

April 2016

# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International

autogas  
autogaslimited.co.uk

Euro6

*15 year old TX2?  
Could this cab  
and the DaC  
Credit Union  
be the answer???*





# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

April's usual 'Numbers' is the new fare chart, but as there will be virtually no change to the meter rate once it actually arrives for this year, it has been replaced with another 'What's On'. It's only as comprehensive as one page will permit, but I have tried to list events where the finish times are known...

## "What's On" April 2015

Olympia Grand Hall	Ideal Home Exhibition	Wed	01/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	Mountbatten Festival of Music	Sat	18/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 22:20)	Wed	01/04/2015	Charlton	v Leeds (Burst 16:45)	Sat	18/04/2015
Olympia Grand Hall	Ideal Home Exhibition	Thu	02/04/2015	Crystal Palace	v WBA (Burst 16:45)	Sat	18/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 22:20)	Thu	02/04/2015	Wembley Stadium	FA Cup Semi-final	Sat	18/04/2015
Royal Albert Hall	John Bishop	Thu	02/04/2015	ExCel West	Wedding Fair (Finish 17:00)	Sun	19/04/2015
Alexandra Palace	Bier Festival (Finish 23:00)	Fri	03/04/2015	ExCel West	Natural & Organic (Finish 17:30)	Sun	19/04/2015
Olympia Grand Hall	Ideal Home Exhibition	Fri	03/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	Tchaikovsky Gala	Sun	19/04/2015
Royal Albert Hall	Messiah on Good Fri. (Starts 14:30)	Fri	03/04/2015	Wembley Stadium	FA Cup Semi-final	Sun	19/04/2015
Fulham	v Brentford (Burst 16:45)	Fri	03/04/2015	ExCel West	Wedding Fair (Finish 17:00)	Mon	20/04/2015
Millwall	v Charlton (Burst 16:45)	Fri	03/04/2015	ExCel West	Natural & Organic (Finish 17:00)	Mon	20/04/2015
Olympia Grand Hall	Ideal Home Exhibition	Sat	04/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	Lang Lang Recital	Mon	20/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 17:20)	Sat	04/04/2015	Olympia West	Forensics Europe (Fin. 16:30)	Tue	21/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 22:20)	Sat	04/04/2015	Olympia National Hall	UC EXPO (Fin. 16:30)	Tue	21/04/2015
O2 Arena	McBusted	Sat	04/04/2015	Olympia Grand Hall	Counter Terror Expo (Fin. 16:30)	Tue	21/04/2015
Royal Albert Hall	Stars in the Round	Sat	04/04/2015	ExCel West	Safety in Healthcare (Finish 19:00)	Tue	21/04/2015
Arsenal	v Liverpool (Burst 14:30)	Sat	04/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	Music is for Life 2015	Tue	21/04/2015
Chelsea	v Stoke City (Burst 19:15)	Sat	04/04/2015	Olympia West	Forensics Europe (Fin. 16:30)	Wed	22/04/2015
Olympia Grand Hall	Ideal Home Exhibition	Sun	05/04/2015	Olympia National Hall	UC EXPO (Fin. 16:00)	Wed	22/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 17:50)	Sun	05/04/2015	Olympia Grand Hall	Counter Terror Expo (Fin. 16:30)	Wed	22/04/2015
O2 Arena	McBusted	Sun	05/04/2015	ExCel West	Motivate (Finish 17:30)	Wed	22/04/2015
Royal Albert Hall	Orquesta Buena Vista	Sun	05/04/2015	ExCel West	Safety in Healthcare (Finish 19:00)	Wed	22/04/2015
Olympia Grand Hall	Ideal Home Exhibition	Mon	06/04/2015	ExCel West	Marathon Exhibition (Finish 20:00)	Wed	22/04/2015
Crystal Palace	v Man. City (Burst 21:45)	Mon	06/04/2015	ExCel West	Motivate (Finish 16:30)	Thu	23/04/2015
Leyton Orient	v Gillingham (Burst 16:45)	Mon	06/04/2015	ExCel West	Safety in Healthcare (Finish 17:30)	Thu	23/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 22:20)	Tue	07/04/2015	ExCel West	Marathon Exhibition (Finish 20:00)	Thu	23/04/2015
Charlton	v Fulham (Burst 21:30)	Tue	07/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	Barnet Education Arts Trust	Thu	23/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 22:20)	Wed	08/04/2015	ExCel West	Safety in Healthcare (Finish 16:30)	Fri	24/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 22:20)	Thu	09/04/2015	ExCel West	Marathon Exhibition (Finish 20:00)	Fri	24/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 22:20)	Fri	10/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	Desert Island Discs	Fri	24/04/2015
Fulham	v Wigan (Burst 21:45)	Fri	10/04/2015	Olympia Conference	Aesthetic Medicine (Finish 18:00)	Sat	25/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 17:20)	Sat	11/04/2015	Olympia Central	Record Fair (Finish 16:00)	Sat	25/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 22:20)	Sat	11/04/2015	ExCel West	Marathon Exhibition (Finish 17:00)	Sat	25/04/2015
Millwall	v Watford (Burst 16:45)	Sat	11/04/2015	ExCel West	Salute (Finish 17:00)	Sat	25/04/2015
Tottenham	v Aston Villa (Burst 16:45)	Sat	11/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	Prom Praise	Sat	25/04/2015
West Ham	v Stoke (Burst 16:45)	Sat	11/04/2015	Crystal Palace	v Hull (Burst 16:45)	Sat	25/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	Sweeney Todd (Finish 17:50)	Sun	12/04/2015	Fulham	v Middlesborough (Burst 16:45)	Sat	25/04/2015
QPR	v Chelsea (Burst 15:15)	Sun	12/04/2015	Leyton Orient	v Sheff. Wed. (Burst 16:45)	Sat	25/04/2015
ExCel West	BizTalk (Finish 18:00)	Mon	13/04/2015	Millwall	v Derby (Burst 16:45)	Sat	25/04/2015
Royal Albert Hall	Devin Townsend Project	Mon	13/04/2015	QPR	v West Ham (Burst 16:45)	Sat	25/04/2015
Olympia Grd & Nat.	Book Fair	Tue	14/04/2015	Olympia Conference	Aesthetic Medicine (Finish 17:00)	Sun	26/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	DIANA VISHNEVA: (Starts 19:30)	Tue	14/04/2015	Olympia National Hall	Professional Hairdresser (Finish 16:30)	Sun	26/04/2015
ExCel West	BizTalk (Finish 16:00)	Tue	14/04/2015	LONDON	London Marathon Major Road Closures	Sun	26/04/2015
Royal Albert Hall	Classic FM Live	Tue	14/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	A Gala for St. George	Sun	26/04/2015
Leyton Orient	v Doncaster (Burst 21:30)	Tue	14/04/2015	Arsenal	v Chelsea (Burst 17:45)	Sun	26/04/2015
Millwall	v Wigan (Burst 21:30)	Tue	14/04/2015	Olympia National Hall	Professional Hairdresser (Finish 16:30)	Mon	27/04/2015
Olympia Grd & Nat.	Book Fair	Wed	15/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	Titanic Live	Mon	27/04/2015
O2 Arena	Paul Simon & Sting	Wed	15/04/2015	Olympia Grand Hall	Charing X Intn'l Symp. (Finish 18:00)	Tue	28/04/2015
Fulham	v Rotherham (Burst 21:45)	Wed	15/04/2015	ExCel West	Natural Stone (Finish 17:00)	Tue	28/04/2015
Alexandra Palace	Ben Howard (Sold Out-Burst 23:00)	Thu	16/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	FOLLIES in Concert	Tue	28/04/2015
Olympia Grd & Nat.	Book Fair	Thu	16/04/2015	Olympia Grand Hall	Charing X Intn'l Symp. (Finish 17:00)	Wed	29/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	DIANA VISHNEVA: (Starts 19:30)	Thu	16/04/2015	Olympia Central	Insight (Finish 17:30)	Wed	29/04/2015
O2 Arena	Paul Simon & Sting	Thu	16/04/2015	Olympia Central	Marketing Week Live (Finish 17:00)	Wed	29/04/2015
Royal Albert Hall	Mountbatten Festival of Music	Thu	16/04/2015	Olympia West	Museums + Heritag (Finish 17:30)	Wed	29/04/2015
Alexandra Palace	Ben Howard (Sold Out-Burst 23:00)	Fri	17/04/2015	ExCel West	Natural Stone (Finish 17:00)	Wed	29/04/2015
ExCel E. or W.	Holy Ghost Festival (Starts 20:00)	Fri	17/04/2015	ExCel West	Academies Show (Finish 16:30)	Wed	29/04/2015
ExCel West	Property Investor (Finish 18:00)	Fri	17/04/2015	Olympia Grand Hall	Charing X Intn'l Symp. (Finish 17:00)	Thu	30/04/2015
Royal Albert Hall	Mountbatten Festival of Music	Fri	17/04/2015	Olympia Central	Insight (Finish 17:00)	Thu	30/04/2015
Alexandra Palace	Ben Howard (Sold Out-Burst 23:00)	Sat	18/04/2015	Olympia Central	Marketing Week Live (Finish 17:00)	Thu	30/04/2015
Coliseum- ENO	DIANA VISHNEVA: (Starts 19:30)	Sat	18/04/2015	Olympia West	Museums + Heritage (Finish 17:00)	Thu	30/04/2015
ExCel West	Property Investor (Finish 17:00)	Sat	18/04/2015	ExCel West	Natural Stone (Finish 17:00)	Thu	30/04/2015
ExCel West	MuggleNet Live (Finish 18:00)	Sat	18/04/2015	Royal Albert Hall	Status Quo: Aquostic Live	Thu	30/04/2015

The fare chart for 2014 to 2016 can be found at [www.nashsnumbers.co.uk/uidpt1.pdf](http://www.nashsnumbers.co.uk/uidpt1.pdf) or surf [www.myfav.co.uk](http://www.myfav.co.uk) and click the "taxi <-----!" link for lots of taxi related iconic links.

# from the editor's desk

## PEDS

Ok, let's not beat around the bush... are you fed up with me constantly having a pop at London Taxis Private Hire – ie Transport for London... ie Her Majesty's Government!

Let's face it, is there any other group of self-employed workers like us in having so much of what they do in their everyday job controlled by outside sources, who at the same time apparently have so little knowledge of what those workers do; even worse, an authority that appear to care so little?

So yes, over the past few months I haven't stopped moaning and I can't see myself stopping anytime soon. After all, name me another organisation that puts out so many consultations yet takes no notice of the responses and just goes ahead and does whatever they like in such a pompous manner?

**We are on the verge – if not already there – of the number of licensed minicabs totalling 100,000. For those of you who have only recently come into the trade, let me give you a few facts:** Ten years ago (2006), the number of licensed PH drivers was 31,100. At the same time (2006) there were 21,700 licensed taxi drivers. So to save you getting out your calculators, over the past ten years PH drivers have *increased* by around 68,000 whereas over the same period our numbers have gone up by around 3,500. Theirs are still increasing while our numbers are dropping and will continue to do so.

Yep, just to repeat that; in the past 10 years they have increased by 68,000 compared to our 3,500 whilst at the same time, Big Boris tells the world how hard he is trying to cap minicab numbers. Well sorry pal, but that boat has gone and unless Mayor Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson can tell me that he is also looking to cancel the last 30,000 or so licenses that his men have dished out like confetti, then his term as Mayor will have been an unmitigated failure. And I haven't even mentioned cycle lanes or roadworks!

**I'm just going to write of the small matter of our safety while in the cab. Driving and being in a minicab is dangerous - dangerous for the driver who faces being attacked at any time and also dangerous for the passenger, who faces being attacked at any time – by the driver! I hadn't realised the Chairman also intended writing about it, but the subject is serious enough to warrant a duel attack!**

Last month's *Call Sign* published a list of figures that we had been told should not be put into the public domain as they could cause some "alarm!" These were the numbers of minicab drivers that had been arrested etc. Had the majority of those been on Addison Lee, Brunel or any of the green vegetable variety we would have soon heard. That means that most were on Uber. But hey, this isn't an anti-Uber piece either – not that I couldn't fill up the page about some of the miscreants driving cabs with TfL's blessing, had I wanted to. This is purely about safety – our safety - something that I believe LTPH, ie TfL, ie HMG couldn't give a toss about.

So I've finally arrived at the piece that has upset me. I know what people say about the cost of cabs etc, but there is one aspect that to me is hugely important. I feel a thousand times safer in a taxi than I could ever feel as a minicab driver. The licensed taxi driver is as protected as he/she can be and if you always keep the front doors locked, then it is as though you have a button marked 'safety' because you are as safe as it is



possible to be in a city such as London.

**Other than helping someone with their luggage, there is no reason to leave the driver's cabin – or there wasn't until LTPH ie TfL ie HMG put their oars in and told Dial-a-Cab that we will now have to place our credit card PEDS in the passenger compartment. Is that so terrible? Well, no, not if every passenger was a respectable, nice person. Sadly not everyone is and it will be easy for a passenger to say to the driver that the PED isn't working or their card is stuck and ask them to take a look. The only way you'll be able to do that soon is to get out of the cab and get into the back.**

I don't need to explain further. The only question is why LTPH ie TfL ie HMG feel that DaC's removable PEDs that can so easily be passed through to the passenger compartment and which were originally passed by TfL, are no longer good enough? I know that Brian Rice argued at a meeting and followed that up in a letter to LTPH ie TfL ie HMG that our PEDS had originally been passed by TfL, so why were they suddenly no good placed where they were? The answer is self-explanatory; firstly because *they* say so and secondly because they don't care about our safety, just about their rules. No doubt it would be so different if our name was Rachel Whetstone!

**In an email to LTPH GM Helen Chapman, I explained that I had not had one single complaint against me from a passenger in my 45 years as a licensed taxi driver, but that if the PED was placed in the rear compartment and a passenger asked me to take a look at it for whatever reason, I would refuse.**

I just hope that I do not hear of any DaC drivers being hurt in any way after being asked by a passenger to go into the back to look at the PED, because it would undoubtedly be the fault of an organisation that is supposedly there to promote and protect us as well as the public, even if at the same time they do screw us out of huge amounts of dosh. I used to respect the PCO. What that former organisation has now become doesn't deserve any...

## Uber and the 1998 PH Act

Courtesy of Dial-a-Cab's PCN expert, John Vigus, regarding the *Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998* and how it does – or should – affect Uber...

1a: *In the Act, PHV means a vehicle constructed or adapted to seat fewer than nine passengers, which is made available with a driver to the public for hire for the*

*purpose of carrying passengers other than a licensed taxi or a public service vehicle.*

1b: *Operator means a person who makes provision for the invitation or acceptance of or who accepts private hire bookings.*

However, John then continues that Section 4 (1) provides that the holder of a London private hire vehicle operator's licence shall not in London accept a private hire booking other than at an operating centre specified in his licence. Section 1 (5) says that in this act 'operating centre' means premises at which private hire bookings are accepted by an operator.

**So, asks John, where is this 'operating centre' as specified in Uber's licence? Their address is 1 Aldgate Tower, 2 Leman Street E1 8FA, but is this their operating address ie, what is the address specified in the licence?**

"Does this affect a booking via the App if the booking does not go through the official 'operating centre'? Is a booking via the App recorded at their operating address or does it circle in cyber-space and only get recorded at the operating address *after* the passenger has been picked up? The Act implies that a booking must be ACCEPTED (at the operating centre) before being passed to the driver, so then what are the series of events when a customer books via the App? Food for thought?"

**As an expert of PCNs and parking offences, John has now published a must-have book that answers every question you could possibly have regarding the two. You can read about it with details of how to get a copy inside this issue...**

## Missing from TfL...

TfL's proposed Budget 2016/17 and Business Plan has been published and includes the continuing construction of Crossrail (Elizabeth line), the huge transformation of London Underground with major stations being rebuilt and the Northern and Met lines being extended plus general modernisation and a new signalling system. Then there's the 24 hour weekend 'Night Tube' services.

TfL are also doubling the station accessibility fund from £75 million to £150 million, making more stations step-free and ensuring the Mayor's target of 50 per cent of rail and Tube stations being made step-free by 2018 is on-track. Gospel Oak to Barking Overground line will be electrified.

They have spent a fortune on replacement Routemaster buses – albeit some 500 are said to be faulty and returned! They are hoping to double TfL's Growth Fund to £600 million for regeneration across London with £250 million towards two new Overground stations at Old Oak Common, providing connections to HS2, Crossrail and national rail stations. Then there's the £4 billion London roads improvement, always assuming they can get cyclists to give some back! Mind you, they won't need to because there is another £1 billion to be spent on cyclists' safety – probably teaching their mums to make sure they don't let them go out without a vest if it's cold! And you can read inside this issue about the absolute fortune they are looking to spend on new river crossings.

**Read the above slowly. Is there one form of TfL's transport system that gets absolutely nowt that we don't pay for ourselves? I thought it wasn't just me...!**

Alan Fisher  
callsignmag@aol.com



# Reflections of the Chairman

## Credit Card Mandating

You are all probably aware that as from April 2 there will not be any extra surcharges placed on the customer for using a Credit Card to pay their taxi fare, other than the fact that every customer will have to pay an extra 20p on the clock drop for 12 months; the 20p surcharge will then be reviewed by TfL to see whether it is retained or scrapped!

Everyone I know has always advised TfL that the surcharge for using a Credit Card (CC) should remain with the customer using the card and that there should be no levy on the driver who actually gives the credit, albeit a maximum customer charge could be set by TfL. However, as usual, TfL have ignored advice from the people that know and understand the trade best and have dictated instead of negotiated. I'm totally convinced that all the Consultation documents issued by TfL are a total smokescreen and that they know exactly what they are going to do from day one. Why they bother talking to us (or not) I will never know, the Consultations are just a process of going through the motions and what they have to do!

So we now come to the charges for using a CC; as you know, all the radio circuits charged the customer 10% and absorbed the Merchant Fee and without doubt, it was Dial-a-Cab's biggest account producing a considerable income. Obviously that has disappeared and we now need another way in which to introduce that revenue stream. We know that whatever we do will not be popular with some. After all, some Members complained about the 10% surcharge to customers, now look what we have! We should always perhaps be careful what we wish for.

Many companies in the trade have not announced what they are going to charge for using a credit card, they are all probably waiting to see what the competition charge before announcing their own charges. However, at Dial-a-Cab we have announced what we intend to do as from 2 April, we are charging our Members £1 per day plus VAT (making £1.20 in total) and Dial-a-Cab will absorb all the charges made by the Banks. Before you start doing your calculations on the back of an envelope (the days of fag packets being long gone), you should remember that once you've completed six trips of any description, anything to do with a CC transaction would have been paid. Forget about who gets what, once you have completed those six trips then you are in front. Of course, we have no way of knowing how this is going to pan out, because if CC transactions off the street go through the roof - as some expect - then Dial-a-Cab could find that we took a huge gamble by not introducing a percentage fee to the driver.

I have heard a rumour - and I stress it's only a rumour at the moment - that one of the big players in the market place intends to install their equipment in taxis free of charge and charge a very small percentage to the driver in an attempt to take the mar-



ket over. However, if they do then you can imagine the rest!

The whole scenario has been extremely badly administered by TfL and the views of people such as Dial-a-Cab, who were the pioneers of CC acceptance for the past 25 years, have been totally ignored. But then again, am I surprised by the incompetence of TfL? Not in the slightest...!

This is the first year I can ever remember that facts about CC mandating and the fare increase have come out from TfL in dribs and drabs - extremely unusual. Consequently, I watched the TfL Board Meeting where the Mayor was present and some of the topics introduced by TfL were not even discussed at the meeting! And there was me believing for all these years that everything had to be passed by the TfL Board before it could be implemented... silly me!

## Can TfL be trusted? Can they say yes but mean no?

When we were in the process of re-equipping the fleet some years ago, we decided to install a Chip and Pin or Pin Enabled Device (PED). I always felt the PED should be in the front of the cab for driver security, that it should be kept in a holster and passed to the customer in the back of the vehicle or indeed through the luggage window when needed. I was always concerned that when mandating of Credit Cards by TfL was introduced and usage increased, that there was always the possibility of knowing that drivers HAD to accept them and the more unscrupulous in our society could use that as an excuse to inform the driver that the PED in the back was not working. That could then be an attempt to get the driver to leave the front of the cab with possible dire consequences following.

Consequently, I contacted TfL in February 2011 and sought permission to site the PED in the front of the vehicle in a holster. I personally attended Palestra in Blackfriars Road along with our Director of IT and a taxi equipped with the PED in its holster. They passed the vehicle and had no problems with the siting of the PED, giving their permission by passing it a few weeks later with no adverse comments (March 2011). I still have all the correspondence appertaining to the PED passing.

So imagine my surprise when TfL announced that all London Taxis had to be

equipped with a PED mounted in the back of the vehicle by 3 October 2016! I immediately had a meeting with TfL and the attitude was: "Don't blame us Brian, we're just the messengers, the Board of TfL agreed it."

Well, that was before I saw the video of the meeting and the siting of the PED was not even mentioned! I have subsequently written to everyone I can think of concerning this matter, attaching all the correspondence from 2011 that gave us permission. It was two weeks ago that I wrote to TfL and so far I have only received an acknowledgement of receipt from Helen Chapman; once again it shows the contempt that most of TfL treats the Licensed Taxi trade.

So in a nutshell, TfL believe they can rescind the permission they gave me back in March 2011 (if I was a gambling man, I'd bet that TfL never even knew they gave it in the first place) to have the PEDs sited in the front of the vehicle. Have they any idea what is involved in recalling our whole fleet to locate new lockable holsters in the back of the vehicle, the time and expense would be enormous, not to mention the extra danger our Members would be exposed to by having the PED in the passenger compartment.

What is the point of having something passed by TfL when they can change their mind on a whim; but are they really changing their mind or, if as I'd bet, they never even knew I had permission. This once again proves my point that if only TfL had spoken to me initially before they made the announcement, they might never have got themselves into this predicament. Once again they have shown themselves to be incompetent by not speaking to the relevant people in the trade before making any announcement. As I have stated many times in the past, they don't negotiate... just dictate!

I just hope they stand by their initial decision to grant the location of the PED in the front, after all, the PEDs have been there for five years without one single complaint from a driver or member of the public. TfL must honour their original decision...

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

## Call Sign April 2016

Editor: Alan Fisher

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

Tel: 0207 251 0581 Fax: 0207 553 7293

Email: [callsignmag@aol.com](mailto:callsignmag@aol.com)

Website: [www.22-callsign.co.uk](http://www.22-callsign.co.uk)

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Tel: 07958 300 428

Email: [debbiefresco@googlemail.com](mailto:debbiefresco@googlemail.com)

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Artemis Mercer, who with other taxi drivers' wives started the #SaveTaxi Facebook group last year in support of the taxi trade, launched a drive several months ago in order to raise £600,000 to fund the initial phase of launching a Judicial Review against TfL.

By the original closing date, the Crowdfunder had raised over half the total, but were then granted a 22 day extension in order to raise the rest. An estimated 18,000 drivers have not given a penny!

Artemis established Action for Cabbies as a private company to spearhead the Crowdfunder.co.uk campaign. It bases the proposed action on the grounds that TfL was wrong to grant a licence to Uber and its drivers in 2012 as the licensing authority had failed to follow the correct procedures.

"There has always been a two-tier system with private hire vehicles on one side and black cabs on the other," Mrs Mercer, whose husband is a taxi driver, told Sky News. "TfL did not follow those regulations in 2012: it went from being a law-enforcer to a law-maker and in doing so it compromised public safety and cost black cabbies the opportunity to compete on a level playing field."

The group will again repeat that Uber drivers use a meter of the kind that should

# #SAVETAXI FUND EXTENSION

*But they need your help NOW!*



Artemis Mercer

only be available to licensed taxis. Artemis said the Uber app did not implement insurance and public safety standards as rigorously as those imposed on black taxis.

Although the Crowdfunder campaign has targeted London's 25,000 licensed taxi drivers to raise the required money, many from outside the trade have also chipped in.

Action for Cabbies has warned that unless TfL's decision to grant Uber a licence is revoked, the black taxi industry will be decimated "...and the iconic black taxi rendered extinct."

The latest total, which is looked after by a reputable legal firm, was well on its way to £400,000. But there are only a few days left with the Fund closing on Thursday 7 April. If you can help, go to:

<http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/Action-for-Cabbies> and click on Pledge to support the fund.

*Your livelihoods may depend on it...*

## LTC £44m deal to go to Oz!

The London Taxi Company, owned by the Zhejiang Geely Holding Group, has signed a deal worth over £44million to expand the TX4 down to Australia. A minimum order of 1,000 taxis is to be supplied by LTC in the first five years of a ten-year distribution deal.

The deal gives London Taxi (Aust) Ltd the exclusive rights to sell and distribute the iconic TX4 throughout Australia and New Zealand, with LTC in Coventry producing the first order of 200 cabs during 2016.

Peter Johansen, LTC CEO said: "Our vision is to see our iconic London taxis on the streets of all major cities around the world and this agreement is another huge step towards that goal. We have enjoyed a good relationship with our outgoing Australian distributors who have helped us to open up the Australian market and we wish them well. We now look forward to working with the new owners of London Taxi (Aust) Limited in the coming years as we build up the London taxi brand in cities across Australia and New Zealand."

**One hundred TX4 taxis are already in use in Perth, Western Australia and LTC say it has been a "receptive market."**

London Taxi (Aust) Limited is owned by Elgan Potter and Ross Prendergast. In a statement, the duo said that nothing symbolises a high quality professional taxi service as the London TX4 does and that they were delighted to have signed the ten-year distribution agreement.

"LTC is an ambitious company with exciting future plans which bodes well for our future business development. Together, we look forward to raising standards in the taxi industry in Australia."

The London Taxi Company is currently investing £300m in product development and in the creation of brand new research, development and production facility at Ansty Park, Coventry. They are looking to develop and produce a purpose built ultra-low emission taxi capable of meeting London's ambitious emission standards.

London Taxidriviers' Fund for Underprivileged Children

## DRIVERS WANTED

Drivers, we welcome you to come and join us on our outings that give many special needs and disadvantaged children some wonderful fun-packed days out. As well as giving a great deal of pleasure to so many children, we promise you will have a brilliant and fun-packed day out yourself.

**TUESDAY 17th MAY 2016 TO WOBURN TAXI SAFARI**

**WEDNESDAY 13th JULY 2016 TO SOUTHEND**

Without you there are no outings, so please contact our drivers' liaison:

Steve Bell on 07811 508772

Or enter your details on the volunteer page of our website:

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# Jery's World



“Yeah Jack, they’re only cab drivers, what do they know – we’ll offer them a few hundred quid each and a free fish dinner for their building. They’ll snap it up...”

“Not sure Charles, cos they’ve already been offered nearly \$19million and that’s a lot of fish!!!”

## Acceptance of Credit Cards / Handling Fees



I am sure by now you have been made aware that Transport for London (TfL) has ruled that from **2 April 2016**, Credit Cards must be accepted without any additional administration / surcharge being applied, resulting in passengers paying the meter fare only.

**In addition, to assist drivers to recoup the cost of accepting Credit Cards, TfL have increased the flagfall from £2.40 to £2.60.**

The Board has looked at various ways of processing your *Street Hail* Credit Card rides with the sole intention of you not losing any part of the fare as a percentage processing charge. Consequently, the most acceptable method agreed by the Board was to charge all drivers a Credit Card processing fee of £1 per day (plus VAT), which enables you to retain in total the cost of each *Street Hail* Credit Card trip. Bear in mind that you will recover the daily processing fee within the flagfall of your first five trips of the day.

**The only method open to the Society to charge the additional £7 per week is to add this amount to your current weekly standard subscription, which will then appear on your weekly statement. As the revised charging structure for Hail and Ride trips will commence on Saturday 2 April 2016, your revised subscriptions will be charged initially on your statement dated Friday 8 April 2016.**

Credit Card trips accepted via the terminal will continue to attract a 7.5% administration charge; however, this will not apply to any *Street Hail* trips.

Please also bear in mind that all signage referring to the previous charge made on Credit/Debit card acceptance must be removed on Saturday 2 April.

**Howard Pears**  
Finance Manager / Company Secretary



Washington: Police in Michigan have said that an Uber driver who carried out a shooting spree in February has told investigators that the ride-sharing app forced him to commit murder! Police charged Jason Dalton, 45, with killing six people and wounding two during his rampage in the city of Kalamazoo, 150 miles west of Detroit.

Dalton confessed to the murders and said that the Uber smartphone app had instructed him where to go to shoot victims after "taking over his mind and body," the Detroit Free Press reported citing police reports obtained through a public records request.

Dalton told police that on opening the Uber app, he saw a symbol resembling a devil's head and claimed that's when the problems started. The app, he claimed, would give him an assignment and would literally take over his whole body, Dalton is said to have told investigators.

He carried out the shootings outside an apartment complex, a restaurant and a car dealership between driving customers for Uber during a five-hour period.

The police reports also said that after the car Dalton had planned to use failed to start, he took another that left his wife without transportation. Speaking to her at his parents' house after the first shooting, he warned she would not be able to return to work, their children could not go back to school and that she would understand why by watching television news. Investigators say they are still trying to determine a motive.

A judge has ordered Dalton, a former insur-

Shock as Michigan killer claims...

# UBER MADE ME KILL!



Jason Dalton claimed that the Uber app forced him to kill 6 people in Michigan

ance adjuster, to undergo a mental competency exam, prosecutors said earlier this month. He faces a mandatory life sentence in prison without parole.

Dalton's shooting spree prompted President Barack Obama to urge governors to fight gun violence. However, Republican lawmakers, many of whom are backed by the powerful National Rifle Association lobby group, have blocked Obama's attempt to pass gun control legislation.

## Credit Card Signage

As of 2 April 2016, Credit Cards must be accepted without any additional administration / surcharge being applied ie, passengers paying on a card will pay the meter fare only.

All interior signage relating to the previous surcharge (10%) for accepting Credit/Debit card acceptance, must be removed by Saturday 2 April.

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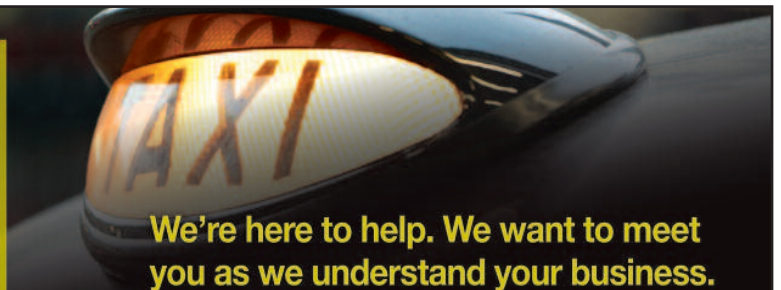
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**By the time you read this, most - if not all - of Dial-a-Cab's taxi fleet will have been upgraded to accept the GPS signals.**

Cabs are being converted at the rate of around two hundred mobiles a week or even more as circumstances at the **Roman Way** depot allow, with technicians working flat out to complete the task as soon as possible. This, of course is in addition to regular maintenance tasks, new and re-fit installations together with the odd problem-solving enquiry!

The image shows just how busy the fitting bays were at the start of the upgrade programme, with several cabs being attended to at the same and every square inch of floor space being utilised to maximise the speed of the fleet conversion while at the same time minimising the down-time for drivers.

# Upgrade Underway!



No room to swing a cat at Roman Way! Luckily there aren't any there to swing!

## While at the Wolseley...

"With the economic climate for the cab trade as tough as it is at present," **Stuart Reason (B26)** told *Call Sign*, "as well as full use of regular taxi ranks, you also get 'pop-up' ranks in unusual places.

"I was setting down at the **Wolseley Restaurant on Piccadilly** and passed a few cabs waiting outside the **St James's** eatery as they formed an orderly - if temporary - queue ready to provide an instant service to patrons of that upmarket establishment!"

**Stuart continued with his story but then gave a different slant to the problem undoubtedly linked to the current downturn in our trade:**

"The doorman eagerly stepped forward to open the cab door for my passenger and that's when we started chatting for a few seconds. It appears that he too is feeling the effects of the downturn because it used to be that when he stepped out into the road to hail a passing cab for a Wolseley client, he would often gain a tip from the punters for doing so. Now with taxis outside his door on their informal 'pop-up' rank, there was no reason - at least in the mind of the public - for him to 'call a cab' because they were already right there!"

Stuart told this magazine that he hadn't thought how the downturn in our trade could have an effect on the wider economy as we usually only worried about our own situation. After hearing Stuart's tale, *Call Sign* spoke to the doorman of a nearby hotel who asked that we not mention either his name or that of the hotel. He said that one problem they had - one that rang a bell with us and similar to the doorman at The Wolseley - was the number of people calling **Uber** because only they knew the vehicle they were waiting for and often just jumped in quickly thereby avoiding the doorman's outstretched hand!

But back to Stuart! He told us that The Wolseley was originally a car showroom back in the 1920s and a branch of **Barclay's Bank** until 1999, with the *Grade II* listed building opening as a restaurant in 2003.

"It's surprising what you can learn talking to a doorman for a few seconds," Stuart said with a smile!

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



Stuart Reason

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**DaC Board Member Mike Son met with TfL Director for Taxis and PH Peter Blake before the TfL board meeting on 17th March and prior to the LBC investigation into PH licensing**

# MIKE SON TALKS TO TFL

**B**eing very aware of the hard work various taxi trade organisations and their representatives have been and are continuing to undertake in order to protect our taxi industry, I am, however, also extremely concerned about the issue of licences to both Private Hire drivers and their vehicles, in addition to the minimal checks undertaken by the two groups. There are also other areas where I was apprehensive...

**So I decided to write to Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Directorate as an individual Stakeholder, with my own personal views and some proposals.**

I must stress at this point I was not representing any organisation within the taxi trade, just my own view and concerns. With this in mind, I was very much surprised to receive a reply and an invitation to meet with the Director of Taxi and Private Hire Service and Compliance, **Peter Blake**.

During our meeting, the various items we discussed were as follows:

## Private Hire Operators Licences:

There are around 3000 existing PH Operators for which the licence fees are as follows:

	Small (two cars max)	Standard
Licence application fee (non-refundable)	£838	£838
Grant of licence fee (5 years)	£650	£1988
Total:	£1488	£2826

**Mike Son proposal:** Due to the low value of Private Hire Operator Licence fees, these should be increased dramatically to meet with the high demand of TfL staffing levels and the ability to check licences, establishments and monitor all PH business activities. Licence renewals should be reduced from five years to one year.

**Peter Blake:** There are proposals on updating the regulations governing London's PH trade for TfL Board approval on 17 March 2016. One of the issues includes altering the structure of licence fees paid by operators of different sizes to better reflect the costs of compliance and enforcement activity. While we are not proposing to change the length of operator licence, it is something we will keep in mind following the already planned changes based on the size of operator.

## Topographical Skills Assessment Centres:

**Mike Son proposal:** There are approximately 150 Assessments Centres, of which many are actually minicab offices. Applicants are given help with filling out the PHV Driver Application form, possibly due to the fact there may be a lack of the English language. There is also minimal Topographical training given. Training is from two hours to half a day with just map reading and no driving test. Yet applicants are guaranteed a 100% pass rate. There is negligible TfL staff monitoring of these Assessment Centres. Fees vary – as an example, training and assessment is £129 (including VAT) whereas assessment is only £69 (including VAT).

There is no expectation that PH drivers can attain the high standard of competence that the London Licenced Taxi Driver will have achieved after 3 to 4 years of learning the Knowledge and the Advance Driving Proficiency training. Nevertheless, to consider public safety and an increase in accidents that involve Private Hire drivers, Topographical Skills Assessment training should incorporate at least some basic vehicle driving training before the issue of a PHV Licence.

**Peter Blake:** We are already working to enhance the topographical test. As I am sure you will know, Private Hire drivers already undergo enhanced DBS checks; we will increase our monitoring testing and auditing of current test centres, as well as those centres that have moved to becoming training schools, which do not administer the test itself.

## PH Congestion Charge Exemption

**Mike Son:** Withdraw the Private Hire Congestion Charge Exemption.

**TfL Response:** Your comments are noted. Clearly, should TfL take forward the proposal to withdraw the exemption, such details will need to be taken account of.

In the meantime, we are adding an extra resource to check that those PHVs entering the Congestion Charge Zone and that claim exemption, are indeed on a booked journey.

## NSL Passing Station Appointments


**Mike Son:** It appears there is a 20% failure rate when vehicles are taken to the Passing Station due to some drivers not having the appropriate documentation with them. There is a need for some resolve on this issue as it impacts the extended time it takes for an appointment for taxi licensing.

**Peter Blake:** As we discussed, it's important to know we would want to take the opportunity to encourage compliance in the first instance, before going down the route of charging for failures due to lack of documents. We are stepping up the message to drivers on the need for proper documentation in our communications with them, ie in our **OnRoute** magazine and weekly emails. We are also encouraging trade reps we engage with to spread the message to drivers and proprietors. Should we not see an improvement in the number of vehicles failed due to documentation in the coming months, then we will re-examine the potential use of a financial incentive.

**Mike Son:** Thank you...

**Mike Son**  
DaC Board Member

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## Can you really afford *not* to get a copy!!!





**Robert is concerned about forthcoming PED regulations**

"This 02 network thing is fine, coverage is throughout the UK- if we're lucky enough to get a trip that far," **Robert Meehan (W24)** enthused to *Call Sign* when we met while he

## Better than before but...

was being upgraded to accept the forthcoming GPS signal changeover.

"Many years ago, I went to the South Coast with a fare when we were still operating on the old analogue signal, which had a range of about 30 miles if you were lucky," the **Dial-a-Cab** driver recalled.

"On arrival at our destination, I had to phone in the meter reading to the dispatcher, who advised me that he had noted the details and that when returning and a bit closer to London with a recovered signal, I should clear the meter reading in the normal way and he would check all was well. No such complicated procedures nowadays with our present network and I look forward to the new GPS system being even better as we won't have to remember constantly booking in as we move from zone to zone, which will be much better the before."

Then Robert's tone changed as he recalled a recent visit to his local Passing Station.

"It left me a little confused, even though

my cab passed its' annual re-licencing, when the technician said that DaC's current positioning of the PED card reader would not be viable soon because under new regulations coming in regarding compulsory credit card apparatus, the card reader has to be 'in a fixed position within the passenger compartment and within the field of vision of the passenger.' He pointed out the obvious that both ours and **ComCab's** were clearly not!"

*Call Sign* checked the situation and according to a spokesperson for the Society, we had originally been given the OK to keep our PEDs where they are, obviously a much safer option because it is not only more convenient to use by the passenger given its' flexibility via the cable, it is also under the control and watchful eye of the driver at all times.

The Editor and the Chairman have commented on the situation on pages three and four...

**Baghwat Singh**  
*Call Sign Online*

## Two new river crossings for East London?

**A**ccording to a recent **TfL** report, East London could see two new river crossings at **Gallions Reach** and **Belvedere** to provide new, quicker road and public transport links and support new housing developments by 2025, following overwhelming public support in a recent TfL consultation.

Consultation on the proposals, which closed in February, showed 88 percent of those responding supporting a new crossing at Gallions Reach to link **Thamesmead** and **Beckton**, or at **Belvedere**, linking it to **Rainham**. Around 77 percent supported new crossings at both locations, which would cater for public transport and road users and help secure London's future success.

TfL's work has shown that both proposed crossings would provide significant benefits to local people and businesses and help support jobs and homes on both sides of the river. The crossings would incorporate a network of new and extended bus services and could also provide opportunities for new walking and cycling links as well as a potential extension of the **Docklands Light Railway** from Gallions Reach across the Thames to the new station at Thamesmead.

**In the meantime, TfL is extending the life of the Woolwich Ferry service. Work was recently completed to the jetties and loading bridges on both sides of the river and TfL has now begun the bidding process to purchase two new boats to replace the existing 1960s vessels, to keep the service running into the 2020s.**

Outgoing Mayor of London, **Boris Johnson**, said: "There is no doubt that new river crossings in the east are going to be vital to the future prosperity of our rapidly-growing city. As well as improving transport links for all, they will unlock swathes of land for development, leading to new jobs and homes and improve areas for businesses and communities. Gallions Reach and Belvedere are just the start of a series of crossings that are going to prove a real boost to the capital and I'm delighted that Londoners have given us their unequivocal backing."

The plans for the new crossings at Gallions Reach and Belvedere form part of the Mayor's wider proposals for the future of river crossings in the Capital. The vision, which was outlined last year in TfL's **Connecting the Capital** report, proposes 13 new tunnels and bridges across the **Thames** – increasing the total number between **Imperial Wharf** and **Dartford** by more than a third and the number for pedestrians and cyclists by nearly 50 percent. These include public transport crossings such as **Crossrail** and a number of potential pedestrian and cycling crossings, such as the new bridges connecting **Nine Elms** with **Pimlico** and **Rotherhithe** with **Canary Wharf**.

Following approval at the TfL Board last month, work is now underway to submit plans to Government for permission to start building the proposed **Silvertown Tunnel**. This tunnel, which would link the **Greenwich Peninsula** with the **Royal Docks**, is vital to relieve pressure at **Blackwall**, which is currently east London's only major road crossing and which would help support the delivery of thousands of new homes and jobs.

*Call Sign says: New crossings are undoubtedly needed, but we can't help wondering whether it is the public who will end up paying never-ending fortunes to cross, just as they do at the Dartford Crossing. And with so much investment money in their hands, we can think of a forgotten part of the Mayor's transport system that could use some financial assistance...*



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## LPG TAXI CONVERSIONS ARE COMING!

**C**all Sign has received a stream of phone calls over the past 12 months from Dial-a-Cab drivers asking if there was any way they could extend their cab's 15 year life, because either they were too old to contemplate buying a new taxi or perhaps couldn't justify the cost at present. So we looked into whether an LPG conversion and the 5 year extension that comes with it could be an answer.

Taxis are said to be one of the worst polluters on our roads and while we are certainly not alone, there is undoubtedly a substantial amount of truth in it. The claim is that in central London we account for almost 35 percent of PM10 emissions and around 15 per cent of NOx emissions. The new models of TX4 and Vitos are much improved, but involve a huge outlay and until the electric versions come out, then the stigma will remain. But we had been told that an LPG conversion would cut emissions substantially – PM10 by a whopping 99 percent and NOx by 80 percent.

So *Call Sign* held a meeting with Paul Oxford and Andrew Sanders who were representing Autogas Ltd; but there was a third guest - a 2010 TX4 that had been converted to run on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). Andrew uses it as his company car, covering what he told us were many thousands of trouble-free miles, including trips to Holland. The cab had already been to Millbrook testing station to check for improvements since converting. It would have been Euro 4 in 2010, but testing when bought second-hand showed it operating then below Euro 2 emission standards. After conversion to LPG, the taxi met the Euro 6 standards and had fuel savings of around 20%!



The Editor in the converted LPG cab

### The conversion...

The conversion consists of replacing your diesel engine with a brand new Opel petrol engine that is capable of 290 brake horsepower, although detuned as 100mph + taxis aren't really needed on the North Circular Road! But it will give you the same torque as a TX4 but without any shudders or vibrations and will probably sound even quieter than your car!

The first thing you notice after starting it up

and moving off is that quietness, but I wondered what would happen if I put my foot down? Would it have the same power that a TX4 has and the answer was undoubtedly yes! From a gentle 20mph, my foot pushed down on the throttle and the cab shot forward but with very little engine noise. The feeling was of driving a car.

Both Paul and Andrew spoke of the environment, something we've all heard many times before and yes, we'd all like it cleaner; but do we take much notice? Then Andrew went outside and came back with four small containers. Paul made the point that one reason the public aren't overly bothered that much with emissions is because they can't see it... but we were about to and yes, it really shocked me!

Two of the jars contained NO2 and fine particulates gathered from taxi emissions after 500 miles on a TX1, whilst the other two contained the NO2 and fine particulates following 500 miles on the LPG conversion. The results in the jars were staggering. Before conversion, looking at the two jars it was frightening to think that we were breathing that in, but to then pick them up and feel the actual weight was just shocking. The two jars following conversion did have some NO2/particulates, but such a tiny amount that you could hardly see it! The soot is the unburnt product that comes out of the exhaust to become part of the air around us. And those results (see photo) were just from 500 miles, so to then multiply it by 22,000 cabs in London... that is pretty scary!

The cab starts on petrol, but once the operative temperature is reached, automatically switches over to LPG and gives the average London taxi driver more than two days before needing to refill. The small petrol tank would need refilling even less as it's hardly used. Andrew told *Call Sign* that the most he has had from a tank of LPG was 401 miles and that equated to 12p per mile at 56p per litre, but he did emphasise that included a lot of motorway driving and that driving around town with its stopping and starting would obviously be less. But even at 350 or so miles, that certainly removes any recharging you might have to do on an electric taxi.

The downside is the number of filling sites in



The two filled jars on the left contain emissions from an unconverted cab. The two almost empty ones are from the LPG cab

London. Currently there are around 65 pumps but the probability is that most drivers fill up with diesel at the same garage and the same would apply once you had found a local LPG site. I was given a list of sites and there are no parts of London that don't have LPG pumps.

So how far are we away from conversions becoming reality? Well, Autogas met with LTPH the previous week and by the time you read this, someone in London will be trialling a converted TX2 before it then goes back to LTPH / TfL for a durability test. If successful, *Call Sign* was thinking of possibly holding an open day at the Dial-a-Cab House car park once work has been completed. Interested drivers would be able to come and test-drive the vehicle and even meet Credit Union officials if needed.

So to the part most drivers are interested in... finance! The total conversion cost including the new engine and fitting etc is £8,000 + VAT taking the total up to £9,600. Autogas don't provide any finance deals, so if you don't want to empty your bank account then we have another option. We've spoken to the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union and they are prepared to lend any interested drivers the money needed. Of course, if you aren't a member then you will need to join (their ad is in every issue). In order to borrow from any credit union, the requirement is that you have had to have saved one third of the total you want to borrow.

*continued on page 13*



It's always seemed to me that if you eat in the same place every day with the same crowd and then one of you changes his hours or decides to eat elsewhere, then it's like they vanished off the face of the earth! And that's kind of like how it was with me and a guy I'll call **Big Dave...**

It was the early eighties and I was, shall we say, in between marriages and spending a fair amount of time in the **Granby Grill**. I'd go in there about eleven and again at six and **Big Dave** was always in there. He was tall, thin and lugubrious and reminded me a bit of **Walter Matthau**. He also had an engaging stammer and a near permanent cigarette lit.

He was probably 20 years older than me, but we got along very well. He was a great raconteur with a lifetime fund of experiences and stories. But not only could he talk - he had that rare quality - he could also listen. **Big Dave** had a lovely laugh if you amused him. And he could do it without his eyes wandering to the door to see who'd come in or breaking off to engage someone else in conversation. When people do that to me, I just stop talking and wait to see if they say sorry and ask what I was saying! Mostly they don't.

Anyway, back to **Big Dave**. The reason I opened this piece as I did, was because of Dave's unusual working methods. What he did was to work long days from about April to Christmas and then disappear until the spring. When he came back onto the scene, people would always ask him where he had been and he would always reply that he'd been to **Spain**. But he confided to me that it could have been **Israel** or the **US** or anywhere he fancied but told them **Spain** because there were so many tales about him always circulating. He was rumoured to be very rich. Others claimed they saw him com-

Another true story from Geoff Levene...

## The tale of Big Dave...



ing out of safe deposit centres. I didn't probe. I just enjoyed his company.

In 1945 he joined the Army, but this tall, skinny Jewish boy with the stammer was a target for the bully boys. So he shacked up with a girl and went AWOL, but ran out of money and came down to borrow some from a friend (of whom more later). But he walked through **Kings Cross**, which crawled with Military Police. Two of them watched him as he walked by. Then he made a mistake - he looked back at them and was soon back with his "mates" and saw out the war and the rest of his service there.

I wanted to invite him to my wedding to the good lady wife, but it was in the winter so he was off the scene. I saw him a few months later, but then one day I mentioned him and someone said that he had died. I was really shocked and saddened. Perhaps those cigarettes got him in the end.

Now what about that friend - let's call him **Manny Wolf**. He also became a cab driver. He was, and hopefully still is, a lovely charming fellow. He was also what you might call "hooky" and famous for what was known as

the *luggage scam*. That particular piece of chicanery had three vital elements:

1. The **FX3** with its open luggage compartment.
2. A **Geecen** meter.
3. A "Connaught" - ie a stranger in town who didn't know the ropes.

So **Manny** was on the point of **Liverpool Street** and up walks a young Dutch guy with a suitcase. **Manny** steps forward and grabs the case.

"Good morning sir, where would you like to go?"

"**Victoria Station**," comes the reply.

"**Certainly**," says **Manny**, "I'll just weigh the case."

He puts the case on the "scales," starts the meter and presses the extras button. Because the thing about the **Geecen** was you didn't have to keep pressing the button, you just kept your finger on it and the amount shot up.

"**OK**," **Manny** says with obvious experience, "that'll be one and ninepence for the case. Pay me when we get there." It was all done with courtesy, grace and charm. As he used to say: "Always leave them with a smile."

One last thing about **Big Dave**. Long before I met him and before it was fashionable, he had gone through a messy divorce and years later was still paying her maintenance. He kept tabs on her because his friend was her cousin and he used to say that it was like having a spy in the enemy camp! But he would never pay her personally - only via the Court and only after receiving a final demand.

"**I am determined**," he said in all seriousness, "to die owing her money!"

I think he got his wish...!

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

## LPG TAXI CONVERSIONS ARE COMING!

continued from page 12

We asked **DACCU** for repaying estimates on a round £10,000 so you would need to have saved over £3,000 to get that, but you could actually put that into your savings as a lump sum. With current interest rates so low, you really won't be losing much in that respect.

Paying back the loan? Well, put it this way, if you do not intend buying a new cab and your current cab is running out of time, then you're looking at renting an older one at up to £190 per week or £265 for a 2016 model. Or there is the Credit Union.

Borrowing £10,000 over 48 months will cost you £264 a month. If you want to repay over 36 months, the monthly cost is £333, while drivers thinking of paying it off over 24 months are looking at a monthly cost of £470, while those that just want to get it over with and can afford to go for 12 months, that would set you back £890 a month - pretty much the cost of an ever-increasing **TX4** rental, except that you'd be paying it for just 12 months and not forever!

Former **DaC** driver, **Stanley Roth (ex-Y53)** has driven a gas cab for many years. He told *Call Sign*: "Since 1957, I realised how harmful diesel was, not just from fumes but also the noise and vibration. So I started driving petrol cabs. In 1970, garage owners **W H Cook** started to buy petrol **FX4s** and add **LPG** to help cut pollution. I was the second owner-driver to convert. My present taxi is a **V reg TX1** which was converted to **LPG** using the **Australian GasTech Engine** over 5 years ago. **LPG** is the most practical and cleanest road fuel for a taxi as it has the lowest **NOx** output and is, in fact, 90% lower than a **Euro 6 diesel** and also with no **PM10s...**"

More info as we get it...

**Alan Fisher**  
Call Sign Online



Well, the answer to the question is that I don't know! I have no real knowledge of UK tax laws, other than that I pay what's requested from me at the



end of January and July each year. According to specialists in tax law, UK regulations in tax run to around 78,000 pages of often conflicting rules and regulations, so it's no wonder that those with huge amounts of money going through their hands find ways of retaining those sums within their corporate bodies.

It's fairly apparent to those of us who have modest amounts of earnings that something needs to be done, firstly to simplify the tax system and secondly to ensure that those that have the most, pay the most! Hopefully, that would ensure that the UK has the resources to run properly for everyone and not just a small minority.

Back to the headline of could DaC go offshore just as Uber does? The question comes about as the result of a BBC2 documentary called "The town that took on the taxman." The town concerned was a small one in Wales called Crickhowell. It was not a cloned town and apart from a Boots, there were no other chain stores in town - and that was the way they liked it. They had already seen off one of the big four supermarket chains that wanted to open there. Nevertheless, Crickhowell has become famous...

This small town in Powys sits at the other end of the A40 between Abergavenny and Brecon and has found that degree of fame for being the first British "settlement" to use tax avoidance schemes that are often used by big business in order to avoid paying taxes. It was said to be in protest as to how large corporations were legally allowed to use loopholes in order to avoid paying UK tax. Does that remind U of any particular minicab outfit?

Eddie Lambert wonders whether, just like Uber...

## COULD DIAL-A-CAB GO OFFSHORE?

Journalist / comedian / activist, Heydon Prowse, went to the town to see if he could inspire some of the local traders to join a project to take their businesses offshore. The aim of this wasn't to reap huge rewards for the townspeople, but to point out to HMG and the Revenue and Customs office that current tax laws were far too easy on the multinationals. They decided to set-up a "Town Company" consisting of a handful of local businesses and to go "offshore."

This they did by first going to the Isle of Man to form a corporate company - very easy as it only took an afternoon at the Isle's Financial Centre - very conveniently situated adjacent to the ferry port at Douglas. The cost of setting up the accounts was less than £500 plus an annual fee. Of course there was also travel and accommodation costs to add on.

The next step was to establish something known as a Dutch Sandwich. This involves travelling to Amsterdam to form 'Holding' companies. These were companies in name only and in one example shown in the programme, there were around 28,000 companies housed in one modest three storey office block crammed full of computers, but with only 3 people working there!

The point of the exercise was to establish themselves as a Dutch company for tax purposes. Then all profits would be sent to Holland electronically in the first instance, as this apparently removes the funds from any liability of Corporation Tax (20 percent in the UK). Usually, any money sent abroad like this then becomes liable to something called Withholding or Retention Tax, which is usually 25 percent, but Holland has it

zero rated!

Once this had been done, the money was forwarded onto the Isle of Man accounts. One person from the operating company - in the TV programme they decided to call themselves Fair Tax Town - would have to attend an AGM in Amsterdam once a year.

The operation revolves around "Intellectual Property Rights." This is an ethereal or intangible concept that can be hard to define and therefore difficult for tax authorities to judge. Dial-a-Cab's business model, compared to the likes of Addison Lee and the other Private Hire operators out there, is based on the driver having studied and absorbed the Knowledge of London. It is my contention that this must come under the heading of "Intellectual Property" as it must differ slightly from driver to driver.

Whether it would be practical for DaC to use this route to save Corporation Tax, I don't know. But I do know that if it is, then it could make a difference to DaC's survival from the current financial situation in the form it currently is. It would also help put pressure of HMRC and Her Majesty's Government to sort out the current situation with regard to companies such as Uber, Google and Amazon etc.

After all, HMRC may not mind those huge organisations getting away with some tax, but they wouldn't want us ordinary folk to be able to do it as well!!!

Eddie Lambert (V37)

Call Sign Online

While DaC's tax situation is more complicated than the above in regard to corporation tax, the principle of Eddie's article remains relevant ...Ed

## LTDA Members Lobby Parliament

On Tuesday 8 March, the largest congregation of LTDA members seen for many a year amassed in the splendour of Central Hall at the Palace of Westminster.

The LTDA had organised a lobby of MPs with Members and MPs not letting them down. The day bode well when with two colleagues entering the security screening area, a policeman enquired whether we were cabbies? We owned up - only to hear him utter under his breath: "Good luck lads, get rid of them!" And no, he wasn't referring to some of the incumbents at the House!

The exercise of this LTDA lobbying initiative was for members to persuade their MPs to commit to taking action that licensing authority, TfL, had failed to do.

We had to adhere to the protocol of lobbying by making for an area where lobby cards were filled in. I was promptly reprimanded by a round bobby for trying to take photos, ironically by a sign that proclaimed *no photography!* That tickled the friendly bobby!

But rules are made to be broken, Uber have conclusively proved that adage! I took a picture of my Lobby card and promptly tweeted it to my MP, Wes Streeting, MP for Ilford North. To my amazement, Wes tweeted back saying he was on a committee but would be down soon.

We didn't have to wait too long and his taxi driving constituents, including me, weren't disappointed. Wes Streeting is well-informed, engaged, energetic and very generous with his time.

He was empathetic to our plight and on March 22nd aired our grievances in the House of Commons by introducing a 10 Minute Bill (see page 29).

Following the meeting, Wes Streeting said: "Uninsured drivers, unfair competition and poor quality are driving black cab drivers off the road. Ilford North is home to one of the largest numbers of black cab drivers in London and we need to make sure that there are fair conditions and everyone is on an equal footing."



Marc Turner with his MP, Wes Streeting, at the Lobby

Marc Turner (R97)



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  
1964

This month's Flashback is from the August 1964 issue of ODRTS News Magazine...

## Bernard Braden, Barbara Kelly and ODRTS

News Magazine published a letter in the June edition from Mr Bernard Braden in which he criticised our use of the word reliability, the cost to him of the ODRTS taxi service account facility and asked why our pre-booked jobs are only called ten minutes before the booked time. He also mentioned his wife, Barbara Kelly, calling an ODRTS cab and after it failed to appear, she had to start walking until a taxi from "another circuit" picked her up "having picked up the signal!" Since then, we have received numerous responses and are publishing two relevant ones – a drivers view and a synopsis of events re Miss Kelly's cab from the ODRTS Control Room.

Joe Toff, Editor ODRTS News Magazine

Dear Sir,

With regard to Mr Braden's letter in June, we should ask ourselves if we stand or fall as an organisation if credit facilities are not taken up by the Braden household or if they seek a more reliable service elsewhere. I am confident that their absence would not be noticed, but cannot say the same for the many satisfied and respected clients and friends who are always ready to praise our efforts and sometimes show their appreciation by tipping the driver in addition to the automatic gratuity. The fabulous amount of 6s or 6s 6d for transporting Mr Braden from home to office or vice versa is still 1s 6d or 1s below the lowest minimum fare advertised by our unlicensed and unreliable opposition. A few weeks ago I answered a call for Chester Terrace; I gave my position at Madam Tussauds and was asked to cover the job quickly. On arriving at the Braden household with 2s 6d on the meter, the manservant asked me to wait. Mrs Braden eventually appeared and asked to be driven to Hinde Street. After driving about 100 yards, the meter tripped up to 3s 6d and Mrs Braden began to complain about the amount on the meter. I explained the run-in procedure and waiting time but she more or less insisted that some sharp practice was going on. As I could make no headway, I called the dispatcher, explained the position and told him within my passenger's earshot that I had the feeling Mrs Braden was convinced I was a dishonest person. He suggested I make some adjustment at the other end, to which I replied in a very loud and firm tone: "Certainly not!" By the time we reached Hinde Street, Mrs Braden was sweetness itself, most apologetic and rewarded me with a 1s 6d tip. But gone was the image I had built up of a kind and homely personality, a priceless image that entertainers struggle and strive for and gone for the price of a measly bob. This incident does not seem to fall in with Mrs Braden's eagerness to have a cab five minutes early rather than five late.

I suggest we write to Mr Braden in the nicest possible terms urging him to give our competitors a trial and when he is dissatisfied, as I am sure he soon will be, come back to us a wiser and happier client - a little more patient during peak hiring hours and happy in the knowledge that we will be more eager to cover his requests for cabs if we are not treated as "Ali Baba and the Forty Cab Drivers," that crazy old pantomime joke which seems to perpetually run through his mind and his Braden Beat show.

There was a modicum of truth to his letter, of course, as there often is when writing of dis-satisfaction at a service of some kind. After all, how often have I been watching BBC on a Saturday night and then turned to ITV to watch On the Braden

Beat hoping to be amused and entertained, BUT...!!!  
R. Barnett (C37)

## Reply from the Control Room

Dear Sir,

Having read the letter from Mr Bernard Braden, I would like to bring something to both yours and their notice. It concerns an incident around three weeks ago. A cab was booked for Mrs Braden (aka Barbara Kelly) at 10.55am and as is usual, the dispatcher called the job 10 minutes before time. A cab was in the Outer Circle and arrived at Chester Terrace within three minutes. We phoned to advise that the cab was outside and was informed that Mrs Braden didn't mind the cab being there a few minutes before time, but would the driver stop his meter until the booked time. She was informed that this couldn't be done and we were instructed to send the cab away and send another one at the booked time. We then suggested, after dismissing the cab, that she phoned for one when she was ready. This she did and you know the rest...

Derek Ford  
ODRTS Control Room



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The DaC Sales team have been very busy speaking with new prospective clients, in addition to a large number of our existing ones.

Now that our new Senior Sales Executive is becoming more familiar with the industry and the services we offer, he has begun contacting companies and building relationships with them. That is how this industry works within the corporate sector. Nowhere have we found where an account is opened at the first visit; you first make the initial contact. That in itself is hard enough, as individuals no longer allow their contact details to be given out. You have to be a detective by nature to find new ways of getting the contact information. Once you have it, then you have to get past the rejection stage of them not being interested.

**Again, it is the skill of knowing which type of carrot to dangle, although having said that, most carrots seem to involve cost – the first word we seem to hear!**

Each day, our customer service side is contacting existing clients informing them of our pricing for longer trips, whilst at the same time making updates to our account contacts. We are also making clients fully aware of all our facilities, which includes being able to book via our Smartphone App and our online booking tool.

General feedback has been very good and all seem very pleased with the service. In saying this, I feel there may be too many that can relate to our early morning service, which is not always as impressive as our overall service.

We also encourage clients to allow us to pay them a visit so that we can better demonstrate and explain all the services we provide over and above putting a vehicle outside the door. And in the majority of occasions, this has been welcomed by clients.

Unsurprisingly, when we get the opportunity to meet with them, they open up far more than when speaking on the phone. A common point

# DaC Sales Report

*With Keith Cain*



of discussion relates to the approaches being made by our competitors and at the moment, that is Uber who are making a conservative effort for the corporate market.

**One Mayfair client told us that Uber were offering them £33 from W1 to Heathrow Airport and if an invoice at the end of the month was required, then a very small administration charge is made for supplying it. Clients often admit that even with the cheap Uber prices, not all their staff want to use them - primarily because of the bad publicity surrounding them - and they often do not put up any objections. In one way that's good, but not so good in another way because no matter how we look at it, the account usage with us has dropped.**

I have also had meetings with a couple of very large users, one of whom is based on the Island. The opportunity I had to show them exactly what we can offer was met with much

interest. What they liked most was the one stop shop service we offer. They knew of us and what we used to offer JPM on the Island and were keen to explore this in more detail. Never count your chickens... but the initial contact was positive and I will build on it.

At the time of compiling the report, we are completing three tender documents. One is for a rail company; one is for an NHS hospital whilst the third is for a major bank.

As a point of information for *Call Sign* readers, no one, when asking you to complete their tender, ever takes into consideration that you may just be busy doing other things, because deadlines being given to return completed tenders are getting shorter and shorter. What is also rather disappointing with the tender process is the amount of information we are required to supply. Questions such as how we run the business with regard to our business continuity plan, our environmental policy, our Health and Safety documentation, our liability insurances and our data protection policy to name but a few. But of course, so often all they really want to know is how much will the service cost!

Every section is scored, but the pricing section unsurprisingly scores the most! Score low there and it does not matter how high you score elsewhere. However, we do not refuse any opportunity to tender for business... no matter what.

**Keith Cain**  
*Head of Sales*

*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

### **Moor Park Golf Club: The High Course**

There are two courses at **Moor Park** (The High and The Low ones), but the one you want to play is the High course.

But let's start with the **Clubhouse**; it was built in the late 1670s for the **Duke of Monmouth**, who was beheaded soon after completion – although there is probably no connection between the building and the beheading other than they both start with the letter B! In actual fact, **James Scott**, the First Duke of Monmouth and son of **Charles II** was beheaded for treason on 15 July 1685 after failing in an attempt to overthrow his uncle, **James II**, at the Monmouth Rebellion.

**But where were we? Ah yes, the Clubhouse! This is probably the most impressive clubhouse in the British Isles aside from St Andrews. Changing hands through the centuries, it was also the HQ for Operation Market Garden in the latter stages of WW2.**

The course is a **Harry Colt** design, opening in 1923. Colt courses have a common denominator - clever contoured greens, usually higher than the holes, fairway and surrounded by bunkers.

Moor Park High course is no exception. It's not a sloggers course; strategy off the tee will leave you in the ideal position to play your approach in.

**A few holes go up and down, quite steep valleys and as it's on clay, I'd suggest playing in between Spring and Autumn, maybe on their 'twilight deal' that I think is still going.**

There are some very good holes here; a particular favourite from memory is the par 3 on the back nine. 180-90 yards over a deep dell to one of the most severe 2 tier greens I've played. A really enjoyable course...

*Happy golfing*



**Moor Park GC**

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



# THE MOTORISTS GUIDE TO... MOVING TRAFFIC AND PARKING REGULATIONS

**J**ohn Vigus is Dial-a-Cab's parking expert and the person who deals with our PCN appeals. Over the past year, the number of driver's parking fines that this Society has to pay has gone down to virtually nil – ok, there *was* one last month! We can safely say that John knows his stuff having successfully challenged a total of over 12,000 PCNs from taxis to scaffold lorries!

So when we heard that he'd written a book on the *do's* and *do not's* of parking and driving, we had to take a look. And sure enough 'The Motorists Guide to Moving Traffic And Parking Regulations' does what it says on the tin! There is no situation that we as professional drivers could find ourselves in that isn't covered in this astonishing book.

Published in an A4 format so that none of the many signs we need to recognise have to be squeezed in, this 116 page book is a complete guide to not only what you can and can't do, but also what you should do if you're naughty and caught! Do you have a chance with an appeal etc.

John also explains in his own words - rather than the official gobbledegook we tend to get - exactly what some of the many parking terms used on street signs and references on PCNs actually mean. Also there are the numerous signs we pass each and every day as we drive around London, often not really understanding what they even mean! We probably often wonder if they are made to deliberately be confusing so that we don't understand them and consequently disobey them unintentionally – but still have to pay!

Call Sign spoke to John recently and asked him about the book...

"Since the use of CCTV for parking contraventions was seriously curtailed in April 2015, all London enforcement authorities have been aggressively pursuing moving traffic violations. Many of the moving traffic penalty charges that have been issued could have been avoided and so I produced a guide detailing the finer points for all motorists - with advice for taxi drivers in particular. Taxi drivers are on the road for hours at a time and although familiar with many routes, can still be caught out on occasion. Having dealt with many thousands of adjudication appeals, I have learnt what adjudicators will and will not accept as a defence. The guide is in 7 parts: The legislation, red routes, stopping waiting and Loading restrictions (including bus stop regula-



John Vigus explains to Call Sign how his book will help taxi drivers

tions), parking bays, moving traffic (including box junction regulations and cycle boxes), bus lanes and parking on private land.

Most of you will know that I have been readily available on the phone to give advice, to assist and represent drivers who have received PCNs and I will continue to do so."

Hard copies of The Motorists Guide to

Moving Traffic And Parking Regulations are priced at £8. Alternatively, the book can be made available to Dial-a-Cab drivers in electronic form at a cost of £5 per copy.

Orders will be taken via Driver Services and payment can be deducted from your DaC account. Perhaps more to the point should be can you afford *not* to get a copy!!!

Alan Fisher  
Call Sign Online

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With PH licensing now almost at 100,000, Call Sign asked in an FOI Request...

# JUST HOW MUCH DOES TFL GET FROM PH LICENSING?

Over the past few years, the number of minicabs being licensed in London has been going through the roof (up 68,000 over the past 10 years). It doesn't need *Call Sign* to tell licensed taxi drivers how that has affected this trade and how in reality, Transport for London under the leadership of Mayor Boris Johnson has done what even Adolph Hitler couldn't – decimate this 360 year old trade!

So we sent a Freedom of Information Request to TfL to see whether the huge increase of PH licences is bad news for everyone. So, very few Dial-a-Cab drivers will be surprised to know that our bad news was equally good news for our licensing authority.

We asked for the itemised incomes from PH licensing over the past three years and unsurprisingly, TfL's income from 2013 to 2015 shot up by almost £500,000! That represents an



awful lot of minicabs! But that isn't the whole story.

Strangely, there was a decrease in 2014 thanks to a reduction of £14 in the PH vehicle licensing fee, but by the following year

they made that up by sheer numbers and the figure literally took off, heading upwards by almost £1.3 million - £1,256,000 to be precise! To re-emphasise, that was the increase in just 12 months!

According to the FOIR, by law all the income has to be spent on licensing and TfL cannot make a profit, so licence fees "are therefore adjusted accordingly."

So that infers that TfL spent their 2015 PH income of £6,505,000 on just licensing. Having heard how much some of the TfL Board earn, could it be that Uber – probably quite happily – pay the Board's huge salaries???

### Year Income from PHV licensing

2013	£6,013,000
2014	£5,249,000
2015	£6,505,000

So we have to wonder what exactly TfL did with the extra £1,256,000 in 12 months!

Simon Scott is one of the new generation of taxi drivers whose life is captured as a blog! His story of his early days as a taxi driver is captured here as...

## A Blogger's Tale

### 1988

I had begun working a little earlier in the day - getting in a few hours before breakfast had become my routine and I enjoyed it. The last fare before my trip to the **Piccolo** was a special one; once the money had changed hands, I always put it on the dashboard and viewed it as breakfast. Once there, I would lean back in my seat and mentally thank that last punter as I forced a piece of toast into my mouth before setting sail again and starting to think about lunch!

It was in this state of mind that, as I cruised along **Newgate Street**, I noticed a young lady waving her arms at me. She was quite breathless as she leant into my nearside window and whispered: "Can you go around the block and wait at the top of the **Old Bailey** for me please?"

Now, I do get a bit suspicious when someone asks me to help them, especially when it's my job anyway; there was definitely something she wasn't telling me but I said of course I would and off I went.

I positioned myself at the top of the Old Bailey and could see the entrance clearly, there was the usual crowd of people milling around and I wondered what all the secrecy was about... when all of a sudden she came rushing out with her arms going like a windmill. I released the handbrake and shot off down the hill as fast as my **FX4** could handle it. I noticed some movement from the press people who had obviously seen her as well. As I got close, she ran back to the door and re-appeared with three people from inside the court. All hell let loose as the rear door flew open and slammed shut with my new occupants inside. The press were all over my cab, flashbulbs lighting it up; they were blocking the road in front, the side and behind me trying to open the

doors and force the windows down.

I looked in the back for some direction, but they were all on the floor with their hands hiding their faces. Miraculously, I had managed to avoid running anyone over by the time I got to the traffic lights, but they hadn't even told me where we were going! I slowed as the lights turned red and a head appeared in my rear view mirror asking for Stratford.

But as I waited at the lights we had a repeat performance. One of the rear windows was forced down and cameras were being held inside the cab, flashes illuminating the back like a Christmas tree. I forced the lights to go green through sheer willpower and for those who don't remember the emissions that an FX4 could produce at full throt-

tle, I'll remind you because as I looked in my wing mirror I could see absolutely no one, despite there being at least a dozen press men there! They had disappeared in a cloud of toxic diesel fumes!

Later that night with my feet up on the coffee table, I saw the whole incident again on the **News at Ten**. I may have still been a butterboy but I'd made it. I had appeared on television at last...!

To be continued...



Simon Scott (040) Call Sign Online

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# LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

With Tom Quigley (Y33)

## What's the point...?

Needless to say, the response I get from a lot of trade members when I tell them in conversation that I run a Knowledge college is: "What! Are people still signing up? What's the point??? Have you told them the game is dead?" You get the picture because many of the comments are obviously watered down for publishing in a family magazine such as *Call Sign*.

As someone who has always tried to remain positive, I have to remind the pessimists that they were once in that position and the jobs - or lack of them - that my students have currently got are generally worse than the career they are trying to pursue. Or that due to the pressures of modern day working conditions, of 24 hour technology, mobile phones and emails, that some of the students are perhaps looking for a complete change.

Can I remind all you *Dial-a-Cab* drivers out there that we are privileged; apart from the current financial restraints, we wake up each day with a choice of whether or not to work, to select what time we start and what time to finish and have no emails or phone calls unless we choose to have them.

We never have to phone London up and say we can't come in because our children aren't too well, neither do we have to book our holidays in February as we can't clash on the same weeks as our work colleagues.

Often, we just don't appreciate what we've got until it's under threat or lost completely; yes we are under attack and work is a struggle at the moment, but there are many in our business who have moaned consistently throughout my time in the trade, complaining about too many drivers passing the KoL. I wonder if they sit in their Taxis now and regret saying or thinking that, because they are now of a mind that if more people passed the Knowledge, the less there would have been a demand for alternatives.



Yes, it may have meant less work, but at least the playing field would have been equal...

## Tales from the KoL Chair

All of us will have Knowledge memories of our appearances, our time in "the chair" and the strange and funny stories we either remember or choose not to, even though most will be a blur! The great thing about teaching and listening to students is that I can relax and chuckle at their experiences, even though it's only been a relatively short time.

Stories I can relate to come flooding back; a new student who had only been with me for a week was asking advice on how to conduct himself. This guy, an ex-professional footballer and reasonably successful as a City trader, took on board my comments about calling the examiner Sir or Ma'am and not to sit until requested to, so much so that when the examiner called him in, he went straight in and sat down! The examiner told him he shouldn't be sitting down yet and especially not there... as it was *bis* seat and the answers were in front of him! The same student on his next appearance couldn't 'see' the run required but told the examiner that though it

"may be a bit rough and wide, I'll get you there!"

Another student was on their first appearance; the examiner introduced himself and said that he would be asking the questions. The student responded by introducing himself as the candidate and said that he would be answering them! Then there was a young guy in our group who turned up without a tie. He looked around the room at the other candidates with their suits and ties on and realised his error. In a panic, he went through his pockets and luck was on his side, as, this being his only suit - one that he last wore for a funeral - and there was a tie in his pocket!

One young lady student was so nervous that she went to the toilet in a haze, only to be met outside by a female examiner asking where she had been. Replying politely to the examiner, the young girl said she had been to the toilet. She then went bright red when realising that she had been into the men's and that the ladies toilet was at the other side of the corridor!

Yes, there are horror stories to tell - some funny, some sad. Where nerves got the best and worst out of the students, with hypnotists, chanting, pinching of thumbs, curling of toes, so much so that one student was requested to stop swearing silently under his breath as the examiner could hear him!

Of course there are the allegedly good examiners and the proverbial tough ones. Unfortunately, in these days of social media and *Twitter* accounts, the stories of woe are instantly out there - no longer confined to the *Star Cafe* or to your immediate cops and fellow school students. Instant news isn't always a good thing...

Tom Quigley  
Call Sign Online

## The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled

# LTBAWD Vets Visit North Cheam Sports Club

On Thursday 3rd March, **The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled** and a large number of veterans were invited to **The North Cheam Sports and Social Club** for a special lunch.

Committee member, **Dave Hempstead**, had arranged for local **Yellow Badge** taxi drivers at **Morden** to supply a shuttle service from the station to the club, a gesture that was greatly appreciated by all concerned and all of whom sent their thanks to Dave and the drivers.

At the club, the Vets made their way to the club bar before sitting down to a lunch of pie or sausages and mash, followed by a delicious cheesecake - all supplied and cooked by the staff of the sports and social club and served by the ladies of **Barclays Bank**. The Committee would like to thank them all for their hard work.

The Hon Secretary of The LTBAWD, **Paul Davis**, then made a short speech thanking **Tony** and **Sue Millard** and all the sponsors for helping to create such an enjoyable time. During lunch, the visitors were entertained by two singers with many of the vets joining in and everyone enjoyed a sing-song.

When it was time to leave, once again the local Morden taxi drivers arrived to help transport guests back to the station. Again, the LTBAWD Chairman and committee cannot thank these gentlemen enough for their help on the day as they also do to everyone at The North Cheam Sports and Social Club for making such a wonderful day...



Vets enjoying the day

Derek Leone  
LTBAWD Hon PRO



# OPERATIONS AND COMPLIANCE

*Hello Ladies & Gents,*

It is now a year since the new **Fixed Price** journeys were introduced and on the whole most of you fully agree with our pricing and waiting policy. As you know, we're dealing solely with trips to all **Airports** and journeys to and from destinations outside of the **M25** - fixed price journeys to and from inner London areas will be treated in the normal way and if the waiting time exceeds the accepted levels, the fixed fare will be removed and revert to the meter. I monitor these trips very regularly and we are definitely seeing an increase in their usage. I believe that you should evaluate the trips - not just the full meter fare, but on the actual amount of time the trip takes to complete. In this climate, we are offering a fair price for trips that previously were covered in a private hire vehicle. I'm convinced that at the right price, many account clients would much prefer to travel in a DaC taxi for many obvious reasons and this allows them to travel safely and securely in one of our taxis.

Even in this climate, we have coverage problems in certain areas at various times of the day or night. Sometimes it surprises me that lucrative work is rejected time after time.

## This is the scenario

Two weeks ago on an early Saturday evening, a VIP client who works for a major account booked a taxi from NW3 to the Southbank area. Fleet messages were sent out prior to this booking with full details of the journey. After a number of rejects, the run-in was increased and the first of two reasonably



high premiums were added to the trip with more **urgent** messages sent out. After **nine** rejects and almost fifteen minutes after the booked time, the trip was accepted but unfortunately the client could not wait any longer for the taxi as he was worried that he and his family would miss the start of the performance. The trip was cancelled and an alternative service was used. He asked me why a taxi in the vicinity, even from the ranks at Paddington or Marylebone stations, could not be sent. With a £15 premium and increased run-in, it was difficult to give him an answer. His young son mentioned **Uber**, but as a staunch user of DaC for many years he continued to wait for us to cover his journey - unsuccessfully

My point is that irrespective of the run-in and the £15 premium, it was also a very nice journey and with that many rejects from taxis not far away, it could eventually push him and other accounts who experience similar issues from us, over to a competitor - which is not what we need in this climate!

I am sure you appreciate where I'm coming from and I'd urge you all once again to go that extra mile to cover all trips and let's firstly keep all of the accounts happy.

Conversely, I must also add that it is not all bad news, because we have also received emails commending our members on providing an excellent service.

## Compliance

The Contact Centre are regularly monitoring the system, especially run-ins and booking-ins, so I would ask you all to abide by the Procedure Rules. Please remember that outlying zones are physical at all times and to correctly book into inner London zones, you must be able to reach the furthest part of the zone within fifteen minutes. Before booking in to **EC5**, you must be in any of the EC areas and to book in the **LHR** you must be within the perimeter road.

**Allan Evans**  
Operations / Compliance Manager

# Taxi insurance for DaC drivers



On behalf of Dial-a-Cab, Hillier Buchan Ltd in Bexley have negotiated exclusive rates for DaC members. We believe our rates are competitive in today's market for experienced licensed Black Cab drivers.

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We have extensive London Market contacts; consequently we are able to offer our clients a quality of security from companies that are all available in the world's pre-eminent insurance market. As a result, our clients achieve quality of security and service upon which we pride ourselves and a competitiveness of premium that our clients find particularly attractive in today's climate.

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**Phil Buchan**  
**Hillier Buchan**  
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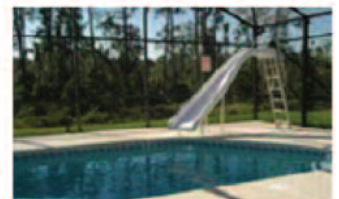
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*Marc Turner (R97) is passionate about this trade and leads all the trade demos from the front by banging his drum. He is unsurprisingly known online as the Drumslayer...*

## Drumslayer says...

tory, night men are finding it tougher than those on days. The 18 – 30 year olds are more prevalent after dark... and we all know who they are choosing to go home with. But I think we're missing a trick.

**When I'm out on weekends in the wee small hours, there's definitely a scarcity of Licensed Taxis. Private Hire is there in abundance and becoming ever-more brazen. Police officers from the Cab Enforcement Unit and the Met Police themselves are conspicuous by their absence. Transport for London has cowardly retreated, thereby capitulating to lawlessness.**

Private hire are creeping onto ranks, some sheepishly, others with attitude. Who's going to stop them? I give it a go by politely request-

ing them to move, otherwise their car reg gets photographed and they get reported. In the main, they acquiesce.

**So getting back to the missed trick. Are you an early morning man (or woman)? Well, on a Saturday and especially Sunday morning, why don't you venture out a few hours earlier and fill the breach - and it's on tariff 3.**

When the kids see PH touting on ranks and no visible sign of enforcement, they presume all is normal. Yet when they see one of us, the hands go up just like the old days.

**We won't win this fight if we don't turn. We need to make a presence... and be in it to win it!**

*Marc Turner  
Call Sign Online*

**N**obody in their right mind could dispute my assertion that our trade is currently enduring the mother of all kipper seasons.

Probably for the first time in the trades' his-

## LBC investigation shows up TfL licensing

**A shock LBC investigation has shown just how easy it is to illegally gain a private hire driver's licence in London and to then drive passengers around in a minicab with Transport for London's blessing after they issued it.**

The LTDA had claimed that one in 10 London minicab drivers may have been driving illegally, so LBC sent their Political Editor, **Theo Usherwood**, to the TfL test centre at Heston – but with someone else's car, someone else's log book, someone else's MOT and no proper insurance! Yet the reporter left the centre with a licence and appropriate stickers "proving" that he was a "genuine" London PHV!

Mr Usherwood, whose last appearance in *Call Sign* came when he was verbally abused by the Mayor's cycling supremo, **Andrew Gilligan**, after asking what he thought about the non-usage of the first cycle lane to open, then took his newly licensed London minicab and parked close to **Bank Station**. In no time he was approached on four separate occasions! On the investigation tape, Theo is heard to ask one passenger why they approached him and he said he assumed it was a cab because of the PH roundel. The passenger sounded amazed when LBC's reporter explained how easily he had obtained the licence from TfL, supposedly the taxi and private hire's licensing authority.

The following morning, LBC's **Nick Ferrari** on his morning phone-in show spoke to TfL's Director of Service Operations for Surface Transport, **Peter Blake** and showed him little mercy! Mr Blake tried to wriggle out of the situation by telling Nick that the investigation had "highlighted an issue that relates to drivers, vehicles and operators being licensed separately, which is the current legal requirements we go through. We continue through our promotional campaign to explain to people not to get into a vehicle that isn't pre-booked because it wasn't safe." Nick Ferrari told Mr Blake that he was missing the point and that it was the simplicity of Usherwood gaining a licence that was so disconcerting! As for drivers getting their cars "passed" to avoid congestion charging, Mr Blake made no response to Nick Ferrari when he raised the point. Did Mr Blake not know that the Mayor had said they would look to block that loophole by making all PH vehicles pay CC?

**Mayor Boris Johnson** joined the debate later on when he told LBC that following their investigation, he was looking to change the rules on those getting minicab licences. He said he was concerned about the ease with which the licences were apparently given out and said that they were looking to make it so PHV would have to have Hire and Reward insurance at all times. Whether that would have made any difference to Theo Usherwood getting a licence wasn't gone into.

LTDA General Secretary, **Steve McNamara**, also spoke to LBC, telling the broadcaster that it was a scandal that in 2016 TfL were unable - or unwilling - to regulate the PH industry to even minimal standards to ensure that Londoners were safe. He went on to say that the LBC investigative report highlighted just how easy it was for anyone to get a vehicle licensed as a minicab by TfL without even the most basic checks such as ensuring the vehicle was insured.

"Your reporter could have been released from prison that morning for any number of serious offences and been driving a TfL licensed minicab the same evening, at best the risk to the public is that their minicab is uninsured," Steve added.

TfL say the situation has now been changed, but the disgrace is that it was ever allowed to happen and it leaves us wondering just how many other PH drivers got their licences that way and how many of the numerous Uber accidents happened to drivers getting their licences that way? And how much longer must we put up with an authority like TfL who seem to be inept at anything they do?



*LBC's Nick Ferrari gave TfL's Peter Blake a rough ride following the investigation*



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

# Brethren of the Whip



## Brothers in Arms

Harry and Walter Richardson did everything together. They became cab drivers together and worked the same rank, Southampton Street in Covent

Garden. Harry, at 43, was the older of the two. He lived in Wakefield Street at the top of Grays Inn Road and worked for a proprietor named Alder. He was a widower and had a son fighting in the second Boer War in South Africa.

Walter was four years younger. He lived in East Street, Walworth and worked for a master named Barker, possibly John Barker from Bronti Place just off the Walworth Road. Walter had previously had his licence revoked and it had only recently been re-issued to him.

On January 31st 1902, they pulled onto the Southampton Street rank for the last time. Some of the regulars on the rank noticed how they appeared to be happy, laughing and joking with each other. A lot of time was spent by cabmen on this and other stands at the time. The war in South Africa had plunged the country into recession and, as usual, the cab trade bore the brunt of it. Despite the lack of work, the two brothers spent their time whilst waiting for a job doing what every other cabman seemed to do whilst waiting for a passenger – they waited in a pub! Nearly every cab rank in London at the time was close to a pub.

So great was it for business that it was widely held that the value of a pub increased by its proximity to a cab stand! The pub frequented by Harry and Walter Richardson, as well as other cabmen from the stand, was the Bedford Head. It's still there, but since 1984 the pub has changed its name to the Maple Leaf.

Both brothers, after they had had a few drinks, appear to have come to the attention of a policeman who was quite willing to arrest them, presumably for being drunk. The policeman was talked out of doing his duty by the other cabmen on the rank who said they would look after the pair. But instead of going to a coffee shop to sober up - there were plenty in Covent Garden even then - they returned to the pub. After a few more drinks, one of the brothers - it wasn't clear which one - went back into Southampton Street and into a chemist, where he asked for four pennyworth of oxalic acid. Oxalic acid was first produced by synthesis when dissolving sugar in nitric acid; it was later to be found occurring naturally in plants such as the leaves of rhubarb. Since 1882, an American company had been selling it in pow-

der form as abrasive cleaner, Bar Keepers Friend (still being produced today). It was, and is, a useful cleaner for removing rust.

"You know this is poisonous," said the chemist, "there's enough there to kill a dozen men."

"I know that," said the Richardson brother, "every chemist tells me it is poison. I want it for cleaning the brasswork of my cab."

"You'll only need two pennyworths for that," replied the chemist, after all, there were only the lamps, handles and 'butterfly' (a guide for the reins on the roof of the hansom) that needed to be cleaned in such a way.

"I want some for a pal outside," replied the cabman. After handing over his 4d, the brother took the oxalic acid and with his sibling, returned to the Bedford Head. There they ordered a measure of gin each and took their drinks outside.

Their sister believes it was done as a bet. But outside the Bedford Head they poured the oxalic acid into the gin and drunk it down. They then went back into the pub –

and were both violently sick. They were kicked out. Shortly after, they were found by a cabman, Edward Rowse, lying in a doorway in Maiden Lane. He shook them and assisted them up. Harry could just about walk. He clutched hold of a lamp post and exclaimed: "Rowse, old man, me and Walter have taken oxalic acid."

Rowse and other cabmen assisted them into the back of Harry Richardson's cab. Their first thought was to treat it as some kind of drunken prank and let them sleep it off. But it was soon plain the brothers were not 'larking around'. The two brothers were in agony and embraced each other. A cabman decided to drive the cab to the nearby Charing Cross Hospital.

Harry was dead before he reached hospital, Walter died shortly after being admitted. Nobody knows why they did it, but they were brothers... they did everything together...

Sean Farrell  
Call Sign Online

As taxi drivers queue up for CabCams, DaC driver Eugene Fitzsimons tells why one particular brand is...

## NOT FOR ME!

Eugene Fitzsimons (L09) sounded upset as he spoke to Call Sign regarding the installation of a CabCam CCTV system to his taxi.

"I was renewing my cab insurance policy with Tradex when the topic of a CabCam came up for discussion and I enquired about the Novus model," Eugene told Call Sign. "It appeared to me they had a preferred model called the Taxi Witness system, which I've seen fitted to numerous taxis around town and have heard no complaints about, so I assume it does its job. However, these are fitted in Shepherds Bush and when I got to the address in question, there appeared to be a number of PH cars there. I wondered if this might have been the same outfit that has featured in Call Sign quite recently regarding Uber cars. As you can imagine, I wasn't too impressed and decided that I was not going to offer my personal details or have anything to do with that company and decided to leave!"

Eugene ended by saying that he had since made his own arrangements and was happy with the CCTV system he now had.

Call Sign spoke to Tradex Insurance and a spokesperson confirmed that the Taxi Witness system was more suited to their requirements in so far as the footage was not viewable by unauthorised personnel and that the camera needed to be checked out every six months by authorised technicians. They also said the Novus Cabcam was still an option for those wishing to go with that system.

Call Sign readers will remember that two Dial-a-Cab subscribers, Pat Keefe (G01) and Alan Green (E52), among many others, have the Novus camera fitted to their cabs and that both have used it to great effect in highlighting misadventures on the road.

In Pat Keefe's case, he was able to capture and therefore act as a witness to a collision between a coach and speeding car that had jumped a line of traffic ahead of the coach, while Alan Green has published images in Call Sign of an errant PH car driving up East Road close to Dial-a-Cab House against the one-way traffic and also of a bilker alighting his cab in NW3.

The article that Eugene referred to was published in the October 2015 issue: Milking the taxi trade, written by Call Sign's Marc Turner...

Jamie Corum, Call Sign Online



Eugene Fitzsimons



The TX has windows that open whereas the Vito doesn't but has excellent aircon

# You can't please everyone!

**J**oe Martinez (P44) sounded very surprised when he spoke to *Call Sign* about passenger preferences recently, admitting something that most Dial-a-Cab drivers have always known - that whatever you do, you just can't please everyone!

"Yes, I was really taken aback at the time," Joe admitted "but I guess there's just no pleasing some folk. I was setting

down at the **Docklands Hilton Hotel** when a lady came up to me and asked if I could summon a taxi.

"She must have seen the quizzical look on my face, because there I was, a Vito taxi, sitting there right in front of her and wondering what she meant by a taxi? But she went on to explain that she suffers from claustrophobia and needed a taxi where the windows could be lowered as wide as possible, allowing her to feel fresh air blowing in her face.

"Naturally, I tried to convince her that my Vito had more passenger space than the TX model to which she was obviously referring, in addition to an effective air conditioning system for passenger comfort that had the added bonus of not blowing her neatly coiffured hair into disarray while we were on the move! But she was insistent about her needs and concluded with the phrase of not closing her in!

"So I put out a fleet message for a TX taxi that might be nearby to come and pick her up! I appreciate that you can't please all of the people all of the time and that for a very few passengers, whatever you do will not be good enough for them! But that's life, I guess. There have been other times when I've had punters who were grateful for the cosy atmosphere of closed windows and side vents, so I guess you just can't please everyone all of the time!"

Joe sighed as he drove away. It was another day and another time and he would be doing his best to please everyone he met along the way...

**Dennis Latchett**  
*Call Sign Online*

*A DaC driver's conversation with passenger Dr Max Pemberton...*

## JUST ANOTHER UBER STORY!

Dial-a-Cab driver, Jon Robinson (E88), recently contacted *Call Sign* and started with an apology: "Sorry, it's just another Uber story!" However, as his passenger had been the highly respected Daily Mail columnist and psychiatrist, Dr Max Pemberton, we thought it had to be worth listening to...

Dr Pemberton was going to **The Mall** in Jon's cab and had happily chatted away to the DaC driver during the journey. Jon was correct – it was just another Uber story - but given the source, certainly worth passing on to our readers. Dr Pemberton told Jon that he no longer used Uber following some "iffy" journeys and after hearing what had happened to three friends of his.

That trip in an Uber car had involved one female and two males sitting on the back seat; the two males were gay and one had put his arm around the other. Suddenly the Uber driver turned round while driving and repeatedly requested that he took his arm away from around the other passenger.

**While this was going on, the Uber car drove into a pedestrian on a Zebra crossing, knocking him up into the air.**

The Uber driver then blamed the two gay passengers... but kept on driving! The passengers screamed for him to stop but he carried on while still shouting that it was the passengers fault. One of the three passengers then called the police on their mobile phone, saying that they were being held against their will and that the Uber driver had knocked someone over but failed to stop.

**Jon Robinson told us that Max Pemberton mentioned the occurrence to the Daily Mail at the time and they called Uber!**

"But you and I know what Uber had to say... and so does the Daily Mail now," said Jon with the merest hint of a smile. "Just as you would expect, the app said they had nothing to do with the driver!"

Jon's trip with Dr Pemberton was a fairly short one and he had related the story quickly just after Jon told him how most London taxi drivers were fed up with **TfL's** lack of enforcement against Uber. Jon had said that most "black cab" drivers believed there was a connection between Uber and the Prime Minister's office.

"As I mentioned that part, a smile came onto Max Pemberton's lips. I don't suppose I'll ever find out what the smile meant, because it was then that he had to leave the cab!"

**Yep, Jon's tale was just another Uber story – but we need to make sure these true stories are repeated until everyone knows exactly what they are dealing with when they get into an Uber car...**

**Alan Fisher**  
*Call Sign Online*



Dr Max Pemberton spoke to Jon about Uber

# DACCU AGM

*The AGM of the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union will take place at 4.30 on Wednesday 13 April at DACCU's office: The Peterley Business Centre 472 Hackney Road London E2 9EQ*



The age-old expression often used by licensed taxi drivers of 'be lucky' perhaps has more resonance to the sport I wish to feature this month - and if you are ever lucky enough to nab a job to take punters (an appropriate expression in this case) to go horseracing, then the chances are you would have taken them either to Epsom Downs, Ascot, Windsor, Kempton Park or Sandown Park - all just outside London and far enough to be a decent job.



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

# IT IS NOW!

**Bob Woodford looks at London's long lost sporting venues**

Epsom's first recorded race was in 1661 and early racegoers included **King Charles II** and **Samuel Pepys**. Ascot was opened in 1711 by **Queen Anne**, Windsor started in 1866, Sandown Park in 1875 and Kempton Park in 1878. Once well known, **Hurst Park** was downstream near **Hampton Court Palace** and began life in 1890, but ran its last race in 1962.

**It is probably only the older Dial-a-Cab drivers that will have remembered that horseracing at Alexandra Park (first ever race in 1868) closed down for ever in 1970.**

Alexandra Park was named after a popular Princess, Queen Consort and Queen Mother - **Alexandra of Denmark**, who was spouse to **Edward VII** (more commonly known as the playboy prince, **Edward the Caresser**). So perhaps her popularity was in part due to public sympathy over 'Dirty Bertie's' philandering (*Call Sign* readers looking for some Royal scandal can find it with **Stanley Weintraub's "Edward the Caresser: The Man Who Would be Edward VII!"**)

But back to the racecourse; it was inside the Park and also one of the quirkiest in Great Britain, celebrated for its atmosphere and reviled for the treacherous twists and turns of its shape - rightly nicknamed the **Frying Pan**.

My Dad took me to 'Ally Pally' races for an evening meeting in the summer of 1968 and I can remember from our vantage point by the



**Ally Pally racetrack closed in 1970**

one furlong marker, of jockey **Paul Cook** becoming dismounted to his embarrassment and to some rather unsympathetic cheers from punters who were already on the **Gypsy's Kiss** (the Editor wouldn't let me say p\*ss)!!!

**Today, the only reminders of race-day heritage in Muswell Hill are the Victoria Stakes and Starting Gate pubs, just 7 miles from the centre of London - and yet post World War Two, the racing there attracted crowds of over 10,000!**

The North London venue is sadly one of many race tracks that have gone in living memory after a decline in attendances - what a pity, because (for instance) City workers would be only 19 minutes away on a journey from **Moorgate Station**.

Racing pundit and **Prince Albert Road** resident, **John McCrick**, inevitably is one of those calling for the return of the old 'Frying Pan' and has even made an after-life commitment, requesting that his **Booby** (wife) scatter his ashes at the place where approximately the

one furlong post once stood! These days, dog walkers with muddy boots and wellies have replaced the thunder of hooves on the Haringey sports fields that are no longer covered with discarded betting slips.

The chances of this track re-opening are not just down to investment, but any number of independent proposals for re-development jostling at the starting gate would have a problem these days with trying to fulfil strict safety regulations laid down by the **British Horseracing Board**.

Former jockey **Willie Carson** once described Alexandra Palace race course as dangerous to both horses and riders - but my memories of his racing colleague Paul Cook's unfortunate spill lives with me forever, together with all the shouting and swearing from both riders and punters!

Former jockey **Willie Carson** once described Alexandra Palace race course as dangerous to both horses and riders - but my memories of his racing colleague Paul Cook's unfortunate spill lives with me forever, together with all the shouting and swearing from both riders and punters!

**All of the race tracks mentioned in this article went to the graveyard in the 20th century, but next month I'll feature a long lost racecourse from the 19th century and from a part of London where people may well hail you to take them 'off to the races!'**

*So be lucky...!*

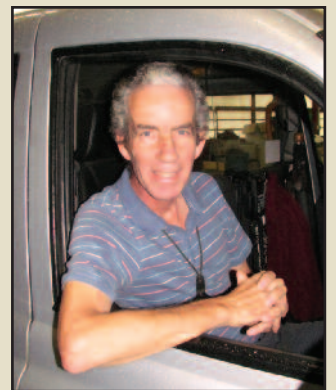
**Bob Woodford  
Call Sign Online**

## ALL HOT AND BOTHERED!

"I was on my way for my cab's six monthly MoT test and was coming into town along the **North Circular Road** at a reasonable rate of knots," **Francis Robinson (G18)** told *Call Sign*. "I glanced down at the temperature gauge on the cab dash and that's when, to my horror, I saw the indicator needle had gone right up into the 'red' zone! I rapidly pulled onto the hard shoulder to let the engine cool down and waited around twenty minutes before attempting to re-start the engine. But all I got was a groan from the starter motor as if the battery was flat and that's when I asked for a fleet message to be put out asking for a jump start.

"But there was no one out that way, so I patiently waited at the roadside for another fifteen or so minutes and this time, much to my relief, the engine fired up and I was on my way again - although at a much more sedate pace! When I finally reached the service centre they diagnosed a jammed **viscous fan**, which is a critical part of the **TX2** engine cooling system. It works on centrifugal force by rotating the cooling fan sited behind the engine radiator to draw air through the 'rad' in order to maintain the engine at its optimum operating temperature. Mine had become stuck solid and had to be replaced. As an additional safeguard, the engine thermostat was also replaced as that can also cause the engine to overheat should it fail to open fully and allow antifreeze to flow around the engine.

"The reason I was able to re-start unaided after the engine had cooled sufficiently was because it had originally become so hot that the internal parts expanded, leaving many components within the engine that should move freely at normal temperatures, being left too tight to budge."



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



**O**n 9th March 2016, under an increasingly cloudy and darkening sky, several hundred taxi drivers gathered in **Trafalgar Square** before marching down **Whitehall** and on to **Downing Street**, to vent their anger and disappointment at what they see as the incompetence of **Transport for London** to adequately enforce and regulate the rules with regard to **Uber** and its drivers, with particular regard to the lack of enforcement of hire and reward insurance cover, driver background character checks (DBS/CRB) and the limited availability of disabled access vehicles, all of which licensed 'black' taxis have to comply with. It had been organised by the **UCG** and supported by the **LCDC**, **SBT** and the **RMT**.

This demo was later joined by another group calling itself **Dads Defending Daughters** that started their demo outside **Broadcasting House**, before marching down **Regent Street** to the Square. The combined group then walked down **Parliament Street** before finally arriving at **TfL** head offices in **Victoria Street** and protesting about the lowering of standards/regulations that have left women in danger from minicab drivers. According to an earlier **LBC** investigation, those PH drivers no longer have to worry about being unlicensed as licences are given out like confetti!

During the demo **Call Sign** spoke to several **Dial-a-Cab** drivers for their views:

**Alex Smith (J67)**: "It's disgraceful! My son Billy has been waiting eighteen weeks for his CRB document to come through having just passed out as a taxi driver, but he can't work because he doesn't have his CRB paperwork yet."

**Adrian Everett (T20)**: "There should have been double the turn out here. There has been advertising in cafes and on taxi ranks. Also the **Crowdfunding** contributions have been poor with regard to supporting the necessary funds for a possible judicial review."

**Mark D'Arcy (O44)**: "The disabled lobby are not here supporting us, yet they cannot get into a cab on **Lower Thames Street**. The public expect a gold taxi service for 'cheap as chips' prices."

**Tom McCaffrey (H18)**: "The way the licenced cab trade is generally being treated is disgusting. Also, making PH think they are insured yet I believe Uber will not take pre-bookings, so no hire and reward insurance cover because only PH cars that are 'pre-booked' have 'Hire and Reward' insurance cover. The travelling public think they are insured but I think that is doubtful."

**Robert Montgomery (D18)**: "We are now second class, whereas we used to be a premium taxi service. But not anymore, I fear."

Meanwhile **Call Sign's** **Marc Turner (R97)** continues beating the cab trade's drum to its marching rhythm!

As an aside, on March 18, 10,000 cab drivers blockaded **Rome** also as a protest against Uber...

*As the battle against TfL continues, Call Sign went to the demo on 9 March to witness two separate licensed taxi demonstrations merge as one at Trafalgar Square. Yes, this was...*

# ANOTHER DAY... ANOTHER DEMO



Tom McCaffrey (H18) and Robert Montgomery (D18)



L - R: Tony Herbert, Billy Smith, Alex Smith (J67) Adrian Everett (T20) and Mark D'Arcy (D44)



Marching to the beat of Marc Turner's drum!





## Was it a cop out?

On 17 March, the TfL Board met to approve the new regulations which they claimed would "modernise and improve the private hire industry while making it safer and more convenient for customers." It follows a consultation that was said to have attracted over 20,000 responses.

The Board changes included:

**\* Even more robust 'hire and reward' insurance requirements that will mean a policy has to be in place for the duration of the vehicle licence, including when the vehicle is presented for inspection to TfL.**

\* A formal English language requirement for all drivers

\* A fare estimate for customers in advance of their journey

\* The provision of driver and vehicle details to customers, including a photo of the driver, before the start of each journey where customers are able to receive this information

\* Private hire operators will be required to ensure that customers can speak to someone in the event of a problem with their journey

\* Requiring operators to keep improved records and provide driver and vehicle information to TfL regularly to make enforcement easier and more effective.

**TfL said:**

"The changes, which represented the first significant amendments to the private hire regulations since they were first introduced, follow an unprecedented increase in private hire driver and vehicle numbers. The new measures will raise the standards across the industry, ensuring Londoners can continue to move around the Capital safely. The regulations will remain under review to ensure they keep pace with the changing industry and support a modern and thriving trade, given the welcome technological innovations that have increased choice for customers in recent years.

TfL will now begin the implementation process, which will vary across the regulations. While some changes are amendments in policy that can be enacted quickly, others will require a longer period to build the necessary infrastructure. TfL has already made a number of changes following the first consultation in summer 2015, including a review of topographical centres and a new system for customers to report problems with taxi or private hire journeys directly to TfL after the consultation process showed that customers wanted TfL to be more involved in complaints.

Separately, the Mayor has asked TfL to investigate the effects of removing the Congestion Charge exemption for private hire vehicles as a

**Hire and Reward insurance for Private Hire drivers???**  
**Clipboard Johnnies? TfL needs more time to consider them!**

# TFL BOARD MEETING

way to tackle the issues of congestion, pollution and illegal parking that have worsened as a result of the rapid expansion of the private hire trade. He has also successfully secured a commitment from Government for TfL to be able to regulate pedicabs through a change in primary legislation."

\* Operators must have the facility to provide a booking confirmation to passengers containing the photo ID and details of the vehicle being used to discharge the booking where passengers are able to receive that information

\* Operators will be required to provide specified information to TfL at specified intervals including details of all drivers and vehicles registered with them

\* Operators must record the main destination for each booking before the journey commences

\* Operators to retain all records for a period of 12 months

\* TfL to control the names under which operators offer private hire services to the public

\* Private hire drivers to be required to demonstrate a certain standard of English.

\* Individual licence applicants to provide National Insurance numbers to TfL

\* A driver's private hire vehicle licence to be considered for revocation if their private hire driver's licence is revoked

\* TfL will liaise with the Home Office on introducing DBS checks on private hire operator staff that have face to face contact with the public

\* TfL to stop accepting payment for licence fees by postal order and cheque

\* Drivers to carry or display a copy of insurance details at all times

\* Introduce new operator licence fee structure to better reflect operator licensing costs based on operator size. The specific revisions to the licence fee structure will be consulted on separately

\* Amendment of regulations to give TfL the power to control advertising displayed inside, from, or on the outside of a private hire vehicle

\* Operators will be required to notify TfL before changing their operating model

\* Operators must ensure that customers can speak to a real person in the event of a problem with their journey

\* Private hire operators must provide an estimated fare prior to the commencement of the journey

\* Hire and reward insurance will be required at the point of vehicle licensing, and for it to remain in place for the duration of the licence

\* Working with the Department for Transport to develop guidance on ridesharing

**\* A decision was deferred on proposal six, which stated that TfL will no longer issue licence variations to private hire operator licenses to add a late-night or temporary event operating centres. More work will be undertaken on this point.**

\* Hire and reward insurance protects passengers in licenced taxis and private hire vehicles. It ensures that passengers are able to reclaim loss sustained as a result of an accident while undertaking a journey in a taxi or private hire vehicle. Without this insurance in place, passengers may not be able to reclaim costs or claim compensation following an accident or injury. Private hire vehicles were required to have this insurance only when undertaking bookings. The new regulations will change this.

**TfL spoke of "even more robust 'hire and reward' insurance requirements that will mean a policy has to be in place for the duration of the vehicle licence, including when the vehicle is presented for inspection to TfL."**

Even more? Currently there is absolutely nothing and the LBC investigation (see page 21) showed how useless TfL's insurance check was. What TfL should have said was that the operators have to insure their whole fleets with Hire and Reward insurance, just as companies like Addison Lee do.

And then there was proposal six which we would probably refer to as the Clipboard Johnnies bill. That was "deferred" because they have to do more work on it. How long did they need? The whole country knew the Board meeting was scheduled for 17 March, so why was there no decision? Would it have interfered with their social lives too much?

**Perhaps the most interesting comment came in a Tweet from London Assembly member Val Shawcross during the Board meeting. It said:**

**@valshawcross... Good question raised at TfL Board as to why the VAT treats Uber bookings as taking place aboard but TfL treats them as taken in London?**

Need we say more?

**Alan Fisher**  
**Call Sign Online**

# DACCU AGM

*The AGM of the Dial-a-Cab  
Credit Union will take place  
at 4.30 on Wednesday  
13 April at DACCU's office:  
The Peterley Business Centre  
472 Hackney Road  
London E2 9EQ*

Imagine, if you will, strolling towards a Hackney cabstand in late 19th century London. Suddenly the cry “**Mother Prodgers**” echoes around the streets! The cab drivers scarp, leaving the stand empty but for a seemingly innocuous, overdressed woman: **Mrs Caroline Giacometti Prodgers**, nemesis of cabmen, zealous litigant and infamous music hall conversation topic.

Over the course of two decades, she was to lead a one woman campaign against the notoriously truculent cabmen of London. She took to court the publisher of a major newspaper and even her own cook. Her stubbornness was caricatured in print and sung about in music halls. One desperate cab driver went so far as to burn her effigy on bonfire night!

Her first taste of life in the courts came in 1871, when she began proceedings to divorce her husband of ten years, an Austrian naval captain called **Giovanni Battista Giacometti**. The case set a precedent for divorces in which the wife was wealthier than the husband (the Prodgers family found itself with a considerable fortune through her mother, a wealthy heiress whom her father, the **Reverend Prodgers**, had married after rescuing her from drowning). The details of *Giacometti v Prodgers* would regularly make the papers, including such oddities as Mrs Prodgers questioning the legitimacy of her own children, presumably in an attempt to try and disinherit Giovanni from her family fortune. Following the actual divorce, there were other legal wranglings. It was reported that her husband, Giovanni, had given up his whole career at Mrs Prodgers’ request and that after the divorce, he had taken her to court over non-payment of a yearly settlement. The Prodgers family, taking his side, agreed on an additional several hundred pounds per year. Mrs Prodgers found herself again in court after failing to pay a shorthand writer she had, debatably, hired during the divorce proceedings.

It was soon after the divorce and its various spin off cases that Mrs Prodgers began her infamous crusade against London cab drivers. Her *modus operandi* was to catch a cab to a specific destination to which she knew the exact distance (she familiarised herself with the cost charts), then ask the cabman to stop just at the point where the fare would change. Invariably the cabman would attempt to charge her for the next part of the fare, which she would dispute. One or other party would then threaten a lawsuit and she would continue to goad the often irate cabman into verbal abuse and swearing, whereupon she’d immediately threaten another writ.

She was remarkably successful and ended up bringing over 50 cases to court – many of which descended into farce. Reports on the various cases are packed with amusing incidents. There is extended banter over the use of her full name (which she always insisted upon). One judge suggested that it might be cheaper for her to purchase a carriage than keep returning to court!

In addition to cab related litigations she was involved in a string of court cases regarding other matters. She sued her dismissed cook for refusing to leave her house - and continuing “to sing about the place.” She sued a newspaper publisher for accidentally tearing her dress dur-

*A reproduced cartoon from Punch Magazine dated 6 March 1875 recently appeared on some taxi websites, showing a woman entering a taxi shelter and leaving a look of fear on the faces of the cabmen. So that raised the question: Just who was Mrs Prodgers...?*

## GOING BACK TO MRS PRODGERS...

ing an altercation after she refused to pay the full penny for a paper, which she thought she might be mentioned in. She sued a watchmaker for returning the wrong watch to her house. Her obsessive and sometimes bizarre activity in the courts did not go unnoticed.

In 1875 she had the dubious honour of having an effigy of her burnt on bonfire night, a ‘gigantic figure’ paraded around on a cab. The police intervened and arrested the cab driver – rather bizarrely on the charge of ‘begging’ (the accounts don’t report if Mrs Prodgers had any influence over the arrest). The judge dismissed the case saying that the cabbie was acting as a showman for the amusement of the public” and that it was merely meant as a joke.

Mrs Giacometti Prodgers appeared several times in *Punch* magazine. A satirical piece in 1890, the year of her death, coincided with controversial plans to fit each Hackney cab with a mechanical device to measure distances and calculate the cost of each journey:

Sadly, first hand anecdotal evidence does

nothing to alleviate the true awfulness of her character. She appears to have been as rude to fellow members of the public as she was to porters and cab drivers.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, her obituary as reported in foreign papers was blunt and concise:

*Mrs. Giacometti Prodgers, the terror of London cabmen, is dead. Her habit was to drive the fullest possible distance for the money, pay the exact legal fare, and then cause the arrest of the cabman for expressing his feelings...*

*Courtesy: The Public Domain Review/ Heather Tweed*

*You can read more about Mrs Prodgers in G.N.Georgano's history of the London Taxicab*



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

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# Camaraderie? Not here mate!



Grant was shocked at a DaC driver apparently not caring

When Call Sign spoke to Grant Adams (E84) recently, he was still visibly upset at the lack of assistance offered from a fellow Dial-a-Cab driver while at Stansted Airport on a recent Sunday evening.

"I took some passengers up to Stansted Airport and on arrival there, for whatever reason, I could not clear the credit card as my PED was showing a weird message that I could not resolve. With a very sizeable fare showing on the meter, I was naturally concerned about getting my money. Try as I might, I just couldn't clear the PED and therefore the fare. Meanwhile, the passengers were also becoming agitated at the delay,

which didn't help matters," Grant sighed to *Call Sign*.

Grant continued his story and said that while trying to think what he could do, he suddenly saw another DaC taxi pulling up nearby.

"I really thought that this driver was going to be my White Knight of the road and hoped he would be able to help by either spotting if I was doing something wrong or failing that, be willing to clear my passengers' credit card through his *DaC* terminal, which we would then be able to sort out with Driver Services on the following Monday morning. After all, I was giving him my money to hold and not asking him for a loan!"

Grant went over to the other driver and explained his situation.

"Then," said Grant, "instead of being helpful as I had expected of a fellow subscriber, I was just astounded at his lack of interest in my predicament or of any offer of assistance. So I had no choice other than to request one

of the passengers to go into the terminal building to use an ATM, while I respectfully asked the second passenger to remain in the taxi with me. It was rather embarrassing really. The whole saga took so much time and delayed me so much, that I had to pay £12.50 to leave the airport instead of the usual 10 minutes free grace time. So yes, I was well and truly fed up!"

Ending his tale of woe, Grant told this magazine: "I know such behaviour is not the norm on our circuit, but it really left a sour taste in my mouth. The other driver may have had his reasons for declining assistance and I draw comfort from knowing he is in the minority of our members. But I guess that's life," Grant said philosophically.

If you were the driver referred to above, *Call Sign* would be pleased to hear your explanation and give your side of the story.

**Alan Green**  
*Call Sign Online*

## ARMED ROBBERY - WITH A COP'S CAR BEHIND!



A still from the driver's CCTV camera shows the horrifying attack with a shot of the cop behind

An armed robber who pulled a gun on cab driver was caught after a police officer randomly stopped right behind the taxi.

**Ralph Valletta** picked up 18-year-old **Victor Martinez-Herrera** in **Wyomissing, Pennsylvania**. The passenger then pulled the gun on Valletta and asked for his money, but failed to notice a police car had pulled up right behind.

Deputy Sheriff **Terry Ely** told the local *ReadingEagle* paper: "The taxi driver stopped the car at the lights and put on his emergency lights but failed to move when the lights turned green. I got out, hit the door and then heard the driver say "please don't shoot me," and call out that the guy was holding a gun to his head.

"I immediately bent down and pulled my firearm out because I saw he had a hood over his face when he looked over at me. I noticed the money in his hand and a black object in his right hand, so I ordered him to drop the gun and get out of the car."

Herrera faces charges of robbery, terroristic threats and a weapons offence, although the weapon was later found out to be a pellet gun.

The whole incident was caught on Ralph Valletta's CCTV system with the police car right behind...

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# Panicking minicab smashes into ambulance



The minicab and ambulance collided in Stamford Hill at 01.45

Traffic was brought to a halt at Stamford Hill in the very early hours of a March morning as a minicab driver became flustered after seeing an ambulance heading in the opposite direction towards him. But instead of keeping to his own side of the road, the panicking minicab driver drove straight into the ambulance.

Call Sign's Gary Cox (O46), who was on his way home at around 1.45am, told us of the strange sight as a group of orthodox Jewish men with their long black coats and hats surrounded both the ambulance and minicab trying to offer assistance.

Fortunately there were no serious injuries...

## DACCU AGM

The AGM of the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union will take place at 4.30 on Wednesday 13 April at DACCU's office: The Peterley Business Centre 472 Hackney Road London E2 9EQ



## Wes Streeting 10 minute bill

On 22nd March, Ilford North Labour MP Wes Streeting put a 10 minute rule bill to the House of Commons. The subject was the future of the taxi and private hire industry. Mr Streeting said that change was needed in order to make sure Londoners remained safe when using this form of transport and to prevent licensed taxis being put out of business by what he referred to as the 'wild west' conditions of the industry.

His bill proposes that operators insure drivers rather than leaving it to the drivers themselves and that they must pay their taxes in the UK. He also said that they should also provide training in order to gain an operator's licence.

Wes Streeting consulted with the LTDA, RMT, Addison Lee and Hailo before putting his ten minute rule to the House.

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# Mailshot

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Dial-a-Cab House  
or email us at  
callsignmag@aol.com

## Selling the building?

Hi Alan

I always enjoy reading *Call Sign* every month, but the *March* issue's front cover got my attention when I saw the comment that each driver's share was worth around £20,000! I was at the AGM and heard all the talk about selling the building, but I hope something positive comes from all this and ideally I would rather DaC continues to run as a business that covers its costs and keeps drivers reasonably busy. But I'm also a realist and I think the time has come when radio circuits can't compete on costs anymore if drivers are to earn a living wage. Then there are the corporate customers who used to pride themselves by using the black cab service, but can no longer do so due to ever mounting financial pressure at their end. They now regard the savings made by using a cheaper service as more important than the standards they were used to. Unfortunately we can't change that mindset, which is controlled and dominated by accountants and budget managers who ultimately receive substantial financial rewards based on the savings they make for their businesses.

I don't know where this will all end, but I hope that DaC doesn't end up on its knees with no alternative but insolvency at the end of the day. I would hate to see that scenario personally. Far better to bow out gracefully at the top and who knows what might happen.

Gary Cowderoy (N17)

The piece Gary is referring to took place during a Q/A session between Patsy McCarthy and Brian Rice. Patsy suggested that as we had a major asset in DaC House, we should sell it and split the proceeds between DaC shareholders. In response, Brian said a recent valuation had put a value of £17.9million on our building if it could go up ten floors, but substantially more if it went higher - as the East Road building next door was already doing. Brian estimated that if we got the full market value, each member could get around £20,000...Ed

## GPS

Dear Al

Well, GPS is almost upon us. I'm not sure why we're going down this path at this, shall we say, rather difficult time when some drivers are suggesting we sell up, while others are pushing for this new - at least to this circuit - form of work dispatching. I experienced it on *Mountview* when they changed from a zonal system years in 1998. It was very busy back in those days, but I found the work per driver dropped

off dramatically. Let's hope it works out OK this time.

Bearing in mind that drivers may find themselves still going through quiet periods, the BoM have been proactive and come up with a scheme to stop any boredom. So when the system gets under way, there will be a new function. This will be known as the FSH facility. When you click on it, you will receive all the latest updates regarding *Fish Street Hill*. It will no longer be necessary to waste airtime asking whether you can turn left or right or whatever. Everything will be there on the screen... plus videos and live interviews with drivers on the spot. I can't wait...

Geoff Levene (W32)

To save any drivers writing in, I think *Call Sign's* regular story teller is taking a sideswipe at all the messages regarding the open/close/open agenda surrounding *Fish Street Hill*! As for Geoff's more serious point regarding GPS, I remember the moans of many RT drivers at the time who were complaining that their GPS system was offering jobs in *Kilburn* while drivers were in *Trafalgar Square*! Drivers on DaC seemed to prefer a zonal system then because it virtually guaranteed you an account ride. Nowadays and at a much quieter period, that guaranteed job can take much longer to achieve - albeit still there. However, I think a quiet period could help our drivers get more work. How? Well, there won't be more trips in the system but those that are there will be offered to drivers who would otherwise be booked in another zone that they perceive to contain more work. That's caused by the fear of wondering whether trips would come out of certain less popular zones - I know because I'm a driver too and have often booked into an adjoining zone believing that would be busier than the one I was in at the time. GPS, if used properly, could remove that fear...Ed

## Remembering the Wallenbergs...

Hi Alan

Does anyone remember Mr & Mrs **Wallenberg** from around 20 years ago? They lived in **Kensington Park Gardens** and regularly took their son, who has cerebral palsy, via **Dial-a-Cab** drivers to **St Marys Hospital, Paddington**. Well, Mr Wallenberg was in my cab this morning and although now living in **New York**, he fondly remembers the patience and dedication of our drivers. He also remembered the wife of one of those DaC drivers who had knitted a woolly teddy bear for their son.



Even twenty years on, he repeated how grateful he and his wife had been at the time and became really emotional. To be honest, I also felt quite emotional; but above that I felt really proud.

Adrian Landau (T14)

Thanks for passing that on Adrian, a lovely story... Ed

## Book review

Good morning Alan

Thanks very much for such a great review in the *March Call Sign*. **London Taxis in Camera** has been a long time in coming to print - I first notified my wholesaler of the idea 2011! But, it looks like it was worth the wait.

Bill Munro

Earlwood Press

I thought **LTIC** was one of the best books of its type that I've seen in a long time and I have many 'taxi' books in my library! The review was in the *March* issue and if anyone is interested in a very interesting read filled with great pics, **London Taxis in Camera** is available direct from Earlwood. They do a post service where you can order the book online and get it for £19 (incl postage) or £22 including postage for anywhere outside the UK for the benefit of *Call Sign's* 8000 + internet readers. Go to [www.earlwoodpress.co.uk](http://www.earlwoodpress.co.uk). It can also be found on Amazon, MDS and many other online sellers. USA readers can find it in bookstores and various outlets...

## Topographical test centres / driverless cars

Hi Alan

BBC news has announced that many minicab topographical skills testing centres are to lose their accreditation following Tfl secret customer testing. Another case of closing the stable door! As you know, there were many adverts for these testing centres on social media, I made several comments about these on Facebook and was asked by an Arsenal supporting taxi driver if I was another racist little Englander cab driver? I wish I could find him on Facebook now! I also noticed on the Tfl website that many of these testing centres are run by minicab operators; surely this is a conflict of interest?

Changing tack, I recently picked a gentleman up from the **Waldorf Hotel** and he was telling me he had been there for a conference on self-driving and driverless cars. He was there for the insurance side of things and regarding who would be to blame if and when accidents happen. The good news is that they are at least 10 years away. So I can carry on being a miserable grumpy London cabbie for another 10 years!

Jon Robinson (E88)

Nothing's changed there then, Jon!!! ...Ed

# Mailshot

## Credit Card acceptance 1

Hi Alan

Just read the letter from **Howard Pears** relating to Credit Card trips in which he suggests that the daily fee the Society will be charging drivers will be recouped in 5 trips. I have just done the calculation and obtained a different figure.

$£7 + \text{vat} = £8.40$  per week

$£8.40 \times 52 = £436.80$  per year

If a driver takes 4 weeks holiday a year plus a week of problems with the cab (which we all get) = 5 weeks. So that gives us  $£436.80$  divided by 47 =  $£9.30$  per week.

$£9.30$  divided by 20p = 46.5 trips per week. Assuming we do a 5 day week, that would mean doing 9.3 flagfalls to recoup the charge and not 5.

I am not complaining at the charge, but for a Finance Director he is he a long way out...

**Francis Robinson (G18)**

**Good morning Francis, yours was the first email I had opened after waking**

up... so I turned round and went back to bed! I'm please you're not complaining though, cos I'd hate to be around if you were! ...Ed

## Credit Card acceptance 2

Hi Alan,

I suspect the latest letter from the BoM regarding the Credit Card processing fee will lead to a full mailbag, so here's my contribution.

I fully understood that the monthly  $£1$  subscription for 30 year+ drivers was unsustainable in the current climate, but this latest charge of  $£1$  per day for CC processing will, I estimate, take my subs from  $£12$  pa to way over  $£1000$  pa! That is bad enough, but it would appear that I will be charged well over  $£150$  pa when not even working!

Why can't the charge be made for working days only? We're being charged when not working, which I think a little unfair especially for part-timers.

**Alasdair Kay (C47)**

See Brian Rice's article on page 4 ...E

## DaC App

Alan

In reply to Brian Rice re 10% discount incentive for passengers signing up to our App. The cost would be minimal as the driver would be charged 7.5% of the fare through DaC so DaC would be out of pocket by 2.5% for the first three fares of the new customer. It could be trialled allowing only say 100 drivers access to a code that could be given to customers, limiting it to a certain number of customers for now and seeing if they reuse us. Even including DaC losing drivers, 7.5% fee on say three  $£20$  fares; that would be a loss of  $£6$  for DaC revenues but a potential new customer...

**John Thomas (Y58)**

**Brian Rice replies: John, what happens in reality is that most people accept the discount and sign up but do not use the App. I think you'll find the two taxi Apps in the trade have discovered that to their cost. But your suggestion is not being dismissed and perhaps something might transpire in the future...**



## The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers

# WCHCD ISSUES POSITION STATEMENT

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers is the 104th Livery Company of the City of London, having received Grant of Livery in February 2004 and earned its Royal Charter in October 2013. With our origins dating back to an original Act of Parliament in 1654, we have earned our place as an integral part of the functioning of the historic City of London.

**Today, the objectives of The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers are more relevant than ever and are spelled out quite clearly in our Royal Charter; to raise public awareness of the high standards of the London Hackney Carriage trade and industry and to work to ensure continuous improvement in the health of the industry through managed growth and development, ensuring that the London cab trade remains attractive to those passengers who live or work in London and preserving the elements of the industry that are considered irreplaceable - such as The knowledge of London.**

We are not a union. We are not a lobbying group. We are not partisan. The membership of The WCHCD represents every single facet of the taxi trade - from taxi drivers to vehicle manufacturers, fleet operators, insurers, accountants, technology providers, repairers, knowledge tutors and, of course, most crucially, the customers who use taxis for moving around London.

Our goal is the preservation and promotion of what's widely regarded as the most professional, most respected taxi service in the world. We do not wish to see our historic and much-loved trade reduced to the low standard that is witnessed in many other cities around the globe. Londoners and those who visit London, still crave the assured service, safety and accessibility that only a licensed taxi can provide, while the rest of the United Kingdom looks up to the London taxi trade as the standard to be followed.

**The WCHCD has many members from outside the capital and we must acknowledge that not all cab trade issues are London-centric and that decisions made within London can eventually impact on other UK Cities. The WCHCD is unique; there is no other organisation with our broad spread of membership. There is no other organisation with our knowledge and experience of the taxi industry; there is no other organisation that enjoys such a rich history - and yet is so forward thinking. We are available to assist those who share these ideals in any way we can, in order to protect our trade.**

Our position as the most neutral, approachable and established taxi trade organisation means we continue to attract more interest than ever before. This is appropriate, because perhaps at no other time has our historic trade faced more questions about its future. Our position is clear; London has always needed - and continues to need - a flexible, accessible, safe, secure and utterly reliable taxi service. London has that, but it is easily lost if we do not all strive to protect and preserve the formidable combination of knowledgeable drivers, unique vehicles and the assuredness we all enjoy of the world's greatest taxi service.

**The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers welcomes all those who wish to join us, talk to us, or share our truly unique perspective and insight into the historic licensed London taxi trade and industry.**



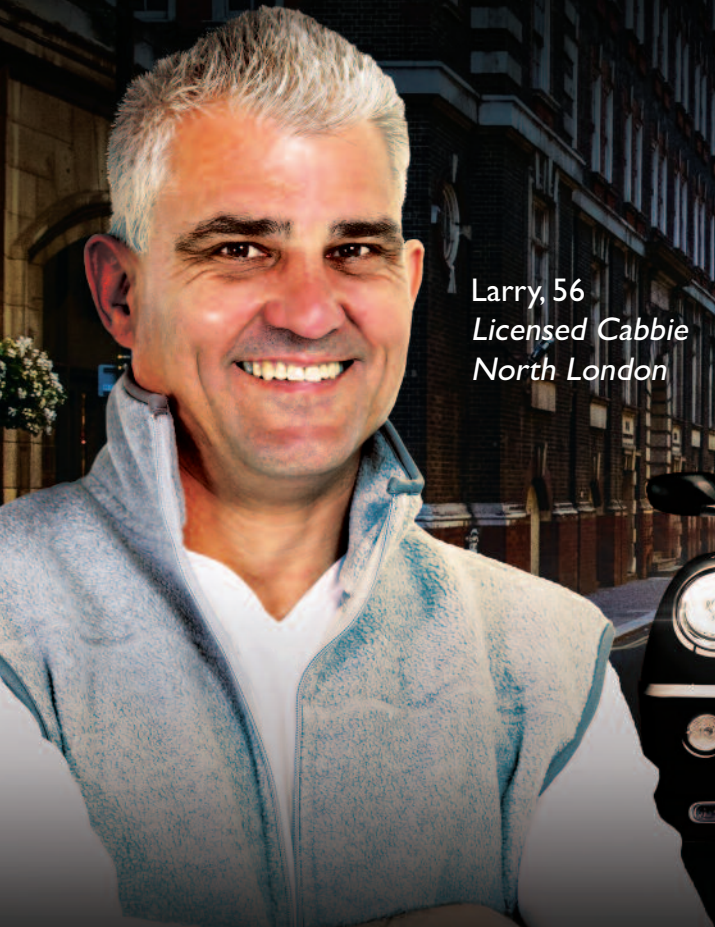
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1-3 Blackhorse Road, London, SE8 5HY  
**0208 692 1122**

\*Terms and conditions apply. Free servicing offer includes 15,000 miles, 30,000 miles, 45,000 miles and 60,000 miles servicing intervals and annual air conditioning service. Free servicing offer only available when vehicle is purchased in conjunction with finance provided by Black Horse Taxi Finance. Offer available on TX4 Elegance model only. Offer is only applicable to vehicles registered and delivered by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Offer not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. **Business users only.** Finance offer available on Personal Contract Purchase 9.2% APR representative; figures based on TX4 Elegance (automatic transmission) at £42,795 OTR with a customer deposit of £3,295 followed by 48 monthly payments of £688.21 (equivalent weekly payments of £158.81) plus an optional final payment of £16,830 based upon an annual contracted mileage of 30,000 (120,000 over term) and an Option To Purchase Fee of £10 on the last payment. 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. Fuel economy information: TX4 (Euro 6) in mpg (l/100km): Urban 25.7 (11.0), Extra Urban 41.5 (6.8), Combined 33.2 (8.5), CO2 emissions: 222g/km.