

May 2015



# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*Can Shanghai show London how to defeat the cab app problem?*



*What are these two DaC drivers afraid of losing???*





# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

I still get confused with the plethora of hotel chain names with owner changes and new sites. This article may look the same as previous articles, but believe me there are many changes and this is now up to date – until the next time!

## Hotel Chains

<b>PREMIER INN HOTELS</b>			
Angel Islington	18 Parkfield Street, N1 0PS	Bank (Tower)	20, St.Mary-at-Hill, EC3 8EE
Blackfriars(Fleet St.)	1-2 Dorset Rise, EC4Y 8EN	Beckton	1 Woolwich Manor Way, E6 5NT
Southwark (Borough)	34, Park St, SE1 9EF	County Hall	Belvedere Rd, SE1 7PB
Docklands (Excel)	Festoon Way, E16 1RH	Greenwich	43, Greenwich Hgh Rd, SE10 8JL
Euston	1 Dukes Road, Euston Road,	Hackney	27 Dalston Lane, E8 3DF
Hampstead	Ornan Rd, 215 Haverstock Hill,	Hanger Lane	1 Ritz Pd, Hanger Lane, W5 3RA
Hammersmith	255 King Street, W6 9LU	Holborn	27-29 Red Lion Street, WC1R 4PS
Heathrow Bath Rd	15 Bath Road, Hounslow, TW6	Heathrow Hayes	362, Uxbridge Rd, UB4 0HF
Heathrow M4/J4	Shepiston Lane, UB3 1RW	Heathrow T5	420 Bath Road, W. Drayton, UB7
Kensington(Earls Ct)	11 Knaresborough Place, SW5	Kensington Olympia	32, West Cromwell Rd, SW5 9QJ
Kings Cross	26- 30 York Way, N1 9AA	Leicester Sq	1, Leicester place, WC2H 7BP
Old St (City)	Corsham Street, N1 6DR	Putney Bridge	3 Putney Bridge Approach, SW6 3JD
Southwark (Tate)	34, Park St, SE1 9EF	Stratford	Int'l Sq, Montfichet Road, E15 1AZ
St. Pancras	88, Euston Rd, NW1 2RA	Tower Bridge	159, Tower Bridge Road, SE1 3LP
Tower Hill (City)	24, Prescott St, E1 8BB	Victoria (Gillingham St)	82, Eccleston Sq, SW1V 1PS
Waterloo	85, Belvedere Rd, SE1 7PB	Wandsworth	45 Garratt Lane, SW18 4AD
<b>TRAVELODGE</b>			
Aldgate East	6, Chamber St, E1 8BL	Bank	19 St Swithin's Lane, EC4N 8AD
Barking	4, Arboretum Pl. IG11 7RX	Balham	177, Balham High Rd, SW12 9BX
Battersea	200 York Road, SW11 3SA	Bethnal Green	231, Cambridge heath Rd, E2 0EL
City Airport	1, Connaught Road, E16 2PJ	City Road	1-23 City Road, EC1Y 1AE
Covent Garden	10 Drury Lane, High Holborn,	Clapham Junction	155 Falcon Road, SW11 2PD
Docklands	Coriander Avenue, E14 2AA	Euston	1 Grafton Pl. NW1 1DJ
ExCel	1016 Dockside Road, E16 2FQ	Farringdon	Gwynne Place, WC1X 9LN
Fulham	290 North End Rd, SW6 1NQ	Gatwick Central	Povey Cross Road, RH6 0BE
Greenwich	Blackheath Rd/Deal's Gateway	Greenwich High Rd	High Rd. SE10 8JA
Heathrow T5	Calder Way/Horton Rd,	Heathrow Central	700 Bath Rd, TW5 9SW
Heston EB	Moto Svc TW5 9NA	Heston WB	Moto Svc TW5 9NB
Kings Cross	356, Grays Inn Road, WC1X	Kings X Royal Scot	100 Kings Cross Road, WC1X 9DT
Liverpool Street	1 Harrow Place, E1 7DB	Marylebone	Harewood Row, NW1 6SE
Stratford	High St /Park Ln, E15 2JG	Southwark	202 Union Street, SE1 0LH
Tower Bridge	1 Goodmans Yard, E1 8AT	Waterloo	195 -203 Waterloo Rd, SE1 8UX
Woolwich	125, Powis St, SE18 6LQ		
<b>DOUBLETREE</b>			
Chelsea (was Jurys)	Imperial Rd, SW6 2GA	Hyde Park	St Petersburg Pl, W2 (Entrance)
Heathrow	745 Bath Road, Cranford TW5	Islington (was Jurys)	60, Pentonville Rd, N1 9LA
Marble Arch	4 Bryanston Street, W1H 7BY	Tower of London	7 Pepys Street, EC3N 4AF
Victoria	2 Bridge Place, SW1V 1QA	West End	92 Southampton Row, WC1B 4BH
Westminster	30 John Islip Street, SW1P 4DD		
<b>Holiday Inn Express</b>			
City	275 Old Street, EC1V 9LN	Docklands	1 Silvertown Way, E16 1EA
Earls Court	295 North End Road, W14 9NS	ExCel	1018 Dockside Rd E16 2FQ
Golders Green	58 Regents Park Road, N3 3JN	Greenwich	Bugsby Way, Greenwich, SE10 0GD
Hammersmith	120, King St, W6 0QU	Limehouse	469 The Highway, E1W 3HN
Park Royal	Victoria Road, W3 6UP	Royal Docks	1 Silvertown Way, E16 2EA
Southwark	103 Southwark Street, SE1 0JQ	Stratford	196 High Street, E15 2NE
Swiss Cottage	152-156 Finchley Road, NW3	Vauxhall/Nine Elms	87 South Lambeth Road, SW8 1RN
Victoria	106-110 Belgrave Road, SW1V	Wandsworth	Smugglers Way, SW18 1EG
<b>Holiday Inn</b>			
Bloomsbury	Coram Street, WC1N 1HT	Brent Cross	Tilling Road, NW2 1LP
Brentford Lock	Commerce Road, Brentford,	Camden Lock	30 Jamestown Road, NW1 7BY
Commercial Road	5 Cavell Street, E1 2BP	Forum Kensington	97 Cromwell Road, SW7 4DN
Kings Cross Bloomsbury	1 Kings Cross Road, WC1X 9HX	London West	4 Portal Way, W3 6RT
Mayfair	3 Berkeley Street, W1J 8NE	Oxford Street	57-59 Welbeck Street, W1G 9BL
Regent's Park	Carburton Street, W1W 5EE	Stratford City	10a Chestnut Plaza, Montfichet
Wembley	Empire Way, Wembley, HA9		
<b>Park Plaza</b>			
County Hall	1 Addington St SE1 7RY	Riverbank	18, Albert Embankment, SE1 7TJ
Sherlock Holmes	108 Baker St W1U 6LJ	On the River	18, Albert Embankment, SE1 7TJ
Victoria	239 Vauxhall Bridge Rd, SW1V	Westminster Bridge	200 Westminster Rd SE1 7UT

There is lots more info at [www.nashsnumbers.co.uk](http://www.nashsnumbers.co.uk) and click on MyFav taxi page

# from the editor's desk

## Suspicious drivers

Well, well, well, what a suspicious lot you are! Perhaps it was the long Easter weekend that gave drivers more free time than they would normally have had, so they thought they'd phone me instead. Of course I never mind having a chat, but when I got numerous calls on Easter Saturday all asking the same question, I found myself almost ready to pretend I couldn't hear the phone. But my love of a good chat, over the glass of *Merlot* at my side, put that idea to bed.

So what was it that got those drivers so wound up? Well apparently they all believed that the letter from the former **ComCab** General Manager who is now with **Addison Lee**, **Mike Galvin**, was a subtle ploy by the **Dial-a-Cab** Board to sound out Mike about coming to work with this Society.

Coincidentally, on the same **Mailshot** page in the *April Call Sign* was a letter from another former ComCab GM, **Malcolm Paice**, who is now the Master of the **Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers**. Strangely, no one asked me the same question of Malcolm.

So let me tell all those that didn't phone me the same thing I told those that did; the fact that Mike Galvin and Malcolm Paice were in the last issue was purely down to me. No one on the DaC Board knew about it until they read it – albeit one day before you thanks to their copies coming straight from the printers rather than via the postal system. Their inclusion was not a devious plot to test driver's reactions to them being offered jobs, because unless we have representatives from both MI5 and MI6 here, then I would have heard something by now! And I haven't. So there! Now where did I put that glass of *Merlot* – and remind me not to publish anything from **Geoffrey Riesel**...!!!

## Kings Cross and Uber

I was rather naughty recently and knowing that this magazine is widely read with sections appearing online almost before even I've finished reading it, telling *Call Sign* readers about it now could pose me some nasty problems. But hey, early retirement could mean more **Spurs** matches and even retaking my old **Surrey CCC** seat at **The Oval**, especially now that KP has returned to liven it up!

It was a few weeks back and I'd been at the end of a long queue of cabs, but one that moved fairly quickly and within 10 or so minutes I was second and watching a tall man on his mobile phone, holding a briefcase that looked as though it had been owned by a previous Chancellor of the Exchequer – probably **Dennis Healey**!

I knew exactly what he was doing by the way he was looking at his phone and looking around. He was waiting for an **Uber** cab. Then the first cab took a passenger and I was on the point. Then over he came to me.

"You will have to take me to Marylebone Station; I think my **Uber** taxi has got lost. How much will you charge me? I bet it's ridiculously high."

A pretty standard job and while not the 'road-er' we all think is coming our way any minute, it was a job – but just not for him. Had he come over and asked for Marylebone, even though I knew what he was trying to do, I'd have had no choice and would have swallowed it. But refer-



ring to his **Uber TAXI** and then asking me how much I would charge him... well sorry mate. You just carry on waiting!

"I'm going to report you," he said, "what's the phone number of your company!"

That sounded to me very much like someone who has tried to complain to **Uber** – not, apparently, the easiest of experiences. By now the drivers of the second and third cabs had come over, believing that I was trying to broom a job and making sure it didn't get swept their way. But they soon saw what was happening and one of them told the prospective passenger where to go in language that I hadn't heard since 1959, when I managed to buy a copy of the unexpurgated version of **Lady Chatterley's Lover** and thought about taking up gardening when I left school after reading about **Mellors' exploits**!

He walked off still looking at his phone and the first passenger, of what was by now a small queue, came over.

"**UCH Hospital** please driver," came the request, "I know it's fairly close but I can't walk so well nowadays."

"Not a problem," I said lying through my teeth, "which entrance would you like?"

It was at the top of Gower Street as we turned left. I nipped out, held the door open for her and lent an arm for her to lean on. She pressed a £5 note into my hand with a "keep the change, driver, and thank you so much."

And do you know something. Given the unlikely choice of taking Mr **Uber** to Marylebone for double fare or taking this lady to the **UCH** for nowt, I'd have taken the latter every time – not because he used **Uber**, but just because of his sheer ignorance.

My belated thanks to the two cabs behind me on the **KX** rank for backing me up and I'm now ready to be carted away by Sir Peter and co...

## Credit checks

At a time when second hand taxis are like gold dust, I have just been told by a DaC driver who bought a second hand cab off a non-DaC driver, that he has since discovered there was still an outstanding **HP** debt on the cab and that the seller hadn't paid it off with the funds obtained from selling the cab.

So there is an obvious answer. It may not make you too popular with the seller because we all want to be thought of as honest – including most sellers – but before laying out your hard-earned loot you should have the taxi you are thinking of buying, credit checked. It's an

easy process that you can look up online. You might save yourself some money – in the case of the DaC driver I spoke of, around £3000...!

## Bike tragedies

How tragic it was to hear of the death of **Moir Gemmill** who was killed in a collision with a lorry at **Millbank Circus** in April, just a few months after **Francis Golding** was struck and killed by a coach in **Holborn**. The deaths of Mr Golding and Ms Gemmill made five cyclists that have died on London's roads this year.

The deaths make it much harder to argue against bike superhighways, but make it even more difficult to argue, as **Cycling Commissioner Andrew Gilligan** did in the last issue of *Call Sign*, to allow cyclists to use the main highway when there is a cycling superhighway in force. Yet that is exactly what Mr Gilligan told this magazine. He didn't think it was necessary to impose that restriction "because taxis aren't forced to stay in bus lanes." His statement was madness then and it is even more imperative now that no cyclist be allowed to travel outside of a cycling superhighway lane when there is one in place.

He told this magazine last month: "**We're not going to ban cyclists from using the road, but our experience on the existing segregated track we've installed on Stratford High Street is that the vast majority (97 percent +) use the track. The tracks we're installing will be 4m wide (mostly) - enough for fast cyclists to pass and overtake slower ones within the track itself. I don't think 3 percent makes much difference either way, to be honest. We're talking maybe 15 cyclists an hour, tops.**"

Well I'm sorry Mr Gilligan, I disagree totally and if a cyclist dies in tragic circumstances after being involved with another vehicle and they are cycling *outside* of a superhighway, we will remind you of your statement.

And a message for **TfL**; the last we heard, the yellow stickers sported by some taxis on their rear nearside windows advising cyclists not to undertake on that side because of the danger, had been banned. I sincerely hope that ban has been lifted...

## Alf Townsend

I read in **TAXI** that **Alf Townsend** is now 80. Firstly, I'd like to wish the most famous writer in our trade a very happy birthday, but I'm just not sure whether his telling the world that we have 80-year old drivers taking passengers around in taxis was the wisest move...

## Holiday time...

*Yep, as usual there is no June issue of Call Sign and we'll be back on 1st July. However, please don't let that stop you sending in anything interesting because my laptop never stops! But please don't send in details of events that take place in June that you want publicised – unless it's a report of one that you were involved in. Telling drivers to go somewhere on June 14th in the 1st July issue won't help to swell crowds by even one!*

*Have a great holiday and hopefully things will begin looking up when you get back...*

**Alan Fisher**  
callsignmag@aol.com



# reflections of the chairman

## Merger with Radio Taxis

Not a great deal of progress to report on any merger with **Radio Taxis** aka **Mountview**; we are still talking to them but as you can imagine, their view on events is a little different from our view.

However, everything is very amicable and we are hopeful that we can come to some agreement, because what we do both agree is that a merger of the two organisations would certainly lead to economies of scale, which again would definitely aid both organisations.

As I have explained in the past, I've had to sign a *Non-Disclosure Agreement* (NDA) which obviously has an effect on the type of information I can divulge. However, during our ongoing discussions some information has been relayed to their staff and drivers that consequently puts it into the public domain. As such, I do not have any problems about repeating it in *Call Sign*.

It would appear that Mountview have signed to sell their premises and I understand they will have to vacate **Lennox Road** by the end of August. I also believe they will be renting new premises in Southgate. I really do wish them well with their move because we did just that eight years ago and I must confess that moving all the infrastructure to different premises does lead to a stressful experience for all concerned. However, in the meantime, discussions between the two organisations will continue.

## Maaxi Taxi

You are probably aware that a new taxi App has been launched with the intention that members of the public can share the taxi with others travelling in the same direction, with of course the fare being divided by all parties that are travelling.

I believe the App is primarily aimed at current bus users in the hope they will switch their allegiance from London Transport to Maaxi and I understand this is leading to some consternation within TfL, as they contemplate some erosion from bus passenger numbers.

I am also led to believe that several obstacles have been placed by TfL in the path of Maaxi Taxi. It is a great shame that the same diligence was not applied to Uber when they applied for a Private Hire Operators licence.

It remains to be seen whether or not the new App is successful, but you don't need me to tell you of the possible pitfalls that could well be experienced by some passengers and drivers; however, if new business can be attracted into our trade, then that must be a good thing. But we will have to wait and see.

On the same topic, I had a visit from Maaxi Taxi CEO **Gabi Campos**, who together with **Nat Rothschild** initially supplied the funding for Maaxi. He went into considerable detail explaining how the App works and how he believes it will breathe new life into the taxi industry, but as I stated earlier, only time will tell if it is successful.



I must admit to having been somewhat curious as to why Gabi wanted to see me and explain the working of his App, because at the end of the day both organisations wish to transport members of the public - albeit under slightly different circumstances.

Anyway, we got there in the end and Gabi said that he wanted *me* to explain to *your* Account Customers how by sharing taxis and using the Maaxi App, corporates could save a considerable amount of money annually; I don't think I need say more on that subject...!

## Despatching System

You don't need me to tell you what a particularly bad Kipper season we have experienced this year, it was probably as bad - if not worse - than any in recent memory. However, it's now getting close to the **Chelsea Flower Show**, which was always considered to be the start of the season. So let's hope that comes to fruition this year as the licensed taxi trade could certainly do with some good news.

Also, the **General Election** is on May 7th and once again the trade will hopefully improve once that is out of the way and everyone has a clearer idea what may lie ahead for the next five years. Let's hope that both these topics, when taken into

consideration, will improve the trade's plight.

During this particularly lean spell, your IT department has continued with the development of our new despatching system and I'm led to believe that assuming they don't come up against any unforeseen circumstances, the development is still on track to be delivered by the end of the second quarter of 2015.

## New logo

Following my article in the last *Call Sign* re the new logos, this is an image of the new design...



## Hooray... a month off!

As many of you know, the Editor does not produce a magazine during the month of June; so that means I have nearly two whole months where I do not have his constant nagging for me to produce an article for *Call Sign*. I will happily admit that those two months of the year do seem to pass quicker than any other two and I really can't think why!

Let's just hope we all have a good summer with lots of visitors from the Middle East and the rest of Europe and that none of them worry too much about the strength of the pound against the Euro.

And of course, all of you drivers and staff who are going away for a deserved summer holiday, have a really great time...

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

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# UBER SUSPENDS PASSENGER

## But you'll never guess why!

**M**ark Tiller (K90) recently rang *Call Sign* to tell us about a passenger he had picked up that day along **Victoria Park Road** and the astonishing conversation that occurred as they made their way towards **Bishopsgate**.

Mark's customer asked him if he knew of any taxi apps because he had previously been using **Uber** but had now been banned from them!

He explained about the app's rating system where passengers can give Uber drivers a mark on how good or bad they are (ie didn't know the way etc), whilst drivers can give marks to passengers (ie they were drunk etc). Several bad reports and drivers can be sacked, whilst passengers can be blocked from using the app if too many drivers complain about them.

The passenger went on to explain to the Dial-a-Cab driver of hearing that several drivers had issued complaints about him expressing annoyance at incorrect routes often being taken by the Uber drivers. But his final complaint somewhat took the proverbial biscuit!

It had happened when he was on his way home and just about to join the **North Circular Road**. He was sitting quietly in the back seat reading the *Evening Standard* and glanced up for no particular reason other than to see if they had reached the NCR yet and to make sure that they weren't lost - even with the satnav on.

**There is an old joke where an elderly woman phones her equally elderly husband who is driving home along a dual carriageway.**

The woman tells him that she has heard a traffic report on the radio claiming that a car was being driven on the wrong side of a dual carriageway and to be careful. The husband replies that it wasn't one car, it was hundreds!

And that's what happened to Mark's passenger. As he looked up, he screamed at the driver to pull over as he had somehow got onto the wrong side of the North Circular and huge numbers of cars with headlights blazing were heading straight towards them!

The passenger got out and stayed out calling the driver a silly billy (approx)! But the next time he used his smartphone to get an Uber car (yes, we agree that some people never learn), he learned that he had been banned for shouting at the driver and for previously being given poor ratings for telling drivers with a rather forceful voice that they were lost and were silly billies (again)!

In future, he told Mark, he would use either the DaC or Hailo apps - by which time they had reached Bishopsgate without Mark having to look up the route even once - but the passenger didn't comment on that because he knew that we were the professionals. And Mark was too worn out from hearing the story to tell him about Hailo. Besides, he didn't want to risk having the passenger shouting at him!!!

**Ron Yarborough**  
Call Sign Online



**Mark listened to his passenger with astonishment!**

## E&C: 12 months of chaos begins

As part of TfL's continuing £4bn Road Modernisation Plan, construction of the major transformation of the **Elephant & Castle** northern roundabout has now begun. The scheme, which was supported by more than 80 per cent of respondents to a public consultation in February 2014, supports Southwark Council's regeneration of the wider area.

E&C is one of TfL's priority locations to deliver improved safety for all road users. The £25m overhaul of the northern roundabout has been designed to significantly upgrade facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers by converting it into a peninsular, creating a new, more open and accessible public space, with the road around it converted to two-way traffic. The subways will also be replaced with new pedestrian crossings that allow people to cross directly, easily and safely between tube, bus and local amenities at all times of the day. New dedicated cycle routes will also be created through and around the junction to improve safety for cyclists.

The E&C is a residential area and while some necessary work will be carried out at night and during weekends, the majority of work will take place on weekdays between 08:00 and 18:00. The main highway work is scheduled to be fully completed by summer 2016, with work on the public space within the new peninsula to be carried out after an upgrade to the Northern line station is completed in the early 2020s.

Ahead of the start of construction, TfL's skilled traffic engineers have been developing traffic management plans to ensure that the impacts on all road users are kept to a minimum. Sophisticated traffic signal technology, which allows better management of traffic depending on differing conditions at any given time, will be used to ensure that key routes and junctions are controlled in real-time to help keep traffic moving.

**Reducing the speed limit to 20mph is also being explored as part of this work, which would improve overall safety conditions for all users.**

The construction of the redesigned Elephant & Castle northern roundabout forms part of the wider work being carried out across London as part of TfL's Road Modernisation Plan. With a budget of more than £4 billion from now until 2021/22, this overreaching 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 Londoners.



**What the E&C should look like in 12 months time**

## Immaculate White Cab Available for Weddings



**Female driver**

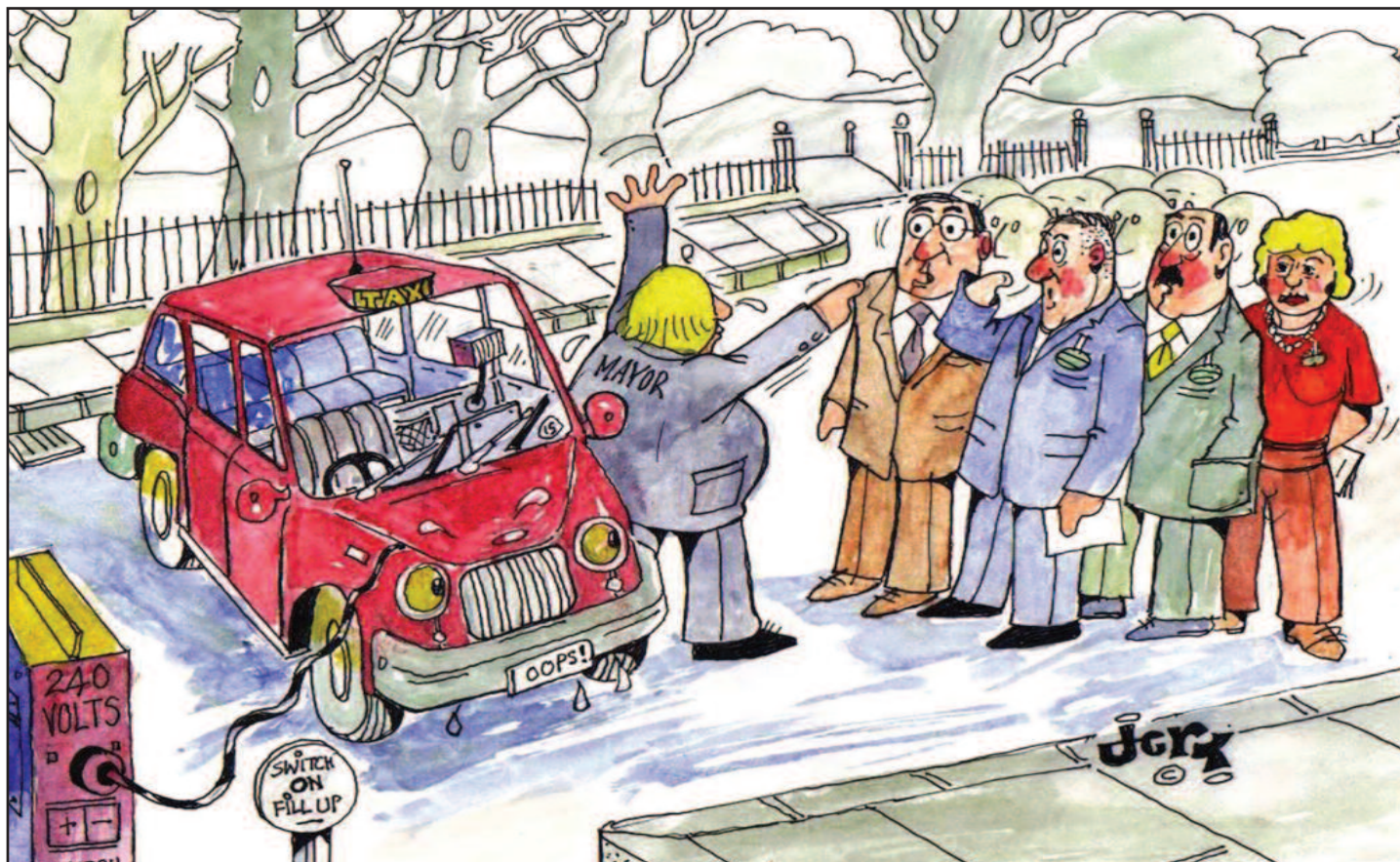
**10% reduction for Dial-a-Cab drivers**

**Contact Debbie (W18) on**

**07956 317040**



# Jery's World



"Listen chaps, I have some good news and some bad news. The good news is that recharging your electric taxis will be provided by the Mayor's office at no charge! The bad news is that the 15 year time limit on taxis is being reduced to 15 months. But as I like you all so much, I'm trying to get that increased to two years!!!"

## DACCU AGM

At the DaC Credit Union AGM held on 25 March 2015, President Terry Dodd on behalf of the "hard working Board and Committees" gave a wide ranging and dynamic report stating amongst other things "that despite the cab trade facing competition and trading depression, our credit union (owner members own it and no-one else) continues to flourish and grow as we do our utmost to serve the savings and loans needs of our owner-members at all reasonable times."

**Audited Accounts presented to owner-members and approved, revealed from the Balance Sheet:**

1. An increase on loans granted of 29.05% from last year.
2. "Cash in Bank" was far too high, earning little for the Credit Union in interest and it should be out on loan to our owner-members. Would a bank help you with anything? Your credit union can (subject to underwriting).
3. Net asset increase (mainly the value of the Loan Book); an increase of 25.05% from last year.
4. A slight reduction in reserves from last year "as the repayment of new loans gained had not produced a full interest yield (profit) at the accounting date."

**From the Profit & Loss Account:**

1. Interest paid on owner-members investment, an increase of 24.25% over last year. Terry Dodd explained that "the Dial-a-Cab 7% gross offering on fixed interest term shares is the best around and owner-members should wait for the next offering to open."

The Report of Treasurer **Brian Flanagan** was most comprehensive and greeted with great applause; as usual the ever youthful **John Riley** retained the perks of his office, the 'Vice' of Vice President.

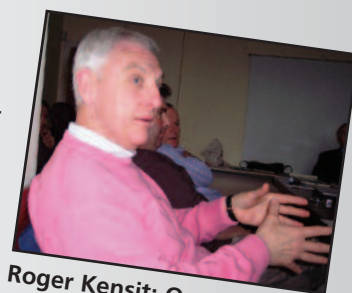
A key point from the Auditors Report of **Appleby & Wood** to owner-members was to point out to the meeting that "the hands on control exercised daily by the Board showed up in the audited figures, especially the control over bad and doubtful debts (non or slow payers) and that some smaller credit unions have a percentage figure 30 times as great!"

Some significant Board and Committee changes occurred as a result of the democratic process and the need for the Credit Union to grow its leadership team. **Derek Griggs** and **Roger Kensit (W31)** have been elected to the Board of Directors and **Paul Smyth (R11)** to the Supervisory Committee.

All the owner-members agreed unanimously with the recommendation to the Board of Directors to reject declaring a dividend on shares held, allocating the trading surplus to the reserves to strengthen further the very strong financial position of the DaC Credit Union.

Under "Any Other Business" outside the Agenda of the Annual General Meeting, owner-members conducted a general discuss on the future development of "our" Credit Union – you own it!

Lastly, whilst **Julia Roberts** did not attend the meeting as she is not member of our Credit Union, all who were there were in total awe of the sartorial elegance of Roger Kensit who was "pretty in pink!" What will he wear next year? Attend and find out!



**Roger Kensit: One of the members elected to the Supervisory Committee**



So it's the march of the most important **British General Election** in years so far as European issues are concerned. Yes, even more important than the recent **Dial-a-Cab** elections! But when all the ranting stops, many will look back and begin to wonder if the last UK election on Thursday 6th May 2010 was probably even more important than the impending one - exactly 5 years on when you realise that tradition dictates it should be on a Thursday.

Why was it more important? Probably due to an economic freefall of a descending spiral of despair, which left most holding their breath as bankers teetered on the edge of a mountain, knowing the drop on the other side was sheer with nothing between their skull and the deck below. Not to mention the possibility of a council school education for their kids... and the dole queue for them! That in turn would have found you, me and Uncle Tom Cobley alongside them in a dole queue near you. And what chance would we have stood up against such talent as **Oxbridge** and **Harvard** for a job working with **Tower Hamlets Council** and/or **Transport for London** - the only ones in need of staff.

As for now, we must focus our minds on the coming election because what has happened in the past has to be cast aside, with much regret from a card carrying Tory and Lib-Dem supporter's point of view. The bogie man standing in the corner is the debate about Europe.

A debate? That's a laugh! Have you ever heard of any taxi driver - let alone one on DaC - not having an opinion on any subject, let alone how to run the country. And with the advent of the Internet, most drivers at the tap

## Call Sign's Gary Cox, in his own way, is... **LOOKING AT THE ELECTION**



of a button will have found out who the person is in the back of their cab - not that many cabbies wouldn't already know who **Gary Cohn** - President and Chief Operating Officer of **Goldman Sachs** was before or after his appearance on **BBC Radio Four** telling all and sundry that pulling out of Europe would be a disaster for the UK, with I suspect, an undercurrent of:

**"God, stay in! We at Goldman Sachs feel safe in Europe dealing with the way your government services, schools, restaurants and cabs work!"**

We didn't need him to tell us what we

already knew, but his remarks were well timed and balanced to give us a nudge before the election truly kicked off - even though the phoney war has been playing out for a year or more.

Everyone is entitled to their vote and their option to vote for the bloke in the big pink hat and Safari suit from the **Monster Raving Looney** party should they so desire. But me personally, I'm a bit like Gary Cohn, an ex-London metal exchange member of the Board of Directors. I'm for changing the European malarkey from the inside and not the outside - even if I like the way **Nigel Farage** leans on the bar with a fag and a pint while enjoying the benefits of a good looking German wife and the trimmings of a European Parliament job. Yes, I want change, but not the same change as **Mr Putin** and what's left of his empire, wants.

**Let me give you a tip; know who you're talking to, understand their background and which stables they have worked out of. And look at the medals on the table! Then make your mind up about the options on the table.**

But if you're lucky enough to come across Mr Cohn, tell him: "Bad move that Uber one. Mate!" I'll lay you a pound to a penny that he'll laugh and with a wink of his eye say that you're right, because he knows you interview through the rear mirror for any tips on where to move your money. After all, he's a business man - albeit bigger than you. But only if the tape's not running...

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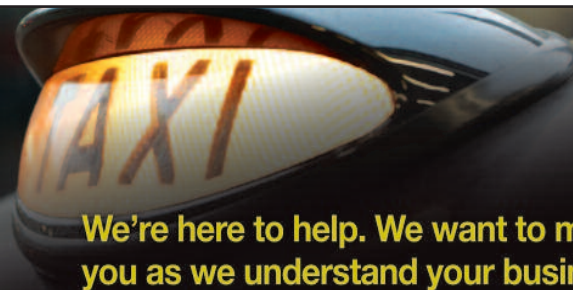
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DaC driver Sean Farrell (B39) looks at trade history from a different angle

# Brethren of the Whip



## Rough Justice

On July 31st 1856, cabman George Mather Andrews picked up Mr Ward from his residence at 7 Hamilton Terrace, St John's Wood and drove him to 11 Highbury

Place. When they arrived, Frederick Ward got out the cab and proffered 2s (10p) to Andrews. The cabman looked at what was being offered and said: *"Two shillings is not enough for a three shilling ride."* Ward was having none of it and refused to pay what he saw as an exaction by the driver. Andrews took the 2s, gave him his ticket - a form of receipt that the cabman had to give to every passenger who hired him - and politely drove off.

It was not a lost fare so far as Andrews was concerned, he knew where Ward lived and had actually picked him up several times before; but this was the first time there had been a dispute over the fare. The fare at the time was 6d (2.5p) a mile, so Ward obviously thought it was under four miles, whilst the cabman believed it to be between five and six miles.

Twice Andrews went back to Hamilton Terrace to get his money, but each time he came away empty handed. He then felt compelled to take out a summons so the matter could be settled by a magistrate.

In court, Andrews was described as *"a cabman, who was very respectably attired and who gave his evidence in a very fair and impartial manner."* He related his version of events, with which Ward did not disagree and the cabman said he'd be willing to have the ground measured. In cases such as this, the cabman and the passenger would each deposit 5 shillings (25p) with the court. An officer of the court would then measure the shortest route using a surveyor's wheel. Whoever was correct got their 5s back, the loser paid for the measurement.

Andrews was willing to have the ground measured, but his passenger was not. There was no need. The magistrate, Corrie, looking at a map felt the cabman was clearly in the right and ordered Ward to pay the 1 shilling that was outstanding, 2 shillings for the cost of the summons and 3 shillings for Andrews' loss of earnings in attending court.

Ward paid up and then asked for a summons against Andrews for abusive language towards him. This was the bane of the cabman's life. They were forced to go to the trouble of taking a passenger to court for underpaying, then the counter-summons was issued for whatever rea-

son and they were fined. The passenger was never fined for underpaying, they were just charged costs.

What was the abusive language uttered by Andrews: *"Two shillings is not enough for a three shilling ride."* That's all it was and for this he was fined the 2 shillings that he paid straight away before exclaiming: *"This is not justice."*

If a publican, grocer or draper did not receive enough for their services, they'd be within their rights to ask for the correct amount. Anyone would do the same. But if a cab driver was not paid the correct amount for his services and he happened to mention this to the passenger, he was liable to be fined; 19th century justice on a plate - or was it?

*The Examiner* newspaper described the punishment of Andrews as *"preposterous."* In fact, so inflamed was Ward by his portrayal in the press following the court case, that he returned to Court to seek advice from magistrate Corrie on what could be done about it. Corrie was non-committal. The fact, as he saw it, was that Andrews had said *"two shillings was not enough for four miles,"* but the act of parliament said it was and that's why the cabman was fined.

One week later, *The Standard* newspaper printed a correction to its account of the case. According to Frederick Ward, Andrews did not know the actual distance he travelled and Ward said he was taken *"a way I've never been before."* After leaving him at Highbury, Andrews went to Hamilton Terrace to get his shilling, *"knowing that I was not there."* According to Ward, both Corrie and the chief

clerk thought the distance was under five miles *"but I declined to have it measured."*

According to passenger Ward, cabman Andrews' *"turbulence"* in court drew a threat from magistrate Corrie that he would have his licence suspended for a month if he persisted; hardly the cabman who gave his evidence in a "fair and impartial manner."

Andrews never got the right to reply, but if Corrie had felt that the distance was under five miles, there is little doubt he would have convinced Ward to have the ground measured and Andrews could have been fined for overcharging. He didn't. It wasn't...

Sean Farrell (B39)  
Call Sign Online

## Alterations to the A11

TfL have banned turns at Mile End Road at its junctions with Stepney Green and Burdett Road. They will also modify the banned turn and prescribed route at Bow Road's junction with Fairfield Road.

Side roads affected in addition to mains of Whitechapel Road, Mile End Road and Bow Road will be Bancroft Road, Goulston Street, Fairfield Road, Tyne Street and Old Castle Street. The good news is that any driver with objections / representations can send them to TfL at Palestra, quoting reference RSM/PI/STOT/TRO, GLA/2015/0114-0117.

The bad news is that they will take no notice as they had to arrive before 29th January 2015. But sadly, no one told us anything about it!

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# OPERATIONS AND COMPLIANCE

*Hello Ladies & Gents,*

The Easter period was particularly quiet this year and with the **Chelsea Flower Show** soon to be upon us, we would hope that the work will pick up in the normal manner.

You'll have read in last month's Chairman's report that in addition to my present role, I have been asked once again to oversee the Compliance side of the Society. Working closely with **Shelagh Adkins**, we will endeavour to get things back on track and again make it fair and equal for every member. I firmly believe that the vast majority are still playing by the rules, but it is now our job to eradicate any blatant misdemeanours that in the last year or so may have arisen.

When I originally took the position over from **Tom Whitbread**, I explained in my article at the time how I perceived Complaints should be dealt with and this will not change second time around. As the title indicates, my role is to ensure that all our members operate within the Society's rules and I can categorically reassure you that each complaint will be dealt with on its merit and without prejudice.

As the Compliance Officer, you are not the prosecutor but merely the processor of the complaint - someone who is trusted to make the best judgement on how a complaint is dealt with. There are **21 Procedure Rules** that are in place to safeguard members and clients alike and I have included them below as a gentle reminder to you all. It is purely the decision of the Committee to decide what action (if any) should be taken, based on the answer to the complaint and any additional information that is discussed in the meeting.

A Complaints hearing was held on April 22nd, but due to some Appeals, the results will be held over until the next issue. Interestingly, one member immediately arranged to leave the Society rather than answer his complaint, even though without a

## From Allan Evans



reply there was no decision made as to how the complaint would progress. This, in my opinion, was an admittance of guilt and a quite cowardly course of action by the member in question who did not want to face his fellow colleagues. The motto of 'don't do the crime if you can't do the time' comes to mind. Incidentally, the trip he was booking in for and hanging up to exclusively get has now been evenly spread out amongst many of the members. Dispatchers will be monitoring the system more closely and I would politely ask you all to book in within the rules, then the work will be allocated fair and equally for everyone - which is how it should be.

During certain times of the day, you may be offered **fixed price** trips that are based on mileage and the time it takes to complete the journey(s). As I mentioned in my address at this year's AGM, we must endeavour to offer a workable fare for all sides in an effort to win back some of the longer, more lucrative work. I have spoken to many of you recently and I don't believe you will be adverse to covering trips that are competitive and which may in many cases lead to the account using us more frequently in the future. Of course we notify

the accounts of these new procedures and our reasons for doing it and so far it seems to be working. Again, I am asking you to assist with coverage, because without your help and support it will not have the intended impact and will fail.

## Signals explained

Over the past three months, I have received a small number of calls complaining of bad signals, which causes frustration and annoyance out on the road. Our IT department have done everything in their power to help alleviate this problem, but in almost all cases it is the network that is letting us down.

There are around **90 million mobile phones in the UK and London has 30 per cent of them**. In the early days, we had a series of base stations located in different parts of the capital; now we rely on almost five thousand masts for the signals.

In the London area they are close together, further out they are more widely spread. When a mast is out of action and unless you are within range of a functioning mast, the signal in all probability will be lost and you will be unable to book in or sign off. In layman's terms, it will eventually pick a signal up when you are within range, but if you live near or by a mast that is out of action, then again signing off will be somewhat impossible until the mast is up and running. We frequently check O2's website and report any ongoing problems, but unfortunately they are network issues beyond our control. In actual fact, O2 now inform us of serious problems such as the fire at **Kingsway** that instantly wiped out fifteen masts in the WC2 and surrounding areas, causing a major dropout in calls and lost signals.

**Allan Evans**

**DaC Operations and Compliance**

## Dial-a-Cab Procedure Rules 2015

1. Rudeness abuse or violence, threatened or actual, towards clients, other members or staff of ODRTS.
2. Conducting him or herself in a manner likely to bring the Society into disrepute.
3. Conduct liable to prejudice the Society.
4. Arriving at the pickup point with more than the authorised amount showing on the meter.
5. Taking a job allocated to another member or pulling off a job without the consent of the Call Centre.
6. Making a journey which is the property of the Society his / her own.
7. Clearing more or adding to the correct meter fare at the end of a trip.
8. Misuse, non-accidental damage or tampering with the ODRTS equipment.
9. Failing to complete a journey, as per trip details.
10. Using a badge number other than their own or allowing another to use their badge number.
11. Booking into a zone contrary to the Society's procedure or placing him / herself in a favourable position of which they have prior knowledge to gain an unfair advantage.
12. Accepting and then failing to complete or trying to have recovered an 'As Directed' trip.
13. Trying to reject a non-rejectable trip by engaging the meter or timing out.
14. Failing to accept a Company Charge Card or Westminster Taxi-Card trip (Hail & Ride).
15. Failing to keep his / her taxi in a good mechanical, clean and presentable condition.
16. Not adhering to a Rule as specified in The Company Rule Book.
17. Not producing his / her Motor Cab Licence within the time limit set by ODRTS.
18. Not displaying the company logo.
19. Failing to use the 'delay advise' facility when anticipating being late for a pickup.
20. Not transporting the passenger by the shortest route without authorisation from the Call Centre.
21. Accepting a credit card trip booked through the DaC system and clearing it through a third party causing financial loss to the Society.

## TfL move!

**Drivers can again personally take in licence applications...**

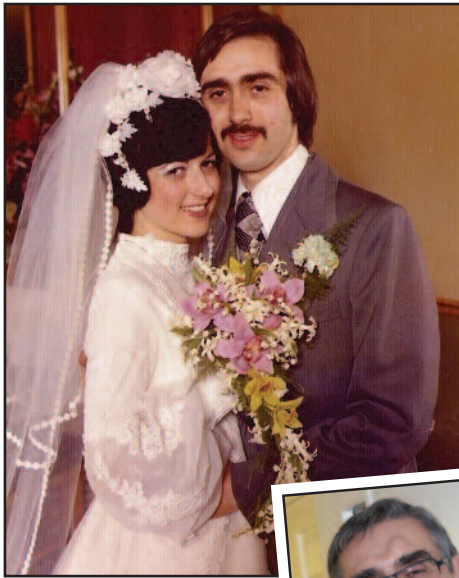
Anyone remembering the old **PCO** system will know that most things could be done at the **Penton Street** office. But since the office moved to **Palestra** in Blackfriars Road, drivers have been unable to do anything in person. One **Dial-a-Cab** driver was even once famously told to take the licence application that he had wanted to drop into Palestra, over the road to the Post Office so that he could then have it posted back to where he was standing trying to hand it in!

But now a new over-the-counter scheme has been re-introduced, albeit a bit further down the road at number 230 Blackfriars Road. Knowledge examinations will also take place there - as exclusively revealed last month by **Tom Quigley** in his **Call Sign** column. But you'd expect that...



To DaC driver David Burnetts and his lovely wife Maureen...

# GOTCHA!



David and Maureen  
40 years ago  
Inset: David now!



The couple were married at the Norrice Lea Synagogue on March 6th 1975, followed by a reception at the Grosvenor Rooms in Willesden. But of course that was well-planned and the soon-to-be happy couple were behind most of those intricate plans. Forty years on and it was to be a quiet meal in Palmers Green with their children.

But in a clandestine ruse that would do credit to MI5 and organised by those same children, the unsuspecting duo were lured to **Baskervilles Restaurant** to be met by their closest friends and grandchildren for a big celebratory tea.

Memories from long ago flowed together with the brew, as the 'Groom' still regaining his composure from the unexpected surprise and speaking for Maureen and himself, gave thanks to those attending in addition to their daughters **Alexis** and **Ilona**, along with their respective husbands **Matt** and **Tom**, for hosting the event.

Afterwards, David told *Call Sign*: "It was a lovely surprise – although you have to be careful with shocks at our age!!!"

It's always nice to include happy events in *Call Sign* and so we'd like to congratulate **Maureen and David Burnetts (S43)** who recently commemorated their ruby – 40th - wedding anniversary by being tricked into turning up at a restaurant by their friends.

## Freebie Theatre Tickets

**S**ince Tom Whitbread left the Dial-a-Cab Board at the last AGM, there has been a notable decrease in the availability of freebie theatre tickets.

Now Tom has told *Call Sign* that any driver who would like to be informed when complimentary theatre tickets are available should send him their email address and he will start a database to allow those drivers to be notified via email when and where freebie theatre tickets are available.

Just as when Tom advertised availability on driver's terminals, it will always be first come first served until they are gone.

Send Tom your email address; put DaC theatre tickets on the subject line and your name and call sign in the main part. Then whenever Tom's many theatre contacts give him details, he will pass them straight over to drivers email addresses. If you don't send Tom your email address with those details as above, then you can be certain that you won't be informed!

Emails to [tom.whitbread@btclick.com](mailto:tom.whitbread@btclick.com)

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

## SIMON'S GOLF COURSES



### Woodhall Spa Golf Club

It is often debated as to which is England's finest inland golf course and the one that usually comes out ahead of all the others is the home of the *English Golf Union*, the Woodhall Spa Golf Club's Hotchkin course.

*It's a devil of a place to get to in Lincolnshire. I'd suggest staying overnight and playing its sister course, **The Bracken**, as well. Most golfers that have played the Hotchkin course will have one*

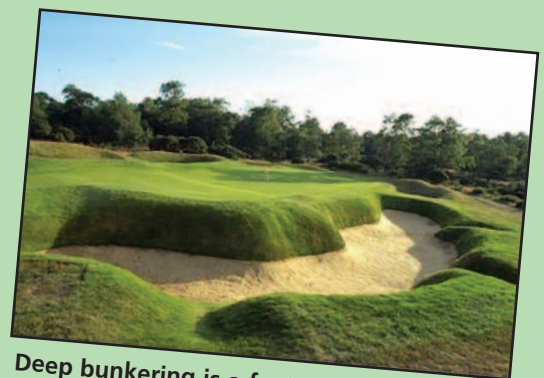
*abiding memory - the bunkers! Deep cavernous pits of despair for the average golfer - and that's not just the green side bunkers either!*

Most of them actually have steps to enter and exit – always hoping that will be after just a single swipe with the trusty sand wedge! But the course contains so much more than just that memory.

It's a large layout of sandy soil; in the summer you have to plot your way round. There may be some peculiar bounces that send the ball towards the fairway traps, but that's the 'fun' of golf.

Special mention; the par 3 12th, a 165 plus yarder to a green surrounded by the deepest bunkers on the course - up to 12 feet deep! The best advice I can give is not to go in them!

**Woodhall Spa** might be a course for the seasoned golfer rather than beginners. But either way, it's well worth the trip... Happy golfing...



Deep bunkering is a feature around Woodhall Spa's 5th green

**Simon Wallis (M11), Call Sign Online**



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## To the Licensed Hackney Carriage Trade

Last month, our parent company Geely announced that it was investing £250 million to build a new factory at Ansty, near Coventry, to put into production the next generation of the iconic London Black Cab. The new TX5 will be a plug-in, range extended electric hybrid vehicle and will be available before 1st January 2018 in order to meet the requirements set by The Mayor of London for all new taxis to be **Zero-Emissions Capable (ZEC)** by that date.

Geely would not have had the confidence to make this investment had it not been for the strong support that we have received from the Licensed Hackney Carriage Trade. Last year we sold more TX4s in London than in any year since its launch in 2007. The Chairman of Geely, **Li Shufu**, has asked me to send you his personal thanks for the confidence and loyalty that you have shown in the iconic London Black Cab.

In recognition of this loyalty, he has decided that everyone who has purchased a new TX4 since Geely acquired The London Taxi Company (LTC) in February 2013 should receive a voucher which will entitle them to £1000 off the price of a new TX5. Furthermore, this offer will extend to anyone who buys a new TX4 between now and the TX5 launch date in 2017. This is our way of saying a big thank you for supporting us.

Two years ago, I set out the priorities for LTC to put customers first in everything we do, focus on improving the quality of our goods and services and, if we achieve these objectives, then we will have created a sustainable, profitable business. This strategy has proved successful and customers realise that we are treating them as the most important aspect of our business. I am delighted to announce that LTC has made significant progress in 2014 towards its aim of becoming a sustainable, profitable business. In 2014 we made a £1.2m trading profit before tax and other deductions and the UK group has a net worth in excess of £25 million.

The build quality of our current TX4 is the best it has even been with improved handling, electronic stability control, greater ride comfort and lower noise levels. If you don't believe me, pop in for a test drive and see for yourself; I promise you that you will not be disappointed. In recognition of this improvement in quality, we have increased the comprehensive manufacturer's standard three year warranty from 100,000 to 120,000 miles to give you more peace of mind; another example of putting our customers first.

The mission of The London Taxi Company is to support the provision of safe, accessible, durable and professional taxi services throughout the world and our vision is to see the iconic London Black Cab on the streets of major cities in the world. London should be rightly proud that it is recognised as having the best taxi service in the world. This accolade is derived from a combination of the quality of the London Cabbies with their famous **Knowledge**, the iconic London Black Cab itself and stringent consistent regulation from

## Peter Johansen's open letter to the trade: 2015



Transport for London. If any of these three elements were missing, the crown would swiftly slip from London's head.

We live in a rapidly changing world and one thing is for certain, the world will continue to change and we must all adapt to the new challenges that this will bring. We must protect and expand the loyal and passionate base of customers that our trade relies upon by continuing to move with customer tastes and adapting to their changing demands.

**The private hire trade continues to expand unchecked both in London and the Regions and the Licensed Hackney Carriage Trade needs to unite and find a way to respond by using technology to attract more business; a dedicated national Black Cab only App for smartphones might be the way forward.**

As an industry, the Licensed Hackney Carriage Trade faces many threats to its livelihood, but there are also opportunities that should not be missed and we must face up to these challenges together and speak with one voice to government and the public. This is the only way to ensure that the licensed taxi trade is shaping its own future, rather than having it shaped for us. In the coming year, I intend to work closely with the ITDA, ICDC, Unite and RMT unions, The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers and other similar groups to formulate a cohesive consensus of opinion to drive forward those issues that directly affect our industry both in London and in the Regions.

The uncertainty over taxi age limits and how the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) will operate in London is adversely affecting confidence in the future. In our submissions to the ULEZ consultation, and in subsequent representations to TfL, we have strongly opposed a ten year age limit under any circumstances and said that we would not accept any changes to the age limit without meaningful compensation for every owner affected. We put forward an alternative proposal of a 15 year age limit for Euro 6 taxis and a 12 year limit for older vehicles, but we do not know if this proposal will be acceptable to TfL. It is our view that the debate on age limits misses the key point, because the best way to improve air quality is to encourage drivers into new ZEC vehicles. That's why I'm pleased to say that LTC has led a successful campaign on taxi grants which has

resulted in the government more than doubling the funding available to drivers who want to invest in a ZEC taxis when they become available in 2017, with an additional £25 million specifically earmarked for London drivers.

Unfortunately, until TfL announce their final decision later this year over taxi age limits and ULEZ, there will continue to be unhelpful uncertainty over these important changes. However, there is already a way for taxi owners to protect their investment *now*, ahead of any pronouncement on age limits or changes to emissions rules.

**There is currently a shortage of second hand taxis in London and consequently the value of these vehicles is at an all-time high. This means that there has never been a better time to trade in your vehicle, cash in on the equity that you have in it and enter into a £145 per week Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) to buy a cleaner, greener new TX4. This PCP deal will give you a guaranteed future value for your new TX4 that protects your investment regardless of any change to the age limits. What's more, you will also receive a voucher worth £1000 off the price of a new TX5. Don't delay, visit Brewery Road today!**

We are already getting enquiries from taxi drivers who want to put their name down for the new TX5. In order to be fair to everyone, we are launching our 'Get to the Front of the Rank Campaign'. We anticipate that there will be an unprecedented demand for the new TX5 when it becomes available in late 2017 so those drivers who have bought a new TX4 since February 2013 will have the first opportunity to buy a new TX5. We are creating a 'virtual taxi rank' based on when you have bought your new TX4; those that bought one in February 2013 will be served first with others ranked by the date of delivery.

**So don't be the last cabbie in the rank; buy a new TX4 today to reserve your space in the TX5 virtual taxi rank.**

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

**Peter Johansen**  
Executive Vice-President  
The London Taxi Company

### Call Sign May 2015

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In the April issue of *Call Sign* and at the end of a letter from Addison Lee's Mike Galvin where he berated Uber, this magazine asked whether AL - having a similar beef to the licensed taxi trade - meant that our enemy's enemy could possibly be our friend? Eddie Lambert has been with Dial-a-Cab for almost twenty years and for the whole of that period, he has been involved politically either with the former T&G Cab Section or more latterly, the RMT. So if anyone should have an anti-Addison Lee feeling, it's him. This is what he told *Call Sign*...

"Yes you are right about that, Alan. Working with Addison Lee, whatever next? When I was Chair with the RMT Taxi Branch, London, I can remember the stick I got for talking to GMB Regional Organiser Terry Flanagan because they represented PH drivers in London.

No notice had been taken of the fact that they wanted a numerical control of PH numbers in London, an outside independent body to carry out the map test for potential PH drivers instead of the PH companies carrying out their own

## Our enemy's enemy?

tests - as though they were going to fail anyone and turn down £100pw in circuit fees etc. These included a spoken English and written basic maths test.

In addition, they wanted all drivers who rented cars either directly from their circuit or through a company-owned subsidiary, to be on PAYE.

The GMB also wanted a legal minimum fare, better reporting and registering of crimes against both sets of drivers and a vast improvement of enforcement against tout-ing. This was costing them jobs with their drivers turning up to discover their passengers had been taken by touts. The only thing the GMB wanted that I told him we would fight him through hell and high water over was our access to bus lanes - something which was obviously a big issue. However, he did agree that they would not join any campaign to get taxis out of bus lanes.

I also met Steve McKenzie, who was the Branch Secretary of the GMB Professional Drivers London branch at the time. He agreed to not recruit taxi drivers in London (although they do represent PH and Hack drivers outside London) because of potential conflicts of interest. Quite why that doesn't apply outside of London I don't know, but I guess it's just a matter of getting and keeping members.

We also discussed other points above and apart from the bus lane issue and there was no real difference of opinion, just a slightly different approach due to their start position. However, I should add that the position on

recruitment may well no longer apply, as I believe the leadership of the London Professional Drivers branch has changed with Terry Flanagan, an old style trade unionist, having gone from the GMB altogether and there is a new Branch Secretary. A possible consequence of this is that GMB sponsored MPs will be brought into any debate.

Whilst I was talking to Steve, I received a phone call from the man we all knew as the Pope, the late John Paul Pace. I invited him to join us for a cuppa as he wasn't far away and this he did. Sometime later, I heard he had told people of "discovering" us having secret talks with the GMB. I never did agree with JPP that sitting at a pavement table outside the Pinner café opposite RMT headquarters in Chalton Street was a place for secret talks! Sometimes your enemies may be closer than you think and not necessarily who you think they are.

It would seem to me that what we, the Hackney trade and the vast majority of the established Private Hire companies, want is for the law of the land as we understand it to be enforced and if a third party comes along and tries to steamroller changes, for TfL to then stand up to them and force them to follow a legal path to achieve their aims.

The *Status Quo* should be supported until - or if - any changes are judged, following due consideration, to be legal and any possible challenges also to be considered.

**Eddie Lambert (V37)**

## 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.

It maybe a surprise to hear that there needn't be anything wrong with you for you to see a counsellor. Counselling could simply enable you to become happier, healthier and a more fulfilled human being.

I am a fully qualified counsellor with 12 years experience  
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I offer sessions Monday- Saturday and Thursday evenings.

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**Session fees are £50.00**

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**www.hart-counselling.co.uk**



# Making a splosh... in Kings Cross!



**H**ow life changes! Not too long ago, the thought of building an open sploshetorium – ie a bathing facility other than a regulation swimming pool – anywhere other than Hampstead would have been unthinkable. But no longer...

The developers behind bringing **Kings Cross** into the 21st century have applied to Camden Council for permission to create Europe's first man-made natural pond where swimmers will be allowed to relax, right in the middle of the KX regeneration site. If successful, it's hoped the new sploshetorium will be ready to use by mid-summer.

## 'Big Show' cab smash inside O2!

**Call Sign** was sent several reports from Dial-a-Cab drivers - and in two cases from their children - of an extraordinary RTA that occurred on the stage **INSIDE** the O2 arena!

It happened on Monday 11 May during an episode of **WWE Raw**. Most episodes of the American Wrestling program come from the USA and are so popular in the UK that **Sky Sports** show them live, beginning at 1am every Tuesday morning and lasting for an astonishing 3 hours and 10 minutes! But twice a year, the show comes from London and is shown in the US with a tape delay because the UK show kicks off at 7.30 – mid-afternoon US *Eastern Standard Time*.

As with most WWE shows, there are lots of lighting effects and fireworks etc, but with the London shows they always have a real TX4 on stage alongside a large Union Jack.

Inside the ring, wrestler **Roman Reigns** was being interviewed and said some rather unkind things about a seven foot giant who wrestles under the name of the **Big Show**. As he left the stage to walk back to the dressing rooms, Big Show came out and attacked Reigns, before then throwing him into the side of the TX4. The thud was described as "sickening" and as he bounced off the cab, two huge dents could clearly be seen. All the reports **Call Sign** received suggested that this was a real cab with the same bodywork that we get in our cabs.

But Big Show wasn't satisfied with that; he then lifted Reigns up by his throat and laid him on top of the cab. Then he climbed onto the taxi roof via the bonnet, picked up Roman Reigns by his neck and choke-slammed him



**Big Show** stands on the roof of a TX4 while Roman Reigns lays there after being choke-slammed onto it!

into the roof of the cab. The sound of his limp body crashing into the steel roof sounded horrific and Reigns' hand could just about be seen poking out from the huge dent on the roof.

For a sport that is famously fake, they should have asked the **London Taxi Company** if they could make them a taxi made out of marshmallow!

Reigns was later carried to an ambulance but refused to get into it, got up off the stretcher and walked away. His only comment afterwards was that being smashed into a London steel taxi hurts like hell!

Thanks to all the drivers that sent us the info...

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A different format, but at last it's back...

# TAXI DRIVER OF THE YEAR RETURNS

The Taxi Driver of the Year Competition has not been held for around ten years, with many often asking the Committee when it will be coming back. Sadly, the cost of putting the show on spiralled out of control and eventually prohibited the reintroduction of a competition that Dial-a-Cab drivers always did so well in. But now it's back and looking for entrants.

In conjunction with leading taxi advertising operator, Ubiquitous, the organisers of the Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund have created a new approach which, with the input of the trade, will help get the competition back on the road.

TDYCF are inviting nominations from the trade for the Taxi Driver of the Year 2015, which will not only raise the profile of black cabs and its drivers, but also raise money for the five charities the Fund supports – Albany, LTFUC, Southend Fund for Underprivileged Children, ELCO and War Disabled.

**The finale of the 2015 Award will take place at the annual TDYCF dinner dance, which this year will take place on Saturday November 7th in central London.**

If you want to nominate a driver as Taxi Driver of the Year, firstly seek the permission of the driver beforehand and make sure that he or she is available to attend the finale at the November 7th dinner and dance, when the shortlisted drivers will be asked to take part in a written knowledge test and meet the judges. The winner will be decided on the night and become the 2015 taxi driver of the year, collecting a prize as well as the glory!

So if you feel you know a driver who would be deserving of the title Taxi Driver of the Year,



**Back in the 2004 competition and DaC's Andy Daniels was laughing after getting lost!**

someone you consider upholds the values that London's taxi drivers are renowned for, then don't hang around.

It costs just £200 to enter a driver, but this will include two tickets for the dinner and dance - one for the driver and one for the person nominating them. Additional drivers can be entered for £100 and this will also include the cost of their ticket to the dinner dance. The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund would love to see a great turnout for the Award at this year's annual dinner dance. Tickets for the function are just £65 per person and tables of 10 are available too.

**Driver nomination forms and dinner dance ticket booking forms are available by emailing Barbara Poluck at: [brussella@talk21.com](mailto:brussella@talk21.com) or they can be downloaded by visiting the News section at**

[www.UbiqTaxi.com](http://www.UbiqTaxi.com).

Commenting on the Award announcement, the Honourable Chairman of the Fund and long-time Dial-a-Cab driver, **Russell Poluck MBE**, said: "Let's not forget that the focus of this initiative is to raise money for those less fortunate than ourselves. We are really thrilled that with the help of Ubiquitous, we are able to reinstate the TDYCF Award and hope that the increased profile of the event will help to provide extra support for our charities. We urge the trade to get behind this initiative so we can successfully reinstate the great tradition of the driver competition and raise more money!"

The TDOYCF was founded in 1972 and since then has distributed more than £2.6million to charities, hospitals and private homes in addition to the five trade charities.

Of the three radio circuits, DaC had the highest number of winners, but it was someone that didn't win who made us smile the most! It was in the 2004 competition and **Andy Daniels (A02)** was competing in the 'drive' section of the competition where competitors had to make a trip with the meter on 'stop' with the most points going to the driver with the lowest amount showing on the meter. Andy was really well placed and arrived back at the show with possibly the lowest amount of any entrant. He told *Call Sign* at the time:

"I was doing really well, but I couldn't find the entrance to get back into the Show and added an extra £2 onto the fare!"

Yes, 2015 will be a very different format, but with support from the trade and the kind sponsorship from Ubiquitous, it will still be fun. But more importantly, it will help raise the profile of the trade...

## Harry Hizer Barmitzvah



Mum and dad with Harry and his younger brother Alfie

The eldest son of long-time Dial-a-Cab driver Martin Hizer (M47), Harrison – better known to his friends and anyone connected to Tottenham Hotspur FC as Harry – recently became Barmitzvah'd at the Perryman's Farm Road Synagogue in Newbury Park. Martin and his wife Amanda made a huge party for their son the following day at the Royal Majestic Rooms in Willesden Lane. Martin's planned retirement will now have been delayed by several years!

Our congratulations go to the Hizer family and of course, to Harry the traditional Jewish congratulation of mazeltov...

## New credit/debit card stickers



There are now new partition stickers available at Dial-a-Cab

House, which in addition to previous passenger information (ie 10% charge with a minimum of £2 for credit cards etc) also add debit cards to that.

Some passengers have apparently pointed out that the old notice mentions just credit cards, believing that debit cards carried no charge.

**Please pick up one when you pass the office and replace the old one.**





Anthea Turner was one of an alleged many Uber clients whose accounts were hacked

Something of a stink recently surfaced when the New York Times revealed that Uber's customer data base was hacked into last year and that the company never revealed it until this March – a period of almost five months.

Although the hacking was first reported in the US, more and more Uber UK customers came forward and claimed that their accounts had been broken into. Perhaps even more disturbing, two separate vendors on a 'dark web' marketplace were said to be selling active Uber accounts complete with worldwide usernames and passwords, one for just \$1 each with the other asking for \$5 and offering a guaranteed period that the accounts would remain active!

## Anthea Turner: My Uber account was hacked!

Once bought, these active Uber accounts allow you to order rides on someone else's account using the payment information provided on the file – at least until it is discovered – and not everyone checks their accounts that frequently. One such woman must have been **Kate Simon** who discovered a shortfall of £5000 in her account that she blamed on Uber. Or perhaps record producer **Mick Crossley** who recently told how he was presented with a £3,000 minicab bill for 142 journeys that he hadn't made. His Uber account had allegedly also been hacked. He hadn't checked his account for a few weeks – bearing in mind that many only check their statements monthly. Mr Crossley then discovered that an average of 10 rides each day had been made using his account, yet he says he never received any warnings from Uber to ask if he knew his usage was going up dramatically and that his contact details had suddenly been changed.

If revealed, the hacked account details also contain other sensitive information such as the last four digits of the registered credit card, together with the expiration date, trip history, email addresses, phone numbers and information of users' home and work addresses – all useful details for anyone committing fraud.

The internet and Twitter soon filled with similar stories - Uber's Twitter helpline even-

tually becoming inaccessible after getting swamped with complaints from customers. Uber denied the claims and said that customers should avoid using the same login credentials across multiple online sites.

But the question must be why, with all the problems Uber has had including security, drivers getting lost and passengers dislike of the surge pricing policy during busy periods when fares can become as high as quadruple, people such as Anthea Turner still use them?

And perhaps even more relevant, how it is that only TfL accept Uber without any problem, especially now that the licensing authority for London have said that refugee or asylum seekers coming to the UK from abroad and who drive minicabs over here, do not need any background checks, just a letter from a previous employer saying what nice people they are! Some probably are, but would you want your child to take the chance of getting into the cab of someone who could be a rapist or murderer in their own country, when even the rules state that asylum seekers are banned from working until their asylum claim has been approved? TfL obviously see no problem with that scenario, so they are hardly likely to worry about Uber...

**Jamie Corum**  
Call Sign Online

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

### Lumbago cured?

Do the advancement of medical science and the change of the English go hand in hand? There was a time when the **Small Faces** sang **Gor' Blimey Hello Mrs Jones, how's old Bert's Lumbago!**

We would have all known what they were talking about, literally saying: God Bless me, how's old Bert's bad back. The term 'God Blimey' was first linked to **James Joyce** in *Ulysses* - the Irish always there being an in-joke to **Trevor Knapman (K32)** as he suffered seeing me cheering **Ireland** on in the **6 Nations!**

Back to the point; *Bert's Lumbago* would no longer be recognised as such, now he would probably be diagnosed as having **Sciatica** or some sort of degenerative disc disease borne out of overwork or sitting the same position for long periods - an occupational hazard for taxi driver and not at all brought about by over indulgent meals, too many beers at lunchtime following a round of golf in the freezing and driving wind or rain while walking around with a stomach the size of a medicine ball! **Call Sign** forbids the use of adjectives such as beer belly or fat gut!

Got a dodgy knee with swelling? It's no longer a carpet layer's problem; today we have an aka **Paul Gascoigne** *cruciate ligament* injury with damaged *meniscus* aligned to the fact that the problems with our feet are no longer ill-fitting cheap shoes from **Curtess**, but we suffer like **David Beckham** from *Metatarsal* problems.

Of course we no longer get headaches, but bouts of dehydration which trigger off our recurring *migraine*. Growing pains are no longer acceptable, now it *Osgood-Schlatter* syndrome or disease.

We don't put on weight or associate with the non-PC terms that come with it, that's all down to the trouble we have with our *thyroids*. Got a 'frog in your throat'? Most certainly not, it's a *glandular* problem.

I daren't even go down the road of terms such as 'they've lost their mar-

bles', 'bleeding nutter' or 'got a screw loose' as I will have the mental health authorities on me – not to mention the Editor!

There is no doubt that as we now know more about our health conditions, we are also more aware of the causes. But sometimes it is reassuring to hear someone of the older generation say: "No wonder he's put on weight, the lazy git, he doesn't do a 'stroke' - sometimes a bit of non-PC just tells the truth!"

### Santander or Barclays... Labour or Tory

Well, we finally know that the new sponsor to the **Boris Bikes** are no longer **Barclays** with their bluish Tory colour, but the red (not Red Ken who had the original idea for the scheme) of **Santander**. It's quite ironic really on many fronts...

Firstly, as I've mentioned previously, will the roads now be repainted back to the new sponsor's colour - meaning the original red routes painted blue will now be repainted red?

Secondly, how ironic that a bank that started in a country now floundering with financial depression, are sponsoring a scheme in one the major financial cities of the world!

Thirdly for me, is the great irony that they are being launched during the time of an election to see if Tory blue and Labour red are going to win. I'm not on *Twitter*, so by the time you read this it may be old news, but I'm conducting my own poll on how the country is going to vote. I just observe which choice of bike the hirer chooses from the dual colour ranks, to see which way the election will go...

**Tom Quigley**  
Call Sign Online



# DaC Sales Report

With Keith Cain

Since I last wrote in the magazine, the Sales team have been busy completing tenders, one of which is purely to determine if our booking platform meets their requirements.

The Pre-Qualification Questionnaire requirements have been met and our system does in fact offer more than required. This has come from a major account user in the City and was one of those companies present when we demonstrated it back in February. It places a whole new concept on how clients are looking at their transport needs and one we are following with interest.

We were waiting for news of a few other tenders we have completed and one, after a full year, has decided to withdraw the tender completely because they have internally restructured their transport policy, which I take to mean that staff are ordering taxis on their corporate credit cards and claiming back their business trips.

The other company, which is based on the Island, informed us that we were not successful on cost only. The winning supplier is a company not really known to any of us which has a total fleet, so they say, of around 160 vehicles! They are not based in London and while it's extremely disappointing to receive the announcement, I do get very frustrated when you are told your commercial ability was equal to that of the selected



supplier, but cost was a significant factor.

Perhaps there is some satisfaction in knowing that none of our taxi competitors were awarded the contract either. However, while I know that our costs were very low, for someone else to offer lower... well all I can say is that their drivers must be paying a very hefty price for the work!

On a brighter note, we have been notified by a new account based in the EC2 area that our tender was successful and subject to finalising a couple of Service Level Agreements, we will be the preferred supplier. It is not going to be a major account, but certainly a respectably sized one. More information will be announced very soon.

I have been looking very closely at those clients that use cars for longer trips on the assumption they will be much cheaper than using Black Taxis. Comparing the meter fare to the car price, it is far more expensive, but what has emerged is that our drivers would be prepared to undertake the same trip at less than the meter price if given the opportunity.

This has led to discussions with our IT department to see if it is possible to build into the dispatch system a way of highlighting these trips to the driver. With the information I've researched, I'm ready to talk with some of our clients on an offer for them to use taxis for longer trips. I have even looked at the possibility of a system to offer trips back from the airport at lower rates. We are in the early stages, but the more you delve the more the opportunity is there to offer members more trips. Of course, the choice of accepting these trips will be down to the member and I will keep you all updated...

Keith Cain  
Head of Sales

## LTC: Another two approved service dealers...



The **London Taxi Company** continues to put customers first by improving its after sales network with the appointment of another two Approved Service Dealers.

**Witham Vehicle Solutions** and Bristol-based **Chandler Motor Company**, have both joined LTC's UK network of fully trained and approved after sales repairers. Both businesses welcome LTC vehicles for servicing and warranty work as well as retail part sales.

**Witham Vehicle Solutions**, who operate from **Lynfields Business Centre** in London Road, Witham, is a privately run business who are already a **SsangYong** franchise and independent used car centre. They have a large fully equipped workshop, as well as a body-shop.

Commenting on the appointment, WVS owner **Darren Cox** said:

**"We recognised an opportunity for growth within our business and a family member, who is an owner of a London Taxi, helped identify the need for service in the Essex area where taxi drivers could be offered priority slots within our workshop. We fully understand the cost of downtime for drivers and want to minimise this."**

Perhaps surprisingly to some **Call Sign** readers, there are a number of **Dial-a-Cab** drivers who live in the West Country, some as far out as Devon. So they will be happy to hear of the Bristol-based Chandler Motor Company. It is a family run business that services and repairs Citroen, Peugeot, Renault and LPG vehicles. They have a large fully equipped workshop, as well as collection and delivery services within the Bristol and Bath area.

CMC owner **Peter Chandler** said:

**"We realised there was an opportunity as there were no approved LTC dealers in Bristol, Bath or even South Wales, so we were really keen to fill this gap by getting fully trained and qualified mechanics to do servicing and repair work."**

Both new Approved Service Dealers boast a team of qualified and skilled workshop technicians and had to comply with LTC's stringent service standards in order to join the network. They also had to ensure that all technicians received intensive diagnostic and mechanical training at LTC's new Training Academy, based at the current production facility in Coventry.

**To find out more about LTC's Approved Service Dealers, including services and times etc:**

**[www.london-taxis.co.uk/approved-service-dealers](http://www.london-taxis.co.uk/approved-service-dealers)**

## HACKNEY ROAD TAXI TYRES

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*The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers***WCHCD NEWS*****United Guilds service at St Pauls***

As **Malcolm Paice**, Master of the WCHCD together with other members of the Company, travelled to **St Paul's Cathedral** on the morning of 20th March 2013, there was little sign of the sun let alone the much heralded eclipse. But by the time this 73rd **United Guilds Service** was over, the sun had come out to greet London's Livery companies as they left the Cathedral.

The first United Guilds Service was held on 25th March 1943, **Lady Day**, selected because it was the first day of the year according to the Julian calendar. Much of London had been a bomb site back then and this service had been introduced to raise morale. The area around St Paul's now shows little evidence of the devastation that was all around the cathedral in 1943; back then it was a different scene as the Master and Prime Wardens of the Twelve Great Companies held a meeting at the Goldsmiths' Hall and decided to hold a service at St Paul's Cathedral for the Livery Companies and Guilds of the City of London to help lift the spirits of the city following the **Blitz**. In 1943, the Lord Mayor of London, **Sir Samuel Joseph**, attended along with the Sheriff, Court Aldermen and the Lord Bishop of London, **Dr G.F. Fisher**, who preached the sermon. In 2014, the Lord Mayor of London, **Alan Yarrow**, was present at the service.

The cathedral welcomes people of all Christian traditions, as well as those of other faiths and this service is an uplifting occasion for all those who pack into the beautiful cathedral. This year's sermon was by **Nicholas Holtam**, the Bishop of Salisbury.

The procession into the cathedral is a spectacular sight; the Lord Mayor arrives to be met by the chairman of the Trustees of the United Guilds Service and the Masters of the Mercers' and Grocers' Companies. The procession down the main aisle of the cathedral is led by a Verger and the choir, the Bishop of London, Chief Commoner, High Officers, Sheriffs and Court of Aldermen, Clergy and the Bishop, the Lord Mayor's Chaplain, Serjeant at Arms, Sword Bearer and the Lord Mayor. They are joined by the Masters of the Companies present all in their ceremonial robes and regalia - an impressive sight that shows how the Livery is still flourishing and active in the City today.

Tourists and bystanders watched the dignitaries as they left the cathedral to the pealing of St Paul's bells. The WCHCD then joined with the **Worshipful Company of Bowyers** and the **Worshipful Company of Water Conservators** to attend a lunch in the **Guildhall Private Members dining room**.



The iconic picture of St Pauls standing tall whilst all around was burning in the Blitz

***Affiliation with the Royal Docks Community School***

City Livery Companies often have affiliations with schools as part of their remit of Education and for the WCHCD, their connection with **Royal Docks Community School** began in 2008. Since then, successive Company Masters have attended the annual prize giving where an award is given by the WCHCD to the boy and girl who in the school's opinion have made exceptional personal progress. There are also other prizes for academic success.

The WCHCD have previously organised trips in taxis, installed a greenhouse and the school is now preparing to plant a **Royal Charter Orchard** with donated money from the Company, following attendance of the head teacher, head boy and girl at last year's presentation of a **Royal Charter** by **Prince Charles** to the WCHCD. In 2014, Past Master **Andrew Overton** became a governor at the school, with a view to helping them with marketing and promoting the school to the outside world on schemes such as work experience and apprenticeships.

The Royal Docks Community School is a purpose built, mixed, community comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 16 with approximately 800 students. Opened in 1999, the school building has achieved national architectural recognition for its design and has a 3 year plan to become outstanding. Their values are to aspire, learn, co-

operate and achieve. The student population is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural and is a fully inclusive school with 25 students who have profound, severe and multiple learning difficulties. They are taught by a specialist team of teachers and support staff, but are fully integrated into the life of the school.

The school benefits from a committed, dedicated and hardworking team of teachers and support staff, headed up by the Head Teacher **Wendy Bower**, who was appointed in January 2014. The whole team is focused on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. The WCHCD is looking to develop its link with the school further with visits to city Livery Halls, speakers from the cab trade and others, as well as helping provide work experience and shadowing within cab trade businesses. The present Master of the WCHCD, **Malcolm Paice**, is helping the school with its employability programme, which aims to prepare students for work with CV, interview and professional profile skills as well as working with businesses and organisations to offer work experience and full time employment opportunities.

Last month, the newest Liveryman of the WCHCD, licensed taxi driver, **Kevin Hennessey**, went along to the school to talk to pupils about the history of London, using some of the knowledge he gained during the **Cab Guide Course**. The WCHCD is planning to develop its relationship with the Royal Docks Community School further every year and is encouraging more of its members and associated contacts to become involved.

**Sandie Goodwin**

***DaC Arbitrators***

With three arbitrators having retired, Dial-a-Cab is looking for replacements. If you have been on the circuit for at least five consecutive years and would like to be considered as an Arbitrator, please let me know in writing by May 8th 2015 at the usual DaC address or via email to:

[howardp@dialacab.co.uk](mailto:howardp@dialacab.co.uk)

If more than three drivers apply, then a postal ballot will take place at a later date.

**Howard Pears**  
*Company Secretary*

# Cup final is Lee's swan song



Lee is going back to a less painful way of life - driving a cab!

Up until September 2006, *Call Sign* had been sponsoring the **Dial-a-Cab** Call Centre's blonde Bombshell, **Donna Merry** and her *Mirkou MK30* shotgun as she battled into the European and World skeet shooting championships. When she left, we transferred our sponsorship over to DaC driver and then-Wembley FC goalkeeper, **Lee Pearce (J71)**. Lee didn't quite match Donna's long blonde locks, but what he had in common was that as a goalkeeper, he was good at what he did.

Our sponsorship paid up in trumps the following season when DaC Wembley were selected by the BBC's *Football Focus* and *Match of the Day* to be the team they would follow in the FA Cup of that season - the idea being that once Wembley were knocked out, they would continue to follow the team that beat them until eventually they reached the Final. Former **Spurs** legend **Garth Crooks** and a BBC team turned up at Wembley and *Football Focus* did a piece on the team, including posing with the cup itself.

The DaC banners made several appearances as they showed the team training. They didn't win the cup, but the *Match of the Day* team admitted being surprised at how good the standard was and 30,000 followed Wembley's progress with the BBC streaming the match live online.

*Call Sign* followed Lee as he moved around to several different clubs until he finally arrived at South London's **Colliers Wood United** in the Combined Counties Premier division.

The April *Call Sign* told of the League Cup quarter final match and how the team beat **Badshot Lea** 3-0 to move into the semi-finals, where they had to play **Farnham Town** with the winners meeting league leaders **Camberley Town** at Woking FC on 1 May, just as you read this.

The first 30 minutes of the semi-final saw Farnham on top, but with neither side managing to score the goal that looked as though it would get their team through to the final. But on 33 minutes, Farnham took a deserved lead

when the unmarked **Mark Corbett** beat **Lee Pearce**.

The second half went much the way of the first half and with just three minutes left to play and Lee looking to be going out on a semi-final, the team refused to give up. **Dan Harding** sped down the right wing, centred the ball and **Mario Embalo** headed home to send the tie into extra time, just as the rain came lashing down.

Wood went ahead on 102 minutes when **Dan Harding** finished off a superb **Mario Embalo** cross and Wood kept the lead up till the end of the extra time first half. Five minutes after the restart, Farnham were level when **Paul Douglass** sent in a cross that went straight into the net past a nervy looking **Colliers Wood** defence. But the nerves vanished after **Theo Woodhouse** fired just wide and **Mario Embalo** put **Eli Ogunseye** away only to be tackled in the area. The ref gave a penalty and Embalo made no mistake from the spot.

Then within a few short minutes, Embalo set

up Ogunseye to make it 4 - 2 and Mario got his hat trick just moments later when he made it 5-2 to take CWU into the League Cup Final.

Lee told *Call Sign*: "It was a great result, but I'm in my mid-thirties and after many years of playing in goal and being banged about, there isn't a part of me that doesn't hurt. My hands, my knees, my feet - you name it and I have been kicked there! All the pain I have is just from playing football. Perhaps to some, playing outside the Premier league doesn't count, but believe me when I say the standard in these lower leagues is a long way above kicking a ball around a park and you have to be fit. But you have to know when to stop and I decided the Combined Counties League Cup would be my goodbye to playing semi-professional soccer. Did I think we'd reach the Final? Well I hoped we would, but that's a long way from actually doing it, so I have to believe that the team played out of their skin in every round just make my farewell game the League Cup Final."

## ULEZ countdown commences

**Mayor Boris Johnson** has now officially given the go-ahead for the **Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ)** in an attempt to cut harmful emissions in London. Petrol vehicles will have to meet Euro 4, while diesel vehicles - including taxis - will have to reach Euro 6 in order to be exempt from the ULEZ charges, which are scheduled to be introduced from **September 7 2020**. Those daily charges for non-compliant vehicles, according to TfL, will be £12.50 for cars, vans and taxis, with heavy goods vehicles having to cough (sic) up a huge £100 a day!



Boris makes ULEZ official

According to the Mayor's office, the full ULEZ package is expected to halve emissions of nitrogen oxide (NOx) and particulate matter (PM10) from vehicle exhausts in the capital, with over 80% of central London expected to meet the NO2 (Nitrogen Dioxide) annual EU legal limits in 2020. The numbers living in poor air quality parts of town where levels of NO2 exceed legal limits are expected to fall by 74% with a reduction within inner London of 52%. Outer London, it is claimed, is expected to fall by 43%.

**A £45million fund is said to be available to local authorities to support the rollout of ultra-low emission taxis across the UK. The money is said to help reduce the upfront cost of purpose-built taxis and help install charging infrastructure - although the details claim that this facility will be for both taxis and private hire.**

Of the £45m, £25m of the amount is said to be earmarked for the greater London area in order to help green and yellow badge drivers upgrade to Euro 6, with all new London taxis required to be zero-emission capable by January 2018.

**Taxis will also qualify for the plug-in car grant, which currently offers up to £5,000 off the cost of an eligible low emission vehicle.**

The air quality plans are scheduled to be submitted to the European Commission by the end of this year as part of EU legal obligations over nitrogen dioxide limits. However, those plans will mean that the UK will not meet the legal limits in greater London, the west Midlands and west Yorkshire until after 2030 - 20 years later than the original EU legal deadline.



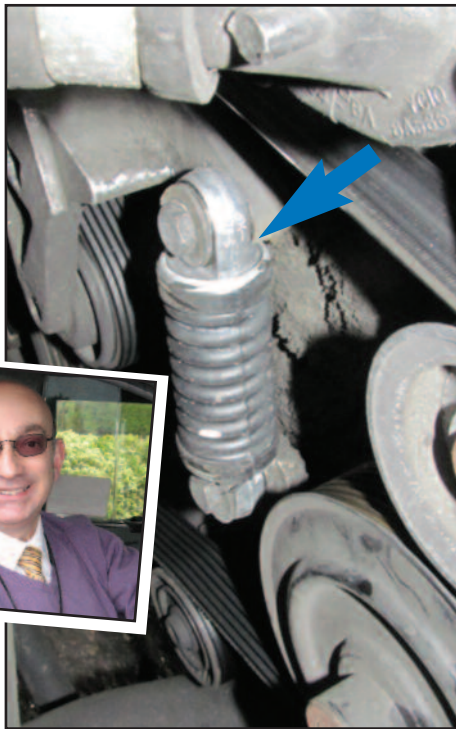
# Ivan's damper dismay!

"I was really disappointed," **Ivan Sobell (P69)** told *Call Sign*. "I heard a loud rattling noise from the engine, stopped immediately to take a look and found that the very long fan belt that runs over numerous pulleys on my TX2 had frayed and that one of those pulley's had broken off from its shaft, leaving me immobile. The upside was that no further damage appeared to have been done."

"Realising that I wasn't going anywhere soon, I called **V&H Taxi Recovery**, whose name I got from an advert I had seen in a trade newspaper. They came out about an hour later and fitted a top pulley and fan belt. Thankfully I had sufficient cash because they said they didn't accept credit cards."

"Then around a week later, the noise returned and so I called them again and this time they fitted a new damper, which is the tubular part with an external spring bolted on behind the radiator and which applies tension to the fan belt. But I was still having problems and made my own enquiries at an LTC dealership, who suggested that the replacement damper was not a genuine LTC part."

"Eventually I discovered that the damper had also been fitted incorrectly - upside down - and it cost me even more money to



**A TX2 tensioner (inset): Ivan smiling again now his cab has been fixed**

get it sorted. I made representation to V&H, who rejected my appeal saying they could not be expected to pay for someone else to repair my cab. Frankly, had I not had more pressing issues involving my wife attending hospital on a regular basis, I would be taking V&H to the small claims court."

So *Call Sign* turned to a regular friend of this mag for impartial advice. **Sheldon Posner** of **Cricklewood Carriers** told our reporter that genuine LTC Parts are marked accordingly; in this case an arrow indicates the correct orientation of the tensioner and carries the LTC part number. He explained that if the unit was fitted upside down, the tensioner plays a tug of war game with the belt as it is obviously pulling and applying tension in the wrong direction with possibly dire consequences.

In the interests of balanced reporting, *Call Sign* visited V&H in **Clare Street E2**. Despite a busy workshop, with staff working on cabs, no one was available for comment. Our pages therefore remain open for their response.

**V&H Taxi Recovery can be contacted on 07956 333 086.**

**Cricklewood Carriers can be contacted on 0208 452 5461**

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**Richard Potter (T51) and a few things that are...**

## ON MY MIND!

### Uber

I was recently stopped by a **Knowledge Boy** on **Goodsway** who tapped on the window and asked about continuing with the knowledge considering all the **Uber** cars around. I didn't have the heart to tell him what I really thought, but said that if it was better than what he was doing, then to continue and generally I gave him some encouragement. Only in the UK could we create the best taxi service in the world whilst then doing the utmost to let it crash and burn.

TfL will eventually have a number of questions to answer regarding Uber and it might need a *Freedom of Information* request to find out the name of the lawyer who said that Uber was legal, considering that **Sir Peter Hendy** could not remember it when questioned by GLA members. Uber was recently valued at \$41 billion dollars with virtually no assets and said that TfL were the easiest licensing authority they had dealt with! What could they possibly mean? They are listed as a *Disruptive Technology*, have no credit facilities and take money direct from customer's accounts.

Why would the big financial houses not give them merchant credit status? A recent media report claimed that on the "dark web" an Uber customer's account details could be brought for as little as 34p. A lady I picked up recently told me that she had stopped using Uber because the driver was nothing like the one sent on the job details. He admitted that he was the licensed driver's brother!

### The enemy? Congestion Charging?

Talking of TfL, it's now 12 years since the introduction of the **Congestion Charge**, which in my opinion is our real enemy. Why should punters sit in traffic and pay for it. To summarise, traffic levels have fallen by 10% in that time, with travel times remaining the same. It takes just as long - or even longer - to do a journey across town as it did before 2003. But surprise, surprise, net revenues for 2013 are up £35 million to £132 million from the £97 million in 2004.

So let me try to understand that car journeys have decreased, yet revenues are up! As we all know, if the congestion charge had worked properly, traffic levels would have gone down - but so would revenue. TfL make a number of excuses for why the travel time remains the same, but I think it's fair to say that each time TfL raised the Congestion Charge - £5 in 2003 to £11.50 in 2014 - they blamed the congestion and traffic speed and we all know that this was created by them! And this is a body who tell taxi drivers what vehicles they must use by law, whilst in the same breath tell the same drivers that those vehicles are not fit for purpose. Well in my opinion, it's TfL who are the ones that are not fit for purpose.

### The MoT v Annual inspection

Having taken my taxi to **Crayford** for its annual **NSL** inspection, I was surprised when I was called out of the viewing area by a tester who after putting my cab on the ramp, pointed out that a brake pipe was a little corroded. Very interesting I thought as I pointed out that it had passed the MoT just five days earlier. I asked if he was suggesting that I get it replaced, his answer was that he was failing the cab and if I didn't like it, then I should complain to TfL.

The old PCO days are still here, unfortunately the bitter ex-PCO inspectors just work for NSL now. I doubt if he would have talked to the PH brigade like that, but I'd like to know if NSL have the right to fail your cab on a mechanical issue and not a LTPH issue. The guidance says that things must be up to MOT standard, which it was the week before. The gentleman concerned, who will not be named, is well known at Crayford. So just beware...



**Richard Potter**  
Call Sign Online

So far as taxis are concerned, the Chinese city of Shanghai will forever be associated with saving the iconic London taxi. But the Shanghai Daily has come up with an astonishing story involving Shanghai that has nothing to do with London Taxi Company owners, Geely, but everything to do with a taxi system that perhaps the London taxi trade could look at and maybe learn from...

The city government is seeking to limit the use of taxi-booking apps during peak hours as they struggle to deal with the impact these, like London, have had on China's transport market.

Beginning in early April, 6,000 of Shanghai's 40,000 licensed taxis have been told to give priority to passengers hailing cabs on the street or booking them by telephone during morning and afternoon rush hours. Drivers from the city's five biggest taxi companies will take part in the plan for four hours each day, depending on their licence plate numbers. The paper also said the move was a response to the rapid growth in the popularity of smartphone booking apps, which have led to complaints by residents about the difficulty of finding a taxi on the street.

It may not be **Uber** or **Hailo**, but many drivers at China's licensed taxi companies make use of the country's two main taxi-booking apps, **Didi Dache** and **Kuaidi Dache**, which together control 90 percent of a market estimated to reach 45 million users this year! The two companies, invested in by two of China's two largest Internet companies - **Tencent** and **Alibaba** respectively - merged in February creating a company whose worth is estimated at £6.5 billion.

However, analysts say the apps have created a digital divide. While young people using the smartphone apps feel they have made life more convenient, older or less tech savvy users have complained that they now have to wait much longer to hail or book a cab. The government has also said that apps have undermined fairness and market order by allowing would-be passengers to offer drivers extra money to pick them up.

## UBER AND HAILO... Is China showing the way?



Has China worked out the app menace to street hails?

licensed taxis, who went on strike in at least seven cities around China earlier this year. The drivers were complaining both about the high fees they had to pay to their companies and about unfair competition from private drivers unburdened by such fees.

The Chinese government responded by banning app

Shanghai's Transport Commission has said that under the new rules, residents can report drivers who refuse to pick them up during rush hour by calling a hotline number. However, it remains to be seen how successful the program will be. Shanghai announced over a year ago that it intended to ban all drivers from using apps during rush hour, but with apparently limited impact.

Observers say the taxi-booking issue has highlighted tension between the interests of various groups, including citizens, drivers and China's powerful Internet companies. With many residents frustrated at how hard it can be to find a taxi, China has also seen a rapid expansion in the use of apps offering private cars driven either by chauffeurs from existing car rental companies, or by private individuals seeking to earn extra money.

**Didi Dache** entered the private car market last year. Other key players in the market include **Yidao Yongche**, sometimes known as China's Uber, as well as Uber itself, which entered the Chinese market last year. Uber and other companies have sought to build market share by offering incentives to passengers and drivers. However their growing popularity has caused tension with drivers of

operators from using drivers or vehicles without taxi licenses - saying this was partly to ensure passengers' safety. Police are also reported to have been cracking down on private drivers. In Beijing, they have warned that anyone caught offering unlicensed taxi services faces a fine of some £2000 (20,000 yuan).

In Shanghai, drivers working for Uber say police have stepped up checks on cars they suspect may be operating as unlicensed taxis. They say drivers who are caught, face having their car impounded and losing their licence for up to three months as well as facing large fines. Some drivers have responded by asking passengers to sit in the front seat and to tell police they are the driver's friend if stopped! Others say they are planning to stop working via booking apps.

Uber says it does not operate illegal services in China, but simply links customers with drivers from licensed rental services and offers non-profit services via 'People's Uber.'

But the latest developments are a reminder that the road for China's booking app providers may be far from a smooth one. And we wonder if there is something London can learn? But we have a problem in comparing our TfL with the progressive Shanghai Transport Commission...

## TAXI FARES 2015/16

*For those that don't already know...*

Following the annual review of taxi fares, which included a public consultation in November 2014, the Transport for London (TfL) Board has approved a freeze in taxi fares. The cost index used to calculate changes to taxi fares showed a 0.1 per cent decrease this year and the TfL Board agreed to defer this decrease to next year's fare calculations.

This is the first freeze of taxi fares since TfL took over responsibility for licensing taxis in 2000 and will last until April 2016. Full details of the taxi tariffs are available on the TfL website at: [Tfl.gov.uk/taxifares](http://Tfl.gov.uk/taxifares).

The paper considered by the TfL Board at its meeting on 4 February 2015 is available on the TfL website at:

<https://www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/board-papers>

**Transport for London**

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Another true story from Geoff Levene

# FIGHTING THE BOREDOM

It's been busy hasn't it? You turn on the terminal, log on, book in and within seconds the familiar *beep*, a job offer comes up and away you go. Do the job, CLJ and the next one please. Huge queues at Padders, shared rides, a couple of airports a week and so it goes on. The *Nissan* engine is going strong. Of course we had to get it converted to *Euro 3*, but now it will be good for... hmmm, forever? But Ken has brought in a second overhaul a year. Anyone who reverses that will get the cab trade vote for sure...

But then beep, beep, beep - it's the alarm clock! And then I awake and look around me, at four grey walls that surround me and I realise that I was only dreaming (we'll forget about the guard and the sad old padre)!

Things are a bit different now. There seems to be a long time between jobs. You do get a good day now and then, but we get let down by everyone - even our friends at the RMT. They keep threatening strikes on the tube but then cancel them at the last minute!

So what can one do to fight the boredom? Well, reading is always a good option. I've always got a book that's left over from my holiday and recently a passenger gave me the latest **John Grisham** as a tip. On Sundays we get *The Mail*, *The Times* and *The Observer*. That's a lot of newsprint - actually it's a small forest! The good lady wife reads them first and then passes them on to me, plus cuttings from *Woman*, *Woman's Own*, *Bella*, *Best* and the *Radio Times*! I have to admit I'm a bit behind, but I can tell you that *Chamberlain* is back from *Munich*! Sometimes I sit and think and sometimes I just sit...



But one thing you can do to pass the time is to play *Six Degrees of Separation*. This is based on the theory that everyone is linked to someone famous by no more than six stages. So here's how I'm connected to George III...

1. My late brother David.
2. The Queen who awarded him the OBE for services to HMRC - but don't go there...!
3. Her father George VI.
4. His grandmother Queen Victoria.
5. Her uncle the Prince Regent - later George IV.
6. His father George III.

Then there's Mozart and me...

1. A passenger of mine and well-known cellist, *Stephen Isserlis*. His grandfather (number 2) left Russia after the revolution when he (number 3) went to Vienna and (4) lodged with a very old lady who told him about the "horrible man" who lived in her house when she was little. That was number 5, *Beethoven* and when he was a boy he played for number 6 *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*...

Of course it doesn't work with everybody. For instance there's no way I'm connected to *Adolf Hitler*. But hang on a minute. Back in the seventies we had an account in *Eaton Square*. It was the *Duchess of Devonshire*. The dispatcher was always at pains to point out it was a person and not a pub! She was actually the Dowager Duchess - the widow of the old Duke. I picked her up a few times, so she is number 1.

- Number 2 was her son, who was the Duke at the time. 3 was his wife, the Duchess (she recently died), but before she married she was *Debo Mitford*, one of the famous sisters, two of whom - *Unity* and *Diana* - were both Fascist sympathisers and my joint number 4. Diana married the equally charming (and number 5) *Oswald Mosley*. The honoured guest and witness at the wedding in Germany was number 6, *Der Fubrer*!

So when you're next roasting on a rank, kill a bit of time by working out who you are connected to...

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



**Keith Reading**  
Professional Toastmaster  
Master of Ceremonies

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10% discount for DaC drivers and staff

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## THE DAY OF DECISION

**W**hen the LTDA agreed to drop their proposed criminal proceedings against four Uber drivers, it gave Transport for London the go-ahead to apply to the High Court to test whether Uber are using what the taxi trade consider to be taximeters.

Uber say their app measures fares according to the smart phone GPS estimate of a journey distance and time - something that TfL's legal team have said they agree with and that modern technology has caused their own rules - that private hire are supposed to operate under - to be out of date.

However, our licensing authority have also said that the High Court is the way to settle the argument - an argument that if it goes Uber's way, could signify the beginning of every minicab in London having the equivalent of a meter.

TfL told *Call Sign*: "We have made it clear previously that it is our view that smartphones used by private hire drivers do not constitute the equipping of a vehicle with a taxi meter where they act as GPS tracking devices to measure journey distances and relay information so that fares can be calculated remotely from the vehicle."

The LTDA, every other trade group and probably all 26,000 licensed taxi drivers disagree with TfL's estimate of the situation. If the Court decides against Uber, then it would cause a huge setback with the company being in breach of the law and could bring an end to Uber in London until they find a new way of calculating fares. If it decides in favour, then this trade will be in trouble.

The case will undoubtedly be a day of decision for this trade and it will be sometime this year...



### Celebrities used to queue up to eat at the Top of the Tower until it was blown up by terrorists

In the early 1960s, an almost phallic-like symbol rose above the London skyline that would replace **Millbank Tower** as the tallest building in London.

Looming above genteel Georgian terraces below, this giant totem pole was a naturally alienating and foreboding structure to most of us at first. It held its number one ranking until the 1980s when the **Nat West Tower** (now **Tower 42**) rose higher and today the **BT Tower** (formerly the **Post Office Tower**) has slipped down to 11th place.

The tower was designed by architects of the Ministry of Public Building and Works led by Eric Bedford, with Prime Minister **Harold Wilson** officially opening the new building on 8th October 1965.

It would be the Postmaster General **Tony Benn** and holiday camp entrepreneur **Billy Butlin** that publically opened its star feature for the new kid on the block – a revolving restaurant to be named **Top of the Tower**, which would complete one revolution every 22 minutes.

Some older readers may remember the office of the Butlin's group that was once on **Oxford Street** near the junction of **Betterton Street** and which for several years had an account with **Dial-a-Cab**. On the other hand, younger readers may not have realised that this major UK communications hub in Fitzrovia was once open to the public, complete with viewing galleries and a souvenir shop.

But the peace and tranquillity of this dynamic London visitor attraction was shattered because of a Halloween Blast that took place on the 31st floor of the Tower at 4.30am on 31st October 1971, but when fortunately, almost certainly due to the timing, nobody was killed or injured – although shrapnel and debris rained down on Cleveland Street below, so hopefully your taxi was well out of harm's way!

The physical damage took 2 years to repair, which put a stop to celebrities queuing up in the west end for *Beluga Caviar* and *Atlantic Smoked Salmon* complete with a view that stretched out to the home counties.

Interestingly, nobody claimed responsibility for hiding the device inside a toilet beside a viewing gallery, despite early news reports just minutes after the explosion that Scotland Yard had received a call from the so-called '**Kilburn Battalion**' of the **IRA**.

But in a 1973 book by **Alan Burns** called **The Angry Brigade**, he claimed that the British left-wing Anarchist Group were

*In this series, Cab Guide, City of London Guide and City of Westminster Guide Bob Woodford looks at infamous peace time London explosions...*

# Blast!



responsible – and that this was one of a series of bomb attacks between 1970 and 1972 that included the disruption of a **Miss World** contest at the **Royal Albert Hall**.

You may recall more recently in 2009, the Tower was back with a bang and an impressive firework display to launch a countdown screen for the 2012 **London Olympic Games**.

The space at the top of the pole now is currently only used for BT corporate events and BT recently confirmed that it will not be re-opening the revolving restaurant at the top of the Tower in the immediate future - **Gary**

**Rhodes** being just one among of number of chefs keen to master-

mind the project. Sources suggested that BT had decided it could not justify the time and money being spent on the project during a period of national belt tightening, but I rather suspect it's really all about that 8 letter word that you hear so often these days – **security...**

**Bob Woodford**  
Call Sign Online

## TAXI LICENCE FEES 2015/2016

**F**ollowing the annual review of taxi and private hire licence fees, the Transport for London Board has approved the following licence fees, which came into effect from 1 April 2015...

Taxi vehicle application	- £65
Taxi vehicle licence	- £33
Taxi driver application	- £80
Taxi driver licence	- £192
Knowledge appearance	- £400
Knowledge written test	- £200

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*We are certain that you will be delighted*



Please bring along your badge or Bill as ID

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**W**hilst the TX4 taxi is seen by some as being noisy with all the emission downsides that diesel vehicles are said to have, LTC's Chinese owners Geely have now put their money where their mouths are and say they will be turning the next generation of taxis into a 21st century electric vehicle with an aluminium body and a driver relying on a battery with over 200 miles before a recharge is needed.

In an exclusive and lengthy interview with Geely Chairman **Li Shufu** in the October 2013 *Call Sign*, he said that their next generation green cabs would be the "most technologically advanced taxis the world has ever seen and crucially, they would be the greenest ever." As most newspapers world-wide have now confirmed, Mr Li kept his promise and set up a new £250 million factory in Ansty Park, Coventry, where the new TX5 will go into production from September 2017 ready for the January 2018 ULEZ emission rules. Geely claim that the factory will produce jobs for 1000 workers by 2023.

The new taxi will feature a 400kg battery that drivers will be able to recharge whilst on the move thanks to a small petrol engine. The TX5 has been designed with

## New LTC factory goes green!



Mayor Boris, David Cameron, Li Shufu and Peter Johansen at the launch

**Emerald Automotive, the electric van maker Geely acquired last year. They are also based in Coventry.**

The new factory is looking to produce some 36,000 vehicles a year by 2023, around 80 per cent of the TX5 taxis probably going for export. The new vehicle will be developed using significantly increased UK and EU content, bringing economic benefits through the supply chain.

Mr Li said Geely was working with software developers to find ways of countering the Uber threat.

More recently, LTC in Coventry has produced its first export vehicle since the company became part of the Chinese

Zhejiang Geely Holding Group in February 2013. The purpose built taxi is on its way to Melbourne, Southern Australia. After approval, a further order of several hundred vehicles is expected from the main Australian distributor - The London Taxi Company Australia - into the city of Melbourne. The Taxi Services Commission has already approved the London Taxi for use as a conventional taxi in the state of Victoria.

## TEAM WILKEY AIM FOR MAY TITLES!

**Alec Wilkey (W83)** isn't just a ten-year veteran of **Dial-a-Cab**, he is also a very respected trainer in the world of professional boxing and has a very busy May ahead - not involving his cab - with no less than four of his boxers fighting for titles!

Based at **Lansbury ABC** in Poplar, the fighters are deep into their training camps for their important upcoming bouts, with the first being female fighter **Areti Mastrodouka** (8-0) who has the chance to win three World Titles with the **WBF**, **WIBF** and **GBU** versions all on the line for this unification bout on May 9th in her homeland of Greece. Known as *The Master*, Areti won the World GBU title on points last time out against **Hana Horakova** and now fights **Loli Munoz** in a Super-Featherweight contest at the **Panathinaikos FC** ground for all the belts!

Alec also has three fighters vying for titles on 16th May at **York Hall**, Bethnal Green, on the **Goodwin Promotions** show which features 7 title fights. Former *Prizefighter*

Champion **Johnny Coyle** from **Stanford-le-Hope** in Essex became the Masters Bronze Champion in his last contest and now fights for the Light-Welterweight Southern Area title against **Phil Bowes** in what should be a cracking match-up - one in which the winner can look to progress to fight for more titles.

**Danny 'Cassius' Connor** is also back in action after competing in the *Prizefighter* tournament back in December. The 28 year-old Sutton boxer is looking to secure a title in a third weight division after moving down to Lightweight, having previously won the Southern Area Light Welterweight strap and Masters Welterweight title. Connor faces off with **Andy Harris** for the Masters belt this time out.

Also on the bill fighting for the vacant International Masters Bronze title is 24 year-old **Adam 'Raw' Salman**. The welterweight Morden fighter is set to clash with **Stanislav Nenkov** and fights for his first title after moving into the paid ranks at the beginning of 2013.

*It is sure to be an exciting night of action at York Hall with a host of other top fights on the bill including the likes of Jamie Speight, Johnny Garton, Adam Dingsdale, Michael Devine, Dean Byrne and the Upton brothers to name a few.*

To purchase tickets (£35), call 07944 791 360.



Alec (centre) with Team Wilkey

David Wilkey



DaC Board Member Mike Son asks a simple question...

## Whose side are TfL on?

**Dear Ladies and Gentlemen**

Although it's a while ago now, this is my first opportunity to thank you for your support at the last AGM.

Like you, I drive a taxi so I don't have to tell you how difficult it has been lately due to the general lack of work and although **Dial-a-Cab** is still in a favourable financial position

compared to others, nonetheless I understand that as members, your main concerns are your own individual earnings.

At the AGM, there was much consternation and anger expressed to the Board as to the direction being taken and what efforts and strategies were being put into place to redress the loss of work to DaC members. But I can assure you that every effort is being made to obtain new clients and keeping existing accounts; but yes, it is proving to be very difficult.

But new and imaginative marketing strategies are being viewed, which we all hope will be the turning point in our efforts to regain control of our market share.

The cheap fares being offered along with the absence of control by TfL on the ever increasing minicab fraternity and the mobile app revolution, is proving to be extremely worrying for the future of the licenced taxi

industry and I really cannot understand how the licensing authority can continue to allow such an apparent lack of vetting procedures of minicab drivers. I am given to understand that at the very least, there is not even an appropriate driving test! It does make you wonder just whose side TfL are actually on?

Again the lack of TfL's responses to various articles in the press and social media concerning the disreputable behaviour of some of these drivers and the confidence tricks used by some of the minicab companies when passengers use credit cards, really is quite unbelievable. Personally speaking, I really cannot understand what Transport for London's agenda is.

Although members of the public, along with some corporate companies, have been using minicab companies and their mobile phone apps in an effort to cut costs, many are coming to realise that some of the more unscrupulous drivers are offering a clear and current danger to passenger's safety, security and to the general wellbeing of those who choose to use private transport – all apparently, with the blessing of TfL.

So getting back to the point of reduced taxi work, especially radio taxi trips, we are looking at different strategies but in addition, we could also do with your help.

Whilst driving around town, just take a note of the companies or buildings where you see minicabs lining up waiting for passengers. Your help may prove to be extremely helpful to the sales team and give the opportunity for members of our team to contact the companies to introduce the Dial-a-Cab services and products.

The email address is:

**sales@dialacab.co.uk** or you can text me on 07710 388588...

**Michael Son**  
DaC Board Member

## 10 or 15 years... What to do for the best?

Stephen



Alex



"I really don't know what to do for the best, which way to go forward," **Stephen Hassan (P95)** admitted to **Call Sign**. "I'm waiting for Boris to make up his mind about this ten or fifteen year rule," he said, referring to the impending decision by the Mayor of London regarding the life cycle of London taxis.

"I have just had my last overhaul on this cab, so while it's good for only another year so far as the authorities are concerned, to me it is still a good tool to go to work in. I only cover around 9000 miles a year, need only one service a year and at this last re-licencing procedure, the smoke test was better than a TX4! Yet I will have to say goodbye to my cab in 12 months' time because it will be fifteen years old, even though there is plenty of life left in it.

"At one point, I thought I might be able to convert it to gas, but I think I might be too late for that because I remember reading in **Call Sign** that such a conversion had to be done *before* the last overhaul to gain the additional five years of working life. I'm determined to stay on **Dial-a-Cab**, but unless I can rent a DaC taxi, who knows what the end result will be? It really is a major headache for me right now until I can somehow resolve the matter.

"I may investigate those leasing deals currently available through dealerships, because the options offer several advantages in that I can keep the cab at the end of the term if I wish or hand it back, and I will know my regular monthly expenses during the leasing period. It is an option I may seriously consider!"

Joining us in the conversation was **Alex Hurley (K70)**. He too has an older cab and will be likely to rent a taxi when his current workhorse comes off the road.

"I have been driving thirty-nine years, twenty of those on **Dial-a-Cab** and I would dearly like to stay on the circuit, but I will have to seriously consider renting because to me the future of the taxi trade does not look too good and I do not wish to invest just now; so I will be looking to rent my next cab," Alex confirmed.

"I've investigated several possibilities and options, including a gas conversion, but I will hopefully find a rental cab fitted with **Dial-a-Cab**..."

**Call Sign is offering its pages to any Dial-a-Cab driver who is open to either of two options; if you are willing to rent out your taxi to another DaC driver whose cab has reached the end of its life, or if feel you might perhaps be interested in a new taxi but don't want to spend that much but would consider a shared ownership, then just contact this magazine by either posting your details to the office addressed to Call Sign, or email [callsignmag@aol.com](mailto:callsignmag@aol.com).**

## Euston Road accident

On Thursday 23 April in Euston Road, an unmarked police car went into a DaC taxi at full speed spinning the cab round and causing part of the road to be closed.

The two passengers and both drivers were hurt and all were taken to the UCH by ambulance.

The driver was carrying out an account ride for MWM Boardroom Consulting LLP. The driver and one passenger were later discharged, but the second passenger was kept in. We would like to wish the passengers and the driver, Brian Shapiro (H41), a speedy recovery...



I find it hard to understand - although I do confess to not being an engineer or mechanic - why Mercedes have continued to try and rectify the rear steering problem on the Vito. It would seem to me to be a much better idea altogether to do what Nissan have done with their converted NV200 van - which has been shelved for the foreseeable future due to the problems of dealing with TfL.

That solution would be to make changes to the front steering rack so that it can meet the required Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness (MCF). Quite why Nissan hasn't proceeded across the rest of the country, where local authorities for the most part actually seem to have intelligent people working for them and serving on Licensing Committees, I don't know.

Even if Mercedes do finally crack their rear turning problem, it will be a solution that is only useful on a small percentage of the production run ie **London Taxis** and the very few councils that continue to use the MCF, which I believe to be as low as 5 out of over 350 local authorities. Due to this limited number - possibly as few as 3 to 4000 vehicles a year - the cost will still be quite exorbitant and add somewhere in the region of 10 to 15% to the cost of the vehicles compared to those coming straight off the production line and become a solution that could be used in all Vitos across the whole production run. The cost would then be spread out while reducing the cost to well under 1% of the total vehicle and make the Vito Taxi far more affordable - particularly outside of London.

If all Vito vans across the country - or indeed the world - had "our turning circle" then they could use the strap line: 'As manoeuvrable as a London taxi' in their advertising for the Vito.

## And then there's the electric Metrocab...

As a Metrocab owner-driver for over 18 years, I have been watching the progress of the new Fraser Nash Metrocab with great interest. On reading the latest reports of their progress, I

**With all its rear-wheel steering system problems, Eddie Lambert makes a suggestion to Mercedes and asks questions to Fraser Nash about electric taxis...**

# CHANGE THE VITO'S FRONT STEERING RACK!



## The electric Metrocab

would seem to me that somewhere in the region of 10% of the fleet number would be more appropriate - ie some 2,000 charging points.

Following the enthusiastic harvesting of taxi ranks across central London by councils - **Camden** and **Westminster** in particular - it would seem that there could be a lack of suitable ranks, so perhaps **induction charging**

at major stations could be a part of the electric taxi answer - although not via physical contact or leads. The charging system could be incorporated in the road with taxis accepting a charge whilst waiting for their next fare. Another good place would be at green shelters and places such as **Camley Street**, the new Oak at **North Wharf Road** and **Great Suffolk Street**, although the lack of any permanent tenancy could be a possible problem. Perhaps the GLA/TfL could find some sites where a 10 year or so tenancy by the operators might be possible.

With the right number of charging points, it might even be possible to reduce the size of the batteries and the overall weight of taxis.

Which leads me nicely to my final point: How much are we going to be expected to pay for the batteries and are we going to have to purchase or lease them separately from the taxis?

**Eddie Lambert (V37)**  
Call Sign Online

# Kupkake Thanksgiving Service

Regular readers of *Call Sign* will remember this magazine's former poet and long-time Dial-a-Cab driver, David Kupler

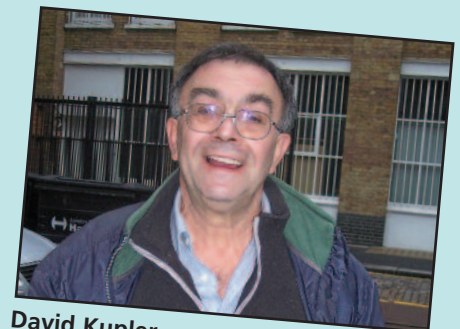
To refer to David as brave is such a gross understatement; he went far beyond that description. It was in November 2013 that a small shadow was discovered on his lung, but by February 2014 it had grown so quickly that there was no treatment available that could help. But I was stunned when he said he had just weeks to live and wanted to put some final poems into the mag. He also wanted to write his own obituary. And that is exactly what he did! He died 3 weeks later on 1 April 2014.

David was totally irreligious although he described himself as a not too strict *Taoist* saying that he didn't believe in any supreme being. His belief was that you are born, you live and then you die; but he believed strongly that while we are here, we should try our best to help each other and as such he signed a form that said after his death, his body should be donated to medical science.

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

And that is exactly what David "Kupkake" Kupler did. Now his cousin Stuart has told *Call Sign* that there is to be a **Thanksgiving Service** for David and others who donated their bodies for anatomical research in the previous year.

It will be held at **Southwark Cathedral** on **Friday 15 May 2015** at 11am and any drivers wanting to pay their respects can just turn up on the day, but please be there at least 30 minutes before the service commences.



David Kupler

**Alan Fisher, Call Sign Online**

# STEVE v SATNAV!

"It really is quite remarkable when you think about it," **Steve Lederman (B54)** told *Call Sign* recently.

"I had picked up an account client from **Canary Wharf** to go to the **Home Office** building in **Croydon**. As the passenger got into the cab, he asked me which way I intended going because the previous week a private hire driver in a black Ford Galaxy - and guided by his Satnav - went via the A2 to the M25, along the motorway to the M23 and then back down onto the A23 to take them eventually into Croydon. He said that it took them absolute ages! He added that he hoped I would know a better way!

"Firstly I'm a London taxi driver so of course I knew a better way than their minicab provider did and secondly, I actually live in south London so yes, I'm familiar with the roads anyway. Nevertheless, I was very surprised at that route taken, so I simply told the passenger to sit back and watch, before moving off swiftly in the direction of **Lunar**



**Steve won!!!**

**House at Wellesley Road in Croydon.**

"We whizzed through the **Blackwall Tunnel** and into **Blackheath Village** before heading towards **Catford**. Then it was **Verdant Lane** to **Beckenham Junction** stay-

ing on the main road into Croydon. It's a straight road and you really cannot go wrong - unless, of course, you are a minicab driver, a slave to the car's Satnav - but slightly cheaper!" Steve giggled impishly.

"The client was amazed and delighted and as he got out, he congratulated me on the service that **Dial-a-Cab** provides and the competence of our drivers. As he walked off into the Home Office, he mumbled: "Just 43 minutes door to door...brilliant!" Yes, of course I was proud, but in reality it was just another day in the office and shows why we are so much better than private hire. It's just a shame that big companies feel the saving of a small amount is more important than the reason for the trip. End of!"

Steve grinned with the satisfaction that he had helped maintain the professionalism of the finest taxi service in the world...

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

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

## DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK



**This month's Flashback is from July 1978 and is an ODRTS News & Views article from Complaints Officer Johnny Saunders...**

Gentlemen

### Complaints

There was recently a complaint made against a dispatcher after he had allocated a job in Kent to the wrong cab. The dispatcher was then called into the office to answer the complaint and when I read the answer, I agreed that the driver had been justified in making the complaint and I cautioned the dispatcher to be more careful in the future. I then told the driver my decision and he seemed to think that his making a complaint against an ODRTS dispatcher had been a waste of time.

I told him that this really wasn't the case and that only recently the Board of Management had suspended another dispatcher indefinitely from the control room. I emphasised that I am always available to listen to driver's complaints and I take no sides. So please, in future when you feel that there has been a wrong done, get in touch with the Complaints Officer.

Our complaints system has now been going since the last AGM in November 1977 and most of the teething problems have been ironed out. Also, for those wishing to appeal against a sentence given by the Complaints Committee, there is an Appeals Committee that has the power to change a sentence.

### City jobs

For an experimental period, work in the heavily populated part of the City will be called from the point of the Moorgate rank between the hours of 8am and 10pm. Hopefully this will benefit both the drivers and dispatchers.

### London Airport

London Airport jobs will be taken from the car park, which means a driver has to have a number. If there are no cabs in the area, the point will be measured from the car park and not from the pick-up point.

### Pye radios

With regards to our new radio sets ranging from 57000 to the 71000 series, the **Pye** engineer asks you to please note that when switching off, you should not apply excess pressure as this often causes malfunction in the switch and could lead to a complaint. Thank you very much.

**Johnny Saunders (B20)**  
ODRTS Complaints Officer

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# DAC DRIVER'S HOSE AND WOES!

April was a bad month for three Dial-a-Cab drivers! When Melvyn Harvey (E87) noticed steam escaping from the front of the cab, he was very surprised as he'd had the heater matrix replaced some weeks previously after breaking down in Harley Street and he wasn't expecting further problems with the cooling system on his TX4.

He told *Call Sign*: "When I failed to proceed in the heart of the medical profession's locale, the AA came out to me and I had to be transported to my dealership to have the leaking heater matrix replaced.

"That was five hours of grief and as I broke down early in the evening, my entire night's work was lost and I didn't get my cab back until the following day. So when I saw those wisps of steam yet again, my heart sank as you can imagine.

"On the second occasion I broke down, it was in Covent Garden and when I opened the taxi hood to see where the steam was coming from, I saw the split in the top hose that carries the engine coolant to the radiator from the engine and that's when I realised I wasn't going anywhere yet again!

"The AA came out to me again and as usual I had to be 'assessed' for transportation, even though I tried to save time by stating the cab was unrepairable at the roadside, the problem being that I did not have a spare coolant hose for the AA man to be able to replace the damaged one! So that was another evenings' work down the tubes; so you can imagine my disappointment."

Getting into the swing of things, Melvyn went on to say that had he carried a few essential spares such as coolant hoses, drive/fan belts and a selection of light bulbs relevant to his model of taxi, his hose and woes problems would have been over because the AA would probably have sorted it quite quickly and he would have been able to go back to work without missing yet another night on the road.

"The cost of those few emergency spares - even if they were just kept on the cab - would have been far cheaper than losing a second nights' work, so I've now learned my lesson and I'm passing that advice on for the benefit of other Dial-a-Cab drivers!"

*Call Sign was told that water hoses, like many flexible materials used on the cab, become brittle and weakened with age. The constant cycle of heating up and cooling down as the engine runs can cause the rubber to crack and therefore fail. We were advised to check the condition of all hoses regularly.*

Geoff Levene (W32J) also broke down recently through no fault of his own.

"Yes, you may have seen my cab sitting forlornly on the back end of a flat-bed recovery truck recently! I was in Westbourne Park Road when the cab suddenly lost power before actually stalling. Try as I might, I could not re-start it. A kindly passing fellow cab driver, assisted by a postman, helped push the dead cab into the side of the road otherwise I may have caused a traffic jam back to Shepherds Bush!

"The recovery man said an injector pipe had a hole in it, probably due to metal fatigue, which had then caused an air-lock in the fuel system so no amount of bleeding the fuel lines of air would have succeeded and I ended up catching a lift on the breakdown truck to **Frameright Taxis** in Three Colts Lane, losing several hours work.

"At least Frameright got me back on the road with the minimum of fuss. I was well-pleased with them," Geoff added enthusiastically.

**Frank McCormack** (C63) was lucky when he experienced steering problems on his TX4.

"The power steering felt very heavy intermittently and made weird creaking noises as I turned the steering wheel. Early diagnosis was a steering pump failure, but closer examination showed the steering column was the culprit as the internal bearings that support the steering wheel shaft had collapsed to the point of being dangerous. The steering might have even locked up completely, preventing me from controlling the cabs' direction.

Anyway, those great guys at **Ascott's** sorted it out in under an hour and I was back on the road safely!"

**Frameright Taxis** can be contacted on 0207 739 5617

**The Ascott Cab Company** can be contacted on 0208 692 1122.



Melvyn Harvey learned a lesson about carrying spares...

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## Theatre tickets

Don't forget; if you read the piece on page 10 of this issue and want to receive information on when and where taxi driver's complimentary theatre tickets are available, then email Tom Whitbread on:

[tom.whitbread@btclick.com](mailto:tom.whitbread@btclick.com)

*He will then put you onto a database of drivers who will all receive information at the same time regarding any freebie tickets on offer. More details on page 10...*

Dear Alan

Even though I left both **Dial-a-Cab** and the UK back in 1997, I still have fond memories of both on two fronts. I read your excellent online version of **Call Sign** and I also have a suitcase in the spare bedroom stuffed with memorabilia that I took with me when my wife **Rose** and I emigrated to the sunshine island of **Malta**. We had always spoken of retiring to **Crete** but somehow ended up here – and never regretted it.

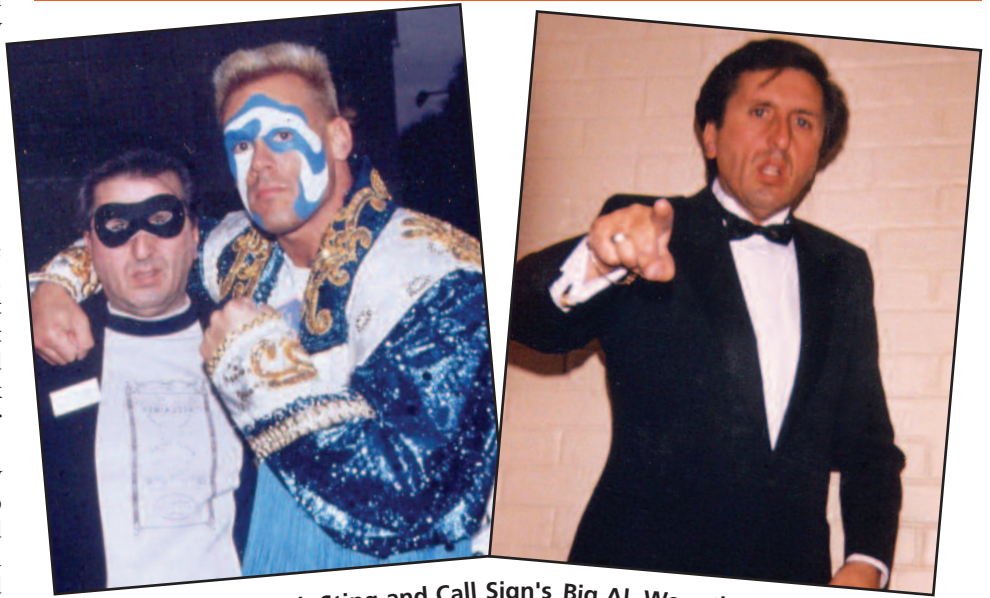
But it's that suitcase that I hadn't opened for many years that I wanted to talk to you about. Whenever I thought of opening it, Rose always talked me out of it – not because it might have contained some sad memories, but more because it had so much stuff in it that our small one bedroom apartment would probably have been covered in old newspapers, photos and small bits of junk that she always said I'd wonder why we ever brought them over with us!

Sadly, my Rose died last year and just a few weeks ago I thought I'd take out the case to see if there were any nice photos of Rose and I. Indeed there were – along with some awful junk that Rose was right in saying I would wonder why I ever thought of bringing them over here. But not everything fell into that category, because I also brought some memories of my 33 years as a green badge taxi driver and some of it involves you!

I have always been a huge fan of **American wrestling** and would never miss a copy of **Taxi Globe**, purely because it had a masked gentleman by the name of **Mr X** who regularly wrote about the sport. Back then, the only other way you could read about it was via imported wrestling mags such as **Pro Wrestling Illustrated**, which were great but usually around two months out of date. **Taxi Globe's** Mr X, however, was always up-to-date! I even went to **Taxi Globe's** office with my son **Stephen** – also a wrestling nut – to ask the Editor for a contact number for Mr X. I can't remember his name, but he was a shortish, well-dressed man with glasses (*Rodney Lewis...Ed*). But he refused. When Rose and I left for our sunshine island retirement home, I obviously put a copy of **Taxi Globe** in my memorabilia suitcase because I'm now looking at a photo of Mr X with **Sting** – someone I saw fighting at **WWE's Wrestlemania**, which both Stephen and I went to in **Santa Clara**, California recently. Stephen lives in

Embarrass the Editor of Call Sign? Former driver Chris Treadwell shows how!

## BOX OF MALTESE MEMORIES



Taxi Globe's Mr X with Sting and Call Sign's Big Al. Were they one and the same?

**Devon** and it was a lovely way for us to spend two weeks together.

But back to my suitcase; I also pulled out a copy of **Call Sign**. It was edited by **Jery Craig**, who was and obviously still is a brilliant cartoonist. But it also contained my favourite part of the magazine – **Big Al**. Most drivers enjoyed reading him because he was so irreverent and would think nothing of insulting even the Chairman! And that's when I noticed something. **Big Al** and **Mr X** looked very similar and I'm now wondering if all I had to do was to ask Mr Craig for his phone number and I'd have got the details of Mr X as well? I have scanned the two photos for you and perhaps you will put me out of my misery! Were Mr X and **Big Al** one and the

same person – and yes, I know that you were **Big Al**!

*Best wishes to all at DaC...*

**Chris Treadwell**  
**Mellieha Bay, Malta**

*Thanks for the letter, the views of Malta and the two photos, Chris. As you can see I already have copies of both pics and used them. Does that answer your question!*

I envy you having gone to **Wrestlemania** with your son and although I only watched it as a Sky PPV, it looked brilliant with 77,000 people in that magnificent San Francisco Bay stadium watching such amazing action – especially when **The Rock** teamed up with one tough lady – **UFC World Champion, Ronda Rousey** ...Ed

### Avoiding confusion with debit cards

On page 15 of this issue you will read of the new partition stickers available at DaC House, which in addition to the previous passenger information (ie 10% charge with a minimum of £2 for credit cards etc) also add debit cards to that. Some passengers have pointed out that the previous notice mentioned just credit cards and believed that debit cards carried no charge.

To avoid confusion, please pick up one when you pass the office and replace the old one.

You may not need us now, but cut us out for when you do!

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Howard Sales (ex-A11) was a former DaC driver and trainer who emigrated to Australia many years ago where he opened a garage. He keeps in touch with *Call Sign* and sends the occasional update – but this was one we never really expected – **Rent-a-Kitten for 15 minutes!**

He picked it up from Australian site, *Your Friends House*...

“Following the huge success of **UberKittens** in the US, **UberAustralia** has decided that delivering kittens to strangers for fifteen minutes is a great way to give everyone the warm fuzzies. According to the *Aus* team’s blog: We were inundated with requests from riders and some amazing local shelters to bring it to our shores so we could share the kitten love and spread the word about the importance of finding much needed homes for our furry friends.

The best thing is that every dollar donated

## Uber renting out kittens?



Instructions are simple:

1. Download the Uber app.
2. Request the ‘KITTENS’ option in your app between 12pm and 4pm (local time).
3. If kittens are available, you will get to enjoy 15 minutes of kitten cuteness delivered to your office, your sweetheart or even your favourite cat lady!”

during kitten visits goes directly to the participating shelter in your city. It costs \$40 and the fact it’s for such a good cause outweighs the logistical nightmare we can only assume comes from flinging kittens all around the city.

*Well, it sounds cuter than the Norwegian taxi company that offered a contraceptive delivery service! Mind you, Call Sign can think of a link between contraceptives and Uber!*

## Taxi rank at Novikov

Evening drivers on Dial-a-Cab will have taken many passengers to Novikov in Berkeley Street and felt frustrated at not being able to wait on a rank to pick up at what is now a very popular restaurant, whilst minicabs seemed to have very few problems in hanging around.

Well now there is a rank outside and it is important that it is serviced well and that the only taxis on there are those that are for hire.

It was on **November 5 2009** and very close to Novikov, when following a long battle a rank was granted outside **Nobu**. It was this magazine that began the fight for that rank as far back as **November 2005**, when DaC driver **John Fisher (C45)** contacted us about touting outside Nobu. We contacted the tout squad and gave them a list of the tout’s minicab registration numbers.

Within weeks, **Sgt Dave Hillson** of the-then Cab Enforcement Section led a raid on the restaurant and several minicab drivers were arrested. It took four years, but with much thanks to drivers such as **Natalia Shalom** and **Daniel Woodhouse** who constantly “hung around” outside Nobu and had ongoing and threatening “battles” with the bouncers, eventually the rank was won and it is now regularly used. We must make sure that Novikov is used every bit as well, because if we don’t use it, we all know who will.

Up until drivers got the point about a rank being outside Novikov, the **LTDA AdVan** tended to park there just to show drivers – even though the driver, **Mike Calvey**, was asked to move away!

**Novikov** is Arkady Novikov’s first London restaurant and features both Asian and Italian food. Cheap it isn’t; but the food is said to be delicious. But so far as most of us are concerned, all we need to know is that the rank runs from 6:30pm until 8:30am and we can’t afford to let it be anything but well-serviced.



There is now a busy rank outside Novikov in Berkeley Street

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Covering Essex & The Surrounding Counties

*“It is at the edge of a petal that love waits”- William Carlos Williams*

# Mailshot

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

## Lost taxi driver's medical reports

*Hello Alan*

Regarding your article in the *April Call Sign* concerning lost medical reports, it seems to have solved a mystery that has baffled me since January. On reaching the age of 67, I was expecting my annual medical form from TfL. After quite a few weeks, I started to think they had forgotten and maybe I would get one next December when my licence is due for renewal.

Then at the beginning of March, I got a letter and form from TfL giving me some twenty days to get my eyes tested by an optician - the reason being that my medical showed my eyes were not up to standard. I passed the eye test with flying colours and it cost me nothing but my time. So I can only assume TfL were looking at past medical reports in which my doctor had tested my eyes. Now I'm wondering if I was the only driver who has been overlooked.

I can only hope I get away this year without having to pay my doctor his normal £160 for his signature on a form. As for health, I have two check-ups a year free on the NHS so hopefully I am not endangering the public when driving my taxi! If you print this, please remove my name for obvious reasons.

**A DaC driver since 2007**

**Everyone knows my policy of not publishing letters that have no name, but this driver has signed it, given his call sign and I understand his reasons ...Ed**

## Ray Sorene

*Hi Alan*

There was a big turnout for Ray Sorene's funeral. It was especially moving to see a contingent from Dial-a-Cab including Board Members Keith Cain and Allan Evans, in addition to Alan Green (E52) from *Call Sign* and individual drivers as well. It was much appreciated by Ray's widow, Mary and her daughter Carol. It was also nice to see a few RTG drivers there too.

**Dave Cohen (E94)**

**A lovely man who deserved a good turn-out ...Ed**

## Second hand cabs...

*Hello Alan*

I recently started thinking about selling my 08 TX4. When I phoned the LTC, they

said they'd had a 2 year old TX4 for sale at £32k and it had been sold the previous Tuesday! That was all they had and I am on their list if anything comes in.

So I agree with David Heath in the *April Call Sign* that there are no taxis to buy and because of the awaited ULEZ decision, no one will buy mine because if it arrives in 2020, any buyer now would lose £6000 or 3 plate years. Currently, plate years are based on £2000 per year, the highest the trade has ever known. To say that the dithering TfL are pushing the trade to crisis point is an understatement, as rental garages let old cabs go and don't replace them. Indeed it's a real mess.

As for Mike Galvin writing to *Call Sign* complaining about Uber taking work from Addison Lee; I find that a bit rich considering he jumped ship from the taxi trade in an attempt to take work from DaC! Now that's what I call an outrage.

**Richard Potter (T51)**

**It does seem that the letter from David Heath last month in which he wrote that LTC couldn't offer him a second hand taxi so that he could rejoin Dial-a-Cab after his own cab fell foul of the 15 year rule, has started something with many drivers phoning me to ask where the best place to get a second hand cab would be. My answer is that I don't know but to keep an eye open because someone is always looking to sell a cab.**

As for Mike Galvin's leap, I believe he actually left the trade altogether before going back with AL. And yes, they do try to take work from DaC just as we would try to take any of theirs. But as I asked last month, is it possible that our enemy's enemy could be our friend because as much as we are on opposite sides of the fence, we have two things in common - we both work legally and we both agree that Uber doesn't. Is that enough to form the strangest alliance the cab trade has ever seen? I really don't know but I'd appreciate some sensible comments. Just calling them names won't help either of us.

**And is there anyone out there happy to admit that if a PH company offered you far more than you could earn as a licenced taxi driver, you'd refuse it outright...Ed**

## Uber and insurance

*Alan*

How easy would it be for Uber drivers to get private hire insurance for 28 days, meet the criteria and then go back to ordinary insurance, save money and yet still pick up passengers! It looks wide open for Uber drivers to duck and dive and avoid current regulations and the law while clawing back some of the money they lose by undercutting fares. I know there are many minicab drivers in the past who have not had proper insurance; if the police and



TfL did a midnight blitz on the West End on a Saturday night, I'm sure they would catch loads of unlawful drivers. We need an undercover night squad to sort it all out, but maybe TfL don't have this facility. Or maybe Uber are just bulletproof...? **David Heath (Ex-W27) - and still without a cab**

**They had a blitz last year when they caught 34 drivers! What do you want David - blood! ...Ed**

## Uber fares

*Hi Alan*

Is it true that Uber fares are increasing?

**Alex Constantinou (N05)**

**Yes, their drivers were sent an email that seems to have caused some consternation among them. The email said Uber were going to raise prices for riders by 7% and that the commission payable would go up to 25%. Drivers have complained that their minimum fares will now drop by £1 each with normal fares down around 3%.**

**Call Sign would like to make a suggestion to TfL. They are always quick to publicise taxi fare increases to the press, so perhaps they could tell them about the Uber increase while explaining that London taxi fares have remained unchanged? Oh look, is that pig still flying? ...Ed**

## April Fool's joke?

*Hi Alan*

It hadn't occurred to me that the Uber award article (*April Call Sign*) might be an April Fool. I didn't read the article at first as I have more important things to do than read about Uber, but then when my wife asked if I had seen any April Fool stories, I suddenly realised that Uber receiving an award from TfL as Taxi/PH company of the year had to be one. Very clever, putting it on the front cover. Must be the truth if it's on the front cover etc. Having now read the article, I could not see any hint of an April Fool - unless the person sending it has conned you.

**Sean Farrell (B39)**

**The story was genuine, Sean! Uber won PH/Taxi Company of the year at the Royal Lancaster and it was presented to them by TfL - who were also part-sponsors. There was no April Fool joke this year as there are always some drivers whose postal service seems to take two days to get the mag and April Fool spoofs don't work on April 2nd!**





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