

COVER STORY

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TAXI

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23rd August 2022 #523

WILL CYCLISTS BE FORCED TO PLAY BY THE RULES OF THE ROAD?

MINISTER CALLS FOR CLAMP DOWN ON DANGEROUS CYCLING



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SELF-DRIVING CARS COULD BE ON UK ROADS BY 2025

The Department for Transport (DfT) has announced that UK roads could see “self-driving vehicles rolled out by 2025.” The government is set to invest a hefty £100 million in trying to make this happen. They are suggesting that some vehicles, including cars, coaches and lorries, with self-driving features could be operating on motorways, as soon as “next year.” The DfT has also set out plans for new legislation to allow for the safe, wider rollout of self-driving vehicles and has launched a consultation on a ‘safety ambition’ for self-driving vehicles. This would inform standards that vehicles need to meet to be allowed to ‘self-drive’ on the roads.

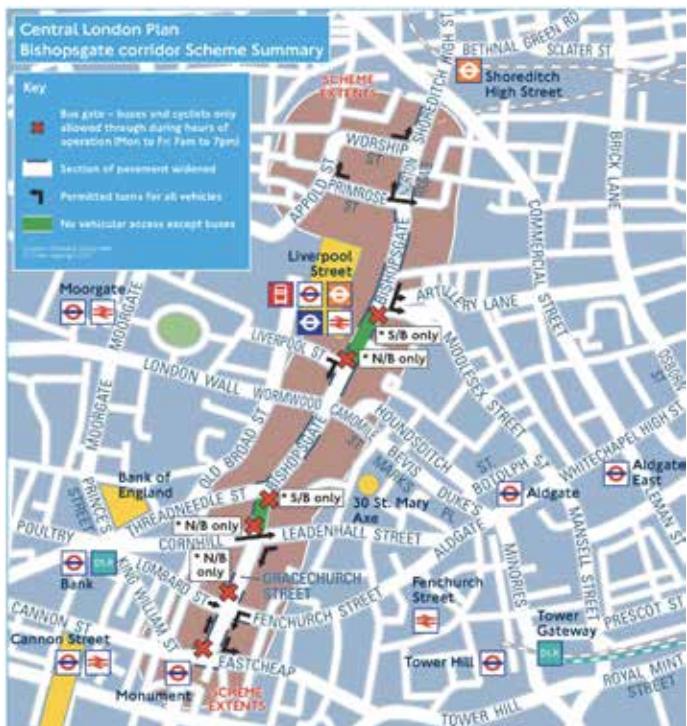
ON-STREET RESIDENTIAL EV CHARGING NEEDS URGENT BOOST, SAYS AA

The AA is calling for an urgent boost in on-street charging to help the 40% of households without a driveway, parking space or garage take part in the transition to electric cars. According to the AA, low numbers of local authorities successfully applying for funding for on-street EV chargers has created “huge black holes” in the UK’s infrastructure.



CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF BISHOPSGATE

TfL are consulting on the future of the A10 Bishopsgate Corridor scheme and the bus gates, which currently deny licensed taxis access to key sections of the vital thoroughfare. Based on feedback from the consultation, TfL will decide whether to make changes to the scheme or if it should be removed or retained. You have until Monday 26 September to respond to the consultation. Drivers are encouraged to respond, highlighting the negative impact of the scheme on taxis and passengers and calling for taxis to be given the same access as buses. https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/bishopsgate/survey_tools/bishopsgate-consultation-survey



EUSTON ROAD CYCLE LANE FULLY REMOVED

Cabbies have been celebrating the removal of the Euston Road eastbound cycle lane. TfL made the decision to remove the controversial cycle lane, as the congestion associated with it, was found to be increasing bus journey times and causing delays for bus passengers. Taxi drivers and members of the public are reporting a huge reduction in traffic and congestion in the area, as common sense has finally prevailed.

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Music for My Ears & Cabbie Poetry

If cyclists are going to keep being given more priority and prominence on our roads, they need to have the same responsibilities and obligations, as the rest of us.



5

Steve's comment

The news that the Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, is at least concerned about cyclists breaking the speed limits has to be good for us. It could may be a sign that cyclists will no longer be given a free ride, when it comes to things like jumping red lights and racing through pedestrian crossings at high speeds, if so, great it's high time the government recognised this!

Common sense

The Secretary of State would appear to be serious, if the comments attributed to him are correct. He reportedly told a *Daily Mail* journalist, "Somewhere where cyclists are actually not breaking the law is when they speed, and that cannot be right, so I absolutely propose extending speed limit restrictions to cyclists. I don't want to stop people from getting

on their bike, it's a fantastic way to travel, and we've seen a big explosion of cycling during Covid and since. But I see no reason why cyclists should break the road laws and be able to get away with it."

The problem is that he will probably only have the job for another few weeks and the new Prime Minister, Liz or Rishi, might appoint someone, less realistic or practical. I'm sure that it's only because Boris is on the way out that Shapps felt secure enough to comment in the first place. It's no secret that Boris' love of all things cycling, as proven by the power he gave his transport adviser, Andrew Gilligan, and the fantastic sums of money given to Ex Olympic Cyclist, Chris Boardman, when he was made the 'Commissioner of Active Travel' to fund his 100+ staff and presumably continue the 'two wheels good, four wheels bad' philosophy, which seemed to emanate from Number 10, under Boris.

We can only hope that whoever the new PM is that they recognise the wisdom in Grant Shapps' words and give

their Secretary of State the go ahead to bring in the much-needed regulation of all things cycling, so that cyclists play by the same rules of the road as the rest of us!

Of course, the cycling lobby have gone absolutely mad, shouting about North Korea being the only other country on earth to use number plates on bicycles. But they are missing the point, as usual. This isn't about how we do it, but one thing is clear, if cyclists are going to keep being given more priority and prominence on our roads, they need to have the same responsibilities and obligations as the rest of us. Just as with motorists, not all cyclists are going to break the law. Many will already be using the roads safely, but we need a system that can deal effectively with those who don't, and that will benefit all road users and pedestrians.

Cabbies and poets

A few months back, we were asked to circulate a request for cabbies with an interest in poetry to team up with some real poets and collaborate on a

project called 'On the Cotton.' As part of this, they would write and perform about what it's like to drive a cab in 2022. I had no doubt that within our ranks there would be some budding, and talented, poets, but when I attended the 'reveal' performance, I was stunned at how good the cabbies were!

It was a hot and humid evening in a tiny venue in Hackney that was absolutely full to capacity, as the cabbies and their partnered poets took to the stage and read their odes to 21st century cabbing. The themes varied, from the light-hearted to some very serious statements, about subjects such as the homelessness we encounter in our travels, and personal tributes to fathers and mentors. Absolutely everyone was impressed with the quality of the performances, and at least one of the cabbies should consider a new career! Once the show has been edited and is posted on YouTube, we will share the link, it's certainly worth viewing!

LTDA



Do We Really Want Empty Streets?

If we followed the philosophy behind these schemes in all aspects of our daily life, we wouldn't leave the house; pick up a knife to cut our food; or, even walk up or down a flight of stairs.



An empty Tottenham Court Road

Top rank

We're now well over halfway through the year and the horrors of the pandemic and the lockdowns now appear firmly in the rear-view mirror. So far, according to some of our more senior members, 2022 has been one of the best in living memory. It's certainly been the best that I've seen in my 26 years. Hopefully, this will be continued through the remainder of the year!

'Dippy toe'

As everyone knows, we were due a good run, as the previous two years were horrendous for our trade. Covid-19 was of course the root cause, but more damaging if you ask me, were the clueless politicians taking a 'dippy toe' approach to policymaking. The never-ending cycle of lockdown, followed by partial re-opening, followed by another lockdown, meant that people didn't know whether they were coming or going. One minute, people were ordered to stay at and work from home; the next, they were told to get back to the office. The rules seemed to change on a daily basis and all

"I know many drivers have now stopped serving areas like the City of London because of the lack of people and the difficulty in gaining access."

of that indecision and upheaval, resulted in work levels being virtually zero, which in turn forced many drivers to find alternative work, to make ends meet.

Thankfully, that is now all behind us. That's not to say we haven't had and don't still have issues. Take the ridiculous low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) that strangely, never seem to be in the high-density council estate areas. Other examples include the cycle lanes and other traffic management schemes, which have popped up in the most ludicrous locations, causing significant disruption for drivers and our passengers. That's not to mention the widespread rollout of 24/7, 20mph speed limits, on roads that were previously 30 or 40mph zones, with no history of speed related injuries or incidents.

The thought process behind such measures might be valid, but in my view slightly warped. If a vehicle is barely moving and comes into contact with someone, then the chance of injury is far lower – that makes sense. But I have to ask myself, when was the last time I travelled south down Park Lane, and someone tried to run across that road? Is a 20mph limit really appropriate for a busy dual carriageway?

If we followed the philosophy behind these schemes in all aspects of our daily life, we wouldn't leave the house; pick up a knife to cut our food; or, even walk up or down a flight of stairs. After all, around 1000 people die each year from falling downstairs!

Now that I have made the powers that be aware of that shocking statistic, I will wait with bated breath for Mayor Khan to announce a new policy that all stairs are to be removed and from this day forth only bungalows or other single storey buildings, will be permitted to be built. Meanwhile, all the skyscrapers in London must be torn down. As a side note, the latter move would be a welcome one by me, I used to think we had a great skyline in London, with a fantastic mix of old and new, short and tall. Now, in my opinion, it's being ruined. Whilst the view from one of the ever-growing rooftop gardens is impressive, the view from everywhere else, is less so.

Empty streets

After I told you in the last edition that the fight to regain access to Bank Junction and other roads was still very much ongoing, I was sent, amongst others, the Tweet pictured here. I was sent this, not I hasten to add, by the original author, but from a pro-road closure activist, showing how everyone thinks 'it's great and that life is so much better now.' When I read the correspondence from the activist, as well as the original Tweet, apart from laughing that they think 'no-one's noticed', I had to stop

and ask myself, do they really look at these pictures and think wow, it's fantastic?

Are they really so blinkered by the lack of cars and vans, that they fail to notice that there's actually a complete lack of anything? Look at the four pictures that accompany the Tweet. Whilst you're at it, also have a look at a similar picture, which I was sent professing the great success of a car free Tottenham Court Road.

What, apart from the lack of vehicles, do these images have in common? There is of course also the very obvious lack of actual people in the pictures, yes, there are a few, but then there's also a few vehicles. If you know that area of the City of London, you know, that apart from at weekends, it was always a very busy area, with pavements that were buzzing with people, as were the shops and restaurants. Well, not anymore, is that really a reason to celebrate a so-called success?

I know many drivers have now stopped serving areas like the City of London because of the lack of people and the difficulty in gaining access, because despite the lack of vehicles here in these pictures, the roads that surround them are now gridlocked. Some common sense has of course been restored. Earlier this week, I had a hassle-free drive eastbound along the Euston Road now that the unused cycle lane has finally gone, and I have no doubt, it will not be the last road returned to its proper use over the coming months.

■ LTDA

The City has largely removed cars from a big chunk of central London without anyone really noticing or complaining too much



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A Legal Team That Delivers

Recent examples, show just how comprehensive the legal cover we offer is and how our dedicated, in-house legal team go out of their way, to do all they can to support drivers.

Streets ahead

We are busier than ever at the LTDA, supporting members with all sorts of issues. Whilst our members are always our top priority, we will try to offer advice and help to anyone in the trade who it needs it, when we can, from a Knowledge

student to a driver who isn't a member.

A key part of the service we offer is 24/7 legal advice and representation on any matter, should you need it. I've said it before, but I will say it again, our legal team really is the absolute best in the business. A couple of recent examples, show just how comprehensive the legal cover we offer is, and how our dedicated, in-house legal team, go out of their way to do all they can to support drivers.

Out of hours advice

A few weeks ago, a cab driver got in touch looking for some help and advice. He wasn't a member, but he was in desperate need of help. He was due in court on a criminal matter a few days later and had no idea how to handle it. We passed his details on to our lawyers, who tried to contact him. When they were eventually able to get him on the phone, it was Sunday afternoon. He was up in court the next day

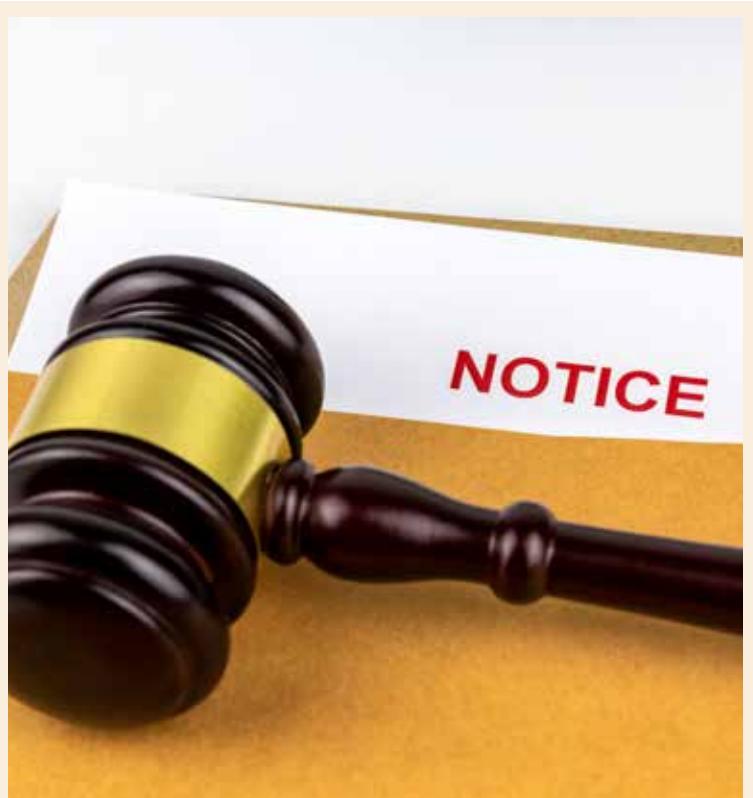
and planned to represent himself on a careless driving charge.

Luckily, he was able to speak to John Luckhurst, one of our lawyers who discussed the case with him and gave him some expert advice on what to do and say in court, based on his vast amount of experience dealing with such matters. The driver was extremely grateful for John's advice, which he was able to use and resulted in him being acquitted of all charges – something which likely wouldn't have happened without the LTDA's help.

The driver said that John and the team at the LTDA, were the first people not to mess him around and to simply give him the advice that he needed, there and then and some actual practical help and support. He was especially impressed that he got all of this out of hours, on a Sunday.

I heard about all of this, as I am also supporting the same driver, with a medical issue. It turned out that the driver was actually a member of Unite. He had contacted them when he first received the summons. They had kept all of his papers for something like six weeks over the Christmas period to review them and come back to him. Eventually, they did get back to him, but only to tell him that they couldn't help him. This had left him scrambling about trying to defend himself at the last minute. He told us that he had also previously tried to get help from his union with a couple of speeding matters, which they similarly refused to assist him with. Again, this is something the LTDA would have tried to help with, if we could. This shows that no other organisation offers its members the same level of support as the LTDA.

This driver was lucky, as we were able to help him at the last minute, but if you aren't a member our legal team can't represent you in court and we can't guarantee that someone will be available to offer advice, when you need it the most. Don't wait until you are in desperate need of help to call the LTDA, call us and join today, so we are always by your side.



Moment of need

Another example is the help the team recently gave to a driver, who has been a member since 2013. He had used the LTDA two or three times previously for assistance with small matters, but when he needed us for something more serious, we were there.

The driver is currently unwell and had been in hospital undergoing treatment. Whilst in hospital, he had received a Single Justice Procedure Notice (SJPN), notifying him of a motoring offence and proceedings against him. When he became aware of the SJPN, after he was discharged from the hospital, he had just two days left to respond. He was still unwell, and this was extremely concerning and stressful for him, on top of everything else. He didn't know what to do, so he called the LTDA.

He spoke to one of our support officers, who then passed his case to the legal team. Time was short. The biggest problem was that the driver had no way of getting the paperwork to the team, so they could assist him. John was out supporting a different member with a legal matter, taking statements from witnesses for his case, when he was told about this driver's predicament. He called the driver straightaway and asked him where he lived. He then asked the member, who he was out with, (who was driving him to interview the various witnesses,) if he would mind making a quick stop out in Barnet, to help out a fellow cabbie. He was very willing to, so John went to the other driver's house to personally collect the papers, so that he could review them and advise on next steps.

The driver was over the moon and couldn't believe how much everyone had gone out of their way to help him. John reviewed the documents and called him the next day to agree how to proceed. The papers were then sent back in time to prevent further action being taken, against the incredibly grateful driver.

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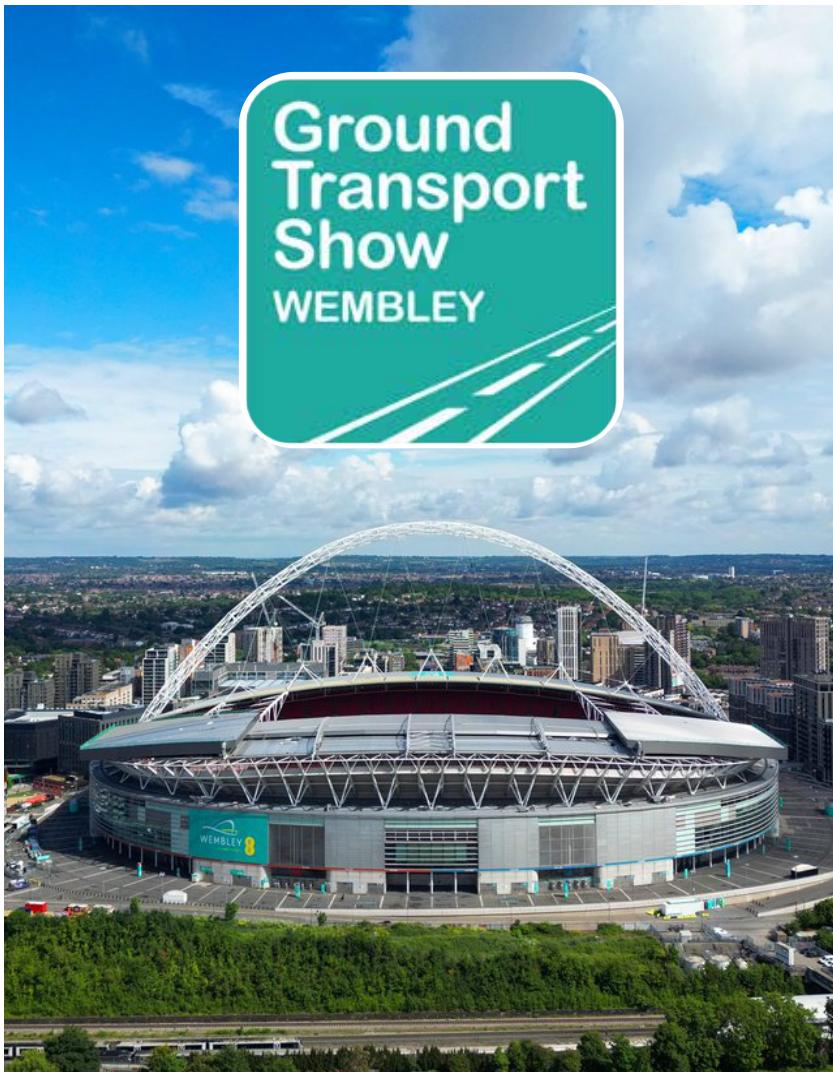
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A Game of Snakes and Ladders

It seems that some people won't be happy until we return to an agrarian economy, ploughing the fields and bartering plant-based chickens for virtual GP appointments.

M4 Musings

It has ever been thus – one door opens, another closes. You climb a ladder, you slip down a snake. No sooner does work begin to remove the ridiculous Euston cycle lane, than a new restriction is placed on the westbound A4 by Sutton Court, removing two lanes, and causing lengthy delays on one of the two main arteries out of town.

These works are due to be in until December, with various full closures planned from time to time. The resulting disruption is already significant, with traffic almost permanently back to the Hammersmith Flyover. Imagine what it'll be like on a busy Friday in October!

Even the most conspiratorial among us, wouldn't believe that these things are coordinated or deliberate. However, the demonisation of motorised transport by government and media, tells us all we need to know about how much anyone cares for those businesses that rely on our roads being managed efficiently and sensitively. And it ain't a lot, if you ask me.

If you're lucky enough to trap a job to the 'flyers' at any point between now and Christmas, make sure you check the traffic and manage customers' expectations accordingly. It's no fun being stuck in a jam, with people worried about missing a flight.

Crisis – which one?

The permanent sense of crisis continues all around us, even as the cab trade seems to be doing ok (thank you very much), even in August. It is however important to note that, while individual drivers may be doing well, there are fewer licences, and even fewer vehicles than five years ago. So, it's possible the overall size of the business is smaller.

We've all noticed the inflation of course, though diesel has slipped down around 15p per litre to 185p at the garage near me. Still very high, but lower than it was a month ago.



"As we constantly point out, the London cab trade has existed in some form or other since pre-industrial times. Generations of drivers have made a living getting people where they want to go, against the backdrop of all the upheavals of history."

Our own costs have also increased. The Taxi Cost Index (TCI) has recently been updated and came out provisionally at 11.6%. Drivers will recall that the tariff was adjusted upwards in April this year, for the first time since January 2020.

Amid the constant roar of the 24-hour news cycle and social media, it can be difficult to pick apart what matters and what doesn't. Enormous energy bills matter, hosepipe bans maybe less so. From our perspective, it's a worry that people will cut back on spending and maybe go out less this winter.

Next PM

Meanwhile, the absurdly protracted Tory leadership race staggers on. Even though the vast majority of members will have voted already, the country

must wait till September 5th to be told who our new PM is.

Whatever either candidate is saying currently, it is overwhelmingly likely that some sort of stimulus package will again be necessary to keep the country afloat through the winter, and this will mean more borrowing. Whoever becomes PM, will have a rocky road ahead and the government's commitment to make the UK 'net-zero' by 2050, might well come under pressure.

The politics of limits

'Net-Zero' refers to the commitment (usually enshrined in law) the UK and other governments have made to reduce carbon emissions to the point that any emissions that are made are 'offset', either by 'carbon capture' (for example by planting more vegetation) or by paying other countries to emit less.

Since the Industrial Revolution, humans have been finding ingenious ways to improve our lives by releasing and utilising the power of carbon trapped underground. Unfortunately, the overwhelming scientific consensus is that this release of carbon into the atmosphere is warming the planet and we have to stop doing it, otherwise all sorts of catastrophes will (may) occur.

This of course is where the lines become blurry. It reminds me a little of the argument surrounding lockdowns; how much is it reasonable to restrain

economic activity to achieve a certain goal, when it's so difficult to quantify costs, which won't become fully apparent until later?

But here's the rub, especially for us as an industry – to what extent should individual taxi drivers shoulder the burden of the transition away from fossil fuels. The answer appears to be limitless. At least, it does in the eyes of the many commentators and activists, who see fit to meddle in our business and its operating conditions.

We've already paid substantially with the age limit reduction from 15 to 12 years, taking thousands of perfectly good vehicles off the road. We are also paying more in rent or lease payments for ZEC cabs. The cost of charging is also only heading upwards and on top of that, we are restricted in our physical access to streets and premises, increasing our own costs and ultimately the cost to passengers, who choose our service.

It seems that some people won't be happy until we return to an agrarian economy, ploughing the fields and bartering plant-based chickens for virtual GP appointments. I think it's symptomatic of a sort of nostalgia for so-called 'simpler times', which never really existed. By all accounts, life was pretty crap for the average person before the Industrial Revolution. Improvements in living standards and life expectancy were hard won by the nous of inventors and the sweat of workers. If you ask me, it's a betrayal of those who came before us, to focus squarely on clamping arbitrary restraints on economic activity to solve this problem.

As we constantly point out, the London cab trade has existed in some form or other since pre-industrial times. Generations of drivers have made a living getting people where they want to go, against the backdrop of all the upheavals of history. I'm willing to bet that no matter what happens, people will still want cabs in the year 2122.

Good luck out there. ■ LTDA

London's Black Cab drivers tell us more about using ride-hailing apps.

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London Black Cabs are one of the most iconic features of the city, and with approx. 14,600 Black Cab drivers in London, the trade also plays a big part in people's livelihoods. With the ride-hailing apps becoming more prevalent over the last decade, the landscape of the London taxi trade is changing. This month, we're speaking to 2 of London's Black Cab drivers about the role ride-hailing apps play in their day-to-day lives.

Tell us a little bit about you as one of London's Black Cab drivers.

"I'd say London really is the only place where people aspire to be a Black Cab driver. Of course there are Black Cabs or Taxis in cities around the world, but the Black Cab has become one of London's most iconic features. The Black

Cab is so ingrained in the city's culture, there's a sense of pride associated with working in the trade.

Being a black cab driver is exciting. Due to the nature of the job, no day is quite the same. I could start the day at home in Essex, and find myself on a job to Stratford-Upon Avon. It means I get to see so many places, and meet so many different people - it's fascinating!

The best bit is that you have no boss to report to at the end of the day - I decide when or where I want to work, which gives me a level of flexibility that I don't think is very common for most jobs. As long as the bills are paid, I work according to what suits me."

What are your thoughts about using Ride Hailing Apps? What are the benefits vs. purely using street-hail?

"Access to more customers & different quality of work is probably key. With technology being what it is now, a lot of

passengers hail a cab through an app - it makes life easier for them. More passengers now also hail from home or work, which tend to be better quality jobs compared to street-hail.

If I was using street-hail only, I would likely follow the same, or a similar, route into London from home every day. However, by using a ride-hailing app, I could pick up a job around the corner that I wouldn't have gotten if I drove my usual route. It's generally a good way to connect more drivers with more passengers.

It's probably worth saying that street-hail is where the trade started, and is still a key part of being a Black Cab driver, but with passengers using ride-hailing apps more, I would recommend using these to supplement street-hail work where you can."

Why do you drive for FREE NOW?

"FREE NOW are great in that they offer the passenger the chance to book a cab from the comfort of their own home. Compared to other Black Cab apps, FREE NOW offers a much lower commission, meaning you can still maximise your earnings, maintain the flexibility of your work, and have access to more customers. Of course this doesn't outweigh street-hail but is fair for the extra work they provide for drivers."

How do you use the FREE NOW app as part of your job as a Black Cab driver?

"The great thing about FREE NOW is that I can use it alongside street-hail. When street-hail gets quieter, it's often a great time to pick up the app to check on other available jobs to fill my time and maximise my earnings. The pre-book option is also a great tool to use during those quieter times."

Unsurprisingly, using street-hail doesn't always allow for much planning. So when I come to the end of a long day, I like using FREE NOW's 'On The Way' feature, which

allows me to pick up a job that takes me closer to home. That way I maximise my earnings for a trip I would have driven anyways."

What is the best feature of the FREE NOW App?

"Definitely the pre-book functionality. As a driver with an electric black cab, I can find a charging point close to the location of a pre-book job, and know I will have a guaranteed job as soon as the car is fully charged up. When it comes to minimising wasted time, the pre-book functionality is a life saver."

What are your thoughts about FREE NOW's Green Pledge? Have you used it? Would you recommend it to drivers?

"It's great! We all need to play a part in keeping our planet clean, and passengers are equally becoming more environmentally conscious. The FREE NOW Green Pledge helps drivers make that step towards what can be a pretty pricey purchase, and all FREE NOW asks is that you complete 25 jobs per month over 12 months. - that's less than 1 job per day, so totally worth it in my opinion."

Final question. What's your favourite place to drive in London?

"Knightsbridge, partly because you tend to get pretty good quality customers. Alternatively Notting Hill & Hyde Park - especially when the sun is shining. It just makes me happy."



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Taxi Lingo from the US

Did you know that Arthur McBride, a Cleveland taxi boss, financed the first 'taxi squad'?

International correspondent

In the research for my last column, looking for cultural taxi clues, I discovered by accident Uber is not a valid Scrabble word (and probably won't be until Uber acquires the producer of Scrabble: Mattel/Hasbro). However, 'bolt' is a Scrabble word, but strangely enough has no transportation connotation in the Scrabble world. Taxi, taxis and taxicab(s) are valid Scrabble words, according to the Scrabble Word Finder, but taxidriver isn't, whereas cabdriver and hackdriver can be used on the board: just like cabbie, cabby and taximan. A bit weird and arbitrary for the taxi trade, don't you think?

Whilst looking at cultural connotations in the taxi trade for a new book on taxis and private hire – a truly rich tapestry, by the way – I wondered whether TNCs (Transportation Network Companies like Uber, Ola, Bolt, Lyft and others) in the few years of their existence (compared to the taxi trade) had built up a dictionary of terms and expressions unique to their trade, just like the taxi one has. I somehow doubt it. Words like bilker, butterboy, roader and single pin are as common in London's cabbie lingo as an expression like 'Fackel' (torch, flare) for roof light or 'Hungerlampe' ('hunger light', when lit) is to Berlin's taxi drivers. When you start digging in the rich cultural heritage of the taxi world, you make wonderful and surprising discoveries all over the world.

Pizza-Taxi

From the start of the (motorised) taxi trade (in London, 1897, with the electric Bersey's), the term 'taxi' has not only become the label for transporting people, but has also become the go-to word to link speed and efficiency to other products or services. In the 1980s, the term 'Pizza-Taxi' suddenly became a popular term in Germany for pizza-delivery by cab or by cars posing as taxis. Recently, I saw a pic of a 'Rubbish-



Taxi'. The term didn't refer to the quality of the service carried out, but referred to transporting – you guessed it – rubbish.

Judging by the number plate it was UK-registered. Often the word taxi is used to infer a wide and influential spread of services and many contacts, like the web-mag 'Design Taxi'.

A football expression with taxi roots

In my last column, I introduced 'taxi dancer' as one of these typical cultural expressions somehow inspired by the taxi trade. Another one I bumped into recently is even more interesting: 'taxi squad'. Although a 'taxidance' refers to the taxi practice of hiring (a cab, a person) for a short time (a trip, a dance), the practice has no links with the industry itself. But the American roots of 'taxi squad' actually have something to do with the trade. If you're a follower of American football, you will have seen the word 'taxi squad' popping up recently in the media as the regular American football season begins.

The word 'taxi squad' dates back to the 1940s and most US football teams have one; even in Fantasy Football. Here is one definition: 'A taxi squad allows you to "stash" players off the active roster while earning playing time in the National Football League (NFL). These are typically rookies or second-year players. It can vary depending on league rules.' During times of Covid, these 'taxi squads' became even more popular as players had to be able to step in on short notice for

players who went down with the virus. The US National Hockey League (NHL) also used these reserve players extensively during the 2020-2021 (Covid) season.

No need to drive a cab

But where does the term 'taxi squad' actually hail from? And was there really a 'live' taxi connection? It turns out the term was also coined during the '40s by the Cleveland Browns football team. Coach Paul Brown invented the term when he wanted to hang on to a group of promising players who didn't make the first team. He didn't want to lose them, so the Cleveland Browns owner, Arthur McBride, put them on the payroll of the taxi company, Cleveland Yellow Cab Co, he owned. The players didn't even have to drive a cab! That's how the term 'taxi squad' was born and would ultimately be adopted by the NFL.

McBride was a colourful character. Besides running cab companies, he was also a real estate developer and an investor active in Cleveland, Chicago and Florida. Besides taxi cab companies in Cleveland, he ran a horse racing newswire that sold information to bookmakers. Even more interesting was that he had ties to organised crime figures arising from his wire service, but was never arrested or convicted of a crime.

Berlin taxi slang 'hunger light': when the roof light is on, the driver is hungry for work.

A taxi squad allows teams to 'park' promising players as reserves.

Lack of drivers

In 2017, McBride's son, Brian, closed Cleveland Yellow Cab after 90 years in business. He didn't complain about the competition from Uber and Lyft, but blamed the demise of the company on a lack of succession plus tough regulation and a lack of drivers. For one thing, Uber and Lyft drivers don't have to pass a test required by the City of Cleveland to get licensed as a driver, McBride said. According to him, 95% of the past 50 people he had take the test ended up failing. That says something about the toughness of the test, although not the Knowledge itself, but likely the quality of the drivers for the local TNCs.

And, in case you're wondering whether 'taxi squad' is an official Scrabble word, unfortunately it's not. It would be a great opportunity to get rid of that damned difficult 'q' in a lengthy word though!

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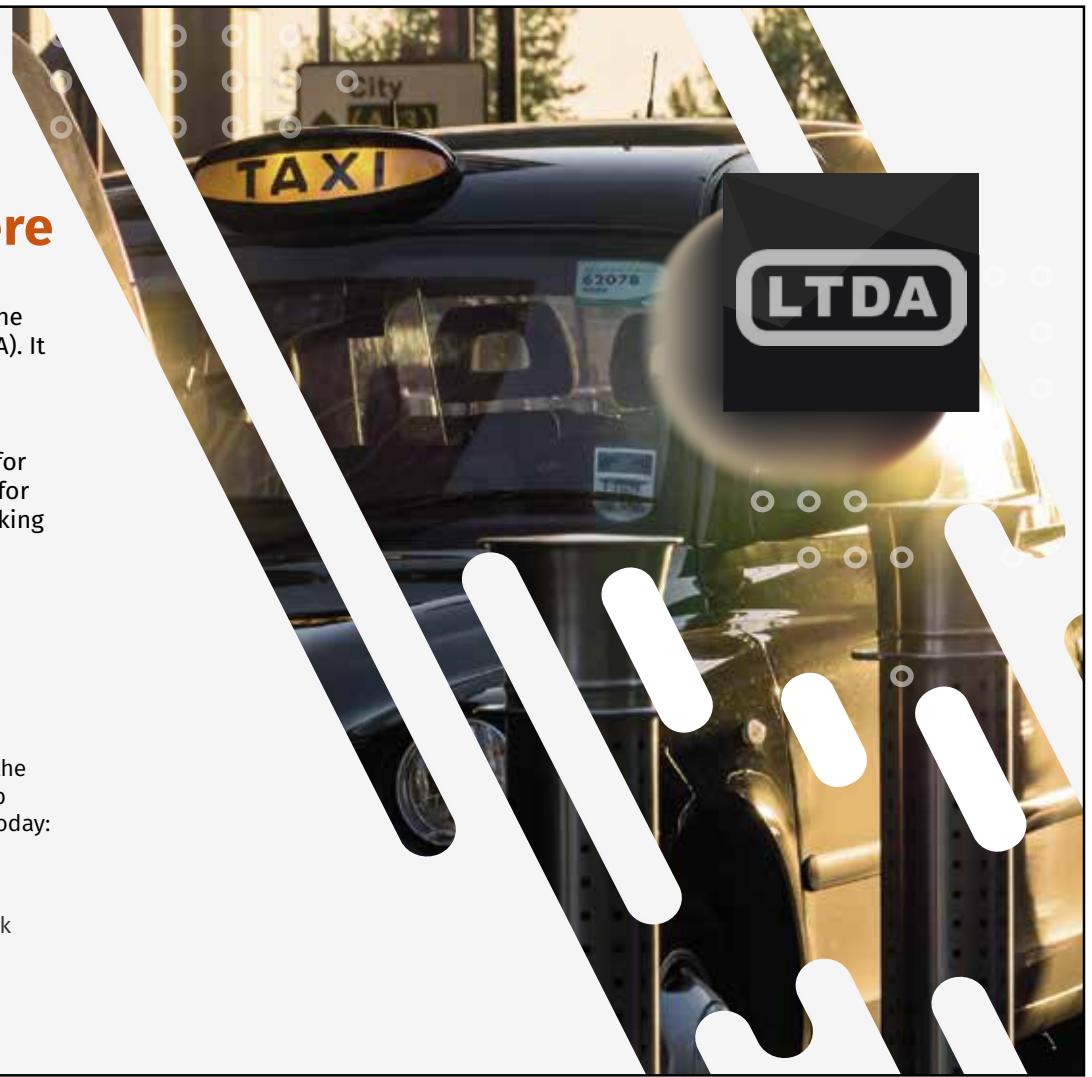
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Jackanory: A Taxi Driver's Tale

The world lost a legend this month, so here's a short story in honour.

A man in black

The 27th July, 2022, was a sad day indeed. Everybody's favourite children's storyteller, Bernard Cribbins, passed away at the ripe old age of 93. The veteran of stage and screen appeared in an incredible 114 episodes of *Jackanory*, spanning 25 years. In honour of this legend, I shall recount to you a more adult-orientated story - so sit back in your favourite armchair (or chaise-longue for the more bohemian amongst you), relax with your beverage of choice and I shall begin.

Once upon a time in London

Once upon a time there was a London taxi driver called Sid, he was a middle-aged man who had been driving a cab for a very long time. After many years of service he was acutely aware that his job required him to act professional at all times and remain cooler than a penguin's pantry. He knew that the overwhelming majority of his customers were fine, upstanding people who just wished to get from A to B safely and without fuss. He also knew that there was a small minority of ne'er-do-wells skulking around London's busy streets intent on causing trouble. Although his instinct to avoid aggravation was usually impeccable, one evening Sid's finely-tuned aggro-detector failed him.

Cheap sunglasses

It was a warm Saturday evening in late July. Sid was driving eastbound along Tooley Street, looking for work.



The ZZ Top classic *Cheap Sunglasses* was playing on the radio and, as if art were imitating life, Sid was also wearing cheap sunglasses. Upon reaching the junction of Tooley Street and Bermondsey Street, the cabbie came to a halt for a set of red lights. He was then approached by a middle-aged man who

said: "Old Street Records, mate", as four men got into his car.

Unfortunately for Sid, the job had started badly, with the last person to enter the cab struggling to close the door. Sid asked the customer not to try to shut the door with the exit handle, instead urging him to use the door-pull. Unexpectedly, two of them began shouting verbal abuse. This troubled Sid, but he chose not to react to the abuse, putting it down to over-exuberant merriment.

A bridge too far

Now, despite driving a new taxi, two of the four men were telling our cabbie how he was driving a "sh*t cart". They also claimed that the man who initially hailed him was also a cabbie. Sid interrupted their expletive-imbued diatribe to explain that he was going to have to go over Tower Bridge due to London Bridge being closed northbound. Quick as a flash the youngest passenger said "Don't take the p**ss, it's open to buses and cabs northbound." Although rather taken aback by the response, Sid replied: "Yes, you are right, but the bridge is shut northbound for roadworks." A verbal tirade was aimed at Sid, with two of the passengers now becoming aggressive and threatening. The bemused cabby had taken as much as he was going to and decided to act.

Luckily for the hapless cabbie, the volume of traffic in Tooley Street was so heavy that the vehicle had moved less than 200 yards. Without warning Sid did a U-turn and started to head westbound. The confused passengers then threw more verbal abuse at him, before one of them asked what he was doing. Sid, with a rye smile on his

face explained that since he was a firm believer that the customer is always right and was repeatedly being called a liar and a p**ss-taker, he would take them over London Bridge as far as he could. One of the passengers then said: "But you said it's shut..." To which Sid said: "It is, but since they didn't

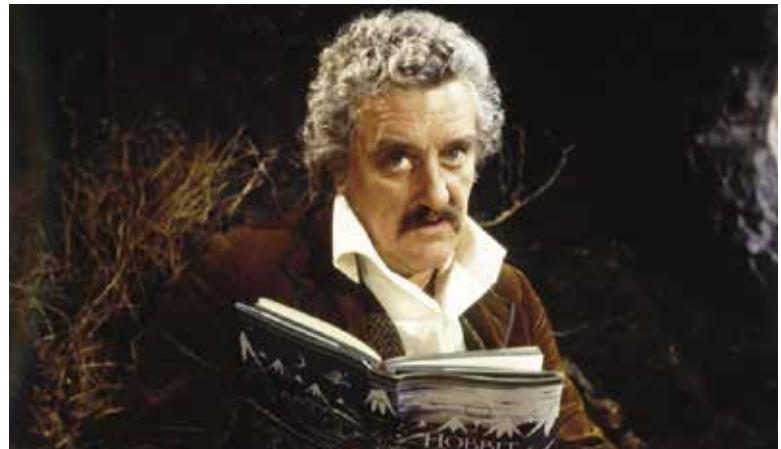


Image from BBC.co.uk

believe me he would show them and then take them over Tower Bridge, at no extra charge."

Sid had been doing the job long enough to know that he wasn't going to get paid, so it was no surprise to him when two of the four men told him, in an expletive and threat-ridden rant, that he wasn't going to be paid, even if he was right about the bridge. Sid then brought the taxi to a standstill and told the passengers that their journey was over.

Enough is enough

Now, Sid believed that he wasn't going to be paid the £6.20 on his meter. However, he was in for a surprise, one which left him rather banjaxed. The passenger who it had been claimed was a taxi driver went to pay him. The cabby was completely thrown by this and told the middle-aged passenger to keep his money as he wasn't interested. However, the man persisted badgering the cabby to take it. Eventually, Sid settled on a fiver but the story doesn't end there.

When Sid got home he was so incensed at what had happened that he decided enough was enough. He then went online and filed a police report regarding 2 of the passengers who had directed the threatening and abusive behaviour. Sid then went to bed a happier man.

The end!

Sorry, Bernard, I've just murdered *Jackanory*.

Report, report, report

As you've probably figured out, I am 'Sid'. The incident happened at 9.15pm on Saturday, 30th July. And I am glad I filed a report instead of just wiping my

mouth. But why?

With tube, bus and emergency service workers, who are all potential victims from an abusive and threatening public. They collectively have one thing in common: they are protected by a zero tolerance approach to abuse from their employer. This then begs the question as to why taxi drivers should have to put up with it? The simple answer is that cabbies shouldn't have to accept abuse and threats, nor any other form of intimidation.

Since 2014, there have been over 1,000 criminal acts against taxi drivers, year on year (the period during Covid restrictions excepted). This statistic is just the tip of the iceberg as many crimes against cabbies go unreported.

Making a police report online is relatively simple and takes around 15 minutes. It is important to collate as much evidence as you can - along with any dash cam or video footage to help corroborate your report.

Some may feel that making a report is a waste of time, there is a perception that very little is done. However, making a report is important in relation to shaping how cabbies are protected in the future. We are living in a world where statistics are key and cannot be ignored, therefore the taxi industry needs to protect itself by making sure the statistics are reflective of the severity of the situation.

Reports can be made to the following website:
<https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>



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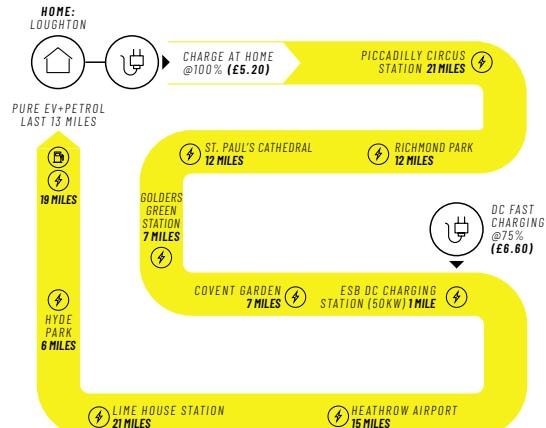
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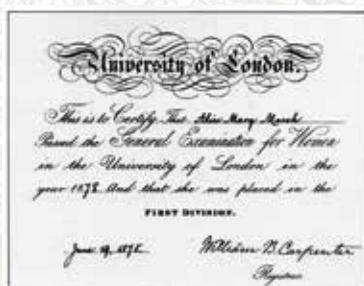
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The world's first female university students

As of January, 2022, there are 165 universities and higher education institutions across the country, with 18 of those situated in London. In fact, London is home to more universities than any other city in the UK. But did you know that it was in June of 1868 that the University of London's Senate had voted to admit women to sit the General Examination, thus becoming the world's first university to accept women?

Almost 12 months later, on 15th May, 1869, the 17 examiners of the University of London gathered at Somerset House to assess and grade the university's first General Examination for Women, where nine candidates had sat earlier that month.

After assessing the women's papers, the examination board awarded honours to six of the nine: Sarah Jane Moody, Eliza Orme, Louisa von Glehn, Kate Spiller, Isabella de Lancy West and Susannah Wood. The remaining three students - Mary Anne Belcher, Hendilah Lawrence and Mary Baker Watson - failed to pass. However, all nine were considered to be trailblazers in relation to women's higher education.



But, despite passing the General Examination, the successful women didn't even receive a degree. Instead, they received a Certificate of Proficiency. Another decade would pass before women were admitted to the university's degree programme, with London, again, the first to offer this option to women students.

They were required to pass at least six papers, ranging from Latin to English language, English history to geography, mathematics and natural philosophy. Two from Greek, French, German and Italian, and either chemistry or botany were also required.

Despite the prejudices attributed to the era, women were expected to attain a similar level to their male counterparts. Nowadays, the gender gap has reversed with 25% more women attending university than men.

The hanging of Jack Sheppard

For centuries, hangings for both minor and major criminal offences were commonplace. People used to travel from far and wide to witness the hanging of some rascal who may have stolen a loaf of bread or robbed some dignitary of his pocket watch - but only one managed to attract a crowd of 200,000 people, or a third of London's population. The hanging in question was that of the thief and burglar, Jack Sheppard.

Born in 1702, the apprentice carpenter's criminal career began in 1723 and lasted just one year. He was arrested and imprisoned five times, but escaped from incarceration an incredible four. This made him a highly popular but notorious figure.



On Monday, 16th November, 1724, after being caught for a fifth time, Sheppard was taken to the gallows at Tyburn to be hanged after being tried and convicted. He planned one more escape, but his pen knife, which was to be used to cut his restraints on the way to the gallows, was discovered before he left Newgate Prison.

Sheppard's final journey saw him travel in a cart along Holborn and Oxford Street, through a huge crowd lining the streets. The procession halted at the City of Oxford tavern on Oxford Street, where Sheppard drank a pint of sack. Upon reaching Tyburn, a carnival atmosphere pervaded in honour of the villain's life.

Sheppard was eventually led to the gallows, where he died a painful death through slow strangulation. Due to his small frame his neck failed to break, prolonging his agony. The huge crowd lurched forward to prevent his body from being dissected; however, this actually thwarted an attempt to save his life.

Sheppard's body was finally recovered and he was buried at St Martin-in-the-Field.

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW

LONDON?

Of mice and men

There are over 1,500 statues sited in and around London, but none are smaller than the statue of two mice eating a piece of cheese.

This tiny structure, built in 1862, is situated on the corner of a building at the junction of Philpot Lane (named after Sir John Philpot, Lord Mayor of London between 1378-1379) and Eastcheap, in the City of London.

It is believed that the story behind the statue is quite a tragic one. During the construction of The Monument to the Great Fire of London, two men who had been working at the top of the structure stopped work for lunch. Although the pair were friends, trouble was brewing because one had discovered that his cheese sandwich was missing. An accusation of theft was made by one of the workers against the other and a fight broke out.

Tragically, both men fell to their deaths from the top of the monument. It was later discovered that nobody had stolen the cheese sandwich, except for some mice who had taken residency on the construction site.

To commemorate the unfortunate demise of the bickering friends, London's tiniest statue was built in their honour. Sadly, there is no actual record as to who built the memorial, and so remains a mystery.



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A Grizzly Luncheon for Jack Tratsart and His Unsuspecting Family

The story of a man devastated by mental illness and parental jealousy.

Rob's history tips

First established on Piccadilly in 1894, J. Lyons & Co. was once one of Britain's largest restaurant chains, and for many decades their corner houses – where the public could pop into bright, welcoming surroundings for a reasonably priced meal – were a regular staple on Britain's high streets.

Sadly, in April of 1945, their Oxford Street branch would bear witness to a scene of horror...

Born in Epping, 1918, Jack Tratsart was a slim, bespectacled fellow who worked as a toolmaker. He was the oldest son of Jean and Adrienne Tratsart, a Belgian couple who'd come to Britain as refugees at the start of World War One.

Jean and Adrienne were devout Catholics, and Jack – who was raised in a loving, stable home at 27 The Chase, Norbury – eagerly embraced his parents' religion.

He had a number of siblings, including Claire and Hugh; both of whom suffered a neurological condition: Claire had epilepsy, and Hugh a mild form of cerebral palsy.

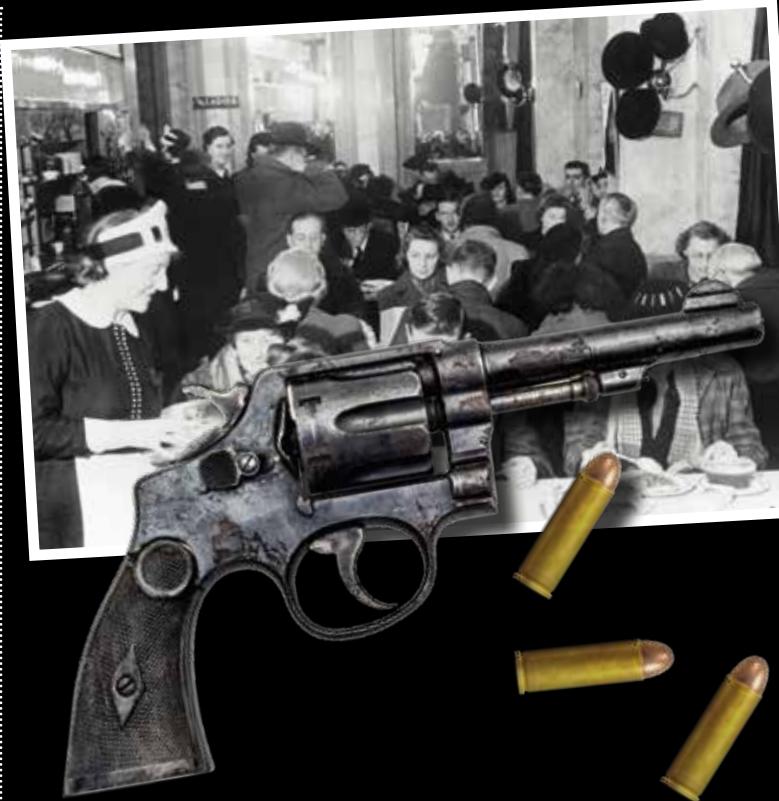
Jack himself suffered from what is now known as bipolar disorder, and as such went through severe bouts of depression.

This was gravely compounded in early 1936 when his mother died of cancer; a tragic event which led Jack to renounce his faith in God.

In an attempt to escape the anguish, Jack moved to Belgium for a year to study engineering. This didn't ease his pain though, and when he returned to Norbury, Jack was outraged to discover that his father was now in a relationship with a woman named Francis Chamberlain.

Jack seethed with malice towards the pair (even though his siblings had warmly embraced Francis) and the situation grew so bad, Jean had to ask his son to leave.

Jack promptly did so, and secured a bedsit on nearby London Road. Before long, the



Second World War erupted, leading Jean to evacuate his family to Northamptonshire.

Due to work reasons, Jack remained in London, although as the war raged around him, his depression intensified and he became convinced that Armageddon was at hand.

He was also suffering from insomnia, and often went without sleep for days at a time. One night, in 1944, this distressing state led Jack into a failed suicide attempt when he leapt three storeys from his bedsit window. After this, his landlady could cope no more and kindly asked him to leave.

Jack did so, and returned to the family home at The Chase, which by now had been empty for several years.

By spring 1945, the war in Europe was nearing its end.

As such, Jean, bearing an air of optimism, began making plans to move his family back to Norbury and tentative steps were made to reconcile with his estranged son.

Although Jack did engage with his father, and the pair bonded as they carried out renovations at The Chase house together, Jack still harboured much animosity.

Jean didn't seem to pick up on this though, and although Francis (who was now married to Jean) refused to go anywhere near Jack, he suggested the rest of the family should get together for a small reunion.

The chosen venue was the large Lyons Corner House at the eastern end of Oxford Street, and so, on the afternoon of Friday 20th April, 1945, Jack caught a bus to Tooting Bec where he switched to the Northern Line.

As he sat on the tube, other passengers may have noticed the young man looked haggard and red-eyed; for he hadn't slept in three days... although nobody saw that, in his drab, grey suit, he concealed a Smith & Wesson revolver which he'd recently purchased from a Canadian sailor.

After exiting The Underground, Jack didn't have to walk far. The Lyon's Corner House was opposite Tottenham Court Road station, and by 5pm he was sitting at a table with his father and three siblings: Anne (13), Hugh (17) and Claire (29). Also present was his much beloved Aunt also named Claire.

As the family drank tea amongst the hubbub of the crowded cafe, Jack slipped the revolver from his jacket, aimed

it at his sister Claire's head, and pulled the trigger.

Nothing happened.

Amongst the noise and chatter, only Hugh seemed to notice this and grinned, thinking his older brother was playing a prank.

Jack tried (and failed) again, and this time his other relatives did see, asking "...what have you got there?" To which Jack replied it was a 'water pistol'.

Cursing, he fiddled with the gun beneath the table and realised his error: the hammer wasn't clicked in place.

Now ready, he once again whipped out the revolver and fired, shooting his sister, Claire first at almost point-blank range, then, as diners dove beneath tables, Jack shot his father, then Hugh before attempting to shoot himself in the head, which failed.

Before he could try again, several waiters and a soldier on leave wrestled him to the floor, and in the chaos, Jack managed to hurl the revolver into a chandelier, and it would take some time before the weapon was eventually discovered.

Once apprehended, Jack remained unnervingly calm, despite Claire laying dead nearby. His father, barely alive, was rushed to Middlesex Hospital where he later died. Fortunately, Hugh survived and made a quick recovery.

In custody, Jack explained to police that, due to their neurological problems, he'd pitied Claire and Hugh, and considered shooting them as a mercy killing.

As for his father? That murder was committed out of pure hatred.

After being deemed unfit to stand trial in May of 1945, Jack Tratsart was detained at Broadmoor, where, two years later, he finally succeeded in taking his own life with a shard of broken glass.

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Movie Corner

Film critic Amon Warmann offers us some spoiler-free insight into the latest UK cinema releases, from *Nope* to *Mr. Malcolm's List*.

Reel Talk



Nope (15) ◐

Jordan Peele's third feature confirms that there's no other person in Hollywood today who's quite like him. It focuses on siblings OJ (Daniel Kaluuya) and Emerald Haywood (Keke Palmer), inheritors of a California horse ranch who spot a mysterious unidentified flying object in the skies above them. Their quest to capture evidence of the UFO leads to a story that by turns skewers the industry, our constant need for spectacle, and the poor treatment minority talent has had to deal with.

That smart subtext is what makes *Nope* one of the best films of the year so far, but Peele's latest also works as an entertaining sci-fi/horror tale. The writer-director crafts some excellent scares – a sequence set in a barn is especially noteworthy for how it builds tension, and the UFO remains terrifying even as it becomes less mysterious. Hoyte van Hoytema's stunning cinematography, meanwhile, is especially memorable in the film's final third (see *Nope* in IMAX if you can), as the full scope of what the Haywoods and their neighbours are dealing with is revealed; and there's also some welcome, organic levity thrown in for good measure. The titular "nope" is said more than once here, but it never feels out of place. With the brilliant *Get Out*, *Us*, and now this, Peele is three for three.



Nope is in cinemas now.



Mr. Malcolm's List (PG) ◐

Back in 2019, *The Personal History of David Copperfield* made waves for its colourblind casting, and *Mr. Malcolm's List* proves to be another example of the delightful results that can ensue from such an approach. Based on the romance novel by Suzanne Alain, director Emma Holly Jones has expanded on her '19 short film for her feature debut. Set in London, 1818, it sees Julia (Zawe Ashton) recruit her childhood friend Selina (Freida Pinto) for a revenge scheme against eligible bachelor Mr. Malcolm (Sope Dírísù), after she failed to meet an item on his list of requirements for a suitable bride. Cue meet-cutes, rich costumes, and sharp musings on love.

You won't be surprised by who ends up with whom, but you'll be swept up in it all the same, thanks to the excellent performances. Dírísù is charming in the lead, and his chemistry with Pinto is palpable in their playful and funny interactions. Speaking of laughs, the comedic timing of Oliver Jackson-Cohen's Lord Cassidy is a consistent highlight. It's Ashton who is the movie's clear MVP though; in addition to providing many laugh-out-loud moments, the layers she adds to Julia means you root for her to find love in spite of her manipulations. Fans of *Bridgerton* and period romances alike should rejoice.



Mr. Malcolm's List is in cinemas 26th August.



Beast (15) ◐

The man versus beast subgenre is alive and is mostly as entertaining as ever, with its latest entry, *Beast*. *Everest* and *2 Guns* director Baltasar Kormákur's high-octane movie has a simple, but very effective selling point: Idris Elba versus a bloodthirsty lion. Those waiting for that inevitable bout will have to be patient, but in the meantime we get a family story about a father (Elba's Nate) trying to reconnect and then survive with his two daughters (Iyana Halley and Leah Jeffries, on spirited form) after the death of his wife.

On a technical level, *Beast* is impressive. The CGI lions are incredibly well rendered, and Kormákur's long takes makes the movie that much more immersive. And while the ferocious animal is a terrifying threat throughout, the reasons behind its actions – namely a revenge plot against poachers – are smartly articulated. It's not quite enough to elevate *Beast* beyond exactly-what-it-says-on-the-tin popcorn entertainment, but Elba delivers as an action hero and in its more intimate family moments.



Beast is in cinemas 26th August.

Meet the LTDA legal team

Driving a taxi for many hours of the day in one of the world's most congested cities is a challenging task. Cabbies often fall victim to complaints and false accusations from police, passengers and other road users (especially cyclists and PHV drivers). When these events arise it's



comforting for LTDA members to know that they have the immediate support of the best specialist in-house legal team in the business. The success rate of the LTDA Legal Team is second to none. In fact, according to Criminal Justice Statistics, LTDA members defended by our team are FOUR times more likely than the national average to be acquitted of allegations made against them.



John Luckhurst
Senior Partner



Charlotte Collett
Solicitor



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



Tom Poulson

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

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

Ken Jackson

The LTDA's solicitors and support team, could not have been more helpful when I first informed them that an allegation had been made against me. The LTDA was quick to check all the CCTV cameras in the area and arrange for plans of the location to be drawn up. Witness statements were also obtained and Mr Demidecki was successful in getting the Crown Prosecution Service to drop the case against me. Thanks LTDA - an all-round brilliant service!



Paul Baxter

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



"LTDA subscriptions cost less than four quid a week"

Bilking: Know Your Rights

Bilking, where money is withheld from cabbies after fare, is an increasing issue that needs to be tackled by the law.

Night work update

One of the most common problems that taxi drivers face at night is bilking. That's not to say that it doesn't happen during the daytime, but it is more prevalent in the wee, small hours. It is an aggravating and potentially time-consuming issue if you decide to report a bilk to the police.

The first thing which you may have to navigate is the ignorance of the law. Many police officers or civilian workers within the service have absolutely no idea of the legislation surrounding this particular offence. This is quite astonishing and is made worse by the fact that some will actively try to dissuade you from making a complaint. One of the more common responses from the police when trying to report a bilk is the claim that it is a civil offence and not a criminal matter. This is of course completely wrong and you, as a driver, need to be prepared to counter this nonsense.

Know the law

There are a trio of different pieces of legislation which encompass bilking. The first one is Section 3 of the Theft Act 1978 which states: 'a person who, knowing that payment on the spot for any goods supplied or service done is required or expected from him, dishonestly makes off without having paid as required or expected and with intent to avoid payment of the amount due shall be guilty of an offence.'

The second piece of legislation is Section 2 of the Fraud Act 2006, which could apply, and states: 'if a person dishonestly makes a false representation, and intends by making the false

representation to cause loss to another or to expose another to risk of loss'. In layman's terms, if somebody pretends that they will pay by claiming that a friend or colleague will pay at the end of a journey and remuneration isn't made, an offence is committed.

Finally, the third element of the trio of legislation is Section 11 of the Fraud Act 2006, which says: 'if a person obtains services

"Worryingly, in many night-workers' experiences, calling 999 is a fruitless exercise. The police take an age to attend, by which time the suspect has long gone."

for themself or another by a dishonest act... intends that payment will not be made, or will not be made in full', then, yet again, an offence is committed.

It is important to report all cases of bilking as it helps build a picture as to how widespread the crime actually is. Reporting it is very easy: simply go online and fill out the relevant report at your leisure, making sure you have the time, date, location and description of the perpetrator/s. Alternatively, you can dial 101 and make a telephone report. Finally, If you are feeling threatened and the crime is still in progress, call 999 for assistance.

Think rationally

Worryingly, in many night-workers' experiences, calling 999 is a fruitless exercise. The police take an age to attend, by which time the suspect has long

gone and you are even further out of pocket.

Trying to report the offence at a police station can also be a pointless endeavour, given that many stations are now closed at night, or in some cases permanently shut.

If you are able to obtain any police response, officers will assess all of the information provided and decide if a crime has been committed. The police will also consider if it is in the public interest to investigate further. However, do not feel dissuaded by an officer to report it, as it is most certainly a criminal offence.

So, to summarise, the three important pieces of legislation that you should store on your phone so that you can blind an officer with your impressive legal knowledge are:

Section 3 of the Theft Act 1978, Section 2 of the Fraud Act 2006, and Section 11 of the Fraud Act 2006.

Remain safe

Never try to detain somebody in your taxi or take the law into your own hands. This in itself is a criminal offence, which could potentially land you with a prison sentence. Aside from the legal aspects of trying to detain somebody for bilking, you never know what they are carrying and could end up hospitalised yourself. There is also the danger of an accusation of assault against you - it's just not worth it, no matter how tempting it is to hold them by the scruff of their neck until the police arrive.

Ultimately, it's better to lose the price of a single job rather than your livelihood or life. Therefore, look to making that report online and remove some of the extra stress and aggravation. It really takes no time at all and the end result will be no different than if you had reported the crime over the counter.

■ TAXI

Who's got your back?



Charged with jumping a red light

Charged with careless driving

Acquitted on all charges

Charged with dangerous driving

Charged with road rage assault

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

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

Join the LTDA today, we've got your back.

Call: 0207 286 1046 or visit: www.ltda.co.uk

LTDA

'The Professionals'

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

What 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.





King of the Ranks

At the present rate, it's likely the young pretender that is the TXE, will become king of the ranks before the end of this year.

Cab you drive

I still see a lot of complaining on social media, from a few cabbies, about the lack of choice in the vehicle they buy. Generally, it's from those who seem to know zilch about cars, who often want to scrap the turning circle, which they argue, 'would give drivers more choice and a cheaper cab'. This is despite me, and numerous other trade pundits, pointing out that a converted EV van or people carrier (remember that any new cab has to be electric), will end up costing as much, if not more than a TXE. Yet, some people, still draw price comparisons with the diesel van conversions, which are used as taxis in other places around the country.

Tables turned

With this in mind, I found it really interesting to see a leading light from the chauffeur industry, Martin Cox, the CEO of *Gerrards*, calling on the Mayor of London to reverse Transport for London's policy of refusing to licence new diesel vehicles, as Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs). Currently, PHVs under 18 months old, being licensed for the first time, must be zero emission capable (ZEC) AND meet the Euro VI emissions standard, whilst PHVs over 18 months old licensed for the first time, can still be petrol or diesel, as long as they meet the Euro VI standard. However, from 1 January 2023, all PHVs licensed for the first time, regardless of their age, will have to be ZEC and Euro VI.

Writing on LinkedIn, Cox said to the Mayor, "Your policy of not allowing private hire vehicles in London to licence new diesel vehicles is damaging our industry to a point where I believe, it could become business critical. The situation is particularly critical regarding



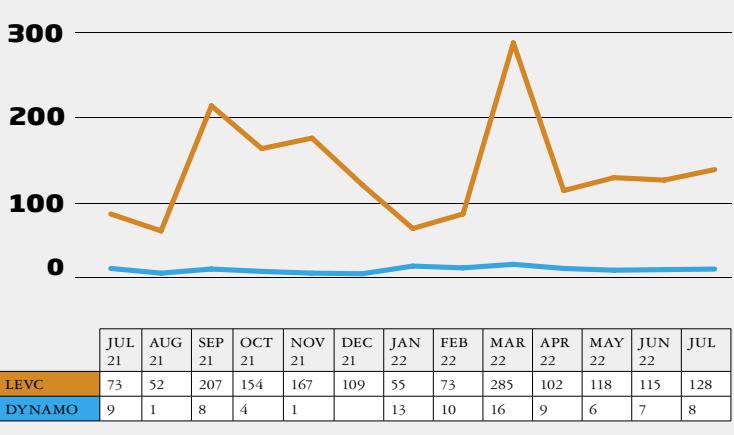
7-seater MPVs, as the only car of chauffeur standard—the Mercedes-Benz EQV—is in short supply, is expensive and has a limited range."

Ironic, isn't it, to see the private hire industry moaning about how much their cars cost, the limited range, and often, the lack of charging infrastructure? How the worm has turned!

Say what you will about the TXE, but embracing them has proved to be a good decision, for those drivers who've made the change. Moreover, range is just not an issue, I delivered one to a customer in Scarborough last week, charged it before I left, filled it with petrol and got all the way there, non-stop!

Strong sales

The sales figures in London have yet again been great, with over 130 new cabs joining the ranks in July. The fleet just missed out on breaking through the 15,000 barrier, with 14,980 licensed taxis now on our streets. The TX4 is still king of the ranks, with 6445 in the fleet, down 43 on last month, but the gap between the numbers of TXEs and the TX4s is falling every month. It's a bit like watching an old film, set in medieval times, where the elderly king is on his death bed and his heir hangs



DYNAMO	185
LEVC	5,644
METROCAB	1
TX1	1
TX2	81
TX4	6,445
VITO	2,623
TOTAL	14,980

around waiting to be crowned. At the present rate, it's likely the young pretender that is the TXE, will become king of the ranks before the end of this year.

Second-hand market

The second-hand cab market, or 'pre-owned vehicle availability', as we in the trade like to call it, is still buoyant, but slowing a

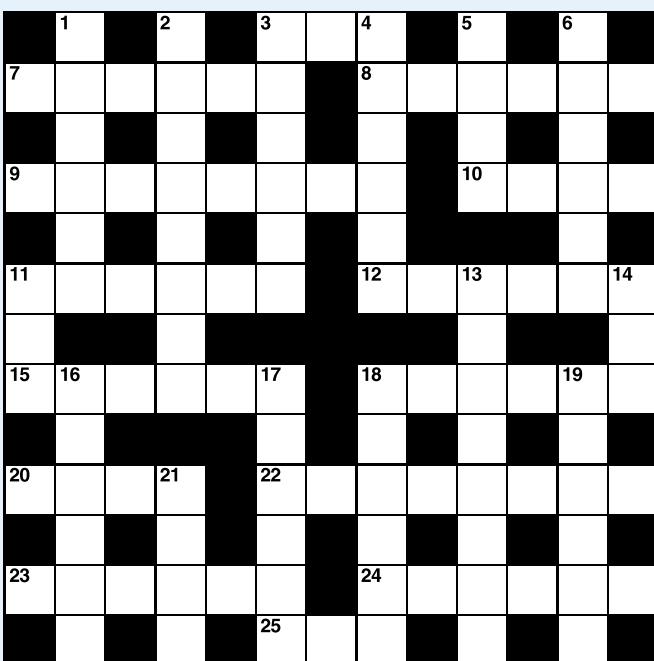
little bit, with late model, low mileage Euro VI TX4s still sought after and the late Vitos a little less so. Meanwhile, demand for early TXEs is really hotting up. I have already underwritten four, one owner TXEs, which are being traded in September, as the owners 'go again' on a new cab and lease. Despite bidding high, I won't be surprised if I am gazumped on at least three of them – it's that competitive. From what I am hearing, from the main dealers and others, September will be either a record, or close to it, month for new sales. If you were thinking of going for a new cab, but haven't already ordered one, you may struggle to get delivery before October or later.



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

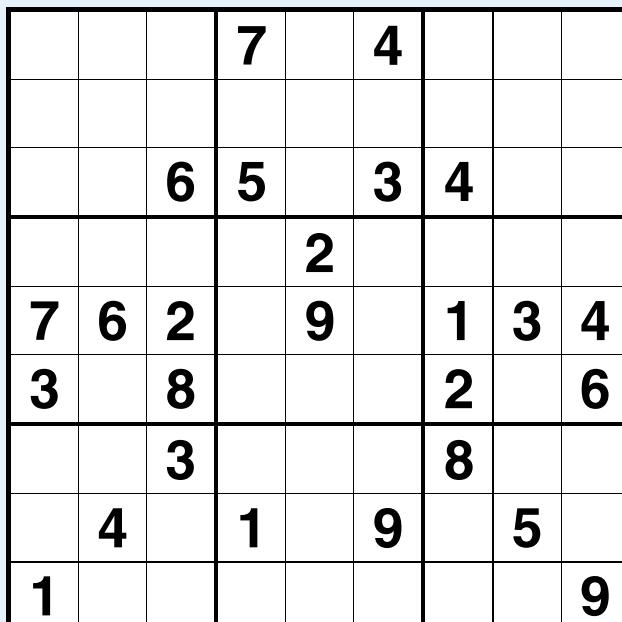
- 3 Except (3)
- 7 Silky wool from a goat or rabbit (6)
- 8 Matchless (6)
- 9 Rural community dweller (8)
- 10 Bias, distort (4)
- 11 Work avoider (6)
- 12 Rip to shreds (4,2)
- 15 Lemon colour (6)
- 18 Bluntly (6)
- 20 Peak, apex (4)
- 22 Distribute (8)
- 23 Mettle, enthusiasm (6)
- 24 Mount of ___, hill near Jerusalem (6)
- 25 Chop (wood) (3)

DOWN

- 1 Take apart (a seam) (6)
- 2 Minor, limited in scope (3-5)
- 3 British sausage (6)
- 4 Small tower (6)
- 5 Snake noise (4)
- 6 Office, department (6)
- 11 Satellite TV company (3)
- 13 Anti government of any description (8)
- 14 Settle up (3)
- 16 Succeed in avoiding (6)
- 17 Prosperity, abundance (6)
- 18 Left untilled (6)
- 19 Shaving foam (6)
- 21 Work for (wages) (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.



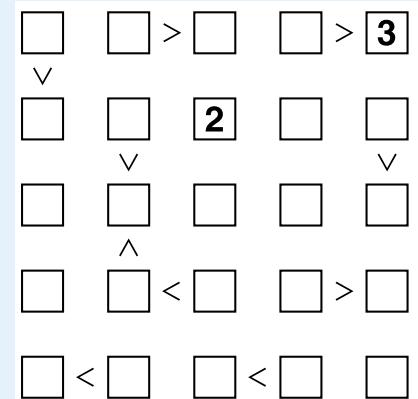
Wordwheel

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.



All answers to puzzler on p30

Puzzler
DC THOMSON

CABS FOR RENT

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OF YOUR COSTS**

**WITH AN ELECTRICALLY-DRIVEN TX**

Take charge of your fuel costs with our unique eCity range-extender technology.
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ELECTRIC DRIVE. NO RANGE-ANXIETY.



*For full details regarding the warranty, visit www.levc.com/warranty



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TX4s TO RENT

- Ascott's maintained.
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CABS FOR RENT

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EXPERIENCED TAXI MECHANIC REQUIRED FOR EAST LONDON TAXI GARAGE

MUST BE FIT, ENTHUSIASTIC AND MOST IMPORTANTLY RELIABLE.

PAY SUBJECT TO EXPERIENCE.

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0208 981 2419

CABS WANTED



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 WANTED

CABS FOR SALE

starting from £200 please call - 07956211478

● Private cabbie looking for TX4 Euro6 low mileage FSH, Very good condition, no fleet or traders or livery - 0739218839

● All cabs wanted. Tx4, euro 4, 5 & 6 also TXE wanted We come to you, any condition, very quick decision. cash paid instantly. 07702 554934

● CASH paid for your cab TODAY any condition quick decision collection service available finance cleared if required 07763 699767

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

● All de-commissioned good quality TX4s wanted. Instant decision, cash paid. We come to you. Also white TX4 elegance wanted 07973 335739 or 01253 407500

● Cabs for sale. Main Dealer service history. Non-fleet cabs. New stock daily. Cabs also wanted. Finance Paid 07957 465423

● TX vista comfort plus, 2019 LEVC TX Alpine white, low mileage 4000 miles, 7.5 year 150k Warranty, extra plug in charging socket chade, vinyl seat material and floor passenger compartment, retiring, £49,000 ono - Call Dennis - 07525437944

● 15 Reg TX4 Black 112,000 miles, 2 owners good condition £14,500 - 07887950574

● AKA Taxi Rentals Ltd, TXEs for rent from £320 per week - 07951 843663

● TXEs, TX4s and vitos available from £230 per week contact Sabri - 07958973944

● TX4s TO RENT! Essex based full back up garage facilities from £210 per week - 07824630247

● VNK Motors -Electric cabs LEVCs & TX4s for rent, from £195 upwards per week. Full back up, Caledonia Road, North London area, breakdown service, overhauls, running repairs & body work. Also Looking for a taxi mechanic. 0207 700 1045 or 07951 661430 - Nick.

CABS FOR RENT

● All vitos and TX4s for rent, full back up, starting from £200 based in East London - 07872504604

● Euro5&6 vitos for rent, full backup, prices

DRIVERS WANTED /CAB SHARE

● Wanted cab to share 3 days or evenings weekly, green badge driver, living CR5 area - 07958743977

Chairman, Ian Parsons, Discusses All Things Taxi Charity Before Stepping Down This Autumn

TAXI caught up with London Cab Driver Ian Parsons, to reflect on his memorable time as Taxi Charity Chairman.

TAXI So, Ian, when did you become Taxi Charity Chairman?

Ian: I have been Chairman since 14th May, 2019, and will be handing over to the new Chairman in early September.

TAXI What have been the highlights?

Ian: There have been many! And if I were to list my top ten for you today, I'm sure they would be different tomorrow. But two very special moments do spring to mind. They were both from our 2019 trip to Normandy.

It was 6th June - the 75th anniversary of D-Day - and I had the honour of laying a wreath with WWII veteran Bill Gladden, during the commemoration service at Ranville Cemetery. 75 years earlier, almost to the hour, Bill and his 6th Airborne comrades landed in a Hamilcar glider in a nearby field. This was a very poignant moment for me - and there would be another later that day following our lunch at Amfreville village hall. Children from the local primary school had lined the street to greet our convoy, smiling and waving flags as the cabs arrived. After we'd eaten, I walked outside and spontaneously invited the children to join us. There must have been at least 200 who began snaking their way in and I thought, oh no, what have I done, is there room in here for everyone?

The children packed on to the small stage at the back of the hall and sang to the veterans. It was all unplanned and quite delightful. Afterwards, whilst they posed for photos with the veterans, I discovered that one, Roy Cadman (No.3 Commando), had helped liberate Amfreville.

TAXI Any lowlights?

Ian: 2020 was shaping up to be the biggest year in our charity's history, but Covid destroyed all our plans. We were to have played a major role at several landmark military anniversaries across the UK, as well as in The Netherlands and Normandy. Among the many events lost was VE-Day 75. Planning was in its final stages when the pandemic struck. Just think how our country would have celebrated that occasion. And imagine the role the Taxi Charity and our volunteer cabbies would



The Dutch Liberation Parade

have played in London, during the three-day celebration weekend.

TAXI What are you most proud of during your time as Chairman?

Ian: Our response to the pandemic, which ultimately led to us to win The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

From the start of the emergency, our main aim was to keep in contact with as many veterans as we could: by phone, post and, where possible, in person, and to offer help and support, especially to those living alone and isolated.

We came up with a variety of imaginative ideas during the lockdowns, including socially-distanced doorstep visits. Some went on to form support bubbles. Our volunteers delivered shopping, supplies and prescriptions. We delivered goodie bags and other gifts too.

Drivers also took veterans for hospital appointments and for their covid vaccinations. Some even delivered a birthday cake and the occasional home-made meal.

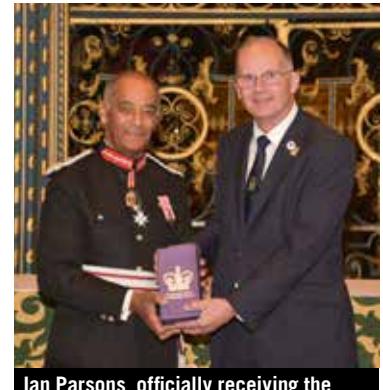
We published a regular Veteran Newsletter and posted out thousands of cards - those we created and those we received from a multitude of supporters in Normandy and The Netherlands.

We responded very well under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

TAXI Who have you met that really made an impression on you?

Ian: That's a hard one. I've met many fascinating people during my time as Chairman, so let me answer in a roundabout way.

On my first full day, I spoke at the Dutch Centre in the City of London about the history and work of the Taxi Charity.



Ian Parsons officially receiving the

relied on the generosity of its volunteers: that mainly consists of London cabbies who give their time and vehicles free of charge. We are a unique military charity for this reason, but we also rely on the help and expertise of other volunteers from outside our trade. All I can offer is my heartfelt thanks to one and all, and say you can be proud of what you have done. You have helped change lives and made a positive difference to so many.

I would also like to use this opportunity to remember and thank all those who came before us; those who helped develop the charity from its humble beginnings.

TAXI What are your plans for after The Taxi Charity?

Ian: Whilst I'm stepping down as Chairman, I am remaining on the committee and will continue to play an active role. Anne, my wife and Taxi Charity volunteer, and I recently moved house and she's got a long list of things for me to do... and I've got a long list of places I want us to visit! Tool shed or Hawaii? It's a tough one.

TAXI

To find out more about the type of support the Taxi Charity offers veterans, or to donate, please visit 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 Belgium, France and The Netherlands for acts of commemoration and days out to museums, concerts, or fundraising events across the UK, to catch up with friends and comrades.

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

In 2023, the charity will be celebrating its 75th anniversary.

To fund and facilitate their work, the charity is reliant on generous donations, grants, and sponsorship.





Driving Mr. Daisy

Because of the brace on Mr. Meg's left leg, I am now his designated driver.

A woman of words

This is because of his fracture and ruptured ligament (see my last column of TAXI for context), and he still can't bend his knee to get into his car or walk far. He certainly can't cycle anywhere. His only means of getting about is lil, ol' me.

It's years since I passed the Knowledge and I have since clocked up many taxi miles.

I have had all sorts in the back, including Ant without Dec, Dec without Ant and a pair of *Love Island* finalists deep diving for one another's tonsils. The *Love Island* snog is worthy of note because they were cheating on their 'official' partners at the time.

There was the man with a beard who proudly told me he was fifteen feet, and was

dressed as Shirley Bassey. I took him from Baker Street to the Phoenix Arts Club and he sang *Big Spender* at the top of his lungs all the way. It was great. Except he wasn't a big spender, and I got no tip.

I've had a fella who told me I was depriving him of his human rights by telling him he couldn't smoke in the back of the cab. He lit up, I pulled over and himself and a passing Special Constable had a bit of a tussle on the pavement until the cigarette (his last) broke into two. He cried.

And there was a famous hairdresser to the stars who advised me that the best thing I could do with my hairstyle was to shave it off and start over.

None of them annoyed me. It's all part of the job and I wish goodwill to all men, women, men dressed as Shirley Bassey and bitchy hairdressers.

Well, bar one. The person I



am married to.

Today, I had to drive Mr. Meg to the Fracture Clinic at our local hospital. His appointment was at 9.10am and it is an eight-minute drive, max. He shook me awake at 6.10am so I could 'get ready'. I'd done an airport run the night before and didn't get in until 2.37am.

I wanted to keep shining, keep smiling and all that, but I fell asleep in my porridge.

And it got worse.

Approaching the cab on the

front drive Mr. Meg asked, "Why did you park it like that?" The taxi was precision parked.

Once we were on the road, he wanted to know why I was driving so fast, so slow, so close to parked cars, so far from parked cars, not stopping at lights which were green, not giving way to traffic on the right, not taking note of traffic on the left, going over speed bumps too quickly and, of course, not going over speedbumps faster.

Then, when I pulled up outside the hospital in a bay marked 'Drop Off Point' he said, "Why are you stopping here?"

I helped him out of the cab, steadied him and handed him his crutches and had to fight the urge not to try to light sabre him with one of them.

Doctors have told him it's going to be another 10-12 weeks to full recovery.

Send help!

■ TAXI

LTDA A selection of our numerous Distribution Points

- ◆ A1 Taxis, Melody Lane, Highbury, N5
- ◆ Abacus Accounts, Southbrook Road, Lee, SE12
- ◆ Astral Café, Regency Place, SW1
- ◆ Bubbles Car Wash, E2
- ◆ 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, ThreeColtsLane, E2
- ◆ Ubiquitous Ltd, E1
- ◆ Waterloo Station
- ◆ Wimbledon Station Rank
- ◆ WizAnn Knowledge School, Watts Grove, E3

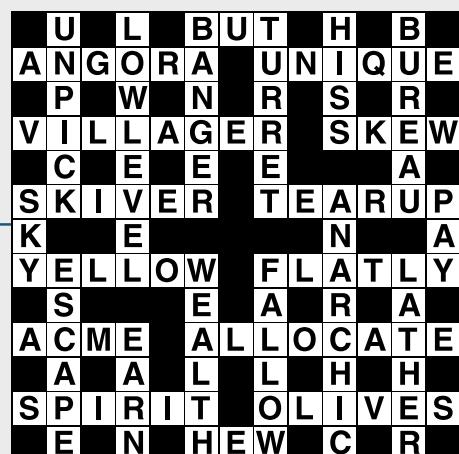
PUZZLER ANSWERS



Crossword

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SUDOKU

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

Wordwheel

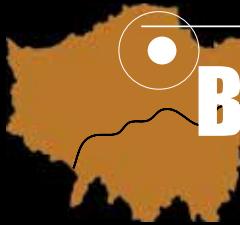
SOLUTION: ADVENTURE

All words: Aunt, avenue, daunt, denture, duet, dune, duvet, endure, etude, nature, neuter, nude, retune, revue, rude, rued, rune, runt, tenure, tenured, true, tuna, tundra, tune, tuned, tuner, tureen, turn, turned, under, unread, urea, vaunt, vaunted, venture, ventured, venue, ADVENTURE.

Word targets: Excellent: 42, Good: 35, Target: 26, Kids: 21

Futoshiki

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



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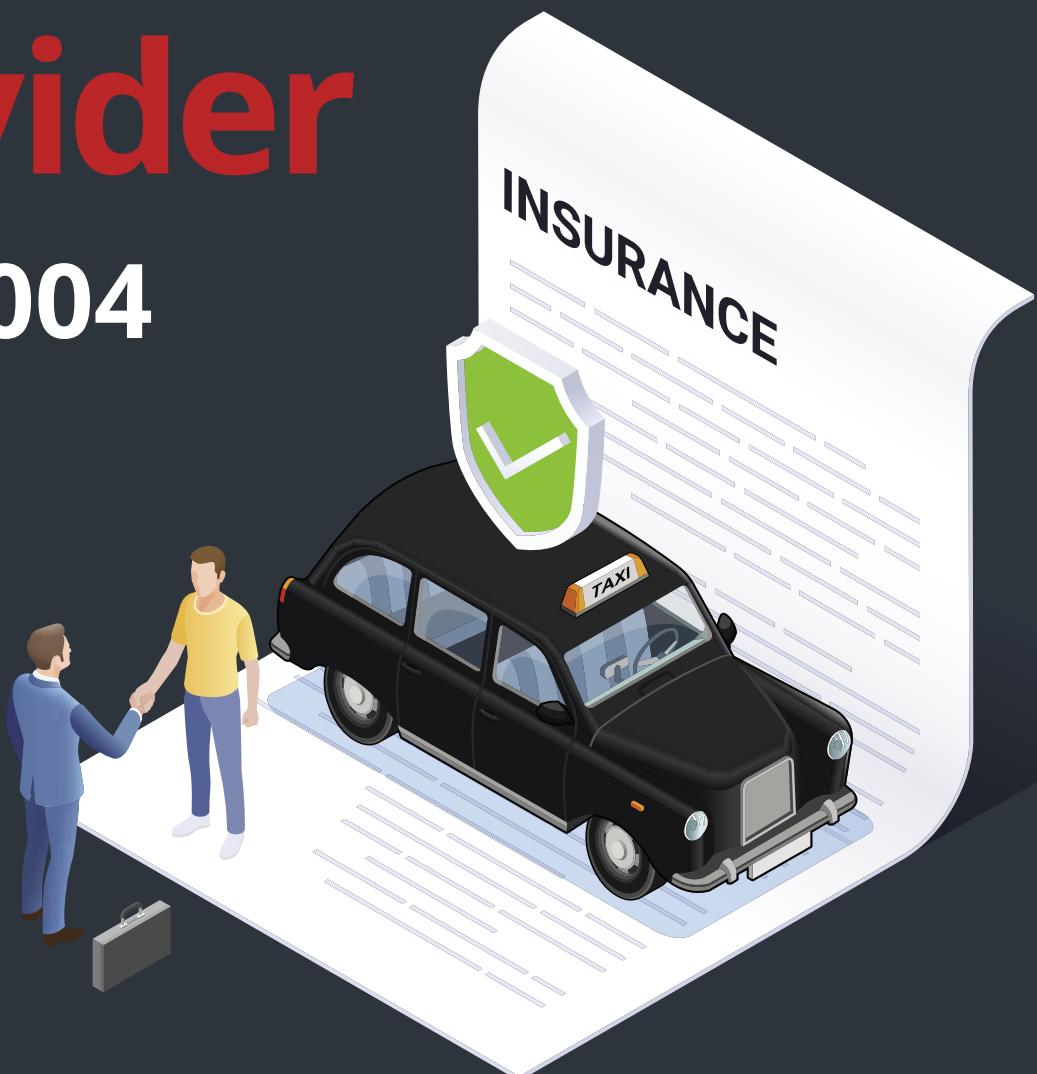


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