THE LTDA CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO “HELP CABBIES GO GREEN”
A London taxi fleet owner has donated four taxis to charity to give free rides to elderly people in Poland who saved Jews during the Holocaust.

Farley Freeman, of R.E Cantwell Ltd, donated the old cabs after meeting Jonny Daniels from charity From the Depths, which helps ageing non-Jewish people, known as the Righteous Among the Nations, who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. They are recognised by Israel’s memorial council Yad Vashem.

“The taxis help the elderly people to get around as they’re no longer self-sufficient and need help with things like shopping trips,” explains Farley, who has been a taxi fleet owner for more than 20 years.

Initially, Jonny wanted to buy the old taxis from Farley, but the taxi fleet proprietor said he was “happy to donate them”.

“It’s great to be able to use the redundant taxis for a good cause. I just take the old cab, spray it and check the mechanics, and then it’s driven out to Poland to provide the free taxi service,” he explains.

“Everyone is aware of the Holocaust and I’m so grateful to these people who risked their lives by helping the Jews. This is our contribution to say ‘thank you’.”

Farley is continuing to support the charity by preparing two taxis to send to Albania to help give free rides to elderly people there.

Anyone wishing to support the charity or make a contribution can get in touch with Farley Freeman by email on farleyf@btinternet.com

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Pop in and we’d be delighted to show you round our new premises and talk you through some of the ground-breaking features of the new TX Electric Taxi.
LTDA urges politicians to increase the number of rapid electric charging points for taxis

**GOVERNMENT MUST HELP CABBIES GO GREEN**

**TOP TRADE STORY**

Earlier this month, I was glad to be able to attend an event in Parliament on electric taxis, jointly hosted by the APPG on Taxis and the APPG on Electric Vehicles.

With more than 60 attendees, including MPs, peers, London politicians, and a variety of industry figures, it was a great opportunity to discuss the future of the taxi trade, particularly on how we can make the adoption of the ZEC taxi easier. I was keen to hold our elected officials to account and make clear to them once again that the voice of the taxi trade stands firmly behind efforts to make London’s transport cleaner and greener, but only in a way that ensures cabbies can continue to earn a living.

I also raised the scandalous issue of the electric charging hubs at bus garages across London that remain unused for most of the day. I used the 50-bay bus charging unit in The Cut standing empty and idle as an example, while taxis are constantly needing to queue to access the charge points nearby on Southwark Street! I will soon be meeting with the Deputy Mayor for Transport Heidi Alexander and Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy Shirley Rodrigues to discuss this issue specifically, and to work out how we can resolve this problem. It is vital we come to an arrangement to allow taxis to access these empty charging points and make the most efficient use possible out of the investments in charging infrastructure that have been made. New continued investment is also necessary, but we must make the most of our current infrastructure if London is to become the electric vehicle city the Mayor would like it to be.

Last week at Westminster Magistrates’ Court, the initial hearings into Uber’s appeal to retain its licence began. The LTDA and UTAG, was represented, and our licensing QC made our submissions as to why we should be an interested party in the appeal.

Between now and the likely appeal date of July, there will be several more case management hearings when we will learn if our application to intervene has been successful. As more emerges about TfL’s decision not to relicense Uber, the clearer it becomes just how disgraceful this dodgy firm is. Not only have they let unlicensed and uninsured drivers onto our streets, but they have allowed fraudsters to charge Londoners for fake journeys, and let drivers fake their own locations so they could rip off customers even more. In just one six-month period last year, there were nearly 28,000 safety complaints on the Uber app. All of this makes it very clear to us, that come July, the courts must act to keep Uber off our streets for good. However, we have been here before and the result is anything but guaranteed!

Steve McNamara is the LTDA’s General Secretary
Make the most of your LTDA member rewards this Mother’s Day

Savings on Cottage Holidays this Mother’s Day

Save up to 10% on cottage and short break holidays with CottageStayUK. They work with over 18,000 cottages and villas in the UK and Europe to give members maximum choice. CottageStayUK can help you find the right property for your Mother’s Day holiday at a great price*. View more information at LTDA Plus

Looking for something special to give to mum this year?

LTDA members can enjoy an 18-month subscription to Open Fairways for only £22.50! It usually costs £89, but LTDA members and their family will pay just £22.50 for 12 months (and receive an extra 6 months free)! The Open Fairways card gives golf lovers up to 50% off green fees at over 1000 golf courses for Mother’s Day in the UK, Ireland and overseas including Fairmont St Andrews, Celtic Manor, Hever Castle and Burhill. For a full list of courses visit www.openfairways.com*

View more information at LTDA Plus or call 02890 393 990 quoting LTDAGOLF

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LTDA Plus has teamed up with Virgin Experience Days to offer members 20% off a variety of experiences from afternoon teas to spa breaks*. View more information at LTDA Plus

15% off flowers

Get 15% off stunning bouquets with Interflora, delivered to Mum’s door. A time-honoured treat for mums of all ages*. View more information at LTDA Plus and quote LTDA15

To take advantage of these and other fantastic deals visit the LTDA Plus Special Offers page today!

*Terms and conditions apply to all deals. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice. CottageStayUK - Savings of up to 10% off all cottage reservations. Interflora - Code must be entered at the checkout to redeem discount. Code cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. All products are subject to Interflora standard delivery unless otherwise stated. Standard delivery is next day at £7.00. Free delivery by courier is only on our free delivery plants range is next day via courier. Other delivery options available. At certain times of the year delivery prices may vary. Some delivery services are subject to availability and may be withdrawn without notice during busy periods. Some restrictions may also apply to certain delivery locations. Virgin Experience Days - Discount code cannot be used against their Excluded Range. LTDA Plus is managed and run on behalf of LTDA by Parliament Hill Ltd.
Nerves are the toughest obstacle to overcome when doing a Knowledge appearance.

**KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**

**TOP RANK**

In the past few weeks, I’ve spoken with several Knowledge students for a number of reasons. They do, however, always seem to have a few common questions. As you might expect, one of them is: is it worth it? Another is: do I have any tips on how to do the Knowledge? Then they often tell me about a recent bad appearance and ask if there’s any coming back from it.

I always answer, yes to the first question, and offer my small pearls of wisdom with regards to the Knowledge. I then also have to confess to them that I wasn’t the best Knowledge student. This was not because I was lazy or stupid; I certainly did the work. I went out, regardless of the weather, but nerves at the dreaded appearance always got the better of me and I often dropped points that I absolutely knew (but more of that later).

Still to this very day, every time I go past Penton Street (which thankfully isn’t often), I get that certain feeling in my stomach that I only ever experienced during my Knowledge years in the mid-90s. I can’t describe it, but then 99% of you that did the Knowledge probably don’t need me to, you know exactly what I mean.

In every era of the Knowledge, there has always been that one examiner that we all dreaded getting; in my era, that man was Mr Orme.

Mr Orme was known for many reasons; his slow death march walks from the waiting room to his office at the far end of the corridor; and his love of talking to his stuffed parrot as you were halfway through a run. You also knew when Mr Orme came to pick you up, there would be no easy runs or points, no Manor House to Gibson Square from Mr Orme; Eade Rd to Shepherd’s Bush Green, R Uxbridge Rd, F Holland Road, comply Holland Circus, leave by and comply Warwick Rd, F Holland Road, comply Holland Circus, leave by and comply Holland Villas Road and Holland...” he said and looked at me with a stare that to this day I cannot describe.

He then said: “How about Vanderbilt Racquet Club, do you know that?”

“Yes sir, Sterne Street,” I replied.

He then said: “Go on then!”

So off I go, calling the run, leave on the left Elm Crescent, R Trouville Rd, L Abbeville Rd, R Cavendish Rd etc... F Holland Road, comply Holland Circus, leave by and comply Shepherd’s Bush Green, R Uxbridge Road, L Caxton Street, R Sterne Street, set down on left.

“He then asked: “No sir, sorry, I still can’t think of Holland Road”

Puzzled by what he’d just said, I stared into space and to my utter embarrassment and disbelief, I responded: “No sir, sorry, I still can’t think of it!”

Of course, as soon as I closed his office door behind me, I knew exactly where Holland Road was and that I’d just used it as part of my run. I also knew that despite wanting to turn around, open his door and say: “Sir, sir, I do know it, sir!”, I just couldn’t; I would have to do what we all had to do after a bad appearance and put it down to experience.

I must say, I was very pleased I had remembered that one. In my head, I’m thinking that I know Holland Villas Road, I know Holland Park Road, I know Holland Gardens, but I couldn’t picture that little obscure street that is Holland Road.

“Sorry sir, I can’t think of Holland Road,” I told him.

He replied: “Oh dear, have you actually been out on a bike or did you think it would be a good idea to just come here and waste my time?”

“I have sir, I can think of Holland Villas Road and Holland...” I stammered.

“Tread on!”

So off I go, calling the run, leave on the left Elm Crescent, R Trouville Rd, L Abbeville Rd, R Cavendish Rd etc... F Holland Road, comply Holland Circus, leave by and comply Shepherd’s Bush Green, R Uxbridge Road, L Caxton Street, R Sterne Street, set down on left.

“Ok, so you do know Holland Road?”

I then asked.

Puzzled by what he’d just said, I stared into space and to my utter (later) embarrassment and disbelief, I responded: “No sir, sorry, I still can’t think of it!”

I just couldn’t; I would have to do what we all had to do after a bad appearance and put it down to experience.

Hopefully my little story gives them (and any Knowledge student reading this) some comfort, but to be honest they’re usually still chuckling too much to respond.

**Did you know?**
The Shard has 11,000 panes of glass that takes a team of 17 window cleaners three months to clean and when they’re done, they go back and start all over again.

Paul Brennan, LTDA Executive

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At Allan Reece Associates LLP, we work with the country’s leading mortgage lenders to find the right solution for you.

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Help make the LTDA an organisation that we can all be proud to belong to

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

THE MASSETT FILE

The LTDA is continually trying to improve its communications with members and to increase its democratic practices in line with the principle of one member, one vote. Already, the Association’s Council of Management is elected on a three-year cycle with the ballot being carried out under a postal vote that is conducted by Electoral Reform Services. It is hard to see how that process can be improved upon, especially when compared to some other organisations in the trade which hold their management elections at an AGM, where frankly it’s a case of how many mates a candidate can get to come along on the night. It is also questionable whether some venues chosen for these meetings would meet modern democratic standards. For example, there are many people that may be dissuaded from attending a meeting when that meeting was to take place in a pub at night.

Last year, the LTDA included a survey form in its usual Christmas mail-out to members in order to gauge their views on our current processes. Over recent years, the Association has been using additional methods to communicate with its membership; regular updates on current topics have been sent directly by email to the 80% of members for whom we hold current email addresses. Online surveys, utilising Survey Monkey, have been carried out on matters, such as the tariff, in addition to our traditional communications tool, Taxi newspaper. As far as democracy is concerned, the Council of Management proposed a fundamental rule change whereby all members of the Association would have an equal vote on all future rule changes with the ballot being carried out by Electoral Reform Services in much the same way as the CoM elections, which would provide each and every member with an equal right to vote thereby improving our democratic process in line with the one member, one vote principle. We would like to go further with this process to make the LTDA a thoroughly modern, progressive society that embraces the diverse make-up of its current membership and to make us an organisation that we can all be proud to belong to. Unfortunately, a relatively small group of members with a vested interest appear to be opposed to progress and instead want to kept us tied down by the requirements of our outdated trade union foundations that have now, by and large, been widely reformed throughout the Trade Union and Co-operative movements.

The results of the survey are now available (see right) so that you can see for yourselves what the members views are on these matters.

Richard Massett, LTDA Chairman, and Chairman of the London Cab Ranks Committee
Former Uber driver found guilty of plotting terror attack

CRIME

Former Uber driver Mohiussunnath Chowdhury has been found guilty of plotting terrorist attacks on major London tourist attractions, including Madame Tussauds.

The 28-year-old unwittingly told undercover police officers of his plans to launch a terrorist attack on tourist hotspots, including Madame Tussauds, the Pride parade and an open-top sightseeing bus, during a six-and-a-half-month counter terror investigation.

Chowdhury was also recorded telling his sister Sneha Chowdhury, 25, that he was “doing another attack” and asking her help to practice stabbing people – information which Sneha Chowdhury did not report to police.

Police launched an investigation after Mohiussunnath Chowdhury began posting disturbing extremist messages online just days after he was cleared of a samurai sword attack on police outside Buckingham Palace in August 2017 when two unarmed officers were wounded.

By the end of January 2019, he had bought a replica gun. Undercover police officers were then deployed to befriend Chowdhury to find out what he was planning.

Chowdhury asked covert officer “Mikael” where to buy a real gun and revealed that he had “deceived” the jury at the Old Bailey trial who had found him not guilty.

Woolwich Crown Court heard how Chowdhury rehearsed beheading techniques and booked shooting range training to prepare for an attack.

Detectives arrested the siblings on 3 July 2019, just days before the Pride in London festival.

Commander Richard Smith, head of the Met Police Counter Terrorism Command, said: “The courage and professionalism of these covert officers meant they obtained evidence that was, I feel, crucial to us securing these convictions today. They, like so many officers working across counter terrorism policing every day, are carrying out dangerous and challenging work to ensure the public is kept safe.”

“In counter terrorism, we constantly balance the risk of terrorist individuals pose to the public with the need to gather evidence strong enough to secure a conviction and ensure they are locked up. Mohiussunnath Chowdhury was determined to kill innocent people but we arrested him at the right time, having been able to gather sufficient evidence of his plans.”

Mohiussunnath Chowdhury was found guilty of preparation of acts of terrorism; dissemination of a terrorist publication in relation to a violent terrorist propaganda video he sent the covert officers; and possession of information useful to terrorism, for having a guide to carrying out terror attacks on his phone. He will be sentenced on 13 March.

His sister Sneha Chowdhury was found guilty of one count of failing to disclose information regarding terrorist activity. She was found not guilty of another count of failing to disclose information regarding terrorist activity. She was bailed for a pre-sentence report to be prepared.
HEALTH

The first confirmed coronavirus patient in London took an Uber to Lewisham hospital to be tested for the virus.


This was the UK’s ninth confirmed case of the virus and the first case in London.

The woman breached public health advice which states that anyone who thinks they have coronavirus should stay at home, call NHS 111 and wait for transport to the nearest hospital assessment pod.

Uber has temporarily suspended the account of the driver who took the woman to hospital. It is not known if the driver made subsequent trips.

Two healthcare workers who came into contact with the woman were told to self-isolate.

Public Health England said that the driver was “not considered high risk”.

Dr Rachel Thorn Heathcock, consultant at Public Health England, said: “We are in contact with Uber to ensure the driver receives advice and information on what to do should they feel unwell in the coming days.

“As the journey was less than 15 minutes, the driver did not have close sustained contact with the individual and are not considered high risk.”

An Uber spokeswoman said: “We received a request from Public Health England for information about a passenger who has now been confirmed as having coronavirus.

“Out of an abundance of caution, we temporarily suspended the account of the driver who transported the individual to hospital, and we remain in close contact with Public Health England.

“We have a dedicated online portal for public health authorities to contact Uber for information about riders and drivers, and we will take action on any user accounts on the recommendation of those authorities.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

Stolen black cab found thanks to ANPR cameras

A black cab stolen in London was found in Northants thanks to automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras.

The taxi was spotted by the cameras on the A4500 near Harpole and Kislingbury.

The vehicle was then stopped by police who arrested the 32-year-old driver.

A spokeswoman for Northamptonshire Police said:

“Following the activation of ANPR cameras in Northampton, officers stopped a black taxi cab, which had been reported stolen in London in January, on the A4500.

“A 32-year-old man from London was arrested in relation to a number of driving offences and has been released on police bail.”

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New Name...Same Hotel

Nadler Hotels have changed their brand name to The Resident. Our four London Hotels are now The Resident Covent Garden, The Resident Kensington, The Resident Soho, and The Resident Victoria.

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The Resident Soho
(formerly The Nadler Soho)
10 Carlisle Street, Soho, London W1D 3BR

The Resident Victoria
(formerly The Nadler Victoria)
10 Palace Place, Westminster, London SW1E 5BW

The Resident Covent Garden
(formerly The Nadler Covent Garden)
51 Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London WC2R 0PZ

For more details visit ResidentHotels.com
Save up to 48% on your card payment fees

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Petrol and diesel car sales ban brought forward

A ban on selling new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars could be brought forward to 2035 under plans unveiled by the Prime Minister.

In a bid to tackle climate change and meet its goal of cutting emissions to net zero by 2050, the government will consult on bringing forward the ban from 2040 to 2035.

The policy was revealed by Boris Johnson at a launch event at the Science Museum for a United Nations climate summit, known as COP26, in November.

Mr Johnson said that the ban could come even earlier than 2035 if possible.

When the ban comes into effect, people will only be able to buy electric or hydrogen vehicles.

The ban has been brought forward after experts warned that 2040 would not leave long enough to get old conventional cars off the road by 2050.

Mr Johnson said: “Hosting COP26 is an important opportunity for the UK and nations across the globe to step up in the fight against climate change.

“As we set out our plans to hit our ambitious 2050 net zero target this year, so we shall urge others to join us in pledging net zero emissions.

“2020 must be the year we turn the tide on global warming– it will be the year when we choose a cleaner, greener future for all.”

AA president Edmund King said that the stretched targets are “incredibly challenging”.

“We must question whether we will have a sufficient supply of a full cross-section of zero emissions vehicles in less than fifteen years.

“We will also need a package of grants coupled with a comprehensive charging infrastructure at homes and in towns, cities, motorways and rural locations.

“At the very least the Government should take up the AA demand to cut VAT on new EVs to boost sales and make vehicles more affordable to those on lower incomes.”

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CHECKLIST

Save yourself time and loss of work

- Vehicle registration certificate, logbook or new keeper’s supplement (complete with bill of sale/receipt) where vehicle is newly purchased prior to inspection
- Current vehicle licence (for renewal inspections)
- From October 1, 2014, vehicles no longer require a tax disc to be displayed. Vehicles can be taxed online or at a post office. If a vehicle is not recorded as taxed, NSL will accept an online application/post office receipt. (information at www.gov.co.uk/dvla nomoretaxdisc)
- 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)

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WHY SETTLE FOR LESS
WHEN YOU CAN AFFORD THE BEST

From significant fuel savings and reduced service, maintenance and repair costs to an array of flexible finance packages, government funding and subsidies, there are many reasons why the world-class TX electric taxi is exceptionally affordable.

TX VISTA from £183 per week*
Weekly equivalent based on 5 year PCP paid monthly via direct debit.

*Business users only. Finance illustration refers to Personal Contract Purchase. 7.3% APR Representative. Figures based on TX Vista at £57,099 OTR (OTR figure is net of OLEV Plug in Taxi Grant which is up to £7,500 and is subject to European Whole Vehicle Type Approval and European Commission state aid notification) with a customer deposit of £3,750, followed by 60 monthly payments of £791.09 (equivalent weekly payments of £182.56 – it is not possible to pay by week, balance is paid monthly via direct debit) plus an optional final payment of £19,258 and £10 Purchase Fee. Based upon an annual contracted mileage of 30,000. You have the option at the end of the agreement to 1. return the vehicle and not pay the optional final payment. If the vehicle has exceeded the maximum agreed mileage a charge per excess mile will apply. In this example, 6p plus VAT per excess mile. If the vehicle is in good condition (fair wear and tear accepted) and has not exceeded the maximum agreed mileage you will have nothing further to pay. 2. Pay the optional final payment and keep the vehicle. Or 3. Part exchange the vehicle subject to settlement of your existing finance agreement; new finance agreements are subject to status. All prices inclusive of VAT. Two, three or four year plans are also available. Finance is provided by Black Horse Taxi Finance a trading style of Black Horse Ltd, St William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff CF10 5BH. Credit is subject to status and is only available to UK residents aged 18 and over. All prices and promotions are valid for vehicles ordered and delivered before 31 March 2020.
Spring has almost sprung and there’s no better way of getting into the mood for blossoms and bunnies than by being handed a £150 gift card completely free.

Our diary spotters love nothing more than hopping around London looking for hardworking LTDA members to give goodies to. This week, they caught up with Ian Manning who was thrilled when our spotters surprised him with a £150 All 4 One gift card just for having his LTDA diary on display in the window of his car.

Ian said: “I can’t wait to spend this!”

All 4 One cards can be spent in dozens of stores, including Debenhams, Argos, River Island, Marks and Spencer, B&Q, Empire Cinemas, Clarks and loads more.

A short while later, our spotters caught up with Dahr Elmi in Waterloo, who was as pleased as punch when he was handed a £150 gift card simply for having his diary on display.

“That’s amazing, Thanks!” he said.

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.

---

DIARY WATCH

ALL 4 ONE BONUS FOR LTDA MEMBERS

Ian Manning

Dahr Elmi
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67 Stephenson Street  London  E16 4SA
Fake minicab driver caged for raping student

CRIME

A fake minicab driver has been jailed for 15 years for raping a University of Leeds student.

Muhanad Adem, 29, of Levell Park Hill, Leeds, pretended to be a private hire driver when he picked up the student after she had been on a night out with friends on 13 December 2018.

The court heard that the victim had typed her address into his mobile phone but he drove in the opposite direction before stopping and raping her in the back of the car.

After the attack, Adem drove off and the woman managed to escape through a car window. She then contacted her friends to tell them she had been raped.

Adem denied the charge but was caged for 15 years at Leeds Crown Court. A jury took less than three hours to reach a unanimous guilty verdict.

Claire MacDonald, from the Crown Prosecution Service, said: “This was a brutal and opportunistic attack, late at night on a vulnerable young woman, who has been left devastated.

“The impact of sexual violence of this kind goes far beyond any physical injury and its effects for the victim are long-lasting and traumatising.

“I would like to pay tribute to the victim who has displayed immense courage and dignity during the investigation and prosecution. As a result, Adem is today beginning a lengthy prison sentence.”

TfL licensed PHV driver caught touting at Heathrow

CRIME

A TfL licensed private hire vehicle driver was caught touting for business inside Heathrow airport’s Terminal 3.

The driver was spotted by plain clothes officers on the morning of Saturday 15 February, according to a tweet from the MPS Roads & Transport Policing Command.

A court date awaits the driver.

On Twitter, Roads&Transport MPS wrote: “#CabsUnit plain clothes officers were touted this morning inside @MPSHeathrow Terminal 3 by a licenced @TfLTPH PHV Driver. Court date awaits the driver.”

MASSETT’S CAMERA HOTSPOTS

EXMOUTH MARKET
BERKLEY STREET J/W PICCADILLY
JOHN ISLIP STREET
FULHAM BROADWAY/BARCLAY ROAD
CAMDEN
SELRFRIDGES
LUDGATE HILL
ISLINGTON
RED ROUTES
TOWER BRIDGE
LIMEHOUSE LINK
SMITHFIELD
A13
THE CITY
KILLICK STREET
WESTMINSTER PARK PLAZA
VERNOR PLACE

Red zone
Yellow box cameras
No right turn into Ponsonby Terrace
Yellow box
20mph limit
Over ranking
Zig-Zags
20mph limit
TfL is actively enforcing yellow box restrictions
20 mph speed limit - average speed cameras
30mph speed limit
Do not park in loading boxes, they are enforced by camera
Average speed cameras in operation
20mph limit
Pedestrian zone
No right turn into Addington Street
No left turn into Southampton Row

HOTSPOT 1
Devonshire Place Mews
– no right turn

HOTSPOT 2
Binfield Road
–24hr pedestrian zone
“Being off work for a long time was the last thing I expected. Joining the LTDA was the best thing I ever did!”

“My knee had been playing up for ages. When I was eventually forced to take a few months off the LTDA payments saw me through”

**Gold Premium**

Up to £250 weekly benefit if you were unable to work due to Sickness or Accident

**£51.20 per month**

(includes LTDA basic membership)

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Up to £450 weekly benefit if you were unable to work due to Sickness or Accident

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Mayor of Newham is leading the charge for cabbies

TRADE

One of the major issues facing cabbies and all owners of EV vehicles is the lack of on-street charging infrastructure.

The problems are not restricted, as many believe, to the need for more rapid points, but to the lack of slow overnight chargers for residents who park on the street. A stroll down many suburban roads will reveal a host of improvised charging points as desperate residents run cables across footpaths to power their vehicles.

Across London, the response to the problem varies from the good to the non-existent. But Newham - under the leadership of new Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz - is among the best.

Rokhsana recognised that getting more residents and businesses to adopt new clean vehicle technology was only going to happen if the council played their part and provided the necessary charging network. She knew that cabbies who lived and worked in Newham were among the earliest business adopters and was keen to learn of the problems we faced and the locations where the charging points were most needed.

The LTDA met Rokhsana and her team late last year and gave her the opportunity to drive a TXe. We were also able to supply postcode locations in Newham where cabbies would most benefit from overnight on-street charging facilities.

As a result of this, Newham are now progressing with the first tranche of electric charging units – which are Allego 22kWh double units, with 40 of them being delivered between now and the end of March. They have also secured a further tranche of funding for a phase 2 installation, which this time includes funding for two rapid charging units in the borough, as well as a further 40 double charge units, again in residential areas.

The unanswered question is, if Newham can be so forward-thinking, innovative and active in tackling both the climate emergency and meeting residents and business needs, why are so many other boroughs doing very little or nothing at all?

- By Steve McNamara, LTDA’s General Secretary
LETTERS

APOLOGY TO DRIVER

Please don’t tell me how long there has been a rank outside The Lyric in Shaftsbury Avenue. You will only humiliate me. I was certain it was just a lay-by, which is why I picked up a passenger right in front of a driver waiting there, even after he hooted at me. This happened a little after 6pm on Sunday 8 February. Two hours later, I drove past and saw the rank markings on the road and I now feel absolutely mortified. If the driver concerned reads this, please get in touch with me through this paper.

Robert Howse

WITNESS APPEAL

I am trying to track down a black cab driver who helped me in an accident last year. The collision was on 7 January, 2019, on the junction of Camden Road and Hilldrop Road N7. I was on my moped and the taxi driver stopped to help me and gave me his blanket. It would really help if I could find him as the police didn’t get witness statements despite there being lots of people who stopped.

Ewa Kmietowicz

HOLY SMOKE

If ‘deliveries’ are to be allowed in the City of London’s Beech Street zero emission zone, can a diesel taxi drop a passenger (disabled on otherwise) off there too? I assume requiring access in order to ply for hire is a bit too much to hope for?

Les Hammond

GRAVE ERROR

I see that another national newspaper doesn’t seem to know the difference between taxis and minicabs. The Guardian, who you think would know better, recently reported that the first person to be diagnosed in London with coronavirus turned up at Lewisham hospital in an Uber ‘taxi’. All very annoying! When I pointed this out, the word ‘taxi’ did disappear from the paper’s online front page an hour or so later, but was still retained in the headline on the article itself. Perhaps the LTDA could convene a ‘re-education’ seminar for national newspaper sub-editors at Taxi House!

Ian Moody

HEARTFELT THANKS

On behalf of the Chairman and Committee of The London Taxidrivers Charity For Children, may I offer our grateful thanks to the LTDA and in particular, Dave Sparks, for allowing our charity to use one of your store rooms for all of the various equipment needed to help run the charity. You have given us this facility for many years gratis, thereby saving us many hundreds of pounds in storage costs. Your organisation has always been on hand to help us at any time, such as allowing us to use your boardroom for emergency meetings, and we are most appreciative. Thank you once again and we hope the move to your new premises are successful.

Malcolm Shaffron
Honorary Secretary
London Taxidrivers Charity for Children
But hurry, taxis MUST be ordered and delivered by 31st March 2020 to qualify for this fantastic offer!

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TRUSTED TO DO RIGHT BY DRIVERS
A MAN IN BLACK

The Knowledge of London is widely considered to be the most difficult topographical test on the planet. Introduced in its current guise in 1865, the Knowledge invites some poor lost soul in torment to ingest every street, square, lane, place and mews, as well as a number of buildings on those streets, into their brain.

After undertaking a number of exams, it’s hoped that the aforementioned poor soul obtains his or her choice across the merry old metropolis.

Sadly, it seems that both taxi driver numbers and Knowledge student numbers who are on stages 3 to 5 have dropped.

The current number of students at that stage is 943, with 714 at stages 1 and 2; the rest are either dormant or still doing their runs. This is quite an alarming figure when you consider that in 2012 there were in excess of 3,000 Knowledge students across all levels, figures have almost halved in less than eight years.

Compounding the problem of falling Knowledge students is an ageing taxi driver demographic.

According to latest Transport for London figures from October 2019, there are 7,716 drivers under the age of 50, leaving 15,104 over 50 years of age. A total of 3,131 drivers still hold a licence beyond pensionable age.

The figures show that there is currently a grand total of 2,477 people on the Knowledge, with 442 over the age of 50.

So what can we do to boost numbers?

Back in the good old days, we had something called the Chelmer Trust which used to help Knowledge students get started and give support along the way. Could TfL be persuaded to help set up a similar trust to help all students who wish to study the Knowledge?

We are a walking advert for our industry, so we could hold open days to persuade unemployed people that joining the taxi trade is an attractive career option.

With the aid of a trust to help those individuals, it may be a push in the right direction.

The negativity towards the trade across social media has also been highlighted by both cab drivers and Knowledge students. In the past, you may have met the odd cabbie who would say things like “the game’s dead, son”, but this viewpoint has now been expressed more aggressively on Twitter. This in turn is turning people away from the industry and has a deeply negative effect on the trade.

We really need to put our collective heads together to figure out a solution as to how we can promote the best taxi industry on the planet - and the Knowledge itself - so that the trade can remain a viable entity.

Steve Kenton is a Licensed Taxi driver of 30 years.
As Heathrow’s third runway hangs in the balance, Alf looks back at the history of taxis at the airport

**UP IN THE AIR**

**TAXI TOWNSEND**

It’s very difficult to ascertain just how long the protesters have been demonstrating about Heathrow’s plan to build a third runway, but here are the facts. Almost 30 years ago in 1990, The Runway Capacity Study first mooted the idea. This was followed by a government White Paper in 2005, but then came many years when the project was either postponed or cancelled by the following government. Heathrow didn’t have the private finance for the project, but when parliament voted in favour of it, the game was on.

BAA managed to get mega billions in private finance and informed the nation that they would start in 2022 and hopefully finish in 2050. It wasn’t just about building a runway, they had to divert rivers and roads and redirect the M25 through a newly built tunnel under the new runway. They planned to repair the terminals and double the parking area. This infuriated the environmentalists who accused BAA of increasing pollution. Boris Johnson, whose constituency was next door, said that “he would lie in front of the bulldozers to stop them!” Asked recently if he would still lie down in front of the bulldozers, he replied: “I see no bulldozers at present, nor any prospect of them arriving.”

**Dog-eat-dog world**

Heathrow plan to demolish 761 homes and totally obliterate the entire village of Longford. I recently heard that there was a problem with Longford Cemetery, which is in the proposed flight path. Therefore, they will either need to bypass it or reinter the bodies at Euston. This was a problem with Longford Cemetery, and totally obliterate the entire village of Longford. I recently heard that there was a problem with Longford Cemetery, which is in the proposed flight path. Therefore, they will either need to bypass it or reinter the bodies at Euston.

Prior to the years of indecisions about constructing a third runway, London taxis arrived at Heathrow. This followed the inauguration of the first terminal in 1955 by the Queen, after which an act of Parliament was passed to allow London taxis to ply for hire at Heathrow. London cabbies then started to ply their trade at the world-famous Heathrow Airport.

In the early days, the cabbies consisted of a small band of hardy souls who were happy to face the daily search for a tiny number of fares from just one terminal. The cabbies were parked up on the north side among the Nissen huts and the hastily-laid cinder, and had to abide by a primitive ticket system, which was totally unfair and controlled by just one copper. This was in the bad old dog-eat-dog days, before there was a taxi feeder park and computerised taxi movements. The flow of taxis relied purely on the whims and vested interests of small groups of cabbies, who organised themselves into cartels or gangs. If my memory serves me correctly, I believe one ‘firm’ was called ‘The Quality Street Gang’ and the other was ‘The Lavender Hill Mob’. If you weren’t a member of one of these ‘firms’ then, ticket or no ticket, you simply couldn’t get onto the only terminal rank at the then Terminal 1, which is now Terminal 2. When one cab got hired, they would simply leave a space in the middle, only pulling forward when one of their gang appeared. Consequently, all ‘The Connaughts’ – Connaught Rangers – Strangers, were forced to continually orbit, that is circle the central area hoping to find a space. ‘The cartels controlled the rank by not leaving ‘the point’ – the head of the rank - unless it was a good fare that suited them. The choice fares of that era, so I am told, were the groups of Asian immigrants entering the country.

All these poor people had in their possession was an address of their contact up north, maybe in Birmingham, Wolverhamport or Bradford. The guys would load their cabs to over-flowing - because the contact would pay ‘by head’, then take them to these addresses up north. I’m told that this one job often earned the cabbies a week’s takings! Unfortunately, those poor souls had to work like dogs for many months to pay the over-inflated cost of their taxi ride and became virtual slaves to their employers.

Another choice fare that I found distressing were all the young foreign girls looking for an abortion in the only European country where it was legal. The guys knew all the seedy addresses where they would cop a fat commission for what was known loosely on the rank terminology as ‘Belly Jobs’. But farther down the line, as a loving father of two daughters, it’s not my idea of humour. I am simply relating the facts!

**Move up the ranks**

If the guy on ‘point’ didn’t fancy a particular fare, or if it was a ‘local’, he would send it to the back of the rank. The guy on the back who took the local was allowed back on the rank by the cartel - despite all the many cabbies orbiting after waiting for a ticket over on the north side!

It was painfully obvious to BAA and just about everyone else that an international airport like Heathrow couldn’t possibly function in a professional way, with a taxi operation like the one that was in place - especially after some bitter complaints from influential and powerful people who had the misfortune to go on short journeys and find that the cabs simply wouldn’t take them! These complaints had the effect of forcing BAA to sort out a fair and sensible taxi operation. Their first attempt was using what is now the bus depot in the central area as a taxi feeder, but it didn’t work because it wasn’t big enough. Finally, after the opening of Terminal 3 in 1961 to cater for long-haul flights and the opening of the now T1 in 1969 for short-haul UK airline services, BAA finally got their act together because hundreds of cabs were arriving to rank up!

BAA finally utilised some spare space out on the Northern Perimeter Road, bang opposite Heathrow Nick, and adjacent to all the old Nissen huts. That’s when all the trouble started. Suddenly, BAA informed the trade organisations that they intended to levy an entry charge on every taxi entering the new feeder park! This caused absolute mayhem among the regulars. They stated, quite rightly, that cabs were supplying a service for BAA’s passengers and that they shouldn’t be penalised! The strike, boycott and drive-ins around Parliament followed. But that’s a story for another article! ✧

“The flow of taxis relied purely on the whims and vested interests of small groups of cabbies, who organised themselves into cartels or gangs”
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MY TXE IS THE BEST VEHICLE I’VE DRIVEN

STEVE HOWARD

SUBURBAN ROUNDPUP

It's get the moans and groans out of the way. I recently took delivery of a new TXe vehicle and I think it's the best vehicle I've driven in 48 years of cabbing. There's no comparison to anything I've ever owned, from my Feo to my Mercedes. Unfortunately, my cab was broken into while I was eating out one night in Kew. Two guys on bikes smashed the side window and ransacked it; luckily, they left most of my stuff on the road, but fixing the side window was a problem.

Most of the big dealers said it would take two to three days to replace, but fortunately, Jimmy and his crew at Taxi Glaze came up trumps and I'd like to thank them for their excellent service and expedience for my replacement window.

I happened to be listening to an early morning chat show about tourists and long-term visitors needing to undergo extra driver training when staying in the UK. It made me wonder when the government is going to get to grips with the appalling standard of driving by Uber drivers. Over the Christmas period, I saw some lethal manoeuvres by Uber drivers: driving on the wrong side of the road; setting down on zebra crossings; and even dropping off passengers in the middle lane of the Marylebone road in free-flowing traffic! Will it take a fatality for people to take their blinkers off?

Again, I have been reminded from many of the reps about cabs not moving up and leaving unattended cabs, so use your loaf.

With the increasing number of electric vehicles on the roads, there's a desperate need for more charging points. I have asked all of the reps to do their utmost to progress this with TfL and their local councils.

Sector 2

Last summer, Newham Council proposed changes to vehicle access in the Browning Road, Manor Park, area to exclude taxis. After lobbying by the LTDA Chair and contact with a local councillor, they decided to exempt taxis from the new southbound closure. However, since implementation, a few drivers have been receiving penalty notices. I contacted Newham for an explanation, and they have confirmed that taxis ARE exempt, and they will ensure that it won’t happen again.

The line out of Liverpool Street is now suspended during weekends until 4 April 2020. Buses will run along the route and in and out of Newbury Park Underground station.

Ilford Station is being rebuilt. Passengers now use a new entrance at Ilford Hill where there is a line of sight to Ilford High Road Rank, meaning there could be an opportunity to regain work in this area. Please pull up and stay for a while so customers can see and use taxis again. Also, we have a two-cab rank opposite the New York Road entrance. Please don’t leave your taxi unattended as we are being watched.

Sector 4

Recently I met with TfL and various groups of council officials to look at signage at Beckenham Road and Bromley High Street. Also, the rank at West Wickham is progressing along with a one-cab rank at Bromley North Station.

Sector 5

It's come to our attention that building work is to start on the ground opposite the Porter and Sorter pub. We have been informed that due to the size of the development, there will be lots of heavy goods vehicles coming and going. The entrance will be from Cherry Orchard Road and they intend to take away the feeder rank going down Cherry Orchard Road.

I have had a meeting with TfL and argued our case for not losing any rank space whatsoever. This is an ongoing matter and I intend to fight all the way for alternative ranking or for at least a solution to the problem. I understand that they need access to the site, but they must also understand that this is how we earn our living; moreover, we are a public service.

I shall keep you informed as and when I have any further information. Meanwhile, I hope this puts an end to any rumours.

Sector 6

Wimbledon is due to have a 20mph speed limit imposed in almost the entire town centre and the surrounding area.

I was at a meeting the other day with some councillors who mentioned a complaint they had received from a disabled person about cabs parking on the off-side lane of the station rank at Wimbledon. I assured them that should this happen, drivers always move up to assist, but they reiterated that they shouldn’t be there, so be warned.

Lastly, the dates for the forthcoming AELTC tournament 2020 have been announced: they are Monday 29 June to Sunday 12 July, so try not to plan a holiday for those dates!

Sector 7

In the summer months, the bus station in Cromwell Road, Kingston, is being knocked down and rebuilt. This will take about 18 months, during which time, TfL buses will be racking up buses all over town. Currently, the only inconvenience to us will be the fact that the station rank’s last two spaces will be made into a loading bay between 4am and 6am. I have voiced my scepticism to TfL about the lack of enforcement around the town and controlling the use in those hours (no chance!). Twickenham Station has now opened its new main entrance, so the new night rank should be used as it should; we are still trying to negotiate for daytime usage.

Sector 8

The music festival LOVEMEX in Gunnersbury Park is on again from 12 to 14 June. This will be open to both Sector 7 and Sector 8 drivers, and it will be marshalled by taxi marshals again so please give your support. I will remind you all again nearer the time.

Steve Howard Suburban Branch Secretary and Council of Management member
Ola launches in London

TRADE

Ola, one of the world’s largest ride-hailing platforms, launched in London on 10 February.

The India-based company, which already boasts more than 25,000 drivers on its platform, was issued with a 15-month operator’s licence in July 2019.

With Kapten, Bolt and Addison Lee, as well as Uber, being major players in an already saturated market, Ola claim it will offer drivers the best commission rate on the market although no figure has been divulged as yet. They will also enjoy six weeks of zero commission after first joining the platform.

Founded in 2011 by Bhavish Aggarwal and Ankit Bhati, Ola is well funded with a near £4bn investment from Tencent, as well as Uber investors, Didi Chuxing and Softbank.

Ola first launched in the UK in 2018 and currently operates across 28 local authorities.

To date, Ola has provided more than three million rides with more than 11,000 drivers already operating on the platform in the UK.

The platform offers three categories of vehicle: comfort, comfort XL and exec ride classes, and every Ola driver has passed the Versant spoken English test from education experts Pearson plc.

Simon Smith, Head of Ola International said: “We are thrilled to now be live in London. This is a major milestone for our business and represents the next step in our ambitions to connect people in cities throughout the country.”

He added: “We are proud of the progress Ola has made in the UK and we look forward to building on our success by offering a differentiated service to Londoners, focussed on quality, safety and reliability.”

The launch comes as Uber fight to retain their licence to operate in London after a string of failings saw them deemed “not fit and proper” by Transport for London for the second time in two years.

- By Steve Kenton

LEVC predicts 50% rise in demand

Black taxi maker The London Electric Vehicle Co (LEVC) has predicted a 50% rise in demand in 2020.

The company sold 2,507 of its electric TX models in 2019 and expects to be producing 20,000 vehicles a year by 2022.

Based near Coventry, LEVC plans to create 100 new jobs as it prepares to launch a new electric van, which is making its debut at the Commercial Vehicle Show in April.

The electric van is made using the same lightweight aluminium architecture as its TX electric taxi – 30% lighter than a steel body, resistant to rust, and can absorb twice the crash energy of mild steel.

As well as being successful in London, the TX is a hit in the UK and overseas too with growing demand from taxi operators in Germany, France, Switzerland, Denmark and Japan.

Later this year, LEVC will begin exporting to the Middle East, New Zealand and Australia.

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The April ban is being introduced to protect the UK’s problem gamblers.

GAMBLING ON CREDIT CARDS TO BE BANNED

EMMA LUNN

GAMBLING ON CREDIT CARDS TO BE BANNED

MONEY MATTERS

Gambling with money borrowed on credit cards will be banned from 14 April in a bid to protect problem gamblers.

The Gambling Commission announced the ban which will apply to all online and offline gambling products, with the exception of lotteries where the payment is taken face-to-face – for example, if you buy a Lotto ticket in a shop.

The ban follows the commission’s review of online gambling and the Government’s Review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures.

According to the Gambling Commission, about 24 million adults in the UK gamble, with 10.5 million of those gambling online. It found that 22% of online gamblers who use credit cards to gamble are classed as “problem gamblers”.

Separate research from UK Finance estimates that about 800,000 consumers use credit cards to gamble. The Gambling Commission conceded that some people use credit cards for gambling because they are convenient, but maintained that the risk of harm to others was too high to allow the use of credit cards to continue.

Gambling Commission chief executive Neil McArthur says: “We also know that there are examples of consumers who have accumulated tens of thousands of pounds of debt through gambling because of credit card availability. There is also evidence that the fees charged by credit cards can exacerbate the situation because the consumer can try to chase losses to a greater extent.”

If you think you may have a gambling problem, there are a number of steps you can take to control your betting. For example, a growing number of banks, including Monzo, Starling, HSBC, Natwest and Barclays, give current account customers the option to self-exclude from all gambling transactions on debit cards.

The schemes, designed in partnership with charities GamCare and GambleAware, aim to create “positive friction” by giving customers time to consider their urge to gamble. Self-imposed gambling blocks locks can normally be reversed with 24 hours’ notice.

Most online casinos offer customers the option to set daily, weekly or monthly deposit limits. Those customers who want to kick the habit altogether, can “self-exclude” from individual sites. Self-exclusion is a process when you ask a gambling operator to ban you from gambling with it for a set length of time – usually between six months and five years. In practice, it means you will be refused service in the venues where you have self-excluded. Legally, this must be provided as an option by gambling operators based in the UK.

Another useful tool is GamStop. This is a free service that lets you put controls in place to help restrict your online gambling activities. If you want to stop gambling online completely, you can register your details and choose how long you want to be banned for. You should then not be able to logon to any gambling websites signed up to GamStop. In due course, the Gambling Commission will require all online gambling websites to join GamStop.

Alternatively, GamBlock software can be downloaded to devices to block access to gambling websites. There are versions of GamBlock available for PCs, Apple devices and Android smartphones.

If restricting your access to gambling isn’t enough for you to feel comfortable with your gambling activity or urges, you might want to seek professional advice. Organisations that can help include BeGambleAware, Gamblers Anonymous, GamCare, and the National Problem Gambling Clinic.

Treatment typically includes cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), psychodynamic psychotherapy, and individual psychological support.

If you have run up debts through gambling and are struggling to pay them back, you can get debt and budgeting advice from Citizens Advice, the Money Advice Service and StepChange Debt Charity.
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As Storm Ciara causes chaos across London, Chris heads to the pub

BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES!

CHRIS ACKRILL

ON THE ROAD

As I sit at my PC typing this, the wind is howling outside. We’re advised not to venture out unless our journeys are essential. The port of Dover is closed. Flights are cancelled and there’s a 50 miles per hour speed limit on the train network. Some trains aren’t running at all. Some areas are flooding. Power cuts are imminent. At home, the cat won’t go out into the garden, and the rabbit is grounded on safety grounds.

This country rarely experiences extreme weather, and we’re never fully prepared for it. When the first snowflake drops, the roads and rails grind to a halt, and all the schools close; just in case they face legal action for forcing children out into the cold. The authorities don’t like us moving around as it causes accidents and incidents that they’ll have to deal with. Transport providers don’t like us clogging up the roads, trains and buses; or causing a jam at Sunglass Hut at the airports.

As much as I like to pretend that I’m driving my rig across Alaska like on TV’s Ice Road Truckers, anything more than a dusting of the white stuff and I’m on my way home. Conversely, when the first rays of sun hit our shores, the great British public head to a pub garden to order a pint of lager with a wasp in it. Others strip off and lie around drunk in our parks. Or try to get into cabs in Soho.

We need to be wary. Driving in hot weather is very debilitating, even in a cab with air-conditioning.

Normally I’d be driving the cab on a Sunday. I’m not scared to drive into London. I’m only at home because I’m booked in for a family meal at a Hertfordshire pub. I decided to have a rare Sunday off because of today’s Winter Run and the widespread road closures the event requires. If there are road closures in the West End, I base myself in the City. If the closures are in the City, I work the West End. When the closures affect most of Central London, I take a day’s holiday. To my surprise, the Winter Run was called off on Friday, two days before the event. By then, I’d committed to my family lunch and I was already in holiday mode. Storm Ciara they called it. As if giving it a name makes it more serious and official. Well, my 12-mile drive to Harpenden was essential, as is any visit to a pub. It passed off uneventfully, though some people did have serious problems.

So, the Winter Run was cancelled because of a bit of wind? Surely scheduling a run in February comes with the risk of, er, winter-type weather. That’s why it’s called a Winter Run. A summer run could be hot and sunny, and a winter run could be expected to feature ice, snow or wind. I’d have thought that a proper runner should be able to cope with those conditions. They’re not landing a jumbo jet on an icy runway.

I don’t mind driving in the wind, but snow and ice makes me nervous. I prefer perfect conditions. I hate the rain; visibility is reduced, the traffic slows, and I find it depressing. In some countries they drive on snow and ice. I guess they’re used to it. Everything shuts down here. Remember the “Beast from the East” two years ago? At the end of February and the beginning of March 2018, I lost four days of work because of snow. Little over a month later, we had three boiling hot days. April 19 was the hottest April day since 1949. Typical British inconsistency.

I had a friend at university, Finnish Erik, who thought this global warming thing was great and looked forward to seeing palm trees in Helsinki. That was over 20 years ago. Since then we’ve been made aware that the hottest places in the world will become inhabitable in the future, and that folk are starting to move from hot places to more temperate ones. I wonder if there are property investment opportunities in Greenland?

Of course, under Brexit we are now free to import more extreme weather from non-European Union countries. Viruses too. How many of us knew where Wuhan was? I pride myself on my geography, but I didn’t know. Apparently, Wuhan is about the size of London. If people in Britain haven’t heard of Wuhan, there are probably people in Wuhan who have never heard of London or New York. Makes you think, all this wind and rain.

Anyway, I expect that when you come to read this all the extreme weather will be over and we’ll be looking forward to a bright warm spring…

Website: pubcat.co.uk

Chris Ackrill is a taxi driver and former Knowledge examiner

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Postcode

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Email

Twitter

Date of Birth

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Badge colour (Please state whether green or yellow)

Year badge obtained

Suburban badge sector numbers

Have you ever been a member of the LTDA before? (please tick)

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you currently have points on your DVLA driving license? (please tick)

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes how many points do you have?

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

[ ]

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

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

Signed ___________________________ Date ___________________________

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  - If 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.
I am mid-ding-dong with John Lewis who sold me a fridge before Christmas. It’s just a small one for the garage so I don’t have to play chilled food Jenga on high days and holidays.

But guess what? When it’s cold outside, the fridge switches itself off. Making it as useless as a concrete parachute. For the scientifically minded out there, it’s all to do with thermostats and ambient temperatures, apparently.

I want the shop to exchange the fridge it for one that will work all of the time but, so far, they are saying no. This week, I upped the complaint to their super-duper Head of Customer Service, and she sent me an email that began “Dear Mrs Mig…”

I shot back a super snotty email stating that before we get to the complaint, she should at least get my name right. Within minutes she had replied, pointing out, oh-so-politely, that she had used the same spelling that I had used in my original email to her. BLUSH.

I embarrassed my recent pit stop at Pret in the Wembley Designer Outlet. I got settled at a nice table by the window, took a long slurp from my tea and a big old bite of my £2.45 very berry muffin. My muffin strategy is always to eat the ‘cap’ bit first. Yum. How shocked was I when the bloke opposite me snatched my muffin from its plate, peeled off the case and finished it in one swallow? He held eye contact with me the whole entire time. I decided to skedaddle in silence with my tea, fearing muffin man might pose a threat to life and limb.

When I sat back into the cab, I sorted my bag out before driving off, and guess what I found? My mixed berry muffin, untouched, in its bag. I’d taken the first bite of a stranger’s muffin. Argh.

In the embarrassing moment stakes, that typo doesn’t come close to my recent pit stop at Pret in the Wembley Designer Outlet. I got settled at a nice table by the window, took a long slurp from my tea and a big old bite of my £2.45 very berry muffin. My muffin strategy is always to eat the ‘cap’ bit first. Yum. How shocked was I when the bloke opposite me snatched my muffin from its plate, peeled off the case and finished it in one swallow? He held eye contact with me the whole entire time. I decided to skedaddle in silence with my tea, fearing muffin man might pose a threat to life and limb.

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And here’s the gaffe that keeps on giving. I still cringe about it after almost 20 years. When the first mini Meg arrived, I bussed it to work every morning, dropping her at nursery on the way. The bus always passed a field with horses in it, and I would bounce her up and down on my knee and together we’d say in very excited squeaky voices: “Look at the lovely horsies!” And then we’d count them all and make neigh neigh whinny whinny sounds.

When mum came to stay and took care of the baby for a few days, I travelled solo on the bus for the first time. It was packed and I was sat next to a very well-dressed man engrossed in The Financial Times. When the bus passed the field, in fully automatic mum-mode, I merrily bounced my handbag on my knees using both hands and cried: “Look at the lovely horsies!” There were seven that morning. Yes. I counted them all, aloud. And I neighed. And whinnied.

As the man next to me got up to get off he leant in and spoke very quietly and kindly, “What is your name, my dear?”

“Meg” I answered.

“I do hope you get the help you need, Meg.”

And then, as if I hadn’t embarrassed myself enough, I insisted: “It wasn’t me!”

Let’s play the shame game. Can anyone beat that? ✷
Top tips on how to make driving as comfortable and pain-free as possible

HOW TO RELIEVE BACK PAIN WHILE DRIVING

DRIVING PAINS

Meeting a cabbie without a bad back is like going for a walk and seeing a unicorn. It doesn’t happen.

Driving for long periods is a major cause of those familiar aches and pains because it ‘shortens’ your muscles. Maneoeuvring a taxi adds even more pressure due to endlessly sitting in traffic made worse by the behaviour of your fellow road users.

During a typical day behind the wheel, your body and muscles will stress, tighten and shorten which commonly leads to long-term pain and problems. It also affects the way your heart pumps blood around. Good circulation is vital to keep the old ticker, brain and muscles in good order. Unfortunately, that’s a challenge when you’re in your cab all day.

Sitting for long periods minimises your circulation. Your heart is still doing its job but it’s your muscles that help get the blood flowing efficiently. This adds the lymphatic system which cleans your body of toxins. Inactivity can be linked to being overweight, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

To make the point - when you sit for too long it slows your metabolism. And this works against your ability to regulate your blood sugar, your blood pressure and your ability to break down your body fat.

Driving is a chesty business. And it affects your posture. Holding on to the steering wheel tightens the muscles in your upper body. And when they’re tight, they pull your shoulders forward which immediately puts pressure on your neck. This is a major cause of pain.

Your shoulder is a ball and socket joint and has the largest range of movement in your body; it operates like a sheep. In other words, it goes wherever your body tells it to. This means that most of the time your shoulders are out of alignment which puts more pressure on your neck.

This is often the cause of those headaches and feelings of head tension. To ease this problem as soon as you get home, stretch your chest. Hold the position for 20 seconds. This will loosen your muscles and you’ll notice your shoulders position themselves back to where they belong.

Your back is down to your piriformis. This is the deep muscle in your buttock that tightens and clamps down on the sciatic nerve. To stop this, try not to place your foot on the peddle at an angle. Focus on keeping your foot square on. When you’re at an angle, you’re at risk of creating a repetitive strain injury. This simple action will also help with any knee problems.

Finally, to help your back, keep your core activated and your spine neutral. This will go a long way to relieving any pain.

Always consult your GP if you’ve significant problems, but for more information on how to carry out the exercises visit my website molyfit.co.uk. You’ll find tips and free videos to help you and there’s a specific post-driving stretch routine to get you started.

I’ve also published a book with even more advice gained from more than 20 years of experience as a professional therapist. John Molyneux’s book A Better You in Later Life is available from Amazon.

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PUZZLER
PRIZE CROSSWORD

ACROSS:
7 Dung (6)
8 Someone’s estate (6)
9 Cause (4)
10 Yellow flowering tree (8)
11 Typeface (7)
13 Ungainly (5)
15 Borough (5)
17 Relating to motion (7)
20 Keyboard player (8)
21 Hard, porous fuel (4)
22 Last syllable (6)
23 In the same place (6)

DOWN:
1 Scholar (6)
2 Underground (4)
3 Horses leg joint (7)
4 Long necked waterbird (5)
5 Coach (8)
6 Hit (5)
12 Wooden hut (3, 5)
14 Tied hairstyle (7)
16 Disorderly (6)
18 Printer type (3, 3)
19 Eye shield (5)
21 Fragment (4)

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

OVERHEARD

M y wife went for medical treatment yesterday and was told to take all her clothes off. She says she’ll never go to that dentist again. Mind you, no dentist has ever found it necessary to ask my wife to open her mouth. It’s never closed. It may be just a rumour, but I heard that post-election, Jeremy Corbyn went to his dentist about a wisdom tooth. He wanted one put in. And Prince Charles keeps plaguing his dentist too. He’s anxious to have a crown. Dentists can be very expensive. They usually give you an appointment six months in advance so you’ve got time to save up for their fee. All dentists have to take an oath. It’s usually to become millionaires. The first thing they say is: “Stick out your tongue and say Owe.” My dentist kept telling me to open wider. Not my mouth, my wallet. He spotted some £50 notes in there and said: “I’m afraid they’ll have to come out”. He not only pulled my teeth, but by the size of his bill, I thought he was pulling my leg as well. He charged me £250 to pull two teeth. When I complained that it was a lot for just a few minutes of work, he said: “Next time you come in, I’ll pull them more slowly”. The trouble with dentists is that they work on your mouth, but you pay through the nose. The dentist himself, I ended up feeling down in the mouth.

Statistics show that people over 70 have fewer cavities. Probably because they have fewer teeth. As a matter of fact, my grandfather went to the dentist with buck teeth. He left with bunk teeth. One upper and one lower. That was a year ago and grandad hasn’t paid yet. The dentist says getting money out of my grandad is like pulling teeth. Poor old grandad lost most of his teeth in his early thirties. Mind you, it was his own fault. The woman he was seeing had a jealous husband. Actually, my sister’s first husband was a perfect dentist. She said she knew he was perfect, because whenever they made love she didn’t feel a thing. It may be just a rumour, but I heard that post-election, Jeremy Corbyn went to his dentist about a wisdom tooth. He wanted one put in. And Prince Charles keeps plaguing his dentist too. He’s anxious to have a crown. Dentists can be very expensive. They usually give you an appointment six months in advance so you’ve got time to save up for their fee. All dentists have to take an oath. It’s usually to become millionaires. The first thing they say is: “Stick out your tongue and say Owe.” My dentist kept telling me to open wider. Not my mouth, my wallet. He spotted some £50 notes in there and said: “I’m afraid they’ll have to come out”. He not only pulled my teeth, but by the size of his bill, I thought he was pulling my leg as well. He charged me £250 to pull two teeth. When I complained that it was a lot for just a few minutes of work, he said: “Next time you come in, I’ll pull them more slowly”. The trouble with dentists is that they work on your mouth, but you pay through the nose. The dentist himself, I ended up feeling down in the mouth.

PUZZLER
SUDOKU

Just for fun...

PUZZLER

WINNER: ISSUE 460 – Peter Kelly, Rickmansworth

ACROSS:
7 Polite, 8 Uptown, 9 Monk, 10 Imminent, 11 Adjunct, 13 Waken, 15 Tabby, 17 Federal, 20 Dead duck, 21 Raja, 22 Adhere, 23 Insure.

DOWN:
1 No-good, 2 Pink, 3 Bewitch, 4 Yummy, 5 Stone Age, 6 Twinge, 12 Unbidden, 14 Necktie, 16 Amends, 18 Adjure, 19 Duvet, 21 Rash.

25 February 2020

–Brad Ashton
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.

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!

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.

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Quotax was started by John Fosker. As a London Green Badge Taxi driver he built up a relationship with Ascott Cab Company, a well-respected family-run London Taxi garage.

**2004**
John originally had the idea of establishing an insurance broker for London taxi drivers at Ascotts, with ambitions to reproduce the same high-quality levels of customer service.

**2009 - 2010**
John's two sons, Daniel and Paul Fosker joined the business after graduating from University. Their added drive and determination alongside an ambitious team around them only helped the company grow.

**2013**
Quotax made the decision to grow their product range adding a number of other niche motor products. We have now become one of the UK’s leading insurance brokers for London Taxi drivers and other specialist vehicles.

**2018**
Quotax invests considerable resources into growing our presence online. John retired in September 2018 and has passed the business to Daniel and Paul, expanding even more by opening a second office in Dartford.

**2019**
Under their control, the business remains true to its core beliefs of being supportive, professional and delivering exceptional customer service to all of our clients.

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