

DOES YOUR CAR HAVE IT? *By Anthony Goodwin*

Recently I was invited to attend an event at Hendon Police Driving School to learn more about ESP. Many new vehicles have ESP, which means Electronic Stability Programme. It is also sometimes called ESC, with many car manufacturers having their own name for it. In essence it's an active safety system which supports the driver during nearly all critical driving situations.

So what does it do? After a trip out in a test car and test van, I know exactly what it does! Firstly it recognises if the vehicle is moving in a different direction to the one the driver is steering in. Then it reacts by applying brake pressure to individual wheels stabilizing the vehicle so it doesn't go into a skid. All this is done quicker than a human ever could, with the monitors and sensors within the vehicle being checked 25 times a second! ESP saves lives - this is the conclusion of research carried out by well known manufacturers and institutes. It is an effective means of reducing accidents due to skidding and widespread introduction of ESP could reduce the number of accidents by skidding by up to 80%.



As from November 2011 it will become mandatory for all new car and commercial vehicle models and from 2014 it's mandatory on all new vehicles. So when you are buying your next car check and see if it has ESP. It's not as glamorous as alloy wheels or leather seats but it could save your life! More interesting facts found out during the day are the all new Euro NCAP rating scheme. The new ratings are taken from four areas of assessment these are Adult Occupant, Child Occupant, Pedestrian protection and the new area Safety assist. The new rating has also seen the introduction of a rear impact or whiplash test. The new area Safety assist allows Euro NCAP to look at all the driver assistance systems and active safety technologies. This has come around due to these technologies and systems playing an ever increasing role in crash avoidance and helping to stop injuries. These tests will increase in severity over the next few years to help increase the safety of new cars.

DIAL-A-CAB DRIVER CELEBRATES 45 YEARS AS A TAXI DRIVER! *By Alan Fisher*

On 22 February 2009, DAC driver Ken Freeborn celebrated 45 years as a London Taxi driver and was joined by family and close friends to mark the auspicious occasion. Ken is the older brother of Martin Freeborn, another DAC driver. As guests gathered, the talk was of old times, cab trade characters from the past, makes and models of taxis owned and journey's into the (sometimes) unknown! Nostalgia ruled the day as cab-driving colleagues each had a story to tell about those bygone days. The conversation was lively as the guests - some still driving, others retired - each brought a wide variety of taxi memorabilia and related artefacts to share and enjoy. During the day, a quick calculation revealed a total of 272 years of public service among drivers present - an astonishing fact!

Speaking to Call Sign, DAC's in-house magazine, Ken said: "I bought my first cab, a Beardmore, in April 1965 and joined what was then known as the 'TERminus 6444' radio circuit towards the end of May 1965."

That 'radio circuit' was in fact ODRTS Ltd, the forerunner of Dial-a-Cab. Ken continued: "There are other drivers with longer service records than mine, but as the date coincided with my birthday, Jennie and I thought it would be fun to mark the occasion. Everyone invited bought in to the theme of a 'Cab Driver's Convention' with gusto, and WAGS were swept along with the idea too!"



Ken and Jennie Freeborn cut the cake

Ken's meticulously kept accounts from those long gone days of 1965, record his Beardmore taxi costing £500, while 4 gallons of diesel fuel was 18 shillings and 4 pence in old money. That equates to around £0.92p in today's decimal currency!

"92p for 4 gallons," Ken laughed, "it makes you wonder what went wrong!"

Ken has twice won the coveted Taxi Driver of the Year competition, winning the title in 1979 and again in 1987, with younger brother Martin taking the trophy in 1990. Indeed, in recent years 6 out of the 10 winners of this prestigious taxi championship have been on Dial-a-Cab. The competition's combination of Knowledge of London and driving skills through a very tough assault course ensured that only the best made the grade.

The guests also spoke of Ken's charity work on behalf of the War Disabled Benevolent Fund, and St. Joseph's Hospice in Hackney, where he first teamed up with Call Sign Editor, Alan Fisher and the late Ian Cameron, to

transport and even entertain the residents. "May I, through Call Sign," said a happy Ken, "express both Jennie and my own thanks to everyone who helped make this a really special day of celebration, all those behind the scenes who supplied info and historic documents, from the TDOY Committee, Benevolent Fund folks and Dial-a-Cab Board and Staff for all their efforts. We both appreciate it greatly."