

**COVER STORY:**

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**MEET RISKY ROADZ:**

THE GRIME CABBIE **Pages 12 & 13**

# TAXI

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28th June 2022 #519

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

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

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

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

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

**Creative Director**  
Peter Davies

**Printed by**  
Manson Group, St Albans

**Published on behalf of the LTDA by**



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### CHARGING ANXIETY

According to Volkswagen Financial Services UK's data insights team, the biggest problem with the UK's EV charging infrastructure is not the availability of charging points, but the "*accessibility, reliability and geography*." Describing the 'postcode lottery', they note that London and the South East are best served by charging points, however taxi drivers will know that one of the biggest issues is whether a charging point will actually be in service and operational when you get to it. Volkswagen Financial Services argue that the key factor deterring people from switching to an EV is now not so-called '*range anxiety*' but the new driver phenomenon of '*charging anxiety*', with drivers not having the confidence that they will be able to find a charger to use when they need one.



### LTCFC FUN AT THE DOCKLANDS SAILING CENTRE

The London Taxi Drivers' Charity for Children's (LTCFC) most recent trip took 30 children from St Luke's School on the Isle of Dogs for a fun day out at the Docklands Sailing and Watersports Centre. The kids had a fun-packed, sunny morning kayaking and paddle boarding, assisted by the Docklands centre instructors. It's the first time the London Taxi Drivers' Charity for Children have done this kind of event out on the water and great fun was had by all. Talking about the experience, Year Four student Maize Drew said, "*I've never done this before and it's the best thing ever.*" The sailing centre, located in the west end of Millwall outer dock, has been in operation for the past 35 years delivering courses in sailing, windsurfing, powerboating and paddle sports for adults and children, but this was the first time that

St Luke's had visited this incredible purpose-built facility. The LTCFC would like to say a big thank you to all those involved in making it a smooth and happy day for everyone.

### NEW STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON ACCESS TO TAXIS AND PHVS FOR DISABLED USERS



The Department for Transport has published new guidance on access to taxis and private hire vehicles for disabled users, outlining how licensing authorities can ensure that drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles comply with requirements on disabled access and meet their duties under the 2010 Equality Act.

No doubt primarily aimed at the PHV sector, in which issues such as assistance dog refusals are well documented, this new guidance sets out the duties that apply to taxi and PHV drivers and notes that licensing authorities are "*expected to take tough action where drivers or operators breach their duties under the Equality Act 2010.*" The guidance suggests that a driver who wilfully failed to comply with their duties would be unlikely to remain a "*fit and proper person*" and licensing authorities should reassess their licence. It also notes that licensing authorities "*may also take appropriate action – such as suspension, revocation, or refusal to renew a licence – even where prosecution did not proceed*" but where "*the authority deems that the driver treated a disabled passenger unreasonably.*"



### MOST DELAYED ROADS IN THE UK ALL IN LONDON

A recent study by Instant Offices found that 27 of the most traffic-congested cities in Europe are in the UK, with London traffic worse than other capitals like Berlin, Rome and Zurich. Unexpectedly, London wasn't the most congested, instead falling behind Edinburgh, however when broken down by council area, 27 of the 28 most congested areas were London boroughs. The top five councils with the most delayed roads in the UK were all in London and it will come as no surprise to drivers that these were Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster, Islington, Wandsworth and Camden.

Council	Average road delays per month
Kensington and Chelsea	10 hours 14 minutes
Westminster	10 hours 8 minutes
Islington	9 hours 33 minutes
Wandsworth	9 hours 8 minutes
Camden	8 hours 56 minutes



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# Two Wheels Good, Four Wheels Bad?

**"The most recent dictate from our very own glorious road planners at City Hall is a warning that anyone driving or even wandering into a cycle lane will be fined £160."**

## Steve's comment

**A**t the moment it feels like we can't go more than a few days without seeing a change or new policy introduced at the local council, TfL or government level that has the potential to negatively impact motorists and businesses. This brings to mind a famous quote from George Orwell's book *Animal Farm*, "Four legs good, two legs bad." An easily remembered slogan designed by the pigs to sum up their hatred for humans, after they take over the farm.

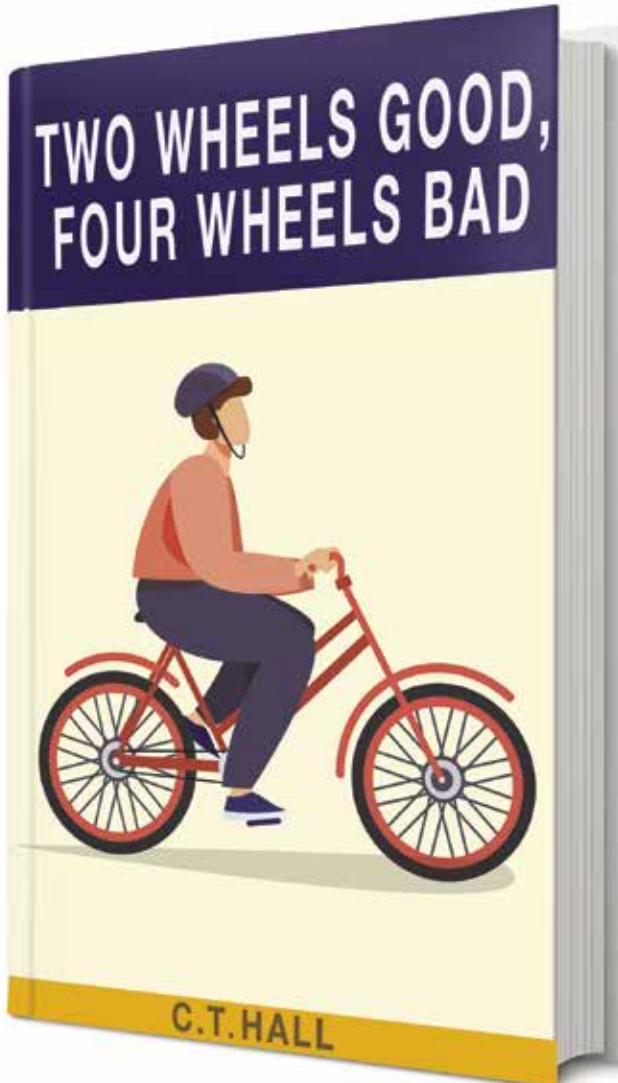
### Hostile takeover

The equivalent to describe what we are seeing today would be "*two wheels good, four wheels bad*," a slogan perhaps for the cycling lobby who seem to now pervade and dominate almost every level of government. It's a good analogy, because their hatred of anyone who uses a car, van, lorry, or taxi seems to be just as strong as that of the pigs who took over the farm, and this lot really have somehow taken over at City Hall and Town Halls across London.

Their fingerprints are all over the recent changes to the Highway Code that accorded cyclists the right to ride two or three abreast, whilst the business and commercial traffic queues behind them. The irony is that any group of cyclists riding two or three abreast would surely be cycling for leisure, as opposed to engaging in any kind of industrious endeavour, whilst the vehicles all delayed would invariably be commercial traffic. Sadly, the irony of this seems to have been lost on the Department for Transport.

### Enter at your peril

The most recent dictate from our very own glorious road planners at City Hall is a warning that anyone driving or even wandering into a cycle lane will be hunted down, hung drawn and quartered. Joking. Actually, they will be fined £160,



**"Remember they are watching and waiting for you to drive on this sacred ground for more than a few feet and if you do a PCN is coming your way."**

but it seems only a matter of time before medieval torture is considered a proportionate response to any transgression against the cycling elite.

I have sought clarification on this, and taxis are still allowed to cross the white line to pick up or set down a passenger, but remember they are watching and waiting for you to drive on this sacred ground for more than a few feet, and if you do a PCN is coming your way.

### Policymaking for the few

So how, why, and when, did this blatantly ludicrous state of affairs come about where a few cyclists, predominantly members

of the same privileged social class from what I can see, gained such power and influence? How are they able to get away with implementing policies which are creating traffic chaos to the point where it is starting to impact Londoners' ability to move around, our economy and commercial viability? The answer is that cyclists and their ilk are generally well-heeled, well-educated and politically active. As a result, they hold a disproportionately high number of both elected positions as councillors and well-paid positions in town halls and government as planners, traffic engineers and advisors. They want London to work for them and their

social circles.

From what I can also make out, they tend to live centrally and want to cycle the short distance to work. Although ironically, they are probably the very demographic that is refusing to return to the office and now sit at home all day, pretending it's better for their mental health, when the truth is they are probably just bloody lazy.

I don't think they have any understanding of how other Londoners live, and they don't care, everyone they know and mix with is like them and they cannot comprehend how their policies are negatively impacting on the less affluent. The people who rely on the buses to get to work (the buses that are now slower than ever as the gridlock intensifies), the delivery drivers and tradesmen, who have to spend hours in a car just to even get to work, and the small shopkeepers losing trade as their shop is marooned behind a fixed cycle lane.

### Fines, not crimes

At the same time TfL seem to be focused on colluding with the Police to catch motorists out and raise much-needed funds. Yes, we all want to make London's roads safer, and that's why I regularly attend Vision Zero meetings and contribute ideas, but most of these fall on deaf ears, as they clearly have their own agenda and once again we hear them cry "*two wheels good, four wheels bad*."

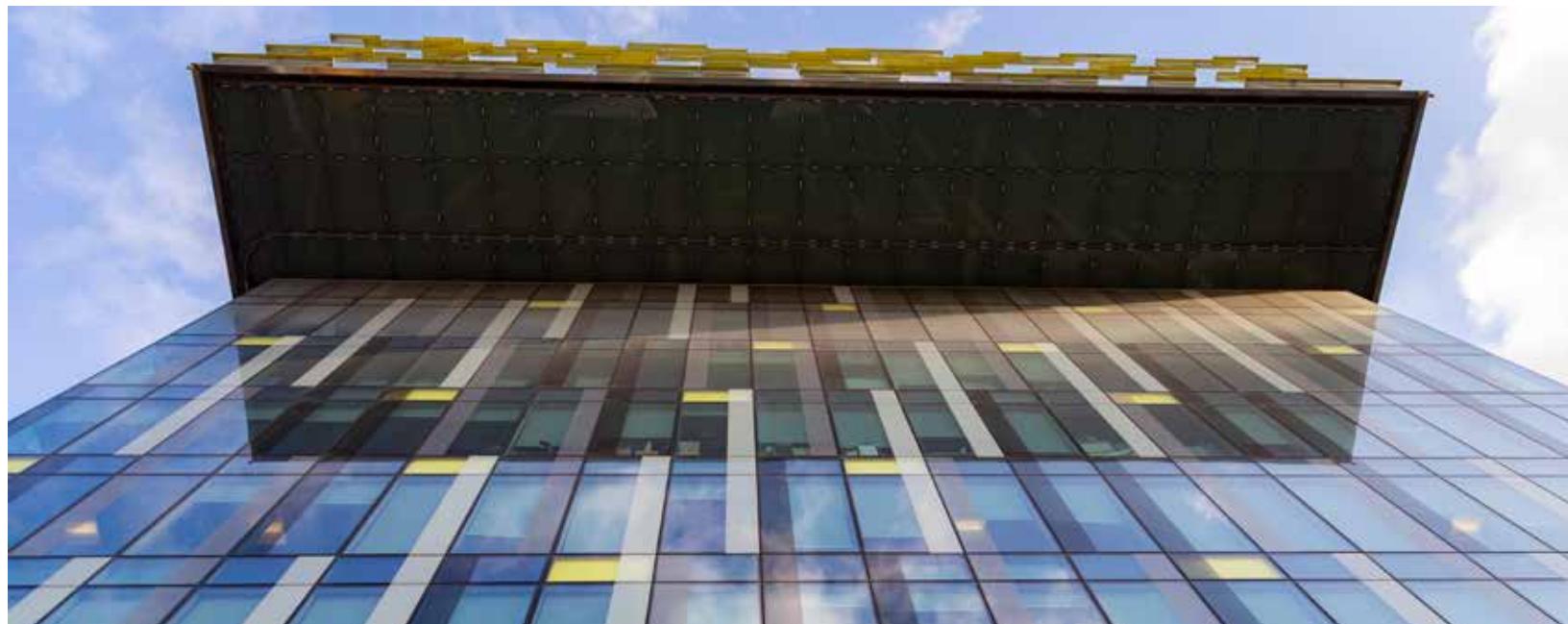
They are focused on tackling speeding offences with the aim of building the capacity to issue one million speeding tickets by 2024. Yes, you read that right, as knife and violent crimes continue to be a daily part of London life, the Met is investing huge amounts of time and money concentrating on targeting and criminalising ordinary Londoners for minor speeding offences, often at speeds in the low 20s, on roads that until recently were 30 or 40mph zones.

Going back to *Animal Farm*, Boxer, the horse, was loyal, strong, and hardworking but when he no longer suited the pigs running the farm, he was sent off to be slaughtered to make glue. How long before those with this irrational hatred of anyone who has to drive in London think of a similar fate for us?



# Wrong-headed Decision Making

**"Once again we find ourselves at odds with our regulator, asking them to simply treat drivers fairly and promote and protect their livelihoods."**



## Top rank

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You often have to wonder at the thought processes behind decisions that come out of Transport for London (TfL). Perhaps more apt would be to consider the apparent lack of any real thought or process of analysis, beyond the narrow-minded views of certain factions within TfL, which seem to be dominating the agenda.

### Competing agendas

Too often, we can all clearly see that a policy has probably been proposed and formulated elsewhere in the behemoth that is TfL and has then been passed down to the Taxi and Private Hire team (TPH), who simply implement it. Not all, but many of the people we work closely with in TPH and elsewhere at TfL, really understand our trade and genuinely value and want to support us. Sadly, the decisions that hurt us the most seem to have often been made above their pay grade or in a totally unrelated department, one which knows nothing about the cab trade and how things really work.

All of this means that TfL often says one thing, only to turn around and manifestly do the absolute opposite. Worse still, it sometimes feels like every time things are looking up for our trade, some new threat appears, and we once again

find ourselves at odds with our regulator, asking them to simply treat drivers fairly and promote and protect their livelihoods (the role of any regulator).

### Damaging new points policy

The recent changes to the taxi and private hire driver policy around penalty points are a classic example. Despite TfL's protestations that these changes are all about implementing the government's statutory standards (the non-binding, optional standards that licensing authorities can choose to implement if they think necessary), if I had to guess, I would say it was probably dictated by someone like Will Norman, with what I would argue is a clear anti-car agenda, that we seem to always get tangled up in.

I won't go into all the facts or reasons why it's wrong that a driver with just six points could lose their taxi licence, as I'm sure those will be covered elsewhere. I'm

**"Let me make this very clear, the LTDA will not stand by and let any of our members face this disgraceful attack without fighting back."**

not condoning driving offences, however, I will say that it is complete madness that a single second's misjudgement – which let's be frank can absolutely happen to even the best of us, at any time – could resort in the loss of taxi licence, even though no harm to anything or anyone was actually done.

### (Un)intended consequences

It will likely not matter to the higher ups, that this will no doubt discourage some potential candidates from now doing the Knowledge. Or that it will undermine efforts to replenish our dwindling driver pool and ensure taxi availability for our great city, its inhabitants, and visitors, which is an issue their colleagues elsewhere in TfL are trying to solve. I also doubt anyone will consider how this one decision could put the brakes on the quite remarkable uptake and replenishing of our fleet from diesel to clean ZEC taxis – a goal they supposedly say they want.

They won't see the irony that whilst pushing the Safer Travel at Night (STaN) message, they are introducing policy that will have a knock-on effect on our numbers. They will also probably fail to recognise the hypocrisy of another division of TfL advertising for someone to drive a 15 plus tonne bus that carries upwards of 60 people, with a job description stating that the applicant should have no more than six

points on their licence, whilst simultaneously threatening to take away a taxi driver's licence for having the exact same amount.

I am sure they will also continue to claim the changes are "*all about safety*", despite the fact that for more than half a decade they have failed to re-establish the taxi driving test, to make sure those who get behind the wheel of a taxi, or for that matter a private hire vehicle, have the necessary skills and can exhibit a higher standard of driving than joe public. They also won't acknowledge the fact (after years of muddying the water by issuing joint accident statistics for the taxi and PHV trades) that we have a remarkable safety record, which puts all others to shame.

### This will not stand

I know anyone reading this will know all of the above, but let me make this very clear, the LTDA will not stand by and let any of our members face this disgraceful attack without fighting back. The LTDA's legal team is already on the case. We are also contacting MPs and other decision makers at the London and national level to get their support.

Let me also reassure you that if I have anything to do with it, we will be doing all we can to ensure that we also work with the other trade organisations and put up a united front. To that end, we've already hosted a meeting to discuss this with the UCG and LCDC and will be having further discussions along with RMT and Unite to see what can be done jointly. ■ **LTDA**

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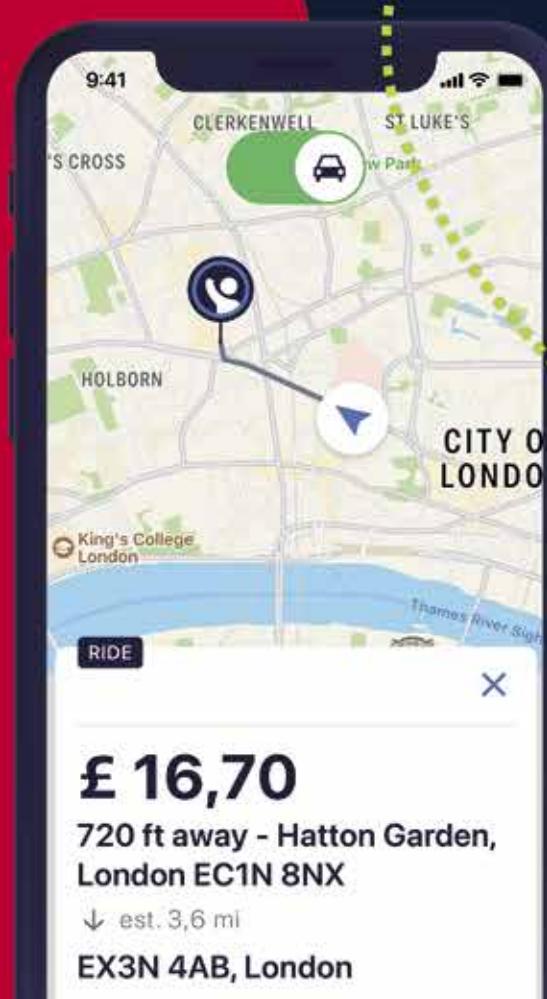
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# Use It Don't Lose It!

**There are now many new ways that a driver could all too easily lose their Bill and with it their ability to earn a living.**

## Streets ahead

**A**s most readers will know, at the LTDA, we take many calls from members on a daily basis who need help with an issue that could potentially impact their taxi licence and take away their livelihood. The LTDA team can support with anything from a licence renewals and medicals to PCNs, completing statutory declarations and more complex legal matters. Whatever the issue, our team go the extra mile to make sure we get the answers members need or to resolve an issue on their behalf.

### Not me, guv

If you are reading this thinking, "I can do this kind of thing myself" or "I never get PCNs" and so don't need to be a member of the LTDA, I would advise you it's time to think again! The hottest topic in the trade right now and issue that has everyone rightly worried, is the changes to TfL's Taxi and Private Hire Driver Policy, which mean that there are now many new ways that a driver could all too easily lose their Bill and with it their ability to earn a living. In the last two weeks alone, more than 15 cases where a driver's licence is under threat as a result of these changes have crossed my desk.

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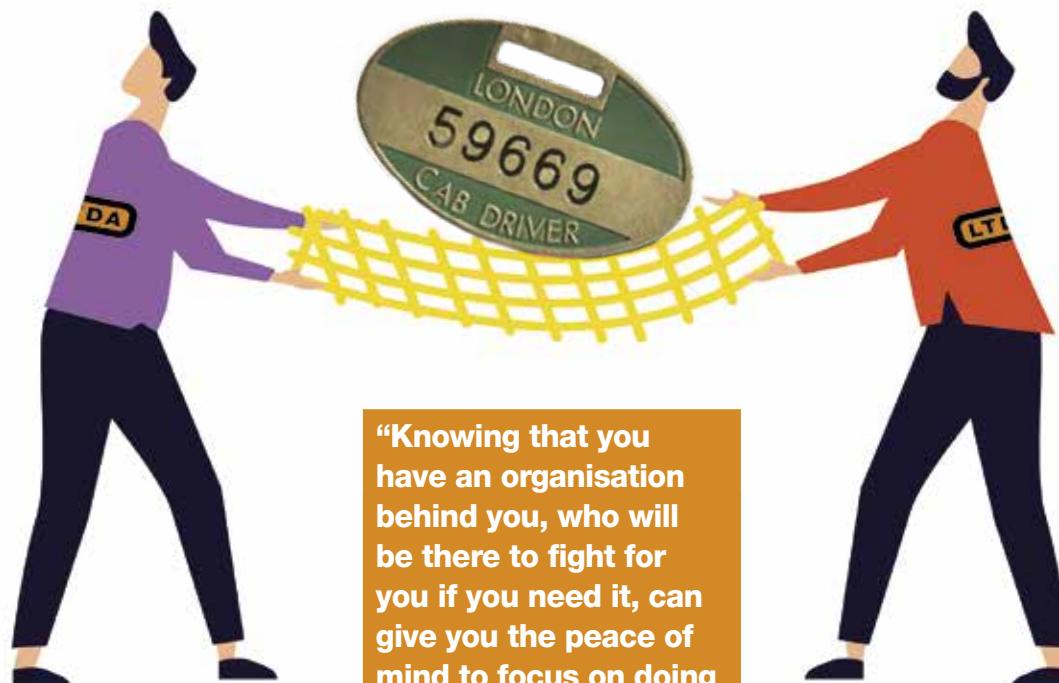
and given six penalty points or more on your driving licence, then under the new policy, TfL can revoke your taxi licence. Even if you receive less than six points, simply being convicted of such an offence means TfL can suspend your licence.

More than one conviction for a major driving offence within five years would also merit a licence refusal and no further licence application would be considered until seven years from your last offence. A major offence would be any driving offence that carries six points (I don't think many of us would like to be back on a moped doing the knowledge again).

Any driver who has accumulated 12 points since the 20th of December 2021 could also have their taxi licence suspended for six months, regardless of whether they are disqualified from driving.

### Safety, you say?

TfL say these changes are all about passenger and public safety, but in my opinion there are many much more pressing safety issues which need addressing. We've all seen the accidents caused by poor standards of driving by PHV drivers, so why haven't TfL reinstated the enhanced driving test and applied it to PHVs? What about improving access for those who are less able to walk and need a taxi rank for onward travel or implementing additional taxi ranks to support safer travel at night?



**"Knowing that you have an organisation behind you, who will be there to fight for you if you need it, can give you the peace of mind to focus on doing your job and making a living."**

### Make sure you're covered

We do try to help and give advice to non-members where possible, but we cannot act on their behalf. There has perhaps never been a more important time to be a member of a trade organisation that will have your back and fight for your licence.

I've seen some drivers on social media saying they now feel nervous to go out and on edge the whole time, as the system seems set against them. Even in a city they know like the back of their hand, there are so many new speed limits in place and unexpected changes to road layouts, that could easily catch anyone out.

Knowing that you have an organisation behind you, who will be there to fight for you if you need it, can give you the peace of mind to focus on doing your job and making a living. Think of it like insurance - you don't always need it, but when you do, you are very glad it's there.

We will continue to challenge TfL on this ludicrous policy through the proper channels and the courts where necessary and will keep all our members updated on all trade matters.

If you are not member, fill out the application form in this paper or on our website to join today or to find out more, you can contact us via email on [info@ltda.co.uk](mailto:info@ltda.co.uk) or call 0207 286 1046

Keep your phone in a cradle and be safe out there.

LTDA



### Licence revoked

Under the new policy, the reasons that a licence could be revoked or suspended now include things like being convicted of a single mobile phone offence which results in six penalty points. This could see your licence revoked. Driving too close to a cyclist could also be deemed as 'driving without reasonable consideration' and if convicted

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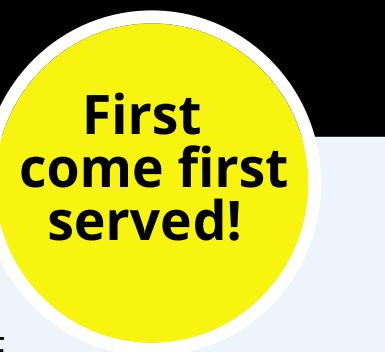
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# TAXI and LTDA Member Mail

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

## Subject: Witnesses sought

Dear Editor,

I am hoping you might be able to help. I am trying to track down a black cab driver who kindly stopped to say he had witnessed another car drive into mine, but who in the heat of the moment I failed to take details from.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June (the Friday of the Jubilee weekend) at around 6.55pm on Upper Woburn Place my car was scraped by an Uber driver crossing out of a bus lane he shouldn't have been in, while I was waiting in a line of traffic at a red light just south of the Euston Road.

My car is a silver Porsche Boxster, and I had the roof down and a cute white dog in the passenger seat, who might have made it memorable.

The Uber was a white Toyota Prius, '66 reg.

The Uber drove off. I had thought it had just hit my wing mirror, but a black cab pulled up alongside me and the driver asked if I knew that the other car had scraped the wing of my car, which he said that he had witnessed. I jumped out to look, but with cars behind it all felt hurried and I didn't take any details from the cabbie.

The taxi was a black LEVC electric cab, I think with an advertisement on the side. The driver was male and black.

I got the registration number of the Uber driver but he is denying liability to my insurer, so I am in need of a witness, and the cabbie seemed happy to support this when he stopped.

Are you able to get the word out?

Regards,  
William

If you witnessed this, please email editor@ltda.co.uk to be put you in touch with William.



## Subject: Who do TfL think they are?

Dear Editor,

I was shocked to read that TfL want to usurp the power of the courts and revoke a cabbie's licence after a court has allowed them to carry on driving. Just who do they think they are?

I have no doubts that this was brought about following lobbying from the cycling campaigners led by someone like Will Norman. It's outrageous that

they want to impose a 7-year ban for what could be minor offences, it's more than some criminals get for serious offences.

I do worry though when I still see some cabbie's holding a phone, are they mad? It's simple don't do it and if you do and get caught, don't moan!

Yours faithfully,  
Tony Lister

## Subject: TfL above the law?

Dear Editor,

I am so glad the LTDA are challenging TfL's new 'put cabbies out of work' directive. How dare they try and rise above the law and overrule a magistrate? I have had a nightmare getting my medical sorted out, countless letters and emails over something that should be so easy. They are next to useless on matters they should be doing but super ready to get to work revoking licences and possibly destroying families. You wouldn't print what I really think of them.

Best wishes,  
R Mahmud

## Talk about get your priorities wrong!

I still felt guilty a few months later when I saw a policeman rolling about on the floor with a suspect at the World's End, my instinct, as it has always been, was to jump out the cab and help him, but I left him to it, as did the two young and fit builders in the van next to me. We all stood and watched as other policemen arrived and arrested the suspect and we got back in our vehicles. I said to the builders why I never helped, the driver said he wanted to help, pointing to his mate, I stopped him, they nicked me for 55mph on the Dartford Bridge "sod em!"

How many more people are now thinking like me and the builder? Losing public support is not a good plan for the Police, it needs a rethink!

Thanks,  
Paul Gibson

## Subject: Police priorities

Dear Editor,

So, some non-elected numpty at TfL, probably working from his or her house (how are they even still doing that), is going to revoke my licence and my ability to provide for my family if I get caught, by them, driving at 23 or 24mph 3 or 4 times in 3 years?

Aided and abetted by our joke of a police force, sorry service, who don't even investigate crimes anymore but simply send an email with a crime number for the insurance but have enough staff and resource to issue hundreds of thousands of speeding tickets each year. I used to be a great supporter of the Police, no more. I have dealt with them 3 times in the past year. Once my daughter had her phone snatched and I was treated as if I was a nuisance wanting to report it, yet a week later I got a speeding letter from them and 3 follow up letters threatening the world if I didn't reply.

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If you need support outside of our opening hours, you'll find plenty of common queries in the help centre on the FREE NOW website.

\* As of April 2022.



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# Risky Roadz - TAXI Talks

**"For me the duality of it [driving a cab], the ability to do this, alongside something completely different, is a real big sell".**



## Feature

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**W**hen he's not producing documentaries and working on music videos for some of the biggest names in the UK grime music scene, Roony 'Risky' Keefe is a proud London cabbie. I spoke to him while he was ranked up at Kings Cross to find out more about his "mad dual life".

### Meet Roony

Born and bred in Bethnal Green, Roony Keefe started making videos in 2004, well before the era of YouTube and social media, (a better time some might argue). This was the start of what became a legendary DVD series, 'Risky Roadz' which featured and helped kickstart the careers of countless MCs in the early days of grime. He went on to set up Risky Roadz Productions a video and content creation company.

Working in TV and video production, Roony was frequently finding himself at a loose end in between mostly freelance jobs. Driving a cab was in the family, he has uncles in the game and had always seen it as "*a good way to make a living and a good career*." He started studying the Knowledge and earned his Badge six years ago.

Now, he drives the cab in between projects. He loves having the freedom to jump in the cab to pay the bills, when he's not pitching new ideas to TV companies and

filming his own projects. *"For me the duality of it, the ability to do this, alongside something completely different, is a real big sell."*

He tells me no matter what successes he has, even if he gets to the point where he *"has a few million in the bank"*, he will continue driving the cab *"to keep up with the boys and keep himself grounded, even if just giving away a few rides."*

### Knowledge journey

Like most people, Roony says doing the Knowledge *"wasn't easy"*. But once he got the right support, he really enjoyed it and made some great friends along the way. He studied it part-time for a year and a half and then full time for another year and half, before getting his Badge.

He was really struggling to get it, until at one of his appearances the examiner gave him a life changing piece of advice. *"He told me whoever was doing my call overs wasn't good enough and suggested I go to a Knowledge School. That changed my Knowledge journey completely, and my life, as without it, I probably wouldn't have got my Badge. I will always be grateful to him for that."*

This inspired Roony to start going to classes at Knowledge Point. He says whilst he was nervous at first that people would judge him and think he wasn't good enough, once he got over the initial nerves, *"it changed the whole ball game."*

Roony also describes the amazing sense of camaraderie in the trade, he has *"his boys"* who he came up with and like many drivers they are always on the phone telling each



# to the Grime Cabbie



other what's going on and where it's busy. He says how important this is, as without it, driving a cab could be "*a lonely job*."

## Busier than ever

During the pandemic, Roony didn't work the cab, focusing instead on video projects, including shooting a series called '*Grime Gran*' featuring his nan Margie, who has supported him since day one, lending him £300 to buy his first camera. More recently along with his mum, she helped him fund the Knowledge.

Since getting back in the cab, he says it's been "*the busiest I've seen it since I got my badge*". He sees a bright future for the trade and would definitely recommend it, particularly for anyone looking for a job you can work flexibly around other things.

## Different worlds

I asked Roony what his fellow cabbies make of his other job and persona? He tells me all the boys who know him are used to it now, "*but it can be hard to get your head around my two different worlds*."

The cab trade itself is a small world and his reputation as the grime cabbie has often preceded him. He recalls how at one of his first appearance the examiner welcomed him into the room saying, "*Here he is, the friend of Dizzee Rascal and Tinie Tempah*".

He also tells me he's had a few famous faces in his cab, including Liam Gallagher and Childish

**"The cab trade is a real mix of people and always has been."**

Gambino and when they get talking about music, it turns out they've seen his videos. Some even recognise him when they get in the cab.

## Iconic cab

Long before he had even considered taking the Knowledge, but since gaining his Badge, his iconic black cab has become part of his identity and almost "*a character in its own right*", featuring in music videos for Skepta and other artists and serving as the setting for some of his documentaries.

I asked Rooney how the artists and others who ride in it, react to the cab? He says a few have never been in one but after riding around with him they start to view the trade

differently. He notes that "*the cab trade is a real mix of people and always has been*." I am surprised when he tells me quite a few MCs are also cab drivers and some of the people who inspired him to get into the grime scene originally, were in the trade themselves.

Roony's cab is featured in a new exhibition at the Museum of London honouring the music, people and places central to the grime scene and its roots. A central part of the exhibit is a video in which Roony tours east London in his cab, with influential figures from the UK grime scene. '*Grime Stories: from the corner to the mainstream*', is now open daily from 10am to 5pm and runs until December at the Museum of London, 150 London Wall, EC2Y 5HN

Roony's latest film project also featuring his cab is a documentary looking at the rise of the grime scene in Birmingham. *RiskyRoadz 0121 - A Birmingham Grime Story* is now available on Amazon Prime.



## What is Grime?

The grime music scene has its roots in East London. It began to emerge in E3 in the early 2000s from other styles, including garage, jungle, and hip hop and is generally recognisable by its rapid breakbeat and electronic elements. The genre was originally popularised on pirate radio stations like Rinse FM and by pioneers like Roony. It was brought to a more mainstream audience by big names like Wiley, Dizzee Rascal, Skepta and Kano to name a few, and has since gained international recognition.



# Make Hay While the Sun Shines

**“...It’s sensible to make as much money as we can while the demand is there, because in our business, you never know what’s around the corner...”**

## M4 musings

**L**istening to all the bad news there's been about the economy lately, taxi drivers could be forgiven for feeling like we live in a parallel universe; our business is as good as I've ever known it, but all we see in the news is foreboding, doom and gloom.

This reminds me a bit of the period between 2014 and 2016, when our business seemed under attack from all directions. Our hourly revenues were stagnant or shrinking, while other sectors of the economy were doing very well. I came into the cab trade from a declining industry, so it was depressing to think that might happen to us as well. Fast forward to today and it is others who are struggling. Meanwhile, many of the customers we lost during the 2010s have returned to us because we are skilled, reliable, safe, and won't rip you off.

They say it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good, meaning that even a bad situation must benefit someone. Our business has probably benefited from certain events in recent years – I'm not talking about the pandemic here, more the shift in stance towards international trade and a retreat from 'globalisation,' represented by Brexit and a hardening of attitudes towards other global competitors.

Whatever the reasons, it's sensible to make as much money as we can while the demand is there, because in our business



you never know what's around the corner, as recent years have shown.

### Fly away for summer

We are seeing exciting, if chaotic times for the air travel industry. It's really not surprising that everyone wants to fly off on holiday now that for the first time in three years, there are virtually no restrictions on foreign travel. It's also understandable, if frustrating, that airlines and airports are struggling to cope with demand.

This sort of 'feast and famine' is the opposite of what businesses need to be able to plan effectively. It takes time and money to recruit and train staff, and I'm sure many firms have erred on the side of

caution, given the losses sustained during the pandemic. It must be galling for them to see there is clearly unmet demand, not to mention hugely upsetting for holidaymakers, who have flights cancelled at the last moment.

Our business is similar in some ways – it would be better to have a constant level of demand, so that whenever you choose to work, you'll tick over nicely and there are always cabs when passengers need them. Of course, the real world doesn't work that way. Instead, we see intense periods when everyone wants a cab at the same time. An additional complication for us is that we have no centralised management, although I do think

the WhatsApp groups and closed Twitter accounts do a decent job of spreading the word when demand is high.

My experience after flying into Heathrow recently, during an extremely busy period was that although there was a large queue, no-one moves as many people door-to-door as quickly or efficiently as London taxi drivers.

### Sky high fuel

Everyone knows prices of all types of fuel are sky-high at the moment. I've seen a couple of messages floating around implying that this is because of the government. It's true the Treasury could do more to influence prices at the pump, as has been done in other countries. But it's not as simple as all that.

I wrote a couple of issues ago about the 5p cut in fuel duty, but this seems to have been entirely swallowed up by the petrol companies, as it certainly hasn't had any noticeable effect at the pumps. Helpfully, the next idea the government had was to 'name and shame' companies who had not passed on the reductions. I'm not sure how practical that would be.

Some on social media have also pointed out that the cost of a barrel of crude oil is lower than it has been in recent years, questioning why petrol and diesel are so much more expensive? The answer to that is mostly because of uncertainties in future supply, caused principally by the war in Ukraine. The LTDA and other groups are in dialogue with TfL about restoring the emergency fuel extra that was allowed in recent years, although never actually used.

Good luck out there. ■ LTDA

### Highway Patrol

We are seeing more and more of these 'cycle vigilante' videos. I saw one recently where the person was cycling between two lanes of stationary traffic and looking into every single vehicle until they found someone committing a mobile phone offence. Many of us are also familiar with a gentleman who stands in Regent's Park for long periods of time, recording videos of himself confronting drivers who break the law.

I remember when this sort of thing first started, there were one or two fairly well-known characters who did it and everyone else just thought they were a bit sad. Now, with the

improvements in technology and a shift in attitude by the Police to positively encourage this sort of 'citizen enforcement', London is full of people trying to 'make the world a better place' by reporting people who are texting while in stationary traffic.

We all want to make London's roads as safe as possible and I'm not condoning mobile phone offences. However, mistakes do happen and as you will have read elsewhere, recent changes in the law and regulatory policy make these offences potentially very serious for taxi drivers. So if you don't have the right kit for your phone or device, get it now. Do not risk touching a phone in any way, unless it is in a cradle!



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# Drop-off Dilemmas

**"You would have hoped that paying the charge would be simple, but as usual it's not as easy as it could be."**



## Airports & beyond

**S**ince 30th April, London taxi drivers have had to start paying the drop-off charge at Heathrow Airport. The new £5 charge applies to any vehicle entering the drop-off areas in front of the terminal and is payable each and every time you enter. Drivers have until midnight the following day to pay the charge. If you drop passengers at two terminals, you have to pay drop off fees for both. However, you can add £10 to the meter for this as extras.

## 'Good faith' mistakes

You would have hoped that paying the charge would be simple, but as usual it's not as easy as it could be. The process can be confusing and mistakes can happen all too easily. I

have received many calls from members who have received a PCN, even though they thought they had paid. There can be many reasons for this and it's not always the driver's fault.

If drivers receive a ticket, the fine is £40, if paid within 14 days. It doubles to £80 up to 28 days. If still unpaid, it then goes to the collection service. When you go online and enter your PCN number and registration, it tells you the date that the fee will increase to £80.

The most common issue I am seeing is when a driver pays in "good faith," but may have made a simple mistake such as entering one digit of their registration incorrectly. For example, using the number '0' instead of the letter 'O'. The member has proof that he's paid with a receipt, but it's clear the wrong digit was used.

I also had one driver who received five PCNs in one week.

He had rented a cab whilst his own taxi was in the garage and had clearly paid for all five trips but had put his own registration in and not the rented taxi's. It was clear he had paid and again in "good faith," but the appeal process has not been easy.

I have been helping members to appeal PCNs, but the process can take a long time and does not always work out in a driver's favour. On some occasions, APCOA have agreed to reduce the fine from £40 to £20, but won't revoke it, as it's technically the fault of the driver.

## Local journeys

If you are in the feeder park and do a local journey to another terminal, you are exempt from paying the drop-off fee. However, it's down to the driver to give his registration details to the agent, so he won't have to pay. The terminals can get very busy, as there is high

demand at the moment and we are in our busiest month, so it's understandable that the driver and agent can forget such details. In these cases, the appeal process is a lot easier, as the driver can access his local journeys in the cabin and prove he was on an inter-terminal drop off. I have been a lot more successful with these appeals.

## Paying the charge

Setting up an account to pay the charge isn't as straight forward as it could be. We had one driver that as far as he was concerned had set up an account, but he didn't enter his registration number. The way it's set up, it's not clear at each stage and the member thought he had completed it, until he got a ticket.

The best way to pay if you are a professional driver whose work may take them to Heathrow, and to make sure you don't forget to pay the charge within the timeframe, is to set up a business account, which will ensure the charge is paid automatically every time you enter the drop-off zone.

**Please note that as Terminal 4 only reopened on Tuesday 14th June, the drop-off charge doesn't go live at T4 until 1st July.**



## How to set up an account to pay

- Go to [www.heathrow.com/dropoff](http://www.heathrow.com/dropoff). Click on sign in/register now for a business account.
- Click sign up now.
- Enter your e-mail address and click send verification code.
- You will be sent a code to your e-mail address.
- Enter the verification code on the website and click on the 'verify code' button.
- Click the remaining required fields and then click the 'Create' button.
- On a business account a user must set up automatic payments to pay the drop off charge. You are unable to make one off payments with a business account.
- Click 'set up autopay.'
- Click 'add payment method.'
- Enter card details and press 'Continue.'
- Once your card is successfully set up, it will appear on the screen. Check this is the case before moving on.
- Now click onto 'Manage my vehicles' to add your vehicle.
- Now click 'Add my vehicle.'
- If you wish to add more than one vehicle click on 'Add multiple vehicles.'
- Enter your registration number and then click 'Find my registration.'
- Check your vehicle registration is correct and then Click 'Confirm.'
- Once your vehicle is successfully registered it will appear on the screen. Please check this as it's vital it's correct.

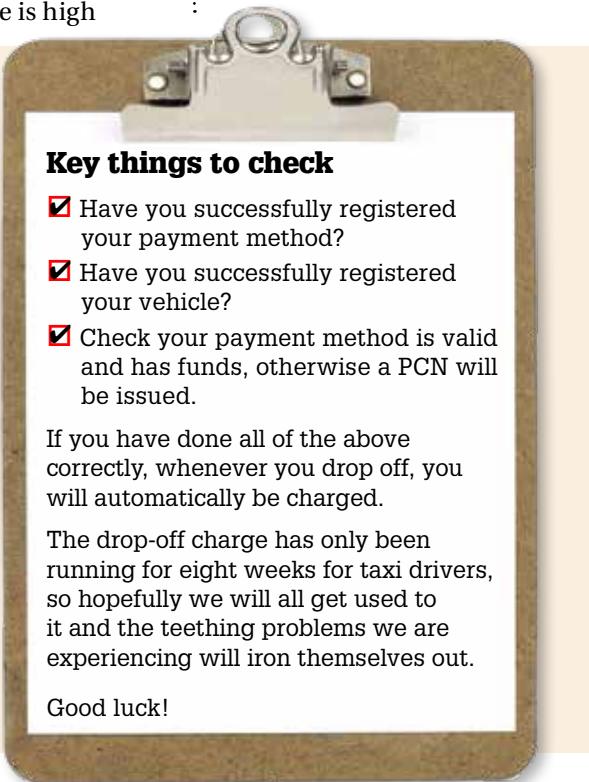
## Key things to check

- Have you successfully registered your payment method?
- Have you successfully registered your vehicle?
- Check your payment method is valid and has funds, otherwise a PCN will be issued.

If you have done all of the above correctly, whenever you drop off, you will automatically be charged.

The drop-off charge has only been running for eight weeks for taxi drivers, so hopefully we will all get used to it and the teething problems we are experiencing will iron themselves out.

Good luck!





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# Tax Conditionality and the Manic Cabbie

What does a 40-year-old computer game have in common with your tax conditionality check code? Turns out the answer is, well, everything, especially if you are stuck inside my monumentally warped mind.

## A man in black

In 1983, Bug-Byte released a computer game called *Manic Miner*. The game was initially written for the ZX Spectrum and is considered one of the greatest platform games ever produced.

The premise of the game was as follows: Miner Willy had to negotiate 20 different caverns, collecting several flashing objects. He had to do so while avoiding poisonous pansies, spiders, slime and manic mining robots. Willy could be killed by falling too far off of a platform or ultimately running out of oxygen. After giving this approximately one minute and 37 seconds thought, I felt this comparable with the new rules regarding tax conditionality.

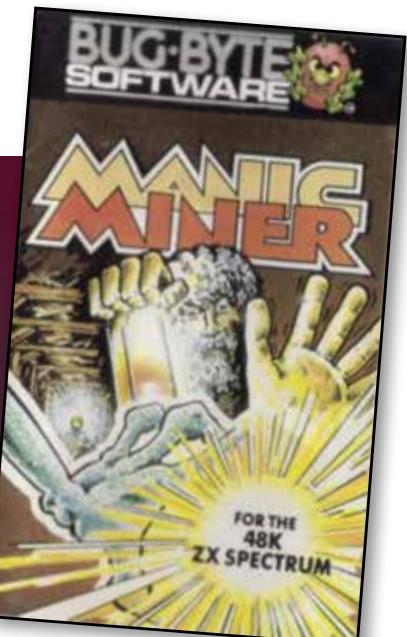
Now, before anybody asks I wish to declare the following: I've not been on the Babycham, I'm nowhere near the magic mushrooms and I've definitely not been feeling the need, the need for weed. To be fair, I am writing this with a bottle of Hoegaarden and a large bag of Monster Munch but if you're struggling to follow, please allow me to explain.

## From Tax checks to poisonous pansies

As of April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, new tax checks came into force for cabbies who wished to renew a licence. The same checks also applied to PHV drivers and PHV operators - and this, my friends, is Miner Willy's cavern of doom.

To apply for and to obtain a new licence, a driver will need a nine character code from HMRC which must then be submitted to TfL. To do a tax check and obtain said code, the applicant must have a Government Gateway user ID and password. If they don't have either of these, one can be created when the check begins.

Now, this is the part which equates to poisonous pansies, spiders, slime and the manic robots - in other words, all of the information which can knock you straight off of



that metaphorical platform. Applicants will need to know when they first got their licence, the length of their most recent one and how they pay tax on the income they earn from using it. But wait, there's so much more here - 'tis a veritable smorgasbord of questions!

What happens if a driver is retired but wishes to retain and renew their licence? Well, after doing some digging and obtaining help from TfL, HMRC and Paul Brennan at the LTDA, I have discovered the following:

If a person is renewing their licence, even if they are not currently using it, they still need to do a tax check and provide TfL (or their licensing body if operating outside of London) with a tax check code. When they initiate the check, they will be asked: What was your tax status for any licensed work done between xx and yy tax year? The choice of responses are one of the following:

- I was:
- An employee;
- Registered for self-assessment;
- Registered for self-assessment and PAYE;
- Did not need to tell HMRC about any income.

If an applicant has a licence which was never used, they could legitimately select the fourth option and declare they had no tax to pay in relation to it.

Next up, a question which seems to be getting asked with alarming regularity by cabbies: What should drivers do if they are self-employed in another field or employed by a company and wish to renew their licence?

The answer to this is quite straightforward. They still need to do a tax check and choose one of those options above. The important thing to note is that the questions relate to the licensed activity only and NOT to any other employment the person may have.

Finally, (and this is the bit where Miner Willy runs out of oxygen and falls off of the platform) your code is valid for a period of just 120 days, after which time it expires alongside a driver's will to live should they time manage badly.

## Bonus life!

As with any decent video game bonus lives are invaluable, and *Manic Miner* is no exception. HMRC, along with TfL, is no exception, either. According to their website, an applicant's existing licence may be extended until a final decision has been made (including one on appeal).

However, if you do not give the licensing authority a valid tax check code your licence will expire on whichever of the following dates is the latest: either 28 days after the licensing authority has asked for your code or the date your actual licence expires.

## Game over!

For some, renewing your taxi licence is a daunting prospect. It's an awful lot of paperwork (or keystrokes if renewing online) and is very difficult to obtain help if and when you need any. Being an LTDA member can be beneficial as there are people who can guide you through

**"To do a tax check and obtain said code, the applicant must have a Government Gateway user ID and password."**

the land of confusion - oh look at that, a second reference to Genesis in a month! - that is the licence renewal form.

However, if you decide to hide your renewal pack underneath a 40-year-old ZX Spectrum (complete with rubber keyboard) and don't fill it out until the last possible moment, do not be surprised if said licence isn't renewed in a timely fashion - it really could be the proverbial 'game over', leading unprepared drivers to morph into a manic cabbies.

To help guide you through, HMRC have produced a webinar which is available on YouTube and outlines changes licensees may find useful.

Guidance is also available on GOV.UK to help you complete the tax check:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-a-tax-check-for-a-taxi-private-hire-or-scrap-metal-licence](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-a-tax-check-for-a-taxi-private-hire-or-scrap-metal-licence)

It's worth remembering that you can contact your accountant if you are facing difficulties in obtaining your tax code. They should be able to guide you through the process and be in a more favourable position in relation to obtaining information from HMRC.

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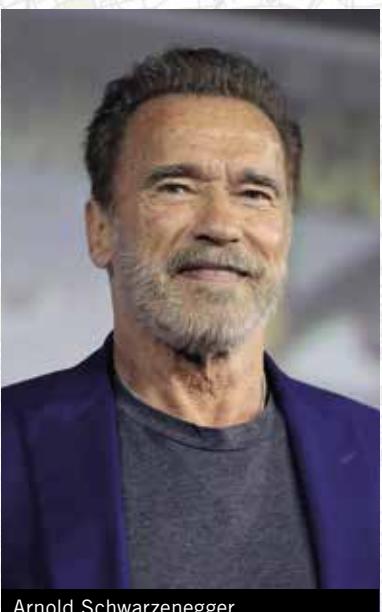
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Arnold Schwarzenegger

## Forest Gate – The Schwarzenegger connection

From *Conan the Barbarian* to *The Terminator*, Arnold Schwarzenegger is the quintessential action hero. Since his film debut in 1969, the former Mr. Universe has 83 acting credits to his name. However, did you know that this particular Hollywood icon has pre-fame links to Forest Gate?

In 1966, Schwarzenegger attended the National Amateur Body-Builders' Association (NABBA) Mr. Universe competition in London. Despite finishing a credible second, behind Charles Yorton, one of the judges, Charles 'Wag' Bennett, was so impressed with Arnie that he offered to train him at one of his gyms and gave him lodgings at his home in Forest Gate.

Living with Bennett not only helped the future actor with his training regime, it aided him to develop a grasp of the English language. In lieu of rent, the giant Austrian took to endorsing Wag Bennett's Pinnacle protein powder. Bennett's training programme taught Arnie how to pose and hold himself during competition; he taught him everything, in fact, right down to the choice of music to flex to.

While living at Bennett's home, a youthful Schwarzenegger met childhood idol Reg Park, who eventually became a friend and mentor. In 1967, he fulfilled his dream by winning Mr. Universe for the first time, becoming the youngest ever victor at just 20.

Arnie eventually moved out of Bennett's home and relocated to Hollywood, seeking fame and fortune and starring in his first film, 1970's *Hercules in New York*.

Bennett also owned a motor factors shop in Gants Hill and his wife, Dianne, ran a women-only gym, which was also located in Forest Gate. Bennett sadly passed away from cancer in 2008, at the age of 78.

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## Dippy the Diplodocus

From 1979 until 2017, the first sight to greet any visitor entering the Natural History Museum in London would have been the full-size skeleton of 'Dippy' the Diplodocus. With its 356 bones and towering 85 feet high, 'Dippy' welcomed over five million visitors during a 38-year stint as door-person at the world famous museum. But did you know that the skeleton was actually a fake?

London's version of 'Dippy' is, in fact, a plaster-cast replica of the fossilised bones of the giant herbivore's skeleton. The original 150 million-year-old frame is actually on display at a museum in Pittsburgh, USA. Although the plaster-cast of 'Dippy' was placed at the front of the NHM some six decades ago, it had been on display at this location since 1905.

The fossilised remains from which 'Dippy' was created was discovered in Wyoming, USA, in 1898. Scottish-American Industrialist Andrew Carnegie originally acquired the skeleton to display at his own newly-founded museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh.

In 1902, King Edward VII, a trustee of the British Museum, saw a sketch of the bones at Carnegie's Skibo Castle home in Scotland. Carnegie agreed to donate a cast to the NHM as a gift, paying £2,000 for said casting. 'Dippy' was eventually replaced at the NHM by the real skeleton of an 85-foot Blue Whale, however, the famed dino is set to return home later this year.

With replicas in many European cities - including Berlin, Bologna, Madrid, Paris and Vienna; as well as Mexico City and La Plata in Argentina - 'Dippy' is officially the most-viewed dinosaur skeleton in the world, and has even featured in the 1975 film *One of Our Dinosaurs Is Missing*, starring Peter Ustinov.



# SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW

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## LONDON?

### The first recorded tornado to hit London

Britain is famous for its unpredictable and erratic weather patterns. And, over the centuries, it has become the butt of many jokes. Yet, did you know that Britain's first recorded tornado touched down on the streets of its capital?

On 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1091, London Bridge (or what was there at the time) was destroyed by a tornado that meteorologists estimate would have rated T8 on the tornado scale. The scale, to put things into perspective, runs from T1 to T10; meaning winds of up to 240mph would have hit what is now known as The Big Smoke.

The ancient bridge and area around what is now famously London Bridge, wasn't the only location obliterated by destructive weather. The Church of St Mary-le-Bow was almost completely flattened, where only a recently-built arched crypt survived. Indeed, the tornado was so fierce that four 26-foot rafters, which helped support the roof's structural integrity, were thrown towards land so that only four feet remained visible above ground. Other buildings were wiped away, including some 600 wooden houses. Incredibly, only two people were killed during the natural disaster.

Due to a lack of meteorological equipment back then, the phenomenon wasn't recorded as the biggest tornado to hit either London or even the UK – that honour goes to the Kensal Rise twister.

On 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2006, at approximately 11:02am, a tornado touched down in Kensal Rise, London. This tornado was estimated to have been T4 on the TORRO scale, equating to F2 on the Fujita one. For context, that equates to being at the lower end of the mid-scale region on both measurement systems. Amazingly, no deaths or injuries were recorded despite substantial damages in the vicinity and 29 homes declared unfit for habitation.

Interestingly, although the US encounters a much higher frequency of tornadoes – around 1,200 per year – England is home to the highest number of tornadoes by measurable area. This was once certified by Guinness World Records stating that England experienced on average 2.2 tornadoes per 10,000 square kilometres between 1980 and 2021.



# 'The Professionals'

## – What sets those with 'The Knowledge' apart from the rest?

**W**hat does it mean to be a professional in 2022? When does an occupation or a job become professionalised? What makes those with 'The Knowledge' different from other "... suppliers of transportation services...?"

A brief background search produces suggestions as to what the make-up of a 'professional activity' might involve. Modern definitions include notions of 'accountability; integrity; competency; knowledge and qualifications' – deprive a Knowledge Boy or Girl of a 5G network and these skills would still exist, though some other 'suppliers of transportation services' might well struggle!

### Some of the key ingredients of 'professionalism' involve:

#### 'The deployment of formal certified learning'

Can other 'suppliers of transportation services' really claim to be engaged in doing this? Possibly, though that might depend on the depth and quality of learning involved in order to be accredited. In what world can those that pass 'The Knowledge' be compared to the learning involved to obtain other road-based transportation service operator licenses?

#### 'A professional owns the power, skills and freedom to problem solve.'

It's pretty certain that an individual having the means to purchase and blindly follow a mobile device with a sat-nav app doesn't meet this threshold. 'Knowledge Boys & Girls' have in-built 'chips and processors' that deploy real knowledge, in real time. Out on the roads, real professionalism isn't dependent on the battery life of a mobile device or if that device knows that the football kicked off late or is going to penalties - which will impact on both journey time and route choice.

#### 'A professional possesses the ability to make decisions in the best interests of others.'

We know that this level of responsibility is based on the use of specific, localised, operational expertise - rather than hoping a digital device can

provide an AA graded Knowledge rating of a route selection in line with traffic conditions, whilst ensuring a disabled passenger arrives at the entrance to their hotel which has suitable wheelchair access and porter assistance.

Those who possess 'The Knowledge' and have responded to the strength of the calling to the highest standards of the profession don't just know the optimum route within an ever-changing landscape, they know its history too. If the formation of a professional identity is also about '**providing a specialised service to society**', those professionals with the ability to share that learning with their passengers are actually, inter-generational custodians of present-day and historical London knowledge. Black cab drivers are trusted 'old school influencers' in relation to the sites, attractions, facilities, services and cultural traditions of the capital – including being ambassadors of a historic trade, which is known as the best taxi service in the world.

All this, whilst transporting passengers in the most direct and safest manner, in accordance with codes, ethics and the standards of a professional community of operators.

Those with 'The Knowledge' have often picked up and are moving before a passenger has informed them of their destination - professionals are not sat around backing up traffic, typing postcodes into gadgets, in the hope a device can professionalise their practice and make them what they are not.

When people are lost - a professional finds them and gets them where they need to go. When they are too tired to go on - a professional takes the reins and when they are late for what's important to them, professional road craft and knowledge get them to their destination safely and quickly.

So how are those with 'The Knowledge' valued and whose responsibility should it be to promote the identities and activities of such professionals, in turn separating them from other "suppliers of transportation services...?"

**You are professionals. We know it.**

**Let's ensure everybody else knows it and values it too.**

**■ The LTDA are here to represent, protect and ensure recognition of the professional practice, identity and standards of our members.**





# The Ever-changing Cabbie Landscape in 2022

During Covid, international contacts in the taxi trade stalled. Worldwide, the industry faces a dramatic driver shortage

## International correspondent

**E**very time I promise to make this column an Uber-free zone and every time I fail. But hey, I can't help it if the 'Evil Empire' is up to its usual tricks. For me, as a taxi and public transport journalist, Uber's a gift that, unfortunately, keeps on giving.

In mid-June, the highest court in Switzerland declared Uber must employ its drivers. Initially unwilling to abide by this decision, they switched off their app in Geneva. A week later, it returned, agreeing to offer employment and minimum wages - but not as Uber, instead via the companies it farms out work to; a trick it started using in Germany to circumvent hundreds of bans.

A few days prior, Belgium's Constitutional Court decided that Uber had worked the streets of Brussels illegally, prompting local taxi operators to seek damages which generated plenty of work for legal firms. In The Netherlands, a legal wrangle between national union FNV and Uber continues, with the former having won an initial case stating drivers must be employed and paid a wage, however the platform then used its favourite tactic: stall and appeal. The court denied the union's demand for a periodic penalty to force Uber to comply with this verdict, so the union is, once again, on the offensive demanding £86,725 for each day Uber doesn't comply.

## Rise in demand

During Covid, international contacts in the taxi trade stalled. Worldwide, the industry faces a dramatic driver shortage, rising fuel prices, increasing platform competition and problems with fleet renewal due to a lack of parts. But in a seemingly perfect storm, demand for taxis is actually on the up, with drivers making more money than ever before. These were just some of the conclusions reached by attendees of a virtual European Radio Taxi Association (ERTA) meeting in May. (ERTA)



Right: Hedy Borreman (TCA Amsterdam): "Amsterdam wants to reorganise the taxi and platform market in early 2023, possibly keeping cabs out of the centre."

Left: No e-cabs for Judith Potter from Black & White Transportation (Toledo, USA): "My nearest charging point is 20 miles away." Photo B&W Transportation.

Bottom Right: Anastasios Evangelou (Taxi Stockholm): "In the evening we can no longer serve Arlanda Airport for late flights."



is ex-Radio Taxis' CEO Geoffrey Riesel's brainchild.) With the support of several cabbie experts, it held 'live' meetings in several of Europe's capitals up until two years ago the last time this 40-strong group met was in Berlin in 2019. This time, however, over a dozen cities across the globe joined in.

Black & White Cabs CEO Gregg Webb commented on the current situation in Australia, saying that the competition with platforms has increased significantly and that, "... the monster Uber has grown exponentially. The government just dropped the taxi trade." It's something drivers notice in a lot of places where regulators seem to turn a blind eye to Uber's regulatory shenanigans. In three states Down Under, deregulation has now been ended but the playing field is still rough and uneven.

## Unpopular Stateside

Judy Potter, of Black & White Transportation of Toledo, USA, said customers in the US have also found their way back to traditional taxis, with Uber's surging prices cited as a deterrent. With 130-150 taxis and minibuses, Potter's company actually can't keep up with demand. There's not a single e-taxi in the fleet, largely due to a lack of financial incentive and missing infrastructure: "My nearest charging point is about 20 miles away," she reveals.

In Poland, e-taxis are the last thing on operators' minds because cab companies have

been busy carrying Ukrainian refugees to reception points, explains Mariusz Bedyniak (Taxi 800 400 400 – Lodz/Warsaw). "The war pushed up inflation and fuel prices rose rapidly," he says. "We now pay 40% more for a litre of petrol. Fares have only increased by 14-20%." Bedyniak calls the driver shortage "catastrophic", stating, "It's very difficult to attract young drivers. And older drivers are looking for other jobs ... Uber and FreeNow will let new customers travel for free for a month."

## Competition worries?

"Lots of vehicles, no drivers," was the verdict coming out of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Robert MacLean of Glasgow Taxis said, "We are back to 2019 order levels but we have no drivers. The competition doesn't worry us. They have no drivers either. Customers have switched to public transport, especially in the evening and at night. There are just no night drivers." However, three Glasgow PHV companies have merged but also charge a booking fee per trip. "That makes them more expensive and less attractive than taxis."

## Europe's wait on a ride

"The taxi business is doing very well," said Anastasios Evangelou of Taxi Stockholm, despite the fact there are seemingly no drivers. Most night workers have stopped with around 2,000 cancelling their access codes for the booking system. "After losing 750 drivers during Covid, we are now back

at 1,450, minus 300, with drivers making more money than in 2019. It's not the competition, but a lack of drivers that's causing us problems. In the evening we can't service Arlanda Airport for late flights. Fuel prices jumped by 30 to 40%, and in our deregulated taxi market, so have tariffs. Fleet renewal is another huge problem: ordering a car today means a delivery in 12-14 months."

Taxi Berlin's Hermann Waldner reported a stark drop in cabs: "Although 80-90% of business is back, we went from 8,300 cabs at the end of 2019 to around 6,000 now. Competition with Uber, Bolt and Free Now is fierce. The number of PHV rose sharply." Demand is up in Paris too, says Armand Joseph Oudin of Taxis G7 (9,500 drivers), and it's the same story over here, with no drivers, high fuel prices and vehicle supply problems hindering the industry. In fact, many G7 drivers have already switched to hybrids as Paris plans to ban diesel cars from 2024.

In Amsterdam, driver shortages are exacerbated when they hop between Hedy Borreman's radio circuit TCA, Uber or Bolt. "Drivers say they would love to take more TCA-work, if they could get something extra on the meter," Borreman shares. Amsterdam is working on re-organising taxis and platforms, keeping cabs out of the city centre and giving preference to app-cabs. In 2025, they all must be zero-emission vehicles and, because the city invested heavily in charging facilities, e-taxis are becoming more popular there.

# Flavours of Naples

## 299 Borough High Street

"Real Italian food, in a real Italian restaurant..."

**L**ondon has literally hundreds of Italian restaurants, everything from commercial chains to incredibly smart, expensive, high-end establishments. Very few of them have the feel or taste, of an authentic and genuine family run restaurant, of the type that are so prolific across the length and breadth of Italy. Flavours of Naples, in Borough High Street, just opposite the LTDA's building on the corner of Great Suffolk Street, is one of these.

From the outside it is non-pretentious and unassuming, it would be easy to walk or drive past and not even notice it. In fact, on the evening we walked in, it felt like we had interrupted a family dinner. It was busy, noisy and so atmospheric that we genuinely could have believed we were in a family run restaurant, somewhere in the back streets of Naples.

At first the menu looked limited, until the waiter brought out the specials board, which was bigger than the menu itself! As we were asking questions, the Italian waiter was joined by the Italian chef, who went into great detail about how he chose the seabass himself that morning at the fish market and why. That settled it for me. What a wise choice it turned out to be, served on a bed of vegetables with grilled potatoes, it was probably the best fresh fish, that I have eaten anywhere outside the Mediterranean. My partner also opted for seafood and had the fish soup, this was simply enormous and filled with prawns, bits of crab, said seabass, vegetables and came with delicious authentic handmade Italian bread.

The wine list looked good and extensive but on that hot evening we settled for the draft Moretti as we chatted to other diners, all of whom were regulars, with one couple coming from as far as



Golders Green! "Worth the trip on the Northern Line," was how they described it. High praise indeed for anyone who knows that tube line well and the distance they had travelled, but after eating there I can see why!

To finish, we shared a wild berries panna cotta, which was as fabulous as the rest of meal. This place really is a find.

If you pick anyone up looking for real Italian food, in a real Italian

restaurant, run by real Italians, at a reasonable price, you can definitely recommend Flavours of Naples.



[www.flavoursofnaples.com](http://www.flavoursofnaples.com)

Food	★★★★★
Service	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Atmosphere	★★★★★

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# The Murder of Allan Jee

**Over the years, London has witnessed some truly notorious crimes. Here's the story of one of them: the murder of Allan Jee.**

## Rob's history tips

**1** 1960 should've been a wonderful year for Jee. Described as 'loveable and quiet', the 23-year-old, who lived on Hall Road, Isleworth, had completed his National Service with the RAF in March of that year and, after being demobbed, secured a position as a trainee engineer. And, on 24<sup>th</sup> June, he'd (successfully) proposed to his girlfriend, Jacqueline Herbert, boasting an impressive diamond ring on her finger.

The pair were apparently inseparable, and spent the following evening at the cinema, after which they returned to Jacqueline's parents' home on Hartswood Road, Shepherd's Bush, to watch television.

The couple bade farewell at around 10.30pm as Allan caught a trolleybus back to Isleworth. For the final leg of his journey, he took a familiar shortcut which involved an alleyway and footbridge in order to cross the railway line between James Street and Chatsworth Crescent.

## The murder

It was here, close to this poorly-lit bridge at approximately 11.17pm, that he encountered

four men with robbery in mind: Norman Harris (who was 23 and nicknamed 'Flash'), Christopher Darby (aged 20), Francis Forsyth (18 and better known as 'Flossie') and Terence Lutt (who was just 17).

Jee had a scant chance of defending himself and, after being punched to the ground, his attackers quickly rifled through his pockets. As most of his money had been spent on Herbert's engagement ring, Allan only had ten shillings on him, leading the infuriated gang to start kicking their victim in the head.

Forsyth, who was wearing distinctive Italian winkle-picker shoes, administered the worst of the blows, and although there were only seconds in it he was the last to flee the scene. The savage assault left Jee with a fractured skull. He died from his injuries two days later at the West Middlesex Hospital.

The investigation into Allan's murder which, unsurprisingly, led to public outrage, was headed by Detective Superintendent Frederick Hickson. However, there was one vital witness who came forward - a man named Anthony Cowell - who'd been at the end of James Street at the time of the attack. He said the men were all 'Teddy Boys' (part of the British youth subculture at the time,

known for a distinct dress style and interest in rock and roll) and provided a detailed description.

Despite this, it wasn't until July 18<sup>th</sup> that the real breakthrough occurred. That day, a youth named Kevin Cullinan also came forward to inform police that his friend, Forsyth, had been bragging about his part in the crime. Cullinan also gave the names of the three others, all of whom he'd seen at a coffee bar with his pal on the night Jee was killed.

It's likely Cullinan's decision to come forward was prompted by the £500 reward (about £8,000 in today's money) which had been offered by *The People* newspaper the previous day.

The offenders - all living in the Hounslow area - were promptly arrested, and police soon discovered traces of Jee's blood on Forsyth's trousers and shoes. It also transpired that Forsyth was a known criminal, having recently been detained from school after assaulting two police officers at London Airport (now Heathrow).

## The trial

At the time of Jee's murder, Forsyth was still on bail and, with his girlfriend pregnant, was an expectant father. Furthermore, Allan had been known to Harris - the pair were once classmates at Spring Grove School, and served in the RAF together.

After pleading not guilty, the men were tried at the Old Bailey in September of 1960. At the trial it was revealed they'd spent that fateful Saturday drinking at The Clay Pigeon in Eastcote, before moving on to the coffee bar in which Cullinan had first spotted them. Despite the coffee, the men were all drunk and, running short of cash, made a conscious decision to mug someone.

It was Lutt (despite being only 17, was powerfully built) who'd initially punched Jee, after mockingly calling out, "Hello, my darling." The kicking, meanwhile, had been triggered by Forsyth, who claimed he'd panicked when Jee began shouting. Pathologist, Dr. Donald Teare, testified that the victim had received five kicks to the head. Darby was the only one to insist that he hadn't used any violence.



Allan Jee

The trial also disclosed that, upon their arrests, none of the gang had displayed any remorse. Forsyth, for example, was recorded as saying, "*I hope I don't go to the Scrubs... We should be out by the time we are 24 with a bit of luck.*"

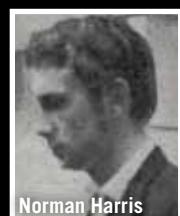
On 26<sup>th</sup> September, it took the jury just 49 minutes to find Harris, Forsyth and Lutt all guilty of capital murder. For Harris and Forsyth this meant the death penalty. Lutt, still being 17, was too young to hang and was sent to prison, while Darby, was found guilty of non-capital murder. Both men were eventually released in 1970.

## The execution

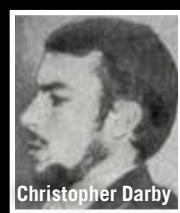
Despite appeals for clemency, Harris and Forsyth were simultaneously taken to the gallows at 9am on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 1960; the former to Pentonville, and latter to Wandsworth. Forsyth's execution, it turns out, was particularly turbulent.

In the days leading up to his hanging, he'd regularly - and unnervingly - been heard ranting and screaming in his cell. As the hours ticked down, other prisoners at Wandsworth kicked up a commotion which threatened to riot. Forsyth was the last ever 18-year-old to be executed in Britain.

In a grim twist, a friend of his, 20-year-old Victor Terry, committed robbery on the very same morning of the hanging, in which he shot dead a security guard. He too was found guilty of murder and, in May of 1961, put to death on the very same gallows Forsyth had taken the drop on.



Norman Harris



Christopher Darby



Terence Lutt



Francis Forsyth

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Badge colour (Please state whether green or yellow) .....

Year badge obtained .....

Suburban badge sector numbers .....

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If Yes how many points do you have?

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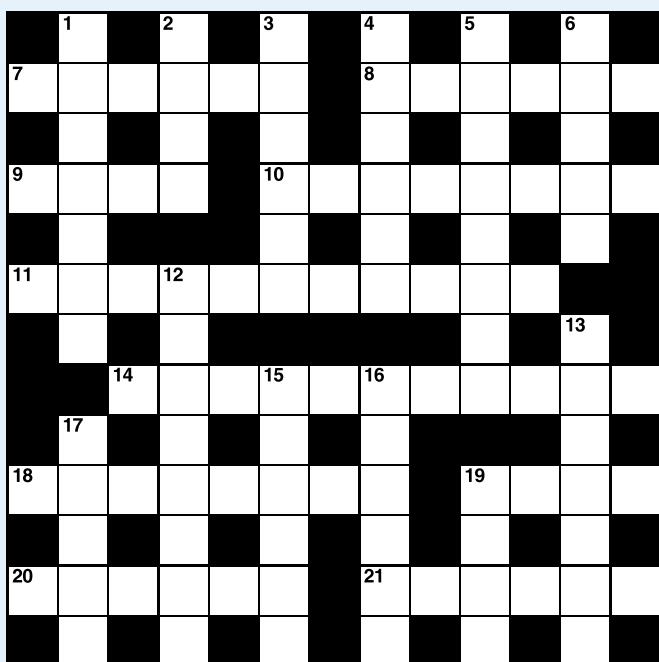
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# Puzzler page

So you know every street and every run between two points in London? Let's now see how your knowledge stands up to these brain twisters...

## Crossword



### ACROSS

- 7 Church officer (6)
- 8 Written order to pay (6)
- 9 Feel irritation of the skin (4)
- 10 Elated, jubilant (8)
- 11 Breathing (11)
- 14 Lacking affection or warmth (4-7)
- 18 Variety of styles for printing (8)
- 19 Powerful aircraft engines (4)
- 20 Way a page is arranged (6)
- 21 Nostrum for long life (6)

### DOWN

- 1 Not one or the other (7)
- 2 Inscribe deeply (4)
- 3 Arouse affection (6)
- 4 Mystic, supernatural (6)
- 5 In the adjacent building (4,4)
- 6 Destroys by fire (5)
- 12 Public call booth (5,3)
- 13 Colourful pen (4-3)
- 15 Shortage (6)
- 16 Square root of 121 (6)
- 17 Bird that imitates human speech (5)
- 19 Prison (4)

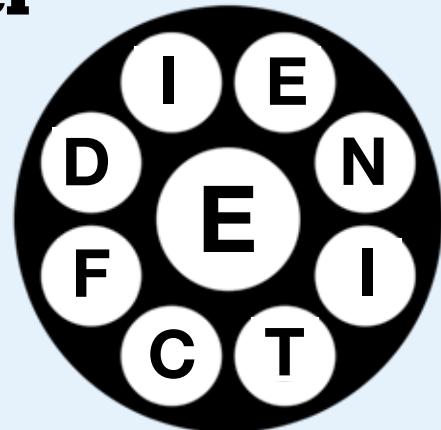
## Sudoku

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.

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

## Wordwheel

How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Wordwheel? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used once only. At least one nine-letter word can be found. We found 39 words - can you do better?



## Futoshiki

Fill in the blank squares so that each row and column contains all the numbers 1 - 5. Use any given numbers and the symbols that tell you if the number in the square is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

4				
		<		
		<		
	<		>	> 2

All answers to  
puzzler on p30

**Puzzler**  
BY THOMAS

**TAXI**

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# Cabbies, Veterans and D-Day Commemorations



**The Taxi Charity has recently returned from six days in Normandy alongside a group of veterans for the D-Day commemorations. TAXI spoke with London Cab Driver, Taxi Charity volunteer and amateur photographer, Dean Euesden, about the trip.**

**TAXI** Hi Dean, great to meet you. We asked you to select four pictures that you had taken in Normandy, was that an easy choice?

**Dean:** Not easy at all! Over the six-day Taxi Charity trip I took hundreds of pictures, but I hope that the ones I have chosen will give people a small taste of what the experience of volunteering and spending time with veterans is really like for us drivers.

**TAXI** Let's talk about the first picture of a veteran at the British Normandy Memorial?

**Dean:** I took this on June 4<sup>th</sup>. The Charity should have been at the opening of the British Normandy Memorial last summer but because of the pandemic's travel restrictions we instead took a group of veterans to watch the ceremony on large screens at the National Memorial Arboretum. This year, the Taxi Charity visit was the largest group of veterans that the memorial had welcomed since it opened. I chose this picture to highlight the beautiful columns that record the names of the 22,000 people who didn't come home. The stunning memorial is situated high above Gold Beach and the view brought many memories flooding back, and I hope my picture reflects this veteran's quiet moment of reflection.

**TAXI** Why did you choose the second picture?

**Dean:** This image was taken after the ceremony at 'Memorial Pegasus', the day before the anniversary of D-Day. I think it really sums up the reaction that we often see from people meeting veterans. The Pegasus Museum is situated by Pegasus Bridge which played such an important part in D-Day. Pegasus Bridge is a road crossing over the Caen Canal, between Caen and Ouistreham, and control of the bridge gave Allies the opportunity to disrupt the Germans' ability to bring reinforcements to the Normandy beaches. The original bridge, built in 1934, is now the centrepiece of the Memorial Pegasus Museum, and during remembrance services a lone piper plays from a high vantage point. This young lady was with a group of Army Air Corps who were on duty for the ceremony, so were invited to



Above: (picture one)  
British Normandy  
Memorial



Right: (picture two)  
This image was taken  
after the ceremony at  
'Memorial Pegasus'

Right: London Cab Drivers and Taxi Charity Volunteers Ian Gray, Dean Euesden and Dave Hemstead

Below: (picture three) 100 year old Roy Maxwell

Below right: (picture four) A group shot of the cab drivers who I spent their time looking after a group of 24 veterans



come and meet the veterans and take some selfies. Many of the group were very moved to meet some of the men and women who had been involved in D-Day 78 years ago. As time passes and we take fewer veterans back with us on each trip, the welcome they receive seems to get bigger, warmer and more poignant.

**TAXI** Who is in the third image?

**Dean:** This is D-Day Veteran Roy Maxwell who recently celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Roy was part of No. 4 Commando in June of 1944, as part of the 1st Special Service Brigade, and landed on Sword Beach. It was great to see the French General make a beeline for him after the ceremony at Pegasus - they exchanged a few words and then stood patiently while hundreds of pictures were taken. While we were in Normandy, Roy visited the small village of Amfreville where he was reunited with Leon, one of the French Commandos. Roy laid a wreath at the No. 4 Commando memorial in the village, accompanied by a band, standard bearers, and dignitaries. Then, he and Leon were presented with commemorative medals from the Mayor for the important role they played in liberating France. All our WWII veterans are now in their late 90s and early-hundreds, so to be able to take them to Normandy really was a privilege and an experience that's

difficult to put into words.

**TAXI** And finally, why did you choose picture four?

**Dean:** This was an easy choice. It is a group shot of the cab drivers who I spent the week with. These men and women are such a great crowd! During possibly the busiest week in London for years, when the city was full of people celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, they gave up the chance to earn and instead dedicated theirs to looking after a group of 24 veterans. We were all assigned a veteran and their carer for

the week. We picked them up from home, drove them to the ferry in Portsmouth, then around Normandy in an escorted convoy meaning no red lights or traffic for us! The joy of spending time with the veterans, hearing their stories, laughing, joking, ensuring they were ok, well fed and didn't have to queue at the bar was such a pleasure!

**TAXI** So, what's next?

**Dean:** The next outing is a day trip to Worthing on 5<sup>th</sup> July. Then, I'm going to join some of the other drivers as we decide on fun ideas to raise funds for the next trips. 

To find out more about the support the Taxi Charity offers veterans visit: [www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org)

## About the Taxi Charity

The Taxi Charity is run by volunteer London black taxi drivers and has been supporting thousands of veterans of all ages since 1948. The charity arranges free trips to The Netherlands, Belgium and France, for acts of commemoration and days out to museums, concerts or fundraising events in the UK, to catch up with friends and comrades.

The charity worked tirelessly during the pandemic to ensure veterans received regular contact by sending out a greeting card each month, gifts to mark the 75th anniversaries of VE and VJ Day, stockings at Christmas and arranging Guards of Honour at veterans' funerals. Volunteers have also helped with regular phone calls, food shopping, transport to hospital appointments and, more recently, taking veterans for their Coronavirus vaccinations.

The charity was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in June, 2021.

To fund and facilitate their work, the charity is reliant on generous donations from members of the public, businesses, and trusts.

[www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org)



# What Time is it? Getaway Time

At least, it should have been.

## A woman of words

**A**fter almost two years locked in the house and locked out of the cab (thanks Covid) I decided Mr Meg and I should have a holiday.

The way the cost of living is going up, it might be our last.

### 'Holiday Road...'

His suggestion for our dream holiday? I drive him to Scotland in the cab ("I can give my legs a good stretch in the back," he said, "very relaxing.") and we live rough, under canvas, for a week.

Camping is for a certain type of bloke who doesn't care when, or even if, they brush their teeth and will happily eat a lettuce unwashed, slugs and all.

They can pee anywhere, anytime

without having to squat in long bug infested grass or cope with nettle stings on their behind.

So, after a civilised discussion (shouty argument), we (I) decided on sunny Minorca. It's a short flight, a quick transfer from the airport and a good half-board deal.

### Passport to Pimento?

What could possibly go wrong?

Quite a lot it would seem. It turns out that Mr Meg's passport is dead as a dodo. It is no more. It has expired. So off he trotted to the Post Office to get forms to renew it and there he met our neighbour Jack who was also getting the necessary forms for his passport renewal.

Because they both qualify as persons who could sign the back of one another passport photos they agreed to complete, and then swap, their forms so each could do the necessary biz.

All they needed to write was 'I

certify that this is a true likeness of Mr Meg/Jack' and then sign it.

What could be easier?

Mr Meg could not get those words to fit on the back of a photo. He spoiled all ten of Jack's passport pics and went over the road to confess they would have to be done again.

Hard to believe but it turned out Jack had done the same to Mr Meg's!

### Photo (un)fit

This pair of Class A dopes returned to Asda's passport photo booth. They redid their pictures and made an afternoon of it because there was a café, where they had a frothy coffee and a Chelsea bun for £1.50.

Mr Meg came home and tried countersigning Jack's photos again but still couldn't make the words fit on the back. His language was choice.

I HAD to step in. In tiny print I wrote the necessities, and, under my stern and watchful eye, Mr Meg



did a teeny-weeny signature.

Want any problem solved? Find a London cabbie.

But there's more. There is a rectangular box on the form for the applicant's signature, and it must stay inside the lines.

Déjà vu. Mr Meg couldn't do it. He went back to the post office to collect more forms. The woman behind the counter said she was reporting him as a high-level security risk, and the purveyor of false passports. He's a marked man to be watched closely (but then I knew that).

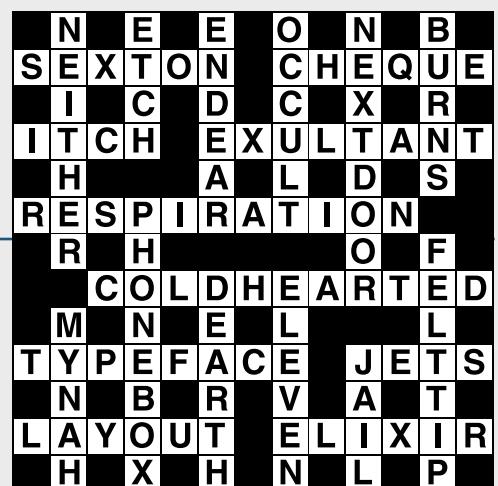
What with a minimum ten-week turnaround time, and a husband who writes in HUGE letters like he's the Jolly Green Giant I think that cab ride to Scotland is looking increasingly likely.

■ TAXI

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- ◆ C & S Taxis, Dunbridge Street, E2
- ◆ Cabsurance, Seven Kings
- ◆ Camberfield Taxi Services
- ◆ Computer Cab, Mitre Way, W12
- ◆ Coney Allen, Dunbridge Street, E1
- ◆ CP Beehive Service Station, Beehive Lane, Gants Hill
- ◆ Cricklewood Carriers, Cricklewood
- ◆ Dial A Cab, City Road, N1
- ◆ Edgware Station Rank
- ◆ Euston Station Rank
- ◆ G & L Taxis, Crayford Road, N7
- ◆ Globe Transmissions, Cudworth Street, E1
- ◆ The Ham, Brentford
- ◆ Heathrow Airport Canteen
- ◆ Hexagon Garage, Lukin Street, E1
- ◆ Jet Garage, Clipstone Street, W1
- ◆ Knowledge Centre, Caledonian Road
- ◆ KPM, Hemming Street, E1
- ◆ London City Airport Canteen
- ◆ LP Motors, Dunbridge Street, E2
- ◆ Martin Cordell, Thomas Road, E14
- ◆ Paddington Station Rank
- ◆ Putney Bridge Taxis, The Arches, Putney Bridge Station, SW6
- ◆ Richmond Road Taxi Centre, E8
- ◆ Safewise Supermarket, Harrow
- ◆ South Bank Service Station, Great Suffolk Street, SE1
- ◆ TAXI HOUSE, Great Suffolk Street, SE1
- ◆ Taxi & Private Hire, Blackfriars Rd, SE1
- ◆ Temple Place Shelter
- ◆ Turbo Accessories, Three Colts Lane, E2
- ◆ Ubiquitous Ltd, E1
- ◆ Waterloo Station
- ◆ Wimbledon Station Rank
- ◆ WizAnn Knowledge School, Watts Grove, E3

## PUZZLER ANSWERS



## Crossword

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## SUDOKU

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

## Wordwheel

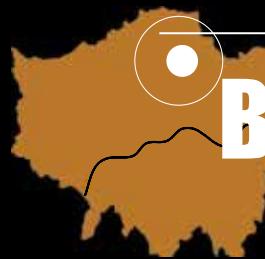
### SOLUTION: DEFICIENT

Cede, cent, cine, cite, cited, deceit, decent, defect, deficit, define, definite, deft, dent, dice, diet, dine, edict, edifice, edit, eidetic, entice, enticed, feed, feet, feint, fence, fenced, fend, fete, fetid, fiend, fine, fined, finite, iced, incite, incited, infect, infected, need, nice, niece, teed, teen, tend, tide, tied, tine, DEFICIENT.

**Word targets:** Excellent: 56, Good: 47, Target: 34, Kids: 29

## Futoshiki

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



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