Q. Do you think, generally, our fares are...

- About right?
- Too low?
- Too high?

YOU’VE BEEN SERVED

Transport for London

HIGH COURT PAPERS
LODGED REQUESTING ENTIRE STREETSPACE & BUS GATE REVIEW page 6
**TAXI NEWS**

**THRIVE LDN**

Thrive LDN has released a radio documentary called ‘Taxis Talk’ to capture the experiences of Londoners during lockdown. In the documentary, London taxi driver and BBC’s The One Show contributor, Dale Forwood, takes listeners on a unique journey speaking to passengers about their experiences during the coronavirus pandemic and exploring how life has changed for them.

The 30-minute programme brings a human perspective to a global health crisis, exploring how resilient Londoners are and what they have been doing to cope during such a challenging situation.

The stories are emotional and authentic, but ultimately uplifting and inspirational, celebrating the best of Londoners and our city’s diverse communities.

You can listen to the show by following the link below:

https://thriveldn.co.uk/2020/08/07/thrive-ldn-releases-new-radio-documentary-taxis-talk/

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**LEVC**

LEVC has significantly grown its authorised service and maintenance network by signing a partnership with one of the UK’s largest end-to-end fleet management companies, Rivus Fleet Solutions, doubling its existing UK service network in size. These additional 20 authorised service centres join LEVC’s existing 17 sites, which will increase the British brand’s existing UK network to 37 locations by the end of October. Each authorised site will be able to carry out servicing, maintenance, general repairs and MoTs for LEVC TX taxis.

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**MISSING PERSON APPEAL:**

Detectives with the Metropolitan Police are attempting to locate a black cab driver that picked up a mixed-race young girl on Saturday 27th July 2020 between 9.10pm and 10pm outside Paddington Station or Hilton Hotel in Praed Street. The taxi driver is not a suspect. Police are hoping a driver is in possession of dash cam footage or knowledge in regard to where the girl alighted. If you can help, contact Met Police on 101 with information to be relayed to Detective Fitorre Haradini.

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**TAXI FARE FUNDING**

Taxi fare funding is to be made available for disabled workers. The DWP have extended the ‘Access to Work’ scheme which supports disabled workers and those with a range of other health conditions. The scheme provides support in funding specialised equipment, travel costs and mental health support. Included in the scheme is funding that can now cover taxi fares - providing a health condition prevents travel on other forms of public transport due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

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Tariff consultation: “Judging from the circa 2,500 responses already received, and with only 17% of respondents agreeing with the Tariff Group, our decision has already been clearly vindicated.”

**MEMBER SUPPORT, SAFETY, ACCESS & CONSULTATION**

**TOP TRADE STORY**

Last week, we saw the Mayor finally admit that “empty offices” and people continuing to work from home are a “big problem” for central London, with many small businesses still struggling as result. This was a significant and much-needed change of tune, but it remains to be seen what he will do to actually address the issue and ensure people feel safe returning to the capital.

**Getting London Back on Track**

As we all know, a key part of encouraging people to return is ensuring that they have safe transport options. Socially distanced, purpose-built taxis are the obvious and ideal solution. We are continuing to push City Hall and TfL to make this clear, recognise the role that taxis can and should play and stop undermining the important service we provide. The LTDA will also be doing everything we can to continue to promote the safety features of London’s black cab as people do start to return over the next few months.

**More Support for Taxi Drivers**

In the meantime, the second and final round of Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) opened last week and eligible drivers should now have been contacted by HMRC. You can make a claim worth 70% of average monthly trading profits capped at £6570 until 19th October. The scheme continues to be a lifeline for those who can access it, as trade still remains well below pre-Covid-19 levels.

Over the next few months, I will be making sure that there is a plan in place to support drivers moving forward, as its likely that we will still face significant challenges beyond October. I was interviewed on BBC News last week making this point and outlining what we need from policy makers to get through what will continue to be a challenging time for many.

**Keeping Royal Parks Open to Taxis**

Elsewhere, earlier this month, the Royal Parks began five trials to ban vehicles driving through some of the capital’s parks on certain days or at certain times. This is another worrying and potentially damaging development for the trade.

I met with their Head of Transport to discuss these and the make for taxi access. They will be consulting on the impact of the trials in November before they make any decision on the future of these roads. They are keen to hear our feedback and open to working with us to ensure that taxi drivers are not disadvantaged wherever possible. The Royal Parks themselves have limited powers around enforcement and regulation (these powers remain with central Government), which does limit what they can do, but I am hopeful we can work constructively with them.

**Safe Taxi Use**

The LTDA also took part in a call with representatives from Public Health England, Department for Transport and the Health and Safety Executive recently to discuss what more can be done to keep drivers, particularly those more vulnerable to Covid-19, as safe as possible. We highlighted the need for clearer guidance on safe taxi use, face coverings and the need to draw a clear distinction between taxis and PHVs. We were assured that they are aware of these issues and specifically looking at the latter.

**Tariff Consultation**

Traditionally, our tariff is reviewed annually via the cost index basket through the trades tariff group, comprising of representatives from LTDA, UCG, UNITE, LCDC and RMT. Over the years the formula used, and the work of the group has ensured our tariff is relevant and updated.

The calculations had shown this year’s increase to be 4.16% but with the current pandemic the trade group decided not to apply any increase this year.

A decision then had to be made as to what we should do in Spring 2021. Should we apply the increase of 4.16% due this year, or use this year’s costs basket review (thought to be around 2%) and apply that figure, or because of the current situation and uncertainty, apply no increase again next year? Our view was clear, that our members should decide, and, as in previous years, we emailed all our members with an online survey asking their opinions on a variety of tariff issues and very specifically what to do with next year’s increase. Our decision to ask our members has met with criticism from some of the tariff group who want to push ahead with the 4.16% increase, without consulting their own members. In the past, this may have been acceptable but in the current crisis and without any end in sight, we are convinced asking our members was the correct action. Judging from the circa 2,500 responses already received and with only 17% of respondents agreeing with the Tariff Group (to take the 4.16%), our decision has been clearly vindicated.

Steve McNamara is the LTDA’s General Secretary

**Please see page 28 for key member survey results**

Any decision we make on this will be important to help us get back to work, get passenger numbers up and get London moving again.
Making tax less taxing

Cab Accounting Ltd has been making taxes less of a worry for the Taxi Trade for over 10 years.

Here are some of the benefits we offer.

- All our accountants are either publicly certified or qualified tax technicians
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020 7704 8100

INTRODUCING

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- Check your income and expenses daily, weekly, monthly or even annually with the touch of the screen
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- Free ongoing support
- Talk to one of the team instantly through the chat function

Check out our website for more information or call, Tweet us or pop into the office.
Subject: Streetspace Consultations

Dear TAXI Editor,

You will be aware that TfL is running a consultation on Streetspace schemes.

I recognise that these links have been featured over numerous editions of late in column articles, though I think it’s worth another plug!

It’s a bit fiddly because you have to click on each scheme individually but if every driver ‘let’s rip’ on the ‘Park Lane’ and ‘Bishops Gate’ schemes I think it will send out an important message!

https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/general/streetspace/

Regards,
Dave Heap.
Badge No: 68295

Subject: Fare Reduction Discussion - Reply to I S Connelly

Dear TAXI Editor,

I too had been driving a cab for some years before Mrs Thatcher came to power. Using the “Bingo Chart” and “Double Bingo Chart” to calculate the correct fare. Yes, we had to wait a number of years before we were given a fare increase that frightened a lot of punters away.

The big mistake I think we made then, is not making a big splash about the ‘no fare increase’, letting the customers know that our prices remained low. The most important difference then and now is that mini-cabs weren’t licensed, and mostly worked a local customer base, often returning empty. It was also useful if a driver lost his bill, he could keep working. Today we have all the app-based companies with millions behind them, charging sometimes less than the job costs.

At the moment it doesn’t matter what our charges are - there is not enough work for anybody. But as the work hopefully starts to increase, we need a ‘hook’ to bring customers back. Unfortunately, nothing will return to what it was. Never again are the days I remember when you could take your weeks cab rent, derv, cab washer, N.I. Stamp all in one day per week, then one day for HMRC, three days for yourself. The ‘pop out’ on a Saturday night for your holiday money! You would say, “I’m off home, I’ll make it up tomorrow.” Those days are just a distant memory. How many of us oldies are now saying, “If I knew then what I know now!”

Another big difference was more unity in the trade. LTDA, T&G – there was more comradeship. If you broke down or just had the bonnet up, five cabs would stop and see if they could help. Now your airport faces working town, even if they know the ‘rules’ they don’t give a hoot who they turn over. What the new normal will be like in the cab trade remains to be seen. But unless we all work together, the game’s finished. Now where have I heard that before.

Stay safe, be lucky,
Fred Hardy
(FREDTHELEG)
Badge No. 4545
“Everyone involved is working flat out to try to achieve justice in what looks increasingly like a battle to save our 350-year-old industry from extinction.”

HIGH COURT ACTION & SOUTHWARK INCLUSIVITY

THE MASSETT FILE

On Friday 14th August, the LTDA and its colleagues at UTAG launched a joint challenge to the Mayor and TfL’s Streetspace schemes in the form of an application for Judicial Review in The High Court. The application being the first part of a two-pronged attack that will see a second part of the action later this month when papers for a Judicial challenge will also be lodged with the Court.

TfL’s Access Claims

TfL has been carrying out construction work in Bishopsgate and Gracechurch Street to implement Bus Gates that will allow only Buses and Cycles to travel through the Corridor in each direction with Taxis excluded. The Mayor and TfL seemingly content to ignore the trade’s role as part of London’s public transport mix. In answer to questions from the trade and others, TfL has repeatedly claimed that it is providing access to the Corridor for Taxi passengers but it omits to mention that without allowing the trade to use it as a through route, our passengers, including many that are not able to easily walk or cycle, will be unfairly penalised in terms of significantly longer journey times and increased fares. It also seems to be putting the boot into the Trade at a time when many drivers are opting to leave the trade because it is now so difficult to make a living.

I feel that the Trade and its lawyers are putting forward a very compelling case and everyone involved is working flat out to try to achieve justice in what looks increasingly like a battle to save our 350-year-old industry from extinction.

Southwark

The LTDA recently met with Southwark’s Cabinet Member for the Environment and Transport, Richard Livingstone and its Head of Highways, Dale Foden, at the top of the agenda at this time was the Borough’s plans to implement four or five new Bus Gates. The meeting was positive from the start and the Councillor explained that the Authority recognises the unique public transport role that the Taxi industry plays and therefore the planned Bus Gates will all provide full access to Taxis. He went on to explain the benefit that he believes Taxis provide to many of the Borough’s less able residents and also that the Council recognises that its Taxi driving residents deserve support at this difficult time similar to other small businesses in the area.

As well as the Bus Gates, we went on to discuss street closures that were being put in under Low Traffic Neighbourhood schemes. Taxis would not be exempt from these, but they would continue to have access to all these streets so that a full service can continue to be provided to residents.

Moving on to School Streets schemes, the LTDA explained that many children with special needs are taken to and from school each day by Taxi, often under a local authority contract, and residents living within the restricted area often also have special needs that may require them to travel by Taxi during the closure period. We have been making these points on a borough by borough basis as schemes come up and although our representations are usually well received we now feel it is time that there were common regulations in place to ensure that there is no disruption to our local services when these schemes are put in place across London. The schemes are usually enforced either by ANPR cameras or with manually controlled barriers and there is a need to ensure the role of Taxis is recognised. Again, Southwark were very sympathetic and agreed with our aims and the Council will do its best to ensure that there would be recognition of the services provided by Taxis, whatever the method of enforcement.

The Southwark representatives were also sympathetic when we raised the issue of how difficult it had become to stop and load passengers in some areas because of barriers that had been placed in the road to segregate cyclists and pedestrians from traffic under Covid recovery programmes. They undertook to take this away in order to consider how they might be able to improve things.

With the spread of these type of schemes, the LTDA is endeavouring to make contact with all the London boroughs to explain how these may impact the trade, its customers and to build relationships. So far, the response has been encouraging.

Richard Massett, LTDA Chairman, and Chairman of the London Cab Ranks Committee
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S
ince I wrote my last article notifying drivers that the Government had issued
guidance to licensing authorities,
proposing that all Taxi & Private Hire
drivers should have an ongoing six
monthly enhanced Disclosure Barring
service (DBS), as part of their licencing
requirements, I have received many
calls from members asking me about
this service with many not knowing
that this service was even available.
Well... those who have recently
received their new certificate have
called us up to help them sign on to
the update service, which is quick and
very easy to do (and not to state the
obvious), this service will also save
you money and be less stressful when
reapplying in the next three years for
your next DBS/CRB. Incidentally, you
may also be wondering what the difference is
between a CRB check and a DBS check? And the answer is nothing,
the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)
and the Independent Safeguarding
Authority (ISA) have merged to
to become the Disclosure and Barring
Service (DBS). CRB checks are now
called DBSs checks, and they wonder
why we get confused!

We will always help our members to
clean their cabs
We have had a great response from
drivers that want to offer our members a
discount on their credit card
transaction fees. We have been
discussing all the hurdles that they
will need to jump over with TfL to
become an approved provider and
I am glad to say the hurdles have
nearly all been jumped over with
none being knocked down.

We have discussed the many
problems we all face when offering
this facility to our passengers
‘credit card would not work or
the loss of signal etc.’, which
they have taken on board and
have given us some positive
answers and solutions. This will
also give our members rewards
and other benefits when taking
card payments which is being
discussed and will hopefully
follow later. This will make a
massive difference on credit
card transaction fees that will
be massive difference in LTDA
members pockets. Sorry to be so
vague with the finer details on this
offer but please continue to watch
this space…

I wish you and all your families
the best and hope you are staying
safe and well. ♦

Anthony Street is an LTDA
Executive Support Officer

BEHIND THE SCENES UPDATE

LTDA Executive, Anthony Street updates members on DBS support, NSL testing deadlines, LTDA defence & promotion of the trade, plus a behind the scenes teaser on an upcoming new member offer...
Choose from a deposit contribution, first 3 months’ finance payment or cashback to the value of £2,700.

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- Total amount of credit: £8,394
- Cash price: £60,144
- Total deposit: £3,750
- Optional final payment: £18,883
- Agreement duration: 65 months
- Interest rate (fixed): 8.6%

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*Three months’ finance payment or cashback payment will be payable within 30 days following delivery and acceptance of the vehicle. Offer is available up to the value of £2,700 only. **Business users only. Finance illustration refers to Personal Contract Purchase 0% APR Representative, based on TX Vista at £193 per week. Offer valid until 30 September 2020. Offers correct at point of publication but are subject to change. **Customer to pay a deposit contribution of £2,700 and a cash deposit of £8,499. You have the option at the end of the agreement to: i) Return the vehicle and not pay the optional final payment. If the vehicle has exceeded the maximum agreed mileage you will have nothing further to pay. ii) Pay the optional final payment and keep the vehicle. 3. Must exchange the vehicle to settle your finance agreement. New finance agreements are subject to status. All prices inclusive of VAT. Two, three or four year offers are also available. Finance is provided by Black Horse (Lease) Finance, a trading style of Black Horse Finance Ltd and Williams House, Fosseway Terrace, Cardiff CF11 7AE. Credit is subject to status and is only available to UK residents aged 18 and over. All prices and promotions advertised for vehicles ordered and delivered before 30 September 2020. Includes retail. Credit card equipment and delivery charges apply. Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.
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Mercedes-Benz

Official government fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the 2018 Vito 119CDI Tourer Select Extra-Long: urban 42.2 (6.7), extra urban 53.3 (5.3), combined 48.7(5.8). CO2 emissions* 153 g/km.

The indicated values were determined according to the prescribed measurement method - Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP). Figures shown may include options which are not available in the UK. *CO2 figures have been converted into MEDC-equivalent values for use with the current VED and BIK tax legislation. Figures shown are for comparability purposes, only compare with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. Figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the factory fitted options, accessories fitted (post registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Further information about the test used to establish fuel consumption and CO2 figures can be found at www.mercedes-benz.co.uk/WLTP

Could it be the case that the Mayor doesn’t want a car led recovery unless of course he is the one earning from it?

**RECOVERY - WHO’S DRIVING IT, WHERE TO AND WHY?**

**No Win No Fee…**

Right now, businesses are weighing up the ‘pros & cons’ of getting staff back to work against having a Covid-19 break out happening within the office and if they were to have one, what the impact of the possible repercussions from it might look like. Already the ‘no win no fee’ lawyers are actively doing the leg work on possible class actions for employees who become infected by a work colleague. It’s also worth noting that these same lawyers are also doing the leg work on how to make a claim if you are injured in a cycling accident that you have been forced to take because other modes of transport have been unavailable.

Talking to some within the business world it’s quite clearly not any alleged healthy sustainable productivity figures that is keeping employers from calling the workers back, it’s the masses of red tape and procedures that need to be put in place before they can (and even then there is no guarantee the ‘crap won’t hit the fan,’ leaving them with an awful stinking mess). No one in power is to blame for the pandemic and none of us can or should expect it. God knows my family has. What our in power is to blame for the pandemic works rather than those with just an agenda are put into place to get London and the UK back to some normality. Cycling absolutely has its place and the UK back to some normality. It would appear that the recent upturn in cycling whilst we’ve all been in lockdown and which the aforementioned incompetents gleefully cited as clear evidence that they are justified in introducing the stifling Streetspace schemes, actually peaked with an eye-popping increase of just 40%. I’ll let that sink in. Yep, just four, zero percent - less than half that which I had begrudgingly thought might happen. Now you don’t need to be a mathematical genius to work out that’s way below the predictions from the buffoons in charge, what’s more, that 40% is already in decline.

I have used a stronger term, but the editor does not like me using excess profanity - ironic actually as he’s been known to say a few choice words when an article is still missing long after the deadline has passed. I said they would be lucky to see a two-fold increase let alone ten-fold. Well it turns out I was wrong. I know it happens, I can’t always be right, I am after all only human. Recently released Government figures clearly demonstrate my wrongness. The ten-fold increase (or to give it as a simple percentage, the 1000% yes 1000% increase) predicted by Mayor Khan & the TFL blinkered cycling Gestapo verses my possible 100% increase has been shown me up to be wildly incorrect...

It would appear that the recent upturn in cycling whilst we’ve all been in lockdown and which the aforementioned incompetents gleefully cited as clear evidence that they are justified in introducing the stifling Streetspace schemes, actually peaked with an eye-popping increase of just 40%. I’ll let that sink in. Yep, just four, zero percent - less than half that which I had begrudgingly thought might happen. Now you don’t need to be a mathematical genius to work out that’s way below the predictions from the buffoons in charge, what’s more, that 40% is already in decline.

**Informed, ‘Real World’ Plans Required**

Surely, it’s now time that the idiots in charge accepted this and the ‘we can’t have a car led recovery’ mantra they spout from their clueless brains absolutely must be put to one side and ‘real world’ plans from people who actually have a clue how a big city works rather than those with just an agenda are put into place to get London and the UK back to some normality. Cycling absolutely has its place and I accept, and support cycling being promoted but it needs to be done using Quietway’s on the back streets of London. Driving around London these Quietway’s are where I see the most cyclists, it’s where the motorist knows they must be mindful of them and where you see your everyday normal cyclist happily ride from A to B as the Lyca twats (Ed – I’ll let this one go…) are nowhere to be seen. It is complete madness that Euston Rd has been changed to give over more ground for motorists to change over to a cleaner vehicle. Because no matter what you want, people will not be abandoning their cars anytime soon - they need to realise that and react to that instead of blindly going down the road to nowhere.

And how about the Mayor or Boris giving TFL a good kick up the backside to get the Euro 5 to 6 Taxi conversions approved? It’s amazing how quickly some useless afterthought of a plastic screen can get approval for fitting into a Prius, yet a scheme that could within a few short weeks see four and a half thousand Taxis go from a euro 5 to a euro six standard (dramatically cleaning up our fleet), for some possibly vindictive or incompetent reason gets stifled at every opportunity.

**TOP RANK**

S
ome say (and by ‘some’ I say, that strangely it often comes back to a green group or at least the quoted figures do), that business productivity has remained the same whilst people have been working from home. The trouble is, all that is really happening is many businesses are currently only treading water by nursing the current business they already have. I liken it to them simmering on the hob to sustain them through the current climate but eventually that saucepan will simmer away, new business will be needed and when it is, more and more workers will need to return to the workplace.

My Wrongness…

I said recently that the claims of a ten-fold increase in cycling was laughable, from it might look like. Already the ‘no win no fee’ lawyers are actively doing the leg work on possible class actions for employees who become infected by a work colleague. It’s also worth noting that these same lawyers are also doing the leg work on how to make a claim if you are injured in a cycling accident that you have been forced to take because other modes of transport have been unavailable.

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**Informed, ‘Real World’ Plans Required**

Surely, it’s now time that the idiots in charge accepted this and the ‘we can’t have a car led recovery’ mantra they spout from their clueless brains absolutely must be put to one side and ‘real world’ plans from people who actually have a clue how a big city works rather than those with just an agenda are put into place to get London and the UK back to some normality. Cycling absolutely has its place and I accept, and support cycling being promoted but it needs to be done using Quietway’s on the back streets of London. Driving around London these Quietway’s are where I see the most cyclists, it’s where the motorist knows they must be mindful of them and where you see your everyday normal cyclist happily ride from A to B as the Lyca twats (Ed – I’ll let this one go…) are nowhere to be seen. It is complete madness that Euston Rd has been changed to give over more ground for motorists to change over to a cleaner vehicle. Because no matter what you want, people will not be abandoning their cars anytime soon - they need to realise that and react to that instead of blindly going down the road to nowhere.

And how about the Mayor or Boris giving TFL a good kick up the backside to get the Euro 5 to 6 Taxi conversions approved? It’s amazing how quickly some useless afterthought of a plastic screen can get approval for fitting into a Prius, yet a scheme that could within a few short weeks see four and a half thousand Taxis go from a euro 5 to a euro six standard (dramatically cleaning up our fleet), for some possibly vindictive or incompetent reason gets stifled at every opportunity.

**TOP RANK**

S
ome say (and by ‘some’ I say, that strangely it often comes back to a green group or at least the quoted figures do), that business productivity has remained the same whilst people have been working from home. The trouble is, all that is really happening is many businesses are currently only treading water by nursing the current business they already have. I liken it to them simmering on the hob to sustain them through the current climate but eventually that saucepan will simmer away, new business will be needed and when it is, more and more workers will need to return to the workplace.

My Wrongness…

I said recently that the claims of a ten-fold increase in cycling was laughable, from it might look like. Already the ‘no win no fee’ lawyers are actively doing the leg work on possible class actions for employees who become infected by a work colleague. It’s also worth noting that these same lawyers are also doing the leg work on how to make a claim if you are injured in a cycling accident that you have been forced to take because other modes of transport have been unavailable.

Talking to some within the business world it’s quite clearly not any alleged healthy sustainable productivity figures that is keeping employers from calling the workers back, it’s the masses of red tape and procedures that need to be put in place before they can (and even then there is no guarantee the ‘crap won’t hit the fan,’ leaving them with an awful stinking mess). No one in power is to blame for the pandemic and none of us can or should expect it. God knows my family has. What our in power is to blame for the pandemic works rather than those with just an agenda are put into place to get London and the UK back to some normality. Cycling absolutely has its place and the UK back to some normality. It would appear that the recent upturn in cycling whilst we’ve all been in lockdown and which the aforementioned incompetents gleefully cited as clear evidence that they are justified in introducing the stifling Streetspace schemes, actually peaked with an eye-popping increase of just 40%. I’ll let that sink in. Yep, just four, zero percent - less than half that which I had begrudgingly thought might happen. Now you don’t need to be a mathematical genius to work out that’s way below the predictions from the buffoons in charge, what’s more, that 40% is already in decline.
IMMUNITY, TEARS, TOUTING & CONSPIRACY

SAM HOUSTON

M4 MUSINGS

T-Cell Immunity
Evidence for some measure of ‘T-Cell’ immunity to Covid-19 appears to be mounting. This is distinct from the supposed immunity conferred by antibodies in those who have recovered from the virus. T-Cells are not yet fully understood but it is thought that some immunity may be present in people who have been exposed to other corona viruses or even other cold viruses.

In other positive Covid news, a recent report has shown that, as expected, hospitals are becoming far fewer people losing their lives. As I have said before these things matter because they give government more leeway on policies to get the economy moving.

Ultimately, we know so much more now than 3 months ago when the virus was at its peak. Any further restrictions, if necessary, at all, are more likely to be localised and limited. It may seem grim at the moment with activity so much lower than it should be, but we are heading in the right direction.

I also don’t buy this idea that workers won’t return to central London. It’s true some firms have given the option for workers to stay at home but that doesn’t mean those workers will never come in, they will just come in less. Offices will still ultimately be filled, London is a massive and prestigious business centre, that is not going to change; firms will still want to rent space, maybe the big city landlords might have to reduce their rents slightly, they can afford it after all.

Uber California
Hilarious to see Dara Khosrowshahi crying into his latte that he might have to give basic workers’ rights to Uber drivers in California, maybe they’ll just close up instead and take their ball away...

I mean if you can’t afford to pay your workers (the people who make money for you) a minimum wage and give them basic entitlements then maybe you never had a business in the first place? Maybe ‘transportation’ is not as cheap to provide as you claim? Maybe (whisper it...) Uber is only cheap because they exploit precarious workers by transferring all the risk and keeping all the reward, and have enough investment behind them to burn through billions of dollars while they work out how or if they will ever make a profit?

Big Tech was given a pass for years because it was new and innovative and governments including the claven UK’s were desperate to attract the investment. But the times are gradually changing, as Bob Dylan didn’t say.

The internet is not as new as it used to be and can no longer be used as carte blanche to disregard the rights workers fought tooth and nail to gain throughout the 20th century. You either have a profitable business or you don’t, but the route to that profit cannot be Victorian style working conditions. Uber bleat on about ‘flexibility’ but that only goes so far, it doesn’t compensate for the lack of a living wage. It will be interesting to see what happens both in California and here in the UK, where the Supreme Court is due to give judgement on a similar case.

Airport / Air Bridges
Throughput at the airport improved in July but was matched by an increased number of drivers at the airport, average waits hover around 10 hours, but even this does not give the full picture. Many jobs still go to local hotels, and with long waits on the ranks, if you get 2 or 3 locals that can be the end of your day.

The situation at Heathrow is unlikely to improve while the 14-day quarantine requirement remains in place for travellers returning from so many destinations. In the past week France and the Netherlands have been removed from this list. Holidaymakers are confused, frustrated and often left out of pocket.

Countries including Spain have called for a regional approach to quarantine, as the virus seems to appear in ‘hot spots’ so that infection rates across a whole nation vary hugely. This does seem to make sense as a way of reducing disruption going forward until you realise that even this national approach has taken the government months to organise and appears to be sparsely enforced. You can only hope that the Home Office pulls its finger out and finds a way to allow more people to travel safely, because the demand is certainly there, as is the will from airlines and tourist destinations.

There is also some evidence of touring, probably due to an absence of taxi marshals and TFL compliance activity. The lack of TFL on the terminals is disappointing as there is still a need for customers to be protected from unscrupulous unlicensed operators, who hang around trying to pick up bewildered travellers trying to find the taxi rank.

Social Media Conspiracies
It’s been a bizarre time in the news, and not just because of Covid. Lockdown appears to have put rocket fuel into several ‘conspiracy theories.’ The reason I mention this is because I see stuff on social media and think ‘that’s just mad...’ and next thing I know a mate or family member is telling me the same story over coffee or sending me a link saying ‘what do you think of this?’

The advent of social media has transformed the way we consume news. How many of you reading this have heard or used the term ‘main-stream media’? When I was a lad (I’m 45...), so-called MSM was all there was, it was just called ‘the media.’ Of course, people didn’t trust everything they read in the papers, you take it with a pinch of salt, especially where politics is concerned.

You would still hear strange tales and rumours, often in the pub or with mates but that’s as far as it went. Now we have social media, that old line that a lie is halfway round the world before the truth has tied its shoelaces has never been more apt. Call me old fashioned or naive (people do), but I’m still more likely to give credence to a researched and sourced article from a reputable media organisation than to a uncredited message on WhatsApp. Especially if I see it in more than one place.

Same for the BBC - some people think it’s too liberal believe it or not, and many on the left think it’s too conservative! That in itself tells me the old Beeb is still doing something right. Defund the BBC? Be careful what you wish for.

“..."
The TfL delicensing fund is available for taxi drivers who want to delicense their Euro 3, 4 or 5 vehicles. For more details on scheme eligibility please refer to https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/taxis-and-private-hire/taxi-delicensing-scheme. Terms and conditions apply.

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Puting more work into Black Cabs
Mr & Mrs Man in Black are under house arrest. But the phone won't stop ringing with news of further recently committed offences...

**TRACK & TRACE ALL OVER THE PLACE**

**A MAN IN BLACK**

Now, if you have been following my dubious leisure activities for any length of time you may be aware that I have recently returned from Spain (I do hope that you read last week’s column, I shall be asking questions later). Anyway, upon returning to the UK after luxuriating on the sunny Costa Del Booze-Up for a couple of weeks I had to go straight into house arrest. oooops I mean quarantine for a fortnight. Given that nobody wants to spread ‘Galloping Stump-Rot’ all over creation, we complied like a good boy and girl - however all was not quite right in the murky world of the track and trace call centre (cue the dramatic music and sharp intake of breath).

So, eight days into our house arrest (dammit I did it again), I mean quarantine, Mrs Man in Black received an email from the aforementioned track and trace centre, stating that she had been in contact with somebody who may have symptoms of Covid-19 and must self-isolate. Now this was slightly odd because neither of us had been outside the front door for over a week, so I investigated further… (puts on Columbo’s dirty rain-mac.)

**Cue Christopher Lee**

Upon contacting the helpline on my wife’s behalf, we discovered that there had been an error and we didn’t have to self-isolate until Armageddon arrives - happy days yayyyyy - NOT. The saga continued (cue more dramatic music and footage of Christopher Lee going ‘mwwahahahahahaha’ and rubbing his hands together - which incidentally for any advertising guru’s out there, this would make a great government video for the benefits of handwashing, sorry I mean handwashing).

So, the following day we are up with the lark, the dogs are cuckingoing and the birds are barking, when to our complete surprise (yet more dramatic music and the image of Janet Leigh from Psycho screaming) track and trace called to tell us that thine fair maiden had been in contact with somebody who may have Covid-19 and we should self-isolate. Now this had started to get a little annoying as we both started to feel as though we were starring in the film Groundhog Day.

As a result, a rather peeved Mrs Man in Black proceeded to ask track and trace who she was supposed to have been in contact with, also asking why hadn’t I been contacted alongside her, to which the person in the call centre replied: “We don’t know”. The call centre operator then explained that it was yet another mistake after it was re-established that we were quarantining. We then made the concerted decision that if they contacted us for a third time, we would give them a very strong finger wagging and proverbially smack their bottoms.

**Cue Sean Bean**

This situation then piqued my interest and I started to ask myself the following questions, ‘what would happen if you had a plague carrier in the cab (cue Sean Bean running through a Black Death victim shouting: “Yer bast*rd” in a Yorkshire accent) and what is the procedure in relation to being able to work? It occurred to me that you could have a bit of a problem, especially if the aforementioned lurgy spreader had made a booking through an app or via a radio circuit.

Picture the scene; despite being segregated from the passenger and potentially over 2 meters away, because both you and your passenger now have each other’s contact details, you could find yourself having to self -isolate for a fortnight after track and trace contact you…

Now this in theory isn’t the end of the world, it’s a pain in the proverbial, but these things happen, however if you then gone back to work after self-isolating for a fortnight and the same thing happens again, you are then in a situation where you could have to self-isolate for a fortnight again, back to square one, so what do you do?

**Cue Grim Reaper**

I tried to find information relating to this situation on the Government website, but to no avail, there was absolutely nothing whatsoever, in fact it was as bare as old Mother Hubbard’s cupboard. So, one can only assume that you have to “repeat til fade”, meaning you could reach the age of 103 before you can get back to work normally (cue the grim reaper from the Seventh Seal). This of course is clearly an unacceptable situation.

The only possible way that I can see to get around this conundrum is to contact the track and trace centre after you have received the dreaded missive that you are “off the road” and explain that you are a licensed London taxi driver and as such you are socially distanced and segregated by default and therefore not at risk.

But, you are then at the mercy of an individual who probably cannot tell the difference between a taxi and a minicab anyway and as a result force you off the road regardless.

**In summary,** the track and trace system in its current format is an unrefined sledgehammer, cracking a very diverse nut. On one hand it does actually work, but on the other hand it doesn’t work properly. No two people have the same set of circumstances, it seems as though the current “one size fits all” system cannot meet the needs of certain public-facing professions. This of course needs to be addressed rapidly if we are to avoid the numerous anomalies which could put people into further hardship. This would require the creation of caveats within the system to reflect extenuating circumstances. ✻

Steve Kenton is a Licensed Taxi driver of 30 years.
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Over the years, many television series have been filmed on London's streets. Here are some runs based on locations which have appeared in classic programmes.

A good place to start is with Only Fools and Horses which, although set in Peckham, was never actually filmed there. Many of the market scenes which appear in earlier episodes where filmed on Islington's Chapel Market. Run it from there to the Harlech Tower on Avenue Road W3 - the building originally used for the Trotter's home, Nelson Mandela House. In later series filming moved out to Bristol.

Another classic comedy set in Peckham was Desmond's in which the late, great Norman Beeton played Guyanese barber, was Desmond's in which the late, great Peckham House. In later series filming moved out to for the Trottter's home, Nelson Mandela Road W3 there to the Harlech Tower on Avenue Road W3 - there are now.

The set in which the Flying Squad offices were recreated was located inside Colet Court on Hammersmith Road. A lot of filming took place on location too of course, so run it from Colet Court to Lavender Hill where the former Craven Arms (above which was a famous boxing gym)- featured in the episode Chalk and Cheese- once stood.

Set in the 1980s, Ashes to Ashes parodies the behaviour of the tough cop shows of that era. Beech Street features several times as a road through which DCI Gene Hunt tears around in his Audi Quattro. Run it from there to Christopher Street EC2, where a large office block stood in as the fictitious Fenchurch East Police Station.

A lesser known crime drama is Widows which premiered in 1983. The opening episode featured a car chase across the Southbank, culminating in a horrific crash with a security van in the Strand Underpass. How would you get from the Underpass to the Rivoli Ballroom which features in an episode of Idris Elba's Luther?

Much of Steptoe and Son, which ran from 1962-1974, was filmed at the BBC's former studio on Lime Grove (where many other programmes including Dr Who were made). How would you run it from there to Stable Way which, in later episodes, was used as the location of the Steptoes’ yard on the fictional Oil Drum Lane?

Between 1977 and 1980, Robert Lindsay played Wolfe Smith, the self-proclaimed 'urban guerrilla' and leader of the 'Tooting Popular Front' in the comedy, Citizen Smith. The opening credits famously featured Woolfie exiting Tooting Broadway Station. What route would you take from there to Freemasons Hall which can be seen in the opening credits for another series from the same era - The Professionals?

The Bill and London's Burning were both long running shows focusing on the Metropolitan Police and London Fire Brigade respectively. Sun Hill police station which featured in The Bill was originally located on Wapping's Artichoke Hill. Run it from there to Dockhead fire station, which was used in London's Burning. For a bonus run, go from Barby Road to Leyton Fire Station, both of which were used in later episodes of these two series.

Long running soap opera, Eastenders is filmed on the outskirts of London at a purpose-built set in Elstree. The inspiration for Albert Square however was Hackney's Fassett Square (indeed it was originally intended to be filmed there until practicalities got in the way). How would you get from Fassett Square to Greyhound Road where Fullam Preparatory School (formerly Holborn College) was used in the early 1980s for filming the children's drama, Grange Hill?

Robert Lordan has been a Licensed Taxi driver and Qualified London Taxi Guide for over a decade.
excitement in December year family can barely contain their the car their parents have. A once-a-year family can barely contain their excitement in December when you become Santa Claus himself. Whatever the customer experience, the job wouldn’t exist without the passengers (afterall, they pay out wages), so let’s look at a few major consumer groups who need looking after:

Commuters
Thousands of workers come into London every weekday. The bravest souls drive here: those with enough income to be able to pay extortionate parking charges, or the privileged few with access to private parking. The rest swarm out of train stations and continue their journeys by foot, or by tube, bus, or taxi. Walking is slow, buses are slow. The tube is OK at off-peak times, but it’s a living hell when busy. It’s hot, crowded, and everyone is getting into everyone else’s way. Commuting is a miserable experience. I know what it’s like, I’ve done it. I know the tension as your train is called and hundreds of you rush down the ramp at Euston in order to secure a seat fit only for an arse smaller than that of a super-model. Commuters, I feel your pain. You have to put up with inflation-busting price hikes every year, but with no real improvement in the service: just more people crowding you out and coughing and sneezing germs over you. Even if you can afford to travel first class you’re not exempt: when I used to work at Palestra and travel back from Euston, the train was so crowded they sometimes opened up the first-class carriages to everyone. What’s that all about? Surely the whole point in buying a first-class ticket is to guarantee a seat in a relatively empty carriage?

I was still a commuter driving a cab. It’s just that when I got to London, I’d drive around the West End for eight hours looking for a parking space. At about 7pm I’d give up and drive home.

Tourists
We all love tourists: they’re so jolly and easy to deal with. Well would you rather drive a frustrated commuter to Waterloo Station to catch a train that went five minutes’ ago, or drive some giggly Chinese girls to Selfridges?

Foreign visitors love the Changing of the Guards ceremony, Harrods, Selfridges, Tower Bridge, etc, etc… You need to be careful with Tower Bridge. Apart from the 20mph speed limit, visitors sometimes confuse it with London Bridge. You get a good view of Tower Bridge and the Shard, but London Bridge is otherwise a rather uninteresting strip of concrete and tarmac.

Bargain-conscious tourists are easily pleased with a trip to Primark, or to watch street entertainers. I’d often see a gaggle of tourists watching a bloke bang a drum kit on a busy West End street. No other musical instruments, just a drum kit. I don’t know about you, but I don’t see the attraction. Tourists are usually in a good mood as they’re on holiday. They’re not usually rushed, and they enjoy watching the�fis we drive through the West End. I’d always be happy to pose for a photo at the end of the ride too. Tourists are sometimes desired for being amused by the humdrum things that the locals take for granted. I don’t. I can see London through their eyes. I’ve taken photos of checker cabs in New York myself.

Bridge & Tunnel People
Many London residents don’t see the need for a car. It’s an expensive burden. When living in London, I was well into my twenties before any of my friends bought cars. I had scooters and motorbikes, and I didn’t think about driving a car until the idea of being a cab driver came up. Underground trains went anywhere I wanted to visit, as well as to many places that I’ve still never been to. I’ve always been fascinated by the tube map, and I still wonder what goes on in Cockfosters, Totteridge & Whetstone, Fairlop or Theydon Bois.

One of my most memorable account jobs was from a big house on Regent’s Park Outer Circle. My task was to deliver a cold box of food to a private jet at Luton Airport. Luton Airport is a lucrative run, but this one was particularly good because of the waiting time involved. I had to pass security clearance at the private jet terminal, then actually drive on to the runway and park under a plane’s wing.

Account Customers
Signing up to a hailing App, or a computerised radio circuit adds strings to your bow and can provide work when it’s quiet on the street. I’d invariably ferry around corporate account holders whose employers pay for their taxi rides. These people come from another world: a world of expensive restaurants and luxury hotels, regular international travel, and half-day shopping trips on the meter. There could be £20 or £30 on the meter before they show up. A £50 cab ride is like the price of a cup of tea to some corporate types.

One useful function on the Comfort Cab system is the ‘Going Home’ mode. When I’d start to think of home, I’d automatically let the circuit know I was looking to go north. A job to Hampstead or Hendon would do me nicely at 7pm. Many well-off account holders live to the north or west of London so a Roader into the country is always possible. My friend Paul picked up a man heading home south-west along the M3. The customer obviously took this route home regularly. He helpfully advised Paul to turn left when the meter reached £100. A job going above £100 is rare, but gratefully accepted, especially when you’re heading in that direction anyway.

One of my most memorable account jobs was from a big house on the biggest martyr draws the most admiration. If your guests are multi-millionaires living in central London, a £10 cab ride is not going to impress anybody. If you have spent fifty quid on a tortuous trip over bridges, under tunnels, and around dangerous one-way systems, you have a tale to tell.

Executive Summary

In an ideal scenario, smiley happy people get into your cab, and you convey them swiftly to their destination. Kids are always enthralled with a ride in an iconic London taxi because it’s nothing like the car their parents have. A once-a-year family can barely contain their excitement in December when you become Santa Claus himself. Whatever the customer experience, the job wouldn’t exist without the passengers (afterall, they pay out wages), so let’s look at a few major consumer groups who need looking after:

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1. Complete your 2019-20 tax return with SAS!
2. Be fully paid up.
3. Leave a review!

If you are thinking of joining SAS, please do so ASAP and complete the above steps.

If you have already completed your return with SAS and left your review, you are included!

The draw will be completed on the 1st of October.
Bob Hamshare 1929 - 2020

Bob Hamshare sadly passed away on 19th June aged 91. Born in 1929 in Battersea he became a London Taxi driver in 1962 and drove a taxi for 54 years until his full retirement in 2016.

Bob was often seen in the various taxi shelters and eateries over the years and was popular and well liked amongst other drivers.

For many years Bob worked tirelessly for and was involved with the London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled (now known as the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans) as committee member and treasurer. He very much enjoyed the outings to Worthing and meeting the veterans and various dignitaries and guests who would attend.

Bob was involved in setting up the inaugural Taxi Driver of The Year Show, which was held at the Southbank by the Festival Hall. He remained involved for many years and was instrumental in running the trade show section of the event, which he enjoyed very much. The annual event raised money for all the various taxi trade charities.

Bob will be very much missed by his wife Sheila, his children Pamela and her husband John, Robert and his wife Christina, Andrew and his wife Trish, and also his four grandchildren, Victoria, Charlotte, Emma and Jacob and his four great grandchildren, Aidan, Lochlan, Niamh and Jaxon.

Brian James Connolly 1945 - 2020

It is with deep regret and sadness to inform that Brian passed away in his sleep on the 7th August.

Brian was born in Belfast but moved to London when he was 18. He loved London and the people, spending his first few years in Ealing, working as a bus driver at Hanwell Garage whereupon he met Sheila, and shortly after they were married at St Benedict’s Church in 1966.

After moving to Walthamstow, Brian took another job as a bus driver at Tottenham Bus Garage, driving the number 73 Routemaster. It was at this juncture that his London Cabbie friend Terry, persuaded Brian to sign on and do The Knowledge.

Together, with ‘call-over’ friends ‘Belfast Harry’ and Ray, they all successfully completed their knowledge in 1987. Brian, on his first appearance was asked to ‘take a seat’, which he did, moving it closer to the examiner before promptly being told not to move any chairs!

He was well liked, always happy and had a joke or a story for every person or situation. Brian was a very proud Green Badge for over 30 years and enjoyed every minute of the job, especially when ranked up in and around Mayfair.

He leaves Sheila, his wife after 55 years together, daughter Trish and partner Brenda, son Brian and wife Sarah and two grandsons, Joseph and James.
HAVE YOU HEARD OUR 2020 RADIO CAMPAIGNS ON LBC?

We have set aside £100,000 to help promote the trade in getting our message out there that Taxis are the safest option for the travelling public to use.

Listen to our radio ads here: www.ltda.co.uk/media-centre/ltda-radio-adverts
“It might sound boring, but now is a good time to get your ‘life admin’ sorted. That means going through your bills and seeing whether you could be getting cheaper deals…”

UK IN RECESSION - WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?

MONEY MATTERS

The announcement in mid-August was just a formality: the UK is now officially in recession.

The news won’t have come as a surprise to anyone after the coronavirus pandemic wreaked chaos not just on people’s health and freedoms - but the economy too.

The definition of a recession is two quarters of gross domestic product (GDP) contraction in a row, and figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have showed the biggest drops in GDP since records began.

GDP fell 20.4% between April and June (Q2 2020) when the country was in lockdown. This follows a fall of 2.2% during January to March (Q1 2020).

Laura Suter, personal finance analyst at investment platform AJ Bell, says: “Unemployment has already shot up and is expected to rise further before the end of the year, meaning many people will find money is tight and job opportunities are scant. As with previous recessions we’ll also see debt levels increase and earnings either stay flat or fall. But for those not yet affected there are ways to get their finances in order should the worst happen, so they can ride out the downturn as best as possible.”

Another Credit Crunch

In what looks like a repeat of the 2008 financial crash, we are already seeing it get more difficult to borrow money.

Mortgage lenders are tightening their lending criteria and upping deposit requirements, while credit card providers are reducing 0% interest deals.

If you have spare cash, you should use it to pay down any expensive debt. If you’ve got lots of borrowing in different places, find the debt with the highest interest rate and start paying that off first, before moving to the next highest rate.

“However, many people won’t be in a position where they have spare cash to be able to funnel into paying off debt,” warns Suter, “If that’s the case your focus should be on reducing the cost of any debt. There are a number of different schemes in place if you’ve been affected by the current pandemic, so you can get help from your bank, such as payment holidays – just make sure it’s definitely the right decision for you as they may cost you more in the long term.”

Get Saving

Your next step should be to build up an emergency pot of cash that you can fall back on should you lose your job, your income is reduced, or you face any unexpected costs.

Suter says: “It’s a good idea to build up between three to six months’ of essential outgoings, so add up your mortgage or rent, bills, food shopping and any other essentials and work out how much you need. If this seems like a high figure, then just put away anything that you can.”

However, don’t expect to earn much interest on your savings. With the Bank of England base rate at a record low of 0.1%, savings rates are paltry. There are even fears that we could see negative interest rates at some point – that could mean you have to pay your bank to keep your cash.

Is Your Money Safe?

If you’re in the enviable position of having a large amount of cash savings, you need to make sure it’s safe.

The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) protects your money up to £85,000 per institution. This means if a bank collapses, you’ll be able to recover your cash up to this amount.

In some cases, temporary balances up to £1m will be protected by the FSCS. This will cover money from things like house sales, redundancy or inheritance.

Cut Your Costs

It might sound boring, but now is a good time to get your ‘life admin’ sorted. That means going through your bills and seeing whether you could be getting cheaper deals.

Price comparison sites such as TotallyMoney.com, Moneysupermarket.com and Uswitch.com can help you save money on energy bills, phone and broadband, and financial products such as loans and credit cards.

A quick trawl through your bank statements will reveal any subscriptions or memberships you have been paying for on direct debit but no longer use – cancel any you can live without.

You’ve probably heard of the LTDA Lottery. What you probably don’t know is that since it started in 1986, there have been over 360 winners. That’s over £1,800,000 million paid out in prize money.

JULY’S LOTTERY WINNER!

Richard Bailey from Essex was “overwhelmed with the win” - like everyone else he has been struggling through the pandemic and said “this could not have come at a better time.”

LTDA LOTTERY

The first prize in our lottery is £5000 - every month! But you won’t win it if you’re not in it.

Tickets cost £5 each per month. And even if you don’t win, you’ll know that proceeds from the lottery contribute towards the LTDA advertising campaigns run on radio, posters and AdVan.

To be in on it, call 020 7286 1046 and ask about the LTDA Lottery.
Al chronicles an insane emperor, crafty cabbies, antecedent histories, hot-footed passengers and a couple of 'Jack the Lads'...

**CHEEKY B*STARDS, BILKING B*STARDS & ONE DAFT B*STARD**

**AL FRESCO**

**CABBIE CHRONICLES**

For the most part, cabbing life ticks over uneventfully.

Annually, London’s ‘Cab Trade Cost Index’, flags up a fare increase (that goes virtually unnoticed in terms of hard cash in your pocket). But more recently, an ego-centric Mayor of London and a host of acolytes have been tinkering with the mechanics of governance like an insane Roman Emperor. Barely challenged, he almost destabilises the centuries-old establishment, by picking at a tiny thread – an overlooked road width here, a speed limit there, or a thoughtless ’No Entry’ plonked in anywhere. Mindless of repercussion, he continues to tug at the loose end, and like the butterfly ‘metaphorically’ flapping its wings in Brixton, causing a stir and like the butterfly ‘metaphorically’ he continues to tug at the loose end, anywhere. Mindless of repercussion, he continues to tug at the loose end, and like the butterfly ‘metaphorically’ flapping its wings in Brixton, causing a stir and like the butterfly ‘metaphorically’ flapping its wings in Brixton, causing a stir and like the butterfly ‘metaphorically’ flapping its wings in Brixton, causing a stir and like the butterfly ‘metaphorically’ flapping its wings in Brixton, causing a stir and like the butterfly ‘metaphorically’ flapping its wings in Brixton, causing a stir and like the butterfly ‘metaphorically’ flapping its wings in Brixton, causing a stir.

**Cheeky B’stards**

CABBING, so I discovered, in the 60s, 70s, and 80s, was not an occupation for the faint-hearted. Not, that I went out to work each day armed with a baseball bat, bandages, plasters and a styptic pencil. The cab trade was not on a war footing, well, not exactly. The ambience in the cab trade was nothing like I’d ever experienced before in any of my previous jobs. Perhaps it was only in my imagination, but out on there on the streets there was a hint of menace; it was as if at any time, I was somehow, going to be engulfed in an insurrection (perhaps a bit like the more recent Tottenham Riots). It was hard going out there. Lots of cabs and not much work. I grew up very quickly. It didn't pay to be ‘wisy washy’. No prisoners taken! It was almost as if you couldn't afford to be nice. A moment of weakness or lack of concentration, and your job would be kidnapped in front of your eyes. Ranks were prime targets.

I’ve never had the nature, or nerve to be a villain. The sort of goer who goes to bed wearing his running shoes, expecting to be woken up at the crack of dawn by the ‘blue light’ early morning.

bride, the sound of splintering door frames, and having a solicitor on 24/7 standby. Some years ago, a cabbie mate told me about the Freedom of Information Act, whereby, if you sent off a tenner you could get a copy of all the naughty stuff that’s been amassed about you and filed away over the years. He sent off his tenner and in return received a package, as big as a house brick, containing every complaint, warning and miscellaneous mischief he’d been involved in – amassed over half the time I’d been driving. Worried, I sent off my ten pounds, expecting them to ask for extra money to cover my half a century. A few days later, I got my cheque returned. ‘They couldn’t find anything in my file to copy!’

Often, though, it was the passengers who were more likely to ‘turn you over,’ rather than another cab driver. When I first started driving, I worked nights. When it was hard going with not much work on the streets, I’d work all through my twelve-hour shift – 6pm till 6am. I’d bring the cab back to the garage, bleary eyed. Day men would be hanging around, mumbling and swearing, waiting for their tardy nightman to return. The cab washers would have an un-plated cab parked up, round up all the drivers who didn’t have their own transport and drop them back home. Sometimes on the way back, they’d nick a fare or two.

**Bilking B’stards**

A ruse of passengers, that I quickly learnt (and which they treated as a game), were bilkers – those who attempted to make off without paying the fare. Sometimes, I ‘first-footed’ them - stopping the cab somewhere where they couldn’t fling open the door and dash down an alley. Other times, the bilkers were well rehearsed. ‘Stop here driver, just outside my house’ - except it wasn’t, it was a narrow alley which ran between the houses. If you were quick enough, you’d drive round the block and catch them emerging at the other end. The worst potential bilking scenarios was the ‘missed the last bus/train home to a distant suburb’ fare. Five minutes from your destination, the passenger would announce, “I haven’t got any money on me, I’ll pop in and get it off me mum.” On one occasion, at four o’clock in the morning, having driven through a swirling winter mist somewhere down a country lane on the outskirts of Chelmsford, I watched my half-cut passenger totter out of the cab and vanish into the indistinguishable gloom of a row of cottages. I couldn’t tell which one. I told myself I’d give the bloke five minutes. I’d leave the cab ticking over right outside the fire station. It was blocking the fire engines. ‘If you want your taxi back,’ said the officer, ‘I suggest you take a walk up to Bow Road Police Station and talk to me. By the time you get here, it will be waiting for you.’ It was. My money bag, hanging from the inside door handle was still intact and the policeman handed me a ten bob note that had been left on the driver’s seat.

**Daft B’stand (s)**

One evening, at about 9.30pm, I picked up two ‘Jack the Lads’ outside the Regency Club - the Kray Twins establishment in Amhurst Road, Hackney. They wanted a pub in Parnell Road, Bow. Nice ride. I was going past my front door in Mile End, so I asked the guys, who seemed quite amenable, if they didn’t mind me stopping for a couple of moments to dash indoors and tell my mum I’d soon be home for supper (no mobiles, then). I stopped, dashed inside, gave my surprised mum a quick hug and dashed back upstairs to the open front door. The street outside was devoid of my cab. Gone. Vanished. Silly, trusting, me. I’d left the cab ticking over with the keys in the ignition. I went back inside, phoned the old bill and reported my plight. My consolation supper soon appeared on the table. ‘I’d only eaten a couple of mouthfuls when the phone rang. It was the police at ‘Bow Road nick’. The two ‘tea leaves’ had left the cab ticking over right outside the fire station. It was blocking the fire engines. ‘If you want your taxi back,’ said the officer, ‘I suggest you take a walk up to Bow Road Police Station and talk to me. By the time you get here, it will be waiting for you.’ It was. My money bag, hanging from the inside door handle was still intact and the policeman handed me a ten bob note that had been left on the driver’s seat.

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*Al Fresco has been a Licensed Taxi driver since October 1966*
LTDA APPLICATION FORM

Name _____________________________________________________________

Address ___________________________________________________________

Postcode __________________________________________________________

Telephone __________________________________________________________

Mobile _____________________________________________________________

Email _____________________________________________________________

Date of Birth _________________________________________________________

Badge No. __________________________________________________________

Badge colour (Please state whether green or yellow) ___________________________

Year badge obtained ________________________________________________

Suburban badge sector number __________________________________________

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

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.

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 _____________________________________________________________

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 Eden Springs UK Ltd will notify you (10 working days) in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Eden Springs UK Ltd 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 Eden Springs UK Ltd, 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 Eden Springs UK Ltd 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.
Over 120 veterans and their families were treated to a trip down memory lane and an afternoon of entertainment during a special concert to commemorate VJ Day held at the magnificent Danny House, Hurtspierpoint on Sunday 16th August.

Organised by The Not Forgotten, a British Armed Forces charity for serving and ex-service men and women the event was part of a nationwide outdoor concert tour to entertain, boost morale and lift lockdown spirits by reaching 1000’s of veterans across the country. Sussex resident and long-time supporter of The Not Forgotten, Virginia Lewis Jones, Dame Vera Lynn’s daughter, attended the concert with her husband Captain Tom Jones, her daughter, Chesney Jones and granddaughter, making it a real family affair. Brigadier James Stopford, CBE, CEO of The Not Forgotten said: “Sadly, events to commemorate VJ Day could not take place properly this year, so we were determined to help WWII veterans and those who have served their country mark this important day by bringing the celebration to them at Danny House.”

The WWII veterans that the Taxi Charity took to the event included:

- **Tom Schaffer**, 94, who was in the 13th Battalion Parachute regiment was driven to the event by volunteer cabbie Austin Levens. Tom saw action in the Ardennes and then set off for Japan, but his regiment got called back when the Japanese surrendered ending the war.

- **Cyril Banks**, 95, was in the Royal Navy on HMS Ready. During WWII he was involved in the Arctic Convoys, then D Day before going out to the Far East.

- **Ernie Davis**, 94, was on HMS Cotton, a minesweeper and he saw action in both the Arctic Convoys and clearing the mines for D Day.

- **Dickie Forrester**, 94, was in the Rifle Brigade and saw action in Northern Europe.

- **Albert Holmsure**, 96, was in the REME attached to the 7th Field Regiment Royal Artillery. He saw action in North Europe and was part of D Day. Before D day his regiment was assembled at Bolney just two miles from the event at Danny House. Danny Shelton the cabbie who drove him to the event took him back to Bolney on Sunday so that he could see the village again after 76 years.

- **Dick Goodwin**, Vice President, Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, said, “The WWII veterans that the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans supports have had a very disappointing few months; unable to go on the charity’s annual visits to Normandy or The Netherlands and spending the anniversaries of D Day and VE Day in lockdown. The Not Forgotten event to celebrate the 75th anniversary of VJ Day is a day that our veterans and volunteer cabbies, will not forget.”

---

**About the Taxi Charity**

The Taxi Charity for Military Veterans was formed in Fulham in 1948, to work for the benefit, comfort and enjoyment of military veterans and arranges many trips every year for veterans from all conflicts.

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

To fund and facilitate these outings, the charity is wholly reliant on generous donations from members of the public, businesses and trusts and the amazing group of London licensed taxi drivers who offer their time and vehicles free.

[www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org)
ACROSS:
1 Bouncy form of exercise (12)
8 Family saying (5)
9 Dead as a dodo (7)
10 Political protest (4)
11 Loan on a house (8)
14 Move in a circle (6)
15 Display ostentatiously (6)
17 Long green salad vegetable (8)
18 Unwrap (a present) (4)
21 Ward off, divert (7)
23 Daniel ___, James Bond actor (5)
24 Process of making a new life in another country (12)

DOWN:
1 Measured by stopwatch (5)
2 Mechanised (9)
3 Crafty scheme (4)
4 Hide away, go to ground (3,3)
5 Don’t mention it! (3,2,3)
6 Convent resident (3)
7 Taking the most optimistic view (2,4)
12 Skid on a wet road (9)
13 Mass rush (8)
14 Go back (of the hairline) (6)
15 Buzz off (4,2)
16 Hours of darkness (5)
17 Teenage skin complaint (4)
18 Price for a service (3)

SET SQUARE
Place each of the digits 1 to 9 in the grid to make the sums work. We’ve started you with two numbers.

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

LETTERBOX
Complete the grid so that four words read across and a different four words read downwards using only the letters in the given word.

All puzzles © Puzzler Media Ltd - www.puzzler.com
Q. The Trade Groups Fares Committee have agreed that we will not apply any further increase that was due this year. Is this the right decision?

Responses

- Yes: 98.26%
- No: 11.74%

Q. The calculations indicated that, had we taken an increase this year, it would have been 4.16%. An initial assessment of the calculations for next years increase show it will be less than 2%. In effect we have three choices for next years tariff...

Responses

- Take whatever the figures show for next year (less than 2%): 58.7%
- Take the 4.16% owed from this year: 13.36%
- Do not apply any increase: 24.33%

Q. Our current flag fall starts at £3.20. Is this the right decision?

Responses

- Yes: 98.26%
- No: 11.74%

Q. Do you think, generally, our fares are...

Responses

- About right?: 78.18%
- Too high?: 16.83%
- Too low?: 4.09%

Q. Our current flag fall starts at £3.20. Is this...
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CABS WANTED

Cabs urgently wanted, plated or de-commissioned. Any condition, cash same day, sell and rent back. Roy 07305 160361

CABS FOR RENT

TX4s TO RENT

07957 465423
e16-taxirentals.co.uk

CABS WANTED

Cabs urgently wanted, plated or de-commissioned. Any condition, cash same day, sell and rent back. Taxi’s available to rent. call 07956 317300

De-commissioned your tx4’s and Euro 5’s? Earn more by selling outside London. We pay cash, collect and drive away. John 07702 554934

De-commissioned your tx4’s and Euro 5’s? Earn more by selling outside London. We pay cash, collect and drive away. John 07702 554934

CABS FOR SALE

TX4’s 15 plate for sale. Low Mileage: £17,500ono. 16 reg TX4 £27,000ono. Main dealer service history. Non-Fleet cabs. More cabs daily. 07957 465423

TXE Vista comfort plus. 9 months old. 8700miles. £40,000. 07958 598285

Mercedes Vito 113cdi. 2012. Plated until October 200,000miles. MOT until March 21. Good condition. £11,750. 07946 106002

Taxi euro 6 limited edition (67 september) 49,000miles. Excellent condition. 18 Months LEVC warran,te plus 8 months free servicing. Plated until 02/11/20. £34,950. 07956 278262

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“Walking the new puppy up and down the river at Rotherhithe makes me feel like Madonna. Not because I am wearing a cone shaped bra...”

MADONNA, UNWANTED PETTING & PLAYING DEAD

ne of the Mini-Megs has just had a baby. It has four legs and a waggy tail, so I am a proud Danna - that’s a Nanna to a dog in case you are wondering. This little dog, called Pippen, has a big brain. She’s only 4 months old and can already sit, stay, rollover and play dead on command. If only Mr Meg was so obedient. Most impressive of all, when Pippen wants a wee wee, she presses a bell with her paw and asks to be let out. Dingalingawoowee! How clever is that? Both my daughter and her partner are working hard from home since lockdown, so I have been helping out with walksies, as I have all the else to do. My cab is barely on the road these days.

Madonna

Walking the new puppy up and down the river at Rotherhithe makes me feel like Madonna, not because I am wearing a cone shaped bra... but because I get mobbed by an adoring public. If you need evidence that the British are a nation of dog lovers join me at the end of Rope Street SE16 on a weekday morning around 11am. I kid you not, people are queuing up to look at the pup, take pictures of the her, stroke her and baby talk to her like “Who’s a little cutie wootie? You are! Yes, you are, you are, you are...” I just stand holding the lead and waiting for them to stop talking googoo.

Petting: Cease & Desist!

Pippen has a particular gentleman superstar. He waits for us at the Greenland Quay riverboat stop. This chap is a sharp dresser and carries a £/EMerse briefcase and an air of importance. Until he spots Pippen. Then, the briefcase gets chucked to the kerb and he gets down on all fours to rub snouts with the pup. I had to call him to cease and desist yesterday when he tried to kiss Pippen on the lips, saying that I was only the dog’s ‘Danna’ and wasn’t sure if that was allowed in these times of Coronavirus concerns. And that my daughter was expecting me back to clean our goldfish. Anything to get away. Quick sharp I pressed the button on the lead handle and reeled the dog in.

Bonkers Mutt

We are a doggy family. Mr Meg and I happened on our first dog the day after we got married. She had been dumped in a dustbin and was howling as we passed by. It took a split second to decide to keep her and she was called Fay because it was FA Cup Final Day. Why, oh why didn’t we invest in a book called ‘How to Train a Dog?’ Our mutt was bonkers - she would have won gold in the ‘Naughty Dog Olympics’.

Fay’s speciality was to watch and wait for visitors to get a drink and then take a flying leap at them. Her aim was to place her paw in the full cup or glass they were drinking from, and she always succeeded.

Owners Playing Dead?

Watching Pippen come back to heel when she’s called makes me realise just how mad Fay was. She refused to come back when she was let off the lead, and the only way we could lure her back was for Mr Meg to lie flat on the floor, in the house, on the street or in the park, and play dead until she came over to sniff him. At that point he would grab her collar and attach the lead.

But you know what they say, there are no naughty dogs, just naughty owners.

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PUZZLER ANSWERS

SUDOKU

SET SQUARE

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

2 1 8 5 4 3 7 6 9

8 3 4 6 2 7 5 1 9

7 6 5 3 9 1 8 4 2

4 7 9 1 3 2 6 8 5

3 8 6 9 4 5 1 2 7

5 1 2 7 6 8 9 3 4

1 4 8 5 7 9 2 6 3

6 5 7 2 1 3 4 9 8

2 9 3 4 8 6 7 5 1

CROSSWORD

RODEO

DEMO

MORTGAGE

AS W AQ S

D L A T E

E L A B A R A

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D E F L E C T

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BUY A TX VISTA COMFORT PLUS AND RECIEVE

£ 2,500 CASH BACK
£ 212 DEPOSIT  £ 212 PER WEEK

ASCOTT'S TOWER PACK
5 Years Unlimited Mileage Battery Warranty
5 Years Cab Warranty Limited to 150,000 miles (£649)*
3 Years or 75,000 Miles Servicing
RAC Cover for 12 Months
12 Months Road Tax
Full Tank of Fuel
Luxury Front Mats
1 Year Digitax Meter
1 Years GAP Insurance

ASCOTT CAB COMPANY
0208 692 1122
1-3 Blackhorse Road London SE8 5HY
www.ascotts.london/New-Electric-Taxi-Sales

Based on PCP purchase at 6.6% APR. Figures are based on a TX Vista Comfort Plus Model at £68,844.00 with a customer deposit of £212.00 with 60 payments of £922.04 a month or £212 weekly. Optional final payment of £19,232.00. Offer is based on annual mileage of 30,000 miles or 152,500 over the term. Excess mileage charged at 6p per mile. Free service plan is 3 years or 75,000 miles and must be carried out at Ascott Cab Co ONLY. Other plans are available including 2, 3, 4 year PCP and HP deals.

£ 212 DEPOSIT    £ 212 PER WEEK

*5 Years Cab Warranty Limited to 150,000 Miles (£649)
Based on a cab being ordered by the 31st August and collected within 30 days of order
HELP IS HERE

We now have a number of insurance schemes available that offer social, domestic and pleasure with an option to upgrade to taxi insurance at a later date.

Call us today for a competitive quote

0208 127 8419

On-Site @ Ascott Cab Company, Blackhorse Road SE8 5HY

quotax.net