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THE NIGHTWATCHMAN **Page 18**

TAXI

www.ltda.co.uk
18th October 2022 #527

IT'S NOT OVER



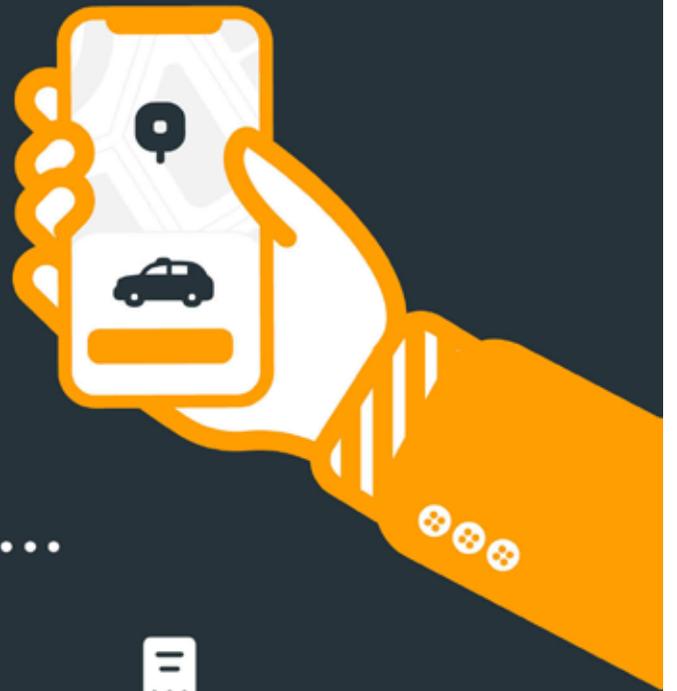
TILL IT'S OVER

**HOW ONE CABBIE'S BAD DAY
TURNED AROUND**

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for the general
public



Doesn't take
commission on
your tips!

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FREE SKATING AT SOMERSET HOUSE FOR CABBIES IS BACK!

Skate at Somerset House returns this November, signalling the start of the festive period and London's licensed taxi drivers are once again being offered a free skating session. With unrivalled skating, contemporary music, the perfect gift selection on offer from Hotel Chocolat, and delicious food and drink, Skate is not to be missed! The magnificent ice rink, now with bigger skate space, transforms the neoclassical courtyard into the essential winter destination, complete with a glorious 40ft Christmas tree, with specially curated decorations from Moët & Chandon, providing perfect picture moments.

Taxi drivers can choose between two free sessions on Sunday 13th November:

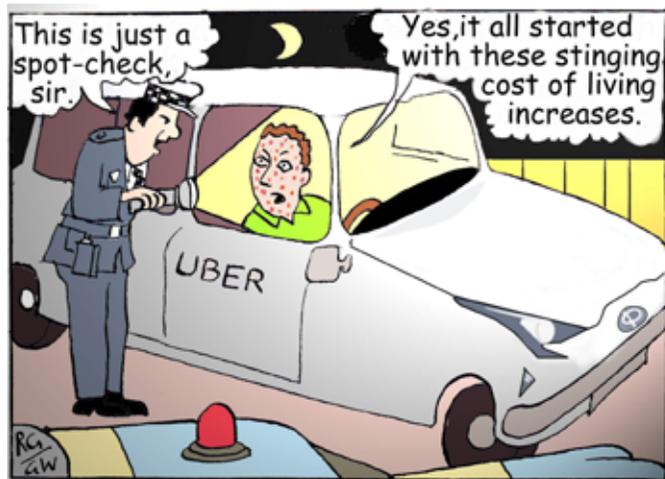
- 15.00 to 15.45
- 16.00 to 16.45

You can make a booking for up to four people using this link: my.somersethouse.org.uk/5859/5860?&promo=SK8TAXI22.

Alternatively, visit my.somersethouse.org.uk/5859/5860 Then enter promo code **SK8TAXI22**.

You will then need to choose your time and follow the sales prompts through to confirm up to four tickets for your chosen session. There is a £2.95 booking fee payable on all transactions.

See the Somerset House website for more information: www.somersethouse.org.uk/whats-on/skate-somerset-house Please note, ice skating is a sport with inherent risks. Patrons skate at their own risk. Tickets are non-exchangeable and non-refundable. Skaters will need to arrive 20 minutes early, to ensure that they have enough time to leave any bags in the cloakroom and get their skates on!



SHERBET EXPANDS LONDON FLEET

Electric taxi company, *Sherbet*, has added 100 new electric vehicles to its fleet, in a £5 million deal, using innovative pay per mile financing. *Sherbet* is expanding its electric black taxi fleet, which will now number 450 vehicles, to help meet growing demand for clean vehicles in the capital, as people return to work and for leisure purposes. The company aims to have at least 1000 electric black taxis in operation in the next two years, spearheading the effort to clean up London's air and to make London's taxi trade the greenest in the world. This expansion was financed using a loan provided by Gravis Capital Management funds, working with *Zeti*, a fintech platform that facilitates pay-per-mile financing for zero or ultra-low emissions vehicles.



VOLUNTEER DRIVERS SOUGHT FOR POPPY CABS SERVICE

Each year, on Remembrance Sunday, hundreds of London's cabbies give up their time to provide the free Poppy Cabs service to help move veterans around London from train and tube stations to The Cenotaph. **Will you join them this year?**

The service will take place on Sunday 13th November. Anyone interested in volunteering to support the event and the incredible veterans, is encouraged to contact Poppy Cabs Coordinator, Mike Hughes.

You can also support Poppy Cabs by purchasing and wearing a badge. The Poppy Cab badges have raised over £15,000 in three years for the Royal British Legion and The Taxi Charity for Military Veterans. They are available for a minimum donation of £5 from cab shelters, from the LTDA at Taxi House or by emailing Mike Hughes. If you would like to buy a badge or volunteer on the day, please email mike@mikehughes.org.uk or call him on 07973 430022.

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Policing Left to the Public

Onboard dashcam footage from the cab was far more representative of what actually happened, yet despite it being shared with the Police beforehand, the prosecution went ahead.

Steve's comment

Unfortunately, our last front page turned out to be quite prophetic. Less than a week after it was published, several people were stabbed and seriously injured trying to prevent yet another phone snatch, within a few hundred yards of Bishopsgate police station.

On our own

It was not that long ago, especially in the City, when it was impossible not to see a policeman. They manned checkpoints at every entry to the Square Mile 24/7. There were smart, uniformed officers, constantly patrolling, and much to the Met's envy, their state-of-the-art BMW response cars seemed to be everywhere at once. The City felt like a safe place, and it was. So, how did we get to the situation in which knife wielding muggers feel confident enough to attack office workers at 10 o'clock in the morning within sight of Bishopsgate nick?

Even more worrying is the fact that the victims and passers-by felt they had no choice, other than to try to defend themselves by tackling the masked, armed attackers. This was probably because, like everyone else, including the muggers, they knew there was little chance of a passing police officer interfering.

Not to be outdone in the annals, as what can only be described as poor policing, a few days later the Met played their trump card. Instead of removing or arresting protestors, who had caused chaos by gluing themselves to the Mall, their public order unit reinforced every negative perception the public likely have of them, by offering the protestors a nice cup of tea!

Vigilante 'justice'

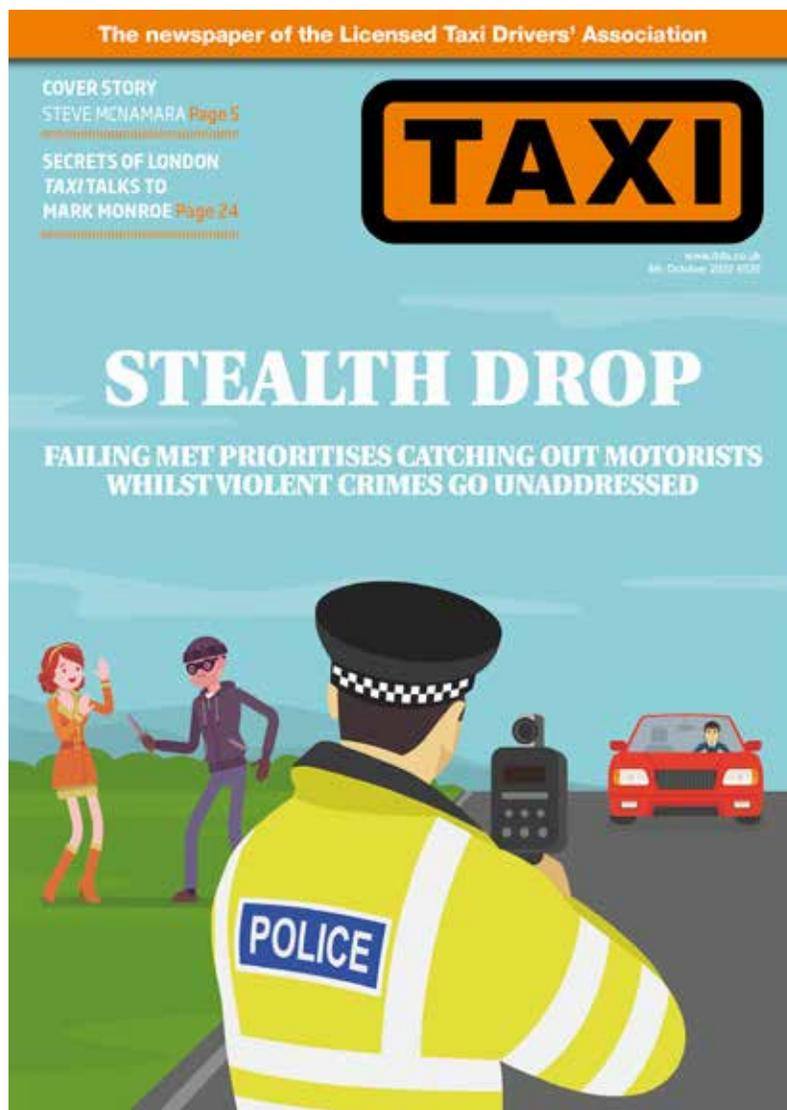
Elsewhere, one of our

members was successfully defended in court, by our in-house lawyers, for an allegation of driving without due care and attention, made after a cyclist submitted a video to the Police that purported to show the cabbie 'close passing' them. The video the Police relied on was far from conclusive. In fact, onboard dashcam footage from the cab was far more representative of what had actually happened, yet despite it being shared with the Police beforehand, the prosecution went ahead. The time and effort put into this case by the Police, on the evidence of a very prolific complaining cyclist, was phenomenal, and a complete waste of everyone's time and money, as was made very clear by the district judge.

It must be wrong when a police service has the resource, time, effort, and determination to bring a prosecution for an alleged motoring offence, that has no chance of success, but cannot keep our roads open or the public safe. If you ask me, the senior police management, (that's all they are – managers – and poor ones at that), are out of touch, not just with the public but with most of the rank and file, who would much rather be policing our streets than watching endless video clips sent in by people with nothing better to do.

One-sided evidence

A few days later, the case of Ian McKellen's agent, who was charged with dangerous driving and assault for an altercation with *YouTube* and social media cycling activist 'Cycling Mikey' was in court. Most of you will have heard of 'Cycling Mikey', real name, Mike van Erp. He is often found lurking behind a lamp post, camera in hand, ready to jump out and catch out an unsuspecting motorist, who he believes is doing something wrong. He is known for targeting our members and has also



been involved in several cases against celebrities and other high-profile figures, who he has caught on camera.

In this case, he supplied the Police with footage showing Paul Lyon-Maris, making an illegal right turn, at a notorious junction. After he was confronted by Cycling Mikey (who upon spotting a motorist breaking the rules, jumps into the road, he claims to "stop the danger" posed to other road users), Mr Lyon-Maris seemingly then drove into van Erp and moved slowly down the street with him on the bonnet of his car. However, dash cam footage from a passing vehicle doing the rounds on Twitter, paints a different picture. It shows Mr van Erp jumping onto the

bonnet of the car himself.

Truth will out

Needless to say, once shown the 'real' evidence, that clearly contradicted Cycling Mikey's version of events, the jury very quickly returned a unanimous 'Not Guilty' verdict. In fact, the judge, Recorder Jonathan Bellamy, in a very unusual move, wished Mr Lyon-Marris luck in his profession and elsewhere! This case again underlines the problem with the Police relying on this kind of one-sided evidence and members of the public with a clear agenda, to make their cases for them. They are rarely getting all the facts. Camera phone footage can be hugely misleading and is often merely a snapshot of a much bigger picture. ■ LTDA



Risky Rickshaws Have No Place on Our Streets

The LTDA has campaigned hard to get rid of rickshaws since 2012 and we continue to push for a ban in every meeting and forum we can.



Streets ahead

6

What started out as harmless fun, pedalling the odd tourist around the pedestrianised confines of Covent Garden, has now turned into a nightmare. Rickshaws are without a doubt a scourge on our streets.

The problem

Rickshaws, or pedicabs as they are also called, cause massive congestion, with London's traffic queuing up behind them, as they travel at little more than walking pace on major roads. They congregate in large numbers outside theatres, shops and restaurants, blocking the entrances and exits. They also park on the pavements outside, forcing pedestrians to negotiate the traffic, as they walk in the road to get around them. They do all of this whilst making a nuisance of themselves playing extremely loud music in the early hours of the morning and disrupting local residents.

The rickshaw riders are also forced to charge exorbitant sums to recoup the high rental fees the operator's charge them for the use of the bikes. There have been reports that the cost of getting in one of these death traps can be £500 from Harrods to Marble

Arch, and I have no doubt that there are many members of the public, who have been ripped off.

Ban

The LTDA has campaigned hard to get rid of these rickshaws since 2012 and we continue to push for a ban in every meeting and forum we can. They should have been removed from our streets a long time ago, when there were only about 100, but after decision makers ignored the problems for so long, there are now thousands, committing offences on the streets. All that was needed was for someone to put their heads above the parapet and act. Sadly, the authorities largely continue to look the other way. There is the occasional clamp down, with fines issued here and there, but only when things get really bad.

The LTDA produced a report on rickshaws, which looked at the dangers associated with travelling in them and highlighted the need for a ban to protect the public. Findings from safety tests included in the report, warned that *"any impact with a motor vehicle"* was likely to result in *"serious injury to both passengers and riders"*. It also showed that the standard of braking for a rickshaw *"fell well short of that expected of a car"*. Now, things are worse. Many rickshaws are powered and can reach speeds up to 30mph. Imagine if one was carrying a passenger and was involved in collision with a motor vehicle at

that speed, it would surely have a devastating outcome.

Failing to act

Unfortunately, the 'free market', anti 'red tape', Conservative government's since then, have routinely refused to act and the councils and TfL's hands are tied, as they don't have the powers they need to act. Any ban would need to come from the top (the Department for Transport).

Now, instead of the ban that we need, there is talk about the government introducing legislation to licence pedicabs. When the then Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps MP, first suggested that it was *"high time"* to crack down on their activities and bring in new laws to control the *"wild west"* of unlicensed rickshaws in central London, many in the trade were outraged. 'Licensing? Madness,' they thought, 'that's the last thing we want!' I do agree. We don't want to make them a legitimate and credible part of our transport network, with passengers being encouraged to use them. But, if we can campaign for the licensing conditions to be so tough that they deter individuals and operators from entering the market, then we can maybe curb them once and for all. The idea being that we can make it so difficult to become a pedicab rider or operator and so tightly controlled, that it's not worth it and there is no money in it.

Nickie Aiken, the MP for the Cities of London and Westminster, who brought forward these proposals, has been campaigning on pedicabs for years. She is very much on our side and also recognises they are a scourge on our city. She, like us, doesn't want to see fleets of licensed Uber-shaws or something similar, roaming the streets plying their trade. But she has recognised that there is not enough support for an outright ban and that done properly legislation and regulation, could eventually take these dangerous, disruptive cowboys off our streets once and for all.

Better than nothing?

As it stands, I do struggle to see how licensing would even work. Would the individual rider need to go through the same licensing process as taxis, including completing a criminal records check and a tax check providing an HMRC code? Would they receive fines and penalties like other road users for breaking the rules of the road? Would they be able to use bus lanes?

We still believe a ban is what's needed, but if licensing is the only thing on the table, then alongside pushing for a ban, we need to make sure that any licensing conditions being developed are so strict, that it becomes almost impossible to get a licence, and that it is no longer a viable business to be in.

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** Limited time offer for the referral of a new driver. Make sure your colleague knows they are being referred and complete onboarding. Once they have completed onboarding and the targeted number of jobs, you will receive your referral bonus. You need to be a FREE NOW driver to refer to another driver.

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A Game of Luck

After a terrible morning, one of our members put on the rank at Paddington. A short while later he heard the words every cabbie dreams of... "Would you take me to Merthyr Tydfil in Wales please."

Streets ahead

We all tell each other to 'be lucky', but it's easy to forget just how important a bit of luck can be in this game. This is a story which shows no matter how bad your day is going, you shouldn't give up and go home, because you never know what's around the corner.

How your day can change

This was certainly the case with our member, let's call him Mick, who came in on a Saturday morning to start what was intended to be a long shift. His cab had been in the garage for two days earlier in the week, so Saturday was his catch up day. Picture the scene, its 7.30am and as he comes down Albert Embankment, he is hailed by a couple outside the night club, *Ashtar*. The couple had obviously had a very long night of drinking, but after sizing up the situation, Mick decided to take them. They wanted Bishop's Court on Bishop's Bridge Road.

Pretty much as soon as they got in the cab, they both fell asleep, which was ok with Mick. Everything was fine, until he arrived at Bishop's Court, when things went dramatically downhill, and fast. As he pulled in, the girl woke up and started making that horrible noise of someone who is about to throw up. He immediately told her not to be sick in the cab and to get out. Sadly, it was too late. She projectile vomited all over the floor. It was obvious there was more coming, so Mick jumped out of the driver's seat, ran round to her door, opened it and helped her out of the cab, just in time.

From bad to worse

While Mick was taking in the carnage in the back of his cab, the male passenger had got out and was in the front of the cab helping himself to some of the float that was in the centre console! Mick immediately ran



round and confronted him. Much to his amazement, the thief decided to square up to him. For obvious reasons I can't go into detail, but suffice it to say, after a short, shall we call it a 'discussion,' the low life thief had it on his toes.

Our member suspected that the thief wasn't as drunk as the girl, given how fast he ran away. With this, he went back round the cab and asked the girl (who was still bent over, throwing up) who the other passenger was, whilst also informing her of the soiling charge. She, now crying, claimed

she didn't know her fellow passenger and had met him in the club. She also informed him that she had no money. Now, the member was faced with a tricky decision of whether to call the Police or just let her go. He definitely didn't want her back in his cab and he knew he couldn't unlawfully detain her. He also had a suspicion that calling the Police would only make the whole disaster last longer.

Things can only get better

At this point, readers will do

well to remember that this happened to someone else and not you, as I'm sure many of you will be shouting that you would have done things differently! He decided to let it go and headed off to Bubbles Car wash in Kendall Street. The cab was in such a state that he had to pay £100 to have it cleaned out.

Quite rightly then feeling very sorry for himself, Mick called a couple of mates for a pep talk. He decided he was not going home and after a coffee and a calm down, he made his way to Paddington and put on the rank.

After ten minutes, a gentleman with a rucksack came up to his window and said, "*would you take me to Merthyr Tydfil in Wales please.*" Our member informed him that he had had a very bad morning and was not really in the mood to be wound up. The gentleman then explained that he had flown into the country to visit his long-lost brother, who he had not seen for 30 years and that his request was in fact, a genuine one. There was a train strike that day and he was not put off by Mick's estimate of how much the fare would be.

As they left Paddington to embark on the more than 160-mile trip, the gentleman asked if it would be possible to go via the Cotswolds. He explained that he had seen some lovely documentaries in the States and saw on the plane that it was sort of en-route to Wales. The driver obliged and they found a lovely little pub in a nice village and the man bought him a very nice lunch! On arrival in Merthyr, as well as paying the fare, the gentleman thanked the member very much and gave him what can only be described as a huge tip. Mick told me that he then floated back down the M4 in amazement.

The moral of this story is that if you are having a day, where it's all going wrong try to stick to your hours, as things can easily change for the better (sometimes). Be lucky. ■ LTDA



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Misplaced Activism and What Ifs

Cab drivers are some of the most innovative, productive and hard-working people I know, which is exactly the sort of attitude this country needs in this historic period of uncertainty.

M4 Musings

We've taken a lot of calls from drivers complaining about traffic in general recently. Unfortunately, there is no overarching authority that co-ordinates the multitude of agencies, who have the legal right to dig up our roads. This can mean that lots of works happen at once, the cumulative effect of which can add greatly to congestion.

The restrictions on the A4 and M4, associated with the Cromwell Road Railway Bridge maintenance, are a prime example. The works have been disastrous for traffic in the area. Hopefully, by the time you're reading this, the lane closures will be coming out. On 25th October, the operation is due to move to phase 3, which should see a considerable easing of delays.

These large projects need to happen, but I think some authorities take the view that if a bit of traffic discourages people from driving, then more's the better. This is terrible economics. Delay of any sort reduces productivity and increases costs. That's the opposite of what our economy needs, at a time when the government is trying to keep us out of recession.

Press - a - button activism

Everyone's an 'activist' these days – all you have to do is put it in your 'bio', press a few buttons and hey presto you're changing the world! This is one of the many 'benefits' that social media has conferred on the world, or so we're told. If you ask me, the avalanche of information both into and out of the average person's consciousness, has led to an explosion of idiocy on all sides.

I'm old enough to remember when people complained that no-one was interested in politics, especially young people. Now, you can't move for teenagers bemoaning the state of a world, that they've by definition got



very little experience of. They get taken seriously by otherwise sensible adults because, you know, 'the yooof'.

Our business has been a victim of this general increase in activism, and the attention paid to it by those in authority. We are unfairly lumped in with general traffic and 'cars' far too often. As a result, we do not get the credit we deserve for the huge strides our industry has made towards being cleaner, greener and more efficient. Cab drivers are some of the most innovative, productive and hard-working people I know, which is exactly the sort of attitude this country needs in this historic period of uncertainty. It's time the cab trade got the respect it deserves from those in authority, both locally and nationally.

A not so original idea

A prominent businessman with an active social media presence, recently canvassed for taxi drivers' opinions on his sudden inclination to start an app for licensed taxis. He has other businesses and takes a lot of cabs, so it must have seemed a natural fit.

Nothing against the guy, but we've been here before, many times. People seem to look at our business and think 'yeh, love those black cabs, what they really need is an app,' as if no-one's ever thought of that before.

To be fair, a number of cab drivers responded with very

sensible comments saying just that. Many have tried and failed to make our industry digital, but the fundamental difficulty remains the same as it was when there was just a telephone: coverage. When it's quiet, drivers will happily run for a job, but

once it gets busy, the best way to get a cab will always be off the street or a rank. This immediate hiring is at the core of everything we do, long may it continue. Apps are great, but if you want a cab sharpish, lift your arm.



What if?

The shortage of tags at Heathrow Airport has reached the point where many drivers no longer believe they will ever be delivered. Personally, I'm not quite at that point yet, but I'm getting there. With this in mind, the question we are now asking the airport is what if? What, if no tags ever come? What then will Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) do to allow cab drivers into the airport?

Since the chaos of early summer, HAL has facilitated private hire provision by opening the AVA car park 24 hours a day. A deal appears to have been reached between *WeKnow*, who operate desks at arrivals halls, and *Uber*, with prominent advertising now on show. Add to this the laissez-faire attitude to private hire picking up in the drop-off zones, and contrast it with the seemingly deliberate reduction in the number of cab drivers able to pick up at Heathrow, and the difference is striking. This leaves licensed taxi drivers yet again, feeling that HAL is, at best, ambivalent about our presence at the nation's biggest airport.

In other more positive news, HAL has recently announced the end of the cap on passenger numbers, which should be good for everyone. Let's hope the demand keeps up throughout the winter and people haven't been put off travelling by some of the difficulties experienced earlier in the year.

What makes FREE NOW perfect for drivers?

What do black cab drivers know better than the streets they drive through every day? They know what they want. And what's that? A hassle-free shift, a higher income, and plenty of passengers.

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That's why so many black cab drivers choose FREE NOW. In the app are thousands of passengers waiting for lifts, without the need for the driver to rely on street pick-ups or offers over the radio. Plus, the app is built with drivers in mind. This means they benefit from an intuitive and user-friendly design.

With all this, FREE NOW is the perfect app for black cab drivers in London.

Europe's largest taxi driver fleet

Did you know that over 20,000 taxi and black cab drivers across the UK use FREE NOW? And with over 1.5 million passengers waiting for them, there's plenty of work available. Besides, FREE NOW takes more and more bookings for taxis and black cabs every month. In July alone, they saw over 1 million bookings. And their drivers are the first to benefit from this. And with an average value of £26 per trip*, FREE NOW is a great way to supplement your earnings from street-hailing.

Drivers love using FREE NOW...

The FREE NOW app has tons of great features that help drivers

earn more and get better trip offers. Let's see how it works:

When a passenger books a trip, the FREE NOW app automatically sends the offer to the nearest available driver — so no humans meddling with the algorithm and slim margin for error. It doesn't matter if the driver's been working all day or just starting their shift. The offer is available for a few seconds and then passes to the next closest driver. There's no penalty if they don't take the job, giving drivers full flexibility and control.

To make things even easier, the app can offer trips heading in the same direction as the driver is travelling. So, a driver can potentially pick up and drop off passengers while they're on their way to the doctor, to collect their kids from school, or just heading home after a shift.

When a new offer pops up in the app, the drivers can see all the relevant information before accepting the trip. They can see the passenger's pick-up and drop-off addresses, the distance they need to drive, and any bonuses they'll get.

And to keep things going, the app sends new offers before the current trip has ended. Gone are the days when drivers needed to cruise around and waste fuel looking for passengers. With FREE NOW, they can get back-to-back offers, which equals more money, less wasted time, and a

smoother shift.

Drivers are at the core of everything they do at FREE NOW. So, their team's constantly working to improve the app to make life easier for them. They're always ready to hear what drivers have to say and frequently ask for feedback. This comes in the shape of surveys, interviews, or chats at their local driver's office, so no matter the driver's preference they can get heard.

So before we move on, let's recap: the FREE NOW app is easy to use, it has a lot of useful features for drivers, and it's constantly improving.

And their passengers love taking black cabs...

There are loads of reasons why they choose black cabs in the FREE NOW app. And it's for more than their iconic status.

They love that they can book black cabs from the comfort of their home, office, or restaurant table, especially on roads with fewer passing cabs. They love the security of knowing who their driver is and getting an estimated fare. But above all, they love how easy it is to book a taxi with FREE NOW.

That's not to mention the generous discounts FREE NOW gives passengers, encouraging them to book black cabs. Or how black cabs are always front and centre in their adverts. Plus, as sponsors of this year's Mercury Prize Award, FREE NOW's black cabs were even spotted ferrying some of the UK's up-and-coming artists around London.

All this brings more passengers to the app, ready and eager to book black cab trips.

But FREE NOW isn't just a black cab app

Passengers can also book eBikes, eScooters, and PHVs using the FREE NOW app. Bear with us while we explain why that's great for black cab drivers!

By adding all these different options to the app, it's becoming a one-stop shop for anyone looking to get around the city. If they want to nip down the road on an eScooter, they can book it with FREE

NOW. If they fancy a bike ride, then they'll open the app. And if they want to book an iconic black cab, then they're ready and waiting in the FREE NOW app. The more passengers enjoy using FREE NOW, the more likely they are to use all the services in the app as they travel through their city.

Passengers can also use FREE NOW in 10 countries and 150+ cities across Europe. So, visitors to the UK often use the FREE NOW app like they would back home. This adds to the already huge number of passengers in the UK.

When it comes to booking 4 wheels, passengers don't need to seek out the black cab option in the app, it's done automatically. So, every time they request a trip, they'll have a choice of vehicle, which means that black cab trips always get served when passengers submit a request. And from all the options, around 50% of total passenger requests in the app are for a trusted black cab driver as passengers feel safe and reassured by their expertise.

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The Not-So-Dynamic Duo

Seriously, how did we get into such a mess with this government?

A man in black

Many of you will remember those halcyon days of yore, sitting in front of a TV the size of a small island, waiting for your favourite show to light up the screen. 9pm on a Friday night, our TV would always be switched to ITV for the latest episode of *The Professionals*.

The professionals

Now, for those of you under the age of 50, *The Professionals* was your archetypal dynamic duo crime drama. Bodie and Doyle were the main protagonists of the series but there were many other dynamic duos around at the time: *The Sweeney's* Regan and Carter and of course who could forget *Batman and Robin* to name but a few.

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Fast forward to 2022 and we are in the midst of a war in Eastern Europe, a major energy crisis and the tail end of a pandemic. But fear not, we have (or rather had) the fiscal freedom fighters Kwarteng and Blunder-Truss.

The definition of insanity

They say the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Cue PM Liz Truss's trickle-down economics. Trickle-down economics is a term used to describe the belief that if high-income earners gain an increase in salary, then everyone in the economy will benefit as their increased wealth filters through to all sections in society. However, this particular economic policy is widely regarded as a dismal failure.

The United States tinkered with trickle-down economics during the Reagan and Bush eras. Not only did they find that it didn't work, it did horrendous damage to both their economy and society in general. It was also a dismal failure in the 17 other countries that attempted to adopt it, the UK included. It is such a fanciful notion that even the International Monetary Fund rejected the policy, with five economists producing a report



stating that when the income of the top 20% of earners is increased, the benefits do not trickle-down. The report actually argued that growth is increased by boosting the income of low and middle income earners. So, why did Liz Blunder-Truss and Crazy Kwasi champion this fiscal failure?

The answer may be due to the fact that Liz Truss is a proponent of free-market neoliberalism. A supporter of the same views as a number of right wing think tanks, including the Adam Smith Institute and the Institute of Economic Affairs. Both of these institutions supported Truss and Kwarteng's mini bodge-it (sorry, I mean budget). These will be a familiar name within the taxi trade as they are the same places that continually advocate for the systematic dismantling of the London taxi industry in favour of a single-tier entity with minimal regulation.

Radio Gaga

In what can only be described as a car crash, Truss undertook a series of local radio interviews in support of her recently announced policies, prompting criticism from members of all

major political parties, including her own. There were even calls for the beleaguered PM to resign. It had been mooted that members of her own party would rebel against some of the proposals which spooked the markets to such an extent that a financial crash became almost inevitable. But wait, there's more. Just a few days after announcing a cut to the 45p income tax rate, a major u-turn in the style of a 1978 Ford Capri occurred.

Even with this unprecedented backtrack, a record swing towards Labour in the polls suggests the Tories face an uphill task to recover public confidence. This has prompted questions from a number of sources as to whether the Tory leadership is deliberately tanking the economy, in the belief that if they can't win the next election, so it will create havoc for any new incumbents.

Blunder-Truss fires her blunderbus

While Blunder-Truss fires her blunderbus through the economy, millions of families are not only going to have to contend with energy costs rising at an alarming rate (despite

the cap which isn't actually a cap, Liz), rising inflation and rocketing interest rates will also cause mortgage payments to increase and, in some cases, lead to a hike in the cost of rented accommodation. This will potentially leave millions of households hundreds of pounds a month worse off.

Despite the Bank of England already stepping in to calm the markets by announcing that it will buy up to £5 billion a day of government bonds of at least 20 years' maturity until 14th October, the damage may already be too great to reverse. With the general public having less disposable income, the impact on the taxi industry cannot be understated too. This comes at a time when the UK, along with the rest of the world, is still trying to recover from the financial and physical impact of Covid.

It could be argued that, even with a major u-turn, this could be the most unnecessary act of fiscal self-destruction in British political history, seeing as one half of this catastrophic team (at time of writing, of course) has left Downing Street.

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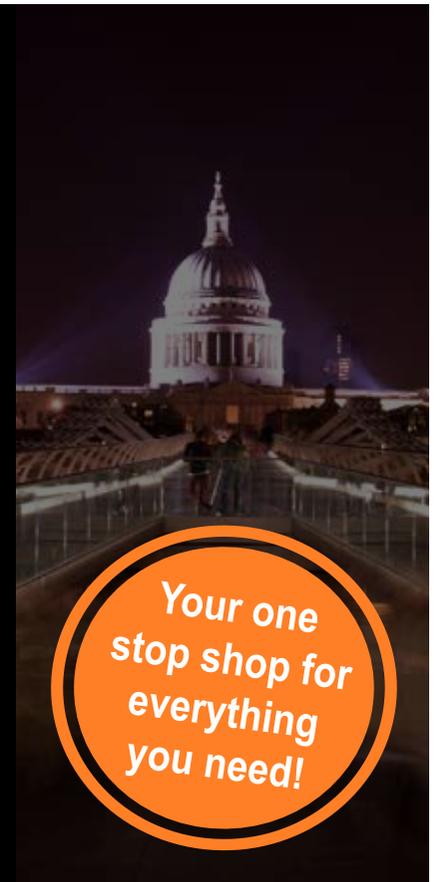
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The Files That Keep on Giving...

One of the joys of this summer was the publication – by The Guardian and newspapers in other countries – of the Uber Files.

International correspondent

As you'll recall, heaps of files were leaked by former Uber senior executive, Mark MacGann, to an international consortium of investigative journalists. The files illustrated the aggressive way in which Uber, between 2013 and 2017, tried to break down regulatory barriers in 40 countries – many of them European. The Uber Files have become a useful reference for learning about their strategy and tactics. Of course, that was in the past and the company now is as pure as the driven snow.

There are new and recent developments. When, on 8th September, a long line of cabs from several European countries meandered through the Brussels city centre in a 400-vehicle demonstration, they carried with them a photo of an erstwhile EU Commissioner. Later that day, drivers passed the EU Commission's HQ and made their presence known. In talks with EU officials, the demo's reps demanded action against one of its former Commissioners, Dutch politician Neelie Kroes. She was in charge of the Digital Agenda (2010-2014) and Competition (from 2004). An avid Uber supporter from the word go, Kroes couldn't wait to join the ranks of top-Uber consultants after

At the EU HQ, cabbies made their feelings known – loudly.



Many protesters at the Brussel demo carried photos of Uber-lobbyist Kroes with them.

leaving her Brussels job. Former Commissioners normally have to cool their heels for six months before taking on another job, but Kroes couldn't wait.

Former EU Commissioner under investigation

Within a month of Brussels, the EU Commission's 'anti-fraud office' launched a formal investigation into Kroes' lobbying activities for Uber immediately after she left the EU Commission. Emails, WhatsApp messages and other documents in the Uber Files revealed that Kroes started working for Uber immediately after leaving her Brussels job, despite a clear ban from her former employer. With this, Kroes may have violated the integrity rules of the European Commission. In the years following her stint at the EU, she enthusiastically supported the Uber-lobby.

A French President

A few weeks ago, two large

French taxi associations, UNT and FNAT, filed a complaint for 'passive corruption' with the French courts against French President Emmanuel Macron. The complaint concerns his activities while he was Minister of Economy, Industry and the Digital Economy (from 2014 to 2016). Both organisations state that "the revelations of the Uber Files affair have shed light on the role he played in founding the VTC company Uber in France and have sparked outrage across the entire taxi industry." UNT and FNAT, "concerned to defend the interests of the profession", through the investigation of this complaint, "want justice to determine whether the actions of Mr. Emmanuel Macron may deserve a criminal law qualification in this context."

A Brussels Secretary

The Uber Files are a gift that keeps on giving. EU-centre, Brussels, was (after London) one of the main targets for Uber to start pushing its app between 2013 and 2017. It ran an aggressive



Brussels Secretary for Urbanism, Pascal Smet.

lobbying campaign helped by a local politician, Pascal Smet, who was Secretary for Mobility between 2014 and 2019, and in charge of taxi policy and regulation. Like Kroes, he too was mentioned by name by many of the taxis protesting in the Belgian capital. Thanks to the Uber Files, this current Secretary for Urbanism can expect a hot autumn. A special committee will be looking into the whole of Uber's local lobbying activities. Smet was an important ally to them, which hoped that a breakthrough with a legalised app in the heart of Europe would be crucial to its European campaign. The Uber Files showed how close Smet and his assistants were to the app company, trying to gain a foothold in Brussels.

Although the info in the Files provides no proof of criminal abuse or corruption, it hardly paints a pretty picture of Smet's lobbying activities. For a long time Uber actually operated illegally in Brussels. Smet played a smart game not to show his fondness for Uber, but what he did went far beyond political decency.

The Uber Files and his involvement will be the focus of attention for weeks to come. Will heads roll? Doubtful. But these won't be the last revelations to come out of the Files that keep on giving.



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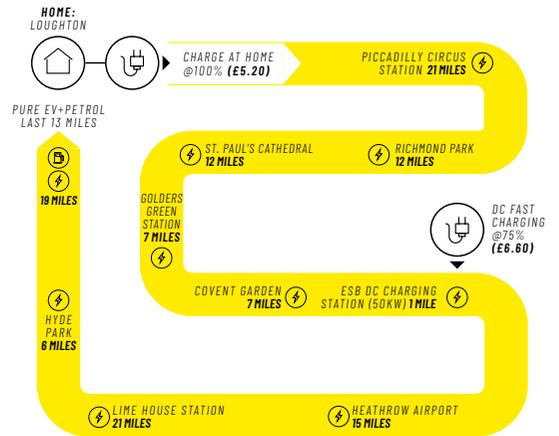
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A Passage Through Time

We continue our journey from the City of London and arrive at Clerkenwell. An area which is known today for its industry, media, arts, gastronomy and gentrification.

Footprints & foundations

The boundaries of Clerkenwell are defined by Gray's Inn Road to the west, Pentonville Road to the north, Clerkenwell Road to the south and Goswell Road to the east. In this series, we'll venture across the borders of Clerkenwell, to uncover the mystery of adjacent neighbourhoods. The changing landscape of Clerkenwell progresses unabated; the development of contemporary offices and residential buildings has brought in new arrivals to this environ. There is no doubt Clerkenwell has evolved from its early origins, with a heritage that has captivated the interest of the attentive visitor.



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Finding Clerkenwell

Place names are clues to ancestral backgrounds. The moniker Clerkenwell refers to the Clerks Well, a watering hole for the former clerks of the 12th century St John's Priory. The Well was located on the corner of Farringdon Lane and Clerkenwell Green. A replica of this ancient water source can be seen in the basement of an office building called Well Court. At first floor level there are information boards and images behind a glass frontage, depicting this artefact. Evidence of Clerkenwell's bucolic past is referred to in its thoroughfares. Bowling Green Lane, Vine Street Bridge, Saffron Hill and Herbal Hill provide indications of a previous rustic ambiance.

Early beginnings

London is a city built on religious foundations. In the past, the sovereign and the state formed a strong allegiance to the church where the doctrine of Christianity was firmly established in the first millennia. The church did not only act as a house of worship, it also played a major role in the salvation of its parishioners. To assist the poor, a social welfare programme existed throughout the nation. Food, education and shelter provided the destitute with their basic needs.

The focal point for the citizens of London was their parish church. In the Mediaeval period, the City of London contained 91 churches before the Great Fire of London (1666). As the green fields of the capital began to develop, it was always important to build a church devoted to a particular saint in these former villages. Throughout the City and its environs, monastic orders of friars and nuns formed homogeneous communities. These holy precincts were enclosed behind tall brick walls. They were completely independent and self-sufficient in amenities, including lodgings, a slaughterhouse, woodhouse, plumber's house, laundry and counting house. The church played a central role for all the inhabitants of these religious orders.

Monastic orders

Here in Clerkenwell, the religious orders of St John's Priory and St Mary's Nunnery were established in the 12th century. St James Church in Clerkenwell Close formed a part of the grounds of the ancient Nunnery. St John Street and Square recall the former Priory. There are many biblical references in the nearby thoroughfares of Clerkenwell, Jerusalem Passage, St Cross Street and Goswell Road-Gods-

Well, which are reminders of a spiritual past. I am most certain the readership has dropped off a fare at St John's Square. The ancient stone gateway on southside is St John's Gate, this was the former entrance to St John's Priory. There are only a few buildings that remain from the original Priory, a crypt and a small museum are incorporated beside St John's Gate. The religious precinct enclosed 5 acres, covering the area down to St John's Lane moving eastwards to the Fleet River now concealed by Farringdon Street.

The Knights Hospitallers

Who were these monastic knights that came to settle in Clerkenwell? In the 11th and 12th centuries, at the time of the Crusades in the Holy Land, a brotherhood of knights from across Europe marched on Jerusalem to protect Christianity's most holy places. Throughout history, the birthplace of religion has always had continual conflict, as nations descended on this Middle Eastern enclave to proclaim sovereignty.



Each group of knights followed a particular doctrine of Christianity. The Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem took monastic vows of poverty, chastity and

obedience and an additional vow to heal the sick. They had military training, however their main role was to set up hospitals for knights, soldiers and pilgrims who had been injured or fallen sick. When the hospitallers returned to England, they were granted land in Clerkenwell by a benefactor named Jordan De Briset (Briset Street) who bequeathed the knights ten acres of land. The priory in Clerkenwell became their headquarters in England. In 1540, the order was suppressed by King Henry VIII (1509-1547) in the Reformation. Henry became head of the Church of England which marked the end of Catholicism and the beginning of Protestantism.

Legacy

The legacy of the Knights Hospitallers is the St John Ambulance Brigade founded in 1887. The organisation, also known as the Order of St John, is an international charity working in over 40 countries, providing ambulance and care services, clinics and first aid training. St John's Wood was in the ownership of the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem in the 14th century.

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Silly Season is Upon Us

How can cabbies protect themselves from the impending, festive chaos?

Night work update

When talking about 'silly season', the taxi industry generally refers to the period between the beginning of October the start of January. For the average night worker this can mean entering 92 days of hell, with very little respite.

To be fair to the general public, it wasn't so long ago that the whole of the UK was under a two-year restraining order, so it's not surprising that the population may go a bit wild. With this in mind, how do taxi drivers protect themselves when dealing with a loud, rowdy and unpredictable public? The simple answer is dialogue.

The two worst things that a taxi driver can do is fail to lock their front doors and get out of their cab. Yet some taxi drivers seem to forget the dangers and do exactly what they shouldn't do. When this happens all hell can break loose.

Stay in the cab

Being a taxi driver of a certain vintage means I've experienced many things, sometimes repeatedly. One of those experiences is being propositioned. Being a happily married man with a modicum of common sense I've always refused the drunken, amorous advances of any passenger silly enough to try it on. Disregarding the fact that I value my marriage (and my teeth), it is the most unprofessional thing that a taxi driver can do. As a public service, we are there to serve and protect the public, therefore taking advantage of a drunk customer is not something we should ever do.

When a drunk customer comes on to a hapless taxi driver, it's generally not because they think that the driver is George Clooney. More often than not you are the last chance saloon for somebody who probably has no clue as to what they are doing and is going to wildly regret their actions the following morning. It's a fool's game. It's also one which can cost you your licence

"The biggest pain in the neck that any taxi driver has to deal with is somebody who cannot hold their alcohol. Throwing up in the taxi is, quite frankly, vile."

and possibly your liberty. The way to avoid ruin is to politely refuse, stay in your taxi and, if necessary, switch the video or voice record facility on on your phone, just in case.

Bilking

We've all been there, the aggressive, drunk passenger who decides that they aren't going to pay up. Unfortunately, as we approach Christmas, this sort of behaviour becomes more prevalent. It's at this point I start to teach the more experienced driver how to suck eggs, while educating the butter-boy. Please, for goodness sake, **DO NOT GET OUT OF YOUR TAXI.**

The moment you exit your car to try and obtain payment, you leave yourself wide open to both accusation and assault. Tackling a drunk passenger is not going to get the fare paid. Instead, try

to find out their address, don't get aggressive towards them, glean as much information as possible. Once they've left the cab either make a police report online or in person at a police station (assuming that you can find one open). As I have said in previous editions of The Nightwatchman, bilking is a criminal offence and not a civil one. Therefore, always insist on the police pursuing the offender. It may not be the worst crime in the world but you are entitled to be paid.

Sickness

The biggest pain in the neck that any taxi driver has to deal with is somebody who cannot hold their alcohol. Throwing up in the taxi is, quite frankly, vile. Being drunk really isn't an excuse, however, deal with it we must. Always carry a couple of carrier bags and a towel. When trying to soak up vomit, cat litter can also be quite useful (although carrying that in the taxi is ridiculous). There are a couple of 24-hour car wash centres dotted around that will clean the taxi for you. The American Car Wash on Great Eastern Street, Shoreditch, and the Car Wash on Chambers Street, near Tower Bridge, will both get you on your way swiftly. It isn't cheap though, but losing an hour's work and paying £30 is better than losing your entire night's income.

Keep the doors locked

Finally, one of the easiest things to overlook are your front doors, especially if you drive a TXe. Locking those front doors could quite conceivably save your life and is the simplest thing in the world to do. In this day and age it pays dividends to trust nobody, so keep yourself locked in and valuables in the boot.

Have a safe and profitable silly season!

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Why Did the Mini-Budget Lead to Financial Chaos?

What exactly is the issue and how did we, as a nation, get into this dire position?

Money matters

Ex-Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng's mini-budget in mid-September plunged the financial world into chaos with the pound dropping, stock market crashing and mortgage rates rising.

So, what went wrong?

The 'mini budget' was the first fiscal event under Liz Truss MP as Prime Minister. Dubbed the "Growth Plan" by the Conservatives, the announcements included tax cuts for the rich but little help for people on low incomes.

The big announcement was the abolishment of the 45p tax rate for people earning more than £150,000 a year (although this was later scrapped). Kwarteng also announced that the basic rate of income tax will be cut from 20p to 19p in April, 2023.

The former chancellor also removed the cap on bankers' bonuses and doubled the stamp duty threshold.

There was nothing in this budget for households struggling with rising inflation and energy bills. In fact, the small print changed some of the Universal Credit rules so that more benefits claimants now face increased sanctions, if they don't spend enough hours each week looking for work.

Prioritising the rich

Critics accused the government of helping their rich friends, such as bankers and high earners, while ignoring the plight of the poor. Our rulers, meanwhile, maintained that the plan would grow the economy and encourage wealthy people to spend. This cash, in turn, would then supposedly 'trickle down' to those struggling.

The immediate impact of this was the value of the pound versus other currencies, especially the Euro and US dollar, fell sharply. The value of a currency generally falls when other countries and the stock market lose faith in a country. Announcements in the mini-budget prompted many to question the credibility of Truss and her new government. As the pound dropped, more currency traders sold it, causing it to drop even more.



A sudden drop in sterling created uncertainty, throwing the plans of UK businesses that import and export goods into disarray, as it means the cost of importing goods from overseas goes up, while the price they get for products sold abroad will go down.

A falling pound also makes holidays abroad more expensive, while anything we buy from overseas will cost more. This includes oil and gas – so affecting fuel and energy bills. Economists warned that the tax cuts would mean the government would have to borrow more money, pushing inflation even higher.

Investors, meanwhile, were concerned that extra borrowing would not be recouped through higher growth and more tax paid, leaving the UK with worsening debts over the long term. This caused stock markets to lose money.

Pensions and investments

If you have a pension, you're

invested in the stock market. The same applies if you have a stocks and shares ISA. So, this affected a lot of people, not just high net worth investors.

The government would need to borrow money to carry out its tax-cutting and other plans. One of the ways it does this is via selling bonds, or 'gilts', to investors such as pension funds and big banks on international markets. 'Gilts' are normally a safe and stable investment in a developed economy like the UK.

Bondholders receive a stream of future payments, or 'yield', based on the interest rate offered. Due to concerns over whether the government's plan would work, investors started demanding much higher interest rates to lend to the UK government.

The Bank of England feared the government's borrowing costs would spiral out of control, so it intervened by launching a temporary UK government bond-buying programme. This means the bank will buy the bonds at a

high rate to offset the decline in government income from its own tax-cut policy.

Mortgage misery

The Bank's action raised fears that interest rates could rise sharply. This led to mortgage lenders withdrawing mortgage products from the market as they couldn't decide how much these products should cost. Rising mortgage rates make life difficult for anyone on a variable rate mortgage, those who come to the end of a fixed rate and want to fix again, and first-time buyers trying to buy a home.

In short, rising mortgage costs could potentially mean house prices will start to fall – bad news if you have a big mortgage on your home as you'll be at risk of negative equity.

The government has since back-tracked on the scrapping of the 45p rate and other elements of the mini-budget, but the damage to the UK's economy – and trust in our leaders – has already been done. ■ **TAXI**



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Jack the Ripper's first victims

The infamy of Jack the Ripper, is known worldwide and you'd be hard-pressed to find anybody who hasn't heard of the notorious serial killer. It's hard to think of another mass murderer, who has not just transcended generations, but also spawned so much in pop culture, including the production of over 50 films.

It is widely accepted that the most notorious man in Whitechapel killed five women, but did you know a case, under the title 'Whitechapel Murders File', implicates Jack the Ripper in eleven murders?

Murdered on 31st August, 1888, Mary Nichols was initially considered to be the Ripper's first victim. However, it is believed that there were two killings prior to that of Nichols. It was also generally accepted that the fiend's final victim was Mary Kelly on 9th November, 1888. In a grizzly development, it is said there were four more murders after the slaying of Kelly.

The initial two, prior to Mary Nichols, were identified as Annie Millwood and an unknown woman, nicknamed Fairy Fay. Millwood had received stab wounds to her legs and lower abdomen. Fairy Fay is believed to have been Emma Smith, who was killed after having a stake driven through her.

The four bodies which were identified as possible ripper victims after Kelly's death were Rose Mylett, Alice McKenzie, Frances Coles and the chillingly named Pinchin Street torso. All but one of them were murdered in the same way as the canonical five. Rose Mylett's death baulked the Ripper's usual modus operandi, being found strangled to death in her home.

Over 130 years later, despite numerous theories, Jack the Ripper's identity remains a mystery.



The secret doorway in Parliament

The Houses of Parliament have always had an air of mystery about them. With concealed entrances and hidden rooms, they are a throwback to a bygone era of secrecy. But did you know that a secret doorway, built during the reign of Charles II, has recently been uncovered by architects during its restoration?

It's believed a passage was built for the procession to the King's coronation banquet in the 17th Century. It is also believed it was subsequently used to access parliament by Prime Ministers, including Robert Walpole and William Pitt, before being bricked up and covered by wood panelling.

Workers performing restoration on the Houses of Parliament discovered the passage, along with some 169 year-old graffiti left by stonemasons. The message, which was written in pencil, said: 'This room was enclosed by Tom Porter who was very fond of Ould Ale.'



Further messages were found, including one which read: 'These masons were employed refacing these groynes ... August 11th 1851 Real Democrats.'

The Real Democrats were part of a working-class male suffrage movement calling for reforms to allow every man aged 21 to have a vote, and for would-be MPs to stand even if they did not have property.

Documentation from the 1851 census shows the stonemasons working on the building at the time were Richard Condon, James Williams, Henry Terry, Thomas Parker and Peter Dewal.

**SO YOU THINK
YOU KNOW**

LONDON?

The first of the Doodlebugs

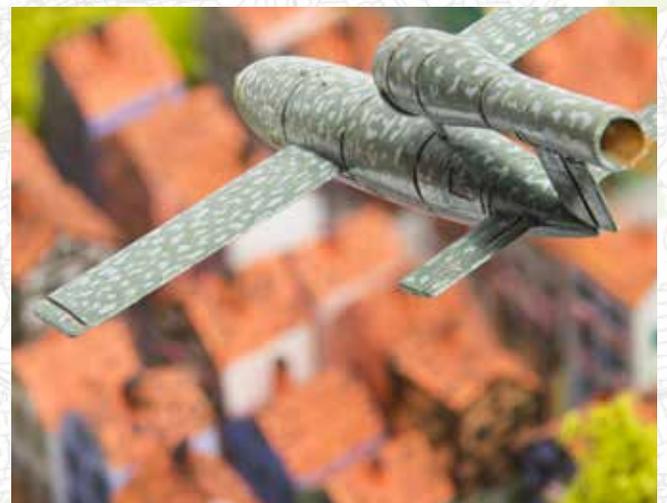
Between June 1944 and March 1945, more than 6,700 V1 rockets slammed into South East England. The V1, otherwise known as the buzz bomb or doodlebug, struck terror into anybody within firing range of the near 5,000lbs rocket. 2,340 flying bombs hit London, causing 5,475 deaths and 16,000 injuries - but did you know the first V1 to hit London, struck Grove Road, Bow, at 4.25am on 13th June, 1944?

The rocket destroyed a railway bridge and levelled houses in close proximity, killing six and injuring 30. 200 hundred were rendered homeless and the Liverpool Street to Essex railway line was severely disrupted. However, in an incredible feat of engineering, the railway service was restored in just 40 hours after a temporary bridge was constructed, remaining in service until 1948.

The V1 rocket, whose code name was 'Cherry Stone', was a winged, pilotless missile. The rocket was launched via a ramped catapult system, although it could also be deployed by aircraft and travel at a speed of around 360mph and had a range of around 150 miles.

Although the engine used was a pulse-jet system, the missile had its origins in a 1915 propeller-powered design. Due to its pilotless design and launching system, it could be argued that it was the world's first drone.

In commemoration of the first V1 striking Grove Road, a steel blue plaque was situated near the railway bridge.



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Movie Corner

Amon Warmann guides us through the latest film releases, to see if they're worth checking out.

Reel Talk

Walt Disney Studios



Blonde (18) ⓘ

Marilyn Monroe was an icon. From the 1950s to the 1960s, she was a top-billed actress. In 1954, she founded her own film production company, and the films she's starred in are still talked about among cinephiles today. But these are not the elements of Marilyn Monroe that Andrew Dominik's *Blonde* is interested in. Instead, it's a near three-hour onslaught of Monroe suffering all manner of abuses: from parents, lovers, and others who wronged her. Or to put it another way, it's a staggeringly incurious biopic that's tough to sit through.

24

And that's a shame, because it does have some things going for it. Though she's not allowed to stray from it, Ana de Armas is excellent at portraying Monroe's vulnerable side. On a technical level, *Blonde* also impresses; Nick Cave and Warren Ellis' score is haunting, and the visuals – which alternate between colour and black & white – are intermittently striking. There are even a couple sequences where de Armas looks just like the genuine article – the costume design on offer is beautiful. It's just a bummer that it's mostly in service of putting Monroe, and us, through the wringer. Monroe fans, or curious cinephiles looking to learn more about the icon, need not apply.



Blonde is available to watch on Netflix now.



Paramount Pictures

Smile (18) ⓘ

There is something fundamentally unsettling about being on the receiving end of an unprovoked happy face. And that uncanny creepiness is maximised many times over in *Smile*, the feature debut from writer-director Parker Finn. An expansion of his 11-minute short film *Laura Can't Sleep*, what it lacks in originality it makes up for with scares that are effectively calibrated to earn your respect – and cold shivers – almost every step of the way.

The woman on the receiving end of many frights is Rose Cotter (Sosie Bacon), a therapist who witnesses a patient grinning while killing themselves and unwittingly becomes the latest target of a malevolent entity that torments its victims for days before killing them.

Bacon skilfully modulates her performance to become increasingly unravelled as her life falls apart around her. It's a journey that examines the impact childhood trauma can have on our adult selves – a rich, emotional vein that's mined well. There's less clarity in what Finn is trying to say about mental health and the stigmas attached to it, but *Smile's* primary focus is on terrifying its audience, and it does that well enough to make you want to turn that frown upside down... after you're done squirming, of course.



Smile is in cinemas now.

Nothing Compares (15) ⓘ

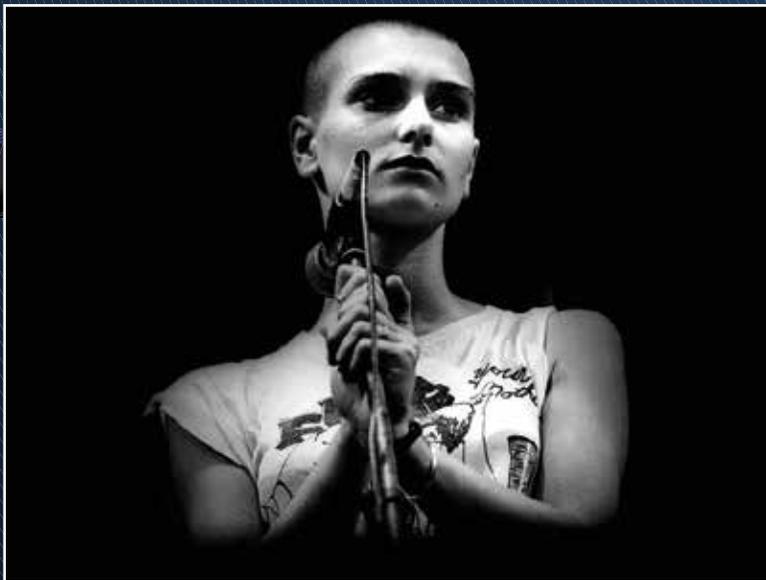
Nothing Compares' opening is striking. It shows Sinead O'Connor getting booed by a stadium full of people as she walks onto stage at Madison Square Garden, during a televised Bob Dylan concert. How did it come to this? Directed by Kathryn Ferguson, this effective documentary then rewinds to the start of O'Connor's story to answer that question. Along the way, we take in her difficult upbringing, the discovery of her talent, and the emergence of her uncompromising attitude that never faded as she came into her own as an artist.

It's a journey that is all the more compelling thanks to the unprecedented access Ferguson had to her subject's home movie footage and TV appearances, which focuses on her six-year whirlwind from 1987-1993, while also drawing a direct line to present day pop stars using their platforms to talk truth to power. While the Billie Eilishs of the world are celebrated for such actions, O'Connor was vilified for it. In that sense, she was ahead of her time, but this doc is perfectly timed.



Nothing Compares is in cinemas now.

Lionsgate Films



‘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.**



Cab Drivers Support the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association

A look at the heroes who paid respects to the Queen, upon her passing.



Left to right: Dan Keighran VC, Chris Finney GC, Kim Hughes GC, Sam Shephard GC, Dom Troulan GC, Mark Donaldson VC .



Keith Payne VC, AM, DSC (USA).

After the car crashed into a lorry, the occupants immediately jumped out and one held a pistol to Gledhill's head before attempting to make his escape with Gledhill holding on to the car window and being dragged along the road. The car crashed and Gledhill and fellow officer McFall were able to overpower the man and take his weapon. Both Gledhill and McFall received injuries during the sustained firearm attack and from the early stages knew the risks they ran of being killed or seriously injured.

Major Peter Norton GC

Major Peter Norton received a GC for his bravery in the Al Bayaa District near Baghdad, in 2005. Following an attack on a three-vehicle patrol by a massive command-initiated, improvised explosive device, a team, commanded by Norton, was taken immediately to the scene and faced the complete destruction of a patrol vehicle and the deaths of four United States personnel. With a complete understanding of the potential hazard to himself and knowing that the insurgents had used secondary devices before, Norton went forward alone to confirm whether an improvised explosive device was present. A short while later, an explosion occurred and Norton sustained a traumatic amputation of his left leg and suffered serious blast and fragmentation injuries to his right leg, arms and lower abdomen.

There is a commonly held misconception that the VC is the highest award for bravery and stands alone in that regard. As HM The Queen made clear in September of 2019, the two awards, the VC and the GC, are of equal standing. **TAXI**

Volunteer London cab drivers from The Taxi Charity for Military Veterans were delighted to offer support to The Victoria Cross and George Cross Association, by driving some of their members to the State Funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II, on Monday 19th September.

The Taxi Charity Chairman, Brian Heffernan, committee member Simon Hawes, and cab drivers Jason Clauson and Jon Southcott were on hand to drive veterans and serving personnel, from the Union Jack Club to both the rehearsals and the funeral at Westminster Abbey.

Heffernan said, "It was an honour and a privilege to offer support to the VC and GC Association. Over four days, we drove the Association members to view Her Majesty's coffin on Friday, to the funeral rehearsal on Saturday, to a private luncheon in Chelsea on Sunday and then to the State Funeral on Monday. It is certainly a great feeling to think that I played a small part in bringing some of Her Majesty's highly decorated soldiers to say a final farewell to their Queen."

Rebecca Maciejewska, Chief Executive of The VC and GC Association, said, "The Victoria Cross (VC) and George Cross (GC) Association is immensely grateful to the Taxi Charity for the way your wonderful, selfless drivers enabled our members to get to rehearsals and to Her late Majesty's funeral itself. Without your help, those more elderly and less mobile would have found it very difficult to take up their late Patron's invitation to attend her funeral. We are very, very thankful."

Among the group of highly decorated men that the Taxi Charity

drove to the rehearsal and the funeral were Keith Payne VC AM, DSC (USA), Johnson Beharry VC, Willie Apiata VC, Tony Gledhill GC and Peter Norton GC.

Mr. Keith Payne VC, AM, DSC (USA)

Keith Payne's VC was awarded for his actions during the Vietnam War. In 1969, in Kontum Province, Warrant Officer Payne was Commanding 212th Company of 1st Mobile Strike Force Battalion, when the battalion was attacked by a North Vietnamese force of superior strength. Directly exposing himself to the enemy's fire, he temporarily held off the assaults by alternately firing his weapon and running from position to position collecting grenades and throwing them at the assaulting enemy. His sustained and heroic personal efforts in this action were outstanding and undoubtedly saved the lives of many of his soldiers and several of his fellow advisors. Aged 89, he is the last living Australian recipient of the original 'Imperial' Victoria Cross.

CSgt Johnson Beharry VC

Johnson Beharry is a soldier in the British Army, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for saving members of his unit from ambushes on 1st May and again on 11th June in 2004, at Al-Amarah, Iraq. His citation reads: 'Private Beharry carried out two individual acts of great heroism by which he saved the lives of his comrades. Both were in direct face of the enemy, under intense fire, at great personal risk to himself (one leading to him sustaining very serious injuries). His valour is worthy of the highest recognition.'

Willie Apiata VC

Willie Apiata VC was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery during a patrol in Afghanistan in 2004. After an attack, and in total disregard of his own safety, he carried a fellow soldier with life-threatening injuries to a position where he would be able to receive medical attention. A subsequent medical assessment confirmed that the wounded Corporal would probably have died of blood loss and shock, had it not been for Lance Corporal Apiata's selflessly courageous act in carrying him back to the main Troop lines, to receive the immediate treatment he needed.

Tony Gledhill GC

Constable Tony Gledhill chased five suspects in a car, at speeds of up to 80 miles an hour, while the bandits tried to ambush the police vehicle and no less than 15 shots were fired using a sawn-off shotgun and revolvers.

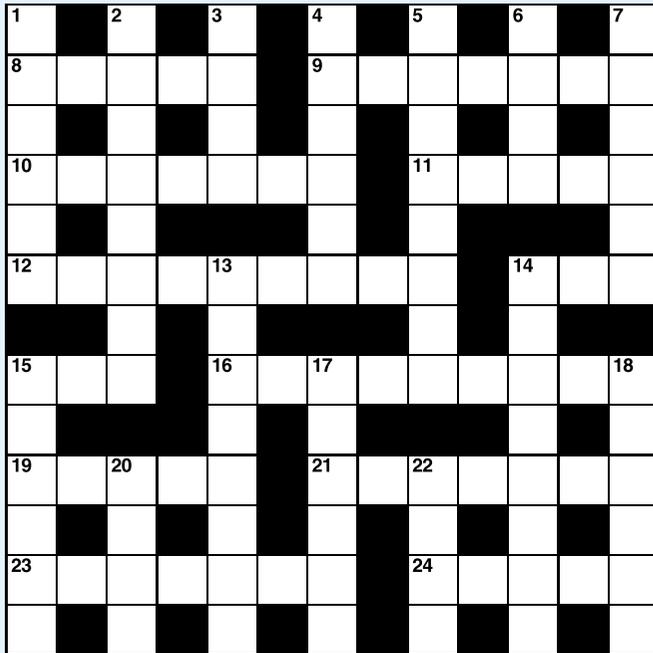


Left to right: Dan Keighran VC, Chris Finney GC, Kim Hughes GC, Sam Shephard GC, Dom Troulan GC, Mark Donaldson VC.



Puzzler page

Crossword



ACROSS

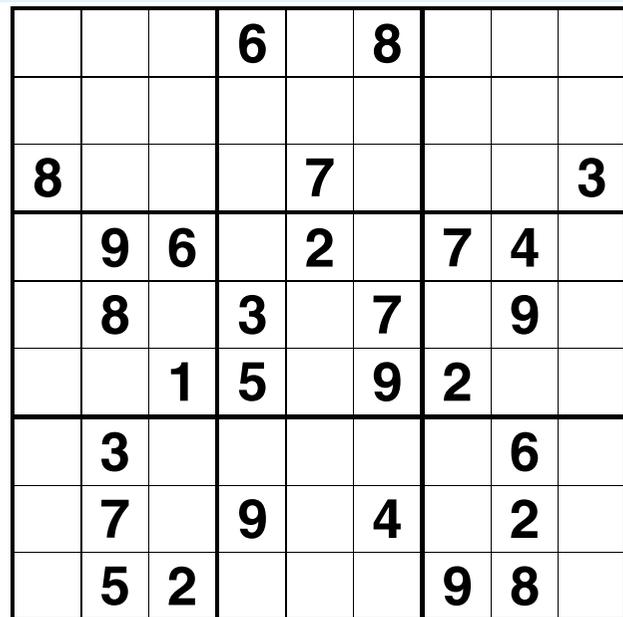
- 8 Solitary type (5)
- 9 Crucial element (7)
- 10 Mechanic's wrench (7)
- 11 Cinema walkway (5)
- 12 Medication for relieving pain (9)
- 14 Colony-making insect (3)
- 15 Eggs of fish (3)
- 16 Body part covered by a nail (9)
- 19 Local authority regulation (5)
- 21 Door for a pet (3,4)
- 23 Human orb (7)
- 24 Golden Delicious, for instance (5)

DOWN

- 1 Colourless part of blood (6)
- 2 Lined up ready for inspection (2,6)
- 3 Wartime woman sailor (4)
- 4 Scattered remains (6)
- 5 Snowball (8)
- 6 Burden of responsibility (4)
- 7 Hate intensely (6)
- 13 Paper for presents (4,4)
- 14 Horned animal (8)
- 15 Burglar (6)
- 17 Agreeably, pleasantly (6)
- 18 Press stud (6)
- 20 Reclines (4)
- 22 Top of a baby's bottle (4)

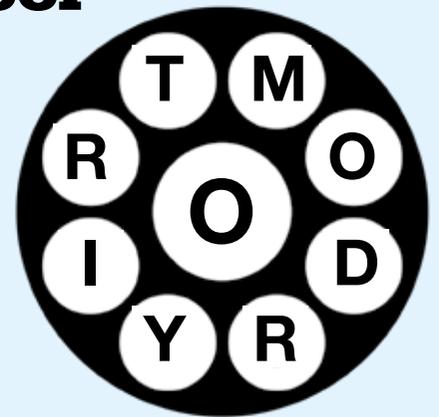
Sudoku

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.



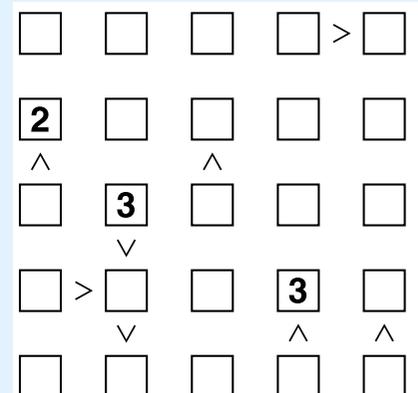
Wordwheel

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

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 Badge colour (Please state whether green or yellow)..... Year badge obtained.....
 Suburban badge sector numbers.....

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 Do you currently have points on your DVLA driving license? (please tick) Yes No
 If Yes how many points do you have?

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

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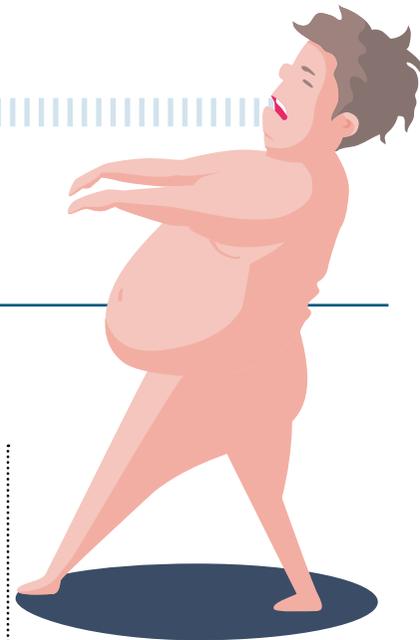
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- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.



Walk On



When inviting folk over to stay, be sure they've no nocturnal habits before committing.

A woman of words

One look at me and you can tell if I have had my beauty sleep. When the zeds are plentiful my cheeks are rosy, my eyes bright, my smile is wide and my hair curls are springy.

So, why is my face grey, my eyes dull and my hair as flat as a pancake?

Because I have had a house guest. His name is Wally. He's an old mate of Mr. Meg's who was in London for three days doing a training course in roof ridding systems. Say what?

If anyone wants to know 'Where's Wally?' he was in my spare room. Correction: his luggage was in my spare room, as is the bed he should have been sleeping in.

Only, he's not been tucked up

in that bed. Between the hours of 11pm and 7am Wally has been a-wandering all over Meg Towers.

You see, he's a sleepwalker. The first night it happened I heard Wally, who is six-foot-four, 19 stone and not-at-all-light-on-his-feet, going downstairs and trying to get out. It sounded like a hippopotamus was ramming the double locked front door.

I tried to rouse Mr. Meg to investigate what his old school friend was up to in the middle of the night. That was pointless though. Honestly, I would have more luck waking the dead at the local cemetery. He just carried on snoring.

That meant it was left to me to find out what was wrong with Wally.

When I joined him in the front hall, I could see the first and most obvious thing that was wrong with Wally was that he was butt naked.

The second is that his eyes were open, but he couldn't see or hear me. Classic sleepwalking!

Good job Mr. Meg was sparko because had he come downstairs, he would have found me prowling around after a man in the noddy.

Wally walked on, stopping in the kitchen to tear off a length of tinfoil, gaze out the front room window and spray some air freshener in the downstairs loo.

Then he headed back upstairs. I followed behind, giving myself a stiff neck looking at the walls and ceiling, so I didn't have to focus on his bare bum.

At the top of the stairs, Wally passed wind. I had to grip the bannister to stop myself keeling backwards. Then, he said to no-one, "You've got the wrong guy!" It might have been funny if I hadn't been choking.

I've had three nights of him moonwalking around Meg

Towers and no sleep as a result.

On the final morning, I came down to find wide awake Wally enjoying porridge and honey. I flicked through the newspaper and pretended I had seen something about sleepwalking in there. "Sleepwalking is so weird, isn't it?" I said, pointing at the page.

"Are you a sleepwalker?" he enquired.

"No," I replied. "Are you?"

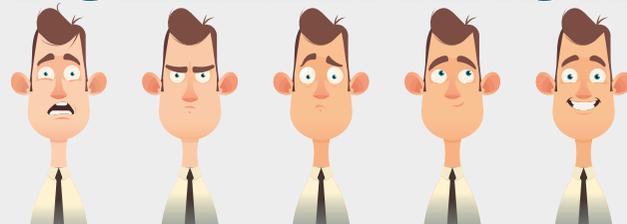
"I'm not that guy," he told me. I wanted to shout, "Oh yes you are!" but I was just too tired.

■ 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, Three Colts Lane, E2
- ◆ Ubiquitous Ltd, E1
- ◆ Waterloo Station
- ◆ Wimbledon Station Rank
- ◆ WizAnn Knowledge School, Watts Grove, E3

PUZZLER ANSWERS



Crossword

P	O	W	D	E	O	D
L	O	N	E	S	S	E
A	P	E	B	C	U	T
S	P	A	N	N	E	R
M	R	I	L	S		
A	N	A	L	G	E	S
D	I	T	N			
R	O	E	F	I	N	G
O	T	I	E	O		
B	Y	L	A	W	C	A
B	I	R	E	E	O	P
E	Y	E	B	A	L	L
R	S	P	Y	T	E	R

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SUDOKU

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

Wordwheel

SOLUTION: DORMITORY

All words: Doom, door, mood, moody, moor, moot, mort, motor, omit, riot, room, roomy, root, rotor, toroid, torrid, trio, trod, DORMITORY.

Word targets Excellent: 23, Good: 20, Target: 14, Kids: 9

Futoshiki

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



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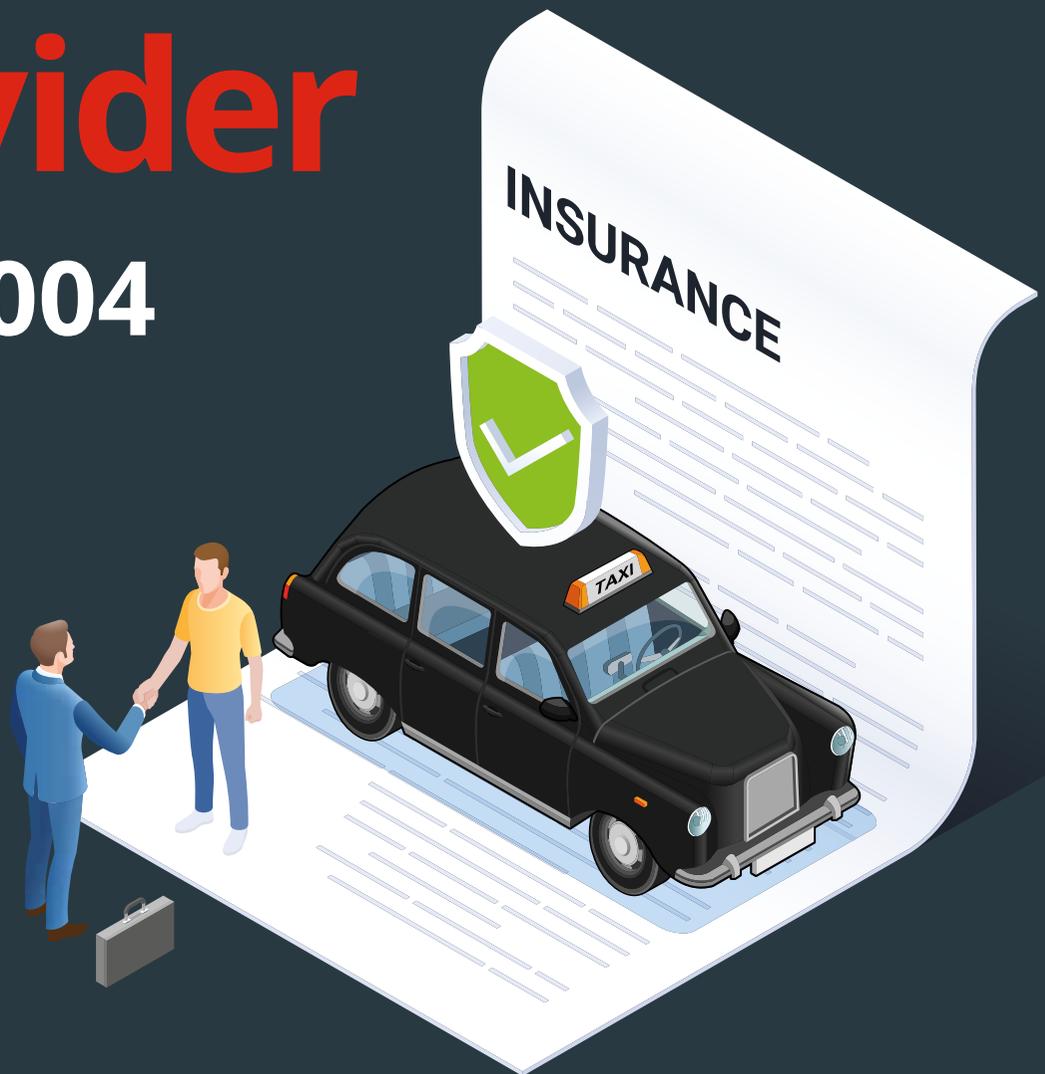
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