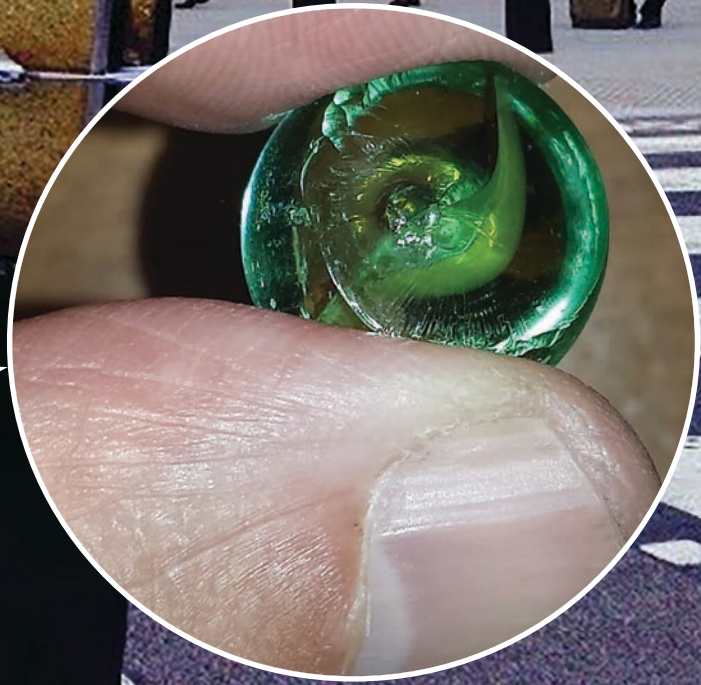
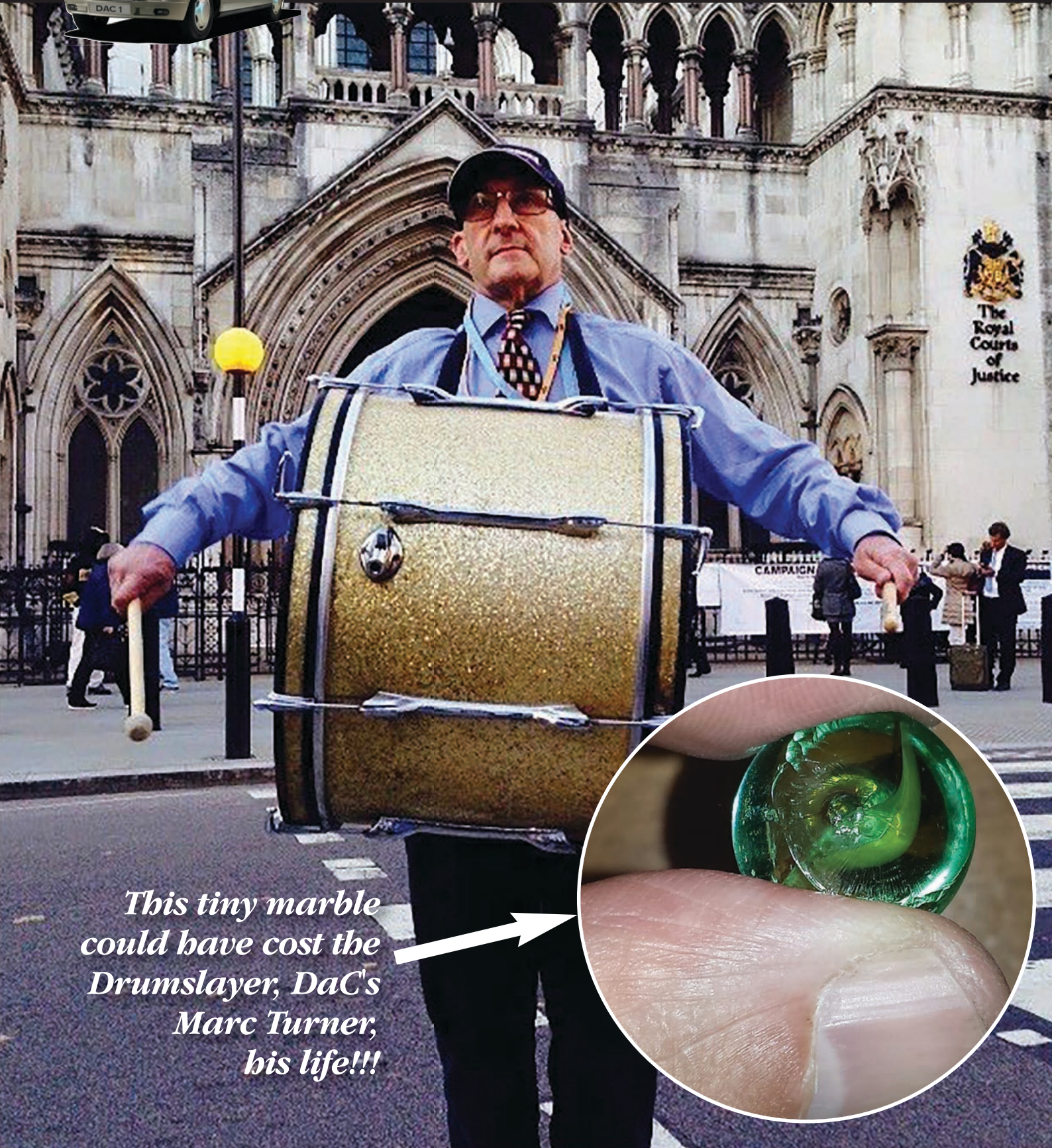


October 2016

Call Sign



The largest online readership of any Taxi magazine



This tiny marble could have cost the Drumslayer, DaC's Marc Turner, his life!!!



NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

'What's On' with burst times is proving very popular, so it's here again listing all events where I've found the 'burst' times. There's only room for some of the 'finish' times plus all major 'O2' events. At least another 160 events plus those below in large print and with the day of the week can be printed off at: www.myfav.co.uk/wooct16.pdf

What's On: October 2016

Venue	Event	Date	Venue	Event	Date
Brentford	v Wigan (Burst 16:45)	01/10/2016	Royal Opera House	Norma (Burst 15:10)	08/10/2016
Charlton	v Rochdale (Burst 16:45)	01/10/2016	O2 Arena	Fifth Harmony	10/10/2016
O2 Arena	Andrea Bocelli	01/10/2016	Royal Opera House	La Fille mal gardée (Burst 21:45)	10/10/2016
Olympia Central	Family Travel (finish 17:00)	01/10/2016	O2 Arena	Justin Bieber	11/10/2016
Olympia Conf.Cntr.	Her Event (finish 18:00)	01/10/2016	Royal Opera House	Il barbiere di Siviglia (Burst 22:15)	11/10/2016
Royal Opera House	Il barbiere di Siv. (Burst 15:30)	01/10/2016	O2 Arena	Justin Bieber	12/10/2016
Royal Opera House	Norma (Burst 22:40)	01/10/2016	Royal Opera House	Così fan tutte (Burst 22:15)	12/10/2016
W.H.Utd	v Middlesbough (Burst 16:45)	01/10/2016	Royal Opera House	La Fille mal gardée (Burst 21:45)	13/10/2016
Olympia Central	Family Travel (finish 16:00)	02/10/2016	Fulham	v QPR (burst 14:30)	14/10/2016
Olypia Grand	Olympia Beauty (finish 18:00)	02/10/2016	O2 Arena	Justin Bieber	14/10/2016
Tottenham	v Man.City (Burst 16:00)	02/10/2016	Royal Opera House	Così fan tutte (Burst 22:15)	14/10/2016
ExCel	European Micro. (finish 19:00)	03/10/2016	Arsenal	v Swansea City (Burst 16:45)	15/10/2016
Olympia Central	Hospitality Show (finish 18:00)	03/10/2016	Charlton	v Coventry (burst 16:45)	15/10/2016
Olympia National	Restaurant Show (finish 18:00)	03/10/2016	Chelsea	v Leicester C (Burst 14:15)	15/10/2016
Olympia West	Bar & Pub (finish 17:00)	03/10/2016	Crystal Pal.	v West Ham Utd (Burst 19:15)	15/10/2016
Olypia Grand	Olympia Beauty (finish 17:00)	03/10/2016	Leyton Orient	v Luton (Burst 16:45)	15/10/2016
Royal Opera House	Così fan tutte (Burst 22:15)	03/10/2016	O2 Arena	Justin Bieber	15/10/2016
Charlton	v Crawley (burst 21:30)	04/10/2016	Q.P.R.	v Reading (Burst 16:45)	15/10/2016
ExCel	European Micro. (finish 17:30)	04/10/2016	Royal Opera House	La Fille mal gard. (Burst 16:15)	15/10/2016
Millwall	v Gillingham (Burst 21:30)	04/10/2016	Royal Opera House	La Fille mal gard. (Burst 21:45)	15/10/2016
Olympia Central	Hospitality Show (finish 17:00)	04/10/2016	Royal Opera House	Così fan tutte (Burst 22:15)	17/10/2016
Olympia National	Restaurant Show (finish 17:00)	04/10/2016	Fulham	v Norwich (Burst 21:30)	18/10/2016
Olympia West	Bar & Pub (finish 17:00)	04/10/2016	Millwall	v Bolton (Burst 21:30)	18/10/2016
Royal Opera House	Norma (Burst 22:25)	04/10/2016	Q.P.R.	v Bristol City (Burst 21:30)	18/10/2016
ExCel	European Micro. (finish 17:30)	05/10/2016	Royal Opera House	La Fille mal gard. (Burst 21:45)	18/10/2016
ExCel	IP EXPO (finish 18:00)	05/10/2016	Arsenal	v Ludogorets (Bursts 21:30)	19/10/2016
Olympia Central	Hospitality Show (finish 17:00)	05/10/2016	Royal Opera House	Così fan tutte (Burst 22:15)	19/10/2016
Olympia Conf.Cntr.	Basements (finish 17:00)	05/10/2016	O2 Arena	Nickelback	20/10/2016
Olympia National	Restaurant Show (finish 17:00)	05/10/2016	Royal Opera House	The Nose Burst 21:15)	20/10/2016
Olympia West	Bar & Pub (finish 17:00)	05/10/2016	Royal Opera House	La Fille mal gard. (Burst 21:45)	21/10/2016
Royal Opera House	La Fille mal gard. (Burst 21:45)	05/10/2016	Arsenal	v Middlesboro. (Burst 16:45)	22/10/2016
ExCel	European Micro. (finish 16:30)	06/10/2016	Brentford	v Barnsley (Burst 16:45)	22/10/2016
ExCel	BDIA Dental (finish 18:00)	06/10/2016	Royal Opera House	La Fille mal gard. (Burst 21:45)	22/10/2016
ExCel	IP EXPO (finish 18:00)	06/10/2016	W.H.Utd	v Sunderland (Burst 16:45)	22/10/2016
Olypia Grand	CCR Expo (finish 17:00)	06/10/2016	Chelsea	v Man. Utd. (burst 17:45)	23/10/2016
ExCel	European Micro. (finish 10:00)	07/10/2016	Royal Opera House	The Nose Burst 21:15)	24/10/2016
ExCel	BDIA Dental (finish 18:00)	07/10/2016	Millwall	v Fleetwood (Burst 16:45)	27/10/2016
ExCel	Cake & Bake (finish 17:00)	07/10/2016	O2 Arena	Four Tops & Temptations	27/10/2016
ExCel	Property Invest (finish 18:00)	07/10/2016	Royal Opera House	The Nose Burst 21:15)	27/10/2016
ExCel	Magic: Gathering (finish 23:00)	07/10/2016	O2 Arena	Justin Bieber	28/10/2016
O2 Arena	Jean-Michel Jarre	07/10/2016	Q.P.R.	v Brentford (Burst 21:30)	28/10/2016
Olympia Central	Graduate Recruit (finish 17:00)	07/10/2016	Charlton	v Chesterfield (Burst 16:45)	29/10/2016
Olypia Grand	CCR Expo (finish 16:30)	07/10/2016	Crystal Pal.	v Liverpool (Burst 19:15)	29/10/2016
Royal Opera House	Così fan tutte (Burst 22:15)	07/10/2016	Fulham	v Huddersfield (Burst 16:45)	29/10/2016
ExCel	BDIA Dental (finish 17:00)	08/10/2016	Leyton Orient	v Crew (Burst 16:45)	29/10/2016
ExCel	Cake & Bake (finish 17:00)	08/10/2016	O2 Arena	Justin Bieber	29/10/2016
Leyton Orient	v Portsmouth (Burst 16:45)	08/10/2016	Tottenham	v Leicester (Burst 16:45)	29/10/2016
Millwall	v Charlton (Burst 14:45)	08/10/2016	O2 Arena	Van Morrison & Jeff Beck	30/10/2016
Royal Opera House	Il barbiere di Siv. (Burst 22:30)	08/10/2016	O2 Arena	Bring Me The Horizon	31/10/2016

www.myfav.co.uk/wooct16.pdf for over 260 events in large print...

from the editor's desk

Living in the real world?

If you were to read this issue of *Call Sign* and knew nothing about the taxi business, you might wonder why we are having such a serious bash at **Transport for London**. The answer has to be because we cannot understand most of their decisions and often wonder if they live in the real world. The one with regard to PEDs being moved to the back of the cab – albeit moved to 1st January – with all the safety issues it involves must be a total puzzle. But it isn't just that.

On August 30, a memo was sent out saying that the Consultation on the state of London's traffic was on the verge of closing. The memo gave a closing date of September 1 although it said they would take into consideration any replies up to September 16. Call me silly, but that sounded like it closed on the 16th.

Ok, let's overlook that rather silly point and look at TfL's reasoning as to why traffic has deteriorated so badly. They claim: "Following a long period of relative stability, London's roads have been getting steadily busier and more congested for at least the last two years. Traffic speeds are falling and journey times getting longer, bringing an economic cost to London and increasing pollution."

All parts of London's road network, central, inner and outer, are considered to be congested."

Sounds about right, so let's look at the reasons TfL claim are causing the problems. According to our licensing authority, they come down to more vehicles using London's roads without a corresponding increase in road space! So did they pay a consultancy firm to come up with that ridiculous piece of working out? They continue by adding that that some road space has been closed to motor vehicles to make space – either temporarily for roadworks or permanently for upgrades such as widened pedestrian areas or the Cycle Superhighways.

Well swipe me down with a rolled up copy of the *Radio Times*! The Cycle Superhighways BEGAN THEIR BUILDING WORK AROUND TWO YEARS AGO! What a coincidence!

The London Assembly will be investigating the situation and ask the Mayor and TfL what they can do to reduce the level of traffic congestion in London? A five word answer: Get rid of bike lanes! To assist the LA committee that many of us feel is the only chance this trade has, take a trip to Lower Thames Street outside of peak hour travel and look at bike lanes in action and the traffic they cause.

And the result is?

Having correctly stated that the reason for congestion is due to road space being closed thanks to roadworks and Cycle Superhighways, *Call Sign* readers won't be surprised to read that TfL are to press ahead with a new cycle route following yet another consultation. This one is the North-South Cycle Superhighway running from the Elephant and Castle to King's Cross and it will cause carnage! According to TfL, the route will provide major benefits for pedestrians as well as cyclists. Are those benefits going to be in the form of increased fine particulates (PM2.5) to breathe in? Farringdon Street is already one of the most congested roads in London with appalling air pollution.

1391 people responded – no doubt many of them cyclists because no car users would say yes to the suggestion. Out of that number, just over half (53%) agreed fully with the consultation and



it will go ahead based on those figures.

An estimated 9,500 Londoners are killed each year by long-term exposure to fine particulates and nitrogen dioxide, so can we now expect that to increase and for it to be our fault – after all, most things are...

To bilk or not to bilk – that is the question...

I'm not sure if I'm just lucky or that you have to be really unlucky to catch a deliberate bilker. You read about it happening and for the driver concerned, it can be soul destroying if you've had a really tough day and then when you finally trap a good job, they run off. In 46 years, I've had a few but too few to even attempt to work out a percentage of them – and that includes a trip to Manchester many years ago; but that's for another day.

Like we all probably have, I've voluntarily decreased a fare because of circumstance. In the old days very few drivers took money from nurses, soldiers or Chelsea Pensioners. Nowadays it's probably just the latter group in their distinctive red tunics who still get that benefit. The other two earn more than we do!

But last week I picked up someone at South Kensington who asked for an hotel in Bayswater. A few minutes after getting in, he asked if we could stop at the large Sainsbury's in Cromwell Road and that he would definitely be no longer than 5 minutes. As I said earlier, I haven't had a bilk for so long that I can't actually remember that last occasion, so with just £7 on the meter I took a chance and didn't ask him to leave something as a sign of good faith (we all know what that means in taxi lingo).

After 10 minutes, I got out and had a look around the large store but couldn't see him and it was only then that I noticed the side door. I think I was more upset that it had happened rather than the loss of money, because it broke my duck. I decided to give it another 10 minutes and took out a copy of the *Evening Standard*. When I looked at the time again, a further 15 minutes had passed and there was around £24 on the meter! I wiped my mouth and reset the meter, went into Gloucester Road and trapped by the station. He was going literally down the road to Elm Park Gardens. Suddenly he called out to ask if I knew that there were two bags from Harrods on the floor!

I told him that they must have come from the previous passenger and he brought them round to the front of the cab together with his £8 for a £5.60 journey. Could the previous punter have been genuinely delayed or did he just forget in his haste to get out? So I drove back to Sainsbury's and sure enough there was my passenger with

two security guards asking every passing cab how they could contact the TfL lost property department! As I pulled up, he recognised me and I was ready for a dressing down. But no; he immediately apologised for being so long and when I explained that I had assumed he'd done a bunk, he understood and gushed out thanks throughout the rest of the trip to his hotel. I explained that there had been almost £25 on the meter and he told me not to worry. When we arrived, there was £9 on the hickory and I asked him for £34 while at the same time trying to explain again why I had driven off. I didn't need to. He gave me £35 and as I was about to get his £1 change – relieved that I hadn't been bilked – he put another £30 into my hand!

So including the passenger who found the bags and the extra £30, the trip I felt certain was my first bilk in yonks actually earned me £74 and in under an hour! I won't bother looking for sympathy by telling you how awful the rest of the day was, but the almost-Shakespearean phrase of 'to bilk or not to bilk' certainly sprang to mind!

New cab concern?

This trade can only survive if drivers buy new taxis. Even if every driver bought a new taxi today and kept it, then the trade would be dead in 15 years unless they sold them and bought another. It needs to be an ongoing process, so the latest figures do concern me.

My view on the Vito is well known. I think it is a lovely vehicle to drive but it just doesn't look like a taxi. However, drivers must like it because there are a large number of them out there and regular users now know they are there and hail them – which is why the 2016 figures disturb me.

From January up until July of this year, a total of 456 new cabs were sold. Of those, the total number of Vitos came to zero, with all 456 cabs being London Taxi Company TX4s.

I love my TX4, but I still hope the Vito figures pick up because I want this trade to continue long after I hang up my Badge and take it easy...

All-out war!

The purchase of Brunel by French company Europcar on September 7 does worry me – yes, I worry about everything nowadays! Addison Lee already buys up anything on four wheels that has a reasonable name as a private hire company, while MyTaxi, who recently swallowed up Hailo, are on the prowl for taxi firms and drivers prepared to work cheaply. Taxi.eu hasn't touched the UK yet but has a presence in 13 countries and is obviously looking this way. They are all chasing the Uber effect.

It looks as though most now believe – perhaps correctly – that the U-men will only be stopped by a company or companies of equal size to Travis Kalanick's 'out of wedlock' baby boy.

Dial-a-Cab in its current form is on the way out, but the saddest part is that there is very little in the way of prospects for future small licensed taxi circuits because size obviously matters in this sphere. So, what concerns me now is what would happen if Addison Lee makes an offer for DaC? Or much worse; what if Uber came in and offered every DaC driver a fortune to sign up but that you had to stay for at least three years? Demutualisation could be interesting...

Alan Fisher
callsignmag@aol.com

Reflections of the Chairman

Special General Meeting 18.09.2016 and the LCDC

I am writing this piece just after the above meeting, but I must admit that the result caused no surprise to me due to the fact that when we held a survey earlier this year, 99% of Members said they wished to demutualise! Now, with the official vote in, it still remains very high at 95.9%. Next stop is 9 October...

This now brings me to the next topic and that is the extremely inaccurate write-up our proposed demutualisation put out in the September issue of The Badge, published by the LCDC.

The article is absolute, utter garbage and obviously totally inaccurate. Sadly, that is what I have come to expect from the LCDC. If you wish to back a loser, then follow their advice!

I seem to recall them creeping around the prospective Mayor in 2008, even going so far as having taxi receipts printed urging members of the public to vote for **Boris Johnson**.

Well he certainly didn't do our trade any favours, in fact he decimated it and we have still not - and possibly may never will - recover from the mauling he gave us; so that's a first own goal for the LCDC.

Secondly, I seem to remember them extolling the virtues of **Hailo**, the App that was recently taken over by **MyTaxi**, or at least several hundred £million was invested into Hailo by that European app. Well, Hailo were certainly the flavour of the month for LCDC with their *'Back in Black'* while extolling the virtues of only using licensed taxis. Then suddenly Hailo started using cars; to say that it left 'egg on the face' of the LCDC would be rather an understatement.

Next to come with the total support of the LCDC was CabApp. They were going to alter the whole trade for the betterment of everyone. Well, we're all "everyone" but sadly we're also all still waiting for that to happen!

The next prodigy to receive the backing of the LCDC was **MaaxiTaxi**, the cab-sharing scheme that never even got off the ground! So I'm sure that you can see their track record for supporting 'winners' is nothing short of abysmal.

Anyway, getting back to the pack of lies that appeared in the Badge; what they obviously do *not* understand is that both myself and the DaC Board are supporting the prospect of the Society demutualising because we have been instructed to do so by the Membership of Dial-a-Cab, a democratic decision.

So we have to ask ourselves just what the LCDC have actually done for our trade? The answer is nothing! There are 110,000 mini-cab licences out there and the LCDC have done nothing to halt the spread.

Half of our road space has been taken up with **Cycle Super Highways** and what have the LCDC done about that? Yes, you're ahead of me now - nothing!



And the record level of congestion in London - what have they done about that? Yep, you've guessed it - now!

Last but not least, what has that organisation done regarding the Credit Card mandate and the threat to driver safety of having the PEDs in the back of the cab? Again the answer is absolutely nothing. Well, not exactly nothing, because they did endeavour to divert any blame away from themselves by claiming it was LTDA General Secretary, Steve McNamara's, fault as he was the one that had accepted it when claiming that it was a 'done deal'.

It appears that all the LCDC can do is to criticise any and all organisations in the trade in an attempt to hide their own shortcoming and failings. I was beginning to believe that **Grant Davis** was growing into his role, but it must really be so difficult being surrounded by people that give him such terrible advice.

Unfortunately, it really appears that he just accepts that advice, but perhaps he should think about issues a little more before he allows his advisers to air their vitriol and lies in the LCDC's monthly publication.

No wonder new organisations are being set up and seem infinitely more adept at getting results than the LCDC, these new organisations seem to have achieved

more in a short space of time than the LCDC ever have. Perhaps that is because these new orgs are more interested in gaining results rather than denigrating other organisations within the trade.

After all, the reason these new orgs were started is because of the inactivity and total lack of achievement by established organisations.

Credit Card Mandate

As you are now all aware, the mandate regarding Credit Cards has been postponed for a while; the acceptance of cards has been put back to 31 October and the fixing of PEDs into the taxi's passenger compartment to 1 January 2017. That is perhaps a very small start but certainly still nowhere good enough.

When will TfL realise this is a driver safety issue where drivers could be enticed out of their taxis on the pretext that the PED is not working correctly. The driver will then have two choices and they are to either forego the fare altogether, or alight from the cab in an attempt to resolve the situation; that's when anything could happen.

I have been lobbying TfL since March of this year in an attempt to get them to change their minds and in recent times, others have joined the fight and the more of us that question the judgement of TfL, then the more chance we have of them altering their decision.

Our PED's have been working perfectly well in the front of our Fleet since March 2011, which is when I sought and obtained written permission from TfL to site them there. It's a pity the LCDC never had our foresight instead of just taking the easy route and going with the flow...

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

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The first DaC demutualisation meeting

In May, Dial-a-Cab Members voted overwhelmingly that they wanted to demutualise this Society, realise the value in its assets and distribute that value to Members. On Sunday 18 September, Members gathered at the HAC Barracks in City Road to vote.

For the first time, proxy voting was included as postal balloting is not allowed for a demutualisation vote. In order to demutualise, there has to be two meetings. This first one needed more than 75% of those voting to be in favour with at least 50% voting. That was achieved at this meeting.

With **Mike Tovey** of Accountants **Moore Stephens** and **David Wilkinson** from the Society's legal team at **Field, Fisher, Waterhouse** present, drivers could ask any questions of them or **Brian Rice** that they needed help with to understand what is a complicated procedure.

It now goes to a second meeting on 9 October where over 50% of those that vote need to be in favour of the demutualisation, with at least 20% of Members



The hall was full with standing room only

needing to have voted and the only acceptable way of voting being in person or via a Proxy.

If voting is in favour and with the necessary number of votes needed, this will convert the Society into a Company incorporated under the *Companies Act 2006*.

The meeting also carried out the Member's May decision to cut the Board from 5 plus the Chairman down to 3 plus the Chairman.

Those that hadn't voted by post voted in the hall. If the second vote is carried, those previously known as Board Members will become Directors.

Results:
September 18 first demutualisation meeting:

In favour 95.9 per cent (needing at least 75% + 1)



Brian Rice and David Wilkinson answered drivers questions

Board of Management elections:

Allan Evans	856 Elected
Keith Cain	611 Elected
Joe Brazil	588 Elected
Mike Son	431 Not elected
Garry White	391 Not elected

Mike and Garry will continue as Board Members until the second vote on 9 October but will stand down at that time regardless of the result as the Board / Directors will still be reduced from its current five down to three...



London Power Networks fined £24,000 for streetworks offence!

Transport for London has successfully prosecuted energy company London Power Networks, a subsidiary of UK Power Networks, as part of its commitment to ensure roadworks cause the minimum disruption as possible to road users.

London Power Networks' offences, including two counts of carrying out work without a permit and a further two counts of failing to serve the required statutory streetworks notices before beginning work, follow schemes undertaken in **Bressenden Place** and **Lower Grosvenor Place** on 9 February.

Appearing before Westminster Magistrates' Court on 7 September, London Power Networks pleaded guilty to the offences and the company was fined £10,000 for each offence of working without a permit, the highest level ever imposed in London to date for a single streetworks offence. For failing to serve statutory streetworks notices, the company was fined a total of £4,000, which resulted in an overall fine of £24,000. They were also ordered to pay £3,722 in prosecution costs.

In passing sentence, the Judge said: "I have seen a number of these cases and I remain unclear why large organisations such as London Power Networks continue to undermine regulations put in place to reduce inconvenience to road users when conducting streetworks. There is no acceptable excuse in my view and I hope the sentence passed today reflects that."

Garrett Emmerson, TfL COO for Surface Transport, said: "Not providing these notices impacts on our ability to successfully coordinate streetworks and we will continue to push for the toughest penalties possible for utility companies caught acting unlawfully. We are committed to keeping London's roads as clear as possible preventing unnecessary traffic build up, which disrupts people's daily commute and worsens air quality."

TfL has prosecuted London Power Networks for five previous offences since 2014 and issued over 1,650 **Fixed Penalty Notices**, 167 of which were within the last year. Including this latest offence, the company has been ordered to pay a total of £37,000 in fines for mismanaging streetworks since 2014.

EUROPCAR GROUP ACQUIRES BRUNEL

Saint-Quentin en Yvelines is the Paris equivalent to London's Docklands – one of four similar "villages." It is also the headquarters of the **Europcar Group** - a major player in car mobility and rental markets. They have now announced the acquisition of London PH company, **Brunel**.

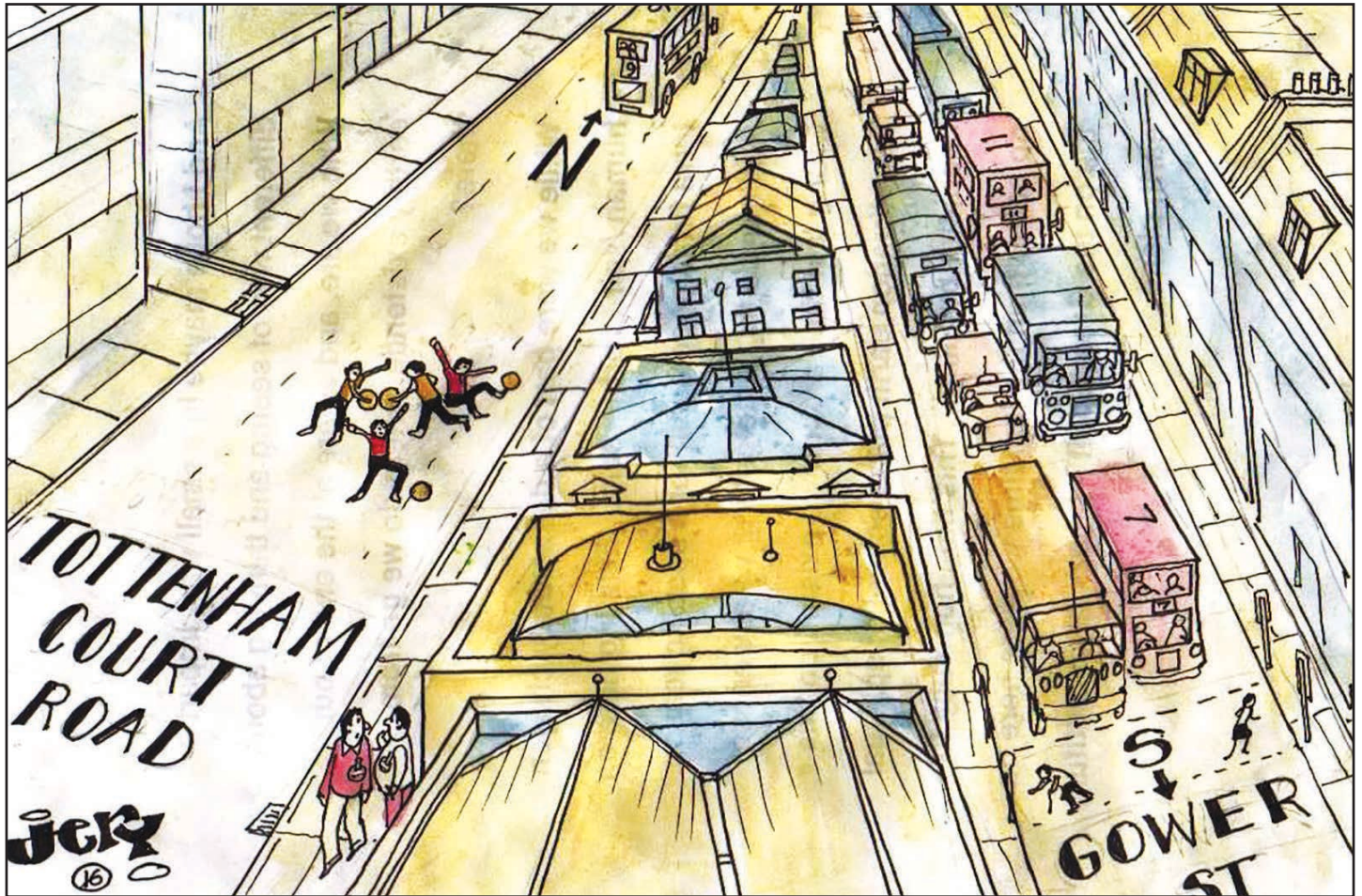
Via **Nathalie Poujol** at Europcar's press office, they say that the acquisition marks another step in their strategy to build a broad-ranging mobility offering to its customers, providing a choice of travel solutions to meet the time and convenience requirements of each journey. They add that it enables them to meet corporate customers' highest expectations thanks to a dedicated tailor made service. They give an example of Brunel offering specific added value services for roadshows and event management while also adding that the services are available worldwide through a global network of partners in 75 countries and covering 480 cities.

Anthony Edwards, Chief Executive of Brunel said: "Over the last 30 years, Brunel has built a strong reputation based on our high quality of service but also on our ability to capitalise on new technology to innovate for customers. We are very excited about the opportunities being part of the Europcar Group can provide us in order to accelerate our development."

The acquisition comes hot on the heels of **MyTaxi** swallowing **Hailo** and **Gett** taking over **RTG**.

See Editor's comments on page 3...

Jery's World



“Thanks Camden, looks like we’re going to lose a major thoroughfare but gain a football pitch! Ah well, better hurry back to Gower Street cos I think it’s due to inch forward again any minute!”

North-South Cycle Superhighway goes ahead

The Mayor of London, **Sadiq Khan**, and **Transport for London** have confirmed their intent to proceed with the **North-South Cycle Superhighway** to King’s Cross as TfL published its response to the recent consultation. The plans, which will also benefit pedestrians with wider pavements and more crossing points, were supported by 70 per cent of the public when consulted on earlier this year.

Once complete the full North-South route, also known as Cycle Superhighway 6 (CS6), will provide a safe and direct route for cyclists across central London between **Elephant and Castle** and **King’s Cross**. 5km in total, the route will be either fully separated from traffic, or on quiet back streets. At its northern end, the route will connect both with the planned Quietway 2 and Central London Grid routes, allowing cyclists to travel safely to **Hackney, Walthamstow, Camden** and **Swiss Cottage** and opening up the city to cycling.

TfL has closely considered all of the responses received in the consultation for this scheme and incorporated several changes to the original plan to address the concerns of local residents and stakeholders. A detailed design will now be developed and, subject to approval from Camden Council and Islington Council, construction will begin in spring 2017.

Mayor Khan said: “We must make it safer and easier for all Londoners to cycle. It can have major benefits for our health and making cycling part of people’s everyday lives will also help clean up London’s toxic air.”

TfL say they will ensure that plans for construction take on board lessons learned from the previous routes. This includes a construction timetable that is fully coordinated with other roadworks and the potential for more night time working to complete the work faster.

The consultation received 1,391 responses, with 53 per cent fully supporting the proposals, rising to 70 per cent including those who partially supported the proposals.



Farringdon St with Superhighway roadworks!

Children's Magical Taxi Tour 2016



strength to strength with support of the Livery Companies and the corporate sector. Some of the taxi drivers have actually taken part in every single trip since the first one in 1994, an amazing commitment.

The ferry trips, donated by P&O, look an amazing sight with the car deck full of London Taxis as was the

made its way down to Dover in heavy rain which slightly improved as the day went on and with an escort of police from both sides of the Channel. On board the donated P&O ferry service to Calais, the convoy of taxis, with their VIP children and their carers', supported by medics, the London Ambulance Service, the AA and breakdown services (just in case), the children's excitement continued to grow.

Disneyland hotel car park when the cabs arrived.

At the resort, the children enjoyed a day in the theme park, followed by a Gala Dinner at the New York hotel, which was also attended by the Disney characters who signed autographs and posed for photos with the children - truly magical.

It was early morning on 16th September 2016 when once again The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers hosted the 2016 Children's Magical Taxi Tour.

Starting with The Big Breakfast send off from Canary Wharf, the trip to the Magic Kingdom of the Disneyland Paris resort was beginning.

Around 400 children, carers and drivers set off on the trip, taking children with life limiting illnesses on this magical journey. Leaving the City of London with great excitement as many onlookers waved them off, the convoy of taxis

Arriving in Calais, there was a regrouping on the harbour side before the convoy set off to the Disneyland Paris resort.

As usual, there were many generous sponsors to help fund the trip and the drivers themselves give their time freely. This was the 24th time the trip has taken place and it continues to go from

Fund raising is a challenge and without the continuing support of the drivers, City Liveries and the Magical Taxi Tour sponsors, this event could not carry on. But the Disney Organising Committee is confident it will carry on bringing smiles to the faces of these children and the supporting team who travel.

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Mike Donoghue (K12) looked pensive as he began his tale to *Call Sign*. As a driver of over 40 years driving a taxi in London, he has probably learned much about life and just as importantly, how to stay safe and legal on the road.

"I recall an incident a while ago in Chicheley Street SE1," he began, "when a fellow cab driver was obviously having a 'discussion' with a pedal cyclist who was right up alongside the cab door and clearly agitated by something that I assumed may have occurred between them. Anyway, the cab driver was motioning to me that he couldn't get out of his cab to inspect the bodywork as the cyclist was directing his cycle wheels to just inches away from the cab door.

"I moved my own cab towards them and that's when I heard the other driver ask me if there was any damage to his taxi as the cyclist was accusing him of cutting him up on York Road. From my driving seat, I looked at the cab doors but couldn't see any apparent damage. Just to be on the safe side and to prove the point, I decided to reach for my camera, lifted it to my open window, pointed it at the other cabs' door panels and the proximity of the cycle wheels and took quick shots of the pristine bodywork - being careful not to include the irate cyclists' face!

By now Mike's pensiveness had vanished to be replaced by the speed of a 100 metre runner as the events of the day came back to him.

"As I took the photos, the crazed cyclist launched himself at me, thrusting his hands through my still open window and as I slid sideways away from him, he managed to grab my shirt and jacket, ripping them from my

Never Get Out!



Mike Donoghue got some useful advice from the police

shoulder! By now, the other cab driver was on his mobile phone calling the police and within seconds, having heard the commotion, a number of police officers miraculously appeared on the scene, for which I was very grateful!

"Those guys were so quick on the scene, I wondered if there was a police station in the immediate vicinity, because they were like cavalry coming to the rescue," Mike continued at a rate of knots as the day's excitement returned.

"The police stunned me when they said the

cyclist was claiming I had included his face in my images and had even said 'smile, you're on candid camera' when in fact I had not opened my mouth! It was easily sorted because I just showed the police my camera images, which proved I hadn't taken his mug-shot. But they were still taken away as evidence, together with my torn clothing. The cyclist was duly arrested.

"Surprisingly and worth remembering, the policeman actually advised me that had I got off the cab for any reason, he would have had to arrest me as well! So it was lucky that I stayed firmly in my seat, doing everything by the book," Mike told us, his smile returning.

"When we got to court, I discovered that three other people who were walking-by had witnessed the incident and gave evidence against the cyclist, confirming my story and that of the other cab driver that the cyclist had tried to make a false claim against the other cab, despite the efforts of the cyclists' barrister to discredit our version of events. The cyclist was convicted of assault and heavily fined. I was awarded compensation for my torn clothing and travelling expenses.

"But the bottom line is borne of the comment made to me by that police officer - never get out of the cab..."

Alan Green
Call Sign Online



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Call Sign's Marc Turner is known as Drumslayer and is usually in the front line banging his drum when it comes to demonstrating against any illegalities carried out by private hire. But this time it was different...

MARC TURNER: "I COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED!"



Last month I wrote of ending up in A&E due to seriously gashing my leg whilst alighting the cab. I had assumed that bit of excitement would do for a while. Little did I know what fate had next in store for me...

We'll begin in the twilight hours of Sunday morning, 4th September. I was hailed on Marylebone Road by an extremely inebriated young man. I wasn't even sure whether I should take him, but two words - **East Ham** - sealed the deal! Besides, what could go wrong? He'd even given me £60 upfront for safe keeping! He soon fell asleep whilst I listened to the radio, thankful that the 'almighty' had dropped this *going home* job into my lap.

We were around 5 minutes from setting down when **BANG!** My driver's window shattered and showered me in glass. At this point we were in East India Dock Road, close to All Saints Station.

My first reaction was to keep moving. If someone was shooting, I sure as hell didn't want to be a sitting target. At the same time, I felt my face for any signs of injury. It felt damp and I hoped it was just sweat from shock, but as I looked at my hand I could see blood that had come from my neck and that is where the main arteries to the brain pass through!

Thankfully, it wasn't too serious, just a cut. But the commotion had roused **Sleeping Ugly** who after his doze sounded far less inebriated than he had been in NW1. He was concerned and urged that we call the police. I told him that nothing was going to stop me from fulfilling the hiring and getting him home safely - something for which he was most grateful. At journeys end, he came to my window, saw my neck wound, commiserated with me and then asked how much he had given me.

I said he had given me £60 and that the fare was £49. I waited for him to hold his hand out but he told me to keep it the change.



Marc with the marble that could have cost him his life!

After he left the cab, I went to the police, reported the shooting and then drove home thinking that my indebted customer's generosity was due to my valour, bravery, calmness, even coolness under fire. No such thing! When I inspected the taxi the following day, I realised he'd soiled his pants and my seat! His generosity may possibly have been a feeling of guilt!

Then I looked at the luggage compartment and on the floor I found a marble. Initially, I thought I'd been

victim of a pellet gun. Police believed a sniper in some opposite flats had taken a pot shot at me with a lethal 'fishing catapult' (apparently used for baiting). The officer said having the window up, may well have saved my life. So, as has been evidenced in the last two issues of *Call Sign*, Drumslayer could be running out of lives!!!!

**Marc Turner (R97)
Drumslayer online**

Taxi! Board Game winners

The three winners of the New York version of Taxi! Board Game competition in the last issue were Morris Abrahams (R85), Barbara Poluck (Russell T55's wife) and Curls Villiers, DaC Senior Night Shift Controller.



The correct answers were: Which year saw London host the Olympic Games for the second time? That was 1948 and not 2012 as many put. Which fashion chain was created by New York born Donna Karan in 1984? It was DKNY - which almost everyone got!

The new version games, in addition to the already successful London version, will be released shortly and the three winners will receive one each. If you were one of the other 171 entrants not lucky enough to win or you missed the last issue, visit www.taxi-boardgame.co.uk or contact gordon@taxi-boardgame.co.uk. The London game is currently available from selected London retailers, Amazon UK, Buuy.co.uk, eBay and Gumtree etc.

All 4 versions, including the 3 new versions of the Taxi! Board Game (New York, Edinburgh and Glasgow) will be available to buy from the previously mentioned online stores AND the new Taxi! Game online shop at: www.taxi-boardgame.co.uk/shop.

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According to Edie.net, London's taxi drivers are seemingly ready and willing to help tackle London's air quality crisis as a new London Taxi Company survey reveals that 80% of us are interested in switching to new ultra-low emission vehicles for work.

The survey of 1,189 cab drivers reveals a huge appetite for greener fleets, with the vast majority of those questioned being either 'interested' or 'very interested' in buying a zero-emission-capable taxi when they are rolled out next year.

With more than 25,000 licenced taxi drivers operating in London, an industry shift to low-carbon vehicles could prove crucial in curbing deadly levels of air pollution in the capital and bringing the UK back on track with its low-carbon transport targets.

"LTC supports Mayor Sadiq Khan's pledge to make tackling air quality in London a top priority – and now we can see taxi drivers want this too," said LTC chief executive Chris Gubbey. "It is down to us to work together with the relevant authorities to ensure the right infrastructure is in place. LTC has manufactured the black cab in the UK for 69 years and is investing £300m in bringing a UK-built Zero Emissions Capable taxi to UK and international markets by 2018. We believe we can lead the charge in ensuring London's air quality returns to safe and legal levels and believe that London can lead the world in zero-emissions urban transport."

The willingness of cab drivers to make the green switch is reflected in the attitude of many large taxi firms across London. LTDA General Secretary Steve McNamara said: "There's a huge amount of interest in the new taxi amongst our members – the worst place to breathe in London's polluted air is behind the wheel, so our drivers know all too well the impact this is having. Cabbies would therefore welcome the opportunity to drive the new zero-emissions-capable taxi tomorrow, given the opportunity to do so and are committed to doing their bit to help improve air quality in the capital.

"As a key part of London's transport infrastructure for more than 200 years, we have constantly adapted our vehicles and the service we provide to meet the changing needs of Londoners from ensuring that all taxis are

BLACK CAB DRIVERS READY TO BECOME GREEN!



The LTC electric TX5

100% wheelchair-accessible to ensuring that all black cabs are equipped to take card payments from October this year. Given the scale of the air quality problem facing London, this ultra-low emissions taxi is the next logical step in our evolution."

The Government is also supportive of the survey's findings, pledging to aid the transition from combustion cabs to the new wave of low emission alternatives. Deputy Mayor for Transport Val Shawcross added: "We need to take every step we can to clean up London's polluted air. It's great to hear taxi drivers are ready to play their part and the use of new zero-emission taxis will make a significant difference. We're committed to

helping the industry thrive and will be working with TfL to ensure we do everything we can to make sure this vital transition as quick and easy as possible."

With such a high level of interest and clean air commitment, LTC is looking forward to cooperating with local government to improve EV infrastructure across the city by introducing a minimum of 150 rapid charging stations by 2018 – extending that to at least 300 by 2020.

The survey comes months after a manifesto from the taxi trade to the then-unannounced mayor in April, which outlined commitments to a greener London by promising to fully integrate zero emission capable vehicles from January 2018. From that date on, all taxis presented for licensing will be zero-emission capable.

The development of the LTC's zero-emission taxi has received support from LTC owners, the Chinese automobile company Zhejiang Geely Holding Group, which donated \$400m to help roll out the upcoming new generation cabs across the capital. The battery-powered hybrid TX5 is scheduled for 2017, shortly before new regulations which require all new taxis and private hire vehicles in London to have a zero-emissions capability for at least 30 miles come into place in 2018. A variety of other electric taxi solutions, such as the MetroCab and the Nissan e-NV200 have been made available to purchase in the capital over the past few years.

Living in a Camden Wonderland...

This is the way Camden Council designers see Tavistock Place

should the alterations become permanent. Of course, what it doesn't show are the constant traffic hold-ups all around the area or explain why so many taxi passengers no longer use our services thanks to the nightmare of trying to get through Bedford Way or Russell Square just to reach Tavistock Place.



If you feel strongly then you can complete their consultation. This is the last opportunity before the scheme becomes permanent. Go to: https://consultations.wearecamden.org/corporate-services/torrington-place-tavistock-place-route-proposed-im/consult_view

Call Sign

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Dodgy Callers!!



Every year at the Dial-a-Cab AGM, *Call Sign* meets up with many drivers that we only see once a year and have something of a “catch-up” with. More often than not, it’s stuff that isn’t for publication but occasionally something comes to light that is worth mentioning.

Gordon Bennett (Y91) is one such case. He has been on this circuit for 22 years and we have probably met him 22 times! This year was slightly different though because it wasn’t an AGM, but the first of two meetings to decide whether DaC becomes a Company via a vote on demutualisation.

As you can read on page 5, this first one was carried and now October 9 will see the result. But Gordon gave us an update of a “problem” that he and his wife had suffered at their home. It’s one that many have had over recent years. Gordon told *Call Sign*:

“My wife recently had a phone call where the caller told her that he was from BT and that our computer had shown signs of being hacked. But BT had been watching and that he could check it out with my wife’s assistance. I was at home and took over the call and he repeated what he had told my wife that he could stop it. All I had to do was to log in and follow his instructions.

He really sounded extremely plausible and although dubious, I was unsure and decided to ask him some probing questions - at which point he hung up!

I really didn’t expect to find out who the caller was, but dialled 1471 just in case and surprisingly he had forgotten to keep his number off that service - obviously not as good at IT as he thought! So I hope that this number will be of use to *Call Sign* readers as they can put it in their phone and then block it! It is 005 432 117624 and readers should be aware of it.

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

Call Sign’s new website

Call Sign has been online since the late 1990s and amazingly, its website has continued year after year with very little maintenance needed.



However, it has finally been brought back to earth by no less than Microsoft, who told us that our website was so old that within five weeks it would no longer work after being put temporarily onto their last Windows Server 2008.

*In that time we needed to either redesign **Call Sign** or lose the ‘search’ capability. So thanks to our website master and maintenance guru, Vince Chin, **Call Sign** now has that new website.*

The addresses are the same (www.dac-callsign.co.uk or [.com](http://www.dac-callsign.com)) but everything else has been brought up-to-date. After logging on, the choice is simple with the menu easily seen at the top. It will open on the ‘Home’ screen where you can read the latest issue by hovering over it and clicking the PDF sign.

You can also click on the ‘Archive’ screen; there you will see a copy of *Call Sign* from every year. Hovering over the icon you will see the year and a message on each one to *click on here to view the monthly magazines*. Click on whichever year you want and then hover over each copy to find the month you want. Hover over the message to ‘click here to see full magazine’ to see the issue but in a smaller version for those with X-ray vision! Click the PDF sign to see the complete issue, but in a large easy-to-read format.

You can also just go to the ‘Call Sign’ screen if you want to go straight to the year you want and finally to the ‘Search Call Sign’ button if looking for something specific by just putting a relevant word into the search box.

There are also issues from the 1960s/1970s and 1980s in addition to every issue since January 1998. I hope you like the new look...

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When *Call Sign* turned up at City Hall on 14 September, there were just two things on our mind – firstly the safety of taxi drivers being forced to place credit card readers in the passenger compartment with all the problems that could lead to and secondly, with the outside temperature at a stifling 31degrees, was the air con working! Well we got one out of two, the temperature was perfect!

Sadly, we must assume that the Mayor and his London Assembly are more concerned with their own comfort than whether the occasional taxi driver is going to get suckered when entering the rear compartment.

In all honesty, the headline doesn't tell the whole truth. The Mayor went over his plan for taxis and private hire that had been leaked the previous day. There will be more taxi ranks, although he didn't specify where so it could be that these are something of a sop to replace the work that the 24 hour weekend tube will take from the trade and will be placed at outlying train stations rather than in town.

There was the now-old news of an extra 250 Compliance Officers around to stop any untoward behaviour, some money towards helping drivers with old cabs buy new ones and 20 more bus lanes will be available for taxis to use. But one thing was missing.

Call Sign had written to the Mayor and Caroline Pidgeon, who were both there, in addition to a number of others involved in our trade including the Mayor's Deputy for Transport, Val Shawcross, Minister for Transport Chris Grayling, London's transport Commissioner Mike Brown, MP for Kensington and Chelsea Lady Victoria Borwick, Ilford North MP Wes Streeting, TfL General Manager Helen Chapman as well as TfL's Leon Daniels, Garrett Emerson and Peter Blake. Of those, only Lady Victoria Borwick and a spokesperson for the Mayor responded (see page 13).

We have long been concerned about the possible danger to drivers of having to enter the rear compartment if a passenger says the

Call Sign goes to City Hall hoping for good news on driver safety to show they care...

ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!



PED isn't working. There is also the danger of women drivers being asked to go into the rear of the cab and being physically attacked or male drivers being accused by a possibly inebriated female passenger of assaulting her.

Either way, the place where Dial-a-Cab currently have their PEDs that have been working so well for five years, after originally being passed by the same people that now want to move them, seems to be the logical answer as to where PEDs should be placed. If it ain't broke etc...

Caroline Pidgeon *did* speak. She asked the Mayor how many charging points there would be specifically for taxi drivers. Mayor Khan replied with 150 by 2018 rising to 300 by 2020. Ms Pidgeon also asked if the Mayor would help those who have their cabs converted to LPG and Sadiq mentioned the current testing going on in Birmingham. He couldn't confirm or deny the question of assistance re LPG until such time as Birmingham had completed their test period.

The Mayor did add that London taxis were part of the transport network and that they needed to help us. Sadly, Ms Pidgeon didn't mention our safety – we

assume because charging points are more important even though there is not one taxi out there yet that yet needs them.

There are many of us that need some protection from the sheer stupidity of a ruling that puts us in danger when there is an obvious alternative – leave things as they are and put an official notice on the partition: *This taxi accepts credit cards.* We

should add that Caroline Pidgeon has often spoken up for this trade but we needed her at that moment to mention safety and she said nothing.

Assembly Member Caroline Russell asked why there weren't more Cycle Super Highways in the outer boroughs such as Barnet and Hounslow. That gave Sadiq Khan the opportunity to talk about the extension to north-south Super Highway that goes through Farringdon Road up to Kings Cross and how it is helping to clean London's toxic air. He obviously forgot to mention how the constant traffic hold-ups caused by the lanes have made Farringdon Road the most toxic part of London! The Mayor added that he was going to allocate even more money to cyclists.

However, not everyone was disappointed as a substantial amount of time was given over to discussing the Assembly Member's pensions – although in all fairness, the Mayor didn't sound too keen on the subject. And no one can deny that he is pro-London taxi. But as for taxi driver's safety... absolutely nothing!

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

Nope, we don't print more copies than all the other papers, but what we do have is...

THE TRADES BIGGEST ONLINE READERSHIP!

Many **Dial-a-Cab** readers seem to like leaving their copy of *Call Sign* in the cab to read at quiet times, while glancing at the online version when in front of their PC at home. But it also seems that many non-DaC drivers enjoy reading the mag and taking a look through DaC history in the magazine's online library as well. That facility contains back issues going back to 1967 when the mag was known as **ODRTS Monthly** and edited by **Joe Toff**.

The latest stats have now shown that record numbers are reading *Call Sign Online*. Mind you, we were the first taxi magazine by many years to go online when our Internet guru, Vince Chin, first put it into cyberspace in February 1998, so we had a good head start when Vince assured us that the World Wide Web was going to be the next big thing! He was right and we are now the biggest!

We often get letters from outside of the UK, although these usually only get printed when there is ample space. However, we never realised quite how popular it was until we recently glanced at our online statistics and which countries the readers are based in.

Call Sign online has dragged the rest of the trade press online, although none have bothered with a library such as we have and where you can take a look at much older issues. The oldest (1967) came out when internet referred more to a way of catching fish!

These are some of the countries that now read *Call Sign*. Obviously a majority are from the UK (71% but not including DaC drivers who get the mag posted). Next highest is the USA with 17% followed by France, Ireland, Australia and Spain. Down the bottom of the list are Ecuador, Chile and Belarus! **And no, we don't know why anyone in Belarus would want to read the mag. But hey, so long as they do!**

And while we're here, can we thank all those *Call Sign* readers that take the time to write to us. We can't print them all, but we appreciate hearing from you...



Baghwat Singh, Call Sign Online

PEDS: MAYOR'S OFFICE REPLIES TO CALL SIGN

But who on earth comes up with their ridiculous replies???

The *September* issue of *Call Sign* published an email that it sent to several important people we assume take an interest in the London taxi trade, from the Mayor to MPs to members of TfL.

Unsurprisingly, none of those at TfL that we sent it to had the decency to even confirm receiving it. One MP did and expressed concern. Now the Mayor's office has responded. Again, unsurprisingly, we had a response from someone at **Sadiq Khan's Correspondence and Investigations** department, rather than the Mayor himself.

Our email expressed deep concern at having to remove the PEDs we have successfully had in the front of the cab for the past 5 years and put them into the passenger compartment. We consider it to be inviting a danger that is not there with the PED's current positioning.

While we weren't sure what the Mayor's answer would be, we were at the very least expecting some semblance of common sense because **Sadiq Khan** does seem to express far more of that ability than either of his two predecessors. But the reply was as ridiculous as it's possible to get.

At the recent **Mayor's Question Time**, Sadiq confirmed again that London's licensed taxis were a part of London's transport system and deserved to be looked after. He obviously knows because of the new station taxi ranks at suburban stations to help the weekend 24 hour tube service, that we work 24 hours. So onto the reply that was forwarded to a member of staff to reply "on Mr Khan's behalf." She wrote:

"Dear Mr Fisher

Under no circumstances would we expect a driver to leave their cab should a problem with the payment machine arise. First of all, the driver should ask the passenger to try again. If the fault persists, they should contact the payment device supplier for support and see whether they can fix the fault or take an over-the-phone transaction. Once a fault has been acknowledged, the vehicle should be taken out of service until it's fixed. If the card is declined or faulty then a common sense approach

should be taken and an alternative means of payment agreed upon. If a passenger refuses to pay and an amicable agreement cannot be found, this should be treated like any other instance whereby a passenger refuses to pay a fare."

Chelsee Mckinlay

TfL Correspondence and Investigations Officer

That response isn't a cop-out; it is the reply from someone that doesn't have a clue what they are talking about. Does the Mayor's office still believe we work from 9 to 5???

Call Sign's editor replied to Chelsee McKinlay, although he has not received any reply...

"Dear Ms McKinlay

Thank you for your response.

Perhaps someone could tell me (and the thousands of other taxi drivers who are affected) how you can contact the supplier at 2 in the morning and what if the passenger claimed the card was stuck. Should we tell them that we'll post it back to them? They would expect us to get out and sort out the problem.

So why cannot the PEDs just be left where they are and a notice placed on the partition saying: This taxi accepts credit cards. The current PEDs in the front of the cab are on cables and easily passed through the gap in the partition. Moving them into a problematic place makes absolutely no sense at all."

Alan Fisher, Call Sign

Sadly, this magazine has to come to the conclusion that there is no one at Transport for London that particularly cares about our safety and we will have to take the matter beyond TfL.

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

PEDs: Another reason not to put them in the back

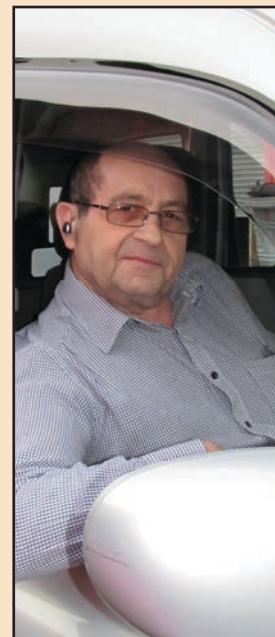
You don't have to look far in recent issues of *Call Sign* to understand why we are so dead set against having our credit cards readers – PEDs – taken from the safety of the front cradle where they sit currently to the rear of the taxi where **Transport for London** want us to place them. The obvious fear is that any passenger claiming they have a problem with the card could insist the driver has to get out, enter the rear compartment with the obvious associated danger that presents and sort out the problem.

Dave Cohen (E94) has been on Dial-a-Cab since 1972 in addition to his time assisting Alan Fleming over many years of the LCDC, so he knows a problem when he sees one – and he certainly saw one recently when his fears of having PEDs fitted in the rear of London taxis were brought to the fore following a disturbing find in his cab. He told *Call Sign*...

"On the early morning of Tuesday September 6, I discovered a 4 inch Sabatier paring knife in the rear of my cab. It is possible that it was a genuine item of lost property; however, if it did fall into the wrong hands it could have been used to inflict injury in certain circumstances, ie if I had been enticed into the rear of my cab because my rear-placed PED had "developed a fault."

He has handed it in to Lost Property, but the question is whether you'd be happy to take the chance...?

Jamie Corum
Call Sign Online



Dave Cohen and the knife he found in the back!



• Book Review • Book Review • Book Review • Book Review •

There are two things worth pointing out here. Firstly, the 'Ben' in the title is **Ben Sherman**, surely the most famous name in shirts going back to 1960s when everyone in and around the pop world wore them – especially if you were a mod. And secondly, Ben's wife **Daphne** is my sister-in-law and will that make me prejudiced in reviewing her book: **Buttoned Down – My Life with Ben and Beyond**.

Written with **Terry Rawlings**, **Daphne Sherman** takes us back to the sixties and seventies to tell her side of the story of a life with the creator of a button down collared shirt that went beyond a piece of clothing to many young people, almost to become a way of life. That way of life gave Ben and Daphne amazing riches together with a lifestyle that seriously challenged that of any clothing designer. But the lifestyle couldn't last and the book details the gradual break-up of their marriage, whilst along the way they hook up in various degrees with everyone from the most famous pop stars to Ben even being rumoured to putting out a contract on his wife's head!

There is no doubt that Ben was a creative genius and the blurb puts it so well when writing of his inevitable rise to fame; his equally dramatic fall from grace and descent into madness and one woman's determination to escape his clutches.

Buttoned Down: My life with Ben and beyond



Daphne with Ben Sherman

what a controlling and manipulative person he was.

There was Ben's infidelity, his violence against Daphne and her son Marcus and how he took everything and left Daphne with nothing. Against that was an incredible life of sheer unadulterated luxury as they travelled the world, living in a luxury apartment next to the Sydney Opera House, with holidays in St Tropez and many places where the rich and famous parade.

Truly an astonishing read; one that could even make you feel queasy at ever buying a Ben Sherman button down shirt. Perhaps even more amazing is the way Daphne showed such tremendous resilience in overcoming the odds that Ben continually stacked against her, which lead her to a highly successful career of her own. A recommended read...

Buttoned Down – My Life with Ben and Beyond (Substitute Publishing £12.99)



It's a very pacey book and an undoubted page turner because for a true story (and it is) parts are almost unbelievable and you just have a need to know what happens next!

The book's structure adds to the reading pleasure because the story of Daphne and Ben runs alongside the news stories, politics and music of the time and genuinely takes you back to the period. However, the book doesn't cast Ben in a very good light while painting Daphne as suffering terribly to the point of being bullied; it shows very early on in their relationship

To the Other Side of the World

"I was returning into town along Primrose Hill Road when a hand shot out from the kerbside," Stuart Cameron (R31) recalled to *Call Sign*. "So naturally I stopped, as you do, for a mature couple who asked for the Grosvenor Hotel in Victoria.

"As the gentleman had a pronounced antipodean accent, I confirmed that they were not confusing it with the **Grosvenor House Hotel** on **Park Lane** and off we went. The couple were quite chatty and were admiring the condition of my taxi, which although elderly was in pristine condition for its age. I do take a pride in my cabs and afford them a fair amount of TLC," Stuart continued.

"My TX1 was bought as a two-year-old and I owned the cab for thirteen years, realising 550,000 miles in it until its fifteenth birthday. Anyway, towards the end of the journey they asked if I could pick them up later that evening and could I recommend a nice restaurant in the Victoria area. I tentatively recommended the restaurant at the **Goring Hotel**, which had the advantage of being close to their own hotel and which had been a favourite haunt of former Prime Minister **Margaret Thatcher**, but I do tend to hesitate when suggesting eateries because such venues are always subjective to personal taste. They agreed to try it and when I met up with them later that evening, they agreed it was a pleasant place to eat and would be staying at the Goring on future visits to London. So I breathed a sigh of relief!" Stuart smiled at the memory.

"It turned out that they were from **New Zealand**, returning to the **UK** on a regular basis and the gent had a passion for collecting classic vehicles. I told them about the 15-year rule for retiring taxis and that mine would indeed be coming off the road in a few months and then thought no more about it. Then sometime later, I unexpectedly received an email from NZ. The man wrote to me saying he wanted to buy my cab and so I wrote back asking if he was serious! It turned out he was serious, so the sale went ahead and I found myself driving to **Tilbury Docks** with a heavy heart at saying goodbye to my faithful workhorse, while it was comprehensively photographed from every angle before being packed safely away in a container to be shipped to the other side of the world..."

Stuart later received an email after the cab – his cab – had been on the high seas for seven weeks saying that his 'baby had been delivered safely!

"I was naturally relieved but it was tinged with sadness as we had been together all those years; but I know 'my' bus went to a good home and is still enjoying retirement from the hustle of life on the streets of London.

"To this day, each Christmas, I get a wall calendar from down under with an invitation to visit New Zealand from the lovely couple I met by chance on Primrose Hill," Stuart said with a wide grin...



Stuart and his baby

Michael Toomey
Call Sign Online

Brazil Calling



By the time this article is published, Dial-a-Cab may or may not have changed its entire ethos of existence. Hopefully I will still be part of the decision making process but just in case that does not become reality, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for your consideration and hope in some way that I have created enough talking points and raised expectation for all of you.

Moving our business forward will mean that hard choices must be made; to assume that leaving our business model unchanged will suddenly reap rewards is folly, inevitably it will lead to a downturn in our fortunes. But with focus and a desire to enhance the livelihoods of ourselves and the licensed taxi industry in general, we may yet prove that we have the right stuff to achieve success.

Once again, thank you for your consideration. I wish Dial-a-Cab and each of you a bright and profitable future. And so on to business...

TfL language test for PHV drivers...

Now, whilst with the language test, no-one ever expected it to involve Joyce, Tolstoy or even Roald Dahl; a basic understanding of the language is not only required, it is also the basic remit for face to face interaction with the public. How many times has a member of the public jumped into your cab and handed you a piece of paper with an address on it, and they, possibly with no English themselves, point at the paper and rely on you to do the rest, getting them inevitably safely to their destination. Conversely, a PHV driver who cannot even read the trip pick-up details presented to them inevitably cannot find the customer, or if given a destination some distance away, "the partner" could risk falling asleep at the wheel whilst a customer is in the vehicle.

The English language requirement not only provides safety in one aspect, but on many different levels; what do you do if your driver doesn't understand a pedestrian zone sign, a diversion sign or adverse camber notification, thus endangering life – or my personal favourite; cats eyes removed!

Very sorry to hear it, but again, not understanding that warning raises the possibility of passenger safety being compromised.

Uber had initially supported the test, but now argues "...the requirement that drivers provide a certificate showing they have an intermediate level of reading and writing is unnecessary and costly." Costly to whom? Because it doesn't seem that the passengers' interests are being served.

Not understanding the language may have other hidden consequences, the possibility of umbrage being taken whilst not understanding a passenger may lead to confrontation. The diversity of people within London can at times lead you to become the Henry Kissinger of international relations to avoid confrontation - and to steal one of his quotes: "The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been." He could have added "Without an argument!"

Bullying London...

The constant dilution sought by interlopers into the London market leaves TfL with a task they must raise their game for. To assume you can bully

London into accepting lower standards by using high court tactics to attack legislation, must mean that regulators ensure they have not bowed to external pressure; they must be seen to be beyond reproach and beyond illicit implication.

London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, as many of you realise, was a human rights lawyer and he chaired Liberty. He must now ready his troops for battle - but he won't expect it to be an easy ride, US events show that. Let's take employment law:

In the United States and the driver classification lawsuit O'Connor v. Uber, not only did Uber lose its appeal to the Ninth Circuit, Judge Edward Chen recently rejected the validity of Uber's arbitration clause, it was argued for employment rights for their drivers. Uber settled.

Enough to give you hope? Well maybe not when you look at what happened after a language test was introduced in the Big Apple. New York mayor Bill De Blasio's battle with Uber last year left him politically wounded after he tried to limit the growth of electronic-hail cars, while the city would study their impact on congestion in midtown Manhattan. The mayor backed down after the company ran a \$multi-million television and social-media ad campaign accusing him of taking jobs from immigrants whom the mayor had considered part of his political base.

Could it happen here? Time will tell. What I do know is that to inaccurately quote Edmund Burke: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of Uber is for good men to do nothing."

I may have changed a word there, Sorry Mr Burke. However, the message is still the same.

Gird your loins chaps and chapesses, there's a fight coming your way...

Joe Brazil
DaC Board Member



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Top Ten London Streets...

Every DaC driver takes passengers to these 10 streets on a regular basis, so it isn't surprising that they should – according to a recent Zoopla Property Rich List survey - contain the highest priced houses in England. These are their average prices...

1. Kensington Palace Gardens W8: £42.11m
2. The Boltons SW10: £32.15m
3. Grosvenor Crescent SW1: £21m
4. Courtenay Avenue N6: £18.91m
5. Ilchester Place W14: £13.65m
6. Compton Avenue N6: £13.2m
7. Frogna Way NW3: £12.99m
8. Manresa Road SW3: £12.62m
9. Cottesmore Gardens W8: £11.85m
10. Albemarle Street W1: £11.11m

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, heralded a "new era" for the capital's taxi and private hire markets as he set out an unprecedented programme of "far-reaching improvements that will drive up standards, boost the quality of service for Londoners and protect the future of London's iconic black cabs."

The Mayor said he is determined to create a vibrant taxi and private hire market with space for all providers to flourish. The **Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan**, launched by the Mayor includes specific new measures to support licensed taxi drivers, sets out ambitious plans to enhance public safety and also improve London's air quality.

Special new measures being introduced to help London's black cab industry to continue to flourish include opening up an extra 20 bus lanes for use by taxis this year in addition to asking London Boroughs to consider access for taxis to a further 40 on roads they control. The number of taxi ranks to be increased by at least 20 per cent by 2020 and the use of new technology will help provide customers with information to help connect them with taxis more quickly and easily -

Sadiq Khan: New era for London's taxis



adding taxi information to TfL's journey planner by summer 2017.

The iconic black cab trade – already recognised as the finest service of its type in any city – will also be helped to become the greenest in the world. From next year, up to £5,000 will be available to drivers who scrap the oldest and most polluting taxis. A grant of

£3,000 will be provided towards the first 9,000 Zero Emission Capable (ZEC) taxis and TfL is asking the Government to guarantee the 'plug-in car grant' for these vehicles, which would take the total grant to £7,500.

From 1 January 2018, no more new diesel taxis will be licensed, helping to address London's poor air quality and tackle the unacceptably high number of people dying each year because of air pollution.

The new plans include new 'zero emission' ranks for drivers who pioneer green technology alongside a network of rapid electric charge points.

The Mayor is calling on Government to support this initiative with a national diesel scrappage scheme to help drivers dispose of the vehicles and ensure they aren't used elsewhere in the UK.

Powers are also being sought to deal with pedicabs, seize uninsured vehicles and automatically disqualify from driving anyone convicted of touting.



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

Queens Park Rangers (continued)

Last month I began the story of London's most nomadic football club, the boys who started it all off in Droop Street in 1882 – Queens Park Rangers. From humble beginnings on waste ground near the Kensal Rise Athletic Ground, where no doubt 'knee scraping' was a regular hazard, the Royalists (as they were known back then) would move home another 8 times before the turn of the next century!

They would win lose and draw fixtures at **Welford's Fields**, the **London and Scottish** rugby ground, **Home Park**, the **Gun Club** in **Wormwood Scrubs**, **Kilburn Cricket Ground**, **Kensal Rise Athletic Ground** and **St Mark's Park** before the residents of **St Quinten's Avenue** would rise up and serve notice upon them to move on (yet again) as they were lowering the tone of the area!

In 1902, the club moved back to the **KRAG** (Kensal Rise Athletic Ground), but they were attracting quite some following by then and had to seek out a much larger space so that they could cash in on the higher attendances a bigger site could provide. Just in time for the start of the 1904/05 season Rangers moved out to the Royal Agricultural Society Ground at Park Royal, which could hold up to 40,000 spectators. This relatively short-lived show ground for the RAS was already established in 1903 and was intended to be a permanent exhibition site for the Society's annual show. QPR played at the **Horse Ring** which much later became the site for the **Guinness Brewery** – while decades later, Guinness would sponsor the team's football strip!

Just 3 seasons after that, the ever-ambitious QPR would be playing at another venue, this one at **Park Royal** had a capacity for nearly 60,000 fans. Bizarrely, the Park Royal Ground was almost an exact replica of **Ayresome Park**, former home of **Middlesbrough FC** up in the North-East of England.

But the club were forced to move home yet again, this time during World War One, when in 1915 the ground was taken over by the armed forces. Those old grounds in Park Royal eventually became the Guinness Sports Club, even hosting the Field Hockey event in the **1948 Olympic Games** – but today, all of this land is simply Park Royal, the largest Business Park in London, occupying 1,200 acres – the equivalent of 1,200 football pitches!

The closest you can get these days to those ghosts at the Park Royal grounds is in and around **Coronation Road**, but the club that were so used to moving home, then had to reluctantly return to the old cricket ground in **Harvest Road** after initially hosting a few games at **White City Stadium**.

The search was on for a permanent ground and not before time. So when amateur side **Shepherd's Bush FC** disbanded after WW1, the Rangers finally moved to their **Loftus Road** ground in 1917.

At this time, the football pitch was just an open field with a pavilion, but the club were determined to make this 18th different home ground permanent – so they schlepped back to Park Royal to dismantle a stand and then re-erected it on the Ellerslie Road side of the ground.

Home sweet home at last, although further ground improvements in 1931 saw the club switch back to White City for a spell – and older readers may recall the club were back at White City again for the 1962/63 season.

QPR fans – how are you **Mr Rice** - will recognise the 1960s as a pivotal turning point in the club's fortunes on the field. In 1967 they became the first Third Division team to lift the League Cup just up the road at **Wembley**, defeating **WBA** 3-2 after trailing 0-2 at half-time. Then in 1968, the 'Hoops' were promoted to the top flight of English football (the old Division One) for the first time in their history, while the rest as they say, is history.

As I write these notes, I hear that Rangers have just been thumped 0-6 by **Newcastle United** in a Championship fixture at Loftus Road – and I guess those good old boys back in Droop Street over 130 years ago will be looking down thinking 'no worries, they'll bounce back like they always do'.

Next month it's the story of a North London giant's humble origins as munitions workers in South East London.

Bob Woodford, Call Sign Online



Loftus Rd in the 1930s with a tin topped stand in place. The rest was open terracing...

It was around mid-April when according to the Tfl Compliance Delivery Department, Dial-a-Cab driver Philip Benjamin (K20) was approached by two of their officers who claimed he was not in attendance with his vehicle, by inference claiming that he was at another location after naming Stratton Road W1 as where the cab was parked and where Philip wasn't!

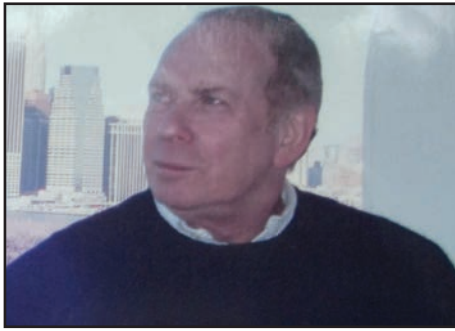
The problem was that the letter to Phil was sent around two months later. It claimed that he had been "parked on an authorised standing at Stratton Road, Mayfair" – not Street! Phil's reply to the accusation was that he was standing behind his cab. He continued in his letter to Tfl:

"As I appeared from the rear of the vehicle, the two young men (one who spoke with an American accent) were hovering at the front. But I was with the vehicle at all times contrary to their allegation."

Philip went on to add – perhaps not too wisely but certainly understandably – that perhaps the officers' time would have been better served attending mainline railway stations etc

Philip Benjamin tells Call Sign of the one thing he never really expected...

"AN APOLOGY FROM TFL!"



where Uber and other rogue minicabs were parked or touting, perhaps to check their insurance and the condition of their vehicles. He suggested to the duo that the result could be the removal of dozens of these vehicles from the streets in a very short space of time and perhaps to his amazement, the pair of officers agreed with Phil that it would be a far more productive way of their time than the nit-picking they were carrying out on Philip's taxi!

Philip, who has been on Dial-a-Cab since 1975, added in his letter that he had held a taxi licence for over forty years and had an impeccable record. He said he found the tone of the computer-generated letter they had sent him to be "offensive and bordering on an effrontery" which in his view only further degraded Tfl's failing relationship with the most revered and properly licenced taxi service in the world.

With those words freshly typed, Philip Benjamin added the following, which explained his anger in a single sentence:

"Kindly expunge any defamatory notes from my record and please add this email to my file..."

Phil sent his reply to *Call Sign* as well as Tfl, telling us quite candidly that he would be astonished to get a response. And indeed he had virtually forgotten all about it when several months later, the response suddenly appeared signed by **Kelly Nolan** of Tfl's Compliance Delivery Department. The email firstly apologised for the length of time it had taken without actually saying why. But it continued:

"I have reviewed the official's report of this incident and the information you have provided and have withdrawn the warning issued against you due to reporting errors made by the officials. I have highlighted this incident with their line manager.

I apologise for the tone of the letter sent, due to the number of reports received it is not always possible to personalise warning letters. However, we are always looking to improve our communications and welcome the feedback."

Philip told *Call Sign*: "From April to mid-August is really pushing the boundaries for an official apology, but it's nice to know that they don't automatically say: Appeal failed!"

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Phil Buchan,
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Tfl and Credit Cards

On 23 March, the Tfl Board agreed that all taxi drivers must accept credit and debit card payments, including contactless, with effect from 3 October 2016. Accepting credit, debit and contactless payment is an important step in protecting the status of taxis, making travelling by taxi and paying the metered fare much easier and a more attractive, convenient option for passengers.

In the consultation they conducted in 2015 regarding this change, 86 per cent of over 1,000 respondents were in favour of making it mandatory that all taxis accept card payments.

However, in response to concerns raised by the trade that card payment system providers need more time to install systems, we have made some changes to the dates by which vehicles owners and drivers will be required to comply:

By **31 October**, drivers must demonstrate that they have the ability to accept card and contactless payments and provide printed receipts for those payments upon request. This could be a handheld device, mobile solution or device fitted in the passenger compartment of the taxi. As long as the driver can demonstrate they have the ability to accept card and contactless payments, they will be permitted to continue working. The taxi must also display Tfl's card and contactless payment signage stickers in the correct position.

By **1 January 2017**, all taxis must have an approved card payment device fitted within the passenger compartment. Any taxi found not to meet the requirement by this date will be issued with an unfit notice, which will remain in place until the requirement is fulfilled and the vehicle is presented for inspection.



What has happened to Transport for London? Following the transfer of power from the former Public Carriage Office, there were a number of licensed taxi drivers who briefly thought it would give us – the finest taxi service in the world – some sort of parity with buses and tubes. After all, the two previous Mayors were very pro-bus and for some time at least, appeared to be pro-taxi as well. But it never lasted other than a previous incarnation at the London Olympics because we were far better known than Transport for London and were used to show London – and we ARE London – whereas TfL now appear to be a bunch of faceless, overpaid people whose only care regarding private and public transport is spelled with just four letters, the first being U and the last being R.

Many drivers were fed up with the strict discipline shown to taxis by the PCO and celebrated the transfer. But even those who were concerned about the change to TfL have been surprised at the apparent anti-stance taken against taxis by TfL directors because as their money has gone up, their care for London taxis has seemingly gone down and their love affair with private hire has taken over.

We accept most car firms, but how can we accept Uber? They care not a jot about authority, yet they are mollycoddled by TfL. They take TfL to court and usually win. You have to wonder why that is? Yet when we ask for just a tad of commonsense regarding the positioning of Credit Card Readers (PEDs), we have to beg TfL to show any sanity. Brian Rice had been in touch with them since March, yet by mid-September – just weeks from their ruling of all taxis accepting cards – no answer of any note was received until Helen Chapman called the DaC Chairman on 9th September – less than a month before TfL's ridiculous ruling was scheduled to come to fruition. They had previously claimed they were "discussing" it, but with whom? Aren't they the decision makers? Seven months to decide whether putting drivers' lives at risk was worth worrying about? Their answer? A 12 week delay until January 1st to "give us more time." Not a word about our safety concerns.

On page 17 there is a story where two of TfL's Compliance Delivery Department approached Dial-a-Cab driver Philip Benjamin (K20) and accused him of not being with his cab, even though he was standing behind it on a rank. It took months for them to apologise saying they would "speak" to the officers concerned. Perhaps the word "sack" should have been used because they tried to get Philip to lose his license. But they won't be; Philip, on the other hand, if found guilty could have had his license taken away on a TfL whim. After all, he isn't an Uber driver so why should TfL care?

But are we being unkind? Was that a one-off? Sadly not! Below is a letter sent to TfL by DaC driver John Gerber (N62). Like Philip, John also wrote a letter of complaint to TfL's Compliance department. This time Call Sign isn't waiting several months for their response because they will probably just apologise for the delay and offer some 'cock and bull' story about why John was reported. You can make

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH TFL???

Are they now a form of transport MI5?

your own minds up about any secrecy issue. This is John's letter

Dear Sir/Madam

I received a letter from you dated 30th August giving me notice confirming my vehicle was unfit for public use. Your letter stated my cab was inspected at the Kings Cross drop off area at 09.17 on the 30/08/2016. The reason you gave for my taxi being unfit was that I didn't have a current MOT / 2nd MOT for licensing.

Firstly you stated in your letter that my cab was inspected at the above location. Well if it was, the Compliance officers certainly didn't make themselves known to me. If they had approached me and asked about a valid MOT, I would have duly produced one there and then dated the 24th August.

I am astonished to be confronted with such a letter from your office, which is totally misleading and calls into question what your compliance team is trying to achieve. Are you trying to undermine this cab trade with fabricated allegations? Are you trying to put us in a bad light with the public with mostly frivolous complaints against the taxi trade, whilst allowing hundreds if not thousands of more serious non-compliance issues by the 100,000 plus private hire vehicles roaming around London daily without proper insurance, illegally being hired, cars that are shared between 2 or 3 drivers of which, if you are lucky, only one of the drivers is licensed. Then of course there are the numerous examples of dangerous driving eg going down one-way streets the



John Gerber: Secret Compliance Officers at work?

wrong way, a huge increase in the number of accidents by the PH trade because they are so distracted looking at their satnavs. I could go on, but I'm sure you can see where I'm coming from.

I await an immediate response and expect a full apology from your office. I will be forwarding this letter onto various cab media and also to the Mayor of London.

Yours faithfully

Mr J Gerber

So as the sub-heading implies: Do TfL now operate a form of secret police system. MI5 have to operate that way but TfL are supposed to be transparent - something they most certainly are not. So that begs the question; do we really need TfL? Do they even know what they are doing? Can we go back to the Met? Ask Philip and John what they think???

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

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From Garry White

book taxis and I feel we have missed out. However this would need to be open to the trade, not just DaC drivers and would be a big challenge to market to our target clientele.

PEDs in all licensed taxis. I did get a reply; she was understanding of our plight in being over regulated in this matter and agreed that the regulatory authority were being too prescriptive in where the PEDs are placed and that it could lead to unintended consequences.

Night time economy

The Arabs that come to London over the summer months have been a saviour to the night time taxi driver, they come out after the sun goes down to eat, drink coffee and walk around **Mayfair** and **Knightsbridge**, creating a steady flow of work for the night time cabby.

Seeing the ladies immaculately dressed and smelling like a perfume department when they enter the taxi is always welcome sight (and smell), and I hope they choose London as their summer vacation for many years to come.

Credit cards

I recently forwarded an email to my MP (**Jackie Doyle-Price**) which **Alan Fisher** wrote, copying in myself and many others about the farce of having to have rear situated

Tourism Action Plan

I was recently shown the Tourism Action Plan and on page 9 they state they would like to see the deregulation of PHV so hotels and night clubs can run their own car services! There is a petition on the **Change.org** website and I urge you to sign it to stop this back door deregulation. You can either copy from below or it is hyperlinked on Call Sign's website. Look at: https://www.change.org/p/theresa-may-mp-stop-the-deregulation-of-phv-as-quoted-on-page-9-of-the-tourism-action-plan?recruiter=100863855&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=whatsapp

Garry White
DaC Board Member

Moving with the times

A 21st century taxi service is going to include working with apps; I say apps, because unless a radio taxi circuit can provide enough work for its members in the future, is it fair to restrict drivers from earning a living from other taxi work providers? It is something the next management structure will have to consider seriously as to how this can work to help you, the driver.

Obviously, the ideal situation would be for **Dial-a-Cab** to have its own trade app, the younger savvy generation like to use apps to

LEE BOWS OUT AT 'HOME'!



(Left) 2006 and the DaC-sponsored Wembley and (right) Lee with David Seaman at a time when Terry Venables was coach

For many years **Call Sign** had followed the goalkeeping career of **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Lee Pearce (J71)** and at times even sponsored him with the odd pair of goalkeeping gloves – which are much more expensive than normal ones. In fact, for two seasons, Dial-a-Cab sponsored the tops that his team of the time, **Wembley**, wore to play their matches in.

Lee retired two seasons ago and although he had moved around having success with several other non-league clubs while playing, he always had an affinity with Wembley; so it was fitting that he should be invited for one last match when two Wembley "legend" teams faced each other.

Call Sign asked Lee to pick out just two magical moments from his long career. The first one Lee picked was when Wembley literally made headlines worldwide in appointing Terry Venables as the team's technical manager to oversee the team in an FA Cup run. But even more astonishing were the signings the team made for that cup run: Arsenal's Ray Parlour and Martin Keown, Chelsea and Southampton's Graeme Le Saux, Fulham and USA star Brian McBride and Argentina World Cup superstar Claudio Caniggia! In addition, Lee had his own personal trainer in ex-Arsenal and England goalkeeper David Seaman!

"Playing in goal behind those players wasn't just a thrill, it was an honour," Lee told us, "and David Seaman was a really great help. Even though they were all retired, the skill just dripped off them and while they may have lost their speed, their ability of knowing where every player on the pitch was without looking was amazing."

Lee's second memory didn't involve Wembley, but another team he played for - **Bedfont Green**.

"It was a match against local rivals **Bedfont** that would normally be a tense affair, but the 2008/9 season game had a carnival atmosphere because regardless of the result, Bedfont Green had already won the *Combined Counties Premier* championship and promotion. We were on a 22 match unbeaten run and made it 23 with a 3 – 1 victory. Following the match, league Chairman **John Bennett** presented the championship trophy to us and our kids suddenly appeared on the field to celebrate with us. It was truly a magical moment."

But Lee still calls Wembley his first true footballing love and he was thrilled to be called to play this last game even though he hadn't played for 17 months and even happier when his team slammed the opposition 8–2!

"Both knees are shot and my right thigh is sore as hell, but I'm delighted to have got through the match letting in just two goals and making a few good saves. It was a good way to say goodbye."



Lee and his kids after Bedfont Green won the Championship

Dennis Latchett, Call Sign Online

The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled has been crowned the UK's best voluntary organisation. The charity began in 1948 with 25 taxis and 50 ex-servicemen and is made up of volunteer taxi drivers.

It is probably best known for its yearly outings to **Worthing**, however, as *Call Sign* often reports, the charity does far more than that, often supported by its patrons: **Dame Vera Lynn, Joanna Lumley, Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns** and **Lady Suzie Johns**.

Last year, the LTBAWD organised a five-day trip to **Holland** when 90 London taxi drivers and volunteers took 120 WW2 Veterans and their carers back to **Arnhem** where they received heroes' welcomes on the 70th anniversary of the Liberation.

Mixed in with many projects such as lunches and other social events in various clubs over many parts of the southeast that the charity undertakes in aid of Vets from all conflicts, there was 9 June 1994 when the LTBAWD organised a whole fleet of London taxis to go across to Normandy for the fiftieth anniversary of **Operation Overlord** – better known as the **Normandy landings**.

Then there was 2008 when they celebrated their own 60th anniversary and to mark that momentous occasion, took 160 Veterans back to Normandy, also coinciding with D-Day landing celebrations in France where the City of Caen asked the charity to be involved in their parade.

Much of the funding they need to continue comes from Lottery awards and the charity have often spoke of their appreciation and indeed the vote to find the best UK voluntary charity came in the **National Lottery Awards** annual search for the UK's favourite Lottery-funded projects. The charity won a £3,000 cash prize in addition to an iconic NLA trophy presented on 12 September and shown on **BBC One**.

Fred Glover, a 90-year-old WW2 Veteran who recently undertook two parachute jumps to raise money for the LTBAWD said: "I'm thrilled that this magnificent charity has won a Lottery award. The cab drivers and committee members are all volunteers. They look after us so well on our trips and outings. I'm proud to be associated with them."

It was Friday 26th August; the LTBAWD had organised a **Tea Dance** at the **Royal Hospital Chelsea** for around 80 guests, including Vets and some of the drivers who freely give their time. They were in the State Apartments that the Royal Hospital had kindly given permission for the charity to use on this occasion. While there, they were entertained by the **D-Day dancers** (dressed in forties style) and **Singers** (in RAF uniforms). Between them, they managed to coax some of the veterans and drivers onto the floor to dance with them!

It was soon after a buffet lunch that a BBC television team arrived, along with **Katie Derham**, who then announced that the charity had won the **National Lottery Awards** with a total of 3995 votes! It was greeted with cheering and clapping from everybody concerned before

LTBAWD VOTED BEST UK VOLUNTARY CHARITY!

...and they heard the news at yet another Veterans outing – a Chelsea Tea Dance!



Dick Goodwin and two Veterans accept the award

name will always be associated with the charity and that so much of his early hard work on behalf of it, while also still driving a cab, has helped to lead to its success and this award.

Harry once told *Call Sign*: "The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled is my

life, because as long as there is conflict and war around the world, there will be a need for organisations such as this and for the work we do."

We couldn't have put it better and once again we send our congratulations on the National Lottery Award – but more importantly, the thanks of so many Veterans who will forever be grateful to the LTBAWD...

Alan Fisher
Call Sign Online

the dancing then continued – **Katie Derham** also giving it a twirl along with some the veterans.

Katie Derham said: "I have been bowled over by the special bond between the London taxi drivers and the Veterans. It's great that projects like this receive funding, thanks to National Lottery players who raise £36 million every week for good causes across the UK."

Dick Goodwin, LTBAWD event organiser added: "We are absolutely delighted to have won a National Lottery Award and would like to say a sincere thank you to everyone that got behind us – Veterans, Taxi drivers, family, friends and the British public – this award sends a great message to our Vets that people genuinely care about them and what they went through."

The Committee deserve every praise, but four people must get special mentions; **Frances Luczyc Wyhowska** who has taken our trade to her heart and was often out campaigning for the LTBAWD to win the award; the man known to many cab drivers as **Barking Bill** but otherwise known as **DaC's Terry Ward (W13)**. He has been associated with the charity for so many years as have the Secretary, **Paul Davis** and the charity's PRO **Derek Leone**, the man who keeps us informed of everything that goes on.

But there is one man whose name will forever be associated with The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled and whose hard work over many, many years has allowed the charity to reach this pinnacle of recognition – former Dial-a-Cab Board Member, **Harry Joel MBE (Ex-B33)**.

For many years, Harry was the Hon Chairman until in 2006 when the title was superseded by that of Life Long President. He often said that much of his tireless work was thanks to his late wife **Frances**. In 2003, when Frances illness became too much for her and both she and Harry knew the end was near, in her final moments she insisted that Harry should still go on that year's War Disabled trip to **Worthing** – indeed the mark of a very, very special woman.

Now at almost 92, Harry takes a place more in the background but surely knowing that his

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MORE FOR MARG!

As Call Sign solves one problem, that solution leads to another question!

Last month's *Call Sign* contained an article from our man in Canada, **Norman Beattie**, headed by *the strange life of a 1957 Austin FX3* and told the story of Marg Kentner, who runs **The Grande Bazaar** gift store in Stonewall.

Forty years ago, Marg started a business in **Winnipeg** opening a gift store and gift delivery service. Looking for something different to distinguish her business against anything similar, she came up with the idea of using a London taxi to make deliveries and knowing a friend was going on a trip to **England**, she asked him to enquire and after speaking to several cab drivers, he went to **LTI** and purchased a second hand **FX3**.

Marg later ran the **Tin Lizzie** auto-museum in **Headingley**, just west of **Winnipeg** and where antique cars were stored for local collectors. Marg's 1957 **FX3** used to give people rides around its grounds.

The cab is now in the hands of Marg's nephew **Brian**, who lives in **Boissevain, Manitoba**. It is still in excellent running order and occasionally takes part in parades and various festivities.



Marg's cab in Canada

Mark began by sending details from a page of the original 1957 **Mann & Overton** sales ledger, which showed the entry of **TXV 111**. That also showed the cab's first owner as being the **London General Cab Company**, which meant, as Mark pointed out, that like every taxi of the time, the cab would originally have been all black as against its red and black colouring today.

The final piece of the jig-saw came with the date that Marg's **FX3** entered service - **18th April 1957**. And as a sort of bonus, Mark attached the website to a short 1960 documentary that featured the **London General** garage and showed what life was like for new cabs of the time. For those that would like to watch the film, take a look at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nX9pHzj2Uy4>

For anyone interested in old taxis, you do not have to be the owner of an old cab to join the London Vintage Taxi Association – you don't even need to have been a cab driver! For a membership of just £29 a year, you get 6 magazines a year containing



Mark Cooper got the 1957 details for Call Sign

The red and black **FX3** had the distinctive licence plate number of **TXV 111** but little of its history was known. So via **Norman** and *Call Sign*, Marg asked if anyone over here could help and within 24 hours of the magazine coming out, the **London Vintage Taxi Association** PR **Mark Cooper** - described by many within that organisation as a walking library on matters involving old cabs – sent us the information Marg had been seeking for many years on the cab.

information on vintage taxis and details of when and where vintage shows are taking place. There is technical advice for those carrying out repairs etc and of course, the chance to liaise with other members around the world.

Customer	Car and Chassis No.	Engine No.	Registered No.	Body No.	Austin Invoice No.	Consolidation Date
J London General Cab Co.	234561		TXV. 111	7438047	04961	18.4.57
O. Huntly Bros. Ltd.	234542		TXN. 929	7436047	04962	18.4.57
J W. Dunlop & H. Camel	233933		TYK. 833	7458047	04983	29.5.57
Mr F. G. Duncan	234684		TXN. 980	7519057	04993	8.6.57

TXV 111 shows on top as being bought by the **London General** in 1957. But what about **F.G. Duncan** at the bottom? Was that **Frank**?

But back to the **FX3** because the solution to Marg's request has led to another question; Marg's **FX3** tops that page, however, the fourth name on the list of **Mann & Overton's** sales ledger for May 1957 is **F. Duncan**. I doubt that even the **LVTIA** can help here because we know that **Founder ODRTS** Board Member and former Treasurer of this Society, **Frank Duncan**, bought a cab at around that time because when Editor **Alan Fisher** wrote **The Early Years of ODRTS**, he interviewed **Frank Duncan** and he spoke of his first **FX3** that he'd bought in 1957. Was **TXN 980** that first taxi of a **Founder ODRTS** member. Will we ever know...

Our thanks once again to Mark Cooper and the LVTIA for the help with TXV 111...

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 www.corinthianssportsclub.co.uk



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

SIMON'S GOLF COURSES

Crowborough Beacon Golf Club

Some courses are hidden gems; Crowborough Beacon is certainly one that literally falls within that category! That could be because it's not the easiest course to get to. But don't let that put you off!

Situated high above the **East Sussex Weald** - 800ft above sea level to be more precise - the course provides fabulous views across the **South Downs**. While it has been quite some time since I last played Crowborough Beacon, I'm hoping to make a trip back soon.

This is a course of springy turf, heather and pine. It's not overly long at 6200 yards and was originally opened as a 9 hole course, but extended to the full 18 holes around ten years later in 1905.

A local resident and former club captain was Sherlock Holmes creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. However, there's no mystery on how to play the course! Position is absolutely essential from the tee. The fairways are often sloped to send a mishit shot further away on the many doglegs.

The standout hole is the par 3 6th, **The Speaker**. At 191 yards, you're faced with a shot across a gully to the green; anything to the left of the green is lost into another deep drop-off! *The hole was named after House of Commons Speaker, William Gully and is one of Crowborough Beacon's signature holes, even though these days it is a different hole than the one originally designed. It is longer in yards, but not as long a 'carry' due to a change in angle from the original tees.* It is a fantastic, yet picturesque hole.

Crowborough Beacon an incredibly friendly club and if the weather is clear, the balcony has some of best views of any club I've played. It also has reasonable green fees for such a well rated club...

Happy golfing



The sixth - the Speaker! Too far to the left and it's the Speaker's gully!

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

Taxi Driver Of The Year Dinner and Dance

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

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

The cost of tickets has been held at last year's price of £65 per head. As usual, tickets will include an excellent 4 course meal with half a bottle of wine per person and of course the evening is complemented with dancing to a live band. With your support, the Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund is able to make substantial donations to the taxi trade charities that support them. Don't be the one to miss this great night out; come along to the Holiday Inn Regents Park and enjoy the good food and great company.

This event will prove to be an enjoyable and memorable occasion for all.

*Please complete and return the form together with your cheque made out to TDYCF to: Russell Poluck MBE (Hon Chairman)
5 St Brides Avenue, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 6BT*

RSVP by 12th October 2016. Please print and make cheque out to TDYCF

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Number of tickets: _____

Dietary requirements: Veg Fish Meat

Dress smart

For further information, contact Russell Poluck: **07850 056 765** • Tel/fax **020 8952 1357**

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

'Remembering those less fortunate than ourselves'



Another true story from Geoff Levene...

I Live in a (sort of) Village!

London is a collection of villages. There is a relatively small central area surrounded by a host of once outlying districts that now form a virtually unbroken belt - north, south, east and west. Camden, Islington, Hackney, Stepney, Wapping, Greenwich, Deptford and on they go. Occasionally strangers think they've reached "the edge."

Taking someone to Stanmore one day, I drove along Fryent Way, which cuts through what was once a farm and is now a nature park. He looked worried, asking if he'd find a cab there later on. Of course, all of this has been good news for that shy and retiring lot - Estate Agents. No longer do they have to struggle to flog places in Hampstead, Highgate or Wimbledon. They stick 'village' on the end of the details and it conjures up images of sunny meadows, friendly pubs, a fat smiling copper and a postman on a bike - even if the reality is slow moving traffic, bored and threatening teens and civil enforcement officers. But the prospective property owners lap it all up!

I realise, of course, that I myself live in a 'village'. I step out of my door, walk round the corner and there it all is - the pub (Tuesday is curry night), the bakers (beigels and Kenyan specialities), the butchers (strictly kosher), the greengrocer (last seen 25 years ago; go to Tesco Express) and the quaint furniture shop (fifteen foot laminated minimalist sideboard type thing... £10000)! A traditional English village.... oh, I forgot the sixteen restaurants, the six hairdressers and the three nail bars!

There is also a small unisex hairdresser. It's run by two ladies - one is Thai and one Colombian. I used to go there until something shocking happened. As I was paying, the South American woman said that the next time I went there... "Why don't you come on Pensioners' day!" So after they pulled me off the nearby railway line, I decided to find someone new in the tonsorial field!

And while none of those eating establishments could be called *cutting edge* and a few really are not very good at all, it's great to just find a selection of restaurants two minutes away. And I don't have to worry about drinking and driving. But I was amazed to find myself seated at a table next to wine expert Jerry Boam and his guest, food writer and restaurateur, Herb Crust. The wine man swilled the golden liquid round his glass, took a sniff and then a sip. With a faraway look in his eye he declared it "*cheeky without being presumptuous.*" Oh please!

Anyway, as I wandered around the area the other day, I discovered a place I hadn't noticed before. It was a menswear shop.

The sign above the door bore the legend: *Get well toggled at Togwells.* What sort of place was this? I think unusual best described it. To start, the inside of the window was lined with the yellow plastic stuff that stops the sun fading the window display. And what a display it was - pride of place going to a rather battered male mannequin dressed in a safari suit, desert boots and a bush hat. Was it 2016 or 1976?

What else? Placed around were piles of multi-coloured shirts with very wide collars, the sort of thing Tom Jones used to wear. There were also plenty of tank-tops. It was all very odd so I decided to venture inside. A bell tinkled as I pushed the door. The shop was crammed with stuff - suits, trousers, shirts and shoes. And that was just what I could see. Suddenly a man appeared. Slim with grey hair and twinkly eyes. He wore a white T-shirt which said 'I'm Al, fly me'. This was tucked into floral flared loon pants whilst on his feet were sandals.

"How can I help you," he asked quietly, "are you after anything in particular?" I said I was just looking. "We've got everything you need here, sir. Have a good look round."

The thing was the whole place was a time warp. It was as though I had stepped back forty odd years. Jackets with huge lapels, bell-bottomed trousers, kipper ties. He suddenly asked if I'd seen anything I liked. I commented that it was all a bit unusual but he didn't seem to hear me. He opened a drawer, looked around to see if anyone was watching and whispered: "*These are going to be big this summer. Get one before they go.*" I asked what they were? He took another look around him: "*String vests,*" he hissed, "*and in a variety of colours!*" I asked if he'd had the shop long and he replied he'd it some years earlier but then did something else for a while. He was now starting again. In other words, he was trying to flog the same stuff from years ago. I decided I'd seen enough.

"I've got to fly," I said, "I'll try to look in again."

"Of course," came the polite reply. "You're welcome anytime. We're always open."

And I stepped back out into the village, back into the twenty-first century...

Geoff Levene (W32)
Call Sign Online

Round and round the Ring

"Well, yes, I suppose I am a bit of a petrol head," John Wiles (C60) admitted to *Call Sign*, "but I do love things mechanical," he added with a broad grin. "For the past twenty years, a few of us have been travelling to the German race track of Nurburgring - said by many to be the most challenging race track in the world - to thrash around the famous circuit in our own cars. This year I was accompanied by my nephew who thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

"Our group of six cars in convoy took the Shuttle service to France and then drove through France into Luxembourg, taking in a visit to the Battle of the Bulge site and US War Museum at Bastogne, before heading into Germany and on to the Nurburgring itself. We stay in B + B's for the few days we're there, booking everything in advance, including our track tickets," John explained.

"The 'Ring is actually a one-way public toll road and not open every day for public access, as vehicle manufacturers also use the track for road testing new models etc, so the usual rules of the road apply while participants engage in whizzing around the track! You buy a ticket for each lap of the circuit that you wish to complete; this time I bought 4 tickets that entitled me to four laps, although you cannot complete those laps continuously," John said.

"There is a barrier on the approach to the track and only when that's raised can you go. The rush of adrenalin you get as the engine revs rise in response to the throttle pedal, and as the roadway flashes past underneath the car, is indeed a heady mix," John added with a grin as he remembered his most recent trip, almost akin to a child with a new toy! "Then you come off the circuit at the end of the lap and return to the barrier for the start of your next lap and so on for however many laps you've chosen to complete. It's not unusual to find yourself mixing it with other road traffic such as coaches, so you really need to concentrate," he suggested.

"Over the two decades I've been going, I must have clocked up hundreds of laps, but the thrill of the experience and the speed rush never diminishes.

"In the evenings after the days' racing, we usually get together for a few beers before heading back to the UK the following morning, looking forward to the next time when the 'Ring authorities organise a Tourist Rides Fun Day."

Then it was back to his somewhat slower and possibly more boring vehicle... his taxi!



John races his own car at Nurburgring - possibly the most challenging race track in the world!

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

Brethren of the Whip



The great silver coin robbery

For cabman **Henry Harriott**, badge number 11725, it was a regular and profitable job.

Every Monday he would go to the **New Cattle Market** (now the site of the Corporation of London housing estate between **North Road** and **Market Road**), a large amount of silver coin would be placed into his cab and he would then take it to the **Bank of England** in the City.

The money was collected at the market by **William Gardner**, a skin salesman, who met up with his customers and exchanged paper money for the coins held by those customers. On **Monday May 31st 1858**, £787 in silver coins was placed in six bags that were then placed within a sack and put on the seat of **Harriott's cab**. Along with **Harriott** was an employee of the company, **James Griffin**, who would supervise the delivery. The two had worked together for two years and no one could doubt their honesty and integrity.

An hour after leaving the market on that fateful Monday in May, **Griffin** and **Harriott** returned to their manager accompanied by a detective and told **Gardner** that his money had disappeared. **Gardner's** first thought was that his man was joking, after all, how could a sack of coins weighing 2 cwt (about 16 stone) simply disappear? **Griffiths** explained that the cab was left unattended whilst they stopped for a minute at the **Albion pub** in **Thornhill Road** in order to water the horses and it was there that the money was taken.

Gardner may have trusted the two men, but the police were not so forgiving. **Harriott** and **Griffin** were arrested and charged with the robbery. The situation got far worse for **Harriott** when the next day, **Griffin** agreed to be a witness against him. Having dwelled on it overnight, he had come to the conclusion that he had been duped by the cabman and the only way he could rectify the matter was to tell the police what happened.

Griffin told the detectives that on leaving the market with their precious cargo, **Harriott** had been called out to by a man on a *chaise cart* pulled by a grey mare. **Harriott** and the man conversed a little while before going into the nearby **Balmoral pub**. **Griffin** remained in the cab with the money and after about five minutes, **Harriott** returned and they set off towards the City.

Just as they did every Monday, they stopped

at the **Albion**. **Harriott** went round to the back of the pub and returned with a pail of water, giving some to the horse to drink and threw the remainder over the horses feet. **Harriott** then asked **Griffin** to take the pail back and said he did so and was back at the cab "within a minute." **Harriott** was standing outside the pub lighting up his pipe. **Griffin** then went into the bar and ordered a pint of "half and half", a porter and ale mix, which they probably shared.

When he climbed back into the cab, **Griffin** called out "My God, Harry, the silver is gone!" Panic then set in and **Harriott** suggested that the best thing was to drive round to the local police station and report it. This was later seen as a ruse to allow the robbers to get away. On route to the police, **Griffin** stated that **Harriott** asked him what sort of tale they should make up. It was looking bad for **Mr Harriott**.

Corrie, the magistrate at **Clerkenwell**, was less convinced of the cabman's guilt. The only evidence against him was circumstantial. But the fact of the matter was the two men maintained the same schedule for two years like clockwork. Every Monday they stopped at the **Albion** and every Monday, **Griffin** would return the pail and then buy a beer. The magistrates gave police a month to find some real evidence with which to convict **Harriott**.

A reward of £500 was offered for information regarding the robbery, but all enquiries

drew a blank. When **Harriott** returned to answer his bail the following month, the magistrate informed him that there was absolutely no evidence against him and that he was a free man without a stain on his character.

Sean Farrell,
Call Sign Online

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Any Dial-a-Cab driver who has been held up in renewing his licence due to delays with DBS checks will know how frustrating that can be. Drivers blame TfL for the delays, when it is often the DBS check that takes an unnecessary length of time. Yet Uber seem to have no difficulty in getting drivers, many of whom have trouble speaking English hence the new TfL regulation re written tests.

On DaC, we have had or still have drivers from **China, Thailand** and all parts of **Asia** and **Europe**. They may or may not have different religions or philosophies, but they do have at least one thing in common – they all speak perfect **English**. And, adding some guesswork, another point they probably have in common is that at some time or another, they have all been delayed by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Quite rightly, we should have enormous sympathy for anyone who has had to flee their mother country because of war and enters the UK as a refugee, often ending up in London because of work opportunities. But if they intend taking passengers around – including women and children – should their sad state mean they can bypass the strictness of the DBS check? And how is it that Uber manage to get so many drivers who obviously fail when it comes to speaking English? So we asked via an FOI request and this is what we were told...

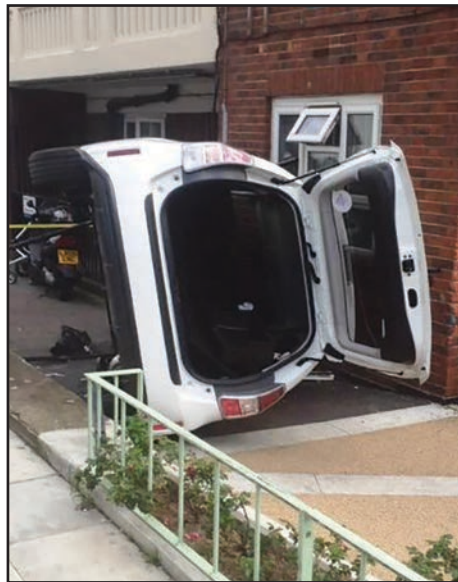
“Every applicant who applies for a PHV (London) Driver’s Licence must provide to TfL an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. In addition, any taxi or PHV applicant who has lived in a country other than the UK for one or more continuous periods of between three and 12 months (other than periods of extended vacation) within three years of the date of application, is also required to complete a Living and Working Abroad form (TPH/205) accompanied by a Certificate of Good Conduct from the relevant country. The Certificate of Good Conduct is an extract from the judicial record or equivalent document issued by a competent judicial or administrative authority for the relevant country. This Certificate documents any convictions recorded against the individual or to confirm good conduct. This requirement is in addition to the enhanced DBS check, which is required for all applicants.

Where an applicant is unable to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct, they must explain why and provide references from individuals/bodies who can confirm their conduct for their time in the country (the referee must not be a family member). The absence of a Certificate of Good Conduct or references does not prevent someone from submitting an application to TfL, but the failure to do so will be taken into account when considering their suitability to be licensed.

We recognise this may not be possible if an applicant is granted asylum or refugee status and, where applicable, these applicants will be required to pro-

Under the Freedom of Information act, Call Sign asked TfL how refugees from other countries with no paperwork or available history manage to get enhanced criminal records checks from the DBS that are apparently enough for Uber to accept them as drivers...

How do refugees get Disclosure & Barring Service checks?



One of many alleged Uber crashes

vide a Certificate of Good Conduct from any other country of residence within the last three years. They will also be required to provide evidence of their Certificate of Registration or a letter from the Border and Immigration Agency.

All licensing decisions are made on a case by case basis, assessing all of the information provided by the applicant – the DBS check and the certificates described above. Absence of these certifi-


icates does not prevent someone from submitting an application to TfL but the failure to do so will be taken into account when considering their suitability to be licensed. Particular consideration is given to whether the applicant has suitably demonstrated their fitness through all of the above.”

Call Sign Comment: Surely if you have escaped from a war-torn country, the last thing you will be able to prove is what a good person you have been before leaving? The Sun (online) paper recently contained a piece detailing many of the appalling road traffic incidents involving Uber drivers. Photos and descriptions of overturned cars, crushed bikes etc followed just a few weeks after their exposé regarding the number of Uber drivers allegedly involved in sex assaults, including rape.

Is it not time that regardless of the enormous sympathy we feel, anyone dealing with transporting the public has to undergo the identical checks as every licensed taxi or private hire driver has to with no escape clauses. If you can't fulfil the criteria needed, then you can't get a licence. And it should be backdated. If you feel that we're wrong or being unfair, feel free to contact Call Sign and your letter will be published...

Dennis Latchett
Call Sign Online

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



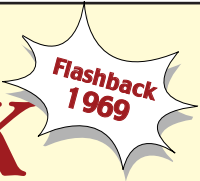
Produced by Dial-a-Cabs PCN expert, John Vigus, this book is all you need to know about moving traffic and parking regulations in one easy to read guide!

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

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

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

This month's Flashback goes back 47 years to October 1969 and one of the hardest hitting articles ever published against our drivers. It came from ODRTS Secretary / Book Keeper, Mr Ives.

From ODRTS News Magazine (October 1969)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

I find it very difficult to express the feeling of disgust that I have for some of you as I write this. I have just finished trying to defend you to a customer and it may be of interest to you to know about the service given in this instance.

On the morning of 15th September 1969, a customer phoned at 07.17 to book a cab for 08.00 to go to Victoria. At 08.10 she rang again, only to be told: "We have nothing in the area." The lady then rang a minicab firm with no better result. Finally, she picked up a passing cab and went to collect her daughter and two friends, all of whom were in tears as they were going on holiday via the BUA Terminal at Victoria and being little more than children, they were worried about missing their flight.

Well, gentlemen, they did miss their flight and it cost them cab fares home, lunch and two nights for a hotel abroad as the next available flight was not until the late evening of 16th September. For three children to miss two days out of a seven-day holiday and for the mother to ask me how I intended to compensate them, presents a very difficult job.

Wanting to express my disgust to someone, I spoke to ODRTS control room manager **Bill Browne**; he, poor soul, did not let me say a word before expressing with adjectives his feelings about your coverage of credit work. He had just dispatched a cab to **Regency Lodge, Swiss Cottage**, for **Mr Rosen**, a customer some of you may know. It was covered by **Mr Levy (D80)** who ran from **Holborn**. May I say thank you, Mr Levy; if only we had more drivers like you.

We recently lost a driver to **Mountview**, who was not prepared to do Bank work as some of the prices were set just a little under the meter. These tend to be long jobs and he wanted to be paid his full fare. It would seem that some of you want blood, as I said in my column a few months ago.

If you feel some shame at reading this, it could pay you to reflect on the jobs you could have covered but didn't because we soon will have no long rides left! But then again you may have been too busy making snide remarks about other drivers who try to cover account work that you won't do and which end up in us losing a good account customer. Those drivers at least get out of the radio what they put into it. The rest of you might just as well leave the trade unless you realise that taxis are for the benefit of the public as well.

By the way, those drivers who refused to cover long rides for slightly under the meter have now caused us to lose the valuable **Midland Bank** account, some of the journeys which came to more than a days' work just for the one trip.

Fred Ives (D65)

Thanks to all of you who offered condolences on the loss of my father **Fred Ives (D65)**. As a radio cabman, he had a tremendous knowledge of London and passed that along in a quiet and unassuming manner.

E.Ives (B65)
ODRTS Secretary

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

A Blogger's Tale

1993

My worst punters...!!!

I can't be too sure about the year, but for the purposes of this blog we'll stay in 1993. I had been driving a distinctive cab around for some time and lived in Bethnal Green as did some of my relatives. Unfortunately for me, so did a couple of unsavoury chancers...

That Saturday dawned like any other; I got up, showered and headed out in the direction of my usual starting point, **Liverpool Street station**. Business was brisk and I had done a few short jobs when a hand went up in the City. It was broad daylight, so I didn't feel the need to do my usual drive past and stop; I just pulled up and awaited my instructions. Without consulting me first, he opened the back door and beckoned a second very desperate looking individual out of the narrow side turning he had been lurking in.

Even after all these years, I feel I can't go into too much detail about what happened next; but in a nutshell one of the punters was very agitated, probably on drugs and at one point produced a pair of scissors that looked like the type tailors use to cut fabric. My sliding partition window was wide open and so when he pressed the scissors up against my neck, I really did feel that my life was about to end.

The calmer of the two shouted to put the scissors away, but he didn't - he kept making that snip snip cutting noise you can hear when you're using them. We went on a long journey and you may wonder why I didn't just slam on the brakes and jump out? I've got to say that the thought crossed my mind a few times, as did the thought that propelling this mad-man forward might also propel the scissors into my neck. I just tried to keep calm, I kept telling myself this is the middle of a Saturday in London and I held on to the hope that the calmer one would keep him under control. The journey lasted an eternity and to cap it all, when they eventually got out they gave me a tip!

I watched them walk off without a care in the world leaving me feeling really vulnerable. That afternoon I screwed the baton back into the sliding window behind my head, leaving the smallest of gaps I could get away with. For ages afterwards I hated people sitting on the flip up seat behind



me, but I think the biggest change in me was my own awareness of danger; trust no longer existed and that mind-set remains with me to this very day. I don't think that's a bad thing.

It all ended up at a famous crown court with

the officer in charge (IOC) of the case bing bonging my name over the loudspeaker for all to hear, various tattooed Neanderthals craned their necks to watch me walk away from the seats outside the courtroom to the front of the building to meet the IOC who had led me this far.

He told me I was a credit to the trade and should be proud of myself, I wasn't feeling proud at all, I could feel dozens of eyes boring into my back and daren't look behind me as I walked out and into the sunshine. I think I ran back to the cab, I was just so glad it was all over. I sold my cab and bought one that blended in with everyone else, happy in my anonymity.

That incident and those two individuals were the worst experience I had driving a cab, I had no phone and no protection but worse things have happened to London Taxi drivers over the years and I believe we are safer now than we have ever been.

To be continued...

Simon Scott (O40)
Call Sign Online



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The 17th-century 'house of delight' that began an architectural movement in Britain will re-open to the public on **11 October** following a 14-month closure for conservation with a startlingly ambitious contemporary artwork at the heart of its most celebrated room, **The Great Hall**.

The **Queen's House**, the Palladian villa designed by celebrated British architect **Inigo Jones**, is one of the UK's most historically important buildings and an acknowledged masterpiece of British architecture. Part of **Royal Museums Greenwich**, the Queen's House is a Scheduled Ancient Monument of unique architectural importance and forms the central feature of the UNESCO Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site. The heart of the House is a masterpiece within a masterpiece - **Inigo Jones's Great Hall** - a 40ft cube with black and white marble floor and ornately carved ceiling and gallery woodwork.

When the House was built, Florentine artist **Orazio Gentileschi** was commissioned to create nine paintings for the Great Hall's ceiling panels, collectively entitled *Allegory of Peace and the Arts under the English Crown*. The paintings remained in situ for a relatively short time, from 1639 to 1708, when they were removed and re-sized to fit a smaller ceiling in **Marlborough House**, St James's, where they remain today. Now, one of the most important British artists to emerge in the last 20 years, Turner-Prize winner **Richard Wright** has become the first artist since **Gentileschi** to create a permanent new work on the ceiling.

Richard Wright's no title is his largest work to date. His gold leaf, ornamental design reflects the influence of **Inigo Jones's painted, carved and gilded ceilings** and the elegant wrought-iron leaves, scrolls and flower heads of the spiral balustrade from Jones's **Tulip Stairs**, the first in Britain to be built without a central support and another undeniable British design treasure.

A new contemporary art collections programme, installations, displays, events, exhibitions and acquisitions will aim to establish the Queen's House as *the* art centre for south east London. An undoubted highlight of the re-opening of the House is the unveiling of the famous *Armada portrait of Elizabeth I*. The painting became part of the national collection following a successful public fundraising campaign which attracted thousands of individual donations as well as major grants and contributions from the **Heritage Lottery Fund**, **Art Fund** and others.

Once owned by **Sir Francis Drake**, the

Uber challenge TfL decision

Following the TfL changes to private hire regulations, changes most PH companies seemed to agree with, **Uber** put in an application to the High Court for a **Judicial Review**.

The challenge was against four of the new rulings – to be insured for hire and reward, to notify TfL of any changes to its operating system, for drivers to undertake an English language test and for call centres to be within a licensed operations centre ie a phone number! However, the Judge allowed challenges to be made on three of the four. The one he decided could not be challenged was on the insurance. It is scheduled to be heard before the end of 2016.

400th Anniversary Of The Queen's House

17th-century Greenwich masterpiece re-opens with new work by Richard Wright



Saved for the country: The Armada portrait of Elizabeth 1 is at the Queen's House

painting was sold by his descendants and is in the public collection for the first time in its 425 year history. It commemorates the most famous conflict of Elizabeth's reign, the failed invasion of England by the Spanish Armada in summer of 1588.

As the House re-opens, one important painting will return for the first time since the 1650s. Part of a sequence of pictures commissioned for the House by **Queen Henrietta Maria** and **King Charles I**, **Orazio Gentileschi's Joseph and Potiphar's Wife** (c.1630-3) will be on loan from the **Royal Collections Trust** and hang in the **King's Presence Chamber**.

The newly conserved rooms of the Queen's

House's will present some 450 works from **Royal Museums Greenwich**, the absolute treasures of a maritime art collection which has no rival anywhere in the world. And fifty magnificent works of art will be loaned by some of the great museums, galleries and collections of Britain.

There is no charge for admission to the Queen's House. It is in Romney Road, Greenwich.

Opening hours: Monday-Friday: 10am-5pm seven days a week.

More information: www.rmg.co.uk
Twitter: @TQHGreenwich

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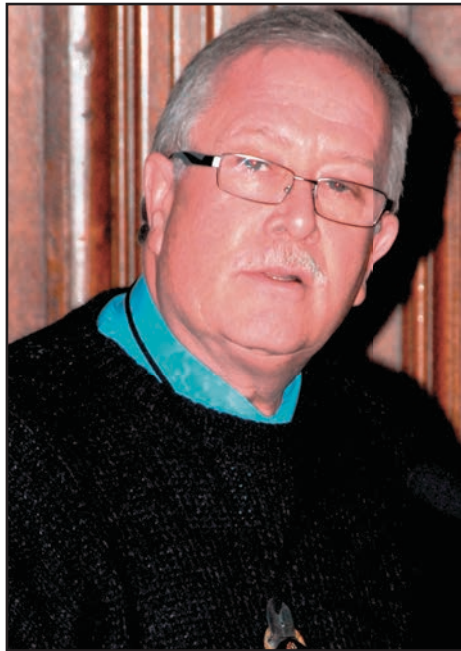
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Graham believes the trade organisations should unite

DaC driver Graham Waite gives his view on what the only way forward is...

UNITE THE TRADE???

I have a small side-line business buying and selling old taxis. I started by getting old Fairways for London Vintage Taxi Association club members, but now I sell TX1s to a wide range of customers, including Northern Ireland and the north of England where they have no cab age restriction.

Nowadays, I only work my cab at weekends after holding a Green Badge for 38 years. I hear more and more drivers - both young and old - telling me when I buy their old cab that they are getting out of the game or retiring. The younger ones are often going back into trades they did before going on The Knowledge, but the older ones are simply retiring.

With the drop in numbers doing the KoL, the possibility of driver-less cars/cabs and of course Uber, the trade will obviously diminish and with those falling numbers it just will not be

viable to build a purpose built London taxi any more. The number of new taxis currently being sold to private buyers is very small, only the fleets are buying in order to meet the increased rental demand from drivers not willing to commit their finances into buying a new cab. We are, I think, witnessing the end of the London Taxi trade as we know it.

I work nights and my takings are down 50% - if not more - on previous years. My old TX1 has 16 months left to go and after that I think it will be *Goodnight Vienna!*

I remember joining ODRTS at Shirland Road with Jack Taylor, Martin Gellman, Peter Fennimore and all the other old faces; what characters they all were and what enjoyment they all got from being part of the London Cab trade which was, and still is, the best in the world. God rest them all! But things have changed in our trade and we need to do something.

Perhaps one answer is for all the various taxi trade associations to put aside their differences and form a united front to fight Uber and any other PH enterprise attempting to dominate the trade. Why LTC and Mercedes have not assisted more is beyond me. However and unfortunately, there is no real answer because we cannot compete against cheap labour with immigrants willing to work for under £7 an hour or Uber drivers on their apparent \$5.12p per hour average. On top of that, vehicles are being purchased on lease contracts costing far less than half the price of buying a new taxi - be it LTC or Mercedes.

TfL should be pushed in regard to making an early statement on the subject as the investment from both cab manufacturers and taxi drivers could all too very soon be pointless. In the meantime, what price trade unity...???

Graham Waite (B35)

THE HERTFORDSHIRE SENIOR PAIRS GOLF OPEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

SENIOR PAIRS OPEN

Wednesday 19th October 2016
 Please complete the form below giving full players details.

Lead Contact Name:

Please provide FULL details of both players

Name (1)

Address

Contact number E-Mail Address

Name (2)

Address

Contact number E-Mail Address

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

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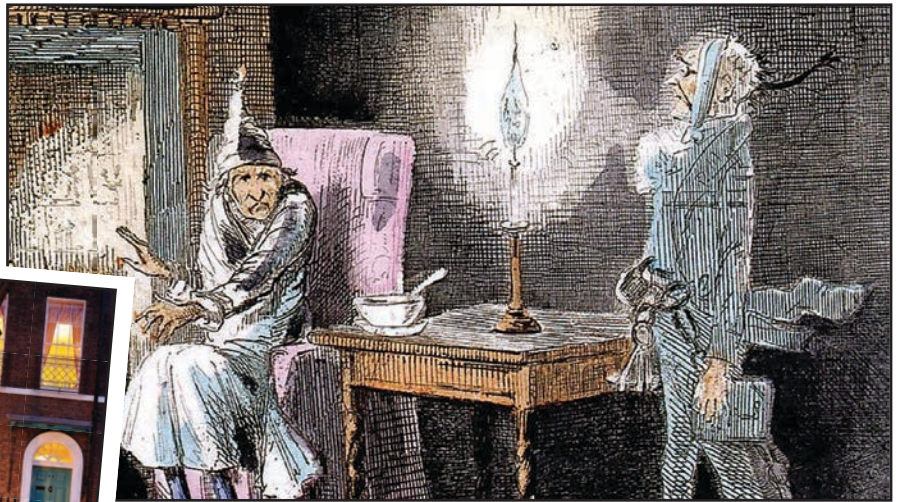
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CHRISTMAS AT CHARLES DICKENS HOUSE

From 1 December 2016 until 8 January 2017, the London townhouse where Charles Dickens completed *The Pickwick Papers* and wrote *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, will host a celebration of Christmas, a time of year which Dickens loved. The Charles Dickens Museum at his first family home at 48 Doughty Street in Bloomsbury will be dressed for a beautiful celebration of a Victorian Christmas; the historic rooms into which Dickens moved with his growing family in 1837 will be filled with the atmosphere of a 19th-century London Christmas. Dickens House contains the world's most comprehensive collection of Dickens-related material...



Ebenezer Scrooge sees the ghost of Jacob Marley in a Christmas Carol. Read at CD House (inset) by Michael Slater or performed by Dominic Gerard

Christmas by Candlelight

A rare opportunity to explore Charles Dickens's rooms by candlelight at Christmas. Flickering light will reveal the elegant interiors that Dickens and his family loved, as well as original fixtures and fittings and extremely significant items and pieces of furniture. These include the desk at which he wrote many of his most significant works, his red leather chair in the Drawing Room, his personal library of books and John Leech's sketches for his illustrations reproduced in the first edition of *A Christmas Carol*. The visit also takes in the shadowy chambers of the Victorian basement, the kitchen and perhaps the most historically important room in the house, Dickens's study. Dickens often wrote into the night by candlelight and was fascinated by the effects created by flames. Guests will be able to luxuriate in what he called 'a ruddy, homely...glow' and experience rooms filled with festive greenery, authentic Victorian fayre and the scent of citrus and spice.

Dates: Wednesday 14th & 21st December; timed entry from 6.40pm.
Admission: £20

A Christmas Carol: Performed by Dominic Gerrard

A special candlelit performance of *A Christmas Carol* by acclaimed actor and Dickens performer, Dominic Gerrard in the rooms in which Dickens wrote. A magical re-telling of the classic Christmas story, directed by Tim Carroll and with ingenious puppetry animating the words of Ebenezer Scrooge.

Dates: 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 28th, 29th, 30th December.

Times: Weekdays: 3.30 and 6.30pm; Weekends: 3 and 6pm.
Admission: £22

A Christmas Carol: Read by Michael Slater

The great Dickens authority, Professor Michael Slater MBE, brings *A Christmas Carol* to life. A much-loved annual festive treat, highly recommended by all at the Museum and the many visitors who return to experience it each year.

Dates: 12th, 13th & 23rd December. **Times:** 3.30 and 6.30pm.
Admission: £15

Christmas Eve at 48 Doughty Street

A special day of Christmas celebrations throughout Dickens's home. An opportunity to immerse yourself in Christmas spirit and Victorian London, with carol singing around the piano in the Drawing Room; theatrical performances throughout the house by theatre company *Equapoise*, each inspired by Dickens's Christmas stories.

Date: 24th December. **Times:** 10am-6pm (last admission at 5pm)

Admission: Adults: £24; Children £12. Ticket price includes a festive drink and a mince pie.

Christmas Housemaid's Tour

A step back in time to Christmas 1839; while Dickens and his family are out at a Christmas event, their housemaid takes a break from her duties to invite visitors through the now-rarely-open original door of 48 Doughty Street,

which Dickens used, to enjoy an exclusive tour of Dickens's 'house in town', dressed for Christmas and filled with festive greenery, authentic Victorian fayre and the scent of citrus and spice.

Dates: Sunday 11th & Sunday 18th December. **Times:** 10, 10.45 and 11.30am

Admission: Adults £18; Concessions £14; Children (6-16) £12

Opening hours: Seven days a week, 10am-5pm (last admission 4pm).
Closed on Christmas Day & Boxing Day. Admission outside of special events: Adults £9; Concessions £6; Children (6-16) £4 and under 6 free.

More info + tickets: www.dickensmuseum.com / 020 7405 2127 / events@dickensmuseum.com

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Dial-a-Cab House
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callsignmag@aol.com

PEDs

Hi Alan

That was a good open letter regarding the PEDs from Alex Constantinou (N05) in the *September Call Sign* and hopefully common sense will eventually prevail. Where their PED was placed in the passenger compartment was actually one of the reasons I came off **Radio Taxis**. I kept feeling that somebody was always peering over my shoulder and I also believe it blocks the peripheral vision from any cyclist coming up fast on the inside.

Sean Farrell (B39)

PEDs

Hi Alan

I am writing in response to your letter published in the *September* issue of *Call Sign* headed: "**How important is the safety of London Taxi Drivers.**" This was a really good letter which obviously came from the heart.

After reading it and noting that the original had been sent to the Mayor of London and numerous others who your readers may or may not be familiar with, I felt the need to add my voice. I am the mother of a female taxi driver and the thought of my daughter - or any driver come to that - having to put themselves in the vulnerable position of leaving the safety of the front of their taxi to assist a passenger, who may or may not be having a problem with a credit/debit card, is frightening. After all, isn't that why there is a screen between the driver and the passenger? So why are drivers now expected to leave the safety of their taxis and, if I am correct, not be able to lock the driver's door as that would lock the whole cab thus making the cab easy access for robbery or worse - to steal the taxi!

Am I being over dramatic? I don't think so; any partner, spouse or parent of a taxi driver would feel as anxious as I do regarding this. Would my daughter feel comfortable getting into the back of her taxi with one or more male passengers who may or may not be sober? No. Would anyone who makes these decisions want a member of their family to be put in this position? I rest my case!

I hope your letter does receive a response from the Mayor and TfL because I feel that safety of such an envied service, which as you say is respected around the world, is paramount. Although the majority of the public are good passengers, there is a minority who feel that hurting/attacking others is acceptable and I feel this should and must be taken into consideration.

Natalie Ezekiel

DaC Control Centre

Sean and Natalie, by now you will have

heard that the D-Day for moving our PEDs from the front of the cab and into the passenger compartment has been put back until 1 January 2017. But it isn't any sort of victory because in my view - and apparently not just mine - by insisting on a rear fitting for PEDs, Transport for London are actually putting driver's lives on the line and that is an absolute disgrace.

I have written to everyone I can think of - including the Mayor - so that they are aware of what is happening. If it goes full-term, then we'll see what happens on January 1st. I can't deal directly with them because TfL no longer respond to me with my views on the topic possibly being an irritation to them; however, my sincere thanks also go to DaC Chairman Brian Rice, Artemis Mercer and all her supporters at the Save our Black Taxis website, Jim Thomas at Taxi Leaks, the many online wives/partners and of course all the drivers who have emailed and phoned to say they support my anti-TfL stance.

If something is obviously wrong, how can it be right??? ...Ed

Apology from Terry

Dear Alan

Having read your reply to my published letter about MP Clive Efford (*September Mailsbot*), I feel I owe him an apology as I was unaware of him doing quite a bit of work on behalf of the trade. My assumption was that as an MP and former taxi driver, he appeared to have done little for the trade. I now know that my assumption was incorrect, so I now hope he puts his name to the All Party Transport Group (*August Call Sign*) in the near future, that's unless he already has and I have got it wrong again...

Terry Farr (Ex-T55)

I always remember a particular letter written to Mailshot some years ago, although not the name of the writer. In the previous issue, I had made a comment that the writer pointed out was incorrect. I checked and he was right... I was wrong! So I held my hands up, said sorry and forgot all about it.

Then a week after the next issue I received another letter from that same writer. He said he had never heard of an editor apologising for being incorrect and that they would usually just forget about it!

So Terry, don't worry about getting it wrong, we've all been there and you've held your hands up. End of ...Ed

Call Sign Online

Alan

I emigrated from the UK to New Zealand around 15 years ago and still miss the sound in the morning of my Fairway starting up! As a regular *Call Sign Online* reader, I am upset at seeing the problems you guys get nowadays but I at least still feel part of the trade when I read *Call Sign*. Good luck guys...

Pete 'Macca' McKenzie
Auckland, New Zealand



Hello Alan

Once again, very good work, excellent writing and overall, a jolly good show! I see that my old friend Charles Rathbone, now a Vice Prez at one of SF's major taxi companies, has made it into the pages of *Call Sign*. Good chap is Charles; we go way back - decades in fact. So far back that the places that we would once go to on our coffee breaks, no longer exist! Next year I will be 70 and will retire. It is really the only sensible thing for me to do.

The same exact problems that you experience in London are also here in San Francisco, with Uber of course being the number one problem. They won't go away, ever. But no matter, life goes on...

Bob Hunt

San Francisco

Alan

As usual this *Call Sign* is great. I love Marc Turner's wit (*September* issue): "How do you make God laugh? The answer... Make plans!!!"

John Parker

Maui

Hi there Alan

Long time no speak. Can I thank you once again for allowing me to publish articles from *Call Sign* into my little magazine. Although our circulation is only around 250 taxi drivers, they enjoy reading about your problems - you know what I mean!

Always in fraternity...

Mathéo Mertens

Bruges, Belgium

Call Sign doesn't often print emails we receive from internet readers, but hearing that we now have the largest internet readership of all London taxi mags (see page 12), I thought I'd put a few in ...Ed

Uber/Who's getting all the loot!!!

Alan

Take me home, Mr Car. *Daily Mail* Motoring editor, Ray Massey, tells us he's been driven around for a week in two Volvos before explaining that safety pioneer Volvo is carrying out government-backed fully autonomous road trials in London from next year and is working with Uber to create a self-driving taxi! Not only have we been shafted by TfL and Uber, but we are about to be put out of work by Geely who currently depend on those very people as customers! I fear the game may not be over, but it's nearly completed. Perhaps that's why the new TX5 will be a six seater... no driver!

Secondly, it's begun, just as you knew it

Mailshot

would. I recently had this sent to me. Of course I try not taking any notice... *'Brian Rice opens six companies with member's money as part of his manoeuvre and plan to con the members of Dial-a-Cab out of their Society!'*

Jon Robinson (E88)

Thanks Jon, I had one which "suggested" the Chairman was getting £3million for "assisting" plans to demutualise! What worried me more was when an anonymous email – funny how they are always anonymous – asked me what I was going to get out of any demutualisation for not revealing who was "on the make" at DaC! The answer – which your letter suggests you already know – is that every member that has been with DaC for over two years will get exactly the same pay-out to the penny should demutualisation go through; and the Chairman and Board all have one share just as we all do. I very much doubt whether these anonymous / venomous scribes are on DaC, but I suspect they are just extremely jealous that our members may get a pay-out if it goes through while still able to carry on working. There are a lot of sad people out there who cannot bear to see others get anything that they don't. One former driver, who still reads every issue online, takes every opportunity to criticise Dial-a-Cab, *Call Sign* and myself online, even though he had to leave almost ten years ago! He once took Dial-a-Cab to an Industrial Relations court and after losing, was described by the Assistant Recorder as "vexatious."

That said it all and is why I take no notice of his silly attempts to insult me!

They're out there Jon, so your policy of taking no notice – just as I do - of anonymous rubbish is probably the wisest event. But DaC don't escape completely because the proposed second meeting has been set for October 9th and that is my birthday! Linda wasn't too impressed with me having to go, but on the plus side at least I'll be there in person to collect any presents! ...Ed

Petrol TX4

Hi Alan

I wondered if TfL are aware that a TX4 is manufactured (since 2010 according to Wikipedia) with a Mitsubishi 4G69 2.4 litre petrol engine. Would it not have been easier for TfL to insist on this cab to be supplied in the UK rather than have 15 year age limits and worrying about emissions all the time? Oh yes, I forgot, TfL don't do simple!

Bob Francis (Y98)

I believe the Chinese version is "born" with it and a number of other countries have ordered them. But none are sent from Coventry, they are all Chinese manufactured. Sadly the words 'TfL' and 'easier' just don't go together ...Ed

PED risk

Alan

In your quest to try to get TfL to realise how foolish it is to make drivers have CC readers in the back for driver safety reasons, TfL should also be told of the security risk for all

credit card holders and by default, for London's taxi drivers. Why? How? Simple! It takes around 3 minutes to apply a card reader that will also take a note of your pin number. And as it's in the back of a taxi where most drivers don't go into, they will not know. All a passenger (conman / woman) has to do is to fit one onto the card reader then arrange for the driver to pick them again two weeks later arranging to go to Gatwick, Luton or any nice job and to show how "sincere" they are by leaving a deposit. Then when you see them again two weeks later, the conman or woman simply takes the card reader off, but now he has 10, 20, perhaps even 50 + credit card numbers complete with pin numbers and will go on to clone those cards – and all without the driver knowing a thing. That will cost passengers - and companies - £1000s if not 10s of £1000s. I do think TfL should know of this risk, as should the general public – a risk that would be greatly diminished if the CC reader stayed where it was – in the front...

Mike Appleby (L73)

Sounds very feasible Mike, but it's still the possibility of drivers being attacked because of TfL's intransigence that bothers and upsets me ...Ed

MIKE SON GETS HIS BEM

Thomas Larke was a 16th century surveyor of note and in 1566, some 25 years after Sir William Petre had built Ingatestone Hall, his new house in the middle of his Essex estate, he wrote:

"Sir William hath at his own great costs and charges erected and builded a new house, very fair, large and stately, made of brick and embattl'd."

What Thomas could have added was that this was a house that would survive everything thrown at it, including two world wars, because now having passed through the hands of fifteen generations of the Petre family - who continue to own and occupy it in 2016 - on 19th September, it fell upon the fourteenth generation of the fifteen, Sir John Petre, to present Dial-a-Cab's Mike Son with his British Empire Medal for services to children's charities.

Ingatestone Hall stands in open countryside just outside the village of Ingatestone and has kept much of its original Tudor appearance, mullioned windows, high chimneys, crow-step gables and oak-panelled rooms. It was in just such a room that guests enjoyed a traditional English afternoon tea prior to the presentation that took place in front of his family, friends and many of the committee from the charity that Mike has spent so many years helping as Special Projects Manager – The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children.

Sir John read out Mike's achievement on behalf of the Fund with special mention of the organisational work involved. Mike responded as we knew he would – he was privileged to be presented with the BEM, but in reality it was an award for everyone involved with the LTFUC, including the committee's partners because they also all work so very hard.

Call Sign sends its congratulations to Michael and also to the LTFUC...





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