

December 2015

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

Call Sign



Ridiculous? Well read Marc Turner's interview with an Uber driver...



Is something funny at the Taxi Driver of the Year dinner and dance?





NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

To supplement October's list of restaurants, here are another 70...

Alain Ducasse at The Dorchester	Park Lane, W1K 1QA
Amaranto - Four Seasons London	Four Seasons, Hamilton Place, W1J 7DR
aqua kyoto	30 Argyll Street, W1F 7EB
Aqua Shard	Shard, 31 St. Thomas Street, SE1 9RY
Asia de Cuba	St Martin's Ln Hotel, St. Martin's Lane, WC2N 4HX
Athenaeum	Athenaeum Hotel, 116 Piccadilly, W1J 7BJ
Benares	12a, Berkeley Square, W1J 6BS
Boulevard Brasserie	40 Wellington Street, WC2E 7BD
Buddha-Bar Restaurant	145 Knightsbridge, SW1X 7PA
Cantina Laredo	10 Upper St Martin's Lane, WC2H 9FB
Canvas Chelsea	1 Wilbraham Place, SW1X 9AE
Chez Mal	18 - 21 Charterhouse Square, EC1M 6AH
Cigalon and Baranis	Cigalon Ltd, 115 Chancery Lane, WC2A 1PP
Cinnamon Club	30-32 Great Smith Street, SW1P 3BU
Cinnamon Kitchen	9 Devonshire Square, EC2M 4YL
Cookbook Café	1 Hamilton Place, W1J 7QY
Crazy Bear - Fitzrovia	26-28 Whitfield Street, Fitzrovia, W1T 2RG
Cucina Asellina	336-337 Strand, WC2R 1HA
Fire & Stone	31/32 Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, WC2E 7JS
Galvin Bistrot de Luxe	66 Baker Street, W1U 7DH
Gilbert Scott Restaurant	St Pancras Renaissance, Euston Road NW1 2AR
Gillray's	Marriott, Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7PB
Grill at The Dorchester	Dorchester, 53 Park Lane, W1K 1QA
Hakkasan - Hanway Place	8 Hanway Place, W1T 1HD
Heliot Steak House	Hippodrome, Cranbourn Street, WC2H 7JH
Homage	Waldorf, 22 Aldwych, WC2B 4DD
Hutong	The Shard, 31 St. Thomas Street, SE1 9RY
Kaspar's	Savoy, Strand, WC2R 0EU
Library Lounge	Marriott, County Hall, SE1 7PB
M Restaurants	60 Threadneedle Street, EC2R 8HP
Marco Pierre White - Kings Road	386 Kings Road, SW3 5UZ
Marco Pierre White Steak & Alehouse	109-117 Middlesex Street, E1 7JF
Marcus	Berkeley, Wilton Place, SW1X 7RL
Massimo Restaurant	10 Northumberland Avenue, WC2N 5AE
Maxwell's Covent Garden	James Street, WC2E 8BH
maze - Gordon Ramsay Group	10 - 13 Grosvenor Square, W1K 6JP
Mele e Pere	46 Brewer Street, W1F 9TF
Melody at St Paul's	153 Hammersmith Road, W14 0QL
Morden & Lea	17 Wardour Street, W1D 6PJ
Narrow	44 Narrow Street, E14 8DP
No.20 @ Sanctum Soho Hotel	20 Warwick Street, Soho, W1B 5NF
Nobu - Old Park Lane	19 Old Park Lane, W1K 1LB
Nobu Berkeley ST.	15 Berkeley St., W1J 8DY
Northall, Corinthia Hotel	Corinthia, Northumberland Avenue, WC2N 5AE
Oblix Lounge	Shard, St Thomas St., SE1 9RY
Old Tom & English	187b Wardour Street, W1F 8ZB
Oval Restaurant. Wellesley Hotel,	11 Knightsbridge, SW1X 7LY
Palm Court Brasserie	39 King Street, WC2E 8JS
Park Room and Library	Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W1K 7TN
Pescatori	57 Charlotte Street, W1T 4PD
Pescatori - Dover Street	11 Dover Street, W1S 4LH
Petrichor, Cavendish Htl	81 Jermyn Street, SW1Y 6JF
Picture	110 Great Portland Street, W1W 6PQ
R.S. Hispaniola	Victoria Embankment, WC2N 5DJ
Restaurant at Sanderson	Sanderson Hotel, 50 Berners Street, W1T 3NG
Rivea London	171 Knightsbridge, SW7 1DW
Sake No Hana	23 St. James Street, SW1A 1HA
Sticky Fingers	1a Phillimore Gardens, W8 7QG
STK (ME hotel)	336 - 337 The Strand, WC2R 1HA ME hotel
Strand Dining Rooms	1-3 Strand, Grand Buildings, WC2N 5EJ
Swan at The Globe	21 New Globe Walk, SE1 9DT
Ten Room at Hotel Café Royal	Café Royal, 68 Regent Street, W1B 4DY
Terrace Grill, Le Méridien	21 Piccadilly, W1J 0BH
Tredwell's from Marcus Wareing	4A Upper St Martin's Lane, WC2H9NY
Tuttons	11-12 Russell Street, WC2B 5HZ
Union Street Café	47-51 Great Suffolk Street, SE1 0BS
Winter Garden, Landmark Htl	222 Marylebone Road, Marylebone, NW1 6JQ
Yacht London	Temple Pier, Victoria Embankment, WC2R 2PN
Yauatcha City	Broadgate Circle, EC2M 2QS
York & Albany	127-129 Parkway, NW1 7PS

Wishing all drivers and staff a very Merry Christmas

from the editor's desk

It's a bit silly, I know, but since December 1997 this magazine has celebrated Christmas / Eid / Chanukah / Zarathosht Diso / Rohatsu in the 1 December issue! We just have this silly feeling that 1 January might be a bit late and in any case we missed Diwali altogether. So here we are and regardless of which religion you follow, I hope your God provides you with a good December...

Confirmation of the ULEZ requirements

We now hear officially that the world's first Ultra Low Emission Zone will be introduced to London in 2020. It was also confirmed by TfL that as of 1 January 2018, all new taxis licensed will have to be zero emission capable and no new diesel taxis will be allowed in London.

TfL say they have secured £65million of funding to help taxi drivers achieve the Mayor's target of 9,000 zero emission capable taxis by 2020. The funding will provide up to £5,000 to taxi drivers who are prepared to give up their cabs when they reach 10 years of age rather than waiting until the 15 year limit arrives. The nearer to the 10 years, the higher the amount will be available. There will also be a £5,000 plug-in car grant via the Office for Low Emission Vehicles. A top-up grant of £3000 may also be added to that.

However, while most drivers can see why London should reduce its emissions, many are asking why an organisation that is hell-bent on reducing emissions is licensing new private hire vehicles at a rate of knots never before seen anywhere – let alone London. Even TfL's own estimates expect the number of PH vehicles to be substantially above the 100,000 mark by 1 January 2018 and close to 120,000 by 2020. TfL is trying to cut down emissions by increasing the number of PH cars inside central London by many thousands – now closing in on 92,000 – and blaming the increase in poor air quality on taxis! And then there's Camden Council's Tavistock Place scheme that is going to make Euston Road even worse and its emissions even higher. Are they looney... or are we for putting up with it?

Cheap Liverpool

One of my favourite cities is Liverpool and I recently went back there on a four day trip with Linda – I had to take her because she paid! With clear blue skies, walking from our Crowne Plaza hotel through the near-by Albert Dock with its restaurants, shops and bars, passing galleries, museums and an amazing collection of statues, the 'Pool is an amazingly relaxing place. If you like The Beatles, then it's even better because they are still all over from The Beatles Museum, to The Beatles restaurant to The Cavern in Mathew Street – just a few metres away from the original which is now just a plaque on a wall! And if you like shopping, well the shopping centres go on and on and on!

But however nice the trip was – and it was really nice – this piece isn't about that bit of Liverpool, it's about the taxi service. Uber is new there and will undoubtedly spread; private hire is prevalent but the taxis and minicabs live reasonably peaceably so long as they don't cross licensing borders and come



in from outer boroughs. But neither is this about minicabs or Uber – it's about Liverpool's taxi prices.

We used numerous cabs in our four days. They are plentiful and cheap. Make that plentiful and very cheap – so cheap, in fact, that I had to wonder how they made it pay.

I spoke to several drivers and they were very friendly, but all agreed that making it pay when it was busy was tough, let alone when it was quiet. But most also said that because they were cheap, more people used them rather than wait for buses. One example was when we went from our hotel to the Royal Court theatre on a really busy evening peak hour. The trip must have been around two miles and we crawled much of the way – yet the meter didn't even reach £5. And on the return journey just before 11pm, it was even cheaper because there was no traffic and the meter was still on Rate 1 – I forgot to ask if there was a Rate 2. I was giving ridiculously large tips – around 50% – because I felt so guilty!

Now I'm not suggesting that we slash our fares, but we need to accept that they are so high that many are frightened off. How often do prospective passengers now ask how much the fare will be before getting in? Far more than ever before, because they automatically assume that we are expensive – and of course we are, especially if you hit traffic. And boy, do we hit some!

A recent passenger got in my cab at the top end of Dean Street at around 6pm asking for Hampstead Way. With a terminal message saying that Wardour Street was shut at Broadwick Street, I had little choice but to use Charing Cross Road and because Soho Street was shut, I had to go via Greek Street and Old Compton. Charing Cross Road was chokka thanks to the single lane open crossing into Tottenham Court Road. Roadworks just before Howland Street then pushed everything into the centre with the result that there was the longest queue of buses in the two offside lanes that I had ever seen!

With the traffic not improving once we got into Hampstead Road, she suggested going via Primrose Hill – something I was delighted to hear because at least that meant the responsibility was now hers! But Primrose Hill was solid, as was East Heath Road when we finally managed to get to Haverstock Hill. The end result was a fare of almost £40! She was very nice and said it wasn't my fault, but she could no longer take a chance of having to pay that much again. So that was another lost customer – one who had expected to pay up to £25 if the traffic was bad so she wasn't someone who was looking for a cheapo ride. But £40?

Of course I could have knocked something off, but that isn't really the answer and in all honesty I don't know what is. But the equivalent fare in Liverpool for the same distance and traffic condi-

tions would have been less than half. Our next fare increase is expected to raise fares by an average 8p for a £10 ride, so we should obviously reject that and advertise that we have had no increase for two years. But does anyone out there have an answer?

Karhoo

After a recent evening out, I got back to find 12 missed calls – five of whom left voicemails with similar messages involving a company with a new comparison website to be released in 2016 called Karhoo. Like Uber, this is said to be a technology company claiming to have around 200,000 private hire cars AND TAXIS on its system. But the reason for the missed calls was that Karhoo had apparently established partnerships with several car AND TAXI operators. Among the names mentioned were New York car companies Carmel Cars and Dial7 along with London companies Addison Lee, ComCab and Dial-a-Cab! The idea is that Karhoo has none of the drivers working for it, but that they are still employed by the car / taxi companies they work for. It is really a comparison site.

Very little surprises me nowadays, but I assumed that if we were to suddenly go on a platform run by Uber lookalikes, that I would at least have heard a whisper. When I next saw Brian Rice I asked if he knew about Karhoo and if it was true that we were going in with them? The Chairman knew of them but said we weren't and that the first he knew of DaC's "involvement" was when he was shown some online text! I had also seen that online PR, but by the next day the piece still had the identical text – but was minus the name of Dial-a-Cab! He obviously has ways and means!

Call Sign has also seen a ComCab letter to its drivers which made two claims; firstly that they had captured law firm Freshfields (taken from Mountview) and secondly that they were going to be part of Karhoo. There is something very sad about the Freshfields capture, because although there are still three taxi radio circuits, the best they seem able to do is to take accounts from each other. If ever there was a reason to say that three should be two – if not one – then surely that is it.

But Karhoo sounds like Uber and looks like Uber. Of course that doesn't mean it is Uber, but what it probably does mean is that taxis will be on it as a back-up – after all, we're hardly going to be the cheapest option. Nevertheless, part of me still isn't sure, but I'm pleased that if we are to ever be associated with a comparison site such as that then it will at least be because WE decided to do it and not because some face in New York decided that we would. I hope ComCab's decision to become part of the Karhoo platform doesn't damage this trade beyond any hope of repair.

I also hope that the info I have in that they won Freshfields by offering no run-ins, no waiting time, no gratuity and no admin charges isn't true, because that would mean they took the account from another taxi radio circuit even though they will lose money on every trip they cover. That would be worse than sad and leaves me fearful for the trade because it would mean the world famous London taxi trade is now run by Singapore and China. But at least the Chinese are keeping us as taxis...

Too late!

I now see that the emergency services including ambulances and police are complaining that the Mayor's Cycling Superhighways are holding them up. It's a shame they didn't take notice of us earlier.

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections of the Chairman

Licence renewal

As you are all aware, Licensed London Taxi Drivers have to renew their licence – or as we call it, the 'Bill' – every three years. Well, about three weeks ago (from the time you are reading this piece) my renewal dropped through the letter box as my Bill expires in February 2016.

When you open the envelope, your heart sinks when you see the size of the contents; fortunately, on closer inspection most of the contents are instructions with just the application form that needs to be completed.

However, before you get to do that you must complete your application for what was formerly known as the **Criminal Records Bureau** (CRB) check, but now known as the **Disclosure and Barring Service** (DBS). This check can be completed online by stating which documents you intend to produce at a Post Office to be checked – in my particular case I nominated my passport, driving licence and a utility bill. It was made clear that the documents produced had to be the originals and not scanned copies.

So the next day, I went to the Post Office and produced the documents – which were in order – and paid the £56.85 fee. I would then have to wait to receive my 'E' number via email. When the number is received, it has to be entered onto the application form for renewing the licence, but at the time of writing I have not received my 'E' number, which I understand takes around four days to arrive.

When I got home from the Post Office I thought I'd take a look at the application form, which I must say seems straightforward – until I arrived at the last page which consisted of the payment method.

It seems that you can pay at a Post Office when you use their 'Check and Send' method, which then adds a fee of £7.15p to the £272 licence fee and they will then collect the whole fee from you. But I didn't need them to 'Check and Send', so that method was not needed.

The other means of paying according to the application form, I found to be quite staggering; you can pay by **Credit or Debit Card** and in both instances they require you to submit your details in written format. They require the card's sixteen digit number together with the Card Verification Code – that's the three numbers off the back of the card – and finally the 'valid from' and 'expiry' dates of the card.

You are then expected to send that to Sheffield in the post, bearing in mind the application form has your name, address and date of birth; you also have to include a scanned copy of your DVLA licence. I must confess I was appalled that TfL could be so naïve (or was it me) that they required the above information in written format, which certainly does not comply with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCIDSS). They even expected you to post the information to them.

I was so appalled by this negligence that I telephoned Sheffield to inform them of what



I considered to be an error and you will be surprised to know that they didn't seem to care; after all it was not their identity that could be stolen or their bank account that could be emptied!

Anyway, I said that I would only put a cheque in the post and asked who I should make it payable to? They very reluctantly informed me it should be made payable to 'London Taxi and Private Hire' and then added the proviso that if I sent a cheque it could hold up the issue of my licence, which as we all know is meant as a 'frightener' to most taxi drivers.

When my 'E' number is eventually sent to me, I will be sending a cheque and not entering my Credit or Debit Card details that could be cloned and/or my identity stolen (no comments please)!

So ladies and gentlemen, when you wish to renew your bill please give some thought to how you do it, because it is no good trying to lock the stable door once the horse has bolted.

Exaggerating? Well the Editor sent off his medical form to the same people and they have lost it! One month later they sent Alan a letter threatening that if he didn't send it, he could put his licence at risk! And they want me to send my bank details!!!

Website

Over half the fleet are now fitted with the new logo and I believe most of you must like them as I have only heard of one complaint and that was a letter to *Call Sign* some time ago. Our stationery has now been re-branded along with our App, so all that now needs to be done is our website and we are in the final stages of completing that.

It will be a totally new site – not just the old one with a facelift. Hopefully, it will be user-friendly as over half the trips we now complete come via our App, online or street hail Credit Cards – oh how this industry has changed in recent times! What with the way we take work and of course the unfair competition we have to deal with on a daily basis – I'm of course referring to the 90,000 minicabs, with over 600 Private Hire licences being produced on a weekly basis. No wonder the congestion in London is the worst I have ever seen it with minicabs, roadworks and the introduction of the Cycle Superhighways – and not forgetting the cyclists themselves! We will soon be in constant gridlock and that won't do much for pollution levels either, so let's just hope that TfL can sort out all the problems in 2016; after all, most of the above are only here due to their incompetence!

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Members, Staff and their families a very happy Christmas and a healthy New Year and as a flashback, it was Christmas 2007 that Dial-a-Cab paid £521k in bonuses to Members for covering account work in the run up to Christmas! How things have changed in the last eight years and all of it can be directed to the Mayor and TfL!

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

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After a successful trial period The London Taxi Company has extended its agreement with Ascott Cab Company to serve as an official retailer of the TX4.

The original agreement, announced in May 2015, was set up on the basis of a six month trial period. Following the successful completion of the trial, The London Taxi Company has moved to make the arrangement permanent on the back of positive customer feedback on Ascot Cab Co's South London location, strong commercial performance and effective working relationships that have been established between the companies.

Richard Gordon, The London Taxi Company's Commercial Director, said:

"The response to the appointment of Ascott Cab Co over the last six months has been very positive. The combination of their location, team commitment and customer loyalty gives us the confidence to move forward on a permanent basis.

With the first deliveries of the new TX4 Euro6 cab underway, interest is strong in this new model that is more powerful, smoother and the most environmentally efficient vehicle that we have ever produced. It makes sense to offer our customers the convenient option of a retailer in South London in addition to our flagship London dealership at Brewery Road in North London."

Ascott Cab Company continues as official TX4 retailer



Andy Ascott from Ascott Cab Co. said: "We have been really pleased by the response and support of our customers. Since our appointment we have received more than 90 orders for new TX4 cabs, which demonstrates the value we can add. Everyone at Ascott Cab Co is

delighted to be extending this partnership and will continue to focus on delivering the highest standards of service to our loyal customers."

For more information on the new TX4 Euro6 cab please contact ukenquiries@london.co.uk

TFL: RECORD NUMBER OF TOUTS CAUGHT

98 per cent conviction rate!

Transport for London (TfL) has successfully prosecuted 46 rogue drivers in just six months in a continued crackdown on illegal and non-compliant cab activity in the Capital. They have been extremely successful in prosecuting drivers who are caught by the Taxi and Private Hire Compliance Officers for illegally plying for hire. From April to date, 98 per cent of cases prosecuted by TfL have resulted in a conviction. These prosecutions are an essential part of a wide range of enforcement activity being undertaken by TfL and the Police to tackle toutting and other illegal cab activity. The TfL Compliance team stamp out illegal cab activity by carrying out regular vehicle and driver licensing checks across the Capital. They also work closely with the TfL-funded Metropolitan Police Service's Cab Enforcement Unit. Together they undertake joint operations on a regular basis, informed by the latest intelligence on cab-related offending, including sexual offences, toutting and unlawful plying for hire.

Earlier this year, London Mayor Boris Johnson announced the doubling of TfL Compliance Officers from 41 to 82, as part of continued efforts to increase enforcement within the Taxi and Private Hire trade.

Steve Burton, TfL's Director of Enforcement and On-Street Operations, said: "I am pleased to see that the hard work of our compliance officers and the MPS Cab Enforcement Unit are producing some great prosecution results. This work reflects our commitment to cracking down on illegal cab activity, which not only poses a serious risk to passenger safety but undermines licensed, law abiding Taxi and Private Hire drivers. We are using a broad range of tactics to deter, disrupt and apprehend drivers who are toutting or illegally plying for hire and we will push for the toughest penalties available for anyone caught by our teams."

In addition to the successful prosecutions by TfL, over the same period

the MPS Cab Enforcement Unit arrested 267 drivers for toutting and unlawful plying for hire offences of which 253 of the arrests were for toutting offences with 141 drivers summonsed for the offences to date. Of those cases, 61 have been dealt with resulting in 53 convictions (87 per cent), seven cases were dismissed or withdrawn, a warrant of arrest issued to one driver for failing to appear and 80 cases still pending.

The activity carried out by TfL's TPH Compliance team and MPS Cab Enforcement Unit is in addition to Operation Neon, an ongoing high visibility multi-agency operation to deter illegal minicab activity in the Capital.



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"That Mr Evans may be a nice chap, but I've been doing this for hundreds of years and I'm just not going to start doing it for a fixed price!"

Temporary Licensing Arrangements



Disclosure & Barring Service

TfL has announced the introduction of temporary measures for existing Taxi and PH drivers if their **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** results have still not been returned. The measures are a response to the impact that current delays at the DBS can have on drivers waiting for their licence to be renewed.

DBS checks are the responsibility of the Home Office and individual police services. The Mayor is ensuring every effort is made to reduce waiting times for these important safety checks with the Met drafting in around 60 additional members of staff to help and TfL has already taken a number of steps to ensure that licenced drivers aren't stopped from driving because of delays, discussing the issue with the Home Office and seconding a number of staff to the Metropolitan Police Service to help process applications. The new measures will further ease pressure, whilst ensuring that the high standards required from drivers are maintained.

To be eligible for the temporary measures, drivers will have had to apply for their DBS at least three months prior to the expiry of their previous licence. Drivers receive a renewal pack, which contains details of how to apply for the enhanced DBS check necessary to continue their work as a licenced driver from TfL, four months before the expiry of their licence.

The temporary measures will only be available to drivers applying to renew their licence – as these drivers will have previously undergone a DBS check and will initially be limited to two weeks in length. In the unlikely event that their DBS certificate is delayed further, drivers can apply for a renewal. Drivers from both trades who are applying for a licence for the first time will not be eligible; however TfL will continue to escalate these cases on their behalf.

Mayor of London, **Boris Johnson**, said: **"The last thing we want to see is London's taxi drivers out of work. These temporary measures are the most effective way of tackling the immediate issue alongside a dramatic boost to staffing levels at the Met. I am confident that this approach will ensure that drivers are able to get back to work as soon as possible while maintaining public safety."**

Garrett Emmerson, TfL's Chief Operating Officer for Surface Transport, said: **"We are aware that a number of drivers have been unable to work due to the delays in receiving their DBS certificate and that these delays are affecting them and their families. These new measures will help these drivers while ensuring that the high standards required of drivers are maintained."**

While the temporary measures are in place, TfL will continue to work with colleagues in the Home Office, the Metropolitan Police Service and the DBS to address the waiting times for DBS checks. As a condition of the temporary measures, drivers will be required to sign up to the DBS update service in order to prevent a similar situation occurring in future.

As well as these efforts to minimise delays in the DBS system, TfL also launched a counter service earlier this year in order to assist drivers with any licensing queries or problems.

In last month's *Call Sign*, Dial-a-Cab driver **Chris Passfield (Y25)** – who has been on the circuit for 33 years out of his 41 years as a licensed taxi driver – told us how in **October 2014** following a medical, he was told there might be a problem. Six months later he was informed that his heart muscle was operating at 20% to 25% whereas the left ventricular ejection fraction needed to show a minimum reading of 40%. As a result, Chris had to hand in his licence, even though he had never had any physical heart problems.

Following a visit to the **Royal Brompton Hospital**, he was put on **Warfarin** along with other medication they had prescribed for him, which they said should help prevent any heart attacks. Chris said that he now needed to know whether he could safely contemplate buying another taxi as his cab had passed its 15th birthday. He was philosophical about the situation, but was hopeful that there might be some other drivers out there with a similar problem or perhaps on Warfarin and who could confirm that he would be able to get his licence back with the usual medical tests.

What he didn't want was to have to involve himself in a large financial outlay for another taxi, only to then be told that he couldn't drive it!

Chris asked if there were any drivers out there who could answer the question for him and another long-time DaC driver, **Dave Freeman (A46)** has stepped forward. He told us:

"I am also under the Royal Brompton with similar problems to Chris. Although I



New hope for Chris Passfield

do not take Warfarin, I am on other medications and I must say the consultants at the Royal Brompton were amazing in pulling out all the stops and giving me treatment so that I could keep my licence. Warfarin should NOT be an obstacle on retaining your licence.

As you are aware, each case study is different. I, for instance am on two types of

HEART PROBLEMS AND TAXI DRIVING

And a possible answer to Chris Passfield...

medication, Perindopril and Fellopodine. Amongst other things, they relax the heart muscles and allow blood to flow more easily.

I am unable to do a stress test (treadmill) as I have a suspected torn adductor muscle in my groin. A more accurate test to check the heart is an Echocardiogram, which according to the results, satisfies the escalation team at TjL.

I am under Professor Kim Fox and Dr Ranil de Silva's team, who are both outstanding and seem to do all within their power enabling me to retain my licence."

We have passed Dave's contact details over to Chris Passfield and the above does seem to offer him some hope. If there is anyone out there in the same boat as Chris, then Dave has given permission for us to pass his phone number over.

On the lighter side, Dave added that his father took him over to Stamford Bridge in 1952 when he was five to watch Chelsea and that he has had a season ticket from the year dot... and if he can take that stress, then he can take anything!

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

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The Call Sign Christmas Story

Santa spells trouble

It was the first time I'd ever worked on Xmas Eve before. The only reason for it was that my wife Mary and I had discovered that after 20 years, we didn't really like each other very much and had decided to split. I was feeling a bit lonely and didn't find it easy to stop thinking about her; after all, you can't be with someone for 20 odd years and just switch off. Anyway, all this Christmas goodwill and festivity wasn't helping and I needed something to take my mind off her. So I started the cab and headed for the West End.



By 2am I reckoned I was having a good night, no awkward customers and no one throwing up in the back. I had just pulled over in Hanover Square to take a drink from my coffee flask when it all started to go wrong. Coming towards me was this massive figure dressed up like Father Christmas, complete with white beard and black boots. He put his hand up to acknowledge me and I watched with some amusement as he finally managed to get his 20 stone plus of human lard into the back of the cab.

"What happened to your reindeer," I asked him? He didn't answer immediately as the effort seemed to leave him short of breath.

"I've just come from a fancy-dress party," he explained.

"Not going to work then," I replied still smiling!

But my humour was not hitting the right spots with him, so it was down to business.

"Where would you like to go?"

"I live in the posh part of Peckham."

Now, as a Londoner I knew that such an area did not exist and I assumed he meant the part where there was the least number of murders. However, I refrained from saying that as there is no point in antagonising punters. I headed south and we hadn't been going long when the sound of a bell ringing like the last lap of a running race frightened the life out of me. I glanced round and there he was holding a brass hand-bell.

"Turn it in, mate," I shouted.

"What about singing then, is that okay?"

"Not really."

"What about smoking?"

"Of course not."

"This is not exactly a fun cab is it," he said in an un-Christmas like, aggrieved sounding voice.

By now, my roly-poly Santa Claus was giving me the hump and the only consolation was that Peckham was in the direction of home. However, after 10 minutes I thought my fare had become unusually quiet and when I stopped at some lights, I turned around to look at him. He glanced up, waved a bottle of whiskey and called me to have a drink with him!

All I wanted to do was get rid of him and I was already feeling uneasy about getting paid. We were now past Camberwell Green so I stopped and asked which direction the posh part was; unfortunately, the only sound was a snore from the red-coated lump stretched out on the seat.

I'd had enough. I got out, opened the rear door and fell in as I stumbled on a bottle. What a nightmare, I thought as I tried to wake him. My next effort was to lift this monster

from the cab but I couldn't even raise him from the seat and it was obvious that unless a friendly crane driver passed by, I was stuck with Santa Claus. So I gave up and carried on my way home.

When we finally stopped, I felt qualified as an HGV driver! My hippo-sized freight was still sound asleep and I had as much chance of getting the £70 on the meter as I did of seeing the Queen in a kebab shop. I left the cab in the drive and opened my front door.

The house felt empty since Mary had gone and even more so when I got into bed. Just don't think about it, I told

myself; but I knew it wasn't going to be easy.

When I woke up, I immediately remembered my over-sized Santa and glanced down from the bedroom window. The cab was still there but I couldn't see if anyone was in the back, so I went down hoping that he'd gone, even though so far he'd been nothing but bad news.

At first, I thought I'd had a result because when I looked in the back, my dressed-up Santa Claus wasn't there. However, he must have also fancied himself as a graffiti artist because he had spray-painted the rear seat with a seasonal message. That was bad enough, but he wasn't much of a speller either and that really did it for me.

It said Mary Xmas...

Roy Granville
Call Sign Online

With due deference to The Weather Girls and their 1982 disco hit...

IT'S RAINING ~~MEN~~... ER... TAXIS!

Hot on the heels of the new hybrid TX5 launch, which was reported on in the November *Call Sign*, comes news of the production version of the **Toyota JPN hybrid taxi** – one that bears a striking similarity to the **Geely/LTC** version – although like the **Vito**, it was based on a van.

The new taxi, which will have its release first in Japan, is wheelchair accessible with sliding doors and a low floor for easy entry and exit. Toyota also say they plan to incorporate a newly designed steering system that will have a tight turning circle – although how tight that is hasn't been revealed.

There is an electric motor and a four-cylinder that runs on **Liquified Petroleum Gas** (LPG) that, it is claimed by Toyota, has been built for durability and stop-start traffic.

The taxi – which starts with a disadvantage in that it is built by the same company as that building the Uber-favourite **Prius** – will be ready at around the same time as the TX5. Whether Toyota will apply to have it for sale in London has not yet been decided.



How the Toyota JPN Taxi will look in 2018

In this supremely competitive environment in which we live, retaining client loyalty through excellent customer service and satisfaction is the watchword of every one of us, even more so in the light of a recent court ruling regarding the "legal" status of a competitor...

Customer service was indeed at the forefront of Jackie Kott's (Y88) mind when she returned a senior account client's mobile phone that had inadvertently been left in the back of her taxi. When Jackie spoke to *Call Sign* recently, she recalled the event...

Ringling Our Praises!



account client. I turned down the offer of payment with a 'don't be silly' or words to that effect – which is probably not quite how one should talk to an account client! But I think it was taken in the spirit I gave it." Jackie laughed rather impishly at her own comment!

"But I felt quite relieved that I had not picked up anyone else prior to returning that phone, or it might have been a different story!"

When *Call Sign* spoke to the account holder, he was overwhelmed at the speedy return of a device that actually cost more than the value of a family car!

"Half my life is on that phone, including global business contacts, bank account numbers and PIN codes, together with much more personal information. Had it fallen into the wrong hands, I just do not want to think of the possible consequences."

The passenger subsequently sent a written statement to *Call Sign*. For security purposes, we have withheld names etc...

"In my experience of using *Dial-a-Cab* and other services, the case for *Dial-a-Cab* is compelling. The drivers are superb, can adapt to traffic with their knowledge of routes, so saving me a lot of time and are invariably punctual and courteous. Moreover, the security of having each fare recorded is tremendous. Having left phones and iPads in taxis – easily done – I have always got them back quickly from *Dial-a-Cab*. If time, confidence and security are important, I cannot recommend them enough."

**Alan Green (E52)
Call Sign Online**

AGM REMINDER



All members should have received the *Notice of Annual General Meeting 2015* advising that the meeting will again be held at The HAC, Armoury House, City Road on Sunday 7th February 2016 at 11am.

The meeting this year will consider an agenda *excluding* the election of officers, but *including* as usual, proposed Rule Changes and Propositions.

Any proposed Rule Changes and Propositions should have been received at Dial-a-Cab House on or before Friday 27th November 2015 as per the Notice of Annual General Meeting 2015 letter and as in the November issue of *Call Sign*.

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

**Howard Pears
Company Secretary**

"I picked the customer up from Marylebone Station, took them to somewhere behind Euston Station, set them down and made my way back to Marylebone Station, thinking no more about it. As I pulled up onto the Marylebone rank, the Lost & Found supervisor at *Dial-a-Cab*'s call centre called to ask me to check the back of my cab as the client had lost their phone and wondered if they had left it in my taxi. I looked round, and sure enough there lay a thin black personal communication device staring back at me. It seemed to have a rather lonely look as if to say 'I'm missing my owner!'" Jackie giggled at the thought.

"I immediately pulled off the rank and made my way back to the destination address, to be warmly welcomed by the

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We've all seen the Terravision coaches parked up at Finsbury Square, but Call Sign's Gary Cox (O46) saw something that could cause concern after spotting a fly pitcher outside Liverpool Street Station. But he wasn't advertising Terravision and their cheap coach trips to Stansted Airport; it was City Link advertising THEIR cheapo Stansted runs!

If City Link is famous for anything, it's their failure at business. Trying to find prolonged periods when they made profits with their parcel delivery service is difficult and following several years of failing to bring in any loot, it was on Christmas Eve 2014 when City Link went into administration, cruelly and quite infamously informing their staff on that particular day that most of them were out of work. Then on New Year's Eve, City Link announced that of their approximate 2700 staff, just 370 were still employed leaving 2356 of their former employees with the worst news they had ever had at any time... let alone on Christmas Eve!

In the 21 March 2015 issue of *The Daily Telegraph*, it was reported that City Link's creditors were unlikely to get even 2p in the pound on any money they were owed. We're not quite sure who has taken charge of a company that seems always doomed to fail, but the name has certainly returned and this time they are trying to take passengers away from Terravision and to a lesser extent, from those Licensed London taxi drivers ranking outside the Liver who are often happy to offer fixed prices to that airport – especially for four handers who might prefer less hassle re luggage etc.

So back to Gary Cox and the fly pitcher. Firstly, was his advertising of cheap coach trips to Stansted Airport allowed by the City of London Corporation Secondly, it appears they are using coaches from the Irish Republic and Gary wondered why, if they can use buses from other EU countries on their routes, how long before private hire follows the same path with the same blessing of TfL and we become bogged down with weekend minicab drivers from France and Belgium?

EURO WIDE OPPOSITION



City Link fly pitcher at the Liver, Inset: City Link's coach with Irish number plates!

bus route but not directly flogging the tickets.

City of London Corp's trading arm said that it was unlikely City Link would have been given a licence for the fly pitching, although they did add that occasionally their Events Dept does take into account exceptional circumstances. But they also told Gary that the company in question should not have been doing their advertising without first getting the correct paperwork.

All we can do is but wonder who on earth would pay City Link even eight quid, taking into account their track record! But perhaps we should ask their former 2356 members of staff who were laid off on Christmas Eve for

Following it up, Gary told *Call Sign* that information passed to him suggests that the fly pitcher was from an agency employed by the City Link group, whose staff was promoting the

their view on using City Link On second thoughts, *Call Sign* is sometimes read by young people!!!

LTFUC Victoria Station Collection

Thursday 12th November 2015 saw the **London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children** committee with huge smiles on their faces after selling most of their 2016 Calendars and completing a very successful fund raising day! Well done to all, including their amazingly credible Charlie Chaplin!

More of these popular calendars are going to print and are available from any committee member at

www.ltfuc.org.uk in return for a donation.

Grateful thanks to the management and staff at Victoria Station and again to Steve Allen of LBC for his usual appreciated support...



Collecting at Victoria with a passing LTFUC fan and Charlie Chaplin (David Girt)



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To the “lovely people” of Camden Council!

Not forgetting TfL and the City of London Corporation!

Call Sign to Camden Council:
“Wheelchair users can’t exit their taxi at the Tavistock Hotel because of your new one way system...”
Camden Council to Call Sign:
“Tough! Park round the corner...!”

If you’ve been stuck trying to get to Euston or Kings Cross from the Russell Square area, you will know only too well about the sheer lunacy of Camden’s new one-way system that totally dismisses cars and taxis as irrelevant and shows the council’s number one priority as bikes (and we have their traffic free Tottenham Court Road system still to come).

But what if you have to drop a wheelchair passenger outside the Tavistock Hotel, because as the taxi ramp is on the vehicle’s nearside, that would mean you having to park facing the wrong way or forcing the disabled passenger to get out on the traffic side – something no taxi driver would ever allow. But no doubt, any Camden Councillor would be happy to do so.

So we asked Camden and received a long

email in return telling us why they had to put this one-way in and the answer didn’t surprise us in the least. It is “...an important east / west cycle link connecting Marylebone, Fitzrovia, Bloomsbury, King’s Cross and Angel.” So it isn’t a link for cars and taxis who actually pay extortionate amounts for the privilege of driving in London – not to mention those who have to pay a congestion charge as well.

They sent me a list of how many cyclists use the route and how their own criss-cross cycle track is confusing. Of course, if it’s that confusing they could always remove it and the traffic would flow again.

This council of loonies also say that there needs to be more space for walking, but that because the roads aren’t that wide they are banning cars and as a by-product, they will make these routes more attractive – useful when you’re stuck in a huge jam while cyclists go past you with a smile, a sandwich and of course, a phone!

Yes! But what about dropping a wheelchair-bound passenger outside the Tavistock Hotel? The answer Stop on a side street where there is a left hand side kerb! And who will push the wheelchair to the hotel entrance because not all

wheelchair users are able to move without outside assistance? No answer, so we’ll never know!

So while Camden destroy that part of London and Mayor **Boris Johnson** does the same everywhere else with his bike lanes, the question has to be asked: What if there was a terrorist attack in London? Yes, we know that cyclists will be ok, but what about the rest of us who can hardly move as it is?

Now they want to close Bank junction to all vehicles except buses and bikes. My question is: Are we still part of the TfL transport system, because if we are, then you could have fooled me.

There is just one chance. Legal action! Can these authorities do exactly as they wish regardless of the problems they cause? And should car drivers have to pay a congestion charge to sit in unnecessary man-made congestion?

But, you ask, what about the cyclists? Well what about them? If they are proficient, then they will have no problems. If they are idiots, then they shouldn’t be on the roads.

Is it now ok for the lunatics to run the asylum?

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

Gainsborough School raises money for LTFUC

On Monday 2nd November, the **London Taxidivers Fund for Underprivileged**

Children was invited to the Inclusive School, **Gainsborough Primary** in Stratford, East London to collect a cheque for **£2,047.50** that was being donated by the school.

Many children from the school had attended our Christmas Party at the Grosvenor House and the outing to Southend this year – chosen because they do not get the opportunity to go on many outings.

The school was so overwhelmed by the wonderful effect the outings had on the children that one of the teachers, **Leia Jones**, Learning Mentor and Admission Lead, decided to raise some funds for us.

In July this year, **Leia** and another teacher, **Julie Carver**, along with their husbands and friends – a total of 14 in all – climbed over the **O2** roof strapped in safety harnesses and accompanied by safety experts, with the climb taking one and a half hours to complete.

We are very grateful to Head Teacher **Ms Deborah Strain** and the school, and also thank them for the lovely lunch they provided which we had together with the children.



Some of the LTFUC at the Gainsborough School

Raymond Levy
LTFUC Press Officer

OPERATIONS AND COMPLIANCE



Hello Ladies & Gents

I hope that work has picked up now that we are fast approaching the Christmas period and that the usual seasonal traffic conditions are at least tolerable! Over the last month, we have seen increased taxi usage from a number of valued accounts – Hogan Lovell's and Citi being two such clients and we are now servicing Ashurst LLP from the Appold Street rank. I'm sure that if we look after these clients, they will continue to use Dial-a-Cab taxis and increase their usage in the coming months.

But can I please ask you to remember one thing; clients don't need an excellent service at times when there are lots of empty taxis around. It's at difficult times – especially during morning and evening peak times – when taxis are hard to come by that they are looking for something extra special for their taxi transportation. Get them that when others find it difficult and you have a satisfied client who will

want to use our service again and again because they know how good and reliable it is. Tell them that we have no taxi in the area enough times and they will wonder why they bother with the account, because there is certainly no shortage of choice for them. But give them reliability and you will have a big advantage over the numerous competition options around!

Please, just take an extra few seconds to think before rejecting a trip. That might be the one that keeps the account with DaC...

Credit Card Trips

I have mentioned a number of times before in my *Call Sign* articles that Credit Card trips are steadily growing from both the street and through the system. As you are aware, the Contactless card limit has now been raised up to £30 and it will be of benefit for those members that are still to have their PEDs (Pin Enabled Device) upgraded to pop in to Roman Way sooner rather than later. It only takes a few minutes and is becoming a popular way of paying.

If the passenger's card is not *Chip and Pin* or is a foreign one, it is important that the cardholder's signature is obtained before they leave your taxi. Without a signature, it is very hard – and sometimes impossible – to prove usage, which inevitably will result in non-payment at a cost to both you, the member, and to DaC.

Compliance

You will see below in this issue of *Call Sign* that we have held another complaints hear-

ing this month of which the results are listed.

I firmly believe that all of you would rather the system be closely monitored than allow a free for all that in my opinion would be totally unacceptable. We are trying to get the procedures back on track and even many of the members that have received complaints are in agreement with what we are trying to achieve! I believe that says it all.

Booking-in, run-ins and CIJs are all listed in reports that senior members of staff receive and it is my job to decide what course of action (if any) should occur when and if complaints are generated or rules are violated. The safest solution is to play within the rules and I do really believe that most of you do.

Driver Payments for Christmas and New Year

The last statement for this year will be on Friday 18th December and cleared funds will be in your account on Thursday 24th December. The next statement will then be on 4th January 2016 and two weeks standard subscriptions will be taken on Friday 18th. This is the same arrangement as last year, one which worked very well.

Lastly, can I wish you and your families a very happy festive period and a healthy and prosperous 2016. You certainly all deserve it after such a tough year!

Allan Evans

DaC Operations / Compliance Manager

Complaints results November 2015

There was a Complaints meeting held at DaC House on 4 November 2015. These are the results including Appeals... (Abbreviations: rep = reprimand, susp = suspension)

Name & call sign	Description	Verdict
Mark Lander (P77)	Driver repeatedly books into W8 and W11 when true location is Hertfordshire Rules 2, 11	2. Severe rep 11. 2 week susp
Keith D'Urso (M57)	Driver repeatedly books into EC2 when true location is Woodford/Redbridge/Waltham Way. Driver booked into CC00 (LCA) when true location was Angel Road by Walthamstow Ave. Rules 2, 11	2. 4 weeks susp 11. Expelled Expulsion upheld on Appeal
Wayne Ford (N41)	Driver regularly books into EC2 when true location is close to Hatfield. Rules 2, 11	2. Severe rep 11. 1 week susp Susp reduced on Appeal
George Brown (J39)	Driver accepted a fixed price trip to an outer London zone and called the contact centre on 3 occasions complaining that he was unaware of the new fixed price procedure. Driver also complained about the price of the trip, which was overheard by the client, causing him to complain. Rules 2, 3	2. Warning 3. Severe rep



It's not that often that a female passenger admits to her taxi driver that she is a loose woman, but taxi regular and **Birds of a Feather** star **Linda Robson** told **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Richard Potter** (T51) exactly that – although the meaning wasn't quite as it sounded!

"I took an As Directed terminal job at the **ITV** studios at Kent House on the **South Bank**," Richard told **Call Sign**. "When I got there, I was waved through the back gates and told to park at the rear of the studios. I saw a crowd waiting and asked a security guard what was going on and he told me that Linda Robson had just finished working on the new series of **Birds of a Feather** and had just returned to **ITV**'s popular afternoon show, **Loose Women**."

They wanted me to be part of a film, the idea being that at the start of that days' programme it would be announced that Linda was expected back and they wanted to film her getting out of a London Taxi calling out "wait for me" and waving her **Loose Women's** tea mug! TV companies do sometimes cheat but they also know what London's most identifiable vehicles are! As it happens, Linda Robson is a regular taxi user and her daughter, **Lauren**, works in the **Radio Taxis** call centre.

"I'm a loose woman!"



Linda exits Richard's taxi!

"What was even funnier," ended Richard, "was that immediately the filming stopped

and I was clearing the job, someone came up to me and told me that I couldn't park there!

MORE BIKE LANES AROUND WESTMINSTER BRIDGE!

Just when you thought you'd seen all the cycling plans linked to the Mayor's super highway scheme that many say is killing London, TfL has now announced their latest blockbuster to improve cycle facilities even further.

It comes in the form of a further consultation that gives an option to segregate lanes on Westminster Bridge, to put in a new crossing for pedestrians and to make a new cycle and pedestrian-friendly junction at the southern end of the bridge. TfL say that the improvements would open up "safer cycle links from Waterloo Station and south London to the new East-West Cycle Superhighway, currently under construction."

If it goes through, it will give cyclists a new route from Waterloo to Parliament Square, the Embankment, Marble Arch, Paddington, Blackfriars and the City! *The exclamation mark is ours!*

It will also have a link to the new "Central London Grid" cycle route along the South Bank.

According to TfL's Surface Transport MD, **Leon Daniels**: "London is rapidly changing and that is why we are modernising our roads to keep pace with it. We can turn a potentially hazardous junction into a safer place for cyclists and pedestrians by redesigning this area. Our proposed safety improvements would benefit Londoners and commuters of London's busiest railway station, Waterloo, who would have better walking and cycling links to and from the station."

Mr Daniels didn't say what benefit there would be to London's motorists because **Call Sign** is struggling to think of many – or should that be any! But cyclists, who most London taxi drivers now believe rule the roost – will be well provided for as they will now have segregated lanes and their own traffic signals by the south-east arm of the Westminster Bridge South roundabout by the **Park Plaza** hotel. Just like the Superhighway lanes, cyclists won't have to use them and perhaps rather than waste them, the Mayor's cycling commissioner, **Andrew Gilligan** – who exclusively revealed to **Call Sign** back in April that even though fortunes had been spent on the Cycling Superhighways that cyclists didn't actually have to use them – could assign them to women pushing prams instead?

Unsurprisingly, the consultation also proposes a new trial 20mph limit for all traffic on the bridge, on part of Westminster Bridge Road, Addington Street and York Road. We do not know whether that limit will include the Lycra-lads on their super-thin super-bikes because 20mph could slow them down somewhat.

The work is a part of TfL's *Road Modernisation Plan*, which has involved a £4billion

– yes, that's £4billion and not £4million – investment in London's road network that TfL say will ensure our roads are able to meet the needs of a growing population and which complements other proposed local improvement schemes from Lambeth Council and others. You drive a car or taxi Tough!!! Subject to the results of the public consultation, work could begin as early as summer 2016.

Immaculate White Cab Available for Weddings



Female driver

10% reduction for Dial-a-Cab drivers
Contact Debbie (W18) on

07956 317040



Kizzy is a 27 year old male who hails from Togo in West Africa. From the 16th century and for around 200 years, Togo was the trading centre for Europeans searching for slaves to export. It even earned Togo the name of **The Slave Coast**. Kizzy doesn't think much has changed and describes his position nowadays as being in 'servitude' to Uber. "That's what it feels like," he told me recently in the full knowledge that his words would be reproduced in *Call Sign*. He went on to explain those words...

"The UK is the mother of democracy; everyone wants to be here for its liberty, tolerance and safety. Uber welcomes migrants and refugees with open arms, allowing us to get a foothold – at least so far as work is concerned and where 'good' English isn't a necessity. Most drivers' partners have other jobs as it is impossible to make a decent living on Uber unless you work around the clock."

Kizzy often has to sleep in his Prius in order to make his working hours pay. I asked him if he felt exploited? He earnestly replied that it was better to take Uber's crumbs than to steal from his neighbours! He told me that he rents his car but refused to talk about his insurance status and added that working for Uber was unpredictable, varying between slack and busy.

He said he prefers short rides with their £5 minimum, but dislikes 'roaders' because the fares are so cheap and just not economically viable. He tends to call punters with an excuse if a job doesn't suit him and gets them to cancel, earning himself a fiver! If they don't cooperate, he will pretend they're not at the pick-up and scrub it. Contrary to rumour, Uber do allow some rejection of jobs, but if drivers continue to do so they will be deactivated without notice.

Ratings are another pressure. If they drop, drivers get a call enquiring whether they know their way around town. Kizzy admitted to me that he often hung up at Eurostar. When I asked why, he replied honestly that at hourly earnings of around £6 (well below average minimum wage) he had to put himself where the work was.

I asked Kizzy what he thought of licensed taxi drivers? He rather touchingly gestured a bow and then pronounced: "You are the undisputed kings! Taxis are the father, Uber is the baby. If baby gets smacked for continually crying, it will scream louder. Baby needs to be embraced and caressed and taught how to behave properly." I impressed on him that was TfL's responsibility and not ours! I was then taken aback by Kizzy's assertion that

Alex Hayley's Roots; Saga of an American family was published in 1976. A year later, ABC TV's mini-series had a record breaking 130 million viewers in the US and millions more in the UK with its story beginning in 1750 and the birth of Kunta Kinte into a life of slavery. Roots follows his family's battle against slavery through the years. Call Sign's Marc Turner recently spoke to an Uber driver and noted a similarity to that original series. Marc's story is true...

FROM ROOTS TO ROUTES!



Uber drivers often sleep in their cars

young women loved Uber.

"They can't resist the cheapness, despite surge pricing or even feeling scared of the drivers. They all tend to make contact with loved ones as soon as they enter my car because I think they don't trust me! The majority of night customers are young women. Their usage is phenomenal. They may even be the deciding factor in this conflict."

I had one final question to Kizzy; what were his hopes and predictions for the future? His answer wasn't one I really wanted to hear: "Uber is dropping prices again to try and attract new passengers from all over London even though it will aggravate 'partners' with rising commissions. If we raised our fares and you dropped yours, we could meet somewhere in the middle. We Uber drivers shouldn't be enemies with taxi drivers because we have one thing in common – our mutual hatred of Uber."

At that point Kizzy, genuinely tearful, admitted that he didn't want to be an Uber driver for much longer. He found it to be so stressful due to his not being qualified for the rigours of responding to 'immediate hire'. In other words, he didn't know his way around.

At that point, I thanked Kizzy for his time and insight. We parted company – he to yet another night's sleep in his car followed by another day in Uber bondage. I wouldn't dream of saying it directly to Kizzy for fear of offending someone who had been honest in his responses, but there was obviously a tenuous link from Alex Haley's *Roots* to Kizzy's lack of Routes and Uber...

There but for the grace of God go we... and please don't blame the messenger!

Seasons Greetings to one and all...

Marc Turner (R97)
Call Sign Online

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Barbara (left) and Charmaine from Barclays present Russell with a cheque

Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund DaC at 44th TDoY dinner & dance

On 7th November, around 90 guests enjoyed the 44th annual **Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund** dinner and dance at the Holiday Inn, Regents Park.

Following a drinks reception and a minute's silence to honour those connected to the taxi trade that had passed away during the past 12 months, everyone enjoyed an excellent five course dinner beginning with a really delicious trio of melon with a sour berry compote, followed by an equally tasty minestrone soup. A short rest and up came the main course of chicken (or fish or steak depending on your preference), all accompanied by scrumptious miniature roast potatoes, carrots and sugar snaps. If you had room left, then there was an excellent dessert trio with ice cream. Tea or coffee followed with chocolate mints!

Lady guests were presented with a cute foldaway bag before all guests settled down for an evening of dancing to the oldies but goodies of **Deemer Street**. If you needed a breather, then around an hour later there was more tea and coffee, this time with warm Danish pastries! The only question is how Russell and Barbara can do all that on a Saturday evening in a top class hotel for just £65 per person. Oh, and did I mention that there were also several bottles of wine on each table!

Of course, no matter how entertaining, the purpose of the evening is the charity and presentations were later made to five of London's taxi trade charities. Incredibly, in its first 43 years it has given away well over £2million and 2015 was no exception as TDOY Charity Fund Honorary Chairman, **Russell Poluck MBE (T55)**, watched by his wife **Barbara**, presented the five major taxi charities with £1000 each on the night with probably more to come once the total for the night comes in.

The charities receiving the fund boost were the **East London Cabbies Outing**, the **London Taxidrivers' Fund for Underprivileged**

Children – accepted on behalf of his fellow committee members by DaC Board member **Mike Son** – the **London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled**, the **Southend Taxi Drivers Charity for Children** and the **Albany Charity Fund**.

Mike Son told *Call Sign* afterwards: "Every penny the trade charities receive is very welcome and this is also always such an entertaining evening." (Cover pic to see if Mike enjoyed the evening... Ed).

In his speech, Russell explained why the competition aspect for **Taxi Driver of the Year** no longer seems feasible – and that is the small matter of the approximate £35,000 that is needed nowadays to find somewhere suitable to hold an event that used to be one of the highlights of the trade's year and an event that was regularly won by **Dial-a-Cab** drivers! However, they were still hoping that a sponsor could be found.

During the course of the evening, there was a popular tombola running in which **Barclays Bank** of Edgware promised to double however much was taken. There was also

a successful raffle where the first prize was a £1000 holiday voucher.

Once again Dial-a-Cab was one of the sponsors and Chairman Brian Rice was present. Thanks were also made to sponsors Audrey Sherry, Dagenham Travel, Radio Taxis Group, Tradex Insurance, Ubiquitous, Quotax and Colts Cabs.

The raffle winners were
(with names as given on the ticket stub):

1st Steve – 03927 £1,000.00 Holiday Voucher

2nd Lou – 02769 TomTom

3rd Eugenie – 02401 Overnight stay & Dinner at the Coptborne Hotel

4th Rochelle – 03762 Jewellery

5th Julie – 01133 Overnight Stay & Spa @ Macdonald Berystede

6th Ashley – 03965 Hamper

7th James – 00534 Box Cutlery

8th Jim – 03950 £50 Totes gift Voucher

Camden and Islington warning

Call Sign has been told by a reliable source within a surveillance camera department that all the speed cameras in the borough of Islington are active and that the whole borough is now 20mph. Fines have been reported on Old Street, in Bunhill Row and also for doing 25mph at The Roundhouse – which comes under Camden!

Your licence could be at risk.
Please obey the signage...



According to The Guardian, Mayor Boris Johnson is considering the possibility for TfL to buy zero-emission taxis and then lease them back to taxi drivers! This would be part of TfL's efforts to tackle London's air pollution. Since 2010, London has been in breach of EU safety limits and had to pay the resulting fines for nitrogen dioxide, which is said to be produced by diesel vehicles such as taxis.

The surprising response went to London Assembly member, **Stephen Knight**. Mayor Johnson told him: "TfL is currently considering the proposal to purchase and supply zero-emission capable taxis to taxi drivers in London. This is a complex proposal and needs to be considered carefully given that TfL is the regulator for the taxi and private hire trades in London."

TfL already operates a similar leasing model for the new Routemaster buses. Mr Knight welcomed the possibility of electric black cabs: He said:

"Switching London's black taxi fleet over from diesel to electric vehicles is an essential part of tackling dangerous air

Lease-a-Cab Go to TfL!



Stephen Knight: Mayor told him he was thinking of leasing electric taxis to drivers

pollution in the capital. Electric taxis have the benefit of low running costs, but the barrier to their fast and widespread adop-

tion is the very high initial purchase price of these new and innovative vehicles."

DO YOU WANT TO PLAY IN A BAND?



Do you want to join the band?

This was in last month's *Call Sign* but no one responded, so we're trying again because we know there are some guitarists out there who are looking to join a band. We need a bass player and rhythm / lead guitarist, possibly an organist as well. We are based in the Woodford and Loughton area. You don't need to be another Eric Clapton, just reasonably good!

We play rock and blues or anything that takes our fancy! We're all in our 60s and have been round the block a few times, so no pressure there! But we'd really like to start gigging again.

If you fancy having a go with us, please call Kevin on 07506 736421.

I Have A Dream



I have a dream to settle war.

No arguments, nor fighting, just happiness and peace.

People dream of this wish to come true,

But there will always be an ongoing war forever and always.

Happiness will always be waiting for us,

But sometimes we just can't reach it from all the horrors of war;

And these nasty people want to ruin people's lives to keep themselves happy.

I have a dream that everyone gets along. Yet again, no arguing, no fighting. Just happiness.

We shall stick together and fight through hard times.

Dream on and believe in yourself, because together the world could achieve so much.

By Imogen Fisher
(age 10)

The above was written by Editor's granddaughter Imogen following the Paris atrocities...



LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

With Tom Quigley (Y33)

Bags and shoes

Last month, I wrote about the introduction of carrier bag charges in shops. The old adage was that you could tell a person by their shoes, you can now add bags to that adage with the emergence of everyone carrying a bag again. It reminded me of the days when I grew up and everyone had a bag to carry something.

But things have moved on and every person and group has their own status and statement with the bags they carry.

At the Gym, everyone has a sports holdall, but not just any holdall – it has to be one with a branded sports company name on it and equipped with enough paraphernalia to go away for a week! There are trainers, running tops, shorts, cycle shorts, swimming shorts, drink bottles, protein shake bottles and all to spend an hour relaxing. Unless you are one of the really fit people who only have a drawstring bag (sponsored, of course), permanently dressed in lycra and ready for action as they are busy people who do not have the time to change!

Then you get the rambler type of person who no matter what they are doing or where they are going, always have a rucksack/backpack on their shoulders and of course obligatory mountain walking shoes to negotiate the High Street!

No business person has a briefcase anymore; they have a flight bag with wheels to carry all their chargers for their laptops and mobile offices inside the bag. Go to **Holborn Station** and you can tell a **Freemason** from the big cases they carry, undoubtedly full of important things like robes!

Women no longer have a handbag; it's a designer leather holdall with a shoulder strap, generally larger than the old **Wells Fargo** money bags that always have to be searched at the airport and measured as they may have to go in the hold.

Every one of we taxi drivers will have our money bag tucked under our arm or resting on our stomachs as we order yet another oversized pasta (as it's healthy) that we don't need.

I've noticed that the shopper's trolley has been upgraded too; it no longer just two wheels, there are now four-wheeled ones that you push and not pull! Some come with fold down seats, all to assist the owner. Because they don't fit in the boot of your car, the contents have to be unloaded individually. But some have their own special boot bags to store your oil, trolley jack, anti-freeze and of course to separate your shopping and gym bag, as that local Gym is too far away to walk to.

The bag that fascinates me is the **Jehovah's Witness** bag; whenever they roam your street in a pack or knock on your door in pairs, they all have the same regulation size black, nondescript, leather case / holdall, unsponsored with no trace of endorsement by the *High and Mighty*. I'm not in their group, but I would love to know where they are ordered from...



Road closures

Fed up with the road closures Well the guidelines for **Knowledge** students generally mean that if a road is closed for more than six months, then the students cannot call

through it so have to learn another route. Long gone are the days of calling through the dirty dozen to get across Soho. That is due to Crossrail.

But you can feel for the student with the increased number of closures going on at the moment, that every time they go to look at a road or point, it's closed or the one-way system has changed especially around **Aldgate** and **Loughborough Road** areas.

In fact, it's got that bad, that on one appearance – and I don't spread rumours about the KoL – an examiner told a student to forget about road closures and just get him there in the normal way, as it would probably have changed again by the time the student got out! He was probably right...

Have a great Christmas...

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

Taxis banned from Bank junction

The City of London Corporation has released plans to ban most traffic – including taxis – from the Bank junction between 7am and 7 pm. Buses and cyclists will still be allowed in.

If it goes ahead, it will probably mean corporate taxi accounts in the City deciding that using a taxi is no longer feasible and instruct their staff to use buses where possible or minicab companies that don't charge for traffic hold-ups.

If the scheme goes forward, it will confirm that both TfL and the City Corporation no longer count taxis as being part of London's transport system.

There was a tragedy at the junction in June, when 26 year old **Ying Tao** was killed by an **HGV** as she cycled to work. There was a "die in" by cyclists several days later and this closure appears to be the result.

There were 105 collisions close to the junction over five years up to last November with 118 casualties, of which around half were pedestrians, one third being cyclists and the rest motorcyclists.

TfL will probably decide on whether to accept the plan by next spring.



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I went into great lengths in my last *Call Sign* report to explain in more detail the amount of work involved in completing tender proposals. Since then, we have completed a further three new tenders and wait to be appraised.

The tender I referred to last time has now short-listed us to make another presentation on the functionality of our systems. Having made that presentation, the next stage is to present our costs. This also has led to clarification questions being asked with additional work being spent on resourcing for additional workings of the actual account.

I'm sorry if I am sounding rather vague, but I hope you understand that while I want to keep members fully informed, there is still a great deal of confidentiality to adhere to while the selection process is being undertaken.

In this business, it is not a simple process to obtain clients and clients are going to great lengths to choose suppliers. Without doubt, the trend out there at this time is still cost and recently we have received lots of enquiries from private hire account holders requesting information about our services. In our conversations, it is apparent that the reason they are contacting us is because of the

DaC Sales Report

With Keith Cain



serious drop in service being given to them by the larger car firms. Having explained our own charges and services, many have said they will think about it but a few have stated that despite our pricing structure – which I hasten to add is very attractive – the cost of a journey from the city to west end, for example, is still more than they have been paying.

Therefore, they have decided to not change supplier for a better service but would rather stay with their current car firm, pay less and wait for as long as it takes to get a vehicle!

The same goes for our own clients who are also reviewing their costs. We are offering more fixed price journeys and having to make serious reductions in our administration charges.

I also want to remind members there is still in place a monetary sum for any introduction by members for a company that opens an account facility with us. If there are any members who can 'talk the talk' to a prospective account holder, we will pay you for your hard work.

I would like to take this opportunity to send all members and their family's season greetings and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Keith Cain
DaC Head of Sales

DAC CREDIT UNION AND XMAS SHOPPING



Have your kids told you that they now need an iPad or laptop in their room for homework! Yes Well this could be an expensive holiday season for you!

There are many reputable shops offering cheap laptops and iPads etc – but only if you pay outright. It's when you want to pay off that it suddenly become expensive. We've seen £800 packages with 48 monthly payments of £24.28 that end up costing £1165 – an extra £365. That's just one example!

Now look at the **Dial-a-Cab Credit Union**. That £800 loan over 12 months at £72 would cost you just £53 extra in interest. Even over 36 months, you would pay nowhere near **PC World's** rate.

If the **DaC Credit Union** loaned you £1000 over 36 months, that would cost you just £34 a month and a total of £195 in interest, probably around one third of the total interest the big electrical stores would charge you for not paying the whole amount up front.

The **Dial-a-Cab Credit Union** now has over 1000 members and enough funds to cover most loans. It costs you nothing to join and if you do not want to borrow money, contrary to rumour, you pay no fine and you can just continue saving – and saving is the only compulsory thing about DACCU... you have to save a set amount regularly. How much you save is entirely up to you, but the more you save, the more you can borrow! And of course your savings can be taken back whenever you want them or if you would like a loan, very often just a quick phone call will do it – no dressing up and begging the bank manager or looking for loans with shark companies where 1000+ per cent interest is normal!

The DACCU is for drivers and staff of **Dial-a-Cab**, but anyone in your family can also become a member in their own right with all the loan benefits that it offers.

Hackney Road Taxi Tyres

The other benefit you can find here is the downstairs tyre service, **Hackney Road Taxi Tyres**. If you save with the DaC Credit Union, then you can even have your new tyres fitted and pay for them from your CU account. Now that really makes financial sense. Or of course, you can just pay for the tyres in the normal ways – cash or credit/debit cards.

It doesn't have to be for your cab, they also supply any make of tyre for your car. Just make a simple phone call with the size and they will call you back with three quotes – budget, mid and top of the range tyres and then it's up to you. They can be ordered for next day delivery on condition they are in stock.

DACCU closes Christmas Eve at 4pm and reopens 2 January. Have a very Happy Christmas; you know where we are if you need us and as usual, be lucky... but be very careful out there.

You can contact the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union on 020 7729 8171 or 020 7749 0585, Hackney Road Taxi Tyres on 0207 729 5237 or go to the office at Unit 14, Peterley Business Centre, 472 Hackney Road, E2...

John Riley, Vice-President, Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

Nice work !

Nope! It isn't really one of ours with a new phone number; **Dial-a-Cab** – the original one from 1953 – driver **Debbie Hope (W18)** spotted this imitator heading towards **Tavistock Place** recently. The cab with the familiar name brought a passenger on a 100 mile trip from Cheltenham. A nice job when you can get it!

For those that don't know Debbie, she and her white TX4 are available for weddings. See her advert in every issue...





Bob Woodford looks at London's long lost sporting venues

Let me start with a question you might not immediately have an answer to: What do Battersea Heliport, Southside Shopping Centre in Wandsworth (formerly the Arndale) and Makro wholesalers in Charlton all have in common? The answer is they're all on the site of former London Greyhound Stadiums. Last month's article has already highlighted Clapton Dog Track, which is now covered over by a social housing estate in Millfields Road. So continuing with that theme this month, let's explore some more 'ghosts' from London's lost sporting history.

Wanna bet!

Wandsworth Stadium had a capacity of 20,000. Greyhound racing was a very popular spectator sport up and down the country at one time, particularly before WW2. In the Greater London area alone there were more than 30 tracks. The SW18 stadium opened in 1933, was bordered on the west side by **Buckhold Road** and on the east side by **Garratt Lane**, but on its southern perimeter stood the beautiful **Wandsworth Aqueduct** constructed in 1887 to assist storm relief and pulled down along with the dog track in 1966 to construct what was then the largest covered shopping mall in Europe.

Just up in **Lombard Road**, alongside the Thames, the short-lived **Battersea Greyhound Stadium** (1930-1939) had stiff competition with its local rival and was one of the many tracks forced to close just after the outbreak of War and did not re-open. Older readers might recall its short use as an Ice Skating venue long before the choppers arrived.

Down in **Charlton** and very close to the **Valley**, home of **Charlton Athletic FC** and opposite the perhaps politically incorrectly named **Antigallican Pub**, bordered by **Gallions Road** and **Anchor and Hope Lane** is the **Makro Store** – which sits on the site of the old **Charlton Greyhound Stadium** that existed between 1928 and 1971.

South Londoners were spoilt for choice when it came to watching greyhounds. I can remember the first time my Dad took me to **The Den** to watch **Millwall**, walking in from

Some people are on the pitch, they think it's all over...

"IT IS NOW!"



The old West Ham dog track is now a DLR station!

Haringey (1927-1987) in **Green Lanes**, which is now the **Sainsbury's Store**; **Park Royal** (1931-1969) which is now an industrial estate just off the A40 heading west before **Hanger Lane**; **Stratford** (1953-1966) was in **Quartermile Lane** in **Temple Mills**; **Walthamstow** (1931-2008) was originally the **Crooked Billet Greyhound & Whippet Track** where some of the most prestigious races in the greyhound racing calendar took place at 'The Stow'

(the façade is still intact and a listed structure even after Boris approved plans for housing). Then there was **Wembley** (1927-1987) which like **Stamford Bridge** surrounded the football perimeter; **West Ham** (1927-1987) in **Prince Regent Lane** – now covered partly by the DLR Station and track – this was also the home of **Thames FC**, a former Football League Third Division South side who hold the record for the lowest ever League attendance of 469 in a match against **Luton Town** in a stadium with a 120,000 capacity! Then there was **White City** (1927-1984), a stadium originally opened by **King Edward VII** for athletics with a swimming and diving pool infield; the land is now **BBC** property, hemmed in by **Wood Lane**, **White City Road** and the A40.

Further afield there were tracks at **Dagenham** (1930-1938), which was north of the **Ripple Road**; **Greenford** (1927-1928) which was in **Birkbeck Avenue** (now **Jeymer Drive**; **Harlington Corner**) (1935-1962) just south of the **Bath Road** near the **Holiday Inn** on land required by the Air Ministry to further develop **Heathrow Airport**. There was **Sidcup** (1934-1935) in **Foots Cray Road**; **Southall** (1931-1976 in **Havelock Road** (now covered by **Havelock Primary School**); **Welling** (1932-1939) was situated on **Wickham Street** where **Beale Close** is now; **Hendon** (1935-1972) is now beneath the **Brent Cross Shopping Centre**; **Watford** (1928-1967) was at **Vicarage Road** while **Edmonton** (1930-1938) was available for **Spurs** fans and located in **Eastbourne Avenue** where **Barrowside Close** is now.

Edgware and **Feltham** also once hosted small independent (what were known as 'flapping' tracks), but of all the numerous tracks that once covered the metropolis, you can only watch greyhound racing these days at **Crayford**, **Romford** and **Wimbledon**.

Next month I'll explore some more 'Ghosts of Christmas Past' when we'll look at some long lost teams that once used many of the stadiums listed above – but these were not football teams! Have a great Christmas...!

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online

the **Ilderton Road** end and having to ask him what the huge black box-like structure was on the left as we walked up to the turnstiles. It was actually the giant scoreboard to the **New Cross Stadium** (1938-1969) that has now been replaced by the **Bridge Meadows** housing estate!

If you have been bemused by the **Angel Town Regeneration Scheme** that forces you out into the **Brixton Road** via **Villa Road** just opposite the **St. Helens Road School**, it currently sits on the site of the **Brixton Greyhound Stadium** (1932-1939). 4,000 fans showed up at its very first meeting, with 2,000 locked outside!

In more recent years, we lost the **Catford Dog Track** at **Catford Bridge** (1932-2003), which was destroyed by a fire and subsequently demolished – another stadium that once attracted huge crowds before the legislation allowing betting shops in the 1960s.

The so-called **London Stadium** (1936-1977) was down in **Sandy Lane**, **Mitcham**, just a goal-kick away from the old **Tooting & Mitcham** football ground where former **Millwall**, **Manchester United** and **Chelsea** goalkeeper **Alex Stepney** began his career. Only **Wimbledon Stadium** survives in South London as a venue for greyhound racing – although this writer is convinced that because of its situation on the east bank of the **River Wandle** and therefore within the SW17 postal district, it should be known as **Tooting Stadium**!

Another track existed with an SW post code around the football pitch at **Stamford Bridge** (1933-1968), a stadium capable once of holding 100,000 spectators when going to the dogs was once more popular than going to the football – which some say is 'going to the dogs' these days anyway!

We started the series last month at **Clapton** and the **Hackney Wick Greyhound Stadium** (1932-1997) was a point in **Waterden Road** on the **Knowledge** of course – its old site, once used for car boot sales soon after closing, was eventually swallowed up by the **London Olympics International Media Centre** for the 2012 Olympic Games. Other tracks north of the River included

Another true story from Geoff Levene...

Me, Sir John Chilcot and the Iraq Inquiry!



I've been giving it a lot of thought to what could I do if I decided to get out of the taxi game. I had considered Saudi oil prince as a new career. Nice cars, lots of girls, posh home in the West End and plenty of holidays. But I don't know – those white robes give you a washed-out look and the laundry bills must be astronomical; so I'll pass on that one.

How about a football manager? We've all been there... "Wos 'ee doin'? Why dunnee bring on Oscar? Ee's 'avin a laugh!" We all think we know best. Mind you, I wouldn't have got rid of **De Bruyne** and **Mata**. And I wouldn't know what to do with those multi-million pound pay-offs or the cars or the girls or the home in the West End!

So what else is there I suppose I could always fall back on being a Rock Star. It's not generally known that I'm one of the world's great air guitarists. It all started back in the late fifties when I was heavily influenced by **Hank B. Marvin** (what did the B stand for by the way) My version of **Apache** is still talked about in air guitarist circles. And that was just the start of it. There was **Johnny B. Goode**, which was of course accompanied with **Chuck Berry's** Duck Walk. The riff from **The Kinks** **All Right Now** and of course **Fleetwood Mack's** **Albatross**.

But as I got more interested in classical stuff, I learnt a new skill – the air violin. It wasn't easy, I can tell you, but eventually I mastered it. **Bach**, **Mozart**, **Beethoven**; I've taken them all on. I'm told I have a magnificent *arpeggio* and my *cadenzas* have to be seen to be believed!

But one thing that has never tempted me was politics. However popular you might be, one day eventually they will all turn against you. Even **Churchill** had only five good years and a lifetime in the wilderness or mired in controversy. I once picked up **Norman Lamont**. He was no longer in government and lived in **Kensington Park Road** very close to the cab shelter. He was often to be seen eating a bacon sarnie and stirring a mug of tea with a spoon secured by a piece of string.

As he came out, he looked up at the sky and asked me: "Do you think I need my coat?"

"Well," I replied, "It looks a bit ominous but you'll have to decide."

He looked wistful as he said: "They're the only decisions I have to make these days!"

Not far from there in **Ken High Street**, I recently picked up a lady with six bags of shopping. We went to a house in **Princedale Road**.

"Can I help you in with the shopping," I asked, trying to be helpful.

"Oh thank you," she said, "but I apologise for the mess."

So in we went. I understood what she meant. There were piles of paper everywhere. On chairs, tables, on the floor, up the stairs. There was even a cat asleep on one load. Then a man appeared; he looked familiar.

"I can't find 497," he wailed. "I had it but now it's gone." Then I recognised him – it was **Sir John Chilcot** – he of the **Iraq Inquiry**. Mrs Chilcot didn't look pleased. "Well I'm not looking for it; I wasted last weekend searching for 693. Find it yourself!"

He appealed to me. "Please help me driver, I'll pay for your time."

"But isn't this stuff top secret," I responded "Don't worry about that," he said! At that point Chilcot answered the phone.

"Hello... Oh Prime Minister, how are you Yes, I'm also fine, thank you. Yes, it's coming along nicely, just a few things to tie up. Yes, it has taken a while. Oh, did I really say it was almost ready Well if you say I did, but a few things have held me up... I had that problem with the car and then the cat got sick..." At which point even pussy gave him a funny look and went out through the cat-flap!

"Yes PM, of course, as soon as possible. Thanks for ringing... and regards to Sam."

So I started looking everywhere for page 497. It took me an hour and twenty minutes but then I found a shopping list. Six eggs; wholemeal loaf; matzo meal... and a tube of anusol! I turned the list over and there it was – 497.

Chilcot breathed a sigh of relief. The report comes out next summer – thanks to me!

Anyway I've decided on my future. I'm going into manufacturing. I'm going to turn out those signs that say: **STOP HERE WHEN RED LIGHT SHOWS**. You never know, someone might want one...

Geoff Levene (W32)

Call Sign Online



THE HERTFORDSHIRE WINTER PRO-AM GOLF TOURNAMENT

Friday 18 December 2015

Friday 29 January 2016

Friday 26 February 2016

Friday March 18 2016

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10.30 Shot gun start***

15.30 Presentation of Professional & Team prizes

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The Hertfordshire was designed by Jack Nicklaus II. It is a par 70 spread over 6266 yards of beautiful Hertfordshire countryside, making full use of the natural surroundings. The lakes and forests in the area, for example, make for wonderfully challenging natural hazards. With full irrigation cover of tees, fairways and greens, the course is in fantastic condition all year round. Read more about the course at <http://www.thehertfordshiregolf.co.uk/>

Royal Oak closes again

The **Royal Oak** cab driver's eatery closed on 31 October after being given around 10 days' notice to get out following Middle Eastern property developers purchasing the site.

This is the second time that the Oak has been shut down, after its first site at the **Paddington Basin** was closed by **Crossrail**. After a long gap, they found premises close to **Paddington Station**. Now it's goodbye to that as well.

The owners say they will be back, but admit that finding new premises won't be easy. We wish them luck...

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

Brethren of the Whip



Occupational hazard...

When **Joseph Hansom** designed his eponymous coach, its success centred on the fact that with just two wheels, the coach was finely balanced when harnessed

which meant there was less strain on the horse and which made for a more comfortable ride. To achieve this equilibrium, the driver was perched precariously high at the back of the cab looking over the roof. Most of the fatalities that occurred to cabmen during the 19th century were due to injuries received from being "thrown from his box."

More often than not, the cabman would have had more to drink than he should have, but there was also the condition of the streets to take into account.

On the night of **Easter Monday 1880**, 65 year old **Elijah Patrick** was driving round **Cumberland Market (now Haymarket)** when one of his wheels struck a large stone, said to be "in a dangerous position," causing Patrick to be thrown from his seat. He was immediately taken to the **UCH** but died three days later.

In November of the same year, **Henry Williams**, coincidentally of **Cumberland Market**, was found lying in the middle of the **Great Western Road**. It was never found out what caused him to be thrown; he did not smell of drink nor was he subject to fits. But after having been thrown, his horse charged

off at great speed before crashing into another cab. It was with great difficulty that the police back-tracked in the dark before eventually finding Williams. He died shortly after being admitted to **St Mary's Hospital**.

In **August 1881** a cabman named **Cooper** was thrown from his box following a collision with another cab in **Regent Street**. He was taken to **St Thomas's Hospital** where he was treated for a scalp wound. He complained of pains on the left side of his chest and the surgeon just bandaged these up and told him to return the following day. The next morning, however, Cooper was in agony and his wife took him to nearby **St Mary's Hospital** where he died shortly after. A post mortem revealed five cracked ribs and a punctured lung. The injury to his head was more severe than the house surgeon at **St Thomas's** had indicated and the apparently "drunk" Cooper was most likely severely concussed.

Not all such accidents were fatal, but some had fatal consequences. Take the case of 61 year old Charles Humphries. Shortly before Christmas 1881, he was thrown from his box and his injuries were severe enough for him to be admitted to the Marylebone Infirmary – the hospital-wing of a workhouse then in Luxborough Street. People were not patients in infirmaries; they were "pauper inmates."

With Charles in hospital, there was no money coming into the household. He lived with his wife at **5 Newnham Street (now Brendon Street)** and despite her age, she was forced to go charring in order to get money to buy food and pay the rent.

But help was close at hand. Her landlord, Robert Saunders, an ex-butler who

owned a number of properties in the area, employed her as a cleaner with other domestic duties.

At 5.50 on **New Year's Eve 1881**, **Louisa Humphries** finished those duties for the day at **16 Shouldham Street** and reported as such to her landlord (and employer) who was having dinner with his wife. Before she was relieved, Louisa was asked if she would go to the shops to buy some pork for the following day's dinner. Louisa agreed and Saunders gave her 3shillings (15p) for it. No sooner had he given Louisa the money than he ran to the parlour door and locked it. His wife was not unduly alarmed at this point as he had been "slightly eccentric of late." Then without warning, Saunders pulled out a gun and shot Louisa through the head at point blank range. Fearing for her own safety, the wife then attacked her husband – who fired another two shots at her, both fortunately missing. She managed to knock the gun from his hand and unlock the door, running into the street screaming. Her husband chased after her and fired another shot, which again missed her.

When the police eventually managed to smash their way through two doors, they found the bodies of Saunders, who had shot himself and of Louisa Humphries, who was still clasping the 3s for the following day's dinner.

It was not recorded what led to Charles Humphries being thrown from his seat, but it started a chain of events that nobody could have foreseen.

**Sean Farrell (B39)
Call Sign Online**

DIAL-A-CAB ARTISTS

Ladies and Gentleman



Firstly, I am pleased to let you know the **London Taxi Company** now has a fully loaded Dial-a-Cab loan taxi complete with a data terminal and DaC logos. Obviously this loan cab is for the exclusive use of Dial-a-Cab drivers when your cab is having work done at the LTC.

And now for something completely different

Next spring, there will be an art exhibition and competition held at the Goldsmiths' Centre, Britton Street, EC1. It will be open to all competent artists, whether a taxi driver, member of the family or anyone associated with the London taxi industry. In fact even regular cab passengers can enter!

The theme is London, Past and Present.

The artwork can be sketches, oil paintings, water colours, sculptures – in fact any artwork will be considered. There will be a monetary prize for the winning artwork that is deemed to be thoughtful, well-constructed and imaginative. Judging will be by well-respected and knowledgeable professional artists.

Those artists who exhibit will have the opportunity to sell their work to interested buyers and of any work that is sold, a small percentage of the sale price will go to the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children in an effort to help worthy causes.

You may be a promising artist who could equal the talents of **Damian Hirst, Salvador Dali, David Hockney** or **Tracy Emin**.

You have 6 months to plan the work should you wish to exhibit. If you are interested in participating or would like some further information, please send an email to m.son@btconnect.com and I'll be happy to help...



Taxi in the Rain

**Mike Son
DaC BoM**

The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled

TRIBUTE TO A HERO

London is full of large statues dedicated to long-forgotten senior military figures, but the acts of regular military personnel are rarely commemorated with the same grandeur. The people of Bermondsey did much to rectify this imbalance on Friday 23rd October when a stunning statue was unveiled to honour a local boy who won the VC in the First World War.

Able Seaman Albert McKenzie, at the tender age of 19, was the first London sailor to receive the Victoria Cross from King George V. He was part of the crew of HMS Vindictive, which led the raid on Zeebrugge harbour. The plan was to create a diversion by taking out German gun positions, while British warships moved in to block the canal entrance thus preventing German submarines from leaving the port.

Disaster struck when the smoke-screen was blown away by the wind and heavy casualties ensued before the Vindictive managed to pull



Vets go back to the Oxford and Bermondsey club after the ceremony

alongside the harbour wall. McKenzie, armed with a Lewis gun, fought incredibly bravely and accounted for about a dozen of the enemy before the gun was shot from his grasp. He managed to find a rifle, bayonet and pistol and fought on, kicking and punching as he went, suffering wounds to his back and legs. He was nominated by his shipmates for the VC. Tragically he died just before the end of the War, not due to his wounds, but from influenza.

The Bermondsey community put on a moving and dignified ceremony. The statue, created by a local blacksmith, was unveiled by Admiral Lord West and there was a full gun salute on HMS Belfast.

Family members and dignitaries gave speeches, including a representative of the people of Flanders and the Deputy Lieutenant of Southwark, who read out a message from Her Majesty the Queen.

John Berylson, chairman of Millwall FC, himself an ex US marine and his chief executive, Andy Amber, were in attendance demonstrating the support that this London club gives to Britain's military. And no ceremony of this kind would have been complete without the Pearly King and Queen of Rotherhithe.

As part of the ITBAWD, Dial-a-Cab's Terry Ward (W13) (aka Barking Bill) along with Mickey Calvey and myself had the pleasure of escorting several of the charity's veteran volunteer collectors to attend the unveiling, and we were thrilled to be invited back to the Oxford and Bermondsey Club, where the committee had prepared a marvellous reception. This was the moment when the Taxi Charity's veterans came into their own, as they performed a number of wartime songs much to the delight of the assembled company.

It was a really wonderful tribute to a courageous local hero. When you are passing the junction of Tower Bridge Road and Bermondsey Street, pause for a moment to remember another of the fallen.

Frances Luczyc Wyhowska

LTC commits to fight against climate change

The London Taxi Company has joined forces with ten taxi companies in eleven markets to tackle climate change as part of the **21st United Nations conference** on climate change – **COP 21**. As a partner in the initiative, the company is committing to promote the uptake of cleaner, more efficient taxis across Europe and the widespread adoption of low emission zones in European cities by 2020.

The London Taxi Company is investing £300 million into the development of its new zero emissions capable taxi, which will go on sale in 2017. It's new manufacturing facility in Ansty, West Midlands, is also being built with sustainability in mind and is expected to achieve an 'Excellent' BREEAM rating and will be 'A' rated for energy performance.

The climate change initiative is supported by the **French Ministry for Environment** as the host nation for the **COP 21** talks and has received assistance from the COP 21 team in helping companies define the possible goals for the project. The eleven founder companies will now invite all taxi companies worldwide to join them and commit to reducing their fleet CO2 emissions. The London Taxi Company is the only manufacturer currently signed up to the initiative.

LTC Chief Executive, **Peter Johansen**, said: "As an environmentally aware company, climate change is a topic that is close to the heart of our business. We're investing significantly to ensure we have the products to help solve climate change and poor air quality in major cities worldwide. We're incredibly proud to be part of this initiative and look forward to engaging with all its stakeholders worldwide."

The initiative is led by French taxi company Les Taxibus with involvement from London Taxi Company, Taxibus (Belgium), Taxi 31300 (Austria), Fågelviksgruppen (Sweden and Norway), Central Taxis (UK), Taxi Central Amsterdam (Netherlands), Taxiphone Centrale (Switzerland), Taxis Berlin (Germany), Taxi 3570 (Italy) and Taxelco (Canada).



No question? No answer?

Call Sign is always carefully proofed and we try for as few mistakes as possible. Unfortunately, just before production of this issue, a computer accident deleted every question mark! At the last minute we have tried to replace what we could, but have probably missed a number due to the short time available before the magazine's timeslot. If so, we hope it does not spoil your enjoyment of the issue.

Alan Fisher, Call Sign Editor

Call Sign December 2015

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This drivers' experience may be of particular interest to night-men, now that the evenings are getting ever shorter.

Imagine merrily buzzing around the streets of London or – if you are lucky – the darker roads of the countryside, when suddenly and without warning your headlights both 'dip' and the main beam goes dim before disappearing altogether! In addition, your interior lighting fails and the passenger intercom goes silent!

Well that's exactly what happened to Dial-a-Cab driver Alan Richards (W21) and his 07 plate TX4. Alan told *Call Sign* what happened...



"I've been on DaC for almost ten years now and this had never happened to me before. One minute I was happily working, the next it was like a wartime *blackout* except that the street lights were still going, so it didn't take too much working out to realise I had a problem! It was pretty scary at first.

"I had the telephone number of a mobile electrician, so having managed to crawl home I called him at a more sociable hour and after explaining my problem, he correctly diagnosed the fault over the phone and was at my door within a few hours, which I thought was pretty good going. He sorted the fault out very quickly and I was ready to go back on the road.

"I assumed I was in for a mega-bucks cost due to a major component failure, but I was worrying unnecessarily because the cost was very reasonable. The problem had been exactly as he had diagnosed over the phone.

When *Call Sign* spoke to John, the electrician, he was very familiar with the problem Alan had experienced. It is due to overloading of the fuse that supplies power to the lighting circuits and other services.

"The system is under powered, so when drivers switch on the lights and draw additional power by using the intercom and other stuff, the purple coloured wire from the fuse box – sited in the dash – literally melts due to overheating and that's when everything fails. The problem affects TX2s from '55' plate onwards, as they are similar to the TX4 fuse box as in Alan's cab," John explained.

Many drivers will be familiar with John's

When the lights go out...

work from his days working at London Taxi Company former main dealers, Mann & Overton.

If you need to contact John, his mobile number is; 07702 348 061.

Alan Green (E52), *Call Sign* Online

LONDON LEGEND Limousine Taxis



London Legend specialises in wedding transport. Our magnificent Asquith Limousine Taxis and Landaulets with drop hoods are replicas of the legendary 1930's Austin Low Loader Hackney Carriage. Special rates for Dial-a-Cab drivers on mid week and out of season weddings. We cover all areas of London and the south east.

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TfL finalise ULEZ requirements for Taxis and PH

The Mayor and TfL have confirmed to the taxi and private hire trades how they will play their part in improving London's air quality when the world's first **Ultra Low Emission Zone** is introduced in the Capital in 2020.

From **1 January 2018**, all taxis licensed for the first time must be zero emission capable, while new diesel taxis will not be allowed in London. For private hire vehicles, there are several milestones which will ensure that all vehicles granted a private hire licence for the first time after **1 January 2023** will be zero emission capable, regardless of age.

In advance of the **ULEZ** requirements and to clean up the private hire fleet, all PH vehicles licensed for the first time between 1 January 2018 and **31 December 2019** must feature Euro 6 petrol or diesel engine, or a Euro 4 petrol-hybrid engine. From **1 January 2020** all new PH vehicles – defined as those under 18 months old – licensed for the first time will have to be zero emission capable. Older PH vehicles – those over 18 months old – will need to feature a Euro 6 engine when licensed for the first time between 1 January 2020 and **31 December 2022**. They will also need to be zero emission capable from 2023.

This follows a second consultation with the taxi and private hire trades, stakeholders and the public on proposed licensing changes ahead of the ULEZ. The Mayor and TfL have secured £65m of funding to help taxi drivers achieve a target of 9,000 zero emission capable taxis by 2020.

Up to £5,000 will be available to taxi drivers who want to decommission their vehicle once it reaches 10 years of age, with the exact amount depending on the age of the vehicle. As well as this, a £5,000 plug-in car grant is available through the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), to which a £3,000 'top-up' grant can be added.

The 15-year age limit for taxis will remain in place, but the decommissioning scheme will encourage cabbies to remove the oldest, most polluting vehicles from the fleet and upgrade to new zero emission capable taxis. The scheme is intended to tackle the problem of air quality in London in an effective and sustainable way, while also taking into account the challenges currently facing the trade.

Mayor Johnson said: "The taxi and minicab trades have a crucial role to play in helping to improve London's air quality. This is why we have made them a central part of our Ultra Low Emission Zone plans. We understand this will take time and that is why we are giving financial assistance to help clean up these vehicle fleets. The Ultra Low Emission Zone is the most ambitious measure of its kind in the world and we need everyone on board for it to be a success."

🍷 *Yep, it's that time of the year again...* 🍷

Christmas at the home of Charles Dickens

From 1 December until Twelfth Night (6 January 2016) the first family home of Charles Dickens at 48 Doughty Street will host a celebration of Christmas and of one of the author's best-loved books, *A Christmas Carol*. The London townhouse into which Dickens moved with his growing family in 1837, now the Charles Dickens Museum, will be dressed for a beautiful Victorian Christmas celebration of the historic rooms in which Dickens lived and worked while he made his name. They will be filled with decorations, fragrances and sounds of a 19th century London Christmas.

Among this year's highlights will be atmospheric candlelit evening openings; late-night openings and tours of the House; special performances and readings of *A Christmas Carol* by acclaimed Dickens performers; a Christmas walk through the streets of London and a beautifully lively and festive day of celebration and anticipation on perhaps the most exciting day of the year, Christmas Eve.

As part of this year's celebrations, the Museum will present *A Christmas Carol Reimagined*, a new exhibition exploring the themes of perhaps Dickens's most enduring piece of work. Written in six weeks in the winter of 1843, *A Christmas Carol* sold 6,000 copies in the six days between its release and Christmas Eve that same year and has never been out of print since. Inspired by a damning parliamentary report on child labour and growing awareness of child poverty, the book follows Ebenezer Scrooge on a path to redemption over the course of a tortuous (for him, not for us) Christmas Eve night. The Museum's exhibition gallery will be filled with a wealth of new work, created by illustration students from Central Saint Martins in response to Dickens's tale of compassion and social awareness.

Visitor information and event details:

Christmas at the Charles Dickens Museum and *A Christmas Carol Reimagined* exhibition

Dates 1 December 2015 – 6 January 2016. Open seven days a week, 10am-5pm (last admission 4pm). Closed Xmas/Boxing Day, adults £8; concessions £6; children (6-16) £4; under 6 free.

Christmas by candlelight

An unforgettable opportunity to make your way through Charles Dickens's home by candlelight at Christmas. Evocatively lit and lavishly decorated rooms will give a palpable sense of seeing Dickens's beautifully restored home as he did. Flickering lights will illuminate the elegance of the interiors, as well as the shadowy chambers of the Victorian basement and the heart of the home, the kitchen. The rooms are filled with items from the world's most comprehensive collection of Dickens artefacts, including the desk at which he wrote *Great Expectations*, his red leather chair in the Drawing Room, his personal library of books and John Leech's sketches for



his illustrations reproduced in the first edition of *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens often wrote into the night by candlelight and was fascinated by the effects created by flames. Guests will be able to luxuriate in what he called 'a ruddy, homely...glow' and experience rooms filled with festive greenery, authentic Victorian fayre and the scent of citrus and spice.

Dates 16, 23 and 30 December from 6.40pm. Tickets £20.

A Christmas Carol: Performed by Dominic Gerrard

A special candlelit performance of *A Christmas Carol* by acclaimed actor and Dickens performer, **Dominic Gerrard** in the rooms in which Dickens wrote. A magical re-telling of the classic Christmas story, directed by **Tim Carroll** with ingenious puppetry animating the words of **Ebenezer Scrooge**.

Dates 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28 and 29 Dec at 3.30pm and 6.30pm. Tickets £22 (incl Museum entry).

A Christmas Carol: Read by Michael Slater

Back by popular demand, the great **Professor Michael Slater MBE** will bring *A Christmas Carol* to life with wit and panache. A much-loved annual festive treat, highly recommended by all at the Museum and the many visitors who return to experience it each year. If you are yet to hear Michael Slater bring the great works of Dickens to life, this is your chance.

Dates 12, 13, 14, 15 December at 3.30pm and 6.30pm. Tickets: £15 (incl Museum entry).

A Very Dickensian Christmas Eve

A special day of Christmas celebrations throughout Dickens's home. An opportunity to immerse yourself in Christmas spirit and Victorian London with carol singing around the piano in the Drawing Room; theatrical performances throughout the house by emerging theatre company **Equapoise**, each inspired by Dickens's Christmas stories; invitations to come into the basement kitchen to learn how to make the perfect Christmas pudding; hourly readings by Michael Slater of *A Christmas Carol*; and not to mention healthy glasses of mulled cider.

Date: 24 December from 10am – 5pm.

Dominic Gerrard and Mr Scrooge

Tickets: Adults £18; Children £10.

Costumed Christmas Tours of Dickens's home

A step back in time to Christmas 1839: while Dickens and his family are attending a Christmas ball, their housemaid takes a break from her duties and invites visitors through the now-rarely-open original door of 48

Doughty Street – which Dickens used – to enjoy an exclusive tour of Dickens's 'house in town', dressed for Christmas and filled with festive greenery, authentic Victorian fayre and the scent of citrus and spice.

Dates Saturdays 12/19 December from 10am-1pm. Adults: £18; Concessions: £14; Children £10.

Costumed Christmas walk

Exploring the streets and alleyways where many of **Dickens** greatest novels unfolded. The walk will take in **Saffron Hill** with **Oliver Twist** and **Fagin**; the little corner where **Pip** lodged with **Herbert Pocket** in *Great Expectations*; and a look for **Bob Cratchit** as he heads home on Christmas eve 1843, with no idea that his employer, **Ebenezer Scrooge**, is about to undergo an overnight transformation. Twisting through the old streets of London, the walk will reveal how Dickens came to write *A Christmas Carol* and how it has influenced our celebrations of Christmas.

Dates Wednesday 23 December at 2.30pm. Tickets: £10.

When Charles Dickens moved into 48 Doughty Street, he was a little known writer still using his pen-name, **Boz**. By the time he left, he was an international superstar, having finished *The Pickwick Papers* and written both *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* at the house.

During his time there, he surrounded himself with people; a procession of influential visitors – actors, writers and socialites – came to dine in his late-Regency rooms and relished his parties, particularly at Christmas. The rooms are still filled with the furniture Dickens bought for the house – most of the fireplaces, doors, locks, window shutters and fittings are his and contain such items as the copper in the washhouse used to steam the Christmas puddings enjoyed by the family each year, not to mention the desk where he wrote *Great Expectations* and other great works!

Tickets are available from 1 November at www.dickensmuseum.com.

More info at:

www.dickensmuseum.com 020 7405 2127
events@dickensmuseum.com

Hindhead GC...

Over the months I have been writing for *Call Sign*, I may have laid claim to many of the courses as being 'spectacular' or 'stunning' etc and I meant it! Well, after playing **Hindhead** in September, I can honestly say that this course is undoubtedly the number one on the list so far! Never have I played a more picturesque course as this one.

Hindhead Golf Club has a close association with Peter Alliss, television's undoubted voice of golf, and various photos and memorabilia are found within the clubhouse.

The course itself is on two levels; holes 2 to 9 meander through deep valleys formed from ice age glaciers, the banks are Heather covered adding to the truly breathtaking vista.

If you've been a good golfer and repaired your divots and pitch marks, the golfing Gods could take pity from an errant tee shot and propel your pristine white ball back onto the fairway from those steep valley banks. Don't count on it though!

The tee shot at the third is semi-blind from a high tee – can there be any greater feeling than seeing your white dot of a ball against a clear blue sky after a well hit drive!

The course itself is immaculately maintained; from the 10th to the 18th holes you play on the upper level of the course – probably the harder part of the course – but it's a course that doesn't beat you up. Play within yourself and plot your way round and you'll be rewarded with a score close to your handicap.

The club itself couldn't be more welcoming

An occasional review from a struggling 14 handicapper at some of the marque golf courses I've had the privilege to play in my golf days away from the taxi...

SIMON'S GOLF COURSES



Hindhead is number one on Simon's list... so far!

– members and staff alike. With the Hogs Back tunnel on the A3, it makes the journey there much easier than in previous years.

I know I say this every issue, but this really

is a must play course...
Happy golfing...

Simon Wallis (M11)
Call Sign Online

Black Cabs are the number one Icon!

The world famous London Taxi, the ground-breaking work of Frank Pick's posters and Harry Beck's iconic Tube map have been named as London's favourite transport Design Icons.

The three topped the vote after more than 10,000 Londoners took part in the **Transport for London** and **London Transport Museum** search. Sponsored by **Exterion Media**, the Design Icons search is part of **Transported by Design**, an 18-month programme of events, exhibitions and competitions that celebrate the role of good design on the capital's transport network.

Londoners voted for two months from a shortlist of 100 transport designs that had been carefully chosen by industry experts, staff and the LT Museum.

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Simon Scott is one of the new generation of taxi drivers whose life is captured as a blog! His story of when he was on the Knowledge is...

A Blogger's Tale

For some extra cash while on the Knowledge, I got a delivery job that was based on the edge of the city of London. Derek and Jimmy were two London cabbies who had bought a newsagents shop in Fleet Street as an investment; my job was to deliver bundles of newspapers to their customers using Jimmy's old cab. The tyres were always on the edge of legality and the brakes non-existent.

I raised this point with Jimmy, who took great pleasure in telling a Knowledge Boy that cab brakes were meant to be like that: "Cabs aren't built for speed!" I saw it as an initiation into the trade and kept telling myself that as I stood on the brakes with two feet and a prayer to force the old thing to stop.

Jimmy's cab was to become my template for the future; it had a character of its own

and would try to have a lie in by refusing to start in the mornings. Derek taught me a trick that coaxed it into life involving squirting a substance called **Easy Start** into the air intake and partially turning the key in the ignition to warm things up. It worked every time; there would be an explosion of black soot from the exhaust and an awful rhythmic banging sound from the engine and the old girl would burst reluctantly into life. It didn't have a radio, the windows were on a spring and so I had to push them up and down manually and the screen wash button was a plunger that produced a watery dribble at best.

But things were all going along well and I got off to a good start on the Knowledge, getting 28 days from my first appearance. I began to enjoy whizzing around on my moped. I had my share of set-backs though, like the day I bounced off a group of German tourists on **London Bridge** and ended up flat on my back in the middle of the road or that really cold day when I smelt burning flesh because I'd accidentally touched the exhaust

pipe instead of the engine. There was the time I hit a pothole in **Earls Court** and heard my thermos flask smash and soak all my knowledge papers.

Yes, biking was definitely the way forward – until of course the fateful day arrived and I got 'a drop'. In Knowledge terms, a drop is when an examiner – in my case the scary **Mr Miller** – decided that I was good enough to take a step forward and he reduced my appearances to 21 days. This meant I was as good as there – well that's what everyone told me. I had my doubts though; after all it could all still go horribly wrong.

Despite my reservations, I took a 'wangle' cab from a local cab garage in **Bethnal Green**. They gave me an ancient cab to practice in on the condition that I would rent a cab from them for a year when I got my badge. Well it seemed like a good idea at the time.

To be continued...

Simon Scott (040)
Call Sign Online

Killer minicab tout jailed for 8 years

On October 22 at the Inner London Crown Court, Matab Uddin 59 from Grays in Essex was found guilty of causing death by dangerous driving.

The court heard how police were called on 17 November 2013 at 01:45hrs to reports of a man injured on Essex Road, Islington. Police officers and an ambulance crew attended and took the 27-year-old victim, Oliver Farrell, to the Royal London Hospital. He died three days later from head injuries.

Officers from the Serious Collision Investigation Unit launched an investigation. Mr Farrell had spent the previous evening celebrating his brother's birthday and was making his way home from Old Street. He was picked up by the unlicensed Uddin, who already had previous convictions for toutting.

A short while later, Mr Farrell got out of the cab to use a cash machine; however Uddin drove off leaving Mr Farrell in Essex Road.

CCTV showed Uddin returning a few minutes later, pulling up next to Mr Farrell who leaned through the open passenger window. Uddin then drove away at speed while Mr Farrell clung to the car. After being carried along for 100 yards, he lost his grip and fell to the ground suffering a fatal head injury.

Uddin failed to stop at the scene and made off. However the incident was witnessed by a taxi driver who was driving behind Uddin. He took down the registration number.

CCTV on Kingsland High Road caught Uddin crossing a central reservation during his getaway. The car reg taken by the taxi driver proved vital in identifying Uddin, who was arrested in connection with the incident after handing himself in at a north London police station later that morning.

Detective Sergeant Chris Osborne of the Met's Serious Collision Investigation Unit, said: "I would like to pay tribute to Mr Farrell's family, who have retained the utmost dignity throughout the whole investigation and court case. My thoughts remain with them. This case highlights the dangers posed by unlicensed minicabs. People trying to make their way home, especially late at night should only use pre-booked licensed minicabs or black cabs. This is a tragic case for all involved and it stemmed from the unscrupulous actions of Mr Uddin. Our investigation showed he was illegally toutting and on this occasion drove off without any regard for Mr Farrell's safety. He then failed to stop and made clear attempts to flee the scene."

The minicab tout was jailed for eight years. Oliver Farrell's brother Ben said after the case that no punishment would ever bring their Oli back, but that they had been seeking justice for the benefit of greater society and to reduce the chances of other families having to experience what they had been through and will continue to go through.

Our hope is that others will learn from this appalling crime. Sadly we have our doubts...



Oliver Farrell died after being touted by Uddin

Geely's Beauty of China competition!



The London Taxi Company / Geely is now selling the new Euro 6 version of the TX4 with its 2.8 greener engine, lighter chassis and drivetrain and improved power output. They also announced to the world details of its 2018 hybrid emission taxi, the TX5 (see October's *Call Sign*).

At the same time, LTC owners, **Geely**, were encouraging tourists who were in China at the time discovering the country's beauty to send in their mobile phone pictures. Of course, entering photos in the **Amazing China: 2015 Mobile Phone Photo Contest** meant that you had to have been visiting there and not just nicked your best friends photo!

Call Sign is mentioning the competition because 100 winners will have their photos displayed on 50 London taxis and just in case you didn't know why the pics were there... well you do now!

But if any **Dial-a-Cab** drivers were in China at the time and entered photos, please let **Call Sign** know and even if they didn't win a Geely prize, we'd be happy to publish them – especially if they involve taxis...

Photo: China News Service / Shen Zhen

Elliot is a DaC driver's son who was diagnosed with Nodular Lymphocyte predominant Hodgkins Lymphoma two years ago. The family's world was sent spinning, but Elliot is a fighter and followed by the BBC's The One Show, he recently completed a Rickshaw challenge. This is Elliot's report...

ELLIOT'S 'CHILDREN IN NEED' RICKSHAW CHALLENGE!

Day 1

At 05.00hrs on Friday 6th November, I set off from Lands End in Cornwall along with five other young people to start the BBC Children In Need Rickshaw Challenge for 2015. We had arrived the day before to collect our riding equipment and to try to establish a bond within the team, but little did we all realise what awaited us. As Lucy rode the rickshaw out, we had every type of weather known to man thrown at us. It was cold, dark, wet and windy so at least we were getting the best of British weather! However it was exciting too and as the night turned into day, we could see just how beautiful this part of the country was. But we were not here to sightsee; we had a job to do! We started strong, each taking our turn in the saddle. After Lucy's start, Erin was next, then George D followed by Amira, then myself and finally George G. We could hardly control our excitement as we awaited our turn; at first this was so very exciting and new, but would our enthusiasm last?

At the end of the first day, we arrived tired, wet and cold in Padstow. We were greeted by Rick Stein who had laid on a super fish dinner for all of team rickshaw whilst we did our first live outdoor broadcast for **The One Show**. I can really recommend his restaurant if you ever find yourself in Padstow. It was superb. We'd completed day one; this was going to be easy... wasn't it?

Day 2

After our first night's sleep in a strange and unusual hotel room that to me was in the middle of nowhere, we were up again at 05.00hrs for a 06.00hrs start. I was second on the bike today and so watched on as Amira got totally soaked as we made our way towards Okehampton. By the time it was my turn to take over, the weather had changed and although windy, it was also dry! We made Okehampton and although we were cold and tired, at least we made it! Day two was now over but exhaustion made for an early night, ready for another early start for the ride to Taunton.

Day 3

I was lucky as I was allowed to lay in for an hour to rest as the "big one" was only two days away. When I rejoined the team, they were already a few miles out from Okehampton on their way towards Taunton, the weather was starting to settle down and we were finding our comfort zones and starting to enjoy the challenge. It was now game on! The ride to Taunton was uneventful and seemed to go smoothly as we looked forward to another hotel, another hotel meal and another hotel bed...

Day 4

The next morning saw us up bright and early ready for ride towards Bristol – the one before the ride we were all dreading. That night, George G cycled over the Clifton suspension Bridge and into the live outdoor broadcast for **The One Show** where he met his Dad, someone that he had really been missing. The only team members who were allowed a parent to travel with them were Lucy and George G as they needed someone who was familiar with them to support them with their well-being. We had chaperones that were there to keep an eye on us, they were like best friends – a real laugh, although you



Elliot and Pudsey ready to leave dad's taxi!

would not want to upset them. George D and I both went to bed really early that night as we were due to start the dreaded day five at 02.00hrs; this was the ride that all team members and support staff were not looking forward to at all!

Day 5

At 74 miles, the trip between Bristol and Winchester was the longest ride that had ever been attempted in the five year history of the CIN rickshaw challenge – around 15 miles more than the average ride; this was going to be a tough one so it was down to myself and George D to get us underway and make good going, this was whilst the other four team members had a sleep in until 07.00. Jealous Nah, not really, well actually...

It was difficult starting at 02.00hrs but we started well and with kind weather managed to get a good distance, around 32 miles, between us and Bristol by the time the other members joined us at around 08.00hrs. They then took over and it was our turn to take a break and a well-earned warm cup of tea. By that evening, we were ahead of time as we rolled into Winchester and even managed a few visits to schools along the way. As we arrived in Winchester town centre, the realisation hit us... we'd done it! We had got the worst ride of the challenge out of the way! We were all elated and looking forward to a long hard sleep, but there was more work to do! Another live broadcast whilst we turned on **Winchesters Christmas lights**.

Day 6

We were now over half way to our finish at the 'EastEnd' – well **Elstree studios** and the **Eastenders** set actually; but you don't argue with the producers! Our bodies were starting to fall apart. My knees were swelling, painful and heavily bandaged. There were too many other numerous problems with other team members to recall them all in **Call Sign**. We were each asked if we wished to carry on, it goes without saying what our replies were. We now had a blast down to **Brighton** to get under our belts, so we left at 06.00hrs to complete the trip and rolled into the seaside city at around 19.15hrs where Amira met her family. She was elated and tearful; she had missed them so much.

Day 7

Once again after an early night, an early morning was the order of the day in readiness for day 7 – Brighton to **Chatham Docks**. I was the

ELLIOT'S CHILDREN IN NEED RICKSHAW CHALLENGE! (Continued)

first rider to get us going, I was really looking forward to the trip to Chatham as it's a place I've always wanted to visit, we had tried many times before to make a trip here but always seem to get caught at **Bluewater** shopping centre – and I hate shopping! The journey down became quite an event when team member Amira got really upset at the thought of not seeing her family for another few days, this affected us all but we regrouped, got her into a support vehicle and carried on. We were all in an emotional state but NOT going to allow tears to beat us!

Without realising it, our team bond was complete. We were now all thinking along the same lines and looking out for each other as if we had known each other for years. We were complete.

I was the rider taking the rickshaw into Chatham Docks that day and could not believe it when I was told to go up a ramp and onto **HMS Ganet**! As I neared the top of the ramp and turned left, I spotted my friend **Aaron** – a friend I met at **Teens Unite**, an amazing organisation I wrote about in the last *Call Sign*. He wouldn't know I was there unless told as Aaron is blind due to a brain tumour. I made my way over to him and spotted my Nan, Sister and then my Mum and Dad, I hadn't known they were going to meet me there and it really was a fantastic and tearful surprise. I had missed them all so much. **Matt Baker** had to prise me off Mum and Dad for my live **One Show** interview; after that we all went back to the hotel for food and after my family left, I went straight to bed. I was so, so tired.

Last day

The next morning we all awoke to the realisation that it was to be our last day on the rickshaw. It was a sad start as we were all now really enjoying our time as part of team rickshaw and being with Matt Baker and all of the **One Show** support staff. It was like being a part of one big family, even though our bodies were broken and we were so tired. It was a day we were not looking forward to as it meant that soon we we'd be separated, each to our own corners of the country and probably never spend another night together ever again; but our heads were held high even though our hearts were on the ground. We left Chatham at around 05.00hrs and made our way towards the **Woolwich Ferry**, once across we got the news that the rickshaw was to go through the **Crossrail Tunnel**! Amira was the lucky team member to complete this ride so we all drove off to **Stepney** in the support vehicles to meet her there. When she arrived, we made our way through **Hackney** onto **Stoke Newington** – right into **Mildmay Park**, comply **Newington Green** leave by **Green Lanes**, forward into...lol! A taxi family or what!!! We eventually arrived at **Elstree** and managed to grab a bite to eat before our live arrival onto **The One Show** where the amount we had raised was going to be revealed!

We went onto the stage and met **Fearne Cotton** who after a short interview, revealed the amount we had raised. We were after £2.1million as this would take the total money raised so far by **CIN rickshaw challenge** to £10 million over its 5 years, but what we achieved was amazing! We had raised £3,468,678! **Totally amazing!** Dad says my face was a picture of shock, surprise and happiness; it was undoubtedly the proudest moment I have ever had – we had raised nearly 10% of the total amount that **Children In Need** had for 2015!

Let's just say we partied hard and long that night, what a party it was too! We were all in tears, **Matt Baker** and all the crew were there and for the last time in our lives we were still one big happy rickshaw challenge family.

It's now been a couple of days since the end of the rickshaw challenge and although I am missing it, team rickshaw are all meeting up tomorrow (Monday) for one final goodbye live on BBC's **The One Show**, in actual fact it won't be a goodbye as we are now all firm friends. What started out as 6 young people who were complete strangers has now developed into a bond that will never ever break, we have after all travelled together through 477 miles on a rickshaw, shared tears, helped each other's broken bodies and now have memories of all this and more that will last a dozen lifetimes. This is all



Elliot with The One Show's Matt Baker and local firemen who followed the rickshaw for a leg

down and thanks to the support of Matt Baker – who I must add is such a lovely guy, the chaperones, the riding staff, the medical staff, the outriders, the fund raising team, the producers, oh and I nearly forgot to mention **The Stig**, yep, he was driving the camera car!

May I also thank all of those that donated to my just giving page as it was this that kept me going throughout the challenge. Each night I'd call home for an update as my internet connection was often poor and as the total rose, so did my resolve to finish the challenge. **Teens Unite** is and always will be a massive part of my life.

Thank you everyone...

Elliot

Ed's note: The total Elliot and co raised has now reached an astonishing £3,750,000. Well done to all of them...

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John Davis

Hi Alan

I found it hard to believe the front cover story in the *November Call Sign* regarding **John Davis (V41)** and his arrest for "touting," when it was patently obvious that he was just trying to assist a member of public late at night. Surely had he been touting, it would have been for a rather more lucrative job than **Lavender Hill** to the **McDonald's** by **Wandsworth Bridge**. We see minicabs touting all the time, yet all we get is the odd one or two being arrested. Yet a licensed London taxi driver is arrested for daring to ask what he assumed to be a member of the public – rather than an undercover policeman seemingly looking for taxi drivers to 'pull' – if he had his hand out as he wasn't sure!

I was delighted to see that (I assume) you also allowed the article to be republished in several different online websites, because the police – I assume under the auspices of the Mayor – should not be allowed to carry out such an outrageous arrest...

Alex Constantinou (N05)

My phone didn't stop ringing following last month's story, with 100% of those calling thanking us for publishing the story. I was also happy to give permission for taxi websites to carry the story ...Ed

Driverless vehicles

Hello Alan

I recently saw a piece in *The Observer* about the **Uber** court case in addition to another piece about apps etc. It said taxi drivers and other workers should realise that this will be the way of the world in the future; in our case it mentioned driverless vehicles that will be viable in ten years and that we will all have to adapt to that!

I have made my plans; I am going to stand on **Waterloo Bridge** wearing a PVC costume and heavy make-up with a hat in front of me staring blankly ahead – if there's room there!

God help the Knowledge boys and girls, it's only if the digital network crashes or private hire are forced to make their workers into employees – which they patently are – that our trade will be saved.

Anyway, while I am off sick (but still hoping to eventually get back to work), I have let my cab out to a local driver. But with the cab still having a DaC terminal in place, it may be better to let a DaC driver use it and so through *Call Sign*, could I ask if anyone living in the southeast is looking to rent a very well maintained **Metrocab TTT**, then I can work out a rent as appropriate. It may well suit a semi-retired driver. Many thanks for any help...

Gordon Bennett (Y91)

If anyone is interested or knows of anyone that might be interested in renting **Gordon's TTT** – even for just a few days each week – just drop a note to Call Sign and we'll pass the details on.

As for driverless cars, I couldn't help but notice Google's involvement and the number of driverless cars on test out in California that have been involved in accidents! South Korean car manufacturer, **Kia**, is another company that is interested in driverless cars but even their Research and Development GM, **Seoho Choi**, admitted that there would also be legal issues involved. He said: "Malfunctions will never be accepted and there's still the issue of who would be liable in the case of an accident."

You may see some at places like **Heathrow** where they will take people with disabilities out to their flights etc and there may even eventually be cars where you can read the paper while the car drives, but we'll all be long-gone before you can hail one in the street! ...Ed

Elliot and Teens Unite

Dear Alan

On behalf of all the staff and young people supported by **Teens Unite**, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting our work by kindly making a donation of £50 to sponsor **Elliot** doing his **Rickshaw Challenge**. At **Teens Unite**, we pride ourselves on being the only charity to provide long-term, ongoing support to 13-24 year olds who are fighting cancer from across the UK. We are there from the moment a young person is diagnosed, right through to post-remission. We are not medical staff; in fact we try to bring illness into our work as little as possible. Instead, we focus on providing these young people with a bright light at the end of what usually feels like a very dark tunnel.

Through **Teens Unite**, young people with cancer can meet others of their age in a similar situation to themselves and gain strength from each other. We organise activities and workshops where they can build friendships with those who truly understand what they are thinking and feeling, learn new skills, restore their confidence and self-esteem and live a life beyond one of illness. Being the only organisation to offer this support means the demand for our services is constantly increasing. As a self-funded organisation, your kindness and generosity means an enormous amount and your donation will help us reach out to even more teenagers and young adults fighting effects of cancer diagnosis.

Thank you for being as dedicated to supporting these young people as we are and we hope you will continue to support **Teens Unite** in the future. Please do keep up-to-date on our latest news and events by visiting www.teensunitefightingcancer.org

Debbie Pezzani

CEO and Founder

Last month's *Call Sign* ran an article from a DaC driver's son who is fighting **Nodular**



Lymphocyte predominant Hodgkins Lymphoma cancer. He was about to do a rickshaw ride from **Lands End** to **Elstree Studios** as part of the **BBC's Children in Need**. His group were followed by **BBC's The One Show** and **Elliot** has written about his trip in this issue ...Ed

Bob Woodford and 'It is now!'

Hi Alan

Re **Bob Woodford's** article in the *November Call Sign*: *They think it's all over; it is now* and the piece about **Clapton Stadium**, which brought back memories. We use to rank up at **Clapton Pond** in **Lower Clapton Road** to take punters to the stadium at 6d (2.5p) a time, putting 5 in for half a crown and the same coming back. It was a long walk down from the pond!

I also remember **Haringey Stadium**, which used to host speedway and stock car racing as well as dog racing. That was in **Green Lane** and is now a supermarket and **McDonalds**!

They were still the good old days!

Bernie Silver (ex-G08 now F13)

But you told me you were only 27 Bernie! ...Ed

Heart problems

Hi Alan

Re the *November* article in *Call Sign* about **Chris Passfield (TfL leaving me in limbo)**, I have a heart condition (**Atrial fibrillation**) and for a taxi driver who has a heart condition, in order to retain their licence they have to undergo a stress test involving 9 minutes on a treadmill under the so called **Bruce Protocol**. That is 3 mins flat at a normal walking speed, another 3 minutes at the same speed but on a slight incline and lastly, 3 more minutes at the same speed but with a higher incline. All throughout, you are wired up so it's like a 9 minute ECG. If you come through that satisfactorily, you will get your **Bill** back.

You have to undergo that every three years but must check with your doctor for his blessing as to whether you are fit enough to undergo such a test. Try and wangle it on the **NHS** because if you can't, it will cost you about £250. If you do have to pay that however, you can put it on your accounts as a business expense, as you are required to have it to keep your **Bill**. I hope this helps...

Brian Marcantonio (R73)

Thanks to **Brian** and other DaC drivers who contacted *Call Sign* trying to help **Chris** ...Ed

Mailshot

Chris Passfield

Hi Alan

I want to say thank you for highlighting my case in *Call Sign*; it just goes to show that writing and publishing cases like mine can help to make people aware of other driver's problems and assist to help and advise them. Three *Dial-a-Cab* drivers have made contact, all of whom left their details with offers for me to ring them if I wanted to talk. My thanks go to **Brian Marcantonio (R73)**, **John Vodden (E89)** and **Dave Freeman (A46)** and I will be phoning them all. But I have you to thank you for that, Alan, as you were the one that opened other driver's eyes.

When I saw the article in *Call Sign*, I was really surprised and taken aback as I hadn't expected all that space to be allocated to my problem! And what with the photo! Well my granddaughter, Casey, looked lovely but I'm not so sure about me! But thank you again Alan, you should feel proud.

I am now waiting for the hospital to get back to me about the **Bruce Protocol** and I see a nurse on 23rd November but not the doctor until 21st December. I'll let you know of any progress.

Thank you again Alan, God bless you and your family and a Merry Xmas and be lucky to all you lovely drivers and staff at *Dial-a-Cab*.

Chris Passfield (Y25)

Our fingers are crossed that you get a good result Chris. Chris's case was in the last issue of *Call Sign* (*TfL leaving me in limbo*) and while Chris thanks me, it's the drivers that offered him assistance that deserve the thanks. Older drivers often say that the camaraderie of years ago has gone, but cases such as Chris's show that when it comes to the crunch, it is still laying underneath somewhere ready to come out when needed ...Ed

Speaking English

Dear Al

Re November *Call Sign* article: Should PH drivers speak English...

On taking my **Vito** to **Crayford** a couple of weeks ago, I was standing at the counter chatting to someone I knew from the **Ascott Cab Co**, when two men that I would describe as being of Mediterranean or perhaps Middle Eastern appearance walked up to the counter. The man behind the counter gave one of them some papers to licence his private hire vehicle and told him where to fill the forms in. He looked blank, obviously not understanding and turned to his companion who translated. We looked at the man behind the counter incredulously and he just smiled and shrugged. Do **TfL** seriously know that this is going on? If I hadn't seen it, I wouldn't have believed it!

On another **TfL** note, it was recently announced that **Vauxhall** have recalled thousands of **Zafiras** due to 140 of them bursting into flames. Will **TfL** be taking all **Zafiras** off the road like they did when 14 **TX4s** caught alight? Rant over!

Charlton Clark (F25)

Thanks for giving me this chance to push for **DaC** drivers and their families to complete a very important **TfL** consultation document, **Chuck**. The question of whether private hire drivers should be able to understand and speak English is just one of the questions in the **TfL** consultation on the future of **PH**. If you have not yet filled it in (it can only be done online) then you can find it and an explanation kindly provided by the **LTDA** at *Call Sign's* website (www.dac-callsign.co.uk). It must be completed by December 23 and it really is vital that every one of you, your family and even your friends completes it. This is our chance to get some rulings in our favour for a change.

As for the **Zafira** recall; at the time of writing **Vauxhall** had recalled around 220,000 **Zafira B** cars after a series of fires that had apparently broken out from behind the glove-box in the heating and ventilation system. **Vauxhall's** advice was for drivers not to use heating or air con. The problem is that it was November and is now December and those that act as **PH** vehicles may contain passengers who could feel a bit chilly and ask for heating, which could take us back to **Chuck's** first point – what if the driver doesn't understand English too well? According to **TfL**, when the **TX4s** caught fire, no one knew why whereas they do with the **Zafira**! So they aren't pulling them in but will keep an eye on the situation! Look, don't shoot the messenger! ...Ed

Paris atrocities

Hi Alan

When the **IRA** were bombing mainland England – especially the City of London – streets were closed and blocked off because they were using cars and buses as bombs to blow up buildings etc. Move forward 35-40 years and a new form of terrorism arises, that of the suicide bomber. He needs no vehicle, just a vest with explosives and guns that can be hidden on the person. With what happened in Paris recently still fresh in our minds, why oh why are councils still closing roads with no left or right turns; and don't get me started on the bike 'super' highway. If, as expected, it happens here, how are public services supposed to evacuate people quickly from the epicentre? Roads should be reopened in the city, not blocked off to transport, as should **Southwark Bridge** be made more accessible as this is one wasted bridge as an exit south from the City itself.

Woe betide anyone in the **Soho** district as well with the crazy road system and thanks to **Crossrail**, hardly accessible at all except via **Shaftsbury Avenue** – and we all know what a nightmare that can be in the evening. So thanks again **Camden Council** and the **City Corporation**, and a big thank you to **TfL** for allowing this to happen! I hope and pray I am wrong in the scenario of the carnage to come, but we must be prepared...

Chas Kissin (Ex-P99J)



I couldn't have put it better **Chas**, but will anyone learn a lesson? Organisations such as **TfL** or **Camden Council** often talk of "lessons learned" but sadly they never do learn anything about it. Will **Camden** realise what they are doing to London by their pro-cycling **Tavistock Place** one way and proposed **Tottenham Court Road** traffic exclusion schemes, or will **TfL** realise what they are doing to London? with the ludicrous mess they have made of London through their cycling super-highways? If we ever have an attack such as that in Paris, then God help us because no one will be able to move – cancel that last remark because cyclists will be ok! Then again, they'd be ok because they'll shoot through London and prove that they didn't need special lanes anyway! ...Ed

Padders problem

I'm getting a bit peeved off with the way the rank at **Paddington** works. On the few occasions there is a railway worker or early morning **Marshal** on the point organising things, it isn't too bad. But in the evening when it's just taxis, it falls to pieces. Passengers don't know which line of taxis to go to and very often when on the inside line, you can't see if cabs on the outside lane are still in front of you before you take a job. If you hear hooting and someone having a go, then you probably have!

My answer would be that after 9pm when we are usually on our own, a cone is put at the entrance to the nearside lane and all taxis rank at the outside one. Simple and problem solved!

Malcolm Levan (F24)

How about they fix the entry TV outside as well! And **Malcolm**, I can let you have a cone cheap! ...Ed

Looking for a taxi partner

Hi Alan

I've decided to sell my **Vito** and will be looking to rent or share a taxi, preferably on **Dial-a-Cab**. Working hours are optional. I live in **Elm Park, Essex**, am a non-smoker and have a full no claims bonus. If there is anyone out there who is interested, please let the Editor know...

Terry Catherall (Y90)

If anyone out there is interested in sharing a cab or wants to rent their cab out and they live within a reasonable distance to **Elm Park** (eg **Rainham** or **Hornchurch** etc) please let me know on callsignmag@aol.com and I'll pass it over to Terry ...Ed

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