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17th January 2023 #532



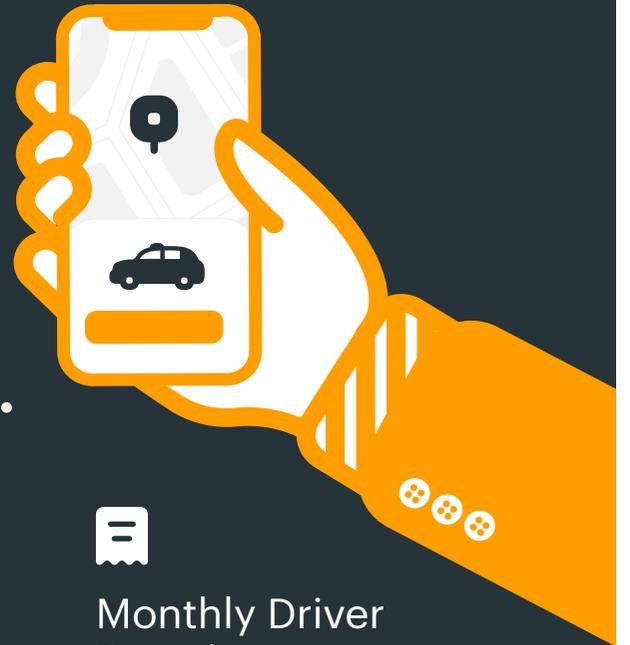
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wonder  
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**LTDA**  
Taxi House 133 Great Suffolk Street,  
SE1 1PP  
T: 020 7286 1046 | www.ltdda.co.uk  
@TheLTDA

**Editor**  
Katie Combes  
E: editor@ltdda.co.uk

**Commissioning Editor**  
Mike Williams  
E: taxieditor@centuryone.uk

**Produced by**  
Century One Publishing Ltd  
Alban Row, 27-31 Verulam Road  
St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 4DG.  
T: 01727 893 894, F: 01727 893 895  
E: hello@centuryone.uk  
www.centuryone.uk

**Advertising Sales Executive**  
Loren Wedderburn T: 01727 739184  
E: loren@centuryone.uk

**Creative Director**  
Peter Davies

**Printed by**  
Manson Group, St Albans

Published on behalf of the LTDA by



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## FREE SELF DEFENCE CLASSES LAST FEW PLACES REMAINING

Is your new year's resolution to get fit or exercise more? There's still time to sign up for the LTDA's latest self-defence class.

The next class, run by cabbie and former kickboxing champion and self-defence expert, Rikki Smith will start at the end of January. It will run for eight weeks in Clapham and is completely FREE to LTDA members. If you are interested in signing up, contact the LTDA on 0207 286 1046.



## UBER HEADS OFF PAY RISES FOR DRIVERS IN NEW YORK

Uber has successfully sued the New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC), delaying a fare hike for ride-hail apps and taxi drivers that was set to be introduced in December. Under the planned increase, apps *Uber* and *Lyft* would have had to raise drivers' rates of pay. *Uber* accused the TLC of using "unsound economic principles to achieve a predetermined result." In a written ruling issued last Tuesday, Justice Arthur Engoron, of the state court in Manhattan agreed that the planned increase was within the TLC's power, but that it had "failed to include a single mathematical computation explaining how it arrived at its numbers." He went on to say that the Court sympathised "with the plight of the ride service drivers, whose deserved raise is being held up by a technicality not of their own making."



## CAB SHELTERS GIVEN PROTECTED STATUS

Two historic cab shelters were among the London buildings recently added to the *Historic England* protection list. The shelters at Pont Street and Chelsea Embankment have been extended the Grade II affiliation and included on the National Heritage List for England.

## LONDON STILL THE WORLD'S MOST CONGESTED CITY

For the second year in a row, London has topped a list of the world's most congested cities. The 2022 *INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard* looked at congestion and mobility trends in more than 1,000 cities, across 50 countries and ranked them accordingly. It shows that in 2021/22, drivers in London lost 156 hours sitting in congestion, which is five



percent above pre-pandemic delays. Is it any wonder with decisionmakers in in London and nationally, putting, TfL and nationally, putting the squeeze on drivers, through an ever-growing number of schemes reducing the available road space, forcing drivers to take time consuming detours and radically reducing speed limits on major roads?

## CONSERVATIVES SEEK TO CHALLENGE ULEZ EXPANSION

The Mayor of London is under increasing pressure to rethink the expansion of the ULEZ, amid widespread opposition from the public and Conservative politicians representing outer London boroughs. Returning to City Hall in January, Deputy Mayor for Transport, Seb Dance, faced a grilling from the GLA assembly members on the plans. Conservative Assembly Member, Nick Rogers AM, highlighted opposition from Conservative-led outer London borough councils, notably Hillingdon, Harrow, Bexley, Bromley and Croydon, which in November issued a joint statement committing to "work with other outer London boroughs to resist its implementation by using all means at their disposal." There have also been suggestions from Conservative MP for Carshalton and Wallington, Elliot Colburn, that London's Conservative MPs are exploring avenues for a potential legal challenge.



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# Off to a Fighting Start

TfL do seem to be listening, but they continue to claim that they aren't seeing evidence of a negative impact of these policy changes, when it is plain to see.

## Steve's comment

**W**e are just over two weeks into January, and I've already met with senior reps at TfL and the new Transport Commissioner keeping up the fight against TfL's damaging '6 points and you're out' driver policy.

Elsewhere, our legal team didn't let up over the Christmas period and as we start the New Year, they are representing and defending more members than ever before, seeking to appeal and overturn convictions and TfL licensing decisions that don't go the driver's way. Our dedicated, in-house legal team is doing a great job and having success, but the system is now firmly set against drivers and doesn't always give them a fair hearing. We are trying to change that.

### Fighting '6 points and out'

Last week, I met senior people from TfL's Taxi and Private Hire Team to discuss '6 points and you're out'. We also discussed changes to the way TfL's reconsideration hearings work, with TfL now basically playing judge, jury and executioner, which have made the process completely unfair and ineffective. We are calling for them to reinstate the old system and exploring legal avenues in case they fail to do so.

We've been lobbying on all of this since early 2022, when the changes were first introduced. I've discussed it with the new boss of Transport for London (TfL), Commissioner Andy Lord (and his predecessor) and raised it in pretty much every meeting we've had, with anyone with any influence in the past year. TfL do seem to be listening, but they continue to claim that they aren't seeing evidence of a negative impact of these policy changes, when it is plain to see. The team here has never been busier, and this policy is the reason why. It's become much easier for simple mistakes to cost drivers their licence and put them in a much more vulnerable position. One mobile phone

The newspaper of the Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association

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**TAXI**

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17th January 2023 #632

**LONDON**  
**A7**

Is it any wonder London's congested?

Transport for London

**LONDON RANKED WORLD'S MOST CONGESTED CITY**

offence (KEEP YOUR PHONE IN A CRADLE!!) or four speeding tickets in three years, and you're toast.

I have now provided TfL with an anonymised schedule of all our members, who have been affected by the changes, whose licences we are working hard to protect, to demonstrate the scale of the problem.

### New commissioner

We also recently had the first trade reps meeting with the new Interim-Commissioner for TfL, Andy Lord. I took the opportunity to chase on the approval of the Euro V to Euro VI conversion and we also discussed road access (with a decision on the future of the Bishopsgate bus gate long overdue), the changes to the driver policy, taxi-only charging point provision and other issues. We wait to see if he can deliver on any of these issues.

### Most congested city

Meanwhile, London wins yet another award, unfortunately, yet again, it's for being the most congested city in the world. According to the 2022 INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard, drivers in London spent an average of 156 hours stuck in traffic. This is 5% more than the pre-pandemic figure and it's the second year running that London has topped the scorecard. As far as I am concerned, it's no surprise that things have got worse since the pandemic. 2020 and 2021 saw TfL and councils across London, implementing wide-ranging traffic management schemes across the capital - limiting access for vehicles, closing lanes and entire roads to traffic and reducing speed limits. As a result, what was already a clogged and congested city is grinding to a halt. Vehicles are being forced off major routes

onto narrow side streets and major roads sit with empty cycle lanes next to a single lane of gridlocked traffic. The cumulative impact of all these changes has proved to be a disaster.

These policies aren't reducing the number of cars on the road and encouraging people to embrace other forms of transport, they are simply making it more difficult to move around London, for all but a small minority.

**"It's become much easier for simple mistakes to cost drivers their licence."**

Many of the usual suspects have jumped on this story to call for more to be done to promote cycling and all forms of active travel to help reduce congestion - failing to see that their favoured approach is the root cause of the problem. It shouldn't be a zero-sum game. One thing shouldn't be prioritised at the expense of another, because as we can all see from this report, that simply isn't working.

### Congestion means pollution

The Mayor continues to champion his clean air credentials and pushes ahead with his plans to expand the ULEZ despite widespread opposition, but surely more congestion in London means more air pollution? You have to ask yourself are his policies really working? If he is going to run for a third term, as recently announced, that's an important question we will all be looking for an answer to.

Of course there is one policy that we know first-hand is delivering, and that's the adoption of electric taxis. Yes, it was forced on drivers, has cost many dearly and continues to do so, but you can't argue with the facts. Every new electric taxi licensed, cabbies are reducing the trade's carbon footprint and doing more to address air pollution and clean up London, and faster, than any other part of the transport network. **LTDA**



# Be Ready for Bumps in the Road

It gives me no pleasure to tell a fellow cabbie, we can't help. I never put the phone down from their call and just forget them, each call weighs heavy on my thoughts for some time.



they're not set at a reasonable level. They are often triggered at just 22 or 23mph. If TfL and Mayor Khan had not set a target of doubling the number of prosecutions for speeding in London to one million a year, again those people might have a point, but sadly that is the target, and they seem determined to catch drivers out to achieve it.

## More to come

The naysayers could also possibly have a point, if the 20mph limits were on the quieter residential back streets of London or on school streets, but they're not. They are on large main roads, like Park Lane, Albert Embankment, Grosvenor Road and Chelsea Embankment, and that's just the start. The next batch of 20mph zones will include adding or extending them in the following: East Smithfield, The Highway, Mile End Road, Stamford Hill, Seven Sisters Road, Upper Richmond Road, Holloway Road, Camden Road, City Road, Pentonville Road, Euston Road, Tollington Road and Finchley Road. This is not about road safety but purely a revenue raising policy to plug holes in their finances resulting from what amounts to largescale financial incompetence. You just need look at Old Street roundabout as one clear example of that. ■ **LTDA**

6

## Top rank

I hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year and wish you all the best for 2023.

Depending on who you listen to, this coming year begins with the threat of either a prolonged deep or shallow recession ahead. No one knows exactly what it will look like or more importantly how long it will last. My personal view is that it won't be as deep as some will have you believe, but just in case, it would be wise to make hay while the sun shines this year.

## Oil prices

In the meantime, hopefully, the government and politicians will get their heads out of their own backsides long enough to tackle a few key measures that would help. One case in point is that last year, the price of oil dropped from highs of \$120 to just \$71 a barrel, yet prices remained inexplicably high at the pumps. If those reductions are passed on (and the Government should be ensuring they are) then we would surely see inflation come down and confidence in the economy improve.

## TfL points policy

Oil and petrol prices are of course out of our hands and the solution relies on others doing what's best for the country. What's not out of our hands, and in fact very much firmly in our grip, is protecting cabbies against TfL's latest, and probably the most outrageous, amongst

a plethora of damaging policies - the '6 points and out' changes to the taxi driver policy.

Now, some will argue, 'well as long as you don't speed, you'll be alright!' If the speed cameras in the new 20mph zones were set at a reasonable level before being triggered, these people would maybe have a fair point. But

## The value of LTDA membership

Defending and protecting members is the LTDA's whole purpose. We are dedicated to doing so, but the cost of defending those who have reached 12 penalty points on their DVLA licence or who are facing a straight revocation for having six points, is by no means an insignificant sum of money. That's not to mention the amount of time we are now spending on these cases. We are having to expand our legal department to make sure we can continue to deliver the trade's premium legal service.

The average cost to defend a member's licence effectively is circa £6000 (a poor attempt by other solicitors can be anything from around £1200 upwards, but they probably won't succeed), this is what a proper defence costs and we spare no expense to help members.

We have also successfully gained acquittals for members on a variety of false charges from a standard driving offence to quite serious, false allegations of assault, at a cost of between £1500 and £85,000! These are again not insignificant amounts.

We're receiving calls from more and more non-members asking for help, unfortunately no

membership, means no help. It gives me no pleasure to tell a fellow cabbie, we can't help. I never put the phone down from their call and just forget them, each call weighs heavy on my thoughts for some time. Ultimately, I have to remind myself they have always had the opportunity to join and to be covered. If you take one step or commit to one new year's resolution right now, make it to join the LTDA and make sure that if trouble finds you, you're not in the fight alone.

## Join today

My predecessors as Chairman of the LTDA often offered periodic special deals and gave two months free subs to first time, new members. That's a deal I have kept in place throughout my entire term as Chairman thus far, but one I will probably need to end soon. Get in early and join the biggest and best, bar none. Your licence and livelihood are too important not to.



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# Don't Get Caught Out This New Year

We all know very well what these private parking companies are about – lining their pockets at any opportunity that is presented, so don't make it easy for them!

## Streets ahead

**H**appy New Year everyone! I hope you all had a great festive period and are having a good start to 2023.

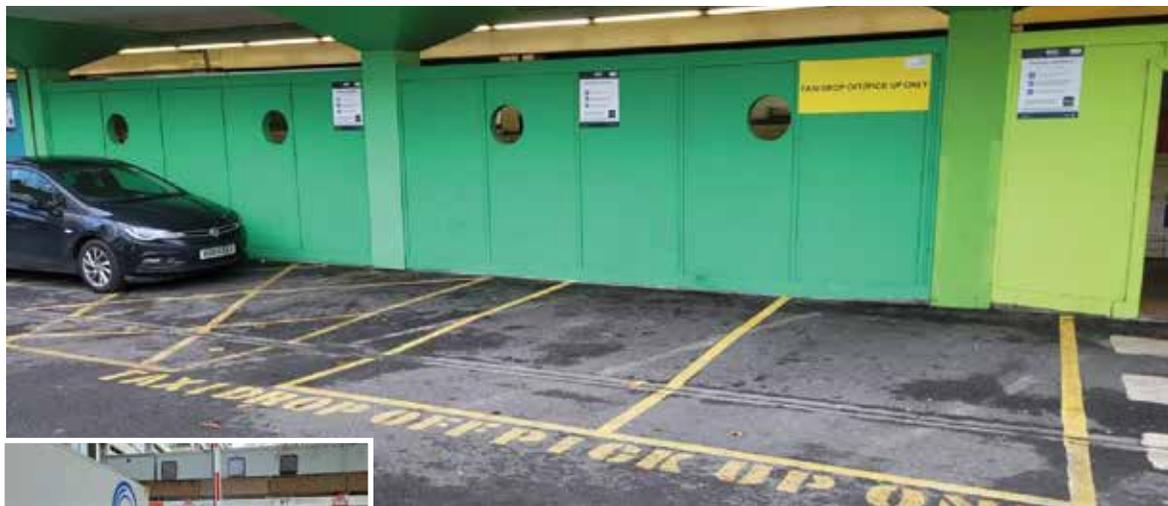
### St Thomas' Hospital drop off update

Late last year, I wrote about the problems drivers were having when dropping or picking up passengers from St Thomas' Hospital. As you might remember, the LTDA worked with the hospital to address this and ensure that drivers had a designated waiting and drop-off area. We also arranged for all the tickets to be rescinded. I am amazed to still be getting calls about this, but then again we all know very well what these private parking companies are about – lining their pockets at any opportunity that is presented, so don't make it easy for them!

Drivers should now be able to enter, set down and pick up passengers with no issues. At our meeting with the hospital, it was agreed that there was no suitable set down area allocated to taxis to drop off a passenger using a wheelchair within the hospital grounds. Senior hospital management agreed this was a problem, not only for taxi drivers, but for their passengers and also for ambulances, as drivers dropping off at the bottom of the ramp were obstructing them. We identified a suitable location for a new drop-off area. We also emphasised to them that the rank would need to be marked out for taxis as a set down and pick up area only. This has now been implemented with a 20-minute waiting time and no charge when exiting the hospital grounds. To access it, you will need to go through the barriers, head to the far-left end on the ground level car park and you will find the taxi rank marked out as shown in the pictures above.

### Tottenham Court Road PCNs

We are starting to see fines being issued for drivers on Tottenham Court Road. Last year, I became aware that Camden had sent a



notice out to residents informing them that Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras had been monitoring vehicle movements and had identified many vehicles ignoring the signage and using Tottenham Court Road (TCR) northbound. To me, this suggested that we would soon start to see the restrictions being enforced and fines being issued. Our advice to members at the time was that we didn't know when exactly it would happen, so don't risk it. You don't want that nasty letter landing on your doorstep. So be careful and don't take a chance.

At the time, I know some drivers were still using TCR even though the restrictions had been put in place and had never received a ticket. I personally had also never helped a member to appeal a PCN for an offence they have committed on TCR. But as I have stressed in a previous article, all the signs and necessary traffic management orders (TMOs) are in place, giving Camden the power to issue tickets, so we strongly advise drivers against using the restricted sections. Lo and behold, I have now started to hear from drivers who are receiving PCNs for using TCR and in most cases we don't have any grounds to appeal on their behalf. Don't make it easy for them, I am sure the cost of a PCN could be well spent elsewhere!

### Medicals

We recently had a member who was distraught to have received a letter from TfL notifying him his licence was revoked with immediate effect, due to a medical issue relating to his eyesight. We straight away investigated the reasons why and whether TfL was right to have done so. We challenged TfL and proved that the guidelines did not state that

in such a case a driver's licence should be revoked. TfL overturned the revocation and returned the driver's licence promptly.

Remember, the LTDA is always here to help with these kinds of medical matters, and anything else with the potential to impact your licence. Don't hesitate to get in touch with a member of the team if you need advice or support! ■ **LTDA**



## HOT SPOTS

I am sure there are many more locations, but the places listed below are the ones we are hearing about most often when dealing with PCN related issues for members.

### Speed limit changes

- Elevated A40 Westway Westbound - 30mph speed limit
- A40 slip road to Paddington Station - 30mph speed limit
- Finchley Road/Queens Grove - 20mph speed limit
- Park Lane/ Mount Street Northbound – 20mph speed limit
- Millbank - 20mph speed limit
- Albert Embankment - 20mph speed limit
- Bayswater – 20mph speed limit

### Access restrictions

- Cornhill coming from Leadenhall Street - No access 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday.
- Lansdowne Drive Hackney – No access 7-10am and 3-7pm, Monday to Saturday.
- Camden Square - LTN no access for motor vehicles including taxis.
- Garnault Place Islington – School street no access between 8.20am-9.15am and 3.00pm – 3.45pm (term time only).
- Stoke Newington/Church Street - Bus gate 7am-7pm, Monday to Sunday.
- Waiting to get onto rank outside Harrods, Brompton Road SW3 - Caught on Zig Zags or waiting on a red route.
- Charterhouse Square – School street no access Monday to Friday 8.15am-9.15am and 3pm-4pm (term time only).
- Tottenham Court Road – Camden now issuing PCNs.

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# A Tribute to Robert 'Bob' Clewley 1951 - 2022

Remembering one of London's finest, taken too soon.



## Airports & beyond

**O**n Friday 2nd December, a freak accident occurred in which we tragically lost one of London's finest. Bob Clewley, lost his life after being tragically hit by a car on the A405.

Bob was very popular and well-known face at the airport and his passing was a huge shock. Many of us had only just seen him the day before at Heathrow, when he was as full of life as ever, greeting people warmly with his usual bounce in his step.

I was sat in the LTDA office on the Saturday morning (the day after the accident), when I received a call from my brother, asking me if it was true about Bob? I immediately went into the canteen and asked all the regulars, who Bob had played cards with or just sat and had banter with, if they had heard anything. No-one was aware of anything. Sadly, within minutes one of the drivers appeared, saying it was true. We were all left devastated.

Bob had five children, Joel, Jess, Laura, Georgia, and Charlie. He also had nine grandchildren and a newly born great-granddaughter. His family was completely devastated by the news. Christmas is a particularly difficult time of year to lose such an important member of the family, not that there is ever a good time to lose someone.

Aged 71, Bob looked more like a 50-year-old and had the energy to match. He was known as 'Fit Bob,' because he would go to the gym daily and was very conscientious about his health and wellbeing, making this tragedy even more poignant.

Bob had been driving a cab for over 30 years. Before getting his badge, he was a mechanic. He was also a qualified referee and used to be in his black and whites for the local cabbie team at the Westway. That team was in full attendance at his funeral, paying their respects to a well-loved man.



I remember Bob as always loving Chelsea Football Club, a good pub quiz and seeing a live band. He lived near to me and used to enthusiastically encourage me to go to the local pub quiz, at the Adam and Eve. I never went, as I feared I wouldn't be able to answer any questions and would be put to shame by Bob, who was a true professional when it came to pub quizzes and a real font of all knowledge. I wish in hindsight I had gone, as he was always so full of joy after attending them.

Bob was also very kind. In my days of wardening in all weathers, he always asked if I would like a cup of tea and brought me biscuits. We would often chat as his line was going out and he was full of pride for his family. Their love for him was evident at the

**"Bob was a very popular and well-known face at the airport."**

funeral, as his five children were united in their grief.

Bob had the last laugh at the funeral, when during the service they played the Chelsea song. I felt quite emotional, as I knew Bob would have loved that. I was stood by the regulars of the airport, who are all Arsenal fans, I could almost see Bob grinning from ear to ear as they suffered through it. I was singing at the top of my voice.

The funeral, which was full to the brim and packed with cabbies, was a testament to Bob's popularity, showing the level of respect and high regard he was held in by many.

I would like to send my deepest condolences to Bob's family. Our thoughts continue to be with them at this difficult time.

RIP Bob. One of London's finest.



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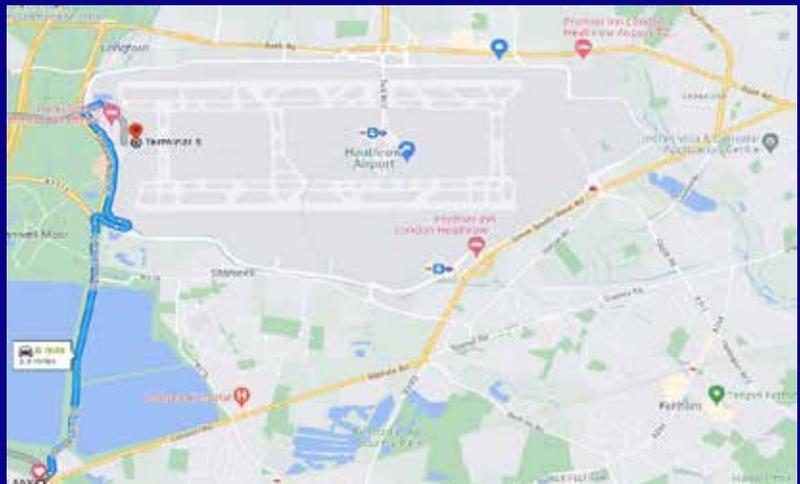
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# Consultations: A Wapping Great Fiasco



And here we are, welcome to 2023. Will it be a case of 'new year, new me' or 'same doo-doo, different wrapper'?

## A man in black

**W**hatever the new year holds for the taxi industry, there are some things which remain constant: births, deaths, taxes, England failing to turn up against a decent side in the World Cup, and, of course, the Wapping bus gate.

As many of you know, this particular testament to ineptitude has been a bit of a thorn in the taxi industry's side. It has also irritated a sizeable proportion of residents and business owners alike, however, for the benefit of those who have been trapped inside a cave for the last few years here is a brief recap.

## Lowdown

In July of 2019, it was announced via a tweet from local councillor Abdal Ullah that the implementation of a bus gate in Wapping High Street had been approved. The decision followed a consultation which resulted in more than 2,300

responses. 70% of ward residents and 61% of all respondents to the consultation were in favour of the implementation of a bus gate. It was decided that the proposals should not include exemptions for residents or taxis as it was determined that to do so would undermine the overall aims of the bus gate.

Prior to the bus gate going live in November of 2019, a very curious statistic had emerged from the consultation, showing 75% of those who took part wanted taxis to have access through the gate. 68% in the area of Wapping wanted them to have access. So, why were taxis denied?

To get to the bottom of it, one which sits alongside other great philosophical ruminations such as why do minicab drivers keep colliding with the Bolton Street traffic lights, we have to look at what a consultation is and does.

## Unpacking

A consultation is any activity that gives local people a voice and opportunity to influence decisions within their community. It involves any given body listening to and

learning from local people, before proposals are put into action and potentially made permanent.

Councils sometimes have a statutory requirement to consult residents. Statutory consultations are bound by legal requirements, such as Best Value legislation, and can have strict rules surrounding how they should be done. Failure to run a statutory consultation in line with said rules could leave a council liable to face a judicial review.

There are also a range of other non-statutory reasons that could require a council or any other body to run a consultation exercise. And there-in lies the problem. Non-statutory consultations have no legal status but do enable councils to hear from a representative cross-section of the population. The paper that they are printed on can then be rolled up and tossed into the bin; they are nothing more than a box-ticking exercise.

In effect, when Tower Hamlets Council excluded taxis from the Wapping bus gate, they completely ignored the majority of those who took the time to take part in the consultation and were legally allowed to do that.

## Seeking help from the Mayor

I contacted Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Lutfur Rahman, and explained the situation that taxi drivers face regarding the bus gate. This included the difficulties in access for the disabled and elderly community when using a taxi, the increase in cost to those with a disability and other protected characteristics, and the added time that it takes to get to and from the area. I also explained the Taxicard scheme has become almost redundant because of the extra mileage, time and cost to the council itself. Mentions were given to the number of zero emission capable taxis that the industry now operates, as well as its impeccable safety record.

The Mayor was good enough to forward this to the Head of Highways & Transportation, Nigel Davies. His response was bemusing and somewhat obtuse. He said: 'As you will be aware, Wapping is always accessible by any vehicle using the appropriate junction from The Highway, and no areas cannot be accessed. There are no plans to amend the Wapping Bus Gateway traffic order to include taxis.'

It could be argued that Mr Davies' response addressed absolutely nothing and bore no relevance to my initial contact with the Mayor. I subsequently expressed my displeasure at the response to Mayor Rahman, reiterating some of the bullet points in my first email.

## A further response

I then received a reply from a case handler at the Mayor's office saying: 'The Wapping Bus Gate will remain the way it is as a lot of residents have been in favour of keeping the current restrictions.'

I made the point that although a lot of residents are in favour of keeping the current restrictions, a lot more respondents want taxi access. Currently, I'm still waiting to hear back, although I am not holding my breath.

So, this begs the question, if a consultation isn't legally binding, is it worth the paper it's printed on?

Answers on a postcard, please.



## See your advertisement here

**TAXI** is the membership magazine for the Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association (LTDA). It is circulated to 12,000 taxi drivers in London every fortnight.

The LTDA is the definitive voice of and for London cab drivers and is responsible for ensuring best practise in the trade, making sure its members' voices are heard and serving members with the back up and support they need.



### Get in touch

To see your advertisement in the leading magazine for black cab drivers in London contact us today:

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# TAXI and LTDA Member Mail

**Get writing to TAXI**

We want to hear from you! Send your well-penned, publishable letters or emails with your full name and postal address to: editor@ltda.co.uk

**Subject: Drivers' Generosity**

Hello,

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December, my wife had a bad fall under Southwark Bridge on the central reservation. A black cab driver stopped to help me carry her to the pavement and then helped me make sure she was as comfortable as could be. I then hailed another black cab to take us to the local A&E department. Again, the driver assisted me in getting my wife, who was in considerable pain, into the cab and drove us to St Thomas' Hospital. At the Hospital, he helped us get my wife out of his cab and into a wheelchair.

The driver refused to take the fare, and given the stress of the situation I did not take either of these drivers' details or the number plates of the cabs.

I would like to record our huge thanks to both drivers, who were incredible in the generosity they showed in helping my wife. She has now had an operation to treat a broken hip, and at the time of writing is recovering in Tommy's.

I would like to make a donation to your charity of choice to reflect our thanks for both drivers. Can you email the charities details and I will arrange the payment?

Heartfelt thanks to you all.

Best,  
Phil

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**Subject: Good Samaritan**

Hello,

On 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022, I made a short visit to a surgery in Sloane Street. As I'm currently in 'hobbling mode', I travelled by taxis: one (white - the driver said he did a lot of weddings!) from Eaton Square to the surgery, and the other a little later back to my home in Lower Belgrave Street. I then realised that my little black diary for the year was missing. I immediately checked with the surgery, who searched without success.

My conclusion was that it must somehow have slipped out of my brief case which has a zip closure that I often leave open. This was a blow to me as, apart from recording all my movements and appointments during the year it also contained some club cards and a considerable number of personal records, medical records, passport numbers, photos etc. I realised that I would have to try to recreate (as far as possible) all the records, inform the issuers of the cards, rearrange appointments etc. This was a daunting task and one that I did not relish.

One evening a few days later, I was locking up for the night, when I noticed a small black object sitting in my mailbox. It was, to my astonishment and enormous relief, my diary! It was complete, intact and with all the records - but with no message.

Clearly, the driver of one of the cabs had taken the trouble to return it safely to my home. With no indication of who the 'good Samaritan' was, I'd like to make a modest contribution to any appropriate driver's welfare fund (if it exists).

With grateful thanks,  
Stephen

**Subject: LTDA support for 2023 a necessity**

Hi there,

Happy New Year to everybody at the LTDA!

Thanks for all your help over the past years. During 2022, I was particularly grateful for the help you gave me concerning rough private parking contractors and for making it a simple process to apply for my licence renewal - an hour spent with you, made the application very easy, so thank you!

As you know driving in London is not like it used to be and having a professional body like the LTDA behind you is not a luxury anymore but a necessity!

I will urge any London taxi drivers out there who are not members to join. I know it will be the best value for money and decision they make in 2023!

Drive carefully, stay safe.

Yours sincerely,  
David Cronin  
Badge No. 66693





**Subject: A Big Thank You**

I guess most of the time, us cab drivers just go about our business like everyone else. Then just once in a while something comes along, totally unexpected.

It really does not matter just how big or small the problem is, the fact is, it is a problem and needs solving. This is when you sometimes need the help or advice of people around you to maybe help you see a clearer picture. You can sometimes be very surprised just where that help comes from.

Last April, just a few days before Easter, I started having problems breathing and was unable to walk very far. I will cut to the chase on details here. It was the Thursday before Easter that at 2.00am, I woke up not feeling very well and at the time was not aware that I had had a heart attack. Later that morning, I was taken to St Richard's Hospital in Chichester. I had various tests and in the end, I had to have a triple bypass / open heart surgery. That is the basis of me writing this note now.

As you can imagine, my wife and I were faced with many problems and this is where the unimaginable help and togetherness of the taxi trade came into its own. The help I received was priceless.

Firstly, I had to contact TfL to explain the situation and that was not something I looked forward to, as many taxi drivers will understand. I contacted the LTDA, and that was as far as I needed to go. From that initial contact, Lloyd Baldwin took over. The relief was palpable. The help I received from Lloyd did not stop there. Over the next eight months, Lloyd gave me very good advice and support right up to the time he was able on my behalf to send off my medical declaration and confirmation that I had passed all my tests, so my licence could be granted back to me. A very big 'Thank you' to Lloyd. The LTDA was definitely there in my hour of need.

Also an equally massive thank you I must extend to Joh-Jon at CABSTOP, in Kingston, who took the worry off me regarding my 'overhaul' that was due at the same time. Craig at the body shop at Ascots, who also sorted repairs needed to be carried out to my taxi at the time. Last, but not least, a massive 'Thank you' to my brother, Peter Fox, who has been a Taxi Cab driver since 1978. Peter and my wife Karen have to me been the rocks you build your life around.

Lastly, I will say it's so helpful that I suffered this problem while I was a member of the London Black Cab Community and the LTDA.

Thank you all.

Michael Fox  
Badge No. 60918



## LOTTO WINNER!

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!**

**Congratulations Mr Paul Franklin!**

December's winner was Paul Franklin, who has been an LTDA member for 23 years. Paul was pleased to receive the call from LTDA Chairman, Paul Brennan, telling him he had won the LTDA Lottery, but he didn't believe it was real until he saw the cheque for £5000 with his name on it! Paul told us that he "*never usually wins things and was shocked.*"

Paul is looking forward to using the money to treat his wife, who has been poorly recently and deserves a nice break and a rest. The LTDA wishes her good health and hopes they both have a happy, safe trip, wherever they go.

### LTDA LOTTERY

The first prize in our lottery is **£5,000** - 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.

To be in on it, call **020 7286 1046** and ask about the LTDA Lottery.



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# Looking Beyond London

Every new policy has to start somewhere and it's not always London.

## National correspondent

**Perry Richardson is a London taxi driver and founder of the UK's digital taxi news outlet TaxiPoint, covering all the latest developments in the taxi industry from around the country. As TAXI's National Correspondent, he will be looking at the most significant stories from outside the Capital and what they could mean for London cabbies.**

The London taxi trade is often the first to feel the impact of changes or trends that go on to affect the industry on a national level.

Some of the most notable shifts in recent times include cabbies successfully adopting electric vehicle technology and also being the first to harness taxi apps like Hailo, way before Uber set foot on UK shores. That said, there are some hugely important decisions to be made away from the capital in 2023 that could help shape the future of the industry in London and beyond.

### Sefton Council versus Uber Court Case

A major court hearing began in November 2022, with ride-hailing giants Uber raising a case against Sefton Council, which could potentially change the business models of every private hire vehicle (PHV) operator in England.

If Uber is successful, the changes could force contractual arrangements with drivers and make all PHV operators the 'principal' for VAT on fares. This is likely to force the price of journeys up by at least one fifth.

Since losing a long running battle centring around workers' rights in London, Uber has been forced to make big changes to its business model. The Supreme Court's ruling in that case stated that the operator was 'the principal', which had implications for tax purposes, specifically that VAT was payable on journeys. As a result, in March 2022, Uber applied VAT to bookings and has since urged thousands of other private hire operators in London to do the same.

Transport for London (TfL), the UK's biggest licensing authority, also told minicab operators to take 'immediate action' to ensure they were compliant, by making changes to their terms and conditions and operating models.

With this new case, Uber is now looking to level the playing field in the sector as whole, by asking a question that would force all operators around the country to pay VAT on all journeys made.

### How could this affect a London taxi driver?

Since Uber was forced to pay VAT, their London prices have escalated fast. High inflation and basic workers' rights have also pushed prices above what their customers expect to pay. As a result, people have shopped around and found black cabs to be a viable (and better) option once more. We are seeing more demand on our end as a result.

If Uber wins its case against Sefton Council, then London is effectively protected from minicab operators licensed outside of TfL, as the same rules will apply to everyone around the country and it won't matter where you are licensed.

If the courts find for Sefton Council, then it opens up the opportunity for operators licensed outside of London to work 'cross border' in the capital without paying VAT and offering cut price fares. This could push the prices down significantly in London once more and could see less loyal customers shop-around again.

We await the court's decision, which is due imminently.



## Taxi and PHV Best Practice Guidance

Last summer, the Government ran a 12-week consultation to update vital Taxi and PHV guidance supplied to licensing authorities to help them more effectively regulate the industry, in response to new digital ways of working, following the boom in ride-hailing services.

A bucket load of new recommendations were made by the Department for Transport (DfT), covering pretty much every hot topic impacting the sector right now. They range from enhanced driving standard requirements to better signage on taxis.

Taxi drivers in London will be showing great interest in licensing points focusing on the identification of both taxi and minicab vehicles. Driver proficiency and training will also be scrutinised and seen as an opportunity to bring back enhanced driving tests and disability awareness training.

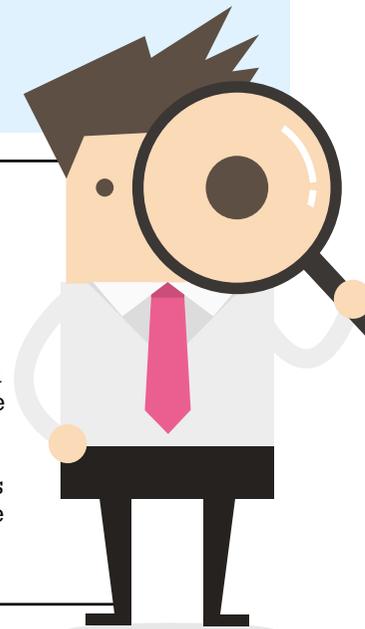


## How could this affect a London taxi driver?

Some of this may seem like more red tape when it comes to licensing and more hoops to jump through like mandatory awareness courses to be completed. Effectively, yes, it may mean more time and money, but there are positives too. The Government has also suggested making taxis more visible and distinctive, whilst simultaneously making PHVs less visible. The draft guidance proposes a revamp of taxi and PHV signage to help the public better identify taxis.

## Things to watch

It's important to keep an eye on what's going on in our industry both locally and nationally. Some other things I am watching with interest to see how they play out, include wireless electric taxi charging trials in Nottingham, new artificial intelligence (AI) police cameras in the South West that capture drivers using mobile phones, and mandatory CCTV policies being introduced in regions across the UK. I will cover these in more detail in upcoming columns for TAXI.





## Pickles the dog: the other hero of '66

Picture the scene: it's 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1966. England have just beaten Germany 4-2 to win the World Cup Final. The list of heroes is endless: Bobby Moore, Geoff Hurst, Gordon Banks... and Pickles the dog. Yes, you read that right. Pickles, the black and white Collie. Everybody remembers England's heroes from that day, but did you know that were it not for Pickles, there may not have been a trophy for England to lift at Wembley?

On 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1966, four months before the World Cup, the trophy was stolen during a public exhibition at Westminster Central Hall. A phone call was made to Chelsea FC and Football Association chairman Joe Mears, by a man who called himself "Jackson". Mears was informed that a package would be left at Stamford Bridge the following day. The package contained a £15,000 ransom demand, accompanied by the removable lining from the top of the trophy.

Mears turned the package over to the police, who then arranged to meet "Jackson", whose real name was Edward Bletchley. He was subsequently arrested, however, he claimed to be nothing more than a middle man and the real culprit was called "The Pole".

Thankfully the remaining part of the trophy was found seven days after it was stolen, by four year-old Pickles and his owner David Corbett. They were out walking in Beulah Hill, Upper Norwood, London, when they found the trophy wrapped in newspaper lying under the wheel of a car. Corbett initially fell under suspicion as being "The Pole", but was soon exonerated and, as a result of his exploits, Pickles was invited to the post-match celebration banquet.

Pickles' heroics led him to become a TV celebrity, even starring in the Eric Sykes film, *The Spy With The Cold Nose*. He was also named "Dog of the Year" and awarded a year of free dog food.

Sadly, tragedy struck in 1967, when Pickles was killed after his choke chain caught on a branch while he was chasing a cat.

His collar is on display in the National Football Museum in Manchester, and there is a plaque in Beulah Hill commemorating "the other hero" of the 1966 World Cup.

## London's smallest cop shop

The police telephone box used to be a common occurrence in the UK. These tiny structures were used for the sole purpose of requesting emergency assistance, unless you were Doctor Who in which case you would be travelling through time and space stepping inside one. However, did you know that a structure which is equally as small as a police telephone box resides in the southeast corner of Trafalgar Square, and is the UK's smallest police station?

The construction of the box is a bit of a mystery and, although it was built in 1926, its origins date back to the end of World War I. A temporary police box situated by Trafalgar Square station was due to be renovated but this was scrapped due to public objections. As a result, a permanent structure was erected inside an ornamental light fitting.

This structure was able to hold two prisoners and a single police officer, in very cramped conditions. It had a small window installed which gave a view of the entire square. It also had a direct phone line to Scotland Yard. Interestingly, when the phone was in use the light at the top of the police station started to flash. It is believed that the light on the top of the box is originally from Nelson's HMS Victory.

Unfortunately, the box is no longer used by the police, instead it is now used as a broom cupboard for Westminster Council cleaners.



# SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW

## LONDON?

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## The sewage lamp

Victorian lamps are still two-a-penny in London. They can be found in dozens of places across the metropolis. But did you know that there is only one sewage lamp left in London?

Just behind the Savoy, situated in Carting Lane, there stands a rather innocuous but ingenious piece of Victorian engineering: The Webb Patent Sewer Gas Lamp.

This lamp was invented by Joseph Webb in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It had the dual function of illuminating a given area at a very low cost and also burnt off the stench of sewage.



Methane was collected and trapped inside a dome in the roof of a sewer and then diverted into the lamp which was at street level. The lamp remained illuminated 24 hours a day, although they weren't solely powered by methane. Town gas supplies heated the filament to around 700 degrees Fahrenheit, this then drew methane into its chamber and, in turn, became a cost-effective way to power the lamp.

In recent times, a reversing lorry in Carting Lane accidentally knocked over the lamp but was restored by engineers from Thames Gas. It is now protected by Westminster Council.



# A Passage Through Time:

The landscape of London is a place of antiquities, curiosities and folklore, as we gain a clearer



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## Footprints & foundations

I have a special interest in social history that is linked to the past. However, London life in the present creates its own social history. The cab trade is truly evolving in the representation of its drivers. Whilst waiting to charge my cab on the St John's Wood rank by the cab shelter, I engaged in a conversation with a cab driver and was completely surprised about his life story. He told me that he came from Afghanistan a few years ago. He could not speak English upon arrival, but after two years of study he acquired the English language and set out to take the

Knowledge. Three years later, he is a London cab driver. It's truly remarkable how this gentleman changed his circumstances.

This week, we continue our journey through Clerkenwell and take a look at the area's social history. London has always had a disparity between rich and poor. In the past, conditions for the destitute were far worse than they are in the present day. Throughout time, institutions were set up to aid those who were deprived of food and shelter.

### The Clerkenwell workhouse

When all hope was lost, those without sustenance found their way to the notorious workhouse. This was the last bastion of salvation, a place of basic

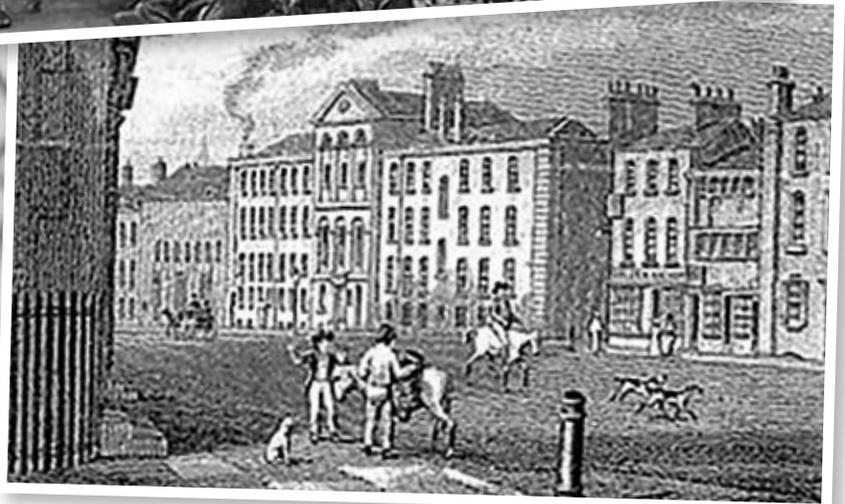
survival under harsh conditions. Workhouses were established at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in London and throughout the country. The renowned author Charles Dickens portrayed the workhouse in his popular novel, *Oliver Twist*. Dickens epitomised the suffering of those in wanton need in the Victorian period. His novels, although fictitious, were based on true facts. The esteemed writer simply opened the hearts and minds of the upper-classes, who failed to see the reality of the poor, from behind the facades of their grand houses.

The Clerkenwell workhouse was located on the westside of Farringdon Road between what is now Bakers Row and Ray Street. The building was

constructed in 1662 by the City Corporation. By 1702, it was taken over by a religious group called the Quakers. Their doctrine was not only to feed and shelter the poor, but to develop and encourage these lost souls to learn new skills. The premises consisted of 46 rooms, of which 31 were lodging ones. The Quakers converted half the building for the elderly to be accommodated one, two or three to a room and there were also dormitories for children. The other rooms consisted of workrooms, storerooms, domestic facilities and a brewhouse. This workhouse was unusual as it did not conform to the traditional types where conditions were abysmal for inmates.

# Clerkenwell

understanding of the capital's heritage.



## Food glorious food

A staple diet that kept the workhouse residents nourished was insufficient, however, it kept them alive. The inmates brewed their own beer and the children helped in preparing all the food. The daily menu was as follows:

### Breakfast

- 4 oz of Bread
- 2 oz of Cheese
- 1 oz of Butter
- 1 Pint of Beer

### Dinner

- 8 oz of Roast Meat without Bones
- 4 oz of Bread
- 1 Pint of Beer

There were slight changes to the weekly menu which sometimes included plum pudding, pease pottage and rice milk. Children received the same food as the adults but were given reduced portions. Beer may seem inappropriate for children; however, ale was a universal beverage for all age groups.

## The demise of the workhouse

The Workhouses that were built across the capital are now ghosts of the past. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they'd moved out of London, mostly to the suburbs and the country. The former buildings of the poor were turned into sanatoriums and then hospitals. By the 1970s, these symbolic

structures were sold off to developers who turned them into luxury apartments.

The former Cleveland Street workhouse became a contentious issue in 2018. The workhouse was located at the top of Cleveland Street, close to the junction of Howland Street. The building was owned by the National Health Service who sold it to private developers. The new owners wanted to demolish the entirety of the workhouse buildings, which was to the detriment of historians and conservationists. The confrontation was taken to court, where a judge ordered the developers to maintain most of the workhouse buildings. This time, the conservationists won

their day in court and saved a London relic from destruction. A cruel poem was composed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century about the lives of those confined to the workhouse.

*Hush little baby on the tree top,  
when you grow old your wages  
will stop.*

*When you have spent the  
money, you made,  
it's off to the workhouse and  
then to the grave.*

If you are contemplating a tourist guide course, please email me at the following email address:  
**journeythroughtime@hotmail.com** ■ TAXI



## What's on? **WEST END**

Our new theatre guru is here to suggest some top shows to wow your customers with.

### Under the Spotlight

#### As You Like It - Soho Place

The first new-build theatre in the West End in 50 years, Soho Place opened in October of 2002 with *Marvellous*, a niche yet totally charming production. Their take on *As You Like It*, their slightly more mainstream follow-up, manages to make one of Shakespeare's lesser-known comedies accessible whilst also staying true to the source material. It's a story that features mistaken identities galore, a wrestling match, a court jester, sweet serenading and a whole lotta love.

The incredibly charismatic and diverse cast are such delights to watch, with standouts including the besotted Orlando (*How To Get Away With Murder's* Alfred Enoch) and the joking jester Touchstone (*Sleepy Hollow's* Tom Mison). Yet it's the presence of Rose Ayling-Ellis that is the most captivating and unique. She performs using British Sign Language, with screens displaying captions on all four sides of the theatre.

And that, in fact, is the venue's main selling point. It's intimate, a theatre in a round, where every seat provides a great view of the stage and makes you feel a part of the production. In truth, there are fewer plays you could wish to be a part of; this magical adaptation is a perfect escape on a cold winter's eve. A memorable visit to a land of joy and wonder.

Running until 28th January.



#### Orlando - Garrick Theatre

One of the shortest plays currently showing on the West End, with a running time of only 90 minutes (straight through, no interval), is this breezy take on Virginia Woolf's 1928 novel. The story is about a young nobleman in Elizabethan England, who one day wakes up transformed into a woman who lives through the 18th and 19th century. Yep, that's over 300 years of history covered in about an hour and a half!

Emma Corrin, who played the younger Princess Diana in *The Crown*, is the star of the show. Their take on the title character is giddy, raw and full of heart - overjoyed at the prospect of adventure and discovering all the fun that life, of either gender, has to offer. Deborah Findlay (*The Split*) is a wonderfully teasing mentor figure as Mrs Grimsditch. They have a lovely rapport, which results in many laughs as well as more heartfelt moments.

The staging is meta and knowing: a clothes rail appears on stage during every new scene and setting, with the knowing dialogue, acknowledging the ideas of construction of identity and show, along with breaks of the fourth wall to address the audience. This further immerses them in a breezily-told tale, loaded with all manner of profound meaning. A thrilling production.

Running until 25th February.



### What else is on?

- **& Juliet (Shaftesbury Theatre)** - Closing in March, this is your last chance to see this coming-of-age jukebox musical that ponders 'What if Juliet didn't die at the end of Shakespeare's great tragedy?'
- **Best of Enemies (Noel Coward Theatre)** - A gripping political thriller with two incredible leads, Zachary Quinto and David Harewood.
- **The Choir of Man (Arts Theatre)** - What if going to the theatre was like hanging out with a bunch of mates in a pub?



# The Last Prisoner Executed at the Tower of London

Just before 8.30am on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1941, a badly injured man with a broken ankle was spotted by two farmers.

## Rob's history tips

**T**he stranger, lying in a field in Ramsey, Cambridgeshire, was found to be in possession of false papers, £500 in cash (approximately £20,000 today), a radio transmitter and, perhaps most damning of all, a German sausage. He was clearly up to no good, and so in true *Dad's Army* fashion, he was detained by a local unit of the Home Guard.

It transpired that the fellow who'd been arrested was 43 year-old Josef Jakobs. Born in Luxembourg in 1898, Jakobs had spent most of his life in Berlin, having moved there with his parents when he was five.

He was a veteran of WWI, during which he'd been shot in the chest and awarded the Iron Cross medal, and, after making a full recovery, had gone on to qualify as a dentist.

However, as Germany's economy collapsed beneath the worldwide Great Depression, Jakobs' customer base dwindled as many people could no longer afford to pay for expensive dental work.

To get by, Jakobs began dabbling in the black market, and as the Nazis rose to power, he discovered there was a lucrative business to be had in selling forged passports to Jewish people desperate to flee Germany.

## An ultimatum

In 1938 though, Jakobs' ruse was busted when the Gestapo arrested him for "high treason and political intrigue."

Found guilty of these charges, he was sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp where he suffered torture at the hands of the sadistic guards, with one of the punishments involving him being hung from a tree in a stress position.

Before long, the globe was plunged into WWII, meaning the Nazis were eager to muster all the intelligence they could.

As a former dentist turned forger, Jakobs clearly held some aptitude, and so the authorities offered him a deal: if he was

willing to join the Abwehr (German Military Intelligence Service) then Jakobs could go free.

Unsurprisingly, Jakobs agreed. After being released on Good Friday of 1940, it was decided he would be posted to Britain as a spy, despite being nowhere near fluent enough in English.

As such, he was given a crash course in the art of espionage, learning how to use invisible ink and send morse-code messages. During this period, Jakobs apparently informed a close friend that he had no intention to carry out his mission.

Instead, his plan was to surrender immediately, and offer as much intelligence on the Nazis as he could in return for safe passage to the USA.

## Beginning of the end

Jakobs' mission commenced late on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1941, when he was flown out of Amsterdam's Schipol airport in a small aircraft. Then, 10,000 feet above Cambridgeshire, he was ordered to jump (which he did) despite having received absolutely no parachute training.

It was this lack of experience

which resulted in Jakobs landing hard, cursing him with a snapped ankle.

After being detained by the Home Guard the following morning, Jakobs was sent to London's Cannon Row police station, followed by a brief stint in Brixton prison.

The injured spy was then carted off to Latchmere House near Kingston-upon-Thames which, during the war, went by the ominous title, Camp 020; a centre where suspected enemy agents were subjected to interrogation.

Following this ordeal, Jakobs was permitted to recuperate at Dulwich Hospital, after which he was held at Wandsworth prison. Any offer Jakobs made in return for a ticket to America appears to have been shunned as, between 4-5<sup>th</sup> August, 1941, he was tried in secret before a military tribunal, held at the Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea. Here, he was found guilty of spying and sentenced to death.

In the wake of this verdict, Jakobs was taken to the Tower of London where, early on the morning of 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1941, he was placed in a chair before



a firing squad, made up of eight soldiers from the Scots Guards.

Jakobs' final words were recorded as, "*Shoot straight, Tommies,*" after which the soldiers opened fire.

One of the live bullets struck Jakobs in the heart, killing him instantly, and thus making him the last ever prisoner to be executed at the Tower of London.

Following his death, Jakobs was buried in an unmarked grave at St Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, and the chair in which he was shot is now displayed within the Tower of London. ■ TAXI

If you want to see more, you can visit my YouTube channel, [robslondon](https://www.youtube.com/robslondon).



# A Tale of Two TXEs

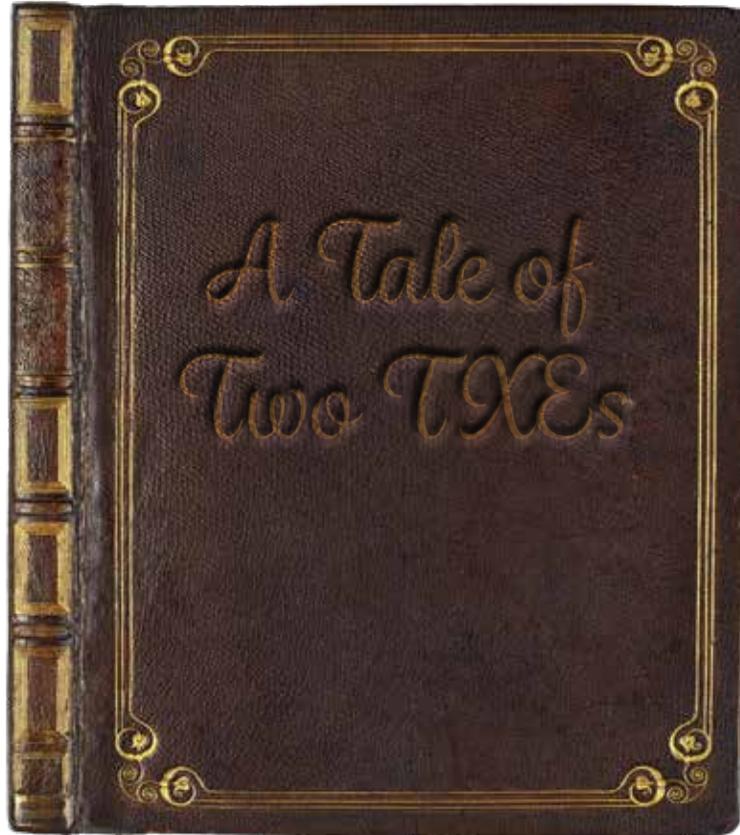
With the age limit now down to 12 years and less cabs dropping off each month, the total number of licensed vehicles should start to increase each month.

## Cab you drive

**H**ello and welcome to 2023! It's only early January and already I have had a first for me.

I had two TXEs in stock, which is in itself, a very rare event for me. They were almost identical cabs - both black, both late 68 plates. The only real difference between the two vehicles was the mileage they had covered. One was low mileage at only 70,000. The other had done around 120,000 miles. As they were both just coming up to four years old, with the average cab mileage (including two years of pandemic) at about 24,000 to 25,000 miles a year, 100,000 miles would be what we would expect to see. I had priced the 70K miles cab slightly over the higher mileage cab and expected it to fly out the door first.

I had two drivers come to see both cabs on the same day. The driver who wanted the more expensive, lower mileage cab did not want it, because it had the vinyl rear seats. Whilst not a deal breaker, he also wanted the plush carpet to go with the cloth seats. The second driver, a nightman, wanted the cheaper cab, but did not want the cloth



seats, and he definitely didn't want a posh carpet. Less than an hour later, both cabs were sold. In a flash of inspiration, we swapped the seats and put the posh carpet in the cab that then had the posh seats. The simple solutions are often the best.

## December sales

Elsewhere in cabbieland, December saw 93 new TXEs join the ranks. The main dealers tell me it would have been more were it not for supply problems, resulting from the worldwide chip and parts shortage. The total licensed fleet is still

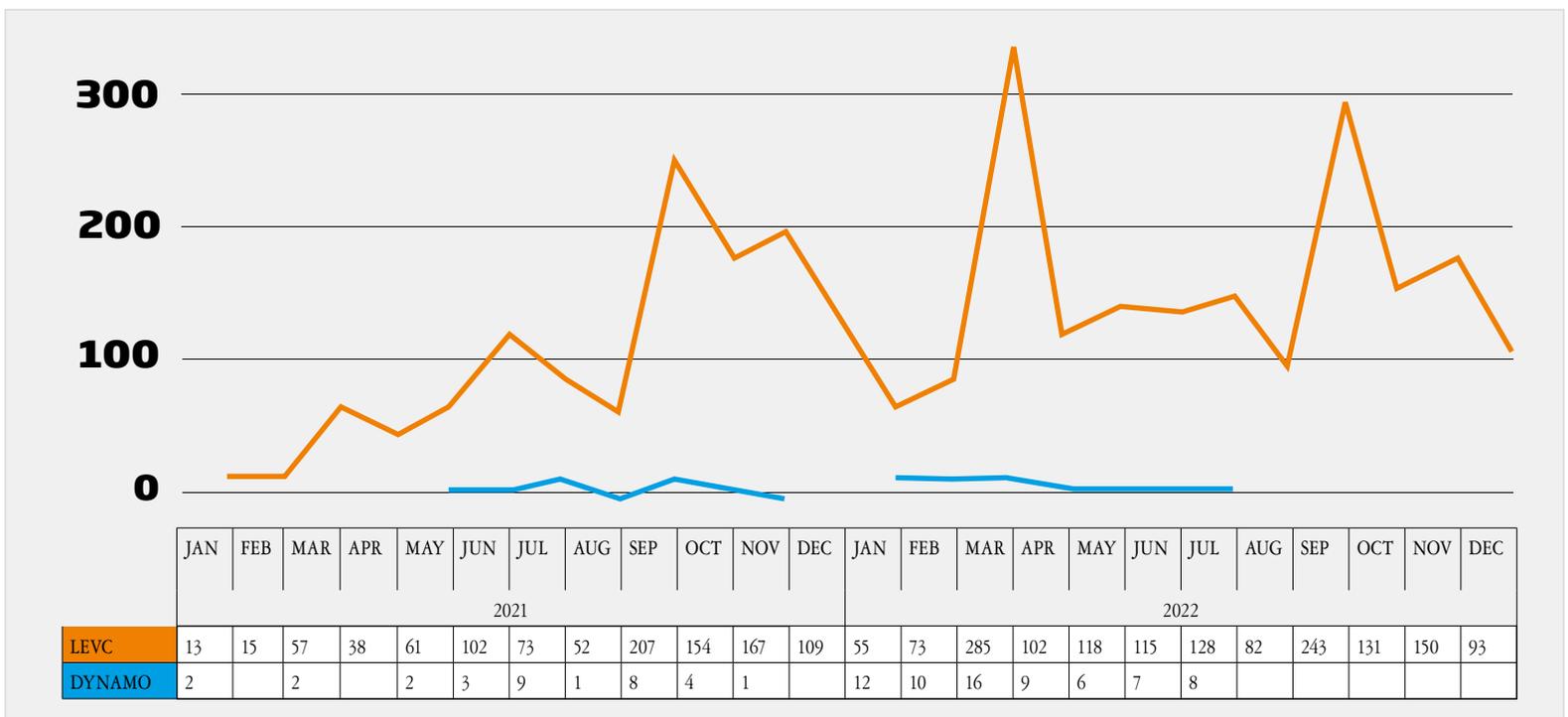
hovering just below 15,000 vehicles, but with the age limit now down to 12 years and less cabs dropping off each month, the total number of licensed vehicles should start to increase each month, as more TXEs join the ranks.

## The next milestone

The next milestone for the fleet will be when the TXE out numbers the rest of the combined fleet of TX4s and Vitos, which is realistically about a year away. Of course that could be delayed if the much hyped and long anticipated Euro V to Euro VI conversion is eventually approved, thus giving those cabs back their 15-year age limit. If it happens, and I think it will, it probably won't be until the summer. It will also impact the prices of those cabs, which will likely go up reflecting the extra extra 3 years' worth of plates the converted vehicles will have. Interesting times ahead! ■ **TAXI**

DYNAMO	182
LEVC	6,335
METROCAB	1
TX1	2
TX2	76
TX4	5,854
VITO	2,508
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,958</b>

22



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# 5 Financial New Year's Resolutions



The start of a new year is always the ideal time to take stock of your finances and make decisions that will benefit you financially.

## Money matters

**T**he government is offering various forms of help to households on low incomes this winter, so check if you're eligible for any of those payments at the foot of this article.

Once you've done that, consider making some or all of the following financial resolutions to get 2023 off to a strong start.

### Be realistic about money

Higher living costs are here to stay for the time being at least. With inflation and interest rates still high, our money obviously needs to stretch much further than it used to.

*"This means that our own budgets need extra attention and careful planning,"* says Emma-Lou Montgomery, associate director for Personal Investing at Fidelity International. *"Be realistic with yourself about how much you earn, what you owe and where your money goes."*

### Get a grip on debt

If you start 2023 with credit card debt, see if you can switch the debt to a 0% balance transfer credit card.

*"These cards could help you reduce the interest that you pay, giving you the opportunity to put the savings towards repaying your debt more quickly,"* says James Jones, head of consumer affairs at Experian.

For people looking for ways to better manage their existing borrowing because they are facing multiple credit repayments, a debt consolidation loan could help to simplify the process by combining all money owed into one place. This could cut your monthly expenditure too.

### Review your subscriptions

Most of us have fees for numerous subscriptions and memberships coming out of our bank accounts each month, but do you really need them all?

Assess whether you need these subscriptions and you could save yourself more than £100 across a few cancellations. For example,



canceling a Strava subscription (£4.58 per month), Tinder Gold (£11.92 per month) and Amazon Prime (£8.99 per month) can save you more than £300 over the course of a year.

### Bag some extra cash

One easy way to up your income is to switch your current account provider. Several banks are offering cash to new customers.

For example, moving your current account to First Direct's 1st Account using the Current Account Switching Service will see you receive £175 from the bank.

Alternatively, if you have a Monzo account, you can earn £5 if you invite a friend to open an account. Your friend will earn £5 too. You can earn £5 for up to 100 referrals: that's £500 in total.

If you have a spare room in your

home you can earn up to £7,500 a year, or £625 a month, tax-free through the government's Rent a Room scheme. Although taking in a lodger can mean sharing your home with someone else, it can be an easy way to make money.

If you have children away at university, you could let their bedroom in term time on a short-term or nightly basis, using Airbnb or Theatre Digs Booker.

### £400 energy payment

Every UK household is getting a £400 discount on their energy bills this winter. A monthly payment of £66 or £67 will either show as a credit on your energy bill (or be sent as a voucher if you have a prepayment meter), or be paid into your bank account. Be sure that you're receiving it.

### Cost of living payments

The government has announced further cost of living payments for means-tested benefit claimants. A total of £900 will be paid in three installments in spring and autumn 2023, and spring 2024. Those claiming disability support will get an extra £150 and pensioners will get £300.

### Winter fuel payment

If you were born before 26<sup>th</sup> September 1956, you could get a Winter Fuel Payment between £250 and £600 to help pay your heating bills. Eligible households will normally get this money automatically.

### Smart Meters

Providing you're eligible in your area of residence, your energy provider can install a Smart Meter for free. This is increasingly handy to see what exactly is costing the most to run on a daily basis, set budgets and allows you to be more mindful over how you consume your electricity. ■ **LTDA**



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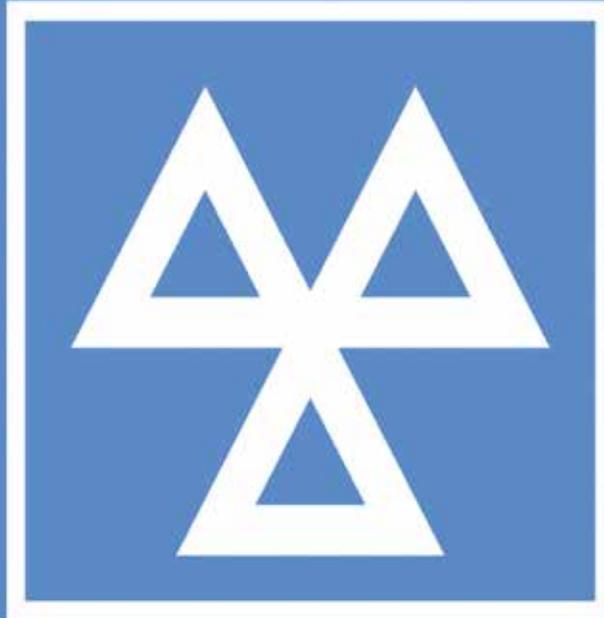
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*All accident repairs carried out*

# The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Taxi Charity is Upon Us

2023 is a special year for the Taxi Charity, so who better to tell us why, than London cab driver and its Chairman Brian Heffernan.

**TAXI** Why is 2023 so special?

**Brian:** We will be celebrating our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. And what a period for us to celebrate this huge milestone, when the country has the coronation of King Charles III to look forward to on 6<sup>th</sup> May. It'll no doubt bring thousands of extra visitors to London, which will be great for the country and for us cab drivers. Indeed, one of the highlights of the charity's history was in 2007, when veterans and volunteers from the Taxi Charity were invited to Clarence House by HRH Prince Charles.

**TAXI** Congratulations, 75 years is a huge achievement. For those who might not know about what you do, how did it all start?

**Brian:** It all began back in 1948, in the Bedford Arms in Fulham, when three cab drivers were sharing a pint and talking about what they might be able to do to support their friends who had been injured during WWII. The idea of a charity to support veterans began and they named it 'The London Taxi Benevolent Association For War Disabled'. Later that same year, 25 taxis took 50 disabled veterans on day trips: one to Brighton and one to Worthing. And it is amazing to think that the charity has been to Worthing every year since (apart from during the pandemic).

**TAXI** When did your trips to the continent begin?

**Brian:** The first was in 1987, when the charity took 200 disabled ex-servicemen to Dunkirk. Then, a few years later in 1994, the charity organised a four-day commemorative trip to the Normandy beaches for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day. For that trip to Normandy, 75 London taxi drivers were given the honour of assembling on Horse Guards Parade with 150 Normandy veterans. They were waved off by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen Mother and our charity Patron Dame Vera Lynn. What a thrilling experience that must have been for everyone.

**TAXI** How have things changed since then?

**Brian:** Well, in 2016 our name changed to the 'Taxi Charity for

Military Veterans' which better reflects our aims to support veterans of all conflicts, and not just those who have disabilities or served in WWII. As well as our trips to Worthing and Normandy we now also take veterans to the Netherlands and arrange many events in this country. And people may not know that we often help get veterans to hospital appointments or the airport. Our drivers often take veterans out for lunch. Most importantly, we support veterans of all ages and we were delighted to be able to assist by transporting VC and GC veterans to the Queen's funeral last September. In December, we supported the charity Blesma by taking some of their ski team to T5. We are, I believe, the only veteran charity with the sole purpose to provide those we support with social events and fun to enhance their lives.

**TAXI** So, what's planned for 2023?

**Brian:** As well as trips to the Netherlands to commemorate Dutch Liberation and to Normandy for the D-Day services, we hope to do an event on International Women's Day this March, host a large party in the summer, have a table at the London ex-Boxers association lunch, a joint outing with the Household Cavalry, a shooting and a fishing day, as well our much-loved day trip to Worthing and our annual Christmas lunch at Millwall. We will, of course, also want to continue working with the charity Waterloo Uncovered, giving us the privilege to take younger veterans to Belgium to participate in an archaeological dig.

**TAXI** Do you have the funding in place?

**Brian** – Sadly not. We have so much on our wishlist to celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup> but, like every charity across the UK, we were hurt really badly by the pandemic when restrictions cancelled all our usual fundraising activities. Late last year, we launched our 75 for 75 fundraising campaign, and hope that the trade will continue to support us and allow us to create some wonderful memories for veterans this year and beyond. We are very lucky to have



taxicharity75for75. Alternatively, if you are looking for a New Year's Resolution, why not think about joining our volunteers or doing a fundraising challenge and give something back to the service men and women who gave so much for this country.

**TAXI** What's for the future?

**Brian:** 2024 will also be a big year as it will be the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day and we want to ensure that any veterans who wish to pay their respects in Normandy are able to.

Looking into the future, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could continue making a difference for the next 75 years too?

Can I finish by wishing all your readers a very happy new year and give a special thank you to everyone involved with the Taxi Charity, including our drivers, supporters and donors. We couldn't do it without you and we are so very grateful for your continued support.

**To find out more about the support the Taxi Charity offers to veterans or to donate, visit [www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org) ■ TAXI**

some wonderful drivers who are committed to raising funds for us. Three intrepid (or should that be mad) cabbies, Stuart, Daren and Bob, set off on 3<sup>rd</sup> January to row the Atlantic, which just blows my mind, especially as none of them had ever rowed when they decided to do this! Cab driver Colin Mills is doing a sponsored 135km walk along Hadrian's wall in May, and Taxi Charity treasurer Simon and I are planning a fundraising walk across the London bridges in summer.

**TAXI** How can our readers help?

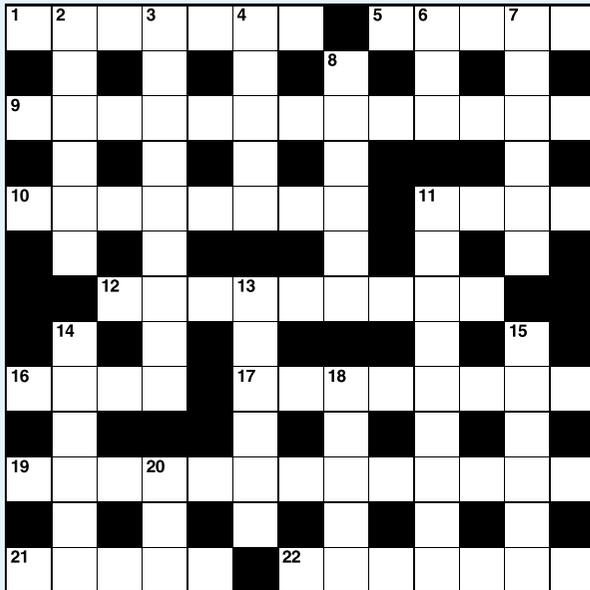
**Brian:** We would be very grateful for donations of any size to our 75 for 75 fundraising campaign via [www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org) or [www.justgiving.com/campaign/](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/)

**About the Taxi Charity**  
The Taxi Charity is run by volunteer London black taxi drivers and has been supporting thousands of veterans of all ages since 1948. The charity arranges free trips to Belgium, France and the Netherlands, for acts of commemoration and days out to museums, concerts, or fundraising events across the UK, to catch up with friends and comrades.  
The charity was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in June, 2021.  
In 2023, the charity will be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To fund and facilitate their work, the charity is reliant on donations, grants and sponsorship.  
[www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org)



# Puzzler Page

## Crossword



### ACROSS

- 1 1853-56 war (7)
- 5 Male deer (5)
- 9 Wait impatiently (5,3,5)
- 10 Be in contention (8)
- 11 Sound of a bell (4)
- 12 Foe (9)
- 16 In this place (4)
- 17 Meddled (8)
- 19 New version of an old object (13)
- 21 Children's entertainer (5)
- 22 School's tuition periods (7)

### DOWN

- 2 Raw recruit (6)
- 3 Treat roughly (9)
- 4 On the move (5)
- 6 Small number (3)
- 7 Member of a European nation (6)
- 8 Flattens (6)
- 11 Passes through (9)
- 13 Catch in a snare (6)
- 14 Breakfast food (6)
- 15 Complain about (6)
- 18 Finely chop (5)
- 20 At present (3)

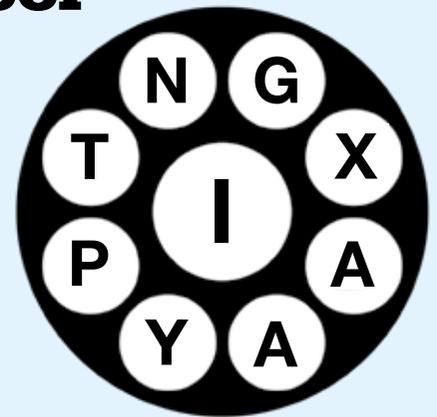
## Sudoku

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.

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

## 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 22 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.

<input type="text"/>	>	<input type="text"/>	<	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	4		
<input type="text"/>		4		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
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All answers to puzzler on p30

**TAXI**

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MEETING**

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**THE MEETING WILL  
TAKE PLACE AT CHRIST  
CHURCH HALL,  
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ROAD, SE1 8NY**

**TAXI**

## LINAGE

**TAXI**

### CABS WANTED

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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

● **London Buyer if all** decommissioned London taxis genuine quick purchase. Excellent prices paid – James 07931964857

### CABS FOR SALE

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

● **TX4 Euro 6 16 reg black 134,000** miles VGC £2,300 – Call Steve 07976 729033

● **TX4 11 reg plated until October,** forced to sell due to illness VGC - £3,000 07939579191

### CABS FOR RENT

● **TXEs, TX4s and vitos available** from £230 per week contact Sabri – 07958973944

● **VNK Motors -Electric cabs LEVCs** & TX4s for rent, from £195 upwards per week. Full back up, Caledonia Road, North London area, breakdown service, overhauls, running repairs & body work. Also Looking for a taxi mechanic 0207 700 1045 or 07951 661430 – Nick.

● **All North/West Vitos. Full** Flat/Part time/ Odd Days/ Shifts from £180, Full garage backup AA Membership - 07549 102030

## Get in touch



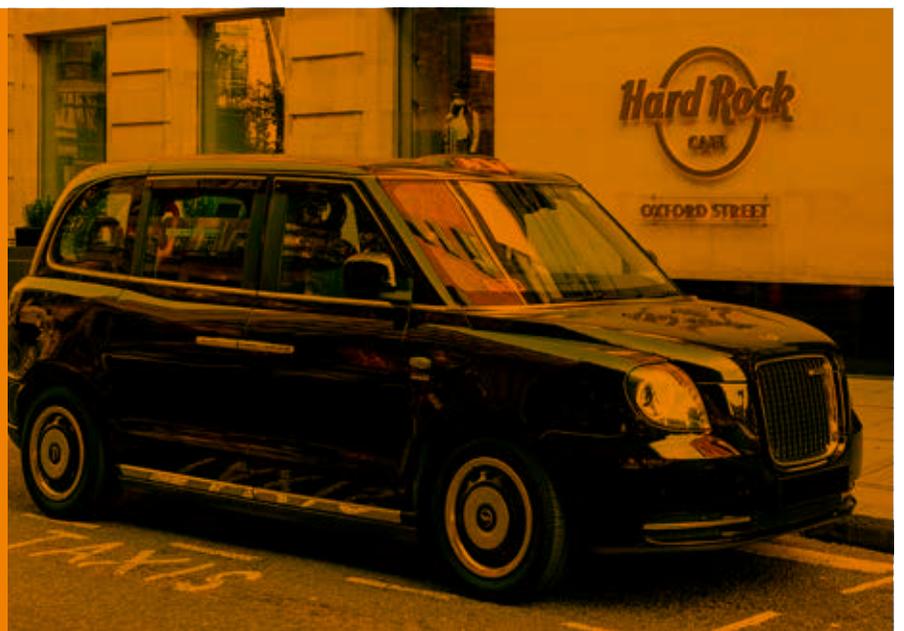
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01727 739 184



# LTDA APPLICATION FORM

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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.....

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1 Please write the name and full postal address of your branch in the box (left)

2 Name of account holder.....

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.....



This guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer

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- 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.

You can now also apply to join the LTDA online, simply scan here to complete an online application:





# Happy 2023!



On the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> January, facing Mr. Meg across the breakfast table, I asked him if he would like to hear a list of New Year inspirational quotes I had snipped out of a magazine.

## A woman of words

**M**r. Meg had the Screwfix catalogue propped up on the marmalade jar and was studying it intently, only half listening.

"Really? At this time of the morning?" he replied.

"So, when then?" I pressed. I was, I admit, huffy that he was more interested in nuts and bolts than the lovely me.

"February," he answered, "because I'm going to do dry January."

Then a new year bicker kicked off with me asking him what a dry January had to do with my my inspirational thoughts, and him saying to shush and wait a minute while he circled thingamajiggywotsits that had to be ordered from Screwfix.

Our spat was all cleared up over

toast and peanut butter when Mr. Meg explained he thought I had offered him a beer, not asked him something about the New Year.

I can't think of any point in our decades-long marriage that we have cracked open a beer with our porridge, so I added booking him a hearing test to my 2023 to do list.

Friends again, and with my clipping at the ready, I asked him to tell me which of the inspirational thoughts I'd found that he liked best.

I started with 'Every year you make a resolution to change yourself. This year, make a resolution to be yourself.'

He pulled his baffled face and said, "Don't get it. Next?"

Number two was 'He who breaks a resolution is a weakling; He who makes one is a fool!'

Mr. Meg who had just made the dry January resolution bristled at that one.

"Who's that saying

I'm a fool, then?" I enlightened him, "The painter F M Knowles."

"Cheeky sod, I bet his paintings are rubbish and all" declared Mr Meg.

Next up was the US know-it-all Benjamin Franklin, who professed 'Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbours, and let every new year find you a better man.'

Mr. Meg wasn't keen on that one, either. "Eh? Every year find yourself a better man? What do you reckon of that?" I pulled a

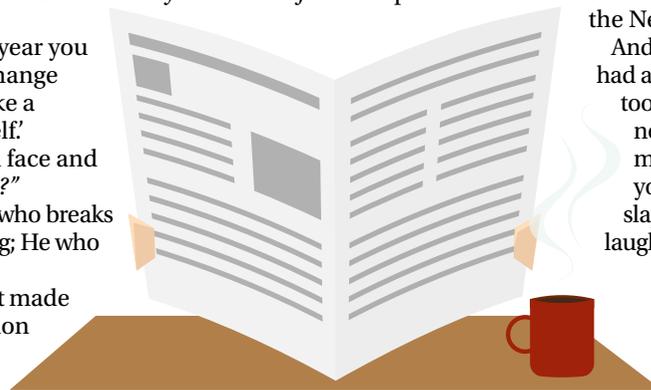
face and said, "Ridiculous!" and thought of my 2022 recurring dream, which was me removing the fluff from George Clooney's belly button. I won't say how.

However, there was one 'start your year' snippet on the list that would appeal to all cabbies in 2023, from the late Nelson Mandela. He wrote, 'It always seems impossible until it's done' - I think he was

referring to driving through the Neasden Underpass.

And America's Dr. Phil had a good one for us cabbies, too. He said, 'A year from now, you're gonna weigh more or less than what you do right now.' Mr. Meg slapped my bottom and laughed like a drain at that one.

And here's an inspirational message of my own to you all for 2023 - drive safe and be well! ■ TAXI



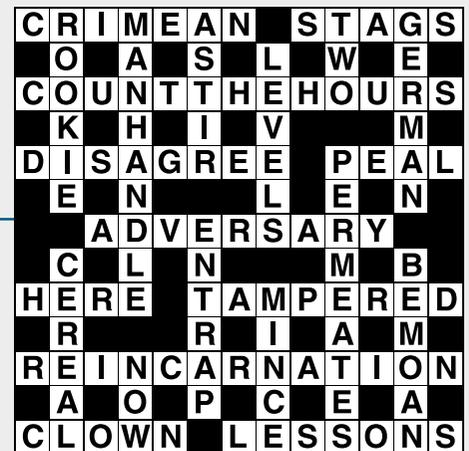
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- ◆ Abacus Accounts, Southbrook Road, Lee, SE12
- ◆ Astral Café, Regency Place, SW1
- ◆ Bubbles Car Wash, E2
- ◆ C & S Taxis, Dunbridge Street, E2
- ◆ Cabsurance, Seven Kings
- ◆ Camberfield Taxi Services
- ◆ Computer Cab, Mitre Way, W12
- ◆ Coney 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



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### SUDOKU

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

### Wordwheel

SOLUTION: TAXPAYING

All words: Again, apian, aping, axing, gain, gait, giant, inapt, pain, paint, patina, paying, ping, pint, pity, taping, taxi, taxing, tiny, tying, typing, TAXPAYING.

Word targets: Excellent: 27, Good: 23, Target: 17, Kids: 12

### Futoshiki

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



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