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BOOKING CABS WITH THE RUSSIAN SECRET SERVICE?: WIM FABER **Page 14**

TAXI

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31st May 2022 #517



Queen's Platinum Jubilee



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LONDON PREPARES TO CELEBRATE THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

Across London, preparations to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee are underway. The extra-long bank holiday weekend is expected to draw the crowds and the world's media to witness the London celebrations. The Queen is set to mark 70 years on the throne, making her the third-longest reigning monarch in world history. Keep your eyes peeled whilst watching the jubilee celebrations as especially prepared iconic London taxis will be in the spotlight, taking centre-stage – though TAXI is sworn to secrecy and unable to reveal any surprises just yet!



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LOTTO WINNER!

May's lottery winner is very happy cabbie, Kenneth Harrington who received his cheque for £5,000 from LTDA Executive Support Officer, Lloyd Baldwin at Taxi House earlier this month!



You've probably heard of the **LTDA Lottery**. What you probably don't know is that since it started in 1986, we've paid out **more than £2,110,000** in prize money to more **than 400 winners!**

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The first prize in our lottery is **£5000** - every month! But you won't win it if you're not in it. **Tickets cost £5 each per month**. And even if you don't win, you'll know that proceeds from the lottery contribute towards the LTDA advertising campaigns run on radio, posters and AdVan.

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LTDA Member Support

“Our lawyers were able to intervene very quickly, attend the court where our member was appearing that morning, secure his release on bail and are now in the process of organising a full defence case...”

Steve's comment

It goes without saying that taxi drivers are some of the most law-abiding people it's possible to meet. We are not just given a cab licence, it's hard earned and as a result – something that's valued, respected, and relied upon to pay the bills – so cabbies are very careful not to risk losing it...

LTDA emergency number

Because of this, our 24-hour emergency legal custody team can go long periods without a call and that's how they, and we, want it. However, there is nothing more frustrating for our lawyers than to get a call on a Monday morning and learn a member was arrested over the weekend but did not call us and get our help because they had lost their membership card with the emergency legal number, as happened last weekend. Fortunately, in this instance our lawyers were able to intervene very quickly, attend the court where our member was appearing that morning, secure his release on bail and are now in the process of organising a full defence case.

We cannot put the emergency number on our website or elsewhere because previously we kept getting calls at all hours from drunks and worse, reporting lost property or trying to book a cab! Keep your membership card safe, if you have lost it, call us and we will send you a new one. It's also worthwhile saving the number on your phone and elsewhere, you almost certainly will never need it, but in that very unlikely scenario that you do, it's literally a life saver.

Being an LTDA member is all about 'us' protecting 'your' interests – this is another example, help us to help you!



My mate Harry

I recently ran an appeal from a long-term supporter of our trade and a good friend of mine Dr Harry Brunjes, who typically for Harry, wanted to write a book for a charity featuring a selection of cabbie stories. Harry wants cabbies to share 'cab' stories, the celebrity fares, the lost tourists, weird lost property, in fact anything out of the ordinary that could help sell the book which is in aid of a charity helping people with long covid. Harry is chair of the English National Opera, who have been putting their opera singing skills to work helping people with long covid who are struggling with their breathing. The charity is called 'ENO Breathe.'

The good news is he has had some responses but needs more stories. Either email the story to cabbiestory@gmail.com or call Harry's office on **01323 483946** and someone will write it down or leave your mobile number and they will call you back. If you have a story, and most of us have, please share it?

“Harry wants cabbies to share 'cab' stories – the celebrity fares, the lost tourists, weird lost property, in fact anything out of the ordinary that could help sell the book which is in aid of a charity helping people with long covid.”

Gorgeous George

There can be very few cabbies who had not met George Vyse and even less who had not heard of him. George was tragically killed in an accident with a moped whilst crossing the road near his home in Kennington on May 12th.

George, affectionately known as 'Gorgeous George' because he was always immaculately turned out started driving a cab in the 70's and was a regular at Heathrow for many years and was the LTDA Heathrow Rep for a period in the 1980's.

I first met him in a cab garage in Bethnal Green when he was pointed out as the owner of a brand-new Fairway, delivered straight from M&O's on a trailer, and in the process of being stripped down so that it could be resprayed in a Jaguar colour of the owners choosing! It wasn't hard to spot George, standing

amongst the broken cabs and grease-stained floor in an immaculate suit, shirt, and tie, wearing a pair of Gucci shoes and holding a designer cash bag!

Over the years I would run into him in an eatery or see him on the road, he was always polite, but he always had an opinion on 'his' trade, our cabs and particularly on the old PCO or, as he saw it, their reincarnation as TFL. He used to call me from time to time at the LTDA, always called me 'Stevie' and invariably was always well informed with every conversation focussing on the trade he loved.

The many stories about George are legendary and some defy belief – but having run some of them past the great man himself I can confirm many are true! We shall not see his like again.

Rest in peace, George.

■ LTDA



Taxiapp Follow-Up...

Taxiapp wants to be the go-to app for people in London wanting to get a black cab, but to do so whilst remaining run by drivers and for drivers.

Top rank

Since the recent Q&A article with Taxiapp, as well as receiving some very positive responses on the upcoming changes, there were a few additional questions raised, like, "Who are these investors?" So, I contacted Ben, the main investor and put forward a few follow up questions...

Q: So can you start by telling us a little bit about yourself?

A: Of course - I'm Ben, I'm 52 and I'm from Yorkshire but I've been in London for more than 30 years. I live in Fulham, and I have three teenagers who all go to school locally. I used to be a lawyer but back in 2000 I started a childcare business with one of my brothers (who is also investing). We ended up running all the creches for David Lloyd and IKEA. We managed to build an HR Tech business out of the childcare business called 'My Family Care' which did very well and which we sold about four years ago.

Q: So what's the connection to Taxiapp?

A: I'm a long-standing user of black cabs. They've been a lifesaver for me on more than one occasion, and I always use them when I can. They're such an iconic part of London for a reason - they do the job better than anyone else and following a conversation with a driver who explained the principles of Taxiapp, I got in touch with Phil and Martin to see if I could help. We aren't a corporation, or professional investors - we want to help Taxiapp grow so that in turn it can help in securing the long-term future of London's black cabs.

Q: Let's be honest, the original promise that Taxiapp is owned and run by drivers is no longer true?

A: Quite the opposite. We made sure that the new company has written into its laws that the drivers will always be the largest shareholder. It also sets out other key rules that ensure that Taxiapp is always run in the best interests of drivers - they have ultimate



control over things like raising commission rates, including Private Hire, or the sale of the company. None of those things happen without driver approval.

Q: The main accusation is Taxiapp has sold out, and is now just like all the competition?

A: Categorically not. There's two parts to this - the move away from a cooperative, and the addition of investment, but one required the other. The bottom line is that Taxiapp must hit a critical mass of both drivers and passengers, otherwise the service doesn't work for either group. To do that takes money and it was clear that it wasn't going to come from the drivers - the only option was external investment, and there was no way we could invest in Taxiapp whilst it was still operating as a coop.

Q: So what does this investment mean for the future of Taxiapp?

A: Well, the first thing it does is secure it. The founders have done an incredible job building and running Taxiapp whilst driving a cab full time, and in some cases doing another job too. But to really grow this business needs people working on it full time, and they couldn't do that without an income. This investment allows the current drivers running the business to dedicate more time to it and enable us to bring in some other people who will bring specific expertise in areas such as PR and Marketing.

Taxiapp wants to be the go-to

"We want to help Taxiapp grow so that in turn it can help in securing the long-term future of London's black cabs."

app for people in London wanting to get a black cab, but to do so whilst remaining run by drivers and for drivers.

Q: On that topic, you've appointed an MD to run the business - what can you tell us about him?

A: Charles has more than 20 years' experience of building and running businesses in the digital e-commerce and marketing technology space. We think he will be a huge asset in helping to scale Taxiapp, and in particular in doing so in a way that focuses on value for passengers and drivers alike.

Q: We've seen references to a Driver Rewards program - can you elaborate on what that is?

A: This is a key element of the principles enshrined in the Taxiapp bylaws. All drivers will share in profits, and the Driver Rewards program is a way of fairly distributing those profits. We will publish the full details very shortly, but the headlines are that drivers will take a share of the company profits, and that share will be

determined based on each driver's contribution - the more you help Taxiapp grow the bigger your share of the profits.

Also, I should mention, that every pound that drivers have contributed in subscription fees over previous years will be counted too - even for those who had left but now but want to re-join.

Right now, Taxiapp has the lowest commission in the market, and we hope to be able to drive the effective commission significantly lower through the profit share system. The growth of Taxiapp will put more money directly into the driver's pockets.

Q: So what can drivers expect to see next?

A: Well, we've just deployed new Apps, and as always with these things we've got a bunch of bugs to fix - we're working hard on that right now. But we would ask for patience as we both fix issues and build passenger numbers - we need drivers to keep using the App to make it work for everyone. Once we have a stable platform we will start working through a bunch of new features and functionality that will be focused on giving both driver and passenger the very best experience. Our driver sub-committee will ensure that we remain well connected to the issues drivers face and the things that matter to them most. That way Taxiapp will always be run in the best interests of the drivers.

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Re-charge, Rage, Risk and Repeat...

“So, if the opportunity presents itself, as you pass by you have a glance in the vehicle to see what manner of human has just mugged you off...”

M4 musings

You know that feeling when you're driving along and some other driver does something stupid or unexpected, you adjust and carry on but there's this overwhelming compulsion to try to see what the person looks like? So, if the opportunity presents itself, as you pass by you have a glance in the vehicle to see what manner of human has just mugged you off...

Object or human?

I'm not talking about stereotyping here; it's a human instinct to try to identify and/or pass judgement on other humans, it's part of social interaction. The thing is though, in the case of driving, it's completely redundant. The thing that gets in your way is the vehicle, not the person driving it, so once you've negotiated any delay caused by another vehicle, the most efficient thing to do is to carry on your journey immediately – you don't need to know who's driving other vehicles in order to get past them. But so often we waste time and attention on looking, and let's be honest, sometimes interacting, with other road users.

I started thinking about this years ago when I was a despatch rider; you're pretty much king of the road on a motorbike, you can slide past almost any obstacle and easily see who's driving if you want to. Pretty soon I realised there are no 'types' of bad driver – we all make stupid mistakes and all you can do is try to refine your process to the point that you make as few as humanly possible. I read (the back of) a



book once called *'Thinking, fast and slow'* and it's concern with how we use different parts of our brain for different activities – driving is mostly a 'mechanical' skill, but when we let emotions (or opinions) get in the way, it can quickly lead to delay, poor decision making and occasionally swearing at people.

The moral here is we're all trying to get about town as efficiently as possible – this can be helped greatly by focusing on the vehicle rather than the driver as the thing that's getting in our way. Sounds simple but in my experience it's much easier said than done...

Risk and reward

Demand has remained strong, if a little patchy and geographically concentrated at times. There's no reason to expect anything other than a busy Summer – many people seem to be taking holidays and trips out that were postponed from 2020 and 2021. In the past month, I've been to two events that were postponed from 2020.

We've spoken to a number of drivers tempted out of retirement or back from other jobs by the prospect of easy money, but it's not all plain sailing out there. We are also seeing unprecedented amounts of PCNs and fines for

minor traffic offences. Councils like to earn money too and camera enforcement is off the charts, so be careful out there and observe all signage carefully.

Electric

Well done to Brian @ eTaxiCharging, who has spent a lot of time looking into the price of charging cabs at Heathrow and managed to get HAL to significantly reduce the 2022 price from 39p to 26p per kWh. Efforts are also underway to develop a process so that electric cabs can charge while in the queue at Heathrow. Apcoa have been supportive of the idea in principle, but this is dependent on staff resources being available to manage the system.

Crypt-oo

I hope no-one out there lost too much money in the recent cryptocurrency slump. Of course, the crypto zealots will say you only lose money when you sell, but in my book if you own something and it loses half its value then you've lost money whether you sell it or not. But what do I know, I don't have any crypto, I guess I'm too much of a luddite. By the time anyone reads this they could be up down or sideways anyway, which I suppose is what excites investors

in the first place. Maybe if I had a spare £500 or so I would 'buy the dip' as they say. But I don't, so I won't...

A pox on poxes

Well, the press have latched onto an exciting sounding new disease (except it's not new), to satisfy the relentless catastrophism of certain sections of the public. Watch out for the Monkeypox everyone, it's coming your way soon – or maybe not. There's always been a healthy market for paranoia, but what's different now is we have had a pandemic that led governments across the world to 'lock down' their economies to an extent never before seen in the modern era. Even as I write this, the city of Shanghai in China is almost 60 days into a covid lockdown much stricter than anything we had here in the UK. I'm always reminded that in 2020 when first considering a lockdown, behavioural advisors in the UK believed that people would only adhere to the rules for a maximum of three weeks.

As it turns out many people, especially those who can work from home, were prepared to do a lot longer than that. Who'd have thought that if you pay people enough, they'll be quite happy to sit on the couch in their jimjams binge watching Netflix while the occasional 'teams' meeting crackles away impotently on a coffee table... As it happens, I don't think there's the remotest chance this government would return to those days unless something truly apocalyptic was on the horizon, and maybe not even then. 'Once bitten twice shy' as they say, and Boris Johnson is still having his behind chewed enthusiastically by his many enemies over so-called lockdown parties.

Good luck out there. **LTDA**



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Gas Talky... but no Walky

Fuel prices are at an all-time high and LPG supply is a major issue – Suzanne's here to update you, because she's not going to be driving her cab for a bit...

Airports & beyond

As work levels pick up and normality commences, the rise of energy costs is spiralling to concerning levels. Fuel prices are at an all-time high and LPG supply is still a major issue, in and around London.

Supply

As we entered the new year, there was a shortage of fuel tanker drivers, so the supply from Autogas, Calor & Avanti was very erratic. Recently, supply at most of the 24 LPG petrol stations within the M25 has improved slightly, but prices continue to rise at an alarming rate, with average LPG prices estimated to reach £1 per litre by next

10

“All drivers want, is to be able to go to work without the daily inconvenience of looking for a supply of LPG.”

month. Many drivers who have invested up to £12,600 on these cleaner alternative engines (which allow a 20 year 'plate life' on their converted vehicles), feel very frustrated and let down by the lack of helpful communication and support from Tfl.

Financial viability

There have been numerous attempts by LPG drivers, the LTDA and UCG to contact Tfl, who are aware of the supply issues, but are still not responding. The LTDA have also made enquiries as to possible LPG supply sites in more central London locations, but with premium land rates in London and specific safety guidelines being required (as well as the added cost of supplying and fitting LPG pumps/tanks), it's just not a financially viable or attractive business concept. One garage we approached in south London, which once sold Autogas, still have the redundant LPG pumps and tanks on their site but told us *“It's just not financially worth us selling LPG again, with 10p profit per litre (which is taxed), we also require someone to physically man the pumps, it really isn't worth all the hassle.”*

All drivers want, is to be able to go to work without the daily inconvenience of looking for a supply of LPG. Fortunately, the converted LPG engine has a two-gallon 'back up' petrol tank – but that only allows a range of about 40 miles. With gas supply being a constant issue, LPG owners are looking at alternative measures, such as converting the 85 litre LPG tank to a petrol tank, but Tfl will not approve this as the 20-year plate life guarantee of an LPG converted cab (TX2 or TX4 euro 4), is only granted because it is run mainly on LPG. It is believed that Tfl still have a £5 million fund to help convert London taxis to LPG, so surely, if so, could help fund four to six (North, East, South, West) central London LPG supply locations. These might be located on workshop sites, London Transport depots or vacant Tfl controlled land – but not unless we can get some form of communicative dialogue with Tfl, and right now, I wouldn't hold your breath.

DVLA road tax rates

How are road tax rates set? There are varying rates of vehicle tax which are



dependent on a number of factors. These factors include: the date of manufacture, Co2, engine size and taxation class. CO2 emissions are measured as part of the 'type' approval process that each variant and version of individual vehicle models must undergo before they can be offered for sale in the European Union. The CO2 figure used for setting the tax rate will be given on the Certificate of Conformity (CoC) following the 'type' approval test. A car's carbon dioxide emission CO2 figure will be recorded on the V5C Registration Certificate, and once set will remain unchanged throughout the lifetime of the vehicle. ■ TAXI

LTDA Membership Platinum & Gold Cover

I'm writing this column as I lay rested in bed with my ankle in a cast. I've very little mobility right now, as in late April I had a freak accident and broke my right ankle. I was in excruciating pain and soon realised I wasn't going to be able to work. I've had it operated on and hopefully I'm on the road to recovery, with 6-8 weeks in a cast and then a few weeks of physio...

I've been driving a cab for ten years and an LTDA member since I got my badge. I've been a rep for nearly four years and never even thought about legal cover such as the 'Platinum' or 'Gold' Memberships with the LTDA until now. Boy, do I feel foolish! My brother is also a cabbie and a member of the LTDA for 25 years and has gold cover... and has bent my ear for the past few weeks asking, *“WHY NOT?”* – talk about making me feel bad! I had 18 months off in the pandemic but managed after six months at home to work as a Delivery Driver for Waitrose. I coped financially, but breaking my ankle, I can't just go and get another job.

Having insurance would have saved me. It's too late for me now (although I will get insurance in case of the next time), but I urge anyone reading this to think about spending an extra £30-40 pound a month to cover any incidents like this. I can't work for a minimum of three months – and that's if all goes well. That's a huge loss of earnings, especially in our busiest summer months. Learn from my mistake and look at insurance cover. I have to just accept my fate and get on with it. At least the sun is shining, and I can tan one of my legs! Good luck out there.



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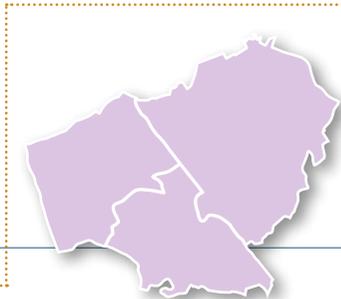
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News from the Suburbs

Steve Howard, LTDA Rep, Branch Secretary and CoM member is on hand to let you know all 'le banlieue' news!

Suburban updates



Sector 9

Rep-action!

Here's a snapshot of what your rep has been up to for the last few months:

Queens Park Rank repainted and an extra cab space has been added. A vigilant driver reported that a ZIP car had been parking on the rank, the ZIP car group have been informed and TfL are taking action.

Wembley Park rank has an issue with night-time maintenance vehicles parking on the rank from 11pm and refusing to move. Rep has completed two site visits and spoken with the station supervisor and TfL are speaking with maintenance dept and railway staff.

There was some doubt as to how much would be re-installed of the Northwick Park Hospital rank, but the rank has been marked out correctly, though we will keep an eye on it.

Station Approach – Harrow Taxi charging point has had an issue with cars using the charger and parking on it all day. The LTDA are working with TfL to solve the issue.

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Sector 8

Ealing

Over the next few weeks, there will be some drainage work being carried out in the area of Ealing Broadway rank. I have had communication with the site and planning reps who have ensured me that this will not impact upon the day to day running. Also, the rank in the High St will be part of a new major project of building work commencing later this year. This will run for nearly two years – again, we have had negotiations with the planners and in fact we will only lose a single space and the rank will move 20 metres further south.

During the months of July, August and September, there are music concerts taking place in Gunnersbury Park. We have held talks with the event organisers and the plans have been set to include ample ranking space for standing and egress of all the events, hopefully these will all have taxi marshals. I will advise you of the relevant dates as and when they are confirmed, so watch this space.

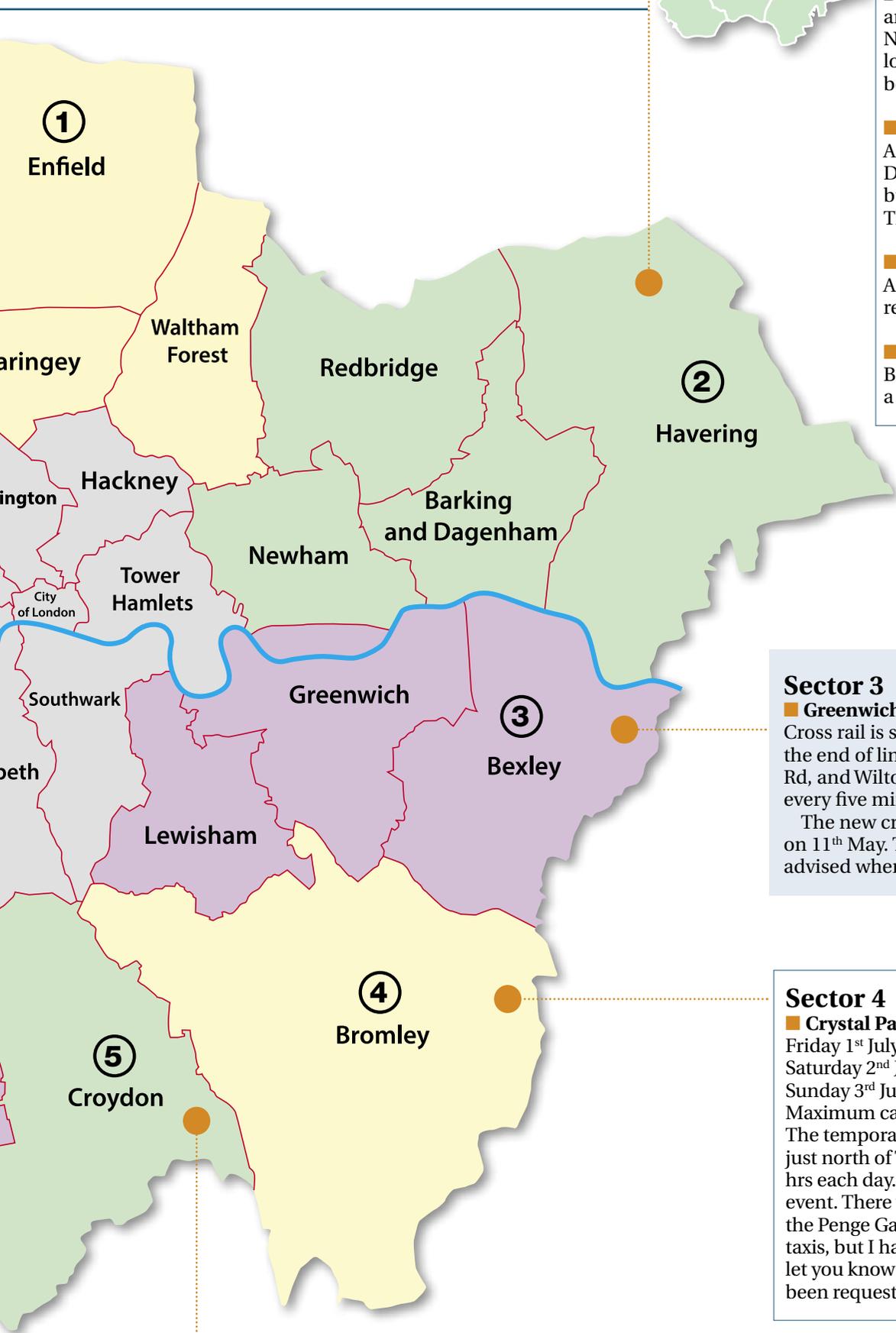


Sector 7

Kingston

Just a few points to take on board... as you will already know, Eden St Kingston has been made 'one way' for the next 12-14 weeks for major sewerage works – this doesn't affect the working of the rank, it just means you can only leave it in a southerly direction.

Sometime this year, Thanet St at the junction with Clarence St will become pedestrian for a six-month trial period. Initially, this will cause quite some confusion for the normal running public.



Sector 2

- ABBA Voyage**
Performances by ABBATARS of Abba music begin on 27th May in a purpose-built theatre in Pudding Mill Lane opposite Pudding Mill Lane DLR Station. An events rank has been discussed and site meeting held, but at the time of writing Newham Council are stalling on the precise location. It's a 3000-seat venue currently booking until December.
- Stratford International Rank**
A superb new rank is in place adjacent to the DLR Station so drivers should cease using the bus station rank as the site is due to be built on. The Westfield Rank is still in use.
- Custom House**
As that part of Crossrail opens, we shall be renewing our taxi rank request
- Barking Riverside Station**
Barking Riverside Station nears completion, and a rank was agreed during the planning stage.

Sector 3

- Greenwich/ Woolwich**
Cross rail is scheduled to start on 24th May, Abbeywood is the end of line. The ranks to service this are in Felixstone Rd, and Wilton Rd. It's the end of line and trains are due every five minutes.
The new cruise liners at Greenwich docks are due to start on 11th May. The ranks close by M&S. Future dates will be advised when available.

Sector 4

- Crystal Palace Event**
Friday 1st July 2022, 11:00 – 21:30 hrs
Saturday 2nd July 2022, 11:00 – 21:30 hrs
Sunday 3rd July 2022, 11:00 – 21:30 hrs
Maximum capacity of 42,000 on each day.
The temporary taxi rank will be on Crystal Palace Park Road, just north of Thicket Road. This will be available from 20:00 hrs each day. The cycle lane 'bollards' will be removed for the event. There will be signage within the event grounds and at the Penge Gate exit. As discussed, there will be space for four taxis, but I have made a request that this is increased – I will let you know as soon as I hear back. TPH Compliance have been requested to attend

Sector 5

- East Croydon**
At East Croydon taxi rank there are bottles dumped by someone containing urine. Ronnie our local rep has talked to the station about some sort of enforcement, and we are waiting to see what they are going to do about it. If anyone sees anybody dumping these, please let Ronnie know so that we can report them. Also, it would appear that someone has again removed our notice board, it's quite unfortunate as I don't think the LTDA will fork out for board no.4, it's a shame that someone has to stoop to this level, but there you go.



Booking Cabs with the Russian Secret Service?

“Way, way past ‘Nineteen Eighty-Four’ – FSB demand direct access to taxi database”

International correspondent

It's way, way past ‘Nineteen Eighty-Four’, George Orwell's dystopian social science fiction novel and cautionary tale which describes a terrifying world where governments control and watch everyone's lives. The novel was published in 1949, but these days the Russian government tries its best to improve on Orwell's predictions: soon you won't be able to take a cab in Russia without being spied on. Or is that nothing new?

FSB wants direct access to taxi database

For years, the Russian taxi trade has been clamouring for proper legislation for the taxi and ride-hailing industry. Now, a new taxi bill, drafted by the Ministry of Transport, contains an unexpected surprise. Like a bit of a sting in the tail, part of the new legislation is to provide the FSB, the Federal Service for Security of the Russian Federation, formerly the KGB, with direct real-time access to taxi databases.

Mid-May saw a new bill introduced to the State Duma, the Russian Parliament, which will eventually end up on the desk of Russian president Vladimir Putin for his final approval. The bill does not explain why the FSB should have access to data on taxi and ride-hailing users. News agencies have unsuccessfully tried to wring a comment out of the Ministry of Transport. Yandex Taxi, the leading taxi and ride-hailing company in Russia, also remained uncharacteristically schtum.

Check, check, check...

The concept has been on the Duma's database for three weeks now. This is how the Duma describes part of the bill: “The passenger taxi ordering service is obliged to provide the Federal Security Service with automated remote access to information systems and databases used for receiving, storing, processing and transmitting of orders for a passenger taxi and will be deployed in a manner specified by



Left: Is Gustav Hartmann's memorial the only statue of a taxi driver in the world? Photo Axel Rühle.

Top Right: Irina Zaripova, “No one will check these data from morning to night.”

Right: Surprise: no one in Russia has yet publicly expressed concerns about this planned new step in taxi legislation.



the Russian government.”

The main part of the new legislation regulates the relationship between drivers and so-called 'taxi aggregators', like Yandex Taxi, Uber and Gett. Jointly, the Russian Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Digital Transformation are developing an online database which will let these taxi and ride-hailing aggregators check that their drivers are properly licensed. In Russia (and, come to think of it, closer to home as well), the person at the wheel is not always the one who is licensed for the job. Come to think of it, Uber might like to buy this new top-notch FSB-programme... Check, check, check...

‘No one will check data from morning to night’

Popular ‘taxi aggregators’ are already informally sharing data with the FSB. Irina Zaripova, head of the very active Public Taxi Development Council, explains that taxi companies currently have 30 days to comply with data requests. “Many fear that the FSB could get information about customers at any time,” Zaripova told the Kommersant FM radio station late March, when news leaked on the new taxi bill.

Since the invasion of Ukraine on February 24, Russian authorities have clamped down further on public freedoms. Since then, FSB agents must have the taxi and ride-hailing data — still by informal ‘request’ — within an hour. “When it comes to national security, very often there are situations where something has happened and FSB

agents need this data practically within an hour to solve or prevent a crime,” cautious Zaripova offers as a ‘plausible’ explanation.

She also insists that “no one will check these data from morning to night. The draft law is not about the transfer of data, but about access to the database, an approach that is easier to implement.” The draft concept also does not specify exactly what type of data is involved. Surprise: no one in Russia has yet publicly expressed concerns about this planned new step in taxi legislation. But who knows, with the advance of IT-technology, it may soon be possible to book cabs directly with the secret service...

The only cab driver memorial?

Over to Berlin now. As far as I know the only memorial for a cab driver in the world (correct me if I'm wrong) can be found at Potsdamer Bridge in Berlin. It bears the name of Gustav Hartmann, the last horse-drawn cabbie in the German capital. With him I'd like to remember a man who has been very influential on the local, national and international taxi scene: Heinz Peter, a typical, outspoken but also charming Berliner, who started his career as a taxi driver in 1946 in the British sector of Berlin and became one of the leading figures on the world's taxi stage. He passed away a few weeks ago, aged 94, but particularly needs to be remembered for one thing: from 1991 onward, Heinz tirelessly campaigned to have a statue

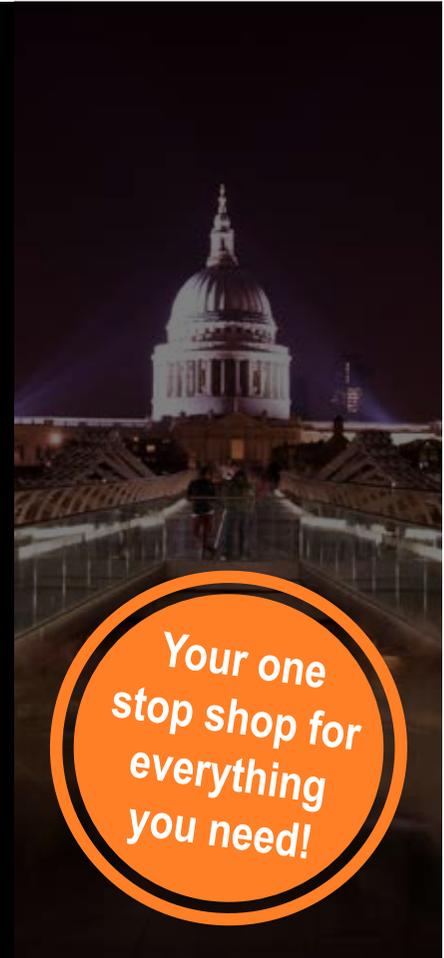
of a Berlin taxi driver, Gustav Hartmann (1853-1938), erected in his home town.

What was so special about Hartmann? He was the last of the horse drawn cab-operators in Berlin. Cabdrivers around him switched to cars and the economic downturn in the Twenties dealt him a nasty blow. As a protest, he drove his cab from Berlin to Paris, just to show what he and his horse, Grasmus were capable of. This ‘Tour de France’ of a 165 days and 2,000 km (1,243 miles) inspired hundreds of thousands along the route and won him the admiration of both Germans and French. It earned him the nickname of ‘Iron Gustav’ and a film with the same name celebrated his adventures. After his return to Berlin, September 12, 1928, Hartmann set up a fund to help colleagues who had fallen on bad times. Besides campaigning for a monument, Heinz Peter did exactly the same, setting up the Gustav Hartmann Support Foundation to support local Berlin taxi colleagues. For that and much more he should be remembered. Go visit the statue of colleague Gustav Hartmann when you're in Berlin next.

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Who are the Adam Smith Institute?



"I'm going to give the report the due deference that it deserves. Absolutely none. Instead, I'm going to look at the institute from where the report was spawned..."

A man in black

The weather and the stripper

And there it is, with all the regularity of the British weather or the striking of Big Ben upon the hour, every hour (current refurbishment excepted of course), the Adam Smith Institute emerges, wheeled out like an ageing stripper at a low-rent stag do. The neoliberal think tank pops up at the point that you most expect them – when the Uber share price dips and/or when they are looking to recruit. It's utterly infallible.

Now as a journalist, writer, scribbler, crayon-muncher or idiot, whatever label you wish to bestow on me (and I've had a few, not all complementary), I try to take an impartial view on anything that I write. However, the Adam Smith Institute's report into the taxi industry entitled: *"A Fare Shake - Reforming Taxis for the 21st Century"*, has stretched me to the very limits of impartiality. In fact, it's safe to say that I've been overcome by an equal combination of mirth, anger and incredulity – therefore I'm going to give the report the due deference that it deserves. Absolutely none. Instead, I'm going to look at the institute from where the report was spawned.

The hard-bitten gum-shoe

Now when I saw the name of the author of the report, I couldn't decide whether he sounded like a hard-bitten gum-shoe or a brand of coffee. Development and Research Officer at the Adam Smith Institute, Maxwell Marlow, is clearly an intelligent fellow, holding a first-class BSc in Politics & History (Joint Hons) from the London School of Economics & Political Science, where he is now an MA candidate. He is also a Don Lavoie Fellow in Political Economy at the Mercatus Centre, George Mason University, and a Fellow at the Consumer Choice Centre. I will repeat – he is extremely clever. However, an expert in the taxi or private

hire industry he most certainly isn't.

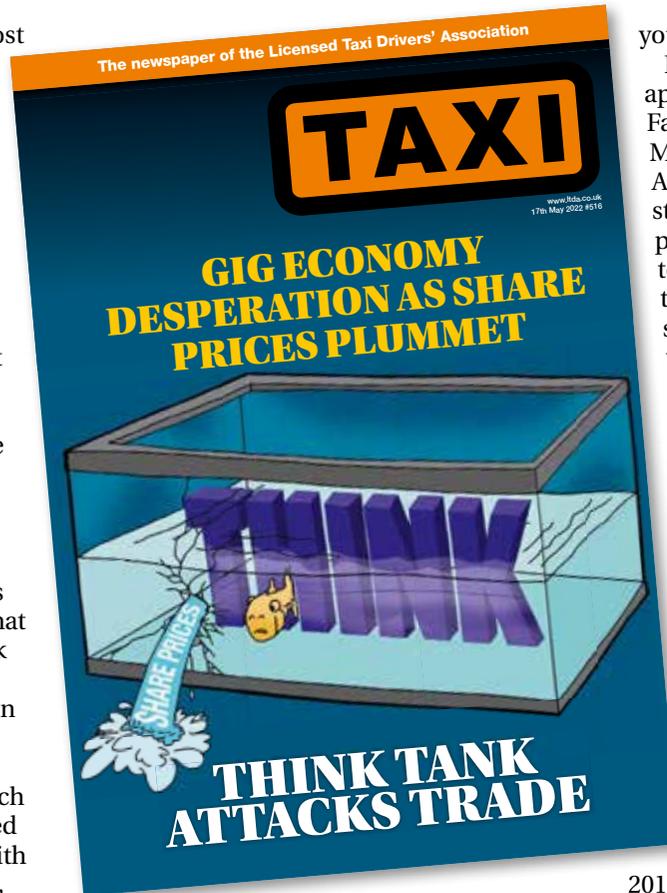
A brief bio

The Adam Smith Institute (ASI) are a neoliberal think tank and lobbying group formed in 1977, by Madsen Pirie and brothers Eamonn and Stuart Butler. During the Thatcher era, think tanks became highly influential, with the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS); the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) – remember that name, I'll come back to that one; and the ASI being relied upon by the government of the day for policy. Unlike the CPS, which had been established by Thatcher and Keith Joseph; and the IEA, co-founded by Antony Fisher (remember that name too, I'll be coming back to that as well), which focused on more theoretical matters, the ASI were employed to directly produce policy. Despite this role, the Institute developed an iconoclastic reputation, in fact Madsen Pirie has said of the activity of the organisation *"we propose things which people regard as being on the edge of lunacy. The next thing you know, they're on the edge of policy"*.

The Institute for Economic Affairs

Now moving sideways, The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) is a think tank co-founded by Antony Fisher in 1955 and is what could be described as the 'older, more established sister' of the ASI. So what, I hear you groan (stick with me here), Antony Fisher, the man who co-founded the IEA also helped in the founding of the ASI.

Both of these think tanks promote economic liberalism and philosophies such as privatisation, austerity and deregulation along with a *laissez-faire* approach to free trade. The shared commonality between both of these institutes is that



they have been extremely critical of the highly regulated and highly qualified licensed London taxi industry as well as the rest of the industry countrywide, promoting an almost complete deregulation of the profession. It is hardly surprising that they have been highly supportive of Uber and their business model – a model which potentially destroys competition through artificially low pricing, in essence, collapsing the very structure of both the taxi and the PH industry from an economic perspective, leaving drivers working for an obscenely low wage, despite rising overheads.

Connections?

Now here is the coup de gras: June 2015 saw Rachel Whetstone, the wife of Steven Hilton, David Cameron's former director of strategy, become Uber's Senior Vice-President of Policy and Communications. Whetstone's maternal grandfather was one Antony Fisher, the same Antony Fisher who founded the IEA and helped the co-founders of the ASI. In another twist, Whetstone's mother, Linda Whetstone, worked with Fisher's think tanks. Have

you joined up the dots yet?

Interestingly, when appearing on the Nigel Farage's show, Steve McNamara challenged the ASI's Maxwell Marlow, by stating that he (Marlow) was paid to argue in relation to the deconstruction of the taxi industry. Marlow struggled in his response to the LTDA General Secretary, in fact, to me he looked like a rabbit caught firmly in the headlights of a taxi. However, the point was a pertinent one given that the ASI are lobbyists – so this begs the question, did Uber commission the report or was it the Transport Select Committee or another entity? Answers on a postcard please.

This isn't the first time that the ASI have rattled their chain in relation to the taxi industry. In

2017, Former head of projects (now head of research) at the ASI, Sam Dumitriu, was questioned by The Sun newspaper about Uber initially being refused a license to operate by TfL. He said, *"this decision is not about safety, it is about protecting the market share for black cab drivers even though they don't offer a better service or competitive prices."* In fact, Dumitriu seemed to be overtly anti-taxi to the point of irrational when undertaking subsequent interviews regarding the trade.

The upside

Thankfully, the ASI seems to be a toothless tiger where the taxi industry is concerned – but the industry cannot afford to be complacent or rest on its laurels. What seems fanciful today can seem highly credible tomorrow. Given the existential threat facing the taxi industry due to low uptake of the Knowledge, Maxwell Marlow's report could be more pertinent than we give it credit for. Anyway, in honour of the Adam Smith Institute's endeavours, I shall be honouring them by listening to the Genesis album *Selling England by The Pound* – they were always so much better with Peter Gabriel on vocals.

Who's got your back?

3pts
£175 fine



Charged with jumping a red light

6 points
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Charged with careless driving

NOT GUILTY



Acquitted on all charges

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Charged with road rage assault

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TAXI and LTDA Member Mail

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Subject: A (Book)-Mark of Respect

Dear Editor,

While in London last week, a taxi driver picked up my wife and I from just outside Regents Park, London and took us to the Hilton Hotel opposite Paddington underground station. The book I had been reading while in Regents Park was left in the taxi by mistake. The book was not that important as it could be re-ordered from Amazon. What was of utmost importance was the leather bookmark within the book. I was a police officer for 32 years and this was a very special bookmark as only 50 were issued at the time. The bookmark shows the crests in gold colour along the length of the bookmark of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the Royal Irish Constabulary, and the Constabulary of Ireland (the last two before Northern Ireland was established - which is 100 years this year).

To me, this was a major loss and staff at the Hilton tried without success to help me. I did not have the driver's licence number from the taxi. Being a very old adult, I should have shrugged and forgot about my error, accepting my bookmark was forever gone. I had great difficulty in doing this and you will probably correctly think I am making a big deal of just a bookmark... but this really spoiled the holiday to London.

You may imagine my absolute joy when the taxi driver came to the hotel two days later and told the staff he had driven a tall white male and a female from the Philippines to the Hilton and asked, were we still guests? The staff could confirm this and reunited me with both book and bookmark later the same day. I think the trip to Regents Park and return was last Tuesday but cannot be certain of that now as so many places within the City were visited during the week.

If you could possibly track down this driver, I would ask you to pass on my gratitude to him for being so honest and taking the time to deliver the book to the Hilton. 'Thank you' are very easy words to write, but I really do appreciate the efforts of the driver and I am so very glad to have my bookmark back again.

I know your Association has more urgent matters to deal with, but may I request please that perhaps through your own media you can trace this driver and make him fully aware of my great appreciation for his efforts. He did not need to correct my mistake and I will be forever grateful to him.

Kind regards from Northern Ireland,
Iain Wylie



Subject: Doom and Gloom Merchants

Dear Editor,

Having been pushing a cab round the streets since the late 80's I think I have done my apprenticeship and have seen most stuff in the trade and heard all the conspiracy theories from the loudest cabbies. They used to be confined to the green huts and cafes and occasional ranks and were avoidable to any cabbie with a brain cell - but now in 2022 their talking shops have become social media.

For an old (ish) bloke, I like a bit of Facebook, even venturing onto Instagram to keep track of various and far-flung family members, but a short visit to twitter showed me that the cabbies who dominate there are the ones I used to avoid in the cafes. I quickly came off before the negativity, lies and doom and gloom had me calling the doctor for a course of anti-depressants. Unfortunately, with so many other smart-minded cabbies avoiding twitter, the D&G merchants are now all over facebook. It's literally unbelievable - we are doing better than we have ever done before and instead of going to work, the same people spend all day on Facebook moaning... why?

The biggest whinge at the moment is the traffic and the cost of a cab, "why is it not cheaper" or "If it was £40 grand, they would sell

loads" My son in law runs a small plumbing business and just bought a new electric van, just a standard transit type van - it was £58,000! Nothing in it, three seats and an empty back (which he then had to pay £1500 to have lined and fitted out). Why do cabbies think we should somehow get something cheaper than it costs to make? Sure, they are expensive, so is every other new car and van, and by the way, my son in law had to wait nine months for his van.

As for the traffic, yep, it's terrible and getting worse, but constantly whinging achieves nothing and the long blogs and posts all identifying as cabbies abusing the Mayor is hardly going to help! It's this "I've done the Knowledge, I am entitled" attitude that gets my goat, they are as bad as liberal cyclists who hate everyone who is not in lycra on a bike!

Having written all that, rant over, I did get one benefit, having seen these same people all condemning Taxiapp I thought it might be worth a punt and signed up. At the moment, there is no commission and whilst not mega busy, I have done more than my share of good jobs on there. If you are like me, not interested in negativity and the D&G, sign up and give it ago.

Yours sincerely,
Graham Huneball



Subject: LTDA backed cabbie v Met Police & CPS

Dear Editor,

In September last year, at a routine badge and bill stop on Millbank, A Met Police traffic officer issued me a ticket for a 'lump bulge or tear', on my nearside front tyre. There was in fact a 10mm cut / nick. The size of one side of a 20p coin! When the ticket arrived through the post (£100 plus three points), I meet with Barney at the LTDA office to discuss my options as I felt I'd been charged wilfully and wrongly. He approved a meeting with the in-house solicitor, John Luckhurst and after consultation agreed we had a case to fight. I'm very grateful that the LTDA then agreed to fund my defence. John Luckhurst

then set about a comprehensive defence strategy including the services of a tyre expert who would have attended court - 'would have' until the CPS saw common sense...

And on Friday 13th May, eight months after the police stop, they dropped the case against me. A big thank you goes out to John Luckhurst and The LTDA for their financial support and strength. We taxi drivers must be represented by a strong, respected organisation and the association has come up trump's again.

Thank you,
Peter White.
Badge 25995
Driver of 44 (clean) years

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The Thames flood of '28

Over the centuries, the River Thames has had a propensity to flood from time to time. Seeing the southern bank of the Thames by Putney Bridge underwater, is not an uncommon sight – but did you know that the last major flood which hit Central London was in 1928?

The flood, hit London's riverside on 7th January 1928 and claimed 14 lives. Thousands of people were rendered homeless, and the volume of water caused part of Chelsea Embankment to collapse. Flood damage occurred as far west as Putney and Hammersmith as well as Greenwich and Woolwich to the East of London.

Millbank, one of the most badly affected areas saw the demolition of warehouses and residential dwellings, allowing new offices to be built and a new Lambeth Bridge was constructed to replace the previous bridge. Other by-products of the flood included the raising of the height of the embankments. Interestingly, proposals were made for the construction of a Thames flood barrier, but these came to nothing, due to concerns surrounding shipping access.

The flood occurred after a Christmas of heavy snow falling in the Cotswolds, near the source of the Thames, followed by torrential rain in the New Year. This created a rise in the volume of water combining with a high spring tide. As of this wasn't enough, a tropical storm in the North Sea raised water levels by four feet at Southend.

This was however only part of the problem because the Thames had also been dredged by six feet to allow access for larger vessels, and seawater was able to flow up the Thames on a high tide, increasing the flow on a mean tide and producing the highest water levels ever recorded in the Thames in London. The flood peaked at a level of 18 ft 3 inches above the datum line – nearly a foot higher than the previous record. Ultimately this flood along with the floods of 1953 on the East coast of England as well as flooding in 1959 prompted the design and construction of the Thames Flood Barrier, which opened in 1994.

From Handel to Hendrix

It is highly unlikely that you would have ever heard of the composer George Frideric Handel. Born in Saxony, Germany in 1685, the court surgeon's son performed as an organist in his first opera at the age of 17. In 1706, he travelled to Rome to hone his skills as a composer, producing numerous operas and oratorios. This eventually drew the attention of influential English visitors, who were keen for him to perform in London. Moving to London in 1711, he had an immediate success with his first opera in the capital, *Rinaldo*. After establishing himself in English society, he was eventually granted British citizenship and took a lease on a house in Brook Street, Mayfair in the summer of 1723 and lived there until his death 36 years later. However, did you know that Jimi Hendrix and Handel (bar 250 or so years) were next door neighbours?

James Marshall 'Jimi' Hendrix was actually born Johnny Allen Hendrix in November 1942. The man who is widely regarded as the greatest guitarist in history only actually had a mainstream career spanning four years. Hendrix began playing guitar at the surprisingly late age of 15. After being discharged by the army in 1961, he began gigging, playing in backing bands for the Isley brothers and Little Richard among others up until 1965. In 1966 he joined Curtis Knight and the Squires before coming to the attention of Animal's bassist Chas Chandler in 1966. Upon Chandler becoming his manager, Hendrix moved to England and very quickly established himself as major artist with his first two singles, *Hey Joe* and *Purple Haze* (released in 1966 and 1967 respectively), with his first album *Are You Experienced?* following in May 1967. After spending much of 1968 recording and touring in the USA, Hendrix returned to London, moving into a flat in 23 Brook Street and for the next few months used the flat as his base, giving interviews there and writing new songs.

On learning that Handel used to live next door it was documented that he went to the One Stop Record Shop in South Molton Street and bought some classical albums – including Handel's *Messiah* and *Water Music*. Hendrix died on September 18, 1970 aged just 27, which rendered him as part of 'the 27 club', the alleged statistical anomalous spike in the number of musicians and actors dying at that age. On September 14, 1997, 23 Brook Street was chosen for an English Heritage Blue Plaque commemorating Hendrix life and work. It is the only officially recognised Hendrix residence in the world. The Handel Museum is situated at 25 Brook Street and incorporates the Hendrix Museum.



The St Pancras walrus

The walrus is generally confined to the cold waters of both the Arctic and subarctic seas, as well as the warmer climes of the Pacific Ocean. It is highly unlikely that you would ever come across one near St Pancras Station – however, in 2003 an archaeology team on the hunt for old relics did just that. Among the bones and artefacts buried in an old cemetery, Phil Emery and his team discovered the remains of a four-metre-long walrus.

The discovery was made after excavation began to facilitate the extension of the Eurostar at St Pancras Station.



Archaeologists began digging up the graveyard of St Pancras Old Church, which is home to over 1,500 bodies and situated in Pancras Road. With an archaeological dig not being an uncommon occurrence when major building works take place, the team would have expected to find the valuable or the unusual, but not a two-tonne, flipped marine mammal housed in a coffin – with eight other human bodies.

Mass graves were not uncommon in the 19th century, with major epidemics such as smallpox, typhoid and cholera plaguing London as well as the rest of the UK. In fact, the cemetery at St Pancras Old Church held the remains of up to 44,000 people between 1822 and 1854 – but there is no explanation as to why a walrus had been buried in the church's grounds. It has been suggested that the walrus, along with those sharing the coffin, were subjected to medical dissection.

This of course is conjecture – we may never unearth the mystery of the walrus in the graveyard at St Pancras. **TAXI**

Meet the LTDA legal team

Driving a taxi for many hours of the day in one of the world's most congested cities is a challenging task. Cabbies often fall victim to complaints and false accusations from police, passengers and other road users (especially cyclists and PHV drivers). When these events arise it's



comforting for LTDA members to know that they have the immediate support of the best specialist in-house legal team in the business. The success rate of the LTDA Legal Team is second to none. In fact, according to Criminal Justice Statistics, LTDA members defended by our team are **FOUR** times more likely than the national average to be acquitted of allegations made against them.



John Luckhurst
Senior Partner



Charlotte Collett
Solicitor



Farouk Merdjane

I was involved in an accident whilst driving my cab in Shepherd's Bush. I wasn't too worried about it because I was confident that it wasn't my fault and the insurance would sort it out. A short while later I received a summons for driving without due care and attention. I had no witnesses to help me, but the other driver had produced "independent" witnesses out of thin air! I quickly contacted the LTDA's legal department and they immediately visited the scene of the incident and arranged for professional photographs to be recorded. I later appeared before magistrates at Lavender Hill Court, where the LTDA barrister tied the witnesses up in knots and demonstrated they could not have seen what they said they had. Thank you, LTDA legal department; you gave me an excellent service.



Tom Poulson

I joined the LTDA when I first got my badge and it turned out to be the best thing I ever did. Due to an unfortunate set of circumstances I ended up getting my licence revoked by TfL. I turned to John Luckhurst, one of the LTDA's legal eagles, for assistance. John went to great lengths to prepare a detailed appeal against TfL's decision and briefed a brilliant barrister to represent me in court. The appeal was successful and saved my livelihood. LTDA subscriptions are only four quid a week, which is less than a pint, and three pounds can be claimed against tax. I can't believe that every cabbie in town is not a member.

“FOUR times more likely than the NATIONAL average to get an acquittal”

Ken Jackson

The LTDA's solicitors and support team, could not have been more helpful when I first informed them that an allegation had been made against me. The LTDA was quick to check all the CCTV cameras in the area and arrange for plans of the location to be drawn up. Witness statements were also obtained and Mr Demidecki was successful in getting the Crown Prosecution Service to drop the case against me. Thanks LTDA - an all-round brilliant service!



Paul Baxter

I was filled with confidence the very first time I contacted the LTDA's legal team and as it turned out, I certainly wasn't disappointed. They did a great job in sorting out my problem with TfL. They've got to be the best in the business!



“LTDA subscriptions cost less than four quid a week”



John Hilton



Learn Rob's tales of notorious London crime to increase your tips!

Rob's history tips

Over the years, London has harboured some truly notorious criminals. Here's the story of one of them... John Hilton. At 9pm on November 17th 1962, a stolen car rolled up to The Driftway – a short dead-end off Streatham Road, Mitcham – which, in those days, was home to a *Co-op* depot. Inside the vehicle were four men, all armed, and disguised with hats and stocking masks.

Robbery

The getaway driver remained behind the wheel, whilst the other three got out; one stationing himself at the depot's entrance, the other two entering the building where they barged into the office and ordered employees to the floor. Little else was required as the safe was already open. They quickly scooped out the £400 (around £6,200 in today's money) which lay within.

Shot in the face

As the robbery was in progress however, Dennis Hurden, a 35-year-old lorry driver and father of two who lived on nearby Glebe Court, arrived to start his night shift. Unaware of what was transpiring, Dennis approached the depot, leading the lookout to shoot him in the face. The gunfire sent the villains sprinting back towards the Austin Cambridge, firing behind them at random as they



“Inside the vehicle were four men, all armed, and disguised with hats and stocking masks...”



fled the scene. Fortunately, no other staff were injured, although tragically Dennis Hurden died soon after at St James's Hospital, Balham. After fleeing, the gang switched to another stolen motor – a Wolseley 500 – which they ditched off Mitcham Lane. Evidence from this abandoned vehicle led to the arrest of three of the gang, all north Londoners: Charles Connelly (of Priory Road,



Hornsey), John Hilton (no fixed address) and Phillip Kelly (of Ainger Road, Hampstead).

Squealer

Kelly was quick to squeal – he named the fourth member as George Thatcher of Caledonian Road, claiming he was the one responsible for shooting Dennis Hurden. There was no forensic evidence to support this however, and at the gang's trial at the Old Bailey in February 1963, Thatcher claimed he'd "*never been to Mitcham in my life*", and that he was at the cinema that fateful night watching *Mutiny on the*

Bounty. Despite this, Thatcher was found guilty of Hurden's murder and sentenced to hang. This was later commuted to life, and he continued to protest his innocence until his death in 2014. The other three received life sentences, and this is where we now turn our attention to John Hilton.

Old-school

Hilton was released on licence in the late '70s, and within weeks he was back to his old ways. At 6.50pm on 28th February 1978, he and an accomplice named Alan Roberts headed to Golders Green. Their target was a 55-year-old

Hatton Garden diamond merchant named Leo Grunhut. Leo was old-school – he had no time for safety deposit boxes, preferring instead to deliver his merchandise in person. As such, he often carried large quantities of cash and precious stones, and on that chilly evening he had £250,000 worth (well over a million today) of valuables on him as he returned to his home on Limes Avenue.

Sawn-off

When he approached the front door, Leo was confronted by Hilton and Roberts who threatened him with a sawn-off shotgun. Leo fled, and as he did, Hilton shot him in the back. The callous pair grabbed Leo's diamond-packed briefcase and fled in a bronze Ford Cortina. Leo Grunhut was rushed to the Royal Free Hospital where he died three weeks later. Being a known face, Alan Roberts – a Bermondsey hard-man – was quickly named by police as a suspect. Little did they know that he too was dead...

Shallow grave

When Hilton fired at Leo, Roberts had been caught in the crossfire, taking a bullet to the thigh. Indeed, a long trail of blood had been found at the murder scene. Hilton had sped Roberts to a lock-up in south London, inside which he bled to death. To solve this dilemma, Hilton then drove Roberts' body out to the village of Stone near Dartford and buried it in a shallow grave beside a railway embankment. Despite this scare, Hilton just couldn't stop thieving, and in June 1981 he was back inside after landing a 14-year-sentence for various robberies – although the authorities were

unaware of his involvement in Grunhut's murder.

Prison break

Hilton was banged up at Kingston prison near Portsmouth, from where, in October 1990, he broke out... Although on the run, Hilton still couldn't resist the urge to rob, and a month after his escape he blagged £90,000 from a jewellers in Brighton. He then decided to go big, and headed back to London where, on December 4th, he burst into a jewellers on Burlington Arcade, brandishing a sawn-off shotgun. After grabbing half a million pounds worth of loot and fleeing, the two brothers who ran the shop – Nigel and Alister Norman – gave chase along the arcade, wrongly believing the gun to be fake. Fortunately, a policeman happened to be nearby, and he too joined the pursuit. Although Hilton fired shots, he was bravely tackled to the ground.

Extremely dangerous

Now in his 60s, Hilton was carted off to Brixton prison where he decided to tell all. He confessed to the murder of Leo Grunhut, and accidental shooting of Alan Roberts, leading police to the grave in which he'd buried his mate 12 years before. In the wake of his escape, spree and subsequent confession, Hilton was again jailed for life. Despite his age, he was still considered to be an extremely dangerous individual, and in 2006 (by which point he was 77), Hilton became one of those rare prisoners to have their sentence switched to a 'full-life' term, meaning he'd never be released. If still alive, Hilton would now be in his 90s... ■ TAXI



Night Terrors

"There are of course issues which occur during the daytime, but the dynamic seems to shift and become a little more menacing after dark..."



Night work update

For many taxi drivers servicing the night-time economy, a sense of frustration can start to permeate due to the lack of protection and enforcement afforded to our industry. There are of course issues which occur during the daytime, but the dynamic seems to shift and become a little more menacing after dark...

Parking on ranks

One of the biggest bugbears that taxi drivers have to deal with during the evening is the car driver who decides to park his vehicle on a taxi rank that you wish to service. The level of irritation that this causes can reach an almost irrational level – but what can taxi drivers do to tackle this menace?

The first thing is to stay calm. Having an argument solves absolutely nothing. It needs to be recognised that a car or van driver may not even be aware that they've parked on a taxi rank due to the rank being badly marked – the rank opposite the Dominion Theatre in Tottenham Court Road, is a prime example of this. It is worth making a note of badly marked ranks and informing the LTDA, who in turn can contact the relevant authority to re-mark the rank.

Who do you report it to?

If a rank is plainly obviously marked, then this becomes a different matter – but there are ways of dealing with this without too much risk to yourself. If nobody is in a vehicle which is parked on a rank, simply park up and take a couple of photographs, making sure that the photos are time and date stamped. Forward them to Transport for London (TfL) or the relevant council. Parking on a taxi rank is subject to a PCN contravention under code 45, which states: "Only a taxi may park on a taxi rank. Other vehicles may not park, even to pick up a passenger."

There is some slight confusion in relation to TfL's website, which could seem contradictory. This is because they say that they are responsible for appointing taxi ranks on the public highway in all Greater London boroughs, with

the exception of the City of London. However, they THEN go on to say: "cars and other vehicles parked on taxi ranks can be reported to the relevant borough, or to us if the taxi rank is on a red route, so action can be taken. Private hire vehicles (PHVs) parked on ranks or unattended taxis on ranks should be reported directly to us so as we can take action." So, which is it, do you report the offence to the borough or TfL?

The answer is as follows: if the taxi rank is on a red route, report the offence to TfL. If the rank is on yellow lines, then it's an offence to be reported to the borough. However, there is nothing stopping you reporting the offence to both TfL and the borough – thus covering both bases.

"The level of irritation that this causes can reach an almost irrational level – but what can taxi drivers do to tackle this menace?"

The issue can become slightly precarious if somebody is in the vehicle. It's never wise to get out of your taxi and confront anybody. If you are however able to stop alongside somebody, you could politely explain that they are parked on a working rank and are under a camera, which will 'nick' them. Surprisingly drivers can be quite grateful to you for pointing this out to them – even when there is no camera! If a driver just plainly refuses to move, again just take all of the details and report to both TfL and the relevant borough.

To hell in a leg-cart

Pedicabs are a general source of annoyance across the board, but when they've decided to plot up en-masse on a taxi rank, what can be done? The simple answer there is absolutely nothing. Until licensing is brought in, they cannot be issued with a penalty charge notice by a civil enforcement officer because

they aren't a motorised vehicle, and they carry no registration mark. To add insult to injury, Transport for London's compliance officers have no jurisdiction over them either, so they cannot move them on. The only individuals that can actually 'do' anything are the police, however unless they are in the area, they are unlikely to attend a complaint involving a few pedicabs on a taxi rank. Once a licensing regime has been established for these vehicles, it should be easier to take some form of action against them. Again, do not exit your vehicle to confront them. There have been reports of some of the pedicab operators being armed – it's not worth losing your life or your livelihood over.

Time-restricted ranks

Always remember some ranks are time restricted - the ranks at New Change in the City and Holywell Lane in Shoreditch are a prime example. It may actually be the case that you are ranking up illegally by forming rank outside of prescribed hours, therefore technically not being on a rank at all – so keep an eye on the restrictions. Also, leaving a taxi on a working rank is a definite 'no-no', an offence which falls under the jurisdiction of both the compliance team and the police. Civil enforcement officers cannot take enforcement actions on operational taxi ranks. ■ TAXI

Useful links

If you need to stop and take a break, look on TfL's website for where the nearest rest-rank may be sited – there are plenty of them dotted around London. You can report ranking offences at the following address: <https://tfl.gov.uk/forms/12368.aspx?cid=tph-report>

Further information regarding taxi ranks, including a handy booklet showing where every rank in London is situated can be found here: <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/taxis-and-private-hire/taxi-ranks>

‘The Professionals’

– What sets those with ‘The Knowledge’ apart from the rest?

What does it mean to be a professional in 2022? When does an occupation or a job become professionalised? What makes those with ‘The Knowledge’ different from other “... suppliers of transportation services...?”

A brief background search produces suggestions as to what the make-up of a ‘professional activity’ might involve. Modern definitions include notions of ‘accountability; integrity; competency; knowledge and qualifications’ – deprive a Knowledge Boy or Girl of a 5G network and these skills would still exist, though some other ‘suppliers of transportation services’ might well struggle!

Some of the key ingredients of ‘professionalism’ involve:

‘The deployment of formal certified learning’

Can other ‘suppliers of transportation services’ really claim to be engaged in doing this? Possibly, though that might depend on the depth and quality of learning involved in order to be accredited. In what world can those that pass ‘The Knowledge’ be compared to the learning involved to obtain other road-based transportation service operator licenses?

‘A professional owns the power, skills and freedom to problem solve.’

It’s pretty certain that an individual having the means to purchase and blindly follow a mobile device with a sat-nav app doesn’t meet this threshold. ‘Knowledge Boys & Girls’ have in-built ‘chips and processors’ that deploy real knowledge, in real time. Out on the roads, real professionalism isn’t dependent on the battery life of a mobile device or if that device knows that the football kicked off late or is going to penalties - which will impact on both journey time and route choice.

‘A professional possesses the ability to make decisions in the best interests of others.’

We know that this level of responsibility is based on the use of specific, localised, operational expertise - rather than hoping a digital device can

provide an AA graded Knowledge rating of a route selection in line with traffic conditions, whilst ensuring a disabled passenger arrives at the entrance to their hotel which has suitable wheelchair access and porter assistance.

Those who possess ‘The Knowledge’ and have responded to the strength of the calling to the highest standards of the profession don’t just know the optimum route within an ever-changing landscape, they know its history too. If the formation of a professional identity is also about **‘providing a specialised service to society,’** those professionals with the ability to share that learning with their passengers are actually, inter-generational custodians of present-day and historical London knowledge. Black cab drivers are trusted ‘old school influencers’ in relation to the sites, attractions, facilities, services and cultural traditions of the capital - including being ambassadors of a historic trade, which is known as the best taxi service in the world.

All this, whilst transporting passengers in the most direct and safest manner, in accordance with codes, ethics and the standards of a professional community of operators.

Those with ‘The Knowledge’ have often picked up and are moving before a passenger has informed them of their destination - professionals are not sat around backing up traffic, typing postcodes into gadgets, in the hope a device can professionalise their practice and make them what they are not.

When people are lost - a professional finds them and gets them where they need to go. When they are too tired to go on - a professional takes the reins and when they are late for what’s important to them, professional road craft and knowledge get them to their destination safely and quickly.

So how are those with ‘The Knowledge’ valued and whose responsibility should it be to promote the identities and activities of such professionals, in turn separating them from other “suppliers of transportation services...?”

You are professionals. We know it.

Let’s ensure everybody else knows it and values it too.

■ **The LTDA are here to represent, protect and ensure recognition of the professional practice, identity and standards of our members.**



LTDA APPLICATION FORM

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone Mobile

Email Twitter

Date of Birth Badge No.

Badge colour (Please state whether green or yellow) Year badge obtained

Suburban badge sector numbers

Have you ever been a member of the LTDA before? (please tick) Yes No

Do you currently have points on your DVLA driving license? (please tick) Yes No

If Yes how many points do you have?

Please tick if you **DO NOT** wish to receive information from the LTDA and other related organisations in the future?

I understand that my application for membership of the Association must be approved by the Council of Management and that until this is confirmed I am not eligible to vote in relation to any form of Association matters. I agree that all benefits prior to approval of membership shall be at the discretion of the Council of Management.

Please note: We do not provide assistance for any matters that have occurred prior to you joining LTDA.

Signed Date

26

LTDA Basic Direct Debit Instructions

Instructions to your Bank/Building Society to pay Direct Debits:

Please complete parts 1 to 5 to instruct your branch to make direct payments from your account. Return form to **FREEPOST LTDA**

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3 Account number

4 Bank Sort Code - -

Banks/Building Societies may not accept instructions to pay Direct Debit from some types of account.

5 Signature(s)

Date



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The Direct Debit Guarantee

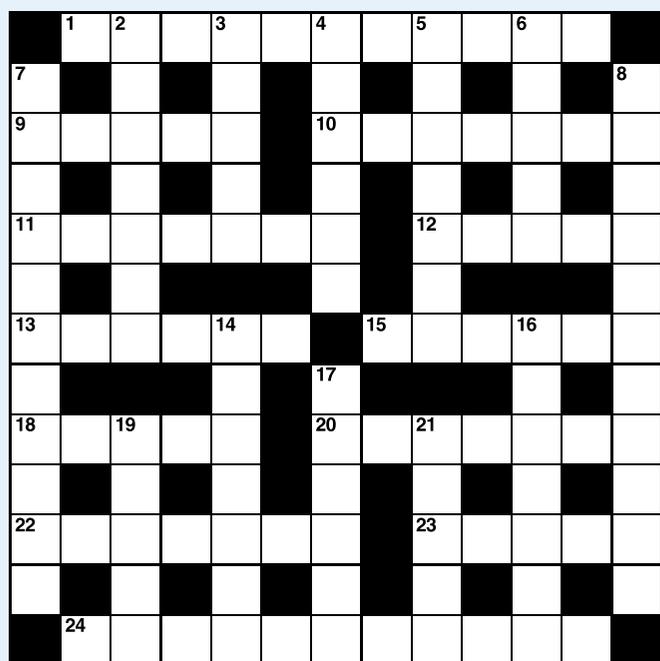


- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit LTDA will notify you (10 working days) in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request LTDA to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by LTDA, or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when LTDA asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

Puzzler page

So you know every street and every run between two points in London? Let's now see how your knowledge stands up to these brain twisters...

Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Rendering of a dramatic role (11)
- 9 Vacuous (5)
- 10 Good buy at a cheap price (7)
- 11 In a dapper manner (7)
- 12 Lower leg joint (5)
- 13 Despite that (4,2)
- 15 Occult (6)
- 18 Husband of your aunt (5)
- 20 Eyelash make-up (7)
- 22 Movable possession (7)
- 23 Terrible, dreadful (5)
- 24 Continually, non-stop (11)

DOWN

- 2 Originate (7)
- 3 Nimble-footed (5)
- 4 Cut of beefsteak (3-3)
- 5 By this time (7)
- 6 Oddball (5)
- 7 Words on a seaside hat? (4-2-5)
- 8 Out of your grasp (11)
- 14 Farm dog (7)
- 16 Weepy (7)
- 17 Old-fashioned term for underwear (6)
- 19 Set of links (5)
- 21 Discolour (5)

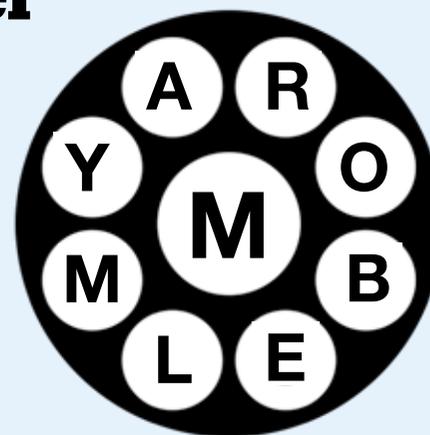
Sudoku

Have a go at this medium level Sudoku puzzle. Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 just once.

				8				4
						1		3
			4	5			7	
		8	1			4		2
7		5			2			
				6	4		8	7
	5		9					
		9			5			
6	2		3		7			

Wordwheel

How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Wordwheel? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used once only. At least one nine-letter word can be found. We found 39 words - can you do better?



Futoshiki

Fill in the blank squares so that each row and column contains all the numbers 1 - 5. Use any given numbers and the symbols that tell you if the number in the square is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

		<		>		
		>				
	<			>		3
5						

All answers to puzzler on p30



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- All cabs wanted. Tx4, euro 4, 5 & 6 also TXE wanted We come to you, any condition, very quick decision. cash paid instantly. 07702 554934
- De-commissioned your tx4's and Euro 5's? Earn more by selling outside London. We pay cash, collect, and drive away. Definitely still buying. John 07702 554934

• Taxis for sale, vitos and TX4s, plated and unplated - 07872504604

• 12 Reg TX4 elegance black 140k miles with full main dealer service history, 1 owner retiring sale £8,000 or £8,500 with new plate in your name. Excellent condition - 07740103099

• TX4 67 Euro 89,500 miles new water pump, drive belt plated until October. £27,500 - 07958383192

CABS FOR RENT

• TX4s for rent £220 per week based in Mitcham - 07450506656

• TX4s to rent from £190 Hertford based ring Mick - 07970824821

• TXEs, TX4s and vitos available from £230 per week contact Sabri - 07958973944

• All Mercedes vitos for rent, full backup, prices starting from £200 please call - 07956211478

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• Cabs for sale. Main Dealer service history. Non-fleet cabs. New stock daily. Cabs also wanted. Finance Paid 07957 465423

• Vito 113Cdi Euro5 black 27/02/12 61 plate 191,178 miles, not currently plated as I am retired, VGC Inspected in Epping, £7,250 - 07753435449

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D-Day Commemorations



TAXI chats with Charity Vice President, Dick Goodwin about the trip to Normandy in early June...

TAXI Hi Dick, good to talk to you again. After the success of the trip to The Netherlands, I understand you are off to the continent again?

Dick: Hi! We are indeed - on the 3rd of June we are taking a group of veterans to Normandy for the D Day commemorations.

TAXI How many veterans are you taking?

Dick: On this trip we hope to take 24 veterans and about 30 cabs. Sadly, as the years pass, the days when we could go over with 100 plus cabs have long gone and we know that for each trip there will be disappointed volunteer drivers who would have loved to have joined us. Our trips are predictably getting smaller, but I am delighted that the warmth of feeling on the continent for these veterans is getting stronger with each year that passes.

TAXI What are the veterans most looking forward to?

Dick: As we have not been able to travel to Normandy since 2019, the whole trip will be very special as it may well be the last time some of the veterans are able to travel. Having said that, so many of our veterans continue to amaze us with their determination to travel with us whenever possible and as well as the veterans in their 90's we will have veterans aged 100, 102 and 103 with us.

If I was to predict, I think two of the highlights will be on the 4th and 6th of June.

On our first day, we will be visiting the impressive British Normandy Memorial at Ver sur Mer. Last year we had been invited to the opening of this magnificent memorial which sits above Gold



Dick Goodwin, Vice President, Taxi Charity for Military Veterans



Taxi Charity Veterans at Sword Beach , Normandy for D Day 75 - June 2019

beach, but pandemic restrictions meant that we couldn't travel. Instead, we took our veterans to the National Memorial Arboretum over D Day weekend to watch the opening on a big screen. To finally be able to pay our respects here will be very poignant for veterans and drivers alike.

Also, the service at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Ranville on the 6th of June is always a very moving experience. The veterans are invited to sit at the front and have opportunity to lay wreaths. The location, the prayers, the music, and the involvement of today's troops makes the occasion very special and the perfect way to remember those who fell on D Day.

But we should not underestimate that for drivers and carers who have never been with us before, seeing the immense stretches of the Normandy beaches and thinking about what these men did in June 1944 can be very emotional.

TAXI Your veterans must have amazing stories?

Dick: They do indeed, but they are a very humble bunch who mainly tell us that they didn't do much.

On this trip we will be joined by Marie Scott who was presented with the Legion D'Honneur for her part in D Day. She transmitted messages to and from the beaches on D Day from deep underground

at the command centre in Fort Southwick. When asked about that day, she always says that when she lifted the handle on the transistor radio to receive a message from the beaches, she could hear the horror of war. We also have Bill Gladden, the WWII veteran who paints, that you spoke with recently. He flew into Normandy on a wooden glider which was so big that it carried a tank and eight motorbikes. Bill was shot in the ankle and spent the next three years in hospital. Roy Maxwell will also be with us, he is 100, and on D day was part of No.4 Commando, who landed on Sword beach. He was piped ashore by Bill Mullen, and we will attend a short ceremony by his good friend Bill's statue at Coleville Montgomery.

TAXI I've had a quick look at the itinerary, and this seems like a huge undertaking moving so many people around?

Dick: It certainly is. We are lucky to have an advisor in France, who helps us to liaise with the French authorities, plans the activities and the very important menus and timings of food, as we all know an army marches on its stomach! She helps with the accommodation and secures a team of motorbike outriders to move us safely and in convoy from event to event. Normandy is always so busy at this time of year and all the other visitors are trying to go to the same



Veteran, Peter Kent on the beaches in Normandy

places as we are, so the outriders are invaluable.

Three members of the Taxi Charity committee went out on a recce earlier this year and I went again in May. With our trip consisting of so many veterans in their 90's and 100's we must check access arrangements, parking, distances between locations, as well as the very important location of toilets. It takes a huge amount of time to plan these trips but once we board the ferry, we have a few hours to relax before the huge responsibility of the trip takes over for the next few days. **TAXI**

To find out more about the support the Taxi Charity offers veterans visit www.taxicharity.com.



Up West



“It was a body shock to be standing belly to belly on the tube with a stranger, bumping along the metropolitan line. I swear, it was like foreplay on a trampoline...”

A woman of words

Mr Meg and I had a BIG date night Up West on Saturday. The first in almost three years thanks to lockdown and being busy, busy. It was eventful...

Trampoline foreplay

We left the wheels at home and got on the tube. Or should I say *squeezed* into the tube. It was stuffed with young people, old people, dogs, bikes buggies and babies. The crush reminded me of a coach trip I took in Morocco when I was young and groovy – the seat next to me was occupied by four, live, uncaged chickens. Mind you, even though the chickens were squawking, flapping, and

pooping right there on the seat, they were still better behaved than some people I have sat next to on planes over the years. Back to the tube, though, we’ve been social distancing for so long it was a body shock to be standing belly to belly with a stranger and bumping along the metropolitan line tracks. I swear it was like foreplay on a trampoline for some of the time.

Old folks on premises

We went for drinks before dinner in a bar that the mini-Megs recommended in Shoreditch. What a mistake that was. It used to be that a posh drink came with a pineapple wedge and a mini paper parasol. The bar was so dark I had to do ip-dip from the menu because I couldn’t read the list of cocktails. The waiter, realising he had old folks on the premises, helpfully shouted them aloud for

me. I chose the first one to shut him up because people were looking. I ended up with a glass full of green liquid that had smoke billowing out of it. Mr Meg had a pint of lager.

Chicken or fish?

We chose a nice restaurant, though mostly because it had a priced set menu. We stuck to that (considering our direct debit for energy costs had trebled earlier in the day) and it was nice. Just nice. The chef surprised us by coming out to see if we were enjoying his food. Mr Meg, who hates a ‘fuss’ wasn’t happy that he had to *schmooze-along-a-chef*. There was a moment when I wanted to slide off my chair and under the table. It was when Mr Chef said to Mr Meg, “*And did you enjoy zee feesh?*” He was French in case you hadn’t guessed.

“*I didn’t have fish*” replied Mr Meg, “*I had chicken.*” Trouble was, he had had ‘*zee feesh*’. And the Chef knew it. Mr Meg was essentially saying his fish was chicken. I leapt in saying that poor Mr Meg gets confused these days, and that he had actually loved, ‘*zee feesh*’.

Taxi for Mr. Meg

Mr Chef gave us free liqueurs after he whispered that it must be hard for a fine woman like me to have to look after a man who is losing his mind. Mr Meg was not at all bothered that the Chef believed he was feeble in the head. He would have faked any illness for a freebie. And the best part of the night? Hailing a Licensed London Taxi to take us all the way home.

■ TAXI

LTDA A selection of our numerous Distribution Points

- ◆ A1 Taxis, Melody Lane, Highbury, N5
- ◆ Abacus Accounts, Southbrook Road, Lee, SE12
- ◆ Astral Café, Regency Place, SW1
- ◆ Bubbles Car Wash, E2
- ◆ C & S Taxis, Dunbridge Street, E2
- ◆ Cabsurance, Seven Kings
- ◆ Camberfield Taxi Services
- ◆ Computer Cab, Mitre Way, W12
- ◆ Coney Allen, Dunbridge Street, E1
- ◆ CP Beehive Service Station, Beehive Lane, Gants Hill
- ◆ Cricklewood Carriers, Cricklewood
- ◆ Dial A Cab, City Road, N1
- ◆ Edgware Station Rank
- ◆ Euston Station Rank
- ◆ G & L Taxis, Crayford Road, N7
- ◆ Globe Transmissions, Cudworth Street, E1
- ◆ The Ham, Brentford
- ◆ Heathrow Airport Canteen
- ◆ Hexagon Garage, Lukin Street, E1
- ◆ Jet Garage, Clipstone Street, W1
- ◆ Knowledge Centre, Caledonian Road
- ◆ KPM, Hemming Street, E1
- ◆ London City Airport Canteen
- ◆ LP Motors, Dunbridge Street, E2
- ◆ Martin Cordell, Thomas Road, E14
- ◆ Paddington Station Rank
- ◆ Putney Bridge Taxis, The Arches, Putney Bridge Station, SW6
- ◆ Richmond Road Taxi Centre, E8
- ◆ Safewise Supermarket, Harrow
- ◆ South Bank Service Station, Great Suffolk Street, SE1
- ◆ TAXI HOUSE, Great Suffolk Street, SE1
- ◆ Taxi & Private Hire, Blackfriars Rd, SE1
- ◆ Temple Place Shelter
- ◆ Turbo Accessories, Three Colts Lane, E2
- ◆ Ubiquitous Ltd, E1
- ◆ Waterloo Station
- ◆ Wimbledon Station Rank
- ◆ WizAnn Knowledge School, Watts Grove, E3

PUZZLER ANSWERS



Crossword

	P	E	R	F	O	R	M	A	N	C	E	
K	M	L	I	L	R	U						
I	N	A	N	E	B	A	R	G	A	I	N	
S	N	E	E	E	N	R						
S	M	A	R	T	L	Y	A	N	K	L	E	
M	T			E	D							
E	V	E	N	S	O		M	Y	S	T	I	C
Q		H	S				E					H
U	N	C	L	E		M	A	S	C	A	R	A
I	H		L	A		T						B
C	H	A	T	T	E	L		A	W	F	U	L
K	I	I	L	I	U	E						
	I	N	C	E	S	S	A	N	T	L	Y	

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SUDOKU

9	7	3	2	8	1	5	6	4
5	8	4	7	9	6	1	2	3
2	1	6	4	5	3	9	7	8
3	6	8	1	7	9	4	5	2
7	4	5	8	3	2	6	1	9
1	9	2	5	6	4	3	8	7
4	5	7	9	1	8	2	3	6
8	3	9	6	2	5	7	4	1
6	2	1	3	4	7	8	9	5

Wordwheel

SOLUTION: MEMORABLY

Amber, amble, ambler, army, balm, balmy, beam, blame, bream, embalm, embryo, lamb, lame, lemma, loam, loamy, male, marble, mare, marl, maybe, mayor, meal, mealy, memo, memory, molar, mole, moral, morale, moray, more, ramble, realm, ream, roam, MEMORABLY.

Word targets:
Excellent: 32, Good: 27,
Target: 20, Kids: 15

Futoshiki

4	1	<	3	>	2	5	
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3	4		1		5	2	
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2	5	>	4		3	1	
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5	3		2		1		4

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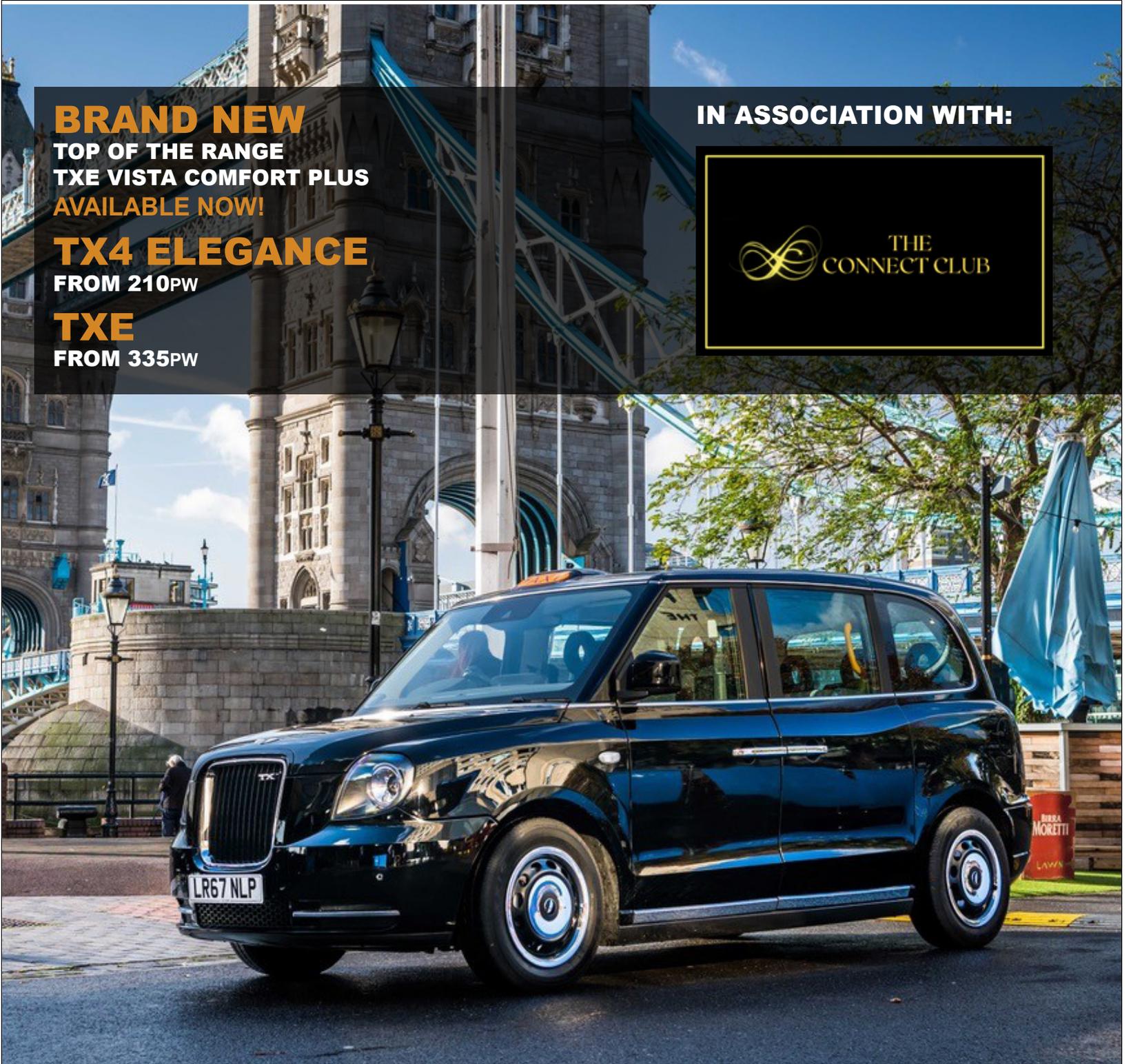
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