Cabbie Strikes Back Against Robbers

PEOPLE

A brave taxi driver has struck back against the robbers making the lives of fellow cabbies a misery by bringing one to justice.

Richard Barrow, of Maida Vale, sprang into action to help a police officer being overpowered by the thief, who had been in the back of the 57-year-old’s cab.

Both Mr Barrow and the officer, a former strongman in the Gladiators TV show, were tipped off by a cyclist to the fact the cabbie’s passenger was a robber.

The cabbie of 27 years picked up the thief close to Westbourne Terrace and was driving along when a cyclist pulled up beside him and yelled “you have a thief in the cab.”

Mr Barrow said: “The next thing there was a police car with flashing lights behind me and I knew something wasn’t right – the cyclist must have tipped police off too.

“I pulled over and the officer tried to stop the robber from getting away, but he was quite strong and I could see he was getting the better of him. So, I jumped in managed to get the crook on the floor while the officer put him in handcuffs.

“There was a lot scuffling around on the floor, but the police managed to get the cuffs on while I held him down. I think he would have got away otherwise.”

It emerged that crook had earlier been involved in a robbery and has since appeared in court on several charges.

The west London area, particularly around Lison Grove, has become virtually a no-go area for taxi drivers after a sharp rise in the number of robberies and distraction thefts.

In November, several taxi drivers came under attack from a gang in Lison Grove who pushed large metal bins into the road in a bid to trap and rob them. Riot police on the scene were bombarded with fireworks and forced to retreat.

Drivers and the LTDA have criticised the failure of the Met to act on the crimewave, with most drivers being told that their incidents will not be investigated.

Mr Barrow was praised by the police but took the opportunity to raise the issue of Lison Grove.

He said: “The police thanked me for my help, but I told them I wasn’t happy with the way they are dealing with the gangs around there. I saw online that there was a woman taxi driver robbed at Christmas and they couldn’t be bothered to follow it up. They were quite apologetic, but I told them it wasn’t good enough.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

Plying for hire PHV driver fined

A private hire driver has been fined more than £1,000 after being caught illegally plying for hire in Reading. Khawaja Babar, 39, of Holberton Road in Reading – a licensed minicab cab driver for South Oxfordshire – was parked in a bus stop outside a fast food shop in Friar Street, Reading, in the early hours of March 17, 2018.

When approached by council officers he lied and said he had just dropped off a customer.

The 39-year-old was found guilty at Reading Magistrates’ Court.

He appeared at court on Monday, January 14, 2019, where he was ordered to pay sums totalling £1,100 – £100 for plying for hire, £253 for providing false information and £747 in legal costs.

Coffee Discount for Cabbies

Taxi drivers can get 10% off purchases at the Coffee House Six Zero Seven at 607 Holloway Road, Archway. Parking is free after 2pm on Saturdays.

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For over 25 years we have arranged mortgages for licensed London taxi drivers. Call today to speak to one of our specialist team and find out how we can help you.
The taxi age limit proposal is unacceptable and I have been making the trade’s case against it at City Hall

CAMPAIGNING AGAINST AN AGE LIMIT CUT

TOP TRADE STORY

Following Mayor Sadiq Khan’s shock announcement before Christmas of his plans for a “phased reduction” in the taxi age limit from 15 to 12 years, I have been knocking down the doors of various air quality experts and policy managers at TfL, not to mention the Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy, Shirley Rodrigues. My meeting with her can best be described as a frank exchange of views, especially on the fact that the announcement was made with absolutely no consultation with the trade and without any impact assessment being carried out. I pointed out the flaws in TfL’s calculations on the trade’s contribution to pollution, and handed over a rough draft of the LTDA’s own impact assessment, which puts the trade’s loss at a criminal £50 million plus.

Back in 2014/15, when taxi age limits were last on the agenda, the LTDA hired scientists to investigate the trade’s actual contribution to exhaust generated emissions, rather than TfL’s estimates. The resulting evidence, along with our cost impact assessments and our members’ survey on vehicle purchase intentions, defeated the proposed age limit reduction. If we are to win this latest battle it will once again be down to the LTDA to do the research, source the experts and secure the evidence to support our arguments. It can be frustrating when others within the trade, who have done nothing but whinge on social media, behind the hype, gloss and lies, the simple truth is most Uber customers only use them because they are cheap. The majority of members support this policy. We received over 3,000 responses with 95% of our members saying the tax’s current Prius will comply; it won’t! Many of these people, rather than admit this, pretend it’s an “unacceptable” TfL wipes £150m off Cut Plan

Support for LTDA Policy

We recently asked our members to complete an online survey on current LTDA policy to demonstrations and militant action. The first question asked was, “as the largest trade group we want the LTDA to be recognised as representing a professional, forward thinking and innovative industry. When dealing with TfL, the mayor’s office, national government/departments, national and local politicians, local authorities and anyone else, our current policy in the first instance is to respond to consultations in the trades interests, correspond with, meet and engage with (the above), gather supporting evidence, if necessary lobby and involve other relevant stakeholder and only as a very last resort to consider picket lines, demos etc, is this policy current and correct?” It’s good to know that the vast majority of members support this policy. We received over 3,000 responses with 95% of our members saying the policy is correct. The breakdown and rest of the survey is on page 31.

Uber Fare Increase

Behind the hype, gloss and lies, the simple truth is most Uber customers only use them because they are cheap. Many of these people, rather than admit this, pretend it’s the app’s simplicity or the convenience are the reasons for using Uber. So where were all these people last when Uber announced a 15p a mile increase then? Because on social media there was only outrage, shock and disbelief at this “blatant profiteering.” Uber attempted to defend it as a means of helping its drivers fund the new much more expensive plug in hybrids that will be required, with many Uber drivers still under the mistaken belief that their current Prius will comply; it won’t!

Interestingly Uber supports the removal of the congestion charge exemption for PHVs, whilst their drivers scream and stage demos outside TfL. Is this because they recognise the congestion and pollution their cars are causing? Or is it because its licence is not as secure as it could be and it is frightened of challenging anything TfL and the mayor do?

Plying for Hire

We are still waiting for the Government to publish its long awaited response to the taxi task and finish group report, which recommended legislation on cross border hiring, a definition of plying for hire and powers for TfL to be able to cap PH numbers. In December, Transport Select Committee Chair, Lilian Greenwood MP wrote to Taxis Minister, Nusrat Ghani MP to ask when the Government will respond to the report, and whether it plans to bring forward primary legislation to implement its recommendations. Once again, the minister said that a response would be issued “shortly” and acknowledged that Government had a “leadership role to play” in addressing “important issues in the sector.” In written parliamentary questions, members of our APPG continued to press the Government on when its response will be published. Linkedin MP, Paul Blomfield MP and Jim Cunningham MP were told by the taxis minister that a response would be published in “due course.” This is unbelievably frustrating, a dozen other people and I, including MPs and representatives from across the country, attended hours and hours of meetings at the DfT. The report produced identified many of the problems affecting our trade that urgently need addressing. The Government needs to respond with proposed legislation in time for it to go into the Queen’s speech and before Parliament this year.

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UTAG is a unified collaboration between Drivers & Supplying stakeholders of the Taxi Trade.

United Trade Action Group Ltd ‘UTAG’ has been formed to manage the legal process and action against Westminster Magistrates Court, Transport for London and Uber. We are in the process of raising funds to pay for these legal challenges to save the Licensed Taxi. On 2nd November 2018, we were granted a judicial review by Hon Justice Walker, but there is much more to do.

WE NEED EACH AND EVERY DRIVER TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE LEGAL BATTLES. YOUR SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL.

Please join the fight and donate here. It’s now or never.

WWW.UTAG.LONDON

UTAG is a reference to United Trade Action Group Ltd
Delicensing Scheme Revamp Explained

TAXI

TRADE

Taxi drivers can get £10,000 for a 13-year-old cab as part of a shake-up of Transport for London’s delicensing scheme.

The mayor has made grants of up to £10,000 available for the first 250 drivers to apply to decommission a taxi between the age of five and 13 years.

There will then be a sliding scale of grant of £9,000 for the next 250 to apply and so on (see the table, right).

This grant is in addition to the existing £7,500 subsidies towards the cost of a new taxi.

The LTDA is advising that “even if you are unsure or are considering selling an older cab in the near future it could be worth signing up as you are not obliged to go through with the sale.”

Delicensing means you agree to take off the plate and the cab cannot be plated again, but your cab can still be sold for use as a private vehicle, or even for use outside London.

The scheme is NOT dependent on buying a new cab: you can scrap yours and rent, or buy a newer diesel!

It is part of an £18m fund being used to support taxi drivers who want to delicense their Euro 3, 4 or 5 vehicles and included other initiatives to support the uptake of Zero Emission Capable (ZEC) taxis.

Apply for a delicensing payment

Drivers are asked to ensure they have carefully read and understood the terms and conditions at tfl.gov.uk/corporate/terms-and-conditions/delicensing, before applying.

To apply for a delicensing grant, you will need your vehicle registration number, Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and vehicle licence number to complete the application, as well as an email address.

For more information, please email TaxiDelicensing@tfl.gov.uk.

LPG Taxi Age Limits

Under proposals to reduce the taxi age limit to 12 years by 2022, the age limit for Euro 6, LPG and ZEC taxis is proposed to remain at 15 years, according to TFL.

The regulator says “the proposal for a 15-year maximum age limit for newly converted LPG taxis would enable fuel savings, helping taxi owners to recoup the conversion costs while also reducing their contribution to damaging NOx emissions in London.

‘Any licensed taxis that have already been converted to LPG under the existing TFL scheme will not be impacted and would retain their exemption to the age limit requirement.”

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*Cost for individual tax return. Taxis annual cost £340 including VAT
City of London is to press on with further changes at Bank with one option including access for taxis.

**BANK ACCESS BACK ON THE AGENDA**

**THE MASSETT FILE**

Allowing taxis access to Bank junction is one of the options to be considered by the City of London Corporation under its All Change Bank project. Whilst it is not guaranteed, it is still good news that the idea is not dead and buried and officials are willing to consider the views of the taxi trade.

As you will no doubt be aware, on September 13 2018 the Court of Common Council (the highest committee) voted to make the experimental traffic scheme permanent, despite all the evidence showing that journey times for taxis and their passengers had been significantly affected by the trial.

The ban was introduced under the Bank on Safety branch of a larger scheme called All Change at Bank which is designed to make the area less crowded and much more appealing to visit.

The City’s aims are to:

- Reduce casualties by simplifying the junction
- Reduce pedestrian crowding levels
- Improve air quality
- Improve the perception of the area, as a place to spend time in rather than pass through.

All Change is kicking back into action now, with three options on the table. The option of most interest to taxi drivers is number three, which is effectively the same as it is now, but with access for cabs.

This option offers the opportunity to refine what has already been achieved, and investigate a revision of the vehicle types allowed, timings of operation and whether any further turning movements can be restricted.

It provides the chance for officials to investigate a limited east/west route specifically for taxis. The good thing about this option is that it is the simplest to achieve, some work, including widening footways, is already underway. The negatives, for the authority at least, are that this option offers limited scope for wholesale community improvements, which are often favoured by authorities in this day and age.

Option two leans towards increasing the room available for cyclists and pedestrians, with some space “retained for some other vehicle movements (the type of vehicle is yet to be established).” This option allows the City to make the area greener, with trees, seating, shade, shelter and activity areas, but to a lesser extent than option one.

It does also allow the opportunity for restricting two or three arms of the junction still further, again with some unspecified vehicle access. As things stand, this is the authority’s favoured option.

Option one, is similar to option two, but would provide the greatest amount of pedestrian priority and full vehicle closure. This would also require the rerouting some London buses, with approval needed from TfL, and would take several years to complete.

Whilst the City weighs up all the options, I will continue to make the trade’s case for full access to the Bank and will report in these pages as the discussions develop.

Richard Massey, LTDA Chairman, and Chairman of the London Cab Ranks Committee

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**MASSETT’S CAMERA HOTSPOTS**

- **EXMOUTH MARKET**
  - Red zone
- **BERKLEY STREET/J/W PICCADILLY**
  - Yellow box cameras
- **JOHN ISLIP STREET**
  - No right turn into Ponsonby Terrace
- **FULHAM BROADWAY/BARCLAY ROAD**
  - Yellow box
- **CAMDEN**
  - 20mph limit
- **WATERLOO ROAD**
  - Zig-Zags
- **SELFRIDGES**
  - Over ranking
- **LUDGATE HILL**
  - Zig-Zags
- **CLAPHAM HIGH STREET**
  - Zig-Zags
- **ISLINGTON**
  - 20mph limit
- **RED ROUTES**
  - TfL is actively enforcing yellow box restrictions
- **TOWER BRIDGE**
  - 20 mph speed limit - average speed cameras
- **LIMEHOUSE LINK**
  - 30mph speed limit
- **TERMINUS PLACE**
  - Bus only left turn. TfL to issue PCNs
- **SMITHFIELD**
  - Do not park in loading boxes, they are enforced by camera
- **A13**
  - Average speed cameras in operation
- **THE CITY**
  - 20mph limit

**HOTSPOT 1**

Lime Street, EC3
- no motor vehicles
- Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm

**HOTSPOT 2**

Binfield Road
- 24hr pedestrian zone
Minicabs Protest at C-Charge Plan

TRADE

Minicab drivers angry at plans to make them pay the congestion charge staged a protest outside Transport for London’s Blackfriars office.

The drivers claim that Mayor Sadiq Khan’s plan to clean up London’s polluted air is a “tax on the poor” which will drive them out of business.

Petrol- and diesel-powered vehicles will have to pay the £11.50 levy on weekdays from April 8.

Uber backs the proposal, which its drivers will pay, but unions say it could see fares rise by 10–20%, with some even trebling.

Minicab drivers say it could see their take home pay slashed by 25%. But the mayor hopes the charge will encourage firms and drivers to operate more efficiently as 28% of minicabs in the area are empty.

The protest was called by the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain’s United Private Hire Drivers’ branch.

Branch chairman James Farrar said: “If the mayor and TfL really want to reduce congestion, they should immediately use their powers to enforce minimum wage legislation and other worker rights.

“Instead of introducing this and other common-sense policies like rest stops for drivers and a levy on operators, Sadiq Khan is choosing to target some of the city’s most vulnerable workers.

“These workers have had enough of policies that ignore their concerns and are going to fight back until they get the fair deal they deserve.”

In a statement, they said that TfL research showed a disproportionate impact on poor workers.

The union has instead suggested a cap on the total number of minicab vehicle licences and rest spaces to reduce the amount of time drivers spend on the road waiting for passengers.

Critics say that it is well known that Uber drivers already use London as their own rank, simply parking up to wait for passengers to hail them, effectively plying for hire.

The mayor has also written to the Department for Transport to ask for the power to cap minicab licences, to no avail.

The union added the mayor should “use his existing powers to enforce worker rights, adding: “Minimum wage enforcement would provide the necessary incentive for operators to reduce the number of cars on the road.”

Alex Williams, TfL’s Director of City Planning, said in a statement that “bold action” is required to tackle London’s public health crisis.

“More than 9,000 premature deaths are linked to air quality every year. The private hire trade, along with all road users, have a central role in reducing the filthy fumes circulating in our city,” he said.

“The changes to the Congestion Charge will contribute to fewer vehicles driving where pollution is most concentrated while ensuring the cleanest minicabs or those that are wheelchair accessible continue to enter the zone without paying a charge.

“The changes to the Congestion Charge and the introduction of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone in April in central London will significantly benefit the health of all Londoners, including drivers.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

Woman Raped by Uber Imposter

A terrified young woman was kidnapped and raped in an alleyway by a driver after mistaking his car for her Uber minicab.

The woman, aged in her 20s, had been out with friends in Hackney, and ordered a car on the Uber app.

When a Toyota Auris arrived at her location, she got in the back but it was driven by an imposter, Mohammed Awais.

The victim was driven to a “dimly-lit” alleyway where she was raped, according to Scotland Yard.

After the horrific attack, she was robbed of her possessions, including her phone, cash and a laptop, and ordered to get out of the car.

Now, Awais, of East Ham, was jailed for nine years and four months at Snaresbrook Crown Court.

MINICABS PROTEST AT C-CHARGE PLAN

Mohammed Awais
Obviously, the hot topic on everyone’s lips at the moment is the scandalous announcement by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, of his intention to consult on cutting the taxi age limit to just 12 years. What made it even worse was the fact he decided that just before Christmas was the time to announce it, or if you are more cynically inclined, to bury the bad news. Then he also decided he wouldn’t even bother giving us any details about how or when it might be implemented but said we would have to wait for the consultation early in 2019 to see the finer details.

What is even considered as early in the year? Is that January? Maybe February? Could it even be April? How long will the consultation last two months? Three months? Maybe four months? Then there’s the period after the consultation where we get the collated information and summaries, before we finally get the decision. That will mean we will be in limbo until the summer of 2019 at best, but perhaps even as late as Christmas 2019.

So, many of us will be spending a whole year not knowing what we should do with the cab we’re currently driving, is that any way to treat the world’s greatest taxi trade?

So, what have we been told? Well, this announcement pretty much sums it up:

“In early 2019, we will also consult on proposals to reduce taxi emissions further, including a proposal of phased reductions of the taxi age limit for the dirtiest vehicles to 12 years. The 15-year age limit would be strictly mandated in 2019, with a proposed reduction in the age limit each year until a 12-year age limit is reached. The age limit for Euro 6, LPG and Zero-Emission Capable taxis is proposed to remain at 15 years. The consultation will launch early next year.”

So, if you’re currently driving a Euro 6 TX4 (approx. 16 plate) or Mercedes Vito (approx. 66 plate) you will still get 15 years along with the TXe and cabs running on LPG. The latter of course could have had a lifespan of up to 20 years, if a cab in its last year of its diesel life was converted to LPG, thus giving an extra five years. For the rest of us they are proposing to lower the age limit to 14 years in 2020, 13 years in 2021 and finally 12 years in 2022.

This isn’t the first time they’ve tried to lower our age limit. We defeated them last time and let me assure you the LTDA will be doing everything it can to prevent this unnecessary attack on hard working cabbies, which has wiped millions of equity from the value of taxis at a stroke. Let’s be clear they have no real proof that we’re as dirty as they claim. The 20% of pollution we’re blamed for, or the 40,000 premature deaths figure is all complete and utter tosh. They seem to be of the view that “if we say it often enough, it becomes true.” It is in effect a straw man, a manufactured problem, which never existed before, built up to show that they are taking action: blame us, white vans and then use a sledge hammer to crack the nut. Clearly, with all the outrage from the minicab trade about being forced to pay the C-Charge, TfL can’t be seen to be letting us off the hook. But what they have failed to take to account is that they are delivering a slap in the face to people who have already taken up the challenge and are going green as fast as they can, with more than 1,000 electric cabs on the roads already, despite there being only one relatively expensive option. At the current rate of change we will be fully zero emission capable before TfL’s beloved London bus service, but yet they still want more blood. What an insult!

Paul Brennan,
LTDA Executive
CABVISION 2019
WHAT’S HAPPENING

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A mother and her two children were made homeless at Christmas after an out of control minicab smashed into her house.

Suzan Hassan, 36, was washing the dishes in the ground-floor kitchen of her home in Bellingham south-east London when the car careered into the wall.

Ms Hassan said she was forced to move out on December 22 after the minicab hit her home shortly before 8pm.

The 36-year-old said: "I thought it was an earthquake. Suddenly this entire car was in my kitchen. I was in total shock. Luckily the kids weren’t home."

"There were cracks going up the ceiling. I was so scared that I jumped on to the work surface and held up the kitchen ceiling."

"My neighbours rushed out and were yelling ‘get out, get out’. I hurt my back when I was thrown into the fridge.”

Police breathalysed the driver at the scene and found that the driver was completely sober.

It is believed he accidentally lost control of the vehicle.

Ms Hassan, a personal trainer and carer, was first put up by relatives before being moved to a “terrifying” housing association hotel, and plagued by anti-social behaviour.

She was so scared she removed her 11-year-old daughter, Yasemin, and slept in the family car, while her son Tyla, six, stayed at his grandmother’s house in Sidcup. The family have now been placed in a three-bedroom property while a new permanent home is found for them.

A police spokeswoman said: “Police were called at 7.55pm on Saturday December 22 to reports of a car in collision with a building on Fordmill Road. Officers and the London Fire Brigade attended. There were no injuries.”

Minicab Hits Family Home

TRADE

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Ms Hassan, a personal trainer and carer, was first put up by relatives before being moved to a “terrifying” housing association hotel, and plagued by anti-social behaviour.

She was so scared she removed her 11-year-old daughter, Yasemin, and slept in the family car, while her son Tyla, six, stayed at his grandmother’s house in Sidcup. The family have now been placed in a three-bedroom property while a new permanent home is found for them.

A police spokeswoman said: “Police were called at 7.55pm on Saturday December 22 to reports of a car in collision with a building on Fordmill Road. Officers and the London Fire Brigade attended. There were no injuries.”
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ON POINT

Everybody knows that a good relationship of any kind is built on mutual respect, trust and a healthy ability to communicate. Unfortunately, someone neglected to tell the Continental Basil Fawlty, in charge of rooms at the Corinthia Hotel, who has snootily snubbed my efforts at reasonable communication over the inability of taxi drivers to access the rank, and thus service their upmarket clientele.

Our relationship with hotels is obviously very important to the trade. We provide a gold standard service for people who generally would rather not spend their time circling London for hours with a confused Uber driver. Admittedly, like all relationships, ours is a bit rocky at times. Some drivers let the side down while using hotel services and there are the obvious complaints about dodgy doorman and backhanders at some less than scrupulous businesses around the city.

Part of my job is try to maintain a cordial relationship, addressing the issues as they arise by phoning, meeting or emailing the hotels in the hope of getting them to listen to our complaints and tackle them and in turn, take up any hotel issues with drivers.

Unfortunately, it seems some hotels are run by people who just don’t care about the trade or indeed fostering good working relationships. It’s disappointing to find that the Corinthia is one of these, not least because when it opened a few years ago, I remember the management taking out a double page in this very paper declaring their great love of the taxi trade etc.

Well, what rubbish! In recent times I have had numerous complaints from drivers saying that the rank serving the hotel is often blocked by delivery drivers and the like. I have politely taken this up with our friend Basil, asking if they could do something about it. However, the response seems to be one of sticking two fingers up and saying we don’t care – charming indeed. Not the response you would expect to get from a hotel that professes to want a good relationship with the trade, or who has studied hospitality. I bet they don’t communicate with their customers like that.

In fact, the response was simply “please be advised that the hotel has no responsibility to police the taxi rank.” Well, that maybe the case but do you want taxi drivers to serve the hotel and its customers or not? It is your responsibility if you want taxi drivers to serve the hotel.

They have doormen and it wouldn’t take a couple of seconds just to tell someone to clear off. I only raise this relationship breakdown out of frustration really, I’m not suggesting that we head for the divorce courts just yet, or actively boycott the hotel, but it might be worth remembering their indifference to the trade and if it’s raining, or you have somewhere else you can be, then perhaps give them a swerve until Basil gets his act together.

Over-ranking

Over-ranking is one of the big issues we hear about, both from drivers and Transport for London.

As many of you will know, there is a new two place rank being trialled in Basil Street. By all accounts the over-ranking there is out of control and we are set to lose this obviously popular rank if the bad behaviour carries on.

Things got so heated recently that an LTDA marshal had to step in and break up a row between two drivers, which was about to get violent. Complaints about over-ranking emanate from Hans Place (both sides) and Walton Place.

Residents are fed up with it and have been filming cabs and sending the videos to Kensington and Chelsea Council, which is in contact with TfL.

Keep calm and if the rank is full, move along. It is obviously proving popular and we want to keep it.

Lloyd Baldwin is an LTDA Executive Support Officer
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Uber Driver Admits Six Murders

INTERNATIONAL

An Uber driver has admitted murdering six people at random in a shooting spree in the US.

Jason Dalton, 48, initially blamed the app for controlling his “mind and body” when he went on the rampage in Michigan.

The 48-year-old slayed four people at a restaurant, and two at a car dealership, in the shootings in the city of Kalamazoo.

The charges consisted of six counts of murder, two counts of attempted murder and eight charges relating to firearms offences. He now faces a mandatory life sentence without parole.

Dalton, who submitted his plea while jury selection was taking place, did so despite the objections of his attorney. He told the judge at the Kalamazoo County court that he had made the decision of his own free will, adding that he had “wanted this for quite a while”.

Dalton had earlier reportedly told police that he was made a “puppet” by the Uber application, which directed him to shoot people at random over a five-hour period in February 2016.

None of the victims were Uber customers but Dalton continued to pick up passengers during the shooting spree.

The shootings took place on a Saturday evening at three locations – outside a Cracker Barrel restaurant, a Kia car dealership and an apartment block.

The first shooting took place outside a Kalamazoo residential building at about 5.30pm local time. A woman was shot multiple times – reportedly in front of her children – and was taken to hospital in a serious condition;

At about 10pm local time, a father and son were shot and killed and a third person was wounded at the car dealership;

At about 10.15pm the third shooting took place in the car park of the Cracker Barrel restaurant. Mary Lou Nye, 62, of Baroda, Michigan, was killed along with Dorothy Brown, 74; Barbara Hawthorne, 68, and Mary Jo Nye, 66, all of Battle Creek, Michigan. A girl, 14, was gravely wounded.

Dalton was arrested that evening and also Uber confirmed that Mr Dalton was a driver registered with the company. Mr Dalton had undergone background checks but passed because he had no criminal record, the minicab firm said.

Diesel Slump Forces Jaguar Job Cuts

INTERNATIONAL

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) has said that it is axing 4,500 jobs, with the substantial majority coming from its 40,000 strong UK workforce.

The company has admitted facing several challenges, including a slump in the UK workforce.

The majority coming from its 40,000 strong workforce.

JLR has said that it is axing 4,500 jobs, with the substantial majority coming from its 40,000 strong UK workforce.

The company has admitted facing several challenges, including a slump in demand for diesel cars and a sales slowdown in China.

The firm has also complained about uncertainty caused by Brexit, which it says has deterred many people from buying new cars for the time being.

Most will be in office roles as the company wants to simplify its management structure. The cuts come on top of last year’s 1,500 job losses.

JLR, which is owned by Indian conglomerate Tata, made a £390m pre-tax loss in the three months to September 30, a major reversal from the £385m profit of the previous year.

“We are taking decisive action to help deliver long-term growth, in the face of multiple geopolitical and regulatory disruptions as well as technology challenges facing the automotive industry,” said JLR’s chief executive, Ralf Speth.

JLR, the UK’s biggest vehicle maker, says it plans to make further investment in electrification.

Electric drive units will be produced at Wolverhampton and a new battery assembly centre, to be established at Hams Hall, Birmingham.

New Taxi Charity President Appointed

CHARITY

A parachute squadron veteran and former cabbie has been appointed as the new president of the Taxi Charity.

Eddie Hillery has been involved with the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans since 2008, volunteering to make bucket collections at stations before becoming a committee member in 2013.

Gary Belsey, Chairman of the Taxi Charity, said "As a long serving charity volunteer, veteran and ex-cab driver Eddie was the obvious choice for president. We are delighted that he is in post as we begin 2019 and the important 75th anniversary year of the D-Day Landings."

In 1954, aged 18, Eddie was called up under the National Service Act. He joined the Royal Signals at Catterick in Yorkshire and trained as a wireless operator. He volunteered for airborne forces, transferred and trained as a parachutist and served the remainder of his service with 16th Independent Parachute Brigade Signals Squadron until 1956. After a few years in different driving roles Eddie signed up for the Knowledge in 1965 and became a qualified taxi driver in 1966. He spent 42 years as a London taxi driver and was a founder member of the Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association (LTDA).

The Taxi Charity arranges international trips to Holland, Belgium and France, UK day trips to concerts or museums, transport to attend fundraising events, as well as special days out to catch up with friends and comrades.

To donate, volunteer or just to find out more visit the website http://www.taxicharity.org
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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 __________________________

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• 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.
IT is unbearable to rank inside Paddington station. Times over. Just join. Needed their help a few times since they began. Them, they were there. My career as a cab driver don’t care what these people say, when I needed about, knocking the board of the LTDA. I forget all these snivelling, jealous posters dotted Plus, most of it can be offset against income tax. Of stress and worry I received the email: I passed unequivocal opinion I was always fit and safe to the same information. He added that in his the time. I couldn’t see how the GP could do your consultant? Anthony suggested making on my behalf with the Occupational Health Department at TfL and they allowed past the 28 days allowed by TfL, the earliest work so I could collect my wallet. However, he had already been on Twitter (as I found out later) to alert me or anyone who knew me to my loss. Despite finding my Spurs season ticket and him being a Gooner he still stopped work so I could collect my wallet. Thank you very much Peter for your patience honesty and commitment.

Simon Thompson

Don’t be insulting online

In my fifth year as a Knowledge student and apart from the odd naysayer, I find most taxi drivers positive and professional. Alas, give them the cover of a digital cloak and a Twitter account and many turn into rampant bitter mad men. It normally goes something like this:

@kellybrown (fake name)

“Last night I was charged £50 pounds for an Uber journey, which I was quoted £17 pounds for. Very unhappy about this @Ubersupport”

You will then get a slew of cabbies insulting said person with sarcastic comments and in some instances, downright rudeness. The tweeters ensure this person will never use black cabs.

London taxi drivers are the best in the world; fact. So please act like it, not just on the road, but on the information super highway as well.

Jay Stewart

LockeRbie correction

A s a taxi driver and also a security trainer at Heathrow airport, I read with great interest the article about the Lockerbie Bombing on the Pan Am Clipper at Maid the Sun in TAXI 435. The article was very interesting as we use the Lockerbie disaster references in training new staff. I was disappointed though that part of the article seems to be incorrect. The reference to a broken lock at Heathrow implies that Heathrow airport baggage had something to do with the bag. In fact, the bag containing the device was placed into an Air Malta flight to Frankfurt where the bag containing the device was transferred on to the Pan Am 103 flight to New York via London. The aircraft made the scheduled stop at Heathrow with the device already on board, from Frankfurt. Heathrow was not involved at all with the baggage. Trial evidence showed that German police were tailing Al Megrahi prior to the tragedy and at the start of the investigation tried to pass blame to Heathrow for the device being placed on the aircraft. It has been proven and recorded that Heathrow was not to blame for the breach of security at Frankfurt. I feel the article, although very well written, implies Heathrow is to blame which is untrue. All evidence shows Heathrow as an innocent party in a very tragic incident.

Tim Veck

Thanks for your kindness

My husband and I went to London on November 15. We had booked a hotel called the Bolton Hotel, South Kensington. We decided to take a black cab from Covent Garden and had a lovely driver who told us lots of history on way. The traffic was very busy and it took ages to get there, but he made the journey pleasant. After we got to our room I realised I’d left my daughter’s Christmas present in cab, a bottle of £84 Tom Ford perfume. I felt like crying. We went out for a walk round and got back after 8pm to find the driver had driven all way back and left it at reception for us. I went to Covent Garden the next day to see if I could recognise him, but unfortunately, I didn’t. So, this is a big thank you from me for your kindness and honesty.

Lynette Cummings

The Filth and the Fury

The conditions at Paddington Station have been disgusting. Taxi drivers are urinating on the walls and floor making it unbearable to rank inside Paddington station. These people should be ashamed of themselves.

Adil Charkaoui

North London Footy Love

I would like to thank a cab driver called Peter from Stoke Newington for returning my wallet to me on New Year’s Eve. At Paddington I dropped my wallet while helping a passenger with their bag. I didn’t know I’d dropped it until a fair time later when I received a call from Peter. He found my LTDA card in my wallet and was able to contact someone at the office who gave him my number which was lucky. However, he had already been on Twitter (as I found out later) to alert me or anyone who knew me to my loss. Despite finding my Spurs season ticket and him being a Gooner he still stopped work so I could collect my wallet. Thank you very much Peter for your patience honesty and commitment.

Fred the Leg

Letters

Don’t ignore consultations

Cycle superhighway route 4 from Tower Bridge to Greenwich is the latest scheme to get the go ahead following a two-month consultation period last year. TfL received 3,265 direct responses to the consultation, of which 83% supported or strongly supported the proposals.

Considering there are 24,000 cabbies representing our trade, it goes to show, once again, that our colleagues are not responding to the LTDA consultations. For the life of me I cannot understand why. We must improve this going forward.

I read the emails that the LTDA sends out regularly, which literally spoon feed cabbies on how to respond to TfL – these are great by the way and much appreciated – but obviously cabbies still aren’t responding. I would suggest that union reps take the time, each time a new TL proposal is emailed out, to liaise with cabbies at all major airport feeder parks and other busy ranks to ensure that every cabbie ranked up completes the consultation then and there, whilst they are twiddling their thumbs.

Heathrow is a perfect example. I don’t know the numbers but there must be about 500 cabs in the feeder parks when its full. If, during a week-long period when a new consultation is emailed out by TL, a union rep knocked on every cab door once a day for that week and talked with the driver they could surely get a couple of thousand cabbies to complete the consultation. Some drivers may need a little bit of help filling it in on their smart phone – others just need a kick up the backside to get it done. Those numbers would swing consultations in our favour and that’s just Heathrow alone!

Jamie Hamblett

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Trial evidence showed that German police were tailing Al Megrahi prior to the tragedy

Adil Charkaoui

Fred the Leg

The Filth and the Fury

The conditions at Paddington Station have been disgusting. Taxi drivers are urinating on the walls and floor making it unbearable to rank inside Paddington station. These people should be ashamed of themselves.
2018 was a strange year: fighting crime was less important for the police than selling branded clobber

EXIT THROUGH THE MET GIFT SHOP

CHRIS ACKRILL

2018 was a strange year: fighting crime was less important for the police than selling branded clobber

ON THE ROAD

A s we journey deep into the land of kippers, we wonder what this year will bring. We might also ponder what is going on in other people’s professions. I was particularly interested in the mad things that were going on in the police service towards the end of 2018. For a fair while, under-reaction had been the order of the day, with “lesser” crimes not being adequately investigated.

Then there was a controversial counter reaction against moped mugging gangs. There was also a comical move into branded merchandising by the Met.

As most people in the London taxi trade are aware, there had been a spate of robberies of drivers in and around the Lisson Grove area. I’ve spoken to taxi drivers who fell victim years ago, but activity intensified in the autumn of 2018. Drivers reported attacks to the police but the crimes weren’t followed up. On bonfire night, gangs barricaded Rossmore Road and attacked passing taxis by throwing traffic cones. The police apparently showed up but withdrew when they came under fire from bricks and stones. That was pretty much the end of it.

On Saturday, November 17, I came home from work early because I couldn’t get around town. Protestors calling themselves “Extinction Rebellion” (whose aims were vague) blockaded five Central London bridges. The police shut more streets off and let them get on with it. The demonstrations continued into the following week and London’s roads were in chaos. There were 84 arrests on the Saturday, but none on the following Wednesday when the demo had been stepped up to ruin many people’s midweek routine. The police often talk about a lack of resources. This is undoubtedly hampering the police to some extent, but they still had the resources to put cones out and direct traffic around the affected areas. Call me reactionary, but I would like to have seen Boris’s obsolete water cannon tested on Extinction Rebellion – or phantom drones – before he sold it... (at a huge loss).

The police are only as good as their funding, and they have undoubtedly suffered from a lack of money. They should be responding to reports of robbery though, particularly when evidence is handed to them on a plate. I’d urge anyone who’s been victim of a crime to report it. And to the police; reporting things on Twitter doesn’t count!

A little later in November, a shift in attitude was reported concerning the epidemic of robberies by teenagers riding mopeds. It was reported that the police were reversing their earlier strategy of giving up the chase, and would now ram the mopeds with their cars.

The Metropolitan Police suggested that the days of passive resistance were over. The police talked about a walk on by culture after an attack on a police officer was filmed and shown on social media.

This was in contrast to the Lisson Grove crime epidemic, where they wouldn’t respond adequately when presented with evidence, and just walked off when the perpetrators turned on them.

They used to tell us not to get involved. You might get hurt, or become subject to prosecution should you take the law into your own hands; even if you’re defending your own property or protecting yourself and others. Taxi drivers who came under attack after the bonfire night incident were reluctant to report attacks as they’d lost confidence in the police. Were the police still lodging victims of crime off with excuses, or were they now working against the walk on by culture? Which version of the police service would we be dealing with as we went into 2019?

The Met had other distractions anyway. They’d recently launched a range of branded clothing, toys and souvenirs. Actually I’d quite fancy one of those checked baseball caps that the cops with guns wear. I could buy a toy gun and spend many happy hours running around like we used to. The term “cop shop” will carry more meaning. We could hand it lost property again, like we used to. The term “cos shop” will carry more meaning. We can report crimes in the traditional way, then browse the merchandise as we exit through the gift shop.

As for the ramming of moped gangs, I’m not sure I believe the hype. It could just be an opportunity to stop motorists in a desperate attempt to sell them an “I’ve Met the Met” baseball cap.

Call me reactionary, but I would like to have seen Boris’s obsolete water cannon tested on Extinction Rebellion – or phantom drones – before he sold it...
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Concluding the gruesome tale about a sadistic barber turned murderous south London publican

THE BOROUGH POISONER’S END

CRUEL LONDON

After murdering his lover Mary Spink with by secretly administering poison in ever large doses, Polish barber turned publican, George Chapman (real name Severin Klowski) set his sights on his next victim: his newly employed barmaid, Bessie Taylor.

Just like Mary, Bessie agreed to enter into a bogus marriage with Chapman only to quickly discover what a monster he truly was; a vile bully who revelled in verbal, physical and psychological abuse. At one point he even threatened her with a revolver.

As with Mary, Chapman began slipping tiny amounts of toxin into Bessie’s food. When she began to display symptoms similar to those suffered by his former partner, Chapman arranged a posting at a new pub – The Grapes in Bishop’s Stortford – where he could avoid suspicion. After a time the pair moved back to London where they took on The Monument Tavern; an inn which once stood on Borough’s Union Street.

At The Monument Tavern, Bessie’s health continued to deteriorate. As she lay ill, her friend Elizabeth Painter – who’d served on the Jack the Ripper spree of 1888; the main reasons being that he lived and worked in Whitechapel at the time, had some medical knowledge and, as seen in each of his relationships, displayed a psychopathic attitude towards women. Following Chapman’s arrest, the bodies of Mary Spink and Bessie Taylor were exhumed and found to contain large traces of metallic elements within them. Chapman’s modus operandi was confirmed, leading the press to dub him the “Borough Poisoner.”

George Chapman: Executed for the murders of three women

George Chapman – who, rather unsettlingly, had been spotted lurking outside the mortuary whilst the post-mortem was being conducted – was arrested by Inspector George Godley, an officer who’d served on the Jack the Ripper case some years previously. Shortly after, a colleague suggested to Godley, “you’ve caught Jack the Ripper at last.” This theory was widely discussed in newspapers at the time and to this day there are still those who believe there’s a good possibility that Chapman was indeed responsible for the notorious spree of 1888, the main reasons being that he lived and worked in Whitechapel at the time, had some medical knowledge and, as seen in each of his relationships, displayed a psychopathic attitude towards women. Following Chapman’s arrest, the bodies of Mary Spink and Bessie Taylor were exhumed and found to contain large traces of metallic elements within them. Chapman’s modus operandi was confirmed, leading the press to dub him the “Borough Poisoner.”

George Chapman was tried at the Old Bailey during March 1903. It took the jury just 11 minutes to find him guilty and he was executed the following month at Wandsworth prison.

Chapman decided to have a crack at insurance fraud by setting fire to The Monument Tavern. Bizarrely though, he removed all of the furniture beforehand and stashed other valuables...
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W hat better way to kick off the New Year than by meeting one of our diary spotters and being handed a £150 gift card completely free. Our spotters love nothing more than hopping around London looking for unsuspecting LTDA members to hand goodies to.

This week they caught up with Emerson Ferreira, who was delighted when our spotters surprised him with a £150 All 4 One gift card just for having his LTDA diary on show in the windscreen of his cab.

All 4 One cards can be spent on a huge array of items in dozens of stores, including Debenhams, Argos, River Island and Marks and Spencer.

Emerson said: “Fantastic. This will come in very handy. I never thought I would win Diary Watch.” A short while later our spotters managed to catch up with Ahmed Haashi, who was pleased as punch when he was handed a £150 gift card simply for having his diary on display. Ahmed said: “That’s great, thanks a lot. That’s made my day.”

Each year we give away almost £8,000 to LTDA members, so the odds of coming up trumps are pretty good. Just make sure you have your LTDA membership diary on display and let us do the rest.

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IF THE UBER CAP FITS...

INTERNATIONAL

It was a real shock for New York City’s taxi and FHV industry when barely five days into the New Year, New York’s mayor Bill De Blasio and Meera Joshi, CEO and Chair of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) announced that Commissioner Joshi would be leaving in March. Taxi Newspaper spoke to the TLC Commissioner about her decision.

It was Meera Joshi who in August 2018 initiated the one year temporary freeze on the expansion of the FHV sector (with the exemption of wheelchair-accessible vehicles) – a unique and innovative initiative. In doing so, she and mayor De Blasio (who in 2015 had lost a bruising fight with Uber about a proposed cap) put the brakes on the extreme growth of Uber, Lyft and others in Manhattan. It also slowed the mushrooming congestion and pollution in New York.

World first: Uber cap

This freeze proved to be a world first and a big setback for Uber in its biggest US market. Both Uber and Lyft fought the proposal for a freeze. Uber particularly fearing the effect on other big operations like London, its largest operation in Europe. Both argued a cap would deprive New Yorkers – particularly poorer New Yorkers in the boroughs – of transportation options, drive up fares and increase waiting times.

The New York taxi industry – particularly the drivers – welcomed the freeze as it was almost on its knees by falling demand, plummeting medallion (licence) prices (from £780,000 in 2014 to barely £156,000 in 2018). Scores of taxi drivers can barely make ends meet – eight from £780,000 in 2014 to barely £156,000 in 2018). Scores of taxi drivers can barely make ends meet – eight taxi drivers in the process of being overtaken by app drivers.

But the relationship between the owners of yellow cab medallions and Commissioner Joshi was less than cordial. They’re happy to see her go and have blamed her for not acting sooner against Uber.

Taxi drivers, however, are sad to see her go. “The timing of Commissioner Joshi’s resignation is concerning because the crisis for New York City drivers is far from over and the Taxi and Limousine Commission’s work to fix it is just beginning,” commented Bhairavi Desai, Executive Director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

Has the cap worked? In London, the taxi industry would very much like to see its regulator take the same tough and innovative route as New York, I told the Commissioner. But what were the initial effects of the New York cap? “In the first quarterly report on what we’ve learned thus far, we’re seeing more trips, and less vehicles, which is a good start,” Joshi told TFLX newspaper. And what will happen after the 12 month cap? “Now that the TLC has additional authority granted (to) us by Local Law, everything is on the table.”

Turbulence

It’s a shame Joshi leaves now as in the coming years the effects of her policies will bear fruit. From 2014, on the 30-year-old presided over the most turbulent five years in the agency’s history. TLC regulates the taxi industry (the 13,587 yellow cabs) and the For Hire Vehicle sector (New York’s black cars) which grew to now well over a 100,000 vehicles and is mainly in use for trips by Uber, Lyft and others.

In that period Joshi calmly stamped her authority on this difficult agency: “It has been an honour to serve New York City through the effective regulation of almost 200,000 drivers in over 130,000 vehicles moving over a million people each day,” Joshi commented on her March departure and added: “Thanks to a skilled and principled TLC staff – a commission dedicated to doing the right thing – engaged industry members and advocates, through public debate and data we increased accountability, safety, access, modernised taxi regulation, protected drivers and increased consumer protection.”

A minimum wage

With the freeze went the prospect to conduct a study into the booming FHV industry.

Another world first was the (enforced) minimum income for ride-hailing drivers, starting February 2019: £13.41 an hour – a £3.90 increase. The same package included the demand for ride-hailing companies like Uber and Lyft to provide the TLC with their trip data – just as yellow cabs do automatically. This way the regulator receives a wealth of data on the activities of New York’s FHV-vehicles (including ride-hailing) and taxis.

Earlier, she had improved the availability of wheelchair-accessible taxi and FHV vehicles across the city and helped reduce the number of fatal accidents involving taxi drivers by 50%.

Spat over congestion fee?

The Manhattan congestion fee of £1.95 for taxis and £2.15 for black cabs, proposed by New York’s governor Cuomo and not opposed by Mayor De Blasio, led to a difference of opinion between Joshi and the mayor, who praised Joshi’s work “as a model for cities throughout the nation and the world.”

At her departure, De Blasio added that “under her leadership New Yorkers who use wheelchair cans get service, passengers are assured that every driver and vehicle is safe, our city has detailed records of the one million daily trips and New York City is the only place where app drivers have pay protection. She will leave an unparalleled legacy and has raised the bar for good government. I am grateful for her service.”

During a routine TLC hearing in December, Joshi warned that maintaining the congestion fee for Manhattan below 96th Street would be “devastating for the taxi industry.” Not surprising, since just getting into a yellow cab and not even driving a meter would already put £3.52 on the clock.

Commissioner Joshi criticised a measure designed to support New York’s local public transport system with a relatively meagre £311 million and (hopefully) curb congestion in the heart of New York, she said would mainly hurt the taxi and FHV industry and was badly thought out. Unlike London’s congestion charge, New York’s measure does not apply to private vehicles, only to taxis and FHV’s.

My initial question to Joshi, “did you jump or were you pushed?” was somewhat unkind, assuming the (possible) spat with De Blasio over this congestion fee, was the reason for her sudden departure. “Well, neither is an apt description,” she replied, “but the decision was mutual. Government grows, agencies change, and turnover is a natural process. No one has said that it had anything to do with my planning to step down, so it would be inaccurate to determine it’s a primary factor, as you have in this question.”

“A form of usage control is needed”

Currently, the congestion fee is on hold, thanks to a court case brought by New York’s taxi industry. The hearing date is set for January 17. Joshi declined to comment on the mayor’s reasoning for not opposing the measure.

She does, however, defend the mayor when I suggest that De Blasio is not interested in protecting the taxi industry against the ill effects of the congestion fee: “That’s not a fair accusation. Everything we’ve done to improve the industry and address the plight of drivers in these historically difficult times has been under the mayor’s aegis, and we couldn’t have possibly achieved as much as we have without his support.”

Joshi is not against some form of congestion charge but feels it needs to be better designed.

“The good government gift”

What achievements are you most proud of? And how do you see the taxi and FHV industry – and the position of the drivers in it – develop as a result of your policies?

“Unquestionably, the achievements of which I am most proud would be the incredible volume and quality of data that we have brought into the process — data that is being used on a daily basis to inform traffic engineering, to enforce safety laws, and to ensure that drivers are fully protected from potentially predatory bad actors whose goal is to cheat them. It is the good government gift that will keep on giving.”

Joshi continued: “Close Runners up would be the creation of wheelchair accessibility across the for hire industry, the expansion of our accessible dispatch programme across all five boroughs and the first ever earnings protection for high volume app dispatch drivers.”

Wim Faber, international taxi correspondent
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With the increasing number of cabbies being targeted by robbers, there's never been a better time to sign up to our free Krav Maga classes for members.

Even a cursory look through recent editions of TAXI would show a shocking number incidents where cabbies have been placed in frightening situations.

With police unwilling or unable to help – it could time meet Ricky Manetta and learn the art of self-defence.

Ricky, who is himself a taxi driver, teaches the use of blocking, grappling and wrestling style moves to fend off attackers – even those wielding weapons.

He can also help you get fit and lose some of those extra pounds you gained over the Christmas period.

Ricky says: “The course is designed to give people confidence to deal with threatening situations. The aim is to help drivers get out of violent or threatening situations without having to fight.”

Hundreds of cabbies have taken the classes and have praised them as fun and confidence building.

Krav Maga was created in the 30s to protect Czech Jews from anti-Semitic attacks. It is purely about self-defence and improving your health.

It gives drivers piece of mind to deal with situations, which can help stop them spiralling out of control, or ending with serious injury. Not only does it offer the chance to improve your fitness and general health, but your state of mind as well.

Some drivers have even claimed it improved their driving and many keep coming back for more. He starts the next course at the Orwell Centre in Wapping on Monday, February 11.

If you are an LTDA member and can commit to an eight-week course on Monday afternoons between 1-3pm, then ask to register.

Wife-beating Uber Driver Jailed

Court

An Uber driver who live streamed a video of himself beating his wife for his family has been jailed for 14 months.

Rahman Ullah, from Croydon, threatened to kill his estranged wife during the WhatsApp video call.

The 38-year-old severely beat his victim with a shoe, leaving her with two black eyes as well as other injuries.

Members of Ullah’s family in Pakistan watched the live stream as he mimicked stabbing his 34-year-old victim with a kitchen knife.

Sentencing Ullah to 14 months in jail at Croydon Crown Court, Recorder Tom Forster said: “You were engaged in a WhatsApp video call to Pakistan, informing them you were going to kill her.

“Not content with your boorish behaviour you pursued her to the communal hallway and by her hair dragged her back into the flat. She was understandably tearful and you tormented her with a knife as a weapon to threaten and filmed the whole thing on a phone”

The court heard how the pair had split from their 13 year marriage twelve months before the sickening attack.

Ullah tricked his way into his victim’s home when he was supposed to pick his daughter up to take to school. He convinced his daughter to hand over the front door key so he could gain access and attack her mother.

Once gaining access to the flat, Ullah called his mother and brother by WhatsApp video and told them that he was “going to kill her today”.

He began to hit her with the heel of his shoe 10 to 15 times. His wife attempted to escape the brutal attack but was caught and dragged back into the home where she was then threatened with a kitchen knife.

“The court heard that Ullah approached his wife with the knife at hand and made a ‘stabbing motion’ while telling her ‘I’m going to stab you’.

Ullah, who was a driver for ride-hailing app Uber, was arrested and claimed it was his wife that attacked him and had in fact been the aggressor during the altercation.

He eventually pleaded guilty to assaulting his wife and causing actual bodily harm. Ullah was also made subject to an indefinite restraining order.

NEWS IN BRIEF

“Reconsider Drunk Trial of Cyclist”

Magistrates have questioned whether it is worthwhile prosecuting a cyclist accused of riding his bicycle while drunk.

At King’s Lynn court, the Crown Prosecution Service was asked to reconsider the case of Nerijus Burkiškis, of Garwood, denied being drunk in charge of a bicycle before it went to trial.

Burkiškis was found riding his bicycle the wrong way along the one-way Norfolk Street at 3.20am on December 8 and arrested.

Chairman of the bench Bill Hush asked the prosecutor: “Are you really going to prosecute this man for cycling the wrong way up a street? With all the public money this is going to take to bring this to trial?”

The maximum penalty is a £1,000 fine, although prosecutors could potentially bring a charge of dangerous cycling, which carries a maximum penalty of a £2,225 fine. The case was adjourned until April 3.

Urgent Notice

If your licence expires in less than four months it is vital that you contact TPH on:

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and request a renewal pack. Failure to do so could result in you being out of work.

Once the pack is received you must submit your application (especially the CRB disclosure application) A.S.A.P.

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Get a Free Personal Training Session

A London taxi driver and fitness coach has teamed up with the LTDA to help his fellow cabbies shape up.

Gary Bedford has been involved with the noble art of boxing for almost 40 years and knows a thing or two about health and fitness.

The cabbie of 30 years is offering an initial consultation, with a free fitness test and one-hour free training session to LTDA members.

And for the next four lessons, LTDA members get a 50% discount.

The sessions will include boxing training, circuit training and cardio work, and also relaxation techniques, all designed to improve strength and conditioning.

Based at the West Thurrock Boxing and Fitness Club, Gary battled in the amateur boxing ranks for many years before going on to coach juniors and seniors at his local boxing club.

He said: “I’ve been working as a taxi driver for 30 years and I know what a toll the stresses and strains of the job can put on the mind and body. I want to help drivers get fit and feel sharper and more confident in their daily lives and believe I have the knowledge, experience and dedication to do that. Come along for the check up and the first-class courtesy of the LTDA - what have you got to lose?”

Training is offered one to one, or in small groups, in West Thurrock on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Free gym membership and discounted rates are available for LTDA members and their families.

For an initial consultation, with a free fitness test and one-hour free training session, please contact Gary on 07811 965 176.
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One of Alf’s biggest fans wants to know if the TAXI scribe is still with us?

**A MISSIVE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE?**

**ALF TOWNSEND**

**TAXI TALK**

This is the time of the year that the old hacks and journos call “the silly season” because nothing much is happening in the big, wide world and they are all struggling to dig up a decent article. Their readers have had a good jolly-up over Christmas and the New Year and are all skint and are counting down the days to their next wage packet. They tend to drag out an old story and tart it up so that it appears up-to-date. In effect they fabricate a silly story for the silly season! I’m going to start my column with a one such story that fits in nicely.

They tend to their next wage packet. They tend to drag out an old story and tart it up so that it appears up-to-date. In effect they fabricate a silly story for the silly season! I’m going to start my column with a one such story that fits in nicely – especially the ending which is hard to comprehend even though it’s the truth – scout’s honour! I have named it – Taxi Talk from the Big Cab Rank in the Sky?

My son Nick is a regular at Heathrow and is quite well known because of his active involvement as a committee member in Unite the Union – plus the fact that the union lanyard around his neck has his photo and name on it. He tells me that he often gets stopped by cabbies who recognise him to say how much they enjoy reading my articles. On the down side, he also gets cabbies who think I write crap. But he’s very laid back and tells these people that if they think I write rubbish, then the simple answer is don’t read it! He was stopped recently by a polite, middle-aged cabbie who told him that he had read every one of my articles since he got his bill some 20 years ago! He then asked Nick in a serious voice, “is your dad still alive?” Perhaps he thought someone else was ghost writing my columns for me. This shook Nick but he could see the guy was genuine so he replied. Well, I saw him last night and even though he had drunk too many rum and cokes, he was definitely still alive! Scout’s honour, it’s true!

Get Well Soon Chris

As an old geezer blessed, or cursed, with a young, enquiring mind, whenever a situation bugs me I need to try and sort it out to satisfy my pea-brain! This latest bugging was centred around the taxi shelter on the George rank. I pass it on buses around half-a-dozen times a week and it’s been closed for a long time. I thought at first that Chris, mine host, had gone on a holiday before Christmas, but the weeks rolled by and it was still closed. My pea-brain was satisfied recently when I hailed a cab outside the Royal Free Hospital to take me home. We got chatting and the cabbie told me he was a regular at the George shelter and according to him Chris, the friendly guy in his fifties who runs the shelter, had suffered a second heart attack in a year. So he was at home, too unwell to work and waiting for major heart surgery. He couldn’t afford to pay someone to run the shelter and he was lumbered with a pricey, business rates contract until next March. Camden Council charge the second highest business rates out of all the London boroughs and, according to him, Chris can wangle his way out of the Camden contract because of ill-health, but I wish him all the best with his future operation.

Your well-being is more important than anything else.

**Stars on Spotify**

Apparently today’s youngsters are not like us old timers who used to save our pennies every week to buy the latest hit record by Elvis, Frankie Laine or the Beatles. In fact they don’t buy any records at all, they simply click on their mobiles and, after paying around a tenner a month to Spotify, they listen to the music app all day and night!

At the time of writing this piece their favourite song seems to be Yesterday, composed and sung by Jack Howard and his band, with twin brother Bertie playing a mean guitar. The latest count for the single is a massive 25,000 hits, so log on to Spotify and hear it. Why am I prattling on about something I obviously don’t know about? Answer, Jack and Bertie Howard are my 19-year old twin Grandsons. I don’t fully understand the Spotify process, but I’m thrilled to bits for the boys! ♫

Camden Council charge the second highest business rates out of all the London boroughs and, according to my info, they unfairly, at least in my opinion, charge the George shelter, which only sells sandwiches and drinks, the same rates as all the posh restaurants in Hampstead!
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A healthy diet plan leads Mr Meg to Greggs and a scuffle with angry vegans

Mr Meg versus The Vegans

Over Christmas and New Year there was a food mountain at Meg Towers. Friends, family and neighbours popped in and out of the house and helped themselves to what was on offer. And they chatted, often with their mouths full, and did that yucky talking/spitting food thing.

Chocolates, Christmas cake, cheese and crackers, juicy satsumas...clumps of them have all travelled my way as people chewed, talked and laughed.

Mr Meg’s second cousin sat on my couch eating pickled onions and cheesy crackers while telling me about a bloke he’d heard taking part in a radio phone-in quiz. This contestant answered the question, “give me a celebrity’s name that starts with the letter Q” with “I know this one! Q Jackson!” After the punchline he laughed so hard with his mouth full and open that there may still be traces of cracker and onion on the front room wallpaper.

After all the excess of Christmas I decided that January was going to be the month when we would go all Gwyneth Paltrow and be more mindful about eating. Mr Meg’s face looked puzzled at first when I told him we were going to eat healthy food while sat at the table and in silence, so we could concentrate on every mouthful.

Mr Meg seized on the quiet meals part. “So, you won’t be talking?” he checked. When I nodded yes to that he beamed and said, “great! I’m in!” Said with all the romance of a man who has been married for three and a bit decades.

As he headed back to work the first week in January, I reminded him, “Mindful eating” and nodded down at the quinoa, sunflower seed and cottage cheese salad in his lunchbox, “and no eating or snacking on the go.” “Got it!” he told me smiling down (or was it laughing?) at his Tupperware container.

Five hours later Mr Meg “mindlessly” popped into a Greggs in central London for a sausage roll. He was still inside and about to take the first bite of his contraband when someone tried to grab it from his hands.

Six vegan protesters had surrounded Mr Meg and were chanting “scum, scum, scum!” Mr Meg, telling me the story a few hours later was outraged, “what sort of country do we live in when a bloke can’t eat his sausage roll in peace?” He was extremely uncomplimentary about the skinny student type with pink hair who’d tackled him. This lad was so determined to get the sausage roll off Mr Meg that he jumped on him and clung on with his arms around his neck and his legs around his waist, screaming “murderer!”

Mr Meg walked out of the shop and tried to get the vegan protestor off him and dump him down onto the pavement by doing some extreme shimmying. A passing police officer intervened, at first believing Mr Meg was the aggressor. There was an unseemly scuffle and a lot of shouting.

The happy ending is that the police officer caught up on the fact that Mr Meg was under attack and dealt severely with the protestor. She patted him on the head and told him not to do it again. Luckily, Mr Meg’s sausage roll survived, it was squashed but saved! And still almost warm.

But the man is now suffering from PTSRD (post traumatic sausage roll disorder) and says he is sticking with the superfood salads in silence regime. However, my spies have reported seeing his van outside McDonalds on more than one occasion.

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Gig Economy Scam Uncovered

**EMPLOYMENT**

Uber Eats and Deliveroo couriers are renting out their work to unvetted illegal immigrants, it has been discovered.

Both companies allow couriers to appoint “substitutes” who are supposed to be legitimate workers.

But whistleblowers have said that black-market workers, possibly with criminal records and no insurance, are paying up to £100 a week to deliver food without undergoing any checks.

They are said to use genuine couriers credentials to log into the apps and accept orders, enabled by a lack of safeguards.

The companies appear to have ignored warnings about the scam.

Ray Phil, of the UK Motorcycle Theft Protest group, tweeted to Uber Eats and Uber’s accounts, saying: “UberEats, you need to sort your app security asap. Hundreds of people renting accounts illegally. Using fake insurance, fake residence papers.”

Couriers can nominate substitutes because they are not employees.

Deliveroo couriers are supposed to carry out checks but do not need to confirm this, while Uber Eats riders are supposed to provide proof of the substitute’s right to work.

The practise is believed to be so widespread that some couriers dubbed it a joke.

Couriers can nominate substitutes because they are contractors, which means the firms have fewer obligations to them than to staff. Deliveroo couriers are supposed to carry out checks but do not need to confirm this. Uber Eats couriers are supposed to provide proof of the substitute’s right to work.

Uber Eats said anyone “who delivers with Uber Eats must adhere to a strict set of safety-based criteria.”

Deliveroo said reports of illegal workers renting accounts were “alleged only” and “completely unproven.”

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**STAY IN THE KNOW**

**15 year reminder**

The London taxi 15 year age limit refers to the cab’s ‘birthday’ (in the log book) not its plate date.

For example:

A cab passed when it is 14 years and 11 months old WILL be granted a further 12 months of life.

Cabs may be booked in for testing in the normal way when the plate has 28 days or less to run. The cab can then work up to the test date. If the plates are taken off with more than 28 days to run, both the plates and the paper licence must be surrendered to one of the six NSL inspection centres in and around London.

The ‘unplated’ cab must then not be worked, and at least one week should be allowed before attempting to book the next NSL test, to allow the computerised booking system to recognise that the plates have been registered.

**Lost/stolen identifier**

If your identifier is lost or stolen you must notify LTPH immediately (0343 222 4444 / tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk)

You may then continue working. A letter of confirmation will be sent out to you by Transport for London, prior to a replacement identifier being processed.

**Shop a tout**

Anyone who sees touting or any other form of illegal cab-related activity is urged to contact TIL with the details.

Take down the registration number and make a note of the date, time and location where incident took place.

Type “cab enforcement” into your internet search engine and follow the links to the ‘report illegal activity’ section of the TIL website.

**DVLA reminder**

The photo card part of the driving licence lasts for 10 years and must renewed after that period. The licence becomes invalid if it is not renewed with a current picture.
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*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers and prices subject to change without notice. FAIRFX - Subject to minimum load of £50, €60 or $75. New customers only. Columbus Direct - Free lounge access requires registration and applies to selected scheduled flights and airports. Holiday Extras - Airport Parking offer: Save 13% on all airport parking products excluding APH special offer products, Leeds Bradford Midi or Short Stay, NCP Gatwick and airport operated products at Aberdeen, Belfast International, Birmingham, Exeter, Glasgow International, Glasgow Prestwick, Heathrow, Luton and Southampton. Discounts will be unavailable at Gatwick and Airparks products during selected stay dates. Airport Hotels offer: 10% discount automatically applied when booking via the dedicated link. Airport Lounge offer: 10% discount available on all UK lounges. Discounts are not available on International lounges. Airport Transfers offer: 10% discount automatically applied when booking via the dedicated link. LTDA Plus is managed and run on behalf of LTDA by Parliament Hill Ltd. LTDA are an Introducer Appointed Representative of Parliament Hill Ltd of 3rd Floor, 127 Cheapside, London, EC2V 6BT who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for non-investment insurance mediation under registration number 308448. Details can be checked on the Financial Services register by visiting the FCA’s web site at https://fca.org.uk/register. Neither LTDA nor Parliament Hill are part of the same group as the providers. **Calls to this number cost 11 pence per minute, plus your phone provider’s access charge.
**PUZZLER**

**PRIZE CROSSWORD**

Complete our crossword puzzle and be in with a chance to win £50! Send your entry to: Crossword 435, Taxi, Taxi House, 11 Woodfield Road, W9 2BA before February 22. The first name out of the proverbial hat wins the cash!

**ACROSS:**

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**WINNER: ISSUE 435 – Phillip Gee, Southgate**

**ONLINE PUZZLE**

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.

```
 6 8 5
7 9 4
2 7 3 4
9 1 7 8 5 1
3 4 6 9 8 6
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**OVERHEARD**

V ictor Hugo once said: “Music expresses that which cannot be put into words.”

Well I can put into words what I think of so-called modern music. I find most of today’s bands play two types of music - loud and very loud. If Van Gogh were alive today, he’d cut off both his ears. And the lyrics need English subtitles. As one record producer said to a songwriter “It should be a hit. I can’t understand a word of it.” I’m certainly not impressed with rap music either. I think the word should have a “c” in front of it. The truth is some modern musicians don’t know their brass from their oboe. I’m told that most youngsters listen to pop music because they’re miserable. Whereas I’m miserable because I listen to pop music. A lot of it sounds like it was recorded at 33 rpm speed and played back at 78. I don’t mind facing the music, I just don’t like listening to it. Music groups come and go so quickly. That’s show biz for you. One day you’re on top and next day on the tip. The Village People sang about the YMCA. Today they’re probably living in one. They always had six in the group. Nor for harmony, nor for protection. Mostly we have three-piece bands, which usually means they only know three pieces. On TV shows a lot of them mime to their records. I saw one where it was obvious the pianist was miming. If Van Gogh were alive today, he’d cut off both his ears. And the lyrics need English subtitles. As one record producer said to a songwriter “It should be a hit. I can’t understand a word of it.” I’m certainly not impressed with rap music either. I think the word should have a “c” in front of it. The truth is some modern musicians don’t know their brass from their oboe. I’m told that most youngsters listen to pop music because they’re miserable. Whereas I’m miserable because I listen to pop music. A lot of it sounds like it was recorded at 33 rpm speed and played back at 78. I don’t mind facing the music, I just don’t like listening to it. Music groups come and go so quickly. That’s show biz for you. One day you’re on top and next day on the tip. The Village People sang about the YMCA. Today they’re probably living in one. They always had six in the group. Nor for harmony, nor for protection. Mostly we have three-piece bands, which usually means they

---Brad Ashton
THE BIG ONE!

The membership of the LTDA is 40 times greater than some other driver organisations!

HERE'S WHY...

BADGESAFE SCHEME
The LTDA retains experienced barristers with specialist knowledge of the London cab trade. Normally when drivers accumulate 12 points on their licence they receive an automatic 6 month ban, but in the case of LTDA members over 90% of those represented by our barristers receive a ban of just 1 month or in most cases no ban whatsoever.

EXPERTISE = SUCCESS
The LTDA's in-house lawyers are proud of their unrivalled record of court triumphs; in fact the rate of acquittals for members defended in court by the LTDA is 4 times higher than the national average. This unparalleled level of success is due entirely to the expertise acquired by the LTDA over many years of specialising in cab related legal matters.

YOUR FUTURE
The LTDA remains the only trade body resolutely opposed to the computerisation of the Knowledge of London testing system. (No to the quickie Knowledge campaign).

INLAND REVENUE ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE
Many drivers and accountants refer to the LTDA for specialist advice on Inland Revenue investigations. (Free to members).

SICKNESS AND ACCIDENT PROTECTION
When trouble strikes it’s comforting to know that you’ve got the strength of the LTDA around you. (Additional subscription payable).

LTDA HOLIDAY CLUB
Many members have saved thousands of pounds by taking advantage of special offers and prices (members only).

WIN £5,000 EVERY MONTH IN THE LTDA LOTTERY
12 big prizes every year, but you have to be in it to win it (members only £5 per entry).

ACCESS TO ‘SIMPLY HEALTH’
Great value health care from the LTDA. The Association pioneered this scheme in the taxi trade and it still offers the cheapest rates. (Special rates for LTDA members only).

HEATHROW OFFICE AND REPRESENTATION
Call in to the LTDA office at Heathrow, first door on the right in the canteen block. The LTDA’s representatives will give you a warm welcome. (Open to all).

WELFARE DEPARTMENT
LTDA officers make home visits to members who are in severe distress or with special needs and authorise contingency payments where appropriate.

RANKS AND HIGHWAYS REPRESENTATION
The LTDA has negotiated taxi access to most bus lanes and leads the way negotiating on issues that affect you, the licensed taxi driver.

GENERAL ADVICE
If you are new to the trade and you don’t know your ‘roader’ from your ‘legal’, give us a call. We’re always here to help. (Tel: 020 7286 1046 - non members are welcome to call).

24 HOUR TOUT LINE
Seen a tout in action? Take the details and phone them in, we will do the rest. (Tel: 020 7266 4769).

HEALTH AND SPORTS PROMOTION
We regularly run promotions with leading health and sports companies resulting in big savings to members.

LEISURE DISCOUNTS
Huge savings on weekend breaks at fine hotels and holiday centres. You will not believe these prices! (Members only).

VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS
Continually representing members’ interests in disputes with vehicle manufacturers and suppliers.

AUTHORITIES AND MEDIA
The LTDA is the largest and most respected driver organisation in the trade. We lead the way when negotiating with the Government, GLA, TfL, Police, Mayor’s Office, Heathrow, Rail Authorities, Local Councils and when dealing with all sections of the media.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
Many cab drivers are discovering to their cost that their licences are at risk due to the TFL’s interpretation of the new DVLA Group 2 Medical Standards. The LTDA has successfully challenged many decisions by the TFL to revoke members’ licences on medical grounds.

FANTASTIC VALUE
LTDA subscriptions have not increased for 14 years! It costs just 4 quid a week to join the trade’s biggest organisation and 3 quid of that is tax deductible! (Payable monthly).

CAUTION
The LTDA legal service is the only trade scheme which defends members for ALL alleged offences (traffic, hackney or criminal), anywhere, anywhere in the UK. Non members are advised to check carefully the exceptions and exclusions contained or imposed by other legal protection schemes circulating in our trade.

To learn more about LTDA benefits and current joining offers call: 020 7286 1046 or visit www.ltda.co.uk
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- Cab Cassure, Seven Kings
- Camberfield Taxi Services
- Computer Cab, Mifte Way, W12
- Coney Allen, Dunbridge Street, E1
- CP Beehive Service Station, Beehive Lane, Gants Hill
- Cricklewood Carriers, Cricklewood
- Dial A Cab, City Road, N1
- Edgeware Station Rank
- Euston Station Rank
- G & N 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
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- LP Motors, Dunbridge Street, E2
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- 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, W9
- Taxi & Private Hire, Blackfriars Rd, SE1
- Temple Place Shelter
- Tent Street Taxi Centre, E2
- Turbo Accessories, ThreeCotsLane, E2
- Waterloo Station
- Wimbledon Station Rank
- WizAnn Knowledge School, Watts Grove, E3

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Wim Faber

Two Fingers
Al Fresco

Taxi Talk
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Overheard
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Musher Meg

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No matter how careful, even the best drivers in the trade can find themselves with legal trouble when the odds are stacked against them.

The LTDA legal service is the only trade scheme which defends members for all alleged offences (traffic, hackney or criminal), anytime, anywhere in the UK.

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- 59 TX4 TO RENT. £180 CROYDON area. Pay in bank. AA back up. Clean/reliable cab. 07949 144485
- VNK Motors -TXIs & TX4s for rent. from £170pw - £225pw. Full back up. Caledonia Road, North London area, breakdown service, overhauls, running repairs & body work. 0207 700 1045 or 07951 66430 – Nick
- 59 TX4 TO RENT. £180 CROYDON area. Pay in bank. AA back up. Clean/reliable cab. 07949 144485
- 59 TX4 FOR HIRE. NO ADS. Full back up with spare cab. E1 garage. Phone 0207 451 2584
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- TX4 BRONZE 09. 157,000 MILES. FSH. Plated until August 2019. £8500ono. 07904 171115 & 07926 208446
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