

February 2017

Call Sign



The largest online readership of any Taxi magazine



**Daniel is DaC's
first driver
with the new
Euro 6 Vito**



**Brian Rice
TfL shocker:
“I am disgusted by
their ineptitude
and rudeness. I
will never again
help them unless
I have to...!”**



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

I can only give burst times if the venues websites state the start and duration or finish times. But we are now including Hackney Empire events, although only shown in the on-line version this month, which is an essential download.

What's On: February 2017

Venue	Event	Date	Venue	Event	Date
Royal Opera House	La traviata (Burst 22:25 Sold Out)	01/02/2017	Royal Opera House	Sleeping Beauty(Sold Out Burst 22:15)	18/02/2017
West Ham Utd	v Man. City (Burst 21:30)	01/02/2017	Royal Opera House	Sleeping Beauty(Burst 16:30)	18/02/2017
ExCel (East)	Modern Business Exp. (finish 18:00)	01/02/2017	ENO (Coliseum)	Pirates of Penzance (Burst 17:15)	18/02/2017
Royal Opera Hse (stu	Upon Awakening (Burst 21:00 Sold Out)	02/02/2017	ENO (Coliseum)	Pirates of Penzance (Burst 21:45)	18/02/2017
ENO (Coliseum)	Rigoletto (Burst 22:20)	02/02/2017	Charlton	v Oxford (Burst 16:45)	18/02/2017
ExCel (East)	Modern Business Exp. (finish 16:30)	02/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Camping/Oceans/Bikes (finish 18:00)	18/02/2017
Royal Opera House	Il trovatore (burst 22:20)	03/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Franchise Show (finish 17:00)	18/02/2017
Tottenham	v Middlesborough (Burst 21:15)	04/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Motorcycle Show (finish 18:00)	18/02/2017
ENO (Coliseum)	Rigoletto (Burst 21:20)	04/02/2017	Brentford	v Wolves (Burst 16:45)	18/02/2017
Crystal Palace	v Sunderland (Burst 16:45)	04/02/2017	Sadlers Wells	Eva Yerbabuena (Burst 17:00)	18/02/2017
Chelsea	v Arsenal (Burst 14:15)	04/02/2017	Sadlers Wells	Eva Yerbabuena (Burst 21:00)	18/02/2017
Charlton	v Fleetwood (Burst 16:45)	04/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Camping/Oceans/Bikes (finish 17:00)	19/02/2017
ExCel (East)	100% Optical (finish 21:00)	04/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Motorcycle Show (finish 17:00)	19/02/2017
ExCel (East)	100% Optical (finish 18:00)	05/02/2017	Sadlers Wells	Eva Yerbabuena (Burst 21:00)	19/02/2017
Brentford	v Brighton (Burst 16:45)	05/02/2017	Royal Opera House	Sleeping Beauty(Sold Out Burst 22:15)	20/02/2017
Royal Opera House	Il trovatore (burst 22:20)	06/02/2017	Royal Opera House	Adriana Lecouvreur (burst 22:25)	21/02/2017
ExCel (East)	100% Optical (finish 16:00)	06/02/2017	QPR	v Wigan (Burst 21:30)	21/02/2017
Royal Opera House	Adriana Lecouvreur (burst 22:25)	07/02/2017	Millwall	v Chesterfield (Burst 21:30)	21/02/2017
ENO (Coliseum)	Rigoletto (Burst 22:20)	08/02/2017	Sadlers Wells	Cia. Mercedes Ruiz (Burst 20:50)	21/02/2017
Royal Opera House	Il trovatore (burst 22:20)	09/02/2017	Royal Opera House	Sleeping Beauty(Sold Out Burst 22:15)	22/02/2017
Evolution (Batt Pk)	Awards Ceremony (1000 attendees)	09/02/2017	O2 Arena	BRIT Awards 2017	22/02/2017
ENO (Coliseum)	Pirates of Penzance (Burst 21:45)	09/02/2017	Evolution (Batt Pk)	Awards Ceremony (1600 attendees)	22/02/2017
Sadlers Wells	Masurca Fogo (Burst 22:00)	09/02/2017	ENO (Coliseum)	Rigoletto (Burst 22:20)	22/02/2017
ENO (Coliseum)	Rigoletto (Burst 22:20)	10/02/2017	Wembley Stadium	Tottenham V KAA Gent (Burst 21:50)	23/02/2017
Sadlers Wells	Masurca Fogo (Burst 22:00)	10/02/2017	Royal Opera House	Sleeping Beauty(Burst 22:15)	23/02/2017
O2 Arena	Strictly Come Dancing	11/02/2017	Evolution (Batt Pk)	Awards Ceremony (1600 attendees)	23/02/2017
West Ham Utd	W.B.A (Burst 16:45)	11/02/2017	ENO (Coliseum)	Pirates of Penzance (Burst 21:45)	23/02/2017
Fulham	v Wigan (Burst 16:45)	11/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Classic & Historic Cars (finish 21:30)	23/02/2017
ENO (Coliseum)	Pirates of Penzance (Burst 17:15)	11/02/2017	Sadlers Wells	Gala Flamenca (Burst 20:50)	23/02/2017
ENO (Coliseum)	Pirates of Penzance (Burst 21:45)	11/02/2017	Royal Opera House	Adriana Lecouvreur (burst 22:25)	24/02/2017
Arsenal	v Hull (Burst 14:15)	11/02/2017	O2 Arena	Jack Whitehall	24/02/2017
QPR	v Huddersfield (Burst 16:45)	11/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Classic & Historic Cars (finish 18:00)	24/02/2017
Millwall	v Southend (Burst 16:45)	11/02/2017	Sadlers Wells	Gala Flamenca (Burst 20:50)	24/02/2017
Sadlers Wells	Masurca Fogo (Burst 22:00)	11/02/2017	Royal Opera House	Sleeping Beauty(Sold Out Burst 22:15)	25/02/2017
O2 Arena	Strictly Come Dancing	12/02/2017	O2 Arena	X Factor Live Tour	25/02/2017
Royal Albert Hall	British Academy Film Awards	12/02/2017	ENO (Coliseum)	Rigoletto (Burst 21:20)	25/02/2017
Sadlers Wells	Masurca Fogo (Burst 18:30)	12/02/2017	Crystal Palace	v Middlesborough (Burst 16:45)	25/02/2017
Fulham	v Notts F. (Burst 21:30)	14/02/2017	Chelsea	v Swansea (Burst 16:45)	25/02/2017
QPR	v Burton A. (Burst 21:30)	14/02/2017	Charlton	v Bury (Burst 16:45)	25/02/2017
Millwall	v Portvale (Burst 21:30)	14/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Classic & Historic Cars (finish 18:00)	25/02/2017
Royal Opera House	Sleeping Beauty(Sold Out Burst 22:15)	15/02/2017	Brentford	v Rotherham (Burst 16:45)	25/02/2017
ENO (Coliseum)	Rigoletto (Burst 22:20)	15/02/2017	Sadlers Wells	Gala Flamenca (Burst 20:50)	25/02/2017
Sadlers Wells	Israel Galván (Burst 21:00)	15/02/2017	O2 Arena	Rod Stewart	26/02/2017
Royal Opera House	Sleeping Beauty(Sold Out Burst 22:15)	16/02/2017	Wembley Stadium	EFL Cup Final (burst 18:15)	26/02/2017
Royal Opera House	Sleeping Beauty(Burst 16:30)	16/02/2017	Tottenham	v Stoke (burst 13:45)	26/02/2017
ENO (Coliseum)	Pirates of Penzance (Burst 21:45)	16/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Classic & Historic Cars (finish 17:00)	26/02/2017
ExCel (East)	Camping/Oceans/Bikes (finish 18:00)	16/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Professional Beauty (finish 18:00)	26/02/2017
Sadlers Wells	Israel Galván (Burst 21:00)	16/02/2017	O2 Arena	Rod Stewart	27/02/2017
Royal Opera House	Adriana Lecouvreur (burst 22:25)	17/02/2017	Royal Opera House	Adriana Lecouvreur (burst 22:25)	27/02/2017
ENO (Coliseum)	Rigoletto (Burst 22:20)	17/02/2017	Evolution (Batt Pk)	Awards Ceremony (1400 attendees)	27/02/2017
ExCel (East)	Camping/Oceans/Bikes (finish 17:00)	17/02/2017	ExCel (East)	Professional Beauty (finish 17:00)	27/02/2017
ExCel (East)	Franchise Show (finish 17:00)	17/02/2017	Royal Opera House	Sleeping Beauty(Burst 22:15)	28/02/2017
ExCel (East)	Motorcycle Show (finish 17:00)	17/02/2017	ENO (Coliseum)	Rigoletto (Burst 22:20)	28/02/2017
Sadlers Wells	Eva Yerbabuena (Burst 21:00)	17/02/2017	Millwall	v Peterborough (Burst 21:30)	28/02/2017

Note: I believe that Evolution are evening events and taken from information obtained last November, so may be subject to change. This table only contains 108 events of the 217 I found. I encourage you to download the full listing in larger print complete with the day of the week as well as date.

Download at: www.myfav.co.uk/wofeb17.pdf

from the editor's desk

Dirty deeds!

Well, the dirty deed has been done; my **Pin Entry Device**, otherwise known as the DaC credit card reader, is now in the passenger compartment and other than the first trip, where I felt somewhat temporarily confused, I've had no real problems - even though I have to consistently tell passengers to wait until I tell them it's ok to use. Of course I never thought that every passenger would be a threat. I just considered it an unnecessary risk to move it from where it was almost 100% safe to somewhere that could pose a threat if the passengers were determined to rob the driver. But sadly, somewhere down the line a driver will be injured thanks to an attitude of superiority aligned with total intransigence by TfL. Some would call it stupidity!

We will just have to learn to adapt and be careful; sadly TfL will remain stupid and intransigent. The best example of that occurred when a **Dial-a-Cab** driver took his cab to his local passing station with his PED in its new position close to the offside door. The passing inspector failed it because no one had told him that TfL had passed a new position down the side as against the "old" one on the passenger side of the central partition!

Are you still with me? It has now moved from its excellent position on the driver's side to either behind the driver or to the offside door. Now I know this is a rather silly question, but if TfL in some sort of perceived wisdom have decided that the card readers can go close to the door, why did they move them to the partition? And if they can go close to the door, why didn't they place them by the nearside door so that drivers can see what passengers are doing, as against the totally blind view they have behind them? Apparently it's in case you try to watch passengers put their pin in - something we couldn't do when we used to pass the PED through the opening. As I said: Stupid and intransigent!

Engine Management Light

Most taxis have an **Engine Management Light** that will come on at some time or other. It could happen after you've had to turn the engine over for a longer time than usual on a particularly cold morning or it might just appear because your fuel cap isn't on properly. It could also mean something serious involving the engine. We all know it's a warning light; the question is for what?

Most garages can't tell you because the warning light covers several different things that could go wrong and only the main agent usually has the computer program needed to decipher the message.

But now there is an app that plugs into your cab and will tell you whether the warning is serious or not and whether it's safe to continue working. That's the good news; not so good is that I never caught the name of it! I was flicking through the TV channels and caught the tail end of a motoring piece on **Fox News** where they had been talking about an app to decipher EML warnings. It sounded like **FIX** but I can't be sure. Sounds like a good idea to me and one that could save small fortunes...

Bank Junction closure

Unless you have been holidaying on Mars, then you'll know that within the next few months,



the City of London Corporation intend closing the Bank Junction to all traffic except buses and bikes. There have been demos and letters flying around; but of all that, one letter stuck out as being so sensible that it almost had a chance of changing the minds of those behind the scheme that will bring even more misery to a City still struggling with bike lanes that are wide enough for buses to get through!

That letter didn't come from a trade organisation or a magazine editor; amazingly it came from the **Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers**. I'm not a member of the **WCHCD**. I've never had the time, but I admire their charity work - especially the **Magical Taxi Tour to Disneyland Resort Paris** that they undertake every year for children with life threatening illnesses. They do other stuff such as helping local schools etc, but what they do *not* usually do is to get involved with trade politics. But having read a letter signed by current Master, **Alan Roughan** to the Corp's Director of the Built Environment, **Caroline Dwyer** and copied to several others including the Lord Mayor, **Dr Andrew Palmley** and those in charge of relevant involved committees, perhaps they should take over the letter writing for the trade, because their letter was excellent.

Uber: Beginning of the end???

Last month's *Call Sign* ran a piece from the minicab union, **GMB**, where they wrote of the victory in October after they brought two employment tests cases for **Uber** drivers to the **Central London Employment Tribunal**. The judge said the company had acted unlawfully and that Uber drivers were entitled to receive holiday pay, a guaranteed minimum wage and an entitlement to breaks. The ruling has major implications for more than 30,000 drivers across England and Wales - but the **San Francisco** based company has decided to appeal the decision in the **High Court**.

But now we hear the dispute has spread to **New York** and a case heard by the **New York State Workers' Compensation Board** - the name infers it is similar to our Tribunal - and should the result go against Uber and classify the worker as an Uber employee, the company could face compensation claims from their workers going back several years.

Uber has always said that drivers working via the Uber app are independent contractors, and that they just supply the software platform that connects drivers to customers. But the New York test case isn't the only one and there are several being filed to state and federal authorities.

The New York case has been filed by **Jorge Washington**; he is a courier for the **Uber Rush and Eats** delivery service. He is also a member of the **New York Messengers Alliance** group

that represents gig-economy delivery people pushing for better pay and conditions and is also backed by the **New York Taxi Workers Alliance**. Uber don't like Unions and or those working for the app to be members of any.

A second hearing is scheduled for late February but to avoid a case, Uber offered to settle with Mr Washington, floating the possibility of a cash payment on the condition that he accepts a rejection of his claim and terminates his contract with Uber. That would avoid setting a precedent and leaves his independent contractor status untested. However, the courier has apparently rejected any settlement.

Robert Grey is the attorney representing **Jorge Washington**; he said Uber was motivated to avoid a second hearing because the compensation board would then decide on Mr Washington's employment status, but an Uber spokesperson responded by saying that the company rejected any allegation that it was retaliating against Washington, partly on the grounds that because Washington was an independent contractor rather than an employee, he is not covered by state labour laws that prohibit retaliation by employers against staff. That Washington is not an employee is, of course, the very point that remains up in the air, and which the state board will decide on later this month.

Should the board rule Uber's messengers are independent contractors, they would not be entitled to the organising protections and workers' compensation coverage enshrined in labour law. However, should it go against the app, the Uber world might begin to implode...

TfL

Just for a change (!!!) there is a substantial amount of text dedicated to our licensing authority, **Transport for London**. It is a sad reflection on TfL that they are so despised by drivers that they actually run **Uber** a close second; but it is now also management that considers them to be totally useless at the important job they are supposed to be doing.

Inside this issue there is an article in which DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** expresses his disgust at the sheer rudeness of TfL and tells *Call Sign* that he will never again assist TfL when they ask for his help - which they do on occasion. He also writes of the rudeness TfL displayed by not answering **Allan Evans** letter regarding the movement of PEDs to the passenger compartment.

Then there is a piece from *Call Sign's* **Marc Turner (R97)** where he interviews **Ajit Chambers** who formed **The Old London Underground Company**. Ajit claims that at meetings with TfL, how impressed then-Mayor **Boris Johnson** was with Ajit's initiative to turn the stations into places of leisure and entertainment. But he soon noticed their attitude changing towards him when, according to Mr Chambers, TfL proceeded to 'steal' his business model and that after he'd invested a huge sum of his own money into the project.

Then there is the disturbing story of TfL's inspectors picking on DaC driver **Alan Drew (L33)** and asking him why he wasn't wearing his badge after he explained that he was on his way home!

Sadly, very sadly, it's all inside this issue...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections of the Chairman

Building update

The process of issuing shares and the sale of the building is progressing, albeit slower than I originally anticipated. However, this is due to HMRC dealing with our situation slower than I'd hoped for. We contact HMRC every few days in an attempt to speed up their process, but unfortunately they move at their own pace. I am now informed at the time of writing that I will receive their decision in the next two weeks and we are pretty sure that HMRC will agree with our view, but we have to be absolutely certain before we can continue with the process. If by an outside chance their view is different to ours, then we will have to proceed via a different avenue. But I am fairly sure that will not be the case.

TfL again

I'm sure you are all aware of the decision by **Camden Council** to ban taxis from **Tottenham Court Road** and **City Corporation's** banning of taxis from **Bank Junction**. Both decisions are ludicrous so far as I am concerned and what with the substantial amount of our road space being stolen in order to appease cyclists, just where will we be able to ply our trade in the future?

I am reliably led to believe that **Camden Council** were originally of the mind of allowing taxis access to **Tottenham Court Road**, but in a document sent to the **LTDA** by **Camden's** solicitors, they clearly state that we would not be allowed access because research had shown them that "taxis were the main cause of serious accidents in the area."

Naturally this view was challenged, but **Camden** stated that after lengthy research had been done, they could not find any data that differentiated taxis from minicabs. My guess is that the same scenario applied to the **Corporation of London** when deciding what vehicles will have access to **Bank Junction**. Why on earth should **TfL** have the temerity to class us the same as minicabs, it really does go some way in emphasising the fact that **TfL** put both groups in the same category, which once again is an insult to the licensed taxi industry - but **TfL** just don't care!

In the past I used to have regular meetings with the **Public Carriage Office** and it was a recognised and a well-publicised fact that the **London Taxi** was the safest means of transport available - and that included all sectors and not just road transport. So you may well ask what has now made us the main perpetrators of serious accidents? Well I'll tell you why... it's because **TfL** include our figures with those of the minicab industry because it obviously suits their agenda - whatever that may be.

I am totally convinced that this scenario would never have been allowed to materialise under the **PCO**, but we were then dealing with staff that were proud of the licensed taxi industry; they correctly believed it to be the best taxi service in the world and genuinely believed they were a part of that and in no small way had their input into making us



the best. That is probably why the trade had respect for the **PCO**, which is more than can be said of the current shower - **Licensed Taxi Private Hire (LTPH)**, which is a part of **TfL**. They have in a short period of time turned our trade into a demoralised gathering of stressed and disillusioned individuals - but still it appears they just don't care! I have never known our trade to hold the authorities that govern us in such contempt as they do with **TfL** and that contempt is self-inflicted by **TfL** staff that just do not understand our trade, nor do they wish to - because they just don't care!

With the anticipated closure of **Bank Junction** to taxis, how will we do **Moorgate** to **London Bridge Station** and service our account clients in the vicinity of the **Bank**? But you've guessed it - **TfL** just don't care! I was hopeful there would be some changes under this new Mayor, but sadly that is not the case; he talks a good fight but comes across as weak and ineffectual. He has done no more good for us than his predecessors, and like **Boris** he probably sees it as a stepping stone to leading his political party in the **Commons**. If it wasn't so awful, it would be funny!

"London is open for business," says Mayor **Khan**. But hang on **Sadiq**, it's not open if you can't move in the congestion, is it? It won't be long before businesses decide to move out of gridlocked London, but I don't suppose they care about that either. They can always put it down to **Brexit**!!

Fares Consultation

I have been invited along with others in the trade to a meeting at **Palestra** to discuss next year's fare increase. I know I have stated in this issue and on past occasions that I would no longer do anything to aid **TfL** after the appalling manner in which they have treated our industry. However, after some serious thought I have decided to attend, otherwise I would not be in a position to be privy to their discussions. But I do not hold out much hope! I have known for some time that **TfL** do not consult... they just dictate and go through the motions of a Consultation so that they can state at a later date how they consulted with the trade. I believe they already know what they want to do next year and will just float their ideas in an attempt to gauge reaction.

There have been a number of emails flying back and forth with certain people in our trade who are endeavouring to make themselves look like clever intellectuals; but if they ever get enough experience they'll find out that their endeavours were to no avail and they have not impressed anyone. Well certainly not me...

PED upgrade

Finally, it would be remiss of me if I did not thank everyone concerned; from our fitters at **Roman Way** to the **IT** department, to **Allan Evans** and **Joe Brazil**, oh and not forgetting the ladies in **Driver Services** together with **Shelagh Adkins** for all the sterling work they all did. And for you, the **Shareholders**, for your patience when we completed the **PED** upgrade... and not forgetting the moving of the **PED** into the back of the taxi (thanks **TfL**).

It was a very onerous and stressful period, especially with everything else that is happening, but I won't say any more on the subject as I believe **Allan Evans** has gone into more detail in his report.

Brian Rice
Chairman,
Dial-a-Cab Ltd

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Laurie calls it a day!

Any Dial-a-Cab driver that has ever worked EC5 or indeed its Finsbury Square rank predecessor on a fairly regular basis, will know Laurie Shapiro (H62). Now Laurie – or Lol to some – has decided to retire and in calling it a day, see what excitement the world as a whole - rather than the world of taxis - holds for him.

"I have to admit that my health has played a big part in the decision," Laurie told *Call Sign*. "It was back in April. I'd gone out for a meal and during a quick visit to the loo, found myself in substantial pain. The next day I went to the doctor and it was eventually discovered that I had a tumour on my bladder.

"I was told it was quite a big one and underwent two operations, which were followed by 32 days of both chemo and radiotherapy. It left me feeling absolutely awful and when I went back afterwards to see the consultant, he told me that the tumour had shrunk by 90 percent – something that made the suffering suddenly feel worthwhile. He said treatment didn't always work but that it seemed to have worked with me. As for the final 10 percent, they are going to decide what the treatment is to be; it could be the removal of the bladder or something yet to

be decided. But he added that either way, he was fairly certain that I would be clear of cancer afterwards.

"Hearing that made me realise that I was now 74 and been driving a cab for over 50 years – much of it on Dial-a-Cab, which I first joined in 1967. Other than a few years in the middle where I tried the jewellery business, I've been here that long! But in all honesty, I've just had enough of driving a cab! That's not to say that I didn't enjoy much of the time and won't miss many of the friends I've made while in it, but it's time to see what's happening outside of the Finz! I fancy New York as a start!"

Laurie's son Ian, who used to share the cab with his dad, will now be sharing with Steve Goldberg (A77). Both Laurie and Ian know only too well the heartbreak that cancer can bring when, following a brave two year battle against the illness, Laurie's wife Frankie was taken by it in September 2011. Drivers may also remember Laurie's daughter Melinda, who while worrying about her



Laurie is retiring - especially from EC5!

mum just three months before Frankie passed away, completed a 5k Race for Life through the City of London in aid of Cancer Research UK. Dial-a-Cab drivers contributed generously to the collection tin in Driver Reception and helped Melinda raise over £850.

So to Laurie, we send our best wishes for a long and enjoyable retirement. EC5 may never be the same again!!!

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

Drop in leisure visitors since Brexit

The number of leisure passengers coming to Britain dropped for two consecutive months, going against predictions of a post-Brexit surge in visitors. **October** figures from the **British Hospitality Association** travel monitor showed there were 450,000 fewer holiday passengers up to that 2016 date compared with the same period in 2015. The previous month's figures had shown a 400,000 drop.

Industry commentators had expected a jump in overseas visitors following Britain's decision to leave the EU after the Pound significantly weakened against other currencies. But holiday inbound travel to the UK was down 5.3% in October and 3.7% for the year to date. By contrast, outbound holiday travel was up 5.2% in October and 5.4% year to date.

Total inbound travel, which also includes business travel and those visiting friends and family, declined 5.1% year on year, but the BHA said figures were skewed by the **Rugby World Cup** being held in 2015. Looking at the wider picture and over the three months ending in December, inbound travel dropped by 0.7% versus the same period 12 months ago, but has grown 1.7% year to date.

In a further blow to the incoming tourism industry - including we taxi drivers - overseas residents spend in the UK was down 8.3% in October and 1.2% year to date. Meanwhile, UK spend overseas was up 17% in October and 10.7% year to date.

BHA chief executive **Ufi Ibrahim** described it as a "worrying trend." She added: "Our analysis has shown that there is increasing pressure on the industry through lower inbound holiday passengers and higher outbound holiday passengers. With

political and economic uncertainty increasing, it is more important than ever to ensure UK tourism can compete. The UK continues to have on average twice the tourism VAT rate across Europe. Alongside businesses investing in the apprenticeship levy, the national living wage and rising business rates, this signals concern for businesses in the industry, four out of five of which are SMEs."



Ufi Ibrahim



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"Yes chaps, we'll be talking to TfL soon. In the meantime, have you seen my Uber car anywhere???"

London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled (Now known as the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT

The Annual General Meeting of the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans took place on Monday 12th December 2016 at The Royal Hospital in Chelsea. Those Present: Gary Belsey, Ian Parsons, Paul Davis, Gary Mankilow, Francis Wyhowaska, Richard Goodwin, Eddie Hillary, David Clegg, Gary Hutchinson, Dennis James, Graham Pike, Arron Capell, Michael Husk and Derek Leone. Guest was Susan Angel...

A one-minute silence was held for those no longer with us.

The meeting was then opened by Chairman **Gary Belsey** at 2pm, who then read out the Chairman's Report (see January **Call Sign**).

The financial report was then explained by Treasurer **Gary Mankilow**.

Election of Officers

The following were elected un-opposed:

President Harry Joel MBE, Chairman Gary Belsey, Vice-Chairman Ian Parsons, Treasurer Gary Mankilow, Secretary Paul Davis, Vice-Treasurer Michael Husk, Vice-Secretary and Press Officer Derek Leone, Transport Terry Ward, Vice-Presidents Richard Goodwin, Eddie Hillary, Francis Wyhowaska, Dennis James, David Clegg. Committee members Arron Capell, Graham Pike, Dennis Hayes and Gary Hutchins.

The Chairman then asked Susan Angel if she wished to be a member of the committee and she agreed to do so. The meeting then closed.

The President, Chairman, Officers and committee would like to thank all of the sponsors and drivers who have in 2016 given their support to the charity...



Derek Leone
Taxi Charity for Military Veterans PR

DaC's First Euro 6 Vito

It was an excited Daniel Francescotti (A51) who carefully drove his brand new MB Vito Euro 6 taxi into Dial-a-Cab's Roman Way depot for engineers to fit the MDT equipment into the gleaming cab.

"Yes, I do believe that mine is the first Euro 6 Vito to join the *Dial-a-Cab* fleet, although I think there are a couple more guys who have also upgraded to a new Euro 6 MB Vito and they will follow me here later today to be fitted up," Daniel suggested, a fact confirmed by Roman Way depot manager, Dana Thananjeyan.

"My previous Vito was 4 years old and out of warranty, so for very similar monthly repayments I decided to upgrade to a new vehicle," Daniel told *Call Sign*.

"The obvious benefits are that I now drive the latest eco-friendly model with its reduced emissions, one that is good for the environment, gives me a full manufacturers' warranty for peace of mind and is comfortable - not just for me to work in, but the passengers like to ride in comfort too, so hopefully that will attract more riders and win back some work. Then, of course, this



cab and others like it will hopefully promote the image of *Dial-a-Cab* and the wider taxi trade in general.

"There are some tweaks to the new 'face-lifted' cab, including changes to the bodywork, sidelights and dashboard controls, which I'm

David was the first DaC driver with the new Euro 6 Vito
inset: The ignition key is now situated to the left of the steering wheel

slowly getting used to," Daniel told *Call Sign*, "it's just a case of acclimatisation!"

The cab uses a 136 hp low emission 114CD Euro 6 diesel engine together with the fuel efficient 7G-tronic plus 7 speed gearbox. It is advertised as no deposit with weekly payments of £168, which includes a 3 year warranty and free 24 hour roadside assistance from MB's *MobiloVan*. That breakdown service boasts attendance in around an hour and uses only genuine MB parts.

Taking a quick look around Daniel's Vito while the new terminal was being fitted, I was impressed with most of the obvious changes from earlier models, but the re-siting of the ignition switch from the original right hand side of the steering wheel to the left is likely only to appeal to left-handed drivers. Other controls have similarly been moved around, but their positions will probably become familiar with usage.

More info at www.mbvitotaxi.co.uk.

The cab is available at S&B Commercials, Travellers Lane, Welham Green.

Alan Green
Call Sign Online

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A brief chat with any of my *historian* chums and we'd all agree that Sir Harry Hotspur was the nickname of Sir Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland – a 14th century arse-kicking nobleman, who would

do battle for both the Crown and its opponents before being slain at the **Battle of Shrewsbury** aged just 39 and at the height of his military career.

A brief chat with my *drinking* chums and we would all agree that Harry Hotspur could refer to the sharp shooting skills of centre forward Harry Kane, or even perhaps the new kid on the block, midfield maestro Harry Winks.

Despite all the superlatives in the second paragraph, I am not a supporter of **Tottenham Hotspur**, but I do recognise the link between Harry Hotspur and Harry Kane and I do believe (from the comfort of my armchair) that the 'Spurs are on the verge of those kinds of glories the much-victorious Sir Harry once enjoyed.

Perhaps the clue is in the fact that the original Harry Hotspur was the Earl of Northumberland – because the Northumberland Park area of what is today N17 and right next door to White Hart Lane Stadium was a very early home ground for football fixtures for the fledgling Hotspur FC, founded in 1882.

Ironically, the club are set once again to move (in 2018) back to the playing ground of their forefathers – a final piece of the jigsaw that would put the seal on north London's impressive new Northumberland Park Regeneration Scheme.

Tottenham Hotspur FC have been ably assisted by both **Haringey Council** and facilitated by former Mayor **Boris Johnson** to achieve their new dream – such a pity that over in south London **Lewisham Council**, supported by Mayor Khan, are happy to push **Millwall** away from their heartlands.

So, how did it all begin for the Spurs? In a story similar to the origins of **Fulham FC** (when a Church Warden formed a team for local boys at **St Andrews Church** in Greyhound Road) and **Queens Park Rangers FC** (when the Wardens at the after-school institution of **St Jude's** in Ilbert Street formed a local side) – **Hotspur Football Club** was founded in 1882 by a bunch of school kids attending a bible class at **All Hallows Church** in Savernake Road.

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



Tottenham Hotspur in 1897

Class educator **Edward Sprylyons** was the instigator and inspiration behind the formation of a football team of grammar school boys to challenge all-comers, because by the late Victorian-era the sport was catching on among the inner city working class.

All Hallows is one of north London's oldest places of worship – a 12th century gem reputed to have been gifted to Tottenham by **King David I of Scotland**, strengthening its connection with the Bruce family (of **Robert the Bruce** fame) who owned the adjacent **Bruce Castle**.

I believe that old **Ed Sprylyons** had a sense of his local neighbourhood's heritage at heart using Hotspur as his new club's name; I also believe that the stoic thick upper lip Victorian preacher-type would have sensed that 'Hotspur' (made evermore famous by **Shakespeare** in **Henry IV**) was a name that had come to symbolise British strength and determination... and this kind of summed up the man.

The medieval **Sir Harry Hotspur** was known to be flamboyant and risk-taking in life - and I'm not suggesting that this has rubbed off on the Spurs defence at times through the years – but for upstarts in 1882 to call themselves 'Hotspur' would certainly have turned some heads, as there was already in existence **London Hotspur FC**, playing over at **Syon Park**.

The Percy family home was at **Syon Park**, while the other land they owned was **Northumberland Park** – hence two cases for naming your teams 'Hotspur'.

Hotspur FC's first home matches were played at Tottenham Marshes and they continued building up a following there for the next 6 years. Moving forward, the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority purchased this land in 1972 and now oversees a 26-mile long corridor of 10,000 acres of recreational land.

Playing at 'The Marshes' back then was rudimentary at best and quite often would see punch-ups break out between teams and officials all hell bent on playing on the best pitches!

The 'Spurs were building up a reputation and the crowds were following, so much so that a new

home ground was sought and obtained at **Northumberland Park**. But even this spell was short-lived as during their one-season tenure there, it became apparent the club just couldn't cope with such large attendances.

The chance came to develop a disused nursery site that had been neglected by **Charingtons Brewery** – the entrepreneurial Landlord of the **White Hart** pub at **750 Tottenham High Road** was 'Gorgeous' **George Beckwith** - the 'Mr Fiddler' who sought to exploit the club in rent revenue.

The ground switch was the making of the **Spurs**, the old stand at **Northumberland Park** was fetched down, the club became **Southern League Champions in 1900** and **FA Cup Winners in 1901** – the only non-league team to ever win the trophy! By 1905, they had stashed away enough dough to buy the freehold of **White Hart Lane**!

Historians suggest that **Sir Harry Hotspur** was struck down when an arrow hit him as he opened his visor for a better view of the battlefield – so perhaps if you are sitting in the stands during the last remaining home games, don't take your eye off the ball for a quick glance at the new stadium currently being constructed!

Had I been writing this series about London football clubs at any time between Spurs foundation year of 1882 and 1965, there may have been a case to exclude them – although the club were part of the London Postal and Metropolitan Police Districts. But in terms of admin and local Government it fell within **Middlesex** before becoming part of the **London Borough of Haringey**!

If you take it to that extreme and consider that **Woolwich Arsenal FC** did not switch from **Woolwich** to **Highbury** until 1913, then you could say that there are no true north London clubs!

*Next month I shall feature the club who **Tottenham Hotspur** objected to joining the **Southern League** in 1905 soon after their formation in a pub now called 'The Butcher's Hook'.*

Bob Woodford
Call Sign Online

Call Sign

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At a recent meeting with Brian Rice, Call Sign sensed a rather unusual anger emanating from the Chairman. Fortunately it was not aimed at the magazine but at what he described as Transport for London's "complete ineptitude and utter rudeness." He shocked us when adding that he would never again help TfL out-side of anything that he has no choice but to do.

The Chairman has written several times of how in 2011, Dial-a-Cab spent around £500,000 fitting credit card PEDs into the front of Member's taxis after TfL had passed the system and confirmed it in writing. We all know now how that same TfL changed their minds in 2016 and gave everyone until December 31 to have PEDs refitted – this time into the rear of the cabs despite an outcry from all sections of the trade.

Both the Chairman and Editor have gone into print expressing their fear of the possibility of some undesirable passengers using the new PED position as a pretext to get drivers to leave the safety of the front and enter the rear compartment where anything could happen.

However, Brian explained that however much he disagreed with TfL's latest edict, there was no choice other than to begin the process of moving all the PEDs to the back otherwise drivers would face 'stops' as of 1 January onwards. The process began and continued day after day, from early morning till late evening.

But with so many drivers, it was always going to be an uphill battle and finally on December 16th DaC's Operations and Compliance manager, Allan Evans, emailed Alex Moffat who had been overseeing the project from TfL's end. Allan wrote:

By the end of today I would have already fitted over half of the Dial-a-Cab fleet and with one more week left before the Christmas break, we will continue with the programme in an effort to fit as many drivers as possible in this period. Since taking delivery of the brackets we have opened our fitting bay from 8am until 8pm continuously to fit as many as possible, but as hard as we are trying, if I am totally honest I think we may require a little longer to fit all of our remaining drivers. I would therefore ask you to consider a short early January extension that will allow us a little more time to complete this project successfully.

As I have mentioned, the whole fleet are perfectly able to accept Credit Cards and all of our drivers that have not had their PEDs re-sited by the 1st January 2017 - and there shouldn't be too many - will be fitted very early in January.

I hope I have explained our situation well enough and that you will be able to show us some leniency on this one occasion.

Brian Rice: "I will never help TfL again!"



I hope to hear back from you soon...

But Allan received no response whatsoever and on 21st December, Brian Rice emailed Alex Moffat - sending copies to Helen Chapman, Leon Daniels, Peter Blake, Sarah Finlay, John Masters, Sadiq Khan's deputy Mayor for Transport Val Shawcross, London Assembly member Caroline Pidgeon, TfL Commissioner Mike Brown and DaC Board Members. The DaC Chairman wrote:

Further to Allan's e-mail (below and to which he has not received a reply) we have now fitted the majority of the Fleet with the PED in the back of the taxi. As you are aware, this has been a major exercise for us in terms of recalling the Fleet; in addition it has been a major expense purchasing new brackets and incurring the cost of keeping our fitting bay open from 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week.

However, I still feel disappointed that TfL reneged on their original decision in March 2011 to allow me permission to fit the PEDs in the front of the taxi (which is a far safer option for the driver). I anticipate that come 1 January 2017, there will be approximately 200 of our taxis not equipped with the PED in the rear of the taxi. I believe everything could be completed by the end of January at the latest.

Consequently, what would you like me to do? Carry on moving the PEDs during January or de-authorise the PEDs that have not been moved in order that they will not function?

I await your decision!

Brian never received a reply either and he

admitted to *Call Sign* that the sheer frustration of TfL's totally unbending attitude had made him sign off the email in that rather sarcastic tone – something he would never usually do regardless of how upset he was. But he added that this wasn't the first time he felt that both he and DaC had been snubbed and insulted by TfL.

He ended by saying that he had helped TfL out many times over the years and that they were always quick to ask him when there was a problem knowing that he knew so many people involved in the trade.

"But no more," the Chairman told us, "I will never help TfL again in anything that I do not have to. I am absolutely disgusted by their complete ineptitude and utter rudeness - miniature gods who do not have to respond if they don't feel like it. So far as I am concerned, they are a disgrace to the oldest and finest taxi service the world has ever seen."

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Well, it was a shock, I don't mind telling you. It was all going so nicely. I'd been busy all morning and just before one o'clock, when it started to get a bit quiet, I set down in **Smithfield**

and knew exactly what to do for the next hour. I went round the market! Up **St John Street**, found a parking spot and did the Pay-by-Phone parking business. Then I walked over to the shop - just near the corner of **Great Sutton Street** and there it was...gone!

I'd first noticed it when I dropped two girls there one morning. They were - shall we say - of the Sapphic persuasion and they seemed to be running the place. They were also a walking advert for the business because it was called **Intu you** and they were covered in tattoos and piercings. Every inch that I could see - and I presume lots that I couldn't - were adorned in metal and multi-coloured ink.

Well, after seeing how terrific those two looked, I was hooked. I went in there and got their catalogue, which was full of interesting ideas. Soon after I began a new chapter in my life - **Body Art**! If only I had started earlier.

I got five rings in one ear and three in the other. Then it was a spear through my nose and another in the tongue. Tattoos? I suggested a dagger dripping blood with the words *Death or Glory* but they said that was old-fashioned. So we decided on a cobra down the left arm and three lions above my right ankle. I suggested to the good lady wife that I would treat her to a butterfly on her shoulder. Her reply was that she would rather eat her own hair! I took it that she wasn't overly

keen! But I was planning something special for myself...

It was going to be a complete hunting scene across my back. Dogs, horses, men in pink jackets and a fox disappearing up... well it disappeared - take my word for it. But the shop was gone... all my plans were in disarray! Perhaps a similar business will open there... but beware! As they say, past results are no guarantee as to future ones.

Not that far from where I live was a traditional English butcher. Been there for years. Last summer a notice went up saying that he was retiring on October 20th and to thank everyone for their custom. Soon afterwards, another sign appeared: "Halal Butchers opening soon." Seemed like a good idea. They did open in November - for about half an hour and the shutters have been down ever since. They had no idea how to run the place.

Similarly, a very busy baker shop in **Camden High Street** was taken over by new people and now the only sign of life is the homeless guy sleeping in the doorway.

Obviously our taxi trade is not immune from closures or retirements or the like. A chap I know, **Peter**, opened a garage in **Willesden** some years ago in partnership with **Tony**. I don't know exactly what broke them up but I think it was money... the money that Tony was putting in his pocket! But maybe he had a lucky escape. Tony was later featured in several editions of **The Roger Cook** programme. There were allegations of bodies buried in the Californian desert!

I actually learnt to drive a cab at **Cooks**

Garage in **Brackenbury Road**. Perhaps a cab historian will tell me why it's known as wangling and could he also confirm that **Cooks** was previously in **Huntsworth Mews** and that the original minicab firm, **Welbeck Motors**, was also there. Someone who worked there at the time told me he had discovered how much diesel was required to torch a **Renault Dauphine**!

Anyway when they moved to **W6**, one vestige of the cab trade remained, this was the panel-beater - the legendary **Ginger**! Now, he wasn't the sort of guy you'd get to work on a Roller, but he would, as they say, "get you out of trouble." And his prices were incredible. You'd go into his workshop and peer through the white dust from the filler. As if that wasn't toxic enough, you'd struggle to breathe because of the intoxicating aroma of the lead-rich paint. But **Ginger** seemed to thrive on it all. I suspect he needed it like diabetics need insulin. It was his lifeblood.

He would look at a dent; bring out his tools and a pot of paint. Then whack, bang, whack, bang, slurp, slurp and "That will be £2 please!" And you were back at work. But eventually he went from there. I last saw him in the eighties working away in the back of a garage in **Midland Road**. Of course that place went with the reconstruction of **St Pancras**. But I've got the feeling that he's still there somewhere, still banging out the dents, still slurping on the paint...

Geoff Levene
Call Sign Online

The London Taxidivers Fund for Underprivileged Children

TWO SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Christmas Party

The first event was a Christmas party held at the **Brayford Club** in London's east end. This annual event is organised by one of our Trustees, **Bradley Winfield**, with lots of help and encouragement from his wife. The event attracted around 150 people with the majority being London taxi drivers and their families, all eager to have a good time and help raise much-needed funds for our charity.

The party ran from 8pm until late, with a plentiful supply of delicious food and drink, and swung thanks to music from a live band that played great music from the 50s through to now. It was also a chance to meet new people and renew old friendships in a good old fashioned east end atmosphere.

The event was a huge success with people already asking Bradley for the date of next year's party. We would like to thank **Maureen** and all the staff at the **Brayford Club**, also **Freddie Hayes**, **Kalvin Saunders**, **Steve Lewis** and **Mark DeLacy** for all the time and effort they gave to make sure the evening went with a bang.

Burlington Arcade

The second event was also a highly successful fund-raising day. It was held at London's **Burlington Arcade** where we were joined by our now famous **Reindeer Taxi**, which attracted much passing interest from shoppers and tourists alike. Our grateful thanks go to **Doug Cheshire** for bringing along his vintage taxi and the **Sing Gospel Choir** for joining us later in the day. We were also delighted to be joined by **Gaby Roslin** and her film crew and thank them for coming.

It was a brilliantly successful day and thanks must also go to **TfL** as well as the management and staff at **Burlington Arcade** for their help and support enabling us to raise much needed funds for our forthcoming January Christmas Party at the **Grosvenor House** (see page 29).



Gaby Roslin joins the Committee at Burlington Gardens

Raymond Levy
LTFUC Press Officer

DaC driver Jon Robinson gives his view on TfL...

The battle against TfL

"The latest from **Transport for London**, better known to those in the know as **Totally Failing London**, comes with the astonishing news that **Victoria Embankment** westbound slip roads will close in the new year for work of some kind. Ok, we're used to the odd roadworks here and there and a few days will be yet just another inconvenience... or it would be if TfL didn't admit that this delay will carry on for around 4 years! That's **FOUR** years!

TfL, in their usual cute and lovable way – after all, *every journey matters* – say that motorists should plan their journey ahead! It's a shame that the **Blackfriars** money-wasters club doesn't offer route advice on how to avoid stress and considerable expense to those still prepared to put up with this ridiculous organisation.

Then we got last month's news in *Call Sign* that the **City of London Corporation** are to press ahead and close all through routes at the **Bank Junction** as from next April. So your passenger gets on at **London Bridge** asking for **Moorgate**... what do you do? Looks like it's going to be forward **London Bridge**, forward **King William Street**... and would you like to walk the rest of the way, madam?

What this all means is that our trade has a huge fight on its hands and one that we have to win, because the way things are going with road

closures, no one will be able to afford us soon! So unless we can force the **City of London Corporation** into allowing us to use the soon-to-be designated bus routes only through **Bank**, I see every other local authority lumping us together with all the other traffic everywhere with new bus lanes and traffic planning and leaving us completely at their mercy.

I really think that it is now so important for our trade to stand firm, otherwise we'll soon be driving around in ever-decreasing circles if we want to move around in the square mile.

Next time you get a **London Bridge** to **Moorgate** trip, just ask yourself how you will get there when you can't use the **Bank** and have to follow a diversion via the back streets! Or perhaps you're driving west-bound along the **Embankment**, need to get off for the **Aldwych** but can't and wonder what your reply will be when your passenger asks you just where the hell you are going, as they watch the meter climb with the traffic not moving. You could of course try **Fleet Street**, but make sure you take your lunch with you.

The only question is how long we are going to take this for..."

Jon Robinson (E88)



Jon: "We'll soon be driving round in ever-decreasing circles!"

A loving message from DaC's Dennis Heavin (A01)

LILY: An
A1 Granddaughter
For A1



Welcome to the world - the gorgeous Lilian Heavin

After waiting so long for our first grandson, we were so lucky to welcome our beautiful *Princess Grand Baby Lillian Heavin* on Sunday 8th January, weighing 7lbs 4oz at **Whipps Cross Hospital**.

We are all so very happy for **Mum Natalie** and **Dad Daniel** and wish all three a very healthy, happy and prosperous life.

How lucky is 7 month old cousin **Billy** having his own goal-keeper when they are able to play in our garden and then being introduced to her beautiful friends when they become teenagers.

Lots of love, hugs and millions of kisses to our newest Lady Hammer Supporter.

Regards from two very proud Grandparents...

Carol and Dennis Heavin (Mr and Mrs A01)

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Phil Buchan,
Hillier Buchan, 01322 553313



A shock video put online by GMB was taken inside an Uber car by the passenger when it became apparent that the driver didn't know where he was. David Heath has just moved from the seaside resort after many years there...

Uber in Brighton

they adhere to wheelchair accessibility regs!

Many drivers may think that what happens in Brighton is irrelevant to London, but not anymore. An Uber driver has been caught on camera claiming that the company were urging 'out of town' drivers to come to Brighton after a boycott by local cabbies that reportedly resulted in just one local driver signing up.

The astonishing video was published by the GMB Union's Brighton and Hove section. In it, the driver tells his passenger he is really busy because the company doesn't have enough drivers and that Uber asked him to go to Brighton. The driver, who kept getting lost and also went through a red light, admitted it was his first time in Brighton and that he wasn't licensed by Brighton and Hove City Council, which has much stricter regulations than London, where he *was* licensed!

When Uber was first granted a Brighton licence in October, it told the council it would only use Brighton licensed drivers so that they would be abiding by the same rules as the city's existing minicab firms. However, it appears that only one local driver signed up with them, possibly because the city's

three big cab firms all said that any driver using Uber would not be welcomed back.

GMB section secretary, **Andy Peters**, said that the public should be fully aware that Uber were using London minicabs in Brighton and that in their view it was an insult to the council. He added:

"It appears that London has become the licensing centre for sending London minicabs all over the UK, rendering local councils redundant in taxi licensing. Very importantly, the council has no powers to act on any complaint on any Uber London minicab working in Brighton and Hove. But if a complaint is made against a Brighton and Hove licensed driver, they are called straight in for an interview."

The chair of the council's Licensing Committee, **Councillor Jackie O'Quinn**, said that under the law of the land, PH vehicles from other areas - including Uber drivers - are allowed to pick up passengers in Brighton and Hove...

David Heath
Call Sign Online

Uber are desperate to find drivers in Brighton but can't get them because of council regulations strict level playing field! So guess what? They are starting to import them from London!

Brighton Council has said that now Uber has been given a licence, at least 20 percent of their vehicles will have to be wheelchair accessible. But it's not going to happen because they are having problems just finding enough ordinary Toyota Prius cars. There is a very strong disabled lobby in Brighton and they say they welcome Uber, providing

RAYMOND WIBBERLEY



Call Sign recently heard from Fraser Wibberley that his father, former Dial-a-Cab driver Raymond Wibberley (ex-Y45), has passed away following a long battle against Parkinson's Disease.

Ray had been a London taxi driver for over 40 years and worked with DaC throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s. He retired from cab driving around 2006 due to Parkinson's Disease.

Ray was known to his friends as "Blonde Ray" and often worked at Heathrow Airport.

To his family, Dial-a-Cab and Call Sign send their deepest sympathy on their loss.

His funeral was held on 25th January in Cromer.

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Since the compulsory re-siting of the credit card-reading PED into the passenger compartment of taxis courtesy of TfL, it would appear that drivers are having far more problems with passengers getting their heads around using the PED to pay the fare. Where before it was the driver who was able to process the fare through the MDT and then physically hand the PED to the passenger for them to pay by card, when passengers are left to do it themselves, difficulties can arise. *Call Sign* asked a small sample of our drivers for any experiences...



Geoffrey Goddard (R10):

"The majority of my credit card passengers are using *Contactless*. I ask them at the start of their journey if they intend paying by card and while generally it seems passengers prefer the *Contactless* option, I tell them I will still have to process the payment through my MDT before they touch the PED with their card; yet sometimes they think they can just quickly hover the card over the PED before I have set the terminal up and that leads to all sorts of confusion, including 'VOID' print-outs! There was an American lady with a USA card and she really had not a clue, despite me telling her in great detail how to use the system. In the end, in desperation, I had to get into the back of my taxi with her still sitting on the rear seat, to assist her and show how it was done. It turned out she was trying to put the card into the top of the reader! I then had to get back into my front seat to finish the transaction and that's when I discovered she had to sign the receipt for the payment to go through, it being a US card. I must admit I was not comfortable at having to get into the back with a totally strange woman under those circumstances. Mostly my trips have been under £30 so *Contactless* is simple and preferable, but I still would like the PED under my control..."



Doug Vogel (R05): "I stopped in **Horseferry Road** for a passenger going to **Old Broad Street Station**. He was clearly in a hurry to catch a train and at the destination he had trouble with his card and the PED reader, so got a bit panicky. With every second of delay seeming like an hour, we eventually exchanged personal details. He gave me his business card with an address in **Primrose Street** and I scribbled down my bank details ie sort code and account number! Thankfully, the man was true to his word and I received payment in due course via a bank transfer, but it was a less than ideal situation and not something I would do lightly again. It is only when the receipt prints out do you know you've been paid. I also think the PED is fitted on the wrong side of the carriage because you cannot see what people are doing with their card, even if you give them precise instructions as to using the PED. When it is directly behind you, it is on your 'blind side' whereas if it was possible to fit it by the near-side door you could look over your shoulder

and stand a chance of seeing what was going on and how the PED was responding..."

Call Sign asked some of our drivers for their experiences with the PED siting since TfL forced the removal from the front of the taxi to the cab's passenger compartment...

PED Problems: A Call Sign Survey...



Gary Cowderoy (N17)

"With the PED fitted as it is, passengers are having real difficulty seeing the PED screen because when they are sitting immediately behind the driver and adjacent to it, the angle of view of the PED screen means they have to lean their body forward about 45 deg and then twist their head sideways to read the screen instructions. Ridiculous! Also, on three occasions I have had children fiddling either with the power wire leading to the PED or pressing the various coloured PED buttons as their inquisitive little fingers wander. It was so much safer and better in the front!"



Tom McCaffrey (H18): "I had a family of five in the cab recently and the father had great difficulty putting his card into the reader, even though I offered advice from the front seat.

After several fruitless attempts by him to find the PED slot, I decided I had no choice but to get into the back of the cab with them and assist, carefully demonstrating how to use the PED. It appeared that he had been trying to put his card into the *top* of the PED, instead of sliding it in from underneath! This scenario was in broad daylight with a family including several children, so while I was not too concerned at that moment, I must admit that had there had been several burly men, evening time or a dark location or perhaps an unsavoury area, I would have swallowed the £14 on the meter in favour of staying safe in the front of the cab with the doors firmly locked!"



Stephen Thompson (F18): "I took an American lady from central London to **Heathrow Terminal 4** and when it came to paying, she had difficulty using her US card. She fumbled for several minutes without success and I was getting more and more anxious. Suddenly, and without any warning, a police officer came running over to me shouting to move my cab immediately while I tried explaining I had not yet been paid and this was my livelihood, so I was not moving that quickly until the passenger sorted out her card payment. All the while this exchange was going on, she was indeed still

struggling to process her card! The police officer then replied that if I did not move my cab there and then I would be nicked. It seemed like there was some sort of emergency inside the terminal. The lady overheard the conversation, scrapped the idea of paying by card and managed to find \$30 in her handbag which she hurriedly stuffed through the division, and I was able to pull away smartish. The downside is that I had £55 on my meter and ended up with US currency of far less value than my fare. A result I had to swallow, because I had no choice but to move on before the policeman made himself busy writing. A substantial loss, yes, but at least I saved getting myself into more trouble. Thanks TfL..."

Terry Felvus (M86): "It is all too much. Everything was simpler and safer when the PED was in the front. You could see exactly what was going on. I went from **Harrods** to the **Marriott Hotel**, **County Hall** and the passenger was really confused and I could not see what was going on with the PED. The receipt came out 'VOID' at first, which caused me a moment of concern; but at the second attempt it turned out ok, but I did feel a bit helpless. To cap it all, it was a foreign card requiring a signature, which prolonged the 'turn around' time before I could move on to the next fare. For me to get out of the security of my own seat to assist the passenger to process their card would depend heavily on several factors, including if it was at night, the precise location, and whether the passenger had been drinking, or indeed if the passenger was male or female. All these factors could be worrying where you have to rely heavily on your social skills to make a judgement and ease the task of getting paid. With the PED moved from the front, we must surely be the only traders who do not meet the customer face to face when processing the card, because if you go into any supermarket, shop or fuel station the operative is looking at you, tells you when to put your card in and then out, whereas here, passengers tend to place their card on or in the reader too quickly if you are not careful."

Mark Cutler (N03): "Since having the PED fitted into the rear compartment of my taxi, there have been two occasions when I have had to get into the back of the cab with the passenger in order to assist. Both instances have been in daylight hours, but nevertheless I was not really comfortable about it. It seems that the passengers push in and/or retrieve the card too quickly which results in a 'VOID' message or confusion. Not good."

Southern Halo and Dial-a-Cab!

Some years ago, if you happened to be in the **Dial-a-Cab** IT department, you might have heard the occasional **American** accent. It would probably been that of **Jim Moore** – not the driver but the CEO of a company that supplied and maintained part of our infrastructure when we operated on a private network. Jim also supplied and maintained our modems.

Now he has a different story for *Call Sign*; this one involves his three gorgeous and very talented granddaughters who form a Country group called **Southern Halo**. They have been touring the USA - mainly down south - but who recently won the best up and coming new artist group in **Nashville**!

Jim also told us that **Disney** is working with Southern Halo and that while the **Donald Trump** and **Hillary Clinton** debate rallies were going on, they undertook a gig at their **Las Vegas Debate** and went down a storm! They also have their own



Jim's granddaughters **Natalia, Christina and Hannah** are setting the Country world alight!

show on **Country Music Radio, Nashville**.

CMR Nashville is Europe's #1 station and the three girls, **Natalia, Christina and Hannah**, told us they were thrilled to be on the station with their show, **Hangin' with Halo**.

"This is a really cool early Christmas present and a great way to wrap up an incredible year. We just couldn't be happier," said Natalia.

The station's CEO and owner, **Lee Williams**, called bringing Southern Halo and their show to **CMR** was a natural evolution. "We play their music on the station and air their music videos on our **CM&T Video** channel. We've watched them grow as artists and their show just feels like a great fit for our listeners and the new breed of younger Country fans. This should open the door to touring opportunities for the trio in the UK and Europe."

As for Jim, he told us: "I'm just bursting with pride and had to tell all my friends at **Dial-a-Cab**."

Southern Halo is scheduled to tour the UK early this year...

GORDON POLUCK

A thank you from his family...



Gordon's family would like to thank everyone for the many kind wishes that were sent to us on the passing of my brother.

As many of you know, Gordon had been ill for quite a number of years and for the last five, he had to go into a nursing home. He was very well known in the trade, not just as a licensed taxi driver on **Dial-a-Cab** and his excellent reputation as a toast master, but also for his sense of humour.

On behalf of Gordon's wife Shirley, myself and all of Gordon's family, I would like to thank you all once again.

Russell Poluck MBE (T25)

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Brazil Calling

The first matter I should mention is of course, the fitting of **PEDs** into the rear of the cab; both myself and **Allan Evans** spent many days and evenings at **Roman Way** trying to make the process run as smooth as possible. I would personally like to thank all the drivers for their patience during this process that frankly, in my opinion, was an exercise unrequited by the public with the process implemented at the worst possible time for we drivers. The staff at Roman Way showed their true mettle and have been a credit to **Dial-a-Cab**. I can honestly say that I did not have, or hear, a cross exchange at any time. We really are the gentlemen's circuit - I of course include all genders in that statement!

There is always a temptation to bash the living daylight out of our competitors in every article and whilst there *are* important matters at hand, I thought for once I would avoid the obvious and relay a few short tales from the month. I'm sure others will impart relevant information in this issue and rest assured, no matters are taken lightly. As I said, just a little humour to break the monotony...

L'art de la cab driver: Amex, MasterCard, Visa... Rizla! That'll do nicely...

Okay it's not exactly what was on the advert, but at Christmas you do get your fair share of people confused as a newt, to put it nicely. But once we get into the New Year, you tend to get your fair share of 'war stories' of jobs that happened during the Christmas, New Year period.

Mine started with what appeared to be a three-hander from just north of Old Street station. Three French people - two girls and a chap - asked how much it would be to Vauxhall. They all seem to ask nowadays! I told them that Vauxhall station would be around £22. Of course, when you press them for a more exact destination, it ends up being down the Wandsworth Road, so I told them it would be in the region of £25. This was approved - or should I say *approuvé* - as my French ran out almost immediately! But when I said jump in, the two more sober of the three stepped backwards and in fell their drunk mate. A phone was pushed towards me by the friends on the pavement showing me a destination of Thorparch Road.

This young lady had obviously had too much to drink, but her friends cared enough to put her into a black cab and as all right minded cab drivers would do, you ask them to put on the seatbelt and make it your duty to get her home safely. Not asking her to put the seatbelt on in French caused immediate confusion and the ensuing game of charades ended with her lying down on the seat where

she stayed until we reached the destination; I hoped she'd wake up with a quick shout and that proved to be the case. Let's face it, getting into the back to wake a lone female is a nonstarter, but as I said, she woke immediately. This is where confusion - both mine and hers - kicked in. I asked her for £26.

"Err, yes", she replied. She stood up in that strange stooping fashion that people tend to adopt and passed through the partition window a small white pill. Now at this point you'd think you've entered either **Alice in Wonderland** territory or possibly **The Matrix** if you are a younger subscriber!

I, of course, replied: "No thank you, it's £26.00 please!" Another pill was passed through the partition and this continued until I had four pills after saying *non* each time. So I asked her if she had a card.

"Oui," she replied - okay, even I got that one! My card machine, newly mounted in the rear, was going to save the day. I looked over my shoulder and saw her trying to push a silver card in it. It seemed to be taking unduly long, so I asked if I could see it. The "card" she passed to me said on it: "L'art de rouler, depuis des années," and was, naturally, a packet of French Rizla!



So I said that if she couldn't pay, we would have to go to the police; she shrugged and said okay. You normally don't have to go too far on the Wandsworth Road to find a **Gendarme** (look at me, picked the lingo up almost immediately)! And so it proved. The police seemed more interested that I was paid in pills than the fare. After a brief check of the mysterious pills, it was determined that I was unlikely to get pregnant that week! The passenger was then duly relieved of the fare from I might add, the considerable sum she was carrying. I was asked if the amount was sufficient and said yes.

They said they would drop her back to the destination, but after a brief cry and lots mentions of "*c'est la merde*," she seemed to calm down and I told the police I would drop her back to the destination and not take up any more of their time. They agreed and when I stopped to drop her off, she apologised and I was tempted to ask if she would like her change in roll-ups or a fresh prescription, but thought it inappropriate. I just told her not to worry, that she was safely home and she trotted off into the flats.



I'm Kirk Douglas' son

Recently **Kirk Douglas** made the century, a fabulous milestone for one of Hollywood's true legends.

But it reminded me of the **Comedy Store** heckle of his less famous, now sadly passed son, **Joel**. The story goes that Joel was performing at the Comedy Store and getting increasingly frustrated by the lack of audience reaction. As the crowd began losing interest in him, he started shouting: "You can't do this to me; I'm Kirk Douglas's son!"

At that point, some wag stood up and said: "No, I'm Kirk Douglas's son." Then another stood and said "No, I'm Kirk Douglas's son," and so on and so on - possibly one of the greatest heckles of all-time - but only if you had seen **Spartacus**!

And finally...

And just to round off the week, I give you a recently discovered letter from the **Queen Mother** written in February 1941 and in which she signed off with the delicious sentence: "**Tinkety tonk old fruit and down with the Nazis.**"

And why not! Roll on the flower show...

**Joe Brazil, Director
Head of Driver Operations**

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DaC driver goes through two 'no entry' signs at Old Broad Street, gets a £130 ticket and Appeals. Then astonishingly it's...

APPEAL ALLOWED!

If you are on a Dial-a-Cab trip and get a ticket, then there is a chance that our PCN maestro, **John Vigus**, will do his best to get you off. But some penalty charges are more difficult to win than others, with some almost being impossible. **Barry Devor's** (W43) was one of those...

After going into the eastern section of Old Broad Street from London Wall and going through the 'no cars / motorbikes' sign, **Barry** then continued towards Liverpool Street Station and went through the next sign – a definitive 'no entry' – because his passenger asked him to. But according to the City of London, breaching that second 'no entry' by Broad Street Avenue carries a Penalty Charge Notice and would give **John Vigus** virtually no chance of winning... but he did. So the question is how???

Well, it appears that **John** discovered that a Traffic Order for that particular 'no entry' sign had a shelf life of 18 months under the Temporary Restrictions Act 1991 and when he received the City of London evidence a few weeks before the case, he realised that 18 month limit had expired and based an appeal on that fact.



The Adjudicator's decision from the London Tribunals

The adjudicator, having considered the evidence submitted by the parties, has allowed the appeal.

The reasons for the adjudicator's decision are that **Mr John Vigus** attended the appeal hearing on behalf of **Mr Devor** on 5 January 2017. I adjourned the hearing to further consider the legal submissions made by **Mr Vigus**. This PCN was issued for the alleged contravention of failing to comply with a 'no entry' sign and/or a no entry traffic order in Old Broad Street at 4.20pm on 7 November 2016. I have looked at the CCTV footage and still images submitted by City of London. These show that **Mr Devor's** taxi drove through two 'no entry to motor vehicle' signs in Old Broad Street to drop off a passenger. The taxi stopped just past the signs and was then turned around after the passenger alighted.

On behalf of **Mr Devor**, **Mr Vigus** submits that there is no longer authorisation for these 'no entry' signs so that the restriction cannot be enforced. **Mr Vigus** refers me to Sections 14 and 15 of The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as substituted by The Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991.

Section 14(1)(a) provides that if the authority is satisfied that traffic on a road should be restricted or prohibited because works are being executed on or near the road, then it may by order restrict or prohibit temporarily the use of the road or any part of it, by vehicles of any class to such extent, and subject to such conditions or exceptions as it considers necessary.

Section 15(1)(b) provides that any such order under Section 14 shall not continue in force for more than 18 months.

Section 15(2) provides that the time limit of 18 months shall not apply to an order made for the reason mentioned in Section 14(1)(a) if the authority making the order are satisfied, and it is stated in the order that they are satisfied, that the execution of the works in question will take longer but, in any such case, the authority shall revoke the order as soon as the works are completed.

The 'no entry' restrictions in Old Broad Street were authorised for archaeological works, diversion of utility services and Crossrail works. They were, therefore, authorised for the reason mentioned in Section 14(1)(a).

The temporary prohibition on entry was made in a notice dated 11 June 2013. The prohibition was stated to take effect from 17 June 2013. The period of the prohibition was stated to be from 17

June 2013 until the completion of works or this temporary traffic order is revoked formally.

In its case summary, City of London say that the order makes it clear that the prohibition is for the duration of the works so that the time limit of 18 months provided for in Section 15(1)(b) does not apply. Nowhere in the order is it stated that the authority is satisfied that the execution of the works will take longer than 18 months. The inclusion of such a statement is a legal requirement in order for the time limit of 18 months not to apply. That is clear from the wording of Section 15(2).

It follows that the prohibition on entry contained in the order made on 11 June 2013 ceased to be effective from 17 December 2014, being 18 months from the date on which the prohibition came into force. As there is no evidence presented of any authorisation of a further prohibition, it must also follow that the alleged contravention did not occur.

John Vigus told Call Sign: "By the time the next issue of the magazine comes out, I suspect that the City of London will have noticed this result and extended the Traffic Order. So please inform drivers that irrespective of any Traffic Order, the 'no entry' sign is still enforceable by the police as an endorseable offence. You may set down or pick up between the two signs but you must NOT pass the 'no entry' sign located at Broad Street Avenue regardless of whether your passenger asks you to or not..."

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign Online



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The Bank of England Museum in Threadneedle Street has confirmed a host of creative events, exhibitions and displays for 2017.

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

The new **Banknote Gallery** tells the story of the banknote from the early days when paper money was largely mistrusted, to the new £5 note packed with security features and printed on polymer. Filled with original drawings, artwork, designs, notes and sketches from the Bank's collection, the gallery includes the earliest paper notes from China's **Ming dynasty** and the 'running cash' notes - as old as the Bank of England itself, the earliest 17th century Bank of England notes and classic designs such as the 'white fiver' which lasted for 100 years. It also includes a close examination of the most technologically sophisticated note yet issued by the Bank, the new fiver.

New and Current Special Exhibitions

Stories from the City: The Bank of England in Literature (opens summer 2017)

This summer, the Bank of England will issue a new polymer £10 note, featuring Jane Austen. To celebrate the launch, this new exhibition explores the Bank's literary connections over the last three centuries. The exhibition will illustrate the richness of the Bank's collections, presenting exhibits related to the lives and works of **Charles Dickens, T.S. Eliot, Dr Johnson, Robert Browning, Samuel Pepys** and **George Eliot**. It will also reflect on moments when the Bank and the finances of London have been woven into classic works of fiction.

Capturing the City: Photography at the Bank of England (currently until the summer)

The Bank of England Archive presents a largely unseen, beautifully atmospheric, photographic history of the Bank and its city since the mid-19th century. Beginning with early salt paper prints from the 1840s and reaching forward to new images of the city today, the exhibition explores an alternative and sometimes surprising history of the Bank, its buildings and staff, while also creating a history of London from the Bank's perspective.

Among the highlights is a series of images of Sir John Soane's 'lost' Bank of England. The windowless 'curtain' wall on Threadneedle Street is the only part of Soane's original building standing today and the exhibition presents the best photographic record of the lost 'Old Bank'.

New exhibitions and free events at...

THE BANK OF ENGLAND MUSEUM



The new polymer £10 note will feature Jane Austen

New temporary displays

The Big Bang 30th Anniversary:
(Currently open until April 28...)

On 27th October 1986, the introduction of electronic trading and other radical changes affected market systems and the structure of the Stock Exchange. Thirty years on, a new, small display includes original documents from the Bank's archive, revealing fascinating insights into the innovation that transformed the City.

20th Anniversary of the Bank's Independence: (opens 2 May)

On 6 May 1997, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer granted the Bank of England operational independence. The Bank began to set interest rates, and the Monetary Policy Committee was established. This new display uses a range of documents from the Bank of England's Archive to explain what these changes meant and how they shaped the way the Bank works today.

Museums at Night (Friday 19 May from 5:30-9pm)

This is a rare opportunity to visit the Museum after dark. Enjoy a variety of gallery talks and chat to gold and banknote experts. Meet members of the Museum and Archive teams, who will reveal some unique and unseen objects from the Bank's collection which visitors can handle.

There are several children's exhibitions where the young visitors can win prizes including at **Toad to the Rescue** (13-17 February at 10.30, 11.30, 12.30, 2.00, 3.00 and 4.00) where children can learn about **The Wind in the Willows** stories and **Chicks Great EGGscape** where they can join the hunt to find the hidden chicks and a golden egg by following the trail around the Museum and then decorate an Easter animal mask or finger puppet to take home. There's a chocolate egg for every child (3-13 April from 10am-4:30pm).

VISITOR INFO: There is no charge for admission to the Museum or for any event. Entry via Bartholomew Lane. Opening hours Mon - Fri 10am - 5pm (last entry 4:30pm). Closed Public and Bank Holidays and weekends.

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

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THE FUTURE

In March 2006, work was so plentiful that Dial-a-Cab had to run an incentive scheme over the Xmas/New Year holiday period to encourage drivers to cover account work. The second prize was six weeks holiday whenever you wanted it and was won by Terry Goldsmith (R74). So what was the first prize? Well, it was won by Richard Barford (R39) and it was no less than a brand new 'Gold' spec £35,000 taxi! Ten years have passed and a four letter word beginning with U has now appeared, undoubtedly having a detrimental effect. Richard now gives his view on the future...

"So another year over and a new one just begun; what will this year bring to the cab trade? I hope it's not as painful as 2016; I've been driving a cab for nearly 22 years now and it was certainly the hardest I have known within those years. But will things change...

I can't see traffic getting any easier as TfL don't seem to care or do anything about it. I'm sure if they were to look at how empty buses were these days whilst also looking at the phasing of traffic lights, they could slightly improve it, but do they really care!

With regards to the cab trade and Dial-a-Cab itself, yes 2016 was really tough. I'm a day man, but have worked the occasionally night. During the day, I believe Rate 1 is right, but at night Rate 3 is shocking and way too expensive. I've looked back at other emails I've sent to *Call Sign* and in a 2013 one, I wrote that Rate 3 could come back to bite us on the bum and I believe that with the introduction of Uber, it now has. I understand that night men have to earn a premium, but I think Rate 2 is adequate. Drivers may not want to read this, but I can't blame anyone getting into another form of transport rather than a black cab at night due to the expense. Yes, I know about attacks / rapes on women, but most people don't seem to care and due to our high costs, we are giving them the opportunity to use private hire.

Until we wake up and realise how much this is hurting our trade, we will continue to struggle to make a living. It also has a knock-on effect as it also affects us day men. I'm sure we've lost many accounts over the years due to high pricing at night. Rate 3 certainly doesn't need a run-in on account work.

As for DaC, it's now three years since that last email and nothing much has changed apart from losing some more accounts. But we are now covering more **fixed price** jobs to the airport than we ever have. When I suggested doing that in a 2013 email, Brian responded by saying that you could get a minicab from **London Wall to Heathrow** for £36 or even get an E-class for an extra £3! But we do now give fixed prices and have won some airport work back. I also mentioned offering fixed prices back into town from the airport, which I know as a Society we are trying to do. I know some drivers at the airport are not keen on doing radio work or fixed prices back into town, so maybe to get these jobs covered DaC's controllers could let us know when these trips are coming out just like they do in the mornings with work. As a trade, unless we start offering fixed price jobs from the airport, the wait for a job is just going to get longer and longer and eventually it will not be worth waiting; I personally don't bother anymore now when I drop off as the wait can be up to 5 hours!

And yet, with all the above we still expect account customers to pay a gratuity in addition to a £4.20 run-in. I still want a run-in and I still want a gratuity, but there comes a time when you realise that sometimes in life, you can't always get what you want.

In those 2013 emails, I suggested keeping the run-ins during the morning rush hour, but at any other time - especially with a system of 'nearest cab' - asked if we needed a run-in. Surely this must hold back our Sales team, especially compared to Hailo for example where there is no automatic run-in or gratuity. I'd rather lose our account work over bad coverage, as we then only have ourselves to blame as opposed to losing accounts through cost. I feel sorry for DaC's Sales

team and unless we give them some negotiating freedom, I can't see us winning many new accounts; all you need do is to read last month's **Keith Cain** article in *Call Sign* to see how just hard it is to win accounts.

I'm not on Hailo or Gett, even though we all know that many DaC drivers are and from what I'm led to believe, the Board can't do much about it. I was £6,500 down this year; how long do I give it in that if you can't beat them, join them? I'm sure that with the technology we have today on DaC, we could route out any members who are on Hailo or Gett.

On that note I better get myself ready for another painful night shift, living off scraps and hoping to be lucky. When I see passengers waiting round every corner for their Uber driver, it just breaks my heart.

However, I would like to wish everyone at DaC a Happy New Year..."

Richard Barford (R39)

We showed DaC's Sales manager, Keith Cain, Richard's article. He told Call Sign:

"While no one can disagree with Richard's comments and frustrations, we are already offering the meter starting at booked time or on arrival for ASAP trips. We also offer fixed price trips to and from the airport, while longer distance trips are being picked up by controllers and given a fixed rate below the meter. No gratuities are offered to accounts that look to be at least reasonably sized. We are doing all we can to compete..."



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Anyone passing the Harris Academy in Southwark Park Road over the holidays might have wondered just what was going on there with an assortment of people strolling in, many carrying their meagre belongings with them. Yet these were just ordinary people who had fallen on hard times and going to the 45th annual **Crisis at Christmas**, where for up to six days they could forget their problems and concentrate on living a far more normal existence.

Once there, guests could have hot meals including Christmas dinner, free health checks, hot showers, be provided with clean clothes and even get free housing and job advice.

Leading up to the holidays, TV and radio ads asked for donations of £22.32 and explained how that amount could give one homeless person six days of normality over the holiday period. They also required volunteers to help provide that normality. One of those volunteers was Carla Rice, daughter of Dial-a-Cab Chairman Brian Rice. *Call Sign* asked Carla how things went...

"This was my first year of volunteering for **Crisis at Christmas**. I was of the 10,000 volunteers that signed up for 8 - 10 hour shifts from the 23rd to 30th December at one of the eleven locations across London and I was left totally amazed at the size of the project and everything that was involved - it really was organised like a military operation!

Crisis for Christmas ask the public to donate £22.32 to their cause and it was inspiring and humbling to see exactly what that money does for a homeless person at Christmas.

Carla Rice, daughter of DaC Chairman Brian, gave up two days of her holiday to work full shifts for Crisis at Christmas, helping to give homeless people a place to stay over Xmas and New Year...

HELPING THE HOMELESS AT XMAS



Carla Rice: "It was inspiring..."

son at Christmas.

I was immediately struck by the diverse group of people that are struck by homelessness and it did a lot to dispel the stereotypes people generally hold of a homeless person. It really can - and does - happen to all kinds of people.

On hand to assist were hairdressers, medical staff, beauty grooming professionals and yoga teachers! In addition, there were also professional counsellors, Samaritans and

housing / career advice officers for any guest to speak to. Guests could get free eye tests and glasses if needed. There was even a specially built kennel for those with dogs!

There was plenty of entertainment available including a cinema, theatre and writing groups, football training groups run by Arsenal, West Ham and Millwall, outings to the London Eye and Tower of London... and not to mention a certain Chris Martin from Coldplay who turned up with no publicity to join in with the karaoke one evening!

IT providers to organisations that can't afford any, Aimar, organised free phone calls from the café with over 71 hours of international calls provided to the guests.

The most humbling part for me was seeing the guests lined up asleep on camp beds in the school hall, which was made into a sleeping bay. Not once did I hear any of them complain about their situation; they were just so full of appreciation and gratitude to all of the volunteers. It prompted, predictably, a range of emotions from guilt to gratitude, from pride to satisfaction.

Crisis for Christmas simply can't happen without the volunteers - and it is something I am very proud to have been a part of and look forward to volunteering for years to come."

Carla Rice
Call Sign Online



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

Brethren of the Whip



Bilkers

The term "bilking" is not, as many believe, a slang term invented by the trade to describe the action of not paying the fare. The phrase itself dates back to 1637 and was first coined by Ben Johnson in his *Tale of Tub*: "Bilke? What's that?" "Why nothing, a word signifying Nothing..."

In 1834, John Brown was charged with bilking William Inskip. Brown was described as "an independent gentleman, about four feet high with a lump on his shoulder." Inskip stated how he had picked Brown up at 4am and took him to several destinations. Whilst the cab was going through Regent's Park, Brown pointed out a kite in the sky to the cabman – at which he took the opportunity whilst Inskip was not looking, to jump out the cab and run off. Inskip gave chase and soon caught the diminutive fellow and handed him to a policeman.

"Why didn't you pay the fare?" asked the magistrate.

"I never hired the cab," replied Brown. "I was forcibly put into it and carried away against my will." On being asked what he meant, he continued; "Why, I was passing in Oxford Street, when on arriving at a coach stand, the complainant caught hold of me, saying: 'Do you want a cab?'"

"No," said I, "I can walk home."

"But you shan't," says the cabman and assisted by the Waterman, he lifted me into a cab. The Complainant exclaimed as he drove off: "You shall ride, sir, you shall ride."

After the laughter of the court had died down, the cabman, William Inskip, objected to the bilker's version of events. "Lord love your Vorship, I never said no sich thing; the gentleman got him by himself."

The Defendant having made satisfaction to the knight of the whip, both parties left the office.

The following year at the same police office of Marylebone, an old sailor who had lost a leg at the Battle of Trafalgar was up before the same magistrate, who asked the old tar what he had to say in answer to the charge of bilking the driver.

"I've to say this here, your Honour. When I got into that land-lubber's cab, I was rather groggy, but my wooden leg was all right as a trivet, your Honour; and when he set me down, I found that it was gone and I only had this here leg to stand upon, the only one that the *Monsieur* has left me. Finding this was the case, I refused to pay the fare and for this I was conveyed to limbo."

The cabman, William Pie, assured the Worship that "when Jack entered the cab, he had no wooden leg, but stood upon precisely the same footing as he did then."

The magistrate asked the sailor what he supposed the cabman had done with the leg.

"Shiver my timbers if I know," replied the sailor - the court reporter could possibly be accused of using poetic licence! The cabman questioned the sailor as to what use his leg could be to anyone? "Why you lubber," came the reply. "It will either do for a leg, or may be used to play at single stick with."

It was all to no avail, the old sailor was told he had to pay William Pie 7s 6d, which included the fare and loss of earnings. The old *Jack Tar* was "...led hopping from the office and consigned to the lock-up."

Some bilkers should think more of the

consequences in trying to bilk a driver. In 1868, Edward Lawrence picked up two men in Hammersmith and drove them to Baker Street. One man got out and Lawrence was told to go on to Cold Bath Square.

On arriving there, the passenger got out and began walking away. Lawrence got down from his cab and asked for his fare but the passenger suddenly attacked him, punching him several times and knocking him down to the floor. The passenger, 34 year old Thomas Jackson was found guilty of the assault and of bilking the cabman and sentenced to one month with hard labour at the Clerkenwell House of Correction. Not only would such a sentence involve the shaving of the head and being doused in lime, but each man was also forced to wear a mask that prevented communication between him and other prisoners. But these were the least of his worries. Thomas Jackson was also sub-warder at the very prison he had been sentenced to. It would not be an easy month for him...!

Sean Farrell
Call Sign Online

Top 10 excuses for not paying tax!

Many years ago, *Call Sign* was shown some letters (with names hidden) by then Dial-a-Cab Secretary, Trevor

Clarke. They came from a handful of subscribers and had been sent to Trevor explaining why those particular drivers were unable to attend that year's AGM. The reason the letters were surprising was because methodical Trevor always filed these "excuse" letters away and brought them out again each year before the meeting that many always tried to avoid going to. Quite miraculously, reasons were often given that the driver's grandparents had sadly died... again! In fact one unlucky driver had 7 grandparents dying in just 9 years! Aunts and uncles by the score also all passed away in the same 2 week period! That's why the following press release from HMRC amused us as it brought those memories back...!



Warren Smith toasts Trevor Clarke on Trevor's last day before retirement in 2001

The deadline for sending 2015-16 Self-Assessment tax returns to HMRC and for paying any tax owed was 31 January 2017. Each year HM Revenue and Customs receives a number of unusual excuses why SA "customers" didn't complete their tax return on time. These include:

1. My tax return was on my yacht, which caught fire.
2. A wasp in my car caused me to have an accident and my tax return, which was inside, was destroyed.
3. My wife helps me with my tax return, but she had a headache for ten days.
4. My dog ate my tax return...and all of the reminders.
5. I couldn't complete my tax return, because my husband left me and took our accountant with him. I am currently trying to find a new accountant.
6. My child scribbled all over the tax return, so I wasn't able to send it back.
7. I work for myself, but a colleague borrowed my tax return to photocopy it and lost it.
8. My husband told me the deadline was 31st March.
9. My internet connection failed.
10. The postman doesn't deliver to my house.

Now you know!

GANGSTERS!

Why it was... I don't know, but for many years the London taxi trade seemed to have a relationship – albeit quite tenuous – with those referred to as gangsters with many recounting times they met Ron and Reg – the notorious Kray twins. That's not to say we were involved in crime, but for some reason we were trusted to just do our job and look the other way if something faintly suspicious was occurring. A dodgy looking delivery or an even dodgier looking passenger – so long as we got paid and were not asked to do anything illegal whilst doing the job, an assortment of gangsters or crooks would trust us!

But that was then. Nowadays people of that ilk are not so easy to spot and often referred to as businessmen! So when recently talking to Editor Al and hearing of a story he told me of a recent incident involving a rather nasty individual that he tied into the Dial-a-Cab battle against moving PEDs to the passenger compartment, I asked him if I could publish it. And here it is...

"I was going to see Russell Poluck after his brother Gordon had sadly passed away and going via Kings Cross, I thought I'd try Roman Way first as it was getting close to the December 31 date by which time all PEDs had to be refitted into the rear compartment."

For months, Alan has written on the subject and explaining how dangerous he thought having the PED in the passenger compartment could be. He continued...

"It was around 3pm but there must have been 5 or 6 cabs outside waiting for the cabs inside that were being worked on to come out. So I didn't wait and decided to go on the way back instead. It never occurred to me how lucky that decision may have been.

"I stopped at Russell's for around an hour and then made my way back from Stanmore towards Kings Cross and put my 'for hire' light on in case there was anything about. When I got to Kilburn, a big man in a fawn old style but new-looking Crombie overcoat hailed me to go to Kings Cross! You can guess what I thought! I was being paid to get the PED fitted! But at Maida Vale he suddenly changed his mind and asked me to take him to Winter Wonderland instead. The traffic going down Edgware Road was solid and I said I'd try a back route, but he suddenly called out that 'good' cab drivers would have shot along the offside of the road in the north-bound lane!

"Suddenly I knew my Kings Cross luck was well and truly sunk! I tried explaining why I couldn't do that and he suddenly changed the conversation to ask if I had been busy. I told him he was my first job (which I tell every passenger that asks that question... and in this case it was true) and he then asked me if I knew the Adams Brothers - Terry, Tommy and Patsy from Islington. I innocently asked if they were cab drivers and he went silent for a few seconds before blurting out that they were billionaires who ran Europe's largest drug ring! He then said he was related, worked for them and was also going to 'hurt' someone that evening because he 'loved a good fight!' As he was almost as wide as he was tall, I didn't doubt him. I tried to make a joke of it and said I hoped it wasn't me but he didn't reply.

"Suddenly he said that 'the brothers' wouldn't be happy to know that a London taxi driver hadn't heard of them. Meanwhile we were close to Seymour Street, moving very slowly and he said he'd get out there. As he did, he said he assumed there would be no charge! I didn't argue and the second the door was shut I turned left quickly into Seymour Street, even though the lights had turned to red!

"I'll never know whether he was telling the truth about the

Adams family (who I had never heard of, but all the drivers I spoke to at Roman Way when I got back there seemed to know them). His coat looked to be really expensive and he was very big across without being fat - in fact he looked how you would imagine a gangster looked!

"As a result, I couldn't help but wonder whether he would have asked to pay by card had Roman Way fitted a PED on my way out earlier and he saw it in the back and... well you know what I'm thinking!

"When I reached Roman Way, they said sorry but they couldn't do it that day. I was a bit upset after what I'd been through to get there, but in reality I could see how busy they were and part of me was relieved. I really don't want to have one and I'm appalled that TfL are forcing us into putting ourselves in danger.

"I went home after a few jobs because I couldn't concentrate. When I got there, I looked up the Adams family of Clerkenwell and they are several steps beyond frightening, even though at least one of them is said to be in prison."

If you're like Alan and don't know who the Adams Family are, there is plenty of information online. No doubt TfL won't be one of those looking. After all, why should they care!



Patrick (Patsy) Adams

Ron Yarborough
Call Sign Online

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"It happened after I had pulled up outside the terminal at **London City Airport** to set down my passenger," **Alan Drew (L33)** explained to *Call Sign*. "He had asked me for a receipt, which I was happy to do. I intended finishing work after this trip, so I took his fare money, slid my green taxi drivers' Badge from my neck and put both items in my money bag for safe keeping as I habitually do when I have ended my shift.

"While I was sorting out the receipt, there was a crashing noise ahead of my taxi. I looked up to see a PHV directly in front of me having unloaded luggage from the car and someone then slammed shut the tailgate. I jumped out of my seat and went round to the front of my taxi to check there was no damage to my cab from where the tailgate had previously been opened. Looking around, there was a lady standing nearby, so I turned

Where's Your Badge?



Alan Drew: Cab Enforcement Officer didn't believe he had just taken off his badge as he'd finished his shift

to her and asked if she had seen anything? She said no but then asked where my badge was. She identified herself as a Tfl Cab Enforcement Officer. I told her that I had now finished work, just taken my Badge off, put it into my money bag together with my passengers' cash and was heading home.

"She said she couldn't be sure that I had been wearing it and I repeated that I was now finished and going home. In the same vein, she then asked how she knew I was finishing. I responded that she didn't have to believe me but that I'd been working for over 10 hours and could prove that via my **Dial-a-Cab** terminal. But she said she was disputing my word and began writing everything down on a digital hand-held device, expecting me to counter-sign it as a statement of fact."

Alan continued his story and pointed out to the CEO several anomalies and made amendments, but still refused to sign anything.

"At that point, another Tfl officer appeared on the scene and agreed with me that I did not have to sign anything so I drove away and headed home. My advice is to never sign anything just because someone says you have to. I am now awaiting a response from Tfl," he concluded, still looking puzzled at what he said was a waste of everyone's time. As Alan pointed out, it wasn't as though he never had his Badge...

Alan Green, Call Sign Online

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

A Blogger's Tale

My dad loved to gamble; he came from a long line of gamblers and both he and my uncle were bookmakers. In fact my uncle managed a number of shops until he retired a few years ago.

Some of my earliest memories were the sound of dad whistling at the horse racing on the television, I was amazed at how much noise he could generate. He once told me that he had won so much money on an accumulator that he managed to pay off the mortgage early, but then whispered to me not to tell mum... and I didn't.

I had a brief - but idyllic - spell after leaving school of being unable to get a job, lazing around at home. No school and no work was totally fantastic, but I had heard the rumblings of discontent from both my parents. Apparently dad had told mum that I could work with him in the betting shop, the one in Soho no less; now if I'd known that I would have invented a job and waited for him at the top of the road, Soho had a magical allure for a teenage me.

Inevitably, despite her desire to get me working, mum refused to allow me to work in a betting shop. I suspect she thought it would corrupt me, but at 17 I wholeheartedly wanted to be corrupted!

I went on to dislike gambling, preferring to keep a firm grip on my hard earned money. I have, though, had a couple of lapses in my time; many years ago I picked up a lucky gambler in the West End. He excitedly told me that he had won big that night and as I steered the cab through the dark streets towards **Charing Cross Station** he replayed every turn of the card and every winning hand until I eventually pulled on to the cobbles at the front of the station. Still in the cab, he asked me if I had had a good night and of course I replied that I had only just started and only had my cash float on me... just in case!

He climbed out, came to the nearside window and held out a leather bag very similar to the one I used to hold my notes in. He asked if I fancied a gamble. Well I always want to win, but the thought of losing made me feel sick. I asked what kind of gamble he was referring to.

"Flick a coin and call heads or tails in the air," the passenger replied. "If you win, you keep my winnings and if you lose, I keep what's in your money bag."

Safe to say I drove home potless. My dad used to tell me to always quit while you were ahead and I used to ask him how you knew when you were ahead. He would just smile and say that I still had a lot to learn...!

To be continued...



**Simon Scott (040)
Call Sign Online**



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This is just a reminder that it's no longer Christmas and that New Year celebrations are a distant memory. But this magazine doesn't forget easily...

Whether you believe the reported figures in the poster reprinted on this page of 154 sex assaults in PH vehicles, including 32 rapes over a 12 month period, or the figures reported at the pre-Christmas Mayor's Question Time that were taken over a two year period of 270 sex attacks, which allegedly included 56 rapes; either way the figures are absolutely appalling!

It has to be also said that during that two year period, there was *one* reported case of a sex attack by a licensed taxi driver; that was in 2015. Yes, even that one case was one too many with the LTDA describing it as a deplorable one-off incident and responded by offering a donation of £10,000 to the St Mary's Hospital Rape Haven in Paddington, which specialises in assisting victims of sexual harassment.

So put that against Budweiser's apparent support of the minicab sex attack and rape figures to such a degree that they not only sponsored Uber over the holiday period by offering £15 per trip to use them, but by doing so were encouraging lone females to use the Uber app.

We on the licensed taxi side all knew that Uber's surge pricing over the holiday period made the £15 discount almost worthless, but people looking to get home and not used to using the app regularly would not have realised. But we would have assumed that a company like Budweiser, who in all fairness many would describe as producing the best beer of its kind, would have checked just who they were sponsoring.

So *Call Sign* can't tell you what to drink but we'd ask you to remember the above when you order your next beer and perhaps remind your family and all your friends of who it was that totally ignored the above disgraceful sex attacks in minicabs and when they next fancy a beer, perhaps think about ordering a different one to Budweiser...

FANCY A BEER???

...but have a short memory!!!



Feb 2015-Feb 2016
Reported sexual assaults
including rapes in
Private hire vehicles
154
32 attacks allegedly
carried out by
UBER drivers

I JUST WANTED TO GO HOME
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DON'T DRINK & DRIVE.

Budweiser UBER

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

Bank Demo

The succession of demos by taxi drivers at the Bank Junction was deemed to be a success by organisers, the independent ITA, despite the best attempts of the City Police to scupper them by creating difficulties for those many taxi drivers that turned up. They even created a further difficulty by reducing the original 90 minutes to just 30.

However, drivers were being sent messages via Twitter and passing them on verbally to move the demo to places other than the Bank Junction and rather than breaking their spirit, drivers became even more determined to get their point across – that taxi drivers are the safest form of public transport and that it had been many years since a licensed taxi driver had been involved in an accident at the junction, whereas buses had and indeed in the same week, a bus at the **Elephant and Castle** had knocked over a pedestrian.

Areas were bought to complete standstills as thousands of Taxis changed destinations. The police soon realised they were losing as more and more venues saw taxis gather at places such as Parliament Square and London Bridge.

As drivers dispersed, organisers gave out details for following days with nothing put out on social media, leaving the police in the dark. That hadn't been the intention but police actions left demonstrators fighting for their trade, knowing that closing the Bank Junction to them would be catastrophic and lose taxi drivers even more passengers.

The only real question is what the City of London has against us to force the trade into acting in this way? However, the city of London has now agreed to a meeting with the RMT taxi section.



Mercedes-Benz Vans has launched its new Euro 6 Vito Taxi; their successor to the vehicle that has sold in excess of 3,000 units since its launch in 2008. The new taxi works on a 136 hp low emission 114CD Euro 6 diesel engine together with the fuel efficient 7G-tronic plus 7 speed gearbox. S&B Commercials at Welham Green advertise the Euro 6 Vito as no deposit with weekly payments of £168, which includes a 3 year warranty and free 24 hour roadside assistance from MB's MobiloVan. It all sounds good, but as they advertise two rates – for business and non-business users – who knows.



Call Sign's Gary Cox (O46) makes no secret of his love for the Vito as against the TX4 but looks at the cab's advertising and second hand future...

SELLING THE VITO



"Why was the best diesel cab ever released just before the electric taxi is due?"

S&B should realise that it will soon find itself in the middle of a panic buying spree due to the fast moving position regarding the up and coming electric taxi. Nobody at S&B was available for comment when approached. That's not surprising considering that they are in all probability trying to convince the big boys and girls in Stuttgart that they don't want to have to shift thousands of ex-leasehold cabs at the same time – could a two year lease plan be in the offing? They must be having a laugh; after all, who sells a cab with a one year warranty on it. Of course, because nobody will be able to purchase new diesel taxis soon, second-hand prices will rocket, which makes the depressingly high price for a new Vito not seem quite so high.

One thing is certain though; the builders in fifteen years' time will be rubbing their hands together at the thought of a well maintained cheap van for next to

nothing, courtesy of the Mayor of London. I just hope that S&B see sense and charge independent traders like you, me and Del Boy the same price as they do to large garages and promise to supply us on a first-come first-served basis.

I bet KPM and Ascott can't wait for the gold rush on second hand cabs, because if my well-known source is to be believed, what the cab trade lacks is enough second hand cabs ready to buy on the showroom floors. Not that S&B are going to want to flog second-hand TX4 cabs because they are going to have to face the nightmare of getting a lot of cabs first time plated – good luck with TfL.

We all knew Mercedes Benz were never going to put their Euro 6 taxi on the road until they thought they had got it right, but I just wish they had delivered this cab a year earlier so that we had a little more breathing space, rather than having prob-

ably the best diesel cab ever arriving at the last minute just before we all go down the experimental route of electric taxis!

My tip is if that if you are feeling confident enough to buy a new dib dab and you can't add extras on it because it comes complete, the only thing you can negotiate is not paying for the oil on the first service. At least when you leave S&B, you know you've got something out of them apart from a fantastic cab – yes, a little over-priced but then again in two or three years' time when they start to emerge back on the second hand market with sixty thousand miles on them, I can see the price rocketing if the electricity thing doesn't give us the pleasure we so desire.

To S&B, above is the best way to flog a cab; it asks all the questions and answers them all in one place. They can consider this the ultimate ad – free of charge because I like the way they do business...

Gary Cox

Call Sign Online (and Vito lover)

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

SIMON'S GOLF COURSES

Knole Park Golf Club

Down Sevenoaks way there's a rather pleasant golf club called **Knole Park**, which is unsurprisingly situated in the **Knole House** estate.

Designed by **J.F. Abercromby**, it was opened on November 1st 1924 when **Lord Sackville of Knole Park** drove off the first tee. The noble Lord was landlord of the estate and a member of **Knole Park Golf Club**.

The course found some notoriety during the war when enemy gliders attempted landings there; that was stopped when a series of obstacles were scattered around. But fame hit the course in the 1960s when **John, George, Paul and Ringo** – aka **The Beatles** – took a walk over the course during the filming for the band's 1967 recording of **Strawberry Fields Forever**.

Knole Park is a classic parkland course with some very fine holes, some of which border on excellent. But a word of warning: You may and almost certainly will encounter the numerous deer that roam the course, but they're a harmless bunch that understand the layout of the course and steer clear of the greens and tees... usually!

At 6500 yards and a par of 70, it's not overly long but it will certainly challenge you. A few noteworthy holes include the 14th – a long par 4 (447 yards) that requires a good drive down the left, leaving a long to mid-iron shot in.

The 16th is the last par 3 at 194 yards and is on the highest part of the course. It also offers wonderful views of the historic Knole House. The 18th is a short par 4 at 345 yards, but beware... it's a redan green (slopes away from you) and 'out of bounds' and the Club House lurk just behind the final approach.

As always, happy golfing...

Simon Wallis (M11)
Call Sign Online



Don't be surprised when some deer turn up to watch you!

when **John, George, Paul and Ringo** – aka **The Beatles** – took a walk over the course during the filming for the band's 1967 recording of **Strawberry Fields Forever**.

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

Hello Ladies & Gents

I would like to start this article by thanking the staff at **Roman Way** and also the girls in **Driver Services** for their hard work and commitment throughout December and into this year, whilst we were carrying out the fleet recall to fit PEDS into the rear compartments of the fleet in a ridiculously short period.

It was certainly a race against time to finish this task before the TfL deadline of 30th December, but with your assistance, it was a reasonably smooth operation and we succeeded against all the odds, so well done to everyone; especially as this came straight on the back of the PED upgrades that prevented the total roll-out of the Version 11 software update. That should have included the gratuity box and card pre-auths had not TfL insisted on their date. However, these will be coming very soon in Version 12.

As I have mentioned previously, the IT department were informed by Barclaycard that if certain software changes to the PED were not implemented, then they would literally die overnight. It was at such short notice, with both **Barclaycard** and **Ingenico** seemingly trying to pass the buck while blaming each other for not notifying us until literally the last minute. For the PED upgrade to work successfully, the MDT units also needed updated software; so as you can imagine, IT Director **John Bankes**, his team and all the guys at **Roman Way** were under severe pressure to make the necessary changes in such a short time and without the prior notice that other providers had some two months earlier! Not an ideal situation and definitely not one of our making.

What adds to our frustration is that it now appears the PEDS that were still to be

OPERATIONS AND COMPLIANCE REPORT



upgraded after the cut-off date did not malfunction and indeed worked normally, but we just couldn't take the chance.

I know many of you are fearful of the obvious dangers and difficulties of having PEDS sited in the back of your taxis and only time will tell if your safety will be compromised or put to the test. But there will certainly be occasions when you are forced to leave the safety of the taxi to sort a problem out in the back. It is with this in mind that I once again urge you to carry a manual credit card receipt book with you at all times that can be handed back to you

in the front after being signed without you having to leave your vehicle. It isn't the ideal solution, but may be a little safer and if a problem occurs then payment can be processed from the office so long as a rubbing of the actual card is taken, which shows the card details and signature.

In answer to some of your queries, the Board have frequently discussed at length the payment schedules for credit card transactions and although it is a cost to Dial-a-Cab to process every payment through the banks, we understand that now hail and ride trips have increased five-fold on a daily basis, there is now a need to quicken up the payment schedule. It seems feasible that we can pay these trips on a daily basis in the very near future.

Lastly, one or two drivers have asked for an instructional notice that can be displayed on the partition regarding the usage of the Chip and Pin cards for those passengers that speak alternative languages. As you know, TfL categorically state where any signage - inside or outside of the taxi - should be located and all signs must be approved beforehand. It doesn't seem to be a major concern at the moment and with all the added stickers that we now have, we are fast running out of space inside of the cabs.

Allan Evans

Operations/Compliance Director

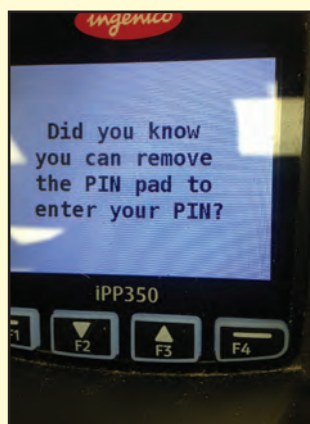
And by the way TfL...

No doubt many **Call Sign** readers are up with this magazine's campaign for the last half of 2016 against moving credit card PEDs to the taxi's rear compartment. You also probably became quite fed up with our secondary campaign, which after admitting defeat for the first one, then asked for the PED instead to go onto a cable as it had been in the front, so that passengers with problems could remove it from the cradle and pass it through the gap to us without our need to get into the back. Sadly, TfL never even had the decency to respond to that one, but we're now used to their rudeness.

But we still thought we'd show TfL this picture of a credit card machine used by Sainsbury's and many others, who actually allow their customers to remove the PED from the bracket because they, unlike TfL, apparently have some brains! We won't get that because TfL could not give a hoot what we think! At least that makes the situation more understandable!!!

Disrespectful to TfL? That's what they have done to us. Perhaps we should change our name to **Uber!**

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online



Many companies allow their PEDs to be removed from the cradle... but not TfL!

CORINTHIAN GOLF CLUB



Cabbie Specials

HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED JOINING A GOLF CLUB BUT WONDERED IF YOU WOULD REALLY USE THE MEMBERSHIP?

Now's your chance to try our course. Any black cab driver who shows us their badge gets a 10% discount for green fees and societies on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and a discounted membership fee.

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Ajit Chambers was previously unknown to the trade, but just like an express train has entered the fray in our never ending struggle with Transport for London. He too has experienced hardship in his dealings with our governing body.



Firstly some background on Ajit. Early on, he trained as a helicopter pilot before then going on to become a civil servant in the Community for Local Government, when no less then Sadiq Khan was the Minister.

He followed that by moving into finance with Barclays and HSBC. Ajit made numerous influential contacts in his position of attending to 'ultra-high net' worth individuals before his entrepreneurial zest bore the idea of turning some of London's disused tube stations into themed tourist attractions. Ajit formed The Old London Underground Company. At subsequent meetings, TfL became very impressed with even then-Mayor Boris Johnson waxing lyrical over Ajit's initiative.

However, soon after, TfL became less cooperative and more obstructive. Ajit claims that under a cover-up, TfL proceeded to 'steal' his business model after he'd invested a huge sum of his own money into the project.

So the question begs, where does the London licensed taxi trade feature in this tale of woe? Well, Ajit has always had affection for our trade going back to when he first came to London. He couldn't quite get to grips with the London Underground system, so he stayed above ground, frequently asking cabbies for directions and was impressed by their courtesy and help. Eventually Ajit became a frequent customer.

Call Sign's Marc Turner (R97) is also known as Drumslayer. This month he spoke to Ajit Chambers, an entrepreneur whose Old London Underground Company has had to battle against the way TfL operates, causing him to sympathise with the taxi trade...

COULD AJIT CHAMBERS BE THE LIGHT AT THE END OF OUR TUNNEL?



"TfL became less cooperative and more obstructive!"

deeds. He demanded a Public Inquiry from the PM into TfL's malfeasance.

Ajit feels his requested Public Inquiry is imminent and believes that soon "some individuals will be shaking in their boots!"

As Ajit investigated the miscreants of his turmoil, the same three names kept cropping up. Ajit said: "The three people involved in the fraudulent procurement process happen to be embroiled in the Garden Bridge fiasco and - wait for it - the Uber plague we are suffering."

Ajit added: "I can't stand by and watch persons in position of power using that power to benefit themselves."

On Friday January 6th, Ajit Chambers met with Prime Minister, Theresa May. That night he was a guest on George Galloway's talkRadio show and described how Theresa May had raised her eyebrow on hearing of Uber's brazen and dastardly

Currently Ajit's aim is to have all the trade organisations uniting as one, so putting this iconic trade back on track. I joked with Ajit that I didn't think even 'God Almighty' could pull that task off! But Ajit was serious: "I'm striving to get all the orgs together as a business partner of London."

In concluding, I'd like to thank Ajit on behalf of the trade for his perseverance in speaking up for us. With those of the calibre of Ajit Chambers in our corner, we'll never be derailed!!!

Marc Turner (R97)
Call Sign Online

Anglo French demo Solidarity

In an unprecedented act of solidarity with London taxi drivers demonstrating against being banned from the Bank Junction in April, fellow taxi drivers in Paris on their own demonstration, were tweeting support with messages claiming that banning taxis from London's Bank Junction was akin to banning French taxis from Place Charles de Gaulle in Paris. Parisian cabs carried signage for the duration of the protest, supporting the action taking place in London with the tweet signage of #JeSuisTaxis.

See page 23.

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*I recently had a short stay at the **Holiday Inn Kensington**, formally the **Kensington Close**. When I say short, it was actually about ten minutes while I had a wonder around.*

*On leaving, I approached the Concierge claiming I needed transport to **Heathrow** and could be advise.*

"Our Airport car Service starting at sixty pounds (£60) is very popular with our guests," he responded.

A friend in Trip Advisor???

"Yes, I could call you one, but it would work out more expensive."

*My review on **TRIP ADVISOR** highlighted the conversation, and of course referred to the fifty five pounds (£55) I eventually paid for the journey in a Black Cab.*

The Management responded: "None of our professional concierges ever tries to upsell our Car Service. They give advice on a trustworthy, professional service."



*In other reviews, one guest claimed he was charged forty pounds (£40) to **Victoria**, another was quoted sixty (£60) to **Heathrow**, but on arrival was asked for ninety five (£95).*

I hasten to add these two other reviews have nothing to do with me.

Nothing new in all this, you are thinking, but the interesting thing is that so far one hundred and fifty people have read my review, and presumably the others.

*So I may well be taking a short break at a few other hotels similar to the **Holiday Inn**. I wonder!!*

Philip Benjamin (K20)

The Call Sign Internet Library

CALL SIGN often gets drivers asking how they can get onto our online library because they have only just gone on the internet. Astonishingly, our online department headed by **Vince Chin** has kept this magazine's website going since 1998 – by far the longest of any taxi trade magazine including the one that is apparently read by more drivers than any other! Even though the last time we looked, CS had over 9000 online readers, never mind hard copy readers!

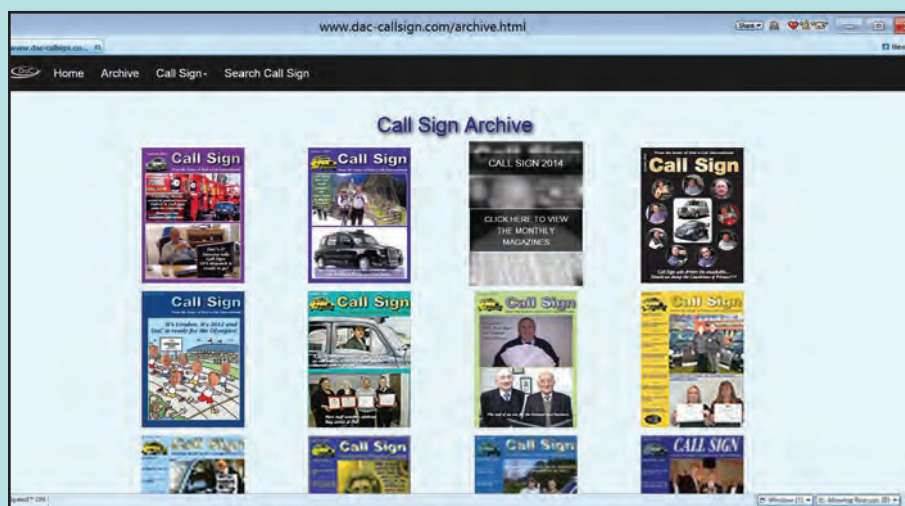
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Then either browse through every issue of **Call Sign** since 1998 by using the **Search Call Sign** facility at the top right of the page, type a clue and let our search engine do the rest. Or go straight to the issue you want by clicking on **Archive** or **Call Sign** at the top. They are both similar except that the **Archive** facility uses covers whereas the **Call Sign** button uses dates.

Since the May 2006 issue, you just need to click on the **PDF** logo under the issue you want to see a large text version. Prior to that date, you can read 20 page versions.

If you just want to see the latest issue, just click on the **Home** page. There are also issues from 1967, 1977 and 1987 as a reminder of the old days!



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

Grosvenor House C

Celebrating their 89th annual Mad Hatters Tea Party on Sunday 22nd January 2017 at the JW Marriott Grosvenor House in Park Lane, the London Taxi Drivers Fund for Underprivileged Children - under the Chairmanship of former Dial-a-Cab Board Member Mike Son - hosted a 4+ hour extravaganza of entertainment for over 650 children and their carers.

Braving cold weather, the eager young guests quickly filled the dance floor, moving to a disco beat and cheering the artistes that had come to entertain them - once again amazingly organised by **Maureen Levy**, wife of the charity's PR **Raymond**. While the non-stop entertainment went on, the guests and their carers also enjoyed a sumptuous high tea.

Following the disco came the energetic dancing of **Amanda's Action Show**, who showed how amazing young people can be with their singing and dancing programme. They were followed by

Animal Fu - an animal character-based dance troop that teaches children to understand the values needed for leading both a healthy and a respectful life. Next up came the **Let it Glow** children who gave a brilliant performance, featuring Elsa from **Disney's Frozen**.

The carers - not to mention the **Call Sign** staff at the party - weren't forgotten as another regular, **Elvis Shmelvis**, gyrated through a medley of Presley hits!

Lydia Lucy, a finalist in last years' **The Voice** then took to the stage to sing two songs that you could see the children associated with - especially when she began rapping! Lydia was followed by the amazing **Elite Musical Theatre Academy** with their incredible dance routine from **Andrew Lloyd Webber's Cats**. So good were Elite that they came back later on to do some more!

Regular visitors, The Bournemouth Carnival Band had the audience roaring with laughter at their comic antics - backed up with competent musicianship and of course, **Spiderman** outfits!

Young players from **Act Now**, a performing arts program that has inspired the talents of young performers over the past 30+ years, then performed a routine from the **Wizard of Oz**, while **Lucy** and



Pearly Kings and Queens



Star Wars comes to Earth!



Lydia Lucy



Elite Musical Theatre Co



Vicky Michelle with Dave Davis



Having a great time at the Grosvenor House

for Underprivileged Children

Children's T&A Party



Animal Fu



Let it Glow's Elsa from Frozen



Elvis Shmelvis



Former East Ender's star Maisie Smith



Lucy's amazing Trip Hazard entertains the kids



Micky, Minnie and co

her amazing dog **Trip Hazard** performed dog tricks involving several happy children up on the stage.

Actress **Maisie Smith**, who played **Tiffany Butcher** in **East Enders**, was then interviewed by resident host **Dave Davis** before the children were joined on the dance floor for a **Character Parade**.

The Elite Musical Theatre Academy then returned with their reprise and were followed by **Crystal Palace FC** favourites, the **Crystal Girls** and their brilliantly choreographed cheerleader act. One day the team may be that good!

Also interviewed was **Allo Allo** saucy waitress star **Vicky Michelle**, who revived memories of the **Fallen Madonna** with the **Big Boobies!** Vicky is also an acclaimed actress with many other parts to her name – not to mention the 2014 series of **I'm a Celebrity...Get me out of Here!**

The **New Generation of Diversity** featuring the main group's **Perri Kiely** had everyone – children and adults – cheering with delight at their simply brilliant dance moves, before then listening intently while ten-year-old **Oliver Joseph** and a slightly older **Justine Harrington** sang.

Another interviewee was **Olympic** wheelchair racer, **Anne Wafula-Strike** MBE who joined **Dave Davis** before then signing autographs for the children.

As usual, all round **The Great Room** things were going on with the **Police**, **Army**, **Fire Brigade** and always popular **Pearly Kings and Queens**. There were lots of other children's entertainments on show - if you didn't mind joining the queues. And not to mention the Editor's favourite part, the chocolate covered marshmallow machine – but he asked us not to mention that!!!

Mike Son asked **Call Sign** to thank all those involved in making the event happen; the **Fund's** amazingly hard-working Committee, the volunteers, helpers, carers, **Sainsbury's** at **Low Hall Chingford** for the plentiful carers' buffet and of course the **Grosvenor House Hotel** Management and their waitresses for their hospitality...

Alan Green
Call Sign Online

Mailshot

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

Shares and drivers

Hello Alan

Have you heard of any undercurrent regarding the mounting of a legal challenge on share distribution etc as although I've not been an owner since August 2012 but prior to that date I was a Dial-a-Cab member for some 30 years as F03. Yet now I don't qualify...

Tony Arnold (J01)

Brian Rice responds: Tony, I have not heard one word regarding an undercurrent and absolutely nothing about a legal challenge, which quite frankly in my view would be laughable; however, there are several stories such as yours. You were either a Member of the Society upon conversion or you were not and unfortunately in your case you were not. However, a rule was passed by the Members and then registered on 5th August 2016 that any Member with 10 years' service on that date could retain his Membership and receive shares as long as he/she rented a taxi with Dial-a-Cab equipment installed.

Unfortunately Tony, there has to be a cut-off date for current Journeymen who were previously owners for 10 years or more (as per the new rule) and that date was when the rule was registered on 5th August 2016. Because you ceased to be an owner four years prior to that date, it excludes you from receiving shares. I know it is unfortunate, but we must abide by the rules. We can't just concoct circumstances to appease individuals. Sorry Tony...

Another year gone...

Hi Alan

Well, another year has been and gone with what can only be described as scenes from 'the ghost of Christmas' yet to come. However, as we ponder the 'Green Mile' I feel that at this time we should try to set aside the overwhelming consumption and self-obsessive flagellation of what we've endured for the benefit of those loved ones who have had to listen to our woes, something they have all but heard long before the fates of recent times.

Therefore it may now be time for some positivity. I've observed the change in my father-in-law's more contented demeanour since handing back his Badge a little earlier than he had planned, to look for other ways in life in which to adapt or change so as not to forget what wonders life can still give.

While some might say it's not that easy - and as a father of three under 15-year olds and in my 50s with an early self-retired wife, I should be the first. However, I can't stop feeling how lucky I am to have a job and still have

the opportunities of doing other things. We should never lose sight of the simple fact that in order to make change, we must start from within and that when we raise our glasses at festive times, it may or may not have been just half empty...

Andy Colli (C84)

You're right Andy. Anyone reading the January issue, which contained two obituaries and one piece remembering someone who had died earlier in 2016, will understand what you mean. Sadly, individual circumstances make it far easier to come to a decision for some as against others. Either way, no one should ever regret growing old because not everyone manages it... Ed

The need to change...

Dear Alan

We need to change our Unions and Associations because they do not lead the way. It's up to us as individuals to understand the market place, predict future developments and change with them. I'm sure most would agree that we're too fragmented, just as I believe that most would agree that **Credit Cards** were a pointer in the right direction. But if **Steve McNamara**, General Secretary of the **LTDA** was honest enough to admit it, his approach to the way in which the system was foisted on us will bear all the hallmarks of **Ken Livingstone's** first London Mayoral style of working - shooting from the hip and picking up any collateral damage along the way. A good example was the removal of credit card PEDs from the front to within the passenger compartment and leaving drivers vulnerable to attack and other allegations.

This is what I think we should do. Look to amalgamate the Green Badge club and the **LTDA**. Of course the reason as to why the **LCDC** came into being will have to be addressed, which could prove painful to the leaderships. Then seat all various organisations around a table and get them to agree that just one trade union will represent our trade and then we can begin putting forward our demands, except that those we negotiate with will no longer have the option of saying that one org disagrees with another and use that as an excuse and do nothing we ask for.

I personally believe that all taxis should be black - a colour that should only be used by the licensed London taxi trade and not private hire. PH should also be defined as being a separate entity from the taxi trade at all levels - completely separate management and staff to create competition from within.

We also need to see the return of a modern form of **Public Carriage Office** capable of an MOT standard of inspection on the road for spot checks on PH and Taxis and have the ability to remove licence plates in extreme cases or

issue warnings notices if needs be.

The **Knowledge of London** tests for taxi drivers should change with the times allowing for a better understanding of public needs. There should be a better understanding of tourism and its needs; for example a small uniform size flag on the front door of taxis informing passengers that this particular driver speaks other languages. Drivers need to be taught how to deal with drunken passengers and also what to do in accident situations.

There should be an advanced driving test instigated and led by the **Institute of Advanced Motoring** for all taxi drivers. PH vehicles with dark tinted windows should be removed from the roads until the offending windows have been replaced. And all private hire and taxi companies and drivers that do not provide tax returns and pay tax on profit in London, should be deemed unfit and not a proper person or company to hold any form of office or trade in the London Taxi / PH region. In plain English, if you want to win it, you've got to be in it!

And you lot are not going to like this one; but we must face the fact that **Rate 3** has been a point of debate for too long so let's fix it and replace it with something more constructive and just accept that it has been an embarrassment to our trade. We should also be able to vote on who represents the taxi trade, even though they can only speak on other forms of transport on the **Greater London Authority** - it should not be just a case of who the Mayor wants.

As for appearance; no more shorts unless they are tailored and no flip flops when on duty. So it's cobbles to those screaming out that they know their rights; it's my rights too! Their screaming doesn't wash when it comes to building our future and feeding our families.

So it's over to **Call Sign** readers to tear the above apart. I just hope that the trade organisations make some attempt at replying, because if they don't it just goes to prove how out of touch they are...

Gary Cox (O46)

Gary, I passed out as a taxi driver in 1971 so I am now officially no longer a butter boy! But even back then and with just the LTDA and the T&G, whatever one said, the other would automatically disagree with it. But there are now multiple orgs - with some founded by small groups of drivers with the best of intentions, but if you then go online you'll hear them all arguing with each other constantly. Sadly, whilst your suggestion represents a form of Utopia, there is more chance of the Mayor banning minicabs than the trade orgs have of voting themselves out of exist-



Mailshot

tence. But you are right in that something has to be done – and quickly – because private hire are being allowed to do whatever they like, whereas we are treated with disdain. And as you also point out, TfL deliberately putting us in danger is a disgrace and shows just how easily this licensing authority finds it to do whatever they want. But *Call Sign* is always open to any driver or trade organisation representative wishing to respond... Ed

Rumours

Dear Alan

I had my PED fitted in the week before Christmas and began to wonder what other business was not allowed to hold and view their PED? I mentioned it to another driver who told me about a **Dial-a-Cab** driver at **Heathrow** who had refused to display the related stickers or to have the PED in the back. He was threatened with and given a *Stop* notice. The story continued that someone at **Roman Way** with a barrister brother took the case up and soon the *Stop* was removed as TfL do not have the authority. Is this just cab driver gossip as there has been nothing in your articles or mentioned by Brian.

Alasdair Kay (C47)

Brian Rice responds: "The rumour may be partly true (I believe) but is nothing to do with Dial-a-Cab. A driver at Heathrow is said to have refused to have stickers affixed to his cab unless he was paid for the privilege. He was promptly given a 'stop' notice but it was then rescinded by LTPH (TfL). At least that's what I heard a few weeks before Christmas. Whether it's true or not, I have no idea. But a happy new year to you Alasdair..."

The thoughts of Jon

Hello Alan and a Happy New year

Some thoughts and observations on my life as a DaC taxi driver. Firstly let me thank you for extracting the urine out of me in last month's *Call Sign*! But I really think that having to wait almost a fortnight for processing a credit card ride through my terminal on weekends is a serious issue, when many of our competitors are offering next day payments. And why, after having the DaC PED fitted in my taxi over 3 years ago, are we still waiting for the option to tip? How much did DaC lose out on when they took a 10% handling fee from the fare? Once again it feels like we are playing catch up with our competitors.

After reading **Keith Cain's** Sales report on spending time with complex tenders only to always lose out to private hire due to cost, I must beg to ask the question as to whether it is worth the effort and perhaps instead the Sales department could look elsewhere, maybe towards personal travel for individuals - as an example, senior industry leaders through their PAs? Perhaps if the cash booking fee was done away with and we surcharged the driver, it could generate some

cash work for our drivers. Who would stay on the line after being told of a run-in and booking fee?

Another concern of mine is that I now have no receipt for returning my single share certificate and I worry if things were to go wrong, what proof would I have that I'm part of **Dial-a-Cab**?

On a more general TfL related issue, it's now less than a year until new taxis must be zero emission capable, yet I don't know of any taxi ranks with electric charging facilities, let alone of an electric taxi for sale! I asked to pay for a cuppa and jam doughnut with a debit card in a cafe and was told that's a minimum of £5 please! A friend went to buy me a beer in the bar of my local civic centre and was told there is a £10 minimum for card payment! How TfL expect me to finance a new electric taxi that is predicted to cost over £50k when I'm being forced to accept card trips that clear for £4 and less when the meter starts at £2.60, I really don't know.

Jon Robinson (E88)

See Allan Evans article...Ed

Uber in Saudi

In Saudi Arabia where women are banned from driving, many more are starting to get jobs - although they still need permission. The \$3 billion investment by their sovereign wealth fund into Uber will help them to get work according to Uber! Oh really? Well thanks a bunch guys! You just couldn't make it up, could you! What it does do is to institutionalise women's inferiority and dependency and actually turn them into a form of investment! No wonder many have deleted the app from their phone in protest. In the meantime, the soul devouring juggernaut that is Uber is continuing to suck in and spit out across the globe. Uber's flagrant disregard for its drivers' employment rights could only be a temporary

period it has to survive through if its aspirational testing of self-drive cars becomes a reality. As **George Orwell's 1984** quoted: "You will be hollow, we shall squeeze you empty and then we will fill you with ourselves." And it's all done in the best possible taste in the race for profit over people...

Dave Heath (Ex-W27)

Gloucester

See page 3 editorial for some news on Uber that may well bring them huge problems...Ed

PED position

In addition to the other problems that I have encountered since the removal of our PED to the rear compartment, I have noticed that non-English speaking passengers appear to be completely unaware of the workings of a UK PED. I am aware that not all countries use the Chip & Pin system and that is obviously causing some of the confusion and failed transactions I have experienced. Perhaps an instructional notice displayed on the partition may reduce the problems, although if the punter does not read English, problems could still arise and lead to delayed transactions.

Would it be possible for DaC to produce authorised instructional signage to explain the process to our valued customers?

Dave Cohen (E94)

There is a survey on the issue inside this issue and I'll ask about a sign. However, with DaC/TfL relations at an all-time low, I can't see this licensing authority saying yes...Ed



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