

January 2015

Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*Call Sign's
Bob and
Steph
conquer
the
Inca Trail
to Machu
Picchu!*



*After Nissan's pull-out from the electric taxi market,
now Intelligent Energy post huge losses...*



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Happy to New Year to all. The kipper season is upon us, so perhaps loitering at theatres may be a way of some extra cash. Here is a list of theatre shows and venues and where possible, the 'Burst' times...

London Theatre Shows

Burst Times Calculated from published start times and length of show, actual burst may be a few minutes later than shown.

Theatre	Show	Sun	Sun	Mon	Tue	Tue	Wed	Wed	Thu	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sat	Notes
Adelphi Theatre	Made in Dagenham			22:15		22:15	17:45	22:15		22:15	22:15	17:45	22:15	
Aldwych	Beautiful			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	O 10/2/15
Aldwych	Dance 'til Dawn			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	C 3/1/15
Ambassadors Theatre	Stomp	16:45	19:45	21:45					16:45	21:45	21:45	16:45	21:45	
Apollo (Shaftesbury Ave)	Urinetown			22:05		22:05		22:05	17:20	22:05	22:05	17:20	22:05	C 10/1/15
Apollo (Shaftesbury Ave)	My Night with Reg			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	O 17/1/15
Apollo Victoria Theatre	Wicked			22:20		22:20	17:20	22:20		22:20	22:20	17:20	22:20	
Cambridge Theatre	Matilda The Musical	17:40				21:40	17:10	22:10		22:10	22:10	17:10	22:10	
Criterion Theatre	39 Steps			22:00		22:00	17:00	22:00		22:00	22:00	18:00	22:00	
Dominion Theatre	White Christas Musical					22:10		22:10	17:10	22:10	22:10	17:10	22:10	C 3/1/15
Drury Lane, Theatre Royal	Charlie & the Chocolate Factory			22:00		22:00	17:00	22:00		22:00	22:00	17:00	22:00	
Duchess	Play That Goes Wrong	17:05	21:05					21:35	16:35	21:35	21:35	16:35	21:35	
Duke of York's Theatre	Neville's Island									21:50	21:50	16:50	21:50	C 3/1/15
Fortune Theatre	Woman In Black				17:00	22:00		22:00	17:00	22:00	22:00	18:00	22:00	
Garrick	Scottsboro Boys			21:25		21:25	16:10	21:25		21:25	21:25	16:10	21:25	C 21/2/15
Gielgud Theatre	Curious Incident/Dog/Night			22:15		22:15	ü	22:15	16:45	22:15	22:15	16:45	22:15	
Harold Pinter	Sunny Afternoon			21:50		21:50	16:50	21:50		21:50	21:50	16:50	21:50	
Her Majesty's Theatre	Phantom Of The Opera			22:00		22:00		22:00	17:00	22:00	22:00	17:00	22:00	
London Palladium	CATS			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	C 28/2/15
Lyceum Theatre	Lion King	17:15				22:15	17:15	22:15		22:15	22:15	17:15	22:15	
Lyric Theatre	Thriller Live	18:00	22:00			22:00		22:00		22:00	22:00	18:30	22:30	
New London	War Horse			22:10		21:40		22:10	17:10	22:10	22:10	17:10	22:10	
Noel Coward Theatre	Shakespeare In Love			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Novello Theatre	Mamma Mia			22:15		22:15		22:15	17:30	22:15	22:15	17:30	22:15	
Palace Theatre	Commitments	17:30	21:30			22:00		22:00		22:00	22:00	17:30	21:30	
Phoenix Theatre	Once			21:50		21:50		21:50	16:50	21:50	21:50	16:50	21:50	C 21/3/15
Piccadilly Theatre	Jersey Boys	19:35			17:35	22:05		22:05		22:05	22:05	17:35	22:05	
Playhouse Theatre	Women on the Verge			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Prince Edward Theatre	Miss Saigon			22:20		22:20		22:20	17:10	22:20	22:20	17:10	22:20	
Prince Of Wales Theatre	Book Of Mormon			21:50		21:50	16:50	21:50		21:50	21:50	16:50	21:50	
Queen's Theatre	Les Miserables			22:30		22:30	17:30	22:30		22:30	22:30	17:30	22:30	
Savoy Theatre	Dirty Rotten Scoundrels					22:05	17:35	22:05	17:35	22:05	22:05	17:35	22:05	
St Martin's Theatre	Mousetrap			21:45	17:15	21:45		21:45		21:45	21:45	18:15	21:45	
Shaftesbury	Memphis			22:00		22:00	17:00	22:00		22:00	22:00	17:00	22:00	
Theatre Royal Haymarket	Great Britain			21:55		21:55	16:55	21:55		21:55	21:55	16:55	21:55	C 10/1/15
Theatre Royal Haymarket	Taken @ Midnight			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	O 15/1/15
Trafalgar Studios 1	East is East					21:30		21:30	16:30	21:30	21:30	16:30	21:30	C 3/1/15
Trafalgar Studios 1	Ruling Class			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	O 16/1/15
Trafalgar Studios 2	Donkey Heart			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	O 7/1/15
Trafalgar Studios 2	Miss Havisham's Exp.			20:45		20:45	16:00	20:45		20:45	20:45	16:00	20:45	C 3/1/15
Vaudeville	Wind in the Willows	15:00	18:30		16:00	20:30	16:00	20:30	16:00	20:30	20:30	16:00	20:30	C 17/1/15
Vaudeville	Di & Viv & Rose			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	O 22/1/15
Victoria Palace Theatre	Billy Elliot - The Musical			22:30		22:30		22:30	17:30	22:30	22:30	17:30	22:30	
Wyndham's Theatre	King Charles III			21:50		21:50		21:50		21:50	21:50	17:10	21:50	C 31/1/15

Key - ✓ = Show on but unknown finish time. O=Opens C=Closes

Only 'Cats' at LondonPalladium has a Monday Matinee on 22/12/14 & 29/12/14 starts at 14:30 , no other Monday Matinees

The new Eurostar Timetable will appear in next month's issue. It commenced 14/12/14 but was not available at the time of this month's compilation. By the time you read this it will be available on the www.myfav.co.uk web site. Just click the Taxi < ---- link for a page of taxi related icon links.

from the editor's desk

Doing a Cromwell???

At the dissolution of Parliament in 1653, the soon to become Lord Protector of England, **Oliver Cromwell**, announced to fellow MPs:

"It is high time for me to put an end to your sitting in this place, which you have dishonoured by your contempt of all virtue and defiled by your practice of every vice; ye are a factious crew, and enemies to all good government."

Cromwell ended his speech by adding: **"So! Take away that shining bauble there and lock up the doors. In the name of God, go!"**

Rather dramatic for **Call Sign** perhaps, especially at what should be traditionally a happy time of year, but I'm starting to link Cromwell's speech – especially those last half dozen words that have been used so often by so many to express dissatisfaction – to Mayor of London **Boris Johnson**.

I, like so many others in the trade, am getting rather peeved off with his constant finger-pointing at us with accusations that we are the people behind London's undoubted poor air quality. A few others contribute, but it's mainly London's taxis that are responsible!

It appears that Mayor Johnson is basing his "facts" on something that 'Roundhead Ollie' would have been proud to have thought of. Referred to by many from **George Orwell** to **Frank Zappa** and even to **Adolph Hitler** as the 'Big Lie' the principle is that if you repeat something enough times, then eventually many will assume it to be true. And that seems to be the policy behind the gradual dismembering of the London taxi service, whose first licensing took place just 17 years before Cromwell uttered his "In the name of God, go," and when fifty taxis were licensed with a four taxi rank set up in the **Strand by Aldwych**.

So perhaps, after almost 380 years, it's time that we aimed Cromwell's dissertation back at our Mayor. After all, he is toddling off anyway to become Prime Minister – whether he has told his former **Bullington Club** chum, **David Cameron** yet is neither here nor there because I have it on good authority that the current PM is to blame for London's poor air quality – or at least he will be by the time Boris finishes with him!

After all, the Big Lie always seems to work with the taxi trade! We've had a fifteen year rule brought in, resulting in several thousand cabs having to come off the road even though newer cabs are said to cause more pollution than those Fairways and TX2s and even then, nowhere near as much as accusations claim. Add to that, the forthcoming battle with the Mayor who has now announced that five years will be chopped off the 15 year rule! As a sweetener, he also announced that £40million would be put aside to help taxi drivers affected by the new rule. But the only help we can think of that he could offer is to buy us all a new electric taxi – but sadly no one seems to want to make them! So we need to buy new diesel taxis that the Mayor is going to devalue by giving them such short lives and kill their second-hand value, making it almost impossible to sell your old cab in order to get a deposit for a new one – which the Mayor will then devalue by giving it such a short life.

Not only has Mayor Johnson now decimated



the number of licensed taxis available, his administration has also called for yet another of his now-famous Consultations, ie another word for telling us what he is going to do anyway. But this one isn't aimed at those of us already licensed to drive the now-named black cabs; this one is designed to cut us off before we even start.

It proposes to charge Knowledge of London students a ludicrous £12.50 if they dare to ride their pre-2007 motorcycles into our capital city between the hours of midnight until – well midnight! You got it right! Mayor Johnson and we assume together with fellow destroyers of our trade, Sir Peter Henty and Garrett Emmerson, are looking at charging KoL "boys and girls" for entering London 24 hours a day and 7 days a week unless they purchase newer bikes. How many of us bought new motorcycles when we did the KoL? Some did, but the majority couldn't afford to bearing in mind how long it takes to do the KoL – even full time.

By bringing in this latest "anti-pollution" regulation, he is not only strangling the trade from within, he is now attempting to cut off the flow of new prospective taxi drivers. Oh, did I mention that our honourable Mayor has decided that his beloved **Routemaster** buses, which burst through his own Euro 6 emission rules, will be allowed to continue to pollute Oxford Street – a street that he now accepts is the most polluted in London after his ridiculous claim that even though it is constantly filled with wall-to-wall buses, it's pollution wasn't particularly bad. And, even though the world and its dog have tried to tell him that, his administration refused to accept it. He even refused to accept evidence from researchers at **King's College** who told him that they had discovered Oxford Street contained the world's highest recorded levels of nitrogen dioxide. Anyone else would just look at the number of buses chugging through our premier shopping street contaminating the air. But he wouldn't accept that. Will he accept new findings from scientists at the **Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust** which shows that healthy people standing in Oxford Street for just two hours suffered damage to their arteries? Look at the evidence from his previous statements and you tell us!

So just to put all that into a nutshell, our cabs have a 15 year limit that looks as though it will be going down to 10 years, while our future taxi drivers are to be penalised to the tune of up to £87.50 per week just for cycling into London – where else would they do the KoL? But the Mayor's

Euro 5 buses will bypass any extra charges because the Boris's office says they are almost Euro 6! Well that's ok then!

We have a suggestion that would help London and its emissions problem. Give traffic priority over pedestrians and cyclists again. How often have you been stuck behind a bus at a bus stop because the road layout makes it impossible to pass it? What about four lane roads reduced to one lane each way because cyclists have been given half the road? Or where pedestrians have been given almost or more space on the pavements than the traffic gets on the road.

The reason it hasn't happened is because City Hall doesn't have anyone capable of thinking logically. We need some taxi drivers to advise Boris! **Monty Schiman** would have sorted it out overnight - cement over the Thames and turn it into a motorway, freeing up extra space in town. Sadly Monty died many years ago and his idea seems very unlikely to ever win support, but he saw the problems coming some thirty years ago, whereas today's lot at City Hall can't see what's happening thirty minutes into the future.

So if I may borrow Oliver Cromwell's oft used phrase and aim it - plus an extra few words - at our Mayor: In the name of God, go – and do it before you kill us off entirely!

Call Sign Online

Call Sign may not distribute as many issues as the paper that has "more readers than the rest put together," but with our online version running into many thousands of regular readers, it's worth reminding those that aren't sure how you get to our online library and its huge range of back issues just how easy it is.

Firstly, log on to www.dac-callsign.co.uk or www.dac-callsign.com and just click onto the year you'd like to look at and then click on the **PDF** sign under that issue's cover pic. As we have been online since 1998, the choice of which mag you want to see is pretty big!

Since the May 2006 issue, you can read the complete issue; however, should you want an earlier issue than that, you can just click on the particular cover and you get a choice of around 20 pages from each issue. Should you be looking for something specific from those early issues, then you can just click on the 'search' button on the top left (just above the year list) and type in a word that you associate with whatever you are looking for – probably a name if you are going back that many years. The search engine that **Vince Chin** designed will do the rest.

If you really want to look at our past, then there are also issues from 1967, 1977 and 1987. But beware, as one driver told us recently, it can be addictive!

Happy New Year

*Hopefully, this issue of **Call Sign** will drop onto your mats either on Saturday 27 or Monday 29 December. So in that case can I wish all our readers a very happy and hopefully successful new year. Can I also thank all those that write for me regularly and all the drivers that constantly ring me up with stories that either inform or entertain our readers. See you in 2015...*

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Another report!

It seems I have only just finished my report for the December edition of *Call Sign* and the Editor is already after me again to produce something for the January issue! It seems that this is due to the magazine's printers being closed for a prolonged period over the Christmas and New Year period.

So as you would expect, it does get rather difficult to discuss topics that have not already been discussed following such a short break from the previous report. Believe it or not, I am writing this piece during the first week of December. But here goes...

Credit Card bookings

I know Allan Evans has written about this topic before - I believe it was in the December edition and he may even be mentioning it again this month - but it is an important piece and for me to re-emphasise his point would not go amiss.

By the time you read this piece, hopefully the new procedure will be in place and working. I know our IT department has finalised the new software and at the time of writing, we are just waiting for it to be installed.

The new process involves Credit Cards; however it does not include Credit Card transactions that you take via a street hail. They will continue to be dealt with in exactly the same way as they are at present, with the customer inserting their card and entering their PIN number at the completion of the journey.

In future, if a customer orders a taxi from Dial-a-Cab either via the telephone, on-line or with our App, then those trips will be despatched to you in exactly the same way in which a Credit account trip is despatched at the moment. The trip will be despatched as a Credit Card Booking (CCB) and once you have accepted the trip, you then deal with it in exactly the same way as you would a normal Credit account.

All authorisations will be completed by the Contact Centre before the trip is despatched to you, so there isn't any need for the customer to produce their Credit Card or enter their PIN number. But again I must stress that this is only for those Credit Card trips you receive through the system, it does not apply to street hails. They will be dealt with in exactly the same way as they are at present.

The CCBs will not carry a gratuity and the £4.20 maximum run-in is optional and at the Member's discretion.

One of the reasons we have introduced this new system is because some members of the public had assumed that if they had already disclosed their Credit Card details to us, then there should not be any reason why they would have to carry their card with them whilst travelling in a taxi they had phoned Dial-a-Cab for, especially when



they had already given the card details to the call taker. As you can imagine, this did lead to some confusion when our Members then asked for the card at the completion of the journey. Not everyone carries a credit card with them when they have no intention of using it.

The CCBs will be unmasked, except between the hours of 7am-10am and if unfortunately you are scrubbed, then you will be treated in exactly the same way as if you were scrubbed off a Credit ride, with the Member going to the top of the queue.

Credit Card transactions are our largest and fastest growing account and we must all do as much as we can in order to encourage that growth even further.

Dial-a-Cab and RTG

I have had numerous enquiries from Members regarding our on-going negotiations with RTG or Mountview House Group.

The latest position is that both parties have signed *Non-Disclosure Agreements* (NDA's) and our discussions are on-going. I don't believe that it is going to be a swift process because there are numerous difficulties and problems to resolve before we can proceed further, but we are proceeding and when/if a strategy can be decided upon, there will be a series of meetings for Members so that the whole situation can be discussed.

It is imperative that we have a route map so that everyone is *au fait* with the situation before we proceed further. We will of course need to have a pretty good idea of Member's wishes before we get to the situation of engaging Solicitors and Accountants.

I am also extremely mindful about incurring any costs that could prove to be unnecessary. So at the moment both parties are still talking to each other with a view to placing before our Members and the drivers of Mountview, a scenario that could be adopted in the future.

Happy New Year

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Members, Staff and their families a very healthy and prosperous New Year and offer a fervent hope that 2015 is the year that sanity returns to our trade...

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

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£40MILLION GREEN AID TO TAXIS

Out of £330million...

Mayor Boris Johnson has unveiled new plans to tackle the capital's air quality crisis, setting out proposals to invest £330m through to 2020 in new green buses and taxis.

TfL has published its draft Business Plan for the rest of the decade, confirming plans to support the launch of the Mayor's Ultra-Low Emission Zone in 2020 by rolling out a further 2,400 hybrid buses and up to 300 electric buses.

TfL also revealed plans to provide £40m of assistance to those licensed taxi drivers that will be affected by a proposed new 10 year age limit for their vehicles as part of the ultra-low emission zone.

The Mayor's senior adviser for environment and energy, **Matthew Pencharz** said:

"Nobody has shown greater desire to improve air quality in the capital than the Mayor. He has set out the most ambitious and comprehensive set of measures to address the problem and this business plan provides the funding to deliver the Ultra-Low Emission



Zone, which will be a game changing moment in terms of improving air quality in London."

The announcement came in the same week as the government confirmed its National Infrastructure Plan would make £85m available to support ultra-low emission buses, taxis and rapid charging infrastructure, with a further £10m dedicated specifically to support the uptake of zero emission vehicles in London.

Mayor Johnson predicted that London's ULEZ would more than halve NOx emissions and reduce the number of people living in areas which exceed legal limits on air pollution by over 70 per cent.

The Mayor also unveiled plans to plant the final 4,300 trees in his Street Tree Initiative, putting him on track to deliver on his promise of 10,000 new street trees by March 2015.

NOTICE OF 2014 DAC AGM



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

will be held at:

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

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

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

Howard Pears
Company Secretary

Holloway Road Bridge Replacement

As life gets back to normal following the holidays, substantial work to replace the road bridge at Highbury Corner in Islington is scheduled to begin in January to bring drivers back to earth with a bump and in all probability, huge traffic congestion. This is part of TfL's continuing £4bn Road Modernisation Plan.

The bridge on Holloway Road, which carries more than 25,000 vehicles a day over the railway lines by Highbury and Islington station, is now more than a century old and in need of replacement. Following preliminary work, TfL will begin the main work in January 2015, which will see utility services diverted and the bridge deck removed and replaced with a new carriageway. The new bridge will reduce the need for ongoing maintenance and ensure additional weight restrictions will not need to be put in place in the future.

As part of the works, the Post Office building situated on the existing bridge will be demolished. This will also begin in January and allow TfL to further improve pedestrian access to Highbury and Islington station. Cycle stands currently on the station forecourt will be relocated to Highbury Station Road.

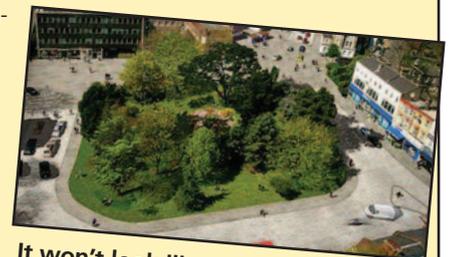
One lane of traffic in each direction will remain open throughout the duration of the works and TfL is working closely with Network Rail to gain access to the station and rail track when it is closed, rather than imposing additional closures on the line. Works will also be coordinated around Arsenal matches and events taking place at The Emirates stadium to minimise disruption.

The often used cut-through by taxis of Highbury Station Road (east of Swan Yard) along with Highbury Crescent (between Highbury Terrace and Highbury Place) will be closed for the duration of the works.

During these works, TfL will also continue to develop a scheme to remove the Highbury Corner gyratory, creating new facilities for pedestrians and cyclists as well as improving the look and feel of the local area. These improvements form part of TfL's **33 Better Junctions** programme, which according to TfL will help transform the area and support the continuing regeneration of Highbury. A consultation will begin on the final concept design for these plans by late 2015.

The major changes to the area around Highbury Corner form part of the wider work being carried out across London as part of TfL's Road Modernisation Plan. With a budget of £4bn from now until 2021/22, this overarching plan represents the biggest investment in London's roads in a generation, including hundreds of transformational projects within the existing road network. Using radical ideas and innovative designs, the plan will make London's roads greener, safer and more attractive for the benefit of all road users.

Call Sign Comment: See the April 2014 Call Sign and find out who TfL's 33 Better Junctions programme is really designed to help. One clue: It has two wheels...!



It won't look like this after January!

Jery's World



A happy new year chaps. By the way, if you don't get electric taxis then you're out and just because there aren't any, that is no excuse...!

Future proof: Taxi and Private Hire Services in London

TfL branded 'woefully inadequate' at regulating taxis ...and minicabs are no better!

A damning indictment of Transport for London came in the shape of a six month investigation into the state of the two trades and TfL's role as regulator by the London Assembly's Transport Committee. It was chaired by Caroline Pidgeon MBE (Lib-Dem) with Valerie Shawcross CBE (Lab), Victoria Borwick (Con), Darren Johnson (Green), Tom Copley (Lab), Steve O'Connell (Con), Dr Onkar Sahota (Lab), Navin Shah (Lab) and Richard Tracey (Con).

According to MayorWatch, in their 67 page report the committee said that TfL had allowed itself to be seen as a 'soft touch' which failed to uphold regulations. Citing industry concern about minicab Uber and whether their app breached the law on meters, the report (published on December 16th) said TfL's reputation had been damaged by a perception that it "...has at best failed to present a significantly robust challenge to an operator trying to strong-arm changes to enshrined legislation to suit its own business interests, while at worst it had actively colluded with that operator to create an imbalance in the market."

During the investigation, former ComCab MD now working for Addison Lee and representing the Licensed Private Hire Car Association, Mike Galvin, told LAMs: "If you now break the law or breach the regulations, TfL - if you are big enough - will change the rules!"

In addition, the report pointed to TfL's failure to

clamp down on unlicensed 'marshals' who take private hire bookings outside venues - despite a ban on plying for trade on the street - as a cause for its bad relationship with the taxi trade.

LAMs said TfL needed "to work hard to restore its credibility," including by showing that it was ready "to hold the line on regulation."

However, they warned that the trades needed to embrace the technological changes that passengers are now demanding of modern, fit for purpose transport services or risk falling behind competition.

Committee chair, **Caroline Pidgeon**, said the recent focus on Uber had become a distraction that had overshadowed the need to address other very serious issues. These include clamping down on drivers who refuse to carry disabled passengers and looking at ways of incentivising the adoption of wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles. There were, she said, serious doubts being expressed about whether TfL had the appetite and capability to oversee the two industries effectively.

LAMs also wanted reforms implemented that would make it easier for passengers to complain about a driver or operator as well as assurances that TfL and the Met police had sufficient resources to uphold regulations. They called for the introduction of taxi ranks outside tube stations operating 24 hours and improvements in how drivers show that they're licensed. Ms Pidgeon added:

"Transport for London's performance as regulator and enforcer has been woefully inadequate and the interests of the passenger are being largely ignored. A strategy and vision for the future is essential in order to support the industry and provide the service that passengers require. TfL needs to get to grips with the basics - such as improving signage, installing more taxi ranks and staying ahead of the rapid technological advances, putting the passenger first - what Londoners and our visitors expected and deserve."

Commenting on the report, TfL said it was already working to address a number of issues raised by the Assembly. **Garrett Emmerson**, TfL's COO for Surface Transport, commented:

"London's taxi and private hire services are the envy of the world and under TfL's oversight, are thriving. The number of trips are up, customer satisfaction rates are high and due to our stringent licensing processes and enforcement work with the police, journeys in taxi and private hire vehicles have never been safer. We will, of course, carefully consider the Assembly recommendations and note that many of the areas highlighted are already being worked through in collaboration with the industry. We agree wholeheartedly that the needs of passengers must remain our top priority and we will continue to work closely with both trades to ensure that this remains the case."

An interesting piece was recently written by Dan Worth, news editor for V3.co.uk and pretty much the expert on fixed and mobile telecoms, data protection, social media and government IT. Our thanks to Dan...

Londoners left almost 25,000 devices such as phones, laptops and USB sticks on buses, taxis and tube trains in 2013, according to data released in a Freedom of Information request. The loss of so many items, especially in the bring-your-own device era where corporate information is stored on personal devices, underlines the risks to business data. The information showed that 24,315 devices were handed in to Transport for London (TfL) in 2013, breaking down as follows:

Phones 21,291, laptops 755, tablets 672, USBs 1,449, Computer hard drives and PC units 148.

Phones are most commonly left on buses (12,091), while most laptops are left on trains (352) and most tablets are left in taxis (294).

The data was released by TfL to device encryption firm ViaSat. Its CEO, **Chris McIntosh**, said that the actual number of losses is undoubtedly higher as not all devices will have been found and returned to TfL. McIntosh said that individuals and organisations need to have methods in place to deal with the consequences of lost devices containing vital data.

Wanna phone? We've found 21,000!



Most tablets are found in taxis

"The potential for fraud is huge when personal data from the average mobile can be used to access bank accounts and credit cards, imitate someone's identity or even blackmail them," he said.

"For business devices, there is also the risk of exposing the organisation to financial penalties for failing to safeguard data, as well as damage to the organisation's reputation."

The fact that almost 1,500 USB sticks were lost on public transport was noted as an area of concern, as such items often contain highly sensitive information and can land organisations with hefty fines if not properly encrypted.

"The fact that so many USB devices are lost on London's transport network still comes as something of a shock, particularly as history should have made organisations and travellers well aware of the risk these devices

pose," McIntosh told V3. "Whether a USB stick containing customer details is lost on a train, or is lost in Bogota containing details of undercover DEA agents, businesses should ensure that no such device can contain sensitive data unless there are strict precautions in place."

McIntosh also noted that one silver lining is that the rise in cloud services means that less data is being stored on devices.

"More and more we're seeing the cloud as a way to remove the risk of lost devices from the equation," he said. "If data is only ever accessed remotely and never actually stored on a device, a lost laptop, phone or tablet, while annoying for the individual, will be less risk to the business or its customers."

The Christmas period may seem the most likely time for device loss, as people stay out late and travel home on public transport, but the data revealed that most items are misplaced in the summer months.

Dan Worth
V3.co.uk

*** So far as taxi drivers banding in devices such as laptops or tablets etc, if they are not claimed after three months they will still not be returned to the driver banding them in, but a monetary reward (often £75) will be given. TfL say this is due to the data protection act. ** Ed*

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If you happen to celebrate New Year at this time, season's greetings to you and your families. As for **Dial-a-Cab**, this year is likely to be quite unique. I don't get too involved

in the politics at DaC, but with the elections upon us I will be voting for no change. With the strong possibility of a merger on the cards, major changes to the DaC BoM would be unhelpful if not very destabilising.

Remember that what is said on Taxi forums online is a minority point of view with a very small readership, so don't believe everything you read.

One thing I have noticed over the past few years since the credit crunch is that everyone wants a bargain or a reduction or money off. Well it does not actually work like that with Taxis, so punters have started a new trend; it's what I call "clipping." If there is £5.40 on the meter, they pass a fiver through the blow hole and disappear! If it's £10.60, it's the same with a tenner - or if they are really clever, they deliberately pay you with a £20 note knowing that you will give them a tenner back instead of lots of your change. I have to say that it's a recent problem where people pay you with notes and make no attempt to find the correct fare.

I recently picked up an older foreign gent from **Claridges** going to **Avenue Road**.

Richard Potter takes a look at...

ELECTIONS, CLIPPING, CABCAMs AND IPHONES!

When we got to Macclesfield Bridge, he asked to get out and passed through a load of change, which I checked. As he walked away I hooted and beckoned him to come back and pointed out that most of the coins were Euros and at the current exchange rate, he hadn't given me enough. His reply: "You are ok, take a holiday!" Then he walked off!

CabCams

I have had an insurance camera in the front windscreen since March and after driving around rather carefully for the first few days, the novelty quickly wears off and you realise that if you just drive normally, you will be fine although you do feel that someone is watching. The camera is locked and holds about 40 hours of driving time until it starts to record over the previous information. If I have a crash, I have to contact the insurance company within 24 hours who then come to my house and take away the SD card.

I don't have that many brushes with the law or TfL, but I recently received letters from both about two separate incidents. I won't go into them but both could have been resolved had they contacted me quickly. It took 10 days for the police and 16 days for TfL to write, long

after the info had been erased from the SD card, which held vital evidence that would have proved my innocence. Thankfully both were sorted out without any further action being necessary, but maybe it would be useful if both agencies could ask the public to comply with a tighter timescales when making a complaint so that camera evidence can be used.

Lost property or Bilking?

I also recently visited the police to hand in an **iPhone**, which was left in my cab. I also wanted to report a crime as I had just been bilked for £47. The former could be sorted out immediately by the desk clerk; the latter she couldn't do straight away and if I wanted to wait 40 minutes she would get to me. I was the only person at Islington Police station at the time.

Isn't that amazing! So I just walked out. I'm sure the police will tell us that crimes in taxis are few and far between, well maybe that is because nobody waits to fill in the forms rather than because crimes are not happening. It means something to you if get bilked, obviously it means very little to the law.

Richard Potter (T51)

UBER v TFL v GLA???

In a period of strange days, Wednesday 10 December must have been one of the strangest that the London taxi trade has ever seen.

It began when a statement was sent out by **TfL** – part of the **Greater London Authority** - detailing a report given to a TfL Board meeting by Surface Transport MD **Leon Daniels**. He expressed the view that **Uber** were acting just as a PH company should and that TfL had no problem with them. He also mentioned a specific complaint against them where a celebrity's name was revealed as having been a passenger in an Uber vehicle as well as the alleged rape by an Uber driver in **India**.

He also went into detail about how immigrants wanting to become PH drivers and in the absence of a Disclosure and Barring Service check, would need a certificate of good conduct which had to come from the Embassy of their country of origin.

But the basis of the report concerned the **LTDA's** private prosecution against four Uber drivers for illegally using a taxi meter via the Uber app. Mr Daniels claim was that it would block their own High Court action seeking a declaration to back their view that Uber's smartphone app is not a taxi meter – a view that few in the taxi or private hire industries actually support and one of the very few occasions where both sides have come out in agreement against TfL.

What made the day strange came in the evening. Mayor Boris Johnson, head of the Greater London Authority, was interviewed by ITV London and admitted that he now believed Uber's smartphone app was indeed a meter! Bearing in mind that no one is above the Mayor, the fact that he apparently now disagrees with his own TfL Board is nothing less than astonishing!

Mr Daniels had told the Board meeting – including LTDA Deputy General Secretary **Bob Oddy** – that a decision to indefinitely adjourn the LTDA case would mean the **High Court** could not consider TfL's application unless the LTDA withdrew their actions. There were angry exchanges between TfL Transport Commissioner **Sir Peter Hendy** and Mr Oddy, both claiming that the other was making inaccurate claims about the timeline of events. Bob Oddy said that the LTDA only went ahead with its prosecutions after TfL had waited **92 weeks** to take action!

Sir Peter Hendy denied the accusations saying that it amounted to an accusation that he and TfL managers were misleading the Board and said he would undertake to provide Board members with a full timeline of events.

Mayor Johnson then suggested that it was "clear" what needed to happen if the cab trade's concerns were to be addressed. But it was only in his television interview that evening that he actually admitted the cab trade was right and by inference, that TfL were wrong!

After the meeting, LTDA General Secretary **Steve McNamara** said: "If we drop the criminal case and the High Court still won't hear it, we can't reinstate our summonses because we're timed out. The whole thing is down to TfL's poor management style. They are so inept as to be embarrassing." More and more, that seems to be a view that is backed by both the taxi and private hire sides of our trade.

A strange day indeed leaving two questions: How can we trust a Mayor who fails to see something so obvious and how on earth can an Embassy's "good conduct certificate" replace a DBS check? Can we now apply to our local Chinese takeaway for a DBS reference...???

The TfL statement came before a French court banned Uber from operating as of January 1st. It also came before the terrible siege in Sydney, Australia where Uber under their surge pricing policy quadrupled their fare prices.

Jamie Corum, Call Sign Online

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers

DAC'S JOHN BARKER: FREEMAN OF THE COMPANY...

Lifetime achievement award to Ronnie Mitchell

In November at Cutlers' Hall, under the charge of Company Master Malcolm Paice, the WCHCD held their Liverymen's Dinner preceded by their first Common Hall meeting. In his official capacity, Malcolm then welcomed Christopher Ratcliffe and Dial-a-Cab's John Barker (F39) as Freeman of the Company.

John told *Call Sign*: "When you do the Knowledge, days such as this are a million miles from your thoughts, but I really feel proud of being a licensed taxi driver today."

Cab Guide students' success

A ceremony for students of the recently completed Cab Guide Course came next. All said they had enjoyed the course which is run by the WCHCD Education Committee. Each student received a badge and certificate and was congratulated by the course tutors - Deputy Master Graham Woodhouse and Lower Warden Dave Cannel. Congratulations went to DaC's Patricia Wilkey (T44), Stephen Taylor (N40) and Paul Murphy (F12) in addition to David Clements, Pete Cooper, Alex Davy, John Dunne, Ian Gray, Michael Kingham, Dean Marshall, Michael McTernan, Jon O'Halloran, Richard Pollicott, Ian Skiffington and Gareth Spencer. The students made a collection and presented a cheque to the Magical Taxi Tour charity. Any *Call Sign* readers who would like to know more about the course can do so by contacting The Clerk, Mary Whitworth, either by email at wchcd@tiscali.co.uk or telephone 01494 765 922. The next course starts in February 2015.

Worthy causes

Throughout the year, the WCHCD makes donations to worthy causes and this year a donation was made to the family of 47 year old taxi driver Alan Henning, who was so cruelly murdered whilst doing humanitarian work in Syria. Another donation was also made to The Cabmen's Shelter Fund. This organisation is responsible for the remaining green huts which are part of the cab trade's heritage and the Fund aims to raise the profile of the 13 remaining shelters. More information is available at www.cabmensshelterfund.com

Awards and thanks

The guest speaker at this dinner was Colonel J Bridgeman CBE TD DL, Master of The Worshipful Company of Turners - a keen supporter of the annual Children's Magical Taxi Tour. As well as having a 30 year international career in the aluminium



Company Master Malcolm Paice makes John Barber a Freeman of the Company

industry, John has served as a Member of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, served on the Defence Science Advisory Council and was for 5 years Chairman of the National Employers' Liaison Committee for the Reserves of the Armed Forces. He has also been appointed the first Independent Chairman of the Recovery Career Services Partnership, a venture between leading service charities and the Ministry of Defence. He gave an interesting speech.

The WCHCD was delighted to present Liveryman Bob McCulloch with the Extract of Matriculation which had been granted to the WCHCD by the Lord Lyon in Edinburgh. The document will now be on display in the City Chambers of the Scottish City. Bob runs the Cab Guide Course in Edinburgh and the document means those successful students in the city are allowed to display the Company Coat of Arms and insignia in the same way it is allowed in London.

Bonjour assevillers!

Each year when the Magical Taxi Tour drives down through France, a refuelling stop is made at Assevillers Service Station. Elior is a major global company operating 257 outlets and shops in 70 service stations throughout France; each year the Assevillers staff liaise with the trip organisers and Esso to get ready for the arrival of the convoy. Whilst the cabs and support vehicles are refuelled, the children are given an amazing welcome by staff at the service station; they are entertained by all the staff at the services, many of them in costume, and they provide free gifts, face painting, stilt walkers and entertainers as well as food and drink for the children and their families. Because of the time constraints of the trip, the Magical Taxi Tour Committee

Members do not usually have time to show their appreciation as much as they would like on the day - so this year the annual Charity Award was presented to the Management and Staff of Assevillers Service Station for their unsolicited kindness and generosity shown each year to the children and drivers involved in the Magical Taxi Tour. Kevin Deneux and Mickael Bruder made the journey over to the UK for the dinner and were delighted to receive their Award.

Ronnie Mitchell: A taxi trade legend

The final presentation of the evening was the Lifetime Achievement Award. This year it was given to Ronnie Mitchell who first entered the cab trade in 1948. He drove a cab until 1962 when he decided to further his involvement in the trade, going into business as M & M Taxis renting and repairing cabs. In 1969 he sold his interest in the company, but because of the excellent reputation he had gained for fairness and good old fashioned customer care, there was a constant call from the cab trade for him to return to business. This he duly did and Stables Taxis was born. This was very much a family business with his beloved wife Edna and subsequently his two sons becoming an integral part. His interests were not just confined to business and he was involved with the Committee of the Albany Charity at its inception as well as the War Veterans Charity. Ronnie joined the Fellowship of Hackney Carriage Drivers in 1991 where he became an active participant in all of its activities, eventually reaching Court and Committee level as well as taking an active role in the annual Magical Taxi Tour as a driver. He has always been a keen campaigner for the relief of hardship for both those in and out of the trade, making it truly apt that he was given this year's Lifetime Achievement Award. There was a great round of applause as Ronnie accepted his Award.

As Company Master Malcolm Paice said, it was a memorable evening...

Call Sign

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Is there still a future?

Call Sign contributor Tom Quigley (Y33), who also runs his own Knowledge school, has passed on this piece of information that could have a devastating effect on the future of our

The 15 year rule? Killing the Nissan taxi? Bike Superhighways? What else can he do?

NOW BORIS TO BASH KNOWLEDGE BOYS!

trade. It affects all knowledge students with bikes made before 2007...

“Riders of motorcycles made before 2007, vehicles favoured by many Knowledge of London students, face a £12.50 daily charge to enter central London under proposals by the London’s transport authority. The daily charge for entering central London’s proposed Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) will be at the same rate as cars and vans under plans drawn up by Transport for London.

The charge will affect bikes made before July 2007, when the European emission standard known as ‘Euro 3’ became a minimum requirement for new motorcycles.”

Even more shocking is that the new legislation will be in force for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All vehicles – including motorcycles - not meeting ULEZ standards will still be able to enter central London but will have to pay £12.50. A 7-day KoL week would cost hard-up students an unaffordable £87.50.

The Motorcycle Action Group is urging riders to respond to the consultation. There is no set date yet when this will come into force but the affect it will have on knowledge students – the future of our trade – will be massive. There was a time when you would see groups of four or more KoL students riding together, nowadays if you see two then it’s a lot.

Vito vital statistics

Despite its recent demise, there are many MB Vito taxis on the streets of our capital and a number of outlets to keep them on the road. A spate of enquiries from owner drivers regarding servicing facilities led **Call Sign** to investigate further for the benefit of the whole trade...

Paul Leonard (T86) had problems with his Vito’s rear brakes and after investigating possible service agents, was recommended to call **Stephen Parnham** who operates near Heathrow.

“Stephen has a lock-up near Heathrow and also carries some essential spare parts in his own cab,” Paul said. “I had the brakes sorted fairly quickly and was back at work with the minimum of fuss.” When **Call Sign** spoke to Stephen, he was very upbeat and said he is usually around from 05.00 hours until about 18.00 hours and often based in the west London area.

“Drivers phone me and we meet at a mutually convenient location, or they come out to me if they can,” Stephen told us.

You can contact Stephen on 07980 610265.

Gary Martin (F62) had a warning light illuminated on his Vito dashboard that suggested battery problems.

“I took the cab to **Cab World** in Goldsmith Row E2 and they speedily diagnosed the problem as a faulty alternator,” Gary explained.

“However, they did not have the correct alternator for my model so had to order one in, which meant I left the cab there overnight. Apparently, the older type alternator can be replaced in 25/30 minutes, but even with the special order I got my cab back early the next morning, no problem,” Gary said cheerily.

“I was thinking that if my trouble had been the battery itself, given where it sits under the central drivers’ console, it is necessary to remove the main support pole for the **Dial-a-Cab** data terminal. With delicate wiring to the terminal, that may pose a bit of a challenge for anyone other than our Roman Way technicians, who are very competent as you would expect.”

Cab World can be contacted on 0207 739 1605

Finally, **Stephen Pluck (M17)** was concerned that his Vito would fail its’ annual re-licencing inspection due to the fragmented appearance of the reflective orange strips on the edges of the extending passenger steps and asked **Call Sign** to investigate.

Indeed, the reflective strips are a safety feature, highlighting the full length of the steps when extended and also alerting passengers to their presence when withdrawn into the Vito bodywork. As such, it must present an unbroken line for the full width of the step or a

‘Fail’ notice will ensue on the annual re-licencing. The strips can be purchased from cab specialist and general motor spares outlets at minimal cost and can save the inconvenience of a re-representation and all the inconvenience that entails.



One final tip regarding the steps’ sliding mechanism - the runners should be lubricated with a silicone based spray several times a year to ensure their smooth operation.

Vito have since announced that they will be re-launching early next year.

Alan Green, Call Sign Online



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DAC ELECTIONS: Drivers questions answered...

Last month's issue of Call Sign posed driver's questions for candidates standing for the Board of Management at next month's Annual General Meeting. These are the answers as received and published in alphabetical order. The questions are printed on page 16 of the December 2014 issue...

Answer to James Griffin (T97) from Joe Brazil (K16)

I'd like to thank James Griffin (T97 for asking the question of the candidates: "What are our top two ideas to improve DaC?"

As I stated in my address, the chances of this being answered directly without the usual hackneyed clichés is fairly remote.... The terrible truth is Dial-a-Cab has reached a "strategic inflection point." In business parlance this is defined as: The time of transition of company's competitive position that requires the company change the current path and adapt to the new situation or risk declining profits. This is a situation we all recognise. Brian Rice, our Chairman for many years, is the necessary cog that drives the company, but I'm afraid it's now absolutely necessary to call time on some of the people who surround him. Whilst you will no doubt hear the words "stability" and "on the job experience" do not be afraid of change. Anachronistic views will only hamper our future path. There will be changes, some may feel uncomfortable to begin with, but as will become obvious to you they are a required starting point.

What's in a name?

The name Dial-a-Cab will get a foot in many doors, but to many of the travelling public the term "dial" is no longer appropriate, this will be omitted if my idea to run tandem work distribution engines on our terminal is adopted. In an APP dominated market, to assume one brand is all that is required, is folly. We must utilise our resources to maximum potential. Different terms and conditions that the driver can opt in and out of can be integrated. The Sales department of Dial-a-Cab will no longer be hampered in negotiations by a single ethos and be able to offer multiple tenders to major companies, with only subscribers being offered the work that is generated.

Driver service rewards

This company that we all work so hard to build and improve has obvious rewards

potential, but your share does not reflect that; your long service can be compensated by increasing share value by years served. If an agreement can be reached, a guaranteed future value tariff will be integrated. This will reflect work completed whilst with Dial-a-Cab with a service bonus, no-one will walk away empty handed. A residual value of any company sale if voted for by members at any time will also be taken into account; your share will become a permanent investment for you and your family.

James Griffin may have asked a question that required only two answers, frankly it will take more time and space to give all the answers required to correct our course and this is just a short answer to a very big question that is just the beginning of steps we need to take if we are to protect Dial-a-Cab for all our futures.

Answer to James Griffin (T97) from Keith Cain (Q07)

Being an elected Board Member does give one more of an insight as to the specific areas within the Society where improvement would be beneficial for the future.

In my opinion there are more than just two areas in need of improvement, but are all complementary to each other for the future success of the Society

Our service levels, which I hasten to add are very good the majority of the time, do at certain times of the day need to improve. The improvement can be achieved by members or it can be with input of the Board making unsavoury changes; I personally have always felt that encouragement of the members and correct policing is the right way forward.

Cost of service. Having been a total advocate of not selling the driver cheap, I have to say I have had my eyes opened since being back in Sales and in the front line of what prospective clients are asking for. I believe that for the future, members have to expect reduced journey costs for the longer trips and expecting new customers to pay both a gratuity and Run-in is not an option. We all know what has prompted this to happen and by whom, but I believe for the future that we have to persuade clients to pay for at least one. That is a compromise which I believe would generate business and would not impinge on members giving a service.

Marketing the organisation is another area that requires focussing on. While our Brand name stands us well, the timing is right to revisit this. Marketing can be very costly and experience tells me this has to be done professionally. Unfortunately, professional marketing firms can run away with expensive ideas that just wouldn't work in our industry. However, experience will not only ensure the

correct marketing is carried out, but that the cost of doing this will be controlled.

Our technology is second to none and while there are differences of opinion as to how we should proceed in this area, one vital improvement that needs to be carried out and is currently being worked upon, is our dispatch system. Having a revised system will allow us reasonable savings in maintenance costs together with being able to include a wish list of enhancements.

Strength in the size of the organisation is something that will be decided upon for the future. I strongly believe that now is the right time to set new foundations for success and setting up a new company that has established ideas on what benefits the driver, knows how to deliver exceptionally good customer service, has proved it can manage costs and be profitable as well as being very successful in supplying a service like no other. Perhaps there is no better time than the present to investigate this further. I have always felt the radio circuits need to review their position and in my opinion having two successful major players makes far more sense.

Added to this, more clients are starting to review their corporate taxi account because the stats are proving car companies are not providing the service they promised. Our revised service charges are beginning to tempt them to talk to us again. One client we visited recently felt the corporate taxi account had gone full circle and would slowly start to come back to the radio circuits because of the more realistic costs being offered and the sizes of our fleets.

All positive information, which although would not be readily available to all prospective candidates, does inspire confidence that the opportunity for a successfully managed business can prosper in the future. These are the areas I see that need to be developed for the future and I would very much like to be part of the management team to deliver them to the members.

Answer to James Griffin (T97) from Allan Evans (Y83)

In an ideal world, as near to perfect coverage at certain times of the day (which has always been problematic) will, I believe, help to s a f e g u a r d

accounts, reduce customer complaints and in addition generate new business prospects.

As we move forward, increased marketing and modern PR techniques will be very important together with a calculated but fair and workable pricing policy for both members and clients, that in the future may require a further review of Run-ins, gratuities and fixed rates, especially on longer jour-



DAC ELECTIONS: Drivers questions answered...

neys. These may well help our Sales team compete on an equal footing in a very uneven market and give them the means to take the Society forward.

Our IT department are in my opinion second to none and the introduction of our soon to be introduced new operating system and planned future development in new technology, will I am sure, be a tremendous asset. Positive and constructive use of the social media, exploiting further the power of 'Twitter' and 'Facebook' as a means of promoting our Society through the millions of users could be very beneficial.

For many years, we have all worked hard to build a fantastic brand with the tools to match. With continuity, strong experienced leadership and the support of the membership, we can look to the future with raised optimism – it will not be an easy ride but with the help and commitment of all of us, it is - and will be - achievable.

Answer to Colin Jenkins (Y22) from Patricia Graves (L53)

How many AGM's have I attended? Colin, I have been to twelve Annual General Meetings; sometimes I have elected to vote by post but I have still gone to the AGM.



I would like to think I can count on your vote and be only the second woman in the history of Dial-a-Cab to be voted onto the Board of Management.

Answer to James Griffin (T97) from Patricia Graves (L53)

My two top ideas to improve DaC?

Answer 1

James, thanks for your question, one that I think is really appropriate. With the loss of some of our most lucrative accounts over the past few years and of course this year, we are all too aware that we are now working in an extremely competitive market. In order to compete for new business, we have to firstly address our pricing structure. By not doing so we would not only be wasting our time but also the prospect of attracting any new business.

Our administration charges: Can they be reduced any further? We would also need to look at that. Run-ins: Can these be withdrawn to make us more attractive to prospective new clients? In reality, what we would be losing is actually £1.80, because when you arrive at a pick up your flag fall is £2.40. As for gratuities, some accounts no longer have them, so I'm now asking for these to be removed too - how many of you do street jobs and

never get a tip?

We don't need to reinvent ourselves here, we've already got a reputation for being the best. So to summarise, I'm asking you, the drivers, to give up £1.80 per job with no gratuities and in return I'm offering you the prospect of much more work.

Answer 2

We are all very aware of the need to have much more coverage of accounts in the morning between the hours of 7am - 9am. With this in mind, I propose that the 7.5% levied on all jobs taken between these hours are removed. If we don't have accounts going into their workplace, then we will not have their return journeys home in the evening.

I know that not everyone's happy with the new subscriptions introduced in September of this year, but to be fair the day drivers don't receive a lot of work and reducing subscriptions to £12 inclusive of VAT plus 7.5% for any work completed is more likely to attract new day drivers, which is needed to increase our fleet. I am also aware that a lot of night drivers have seen their subscriptions in total double from £36 to £72 and this will have to be looked at. With the prospect of new clients requesting a lot more fixed prices, which I would like to see be more favourable towards our drivers, I would therefore increase the minimum fare to £10, which is in keeping with most taxi apps.

James, I have tried to address your question openly and honestly. I hope I can count on your vote in the forth-coming election.

Answer to Colin Jenkins (Y22) from Michael Parkins (Z03)

How many AGM's have I attended? I think this is a very good question Colin and I'm glad you've asked. I can tell you exactly how many AGM's I've attended. None. In my 7 years of being on DaC, I haven't attended one single AGM and I'll tell you why.



I've always felt DaC, up until recently, has been a company heading in the right direction. We had a growing number of large corporate accounts that kept our drivers busy both day and night. We've moved to larger premises and fitted the fleet with new terminals. With this in mind, I never felt the need to attend an AGM. This isn't a reflection of my interest in the running of DaC but a reflection of the trust I had in our Chairman and BoM. As I said in my CV, I work on average 50 hours a week and cover as much account work as my terminal can offer me. There were times when I could work an entire shift just covering account work, only taking enough cash to cover that night's diesel. Basically Colin, I was happy with the way

DaC, our Society, was being run.

Today, it's a different matter. DaC is not only stagnant, but taking huge strides backwards in the market place, losing ground to Private Hire and other Black Taxi providers. Speaking personally, my income from DaC has dropped by around 75%. I, like many others, can no longer rely on DaC to provide enough work. Drivers were voting with their feet and leaving the circuit, searching for greener pastures. In response, DaC has changed the way it charges subscriptions to try and seem better value for money, leaving the higher usage drivers even further out of pocket. The easiest thing for me to do would be to walk away from DaC like so many of our drivers have and try one of our competitors. I've decided I'm also going to vote with my feet, but I'm not going to leave DaC in search of those greener pastures, I'm going to stand up, be counted and put myself forward to be elected to the BoM. I want to be better placed to make a difference and be able to shape the future of our Society. Surely this is the true reflection of my continuing commitment to DaC.

Answer to James Griffin (T97) from Michael Parkins (Z03)

Can all the candidates for the Board elections give us their top two ideas to improve DaC?

Idea 1

If you speak to our clients, whether they be a large corporate account or a private credit card booking, they'll tell you the most important factors they take into consideration when choosing which taxi company to use, are coverage and price. They want a taxi that arrives on time, at a competitive price. Coverage is key when it comes to winning and retaining contracts. I believe the most efficient way for DaC to improve its coverage is to change from a zonal despatch system, to a GPS despatch system. The advantages of changing to GPS are clear. The closest available driver gets offered the job first. A GPS despatch system will greatly improve passenger waiting times as their job will always be offered to closest available driver. It will help reduce job rejects as drivers won't have far to run for pick-ups, again improving passenger waiting times.

With our zonal despatch system, a driver on the eastern end of Strand booked into WC2 can currently be offered a job picking up from the top of Charing Cross Road, also in WC2. As the crow flies it's not a great distance, but when you take into consideration the constant heavy traffic in Covent Garden and around Cambridge Circus, suddenly the job becomes less desirable and has a greater chance of being rejected. A driver who is in Shaftesbury Avenue and booked into W1SE will not get offered the job, despite being geographically closer to the pick-up.

Offering drivers jobs they're already close

DAC ELECTIONS: Drivers questions answered...

to will greatly improve the chances of that job being covered, again improving passenger waiting times. Reducing the distance a driver has to run to reach a pick up means he/she can engage their meter sooner, resulting in less dead time for the driver. The sooner a driver can engage their meter, the sooner they're earning money. I would keep certain radio ranks such as WW00, CC00, EC5 and the current setup regarding E14 and E14C, as I feel these existing ranks work well. I would also introduce new radio ranks at London's major stations such as Paddington, Marylebone, Kings Cross, Waterloo etc, for use when drivers are physically ranking at the stations. This ensures any work coming out of a station gets offered to a driver who is already at the pick-up. Should there be an occasion where no cabs are booked onto a station rank, the job would be despatched via GPS, again ensuring the closest available cab gets offered the job.

Ultimately, I feel adopting a GPS despatch system will benefit DaC, its clients and it's drivers. DaC's overall coverage will improve because drivers are far more likely to accept jobs they're almost on top of. Our clients will benefit from improved waiting times, making DaC a much more attractive proposition and drivers will benefit from shorter run-ins and less dead time. There's also a driver safety benefit of going over to GPS. Currently, drivers have to take their eyes off the road to constantly keep booking into new zones. With GPS, the system already knows where you are and keeps you available to cover work. The system does all the hard work for you; all the driver has to do is keep his/her eyes on the road and concentrate on the trip in hand.

Improving our coverage and showing DaC to be the reliable, dependable operation we know we can be, will translate into more contracts being won and retained in the future. The more contracts we have, the more money our Society and its members will earn.

Idea 2

Depending on the size of the contract and the volume of work an account can potentially offer DaC, I would have a flexible pricing policy and make tailor made offers to each and every client. If a driver wanted to buy one taxi from a dealership, he/she would not expect much of a discount. If the same driver wanted to buy twenty taxis, he/she would expect a preferential rate in return for their business. The same can be said for our customers. A larger account that can offer DaC thousands of regular trips every month will expect to be looked after more than a private account that only uses DaC a handful of times. As an example, let's look at how we lost one of our largest accounts - J.P.Morgan.

The sheer volume of work that JPM fires out every single day and night makes it one of London's most lucrative contracts. ComCab knew this and offered no run-ins or gratuities and subsequently won the lucrative contract. I believe if our fleet had been asked whether they wanted to retain JPM using those terms

or lose it because we didn't match our competitors, I believe the answer would've been unanimous. Contracts that offer the volume of regular trips that JPM did, need to be looked after. If we can be more flexible and offer a tailor made pricing structure for these types of accounts, imagine how many more of these lucrative contracts we could potentially have won.

Personally, the impact of losing JPM has had on me has been immense. Drivers that regularly cover work on E14 will tell you that our drivers are parked up all over E14, both day and night, to help cover our accounts on the Island. After accepting a job, you could see drivers doing laps of Bank and Upper Bank Street to bring their meters up. Had these accounts come with no run-in, would that really have affected coverage? The answer is no. The difference between arriving outside an account with the maximum amount on the meter and arriving with a dead meter is little. In the grand scheme of things, it is peanuts. Again, had the drivers been asked what was more important to them, the chance to cover thousands of extra trips every month and arrive with a dead meter, or lose the account all together, I believe the answer would be unanimous. The same could've been said for many accounts DaC has either lost or are no longer the preferred provider of taxis for: Citi Group, Morgan Stanley, and Deutsche Bank to name a few.

The door swings both ways though. Should DaC assist an account by offering these types of rates, DaC in return would want to cover all trips from that account, not just trips in and around central London. We all know that not every job is going to be a roader, but what every driver wants is the opportunity to cover the longer jobs out of town. I would want DaC to be covering the accounts' airport runs, trips into the suburbs and beyond.

As well as offering tailor-made pricing structures to larger corporate accounts, I want to see DaC do more to target private individual accounts. I believe DaC isn't doing enough to tap into the vast app based market currently being dominated by the likes of Hailo, GetTaxi and Uber. We offer the exact same product as Hailo and GetTaxi - a fully licenced, fully insured London Taxi. Yet we have nowhere near the volume of private individuals using our services. You've got to ask why? How many times have you seen a person standing at the side of the road, obviously waiting for a taxi, letting cabs with their yellow lights on drive past? That person has used a phone app to book a cab. Hailo and GetTaxi have a very clear, very direct marketing strategy. How many times at stations have you seen employees of these companies handing out leaflets to the public that not only promote their services, but also contain money-off vouchers?

Not only do the likes of Hailo and GetTaxi use that time to reach out to potential clients, they use that time to speak to potential new drivers, expanding their numbers in the process. Our competitors are getting to the

passengers before they've even left the office. I want to see DaC make inroads into this lucrative market and become far more proactive in pursuing these types of smaller individual accounts. I would ensure DaC invest in a marketing drive that really targets these individuals. We need to tell our prospective clients exactly what we do and what we can provide.

It's no good having a fantastic product if no one knows about it. The app based market is worth hundreds of millions of pounds every year and currently it's passing DaC by. I want DaC to market our own phone app much more than has previously been done. Supersedes and drivers handing out cards isn't enough. We need to get out and engage with the public to push the app.

Even as you read this response to James's question, a price war is taking place between Hailo, GetTaxi and Uber. Prices are being dropped, subsidised by the companies in an attempt to win work on the run-up to Christmas. Why isn't DaC offering potential clients something similar? This opportunity, like so many others, seems to have passed DaC by. DaC is in a financial position where it can offer incentives to new users for using our services. There's nothing to stop us offering discounted trips or money-off vouchers, all subsidised by DaC at no extra cost to the driver.

DaC is currently charging drivers 7.5% on all account jobs, an increase in account work will lead to an increase in the subscriptions DaC receives that will soon pay back any initial outlay. The goal of offering these types of tailor made pricing structures to both corporate and private accounts is for DaC to win as much work as possible. The more accounts we win, means more trips being offered to our members. I really do believe these ideas are a winning formula that will enable DaC to get a grip back on a market place where it has lost so much ground.

Should I get elected to sit on our BoM, I would, on your behalf, ensure these ideas are set in motion and strive to push DaC forward with the passion I've hopefully shown in answering these questions.

My reasons for standing for election are simple. DaC needs to kick on from where it currently stands to ensure growth and financial prosperity. I believe, as I hope you do, that I am the right person to implement the changes needed to ensure this happens.

Answer to Colin Jenkins (Y22) from Javid Raja (N72)

Hi Colin, no AGMs. I have been 14 years in the trade and a DaC journeyman for 12 years (until last July) so I wasn't eligible to attend AGMs until this year's meeting.



DAC ELECTIONS: Drivers questions answered...

My mind works differently to that of the entire trade. I am Asian, an immigrant (1966).

With the new Yanks arriving in London, they have brought modern day slavery to an end. I have taken advantage of this. I have caused disarray in minicab companies with a desertion campaign. Business is a war; we are in total war now and it is the job of every driver to get Addison Lee, Brunel and other drivers to desert – to destroy their business model. No drivers = No company! The mantra we all use is: You are a free man, go to Uber. Go to Cab Mate to rent your car. Do it, all of you.

We target all big companies. AL has lost 800 drivers so far. Let us help Uber to eat them. The feeding frenzy on our trade is reversed. I have also advised Uber where to attack them on our behalf. I also told them that London will be their Vietnam, the cheeky bastards.

We need boots on the ground: Saturday 10pm till 3am – your trade needs you! I have also put people inside these companies to cause chaos. They now offer £1000 to drivers to return but make them sign three month contracts – it's working. They took our accounts and I will return fire with fury. I have an entire team ready to go – a banker, destroy share price, Somalis, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, East Europeans – their hatred of minicab concerns supersedes our dislike of them.

Carpet bombing – no bombs just brains. Welcome to Asian business management. Do you think anyone would have listened? The petty and juvenile disputes must stop. Unity chaps, think not what your trade can do for you but what you can do for your trade. Have you called a summit meeting, Brian? I have a list but can't say who I want for strategic reasons.

Answer to Jaweid Iqbal (D65) from Javid Raja (N72)

Hi Jaweid, I am opposed to the merger because of the debt Radio Taxis has and its links to Addison Lee as witnessed by me at Kings Cross Station. Any link to any minicab company will not be tolerated.

As for my plans for subs, they should be reduced – we compete for drivers as well as work. They are 'troops' and it is war.

My concept on dealing with enemies? To deal with Johnson and TfL, we destroy the election campaign of the "party of business" – not the taxi business! The 'Don't vote Tory' campaign.

There is a criminal case for TfL to answer. TfL: The most corrupt organisation in the UK. They have destroyed Nissan's investment in our new taxi and I see that as a clear sign of sabotage. I will take them on live radio – Hendy, Daniels – ikbal@nuclearcab on Twitter.

Answer to James Griffin (T97) from Javid Raja (N72)

Hi James, our entire trade has to change, for the market has changed – apps, Uber etc. Two

companies failed to change: Nokia: Eaten by Microsoft without even a burp. Kodak: Invented the digital camera because of greed (kept selling film and processing) – they went into bankruptcy.

To be more competitive, we have to overhaul our trading model. There will be more 'carpet bombing'. Remember Dallas? My initials are J.R. after all!

They took our accounts so I now return fire on their business model. Let's drown them. The shares are now free. The breaking news is that my people have sold the Addison Lee database to Uber. This British Pakistani stands shoulder to shoulder with you, just as our ancestors did in the Burma campaign.

Unity now! It's war people! The B1 is loaded above Camden...

Answer to James Griffin (T97) from Michael Son (V52)

James, excellent observation and relevant question. Prospective Board Members should site their past achievements which gives the membership an opportunity to



gauge the calibre of the candidates. For example, candidates may well have had employment in other areas prior to becoming a cab driver and accumulated skills in areas that could benefit the Society. I believe that any member that wishes to be a contender, prior to the election process, should be questioned by a competent arbiter who could ask the prospective Board Member what experience they have and how they see themselves being an asset to the management structure and ultimately to the membership. If a member is elected to the Board without any experience, that would relate to the service DaC provides; taking up a BM job with all the responsibility the position necessitates is not the way forward for the future of the Society.

Although I was elected to the Board many years ago prior to postal voting by 1500 or so members, providing you looked smart, your speech was what the members wanted to hear and you weren't confrontational, you stood a good chance of being elected. I remember sometimes at the end of some election statements that "A vote for me is a vote for you" always seemed to go down quite well!

Sorry James, that was a bit of a long winded start in answer to your questions. However, what of plans for the future.

It is important to be aware of forward planning and ideas emanate from drivers and Board members and are discussed at meetings. Whether Sales, IT, Contact Centre or any other department, ideas to take the Society forward are discussed, some are actioned

while others are discarded or put onto the back burner for the future.

In my view, we must use every means at our disposal to market our service. Since the development and the introduction of user-friendly online booking for clients, which has proved to be successful, I believe more could be done to increase that trend.

Mobile phones are now an integral part of every area of business. Internet usage on phones has become more important than ever for getting information on the move, especially when competing for market share of whatever business or service is provided. The Internet is helping to keep many organisations ahead of the race by networking their brand. Companies do use social networking to promote their goods or services, which we do use to a degree. However, cost effective marketing using this format is most certainly the way forward. We could also increase other revenue streams, however from a purely commercial point this publication is not where we should mention new concepts. It would be foolish of me to tell you exactly what ideas I do have to further the future aims. However, it will be a pleasure to meet and discuss with you or anyone else for that matter how I see the future.

Answer to James Griffin (T97) from Tom Whitbread (Q09)

I am sorry James, but I have to reiterate myself as this is what I have been advocating for the last 40 odd years regarding losing work. Since the first Renault Dauphines hit the road as Welbeck



Motors, I saw the writing on the wall. Although at their inception I was not a Licenced Taxi Driver, as soon as I got my badge I made my feelings known through every type of media that was available to me.

During the past years, I have got many a Lords / Dial-a-Cab drivers' back up by accusing them of burying their heads in the sand and thinking that minicabs would go away. I have said that the way we have to compete with them is on service; over the past 5 years we should not have allowed any account rides to go uncovered. Please don't tell me these are not viable journeys as I have seen £40, £50 and £60 jobs sent back to the client, informing them we have nothing in the area when I know for a fact that there are Dial-a-Cab taxis around the pick-up points. Since we have been computerised, drivers have been allowed to hide behind their screens while despatchers have been letting the computer do their work and not trying to sell the jobs in a fashion to intimidate the driver into covering their own work.

We also need to make sure that the taxi is

DAC ELECTIONS: Drivers questions answered...

clean and the driver we present to the client for the journey is well-dressed. I am not advocating a suit and tie, but a clean shirt, trousers and shoes. Most of our drivers fall into the first category; it is the ones who cut corners and dress like a beach bum that are losing your work. The Board of Management cannot do their job in a manner that you want without the help of all of the subscribers. Any Board Member who is soft on offending drivers is as guilty as the drivers who do not say anything to their fellow subscribers that are ruining the standards that we need to uphold.

My second suggestion is that we have to find some way to address the fare factor; I know that we are governed by the meter and we need every penny to cover our outgoings, but every other business has sales to attract more customers. But by law we are not allowed to do that. What we could do is give our account clients more fixed prices on long journeys. Private Hire and some other taxi companies go in with very low prices and administration charges when tendering for accounts, but within months these are increased to the same as our prices. We have never given bribes or underhand payments to capture work, but you are up against Addison Lee and John Griffin who since 2008 have donated £754,045 to the Conservative party. Who else have they donated to that we do not know about..

Answer to Alex Constantinou (N05) from Garry White

Firstly, I would like to point out that I do Compliance one day a week (on Mondays) and deal with complaints that get forwarded to myself from the dispatchers and account managers in the best way I can in the time available.



I always like to speak to a member before putting them on complaint if it is possible and if I feel a member has committed a misdemeanor, give them a warning as to future conduct, which would not go in *Call Sign* and like you, they accept their mistake and do not commit the same offence again.

You also ask me about tenders; you're correct in saying they are questions that need a direct answer. However, like most tenders once you've answered the mundane parts they always come down to cost, and that's something we need change as a circuit.

We as drivers need to accept that not all accounts are willing to pay run-ins and gratuities and then complain when our tender isn't successful when our competitors in the taxi supply market are winning tenders by going in with a cheaper starting position.

However, once customers are in the taxi we all use the same metered tariff. So that's up to members: Do you want a little extra at the beginning or the metered fare where possible at the end of the journey?

I say where possible because more and more clients want fixed prices for regular journeys; I know this doesn't go down well with certain members but that's the way the trade is going at the moment. I'm not saying we should do fixed prices during peak demand times, ie rush hours when it is hard to gauge journey times to assess if it's worth doing a fixed price job, because I like to think our knowledge of the city we work in and good service is worth a premium over the PH sector.

Answer to Colin Jenkins (Y22) from Garry White

When I was initially elected to the BoM of DaC and shown round the building for the first time by Brian, we had a conversation about how I would fit into the Society as a new Board member. I said I could learn a lot from Brian about what he does and asked if he could introduce me to clients and contacts within the trade to fully understand the business from the management side as well as the drivers' perspective; I'm afraid this never happened.

After being given the position of Compliance Officer for DaC, I mentioned at a Board meeting this was going to reflect poorly on myself as complaints are left too long before they get answered. The response from Brian, along with the rest of the Board agreeing, was that Board members were expensive and they couldn't afford to have me in more often.

Keith Cain suggested I did two half days, which I felt wasn't helpful as I drive my taxi late evening into the early hours of the morning.

Keith wrote in his proposal of Brian that he feels a new Chairman should be groomed and not put himself forward, as he and others are not without ambition. However, I see it differently and if you want to influence change at DaC, you need to be bold and make a challenge. I have no personal problem with Brian or any other Board member; I want to see the Society face head on the challenges we now have in front of us from other circuits, the PH

sector and the new players whether it be via a tablet in the cab or an app.

Answer to Martin Freeborn (C67) from Garry White

In the December issue of *Call Sign*, Martin Freeborn was allowed to write in the questions section for DaC election candidates, expressing his opinion about the way I presented a complaints meeting.

I would like to answer his points as follows:

Firstly, he said that I presented the complaints sub-standardly. I can only read out the rules that the driver has been accused of breaking and how that offence occurred, then read the members written response to the rule or rules broken.

In the first instance, the driver replied to the complaint without filling in a response or signing the complaints form.

In the second instance, the driver acknowledged his guilt and apologised. I am not the prosecution in these matters, however only there to represent the facts.

The complaints committee are given the complaints, which are printed out by a senior member of staff - not I - who is experienced in the procedure of complaints far greater than I am myself owing to the fact that this was only the second complaints meeting that I have presented.

He then goes on to state that I could not print out a logger, as this is done in the IT department with the drivers MTD ID. This is not something that I could have done from the complaints meeting room. When the member of staff gave me the logger that was requested, it was in a 24 hour format, which is why I took the necessary time to allocate the correct page.

A member can only be asked to answer one of the twenty one procedure rules that appear on the complaints form; therefore for him to say that the complaint fell apart due to lack of information, Martin is being totally disingenuous.

The complaints meeting is chaired, on this occasion it was Keith Cain. He could have given guidance if needed, once the complaint was presented by myself.

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A very young Martin sits next to Spurs legend Pat Jennings while older brother Anthony sits behind

MARTIN HIZER: SPURS OLDER MASCOT!

Last month's *Call Sign* ran a story about Alfie, son of *Dial-a-Cab* driver **Martin Hizer (M47)**. Alfie, like his dad, is a passionate **Spurs** supporter and the December issue had a photo of him on the Tottenham pitch before the game against **Stoke City** when Alfie was one of the team mascots. Even though Spurs lost (yet again), Alfie was still thrilled to be standing in front of 36,000 cheering fans.

But Martin's time as a Spurs fan goes back

many years and he didn't want Alfie to think he'd pulled a fast one on his dad, so he sent us this photo from years gone by. It shows a young Martin sitting next to Spurs Irish international goalkeeper **Pat Jennings**, who in later years had a successful transfer to **Arsenal**. Behind the pair is Martin's older brother **Anthony**, who is also on DaC. Wonder who the other 35,998 people at the games are???

Thanks for my 'Immaculate White Cab'!

When **Nadine Hoffman** saw a copy of *Call Sign* and spotted an ad from *Dial-a-Cab* driver **Debbie Hope (W18)** and her **Immaculate White Taxi** - which Debbie rents out for weddings together with herself as the driver - Nadine phoned to ask if Debbie had the date of her wedding to **Lee** available.

"I always fancied having a white taxi taking me to my wedding," Nadine told *Call Sign*, **"but I never realised that they were available just for that. I assumed that if you wanted one, then you'd have to stand on a street corner and wait for one to come along!"**

Fortunately for Nadine, Debbie did have the date available and she arrived at her Waltham Abbey hotel on November 16th to take her to the wedding at High Beach in Epping.

"Debbie was wonderful," Nadine continued, **"I really just expected the ride, but she made sure that I felt comfortable, that my dress didn't get caught or crease during the journey and just as importantly knowing how important the day to come was, calmed me right down. Debbie was a real diamond and I would recommend her to any bride wanting a white cab for their wedding."**

Debbie told this mag that she was happy to offer any assistance that she could on a bride's big day - adding that Nadine looked absolutely stunning!

Anyone looking for a white cab on the big day can reach Debbie on 07956 317 040.

Totally separately, DaC's Keith Reading (W76) is one of the best toastmasters around and he also advertises in Call Sign. Both he and Debbie offer a discount to anyone on Dial-a-Cab.

And finally of course, our best wishes to the new Nadine Anderson...



Debbie with her white cab waiting for Nadine

Upon receipt of the letter and reading the consultation from TfL/PCO concerning the proposed Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), I, like every other cab driver was totally dismayed once again at the sheer lack of knowledge displayed by the representatives of TfL/PCO at both the current state of the trade and how the trade runs; it really is quite staggering.

I have addressed my comments on the appropriate Consultation website; however I fear that the Consultation document is just a publicity exercise in view of recent developments in the European Court and that court's decision to fine the UK authorities - both national and local - as much as £1million a day for not meeting environmental targets by as early as 2016 if substantive plans are not in place to meet said targets by 2020.

Unfortunately, we the cab drivers are about to pay the price of successive politicians kicking the can down the road for the past 15 years. Boris will not be touched either way; if the plans go ahead, he will claim that he saved the taxpayer a £1million a day. If they fail, he will claim he tried and will blame the cab driver.

I now believe that in addition to voicing our overwhelming disgust at what could after all be a disaster for the trade, instead of trying to block the inevitable, the trade organisations should unite despite all their disagreements - and that means all!

While we continue to protest, we should begin negotiating the best possible deal for all involved in the trade. If we must have electric or extended range vehicles, then the dri-

The latest buzzwords seem to be Ultra-Low Emission zone; so this is...

A DAC DRIVER'S VIEW ON THE ULEZ!



Terry Lewis: Trade organisations should unite

ver's bodies - while the authorities address changes in the condition of fitness - should be fighting to ensure we don't have to face retrospective changes to the conditions of vehicles during the life of a vehicle (as with wheelchair access etc).

They should also be fighting to ensure sufficient dedicated rapid charging space is available for cabs and that profit margins for these charging facilities are enshrined in any contracts that are given for their installation and management (they will undoubtedly be put out to ten-

der for somebody to make a profit on the back of the cab driver)! I'm sure there are many other demands we could include in this, indeed I have few more of my own.

All bodies should now be in discussion with each other; we are all affected - manufacturer, garage owner, proprietor etc. In one shape or form we will all pay. If the authorities have to meet these targets, let's make them pay, let's not look like Luddites (they didn't stop mechanisation of their industry). Let's get the best possible deal for us; the government are proposing a £500,000,000 budget, let's get our share or more. The owners of Addison Lee have probably already got their hand out and are negotiating vehicle prices and subsidies.

Let's not be at the back of the queue for what is a derisory pot of money, let's push our way to the front and get the best deal possible for the trade. I am aware some will see this as defeatist and that the battle has just begun, but unless we the trade have a duel policy of disgust while negotiating a great deal for our trade, we will have everything imposed upon us as with wheelchair access etc.

This will result in the death of our trade and the death of the independent minicab driver, while the likes of Uber - who have the money to meet the targets - will force down driver income while boosting their own profits in renting drivers a vehicle.

Terry Lewis (C33)

JACQUELINE HART COUNSELLOR

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

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

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

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Recently the Editor related to *Call Sign* a perplexing scenario while transporting an elderly lady from the Paddington area to Avenue Road NW8.

"It was several years ago on the Westminster account, Alan told us. As we approached Avenue Road, I looked in the mirror to ask her which street number she wanted but couldn't see her. For one brief moment I thought she had collapsed because she wasn't on the rear seat. I looked round and to my amazement she was squatting on the floor of the cab surrounded by newspapers! She had been defecating on the tabloids!



"I'm not usually short on words but I just stared. The elderly lady began crying and said that she couldn't help herself and had just been caught short, but was too embarrassed to ask me to find a loo. She was from a generation that didn't talk about toilet habits! Thanks to the Evening Standard and the Daily Mirror, my carpet remained unsoiled!"

So *Call Sign* bit the road to garner views from a few Dial-a-Cab subscribers as to how they would have dealt with the situation.

"What? Oh my goodness" Louis Loizou (T58) exclaimed, "I really don't know what to say or how I would deal with a situation like that. I would probably panic! I would not charge her the fare, but I'd be concerned for her health because I would think she may have been unwell or suffering from dementia perhaps. Anyway, I might have been tempted to whizz her - or any passenger for that matter - around to the Wellington Hospital. I do know that I would be 'relieved' to get her out of the cab."



"I would be absolutely mad," Kevan Crowther (T47) stated in astonishment. "I would have thrown her out even though I take into account that she may have had dementia or physical health problems. My father-in-law had to give up driving a cab because of a weak bladder, so I can understand the situa-



THAT'S A LOT OF SH*T!

tion to a degree. But in my 29 years of cabbing, I've been lucky enough to only have to deal with vomit - and who would have thought that dealing only with vomit would have been lucky!"

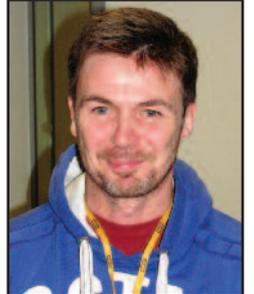
"There are increasingly fewer toilets in London," Ian Macdonald (C64) commented, "and the very people who decide on the loss of these (in)conveniences are the very people who have a toilet at the end of their office corridor! I think the only approach would be compassion for the individual caught short and be glad the cab carpet or interior were not soiled."



"I would remonstrate with the passenger and ask what they thought they were doing," said Geoff Levene (W32J) "and remind them that my - or any taxi - is not a public toilet. I would then get them out of the cab as soon as possible."



Anthony Smith (F43) looked incredulous when *Call Sign* related the scenario. "I'm not sure how I would deal with a situation like that. I would imagine the passenger was not fully *compos mentis* otherwise I would expect to be asked to stop wherever I was in the road. What an awful situation to have to deal with!"



George Christou (E14) was particularly positive in his views. "The passenger would be well out of order! She needed to say something because as a Colitis sufferer myself, there are generally steps you can take to prevent such an occurrence. You ask to stop the cab, get out and do it behind a bush, a tree, in the kerbside, anywhere but not in the cab! It really should not have happened, so I find it hard to believe really."



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Last month, Bob Woodford told of he and partner Steph attempting to walk Peru's Inca Trail to try and raise the £1400 needed to sponsor a taxi taking children with life-threatening illnesses on the WCHCD Magical Taxi Tour to Disneyland Paris. This is the final part of their story...

Inca trail: Day three...

I felt drained after managing little sleep before our 5am rise and shine – ahead of another tough day if we were to conquer the two remaining mountain passes. Over breakfast – which was a struggle because of my diarrhoea problem – I decided that having travelled 6,000 miles, I was going to complete the challenge however long it took and however many times I had to disappear into a bush with my wet wipes!

Fortunately, the dosage of Imodium was beginning to work its wonders and because the runs were less frequent, the walking became more confident – although judging by the aroma of flatulence on **Runkurakay Pass**, my fellow trekkers were having their own issues!

On the **Phuyupatamarca Pass** we negotiated a tunnel that led out to lush green mountains and snowy peaks as far as the eye could see, before then descending to our final campsite after 12 hours walking.

Inca Trail: Day four...

Another early start in order to reach the **Sun Gate** for the optimum view of **Machu Picchu** leaving us with one last steep push on those original Inca steps, before we arrived at one of the world's most breath-taking sights!

The challenge was over and it was a huge relief because it had certainly been a challenge – but the challenge of a lifetime! Glowing with success, the sight of Machu Picchu will stay with me forever!

We then descended to explore the fascinating buildings and ruins that make the city in the clouds so special. Fortunately we had a great Guide in **Willow Torres**, who had been with us since we arrived in Lima and who made our guided tour all the more enjoyable.

We caught the bus down to **Agua Calientes**, a bustling market town hidden from Machu Picchu, before boarding the train back to **Cusco** and a celebratory meal that was to follow the next evening.

On reflection...

So would I ever consider taking part again? Never! Having participated in the **Marathon des Sables** 14 years ago where you had to cross the **Sahara Desert** on foot and which is said to be the toughest footrace on earth, I

Inca Trail to Machu Picchu: The conclusion



The llama looks concerned about Bob and his flatulence!
(Inset): The group's guide Willow Torres



have to say that the **Inca Trail** for me was much tougher. That was because of the effects of altitude sickness complications.

Would I recommend this event to others? Certainly!

But let me advise you of a few do and do nots first (contact me via **Call Sign**), in addition to putting you in touch with a superb Adventure Challenge Company, a superb Guide and the advice of the Travel Clinic!

Has the Appeal Fund been successful? At the time of typing these notes, our Just

Giving page had received nearly £600 in donations – so we are still 55% short of our target. So it's not too late to make that donation - however small - online at www.justgiving.com/robandsteph - or by texting CUSC99 followed by (leave a space) £1, £2, £3, £4, £5 or £10 and text that to 70070.

Thanks from both Steph and I to everyone that has supported our Magical Taxi Tour Appeal Fund!

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online

Call Sign Says...

YOU COULD GET A LOT OF E-CABS WITH THAT!

LibDem leader and Deputy PM, **Nick Clegg**, has announced new funding for cycling in England – a hefty £214million, while Chancellor **George Osborne** has added an additional £114million to share between another eight cycling cities outside of the capital. That can be added to the £100 million that the Highways Agency will be spending on bikes over the next six years.

According to Nick Clegg: "The inspiration and legacy of the 2012 Olympics and the Tour de France starting in Yorkshire

began a revolution in cycling for everyone, not just in velodromes, not necessarily in Lycra, but for going to school or to work or to the shops. The rewards could be massive. Billions of pounds in savings for the NHS, less pollution and congestion and a happier and safer population."

Well, Mr Clegg, according to our beloved **Mayor Johnson**, who told the world how wonderful we were at London 2012, the air we breathe could become much improved if the London licensed taxi trade – black cabs to you – were given that kind of dosh to help us purchase electric taxis. Otherwise those companies building them will follow **Nissan** and just do a runner.

There are lots of votes involved here...although nowhere near enough to save you!



Nick Clegg announced extra bike funding

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

After 42 years as a taxi driver with 40 of them on Dial-a-Cab...

Max Arnold Retires

Early December was a strange time for Max Arnold (D66). After forty years on Dial-a-Cab, he had to make what he called the lonely drive from Clayhall to Roman Way, where his taxi was going to be stripped of its radio equipment. Soon after, even the cab itself was about to get a new owner with Max pulling the plug on 42 years of driving a taxi.

When we asked what he was going to do instead, he just smiled and said that retirement usually meant exactly that – retiring from work!

“To be honest,” Max told *Call Sign*, “I can’t face this trade anymore! What with the traffic, the huge amount of opposition and the constant regulations that push us further and further away from the public, this isn’t the job that I loved so much for so many years. Even our own licensed taxis radio circuits are undercutting each other on price, the result of that can only mean a gradual deterioration of the quality we are renowned around the world for.”

Going back to the beginning, Max told us that he gained his Bill in January 1972 and within two years he was already feeling bored cruising the streets looking for work. He had applied to join ODRTS several months before but had forgotten all about it and had even applied for a sales job outside the trade, when suddenly the postman dropped an application form onto his mat. Signed by the new Chairman **Martin Gellman**, it invited Max to become an ODRTS member.

“I couldn’t say yes quickly enough,” said Max, and on 7 Nov 1974 he was to start a love affair with Dial-a-Cab.

“I know that over the past few years, so much competition added to the recession meant that things were not as they had been, but I remember the good days so well because there were many, many more of those than there have been bad ones. The truth is that I was doing really well by covering radio work – and that was on a day shift. The radio was just so busy that at times dispatchers would often look for drivers that were doing deliveries to see if they would marry up a passenger and get paid twice! All feelings of boredom went as soon as I understood how to work on the radio with its dispatchers who seemed to use their own language! We used to go all over the show and it was so different than working the streets!

“In fact it was so busy in those days that if I couldn’t sleep because our baby daughter was waking up, I’d often go out to work soon after midnight and return at around 6am, before my wife Rose even knew I had gone! And those six hours would provide you with non-stop radio work. In fact, as my last job of the night I often picked up a prostitute from the Hilton in Park Lane and took her to her home to Forest Gate – and before anyone says anything, she paid cash! Strangely enough, this trade had a reputation for accepting passengers such as that and accepting payment in kind! I think that was something of an urban myth because although some of the girls would give you their card and offer commission for customers you took to them, they never offered me anything other than cash for the trip and I doubt they did to many other drivers either.”

Now aged 65, Max says that his feelings about taxi work have returned to how they were in his first two years.

“I’m out at 3am nowadays and it’s nothing like it was in those early days on radio and I’m getting bored again! I may look for a part-time job and I’m certainly not going to hand in



my Badge and Bill because they run till the end of 2016 and you never know!

“But the thought of not driving a cab anymore has put a smile back on my face and that’s a good sign! Can I through *Call Sign* thank everyone on Dial-a-Cab from staff to the Board through to the drivers for making these 40 years fly by. I will miss everyone – but just not the job!”

Good luck Max...



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Buying a new cab

Going back many years, the only supplier of licensed taxis was **Mann & Overton in Wandsworth Bridge Road** and because they were the sole suppliers, they often would abuse the fact. Whilst you sat in their waiting room to pick up your shiny brand new always-black taxi, you could listen to horrific tales from drivers waiting for repairs to be carried out to their still under warranty taxis.



Little did I know that I soon would be joining these hard put upon mushers. Not long after buying my new cab, I noticed a leak that looked to be coming from the nearside shock absorber, so I drove from Hackney to SW6 and rather than wait all day as you always had to regardless of how small the job was, I caught a bus from **New Kings Road** back to **Hackney**. Later that afternoon I made the long journey back from Hackney to Fulham to retrieve my early model FX4. As I walked down **Woolneigh Street**, I saw my taxi parked there and could see the shocker was still leaking. As I went into the **M&O** office, I was greeted by a miserable looking receptionist who told me that my cab was ready! I told him it was still leaking but he assured me that they had changed the shocker. I went out with a mechanic and it turned out that they had changed the offside one! When I queried it, they tried to blame me saying that I had told them it was the offside one. I think their fitter was Stevie Wonder on an apprentice course, so I made them go through the waste bins until they found my instruction paper. They then told me I would have to come back the following day as it was 4.45pm and they were closing!

So I informed them that I had my six year old son with me and we would be camping in their waiting room until my taxi was ready! Thirty minutes later I was presented with my taxi and its new nearside shock absorber fitted!

Once my cab was out of warranty, I used to have my servicing and overhauls done by **Tommy Whitford** whose garage was in **Ashwin Street** off **Dalston Lane** and close to a very popular and well-used taxi rank. As any long time driver would tell you, Tommy was a great guy. He rented a space at the back of **Sam Cooper's** garage where hundreds of drivers filled up each day on their way home eastwards. But Tommy was not known for keeping a clean floor in his work area, so you needed a pair of Wellington Boots as it was akin to standing in a Texan oil field!

Driving for the Queen Mum
Working as I did part-time for **Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother** was just so far removed from the life I led as an **ODRTS** taxi driver. Her Majesty's staff worked in what can be best described as a cocoon, because most of the royal residences were away from highly populated areas. So they usually had a long walk - or occasionally

During his recent well-publicised illness, Tom Whitbread wrote about his early memories as a taxi driver. As he approaches full-fitness once again, this will be the last of that series...

TOM'S TALES

a taxi ride - to local pubs or clubs if indeed there were any. The exception was when in London at **Clarence House**, where they were in the centre of all the life of this great city.

So when they travelled to **Sandringham** (Scotland), **Windsor** or **Dover**, it was likened to a coach outing for the staff that travelled with me. One yearly trip was to **Walmer Castle** near Dover where Her Majesty was the **Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports** and Walmer Castle was where she stayed during the visit.

As Walmer Castle is a Museum, all personal belongings had to be transported there for entertaining and for her personal care. So I would load one of the coaches with the help of **Shaun**, the Queen Mother's third chauffeur; this would include a trunk such as the ones seen in pirate movies - full of the silver needed for a mini banquet! The weight of this trunk, if lifted incorrectly, could result in a delicate part of your lower body dropping to your ankles and you ending up with a very high voice! There would also be a dining table, alcoholic drinks and mixers and glasses, plus personal clothing in hanging wardrobes! You actually felt like a Pickford's removal man.

Then there was the time I was driving the coach along the A2 / M2 with all the above in, including the Royal staff. We were driving up an incline and on this particular morning, my vehicle decided that the weight was just a bit above what it wanted to pull, so the gearbox sent out a sound like a police siren and then with a large bang, refused to function any further. I managed to get to the nearside barrier.

Luckily I had recently just purchased my first mobile phone - almost the size of the Royal coach - and was able to contact **Buckingham Palace** to inform them of my plight and to get them to arrange with the AA for their biggest relay truck to be despatched to our location. While I was organising it, Mary - a lovely Irish lady who worked as a maid for the Queen Mum -

told me of her great need for a public convenience. So as a joke, I informed the official at Buckingham Palace that I was in great need of a bucket. When the large truck arrived, the AA man parked in front of us and walked back to our coach. Opening the door, he asked in a loud voice who was the person in great need of a bucket! Mary's face went bright red as she slid down the seat out of view!

We hitched up the coach to the trucks winch and the AA man started to pull the coach forward, but it was at that moment that the weight once again showed its insistence on not moving and black smoke began to come out of the winch motor. So now the manoeuvre was a start-stop operation until we had the coach safely aboard, then it was *post haste* down the motorway to the first **Little Chef**. With brakes applied and gravel spitting everywhere, the door flew open and Mary departed the lorry like an Olympic sprinter, last seen disappearing through the door marked ladies as there wasn't a loo saying Maids!

On arrival at the castle, the job was not finished as the load now had to be carried by hand up the narrow spiral staircases to the first and second levels. We were often lucky, as the local army barracks would send along six fit soldiers to help. It was always amazing how mention of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother would get that type of reaction. She was very much still loved.

My sincere thanks to everyone that enquired as to my health following my recent operations that at one time looked to have been serious enough to force me to wear a colostomy bag for life. Happily, that is no longer the case and I am practically back to full fitness. Your good wishes helped me greatly and I thank you all...

Tom Whitbread
DaC Board Member

The Hon President, Hon Chairman and Committee Of

The London Taxidriers' Fund For Underprivileged Children

Would like to wish you all

A Very Happy New Year

With grateful thanks to all our drivers, sponsors, helpers and supporters

"None walks so tall as he who stoops to help a child"

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Operations Manager Report

And chat from the Contact Centre...

Hello Ladies & Gents

I do hope that you have all had a profitable festive period and that you've also enjoyed a well-deserved rest and chill out period with your family and friends.

2014 was interesting to say the least, with our trade being disrupted and attacked from all sides. We have lost some of our members both old and new - some through retirement, while sadly others are no longer with us and it is at this time of year that we can reflect on the good times, but also some of those sad times and our thoughts go out to the people that are left behind.

I must praise my staff in the Contact Centre who have all worked so hard over each of our three shifts, especially over the past month or so. We have made quite a number of changes over the last 12 months to help streamline the operation and make it more user-friendly. I do believe that it has worked for the betterment of both driver and client's point of view.

We have trained a number of new dispatchers and team leaders and I again feel that the



changes have worked well. I've listened to ideas and suggestions coming from members and staff alike and I will continue to do that for as long as it continues to help improve the Contact Centre and help make our operation more efficient.

Our online and App bookings continue to grow, which does help to take a little pressure

off the staff. Credit Card trips are also increasing week-on-week and as I have mentioned previously, the average fares are almost £28, so well worth covering.

I do hope that the new Credit Card changes that I explained about in my December article have helped you and although it is still early days, I hope the card coverage has improved.

On all Credit Card bookings (CCB) offered through the system, you no longer have to ask for the card at the end of the journey. It is treated in exactly the same way as a normal account trip, which I hope will further simplify things a little. Of course passengers using Credit Cards when hailing a taxi in the street must have the card!

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very happy, prosperous and successful New Year in 2015...

Allan Evans
Contact Centre Manager
Operations Manager

HYDROGEN TAXI MAKER: BIG LOSSES!

"But still on the right road..."

Hydrogen fuel cell makers, **Intelligent Energy**, have hailed the past twelve months as "transformational" even though their losses more than doubled from £21million to over £48million. But the company, which made the hydrogen fuel cell powered taxis that were paraded at the 2012 **London Olympics**, sounded confident about the future – no doubt some of that comes from TfL policies regarding emission levels.



Hydrogen taxi out on test

In the November 2013 issue of *Call Sign*, we revealed that two drivers on **Dial-a-Cab** had been road testing the temporarily named **TX4H** – H being for Hydrogen – and would continue to do so for a total of around two years. We agreed not to name the drivers.

Intelligent Energy specialise in the development of modular, low carbon fuel cell systems. They lead a consortium whose intention is to introduce zero emission fuel cell electric taxis to London, featuring a hydrogen fuel cell and lithium battery powered electric hybrid that should provide a 250-mile driving range whilst still maintaining all the passenger and luggage space that London taxis are famed for. Refilling is said to take five minutes.

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At the onset of this prestigious cup for non-league teams, the **FA Vase**, there were no less than **605** teams battling to get to the Final, which takes place at **Wembley Stadium**. From that first qualifying round, like thousands of other players, **Dial-a-Cab** driver and **Colliers Wood** goalkeeper **Lee Pearce (J71)** had that dream of walking out at the most famous football ground in the world.

Yes, there's the **Bernabéu**, home to **Real Madrid**, not to mention the ground where they worship both *Catalanism* and **Barca – FC Barcelona**. There is even the *Theatre of Dreams* at **Manchester United's Old Trafford**. But there is only one Wembley Stadium and Lee Pearce wants to play there!

When Colliers Wood were given a home tie in the third round of the Vase against **Lingfield** of the Southern Counties East Football League, 'Wood must have felt that they had a chance – especially as the team had been scoring almost at will, knocking in seven in their previous two league games. But it turned into almost a rout!

CW opened the scoring after 8 minutes when **Charlie Emery** knocked in his first goal for the club. Barely 60 seconds later, **Eli Ogunseye** doubled the score. Soon after, **Mario Embalo** hit the post – a miss he would more than make up for! Lingfield steadied their ship until the fortieth minute when Embalo, dropping back to help out the defence, cleared to Dan Harding whose excellent pass put Ogunseye away and he finished well to pick up his second and Colliers

The Lee Pearce Wembley dream lives on
**COLLIERS WOOD
 CRUISE INTO LAST 32**



The last time Lee Pearce captured silverware was the Middlesex Senior Cup, but the FA Vase is the big one!

Wood third. Two minutes later, Lingfield's **Dan Frith** made it 3–1 following a corner. Then just as half time approached, Lee Pearce managed to deflect a shot otherwise it could have been 3–2.

Then on the hour mark, Lee Pearce hit an

amazingly long kick that was chested down by **Dan Harding** and he hit it past the Lingfield goalkeeper. Mario Embalo made it 6–1 on 71 minutes and two minutes after that he rounded the goalkeeper to make it 7–1 and to claim his hat-trick. But Mario wasn't finished and after 75 minutes he made it 8–1 after being teed up by Dan Harding.

You have to hand it to Lingfield because even with no chance, they kept going and after 82 minutes **Joel Amos** beat Lee Pearce from outside the area with a powerful low shot that crept into the corner. But just before the end, Mario Embalo scored Colliers Wood's eighth and his fifth – which probably made up for his hitting the post in the early stages. Otherwise he would have claimed an amazing double hat-trick and send CW into double figures!

Lee Pearce told *Call Sign*: "We deserved to win although Lingfield were a bit unlucky to catch us in such good form. We feel that we are capable of scoring against anyone now."

Colliers Wood now face a tough away game against Hellenic premier league side **Ascot** in round 4 on January 17...

LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE With Tom Quigley (Y33)

Shotgun deliveries

After Black Friday's online shopping spree and the Boxing Day sales, the one thing for certain with all this shopping is that the goods have to be delivered and the packaging of the goods have to be collected and disposed of.

Those of us old enough to remember will recall that deliveries were done by two men – the driver and his mate. The mate's job was to help with the loading/unloading and assisting the driver to negotiate tight turnings, generally acting as a banksman, guiding and making sure that everything went smoothly whilst helping to speed up the whole process. The term used was 'Riding Shotgun' harking back to the old Wild West days of having a man with a shotgun up front to protect the driver. But I suppose in these days of drive-bys, it wouldn't be PC to have a rider with a shotgun!

However, as all these delivery companies are looking to save money and boost their own profits, the opportunity for a driver's helper are few and far between. But their striving for profits comes at additional cost - who has not had a vehicle parked that has somehow been damaged - often on wing mirrors or other side parts of their vehicle, garden walls and gate knocked down, waited with your taximeter on as some articulated lorry tries an impossible manoeuvre in the road holding up traffic and costing your passenger more money? Or even worse, when a supermarket truck delivers to a home with just one man carrying out their duties about 200 yards from a 24 hour supermarket where many years ago this form of delivery would have been done by a lad on a bike from a local shop (strange how some MPs and political parties supported by the big conglomerates are not advocating a return to this, particularly as they love the cycle campaign so much).

All this damage and holdups mean we all suffer; new parts, repairs, insurance increases, the garden gate/wall being rebuilt, the increased congestion? And dare I say it, the knock-on effect with increased emissions, the undoubted stress on the driver who is probably self-employed or on a zero hour contract.

Meanwhile, the longevity of such work will be impossible resulting with time off work and a period of sick pay - not from the company, but through the DHSS, which is our money. As more and more companies strive for that profit, you often see a waste disposal company in the middle of the West End holding up a whole fleet of vehicles while one man loads the bags of rubbish into the truck! Those contracts are awarded by the same Czars who bang on about pollution and poor air quality. They even have the audacity to preach to others how all London companies should pay their staff a "London Living Wage!" In the meantime, they just close their ears and eyes to the obvious cost-cutting and poor conditions of the workers.

Online shopping is handy, but the delivery systems and working practices of the companies need to be looked at; it might look as though we are saving some money, but the hidden costs are far larger.

Rubbish disposal

Following the IRA terrorist attacks in the 70s and 80s, there was a reduction in the number of litter bins in London, especially in the centre. However, with recycling and a cleaner looking London, there has been an increase in their numbers, which is very good. But have you noticed the positioning of these bins? Obviously and rightly so, many are near bus stops etc where people gather.

But you try emptying any bottles or litter from your taxi into a bin and notice how many are on double red lines, zig zags or no waiting or loading bays area with high camera CCTV activity. Surely this is not done on purpose? Is it...?

Finally I'd like to wish you all a very happy 2015...



Tom Quigley, Call Sign Online



Pat Keefe and the Uber ad that arrived at his home

In the November issue of *Call Sign*, Jon Robinson (E11) said that he had received a text message on his phone apparently from Uber. As he had never been on Uber, he wondered how they had

DaC's Pat Keefe is the second driver to ask the same question:

UBER: WHERE DO THEY GET OUR ADDRESSES FROM?

obtained his mobile phone number and whether TfL had sold them on as at the time our licensing authority were also advertising Uber on their TfL website. The text had read:

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

We asked TfL and they denied not only not having sold the numbers but admitted that they didn't even have Jon Robinson's number.

But it was Uber that answered the question admitting that they received (which probably means that they bought) the numbers from a third party where those contacted had previously registered themselves as London taxi drivers (possibly via the small print) and had given consent to be contacted for marketing purposes.

Now another Dial-a-Cab driver, Pat Keefe (G01), has told this magazine of an advert from Uber that actually arrived in the post! So they also have a database of addresses from somewhere! Pat told us:

"A month or so ago, they sent me the text that appeared in *Call Sign* offering me stupid sky-high figures; now they are at it again

by post. I have to question how they got hold of my address as well as my phone number.

"To my way of thinking, they could only get it from within our own trade and from organisations such as Dial-a-Cab, the LTDA, Tradex Insurance, Taxiworld Meters, LTPH/TfL, the LCDC, MB Vito or even perhaps the former KPM etc.

"I'm sure you get my point. Although I'm sure it wouldn't be any of the radio circuits, I believe someone associated to our trade is selling us out to this carnivorous mob. If anyone out there does know, it would be nice to let the rest of us know, so we then would have a choice to boycott them."

Does anyone out there know the answer?

DAC CCB

Please remember that passengers on Credit Card bookings (CCB) offered via your DaC terminal no longer need to show their card at the end of the journey. Those trips are now treated in exactly the same way as normal account trips. Passengers using Credit Cards when hailing a taxi in the street must still present their card for processing via your PED...

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Taxi Driver of the

DaC at the 43rd TDoY



Brian and Brenda Rice



Allan and Gill Evans



LTFUC Secretary Malcolm Shaffron receives £1000 cheque as did the other four charities



Russell and Barbara Poluck auction two footballs donated by LBC

On 7th December, around 100 guests enjoyed the annual **Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund** dinner and dance at its new location of the **Holiday Inn, Regents Park** – a venue that most agreed made an excellent choice.

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 a truly excellent turkey dinner and amazing dessert trio before settling down for an evening of dancing to **Fraternity**.

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 42 years it had given away no less than £2.6million!

Receiving welcome cheques for £1000 each were the **East London Cabbies Outing**, the **London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children**, the **London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled**, the **Southend Taxi Drivers Charity for Children** and the **Albany Charity Fund**.

Sadly, TDoY committee member Bill Tyzack and his wife Grace, who have attended the function for many years, were unable to attend

Year Charity Fund

DOY dinner and dance



John Dixon (B67) talks to Mike and Maxine Son

through illness. Also absent through illness was Audrey Sherry. All three were missed.

Honorary Chairman of the TDOY Charity Fund, **Russell Poluck MBE (T55)** and his wife **Barbara** work very hard to organise this event each year and this year's was probably one of the most enjoyable they've put on – and after 42 years that is certainly saying something!

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 an approximate £40,000 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!

During the course of the evening, there was a popular tombola running with some great prizes, in addition to a raffle where the main prize was a £1000 holiday voucher, which was won by the lucky **Mr G.Pike**.

There was also a gift of an attractive purse/credit card holder for all the ladies present, while the men received nail files.

Once again **Dial-a-Cab** was one of the sponsors and Chairman **Brian Rice** was present, together with several Board members and staff. Thanks also to sponsors **Audrey Sherry, Dagenham Travel, the LMCPSA, Radio Taxis, Len Roberts, Tradex Insurance and Ubiquitous.**

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

1st prize: £1,000.00 holiday voucher (Mr G.Pike 00878)

2nd prize: Overnight stay at a London hotel with 2 theatre tickets (Constance 025001)

3rd prize: £100 Totes voucher (V.Thompson 01461)

4th prize: Champagne tea for two (M.Anderson 01320)

5th prize: Scooter (Freddie 00680)

6th prize: Hamper (Shifali 02868)

7th prize: Power Washer (Gitesh, Barclays Bank 02511)

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

Brethren of the Whip



Disney and the cabman...

Towards the end of August 1865, William Ivy picked up a fare at the Eastern Counties terminus (where Shoreditch over-ground station now is); his fare consisted of three people with several destinations being involved.

First he took them to Bow Street, waited before continuing onto St Martin's Lane. After waiting there, he took them to Waterloo House in Pall Mall, thence to Scotland Yard, back to Waterloo House before finally finishing up in Berkeley Square. A nice job assuming you get paid – and William Ivy didn't! As the law stood at the time, the passenger could compel the driver to go to a police court to have the argument settled there and this was agreed to.

In Marylebone police court, Ivy retold the magistrate of his journey that morning and ended by saying that he required four shillings (20p) for the job but his passenger felt that only 3s 6d (17p) was the legal fare. As Ivy finished giving his evidence, the passenger burst out laughing...

"Ha! Ha! He is wrong; the distance as he says is right." All those in the court room now exchanged glances as to what the defendant was talking about. Ivy replied that he hadn't said anything about the distance yet, but he then said it was four miles. To which another

barrage of laughs came from the passenger, while more quizzical looks appeared around the court room.

The passenger did not stop there; addressing the magistrate he bellowed that he (the magistrate) would know as well as the passenger that "these cabmen are insulting fellows." This was a bit much for Ivy, who also addressing the magistrate said: "I beg your pardon, sir. We are as much gentlemen as you are." That bought the retort from the passenger: "I did not say you were a gentleman, I said you were an insulting fellow." Which in itself was a strange remark as he had not alleged any insulting or insolent language from Ivy.

Having ascertained that Ivy had carried three people in his cab, there seemed little doubt that he was in the right and that the passenger should pay the four shillings required. The passenger objected:

"I must dispute it. He has no right to charge time for I did not stop for a quarter of an hour at one single place and unless I do so, he cannot claim for stoppages however many different places I might take him to and stop."

It has to be said that an initial reading of the 1853 Act would allow no charge for stopping up to fourteen minutes, but it could be charged from the fifteenth minute. In the dozen years following the Act, many had tried and failed to keep cabmen waiting around all day without having to pay them.

The magistrate, a Mr Mansfield, informed the defendant that his interpretation of the law was wrong; the cabman had the right to add together all the various stopping times. The passenger still argued the point and then informed the magistrate that he was a fellow

magistrate and therefore a fellow gentleman. He even offered to name his club in London (this was not deemed necessary by the court).

The argument continued before the passenger, who now gave his name as Edward Disney from Ingatestone, bowed to the wishes of the court and paid William Ivy his fare.

And then he pulled out his trump card: "I must now have a go at the cabman." William Ivy looked at him mystified. "What for," came the reply. "For not giving me a ticket, said Disney." He now had the cabman bang to rights. The law stated that a ticket - a receipt that had the plate number of the cab so they could be traced if necessary - had to be given at the beginning of every journey. Most cabmen did not bother giving them out as most passengers did not want one. But Edward Disney was not the first to use this against a cabman when they had lost a dispute.

Fortunately for the cabman, the magistrate was on his side. He told Disney that if that was so, he would have to take out a summons against Ivy and this he did after paying the requisite two shillings (10p). Ivy admitted offering a ticket to Disney, but not at the beginning of the journey and the magistrate fined him the princely sum of 6d (2½p) without costs. Disney had won, but it cost him two shillings. He demanded an appeal but the magistrate informed him there were no grounds for appeal and the case was now closed.

It's true that William Ivy only ended up with the 3s 6d he was originally offered, but he probably felt that the 6d he was fined in getting one over a magistrate was money well spent!

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

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I used to do it whenever I could, but I hardly do it at all now. The other person has to be really special before I'll even consider suggesting anything, but by and large I think I'm too old for that sort of thing now. I refer of course, ladies and gents, to asking for an autograph. What did you think I meant?

There have been so many over the years - **Alec Guinness, Phil Everly, Harold Pinter, Gary Lineker, Eric Clapton**; I once spent an entire journey wondering if it really was **Faye Dunaway** sitting behind me but I bottled out of that one!

One day I was on the rank at **Harrods**. A man stood looking in the windows. Black overcoat, jeans, cowboy boots and long blonde hair. It all added up to rock star! But which one? Then two young guys walked up to him and asked him if he was **David Coverdale**? He said he was and signed something for them. I was a rock fan but I was then none the wiser. Then he got into the cab and I thought why not! So I said I had always been a fan of his and would he mind signing my book - hoping I would be able to read it! But my son was truly delighted as it turned out that David Coverdale had been lead singer with **Deep Purple** and later formed **Whitesnake**.

And then there was **Julie Walters, Chris Eubank**, several **Redgraves** and **Bob Monkhouse**, who was exactly as you'd have expected him to be. And at a children's show with my boys, **Rolf Harris** obliged. As my eldest said to me recently of the man currently being held at Her Majesty's pleasure: "He was just so nice!"

As much as I liked him, **Tommy Cooper** was too drunk and a little scary. And in Queen Elm's Square I was amazed when **Albert Finney** answered the door. As I walked back to the cab, his neighbour - swathed in towels and fresh from the bath - called out to him. It was **Dame Maggie Smith** but the situation was just too surreal to dare ask for an autograph!

Nobody has ever refused, but two made me feel uncomfortable - and they were both people I really liked. There was the star of a ground-breaking comedy sketch show of the sixties and seventies which has recently had a successful O2 revival. I picked him up from a castle-like house in St John's Wood. When I asked him for an autograph, his lip curled and he asked with a snarl if I had anything to write on? I think he should have "looked on the bright side of life!"

There was the Geordie actor who came to fame in a series about builders working in Germany. After waiting 20 minutes, he came out, buried his nose in his paper and off we went. Five minutes from set-down in Whitfield Street, he put the paper down so I thought I'd try. In a rather pompous voice he declared: "Well I am rather late."

I said ok then, but he did sign. Sadly I lost some respect for both of them. If all you're doing is just looking out of the window, then it shouldn't be a hardship.

When he was very young, my son Dan twice came face to face with the great and the good - although he doesn't remember either episode. Firstly we were in the old **Biba** on Ken High Street when **Diana Ross** appeared

Another true story from Geoff Levene...

AUTOGRAPH PLEASE?



and gave him the sweetest of smiles.

Not long after that, I was invited to one of those Tarts 'n Vicans fancy dress parties. We decided to get outfits from **Bermans and Nathans** in Camden Town and took Dan with us. As we stood by the fitting rooms, a male voice boomed out that he was going to need a silver lamé jock strap with his outfit. A cur-

tain was pulled aside and there wearing a silver lamé ball gown slashed to the thigh was theatre critic **Kenneth Tynan**, famously the first man to utter the f-word on TV. A good looking man... but a rather unusual looking woman! We all stared open-mouthed.

"Oh my God," he declared before disappearing back behind the curtain! I later read he wore the outfit at the **Dorchester** and there is a picture in his "Diaries."

I decided to hire a monk's habit complete with the cowl or hood. I also thought it would look fun with a death's head mask. We drove to the party in my **Dial-a-Cab** taxi. At the traffic lights by Highgate Station, the driver on my right turned towards me and I looked him full in the face. His eyes widened and his mouth opened in horror, because there on the A1 he had come face to face with the Grim Reaper - minus the scythe! Well, my terminal was in the way...!!!!

Geoff Levene (W32)
Call Sign Online



My tribute to David Kupler

JUST CALL ME MR MELLOR!

Just call me Mr Mellor;

I'm a rude and arrogant fella,

I've met kings, queens and heads of state,

You think that compares with a fare to Forest Gate?

Don't be sarcastic or I'll tear you off a strip.

I'm intellectually superior to most of your class,

I'm so important that I'm up my own ar*e!

If this is being recorded, then I apologise For being rude, arrogant - and cutting you down to size.

I'll explain my outburst on LBC

It will come complete with an apology So next time you see me with my arm in the air

Please don't drive past; I'm such a good fare...!

Steve Shaller (Ex R75) Spain

I'm a QC, a writer and a VIP,

I'm so important - that's obvious to see.

So drive to the Palace and mind your lip,

Nissan bi-fuel Cab for Hong Kong

In a move that could rekindle London interest in the **Nissan NV200**, the company has launched its cab in **Hong Kong**. However, rather than the petrol-powered taxis currently in New York and as had been proposed for London before the car company pulled it, the Hong Kong taxis will run on a bi-fuel blend of petrol and **liquefied petroleum gas**. The LPG standard is already common among taxis in Europe and Asia and Nissan claims its implementation of the technology will reduce 80 percent of NOx emissions as compared to pure LPG vehicles.

Nissan already has a significant share of Hong Kong's taxi market. The Cedric sedan taxi has already been in widespread use over there since the 1970s. Its chief rival is the Toyota Crown. NV200 taxis have also been in use across Japan as well as New York.

Mailshot

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

Cycle Superhighways

Dear Al

I thought your Editorial on cyclists was very restrained given the subject! Well it is election year, so why not turn Mr Johnson into a liability and vote UKIP?

David Hughes (A73)

Hi David; as everyone knows, restraint is my middle name! The current Mayor isn't standing but having spoken to him a few times, I can safely say that while I will miss his sense of humour, I won't miss him as a Mayor! There will be a wide choice of candidates. We need to examine the list carefully and try to get a result by using our block vote. Party politics will be irrelevant; we need someone who still believes that we are the best taxi service in the world and not someone who just pays us lip service ...Ed

Election: Questions or comments?

Martin Freeborn has clearly made a statement on the DaC Elections: Questions for Candidates page. I find that poor journalism on your part; surely the magazine is supposed to be independent of the Board's views and give a balanced view for all candidates? I have no axe to grind with the BoM, but it seems you and the Board are behaving like schoolyard bullies, something I find distasteful. I think the majority of members would appreciate a more balanced view from the magazine - a magazine which I may add is paid for by the members so they can make an informed decision over the elections. At present *Call Sign* appears to be a vehicle for the BoM and little else - that is clearly not fair to the other candidates or indeed its readers

S.PWallis (M11)

Hi Simon; thanks for the letter and giving me the opportunity to respond to what I hear has been a topic on taxi chat lists and Twitter. I must be honest in that when I read Martin Freeborn's letter, I put it in as a question because I assumed that the Board member it was aimed at, Garry White, would want to answer it. Otherwise it would have gone into the Mailshot pages - which are far more widely read than any election pages. In fact, Garry has answered it inside this issue along with other questions asked in the last issue of the mag. Individual content of answers are not up for discussion in the letter's pages.

But putting that aside, I didn't really understand what you meant re your references to the Board. What balance are you talking about? I asked for questions

and statements and published every single one that I received. Surely no one would want me to make some up saying that a candidate is wonderful or awful? Of course, had I held some letters back that said the opposite to Martin Freeborn, then there would be a case to answer. So I'm sorry Simon, but I just don't see what you would have liked me to do to improve that "poor journalism."

Simon says the mag is a vehicle for the BoM, yet when they don't say anything I get castigated because drivers want to know what is going on, whilst the letters pages often contain criticism against the Board. Does anyone ever read anti-LTDA letters in Taxi or anti-LCDC in The Badge? Yet you read anti-BoM letters in Call Sign when someone has a beef they want to air. Other than when I ask for a response to a letter, the Board don't see the mag until they read it - usually a day before you do. I really have no idea how to please everybody, so I gave up trying years ago!

What I should add is that Simon and I had a fairly lengthy exchange following receipt of his letter and I believe we both now understand each other's point of view. However, as several mentions were later passed onto me by drivers on the LTDF website, apparently written by non-members and criticising me, I have used Simon's letter to give my reasons as to what I've done re the election. Whether non-members like them is irrelevant to me, which is why, as a member, I answered Simon's letter. However, the most amusing part of the LTDF 'pop' at me was from former DaC member Mark White who, referring to our election, obviously believes he is taking over the LCDC's paper because he says that if LCDC members write in to The Badge or its columnist Micky Walker - whose inference about one question verged on being racist - about what Mark White calls dirty tricks, they "might" feel obliged to mention it in their January issue before adding that it is only £17 to join the LCDC! The words "dirty tricks" sound funny coming from Mark White, as following his expulsion from DaC he refused to return his data terminal! There's a word for people who take things that don't belong to them - but he hasn't yet invited "his" readers to write in saying what that word is! So if anyone wants to write to The Badge about the DaC elections it won't bother me, but try also criticising their organisation and see if they print it! Actually, as I've said many times now, The Badge has become a good read under Grant Davis and I can't see him bowing to pressure from a chat list apparently consisting of failed accountants and terminal nickers! ...Ed



John Brown Printers and fraud

Dear Alan

Re the article in the November issue about DaC's former printers headed Call Sign's old printers, prison and a love nest; what doesn't surprise me is to read about the antics of Phil Brown on his supposed rehabilitation. We hear it often about the offspring screwing up a business that their parents worked their nuts off to make successful and Phil and Christian were two examples. Neither of them needed to do too much when John passed the business over to them. They had a guaranteed £million worth of steady business coming in each year, which was an ideal platform on which to build up the business, and if you are young and energetic that is not too difficult. But as is often the case, when something is handed to some people on a plate, they don't appreciate it.

I've known John Brown for over 40 years; back in the days when a group of us had businesses that allowed us at the drop of a hat to go up to Scotland for 4/5 days and play golf at St Andrews, Gleneagles and Carnoustie, we had some great fun.

He had a beautiful detached house on a gated estate at Farnborough Common, which must have broken his heart to sell to pay the legal fees for the boy's defence. What also must have been degrading is having that house searched from top to bottom by the police thinking he was part of the corruption his boys were involved in.

When I last spoke to John, which was during the boy's trial, he said that when he visited them in prison, neither of them had the decency to say sorry to their mum and dad for the stress and hurt they had caused them both and knowing they were being forced to sell their home.

I told John to keep in touch and that when they had settled into their new home we could meet up for a beer or lunch. That was nearly four years ago and I haven't heard a word since.

Allen Togwell

Ex-DaC Board member

The story Allen Togwell is referring to involved *Call Sign's* old printers, John Brown, and what police found following a raid at their Norwood premises. I went there every month to sort out aspects of the magazine's printing and often wondered what was behind a locked door. I only discovered what it was when police revealed at their trial that John Brown's sons, Phil and Christian, had equipment there that

Mailshot

continued from page 30

enabled the two of them together with an employee to print counterfeit £20 notes. A cousin, Daniel Brown, was also involved – he in the production of 50 euro notes. At Kingston Crown Court in April 2011, Phil Brown pleaded guilty to cultivation of cannabis and abstraction of electricity. He was also convicted of conspiracy to make counterfeit £20 banknotes and conspiracy to deliver counterfeit 50 euro notes. He was sentenced to nine and a half years. Christian Brown also pleaded guilty to the same charges and also received a similar sentence. The estimated total of fraudulent notes produced was almost £18million. The article also revealed that Phil Brown was meeting up with a lady on his day release time!

David Mellor

Hi Alan

I thought David Mellor's taxi fare was probably about right – Marylebone High Street to St Katherine's Dock might have been a touch high at £29, but if traffic was bad then it could be right. I would have gone to Holborn Kingsway and then cut down to

the Embankment and Lower Thames Street. There are no best routes at that time of evening. I've taken him before and he seemed pleasant enough; I even got a 20p in return for a receipt. But he is obviously careful with money!

But some drivers do get too stroppy; I usually find that if you are nice to people that are rude to you, it often shuts them up! I think David Mellor has got lots of problems but I also wonder whether the driver got paid for giving the tape to The Sun?

David Heath (Ex-W27)

Brighton, East Sussex

Thanks David. For those that didn't see it, I am reprinting the letter that Brian Rice had published in the Evening Standard the following day after The Sun article came out...

Should driver have published Mellor's rant?

David Mellor's behavior seems abominable; there was no excuse for it. But I can't help thinking that the driver should not have recorded the incident because what happens in a taxi should remain private. Lots of confidential issues are discussed in cabs – that's why the partition is there. I am sure the driver was the exception to the rule, as it is impera-

tive that members of the public do not lack confidence in the integrity of the London Taxi trade.

Brian Rice, Chairman, Dial-a-Cab

In an on-air apology on LBC, Mr Mellor said: "I can't think what possessed me to lose it with that cabbie the way I did. OK, I had a case but I threw it away by the way I spoke and I'm really, really sorry about that and I especially want to apologise to you, our listeners for trying your patience and risking my own credibility with you by speaking the way I did. Anyway, it's water for me at the next celebratory lunch, I've definitely made that decision. Ironically, I'm one of London taxis' best customers and I thank a lot of them for speaking up for me."

He finished by saying: "I'd like to show my appreciation for the London cabbies I have used for 40 years by making a substantial donation to their Christmas appeal for underprivileged kids."



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

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK



As it's still holiday time, this issue harks back to a 2003 issue of Call Sign and takes a look at a DaC Marshal and a rather silly taxi driver...

From Call Sign, March 2003

AN EVENING IN THE LIFE OF AN 'EFFIN DAC MARSHAL!

You will have read in the letters page of the last issue of *Call Sign* just how successful the **Dial-a-Cab** initiative at the **British Genius Site** in the **Battersea Park** marquis has been. To their credit, DaC have at no time attempted to keep all this week for themselves, realising that in order to make the Marshalled service to anything up to 2000 guests a success, that other circuits - and even some non-radio drivers - would be needed.

These functions always have at least one **DaC Marshal** present and quite often more, but the good behaviour of licensed taxis becomes very apparent because the system flows so well – or it did until one evening around Christmas time 2002...

A story has arrived on *Call Sign's* desk from DaC Marshal, **Mike Harris (F79)**, which shows how easy it would be to lose the facility. After all, not too long ago, minicabs only were allowed to pick up there and we were banned other than for setting down.

On this one night, the rank had been moving well with lots of DaC drivers, along with some from ComCab, RTL and DataCab getting good jobs. Next in line was a non-radio driver who, according to Mike Harris, looked extremely scruffy, although his cab was reasonably clean. He refused to unlock the cab doors and insisted on speaking to the prospective passenger queue so that he could pick a job that suited him.



Mike had the passengers standing next to him again asked the driver to unlock his door.

"Who the 'effin hell are you," the driver asked, "I can do whatever I want!"

Mike explained the situation to the driver, but the driver wasn't having any of it. Swearing away, the driver insisted that Mike's parentage was in question and he only took the fare when he heard that it was going down the A3. The four-hander got in and the driver pulled off towards the exit. However, 20 seconds later, he returned to have another go at Mike – not liking Mike's attitude towards him. As he swore yet again at the DaC Marshal, a lady approached the cab.

"Is there a problem," she asked the driver?

"Mind your own 'effin business," came the retort, "it's none of your business."

"I think it is," said the woman as she revealed herself to be part of the Parks Police Force. "I suggest that you just leave quietly." Which is exactly what he did...!

Wouldn't it be sad if this newfound business were lost back to minicabs because of a sad few...?

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