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NEW VEHICLE NOT A THREAT

There has been a lot of inaccurate speculation and a fair bit of scare mongering on social media and elsewhere, that the newly launched LEVC 'TX Access' - a new vehicle based on the TXE, but without a hire light and with additional accessibility features - could be licensed for use as a private hire vehicle (PHV). LEVC launched the new vehicle this month at the P4H, Procurement for Health, event, which is aimed at NHS procurement, where the vehicle was being pitched to NHS leaders and decisionmakers, as a means of patient transfer. Some have totally misinterpreted this as some sort of private hire event and pointed to this launch suggesting that PH drivers will all now be rushing out to buy a TX Access and stealing taxi drivers work. This is simply not the case. Firstly, the vehicle is likely far too expensive for PH drivers to even consider it and more importantly, TfL has confirmed that such a vehicle would never be licensed as a PHV in London. The legislation that governs the sector clearly states that a Private Hire vehicle cannot be "of such design and appearance as would lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a London cab." The similarities between the TXE and TX Access would therefore make this impossible. Rest assured.



LONDON MOST EXPENSIVE CITY TO BECOME A TAXI DRIVER

A study released by Zego has unsurprisingly found London is the most expensive city in the UK to become a taxi driver. The insurance company behind the study, Zego, looked at startup costs including the average cost of taxi insurance, initial cost of a DBS certificate, average cost of a taxi licensing fee (for three years) and the average cost of fuel per litre. London topped the list followed by Wakefield, Bradford, Coventry and Edinburgh which made up the top five. Nottingham, Luton, Southampton, Manchester and Wigan were all in the top ten most expensive.



ROYAL VISIT TO THE CABMEN'S SHELTER

On Tuesday 27th June, the cabmen's shelter in St John's Wood received a royal visit from HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Edward. During the visit, Phil Brown explained the charity work that the cab shelter does on behalf of Great Ormond Street Hospital, formerly the Hospital for Sick Children. The Duke was full of praise for the efforts of Andre, Fran, Phil and the team for their continued support of the children's hospital.



NEW LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO IMPROVE PUBLIC ELECTRIC CHARGING

A statutory instrument has been laid before parliament designed to improve the experience consumers have when using electric vehicle (EV) public charge points. The new legislation will require contactless payment, payment roaming and a standard pricing metric of pence per kilowatt hour. The instrument will also put in place a 99% reliability requirement for rapid public charge points and ensures that charge point operators make data on their charge points available which will assist consumers in locating the right charge points for their needs.

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Battle for Bishopsgate

Unfortunately, at the moment, dealing with this Mayoral team and their biased views and single-minded agenda (two wheels good, four wheels bad), we can't win.

Steve's comment

he battle for taxi access to Bishopsgate will be well-known to everyone reading this. For more than three years, we've been fighting against the bus gates which unfairly and wrongly exclude taxis from this major route. What started out as a reaction to the pandemic, has now become a symbol of what seems to be an unending quest to bit by bit take cars (and taxis) off the road and give all London's precious road space over to the cyclists, with no regard for the impact.

The battle

This all started in May 2020, when we were first told about plans to make it a bus and cycle-only corridor, as part of the Streetspace for London project to create more space for social distancing. At the time, we responded to the plans in strongest possible terms. We pointed out to TfL the importance of taxi access and giving publicly hired licensed taxis the right to use the route, in a similar way to how we access bus lanes all over London and are exempt from the congestion charge, not to mention the role taxis were playing at the time in providing a safe, socially distanced service relied on by many, particularly vulnerable and shielding people.

We met with everyone at TfL, including the then Transport Commissioner and Deputy Mayor for Transport, and made our case. We got the government to lobby City Hall on the issue, including the Secretary of State for Transport and Minister for London. We used every trick in the book to try to convince them to include taxis in the scheme. Sadly, in July of that year, the scheme was introduced.

We were left with no choice but to fight it in the courts. Working with UTAG, we launched a legal challenge against the scheme and initially we won, only to be knocked back on appeal in a remarkable and pretty unprecedented turn around. We even tried to appeal it to the Supreme Court, but they refused to look at it, thus ending



the legal route and leaving the LTDA with a 50% share of a near million-pound bill!

In January 2022, a new 18-month experimental scheme was put in place retaining the existing restrictions. Since then, there's been another round of consultation on the future of the scheme, where we once again submitted a detailed response arguing for taxi access. We hoped that this would be a genuine exercise in consultation, and they might listen with the pandemic firmly behind us and mounting evidence that whilst schemes like this are delivering some benefits, they are also causing havoc on London's road network, undermining taxi availability and accessibility. Unfortunately, we now know this wasn't the case.

End game

The consultation closed in October. Then last week, after months with no news, TfL announced that the changes would become permanent with no changes. Since the consultation, we have repeatedly raised the future of Bishopsgate with TfL and City Hall representatives from the Taxi and Private Hire team culminating in a trade reps meeting with the Transport Commissioner, Andy Lord and Deputy Mayor for Transport, Seb Dance, both of whom assured me and everyone else in the

room that they would look very carefully at all the evidence before making a decision.

It would now appear the only person whose opinion really mattered is that of cycling czar and no fan of ours, Will Norman, or maybe it was the Mayor himself, who made the ultimate decision. What I know for sure is the case for restoring taxi access couldn't have been any clearer. The only thing I can think is that they were so determined not to be seen to back down or open themselves up to further legal action that they simply rubber stamped the ludicrous decision and left it as it was.

Who benefits?

The real irony is that all these schemes that put cyclists first and foremost at every stage, under the cleverly framed 'walking and cycling' banner, when its pretty obvious that everyone walks, very few cycle, is that only a very specific demographic benefits, whereas those who are inconvenienced, including disabled people, are much more representative of typical Londoners.

I am not naïve enough to think that lobbying is always the silver bullet and simply responding to consultations and meeting people will get us what we need. That's why we part funded the legal challenge – as a show of strength and determination to protect the trade. But I must admit that on this occasion I had hoped we might be getting through to them and that there could be a willingness to compromise, if only to demonstrate to taxi drivers and to Londoners, what they always tell me – how valued London's licensed taxis are – and to support us to continue to provide an accessible, door-to-door form of public transport famous the world over.

Hold them to account

Unfortunately, at the moment, dealing with this Mayoral team and their biased views and singleminded agenda (two wheels good, four wheels bad), we can't win. Shouting about it won't change anything - believe me we've tried. This doesn't mean we will let it go, but I can tell you that I will be thinking very carefully before wasting my time going to yet another meeting and listening to them tell me and other trade reps how much they value the taxi trade and how important we are, when all their actions clearly show otherwise.

With the election coming up we have an opportunity to really hold these people to account and to make some noise about the support we want and need from a future Mayor of London. Khan may look like a sure win, but we have nothing to lose.





4D Plates Debacle

My advice is, if you have purchased 4D plates from Aplates, for the time being I would remove the number plates and replace them with the originals, then contact Nigel.



Streets ahead

e recently had drivers calling to notify us that they have been stopped by the Police for displaying 'illegal' 4D number plates. They were given a fine of £100 and had 14 days to remove offending number plates. The drivers were horrified to be told they were acting illegally, when they had purchased what were supposed to be legal number plates, from a company called Aplates.

4D plates are legal but in these instances something had gone wrong, as the plates could not be read by the ANPR cameras and so were deemed to be illegal.

Solving the problem

I contacted the company and had a lengthy conversation with the owner, Nigel, who was shocked to hear what had been happening to drivers. He has since been investigating this problem. He contacted the Police to enquire why the plates were not readable with the ANPR cameras that they were using, but he was getting no real answers. Basically, the door had been shut in his face.

He didn't stop there. He contacted our members and asked them to return the faulty plates for further tests to be

carried out. He found that on some plates the characters were in fact not readable with the ANPR cameras, which are used to verify that they comply with the regulations.

He had a suspicion that a faulty batch of material used for the number plate characters had been sent to him by the suppliers, so he contacted them to investigate what had happened because they have never had problems like this before. They are waiting for an update.

In the meantime, Aplates has now replaced all the noncompliant plates with new

ones that have been tested by the authorities and are definitely showing up on the ANPR cameras. Company owner Nigel, is very concerned about all of this and has advised me that he has an in-house barrister and if there are any further problems and if needed, he will challenge the Police.

My advice is that if you have purchased 4D plates from Aplates for the time being I would remove the number plates and replace them with the originals, then contact Nigel, who can check them, and who is more than happy to assist drivers. **LTDA**

Silverstone success

I want to say a big thank you to the fantastic group of London licensed taxi drivers, who provided VIP transport at the F1 British Grand Prix at Silverstone. The LTDA arranged for sixty of London's finest to transport people around the circuit and to and from the helipad and exclusive hospitality venues. The cabbies worked extremely hard, and everyone was very impressed by their professionalism and the service they provided, from F1 drivers including Lando Norris and George Russell to well-known celebrities and wheelchair users accessing the hospitality venues.

This was a great way to showcase London's taxi trade and what we're all about. Special thanks must go to Frank O'Beirne, who was leading the team of drivers on the ground

> at Silverstone. He worked incredibly long hours to make sure everything ran smoothly and it wouldn't have been possible without him.

After the success of this year's event, we hope we will be able to work with Silverstone again next year and to offer more drivers the chance to be part of this iconic sporting event.



LTDA members, have you looked at our new membership benefits? We are adding new discounts and offers to our website all the time available exclusively to LTDA families, so keep an eye out for deals that could save you hundreds of pounds, products and services you might need one day.

To access these great offers, simply log on to the 'members only' area of our website using your membership and badge numbers. You will find all the current deals and instructions on how to claim them. You can also scan the QR code below.

include reduced price and heavily discounted Tastecard membership, giving you huge savings on meals out in a range of high street chain and independent restaurants, cut price coffees in leading coffee shops and exclusive discounts and cashback offers in some supermarkets and retail outlets, amongst other things. If you have any problems accessing these offers please email membership@ltda.co.uk







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Seatbelts & Plying for Hire

Previous cases we've dealt with on this have shown that the hire light does not have to be on for a driver to be working or 'employed' as the Courts term it.

On Point

will put my cards on the table immediately and say that I've always liked the relationship that has existed between London cabbies and the Police. I drove a cab when we were governed by them. I'm not talking about the speed camera section but the Police that are 'on the ground', as the saying goes.

A good relationship

In my cabbing career, I have had reason to approach them a couple of times for help.

One occasion, I got caught by a doorman at the Royal College of Nursing in Cavendish Square. As I drove down Henrietta place, I saw what I thought was a couple standing together and the man hailed me. As I pulled up, it was obvious the girl was very, very merry. I thought as long as her partner was with her, we should be fine. That was when the doorman opened the door and put the girl in and said she's going to Harrow mate and walked off. I started to enquire whereabouts in Harrow she needed, but she just rambled and a couple of minutes later fell asleep.

My plan was to get to the outskirts of Harrow and wake her up to find out where she needed. The problem was when it came to wakey wakey time, she wouldn't respond. There was no way I was going to get in the back to wake her.

My next move was to go to Harrow Police station, but on the way there I saw a police car that had pulled over a group of young lads in their car. I pulled up behind, got out and explained the situation. The officer opened the back door and shook her until she came round. He then got her full address for me and made it very clear to her that she needed to stay awake until I got her home. On arriving at her home, we were met by her dad, who had obviously had the heads up that she was on her way. He paid her fare and thanked me for looking after her.

What I took from this was that the Police were on our side and we there's. I'm sure you are also aware of stories of the police making requests to the cab trade to help



find someone. A cabbie mate of mine once even had plain clothes officers jump in his cab ordering him to follow a car that was believed to contain a wanted man, on the run from prison. He witnessed as they leapt from the cab and swooped on the car, dragging the baddie out. The cabbie was very pleased with himself. He called himself Jack Regan (for those of a certain era) for the next six months.

Seat belt fines

As I said, I've always held the relationship between us and them dear. But I cannot be anything other than very disappointed in what has been happening lately around the West End and Victoria areas.

We've received several phone calls informing us that cabbies are being pulled over for not wearing a seat belt. On one occasion a member told me he dropped a job off in Upper Grosvenor Street and as he went to pull away, into very slow-moving traffic, a police

car flashed him to pull out of where he had stopped. He thanked the driver with the usual thumbs up and thought about where to look for his next job. Suddenly, the police car turned on the lights and indicated for him to pull over. You can imagine the member's shock when he was informed, he had been pulled over for not wearing a seatbelt.

Exempt

Our member informed the Policeman immediately that we are exempt. He was met with 'your only exempt when you've got a fare in the cab or when you have your For Hire Light On and you have neither.' He reportedly then said, 'I know you haven't got your light on because you have not cleared your meter.

I'll be honest I thought there must be more to this, but that changed an hour or so later I when I received

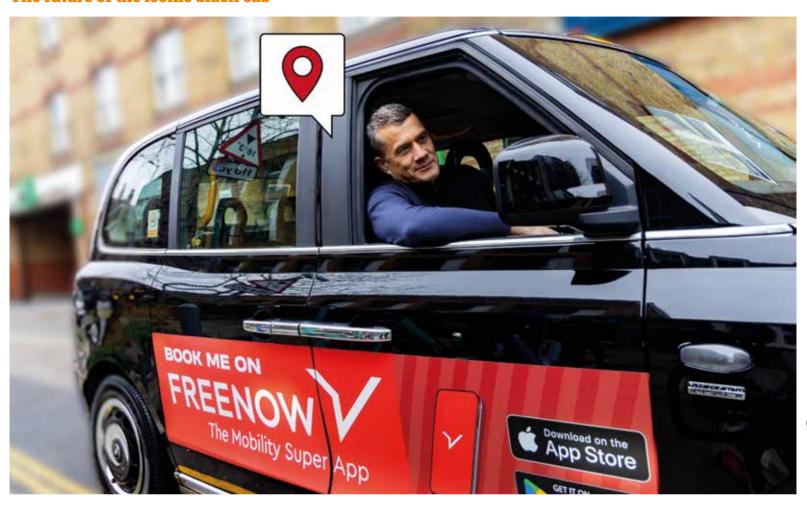
another phone call from a member pulled as he came out of the petrol station in Ebury Street. Over the next few days, I received similar calls form members very upset about the fines they have been handed.

The law on this is clear, we are exempt, when working. Previous cases we've dealt with on this have shown that the hire light does not have to be on for a driver to be working or 'employed' as the Courts term it, as you could be plying for hire on an app or radio circuit or could be POB delivering something. If you are driving within the London licensing area and plying for hire, you are working and exempt. If you happen to run into what seems to be one copper on a mission, who maybe isn't clear on the law, get in touch with us and we can help challenge the fine. **LTDA**

🎾 @TheLTDA

Keeping the Trade Alive

The future of the iconic black cab



FREENOW

When you think of London, one of the first things that come to mind is the iconic black cab. Not only is the black cab industry incredibly unique, it's one of the capital's biggest tourist attractions.

Spanning decades, this trade is one that people in the UK, especially the black cab drivers themselves, are very proud of. However, in recent years the number of drivers entering into this line of work has been dropping at an alarming rate, and this puts the future of this muchloved trade at risk.

Why is the black cab industry at risk?

When the Knowledge of London (KoL) first started, it would normally take drivers around 18 months to pass. Now, however, it takes around 3-4 years on average because juggling a parttime job while also studying for the Knowledge is no easy feat,

and often simply not financially possible. This is one of the major reasons for the high dropout rate.

It's a long and expensive investment for any prospective driver to make, especially given the current inflation rate which means students need to even work longer hours to be able to afford to study and live.

The facts and figures

Just a decade ago there were around 7,000 to 10,000 students and now there's only around 600, according to the Principal of Knowledge Point School, Gert Kretov. That's a staggering 92% decrease in people studying for the KoL over the last ten years. We had a chat with Gert about the industry's decline and why Knowledge schools see a high number of dropouts.

"Before this was an ideal job for someone who wanted freedom with their work. Today, this is a very demanding job with high costs and long shifts. There is a dire need for reforms and financial support to revive the taxi industry."

Data from Transport for London

(TfL) shows that only 30% of the drivers that start the Knowledge actually become black cab drivers. Not only that, actually entering the industry comes with its own price tag, with new drivers having to pay the cost of LEVC, and there's only a very limited number of grants to help new entrants.

What could the solution be? Reforms need to be made so that studying for the Knowledge is quicker, more affordable, and more applicable to drivers today.

Mariusz Zabrocki, General Manager of FREENOW, believes that to attract people to the industry we need to bring the Knowledge into the 21st century. Specifically, we need to reassess what the test actually involves and its relevance to modern-day drivers who have access to a host of helpful technology. He also highlights the importance of actively promoting the flexibility, financial rewards and other benefits this career offers in order to engage the new generation.

According to FREENOW driver advocate and black cab driver, John Hamilton, there is plenty

to promote. "To anyone thinking of becoming black cab driver... Definitely do it. It's worth it for the freedom to work wherever and the opportunity to meet all different kinds of people everyday."

What FREENOW is doing

We're always looking for ways to support the trade and the drivers. Recently, to mark the 200th anniversary of the first licensed black cab, we doubled our electric vehicle grant to £4000 for all drivers who pass the Knowledge before 31st December 2023. This is one of the actions we're taking to provide some financial support to drivers who are just entering the black cab industry. Learn more about this at www.free-now.com/uk/subsidy.

While we're looking for ways to help prospective black cab drivers pass the test and make it easier during their time studying, we know it's also important to continue supporting our existing base of cabbies. We want to do this for them, the industry as a whole, and to make the job as appealing as possible for any newcomers who are interested.



Unmet Demand

Older, wiser drivers told me not to worry, people were getting cabs, they were just having to wait a little bit longer than usual.



M4 musings

o you try to work when it's busy or do you do set hours and go home on time, no matter what? A much-quoted study done in New York in 2014 seemed to indicate that drivers work when they want to work, regardless of the strength of demand...

Demand

June was another busy month, both at the airport and in town. At times like these, some drivers worry about service levels. When I was first out it used to bother me that people couldn't get a cab on a Friday or Saturday night in the busy areas - this is called 'unmet demand,' and means a business may not be operating as efficiently, or profitably, as it could be. Older, wiser drivers told me not to worry, people were getting cabs, they were just having to wait a little bit longer than usual. Now I've been around the block a few times, I think maybe those drivers were right but it's still important to mop up as much work as we can while the demand is there. Every pound we take is a pound another business didn't get, and every pound we take adds to our combined turnover.

Falling numbers

Looking at the number of candidates currently on the Knowledge, it's likely that the number of licensed drivers in London will continue to fall for some time to come, and this means our business is shrinking. So even if individual drivers feel like it's busy on a given day, that doesn't mean things are all rosy in the garden. We need to at least maintain the current number of drivers.

I agree with others who've said that the Knowledge is taking too long. If someone is putting in the work, it should be possible to get through it in two to three years max, otherwise it's too much of an investment to expect people to make in the current climate.

PM's empty pledges

I wonder what possessed Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, to undertake to 'halve inflation'



this year? I mean it's certainly a desirable aspiration but it assumes an agency that the government doesn't seem to have. There's only one short-term policy lever that is supposed to influence inflation and that is interest rates, which the government is not even in charge of – interest rates are decided by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, which meets eight times a year.

At the last meeting, rates were increased by half a percentage point to 5%, bad news for those with tracker mortgages or fixed rate mortgages approaching the end of their current term. The next meeting is on 5th August. It's also indirectly bad news for anyone who wants to get a loan, a credit card, or finance (for example on a cab.)

Solutions?

In the old days, governments tried to curb inflation using price and wage controls. I don't think we are going back to the days of price controls any time soon but all the strikes we've seen in the last year or so show the government is trying to limit pay rises. This seems unfair, as wages in the UK have been stagnant for more than a decade. Surely now there's high demand for labour, it's right that workers should reap the benefits?

It's been pointed out in certain quarters that EU immigration was itself a counter-inflationary measure, as it kept the cost of labour comparatively low, with lots of young people coming to the UK and particularly to London to find work.

Whatever the causes are, there's no easy fix for persistent inflation, as many former Prime Ministers have found to their cost. The higher interest rates go, the more pressure there will be on the Treasury to provide relief to mortgage-holders (and the housing market), especially as the next general election approaches.

Rishi Sunak may well come to regret some of the pledges he made in January. While this government seems a lot cannier than the last one, they have a mountain to climb in the polls, especially as the current Labour leadership also seem a lot smarter than their predecessors, and has so far not made any silly promises about things they have no control over.

Cricket

Even if you're not a fan of cricket, test matches in London are good for business. For those who don't know, we're in the middle of a hard fought and exciting 'Ashes' series, between England and Australia. The Lord's test went on for all five days, and there are always loads of customers before and after these events, I've had one or two very good multidrop fares over the years.



Some passengers may be a little 'worse for wear' after a day's festivities, but they're normally well behaved and unlikely to do a runner!

As I write, England have just won the 3rd Test at Headingley, which keeps the series alive after Australia won the first two. Hopefully, England can win the 4th Test as well to set up a decider at the Oval, beginning on Thursday 27th July. England Captain Ben Stokes is one of those once in a generation sportsmen, who seem to be able to bend reality by sheer force of will, so if anyone can make it happen, it's him.

Good luck out there. ■ LTDA





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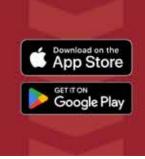
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Minimum Monthly Volumes	×	×	£1,200.00
Monthly Support Fee	×	×	If £1,200 has been processed, the £20 (inc VAT) Support Fee <u>not</u> applicable
Direct Debit Set-Up	×	×	
Transaction Settlement	Next Day, 7 Days Per Week	Next Day, 7 Days Per Week	Next Day, 7 Days Per Week
UK Transaction Support	Ø		
Termination Fee	×	×	£360.00(inc VAT) reducing by £15.00 (inc VAT) per month for contract terms
Warranty	12 month manufacturer	12 month manufacturer	Duration of Contract
Automatic Tip Prompt	✓	∨	
Dynamic Tipping	×	Fixed Monetary Amounts Percentages Custom Amount	Fixed Monetary Amounts Percentages Custom Amount
Colour Screen	×	✓	<
Backlit Screen	×	~	lacksquare
Bluetooth		✓	✓
Requires Smart Device	Ø	✓	\checkmark
Connects to Meter	×	S	
Includes Printer	S	Ø	
Includes Installation	Ø	V	
TfL Approved	Ø	Ø	
Annual Bonus	×	×	Qualifies for Free Meter or Meter Refund @£30,000 p.a. paid to CabPay Card
Monthly Rebate Paid to CabPay Card (starts 1st April 2023)	Yes, 0.1% from 100 transactions per month	Yes, 0.1% from 100 transactions per month	Yes, 0.2% from100 transactions per month

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Cabbies Deliver a First-Class Service at Silverstone



Sixty London Licensed Taxi Drivers transported VIPs around the F1 British Grand Prix, living up to the trade's reputation for excellence.



team of London licensed taxi drivers provided VIP transportation at the Formula One (F1) British Grand Prix at Silverstone. expertly moving high-profile hospitality guests, F1 teams and guests with accessibility needs around the circuit.

Many will remember that last year, the LTDA arranged for twenty electric London licensed taxis to provide transport from the Silverstone helipad to the circuit at the 2022 F1 British Grand Prix. After the success of that event, this year we were asked to supply three times as many cabs, with drivers charged with taking passengers to and from the helipad and servicing all the hospitality venues for the duration of the four-day event. This was a

much bigger undertaking but of course cabbies were more than equal to the task.

The F1 British Grand Prix is a prestigious event, attracting celebrities, sports personalities, and wealthy and influential people from around the world. What better way to transport them and get them where they need to be than in an iconic, world-famous black cab?

This was an unique opportunity to demonstrate the high-quality service provided by London's professional, highly trained licensed taxi drivers as well as our green credentials, with a fleet of LEVC TX electric taxis.



It wasn't all work. The drivers had the opportunity to meet many interesting guests and people linked to F1. One had



the pleasure of picking up Sky Sports commentator, David Croft 'Crofty', another transported British driver Lando Norris, following his second-place triumph in the race, and a whole host of other big names including footballers, TV personalities and Hollywood actors.

They also had the opportunity to enjoy the race from the trackside and got an insight into the inner workings of F1, getting up close to the vehicles and workshops and chatting with the staff.

A success

The whole team at Silverstone and F1 were hugely impressed with the drivers' professionalism and dedication whilst working long hours and expertly navigating their way around the huge circuit.

The LTDA was delighted to be able to give drivers the chance to be part of this iconic event and hopes to be involved again next year.

LTDA Executive, Anthony
Street, who worked closely with
Silverstone to make this possible
said: "This was once again a
brilliant event for London's
licensed taxis to be involved in!
All the drivers were a credit to the
trade, and I am incredibly proud
of the service they delivered. Thank
you and well done to all involved!"

LTDA Membership Manager, Kate Hawkins, who recruited



and supported the drivers at the event said: "It was fantastic to work with such a dedicated group of drivers and to see black cabs at the heart of this iconic event. We've had positive feedback from the team at Silverstone and look forward to hopefully doing it all again next year!"

The team of drivers was headed up by Frank O'Beirne, with support from LTDA staff on the ground. Frank said: "Thank you to everyone who was part of the weekend. This was a totally new way of working for all parties involved, from us to the Silverstone and F1 hospitality and operations teams. Every single person played their part to make it work and did the trade proud."







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Days of Future Past

After racking up well over 30 years as a taxi driver, I can safely say I've enjoyed my fair share of fry-ups, burgers and teas at many a taxi centre.



Man in black

first joined 'the lads' for a bite to eat as a 'wet behind the ears' Yellow Badge driver. After the last train had arrived at Barking Station, several of us used to pile down to either Hungercure, which was 200 yards from the station, or Jake's in Seven Kings, for a 'blowout burger'.

That fine establishment is still there to this day and is still satisfying hungry patrons.

Around the same time, I also frequented the cabbies cafe by the rank at City Airport, devouring a healthy salad, while discussing the state of the trade and how illegal minicabs were encroaching on our industry (nothing changes, eh). When I started out, it wasn't uncommon for a cabbie to do four or five hours here, with your worst nightmare being a job to Stratford or East Ham. Ah, the good old, bad old days.

The Royal Oak

I then went on to study the full Knowledge of London. After two years of analysing the mood of Mr Ormes, based upon the direction of his toucan, as well as being verbally

'roughed-up' by a couple of other examiners, I gained my pretty Green Badge. How I managed to do that given that I actively refused to chop-off my shoulderlength hair I'll never know. It also allowed me to sample the culinary delights dotted around town like food monuments.

My first real encounter of a Green Badge taxi driver's den was the Royal Oak at Paddington. A place of wonderment and where I made some lovely friends. At 1am we all used to stop work, go to the Oak and spend a couple of hours eating, chatting and playing pool, before dealing with the rowdy merchants of joy that left their respective nightclubs.

Spread your wings

As time marched on, I discovered Worship Street Taxi Centre by Liverpool Street Station. Now the odd thing about this place was that Addison Lee used the car park to store some of their vehicles. Private hire were sharing the site with the taxi industry. How the owner, Tony, got away with that in the mid '90s, I'll never know.

Other cabbie hangouts included The Belgrove Centre and the taxi centre at Herbrand Street, which were both very much based on the Royal Oak. Also, the Granby Grill at King's Cross was a popular haunt. And of course, who could forget Doug Sherry's place, which was located in York Way. Marvellous. Sadly all of these places are gone, with the last two being The King's Cross Club in Camley Street and The Great Suffolk Street Cafe.

Times change

With the onset of time, things really do disappear or die. Thankfully, new places can emerge, such as Zevhub, at 15 Mandela Way, London SE1.

Now this place is no Royal Oak or Granby Grill. This is primarily a hub for electric taxis. With the industry evolving, a taxi driver's needs have started to evolve, so what better than a rapid charging hub with 10 charge points (aiming to expand way beyond that), a kitchen where you can make yourself a free tea or coffee, a comfortable seating area and best of all, CLEAN TOILETS. It's like the days of future past.

The site was opened by taxi driver and owner of HP Taxis, Paul Byron, along with business partners Simon Lloyd, Per Regnarsson and Max Delamain. In its first four weeks, Zevhub has given away thousands of pounds worth of free electricity to taxi drivers needing a charge. This investment has been done in a bid to raise awareness of the hub and promote the business and



Sredit: Hidden London

it seems to be working, with taxi drivers descending on the site in their droves. The benefit of free EV charging cannot last forever, with Zevhub charging 60p per Kw to use their network.

According to Lloyd, this could be the first of a number of hubs across London. They are sorely needed given the dearth of charging points and facilities for taxi drivers in general. At present, the hub is open until around midnight, but it's anticipated the site will be operational 24 hours a day. TAXI

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Robberies and Revenge in Russell Square

A tale of one criminal's lust for London that almost lead to his own death.

Rob's history tips

n 2nd July 1888, two men - Eddie Guerin and Frank Diago - walked into the Credit Lyonnais bank in Lyon. Security was lax, and when the cashier's back was turned the pair quickly grabbed a large wad of notes from the counter; the value of which was estimated to be £10,000 in British money, that's the equivalent of around £1 million today.

The thieves fled to London

The thieves fled to London where they were promptly apprehended by Scotland Yard; each man found to have his pockets stuffed with French Francs, US Dollars, and Bank of England notes.

Born in Hoxton?

After appearing at Bow Street Magistrates, the French government demanded the men be extradited. Diago was promptly sent back, although Guerin fought the order, claiming he was a British subject and therefore immune.

This led to a court examination into his background, in which Guerin insisted he'd been born in Hoxton in 1860, spending his childhood on Robert Street.

When quizzed though, local residents claimed they had no knowledge of such a family, and Guerin's past was made all the more murky due to the fact he spoke with a Canadian accent.

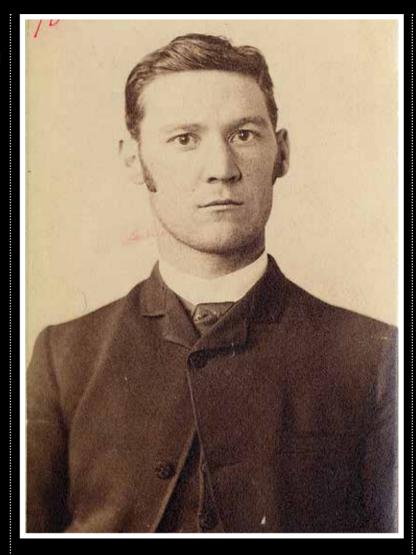
Consequently, the court didn't buy his story and Guerin was sent back to France where he was handed a 10-year prison sentence.

Chicago May

Clearly drawn towards London, Guerin headed back to the city following his release in 1901 where, at a pub called The Horseshoe, on Tottenham Court Road, he met an American woman known as 'Chicago May.'

After embarking on a relationship, the couple headed to Paris where, in true Bonnie and Clyde style, they robbed the American Express Company by blowing up a safe.

They were quickly caught, and although May was sent back to



London, Guerin suffered a far worse fate: he was sentenced to life on Devil's Island; the notorious French penal colony off the French Guiana coast, perhaps best remembered today as being the setting for the 1973 Steve McQueen film, *Papillion*.

Escape from Devil's Island

Miraculously, after spending three years there, Guerin managed to escape in a makeshift canoe and, after reaching the mainland, headed to America, then on to London.

Once in the capital, he tracked down May and the couple had a reunion party at their friend Emily Skinner's house, on Bloomsbury's Kenton Street.

However, fuelled by booze the atmosphere quickly turned sour, and Guerin, suspicious May had framed him for the Paris bank job, ended up telling his former lover that he no longer wished to have anything to do with her.

Infuriated, May responded by threatening to go to the police and have Guerin "sent back to Devil's Island" and, sure enough, a few days later, Guerin was arrested.

Once again claiming he was British, Guerin was remanded in Brixton prison whilst the authorities decided what to do.

Here, Guerin befriended another inmate – a Kansas City resident named Charles Smith, and after telling him his story, Guerin concluded that he wanted to punish May by throwing acid over her.

Smith was released from Brixton soon after and immediately sought out May, apparently to warn her of Guerin's intentions. The pair soon became lovers, with Smith promising to "fix" Guerin if he attempted anything.

Despite his claims of British citizenship being rejected in 1888, it was eventually agreed "Miraculously, after spending three years there, Guerin managed to escape in a makeshift canoe and, after reaching the mainland, headed to America, then on to London."

on this occasion Guerin had been born in Hoxton after all, and he was released in June 1907.

Russell Square revenge

Keen to celebrate, he took Skinner out for dinner in the West End, followed by drinks at The Grapes, on Long Acre.

The Grapes, on Long Acre.
Smith and May meanwhile had heard Guerin was out and so, supposedly hoping to strike first, obtained a pistol.

They hailed a cab to cruise the streets of Bloomsbury, on the look out.

Sure enough, at 11.50pm, they spotted Guerin walking back to Kenton Street, outside Russell Square Station.

After ordering the cabbie to stop, Smith leapt from the taxi and opened fire, striking Guerin who, spotting May in the cab, gasped, "Stoop to murder would you?"

Fortunately, a passing Constable by the name of Robert Bolding apprehended Smith; a brave intervention which saved Guerin's life.

May and Smith were sent to trial where both were found guilty of attempted murder; a decision which resulted in each of them receiving lengthy prison sentences.

Guerin, despite being given a second chance at life, returned to his old, criminal ways. The last known record of him dates from 1932 when, then aged 72, he was sent to prison for 12 months after snatching a woman's handbag in Ealing.

If you wish to learn more, you can visit my YouTube channel, robslondon. ■ TAXI





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Slow & Steady Growth

Things are moving in the right direction and June was another record sales month, with 177 new cabs joining the ranks.



Cab you drive

he good news is the fleet continues to grow, very slowly, but steadily, and its going in the right direction. We started the month of July at 15,185 licensed cabs, up about 50 from the end of May/early June.

These figures reflect another record sales month, with 177 new cabs joining the ranks in June. It

also means that this month will see just under 50% (49.3%) of the fleet now being electric cabs (TXEs and Dynamos). The only big milestone left to fall is when there are more TXEs on the road than all the other cabs combined, likely to be towards the end of this year.

Second-hand market

As more second-hand TXEs come onto the market, the higher mileage ones are being traded at low £30,000s, but low mileage, immaculate one owner cabs are being snapped up, with drivers selling to other drivers at around the £40k mark.

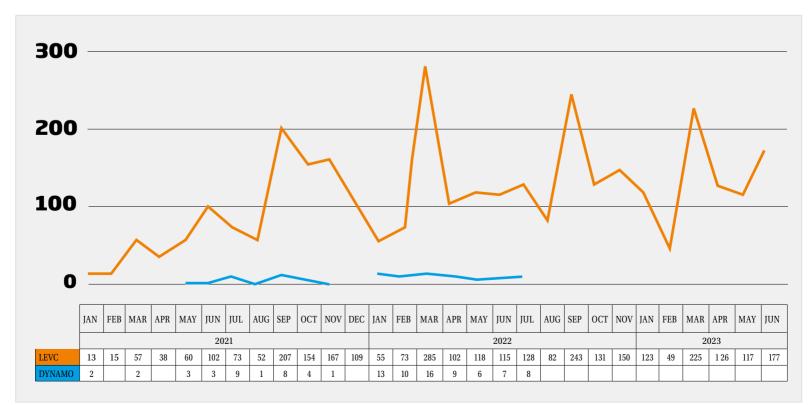
Late diesels are still doing. There is a small but steady group, who would rather pay £25k, even up to £27k for a late Euro VI TX4. This still seems crazy to me, when another £5-£10k will put you in a TXE, but I guess these drivers have their reasons.

Geely investment

Keeping an eye on the news, I saw that Geely, the owner of

Renault Group

black cab manufacturer LEVC, has teamed up with Renault in a €7 billion deal to build hybrid engine systems. Interestingly, their headquarters are set to be in the UK, allegedly in London, which could see their senior staff hopping in and out of cabs and almost certainly getting real life advice from cabbies! TAXI



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Reel Talk

AMAMAMAMAMAMAMAMAMAMAMA

all the elements we've grown accustomed to in the series. That includes insane, he-actually-did-it-for-real stunts by Cruise, whose good-natured banter and workplace synergy with the returning Benji (Simon Pegg), Ilsa Faust (Rebecca Ferguson), and Luther (Ving Rhames) is still fun to watch. And while the exposition feels more leaden than usual, with a villain - known



signs point to Part Two closing things out on a high.

Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One

"Your mission, should you choose to accept it." That obligatory statement, one of the main staples of Mission: Impossible, is always delivered to Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) before he gets to work. But

with Dead Reckoning Part One - the seventh film in the franchise and third directed by Christopher McQuarrie - the issue of choice comes under the microscope like never before. The result is a film that examines why our heroes are the way they are, while giving us

only as 'The Entity' - that leaves a bit to be desired, newcomers Pom Klementieff and Hayley Atwell make the most of their screen time. Atwell in particular is a scene-stealer as Grace, whose ambiguous loyalties make her something of an entertaining wild card. Dead Reckoning Part One ends things on a cliffhanger, but all

Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny (12A) •

Any list of cinema's most iconic characters would be incomplete without Indiana Jones. Across four films and 40 years, Harrison Ford's whip-cracking, fedora-wearing hero has preserved



Entertainment Corner

Our resident film critic takes us through the month's best cinema releases to recommend to your passengers.

Elemental (PG) 🔱

Pixar is no stranger to marrying real world relatability with high concept ideas, and the latest film from the beloved animation studio is no different. Set in a world where natural elements earth, fire, water, air - coexist, it focuses on the fiery Ember (Leah Lewis) who hopes to take over her father's store once she masters her temper. Complicating matters is the watery Wade (Mamoudou Athie), a chipper city inspector who Ember slowly but surely begins to fall for.

The romance story, while predictable, is sweet and funny, with Wade's vulnerability offsetting and then complementing Ember's spunkiness. But the simultaneous storyline of Ember figuring out if she actually wants to take over her father's store, and whether her unique gifts might best be suited for something else, is where Elemental really shines. On that note, there are many moments that are visually dazzling and innovative, especially when she has to whip up a quick solution to an immediate problem. It's no animation feat like the recent Across the Spider-Verse, but it is another impressive effort from Pixar nonetheless.



Elemental is in cinemas now.



archaeological treasures, punched Nazis in the face, and delighted audiences. And though *Dial of Destiny* – purportedly the fifth and final entry in the franchise, with James Mangold replacing Steven Spielberg in the director's chair - isn't nearly as faultless as its star, it feels good and right that Ford gets a swansong for his signature character.

Proceedings start strongly with a 1944 flashback sequence (the de-aging tech is convincing enough that you soon forget about it) that sees Indy once again punch Nazis as he chases after the Antikythera, an ancient dial that can apparently detect "fissures in time." 20 years later, that MacGuffin is still what everyone's after, including Indy's goddaughter Helena (Phoebe Waller-Bridge, oscillating between likeable and irritating) and Nazi scientist Jürgen Voller (a fine if forgettable Mads Mikkelsen). The second act drags with lacklustre plotting and wasted characters, but the audacious ending just about makes up for it.



Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny is in cinemas now.



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www.ltda.co.uk



Getting the Most Out of Your Bank Accounts

A look at where's the best home for your money now interest rates are going up.

Money matters

ising interest rates might be bad news for mortgage borrowers but it's better news for savers. The Bank of England base rate now sits at 5% - the highest it has been for 15 years.

Whether you are putting aside a few pounds each week, or have a substantial nest egg already stashed away or even just use a bank account for day-to-day life, it's important to get the best possible return on your money.

Easy access savings

If you are saving money but want to access it in an emergency, an easy (or instant) access savings account is the ideal home for your cash. Don't stick with your bank for easy access savings – there are much better rates available from smaller savings institutions.

The top rate at the time of writing is from Shawbrook Bank at 4.35% which has a minimum deposit of £1,000. The next best is Chip which pays 4.26%. Chip is app-based and you'll need to link it to your current account via Open Banking.

Fixed rate bonds

If you won't need to access your money any time soon, a fixed rate bond will normally pay more interest. Unusually, you can get the top rates by just committing for one or two years at the moment – normally you have to stash your cash away for several years to get that.

As of 7th July, the best 1-year bond is from FirstSave and pays 6.10% AER, while Al Rayan Bank pays 6.01%. The latter is an Islamic bank so pays an expected profit rate rather than interest.

FirstSave also offers the best 2-year fixed rate bond at 6.15%. High street banks can also offer competitive rates, so wherever your money is now, make sure you double check what percentages you're getting.

Cash ISA rates

Every adult in the UK can save up to £20,000 in an ISA each year, with the returns

interest-free. You can save this either in a Cash or Stocks and Shares ISA. However, interest rates on ISAs are lower than standard savings accounts at the moment, so you won't really benefit from these accounts unless you already have a significant amount saved in an existing one and want to retain the tax benefits.

For those this scenario applies to, the best Easy Access ISA is currently from Marcus by Goldman Sachs and pays 4% AER. You can get slightly more interest if you opt for an account with limited access though. Coventry Building Society pays 4.1% and allows six penalty-free withdrawals a year, while Paragon Bank pays 4.05%

"If you are saving money but want to access it in an emergency, an easy (or instant) access savings account is the ideal home for your cash."

and allows three withdrawals a year before it reduces the interest rate paid.

For 1-year Fixed Rate ISAs, Castle Trust Bank pays 5.25% and Zopa 5.21%. For 2-year ones, Coventry Building Society pays 5.4% and West Brom 5.35%.

Current accounts

Choosing the right current account can also mean extra cash. Some banks pay you money if you switch to them while others pay cashback when you spend on your debit card. Some accounts offer both a switching bonus and ongoing rewards, so be sure to look around before making the move.

For example, if you switch to Natwest's Rewards account, you'll get £200 in cash and you can earn up to £36 a year in cashback. To get these perks you need to pay in a minimum of £1,250 a month (which can be wages).

The account costs £2 a month but you can earn £5 a month by logging into the Natwest banking app and setting up two Direct Debits. So, you can earn a net £3 a month by that alone. You can also earn from 1% in cashback rewards when you spend with your NatWest debit card at the bank's partner retailers.

Alternatively, switching to First Direct's 1st Account pays £175, while switching to Lloyds Bank's Club Lloyds pays £150 plus you can choose a reward from a list including a year's Disney+, six cinema tickets, or a magazine subscription.

There are also ongoing rewards or cashback available elsewhere. Santander's new Edge account (£3 a month) pays 1% cashback on water, energy, council tax, mobile, phone, broadband and paidfor TV bills, as well as 1% on most supermarket and travel spending. You can earn up to £10 a month for each – so £20 a month in total.

The app-only Chase current account pays 1% cashback on your everyday debit card spending for a whole year. There's no minimum payin required in the first year, but you'll have to pay in a minimum of £500 a month after that to continue getting cashback.







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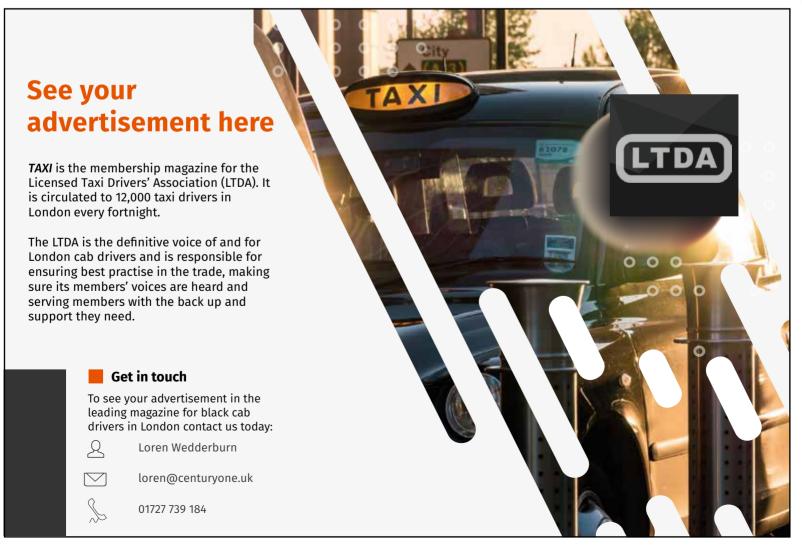
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On Independence Day 100 Veterans **Enjoyed a Memorable Trip to Worthing**

TAXI spoke to Taxi Charity Chairman, Brian Heffernan, about veterans treated to a day out, for some sea air and a fish and chip lunch.

n a tradition stretching back to 1948, when cab drivers got together to see what they could do to help those who had come back with horrible injuries from WWII, veterans supported by the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans have been treated to a day at the coast for a nice lunch.

TAXI How was the day?

Brian: The day has always begun with volunteer cab drivers meeting in the small village of South Holmwood, Surrey, for a refreshment stop and a wonderful buffet prepared by the residents.

The cabs then drive to the esplanade in Worthing, where they are met by the Worthing and Adur Town Crier, Bob Smytherman, and escorted into the Pavilion Theatre.

TAXI What was the reception like?

Brian: Veterans, cab drivers and invited guests were welcomed by the Mayor of Worthing, Cllr. Jon Roser. After lunch, the amazing 102-year-old Flt Lt (Retired) Colin Bell DFC, who served as a Mosquito Bomber Pilot, a man that completed over 50 missions, shared stories from his life.

TAXI Walk us through the rest of the day.

Brian: After speeches from myself (my first at Worthing) and the Taxi Charity Patron, Vice-Admiral Sir Adrian Johns KCB, CBE, KStJ, DL, guests were entertained by rock band The Accents who, much to the delight of the older veterans, had learnt some popular WWII songs.

TAXI Were all the veterans from WWII?

Brian: No, we are honoured to support veterans from all conflicts. Joining us on this occasion were men and women who had served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland and the Falklands. It is a real pleasure to meet these people and hear their stories. We are indebted and grateful for what they gave for their country and days like this are the least we can for them.

TAXI Who organises the Worthing trip?

Brian: The Taxi Charity definitely attracts some very special people. For over 30 years Paul Davis has made all the arrangements for this special day. There is nothing he doesn't know about making the day a success and, as he steps down from the charity committee, he will certainly leave large shoes to fill.

TAXI Tell us about the cabbies that volunteer their time.

Brian: They are the best! They are a wonderful group, who have the biggest hearts that are full of warmth for the veterans in their care. We were reminded recently that Gerry Dunn MBE has been driving veterans to Worthing since 1966 - now that is commitment!

TAXI What does the charity have planned next?

Brian: As you know, 2023 is our 75th anniversary and we did have lots of events planned but we do have real concerns that, with the country still feeling the effects of Covid and now the cost of living crisis, we've found donations and grants are at significantly lower levels. We're devastated that there is a real chance that we may have to cancel some of our future trips due to funding challenges.

TAXI What would you like to say to anyone reading who might be in a position to help?

Brian: I'd like to make a plea to all those in the cab trade to help us. If everyone reading this could donate and ask their friends and family to make any sort of donation too, our future would look much more positive. As one supermarket says, every little helps, so we would welcome anything anyone can donate. As taxi drivers, we know only too well how tough it is, but on 4th July over 50 cabbies gave up a day's pay to support the veterans. We mustn't forget these veterans fought for our freedom, so any help would be hugely appreciated.



Brian Heffernan and Tom Schafer.





Taxis leaving South Holmwood for



About the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans

www.taxicharity.org

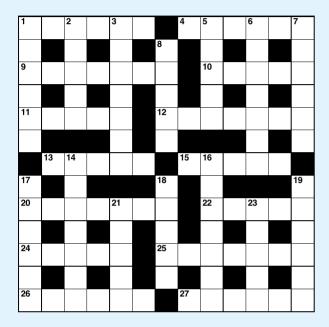
The Taxi Charity is run by volunteer London black taxi drivers and has been supporting thousands of veterans since 1948. The charity arranges free trips (for veterans from all conflicts) to the Netherlands and France, for acts of commemoration and days out to museums, concerts, or social events across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





Puzzler Page

Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Bent (6)
- 4 Over-enthusiastic (4-2)
- 9 Rock singer, eg (3,4)
- 10 Someone who steals (5)
- 11 Sponge (money) (5)
- 12 Debase (7)
- 13 Bumptious, cocky (5)
- 15 Tender, present (to) (5)
- 20 Glossier (7)
- 22 Espouse (5)
- 24 Period of rule (5)
- 25 Insecurely (7)
- 26 Thick dairy product (6)
- 27 Chore involving a short journey (6)

DOWN

- 1 Facet (6)
- 2 Managed successfully (5)
- 3 Starters, appetisers (7)
- 5 Release (a knot) (5)
- 6 Peep (7)
- 7 Insult (6)
- 8 Pamphlet (5)
- 14 Elevating (7)
- 16 Quality or feature of food (7)
- 17 Towards evil ways (6)
- 18 Broil, barbecue (5)
- 19 Endured to the end (6)
- 21 Underlying (5)
- 23 La Traviata, eg (5)

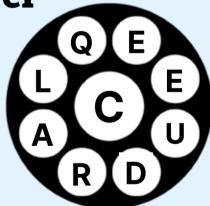
Sudoku

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.

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

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 8 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.

		_ < _	
\bigcap	$\stackrel{\wedge}{\Box}$		

All answers to puzzler on p30

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Get in touch



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29

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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? (plea	ase tick) Yes No					
If Yes how many points do you have?						
Please tick if you DO NOT wish to receive information from the I	LTDA and other related organisations in the future?					
this is confirmed I am not eligible to vote in relation to any form of A membership shall be at the discretion of the Council of Manageme Please note: We do not provide assistance for any matters the Signed.	ent.					
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Instructions to your Bank/Building	9 1 4 4 2 8					
Society to pay Direct Debits:	For Office use only					
Please complete parts 1 to 5 to instruct your branch to make						
direct payments from your account. Return form to FREEPOST LTDA	1 Please write the name and full postal address of your branch in the box (left)					
To the Manager of	2 Name of account holder					
	3 Account number					
D 1/D 111	4 Bank Sort Code — — — —					
Bank/Building Society Address						
Bank/Building Society Address	Banks/Building Societies may not accept instructions to pay Direct Debit from some types of account.					

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer

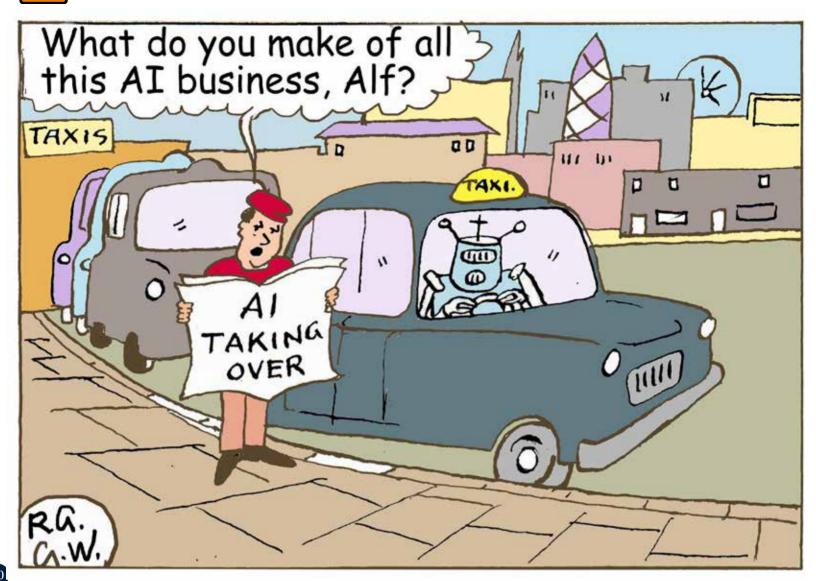
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- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit LTDA will notify you (10 working days) in advance of your account being
 debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request LTDA to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the
 request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by 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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- ♦ 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







GUNGHO

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Crossword

Futoshiki



1



3

1

5

5 1

4 2

4 5

2 < 3

1 2

3

2

3 < 4 5

4 1

Sudoku

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

SOLUTION: LACQUERED

Wordwheel

All words: Acre, arced, cadre, card, care, cared, cedar, cede, cereal, clad, clear, cleared, clue, clued, cradle, creed, creel, crude, cruel, cued, curd, curdle, cure, cured, curl, curled, dace, declare, deuce, educe, lace, laced, lacquer, lucre, race, raced, reduce, ulcer, LACQUERED.

Word targets: Excellent: 34, Good: 29, Target: 21, Kids: 16







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