

Call Sign



From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



Brian Rice on a "trade unity" shocker! See page 4



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

Whilst work should soon be on the up again as schools go back, again here is your 'What's On' guide for September. It lists only events where the 'Burst' or 'Finish' times are known. Another 140 events - plus those below in larger print and with the day of the week - can be printed off at www.myfav.co.uk/wosep16.pdf

What's On - September 2016

Venue	Event	Date	Venue	Event	Date
Bus.Des.Cntr.	RCN Bulletin Jobs Fair (Finish 16:00)	01/09/2016	Chelsea	v Liverpool (Burst 21:45)	16/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 63 - Bach (Burst 21:35)	01/09/2016	ExCel	ECTRIMS 2016 Congress (Finishes 19:15)	16/09/2016
Royal Opera House	Insights (Burst 21:00 Sold Out)	01/09/2016	Olympia Central	French Property (Finish 17:00)	16/09/2016
Bus.Des.Cntr.	RCN Bulletin Jobs Fair (Finish 16:00)	02/09/2016	Brentford	v Preston NE (Burst 16:45)	17/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 64: Berlin P.O. (Burst 20:55)	02/09/2016	Charlton	v Wimbledon (Burst 16:45)	17/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 65: Pierre Boulez (Burst 23:30)	02/09/2016	ExCel	ECTRIMS 2016 Congress (Finishes 13:00)	17/09/2016
Wembley Stadium	Wembley Cup (Burst 21:15)	02/09/2016	ExCel	MS Life (Finishes 19:00)	17/09/2016
Millwall	v Bradford (Burst 16:45)	03/09/2016	ExCel	Wedding Fair (Finish 17:00)	17/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 64: Berlin P.O. (Burst 21:35)	03/09/2016	Leyton Orient	v Yeovil (Burst 16:45)	17/09/2016
Bus.Des.Cntr.	LONDONEDGE (Finish 18:00)	04/09/2016	Olympia Central	French Property (Finish 17:00)	17/09/2016
Olympia National	Speciality Chocolate Fair (Finish 17:30)	04/09/2016	Crystal Palace	v Stoke (Burst 16:00)	18/09/2016
Olympia National	International Jewellery (Finish 19:00)	04/09/2016	ExCel	MS Life (Finishes 16:00)	18/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 67: Simón Bolívar (Burst 17:40)	04/09/2016	ExCel	Wedding Fair (Finish 17:00)	18/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 68: Rossini (Burst 22:50)	04/09/2016	Olympia Central	French Property (Finish 17:00)	18/09/2016
Bus.Des.Cntr.	LONDONEDGE (Finish 18:00)	05/09/2016	Tottenham	v Sunderland (Burst 18:15)	18/09/2016
Olympia National	Speciality Chocolate Fair (Finish 17:00)	05/09/2016	ExCel	Elite Business (Finish 17:00)	21/09/2016
Olympia National	International Jewellery (Finish 18:00)	05/09/2016	ExCel	IntelliSys (Finish 18:00)	21/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 69: Staatskapelle (Burst 21:55)	05/09/2016	Olympia Conf.Cntr.	Smart Summit (Finish 18:00)	21/09/2016
Bus.Des.Cntr.	LONDONEDGE (Finish 16:00)	06/09/2016	Olympia Grand	100% Design (Finish 18:00)	21/09/2016
Olympia Conf.Cntr.	Nursing in Practice (Finish 16:30)	06/09/2016	ExCel	Elite Business (Finish 16:00)	22/09/2016
Olympia Grand	Speciality Chocolate Fair (Finish 17:00)	06/09/2016	ExCel	IntelliSys (Finish 18:00)	22/09/2016
Olympia National	International Jewellery (Finish 17:00)	06/09/2016	Olympia Conf.Cntr.	Smart Summit (Finish 18:00)	22/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 70: Staatskapelle (Burst 21:45)	06/09/2016	Olympia Grand	100% Design (Finish 21:00)	22/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 71: Staatskapelle (Burst 21:45)	07/09/2016	Bus.Des.Cntr.	Molecular Analysis (Finish 18:00)	23/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 72: Staatskapelle (Burst 21:15)	08/09/2016	ExCel	Homebuilding & Renovating (Finish 17:00)	23/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 73: Handel (Burst 23:30)	08/09/2016	ExCel	Sherlocked (Finish 20:00)	23/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Prom 74: Verdi - Requiem (Burst 21:10)	09/09/2016	Olympia Grand	100% Design (Finish 18:00)	23/09/2016
Arsenal	v Southampton (Burst 16:45)	10/09/2016	Olympia National	Wedding Show (Finish 17:00)	23/09/2016
Bus.Des.Cntr.	Shares LIVE (Finish 17:30)	10/09/2016	Arsenal	v Chelsea (Burst 19:15)	24/09/2016
Fulham	v Birmingham City (Burst 16:45)	10/09/2016	Bus.Des.Cntr.	Molecular Analysis (Finish 18:00)	24/09/2016
Hyde Park	Proms in the Park (Burst 22:30)	10/09/2016	ExCel	Homebuilding & Renovating (Finish 17:00)	24/09/2016
Millwall	v Coventry (Burst 16:45)	10/09/2016	ExCel	Sherlocked (Finish 18:00)	24/09/2016
Olympia Conf.Cntr.	Acoustic Show (Finish 18:00)	10/09/2016	Fulham	v Bristol City (Burst 16:45)	24/09/2016
QPR	v Blackburn (Burst 16:45)	10/09/2016	Millwall	v Rochdale (Burst 16:45)	24/09/2016
Royal Albert Hall	Last Night of the Proms(Burst 22:30)	10/09/2016	Olympia Central	Camexpo (Finish 18:00)	24/09/2016
Wembley Stadium	Billy Joel (Burst 22:30)	10/09/2016	Olympia Grand	100% Design (Finish 18:00)	24/09/2016
WHU	v Watford (Burst 16:45)	10/09/2016	Olympia National	Wedding Show (Finish 18:00)	24/09/2016
Olympia Conf.Cntr.	Acoustic Show (Finish 18:00)	11/09/2016	QPR	v Birmingham (Burst 16:45)	24/09/2016
Olympia Grand	Top Drawer (Finish 18:00)	11/09/2016	ExCel	Homebuilding & Renovating (Finish 17:00)	25/09/2016
Olympia Grand	Top Drawer (Finish 18:00)	12/09/2016	ExCel	Sherlocked (Finish 18:00)	25/09/2016
Fulham	v Burton (Burst 21:30)	13/09/2016	Olympia Central	Camexpo (Finish 17:00)	25/09/2016
Olympia Grand	Top Drawer (Finish 17:30)	13/09/2016	Olympia National	Wedding Show (Finish 17:00)	25/09/2016
QPR	v Newcastle (Burst 21:30)	13/09/2016	WHU	v Southampton (Burst 17:45)	25/09/2016
ExCel	ECTRIMS Congress (Finishes 18:30)	14/09/2016	Brentford	v Reading (Burst 21:30)	27/09/2016
Olympia Central	Packaging (Finish 17:00)	14/09/2016	Charlton	v Oldham (Burst 21:30)	27/09/2016
ExCel	ECTRIMS Congress (Finishes 19:15)	15/09/2016	Leyton Orient	v Plymouth (Burst 21:30)	27/09/2016
Olympia Central	Packaging (Finish 16:00)	15/09/2016	ExCel	Takeaway Innovation (Finish 18:00)	27/09/2016
Bus.Des.Cntr.	Naturejobs Career (Finish 16:30)	16/09/2016	Coliseum (ENO)	Don Giovanni (Burst 22:00)	30/09/2016

from the editor's desk

The Mayor's extra Compliance Officers

I've seen some of the anti-comments regarding the Mayor's recent announcement that he is quadrupling the number of Compliance Officers out and about in town. These are the officers whose job it is to tackle touting and any illegal activity affecting the taxi and private hire trades. **Mayor Khan** said that by this time next year, the total of CO's will increase from 82 and go up to 332 – an extra 250 officers.

That is something we have been asking for over many years and indeed, even the **Evening Standard** approved of the additional Officers with both mainstream TV channels reporting on the decision. We should welcome it and indeed, the **LTDA's Steve McNamara** was on TV within hours saying that it was a step in the right direction... and indeed it is.

The Mayor promised that he would protect this trade when he was electioneering and for once, someone in that position has kept his word and I applaud that. How can anyone disagree with him when he says that he wants Londoners to feel safe when they take a taxi or minicab and that's why he is targeting touts and illegal activities. Of course, not all PH companies are delighted because it is they who are funding it via increased licence fees.

Mayor Khan then added that extra COs is the first part of a wider programme that would drive up standards in the industry "...and help our world famous cabbies continue to thrive."

But there is one thing that hasn't been mentioned and that is the problem of **e-hailing**. Only taxis can ply for hire and that is why we spend so long doing the **Knowledge**. Yes, technology is moving at lightning speed, but just because we can control our bank accounts via a smartphone doesn't mean it's ok to go into someone else's account. It doesn't mean you can use someone else's debit card because it has a *contactless* facility. But it seems that even though private hire are not allowed to ply for hire because it's against all regulations connected to this trade, that so-called e-hailing is ok because according to **Leon Daniels**, technology has moved on. Yes, that's the same **Leon Daniels** who is still apparently **TfL's** Managing Director of Surface Transport, even though he seemed to vanish from the scene following a **Freedom of Information** request that purportedly showed him making 24 calls to Uber's **Jo Bertram** between June 2014 and April 2015.

Technology may well have moved on, but if I look at my phone to see where empty Uber cars are and then call one, that is plying for hire. Technology doesn't come into the equation.

Incidentally, the FoI request also pointed to another 31 calls made from TfL mobile phones between December 2014 and April 2015. Perhaps the total of 55 calls were just to enquire how Ms Bertram was, I really don't care if they called 8000 times, plying for hire does not come into the realm of technology – unless it also becomes legal to rob a bank provided that you do it via your phone.

So, yes, I think the increase in Compliance Officers is excellent news and I thank the Mayor for being the first to keep a promise. What we now need is not public criticism saying what he hasn't done, but to say how wel-



come it is and for our trade organisations to have a meeting with him to explain the situation. He appears to be a man of integrity and if the e-hailing situation is explained carefully, he should agree with us as well...

Jump start

I know that you will probably call me nasty after reading this, but hey-ho... if you dish it out etc!

So, I was just going to pick up an account ride from **Savoy Place** close to the **Savoy Hotel**, when a familiar call hit my ears: "Taxi!" I looked around and suddenly a foreign sounding gentleman jumped in front of my cab.

"Please, you give my minicab a jump start and I pay you. I have people in back and they wait to go but battery is flat." I looked at him and then at his car.

"Ok," says I, "I have 10 minutes before I'm scheduled to pick up my job. It will be £50," said this DaC driver. Suddenly the minicab driver's English improved greatly.

"Fifty quid? Are you 'effinwell joking?"

"Yes," says I, "I really was joking..." And with that I drove off to my pick-up, preferring to glance through the **Evening Standard!!!**

Pokemon Go tours???

Some weeks ago, two of my grandchildren, **Samuel** and **Imogen**, dragged me out of the house and took me to streets that I had never been down in six years at my current residence. Why? I thought they just wanted a walk, but no, they had seen some **Pokemon Go** characters nearby on their smartphones and "needed" to catch them.

The following day I went to work and it was stone dead! Yes, school holiday time hadn't let us down again! But whilst I was roasting on the **Kings Cross** rank, I saw this little character in my head and wondered whether anyone had thought of advertising **Pokemon Go** tours where you could hire yourself out at an hourly rate and just follow instructions as to where your passengers need to go to catch these little Pokemons.

It turns out that it already happens! Taxi and PH firms around the country offer tours - some at £10 an hour per person with a minimum of three per cab, while others offer an all-in rate. **Edinburgh Taxis** will take players at a low rate of £15 per hour, whilst a Middlesbrough cab company do it for £20 per hour. Apparently these Pokeys turn up at regular places and the tours tend to follow similar routes.

I must be getting old because I remember a time when people just put their hands out to get a cab from A to B and nowhere along the route did any passenger ever mention that a **Pokemon Go**

character was hatching! Sad or what!!!

No brainer?

A DaC driver recently sent me a copy of the **Kent Messenger** letters page where someone was writing about the merits of **Uber**. They obviously knew a bit about London taxi/private hire prices and methods of operation, because after going into some detail about Medway cabs, they then aimed their ire at London before looking at TfL's court case on smartphone/meters and the private prosecutions by the **LTDA** against individual Uber drivers using the smartphone app.

He then said that he had used Uber cars twice in London and found them to be "cheap, efficient and punctual," before adding how delighted he was that there was no "quandary" about needing to tip drivers - obviously painting himself as the last of the big spenders! But of course, that's his choice.

But he then wrote about his daughter-in-law who he said sometimes worked unsociable hours at her central London office. She, the writer said, had used Uber several times when there was no other way of getting to her home in south London and added that the prices for the trip were £50 in a taxi, £30 in a minicab and £18 with Uber. He said: "I think that's what's called a no-brainer."

Almost right, Mr Whoever U Are, except that I don't call it a no-brainer - more like no brains. Why? Well your daughter-in-law is travelling with a company that had 32 rapes allegedly carried out by its drivers in the 12 months ending in February 2016; or how about the 154 sex assaults by PH drivers with very few of the reported attacks seemingly carried out by the more reputable PH companies.

Or what about the article in the Evening Standard on Frances Carbines, the British Council worker who had a nightmare trip with an Uber driver who dumped her on a dual carriageway after she feared he would attack her?

If your daughter-in-law has problems getting a taxi or minicab and that's why she uses Uber, then I'd be really sorry to hear that; but if saving money is the prime objective then surely that saving needs to be put against any possible danger.

I don't think that Mr Whoever U Are is quite the expert he purports to be and I would suggest his daughter-in-law, who probably has far more common sense than her dad-in-law if her problem is a lack of availability rather than price, should get in touch with **Keith Cain** at **Dial-a-Cab**, open an account and get a fixed price for her occasional trips to home. In fact - and I don't say this very often - I'd rather she used a reputable PH company if she doesn't want a taxi company... anything but Uber. Now *that* is a no-brainer... especially when you look at the possible alternatives.

Sad Uber tale

Uber has apparently complained that the new English language requirement rule is harder to get through than the test for British Citizenship and that it's also easier to become a tube driver! I don't use the Underground very often but I know who I would feel safer with should I ever need to call an Uber car or use the tube. The 'appers' also moan that it's wrong that part-time drivers should need full-time commercial insurance regardless of whether they are working as an Uber driver. They want drivers to insure themselves only on the days they work... but they promise to do it... honest!!!

Now Uber is demanding a Judicial Review. Don't you feel sorry for them?

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections of the Chairman

Demutualisation Update

Although I am going to give you the latest update regarding the demutualisation process, you must bear in mind that things could change slightly over the next few weeks. However, this is the current position as it stands at the time of writing.

I intend sending all "eligible Members" a bundle during the first week of September. It will contain two booklets; the first is a circular entitled the "Proposed Conversion of ODRTS" which provides details of the proposals, while the second is a "Questions & Answers" booklet, which will hopefully answer some of the questions Members may have. There will also be a covering letter to you from me and three coloured forms.

The Green and the Yellow forms will be Proxy voting forms for eligible Members to use in respect of the two Special General Meetings required should they wish to give their vote to a colleague or give their vote to me. With both scenarios, they will have to instruct either the colleague or myself as to which way to vote on their behalf – that will be either for or against the resolution to demutualise.

Also on the Green form - assuming that the relevant Member is voting by Proxy - is the opportunity to vote for three of your current five Board Members who will, if the Membership agrees with the demutualisation, then go forward to become Directors (together with me as Chairman) of the new organisation. I should point out that Members do not have to vote for three, but UP TO three.

Should the Society demutualise, the Pink form then becomes extremely important as eligible Members need to complete that form in order to receive their shares in the new organisation. If they do not complete that form, they will not receive any shares and will only receive their original £50 back. So as you can see, it is absolutely imperative that they complete and return the form if they want to receive shares.

I have used the phrase "eligible Members" above. This is because as per the waiver, which new joiners have been asked to sign since the arrangement was introduced in 2008, Members who have been fully paid-up Members for less than two years on the date of the notice to convene the first meeting will not be entitled to participate in the meetings or receive shares on the demutualisation. Instead, should demutualisation proceed, those Members will cease to be Members and will receive back their £50 membership fee. They will, however, remain drivers on the circuit.

As I wrote at the beginning, the above scenario will hopefully be the order of events, but because I am compiling it approximately one month before the first meeting is scheduled, events could change slightly but I am keen to give you some idea of what will be happening.

I have purposely not included the proposed dates of the two meetings as they could be subject to change, but both meetings will be held on a Sunday.

Unity? What unity...

On Monday 8th August I attended a Transport for London fares review at Blackfriars Road; the purpose of the meeting was to discuss any fare increase that will come into effect next April.



As some of you may be aware, any increase is calculated via the Cost Index, which is basically a basket of items that affect you such as servicing, meter hire, tyres and the cost of the vehicle etc. Not only was the fare increase due to be discussed, but also the actual content of the Cost Index to see whether it is still relevant to the current situation. In my view, that meant that it was an important discussion and one that the whole trade should consider.

As I got there, ComCab had just arrived as had Radio Taxis, Gett and Hailo. With London's traffic often causing havoc, I assumed that the trade organisations were just running late and I casually enquired if anyone had heard from them and how late they would be. To say I was astounded would be an understatement when TfL informed everyone present that these very trade orgs that so often criticise each other for disrupting any hope of trade unity, were not coming as they all refused to sit around the table with the Radio Circuits and Apps. As I write this, I still find it hard to believe that it actually happened!

Who do these people representing the driver orgs think they are? Well, they obviously consider that they are far too important to sit down with the rest of us in a joint uniformed approach to TfL! As a result, TfL had to have two meetings with the trade - one with the driver orgs and one with the rest of us ie radio circuits and apps. Those sit-

ting around the table with Dial-a-Cab were our competition, but we knew how important it was for the trade to put on a united face and appear united. Silly us!

The London licensed taxi industry is in dire straits, yet those representatives from the various driver organisations could not bring themselves to at least attempt to present a united front to TfL. These so-called trade leaders would rather splinter our trade just so they can preserve their dwindling power and respectability – there can't be too much of that left!

What have these political driver orgs actually done for our trade over the past few years? The answer is absolutely nothing; they have allowed almost 110,000 minicab licences to come to fruition; they have allowed Uber to flourish; they have allowed Cycle Superhighways to be brought into being and have done absolutely nothing about pedicabs.

I have no alternative other than to assume and come to the conclusion that some of these mainstream driver orgs are totally impotent and only interested in their own self-preservation. Of course, their leaders will do well while their members get constantly bombarded with schemes that involve buying policies of various assortments against ill-health. Well I suppose they have to do something! There are online groups doing more than that these mainline orgs are doing between them.

But I'm not being fair because I should have pointed out that there is one instance where they can really show their muscle. That is by refusing to sit around the table with colleagues from their own industry!

This failure to attend not only shows how impotent they are, but how downright rude and that any concern they have for their own industry involves just them. It's just a case of my dad is bigger than your dad!

Trade unity? What trade unity... they are just absolutely pathetic...

Brian Rice
Chairman
Dial-a-Cab

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Last month's *Call Sign* published details of the proposal put to London Assembly members by Val Shawcross, London's Deputy Mayor for Transport, to pedestrianise Oxford Street by closing it to all traffic.

This followed a meeting in June when the London Assembly's Transport Committee heard from West End businesses, as well as TfL and Westminster City Council. All three considered that the aim should be to reduce the traffic flow rather than banning it altogether because that would just move the problem to the surrounding streets such as Welbeck and Goodge Streets – a point that this magazine had emphasised when speaking to the walking charity that first proposed pedestrianisation of Oxford Street, Living Streets. Quite astonishingly they told us they hadn't thought that far ahead!

According to Val Shawcross, she doesn't want to lose any resources overall for buses.

"But I can tell you," she told the LA meeting, "there is plenty of demand for more buses and frequencies further out and so we have been looking at doing a very complex job of combing the buses out. That would mean, basically, not going to Westminster and saying that all those buses that are running this way are going to run down Wigmore Street! What we are doing is going back and saying that if we look at a heat map around Oxford Street for some distance, we need to reduce the bus movements in that area

Oxford Street: Residents view of proposed closure...



1890 Oxford Circus and still solid with traffic!

improve Oxford Street... but without adding to the already high levels of pollution and congestion in nearby streets. They suggested that Mayor Khan should look at reducing motor traffic in the neighbouring areas and not just Oxford Street. But they feared that Val Shawcross' pedestrianisation suggestion – pencilled in to take place piecemeal over the next four years - would push buses and taxis into diverting along Wigmore Street, Mortimer Street and Goodge Street.

Wendy Shillam of the Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum wrote to Val Shawcross saying that if pedestrianisation of Oxford Street resulted in a permanent diversion of taxis and bus routes along neighbouring streets, then it would be devastating to the area whereas Jace Tyrell of the New West

much more substantially – certainly in advance of the opening of the Crossrail station in 2018 because there will be massive pedestrian congestion – but then to deliver on Oxford Street. That means more interchanges, turn-backs and changes to the routes, but it is a complex problem because we also have to deliver people to work and to shop at Oxford Street. As soon as you start trying to plan buses in central London around a smarter approach, it does liberate quite a lot of thinking about giving ground back to pedestrians - not just in Oxford Street but in adjacent areas and improving the public realm."

Since then, local residents have put their points of view to the Assembly, but also spoke to the area's local paper, *Fitzrovia News*. The view of most was that they welcome the Mayor's desire to reduce congestion and pollution and want to work together to realise his aim to

End Company which represents traders in Oxford Street was cautious about the plans:

"We look forward to seeing and discussing detailed proposals for Oxford Street following Ms Shawcross's statements, but feel very strongly that any form of vehicle free zones must lead to a genuine reduction of traffic, rather than large scale re-routing down smaller residential or commercial streets. In addition, it must be accompanied by a full economic assessment to measure the impact on businesses and the shoppers and workers that travel to the West End every day via public transport."

Unsurprisingly, campaigners for a traffic-free Oxford Street have welcomed the plan but Westminster City Council claimed that the plans as described by Ms Shawcross were currently unachievable without significant impact on those who live, visit or run a business in the area...

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Phil Buchan,
Hillier Buchan, 01322 553313

BUS LANES TAXI HOPE

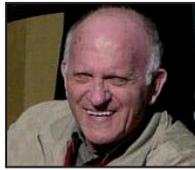
At a meeting with TfL at City Hall on 28 July, the licensing authority led on Bus Lane access, particularly on London Bridge northbound and some others they control including Tooley Street (westbound), Newington Butts, Bishopsgate and Westminster Bridge Road.

TfL said they were prepared to actively support the taxi trade if we approached the Boroughs for access to the Bus Lanes they control, including the City of London. They were extremely positive about increasing Taxi access to Bus Lanes. The London Bridge lane would be on a 3 month trial basis initially and possibly with some times of use, but as with some others the trade are currently banned from, TfL are now of a mind to increase access. This was undoubtedly the most positive meeting on a range of issues for many years and there really seems to be a change in attitude at City Hall!

So it looks like a done-deal on some of their own Bus Lanes, although a deal would insinuate a compromise. But this was an announcement by TfL after years of our demanding access, however, only the recent change of regime and personnel allowed this change of attitude.

Together with a promised substantial increase in Compliance Officers, this could be a lead-in to a new era because Bus Lane access is a huge advantage to this trade and the more of them we are allowed to get into, the better. Let's hope so...

Jery's World



“Yeah, a few blokes have asked me to be their proxy!”

TAXI MASSACRE IN QUEENSLAND AS UBER CELEBRATES

Uber legalised as Premier offers A\$100m assistance package to taxi industry

Former **Dial-a-Cab** driver and Data Dispatch trainer, **Howard Sales (ex-A11)**, left the UK many years ago to settle in **Australia** but still has the blood of a London taxi driver flowing through his veins and often keeps *Call Sign* in touch with events down under.

But this latest item brought a feeling of sadness to this office when the **Queensland** State Premier **Annastacia Palaszczuk** along with Transport Minister **Stirling Hinchliffe** announced that **Uber** and similar ride-booking services would be legalised from **September 5**. Almost as a sop to any feelings of guilt, the duo then came up with an A\$100 million assistance package for the taxi industry.

The offer consists of a one-off payment of \$20,000 per taxi licence (capped at two). Taxis will also continue to have exclusive access to street hails and ranks with the maximum age limit for taxis to be removed and annual renewal fees being waived for 12 months. A hardship fund of A\$26.7million was also announced, which possibly shows how the QLD government think the situation will end up!

Ms Palaszczuk said it was time the Government created a level playing field for taxis, limousines and Uber. However, some things don't change and it was also announced that State Government will regulate to allow Uber to operate from this month *without* a special licence, with a new licence system coming in next year.

Mr Hinchliffe said the reforms would deliver an estimated A\$474 million benefit to the State when it “opens up the market and create opportunities for new and existing participants to respond to market changes, which will ultimately drive competition.”

He could also have added that it means the end of the taxi trade in Queensland. The Taxi Council's CEO, **Ben Wash**, referring to a review into personalised transport last year, called it a waste of millions of dollars.

“It appears as though the Government has deceived Queenslanders by pretending to establish an independent review, when the results were clearly predetermined!”

Meanwhile, in a celebratory mood, Uber thanked everyone concerned with the review, saying it would provide more choice...



Annastacia Palaszczuk announced a hardship fund for taxi drivers!

But who are MyTaxi?

London taxi app Hailo has agreed to a “merger” with Mercedes Benz Daimler ride-sharing app MyTaxi, which has been part of Daimler Mobility Services since 2014 when MBD were said to have paid around £100million!

The new deal is said to be cashless and sees Daimler take a 60% stake in Hailo and controlling seats on the Board. Within 12 months, the Hailo name will vanish and be re-branded as MyTaxi. Hailo have had financial problems since being forced to pull out of North America in 2014 following a price war and battle for market share.

Hailo will now be run from the MyTaxi office in Hamburg, Germany with Daimler Financial Services Chairman, Klaus Entenmann, claiming the merger will make MyTaxi a “leader of mobility solutions and platforms.”

Call Sign spoke to an experienced competitor of MyTaxi in Germany. We agreed not to publish any names. He told us:

“MyTaxi was originally a startup, claiming a niche - one of the first to do so in the German taxi sector. Its founder and former CEO, Niclaus Mewes, grew up in a family dealing with a special kind of fleet management – shipping! But the new company grew quite fast, relying on taxis only with Deutsche Telekom and Car2Go being some of the first investors.

The MyTaxi setup is actually pretty much the same as you’ll find with Hailo, Gett and others. They bypass the traditional taxi dispatchers and build direct contact between the drivers and customer.

Hailo Swallowed By MyTaxi



MyTaxi use licensed taxis only... but at 50% of the fare???

Poland etc. Yes, they do claim to only work with licensed taxis, but since they have a huge marketing budget, they often try to “bend” the law - although they can’t anymore in Germany.

Incidentally, MyTaxi and Hailo are claiming they will now have the largest taxi app

network in Europe, but I believe that to be incorrect since the Berlin and Vienna based taxi network, taxi.eu, is already active in 13 countries with well over 170.000 drivers throughout Europe.”

Hailo never really recovered after applying for a PH license but not telling its subscribers. That was later discovered by a trade organisation and within hours spread through social networks and led to a mass departure by drivers...

They have had some problems in Germany where they went around aggressively “buying” customers at half fare. You should prepare yourselves for that in London as well, since a 50 percent price tag on all trips is still active in Spain and

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign Online

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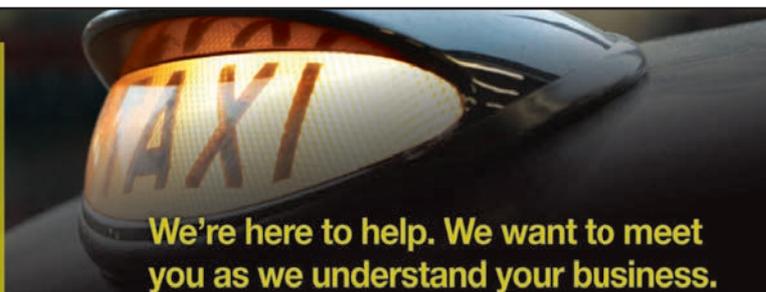
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Known throughout the trade as Drumslayer, Call Sign's Marc Turner (R97) writes of something you don't hear too often...

HOW TO MAKE GOD LAUGH!

The evening of Monday 8th August was one I won't forget in a hurry. I had just exchanged my soon-to-be overhauled cab for a pristine courtesy 06 TX2.

As soon as I looked at the cab, I was impressed. It was clean, as I turned the key the engine sounded great and it really drove well. Everything looked good!

Its regular driver was on holiday and unusually, had left an old testament Bible and Rosary beads with the image of **Jesus Christ** hanging from the rear view mirror. The radio was tuned in to a Gospel station...Hallelujah!

Coincidentally, the cab had been supplied by **Stable Taxis** and wasn't the Son of God born in a stable! So far so good, everything was sounding great. What could go wrong???

So I made for the Bermondsey (recently relocated **Tooley Street**) rank ready to start a new week with my usual ardour, having no inkling of the imminent fate awaiting this



Someone wasn't watching over Marc!

Drumslayer. Looking in the rear view mirror through the Rosary beads, I noticed a familiar face in the cab behind, so I sprightly alighted my new home and immediately felt a razor sharp sensation in my left leg. Being the

trooper I am, I continued the task and it was my colleague behind who drew my attention to my leg bleeding profusely.

I'd brushed the bottom of the door and cut a long gash in a previously unblemished, valued leg, ironically after spending the last 26 years avoiding being head-butted by cab doors! He with another driver convinced me that a visit to an A&E department was in order; so with due haste I drove to **St Thomas's** where I knew there was parking.

I was there for just under three hours in all, apparently that's a result! The wait was made easier by the company of fellow cabbie (Scot) who'd heard of my plight on social media and decided to join me.

The NHS staff were splendid and Nurse Sarah, who eventually treated me, warmed the cockles of my heart with her anti-cyclists rants but suggested that even if they were tailored, I shouldn't go to work with shorts. Nurses always know best!

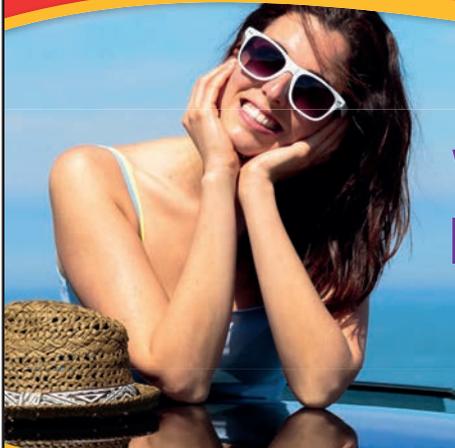
So back to the question; how do you make God laugh? The answer... Make plans!!!

Marc Turner
Call Sign Online



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A recent piece from **Bloomberg** about London's taxi fleet makes interesting reading in that the reason no one has revealed a price on any of the three expected versions – **LTC**, **Vito** and **Metro** – is because around a third of the cost will actually be the battery and prices are expected to fall sharply over the next few years.

The article points out that **Walter Bersey** ran a fleet of 80 battery-powered cabs that he actually designed and which began operating in December 1897. Sadly for Walter, they lasted only around two years. They had been powered by grid-plate batteries that could only be recharged at Bersey's **Lambeth** garage where a hydraulic lifting system allowed for quick battery exchange. The taxi had a range of about 35 miles, which was more than the average horse-powered cab could reasonably cover. It also had a top speed of 14mph – which some would say it isn't much different today with all the extra traffic! They became known as **Hummingbirds** because of the low noise sent out by the Bersey electric engine.

Now, around 120 years later, the **London Taxi Company** is investing \$400 million to build electric cabs in **Coventry**. It has been claimed that the transition away from all diesel vehicles driving in London – not just taxis – could help eliminate almost 10,000 early deaths a year caused by the emissions they give out. Although diesel vehicles emit less carbon dioxide than those running on petrol, they spew out more nitrogen dioxide, which the **European Environment Agency** claims increases respiratory conditions and cardiovascular disease.

LTC President, **Peter Johansen**, has said that there is a general recognition of the need to improve air quality and that electric vehicles were the way of the future for urban situations.

Anyone buying a new taxi from 2018 will have to buy one that is zero-emissions capable using either pure electric or hybrid motors. That won't affect old cabs at present but the world's first Ultra Low Emission Zone will be launched in central London on 7 September 2020 and will mean a congestion charge type fee paid by any vehicle whose emissions break the regulations. At this moment, we believe that taxis will be exempt from that charge, but it could change depending on circumstances.

Dial-a-Cab are trying to give drivers with older cabs a temporary 5-year get-out when they recently organised - via **Call Sign** - an event at **DaC House** that allowed drivers to test out an LPG gas cab. After conversion of their old cabs, that would give drivers an extra five years of licensing in addition to having a Euro 6 taxi that runs like a car and a fuel saving estimated at around 20 percent.

DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** told **Call Sign**: "If the conversion scheme takes off, it would make **DaC** the cleanest taxi company in London. However, this is a problem for the trade as a whole and not just us; so we take the situation regarding emissions very seriously and there is an obvious need to clean up our trade. But the problem has not been through the fault of drivers, more the authorities that insisted and regulated the fact that we had to pur-

Electric taxis: The battery is one third of the cost!



Brian Rice: "If battery prices fall, it could make electric taxis more affordable to younger drivers..."



Could the TX5 be cheaper than envisaged?

would all be academic.

According to **Bloomberg** **New Energy Finance**, which predicts that by 2040 35 percent of new car sales globally will be electric, by 2025 battery storage could fall by as much as 52 percent to under

£140 per kilowatt hour.

With London having just 3 percent of the 25,000 charging points former Mayor **Boris Johnson** promised would be in place by 2015 (according to **Bollere SA** which operates the network), Mr **Johansen** said they were looking at how they could provide more on a commercial basis along with other business partners. They want to get a number of hubs in and around London that are for rapid charging, so that taxi drivers typically can top up while having a tea break.

The next year or so will be interesting, to put it mildly...

chase vehicles that they had mandated for us.

"So far as the future is concerned, if the price of batteries for electric vehicle were to fall substantially, that could just about make electric taxis affordable to younger drivers, assuming Mayor **Khan** means what he says insofar as his looking after London's taxis goes."

The **London Mayor** says he wants to tighten up pollution regulations and has refreshed the City's 60-year-old **Clean Air Act**, which was passed in the 1950s when London suffered badly with smog. His office has pointed out that if London's 23,000 diesel taxis were to *not* eventually change to electric power, they would have been expected to spew around one fifth of central London's nitrogen oxide emissions in 2020.

But the part of the equation most interesting to **London taxi drivers** is how much an electric taxi will cost. Rumours abound of somewhere between £47,000 and £55,000 and possibly even more. But **Peter Johansen** now says that the reason they have not given out even any approximate cost is because **LTC** expects falling battery prices over the next 18 months to make the electric **TX5** more attractive and added that with the battery currently about one-third of the cost of a vehicle, there is no point in announcing a price because it

Call Sign September 2016

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Website: www.22-callsign.co.uk

Printers: Premier Print Group

E6 6 LP

Design: Aldan Publications

Tel: 07958 300 428

Email: debbiefresco@googlemail.com

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Steve Shaller was on Dial-a-Cab for many years, as well as being a regular columnist in Call Sign. On his retirement, he moved to Spain where he still lives. So as an ex-pat, we asked him whether he felt the Brexit result was likely to affect him...

AM I BOVVERED???

There are many things that I do not know, but one thing I do know for a fact that I am one of many taxi drivers who have chosen to live abroad. As an ex-pat, I was invited by Alan Fisher to give my thoughts on living abroad since the result of the Brexit vote came out as leave. Was this curiosity or was he thinking about joining me and building sand castles on the Spanish beaches!

It can be a difficult task to write or discuss about living abroad without getting involved in Brexit politics, especially when I am surrounded by neighbours who have come from all around Europe. My personal political views and the way I actually voted may not be of any interest to the *Call Sign* readership, so I'll keep those opinions to myself. But this referendum has been very divisive and as a consequence I have tried to avoid speaking to my friends on the subject. I prefer my warmth to come from the Spanish sun and not from a heated debate!

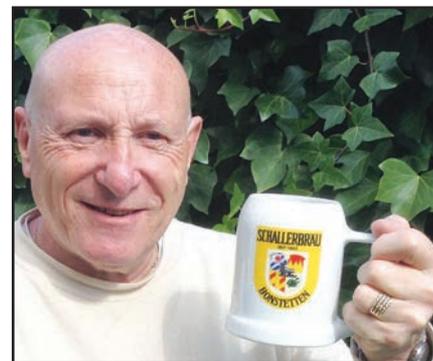
But in speaking to other ex-pats prior to the referendum, I found them equally split on their views regarding staying in or leaving the EU. Some wanted to stay in because they feared that leaving would affect their security, their lifestyle and with it the possibility of having to return to the UK. Others voted to leave because they felt that the sovereignty of their country came first before their own personal interests.

There were many lies bandied about by politicians and the media from both sides of the argument to frighten us into voting the way they would have liked. When reading our local English speaking newspaper, I also found there were many concerned ex-pats who were worried about losing their entitlement to the Spanish health service. They also worried about being asked to leave the country - even worried that their houses could be confiscated.

I have lived on the Orihuela Costa (Costa Blanca) for 14 years and have enjoyed the lifestyle very much. Nevertheless, I shall return home to the UK at a later date irrespective of how Brexit will or will not affect life out here for we ex-pats.

During these past 14 years, I have watched an enormous growth within my area in construction of both commercial and residential property. The general area is flourishing; the Brits, the Russians and the Scandinavians are all here. I came here in the boom. I've seen the bust and now the reconstruction cranes adorn the horizon and the boom has returned. We have an amazing recently built hospital, a new shopping mall that can accommodate 4500 parked cars, there are restaurants and bars - both big and small, with these businesses being built and surviving on British money from both British retirees and holidaymakers.

Last year, British tourists spent nearly €11billion on holidays in Spain.



Steve enjoys his retirement in Spain

That figure does not take into account the 400,000 retirees who, like myself, spend their state pensions here. What country would cut their nose to spite their face and discourage we Brits to come to holiday or live in the EU?

There has been a reciprocal health arrangement for fully paid-up pensioners between Britain and Spain for many years, so I have no fear of being denied this service. Last year Ian Duncan Smith stopped ex-pats from getting their Winter Fuel Allowance. Not just in Spain, but in many other countries within the EU. So you think it doesn't get cold out here in winter? Think again! If I have any concerns, it's that our state pensions could be frozen as it is for other ex-pats who live outside the EU.

Spain can be quite a bureaucratic country, so I also would not be surprised if legislation were to be introduced whereby foreign residents, such as myself, would have to update our residential status on a yearly or half yearly basis. There could be a marginal increase in property tax for those who have holiday homes and who are not resident or fiscal residents. Again, these are all assumptions and only time will tell us if Brexit was good for those living at home and abroad.

So, even with the drop in the GBP against the Euro, people will still travel around Europe spending their money. And what country would discourage tourism?

As the Catherine Tate incarnation of Lauren Cooper, might ask: "Am I bovered? Do I look bovered? Does this face look bovered?"

Does that answer Alan's question???

Steve Shaller (ex-F34J)

Addy Lee profits drop by £20million!

The UK's biggest minicab firm, **Addison Lee**, which is owned by equity firm **The Carlyle Group**, have announced a sharp drop in profits from the £32.9 they posted up till August 2015, down to £11.6million this past August. Like taxi companies, they have blamed Uber and other similar e-hail companies.

They recently battled an uprising by their drivers, who had demonstrated outside Carlyle Group's London HQ at Lansdowne House in **Berkeley Square**, against the reduction in fares charged and finally winning a new contract that gave drivers an extra 7%. The fare reduction was an attempt to compete with Uber.

It was **John Griffin** who started the company in South London in 1975. It is now run by his son **Liam**. Two years ago, Carlyle tried to sell Addy Lee but couldn't find anyone bidding enough money to compensate for the £300million they valued the minicab company at in 2013.

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THE DAC DRIVER AND THE WOBBLY CYCLIST!

"If I'm honest," Michael Fitzgerald (W85) told Call Sign, like many other road users, I have no great love of pedal cyclists.

"I work nights, and recently in the early hours while travelling north along Upper Woburn Place, I spied a very wobbly cyclist ahead of me and decided to give him a wide birth as I closed the gap between us. I came to the rapid conclusion that he was as drunk as a skunk and passed him very carefully and slowly, taking great care not to spook him as I overtook.

"But then a little further along the road, I was forced to stop behind a bus as the traffic ahead was stationary. Sure enough, the drunk cyclist who had previously been staggering from the sidewalk to the roadway and back again, managed to navigate his way between the kerbside and the nearside rear door of my cab. Suddenly there was an almighty bang as the cab rocked sideways, scaring my female passenger and making me jump with fright," Michael continued. "So instead of me worrying about spooking him, it turned out to be the other way around – although there was no concern on his part of course!

"I went around to see what had happened and sure enough, this drunken idiot had fallen off the bike, forcing the cycles' handlebars into my nearside passenger door, swiftly followed by the rest of his shoulders and body as he collided sideways into my cab, causing considerable damage to the bodywork with dents and scratches along the door panel. My passenger had been reading a book and so was unable to bear witness as to what exactly had occurred, confirming only that she had heard the noise. But it was fairly obvious the guy could barely stand up, let alone keep his balance on a bike," Michael said.

"Then as if by magic, several other cyclists in the immediate area started remonstrating with me that I had collided with the cyclist and even a couple of pedestrians nearby also alleged I had crashed into the cyclist. Although I was boiling up inside, I politely explained the facts and when the pedestrians took note of the state of the errant cyclist, they decided to walk away clearly embarrassed by their unwanted interjection. Not so the cycle fraternity who continued their tirade.

"By this time, the wobbly cyclist had managed to gather his senses sufficiently to pick up his cycle from the ground, take a deep breath and walk away towards Endsleigh Gardens. At this point, the other cyclists lost interest too and pedalled away leaving me with an unsettled passenger and a damaged cab. In the end I decided that as no accusations had been made against me and the consoling factor that my CabCam had recorded the entire scenario, I carried on to deliver the passenger safely to her door.

"I then called my insurers at the earliest opportunity to report the matter to cover myself and them, and they in turn sent an Autoglass technician to remove the original SD memory card from my cab which



Michael was thankful for his cabcam

had the entire incident recorded on it and replaced it with a fresh memory card. This whole unfortunate experience just proves to me the benefits of having a little piece of camera technology sitting in the cab, witnessing the antics of others and protecting my own integrity and the utter nuisance these selfish, undisciplined ***** can be!"

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online

ENTERPRISE INSURANCE COMPANY INSOLVENT

EIC may not mean much to most drivers, but if your taxi is insured with Cabsurance, Emrose or Quotax then you will need to speak to the company because they all use the Enterprise Insurance Company and it was recently declared to be insolvent. Sutherland Insurance is unaffected.

A provisional liquidator is now managing the company's affairs and has said that all third party claims will still be paid out whether by EIC or the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. But the FSCS will only pay claims once insolvency by EIC has been confirmed and the liquidator says that the company can no longer pay any money out.

Drivers with any of the above companies should contact their brokers and while third party claims are safe, there can be no guarantee that other payments will be made until EIC assets have been examined.

Currently, drivers with EIC policies can still legally drive with them, but if you are in that position you should contact your broker immediately to take advice. The liquidator will contact all drivers once investigations into the Gibraltar-based company have been completed and the situation becomes clearer.

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Won't tell you? No... Can't tell you!

Information supplied to Members with regard to work being carried out in the Sales department is not always as informative as I would like to be. With the changes looming ahead for the Society, I know it's important for Dial-a-Cab Members to know what we are doing, but for fear of giving just one of our competitors the slightest advantage over us means that whilst I always try to inform you, it has to be the very least that I can. You would be surprised at who is eagerly waiting to read the next *Call Sign* publication and it is purely for this reason that Members are just informed of the minimum and not because there is a lack of activity to report.

Fixed prices

You are now becoming more familiar with the fixed rate journeys we are offering. On a daily basis, the team receive quotes for taxi journeys and with the longer trips, we are offering competitive - if not the best - journey prices. Against that, longer trips numbers are going up.

We have a core client base and having had regular conversations with them, we know they are totally satisfied with the service. So when we ask why usage has dropped, it is an all too common response to be told that the policy of their company is for staff to use public transport.

Encompass

We are in the middle of two tender processes that require a taxi service and which is somewhat different from others we have participated in recently where they are really just looking for a private hire service. To those we have offered our platform, which has recently been renamed **Encompass**.

Encompass, despite rumours, is a rebranding of **Concierge** and not a separately owned company. Again, contrary to rumours, neither does anyone within the Society have a financial interest in it! It is the name we chose to call our booking facility, which offers clients a one-stop shop service and more.

DaC Sales Report

With Keith Cain

The functionality of Encompass allows for clients to use just a taxi account or a mixed fleet service. Recently we have spoken with many companies, including the two companies whom we are currently tendering for, and the total service of Encompass is meeting their requirements and raising eyebrows. Platforms, booking tools - call them what you wish - provide clients with so much more than just putting a vehicle outside the door. Believe it or not, that is now the simple part of the service!

Account management, management information and security of data - I'd go as far as to say in a strange way - is even more at the forefront of having an account facility with a transport provider than the actual transport! Individuals want speed and we can provide that, but when you are the one paying the bill for everyone else, then security becomes more important.

Change!

Years ago, an account customer would just quote an account number and give a password. That service has totally changed to the point where an individual has to have a specific I/D to access the system, then they have to answer a

number of question fields before they can make the booking. If a question field is in what we call a compulsory field and not completed correctly, the booking has to be refused until the correct information is filled in. The types of instructions we receive from the client have to be programmed into the booking platform and is part of the account security we offer. I have simplified this a great deal, but if you imagine a client having just four compulsory question fields to complete, the booking process can take some time.

Where we win over our competitors - and I have no qualms about them reading this because they already know it is a fact - our Encompass system is the best booking platform out there in the market today. Many knocked Concierge in the beginning, but that booking tool has been the backbone to the success of the Society over recent years and is why our clients - including some very large ones - continue to use us.

We use three words to describe ourselves to clients: **Agile, Attentive and Adaptable**. We are able to be flexible; we listen to their requirements and can tailor our total service to meet *their* needs in a timely fashion.

The Sales team at Dial-a-Cab, including our Account Managers, may be a fairly small group compared to some, but is undoubtedly also the most proactive. With the management, our customer service staff and our IT team in place, the experience we have built up for over many years is invaluable to take this Society forward... and be reassured, it can.

Customer loyalty can come into question on occasion, but client confidence and trust means more. But not as much as COST! Get that right and we are halfway there...

Keith Cain**DaC Head of Sales**

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

SIMON'S GOLF COURSES

West Hill Golf Club

You may have heard, if you're a keen golfer, of Surrey's famous three 'W's - but if perchance you haven't, then let me explain...

In fairly close proximity to each other, the three outstanding courses all beginning with letter 'W' are **Woking, Worpleston and West Hill** - the latter of which I was fortunate enough to play at this past May.

West Hill golf course was laid out by the little known, but wonderfully named **Cuthbert Butchart** in 1910. It was originally a ladies only course, which suggests that there must have been some very high standard lady golfers back at the turn of the last century because out of the 3 'W's, West Hill is judged by many to be the most challenging.

If they let you, as they did us on their reasonable Twilight offer (3pm), then play off the white tees. It's not a particularly long course, indeed I played without my driver because my son had taken it and forgot to put it back in my bag! So a well struck 3 wood is probably the best option here anyway.

The course is a series of challenges that really test your whole game; rarely do you find a course without a weak hole, but at West Hill every hole is interesting.

My favourite hole - and it was a difficult choice - is the par 4 18th. At 420 yards, it plays its full distance on a gentle uphill slope to a 3 tier green. A long iron to the final green with the clubhouse patio a mere yard or so off the back of the green is a real test of character!

Rolling Surrey turf, heather and Scots pine... plus excellent golfing; West Hill is highly recommended.

Happy golfing



The 149 yard par 3 13th at West Hill

Simon Wallis (M11)
Call Sign Online

If you are a day man and used to seeing the Victoria Station feed rank wind up Tachbrook Street from Vauxhall Bridge Road, you will probably know about this as warning messages have been going out on Dial-a-Cab terminals for some time.

Drivers used to bear right into Tachbrook and do a u-turn to join the end of the rank. Well you can still go into Tachbrook Street – but halfway along it becomes one-way and our friends in blue often have their tea break there... and if they should catch a few drivers at the same time, then all the better!

We promised to keep the identity of the DaC driver that got “nicked” a secret and we will honour that promise. Just a few small clues perhaps; he is a Board Member, recently awarded the Queen’s British Empire Medal. The reason we are keeping it secret is because he is also a former Magistrate who should have known better! So our lips will remain sealed...!!!!

Mystery driver gets “done” at Tachbrook Street!



Halfway up are no entry signs. Inset: The mystery driver in trouble!

New exhibition at the Bank of England

THE STORY OF THE BANKNOTE

The world’s earliest paper money will take its place alongside the newest, most technologically sophisticated Bank of England note in a new permanent gallery at the **Bank of England Museum** opening on **7 September 2016**. The Banknote Gallery at the Museum will present the story of the banknote from its earliest days, when paper money was largely mistrusted, to the new £5 note that is packed with security features, historically significant designs and printed on polymer rather than paper and which launches on 13 September with its 1943 portrait of **Winston Churchill**.



Notice any subtle differences in this forgery attempt!

The exhibition is filled with original drawings, artwork, designs, notes and sketches from the Bank’s collection. The new gallery will build a clear picture of how banknotes have changed since the Bank was established in 1694. Among the highlights are the earliest paper notes from the Chinese **Ming dynasty** and the ‘running cash’ notes - as old as the Bank of England itself - accepted as payment in place of a pile of gold!

The gallery will also include the earliest Bank of England notes from the end of the 17th century and classic designs such as the **white fiver** which lasted for 100 years. But as soon as banknotes appeared, so did forgeries; the story of banknote design is paralleled by an alternative history of counterfeit development. Since its foundation, the Bank of England has been in a constant battle to stay several steps ahead of forgers; even the simple black and white notes of the 18th century contained a whole battery of subtle security features including complex watermarks and minute secret marks that helped Bank clerks identify genuine notes from forgeries. Many forgeries ended up at the Bank of England.

Among those forgeries on display are brilliantly plausible notes which are surviving evidence of Operation Bernhard, the Nazi plan to flood and ruin the economy of the British Empire in WW2. Created by prisoners at Sachsenhausen concentration camp, the notes were intended to be dropped by plane over Britain, picked up and used by members of the public. While this never really worked, the Bank was forced to withdraw all notes over £5 and re-design the £5 note after the forgeries began to appear in circulation in Britain.

Also on display are earlier forgeries, many of whose creators were punished by hanging! Among these is a £5 note altered to a £50 that was discovered when used to buy a cow at a country fair in 1850! During the Bank Restriction Period in the early 18th century, hundreds of forgers received the death penalty for counterfeits of BoE notes.

Alongside designs that became Bank of England banknotes will be all sorts of designs submitted to the Bank in the early 19th century after it announced a competition to make the **Inimitable Note** – a banknote that could not be copied. Elsewhere, the gallery will follow the journey of a banknote from creation to destruction and eventual recycling.

The new £5 will be followed in summer 2017 by a polymer £10 note featuring Jane Austen and, by 2020, a polymer £20 note featuring JMW Turner. The pairing of notes from the 1690s with the new polymer note shows how far we have come! This exhibition is worth bringing the family to and also to recommend to passengers looking for an interesting few hours...

There is no charge for admission to the Museum or for any event at the Bank. Opening hours are Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm (last entry 4.30pm). Closed public, bank hols and weekends.

More info at www.bankofengland.co.uk/museum, 020 7601 5545.

Described tours led by a Museum Guide are available for visually impaired visitors. Booking is essential. Museum entrance via Bartholomew Lane...

Do you sometimes wonder if perhaps you're actually asleep having a nightmare and that when you awake, life will revert to normality for we London taxi drivers and our biggest battle will once again be against PH companies such as Addison Lee, Brunel plus any minicabs seemingly named after vegetables! Then you awake, Uber is still there and you're left wondering if your sanity is going?

Call Sign took a look at some figures we've acquired through Freedom of Information requests made to Transport for London between August 2013 and August 2016. And for anyone wondering why we're bothering, just a reminder that ten years ago (2006) there were 31,100 licensed PH drivers. In August 2016 that had reached 109,000!

Firstly, there is a list of 'convictions' that would prohibit any prospective Taxi or PH driver applicant getting a licence. A TfL answer following another FoI request adds that convictions not disclosed will show up with the enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. They say:

"Every applicant for a taxi or private hire driver licence in London is subject to enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks (previously known as enhanced CRB checks), which are repeated every three years upon renewal. It is also a condition of licensing that if a driver is arrested or charged with a criminal or driving offence, they should immediately inform the licensing authority."

On TfL's website it says that if applicants have any of the following convictions it is unlikely their application will be successful. The list begins with any conviction for a major violent offence (murder, manslaughter etc) and goes on to add that if they have had more than one conviction of any type of violent offence in the last 10 years, if they are currently serving a custodial sentence or even if they have been released early on licence or the sentence was suspended, they won't get a licence.

Then, if the applicant has been convicted, cautioned or subjected to any other penalty for a serious sexual offence (rape, indecent assault, trafficking, possession of indecent images etc), that will prohibit them getting a licence and added to that list is if they have been convicted, cautioned or subjected to any other penalty for *more than* one sexual offence of any type, irrespective of age. So we must assume that one sex offence is probably ok. That also explains a lot when you look at the number of sex attacks in what we assume were minicabs last year.

UBER AND DBS CHECKS

The figures were obtained by The Sun

numbers in a list.

Of course, when The Sun published a story following an FoI request about the number of rapes and sex attacks carried out, they claimed, by Uber drivers and picked up by every UK newspaper, TfL said... well they said nothing that we could find!

That leads us onto another FoI request we put to TfL. This one asked for the number of sex offences carried out by PH drivers. Quite astonishingly (or not if you believe in conspiracy theories), although a list was provided giving a ten year total of 1318 under the heading of *Cab Related Sexual Offences*— an average of over 130 each and every year of the ten — the Metropolitan Police Service told us they did not differentiate between private hire and taxis when it came to sex offences.

It isn't too often that we agree with a minicab union, but we agree with the United Private Hire Drivers union who claim that TfL is withholding information on the number of women who are sexually assaulted when they get into licensed taxis. Where we differ is that they obviously believe black cab drivers are involved in far more sex attacks than are published, whereas we know they aren't and would like to see the figures published separately to prove how dangerous an Uber trip really is.

I'd be astonished to find that more than 1% of the 1318 were taxi drivers. In fact I'd be astonished if the number even reached 1 percent. But the MPS won't tell us and the question is why. Could it be that TfL and the MPS know there would be panic if passengers thought that virtually 100% of attacks came in minicabs?

Let's be honest, we had John Worboys in 2009 and Edward Chapman three years later. Both went to prison for rape and both were licensed taxi drivers, so we are not immune. However, so rare are events such as those that reports were in every newspaper and made headlines on TV news channels. Even the Washington Post carried a Worboys story! Sex attacks in private hire vehicles just end up as

So back to Uber and yet another *Call Sign* FoI request which asked this time if there was any difference between the DBS checks needed for Licensed London Taxi Drivers and drivers working for London Private Hire companies and Uber specifically?

The answer we were given was that both taxi and private hire drivers licensed by TfL undertake the same enhanced DBS check and the character requirements to obtain a taxi or PHV licence are the same.

But the response went on to add that applicants who have lived in a country outside the UK for one or more continuous periods of 12 months in the three years prior to their application, would instead be required to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct from the relevant country of residence that must have been issued by a competent judicial or administrative authority. They further add that if a certificate couldn't be obtained, a Certificate of Registration or a letter from the Borders and Immigration Authority would be required. TfL also said that they have "robust measures in place to make certain that the evidence provided is legitimate and correct." Forgive us if the evidence on the streets seems to disprove that last statement.

Their answer signs off with this statement: "The safety of our customers is of paramount importance to us and we hope this reassures you that we take every possible precaution to ensure that all of our drivers are fit to hold a licence."

Well sorry TfL, it doesn't do that in the slightest...

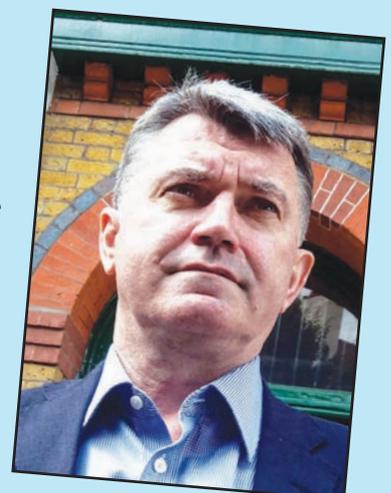
**Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online**

RMT: "Mayor hasn't gone far enough!"

RMT General Secretary, **Mick Cash**, has criticised **Mayor Sadiq Khan's** new plans to increase the number of Compliance Officers by a further 250 because neither the Mayor or City Hall were willing to look at the role of "e-hailing" smartphone minicab services such as Uber.

Mr Cash said: **"This practice circumvents the current regulation regime which is there to protect the travelling public. Neither TfL nor the Mayor appears to have the will to tackle this blatant flouting of the regulations by the likes of Uber.**

"In addition, proposals laid out in a recent consultation review of Private Hire regulations are to be revisited under Mayor Khan's administration. The union is deeply concerned that yet again they fail to regulate the virtual plying for hire of private hire vehicles which is now endemic on our streets."



Norman Beattie is Call Sign's man in Canada for taxi stories and recently sent us...

THE STRANGE LIFE OF A 1957 AUSTIN FX3



Marg with two customers and (right) her red FX3

As an icon, the black cab (in all its colour variations) has become synonymous with London all over the world, but the cab itself is often a real and visible representative of London as it rolls through city streets thousands of miles from home. These are what the **London Vintage Taxi Association** calls expatriate cabs and the **LVTA** collects information about them for its registry.

One of these expatriates, a red and black 1957 Austin FX3, now lives in the town of **Boissevain, Manitoba, Canada**. It is still in excellent running order and occasionally takes part in parades and other festivities in nearby towns, such as the centennial celebration of Ninga a few years ago.

The cab now belongs to Boissevain businessman, **Brian Kentner**, but - in Canada at least - the cab was originally owned by his aunt, **Marg Kentner**, who runs **The Grande Bazaar** gift store in **Stonewall**.

It was back in 1975; Marg had just started her business career in **Winnipeg** with a gift store and gift delivery service called 'A Touch of Class' and was looking for a hook that would distinguish her from competitors. Then she hit on the idea of using a London taxi to make deliveries.

Her friend **Peter McCuaig** was going on a trip to England, so she asked him to see if he could find an original London cab. In due course she received a (rather drunken) phone call from a London pub. It was Peter and in a slightly slurred voice, he told Marg that he had found her cab! He had picked up a second-hand one from **LTI's** batch of part-exchanged cabs.

Marg had the cab shipped to **Canada**, but it took some time before she actually saw it. The **FX3** arrived over here by way of **Antwerp** and was delayed in **Montreal**. Marg was afraid the cab would be stripped for souvenir hunters before it even got to **Winnipeg**, but it was in near-perfect condition. Even the original **Argos** meter still worked!

Marg drove the cab around **Winnipeg** for around 12 years until she sold **A Touch of Class**. Later she ran the **Tin Lizzie** auto-museum in **Headingley**, just west of **Winnipeg**. The Museum stored antique cars for local collectors and showed them off with Marg's **FX3** being used to give people rides around the museum grounds.

The only real problem with the **FX3** was its reluctance to start in **Winnipeg** winters, but Marg had no trouble getting neighbours or passers-by to give her a push start. Another slight inconvenience was that local owners of **Morgans, Bentleys, Jaguars** and other **British** makes would flag her down to have a chat and compare notes!

The distinctive licence plate number of **TXV 111** was original with the cab. In **Manitoba**, it is illegal to drive without a valid front plate but when she registered the cab, the licence inspector allowed her to drive with the London plate on the front and a **Manitoba** plate on the rear. Nevertheless, on one occasion she was once ticketed for a license violation by a particularly zealous female police officer!



Marg and her nephew are interested in the history of the cab before it left England, so if anyone has information, please contact Call Sign!

Norman Beattie
Call Sign Online
Manitoba, Canada



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Looking to the future

With Mike Son

Demutualisation

With an undoubted downturn of taxi work, due in no small part to all and sundry jumping onto our bandwagon – the latest being **Daimler** ride-sharing app, **MyTaxi**, which has swallowed up **Hailo** – and with seemingly no protection for the world’s longest-serving and undoubtedly best licensed taxi service from our licensing authority, **TfL**, the previous months have seen a radical change in the aspirations of **Dial-a-Cab’s** membership with the vast majority through voting procedures, deciding that the days of a DaC friendly society are ending.

Through the sale of our valuable building to - in all probability - a property developer and together with other parts of DaC, it will give an opportunity for the distribution of cash/shares to members. Should demutualisation and a sale of Dial-a-Cab be concluded sooner rather than later, it is important to remember that your most recently elected Board Members will be the last Board of Management to serve at the pleasure of the membership. Many Members have indicated that DaC should continue in a reduced size and of this I am also in no doubt. It is a well-known and much respected brand.

I am still optimistic in the future of the taxi trade. I’m sure you will have noticed that August, which is always a kipper month, has ticked over. Could it be that some members of the public are getting wise to the antics and adverse publicity of **Uber**? Accidents caused by the drivers looking at their satnavs rather than the road together with reported physical and homophobic attacks on passengers, could well have sent some passengers back to using more Licenced London taxis. I believe that a cost factor is also involved and with our Sales department’s fixed price scheme for longer journeys, there has been an increase in work numbers at the Society.

However, although radio taxi services are still finding it difficult to attract new corporate customers, the use of Credit Cards is increasing and will continue, especially after October 3. With Credit Cards in mind, I have noticed that some drivers still have a **Cash Only** sign in their cabs, even though a Credit Card reader and/or a **Credit Cards Are Accepted** sign is present in the cab.

Song Title

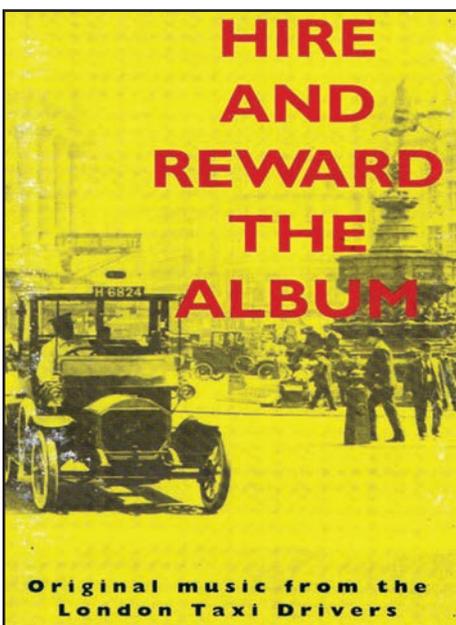
Love you too much
Another lonely day
Haunted & hunted
She’s here to stay
All night blues
Happy ending
Grandpa
God’s telephone
Cardboard city
Pink Cadillac
Miss America
Jeannie don’t call
Push
London Children

Bands/Singer

Tie-one-on
Chris Spangol
JCB
Peter Hallet
Badge
David Waoingham
Ivor Stein & Bands
Low & behold
Urban Clearway
Jeff Collins
Evans & Simpson
La Turn Around
The raining
MJK

Writers

Joe Witherden
Chris Spangol
Keith Waterfield
David Jenkins
Chris O’Shea
Pete Marsh
Ivor Stein
IanArcher/Frances Cramper
Paul Tully
Jeff Collins
ColinEvans & Geoff Simpson
IanWoodcock & Chris Keltie
Billy Clark
Jeff Collins



lowing the British Empire Medal award I was honoured to have been given.

However, I must add that this award is without doubt a recognition of the hard work the Committee as a whole of the London Taxidriers Fund for Underprivileged Children - both past and present - have undertaken year in and year out and of course for the amazing help the many drivers who support our efforts in transporting special needs and vulnerable children together with their parents and carers. To everyone, we thank you most humbly and sincerely...

Mike Son
DaC Sales Dept

These guys must be in a fortunate financial position to be able to turn down fares. Get used to accepting Credit Cards now.

And looking to the past!

Way back in 1995, together with some talented taxi drivers who wrote and performed their original music and **Capital Radio**, the **LTFUC** produced an album - **Hire & Reward** - to help raise revenue for the children’s charity. The album was produced as a cassette; however, I’m now able to copy the music onto CD. Having listened to the tracks, they are great songs. Where are the band members now? I’d be interested in hearing from you...

BEM

Dear Dial-a-Cab Members, Staff, Board of Management colleagues and readers of Call Sign, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all so much for the good wishes and kind comments I received fol-

Immaculate White Cab Available for Weddings



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07956 317040

David Parker (N59) admitted to *Call Sign* that he was pretty much at his wits end when for some weird reason, the big, long fan belt that drives numerous pulleys on his TX2 kept fraying at the edges on a regular basis, causing the **Dial-a-Cab** driver to recently have to replace it frequently and more recently twice in eight weeks. These fan belts aren't cheap and their normal life expectancy should be many thousands of miles. David told us that until recently, it had never happened before and he had 280,000 miles on the clock!

"I had a new fan belt fitted when the cab went in for annual overhaul in May of this year and then within weeks I broke down in **Northumberland Avenue** – and it was the fan belt. Various dealerships had theories about why the fan belt was fraying and what might be causing the problem, but after visiting several service centres and with more expense, the problem continued," David said with a sigh.

"A new water pump was fitted yet I still had problems and within a short time the fan belt would start to fray again. I was concerned because should the belt fail altogether, you lose power steering, the braking effort because there is no servo power to the brakes and also no charge to the battery because the alternator is not being driven, so that fan belt is really important.

"Eventually, and by now pretty fed up, I took the cab to **Dunston Taxis** in **Stean Street** off

Frayed fan belt = frayed nerves!



Kingsland Road, whom I knew of from my earliest days of cabbing when I rented a cab from them some 26 years ago. I explained the problem and without further ado **Richard**

kicked the engine over several times on the starter motor, carefully watching what was happening to the fan belt. By the seventh turn of the engine, he quietly turned to me and pointed to the steering pump pulley that was worn and loose, causing the fan belt itself to 'jump' as it rotated over that pulley. It was *that* that was the source of all my grief!

"I had the steering pump and pulley replaced and so confident was Richard that his diagnosis was correct, not to mention my concern that the problem really was sorted, that he gave me a 3-month warranty, which is very reassuring. Richard also explained that all the pulleys must be absolutely aligned as one, so that the fan belt does not 'kink' because any wear or free play on any pulley will have a devastating effect on the fan belt."

Dunston Taxis are at 333 Stean Street, Hackney E8 4ED. Phone 0207 254 1136.

**Alan Green
Call Sign Online**

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

Three Bobbies and a dented ego...

I loved my old **FX4** but it did have many issues; number one on my list of anxieties being the lights, or to be precise, the lack of them! A night time trip into the wilds of **Essex** was seriously dicing with death and trying to locate a left turn at 1am with something resembling the power of two candles on the front of the cab was embarrassing. They were also unpredictable; switches would regularly melt and they would work or fail on a whim. Despite all that, I had begun to enjoy working nights. But that was about to change...

It was late one very dark night and I had answered a distress call for one more cab to go to **St James Palace**; the destination was still a mystery as were the customers. So foot flat down on the accelerator pedal, I made my way along **Pall Mall**. As I got closer, I noticed a line of neatly arranged cabs and three very straight backed policemen standing guard over them.

I mentioned initial instincts usually being right in last month's **Call Sign**, so you can probably guess what was going through my mind as, in unison, they spotted me and stiffened. The sergeant major stepped forward and did the finger pointing thing at me! I came to a grinding halt and as he marched over, I noticed that there was one space that had been left between two of the cabs. My heart sank as I had wanted to position myself at the end in the chicken's position! But he was having none of that:

"You took your time," he barked at me and before I could say sorry, he pointed to the vacant spot and instructed me to reverse in. There was another ex-military cop standing on the pavement with his highly polished boots shining under the lamplight; as he waved me into position, I noticed that his toecap was overhanging the kerb stone exactly where I wanted to put my rear cab bumper. I braced myself, our eyes met and an unsaid understanding passed through the air between us. I interpreted it a bit like this: I'm not moving and if you touch my boots with your cab, then you're finished!

With a crunch, I selected reverse and lifted my foot off the brake pedal very slowly. It was just another manoeuvre, I told myself; but I could feel the beads of sweat forming on my forehead. I didn't dare look at the other drivers as I knew that would put me off. Inch by inch the old cab moved backwards and towards the policeman, who was getting larger and larger

the closer I got. I decided I would line up my mirror exactly level with the cab to my right, but there was some way to go yet. My window was open and I wondered if he could smell my fear, I could certainly smell the fumes that were pumping out over his trousers!

Finally I was there; I put the cab into *park* and pulled up the handbrake. Just as I looked around for a round of applause, there was a sharp tap on the window. My heart sank as he said those dreaded words: "Would you kindly step out of the vehicle, sir." I got out and he walked around to the back, sure enough I'd done a magnificent job in reversing almost to the inch of where I wanted to be, but he pointed to the back of the cab and said my rear light wasn't working! Now one thing my dear departed father used to say to me was never to admit to anything, but he was a bit of a rogue and I was nowhere near his league! So I said nothing and just banged it with the palm of my hand. Like magic, it came on!

I turned to him and our eyes met as he said to me: "You knew that wasn't working, didn't you?"

I just turned round, got back into my old FX4 and silently said a little prayer of thanks... *To be continued...*

Simon Scott (O40), Call Sign Online



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

Brethren of the Whip



A Grand Prix

I don't know Eric Court. I don't even know if he is still alive; but in a small way history was changed when he went to work one

December day in 1990.

On the 10th of that month, he'd been driving around Hyde Park Corner with a passenger in the back of his cab when he became involved with a red Alfa Romeo that was being driven in an aggressive manner. The two vehicles began jockeying for position, but the taxi driver held his ground much to the chagrin of the other driver who kept close to Court's rear bumper. Eventually Court had to brake, and not giving himself enough space, the Alfa Romeo went into the back of Court's taxi.

Both drivers got out. Fortunately, there was no real damage to either vehicle but Court asked the other driver what he was playing at, which is probably a polite way of putting it. The other driver just smiled and said nothing.

With no damage done, Court went to return to his cab and continue with his fare, but the other driver raised a hand and squirted a substance into Court's eye. It was Mace, CS gas, a chemical developed at Porton Down and its use was illegal in this country.

At this point Court admits to being terrified. He grabbed hold of the other man's tie but the AR driver continued to spray the Mace into Eric Court's face.

"My face felt like it was on fire," reported the taxi driver afterwards.

The police soon arrived and the other driver was arrested, but there was no sign of any canister of Mace. The driver denied the assault, but police later found the canister hidden in the cistern of a toilet in a nearby office block.

It was only the following day when the incident was reported in the newspapers that Court found out just who is attacker was. His name was Bertrand Gachot, the son of a French European Commission official in Luxembourg, but who lived in Belgium. He was also a leading Formula One racing driver ranked 11th in the world. He had a promising career in front of him, although due to several mechanical problems he hadn't accrued many points in the Driver's Championship. He did, however, win the Le Mans 24 Hour race in 1990.

When the case came before a judge at Southwark Crown Court, Gachot had just completed the Hungarian Grand Prix fin-



ishing in 9th position, although he had actually recorded the fastest lap time. In court, Gachot pleaded not guilty and his defence barrister even accused Eric Court of threatening to kill the racing driver once he

found out where he lived in Fulham.

"That's amusing," replied Court. "I am a licensed cab driver. Do you know what they would do to me?" 'They' probably being a reference to police and Carriage Officers who could be a bit pernicious when it came to erring cab drivers!

After deliberating for four hours, the jury found Gachot guilty of actual bodily harm. Before sentencing, Gachot's defence team asked the judge not to pass a custodial sentence as Gachot had recently borrowed a large sum of money in order to join the Jordan-Ford racing team. He still owed £250,000, a sum he was hoping to pay back through sponsorship but a jail sentence would end any sponsorship deal and ruin his career. In addition, he was due to race at his home track in the Belgian Grand Prix that coming weekend.

Judge Butler listened and said he had no hesitation in sending Gachot to jail for 18 months for the assault and a further 6 months, to run concurrently, for possession of a CS canister. He was also ordered to pay Eric Court £500 compensation and court costs of a further £500.

His legal team said they would appeal, not only against conviction but against the sentence as well. There was uproar in Belgium where a "Free Gachot" campaign was launched and over a thousand people marched in protest through Brussels. Many compared Gachot's sentence to those of the Liverpool supporters arrested after the Heysel stadium disaster. They argued that Gachot's sentence was far worse but nobody had died.

Gachot's sentence was eventually reduced to nine months, six of which were suspended and he was immediately released having spent two months in jail and missing four grand prix races. His career as a formula one racing driver was effectively over and he never won another F1 race.

His imprisonment created a problem for the Jordan team who had to find a driver at short notice. They had a young German on their books who had done well in Formula 3 racing, but who had never competed in Formula One. In a practice session, he drove faster in one lap than Gachot had driven all season. His name was Michael Schumacher and the rest, as they say, is history...

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

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"Yes, my old TX1 cab was totally reliable, even after 385,000 miles," Eddie Smith (Y56) recalled to Call Sign as we chatted at Roman Way while his replacement TX2 was being fitted out with Dial-a-Cab equipment.

"I bought my TX1 from Mann & Overton second hand with 60,000 miles showing on the clock and apart from the obvious and expected items of wear and tear such as occasional brakes, battery and regular servicing, that faithful old bus just kept going, proving itself to be a good, totally reliable workhorse," Eddie said displaying a true belief in the longevity of his old cab.

"I replaced two coolant radiators due to silting up over the extended period I ran the cab and with a good battery, the engine would start at the first click every time. In fact, the engine and gearbox were original items and continued to run just fine." Eddie smiled as though he were talking about a



Eddie (inset) with his "new" TX2 before the bodywork had been repaired!

A hard act to follow...

good friend.

"This TX2 I've bought from a friend makes me its third owner and with just 148,000 recorded miles showing, I am hopeful of a good relationship between us. Certainly I've heaped a lot of TLC on it so far! In fact, it was not a DaC taxi in its previous life, so I had to peel back many layers of assorted plastic liveries before I could make good some of the rust that had appeared under the adverts before a bodywork specialist I know re-sprayed the paintwork, which is why it looks almost like new now!" Eddie allowed himself another smile.

"I used to work in the motor trade, so I was familiar in dealing with damaged body panels. After the repairs, I generally tidied up the cab before the annual inspection and to re-licence it in my name. I must admit that however clean and decent it looks now, this cab will have a hard act to follow to catch up with - let alone surpass - the excellent record of reliability of my old TX1. I guess time will tell!"

With that, Eddie drove out of Roman Way with his terminal and door logos and allowed himself a hopeful smile for day one...

Baghwat Singh
Call Sign Online



THE HERTFORDSHIRE SENIOR PAIRS GOLF OPEN



Dial-a-Cab golfers may be interested in a day's golf on Wednesday 19th October 2016 at the Hertfordshire Golf and Country Club. It will be a Stableford scoring team event for two players per team. A 75% handicap allowance is given per player with the maximum starting handicap of 24 for men and 30 for ladies. Play will be from the yellow tees for Men and red for Ladies.

The whole day will be organised for you, just turn up with your team. You will be treated to tea, coffee and bacon rolls and following the competition, sit down to one of our delicious two course carvery dinners, followed by the prize presentation. It's all included in the cost of £64 per team.

You will need to arrive at least 1 hour before T-Time for refreshments and registration. Play will be a shotgun start with the tee time at 10.30am and we anticipate the meal will be served at around 3pm. A change of clothes is required after your 18 holes, ie jacket and tie etc.

If you are interested, please complete the entry form with full details of your team and return it to us with full payment of **£64** as soon as possible; confirmation of your tee time will be given at registration. Please make cheques payable to **Crown Golf** and return to:

Elaine Cochrane
The Hertfordshire Golf & Country Club, Broxbournebury Mansion
White Stubbs Lane, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, EN10 7PY

Credit card payments can be taken over the phone if you prefer. If you need any further information, please contact Elaine on 01992 466666 ext 249.

SENIOR PAIRS OPEN

Wednesday 19th October 2016

Please complete the form below giving full players details.

Lead Contact Name:

Please provide FULL details of both players

Name (1)

Address

Contact number E-Mail Address

Name (2)

Address

Contact number E-Mail Address

Your tee will be confirmed on receipt of your entry fee for the team of £64. Please return entry by 12th October 2016. Cheques made payable to Crown Golf (UK) Ltd. Please phone if you would like to pay by Credit Card or for further information: Elaine Cochrane on 01992 466666 ext 249

This information will only be used by Crown Golf Ltd and not issued to any other third party...

Uber and St Pancras "success...?"

If you were one of the drivers who several months ago gave up a part of your working day over a five day period by demonstrating along *Pancras Road* and surrounding streets against the proliferation of **Uber** cars hanging up for jobs, your sacrifice may just be paying off.

According to **Matthew Little**, the Quality and Training Manager at **Camden Council's** PCN department, proposed changes to a traffic order re parking along the stretch of road opposite the **Kings Cross** taxi rank have now been authorised and a redesign is about to be implemented and hopefully completed by the time you read this. It will introduce a No Waiting / No Loading restriction over 24 hours outside **St Pancras**.

Picking up or setting down will still be allowed, but if your passenger isn't there, then you will not be allowed to wait. We also look forward to a much more visible police presence.



Charles Rathbone lives and works in San Francisco – the place where Uber began life just 6 years ago. He has been connected to the taxi business for many years and was the first cab driver to use a TX2 as his work vehicle. In this article he looks back at the Uber cycle as Call Sign goes...

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Six years ago **Uber** offered its first taxi-like rides to passengers in **San Francisco**. In 2013, the company obtained permission to use personal vehicles in its low cost “rideshare” service. Lightly regulated and richly funded by investors, **UberX** was an instant hit with the riding public and rapidly siphoned business away from taxicabs, as well as from transit.

By late 2014, San Francisco taxicab drivers were abandoning traditional taxi companies. Drivers moved in ever larger numbers to the new services, which offered irresistible sign-up bonuses, guaranteed earnings, car purchase assistance and many new customers. Taxicab companies and individual owner-operators have since faced a chronic shortage of drivers, resulting in many cabs sitting idle for much of the time.

The best official estimate is that 37,000 rideshare drivers ply for hire in San Francisco, many of them part-time. By comparison, there are fewer than 2,000 licensed taxicabs. By observation, the rideshare services appear to have reached a saturation point within the last year. Riders have many new options to choose from as the transportation sector continues its rapid growth. Now fleets of private shuttles and buses target the rideshare demographics and neighbourhoods, offering fares as low as \$3.

Traditional licensed taxicabs continue to enjoy many advantages over the lightly regulated ride services. Trust in taxis remains high because taxi driver background checks are recognised as superior to the informal checks performed by the new entrants. Wheelchair accessible service and service to seniors remain largely markets for taxis.

Licensed taxicabs are regarded as transit in San Francisco and are accorded many transit privileges. Special red-painted transit lanes for buses and taxis stretch for miles along the busiest streets. Dozens of key intersections allow turns only by buses and taxis. Unlike any other cars, taxicabs can pick up and drop off in bus zones and can even stop in bike-only lanes.

Almost every high-volume pick-up point in the downtown area has a designated taxi stand, while no curb spaces are reserved for the informal ride services. At SFO dozens of prime curb spaces at the arrivals terminal are exclusively for waiting taxicabs.

Police and taxi regulators are overwhelmed by the tens of thousands of rideshare vehicles. Taxi inspectors are nonetheless regular visitors to nightlife districts. They issue many citations for illegal operation with fines up to \$5,000.

Taxi companies are making a transition away from their previous high-efficiency mode in which almost every cab was in service day and night. Now there are many hours when the



August 2016 message atop a San Francisco Yellow cab directed at Uber and Lyft drivers (pic Charles Rathbone)

cab is idle while insurance and other expenses keep adding up. Companies and the regulator are looking at options that can reduce the cost of operating a taxi.

Meanwhile the number of customers using one form or another of taxi-like service is clearly much larger than it was even a few years ago. How much of the market traditional taxicabs will ultimately claim remains to be seen. App-based shared taxi service, which makes taxis more competitive with rideshare service, will be operational in San Francisco this year. Permits for drivers are easier to obtain now and the process may be streamlined further. New per-mile insurance products offer the prospect of reduced costs for single-shift taxi operators. And an important constitu-

tional challenge claiming unequal treatment under the law will soon be heard in a San Francisco federal court.

San Francisco taxis have been six years now in the eye of the storm. **London** taxi drivers can take some consolation from the fact that we are very definitely still here! **Uber** and **Lyft** copied their apps from the excellent **TaxiMagic** and **Cabulous** apps that were used in San Francisco as early as 2008. Those taxi ehail companies are still doing well, now re-branded as **Curb** and **Flywheel**. Expect more re-branding and re-positioning of taxis as we leverage our advantages while adapting to an ever larger market with its host of innovative partners and competitors.

Charles Rathbone
San Francisco for Call Sign Online

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NEW VERSIONS OF THE TAXI! BOARD GAME

And you can win a copy of the brand new New York version...



Where to buy Taxi! Board Game

Visit www.taxi-boardgame.co.uk or contact gordon@taxi-boardgame.co.uk for more information about Taxi! The London game is currently available from selected London retailers, Amazon UK, Buuy.co.uk, eBay and Gumtree etc.

All 4 versions, including the 3 new versions of the Taxi! Board Game will be available to buy from the previously mentioned

online stores AND the new Taxi! Game online shop, which launches in late August at www.taxi-boardgame.co.uk/shop.

Call Sign has three copies of the brand new, New York Taxi! board game up for grabs! To win a free copy, simply answer these 2 questions correctly - one taken from each version of the game and you will be entered into Call Sign's prize draw.

From the London Game: Which year saw London host the Olympic Games for the second time?

From the New York Game: Which fashion chain was created by New York born Donna Karan in 1984?

Send your entries to Call Sign by post, email to callsignmag@aol.com or drop it into the reception for the attention of Call Sign. The closing date is Monday 12 September 2016...

The London Taxi! Board Game was launched in 2015 and initial sales considerably exceeded expectations. On the back of this success, the team at Taxi Game Ltd have now created three more City versions of Taxi! and these will be available to buy in late September 2016.

The existing London Taxi board game will now be joined by New York, Edinburgh and Glasgow versions of the game.

About Taxi!

Taxi! is a new game full of fun and knowledge for all the family (12 years +). Created by an Edinburgh black cab driver, the game was first piloted in central Scotland, out-selling Monopoly and Trivial Pursuit in major stores. Now, with new features and a further redesign, three new versions of the Taxi! Board Game are about to be launched.

Taxi! Board Game contains 600 local history and general knowledge questions about the city and just like driving a taxi, the better your knowledge, the better the tips because

when the fare ends, you must answer a question to gain a tip.

Dial-a-Cab drivers, like most taxi drivers, have an opinion on every subject; land on one of the 'Sound-Off' squares and it's your turn to sound-off like a cabbie! The Sound-Off cards contain a hundred varied subjects. On being told the Sound-Off subject, you have 30 seconds to mention as many of the six key words printed on the card as you can. Every key word you mention increases your takings.

Driving a shift in a taxi is a combination of luck and knowledge; turn left you may get a \$5 fare but turn right and you could get a \$90 tour! This is reflected in the Taxi! Board Game by the 'Give or Take' squares. Keep the card for yourself or pass it to a fellow player. Is your luck in?

The winner is the player who has earned the most money at the end of the agreed shift.

Is more better???

With news that yet another taxi app "run by cab drivers for cab drivers" is aiming to hit the streets soon adding to Cab:app, Hailo (soon to be MyTaxi), Gett and several others not including those currently offered by both Dial-a-Cab and ComCab, you

have to wonder where it will all lead, because the first thought has to be that they are all fighting for the same pot of work and that pot is being diluted at a rapid rate.

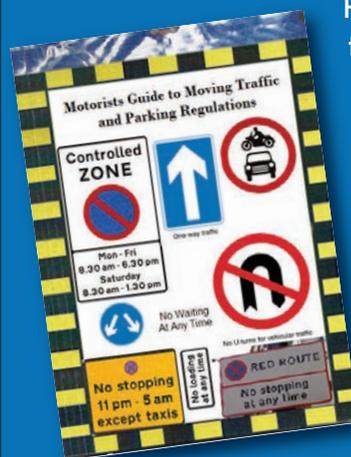
It was reported in the American TLC magazine - that's Taxi, Limousine and Car and not the UK's tender loving care - that there are at least ten new ride share app services starting up around the USA. The article by Don McCurdy goes on to add that "...like any successful enterprise, Uber has numerous copycats doing things a little differently but essentially the same. You know, kind of like Uber does with taxicabs."

Then just like London, Don says: "Regulators have strapped so many regulations on taxicabs that it's a wonder anyone still wants to drive one when drivers can drive any other number of app driven for hire services."

So that means fighting back, but more to the point for London, in this tiny city compared to the parts of the US Don is writing about, how many mini-Ubers can we take - even if they are taxi based?

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

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!!!

Another true story from Geoff Levene...

Agony Aunts and the taxi trade!



In a recent issue of *Call Sign*, **Simon Scott** wrote amusingly in his blog about an embarrassing experience with *Agony Aunt Anna Raeburn*. Well, that sounds rather bad doesn't it; perhaps that should read 'concerning' rather than 'with'!

Anyway, I spent about 35 minutes with her, after which I needed to lie down in a darkened room with a cold compress applied to my fevered brow! I'd picked her up from her pretty terraced house in **West Hampstead** at 6.30 one morning to take her to **Waterloo** and at no point in that journey did she stop talking – and I don't mean chatting about the weather or politics. This was a full frontal 90mph assault! She wasn't being nasty... just unstoppable, with some of it being rather personal.

I think it's pretty well-known now so it can be repeated, but she told me - a complete stranger - that she had been in a relationship with *Agony Uncle Philip Hodson* and that he'd dumped her for another *Agony Aunt, Ann Hooper*. It was all beginning to sound a bit incestuous! But perhaps it's easier to tell these things to someone you can't really see - perhaps like a confessional or radio phone-in programme. So in fact I had become her *Agony Uncle*...

She wasn't the first woman to open up like that. One day in Fulham, I noticed a 20-something girl sobbing in the arms of an older woman, who in turn was flagging me down.

"Don't worry," she said soothingly, "everything will be all right. I'll call you in a couple of days." With that, they said their goodbyes and she got in.

"**Waterloo** please," she said in a soft voice, "what a day!"

She seemed to want to talk, so almost as a courtesy I asked her what had happened. And she told me!

"Me and my husband live in Dorset. He works up here and has a flat so I thought I'd surprise him. But I found *that* girl there. They'd been living together for 6 months and she knew nothing about me."

I asked if her husband had also been there but she said he wasn't. He was away on business - or more probably, with woman number 3! Once again I was the sounding board and as usual, so I'm told, the wife is the last to know.

Selling the house...

Our house was on the market in the depths of the recession and was a real struggle to sell. One Saturday, a couple came to look and immediately decided to buy it. They actually offered £5000 more than we were asking for! Solicitors were instructed and a surveyor gave the place a quick once over. It was all going swimmingly. But then, a few weeks later, the doorbell rang and a woman stood there. I thought she was the one that was buying the place, but no...

"Are you selling your house," she asked?

"It's under offer," I replied calmly.

"Can you tell me who's buying it?"

"I'm afraid that's confidential," I said trying to

sound as though I knew what I was talking about.

With that she began to cry, leaving me wandering just what was going on.

"I've come a long way," she said still with tears flooding her eyes. "Just tell me, was he a big guy?"

"Not really," said I even though I knew that he was.

"Did he have an unusual name," she asked still searching for something.

"I wouldn't say so," I replied, even though I knew that he did. "What's all this about?"

Then it came... "I think my husband is buying it with another woman!"

I asked why she thought that and she blurted out that the surveyor's report came through her letterbox!

What a wally! He had given his home address! Needless to say the sale collapsed the next day.

You'll note that women feature here in a big way. And why not? At the moment they are dominating politics. In a few months a woman will (hopefully) be the most powerful person in the world. The glass ceiling has been well and truly smashed. But I do find American businesswomen a little scary.

Like the one who got in, gave me the destination and announced that she was going to lay down!

Oh dear, I thought, she's not well. But that was the way she liked to travel. Knees drawn up, iPad balanced against them and mobile clamped to her ear. She didn't like the route and let me know it.

"I don't suppose you like women telling you

what to do," she said I kept quiet. When I got to the set-down, she was still banging on about it. Under my breath I said: "For God's sake, just go!" To which she asked if I had just called her a bitch!

She'd had her say, so then it was mine: "No, I didn't call you a bitch, I would never do that. You might consider yourself one but it didn't come from me." That shut her up!

And finally there was Marcia who ran a film company in Soho making commercials. She later became a confidante of Cherie Blair before starting up a fashionable restaurant in Great Portland Street. It wasn't what she said that would make me uncomfortable, it was what she didn't say. She would sit, looking straight ahead watching the traffic.

One afternoon I got a job from her office going to the airport. Out came a young chap, the company runner. He screamed out that he was in trouble! They had two Company Mercedes and his boss told me him to take her case down and put it in the boot, but he had put it into the wrong one! She was waiting at the terminal for us!

He made it sound like he was going to his execution. We got to the airport and there she was. She walked towards him to collect the case. Her mouth widened into a huge smile... but it was the smile of a python before it strikes!

And I thought the good lady wife gave me a hard time...

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

THE SALIERI RESTAURANT *376 Strand, WC2*

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

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"I'm not sure I should be telling you this," Robert Stutman (T63) confided to Call Sign, "but such information is readily available on the internet... if you know where to look!"

Robert giggled rather mischievously as he continued: "I guess the criminal fraternity already know how to get into vehicles without a key so they won't need my help, but for an innocent driver who inadvertently locks him or herself out of their vehicle, it could be a real boon."

Aware of the security aspects of the information he was about to disclose, Robert still continued with his story...

"I had accidentally locked myself out of my cab. At first I hit panic mode as I looked and saw my ignition key sitting comfortably in the ignition switch of the cab when it should really have been in my hand! Under normal circumstances you 'd think it would be an easy enough task to go back into the house, find the spare key and open up the cab door to retrieve the original key, but I in my wisdom only have the one key, which makes life difficult," Robert said shaking his head in acknowledgement with himself!

"I have managed with just the one solitary key for many years and my misfortune was something of a senior moment, but there we

Breaking and entering is an illegal offence, but what about...

Entering Without Breaking!



To save Robert's blushes, this isn't him!

are," he confessed with more than a slight hint of embarrassment.

"I phoned around a few friends and they all suggested I could use a simple domestic implement to force up against the door and sure enough, when I did it the way I was told, the door popped open much - as you can imagine - to my very great relief.

"I have often thought about getting one of those magnetic key boxes to hide outside the cab somewhere, but never actually got round to buying one yet, so now this might be an opportune time to do so because the thought of having to go through a repeat performance of entering my own cab without the aid of the correct key, isn't one I want to contemplate!"

The "rescue" involves a wedge and a rod! Call Sign will not tell you anymore but there are numerous YouTube videos on the subject. The best bet though, is to make sure you always have a spare key!

**Alan Green
Call Sign Online**

ACTION FOR CABBIES: A STATEMENT...

On January 18th 2016, **Action for Cabbies** embarked on a **Crowdfunding** campaign to try and raise an initial £600,000 so as to obtain permission from the court to launch a **Judicial Review** against **Transport for London** for allegedly wrongly and potentially illegally issuing **Uber** with a **PHV Operators License**. The initial deadline for raising the funds was set as March 18th and after several extensions, the final deadline was April 7th. The extensions were given so as to see if we could still make the original target and to give the LTDA time to match the £300,000 as was originally agreed.

Despite our best efforts, we failed to reach the £600,000 target but managed to raise in excess of £350,000. Nobody in the history of the licensed London taxi trade had ever managed to raise funds to this level before, but sadly the original plan was not to be.

Anticipating that we might need to adopt an alternative plan, a Consultation was undertaken on March 3rd by **AskPOB** to find out if those who contributed to the original fund would back an alternative plan to try and launch a judicial review against TfL with regard to certain aspects surrounding how they were implementing the impending mandatory credit card initiative. To that effect, we asked taxi drivers to decide whether this would be a route they would like us to examine and potentially undertake. The majority voted in favour to proceed with seeking permission for a Judicial Review in regards to the driver paying the transaction charge.

Upon realising that we would not reach the £600,000 target and with a majority vote from the Consultation, it was decided on March 31st 2016 to switch from trying to obtain permission for a Judicial Review in relation to Uber being licensed, to attempting to obtain a JR in relation to how the credit card initiative was being

invoked. Everybody that pledged through the Crowdfunding initiative was given the opportunity to withdraw their pledge by 5pm on April 5th. Numerous announcements were made over various platforms including email, Facebook and Twitter and it was made clear that any un-cancelled pledges would be used for attempting to obtain permission for the Judicial Review surrounding credit cards.

Certain aspects of the alternative JR had to be altered as there would have been no prospect of getting a positive result, as well as aspects that were not unreasonable such as objecting to fixed payment machines, the mandated requirement to accept credit cards and the list of suppliers, to name but three.

An application for a Judicial Review was lodged with the court on May 3rd and some of the monies that had been collected were paid to Rosenblatt Solicitors as a retainer; all remaining monies are being dealt with via our accountants Raffingers and will be paid to Rosenblatt upon receiving a full and final costing.

On July 17th we received informal notification from our solicitors that the attempt to obtain a Judicial Review had failed and that we would not be given leave to challenge TfL in court. We received the official notification several days later. Naturally we are very disappointed with this outcome as we feel there is a strong enough case. We would like to thank every single person that believed in this cause. We may have failed on this occasion, however the positives that have come from this are enormous - the biggest positive being that we have proved that we CAN galvanise ourselves and fight back as an industry. Moving forward, we are going to continue fighting tooth and nail to help protect this industry and to help it flourish. We may have lost this battle, but we aim to help win the war.

Once again we wish to thank each and every one of you for your support...

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Are You Sure?

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

Flashback
2000

DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

This month's Flashback looks at a true story from Graham West (V40) that appeared in the January 2000 issue of Call Sign...

A BRIEF CASE OF PASSION

In the November 1998 issue of Call Sign, the Editor asked for *driver's* unusual items-left-in-the-cab stories. That reminded me of an incident that happened in my taxi some time ago...

I had picked up a young couple in Shaftesbury Avenue and was told to drive them to Tedworth Square in Chelsea. On the way, the young couple were being extremely passionate with each other. I was comparing it to the joys of spring - even though it was winter! I dropped them off and out the corner of my eye as I was pulling away, I saw them scampered up three steps at speed - no doubt wanting to catch the end of Coronation Street!

Several minutes later, another hand shot up and this time we were off to Croydon. We hadn't gone too far when my passenger told me that someone had left a briefcase in the back. I assumed it had to belong to that last young couple as I remembered the female holding it when she got in. The passenger passed it to me and I thought that I'd have a look at the end of the trip for any ID that would confirm it to be hers. At Croydon, my passenger paid me off and I pulled round the corner to have a quick look.

Inside the briefcase I found a mobile phone, various credit cards and £2600 in cash! There was also a business card with a **Cadogan Square** address. As I wasn't sure of the exact number in Tedworth Square that I had originally dropped the couple at, I decided to phone the number on the card. However, there was no answer, so I left a message on the answerphone and started making my way towards Cadogan Square.

On arrival, I rang the bell and explained to the male voice answering the intercom that a young lady had left her briefcase in my taxi going to Tedworth Square, but that there was a business card giving this address inside. I left out the part concerning the extra-curricular activities! The male voice said that it sounded like his girlfriend's case and that he would come straight down.

A mental picture formed in my mind during those few seconds waiting. The young lady was very attractive and I had a picture of this guy being 30-ish, tall and handsome. Wrong! The door opened and there stood a shortish, 60-plus balding man who looked more like her father!

He looked at the case and recognised it immediately, even explaining that there was £2600 in it to pay the wages on a day's film shoot at the company he was associated with. He gratefully accepted the case and gave me £60 from it. But he did display a worried frown on his face - no doubt concerned that his girlfriend should have been so careless but possibly also wondering why she had got off at Tedworth Square! I thought to myself how worried he might have been had he realised the circumstances in which the briefcase was left! I decided not to add to his worries and bade him goodnight...

G.G.West (V40)

Autogas trial LPG taxis in London

July 20th at Dial-a-Cab House saw a successful Open Day by Autogas in association with Shell and Calor, when they were invited by Call Sign to show DaC drivers exactly what LPG meant. An estimated 120 drivers turned up in the 5 available hours to look at three LPG cabs, ask questions of the four experts there and test drive the cabs. Overwhelmingly, the drivers thought the cab was a huge improvement on their current cabs. A full report was in the August issue.

Autogas is on the back leg of a trial in London with a licensed London taxi running on LPG. Autogas, which has the largest network of automotive LPG refuelling pumps in the UK, is hopeful that **Transport for London** will licence the cabs very soon for use later this year.

The vehicle, which has had its diesel engine replaced by a brand new Opel petrol engine converted to run on LPG, is run by drivers at **Epsom Cabs Rentataxi.co.uk** 24 hours a day in order to speed up the process of a 10,000 mile durability test.

Autogas believes the LPG re-powering solution will prove attractive to licensed taxi owners that want to extend the working life of their cabs in London, rather than invest immediately in a brand-new one.

Paul Oxford, the business development manager of Autogas and one of those that came to DaC, told **Call Sign**: "Not everyone is going to rush out and buy a new vehicle straightaway. If someone is coming up to retirement, for example, why would they buy a new cab?"

"But by converting with an approved LPG system, they can get an extra five years of service from the vehicle on top of their 15, as well as dramatically help to reduce air pollution and make substantial savings on their fuel costs of around 20 percent."

This provision is important in the run-up to 2018, when all new Hackney Carriages in London will have to be zero emission capable as part of the city's drive to reduce air pollution. Taxis which are already licensed won't be affected.

Initial emission testing at Millbrook has shown that LPG technology produces **80% fewer NOx emissions compared with a normal diesel powered version, as well as a 99% reduction in sooty particulate matter.**

At around 55p a litre, LPG is also cheaper than conventional fuels. Repowering of a taxi costs around £8,000 (+ VAT) and takes around three days, although Brexit might add a small amount on.



The LPG gas cab, test driven by a DaC driver, makes its way back to DaC House

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

IT IS NOW!

Bob Woodford looks at London's long lost sporting venues

One of the offerings I list on my profile for a Vancouver-based Travel Agency is called the London's Sports Stadiums Tour. You would be surprised how much North Americans are interested in getting around town to check out our stadiums. However, as a born and bred Londoner and an historian, I am of course much more interested in researching the heritage of our sports stadiums, both existing and dearly departed.

The most local team to my home is **Gillingham FC**, who have never played their home games anywhere other than **Priestfield** and the team closest to my heart is **Millwall**, who are now playing at their fifth home ground.

But this month's chosen London team however, moved home no less than 17 times before they finally settled on Loftus Road, true nomads and worthy of featuring over the next 2 issues of Call Sign – and not just because they are the love of DaC Chairman Brian Rice!

Queens Park Rangers began life in 1882, one of the capital's oldest clubs and its founding fathers were all ex-pupils of **Droop Street School**. now **Queens Park Primary School** - now a Grade II listed building and one of the original London School Board schools in London, built to serve the children of a newly-built residential social housing.

With the establishment of mission halls as London was spreading further out, those old boys got together in the evenings at **St Jude's Hall** in nearby **Ilbert Street** under the guidance of mentors **Jack McDonald** and **Fred Weller**. These two guys had been given permission to coach the teenagers by the **Rev Gordon Young** – this clergyman would have had no idea what those humble beginnings were going to lead to!

When **St Jude's** merged with neighbours **Christ Church Rangers** to create a much stronger local football force, it was decided to go forward as **Queens Park Rangers** as just about all of the original players came from around the **Queen's Park** district in West London.

Their first playing surface can be described as rudimentary at best, a piece of waste ground adjacent to the more superior **Kensal Rise Athletic Ground** in **Clifford Gardens** off **Chamberlayne Road**. If that first playing surface was very basic, their next choice (for two seasons only) was at **Welford's Fields**, farmland leased from **All Souls College** at **Kensal Green** by **Welford & Sons** who were appointed dairymen to **Queen Victoria** – it was illegal to keep cattle in the centre of town, and so this led to a rapid growth in dairy farming in the suburbs!



Tottenham Hotspur v. Q.P. Rangers: The clever foot-play of the Spurs was much admired

So what part of **John Welford's** 300 acres (the equivalent of about 300 football pitches) did the footballers carry their four upright posts and crossbar tape to? Obviously the acre closest to the pub! **The Case is Altered** was probably a leading candidate for London's most peculiar pub name, but don't get me started on that subject as I'm already researching London's famous **Coaching Inns** for another series of articles! Don't go looking for the pub or **QPR's** second playing surface now – it's all gone, but would have been just to the south of **Kensal Rise Station** near **Station Terrace**.

When construction started to swallow up **Welford's** vast farmlands, they were eventually absorbed into **United Dairies**, but these entrepreneurs still charged **QPR** a whacking £8 in rent for the full season – and there was no sign of **Tony Fernandes** in the 1880s! Incidentally, you can still see the old **Welford's** dairy building in **Shirland Road** if you keep your eyes peeled out there and once you've found that beautiful Victorian red brick building, check out the old archway to what would have been its yard.

Rangers, starting to become a stronger outfit and attracting a reasonable following, secured the **London Scottish Ground** at **Brondesbury**; the £20 annual rent offset by the ability to charge admission to spectators now for the first time, sharing the space with their more illustrious rugby playing partners. The famous old rugby club had its origins over several wee tipples in **Mackay's Tavern** off **Ludgate Hill** in 1878 – and just like the **Rangers**, the custodians of the oval shaped ball had many home grounds before finally settling down at the **Richmond Athletic Ground**.

But followers of both **London Scottish** and **QPR** would have to watch their side do battle at new homes in 1890, because the ground sharing had caused the pitch to become unplayable. Rugby moved out to **Old Deer Park** while the football moved to another four different grounds – **Home Park**, **Kensal Rise Green**, **The Gun Club** at **Wormwood Scrubs** and even to the **Kilburn Cricket Ground** in **Harvist Road**.

QPR lose to **Spurs** in 1901

In 1896, the club moved back to **Clifford Gardens**, but this time to actually play at the **Kensal Rise Athletic Ground** instead of the waste ground next door. The 'R's

(known as **The Royalists** in those days) played their first ever professional match at the **KRAG**, going down 0-1 to **Spurs**, and this once famous venue would regularly put on athletics, cycling and even boxing in its heyday – but it was all covered over by the 1960s.

At the start of the 20th century, it was time to move on yet again and **St Mark's Park** in **St Quintin Avenue** would now host home games – much to the disapproval of local residents who thought football lowered the tone of **North Kensington**! The players had to change in the **Latimer Arms** before games, running down the road to the ground – much to the excitement of the local youth who ran with them so that they could sneak in as they couldn't afford the one penny admission fee!

Those complaining residents was typical of the social upheaval that football was bringing – rugby was considered to be the 'gentleman's game' and the new upstart game was considered low class.

All that was left of **QPR's** ninth home ground in their first 15 years of existence was carved up in the 1920s when the **Princess Louise Hospital** was built and **Pangbourne Avenue** created – the only remaining tracts of land from the ground that was also shared with a cricket club are today at the **West London Bowls Club** and **Kensington Memorial Park** at either end of the street.

The football club in some ways were to be the victim of their own success, because when 12,000 fans turned up for a match against **Spurs**, this caused the residents to petition the estate owner to serve notice on them – not the first time they had found themselves in this pickle.

That old recreation ground had been built over old brickfields and piggeries, not perhaps ideal for sport, but it meant the club were now homeless again, literally in big pig sh*t!

I shall pick up the story again next month, because we are still a long way off from the legends that were **Rodney Marsh**, **Stan Bowles** and **Les Ferdinand**!

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online

The following letter was written by Call Sign Editor, Alan Fisher, but who in this instance wrote it as a driver. It was sent to the following people: London Mayor Sadiq Khan, Deputy Mayor for Transport Val Shawcross, London Assembly member Caroline Pidgeon, Minister of Transport Chris Grayling, London's transport Commissioner Mike Brown, MP for Kensington and Chelsea Lady Victoria Borwick, TfL General Manager Helen Chapman as well as TfL's Leon Daniels, Garrett Emerson and Peter Blake. A copy was also sent to the Dial-a-Cab Board and DaC driver David Lessman as a former Chairman of children's charity, LTFUC...

To whom it concerns...

I am addressing this email to everyone named above and would hope that my case is written clearly enough to understand. If it isn't, that is due in totality to the anger I feel towards Transport for London with regard to the appalling treatment given to Dial-a-Cab by an organisation that I have always assumed wanted all transport vehicles under its umbrella to work in a safe environment.

But apparently that doesn't apply to London's taxi fleet, justifiably said to be the world's best. And much thanks for that must go to TfL's predecessors, the Public Carriage Office. Yes, there was a certain amount of fear attached to their presence, but that was in addition to respect.

The fact that I edit Dial-a-Cab's in-house magazine, *Call Sign*, comes second to my pride at being a licensed London taxi driver for over 45 years. However, I'm also ashamed to be connected to an organisation like TfL who have shown beyond doubt that they care not a jot for this trade and that if any of our number were to be attacked and hurt, then that is nothing to do with them.

In other words, TfL doesn't care if we get hurt and they are attempting to prove it because if their plans go through, then some of our number will be hurt - possibly seriously.

What I'm talking about in case some on this list don't know - and I have no doubt that not everyone does - is all to do with TfL's insistence on London taxi drivers accepting credit cards.

That decision is undoubtedly correct. Like many on Dial-a-Cab, I have already been carrying out CC rides for years via our system and with street CC trips for several years ever since we have had fixed CC readers (PEDS) fitted into our taxis with the holster placed handily by our left shoulder and easily fitting through the gap in the partition for the passenger to put in the card and insert their pin.

But astonishingly, even though it was TfL that passed the DaC PED in that position some five years ago at a substantial cost to DaC, I have now been informed that TfL want the PED to be placed in the passenger compartment. That would mean that if three semi-drunk passengers at two in the morning said that the PED wasn't working, then the driver will have to get out and check it.

How important is the safety of London Taxi Drivers?



I'm sure I don't need to explain what that could mean to any driver being put into that position. Robbery? Bruising? Stabbing? I'm not interested in whether it has or hasn't yet happened. It will somewhere down the line. But why? The PED is excellently placed in a safe position and all it needs is an approved sign on the passenger side of the partition that says the driver accepts credit cards. Why should we be put in danger every time someone comes up with a problem? Most are genuine and I am usually able to sort them out fairly easily, but there is no way on God's earth that I am going to get into the back of my taxi with people I may not even trust.

I often get out to help passengers with bags or women with babies and prams. But would I get into the back of a taxi with an unaccompanied female passenger and take the chance of being accused of an offence against her person? No I wouldn't in either case and I won't. If that means going to court to explain why I don't want to put myself in danger when it is totally unnecessary to do so because our current system caters for all eventualities, then that is what I will have to do. I have already upset my wife when telling her what TfL wants us to do.

Feel free to look at my record as a taxi driver, which actually goes back several years before my May 1971 taxi beginning encasing my time with London Transport. I give you all permission. You won't find one complaint. You won't find me down as a trouble maker; I am just a taxi driver who believes that this is the best taxi service in the world and who does his best to provide an excellent service to his passengers.

But apparently TfL are going to force me into deciding whether my safety is as important as credit card acceptance. I want to accept CCs but not if there is the possibility of putting myself in danger.

I also know of one case where a passenger that had failed to secure their seat belt was catapulted forward hitting their head onto a

PED case in the rear. It was only at the driver's insistence that he should have buckled up that a complaint didn't go any further. But that isn't *my* complaint; I am purely pointing it out as a secondary reason. Perhaps there have been no official reports of it happening, more because our drivers are excellent and unlike the competition, do not need to look at satnavs rather than the road ahead.

But that is a million miles from unnecessarily insisting that drivers may have to go into the passenger compartment if the passenger says there is a problem with the PED. As I have said, it won't be me and if I am forced to do as TfL insist, then the world will know how I feel via our justice system and the newspapers - one of which reported on the 154 alleged sex attacks on their passengers by cab drivers and of whom I would stake my house on that none were taxi drivers. However, I would expect the number of taxi drivers being attacked to go up after being lured into the rear of the cab under the pretence of the CC PED not working.

I find it so difficult to understand that our so-called licensing authority is happy to put us in danger, because an excuse that it hasn't happened yet is just not good enough. It will happen.

I used to write to TfL whenever one of my *Call Sign* readers asked me a question that I believed they could answer, but I cannot remember the last time anyone from that organisation bothered responding to me. However, my views are now known and hopefully will at least be read and the feelings of myself and many other drivers will be looked at sympathetically, because I just cannot believe that any organisation would do what TfL are proposing.

I have sent this lengthy email to several people including Deputy Chair at Transport Val Shawcross, TfL, Caroline Pidgeon at the Transport Committee, the Mayor's office, two former Chairmen of the London Taxi Drivers Fund for Underprivileged Children, Victoria Borwick as a hopefully interested MP and former member of the Transport Committee and someone who knows much about how this trade operates. I have also forwarded it to members of the DaC Board of Management who in all fairness should know my views as Editor.

Any responses would be welcomed because if I get none, then I will know that my worst fears are not just fears but TfL promises...

Kind regards

**Alan Fisher
Taxi Driver / Editor
Call Sign Magazine**

Stuart Cameron (R31):

"I think it would be scandalous to fit it in the back. Where it is now is more convenient because the coiled extension allows it to be handed through the port-hole or the window as and when the situation demands - and it can be viewed and checked by the driver. Personally, I'm not too bothered about driver safety aspect because I work days, but I'm sure repositioning the PED to the rear would be of great concern to those working evenings or nights and I do feel for those it would affect."



Paul Pavlou (W11):

"I'm happy with the card reader where it is and prefer it to be in the front rather than the rear where I would fear for my own safety. I work both days and nights and so would be hesitant about a rear siting for the reader. Also and importantly, I lost a £50 fare because the trip was 'voided' and if the card reader had been fitted in the back, I would not have been able to see that until much later, for example, if I had pulled away from the destination."



Dennis Heavin (A01):

"The reader is absolutely superb where it is now - I wouldn't want it anywhere else. What a ridiculous idea to site it in the back. In its current position, the PED can be handed through the 'pay hole' or passed through the cab door window and anyway, it cannot be fiddled with by children where it is! Furthermore, I would suggest there is an element of passenger safety if it was placed inside the passenger carriage as someone could impact against it, especially if they had been drinking or were unsteady on their feet through health reasons. In addition, fitting it in its present position leaves the carriage free from obstruction to luggage and baby pram's etc. Having worked nights, my concern would be for driver safety, especially during the early hours and for those drivers who do work unsociable times of the day or weekends."



Andy Closier (A05):

"I far prefer it in the front as you could otherwise leave yourself wide



TfL want to move DaC's credit card reader to the passenger compartment, so Call Sign asked subscribers whether they would be happy with the PED moved...

The DaC PED and TfL

open to abuse if the PED was fitted in the back. At least in the front of the cab where the doors are locked, the driver has complete control over the PED's operation *and* their personal safety. I think it is a really bad idea to re-site the unit in the rear."

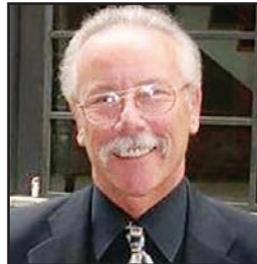
Mickey Tarbuck Jnr: (L12)

"Not only am I very happy where it currently is, I *definitely* do not want it in the back! That would be unsafe for passengers as well as drivers. If it was fitted in the back, in the case of an emergency stop a passenger could hit their head on it, particularly in the dark or if they had been drinking. I used to work nights, so what about setting down in a housing estate or a dodgy area somewhere in the middle of the night? It wouldn't take long before the less savoury members of society catch on to the fact that terminals are in the back of the cab and it would then be goodbye to driver safety! Move it? No thanks...!"



David Lessman (D19):

"It is outrageous that TfL can just move the goal-posts like that when it can possibly affect the safety of both passenger and driver. Surely that aspect should be paramount. If it ain't broke etc...!"



David Burnetts (S43):

"I am quite happy with the card reader device in the front with me where I can conveniently pass it through to the passenger via the port hole/pay tray, or even offer it through the cab door window if the need arises. I can imagine also sorts of security issues arising from a re-



siting into the back of the taxi. No, it really is not a good idea at all."

And from a female perspective...

Debbie Hope (W18):

"Yes, I would far prefer it stays in the front. I often work early mornings and in the winter when it is dark, I admit I do feel vulnerable sometimes. I can see that even the male drivers might feel uncomfortable if the terminal was fitted in the rear and they had to get out of the front to assist with processing the passengers' card. I can imagine all sorts of scenarios where driver safety could be compromised. Yes, I want it to remain where it is right now..."



Jackie Kott (Y88):

"I want that card reader in front with me, not in the back where I can foresee all sorts of reasons to tempt drivers away from the security of the front of the cab. As a woman who works early mornings, I would be very uncomfortable and suspicious if a passenger claimed to have a problem. Fitted in the front as at present, it is the driver who has full control, can see what's going on and if there is a hitch or technical difficulty associated with the PED or MDT the driver can resolve the situation speedily and safely."



Pat Graves (L53):

"Particularly as a woman, I do *not* want that reader in the back! In fact, any driver, male or female will become vulnerable because if there were several burly blokes in the back, *anybody* would feel intimidated at hav-



The DaC PED and TfL (continued from page 28)

ing to leave the security of the front of their cab to have to sort out a problem - be it true or false - if the card reader was situated in the rear. I could see all sorts of ramifications without going into specifics. What about a drunken/confused female passenger and a male driver? Or a passenger fumbling to get their card in the reader and needing the driver to assist? Also, I think the terminal itself would be at risk of theft if sited in the rear due to its higher profile affixed to the division. Cab windows could be smashed to access it with all the attendant grief that can cause. Where it is at present is in full view and in control by the driver and given the extension lead, is convenient for all concerned. We should take our hats off to **Brian Rice** and the DaC Board for their prudent foresight in placing the PED where it currently is. It can also easily be removed for security reasons if the driver so wishes.

Maybe we should make up a template letter for all the drivers to sign and send to **Mayor Khan** and their local M.P? It's just an idea, but I do feel very strongly about re-positioning the card reader."

Janet Ramsden (G35J):

I'm happy taking credit cards but not if the reader were to be situated in the rear compartment. I was always told that you shouldn't leave the front of the cab unless you are specifically helping someone – certainly not because a stranger claims their credit card is stuck in the machine or some veiled excuse that could possibly be designed to get me to leave my driver's cab. I rarely have problems with the PED so why should it be moved? I remember the old PCO telling us that we shouldn't leave the driver's cab in the case of any altercation, now their successors are telling us that we might have to enter the



rear of the cab with two possible drunk males or even those just looking to start trouble.

And what happens while you're in the back, because you won't be able to lock the front? Someone could just get in and take everything! Does that explain my view???"

And finally back to males in an attempt to find anyone in favour...

Paul Channing (V29):

"I'm happy with the reader in its present position because I can check the fare meter reading and ensure everything is correct. I have had passenger's void the card by pressing the 'cancel' button before the transaction has gone through, so the element of fraud possibility is something that does concern me. I work days but it must be tougher to check everything at night."

John Francis (A39):

"I'm absolutely happy where the card reader is fitted at present. Get out of the front of the cab to sort out an alleged problem if the card reader is fitted in the back? Are you joking! Fitted where it is, the driver has complete control over its use, without kids sticky and inquisitive little fingers mucking about with it. I would also be wary regarding driver safety. Incidentally, I had my cab re-licenced at Staples Corner in mid-August and was asked if I had a credit card-reader fitted and when I replied it was a **Dial-a-Cab** unit, the technician simply nodded his approval. So I guess I should be ok for the full year of my licence until next August. Nobody there made any further comment..."

Call Sign did try to find someone in favour of the suggestion and even just not bothered but we couldn't. Following Pat Graves suggestion of a letter to the Mayor regarding the possible PED re-siting, we sent a letter to several MPs and members of TfL in addition to the Deputy Mayor for Transport. You can read the letter on page 27 of this issue...

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Uber apply for Judicial Review

Uber has launched a legal challenge against new rules in London which could require thousands of its drivers to take an English-language test. According to the app's GM, **Tom Elvidge**, the legal action was a last resort following new rules that were being introduced.

"They are bad for both drivers and tech companies like us," Mr Elvidge said.

Uber's application for a **Judicial Review** focuses on four of the new rules that TfL announced several months ago following a consultation of the Taxi and PH industry. While Uber say they support an English-speaking and listening test, they argue that drivers should not have to provide a certificate showing they have an intermediate level of writing and reading. Valued recently at around \$68billion, Uber called the regulation "costly and unnecessary" and have now filed official papers with the court. They will be using the legal services of **Blackstone Chambers**.

Uber is said to have more than a quarter of the PH drivers in London and estimates that thousands of them will be affected by the change.

TfL say they will be "robustly defending the legal proceedings brought by them in relation to the changes to PH regulations." They will be represented in the application by **Brick Court Chambers**.

TfL said: "These regulations have been introduced to enhance public safety when using private hire services and we are determined to create a vibrant taxi and private hire market with space for all providers to flourish."

Uber will be challenging four of the new rules. They are; requiring written English tests for drivers, having to locate its customer service call centre in London, requiring insurance that covers drivers when they are not working and having to alert TfL of changes to its business model or app.

Addison Lee chief executive **Andy Boland** said that he failed to understand why Uber had at first agreed and are now resisting the implementation of the new regulations.

"The whole industry was fully involved in the consultation and there is a strong belief that they will benefit both passengers and drivers."

His view was seconded by **Gett's** Europe MD **Remo Gerber**. He referred to Uber's U-turn as "baffling."

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Hello Ladies & Gents,

PEDs

After receiving many calls regarding the present situation with our Credit Card PEDs, it still staggers me that although TfL passed the DaC PED in its current position some five years ago, they have now informed us that we must place the unit in the passenger compartment by 3rd October, a date that is fast approaching. What's even worse is that after two previous meetings with the Chairman at Palestra and countless emails and telephone conversations going back as far as March this year, at the time of writing we are still waiting for a decision from TfL. Please be assured that we will have a contingency plan in place, especially for those of you that have overhauls scheduled on or around the beginning of October when this new ruling is due to take effect.

We were fully compliant back in 2011 when the PEDs were first implemented and although I am in no doubt that when all taxis are fully compatible, it will generate extra revenue for all of us, none of our Members should be subject to a situation late at night or come to that at any part of the day, when there's a possibility you may be asked to get out of the taxi in order to complete a card transaction in the rear compartment that could then put you in an unnecessarily dangerous or inappropriate position for the obvious reasons.

More rides

As I mentioned in my last *Call Sign* article, we should soon be in a position to offer you more rides back from all the airports, predominately offering the account clients a taxi for their return trips rather than just outward bound journeys, The trips will be predominately on fixed rates including waiting time

OPERATIONS AND COMPLIANCE



premiums and any extra mileage that you incur during a particular journey. We must make sure that all prices are workable for both Members and clients alike in order to encourage taxi usage, but these prices are – and will be – totally rejectable without penalty. I hope that will help reduce time spent in the feeder park for a trip. It's getting more and more difficult for the Sales team to acquire new accounts and I am optimistic that with your assistance, our new service will see an increase in this type of work. Since the introduction of our fixed price regime eighteen months ago, trips to **Heathrow** and other airports have increased by almost thirty percent over the period. Trips to areas on and beyond the **M25** have also seen a similar upturn and long may it continue in the same positive vein.

Euro 6 Mercedes Vito

I have recently been informed on good authority that the new Euro 6 Mercedes is almost ready to launch. The Vitos have been

built, are waiting to be shipped over to the UK and I believe that **S & B Autos** will be the suppliers. But in addition, apart from a cash 'on the road' price, Mercedes will offer a subsidy if you take up their finance, which I am again told is highly competitive. S & B autos will also offer a three or four year lease deal with varying amounts of deposit.

Decision time approaches

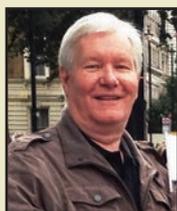
Finally, with the imminent onset of meetings to decide the way forward for demutualisation and the future of our Society, speaking to many Members since the questionnaire was returned, there are many who would like DaC to continue in a restructured format, a much leaner slimmed down operation that I also believe is feasible. But the decision is totally in your hands as to the route we take; and an improved driver App could conceivably help us achieve this. If used in a correct way it would, in my opinion, increase revenue for drivers and the Society.

On a personal note; if after demutualisation and a decision on the sale of relevant assets and distribution of funds to Members is finalised, it is my honest opinion that if the longest serving radio circuit was to fade away into oblivion, it would be a sad day for our industry, probably something Uber would hope for. But it isn't my decision; it is up to you, the Members, to decide and for the Board of Management to carry out your wishes...

Allan Evans
DaC Operations /
Compliance Manager

Taxi Leaks Jim Thomas asks Call Sign readers a pertinent question...

ARE THEY TRYING TO GET RID OF THE TAXI TRADE?



London traffic chaos theory; could they really get it this wrong by accident? I totally believe there is an underlying agenda to get rid of the London Taxi trade, going far beyond the woeful inadequacy of TfL. It's widely believed that most of Inner London's borough councils are party to the conspiracy against us; you only have to look at the way we've been treated by **Westminster, Camden** and **Islington**. No planning committee from any of the councils could have bought this amount of chaos to our streets by accident! The magnitude of such incompetence must surely have been mismanaged?

After witnessing the gridlocking of streets surrounding the cycle Super Highways segregated bike lanes, they are now actually set to expand the nightmare right across the board with **Cycle Super Highway 2**. This man-made mayhem is to be followed by the pedestrianisation of **Oxford Street**, which is likely to include a total ban on all motor vehicles (except buses and cycles) in **Tottenham Court Road** and part of **Baker Street**. Just where are they expecting the traffic to go?

Pollution levels at present far exceed European legal limits, allegedly causing an extra 20,000 preventable deaths per annum. And it's about to get much worse.

Taxi drivers are gifted with a sixth sense in regard to traffic flow. We have the ability to look at proposed schemes and evaluate the likelihood of its success. Yet neither TfL or local council planners have ever tried to seek advice from the trade. Instead they pin all their hopes on graduates, many of whom live outside London and use computer modelling. The evidence that much of this chaos is part of an agenda, relates to the fact they generally take no notice of consultation results and turning London into the world's biggest building site. Virtually every street in central London has road works of one form or another. Whose computer predicted central paving along most of the length of Oxford Street eastbound would improve the traffic flow? **Whose computer predicted that by narrowing the entrance to Regent Street from Piccadilly Circus that it would improve the chaos around Eros? It's just total lunacy! A ten year old child could have predicted problems from narrowing major roads, yet these planner's computer models missed it?**

So what's behind the chaos and mayhem?

We saw it first at the 2012 **London Olympics**. TfL failed to provide ranks at the **Olympic Park** and spectators were directed by an army of stewards from the stadium to expanded bus assembly points and straight onto the tube. Olympic tickets came with 24 hour travel passes (the same at **Lords** and **Excel**). Taxi ranks were moved and hidden in side streets well away from the exits, while spectators were shepherded onto public transport. Similar efforts came at **Twickenham** where spectators were directed to waiting buses while Taxis were excluded from streets around the stadium. Our work has been touted by rail staff while airside at **Heathrow** they used lies about Taxi fares to attract more customers onto the **Heathrow Express**.

continued on page 31

Mailshot

Either write to Call Sign at
Dial-a-Cab House
or email us at [callsign-
mag@aol.com](mailto:callsign-mag@aol.com)

Credit card payments and gratuities

Hello Alan

One of the biggest disappointments with the PED for credit cards is that it doesn't prompt the customer to give a gratuity; I feel this has been a massive error as all the other major credit card system providers offer this facility. I've lost count of the amount of people who ask if they can add a gratuity after the payment is cleared. Are there any plans to add this to the current system?

Darren Carter (K52)

Allan Evans responds: Yes Darren, plans are in place that will enable passengers to add a gratuity at the end of their journey should they wish to. The software on the Ingenico PED (Snoopy) must be able to read the exact cleared fare including gratuities for billing purposes, consequently the supplier is working on this change at the moment and it will be part of the new VAD system...

PEDs in the rear

Hi Alan

Like many other drivers, I'm a bit concerned at the possibility of having our PED devices placed in the passenger compartment of the taxi. I agree with **Brian Rice** and yourself that moving them seems pointless when they work perfectly well where they are, not to mention the possibility – no matter how remote – of putting drivers into of unnecessary danger. Have there been any developments from Tfl bigwigs on the subject...?

Alex Constantinou (N05)

I have written a rather lengthy letter (see page 27) to several people including the Mayor, Val Shawcross, several at Tfl, Caroline Pidgeon and Lady Victoria Borwick MP. It has also been passed over to Wes Streeting MP. We can now but hope that common sense prevails and we can keep the PEDs where they are ...Ed

Clive Efford

Dear Alan

Whilst reading your piece about the group of MPs and Lords who had got together to fight our cause (page 5 *August Call Sign*), I was surprised to see one name missing - that of Labour MP **Clive Efford**. I understand this gentleman was once a London taxi driver so one would have thought he would be fight-

ing our corner at every opportunity, but apparently not so. In fact it would be interesting to know if he has ever spoken in defence of the cab trade or done anything for it.

Terry Farmer (Ex-T55J, retired member) The MP for **Eltham** has long supported our trade. I remember the effort he put into trying - sadly unsuccessfully as it was always destined to be - gain us access into the special lanes during the London Olympics. I also remember him being involved last year when he was one of several MPs gathered in a House of Commons Committee Room to meet taxi drivers lobbying their MPs regarding EDM 142, an RMT initiative designed to define and enshrine in law our exclusive right to ply for hire. **Clive Efford** was one of the first to agree to appear along with **Ilford North MP, Wes Streeting**. His name has often cropped up through the years but from 2011 to early this year, he was the Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport which would have limited his chance of speaking too often ...Ed

ARE THEY TRYING TO GET RID OF THE TAXI TRADE?

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The same thing recently happened at **Edgbaston** for the test match with **Pakistan**. Taxi ranks were replaced by a £5 per person bus service straight to **New Street Station** - with the bus company using the Taxi rank as a bus stop! We'll soon see a revolution in shopping trips to London with **CrossRail**, which they say will bring so many people to Oxford Street; it will be the busiest shopping area in the world. So is that why we are being excluded from major roads in these areas? If Taxis can't get to the shops, people are not going to use us and they will take the tube. Our night work could drastically reduce now that the weekend night tube has opened. Has anyone seen the new network of Taxi ranks outside night tube stations? Visit suburban stations and see the new PH booking offices, many inside the station forecourts! Tfl and **Network Rail** (oh look who's their new Chairman – **Sir Peter Hendy!**) have been getting away with touting our work for years, facilitated by piss-poor weak trade representative organisations and Unions who prefer to fight amongst themselves rather than concentrating on who the true enemies are.

Tfl Compliance officers currently harass Taxi drivers at mainline ranks, while turning a blind eye to touting from PHVs. Why is it we don't see Tfl COs regularly checking booking details of PHVs at stations, why do they only concentrate on Taxis? Compliance teams turn up frequently at pop-up Taxi ranks, yet when did we ever see them at the entrance to the restaurant inside the BBC car park on Wood Lane, or the side entrance to Westfield? Or what about the pop-up PH ranks at the Brewery and HaC Barracks when there are functions on? It just doesn't happen.

Recently, we found PH company **RD2.com** had been given special dispensation from Tfl and the **City of London Corporation** to form an illegal Taxi rank on red route double red lines so as to be available for immediate hire at a function outside **Old Billingsgate**. The **United Trade Group** engagement policy, which held us back for four years, was always going to be scrapped after Boris exited stage right while the new Mayoral administration looked for a way to quell the unaffiliated demonstrators. But the UTG are still there and still excluding other orgs at compliance and rank committee meetings.

Their excuse is that you have to be invited by Tfl. I beg to differ on this as the Joint Taxi Ranks Committee is a self-appointed group who sometimes invite Tfl to their meetings and not the other way round. It needs to be sorted out and soon. We have to make sure every group has representatives invited. At a recent Palestra meeting, Dial-a-Cab Chairman Brian Rice was invited, as were the apps, and because of that, the trade organisations all refused to attend. Trade unity? That's just laughable.

We have for months seen a trend for disgruntled drivers to break away from traditional subscription based representations. New driver groups such as the **Mayfair Mob**, **Dads Defending Daughters** and **Action4Cabbies** have appeared and in the case of the Mayfair Mob, are beginning to achieve impressive results. Trade representation has always mirrored football supporters' mentality. Loyalty to a certain colour of lanyard has held back progress and helped keep the trade divided. But drivers are now beginning to question their own organisations apparent lack of results.

Now that the engagement policy has gone, everyone is playing in the big league. Perhaps it's time to take a leaf out of the beautiful game and have talent scouts look for the best people from all the teams and bring them together in a united squad? 'Taxi United' supported across the board by every driver sounds better than a fragmented and disenchanting trade...

Jim Thomas
Taxi Leaks / Call Sign Online

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