Trade Unites Against Heathrow Levy
Orgs to fight £15 access charge and ‘closed-shop’ rule

Satnav Use is Route to Dementia
The taxi trade organisations are thrashing out a plan to oppose the controversial decision by Heathrow to charge drivers a £15 airport access fee.

The Heathrow Trade Group, with members of the LTDA, Unite, RMT, LCDC and the UCG, were deep in talks at Taxi House working on a joint response the “unacceptable” proposals as this paper went to press.

The airport unveiled its controversial plans to reduce the impact a third runway will have on pollution in the area when it is opened in 2026.

It follows years of debate and a series of investigations, with the Government finally approving plans to the build, northwest of the existing two.

Officials are intent on bringing in an access charge of between £10 and £15 and creating a closed shop with no new drivers allowed tags to access the Feeder Park unless another leaves.

Taxis will be exempted from the incoming Heathrow Ultra Low Emission Zone (HULEZ) for the time being, but this will only remain in place until the runway opens.

Then it will give way to the proposed Heathrow Access Charge (HAC) from which the trade – not private hire – will not be exempt.

From that date taxi journeys will be £10-15 more than they are currently, although some discounts will be available for drivers who drop off and pick up at the same time, which is easier for minicab firms to organise.

Following the announcement, the LTDA sent an invite to all the trade orgs, asking them to come to Taxi House so that a draft response could be drawn up.

Writing in the last edition TAXI, LTDA committee member Paul Brennan said the plans were “completely unacceptable.”

The two-mile runway would cost around £14 billion to build and will involve the loss of more than 2,200 acres of open land, including more than 1,000 acres of greenbelt.

The HULEZ-style charge scheme at the airport could also see drivers of cars and minicabs charged between £10-15 for accessing the airport from 2022.

Other proposals revealed today include a realignment of the M25 so that it passes through a new tunnel under the runway.

Heathrow Airport is already covered by the London Low Emission Zone, so only vehicles not subject to that levy will have to pay.
The threat of an age limit cut lingers on but TfL is taking our retrofitting proposal seriously

TAXI AGE LIMIT DECISION IMMINENT

TOP TRADE STORY

Over the past couple of weeks, we’ve been receiving a high number of calls from members asking whether the mayor and TfL have made a final decision on their plans to cut the taxi age limit from 15 to 12 years. I’m very aware of the fact that members need to know the outcome ASAP, given the serious financial implications that a 12-year age limit will have on individual drivers’ financial circumstances. I’m doing all I can to find out when the decision will be made and to push Sadiq Khan and TfL to take forward our alternative proposal to clean up London’s taxi fleet through retrofitting.

At Mayor’s Question Time, Khan told London Assembly Member Keith Prince that he and TfL are still considering responses to the consultation and that they expect to make a final decision sometime in the summer. That wasn’t a great amount of detail, but at least we know for definite that a decision is some way off. Ahead of the session, I briefed Keith Prince on our alternative proposal so that he could support it publicly and make sure that our message is getting through to the people that are considering the options. In response, the mayor said that TfL is still considering our response and acknowledged that he is personally aware of our proposed retrofitting solution. This is due to a strongly worded letter I sent to him recently, so I’m glad it landed on his desk. I’ll keep you updated on any developments – LTDA members will be the first to know.

Taxi and PHV reform

Earlier this month, I was also absolutely delighted to receive a shout out in the House of Commons from Daniel Zeichner MP, a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Taxis. I recently took him out for a spin in one of LEVC’s electric cabs and he told MPs at Transport Questions that he was seriously impressed by what he described as a “wonderful” vehicle. He’s very sympathetic to the trade’s concerns around access to rapid charging, so I’m happy to have his firm support.

While Daniel had the floor, he took the opportunity to press the Minister with responsibility for taxis, Nusrat Ghani MP, on when the Government will reform taxi and private hire laws. He said that London will probably electrify its whole taxi fleet before the Government manages to get this off the ground! The minister said she is “really keen to secure a date” for this and “the fact that the matter has been mentioned multiple times” by other key supporters including Paul Blomfield MP and Jim Cunningham MP has encouraged her to do so. Following on from these questions, the Department for Transport has finally announced some working groups to talk through proposed changes in more detail, which I will be representing the LTDA at.

This goes to show that meeting and briefing MPs on the changes that we urgently need to see in place – including the introduction of national minimum licensing standards and a definition of cross border hiring and plying for hire – is worth it. Whilst the leadership contest continues to dominate Westminster politics over the coming weeks, I’ll still be meeting with MPs to make sure that this urgent matter of public safety stays on their radar. I’ll also be making sure that the new prime minister’s team are briefed on the importance of bringing taxi and PHV legislation into the 21st century as soon as they’re in the door of No. 10.

Steve McNamara is the LTDA’s General Secretary

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Steve McNamara is the LTDA's General Secretary

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Satnav Use is Route to Dementia

SCIENCE

Over reliance on satnavs can increase your chances of getting Alzheimer’s, a science book has claimed.

The creation of more neural circuits through visual landmarking not only benefits your spatial awareness, but it can keep dementia at bay.

Specialists highlight the benefits of studying the Knowledge in order to become a taxi driver, which has been proven to improve memory retention.

The constant use of satnav technology to navigate the streets means key part of the brain is underused.

Science journalist M.R. O’Connor says that the “bar to entry to becoming an Uber driver is relatively low: You have to be 21 years old; you have to have driven for at least a year; a licence and social security number are necessary. While a background check is required, nothing about actual driving skills or spatial comprehension are noted. Even basic questions about passenger safety are omitted, such as “will you be driving with your phone in your hand?”

A University College London study showed London taxi drivers exhibited enlarged grey-matter volume in their hippocampus, the brain’s internal GPS. This region is responsible for spatial memory and navigation.

There seems to be a definite relationship between the navigating they do as a taxi driver and the brain changes,” said Dr Eleanor Maguire, who led the research team.

O’Connor, the author of Wayfinding, a book about how people navigate our environments, argues that being led by an app makes you oblivious to landmarks, which can have negative effects in long-term cognitive health.

The author cites a follow-up study in London, where participants guided by GPS showed less activity in their hippocampus than those using landmarks to find their way.

Creating more neural circuits in your hippocampus not only benefits spatial orientation, it could keep Alzheimer’s disease at bay, as that is the first brain region to suffer damage.

The initial signs of dementia are short-term memory loss and disorientation, both of which have to do with spatial orientation in some capacity.

Peak navigational aptitude is around 19, with people reverting to habit when they grow older.

One simple way of strengthening your hippocampus is to constantly experiment with new routes, instead of taking the same route to work each day, for example.

Although it may take longer, long term cognitive health is improved, potentially staving off depression, anxiety and mental health conditions in later life. The alternative is to study the Knowledge.

“Demand National Scrappage Scheme,” Mayor Khan says

ENERGY

Drivers who bought diesel vehicles on previous Government advice should lobby for a national scrappage scheme, the mayor has said.

Sadiq Khan (pictured) said drivers who switched to diesel in good faith under previous tax regimes “did the right thing” but should now think about going electric.

Speaking to Auto Express magazine, he said: “What I don’t want (diesel users) to do is go back to petrol, so help me lobby the Government for a national diesel scrappage scheme.”

A road tax regime introduced in 2001 saw vehicles with low CO₂ emissions benefit from lower tax, effectively encouraging drivers to buy diesel cars, which emit less carbon than their petrol counterparts.

Whilst this was correct, it has now been found that diesel vehicles “emit more particulate matter and NOx,” which is poisonous, and a diesel scrappage scheme would help “poor-income families and small businesses” switch.

The mayor said it was a “consequence of poor air quality, coming from transport primarily, that we’ve got thousands of premature deaths in our city.”

Several thousand people have already taken advantage of the £8 million scheme set up in London to help people switch to more expensive electric taxis and vans.

During the interview, Mr Khan denied being anti car saying that London is a city that’s grappling “with the issue of a climate emergency.”

He added he wanted to make it easier for people to go electric, as well as walk, cycle and use public transport.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cycle Tourists “are a Menace”

TOURISM

Growing numbers of cycle tour operators endanger pedestrians and should be regulated, according to City of London residents.

The issue of cyclists speeding around in groups and colliding with people walking in semi-pedestrianised areas has been raised by residents in the largest ward, Farringdon Without.

The neighbours say “cycle convoys are seen to travel at speed through narrow cobbled lanes and have been crossing busy roads at unsafe points with participants, including children, not wearing any safety protection. There is a risk of serious injury to participants and pedestrians.”

It has been discussed by the authority’s transport committee, with residents asking for an urgent review.

Cycle tour operators have responded by blaming pedestrians, saying they often appear too “zombified” by their mobile phones to notice cyclists.
**ROADS**

Councillors are being flooded with calls from motorists furious at the “ill-thought out” works at Old Street roundabout and Highbury Corner.

Troy Gallagher [pictured], from the Bunhill ward in Islington, said he had received 56 calls in one day from angry constituents complaining about the traffic and delays to their journeys caused by the changes at Old Street.

The mammoth project to pedestrianise part of Old Street junction is being managed by TfL, Islington Council and Hackney Council.

TfL changed the road layout at Silicon Roundabout in May, making part of it two way, and closing the south-eastern junction until November, while a new entrance and subway is built in Cowper Street and a 24-inch water pump is diverted.

Two-way traffic is now open on the rest of the lethal junction, where cyclist Sarah Doone lost a leg after being run over by a cement truck in August.

Cllr Gallagher said: “The revamp and development is much needed as it has been a hazardous junction and one of the worst for cyclists and pedestrians.

“But I do wonder if TfL have thought this through properly and I’m not entirely sure they have listened to residents’ concerns on term of what should be done to reduce accidents around there.”

Another councillor, Phil Graham said: “It was always going to be havoc. I think the timings on the lights are all wrong.”

TfL has asked for patience stating that “priority is to keep pedestrians and cyclists protected.”

After a decade of delays and a year of construction work, the notorious Highbury Corner was opened to two-way traffic on Easter Monday.

“Teething problems” have led to long delays, with queuing traffic in St Paul’s Road and Canonbury Road and more pollution, caused by the static vehicles.

Residents have complained that traffic has been forced into side roads and Canonbury, as motorists try to avoid the roundabout, while motorcycle couriers have been seen mounting the pavement to beat the queues.

Nick Fairholme, TfL’s director of project and programme delivery, said: “We’d like to thank local residents and businesses for their patience while we transform the dangerous Old Street roundabout into a space where people can walk, cycle and travel safely.”

**Roundabout ‘Havoc’ Causing Motorist Fury**

The mayor has set out his plans for a major expansion of London’s electric vehicle-charging network. Sadiq Khan says he hopes to make it easier for Londoners to make the switch from diesel to electric cars.

The proposals include a series of initiatives, such as:

- Installing the next generation of ultra-rapid charging points at London petrol stations later this year.
- Delivering five flagship charging hubs, with the ability for multiple cars to quickly be charged in one place. The first of these hubs will be operational in the heart of the Square Mile by the end of the year.
- A new ‘one-stop-shop’ for Londoners to request new charging infrastructure from their local authority in areas of high demand led by London Councils, making it easier for drivers to switch to electric vehicles.
- Expanding electric car clubs and bringing more vehicles to market, offering greater choice to Londoners and businesses.
- New online smart tools to ensure London’s energy grid continues to keep pace with demand and to help unlock private sector investment.

**Charging network plans unveiled**

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LAW

Minicab drivers are by far the worst offenders when it comes to snubbing people with guide dogs, a survey has found.

More than three quarters of assistance dog owners have been turned away from shops, restaurants, and private hire cars, it has been revealed.

Minicabs are the biggest culprits, accounting for 73 of those businesses who refused to take guide dog owners, but more than seven out of 10 people who visited a restaurant (71%) were also turned away.

Some 76% of people with the animals said they have been refused service by a range of businesses, in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

The Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB) called on others to challenge discrimination and said it was "vital that people are aware of the law."

David Clarke, director of services at RNIB, said: "Although I have experienced access refusals first-hand, it is shocking to see just how widespread everyday discrimination against blind and partially sighted people really is."

One guide dog user, who took part in the study by the charity Guide Dogs, said he had encountered "aggressive" minicab drivers, who simply drove off without accepting his fare.

Robert Meikle, who has the sight conditions, aniridia and glaucoma, said one driver "evidently saw Winnie my guide dog, and decided on a three point turn exit without picking us up."

"There was another instance when the driver says he 'has not been told I have a dog with me and has refused to take me – after getting in I might add.'"

He added: "I have had a driver flip flop between claiming he feels sick around dogs because they are 'filthy' to 'I may be allergic, you don't know'."

On another occasion, I sat outside a cab with a very aggressive man for 35 minutes one morning attempting to get to college because he insisted he was in the right.

The study found cafes (59%) and convenience stores (50%) were also among the most commonly reported businesses refusing access.

The RNIB and Guide Dogs have created a new equalities toolkit which informs assistance dog owners of their legal rights.

Kirstie Bower, director of skills, information and support at Guide Dogs, said: "Often establishments, businesses and services don't fully understand their obligations in law, but ignorance is not an excuse. This discrimination has a devastating impact on people's lives, their confidence, and their sense of belonging to society."

Guide dog discrimination at "shockingly high levels"
Kensington and Chelsea have torpedoed the west London cycle way – it shows what can be achieved

**U-TURN SHOWS LISTENING IS KEY**

**STREETS AHEAD**

The change of heart by Kensington and Chelsea Council in pulling the rug from under controversial plans to build a cycle lane through west London was as sudden as it was welcome.

The LTDA was at the council meeting when the decision that officials were withdrawing support was made and the cheer that went up from residents was quite moving.

It shows that these plans are not always a done deal and the importance of making our voices heard when consultations arise.

The mayor and TfL are justly furious at this U-turn, which means £42 million route through Notting Hill and Holland Park has effectively been vetoed, for the time being but it shows they need to listen more.

Hundreds of neighbours raised concerns about the impact on business and traffic, while almost 6,000 signed a petition opposing the loss of 19 trees.

The plans would have led to the creation of a two-way cycle route between Wood Lane and Notting Hill Gate, via Holland Park Avenue.

Kensington and Chelsea Council had initially been supportive of the project but was swayed by the groundswell of opposition from residents.

The scheme would have had a serious impact on the ability of taxi drivers to do their jobs in that part of town. During the campaign, LTDA heard from people in the area and attended meetings and we backed them all the way, but it was the “residents wot won it,” to paraphrase an old Sun headline.

Resident and campaigner, Ruth Saunders, said the proposal would have led to increased gridlock on already very congested Holland Park Avenue and Shepherd’s Bush.

She said and there would be “fewer left turns into Holland Park Avenue, forcing rush hour traffic into rat runs through residential streets. They will make the air more polluted, due to a higher level of idling and queuing traffic.

“The roads will be less safe because of the cyclists travelling at speed, creating a high risk of collisions with slower cyclists and people entering from side roads and pedestrians needing to cross fast flowing cycling lanes to reach bus stops and road junctions, with no controlled pedestrian crossings.”

Transport for London’s consultation on the cycleway has closed but the section of the route running through Kensington & Chelsea is on roads controlled by the borough.

The council said it made the decision after receiving 450 emails from residents who claimed the cycleway would cause increased congestion and air pollution and who opposed the removal of two mature London plane trees and a couple of dozen smaller trees.

Cllr Johnny Thalassites [pictured, left], Kensington and Chelsea Council Transport and Planning leader, said: “We supported the consultation and waited this long to take a position to allow TfL to make the case to our residents and businesses.

“In our view, they failed to do so. I don’t believe TfL’s plans are the right approach for keeping people safe on our roads.”

Only the western part of the route running from Wood Lane – where it will link to a cycleway currently under construction along the A40 to Acton – to Shepherd’s Bush will be built.

There will be no protected cycle route eastwards from there until Lancaster Gate, where the East-West cycle superhighway starts.

Ultimately, this is a story of one council that listens to its residents and a regulator that far too frequently turns a deaf ear to complaints, and it shows what can be achieved by making your voices heard.

Anthony Street is an LTDA Executive Support Officer
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Empty Ubers Drive Pollution

ENVIRONMENT

Uber drivers spend more than a third of their shift cruising for work, driving up congestion and pollution, a former driver has said.

The minicabs carry passengers for less than half their shift, but do not park up, instead they spend the time circling the streets in a bid to increase their hire chances.

When it was launched the company claimed it would get people out of their cars and into minicabs, reducing congestion.

But since then licensed private hire numbers have soared to almost 120,000, slowing the mayor and TfL’s attempts to clean up the polluted air in the city.

Drivers in London, Nottingham and Glasgow spent more than a third (35%) of their time cruising for work and almost a quarter (23%) of their time driving to pick up a passenger. A passenger was on board for 42% of the time.

In 2014 Travis Kalanick, then its chief executive, told the Institute of Directors: “In our current model here in London there are 7½ cars taken off the road for every fully utilised Uber that is on the road.”

But James Farrar, of the United Private Hire Drivers’ Association, said the figures he obtained from the company prove its activities drive up congestion.

He said: “They are competing on immediacy and availability and they do not carry any of the costs [of buying the cars]. That is going to lead to oversupply. You will cause congestion and these drivers will not have enough work.”

The figures, which tracked three drivers for a combined 7,500 hours, confirm that when they are looking for their next job, they do not park. Instead they spend 94% of their time cruising the streets.

In April, Glasgow became the first city in Britain to restrict the number of minicabs.

Mayor Sadiq Khan has no such powers but has repeatedly called for the Government give him the power to cap numbers.

A spokesman for the mayor said: “The laws in this area aren’t strong enough. We need the powers to go further, including being able to cap the number of private hire vehicles in the capital.”

Uber insists it is “committed to addressing the same challenges: reducing individual car ownership, expanding transportation access and tackling air pollution.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

Google Maps Trialling Route Alert in India

TECHNOLOGY

New technology which alerts passengers when their ride goes off route is being tested by Google. The feature is designed to warn passengers and to improve public safety and is prompted by the rising numbers of people being sexually assaulted by minicab drivers.

Google will only customers know if you go off course by at least 500 metres but will not set off for a wrong turn, a minor route or a shortcut designed to avoid traffic, only if the car looks to be heading away from the intended destination.

The alert is currently live in India, but is expected to hit the UK in the near future.
WHO’S BEEN STAYING IN OUR ROOMS?

Our new home, previously The Cumberland hotel has had a rich rock past.

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Saying sorry for accusing cabbies of taking the longest routes does not undo the damage done

TV SLANDER APOLOGY ISN’T GOOD ENOUGH

LLOYD BALDWIN

ON POINT

Over the years I have borne the brunt of many a jibe about the taxi trade. Quips about not going south of the river and homes in Spain are often very droll and predictable, but you have to smile and take it on the chin sometimes, not wanting to appear like an old misery who’s lost his sense of humour. But when it comes to millionaire celebrities slandering a workforce of 22,000 men and women you must take a stand.

In case you missed it, during a broadcast of the Channel 4 quiz Countdown, the show’s host, Nick Hewer, insinuated that taxi drivers are cheats, who head straight to the Strand to sit in traffic in order to ramp up the fare. It’s a claim that is as ridiculous as it is insulting and is without any foundation whatsoever.

Hewer was formally one of Alan Sugar’s sidekicks on The Apprentice and has carved out a career doing ads and TV shows since. I’m not sure if his witless diatribe was meant to be funny, but it wasn’t, and it should have never been aired. Perhaps it’s why the reviews have been scathing and the viewers have been dropping the show in their droves.

Channel 4, which is well known for taking a positive stance on minorities, should have known better. Had it been some other group, an apology would have been issued post haste, or the comments cut without being broadcasted. I took this issue up with Channel 4, which did respond quickly and forwarded my complaint to Hewer, who himself said he felt some “embarrassment” about his comments and acknowledged they were unfair.

Having “pretty much lived in London for more than 50 years” and used taxis “a great deal,” he claimed to hold cabbies “in high regard, as does every Londoner.”

He apologised and tried to suggest his “outburst was triggered by a recent £31.50 journey from Liverpool Street to Pall Mall, much of which was spent stranded in the Strand.” Hewer should spare a thought for our customers, who cannot afford £31.50, journeys, and cabbies, whose customers are put off by these prices, which are simply caused by the congestion and chaos engineered by TfL and the mayor, instead of taking cheap shots at us. And despite his claim that “every journey nowadays carries the plea ‘please avoid the Strand going into Trafalgar Square,’ I would like to see him, or anyone else for that matter, find another way of getting to Trafalgar Square that does not involve the same amount of misery and expense.

Neither he nor Channel 4 understand that cabbies face some of the worst traffic conditions that London has ever seen.

The problem is, that it’s all right for Hewer to say sorry to us in an email but his views were broadcast, unchallenged and uncorrected. Also, it’s Channel 4 that should apologise for allowing the offence in the first place.

Programmers are responsible for the show’s content. If a presenter swore or offended some other group, it would be edited out of the programme, but for some reason cabbies are fair game. These types of comments have a detrimental effect on our reputation. I have asked that Channel 4 redress the balance, by apologising and mentioning the numerous charity events the London cab trade organises or takes part in, and it said it would look into it, but don’t hold your breath.

Lloyd Baldwin is an LTDA Executive Support Officer

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Collision with Cyclist Causes Outrage

Pedestrian Compensated Following Collision with Cyclist Causes Outrage

LAW

A decision to award compensation to a pedestrian staring at her phone when she was hit by a cyclist has enraged fellow riders.

A judge ruled that cyclists “must be prepared at all times for people to behave in unexpected ways.”

Pedestrian Gemma Brushett [right] was looking at her mobile phone when crossing the street but will still get compensation from the rider who crashed into her.

The yoga teacher and cyclist Robert Hazeldean were both knocked unconscious following the collision at a junction near Cannon Street railway station in the City of London in July 2015.

Ms Brushett, who also sustained a minor head injury, sued Mr Hazeldean and Judge Shanti Mauger, sitting at Central London County Court, found them both jointly liable for the crash.

Giving judgment, Judge Mauger agreed her actions.”

The judge described Mr Hazeldean as “courteous and mild-mannered” and said that he “gave every impression of being a calm and reasonable road user” but added that he “did fall below the level to be expected of a reasonably competent cyclist in that he did proceed when the road was not completely clear.”

There were conflicting witness accounts of the incident, but three pedestrian witnesses told police that Ms Brushett was “not looking where she was going” and “the cyclist was not at fault.”

Giving judgment, Judge Mauger agreed that Ms Brushett was looking at her phone but found both parties equally liable for the collision.

She said: “When I stand back and ask, ‘how did the accident happen?’ it seems to me that Mr Hazeldean owed a duty to other road users to drive with reasonable care and skill.

‘Even where a motorist or cyclist had the right of way, pedestrians who are established on the road have right of way. ‘Ms Brushett must clearly have equal responsibility if she is crossing the road without looking – and if she is looking at her phone, even more so. ‘But cyclists must be prepared at all times for people to behave in unexpected ways.

The appropriate finding is that the parties were equally responsible, and I make a finding of liability at 50/50.” It means that Ms Brushett will receive half the amount she claimed for.

Cyclists reacted angrily saying the award was a scandal which was ensuring people left their bikes at home.

One rider on the Road.cc website said: "This ruling has effectively green lit zombie walking with no consequence. ‘Sounds like he made reasonable efforts to continue with this backward-looking amendment.’

Uber has threatened to pull out of Austria if it is forced to be subject to same price regulations as taxis.

Currently, different rules apply to taxis, which are regulated and set by region, and rental cars, which can set their own prices. A new law, which could pass in the country’s parliament as early as July and would apply from September next year, would see Uber come under the same regulatory tariffs as taxis.

“If that comes, then a withdrawal definitely cannot be ruled out,” Uber Austria chief Martin Essl told an Austrian radio station. “We probably cannot continue with this backward-looking amendment.”

Uber was suspended for two days in Austria last year due to a local taxi firm’s lawsuit.

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- Insurance certificate (not a copy) – properly affixed in the luggage compartment
- Valid MoT certificate (issued 13 days or less before inspection)
- If vehicle is less than one year old an MoT is not required
- Taximeter installation and calibration certificate, issued within 30 days of inspection
- Exemption certificate (where applicable)
- Modification approval (where applicable)
- Tool to release ramps
- Tyres – must conform to manufacturer’s specification (see table below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VEHICLE MAKE / MODEL</th>
<th>TYRE SIZE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mercedes Vito Euro 4</td>
<td>195/65 R 16 100/91T or 104/102T</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mercedes Vito Euro 5</td>
<td>195/65 R 16 100/91T or 104/102T</td>
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<td>TX1 (declared speed of 130 km/h)</td>
<td>175 R 16 N</td>
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<td>TXII (declared speed of 147 km/h)</td>
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TWO MONTHS FREE FOR FIRST TIME MEMBERS

LTDA APPLICATION FORM

Name ____________________________________________________________

Address _______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Postcode _______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Telephone _____________________________________________ Mobile ______________________________________________________

Email _______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Twitter _______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Date of Birth ____________________________ Badge No. _______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Badge colour (Please state whether green or yellow) _______________________________________________________________________________________________________

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 ____________________________

LTDA Basic Direct Debit Instructions

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

Please complete parts 1 to 5 to instruct your branch to make direct payments from your account. Then return the form to the LTDA, FREEPOST, (PAM 2005), London W9 2BR

To the Manager of __________________________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Originator’s Identification No. 914128

For Office use only

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer

The Direct Debit Guarantee

• This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.

• If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit LTDA will notify you (10 working days) in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request LTDA to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.

• If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by LTDA, or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.

  - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when LTDA asks you to.

• You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.
**LETTERS**

**GIVE CABBIES THE GREEN LIGHT**

Firstly, the timing of the traffic lights in London needs a serious overhaul: north of Southwark Bridge, north of Blackfriars Bridge, right into Puddle Dock, west end of Southwark Street, Northumberland Avenue, Tooley Street onto Tower Bridge... the list is endless. Leaving the lights greener for longer would solve so much of the problem. With the thousands of cameras all over London, is there really nobody in a position of control who could easily see how to solve the main issue of congestion and pollution? If you left me (or any other cabbie) in charge of the timing and sequencing of the traffic lights, we’d solve half of London’s traffic problems in a week.

Secondly, the roadworks racket is now off the scale. Too many roads dug up or closed, then left with no one working on the project for weeks on end. Who authorises this stuff?

And thirdly, Euston we have a problem. Great new layout (apart from the chicanery around the tree), but they need to remove some of those silver barriers at the top of the rank. It doesn’t take long for half a dozen cabs to be stuck with no access for the queue of passengers urgently waiting to get on their way.

Danny Cheesewright

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**MINICAB GRIDLOCK**

While we have all been eagerly watching Uber’s IPO, TfL have granted Kapten an operating licence, another company which says it intends to put 10,000 PHVs on the streets of London by the end of the year. If they grant the same to hoppa and ola we could be looking at a potential 30,000 extra minicab on our streets. In my books that would cause near-chaos. In my books that would cause near-runners to put any of their hard-earned money on it?

Alan Fisher

---

**THE SAME OLD PROMISES?**

It was nice to hear the Tory London mayoral candidate, Shaun Bailey, tell us that if elected he will put the taxi trade “back on its rightful pedestal as the premium form of personal transport” before adding that we should be in the heart of London’s public transport (TAXI 444, May 29).

That’s nice to hear, but it would have been so much nicer had I not heard exactly the same thing from Ken Livingstone, Boris Johnson and Sadiq Khan, all before they were elected London mayor! Sadly, I didn’t believe any of them when they gave their promises to us and indeed none of them gave us anything! They will tell you anything to get your vote because as the “rulers” of TfL, had any of them cared a jot about our trade there wouldn’t now be around 120,000 licensed minicabs.

Shaun Bailey may be the first one to actually mean what he says, but who among us would put any of their hard-earned money on it?

Rob Holdbrook

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**STARCLETTER**

**“Shaun Bailey may be the first one to actually mean what he says, but who among us would put any of their hard-earned money on it!”...”**

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**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

**EASY RUN**
- Open Air Theatre
- East Finchley Station

**HARD RUN**
- JW3
- Alexandra Palace

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**DOWN WITH ‘BRAND BORIS’**

How interesting to hear Mr Johnson, commonly known as ‘Brand Boris’, gave a thumbs up to the cab trade in his press conference. It’s that time again, when we are asked how far up the lamp post we wish to go. Let’s, at this present time, pretend it was not him that was the go-to man regarding the Olympic Games project. Let’s not take a swipe at the Garden Bridge, or the fact nobody could find a contract in the drawer for the Barclays’ bikes, branded Boris bikes. Okay, I’ll give him the fact that crime did go down under his watch, but that was only because synthetic drugs had killed the mark up, and kids were not propelled towards a bicycle to make such little money. Guess you could say that capitalism worked for Brand Boris at that time. But hold on, who stood by and allowed the likes of Uber to get away with what they did? Whilst afterwards saying, “they made me do it.” Populist politics seems to be the go-to at present, but don’t forget history never fails to repeat itself. Brand Boris may have the Evening Standard paper and the Daily Mail on side, but does he have the nation’s cab drivers on side? Methinks not. It was interesting to read Steve Norris’ remarks the other day regarding Brand Boris. Would Thatcher trust him? I don’t think so. More importantly, I don’t think the Queen of the United Kingdom fancies watching Boris playing to the galleries, sorry gallery, either.

Gary Cox

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**BAKERLOO BILKER**

I am emailing to make other drivers aware of an incident which happened to me recently at around 6:30pm.

I joined the taxi rank at Waterloo Station to pick up my next fare. There was a large queue of people waiting for taxis and I was the first on the rank. This young guy asks for Embankment station and I picked him up.

I had my suspicions given the very short distance and the fact that Embankment was only one stop from Waterloo on the Northern/Bakerloo lines and he was in a very long queue at the rank.

When we arrived at Embankment station, I dropped him off under the arch and the fare came to £8. He got out and handed a £20 note. After a quick inspection, I found the note was fake and told the passenger so. I asked if he had more cash or if he could pay by card. His reply was: “I have no cards.”

I got my phone out to call the police, but he ran off and disappeared into the crowd at Embankment tube station. The bilker in question was a young black male in his 20s, about 6-foot-tall, slim and wearing dark clothes.

Frustrating as it was that I lost out on a fare, I had a lucky escape as I spotted the fake note immediately as it had a dodgy watermark. The texture didn’t feel right, and the serial number began SW. Drivers have mentioned about people travelling relatively short distances to pass on fake £20 and £50 notes. It is important for drivers to check their notes before accepting them and it is important to make more people aware of fake notes doing the rounds.

Gary Cox

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Philip Stacy
I fear that social media has made the court of public discourse more childish, but it’s time for us all to grow up. It does seem there’s a lot more bickering, mudslinging and fake news about. I’m certain we were much more British about things in the past, kept ourselves to ourselves and went about our day. It’s bad enough in the cab trade, where Twitter is swamped with abuse and public squabbling.

It doesn’t help when some of our most senior politicians reduce debate to the social media equivalent of a handbag brawl in the high street. A prime example of this is how during President Trump’s recent visit things reached a new nadir.

Trump called Mayor Sadiq Khan “a loser” and the mayor called the commander-in-chief a “fascist.” When 16-year-old climate change protester Greta Thunberg appears more mature, regardless your view of her, it is nothing short of a cringe inducing embarrassment.

It’s not how I was taught to behave, nor how I raised my own children and I wish the mayor would rise above it, not least because these things have a dramatic effect on our great city.

Visitor numbers to London have plummeted, according to the latest figures, because these things have a dramatic effect on our great city. Mayor Khan, and others in power, led by President Trump, have certainly contributed to a sense of embarrassment.

Visitor numbers to London have plummeted, according to the latest figures, in part because of the inept way Brexit has plummeted, according to the latest figures, in part because of the inept way Brexit has been handled.

Like many of you I’m sure, I have lots of regular customers from around the globe who travel here for business: from the USA, Nigeria and Italy, to name just a few. Many of them have been with me for years and visited the UK fortnightly, or perhaps once a month, until now. This year, apart from one person who came over to visit his student son, none have returned to the UK. It’s not because they no longer want or intend to do business here, or even that they no longer want to use my services. It’s purely and simply down to the fact that until Brexit is achieved ALL non-essential business is on hold. So, they’re not booking flights or hotels, eating in restaurants or travelling in the back of my cab.

What about tourists though? Surely, they should be beating a path to London to avail themselves of the cheap pound? Well, if the reasons given to me by the tourists I met whilst staying in Rome recently are anything to go by, London has lost its sheen. It’s now deemed to be unsafe, thanks to the growing number of high-profile stabbings, as well as dirty and congested.

London is a home and playground to millions, but also a business. Like many other businesses, it’s in competition with other major cities across the globe. Not just to house the new HQ for a corporation, but to attract the visitors who keep our hotels and restaurants afloat.

Any business, the taxi trade included, needs good PR, and to be managed well, for London, that job isn’t just down to the tourist board, it’s the responsibility of officials in Parliament and City Hall.

How can it be that travellers are skipping London for Paris because they believe it safer? When I asked people about the yellow vest protests and civil unrest in Paris every weekend, and other cities across France, they looked at me blankly. They didn’t know what I was talking about. Yet, they were well-aware of London’s knife crime epidemic, scooter robberies and the awful congestion on our roads.

Do you have the powers that be been so inept at promoting our fantastic city? I suppose you only have to look at the spat between Trump and the mayor. I don’t care if Trump is a good or bad. He is the president of a country, four million residents of which jet to our shores each year.

When I was a very small child my parents instilled in me the need to behave in public, as I was a testament to them and their parenting. When I was in primary school, we were told in no uncertain terms that when we left through the school gate, we were ambassadors of the school and should behave accordingly.

Public perception is important and social media is a powerful and influential tool. We, as taxi drivers must learn that abusing media is a powerful and influential tool.

We must grow up and take responsibility for our actions, but it’s time Mayor Khan, and others in power, led by example and remembered the same lessons I’m sure were impressed upon them as youngsters; they should think twice before acting like playground children.

Paul Brennan is an LTDA Executive Support Officer

“This London is a home and playground to millions, but also a business. Like many other businesses, it’s in competition with other cities across the globe...”
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Peak Premiums
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24/7 Customer Care

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or pop into the Gett Driver Office [162 Farringdon Road]
Soot from diesel fuel damages the lungs as much as smoking a pack of cigarettes a day for 15 years, a study has showed.

Lead researcher Dr Carrie Aaron explained: “Our findings suggest long-term exposure to black carbon may impact the pulmonary (lung) circulation.”

The research was conducted using 3,000 people from six metropolitan areas in the US and highlights the need for urgent action on pollution in the major cities.

They range from asthma to COPD (chronic pulmonary obstructive disorder) and cancer.

About 10,000 Britons are newly diagnosed with a lung related disease, such as asthma to COPD (chronic pulmonary obstructive disorder) and cancer, each week and they are responsible for a fifth of deaths each year.

Dr Aaron, of Columbia University in New York, said: “A few previous studies have suggested a link between air pollution and the pulmonary circulation.

“But we wanted to evaluate whether there were associations between chronic air pollution exposure and the vascular structure of the lungs.

“We were interested in the lung vasculature as we think it may be related to chronic lung conditions.”

The differences in the lungs of participants exposed to higher levels of black carbon were dramatic.

The study published in the European Respiratory Journal combined US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), traffic, weather and land use data.

Each individual’s pulmonary blood vessels were then measured using chest CT scans between 2010-12.

Other factors affecting lung health, including age, height, weight, sex, race and ethnicity, smoking and medical history and socioeconomic background, were taken into account.

On average the volunteers were exposed to annual levels of black carbon and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) – another measure of diesel air pollution – of 0.8 and 11 micrograms per cubic metre respectively.

These are below the current limits for PM2.5 as set by the EPA in the US – and the EU.

Despite the relatively low readings exposures to a higher level of black carbon was linked to more blood vessels in the periphery of the lungs.

Other major sources of black carbon worldwide include wood burning stoves, forest fires and forest clearing.

Dr Aaron’s team plans to conduct further research into how pulmonary blood vessels relate to chronic lung disease.

A study last year of more than 2,000 children aged eight and nine found diesel fumes in London were so bad their lungs were becoming stunted.

Tests showed they had an average five per cent lower lung capacity than expected.

This could put them at risk of lifelong breathing disorders, such as asthma and recurring chest infections.

The British team also said London’s low emission zone – which since 2008 has meant lorries have had to pay a charge to enter the capital – has done little to improve children’s health.

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**NEWS IN BRIEF**

"Turning Circle Rule Staying," Mayor says

The iconic 25 foot turning circle of the London taxi is to remain for the time being, the mayor has said.

The requirement is expensive to install and restricts vehicle options and has been the subject of much debate in the taxi trade as to whether it should remain a requirement.

Scrapping it would allow other companies to enter the cab market more easily and increase competition.

But Sadiq Khan said he was opposed to idea when it was put to him by London Assembly Member Caroline Pidgeon.

He added: “The turning circle requirement ensures London taxis can manoeuvre in the tight spaces and narrow streets of the Capital.

"The turning circle enables the taxi to complete a U-turn in one movement, for example when picking up a passenger hailing from the opposite side of the road, and consequently reduces..."
C R I C K L E W O O D C A R R I E R S C A B CO LTD.
0 2 0 8 4 5 2 5 4 6 1

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W E P R O V I D E

T X 4 / V I T O ' S - F U L L Y M A I N T A I N E D - I N S U R A N C E

Y O U S I M P L Y D R I V E
Witness Appeal

A taxi driver is appealing for witnesses after his TX4 was involved in a collision close to Great Portland Street on the Euston Road.

The taxi was hit by a Volkswagen Sharan on Friday, May 24, at 4.45pm as it tried to turn left after the slip road.

Anyone who saw the incident is asked to contact Mr Suliman on 07903 648294.

Cycle Route Work to Begin

Construction work on a major new segregated cycle route in south east London will get underway on July 5.

Work is due to start on the first section of Cycleway 4 between Tower Bridge and Rotherhithe Roundabout.

The project includes new pedestrian crossings along Tooley Street and Jamaica Road and the over haul of the Rotherhithe roundabout.

ROADS

The mayor has defended plans for a tunnel connecting Greenwich and Silvertown amid protests and claims he was contradicting his green agenda.

But Sadiq Khan insisted doing nothing was “not an option” when he was challenged by Green Party Assembly Member Caroline Russell during Mayor’s Question Time in City Hall.

Pupils and teachers from the Thomas Tallis school joined environmental campaigners from Extinction Rebellion and No Silvertown Tunnel to protest the controversial link.

Activists say the tunnel flies in the face of the mayor’s plans to clean up London’s air and would leave them facing years of increased pollution at one of London’s worst blackspots.

Ms Russell said that if the scheme went ahead, the mayor’s legacy would end up being the construction of a “four lane urban motorway,” pollution and a massive debt.

She said: “You don’t have to sign the contract for this dinosaur project. You could just fix the unreliability of Blackwall Tunnel.”

Campaigners believe that much of the problem could be solved if long-running issues that cause the frequent closure of Blackwall were tackled.

But the mayor said that the Silvertown Tunnel was still the right way forward.

He said: “The problem we have, is how we deal with the fact that the Blackwall Tunnel is closed 700 times a year on average, leading to the catastrophe of tailbacks, there’s poor air quality, congestion and people don’t cross the river using the bus because it is unreliable.

“By having a tunnel with a lane reserved for buses, you’ll have public transport going from one side to the other. Also, we are organising for pedestrians and cycles as well. Doing nothing is not an option.”

Thomas Tallis, which is close to the Blackwall Tunnel, is one of dozens of Greenwich Schools and nurseries opposing the river crossing. Andy Smyth, head of science at the school, said: “The NO2 emissions in Greenwich are shocking – the latest 18 years they have been above recommended levels, how is this going to help? Young people’s lungs are developing, this will cause more illnesses in south east London.”

Speaking to protesters outside City Hall, Caroline Pidgeon, Lib Dem Assembly Member, said: “He can talk the talk about cleaning up air, but the contradiction to building a motorway under the Thames and the damaging impact on people in south east London is unacceptable.”

Construction work on the billion-pound project is due to start before the end of the year.
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**KNOWLEDGE POINT**

**Keeping Your Knowledge Up-to-Date**

Below is a list of route changes and updates provided by Knowledge Point training school…

1. It is now possible to turn right out of Edinburgh Gate to Knightsbridge
2. No Entry sign to Leathermarket Street from Weston Street
3. Tanner Street between Bermondsey Street and Tower Bridge Road is now one way eastbound
4. No Right turn sign to Cranley Mews from Old Brompton Road travelling eastbound
5. Bohemia Place is now a no through road from Mare Street
6. From Conduit Street you cannot turn left to New Bond Street
7. Broadway Stratford has now become two way
8. You can now turn left or right out of Tooley Street to Duke St Hill or Tooley Street as the forced right sign has been removed

Knowledge Point School is the training arm of Taxi Trade Promotions Ltd and has over 25 years’ experience in training the KoL. Its teaching staff are all working taxi drivers qualified to teach to the PTTL5 Gr.3/4 standard. For more information visit the website www.taxitradepromotions.co.uk/green-badge-knowledge-point-school.html or telephone 020 7700 3999

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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.

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**Shop a tout**

Anyone who sees touting or any other form of illegal cab-related activity is urged to contact TfL 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 TfL website.

**DVLA reminder**

The photo card part of the driving licence lasts for 10 years and must be renewed after that period. The licence becomes invalid if it is not renewed with a current picture.
The lame duck industry: Will Taxi Europa ever cut the mustard?

“COOPERATION IS WHAT YOU NEED”

INTERNATIONAL

Why is the worldwide taxi trade such a lame duck when it comes to working together across borders (a few successful commercial tie-ups exempted)? Why was it so slow to take up the cudgels against the growth of the US-based commercial apps/Arms of well-paid app-lobbyists have been influencing international rule-making in the taxi and private hire sector everywhere. However, at last it does seem things are on the mend. Slowly.

Internationally the taxi trade’s efforts to influence top-level decision makers (EU or worldwide institutions) and to claw back some of the (regulatory) terrain lost in recent years, are dorsiory. Efforts by the taxi group of the vast international public transport association UITP (now including ride-hailing and, yes, Uber) or the limp IRU taxi group, are unnoticeable or laughable.

Damp Squib

Locally, the taxi trade is often well-organised, militant, motivated and effective in defending its market and proper regulation, yet beyond the national boundaries it’s no more than a damp squib. Well-funded companies like mytaxi (part of Daimler and – for instance in Germany – busily shifting its focus to private hire) seem to have the ear of international movers and shakers.

In March I assisted – as the only journalist – at a high-level meeting in the Brussels’ Euro Parliament organised by mytaxi. Around the table: many of the five-star international institutions, generally players and lobbyists in areas like transport regulation, competition, the social and legal sphere and environment. In these areas the battle for the taxi industry is fought nowadays. Not just in the transportation departments of the world, but the taxi industry is strangely absent.

It Takes Two?

A few weeks ago two important but little-known groups in the European taxi world met, in the same week. They were blissfully unaware of each other’s conference, I assumed, otherwise they would have planned their meetings differently, wouldn’t they?

Not only in that respect were they miles apart – in Edinburgh, where the European Radio Taxi Association (ERTA) met from May 23-24 and in Luxembourg, where Eurocab, a large user-group of the mostly Germanic dispatch company FMS/Austrosoft assembled between May 27-29. Strangely enough, and tellingly, there was almost no overlap between these groups.

ERTA used to be a user-group of large European radio circuits using similar dispatch technology. Set up and led by Geoffrey Riesel (formerly of Radio Taxi, London), it now has an impressive membership in Britain, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, France, Austria Ireland, The Netherlands, Belgium and Poland. Yes, an ideal group of movers and shakers in the taxi business – 35 of them met in Edinburgh, hosted by Central Taxi.

Stop me if you’ve heard this before

What do these leading cab companies talk about? In Edinburgh and across Europe topics are remarkably similar: recruiting and keeping drivers (getting younger drivers and applying the right subscription models, offering incentives), competition with Uber and others (for regular job-supply drivers often pick and choose between apps and cab companies), the state of taxi regulation (a wave of deregulation is sweeping across Europe, fueled by Uber), management structure changes (from cooperatives to more agile and professional companies) and environmental matters (e.g. the meagre choice of suitable electric cabs and the lack of rapid charging facilities in many markets).

Most noticeable: many cab companies are switching to B2B and social contract work (many Uber-drivers are notoriously bad at providing proper service in those areas). And although some companies share jobs and dispatching, others are still wrapped up in seriously unhealthy competition (“I’ll take your’ hotel with unprofitable offers, for the hotel you took from me last week”).

Eurocab conference - a large user-group of the mostly Germanic dispatch company FMS/Austrosoft - meeting in Luxembourg

“A few weeks ago two important but little-known groups in the European taxi world met, in the same week... Strangely enough, and quite telling, there was almost no overlap between these groups...”

Uber and Out!

It’s a shame that lessons learned from (successfully) competing with Uber across Europe don’t get a quick follow up. They would merit a more profound and regular exchange (within ERTA or in a larger group). Just one example: in some countries – like in Denmark – the taxi trade is now protected by regulation. Tax-registering taximeters plus seat contacts are obligatory. For private hire/limo-work the minimum price of a vehicle is now £53,000. No surprise Uber pulled out.

In most Scandinavian countries, one approach against Uber seems to work: the taxi trade is completely transparent when it comes to turnover and taxes. Uber doesn’t want to fit into these transparent structures. Naming and shaming Uber has had some effect.

Internationally, there is an increasing concentration and acquisition trend. Not only taxi companies share and merge, but investors are now buying up large taxi and private hire companies.

And what about Eurocab?

Eurocab is a totally different kettle of fish. The 80 or so representatives in Luxembourg, affiliated to the Austrian FMS/Austrosoft system, represented 11 European countries, 165 taxi companies and radio circuits and roughly 65,000 cabs.

Part of this group is the Taxi.eu app, one of the most popular EU taxi-apps, judging by Google/Apple downloads. Eurocab’s chairman, Koen Van Oorschot (Antwerp-Taxi) lit the touchpaper on the first day by saying that “we need to let our voice be heard in those national and European institutions where it matters. That is an area where Taxi.eu could do more. Much more.” Words echoed by Taxi.eu’s CEOs – Hermann Waldner (Taxi Berlin) and Michael Weiss (FMS): “We must act together and continue to digitize our dispatching and IT, offer every customer segment from young people to business customers a suitable and attractive product and, above all, offer our business customers a pan-European mobility service.” From now on Taxi.eu will massively strengthen its network. Partners in the system can become preferential shareholders. Exchanging (international) jobs will be done on a franchise basis. For now, the brand comes under the umbrella of a newly established limited company provisionally called Taxi Europe AG, which will be active from the Autumn and be open to outside investors.

The question is: will the sharing of international jobs do the trick? European taxi companies also need a sizeable lobbying arm. Both ERTA, with its wealth of taxi business contacts and information-sharing between leading taxi companies and Eurocab, with its now hands-on commercial approach in Taxi.eu, could be much more effective. Who will take the lead to give the taxi industry a strong and effective voice in Europe? That position is and has been vacant for a while. Any takers? ●
THE BIG ONE!

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

CAUTION
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. Non members are advised to check carefully the exceptions and exclusions contained or imposed by other legal protection schemes circulating in our trade.

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).

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).

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 are always here to help. (Tel: 020 7286 1046 - non members are welcome to call).

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

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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
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CAUTION
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. 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
The country is becoming a laughing stock but it’s all just part of a great British tradition

THE POLITICS OF BRITISH COMEDY

CHRIS ACKRILL

ON THE ROAD

Once again, it’s my weekend off and I’m watching TV footage of demos shutting down London. Last time it was Extinction Rebellion; this time it’s the state visit of Donald Trump. This one had a much funnier side to it though, and I really enjoyed the handbags between Trump and the London Mayor, Sadiq Khan. The president had already caused a stir by expressing support for Brexit, and various British politicians had expressed disapproval of him. Sadiq Khan, had called Trump a “global threat” and even attended a demonstration Jeremy Corbyn called him a “negative force” and even attended a demonstration against him. Several dignitaries declined to meet Mr Trump while he was in England, or attend the Queen’s dinner in his honour.

Mr Trump’s plane hadn’t even touched the tarmac when he started tweeting. He compared the mayor to his New York counterpart, calling Sadiq “the twin of de Blasio, except shorter.” I was highly amused when Trump called Mr Khan a “stone cold loser.” Trump’s comments were possibly cruel, but he’d been badly let down by his hosts. Whatever you think of Donald Trump as a person, he holds the office of the President of the United States; our closest political friend. And we could do with as many friends as possible at the moment.

In the taxi game you need a sense of humour. It’s what gets us through. I found myself comparing politicians with comedians. Boris provided a few laughs at London mayor, but there was little substance underlying his comedy (London taxpayers will remember the millions he wasted on a phantom garden bridge). Mayor Khan hasn’t got going, and it’s certainly not funny what has happened to London’s road systems under his watch. The new workings at Old Street gyratory make the travel news every day, and many of us have been sat behind a bus on a single lane on Tottenham Court Road since re-modelling. Artificially engineered traffic jams? He’s a real funny guy.

So who would you pay money to see at the Comedy Store? Mr Trump has the air of a 70s comedian, Mr Khan doesn’t. Trump would appeal to the old school Bernard Manning-type crowd, while Mayor Khan would be more like Ben Elton in the 80s, going on about Thatcher, only less funny. I bet Trump gets on great with Prince Phillip. If Trump and Khan teamed up as a Little and Large type-act, Khan would definitely play the straight man. He’d be too right-on to blame Old Street on the mother-in-law. Add Boris into the mix though, and you’d have a good comedy evening to please everybody.

Trump, and his mate, Boris, are like drunken uncles coming around at Christmas. We know they’re not PC, and we know they’ll say something outrageous. If we’re being honest, that’s why we like them, or at least find them entertaining. Boris would be an entertaining PM, but he’d soon outstay his welcome.

Mr Trump showed impressive comedy timing at a press conference during his visit. Mrs May laughed along, but I don’t think she quite gets it. Mr Khan’s people described Trump’s insults as “childish”. That’s the thing: childish humour is a very male thing. Male humour is based on insults. It means nothing. It’s a sign of affection. Look at the way we talk to each other in the cab cafes. You’re not accepted until you’re given a nickname and are insulted every time you make an entrance. Men enjoy the same humour we did in the school playground. My wife humours me with a strained grin when I run around the kitchen pretending I’m Leatherface from The Texas Chainsaw Massacre every time I carve a roast with the electric knife. Every man worth his salt when presented with a torch will put it on under his chin and pretend to be a ghost, complete with “Woah!” sound effects (come on, it’s not just me, is it?). It’s only men who play air guitar, or quote lines from our favourite films (I did it earlier in this article). Have any of us never done an impression of Bob Dylan? In Taxi Driver?

More political comedy was to come when candidates for prime minister jouled for position. They set out their views on Brexit, taxation – and their drugs of choice. It was all a bit silly and improbable. One hopeful said he had a cannabis lassi while backpacking through India, while another took opium at a wedding in Iran. As you do. Boris once claimed to have tried coke, but sneezed at the moment of impact and missed out on the powder. The regular dope-smokers were pretty much ignored, but Michael Gove was singled out for special treatment. I’m not sure why, and it’s hard to gauge whether public opinion of him has become worse or better. Mr Gove has something of the Mr Bean about him, and I think he’s made himself more interesting by admitting to taking cocaine 20 years ago “by mistake.” At the Comedy Store, Michael Gove could surely now tell a few druggie jokes to get the students on his side.

So, could we be getting a stoner PM? The Europeans might well be laughing at us, but we can take it. We can laugh at ourselves. The USA is our friend because of a shared language. We share culture and comedy too. So let’s hear it for Khan, Boris, Gove, and all the others keeping up the great British comedy tradition.

Visit Chris’s website here: pubcat.co

Chris Ackrill is a taxi driver and former Knowledge examiner

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HEALTH

Yoga is one of the fastest growing exercise regimes in the world, which is practised by millions of people globally, and taxi drivers are being invited to join the fun. Medical experts say its focus on strength, flexibility and breathing to boost physical and mental wellbeing has proven health benefits.

So, far from being a health craze for hipsters and oddball movie stars, it’s for everyone, according to the managers at the thelodge.space, who are keen to welcome cabbies to their popular venue at 120a Lower Road, Southwark.

For the price of £20, cabbies can get access to three expansive studios, offering 80 classes a week including a wide range of yoga, fitness and wellness classes for 15 days.

The space is enjoyed by everyone, from small children to professionals and pensioners, who all testify to the life enhancing benefits of yoga.

A recent medical review analysed the results of 22 random clinical trials and found that yoga practice can improve many aspects of physical and mental health among older adults.

General Manager Oliver Norfolk said: “With taxi drivers spending long hours in a sedentary job, they often develop back pain, posture problems in later life and yoga is the perfect way to counter these issues.

Come along and give one of our classes a try – you might be pleasantly surprised how much you enjoy it and the health benefits it offers.”

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The Lodge also offers treatments such as massage, acupuncture, reiki and much more.

Visit the website www.thelodge.space

WIN: “The Thunder Girls”

The Thunder Girls is a tale of revenge, scandal, rivalry and betrayal surrounding a chart-topping all-girl pop group and TAXI has three copies to giveaway.

Melanie Blake’s novel charts the story of 80’s pop sensation The Thunder Girls and their record company’s attempts to get them to reunite after 30 years, despite some old wounds. But what they don’t know is that “someone is watching their every move – and is determined to stop them succeeding – in the deadliest way possible.”

The Thunder Girls is billed as the perfect tale for readers who miss the bestselling blockbusters of Jackie Collins and Shirley Conran.

Melanie Blake is an author, playwright, TV critic and a former music manager and The Thunder Girls has now been adapted for the stage. The book is published by Pan Macmillan in paperback priced £7.99.

To win a copy, please email: editor@ltda.co.uk with your name and address and the answer to following question, which chart-topping girl group reunited for a series of shows this year?

WIN: Clean Up with a £240 Vacuum

MEMBERS’ COMPETITION

Get your hands on a new handheld, cordless vacuum cleaner courtesy of the people at Kärcher and keep your cab spotless with ease.

Kärcher’s HV 1/1 Bp cordless is a new model worth around £240, but we have one to give away to one lucky LTDA member, which can be yours simply by entering the competition below.

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Email editor@ltda.co.uk with your name address and membership number and the answer to the following question: When was the vacuum cleaner invented?

A. 2000
B. 1901
C. 1955
Meet the LTDA legal team

Driving a taxi for many hours of the day in one of the world's most congested cities is a challenging task. Cabbies often fall victim to complaints and false accusations from police, passengers and other road users (especially cyclists and PHV drivers). When these events arise it's comforting for LTDA members to know that they have the immediate support of the best specialist in-house legal team in the business. The success rate of the LTDA Legal Team is second to none. In fact, according to Criminal Justice Statistics, LTDA members defended by our team are FOUR times more likely than the national average to be acquitted of allegations made against them.

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

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

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

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

“LTDA subscriptions cost less than four quid a week”
**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Scam Rise Prompts Cloning Probe**

A rise in vehicle cloning leaving unsuspecting motorists with fines for crimes they never committed has prompted an investigation by the DVLA.

A 156% increase in reports of vehicle cloning has forced the association’s enforcement team vowed to act.

There are estimated to be around 90,000 cloned vehicles on UK roads, with 6,173 reports of vehicle cloning made to the DVLA between April 2018 and February 2019.

More than 1,600 Congestion Charge penalty charge notices were quashed, with 204 new plates issued to victims of vehicle cloning. However, one of the most alarming figures was that there have only been 45 arrests made for the crime across the whole of the UK.

Vehicle cloning creates huge problems for insurance companies, petrol stations, local authorities and innocent individuals who then have to prove that they did not commit any given offence pertaining to the ownership of the cloned vehicle.

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**INTERNATIONAL**

Any four-wheeled electric vehicle submitted for approval for use within the EU will have to emit a noise designed to warn pedestrians it is approaching from next month.

Concerns have been frequently been raised about the quietness of electric and hybrid vehicles compared with petrol and diesel cars.

Groups representing visually impaired people have argued that engine noise helps people cross streets safely and avoid reversing or parking cars.

New EU regulations say that any four-wheeled electric or hybrid vehicles – private or commercial – must be fitted with an Acoustic Vehicle Alert System (AVAS) from 1 July 2019 onwards.

The system must emit noise at between 56 to 75 decibels – 56 being approximately equivalent to the noise of an electric toothbrush or paper shredder, and 75 being comparable to the noise from an internal-combustion-engine car. As well as operating at speeds up to 18mph, it must also activate when the car is reversing.

The legislation states the sound emitted by the AVAS “should be a continuous one providing the vehicle driving behaviour to other road users and pedestrians.”

The Renault ZOE and Nissan Leaf already come with this technology but currently drivers have the option to deactivate it when they start the car.

The AVAS law, new models of car will not be permitted to have deactivation or pause functions for their noise generators, although examples of models introduced before that date can continue to be sold until July 1, 2021.

After that date, any new electric or hybrid car on sale, regardless of when it was first introduced, must have an AVAS system that cannot be turned off fitted.

Audio technology company Harman is among the automotive suppliers to have developed an AVAS system for manufacturers to fit to their cars. Its solution is called ‘external Electronic Sound Synthesiser’, or eESS, and forms part of the company’s HALOsonic range of active noise management solutions.

Harman’s senior director for car audio product strategy and planning, Rajus Augustine, said: “Given the ever-increasing number of hybrid and electric vehicles on our roads, the risk to pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable groups has risen exponentially over the years. AVAS technologies such as [our] HALOsonic eESS offer an affordable and effective way of increasing pedestrian awareness of an approaching EV in noisy urban environments.”

The Harman system can play the noise inside the car, giving the driver more audible feedback as it accelerates or decelerates – although this function is not a requirement of the EU legislation. Manufacturers can also customise the sound emitted by the system, as well as adding bespoke “start-up” and “power down” noises.

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TAXI TALK

All the shelter keepers work long and hard to earn a living, but there’s one I would like give special mention to because of her fund-raising work for the London Taxi Charity For Children. Katie Simmonds, mine host at Russell Square for the past five years, raises large sums for the charity each year. With the help of the consultancy company ‘Relayable People’, who have worked closely with the charity every year, the Russell Square shelter staged another successful open day recently. This particular event was on June 6th and Katie, who is friendly with Graham Waine, the head honcho at the London Vintage Taxi Association (LVTA), who sent along some lovingly restored antique taxis. All the food and drinks purchased on the day are made by way of a donation – and there were plenty of raffles goodies. Out on the road, a team of volunteer cabbies asked for donations in the workation centres – plus donating all their tips on the day! Last year, the LTFCPC open day raised around three grand and this year is expected to be another roaring success once all the donations are counted! It’s a strange coincidence that Katie is managing the very same shelter that gave birth to the charity some 91 years ago when it was sited in Leicester Square. The story goes that one of the regulars in the shelter, who had been raised in a Wimbleton orphanage, suggested starting a charity for underprivileged children. This name continued for some 90 years until the charity changed its name to the London Taxi-Driver Charity for Children.

By the time you read this piece, the kids outing to Southend would also have taken place on June 25, with hundreds of youngsters given a wonderful day out by the sea thanks to volunteer cabbies. It’s worth sitting back and considering the graft that goes into these events. The taxi drivers and charity organisers can be justly proud of themselves. As far as I can tell, no other industry goes to the lengths of a donation – and there were plenty.

The Joys of Food Shopping!

During my happy marriage of 56 years, I was never a keen food shopper. For sure, I used to supply the wheels once a week for the “big shop” and I was a quite a good trolley pusher and bag carrier. But as for the various foods that my late wife put in the trolley, I wasn’t interested. On at least one occasion I remember making the sarcastic comment that we had enough food for a bloody guest house!

However, there’s been a significant change in my attitude since I was sadly left on my own six years ago. Now I take a pair of specs to check on the prices during my shopping expeditions. I’m sure any housewives reading this piece will agree when I say prices are rising every week! I don’t know if it’s to do with the budget, Brexit, or the polar ice cap melting, but it’s hard to keep up. To say I’m not much of a cook is an understatement; my staple diet is mainly ready meals – mostly upwards. Scottish Shortbreads are my favourite biccies and every week I bought a small pack for 80p, until last year that is. These have now increased in price by 20p. The cakes from the in-house bakery and placed in plastic packets of two, were always one pound. Not any longer, they first went up to £1.10 and even £1.20. Even some of the daily papers have gone up by 5p or more, mind you they’re better value than George Osborne’s ‘Sub’ Standard, and that is free! Some jumps I have to suck up though; the rising price of dark rum or the budget increase on my pipe tobacco – these two items stop me from going mad!

Chairman of The Taxi Drivers’ Charity For Military Veterans, that was formed 70 years ago. She explained what she had in mind and Gary was only too pleased to make a donation towards the huge amount of food required. At the same time a local firm called Plan Insurance pledged to match the donation of the charity! I keep reading about all the luvvies who finish up as sirs and dames, simply because they’ve trodden the boards, or they put their name to a popular cause, but surely dedicated people like Katie Simmonds, who help to assist people in need all the year, must be worth some sort of gong in the New Year’s Honours list! Get your nominations in now.

For Military Veterans, the shelter had been raised in a Wimbledon orphanage, suggested starting a charity for lonely military veterans – especially as the 75th anniversary of the D-Day Landings was approaching. So she rang Gary Belsey,
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Meg gets down with the yoof as the latest series of Love Island gets into its stride

“I’M PRANGY FOR LOVE ISLAND”

MUSHER MEG

LICENSED TO CHAT

call it ‘Love It Island’ because I can’t miss the ITV2 Show.
I’m hooked even though I am ancient compared to the contestants who are physically and mentally like another species.
I watch and compile an ‘I have never list’. Such as I have never worn a top that flashes the undersides of my bosoms. Apparently, it’s the new upside-down cleavage.
I have never spent time in the sun without ending up with prickly heat.
I have never had an all-over sunburnt face (I don’t go brown; I just go lobster) because I end up with white sunglasses rings. How come the Love islanders don’t suffer with panda eyes?
To make sure I get my hourly dose of Love Island chat I have been looking out for fares who are young and female because, mostly, they are the ones willing to own up to watching the programme and able to discuss it.
Mr Meg leaves the room to go and make his Horlicks when the show starts at 9pm, but he returns and stands in the doorway sipping his drink veeeeery slowly and watching the screen.
He says the puffing and panting sounds he makes are him blowing on his Horlicks to cool it down. If that’s true, how come his Horlicks seems to suddenly heat up every time the camera zooms in on one one of the lovely girls (remember them from Father Ted?) in their bikinisweens?
I have compiled a helpful translation list for things that are said on Love Island that used to baffle me. This has been compiled mostly by my recent fares and fans of the show, so big thanks to them. They are ‘lit’. Lit means awesome.
‘Get the ick’ – this is when your one true love does something disgusting that makes you want to retch. Like when Mr Meg turns his socks and underpants inside out to, in his words, “get another day out of them.”
‘Prangy’ – this is when you experience anxiety and panic because your love interest comes close. For example, I would prang out if George Clooney climbed into the back of my cab.
‘Neck On’ – is what in the good old days was described as having a snog. For example, if George Clooney climbed into the back of my cab and I parked up and joined him, a neck on would occur. ‘Dramastic’ – this is a combination of something dramatic and fantastic happening. For example, if George Clooney climbed into the back of my cab and we necked on.
‘Muggy’ – this word has nothing to do with me having a cabbie cuppa at the Warwick Avenue shelter. Muggy is when you are rude or disrespectful to someone. Like this morning when I put on my white jeans and Mr Meg asked if they had shrunk in the wash.
‘Bantz’ this is what Mr Meg claimed he was having when he made the muggy comments about my backside. Bantz is, in Love Island speak, playful rapport.
I may not speak the lingo, my bikini days are long gone, and Mr Meg and I are at the contented stage of life where we don’t need to ‘graft’. But then you probably guessed that when I told you about the turned inside out pants and socks that give me the ick. Allow me to translate, on Love Island grafting is putting on a lot of effort to hook a partner. It’s back! And I’m ‘buzzin’ that a new series has kicked off.
Buzzin = Excited.

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TAXI is the membership magazine for the Licensed Taxi Drivers’ Association (LTDA). It is circulated to 15,000 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.

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Our spotters head to all areas of London, so it could be your turn to get an All 4 One gift card, as long as you are an LTDA member and have your orange diary on display on your dashboard. This week they caught up with Salah Charkaoui, who was delighted when our spotters surprised him with a gift card. 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.

Salah said: “Fantastic. This will come in very handy. It’s the first time I have won anything.”

A short while later our spotters caught up with Mohamed Khan, who was pleased as punch when he was handed a £150 gift card simply for having his diary on display. Mohamed said: “That’s great – I will enjoy spending this.”

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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21 Creative (4)
22 Catholic prayer book (6)
23 Baffle (6)

DOWN:
1 Thoroughfare (6)
2 Loan (4)
3 Putting on (7)
4 Jet (5)
5 Wise in appearance (8) Owlishly
6 Summer cap (6)
12 Holier-than-thou (8)
14 Marsupial (7)
16 Adept (6)
18 Intelligence quiz (2, 4)
19 Male family member (5)
21 Bullets (4)

WINNER: ISSUE 444 – GPatterson, Ealing

UPSTAIRS AT THE GATEHOUSE THEATRE

FLAT OUT

THEATRE REVIEW

The great Faydeau farces were superseded by Michael Frayn’s Noises Off and Alyn Aykbourne’s Bedroom Farce and a stream of very popular farces by Ray Cooney. Lately, they seem to have disappeared in order to make way for more subtle and sophisticated forms of humour. In Flat Out, playwright Jennifer Selway has reverted to broad comedy, with the modern premise of a luxury apartment being illegally sublet. She has the rightful occupants frantically resorting to all manner of shenanigans to avoid their lease being terminated. These include posing as an assortment of unlikely characters making a variety of comical excuses for being there when the suspicious landlord’s representative turns up. They even resort to the classical ruse of a man cross-dressing and posing as his own supposed twin sister, to fool the investigator. The plot, permeated by panic, engenders sex romps, gay collusions and even rampant roving mice to keep the action sizzling and milking every scene for the maximum possible laughs. Actors insist that comedy is the most difficult form to play, but the eight members of the cast, under the astute directing of John Plews, made it look simple. The show runs at the Gatehouse until June 30.

—Brad Ashton
London Taxi P.R.

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