

January 2017

# Call Sign



The largest online readership of any Taxi magazine

## THE SHAME OF TFL!



After more than ten years of asking them, TfL finally release sex figures... but sneak them out!!!



# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

You'll need to know *What's On* in the kipper season. I can only give burst times if venues state their start and duration. Now includes Hackney Empire (only shown in the on-line version this month). *I'd like to wish all Call Sign and Nash's Numbers readers a Happy and Prosperous New Year...*

## What's On: January 2017

Venue	Event	Date	Venue	Event	Date
Arsenal	v Crystal Palace (Burst 17:45)	01/01/2017	O2 Arena	Comedy Central	15/01/2017
Charlton	v Bristol Rovers (Burst 16:45)	02/01/2017	Brentford	v Newcastle (Burst 21:30)	16/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Nutcracker (burst 21:45)	02/01/2017	ExCel (east entrance)	Art Antiques Interiors (finish 18:00)	16/01/2017
Fulham	v Brighton (burst 16:45)	02/01/2017	ExCel (west entrance)	NDC (finish 17:00)	16/01/2017
QPR	v Ipswich (Burst 16:45)	02/01/2017	ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	17/01/2017
West Ham	v Man. Utd. (Burst 19:00)	02/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	17/01/2017
Crystal Palace	v Swansea (Burst 21:45)	03/01/2017	ExCel (east entrance)	Art Antiques Interiors (finish 17:00)	17/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Nutcracker (burst 21:45)	03/01/2017	ExCel (west entrance)	NDC (finish 17:00)	17/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Nutcracker (burst 16:45)	04/01/2017	ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	18/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Nutcracker (burst 21:45)	04/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	18/01/2017
Tottenham	v Chelsea (Burst 21:45)	04/01/2017	ExCel (west entrance)	NDC (finish 18:40)	18/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Nutcracker (burst 21:45)	05/01/2017	ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 16:45)	19/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Nutcracker (burst 21:45)	06/01/2017	ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	19/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Boat Show (finish 18:00)	06/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	19/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Nutcracker (burst 16:45)	07/01/2017	ExCel (west entrance)	NDC (finish 18:40)	19/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Nutcracker (burst 21:45)	07/01/2017	ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	20/01/2017
Leton Orient	v Barnet (Burst 16:45)	07/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	20/01/2017
Millwall	v Walsall (Burst 16:45)	07/01/2017	ExCel (west entrance)	NDC (finish 17:40)	20/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Boat Show (finish 18:00)	07/01/2017	Charlton	v Scunthorpe (Burst 16:45)	21/01/2017
O2 Arena	Comedy Central	07/01/2017	Crystal Palace	v Everton (Burst 16:45)	21/01/2017
Alexandra Palace	Tribute to Bowie (burst 23:00)	08/01/2017	ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	21/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Boat Show (finish 18:00)	08/01/2017	Leton Orient	v Morecombe (Burst 16:45)	21/01/2017
O2 Arena	Comedy Central	08/01/2017	QPR	v Fulham (Byrst 14:15)	21/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Boat Show (finish 18:00)	09/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 17:45)	21/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Boat Show (finish 18:00)	10/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	21/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	11/01/2017	O2 Arena	Avenged Sevenfold	21/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Boat Show (finish 18:00)	11/01/2017	Arsenal	v Burnley (Burst 16:00)	22/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 16:45)	12/01/2017	Chelsea	v Hull City (Burst 18:15)	22/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	12/01/2017	ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	22/01/2017
Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	12/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 17:15)	22/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Boat Show (finish 20:00)	12/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 21:45)	22/01/2017
O2 Arena	NBA Global Games	12/01/2017	O2 Arena	Avenged Sevenfold	22/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	13/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	24/01/2017
Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 17:45)	13/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	25/01/2017
Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	13/01/2017	ExCel (east entrance)	Bett (finish 18:00)	25/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Boat Show (finish 18:00)	13/01/2017	O2 Arena	National Television Awards	25/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Travel & Cruise Shows (finish 17:00)	13/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	26/01/2017
Charlton	v Millwall (Burst 16:45)	14/01/2017	ExCel (east entrance)	Bett (finish 18:00)	26/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 16:45)	14/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 17:45)	27/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	14/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	27/01/2017
Fulham	v Barnsley (Burst 16:45)	14/01/2017	ExCel (east entrance)	Bett (finish 18:00)	27/01/2017
Tottenham	v West Brom. (Burst 14:15)	14/01/2017	Fulham	v Blackburn Rovers (Burst 16:45)	28/01/2017
West Ham	v Crystal Pal. (Burst 16:45)	14/01/2017	Millwall	v Chesterfield (Burst 16:45)	28/01/2017
Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 17:45)	14/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 17:45)	28/01/2017
Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	14/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 22:15)	28/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Boat Show (finish 18:00)	14/01/2017	ExCel (east entrance)	Bett (finish 15:00)	28/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Travel & Cruise Shows (finish 17:00)	14/01/2017	O2 Arena	Drake	28/01/2017
O2 Arena	Comedy Central	14/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 17:15)	29/01/2017
ENO (coliseum)	Giselle (burst 21:45)	15/01/2017	Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 21:45)	29/01/2017
Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 17:15)	15/01/2017	O2 Arena	Black Sabbath	29/01/2017
Royal Albert Hall	Cirque du Soleil (Burst 21:45)	15/01/2017	O2 Arena	Drake	30/01/2017
ExCel (east entrance)	Art Antiques Interiors (finish 18:00)	15/01/2017	Arsenal	v Watford (Burst 21:30)	31/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Boat Show (finish 18:00)	15/01/2017	Brentford	v Aston Villa (Burst 21:30)	31/01/2017
ExCel (west entrance)	Travel & Cruise Shows (finish 16:00)	15/01/2017	O2 Arena	Black Sabbath	31/01/2017

This table only contains 108 events of the 220 I found. I encourage you to download the full listing in larger print complete with the day of the week as well as date. Go to:

[www.myfav.co.uk/wojan17.pdf](http://www.myfav.co.uk/wojan17.pdf)



# from the editor's desk

**F**irst things first; I have no way of even guessing when this copy of *Call Sign* will be falling onto your mat. Thanks to the printers' early closing for the holiday season, I've had to get the mag ready almost a week earlier than usual so that they can catch their postman before pushing off to start on their turkey. When that post will reach your postman remains a mystery, but whenever that time is, the message will still be the same... a very happy New Year to you all.

## Oxford Street Consultation

This issue contains a press release from Transport for London that gives details of a Consultation to clear Oxford Street of up to 40 percent of the bus numbers that currently use it. I don't need to tell you the same story that I've been spouting for several years – that most of the buses going along the UK's premier shopping street are usually 75 percent empty and often even more!

So the Consultation makes sense; but what worries me is what happens after the bus numbers are cut, because there has been much talk about shutting the street to *all* transport and I have to wonder if this is a precursor to Westminster Council telling us that we are to be banned from there and will have to use Wigmore Street along with getting a few taxi setting down points. It had been previously mentioned that Oxford Street was to be pedestrianised by 2020.

**A few months ago, Oxford Street was closed for roadworks and all traffic including buses was diverted along Wigmore Street. The result was that nothing moved. But the Council and walking groups that are so keen on Oxford Street being for pedestrians only are bound to tell us that now bus numbers have been cut, we will have nothing to worry about!**

But we all know that with even an extra 10 percent of buses using Wigmore Street, it will make the current Oxford Street jams seem like nothing. Time will tell...

## Health and Safety

I don't know much about 'Health and Safety' regulations other than they often seem to be a nuisance. I'm sure much of it makes sense, but I always get the feeling that it goes over the top and causes us many unnecessary problems. This issue of *Call Sign*, like the past few, contains a press release from TfL detailing court action they take against local councils or companies who are said to not provide enough safety where roadworks are concerned. It may well be correct, but if you drive through Europe you will often come across a man with a drill and a few cones around him. He does his work and goes home. The traffic is usually unaffected.

The same thing in London will involve a narrowing of two lanes into one from around half a mile before the actual problem, often causing a huge tailback. Then when you finally get to the actual work, you can't see anyone because they have either gone for a tea break or finished for the day.

Every one of us can pinpoint roadworks that have been around for yonks; then you read about the huge 30 metre wide, 15 metre deep sinkhole that appeared on a main road in the Japanese city of Fukuoka. It was deservedly described as a gaping chasm. Yet within a week it was fully repaired and traffic once again drove over it. Fukuoka Mayor, Soichiro Takashima, even apologised! When was the last time any authority in London genuinely apologised? They might say



sorry, yet roadworks such as that would have been with us for months.

**Let's also look at temporary 4-way traffic lights that mean you and your passengers are going to have to wait for several minutes if you just miss the green light. How often do you sit and wish there was still some commonsense rather than what appears to be Health and Safety issues because you can see that the lights do not need to be 4-way.**

Yet no one cares if motorists have to wait, so they just plonk the lights where they want and leave us to roast. How often is it when two human beings could control the traffic around the works? How often do you come up against temporary lights where there is more than enough room for traffic to pass by in both directions? How often have you sat for ages with traffic on red in all directions so pedestrians can cross – yet there aren't any! Is it Health and Safety or is it that no one really cares about drivers???

Did anyone care when I was in Poultry recently heading east and a bus was picking up at the stop. Someone with the brainpower of a pea has plonked the stop right next to an island so that when buses stop, nothing can get past. Is that Health and Safety or stupidity? A car had to stop behind the bus as did several others. Then came my taxi, which was close to the traffic lights at King Street where there is another island. The result was that nothing could move until the bus moved. But suddenly a police car came up behind me with its siren on. They were also stuck because they couldn't get onto the westbound lane to pass us all as the island blocked them.

There was only one way that he could move and that was if I passed all the traffic and the bus by heading east along the westbound side. I'm ashamed to say that for several seconds I wanted to stay there to let the police know how we felt about the stupidity surrounding us everywhere. But I did it. I pulled out, passed everything including the bus and then pulled in. That allowed the police car to pass the King Street island and everything else. A hand came out of the passenger side to acknowledge what I had done. I suppose that had his emergency been cancelled at that moment, he would have nicked me! It wasn't the bus drivers fault or the cars behind. It was the pea brains who do not have a clue about real life.

Is it Health and Safety, laziness or just sheer stupidity that puts motorists in those positions? Read page 9 and then you tell me...

## Mini Holland

The so-called Mini Holland scheme where all the boroughs are supposedly digging deep to pay for their territories to go over to bike lanes at the expense of motor vehicles, is apparently well under way and being led by Waltham Forest.

Those of us who believe that a carless capital will eventually also see us become a commercial-less

city, where most of the big businesses will start the trek to base their businesses in other European capitals, will be proved right over the next few years as more and more companies decide there are too many disadvantages in being in a city where man-made traffic jams have just become intolerable.

Being Mayor obviously gives the incumbents to that position *carte blanche* to look after themselves. Boris was a cyclist so bike lanes became a priority regardless of the hold-ups caused by squeezing motor vehicles into half the road space they previously had. Sadiq isn't a cyclist that I know of, but he *is*, apparently, an asthmatic and that can't be helped by motor fumes. So let's get rid of motors!

**So my sincere apologies to Mayor Sadiq Khan for suggesting that he had more commonsense than his predecessor when it has become apparent that his medical condition, aligned to his power of office, has enabled him to do as he wants and that my suggestion that he would be far fairer to motorists was obviously a load of dangles! Don't get me wrong; the air we breathe needs cleaning and yes, there are far too many vehicles on the road. But to squeeze them all together into a single lane is helping no one; all it does is to make matters worse.**

On the day I'm writing this, air quality in an area to the south of the Euston and Marylebone Roads down to the Thames has been classified as moderate, which is said to be far too high regardless of the terminology. It is also just over a week since the Mayor announced that he was pumping a further \$770 million into more bike lanes – almost doubling the current amount.

Let's forget for the moment the stupidity of cycle lanes that take up half of some roads and ask how many of those motor vehicles need to be in the area? How about those who drive around in circles looking for non-existent parking spaces or even worse, just looking at the Christmas lights! Then there are those who take a drive "up town" to relieve their boredom. But what this capital city needs in order to get around relatively trouble free is its official transport system and those vehicles making deliveries. Yes, London's transport system includes the best taxi service in the world and a nowhere near the best licensed minicab system with companies such as Addison Lee, what's left of Green Tomatoes, another that includes Carrots in its name, plus a few others. But it doesn't need an Uber service that is creating records in low pay, the number of accidents its drivers are involved in and its aim of getting the largest number of drivers going the wrong way down one-way streets in the world. Where's the Guinness Book of Records when you want it!

**And of course the partial answer to why there is so much traffic alongside the bike lanes is the 117,000 PHVs! There's a chart inside this issue showing how fast PHV numbers have risen.**

TfL always blame the Government and they may even be right – after all, the law of averages says that must happen occasionally! The only question then is why they didn't ask HMG to stop the ridiculous climb of their numbers many years ago and not wait until it was far too late. They claim that 70 percent of traffic crossing Blackfriars Bridge are cyclists. But that's because cars aren't moving thanks to the bike lanes. TfL are woeful but we can't seem to stop them killing London...

**Alan Fisher**  
callsignmag@aol.com

# Reflections of the Chairman

## Time again

The Editor has been bullying me once again for an article, even though it seems that I've just finished the last one for his December issue. But as he always tells me each year at this time, my piece has to be completed extra early due to the holiday period and the extended break the magazine printers take. Mind you, he's been telling me that same story every December for the past twenty years and I have never really thought about checking! I'd hate to think that Mr Fisher is just sorting out his own time-off schedule for the holidays!

## Sale of the building

I do not have much to inform you about regarding the building etc other than to tell you via *Call Sign* that all the relevant information that is required regarding any future sale is currently being collated before we go to market after Christmas and it appears that everything is currently going to plan.

## Taxi Leaks

I must confess that I read *Taxi Leaks* online - although there is nothing wrong with that - and that should I miss a few days due to other commitments and not see the site, it's very easy to just scroll down and catch up on any stories I may have missed. Not only is the site very interesting, but you can also add your own point of view if you so desire.

*Taxi Leaks* is maintained by Jim Thomas who must spend many hours producing and researching for this online site.

Jim - who is often referred to as *Thomas the Taxi* - has been a taxi driver and in the trade for as long as I have and it's comforting to know that there are people in our trade who are just as emotional about it now as they were forty years ago.

So to get to the point; I read a story on there recently about the Mayor and TfL capping the number of private hire licences that are currently being issued - the last I heard there were 117,000 private hire licences issued and at the rate of approximately six hundred a week, that figure is now almost certainly already out of date!

Obviously this cannot continue due to a gridlocked and polluted London, however, the Mayor and TfL have stated that as long as a prospective taxi driver or private hire driver meets the required standards, then a licence must be issued.

I have to admit that for many years I was under that same impression. When our last Mayor, **Boris Johnson** - who devastated our industry even though I don't suppose he was any worse than what we have now - stated that he wanted to cap private hire licences, I assumed that he couldn't do that... and of course he didn't!

However, reading *Taxi Leaks* reminded me of a situation that occurred a few years ago regarding TfL. I attended a



meeting at their Palestra building in Blackfriars where many taxi drivers had turned up - many of them being Suburban Yellow Badge drivers; they were protesting at the fact that their respective sectors were totally oversubscribed with drivers and that they were finding it extremely difficult to make a living. I also suspect the identifiers that had recently been brought in just added to the misery of the 'kosher' drivers.

If I recall correctly, that meeting was around five years ago and the then Director of Taxis and Private Hire, **John Mason**, decided that there should be a suspension of issuing further taxi drivers licences in certain sectors pending a review.

I'm sure that Mr Mason's decision to suspend the issuing of licences in Barking/Dagenham, Havering, Newham/Redbridge, Merton/Sutton and Kingston/Richmond was completed with the blessing of TfL! My apologies if some of those sectors do not go together.

So, taking the above into account, it now begs the question that if TfL were correct in suspending taxi driver licences back then pending an inquiry, then why can't they suspend private hire licences today?

If they were correct then, surely they could do it again today with private hire

licences because it really does seem that they are lying to the taxi trade. Why are we not surprised! If they were wrong to suspend taxi licences in the past, then they obviously broke the law and didn't do their homework before making their decision!

Whichever way you look at it, **Transport for London** have undoubtedly scored another own goal. What can we say about our so-called licensing authority other than that they really are pathetic and lead us to wonder when they are going to employ people who actually know what they are doing?

There certainly do not seem to be many at TfL that currently even remotely fill that description.

I really believe that this whole scenario is a very serious cock-up and TfL should advise a trade that it is constantly kicking in the teeth, which scenario is actually correct. I for one would really like to know because for over forty years now, I really believed the licensing authority could not suspend issuing licences, so TfL *must* inform the trade about which scenario is correct.

My sincere thanks to Jim Thomas and *Taxi Leaks* for jogging my memory on this really important issue.

## And of course...

2016 wasn't much of a year for the licensed taxi trade, but we always live in hope and look for a much better 2017. So to everyone at Dial-a-Cab - drivers and members of staff - I wish you all a far more successful New Year than the last one, but more importantly, a very healthy one...

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

## PAUL'S TAXI SPECIALISTS LTD

Unit 10, Ford View Industrial Estate, 83 New Rd Rainham, RM13 8ET

# Tel: 01708 553037

FREE AIR FILTER WITH EVERY SERVICE

TX1 servicing from **£48**

TX2 servicing from **£70**

TX4 servicing from **£90**



WE ALSO HAVE CABS FOR RENT

TX1s, TX2s, TX4s and Vitos

Rentals from **£165 per week**

All Work Undertaken

Servicing – Running Repairs – Overhauls – Small Fleets Welcome – Discounts Available  
All TX1, TX2, TX4

Starters – Batteries – Alternators – All with 2 year Warranty

Fax: 01708 551443

Web: [www.PaulsTaxiSpecialists.co.uk](http://www.PaulsTaxiSpecialists.co.uk)



# Project PED completed!

**"Yes, the last few weeks have been really frantic," Roman Way depot manager Dana Thananjeyan told *Call Sign*, "but working solidly together, we did it and completed the PED upgrade on time and I feel immensely proud of my techie team!"**

"We worked closely with the **Dial-a-Cab** IT department to keep things running smoothly and they in turn took over the upgrade processing of cabs while my guys went for breaks etc when they were at **Dial-a-Cab House**, so that there was no interruption to the work flow, which was important in order to maintain our tight time schedule," Dana explained.

"We had technicians working by day and also late into several evenings at **East Road**

for the benefit of those drivers who could not get over here to **Roman Way** during our normal working hours for that essential PED upgrade. The weather wasn't always kind, but we were determined," he added.

"The tight schedule to upgrade every cab was because the old PED will 'die' quite soon and that meant drivers would be unable to work off the system, so we pulled out all the stops to keep everyone happy. This was of course as well as our regular maintenance duties and install / refit appointments for the fleet generally. Anyway, it's done now," Dana confirmed, "so it is a big 'thank you' to my small team for their dedication to the task, and a 'thank you' to the drivers for their understanding



through the very busy times..."

*The photo shows the Roman Way tech team: Vic, Dana, Sam, Satba and Steve...*

**Alan Green**  
*Call Sign Online*

## Consultation to cut bus numbers

**T**fL has launched a consultation on proposed changes to 23 central London bus routes to better match bus services with demand from passengers. The changes would improve the reliability of a number of bus routes that currently get caught up in congestion along **Oxford Street** and improve air quality and safety on the street. TfL wants to match bus services with demand in London in a smarter way. As it does so in central London, additional services will be provided to support residential growth areas across the Capital, particularly in outer London. The forthcoming Business Plan, subject to TfL Board sign-off, will see total bus mileage maintained across the Capital over the five year life of the plan.

**As Londoners travel patterns have changed, passenger journeys on bus routes outside Zone 1 have increased by 23 per cent over the last 10 years. Overall, bus journeys entering Zone 1 have increased at a much slower rate of just over six percent. On some central London routes passenger numbers have fallen.**

A number of other factors are being considered, including a faster and more reliable Tube, with the Victoria and Northern lines now among the highest frequency services in Europe with a train every two minutes. Route 73, which closely follows the Victoria Line route, has seen up to eleven percent fewer customers this year compared to 2011, as they choose the tube and other forms of travel.

The Night Tube is also providing new travel options to and from the West End and the opening of the Elizabeth line in late 2018 is significant as it will transform how people travel across central London. When fully open, the Elizabeth line will boost rail capacity in central London by 10 percent and provide a key new east-west link across the Capital with 24 trains per hour in each direction serving step-free stations at the heart of London. Many will choose to use these services rather than a bus.

The Elizabeth line will have two new stations at **Tottenham Court Road** and **Bond Street** and will therefore play a particular role reducing bus demand on Oxford Street. The Mayor is already working with the City of Westminster to make Oxford Street more pedestrian friendly and proposals for changes to bus services in central London are designed to start reducing the number of buses running along Oxford Street. The proposals in the consultation would reduce the number of buses going along Oxford Street by around 40 percent.

A small number would need to change buses to complete their

journeys, but the new Hopper fare introduced by **Sadiq Khan** means the second journey would be free. All buses are fully accessible and the proposals would ensure that, where possible, customers can change buses at the same stop to complete their journey.

Ahead of the arrival of the Elizabeth line, which is expected to bring 60 million visits to the West End annually, it is essential that there is genuine traffic reduction to ensure the West End retains its position as a world class retail destination. TfL's proposals would see more bus routes starting and finishing at **Park Lane**, **Trafalgar Square** and **Tottenham Court Road** rather than moving at very low speed along Oxford Street, one of the country's most important retail hubs.

**The consultation is at [www.tfl.gov.uk/west-end-bus-changes](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/west-end-bus-changes). It closes on 29 January 2017.**

*(See Editorial on page 3).*



**Keith Reading**  
**Professional Toastmaster**  
**Master of Ceremonies**

**Tele: 01279 465 938**  
**Mobile: 07774 860 374**  
**Email: [kgr.2@virgin.net](mailto:kgr.2@virgin.net)**

**10% discount for DaC drivers and staff**

**Fellow of the Guild of Professional Toastmasters**

# Jery's World



“Well, if we work on the assumption that it can’t get any worse, we must be on the up!!!”

## BT prosecuted for risking public safety

**F**or the fourth time in 12 months, TfL has prosecuted British Telecom for a range of offences, including dangerous and disruptive work, with the telecommunications giant being ordered to pay more than £10,000 for two serious safety breaches that put public safety at significant risk. The latest prosecution follows unsafe work carried out at Bruce Grove, Haringey on 16 April and Hook Road, Kingston-Upon-Thames one month later.



On 16 November, BT pleaded guilty to the unsafe execution of works with significant risk to public safety at **Westminster Magistrates Court**. They were fined a total of £7,000 and ordered to pay £3,570 in court costs.

TfL Streetworks Inspectors carrying out routine inspections had discovered unsafe working practices at both sites. Both locations had poor signing, lighting and pedestrian guarding as well as incorrect traffic control. The prosecution comes as London Mayor, **Sadiq Khan**, had announced plans to lobby Government for greater powers to manage roadworks, including increasing the current level of fixed penalty notice fines and also widening their scope to cover road safety offences.

In passing sentence, the Magistrate said: “We appreciate the works are often subcontracted, but BT must assume responsibility for the shoddy manner of these works, particularly in Hook Road where the works were very close to a primary school. BT must continue to work with its contractors to ensure improvements.”

TfL COO for Surface Transport, **Garrett Emmerson**, said: “Extra care should always be taken around roadworks, not just for those working on site, but for members of the public passing by. Our Streetworks Inspectors have an important role checking utility work is being carried out correctly and safely, acting swiftly when they spot a problem. It is vital that companies such as BT ensure safety on site and we will always push for the strongest possible action against those companies who put the public at risk.”

Since the beginning of 2016, TfL has issued BT more than 200 Fixed Penalty Notices, prosecuted the telecommunications company four times for dangerous and disruptive work offences and 14 times in total for all streetworks offences.



## Obituary

# DAVID BROWN

In the December 2010 issue of **Call Sign**, we published a letter about the condition of a former **Dial-a-Cab** driver **David Brown (ex-B13J)**. David used to drive the taxi of another former DaC driver and CS correspondent, **Ron Colman (ex-J09)**.

David became well known in the trade as the only driver to be allowed by the PCO to drive a licensed taxi following the amputation of a leg. Sadly, several years later David again had to return to hospital to have his other leg removed. He then had to spend all his time in a wheelchair as the amputations necessitated removing the complete limbs leaving nothing to fit prosthetic limbs onto. David never whined and always remained upbeat.

David also wrote and had published four books - **One Only Kid**, **Manny's War and Peace**, **East End Boys** and **East End Boys at War** - all of which were published by **Aesop Publications**. His publisher, **Martin Noble**, said that David's books were up and coming and selling well. We have now heard from Ron Colman again...

**It is with deep regret that I have to tell you of the sad passing on 1st December 2016 of David Brown following a heart attack.**

When I was driving my **Metrocab** some 13/14 years ago and was Black 13, dear David was my dayman and we got along like a house-on-fire. Our friendship was truly fantastic and having been around for a number of years and meeting numerous people, I can truly say that



David was the nicest and most honest guy I had ever had the pleasure of meeting, knowing and being friends with.

**At the time, he had already had a leg amputated but was fully approved by the-then PCO to drive a London taxi, which he did in a splendid manner.**

He very much loved his family and friends and like me, always supported the Dial-a-Cab BoM. Within the trade he was very highly regarded, but due to his continuing health problems was eventually forced to leave the trade and he moved to **Gorleston** near **Great Yarmouth** where he bought a lovely bungalow. He enjoyed life to its fullest but then sadly his health worsened and he had to face that second amputation.

**In his early days he regularly attended the gym and because he was a man of strength, this aspect helped him to withstand the trauma that had befallen him.**

Alongside this, his wife **Marlene** became ill and is today in a local care home where she has dementia. And as unbelievable as it may sound, David's family had another appalling shock when David's grandson was killed in a motorcycle accident a few weeks back, which has involved a police investigation due to the circumstances.

**David will be remembered with fondness by his many Dial-a-Cab friends and those he made after having to leave taxi driving.**

*May his dear soul rest in peace...*

**Ronald S. Colman (Ex-J09)**

## One-to-One Personal Service.

### Martin Cordell & Co.

Accountants & Tax Specialists to the Taxi Trade

#### Our services include:

- One-to-One personal service
- Annual confidential meeting
- Preparation of accounts
- Tax enquiries & investigations
- Limited company trading advice
- PAYE, VAT & company registration expertise
- Loss of earnings claim advice
- One point of contact for ongoing continuity
- Easy payment terms

#### FREE & SECURE PARKING

Only a few minutes walk away in  
Kilner Street, Limehouse, London E14 7BD

**We're here to help. We want to meet you as we understand your business. Let us take the strain of dealing with your tax obligations.**

**With over 45 years experience of the taxi trade, and more than 40 expert staff members, we are the leading taxi drivers' accountancy firm in the UK.**

Phone us today on: **020 8980 7161**

See us at: **Unit 6, Quebec Wharf, 14 Thomas Road, Limehouse, London E14 7AF**

or: **9 Church Road, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 4AR**

Email: **info@mcordell.co.uk**

Web: **www.martin-cordell.co.uk**

**CALL US FOR A FREE FIRST CONSULTATION IN PERSON OR OVER THE PHONE**





**Call** Drumslayer, **Sign's** Marc Turner (R97), remembers a man to whom many in this trade can say 'thank you' to for their good health; a man known simply as **The Loz**. He passed

away following an illness last April...

Phil 'The Loz' Hewson, once a fair-ground boxer, PT army instructor, Louis Armstrong devotee and cab driver departed this mortal coil at the age of 76 last April. He had dedicated 36 years to keeping London Taxi drivers physically fit and well.

Loz never pretended to enjoy cab driving - in fact he often claimed that he detested it. He just couldn't get to grips with the sedentary nature of long days in the saddle. He realised early in his cab driving career just how detrimental this job was to our health.

In 1980, Loz started his first exclusive-to-Taxi-drivers fitness class at the Seymour Leisure Centre. In 1984, his fitness classes moved to Woodfield Road, where the LTDA were so impressed with Loz that they built him a gymnasium in their basement! In 1997, Loz's three classes a week moved to their present home, John Orwell Sports Centre in Wapping.

But what Loz started all those years ago, continues to thrive in his absence. Before Loz's sad passing on April 16th, he anointed



Some of the current batch of drivers keeping fit include DaC drivers Paul Taylor (M01), Mike Husk (P41) and Andy Ma-Nu (D37)

Inset: Phil 'The Loz' Hewson

long time attendee Gary Mullins to take the reins of this trade institution. Dial-a-Cab's Mike Husk (P41) has been a stalwart of Loz's classes for nigh on 30 years. Mike credits Loz for keeping him alive and in good shape for a man of 74.

So if your New Year resolution (as usual) is to shed some pounds and get fit, then you are more than welcome to join the regulars at Loz's fitness classes, on Monday, Wednesday or Friday between 1pm and

2pm. At £5 a session for body conditioning, stamina building and fat busting, surely it is a life-saving bargain. Also, following Monday and Friday sessions and time permitting, Gary organises 10 minute each way football matches for those that fancy it.

*All that's left for me, your Drumslayer, to do is to wish you and your families, a happy and healthy New Year...*

**Marc Turner**  
Call Sign Online

*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

### Berkhamstead Golf Club

Firstly I should apologise, as when I played Berkhamstead a few years ago I was representing Dial-a-Cab and sadly had an absolute shambles of a round!

It had all started so well with a nice 5 iron to position A on the first, leaving a half wedge in. If you've ever had a case of the shanks, you'll know how destructive it is. Needless to say the ball went off at right angles, nearly taking a playing partner out!

From there on in, it went from bad to worse, culminating in launching a ladies tee box 30 foot into the air after trying to hit a long power drive halfway through the round! Highly embarrassing!

Onto the course; if you're not a great bunker player, this course is for you... it doesn't have any! What it does have though is heather and lots of it! Much the same as, although not quite on the grand scale of **Royal Ashdown**

**Forest**. It's a clever layout that has greens surrounded by humps and bumps. It also advertises itself as being a perfectly natural course with no man-made hazards.

Berkhamstead runs a famous yearly amateur tournament with many famous past winners such as **Nick Faldo** and **Sandy Lyle** amongst others.

**This is a lovely course with position play more important than power, but just don't get the dreaded shanks!**

As ever, happy golfing and of course they do say a shank shot is very close to being a perfect shot!

*A very happy new golfing year...*



The 165 yard par 3 at Berkhamstead

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



In June 2015, Ying Tao, a 26 year old beautiful, newly-married cyclist, was tragically killed by a tipper truck near the always busy Bank junction. Ying had been an Oxbridge graduate and was a strategy consultant for Price Waterhouse Coopers. She died as she cycled to work. Her death was the eighth London cycling fatality of that year and it was still only June.

The following day, the London Cycling Campaign staged a flash demo during rush hour at Bank junction, which they said was in response to the cycling fatality at Bank and another in Harrow. Their statement said they would be gathering to remember Ying Tao and to highlight the need for safe space for cycling; not just at Bank, but across London. They went on to demand more "high quality space for cycling across London, to enable people of all ages and abilities to ride safely in our city." They ended by saying that lorries should be made safer.

Ying Tao's death was nothing less than an absolute tragedy, but what does it have to do with taxi drivers, surely the safest drivers on the road, drivers that need two driving tests to get a licence. We have some sympathy for lorry drivers who must have a terrible job trying to weave through London's traffic. Then there are buses, which also have been involved in accidents involving pedestrians. It can't be easy for them either. Having driven a London bus for several years, I know how difficult it is to see what goes on around you, because there are some people who will always do stupid things!

Then in October 2016, the chairman of the Planning and Transportation Committee at the City of London Corporation, Chris Hayward said:

"Bank junction is currently congested, dangerous and polluted and it doesn't work well for anyone - cyclists, pedestrians or drivers. We are therefore looking at what we might do to improve safety, reduce pollution and create an appropriate setting for the beautiful and important buildings - Mansion House, The Bank of England and the Royal Exchange - at the heart of the City."

A press release at the time said the Corporation's intention would be to block all entrances to Bank junction for cars and trucks. Cyclists would be allowed to go through the junction, BUT THEY HAD NOT YET DECIDED ABOUT TAXIS. However, with our unparalleled safety record, surely that would be a given?

Call Sign Says...

# TRAGEDY LEADING TO MADNESS???



Ying Tou's death was an appalling tragedy, but it wasn't our fault and we shouldn't be punished for it...

We're now entering 2017 and the City of London Corporation have come out with their plan to sort out Bank junction from Spring 2017; ban everyone except buses between 7am and 7pm - and that includes taxis!

Yet records show that buses are involved in far more accidents involving cyclists than taxis, yet buses are ok but taxis aren't. The decision was apparently based on modelling carried out by the CLC and they actually admitted that taxis were not directly involved in many accidents, but they contributed to significantly increased congestion at Bank by

just being there, therefore making it more dangerous!

WHAT??? By that logic, we should apply to knock down Guildhall and all the buildings behind it so that we can cut through to London Wall! Taxis are supposed to be a part of the London transport system, yet we are treated more like lepers when it comes to decisions such as these. Hopefully the Corporation will see how ridiculous the logic to ban taxis from Bank is, otherwise I think that there will be major problems around that junction.

How sad that the death of a young lady should cause a magazine Editor to write in these tones, but the safest drivers on the road should not be punished for a death, however tragic, that was absolutely nothing to do with us. For the article and for bringing back details of such an appalling day, I humbly apologise to Ying's husband Jin, but this decision is grossly unfair. Yes, there is a case for banning trucks between those hours and quite probably to consider rerouting some of the many bus routes going that way.

But why punish us just because we are there? Could it possibly be because buses are losing money hand over foot and based on tragedy, the City Corp are giving their mates at TfL a lifeline? If this carries on then London will eventually die as a major city and instead become a cyclist's paradise. If that's what we want, then we're going the right way about it, because is this not a restraint of trade???

**Alan Fisher**  
Call Sign Editor

## Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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

*Well wonder no more! If you are a subscriber, journeyman or member of staff at Dial-a-Cab, then you qualify to join the Dial-a-Cab Credit Union. Any member of your family residing at your address also qualifies for membership!*

Then if you are over 18, have been a member of the Credit Union for over 3 months and have established regular savings, you can borrow up to 3 times your total savings...

### The cost?

*Just 1% per month on the outstanding balance (or APR of 12.7%).  
Loans can be paid back early AND there can be an annual dividend on your shares.*

**The question is: Can you afford NOT to be in it...?**

**Call us on 020 7729 8171 or 020 7749 0585**

*Members of the Financial Ombudsman Service*

*Member's funds protected up to limit set by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme  
DaC Credit Union Ltd, Peterley Business Centre, 472 Hackney Rd E2 9EQ*

*Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority  
Registration number 213263*

### Call Sign

**January 2017**

Editor: Alan Fisher

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

Tel: 0207 251 0581 Fax: 0207 553 7293

Email: callsignmag@aol.com

Website: www.22-callsign.co.uk

Printers: Premier Print Group

E6 6 LP

Design: Aldan Publications

Tel: 07958 300 428

Email: debbiefresco@googlemail.com

Views and opinion expressed in Call Sign must not be assumed to represent those of the Editor or Board. No part of Call Sign may be reproduced either manually or electronically without the express permission of the Editor.

# The Beatles, the DaC driver... and his Fairway!

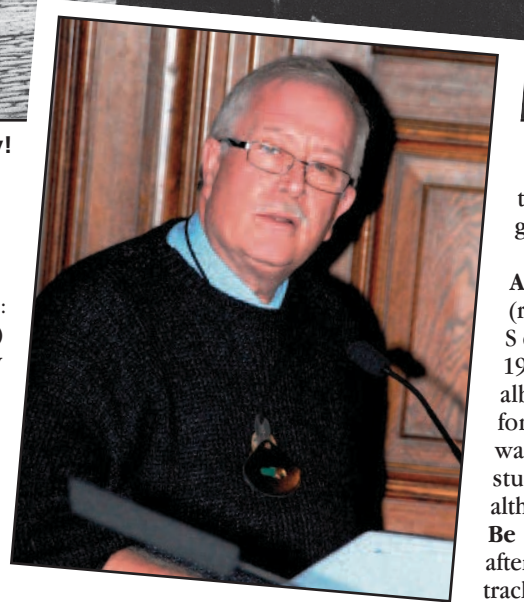
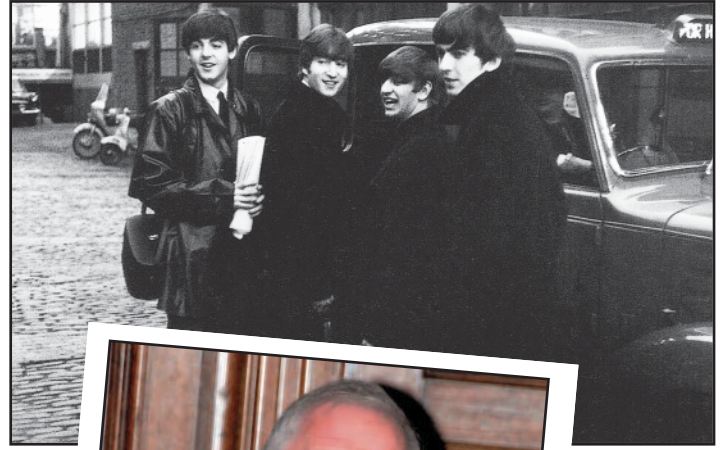


Spice Girls, and Beatles are linked by Graham Waite and his Fairway!

Dial-a-Cab driver Graham Waite (B35) often gets called by film companies wanting to use his immaculate Fairway taxi in a movie. It was one of five taxis used during the 2012 London Olympics when Scary, Sporty, Baby, Ginger and Posh Spice - better known as the Spice Girls - stood atop five London taxis. More recently, it was involved with an even more famous

group – no less than The Beatles – albeit not the real ones!

Graham told *Call Sign*: "It was for STV (Scottish TV) and they wanted a Fairway for part of a film they are making called **The Beatles Lost Album**. It's set in the early 1970s and covers the Fab Fours split and the last album they started but never finished (although many of the songs they later went on to release independently rather



than as a group).

Officially, **Abbey Road** (released in September 1969 and in the album charts for 81 weeks) was their last studio album, although **Let it Be** was released after that but the tracks had been recorded earlier.

The filming took place over 3 days in and around Soho, Fulham, Regents Park and some old back streets near Waterloo. The TV film is scheduled for release in the New Year.

Graham also uses his Fairway for the occasional wedding and there is an advert inside this issue.

## Taxi and Private Hire numbers

*As we enter 2017, we would like to wish Transport for London a happy new year with a reminder to them of how they and they alone have attempted to decimate the most famous taxi trade in the world – one that is amazingly still the best after everything that TfL have thrown at us.*

The figures below say more than we could in an encyclopaedia let alone a magazine!

January 2007: Licensed taxi drivers 24,600  
January 2007: Licensed private hire drivers 38,000

January 2017: Licensed taxi drivers 24,400  
January 2017: Licensed private hire drivers 117,000



Charles I - still with his head!

Yes, TfL, a happy new year; disregard the fact that had this been in the time of King Charles I when he had that disagreement with Olly Cromwell, you would have all been headless by now!

## BANK JUNCTION DEMO

Representatives from LTDA, LCDC, UCG, Unite and RMT have agreed to hold a demonstration on 12th January at **Bank Junction**. A function is scheduled at **Mansion House** on that date with many politicians and bankers expected to attend. If you're not sure what it's about, read the article on **page 9** and then ask yourself how many passengers of those that currently do, will still want to go from **Moorgate to London Bridge** or make the reverse trip when their taxi can no longer access Bank Junction. It's your business that is being taken from you by the **City of London Corporation...**



Only four months after Mayor of London, **Sadiq Khan**, announced the dramatic expansion of TfL's Taxi and Private Hire Compliance team, the first wave of new officers have hit London's streets.

More than 4,800 people applied for the 250 Compliance Officer positions when it was announced the unit was to quadruple in size back in August. The 50 new officers are joining the existing team of 82 who provide a highly visible uniformed presence across the Capital. Officers will be cracking down on illegal activity such as touting and plying for hire, as well as undertaking vehicle checks, ensuring drivers are licensed and have the correct paperwork. They will also provide advice to the public on how they can get home safely.

Over the next six months, the team will continue to grow, so by summer 2017 there will be more than 300 Compliance Officers working across London. This is the largest number of Compliance Officers in Mayoral history. Officers have spent an intensive period training, both in the classroom and out on the streets, being taught about legislation, regulations, health and safety and vehicle standards. Since April 2016, TfL's existing Compliance Officers have stopped approximately 37,000 black taxis and minicabs to check drivers are carrying correct identification and paperwork, and checking their vehicles for any defects.

TfL carries out regular operations with its partners to deter and disrupt illegal minicab activity in the Capital and protect the public from touts. Operation Neon is a joint operation between TfL, the Metropolitan Police Service and Westminster City Council that takes place every weekend.

Sadiq Khan, said: "As I outlined in my manifesto, we must ensure that safety standards are rigorously enforced across London's black cab and private hire industries. I am delighted to announce that from today there will be an additional 50 trained compliance officers cracking down on illegal activity and providing reassurance for passengers on London's streets - and this is just the first step. Drivers who are unlicensed or flout the rules not only pose a risk to Londoners' safety, but also undermine the work of the hard-working and professional drivers who provide a vital service to millions of Londoners every year. Every Londoner and visitor to our city must feel safe getting around London. The roll-out of more compliance officers over the coming months will be crucial in driving up standards and ensuring Londoners remain safe."

New recruit, TfL Compliance Officer, **Lesley Haggerty**, said: "Training has been extremely intense, but I have enjoyed every minute of it. Throughout my learning, what has struck me is the range of vehicle and driver regulations there are which, as a passenger, you don't think about. Every aspect is extremely important because it's the public's safety we're looking out for as well as safeguarding genuine drivers and operators. We need to make sure drivers are licensed and the vehicles they use are safe and roadworthy, if they're not, action will be taken."

**Steve McNamara**, LTDA General Secretary welcomed the announcement. He added:

## Fifty new TfL Compliance Officers hit the streets



**Steve McNamara: Important first step**

These enforcement officers are an important first step in addressing illegal Taxi and PH activity. However, there is still more to do. It is vital

that these officers have the powers and support they need to ensure that the rapidly growing number of private hire vehicles on the capital's roads are properly insured and abide by the rules of the road, as well as to clamp down on illegal plying for hire."

The Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan sets out the Mayor's programme for improvements to the taxi and minicab trade that will drive up standards, improve safety, and protect the future of the iconic black taxi. As part of the Action Plan, TfL will open up additional bus lanes for use by taxis, use technology to provide customers with information on how to get a taxi quickly and easily and increase the number of taxi ranks by 20 per cent by 2020. To make the Capital's taxi fleet the greenest in the world, money will be made available to drivers who scrap the oldest and most polluting taxis.

*After winning their case against Uber, minicab union GMB sends a message...*

### COURTS MUST REJECT UBER APPEAL

A minicab union has called on gig economy private hire firm Uber to stop their legal appeal following the damning original tribunal ruling won by the GMB.

The shamed private hire company have lodged an appeal in the High Court against a ruling that they have denied their drivers basic workers' rights. GMB won the monumental victory in October after bringing two tests cases 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.

**GMB has now called on Uber to stop their legal action and hopes the courts will uphold the original decision.**

Maria Ludkin, **GMB Legal Director**, said:

"GMB is very disappointed that Uber has decided to lodge this appeal in a bid to deny their workers basic rights. The findings in the original tribunal were damning, and continuing this course of action is frivolous.

"It's a waste of time and money – Uber should hold their hands up and admit they were wrong. We hope the court will reject this appeal and uphold a ruling which was an incredible victory for workers in the gig economy everywhere."

## Barking Physical Therapy Centre

**EARLY TREATMENT MEANS SPEEDY RECOVERY**  
Treatment for pain & discomfort doesn't have to be expensive

**The Centre offers fully qualified therapists in Physiotherapy, Osteopathy, Sports Massage, Reflexology, Shiatsu, Remedial Massage, Indian Head Massage, Hydrotherm, Massage Therapy, Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine.**

Call us on 020 8507 8169  
or mobile 07973 639 473 for an early appointment  
Email: [andy@bptconline.co.uk](mailto:andy@bptconline.co.uk) or fax: 020 8507 9650  
Out of hours enquiries welcome

**Barking Physical Therapy Centre**  
90 Longbridge Road, Barking, Essex, IG11 8SF  
Opening Hours: Monday – Friday 9am till 8pm and Saturday 9am till 2pm  
[www.bptconline.co.uk](http://www.bptconline.co.uk)

## The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children

# HON CHAIRMAN AND TREASURER'S REPORTS – 2015/2016

### Hon Chairman's Report



It's been a pleasure these past three years serving the LTFUC as Honorary Chairman. Working alongside my fellow trustees in these challenging times, I am pleased to say

we have managed with the help and generosity of the cab trade, their families and the public to continue our work providing outings, entertainment and special needs equipment and supporting London's underprivileged children. The amount of preparation and organisation to make these events happen is incredible and would not be possible without volunteers that put in their time, effort and heartfelt enthusiasm.

We started 2016 with our legendary Mad Hatters Tea Party at the Grosvenor House and I would particularly like to thank the hotel for their ongoing support.

Up to 650 children, along with families or carers, enjoy this annual party where children can get up close and personal with their favourite TV and film characters, be entertained by a fantastic variety of acts and dance until it's time to go through the Christmas toy grotto and pick up a parting gift.

May saw us reintroducing the Spring outing and we returned once more to Woburn Safari Park. The children were so happy and inquisitive of the day ahead and the highlight was driving through the Safari enclosure; the excitement on their faces at seeing lions, tigers and bears – oh my!!!

July was time for the annual Summer outing, a fantastic day for the children by the sea at Southend and probably the event our charity is mostly closely associated with. No matter how many years I have taken part in this outing, it never fails to touch me how people remember and come out to cheer and wave our taxi convoy on its way. Whatever our route over the years, we see people waving from near and far and this makes the children feel so special. It is always an action-packed fun day.

In 2018 we shall be celebrating the 90th year of our charity and we are proud to be the oldest of the London Taxi charities... but no jokes about the age of the committee members please! We are planning some celebrations throughout 2018 and shall be releasing details as we go into 2017. We hope to see as many of you as possible come along to celebrate our heritage and plans for the future.

On behalf of all the trustees, I'd like to take this opportunity to offer our heartfelt thanks to David Lessman (DaC D19) and his family. David has stepped down after serving the charity for over 32 years. His contribution has been great over the many years and his knowledge and experience of the LTFUC has been a fantastic support to me in my three years as Hon Chairman. David, we'll miss you and wish you and your family all the very best for the future.

By the time you read this, my three years as Hon Chairman will be up and I shall have already relinquished the reigns of the chairmanship into the capable hands of Michael Son BEM (DaC V52), an experienced and longstanding member of the committee. I wish him well and offer him the support of the trustees and myself so that we can continue our work, which of course is always focused on London's less fortunate children.

Thank you one and all for your support of the charity in whatever capacity; your efforts are always appreciated. All that remains is for me to wish you all a very happy and healthy 2017.

Sim Yiannikaris  
LTFUC Hon Chairman

### Hon Treasurer's Report



It is my privilege to present the L T F U C Treasurer's Report for the year ending 31st October 2016.

I am very grateful to the Fund's Trustees for taking time to provide me with

their ongoing support in respect of my role as Hon Treasurer. The trustees continue to carry out their roles with relentless dedication, continuing to make their respective contributions to the charity.

With the help of many donations - sponsors old and new - and the generosity of the general public, the fund has maintained reserves to enable continued support for many disadvantaged children of Greater London. By keeping up the reserves, we were able to take many disadvantaged children on a fantastic day trip to Southend, have a fun packed day at Woburn and to party at our annual 'Mad Hatters' Tea party at the Grosvenor House. Yet general administration expenses have once again been kept down to less than 2p in the pound, allowing nearly every penny of income to be spent on improving the quality of life for those in need.

During the past year, the charity has granted £3,683.56 by supplying specialised equipment to families in need of help, monies being used for a desperately needed air con unit and a buggy, plus other donations large and small given to many different organisations and families for other urgently needed equipment.

The cost of the annual Grosvenor House children's Christmas party at £6,062.99 against the previous year figure of £6,882.83 shows a saving, this being due to the previous year's hire charges for the Great Room. The annual outing to Southend cost £16,971.64, which showed an increase against the previous year's figure of £16,038.77. Woburn costs were £4,767.76.

In such challenging times, the Fund has been successful with street collections at events such as the Burlington Arcade, Sainsbury's (Low Hall) Chingford and London's Victoria Station. Collection boxes placed around London has helped raise money to meet an ever-increasing demand for our help.

Thanks to the tremendous generosity of people's donations and sponsoring, the Fund has been able to recover all our outlays and more, giving 100s of disadvantaged children great memories to cherish.

Thank you to everyone that has supported the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children and we look forward to helping many more disadvantaged children in the forthcoming year.

Lilian Julier  
LTFUC Hon Treasurer

## TX1 TAXIS WANTED



### Your old TX1 Taxi is wanted

- ✓ Quick viewing and decision
- ✓ Cash waiting!
- ✓ Top price paid for really clean examples

Please ring Graham on  
**07435 562759**

or e-mail on  
[oldlondontaxis@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oldlondontaxis@yahoo.co.uk)





**T**he London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled held a luncheon at Millwall Football Club on December 1st to thank all our sponsors and a group of Veterans who have over the past year and in all weathers collected money for the charity at various locations around London.

Guests began arriving at the club from 11am in taxis from **Waterloo** and **Victoria** stations, with a large number from **London Bridge** in the Millwall FC bus.

A minutes' silence was held for those no longer with us; the **Reverend George Parsons** said Grace and lunch was served. Afterwards we were entertained by **St Jude's School Choir** who sang Christmas Carols but finishing with a rendition of *it's a long way to Tipperary* with everyone joining in. This was followed by **Sean Chambers** singing some popular songs, which was greatly appreciated by everybody.

*The LTBAWD Chairman then made the following speech, which was followed by a presentation to Kart Force - an organisation that enables injured ex-service and serving members of the armed forces to compete in motor sport and we are happy to support them in this venture.*

"The President, Chairman and Committee would like to thank all the staff here at Millwall FC and all our supporters and taxi drivers for their help over the years. So welcome to this year's Christmas lunch. This has been a fantastic year with many events, starting with the **Collectors lunch**. In May, we took 98 veterans in 64 London taxis with paramedics and breakdown crews for a three day pilgrim-

## The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled LTBAWD CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT MILLWALL FC

age to **Ypres** and the **Menin Gate**; accompanying us was British ambassador **Alison Rose**. It was an honour and a privilege to have her with us. In June we held our annual trip to **Worthing**, stopping off at **South Homewood** where the people of the village always make us so welcome and have continued to be supportive of our charity for the 68 years we've been in existence.

In July there was another first and well-organised trip to the **Bluebell Railway**. I'm sure everyone enjoyed it albeit on possibly the hottest day of the year! August and September saw two of our Vets, **Mr Glover** and **Mr Pieri** doing two parachute tandem skydives in five days. The first over **Merville Barracks** in **Normandy** with the second one back in the UK. They were accompanied by two committee members **Francis** and **Graham** - a job well done and a very proud and humbling experience for all those concerned.

We also held a tea party at the **Royal Hospital, Chelsea** during which we were awarded the **National Lottery** award for the **Best Volunteer Charity for 2016**. It was so nice to have this recognition. A big thank you to **Janet Hodgson** for her work in making the tea party a success for us; Janet has released a film about the charity and a trip to **Holland** in 2015, which has received rave reviews in the local area of **Hastings**.

The charity is already in the process of organising different events for 2017; possibly one of our largest trips to date will be the **Normandy** trip on the 4th - 8th June 2017 to

visit the **D-Day** beaches. We will launch **Back to the Beaches** trip at the **Spitfire Café, Biggin Hill** on Sunday 22 January 2017. We would like to thank **Castle Rock Brewery** for coming on board; they have produced a beer with a *Back to the Beaches* label on the bottle for general sale. There are some very special people with us today; we have **Headley Court** as well as a charity that we will hopefully have strong links with in the future, **Kart Force**. We also have **RAF Servicemen** and **Women** with some of their Vets.

I would like to thank on behalf of the charity all those that have supported and continue to support us over the years and would like to mention just a few: **Millwall Football Club** and their staff here today, the trade organisations, collectors who go out in all weathers, **Lizzie** and **Rachel** for being windows to the world on our website, **Susie** for all her hard work on this Christmas lunch, the girls from **HSBC** who are selling our raffle tickets and **Janet Hodgson** for her dedication and film work.

Then of course there is the committee of our charity for their continuous and outstanding work throughout the year and a massive thank you to London's licensed taxi drivers - without them this charity would not function.

We Wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year..."

**Derek Leone**  
LTBAWD Press Officer

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

## A Blogger's Tale

1994

The rain was dribbling in through the broken seal on my windscreen, it trickled steadily down the inside of the glass forming a pool below; the wind was howling outside and trying its best to reduce the already low temperature inside my cab. I squinted into the inky dark night as we rattled through the cobbled backstreets of **1990s London**. The headlamps could barely manage a weak glow, shining a little dancing yellow light into the rain. Once again I wiped the inside of the windscreen with my rag, it didn't help. I decided to go home.

I began to turn the cab around, but just as I did I heard a nasty bang. I thought I'd hit something; I jumped out but there was nothing there, just the empty road, I lifted the bonnet and shone my torch into the engine compartment and took a step back in disbelief. The engine had moved forwards, forcing the front fan through the radiator!

My night was over and on the train home I decided I needed a change. The next day after the doom laden prognosis on my old cab, I made my way to see a lovely looking **Fairway** I had spotted the week before at a cab garage. It was a beautiful dark blue with a slightly lighter blue vinyl roof; it had air conditioning, a comfy seat and a sliding sunroof. After the briefest of negotiations, I happily shook hands, hope completely outweighing expectation.

The cab was great in every respect apart from a very important one, the front had started to rust away very badly - it happened slowly but steadily. Almost every day the dark brown patches seemed to grow bigger and more obvious. I mentioned it a few times to the previous owner; he seemed interested but would mumble something about doing it on the next overhaul.

One day I decided to take it into a main dealer, I asked them to take a look and tell me why the front was rusty and the back wasn't? The examiner had a good look all over and eventually turned to me and said the front of the cab was much older than the rear! The best case scenario being that it had been in a big crash and they replaced the whole front end, but had used old panels. I put my outraged hat on and drove straight to the garage and confronted the previous owner:

"You sold me a 'cut and shut,'" I told him. He looked genuinely horrified and came out to have a look. As we stood side by side looking at this now rusty old cab, he said: "Look, it



might have had a slight problem, but it isn't a Porsche is it? It doesn't have every little accident recorded."

"Every little accident," I replied? I couldn't believe his attitude. "This cab has had a complete front end smash and to make it worse, you fitted old panels to it."

He fixed me with his beady little eyes and looked around to check he couldn't be overheard. He almost whispered: "Look, this is the way it works; if you can wait until I find someone who needs a new rear end, we'll have a little accident right here and I'll replace the panels with new ones!"

Needless to say he ended up keeping the cab and tearing up the hire purchase agreement. I called the finance company a few days later just to check it had been settled. Lesson learned...

To be continued...

**Simon Scott (O40)**  
Call Sign Online

"I didn't have any of the usual symptoms," Dial-a-Cab driver Phil Jacobs (D13) said while speaking to *Call Sign* recently, "just a severe heartburn in the centre of my chest. So I took a few Rennie's indigestion tablets, which had no effect whatsoever. When I looked in the mirror later on, I noticed a few beads of sweat on my lips and forehead, which I thought unusual because I had not been doing anything particularly strenuous."

"The previous Friday I was in the gym, swam 20 lengths and did a 2.5 mile track run without any ill effect whatsoever and was quietly feeling proud of my fitness level. Yet here I was on the following Monday morning, having simply moved around some light furniture while awaiting an internet engineer and this intense feeling discomfort persisted," Phil continued.

"Having some medical interest and my own blood pressure gauge, I took a reading but it was only slightly up from usual so I went onto the internet and punched in my symptoms. To my astonishment and horror, the stark message on the computer monitor just told me to Dial 999 - which did cause me concern!"

"I phoned my sister Stephanie who I thought would be quicker than the ambulance. She was round very smartish and rushed me to Whipps Cross Hospital. I was sent straight in to see the Triage nurse who told me there was no sign of me having a heart attack, but took a blood sample as a precaution while I was told to wait outside until they had the results."

"As we waited in an anti-room for the blood test results, my pains got worse and

# Cardiac Arrest!



Phil swam 20 lengths followed by a 2 mile run. Days later he suffered a heart attack...

Stephanie called for a nurse. I was taken back into the Triage room where a doctor told me the blood test results showed a heart problem and I was quickly placed on a trolley and wired up to electronic monitoring equipment to measure my heart beat and all the other stuff that goes with it.

"I don't remember any more after that, but was told my sister looked at me and noticed I

wasn't moving. Suddenly all hell broke loose as the medical team went into overdrive with the 'crash cart' to defibrillate my heart. I've had jump starts as a cab driver but this 'jump start' was apparently just like the ones you see on TV hospital dramas like Casualty!"

"Thankfully, my heart re-started and I came back to life, which was a great relief to my sister and family as you can imagine!" Phil grinned as he added... "and to me of course! But I don't recall any of that, nor how long I was theoretically dead for. But when I did open my eyes, I was told that I had indeed suffered a cardiac arrest."

"So now, after three months off work and having gone through all the various stress tests and the like, TfL have returned my cab driving licence and I'm back on the road, fully recovered. Amazingly, I did not have any of the usual pains either in my arm or left side of my chest and when I did smoke, it was only a few ciggies a day - something I have not done for quite a long time. So while my heart problem is a bit of a mystery, I'm very lucky and grateful to be here relating this experience! I have one stent which was put in at Bart's Hospital and I feel so much better now."

"But the best feeling is just being here..."

**Dennis Latchett**  
*Call Sign Online*

## Aron Baker

**T**here are times in life when you just don't know what to say. Such a time happened

several weeks ago when we heard that **Aron Baker**, son of **Dial-a-Cab driver Neil Baker (D55)**, had tragically died after being struck by a car on the **Ratcliffe Highway** at **Hoo** in **Kent** while walking home following a night out on **Sunday 4 December**.



He was knocked down by a silver **Vauxhall Vectra** just after 3am when close to home. Aron, who was just 24, was taken to a London hospital with serious injuries, but sadly died later that day.

To Aron's mum Allison, dad Neil and all Aron's family including girlfriend Daniella, we offer our heartfelt sympathies.

**Officers from the serious collision investigation unit are investigating the incident, which happened on the Rochester-bound carriageway between the junctions with Bell's Lane and Main Road and want to hear from any witnesses. They are also keen to speak with anyone who may have seen Aron at the time leading up to the collision.**

**Anyone with information about the crash can call the appeal line on 01622 798538 quoting reference 04-0185 or email [sciu.td@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:sciu.td@kent.pnn.police.uk).**

## Book Aiden Kent for your event

...and make it go with a swing!



**Tel: 07956 456 360**

**Email:**

**[aiden.kent@btinternet.com](mailto:aiden.kent@btinternet.com)**

**Web: [www.aidenkent.com](http://www.aidenkent.com)**



# Confident in the future...

When Call Sign popped into our Roman Way depot recently, two brand new taxis were being installed with Dial-a-Cab terminals.



DaC's Stuart Silver and Mitchell Freeman have both decided to upgrade to new TX4s



fortable to drive, it's very quiet and far more powerful than the old one. It will be a pleasure to go to work in it - and work it is what I'm going to have to do!"

Stuart drove out of Roman Way without his usual puff of smoke, but with a big smile on his face...

Stuart Silver (N01) had decided to replace his ageing cab for a Euro 6 model to take him forward. He told *Call Sign* that he had previously spent quite a large sum of money keeping his former cab on the road and was beginning to wonder how much longer it would last before the next big expense.

"It was due to come off the road fairly soon anyway due to the age restriction rule, so I thought about renting because that is now possible on DaC. I weighed the renting options up against the repayments and general running expenses of buying a new cab and after considering it for some time, I decided that buying a new cab would be the best option as I still have every confidence in the future of the taxi trade. The fact that the newest cab

model is Euro 6 compliant and carries a comprehensive three-year warranty is not to be sniffed at!

"Unsurprisingly perhaps, this cab is so much more com-

Also being fitted out was Mitchell Freeman (V33), who had swapped his 08 model for a shiny new example of similar marque.

"Like Stuart," he told *Call Sign*, "I had spent money galore on the old bus and was concerned it would probably start to cost even more yet again in the near future. I would then be stuck with an ageing taxi. I'm 56 years old, intend to continue working for a few years yet and can usually find work - despite what others may say! So I too expect this new tool to keep me going into the foreseeable future with comfort and reliability so that time off the road other than for planned maintenance will be minimal.

"This new TX4 Euro 6 cab has a lot going for it and I'm looking forward to the future."

Then, just minutes after Stuart left the DaC fitting bay, Mitchell did the same. We wish them both the best of luck.

*A new TX4 Elegance can be bought for much less than renting a new model and includes a three year warranty. Either LTC at Brewery Road or the Ascott Cab Co at Blackhorse Road will be happy to show you the cab with no obligation or you can phone 03300 245 922 for the London Taxi Company or 020 8692 1122 for the Ascott Cab Company.*

## Taxi insurance for DaC drivers



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

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

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

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

Our philosophy is to build long-term relationships using balanced service teams providing continuity and expertise. Compare our prices and give us a call. See our ad on page 20 inside this issue of *Call Sign*.

**Phil Buchan,**  
Hillier Buchan, 01322 553313

## Cards now in the back but...

"We have the best PED system, I'm sure of that," Phil Connor (R71J) told *Call Sign* "but with it now being re-sited into the carriage of the taxi, it surely cannot be too long before a driver is either attacked or an unfounded allegation toward the driver is made regarding inappropriate behaviour. There will also surely come a spurious claim made by a passenger as to the 'difficulty of using the PED' which would then require the driver to leave the safety of the front of the cab to sort it out. If that request is purely to lure the driver into the back, the result will surely mean it is no longer safe for females or older drivers, especially those working unsociable hours, to accept cards.

***There is also the guise of a passenger inserting their card, only to quickly remove it while telling the driver not to bother with a receipt and then leaving the taxi quickly. The next thing the driver knows is when the PED prints out a 'void' notice, by which time the passenger is long gone.***

Phil also enquired about the legality of passengers being injured due to contact with a PED fitted in the back, because Phil had heard insurance companies could refuse cover. *Call Sign* checked and it appears passengers are still covered while travelling in your taxi, that's what you pay your premium for. However, as some card readers are hired out by different companies, should that PED be damaged through vandalism or any other reason, the PED may not be covered by your policy and so drivers should seek redress from the company from whom they hire their card reader terminal. It follows that any company hiring out card reader terminals would have insurance cover for such an expensive piece of kit, but it was suggested to *Call Sign* that someone using such terminals would be wise to check that the electronic wizardry installed in the cab is indeed insured to prevent any unwanted surprises should the terminal require maintenance or repair, a potentially expensive cost.

**Alan Green**  
Call Sign Online



I was very much hoping I'd have some good news regarding an NHS Hospital account that we tendered for recently. The specification was for transporting patients and hospital staff, with the supplier needing to supply wheelchair accessible vehicles. There was a requirement to have a dedicated telephone line into a contact centre, have experienced and trained drivers who could offer a top service for all their passengers paying special attention to transporting vulnerable patients, notwithstanding transporting over 300 staff journeys on Christmas Day. A dedicated account manager was required who would on a daily basis communicate any service issues, oversee performance reports, attend regular meetings and present performance data on the general service provided... and all for a very economical price!

We set about completing the electronic document and went to extreme lengths to demonstrate our capability and expertise in being able to service a large account of this nature. A good point was that we were short-listed to give a presentation of our service and answer any questions the selection panel had. This we did and were duly complemented on our answers. Body language and comments made during the presentation came across to us as not only being receptive, but being very positive of our overall service. We even received comments such as that our package was just what they were looking for and that our ability to download secured data was excellent.

After the evaluation process was completed, we received a letter notifying us that our tender was overall sound in the following areas: Wheelchair vehicles, drivers and training, bookings, cancellations, customer service, incident reporting and compliant procedures. There were also positive reports on our quality standards and assurance, contract monitoring, performance reviews and rendering of accounts. The only part of the tender we fell short was within the commercial schedule, which reflects the cost. Our costs included fixed rate journeys priced at 25% to 30% below the meter and a much reduced administration charge that it could be said would mean we would be running the account for next to nothing.

The winning supplier just happened to be a car company who only a short time ago, so we were advised, had gone bust and were subsequently purchased. That company is **Green Tomatoes** and the parent company is **Transdev**. They boast of €6.6 billion in revenue, have 83,000 employees in 19 different countries over 5 continents with variations of vehicles numbering 43,000. They also have 13 different transport modes and 22 light railway networks. Their claim for the UK was they own Green Tomato Cars, "...the operator of London's leading environmentally friendly private hire (passenger car) company, which focuses on excellent customer service and a sustainable business mode!"

I find it hard to express the disappointment we felt at losing out to a company whose business model consisted of being "the most environmentally friendly private hire company" as I believe they have less than 100 cars. Obviously their inexperience within the passenger industry and having to contract out wheelchair vehicle work, counts for absolutely nothing if the price is right. We must be talking of mileage rates as low as £2 to £2.20 per mile being offered... or if the rates were good ones, perhaps £2.40 to £2.60. It is not uncommon in

# DaC Sales Report

With Keith Cain



these types of tenders for car companies to offer no admin and an all-inclusive price. The argument then becomes of what is the driver receiving for the trip? Even if the car company holds back 20% from the fare, the amount paid to the driver becomes such a small amount it is no wonder we see PH drivers complain they are earning less than the minimum wage.

It is my opinion that if drivers cannot earn a reasonable living, they will most certainly cut corners with regard to what they spend on their supposed business. The tools of their trade will be the first to see reduced expenditure. Money will not be spent on repairs to keep the vehicle in tip-top condition.

Minimum amounts will be spent on spare parts just to keep the vehicle running, which then questions reliability of service. We have already heard of some PH drivers not having adequate insurance cover. I'm convinced

this is associated with a lack of earning ability - not what we are used to in a severely regulated taxi industry.

It seems that someone or somebody has declared war on the licensed London Taxi Driver, refusing to give us the opportunity to compete - or throw off our shackles to fight back. At the last count, there were 114,000 registered Private Hire drivers against 23,000 Licensed Taxi Drivers. It's as if those that want to see the demise of the London cabbie are standing behind £multimillion or £multibillion heavily invested companies who are out to disrupt and destroy our industry. They must be getting great satisfaction in watching us struggle. Over the years we must have upset - chosen for the sake of a bet-

ter word - a number of individuals who hold a grudge against our trade and just want revenge!

We speak with our own clients regularly and they tell us how they have instructed staff to use cheaper options and only use a taxi when absolutely necessary. Even if the service received is inferior, cost is paramount.

One prospective new client who was receiving an abysmal service from their PH company wanted us to match their prices and reduce our admin. After consideration, I agreed to it but at the last minute they decided to keep with their existing supplier because despite receiving a poor service, they still felt a black taxi account could work out more expensive. This is becoming even more of an issue where companies are prepared to put up with bad service just to keep costs down. Clients have also gone back to the days of having staff internally to reconcile employees travel expenses and pay back money into their salary. With most transactions being taken via credit card, it is still a timely exercise which clients are calculating is more beneficial than having a black taxi account and the charging mechanism being automated by the taxi company. We are coming up against more obstacles than we have ever encountered before, but we still keep plugging away wherever and whenever we can.

Despite a rather gloomy report, I still wish you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year...

Keith Cain  
DaC Head of Sales

## 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.

### CABBIE GOLF SPECIAL

Our 9 hole course is the perfect place for you to relax and get some fresh air in the beautiful countryside of North-West Kent.

Renovated and restructured greens and improved fairways to play on, with food and a bar on site to refresh yourself after a round.

For more information call Jacquie or Sue on 01474 573116 / 573113  
*A friendly welcome awaits you.*

Corinthian Sports Club, Valley Road, Fawkham, Longfield, Kent. DA3 8LY  
corinthians@billingsgroup.co.uk / jacquie@billingsgroup.co.uk  
www.corinthianssportsclub.co.uk





# TDOY Dinner & Dance: Best one ever!

This year's Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund's dinner & dance - which was celebrating its 45th anniversary - was deemed the best one ever by guests that Call Sign spoke to following this year's annual bash!

The evening - held once again at the **Holiday Inn, Carburton Street** – began with a champagne reception and was followed by an excellent four course meal. But this year's dinner was slightly different when the large hall was turned into a night club as the 110 guests were treated to a 30 minute cabaret act from the man known as the **Singing Cabbie – Aiden Kent**.

**Aiden** had previously been seen with **Bradley Walsh** on ITV's **Sunday Night at the Palladium** and was shortly to leave for Las Vegas, but kindly donated his usual fee to the charity, for which they were grateful and those seated at their tables thoroughly enjoyed the Act.

Once again there was tombola with great prizes in addition to a raffle. The result was that at a presentation held later in the evening, all four trade charities were presented with cheques for £1000 each with a promise that should the final total be more, then they would get equal shares of any extra money.

But filling up the evening brilliantly was **Deemer Street**, a great five piece band who kept the floor filled by playing the type of music that everyone knows! Bopping along to them were "groovers" such as TfL's **Helen Chapman** and **Peter Blake**, DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** and the former DaC dispatcher who on 22 November 1988 was in the dispatcher's seat as we went from voice to data dispatching, **Phil Kirby**! Phil looked exactly the same (as he did last week and not 1988)!

There was also a presentation held which honoured Ubiquitous Director **Micky Harris** as the new Vice President of the TDOY Committee and **Brian Rice** for DaC's help in sponsoring the event over the past 20 years.

Once again, TDOYCF Chairman, **Russell Poluck MBE** and his wife **Barbara** have worked their socks off to provide a night of sheer pleasure and enjoyment...

*For those who bought a raffle ticket but weren't there, these are the winners as per the ticket stub:*

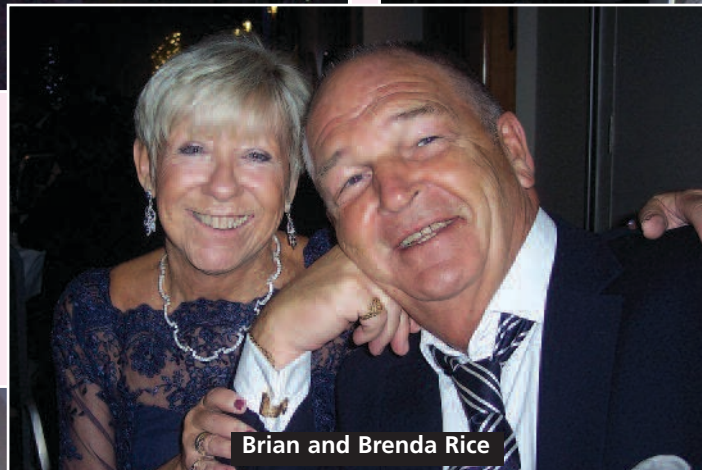
1st prize £1000 Holiday voucher (N.Sweeney ticket 02304); 2nd UK holiday voucher (S.Green 01926); 3rd Overnight stay at the Lancaster Hotel (J.Wheeler 01232); 4th Free service at LTC (JB 02649); 5th Two taxi tyres (Sarah 01945); 6th Two taxi tyres (G Mankelow 00039); 7th Cutlery set (Suzy 02654); 8th £50 Totes gift voucher (P Brennan 01822); 9th £50 M&S voucher (Chick 01534); 10th £50 Boden voucher (Arriff 01290); 11th Magic Bullet (John Dixon 02915)...



The Singing Cabbie, Aiden Kent, opens the evening's entertainment



Phil Kirby shows how ComCabbers do it!!!



Brian and Brenda Rice

Mickey Harris and Russell Poluck MBE

Russell presents £1000 cheques to each of the four trade charities





**D**avid Ford (E10) admitted to *Call Sign* that he had been unsure what to do after picking up a rather drunken lady from the **West End** to **Shepherds Bush**.

David told us that because of her state of somewhat unsteadiness, he had reservations about actually getting paid at the end as she had already told the **Dial-a-Cab** driver that she did not have any cash and asked if she could pay by credit card. Although David told her that he accepted cards, he told *Call Sign* that his 13 years on this circuit had taught him that passengers under the influence weren't always capable of using a PED; so he suggested that they stopped *en-route* so she could get some cash from an ATM.

"Frankly," said David, "I was very hesitant about going all the way to W12 and find no payment forthcoming, but, I was completely unprepared for what happened at the ATM!"

David said that his passenger had managed to exit the cab and get to the ATM without too much difficulty, but was clearly having trouble putting her card into the machine once she reached it! She then returned to the cab and gave David a screwed up piece of paper con-

## Credit Card Prepayments



David had concerns over drunk passenger's ability to use credit cards

"We resolved the matter in the end," David continued, "and I was quite relieved when I set

taining her pin and asked him to punch it into the ATM keypad! David declined, admitting that he felt shocked she was that drunk to even think of giving such an important piece of information to a total stranger!

her down safely at her destination, but it would have been better had I been able to pre-authorise the trip before we even got under way."

*Call Sign* asked a DaC Board Member who confirmed that it was possible to agree a fare before the start of a journey, clear it and then refund the passenger the balance in cash if the metered fare was less than the estimated fare. Alternatively, the card could be run through the PED again if the fare was more than the estimated cost. Naturally you should be certain that the passenger understood what you intended doing at the end of the journey.

The subject has also been mentioned by DaC Chairman **Brian Rice** at meetings where other members had raised similar concerns. In addition, at the next software update, it is expected that pre-authorised credit card trips will be allowed...

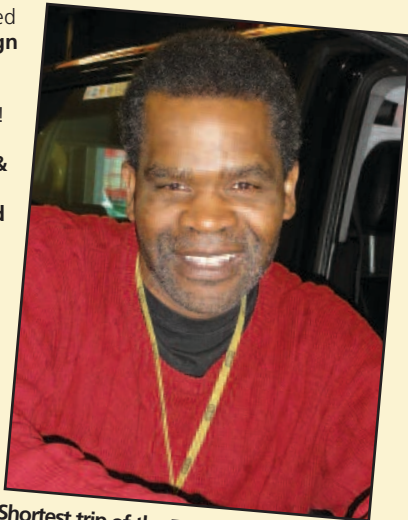
**Jamie Corum**  
Call Sign Online

Few trades contain such a variety of unbelievable tales where we can say that it really is...

## Unbelievable...but true!

**Eustace Clarke (034)** pulled up a seat next to a *Call Sign* reporter and recounted his story that only cab drivers would accept as believable!

"I had managed to squeeze on to the **Marks & Spencer** store rank on **Oxford Street** by **Orchard Street** and sat there for quite some time until I had eventually worked my way up to reach the point. Finally, two Middle Eastern women holding several carrier bags each walked up to me and just said **Primark**. The whole time they just continued their personal conversation as they stepped into the cab and I couldn't get a word in,



Shortest trip of the Eustace taxi driving career!

so I just assumed they wanted the **Primark** store at the far end of **Oxford Street** where it joins **Tottenham Court Road**. After all, they surely wouldn't want the one virtually just across the street! So I began moving off eastwards.

"No sooner had we reached **Selfridges** than one of the women interrupted the flow of her conversation by asking where I was going. I politely said that they had asked for **Primark** and that's where we were heading to. She said they wanted the one opposite to where they had got in!"

As he recalled the incident, Eustace still had an amazed look on his face.

"I asked if she was joking, because I truly believed she was just having a laugh. But no, she came back to say that they felt weary and that their feet hurt, so they just needed to cross the road!"

Eustace smiled between his teeth as he spun round and stopped the cab just past the **M&S** store where they had got in and set them down just yards away outside the **Primark** shop! Eustace was grinning by now thanks to the stupidity of his story.

"Who would think to get into a taxi just to cross the road," he asked rhetorically. "There was £3 on the meter and that's exactly what they paid me! It would have been even less had they stopped rabbiting! Strangely enough, just then another driver had pulled of the **M&S** rank so I just spun round again, drove forward a few yards and put on it again!

"I have been to all sorts of places both far and near in the course of my cabbage career, but that is without doubt my shortest journey. It was unbelievable, but true!"

**NEAT Cakes**

CAKES FOR ALL OCCASIONS

WEDDINGS  
BIRTHDAYS  
CHRISTENINGS  
BAT/BAR MITZVAH  
& MORE...

PLEASE CONTACT LEANNE ON 07772 707760  
OR EMAIL NEATCAKES@HOTMAIL.CO.UK

CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE - [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NEATCAKES1](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NEATCAKES1)  
OR INSTAGRAM @NEATCAKES



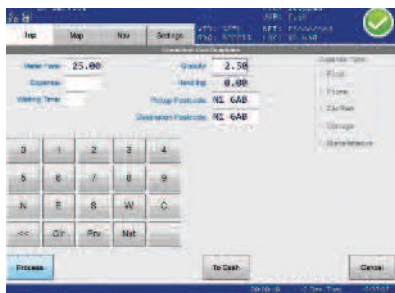
I hope you have all had a prosperous and happy festive period and that your batteries are now fully recharged. I spoke to many of you at **Roman Way** recently and had a few questions posed about adding a gratuity to a credit card trip when you have already pressed the **Process** button on the terminal. Hopefully this article - with the help of Training Manager **Daren Morley** - will help and assist you.

As I have already mentioned, a gratuity prompt and the facility to pre-auth a card will soon be available, but in the short term please follow these instructions:

If you have already sent the amount to the PED, you need to cancel the transaction prior to processing the new amount. If you do not cancel the old amount, it will process the first transaction without the gratuity. DaC can only pay the amount the PED has processed. Below is a step by step guide on how to add a gratuity to a credit card trip at different stages of processing the payment.

## Process button not pressed

If the **Process** button has not been pressed, just add the gratuity into the gratuity field and then press the **Process** button. You will then be asked to confirm the amount, press the **OK** button to confirm the amount.



## Process button pressed

If the **Process** button has been pressed but you have not pressed the **OK** button confirming the amount, just press the **Cancel** button on the **Confirm Amount** box. Enter the gratuity into the **Gratuity** field then press the **Process** button. You will then be asked to confirm the amount, press the **OK** button to confirm the amount.



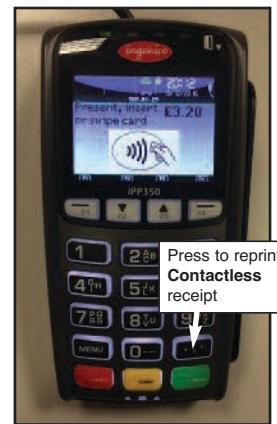
## Process button pressed and amount confirmed

If you have already pressed the **Process** button, confirmed the amount and then sent the information to the PED, you **MUST** cancel the transaction on the PED prior to adding the gratuity. Additionally, if you have pressed the **Cancel** button on the terminal Credit/Debit Card Completion screen, the PED **MUST** also be cancelled. Failure to do so will result in the PED queuing the two transactions and

# OPERATIONS AND COMPLIANCE REPORT



## Printing a Contactless Receipt for Customer



If a passenger requests a **Contactless** receipt, ask them to press the **.** button situated directly above the green **Enter** button. Please note the amount does not need to be showing on the PED to reprint the receipt.



unless the first transaction times out, it will process the first transaction without the gratuity.

Ask the passenger to press the red **Cancel** button on the PED and then instruct them to remove their card. The amount will then disappear from

the PED and your terminal screen will no longer be greyed out. At the bottom of the screen you will see the message:

**Transaction Status Error: Not Processed.**

Enter the gratuity in the **Gratuity** field and then press the **Process** button. You will then be asked to confirm the amount, press the **OK** button to confirm. The amount will then be sent to the PED. The passenger then enters their pin to complete the transaction.

I'd also strongly suggest that you carry a book of manual receipts at all times in case you experience a signal problem, or worse still encounter a person or persons in the back that may cause you a problem for the obvious reasons. The card can then be passed to you in the front to process the trip manually. So long as you have a record of the card number, expiry date and a signature, it can be processed from the office. Far from ideal, but it allows you to remain in the taxi and perhaps be a little safer.

*Lastly can I wish you all a very happy 2017.*

**Allan Evans**  
DaC Operations  
Compliance Manager

# LONDON: "WORST TRAFFIC HOTSPOT IN EUROPE!"

According to a recent **Inrix** traffic information study taking in 100 European cities, Great Britain came out worst with over 20,000 traffic hotspots - more than double that of Germany and over ten times the number in France. Top of the pile by far is **London** with over 12,000 hotspots just on its own!

Perhaps a few more bike lanes and junction closures and we can set an unbeatable hotspot record! Where's Boris when you need him!!!



# THE SHAME OF TFL?

*After over 10 years of asking, separate sex numbers are finally revealed..*



In January 2015, *Call Sign* published a report by the GLA which pulled no punches in labelling Transport for London as being “woefully inadequate. Even Addison Lee accused them of letting London’s taxis down by allowing Uber to march into London to do whatever they wanted. Little has changed.

Going back around 12 years and looking at old *Call Sign* files, between April 2004 and March 2005 the total number of arrests for taxi / minicab offences was 1160. I had several chats with Sgt Dave Hillson - then of the new Transport Operational Command Unit - and asked why out of 1160 offences, we weren’t told how many were licensed taxi drivers? Dave was always helpful to *Call Sign* so I was amazed when he said that not only did he not know, but that the PCO (as it was then) had decided not to differentiate between them. After weeks of exchanging emails and phone calls explaining that as a licensed taxi driver, I felt entitled to know if our reputation for being the best was actually true because if a large proportion of those 1160 were taxi drivers, then we really were in trouble. They stuck to their guns for several weeks until I said that I would put in a *Freedom of Information* request. I was told in no uncertain language that I would be wasting my time as the two groups were lumped together.

Suddenly an email appeared giving me the details I had asked for – out of the 1160, just 9 had been taxi related offences with 1151 being linked to minicabs. I was told not to publish as the figures were not official. I disagreed and went ahead.

Ever since then, *Call Sign* has asked TfL to differentiate between private hire and taxis when it comes to sexual and non-sexual offences, but they always claimed it would be too difficult. Why? They’re big boys; they surely know the difference between the two sides of the trade. If they don’t, we’ll be happy to send them a photo of a taxi and a taxi driver’s badge. After all, they are very quick to ask for them at railway stations, but apparently not when it comes to accusations of rape.

At a recent Mayor’s Question Time attended at City Hall by *Call Sign*, we heard Mayor Khan promise to reveal the figures as separate entities as soon as possible. That has now happened and taking the two years of 2014 and 2015, over 270 sex offences - including 56 rapes - were alleged to have been carried out by minicabs. Placed against those figures is one sex offence registered against a licensed taxi driver – and that was in 2014 with none recorded for 2015.

So have TfL finally done the right thing? Sadly not because they have shown time and time again that they will not denigrate the PH industry and even now they are placing the blame on “unlicensed or unbooked private hire drivers.” In a statement, which confirms how TfL have failed when it comes to preventing the curse of touting by both licensed and unlicensed minicabs, they said:

*“Unlicensed and unbooked PHV drivers pose the greatest danger to the travelling public and are the alleged offender in the majority of rape offences. 13 out of the 14 drivers charged with rape in 2014 and 2015 were unlicensed or unbooked PHV drivers.”*

But they go on to add: *“Many reports of offences are unbooked and the drivers can’t be traced. The police are more likely to be able to trace and take action against a driver when they are licensed and the journey is booked through a licensed operator. For this reason licensed drivers may appear over-represented.”*

**And yes, there are lots of them...!**

They then provide figures which make very disturbing reading and

show how unsafe the minicab fraternity is. *Call Sign* has no doubt that the reputable side of the industry such as Addison Lee may not be our friends, but neither are their drivers likely to be the main culprits. We all know who we’re talking about here and their name begins with U.

Earlier in 2016, the Internet came alive with Met Police figures claiming 141 sex attacks of which 31 were of alleged rape. Of the total number, 32 of the attacks were alleged to have been carried out by Uber drivers. They differ from the TfL figures, but have one similarity: Even though there was one reported sex attack by a licensed Taxi driver, as a whole we are just not part of the problem. The problem is twofold – firstly, perverted minicab drivers who think that picking up females is a licence to attack them and secondly, Transport for London who themselves have fought so long and hard to avoid publishing the separated numbers.

*And considering how long we have been fighting for the information, wouldn’t you have thought our Tfl “Masters” would have issued a press release explaining why the numbers are now being shown separately rather than sneaking it out online? Are they perhaps showing signs of shame? If not, then they certainly should be...*

If TfL have any compassion towards the poor people who thought they were safe in a minicab then there should be a mass resignation of those at the top. But they won’t, because when it comes to shame, they have none! And they are the people we have to take orders from? The only question is for how much longer. They should go now...

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



## Exclusive Taxi Insurance Scheme dedicated to DAC members only



- ✓ 5% Discount for members
- ✓ Additional discount for existing protected Bonus policies
  - ✓ Public Liability
  - ✓ Breakdown Cover
  - ✓ Much more available

**Call below for quotations**



Hillier Buchan Ltd, 18, Bourne Road, Bexley, Kent. DA5 1LU

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority - Firms Ref No: 304318  
Company Registration No: 4319231

**Tel: 01322 553313**

**Fax: 01322 523315**



**T**he December issue of *Call Sign* ran a story on long-time **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Bernie Silver's** decision to retire at the end of November. **Bernie** (until recently **G08**) had phoned to tell us his decision. He had been with the Society since 1975 and although 41 years is a long time, he never really sounded as though he was even thinking of calling it a day. But he told us that with the way things were, there seemed little point in renewing licences and updating cabs etc.

Then one evening, **Bernie's** wife **Jackie** suggested they went out for a meal at one of **Bernie's** favourite haunts – The Central fish bar in **Central Street**. What he didn't know was that some of his many friends had organised a secret farewell dinner for him. He thought he was going to the fish bar just with Jackie but was stunned when a big table had been set up and so many friends and their partners were waiting for him. And even **Bernie** looked quite humble when they both walked in and everyone got up to applaud! **Bernie** told *Call Sign*:

"I have just returned from a surprise retirement party put on by my fellow **Dial-a-Cab** drivers; it was such a surprise that my friends would do this for me. I would like to thank **Howard Flavin (A16J)**, **David Marks (R22)**, **Pat Graves (I53)**, **Jim Moore (M58)**, **Steve Field (F99J)**, **David Morris (M62)**, **Bill Chatterway (A43)**, **Steve Goldberg (A77)** and their partners for such a moving send-off. My special thanks also go to **Howard's** daughter **Leanne** for making the most fantastic taxi cake you have ever seen!

"Once again thank you all so much and so sorry you couldn't make it **Alan...**"

Good luck **Bernie** and enjoy your retirement...

# Bye Bye Bernie!



**Bernie sits midway on the left side at his surprise retirement dinner**



**Bernie's amazing cake, made by Leanne Flavin (see her ad on page 18)**

## JUST WHAT'S GOING ON IN SAN FRANCISCO???

*Call Sign* recently received a press release from a Chicago legal department informing us that the **Yellow Cab Co-operative** of San Francisco had filed for bankruptcy and that everything in the company was now up for sale. But it was the reason for the bankruptcy that puzzled us; there was no mention of **Uber**, instead the claim was "unfavourable verdicts in personal injury suits relating to taxicab accidents."

San Francisco is awash with a form of minicab known as **Transportation Network Carriers** – or **TNCs**. These came around several years ago when **Taxis** were said to be too few, while **Uber** – unlike **London** – was said to be too expensive. **Black Cars**, best described as "official" minicabs that can hire whomever they want and charge as much as they want, were the other alternative and they too were said to be expensive.

But what San Francisco has also had for many years are **carpools**, where at given pick-up points people would wait until a driver was going in their direction and give them a lift. Then someone came up with the idea of normal people with their own cars signing up to be "car-pool" drivers, with prospective passengers calling them on their cell phones and being charged "voluntary donations."

Companies such as **Sidecar**, **Lyft** and **Uber X** soon joined the party and cashed in and **TNCs** were born! The only question was whether the guy in the white hat with that nice blue car and his reasonably priced trip into town, actually had insurance for passengers?

Insurance for vehicles offering transportation in the Californian city is very, very expensive and that is probably in part due to the proliferation of so many **TNCs**. Either way, taxis were suffering. We have to wonder whether this is a sign of things to come???

**We asked *Call Sign's* man in San Francisco, Charles Rathbone, about the Yellow Cab situation. He told us...**

"The **Yellow Cab Co-operative** in San Francisco declared bankruptcy in January 2016. The cause was a large judgment against the company following an at-fault collision. At that time, the company had still not fully recovered from a previous very large judgment against it. **Yellow's** insurance premiums became ruinous despite a \$100,000 deductible per accident – the equivalent of UK's 'excess' policies.

Meanwhile, **TNCs** are flush with new billions and outnumber licensed taxis by 20-to-1. **Lyft** employees stand at the busiest bus stops in San Francisco passing out \$50 ride coupons by the thousands. November saw yet another \$20 free ride offer arrive from **Uber** by mass postal mail.

Despite this perfect storm, the Co-operative might have continued in operation but for an ongoing shortage of drivers. **TNC** drivers receive incentives and bonuses above what their customers pay and far beyond anything that a cab company can provide. Even so, at least one San Francisco taxi company attempted to acquire **Yellow** in recent weeks, but the deal fell through. The court-ordered sale of **Yellow's** assets is a great opportunity for an innovative investor to acquire a dominant position in a major US taxi market, but that investor will need deep pockets to compete with the **TNC's** seemingly unlimited access to capital.

If a non-taxi purchaser acquires **Yellow's** assets, the 500 individual Co-op members will need to affiliate with other cab companies. It's possible that will cause a temporary service interruption as companies seek to expand capacity against the backdrop of 45,000 **TNCs**..."



**San Francisco Yellow cabs go into bankruptcy**





**M**any *Call Sign* readers would have played football at their local park as youngsters; most of us did at a very junior level. But any dreams of that team - be they school, cubs, scouts or just a local area club progressing to professional level would have been left in cloud cuckoo land!

However, this certainly was not the case of St Andrews Sunday School who formed a football club in 1879, taking to the park in light and dark blue colours and taking on other local sides in west London. Those founding fathers in Greyhound Road formed the St Andrews Football and Cricket Club and played their sports fixtures on a field adjacent to the Parish Church, now covered over partly by the Queens Club and late-Victorian housing.

The Church, of course, is still standing and just like the other London clubs mentioned in this series, these fledglings led a nomadic life - mostly playing at their home ground of **Fulham Fields** before finally setting down roots at a venue that is so familiar to us today.

These former churchgoers and choir boys became **Fulham St Andrews** from 1886, before finally dropping 'St. Andrews' to become **Fulham Excelsior** in 1887 and finally just plain old **Fulham FC** in 1888 - perhaps by then many of their players had become less God-fearing!

Whatever the make-up of the playing team around that time, they certainly started to turn a few heads by winning the **West London Amateur Cup** in 1887, with even more success following in the 1892/93 season when becoming **West London League Champions!**

By now The Saints, as they had been originally nicknamed, adopted a black and white striped shirt, more in keeping with today's colours - perhaps the white stripes represented the saints and the black ones the sinners!

But it was time to find a permanent home now that the club's association with the church was receding - and one site that took their eye was an overgrown field alongside the **River Thames** - although still in their locality.

Any mention of Craven Cottage these days

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

# IT IS NOW!

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



**The original Craven Cottage**

and you naturally think of football, but the original cottage was actually a charming villa in 5 acres of woods built in 1780 by Lord Craven for his wife - the thatched house (see *pic*) often used by acquaintances of the a Prince Regent (later George IV) for secret and illicit affairs!

That old ivy-covered cottage stood empty from 1872 and in the early hours of the morning of 8th May 1888, a suspicious fire broke out and burnt it to the ground - it makes me wonder if any of those aforementioned sinners were involved!

After eventually clearing the rubble and overgrown field, Fulham Football Club played their first match at their new ground, defeating their old - and now defunct rivals - Minerva FC. Spectators had just the one basic wooden stand to assemble in at first until the Stevenage Road stand was built on the site of the old thatched cottage, and eventually the club's new headquarters were built and called **Craven Cottage**.

Fulham's mother church still stands today in

Greyhound Road. It has a plaque commemorating Fulham Football Club's foundation.

*Happy New Year to one and all!*

**Bob Woodford**  
**Call Sign Online**



## FAIRWAY WEDDING TAXI

- Immaculate Fairway taxi available for Wedding Hire
- Covers most north, east and central London locations
- Used in Olympic closing ceremony with the Spice Girls!
  - Full leather interior
- Discounts for DaC drivers

Ring Graham (B35) on

**07435 562759**

or email [oldlondontaxis@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oldlondontaxis@yahoo.co.uk)

**Is Your Taxi Running as smooth  
and sweet as it could?**

**Are You Sure?**

**Feel The Difference When  
You Use alphaPowerPill**

Enhance performance  
Reduce Emissions  
Smooother Running.

Still Only  
£16.95  
30 Day  
Money Back  
Offer

**Order  
Today**

Call 020 3239 6101  
07527 345810

Visit [www.OnlyCabs.co.uk](http://www.OnlyCabs.co.uk)



# Not such a hoot for David!

"I discovered my cab hooter wasn't working and decided to fix it there and then so I stopped in **Duchess Street** behind the **Langham** to sort it out," **David Ellis (J11)** explained to *Call Sign*. You just never know when some thoughtless pedestrian glued to their mobile is going to step out into your path, or a cyclist is going to whizz across the front of the cab and you need to make them aware of your presence, because not all of them have much in the way of sense!"

So the **Dial-a-Cab** driver stopped his engine to look for the cause of him being hooter-less, but it took longer than he had anticipated fixing the wire that had worked its way loose – some 20 minutes – and during that period, David had left his cab lights on, the **DaC** terminal and even had music blaring out of the radio.

"When I finally came to re-start the engine, the battery had run down to the point of being pretty much flat. I phoned the Call Centre who put out a fleet message explaining my predicament and told them that I had my own battery leads. All I needed was



David's jump leads were useless

a quick 'jump start' to get me going again. Several **Dial-a-Cab** drivers stopped to enquire if I was OK while I was at the roadside and I soon discovered the leads I had were not good enough to cope with starting a cab. Then along came **John Davis (V41)** who immediately pulled out his own heavy-duty jump leads, connected them my cab and the engine burst into life. To my astonishment, John told me to keep his leads until I had sorted out my battery – which needed to be replaced. His kind gesture salvaged the rest of the evening for me and proves not only what a real gentleman *he* is, but also those other **DaC** drivers who stopped to assist me. Between them, they restored my faith in humanity and the camaraderie that is **Dial-a-Cab**!

"So through the pages of *Call Sign*, I would like to thank everybody that offered me assistance - including the Call Centre - but especially to John."

Cab batteries take a beating during the winter; starting a cold engine, needing lights on for much longer periods, heater fans going full blast, the **DaC** terminal and even listening to the radio... they all take their toll on the heart of a taxi, so any weakness in the battery will be highlighted without mercy. Dirty or corroded battery terminals and leads are a major cause of battery failure, so keeping everything clean is paramount. Also, get a pair of commercial jump leads because those thin ones are no use to anything bigger than a Smart car!

**Baghwat Singh**  
Call Sign Online

## Naked Uber!



**American Hubert Horan has 40 years of experience in the management and regulation of transportation companies. He has no financial links with any car service, investors or regulators or any firms that work on behalf of industry participants. So his view on Uber is based on business experience and not a prejudice on either side...**

Mr Horan's view on **Uber** is that the car company is staggeringly unprofitable, it is the industry's high cost producer and that it cannot grow into profitability. So what is it doing? Well, in his view, Uber's cheap fares are a mirage. In a US article, Horan says that Uber is staggeringly unprofitable, relying on \$billions in subsidies to undercut taxi operators. The transportation giant's aim, he says, is to wipe out the competition and then they would need to quadruple their fares in order to become profitable!

"Unlike most start-ups, Uber did not enter the industry in pursuit of a significant market share, but was explicitly working to drive incumbents out of business and achieve global industry dominance," Mr Horan wrote in *Naked Capitalism*.

"Uber's growth to date is entirely explained by its willingness to engage in predatory competition funded by Silicon Valley billionaires pursuing industry dominance."

With operating losses of US\$2 billion (£1.6 billion) a year - more than any other start-up in history - Mr Horan argues there is no evidence that Uber's rapid growth is driving rapid margin improvements as achieved by other prominent tech start-ups as they grew into profitability.

"In fact," he adds, the "absolute magnitude of losses has been increasing."

According to limited financial information provided to investors for the year ending September 2015, Uber posted losses of US\$2b (\$2.82b) on revenue of US\$1.4b (\$1.97b), a negative 143 per cent profit margin.

He ends by making a statement of logic: "Thus Uber's current operations depend on \$2 billion in subsidies, funded out of the \$18.31b in cash its investors have provided."

Mr Horan's view may not help taxi businesses such as **Dial-a-Cab** and **ComCab**, but it helps us to understand exactly what we are up against...



THE HON. PRESIDENT, HON. CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE OF

**THE LONDON TAXIDRIVERS' FUND  
FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN**

*Would Like To Wish You All*

**A Very Happy New Year**



**WITH GRATEFUL THANKS TO ALL OUR  
DRIVERS, SPONSORS, HELPERS AND SUPPORTERS**

*"None walks so Tall as he who Stoops to help a Child"*

[www.ltfuc.org.uk](http://www.ltfuc.org.uk)

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

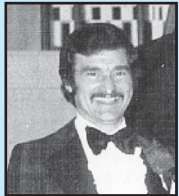
# DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

Flashback  
1967

This month's Flashback goes back 1967. Phil Emden was an ODRTS 'News and Views' magazine editor as well as being a Board Member. This was his first day on radio...

From the May 1967 ODRTS Monthly

## A day in the life of a 1967 new radio driver



**H**aving recently fitted my cab with ODRTS radio, I was keen to get out and press that button. My finger was hovering on that first day. "First call **Cavendish Square**," came a faceless voice on the radio. I pushed the button and called out **Charlie 84**. The voice asked where I

was but I was a bit quick for 100 yards away on first call... being at **Pont Street**! I didn't get the job but was told that it happens to all us finger happy new recruits – but to watch out in future!

It was later that day. I curtailed my long breakfast and visit to the throne room where I usually read the sports page, so that I could learn to master the radio. But the front page made me sit up. It said that a VIP scientist was missing, believed to have been smuggled out of the country. Cor! What with the brain drain, now scientists, the only citizens left soon would be cab drivers! Enough deep thinking, it hurts! Besides, the remaining public were waiting.

Trade was pretty brisk thanks to my new toy. Sure enough, while driving along **Bayswater Road** the radio called an embassy in **Kensington Gardens**. I accepted the job and waited outside. After about five minutes, an eastern European looking chap appeared. He could have been **Frankenstein's** father with his deadpan face, glassy eyes and slow determined walk. He opened the passenger door and without a word proceeded to measure the inside of the cab. He then grunted and left. Another similar looking chap then confronted me and speaking in broken English, said he wanted to take a box to **Surrey Commercial Docks**. He said I would "get paid good!" I nodded and he vanished back inside the embassy.

I started to read the paper when out of the corner of my eye I saw four husky men hauling a very large wooden box towards my cab. It was secured by metal strips and had small holes bored all round it. The men gingerly placed the box inside the cab - it fitted perfectly. As I put my paper down, the headlines about the missing scientist hit me again. I got out of the cab and tried to inspect the box as my suspicions were now aroused, but I was gently eased away. I insisted on looking at the box on the pretext that it may damage the upholstery. I decided the holes in the box must have been air-holes.

The journey to **Surrey Docks** gave me time to come to a decision. Was there a boffin in the box? Was this diplomatic baggage? I casually glanced over my shoulder, but the partition was firmly slammed. I couldn't understand the lingo anyway so why close the window? They had something to hide and that confirmed my suspicions, so I contacted the radio room with an emergency call.

The dispatcher said: "Come in emergency cab." I opened my mouth but nothing came out. The perspiration was slowly dripping down my back and I felt the beady eyes of the foreigners piercing my back. The dispatcher again asked for the emergency cab to come in and I quickly blurted out my story. There was an ominous silence at the other end. Then there was a "Roger, Roger Charlie 84." I wondered all the way to the docks whether I had been overheard. I glanced back but the men were engrossed in conversation.

As I entered the docks, I expected to find the place

swarming with MI5 and police but it was quieter than Bournemouth in November. I asked where the ship was berthed and given explicit instructions from one of my passengers. He certainly knew his way around the docks - he obviously smuggled VIPs all the time! I felt scared. Wild schemes were running through my mind. Had they intercepted my call, after all they do have the latest electronic equipment on these jobs. Would I see James Bond! What was I thinking, but where were those blasted cops? Bet if I'd been speeding or parking... I told myself to keep calm, not to lose my head! I was talking to myself now!

"Turn left in here and stop," a foreign voice jarred my thoughts.

There across my path was an overgrown rowing boat about the size of the **Queen Mary**. I braked sharply, I had to as I was driving straight for that hunk of metal. Suddenly the whole dock came to life. Hooray for the boys in blue, they were everywhere; on top of hangars, around corners and behind boats. Before I even had time to switch off, four plain clothes men rushed over to my cab. The passengers were flabbergasted. One of the officers asked me to leave the cab while he spoke to my "fare." I stood back, grinning all over my face. I felt very pleased with myself. I could see headlines now: 'London Cabman intercepts scientist smugglers' - perhaps I would get an OBE, or was it an MBE? I've already got B.O.

I could see the embassy officials gesticulating wildly at MI5. Try and talk your way out of that, I thought to myself. The box was then removed from my cab, the strips cut off and the lid prised open. This was it, I thought. As the MI5 men looked into the box, their eyes bulged; they stared at the men and then beckoned me over. I swaggered confidently over to the scene of the crime and there to my amazement, lying comfortably and sound asleep was unmistakably... a greyhound! I just couldn't believe it. They had done a **Houdini** on me. The couriers explained: "We have no animal as good as yours, so we take home to improve standard of racing."

What a boob! I'll draw a veil over the next hour but have never been to a greyhound meeting since

Phil Emden (C84)

**Driver required for  
non-radio TX4  
Monday to Friday  
Changeover Warwick  
Ave or Victoria  
£140 per week  
Full back up  
Tel Dave 07876 728 792**



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

# Brethren of the Whip



## Seasonal Drinks

Until the arrival of the motor cab, a cabman having a drink at work was considered part of the job. As long as the driver was not "decidedly drunk" or caused an accident, such instances were

generally ignored - even though frowned upon by police and magistrates alike. The Christmas and New Year period was usually an exceptionally busy time and magistrates often remarked on the large number of cabmen before them at such times.

But how do you prove a driver was drunk? In many cases the word of the policeman was enough if he claimed that "the cab was going from one side of the road to the other" or that he saw the driver "nearly falling from his seat!" These were common enough claims that saw many a cabman fined. From around the 1850s, drivers could pay 7s 6d (38p) to have an inspection by a doctor but even if found to be sober, the driver was not always reimbursed the fee.

So how *did* doctors decide if the man before them was sober? In 1878, James Brooks was asked to stick out his tongue. The doctor looked at it and declared Brooks to be drunk!

"I couldn't have been drunk," Brooks declared. "I remember everything. I even interpreted for a foreign gentleman." The magistrate asked the arresting officer if this was true. The officer said it wasn't and all he had done was to say to the gentleman: "Parlez-vous, Francais" repeatedly! It made the magistrate laugh and Brooks walked out of court a free man.

Charles Fairclough was made to feel his own pulse - a test the arresting officer himself witnessed. Fairclough too was released without charge and the magistrate rebuked the police for employing such an incompetent doctor.

In 1882, Henry Wickstead was accused of being "...undoubtedly drunk, very drunk" by a police inspector. "How can you say such a thing?" exclaimed Wickstead. "Why," he continued, "I even considered that the constable acted so improperly when he interfered with me, that I asked him to lend me a pencil in order that I might take his number. Could a drunken man do that?" There was a roar of laughter in the court as Wickstead continued. "There is the number as I took it down. Is that like a drunken man's writing? The magistrate, Sir Robert Carden, looked at Wickstead's licence and saw that he had been fined for being drunk just two weeks previously.

"Ah, that was the fog" replied Wickstead, "I was not drunk at all, but the fog got down my throat and made me stupid." Carden did wonder if Wickstead was a fit and proper person to

drive a cab, but gave him the benefit of the doubt. Carden was one of the few magistrates who had a genuine liking for cabmen. Wickstead was fined 10 shillings (50p) or seven days. Unfortunately, he could not pay the fine so he was locked up for the week.

Some doctors were known to ask prisoners to say 'now Constantinople' several times without error to show they were sober. In 1900, an un-named cabman was examined with a magnifying glass!

"Couldn't the doctor see the driver without one," enquired the magistrate? The arresting officer explained that the glass was used to examine the driver's eyes. Such scientific endeavours saw the driver fined 10s. The *Daily News* thought the use of a magnifying glass was "...about as bad as Constantinople! A man whose drunkenness could only be discerned microscopically could not have erred very deeply in his cups and might even be justified in driving a cab."

An elderly cabman was arrested for being drunk on the night of Christmas Eve 1895. He denied the charge. An independent doctor verified that the driver successfully repeated 'the artillery extinguished the conflagration early', which a drunk man could not have done. The charges were dropped but the driver faced a bill of 18s 6d (93p) for calling out two doctors at such an unsocial time!

Alfred Fitter denied being drunk; he had spelt the word 'Belvidere' (sic) at the station and offered to write his name and address, according to the court reporter. Fitter lived in Belvedere Buildings, Webber Street and the reporter may himself have been drunk. There was conflicting evidence and Magistrate Selfe had misgivings about the policeman's version of events, but it was enough for the charges against Fitter to be dismissed.

Benjamin Pearce was active in trade politics and a member of a delegation that met with the Home Secretary regarding trade grievances. He was an advocate of having Sunday as a rest day and was a total abstainer. So it probably came as a surprise that he was arrested for being drunk. He denied the charge, his passengers said he had not had a drink, the police surgeon said Pearce was completely sober and even the desk sergeant refused to accept the charge. Pearce was released without any stain on his character. However, less could be said for the arresting officer. He had to pay Pearce £5 for wrongful arrest, payable at £1 a month - a sizeable chunk of a PC's wages back in 1879.

*A very happy New Year to all...*

**Sean Farrell**  
Call Sign Online

## THE SALIERI RESTAURANT

376 Strand, WC2

We Invite Dial-a-Cab drivers and their guests to our restaurant where you can partake of the finest food and wine

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

*We are certain that you will be delighted*



Please bring along your badge or Bill as ID

Salieri Restaurant  
376 Strand, WC2

Reservations: 020 7836 1318

## GORDON POLUCK 1940 - 2017

**Call Sign** was very sad to hear of the passing of former Board member and long-time **Dial-a-Cab** subscriber **Gordon Poluck (ex-R34)**. Gordon had been in a home for a number of years and until recently still insisted on getting his copy of **Call Sign**. But his memory, which he told us back in 2004 was deteriorating rapidly, finally went.

In **February 2004**, some time after being diagnosed with the onset of dementia and advised medically to give up his green badge, Gordon suddenly turned up at **Brunswick House** and caused a few men at Dial-a-Cab to swallow when they saw him. One told this magazine at the time:

"It was a very emotional experience and even Gordon, who was usually the most jovial of toastmasters, had to wipe away the odd tear himself!"

Gordon's "other job" was that of a toastmaster and several months before his appearance at DaC, he kept a promise to **Alan** and **Linda Fisher** when Linda's son **Marc** got married and Gordon did the job as toastmaster. It was his last one.

When **Call Sign** spoke to Gordon again – several weeks later – he had returned to somewhere approaching his old self with the occasional awful joke and 1001 stories. But as Gordon admitted, that was masking the symptoms that caused him to prematurely retire. But even the odd period of forgetfulness wouldn't stop Gordon talking about his connections to the London taxi trade. Father **Elmo** and brother **Russell** are testimony to how deep that connection goes. He also visited Chairman **Brian Rice**, who told us:

**"We spoke in my office for well over two hours and covered every subject you could think of. He also looked and sounded exactly as you would have expected him to. It is a very sad day..."**

Before his illness, Gordon shocked everyone when he disclosed that he had decided to throw his hat into the ring and oppose sitting Mayor **Ken Livingstone** at the 2004 London Mayoral election! He became an official candidate before the cost caused him to pull out. He had previously been a councillor for the borough of **Croydon**.

In 2004 and after pulling out of the Mayoral race, Gordon again phoned us and showed how astute he was when he said:

"I haven't really changed my views on anything since I first announced in May that I wanted to stand as Mayor. I am very concerned that Congestion Charging is destroying London. West End stores are losing money because people are not prepared to pay a fiver and then get ripped off by horrendous car park charges. Even if public transport was brilliant – and just filling the streets with hundreds of empty buses doesn't make it that – not everyone wants to use it. That results in fewer people in town, which will eventually filter back to us and affect the taxi business. It may be busy in the run-up to Christmas, but we can't survive on Christmas alone. People are London's life blood and my main priority would have been to get people back into the capital. But the final cost has given me no chance."

**Chairman Brian Rice represented Dial-a-Cab at Gordon's funeral.**

Our sympathies go to his wife Shirley, daughters Rochelle and Melanie, brother Russell, sister Sharon and all his family...



**"I view life a lot differently now," Stephen Field (F99J) told Call Sign when referring to a collision he suffered at the hands of another driver who was on his mobile phone at the time instead of concentrating on the road ahead.**

"As the song goes, you just pick yourself up, dust yourself down and start all over again. Life's too precious to just sit around and mope! I certainly view life much differently now."

**Stephen told us about the accident...**

"It was 17.15 on Monday, March 14th 2016; I was on the **A13** at the **Beckton Flyover** and heading homewards. The traffic at that time of the day is always slow and I was almost stationary, but suddenly there was an almighty bang into the rear of my **Vito** taxi, throwing me forward in my seat against my seatbelt, with the impact jolting my head sideways and downwards into my shoulder. I think it also hit the driver's door even though I don't actually recall that happening. However, it would explain what happened to me the following day.

"Naturally, with such a heavy force, I was very shaken up - and my cab didn't look too good either having been rammed in the rear at speed by a **Ford Transit** van while the driver was busy talking on his mobile!

"As a result of the RTC, the following day I started to experience double vision, my optic

## Pick Yourself Up...



nerves having been jarred by the impact while the rest of my body was restrained by the seatbelt and that's why it is thought that my head may have struck something hard, possibly the door as I mentioned. Either way, it clearly meant I couldn't work because there was no way I could possibly drive safely – and for a licensed taxi driver, that, of course, is the absolute priority above all else."

"When it became obvious that I was not going to be able to work for an extended period of time, I lost my cab because I had to sell it, thankfully recovering the money I still

owed on the balance of the repayments, so that was one headache resolved. Over the next six months I became a hospital tourist, making regular visits to **Queens Hospital in Romford**, **Moorfields Eye Hospital**, **The Whittington in Highgate** and also **St Thomas's at Lambeth**. Having undergone numerous scans and various tests on my eyes and head and the offer of medication which I steadfastly refused, here I am, six months later with a return of my eyesight to 20/20 vision and looking forward to starting anew, getting back to work on the cab full time. Naturally I'm grateful my eyesight has returned of its own accord, healing itself after such a long recovery period, but it has given me another outlook on just how precious life itself really is.

"So my humble advice to the younger generation is that when you are struck by adversity, think positively, because there is nothing more important or fragile than life itself. So just pick yourself up, dust yourself down... and start all over again!"

With that, Stephen left us to go to work... humming the tune as he went!"

**Alan Green**  
**Call Sign Online**



**W**hen one of *Call Sign's* eagle-eyed readers saw Donald Dacas' (P76) cab being towed by an AA recovery van, word soon got back to our nerve-centre that all was not well in the Dacas camp!

"Yep, trouble again," Don confirmed. "I was turning left into **Cardington Street** on my way to **Euston Station** when the steering suddenly became very heavy and smoke began pouring out from under the bonnet. Something was obviously wrong, so instinctively I reached down to the ignition switch to turn off the engine as quickly as I could. When the smoke cleared, I could see the fan belt was frayed from where it had obviously been rubbing against something and I knew I wasn't going to do much more work that day!"

Donald was towed to his regular garage at **Downs Park Motors**; they diagnosed seized bearings in the alternator and it was the engine running and the alternator unable to turn that caused the fan belt to fray as it was forced over the stationary alternator pulley,

# Quick Reactions



**Donald's quick reactions saved him from even more costly repairs**

because it was being tugged by the still running engine. The force of the engine pulling the fan belt against the seizure of the alternator then caused the alternator drive pulley to buckle, which added to the **Dial-a-Cab** driver's grief. The smoke and burning smell was the fan belt being torn to shreds.

"The garage said that my quick reactions saved further damage being caused, not to mention the possibility of a fire starting as the fan belt got hot from the friction of being pulled over an immovable object, the alternator pulley and the force of the still-running engine!"

"I had to have another alternator, pulley and of course a replacement fan belt, so that's more expense when the work is not exactly busy," Don told with a sort of resignation in his voice.

"The cab drives nicely when it's running, but there are times I wish I had my old TX1 back. That cab was so reliable, whereas this TX4 has cost me around £3000 this year alone," Donald moaned.

"It's not only the cost of regular servicing, but when you're faced with repairs, especially unexpected ones such as this one, it gets really expensive when you factor in the cost of the parts, fixing the repair and the time off the road to effect the repairs; it all mounts up and gets kind of costly..."

Then Don drove away on the long journey to recoup some of his day's expenses...

**Ron Yarborough**  
**Call Sign Online**

## Chas and the giraffe!

**W**hen you have been driving on the streets of London for decades, you build up a fund of stories and experiences and Chas Levy (R61) is no exception. Chas recalled one to *Call Sign* that stayed in his memory.

"I remember some years ago doing a two-cab job where I took the passengers, while the second driver transported a stuffed toy giraffe in his cab, the type of huge toy that children can actually sit on.

It was quite late in the evening and the sky was darkening as we both got on the road. The first driver moved smartly away from the kerbside; I followed, driving the passengers as smoothly as I could while trying to keep up with him. With no need to worry about throwing his passengers around, the lead cab kept up a lively turn of speed. However, the toy animal wasn't secured inside his cab and so as he turned round corners, I could see the giraffe roll from side to side within the cab, giving the impression it was a live animal trying to get out!"

Chas giggled as the scene returned to his memory...

"Anyway, we got to our destination and I helped him remove the toy from his cab; I remarked how real it had looked moving around inside his cab and how pedestrians had given him strange looks as he passed by them on the road, but then thought no more of it. Between us we then heaved the stuffed toy onto the kerbside.

It was only the following morning when my co-driver called me and said the police had phoned him some minutes earlier, responding to reports they had received from pedestrians seeing the two cabs passing. They asked the first driver where he got the giraffe from and were obviously concerned that it might have been stolen from a zoo - even though they admitted that no reports of a missing giraffe had been reported to them. Perhaps that should have been a clue!

The driver gave the police all the trip details of our two cab journey and the matter was quickly wrapped up, with the police officer and the driver having a good laugh! But the thought of it still makes me smile and you have to wonder about people believing that a giraffe could actually fit into a cab!"

**Alan Green**  
**Call Sign Online**



**Chas struggled to keep up with the first cab**

*Immaculate White  
Cab Available for  
Weddings*



**Female driver**  
**10% reduction for Dial-a-Cab drivers**  
**Contact Debbie (W18) on**  
**07956 317040**

Another true story from Geoff Levene...

## Holiday time...Whether you want it or not!

It's that time of the year again. No, I don't mean the final of 'Strictly' or 'X Factor'. It is – or was until a few days ago - **CRIIIISSMAAAS!**

It was around this time last year that I picked up a genial looking old chap who asked for **Euston**. He wore a tweed jacket, cord trousers and had a shock of grey hair. He reminded me of the Professor in **Back to the Future!** When I turned around to give him his receipt, I realised who it was - **Sir Nodrington 'Noddy' Holder**. I was thrilled. I'll always be a **Slade** fan. Not so keen on 'that song' but it's been good for him. I've heard the figure of £500,000 a year going into his stocking thanks to **Merry Xmas Everybody!**

So it's peace and goodwill to all men. Help the poor? I give a few bob. Take in the homeless? Well, I'm afraid there's no room at the Inn. Just like those celebs and politicians who were going to throw their doors open to refugees, but strangely enough palpably failed to do so.

I don't know if it was the festive season when a certain merchant banker went above and beyond the call of duty. He, his wife and two children lived in a big house in the somewhat *edgy* area of Kennington. This was handy for the City and for his other career - Member of Parliament. I don't suppose it's relevant that despite his company having a **Dial-a-Cab** account, it was a minicab that waited outside to take him to the Airport at four-thirty in the morning when two lads strolled up...

"Take us to Peckham, mate," they asked the driver.

"Sorry, I'm waiting for someone here." They looked at the big, expensive house.

"Do you think they'd let us use the toilet?"

"You'll have to ask," replied the driver.

So they did and guess what; the merchant banker MP and future special adviser to **David Cameron** lets them in, showed them upstairs and waited while they... grabbed everything they could, bid him good-night and made their getaway! Mr MP made a bad decision - albeit one that nobody in their right mind would have made. I wondered what other brilliant ideas he came up with while working at Number 10. Merchant banker indeed!

So anyway, the shops were stuffed full of goodies. **Oxford Street**, both **Westfields**, **Brent Cross** and **Lakeside** all wanted our money. It was presents, presents and more presents all the way. I have to admit I'm not terribly good at that kind of thing. It was easy when the boys were young. You could fill the house with parcels and know that there'd be something that would amuse them until **Boxing Day**. But it's much harder with adults. And what makes it even harder for the



good lady wife is that my birthday is just a week before Xmas day. I've told her she doesn't need to get me ten things anymore. Shirt, jumper, book, CD, aftershave and then more seven days later. It's too much and it's difficult to keep on surprising each other, so we say what we'd like and nobody is disappointed! It's often something shiny and smelly or maybe opera tickets. I've just put myself on offer for next year!

One thing I think she'd like is a bit of **Whitefriars** glass. This would entail a trip round antique markets, bric-a-brac shops or boot sales. But the problem these days is the proliferation of antique programmes like **Antiques Roadshow**, **Flog it** and **Cash in the Attic**. Time was you could walk down the High Street in and out of the charity shops and come out with a couple of **Rembrandts**, a signed copy of **Oliver Twist** and

some **Battle of Waterloo** artefacts... and still have change from a tenner! Now everyone's an expert, so you've got no chance of picking up a bargain.

However, I did find a curio the other day. It was a CD called **The Saudi Arabian Top Ten**. It was fascinating. I stuck it straight in the cab's CD player and the best seven - in no particular order - were these:

1. Imam a believer... 2. Sheikin' all over... 3. Halal be there...
4. Omar he's makin' eyes at me... 5. Bagdaddy cool... 6. Yasser that's my baby... 7. Beirut 66...

*So let's forget about Christmas until next year but hope for a happy and prosperous New Year... whether you have a religion or not...*

**Geoff Levene (W32)**

**Call Sign Online**

## Lambeth Bridge: Roundabout Improvements

TfL and Westminster Council have announced planned improvements to road safety at **Lambeth Bridge** northern roundabout. The plans are designed to deliver road safety benefits in the short term while they investigate a longer-term solution for a more fundamental change to the layout of this junction. Construction will begin in January and include the extension of footways and traffic islands to reduce traffic speeds and provide more space for pedestrians, raising zebra crossings to the same level as the footway on all four junction arms in order to reduce traffic speeds and increase safety and providing narrower, better-defined lanes to discourage motorists from weaving between lanes on the roundabout.

TfL do not expect the finished scheme to affect road user journey times through the area but say that there will be some short-term disruption during construction.

### AVAILABLE FOR RENT CLOSE TO DISNEY IN FLORIDA



2 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 4/5



4 Bedroom 2 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 8/9



6 Bedroom 5 Bathroom Pool home sleeps 12



Pool and conservation view at 6 bedroom home.

**Three properties owned by UK Registered Charity Dial A Dream. Reg. 1011637**

Your opportunity to rent one of these villas and at the same time making it possible for this charity to continue its work with children from all over the UK all of whom are suffering from a life limiting illness. All villas within minutes of the main Disney theme parks, golf courses and restaurants.

We can offer car hire and theme park tickets for you and your family at very competitive rates.

So, if you are considering a Florida based holiday in the near future then call us and you may be helping us to give a very sick child the will to say "Let me live another day".

Prices from £56 per night through to £237 per night  
(Prices are for the villa and not per person.)

[www.dialadream.co.uk](http://www.dialadream.co.uk)



**Tel: 020 8530 5589**



**W**hen you've been driving a taxi for almost fifty years, you usually know a wide circle of fellow drivers and can sometimes influence their thinking. Such is the case with **Chas Levy (R61)**, who after some years with another radio circuit, returned to **Dial-a-Cab** several months ago and was so pleased with his decision that he told his friends... and they decided to move home too!

One of them was **Fred Denney (R63)** and his enthusiasm for DaC was palpable...

"I'm getting on very well, thank you! I've been driving a taxi since 1988 and Dial-a-Cab is a far more professionally run circuit than my previous company. The training I received here to operate the MDT was very thorough indeed, which meant that I could go out on the cab and work with confidence which, when you are working late into the night, means you can cope with the many situations that face you knowing that there is a friendly, helpful team ready to assist if you really do get stuck with a problem that you can't easily resolve from the cab.

"I was very disillusioned with the sale of my previous company to an App set-up, which I did not want to be a part of. So when Chas told me he had moved over to Dial-a-Cab, it didn't take me too long to follow!"

**Dean Pearson (F02)** was also encouraging about his move from the same north London circuit as Chas and Fred.

# MOVING HOME!



**Daren Morley trains all new drivers**

"I prefer the radio to street work and I've found DaC to be a really friendly bunch of people and far more professional than the circuit I left, with the emphasis being on the

driver / customer relationship - and that's how it should be. When the other company was sold to an App, I knew I had to 'Gett' out - so here I am!

"Also, here at DaC there appears to be a more sensible policy regarding Fixed Price trips ie with fair prices and that suits me fine. When I did have a problem with a DaC trip, it was sorted out quickly by the ladies in Driver Services with the minimum of fuss. That is just wonderful!"

DaC trainer **Daren Morley** is the man behind all new drivers learning the correct procedure in readiness to go out on the road...

**Michael Toomey**  
**Dial-a-Cab Online**

## Paddington rank Circa 1930s

**P**ADDINGTON STATION seems to have settled into some semblance of normality nowadays, although many drivers still probably remember the set down point as it was when taxis entered down the slope from Praed Street. Some may even remember the old entrance that led you straight down onto the platform where passengers could just get off the train and head straight for a waiting taxi. But we'd bet our last **Rolo** that no **Dial-a-Cab** driver remembers this overflow cab rank from the early 1930s! The photo is from **Graham Waite's (B35)** collection of old taxi memorabilia..



### HOME PC REPAIR

By **Essex PC Fix**

- Install new equipment, printers, etc.
- Upgrade / repair your current PC or laptop
- Virus / Spyware removal
- Wireless Networks set up and secured
- PC tuning (speeds up a slow PC)
- Advice given

Fast, Cheap, Friendly and Reliable service (over 25 Years Experience)

We can fix your PC at your home or collect & return the PC when it is fixed

Please see our website or contact us for list of services and costs

Contact - Paul Middleton  
Email - [info@essexpcfix.co.uk](mailto:info@essexpcfix.co.uk)  
Mobile - 07866 395 831  
Office - 01708 444480 (between 8AM and 8PM)  
Web - [www.essexpcfix.co.uk](http://www.essexpcfix.co.uk)

Area Covered - Hemechurch and 8 miles out - others by appointment



# Mailshot

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

## Change.org petition

*Hi Alan*

I received a petition to sign from Change.org asking me to support them by asking **Mayor Sadiq Khan** to cancel plans to make minicab drivers take an English language test. Written by the daughter of a PH driver who has been doing the job for 10 years, she says it would be unfair for him to lose his job. Yet isn't the fact that his daughter thinks he may fail after 10 years the whole reason why they are doing the test! Dah!

**Gordon Bennett (Y91)**

**Quite right Gordon! If they speak good English then they will have no problem passing the exam. If they don't, then they shouldn't be driving a minicab... Ed**

## Gearbox problems...

*Hi Alan*

Just wanted to tell you about my taxi gearbox/transmission issues and the cheap solution I found to it. I had been having lots of issues with reversing my taxi for the past two years, especially when the gearbox was cold. Anyway, I was getting fed up with pushing the taxi out of parking spaces etc so I visited a few taxi transmission specialists who told me that the seals were probably going in the transmission/gearbox and that I would need to spend £800+ to have the necessary repairs done. So I thought I'd struggle along for a while but then spoke to a **Dial-a-Cab** driver who recommended I visit a taxi transmission specialist in **Stratford** who might be more reasonable when carrying out repairs. So I visited **Allard Transmission Services** and he recommended the change of a valve and a service. Whilst he was carrying out the service on my taxi, he noticed that the 'overdrive' cable had been left undone and he plugged it back in. I was charged just £60 for the valve replacement and service. This morning, I reversed my taxi from stone cold with no issues at all!

So I'd like to recommend Allard Transmission Services to any driver that might be having gearbox/transmission issues. They are at 9 Thornham Grove, Stratford and the phone number is 0208 534 8268.

**Karen Menpes (E01)**

**Thanks Karen, Call Sign is always happy to publicise good service... Ed**

## Gas conversions

*Hi Alan*

Has there been any feedback from the company that brought the converted gas cabs down to Dial-a-Cab for drivers to take out on test drives? It was mentioned that they were looking to present the cab to TfL sometime in October for approval and if approved, I would consider buying one subject to checks with other users. Look forward to hearing from you.

**Ian Macdonald (C64)**

**Hi Ian, you are just one of many drivers enquiring. The cabs are successfully being tested in Birmingham but London seems to be taking an age to catch up. The company, Autogas, is in the final stages of the process before the final durability test begins. The approval process up until now has taken a little longer than they expected with the result that they had to make some small amends and additions to the build manual and then had to have an independent engineering inspection carried out and a report produced. There was also an IVA (Individual Vehicle Approval) inspection to be carried out along with another one by TfL. Following this, the vehicle will then require emission testing and then they can commence the 10,000 mile durability test. As the above info is a few weeks old, I must assume that they have progressed close to the stage when they begin - if they haven't already - the durability test. As soon as I get any update, it will be published... Ed**

## So you use Uber?

This was a fellow cab drivers response to a typical **Uber** fan. I'm actually thinking about setting this company up because it's brilliant! My friend picked up a lawyer recently from a well-known law firm. The female lawyer was raving about Uber and how cheap they were. The driver told her he was in talks with a mate who was a whizz at IT and who developed apps. He was looking at starting up something similar to Uber - but this one was for solicitors and how it would enable the public to get a solicitor for £50 per hour, of which 10% would be paid to his company as a commission. He went on to tell her that he and his friend would be rich in a year as there were lots of people that needed solicitors but who couldn't afford to pay several hundred pounds per hour. The solicitor was becoming quite irate by then and said that the driver would never get a trained solicitor to work for £45 per hour after commission was taken off.

My pal jumped straight back in: "Who said anything about trained ones? I will use any-

one that wants to offer legal advice!"

"You can't do that," she said, "you'll never be allowed to operate without qualified people!"

My friend again jumped in with the knockout punch: "According to you, that business model works with Uber cars, so why can't I use it for solicitors!!!" She never said another word!

**Alec Wilkey (W83)**

**Great story, Alex, I suppose that if anyone knows about a knockout punch it would be DaC's Alec Wilkey, one of professional boxing's premier trainers... Ed**

## Gratuities

*Dear Alan*

Just read the *December Call Sign* mag and read that **Alan Nash (A95)** was happy with the VAD system. He also pointed out that tips are non-existent on credit card work. I can totally agree with that and would personally put it at around just 5 percent of card jobs that you receive a tip. Recently I have been driving a cab fitted with another CC facility. Because this particular machine offers customers the chance to tip, I've found that over 80 percent of customers tip, generally the 10% option. I estimate the loss to each **Dial-a-Cab** driver could be over £1000 a year. I would like to ask our IT department to change the PEDs so that they offer customers this option. After all I keep reading they are the best.

**Barry Spear (Y16)**

**The next software update will include a gratuity box. Unfortunately, because of a Barclaycard cock-up, DaC IT had to sort out that problem first, hence last month's recall of the fleet which had to take priority. Then came the sad but still time-consuming fitting of card readers into the rear of cabs following TfL's decision that showed they could not care less what we think... Ed**

## Saturday payments

*Hi Al*

Could you please ask the new directors at DaC if they could move the cut-off date from Friday night to Sunday night to save waiting 9 days for Saturday card payments, as many of our rival card machine suppliers offer next day or 3 day payments.

**Jon Robinson (E88)**

**I did ask DaC's financial side for you Jon, but they seemed to think I was rather barmy and said that on weekly payments you can only get one Saturday, but that if the Government brings out weeks with two Saturdays in, then they will relook at the situation!... Ed**





# Mailshot



## Pollution, pizzas and drink-driving...

Take a look at the cycle lanes and the pollution they are causing; take a look at the Uber drivers' accident record; take a look at the cable car across the Thames and the instruction that if someone in a police vehicle is in pursuit of a motorcycle and the rider takes his helmet off, the pursuit must be called off - and don't put that one at the door of the Met police. And nobody should be allowed to deliver pizzas on a motorcycle of any size without a full licence - but that won't happen because TfL do not pick up the medical cost! Besides, most senior staff at TfL get free BUPA so they don't need to stand in line with mere peasants to be seen at the hospital!

Christmas may now have passed by once again, but nevertheless, anyone found drink-driving should be banned for seven years first time. TfL stands for Totally Failing London and you may ask what that has to do with drunk drivers? Simply, TfL don't have the money to pay for a 'Don't drink and drive' campaign, the reason being that it's all going to the few at the expense of the many.

I'll close with a thought; tomorrow, a police officer will knock on a family's door and have to tell them their son or daughter is dead, killed, they suspect, by a drunk driver. Spare a thought for that officer who then has to go home to face his own children.

Gary Cox (O46)

Not much I can add, Gary... Ed

## Uber in Brighton

Transport for London has it seems embarked on a course to decimate a highly regulated and globally admired industry... the black cab. Uber have been allowed to come on stream, greatly undercutting, and parachuting in with little regulation, just a licence fee and CRB check / refugee status character reference. Current estimates are over 80,000 private hire vehicles in London, nearly half of which are Uber. Is this decimation of the black cab currently taking place by TfL a pragmatic attempt to punish the black cab in favour of the Uber legions, recruited almost exclusively from the poor, to make the rich richer in the new gig economy sweeping the country. Interestingly Uber have not been successful in every UK city! Brighton - London on sea - being a prime example. Brighton council has insisted that any Uber driver must meet the exact same regulations that every private hire and Hackney driver has - the blue

book of regulations, which includes a topographical knowledge test. Will Uber in London stay as cheap as chips? That is highly unlikely once the opposition has been conquered. No doubt many will lament for the black cab, but it will then sadly be too late as yet another home grown iconic industry slowly dies and bites the dust. Game over... job done.

David Heath (Ex-W27)

Ex-Brighton and now Gloucester

David, who gave you the figure of 80,000 PH vehicles in London? The last I heard it was 117,000. And if you are right that TfL are trying to get rid of us, I very much doubt that if Uber becomes the only player in town that they will entertain TfL. They won't be as accommodating as we have been and simply won't need or put up with them. What was it that Ral Donner once sang - you don't know what you've got until you lose it.... Ed

## The DaC Tontine Investment Scheme!

Dear Alan,

About 50 years ago I saw the comedy film *The*

*Wrong Box* with Peter Sellers, Michael Caine, Peter Cook, Dudley Moore and R a l p h Richardson. It was the story about a tontine investment scheme. This is a project where members contribute into an endowment and the accumulated fund pays out to the last surviving member. The comedy was based on ways in which family members tried to keep their relatives alive so that they would get some inheritance, while at the same time tried to hasten the death of other potential beneficiaries.

This came to mind recently when I was discussing the proposed future of Dial-a-Cab with

another driver. We thought that after demutualisation and formation of the new company, separation into property and trading divisions, completion of surveys and valuations followed by instructing property agents, advertising and search for prospective purchasers of the building, taking further legal and financial advice, there would by this time be a noticeable reduction in the number of drivers eligible to share in the proceeds! Thus, the few surviving drivers would get a larger pay-out once older and sick drivers had been transported to the COS (Carriage Office in the Sky) while others went off to Carey Street! If, say, just 25 drivers survive this lengthy process, I wonder what the forecast distribution would be to each surviving shareholder.

Best to you and all drivers for the New Year...

Laurence Kelvin (W88)

Sounds rather drawn out Laurence; how about a series of duels with the winner taking all! I should tell you though that if a shareholder passes away, his/her shares go to next of kin!

A Happy New Year to you and everyone at DaC... Ed

## BOXING FITNESS CLASSES



### Get Fit to Fight or Fighting Fit!!

EVERY SATURDAY AT WEST THURROCK BOXING & FITNESS GYMNASIUM

From 10.15-12.15 – £10 per pupil

Minimum age of 16

Kids Class: 12.30-1.30pm from age 8yrs to 15yrs

£5.00 per pupil

Suitable for all skill levels, from beginners to accomplished boxers

Female ONLY classes subject to demand



Sports Pavilion  
West Thurrock Memorial Ground  
London Road  
Grays  
RM20 3BT

For more information contact  
Gary on 07811 965176 or  
gb.1959@hotmail.co.uk



## Why Have Your Taxi Serviced with Ascotts?

- ☒ We carry out manufacturer warranty repairs
- ☒ We use the latest diagnostic and test equipment
- ☒ LTC trained technicians
- ☒ Full access to manufacturer technical assistance and data
- ☒ We use genuine parts designed to your taxis exact standards.

**PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT  
AND RESALE VALUE  
OF YOUR TAXI**

*"putting the driver first"*

[www.ascottcab.co.uk](http://www.ascottcab.co.uk)



**MOT &  
NSL PRE TEST**

**£39.95**

### Every 10.000 Miles

10K,20K,30K,50K,60K,90K & 100K

**£99** INC vat

40K,80K **£225** INC vat

70K **£450** INC vat  
ALL PRICES INCLUDE vat & ALL FILTERS

### Every 12.000 Miles

12K,24K,48K,60K,96K

**£99** INC vat

36K,72K,108K  
**£225** INC vat

84K **£450** INC vat  
ALL PRICES INCLUDE vat & ALL FILTERS

LTC genuine  
Tx4 Front Pads

**£50.00**

Fitted inc VAT

*"less downtime at ascott's"*



Service  
Dealer



Specialised  
Oil Products

**ASCOTT**  
CAB COMPANY

1-3 Blackhorse Rd, London SE8 5HY

**0208 692 1122**

**Now in Stock**



The Only Taximeter that Has full MID approval  
ready for the changes in 2016

*Is your current Taximeter ready?*