How else to explain the regular early morning rider - a man at the top of his profession who sometimes comes out of the house bare-chested and clutching a crisp, freshly laundered shirt. But as he doesn't put the shirt on till he's in the cab, his trousers aren't done up properly giving us a nice view of his underpants. Now I'm a bloke and I think it's a bit odd, but I wonder what one of our Dial-a-Cab lady drivers would think?

Then there are those that think you can't hear them, but speak so loudly on their phones that even with the intercom off, you can hear every word. My favourite was the man I picked up in the City who spoke to someone in the friendliest manner. It went something like this...

Another true story from Geoff Levene

Shave, lunch and make-up... in my cab???

"Hello Peter, it's John. Fine thank you. Good. Listen, I've been to the lawyers. We had a long chat and I've decided to do everything I can to destroy your company. OK, speak to you soon. Bye."

I'd love to know what that was all about.

And what about the man who came down the path as his wife called out for him not to forget to call Barry. He called back that it was ok and he would do it. Then we set off for Covent Garden. Two minutes later his phone rang: "I know," he said a little rattled, "yes, I'm going to do it."


Another few minutes passed and the same call again, but this time he went bonkers.

"I'm going to do it," he shouted down the phone, that's three times I've said I'm going to do it and I will. Please don't call me again." So far as he was concerned, I hadn't heard a thing!

The other day as I sat on the rank in Rossmore

Road, a cab did a U-turn to get on behind me. Actually it was so fast that it was more like a hand-brake turn. No sooner had his engine died than a bowl of cereal appeared and he greedily shovelled down his muesli totally unaware or uncaring that I could see him in the mirror. I watched fascinated as having finished eating, he drank what was left of the milk. Next he squeezed some toothpaste onto a brush and began cleaning his teeth - up and down, and side to side before taking a gulp of water, sluicing it round his mouth, opening the door and spitting a stream of soapy water into the street. Charming, but he wasn't finished yet. He then began examining his face in the mirror and having done so and in full view of commuters streaming by, he began to squeeze his spots! I had to look away. Some things should remain private...

**Geoff Levene (W32)
Call Sign Online**



The new City of London Heritage Gallery is now open and located within the Guildhall Art Gallery in the City. It is curated by the London Metropolitan Archives and will showcase some of the treasures held by the City of London Corporation.

The first exhibition runs until 29 January 2015 and comprises:

- * **Magna Carta: The City's copy dates from 1297 and is one of the finest surviving versions from the thirteenth century.**
- * **Cartae Antiquae: This volume contains transcripts of charters and statutes covering laws enacted between the reigns of Edward III (from 1327) to the accession of Henry VII (1485). The volume will be open to show the portrait of Richard III whose remains were discovered in Leicester in 2013.**
- * **Portraits of City of London Aldermen dating from c.1447. The two portraits selected are of John Derby, the Alderman for Candlewick, who was a member of the Drapers' Company and Sheriff from 1445 - 1446 and Robert Horne, Alderman for Bridge Ward and Sheriff from 1446 - 1447 who was a member of the Fishmongers' Company.**
- * **Poster for a Recruitment Meeting held at Guildhall on 4 September 1914.**
- * **London County Council, Emergency Committee Minutes for 1914 reporting on the effects of the outbreak of war on families, businesses and communities.**

Visitor information for Guildhall Art Gallery is available on their website. Please note that closures are sometimes required at short notice due to state or civic functions at Guildhall and you are advised to check the website or phone the gallery on 020 7332 3700 in advance of your visit.



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



Tom Whitbread's son "banned" from TV program!

In the October 2011 issue of *Call Sign*, Dial-a-Cab Board member Tom Whitbread told of his shock when his son Russell, who was a pilot with Indonesian airline Susi Air, phoned to say not too worry but there had been a fatal air crash. It happened when two Susi pilots - David Cootes and co-pilot Tomas Munk - had been killed after their Cessna 208B Grand Caravan had crashed in the jungle shortly after taking off with food and diesel for the remote village of Kenyam, which relied on the flights for almost all of their provisions.

Until recently, the story Call Sign had been just about Tom and Russell, but in August and early September, Channel 4 presented what can only be called a jaw-dropping program featuring the work that Susi Air does in Indonesia.

'Worst Place to be a Pilot' told the story through the eyes of the Susi pilots as they navigated their planes to some of the most breathtakingly remote and dangerous locations on earth.

Indeed, one of the five programmes showed a pilot landing his plane on a short airstrip that local villagers had built and which was a quarter way up Mount Everest! And he had to land through appalling visibility thanks to low clouds. The pilots have none of the advanced technology big jet airliners enjoy, but are forced to navigate their way through the clouds just by sight. Nevertheless, Susi pilots fly passengers and cargo to remote areas around Borneo, Sumatra and Java while often landing in rough airstrips cut out from jungle clearings.

The programme footage also showed the pilots flying over golden beaches and the crystal clear ocean, but that is a million miles from landing in a small jungle clearing to reach villages and villagers that are yet to become 20th century, let alone 21st! One example was the pilot who was afraid of landing after seeing two opposing tribes had clashed and were throwing spears and knives at each other!

Russell, who has previously worked as David Cootes' co-pilot, told *Call Sign* that while the pilots in the program were undertaking some very dangerous flights, the directors of Worst Place to be a Pilot considered that Russell's flight, which had to go through a volcano about to erupt, was just too shocking to show and it was cut from the final programme.

Russell said: "Susi are an excellent, safety conscious company with one of the most modern fleets of aircraft and helicopters in the area. But there are people out here who rely on us just to carry out their daily



The old and the new: A Susi plane stands behind a member of the Moni tribe - complete with spear!



Russell (left) with two fellow pilots on a Susi aircraft

lives. The look on their faces as we arrive is an amazing reward and that was shown so well in the programme."

If you missed these four programmes, see if they are still available on 4OD because they truly make astonishing viewing..

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

Brethren of the Whip



The Execrable Murder of Dr Clench...

In his diary entry of **27th January 1689**, **John Evelyn** wrote how both he and **Samuel Pepys** had come across a child

prodigy at the Admiralty, the son of a **Dr Clench**. The eleven-year-old child was an expert in mathematics, astronomy, geography, history, politics, the Bible and fluent in French and Latin. He was also learning Greek. Evelyn wrote:

“He gave a stupendous account of both natural and moral philosophy and even in metaphysics.”

Nearly three years later, on **6th January 1692**, Evelyn wrote:

“...a most execrable murder was committed on Dr Clench, father of that extraordinary learned child...”

It had been just after 9pm on 4th January that hackney coachman **John Sikes** was flagged down by two men on the corner of **Fetter Lane** and **Fleet Street**. They asked him if he knew **Dr Clench** who lived in **Brownlow Street**, **Holborn**. Sikes replied that he knew the street but not the doctor. The two got into the coach and told Sikes to take them there. Sikes had to stop in **Holborn** on the corner of **Brownlow Street** as a gate at the northern end of the street was closed and there was no room for him to turn his coach around. One of the men then asked Sikes to go to the Doctor's house and tell him they had a patient who was unwell. Sikes followed his orders with a witness later claiming that one of the men in the coach swore at Sikes and told him to hurry.

Clench was all but ready for bed and despite being none the wiser as to whom the two gentlemen in the coach were, he got dressed, went to the coach and climbed in. Sikes was ordered to drive to **Leadenhall Market** where the patient apparently was, but as they approached he was then told to go to the **Pye Tavern** in **Aldgate**. Arriving at the ale house, Sikes was told to remain on his box but to call out to the boy of the tavern for a Chyrurgeon (surgeon) called **Hunt**. The boy went, but came back saying there was nobody of that name there.

Sikes was then told to go back to **Leadenhall Market** but by now the **Aldgate** was shut, so one of the men gave the watchman 6d to allow them to pass through. Once at **Leadenhall**, Sikes was given half-a-crown (2s 6d or 12p) and told to buy a fowl from a poulterer named **Hunt**. One of the men then called him back and gave him an extra shilling and told him he might as well get two fowls. Like **Hunt** the surgeon, there was no **Hunt** the poulterer so Sikes bought his two fowls from another poulterer, paying 3s for the brace – no doubt intending to keep the 6d change for his running around.

When he returned to the coach, only **Dr Clench** remained with no sight of the two gentlemen. Clench was sitting on the floor with his head against the cushions. **Sikes** thought that he must be drunk and tried to wake him but to no avail. He called a watchman who had a candle and they could see that **Clench** had a handkerchief tied round his neck. When they loosened the knot, a lump of coal fell out. **Clench** had been asphyxiated as he sat in the hackney coach, the lump of coal hastening his demise by crushing his windpipe at the same time.

At the subsequent **Old Bailey** trial, it transpired that **Dr Clench** had lent a widow, **Mrs Vanwicke**, £120 with which she was to buy a house but she could not make the repayments back to **Dr Clench** and he would not lend her another penny. Her lover, a gentleman by the name of **Henry Harrison** had been heard to threaten to cut **Clench's** throat because of the

way he was treating **Mrs Vanwicke**.

Harrison pleaded not guilty and provided an alibi, which placed him close to the spot where **Sikes** picked him up. **Sikes** himself was reasonably confident that **Harrison** was one of the two men in his coach. Two other witnesses identified **Harrison** as after seeing **Sikes** first leave the coach to get **Dr Clench** and then to buy the two fowls, they thought that the coachman might be bilked so they remained watching the hackney coach – very different times indeed.

Henry Harrison never did admit to carrying out the murder of **Dr Clench**, very probably the first murder ever in a hackney carriage; but it was a crime for which he was executed. The identity of his alleged partner was never discovered...

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

No, it isn't the chocolate variety, but Chinese TX4s will be...

ALL GOLD!

WE know **All Gold** as chocolates that come in a black box, however the London-style cabs set to hit **Shanghai's** streets later this month that will be gold instead of the traditional black, are real and not made of chocolate! The gold colour is said to be more attractive and suiting the city's image better according to the **Qiangsheng Taxi Company**, who are operating the cabs. **Qiangsheng** are the City's largest cab company.



The 200 Chinese-made TX4 taxis are in the final stage of production, Geely said as it released the photo of the gold vehicles. The fact that Geely's cab factory is also based in Shanghai is said to be coincidental!

Qiangsheng say that because the TX4s are much more spacious than the traditional Chinese cabs, which are saloons, they will be primarily aimed at providing a taxi service for elderly and disabled customers. They will have accessibility fittings and take bookings mainly through dispatch systems to carry passengers with special requirements.

The last time London had gold cabs was during the Queen's golden anniversary in 2003...
Pic Courtesy Weibo.com

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“Cabbing memoirs makes me sound like I’ve been in the taxi trade for decades, but my sixteen years of driving, the last ten on **Dial-a-Cab**, has still given me a fair repertoire of memorable incidents to share,” **James Barwick (J68)** told *Call Sign*.

“Of course, as a *Butterboy* one is always a bit nervous and apprehensive in those early days until you get a bit more confident with routes, roads and the general public. I remember responding to a street hail from a couple of gay men one evening, shortly after I had gained my Green Badge. The first passenger gave me a destination in Camden Town and I innocently asked him if the route I intended to take was acceptable, explaining that I had just ‘come out’ - inferring that I had recently passed the *Knowledge of London* rather than anything else! Without hesitation, the passenger replied: “That’s alright darling – it happens to the best of us!”

“At that point, the penny dropped for me when I realised he thought that I had just ‘come out from the closet’ as being gay so I quickly – and rather sheepishly - explained I had recently gained my coveted All London Green Badge and wasn’t gay! Both passengers laughed and I had to giggle myself at how a casual comment like that could have quite another interpretation nowadays!

“On a sadder note, I recall picking up a gentleman from London Bridge Station who was going to Kingsland Road. He suddenly became very unwell and by the time I reached the north side of London Bridge, he had actually turned grey. I called the police, who in turn called an ambulance and they rushed the man off to hospital. The following morning I had a call from the police officer concerned, who informed me that the man had died. The policeman did not explain further, but it made me feel so sad for the man’s family, as in that short journey across the Thames my passenger had said he had recently moved to Kent with his family and was looking forward to spending time there.”

James voice quavered as he related the story to *Call Sign*, obviously still moved by the incident.

“But in this business, there will always be a lighter note and that came not long afterwards when I picked up a young couple, male and female, and after we had gone some

Have you had an interesting cabbing career or had a particular incident that you think Call Sign readers would like to read about? You know our address...callsignmag@aol.com

Cabbing Memoirs!

distance I glanced in the rear view mirror and could only see the man’s head. Dipping the mirror I could see the lady’s head in the man’s lap and just one thought flashing through my mind... but I was wrong! The truth was that the lady had fallen asleep and was using her boyfriend’s lap as a pillow - not what I surmised at all!

“Mind you, there was one occasion in the early hours of the morning when I was on my way home and following a cab directly in front of me with two passengers on board. The female passenger was straddling the

man, who was stretched out on the back seat, her legs waving wildly in the air with her clothing clearly dishevelled. They were really going at it with gusto and how that driver managed to keep the cab in a straight line, let alone go around the corners, I’ll never know! But he must surely have been aware of what was going on in the back!

“The things that go on in the back of cabs,” James concluded with a raucous laugh...

Alan Green (E52)
Call Sign Online

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers
WCHCD INSTALLATION DINNER

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers held their Installation Dinner aboard **HQS Wellington** on 4th September. **Malcolm Paice** was installed as the new Master. Following the Court meeting, the Master and his Wardens welcomed guests on board for pre-dinner drinks before sitting down to dine in what was once the ship’s engine room but is now a custom made livery hall.

The new Master and his Wardens

Reverend Dr Martin Dudley began by saying grace and reciting one of his remarkable and unique poems about the London Taxi industry. Guests then dined on smoked fillet of sea bass, Lancashire beef followed by baby pineapple filled with Crème Brulee. The Master thanked the Master Mariner for allowing the use of the Hall and congratulated the three new Liverymen before taking wine with ten new Freemen who had been admitted to the company earlier that day.

After toasts and a speech from the new Master, London Vintage Taxi Association Chairman, **Doug Cheshire**, responded and proposed a toast to the Company. Doug was known to Malcolm not only through the taxi industry, but also because Doug - or Mr Cheshire as Malcolm used to know him - used to be Malcolm’s Woodwork teacher!

After the dinner, Freemen and their guests were invited to join the Master in a Stirrup Cup.

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SEPTEMBER CAPTION WINNER



The winner of the September caption contest was **Andy Colli (C84)**. His caption to the cartoon was:

"Like I told you Oleg, who needs to come over in the back of a lorry when we can travel in style! Now tell the others to keep down..."

Andy wins last month's £100. It could be you this month.

See page 19...

Ever wondered how taxi drivers' shortcuts became so popular? Well if you read this article from The Evening News of 26th September 1931, you'll know. And look out for the Hyde Park exit, the right turn into Bond Street and a street that apparently no longer exists!

From the Evening News 26th September 1931 FOLLOW A TAXI!



The best way to cross London is to get a taxi, remember the route and then use it yourself the next time. Here, for instance, is one that I have learned in this way. It will be found useful by all who live in that quarter of London that lies

to the west of Edgware Road or the north of the line from Marble Arch to Ealing and who use their own cars to take them to the theatre.

Get into Hyde Park at Lancaster Gate Station, drive along the north side of it, round to the right at Marble Arch and out of the park at the first gate afterwards, which is just before the Grosvenor House. Go straight across Park Lane into Upper Grosvenor Street and along the south side of Grosvenor Square.

Then turn to the right down Carlos Place into Mount Street and Berkeley Square. Follow round the north and east sides of Berkeley Square until you come to Bruton Street, turn left there and then turn right into Bond Street until you come to Burlington Gardens on the left. Turn up there and cut straight through along Vigo Street to Regent Street. Here you may turn to the right and go through Piccadilly Circus, but if you are bound for Shaftsbury Avenue then you can miss the congestion by going straight across Regent Street into Brewer Street, turn right at Little Pulteney Street and so across Wardour Street into Old Compton Street.

From there you can proceed according to your destination, taking any turning to the right into Shaftsbury Avenue or going straight through into Cambridge Circus. Easy when you know how...

Editor's note: With grateful thanks to British History Online, this is the story of Little Pulteney Street...

In 1666 Sir William Pulteney granted a lease to Henry Batt, brick maker of part of Knaves' Acre or the Laystall Piece, which presumably owed its name to the previous use as a rubbish dump. Several houses were built along the south side of a narrow way leading from Soho towards the north end of what is now Great Windmill Street. This way was called Knaves' Acre or Pulteney Street and was subsequently known as Little Pulteney Street to distinguish it from Great Pulteney Street. It is now part of Brewer Street.

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Transport for London has begun work on a programme to overhaul the capital's 'road safety' camera network – known by most as speed cameras – replacing hundreds of old 'wet film' cameras with modern and more efficient digital safety cameras in order to help further reduce casualties on London's roads.

Safety cameras are said to have proved successful in reducing road casualties in recent years. At locations where safety cameras operate in the capital, research shows that the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) fell by an average of 58 percent, meaning that the cameras help to prevent 500 deaths or serious injuries each year. During 2013, 29 of the 132 fatal collisions that occurred in London involved speeding as a contributory factor. Last year, police commenced prosecution against 120,000 drivers for speeding and red light offences in the capital, with all fines generated passed on to Central Government.

The wet film camera technology used in most of the existing safety camera network is largely obsolete, making long term operation no longer possible. Earlier this year TfL began work to upgrade all safety cameras in London from wet film to digital, making the capital's safety cameras more sustainable in the longer term. As the Department for Transport (DfT) no longer fund safety camera schemes across the UK, TfL is funding the upgrades of these cameras to ensure that London continues to be at the forefront of innovative road safety measures.

TfL and the Metropolitan Police have now replaced and commissioned the first 28 of 250 red light cameras at traffic signal junctions across London. In addition to enforcing against "red light running," these new cameras can also monitor and enforce against vehicles breaking the speed limit while going through green traffic lights, helping to further improve safety at junctions where the risk is higher.

Further sites will be commissioned in the coming months, with all 250 upgraded by October 2016. Next Month, TfL will also begin upgrading the capital's 350 speed cameras with spot speed digital cameras. When located on the central reservation, these new cameras can also monitor speed in both directions, providing a wider area of enforcement for the Police. In addition, at four trial locations on the TfL Road Network, TfL will be replacing older cameras with an Average Speed Camera system, similar to the one already in operation along the A13. Average Speed Cameras improve speed compliance between cameras along a more extensive length of road rather than just where the camera is located, helping to further reduce KSIs.

The four sites are on the A2 between Black Prince and the Blackwall Tunnel, the A40 between the Polish War Memorial and Paddington slip road, the A316 between the M3 and Hogarth Roundabout and the A406 North Circular Road between Hanger Lane and Bounds Green Road.

If you thought that CCTV cameras along London' roads were the bane of your life, you ain't seen nothing yet!

TFL UPGRADES LONDON'S SPEED CAMERAS



He is going to be kept busy!

Work to install these will begin later this year, with the systems beginning enforcement in 2015. Work to upgrade the existing speed camera network to digital cameras will be completed by October 2016.

One of TfL's top priorities is to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on London's roads with a target of a 40 percent reduction by 2020. Recently, the Mayor and TfL published six commitments which, working with a range of partners, are guiding initiatives to deliver this. In particular, action is being taken to prioritise the safety of the most vulnerable road users: pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

Ben Plowden, Director of Strategy and Planning at TfL, said: "Ensuring that all road users are acting responsibly is vitally important to ensure that the capital's roads are kept safe for all. We are committed to delivering a 40 percent reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the capital's roads by 2020.

"We've worked closely with the London boroughs and police on implementing this

important upgrade and by ensuring that our safety cameras have the latest digital technology, we can help further reduce the number of unnecessary speed-related collisions that occur each year."

Edmund King, AA President, said: "Modern well-signed cameras targeted at accident hotspots are an important road safety tool aimed at helping make roads safer. In a recent AA Populus poll, 79 percent of AA members considered speed cameras at the road side to be acceptable. London needs safe roads to help the capital function for all road-users whether they are on foot, two wheels or four."

Cllr Stuart McNamara, Haringey Council's cabinet member for environment, said: "The safety of our borough's roads is a priority for Haringey Council and we are pleased that TfL is taking these steps to ensure that a busy junction is safer for all road users.

"The installation of these more efficient and modern cameras, which will help to reduce dangerous driving such as speeding and jumping red lights, will add to our efforts to improve road safety across the borough."

The upgrade of safety cameras across London is part of TfL's continuing work to improve road safety for all road users. Earlier this year, the Mayor and TfL published London's first Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and Motorcycle Safety Action Plan and its Delivery Plan for Young People, which included a commitment to provide cycle training to all school children in London. In June 2014, TfL also published the revised draft Cycle Safety Action Plan and a fully updated draft London Cycling Design Standards, which inform the work of those designing cycling infrastructure in the capital, for public comment to help further transform London's streets with world leading cycling provision.

For more information about the work TfL is carrying out to improve road safety go to: www.tfl.gov.uk/roadsafety

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Call Sign was finishing off this issue with a final proof and ironically just going through an interesting article from Vito owner, DaC driver and regular Call Sign contributor Gary Cox (O16) which he called "Where is the new Vito?"

Gary's descriptive prose referred to the new cab's possible launch and wrote about it having *AdBlue*, which he had been told would give 20 percent better fuel efficiency and that although it didn't come cheap, it made the possibility of services every 25,000 miles a probability.

Then came Gary's almost prophetic statement:

"Dial-a-Cab Members, who in their wisdom have come to the conclusion that if Mercedes don't get the new Vito right with the turning circle, then it won't be just a temporary curtain down but as Tom Whitbread often puts it, the theatre will go dark forever."

Within hours of proof-reading Gary's article, *Call Sign* heard the news that the Eco City's 76.6 percent subsidiary, **One80** – which developed the Vito Taxi's rear wheel steering technology – was facing administration. As the news broke, alongside it came word that **Eco City Vehicles** – who are the sole distributor of the Vito Taxi – had suspended trading in its shares at 0.3p – some 80 percent down from earlier this year.

Manufacture of the taxi itself has been suspended since August with a large stock of unsold cabs being the reason. This was due to the general financial climate, which many say isn't quite as rosy as Westminster tells the world it is, the resurrection of the TX4 under the **London Taxi Company** and the Chinese company that came to its rescue when it too was taken into administration – **Geely**. The actual cost of the Vito taxi, which hit £42,000, didn't help.

Eco City Vehicles had announced that there was a current lack of production revenues coming in and that was on top of a pending legal case against One80 and the combination resulted in administration. *Eco City released a statement:*

"As previously announced, the Group continues to experience challenging trading conditions requiring ECV to seek additional funding. ECV is in negotiation with a potential funder that may or may not lead to additional funds.

"With the potential administration of One80 and the resulting contractual frustrations encountered with third parties in executing disposals under the Group's strategic review, together with the continuing challenging trading conditions, there is uncertainty as to the Group's financial position and prospects, as a consequence, ECV has requested a suspension of its shares pending further evaluation of its position and future structure."

According to an article in the *London Evening Standard*:

"Eco City Vehicles, the firm behind the Mercedes Vito London black cab, today saw its shares suspended as it stood on the verge of collapse just two years after

IS THIS THE END OF THE VITO TAXI?



July 2008 and Brian Rice was one of many guests at the launch of the Mercedes Vito Taxi

rival TX4-designer Manganese Bronze did the same."

The Vito Taxi, which was introduced by **Peter DaCosta** at **KPM**, became a success as soon as it first appeared on London's streets as a licensed taxi. Much of the reasoning was the name of **Mercedes Benz** behind it. The cab itself was a Mercedes converted people carrier that began life as a **Traveliner** van, arriving in the UK with just a driver's and passengers back seat. **One80** then fitted out the inside while also fitting the rear wheel steering to achieve the 25 foot turning circle as required by the *Conditions of Fitness*. That became the Mercedes Vito Taxi that thanks to a 'magic' button and a maximum 5mph speed whilst turning, eventually gained approval from the **Public Carriage Office**.

But while its drivers loved the cab's performance, not all passengers were so keen with drivers complaining that they were allowed to pass before passenger's hands went out for the TX behind. Some also complained that it was too big for the job – even though it came into its own as a 6-seater rather than the TX4's 5-seats and was giving an excellent performance, especially on longer runs.

But then there were the constant rear wheel steering problems. There had been some other problems, but to their credit, Mercedes Benz, did attempt to upgrade those affected parts but not as quickly as some Vito owners wanted. That led to the formation of a Vito drivers club, which managed to help many of the drivers. But the one thing that no one seemed to be able to cure was that rear wheel steering. Several Vito drivers on **Dial-a-Cab** have told *Call Sign* that Mercedes were becoming irritated with the London taxi. They were selling the Vito and **Viano** all round the world with absolutely no problems, yet the trade in which they sold one of

the fewest numbers was causing them non-stop problems.

On Tuesday 23rd September Eco City Vehicles plc said that it was evaluating it's options after Mercedes Benz had informed them it had opted to terminate their stocking facilities and trading agreements with Eco City's subsidiary **KPM Taxis** with immediate effect. Eco City added that it's directors were evaluating options in the wake of the termination of arrangements with Mercedes.

Call Sign has been told by Mercedes Benz that warranty and service work including rear wheel steering can be carried out at various Mercedes dealerships. Call Anthony Cunningham or Danny Smith on 0161 975 6966 between hours of 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm Saturday. They will inform you of the best garage to take your Vito to.

Please note that service agreements outside of warranty work that were taken out with KPM as an extended warranty will not be covered by Mercedes. However they will be happy to advise you on the above number.

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Lost!

Hi Alan

I'm not a big fan on the thought of using satnavs just in case it takes you to the wrong road but I was recently going on a personal shopping trip with my mother and had an out-of-London postcode (SG13 7EW). So I put it into my DaC satnav and off we went. However, a 30 minute trip ended up taking well over an hour with the satnav not even getting us to the right district. So I ended up just following the map on my phone. Thank God I didn't have a paying customer on board, then again my mum wasn't too happy and kept asking if we were lost and constantly asking where did I think I was going every two minutes! I've managed without this technology for 25 years and don't think I will be rush back to use it again.

Steven Bryant (Y41)

I was sitting on the Kings Cross rank reading your email, Steven, when my terminal began flashing for an account ride from St Pancras to Bromley. The passenger wasn't too sure of the address but had the postcode, which I plumbed into the terminal's satnav. Not only was it a very welcome £70 but it was the easiest trip I've had all week with the young lady inside the machine giving me directions for the whole journey. Other than instructing me to do a U-turn inside Blackwall Tunnel (!!!) it took me right to the door. But satnavs are only machines and you need to keep an occasional eye that the signal hasn't been suddenly lost and confused it while it renews the route.

But what does confuse me is that Steve, together with NHS Practice Development Facilitator Jane Barr, went to Uganda in 2008 on something of a mercy mission. Jane's mission was to give advice to Ugandan medical staff and hopefully help extend the lives of their patients. With HIV and AIDS so prevalent in many African countries, Jane's task was a difficult one. The more practical side was to show how staff could re-use wheelchairs for young children - so often the victims of landmines. Steve, although going mainly to help where he could, also cheered a local group of young footballers - many with severe injuries - from the Kampala Kids League by getting Dial-a-Cab to provide them with a set of Spurs tops. The kids were all soccer mad and knew all about the English Premiership. So my problem is this: How the hell did you find your way there, Steve...!!! Ed

Who are they...?

Hi Al

Some random thoughts: I recently spoke to the CIA, Mossad and the FBI and they all confirmed that we are out of the period of purdah and due diligence has ended. They also said much to the annoyance of a few, that no Board member would be kidnapped and held for ransom. That said, we the members have been the subject of gossip and rumour, so no more secret squirrel! Can we kindly be informed as to the names of the two alleged buyers? Also, the recent account that trialled us for a period of two nights - yes two nights - can we be informed as to what happened with that pearler?

Also, the 'hush hush' account in the City and West End; I fail to see how this account can replace some of our recent lost accounts, having only done one minimum trip out of there?

It would also sadly appear that the radio circuits are in terminal decline but working cheap, in my opinion, that is not the answer. Addy flea drivers work for peanuts, but I bet the final bill per journey to the client is on a par with what we charge. As for an answer, if indeed there is one to stop the decline, I know not what it is. But I have two possible options in mind.

Option 1: Perhaps we should sell our building and buy a smaller, far cheaper unit, in South London. We can also off-load Roman Way and encompass that in the new unit. With the money left over from the sale of the building and the purchase of the new unit, why can't we long suffering shareholder members have a divi up? After the divi up and smaller building purchase, we would still have a huge cash mountain in the bank. Makes sense, does it not?

Option 2: Stay where we are and use the cash mountain to subsidise the proposed subs increase. What's the point in hanging on to shed loads of cash doing nothing apart from impressing the bank? It strikes me that the majority of drivers are now going to subsidise the minority who do very little account work. To ask drivers to pay more (yes, we will pay more) whilst sitting on a huge cash pile in these austere times, is a bitter pill to swallow. No system is totally fair, but we have been charged subs this way since the year dot. I know the Board are elected to make decisions, but I feel this new pricing structure is deeply punitive and should have been put to a vote. Yes I know some drivers will love the new pricing structure, but how about a vote on the subject? How about a vote on down-sizing and a divi up? Surly if happy days had continued and we had, let's say, £50million in the bank, then there would surely have come a point at which we the members enjoyed a divi up? If we had been sold we would have had a divi up, would we not? There are many long serving drivers coming to the end of their driving days to whom a few grand would benefit very nicely! Wudda ya reckon...

Colin Jenkins (Y22)



Brian Rice replies: At the moment Colin I am deep within the confines of my underground bunker beneath the West wing of our HQ. I have been informed by my Chief of Staff that you have recently been released from our facility at Guantanamo Bay after doing a tour of duty in Gaza (no, not the one that played for Newcastle and Tottenham). I trust and hope you will soon recover and be back to your normal Colin the Cabbie self!

I have asked one of my Senators to also reply to you regarding the Accounts you mention, although 'hush, hush', this is due to the fact that he is quite softly spoken, but I am sure he will answer to your satisfaction with more than his rank and serial number.

Regarding your suggestions to dispose of our installations, I have been informed by the Senate that as a Mutual Trading organisation, any surplus has to be withheld within the confines of our regime to be re-invested for the betterment of our hard working and stretched forces! I believe I covered your query regarding subscriptions in my last bulletin to our troops in September!

It is always nice to hear from our 'Boots on the Ground' as you all do a sterling job under intense pressure whilst operating under fire!

So thank you for taking the time and trouble to write to our forces magazine and finally Colin - God Bless America and Dial-a-Cab! Incidentally, have you read my report on page four???

Keith Cain adds: Not quite sure about the two nights trial or the fact that anyone has ever suggested these accounts would replace those we have lost. With morale amongst drivers running low at the moment, I hoped that information regarding new business would help perk some of them up. When accounts get opened at what I call good charges, retain a run-in and gratuity, it would be suicide to name them because if the opposition got wind of that type of information, they would be in like a shot to steal them off us. When it comes to business, make no mistake there is a war going on and we don't need to give anything away...

Gas Cab...

Alan

My cab is 15 years old. Is there any info on a gas conversion and do you think it is worth the expense? I have not heard anything about it. Is it still 5years extra and is there only one garage that does the conversion or are there any other conversions

Mailshot

on the market that are PCO approved...

John Gilbert (W72)

I asked Stanley Roth, whose Gastech company are converting cabs, whether it is worth it. If it is over fifteen years old then it is too late. However, if it's coming up to its birthday then it is OK. Gastech are the only ones who do a full Euro 5 conversion (TX1), which is cleaner than a new TX4 Euro 5. In fact their TX2 conversion meets Euro 6. Stanley has had his converted cab for almost 5 years so it must be worth it because you know whether your cab is a good 'un rather than buying someone else's old cast-off. And yes, you still get an extra five years.

Get in touch with Stanley at:
gastaxi@gmail.com.

Deregulation

Hi Al

Your article on the Deregulation Bill (*From the Editor, August Call Sign Online*) was interesting. But how about the scenario of an unlicensed driver 'borrowing' a licensed PH vehicle from a friend and then also borrowing the friend's Uber PDA? With rickshaws driven by anyone with no CRB needed, I don't think the public have ever been at so much risk, even before Livingstone's PH licensing.

When I used Hailo, I was picking a fare up from somewhere in NW3. Parked opposite was a plain Merc, no PH ID's, no roundels. When the passenger came out, he put his wife and son in the car and then jumped in with me. I said to him: 'So you're letting the family have the chauffeur today then?' He replied that it was an Uber minicab and it was taking them to LAP. I told him 3 times that it was an unlicensed vehicle and that it had no identification from TfL on it and that he should really phone his wife and advise her that she was in an unlicensed vehicle therefore not insured blah, blah. He totally ignored me! This driver had someone else's Uber PDA...

Mickey Lappin (Ex-E46)

This trade was deregulated years ago, Mickey – it's just that no one told us! Sadly the name of the best licensed taxi service in the world has been dragged through the mud backwards by two Mayor's who couldn't care less about us, other than boasting of the service in speeches but not actually giving a toss otherwise. Sadly we are now in a state of war and we will need some PH on our side. The question is who? ...Ed

The minicab wars...

Dear Sir

I'm not sure who to write this to because I know that the disabled account here in Redbridge is nothing to do with Dial-a-Cab. However, I have told ComCab – who do operate the system – several times but it seems to have made no difference. The problem is that my disability prohibits me from using any vehicle other than a real taxi but ComCab keep sending me a car. I then

have to call them back and hope that they can change the vehicle and in fairness, quite often they can – but at the expense of a lengthy wait. If I am just returning from a friend's house then I can cope. But when it's a hospital appointment or as it was recently, to attend a funeral, then time is of the essence because missed hospital appointments are usually cancelled and being late for a funeral – well you can guess how awful that makes me feel. As a former licensed London taxi driver, now retired many years, I just cannot understand how I can phone a London taxi circuit and be provided with a car. I have been around long enough to remember the minicab wars; does this mean that taxis lost?

As I said at the beginning, I doubt there is anything you can do, but at least I feel better having got it off my chest and if ComCab read this, perhaps they'll get it right in future.

Arnold Stanton

Cranbrook, Ilford, Essex

They will at least now know that you have written ...Ed

Older than he looks!

Hi Alan

I read the article about my altercation with a cyclist in the *September Call Sign* and I do need to point out that I have been with Dial-a-Cab since 2001 and not 2012. A minor transgression on the Editor's part, but nevertheless one that gives all my buddies on EC5 ammunition to keep calling me a 'butter' – when I'm clearly not!

Peter Marks (L07)

I was trying to make you look younger. You just can't please some people!!! ...Ed

Call Sign Online

Dear Alan

As always my sincere thanks for *Call Sign Online* every month! You're good! **Lloyd Powell** is a member of the American section **London Vintage Taxi Association (LVTA)** and owns an original FX4. He and his family were over in the UK some years ago, when they also made the pilgrimage to the **Menin Gate** at **Ypres** in Belgium where his Uncle is mentioned and that was commemorated by them. As you know, the **Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing** is a war memorial dedicated to soldiers that were killed in the Ypres Salient of WW1 and whose graves are unknown.

I would like to pass on Lloyd's view of *Call Sign* to you and the publishing group involved. To all of you I pass on 'The Honour' given! Chapeau! Keep up the good work; it's being appreciated....

Hans Dooren,

LVTA Dutch Section, Holland

Hans

Thanks again for your thoughtfulness in forwarding along the latest issue of *Call Sign Online* magazine to me. I spent a leisurely Sunday afternoon reading the entire issue. What a relaxing way to stay inside and out of the 90 plus degree heat – even with a hint of



rain! I must say that this issue was one of the best I have read. It must just be the flow of words that made it so enjoyable – even if Mike Son lost the capitalization 's' in his article, but one can blame that on the proof reader!

Lloyd Powell

Palm Beach, Florida

Thanks to Hans and Lloyd. *Call Sign* has been seen around the world online since 1998 and at the last official count had over 8000 regular readers via that route. Although 70.1 percent of the 8000 were based in the UK with a further 17.1 percent in the USA, we still had 5 regular readers in Ukraine, 5 in the United Arab Republic, 3 in Taiwan and 1 lonely reader in Russia! We even have one solitary reader in Yemen ...Ed

Goodbye Eric

I have recently retired as a cab driver after 45 years' service and have notified Driver Services accordingly. But I must write to say 'thank you' to the Dial-a-Cab Board and Staff members for the hard work they put in running the Society. I've enjoyed being a member of DaC and appreciate the work and income it has provided me with over the 35 years I've been with the circuit; it has been great and has made it all worthwhile for myself and my family. My best wishes to everyone for the future, keep well and thank you...
Eric Pearce (D70)

Brian Rice replies: Hi Eric, thank you so much for your email which has been passed onto me. Your sentiments are very much appreciated. I wish you a happy retirement and know that Neil (D70J) will continue in your footsteps. You have been a credit to DaC over the past 35 years and it is Members such as yourself who have been the backbone of this Society. I know you have been unwell in the past, but I wish you an enjoyable retirement...

Wrong!

Alan

Just read your third paragraph on page 3 of the *September Call Sign* and your reaction was the same as mine when I read the Bill in June. However, I checked and those clauses don't apply to London so the premise of the argument is mistaken.

I will try to remember exactly how they don't apply, but the reason is complex, even obtuse.

Lord Borwick of Hawkshead

Thanks Jamie. For those that don't know, Lord Borwick of Hawkshead was the former Chairman of London Taxis International. He is married to Victoria

Mailshot

Borwick, the Deputy Mayor of London. Both are huge supporters of the taxi trade.

I was writing about clause 10 of the Deregulation Bill which would allow family and friends to "borrow" minicabs to use as private vehicles. My problem was how would anyone know they weren't licensed PH drivers should they decide to work in the car ...Ed

Terminal lay out

Hi Alan

The new MDT now only requires two screen taps instead of three as with the old one to scroll through the available buttons. However, the right side of the screen on the new MDT is little used. Can I suggest that no taps of the screen would be required if we also sited buttons on the right side. The left side buttons are: Zone 1, Zone 2, Zone 3, Bids, Next and Clear.

Then on the right side could be: Resync, Review, Screen, Clear All and History. The History button would be a new one to replace having to touch the bottom line of the screen to show your recent actions.

Alan Nash (A95)

Thanks Alan, I have passed your comments onto DaC's IT department. I suspect that some drivers would complain that your idea means the screen has much less room for details, but I would also imagine that any changes would

have to go onto the back burner with the next major update being the automatic dispatching of trips via GPS rather than having to book into zones. Hopefully that will be round about March time ...Ed

Subscriptions and VAT

Dear Ed

It seems that Brian Rice in his column in the August Call Sign may have misled us in his explanation of the revised subscriptions arrangements. I think he neglected to mention that both the £10 Fixed Charge and the Variable Charge (75% of gratuities) are subject to VAT at 20 percent, which puts quite a different slant on comparisons with the old charging method. It seems from a personal viewpoint that I will only be better off when I'm not working! Or am I missing something? Mike Holleyoake (M6)

Brian Rice replies: The last thing I wanted to do was to mislead you, Mike, but you are quite right - subscriptions do attract VAT and of course I should have stated that everything was plus VAT. At the time of writing, it is the first week that we have stopped the new subscription (plus VAT) and I notice on this particular occasion you are paying less in subscription than you have in the past.

As you no doubt can appreciate, whatever we do will alienate a proportion of the Membership and as you know Mike,

many were calling for the introduction of PAYG. Now we have obliged, we get another section stating they don't like the new system! It could be argued that the more a Member takes out of the pot, then the more that should cost the individual Member and when I state this to Members, they tell me they cover work for the benefit of the Society!

Compared to our two competitors, subscriptions on Dial-a-Cab have always been cheaper and for many years substantially more affordable; even today we are still the cheapest of the three radio circuits - including all the Apps...

Caption winner

Thanks for waking me up this morning with such good news. It's always great to start the day with a positive... so I have just shared the joy of me winning "£25" in the competition to the wife!

Andy Colli (C84)

You can be the next winner of this month's Caption contest and win what is £25 to Andy's wife but £100 to everyone else! See page 19 ...Ed



TDYCF Dinner and Dance

'Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves'

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

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

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

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

RSVP by 1st November

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

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Number of tickets: _____

Dietary requirements:

Veg

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Meat

Dress smart

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

Fuel economy information:

TX4 (Euro 5) in mpg (l/100km): Urban 25.7 (11.0) - 27.7 (10.2), Extra Urban 40.4 (7.0) - 42.8 (6.6), Combined 33.6 (8.4) - 35.3 (8.0), CO₂ emissions: 209-222 g/km

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