

May 2016

Call Sign



From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*DaC's Ray Buckland
watched as his great, great,
great grandfather's Victoria
Cross medal was honoured
in a moving ceremony...*



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

My sincere apologies for April's mess up. After spending hours constructing the article, I sent the editor the file from last year's directory! Hope you got the terminal message referring you to a web page which contained more information than the original article. So no, it wasn't an April Fool's joke Alex Constantinou (N05)!

What's On – May 2016

Venue	Event	Date	Venue	Event	Date
ExCel	Grand Designs (finishes 18:00)	01/05/2016	Wembley Stadium	National League Promo Final (KO 16:00)	15/05/2016
Olympia National	Mind Body Spirit (finishes 19:00)	01/05/2016	Olympia Grand	PULSE (finishes 18:00)	15/05/2016
Olympia Central	Muslim Lifestyle (finishes 17:00)	01/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Tannhäuser (Burst 19:30)	15/05/2016
ExCel	Grand Designs (finishes 18:00)	02/05/2016	Arsenal	v Aston Villa (Burst 16:45)	15/05/2016
Olympia National	Mind Body Spirit (finishes 17:00)	02/05/2016	Chelsea	v Leicester (Burst 16:45)	15/05/2016
ENO (Coliseum)	Sunset Boulevard (Burst 22:10)	02/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Lucia di Lammermoor (Burst 22:30)	16/05/2016
Royal Opera House	Tannhäuser (Burst 22:30)	02/05/2016	ENO (Coliseum)	Madam Butterfly (Burst 22:20)	16/05/2016
Chelsea	v Tottenham (Burst 21:45)	02/05/2016	Olympia Grand	PULSE (finishes 18:00)	16/05/2016
ExCel	Grand Designs (finishes 17:00)	03/05/2016	ExCel	eCommerce (finishes 16:30)	17/05/2016
ENO (Coliseum)	Sunset Boulevard (Burst 22:10)	03/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Frankenstein (Burst 22:30)	17/05/2016
Olympia Grand	WINE FAIR (finishes 18:30)	03/05/2016	ExCel	ITEC (finishes 17:30)	17/05/2016
Olympia Central	ELEVATE (finishes 17:00)	04/05/2016	Olympia Grand	PULSE (finishes 17:00)	17/05/2016
Royal Opera House	Frankenstein (Burst 22:30)	04/05/2016	ExCel	eCommerce (finishes 16:15)	18/05/2016
ExCel	Grand Designs (finishes 17:00)	04/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Frankenstein (Burst 22:30)	18/05/2016
ENO (Coliseum)	Sunset Boulevard (Burst 17:10)	04/05/2016	ExCel	ITEC (finishes 19:30)	18/05/2016
ENO (Coliseum)	Sunset Boulevard (Burst 22:10)	04/05/2016	ENO (Coliseum)	Madam Butterfly (Burst 22:20)	18/05/2016
Olympia Grand	WINE FAIR (finishes 18:00)	04/05/2016	Olympia West	Museums + Heritage (finishes 17:30)	18/05/2016
Olympia Central	ELEVATE (finishes 16:00)	05/05/2016	Olympia National	Art16 (finishes 21:00)	19/05/2016
ExCel	Grand Designs (finishes 17:00)	05/05/2016	ExCel	ITEC (finishes 15:30)	19/05/2016
ENO (Coliseum)	Sunset Boulevard (Burst 22:10)	05/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Lucia di Lammermoor (Burst 22:30)	19/05/2016
Royal Opera House	Tannhäuser (Burst 22:30)	05/05/2016	Olympia West	Museums + Heritage (finishes 17:00)	19/05/2016
Olympia Grand	WINE FAIR (finishes 17:00)	05/05/2016	Olympia National	Art16 (finishes 19:00)	20/05/2016
Olympia National	A Place In The Sun (finishes 16:00)	06/05/2016	ExCel	BBC Good Food (finishes 17:00)	20/05/2016
Royal Opera House	Frankenstein (Burst 22:30)	06/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Frankenstein (Burst 22:30)	20/05/2016
ExCel	Grand Designs (finishes 17:00)	06/05/2016	Olympia National	Art16 (finishes 19:00)	21/05/2016
ENO (Coliseum)	Sunset Boulevard (Burst 22:10)	06/05/2016	ExCel	BBC Good Food (finishes 18:00)	21/05/2016
Olympia National	A Place In The Sun (finishes 16:00)	07/05/2016	ENO (Coliseum)	Madam Butterfly (Burst 22:20)	21/05/2016
Royal Opera House	Frankenstein (Burst 16:30)	07/05/2016	Royal Opera House	The Winter's Tale (Burst 21:50)	21/05/2016
Royal Opera House	Frankenstein (Burst 22:00)	07/05/2016	Wembley Stadium	THE EMIRATES FA CUP FINAL	21/05/2016
ExCel	Grand Designs (finishes 18:00)	07/05/2016	Olympia National	Art16 (finishes 17:00)	22/05/2016
ExCel	Pet Show (finishes 17:00)	07/05/2016	ExCel	BBC Good Food (finishes 17:00)	22/05/2016
ENO (Coliseum)	Sunset Boulevard (Burst 17:10)	07/05/2016	Wembley Stadium	FA Trophy & FA Vase finals	22/05/2016
ENO (Coliseum)	Sunset Boulevard (Burst 22:10)	07/05/2016	Royal Hospital Grounds	Chelsea Flower show (VIP day)	23/05/2016
Fulham	v Bolton (Burst 14:15)	07/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Oedipe (Burst 22:15)	23/05/2016
Charlton	v Burnley (Burst 14:15)	07/05/2016	Royal Hospital Grounds	Chelsea Flower show (Finishes 20:00)	24/05/2016
Crystal Palace	v Stoke (Burst 16:45)	07/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Frankenstein (Burst 22:30)	24/05/2016
West Ham Unt	v Swansea (Burst 16:45)	07/05/2016	Royal Hospital Grounds	Chelsea Flower show (Finishes 20:00)	25/05/2016
Olympia National	A Place In The Sun (finishes 16:00)	08/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Frankenstein (Burst 22:30)	25/05/2016
ExCel	Grand Designs (finishes 17:00)	08/05/2016	ExCel	LIFTEX (finishes 17:30)	25/05/2016
ExCel	Pet Show (finishes 17:00)	08/05/2016	ENO (Coliseum)	Madam Butterfly (Burst 22:20)	25/05/2016
Royal Opera House	Tannhäuser (Burst 19:30)	08/05/2016	Olympia National	Antiquarian Book Fair (finishes 20:00)	26/05/2016
Tottenham	v Southampton (Burst 15:15)	08/05/2016	Royal Hospital Grounds	Chelsea Flower show (Finishes 20:00)	26/05/2016
Olympia West	Caffé Culture (finishes 17:30)	10/05/2016	ExCel	LIFTEX (finishes 17:30)	26/05/2016
West Ham Unt	v Man. Utd (Burst 21:30)	10/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Oedipe (Burst 22:15)	26/05/2016
ExCel	8 events finish 18:00 1 @17:00	11/05/2016	Olympia National	Antiquarian Book Fair (finishes 19:00)	27/05/2016
Olympia West	Caffé Culture (finishes 17:00)	11/05/2016	Royal Hospital Grounds	Chelsea Flower show (Finishes 20:00)	27/05/2016
Olympia National	CIPD Learning (finishes 17:30)	11/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Frankenstein (Burst 22:30)	27/05/2016
Royal Opera House	Lucia di Lammermoor (Burst 22:30)	11/05/2016	ENO (Coliseum)	Madam Butterfly (Burst 22:20)	27/05/2016
ExCel	8 events finish 17:00 1 @16:00	12/05/2016	ExCel	MCM (finishes 19:00)	27/05/2016
Olympia National	CIPD Learning (finishes 17:00)	12/05/2016	Olympia National	Antiquarian Book Fair (finishes 17:00)	28/05/2016
Royal Opera House	Tannhäuser (Burst 22:30)	12/05/2016	Wembley Stadium	Championship Play-Off final	28/05/2016
Olympia West	Dubai Property (finishes 19:00)	13/05/2016	Royal Hospital Grounds	Chelsea Flower show (Finishes 16:00)	28/05/2016
Olympia National	Bel Agê The Anti Ageing (finishes 16:00)	14/05/2016	ExCel	MCM (finishes 18:00)	28/05/2016
Olympia West	Dubai Property (finishes 19:00)	14/05/2016	Wembley Stadium	LEAGUE ONE PLAY OFF FINAL	29/05/2016
Royal Opera House	Lucia di Lammermoor (Burst 22:00)	14/05/2016	ENO (Coliseum)	Madam Butterfly (Burst 22:20)	29/05/2016
Wembley Stadium	SSE Women's FA Cup Final (KO 14:00)	14/05/2016	ExCel	MCM (finishes 17:00)	29/05/2016
Olympia National	Bel Agê The Anti Ageing (finishes 17:00)	15/05/2016	Wembley Stadium	LEAGUE TWO PLAY OFF FINAL	30/05/2016
Olympia West	Dubai Property (finishes 19:00)	15/05/2016	Royal Opera House	Oedipe (Burst 22:15)	30/05/2016
more events for 15/5/16 in next column			ENO (Coliseum)	Madam Butterfly (Burst 22:20)	31/05/2016

A formatted version with more content, go to www.myfav.co.uk/womay16.pdf. There is no Call Sign published in June, but try www.myfav.co.uk/wojun16.pdf near the end of May for "What's on" in June.

from the editor's desk

Uber, credit cards, fraud and lies...

There isn't much to laugh about regarding Uber's operation, even less at TfL's apparent love affair with that app. But occasionally something comes up to at least bring a smile to a situation that is happening more and more frequently – and the one involving **Benjamin Partridge** had a great – or stupid – punchline, depending on your sense of humour!

It's unlikely that you will know of Benjamin; he isn't a cab driver but like many others, he does frequent **Facebook** and he recently posted a short but pertinent piece to Uber. His complaint? "Some bastard just used my Uber account to get a cab across **Beijing**!"

What made that funny was that whoever had accessed his card – supposedly safe in Uber's grubby mitts – also cashed in a '25% off' promotion voucher that the Chinese Uber app had been offering!

Not that long ago, **Linda** and I were walking along **Station Road** in **Upminster**, when she had a call from a number that came up as being from the fraud department of her bank.

"Mrs Fisher," the voice asked, "did you spend \$89 around 7 minutes ago in **Brazil**?"

Well, **Linda** prides itself on being quick, but hey, no one's *that* quick! So what's the difference between **Linda's** bank and **Uber**? Well, **Linda's** bank with their multi-millions of customers spotted the fraud in minutes. **Uber**, who also hold millions of credit card details but nowhere near as many as **Linda's** bank, never seem to spot the fraudulent uses of the many card details they hold and I only picked on **Benjamin Partridge's** problem because there was some humour in the crook using it actually bothering to claim the discount!

I often wonder what **TfL** would do to **Dial-a-Cab** if even just a handful of clients complained about the safety of our account facilities. To my knowledge, there haven't been *any* leaks and it is highly unlikely that any outsiders would get through the hi-tec security this Society uses. But **Uber's** security can only be compared to a sieve, yet they constantly get away with it... courtesy of our licensing authority.

But then there's the really big **U-problem**, the unlimited funds they appear to have. An example of that financial clout arose recently in **California** where **Uber** were fined \$10million (around £7million) for misleading passengers about the strength of the background checks they use when hiring their drivers. I can't believe they would do that!!!

Many would claim the same about **Transport for London's** method of background checks for **Uber** drivers arriving in the country as refugees. Regardless of the undoubted appalling situations some find themselves in, they can still get a licence with nothing other than a piece of reference paper from a previous employer that they have amazingly avoided losing or even getting wet on their boat / walking journeys through **Europe**, until arriving in **London** and picking up their first fare!

But **Uber** apparently still have \$billions



to splash around. How do you beat that? Well we certainly won't while we have **TfL** at the helm. The question is who else could do the job because we have a licensed **PH** company in **Uber** who have been shown to be liars and a licensing authority that thinks it's perfectly ok to licence them.

The phrase 'you couldn't make it up' rings very true...

Mountview and Gett

Firstly my congratulations to **Mountview House Group** Chairman, **Geoffrey Riesel**, whose policy of buying up his drivers low-priced shares has paid off handsomely and he will receive a huge six-figure sum from **Gett** following that company's acquisition of the organisation formerly called **Radio Taxis**.

However, the part I can't quite understand is where **Gett** say they will never use private hire, yet **Mountview's** only profitable section is their **One Transport** booking platform... which deals mainly with cars.

According to **Gett's** European CEO, **Remo Gerber**, they will only be using black taxis and they have no interest in running a minicab fleet, nor will they apply for a Private Hire operator's licence. However, says Mr Gerber, **One Transport** has "£millions of work for Black Cabs every year." But from what I know about **One T**, their customers use black cabs only as part of a car option and without that, many will be uninterested in maintaining an account. I'll be interested to see what happens.

Mayoral elections

Well, it's time to bade farewell to **Boris** and welcome his soon-to-be-elected successor. What can we say about the man who single-handedly has been in charge of an organisation that has done what no one has managed in 350 years – almost finish off the licensed taxi trade so that it's barely clinging on by its fingernails.

His policy of giving priority to cyclists has caused so much traffic congestion that passengers are scared of getting into a taxi because of the meter going up while they are stuck in a traffic hold-up. Does anyone at **TfL** really believe that the single eastbound lane along **Lower Thames Street** is suddenly going to magically clear of its 18 hours-a-day hold-ups when the cones have gone? It will still be just one lane.

Just as the policy during the **London Olympics** almost killed us following his

worthless promises about bumper work levels, even though he knew we would be kept well away from where that work was sited because **Call Sign** asked him about that before the Games!

We have had promise after promise after promise broken. In reality, his promises have been as useless as his **Emirates London Cable Car Crossing**, which takes virtually no one from **O2** to **ExCel** and then doesn't take them back again after they didn't go in the first place!

Then there was the promise to end homelessness in **London** by 2012. He probably meant to say that it would get worse! Or what about the no strike deal he promised to get from rail unions or the promise not to shut any fire stations. Well someone has called the rail unions out several times and closed 10 fire stations along the way!

All I can say is that if anyone is undecided about their Euro vote, would they feel happy voting the way **Boris** suggests because if he says something, then it's bound to be wrong! But hey, he looks great with his blond almost-combed locks... but **Harrow** is welcome to him.

Just please, please, *p l e a s e*, don't let him ever come back because as a famous Mayor once said – he has given us two-thirds of diddly squat since we've known him!

Addison Lee problems

I have never made any secret about my views of **Addison Lee**. I don't like any form of competition, but I have to admire the way that **Addy Lee** have been operated for many, many years. They have a set of standards that they keep to. All their drivers must have the correct insurance – they know they do because they have to buy it from **Addy Lee** themselves! The drivers are always smart, the cars clean and their prices reflect the service. Yes, they are competition, but at least they are legitimate competition.

But things are apparently changing because in an effort to keep up with **Uber**, they have upset their drivers – some of whom are complaining that prices have been slashed by up to 50 percent in order to maintain their share of the work against the **U-men**. The main complaint is that the fare reductions have been taken from the drivers' part of the fare – exactly the same complaint as **Uber** drivers make about their fare reductions.

Letters from both **Addison Lee** and the **UPHD** Union have been leaked online and it doesn't take a lot of working out to see that relations between the company and its drivers are at breaking point.

As **Brian Rice** said last year before the trade took it up, this is truly a race to the bottom...

See you in July...

As usual, **Call Sign** will not be publishing an issue in June so we hope to see you all again in July. Feel free to send in any stuff you want to pass on as I'll still be here and still checking every day.

To everyone planning a holiday, enjoy it. You certainly deserve it after the past few ultra-tough years and hopefully, things will be better when you get back...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections of the Chairman

Credit Cards

You are all obviously aware that as from 2 April, there was no longer any surcharge to customers for using a Credit Card in a licensed London taxi. Any charge will indirectly be passed to the driver by the equipment suppliers, but of course the driver is going to be compensated because TfL have added 20p to the initial hiring for one year, when it will then be reviewed.

We initially had some correspondence from Members concerning the £1 plus VAT per day that we charge for processing all your Credit Card transactions. We had all sorts of suggestions, such as only paying the £1 plus VAT on the day the Member worked or the Member not paying the £1 plus VAT per day when they were on holiday. But of course that was before all the other equipment suppliers released their charges and I think I'm correct in saying that we are the only organisation that does not charge a percentage of the fare to the driver on each transaction.

During the first week of the new procedure, I was totally amazed to see that our transactions via Credit Cards had doubled and up until the time of writing this, that trend has continued. This got me thinking as I couldn't believe that the public had suddenly and dramatically decided to increase the use of Credit Cards during the first week of implementation. In fact, most of them probably never even knew that a new procedure was in place!

Anyway, I have now realised why the transactions we process have increased so dramatically and it's due to the fact that Members are processing *all* their Credit Card transactions through **Dial-a-Cab** as they are only paying a flat daily/weekly fee and not a percentage of the fee to the organisation that processes the transaction. Consequently, it appears that in the past many Members were not clearing their Credit Card transactions through Dial-a-Cab but via a third party as their percentage charge was less than ours, but as we are now the only organisation not to charge a percentage, of course they wish to use Dial-a-Cab! The charges we make for Credit Card transactions may have to be reviewed in the future because when we brought the new charges in, I naively believed that Members were clearing their Credit Cards through us. How wrong was I!

I now have figures for the first 3 weeks of the new system and the transactions that we have processed have increased by 98.5 percent; if only all transactions had gone through us in the first place.

Car Park

By the time you read this piece, hopefully our car park will be back to normal, albeit with twenty one porta-cabins situated on top! I really can't remember if I relayed the story to you in the past, but I was originally approached by the builders next door to see if they could use our car park for their project team who would be housed in porta-cabins. I said yes – provided we could agree on a suitable fee for them to rent the car park, but of course they would have to build a mezzanine floor for the cabins so that we retained use of our parking facility. They would also have to obtain all the necessary licences and permissions and meet the cost of all expenses, together with the cost of the con-



tract. They agreed so then all that was needed was for the builders to come back with a suitable offer they'd be prepared to pay to rent the site. They returned with a figure of £15k per annum for three years, making a grand total of £45k for the period. I found the offer derisory and couldn't contemplate negotiating with them as our individual assessments for the worth of the project were too far apart.

Eventually the co-founder of the actual developers of the site contacted me to see if we could come to some sort of agreement. I had met the co-founder several times before as I originally sold **Brunswick House** to him and he seemed quite keen to do business again. We had our meetings and finally agreed on a rent of £170k per annum for three years making a total of £510k, which under the circumstances will be a welcome income for the Society in the future.

Pin Enabled Devices (PEDs)

All taxis in London will have to be equipped with a PED as from 3 October and have to process a Credit Card should the customer wish to use this method of payment. However, TfL have stated that the PED will have to be a fixture in the passenger compartment of the vehicle, something I have always disagreed with. In fact,

when we had our PEDs passed by TfL to be in the front of the taxi back in March 2011, the two reasons were that I considered the mounting of the PED in the rear of the vehicle could be a threat to driver safety as drivers could be enticed out of the front of the vehicle with the passenger stating the PED was not working correctly. Secondly, passengers should always wear a seat belt when travelling in a taxi, but they don't and the siting of the PED in the back could be a hazard to the passenger should the taxi be involved in an accident or emergency manoeuvre. I'm afraid that I am still of the opinion the PED should be in the front and be passed by the driver to the passenger in the rear or through the luggage window. If TfL persist with their insistence that the PED should be a fixture in the passenger compartment of the taxi, then they will be proven to be wrong – but only after a passenger or driver is injured.

Strangely enough I was sent this piece, although I'm not sure where it originated from. I assume it was a taxi drivers' blog or forum site, but at least it was signed and I am assured it is authentic. It reflects my sentiments exactly...

Just for info guys and the card machine in the back: A friend on RTG got a couple with 2 kids about 12 – 14 in. Mum and dad were on the back seat with kids on jump seats. All normal so far. However, he was made to force a left turn to avoid an RTA. The child in the back slid to her left and into the card machine, very nearly breaking her neck. As it went into her, there was some blood so they went to A&E. Driver has left details with the father, but the father says it's clearly not his fault. However, again what has happened to so called "health & safety?" Ordering us to put these in the back, I feel a death may well be on its way. The PCO would never have allowed these in the back like this. Someone should look into this. Be aware... Mickey A.

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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Following the LTDA's lobby of Parliament on March 8 (see *April Call Sign*) where it was hoped to see drivers persuade their MPs to commit to taking the action that TfL has failed to do, **Ilford North MP Wes Streeting** took up the cudgels and told *Call Sign's* **Marc Turner (R97)** at the time that he would be putting forward a "Ten Minute Bill" on March 22 to publicise some of this trade's grievances – or at least those referring to Uber.

We said at the time that very few Ten Minute Bills get a second reading due to time restraints and sadly that was the case for this Bill too and it has been timed out.

The Bill had asked for changes that were obviously aimed at Uber and which some claim would have had the opposite effect that they set out to do in giving the app's drivers a far more respectable image. But it would also have made that image far more difficult to come by and help keep numbers down, whereas currently it isn't much more difficult to become an Uber driver than getting out of bed.

Some drivers are now criticising Wes Streeting's effort, claiming they "knew it would be a waste of time." Others are asking why the LTDA wasted their time in organising the lobby.

"Ten Minute Bill" runs out of time



Wes Streeting's 10 minute Bill ran out of minutes!

The LTDA and the many drivers attending Parliament on March 22 may not have had the result they wanted, but they also showed that they aren't prepared to just roll over and give up. That isn't a failure... just a delay!

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

But few came out and said either when the Ten Minute Bill was first granted, because the alternative was to sit back and do nothing.

Credit Cards & Stickers

As of 2 April, licensed London taxis were no longer charging a fee for accepting credit cards and it means that passenger hailing a street cab are now charged the amount shown on the meter, whatever their payment method. As from October, all black cabs will be required to accept card payments.

TfL claim that drivers are being compensated for the cost of accepting cards by a 20p extra on the fare drop, taking the minimum fare up to £2.60.

But many Dial-a-Cab drivers have been phoning *Call Sign* concerning removal of the stickers that had told passengers their driver accepted credit cards and that there was a 10% charge for doing so. The question was how they could inform passengers that they still accepted cards and that there was no longer a charge?

The answer was that we didn't know, so we asked those that did – TfL – and the LTPH Strategy and Infrastructure manager, **Darren Crowson** told us that they would be producing signage to advise passengers that taxis accepted card payments and there was no charge for doing so. However, they wouldn't be going out until sometime prior to the October requirement of compulsory card acceptance coming into effect.

However, Mr Crowson did add that existing signage could still be used provided that information about the previous charge was no longer displayed or was covered up.



London Taxidriver's 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

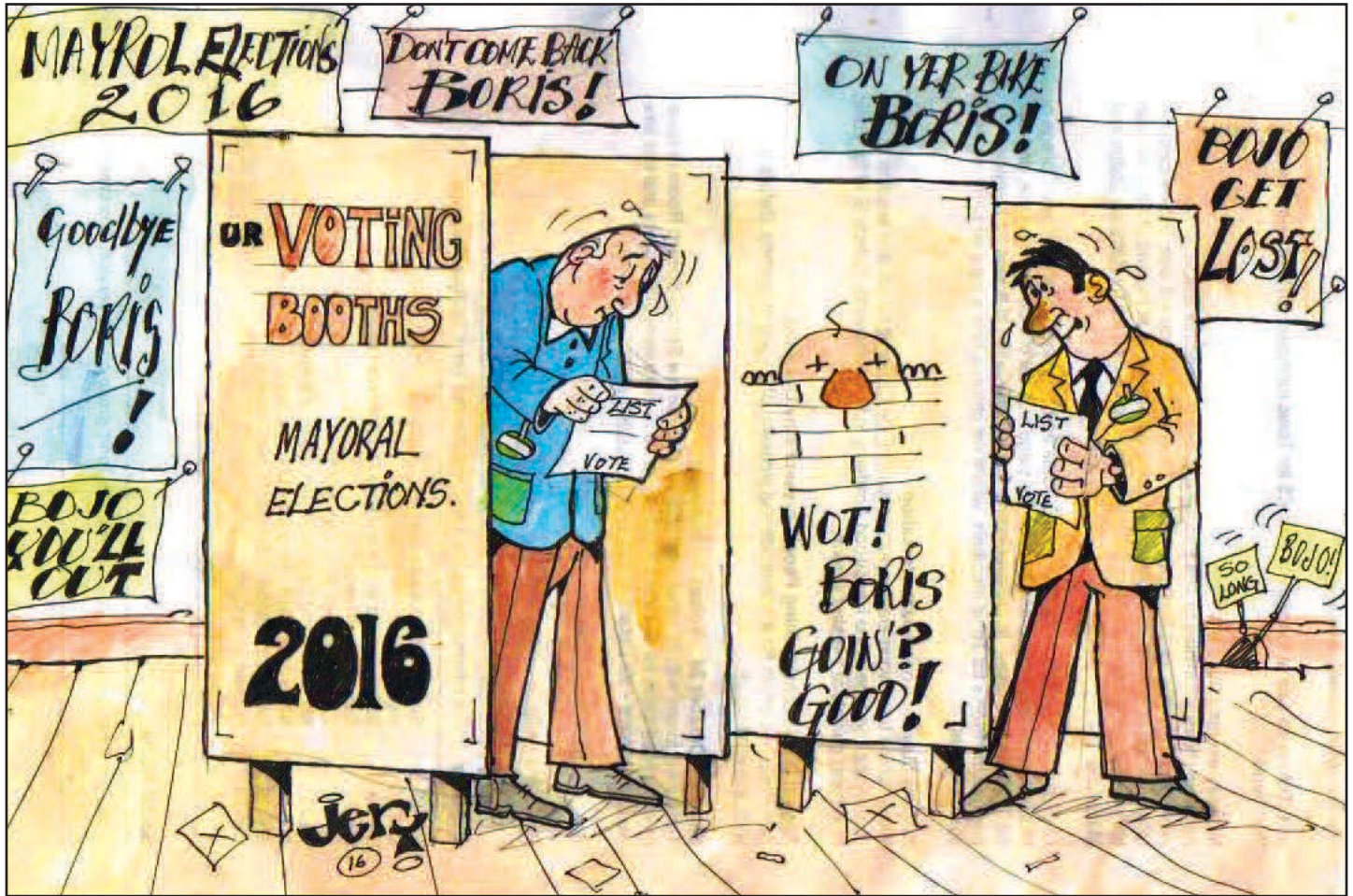
Without you there are no outings, so please contact our drivers' liaison:
Steve Bell on 07811 508772

Or enter your details on the volunteer page of our website:
www.ltfuc.org.uk – a Sponsor Page can also be found there...

The Hon President, Hon Chairman and Committee look forward to seeing you



Jery's World



"Perhaps if we look for a Mayor now who claims to be our friend... before they then double the number of licensed minicabs, ban us from bus lanes and stations and then double the cost for taxi licenses, it might save us getting upset later!"

DBS application and temporary licences



Disclosure &
Barring Service

Call Sign receives several emails each month from upset Dial-a-Cab drivers who say that their new three year licence hasn't yet arrived, that the old one is on the verge of expiring and that they have heard of TfL issuing temporary licences. Then comes the question... is that true?

Well sadly, the answer is no! Contrary to utterances from **LTPH**, there are still delays – usually caused by the **DBS – Disclosure & Barring Service** – side and the only way you can get a temporary licence is if you have been waiting over 90 days.

The application forms are sent out four months before the due date and if you do not respond as soon as you get it, then you are taking a risk with your earning capacity because if you don't get the licence, then you can't work.

If you have been waiting more than 90 days, just phone TfL and they will issue you with a temporary licence. If you haven't then they just will not be interested and tell you that you should have sent it back earlier.

If you don't want to risk your licence, the DBS now have an update service that means once you receive your DBS certificate and subscribe to the update service, then you need never apply for a new one. **LTPH** – or any employer come to that – will just need your membership number and can check that there have been no changes to your original DBS without any delays.

There is a fee of £13 per year to subscribe to the update service when you apply for your DBS certificate, but it means you would no longer be required to apply for a new DBS certificate or have the frustrating wait associated with it.

If interested, then it has to be done within 19 days of your next renewal. Once you complete the DBS form and have your application form reference number, go to the DBS website and join. You will need a credit/debit card. If you prefer to just go through the usual performance every three years, then that option will still be there – just make sure you return your licence application as soon as you get the licence pack, usually around four months before expiry...

Go to the DBS website at <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service> for more details. You can also track your application at the same site...

Call Sign's phone was boiling hot over the past month ever since revealing that we had road tested an LPG converted taxi and how impressed we had been with it. The article obviously hit home with cab owners whose taxis were closing in on the 15 year time limit and some who were already on the extra year that TfL had allowed for some drivers. The reason was that LPG converted cabs will get an extra five years and that even with the cost of conversion working out at around £9,800 (including VAT), that is still much cheaper than buying another cab or renting.

The Dial-a-Cab Credit Union had confirmed to Call Sign that they would give loans to any member requiring one in order to convert their taxis. DACCU gave the monthly cost of members borrowing £10,000 as £264 over 48 months, £333 over 36 months, £470 over 24 months or £890 if you can afford to repay it over 12 months. Put those costs against buying or 5 years renting and they come out as being very favourable.

The conversion consists of replacing your diesel engine with a brand new Opel petrol engine capable of 290 brake horsepower, although it will be detuned as that is far too powerful for a taxi. But it will give you the same torque as a TX4 without any shudders or vibrations and will probably sound even quieter than your car! After conversion to LPG, taxis meet the EU Euro 6 standard and gain fuel savings of up to 20 percent! So it wasn't that surprising that we would get some questions. Among them were how long before they

LPG CONVERSIONS



eral interest surrounding this LPG solution, hopefully they would eventually come down a bit in price.

The TX2 the company are using for a 10,000 mile TfL durability testing is scheduled to commence as this issue comes out.

The vehicles existing gearbox is used and an adaptor plate is manufactured to marry the

would become available, warranties, how would the existing gearbox match up to the new Opel petrol engine, would the conversion become cheaper and was it true that LPG converted vehicles were banned from driving through Blackwall and Dartford Tunnels?

So, re the warranty: All re-powering parts are covered for a period of 12 months or 30,000 miles subject to service requirements being observed. LPG parts are covered for a period of 24 months or 60,000 miles subject to service requirements being observed.

Cheaper over time? It is envisaged that economies of scale would kick in after 500 units had been produced. Considering the size of the London and UK taxi fleets, plus the gen-

gearbox up to the new engine. As the new engine has been tuned to match the power and torque output of the original diesel engine, this means no additional strain is put on the existing gearbox.

Converted taxis can use any UK tunnel except one – the Channel via the Eurostar shuttle service. That is due to the French side but is unlikely to affect many drivers' daily work routine!

The photo shows the adaptor plate, which is milled out of one solid piece of aluminium, fitted into the engine bay. More info as we get it...

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

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I'd like to relate my story over the past 41 years since I walked out of the PCO in **Penton Street** clutching my **Green Badge** number 23391; otherwise it will be as though I was never here. Along the way, I'll give my view on how the cab

trade has been sh*t on over those 41 years by the very people we assumed were there to look after us, as well as our punters...

It was Wednesday 21st May 1975 when I received my Bill; I was working for the Post Office at the time as a technical officer on the telecoms side – now known as BT. I had the day off and went with a man I had been training up to my rank and who had helped me with my call-overs. It had taken me fifteen months – not bad compared to nowadays.

The following evening I rented a cab from Halfins at Parsons Green Lane for the night to return in the morning before I went back to work at the PO. The rent was £4.80 for the night plus 2p per mile for diesel, which was 45p a gallon (around 10p per litre). My first fare was from Kensington High Street's Derry and Toms (if you remember them) to Beryl Road, Hammersmith for 40p plus a 10p tip (almost everyone tipped in those days. I went on to have quite a good night with extra passengers paying an extra 3p and a midnight 'extras' charge of 12p.

After two years driving some evenings and weekends on a part-time basis, I was sure I could do the job full-time and be able to make a decent living, so in April 1977 – Jubilee Year – I resigned from the Post Office and in the June of that year I bought a brand new FX4, having taken my superannuation contributions back from the Post Office and used it for a deposit. In August of that year I joined ODRTS at 144 Shirland Rd, Maida Vale.

In 1975, the country had been facing a raging inflation rate of 27 percent and by 1977 the government had reduced it down to 21 percent. Everyone was getting similar wage increases – with the exception of taxi fares! At the time we had a Labour government led by Prime Minister Jim Callaghan with Dennis Healey as Chancellor (his wife Edna was an account client with us at a time when you could drive your taxi up to the door of 11 Downing Street). In charge of taxis at the Home Office was Merlin Reece, who gave the impression of knowing nothing!

Taxi fares at that time were so low that demand was almost unbelievable, but it didn't really do us any favours as a job between 2 and 8 miles was almost an act of charity on behalf of the driver – except for a Heathrow trip if you could get there and back fairly quickly. So there was a lot of brooming, which didn't do our reputation much good. I remember one example of how low the fares were; I picked up a single passenger going from Oxford Circus to Highgate that went £1.45. The same journey on the tube would have cost that passenger £1.40!

At that time we were begging for a fare increase; diesel prices were rising with inflation, the cost of a new cab was going up almost every

TfL's decisions with taxis have caused many drivers irritation, but one driver – former Taxi Driver of the Year Brian Marcantonio (R73) – has decided he can't take any more and has retired...

TFL AND BORIS MADE ME CALL IT A DAY!

3 months and if you ordered one, you'd have to go on a waiting list and wouldn't know how much it was going to cost you until M&O told you that your new cab was in! So what brainchild did Merlin Rees come up with? He awarded us a 10p increase and an inquiry into how much we were earning and also how much Private Hire was earning.

Among the champagne socialists living in Highgate, Taxi drivers would be hung, drawn and quartered if we dared broom a job to Highgate for that £1-45, but when PH took the same journey and charged them £3, then they were terrific blokes! If we, with our purpose built taxis and full insurance dared to charge £3, we would have a police helicopter and armed response unit outside our house telling us to come out with our hands up!

In 1979 the Tories with Margaret Thatcher were elected and she put Willie Whitelaw in charge at the Home Office. Within a month we received the fare increase we needed – 30 percent! But the airport faces were not happy because prior to the increase the meter used to go double after 6 miles, but it was reduced to only 50 percent faster. But we all gained at the front end and received a large increase. Then 10 months later, we received another 25 percent increase. After that, the motor and cycling index was applied to our fares so we never had to go through what the previous Labour administration had put us through. Needless to say, the number of fares wanting to go to Highgate was drastically reduced.

Then in 1982, M&O introduced the FX4R with a 2.2 litre engine. It was the first cab with an engine that didn't deafen the driver, but it was also an army reject that couldn't climb even the slightest gradient when more than two passengers were in the back! But of course it was ok to put it into a cab because we had no choice as to what vehicle we bought. Eventually there was such uproar over the FX4R that they bought out the FX4S, a taxi that on a warm day would see the engine often overheat and boil over. When drivers complained, M&O said that it was normal! So we asked why the cab didn't run hot enough in the winter! Eventually they gave in and bought out an optional extra for drivers to add to their brand new taxis – a thermostatic fan!

Late 1989 and into the early 1990s, the country entered a severe recession and fares became scarce – although not as bad as now. We then had Michael Portillo in charge at the Home Office and were told that all taxis needed to be wheelchair accessible by the year 2000, but that year we at least got a 9% increase with an extra 2 percent to help pay for it. But at least we were given 10 years notice, unlike changes these days.

Then after years of being treated as nonentities came a breath of fresh air – the Metrocab

was launched giving us creature comforts that we couldn't even dream about in our FX cabs. But at least that led to LTI coming up with the Fairway, which had more for the driver than any other LTI cab had ever come up with before. It also had the Nissan 2.7 engine under the bonnet, probably the best taxi engine ever. But that was eventually dropped and replaced with the TX1...

The cab trades modern-day problems really started with our controlling move from the Home Office to County Hall, onto TfL and the licensing of Private Hire. Then when Mayor Ken Livingstone could see a few more votes in the green lobby with their sandals, grey socks and vegetarianism, came cyclists and the introduction of even more cycle lanes. And THEN – wait for it – the biggest disaster ever for the cab trade – BORIS, the Mayor who promised us everything, gave us nothing before stabbing us in the back with the cycle superhighways.

Large companies aren't coming to London in the numbers they were, but many say they are leaving because of the congestion the cycle superhighway lanes are causing. The CEO's don't go to work on the tube or bus with the sweaty masses, they go by taxi or car and if they have difficulty getting to work as they now are, they just move the company to where they can get to work easier.

The lies and lawbreaking by the Mayor and his TfL are just breathtaking – and that includes HMG too. Crime figures for Taxis and PH being lumped into one means that 25,000 people have been libelled. Perhaps there needs to be a law – collective libel!

Added to the above comes Uber, with total inaction from TfL also being just breathtaking. Is this another case of chums looking after chums? Perhaps I could mention Messrs Cameron, Johnson and Osborne alongside their membership of the Oxford thugs club, the Bullingdon... but I don't have the time, space or inclination to wind myself up!

I could hail David Cameron and George Osborne's "success" in getting Google to cough up £130million in back tax, even though the French government is claiming £130billion for tax they claim is owed by the internet giant – and Google's operation in France is smaller than in the UK.

Perish the thought that when David and George cease being MPs that they would do such a thing as take a job with Google! Mind you, there's always Uber!

Needless to say I can't face this job anymore so it's a very sad goodbye from me. I wish all you Dial-a-Cab drivers the best of luck in this trade; however, I think the future could well be uncertain...

**Brian Marcantonio (now ex-R73)
1993 Taxi Driver of the Year**



Sid at his 90th birthday party

The consecration to the memorial stone of long-time Dial-a-Cab driver Sid Gold (ex-E20) will take place on July 17th at Rainham Jewish Cemetery, 416 Upminster Road North, Rainham, Essex RM13 9SB. The service will commence at 2.45pm.

Sid passed away aged 94, amazingly just 8 years after leaving Dial-a-Cab at the age of 86. Even then he didn't want to retire because he was still passing his yearly medicals. He told *Call Sign* at the time:

"I'm over 86 years of age, so it's a bit of a responsibility. Although I have regularly passed my PCO medicals with flying colours, driving a radio taxi carries much responsibility with it. But Dial-a-Cab has been such a big part of my life for over 40 years and I really am so sad to let it go, however that time had to come one day. But I still have my cab with a plate on so I can occasionally go out to work the streets and I won't starve! I'd also like to thank Brian Rice and the Board for their support over the years. Not every company would have been so kind to someone of my age."

Before retirement, he had been London's oldest driver but his appearances as a non-radio driver never really began and he settled into his deserved retirement. But he always kept in touch, insisting that he stayed on *Call Sign's* mailing list and we were even invited to his 90th birthday party. It was there that he asked me to see if Brian Rice could take him back as a driver at 90 because he was getting bored! I *think* Sid was joking because his 90 year old eyes still had that Gold twinkle in them!

Just 12 months later, we heard that Sid had a heart attack and was undergoing open heart surgery. His chances were given as very slim, but he pulled through and was eventually discharged. When *Call Sign* called to see how the then 91 year old Sid was, he came onto the phone and said that the most upsetting part was that the heart attack meant he would have

SID GOLD STONE SETTING

to wait 6 months before he could get his taxi licence back! He never did say if he was joking!

Sid was born in the London Hospital in October 1921. He began driving in 1939 but never passed a driving test as there were none in those days. He was in the RAF throughout the war until his discharge in 1946 when he went into radio and TV sales and repairs. He worked from two different shops in Brick Lane until 1961 when he decided to do the Knowledge on a part-time basis so that he could also run his other businesses. Sid did the KoL with two friends, but not on a bike – the trio bought an old FX3 between them and did it in that!

Sid showed his toughness when at the age of 82 he was left lying on the ground in Cheshire Street after three yobs – one of whom held a gun to Sid's head – attempted to rob him of his takings. They knocked him to the ground but he

refused to give them his wallet, lying on top of it until the three thugs gave up and left. He was back at work the following night, when he recounted the story and showed off a bruise with the excitement of a 15 year old!

Sid joined Dial-a-Cab in 1965 and left 43 years later much to the sadness of the girls in the call centre. Political correctness wasn't something that Sid ever coveted and he would get away with saying the most outrageous things to them. But they loved him.

But as his daughter Roberta said at Sid's funeral: "We're not here to mourn, but to celebrate a life..."

All Sid's friends from DaC are invited to the consecration regardless of which religion. Just remember that you need a covering for your head...

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

Vito 'punctures'

Call Sign has been sent a message from several different Dial-a-Cab Vito owners saying that drivers should not automatically assume that a tyre deflation on the Mercedes taxi is caused by a puncture, as they have found they actually had a cracked rim rather than a tyre problem.

If it is the rim, you should expect to pay around £100 for a replacement. You should also factor in balancing and fitting costs. And of course, try not to hit the kerb when turning!



Vito cracked rim

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

Ray Buckland (P66) has been around Dial-a-Cab a long time, be it as a driver, Marshal or dispatcher. In fact, *Call Sign* has a rare video in its library of the time when this Society went from voice to data dispatch on 29 April 1989 and Ray is seen in his dispatching guise wandering in and around the old Brunswick Place call centre. But the story Ray recently passed over to us was as far away from taxis as it's possible to get and closer to the Charge of the Light Brigade, part of the 1854 Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War, that saw Lord Cardigan's troops accidentally sent into battle and lose many troops against the far superior Russian forces.

Ray's story begins with his late uncle Peter – who was into genealogy – together with Ray's mother Cynthia, tracing back Ray's great great great grandfather, **James Champion**, who fought in the 1857 **Indian Mutiny** with the **Kings Irish Hussars**, where he won the **Victoria Cross** for valour in the

THE DAC DRIVER, AN UNMARKED GRAVE AND THE VC



Ray Buckland was at the ceremony to honour his great, great, great grandfather's VC, won for actions at the India Mutiny of 1857

Potholes!

With the vast majority of Dial-a-Cab subscribers being owner drivers, ask them what the biggest curse to driving conditions is and most will say road conditions – more specifically, potholes.

A recent announcement from the government explained how their £50 million **Pothole Action Fund** is to be spent across the UK. The Fund was first announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and was set to be split between 118 authorities.

Transport secretary Patrick McLoughlin said the government wanted to "tackle the blight of potholes." However, the **Local Government Association** claimed that it would take around £12 billion to fix England's roads rather than the £50m offered.

The money is the first tranche of a total £250m Pothole Action Fund and is said to have been calculated according to the size of the local road network in the area.

Matt Dyer, MD of LeasePlan, said:

"It's interesting to see how the government plans to divide up the pledged £50 million Pothole Action Fund between English councils. Although this is a welcome first pot, there is still an awful long way to go in repairing Britain's pothole-ridden roads. According to local authorities last year, it will take another £10.5 billion to fill in every single pothole that is currently on the road. With this in mind, we might ask whether this 'so called' permanent pothole fund is enough.

Filling in potholes, however, is no substitute for modernising Britain's road network. Part of the reason why there are so many potholes in the first place is because the roads are aged and decrepit. Only time will tell, but with the extreme wet weather, more cars on the road than ever and still low fuel prices, it's looking more like potholes may be a permanent ongoing fixture on our roads."

Looks like that "curse" is a long way from being removed!

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign Online

face of the enemy. The wording for the 24-year old Troop Sergeant Major was:

For distinguished bravery at Beejapore on 8th September 1858, when both the Officers attached to the Troop were disabled, and himself severely wounded at the commencement of the action by a ball through his body, in having continued at his duty forward, throughout the pursuit, and disabled several of the Enemy with his pistol. Also recommended for distinguished conduct at Gwalior.

Three years earlier, James also took part in the infamous **Charge of the Light Brigade**. **Lord Cardigan**, under orders from overall commander of the British troops, **Lord Raglan**, led his under-strength troops into battle with a Russian artillery battery. But there had been a miscommunication and the Light Brigade was mistakenly sent as a frontal assault rather than a back-up and many British troops lost their lives following a hasty retreat. Fortunately, although involved in fighting, James wasn't in the main body of troops and survived, which enabled him to perform so heroically in India three years later.

The VC to James Champion – later promoted to Regimental Sergeant Major – was honoured at the Eastbourne Redoubt where troops with sabres drawn formed a guard of honour.

Ray Buckland, together with his mum, sister and several other members of James Champion's family, witnessed the emotional

ceremony on 20th April and said it had been one of the most moving events he had ever witnessed. It tied in to a ceremony at **Hammersmith Old Cemetery** where James' grave – that had been marked with just a cross – was re-laid with a fully inscribed stone.

Before leaving for Eastbourne, Ray admitted to *Call Sign* that he hadn't even heard of James Champion before being told of the Redoubt ceremony, but he felt so proud now. Ray added that there was huge thanks owed to **The Sun** newspaper, which played a big part in getting the recognition that those who have been decorated with the Victoria Cross so richly deserved...

James Champion VC MSM
1834 – 4 May 1904

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The big thing these days is genealogy. Everybody wants to know where they came from. Were

our ancestors royalty or rogues? Were they criminal or clergy? In Australia, descendants of English transportees are regarded as aristocracy!

Whole TV series are devoted to the subject. From the BBC's 'Who do you think you are' we learnt that actor **Alexander Armstrong** and journalist **Frank Gardner** can both trace themselves back to **William the Conqueror** of all people. Mind you, there must be many who could do that if they had the resources of the Beeb to help their research!

So what can the average person do to find out about their history? There's plenty to discover from the internet and if you subscribe to certain websites, you can find out even more. And of course there's the wonderful National Archive in Kew. It was there I was able to track down my paternal grandfather's Naturalisation File from 1935. It was embargoed until 2035 but I applied under the Freedom of Information Act and a few weeks later it became available. However, it felt really strange opening something that had been untouched for over sixty years and in all probability will never be looked at again. I made photocopies for members of the family.

Another true story from Geoff Levene...

Who Do You think I am!

On my mother's side, the 1881 census revealed that her grandfather, **Jacob**, had been in **Manchester**; also showing that although he had come from **Russia**, he was actually born in **Finland**, which was part of the **Russian Empire** in those days. This would account for my blond Nordic looks and my prowess at distance running!

Ten years later he was in **Wentworth Street** in the east end, but after that he spent the rest of his life in various parts of **Bermondsey**. Strangely enough, my niece – Jacob's great-great granddaughter – having been brought up in North West London, now lived off **Jamaica Road**.

But there were mysteries about that lot. I couldn't find birth certificates for Jacob's four children, although I found one for a fifth child of whom there is no other record. I don't suppose I'll ever find out what happened there.

But back to my father's side; legend has it there was an ancestor that lived in **Babylon** who made a living as a charioteer. But he lost his license for refusing to go south of the **Euphrates** one Saturday evening. Years later, the family was to be found in the little Polish village of **Mennyzeds**. You won't find that on any map because it's actually called something else that no one can pronounce as it has got lots and lots of zeds in it... so **Mennyzeds** it is!

But life in **Mennyzeds** was tough. Over here in the winter we scrape ice off our windscreen... but over there you scrape it off the bed! You wouldn't dream of leaving the house

in the morning without first covering yourself with goose fat to ward off the cold!

So eventually they decided to leave. Grandpa saved his money and paid for a passage to England, but when they got off the ship they found themselves in **New York**. He was said to be furious.

"The cheats," he screamed, "I paid for England and they dump us here. Back onto the ship!"

Eventually they arrived in London. It wasn't exactly paradise with seven people in two rat-infested rooms. In fact they were so poor that there were not enough rats to go around and two of my uncles had to share a rat! **Aunty Hetty** didn't have her own rat until she'd been married for two years. She had a reputation for being a bit snooty, owning twelve pairs of bloomers – one for every month of the year!

But women can still be a bit hoity-toity. We were chatting to a lady at a party last week when she suddenly said that she had to rush as she was going to pick up a new **Canesten Combi**. So I told her that I had a fifteen year old **Toyota**, but that it didn't make me a bad person!

Recently, I found myself in the east end and decided to find the old place. So I went up **Commercial Street**, tuned right into **Slime Terrace**, left into **Hovel Street** and right into **Bug Row** – and there it was: **Woodlice Buildings**... or as the dazzling steel and glass edifice is now known – **City View Plaza**.

I knew we should have held onto it...

Geoff Levene (W32)

Call Sign Online

Uniting the anti-Uber world!

It was around 5pm on 19 April and along with hundreds of other taxi drivers, we were going round and round **Kings Cross** and **St Pancras International** until the whole area became gridlocked, as together we demonstrated against the total inadequacy of police operations in handling the numbers of **PH cars** – mainly **Uber** – ranking up by the **Euro set-down**.

So it was with some irony that **Call Sign** reporter **Marc Turner (R97)** and I were then invited along to the **Unite (the Union)** headquarters in **Theobald's Road** at 7pm for what we were told was to be a two hour meeting that they described as the world's taxi drivers uniting against **Uber**.

Amazingly, the meeting – conducted by **Unite's Mike Hedges** – was exactly how it had been described and while there were no definitive answers, listening to international speakers speaking of problems they had in dealing with **Uber** made us realise that not only were we not on our own, but that the **Uber** menace was absolutely huge!

Karim Asnoue of the **CGT Taxi Union** in **France** even joked that **Uber** was like the Mafia and in a French accent that made the lady sitting next to me almost swoon, he told the meeting about the demonstrations that **Paris** had, but went on to explain how different the taxi drivers were in other French Cities. The stories may have been similar from all the other speakers, yet it felt important that we understood the destructiveness that **Uber** is causing everywhere. **Peter Kennedy** and **Bob Orr** from **Canada's** largest private sector union, **Unifor**, represent over 310,000 members across **North America** and both gave rundowns of their **Uber** problems. They pointed out how popular **Uber** is with the young because of the technology they use and how young people like anything new.

Frank Moreels, the Federal Secretary of Transport and Logistics and Co-President of **Belgische Transportbond** put forward the problems that **Belgium** authorities had with **Uber** and also explained the difference in taxi service between **Brussels** and **Gent** and compared then to other Belgium cities.

Mac Urata, the secretary of the **International Transport Federation**, which represents unions from **India** to **Korea** to **Norway** tied everything together to make everyone realise, if they didn't already, just how dangerous **Uber** is. Together with his assistant **Claire**, they recited true stories about **Uber** and even explained how the app's "promise" to create one million jobs for **UN** women had fallen flat. Yet **Uber** carries on unperturbed.

London Assembly member **Murad Qureshi** also spoke against the **Uber** machine, as did former Mayoral candidate **Paul Tavares**. However, suggestions as to what to do about the app aren't that easy. There are legal actions against them going on in many countries, as well as demonstrations and suggestions that we should aim our ire at those putting money into **Uber** rather than **Travis Kalanick**, because without money they just could not exist, as the huge losses they suffered last year were unsustainable without the many backers they have pumping money in, but at least it showed that we are not alone in our fight.



L-R: Frank, Mac and Claire

Alan Fisher, Call Sign Online

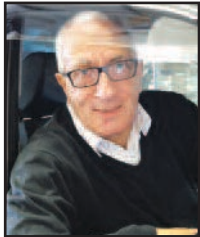
Bob Lashmar (B21J):

"Overall he has been a disaster. The only thing he promised in his election manifesto and that he has done was to get rid of those confounded bendy buses. But I suspect that because of the fires that plagued their service record, they were likely to be consigned to the scrap heap anyway. There are road works everywhere making it difficult to get about. No, I do not think he has helped in any way, but that's politicians for you. Once they have your vote, they go off and do whatever they like!"



Phil Davis (F10):

"Boris has swayed in and out of supporting the cab trade and his indecisions have made our job harder. The road restrictions to facilitate incompetent cyclists are a joke and he has let TfL run roughshod over the London licensed taxi trade when really the Deputy Mayor should have had control over them. This has caused a reduction in the world renowned standards of the London taxi trade."



Steve Burton (N90):

"Boris is good for telling you what you want to hear and good at getting himself out of a hole. He's a good talker and did get rid of those bendy buses that were unsafe and a menace. He calls us a 'gold' service, but treats us like servants in the kitchen..."



Ian Learmouth (R50)

said: "If he was my wife, I'd get a divorce on the grounds of unreasonable behaviour! He has made it very difficult to get around the city due to the extensive road works simply to accommodate cycle lanes. Obviously cycle lanes also have an impact on emergency services as well as taxis and other road users, so I hope these narrowing of road lanes will not result in a loss of life or lives due to emergency vehicles being unduly delayed. I believe this has been reported on Twitter several times, so it would seem to have a negative impact as a whole."



Gary Heath (W42):

"We used to moan about Ken Livingstone affecting transport, but Boris has just screwed everything up! He has just one policy – he is cycle mad and that is to the detriment of everybody else on the road."



Ray Buckland (P66): "The cab trade is going down the tubes and he has not helped us at

As Mayor Boris Johnson enters the final lap of his 8-year tenure in office, Call Sign went out onto London's streets to gauge the views of some Dial-a-Cab drivers on Boris's value to the taxi trade...

Boris Johnson: Success or failure???

all. All he has given us is Uber and then allowed them to flourish here, when other European countries have banned them."

Brian Desborough (K39):

"I was very optimistic when he first came to office, but after his eight years I feel very disappointed. I was very pro-Boris originally and had high hopes that he would support the Taxi trade against Private Hire, but it seems he has no control whatsoever under TfL and they are a disaster in themselves! How it was that they were unable to limit the expansion of PH is a mystery to me. I have lost a lot of the respect I once had for Boris, although I have to wonder if anyone else could have done any better..."



Jackie Kott (Y88):

"I don't think he has done anything positive for us so far as I can recall. He is obsessed with bike lanes – cyclists that wear little or no protection least of all something as basic as a helmet as they roar in and out of traffic causing mayhem all around them – and has given us more and more buses that often have just a few passengers on them. If you try to pick up or set down in Lower Thames Street or along the Embankment, you've got a problem! How can Private Hire be allowed to continue expanding unhindered causing ever worsening congestion, yet this very morning I was told to move off from two ranks because the length of the ranks were said to be causing an obstruction? Yet if we cruise the streets in search of fares, we are not only adding to the already heavily congested roads, we are also adding to the pollution emissions! I have no faith in any of the mayoral candidates anymore and so I really do not know who to vote for. Enough said!"



Jackie Hill (S34):

"Very little I am really thinking is printable in a family magazine such as *Call Sign*! Other than the welcome demise of those bendy buses, his term as London Mayor has been an absolute nightmare and quite honestly, a disgrace... really quite deplorable. I'd like to make a life-size cardboard cut-out of him and use it as a shooting target, but my brother will not



let me borrow his 12 bore shotgun!"

Paul Churchill (A04):

"When Boris took over from Ken Livingstone, I think the spirits of taxi drivers following the euphoria of his win were raised. Sadly they have since plummeted with his legalising of Uber and their virtual plying for hire – let alone their numbers! Then there are his cycling policies which churn up the West End. I'm trying to think of something he has done to help this trade, but at the moment I can't think of anything!"



Paul Mariner (V65): "I voted for Boris but I'm rather disappointed now. I think he had his hands tied via David Cameron, although he really has gone too far with his cycle super-highway lanes crusade. I am a cyclist, but not in central London, that is just madness! Also, the extensive roadworks mean you cannot get people to their destination in a reasonable time, so overall, I'm not too happy..."

In the interest of fairness, we tried to find someone to speak in favour but failed...

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Contact Debbie (W18) on

07956 317040



"Yes, it was quite some journey," Nic Papadopoulos (H19) admitted to *Call Sign*, "and not one I'm likely to forget in a long time..."

With that, Nic began his tale of a journey that started outside the **V&A Museum** one evening while waiting for an account client.

"The pavement there is fairly wide and I watched as two burly gentlemen were escorting an obviously very tipsy young lady across the museum forecourt. Although I say escort, it was more a case of them dragging her... and in my direction! Head slumped, her feet sort of followed the direction the two heavies were pulling her. I just hoped that she wasn't my passenger, but I had this gut feeling that we would be travelling together!"

Nic's facial look to this *Call Sign* hack confirmed the direction his story was about to take.

"One of the men came to the luggage window and grunted **Luton** and that the lady passenger knew the address! Quite honestly, I

Above and beyond...

doubted that she even knew she was in a cab let alone the destination. Nevertheless, after bundling her onto my back seat, they both walked briskly away.

"Anyway, it was an account trip so I decided to make my way north and was heading up **Park Lane** to join **Edgware Road** and eventually the **M1** when I heard a voice from the back of the cab. She sort of mumbled that she needed a toilet and quickly! I made my way to the **Landmark Hotel** on **Marylebone Road** as the speediest pit-stop I could think of and with assistance from the doorman, we got her to the *Ladies*. I opened the main door to the loo for her, but gracefully declined her request for further assistance! I just told her that I would wait outside for her.

"She was inside the toilet for ages but then I heard the clicking of shoe heels shuffling around on the tiled floor. It was fairly apparent that she had finished but was so confused that she couldn't find the exit door, even though I was trying to guide by calling to her from the outside. Eventually there was nothing left but for me to push open the door and bring her out. I really hoped that she had managed to pull everything up and straighten herself before I swung the door open!"

Nic laughed out loudly at the memory before continuing his story, which was already definitely above and beyond the call of duty – even for a valued account client!

"Once back in the cab, I headed up the **M1** and towards central **Luton** hoping the woman would recognise where she was when we got there, because she really made very little sense during the journey. When we got into **Luton**, the passenger gave me some directions which proved to be totally fruitless and which saw us

go round in circles. Suddenly, and to my very great relief, a local cab appeared and came towards me – probably realising that I was lost. I explained my problem, told him the address the woman had given me and as he began to verbally direct me through unfamiliar streets in an unfamiliar town, I suggested I follow him and would pay him whatever was on his meter. In minutes, we were at the passengers' front door and then he was gone without waiting for any fare.

"I gingerly got the lady out of my cab and walked her to her door. As she fumbled with her door keys, I realised that she couldn't even find the keyhole, so I slowly pointed her hand towards the lock and helped her twist the key. My concern was still for her safety once inside her own home as she was still extremely unsteady. So I pushed the door open, gently eased her through her front door and turned to return to my cab.

"Just as my bottom met the taxi seat, I heard the almighty wailing sound come from the house I had just left. In her stupor, the lady had clearly omitted to turn off her house alarm so now the whole street knew she had returned home, but by then I was on the move back towards **London** – albeit by just a matter of a few yards! But figured I had more than done my bit as a **Dial-a-Cab** driver in taking the passenger from **London** to inside her home in **Luton** and that as I didn't have a degree in other people's burglar alarms, it was time to go home!"

With that, Nic turned round and left us with a smile that he didn't have on that trip to **Luton**...

Alan Green (E52)
Call Sign Online

Do you drive through Ilford regularly? Can you help police trace a hit and run driver

ONE YEAR ON...

Detectives have released a CCTV image of a car as part of an anniversary appeal following a fail-to-stop collision that has left a woman seriously injured.

The collision occurred at 01:48hrs on **Saturday 11 April 2015** as the victim, 42-year-old **Vida Mensah-Andani** of **Ilford**, was walking across a pedestrian crossing outside '**easyGym**' on **Winston Way** in **Ilford**. The driver of the car involved did not stop at the scene and drove off along **Winston Way** towards **Seven Kings**. The car is described as a dark coloured **Vauxhall Vectra**.

Vida was taken to an east London hospital where she was treated for serious head injuries. One year on, she has still not fully recovered and the incident is still affecting her day-to-day life. Vida now walks with a walking aid, has ongoing headaches and finds it almost impossible to travel alone. This has led to the loss of her job.

Police are also keen to speak to the driver of a silver Audi which was in the area at the time of the collision, as the driver may be able to assist with the investigation. If you were driving your taxi close by and remember seeing anything that could be connected to the incident, then that information could be useful.

Detective Sergeant Helen Lambert, of the Serious Collision Investigation Unit, told *Call Sign*:

"This collision has left a mother of three young children with life-changing injuries. A year after the incident, she is still suffering and has been unable to live as she did. This collision has had a massive emotional impact on her work and family life. I am appealing for the driver of the vehicle, or those who may know who was driving at the time of the collision, to come forward and speak to police and help us with our inquiries."

Anyone with information is asked to call the Serious Collision Investigation Unit on 020 8597 4874. If you wish to remain anonymous please call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



The only photo of the car; police still haven't found the driver...

1989

I had been renting a cab from BeeJays for some time and it was one of their nicer looking ones, bright red and the wheels were the normal colour. It did however have one major flaw, it vibrated terribly!



I had put up with it for ages, but the final straw came one afternoon when two very attractive women got in and asked to go to the Aldwych. We vibrated our way through Canon Street, along Fleet Street until they got out by Australia House. But they seemed quite happy as I started to apologise for the constant vibration, but they burst out laughing and said that they had quite enjoyed it! Well, I decided that although I had made their day, I was going to change it and I headed back to the garage.

When I got to Dunbridge Street, I parked up and wandered off in search of the owner. He was an elusive little man who always had a throng of cabbies circling him, so he wasn't that hard to find and within 30 minutes I had managed to get an audience and 5 minutes of his time. He tried to persuade me that there was nothing wrong with the cab before changing tack and saying that he had done everything he could to rectify the problem.

Simon Scott is one of the new generation of taxi drivers whose life is captured as a blog. The story of his time as a butterboy is...

A Blogger's Tale

Eventually, as he realised I wasn't going to give up, he showed me his only available cab and it was truly awful. The tyres were too near the knuckle for my liking but were OK by him; the rear seat was torn but he again saw no problem with that. I had no choice but to take it, but in passing I asked him when the overhaul was due? "Two weeks," he replied!

So that meant I would get it all rectified and had to wait just two short weeks. Sure enough, after a few tortuous days the phone rang and he asked me to bring the cab into the garage. In return he gave me another mobile 'skip' with a meter until the cab was ready. When the day came to pick the cab up, I felt relieved that I would at last have a decent cab to drive around in – with legal tyres, a fire extinguisher and a rear seat that was in one whole piece!

At the given hour, I bombed down Wilmut Street and as I approached the garage, I spotted it. I pulled up behind and jumped out to inspect my new improved cab. It was lovely; it had a new rear seat and what looked like 4 new tyres. If the

keys had been in the ignition I would have taken it there and then but strangely they weren't. One of his entourage wandered up and said the cab wasn't ready yet, although it looked ready to me and that all I needed were the keys.

"Give me 10 minutes," he said. Well, you might well have already guessed what happened next, but I was young and naïve and still a butterboy. They jacked it up, removed the wheels and put all four old ones back on it. Then they removed the lovely new rear seat, put the old ripped one back in and to add insult to injury, they even removed the fire extinguisher!

I was devastated; I threw the keys back, got my Bill, walked up the road to KPM and ordered a new taxi...!

To be continued...

Simon Scott (O40)
Call Sign Online

BANK OF ENGLAND EXHIBITIONS

Free creative events for children at the Bank of England museum

Behind four great heavy bronze doors on Threadneedle Street festooned with lions, waves, ships, swallows and serpents, visitors to the City of London will find not only one of the country's great historic institutions, but an innovative, ever-changing, free museum. The Bank of England Museum has confirmed a host of creative events, exhibitions and displays for 2016.

One of them sees the Museum tell the story of the Bank from its foundation in 1694 to its role today as the United Kingdom's central bank. Within a full-size reconstruction of Sir John Soane's 18th-century office, a large boat construction is full of interactive displays explaining how the Bank works, banknote design and security and how the Bank tries to keep the financial system on an even keel.

The galleries feature a permanent display filled with gold, including Roman and modern gold bars, the country's oldest paper money and many star objects from the Bank's collections of silver, banknotes, paintings, coins, photographs and historic documents. The Banknote Gallery itself is currently closed for refurbishment and will re-launch in autumn 2016.

The current exhibition, **Capturing the City: Photography at the Bank of England**, reveals a wealth of previously unseen and unpublished historic photographs from the Bank's archive, while events for children are inspired by the photography theme and the history of the Bank. They begin with early salt paper prints from the 1840s and reach forward to new images of today's city, exploring an alternative and sometimes surprising history of the Bank, its buildings and staff, while also creating a history of London from the Bank's perspective.

Visitors inspired by the exhibition can share their own images of London with the Bank via the Museum's Twitter feed @boemuseum – using the hashtag #CitySnapsBoE. Each month, the BoE Museum selects a favourite image to join the exhibition displays, instantly becoming part of the Bank's history.

Saturdays 25 June and 2 July from 10am to 5pm sees the **Museum Open Day** when it will open its doors to visitors as part of the **City of London Festival**. Enjoy banknote presentations, a variety of gallery talks conducted by the Museum team, including talks on the Museum's latest exhibition, **Capturing the City: Photography at the Bank of England**. The Bank's Bullion team will also be on hand to answer any questions on gold and visitors can even hold a genuine gold bar.

VISITOR INFORMATION: There is no charge for admission to the Museum or for any event. Entrance: Bartholomew Lane (off Threadneedle Street) EC2. Opening hours: Monday to Friday: 10am – 5pm (last entry 4.30pm). Closed Public and Bank Holidays and weekends. More info: www.bankofengland.co.uk/museum, 020 7601 5545, museum@bankofengland.co.uk.



Princes Street in the 1890s as seen from King William Street – now the Bank junction

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Phil Buchan,
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Quantifiable and real...

The Mayoral election* fast approaches and no doubt we will be feted by all – but maybe not supported by all. With many of the candidates, you can see overt signs of support whilst others resist temptation to talk for fear of alienation. What we hear now may not necessarily resonate with what they've said in the past. But as most applicants are career politicians, you normally don't have to dig too far to uncover their mind-set...

The two front runners at this time are **Zac Goldsmith** (*Conservative*), real name Frank (according to *Wiki* – I kid you not) and **Sadiq Khan** (my dad drove a bus) – that's not his name, I'm just sick of hearing it!

Zac, who in a debate on London's black **Taxis at Westminster Hall** in September 2015, spoke with a degree of knowledge about our history and the damage being done to the trade at this time. The debate – also attended by Sadiq Khan – brought a raft of comment from them and other attendees.

Zac Goldsmith was recorded by **Hansard** as saying of us: "Their value is not necessarily quantifiable, but is huge and real." He continued shortly afterwards by saying: "I would think nothing, personally, of depositing any one of my children in a black cab at any time as I would know absolutely that they would be safe."

It is hard to put a number on all that, but it is worth something."

Sadiq Khan (*Labour*), in the same debate reiterated by stating: "As the father of two daughters, I also fully understand his comment about how safe we feel putting our children into a black cab, knowing the checks that take place before someone is allowed to drive one." He continued: "We do not have a level playing field and the Minister will need to tell us why over the past five years – indeed, the past seven years – TfL and the Government have failed to enforce existing legislation, or to provide new regulations, to ensure that new entrants to the market operate fairly."

With some of the other candidates, I looked specifically for comments about you know who...

Sian Berry (*Green*) has been recorded in the past as *not* being pro-Uber by complaining about them parking outside **St Pancras International**.

George Galloway (*Respect*): I think it would be fair to say he is anti-Uber as he stated he would run them out of town "...if I can."

Stephen Greenhalgh (*Conservative*): Well, he doesn't seem to mind... so long as they pay the correct tax.

Caroline Pidgeon (*Lib Dem*): Anti-Uber; likens them to rogue operators.

Peter Whittle (*Ukip*): He wants to crack down on Uber. Concise it would seem.

John Zylinski (*Ind*): Made headlines in 2015 when he challenged **Nigel Farage** to a duel over the Ukip leader's anti-mass migra-

With just days to go, Joe Brazil looks at the "other" election and brings the safety of children into the debate...

THE MAYORAL RACE



tion rhetoric – ok, it's not about Uber but nothing gets an election moving quicker than a call to fix bayonets!

Of course some of them may have fallen by the wayside at election time, but you get the drift...

This leads me to the public safety debate and especially the safety of children and young people within the capital. London's safety – and that of the general public are under threat whichever way you look at it if the figures taken from **Rotherham** are anything to go by, after the damning report from **Alexis Jay OBE**.

Of Rotherham's 800 private hire vehicles, 67 drivers were found to be potentially in breach of new 'fit and proper person' tests – with around 70 percent of this group having their licences revoked after case hearings. A further 171 taxi drivers in the town have had their licences suspended until they complete training sessions on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

This heart-breaking situation should not be visited upon London; TfL will have to be stronger in their approach towards PHV and frankly any vehicle registered in the capital, not letting mealy mouthed lawyers dictate that we don't take responsibility for our "partners" activity.

If these figures were extrapolated across London, the 1400 child victims of Rotherham over a 16 year period would expose the capital to an epidemic-sized risk that would stop all but the most foolhardy, and make them think twice before ever climbing into any private hire vehicle.

In an article by **Fraser Nelson** in the **Telegraph**, he made the salient point that if you organise a bureaucracy so no one takes responsibility, then you create the conditions for abuse on this scale. And no doubt Mr Goldsmith and Mr Khan would be forced to rethink their children's future travel arrangements, should we suffer demise on the altar of so-called progress. Would they then wish they could still say of their kin: "I would know absolutely that they would be safe???"

When it comes to black cabs, not everything is tangible; children's safety and that of the general public should always be paramount.

"It is hard to put a number on all that, but it is worth something."

TO DATE: Three police officers are now facing a criminal investigation in the wake of Rotherham's sex abuse scandal. One South Yorkshire police officer is currently suspended and two others have been put on restrictive duties. The investigations were revealed in a report into the handling of sexual exploitation by South Yorkshire police between 1997 and 2016.

Eric Pickles, then *Secretary of State for Local Government and Communities*, said in the House of Commons: "My powers under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999 ensure the police, local health partners and the safeguarding Board took and continues to take sufficient steps to ensure only *fit and proper persons* are permitted to hold a taxi licence; and is now taking steps to address effectively past and current weaknesses or shortcomings in the exercise of its functions and has the capacity to continue to do so..."

London deserves the same protection...

Joe Brazil

DaC Board Member

**Also standing for Mayor are David Furness (BNP), Paul Golding (Britain First), Lee Eli Harris (Cannabis is safer than alcohol), Ankit Love (One Love) and Sophie Walker (Women's Equality).*

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You have to be male and of a certain age to fully appreciate the innocent and discreet offer posed by our title. It relates to a bygone age when gentlemen's hairdressers would often stock contraceptives as an additional service to simply cutting hair!

However, for master *ladies'* hairdresser Cliff Nash (V74), the question never arose. However, stories of an era long gone did come flooding back when he recently chatted with *Call Sign*, relating events from the early 1960s and the time he was asked a very different question altogether...

"I trained at the hair salon of **Raymond Bessone** in **Park Lane, Mayfair**. He was quite a character and eventually opened several salons around London. But he was probably most famous for his TV appearances and his catchphrase of 'a teasy-weasy here, a teasy-weasy there' when referring to a particular detail of a lady's hairstyle. Eventually he became known internationally as **Mr Teasy-Weasy!** He trained **Vidal Sassoon**, who always sang Raymond's praises," Cliff added.

"At that time, the **Liverpool** music scene was gaining world-wide recognition and if you had a **London** accent, and the capital was regarded as the fashion setter back then, you could make an impact in the hairstyling business! So I set off as a young man, full of ambition and enthusiasm to take a job with **Andre Bernard**, who ran several salons in the Liverpool area with a staff of some 65 employees. Working alongside me – and under my wing so to speak as apprentice hairdressers – was a young chap called **Mike**,

Something for the Weekend, Sir...



Star hair-cutter Cliff!

whom we called **Peter** because there was a 'Mike' there already. Another one was a friend of his called **Lewis Collins**, who later went into acting and became one of **The Professionals** on TV among many other shows and also a chirpy young chap by the name of **Jimmy Tarbuck**, who was always cracking jokes even then. I wonder whatever became of him," Cliff muttered with a grin!

"Anyway, one of the young girls also working in the salon asked this Mike/Peter if he could get her a signed copy of **The Beatles Please Please Me** album. In due course, that long playing vinyl album arrived in the shop,

duly autographed by all four members of the group. But I still didn't realise who this Mike/Peter was, even though he was there cutting hair right under my scissors. I often wonder how much that album would be worth now, especially with the monikers of John, George, Paul and Ringo on it."

"One morning Mike/Peter asked if I could cut his hair. It was fairly usual to cut each other's hair in quieter moments and it was while I was snipping away that Mike/Peter casually asked me if I would cut his brother's hair "cos he's going on the telly."

Naturally, I said yes and suggested the brother come to the salon in central Liverpool. Mike/Peter said he couldn't do that because he would be recognised and get mobbed. So I asked why that would be and that's when **Mike McGear** admitted that his brother was **Paul McCartney!** I might have saved a lock of Paul's hair had I known," Cliff told us laughing, "because nobody, not even The Beatles themselves, dreamed they would be so big! But that's the music business and we sing and hear their songs even now!"

Back in London, Cliff opened his own hair salon in Woodford before getting fed up coping with staff traumas, finally selling the business. And no, he hasn't offered to cut Dial-a-Cab drivers hair or provide them with something for the weekend!

Alan Green (E52)
Call Sign Online

Editor's Big Day

Or more like his grandson Samuel's big day!

On the weekend of April 2nd / 3rd, I was lucky enough to be invited to the Barmitzvah of *Call Sign* Editor Alan Fisher's grandson, Samuel, as he read a portion of the Torah at the South West Essex Synagogue. The following day came the celebration at the Epping Forest Hotel in Woodford Green where 180 guests ate, drank and danced the evening away.

Many Dial-a-Cab drivers will remember Samuel's dad as dispatcher Reed Fisher, who sadly passed away three years ago. So this was a truly special weekend.

Our congratulations go to the Fisher family and mazeltov to Samuel...

J.P.Duval
Call Sign Online



Samuel with mum Lara open the ball



Samuel with sister Imogen and grandparents Linda and Alan

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

Brethren of the Whip



"Mrs Prodgers.. again!"

Last month, Editor Al forewarned me that he was including an abridged article by Heather Tweed on the indomitable **Caroline Giacometti Prodgers** – he

knew I could not resist a gauntlet being slapped in my face!

Incidentally, the illustration of the cab shelter in which Mrs Prodgers invades (see April's Call Sign) could anecdotally be the first one in London – in Acacia Road, St John's Wood, not far from where Mrs Prodgers lived in Queen's Grove.

They say there is a fine line between being a genius and being mad and according to one of Prodgers' contemporaries: "She was as mad as a hatter!" She had been admitted as a private patient to an asylum near **Ware** when she was 24, which may show the way her mind was working. To say Prodgers was forthright would be an understatement. During her countless appearances in court regarding her marriage, she was found to be in contempt for not sharing the matrimonial bed with her husband and actually went to jail because of it – until a financial settlement was agreed.

It is with Heather Tweed's assertion that Prodgers would take a cab the maximum distance at the set rate, then summon the cab driver if he charged more, that I disagree. Such anecdotes were indeed reported by the press at the time, but relied more on **Jonas Chuzzlewit's** idea of the best fun in London: "Taking a cab to the furthest point it could go for a shilling." Prodgers did not know the distances "off the top of her head," she was armed with a book of fares. So, leaving aside her battles with her husband, watchmakers, editors and her cook, let's look at her battles against cabdrivers, albeit lack of space prevents me from going into any detail about them.

Just how many times Mrs Prodgers appeared against cabmen is not known, we only have the published newspaper reports to go on, but one of the earliest cases was a dispute about waiting time with **William Southwell**. She refused to pay the amount he asked but also refused to give him her name and address. She refused to do so at the police station where she was taken and it was only when the desk sergeant suggested she summoned the cabman, that she gave her details. She lost. Southwell got his fare and costs. Just a few days later she was back before the same magistrate, summoned by cabman **Richard Jones**. Once again the dispute was over waiting. She lost that one as well.

In October 1871, **Edwin Castro** took her from **Victoria Station** to **Euston**. Castro demanded 4s (20p) Prodgers said that the book of fares she always carried with her said the fare was only 3s 6d. When this was checked it was found that the book of fares, issued by the **Commissioner of Police**, did not include any mention of Victoria Station, even though it had already been there ten years.

The ground was measured and Castro was found to be right, with yet another defeat for Mrs Prodgers.

John Challis **chucked her out of his cab when she refused to close the windows during a storm! He alleged that his cab would be ruined and he did not even charge her for the distance covered. A policeman put her into another cab and told Challis that his cab was unfit for public use as it was soaking wet. She summoned Challis... but lost that too.**

She obtained four summonses against one driver, **Robert Chalk**. Charging her 3s 6d for a 2s fare – she lost. For abusive language ("You are not fit for a dung cart") and lost. Not supplying a ticket or a book of fares, she actually won that. The victory was pyrrhic; Chalk was fined just a shilling on each.

She summoned **Charles Eagle** for refusing to pick her up, but as he drove a bus and not a cab, the charge was dismissed. She had a rare victory against a cabman who recognised her and demanded his fare up front. He was fined £1 or 14 days if he failed to pay. Such cases highlighted the injustice of the law against cabmen. When Mrs Prodgers was in the wrong, she just had to pay the fare and costs, but when the driver was wrong, he faced imprisonment. There was even greater injustice; many cabmen took summonses out

against her only to have her pay the disputed fare into court before the case was heard, so the cabman lost out on his costs.

Charles Weedon summoned her after she refused to pay him his fare of 1s 6d (7.5p) from **Paddington Station** to **Queen's Grove**. It was the correct fare as the distance was 2 miles 90 yards. Mrs Prodgers showed him that according to her book of fares, the distance was under two miles. Prodgers won, but only because the book of fares was in error. Weedon, unable to appeal against a magistrate's decision, actually had his fine returned to him when the error was confirmed.

Out of the reported twenty-one summonses between her and cab drivers (there were many more), she lost 12 of them, another five were undecided or their outcomes unknown and she could claim victory in just four of them. The idea of her being the nemesis of the cabmen does not hold; she was a pain in the neck but nothing more.

In 1876, a driver at the **London Cabmen's Mission** declared before a large gathering that "She was not half so bad as she was painted." He was roundly booed.

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

Water, smelly water, everywhere!

"I was way back on the **Kings Cross** station rank when my terminal began flashing and I gratefully accepted a credit trip that was going to save me a long wait as the rank slowly inched forward. But fate saw things differently," **Antony Byrne (P29)** told **Call Sign** with that look of resignation that we've all had on the day when nothing seems to go right.

As Antony finished writing down the trip details in his credit book and prepared to leave the rank, feeling fairly pleased with himself, he suddenly saw steam coming out from under the bonnet... followed by the familiar smell of anti-freeze coolant wafting its way in the cab!

"I lifted the hood to check what was wrong and sure enough my worst fears were confirmed by the gush of coloured water everywhere – so that was the end of my credit trip, not to mention the rest of my shift! After alerting the call centre as to my predicament and getting the trip re-allocated, I pulled off the rank out of the way of other cabs that were then able to continue their crawl to the point!" **We've all had that feeling when it's really quiet out there and suddenly you get a radio job and others look at you with a modicum of envy as you put your meter down! But that feeling soon got replaced by the slightest hint of jealousy in his voice as he pulled to the side and awaited the RAC breakdown truck.**

"Could things get worse? Well yes, because I waited four hours until the RAC came out to me! So I just sat there, immobile, watching other taxis come and go on a rank that had suddenly speeded up with passengers galore piling into the backs of taxis!"

Tony's engine had cooled down by the time the patrolman arrived and he quickly diagnosed a broken coolant hosepipe as the problem. Reaching into his van, he cut a length of rubber heater hose from a large reel and fashioned it into a temporary repair, securing both ends of the pipe with Jubilee clips. He advised Antony not to continue working, but to go to a taxi garage and get a proper repair with the correct **TX4** hose.

"I made my way up to my regular service agent, **Stanway Engineering** in **Chingford** who replaced the temporary hosepipe with the correct LTC version and got me back on the road with no fuss. I was lucky my misfortune happened early in the day and I was able to get slowly over to Chingford in good time for Stanway to attend to the cab. But my day was ruined and the pungent coolant smell lingered for several days after the event. And I lost a good credit ride! Otherwise, it was a great day...!"

Stanway Engineering Ltd is located at 14A Chingford Industrial Centre, Hall Lane E4. Tel: 020 8559 4988

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online



Hospices: The cost of looking after the terminally ill...

From 1977 up to 1983, four Dial-a-Cab drivers – the late Ian Cameron and Tony Jack, together with Ken Freeborn and current Call Sign Editor Alan Fisher – ran the transport operation at St Joseph's Hospice in Mare Street, Hackney. The quartet used to ferry out-patients suffering with terminal cancer to see Dr Richard Lamerton every Thursday afternoon during the early days of a scheme that became known as the Macmillan Service – something that was unknown outside of St Joseph's.

The principle of the service was to allow cancer sufferers to die in comfort of their own homes when possible and the four DaC taxi drivers provided the transport needed to take the patients to see the doctor, let them have a cup of tea and occasionally a sing-song along with the astonishing site of a nun playing a piano, before then ferrying them back to their homes. Previously, they would have had to enter the hospice as in-patients. To give a more graphic idea of how hospices were looked upon, St Josephs had previously been known as the **Hospital for Incurables**.

The stigma for hospices has long been removed and while terminally ill patients are probably in the majority, they also provide a philosophy of care that focuses on the palliation of chronically, terminally or seriously ill patient's pain and symptoms, while also attending to their emotional and spiritual needs.

But it all costs money and recently Tony, the son-in-law of *Call Sign* Editor Alan Fisher, could only watch along with Alan's daughter Kim, as his dear mum Pat lay in St Francis Hospice, Havering. Week after week, Pat clung to life even though doctors assessed her life expectancy as being just days. But according to Kim, who stayed with Pat all day, every day in the very pleasant room provided, not once did anyone at the hospice show Pat anything other than exceptional kindness and respect. And how much do St Francis' charge? The answer is nothing, yet it costs them almost £700 per day per in-patient and a yearly charge of £7.2 million to run it; yet they rely on donations.

Kim told *Call Sign*: "The staff are absolutely fantastic, the nurses, the volunteers and even cleaners. Everyone makes you feel welcome and nothing is too much for any of them. St Francis is a truly wondrous place and no words of mine or Tony's could ever be enough to describe the amazing job these people do. If you ask them, they'll tell you that they love their jobs, albeit being sad to lose someone they have got to know. But with their help and support, the patient and their family are helped through some very tough times."

It was back in 1958 when **Cicely Saunders** began working at St Joseph's Hospice. She researched pain control and while there met **Antoni Michniewicz**, a patient with whom she fell in love. His death two years later coincided with that of Saunders's father and also a close friend. The turmoil sent her into what she called a state of pathological grieving. She decided to set up her own hospice that would serve cancer patients and help give them the pain relief that doctors refused to give. Cicely felt it was far more important to give pain relief rather than give patients an extra few days of life, but days filled with pain. That was the beginning of **St Christopher's Hospice** in Lewisham.

In 1979, Queen Elizabeth II honoured Cicely Saunders with the title Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire – a title she so richly deserved.



Pat and son Tony in happier times...

Alan Fisher (F07) told us: I was proud to meet Dame Cicely Sanders on several occasions and listen to her stories of how the hospice movement had progressed, with virtually the only help coming from donations and sponsorship efforts. The last time I met her was in 1998 at her 80th birthday, seven years before she too fell foul of cancer and died at her **St Christopher's Hospice**. I showed her a photo of the four DaC drivers performing a Christmas show at St Joseph's, when we dressed up as **Uncle Henry and the Ovaltines**. She laughed heartily. I also told her how different DaC drivers had carried out sponsorships in the form of marathons etc and the look in her eyes told me everything. She said those drivers were far more important than she, because they were still bringing in funds without which the hospice movement would not be able to offer people like Pat the chance to die with dignity. To Dame Cicely, everyone was more important than her, yet to everyone else, she was a Saint."

The hospice movement needs money, having to find over 30% of their costs. If you can help in any way, please try. You don't need to climb Mount Everest backwards; most hospices run raffles and lotteries and general money raising schemes. *Anything* you can do to help your local hospice is welcomed, because sadly there will always be more Pat Harveys that need help to give their final days the dignity they deserve...

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

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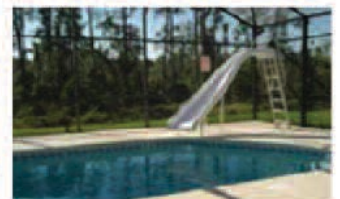
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London Vintage Taxi Association

GOODBYE FROM HANS...

In 2003, two members of an organisation known as the **Dutch London Taxi Club** visited **Dial-a-Cab** whilst we were still at **Brunswick Place** and were given a personal tour by DaC Chairman **Brian Rice**. After returning to Holland, one of the two visitors, **Hans Dooren**, contacted **Call Sign** to say that he and several others had decided to leave the DLTC and set up their own club as the Dutch section of the worldwide **London Vintage Taxi Association** (LVTA). They weren't to realise at the time just how successful and influential the Dutch LVTA section was to become and with the LVTA Chairman then being DaC driver **Keith White**, the contact between Hans and **Call Sign** was to grow significantly and over the years Hans has kept DaC drivers up-to-date on LVTA matters, several overseas members being on the **Call Sign Online** mailing list.



Over the years, we've also heard from many DaC drivers / LVTA members who had old restored London taxis such as **David Joseph (A82)** with his **FX3D** – nor to mention his restored old London bus! Keith White had the prototype **Metrocab** from 1969 as well as a 1957 **Beardmore!**

Now, 13 years after his visit and at the age of 81, Hans Dooren has decided to call it a day and enjoy a belated retirement, perhaps not under the circumstances he would have liked. He has now written to DaC drivers...

"On 22 March 2016, I decided to lay down my post at the LVTA Committee as representative of EU (mainland) members. Starting with just 9 members, nowadays there are many more spread across 15 countries. We have made many nice fruitful contacts including UK and USA members who have contacted me. We have enjoyed good times together and some of those contacts will continue.

I have been engaged in one way or another with London taxis since 1998 and since setting up the LVTA Euro section, we have brought it up to date including the use of group emails to replace the envelopes that were still being used, we helped to introduce **PayPal**, introduced a new **Weblog** with 30,000 views and of course **Facebook** / **Twitter** pages, of which I admit I am not personally fond of, but we use it for PR reasons; all at no cost to the LVTA.

I created my own London taxi archive and laid down the history of taxis by multi-visits to London and aided by my friend Paul Read, we took many photos where normally no private visitors were allowed. As the LVTA, we were always welcomed and allowed to take the pictures wherever we went; such was the respect the club had developed. That made my collection special and I used it for archiving and various publications.

Much history has come and gone and new structures have been built and at least we have helped some cab history to be saved, but at my present age and fitness I could not have carried on much longer. I have always privately bought all handbooks and workshop manuals I could find on **eBay**, scanned them (always with source permission) and burned all of them onto source CD roms, which also brought an income to the Club. I dare not count the hours that it has all taken me...!

Carl Despriet, with whom I worked lately on **VT EU News** and at the annual **Waalwijk** show, and also **Steven van den Dorpel** have asked me to write and explain why I have decided to leave. The decision, that I had already made, was put to the membership by group email, Weblog and Facebook. There were some innovations that I felt were necessary and I initiated and used them as an overview and updated / corrected members list. Then 'things' happened over which I had no control and of which I was never informed about either.

So I subsequently cast my resignation as I felt there was no need to wait for the AGM. Treated as I was, I decided on my own exit using my own created media. I felt so sad at having to leave, as contact with members is the spine and joy of the Association. Looking at the members list, I felt happy about what has been achieved by all, so it adds much sadness to leave it behind. But when one suddenly feels unsupported and set aside without a hearing, then for me it is all over. I have always represented the members, but to do the job properly I needed updated information. It was denied. Even my many emails were unanswered. It

was indeed very strange.

So may I wish all our Euro club members and indeed **Call Sign** readers, a happy stay and a wonderful time with your icons... and enjoy your rides! Privately I am still an LVTA member; I have only stepped down from the Committee and I am still contactable anyway as you wish. Stepping down is no reason to lose contact. I shall no longer do **Waalwijk**. This would be its 13th year in succession and I thank both Carl and Steven for all the years of fantastic support. Without you both I could not have continued for even that long. Aging is not always fun! Your assistance was perfect! Thank you and Chapeau!

I shall also no longer be writing **EU News** and I thank **Sandie** for her support. I felt we were a good team; as with **Sybil** and **James** who were always present – even on leave – and they did such a good job. **Mark**, above all, was an anchor; always present and used so many times to answer member's questions. Then there is **Roy**, a gentleman I respect so much and who works behind the scenes dealing with whatever he was asked to do. Chapeau! If I have forgotten anyone, do forgive me.

For those interested, I have started privately my own Weblog at <http://londontaxi.glutinum.nl> and named it **Dutch London Oldtimer Taxi News**. I am writing it all in my own good time and as it comes (or not)! I have deleted all my work in Weblog, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter etc and I have left a perfect Editor in **Bill Munro**. He will start it all up again and I wish him much success. I left no loose ends!

Finally of course, adieu to my London cab friends and members. I wish you all good health and happiness. Be lucky, keep smiling and thanks for reading and many years of companionship! Adieu..."

Hans Dooren, Netherlands

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In an important development for drivers with diabetes, a new EU Directive will mean that diabetics who suffer with night-time *severe hypoglycemia will no longer automatically lose their licenses, but will in future be treated on a case by case basis.

A 2011 EU Directive stated that drivers who suffered very low blood glucose levels *at night* on more than one occasion in a 12-month period had to hand over their driving licence. But European driving and diabetes experts reviewed the rules last year and voted overwhelmingly for amendments.

This could be important for taxi drivers suffering with diabetes, with the European Commission to ask the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to overturn its ban on drivers suffering with night-time severe hypoglycemia – as against during the day – by January 2018. Leading charity Diabetes UK says it has been campaigning for five years for the rules to be changed as many people have lost their licence unnecessarily. One of these cases was highlighted in 2015 when Helen Nicholds, a nurse with Type 1 Diabetes won her licence back from the DVLA. Ms Nicholds previously had her licence revoked after informing the DVLA of two severe hypos she suffered whilst in a deep sleep in June 2014. She then set up a petition to overturn the decision that reached Prime Minister David Cameron and she was eventually back behind the wheel. Current guidelines do not differentiate between daytime and night-time episodes of severe hypoglycemia and the DVLA has been asked to make the necessary legislative changes by January 2018.

Of course, up until that time drivers with diabetes should continue to comply with the law, which means that diabetics must inform the DVLA if they experience one or more episodes of severe hypoglycemia, including when asleep, within a 12-month period and of any changes to their condition that may affect their ability to drive.

Diabetes UK chief executive Chris Askew said: "The European Commission is absolutely right to ask the DVLA to overturn the ban on night-time hypos and we are delighted this is happening after having campaigned for five years to get this ban lifted and to put a stop to those with diabetes losing their driving licence unfairly.

"Beyond the unfairness, losing their driving licence has caused all sorts of unnecessary stress and anxiety to people, even in some cases leading to them losing their jobs."

That has applied to a number of taxi drivers through the years but a DVLA spokesman now says:

"While hypoglycemia can pose a risk to road safety, there are some people who only suffer episodes of hypoglycemia while asleep and under the current EU rules they would not be able to drive. These changes will mean that licensing can be considered individually, based on medical evidence and risk assessments. We've worked with the EU to introduce this common-sense approach."

In 1999, *Call Sign* ran a campaign against the PCO's stance towards insulin

A new EU Directive to help diabetics with night-time severe Hypoglycemia

YOU CAN CONTINUE DRIVING!



Severe night-time Hypoglycemia no longer means you have lost your licence forever

dependent diabetics, claiming that it was unfair and should be replaced by a policy based more on commonsense with each case taken individually depending on medical advice. Several insulin dependent diabetics on Dial-a-Cab later got their licences back following court actions based on that principle.

The PCO defended their actions in court but lost each case with the exception of one, a Dial-a-Cab driver who chose to use a different defence to the one we had recommended following the legal advice we had been given.

The situation arose when DaC driver Ian Ross developed diabetes and had his taxi licence taken from him. However, the DVLA allowed him to keep his ordinary DVLA driving licence after medical evidence showed that his medication made him safe to drive. As Ian had no car and

only his taxi for private use, he was in the ludicrous situation of being able to drive his family in his cab, but not fare-paying passengers! *Call Sign* took legal advice and Ian eventually got his cab licence back.

PCO Head at the time, Roy Ellis, later responded in *Call Sign* and was sympathetic, but had to put

the licensing authority's case. The bottom line was that the PCO at the time were against returning licences, hence the eventual court actions and their success.

Eventually the decision led to a review of PCO policy relating to insulin treated Diabetes, which took account of new advice and while anyone diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes will need to surrender their licence, it is no longer certain that it will not be returned when proof can be obtained that there is no danger to the public...

**Severe hypoglycemia is defined as having low blood glucose levels that requires assistance from another person to treat.*

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

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LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

With Tom Quigley (Y33)

Hot on the KOL

Not much has changed in the way of procedures of learning the **Knowledge of London**, what stands out now is the reliance on apps, street view maps and modern technology. But despite some of that being, without doubt, of great value in the classrooms and homes of students, I have yet to see any evidence to contradict the old adage that I always advocate and one that most of us would probably stand by...

Keep calling your Blue Book, call and check all the runs on the point sheets, study your maps, get off your sofa and go out and point what's coming out! As I was told, the points may come and go but they won't move Haymarket!

So what's coming out and what do KOL students need to know? Strangely, something I have yet to find out about but will enquire as to why **Blue Plaques** are no longer asked? Obviously there are **embassies, theatres, City Livery halls, stations, hospitals** and an unbelievable number of **restaurants and bars!** As we all know, London is getting bigger and bars are popping up in the most unlikely districts that around 15 years ago were almost derelict.

We no longer have the dirty dozen through **Soho**, due to **Crossrail**, but there are still the tongue twisters of leaving **Cherry Garden Pier, Cleaver Square**, while depending on the student's level you still get asked if you can turn right out of **Dockhead** or what's the spin for **Honor Oak Station?**



Conscientious as I am, I've found myself doing these turnarounds. Only the other day I got my bike out and rode around **Westfield (E20)** and the **Olympic Park** pointing the **Velodrome** and **Aquatics Centre** amongst others and even found myself staring at the **Crate Brewery** in **Queens Yard!** Where is that you may ask? Well, **White Post Lane** and **Fish Island** have changed a lot in recent times and my 18 geared **Marin** bike seemed rather dated against the colourful single fixed wheelies! Actually, it was quite a nice 20 mile circuit except that this time I could afford a decent cup of coffee and not a mug of **Camp** coffee on a stall along the **A12!**

But, and depending on the examiner, they all have their favourites runs. There are popular ones like **Mile End Hospital** to

Homerton; the long ones such as **Harlesden station** to **North Greenwich station** and the tricky "**no light**" runs. All my students, generally from the **East London** and **Essex** area, know that I will ask a beginner of **Peckham police station** to **Tooting Bec lido** before then beating them up on points in the **Manor House** to **Gibson Square** run! Apparently I have a stare that drives through them! All good fun, but still serious all the same...

DBS delays

The Editor has told me of the number of drivers whose licence renewals have been delayed thanks to the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** and the effect it can have on us. But at least we have all probably read about and have been warned, so spare a thought for KOL students who after their **Reqs** are waiting around 130 days for clearance, even though the majority are not in work and raring to work after a number of years on the Knowledge. They are being let down by a poor system of not rewarding the student for passing their exams. I could mention Private Hire and how quickly they appear to get their licence... but I won't.

Tom Quigley
Call Sign Online

For those that don't know, in addition to being a DaC driver, Tom also runs a Knowledge school

TDY GOLF COMPETITION

With a hole in one winning you a £10,000 car!

Wednesday 8 June 2016 sees the 2016 Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund charity golf day at Hendon Golf Club.

The cost for the day is £70; that includes 18 holes, a light breakfast in the morning and a meal later on. The TDY committee have also announced that the first person to get a hole in one will win a £10,000 brand new car!

If you, your family or friends would like to participate, please contact the TDYCF at the address below or email them for an entry form.

As usual, all the money raised will be donated to the five taxi charities supported by the fund. They are the Albany Taxi Charity Fund for Children with Special Needs, the LTFUC, the Southend Fund for Underprivileged Children, the London Benevolent Association for War Disabled and the East London Cabbies Outing. The presentations will be made at the annual dinner dance of the TDY on 26 November 2016.

Write: Russell Poluck MBE, 5 St Brides Avenue, Edgware Middlesex HA 8 6BT.

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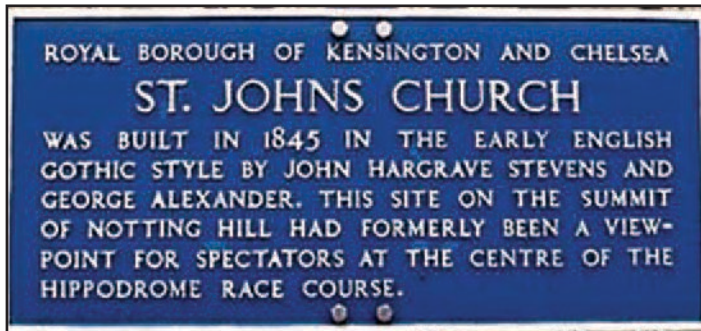




Some people are on the pitch, they think it's all over!

IT IS NOW!

Bob Woodford looks at London's long lost sporting venues



The sign at St John's Church, Lansdowne Crescent

The Hippodrome Horse Race Track of Notting Hill was opened in 1837 – a bold, and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to rival the great established tracks of Ascot and Epsom.

The idea initially came about because the building boom of the 1820's didn't last and put a hold on development of the **Ladbroke Estate**. By the 1830's, construction work in **North Kensington** had ground to a halt. So property 'wheeler dealer' and ambitious entrepreneur, **John Whyte**, leased 140 acres of land from existing developers on the slopes of **Notting Hill** and the meadows to the west of **Westbourne Grove**. A race track to rival **Ascot**? Well, some of the press never saw it that way.

The Times described it as "a disgusting, petty botheration," with the article continuing: "Shame upon the residents of Kensington for permitting it."

However, **The Sporting Life's** correspondent gave it some credit: "The most perfect race course I have ever seen. The feature is an emporium even more extensive and attractive than Ascot."

The main entrance to the track was **Portobello Lane**, which no longer exists but was roughly where the cab shelter is today. The Grandstand was situated on the hill where **St John's Church** in **Lansdowne Crescent** stands today while the paddocks and stables were a little to the north-west in **Pottery Lane**. This area was a notorious slum known as **The Piggeries!** Pottery Lane brick makers were living and working alongside pig-keepers – forced to move as Central London expanded westwards. Sanitation was poor with fresh water scarce and many families lived with pigs in their hovels, which inevitably became slums.

Charles Dickens described the area as "a plague spot, scarcely equalled for its insalubrity by any other in London." So it was hardly likely to impress well-to-do racegoers!

The west side of the track (see map) became known as 'Cut Throat Lane' with vagabonds and low-life seeking easy targets while brandishing their knives among racegoers. This really gave Whyte's already struggling enterprise a bad rap as these people were not the kind of clientele he had in mind.

The Hippodrome was short-lived, only ever staging 13 meetings, and it was wound down in 1842. Perhaps it was ill-fated from the start because of the **Pottery Lane** reputation and its history of violence, today that stands as one of the few lasting legacies of this 19th century lost sporting venue.

Next time I'll look at a sport that will be back in full swing, good old cricket and that sports' long-lost sporting heritage. And just in case you assumed this only ever existed in St John's Wood Road and Harleyford Road, we can investigate that...

So be lucky...!

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online



This 1841 map of Kensington shows the Hippodrome Racecourse



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The March issue of *Call Sign* published (under the heading of *Hypocrisy and TfL*) figures that our licensing authority wanted to keep secret. We didn't publish them to make trouble, but because as the trade mag with the highest online readership, we felt that the public should be aware of some very important facts.

Those facts were that Transport for London, although knowing only too well the difference between us and licensed private hire, does not want to differentiate when giving out bad news!

The news they wanted to keep hidden involved the number of sexual offences committed by PH drivers in 2015 because it could have spoiled TfL's 'Safer travel at night' campaign. After all, who wants to take a risk of saving a few pounds by putting yourself in danger of a sex attack! We pointed out that it seemed unlikely that many of the attacks were carried out by drivers on reputable PH circuits such as Addison Lee or Brunel. So that just left Uber.

Of the total allegations (numbering 180), it appeared that not one was of a licensed taxi driver, yet according to TfL, the figures were joint – meaning they could have applied to either.

Now, six weeks after we saw those figures, they have reached the media and according to a press release, the number of "cab" drivers charged with violent or sexual offences in London has hit a five-year high with stats from the Met Police Service (MPS) telling the world that 126 "taxi or private hire" drivers were charged with violent or sexual offences (which can include assault, grievous bodily harm, indecent exposure and rape) in 2015. They added that the figure accounted for around a third of all crime committed by the drivers and that although general crime had decreased since 2011, violent and sexual offences had gone up.

Overall, the MPS have told an amazed media that a total of 1,427 drivers had been charged with a crime since 2011, of which 521 were for violent or sexual offences and they further claimed that the statistics related to individuals who had declared their occupation as 'taxi driver' and so do not differentiate between Hackney Carriage or private hire drivers.

Being of a normal disposition, we at *Call Sign* have always assumed that the MPS actually check with TfL about licensing and that they would know in seconds whether the accused person was a minicab or black cab driver. But that apparently doesn't happen and after a driver has been accused of a sex attack and he claims to be a "taxi driver" that they make no further checks? Dare we say we find that difficult to believe? What if an accused person gave their name as Boris Johnson and claimed to be the Mayor, would they put that down?

The rise of Uber and other private hire drivers has been put as a potential cause of the increase in crime with the number of PHVs in London soaring at a rate of around 700 each week and Department for Transport figures confirming an increase of over 25 percent in London alone in its 2015 annual summary. The number of

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SO WHY DO THEY KEEP LYING ABOUT US???



The last demo outside TfL's Windsor House

licensed vehicles in March 2015 was 85,300, of which black cab drivers accounted for just a quarter. That is now said to be over 100,000.

Dial-a-Cab Chairman, Brian Rice, told *Call Sign*: "I have been warning against this and a situation where they count us all lumped into one big pot has now come to fruition. We all know who is responsible for at least 99 percent, if not 100 percent, of the attacks – and it isn't the black cab side. Yet TfL continue to not only licence more and more minicabs, but seem to care little as to their past records, dishing out what they call Certificates of Good Behaviour if the applicant claims to be a

refugee with no form of identification. Some may be genuine, but does anyone really believe that all those signed up by Uber are of the same calibre as licensed taxi drivers?"

Sadly, *Call Sign* has come to the conclusion that if TfL are not lying about us, then they are deliberately withholding the truth. Is there a difference, because it could be that the truth could save this trade, whereas a deliberate mistruth could destroy it. And this trade no longer lies down and rolls over to TfL threats...

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

NO MORE MR NICE GUY! LTDA AdVan taking no prisoners...



Any potential Uber passengers will no longer have the excuse of saying they didn't know, following the LTDA's AdVan parking up in locations where their strong message can be seen. Perhaps even TfL might look again at the type of service they have licensed and which we assume they probably use. Well done LTDA...



Hello Ladies & Gents

Your Society

It seems that Members close to reaching retirement age don't want to pass the Society onto the next generation of cab drivers, a Society from which they have benefited through their years of being a **Dial-a-Cab** member but are now only looking to get a pay out to see them into retirement.

If a mutual like DaC is to progress into the app generation, we need to be bold and

From Garry White

progress before the market is lost to the new players in our market completely, because if investors are willing to enter the taxi business and see a potential profit with an example of confidence in the trade being **Gett** acquiring **RTG** and **Sherbet** buying fleets of taxis, then why are we declining year on year when we don't need to make a profit?

I'll leave you with that thought: Is there a future for the Society that has enabled you to earn a good living? And do you want to pass that on to the next generation?

EU referendum

EU in or out? Vote 'leave' with Boris, Nigel and IDS **or** 'stay' with Dave, George and Jeremy? I've made my mind up; I hope we leave and go it alone.

If we vote to leave on 23rd June, it could have dire consequences for David Cameron. Hence why the government has spent £9 million of taxpayer's money on a pamphlet to persuade you to vote to remain in the EU.

TfL

It seems that **Transport for London** is hell bent on ruining our trade through bad or misguided management. So let's all stick together with whichever trade organisation you belong to. The future is bright, get behind the yellow light.

Uber are the tech company that is disrupting London day and night. The **RMT** want to define what is plying for hire and I'm firmly behind them in this all important definition.

Social Media

Using social media as a sales tool is something the PH trade seem to do to their advantage. I believe the Society hasn't grasped this tool to our advantage and could use **Twitter**, **Instagram** and **Facebook** to advertise links to our app, as the young generation use these media platforms and want the taxi to come to them rather than hail one in the street.

Garry White
DaC Board Member

Outfoxing the fox...

"In rural Essex... well, downtown **Woodford Green** actually," **John Tyler (D81)** began explaining to **Call Sign**, "there are foxes that roam the streets at night – and sometimes by day as well – all looking for food. They forage at the back of restaurants, other food outlets and domestic waste bins – no different to many other areas of the country I suppose, but I think I must have the biggest, fattest, well fed fox in South East England that regularly visits my property," John almost boasted until realising just what he had said!

"Every night between 01.00 hours and 04.00 hours I used to hear this scratching and banging sound coming from our waste bins. I'd look out the bedroom window and see this huge, almost obese fox plundering our bins for any morsel of food he could get to grips with. He'd push his nose under the lid of the hinged bin and flip his head upward until the bin lid opened right back on its hinges and then reach up with his front paws on the rim, standing up on his hind legs to look inside for any scraps of food – although I doubt he'd turn down a full three course dinner!

"Then just a few nights ago, I heard this relentless banging sound – even noisier than usual – coming from the bins outside, so I peered out of the bedroom window and to my surprise, the fat one had adopted a new technique and was repeatedly pushing at a waste food bin on my driveway, surrounded by a few of his mates to whom he appeared to be giving a lesson in scrounging! To my astonishment, he succeeded in knocking the bin over onto its side with the contents spilling out across the driveway, at which point he began ripping open the plastic bags we had so carefully tied up to contain the very food scraps he was about to savour! At that point I grabbed my dressing gown and raced downstairs, successfully scaring him and them off my land. My neighbours didn't say anything the following morning as I cleared up the mess, but I'd love to know what

they thought of the sight of me waving my arms at the foxes in my PJs at three in the morning," John said with a giggle.

"Anyway, I determined that Mr Fox was not going to make a meal of my food waste any longer, so I thought about how to secure the lids on the waste bins and came up with the idea of using elasticated bungee ropes with hooks at each end, similar to the ones you see on motorcycles to hold items on such as briefcases etc.

"Sourcing bungees of a suitable length, I then drilled small holes in the sides of the bins to affix the hooks, slid the hooks through the holes and wrapped the bungee ropes tightly across the tops of the lids so that they could not be opened, even by a very determined animal! It seems to have worked, because after a few vain attempts to raid my bins, the fat one got the message and now leaves me to enjoy a peaceful nights' sleep. I don't suppose he goes hungry, because if he can summon up that much ingenuity, I reckon he's giving someone else a disturbed night or maybe chasing Little Red Riding Hood through Epping Forest instead of hounding me!" As he spoke, John was also grinned mischievously.

"Guess you could say I was being a bit foxy...!"



Foxy John outfoxed the fox!

Baghwat Singh
Call Sign Online

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Uber taking cash trips...

I personally think **Uber** are struggling big time, because we should have been killed off by now! They no doubt had a 3 year plan to annihilate us, yet we're still here – albeit wounded and on the ropes. So their new cash play is obviously designed to be the knockout blow, but they are running out of time.

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...

The last thing they really want is their workforce handling cash. Their **surge pricing** will be fun when punters refuse to pay cash fares reaching 3 or 4 times the normal price.

They must also be aware that the weekend 'all night' tube is due to start soon. Their investors are probably becoming irritable... the clock is ticking for Uber, with London *having* to be won at all costs because if they lose London, then their credibility is well and truly tainted.

We are the world's last line of defence. The shame is the 20,000 deserters and conscientious objectors within our midst.

This war is winnable...!

Demos

Regarding trade demos, the point is that our numbers across the trade make us a potent force. I would rather lose this battle knowing

that I had at least put up one hell of a fight before admitting defeat. It's called pride and that is a commodity that can't be bought.

If there are any of you out there that don't have it, then you might as well hand your Badge in at the first opportunity. Unless, of course, you are one of those drivers who is secretly hoping that others will fight your battle for you. I've met some of them while getting soaked to the skin, banging my drum on an infamous demo.

A few were working and had the cheek to give me a two finger insult while their fellow drivers were fighting for their future.

I've said it all along; it isn't Boris, it isn't TfL or Uber or Cameron who will be responsible for the demise of our trade. It's our own 'cowardly' apathy! In the doctored words of Lord Kitchener:

YOUR TRADE NEEDS YOU!

This war is winnable..

Jonathan Ross, the Editor's sister-in-law and...

THE ELEGANT MR FISH!

Long-time readers will know that *Call Sign* Editor, Alan Fisher, is the brother-in-law to Daphne Sherman and that Daphne was the wife of one of the world's most famous shirt producers... the man who made the button-down shirt famous, Ben Sherman!

If you are old enough to remember the early 1960s, you'll know that before Ben came along, men wore either white or blue shirts but thanks to Ben Sherman, shirts for teens suddenly filled with colour. All they had to do was to go to **Carnaby Street** and visit Ben's shop, while along the way they would also pop into "young people's" shops such as **Lord John**, **I was Lord Kitchener's Valet** and **Lady Jane**.

These young people were to become known as **Modes** with Ben Sherman 'button down' shirts becoming their uniform. Towards the end of the decade, the shirt was to become a symbol of the **Skinhead** culture – but either way, Ben Sherman was laughing!

Now you can see what it was all about in an exhibition held at Camden's Jewish Museum. According to Jonathan Ross in his **Radio 2 Arts Program** when interviewing Daphne, the exhibition is amazing. You can see for yourself until 19th June.

Moses, Modes and Mr Fish takes you on a journey from the tailoring workshops of the mid-19th century to the boutique revolution and mod culture of the swinging '60s. For over 100 years, British menswear set trends which led the world, with many of the most influential figures of the period being Jewish – from **Montague Burton** and **Moses Moss** (Moss Bros) to **Cecil Gee** and **Michael (Mr) Fish**. Explore the changing male image and menswear revolution over a 150-year period; from the 19th century formal silhouette through to the post-war period when young men stopped dressing like their fathers, becoming detail-obsessed mods or flamboyant peacocks.

Discover more about menswear in the '60s; a time when swinging London was the most exciting fashion capital in the world. You can explore the emergence of the mod movement and the fashion revolution that made Carnaby Street famous. See luxury clothes designed by **Mr Fish**, popular amongst young aristocrats and celebrities including **David Bowie** and **Mick Jagger**. Featuring fashion, photography and memorabilia including **John Lennon's** Cecil Gee suede jacket, **Moses, Modes and Mr Fish** offers an unmissable opportunity to explore the menswear revolution and discover how it helped to create the high street we know today.

Daphne told *Call Sign*: "Nothing could beat actually being there, but **Moses, Modes and Mr Fish** certainly brought back the memories of an amazing period when Britain ruled the fashion world..."



Jonathan Ross with Daphne Sherman – Mrs Button Down!



COMPLAINTS MEETING RESULTS

Results of a complaints meeting that took place at DaC House on Tuesday 5 April 2016..

Name/call sign

Wayne Ford (N41)

Description

Driver regularly soon to clears EC2 when true location is Friern Barnet and New Southgate

Rules: 2, 11

Verdict

Rule 2: 1 week suspension
Rule 11: 2 weeks susp.

John Sykes (S92)

Driver regularly books into E14, E14C, EC5 and EC2 from various locations outside the correct booking-in procedure

Rules 2, 11

Rule 2: 1 week suspension
Rule 11: 2 weeks susp.

Darren Carter (K52)

Driver accepted an As Directed trip and then informed dispatch he was unable to complete it. This caused a delay to client. The driver has used excuses previously to not complete a trip

Rules 5, 12

Rule 5: 2 weeks suspension
Rule 12: 2 weeks susp.

Concentrate!



Two seconds cost Donald his 'no claim' bonus!

When *Call Sign* met Donald Dacas (P76) on the road, he was in an uncharacteristically sombre mood and *not* in his own cab.

"My own silly fault," Don admitted straightaway. "I rolled into the back of another cab while looking at my Dial-a-Cab terminal. I simply wasn't concentrating – albeit for just two seconds. But that's all it takes I guess," he said rather sadly.

"I was moving slowly in traffic when my MDT sounded off. I glanced down momentarily to check the message and in that tiny space of time, the cab in front of me had stopped... and I didn't! Easily done I know and I should have known better, but we've all done it and it's not clever!

"Now I'm using a non radio cab while mine is being repaired and I really miss the MDT, not only for the work, but for the traffic info, other advisory messages and of course the instant mapping access. Not to mention 'goodbye' to my insurance 'no claim' bonus.

"So maybe you can put a mention in *Call Sign* about the dangers of not concentrating on the job in hand and driving safely. Yes, it's obvious I know, but I see other cabs with all sorts of devices on the dash and I'm sure they must distract drivers for that split second... and that's all it takes for disaster," Don suggested.

"You see PH cars with drivers fingering their satnav and other devices all the time, so I can't imagine how scary it must be for passengers sitting in the back while the driver inputs details into the electronics, meaning he has taken his eyes off the road. It really is important to get the message out there, choose your moment to check..."

With that, Donald drove off carefully... mirror, signal, manoeuvre!!!

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
1956

This month's Flashback goes back over 60 years to February 1956 and a Chairman's Report from the strangely named ODRATS News...

From ODRATS News, February 1956...



Your ODRTS Chairman, Mr Martyn

Your Committee has decided that subscriptions will remain at £1.18s.6d for the present but would still ask you to continue to not put your meter on until your passenger has entered the taxi. This will ensure that we build up a name as a good, trustworthy and reasonably priced organisation. It will help to remove the myth that taxis are the form of transport used by the upper class only.

Our aim must be to get everyone to use ODRTS taxis, which means that our prices must be reasonable while at the same time our passengers must realise that although there is a difference between ourselves and the number 653 London Transport trolleybus, the difference is not huge and well worth paying the extra.

We also have some advertising cards showing the cost of some longer jobs. Please do not charge more than these prices as the passenger may pay on that occasion, but will not phone again. As an example, there is London Airport for £2, Gatwick Airport for £3.7s.6d and the Royal Docks for £1.7s.6d.

Our dispatcher, Mr Defries (D03), has complained that some drivers are using profanities over the air and on one occasion a female telephonist overheard the driver. This is unacceptable and I am asking you to remember who we are.

If any of your passengers enquire, yes, we still are members of the **Holidays and Travel Association**. We feel that the mentions we get from being a member outweighs the cost.

If you know of anyone who is interested in coming on to the ODRTS radio circuit, let a committee member know. Fitting to our organisation is still free.

My sincere thanks to Decca for sponsoring this newssheet. Many of you are now investing in a television set and the choice of programmes is becoming very exciting.

Bonnie Martyn, Chairman

Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Society

172 Pentonville Road, London N1, Phone TERminus 6444

Are you still watching television on a postage-sized screen?

Is it 8inches? Perhaps 10inches?

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When people were asked about boxing, they would traditionally think of 'rags to riches' stories, men fighting their way out of poverty to fame and wealth – stories made famous in movies like *Rocky*, *Raging Bull* and *The Fighter*. However, times are changing and boxing is becoming one of the fastest growing and most popular workout regimes for men and women of all ages and backgrounds. Taking advantage of this new trend is Dial-a-Cab driver, Gary Bedford (T39).

Having been involved in the noble art for the past 40 years as a fighter, trainer and referee, Gary has decided to bring his wealth of knowledge and experience to the ring once more. He told *Call Sign*:

"I love the sport and couldn't let an opportunity go to pass on my knowledge and train others interested in getting fit through boxing."

The opportunity arose because of Gary's link to the IBA, an independent semi-professional boxing circuit that has opened a new gym in **West Thurrock**, where Gary will be holding boxing fitness classes every Saturday. Gary has been refereeing for the IBA for the past 20 years and has great respect for the

DaC driver getting people fighting fit!



DaC driver and boxing referee, Gary Bedford, is now running boxing classes

"I love training people. I have coached kids all the way up to being notable fighters in the IBA." When asked who the classes are aimed at Gary simply said: "Anybody!"

"The beauty of boxing is that anyone can do it. If you have never put a glove on before in your life, it really doesn't matter. These classes are aimed at beginners, right through to accomplished boxers. My aim is to give people from all walks of life the chance to

get fit whilst working at their own pace and ability in a fun and friendly environment."

The classes are at **West Thurrock Boxing & Fitness Gymnasium in Grays**. He will hold two classes every Saturday, the first starting at 10am through to 11.15am; the second from 11.30am till 12.45pm. Each session costs £7 and anyone over 16 is welcome.

For more information contact Gary on 07811 965 176 and see ad on page 20...

organisation because as he says, it allows the average person to fulfil their dream and box in front of a crowd.

Gary passed the Knowledge of London nearly 30 years ago, has been on DaC since 2000 and knows the importance of keeping fit and exercising as a London taxi driver. He says that a healthy body gives you a healthy mind to help cope with the challenges of our stressful job. Gary has been training fighters ever since his amateur career of 25 bouts came to an end.

Dial-a-Cab Credit Union AGM

Held on 13th April 2016, the DACCU directors opened the meeting and once again told those present, including *Call Sign*, how successful our CU is, in fact one of the most successful in the country!

Minutes of the previous AGM were read and agreed before President **Terry Dodd** thanked everyone connected with **DACCU** for their help in running the credit union during the year and said that it had enjoyed a good year considering the state of the taxi trade during the past 12 months.

Treasurer **Brian Flanagan** had a brief report and the meeting moved to the Auditors report presented again by **Terry MacPherson** of **Appleby & Wood**, who confirmed the President's view that the CU had enjoyed another successful year. He said that loan interest had increased, the number of loans had gone up and a good surplus was transferred to DACCU's reserves. Terry then spoke of upcoming increases to the capital to asset requirements for all CU's as set by the PRA, explaining that as from 2018 credit unions of our size would need an 8 percent minimum ratio, plus 2 percent buffer making a total of 10 percent needed. DACCU currently has 6.4 percent, which Terry said was fine at this time. The accounts were passed unanimously.

Next was a discussion about a proposed 1 percent dividend. Terry Dodd said that due to the upcoming PRA increases and the fact that a 1 percent dividend would cost over £30k, he recommended that all surplus funds be put into raising the reserves to the upcoming increased requirements amount. Terry proposed no dividend and it was passed unanimously.

The Loans and Supervisory committees gave reports that everything was running well. That was followed by a unanimous acceptance that Appleby & Wood should remain as DACCU accountants.

Finally there was a request for younger members to put themselves forward for positions on the committee as the board were not getting any younger! They said that members are always welcome to aid in the administration of the credit union.



CU Auditor Terry MacPherson

Mailshot

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

Sharing the proceeds

Hi Alan

I was talking to my wife about retirement and she seems to think *Call Sign* reported that if a driver retires, handing in his/her badge and bill, that said driver would be entitled to a proportion of the proceeds from the sale of DaC House. Was my wife right or is this still to be decided. Paul Tully (Y40)

Hi Paul, Several drivers have asked similar questions, so here goes. What I think your wife is referring to came from the 6 page AGM report in the March issue. What it said was that if we were to sell the building, before doing so we would have to demutualise. It was then put forward by the drivers attending that anyone who retired AFTER we had demutualised, should still be eligible for a share of any profits. However, that would only apply after we demutualised and I have heard of no immediate plans to do so – although I doubt that I'd be the first to know anyway! But it looks like that retirement may have to be delayed Paul! ...Ed

Is the new increase a decrease?

Hi Alan

There seems to be some confusion over the new tariff. Previously the meter changed to the 'fast clock' Tariff 4 at a fixed fare point. Last year for Tariff 1 it was £17.40 so that if you were kept waiting or there was congestion (when isn't there congestion!) the meter changed to 'fast clock' well before 6 miles were covered. The changeover is now at £18.40 which refers to Tariff 1. I don't know the amounts for Tariff 2 and 3 as they are no longer shown on the TfL website, which now just shows the changeover at 6 miles.

TfL have decided that from 2nd April this year, Tariff 4 should only start when a *distance* of 6 miles is covered, with their website showing Tariff 4 starting at 9656.1 metres – or 6 miles in old money. However, since the meter change my clock is changing to Tariff 4 after £18.40 regardless of distance. So either the tariff rates set out on the TfL website are wrong or my meter is wrong. They can't both be right.

Tariff 4 has implications for us as it really pushes daytime fares up and I remember Brian saying that it was a problem at the AGM. A lot of drivers don't even know it exists as it is no longer made explicit on the fare chart. Perhaps you could shed some light on this?

Mick Kennedy (M30)

Brian Rice replies: Mick, firstly let me stress that I am not a meter man, but I was under the impression that Rate 1 changed at £17.80, before going onto 'fast clock' Rate 4. I also believe that Rate 2 should change at £21.40 and Rate 3 at £26.00. So I'm not sure I agree with you regarding Rate 4 pushing up daytime fares, because if as should happen and you stay on Rate 1 until you have actually travelled 6 miles, then (with all the traffic) you are on £2.59p per mile (£3.19 on Rate 2 and £3.96 on Rate 3) instead of Rate 4 which is £3.70p per mile, so I believe most fares would be cheaper. Hence this appears to be a fare decrease rather than an increase. I hope that makes sense, Mick...

Even upside-down, Uber are on the make!

Hi Alan

On our news broadcast tonight, we have heard that Uber users have been having their accounts hacked (surprise surprise)! One unfortunate woman had A\$7000 taken following one trip in an Uber car. I have already posted on Australian chat sites about this happening in the UK...

Howard Sales (Ex-A11)
Brisbane, Australia

For those that don't remember Howard, he was one of DaC's driver-trainers at the time we first went over to data dispatch in 1988. He later emigrated to Australia but keeps in touch via Call Sign Online ...Ed

Moving home

Now that the London and Frankfurt's stock exchanges have merged, how long do you think it will take the whole banking industry to move to Frankfurt? How long will banks put up with journeys from Manchester to Euston being faster than those from Euston to the City? If Mayoral candidates are serious about pedal bike safety, they should enact the following:

- All cyclists to wear helmets
 - Ban cyclists wearing of headphones, otherwise how can they hear the traffic around them?
 - Cyclists must be prosecuted if caught on their phone or texting while riding.
- What is more important to the country:
The city of London or the cyclist?

PS. Sometime ago I emailed the EU re Uber. It would appear that things have moved on and that under EU competition law, Uber is illegal. All it takes is for an organisation to complain to the EU – but it must be an organisation. Have you heard anything?

Stephen Field (F99)

Stephen's letter was forwarded to all the

Mayoral candidates. As for the PS, no I haven't heard that and I'd be amazed if it wasn't just another unfounded rumour...Ed

PEDs and safety...

Just read two *Call Sign* articles about PEDs in the April issue by both Brian Rice and yourself regarding safety issues. Apart from the obvious dangers, imagine a situation where a drunken woman says she is unable to use the PED. Because of her state, there is no way a driver should be in the back of the cab in any situation, especially a male driver in the above scenario...

Malcolm Levan (F24)

We all know that – it's TfL that don't seem to understand ...Ed

Nash's Numbers

Hi Alan

I look forward to Nash's Numbers each month as it's a real boon knowing what's on and the finishing times – especially when it is as quiet as it is at the moment. So when I opened the April *Call Sign* and saw a 'what's on' guide, I photocopied it and left it in the cab as I usually do. It was only when I saw Arsenal v Liverpool on Saturday 4 April with a 2.30 kick off that I became suspicious as the 4th was a Tuesday and besides that, they played that fixture back in August with a 0 – 0 scoreline. So all I could think of was that this was an April Fool's gag, but if so, as I received the magazine on 31 March, it wasn't a very-well thought out one!

Alex Constantinou (N05)

I was absolutely inundated with phone calls, emails and text messages following the April issue when it turned out that Alan Nash had accidentally sent the April 2015 Nash's Numbers! Alan called me as soon as he realised and gave me a link to the correct column, which we sent out via driver terminals. As this is his first mistake in around 19 years of 'Numbers' I have forgiven him – providing he doesn't mention Arsenal again! ...Ed

Gett acquisition

I recently heard that Gett have announced the acquisition of Radio Taxis. There is supposedly an offer on the table for DaC that many of us assumed was from Gett! If not – which seems to be the case – then who is it and is the offer still there?

Martin Hizer (M47)

Brian Rice replies: No, Martin, it wasn't from Gett; we would be far more expensive than RTG purely due to our assets.



Mailshot

There was an offer on the table for us, but when I had the building valued and it came to £17.9m for just the building, it sort of dampened their desire a little. However, is the offer still there? Well it could be, but the approach would have to be a little different. Who is it? Not going to tell you!

Self-perpetuating!

LBC is constantly harping on at why Donald Trump is so popular with the masses. It's obvious; red capitalism is not working! The rich are getting richer and the poor poorer – an ever-increasing pool of cheap labour. Uber is the classic self-perpetuating American business model. The more successful the company, the less the drivers earn!

There are far too many of them in London now, with increasing instances of drivers filling up in garages and not being able to pay! I have evidence of this...

David Heath (Ex-W27)
Portslade, East Sussex

Credit Card holidays

Dear Brian

I refer to your article in April's *Call Sign* regarding TfL now insisting that all card readers be installed in the back of all cabs even though you have paperwork from 2011 agreeing they could go in the front. If this is the case, I feel that we should not have to bear the cost and should bill TfL £7,000 at £50 per cab for 1400 cabs' installation. We should give them a response time and if they don't respond as they normally don't, we should seriously consider taking them to the County Court. I'm sick and tired of TfL's big brother tactics in trying to bring the cab trade down.

While I'm on, I know you are trying hard to please everyone regarding the £7 credit card charge, but I feel it is unfair to someone like me who only works 5 mornings a week and some weeks don't even do a credit card job. I'm sure there are a lot of other drivers in the same position, so in cases like mine why can't we just have a small fee ie 50p each time the credit card is used. Otherwise I feel I'm paying out for nothing. As you know, Brian, things are hard enough at the moment without added expense. I look forward to hearing your comments...

Dave Bull (D33)

Brian Rice replies: The last eight years seem to have flown by and it's nice to see you are still punching above your weight Dave, although anyone else reading this – other than you and I – will not have a clue what I'm talking about!

Regarding TfL, I couldn't agree with you more. Someone, somewhere will have to stand up to them, however, if I did bill them as you suggest then 1400 cabs at £50 would come to £70,000 and not £7,000 as you suggest. I wouldn't let them off as lightly as you!

Regarding your suggestion of 50p per trip, Dave, the problem is that the larger the amount, the more we have to pay as a Merchant Fee; for instance Amex charge 2.85 per cent so on a £70 trip to the Airport, we would have to pay Amex a fraction under £2 and if we only received 50p from you, then you can see our predicament, bearing in mind the PED's cost £219 each.

Also Dave, I think you will find in the future that many more members of the public will start to use cards; we have taken a bit of a gamble on the way in which we have priced this because we just don't know what the 'take-up' will be with cards. It could be that the above scenario will suit you fine, so let's give it a while to see how things progress.

Credit Card holidays

Hi Alan

Just a quick note to see if any discussion has taken place with the Board regarding a holiday break in credit card charges for drivers, as I think it is unfair for us to have to pay this charge when on holiday and not working. I think a 4-week break in charges would be fair for all drivers. Can you perhaps discuss this with the Board and please let me have their response. Many thanks...

Trevor Wright (G13)

See Allan Evans reply below ...Ed

Credit Card holidays

Alan

I write with some concern regarding the implementation of the credit card facility and the proposed charges from DaC. Could you find out for me if, when taking holiday breaks for a set period, DaC still intend to charge for the use of the facility even though no credit card charges will be accepted during that time? We currently pay a regular weekly charge for the use of the DaC terminal that has always been inclusive of the credit card terminal.

There are other points regarding conditions of fitness and TfL rules that apply to all cab drivers and I have written to TfL asking them to clarify certain points to me as a matter of urgency ie contact with passengers, failure of terminals, credit card declines, dead signal areas etc. Should I receive a reply (not expected) I will forward a copy to *Call Sign*.

Peter Dunne (A25)

See Allan Evans reply below ...Ed

Signals and camaraderie...

Hi Alan

I refer to the article 'Camaraderie? Not here mate!' in the April edition of *Call Sign*. I sympathise with Grant Adams (E84) about the stressful situation he faced with the failure of his terminal to process a credit card payment at Stansted Airport. I would certainly have helped him had I been there, unlike the other uninterested Dial-a-Cab driver!



I believe that Grant's problem underlines the importance of not relying on just the DaC terminal as I'm sorry to say that it can sometimes be unreliable due to bad signals. I have a back-up hand-held terminal that I use and would advise all of my colleagues to also have a second credit card processing facility as a back-up.

Yaqub Rafiq (O28)

See Allan Evans reply below ...Ed

Credit card signals

Hello Alan

On hearing of the card charge being dropped in favour of a daily charge, I was a bit unsure. Then I read the letter from **Helen Chapman** at LTPH stating that the flagfall is being raised by 20p and there is also an overall increase of 1.6% on the rate, which made me feel happier. Then the next street card job I got asked me to add a pound tip to the fare, which I did not feel at all guilty of doing with the Credit Card charge having been dropped.

But then I read **Brian Rice's** monthly report saying the 20p flagfall may be dropped in a years' time, so now I'm not so sure again! I went back to Helen Chapman's letter to verify if this was true and could not see any mention of it being reviewed in a years' time. Where did Brian get that info from? That aside, if CC jobs increase in number, our biggest problem could be losing the signal when clearing a card job if the passenger has no other way to pay. That happened to me recently when I accepted a street trip paying by CC. When we arrived at the destination, the terminal would not print a receipt and therefore the job could not be authorised and cleared. The customer had no cash and was in a hurry to get to a meeting so I had to let her go and suffer the loss. In future, how should I deal with this to make sure I do not lose out again...?

Francis Robinson G18

Allan Evans responds: Trevor, Peter and Francis, within a week of the new charges starting we saw a considerable increase in Credit Cards being processed through the DaC system. As a Board, we have tried to make the charges fair for everyone and in comparison to other systems that are on the market, the weekly cost seems more than favourable – especially considering the steady rise in the numbers that are now being processed free of any other additional costs to each member.

I would suggest that drivers also carry the old style manual receipts pads just in case of signal problems. You could even consider having a hand-held backup system as a last resort as Yaqub suggests.

The current charges are not set in

Mailshot

stone but until we've had a longer period to judge and monitor card usage, the Board believe that the present charges are more than fair.

Ed's note: *Re. the 20p. Brian Rice told Call Sign that the information came from TfL's Strategy and Infrastructure Manager, Darren Crowson and Tom Moody, the Head of Policy and Service Development.*

Demutualisation

Dear Alan

I feel compelled to write to you with regard to our financial situation. We are paying £12 subs, £8.40 credit card, £2 paper statements (unless you take them online) and 9% on jobs. If drivers on average take £200 per week, we are now paying £40.40p per week to Dial-a-Cab. We are also losing 30% on fixed prices, our gratuities are going and our run-ins are being reduced. We are being forced to accept credit cards at our own cost and with TfL licensing all-comers, our huge loss of work leaves us in a very precarious position. When Mike Tovey was asked at the AGM how long he thought these losses could be sustained, he said that in his opinion it could be around five years. Any commercial concern would be considering what sensible steps could be taken, as the hoped-

for uptake in work is not happening and will probably not happen.

I firmly believe that the time has come to call an EGM to consult with the membership whether we should begin the process of demutualisation and prepare for a considerable downsizing exercise as mentioned at the AGM.

In regard to the credit card situation, could we now get pre-authorisation before the journey begins as I feel we could be open to considerable abuse.

Paul Hammett (V42)

Allan Evans replies: Having read your letter with interest, Paul, there are a few points I'd like to clarify. You have included the VAT in your calculations and unfortunately, as a Society, by law we have to include those charges. TfL have made credit card acceptance compulsory and the £1 per day charge that members pay is more than favourable, certainly when comparing it with the alternatives out there in the market place. We have already seen a 25 percent increase in credit card usage and I'm sure this will steadily rise in the coming months. If you factor in the 20p extra on each flag fall and the fact that you now pay *no* processing fee on any street credit card hiring through DaC, at this particular time the BoM feel it is more than fair – but it's still

early days and it will be closely monitored.

As for fixed prices, it's true that the fares are competitive, but we have now seen an increase in all airports and trips to and from locations over a twenty mile distance, which was not the case a year ago. I speak to more members than most and they understand the reasons for offering prices that will allow them the chance of longer trips that previously went into cars, which incidentally is also the choice of many account clients.

Regarding pre-authorisations for credit cards, our IT department has been talking to Igenico for many months and the software is now ready to go, but we do have to go through a detailed accreditation with Barclaycard before any final implementation. Pre-auths had been only for hotels and car hire companies previously.

There were three main points raised at the last AGM and the Chairman will be writing to each member in due course and taking the necessary steps thereafter.



The Other Dickens: Discovering Catherine...

Charles Dickens Museum 48 Doughty Street, WC1: 3 May – 20 November 2016

A new exhibition will aim to debunk a series of myths surrounding the life of **Catherine Dickens**, wife of **Charles Dickens**. *The Other Dickens: Discovering Catherine*, guest curated by **Professor Lillian Nayder** and based on her 2011 biography of Catherine, will use a combination of rarely-seen exhibits, including many personal items and letters to present an accurate picture of a woman who met Charles Dickens in her teens and whose own character and achievements remain in his shadow.

The Other Dickens: Discovering Catherine takes place at Charles Dickens Museum, 48 Doughty Street, the London townhouse where Dickens completed *The Pickwick Papers* and wrote *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. It runs from 3 May – 20 November 2016.

As Charles Dickens's fame grew quickly following the successive publications of the three novels listed above, Catherine found herself existing increasingly in his shadow, her own identity defined by that of her husband. The exhibition will celebrate Catherine's life at Doughty Street, adding significant detail to a name only known through the achievements and actions of Charles Dickens.

Catherine Hogarth married Charles Dickens in 1836. They lived together for the next 22 years, Catherine having ten children (two of whom were born at Doughty Street) in the first sixteen of those years, as well as travelling to America and living abroad. When they separated, Catherine moved to 70 Gloucester Crescent, Regent's Park, where she stayed for 21 years – outliving Charles by nearly a decade. During this time, Charles Dickens painted a harshly negative portrait of his wife, suggesting that Catherine was constantly depressed and an uncaring, unfit mother.

Addressing this issue, the exhibition will help to build a more rounded picture of a Victorian woman devoted to her children and part of a lively social group, who enjoyed frequent visits to the theatre, concerts and late-night parties. Catherine was also a published writer; her popular cookbook, *What Shall We Have for Dinner* ran into several editions.

Working its way through Catherine and Charles's home, the exhibition will explore Catherine's childhood in Scotland, her relationship with her sisters, the role she played in Charles's success, her place in London's literary scene and her musical and needlework skills. It reflects on her experience of motherhood, as well as the effect of the loss of three of her children.

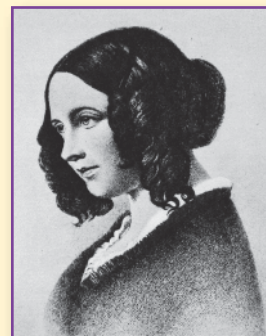
With the support of a Grant from Arts Council England, the Museum has commissioned sound artist **Felicity Ford** to make *Hearing Catherine*, a collection of six new works which will bring Catherine's voice back to Doughty Street. Introduced throughout the exhibition, a subtle combination of spoken word, music and field recordings will use Catherine's own words to give her a presence and build something of the atmosphere that she would have known in the family home. Among the music will be pieces by Catherine's father, **George Hogarth**, while recordings will include sounds from around Catherine's gravesite. Catherine's words will be taken from her letters, her published cookbook and lists and notes she kept at Doughty Street.

Among the many exhibits is her jewellery including her engagement ring, Samuel Lawrence portraits of Catherine and Charles and an 1858 draft deed of separation as well as illuminated extracts from Catherine's last will and testament.

The Other Dickens: Discovering Catherine will be open from 3 May – 20 November 2016. Opening times are Tuesday to Sunday 10am-5pm (last admission 4pm). It is closed on Mondays.

Adults £9, concessions £6, children (6-16) £4, under 6 are free.

More info: www.dickensmuseum.com, 020 7405 2127, events@dickensmuseum.com





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