

September 2015

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

Call Sign



In 2008, DaC drivers questioned Boris Johnson on his plans for the following 8 years should he become Mayor. So how many of his 'promises' became fact???



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Eurostar timetable, valid until 12 December 2015. Only of use for drivers without a smartphone!

Arrival	Train #	From	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Notes
7:59	9109	Brussels	✓							
8:02	9005	Paris	✓							
8:32	9007	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
8:57	9113	Brussels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
9:00	9009	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
9:30	9011	Paris						✓	✓	
9:57	9117	Brussels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
10:00	9013	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
10:39	9015	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
11:39	9019	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
11:57	9125	Brussels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
12:30	9023	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
12:57	9129	Brussels							✓	
13:30	9027	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14:00	9029	Paris					✓			
14:05	9133	Brussels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
14:09	9029	Paris							✓	
14:30	9029	Paris							✓	
14:39	9031	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
15:30	9033	Paris						✓	✓	
16:02	9035	Paris					✓			
16:05	9141	Brussels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
16:39	9037	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
16:57	9145	Brussels					✓		✓	
16:57	9145	Brussels	✓	✓	✓	✓				2
17:39	9039	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
18:02	9043	Paris							✓	
18:06	9149	Brussels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
18:32	9045	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
19:03	9153	Brussels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
19:10	9153	Brussels							✓	
19:39	9047	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
19:57	9157	Brussels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
20:02	9051	Paris				✓	✓		✓	
20:02	9053	Paris		✓	✓				✓	1
20:39	9055	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
21:03	9161	Brussels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
21:39	9059	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
22:00	9061	Paris							✓	
22:39	9063	Paris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

Notes 1 until 31/10/15 - 2 runs 22/10/15 to 29/10/15

from the editor's desk

Uber, corruption and Mr Yew...

I must tell you, I had a real shock last month. The *August Call Sign* had just come out and I was glancing through an Australian taxi mag where the name **Uber** was mentioned at least once on every page, while our own **Transport for London** was given several honorary mentions for licensing more private hire cars in a month than there were sheep in New Zealand!

I was also glancing at **Bloomberg's** excellent on-line facility where the story was of Uber Technologies facing a lawsuit from the **GMB** union, who claimed the app service didn't ensure minimum wages or paid holidays for its drivers. The suit could include allegations of health and safety violations, according to law firm **Leigh Day** who are scheduled to represent the GMB union.

I followed that by looking at some UK daily newspapers where the word 'corruption' was sitting in the page one headlines. Those stories turned out to be UK Prime Minister **David Cameron** speaking at the **Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore** and giving details of how he planned to address corruption in the UK.

He spoke of Singapore's first PM, **Lee Kuan Yew** and how he had successfully tackled corruption over there and how it was important that the UK made sure corruption over here did not become endemic. We apparently have some £48 billion laundered each year – much of it via property deals. Mr Cameron said that most important elements of a rules-based world order were "...a commitment to transparency and to tackling corruption."

So why did I have a shock? Well for one brief moment I had mixed the two up and for that second or three thought that TfL had been found to have been involved in a corruption deal with Uber! Perish the thought! The human mind eh? Who'd have one!

RideLondon

I was sunning myself away from London on the weekend of August 2/3 and so missed the rather inaptly named **RideLondon**. According to the multitude of **Dial-a-Cab** drivers that phoned me during my break, riding around may have satisfied the 70,000 or so cyclists that took advantage of the 'no motor vehicles' weekend, but for taxi and lorry drivers who needed to work – well sorry pals, but you couldn't because TfL – in the shape of the soon-to-be ex-Mayor, **Boris Johnson** – once again gave priority to cyclists. This follows onto the four consecutive Sundays where all motorised vehicles were banned from **Regent Street**, thereby saying that while London's taxis have to be wheelchair accessible, those actually in said wheelchairs can't use their day off to visit one of London's two main shopping streets in a taxi.

However, all isn't lost because TfL and the Met celebrated what they called a "road safety milestone" as the 20,000th person took part in the joint-funded **Exchanging Places** initiative. The milestone was reached during the **Prudential RideLondon** cycling festival where 1,200 were given tips for staying safe on the road.

Exchanging Places is a road safety educational event run by the MPS Roads and Transport Policing Command's Cycle Safety team that allows members of the public to sit in the driver's seat of a Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) to gain a better understanding of what the driver can and can't see. Drivers are also invited to sit on a bike alongside an HGV to understand the cyclist's view of the road.



Seven of the eight cyclist fatalities this year have involved a lorry, which is probably disproportionate in representing cycling accidents in London. The question is whether all London's road users should be the ones who suffer or should concerned cyclists go on a free course, because there is no doubt that thousands of the two-wheel users do not have a clue about cycling proficiency, just as I have no doubt that at least once a day – and probably many times more – taxis, lorries and buses have a cyclist trying to pass them on the inside even though they have a left indicator flashing.

Had I not been away, I wouldn't have bothered going out that day, but not everyone has the choice. As one of many drivers with similar stories, told me: "The RideLondon route was from Olympic Park to Surrey and back. Once they set off from Stratford, you couldn't cross the route. I was at the Gloucester Road junction with Cornwall Gardens and needed to get to Pimlico. The cycle marshal told me my options were to go over Hammersmith Bridge and come back around or to go to Stratford and come around the Olympic Village! Although no bikes were in sight, he refused to let me quickly nip across Cromwell Road even though there were few cars around either."

So that begs the question: Why are motorists treated as second class citizens compared to cyclists? Why do cyclists need lanes that are causing so much disruption to motorists, who then in turn increase air pollution, which motorists – especially taxi drivers – are then blamed for? Only TfL knows...

Mergers?

Although many drivers I speak to seem to assume that I know what is happening re any mergers, the answer is that I don't, other than seeing the mag several days before anyone else does! So although I've read the article inside this issue from **Jon Tremlett** and **Brian Rice**, that is all I know. But that doesn't mean I do not have my own views.

When my son **Reed** died, I had amazing support from the drivers and Board Members of DaC. I also had a lovely message from RTG CEO, **Geoffrey Riesel**, who without me asking offered the services of **Mountview's** terminals to pass along any messages etc. Mr Riesel was also one of the huge number at Reed's funeral. All that meant a lot to me and is something I will always remember.

However, I have a sneaking suspicion that his organisation are playing for time for whatever reason, so that personal view I mentioned earlier is that while I agree with **Brian Rice** in this issue that there are too many circuits, I think we should bear in mind that there is also another

circuit in addition to **Mountview** that might benefit from an amalgamation. Whichever company it is, we can't hang around forever because outside forces are gathering...

Scams

If you have been using the internet for some time, you will recognise the scams and dodgy websites that seem to regularly arrive along with your emails. I have been online since 1988 when **Dick Kawadler**, a friend in Las Vegas who edited their **Trip Sheet** magazine, got me an email address. Even at my tender years with a young and fresh brain, I could never remember it because it consisted of nine numbers followed by @compuserve.com. Unfortunately, the only other people I knew with email – still called electronic mail 27 years ago – were **Dick Kawadler** and Board Member of the time, **Steve Sanders**. After a while we ran out of things to say and a phone call became quicker!

In 2004, I became callsign@compuserve.com when personalised addresses finally came along. A few more drivers had joined the revolution, although not many. Soon after, AOL took over Compuserve but callsign@aol.com wasn't available, so ever since then we have been callsign-mag@aol.com.

Now in 2015, a majority use email, Twitter, Instagram et al but with the progress has come a new danger – financial scams. We've all had emails that you know don't really come from the person they purport to be from because they just consist of a website and a signature that isn't how the 'sender' would normally sign themselves. Some just take you to a site that sells drugs, while others tell you that your internet access has run out and that clicking the given link will help – it won't but it *will* help the sender get details from you that you wouldn't want them to know. Some even tell you about a large sum of money that could come your way... just tell them your bank details and they'll put the money in for you! And some do tell them! Or you may have won a lottery that you never actually went in for. A miracle no less!

But recently - and for the first time - a scammer actually phoned my mobile to ask whether I had received an email that informed me about a purchase I had supposedly made to an online computer gaming company. The email had all the markings of a scam (click the link for details etc), but when a phone call follows claiming to come from a fraud detection company, for one brief second I thought my bank account had been compromised. I told the caller to call me back when I got home. I checked my bank account immediately. Nothing had been taken and my scam suspicions were true.

The caller's number had come up on my phone, so I put it into *Google* to see what type of company it was, only to discover that it was indeed a scam with many others also having received the call. I informed the real internet fraud squad (Action Fraud) and blocked the caller's number (0207 523 0121). Not long after, I received another call, this time it came up as a *Freephone* number, but there was no mistaking the similarity (0800 072 5230). I blocked that number too and haven't heard since.

Modern technology is incredible, but it brings real risks with it. Just be careful and remember that very little in this world is for nothing and if it's offered to you, it's probably a scam.

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

reflections of the chairman

Consultations

I have written in the past of the number of Consultation documents Transport for London produce online and of course anyone can participate in any particular Consultation, while stating their view of the proposal that is put before them. It can be an organisation or indeed an individual and of course all views are taken into account.

Unfortunately, the taxi industry is sadly notorious regarding apathy and we never seem to do too much - except moan amongst ourselves! We tend to leave it to others to fight our corner and just hope that those "others" will put their head above the parapet to save us having to do it ourselves. Is it because we don't care or that we just can't be bothered?

I recently received an email from TfL regarding a Consultation document they put out earlier in the year; it referred to the proposed **East/West Cycle Superhighway** and concerned the route it will take through **Hyde Park**.

I assumed that TfL had emailed me their findings because I responded to the original Consultation document, not just on behalf of **Dial-a-Cab** but also as an individual, a scenario that is of course open to anyone.

I found the results of the Consultation quite staggering, but not particularly surprising. By their own admission, TfL had contacted 45,000 individuals and organisations known to have an interest in the project, but of course anyone can participate by just visiting the TfL website.

From the 45,000 contacted, our licensing authority received 670 responses - I'll repeat that just in case anyone thinks it's a typo. For this vitally important Consultation that has, and will further affect this trade so greatly, just 670 responded out of a total contacted by TfL of around 45,000!

Can I also say that of those 670, my guess is that the majority will have come from the cycling fraternity because out of those 670 responses, 79% were either in favour or partially in favour of the recommendations. TfL did take into account suggestions made by the respondents, one of which was that cyclists will be provided with their own dedicated signal phase to travel southbound out of **Hyde Park** through the junction of **West Carriage Drive** and **South Carriage Drive**. You have to, of course, assume that suggestion came from the cycling lobby.

Whether you agree or not with the Cycle Superhighway, I think you have to agree that 670 responses from all parties is pretty derisory when you consider there are 25,000 taxi drivers alone. But I suppose we will now go back to what we do best and that is leave it to others... and then complain about the outcome.

However, for those who are interested, work on **West Carriage Drive** should have begun by the time you read this....



Private Hire licences

I recently saw some figures for part of July/August regarding the number of Private Hire licences that have been issued. The figures are quite staggering and they just cannot be allowed to continue or our trade will be swamped. Bear in mind there are 83,000 minicabs out there and TfL are issuing licences at the rate of approximately 600 per week, yes 600 per week! For the week ending 13 July, 640 were issued, 20 July saw 596 issued, 27 July another 607 issued, whilst 3 August saw another 652 minicab licenses issued.

Even the Mayor has admitted there are too many minicabs in London causing unacceptable congestion on the roads and of course, extra pollution. He's now said there should be a cap on licences issued. I think the phrase is locking the stable door after the horse has bolted; however, I don't believe the Mayor has the power to actually achieve it anyway. I believe that once a minicab driver possesses all the criteria required, then LTPH do not have any alternative other than to issue a licence. There is a very similar situation in our trade and that is when a **KoL** student reaches the required standard, a badge has to be issued. As I've said, I don't believe

the Mayor, TfL or LTPH have the power to do anything else.

However, there is a solution to the problem, one I have written of before. That is that TfL should invoke the part of the *1998 Act* which states that a Private Hire driver should undergo a topographical Knowledge. That clause was not part of the original act, but some of us in this trade lobbied really hard to get the clause inserted. We were successful and succeeded with our proposal, however, TfL have never tested PH drivers on their **KoL**. We never envisaged that a PH driver should attain the same standard as a London Taxi driver, but should be aware of some hospitals and stations etc.

The thinking behind it was to ensure the applicant could read and write English, an ingredient which should be paramount when transporting members of the public and also to stop PH licences being issued like confetti, as indeed they are at the present time. Any topographical knowledge requirement is currently administered by the Operator, who the Private Hire driver takes his work from. We can but wonder how many do not reach the required standard in the Operator's eyes - not many... if any!

What is blatantly obvious is that LTPH cannot keep issuing 2,500 licences during the course of a month; they must take steps to bring the Topographical testing of Private Hire drivers in-house if they wish to retain the London Taxi trade as we know it - and they need to act now before it's too late.

We are being inundated with Private Hire and TfL need to stem the tide; they must invoke the Topographical knowledge for Private Hire now - not only will it stop us being overrun, it will also produce a far better Private Hire driver.

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

PAUL'S TAXI SPECIALISTS LTD

Unit 10, Ford View Industrial Estate, 83 New Rd Rainham, RM13 8ET

Tel: 01708 553037

FREE AIR FILTER WITH EVERY SERVICE

TX1 servicing from **£48**

TX2 servicing from **£70**

TX4 servicing from **£90**



WE ALSO HAVE CABS FOR RENT

TX1s, TX2s, TX4s and Vitos

Rentals from **£165 per week**

All Work Undertaken

Servicing - Running Repairs - Overhauls - Small Fleets Welcome - Discounts Available

All TX1, TX2, TX4

Starters - Batteries - Alternators - All with 2 year Warranty

Fax: 01708 551443

Web: www.PaulsTaxiSpecialists.co.uk

VJ Day and London taxi drivers

Saturday 15 August was a strange day. It was the 70th anniversary of VJ Day – the day in 1945 when Emperor Hirohito made a recorded radio address announcing the surrender of Japan to the Allies. This followed the detonation of the two atomic bombs by the Americans – the first on Hiroshima with a second three days later on Nagasaki. It was estimated that around 250,000 people died in both blasts with many more over the following years from sicknesses caused by radiation. As a result, the day was more of commemoration than celebration.

Hundreds of taxi drivers made themselves available at railway stations, taking the Veterans and their families to Horseguards free of any charge and for once – although no drivers did it for publicity – both BBC and ITV made the driver's efforts as their headlines. Drivers were interviewed, with one, David Hempstead – vice Chairman of organisers The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled – hitting the mark exactly when



Japanese foreign minister Mamoru Shigemitsu signs the surrender document 70 years ago

describing the experience of picking up the Vets as “humbling.”

Passengers such as 90 year old Gordon Spong and fellow Vet George Palmer were all full of praise for the black cab drivers, some adding that without them they wouldn't have managed to get to the Parade ground.

It made a change to see this trade given some credit for something it does throughout the year anyway with so very little publicity, and to those many drivers that took part and indeed to organisers the London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled, well done.

Many drivers had their own personal memories. One touching message regarding the day

came from Jim Thomas, known by many as Thomas the Taxi. He wrote:

“Emotional day today watching the VJ service. Thinking about Uncle Fred and his brother-in-law Ted whose war carried on a long 4 months till August 1945, while brothers Ronnie, Lesley, George, Bobby and brother-in-law Ernie were safely getting on with their lives after their war finished in the May. But by the grace of God, all were returned to the bosom of their family.

I was so proud of my Taxi colleagues who today stepped up to the mark. Many drivers answered the call, gave up working and generously gave a free service, picking up and taking home the Veterans of the forgotten Army. God bless you all.”

In the meantime, the Daily Mail on the Monday following the commemoration lambasted South West Trains because on the day when so many Veterans wanted to travel to London to pay their respects, the train company suspended their usual cheap ticket option that offered £20 return trips to the capital and forced those going by train to pay the full fare – which cost many substantially more. The train company weakly claimed it was for “safety reasons,” while the Chief Executive of the Veterans Association UK, Tony Hayes, called the decision “mean” and pointed to London Taxi drivers who ferried the Vets free of charge...

David Lammy brings taxis into Mayoral debate

The four leading contenders to be Labour's candidate for next May's Mayoral election, when Boris Johnson will step down and concentrate on his other job as Conservative MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip, took part in an LBC debate recently chaired by Iain Dale. The four were Tessa Jowell, Diane Abbott, Sadiq Khan and David Lammy.

The one-hour debate, led by listener's questions, covered several topics and gave one of the four, David Lammy, the chance to bring up the subject of London taxis, private hire, Uber and TfL.

He began by saying that Sir Peter Hendy, who recently moved from TfL to the railways, had a lot to answer for over the way he had treated black cabs and for the licensing of private hire, which he said had gone from 53,000 up to 77,000. He cited the increased congestion and added that anyone could now go and become an Uber driver.

Mr Lammy then went on to criticise Uber for “not paying any taxes” and spoke of “real issues” he had with the app over their poor safety record and “horrible issues around homophobia.” He said that every major city licenses those that can run private hire vehicles properly, but that London had failed in that.

He said that had he been London Mayor at the time, he would have called for a Judicial Review to challenge Uber in the same way that the Mayor of Paris had done. He went on to call it an outrage that we needed to protect “the institution that is the black cab.”

Mr Lammy said that he had visited a Knowledge of London school and referred to that as a fantastic experience, one that inspired him to want to bring back more night schools to London so that people could get more skills, enabling them to earn a better income.



David Lammy

Call Sign September 2015

Editor: Alan Fisher

Address: 39 – 47 East Rd, London N1 6AH

Tel: 0207 251 0581 Fax: 0207 553 7293

Email: callsignmag@aol.com

Website: www.22-callsign.co.uk

Printers: Premier Print Group

25 – 31 Violet Rd, London E3

Design: Aldan Publications

Tel: 07958 300 428

Email: debbiefresco@googlemail.com

Views and opinion expressed in Call Sign must not be assumed to represent those of the Editor or Board. No part of Call Sign may be reproduced either manually or electronically without the express permission of the Editor.

Jery's World



"I don't care what Boris says pal; his emissions policy doesn't hold a candle to my gas masks idea!"

WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVERS

WCHCD AT ROYAL DOCKS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Following their unveiling of a new orchard at the **Royal Docks Community School** in Newham (*July Call Sign*), the **WCHCD** in the form of current Master **Malcolm Paice** along with Past Master and school Governor **Andrew Overton**, attended the school's Year 11 Achievement Awards ceremony. This marks the end of the Year 11 pupil's time at the school before they move onto sixth form colleges or into apprenticeships or work.

A range of awards marking academic achievements as well as scholarships and bursaries were presented. A number of musical interludes in the ceremony showed off the remarkable musical talent the school fosters.

Each year the WCHCD makes a financial contribution to the school and this year the donation went towards a permanent trophy, which will be engraved each year with the names of the winners of the outstanding academic achievement award. The school has a growing collection of trophies and the WCHCD trophy will form part of this impressive tally in the school's main lobby. In addition, the five winners of the outstanding academic achievement award each receive a smaller replica of the main trophy as well as their achievement certificate.

The Royal Docks Community School is proud of its highly diverse student population and the school has worked hard to create a facility that also teaches a large number of pupils with physical and sensory impairments, some of whom have profound learning difficulties. The WCHCD outstanding academic achievement award recognised this, with two of the five recipients coming from a special educational needs and profound learning difficulties background.

WCHCD Master, Malcolm Paice, gave an address at the ceremony and told the assembled students, parents and tutors that the school was incredibly exciting and full of confident, talented individuals.

"You should be proud of the talent being nurtured here and the opportunities created. The WCHCD is very proud to support the school and this award for outstanding academic achievement marks our long term commitment to supporting the school and those who study here."



Company Master Malcolm Paice presents an award and holds the new outstanding achievement cup

Matthew Rye (B99) admitted to **Call Sign** that he had never done it himself, but quickly went on to explain what he actually meant!

"In an attempt to reduce my taxi operating costs and the inevitable 'down time' involved when dealing with third parties, I decided I would try to put my one year old TX4 through its annual re-licencing procedure myself. But I wasn't really sure about the wisdom of steam-cleaning the engine bay given the electronics in close proximity, which is why I put out a fleet message hoping to glean some advice. That advice was that the electronics could be at risk of damage due to water penetration, so although I was trying to reduce expenses, I became concerned that I could end up with a hefty bill for electronic component repairs. That would have been rather ironic," Matthew said with a grin.

He recalled a previous cab where water had got into the electronic circuits, causing numerous dash lights to flash on and off. He said it reminded him of a pin-ball machine but luckily for him, it all dried out and worked ok. But it gave him a scare, he admitted.

"With this cab, I had the brakes checked out by my service agent a few days before my NSL appointment and was looking to clean the cab up myself and make it presentable before actually presenting it in person."

As with anything involving electricity or electronics, keeping moisture at bay is the key to success. Where vehicles are involved, elec-



Matthew

tronic components should be protected from the ingress of water by covering them with plastic sheeting such as a carrier bag or other waterproof material, and any water / steam jet spray should be used with caution, avoiding directly aiming the water flow towards the taxi's components.

Proprietary chemicals such as Gunk or other similar products can be applied to specific areas with the aid of a paintbrush or aerosol can and then gently washed away, but the watchword is always to use it with extreme care. Alternatively, you can use a piece of cloth soaked in your chosen product to wipe surfaces by hand, thereby avoiding the possibility of damaging delicate electronic components through water being splashed indiscriminately. That last



The arrows show where water can get into an alternator - that could then cost you £350 to replace!

option was the method chosen by Matthew.

"I wiped the engine bay with an old shirt and then washed the cab before taking it to NSL Crayford, where it passed first time. I was out in 90 minutes, plates on cab and back at work. Total bill was £105 including £7 for the cab wash, so I'm well pleased as I've paid £1500.00 in past years! I'm not sure about next year, as the cab will be that much older of course! I accept that doing it yourself is not everyone's cup of tea, but I'm delighted that I did it," a happy Matthew concluded...

Alan Green (E53)
Call Sign Online

One-to-One Personal Service.

Martin Cordell & Co.

Accountants & Tax Specialists to the Taxi Trade

Our services include:

- One-to-One personal service
- Annual confidential meeting
- Preparation of accounts
- Tax enquiries & investigations
- Limited company trading advice
- PAYE, VAT & company registration expertise
- Loss of earnings claim advice
- One point of contact for ongoing continuity
- Easy payment terms

FREE & SECURE PARKING

Only a few minutes walk away in
Kilner Street, Limehouse, London E14 7BD

We're here to help. We want to meet you as we understand your business. Let us take the strain of dealing with your tax obligations.

With over 45 years experience of the taxi trade, and more than 40 expert staff members, we are the leading taxi drivers' accountancy firm in the UK.

Phone us today on: **020 8980 7161**

See us at: **Unit 6, Quebec Wharf,
14 Thomas Road,
Limehouse, London
E14 7AF**

Email: **info@mcordell.co.uk**

Web: **www.martin-cordell.co.uk**

CALL US FOR A FREE FIRST CONSULTATION IN PERSON OR OVER THE PHONE

Adam meets a hero...

Dial-a-Cab driver Adam McGann (J09) didn't mince his words when talking about his taxi passenger, Tommy Coupe.

"In Tommy, I met a true hero. I had been sitting on the rank at **Euston** when I was called over by the station staff to help a gentleman who needed mobility assistance. His name was **Tommy Coupe**, he had been a private in the **East Lancashire Regiment** and had taken part in the D Day landings in 1945 when just 19 years of age. He had been told before the landing that he would have a life expectancy of just 3 weeks and had only been in France for 30 minutes when he was promoted to corporal due to all the fatalities. There had been 120 men in his platoon; just 18 survived.

Just four weeks after landing in Normandy, he was captured and sent to **Belsen concentration camp** in Germany, where he witnessed the most appalling atrocities imaginable.

He had come to London to get an accredi-



Tommy Coupe

ed VJ day pass for last month's ceremony at Horseguards, but on getting Tommy to Horseguards and checking with security, it turned out that you could only get a pass if

you had the **Burma Star** or **Pacific Star** and obviously he didn't have one of these as he had been in Germany. The staff organising the ceremony were very good and explained to him that unfortunately he couldn't have a pass to get onto Horseguards, but he would be more than welcome to go and watch from **St James Park** or **Whitehall**. Tommy then asked me to take him back to Euston as he had a meeting in Glasgow later that day before making his way home that night to Blackpool!

On getting back to Euston, I contacted the station staff and arranged for them to collect him with their mobility buggy, but while waiting with Tommy we had a very enjoyable chat until they station staff collected him from my Taxi. Tommy tried to give me some money, but I politely refused and thanked him for allowing me the honour of running him round London for an hour and for him sharing his stories with me. What a great, great man..."

Adam McGann (J09)
Call Sign Online

Taxi Driver Of The Year Dinner and Dance

'Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves'

The **Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund** presents their **Annual Dinner and Dance** on **Saturday 7th November 2015**
It will be held at the: **The Holiday Inn Regents Park, Carburton Street, London W1W 5EE**

Reception 6.15pm for 6.45pm dinner. The cost of tickets has been held at last year's prices: £65.00 per head. As usual, tickets will include an excellent four course meal with half a bottle of wine per person and of course the evening is complemented with dancing to an excellent live band.

With your support, **The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund** is able to make substantial donations to the taxi trade charities that support them. Don't be the one to miss this great night out; come along to the **Holiday Inn Regents Park** and enjoy the good food and great company

This event will prove to be an enjoyable and memorable occasion for all.
Please complete and return the form together with your cheque made out to TDYCF
to: Russell Poluck MBE (Hon Chairman)
5 St Brides Avenue, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 6BT

RSVP by 12th October 2015. Please print and make cheque out to TDYCF



Brian and Brenda Rice at last year's event

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Number of tickets: _____

Dietary requirements:

Veg

☐

Fish

☐

Meat

☐

Dress smart

For further information, contact **Russell Poluck: 07850 056 765 • Tel/fax 020 8952 1357**
Email: brussella@talk21.com • Website: taxidriveroftheyearcharityfund.com

Registered with the Charities Commission No: 1000761

Ronnie Welch (M42) has been on Dial-a-Cab for eight years and appreciates the link it gives with other drivers.

"I suppose it's a bit like a club," he told **Call Sign** when explaining to this magazine about a rather unpleasant run-in with an **Uber** driver.

"I could write what I think of Uber drivers on the back of a postage stamp and still have room over, but perhaps not in a family magazine!" Ronnie smiled briefly, but that soon vanished as he thought back to the day in question.

"I was close by the **Thistle Hotel** in **Bryanston Street, Marble Arch** and trying to get to **Portman Street**. The road is both narrow and often busy with traffic, but this Uber driver was parked in the middle of the roadway and fiddling with his SatNav, selfishly blocking the street completely. I asked him politely to move so as to let me and other traffic get past, but instead of moving he just hurled abuse at me. I asked him again to just move over because he was obstructing the traffic, but all I got in return was more abuse and no movement of the car.

"Then he actually got out of the car and came towards me; he was mumbling in an aggressive manner although his command of

Moral support from a DaC driver...



Ronnie was grateful for the moral support of another DaC driver

the English language was less than fluent so I couldn't really understand all he said. But I got the gist of it from his attitude and body language! He really looked threatening.

"But just then, like the cavalry charging to the rescue, another **Dial-a-Cab** driver who had been on the hotel rank came to my aid with some welcome moral support. He had witnessed the scene, heard the Uber driver shouting and remonstrated with this idiot who was still blocking the road that he should move his car to allow everyone to pass. By this time a crowd had gathered, yet it was only my **DaC** colleague who was prepared to offer support and defuse the situation!"

Ronnie ended by telling us that he didn't really get a chance to say a proper 'thank you' at the time as it was all over in seconds, but he did ask for a fleet message to go out which offered his thanks.

"But hopefully that driver will see this in **Call Sign** and understand my gratitude during a fairly harassing moment," Ronnie concluded.

Barrie Segal's Quick Guide to Fight Your Parking Ticket!

Chartered Accountant, parking ticket expert, founder of parking ticket websites **Appealnow.com** and **ParkingTicketExpert.com**, Barrie Segal has published a new Kindle book: Barrie Segal's quick guide to fight your parking ticket.

If you have ever received an unfair parking ticket, penalty charge notice or had your vehicle clamped or towed away, you will know how frustrating it is and how hard it is to fight back. Fighting your parking ticket was an uphill battle... until now!

Barrie Segal, the UK's leading parking ticket expert brings his years of knowledge and expertise to show you how to fight your parking ticket and win. **Sir Bob Geldof**, **Richard Hammond** and **Richard and Judy** are just some of the people who have praised Barrie's expertise.

This Kindle book shows you all the pitfalls to avoid and explains in easy to understand language what to do at every stage of a parking appeal - from what to do when you first get a parking ticket all the way through to the final appeal stage - an appeal to the Parking Adjudicator. It also explains what to do and how to appeal if your vehicle has been clamped or towed away.

The **detailed index** makes it easy to quickly find any subject you want with just **one click**. Most importantly, the book contains detailed appeal templates based on reviewing more than **60,000** parking tickets and **7,000** Parking Adjudicator cases. So if you want to fight your parking ticket, this is the only e-book you will ever need. Don't wait - buy this book and fight back now!

Former **Call Sign** writer and DaC parking expert Barrie says: "The parking ticket appeal process is not only a minefield, but is weighted against the motorist. My book shows members of the public how to fight their unfair parking tickets and level the playing field..."



Call Sign Says

Stories like the above are becoming more and more common. So is it not about time that Transport for London got off their high horse and stipulated that all PH drivers must at least have a mastery of the English language so that when their SatNavs lose the signal, they can at least ask someone where they are rather than threaten violence. Mind you, this Uber driver sounds like a charmer compared to many others from an operation that TfL is obviously happy to licence ...Ed

Immaculate White Cab Available for Weddings



Female driver

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

07956 317040

LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

With Tom Quigley (Y33)

Another nail in the Knowledge

After *Call Sign* exclusively revealed that proposals were being reviewed to make motorbikes and scooters pay the congestion charge therefore increasing the cost for **Knowledge** students, a further development has occurred and again *Call Sign* can exclusively report that if you have a relative on, or even thinking of going on the Knowledge, tell them to act quickly as the cost of the **Compulsory Basic Training** (CBT) test on a motorbike is going up.

As of December this year the test will be made harder as well as more expensive. There will be mandatory theory tests as well as practical tests, fewer learning sites able to do the test in as they will have to be approved by the DSA under the new legislation. You will also have to demonstrate knowledge regarding road legislation and maintenance, in addition to knowing about the upkeep of the bike or scooter. Prices are expected to be in excess of £250.

The planning is to bring legislation into practice due to the number of 16 to 26 year olds having accidents whilst on 'L' plates. The best advice I can give is to get a CBT booked before December, even if it's not due! Hopefully, that will then last till the end of their **Knowledge** days.

My own opinion is that although we obviously want fewer accidents for all road users, the reality is that if something becomes too expensive and harder to pass, many will be tempted to not even bother doing the test and start using someone else's bike! With a depleted police force already under severe pressure, it will be very difficult to recognise a non-qualified rider with a helmet and balaclava on as it's the bike that will be on Number Plate Recognition (NPR) and not the rider. Also, the policy is not to pursue riders on bikes due to fear of accidents.

On another note for the powers-to-be who hope to decrease congestion, have they realised that if they do make the CBT so expensive and difficult, the majority of law abiding commuters who use motorbikes - and now Knowledge students - will look for an alternative and opt to buy a Smart car, fully licensed, congestion charge free, safer and less expensive to run. The only thing is that Smart Cars take up more road space, increasing congestion and delays and increasing emissions.

It would seem once again that the honest motorist and in particular this time the Knowledge student and the future of this trade, will be penalised the most. I've been in touch with my trade organisation to lobby for an amnesty for Knowledge



students or a subsidy at least from TfL, as at the moment the costs is spiralling for this group of people.

Knowledge costs

We're all aware of the ease of other PHVs and apps to get into our trade with very few costs and even fewer standards, so maybe it's time to give an insight into present day costs that Knowledge students are paying and therefore I expect and hope to be supported and protected by legislation from TfL.

This is a small breakdown of costs for students, just to keep you updated...

Initial application £80.00

DBS application £56 .85

Post Office Check/Send £7.15

Medical Payable to GP (variable) ????

KoL written exam (All London) £200.00

KoL - One-off Appearance £400.00

Issue of Licence fee £192.00

DSA Hackney Carriage Test £100.00

Wheelchair test £50.00

These costs don't take into account the costs of buying a vehicle, fuel, etc or the time and loss of potential earnings, membership to a school, the costs of **Bluebook** runs, cross sections, apps, point sheets, pens and paper etc. We've all been there. To join a local dedicated school will cost circa £50 a month for probably around 18 months, without any financial help from government agencies.

The whole of Britain was up in arms about student loans at universities, yet Knowledge students will pay more in financial and family terms, but they are a silent few. No wonder when we get our Badge, we are rarely silent!

And for those going on the KoL...

The Knowledge school I run is doing well. We have good students, very good banter and they are getting good averages on their Appearances. If any Dial-a-Cab driver knows someone looking at going on the KoL or for a KoL school and they are in the Chingford or local Essex area, feel free to give me a call on 07984 444 590.

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

THE SALIERI RESTAURANT

376 Strand, WC2

We Invite Dial-a-Cab drivers and their guests to our restaurant where you can partake of the finest food and wine

And as a thank-you for helping our clients come and go over the years, we are happy to be able to offer you a genuine 25% discount on your bill

We are certain that you will be delighted



Please bring along your badge or Bill as ID

Salieri Restaurant
376 Strand, WC2

Reservations: 020 7836 1318



Why Have Your Taxi Serviced with Ascotts?

- ☒ We carry out manufacturer warranty repairs
- ☒ We use the latest diagnostic and test equipment
- ☒ LTC trained technicians
- ☒ Full access to manufacturer technical assistance and data
- ☒ We use genuine parts designed to your taxis exact standards.

**PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT
AND RESALE VALUE
OF YOUR TAXI**

"putting the driver first"

www.ascottcab.co.uk



**MOT &
NSL PRE TEST**

£39.95

Every 10.000 Miles

10K,20K,30K,50K,60K,90K & 100K

£99 INC vat

40K,80K **£225** INC vat

70K **£450** INC vat

ALL PRICES INCLUDE vat & ALL FILTERS

Every 12.000 Miles

12K,24K,48K,60K,96K

£99 INC vat

36K,72K,108K
£225 INC vat

84K **£450** INC vat

ALL PRICES INCLUDE vat & ALL FILTERS

LTC genuine
Tx4 Front Pads

£50.00

Fitted inc VAT

"less downtime at ascott's"



Service
Dealer



Specialised
Oil Products

ASCOTT
CAB COMPANY

1-3 Blackhorse Rd, London SE8 5HY

0208 692 1122

Now in Stock



The Only Taximeter that Has full MID approval
ready for the changes in 2016

Is your current Taximeter ready?

There was a time long ago when just one book on the London taxi trade saw the light of day; that was **Anthony Armstrong's** light hearted look at our business with **TAXI!** But he wrote that in 1929 with **Hodder and Stoughton** putting it out one year later.

Happily, there have been quite a number of fascinating books added in later years thanks to authors such as **Bill Monroe** and the late **Phil Warren** who was on **ODRTS** for many years as **A08**. Between the two of them, they have put out a complete history and of course **Bill** is still doing so.

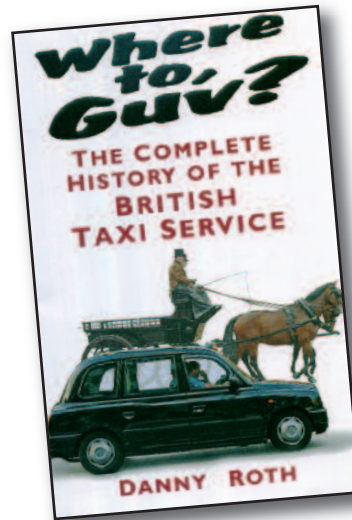
But what we've only had once was a book on taxis by a non-taxi driver. That was **Nick Georgano** who penned **The History of the London Taxicab** 43 years ago, before putting out a sort of follow-up to the 1972 book in 2000 with **The London Taxi** before then returning to his first love of motor cars.

So the time is probably ripe for another non-taxi driver to write a history of taxis - and you'd have to say that for something many still rather strangely consider to be a secret society, **Danny Roth's Where to Guv: The Complete History of the British Taxi Service** makes a pretty good job of it.

Danny's only real link to taxis - other than being a passenger - was his late

Where to Guv?

The complete history of the British Taxi service (Danny Roth)



father-in-law, **Lawrence Grant**, who died in 2005. He was almost universally known in the trade as **Pebbles**. The book is dedicated to his memory.

As for the book itself, unlike most others on the subject, **Danny** briefly goes back to ancient Egypt when boats were providing

a taxi service! He doesn't mention if they went south of the Nile, before quickly moving on to the 1600s and the genuine beginnings of the London taxi trade. I have to take it that **Danny's** facts are indeed factual, but they most certainly are written in an easy to understand and indeed entertaining way rather than as a set of figures.

That's the vein throughout the book as he covers the Victorian era, moving through the early 1900s, two wars and onto minicabs and the present day. Having said that, there are a number of pages at the end of the book detailing everything from cab driver's lingo to where our watering holes are!

But the bulk of **Danny Roth's** book consists of interesting and often entertaining text and technical details about taxis and taxi drivers and it is well worth a read...

Where to Guv, The complete history of the British Taxi service (The History Press)

Kindle Edition £18.99

Hardcover £19.99



Save Our Black Taxis Peaceful Demo



Taxi Families Demo at Downing Street

Join us and our trade supporters in a peaceful standing demo against TfL's failure to enforce their very own regulations.

Our Government along with Transport for London (TfL) are failing our Taxi Families by not standing up against corporate greed. We want to know why?

1-3 PM, Saturday 5th of September 2015 Opposite Downing Street

Save Our Black Taxis

I would be grateful if you would please publicise the details of our next demo for cabbies, their families and trade supporters to attend on **Saturday 5 September** opposite **Downing Street**.

Artemis Mercer
#SaveTaxi

Joe Brazil asks a simple question. Plying for hire; when did it all begin?

There seems to be an inordinate amount of confusion regarding the term plying for hire; this confusion seems to begin and end in the law courts, but as any cab driver will tell you it's not a confusing concept, but one that seems to have defeated the brilliant minds that guide our industry! I was always curious as to why this term defied legal definition - as we are told it now does. So with various sources stating when it began and its later amendments, I decided to look a little closer at early references relating to the law and to cab drivers in particular...

The RMT in a document used the oft reported text below...

Legislation containing the term 'Plying for Hire' was first introduced in the London Hackney Carriage Act 1831 under section 4: Definition of a Hackney Carriage: "And be it enacted that every carriage with two or more wheels which shall be used for the purpose of standing or plying for hire in any public street or road at any place within the distance of 5 miles of the General Post Office in the City of London."

Elsewhere in England and Wales, the term plying for hire can be found in *The Town and Police Clauses Act 1847*. This is the usual terminology (with later amendments) taken as a starting point. But when you use sources such as **Old Bailey Online**, earlier references appear to be in force already. I show the piece below merely as an example...

(NB: Chaise and Post Chaise were forms of horse-drawn carriages while a Post boy was supposed to ride on the left horse pulling the carriage...)

ROBERT JONES: Theft > grand larceny, 9th September 1789.

616: Robert Jones alias Samuel Say, indicted for feloniously stealing on 20th of August last, one wooden trunk covered with skin, value 10s, six linen shirts, value 3 l, property of Josiah Spode.

Josiah Spode sworn: "I live in Fore Street; I lost the things in the indictment on Thursday evening, 20th of August, near eleven, near St. Paul's Churchyard; there was this trunk and another strapped on before the chaise; I was in the chaise at the time and while I was coming to town, there had been a fire at Mr Brown's, which took my attention; I saw it about twenty yards before; I jumped out of the window; I could not open the door; I ran and met a **hackney coach** following my chaise with a gentleman in it, half asleep; when I came up to the horses heads, the coachman called out, this is your thief! Your prisoner! he has just thrown in this trunk and jumped up to the seat with me; the prisoner was in bearing, but made no answer; after that I saw the portmanteau and I seized the prisoner by the collar and dragged him down to the pavement; we had a violent struggle; after many attempts I held him fast; no watchman came. At last, Mr Hoppy, who keeps a shoe warehouse, threw up the sash and let off a rattle; then the watchmen came and I delivered him up into their hands; there was property in the trunk to the amount of six or seven pounds; I saw it carried to a neighbour's house for security; I sent for it next morning by one of my servants; it was all safe including the

BRAZIL CALLING...



things in the indictment; I have had the trunk three or four years; I can swear it to be mine. I first examined the property the next morning at my own house; I had a list of the articles that were in it and they exactly corresponded; there were one hundred and twenty two guineas in gold and bills of exchange and a deal of linen; I saw the prisoner afterwards at the watch house and swore to him."

Robert Moore sworn: "I am a coachman; I was in Oxford Road at past eleven o'clock on 20th of August last, **plying for hire**. Two gentlemen called me; I put them into the coach and they ordered me to go to the Templegate opposite Chancery Lane; one gentleman ordered me to go to Tower Street and as I was going round St. Paul's Churchyard, it was half past eleven and a man about twenty yards from the end of Watling Street meets me and says stop coachman, damn you, why do you not stop coachman? he said so two or three times; at last I pulled my horses in; the man came from Watling Street way; he chucks the trunk up before me on the top of a shutdown boot and jumped on the box himself; I went on and there stood the chaise; and I called halloo post chaise boy, here is your trunk and the man that has it. When he stopped me, I saw no post chaise; the post chaise was just at the turning at the end of Watling Street going into Cheapside when I came up; I was going along Watling Street; the chaise was in the churchyard and I stopped my horses as soon as I came up to him; I told him there was his trunk, and the man that had it."

"Is the prisoner the man that was on the box with you?"

"I cannot tell; it was a dark night and the horses would not stand still; I delivered the man to the watchman when he came up; I had no opportunity to take any notice of the man; I believe the gentleman himself came up and took the trunk."

Joseph Newell sworn: "I am a watchman of Castle Baynard ward; I did not see the trunk taken but I took the man in charge from Mr Spode, who had taken the trunk; the prisoner was the man that was charged with taking the trunk; I can swear to him; I lodged him safe in the watchhouse and conducted him to the Compter (prison) afterwards."

James Stevens sworn: "I heard a rattle and ran after it; when I came to it, this brother watchman had the prisoner fast by the collar; that was the gentleman at the bar and the gentleman was bringing the portmanteau (**large suitcase**) away from the coach to the house; we took the prisoner to the watchhouse."

Court to Prosecutor: "Are you sure that is the man that you delivered to the watchman?"

"I am and I can positively swear that every word the coachman has uttered is false; he says he stopped and called to the post chaise boy, when I jumped out of the post chaise; when I ran back, I met the coach a dozen yards or more behind my post chaise and the coachman had never uttered a word; I ran for the space of a dozen yards rather than where the coach was at the time; the coach was going on at the same time; I ran back and opened the coach door; at the same time my chaise was a hundred yards off side the china shop on the corner of Watling Street, which was as near as I can guess directly opposite to where the fire was at Mr Brown's; his coach was behind me, I fancy, a dozen or fifteen yards; it was not near Watling Street in the manner he describes by fifteen yards; it was four or five yards behind my chaise at the time; I opened the coach door and after I had opened the coach door and ran to the horses heads, the coachman stopped and not till then; the coachman further says he delivered him to the watchman; I positively swear I had him in my arms for the space of a minute or two before anybody came near me; and it was with difficulty that I could get anybody to come near me. At first I had him by the collar with one hand, bringing my trunk, begging somebody to help me; then I called out for help and Mr Hoppy threw up the window at the time; then the watchman came after that, bearing the rattle."

Newell: "I can swear I received the prisoner out of Mr Spode's hands and not the coachman's."

Prisoner's Defence: "I have my master here, John Patchell, going round St Paul's Churchyard I saw this man going along and a post chaise before it; and this man was saying post boy, post boy, what have you lost; here is a trunk; and the gentleman ran up and caught hold of me; and the trunk was pulled out of the coachman's boot; I know nothing of it; I think other people lies more liable to be answerable for the box than I was."

Verdict: Guilty. Sentence: Transported for seven years. Tried by the London Jury before Mr Recorder.

Now I don't suggest that anyone who finds himself in possession of theft derived property should end up in New South Wales, although I would imagine the chances of anything being returned from any form of transport would decrease markedly if it meant your penance would be paid for in Australia! I could be wrong, but just to round the circle, "plying for hire" was understood well before the 1841 act and we may have to dig a little deeper to find its definition. It surely exists, and maybe this time we'll keep the miscreants in the northern hemisphere, although I think there would be rarely a shortage of cabs plying for hire that wouldn't run them to the nearest airport or docks so they could join our antipodean friends for a short while.

Case quotes are provided courtesy of www.oldbaileyonline.org

TTFN...

Joe Brazil
DaC Board Member

It was a tube strike day and **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Roy Davis (D99)** was hoping for a good one. It had certainly started out well; he had been booked into the **Ascott Cab Co's** Blackhorse Road garage for a cab check at 8.30am, not realising at the time of booking that there would be a tube strike that day. But he was delighted when just 30 minutes later, the Ascott mechanics gave his cab the thumbs up and he went out to see what fortunes Lady Luck would bring his way on what was bound to be a very busy day.

Roy told Call Sign what happened next...

"Sure enough I trapped a job from the **Hilton Hotel** in **Tooley Street** going to the **ExCel Centre**. The journey wasn't too bad going as all the traffic was going into town from the opposite direction. I do remember that the fare was £15 and thinking that **Canary Wharf** would probably be busy, so I made for there and put on at one of the ranks behind a few other drivers, all obviously hoping to get back into the City. But it looked like a ghost town there with the whole place taking on a really desolate feel and after quite a long dwell on the rank, I decided that enough was enough and left.

"By that time, the traffic going west was even heavier than when I saw it as I was heading eastwards to Excel, so I decided to try an alternative route. But everywhere was just solid and my attempts to get into town had the reverse effect, with me ending up further and further away from the City! I tried every route I knew, but all to no avail.

ROY AND HIS STRIKE DAY JOB!

But not all that glitters turns to gold...!



Did they all walk???

"Eventually, I decided that I'd had more than enough traffic for one day and that home near **Croydon** was becoming an ever enticing sight. So I turned around and made for the **QE2 Bridge** at **Dartford**, took the **M20** and made my way towards home in **Shirley!**"

Looking back, Roy summed it all up: "If we

start with the £15 I got for the ExCel job, then take off the £2.50 Dartford toll and the cost of the diesel used, it's fair to say that the next time there is a tube strike, I'll be at home watching **This Morning!!!**"

Alan Green (E52)
Call Sign Online

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

Summer's here and what could be more enjoyable than a short golfing break to some not-too-distant places along with some golfing pals. So over the next three issues of *Call Sign* I will be recommending a trip that I've done on numerous occasions. With the drive-on, drive-off Eurotunnel shuttle service, this trip is a very easy drive...

Day 1: Hardelet Les Pins:

Hardelet is just 35 minutes from the Tunnel and there is a course that could quite easily match many of the top courses along the Surrey sand belt. Ranked as one of the top 100 golf courses in Europe, its fairways are lined with magnificent pines that were once part of the ancient forest in which France and England signed the famous peace treaty 450 years ago. The course consists of strategically placed bunkers and well-guarded greens which require accurate stroke play.

Those pines, the springy turf and large undulating greens all make this course to be a great first day opener to your 3-day golfing trip. The last few holes in particular are very good; the 17th par 3 with a huge fall away to the left and the long par 4 downhill 18th with the green in front of the quaint clubhouse, all help make it a superb course to play. I recommend you stay in **Le Touquet** as your base. The **Bristol Hotel** or **Le Nouveau Caddy Motel** are right in the centre. A good high class meal at **Le Paris** is a must and not extortionate - although you should book early as it is often full.

Day 2 next month.

Happy golfing...

Simon Wallis (M11)
Call Sign Online



The short par 3 on the front 9. Make a 3 here and smile!

**Is Your Taxi Running as smooth
and sweet as it could?**

Are You Sure?

**Feel The Difference When
You Use alphaPowerPill**

Enhance performance
Reduce Emissions
Smoother Running.

Still Only
£16.95
30 Day
Money Back
Offer

**Order
Today**

Call 020 3239 6101
07527 345810

Visit www.OnlyCabs.co.uk



When I passed out on *The Knowledge* and was given my badge, myself and the other nine drivers that day were given a word of advice from Mr Chilcott.

"You have worked hard for your badges, so don't give me any reason to take them back from you. And remember that when Major Jones is prodding you in the back with his walking stick and complaining about your route and what's on the meter, he will be getting out shortly and you will probably never see him again."

That was good advice and something I have often thought about when dealing with that overly difficult passenger. But that was it... no other training, no *PowerPoint* presentation and considering that we have to hit the ground running, I hope LTPH do more for the new drivers.

Road rage is always an issue and especially with cyclists, but being a driver and a cyclist I tend to have a neutral point of view. However, I was shown a YouTube clip of a confrontation between a driver and a cyclist. I really deplore cyclists who have a front and rear camera and who in my opinion seek out confrontation.

Go to YouTube and watch this video. Please be aware that there is swearing involved. It's at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PFRdEUN240. If LTPH wanted a training video called 'How not to let yourself get provoked by a cyclist' then this should be it. The clip starts out with a close shave and a bit of blue banter, but the end could have been much more serious had the man hit his head or even had a heart attack. I am not condoning the actions of the driver, but my point is that you sometimes never know where these arguments will end up and you should *never* get out of your vehicle over a disagreement.

After watching this incident, it reminded me of how regular exercise helps keep stress levels down. When I go out cycling, the next day nothing bothers me at all. But I saw a taxi driver one afternoon, who really needed a bike ride...

I was headed west along Knightsbridge from Hyde Park Corner; in my mirror I saw a lorry and a taxi getting a bit too close. When the taxi pulled up behind me in the bus lane, for some reason the lorry came past in the middle lane and before stopping next to me, took the taxi driver's mirror clean off. The taxi driver jumped out and to my amazement stood on the bumper of the lorry and ripped the driver's windscreen wiper and arm clean off! Not happy with that, he then stood on the bumper again and did the same

Call Sign's Richard Potter looks at a subject that has probably affected every Dial-a-Cab taxi driver at some time or another...

A ROAD RAGE CLASH WITH A CYCLIST!

to the passenger wiper and arm. Still not satisfied, he climbed the steps of the passenger door, leant out and grabbed the nearside mirror before then jumping off the step and taking the mirror with him - leaving it dangling by two wires.

Well, I didn't know whether to clap or say bravo! But I was really speechless. I don't think I have ever seen anything like that before or since. And the lorry driver? He just drove on...!

There is also an article in the November 2013 issue of *Call Sign* that demonstrates how taxis and bikes can fall out big time! It was called 'He's Looking For You' and featured Dial-a-Cab driver Melvyn Harvey (E87) and a cyclist who called himself 'sonofthewind' and whose speciality is putting clips of vehicles that he considers drive too close to him on YouTube. His ridiculous cameras are worth showing again...



Sonofthewind and his ridiculous camera-laden helmet!

Richard Potter (T51)
Call Sign Online

Bill Monroe retires

Bill Monroe has never been on *Dial-a-Cab*, but was a staunch radio man with *ComCab*. However, as one of the most knowledgeable members of this trade, *Call Sign* had to give him the send-off that we usually reserve for members of this Society after hearing that **Tuesday 1 September** would be the first day of his retirement as a taxi driver.



Bill is a third generation taxi driver, following his father who did the Knowledge in 1933 and grandfather, who actually drove a horse cab in Brighton before moving down south and driving a motorised cab in London.

Now Bill has completed 42 years in the trade and says that is enough. However, he is also a prolific writer for various motoring magazines and is the author of several important reference books on this trade; books such as *London Taxis: A Full History to Carbodies: The Complete Story to Taxi Jubilee: Fifty Years of the Austin FX4 London Taxi* and probably some others that we haven't got in *Call Sign's* library. But with Bill's retirement and having his own publishing company in *Earlswood Press*, that number will surely be added to.

Already in line for later this year is a second edition of *London Taxis in Camera*, which is a full colour history of our trade plus a change of direction – literally – when Earlswood publish a book on the American icon, *The Checker Cab*.

Happy taxi retirement Bill – that, of course, is in the loosest sense as his name will still be very much involved with taxis!

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

Laura "Trotts" off in a DaC taxi!

The *Prudential's RideLondon* may not have been too popular with those driving around London trying to provide a taxi service – not to mention their valiant attempts at trying to earn a living – but for the estimated 70,000 cyclists that took to London's streets, it was like an early Christmas present with streets totally devoid of anything containing a motor and doors!

One of those taking part was Team GB's double Olympic champion, Laura Trott, who was in both the Saturday *RideLondon* event where she finished in eighth place behind Italian super-cyclist Barbara Guarischi, and also the 100 mile Sportive to Surrey and back the following day.

Laura, now 23 years old and *Prudential's RideLondon* Ambassador, is currently in training to defend her *Omnium* and *Team Pursuit* track titles at next year's Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games where we'll all be cheering her on.

But it looks as though the heat on the *RideLondon*



Laura saving her strength for Rio! Inset: Laura and her two London 2012 Gold medals



weekend may have proved too much and at the end of it, Laura decided to take a Dial-a-Cab home rather than cycle! We're always pleased to help...

Break in... to steal a DaC terminal!

"I didn't hear a sound," was how Alan Hall (B48) described his cab being broken-in to when telling *Call Sign* about the crime.

"Having had the cab attacked by thieves on several occasions previously, I tend to leave it unlocked while parked and unattended," he told this magazine.

"On this particular occasion, I arrived home at around 2am on the Thursday night / Friday morning and went straight to bed. When I came back to the cab the following afternoon to go to work, I instinctively reached out to 'sign-on' to the *Dial-a-Cab* terminal and lo and behold, it wasn't there!"

Continuing his story, Alan said that there had been no finesse about the terminal's removal as it had just been ripped off the supporting pedestal. The thieves had used so much force that it actually broke the retaining bracket from the adjusting knuckle, so it must have severely damaged the back of the MDT as well - probably causing internal damage to the delicate electronics inside too.

"Anyway, I would not have thought the unit would be of use to a third party, even though to the un-initiated eye it looks a bit like an iPad or mini laptop." Alan smiled at the suggestion.

"Some time before, my cab was again broken into and personal items were stolen, including my PCO Green Badge, which, no doubt like many other drivers meant a lot to me with the personal memories it brings back. But I was lucky on that occasion because I found the Badge in my neighbour's front garden, it having been callously discarded by the thieves. So nowadays, I save myself the grief of broken glassware and damaged bodywork by leaving the cab unlocked deliberately.

"Sadly, like many others before me, I learned that there are some nasty people out there and one needs to take care not to leave anything of value in the taxi..."



Alan no longer locks his cab overnight in an attempt to minimise break-in damage

© Call Sign Magazine MMXV

TfL Press Release

CHANGES TO PAPER APPLICATIONS

On Line Application Forms...

As part of the ongoing modernisation of Transport for London's taxi licensing service, taxi drivers and applicants can now apply online, using our new online web portal at tfl.gov.uk/tph.



The new online process makes it quicker and easier to apply for both new and renewal driver licences. The system has been tested with a small number of customers in recent months and so far 50 applications have been received by this method.

Customers who would like help in any aspect of the online process can also book an appointment to visit our counter service at Chancel Street. Appointments can be made by ringing our contact centre on 0343 222 4444.

Applications can still be submitted using the Post Office Check and Send service or directly by post.

Taxi drivers' application forms

Since October 2013, new pre-printed application forms have been issued to applicants and licensees which contain personalised information relevant to the new or renewal applicant. This allows us to speed up the application process, as we scan the forms to our system and automatically upload the content to the correct record.

However, a number of paper forms printed prior to the introduction of the new forms remain in circulation. From 1 September 2015 all new and renewal driver and PH operator application forms received will need to be in the new, pre-printed format. Any old style applications received from that date will be returned to the applicant and they will be asked to request a new pack.

To request a new form, please visit our website at tfl.gov.uk/tph or call us on 0343 222 4444.

**Helen Chapman
General Manager**

As Save Taxi exceeded 10,000 signatures for their online petition, they called for a friendly, family day demo outside Transport for London's Victoria Street HQ at Windsor House. Held during the school holidays on July 31, the demonstrators included taxi drivers, their families, friends and children.

To a cacophony of noise consisting of taxis, cars and even bus drivers hooting, with demonstrators – both young and old - shouting out anti-TfL slogans, this demo led by Save Taxi's **Artemis Mercer** undoubtedly struck a chord with those passing by. TV and radio companies were out in force – even the UK Russian service **RT** gave a favourable report. Everyone interviewed criticised TfL rather than **Uber**, who Artemis referred to as a symptom rather than the cause of taxi driver's current problems.

Garrett Emmerson, TfL's COO of Surface Transport, answered in a statement: "As the regulator of London's taxi and private hire trades, we apply legislation fairly and equally. We have not and do not treat Uber any differently to any other London operator and we are satisfied that Uber currently complies with private hire licensing requirements."

Sadly, few on this side of the trade believe that. With literally thousands upon thousands of minicab drivers coming onto the scene and all paying a licence fee, TfL has become almost a financial giant who seem to care little about the taxi side, with many believing that it is unloved by TfL and branded as troublemakers!

The "Happy" Demo!



Perhaps to rub some salt into the face of **Sir Peter Hendy**, former TfL taxi supremo and the man known as Mr Bus who left to move to the railways a few months back, the demonstrators used a London bus to provide snacks and refreshments to supporters – of whom there were many! It does seem that the **Save Taxi** ladies have taken over so far as demos are concerned!

*While the Editor was away on holiday, Dial-a-Cab driver **Adam McGann (J09)** – one of a number of DaC drivers there - took photos for us. The lady in the wheel-*

chair was Adam's Auntie Wendy with his Godson Ethan on her lap and his wife Samantha with her Godson Michael holding the flag poles.

This was probably the trade's best demo, gaining an incredible amount of public sympathy without causing the frustration of horrendous traffic jams. There is another on 5 September at Downing Street.

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online

David Kupler's Funeral

It was back in November 2013 that a small shadow was discovered on David Kupler's lung that within just three short months had grown so quickly, there was no treatment available that could help him.

For many years, the long-serving **Dial-a-Cab** driver had written poetry for **Call Sign** – very often loaded with controversy and containing criticism of something or more often, someone. If I ever told him that he would get me into trouble, he'd just laugh and ask if I wanted the truth put out there!

Bravely, just before he died, David signed a form that would donate his body to medical science. He told us at the time: "How do we eradicate these types of illnesses if they have no bodies to look at? What good do a grave and 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." He then asked **Call Sign** to post it.

A memorial service was held at Southwark Cathedral in May to celebrate the lives of David and several others that had also donated their bodies in order to help doctors find more cures. But the time has now come to lay David to rest and his funeral will take place at 9.15 on Wednesday 23rd September 2015 at Streatham Vale Cemetery.

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online



Keith Reading
Professional Toastmaster
Master of Ceremonies

Tele: 01279 465 938
Mobile: 07774 860 374
Email: kgr.2@virgin.net

10% discount for DaC drivers and staff

Fellow of the Guild of
Professional Toastmasters

Looking back to May 2008...

Boris: How has he done?

Those Dial-a-Cab drivers that have been around since before Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson – who we all call Boris for short - became London Mayor on 2nd May 2008, may remember how he courted the taxi trade's vote by paying visits to our watering holes, drinking tea out of old mugs and constantly referring to us as the best taxi service in the world. We now know that he was elected.

So, with his second and final term in office now coming to an end, Call Sign thought it would look back to that year of 2008 to see how what he said at the time matched up to what he actually achieved.

It was early 2008 when Call Sign asked Dial-a-Cab drivers if they would like to ask Boris any questions and in an exclusive interview, these were his answers at the time...

Poppy was a regular Call Sign writer at the time and she asked Boris about the possibility of increasing the number of public toilets on the streets and the transport system. She described the numbers as "woefully inadequate."

The-then Mayoral candidate responded by saying the one thing that lets London down was not only the lack of provision for public toilets, but also the grotty state of most of them! He said we needed to work with local councils to upgrade them and provide more of them where they were needed, adding that was particularly important for people like cab drivers who spent long hours out on the road.

Please let this magazine know if you think he kept his word on that...

John Dixon (B67) asked Boris whether, if elected, he would give priority entry to the Olympic Village for London Taxi drivers for picking up and setting down passengers during the 2012 London Olympics.

Boris said that he hadn't been aware of any plans to exclude black cabs from the Olympic Village and supported our right to have access.

Please let this magazine know if you think he kept his word on that...

Former DaC driver Divyesh Ruparelia asked Mr Johnson if it was too many buses that caused much of London's traffic problems, adding that although a good transport system was important, previous Mayor Ken's bus policy seemed to have been a case of overkill.

In his answer, Boris said that Oxford Street was a good example of that with 40% of all London bus routes going down there, turning London's premier shopping street into "a giant bus park and that it was certainly quicker to walk." He said we needed to keep a balance but to take a fresh approach.

Please let this magazine know if you think he kept his word on that...

Then there was John Riley who asked whether Boris, as Mayor, would be happy to see pedicabs working the streets of London as they were currently doing (in 2008).

Boris replied that Pedicabs should be subject to the same rules as everyone else and that it was important to make sure they were safe and the fares to be honest. He added that he didn't have a serious problem with them, so long as they were confined to a small area.

Please let this magazine know if you think he kept his word on that...

David Marks (R22) asked the Mayoral candidate if he would allow PH to ply for hire on London's streets.

Boris said that he thought London's cab trade has taken a bit of a bruising under Ken Livingstone and that if elected he would re-energise it; adding that black cabs had to retain their right to solely ply for hire.

Please let this magazine know if you think he kept his word on that...

Bill Kibble (K86) asked the man who would become known as Bojo after being elected about road works and the congestion that was all over town with the renewal of water mains. Bill thought they could be completed in a third of the time if the work was carried out at night as



well as during the day. He asked if that was something Boris would look at if elected.

Boris responded that roadworks were something they had to sort out and asked how many times we drove past a giant hole in the road that had been left unattended? He added that they did roadworks at night in other major cities and that if elected he would certainly look at that suggestion.

Please let this magazine know if you think he kept his word on that...

And in answering a question from Bernie Silver (G08) about traffic congestion, the soon-to-be Mayor responded in the 2008 article by claiming that TfL had deliberately installed more traffic light schemes, which they had admitted was reducing road space and slowing down traffic. He said that if elected he would focus on getting London moving and would also re-phase the traffic lights.

Three months after Boris Johnson answered Bernie's question, he was installed as Mayor. Then five months into his term of office he contacted Call Sign and told us he was going ahead with his re-phasing of the traffic lights plan to get the City moving again, had ordered TfL to look at the light sequences and to improve the traffic flow that at some junctions such as The Mall / Trafalgar Square, Strand westbound by Charing Cross Station and Gloucester Place where it crosses Marylebone Road. These traffic signals often caused traffic to come to a standstill.

Please let this magazine know if you think he kept his word on that...

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

HACKNEY ROAD TAXI TYRES

FOR THE BLACK CAB TAXI TRADE

- Austones for the TX
- Barums for the Vito
- Michelin and Continental also supplied
- 4-wheel laser tracking for the Mercedes Vito
- Puncture repairs
- Also free tyre checks

Find us downstairs the
DaC Credit Union at
The Peterley Business Centre,
472 Hackney Road, E2

0207 729 5237



From Jon Tremlett (Y32)

Dear Editor

I love an old joke; did you hear the one about the man who went to the Board of Directors and told them that everybody in the company says they don't know what's going on and they answered: "Really, we hadn't heard that!"

So here are some collected thoughts Board Members might not have heard because having signed a non-disclosure letter, it follows that not being able or willing to talk to the 'troops', they cannot get any feedback from them.

Hardly anyone actually driving a cab thinks that a merger is going through, most of the drivers I have spoken to do not want it or can see a direct benefit for them. Many others have concerns that the makeup of a combined Board of Management must include people from *their* BoM - one that we haven't voted for or probably not able to get rid of democratically.

Other reasoning is that if the other side are willing at this stage to spend serious money on a new office etc, then they are not serious about a merger into our much better placed building. That the protracted delays are due to holidays etc also doesn't ring true or show any real intent.

Add to this the fact that any new Board would have to be quite small and that some current members would have to go, well, do turkeys look forward to Christmas? So the major thoughts of the 'Troops' are that a merger is not a good idea and has no direct benefits for anyone.

The other part of the merger proposal that *does* interest us very much - namely demutualisation which entails giving back to drivers some of the excessive 'dead' money sitting in our bank account - is very much on our minds. Since this cannot be part of the non-disclosure deal or have anything at all to do with whether a merger takes place or not, we are all wondering what actually have the Board done about this whilst playing for time, and what is the time scale for this return. The collective thoughts are that having proposed this, there is no going back to the *status quo*.

With drivers constantly asking Call Sign about the possibility – or not - of mergers, we're publishing this letter from Jon Tremlett (Y32) and its reply from Brian Rice...

Mergers and Cynics!

The cynics (there are a few), think that any money return will wait until a certain influential Board member decides to retire himself... Really, some drivers have no faith!

Since most of the Board do not drive cabs or even have to own a cab, are they fully aware of the problems caused by the 15-year rule and its implications to Members of a certain age who, having been on the circuit for years now, face having their cabs taken off the road and becoming journeymen on **Dial-a-Cab**, which then bars them from a share of the monies they have contributed to for many years. They and the rest of us with a few more years of life left in our cabs deserve an answer that would help forward planning.

Yours truly in the sense of constructive criticism...

Jon Tremlett (Y32)



Brian Rice replies:

Hi Jon

And there was me thinking that 'Jon the Mush' had mellowed in his old age!

The Board are aware of everything you allude to Jon, and with regard to showing 'any real intent', as I have explained previously the ball is in Mountview's court and we are still waiting for them to get back to us, although they *are* in the process of moving having sold their building and renting new premises in Southgate, with August 22nd as the probable date.

As you probably know, the only way we can distribute funds to Members is to demutualise; whether we then merge is another matter, but if we were to demutualise it is fair to say that Members would have little influence as they would trade their voice for money.

Knowing you as I do, Jon, when you refer to the cynics that believe any money return to Members will have to wait until a certain influential Board Member retires, I assume that can only be directed to me! This will probably be my last term as

Chairman... but then again I might work until I'm as old as you!

Whatever happens, I believe that London cannot now support three radio circuits together with the Apps and of course the rogue Apps. Something will have to 'give' in the not too distant future as there is not one organisation within the London Taxi industry that is actually making money at this present time. However, if two of the three circuits were to merge then I believe you would have a viable profitable business. What you can't do, Jon, is to accuse me of having a vested interest or endeavouring to create a position purely for the reason I have alluded to earlier.

Regarding the 15-year rule, you know the rules as well as I do and you would be one of the first people to reprimand the Board should they not follow the Rule Book, unless of course it suited you, then who knows?

But I can sympathise with your view regarding the 15-year rule and the answer is that in order to accommodate your wishes, we need a rule change. I'm afraid it cannot be done any other way.

It's always nice to hear from you Jon and I'm sure you know that my remark about your age was just tongue in cheek - although we do only seem to meet at funerals these days, which probably says something about both of us!

Brian Rice, DaC Chairman

HOME PC REPAIR

By **Essex PC Fix**

- Install new equipment, printers, etc.
- Upgrade / repair your current PC or laptop
- Virus / Spyware removal
- Wireless Networks set up and secured
- PC tuning (speeds up a slow PC)
- Advice given

Fast, Cheap, Friendly and Reliable service (over 25 Years Experience)

We can fix your PC at your home or collect & return the PC when it is fixed

Please see our website or contact us for list of services and costs

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

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



TAXI BOARD GAME WINNERS

If you didn't win, here is
a special reader's offer!

The two winners of the London TAXI! board game competition in the August Call Sign were DaC driver Paul Churchill (A04) and Curls Villiers, who is the senior night shift controller in the Call Centre.

The answer to the question from the 'Guess who I had in my cab' section of the game: Who was the World Dart's Champion known as the crafty cockney, was **Eric Bristow**.

The London TAXI! board game is based on the life of a London taxi driver. There are over 600 questions on London and it will be available to buy from local retailers shortly, well in time for Christmas. It is currently available to buy directly from Amazon. Just link on to: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B010V4POGY>.

Ideal present

With Christmas getting closer, this could be a good time to get some of those hard to find gifts out of the way with a special Call Sign reader's offer. You can buy TAXI! board game on Amazon where it normally costs you the correct price of £29.95 plus £4.73 postage/packing, making a total of £34.68.

But you can save £7 with this Call Sign readers offer!

At Call Sign we have arranged a special deal for our readers and if you would like to buy the game, then we have arranged a special £7 reader discount. Simply buy the game online via Amazon at <http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B010V4POGY> and when you get to the CONFIRM PURCHASE stage of the process, simply input the code **CCYF7K4P**. This will secure you the £7 additional discount. Thus you will get the game delivered to your home, for an all-inclusive cost of £27.68.

This Call Sign reader's discount is only available up to and including 30th September 2015.

ONE DIRECTION TICKETS WINNERS

Call Sign's 'One Direction' competition had by far the largest number of entries that any trade paper has ever had for a competition! We offered two lucky winners one pair each of the prized ground floor VIP seats for the O2 concert on September 29th featuring the biggest band on the planet and received a huge 603 entries. These boys must be quite popular!

Some of the accompanying letters to those entries from what appeared to be driver's young daughters and wives virtually begging for the seats almost brought tears to our eyes! Some had queued for hours only to be told there were none left, whilst others sat by their laptops for the 9am window to open only to find that everything at eye level had gone! And anyone who has sat upstairs at the O2 knows how far up that is!

Although every letter was read, including a heart wrenching one from the Editor's granddaughter **Shelby** who desperately 'needed' the tickets, another from a young lady who had apparently dedicated her life to the group and would love them forever, to one lady – a driver's wife no less – who offered to clean the Editor's office for a year in exchange for just one ticket! Several claimed they wanted to marry Harry although none actually said if Mr Styles actually knew. But in the end it had to be just the actual entries that went into the bag. The draw was made by Chairman **Brian Rice**.

There was nothing to stop members of the same family entering and many did, but the Editor's rules were that whilst that was allowed, if by some chance both winning names came from the same family, then one would go back in the bag and another ticket would be drawn – although that didn't happen anyway.

The other rule is that whilst the winners can do what they want with the tickets – valued at over £100 each – under no circumstances must they be sold.

The winners were **Paul Pavlou (W11)** and **Dave Ballard (N28)**. While Paul was delighted, Dave told us that his wife and daughter had already claimed them! We hope they all have a great evening...



Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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

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

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

The cost?

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

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

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

Call us on 020 7729 8171 or 020 7749 0585

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

Hi Ladies & Gents

Taking back the work...

With corporate work at an all-time low, app users are trying the alternative option - the 'U co' - to see what they offer! As a night driver, it has been challenging; however there is still a demand for our services but it has meant changing the way I and other night drivers work. We have started taking back work from venues previously lost to touts ie **Novikov in Berkeley Street** and **Hakkasan in Bruton Street** where we have a rank situated right outside the front entrances which are very busy. There is also **Forge at Cornhill** in the City; messages get sent out to drivers via **Twitter @UCGup** to inform drivers when there are spaces on these ranks or there is work coming out.

TfL

I've recently met licensed taxi drivers that live in the constituency of **Thurrock in Essex** to form a lobby group on how we see **Transport for London** failing our trade. If you live in Thurrock or know of any licensed taxi drivers that reside in the area and would like to add yours or their names to our group or perhaps join our meetings, please forward your details to me at **garryw@dialacab.co.uk** or



andrew.hamshare.taxi@gmail.co.uk.

We have had a good response from our MP, Jackie Doyle-Price and are in the process of arranging a meeting with her in the very near future.

Family day protest at Windsor House

It was good to see the media give the friends and families of the taxi trade some good press on how they see TfL failing the trade at the

From Garry White...

Windsor House demo! The carnival atmosphere created by all who attended was great! You can follow these guys on Facebook (**Save our Black Taxis**) and **Twitter @Supportblktaxis**. You can also see a piece on the demo inside this issue.

World Taxi protest

There has been a call for a world taxi protest on the 16th September 2015 against the digital disrupter that's affecting the licensed trade worldwide. It will be interesting to see how this goes...

Rugby World Cup

The tournament starts on the 18th September and runs to 31st October 2015. There will be road closures in the Twickenham area; however, I'm hoping the home nations do well with one or even two making it to the final, bringing some added trade our way.

Be lucky...

Garry White
DaC Board Member

PATSY McARTHUR: OTHERWORLD

At the Coningsby Gallery, 5-10 October 2015

Floating in oceans, lakes and pools – escapist underwater images by Patsy McArthur

Not to be confused with **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Patsy McCarthy (C01)**, **Otherworld** is a new exhibition by an artist whose work attempts to capture the weightlessness of being underwater. **Otherworld** is devoted to a new collection of paintings by Scottish figurative artist **Patsy McArthur**, the result of time spent in the deep and shallow waters of Australia earlier this year. It runs from 5-10 October at **The Coningsby Gallery in Holborn**.

Patsy McArthur's work explores the graceful and powerful movement of people. Following periods of painting freerunners, acrobats and trampolinists, she has progressed underwater to swimming pools, lakes and the open sea to capture ways in which people move when submerged and the effects caused by the relationship between light, colour and water.

While the works may transmit a feeling of immersion, serenity and grace, the process of making each painting is labour intensive and scrupulously planned. The new work, from very small ink studies to large oil paintings, is based on images shot in ten locations around Sydney, from algae-filled filthy private swimming pools to the ocean waters of Balmoral Beach on the North Shore.

Once Patsy has selected the models for her work, crucially, all strong swimmers, she will consider the particular conditions of each body of water, including the translucency or opacity of the water and various effects caused by such elements as coloured swimming pool tiles, floating algae or coral.

Unsurprisingly, conditions found in man-made pools and deep oceans differ wildly. In a clean pool, light is able to bounce off the walls, revealing vivid colour, intense detail and a clear sense of the size and shape of the figure at the centre of the image. In the ocean, horizontal light can be travelling for miles before it meets the subject of the painting, leading to blurred figures and dampened colours. Weather conditions have a great effect too, with storms churning up sand in the water, hampering visibility but creating interesting effects.

While there is no overt fashion element to the work, most of the models are fully clothed, with dresses and shirts chosen for the weight and colour of the fabric, the ways in which it reacts with light and how it moves with the powerful push and pull of the water. Once these choices are made, Patsy will descend with her models, as well as pieces of furniture and other props, spending up to two hours at a time taking hundreds of photographs and shooting video. Back in her Brighton studio, she uses these reference shots to make drawings and studies before moving on to the paintings. The resulting work conveys a palpable sense of strength, freedom and suspension.

Patsy told **Call Sign**: "I like my work to have an emotional element and I think my underwater imagery has a kind of escapism about it; the viewer can feel the temperature of the water, the sensory experience that comes with being in water, that otherworldliness. When it comes to painting the figure underwater, I'm dealing with differing transparencies of water and their effects on the figure, which is challenging and keeps it interesting for me. For that reason, it's not a subject I feel I will tire of any time soon!"

The Coningsby Gallery is at 30 Tottenham Street, London W1. The exhibition runs from 5 to 10 October and is open from 9am to 6pm; there is a private viewing by appointment only together with a talk from Patsy on Tuesday 6 October

More info: www.coningsbygallery.com www.patsymcarthur.com, info@coningsbygallery.com or 020 7636 7478.



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

Brethren of the Whip



Sistren of the Whip!

In last month's edition of *Call Sign*, there was an article entitled **The Marie White Mystery**, which was provoked by our man in the colonies, **Norman Beattie**. Norman had supplied our erstwhile editor, **Alan Fisher**, with a couple of articles from the American press dated 1887 and which proclaimed the demise of **Mary Hanniwell** - the "first female Jehu."

The story of Mary Hanniwell was covered by this column back in July 2013. According to newspaper reports of the time, one **Billy Seymour**, a cabman in **Liverpool** was arrested for stealing 30lbs of meat. He was taken to **Walton Gaol** and there, prompted by a medical examination, it was found that Billy Seymour was actually a woman! Mary Hanniwell had been masquerading as a male cab driver for at least 6 years in Liverpool and previous to that had been driving a cab round London for 3 years!

This would place Mary as driving a cab in London during the mid-1860s, something she could not have done legally. Cabmen were questioned on their topographical knowledge of London from about 1864 and even with her implied speech defect, it's doubtful if she could have fooled the police given that her face was "unmistakably feminine."

If she did ply for hire on the streets of London, then it was as an unlicensed driver - possibly using another driver's licence. Whilst there is little doubt she worked as a cabman undetected in Liverpool for several years, there is actually no evidence that she ever worked as a cabman in London.

There have, however, always been women associated with the trade; in the list of the 400 Master Hackney Coachmen (proprietors) in 1662, 20 of them are women. These women are the widows of proprietors that had held a licence and thanks to one of the few concessions given at the time - and still enforced today - the widow of a proprietor, or an owner driver, could take over the proprietor's licence. Even at a time when a woman's possessions automatically became the property of her husband, if a widowed proprietress remarried, she could retain the proprietorship of the cabs under her control and they would not become her new husband's property.

As an example; in 1845, John Hopkins, described as a *squalid looking cabman*, was charged with theft following elopement with his landlord's wife. It was not the fact that he "stole" a wife, but the fact that she took all her clothes and a sideboard to put them into that prompted the charges! Hopkins was sentenced to twelve months hard labour.

There was nothing to stop any of these women from driving a coach; in fact a proprietor could allow anyone to drive a cab for 24 hours in an emergency, whether or not they were licensed as a driver and presumably whether or not they were female.

The 1881 Census turns up six women who were classed as cab drivers. Most of these, including the delightfully named **Fanny Virgin** of **Elnathan Mews W9** can be dismissed like the others as an error of the enumerator. But more problematic is **Jessie Burrows** of **Waterford Road SW6**. Her husband is listed as a cab proprietor but she is listed as a "cabman and china dealer."

Last month in this column, I touched upon the clamour of allowing women to drive a cab during the Great War. According to Phil Warren, four women actually passed the examinations and were given badges. The *Daily Express* names Miss Ryder as the first female London cabby; she

had badge number 1366 and passed the knowledge "at her eighth attempt." The problem these women had was finding a garage that would allow them to take a cab out without raising the ire of the other drivers! Miss Ryder summed it up by stating she was willing to put up with a bit of animosity but it would be worth it if a "man was released for war work."

The *Shell Book of Firsts* lists **Shirley Preston** as the first female to drive a London Taxi in 1967, although it was more than likely she was licensed by the local council and when Greater London was created, her licence was converted to a yellow badge.

Three years later **Mrs Sheila Anker**, a mother of four, passed the **Knowledge** - a local one at least - and despite newspapers proclaiming her as the first London cabby, her badge was definitely yellow.

That brings us up to **Dial-a-Cab's Marie White**; she was not the first woman to drive a cab, nor was she the first woman to do the **Knowledge** of London examinations. She was, however, the first woman to have completed the **Knowledge** in the green badge era - and that's not a bad record!

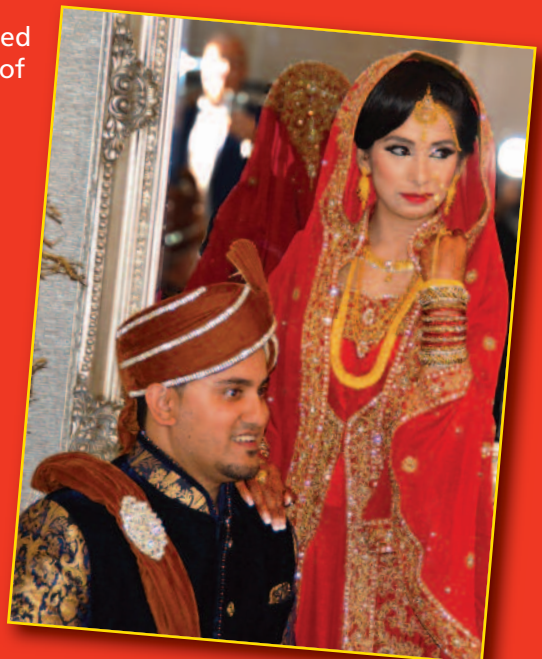
Sean Farrell (B39)
Call Sign Online

ABDUL AND SUFIA

It was so nice to be invited to attend the wedding of **Dial-a-Cab** Call Centre Team Leader **Abdul Wadud** and his lovely wife **Sufia**. I attended the wedding with my wife **Gill** and a number of work colleagues.

It was a really joyous and colourful occasion and on behalf of everyone at DaC, I would like to wish them both every happiness and the very best for the future...

Allan Evans
DaC Operations /
Call Centre Manager



After seeing **Brian Rice's** shock figures on page 4 concerning **Transport for London's** licensing policy, we took a closer look and here they are in black and white. According to our licensing authority, they have no choice other than to licence anyone who fulfils the necessary requirements – which apparently can include just a reference from anyone that knew the person requiring a PH licence in their home country, rather than the **Disclosure and Barring Service** that taxi drivers and hopefully most of the legitimate private hire drivers need (not to mention up to four years of doing the Knowledge as well for taxi drivers)!

Last month's *Call Sign* contained a *Tweet* from an **Uber** passenger who complained that her driver had his five-year old son in the front of the car with him to both translate and work the satnav. Judging by complaints on the internet, that seems to be the general standard of many PH drivers – especially on **Uber** where there is no such thing as a ceiling on numbers.

According to the figures shown; for the three weeks between 22 June and 6 July the number of PHV licensed active drivers went up from 82,390 to 83,300 – an increase of 910 drivers. The number of newly licensed PH drivers in just those three weeks came to a staggering 1864 with the number of newly licensed vehicles coming to the no-less astonishing number of 2176. Active PH vehicle licence numbers went up from 66,255 to 67,041 – an increase of 786.

Then there are the figures for taxis during that same three week period...

The number of active taxi drivers (compared to the PH 910 increase) showed a **decrease** of 29, down from 25,096 to 25,067. The number of newly licensed taxi drivers went up by 62, meaning that 91 drivers had either retired, passed away or had their licences stopped. Active taxi vehicle numbers licensed by Tfl in the period went down by 8, which increased the differential between PHV and taxi numbers by a further 794 vehicles.

We don't actually know how many PHV fail due to incorrect paperwork being presented because we often hear of that happening to taxis. Neither do we know whether that **Uber** driver had to take his 5 year old son with to translate the obvious words of: "Yes, your vehicle has passed its inspection. See if you can find some spare road space out there to drive on. Incidentally, we drive on the left! Have a nice day."

In the meantime, *Call Sign* has heard from a driver whose licence was taken away by Tfl. At the time of writing he'd had no source of income for almost a month and had been threatened by the police – who arrested him at with guns at the ready – with a charge of intent to defraud.

This apparently terrible excuse for a licensed taxi driver had asked the **Post Office** to renew his three year licence and was happy to pay their reasonable charge for doing so in addition to the actual 3-year

Call Sign Says...

TFL, TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE

Type	22 Jun	29 Jun	06 Jul
PHV Drivers Active Licences	82,390	82,840	83,300
PHV Drivers Newly Licensed	543	655	666
PHV Vehicles Active Licences	66,255	66,637	67,041
PHV Vehicles Newly Licensed	748	725	703
PHV Operator Active Licences	2,955	2,946	2,941
PHV Operator Newly Licensed	4	3	4
Taxi Driver Active Licences	25,096	25,094	25,067
Taxi Driver Newly Licensed	12	26	24
Taxi Vehicles Active Licences	22,283	22,297	22,275
Taxi Vehicles Newly Licensed	26	37	32

licence cost. But he committed the cardinal sin of forgetting about it and some months later was pulled up at **Canary Wharf**. He couldn't show his licence as he hadn't had it back yet. He showed the police officer his receipt from the PO and they allowed him to go on his way. A few weeks later and this time several gun-toting officers from the constabulary actually arrested him for not having the licence. This group refused to accept his PO confirmation and he was locked in a cell and charged with fraud.

Someone later decided that he didn't look or sound like a criminal and as he had genuinely paid for his 3 year licence, he wasn't really defrauding anyone and that no reasonably-minded judge would find him guilty of any offence other than stupidity for not remembering about his licence non-arrival.

When he asked *Call Sign* for advice as to what he should do, we suggested he go to **Uber** – although we did quickly add that it

was a joke! But some jokes are more pertinent than others and you have to wonder whether any of the newly licensed 1864 PH drivers in that three week period will ever have the same problem? If they did, then no doubt a letter from a friend saying how nice they are would probably suffice without incurring the driver any loss of income. The family of the taxi driver are obviously irrelevant and can go to a food bank.

After 350 years, this trade is ironically facing far more problems from its own licensing authority than it ever has from private hire.

As **Artemis Mercer** said at the **Save Taxi** demo outside Tfl HQ in Victoria Street on July 31, **Uber** was a symptom rather than the cause of this trade's problems. If only we could bring back **Oliver Cromwell**....!!

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Editor

ROY MANIX

In the early hours of 30th July, long time **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Roy Manix (ex-K98)** passed away after a short battle with cancer.

He joined DaC in July 1992 and left the circuit in March 2009 due to failing health. He continued writing to *Call Sign* regularly until just a few months before his death. Even after leaving the trade, he was constantly concerned as to how things were going and always signed his emails as Roy the Boy.

Roy died at home with his wife and children at his side. His funeral was on 12th August at Hendon Crematorium.

Our sincere condolences to Roy's family.
And to Roy the Boy...Rest in peace mate.



DaC, WE WANT A RED WEDDING!

...and it has to be an Arsenal one!

The 'Special Events' department within Dial-a-Cab is used to handling rather unusual requests from clients who have particular needs as to their taxi requirements, but every so often the *really* unusual turns up at the other end of the telephone line!

Such was the case recently when what started out as a standard 'wedding' transportation request, was raised another level at the last minute.

A spokesperson for DaC explained: "We are frequently asked for a traditional London taxi to take the Bride to the ceremony or sometimes both the Bride and Groom to the reception. This particular event started out that way and, as always, we were happy to oblige.

"At the hirers' request, we can supply taxis decorated with white ribbons at the front, with bows attached to the door mirrors as an added spectacle. However, on this occasion and literally just an hour or so before the actual event was to take place, we were made aware that both the Groom and his Father were ardent Arsenal football fans and that they suddenly requested the cab should be decked out with red ribbons in addition to the regular white ones.

"Our first thought was W-H-A-T!" said the spokesperson, "but we soon got down to turning the request into reality. We immediately called **Ivan Sobell (P69)**, who was covering the event for us and he was able to provide not only the said red ribbons via a relative, who was also kind enough to make up a large white-ribbon bow that adorned the radiator grille of the taxi. By all accounts the clients were delighted; our specially decorated cab attracted a great deal of attention and the reputation of the DaC 'Special



Outside were red and white ribbons, while these cushions were inside!
Inset: Ivan Sobell



Events' department was maintained!"

When *Call Sign* spoke to **Ivan**, he explained that his son was also an Arsenal fan and that he had 'borrowed' two cushions from him to decorate the inside of the cab as an additional feature.

"Yes, I do believe the clients were surprised and amused," **Ivan** said. "They expressed their thanks for the 'extra mile' we went to, making their day even more special than usual."

In a statement, Call Sign Editor Alan Fisher pointed out that the reason most people want plain white ribbons is probably because they are obviously Spurs fans!!!

Alan Green (E52)
Call Sign Online



DaC Appeal Result

A Complaints meeting was held on 21 July 2015 with an Appeals meeting on 31 July. The result is below. Non-appealed results were published last month...

Name/call sign:

Michael Appleby (L73)

Nature of complaint:

Driver regularly accepted ODRTS staff trip from Woodford (E50N) to East Road N1 when not physically in the zone. Then clears trip before arrival at East Road and accepts another staff trip from the DaC office, therefore gaining an advantage over his fellow drivers. Warnings have been given in Call Sign regarding the correct booking-in procedures.

Original result:

Rule 2: 2 week suspension

Rule 3: 2 week suspension

Rule 11: expelled

Appeal meeting result:

Rule 2: 1 week suspension

Rule 3: 1 week suspension

Rule 11: 2 weeks suspension

Sentenced reduced on appeal by BoM from expulsion to 4 weeks suspension

AVAILABLE FOR RENT CLOSE TO DISNEY IN FLORIDA



2 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 4/5



4 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 8/9



6 Bedroom 5 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 12



Pool and conservation view at 6 bedroom home.

Three properties owned by UK Registered Charity Dial A Dream. Reg. 1011637

Your opportunity to rent one of these villas and at the same time making it possible for this charity to continue its work with children from all over the UK all of whom are suffering from a life limiting illness. All villas within minutes of the main Disney theme parks, golf courses and restaurants.

We can offer car hire and theme park tickets for you and your family at very competitive rates.

So, if you are considering a Florida based holiday in the near future then call us and you may be helping us to give a very sick child the will to say "Let me live another day".

Prices from £56 per night through to £237 per night
(Prices are for the villa and not per person.)

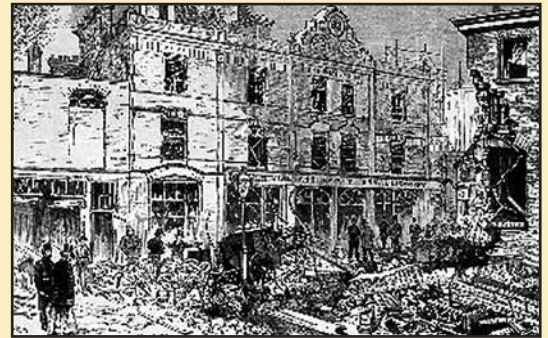
www.dialadream.co.uk



Tel: 020 8530 5589

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

Blast!



Scotland Yard following the 1883 Fenian bombing

Most *Call Sign* readers will either have vivid memories, or least will be aware of the many IRA bombings carried out in London during our more recent history. It started on **8th March 1973** with the planting of 4 car bombs in London, 2 of which exploded. One was near the **Old Bailey** and the other outside the **Minister of Agriculture in Whitehall**. It was a day that fortunately saw the 2 other bombs defused - one outside the Post Office in **Broadway SW1** and another at the **BBC's Armed Forces Radio Studio in Dean Stanley Street**.

The wave of sporadic attacks continued for many years, even after the **Good Friday Agreement** of **10th April 1994**, with the final outrage coming on **3rd August 2001** when a car bomb containing 45 kilos of explosives went off in **Ealing Broadway**, injuring 7 bystanders and ruptured a water main that flooded the shopping centre.

In this series of **Blast!** I have previously featured others of those many bombings caused by the IRA - the December 1975 explosion at Scott's Restaurant in Mayfair (see *February 2015 Call Sign*), which led ultimately to the **Balcombe Street Siege** (*March 2015* issue).

But there have been other bombings by Irish Republicans well before the 1970's (the period often referred to as 'The Troubles' and when the mainland was attacked by the Provisional Irish Republican Army) and in this series I wrote about the **Clerkenwell Prison** explosion (*Call Sign April 2015*), which was caused by the **Fenian Brotherhood** in **December 1867**.

When **Alan Fisher** reminded me that it was time to prepare my next **Blast!** I was preparing the **Sunday Study Walks** for new students on the forthcoming ***Cab Guide Course** - and I always include **Whitehall**, the street that shaped our nation and the various explosions that have taken place in this world famous locality.

One of the topics that inevitably crops up is the **Fenian Dynamite Campaign** of the 1880's when Victorian London was rocked by a series of **Blasts!** Between the years 1881 to 1885, some of the many explosions included venues as prestigious as the **Mansion House**,

the **Carlton Club** and **Scotland Yard** where the **Rising Sun pub** was severely damaged. It was one of the first modern terror campaigns in mainland Britain; it resulted in the establishment in **1883** of the first Police unit set up to combat terrorism - the **Metropolitan Police Special Irish Branch** - which was trained in counter-terrorism techniques to combat the **Irish Republican Brotherhood**.

On my Study Walk, I mention the bomb which exploded in **Westminster Bridge** tube station on a fateful night of 30th October 1883 when a coordinated attack also saw an explosion at **Praed Street** tube station (now **Paddington**) just 3 minutes later.

Fortunately, no deaths occurred in either **Blast!** But over 60 passengers received appalling injuries as a result of being cut by flying glass and 6 train carriages were severely damaged as a result of the attack.

Many readers will be aware of the existence of the **Black Museum**, a macabre collection of artefacts from London's criminal history, which includes a box of shrapnel from an unexploded Fenian bomb found in **Paddington** in 1884. The Museum has always been closed to the general public because it is a real chamber of horrors, representing London's bleakest moments of times past - but the renamed **'Crime Museum Uncovered'** runs from this October to April 2016 and is curated by the Museum of London in the City. It has to be worth a visit.

Next month it's back to the East End for a **Blast!** This one happened during World War One - but was not a result of enemy action.

***Any Call Sign readers interested in going on the Cab Guide Course should ring WCHCD Clerk, Mary Whitworth, on 01494 765922. The next course begins on 7 September...**

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online

A Simple Journey...

"It looked to be a simple enough ride when it flashed up on my **Dial-a-Cab** terminal," **Alan Drew (L33)** told *Call Sign*.

"Pick up from **Claridges Hotel** going to **Baker Street** on account, were the details. They wanted **Waitrose** on Baker Street and then to whizz them back to Claridges.

"So off we went. After a few minutes waiting at Waitrose, the passengers came out of the store looking a little glum and with a curt "they've not got what we want," then asking me to take them on to the Waitrose on **Motcomb Street** in **Belgravia**; so that's what I did!"

Alan was starting to smile at a recollection of the trip.

"I waited there several minutes for them before they came out... looking even more despondent than before and asking me to take them back to Claridges.

"During that return journey, they were making numerous phone calls while sounding ever more exasperated with each succeeding call. En-route to dropping them off, they requested I pick up a colleague who was still in the hotel and take him down to **ASDA** in the **Old Kent Road**, wait for him and then return him back to Claridges!

I never found out just what it was that ASDA stocked that Waitrose didn't, but whatever it was took around three hours to purchase and gave me my best job in ages!"

With that, Alan smiled and headed off in the direction of Claridges.

"Well you never know," he called out...

Alan Green (E52), Call Sign Online



It should have been just a simple journey but...

The publicity has gone before it – a new UK built ultra-low emission vehicle. Now the London Taxi Company and its main contractor, Winvic, have started the construction process at the Coventry suburb of Ansty Park which makes the project the first greenfield car production facility built in the UK for almost 15 years. It will be LTC parent company Geely's UK base for the ultra-low emission vehicle research and development.

Winvic is a multidisciplinary main contractor that excels in the delivery of construction projects on a national platform. Formed in 2001, they are privately owned and this year will turn over in excess of £300 million for a growing list of blue chip clients.

The milestone comes soon after the company's £250 million investment project announcement in the presence of the Prime Minister David Cameron and London Mayor Boris Johnson earlier this year.

A breaking ground ceremony attended by Rugby MP Mark Pawsey, Coventry North West MP Geoffrey Robinson and Coventry South MP Jim Cunningham, took place on 3 August at Ansty Park. The company also welcomed officials from the local authorities, press and London Taxi Company board members to officially commence the building work.

The new facility is the first greenfield development of any Chinese automotive manufacturer in the UK, demonstrating parent company Geely's ongoing commitment to the country and West Midlands region. The investment will create up to 1000 direct jobs and support a further 500 roles in the local supply chain.

The 37,000m² building will be constructed by main contractors Winvic and comprises a 31,000m² production facility, which will make the next generation of the iconic London Taxi from 2017 and other forthcoming models, as well as 6000m² office space. Ansty will be Geely's UK base for ultra-low emission vehicle R&D and the London Taxi Company's global headquarters.

Reflecting the London Taxi Company's values of sustainability, the Ansty site will have an 'Excellent' BREEAM rating and be 'A' rated for energy performance. The building will include 850m² photovoltaic solar panels and 20 electric vehicle charging points. It will also harvest waste heat from compressed air systems to warm the air and provide hot water, while rainwater will be collected for use in all of the facility's toilets.

LTC Chairman, Carl-Peter Forster, told *Call Sign*: "The Geely group strategy to invest in ultra-low emission technology is progressing

At the London Taxi Company's new home to build ultra-low emissions taxis...

Construction begins!



well across all its brands. The London Taxi Company and its new products are central to that approach and our investment here demonstrates continued commitment to the UK automotive sector and helps to underpin the world class engineering capabilities which can be accessed in this country."

LTC Chief Executive, Peter Johansen, added: "Today marks another important step forward for the company and our employees as we prepare to produce the next generation of ultra-low emission vehicles here in Ansty. We would like to thank the local authorities for their hard work and support during the planning process and everyone who has been associated with the building project to get us to this point today. We'd also like to thank our main contractor, Winvic, whose work so far has been impeccable."

Mark Pawsey, MP for Rugby, said: "Investment of this nature in advanced manufacturing and ultra-low emission vehicle technology is exactly the type of activity we need to encourage and support. This is a fantastic addition to our already booming automotive industry and further demonstrates the London Taxi Company's ongoing contribution to the local economy, which will only grow with the creation of many hundreds of high quality jobs for local people."

Winvic's MD, David Ward, said: "We are thrilled to have been appointed by the

London Taxi Company to build their new home here at Ansty. By applying the very highest sustainability and construction standards, the building will be befitting to the products that will be produced here. This is a really exciting time for the London Taxi Company and for manufacturing in the region and we're pleased to be playing a part in its development."

The London Taxi Company's investment reinforces the strength of the UK automotive sector and the importance of the West Midlands as an engine for that growth. More than a quarter of the UK's 30 largest automotive manufacturing sites are based in the West Midlands, with global vehicle makers announcing £850 million investment in the area so far this year. The automotive industry supports around 770,000 jobs in the UK and added £12.4 billion to the country's economy.

Call Sign hopes to organise another trip for drivers once building work is further developed...

Photo: LTC Chairman Carl Peter Forster, Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry Lindsley Harvard, Coventry City Council leader Ann Lucas, LTC CEO Peter Johansen, Coventry NW MP Geoffrey Robinson, Rugby MP Mark Pawsey, Coventry South MP Jim Cunningham and Winvic Business Director Danny Nelson at the official launch...

O₂: Shouldn't they remember who their clients are???

A recent O₂ advert was brought to the attention of Dial-a-Cab Chairman Brian Rice by John Woodgates (T43). The ad said that anyone signing up to Uber could not only travel in style, but also claim £20 off their first journey. This offer, it added, came exclusively with O₂ Priority. John told *Call Sign* that he found it difficult to believe the ad was actually genuine and that was why he forwarded it on to Brian.

As all three licensed radio taxi organisations operate their data transmissions via the O₂ network, the ad appeared to be something of a kick in the teeth for ComCab, RTG and DaC.

So Brian Rice wrote to a contact he had at O₂...

"My members are in revolt due to the fact that O₂ are promoting Uber with a £20 voucher off the first ride the O₂ customer takes with Uber. As you are aware, all three licensed taxi circuits use the O₂ network, together with many of the 25,000 licensed taxi drivers in London, so I can only assume your Marketing Department has been a little naïve or even worse, negligent by alienating the London Taxi Trade!

Whilst I understand this has not been your personal decision, I would urge you to take this matter up with the relevant department, because at the moment O₂ are doing themselves irreparable damage within the Licensed Taxi Trade."

Kind regards, Brian Rice

Responding to the DaC Chairman, an O₂ spokesperson thanked Brian for making them aware of the Uber promotion and said it wasn't something they were aware of at O₂ Enterprise business. However, they passed Brian's message on in order to highlight the dissatisfaction it was creating. He ended by saying that although Uber were aggressively marketing themselves through any number of channels, they would rather that promotion in particular had not been run due to the importance of the Licensed Taxi Trade to O₂'s business.



Just Who is Who Nowadays!

It must have been around 1960 when my late brother David and I were strolling along Brighton prom. As a middle-aged man rushed past us, a woman's voice cried out: "Stop him, he's got my bag."

David chased him, ordered him to stop and demanded the bag. The pathetic thief did as he was told – no violent mugger obviously – and stood awaiting his fate. A crowd gathered and someone shouted to get the police! Then David's allegiance switched from the victim to the perpetrator, saying that we had the bag back and perhaps we should just let him go? He wasn't a mug; he just wanted to help someone in trouble. I don't know what he'd do these days. There are so many beggars, con artists, scammers and genuinely needy on the streets, that it's difficult to work out just who is who...

At the traffic lights in Goods Way a little old lady approached the cab. A job? No such luck! She just asked if I could spare some change so she could get a hot breakfast. But I wonder why they always target cab drivers? I coughed up 50p but she didn't seem too impressed. Perhaps she was hoping for the full English...

Two minutes later and I was stopped at Crowndale Road. Up came a man – suntanned, wearing a tracksuit and carrying a sports bag with his hand held out. In a cultured English accent he asked if I could spare any change!

"Sorry mate," I replied, "you're two minutes late. I already gave."

"Can I get to Archway for £10 then," he asked.

"Look sir," I said to him, "you're either a beggar or a cab rider. You can't be both."

He said he just happened to have a £10 note! I just happened to drive on...

A hot day in Pimlico

It was a steaming hot day in Pimlico and I decided to take refuge in the air-conditioning of Starbucks. I got a sandwich, a drink and began reading my paper as I began cooling off. I became aware of a man murmuring if I could buy him some food or let him have some money. Not again! He was quite well-dressed, nice haircut, clean shaven and wearing brand new trainers. I said nothing and went back to my paper. He persisted and asked if I could at least acknowledge his presence? I put the paper down.

"The answer to your first question is no," I said and went back to my newspaper. But I was starting to lose the benefit of the air-conditioning. He wouldn't go away.

Another true story from Geoff Levene...

BEGGAR OR CAB RIDER?

"There, that wasn't too difficult was it," he said with a smirk on his face.

I was starting to boil. "Why don't you go away and leave me alone?"

"It would be a pleasure," he replied as he stalked off.

And Regents Park!

So on a Bank Holiday, the good lady wife and I are spending a pleasant day in Regents Park. As we sat enjoying some lunch, a man accompanied by a young girl thrust a hand-written note at me. It was all in capitals and read as follows: PLISS MISTER. WE NEED FOOD AND HOME. MY GIRL SICK. HELP US. I looked at the wife. She shook her head. I looked at the man. His eyes were pleading. I looked at the girl. Her lip trembled. I gave him £1. The wife sighed. The man's eyes lit up. The girl's lips formed a brave smile. Half an hour later I saw them again. They were in a crowd of about a dozen men and girls - all laughing and joking. It was one giant scam of course.

You're not even safe in your own home. These days we live on the second floor with a video entryphone so that we don't get bothered by nuisance callers. But when we had a house it was different. Take that time I opened the door to a pretty young girl in a dazzling white tracksuit.

"Oh hello," she said nodding vaguely down the road. "You don't know me but you probably know my sister. The thing is I'm coughing up blood. Could you let me have a pound so I can get to Northwick Park Hospital."

I could have called her bluff and suggested taking her there myself, but instead I merely said no! The point to remember is that if you're going to claim that you're coughing up blood, it's best not to wear the cleanest whitest track-suit in the world!

But not Cricklewood!

Years ago there was a knock on my mum's front door in Cricklewood. There stood an Irish chap wearing a beret, an old pin-striped suit and pushing a bike.

"G'mornin' Missus. Would you like me to prune that tree over there?"

"Well, I suppose it needs doing," said Mum. "How much?"

"A fiver," said the Irishman, "I can do it in the morning."

Mum said she was going out in the morning, so the Irishman suggested she pay him and he wouldn't let her down. But the next day there was no sign of the 'tree feller' and mum was convinced she'd been stitched up. But as she walked up the road there he was up next door's tree merrily sawing away!

"Are you coming to me next," she asked him? He looked at her, at the house and at the tree.

"This isn't your place then," he said before almost falling out of the tree! He slammed a fiver into mum's hand and pedalled away as fast as he could.

As for the bloke who wanted to go to Archway... I should have taken him. It took me an hour to find another job!

Geoff Levene (W32)
Call Sign Online

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

LOCKHOUSE SECURITY

All types of locks, opened, repaired and replaced

10% discount on keys and locks for DaC drivers

Transponders / chipped keys

On site key cutting services including taxis

Locks replaced / fitted to insurance specifications (BS3621)

Burglary repairs / boarding up

Additional security / security upgrades

Safes opened, repaired and serviced

Grilles and security gates

Specialists in UPVC doors and windows / patio doors

Free estimates / no call out charge

24hr service

You can find us at:

8-10 The Arcade, Farnham Road, Harold Hill

Tel: 01708 371115



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

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

Flashback
1997

This issue harks back to the March 1997 Call Sign and looks at the mag's gossip columnist of the time...

Señor Al: The snitches pal

Sorry, who are you?

We've all picked up passengers whose face we couldn't quite place. I did it recently.

"Odeon, Leicester Square, please driver," the beautifully dressed lady asked sweetly. Before I could explain that there was a premiere on and that meant that I'd have to drop her as close as I could, she said that she had a pass to go through the police cordons.

As we arrived at the gates to Panton Street, cars and cabs were setting down their dinner-suited passengers. A policewoman pointed at me and with a wave tried to get me to park on the side as all the big Rollers and Bentleys were going through. I flashed my pass. Mine was the only one that she double-checked, whereas all the swanky cars were waved through and given a little salute.

"Ok, go through," she said gruffly.

We drove through and pulled up by the red carpet where a huge crowd were waiting for celebrities. I was careful not drive onto it as I'd recently had an oil change and some had dripped onto the tyres!

"God, this is so embarrassing," my passenger remarked as she opened the cab door to flash a wide smile at the hordes as though she had swallowed a banana! I wasn't sure who she was, but as the cab door opened, the press flashbulbs went off. I was momentarily dazzled.

"Aren't you going to take some of my passenger as well as me," I jokingly shouted to the masses. It brought a polite smile and my passenger made her way along the red carpet towards the entrance.

"Excuse me," I shouted to her as she walked away. A huge cheer went up. She didn't hear but a uniformed police officer tapped her on the shoulder and pointed at me.

"Haven't you forgotten something," I called out, pointing at my money bag and shaking it violently. "Like the fare for example!"

She walked back slowly, her face colour now a perfect match to the carpet.

"I'm sorry, driver," she said in that same sweet voice, "I don't know what to say."

The spectators were in convulsions laughing at my passenger's misfortune. After all, there isn't much to smile at when you're gawping at celebrities who don't say anything in case anyone should think they are associating with the lower classes!

"Don't worry," sez I, "just look on the bright side. Now at least you have something worth getting embarrassed about! You've also livened up their evening."

Meanwhile the hecklers were having a field day at her expense.

"Don't forget his tip," several shouted in unison. Everyone else laughed!

Meanwhile, the photographers were snapping away like mad at this poor misfortunate woman who was doing her best to maintain a smile. She paid and gave me my biggest tip of the night. As she walked off towards the theatre to a huge cheer, I gave her a wink and she gave me and the spectators a lovely smile as she managed to smile at her own misfortune. In fact she received a standing ovation... even though they were all standing anyway! As she left, I called one of photographers over.

"Who was she," I shouted above the noise. "I couldn't quite recognise her."

"Ain't got a clue," he laughed. "Never seen her before in my life! My job's to take pictures of everyone...!"



A METER OR NOT A METER

That is the question...

Monday 5th October has been set aside for the declaratory relief hearing to be held at the High Court in London.

The LTDA claim, along with most of the trade except our licensing authority **Transport for London**, that Uber's use of a smart phone type of device that they use to calculate their fares is in breach of the 1998 PH Act. The minicab company, along with TfL, maintain that it isn't.

Even the LTDA admit that the result could go either way, but the trade's largest organisation has engaged the services of a top QC to put forward our case.

LONDON LEGEND Limousine Taxis



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

Tel: 01628 471632 Mob: 07974 348974

Mailshot

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

The curious case of the cab in the night-time!

Well Mr Editor...

I think the time has come for someone to say it as it is... Regarding your Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, I think the time has come to say it as it must be said. We may well ask ourselves just where DaC goes from here. I think the words of the famous Andalusian bullfighter, Manuel Benitez, springs to mind; I will buy you a house or dress you in mourning. In plain language, the members must decide to accept each job going As Directed and if we have to run a long way, we must pay ourselves out of reserve profits made to cover it.

One thing in the last few years that has been lacking at DaC is loyalty. Have you ever thought why so few talented drivers stand for the Board? So who's got the balls at the next AGM to propose that no drivers be allowed to wear T-shirts without collars on.

If anyone is interested in knowing why I would not stand for the BoM, the dog in the night is just not curious enough to look over the wall, let alone trust anyone else to look over the wall for them. I will leave you with the words of Senor Benitez... we decided to hold the fight in an open field!
Gary Cox (O46)

Gary is referring to the trouble Linda and I had in getting an account cab from Shaftesbury Avenue back to Dial-a-Cab at 10.30pm after we had watched the Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time. It wasn't a case of no cabs available because the trip had 27 rejects and in the end we caught a passing cab ...Ed

Sid Gold book...

Dear Alan

Thank you again for your touching article on my dad, Sid Gold. For some time now I have been thinking of writing a book about Dad's life... from his upbringing in the East End to his days in the war and how his Mum died when he came home on leave unexpectedly. She then went to queue for extra rations to feed him, but suddenly fainted in the queue and hit her head. She died on the way to hospital.

Then there's the story of how he was one of the first to enter one of the death camps after they were liberated, or after the war when he became a Translator while prison-

ers were being interrogated as he spoke fluent German.

There are also stories of his dealings with German Blaupunkt (Blue Spot) radios where he often flew to Germany to their headquarters and was collected from the tarmac by one of their cars or his days of owning Radio Electronics Ltd and his run ins with Alan Sugar! Of course there were then his wonderful days as a taxi driver on ODRTS and Dial-a-Cab and his many amazing stories. He really was an amazing man and a true gentleman with a heart bigger than himself. My Mum used to scream at him when he got home from working on the cab asking how come he was the ONLY cab driver to come home covered in dirt and oil because he would spend so much time helping to fix other cabbie's broken down taxis! She'd point out that they then carried on working but Dad just went home filthy, but to no avail!

He never charged nurses the fare when picking one up and if they were from Bart's, he'd ask them if they knew me as I was training there and then tell them to let me know he had been their cab driver!

There are so many stories, Alan. He really was a one off...

Larry Gold

Kissimmee, Florida

Don't forgot the time he was held up at gunpoint at the age of eighty something when he refused to hand over his wallet! ...Ed

Sid Gold

Hi Alan,

I've just seen the August 2015 Call Sign and was happy to see the article about my dad. As people have said - he was a legend and they don't make them like him anymore. Our house is very quiet without him. We miss him very much.

I want to thank you for coming to my dad's funeral - he thought a lot of you and often spoke about you. His stone setting will be on 17 July next year and I will remind you nearer the time. Perhaps you would put a notice in your magazine.

Roberta Gold

Mapping upgrades

Hi Alan

When do our terminal maps get updated?

John Gilbert (W72)

Every time cabs are called in for an upgrade, the latest mapping is added ...Ed

PHV insurance and Tfl

Hi Alan

I was reading issue 231 of The Badge newspaper on pages 8 and 9 about the contents of a meeting re PHV/Uber. When the topic of PHV/Uber having hire and reward insurance was raised, a person named Gary Emerson said - and I had to read this twice because I could not believe what I was actually reading. He said that Tfl were looking at ways to instantly check insurance validity but then made the ridiculous claim that the task was made harder by the fact that PHV's were also used as private vehicles and so would have to turn the hire and reward insurance on and off at different times!

Hands up anybody who knows of any insurance company that would do such a thing? Making such a statement, how did that man get the job? I know in these days of Political Correctness with ethnic origins, sex, sexuality, transgender and disabilities etc, but I didn't know that there was a category of being as ignorant as dog excrement! This is a new one to me. Gary Emerson should resign. If not, somebody in Tfl with any balls should give him his P45. Alas, in the civil service, the way they get rid of a Wally is give them promotion! God help us...

Brian Marcantonio (R73)

The article in The Badge Brian is referring to was about the 8 July meeting at City Hall. In an excellent report, it showed the Tfl side - in the shape of Leon Daniels and Garrett Emerson (I don't know him as Gary) failing to answer questions put to them by the GLA and in the specific case of PHV insurance, by Victoria Borwick. The article was headlined: 'Flabby and cosy'... Tfl mauled by GLA over Uber relationship!

Ms Borwick had claimed that links between PH drivers and specific PHVs and vehicle insurance were nowhere near as strong as in the taxi trade, whereupon Mr Emerson said that Tfl were looking at immediately getting access to check PHV insurance validity. He then made the statement that Brian is referring to about PHV switching from one policy to the other - one that The Badge's reporter called "ridiculous," when explaining what we all know is that taxis are also fully insured for both hire and reward and domestic



Mailshot



use and that there was surely no need to switch one off and the other on for PH either. So far as Call Sign knows, there is no such policy as the on/off described by Garrett Emerson ...Ed

In the Twilight Zone

Dear Ed

TfL have licensed 82,000 of uninsured "taxis." Apparently it is not illegal to charge £200 per mile in a rickshaw while our Mayor believes it is legal to transport his Mrs to work on his saddle! The Oompa Loompas have taken over TfL. I must have been asleep and woken up in the twilight zone!

David Hughes (A73)

You said it Dave! ...Ed

TfL, Uber... and Dial-a-Cab!

Hi Alan

Uber... useless! I was driving westbound down John Islip Street early one morning when a Toyota Prius travelling east decided to u-turn in front of me. Now it was westbound and at the lights at Vauxhall Bridge Road. It turned left and stopped half inside the yellow box. Then the door opened and a young lady got out, opened the boot, got her suitcase out and walked to my cab. She asked me to take her to Heathrow and got in. She said she had tried Uber for the first... and last time!

"He didn't know which direction to take," she complained! I informed her that he possibly had no experience of driving in London. "Unbelievable," she exclaimed. Anyway, she was thankful when I dropped her at Terminal 5. How much was he going to charge her you may ask? Well it's irrelevant as she would have undoubtedly missed her flight!

TfL are responsible for licencing these jokers and I don't think we should try to compete on price, but as Dial-a-Cab is now putting fixed priced jobs out for longer trips, I think we can compete with other PHV circuits. I think the meter for postcode jobs is right, but for jobs going out into the 'sticks' it can be fixed at a sensible rate below the meter, which can be worthwhile for the driver. If it means getting longer jobs back in our cabs, then I am for it. Having the right to reject must apply of course.

People will always try elsewhere, but I think our service is excellent. However, in these times price seems to dictate... so let's give it a go.

We should also drop a line to our MPs with your concerns regarding the licencing of Uber; don't sit back and let the parasites go untroubled.

Gary Tyler (L79)

Brian Rice replies: I know Gary, it's a dangerous state of affairs that has evolved due to the incompetence of TfL, both to the public and the taxi trade. Uber should never have been licensed back in 2012, because so far as I'm concerned they are available for immediate hire and on that premise alone, their licence application should have been declined. If the management at TfL were unsure of the legislation - as their past employment record involved buses only - they should have consulted with the taxi trade as there are several people that could have advised them. But it appears TfL only sought internal advice, which I believe was incorrect.

The licence application should have been refused, then Uber would have taken TfL to court. But in the meantime they would not have been able to operate. However, when the case does eventually get to court I'm really not convinced the Judge will advise in our favour regarding 'immediate' hiring; even I could put a convincing case for Uber and I can assure you they will hire people a lot brighter than me to support their case. Uber have had some absolutely terrible press, yet they continue to thrive and the public continue to use them. If our highly regulated industry is not supported by TfL, then we will have a real problem. A highly regulated industry with all the costs involved, will never be able to compete with a Rag, Tag and Bobtail outfit!

I must admit I'm not a fan of Fixed Prices in town, as we might as well be a minicab outfit. Also, very often the metered fare is more expensive on Tariff 1 than it is on Tariff 3 due to traffic conditions. Consequently, submitting a fair FP for all parties can prove to be difficult. However, on longer journeys I agree with you Gary, we can compete with the opposition. On Tariff 4 (yes, there is one) the meter registers at £3.64 per mile, so if you travel at 70mph on a motorway your meter will register £254.80p per hour! I know you have to come back, but you must decide if that is a little on the expensive side!

Consequently, we are offering a FP for these longer journeys; unfortunately some Members are delaying their POB until the 10 minute threshold has elapsed, so the FP comes out. We now

look at every one of those trips and consult with our GPS system to see where the Member actually did their POB. In many cases it is when the passenger has been on board for a few minutes and departed from the pickup point. With every FP, the Member is shown pickup and destination and price, he can then reject the trip if he so desires. However, what we are now doing on the longer FP trips is to give the customer 5 minutes free waiting time, but when the five minutes has expired we will not take the FP out and revert to the metered fare, but will add on 45p per minute or £27 per hour to the FP.

So basically Gary, I agree with everything you say; but there is just one last point I've thought of. When the original legislation regarding Private Hire was introduced in 1998, we fought very hard to have a clause inserted that required the minicab driver to have a topographical knowledge (not to our standard); we hired Lobbyists, consulted with MPs and were successful in having the clause inserted. There is no doubt in my mind that by having a topographical knowledge, the applicant would have to speak and write English and have a reasonable idea as to where he was going and all three should be an essential requirement. But that clause has been totally ignored by TfL! The Mayor states he is going to 'cap' PH licences, but unless there is a change in legislation he does not have the power to do that, the same as with a taxi licence; if you meet all the criteria required then a licence must be issued.

If the Mayor wants to cap numbers, the solution is easy - introduce the Topographical Knowledge part of the legislation that is already in place for any new applicants seeking a PH licence, that will reduce numbers overnight... and that advice to the hierarchy at TfL and the Mayor comes free of charge!

Uber and sexual harassment towards staff?

Hi Alan

Blake in my cab this morning told me his company had closed their Uber account because of two cases of sexual harassment towards female employees! It had been reported via email to TfL but as of yet there

Mailshot



had been no reply! They have now started using Gett but I told him that we were more accommodating for longer trips and more professional. I have passed their contact details over to Keith Cain...

Jon Robinson (E88)

You have to wonder why people still use Uber with all the negative publicity they receive from around the world. If my daughter or two granddaughters ever called an Uber cab, I'd go mad and physically try to stop them. But if either of my two grandsons did it, I'd call them mad. Does that tell you anything about Uber? Perhaps TfL could elucidate as to what it is about Uber that they like as compared to the awful publicity they accumulate ...Ed

No such cab!

Alan

Just read the July Call Sign Online and particularly enjoyed the article on page 26 about Alan Lewis (DaC A44) and his FX3 - despite the typo in your photo caption that named the vehicle as a TX3! My own taxi is a 1955 Austin, so I am sensitive to these matters!

John Freeston

Vice Chairman, London Vintage Taxi Association

Windham, New Hampshire, USA

Bet you'd like a TX3 though John! For those unaware of why there was a TX1, TX2 and then TX4 - but no TX3 - it was because at the time the engine was Euro 4 compliant and TX3 gave out the wrong image. It was also said that the company (LTI at that time) "wanted a connection with its world famous FX4." ...Ed

Air quality and taxi drivers

Hi Alan

It's only my opinion - I've not checked any figures - but my husband David Kupler's lung cancer was very aggressive. I believe that years of smoking JPS cigarettes AND driving round a heavily polluted city every day caused the cancer. So I really think that Dial-a-Cab drivers should consider wearing those white face masks. When David was forced to give up his air conditioning system in order to make space for the catalytic converter, he naturally had to keep his windows open to keep cool. As a result, he was breathing in a huge amount of toxins day in, day out. So it's really not that surprising that he should die of lung cancer. Don't worry Al, I'm not about to start a riot or anything, but I wondered if there was a

way to gently point out to DaC drivers (even the non-smokers) that inhaling toxic fumes for hours on end could possibly damage their health.

Please consider the above and wear a mask...

Jan Kupler

Chigwell, Essex

David Kupler died in April 2014 at the age of 66. In addition to being on DaC for many years, he was also Call Sign's resident poet ...Ed

Looking backwards?

Dear Alan

First, may I start on a positive note! There is a feeling that business is at last improving. In the last 2 weeks I have been offered five account jobs! It is regrettable that so much of the taxi trade press - and even the wonderful Call Sign - spends such a long time moaning about the competition and recalling our glorious history. With habitual looking back, emphasis on tradition, tales of drivers who were "characters" and anecdotes from others who keep remembering better times, together with gripes about how minicabs have taken "our" work, it is not surprising that we have been overtaken by business people who look forward and make quick use of technology as it becomes available. In any other area, it is impossible to imagine such a blinkered approach by an industry faced with new rivals. When Pepsi-Cola first arrived, Coca-Cola did not spend ages whining "not fair" but tried harder, modified, diversified and advertised effectively. When manufacturer of typewriters, Olivetti, saw new technology arriving, they did not dwell on past processes but moved into computers, tablets, smartphones and printers.

After the severe downturn in 2008 and large reduction in our staffing levels, I made the suggestion at our AGM in 2013 (possibly 2012) that one or even 2 floors of our offices in East Road be sublet. This would have raised substantial rental income. However, Brian Rice said that there were security issues involved in sharing premises so this idea was not acted on. Perhaps the time has come to reconsider?

Laurence Kelvin (W88)

Nice to hear from you Laurence. Sorry you don't like parts of the magazine that look back but it is, after all, a magazine and with the greatest will in the world there just isn't enough news to fill it up with just that - unless you want me to turn it into something similar to papers that fill their pages with press releases and end up all looking the same. Actually, some of Coca-Cola's most popular ads were those that looked back!

As for renting out the building; yes, the Board did take note of your suggestion and have offered parts of the building out for rent and would still consider offers. In fact when I showed him your letter, the Chairman told me that we actually offered part of the building to Mountview instead of them renting premises in Southgate. Also, the builders next door were offered the opportunity to put a raised floor in our car park and to erect portacabins to house their project team. However, both were to no avail ...Ed

Fixed prices and subs

Dear Alan,

I have been fortunate to cover a couple of fixed price account rides recently and whilst I bemoan the fact that some have been considerably under-priced, on a time basis they represent reasonable value. However, I regard it as most unfair that not only do I then lose 7.5%, I have to pay VAT on top, making a 9 percent deduction. Would the BoM consider removing the variable subscription on fixed price rides?

David S. Lessman (D19)

Company Sec Howard Pears will bring your suggestion up at the next Board meeting ...Ed

One fine day...

One fine winter afternoon, I was working happily and at around 3.30pm, home beckoned as usual. It was dry and very cold, but no snow was forecast. Suddenly the voice radio burst into life: First call Manchester Square going to N20 delivery... 2nd call and it was mine! Great job to within 200 yards of home, how lucky was that! Off I went and immediately it started to snow very heavily. I slipped and slid to Swiss Cottage, slid down to the Golders Green lights before deciding that I just couldn't get any further. So I parked on the rank, took the tube to Totteridge and walked to deliver the parcel at about 5.30pm before then walking home... job done! I went back to the rank the following day to collect my cab as by then the roads had been gritted.

Oh and while I think of it, what about those amazing BBC jobs such as picking up an order from Television Centre to go to Crystal Palace, pick up a tin of paint and then return back to TVC! Happy days!

Retirement is great down here in Bognor Regis; we even see DaC cabs down here as some other drivers also live here. Best wishes to all...

Martin Freeborn Ex (C67)

Limited stock of Euro 5 TX4, just £145 per week*



**Enquire now
whilst stocks last!**

With our 4 year Personal Contract Purchase plan,
pay **just £145 per week*** to drive the iconic Black Cab.

A new TX4 comes with peace of mind of a 3 year, 120,000 mile warranty.




Don't miss out on the limited stock. Call us now!

A taxi from the people who only make taxis.

The London Taxi Company
39-41 Brewery Road • London N7 9QH
03300 245944

www.london-taxis.co.uk
London@london-taxis.co.uk

GEELY

 TheLondonTaxiCompanyUK  LondonTaxiCoUK  LondonTaxiCompanyUK



* Terms and conditions apply. Business users only. Finance offer available on Personal Contract Purchase, figures based on TX4 Elegance (automatic transmission) at £39,195 OTR with a £2,995 deposit followed by 48 monthly payments of £625.49 (equivalent weekly payments of £144.34) plus an optional final payment of £15,725 based upon an annual contracted mileage of 30,000 (120,000 over term). Deposits can be made from £0 and paid on collection; the above is an example deposit based on the finance illustration. Three year plans are also available. Excess mileage charge of 6.0 pence (+VAT) per mile applies. If the vehicle is in good condition and has not exceeded the allowed mileage you will have nothing to pay. Finance is subject to status and is only available to UK residents aged 18 and over. Finance is provided by Black Horse Taxi Finance a trading style of Black Horse Ltd, St William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff CF10 5BH. Other models are available.