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WHY BLACK CABS WILL NOT
PARTNER WITH UBER
MOHAMED ABDI MOHAMED Page 14

TAXI

12th December 2023 #555

TAXI ACCESS SPLITS THE CITY

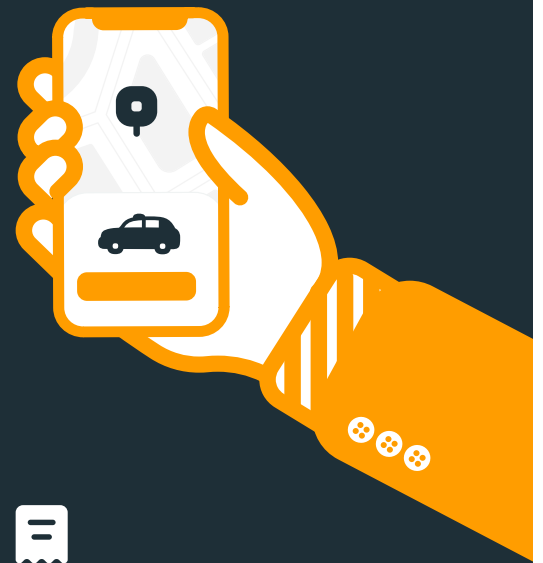
LTDA FIGHTS TO CONVINCE SPLIT CORPORATION MEMBERS AHEAD OF VOTE



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BATTLE FOR TAXI ACCESS TO BANK JUNCTION CONTINUES

Once again, last week, the City of London Corporation's Court of Common Council found itself debating the future of the traffic mix and timings restrictions at Bank Junction. This is the latest development in the fight for taxi access, which has been ongoing since restrictions were first introduced in 2017. There were supportive statements in favour of restoring taxi access made by Deputy James Thomson, Common Councilman for Walbrook Ward and architect of the *Cabs Across Bank* Campaign, and Alderman Timothy Hailes, both longstanding supporters of taxi access. As ever, a few members raised concerns but eventually the Council accepted the Corporation's Planning and Transportation Committee's recommendation, which now see transport and planning officers completing a review of the current restrictions and a traffic modelling exercise looking at the potential impact of reinstating access for taxis. This is all being done with a view to making a final recommendation and decision on the issue by June 2025. This is still a very long way off, but there is more support for taxi access than ever before from within the Council and growing evidence of the need for change. The LTDA worked closely with Deputy Thomson and Alderman Hailes in preparation for the meeting and LTDA reps were outside the meeting encouraging members to support taxi access.

ADDISON LEE ABANDONS PLAN FOR ALL-ELECTRIC FLEET

London's biggest minicab company has U-turned on plans for all its vehicles to be electric this year, blaming a lack of public charging points in the capital. In 2021, the company made a commitment that its fleet of 3,000 cars would "become fully electric by 2023" in an effort to reduce emissions and to help address the climate emergency. However, it has now said its fleet will only be "zero-emissions capable" by April 2024 comprised largely of hybrid vehicles. Liam Griffin, Addison Lee's Chief Executive, acknowledged that this was "disappointing", but explained that the transition to a zero-emission fleet had been harder than expected. He explained that the capital does not have the charging infrastructure needed to support drivers without private parking, who are unable to charge cheaply overnight. He also noted that more on-street rapid chargers were needed to allow drivers to top up during the day. Griffin said: "We were slightly oversold the dream, and it hasn't been the utopia we hoped for in terms of being able to charge. The electric solution is brilliant if you have got overnight charging. Most of our drivers do not."



ADDISON LEE



TfL CELEBRATES MILESTONE FOR TAXI TRADE

TfL has marked a major milestone for London's taxi trade highlighting the fact that over fifty per cent of London's black cabs are now zero emission capable (ZEC). The number of electric taxis in the capital

now totals more than 7,970. In a press release, TfL recognised how the capital's taxi drivers are playing "a significant part in cleaning up London's toxic air, with a ten percent growth in the new more environmentally friendly vehicles in the last six months." The majority of these taxis are LEVC's purpose built, range-extended TX electric taxis, built in Ansty, Coventry. Alex Nan, CEO of LEVC, said: "With more than half the black cabs on London's streets now zero emission capable thanks to the iconic TX, today represents another momentous milestone for LEVC. We would like to thank London's famous black cab drivers, who have been instrumental in this achievement." Helen Chapman, Director of Licensing and Regulation at TfL, said: "London's black taxis are recognised worldwide and we are proud to see that so many drivers are helping clean up our air and assist us in tackling the city's health emergency by driving zero emission capable (ZEC) vehicles." Oliver Lord, UK Head of Clean Cities Campaign, said: "We should be proud of London's cabbies for showing us that change can happen." He continued, "London's electric revolution is racing ahead with our cabbies at the helm."



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A Busy End to the Year

Rest assured in the run up to Christmas, the LTDA is fighting for you on all fronts. There are a lot of issues out of our control, but we are making progress, and we never give up!



Steve's comment

Things are normally starting to slow down in the run up to Christmas at Taxi House. Not this year! It's been a very busy start to December so far. We've seen it all, from Uber's announcement that they would be attempting to "partner" with black cabs, which I won't cover because others have later in this paper, other than to say I really don't know what they were thinking and who their PR team is, but it wasn't a particularly smooth or well-thought out move, and has gone down like a lead balloon to numerous meetings with TfL on everything from road access and Vision Zero to the damaging impact of the way the six points and you're out policy continues to be applied, with seemingly no room for discretion or common sense.

Road access

Firstly, I had a meeting with the TfL Network Management team, who are the people who despite all the other higher ups, who claim to have a say, are the ones who actually do the work and make the decisions on road access. These are the people who ultimately made the decision to keep us out of Bishopsgate. The TfL Commissioner suggested I met with the team to make sure they understand how our trade works and the access we need to do our jobs, so that this is factored in and at least some of the decisions they make hopefully reflect our interests. The thinking being perhaps decisions would then occasionally go our way. It seemed that they did recognise that things had perhaps gone too far, and they accepted that all the changes to the road network are causing us problems.

An early Christmas present

It was good timing for this meeting, as it came following a weekend, which saw record

levels of traffic in London and the capital basically grinding to a halt as many attested to on social media. Anyway, I did come away with some positive news. They have made the initial decision to allow us to use the Pentonville Road contraflow bus lane, which will save going around the Kings Cross one way system coming from the Angel, as well as Shorter Street at Tower Hill and the bus lanes in and around the O2. I have yet to get a date when these changes will be implemented. They need to do the traffic orders, re-phase traffic lights etc. but hopefully they should be up and running early in the New Year. I think telling me now was their idea of a sort of Christmas present to the trade, albeit one we cannot open till 2024. There is a lot more we need, but we will keep up the fight for more!

Senior reps meeting

We also had the quarterly senior trade reps meeting with the Deputy Mayor for Transport, Seb Dance, and the Transport Commissioner, Andy Lord. We talked about all the big issues you would expect. The positive thing coming out of that meeting was a commitment to look again at how the driver policy is being applied and the damage it is doing to so many of our members, as well as looking at the changes to the way reconsideration hearings work, which have made it that much harder for us to successfully challenge licensing decisions and protect members' licences.



I also asked for their help in lobbying the government to fund the Plug-In Taxi Grant (PiTG) beyond the end of the financial year, from April 2024. This is something we have been banging on about to anyone who will listen for months. The

PiTG has been instrumental in helping cabbies buy new zero emission cabs, which as we all know are not cheap.

The grant doesn't go to cabbies, but it is taken off the price of the cab meaning that without it, cabbies would have to part with more of their hard-earned cash and the TX would become more expensive to purchase. This wouldn't be good for anyone. We've been calling on the Treasury to maintain the grant at the current level and to also look at the VAT treatment of wheelchair accessible taxis. We've also been providing evidence to the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles to try to demonstrate how important the grant has been in helping us reach the significant milestone of over 50 per cent of the London taxi fleet now being made up of zero emission capable vehicles. Let's hope someone's listening.

Mutual appreciation society

Finally, I also went to a Vision Zero Reference Group meeting, where as usual, they talked about what wonderful work they are doing and patted themselves on the back. It's the ultimate mutual appreciation society and I am generally a lone voice pointing out, what I see as the obvious issues with the work being done, but I am sure the rest just see it as me causing trouble.

This time they were getting excited about safety commitments from the app food delivery companies. As far as I am concerned until we acknowledge the business models of the food delivery companies that actually incentivise lowly paid riders to use illegal high powered electric bikes, jump traffic lights and ride like lunatics as they try to complete as many trips as possible, no amount of on paper commitments to safety will make London's roads any safer.

Rest assured in the run up to Christmas, the LTDA is fighting for you on all fronts. There are a lot of issues out of our control, but we are making progress in many areas and we never give up.

I want to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a successful and prosperous New Year! **LTDA**



Looking Back at 2023

A busy year for the trade with more tourists and people coming back to London, some big battles with TfL and more devastation wrecked on our road network...

Top rank

As is my wont at this time of year, and with this being the last edition of *TAXI* for 2023, I thought I'd do my usual look back over the past year and how it has treated our trade.

Looking back

Last year, when I wrote this piece, some of the hot topics of 2022 were as follows:

- Euro 5 to 6 conversions.
- The trend for working from home (WFH).
- Increased work levels.
- Tourist levels.
- Euston Road cycle lanes.
- The so-called 'Uber Files' vindicating all that the trade had said around the corruption of the Tory government under dodgy Dave, which is suddenly feeling topical again following the outrageous appointment of Lord David Cameron as foreign secretary.
- The threat of an upcoming deep recession.
- TfL's 6 points and you're out policy.

So, what actually happened?

Well, as this year draws to a close, the conversions have still yet to take place, with both the TX4 and the Vito undergoing further testing before any TfL approval takes place. Unfortunately for too many drivers, this delay has meant some perfectly good cabs have now been taken off the road



and all too often, its driver has left the trade feeling they had no other option available to them.

The WFH bubble has well and truly burst for many people, and we can see workers returning in their droves. At the start of the year, it was mainly Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday people worked. However, as the year ends, we can all see Monday and Friday have both seen a massive increase in office workers coming into London. Along with them, our work levels are back to where they were throughout many parts of the day. Only the night sector is still lacking a good recovery. If only we had a night-time 'czar' to assist with that. Oh wait, apparently, we do!

Tourist levels this year have seen a very good recovery, with over two million additional tourists coming to the capital. The 'experts' had predicted a slump due to a deep recession, which luckily proved to once again be wrong. If you ask me it just shows us that the only constant from so-called experts, is that they consistently get things wrong.

If there is one thing that has not changed, I would say it is the very questionable use of data and statistics that Mayor Khan's cycling commissioner, wee Willy has been producing throughout 2023. With the removal of the Euston Road cycle lane and the easing of congestion it brought about, it was hoped we would see some common sense prevail and

that other nonsensical cycle lanes and the more problematic LTNs, would follow in its path and be removed or rethought.

Unfortunately, as we all know, the thing about common sense is, it's not very common.

There is now a very clear and vocal movement for the removal of LTNs, but those who are introducing them press ahead regardless. It seems they have mostly now abandoned the facade of claiming it's all about clean air but continue to use the biased or carefully selected data to hold onto or force new schemes and their ideology upon us.

Two big issues

No question about it, the two biggest issues facing us this year have been the devastation wrecked on the road network and TfL's updated driver policy, which appears to be being used with absolutely no discretion. No one is taking the time to look at the individual circumstances and cases, let alone a driver's history or what the courts say on the matter.

The irrational implementation of TfL's updated driver policy has seen drivers with years, if not decades, of exemplary driving and a spotless record, facing a four to 12 week forced holiday, with no ability to earn, for what are just minor errors. This is made even worse by the

ridiculous lowering of speeds to 20mph on major roads that are being enforced at 23mph.

The changes in road layouts have led to absolute chaos. As a result, what would have previously been insignificant changes, such as minor roadworks, which would have barely been noticed, now lead to the disgraceful scenes, we see regularly across London. In the last few months and particularly weeks, this has been particularly bad in the areas around and between Knightsbridge, Hyde Park Corner and Victoria, for example.

Still time to support C.A.B

As I said earlier, there are people fighting back against all the above and a good case in point is the 'Cabs Across Bank' campaign being led by James Thomson, Deputy Common Councilman for the Ward of Walbrook and Chair of the City of London Police Authority Board. He needs our help and support to gather the data we all know is there, to fight those who would happily see us permanently excluded from the City, with everyone walking, cycling and wheeling, no doubt whilst blowing bubbles and sprinkling fairy dust. If you haven't already, visit cabsacrossbank.london to see how you can help and send in your stories! A win at Bank would be an important one and its down to us all to try to get this over the line.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you all a safe, joyous, and prosperous festive season and New Year.

LTDA



Celebrating 2023 With Our Drivers

£1,000 cash giveaways & more!



FREENOW

£1000 cash giveaway & gifts!

Reflecting on the past year, we begin by acknowledging our drivers and rewarding their outstanding service this year. So until 24th December, we're running a weekly draw to give Black Cab drivers in London the opportunity to earn an extra £1,000. There's also a gift box for FREENOW drivers at their local driver centre.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

200th Black Cab anniversary: 2023 marked 200 years since the first licensed Hackney Carriage came to London. To celebrate, we matched every tip Black Cab drivers received during the anniversary weekend. We also launched our £4,000 electric vehicle

subsidy. Aimed at new Black Cab drivers, the subsidy helps them make the switch to an electric cab.

Parliamentary Taxi & Private Hire Awards:

We were proud sponsors of the Annual Parliamentary Taxi & Private Hire Awards. This important event brings the industry together to celebrate drivers and inspire passengers. The winners included taxi drivers who stood out in praiseworthy categories such as Charity Work, Community Support or Climate & Sustainability. Congratulations again to all 2023 winners.

Accident and sickness insurance and other benefits:

A partnership with Onsi was launched to support our 10,000+ Black Cab drivers and their families. Onsi is a leading workplace rewards program providing drivers with access to benefits such as accident and

insurance coverage, parental leave as well as food and fuel discounts.

Remembrance Day Charity initiative:

Our ongoing support for Remembrance Day continued this year. We matched 100% of all tips on Remembrance Sunday and donated this to the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans. This year we also partnered with Poppy Cabs to help find taxi driver volunteers for Remembrance Sunday's free taxi service. For every FREENOW driver who volunteered, we donated £5 to Poppy Cabs on their behalf. All proceeds to Poppy Cabs were split between two charities: the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans and the Royal British Legion.

Knowledge subsidy launch:

In November, our Knowledge subsidy was launched, receiving 500+ applications within a day. With the number of drivers entering the Black Cab trade in

decline, FREENOW wanted to support the trade and protect the longevity of the industry. The subsidy covers the full costs of the Knowledge, including application, tuition, exam and licensing fees. Helping to break down barriers to entry. The subsidy is open to all eligible FREENOW PHV drivers.

November:

That's not all, this year, FREENOW partnered with Movember to help raise awareness of men's physical and mental health. As a part of this partnership, we also helped raise funds for Movember through our Round Up & Donate initiative. Together with Movember we'll be hosting virtual and in-person talks for our drivers where we'll talk about mental health, relationships and self care.

We're proud of what we achieved alongside our drivers this year and can't wait to see what 2024 brings.



A Partnership We Don't Want or Need



I must mention the lady cabbie who said other cabbies signing up to work on Uber would be like turkeys voting for Christmas.

On Point

I did have a good laugh last week, when I watched the news and saw an Uber representative pleading for black cab drivers to sign up to their awful organisation. All whilst trying to claim they were launching a mutually beneficial 'partnership'.

Laughable

I watched as our General Secretary and other cabbies basically laughed at the suggestion that the most historic and universally accepted 'best cabs in the world' would want to be

associated with them. I must also mention the lady cabbie who aligned it to turkeys voting for Christmas - very good. I also enjoyed BBC London's Transport Correspondent, Tom Edwards, remark that Uber's proposed 'partnership' with the cab trade had gone down *"like a cup of cold sick."*

Black Taxis & The American Mini Cab Company

I agree with the prediction that no more than ten or so drivers would likely join up. The thing is, we must be prepared for the ten who might. I remember doing a weeklong demo outside a bent hotel

"The promises of hefty rewards and loads of work will come in Kipper season and maybe they are hoping we join as we are worried about making our targets."

encouraging cabbies to not service the rank for that week, in protest of their doorman putting work in mini cabs. It went very well, apart from two cabbies, who announced that they were not interested in the trade's efforts and spent the whole week working the rank knowing they wouldn't wait too long for a job. My opinion is that the

general public.

As we all know, Uber's way of working is to throw loads of their investors' money at problems. That money will now be offered to cabbies by way of incentives and 0% commission. The promises of hefty rewards and loads of work will come in Kipper season and maybe they are hoping that we join as we are worried about making our targets during the kipper period.

Don't forget

As I have said many times in my articles, I am not one of those trade reps, who is arrogant enough to believe everybody must do and think as I do (if I wanted to do that I would join the Twatter Mob) but come on boys and girls, if you are even entertaining the thought, please think back a few years to when this lot bowled into London, with one main objective. That objective was to run you, me and every other cab driver out of London. History will tell that they failed, but I have forgotten how many calls I took from members, who were on their knees with worry at the time, and I know that they were the reason some left our trade.

I believe their objective is now to get us on board and a few years down the line then maybe lobby for the removal of all ranks and our ability to ply for hire claiming they are no longer needed.

History repeating

There is of course a bit of history here. It's not the first time they have tried this. About six or seven years ago, they invited cabbies to join up, but unfortunately the cabbies who did sign up for one reason or another were unable to complete the accepted rides and their customers were left without a cab. A few months later they abandoned the whole thing. Funny thing is that at the time I received no calls from cabbies complaining about that. As I say, be prepared for all the offers coming in January and please see them for what they are and don't be fooled.

As this will be my last article before Christmas, can I wish all cabbies and your families Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

LTDA

American Mini Cab app is running scared of *FREENOW* and *Gett*, who are taking away their market share. They see that they have black cabs on their apps, and this is what they want in an effort to make them look more respectable to the



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Trains, Rides, Eats... Cabs?



The absolute desperation of this company to sell anything to anyone is really something to behold. I suppose it's recognition that their original business model...was somewhat flawed.



M4 musings

10

I arrived at the train station the other day to be confronted by an enormous bit of signage that proclaimed Uber now on trains! Earlier, I'd also been mildly amused by various bits of TV advertising for the same private hire firm, one of which included everyone's favourite pretend gangster, Robert De Niro.

SADvertising

How much have they had to spend on all this pumping? The mind boggles. And then we have

the news like a 'Bolt' (see what I did there) from the blue that Uber will have another go at recruiting Taxi drivers onto their app, because of course that went so well last time...

The absolute desperation of this company to sell anything to anyone is really something to behold. I suppose it's recognition that their original business model to become the world's biggest company just by replacing Addison Lee was somewhat flawed.

Will they have any success getting Taxi drivers on their app? I strongly doubt it and I really struggle to see what they're trying to achieve, other than trolling over-active Taxi Twitter accounts. Strange times indeed.

Your black cabs. Your say.

So endeth this year's Taxi Fares consultation. There was a time when these things were not quite annual, as tariff adjustments drifted apart like the continents, so the 2018 adjustment ended up happening in 2020 and having to be merged with 2019, or something, and some people thought this might be because TfL wanted to stop taxi fares from increasing.

At the time they said they were not actually obligated to revise fares annually, but we seem to have come out of that phase now. At the moment, TfL appear keen to stick to a yearly adjustment.

The thing I hear most often from drivers regarding this, is why do our fares have to be subject to public consultation, and this is an understandable question. If I was being cynical, I might agree with most cabbies that our prices should be for us to set and none of anybody's business. But the truth is we are still public transport, whether authorities want to treat us that way or not, and this is a status we should embrace.

So yes, it seems perverse that you would ask a customer whether they want cab fares to increase, but the fact that we have to means that we still hold a special position in London's Transport network.

The task is to maximise the advantages we have to the benefit of our business and by extension the benefit of those very customers TfL so assiduously consult every year.

In a competitive city like London, with all its conflicting interests and ideologies any business has to have sharp elbows just to keep a seat at the table.

Taxi drivers have managed it for a lot longer than most, and I'm betting we'll stay part of public transport for a good while yet!

Happy Christmas and good luck out there! **LTDA**



Perverse incentives

Well this is another story about a job gone wrong but bear with me, there is a point.

I picked a bloke up on Cromwell Road by the Vanderbilt; he asked for a restaurant at the bottom of Seymour Place, a Basque place that looked very nice when we eventually got there...Anyway, the obvious thing is either Hyde Park or Park Lane, but as we all know, since Winter Wonderland came in, Hyde Park Corner has been even more congested than usual.

West Carriage Drive was a complete no-no, I very rarely use that Northbound now. I'm surprised Cycling Mikey hasn't had someone prosecuted for dying of old age waiting in that queue.

I had a look at the traffic, and it actually seemed like the quickest way would be Kensington High Street, Kensington Church Street and then back Eastbound along Bayswater Road. Completely the wrong way and a longer distance.

I'd been through HPC several times earlier in the week, and it was bad but doable, so I went that way. Big mistake. I'll draw a veil over the rest, but the journey took a LONG time and the guy received two angry phone calls from his wife. He was very good about it, and I took a bit of money off at the end but it made me think for the hundredth time about the perverse incentives on our road network that act to discourage people from driving.

You will hear TfL, councillors and occasionally national government say that they are trying to encourage walking and cycling – fair enough. But what they rarely admit is that mostly they do this by discouraging driving, i.e. making it more difficult and less convenient.

I've always thought this is crap economics – it's a built-in admission of defeat, if you can only encourage one mode of transport by restraining another; If walking and cycling were actually better than driving, everyone would be doing it anyway. Driving is great, because you can go for miles and don't have to pedal...

Anyway of course the traffic wasn't really caused by bad policy, but it was made worse, and surely this is the opposite of what authorities should be doing? I don't know, people call me naïve.

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Britain's First Identikit Used To Solve A Murder

The story of a desperate man who turned to bloody violence, supposedly in the name of love.

Rob's history tips

Born in 1940s London, at the height of the Blitz, Edwin Albert Bush – 'Eddie' to his friends – was troubled from an early age.

He was taken into care at 12, when concerned social workers discovered the family were living in squalor. Before long, Bush had become a prolific burglar, landing him several spells in Borstal Prison.

Cecil Court

By the time he was 20, however, life should've been looking up for him. Now living on Ewart Road, Honor Oak, he'd secured work as a labourer and was also engaged to 17 year-old Janet Wheeler.

This caused problems for Bush though. Being short of money, he couldn't afford an engagement ring, so decided to resort back to his criminal ways in order to make some quick cash.

On 3rd March 1961, he made his way to a curiosity shop which, located at 23-25 Cecil Court, was stocked with everything from fancy antiques to shrunken heads.

This wasn't the first time Bush had visited the emporium, he'd popped in the day before and spoken to the shop's owner, Louis Meier, about a ceremonial Indian sword which, priced at £15 (roughly £278 in today's money), he had no way of affording.

A brutal murder

When Bush returned the following morning, Louis was out attending auctions, leaving his business in the capable hands of 59 year-old Elsie Batten.

According to Bush, he asked to view the sword again and, when he attempted to haggle the price, he claimed Elsie took offence and insulted him with a racial slur. (Bush had Pakistani heritage on his father's side.)

Enraged, Bush grabbed a stone vase which he smashed over Elsie's head, then snatched an antique knife which he plunged into his victim four times. So violent were the injuries, any single one of them would've



been enough to cause death. He then made off with the sword.

Shortly after, at 11.15am, a 15 year-old apprentice sign writer named Peter King entered the shop with a view to buy a billiard cue. Being of a nervous disposition he quickly backed out when he saw Elsie lying in darkness towards the back of the shop, assuming she'd fainted.

It wasn't until over an hour later, when Meier returned, that the true horror of the scene revealed itself.

The first identikit

Detective Frank Pollard was put in charge of the case and, with the ceremonial sword missing, heavy suspicion fell on the young man who'd viewed it the day before.

Consequently, Louis gave a detailed description of the man and, in what was a first for British police, Pollard opted to use a new tool which had recently been developed in Los Angeles: the identikit.

Using this, an extremely good

likeness of Bush was created, with a similar image put together by another shopkeeper who, based on nearby St Martin's Lane, said the suspect had attempted to sell the stolen sword to him.

In this sighting, Janet Wheeler had also been present, and so a likeness of her was created too.

When the identikit images were published in the newspaper, Janet saw them and, having no idea what dreadful deed her boyfriend had committed, joked how odd it was that they matched the pictures.

Bush eventually sold the sword for £15. So, on 16th March, he and Janet headed out to find a ring.

Rather brazenly, Bush led his fiancée up Charing Cross Road and past the scene of his horrific crime, before turning onto Old Compton Street. It was here that a patrolling copper named Arthur Cole spotted the pair; their appearance bearing an uncanny resemblance to the identikits.

Sentenced to death

Once arrested, fingerprints and bloodstains on his shoes linked Bush to the murder, and after insisting Janet was completely innocent, he confessed, stating: *"Speaking personally, the world is better off without me."*

Bush's trial took place at the Old Bailey over just two days in May of 1961, at the end of which he was found guilty and sentenced to death.

The reason for this was that he'd been charged with *"murder in the course or furtherance of theft"*; a clause that had been introduced in 1957. This meant that if he hadn't taken the £15 sword he would have been spared the noose and handed a life term instead.

Edwin Bush was hung at Pentonville by Harry Allen, on 6th July 1961, four years before Britain suspended the death penalty.

If you wish to learn more, you can visit my YouTube channel, [robslondon](#). ■ TAXI

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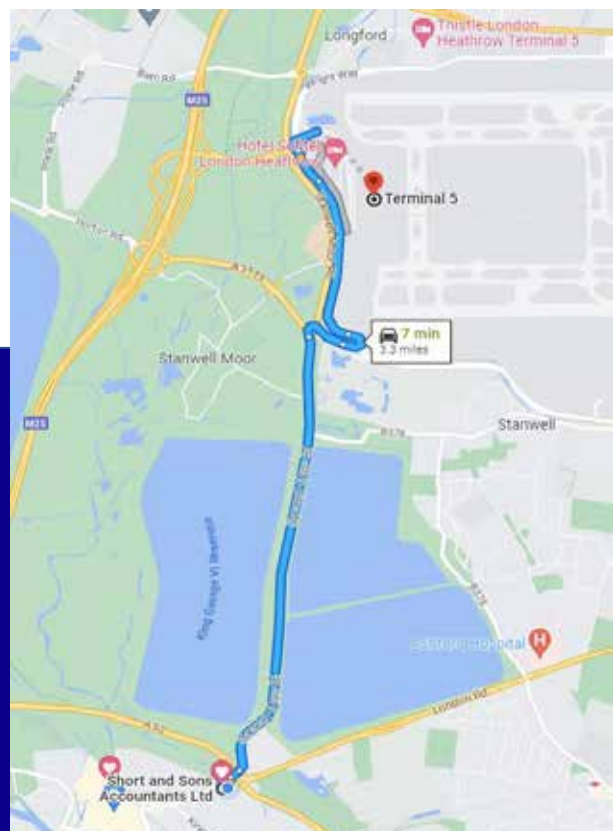
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Why Black Cabs Will Not Partner With Uber

Why would any cabbie want to sign up to work for a company that has shown itself to have no regard for passenger or driver safety and which does not pay their share of taxes in this country?

Views on the news

Two weeks ago, Uber announced a proposed 'partnership' with the black taxi trade. This isn't new, they have tried it in the past, it didn't work then, and I don't believe it will work this time either.

To me, this is a desperate move from Uber and a last ditched effort to get black cabs onto their platform. It is clear that Uber failed to win the London Streets away from the black cabs, hence forcing them into trains, buses, boats and I seem to recall at one point, even the dry-cleaning game.

Every trick

They will employ every trick in their arsenal to associate their business with the world renowned and respected black cab trade, in an effort to improve their own very poor reputation, including offering financial incentives to persuade cabbies onto their platform. In my opinion, any cab driver who does join, should hand back their badge and drive for them as a private hire driver. We earned our gold standard status and beyond reproach reputation with decades, well centuries actually, of constant high levels of service and customer care. It was not bought or obtained with subsidised travel, law breaking, or the myriad of other tactics employed by them in the past. Any cabbie who signs up to Uber is sullyng our trade and they are not in my opinion, worthy of wearing the badge.

I have the impression that Uber's next objective would involve providing advertising services to garages that rent out taxis, if they can find any willing to do so. In my opinion, cab drivers should avoid hiring cabs from any garage that promotes or helps to promote Uber's business.

Orgs against

I would hope that all Orgs notify their members not to sign up and work on their platform, for all the reasons I have outlined above. If you ask me, any members who should (if permitted within



an Org's rules) have their membership cancelled. For the sake of argument, how could any Org justify offering legal assistance to a member, who had issues with their licence, whilst working on Uber's platform? I certainly wouldn't want my subs contributions used in such a manner, and I doubt the majority of other members would either.

Uber's poor record

I remember it very well when Uber came to London back in 2012. It was clear their ultimate aim was to exist for over 350 years. Instead, by the end of 2019, TfL had stripped Uber's licence following patterns of failures by the company, which included several breaches that placed passengers and their safety at risk. More than 14,000 trips were taken by drivers who had faked



their identity on the app. Why would any cabbie want to sign up to work for a company that has previously shown itself to have no regard for passenger or driver safety, and does not pay for their share of taxes in this country?

Not worth it

The only way Uber can make this work is if cabbies like you sign up. No matter what they might offer to entice you, whether its

zero commission or big joining bonuses, the damage it could do to our trade and ultimately in the long run to your livelihood, is not worth the risk. You can't put a price on the taxi trade's history, knowledge and sterling reputation, and if you could, it would be far more than a few months cut price commission or a bonus. Don't let Uber buy their way in to our business and ruin our legacy. **TAXI**

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What's on? West End

Charlotte takes a look at December's top London shows to recommend to your passengers.

Under the spotlight



The Nutcracker, Tuff Nutt Club – Southbank Centre

The Nutcracker meets jazz may not appeal to everyone, at least from that initial description. *The Nutcracker* is viewed as one of the seminal seasonal classics that boasts almost universal appeal, with *The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* being one of the most recognisable melodies in classical music. Where's the need to jazz it up?

Well, the offering here is a radical reinvention that is something truly delightful and a pleasure to behold. Our main protagonist, Clara (who is usually depicted as upper class), is now Clive. He's growing up in a single father household that are barely getting by. Working all hours, his dad is able to offer him very little attention – beyond berating him for favoring a ballerina over Action Man (the modern replacement for the nutcracker itself). Both toys come to life and end up taking Clive on an unexpected adventure like no other.

Drew McOnie's choreography is a gorgeous mix of ballet and cabaret, performed by six extraordinary dancers in a stage half the size of a tennis court, accompanied by the four-piece jazz band who are sublime. The audience sit around the stage and, for the 60 minutes of the show's runtime, are enraptured by this wonderful exploration of masculinity and finding one's joy in the world that often seems determined to crush it. (Suitable for ages 6 and above.)



The Nutcracker, Tuff Nutt Club runs until 6th January, 2024.

The Time Traveller's Wife – Apollo Theatre

A book, by Audrey Niffenegger, in 2003. A film, starring Eric Bana and Rachel McAdams, in 2009. A TV series, starring Rose Leslie and Theo James, in 2022 (which was cancelled after one season). So, of course, it's time for a musical, with original songs by Joss Stone and Eurythmics' Dave Stewart.

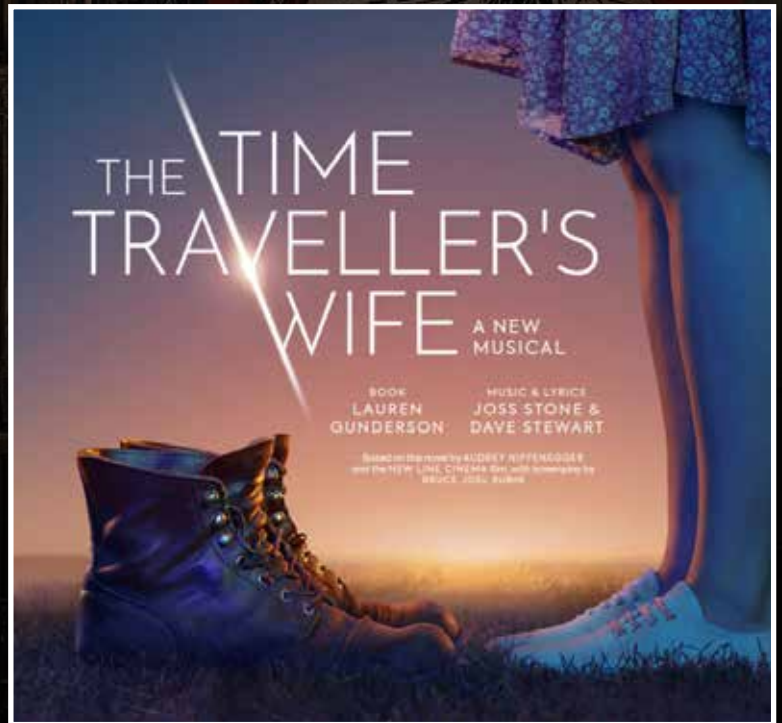
It's a shame then that it's the songs that are perhaps the weakest part. Unmemorable in terms of both lyrics and tune, they serve as a distraction from the action – a hindrance rather than enhancement. Although performed well by the cast, the show is at its most compelling when it's spoken and not sung. The wibbly wobbly timey wimey stuff is easy enough to follow, with the past and present intriguingly blended.

The staging is deceptively beautiful, its details and role growing in both size and scale throughout the show, with an opening number of Act Two that is breathtaking in its portrayal of loss & uncertainty.

Despite its flaws, it has its strengths too, but this really feels like one for the fans.



The Time Traveller's Wife runs until 28th March, 2024.



What else is on?

■ **Wishmas: A Fantastical Christmas Adventure – The Old Bauble Factory (until 7th January, 2024)**

"Welcome to the world of Wishma, where all your Christmas wishes come true!" An immersive holiday theatrical experience for all the family.

■ **A Christmas Carol – Old Vic (until 6th January, 2024)**

Jack Thorne's wonderful adaptation of Charles Dickens' festive staple is back for another year, this time Christopher Eccleston as the curmudgeonly Scrooge.

■ **Peter Pan – London Palladium (until 14th January, 2024)**

The Palladium's pantos have become a West End seasonal highlight, marking its 8th season with JM Barrie's classic tale. Starring Jennifer Saunders, Julian Clary & Rob Madge to name but a few.

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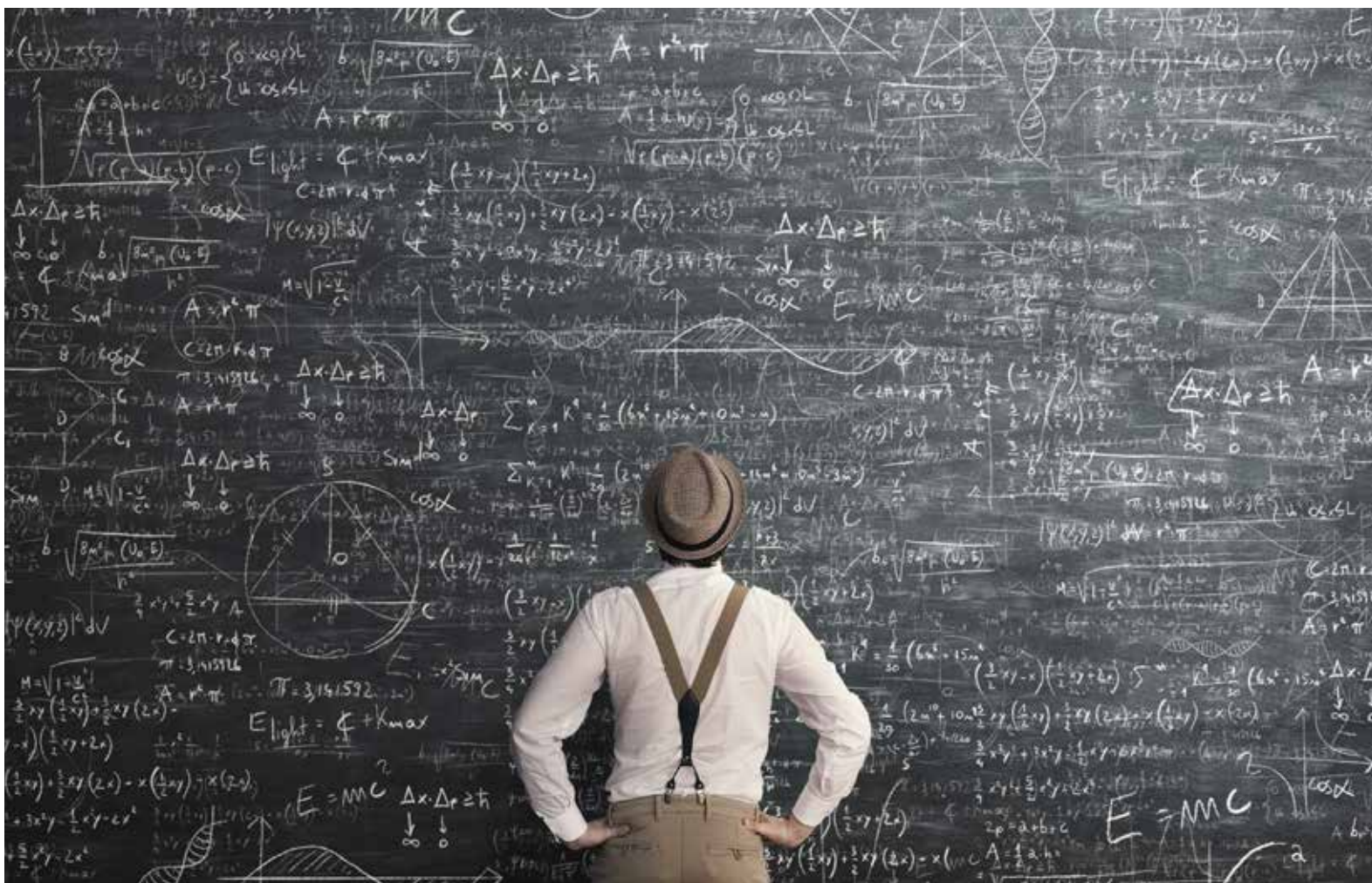
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Land of Confusion: The Taxi and PH Policy Document

"If your hobby is mugging old ladies, or driving a vehicle with a gallon of martinis inside you and a cherry on your head, go into politics, not cab driving. Because one conviction EVER, and you're back in the bus queue."



18

Man in black

It is probably fair to say that sometimes art can imitate life in the most comprehensive of ways. Mr Burgess, aka Nigel Hawthorn's acerbic monologue from the TV drama *The Knowledge*, is a fine case in point. There is a rather uncomfortable truth to every word uttered within his diatribe to a room full of petrified Knowledge candidates.

But this is no fictional drama, this is real life, with taxi drivers' careers hanging by a thread in so many instances.

Confused dot com

With the Institute of Licencing (IoL) recommendations regarding the taxi and private hire industry being ratified by

the Department for Transport (TfL), regulators across the UK have been implementing their interpretation of the policy, much to the chagrin of the taxi and PH industry UK-wide. It's become a "hot mess", as the Genesis classic *Land of Confusion* springs to mind.

In London, the level of confusion is so acute it's almost tangible. Mixed messaging has become a major cause for concern within the industry since the policy's implementation in December 2021. The briefest of research has identified that many taxi drivers aren't even aware that there is a Transport for London (TfL) policy document, nor that there are certain responsibilities which drivers need to observe and adhere to. One example of this lack of awareness is the fact that drivers are required to inform TfL of any points that have been incurred on their DVLA

licence, within 21 days of the application of said points.

Confusion has also been created over this very issue, because TfL has been requesting drivers give an account of themselves if they exceed the 21-day requirement. However, the 21-day limit cannot be adhered to if the driver who has committed an offence and acquiring points, rents their taxi. This is due to the fleet owner initially receiving the Notice of Intended Prosecution (NIP) requiring them to identify the driver. They have 28 days to do this. The Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is then sent to the driver, which can take another four weeks. Once the FPN has been received, you then have another 28 days to pay the FPN. Points are then backdated to the time of the original offence and added to the DVLA licence. Informing TfL should be fairly straightforward. Once the fine is paid, you simply tell TfL by email or

post. However, it appears that some staff at TfL have been applying the 21-day rule from the date of the offence itself. This, of course, brings the whole rule into disrepute as it is physically impossible to comply with the directive, as it could take months for the points to be applied.

48 hours

This situation could become significantly more problematic as TfL looks to prescribe an amendment which will require all taxi drivers to inform them of any arrest and release, charge or conviction (including motoring ones) within 48 hours. This condition will apply to all licenced cab drivers from 1st July 2024.

The directive may be impossible to comply with, given the nature of how points are applied to one's DVLA licence. Therefore, it is imperative that both driver and TfL staff are absolutely clear as

Appendix 1 – Consultation outcomes
Where the new requirements for taxi and PHV drivers are different, this is a result of the differences in taxi and PHV legislation.
Licensee self-reporting (DfT 1)
We have made a slight modification to the consultation proposal for taxi and PHV drivers to explicitly re-state that cautions are included (as per the current requirement).
Taxi Drivers
We have amended the London Cab Order 1934 to include a prescribed condition that taxi drivers inform us of any arrest and release, charge, caution and conviction within 48 hours. The condition will apply to all licensed taxi drivers with immediate effect from 1 July 2024 .
PHV drivers
From 1 July 2024 all new and renewed PHV driver licences will be issued with a condition that the driver informs us of any arrest and release, charge, caution and conviction within 48 hours.
PHV operators
We have amended Regulation 9(4) of the Private Hire Vehicles (London) (Operators) Regulations 2000 to require all PHV operators to inform us of any arrest and release, charge, caution and conviction within 48 hours.
Regulation 2 has also been amended to clarify and expand which individuals associated with an operator's licence will be meet this condition, and to be consistent with the requirement for operators to provide DBS checks (see DfT 7).
The revised condition will apply to all licensed PHV operators from 1 July 2024 .
Displaying complaints signage (DfT 2)
Taxis and PHVs
All taxis and PHVs will be required to display prescribed information.
The new signage will include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about how to make a complaint to TfL No-smoking sign Cycle safety sign Card payment information (taxis only) Information for wheelchair users (taxis only) Pre-booked only sign (PHVs only) Seatbelt sign Message advising passengers that abuse of drivers is unacceptable
From 1 July 2024 , we will affix the signage in taxis and PHVs at the next annual vehicle licensing inspections.
Taxi drivers
We have amended the London Cab Order 1934 to include a prescribed condition of a driver's licence that the taxi they are driving is displaying the prescribed signage.
The condition will apply to all licensed taxi drivers with from 1 July 2025 .
PHV drivers
From 1 July 2025 , all new and renewed PHV driver licences will be issued with a condition that the PHV they are driving is displaying the prescribed signage.
Overseas criminal records checks (DfT 3)
We have amended our consultation proposal, after considering feedback from the consultation, and reduced the period for which Certificates of Good Conduct must be produced from the whole period since the applicant was 18, to the last 10 years since the applicant was 18.
Periods of extended holiday will no longer be excluded from the requirement.
Taxi and PHV drivers
From 1 July 2024 , all new and renewing applicants for taxi and PHV driver licences, who have lived in a country other than the UK for one or more continuous periods of three months or more in the last 10 years will be required to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct for any such period.
PHV operators
From 1 July 2024 , all new and renewing applicants for PHV operator licences, who have lived in a country other than the UK for one or more continuous periods of three months or more in the last 10 years will be required to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct for any such period.

to what constitutes the date of conviction where fixed penalty notices are concerned.

According to many within the industry, including various org and union representatives, as well as TfL staff themselves, it was generally understood there was a tacit agreement that TfL wouldn't be particularly concerned if you received a single SP30 and didn't inform them. This was because the speeding conviction would be revealed at a licence holder's renewal stage, and considered

a minor offence. This was never confirmed in writing, and since December 2021's policy change the directive to inform TfL is now being enforced. Interestingly, this 21-day rule for informing TfL has always been in place and is not a new policy. Although there seems to be no sign of the directive in TfL's taxi and private hire policy document prior to December '21, letters generally accompanied renewed licences, stating a driver is responsible for informing TfL of any offence within 21 days.

Driver DBS checks (DfT 4)
From 26 February 2024 , all applicants for a taxi or PHV driver's licence, both new and renewal, will be required to provide evidence of registration with the DBS Update service.
Taxi drivers
We have amended the London Cab Order 1934 to include a prescribed condition that any taxi driver whose licence commences on or after 26 February 2024 maintains continuous registration with the DBS Update service.
PHV drivers
From 26 February 2024 , all new and renewed PHV driver licences will be issued with a condition that the driver maintains continuous registration with the DBS Update service.
On 26 August 2024 , we will commence undertaking six-monthly status checks with the DBS on all taxi drivers who have subscribed to the Update Service.
Safeguarding training and English language skills (DfT 5)
PHV drivers
No change to current requirement.
Taxi drivers
We have amended the London Cab Order 1934 to create a requirement that all new and renewing taxi drivers must take and pass an assessment of their safety, equality and regulatory understanding (SERU assessment).
From 1 October 2025 , no new driver may be licensed or renewing driver re-licensed without having passed a SERU assessment.
We will continue to monitor taxi drivers' English language proficiency during the Knowledge of London examination process. If there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the Knowledge of London does not sufficiently demonstrate taxi drivers' English speaking and listening skills, we will reconsider the need to introduce a separate speaking and listening test similar to that undertaken by applicants for PHV driver licences.
Vehicle owner DBS checks (DfT 6)
We will maintain the position set out in the consultation and not introduce any additional requirements for either taxi or PHV owners.
PHV operator DBS checks (DfT 7)
From 1 July 2024 , all new applicants and renewing operators will be required to provide a basic DBS check with their application.

"With the potential for driver suspensions reaching new levels, a deep chasm is starting to form between driver and regulator, one which has arguably not been seen in the industry before."

All stick, no carrot

With the potential for driver suspensions reaching new levels, a deep chasm is starting to form between driver and regulator, one which has arguably not been seen in the industry before. It is rapidly emerging that the interpretation of what qualifies as fit and proper could be seriously flawed. This has the potential to do serious damage to a taxi driver's income, family life and mental health (something which is now being reported on in increasing numbers). The old adage that we are all three pay slips away from financial collapse may be coming to fruition with alarming regularity, especially if the current interpretation of TfL's policy continues.

Another worrying development

emanating from TfL's offices is drivers receiving retrospective punishment over a year AFTER TfL have been informed of an offence. Obviously each case has to be looked at on its own merits, notably with retrospective action (when an offence predates the new policy) which seems highly irregular.

So, how do you protect yourself in relation to the current policy?

- Always inform TfL immediately of any conviction - including motoring ones. Where possible do it by email so that there is a paper trail. Despite widespread reports of problems regarding contacting TfL by email (especially during lockdown), it is still the best way to inform them over licensing issues as there is then an electronic footprint.
- If you feel email is not for you (even though it's the safest way), the traditional postal service will suffice. Where possible, send any information by Recorded Delivery and always KEEP THE RECEIPT.

- Ultimately, silence is not golden. Burying your head in the sand won't make the situation go away. It is generally agreed that some aspects of the new policy are sensible, but there are also some which feel draconian, punitive and unnecessarily harsh. But they are enforced right here, right now and we, as an industry, have to live with it. **TAXI**



Is a New Cab About to Get More Expensive?

If you're ordering a new cab, thinking about it, or pondering what to do next year, it may be wise to bring your planned purchase forward...

Cab you drive

I am surprised that so little publicity has been given to the fact that the Plug in Taxi Grant (PiTG) is only guaranteed until 2023/24, meaning it could stop at the end of March 2024.

If this government grant, administered by the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), which is taken off the price of the cab at the point of sale, came to end, it would effectively push up the price of a new cab by a pretty hefty £7500.

The LTDA tell me that it's yet to be confirmed whether the grant will continue and that they

are lobbying for its retention, but with a government that's publicly committed to 'levelling up' and pushing money away from London, it may be a hard sell. The PiTG has been and still probably is almost exclusively used by London cabbies. More cities are gearing up to go green with clean air zones and new licensing requirements, so this could be about the change, as taxi drivers elsewhere find themselves in need of a zero emission capable vehicle, but not in the short-term.

I am only speculating here, but personally I think that with the way the government has U-turned on its quest to net zero and delayed the ban on the sale of petrol and diesel cars, it's extremely unlikely they keep

this specialised grant in place beyond March 2024.

If you are ordering a new cab, thinking about it, or possibly just pondering what to do next year, (even very late next year), it might be wise to bring the purchase of your new cab forward, and potentially save yourself £7500!

I am telling all the fleets the same thing. So be you a musher or someone with five, ten or more cabs, think seriously about how much it could cost you if you hesitate or delay past March.

Whether LEVC can supply enough cabs to beat the deadline is unclear, along with how an exceptionally high new sales month will impact on second-hand sales, but as always planning is key.

If you order a new cab ASAP, get

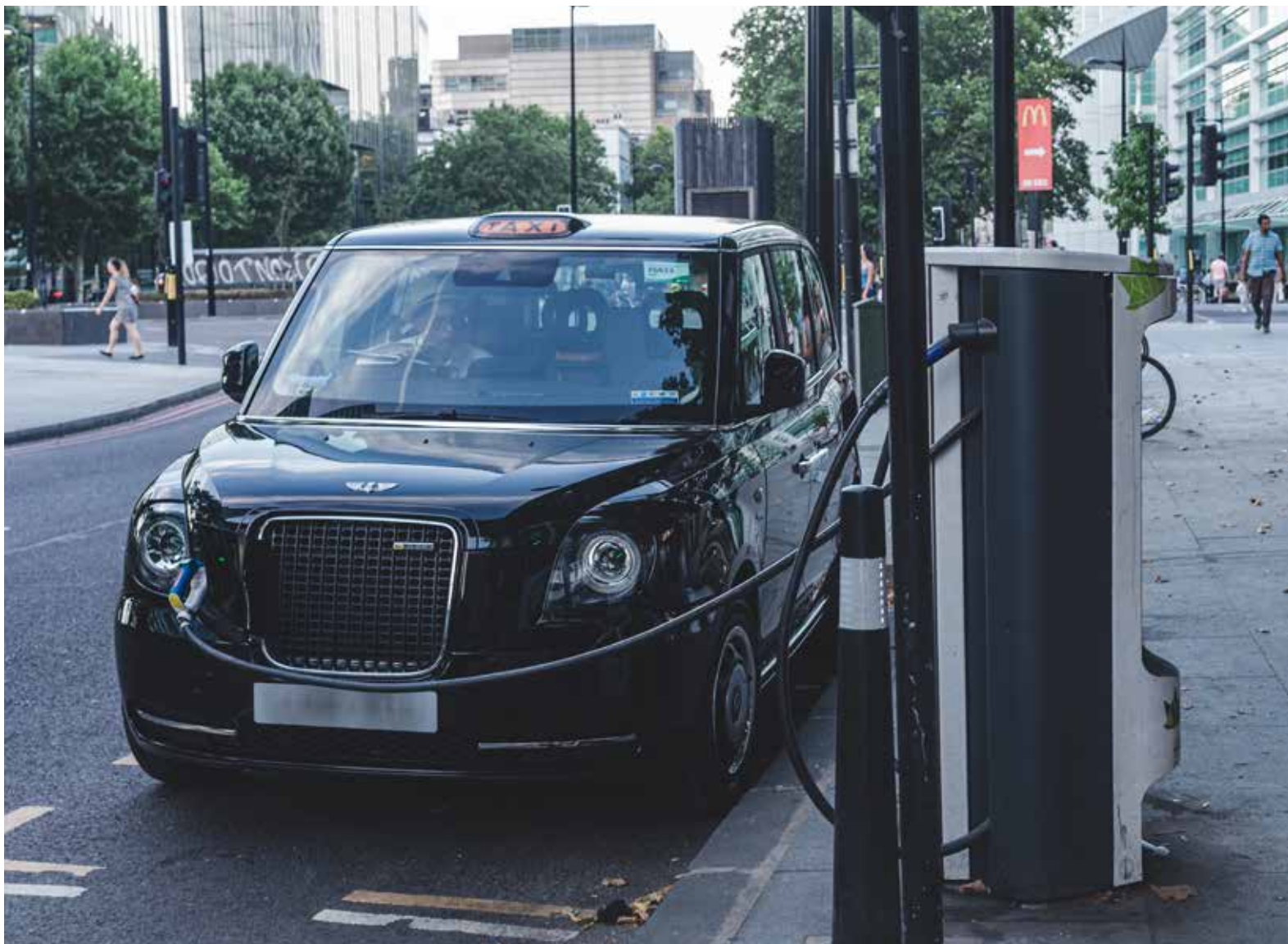


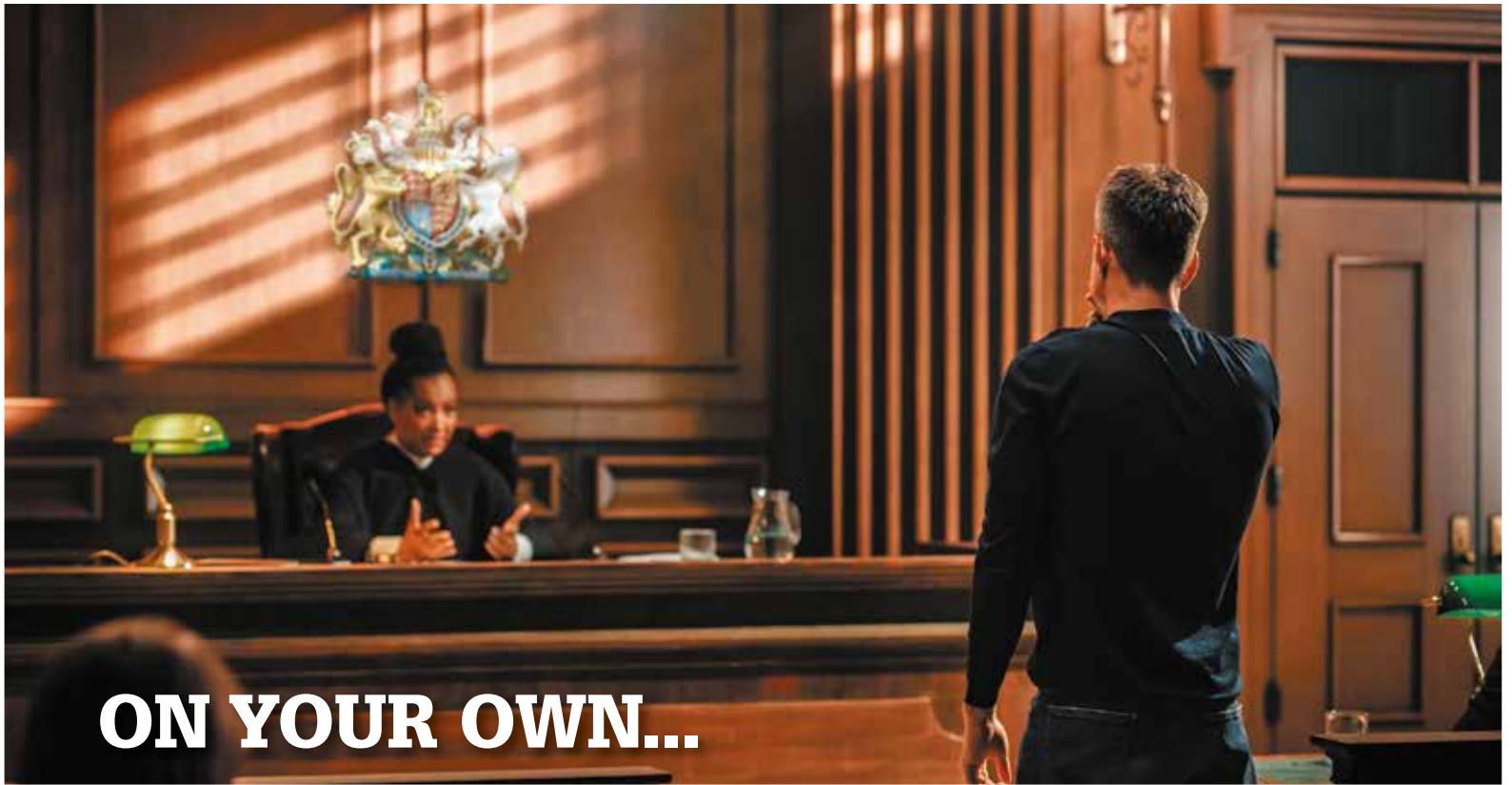
Office for Zero Emission Vehicles

an agreed part exchange price and the finance in place, you will be better off than someone who walks through the dealership door in Mid-February, rushing to order a cab, sell the existing one and get it all sorted before anything changes.

You never know, I might be wrong, but what I do know is once it's gone, it will probably be gone for good.

■ TAXI





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*Based on percentage of successful outcomes out of total number of cases, compared to national average.

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Is It Really Only Heartburn?

Cabbies, concierges and chefs are being invited for free heartburn health checks. Heartburn Cancer UK spoke to TAXI to tell us more.

Cabbies, chefs and concierges - and all other people working in and around the London hospitality industry - have been invited to check if they're eligible for a free health check being done at one of London's most prestigious hotels.

Heartburn (or acid reflux or indigestion, as it's also called) is a common complaint.

Almost everyone knows that uncomfortable feeling in their chest or nasty taste in their mouth after eating something too fast or having a late-night meal. But not a lot of people know that it can also be a sign of cancer or a pre-cancerous condition - called Barrett's oesophagus - that can be monitored to check that it doesn't turn into something more life-threatening.

TAXI caught up with Fiona Labrooy, from Heartburn Cancer UK (HCUK), the charity running the free heartburn health checks - in partnership with The Lanesborough on Hyde Park Corner - and asked all the questions we know you'd like answered about the initiative, how you can get involved and how it might just save your life.

TAXI Hi Fiona, this sounds like a great initiative, tell us why people should be concerned about heartburn?

Fiona: Although many people get the odd bout of heartburn, persistent heartburn - which comes back regularly for three weeks or more - isn't normal and can be a warning sign of oesophageal cancer or a pre-cancerous condition called Barrett's oesophagus.

Many people - however - don't know this. And they either ignore it, never ask a doctor, or get it checked. Or they mask it with over-the-counter or off-the-shelf treatments, such as Gaviscon or Rennie, and don't speak to their GP until things have developed much further, when if there's a serious problem, it's much more difficult to cure, and people need major surgery.

TAXI What causes heartburn?

Fiona: The things you eat and drink get to your stomach by

HCUK
HEARTBURN
CANCER UK
Is it really
only Heartburn?

If you're regularly
treating the **symptoms**,
you may be ignoring the
cause

INDIGESTION
UPSET TUMMY
DISCOMFORT
PROBLEMS
SWALLOWING
PERSISTENT
HEARTBURN

It may be nothing, but certain symptoms, such as heartburn that flares up or won't go away, could be signs of oesophageal cancer.

Don't ignore it. See your GP.

For more advice and support, go to www.heartburncanceruk.org

travelling down the oesophagus - which is sometimes also called the gullet or the food pipe. At the bottom of the oesophagus is a muscular ring - a sphincter - which normally acts as a one-way valve, keeping food, drink and stomach acids where they should be.

When this valve doesn't work properly (for lots of reasons), acid leaks back up into the oesophagus, and sometimes the mouth, and causes the pain and irritation that we know as heartburn (or indigestion or acid reflux, it's different names for the same thing).

TAXI Why could cabbies be particularly prone to heartburn?

Fiona: Professional drivers, especially those who work in busy places like London, can be prone to some of the risk factors of developing heartburn, including stress. Cabbies also spend a lot of time sitting down and can be known to eat on the run. These things can increase the risk of heartburn.

Cancer of the oesophagus and Barrett's oesophagus involve cell changes in the food pipe that are caused by the stomach acid leaking back into the oesophagus.

TAXI Why is it important to find out if there's an issue early?

Fiona: Oesophageal cancer is the 7th biggest cancer killer in the UK (the 4th biggest killer for men). And, because it's often missed - because people don't know or ignore the warning signs, such as persistent heartburn or a cough that won't go away - it is often discovered late, when it has spread, making treatment very difficult, and a cure impossible.

TAXI Why is it good news...in some ways...to find out that you have Barrett's oesophagus?

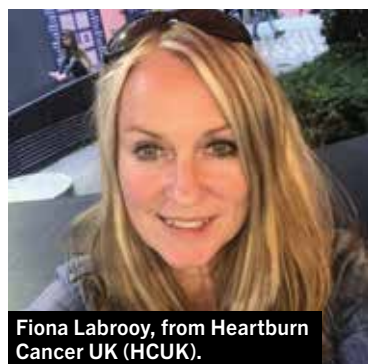
Fiona: Finding out you have this pre-cancerous condition could be seen as a gift. Most people with Barrett's don't go on to develop cancer. But people who have it are normally monitored regularly to check that the cell changes don't develop into cancer.

TAXI Why are the tests being done at The Lanesborough?

Fiona: We're one of the leading charities raising awareness of the problems caused by persistent heartburn and pushing for



earlier diagnosis. We're The Lanesborough's chosen charity because they've, sadly, in recent years, lost two important people to the disease. They were both men in their late forties/early fifties who had persistent heartburn, which they treated with off-the-shelf remedies and only went to the doctors when it was too late for a cure.



"Professional drivers, especially those who work in busy places like London, can be prone to some of the risk factors of developing heartburn, including stress"

TAXI How can people sign up for the test?

Fiona: You will find a short form on our website at www.heartburncanceruk.org. There are a few criteria you have to match, such as being the right age (40 or over) and having a problem with persistent heartburn or acid reflux. We have a limited number of tests but we will offer one to as many people as possible. We'll be

back in touch to tell you if you meet the criteria and can book one in the New Year.

TAXI What will the test involve?

Fiona: The tests will take place at Lanesborough in February, which is Oesophageal Cancer Awareness Month. They will be done by a specialist nurse or a doctor from Cleveland Clinic (who are also donating their time and expertise for free), in our special mobile unit, which will be on site. If you come for a test, you can park your cab outside while you're having it done.

The test is simple and most people deal with it well. It is a pill-on-a-thread, which is swallowed with some water. In the seconds the pill takes to come back up the oesophagus, it will pick up cells, which are then tested in the lab.

TAXI What happens after the test?

Fiona: The results will bring reassurance to many people who have persistent heartburn. If, however, the lab tests picks up any abnormal cells, the person will be invited to a follow-up endoscopy - again free of charge - at the private Cleveland Clinic. This does not mean they have cancer. It just means more checks are needed. They could have Barrett's oesophagus, which will then be regularly monitored. And remember, the earlier a problem is found, the better the outcome. The clinical teams involved in the testing will communicate with the patient's GP throughout.

TAXI What happens if someone doesn't get offered the test?

Fiona: If you don't get offered one of the tests, but you do have problems with persistent heartburn, whatever your age, we really hope you will contact your GP. They can send you for their own tests.

The NHS is currently trialling the pill-on-thread heartburn health check in some areas. But it's not yet widely available. We hope that changes soon. In the meantime, doctors can send you for an endoscopy, or other tests, as an alternative.

TAXI Will the findings of the test affect a cabbie's licence?

Fiona: Finding out you have Barrett's oesophagus would not impact your ability to drive a taxi or your licence. If you were found to have something more serious happening and to need treatment for cancer, you would have to discuss this and next steps with your doctors.

TAXI What can people do to help themselves, and where can they get more information?

Fiona: Lifestyle changes are often enough to stop people getting heartburn in the first place. This can include not eating late at night, losing a bit of weight around our bellies and avoiding or reducing triggers such as spicy food or alcohol. You can find more on this at our website www.heartburncanceruk.org where there's also a lot more advice and support. This project could not have been done without the help of our partners at The Lanesborough, the Cleveland Clinic and the makers of the tests who also carry out the pathology, Cyted. **TAXI**

You can sign up to be considered for the test by scanning this QR code with your phone or visit heartburncanceruk.org



Find out more and watch the invitation video here.



Poppy Cabs Coordinator Commended For Remembrance Day Efforts

TAXI spoke to London cab driver Mike Hughes, who coordinates the Poppy Cabs Service in London, during its World War II commemorations.

TAXI Hi Mike. We understand congratulations are in order?

Mike: Thank you! I was invited by The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers to a dinner on 16th November, at Waterman's Hall. To my delight, was awarded the 2023 Charity Award for Exceptional Care. I was presented with a certificate which said 'In recognition of my commitment as a coordinator of Poppy Cabs' and, of course, I accepted it on behalf of all the cab drivers who volunteer to help veterans on Remembrance Sunday.

TAXI For anyone who might not know, what is Poppy Cabs?

Mike: Poppy Cabs is a free taxi service for veterans attending the annual Remembrance Day service and parade in London. The Poppy Cabs initiative began with a handful of drivers in 2009, as a way of giving something back to those who had sacrificed so much for this country. Over the last 14 years, we have grown and grown. Now hundreds of cab drivers volunteer their time to take veterans from mainline stations to the Cenotaph.

TAXI Can you tell us more about the day itself?

Mike: On Remembrance Sunday, it is a pleasure to do something to make it easier for veterans who are travelling to London from all across the country, to help them get to their Remembrance service destination. We support veterans of all ages, but especially for those who are elderly or disabled. Them knowing that the Poppy Cabs service is available relieves much of the stress of making the journey into the capital.

TAXI So, how exactly does it work?

Mike: The service relies on the generosity of London cab drivers, who volunteer their time on the day itself. From 8am, we allocate drivers to mainline stations, the Victoria Coach Station and to the Union Jack Club and Victory Services Club to pick up veterans. Those who are less mobile and need additional help often contact us

in advance, so that we can pick them up from more convenient locations, sometimes even from their homes. After the drop offs are complete, many of the drivers assemble on Westminster Bridge and wait to take veterans on the return journeys.

If anyone wants to support us next year, on Sunday 10th November, cab drivers are required between 8 and 10am to cover journeys from all the aforementioned locations. Then in the afternoon, volunteers are also required from 12.30 until 4pm at Westminster Bridge to help with return trips.

I must say that it's not only the drivers that help out here. We need a great deal of support with marshalling and many drivers' partners and families now regularly volunteer to help organise veterans needing cars. And this year we had wonderful support from The Renaissance Hotel in St Pancras. They gave

us space to use as a meeting room on Remembrance Sunday and provided our volunteers with tea, coffee and bacon sandwiches. I was delighted I could personally thank them and present their General Manager, Ed White, with a Certificate of Appreciation, and praised him for their support.

TAXI Does this coordination only happen in London?

Mike: No, there is also a Poppy Cabs service in Edinburgh. The Edinburgh initiative was set up after seeing what we were achieving in London, and they too are going from strength to strength. I offered help and advice when they wanted to start up their own Poppy Cab service, and we are still in close contact for support and to exchange ideas. I also supply them with Poppy Cab badges, which benefit two of their local charities.

TAXI I understand you also do a little bit of fundraising too?

Mike: Each year we produce a Poppy Cabs enamel badge which raises money for our two chosen charities: the Royal British Legion and the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans. Since we started, we have raised an amazing £20,000. This year, when everything is totalled up, we expect to have raised another £5,000. Next year is the 80th anniversary of D-Day, and we know that the Taxi Charity will use this year's donation towards their trip to Normandy in June.

TAXI Are these badges still available?

Mike: We have a few left, yes. Each year we produce a different design and some people are collecting every badge. We ask for a minimum donation of £5. If anyone would like one, please email me at mike@mikehughes.org.uk



Drivers showing support for Poppy Cabs.



Mike Hughes receives Certificate of Appreciation.



Mike Hughes, Poppy Cabs coordinator.



Mike Hughes with veterans.



Generous drivers volunteering.



London cabbie, Colin Mills supporting Poppy Cabs.



Mike Hughes thanks the Renaissance Hotel for supporting Poppy Cabs.

Taxis on Westminster Bridge, this Remembrance Sunday.

TAXI What would you like to say to those involved?

Mike: The most important thing I'd like to say is thank you. We can't do this without you. A huge thank you to everyone who supports Poppy Cabs – from drivers, to volunteers, to badge sellers and to everyone who donates and proudly wears a Poppy Cabs badge.

To find out more about Poppy Cabs, email mike@mikehughes.org.uk

About Poppy Cabs

Poppy Cabs was founded in 2009 by London's black cab drivers to provide free transport in London for veterans on Remembrance Sunday. The initiative relies on the generosity of London's taxi drivers who volunteer their time, cars, friends and relatives, who all help to move veterans from mainline stations and military clubs to the Cenotaph. The Independent Taxi Coordinator, since the start in 2009, is Mike Hughes. Enamel Poppy Cab badges have so far raised over £20,000 for the Royal British Legion and the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans. **TAXI**

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

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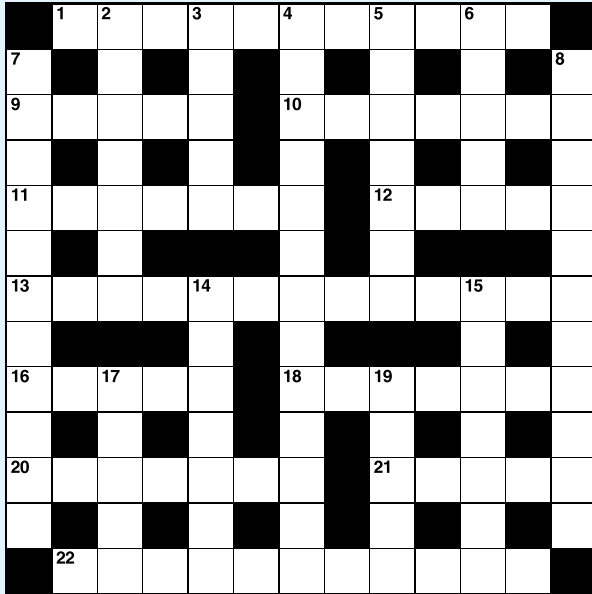


www.ltda.co.uk



Puzzler Page

Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Stylishly (11)
- 9 Sign up (5)
- 10 Exaggerated enthusiast (7)
- 11 Time-honoured (7)
- 12 Lean forward (5)
- 13 Act of working together (13)
- 16 Frenzied desire (5)
- 18 Shade of red (7)
- 20 Imposing building (7)
- 21 Take place (5)
- 22 Require (11)

DOWN

- 2 Letters for overseas (7)
- 3 Public rooms (5)
- 4 Meddling (13)
- 5 Inability to remember (7)
- 6 Bingo-like game (5)
- 7 Gatherer of jetsam (11)
- 8 Needle treatment (11)
- 14 Extreme greed (7)
- 15 Unlawful, forbidden (7)
- 17 Ingenuous, artless (5)
- 19 Happening, brewing (5)

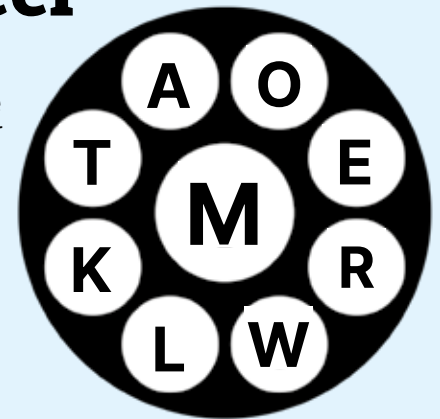
Sudoku

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.

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

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 13 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.

		<		
			^	^
	1		2	
	>		>	

All answers to puzzler on p30

CABS FOR RENT



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e16-taxirentals.co.uk

TX4s TO RENT

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**John
07702 554934**

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28 ● Euro 5 about to be de-commissioned, Cabs wanted, TX4's and Vito's. Top Price paid. Call John 07702 554 934

● We want your cab any condition quick decision cash or bank transfer you decide, finance cleared if required – 07877 093 866

● All cabs wanted. Tx4, euro 4, 5 & 6 also TXE wanted We come to you, any condition, very quick decision. Cash paid instantly. 07702 554 934

● 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 554 934

● Looking to sell your TX4? Too old to replate? Call James London based buyer for quick and easy sale – 07931 964 857

● Thinking of part-exchange. All cabs wanted any condition: plated or not, cash, same day collection service– call Roy 07956 293 748

CABS FOR SALE

● LTI TX4 Elegance Euro 6 (White), 100,000 miles, FSH, Reg. Sept 2016, Immaculate, £26,500. Contact Peter 07930 944 542

● Vito 62 reg 145,000m 2 owners plated till 25.8.24, lovely condition best offer over £5,500 SE19 call Mo 07956 819 476

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

CABS FOR RENT

● Rent Taxis, Euro 6 and also Electric vehicles from £250 - £345. We also do repairs on cabs, call Nick 020 7700 1045 / 07951 661 430

● TXEs, TX4s and Vitos available from £260 per week contact Sabri – 07958973944

● All Vitos for rent, full back up, based in East London – 07872 504 604

● TXE's available for rent, from £320 per week. Call Wax 07951 843 663

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LTDA Branch Meeting

Central Branch

18th December at 10.00am
Christchurch hall, Blackfriars Rd,
London, SE1.



Get in touch



James Martin



james.martin@cplone.co.uk



01727 739 197

LTDA APPLICATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

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? Do you have any motoring or other prosecutions pending? Yes ☐ No ☐*Please note: We do not provide assistance for any matters that have occurred prior to you joining the LTDA.*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 _____

29

LTDA Basic Direct Debit Instructions

Instructions to your Bank/Building Society to pay Direct Debits:

Please complete parts 1 to 5 to instruct your branch to make direct payments from your account. Then return the form to LTDA, FREEPOST, London, SE1 1PP

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Service User Number

9 1 4 4 2 8

For Office use only

1. Please write the name and full postal address of your branch in the box (left)
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 _____
Date _____



This guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer

The Direct Debit Guarantee



- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- 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.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

You can now also apply to join the LTDA online, simply scan here to complete an online application:





Happy Croissant!

There's not a cabbie among us who hasn't, at some point in December, had to clean up a pile of Christmas 'merry' but it's the neighbours you need to watch out for.

A woman of words

Tis the season to be merry and all that.

Booze and bonkers go together. Last Christmas, I had a lady fare passionately kiss the screen behind my head because she couldn't get to my actual head. She snogged away at the glass pausing only to tell me I must remember that I am a "powerful, important and beautiful woman who had totally, like TOTALLY, changed her life".

And why did I deserve such big praise? I asked her, "Where to, love?" when she pitched into the back of my cab in Southwark Street, after her office Christmas party.

And it's not just on the road that I suffer from Christmas craziness.

My neighbour, Colin, is a festive fanatic. Santa himself would be

pleading with him to tone it down.

Cliff Richard's *Mistletoe and Whine...* sorry, *Wine*, plays on a loop day and night from speakers positioned at the open front bedroom windows. Colin does enjoy a singalong to Cliff, in a voice so high that by now the man's prostate must be like a piece of cheese wire.

"It's for the kiddies!" he lies. The kids run past his house, hands over their ears, screaming for mercy when the music is blaring.

And then there's his one-man attempt to overload the national grid. Colin has a tall tinsel-covered

ladder that he uses to position his Christmas creatures on the chimney pot, the roof, the guttering, the front and back walls and windowsills. His front lawn is populated, alien invasion-

style, with glowing and flashing elves, snowmen, mice and reindeer. In case you are thinking how lovely this sounds, let me elaborate.

He has a semi-naked Santa with his arse sticking out of his chimney pot, complete with a red bulb to light up his modesty. And on top of his garden gate is a motion-activated farting reindeer. It releases a puff of green smoke with every 'whoopsie!'

sound. I saw the postman punch it yesterday.

I have had to beg Colin to turn off the strobe lighting effects on his six-foot-tall skiing moose, because watching *Coronation Street* in my front room has become a psychedelic experience, as it whooshes back and forth on its track by my side window.

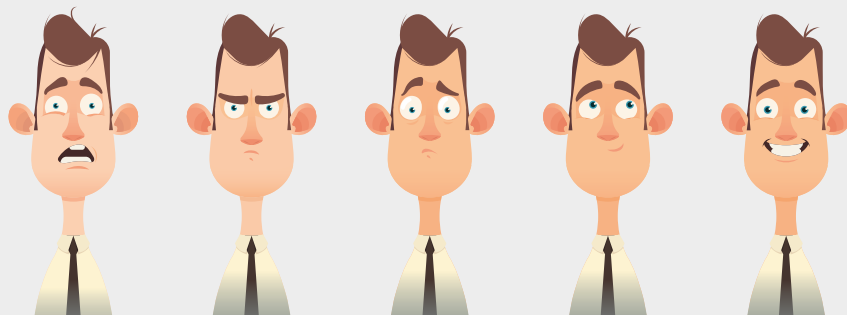
Mr Meg doesn't notice it. If something is not going on in his shed then it's not really happening. But over porridge yesterday morning, he asked, genuinely puzzled, what croissants had to do with Christmas. He'd seen that Colin had hung a four-foot-long singing croissant across his front porch. It's an American import and does a good, very loud, rendition of *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*.

"Nothing at all," I answered. But I'm not going to be a grinch about it. So, Happy Croissant 2023, to all you lovely TAXI readers! **TAXI**



30

PUZZLER ANSWERS



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

Crossword

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Sudoku

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

Futoshiki

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

Wordwheel

SOLUTION: METALWORK

All words: Amok, atom, lame, loam, make, maker, male, malt, mare, mark, market, marl, mart, mate, mater, meal, meat, melt, meow, metal, moat, molar, mole, moral, morale, more, mort, mortal, mote, motel, mower, realm, ream, roam, tame, tamer, team, teamwork, term, tome, tram, warm, workmate, worm, METALWORK.

Word targets: Excellent: 40, Good: 33, Target: 24, Kids: 19



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