

Call Sign



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From Bonnie Martyn to Brian Rice...
The original launch of ODRIS to 9 October 2016 when
DaC became a limited company...





NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Your 'What's On' guide (excluding theatres) for November; all the burst times I could find are there. Others have start or finish times excluding a few major events. There are 108 below but the on-line version has well over twice as many...

What's On: November 2016

Venue	Event	Date
Royal Opera House	The Nose (Burst 21:40)	01/11/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Children in Need (Sold Out starts 19:00)	01/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Black Hat (Finish 18:00)	01/11/2016
Royal Opera House	Anastasia (Burst 22:15 sold out)	02/11/2016
Wembley Stadium	Tottenham v Bayer Lev. Burst 21:30)	02/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	Freight in the City (Finish 17:00)	02/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	80th ann. TV broadcast (Finish 19:45)	02/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	80th ann. TV broadcast (Finish 22:15)	02/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Black Hat (Finish 18:00)	02/11/2016
Olympia Central	Government Procurement (Finish 16:00)	02/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Pearl Fishers (Burst 21:45)	03/11/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Jurassic Park (Sold Out-starts 14:30 & 19:30)	03/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Black Hat (Finish 19:00)	03/11/2016
Olympia Central	Big Data (Finish 17:00)	03/11/2016
Royal Opera House	The Nose (Burst 21:40)	04/11/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Jurassic Park (Sold Out-starts 14:30 & 19:30)	04/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	Fireworks Festival (Display @ 21:00)	04/11/2016
Brentford	v Fulham (Burst 21:30)	04/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Black Hat (Finish 16:00)	04/11/2016
Chelsea	v Everton (Burst 21:15)	05/11/2016
Royal Opera House	Anastasia (Burst 22:15)	05/11/2016
Wembley Stadium	Barbarians v South Africa (Burst 17:05)	05/11/2016
West Ham Utd.	v Stoke (Burst 16:45)	05/11/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Jurassic Park (Sold Out-starts 14:30 & 19:30)	05/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	Fireworks Festival (Display @ 20:00)	05/11/2016
Arsenal	v Tottenham (Burst 13:45)	06/11/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Paul Simon	07/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Pearl Fishers (Burst 21:45)	08/11/2016
Royal Opera House	Anastasia (Burst 22:15)	08/11/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Paul Simon	08/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Lulu (Burst 22:45)	09/11/2016
Royal Opera House	The Nose (Burst 21:40)	09/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Country Living (Finish 17:00)	09/11/2016
Royal Opera House	Chroma (sold out starts 19:30)	10/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Country Living (Finish 20:00 & 20:30)	10/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	21 Pilots (Burst 23:00 sold out)	11/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Pearl Fishers (Burst 21:45)	11/11/2016
Wembley Stadium	England v Scotland (Burst 21:30)	11/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Country Living (Finish 18:00)	11/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Lulu (Burst 21:45)	12/11/2016
Royal Opera House	Anastasia (Burst 16:15)	12/11/2016
Royal Opera House	Anastasia (Burst 22:15)	12/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Country Living (Finish 18:00)	12/11/2016
Millwall	v Bristol Rovers (Burst 16:45)	12/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	21 Pilots (Burst 23:00 sold out)	13/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Country Living (Finish 15:00)	13/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Lulu (Burst 22:45)	14/11/2016
Royal Opera House	Chroma (sold out starts 19:30)	14/11/2016
Wembley Stadium	England v Spain (Burst 21:45)	15/11/2016
ExCel	PETEX (Finish 17:00)	15/11/2016
ExCel	PETEX (Finish 17:00)	16/11/2016
ExCel	EMEX (Finish 17:00)	16/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	Flume (Burst 23:00 sold out)	17/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Lulu (Burst 22:45)	17/11/2016

Venue	Event	Date
ExCel	PETEX (Finish 17:00)	17/11/2016
ExCel	EMEX (Finish 16:30)	17/11/2016
ExCel	Simply Xmas (Finish 16:00)	17/11/2016
ExCel	Stitching, Sewing (Finish 16:00)	17/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Pearl Fishers (Burst 21:45)	18/11/2016
ExCel	Simply Xmas (Finish 16:00)	18/11/2016
ExCel	Stitching, Sewing (Finish 16:00)	18/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	Panic! at the Disco (Burst 23:00 sold out)	19/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Lulu (Burst 21:45)	19/11/2016
Fulham	v Sheffield Wed. (Burst 16:45)	19/11/2016
QPR	v Norwich City (Burst 16:45)	19/11/2016
Tottenham	v West Ham Utd. (Burst 19:15)	19/11/2016
Charlton	v Port Vale (Burst 16:45)	19/11/2016
Crystal Palace	v Man. City (Burst 16:45)	19/11/2016
ExCel	Simply Xmas (Finish 17:00)	19/11/2016
ExCel	Stitching, Sewing (Finish 17:00)	19/11/2016
Leyton Orient	v Blackpool (Burst 16:45)	19/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	Panic! at the Disco (Burst 23:00 sold out)	20/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Tosca (Burst 22:15)	22/11/2016
O2 Arena	Rod Stewart	22/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Sleep Event (Finish 21:30)	22/11/2016
ExCel	Acute & General Medicine (Finish 18:30)	22/11/2016
ExCel	Food Matters (Finish 17:00)	22/11/2016
Leyton Orient	v Exeter (Burst 21:30)	22/11/2016
Millwall	v Wimbledon (Burst 21:30)	22/11/2016
Royal Opera House	The Nutcracker (Sold out Burst 21:50)	23/11/2016
Arsenal	v Paris Saint Germain (Burst 21:30)	23/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Pearl Fishers (Burst 21:45)	23/11/2016
Olympia Grand	Xmas Ideal Home (Finish 18:00)	23/11/2016
Business Des. Cntr.	Sleep Event (Finish 18:00)	23/11/2016
ExCel	Acute & General Medicine (Finish 18:00)	23/11/2016
ExCel	Food Matters (Finish 17:00)	23/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Tosca (Burst 22:15)	24/11/2016
Olympia Grand	Xmas Ideal Home (Finish 21:00)	24/11/2016
Royal Opera House	The Nutcracker (Sold out Burst 21:50)	25/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Pearl Fishers (Burst 21:45)	25/11/2016
O2 Arena	Rod Stewart	25/11/2016
Olympia Grand	Xmas Ideal Home (Finish 18:00)	25/11/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Jools Holland	25/11/2016
SSE Arena (Wembley)	Simply Red	25/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	Chase & Status (Burst 23:00 sold out)	26/11/2016
Alexandra Palace	Club de Fromage on Ice (Burst 23:00)	26/11/2016
Chelsea	v Tottenham (Burst 19:15)	26/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Tosca (Burst 17:45)	26/11/2016
O2 Arena	Rod Stewart	26/11/2016
Olympia Grand	Xmas Ideal Home (Finish 18:00)	26/11/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Jools Holland	26/11/2016
Brentford	v Birmingham (Burst 16:45)	26/11/2016
Charlton	v Sheffield Utd (Burst 16:45)	26/11/2016
Arsenal	v Bournemouth (Burst 16:00)	27/11/2016
O2 Arena	Simply Red	27/11/2016
Olympia Grand	Xmas Ideal Home (Finish 17:00)	27/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Tosca (Burst 22:15)	29/11/2016
Coliseum (ENO)	Pearl Fishers (Burst 21:45)	30/11/2016

The on-line version is at: www.myfav.co.uk/wonov16.pdf. It has larger print, separated by days of week and over 230 events

from the editor's desk

Well, following the meeting on October 9 and the fact that nothing at Dial-a-Cab will ever be the same again, it does appear that I'm still here – albeit as just an Editor and not a Director! So on with the show...

New system

There is a piece on the new **Volante Automated Dispatch** launch inside this issue, but on a personal level I have to say that I really am impressed with it and have had more trip offers than I was getting under the old system when, like many others, I probably tended to book into the nearest zone to where I actually was – but one that I thought might provide me with an account ride.

You can no longer do that and doing a *soon to clear* into an unspecified zone also took some getting used to, but the first trip I got on day one came at around 8.15 on a quiet evening whilst dwelling on the **Kings Cross** rank closer to **Goods Way** than to the point. Suddenly the sound of a trip offer woke me from the bland sound of a football commentary on **5 Live** that didn't involve **Tottenham** – a pre-booked job from **St Pancras Station** to **Fulham**! But perhaps even better than that, albeit not in financial terms, was a trip just before 10pm. I had set down in **Parliament Hill** and was making my way back towards **Haverstock Hill**. In **Pond Street**, the terminal bleeped, offering me an account trip from the **Royal Free** that I had just passed. It was only going a few miles to **St John's Wood Road** but under the old system I probably wouldn't have been offered the job until I was a few miles away whilst it went through all the individual drivers booked into **NW3** and its back-up zones. I would then have probably been well-beyond **Camden Town** and rejected it.

But when you are passing the door, that job that you probably wouldn't have looked twice at becomes a good job because as we used to say, it keeps the wheels turning and the clock moving. A few drivers have said they find the text rather small, but that will be improved in the next update - but it's certainly much easier to read than on a phone app!

Also, I know that a small number aren't happy with VAD because it doesn't allow them to book into EC5 from Woodford... but hey, nothing is perfect!

So yes, as far as I am concerned, this system works and if it helps to improve coverage that could be an added bonus with the reliability of **Dial-a-Cab** once again coming to the fore and encouraging account clients to use us more.

Meeting 1

Call Sign recently had a meeting with **London Taxis and Private Hire** General Manager, **Helen Chapman**. I also asked **Brian Rice** to attend as he knows far more re the financial aspect of changing PEDs in addition to the history of DaC and credit card acceptance. I also used his office, which is better than my downstairs one as drivers keep popping in there to spend a penny!

Although we touched on several topics, rang-



ing from the status of **Addison Lee** and **Uber** to **bus lanes** and **emissions**, the main topic and the one we really invited Ms Chapman to discuss, was the **TfL** decision to place **credit card readers** into the rear compartment.

It was a tough meeting because Helen made it quite clear that the **TfL** Board had made their decision and it was unlikely that they would change it. I passed over a file of emails I'd received from drivers, all saying they did not want to take a chance on being called into the passenger compartment if the passenger said it either wasn't working or that they just didn't know how to use it.

I acknowledged that in 9 cases out of 10, it would be genuine; but asked several times what about if it was a deliberate ploy to get the driver to leave the relative safety of the front? The answer was that if something like that happened, TfL might look at it again!

I later followed up on our meeting with a suggestion via email that most drivers would be happy with a reverse system to the current one ie on a similar cable to how it currently is, but which would enable the passenger to pass the PED through the opening in the partition to us just as we can to them. We await developments...

Meeting 2

That meeting on 9 October to ratify **Dial-a-Cab** going from a mutual trading society to a limited Company as recognised under the *Companies Act 2006* was rather strange.

For a start, DaC meetings have always followed an agenda that included previous minutes, often elections and usually a section devoted to any other business. But this meeting was different in that there was just one item on the agenda and that was a vote to decide the result and with most people having already voted, the meeting was over almost before it even started with the result that we all knew was a certainty... it was carried.

There is a report of the meeting inside this issue, as well as a complete update of this Society up until that moment. These are certainly different times; decisions will soon have to be made by shareholders – and that's us! If we sell the building – as we undoubtedly will – should we do so as soon as we get a good offer or wait the twelve months that could see the selling price leap, as planning permission for **Dial-a-Cab House** allows it to grow upwards?

And as we are talking in \$millions, we need to be careful, so Brian Rice's summing up at the meeting is worth noting. That is also inside this issue...

Goodbye Mike and Garry

As a by-product of the first of **Dial-a-Cab's** two demutualisation meeting, two Board members

had to leave after drivers voted they only wanted three rather than five. So after a vote, **Mike Son** and **Garry White** had to leave following completion of the second meeting and our change of status.

Mike has been on the Board for many years in addition to his time on the **London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children** committee and served in many different positions. Although Garry has done far fewer years, no one could doubt his self-belief when he stood against **Brian Rice** for the Chairmanship.

Both always gave of their best and deserve the thanks of the membership as we move into this new phase.

Taxi Globe

Just over a year since the demise of **Taxicab News**, another trade paper has bitten the dust. **Taxi Globe's** editor, **Sandie Goodwin**, has retired and the paper has closed alongside her. There was a time when the taxi business was awash with trade papers but their numbers are diminishing.

Anyone remember **London Taxi Times**, **London Cabbie News**, **National Cab**, **Taxi Trade Times**, **Taxi Times**, **Taxi Trader**, **Cabbie** and even **Cab Trade News** as a monthly mag rather than the occasional one every three months. Now we have **Taxi**, **The Cab Driver** and **The Badge** (and of course, **Call Sign**). It is all a rather sad state of the trade...

Sadiq Khan

Sadiq Khan is the third Mayor of London following **Ken Livingstone** and **Boris Johnson**. The first two did little for this trade but Sadiq, whilst putting forward many more words than actual actions, does seem to care about the taxi trade and I find it disturbing that on a recent demonstration outside **TfL's Blackfriars Road** headquarters, some of the placards were downright rude towards the Mayor. Will that force him into supporting us more or push him towards the private hire section? I think you can work out my view from the above.

He has been in power for just a short time and while legalities may have temporarily watered down some of the regulations he has attempted to push towards the PH business, I'd rather have him than either of the first two...

Thanks for the embarrassment!

My "thanks" to Chairman **Brian Rice** who at the 9th October meeting told the 100 or so drivers present that it was my birthday, before then calling me out to present me with my own 'birthday boy' badge that had been placed in my jacket pocket by **Linda** before I left home – no doubt as her revenge for my having to sacrifice any birthday celebration for the Society!

Brian then led the drivers into a rather tuneless rendition of **Happy Birthday** before asking if I would like to make a speech! For those that weren't there, you will never know what my reply was as this is a family magazine and I will not mention any rude words beyond fart!!!

That aside, I thank all the drivers that wished me a happy birthday and said some nice things about me and the magazine...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections of the Chairman

Demutualisation update

The second meeting to demutualise this Society was held on 9th October and went extremely well, although it was a really short meeting. The resolution was passed by 97.2% of the Membership, which is something the detractors *outside* Dial-a-Cab should remember; they should also remember that I am fulfilling an instruction instigated by the Members and should consider keeping their misguided and incorrect opinions to themselves!

Our Shareholders - and indeed myself - are really not interested in these peoples' views, especially as they are not Shareholders in the new company. I believe the Editor has compiled a more comprehensive resume of the meeting elsewhere in this issue (*see centre pages...Ed*).

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank both Michael Son BEM (mustn't forget that) and also Garry White for their contribution to Dial-a-Cab whilst they were Board Members and the way they conducted themselves following the first meeting on 18th September when they realised they were not going to be elected as Directors of the new company.

At the time of writing, I am in the process of writing to Shareholders advising them of the next steps in the process of realising the assets of Dial-a-Cab; it is proving to be an extremely complex operation and to be honest, far more time consuming than I ever imagined. However, I have the assistance of Jacqui Chart with whom I have worked with for over 20 years and her input and dedication to me and the project has proven to be extremely valuable and productive, with only some very minor disagreements along the way!

The next stage for you, the Shareholders, is quite straightforward. I will again be sending you a letter, circular and proxy voting form etc together with details of a meeting that has to be held. You don't need to fret too much, as it is just another stage in the process and as you have already voted to demutualise, then all you really need do is to complete your proxy form and return it to us. I will not be going to the expense of hiring the HAC and the ERS but will endeavour to hire the local school one evening as the meeting should be a formality, although at the time of writing I have not set any dates.

Basically, the object of the exercise is to split Dial-a-Cab in two with you, the shareholders, owning both companies ie the Radio Circuit and Dial-a-Cab House - which will be the property company.

So I have now come to the point where effectively, we are ready to split Dial-a-Cab Holdco into two and demerge Dial-a-Cab House from the rest of the business, with the result being that you will end up with shares in Dial-a-Cab Holdco (which will own 100% of the shares in Dial-a-Cab Limited - the owner of the Dial-a-Cab taxi business); and shares in Dial-a-Cab House Holdings Limited ("Propco Holdings"), which will own 100% of the shares in Dial-a-Cab House Limited - the owner of Dial-



a-Cab House). All Shareholders, including Directors and myself, will own equal shares.

You will probably have to read the above paragraph again, because on first glance it does sound a little complicated, but as I stated earlier I am just splitting Dial-a-Cab in two as both portions will have a value, one more than the other. I'm not sure if I will be able to get the paperwork to you before you read this, if not then you will at least have a good idea of what to expect.

I would urge you to complete the proxy form and return it to Dial-a-Cab because even though the meeting should be a formality, it is still needed as the next step to realise your ambitions.

Upgrade to your PED

You all know my sentiments about TfL's view regarding the siting of the PED into the rear of the taxi from its current position. It's quite simple - they have got it wrong! However, being an intransigent organisation, they refuse to compromise.

As a result, they have me over a barrel because if I do not move the PED into the rear of the taxi, I personally would not suffer and neither would Dial-a-Cab, but you, the Shareholder, undoubtedly would

when they put a 'stop' onto your taxi. So in reality, I do not have any alternative.

Nevertheless, we will be taking this opportunity in an attempt to accelerate changes that we want to make to the PED and its functionality. We have contacted both Ingenico and Barclaycard for updates. The name given to the project is Snoopy.

The main reason for our attempt to rapidly move to Snoopy will be the elimination of the button press at the end of the transaction. This will happen just by using Snoopy and the existing MDT software. Snoopy also provides the opportunity to introduce Pre-auths, Charge Card reading and a PED entered gratuity. However, all three of these functions will require a new release of the MDT software - Volante MDT version 11.

We have not yet started work on version 11, but it would be ideal if we could take the opportunity of having the fleet recalled and also install version 11 at the same time. However, I doubt it will be ready for the beginning of the bracket fitting project.

We are still busy investigating and resolving issues with the VAD system but should be able to deliver version 11 at least before the bracket project is finalised, meaning that some cabs that come in for the bracket may also get version 11. The important thing, however, is that the bracket project (which has a drop-dead date) need not be held up by version 11 as it will work quite happily with version 10, albeit without the Pre-auth, card reader and gratuity enhancements.

I hope all the above will demonstrate that the only place you can get the true facts is in *Call Sign*. Other trade papers giving opinions that are patently based on guesswork, are putting 2 + 2 together and coming up with 22...

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children supporting the...

PEARLY KINGS & QUEENS HARVEST FESTIVAL

The LTFUC had the pleasure of being invited to attend the (18th) anniversary of the traditional and annual **London Pearly Kings & Queens Costermongers' Harvest Festival Parade** on Sunday 25th September at the Guildhall. I went along with the Fund's Honorary Secretary **Malcolm Shaffron** and our wives **Maureen** and **Evelyn** to witness this colourful, traditional and spectacular event.

Scores of Pearly Kings & Queens from all corners of London had gathered for this festival, more than 130 years on from when road sweeper Henry Croft covered his finest 'whistle and flute' (suit) in shiny white buttons in aid of the City's poor, with the modern day Pearlies continuing his mission and doing such great charity work. It was a beautiful day and the crowds were out in abundance to enjoy the traditional



Raymond (left) and Malcolm with Doreen Golding

entertainment in Guildhall Yard. Afterwards we joined the long procession, lead by the Pearlies, Chelsea Pensioners and many

Mayors, through the streets of the City to attend **St Mary-le-Bow Church** where the pealing of the **Cockney Bow Bells** welcomed the congregation for a thanksgiving service. I thought the roof would come off when my wife joined in with *All Things Bright and Beautiful!* Many tourists and onlookers lined the City streets waving, taking photos and cheering the parade along.

Once again our congratulations must go to **Doreen Golding**, Pearly Queen of Bow Bells and of the Old Kent Road (Freeman of the City of London) for organising such a brilliant event.

May I also take this opportunity to thank all the wonderful Pearlies for continuing to help and support our charity and all the many charities in London and the Greater London area.

Raymond Levy
LTFUC Press Officer

CHANGES TO PRIVATE HIRE REGULATIONS

English language requirement

TfL has confirmed that an English language requirement for private hire drivers was introduced on Friday 14 October. The Taxi and PH licensing authority said it was essential for public safety that all licensed drivers are able to communicate in English at an appropriate level and that drivers *must* to be able to communicate with passengers to discuss routes or fares as well as reading and understanding important regulatory, safety and travel information. TfL told *Call Sign* that they believe that is crucial to driver's roles in transporting the public.

The requirement applies to all applications for PH drivers' licences received by TfL on or after 14 October 2016 and includes applications for both renewal and new licences. There is a transitional process for applications received from 14 October up to 31 March 2017 and drivers have until then to satisfy TfL that they have met the English language requirement.

TfL said that applicants may satisfy them of their ability to meet the requirement by providing a certificate from a test provider appointed by TfL confirming that the applicant's level of proficiency in the English language is at level B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: ('CEFR') or above, or documentary evidence of a qualification (whether or not the qualification was obtained in the United Kingdom) on the basis of which TfL is satisfied that the applicant's level of proficiency in English language is equivalent to level B1 on the CEFR or above.

Brexit puts diesel prices up!

"The double impact of the pound weakening against US\$ and global oil prices strengthening will cause pump prices to move sharply upwards," **Brian Madderson**, Chairman of the **Petrol Retailers Association** told *Call Sign*.

"The pound has now fallen by over 15% to US \$1.23 since the pre-Brexit level of \$1.47 and dropped even more alarmingly in the second week of October to just \$1.15 in the 'flash' trading, which started in Asian markets. Fortunately it recovered quickly, but there are City analysts talking about even lower levels to come, including parity with US\$.

"At the same time, renewed talks amongst **OPEC** members trying to curb oil production have led to a hardening of global oil prices, with **Brent Crude** passing the psychological barrier of \$50/barrel. As a result, **Platts** wholesale costs to retailers have increased by over 6p per litre for petrol and 7p per litre for diesel in the past few weeks, whereas the UK average pump prices have moved up by less than 2p per litre for both grades over the same time period.

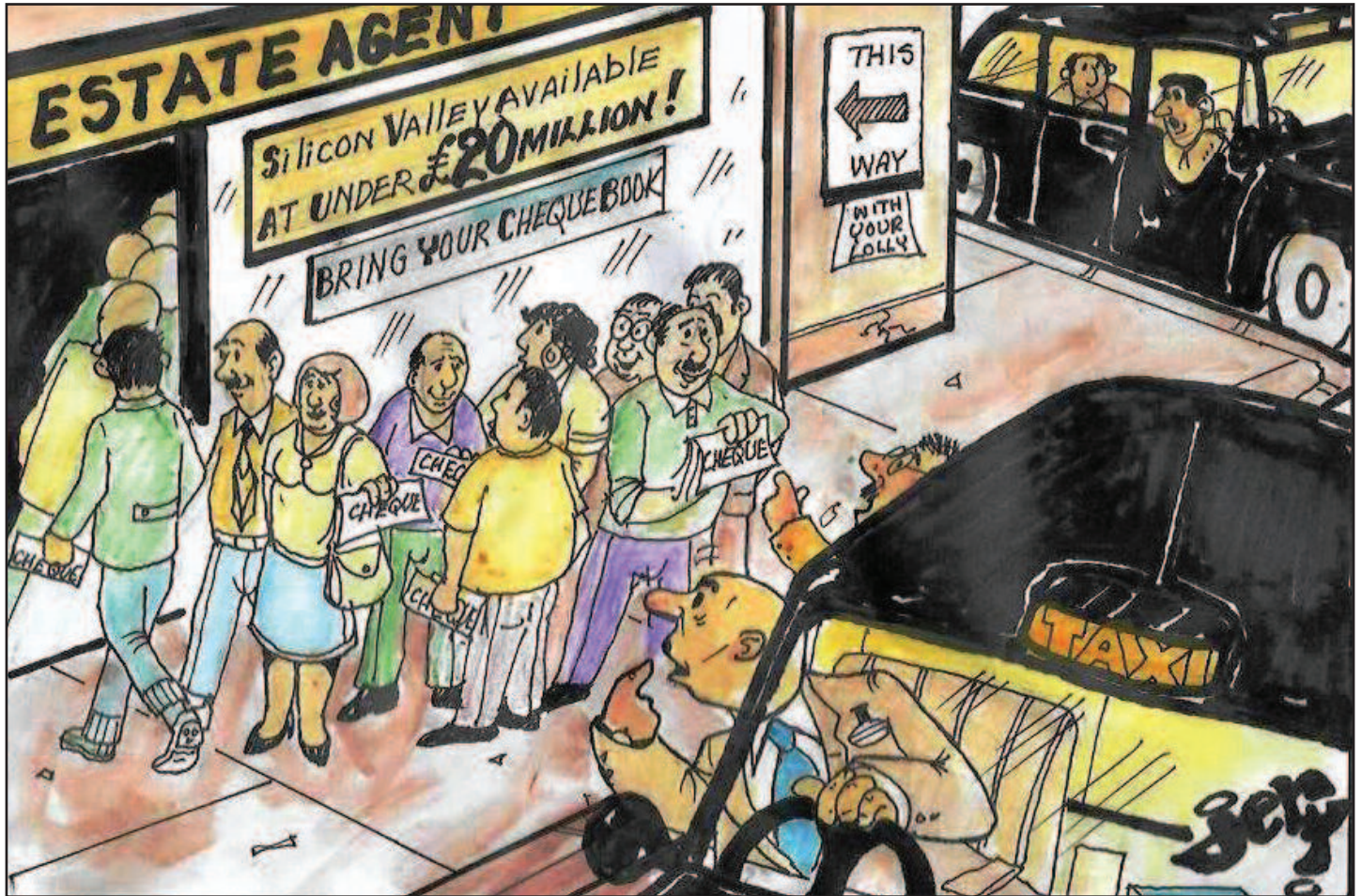
"Thus motorists can expect increases of more than 4 or 5p per litre by the beginning of November unless there are favourable corrections to the exchange rate and to global oil prices. This will also increase UK inflation rates.

"The PRA has written to the Chancellor advising that the Government should support the economy in the face of such fuel cost increases by reducing Excise Duty in his Autumn Statement from 57.95p per litre to 55.00p per litre. This would be an extremely popular and valuable contribution to ensuring consumer spending does not start to fall away and damage business prospects as the new Government grapples with the aftermath of Brexit."



Brian Madderson
Petrol Retailers Association

Jery's World



If you've met our Chairman, Mr Rice, then you'll know that part of the deal will be that you wear our logo on your back!!!

PHONING ON THE MOVE

For those that haven't yet heard, in September Her Majesty's Government announced proposals that will increase sentences for those caught making phone calls while on the move. According to Chris Grayling, the Minister for Transport, using mobile phones at the wheel is as socially unacceptable as drink or drug driving.

The result will be that in addition to the fine doubling up to £200 from the current £100, the licence endorsement will also double from 3 to 6 points. That means that if a driver were to be caught within 3 years, he or she will have amounted a total of 12 points under the 'totting up' procedure and face a ban of 6 months. And then at the end of that period, drivers will probably face a huge hike in their insurance premium in addition to needing a 'chat' with **Transport for London** regarding their suitability to drive a London taxi.

What some may not realise is that should the above enter the statute books, the penalty for new drivers will be even tougher. Totting up for that group of drivers will be over a 2 year period instead of 3 and if they reach just 6 points within those 2 years of passing their test, not only will they have their licenses revoked but they will also have to retake their driving test again – both practical and theory sides.

The regulations also apply to having a quick chat whilst at traffic lights and at any time you are in charge of a vehicle with the engine running. But regardless of whether the new punishments come in, the offence is still in force. So the only way to not get caught is to not do it in the first place!

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online



Mobile phones are amazing - but they could cost you your livelihood if you get caught using one while driving

KEITH WHITE

1949 - 2016

It was with great sadness that members of the **London Vintage Taxi Association** learned of the passing of their Vice President and former **Dial-a-Cab** driver, **Keith White (ex-A16)**. In the words of one of the members: "Keith White was an amazing man!"

Keith was a long standing member, past chairman and stalwart of the LVTA and long-time driver with **Dial-a-Cab** until he retired due to illness. His funeral took place on 25 October and many LVTA members attended, together with their taxis.

Keith was a mine of information on anything that moved; this included taxis of course, but also buses, trolleybuses, trams, rail, tube trains – and even canals! As well as being a licensed London taxi driver, he was a PSV licence holder and was in his element at the wheel of an old bus – even when carrying passengers.

One of the funniest moments, recalled by LVTA member **Jimmy Waters** and his wife, involved a trip to **Liverpool**. They used to travel up in convoy for the **Liverpool Taxi Driver of the Year** and **Vintage Taxi Driver of the Year**. It was the first visit by the southern area of the LVTA; a contingent of about six cabs went with Keith leading the convoy along a series of 'A' and 'B' class roads in his **Beardmore** taxi. Near **Milton Keynes**, Keith took a wrong turn. The convoy all followed. While **Pat**, his wife, frantically worked a way out of the problem in the back of the cab, Keith had entered a roundabout but continued going round. One by one the other cabs followed until moving taxis blocked the entire roundabout! This situation was maintained much to the annoyance of other motorists who could not get on, until Pat had a new route worked out. Keith then gave a couple of honks on his bulb horn and the convoy peeled off one by one to continue on their way! Keith actually won the latter award in 1994.

Keith worked tirelessly with the **Federation of British Historic Vehicle Cabs (FBHVC)** and **Department for Transport** to ensure the old diesel vintage cabs were exempt from new MoT legislation. Had he not been successful, all members with older diesel cabs and many vehicles from other clubs within the FBHVC would have been consigned to museums or the scrap heap.

Another LVTA member, **Bob McPhail** and his wife were good friends with Keith and Pat. Bob gave the eulogy at the funeral. He said: "We shared a lot of interests – steam trains, buses, coaches and cabs of course. Keith was very knowledgeable about them all. Keith was also a fan of 'rock and roll' and could play the piano very well ala Jerry Lee Lewis style! He served on the LVTA committee as Membership Secretary for about 10 years and was later Chairman, together with myself as Vice Chair, for around 15 years. We have shared many happy times and he kept his sense of humour and his jokes despite his illness over the last three years. He was determined to keep going to the shows and also continued to work as a JP at Guildford Court."

Keith attended the LVTA AGM in May 2016 taking an active part in the discussions. He will be sadly missed by all in the LVTA and also at Dial-a-Cab.

Rest in peace, Keith...



*Sandie Goodwin
Call Sign Online*

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Call Sign speaks to Helen Chapman

CALL SIGN had arranged to speak to **London Taxis and Private Hire General Manager, Helen Chapman**, regarding the safety aspect to drivers if we were forced to move the Pin Enabled Device (PED) credit card readers from the relative safety of the driver's locked cab, into the passenger compartment and the associated dangers that have been pointed out in previous issues of this magazine. We invited Helen to **Dial-a-Cab House** and also asked DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** to attend as he had access to relevant figures that might be needed.

Brian pointed out that he agreed so strongly with the Editor's view that moving the PEDs could put drivers in danger that had it been purely up to him, he would have challenged TfL/LTPH decision in court. But the Chairman also added that it would be unfair for him to put drivers at risk of getting 'stops' on their taxis because it wouldn't affect him, only those drivers and that would undoubtedly happen if legalities delayed the final date.

Brian also said that our case had been weakened because **ComCab**, who also previously had their PEDs in the driving compartment, had capitulated to TfL's directive, leaving DaC to battle alone – something **Call Sign** had been doing for several months. Brian pointed out that had ComCab not given in, then TfL would have had 3500 non-compliant radio taxis in addition to the 4000 not yet compliant anyway and would have had to take the matter far more seriously with around one third of all taxis not fitted.

The Editor then gave Helen a pile of letters from drivers – both male and female - all against the change with many of them fearing that it could put them into danger. Helen Chapman pointed out that many cabs already had card readers in the rear compartment and that there had been no reports of any problems. **Alan Fisher** replied that many passengers didn't yet realise that all taxis would soon be compelled to take cards and that once it became common knowledge, there could be some people out there who might see that as an opportunity to rob the driver by tricking them into getting in the back.

As an example, Alan gave Helen the name of a driver who had been robbed via the front of the cab and who later died from a heart attack, which was probably brought on by the attack. He suggested that it would be even easier for those types of people to lure the driver into the rear compartment on the pretence that the card reader wasn't working, rather than to attack a driver with locked doors. Brian agreed with Alan.

For her part, Ms Chapman said that the decision had been taken at TfL Board level and she couldn't see that being changed, but promised to put our points across. She also said that should any incident occur re the problems that both Brian and Alan had brought up, then TfL could relook at the situation. Alan queried whether that would be rather too late? He later suggested in a follow-up email the possibility of a movable PED on a cable in the passenger compartment that could be passed through to the driver.

Another point raised concerned the letters sent to drivers regarding that refitting of credit card readers into the passenger compartment of taxis. TfL had issued the letter that both Brian and Alan considered to be extremely ambiguous and which could have been interpreted in two different ways.

The way the letter read and made it sound was that if you didn't have the PED already in the back, then you would need a



letter from an authorised agent giving a date of when the PED would be fitted in the back and that would have to be before 31 October. However, Brian said that had been interpreted by at least one person at a TfL passing station who claimed the letter meant *before* that date and as soon as your cab was presented.

In fact, one Dial-a-Cab driver was told by the London Taxi Company after purchasing a brand new cab that if he didn't have a letter, then his new cab would not get passed. That was around 7 October and several weeks away from the date given in the letter.

Although DaC said they would print letters for drivers telling passing station employees that taxi PEDs would be refitted within the timed schedule (1 January 2017), Brian wanted to know whether these were actually needed prior to 31 October. Helen seemed to agree that a letter should not be needed before 31 October and said that passing stations would be informed.

Several other subjects - mainly involving private hire and English language requirements together with the possibility of legal challenges etc - were touched on at a meeting that was scheduled for one hour but ran closer to two and although our main aim may not have been achieved, **Call Sign** would like to thank Helen Chapman for her time and honesty in answering our questions...

Baghwat Singh
Call Sign Online

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Are they still called radio circuits? It seems pointless considering that 'radio' - by which I mean voice despatch - hasn't been used for more than 20

years. What could they be called now? **London Taxi Data Solutions**? Bit of a mouthful. What about **Traditional Licensed Transport**? Maybe we should stick with radio circuits, the job is still basically the same. It's getting people where they want to go. What has changed is the technology.

Back in the Seventies it was two-way radios. We drove round hoping a job would come out near us. The despatcher went through what seems now to be a strange mantra: First call... Second call... Open call... First assistance. If more than one cab came in for the job, the despatcher had to work out who was nearest. This could lead to arguments and accusations of false positions being given. The despatchers became legends. One of them still does a weekend shift as a controller and it's always a pleasure to hear 'Uncle' **Ivor Belkin's** voice.

BBC work around **Shepherds Bush** was called from the local rank. One morning the despatcher - a nice young chap I'll call **Harvey** - asked for the first two cabs. Number 1 was a fellow I'll call **Tissue**. He was given a job to the West End while Number 2 was told to get his details from another channel. Tissue smelt a rat and switched over to that channel only to hear the other guy getting off to **Hemel Hempstead**. It turned out that Harvey and Tissue didn't get on. But it was a naughty thing to do and Harvey had to go. He drives a cab now and is still as charming as ever. But as things got busier, it was obvious that the old system couldn't continue and data despatch - the zonal system - was introduced.

Another true story from Geoff Levene...

Are they still called radio circuits???

At the time I was into a 14 year sojourn on **Mountview**. They were still on voice but after a few years they followed suit. There was loads of work. I was getting 8 account jobs a day. It was brilliant and then came GPS! Suddenly 8 jobs became 5, but there was lots of work on the streets so that took up the slack. But the problem I had was the fact that it was a system that stopped you from thinking for yourself. Plus you never had a clue where the work was.

So after a few years of that I was back on **Dial-a-Cab** in July 2000. These were golden years. Tons of work in **Chelsea, Fulham, South Ken** and **St John's Wood** in the mornings. Later in the day the **City** and **Canary Wharf** were the places to be. But it couldn't last because while banks spent millions on huge bonuses, lavish expenses and taxi fares, they were lending similar amounts - often to people who couldn't pay back. The result was the financial crisis of 2008. **Lehman Bros** crashed. Others had to be bailed out by **HMG**. Things got tougher when big businesses started to cut costs and the first things to go were taxi accounts. **Addison Lee** took advantage offering cheaper rides and a vehicle that many passengers preferred. The happy hunting grounds of **Canary Wharf** became arid deserts. But even as the recession eased, another enemy appeared. Like the barbarian hordes of **Attila the Hun** they cut a huge swathe through America, Asia and Europe before landing here. It was **Uber**. Aaaargh!

Well, you know the rest. A few years ago some drivers suggested we adopt GPS to

increase the chances of getting a job. The Board's response worried me: "We have the technology. We can change the system at the flick of a switch."

Oh no, surely not. In the meantime, some drivers added another string to their bow by joining **Hailo**. They reasoned that 90% of something was better than 100% of nothing. Even one Board Member said to me it was understandable, adding that drivers had to earn a living. But let's cut to the chase. After the recent school holidays I felt things were getting a little bit busier, so imagine my surprise when I heard GPS was going live. I wonder which Board Member suggested the change and what did he say?

"Gentlemen, it appears that drivers are not getting enough work, so I move we introduce the GPS system and they'll get even less. But maybe everyone will get one or two. It's fairer that way. Some drivers are too greedy."

Excuse me? Fairer? I didn't sign up for fairness, I wanted to play by the rules and get as many jobs as I could. Does anybody do four rides and reject number five because they wanted someone else to have it? I don't think so. Anyway in the event the new procedure was for me, as bad as I thought it would be.

Look, I know this game is all about luck but even so, driving around aimlessly hoping a job will come out near me? But we've been here before. It was called voice despatch, except now a contributing factor is how long you've been available. **Gordon Gekko** was right. Greed is good...!

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

AIDEN KENT SERENADES CALL SIGN

...and gives a big boost to a trade charity!

Can there be any licensed London taxi driver who hasn't been stuck in traffic at one time or another as they sat in **Orchard Street** by the side entrance to **Selfridges** wondering which lane was likely to move quickest. Either way, it presents itself as a rather boring few minutes...unless you happened to be alongside a rather special cab.

I was sitting in my cab with two young lady passengers - neither of whom had much of a command of the English language - on our way to **Claridges** and moving every bit as slow as you'd expect. On my nearside and moving even slower was another taxi with a familiar sounding personalised number plate - **AK 51NGS** - also with two females inside. It was a rather extravagant looking cab with the face of a cab driver beaming from the door panels and a full wrap looking as though it was advertising a West End show. As I pulled alongside, I noticed twinkling stars in the headlining. Although I didn't know him, I assumed the cab belonged to **Aiden Kent, The Singing Cabbie**! But any doubts vanished when I heard dulcet tones serenading his passengers!

My passengers stared in amazement - as did I. Meanwhile, his passengers - they looked like a young girl and her mother - were beaming away as they enjoyed their surprise serenade. The astonishing part was that even with the sound of traffic and no instrumental backing, he sounded really good. Then rather worryingly, my passengers pointed at me as if to ask whether we all sang and in their case, me in particular! I shook my head as we all enjoyed our brief break from reality.

I remembered seeing Aiden on **ITV's Sunday Night at the Palladium** a few months earlier where he was introduced by **Bradley Walsh** and really went down a storm in performing **Mack the Knife**; so I jumped out the cab quickly and dropped a copy of **Call Sign** through his window suggesting just as quickly that anytime he had a few minutes to spare that I'd appreciate a few words about how he became **The Singing Cabbie**. He said he would... and he did!

Aiden has been a cab driver for 27 years, following in the footsteps of his father and brother. For many years he has been a fan of the crooning style made famous by **Frank Sinatra**, **Dean Martin** and his personal favourite, **Matt Monro**. He regularly plays concerts outside of the cab performing at weddings, clubs, restaurants and bars in addition to the **Palladium** show. In January, Aiden will be going to Las Vegas where he will be talking to four of the major hotels with a view to **The Singing Cabbie** performing on the strip.

But Aiden then surprised me with some unexpected kindness. When in conversation I asked if he was going to the **Taxi Driver of the Year** dinner and dance at the **Holiday Inn, Carburton Street** on 16 November. He said that he hadn't planned to but as he had no bookings for that day, he would be happy to do a 30 minute cabaret spot while the regular band took a tea break - and that he would do the spot for nothing because it was a trade charity!

Not sure if there are any tickets left, but if you are going, then you are in for a real treat. On behalf of the **TDoY Charity Fund**, thanks Aiden. For ticket availability, call **Russell Poluck** on 07850 056765 or 020 8952 1357.

Alan Fisher, Call Sign Online



After a short live test and listening to comments from drivers, **Dial-a-Cab's** new dispatching system **Volante Automated Dispatch - VAD** for short – was launched on Sunday afternoon 25 September at just before 3pm, a time specifically picked to cause the least inconvenience. It was set to replace the previous **V6** dispatching system.

Volante is the name **DaC** uses for its internally developed systems and **Volante Dispatch** now adds itself to **Volante MDT**, **Volante Mobile** and **Volante Web**. As we live in a world of initials, the new system's name of **Volante Dispatch** was deemed somewhat politically incorrect and 'Automated' was added to the middle!

The biggest difference so far as drivers are concerned is that they no longer have to physically book-in to a zone because with **VAD** working on a navigation satellite system known as the **Global Positioning System** – or **GPS** in this world of initials – that is now done automatically. As a result, trips will be distributed to drivers based on their taxis actual position and how long they have been available.

All drivers have to do is to push a button telling the system they are 'available' and as long as they are working and using the 'soon to clear' button, their position will automatically be updated and they will be offered work when available.

If drivers do not use the **STC** button, then at the end of that particular trip the **VAD** system will assume that you do not want a radio job and put you back to 'unavailable'. All drivers need to then do is to push the 'available' button again and they are back in the system.

If drivers' rejects a trip, or let a trip time out, then that driver's availability will be adjusted - so there is still a penalty for rejecting a trip.

With IT's **John Banks** and **Theresa Whitfield** on hand watching for any problems in the system, Call Centre manager **Allan Evans** and dispatcher **John Connor** dealing with driver's problems and **DaC** trainer **Daren Morley** casting an eye over call takers, everything seemed to be working well and the fact that we are still on **VAD**, makes that even more so.

Perhaps the biggest problem is just to make sure that when signing in, drivers don't book into **V6** out of habit, because not much is going on there!

Any problems call 020 753 7266 or
Email: techproblems@dialacab.co.uk.

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

Call Sign

November 2016

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Website: www.22-callsign.co.uk

Printers: Premier Print Group
E6 6 LP

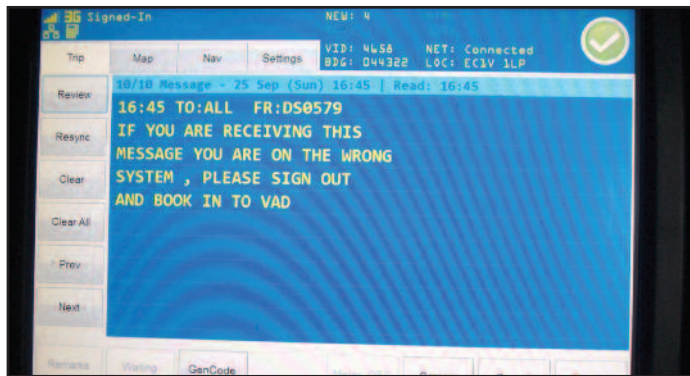
Design: Aldan Publications

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VAD goes Live



Goodbye **V6**, after it had been up since 29 April 1989



Daren Morley and John Connor watch out for drivers at the launch



Theresa Whitfield and John Banks from **DaC's** IT dept doing an all-nighter just in case!

Living in a Camden dream world...

This is the way Camden Council designers see Tavistock Place should the alterations

become permanent. Of course, what it doesn't show are the constant traffic hold-ups all around the area or explain why so many taxi passengers no longer use our services thanks to the nightmare of trying to get through Bedford Way just to reach Tavistock Place. Many Call Sign readers took part in the Camden consultation of which we published details last month. That has now closed and the results will be announced in early 2017.

We can only hope that commonsense comes into the decision...



Thank heaven that's gone!

October should have been the beginning of the run-up to Christmas... but we are still waiting!

The traffic has been abominable with every other car now being a minicab – something TfL say they can do nothing about. The latest total is over 115,000 private hire cars that are actually licensed. God knows how many are unlicensed!

There were also two taxi demonstrations held at TfL's Palestra building, while The Badge gave DaC Chairman Brian Rice a hair makeover!

But *Call Sign* didn't worry about anything as we enjoyed ourselves at a sixties revival party!

This is October in pictures...



It's always nice to see a minicab with class – or something!



Editor Al at a sixties party posing with The Searchers bass guitarist Frank Allan and trying to keep one of his chins hidden!

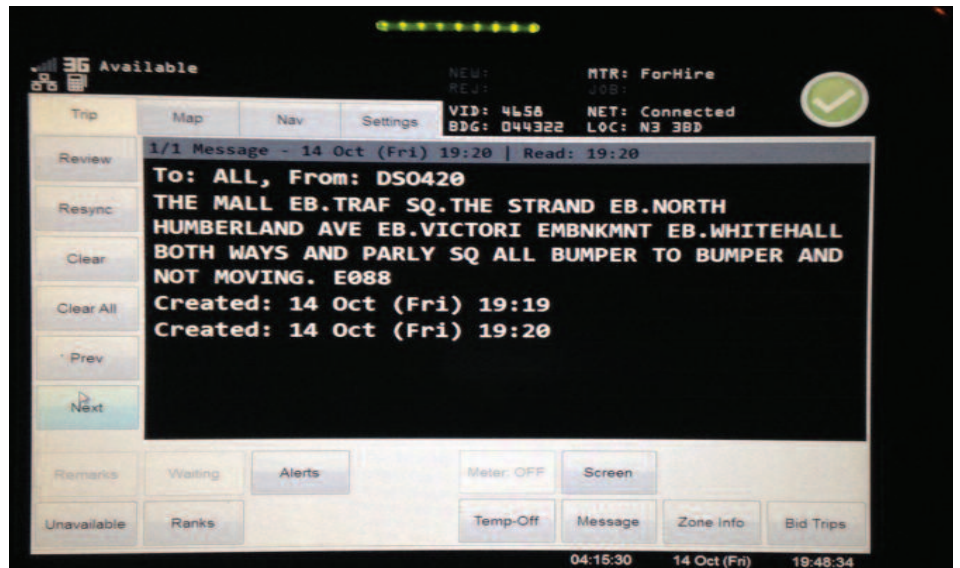


The Badge see Brian Rice as the golden haired one of the cab trade – they also think that Mary Berry, Jenny Éclair and Keith

Lemon are cakes! PS. Brian loved it!



Was this a taxi demo or were they really getting ready to operate... even after TfL said no blood on Palestra's walls!



Yes, there's a bit of traffic here and there!

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



Produced by Dial-a-Cabs PCN expert, John Vigus, this book is all you need to know about moving traffic and parking regulations in one easy to read guide!

The Motorists Guide to Moving Traffic And Parking Regulations

Hard copies £8. Electronic versions to Dial-a-Cab drivers are £5 per copy. Orders via Driver Services with payment deducted from your DaC account.

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

Dial-a-Cab driver Jim Rainbird (T25) has often appeared in *Call Sign* over his 22 years on Dial-a-Cab, whether that was during his time as a WCHCD Master or via his many filming promotions – including at least one smash hit Bollywood blockbuster – although there was no word on whether he had to dance!

In 2001, he actually appeared on a Japanese TV station quiz but doesn't know how he did as he doesn't speak the lingo! Then there were the times when Jim + taxi were hired by paparazzi because that looked less conspicuous while chasing celebrities than flying around on a motorbike with a huge camera lens hanging around their neck!

Jim also appeared on these pages when he and his cab were used by *Motorcycle News* to promote their show at the Excel Centre when he worked with motorcycle stars Chris 'The Stalker' Walker and Tommy Hill. He has also appeared alongside motor racing F1 stars Lewis Hamilton and Mika Hakkinen in a Johnnie Walker anti-drinking campaign!

But Jim would be the first to admit that it isn't a hobby, he does it for the money! Whilst often enjoying the work because it's easier than searching around for a passenger, it doesn't usually involve much genuine gratitude. You turn up, do the film work, sort out the payment and it's back to EC5!

But a recent television job changed that. Jim was filming the Tuesday evening at 9pm Channel 5 programme, *How the other half live*, which is presented by Eamonn Holmes and his wife Ruth Langsford. The real-life married couple look at the lifestyle of the ultra-rich, those people that can literally afford anything they want at literally any price.

Eamonn and Ruth: How do you do it!



Taking a break during filming of *How the Other Half Live*...

for celebrities! However, I'm not sure about the flattering remark that Eamonn made to Ruth in front of me..."

"I don't know how Jim does his job, Ruth. Look at what it's done to him... he's only 25!!!"

Jim told *Call Sign*: "On television, they look like a lovely friendly couple, but we all know how television can create an image that isn't necessarily true. But having now worked with them, I have to say that Ruth and Eamonn really are a genuinely lovely couple and that's quite unusual

"I assume that he must have been referring to my T25 callsign!!! But it really was a lovely day filming with them and if the series hasn't ended yet, you catch it on Tuesday's at 9pm on Channel 5 or on Catch up..."



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At the first DaC SGM, Mike Son and Garry White came fourth and fifth in a vote to keep just three Board Members. Mike asked Call Sign if he could say goodbye. He remains a driver...

MIKE SON: THE FINAL ARTICLE



Dear fellow shareholders,
I want to take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks with regard to the support I have been given throughout the many years I served as one of your Trustee's.

My time on the Board of Management has been an adventure and an extremely rewarding experience. I will always treasure that time and remember with fondness and grati-

tude the support given by the Chairman and colleagues.

I must also pay tribute to all the Management and members of staff in all departments, both at Dial-a-Cab House and not forgetting Roman Way. During these turbulent times, they have all given 100 percent.

My sincere gratitude also goes to **Al Fisher**, Editor of *Call Sign*, for his consideration and help when I had to write articles within our magazine. Alan has without doubt created one of the taxi trades' most interesting and influential publications.

Sincere thanks to everyone...

Kind Regards, Michael Son BEM



TfL prosecute Vodafone... AGAIN!



Transport for London has successfully prosecuted telecommunications company **Vodafone** for the second time this year as part of its commitment to ensure that roadworks cause as little disruption as possible to road users.

Vodafone's offences, which took place between February and March this year, include working without a permit in **Borough High Street** and failing to serve the required streetworks notices before starting work at **St Thomas Street, Loampit Vale** and **Bishopsgate**. Vodafone failed to pay the Fixed Penalty Notices issued by TfL in response to these offences.

Ahead of a hearing at **Westminster Magistrates Court** on **28 September**, Vodafone pleaded guilty to the offences and was fined a total of **£3,500** and ordered to pay prosecution costs of **£3,020**.

TfL COO for Surface Transport, **Garrett Emmerson**, said: "These offences prevent us from coordinating streetworks effectively and we will continue to push for the toughest penalties possible against telecommunications and other companies caught acting unlawfully. We are committed to keeping London's roads as clear as possible to prevent unnecessary disruption to journeys and to help us tackle poor air quality."

Since January 2015, TfL has prosecuted Vodafone on three occasions and issued the company with 78 Fixed Penalty Notices, 33 of which were within the last year.

In June Vodafone was prosecuted for failing to serve a required statutory Streetworks notice for work in **Tooting Bec** on 7 and 8

January 2016. Including this latest offence, the company has been ordered to pay a total of **£12,706** in fines for mismanaging streetworks since 2015.

Below is the number of times TfL has prosecuted utility companies since 2010:

BT have faced 38 prosecutions, followed by Thames Water with 13, Infocus with 11, Virgin Media faced 10, Fulcrum have 9 as have UK and London Power Networks. Following close behind come Vodafone with 7, National Grid with 5, Cable & Wireless have 3, Abovenet with 2, O2 with a single offence as have McNicholas (on behalf of Virgin Media).



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LTFUC AGM



*The Annual General Meeting of the
London Taxidriver's Fund for
Underprivileged Children will
be held on Tuesday 15th
November 2016 at 7.30pm.*

*There is parking at the Centre and
refreshments will be available. All dri-
vers are most welcome to attend...*

*New Park Day Centre
19 Highbury New Park,
London N5*



Arsenal

There will be plenty of readers out there who claim their football team is the 'Pride of North London' – *Call Sign* Editor included – and from where I'm sitting, they both have equal rights to claim to the nickname. But **Arsenal** actually has its origins in South London and it was back in 1886 that the club was started up by munitions workers down in **Woolwich**. The lads that worked at the Royal Arsenal's ammunition workshops were the founding fathers of **Dial Square FC** – the location taking its name from the sundial that lords above its entrance gateway and which dates back to 1764.

Those founding fathers were hard up for cash initially and couldn't even afford to buy their first set of jerseys, let alone decide what colours to play in! Fortunately, among the early ranks were a couple of former **Nottingham Forest** players – the 'Reds' had been around since 1865 – and they wrote a letter to their old club asking if they would be prepared to let them have some kit. Forest turned out to be extremely generous and responded favourably with a full set of red jerseys and even a football – so if you ever wondered why teams play in the colours that they do, that's one example!

Dial Square were up and running and while trying to organise a suitable ground to play home games, their first away game was played over on the Isle of Dogs against a side called Eastern Wanderers – the venue being the site of Millwall's first ground in Tiller Road.

Within just a few months of forming, the decision was taken to rename the club **Royal Arsenal FC** and they used a tree-lined green space on **Plumstead Common** to play their first home match, beating **Erith FC** 6-1. The players used **The Star Inn** pub as a dressing room to change into the red strip they had bagged from Nottingham Forest and this pub is still around today.

Arsenal FC and Plumstead Bus Garage!

The following year the club moved to an old pig field on **Plumstead Marshes**, which was quite often waterlogged until a little hard work made the surface playable. Over time, members and fans began to name the club's second home ground as the **Sportsman Ground** after the Sportsman pub which was nearby (although no longer there) and they played here for the 1887/88 season. There is no visible sign of this ground left as it's covered over by the modern day **Plumstead Bus Garage** – although there is no truth that red buses became red out of respect for Arsenal's heritage!

The old Sportsman Ground flooded badly before the end of their first full season there, so a hasty decision was made to move to the adjoining **Manor Field** (as it was originally known), which was soon renamed **Manor Ground**. This was a slight improvement, but the pitch got notoriously muddy at times and

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



on its southern side ran a large open sewer – so there was no rush to take a throw in on that side of the pitch! Neither were there seating areas as such, but members came up with the unique idea to use wagons borrowed from nearby army bases to house spectators! The team's first fixture at the Manor resulted in a 3-0 victory against **Millwall Rovers**. But that muddy pitch and smelly sewer forced the **Arsenal** to seek a fourth option and they rented the **Invicta Ground**, which was an already established sports stadium close to **Plumstead Station** on **Plumstead High Street** complete with stands, terraces, changing rooms and no access to raw sewage!

Arsenal FC and Hector St!

Very little survives of this old ground, now covered over with late **Victorian** streets and houses, but some of the back gardens in **Hector Street** include a row of terraces at the end of their plot and I am grateful to fellow *Tour Guide* **Paul Talling** for the above picture, which was taken from a precarious position standing on a dividing wall – so be careful out there if you intend to investigate!

It was great while it lasted and success began to follow winning 3 local trophies and pulling off a shock in knocking **Derby County** out of the **FA Cup**, but 3 years down the line the landlord at 'The Vic' decided to exploit the club's growing popularity and announced he was going to double the rent!

It was around this time that the club were re-named **Woolwich Arsenal** and the unscrupulous landlord forced the cash-strapped relative newbies to move back to the Manor Ground in time for the start of the 1893/94 season; they managed to purchase it outright with money raised from an ambitious share issue and the sewer was culverted. They also erected a single main stand and banks of terracing. Their new found ambitions were built on the strength of the fact that the club were set to become the first southern member of the Football League's new Second Division – the opportunity coming about because **Millwall** had originally turned down that offer, preferring to continue with the development of the Southern League (how things could have turned out differently).

The stadium averaged a gate of 6,000 that season and so in 1904, a second stand was added and it was the first terrace in the country to be nicknamed **Spion Kop** – but as *Call Sign* readers will know, many other clubs like **Liverpool** also built Kops, as they were better known. But Arsenal were on the up, literally, as they achieved promotion to the First Division in the next season and with additional capacity attendances, they reached over 20,000 for some matches.

Just as all was going to plan, there was an emergence of other football teams in South-East London (including **Millwall** moving from the Isle of Dogs with a massive following), so **Woolwich Arsenal** faced bankruptcy in 1910 – the average crowd dwindling to around 11,000. And there was ever more competition for spectators locally – top amateur sides **Dulwich Hamlet** and **Nunhead** had been around since 1888 and 1893 respectively, plus **Charlton Athletic** and **Crystal Palace** had been attracting fans to their games since 1905.

At that time, London property developer and Kennington boy made good, Sir **Henry Norris** bought Arsenal out, rescuing the club and proceeded to move them across London to the new **Arsenal Stadium** in **Highbury**. His initial plan was to merge his own club, **Fulham**, with Arsenal into a new super London franchise. That plan failed and **Woolwich Arsenal** played their final match at the **Manor Ground** against **Middlesbrough** in front of just 3,000 people in 1913.

I wouldn't spend too much time looking for clues of the whereabouts of the Arsenal at the Manor. After they left the ground, it fell derelict and was demolished – eventually becoming the home to a run-down industrial estate and the last I heard, it was set to be redeveloped.

Henry Norris's Arsenal moved to their new purpose-built stadium in **Highbury** in 1913 and he would play a pivotal role in holding back the development of arch-rivals **Tottenham Hotspur** a few years later by bribing members of the Football League to promote his side back to the First Division at the expense of their neighbours, despite their inferior final league position. Bungs in football? Never!

Next month it's 'jumpers for goal posts' down in South-West London.

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online

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

Brethren of the Whip



Lost Property

The current law of handing items of lost property into the nearest police station within 24-hours dates back to 1853 – and for a good few years after that, it was actually illegal to return the item direct to the passenger. The law said the item had to be handed in and a driver could be heavily fined for not doing so.

In 1871, cabman **George Bennett** was surprised to receive a summons for not handing an item in to the nearest station. He had done exactly that – the only trouble was that he handed it into the **Lost Property Office at Cannon Street Railway Station**. Fortunately for him the magistrate saw the funny side of it and only made him pay the costs of the summons, usually about 2 shillings (10p).

Prior to 1853, a driver could hold onto an item for up to four days before he had to hand it in. Many drivers took advantage of the delay in order to see if forgetful owners had placed an advert in the newspaper, offering a reward for the item's return.

If an item was claimed, the driver would receive compensation for his time. If the item remained unclaimed, it became the property of the driver after one year. This system was changed in 1853 with a sliding scale of reward based on the value of the item and if it remained unclaimed, the item was sold and an amount to be determined would be paid to the driver. This system was again changed in 1869 to the present one where the driver is entitled to a reward if the item is claimed, or can claim the item as their own after three months if not collected.

When, during the summer of 1841, **Joseph Hayward** found "a monstrosity" in his cab, he did what any young cabman would do – he took it home to mum! Hayward would later state that he found a package in his cab and when he opened it up "...he first thought it was a pig and then an elephant - in fact he scarcely knew what it was and gave it to his mother who he thought might know more about it than he did." Mrs Hayward confirmed that her son had brought the "...curiosity to her and she took it to Dr Evans, as it began to smell a little!" Dr Evans sent the strange creature to **Guys Hospital** – who were not impressed with it at all. It was not as rare as the doctor believed and as it had started decomposing, they threw it away with the rubbish.

A few days later Dr Evans was confronted

by **Thomas Moody**, a **Birmingham** businessman who demanded the return of his 'curiosity'. Dr Evans related how he had taken the specimen to **Guys** and after a perfunctory examination of its head, they flung it away. Moody did not believe the doctor; he believed the creature was being held by him so he could use it at exhibitions and such. Dr Evans was summoned for "unlawfully detaining a non-descript animal valued at £5, the property of **Thomas Moody**." In court, Moody was asked to describe the 'curiosity'.

"The animal was between an elephant and a pig" explained Moody, "in that it had a mouth and proboscis resembling the former, while its body and legs were more like the latter; and that in fact it was what might well be termed a 'monstrosity'."

Dr Evans reiterated what he was told by the anatomy department at **Guys** that the creature (in all probability an ant-eater) was not rare and that the hospital could

procure him one if he so wished. Moody insisted on the particular specimen that had been in his possession, claiming that if he had returned to **Birmingham** with it he would have been paid £5. He was however willing to drop the case if the doctor would compensate him to the value of the £5. Dr Evans thought that the demand was perfectly unreasonable "for a thing so completely valueless."

A further witness for the prosecution was called. This was a colleague of Moody who gave his evidence, but only after Moody was asked to leave the courtroom. The witness's testimony adversely demolished the case for the prosecution and Dr Evans was discharged.

Moody had literally bought the 'monstrosity' "from a man in a pub" and only paid half-a-crown for the bargain...!

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

The policewoman thief and a DaC driver!

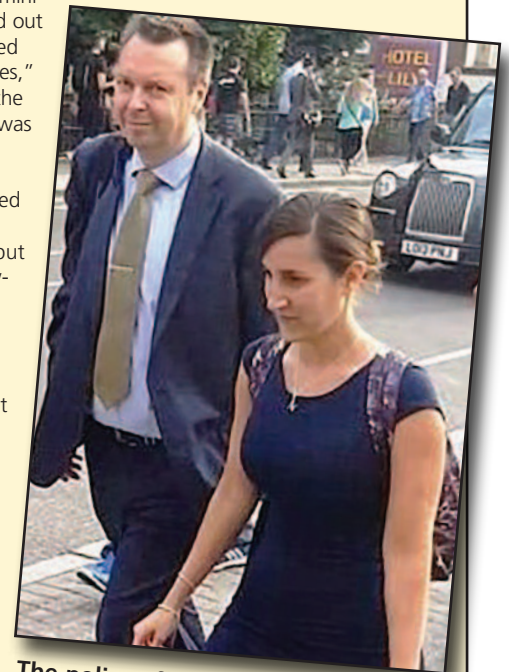
A woman police officer, who refused to pay a £24 minicab fare and then ran from the car, has been kicked out of the force. **PC Nicola Elston** was said to be "jaded through drink after a social night out with colleagues," when she refused to pay **Mr Ali**, a minicab driver, the cab fare to **Croydon**, an MPS misconduct hearing was told.

Ms Elston was also accused of threatening and punching the driver in the stomach, but was cleared after an earlier trial at **Southwark Crown Court**. She had initially claimed being innocent of theft, but the jury convicted her after a three-day trial, allowing the MPS to conclude the disciplinary proceedings. She claimed that she left the money in the minicab for the driver.

In a statement, Elston said: "I apologise for this matter and in hindsight, I should have dealt with it in a different manner. I accept that it is hard to continue to employ me, especially if I was asked to give evidence in court and would have to declare any convictions." She was dismissed without notice.

Mr Ali may have been a minicab driver, but we have to assume that the fare was legitimate otherwise it's hard to see a tout taking anyone to court for non-payment! However, the court kept referring to him as a taxi driver and that did irritate us – but not as much as it irritated **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Jon Robinson (E88)** whose photo, including his registration number, was in several newspapers that reported on the case.

Jon told Call Sign: We're used to seeing ourselves in photos or TV news reports as we pass the cameras, but on this occasion when the write-up in newspapers mentions Mr Ali as being a taxi driver and a woman who you could only describe as being a disgrace to the police force... and then several drivers point out that they showed a photo of her with me behind in my taxi!! But even accepting the poor reporting, you can tell my feelings about this former police officer if I say I had more sympathy for the minicab driver!!!"



The police officer with Jon's taxi behind

Many are undecided; is the long journey of the Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Service slowly coming to an end or was it the beginning of a new exciting journey when on Sunday 9 October 2016, the second and deciding vote on demutualisation sailed through with well over 97 percent of Dial-a-Cab subscribers voting in favour. The meeting report is on the next page.

DaC's journey began on **Thursday 29 January 1953** when the man who was to become our Founder-Chairman, **Bonnie Martyn**, met up with a friend of his, taxi driver **Albert Hall**. Both were then with a radio taxi organisation known as **RODA** – the **Radio Owner Drivers Association**. The RODA committee consisted of well-known drivers of the time: **Lou Dunn, George White, Charlie Watson, Cyril Lumley** and **Ronnie Frewin** but as hard as these honourable men tried, RODA was beset with problems and both **Bonnie Martyn** and **Albert Hall** decided that there had to be a way of starting an owner drivers taxi circuit where the underhand dealings that the RODA committee found so difficult to control and stop, could be prevented from ever happening again elsewhere.

The result was a meeting called by **Bonnie**; it took place on **Sunday 29 March 1953** in the back of his cab while parked on the **Grosvenor Gardens** rank. Besides **Bonnie** and **Albert**, squeezed into the taxi were also **Arthur Cutmore, Doug Naismith, Eric Stoffel, Alec Cobden, David Fiertag** and **Frank Duncan**.

Bonnie had paid a visit to the **PCO** in 1952 where he had a meeting with **Chief Supt Harold Gould** to tell him that he planned to start an owner-drivers radio circuit and the Chief Superintendent gave his blessing. **Bonnie** then tried to find premises for a meeting to discuss the possibility, but money was tight and eventually he decided that his taxi would have to do! After two hours in his cab, the seven drivers decided that they would try to pass the word around that a new circuit was to be attempted. With no social media in those days, it was left to word of mouth and on **Sunday 7 June 1953** at the **Albany Tavern** in **Great Portland Street**, the drivers that attended raised the sum of £200 between them and the journey was about to begin.

By **Monday 10 August**, estate agent **Jack Rose** told **Frank Duncan** that the building they had looked at - **172 Pentonville Road** - was available to rent with a view to buying later on. The committee voted on it and by **Thursday 1 October**, **Frank** had come to an agreement with the phone company to fit four lines, **Terminus 6444** was born and 47 owner drivers signed up and waited for work!

Eight weeks later on **Tuesday 24 November**, the committee purchased the **Pentonville Road** lease for £2400 following a decision at their first-ever board meeting just 12 days earlier on **Thursday 12 November**

*Sunday 9th October 2016 –
a new date enters DaC's history...*

DIAL-A-CAB BECOMES A LIMITED COMPANY



Current Chairman **Brian Rice** with founder Chairman **Bonnie Martyn** on his 90th birthday

shop that was used for paying out credits and that often become crowded with drivers involved in queries while our first **Pentonville Road** telephonist, **Florrie Culverwell**, would try to sort it all out! We even had a cleaner, **Mrs Goodman** – known as **Mrs Gee** – who on occasions

1953. At that meeting, the name **Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Service** was agreed on and a starting date of **Friday 18 December** was decided on as the day **ODRTS** would go live. But although a few passengers phoned following house-to-house card distribution, the signals failed to reach the taxis and the launch was scrubbed. A new launch date was decided as being on **Tuesday 26 January 1954**. This time everything went well and the first official job was dispatched – from **Pentonville Road** to **Holborn** department store, **Gamages**.

The **ODRTS** name spread quickly. **RODA** had long gone and competition was minimal with just two working circuits – **York Way Radio Cabs** and **Metropolitan Radio Taxis** with the latter also failing to survive. However, competition was on the way with another cab driver, **Joe Stern**, calling his own meeting at the **Rifle Range** in **Harewood Avenue, Marylebone** for an opposing circuit to **ODRTS** and on **Monday 14 December 1953**, **Radio Taxis (Southern)** were registered. They used the old **RODA** premises at **Townsend Yard, Highgate** with the telephone number of **Mountview 3232** and became known as **Mountview**. But **Joe Stern** and **Bonnie Martyn** both disliked each other and it created a feud between the two. The probable reason was that when **Bonnie** heard that **Joe Stern** was taking over at **Townsend Yard**, a rumour claimed he asked radio suppliers, **Pye**, not to let **Joe** have the equipment! Many years later, **Bonnie** admitted to *Call Sign* that the rumour was true!

"It was nothing personal," said **Bonnie**, "just business!"

Also many years later, **Joe** told *Call Sign*: "**Bonnie showed off too much for my liking, but he certainly knew how to run a radio circuit!**"

By the time **Mountview** dispatched their first trip following registration, **ODRTS** were becoming quite busy and had even opened a few accounts – something **York Way Radio Cabs** refused to do. We had built a new front

would help to pay drivers, By then we had 200 all paying 37/6 per month (£1.75) subscriptions. The only thing we lacked was publicity. Drivers kept handing out cards but two drivers and part-time dispatchers, **Bernie Lyons** and **Sam Harris**, came up with a suggestion and spoke to **Bonnie** about it – an official celebrity opening!

So **Tuesday 8 March 1955** **ODRTS** saw its official launch by well-known MP of the time, **Sir Ian Fraser**. **Bonnie** particularly wanted him because he was a founding member and President of the **Royal British Legion** – an organisation forever tied in with the taxi trade. But he was tied up until **March 1955**, so **ODRTS** decided to wait! **Sir Ian** was famous for his work on behalf of the disabled and had himself been blinded during active service in **WW1**. He had worked tirelessly to promote welfare for blind people and ex-servicemen.

The work flowed in as did the money accrued by the circuit and on **Monday 8 March 1965** under the Chairmanship of war hero **Jack Russell**, **ODRTS** moved to larger premises at **144 Shirland Road** and a phone number that some say defined our future – **LORDS 1133**. For many years after, we were known as **LORDS**.

The rest are really just facts and figures. On **Monday 11 June 1984** we took the trading name of **Dial-a-Cab** and on **Saturday 29 April 1989**, **DaC** made its second attempt at going live from our then voice despatch system to one of **Data dispatch**. Five months earlier the system had to be taken down after one day, but on that second attempt it worked and stayed up until **October 2016**, when under **Brian Rice** we moved over to our current **VAD** system.

But back to **Wednesday 11 August 1984** under the chairmanship of **Peter Fennymore** when we moved to **Brunswick**

continued on page 17

Back in May, Dial-a-Cab Members voted in an unofficial Board survey that they wanted to demutualise this Society, realise the value in its assets and distribute that value to Members. On **Sunday 18 September**, Members went to the **HAC Barracks in City Road** for the first of the two meetings that would be required for the demutualisation to be activated. To take the process to that second meeting, more than 75% of those voting – now including proxy voting – had to be in favour with at least 50% voting. That was achieved with a ‘yes’ vote of 95.9 percent.

The first meeting also cut the Board down to three members and the Chairman, with **Mike Son** and **Garry White** being voted off.

So it then went to that second meeting on **9 October**. For demutualisation to go through, over 50% of those that voted needed to be in favour with at least 20% of Members needing to vote. Again, the only acceptable way of voting was either in person or via a Proxy. A ‘yes’ vote would convert the Society into a Company incorporated under the *Companies Act 2006*. A ‘no’ would see it remain as a mutual trading society...

The meeting opened at 11am. The Chairman asked for the usual permission that the sound recordist and two DaC ladies remain present. As no one objected, the meeting – probably one of, if not THE most important meeting in our history - began...

It was down to Chairman, **Brian Rice**. He said: “In theory, we are here today with only one topic on the agenda – that is to ratify the last meeting that we had on 18 September. But before we start today, there is something quite important, otherwise you will be driven nuts by this certain person. So I thought I’d get it out of the way first! Today is the birthday of **Alan Fisher**, the Editor of *Call Sign* and if I didn’t tell you now, he’d probably go round to you all later to tell you himself! So Alan, would you like to come and accept this...”

To applause, the Editor sheepishly went to the Board’s table to accept a badge with his age on – one that had mysteriously gone missing from his pocket earlier! Following a rendition of Happy Birthday, it was down to the serious business and Brian Rice continued with the meeting proper. He said:

“What the proposition or resolution is today is to approve the special resolution that was passed at the first SGM of this Society, held to approve the conversion of the Society into a company limited by shares. That is what we are here to ratify today, so if there is anyone here that would like to speak against that resolution, would they kindly go to the lectern now please.”

No one responded, so the Chairman contin-

On page 16, you can read the history of Dial-a-Cab up to the moment it became a limited company. That takes this Society up until 9 October 2016 and the start of the final demutualisation meeting. This is the record of that meeting – probably the most important yet shortest one this Society has ever held...

DaC: The demutualisation



Within just 15 minutes, drivers went from being members of a mutual trading society to shareholders

Directors plus a Chairman onto the Board. That could of course change depending on circumstances.

“To give you the latest information; I have been in touch with around ten agents that are interested in the building or to act as our agents to sell the

building. Seven of them have put proposals forward that are very interesting, although we haven’t yet gone into them in great depth but our accountants and solicitors are fully informed and have copies of everything. We have had one firm substantial offer from a development company who have offered a cash deal rather than going through agents. However, knowing accountants and solicitors as I do, they would say that if someone is prepared to pay that, then someone else out there will probably be prepared to pay more! So there does seem to be interest in Dial-a-Cab

House at the moment and it would appear that the property that you own is in the middle of everything that Hackney Council wants - social housing and office blocks etc - and it also appears that planning permission is a formality, although that would probably take a minimum of 12 months.

After several minutes, during which time a few drivers asked the Chairman question about DaC, Brian Rice announced the result. This included those that had already voted, those voting via a proxy and those in the hall that had not yet voted. He spoke what were probably this Society’s most momentous words since **12 November 1953** when founder-Chairman Bonnie Martyn proclaimed at the very first ODRTS committee meeting: “Gentlemen, this is the first meeting since the registration of the Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Society Ltd. We are responsible to a lot of drivers, business houses and the GPO and we must therefore conduct all dealings in a proper manner. I feel confident that we are capable of fulfilling the work before us.”

Brian read out the results which were almost unanimous with just thirty members out of the whole fleet voting against and needing over 50 percent, the result achieved a 97.2 percent approval. He said:

“The resolution is ratified and from today (9 October 2016) onwards we move on. Dial-a-Cab will no longer be a mutual co-operative, it will be a limited company limited by its shares, of which you will all be shareholders. To a certain extent, while that persists you will have the same rights as you had before. There will be an Annual General Meeting if nothing is done with the company or the building with the first one probably being one year from now and as shareholders, you will still have a vote to elect three

“I suggest that what *may* happen – and this is all conjecture on my part – is that a development company may come in and say they will give us £x million today or that they would seek planning permission, which they would have to pay for and which could cost up to £1million and then in 12 months’ time or whenever we got the planning permission, they would then come back and offer us the initial figure plus a further price. That will be your choice. We would write to shareholders and say that you have been offered one amount now or a different amount in 12 months’ time.”

With that, the official and momentous meeting closed after around 15 minutes...

DIAL-A-CAB BECOMES A LIMITED COMPANY continued from page 16

House, where we were to stay until **Saturday 5 May 2007** when under **Brian Rice** we moved to Dial-a-Cab House (then called **Marten House**) in **East Road**. Astonishingly for a radio circuit, we bought the much bigger building without incurring any debt and it has now increased in value by approximately 6 times the price we paid!

And that brings us up to date when on **Sunday October 9 2016** at the **HAC Barracks in City Road**, DaC drivers voted overwhelmingly to become a limited company under the Companies Act. The journey began with Bonnie Martyn founding our Society and with Brian Rice leading the Board onto our next step. Along the way there have been many chairmen, board members, staff and of course drivers whose part, no matter how small, helped to get us here.

Now we are about to find out the answer to the question we asked at the beginning: Is the long journey of the Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Service slowly coming to an end or is it the beginning of a new exciting journey for Dial-a-Cab Ltd???

Alan Fisher, Call Sign Online

Ouch... Bet That Hurt!

Regular readers will recall in the *October Call Sign* that we featured the road racing exploits of **John Wiles (C60)**, his admission to being a 'petrol head' and how for the past twenty years he and a few friends had travelled each year to the German race track of **Nurburgring** – said by many to be the most challenging race track in the world – and how they chase round that famous circuit in their own cars.

But what we saved our more squeamish readers from were the finer details of an horrific accident that John was involved in while on the same track several years earlier, but on that occasion he was on TWO wheels instead of four!

"Yes, it was a bit inconvenient at the time, but it wasn't my fault," John protested to *Call Sign*.

"It was back in 2006 and I was hurtling around the Nurburgring race track, but this time on my **BMW 1100** Sport motorcycle and the wheels must have come into contact with some oil or engine coolant that had spilled onto the track surface from another cyclist ahead of me. The tiniest drop of fluid, or for that matter even a pebble, is enough to de-stabilise a bike - and I was hitting over 90 mph at the time! Suddenly the bike dropped away from under me, skidding off in one direction while I found myself flying through the air in another direction altogether, before landing heavily and ungraciously," John remarked in a matter-of-fact tone!

"As any motorcyclist knows, the contact area of a bike tyre onto the road surface is only about the size of the palm of your hand, so the slightest loss of that contact can have disastrous results, especially when you're pushing towards 100 mph!" Astonishingly to us, John was grinning as he recounted his painful tale.

"Looking for oil patches to slide on is not the sort of thing I would recommend for thrills, because I ended up fracturing my left arm in 35 separate places, had to undergo a six-hour operation to put my arm together again and it was around one year



John and his broken elbow!



later before it was actually healed.

"I also had to undergo immersion in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber therapy regime (HBOT) to re-establish the blood supply to my arm. It's a similar treatment to that which footballers undergo when they break bones during a match. The increased oxygen level in your blood stream helps to heal fractures and damaged tissues far more quickly than might otherwise be the case, and thankfully I made a good recovery. But I don't think I'd like to do it again," said John as he drove off in his taxi at a sedate rate of knots – and still smiling...

Alan Green, Call Sign Online

The ideal Xmas present!

...and you can get a discount!

By now, the three winners of *Call Sign's* September issue competition for the **New York** version of **Taxi! Board Game - Morris Abrahams (R85), Barbara Poluck** (Russell T55's wife) and **Curls Villiers**, DaC Senior Night Shift Controller – will have received their game and are enjoying it.



This new version is in addition to the already successful London, Edinburgh and Glasgow versions and makes an ideal Christmas present for the offspring of licensed taxi drivers!

The game is also available from selected retailers such as Amazon UK, eBay and Gumtree but if you buy it via www.taxiboardgame.co.uk/shop then as a *Call Sign* reader you can get a special discount deal to give you a 10% discount. Just put in the code **G1001** when you get to the checkout and get the game well in time for the Yuletide festivities... and present giving!

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Call Sign often has irritated drivers contacting us after they receive a **Penalty Charge Notice** for blocking a box junction when in reality it was another vehicle that popped up at the last second to block their exit and leave them stranded. The result is that PCN – very often for blocking a junction along **Euston** or **Marylebone Road** – comes under the auspices of TfL's **Red Routes** and their PCNs.

But how often is that blocked yellow box the fault of a bus that won't wait until the exit is clear? The answer – especially along that stretch of road – is fairly often. We could fill up two pages with photos of buses offending the box junction rules that drivers have sent us, but we'll just put in one as an example of something we all see at least several times each day.

So bearing in mind the number of taxi drivers that have been stung at what a **BBC Panorama** program once described as **Moneybox Junctions** when they secretly filmed a CCTV camera operator

PCNs and buses



TfL don't know how many buses get PCN's - if any!

Mastermind Final



Name: "Fred Bloggs"
Occupation: "Taxi Driver"
Specialist subject: "Everything!"

Taxi insurance for DaC drivers

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

At Hillier Buchan, we understand every driver's circumstances are different; therefore our policies can be tailored for the individual driver. We offer a 5% discount for DaC members, with additional discounts for existing protected Bonus policies.

Hillier Buchan was established in 2002 by David Hillier and myself with in excess of 50 years experience as high level Brokers working in the City of London for major broking houses. We have established a reputation for professionalism and service in our chosen fields.

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

Our philosophy is to build long-term relationships using balanced service teams providing continuity and expertise. Compare our prices and give us a call. See our ad inside this issue of **Call Sign** on page 13.

Phil Buchan,
Hillier Buchan, 01322 553313

claiming that they had achieved *another record month*, we asked **Transport for London** via a **Freedom of Information** request just how many buses had received PCNs after being caught in yellow box junctions? The astonishing answer was that when they record a contravention, they do not record the vehicle type and so do not hold the information!

We suspect that had they actually kept the info we asked for, the answer would have been zero!

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign Online

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

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Registration number 213263*

SGM

Firstly, I would like to say a big thank you to all the members who supported me in their selection for new Directors of the Society. With the second SGM now having taken place and ratified the decision to change from a mutual trading company to a limited company, it is now full steam ahead to finalise the paperwork and move forward with the sale of the building.

Many drivers have asked how long this will take and the only answer that can be given without appearing to be patronising is to ask how long is a piece of string? Rest assured the process will be carried out as soon as is possible, but it will be the members – or should I say the new shareholders – that have the final decision as to who it should be sold to.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish Michael and Garry well for the future and to say how much it has been a pleasure working with them.

Attracting new business

As you know, it is very difficult to attract new business and for some unknown reason, as soon as you introduce yourself as being a black cab company, the shutters seem to come down with potential customers finding an excuse to get you off the phone faster than you could say Jack Robinson.

But that does not stop us trying and

DaC Sales Report

With Keith Cain



looking for alternative methods of speaking with as many potential clients as we can. With our change of status, I believe that it will spark interest and help the sales team to speak with many more potential clients.

We have recently completed two tenders on which we are awaiting a decision. These were both completed back in August / September and with the nature of the business participated in, we don't expect any decisions to be made for another couple of months.

Much time is spent contacting those clients who seem to have reduced their usage. I have

written before about this and the general feedback is that the reason is solely down to management instructing staff to cut down on taxi usage. We always quiz further and ask if another supplier is being used; the vast majority say no and that it is purely a financial decision by the company directors. They are all very happy with the service you the drivers give and equally as happy with the service given by our contact centre staff.

VAD

The new dispatch system is in place now and there have been mixed feelings and opinions from a number of drivers. I have to say that the majority of you like it and think it is a much fairer system. There have been a few teething problems, which will be rectified by the IT department in due course. This was the same when we first introduced the V4 system back in 86 /87. From the very first day of going live, we constantly made upgrades to the functionality of the system and it was only until about four years ago that we decided to stop making any further changes. I am sure we will enhance the new system in a similar way as we all get a better understanding of its capabilities...

Keith Cain

DaC Head of Sales

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

A Blogger's Tale

1993

We meet many people during the months and years behind the wheel of a taxi in central London; many of them seem to be quite open about themselves and chat about their lives and work, but have you ever looked in the rear view mirror and wondered what a terrorist looks and sounds like?

The taxi trade has a reputation of being London's eyes and ears, so how would a terrorist approach a ride in a taxi? Would he or she invent a story or remain quiet, perhaps reading a newspaper? I'm not suggesting IRA bombers used London taxis to get to or flee from the scenes of bombings, but if you've lived and worked through bombing campaigns from any terrorist organisation, then I'm equally sure it has crossed your mind.

Around the time of the French terror attack in Nice this year, I got chatting to a young lady. As we made our way through the city, she asked if I was scared of another attack in London. My immediate reply without even thinking about it was NO. After she got out, I began to wonder why. The taxi trade has been touched by many bombings, even in my time there have been a significant number. The Public Carriage Officer who gave me my Badge told me to always check the back of the cab after a fare had left, because the police were surprised that a bomb hadn't yet been left in the back of a cab. Then on **Saturday 24th April 1993**, the IRA let off a truck bomb outside **99 Bishopsgate**; the ensuing carnage cost £350million to repair and led to police rethinking their approach to security, particularly in the city. I was nearby and heard the explosion; it rumbled through the ground just as the bomb that killed **Airy Neave** had done when I was working at **New Scotland Yard** in **1979**.

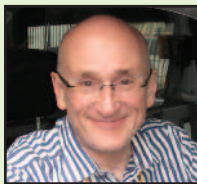
Just a year before that, the **Baltic Exchange** had been bombed resulting in loss of life and significant damage. If memory serves me right, a London taxi driver had been sitting either outside or nearby at the moment the bomb went off, his cab - along with his confidence - was completely destroyed. A photo of his cab appeared in the trade press and every panel had been distorted by the debris that rained down on it. The bomb site is now home to the **Gherkin** and is understandably still a sensitive area. There is a convenient rest rank opposite, but it is inadvisable to leave your cab there for too long, as in **October 2014** after a series of road closures nearby, the police assumed a parked taxi that appeared to have been left on the rank illegally, was a suspect vehicle and conducted a controlled explosion on it.

Perhaps the most audacious attack was on the government itself. On 7th February 1991 whilst the cabinet were meeting to discuss the Gulf War, the IRA launched three mortar shells from the junction of **Horseguards Avenue** and **Whitehall** in the direction of **Downing Street**. One exploded in the back garden of number ten, a few feet from its target which would have destroyed the building and the government. They survived by the skin of their teeth, just as in Brighton some years before.

"You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life..."
Winston Churchill

To be continued...

Simon Scott (040), Call Sign Online



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- **How can PH drive safely while looking at an app?**
- **When will TfL separate accident figures between taxis and private hire?**
- **A 44% increase in accidents for Taxis and PH. Yet taxi numbers are the same???**

Caroline Dishes It Out To The Mayor!

The Mayor's Question Time on Wednesday 19 October was interesting because LibDem Assembly Member and black cab supporter, Caroline Pidgeon, asked questions of Mayor Sadiq Khan that could have affected private hire so badly as to even put many of them out of business.

Her first question was to query the safety of smartphone-based apps used by most mini-cab firms – and even by two taxi apps in **Hailo** and **Gett**. If it is illegal – not to mention dangerous – to use a phone when in control of a motor vehicle, then how can it be legal to use a phone-based app?

The Mayor replied with a breakdown of his recent taxi and private hire action plan: He said "I'm committed to ensuring that London's Taxi and Private Hire industries are as safe and accessible as possible. The significant increase in the use of app-based technology in both taxis and private hire vehicles is a relatively recent development. To be clear, hands-free phones, satnavs and other devices in cradles that are widely used by drivers, are legal as long as they are used safely and in accordance with road traffic laws while driving. Having said that, both taxi and private hire drivers should give their full attention to the road while driving. TfL and the police will take action against anyone if this is found not to be the case.

"The Met police service stopped nearly 27,000 motorists for this offence last year and there is ongoing work to enforce traffic regulations and warn road users, with the aim being to reduce instances where this offence occurs.

"My taxi and private hire action plan is aimed at improving driving standards and my intention is that TfL should introduce an advanced driving test for private hire drivers by the summer of 2017. I am also boosting the number of on-street compliance officers by quadrupling the number from 82 up to 332 to clamp down on any illegal activities. In addition, there is to be a road safety campaign that will target all professional drivers - including freight, taxi and private hire - to highlight the danger of being distracted while driving. This comprehensive action plan will improve public safety by putting up standards across the private hire industry, provide the support taxi drivers need and deliver the world's greenest taxi fleet."

Caroline Pidgeon then came back: She said: "I really want to focus on the issue of apps. Driving while texting is a serious offence and studies have shown that if you use hands-free or hand-held mobile phones then you will be slower to react to hazards. Some drivers – particularly private hire drivers – are reading text messages and interacting whilst they are driving a vehicle. Do you think that taxi and



private hire drivers should only read in response to a text message when they have pulled over and are safely parked?

The Mayor's one-word answer was simply "yes."

Caroline then spoke again, thanking the Mayor for a clear answer and said that was what she was hoping for! She continued: "In the past few weeks, **The Sunday Times** published an excellent report by an undercover reporter who was an **Uber** driver for three weeks. His specific words were:

'Beep! The next customer flashes up, you have 10 seconds to comply!'

"So drivers have to read messages and respond while driving. You simply can't do that safely. Mr Mayor, do you agree that Uber and other apps are in effect forcing drivers to take risks?"

The Mayor came back by agreeing that 10 seconds clearly wasn't safe and Ms Pidgeon then asked Sadiq if he would look and undertake research as to how all apps are actually used in practice on the roads and whether he could issue some safety guidelines?

The Mayor repeated his initial comment that hands-free phones, satnavs and other devices in cradles were not prohibited in law provided that the driver was safely in control of the vehicle. He continued:

"I've talked about the numbers of those stopped by police – 27,000 last year – and we have quadrupled the number of enforcement officers we have out there.

"BUT YOU ARE RIGHT! DRIVERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THEY ARE TAKING A RISK OUT THERE.

"It's not just their safety; they also have the passenger's safety as well to think of."

Caroline Pidgeon spoke again and asked the Mayor if he would speak to TfL to ask them if they would consider new regulations to say that apps could only be used by a driver when the vehicle is stationary.

The Mayor said the law was clear and that drivers should know and understand the regulations. But there was nothing to stop passengers asking the driver to concentrate on the road and to not use their phone while driving.

Caroline said that the way those types of apps worked was that suddenly the PH driver would receive a text from the next

passenger asking where they were and asking the driver to respond as to whether the traffic was bad? It was also in **The Sunday Times** article that the drivers were being encouraged to answer instead of being focused on the road and causing a danger to other road-users as well such as cyclists and pedestrians. She wondered if the Mayor "could perhaps get TfL to look if there was something else they could be doing in addition

to the Mayor's road safety campaign that might help to tighten up what was happening?"

The Mayor responded by saying that TfL were always looking at evolving new ways to ensure that London had the best taxi and private hire service there could be. He said that resources were not finite and that it wasn't just taxi drivers that did this with apps (*I think he meant private hire, but I didn't want to interfere...Ed*). There was zero tolerance towards anyone doing it, he said, and that TfL would continue to look at all types of answers to make sure that health and safety on behalf of drivers and passengers was paramount. Caroline said that she would take that as a 'yes' as part of the work Sadiq was already doing.

She then went on to talk of the 44% rise in casualties caused by "taxi and private hire vehicles" since early 2013 before raising a salient point. She said:

"But we know that taxi numbers have stayed relatively the same! However, there has been a huge rise in private hire vehicles; will you give a precise date as to when TfL will start to regularly publish data showing the number of incidents involving taxis and those of private hire - but showing them separately."

The Mayor said they were working on it and were looking at spring 2017 which he thought would be the earliest they could do it because of having to segregate the data.

"It's something that hasn't been done before in a separate form," he added. "We believe there should be greater transparency."

This trade should offer its sincere thanks to Caroline Pidgeon for stating the obvious and asking the questions that *Call Sign* and indeed all the trade organisations, have been calling for over many years. The public need to be able to see for themselves the difference between the two sides of our industry. Although we are still waiting for the separate crime figures that we were promised to be published, the assistance from Caroline Pidgeon is so very welcome and we thank her...

**Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online**

Call Sign readers will have to forgive me if, while strolling towards the TfL/LTPH offices at Palestra at Blackfriars Road



on the bright autumn day that was Thursday 13th October, my mind suddenly reverted back to 1966 – no, not to England winning the FIFA World Cup, but more towards a hit record of that year... Napoleon XIV: They're coming to take me away ha ha!

Why? Well it was probably while suddenly being besieged by a group of people in white coats, face masks and stethoscopes! On further inspection - mine, not theirs - lo and behold there was LCDC Chairman **Grant Davis** standing amongst them! Hundreds of cabbies had congregated for a static (opposed to a drive-in) legitimate protest called for by the LCDC regarding what they claimed was TfL's scant regard for passenger safety. This followed a shock exposé by **The Sun's** detailing the scandal of PH drivers purchasing medical certificates from crooked doctors!

Truly a case of the minicab fraternity transferring its reliance on GPS onto dishonest GPs! If these disgraceful deeds ever end up in public maiming or even worse, then it really would be a 'cash for crash' scenario!

TfL really do not seem bothered that the drastic rise in minicab Road Traffic Accidents

Call Sign's Marc Turner (R97) is also known as Drumslayer. This month he is writing about problems between taxi drivers and our licensing authority, TfL...

GPs TO GPS! Private Hire faking medicals???



Dr Davis leads the LCDC demo against TfL PH medicals

could be down to impaired vision, epilepsy, diabetes, mental health issues, heart problems or the numerous other medical problems that could stop we taxi drivers being given a licence. In fact, they have deemed it OK for cheats to continue driving until their next scheduled medical.

Grant Davis has been in dialogue with TfL on the matter but to no avail. He told **Call Sign**:

"After **The Sun** expose, I felt this was far from satisfactory and contacted TfL but was told by a senior manager that they had no plans to re-test PH drivers. I was flabbergasted and told them that it was surely their duty to protect the public. I spoke to my committee and we agreed to hold a static protest at TfL and have flyers printed to hand out to the public informing them of the dangers."

Personally, I thought it was an innovative touch having some protesters holding

up those placards while dressed as doctors; it certainly held the attention of many passers-by. Fortunately none of them enquired about treatment for piles!

It's more than unfortunate that corrupt General Practitioners have confused the National Health Service with **Naturally Help (PH) Service**. Just four days after the LCDC demo, a second trade demo – this time a mass ply for hire - was also held outside **Palestra** and added a basket load of complaints against TfL to the one regarding the medicals. This one was organised online and caused havoc stretching back to a gridlocked **Kingsway**.

Call Sign Editor, **Alan Fisher**, confirmed to me that following a meeting he had held with **Helen Chapman**, **LTPH** admitted there was little they could do now other than make sure that relicensing requests three years after the initial one would be very carefully checked. A bit like locking the stable door after the horse has bolted...

Marc Turner
Call Sign Online

Taxi Globe closes

One of the trade's long-standing 'freebie' newspapers, **Taxi Globe**, has printed its last copy, following Editor **Sandie Goodwin** announcing her retirement.

Whilst always maintaining an independent approach, Sandie always had an excellent relationship with both **Dial-a-Cab** and **Call Sign** and the two papers were never afraid to ask for the occasional assistance in covering an event or just using each other's' photo library when needed.

Taxi Globe first published on **1 May 1985** when it was edited by **Janet Gordon** from a portacabin above taxi garage **BeeJays** in **Three Colts Lane**.

Janet later moved on to edit the **LTDA's TAXI** and in **2000**, **Sandie Goodwin**, who had been previously been involved in the delivery side of the **Globe**, was appointed Editor.

Very few readers realised that her experience of the taxi business at the time was almost nil, because she covered most of the important news stories with a flair that gave the impression that she was perhaps a former cab driver! Sandie was also a regular on most of the trade's charity outings.

"I've enjoyed most of my **16 years** as Editor," Sandie told **Call Sign**, "but I'm now looking forward to taking it a bit easier, giving up schedules and living more to the pace I want to live at! But, yes, I will miss the paper and the connection it gave me to such a wonderful trade..."

Taxi Globe follows last year's closure of **Taxicab News** and a bad 12 month's for the trade press...



Sandie (right) on a WCHCD Magical Taxi Tour trip to Paris with DaC's Janet Ramsden (G35J)

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Onto the golf course for Laurence!

"YES, it has been a long and enjoyable road, but the time has come..." Laurence Lacom's (D68) voice tailed off with emotion as he recalled to *Call Sign* his time with *Dial-a-Cab*, even though in conversation he regularly referred to the Society as *Lords* - our previous moniker from the *Shirland Road* days when we were known by the telephone exchange prefix.

"I joined in 1973, so when in 2003 I applied for a reduced subscription according to the 30 year unbroken service rule and was told the records only went back to 1976, I was disappointed but couldn't prove my membership for the additional time, so I accepted the situation, even though I had kept my original call sign over the years!

"Shirland Road brings back memories of what life was like in the Control Room down in the basement of No 144; trips were written out on paper dockets by telephonists taking passenger details and then dropping them onto an endless, constantly moving conveyor belt that snaked its way round the Control Room to a dispatching position. The trip would then be allocated to the nearest cab to the pick-up point. Absolute fairness to drivers regarding trip allocation was always paramount and drivers would run from wherever to cover an account ride, as they in turn appreciated dispatchers' integrity," Laurence emphasised.

"In fact, to endorse that fairness, we had a hard plastic sheet over the map on our dispatching table so that drivers would hear the coin drop if it came to a 'toss-up' between cabs equidistant from the pick-up address.

"I frequently covered as a dispatcher for Ivor Belkin (C97) at weekends when he took his lunch break, but I still remember that first time. Ivor had been dispatching as usual in Shirland Road until midday when the swap to me took place. I took a deep breath, carefully held that first docket in both hands, fixed the pick-up point, opened my mouth, allocated a cab and sent him in!" Laurence grinned while savouring the recollection.

"So when we moved from Maida Vale to Brunswick House I had an idea of what to do. In fact, mine was the first voice that dispatched the very first trip at noon from our then new building.

THE END OF THE ROAD

As Laurence Lacom says goodbye to Dial-a-Cab...

"The snaking conveyor belt at BH still jammed occasionally as dockets fell into the machinery, but even so, on one memorable eight-hour shift we covered 3000 trips! Can you imagine that - and all on 'voice' dispatch too; none of this modern day technology! The back-channel operators, who were responsible for giving the drivers their job details once the cab had been allotted the

trip, were going hell for leather in order to keep up with the flow, but we did it as a team.

"Now, I'm going to take life a little easier; maybe play a bit more golf," Laurence concluded before walking away. We wish him well for a long and happy retirement...

Alan Green
Call Sign Online

Congratulations to Al Fresco

Call Sign would like to congratulate Al Fresco, who recently celebrated fifty years as a licenced London taxi driver.

There was time when the old PCO would invite those with 50 years behind them up to **Penton Street** for a small celebration, but according to LTPH General Manager, **Helen Chapman**, the impression they used to get was that most invited drivers didn't really want to be there, so it ceased! But if anyone deserves at least a mention, it's my friend **Alan Fresco** and I have no doubt that he would have attended and told Helen some of the stories he is so brilliant at recounting!

Among Alan's achievements in this trade - and no doubt we will have missed many - were his editorship of *Taxi Trade Times*, *London Taxi Times* and *Steering Wheel* - which along with joint owner, **Ernie Keates**, he renamed *The Cab Driver*. Al also edited *Mountview News* and although he would never say it, is probably the best writer in this trade.

I'm proud to call him a friend and I know that his late wife, **Carole**, would not only have been proud of the achievement, but would probably have taken over the PCO for the day to give Al that deserved congratulatory drink and certificate!

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online



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In the October Call Sign, Graham Waite (B35) wrote an article about the state of our trade in which he wrote that he now only drives his cab at weekends after holding a Green Badge for 38 years. He also wrote of hearing that many other older taxi drivers were retiring early, whilst younger ones were often going back into trades they did before going onto The Knowledge.

Graham wondered if we could be witnessing the end of the London Taxi trade as we know it - unless we did something about it and quickly before also adding that this was still the best taxi service in the world.

The Dial-a-Cab driver's suggestion was that the various taxi trade associations should put aside any differences to form a united front to fight Uber and any other PH enterprise that attempts to dominate the trade. Graham's idea has been floated around by many others over the years, from the early days when it was the LTDA against the T&G (now Unite) to 2016 with the LCDC, UCG, RMT and several other organisations that operate online.

However, the suggestion seems to be a highly improbable one with many of the orgs in a constant state of disagreement with others and of course, in any joint enterprise, there would be an awful lot of cooks and very few bottle washers! But could trade unity

Trade Unity???

It is in Walthamstow!



come in smaller packages???

John Minihane wrote to Call Sign on behalf of a growing group of cab drivers that live in the Walthamstow area after reading Graham Waite's appeal. He told this magazine:

"This is just to report that a group of Green Badge cab drivers living in Walthamstow who are all members of either the RMT, LTDA or Unite, managed after many efforts to obtain a meeting with our local MP, Stella

Creasy. At that meeting, we were able to explain our point of view and discuss many other issues relating to the trade.

On 11th July, Stella Creasy sent an email to Sadiq Khan asking the Mayor to reconsider our request for PHV Regulations Proposal 8 (operators must not show vehicles available for immediate hire, either visibly or via an app, to be implemented). Our group of drivers believe that if we can achieve that, then drivers in other boroughs can too.

Yes, it is important to belong to a trade organisation but we cannot rely just on those representatives to do the work. We must play our part too by contacting our MPs - or the Mayor directly - or anyone who can help our cause.

If any Dial-a-Cab driver, or any other cab driver reading this who lives in Walthamstow wishes to join our informal group then they can contact me by email at minihanej@virginmedia.com or call me on my mobile at 07904 555 963. There are no subs or dues, we just send emails, make phone calls or arrange meetings with our MP. You will be welcome..."

Taxi Driver Of The Year Dinner and Dance

Celebrating its 45th anniversary, the Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund presents its annual Dinner and Dance on Saturday 16th November 2016 at the:

Holiday Inn Regents Park, Carburton Street, London W1W 5EE

Tickets are just £65 per head and include a 4 course meal, half a bottle of wine per person, dancing to a live band and a celebrity cabaret by the Singing Cabbie - direct from Sunday Night at the Palladium with Bradley Walsh - Aiden Kent!

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Email: brussella@talk21.com • Website: taxidriveroftheyearcharityfund.com

'Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves'

LTC to take on another 1000 workers!



A manufacturing and engineering recruitment consultancy based in Shakespeare country, Consilium Recruit, has been appointed a recruitment partner of the London Taxi Company and will help to fill the 1,000 new posts that are to be created at LTC's new multi-million factory, currently being completed in **Ansty Park, Coventry**.

Among the new recruits will be highly skilled engineers, managers and advanced manufacturing technicians who will be involved in the production of a green version of the London taxi, which is due to be launched in 2018.

Production of the current TX4 will remain at the company's base in Holyhead Road, Coventry.

*Hello Ladies & Gents,***Thank You**

I'd like to thank all the members that voted for me at the recent SGM; it was flattering to know that you have put your trust in me to be part of the newly formed Board of Directors that will carry out your wishes in the weeks and months ahead. The final decision was overwhelmingly in favour of demutualisation. I know that the Chairman has worked tirelessly on this and will continue in the same vein to conclude the process as quickly as possible.

New dispatch system

It is over a month since the introduction of the VAD (Volante Automatic Dispatch) system was introduced. In the main, most of you are now getting used to the new way of dispatching. It is important to know that apart from the normal physical zones and ranks that remain unchanged, this system doesn't offer trips to the nearest taxi to the pickup or to the cab that is longest in a zone, it is a combination of the position of the taxi and the member (shareholder) with the longest period of availability.

It is also worth noting that the **Soon To Clear (STC)** button offers up to fifteen minutes of availability before you clear the trip and will automatically make you available for the next offer. If you do not press STC when you are within fifteen minutes of the destination, you will need to make yourself available at the end of the journey, which starts your availability from zero. If you experience any problems, the help line number is **020 7553 7266**.

You should also be aware that on the

OPERATIONS AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

**Credit Cards (Hail and Ride)**

As you know, the new credit card charges were introduced by TfL some eight months ago (in April) and overnight the number of DaC street transactions increased substantially for a number of obvious reasons. I believe it soon became apparent that when comparing our charges to those of our competitors, ours undoubtedly offered members the fairest and cheapest processing fees of all.

No additional costs for the PEDs or printers, which are part of the latest available bundles out there in the market place and no limit on the number of transactions per mobile.

Now that the acceptance of cards in taxis is mandatory after 31 October and with the expected surge in usage, we will be adding 1.5% (excluding vat) to street credit card journeys (Hail and Ride) from 1st January 2017. This step was not taken lightly by the Board and will be introduced solely to offset the noticeable processing fees that we as a Company now incur, charges that will steadily rise.

On balance, it is still a more than reasonable deal and the charges will be incorporated in your variable subscriptions each week. All other types of trips will remain the same..

Allan Evans
DaC Operations
Compliance Manager

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

SIMON'S GOLF COURSES

Walton Heath new course

In a previous issue of **Call Sign** I reviewed **Walton Heath Old Course** but this August I was lucky enough to be invited to play **Walton Heath New Course**. Although the New Course is considered to be the lesser of the two, it still ranks as one the best I've played.

The first two holes are a very pleasant introduction to your round; a gentle short par 4 and a short par 3 – although I knocked in a birdie at the 2nd! But after that it ramps up your shot-making abilities to a higher level. There are 6 par 4s of over 400 yards, with one being 469 yards off the white tees (stroke index 1, unsurprisingly). However, what makes it perhaps more fun to play than the Old Course is because for the amateur it's a little more playable.

Each year when they host the final qualifying day for the US Open in the UK, they use both courses so you can see it is a challenge even if not quite so brutal as the Old one.

The New Course is misleading; it was designed by **Herbert Fowler** as 9 hole course in 1907 and extended to 18 holes in 1913. As with the Old Course, the heather here is treacherous so you must try at all costs not to find it!

If you can finish with the same ball you hit off the first, you're a better man than me my son, to quote **Rudyard Kipling** (*did he play golf...Ed*)!

Both courses are rated in the UK top 50 and for added kudos, if you could only play one it would have to be the Old course. But if I was a member there, I think I'd be playing the New one mostly...

Happy golfing...



Simon looks for his partner's ball in the heather surrounding a fairway bunker at Walton Heath

Simon Wallis (M11)
Call Sign Online

Alec Wilkey (W83) has been on Dial-a-Cab for 11 years, but in a life far away from taxi driving, Alec is also a much respected trainer in the world of professional boxing – and in October, the wins for his TeamWilkey kept on coming!

It began with a **Frank Warren Promotion** on 8th October held at **The Harrow Leisure Centre**, Alec's hot prospect, **Johnny Coyle**, was up against the tough Spaniard, **Geiboord Omier**. But Johnny cruised to an easy victory, winning every one of the 6 rounds. Johnny, who is managed by **MGM**, is now looking forward to a major title fight before the end of 2016.

The next **TeamWilkey** outing was at **Bethnal Green's York Hall** on 15th October where Alec and his right-hand man **Johnny Sparks** paraded two of their newest hot prospects.

First up was **Cheznie Hawkins**, who was making his professional debut against Hungarian boxer, **Roland Farago** whose career so far showed 3 wins and 2 TKOs. But Alec's boy - aged 20 and from Mitcham - showed great ring presence to give a really mature performance for someone having his first bout and picked up the win with a 40-36 points victory.

Cheznie was followed by another Alec

MORE BOXING SUCCESS FOR DACS ALEC WILKEY!



Ritchie Gray, Johnny Sparks, Arthur Hermann, Alec Wilkey and Cheznie Hawkins.

Inset: Stephan Horvath will be defending his European title against Alec's boxer, Arthur Hermann

protégé in **Ritchie Gray** from Brentwood. Ritchie who was having his second pro fight, was up against a tough opponent in **Edgars Sniedze**. Although Sniedze has lost

Horvath – even in his home town. A win would then put him into the World rankings and once that happens, who knows how far he will go..."

far more fights than he has won, this was an experienced boy who knew all about fighting. But Ritchie used all his Team Wilkie skills and got the win.

The next **TeamWilkey** outing will be in the **Czech Republic** where Alec's fighter, **Arthur Hermann**, will take on **Stephan Horvath** for the **WBO European Super Welterweight Championship**.

Alec told **Call Sign**: "This is a major fight for Arthur (17-2-13 TKOs) and I really believe he has all the tools to beat

The UK's most dangerous top ten!

New research on behalf of www.VoucherCodesPro.co.uk has revealed that 20% of British drivers that have had either a near-miss or a car accident, had been paying too much attention to the music they were listening to rather than the road. According to the report, it's **Adele** and **Justin Bieber** who top the list of musicians that drivers were listening to at the time of an incident.

The research confirms the worst in-car distractions other than family members such as children, as being mobile phones (31%) with music voted the next biggest danger (20%). VoucherCodesPro.co.uk conducted the research as part of an ongoing study into attitudes and behaviours of British drivers with 2,186 Britons taking part, all of whom were aged 18 and over and who had held a full driving licence for a minimum of two years. All respondents had stated that they had caused at least one car accident when behind the wheel.

Initially all respondents were asked how many car accidents they'd had in the past two years, to which the average response was two accidents. They were then asked how many near-misses they estimated that they had experienced over the same period, to which the average answer was fourteen.

All respondents were then asked what musicians they had been listening to when they had been involved in a car accident, or come close to having a car accident. When provided with a list of possible responses and told to select all that applied, the top 10 musicians were revealed as:

1. Adele - 18%
2. Justin Bieber - 17%
3. Sia - 15%
4. Slip Knot - 14%
5. Rihanna - 14%
6. Drake - 13%
7. The Beatles - 10%
8. Calvin Harris - 8%
9. Eminem - 8%
10. Kanye West - 7%



Perhaps the answer is to only play music that you don't like!

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Rat Pack LEGENDS

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My Way • New York • That's Life • Little 'Ol Wine Drinker • Candy Man

Call Sign Says...

SAYING... AND DOING???



On Monday 17 October, a taxi demonstration - called a 'mass ply for hire' - was called for outside TfL's Palestra building. With heavy rain falling, it certainly caused much traffic havoc with hold-up reaching as far as Holborn and Kingsway!

Many asked if it was necessary, coming as it did just days after an LCDC demo outside the same building. It wasn't, according to TfL's Director of Service Operations, **Peter Blake** (*pic*), who said just before this second demo:

"There is no need for this protest that will cause unnecessary disruption to people trying to go about their business. We urge the organisers to call it off. The Mayor has recently launched a comprehensive Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan that is aimed at driving up standards and improving safety. We will work with all industry stakeholders to help shape the implementation of the Action Plan."

Mr Blake, that would all be great if it were true. In reality, that may be what you would like to do because I hear you are an amiable person who listens. The problem we in the trade come up against time after time is that everyone at TfL listens... but then does absolutely nothing. The biggest example is forcing drivers to put credit card readers in the passenger compartment when, so far as DaC taxis are concerned, they are already well positioned for both driver and passenger. Yet when we called a meeting on the subject, we were told that the TfL Board had agreed and were unlikely to change their decision.

When we pointed out the possible danger to drivers being coerced into entering the passenger compartment because of a "faulty reader," we were told that should an incident like that happen, then TfL may look again at the subject. So our lives could be on the line when the obvious answer is staring TfL in the face.

And you ask why we don't trust TfL? Saying and doing are two totally alien concepts to this licensing authority. Should just one Dial-a-Cab driver get injured after being told the card reader isn't working, he or she is forced to get in the back and then attacked - bearing

in mind that they will then be unable to lock the front - there will be one hell of a law suit against the organisation that refuses to listen...

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Editor

LANCASTER LONDON HOTEL



12 month refurb

FROM 24 October 2016, the **Lancaster London hotel** will be covered in hoarding for its year-long refurbishment. The hotel will remain open for business during this period.

During the refurbishment, the current taxi rank will become a feeder taxi rank as the hotel's temporary entrance will move 20 metres to Westbourne Street (the SE corner of the hotel). Outside the temporary entrance, there will be a new temporary taxi rank with space for two taxis, plus additional space for drop-offs. To assist taxis, the hotel will be hiring additional doormen who will be on duty from 8am until 11pm.

On 19 August 2017, the hotel's refurbishment will be fully complete and the hotel will once again become known as the **Royal Lancaster** and the taxi rank will resume its original position.

Twitter Feed: There will be regular large events at the hotel throughout the renovations and these will be tweeted to all taxi drivers as the hotel needs your continued support.

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One of Anglia TV's 'Fundraiser of the Year' nominees for the 2016 Daily Mirror Pride of Britain awards has been revealed as former Dial-a-Cab Board Member and long-time driver, Mike Son (V52).

Mike, who lives in Westcliff-on-Sea, has been part of the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children committee for thirty years and as part of that amazing charity, has helped to raise £millions for thousands of underprivileged children.

Mike has organised many events as the Funds' special projects committee member

PRIDE OF BRITAIN

Mike Son nominated



and they include concerts and events in places such as St Paul's Cathedral, House of Commons, the prestigious St John's Church in Smith Square and even Burlington Arcade, where he managed to do the impossible and get LTPH to temporarily allow the nearby rank to be used by the committee *only* for the day!

Mike was proposed by former DaC Board Member, Tom Whitbread, who told Anglia TV that Michael was a "people person who just loved helping children, whether they were from broken homes, suffering from serious illness or just coming from a family suffering with undue hardship."

As Anglia reporter Kate Prout put it: "Michael Son is someone who has raised £millions to help raise a smile for

thousands of children."

Mike was, as always, very humble in receiving the nomination – especially so close to getting his BEM award – and told *Call Sign* that as wonderful as the Pride of Britain nomination was, it was really an award for the LTFUC committee and he was just a cog in the wheel of that amazing charity.

Nevertheless, the nomination is an amazing pat on the back for the charity as well the taxi trade too.

Slash fares???

A major study from the Capital City Foundation think-tank, has claimed that the price of taxis is 'prohibitive' after 10pm and says that night-time fares need to be "slashed" if drivers are to have any chance of fighting back against the threat from Uber.

The report said that passengers felt a "meter anxiety" on longer cab journeys and that the annual "inflation busting" rise in taxi tariffs had to be addressed in order to stop this trade haemorrhaging and losing London one of its best loved symbols.

However, the report also goes on to urge far tighter regulation of Uber and to tackle what it claims is the app-based service's high accident rate and inadequate vetting of drivers – something our trade organisations have been bringing up with TfL.

The foundation said we had effectively "priced themselves out" of the night-time market through our "prohibitive" rate 3 premium after 10pm and that trips had been reduced by one third in just two years.

The report was written by LBC radio presenter Nick Ferrari and called for the trade to scrap Tariff 3, which he says can make black cab fares twice as dear as those in an Uber car, giving an example of what he claims is a typical six-mile ride home in a black cab at 11pm costing £25.60, compared with £13 to £17 for an Uber, according to his report called "Saving The Black Cab."



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ED'S GRANDSON GETS DOWN ON ONE KNEE...

And proposes in New York's Central Park!



Emmie shows off her new engagement ring after Taylor proposed on a horse and carriage ride in New York's Central Park!

It was a secret that Call Sign Editor, Alan Fisher, almost let out of the bag several times and it was only thanks to his wife Linda's ability to deliver a left foot kick to Alan's right shin that stopped him blurting out to his grandson Taylor's beautiful girlfriend Emmie, that their five day holiday in New York wasn't going to be just a run of the mill shopping trip, but one that would change their lives forever.

It was the fourth day of the trip. Their hotel, the Crowne Plaza, served the usual hotel breakfast buffet and having already been round Macy's store on West 34th Street and the usual tourist spots, this day was going to see them relax a bit with a 15 minute helicopter trip around New York and then a walk in Central Park. But Taylor's plan at Central Park included something else.

He asked Emmie if she'd like a tour of the park via a horse and carriage ride. Although she found the helicopter trip amazing, Emmie admitted that she and helicopters weren't as ideal bedfellows as she thought they may have been, so a much slower and more sedate ride sounded much calmer! But little did Emmie know what was about to happen!

Taylor helped his girlfriend into the carriage and then, just as Emmie was expecting him to join her, he dropped down onto one knee, pulled the ring out of his pocket that he had been guarding so carefully during the first few days and asked her if she would marry him!

A video of the moment, taken by a passing stranger, at first showed a look on Emmie's face of total disbelief that was soon replaced by the broadest grin anyone had seen in Central Park for some time and a single word answer of "yes!"

After their ride, Emmie, who had stepped onto the carriage as Taylor's girlfriend, stepped off as his fiancée!

Taylor had been planning this for several months and when Call Sign asked Alan if they had spoken to him yet, the Editor told us that he had once asked Taylor what would happen if Emmie said no!

His answer was simple and to the point: "We love each other, why would she say no!"

We managed to speak to Emmie when she returned to the UK. She told us:

"We'd had an amazing day out. It began with a helicopter tour of NYC – even though it was a bit scary – then Taylor took me to Central Park for a horse and carriage ride. I got into the carriage

and waited for him to get in as well, when he suddenly got down on one knee and proposed!

Then we finished the day off with a beautiful dinner on a boat. I just could not be any happier! If he reads this, then I love you Taylor!"

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

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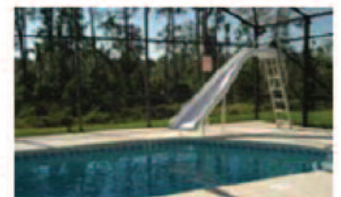
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DaC PEDs in the front

Hi Alan

Following last month's letters re having PEDs put into the back; a tragic event took place some years ago when a taxi driver colleague known as **Jack the Hat** was fatally shot in Baker Street. The shooting took place early one Sunday morning and highlights the risks that could arise if a driver had to assist a 'passenger' claiming to have problems with a PED.

Although the event took place before we accepted Credit Cards, unfortunately a repeat scenario could arise. Just thought this info could help our cause to have PEDs front mounted.

Dave Cohen (E94)

Non-DaC PEDs in the front

Hi Alan

My name is **Jane Wolsey** and I have been a London cabbie for 16 years. I have heard of your efforts in trying to get TfL to change their PED rules re having them in the back of the cab. I feel that having them cited in the back would compromise my safety if I had to get into the back of the cab to show the customer how to use the machine. I work nights and am often in dimly lit streets taking card payments with my hand-held **iZettle** machine. It works fine for me; I put in the amount and pass it through for them to put in their PIN number. It is certainly feasible that I could get a predatory man in who pretends that he doesn't know how to use the card machine, then I would lose out on the fare because I certainly would not get in the back. Thank you for your support, Alan.

Jane Wolsey

Badge number 63395

Hi Alan,

When the time comes for the PED to be fitted into the rear passenger compartment of my cab, would it not be possible for the engineers at Roman Way to fit it in a way that would enable me once it has been up for its inspection, to unlock it from its holder and replace it back into the front. I know there would be a risk of getting a stop notice put on the cab if caught on the street by a compliance officer, but I would rather take my chance with them than a bunch of blokes or a drunken woman in the early hours.

Paul Arrowsmith (T83)

Thanks to the many drivers, both on and off Dial-a-Cab, who sent me letters, texts and emails saying that they didn't

want a PED placed in the passenger compartment due to safety concerns. I passed them all over to Helen Chapman, General Manager of LTPH, in a meeting on 11 October. She understood my concerns and took them back to TfL with her, but I have to say that the chances of a change seem remote as all the decisions have been made and they rarely change them. However, she had both **Brian Rice** and I pushing and she knows our view. But I don't think that we can ask Roman Way to deliberately break TfL regulations.

It has occurred to me that one answer could be to have the identical PED in the back as we have in the front ie on a cable that could be passed back to us just as we pass it to passengers. That way, in case of problems, they could just pass it through the gap. But as I haven't heard, I assume the answer was also no. As a final result I have gone to a national newspaper to tell them our concerns ...Ed

Good news!

Dear Alan

For several years the trade press have had almost nothing but negative stories, moans about the economy, complaints about the opposition and criticism of TfL. It is time that we had some more positive reporting and I would like to start by listing a few items.

Some large events in London have brought in visitors and work has started to look a bit better. **London Fashion Week** and **Regent's Park Frieze** have certainly helped. Our latest despatch system is easier to use, especially for credit cards (a big 'thank you' to the DaC IT department). More passengers are using credit cards and as it becomes widely known that all London taxis take cards, increasing numbers of people will just get in a cab if payment is just a swipe away and the cost does not have to be dealt with till the following month. And now I hear that TfL are going to launch an advertising campaign to let the public know about the new comprehensive facility, which should lead to even more members of the public just getting into the nearest taxi for long and short journeys. There is also news that TfL are to approve additional taxi ranks and give taxis access to several more bus lanes.

Work is still not as vibrant as it was before 2008, but even that can have a constructive side to it. I have noticed large numbers of drivers on ranks taking the opportunity to spend the extra time reading various magazines or books. It was during one of several long waits at Paddington that I read the following and wondered how much of it could be seen as a criticism of the tactics employed by Uber? Too many big businesses "...don't

want to win by creating better products; they want to win by getting the government to rig the market so they won't be challenged. Great entrepreneurs don't rely on loopholes to make profits. Of course they want to win, but they want to win by having the best products and services - not the best lobbyists and lawyers. ... So when "pro-business" politicians say they want to leave business alone, what they're really saying is that they want to maintain the unfair, often uncompetitive status quo. They want a free market only after it has been structured to unfairly privilege their donors."

The above is from an excellent book, **More Human** by **Steve Hilton**. What is surprising is that his wife, **Rachel Whetstone** is senior vice-president of policy and communications at **Uber**. Of course there is no reason why husband and wife should agree on all issues, but it would be interesting to find out her views on this chapter.

Laurence Kelvin (W88)

Thanks Laurence, but wouldn't you rather read Call Sign on your rank!!!

...Ed

Lost contact

Hello Alan

I wonder if you might be able to help me out. In your January edition of **Call Sign** I found an article by driver **Brian Marcantonio (R73)** regarding the wife of a friend of his - **Susan Harrington** - who had just passed the Knowledge at the age of 60. He also mentioned her husband **Frank**, who I'm pretty sure is an old friend of mine that I have lost touch with for many years. He too was a cab driver and I'd like to contact him. Please would it be possible for you to forward my email to Sue or Frank if you have an email for them or give them my number and ask them to call me. Thank you for any help you are able to give and sorry to put you to any trouble.

Bill Butler

Loughborough

We forwarded details to Bill and he came back after making contact to confirm that it was the same Frank and Sue he had been looking for ...Ed

Familiar Sounds

Dear Alan

Thank you for the October issue of **Call Sign Online**. In your Mailshot page I read a letter written by retired taxi driver **Mr Pete McKenzie**, who resides in **New Zealand**.

Like myself, I am sure Mr McKenzie is enjoying his well-earned retirement. I



Mailshot



know exactly where he is coming from when he states that there are times when he misses the sound of his **Fairway** starting up in the morning.

Having officially retired over five years ago, I too suffered from taxi trade withdrawal symptoms. I missed the sound of that engine starting up and ticking over; the sound of the passenger doors being slammed, the squeaky brakes, passengers querying my route and of course, the verbal abuse! After 45 years of cabbings, I felt that there was a big void in my life!

One day I was reading a very interesting article about people who listen to the sounds of whales communicating and also the sounds of the Brazilian rain forest. By doing so it helped them sleep and relax. This gave me the idea of doing the self-same thing. I now have CDs for sale aimed at those drivers who, like myself, miss those wonderful sounds of the taxi trade. Should anyone be interested in purchasing one of these CDs, please state which model taxi engine they would like to hear (Metro, TX1, TX2, TX4 or Vito), not forgetting any obscenities of their choice. All CDs are tailor made and designed to the purchaser's specifications with all profits going to retired London taxi drivers living abroad.

Steve Shaller (ex-W23, ex-R75, ex-F34j, ex-UK)

Are you trying to say something Steve??? ...Ed

Credit cards and wheelchairs

Afternoon Alan

Credit cards will soon put an end to some older part-time drivers and suck money out of my pocket. Suddenly the days of paying a utilities bill by earning the cash when the bill arrives will be gone and gross earnings/takings on paper will rise by around 60 - 80% for some non-radio drivers. A gratuity will rapidly become a thing of the past. **Helen Chapman's** letter earlier in the year told us that cabbies tips in **New York** had risen after credit cards become mandatory, yet nowhere on the new signage does it tell people they can tip, but only how to complain! Also there's the notice: "This cab now takes credit cards." Well this cabbie has been taking cards for more than 25yrs!

Changing tack, I picked a lady up this morning from **Rotherhithe**, a really nice lady called **Ruth Owen**. She is a wheelchair user and regular **Dial-a-Cab** rider who I believe works for **Whizzkids**. She was telling

me that DaC had let her down a few times recently and she'd had to use **Uber** to get her home! She told me that so many of our drivers often complain to her about **Uber** yet many cabbies don't want to stop for her in her chair. Talk about our own worst enemy...

Jon Robinson (E88)

I think our VAD system makes credit card taking a real doddle. No more having to reset the meter and losing your STC facility because the passenger suddenly announces they are paying by CC after you have stopped the meter and a gratuity option will be on the next software release. As for **Ruth Owen**, I have never picked her up but **Whizzkids** is an amazing charity for whom several of our drivers have run **Marathons** for over the years. If anyone is offered **Ruth's** trip – or any wheelchair passenger come to that – then please, if you reject for any reason, don't let that reason be anything to do with their disability. Our supporters are diminishing and we need to have the 'good word' spread about London's black cab service – and especially DaC's ...Ed

VAD

Hi Alan

It's now three weeks since we went onto the VAD system. What I would like to know are the advantages of this system to the driver because, to me, I've detected only negative things.

1/ Job offers are so small in lower case you are unable to read them if you rely on reading glasses.

2/ Lead times have increased meaning more time waiting to start meter. I assumed that the new system allocates the job to the nearest cab therefore I would assume lead times would decrease.

3/ I noticed whilst on the St Pancras rank I was logged into N1, which mean's little chance of getting a Eurostar job even though you're on the rank.

4/ There's no way of knowing how far you are up in a particular zone you are.

Barry Spear (Y16)

Allan Evans replies:

1. The IT department are aware of the text size, Barry, and should be able to increase the size in an upcoming software release.

2. Lead-in times are the same as they were on V6 (old system), and after all zones have been closely monitored for a period of time there is an option to reduce them.

3. St Pancras station is actually in postal district N1C so Eurostar trips will in fact be allocated to you on the rank.

4. The system does not allocate trips to

the nearest taxi or to the taxi that is longest in a particular zone, trips will be distributed to drivers based on their taxis actual position and how long they have been available. So in real terms, apart from EC5, LHR (Heathrow) and the normal physical ranks, queue positions are immaterial – it is the driver with the longest availability. ...Ed

Infra-red images when driving?

Hi Alan

Recently you made a humorous comment about a driver using a portable Sat-Nav that projects its Sat-Nav screen images up onto the windscreen of a vehicle. It made me laugh! Why? Well because I was responsible for the idea!

I wrote a thesis and called it **Head up Display Sat-Nav** after seeing that there was nothing like it in the market. I sent the thesis to a manufacturer, **Garmin**, they liked the idea, developed it and it has now gone around the world.

My original **Head Up Display** concept started in 1957. A Provisional Patent applied for 26992/59 - **Refractive Infra-Red CCTV Head up Display!** To allow a person/driver to see an Infra-Red image on a windscreen of the way ahead in low visibility ie FOG. Alan kindly published an article about it in the **December 2008** issue of **Call Sign**. So, a reflection of an item placed on a car dashboard is a negative that eventually turned into a positive...

Norman Kerstein (ex-A81)

You can read Norman's original article on page 27 of that issue at:

<http://www.dac-callsign.com/08/Dec08/CallSignDec08.pdf>

Norman points out two incidents that have taken place since the original article where he says infra-red technology might have made a difference; the helicopter pilot who crashed into a crane at **Vauxhall** in 2013 and the appalling accident that occurred on the A249 on 5th September 2013 when there was a huge crash of around 100 vehicles piling into each other in poor visibility. What **Norman** says is that if vehicles were fitted with infra-red devices, which perhaps could be via a dash cam device that could pick up radiated heat, then that would provide advance warning of accidents and virtually allow drivers to see through fog. As **Norman** points out, even an ice cube gives off some heat and even that could be picked up. I'm not laughing now **Norman!** ...Ed



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