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**FLEET TOPS 15,000 FOR FIRST
TIME SINCE PANDEMIC**

CAB YOU DRIVE Page 20

TAXI

14th February 2023 #534



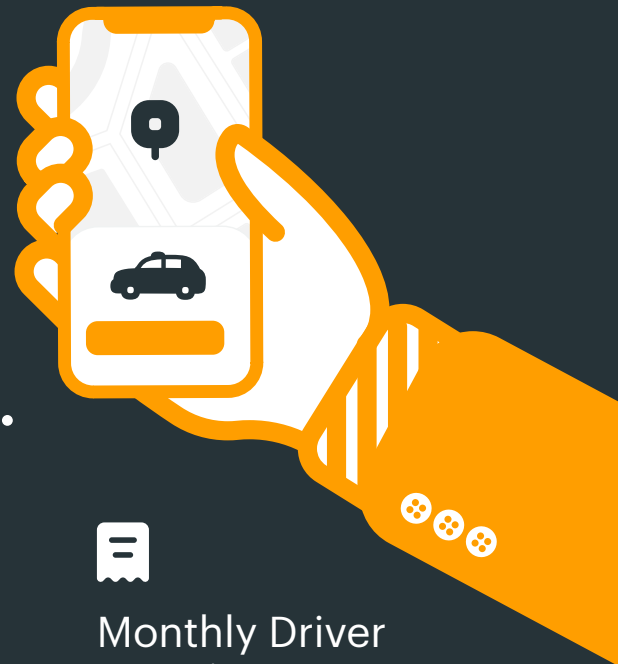
**6 POINTS
NOT OUT –
HOWZAT?**

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DEFENDS MEMBERS**

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

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

Commissioning Editor
Mike Williams
E: taxieditor@centuryone.uk

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

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

Creative Director
Peter Davies

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FREE BASIC LIFE SUPPORT TRAINING COURSE

LTDA members are invited to attend a FREE first aid course at Taxi House on Friday 24th March 2023. Delivered by fellow cab driver, Paul Tippett, an experienced St John's Ambulance Volunteer and Community First Responder, the course will cover performing CPR, using a defibrillator, the recovery position and what to do and how to help if you encounter someone in distress. This interactive course aims to give participants the confidence and practical skills to be able to handle an emergency situation, whether it be in the back of their cab or out on the street. There will be two sessions each covering the same material - a morning session 10am to 12pm and an afternoon session from 1pm to 3pm. To sign up email info@ltda.co.uk or call the LTDA on 0207 286 1046. Places will be allocated on a first come, first-served basis.

ADCU STAGES PALESTRA PROTEST OVER WORKERS RIGHTS AND ABUSIVE ALGORITHMS

Last week, the App Drivers and Couriers Union (ADCU) staged action against Transport for London over its "failure to regulate Uber and Bolt on worker rights and abusive algorithms." The protests came just shy of two years since the Supreme Court ruling against Uber, affirming that its drivers were workers and not self-employed as the company alleged. ADCU claim that Uber continues to flout the law and is still failing to uphold basic workers' rights. The protest also follows TfL's decision to allow Uber to introduce its 'dynamic pricing' technology in London, which allows the operator to set variable pay and pricing levels based on "real time market conditions", as well as the personal data and profiling of drivers and passengers. ADCU state that dynamic pricing is "known to introduce tacit collusion amongst competitors in the market. This means that competing algorithms can collude to keep prices higher, and supply limited to customers and unfairly drive down pay for workers."



CLIPPER CAB CELEBRATE 10,000 MILES ROAD TESTED

Clipper Automotive are celebrating a new milestone for their converted black taxi, which has reached 10,000 electric road tested miles, demonstrating the cab's durability. Clipper upgrade iconic British TX4 black cabs making them into 100 per cent electric and emission-free vehicles. They hope to bring them to market soon, and this achievement brings them one step closer to making that happen. After completing 10,000 test miles successfully, the team behind Clipper, Dr Alexander Howard and Janosch Oppermann, hope to be able to expand their offering to other vehicles that could benefit from the conversion.



WINNER

DIARY PRIZE!

ALL 4 ONE BONUS FOR LTDA MEMBERS

The LTDA diary spotters have been out and about, on the lookout for members displaying their diaries proudly on the dashboard. The lucky winner this time was Mr Mohammed Rhachlioune. Our diary spotter was in Wimbledon when he saw Mr Rhachlioune displaying his LTDA diary. Mohammed was very pleased to receive his gift card worth £150. He was also very complimentary of the LTDA and everything it does, having been a member for more than ten years.

One4All gift cards can be spent on a huge array of items from 130 high street brands in store or online and restaurants. Participating retailers and restaurants include Argos, H&M, River Island, B&Q, John Lewis, Harvester, Pizza Express and Marks & Spencer.

Each year, the LTDA gives away thousands of pounds worth of gift cards to its members. All you need to do to be in with a chance to win is have your LTDA membership diary proudly on display and let us do the rest. Good luck out there.

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Three Tickets, Three Days & Three Hearings

This was not a 'dangerous' or 'inconsiderate' driver and if a magistrate thought him safe enough to keep his DVLA licence, he should be allowed to 'carry on cabbing'.

Steve's comment

It used to be a fact that our lawyers only ever had to fight a case on behalf of one of our members once, in a court room. There are hundreds of members over the years, who have had their licence (both DVLA driving licence and TfL cab licence), saved by our in-house legal team in such a scenario. Unfortunately with TfL's new 'Six points and you're out policy', we often have to run the same case twice, occasionally even three times!

A recent case

We recently had a case involving a member who already had three points on his licence. The three points were from a ticket he received two years earlier, on the M25 Dartford Bridge, for doing 57mph in a 50mph zone, at 3 o'clock in the morning. Fast forward two years and he suddenly received three tickets in the space of three days, all from the same camera, situated on the Westway. The tickets were for speeds varying between 35mph and 38mph. Now, it's important to bear in mind that, until very recently, this was a 40mph limit, and historically a 60mph stretch of road! As far as I am concerned, it is clear these were mistakes, made because the member didn't realise there was a new limit in place. Sadly, under TfL's new policy this doesn't seem to matter.

The third of the three tickets made our member a 'totter', with 12 penalty points on his DVLA licence. He therefore had to attend magistrates' court, where a period of disqualification was almost inevitable. Luckily for the member, our lawyers were able to put up a good argument for the case to be treated as 'Exceptional Hardship' and our member was allowed to keep his DVLA driving licence.

Licence revoked

Unfortunately, with the new

The newspaper of the Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association

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6 POINTS NOT OUT – HOWZAT?

LTDA SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDS MEMBERS

"We do whatever is necessary to best defend our members."

policy in place, TfL then revoked his taxi licence with immediate effect, putting our member in the crazy position of being able to drive his car, but not his cab.

We then appealed the TfL decision and our lawyers attended a reconsideration hearing at TfL, during which they highlighted the unusual nature of the case. As already explained, our member received three tickets in three days, all of which were for low levels and after 30 years of driving a taxi, with no

complaints, and up until two years ago, not a single point on his licence. The point was strongly made that this was not a 'dangerous' or 'inconsiderate' driver and if a magistrate thought him safe enough to keep his DVLA licence, he should be allowed to 'carry on cabbing'. Unfortunately, TfL disagreed and ruled that his licence revocation was upheld.

Third time's the charm

Our lawyers then found themselves back at magistrates' court, this time appealing the TfL decision to revoke the cabbie's licence. For the third time, they once again went out to bat for our member. They made pretty much the same arguments they made at the TfL appeal, but also highlighted the anomaly of

a magistrate's decision (to allow our member to continue driving), effectively being overturned by an unqualified TfL official. Fortunately, once again, the Court agreed with our arguments, and reinstated his taxi licence.

Once again, the time and care that went into preparing and presenting every stage of this case by our in-house legal team produced the right result for our member. Howzat, not out!

Keeping you in the game

We are still busier than ever, doing what the LTDA does best: advising, representing, and defending our members. Had this cabbie not been our member, he would almost certainly not be out there today – working and providing for his family. The cost of mounting this kind of lengthy defence, at many levels, is beyond the means of most. Many of the alternative legal protection schemes available on the market also do it for a cost and to make a profit. We don't, we do whatever is necessary to best defend our members.

This example shows just how easy it can now be to lose your licence, for what in this case amounted to a series of unfortunate mistakes. No driver would intentionally risk their licence in such a careless way and that should be plain for anyone to see. Unfortunately, without the LTDA lawyers, TfL would have taken the cabbie's licence.

Make sure mistakes don't cost you your licence. If you are already a member of the LTDA and need our help, get in touch today. If you aren't, what are you waiting for? Scan the QR code below to join now and get the protection of the LTDA and the trade's best legal team on your side! ■ LTDA





In or Out?

The boroughs, which have permitted taxis access to their schemes, be it a LTN or a bus gate, have done so with no adverse effects and whilst maintaining the benefits of the schemes.

Top rank

When it comes to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), London is very much a Tale of Two Cities. On the one hand, you have some borough officials, who have taken a sensible, responsible approach to designing, installing and managing road restrictions. Then of course there are the boroughs, like Camden and Islington, who generally won't even agree to talk to us. They seem hell bent on changing the very fabric of vast areas of London under their control, to appease a very small minority, over the majority.

It's now got to the point where the only opportunity I get to address anyone from boroughs like Islington, is when I attend other authority's events or external events that they also happen to be attending. The trouble with such events is that they are generally only attended by likeminded people, who all think the same way. Then, at the first sign of trouble they circle the two wheeled wagons to protect their own.

Influencing

One of my jobs at the LTDA is to try to meet as many influential people as possible, to put forward our trade's wants and needs. We do this in the hope that some common sense will prevail. The idea being that when changes are planned, and then implemented, that our trade has been listened to and that our requirements are considered, and hopefully accommodated. I'll be honest, it can all too often seem like a quite pointless, never-ending task, with more downs than ups. Luckily, I'm nothing if not persistent. I'm certainly not easily dissuaded, and I will keep on at it, and at them.

You would have seen recently that some boroughs have been listening. The Outer London boroughs have always been a lot more forward thinking and understanding of the needs of the taxi trade. Now, we are seeing more central boroughs, like Lewisham, Southwark, Lambeth,



Taxis granted access in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith and Fulham, all including licensed taxis as permitted vehicles in various restrictions.

One example is Lambeth's Brixton Hill LTN, which has taxis included on the exempt vehicles list. This is in addition to our permitted access to certain bus gates in the same Borough. Probably the most grown-up approach to be found is in the South Fulham LTN, where Hammersmith and Fulham have given taxis access throughout the restrictions in the area around Peterborough Road, as they did in Imperial Road. There must be something in the water in that part of London, as it is also the home of the unknown hero, who operates the infamous Chelsea Harbour barrier.

No downside

The boroughs which have permitted taxis access to their traffic management schemes, be it an LTN or a bus gate, have done so with no adverse effects, and whilst maintaining the benefits of the schemes. It's a pity that the other boroughs don't seem to have council officers and committees, who take such a practical and flexible approach to these schemes – ensuring that they work for everyone, who travels and lives in their borough, just as they should.

When I speak to a London borough or any authority looking to introduce restrictions, I always ask them to include taxis from the get go, monitor the situation to see if we are a problem (because I 100% believe we would not be a problem), and

then if it becomes a problem, we can revisit it. We've had success with this approach in a number of areas and most recently successfully argued for taxi access in Chancery Lane. It can't be and shouldn't be a borough's go-to strategy to exclude us from the start. Then look at maybe reintroducing us further down the line, if, or more accurately when, we make enough noise about the problems the scheme is causing.

Ploughing ahead, ignoring people's concerns and then being forced to make changes later on, seems pretty backwards to me. But let's not forget that some of the strongest supporters of and decision makers pushing these schemes, have such tunnel vision that they will not even allow for easy access for blue badge holders, so perhaps we shouldn't be surprised? ■ LTDA



More chaos at Bank

As of 13th February, Queen Victoria Street, at its junction with Mansion House Street, will be closed to all motor vehicles 24/7. This means that we will now need to share the limited road space in Queen Street, with the multiple bus routes that previously used Queen Victoria Street to access Bank Junction. Access to Bucklersbury and Walbrook is maintained from the open section of Queen Victoria Street.

In addition, between 13th February and 12th July 2023, there will also be changes on Mansion House Street. It will be restricted to one way traffic westbound (heading towards Poultry). All traffic, including cyclists, travelling eastbound will be on diversion. Traffic will not be able to enter the junction from either Poultry or Queen Victoria Street during this period. Access to Cornhill remains possible via Princes Street southbound. ■ LTDA



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Where to?



Whose Rules Are We Playing By?

A year on, we are now seeing the 'six points and you're out' policy hitting hardworking cabbies and putting them in very worrying predicaments.

Streets ahead

When it comes to medicals, TfL follows the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) rules to the letter, so why are they now banning cabbies with valid DVLA driving licences from driving a taxi?

DVLA rules

Drivers over a certain age are required to provide TfL with a medical, first at 50, then 56, 62 and 65. After 65, this then becomes a yearly requirement, to confirm that they meet the fitness requirements to hold a taxi licence. The normal procedure is that a driver books a GP appointment, at which the doctor will complete their medical form. On this form, GPs will note if a driver has had any health issues. These can range from the more minor such as high blood pressure to the most serious issues including heart attack, stroke, or diabetes.

When a driver sends a completed medical form to TfL, which lists a previous health issue of concern, TfL will then request further medical information to enable them to make a determination on the driver's fitness to hold a taxi licence. In assessing this, they follow the DVLA medical guidelines and whenever we query such decisions, they always simply refer us back to DVLA rules. There is generally no room for manoeuvre, the rules are the rules, as they say computer, or well DVLA, says no.

This begs the question why is TfL now revoking the cab licences of drivers who are deemed fit to hold a DVLA driving licence and have no other issues.?

Judge and jury

Under TfL's new driver, 'six points and you are out' policy, cabbies are subject to licence revocation if they receive a single conviction for a major driving offence, resulting in six penalty points, like using a mobile phone. You can also lose



your licence if you accumulate 12 points in three years for minor offences like speeding, which may sound like a lot, but can quickly add up, and mistakes happen. Even if the driver doesn't lose their DVLA licence, and a qualified magistrate decides in their favour, on the grounds that losing their driving licence would cause them exceptional hardship, they are STILL liable to lose their taxi licence at the hands of TfL.

When this new driver policy came into force, the implications hit us all like a sledgehammer. Suddenly, it was much easier for a driver's licence to be put in jeopardy and for their livelihood to be taken away. Just over a year later, we are now seeing the policy hitting hardworking cabbies, some who have never previously put a foot wrong, and who are being left in very worrying predicaments.

This simply isn't fair or right! TfL is a licencing authority, not judge and jury. Yet here they are overruling decision made by magistrates.

Don't go it alone

I speak to drivers daily about this and their concerns. The LTDA's answer is always that we will do our utmost to make sure you remain on the road, providing for your family. We are inundated with calls from members and from some drivers, who do not belong to an association like the LTDA, and unfortunately have no one to fight for them. I don't know about you, but I would not like to find myself in that situation, as it could be a very lonely and difficult place to be. We try to offer non-members advice, but that's all we can do. We must focus our resources on our members.

Without the LTDA legal team backing them up, if they wish to take the fight to court or to try to appeal a licensing decision, non-members will have to find themselves a suitable solicitor and pay hefty legal fees, which could run into thousands of pounds.

When you are already in trouble, it's too late to join the LTDA, so don't delay, join today! When you apply to join the LTDA you will get two months free membership and from day one you will have our dedicated legal team on hand to support you, should you need it.

When you are on the road for 10 to 12 hours a day, it's all too easy to make a simple mistake which can result in a conviction and penalty points on your licence. Make sure you have the best team behind you, to defend and protect your licence, whatever happens. **LTDA**

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Girl Power

If we had workshops like this on a regular basis, I feel confident that we would have more ladies on the Knowledge and in turn more women cabbies!



All the ladies gather for a group shot.



The workshop in full swing.

Airports & beyond

10

On 19th January, I attended a Women's Workshop for female cabbies and those thinking about a career as a cabbie. The workshop was held at Baker Street and was organised by TfL. I was really impressed with the organisation of this event and learned a lot.

Bringing us together

The workshop was attended by a group of ladies from many different backgrounds and at all different stages of life. Some were thinking of doing The Knowledge, others were currently on it, there were also union reps, some of whom have been out for years, and examiners. Those I recognised, included Karen Proctor (UCG), Louise Osborne (Unite), Katie Chennells (Knowledge of London Manager TfL), who led the workshop, Jane Ayers (Knowledge examiner), and the only man in the room, Paul Whitehead.

We all sat on tables with a mixture of Knowledge students, brand new lady cabbies and those who've been holding a badge for many years. We were given topics to discuss amongst our groups and then we had a joint discussion about our findings. It was really interesting talking through the positives and negatives of being a taxi driver, as a woman. The negatives were spoken about at length, with a view

to finding a solution and turning them into positives, where possible. Having so many ladies in a room, all sharing their experiences, helped all of us so much. Regardless of our respective positions in the room, we all learned a lot.

One of the concerns of the ladies, was doing the Knowledge on a moped for security reasons. Some explained that they cover most of the roads in their cars. I remember doing the same on a Sunday, when the roads are quieter. I would do most of my runs on the moped during the day, when I felt safe. I would then take my bicycle in my car at the weekend and cycle quarter mile areas. Another area of concern was fitting in studying around childcare. Some of the ladies, who have to do the school run, said they found a way of sharing these duties with other mums, as they didn't have family that lived nearby. Once again, I did this when I could. It was like having saved favours, so when I had time, I could help other mums back.

Mentors

I got my badge over 10 years ago. I remember my induction like it was yesterday. I was terrified. I walked into a room full of men, as the only woman. We all looked as scared as each other and sat silently waiting for the session to start. In walked this elegant lady. She had a pencil skirt on, high heels, perfectly painted nails and was immaculately presented. She introduced herself, and I

was gobsmacked to hear she was a cab driver, and had been driving for seven years. Her name was Jane Ayers, the same lady involved in this current workshop and still a Knowledge examiner. I remember thinking, 'Wow, if she can do it, then so can I.' I had stereotyped her and that was a mistake, however having her in my first meeting is one hundred per cent what made me start the Knowledge.

Attending the Women's Workshop, really took me back and made me realise the importance of having a mentor, especially in a trade where only 2% of drivers are currently female. I was lucky that in my first experience of the process, I met a dynamic and inspiring female role model, but I am sure many didn't have this. If we had workshops like this on a regular basis, I feel confident that we would have more ladies on the Knowledge and in turn more female cabbies!

Katie Chennells, is also a leading example for women in the trade. She can share her first-hand experience of doing the Knowledge,

but as she then went on to work for TFL, she has experience from both sides of the coin.

Worth it

I have been accused of getting an easier time on the Knowledge, because I was a woman. Any lady on the Knowledge will know this has never been the case. If anything, we had more obstacles to overcome, and at no point was I given an easy ride. If anything, I had to work harder. But I had a choice, four children, single parent and full-time job, there was no easy way, other than doing it the correct way, the hard way. I put my head down and I didn't look up. I can now say for sure that it was all worth it.

The Women's Workshop was a discussion between like-minded people trying to find a way to encourage more ladies to join us and discussing how we can help those already taking the Knowledge or out in the cab. I would have been so grateful if I had this ten years ago, so what Katie Chennells and her team are doing can only be commended.

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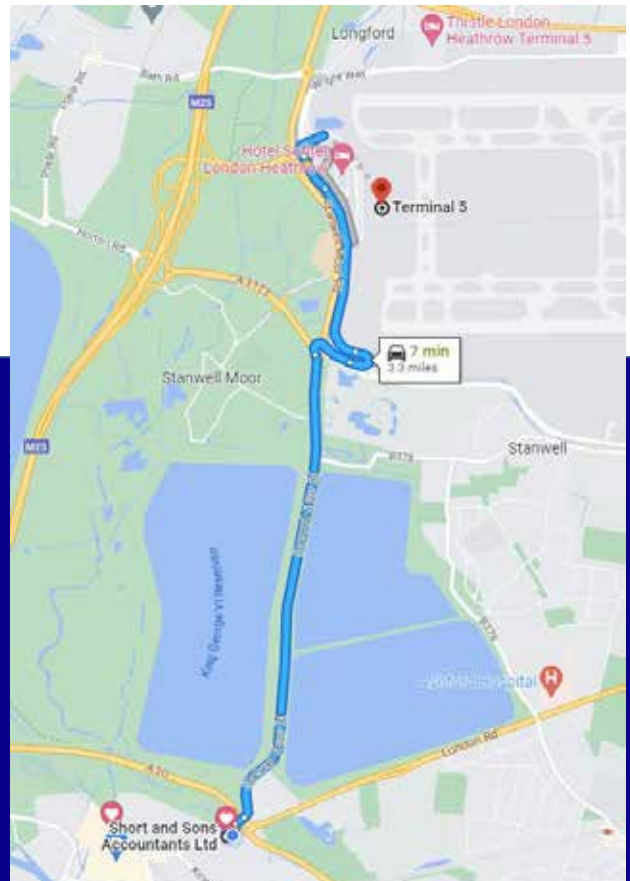
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REMEMBERING DAVID PLATT

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of David Michael Albert Platt. David was a hard-working London cab driver, tour guide, and a devoted husband and father.

Best known as Dave, or Platty to his close friends, he passed away suddenly on 22nd January 2023, at the young age of 59, surrounded by his loved ones.

Born and raised in the Cheshunt area, it is no understatement to say that Dave lived life to the full! Along with his family, his love of music, golf, Arsenal FC, and walking his two dogs, Ted and Tucker, all brought great joy to Dave, as did his enjoyment of travel.

Not shy of a challenge, Dave completed the Knowledge of London, becoming a cab driver in 2008. In the Autumn of 2011, he was drawn into the guiding world, gaining not one, but three accreditations: The WCHCD tour guiding course, followed shortly after by the East London Guiding course, and more recently becoming a City of Westminster guide.

Amongst those privileged to know him, he became well-respected, both inside and outside of the trade. Dave was a man who lived life the way it should be lived and he will be sorely missed. Our deepest condolences go out to his family and friends.

A collection has been organised in honour of Dave's memory and to raise money to support his family at this difficult time. If you would like to contribute, you can do so by scanning the QR code pictured or using this link: www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/nick-over?utm_term=Qnk7mjbb6



CABBIES INVITED TO CELEBRATE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST HACKNEY CAB SERVICE

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first licensed Hackney Cab service in London, Saturday 11th March, the London Transport Museum is hosting the premiere screening of *On The Cotton*, a short film, which documents a project that saw seven Black Cab drivers and seven London-based poets co-create poetry that celebrates the iconic Black Cab, London's cabbies, passengers, and the Knowledge.

The screening, followed by a poetry performance and Q&A with some of the poets, cabbies, and filmmaker Bilal Bounit, will take place at the **London Transport Museum, Covent Garden on Saturday 11th March 2023 from 2.30pm to 3.45pm**. Tickets can be purchased online in advance via the London Transport Museum website www.ltmuseum.co.uk/whats-on/cotton

Black Cab drivers are eligible for a concession ticket price for this event, simply show your yellow or green badge on the door.



FREE TAX ADVICE AT TAXI HOUSE

The LTDA has joined forces with our friends at *Martin Cordell & Co* to offer our members an initial free tax advice session at Taxi House. Over the next six months, we will be holding free monthly drop-in sessions for any LTDA member who needs advice, on any aspect of their tax affairs or involvement with the Revenue.

Come along to Taxi House to get free, impartial advice, first-hand from the experts. The drop-in sessions will take place on the following dates between 9am and 5pm:

- Wednesday 15th March 2023
- Wednesday 12th April 2023
- Wednesday 10th May 2023
- Tuesday 13th June 2023
- Wednesday 12th July 2023
- Wednesday 16th August 2023



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They say what goes around comes around; in an era where everything new or modern is considered better than its predecessor, there are some things which buck the trend.



14

A man in black

Sometimes feisty, occasionally amusing but always entertaining, London Mayor Sadiq Khan served up an absolute corker of a response, when being dragged across the coals by Conservative GLA members over the ultra low emission zone (Ulez) expansion, and it certainly wasn't the Mayor's finest hour.

19th January's meeting saw Khan facing fierce questioning regarding the claim that documentary proof was available, confirming that he and his deputy, Seb Dance, had made "untrue and dishonest" comments in telling the London Assembly they had not been briefed in advance on the interim results of a consultation into extending the ULEZ. The Mayor fired back with what could only be described as a bizarre, foot-stamping tirade. He said: "The Conservatives clearly do not care about our children developing permanently stunted

lungs and clearly do not care about the premature deaths in our city directly attributable to air quality because they're in the pockets of vested interests". It was at this point all hell broke loose at City Hall.

With the Chair of Mayor's Questions seemingly losing control of proceedings, Conservative London Assembly member, Emma Best said: "Chair, I'd like to have a point of personal explanation. I won't sit here and accept that. You have said the Conservatives on the Assembly do not care about the air quality that children breathe. You are saying that I do not care about the air quality that my children breathe."

GLA Conservatives leader, Susan Hall, then followed up by scolding Khan, with: "Don't you dare ever tell us who we want to protect and who we don't. We do care about children and take that on board."

Mustang Sally

While watching this metaphorical Royal Rumble on YouTube, the original version of *Mustang Sally* (first recorded by Sir Mack Rice in 1965) began

blasting over the airwaves on my state of the art stereogram. The first thing that popped into my head when I heard this was: "Will she be ULEZ compliant?" I decided to do a little digging.

Now, although the ULEZ expansion has no direct impact on the taxi industry in London (unless you consider the decommissioning of a few thousand cabs as part of its initiative), many of you may have private vehicles which are non-compliant. This means that you could be bemoaning the fact you may have to get rid of a perfectly decent vehicle because of compliance issues. This is what happens when you fall into the trap of being convinced by a politician pontificating on 'motornomics'. In other words, being taken in by Gordon Brown and the promotion of 'clean-burning' diesel vehicles.

According to various media sources, September 2015, is the generally accepted cut-off date where vehicles are deemed either compliant or non-compliant in relation to London's ULEZ. If, for example, you own a 2015 Renault Clio 1.5 Diesel and it was first

registered in June 2015, your vehicle will be deemed non-compliant. However, if you have an identical vehicle, with an identical emissions reading and it was registered in September of that year, your vehicle will be deemed compliant. This, of course, makes about as much sense as Khan's ridiculous rant, so what can you do?

The golden ticket

If you've ever read Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, you would know that Charlie managed to win a golden ticket to Willy Wonka's workspace. As a diesel owner, you too may be the winner of a golden ticket – that ticket is called a 'certificate of conformity'.

According to a source at Transport for London (TfL), if you can prove, via a manufacturer's own data, that your vehicle can match the minimum emissions level for diesel vehicles to drive freely in London, you ask for (or purchase) the certificate from them. You then send a copy to TfL and, hey-presto, you don't have to change your vehicle nor submit to legislative extortion, and the same principle will apply to petrol vehicles. Most cars with petrol engines registered before 2001 are liable, together with some vehicles registered between 2001 and 2005.

Interestingly, London's ULEZ differs considerably from other cities imposing the charge on those driving through their environs, as it operates the strictest regime in the UK, so it is wise to check online to see whether your vehicle is compliant when travelling to other major cities.

Incidentally, if you are lucky enough to have a vehicle over 40 years old, regardless of its power source, you are exempt in both London and the rest of the UK. This means that the petrol-head in me wants to purchase a 1973, 5-litre Ford Mustang and sit outside the crystal building revving my engine while my stereo is blaring out the MC Hammer classic *Can't Touch This*. ■ TAXI

REPORT MISUSE OF TAXI ONLY CHARGING POINTS

In response to the LTDA's calls for action on private hire vehicles misusing dedicated, Taxi-only charging points (RCPs), TfL are asking that anyone who sees a PHV parked in or using a Taxi-only RCP - (or on a taxi rank) [emails tpintel@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:tpintel@tfl.gov.uk), providing pictures or video evidence, the date, time, location and VRM if possible.

Information provided will be used to inform deployment of Compliance, Policing and On-Street Services (CPOS) Operations Officers. It will also enable TfL to write to the relevant licensee to advise them about their conduct. In cases of persistent misuse, TfL will then take appropriate licensing action against the licensee. TfL is also monitoring reports on Twitter and processing them in the same way.



TAXI CHARITY FOR MILITARY VETERANS AGM

The Taxi Charity For Military Veterans are holding their AGM on 13th March 2023 at 12pm at Millwall Football Club. Any one who would like to attend should please contact the Secretary, Paul Davis, on [07860850102](tel:07860850102) or via email on pauldavis88@hotmail.com.



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DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT BY THE VIGILANTES

We would like to remind drivers to be extremely careful out there and never to touch or use your phone unless it is in a cradle, it can never, ever be held in your hand. There are more and more camera wearing cycling vigilantes who spend their time riding in the traffic desperately trying to film motorists, and particularly cabbies using or touching a phone. These keyboard warriors then upload the footage to dedicated police portals, the Police then issue a Notice of Intended Prosecution, followed by a penalty charge notice, this is a mandatory 6 points on your DVLA licence, almost certainly followed by your taxi licence being revoked by TfL! These sad individuals are out to get taxi drivers, we don't condone their tactics, and anyone who has so much time to dedicate to this can't have much of a life, but we don't have to make it so easy for them! They have dedicated Twitter accounts, where they openly boast about how many cabbies they have 'caught' and revel in the fact that inevitably these drivers will lose their licence and take great pleasure in defaming the reputation of the trade. Disappoint them, ruin their day, don't let them catch you-keep it in a cradle!



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The Curious Case of Wolverhampton

If you are observant, like most cabbies are, one of the things you've probably noticed recently is more City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) licensed minicabs working on our roads.

National correspondent

Once again things happening far outside London are having an impact in the Capital. This week, it's up in Wolverhampton, deep in the Black Country, where the Council's lax licensing policy is wrecking havoc for the rest of us.

Like you, I probably spend far too much time behind the wheel looking for fares and helping people move around this great city. Taxi drivers tend to notice everything – the most minuscule of changes to our environment stick out like a sore thumb, whether its updates to the road network or new venues popping up around London. If you are like this, one of the things you've probably noticed recently is more City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) licensed minicabs working on our roads.

What's going on?

There are just shy of 100,000 private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers licensed under Transport for London (TfL). Some might say that should be more than enough to cover the demand in our vibrant, global city. So why are there now lots of extra Toyota Priuses licensed in the Black Country roaming down Piccadilly?

The answer is that some people will always want things quick and cheap. We've all probably been guilty of that in some way – perhaps a cheap fast-food burger for dinner or the instant gratification of binge-watching a whole TV series in one night? Sadly, for the taxi and PHV industry, this fast, bargain basement outlook has also infected the licensing system in England and it's affecting not only London, but the whole country. Quite simply, minicab applicants are shopping around for their licence looking for the cheapest deal available.



“Quite simply, minicab applicants are shopping around for their licence looking for the cheapest deal available.”

Wolverhampton Council vs TfL

It's not just money savings that Wolverhampton can offer applicants. They can also usually offer rapid processing times and have a younger entry level age limit for drivers. Minicab drivers see the council as a great authority to work under, mainly due to their more liberal licensing standards. People as young as 18-years-old, who have held a driver's licence for 12-months, are able to apply, so long as they also pass a medical, driver assessment and DBS checks. Three-year licences are granted for just £100, plus an extra £40 for a six-hour driver assessment course.

In comparison, TfL requires an applicant to be at least 21-years-old and have held their driver's licence for at least three years. TfL also demands applicants complete a topographical test, an English speaking and listening test, and a SERU assessment costing a combined £108. A three-year licence also costs £310.

With these contrasts in mind, you can see why some feel compelled to licence themselves outside of the area where they live and plan to work.

Record increase

Since demand for both taxi and PHV services bounced back post-covid, driver

numbers have been increasing all over the country, but nowhere like at the levels seen in Wolverhampton. The City of Wolverhampton Council looks on track to expand their pool of licensed drivers by an astonishing 10,000 in 2022/2.

According to a report seen by TaxiPoint, the largest ever increase on record (outside of London) is perhaps unsurprisingly also held by Wolverhampton and currently stands at 5,051 drivers. This is now set to be broken, in fact doubled, by the same authority this financial year. As of 15th December 2022, Wolverhampton had 26,745 drivers, an increase of 7,428 so far this year. Given that there are three more months left, it is likely that the increase will approach 10,000.

Why are 'out-of-town' minicab drivers able to work in the capital?

This is all comes down to legislation which allows for something termed 'cross-border hiring', which refers to a PHV driver in one licensing district picking up a passenger in another district. This is legal, provided either that the driver, vehicle, and operator are all licensed by the first district; or that the operator sub-contracts the booking to an operator licensed in another council area. This practice has become

increasingly commonplace since app-based operators started popping up a decade ago, exploiting what is essentially a legal loophole.

For many, this practice is seen as problematic. When a taxi or PHV is being driven for PHV purposes in another district, the local council has no powers to step in if the driver contravenes any condition of the licence or provides a poor service to a passenger. In such circumstances, all that can be done is to write to the authority which issued the licence, where this is known.

This practice is also regarded as unfair on the trade in the local area. The locally licensed driver, who meets all the local requirements asked of them, essentially faces competition from drivers, who have paid cheaper licence fees or undergone less rigorous checks elsewhere.

Until there is sufficient interest from the Government in rectifying this loophole and addressing this practice, we can expect to see more licensing authorities either reducing their own fees or cutting standards to compete, or in some cases basically outsourcing their licensing processes to the City of Wolverhampton to undertake.

■ TAXI

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The Battle of Barking Creek

Unfortunately, friendly fire incidents during wartime (and occasionally peacetime) are more common than people realise. Sadly, the first recognised death of a British fighter pilot due to friendly fire occurred in September of 1939, during the Battle of Barking Creek in East London.

At 6:15am on 6th September, 1939, a false alarm was sent out that unidentified aircraft were flying at high altitude over West Mersea in Essex. Six Hawker Hurricanes were subsequently ordered from North Weald Airfield. However, sector controller, Group Captain David Frederick Lucking sent up the entire unit of 14 aircraft. Two reserve aircraft were also ordered into the air and followed at a distance, something that was unbeknown to the other pilots. The initial reason for the false alarm was due to a radar fault which didn't recognise that the planes over West Mersea were British.

As well as the North Weald based Hurricanes, Spitfires from Hornchurch Airfield were also scrambled. With poor communication between the pilots and ground control, and no procedure in place to distinguish British aircraft from German planes, the pilots were at a major disadvantage.

A group of pilots from 74 Squadron saw what they thought were German aeroplanes and were given the order to engage the enemy. Flying Officer Vincent 'Paddy' Byrne and Pilot Officer John Freeborn then opened fire. In the ensuing firefight, Frank Rose and Pilot Officer Montague Hulton-Harrop were shot down. Tragically Hulton-Harrop was killed after being hit in the back of the head and his Hurricane eventually crashed at Hintlesham, Suffolk, making him the first British pilot to be killed in World War II.



Londons ringways, 1960

It is well-known that London has two major ring roads surrounding it: the M25 and the North/South Circular Road. But did you know that four ring roads had been planned to surround London in the 1960s?

Incredibly, there had actually been plans to construct them around the capital since the 17th century. A number of these roads were eventually built in the early 20th century, including the North Circular Road and Eastern Avenue and Western Avenue.

The Highway Development survey of 1937 saw further plans submitted to expand on existing roads and was quickly followed up by the Count of London plan in 1943. The idea for four of them to surround London originated from these earlier plans. Some of the sections of road were to be upgrades of existing projects such as the North Circular Road, whereas other sections would be new builds.

With the ringway proposals attracting increasing opposition due to the demolition of properties and noise pollution that the paths would cause, a series of protests took place. Such was the level of anger, the scheme was cancelled in 1973 with only three sections being built, with two of those sections now making up part of the M25.

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW

LONDON?

Crossbones graveyard

Graveyards are a common sight all over London, there are literally thousands of them scattered across the Metropolis, but did you know that only one of them bore the name Cross Bones Graveyard?

This disused burial ground with the menacing moniker was established in the mid-to-late 16th century. It is situated in Redcross Way, Southwark, and is the final resting place for up to 15,000 people.

The graveyard is believed to have been an unconsecrated burial site for sex workers and single women, who were known locally as 'Winchester Geese', because they were licensed by the Bishop of Winchester to work within the Liberty of the Clink. Due to this area falling outside of the remit of the City of London, and therefore out of its legal jurisdiction, the area became a hub for brothels, theatres and even bear-baiting.

The graveyard was so known, it received a mention in John Stow's *A Survey of London*. In later years, it became a cemetery used to service the poor of St. Saviour's parish before being closed in 1853. This closure was due to the site being over-subscribed and as such becoming a potential health risk.

A subsequent 1883 sale of the site, as a building plot, was thwarted due to potential desecration of the bodies. Several attempts to purchase the site have since been made and, at one point, it was even used as a fairground. After the removal of remains from the graveyard to the parish facilities in Brookwood Cemetery, Surrey, the grounds were finally sold, allowing warehousing and other commercial buildings to be built where the bodies once rested.

In a sad twist, it was revealed that not all of the bodies had been moved. Excavation digs between 1991 and 1998 revealed numerous corpses piled on top of each other, many of whom were perinatal.

In 2006, Southwark Council funded the erection of a brass plaque which reads:

*Cross Bones Graveyard.
In medieval times, this was an unconsecrated graveyard for prostitutes or
'Winchester Geese'
But by the 18th century it had become a paupers' burial ground, which
closed in 1853.
Here, local people have created a memorial shrine.*

*The Outcast Dead
RIP*



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Supply and Demand

Near record sales in January mean the fleet now stands at 15,031 cabs, hopefully never to drop below 15,000 ever again!

Cab you drive

It never ceases to amaze me how simple the cab and car markets are. It all comes down to basic supply and demand. A great example can be found in the current classic car market, where pre-war and pre-mid 1950s cars have fallen out of bed pricewise.

Cars that ten or 15 years ago were highly sought after and fetched good prices, are rapidly falling out of favour, with demand drying up, whereas cars from the 1960s and 70s are commanding totally unreal sums of money. I recently watched an online auction for a completely rotten 1971 'J' Reg' Mk 1 Escort. It was only the basic 1100, not even an 'E' or anything unusual, yet it went for nearly £12,000! The car had no floor pans, and the wings were like sieves. It hadn't run since Ultravox were in the charts, but people want them and so up goes the price.

Vito market

A similar thing is happening right now with late Vitos, especially the Euro VIs, but increasingly it's also happening with the Euro Vs. This is because the much-



awaited conversion is rumoured to be nearing approval, giving a converted cab 15 years. There are less and less Vitos around (down to only 2489), making them a rare and increasingly precious commodity. The faces from the flyers, along with drivers who live way out, love them. As their old Vito's are hitting the age limit and ending service, many are looking to get into the latest Vito, apparently at any price!

I sold a very nice, low mileage, early Euro V last week, at not far short of Euro VI money. The driver knew what he was doing and was gambling on the conversion kit being approved before this cab

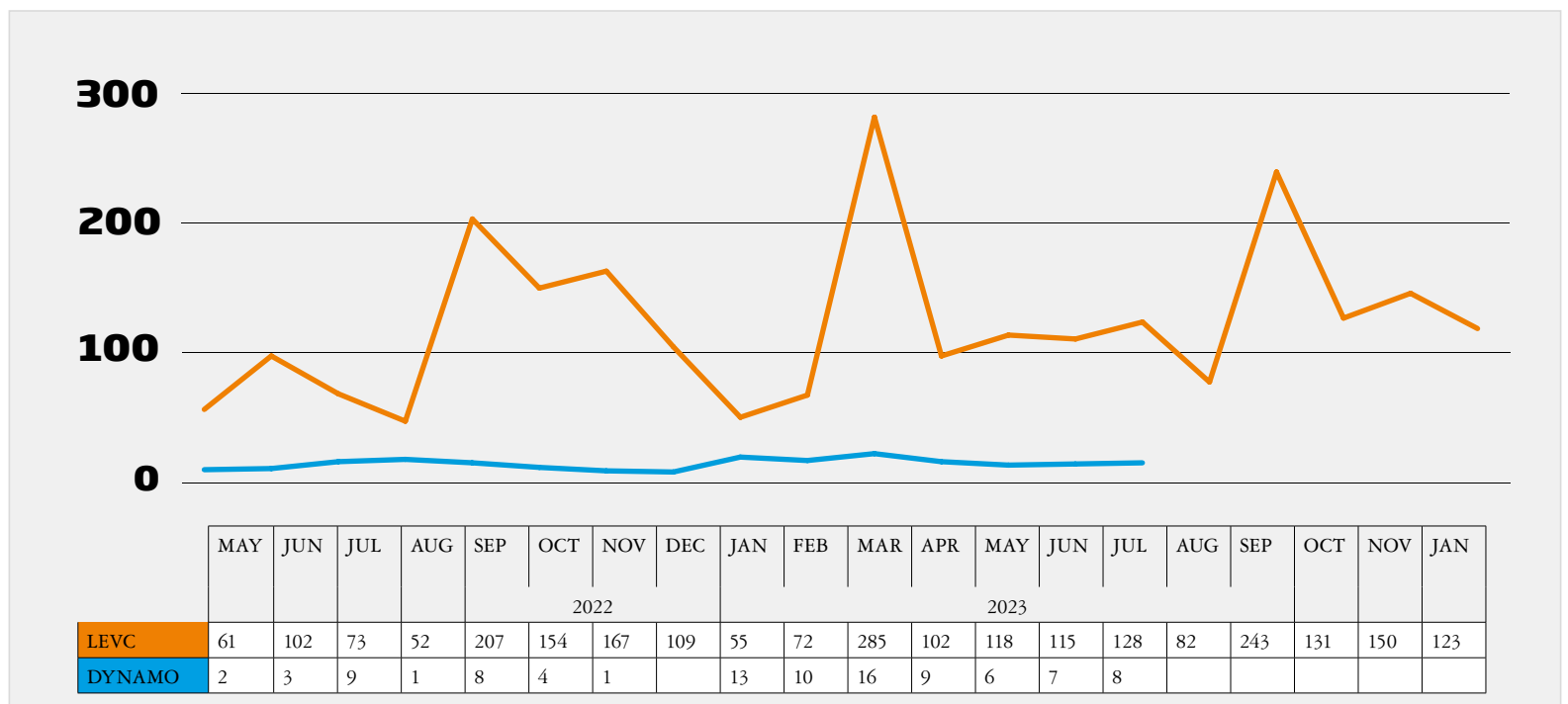
was 12 years old. He had costed in another £6000 - 7000 for getting it converted, and then planned on keeping it until the very last day of its 15 years. I hope it works out for him, it probably will.

Strong sales

On the new cab sales front, January saw the second highest ever sales figures, with 123 new TXEs joining the ranks. This brought the fleet levels back up to 15,031, hopefully never to drop below 15,000 ever again! I am told this year's kipper season has been far better than anyone predicted. This should bode well for February, which is

always a quiet month for sales, as new owners wait for the plate change on 1st March. **TAXI**

DYNAMO	183
LEVC	6,453
METROCAB	1
TX1	2
TX2	76
TX4	5,827
VITO	2,489
TOTAL	15,031



‘The Professionals’

– What sets those with ‘The Knowledge’ apart from the rest?

What does it mean to be a professional in 2023? 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. 21

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.





Who Was the Real Fagin?

How familiar are you with the real-life origins of one of Charles Dickens' most famed names?

Rob's history tips

Out of the many characters created by the renowned Charles Dickens, one of the best known is Fagin; the underworld figure from 1838's *Oliver Twist* who, in league with the terrifying Bill Sikes, trades in stolen goods and lords over a gang of young pickpockets.

Over the years, many actors have portrayed Fagin on film, including Sir Alec Guinness and Ron Moody, the latter playing the character as a loveable rogue in the 1968 musical, *Oliver!*

In the original novel, however, Fagin is a far more menacing figure who thinks nothing of beating his young proteges and, rather than dancing off into the sunset, ends up on the brink of insanity after being sentenced to execution.

It may also come as a surprise to hear that Fagin was based on a real person named Issac 'Ikey' Solomon.

One of nine children, Solomon was born in Houndsditch in around 1787.

Although he tried his hand at honest work, he once told a judge that he'd "worked in every factory in London", his father was a successful fencer, and it was he who introduced his son to the shady business of receiving stolen goods.

As a front for his burgeoning, crooked career, Ikey Solomon first opened a shop in Brighton, although he soon returned to London and opened a similar business, believed to be a pawnbrokers, on Bell Lane, Spitalfields, from where he gradually rose to become one of London's most prominent criminals.

Although plenty of thieves brought their wares to Solomon, he wasn't adverse to dabbling in robbery himself, and in April of 1810 he was caught red-handed pickpocketing a gentleman named Thomas Dodd outside Westminster Hall.

Dodd's pocket book was a plum pick, for it was stuffed



with £40 (approximately £2,300 in today's money), and as such Solomon felt the full weight of the law, was found guilty at the Old Bailey and was sentenced to transportation.

As it transpired, he never made it to Australia on this occasion. The details are hazy, but it would appear Solomon spent four years on a prison hulk (a decommissioned ship upon which inmates would await their voyage down under) before making his escape.

Rather than use his new found freedom for good though, Ikey Solomon foolishly returned to

his old ways, and by 1818 he was once again operating a business for the purpose of fencing stolen goods.

This lasted until 1827, when he was caught in possession of six watches and a large quantity of valuable lace and cloth. Consequently, he was thrown in Newgate prison to await trial.

During this process, Solomon was called before the King's Bench, after which he was taken back to Newgate in a Hackney carriage. What the authorities didn't realise was that the cabbie driving it was none other than Solomon's uncle, who took a

detour towards Petticoat Lane. Here, at a pre-arranged point, a gang of Solomon's associates attacked and overpowered the guards, thus allowing him to make his escape.

In the wake of this incident, Solomon thought it would be wise to flee London, and so headed to Denmark, then later New York.

In his haste, he left his wife, Ann, behind, who was promptly arrested and transported to Tasmania along with their four youngest children.

When Solomon heard of this, he decided to go to Australia to be with his family. He arrived in Hobart in October of 1828, where, due to the fact that many of his criminal associates were serving sentences there, was quickly recognised.

After various legal wrangling and a wait of many months, a warrant for Solomon's arrest was issued.

He was taken back to London in 1830 and tried at the Old Bailey in November of that year.

Due to his daring escapades, the story was major news, and his trial was well documented: eight years later, Charles Dickens appeared to have used Solomon's trial as the basis for Fagin's in his book.

Solomon was found guilty, leading the judge to label him "evil disposed." He was sentenced to 14 years transportation, and thus shipped all the way back to Australia.

Once back in the penal colony, he attempted to reunite his family, although it would appear they'd had enough of his troublesome ways by this point, leading Ann and the children to become estranged.

Ikey Solomon was granted freedom in 1844 and would remain in Australia for the rest of his life. He died on the 3rd September, 1850, and was buried in Hobart Jewish cemetery.

TAXI

If you want to see more, you can visit my YouTube channel, [robslondon](#).



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A Passage Through Time: Clerkenwell

Every working day as a taxi driver you're confronted with passengers who come from all walks of life. Cab driving is very different from working in an office, factory or shop.

Footprints & foundations

In the course of your career as a London taxi driver, you will encounter situations that require careful consideration to make the correct decision. Whilst you are engaged with a fare, passengers will sometimes tell you their life stories. These narratives may be happy, sad or comical. Most times the client's vivid imagination will transcend into make-believe thoughts, for London is a city of dreamers.

This is what makes your employment so interesting. Record your experiences, write them down in a notebook and date them. One day you may want to follow in the footsteps of a few cab drivers who wrote autobiographies about their time as a cabbie, whose stories ended up on the bookshelves of Waterstones. Because when you observe your daily experiences a personal history starts to evolve.

For now, we continue our passage through Clerkenwell and arrive at a well-known thoroughfare: Hatton Garden, a place the jewellery trade has occupied since the early 19th century. However, the history of this neighbourhood and its environs has seen many changes throughout the years. Allow me to turn the clock back in time to reveal Hatton Garden's foundations.

A Garden of Eden

Today, Hatton Garden is an urbanised locality where former houses existed. These properties have been turned into small factories and shops which dominate this quarter. The place name depicts a garden, and in the present day there is no evidence of a garden in this neighbourhood. My research revealed a locale of greenery did exist from the 13th century with fine orchards in abundance, where the cultivation of apples, strawberries and grapevines were plentiful. Herbs were also grown for medicinal purposes.

Clues can be found in the place

names, too: specifically Saffron Hill and nearby Herbal Hill. By the late 17th century, the march of bricks and mortar covered the landscape. The former orchards are now ghosts of the past. Hatton Garden became a residential area where the nobility moved into grand houses which occupied both sides of the thoroughfare.

Sir Christopher Hatton

Notable names have filled the pages of history, with one such protagonist being Sir Christopher Hatton. Today, he would have celebrity status. He was a handsome, debonair and impulsive character who attracted the advances of women such as Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603). Hatton's formative years were fraught by failure. He went to Oxford University but left without a degree. Hatton travelled down to London and went to the Temple to study law. Again, this proved unsuccessful as he did not qualify as a lawyer. Yet these continuous failings did not deter Hatton from succeeding.

Hatton House

As Hatton was from a family of aristocrats, he had influences in the court of the Queen. Having taken the eye of Queen Elizabeth, a platonic relationship ensued. It was rumoured that Hatton and the Queen were lovers, although evidence has proved this tryst unfounded. He convinced the

Queen to grant him a rental on part of the Bishop of Ely's house close to the site that would become Hatton Garden. He eventually took over the whole property which Hatton remoulded into Hatton House. Many titles were bestowed on Hatton, including Lord Chancellor of England. Although his life seemed successful, Hatton was never too far away from his creditors and bailiffs. Even his favoured Queen was demanding a back payment of £4,000 for her help in the involvement of the construction of Hatton House. This dark episode exposed all of Hatton's frailties. Shortly after he read the letter from the Queen he died. Probably of a broken heart. Hatton House was demolished in the mid-18th century, as Hatton Garden remembers this colourful character.

Bleeding Heart Yard

At the southern end of Hatton Garden is Greville Street. Here, a small cobblestoned courtyard known as Bleeding Heart Yard is located, and is perhaps one of London's most foreboding place names. The capital has numerous tales that have passed through the centuries into folklore. Here, in Bleeding Heart Yard, a gruesome story is disclosed: urban legend has focused on the courtyard's place name that commemorates the murder of Lady Elizabeth Hatton. She

was the second wife of Sir William Hatton, son of Christopher, who inherited it from his late father. The narrative has many different versions which have been documented through the centuries. The most popular one being that Lady Hatton made a pact with the Devil to secure wealth, position in society and a mansion in Holborn. During a gathering at Hatton House, the Devil dances with her, then tears out her heart, which is found by a pump, still beating and bleeding in the courtyard the next morning.

A poem recalls the notorious events of Bleeding Heart Yard.

*Of poor Lady Hatton, it is needless to say,
No traces have ever been found to this day,
Or the terrible dancer who whisked her away;
But out in the court-yard - and just in that part
Where the pump stands - lay bleeding a large human heart.*

If you are interested in a tourist guide course or have any questions about London, please contact me: journeythroughtime@hotmail.com **TAXI**



Bleeding Heart Yard.



Sir Christopher Hatton.



What's on? WEST END

Charlotte rounds up this month's top London shows to recommend to passengers.

Under the Spotlight

Allegiance - Charing Cross Theatre

Sometimes you'll watch a show about a time, place or period in history and be aghast that you were totally oblivious and ignorant about it. This is one of those shows, as *Allegiance* reveals the courage and loyalty of a family in a time of great injustice, as 120,000 Japanese-Americans are forced into internment camps. Inspired by true experience, this is the UK premiere of a show that has had several runs in the US.

It's a show notable for numerous reasons, besides it's essential story. For one thing, surprisingly, it marks *Star Trek* icon George Takei's London stage debut. He's a charismatic presence, both as a nostalgia-feeling veteran and as a grandfather trying to retain hope in the unimaginable horrors of the camp. He's part of an incredible ensemble cast whose vocals are truly impeccable. Standouts are Telly Leung as Sam, who is the young man fighting to enlist to prove his family deserve to be free, and Aynrand Ferrer playing his willful sister Kei, who believes that resistance rather than resignation is the way forward.

The result is a compelling play that is as much about family as it is political conflict. The intimate nature of the venue enhances these tensions immeasurably, with only 265 seats - set in rows either side of the stage - it is one of the smallest venues in the West End and perfect for forcing an audience to witness a dark chapter that history seemingly wants us to forget.

Allegiance runs until 8th April, 2023.



Credit: Charing Cross Theatre



Credit: londontheatre.co.uk

Sound of the Underground - Royal Court Theatre

Part scathing satire, part furious manifesto, and part steamy performance, *Sound of the Underground* is not your average night at the theater. Legends of the London queer club scene have come together to be loud and triumphantly proud, whilst also forcing the audience to confront everything they think they know about drag.

CHIYO, Lily SnatchDragon, Ms Sharon Le Grand, Sadie Sinner the Songbird, Rhys' Pieces, Sue Gives A-, Midgitte Bardot and Wet Mess. 8 icons finally getting the center stage spotlight they deserve. Thanks to a certain RuPaul Charles, drag has never been so mainstream - but at what cost? Who is really profiting? And, importantly, how? And is anyone bothering to acknowledge or thank its origins?

The answers are thoroughly explored in this blistering and raucous performance like no other.

Sound of the Underground runs until 25th February, 2023.



What else is on?

■ *Newsies* - Troubadour Wembley Park Theatre (until 16th April)

At the turn of the 20th Century, tensions are riding high in New York. Without warning, the newspapers have increased their fees. So, the teenage newspaper sellers dreaming of a better life far from the hardship of the streets decide there's only one thing they can do: strike! A musical with some of the most mesmerising dancing you'll ever see on stage.

■ *Alex Edelman: Just For Us* - Menier Chocolate Factory (until 26th February)

A one-man show. An anecdotal ramble from Edelman's own life story. The result: a stand-up comedy rooted in theatre that makes for a wickedly smart and awkward delight.

■ *The Lehman Trilogy* - Gillian Lynne Theatre (until 20th May)

Epic is the only way to describe it. With a runtime of 200 minutes, three actors perform the roles of hundreds of characters, as we follow 200 years of the Lehman Brothers and their legacy. A masterclass in performance.

Retired Cabbie's Eight Decades Supporting Taxi Charity

2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans. One man who has been associated with the charity for almost all of those years is Len Sheppard, 93, from Albany Park.

Taxi asked Len to share his story.

"In 1954, I saw a cab driver friend dropping off a passenger and we had a little chat. From what he told me, I knew I wanted to become a London Taxi driver like him. He told me it would take four to five years doing it part-time, so I made enquiries to apply for a licence through the public carriage office.

It took several weeks to check up on my background. When they accepted me, my wife fell pregnant so I had to give it up. But she said no, and that I could get through it full-time in a year. She told me that I could work on getting my badge while she was pregnant and, with her help, I studied very hard.

At that time, those leaving the services were being helped by the Royal British Legion to get back into work, but I didn't go to Royal British Legion School because they were taking too long. The RBL would have taken three years so I did it myself. Across London, I did four runs every day, it was hard but I passed within nine months and enjoyed 47 years of taxi driving."

Discovering the charity

"In 1955, very shortly after I got my badge, a fellow cab driver told me about a new charity that was supporting veterans and, as I had served with the RAF, decided that I wanted to help. It was called the London Taxi Benevolent Association For War Disabled then, and I used to go to the cab ranks and collect money with Harry Joel MBE, who would later become the charity's life president. The money we collected would pay for the charity's annual trip to Worthing and, at that time, there were probably about 60 volunteer drivers who would take veterans to the coast each summer for a day out. Over the years, I am immensely proud that I must have collected thousands for them."

After Len retired from driving a cab, he then saw the other side of the charity when he was invited, as a veteran who had served with the RAF checking and servicing radar equipment, to join the charity at events in the UK and Europe.



Cabs dressed for the Liberation Parade.



Len Sheppard on a Taxi Charity outing to Worthing.



Len Sheppard with his wife Doris.

"Having supported the charity during my years as a cab driver, it was wonderful when the charity started to invite me to join them at their events. Many people think that the charity only supports WWII veterans but they support veterans from all conflicts, which is why I received the invitation. I have been with them on commemorative trips to Arnhem, Ypres and Normandy. And in December of last year I attended their hugely enjoyable Christmas Lunch at Millwall Football Club.

At 93, these trips might be considered too much for some, but a charity volunteer cab driver picks me up at my home and returns me safely after the event. If we are away for a few days, I never have to worry about anything as nothing is ever too much trouble for these drivers."

Dick Goodwin, Vice President of the Taxi Charity, said: *"This year is so special for everyone associated with the Taxi Charity, as we celebrate our 75th anniversary. Over the years, the charity has been supported by hundreds of volunteer cabbies and*

we are immensely thankful to Len and all the other London taxi drivers who, since 1948, have volunteered their time and vehicles to support veterans."

To find out more about the support the Taxi Charity offers to veterans or to donate to the charity's '75 for 75' anniversary fundraising campaign, visit www.taxicharity.org



When Taxi went to print, the cabbies rowing 3,200 miles across the Atlantic, from Lanzarote to Antigua, had just 983 miles left to row to reach dry land.

You can donate here - www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/sarah-barber-124



About the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans

The Taxi Charity is run by volunteer London black taxi drivers and has been supporting thousands of veterans since 1948. The charity arranges free trips (for veterans from all conflicts) to the Netherlands and France, for acts of commemoration and days out to museums, concerts, or social events across the UK.

2023 is the charity's 75th anniversary, a remarkable milestone for a small, niche charity, peopled by enthusiastic volunteers.

The charity received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021, an award approved by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the equivalent of the MBE for charities.

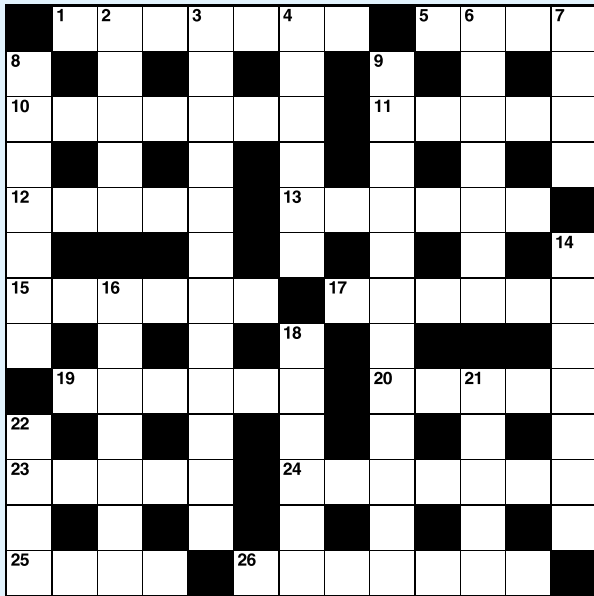
To fund and facilitate their work, the charity is reliant on donations, grants and sponsorship and has launched a '75 for 75' fundraising campaign to raise £75,000 in its anniversary year.

www.taxicharity.org



Puzzler Page

Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Short races (7)
- 5 Off-white gem (4)
- 10 Outdoor (4-3)
- 11 Zodiac maiden (5)
- 12 Hotel customer (5)
- 13 Get ready to exercise (4,2)
- 15 Grade of sailor (6)
- 17 Boy's voice (6)
- 19 Obscene (6)
- 20 High structure (5)
- 23 Of vision (5)
- 24 Attracts, invites (7)
- 25 Gently whirl (4)
- 26 Study of rocks (7)

DOWN

- 2 Fragment (5)
- 3 Present (2,10)
- 4 Decorative rugs or blankets (6)
- 6 Unsettle (7)
- 7 Goods taken from an enemy (4)
- 8 Borders (7)
- 9 All too ready to find fault (12)
- 14 Delicately scented bloomer (3,4)
- 16 Misshapen, distorted (7)
- 18 Can be eaten (6)
- 21 Amiss (5)
- 22 Golfer's warning shout (4)

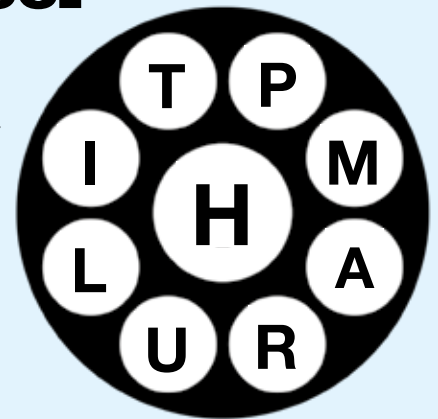
Sudoku

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.

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

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 32 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.

5			>		
	<		3		
	>		<		
				>	

All answers to puzzler on p30

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John
07702 554934

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LINAGE

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

CABS FOR SALE

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

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- **VNK Motors -Electric cabs LEVCs & TX4s for rent,** from £195 upwards per week. Full back up, Caledonia

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0207 700 1045 or 07951 661430 – Nick.

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- **Night or day time driver wanted** part time welcomed full backup with spare cab call Andy - 07970915778

Get in touch



Loren Wedderburn



Loren@centuryone.uk



01727 739 184



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Postcode.....

Telephone..... Mobile.....

Email..... Twitter.....

Date of Birth..... Badge No.....

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

Suburban badge sector numbers.....

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

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

If Yes how many points do you have?

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

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

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

Signed..... Date.....

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2 Name of account holder.....

3 Account number

4 Bank Sort Code - -

Banks/Building Societies may not accept instructions to pay Direct Debit from some types of account.

5 Signature(s).....

Date.....



This guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer

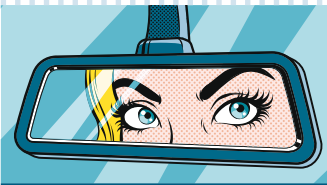
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- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by LTDA, or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when LTDA asks you to.
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51 Ways to Leave Your Lover

Love is in the air. Or, it seems, for the man about town in London during Valentine's week, it's in the hair.

A woman of words

One coiffed chap in the back of my cab on his way to a pre-Valentine's Valentine Party had hair so dazzling, slick and shiny, I just had to ask him what he used. "Johnny B," he told me. "£38 a pop." I later reported this to Mr. Meg who likes to style his hair a la Wurzel Gummidge, as he shouted, "£38? He should try WD40, it's just as good!" Valentine's Day gets me thinking about my first dates many moons ago. First up was Mike. We were just 16. He was the son of a neighbour and our only meeting took place in my front garden with my grandma sitting on a chair six feet away, watching and listening. Mike whispered to me that he suffered from priapism. "What's that?" I asked. "Look it up and next time I'll show you," he promised. Lazy

me didn't look it up. I just asked my dad instead and he raced two doors down and gave him what for.

Two years later, along came a boy from college who was a mini Jacob Rees-Mogg. He was posher than posh and from a family richer than rich. His mother found out that I lived in a council house and offered me £50 to go away (and stay away) from her darling boy. What she didn't know when she handed over the cash was that he had already dumped me. Sweet deal.

Then, Mr. Meg happened. He moved slowly. Worn out waiting after three years of dating, I just told him we were getting married and he shrugged and nodded.

Last night, however, I finally did get a marriage proposal. It wasn't for me and was in the back of my cab.

The lovebirds hailed me in Stamford Street and he said,

"Hyde Park Corner," then whispered, "Go slow on The Mall," and winked.

We were in the middle of The Mall when he clicked off his seatbelt and dropped down on one knee. She was gazing out the window and hadn't even noticed him. Just as he raised the ring box towards her a motorcyclist cut me up and I was forced to swerve. This toppled the poor fella sideways, at his beloved's feet, and in all the drama the ring popped out of the box.

Shouting ensued. I made an emergency stop and all three of us played 'hunt the ring' on our hands and knees. It was me that found it and I held it up in delight. The chap clapped. The



girl wept. I thought she was overcome with relief, until I handed it to him and he handed it to her and she said, "No!" and "Don't!" and "Stop!" and "I can't." She then ran off towards Green Park and he took off after her like a rocket.

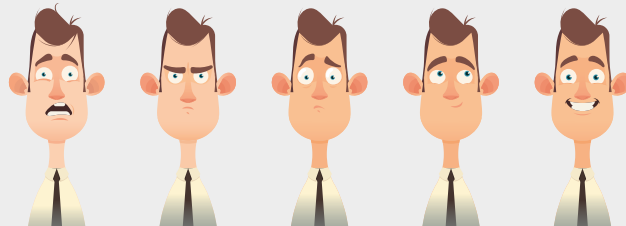
What becomes of the broken hearted? I'll never know.

So, I turned off the metre and switched on the radio. Paul Simon was singing *50 Ways to Leave Your Lover*. Make that 51, Paul. ■ **TAXI**

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- ◆ 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

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

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SUDOKU

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

Wordwheel

SOLUTION: TRIUMPHAL

All words: Hail, hair, halt, harm, harp, hart, haul, hilt, hump, hurl, hurt, lath, mirth, path, phial, pith, thrum, thump, triumph, TRIUMPHAL.

Word targets: Excellent: 25, Good: 21, Target: 15, Kids: 10

Futoshiki

5	2	4	>	1	3	
4	<	5	3	2	1	
	∨					
2	3	1	5	4		
			^		^	
3	>	1	2	<	4	5
1	4	5	3	>	2	



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