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16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 #556

# WORLD'S SLOWEST CITY FOR DRIVERS

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16.01.24

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**KIA LAUNCHES NEW MODULAR VEHICLE**  
Kia unveiled its Platform Beyond Vehicle (PBV) strategy at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2024 in Las Vegas, earlier this month. This strategy is based around the development of the manufacturer's new modular vehicle, the Kia Concept PV5, which will eventually harness artificial intelligence and other technology to revolutionise the mobility industry. Kia aims to revolutionise the mobility industry. The manufacturer says its PBV proposition is built around a dedicated business system, integrating electric vehicles, software, and future technologies to "deliver added value".  
Kia has also signed a deal with Uber to develop the PV5 specifically ride-hailing. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two companies commits them to collaborate on Kia's planned development and deployment of PBVs. The partnership's goals also extend to the creation of proofs of concept, prototypes, and the production of PBVs tailored to the needs of PH drivers. Could we see these interesting looking vehicles operating in London any time soon? Unlikely, if you ask us.



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**ULEZ PUBLIC TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS NOT BEING DELIVERED**  
Improvements to public transport in outer London have been described as being only 'light' since the ULEZ expansion. Discussing progress since the expanded ULEZ zone, which now covers the Borough, was introduced, councillors in Richmond raised ongoing concerns about public transport provision and residents being able to get from A to B since the £12.50 charge was introduced. At a council meeting earlier this month, there were particular concerns raised about the impact on the reliability of bus services and whether the Mayor and TfL were delivering on the promises made when the expansion was introduced to improve public transport service and support residents.

**LONDON 'MOST PREPARED' REGION IN UK FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES**  
A new study has revealed the regions most prepared for the government plans to end the sale of diesel, petrol and hybrid vehicles in 2035, with London reportedly being able to provide the most support for for electric vehicles.



The research conducted by motor trade insurance experts One Sure Insurance analysed the number of EV chargers within each area, and the number of vehicles registered, to identify which cities are most prepared for the government guidelines.  
The study found that London is the region most prepared to meet the government targets, with 1,905 chargers per 100,000 registered vehicles. London may be far ahead of other parts of the UK on this, but cabbies will question whether this is enough, as many still worry about the lack of rapid charging infrastructure and report struggling to find a working, available charge point, when they need one.  
Meanwhile, earlier the month the government claimed to have created the most ambitious regulatory framework for the switch to electric vehicles of any country in the world, thanks to new laws which came into force on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024. The Zero Emission Vehicle mandate (ZEV) sets out the percentage of new zero emission vans and cars manufacturers will be required to produce each year by 2023. 80% of new cars and 70% of new vans sold in Great Britain will now be zero emission by 2030, increasing to 100% by 2035. It also sets ambitious targets for the rollout of rapid and ultra rapid charging infrastructure.

**LOTTO WINNER!**

You've probably heard of the **LTDA Lottery**. What you probably don't know is that since it started in 1986, we've paid out **more than £2,205,000** in prize money to more **than 400 winners!**

**Congratulations Mr Graham Holland!**

December's winner was Graham Holland. Graham was delighted to find out that he had won the LTDA lottery and to receive his cheque for £5000. He told us this little windfall had come just at the right time and he planned to take a well-deserved holiday with his wife, somewhere nice and hot.

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# Off to a Slow Start

**London topping the rankings as the world's slowest city was not news to anyone who drives in central London on a regular basis.**

## Steve's comment

**F**irstly, let me wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year and may Kipper season not treat you too badly.

### World's slowest city

You may have seen the story last week from the satellite navigation company, *tom tom*, with data showing that London is officially the world's slowest city for drivers. This was not news to anyone who has to drive in central London on a regular basis.

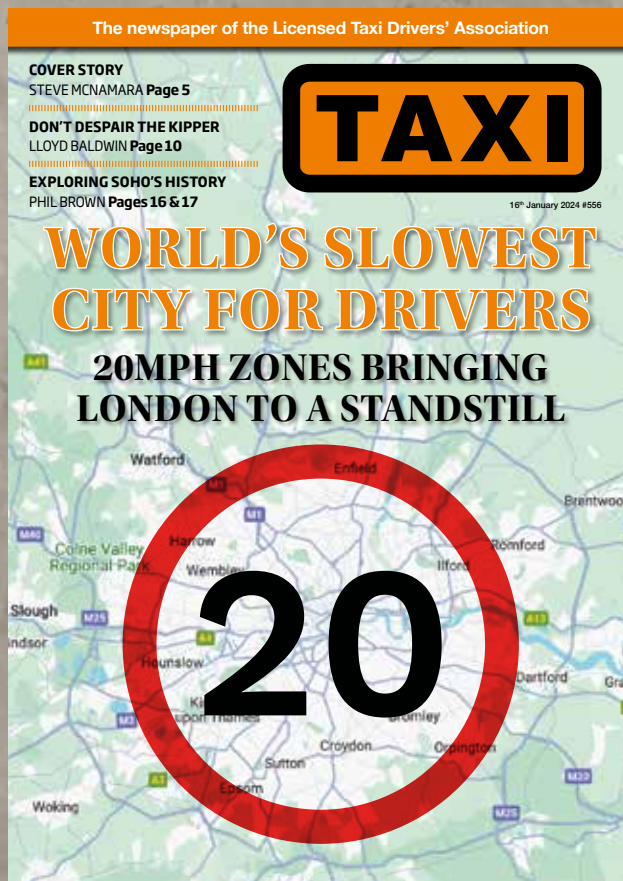
The report made the media only because it gave 20mph speed limits as the primary cause of the congestion, prompting press releases from TfL and the Mayor with a plethora of excuses and statistics, all in an effort to blame anyone and everything other than themselves and their atrocious lack of planning or joined up thinking over the entire road network.

I was more than happy to pop up and tell it how it is in the course of a few radio and TV interviews. Unsurprisingly, no one from TfL or City Hall was prepared to come on and debate the issue with me!

### Cycling vigilantes

The cycling vigilantes who spend their waking hours filming drivers, uploading it to YouTube, and sending the footage to the police are, by the nature of what they do, attention seeking.

The question now, is which one of the vigilantes will claim to be the inspiration for the character in the *Viz* comic, 'Bicycle Bellend'? In the comic, the new character is depicted as being very excited when he opens his new helmet cam and as he heads out onto the streets to get some 'Bellend Camera Action'. He rides around, telling motorists "*It's all going on YouTube*", whilst riding through red lights, on the pavement and knocking over pedestrians, which makes it all seem very authentic. Who will be vain enough to claim the title?



### Could cab prices rise by £7500?

Currently, any member who buys a new TX electric taxi automatically receives a grant of £7500 from the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV) taken off the price at the point of sale. The grant is known as the Plug in Taxi Grant (PiTG) and has been available since the launch of the TXE in 2018.

The funding for the PiTG is only guaranteed until March. There is a real possibility that it will not be renewed, and the cost of a new cab will rise by £7500. We have been lobbying OZEV, Ministers and MPs in an effort to secure additional funding and to retain the grant. As a result of our engagement with the Mayor and TfL, I understand both the Transport Commissioner, Andy Lord, and the Mayor have written to central government supporting our calls.

At the moment, we have received no news or clear indication either way and as March approaches, we are increasingly concerned that the grant will cease. If you are planning to buy or lease a new cab in the near future, it may be a good idea to do so before the end of March, which is when the funding is currently guaranteed until. It's unclear what will happen if the grant goes, but we assume the cost of the cab would immediately go up.

I must emphasise that we do not know what is going to happen and I am only making members aware of what *might* happen, so that you can make your own decisions.

We should have a clearer idea after the Budget on 6<sup>th</sup> March. It could be that we will be successful in our lobbying and that fresh funding will be found to maintain the current level of grant. We just don't know either way right now, but feel it is important that anyone considering a new cab purchase should be aware of the possibility of a substantial increase in cost.

LTDA



# What Does 2024 Have in Store for London's Iconic Cab Trade?

2024 will see elections both local and national and big decisions being made, which could significantly impact our trade and drivers' futures.



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## Top rank

**F**irstly, can I start by saying, I hope you all had a fantastic festive season, whether you chose to spend it with friends and family or were working the cab throughout. Can I also take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year.

### What's next?

So, what will 2024 have in store for London's iconic cab trade? Without question one of the biggest, if not the biggest thing that will impact us, will be taking place in late spring. Whilst the date of any general election is yet unknown, we do know that the London mayoral election will take place.

### Electioneering

Funnily enough, suddenly, our current Mayor is once again singing our praises and claims that he's developing 'a new vision' for taxis and private hire in the capital. Let's hope it's better than the last one, which saw us downgraded, ignored and actively persecuted.

The elections will take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and so far, candidates

have been put forward by the big two in Labour and the Conservatives, as well as the Lib Dems, Greens and Reform UK and four independents, who have also thrown their hat into the ring. The interesting thing will be if anyone else joins them. Whilst it's a known that the Reform party will put a dent in the Conservative vote there is no such spanner in the works for Labour or current Mayor Sadiq Khan. If, however the rumours that Jeremy Corbyn could join that race as an independent, having been (and for many, controversially) thrown out of the Labour Party, his name on the ballot paper could see a sizable chunk of London's left leaning Labour supporters moving away from Khan.

### Vote for what's best

As someone who has no (and never has had) any political allegiance, I don't get why someone always votes red, blue or other, just because they always



have, their parents did or it's what they are told they should. The anguish on some cabbies faces when they tell me they will be voting Tory over Labour in this upcoming election is alien to me. To me, Mayor Khan has harmed our trade, our livelihoods, our mental health and London. It's not about allegiance, it's about our survival.

### Future of the PiTG

Come spring, we will also find out whether the Plug-in Taxi Grant (PiTG) is to remain or cease to be. If it doesn't stay, anyone wishing to purchase a new cab and add to the extraordinary uptake in ZEC taxis in London, will need to find an extra £7500 plus interest to do so. We have of course been lobbying hard to make sure it does stay in place, as well as also lobbying to get the VAT we pay for our specialist taxis zero rated.

Some in our trade don't think it's an issue that every month from now until the day they retire, cab drivers will need to pay the equivalent of another mortgage to have a cab. These same people think we should just accept that the days of being freehold or being able to regularly upgrade our cabs, using the current one as a high value trade in are over. I don't share that view.

## Cabbies retiring



One of the things that happened throughout 2023 and no doubt will continue throughout 2024, is the fact that some of

the older drivers and even those who aren't particularly old are retiring from the cab trade.

One such person is a face that many of you will know, especially those who have worked the airport over the last 30 years, and that's Jimmy Smith, who for many years acted as the senior trade rep for the LTDA out at the airport.

Jimmy was a regular on any demos the trade had, be they large scale or the smaller dodgy hotel demonstrations. He worked tirelessly to help and support taxi drivers throughout his career and having already scaled down the amount of work he did since the pandemic, he has now officially retired.

On behalf of all the drivers he helped over the years including myself and on behalf of the LTDA, I would like to wish him a very happy and long retirement. **LTDA**



### Bulit21 update

The Black Cabs vs Uber Litigation 2021 (Bulit21) could perhaps finally progress to beyond just the name gathering stage. If you haven't signed up yet but would like to, go to [bulit21.com](http://bulit21.com) to see if you meet the criteria and if it's something you want to do. If you have signed up and they have some information from you and you've forgotten to send it, can I suggest you get that done. The quicker you do it, the quicker things will progress.



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# Levels of Decision Making

**TfL policy states if you do not notify them at the time your DVLA licence is endorsed with penalty points, they can suspend your licence, and from what we are seeing now, they likely will.**



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## Streets ahead

**A**s this is my first article of the year, I don't want it to be depressing for drivers, but there is an important message I need to get across about what is going on with TfL's driver licensing policy and how it could impact you.

As it stands, a simple misjudgement resulting in you receiving a Notice of Intended Prosecution for a road traffic offence, even one only resulting in just three points, could cause you serious problems.

### The problem

TfL have the power to use their discretion and to make decisions on a case-by-case basis, depending on the circumstances and taking the driver's record into account. In my opinion, this is not happening, and the policy and procedure is not being applied properly, resulting in drivers losing their licences undeservingly.

Taxi drivers are on the road for

most of their working lives, which I know at times can be stressful, but TfL are not supporting drivers and instead they are adding to drivers' stress, in a way which can have a profound effect on their mental health. At the LTDA, we take hundreds of calls from members worried sick whether TfL will suspend their licence because they were travelling at 24mph in a 20mph zone or have been caught using a mobile phone.

TfL policy states that if you do not notify them at the time that your DVLA licence is endorsed with three points they can suspend your licence, and they probably will, but if you do tell TfL then it seems they are more likely to allow you to retain your licence. We have seen first hand that TfL is not being consistent in its decision making and on how and when it penalises drivers.

### Unfair

We don't believe that the current process is fair. If a driver finds themselves having to attend a reconsideration hearing alongside our barristers, it is our view that it should be led by an

independent body, as opposed to TfL employees, to ensure it is a fair, unbiased hearing. The current system, which changed in recent years, goes against the principles of natural justice. We will be addressing not only these issues but others with TfL when the trade reps get together with top decision makers later this week. Our legal team is also looking at other ways to challenge this in more detail.

Ultimately, we need common sense to be applied by those who make decisions on individual matters, especially when it involves something as serious as taking a driver's livelihood away that will potentially have profound consequences on a family's current financial status – their ability to pay a mortgage, pay for a cab etc., not to mention their mental health. These are serious matters, with serious consequences for drivers and enough is enough.

### My advice

In the meantime, my advice is that you notify TfL of any driving offences as and when they occur, and they will likely be more lenient. If you

choose not to notify TfL, the consequences will likely be more significant. TfL will find out anyway eventually, as they get all this information from the DVLA code you provide them at the point when you renew your licence, so why would not you just notify TfL and cut out the middleman? This is a choice only you can make but my advice is tell them, be upfront and head off any problems.

I recently dealt with a member on three different speeding offences (meaning he had nine penalty points). He chose to notify TfL, and he is still working. If he had failed to tell them about any of these, it could have been a different story.

For serious offences like holding a mobile phone, dangerous driving, driving without due care and attention or reasonable consideration for other road users (any six point offence), the policy says a driver should face licence revocation, however this will need to go through the appeals procedure before a final licensing decision is made. Be careful out there. **LTDA**





# TAXI and LTDA Member Mail

## Subject: Thanks for LTDA support

Dear Editor,

Just wanted to express my thanks and gratitude to Rob at the LTDA for all his help in regard to my recent cab licence renewal application. It's comforting to know that as a member of the LTDA, help is always at hand should any problem arise.

Once again, many thanks, Rob.

Paul Merritt



## Subject: Mobile phone returned to grateful owner

Dear Editor,

I am writing to bring to your attention the excellent service and the above-and-beyond help my wife and I have received from your member, Gordan Ninkovic.

On Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup> December whilst traveling to Waterloo station, my wife left her mobile phone in Gordan's cab. When this was realised, I immediately rang the phone which was answered by Gordan who reassured me that the phone was safe and that he would do whatever was needed to make sure it was safely returned.

Incidentally, Gordan had already returned to Waterloo in the hope of finding us, however, we were already on the train home.

After exchanging telephone numbers, we arranged that I would return to Waterloo the next day to collect the phone. As you can imagine the loss of a mobile phone is a stressful time, however

the reassurance given by Gordan, and his excellent communication helped ease my wife's distress.

I am pleased to say that the phone was collected from Gordan at Waterloo at the time we had arranged, in Gordan's own time.

I would appreciate any thoughts you may have and perhaps you could make your members aware of this standout service.

Kind regards,  
Mark Gosden



## Subject: Free journey

Dear Editor,

I posted the below on my Facebook page but wanted to share it with you for inclusion in your magazine.

Thank you to the London Black Cab driver who drove my daughter (not very far) Moorgate to Liverpool Street recently, she came out the wrong exit from the Lizzie Line. Time was tight and she was a bit lost momentarily.

He got her there in time and didn't charge. She made her train home.

We really can't thank him enough. London Black Taxis are the best!

Regards,  
Juliet Baird



## Subject: Killing Choke

Dear Editor,

Enough is enough. The traffic in London must be allowed to flow, and the paranoia around rewarding drivers with ease of movement has to stop.

New road layouts, cycle lanes, LTNs, 20mph cameras (on a main road with a separate cycle lane!), the "con"-gestion charge, the Great ULEZ Swindle, do this do that but only after 7pm, off-the-scale roadworks, pretend roadworks, roadworks where there aren't usually any roadworks... all designed to crucify the working public for having the audacity to drive anything with four wheels; plus it creates the wondrous illusion of chaos. And the people breathing in the additional toxic air are

pedestrians and cyclists. Oh the tragic irony.

There is actually now less traffic on London's roads, and cleaner vehicles replacing older ones every week. Over half of London's proud taxi fleet is now greener, and still they restrict our access to certain roads when we need to cater for people with limited mobility, i.e. wheelchair users. This is pure discrimination.

Also, at certain places and at busy times the police, fire and ambulance crews simply cannot manoeuvre through the traffic at all. Our beloved Emergency Services should be able to sue for gross negligence at the very least. People must have died as a result of the obsessive plans to choke the capital into submission.

Regards,  
Danny Cheesewright



# The Kipper's Here

**Yes, the first couple of weeks in January are very slow and its nowhere near as busy as I would like it, but I personally find Easter to be a much more difficult period.**

## On Point

**F**irst off, let me wish you all a very Happy New Year, but at the same time here we go again, boys and girls. The dreaded Kipper season is upon us.

I personally have always hated this time of year. Every year I wish I had worked a bit harder at the back end of the year before, yet thinking about it, the reality for me is that they were generally not as bad as I feared.

## Could be worse

Yes, the first couple of weeks in January are very slow and it's nowhere near as busy as I would like it, but I personally find Easter to be a much more difficult period. I have always maintained that they are the worst two weeks of the year.

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The Kipper is also feeding time for the Doom and Gloom merchants, who will no doubt be all over social media running down the trade and implying if cabbies only listened to them, then we would all be ok. Do your best to ignore them.

I do wonder sometimes where these cabbies are coming from. I mean what is the point of telling everyone how bad it is? None of us enjoy the kipper and we don't need it shoved down our throats. As I say, it's the D and G mob's favourite time of year, so give them a wide birth and get through as best as you can.



**"Ignore the Doom and Gloom mob and get through it the best you can!"**



## DBS update service

Transport For London has announced that from the end of February this year, all cabbies who receive a new DBS certificate when

they renew their licence will have to sign up to the DBS Update Service. Although it's yet another new directive from TfL, which I know we are all getting sick of, this is one that I sort of agree with. The vast majority of issues we have when a member is relicensing are the potential delays with the DBS application and having members signed up to the Update Service may prevent this.

*Know Your People*, will now unfortunately take our calls when we are enquiring on behalf of a member, they have to do it themselves. Then, when the member calls them him or herself instead, their stance is often basically to say that it will take as long as it takes and it will be done when it's done. I

know a few people reading this will be saying 'I did mine and it went through no problem' and that can be the case, but believe me, cabbies have had nightmares waiting for them to be issued.

TfL are very strong on the fact that they will not issue a new licence until the DBS is completed. Going on the Update Service takes all the stress out of waiting for it as it happens automatically. It's also cheaper because you set up a standing order with them for £13 a year instead of having to make the £53.42 payment every three years.

It is important to note that this only applies to you next time you go through the relicensing process, and you are issued with a new DBS certificate. You must then join the Update Service within 30 days of that certificate being issued. You will also be required to provide that original certificate every time you renew your licence, so keep it safe. If any member has any questions regarding this new rule, please call me and I will be happy to help.

LTDA



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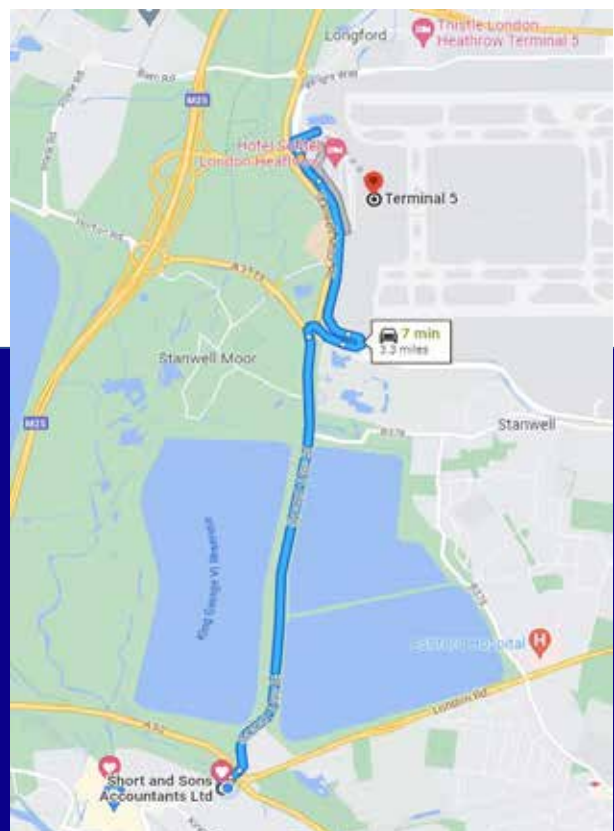
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## Knowledge is power

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**F**irstly, I'd like to wish every driver a very happy, healthy, and prosperous 2024. As we start the year, I would like to give our members a bit of an insight into the services we provide for you and how important your wellbeing is to each and every team member here at the LTDA.

### Our work

At Taxi House, we assist members with all matters both trade and driver related, all for just about the price of one cappuccino a week, which many of our existing members tell me is great value for money. We receive hundreds of calls and emails every week with members asking for information and support, on top of in-person appointments at Taxi House.

These matters include licence renewals and related problems, medicals (both the routine and more complicated), various types of legal issues, NSL test issues, member benefits, complaints and the more serious 'fitness to be licensed' issues, PCNs and police forms, through to the more general trade issues like taxi ranks as well as meeting with resident associations and other interest groups, meeting with TfL and City Hall representatives, local

boroughs and MPs, as well as lobbying Government on all trade related policy and political matters.

### Speaking up for the trade

Over the years and on the back of all of this, the LTDA has up built a hard-earned reputation as the respected and authoritative voice of London's cab trade. We speak up for the trade, taking a sound common sense and fact-based approach to protect drivers' livelihoods and to make sure taxis continue to play a vital role in London's transport network, not just now, but into the future.

Our work also includes the mundane things like responding to countless consultations on new road and traffic management schemes, but it is not limited to just that. We respond to and make representations on any issues that could impact the trade, at both the London and national level. These could be on anything from new traffic schemes proposing to exclude taxis to proposed changes to the conditions of fitness relating to our vehicles. We also represent drivers' interests in a variety of ways, including on Department for Transport working groups, TfL Taxi and Private Hire meetings and the London Chamber of Commerce and the City of London.

We do all this so that you can relax, as stress free as possible, and concentrate on what you do best, driving a cab for the world's finest taxi service.

### Licence renewal reminder

I want to take the opportunity to remind you that when filling in your TfL application form, you do NOT need to wait for your actual DBS certificate to arrive before posting your application. As of last September, you also do NOT need to enter an 'E Number' on the form, as TfL can now check it without one. Having said that, it's still very important that you start the DBS as soon as you receive your renewal pack through the post. If you are unsure about any of this, please don't hesitate to call the LTDA.

### PCNs still increasing

The number of PCNs issued in London, across all the boroughs and TfL administered roads for the past year hit a staggering 7.6 million and the related fines raked in over £400 million. This was an increase over the previous year and shows no sign of slowing. Please be aware of where you are parking, waiting, picking up or dropping off, so that you don't give these money grabbing sharks any of your hard earned.

At the same time, please also keep your mobile phone in a cradle and do not touch it when driving, as TfL treat this extremely seriously, if you are prosecuted. There are plenty of plastic policemen with helmet cameras ready to film you, so be aware and look out for the hotspots below.

### Kirby's PCN Hotspots

The enforcement camera 'hotspots' that I am hearing about all the time from drivers who've been caught out are the following:

#### YELLOW BOX CAMERAS

- All along Piccadilly
- Park Street/Green St W1
- Vauxhall Cross
- Shepherds Bush Green (Westfield)
- Hans Road (Rear of Harrods)
- Victoria Street/Palace Street
- Bayswater Road/Westbourne Street



#### CAMERA PCN ENFORCEMENT

- Harrods (Brompton Road) Over-ranking
- Tottenham Court Road
- Sopwith Way (Chelsea Bridge) 15 min stay only
- Cornhill (coming from Leadenhall Street)
- Bath Street EC1 No Motor Vehicles 24/7
- Wilton Road, Victoria Station Over-ranking
- Edgware Road W2 Red Route
- Borough High Street Red Route
- Tower Bridge Road Red Route
- Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel, No right turn
- Aldwych, No U-Turn across the solid white line. This is police enforced and endorseable with 3 points

#### 20MPH MOBILE CAMERAS

- Vauxhall Bridge Road/Neathouse Place
- Harrow Road/Hermitage Street

**TAXI**



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# Credit Card Conundrums

**I informed the customer my card machine wasn't connecting. I couldn't refuse the job, so if it hadn't connected by the time we arrived, she would have had the fare for free.**

## Airports & beyond

**I** have written many times about the credit card system I have in my cab and the appalling service I get from my provider. I also get calls from other drivers with the same issues, so thought I would share my story.

I have stuck with this provider ever since October 2016, when we started having to accept cards. Even though TfL have approved them and tell us drivers this is one of the companies we must use, I have had ongoing issues. I have stayed with them and tried to resolve the issues. I've updated the system when asked, I have tried different terminals, upgraded to their phone system, and still no joy. I was also told that I needed to download a new version, which I did. I will try anything as I am desperate to have a working system!

## No back up

The most frustrating part is that I am not allowed to carry a second device for back up. I have informed TfL of the poor service, yet they continue to endorse this company that in my experience is not fit for purpose.

I have recently been unlucky enough to have had my cab in the garage with different problems, spanning over many weeks, so I decided to rent a cab. Unfortunately for me, lo and behold it was with the same credit card provider. As soon as I tried to set it up, guess what? Yes, you've got it, more problems. And again, because I don't have a second handheld, I had to spend a long time on the phone to them the Friday before Christmas.

I managed to get it set up, but every time I logged on and was about to start work, it wouldn't connect. I had to reboot four or five times, before I could get a connection. At one point, after trying for 45 minutes, I arrived at the Terminal with no connection. I got a local journey and informed the customer my machine wasn't connecting. I couldn't refuse the job, as we should not be working without a full credit card system,



so if it hadn't connected by the time we arrived she would get the fare free. The agent on the Terminal couldn't believe I was prepared to do this, but what choice did I have? It was that or be kicked off the rank. I was lucky on this occasion, as after 55 minutes, it finally connected just as I dropped the passenger off.

## Appalling customer service

The worst part about all of this is that their customer support for drivers is non-existent out of hours and in holiday periods. There is only a number to ring for when a customer can't pay. I tried this line and got cut off four times. I knew this would be the case, as I was lucky enough to get a fare to Brighton in early December and had a problem with payment (on a Sunday), I didn't get through and so on that occasion had to leave without knowing whether I had been paid.

Luckily, after having so many issues over the past few years, one of the technicians has very kindly given me his personal number so I can contact him if I get stuck. He talked me through it, but still couldn't be

sure if I had been paid.

When I eventually got my cab back from the garage, I was straight back to the same problem. It was a Sunday. I tried to contact driver support and got through to the same department, that's based in Asia I think, and quite clearly does not understand how our cab trade works, only to be told they are only available Monday morning from 9.00am.

My log in wasn't working. It said I was still logged into the rental cab. I knew I had logged out, but contacted the proprietor and met him at Heathrow to double check (more time wasted, when I could have been working). I had definitely logged out and yet I still couldn't sign in. So, I got in touch with the technician directly again and after a few hours he managed to get me connected.

## No pay, no way

Apart from the hard-working technician, this is just appalling customer service. TfL need to take note of how bad this company's service is. I had a stressful

time, and I was lucky enough to have the personal number of this technician. What do other drivers do in the same position?

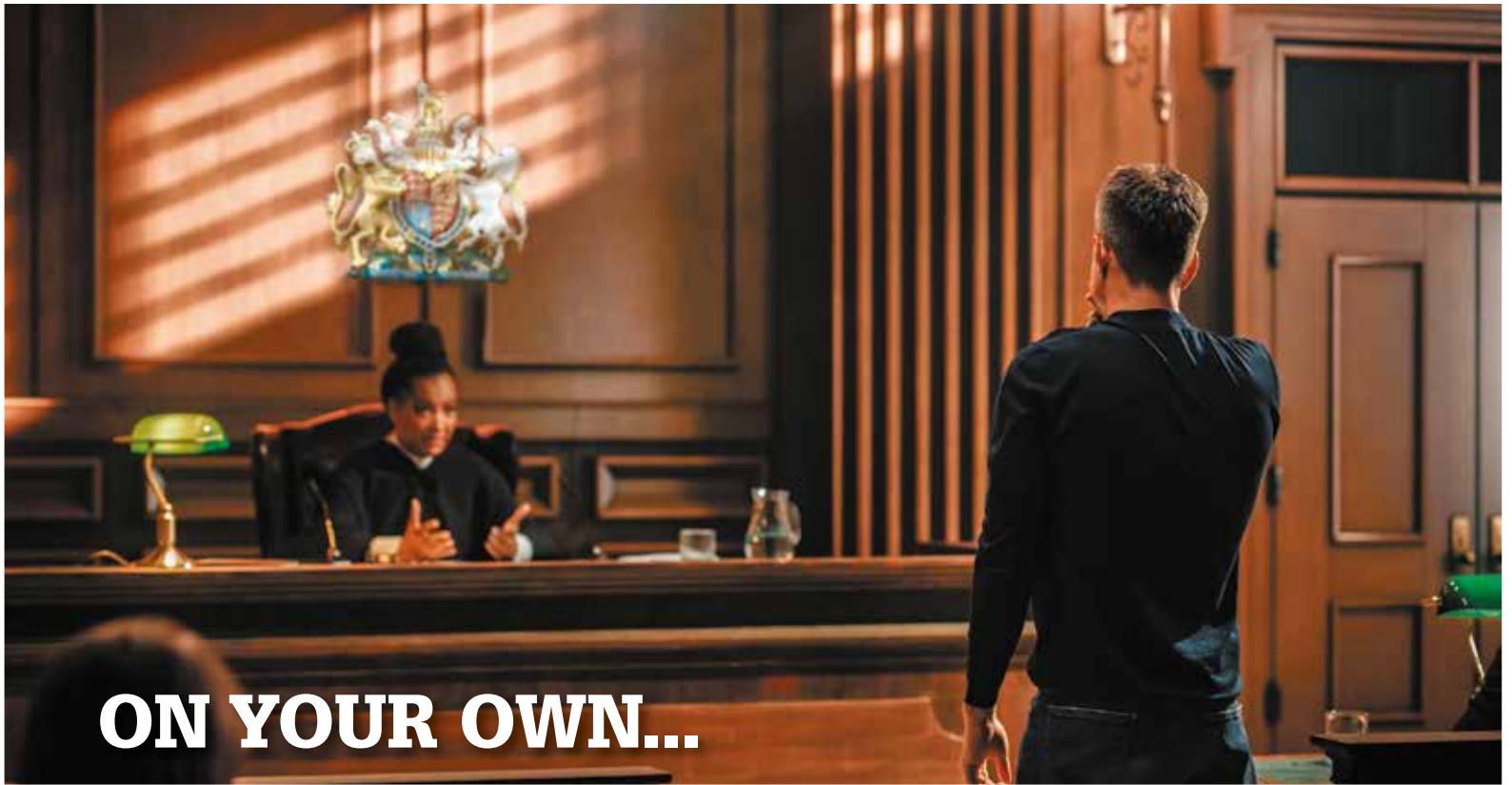
TfL say NO to second devices, yet they don't give us a solution or alternative option to use when things don't work, which trust me, in my own experience and talking to many drivers, is often. I am repeating myself now, but would anyone at TfL go to work with the expectation that they may not get paid? I think not. The question is then why are they not trying to help?

After being with this provider for seven years and trying everything they suggest, their only remaining solution has been for me to leave their services. This shouldn't be my only choice. Surely it should be to look at how they can improve their services and most importantly their customer support system?

I could write a double page spread on every problem I have, but I don't think this will solve it. TfL need to understand that this is a huge problem and one that needs urgent attention. I know the LTDA has had meetings with TfL on this and there are discussions being had about changes that need to be made to improve things for drivers and make sure we can always get paid. In the meantime, I want to massively thank the technician who has tried tirelessly to help me. I can only apologise for contacting him out of hours, but I didn't know what else to do. **LTDA**







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**...OR WITH THE LTDA**



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Even the most experienced London taxi drivers can find themselves in legal trouble, and with the law constantly changing, it's easy to get caught out.

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

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# A Passage Through Time: Entering Soho

Phil Brown whisks us off to the innermost sanctum of Central London, exploring one of its most iconic locations and historical disasters.

## Footprints and Foundations

**W**e now arrive in the new location of Soho. Many of the streets here do not have vehicular access in the present day. For older cab drivers, they will remember a well-known route from Great Marlborough Street to the north of Charing Cross Road. This cut through dissected a dozen streets. In cab terminology, the route acquired an eponymous name and became known as 'the dirty dozen.'

### Fields of pleasure

The unusual name 'Soho' derives from the ancient hunting cry 'So-ho!', similar to the well-known cry of 'Tally-ho!', which is used by the hunting fraternity today. The terrains had a bucolic setting where the flora and fauna flourished. The moniker Great Windmill Street provides

evidence of a rural pastime in this location. The greenery had a flat landscape, which provided ideal conditions for hunting, and Henry VIII (1509-1547) was often seen in this location. To define Soho's boundaries in the present

"The greenery had a flat landscape, which provided ideal conditions for hunting, and Henry VIII (1509-1547) was often seen in this location."

day, the north is Oxford Street, the east is Charing Cross Road. To the south is Shaftesbury Avenue, and due west is Regent Street. Major road improvements in the late-1800s caused topographical changes to the street pattern of

Soho. Chinatown and Leicester Square were originally referred to as Leicester Fields. This location was inclusive in Soho before Shaftesbury Ave. was developed, thus bisecting the southern side of Lower Soho.

### Early development

The church has always been influential in acquiring land throughout the capital. In the Middle Ages, Soho green fields were under the ownership of Westminster Abbey, who leased it to the Mercers' Company, a guild in the City of London. Other religious orders also obtained leases in this district, including the Abbey of Abingdon and the Hospital of Burton Saint Lazare. The Reformation in the early-1500s saw the ownership of 50% of Soho pass to the Crown. The remaining plots of land were leased or sold to a variety of owners. These estate landlords included the Earls of Portland, Newport, and Leicester, Lord Gerald, and Sir William

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Pulteney. Many of the street names reflect the holdings of these landowners.

### Cause and effect

The development of the capital was due to a catastrophic event that engulfed the City of London. The conflagration of 1666 was a defining moment in the capital's long history. The Great Fire of London occurred in London's eastern quarter. This area only measured one square mile, however up to 200,000 people lived within this crowded domain, upon an early Roman stronghold that was constructed at the beginning





of the first millennia. Through the centuries, London became a major city of commercialism. Prior to the Great Fire of London, most inhabitants lived and worked in this ancient quarter. The crumbling Roman wall that encircled the old City was still evident in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

After the destruction of the city, a majority of the population did not want to return to their former habitats. The anxiety of future fires in such a congregated township was a worrying prospect. The choice was simple and the population was on the move. Most would take the passage west and settle in the

idyllic villages of the capital. Landlords who had rented out arable land to tenant farmers quickly realised that a crop of houses would be more rewarding than a crop of vegetables. The demographic was changing, as former villages were consumed by new housing developments. This was the beginning of the urban landscape. The greenery of London was eventually covered over by the march of bricks and mortar.

### New arrivals

In the late-17<sup>th</sup> century, the former hunting grounds of Soho were under rapid construction.

Fine streets and squares with elaborate houses to attract the gentry were constructed throughout the neighbourhood. This prime London address proved popular with the upper classes. However, new arrivals under persecution from Europe would also inhabit this West End locality. Thus, creating a social paradox for the well-to-do residents. London has always been a cosmopolitan city. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, French Huguenots fleeing oppression settled in this district. They were followed by Greek Christians who had sought refuge in England.

That influence is still apparent today. The French church in Soho Square continues to be a place of prayer. The French house hostelry in Dean Street is another reminder, as is the former French Hospital in Shaftesbury Avenue, now the Covent Garden Hotel. ■ TAXI

If you have any questions on London's history or are contemplating a tourist guide course, contact me via [journeythroughtime@hotmail.com](mailto:journeythroughtime@hotmail.com)





# What's On? West End

Charlotte reviews what's worth seeing in theatres, and looks ahead to an exciting year.

## Under the spotlight



### **The Homecoming – Young Vic** 📍

The Young Vic has continued its streak of impeccable show choices, with this latest revival of Harold Pinter's Tony Award-winning modern classic. In a small house in East London, there lives a working class family of dubious occupation and nature. When eldest son Teddy, a university professor, returns home from America with Ruth, a wife whom his family have never met, a power struggle quickly forms between her and the five men.

This is not a play for everyone, and your patience with it fully relies on how much you enjoy a Pinteresque play, with dialogue that borders on the mundane, a story where nothing really happens, and everything is implied with an underlying sense of malice. For the show's two-hour-and-five-minute runtime (including interval), this atmosphere is maintained to taut perfection, with a precarious feeling that something awful will occur at any moment.

It's the union between Pinter's words, the sumptuous staging and note-perfect casting and performances that allow this to happen. Its only pre-show warning is about the use of haze, which fills the auditorium prior to the performance – creating a transportive timelessness, that what is about to occur is from another time. Jared Harris' wannabe patriarch is delightfully cantankerous; a man so fixated on his past to the point of denial. Joe Cole gives a powerhouse performance as the malignant Lenny, dominating the stage with his cold, quick wit. Lisa Diveney completes the lead trio, near enough stealing the show as an underestimated, calculating invader.

An impressively sharp take on a darkly depressing play.



*The Homecoming runs until 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2024.*

## The year ahead...

### ■ **Exhibitionists at King's Head Theatre** (8<sup>th</sup> January – 10<sup>th</sup> February)

When ex-partners collide at an exhibition, sparks fly and their new boyfriends are caught in the blast, igniting a series of comic crises involving a road trip along the Pacific Coast Highway, that leads them to a mysterious hotelier and new beginnings.

### ■ **Cowboys at Royal Court** (11<sup>th</sup> January – 10<sup>th</sup> February)

When handsome bandit Jack Cannon swaggers into a sleepy town in the Wild West, their explosive arrival inspires a gender revolution, and starts a fire under the petticoat of every one of the town's repressed inhabitants.

### ■ **Cruel Intentions at The Other Palace** (11<sup>th</sup> January – 14<sup>th</sup> April)

In Manhattan's high society, Sebastian and Kathryn are a deadly step-sibling duo who use their wealth, manipulation, and sexual prowess to get what they want. In a cruel bet, Kathryn convinces Sebastian to attempt to seduce the headmaster's daughter Annette, a virtuous girl who aims to remain celibate until marriage. Weaving a web of temptation, deceit and secrecy, the pair hatch a plan to destroy the innocent girl, along with anyone who dares to get in their way.

### ■ **Rehab at Neon 194** (12<sup>th</sup> January – 17<sup>th</sup> February)

It's 1999 and a jaded 26-year-old pop star, Kid Pop, finds himself in court, after being caught red-handed in a drug-fueled tabloid sting. An understanding judge gives Kid the choice between jail time or a rehabilitation centre for six weeks. It's a no-brainer for Kid: rehab will be a holiday. But how could he have got it so wrong?

### ■ **Afterglow at Southwark Playhouse Borough** (12<sup>th</sup> January – 10<sup>th</sup> February)

When Josh and Alex, a married couple in an open relationship, invite Darius to share their bed for a night, a new and intimate connection is ignited. As all three men come to terms with their individual definitions of love, loyalty, and trust, relationships are challenged, and futures are shaken.

### ■ **The King & I at Dominion Theatre** (20<sup>th</sup> January – 2<sup>nd</sup> March)

Anna, a widow, and her son travel to Bangkok, where she has been assigned as a teacher to King Mongkut's children. She soon finds herself having cultural clashes and differences with the ruler.

### ■ **A Mirror at Trafalgar Theatre** (22<sup>nd</sup> January – 20<sup>th</sup> April)

*'I do solemnly declare, of my own accord and without coercion, according to the constitution of this country, and the oath I have sworn to its people and its leadership, that I know not of any lawful impediment why I Joel may not be joined in marriage to Leyla.'* A story of censorship and art, and what happens when the two collide.

### ■ **Just For One Day at Old Vic** (26<sup>th</sup> January – 30<sup>th</sup> March)

Relive the day music brought the world together. Featuring songs from Bob Dylan to David Bowie, The Who to Bryan Adams, Diana Ross to Ultravox, a cast of 26 tell the story of Live Aid and the people united by it to the stage, in this brand-new musical.



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## Get in touch

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James Martin



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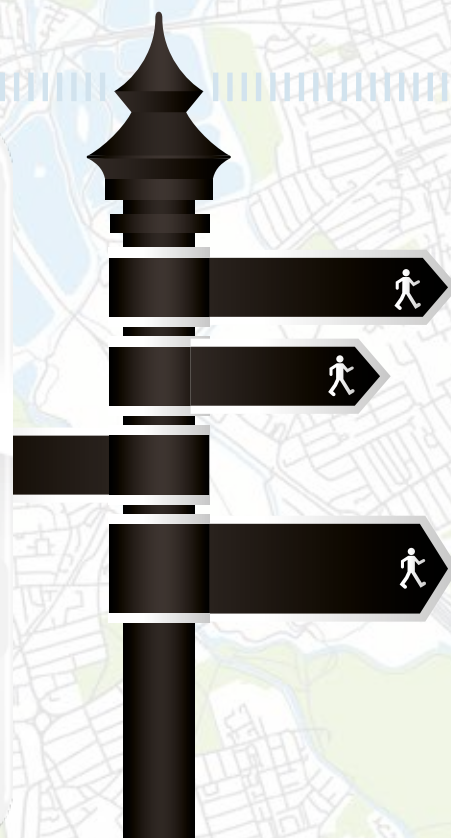
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# SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW

## LONDON?



### The grave you're invited to dance on

**B**urial sites have been a source of solemn fascination to many since time immemorial. But did you know that, unusually, there is a plot in an Islington park where you are encouraged to sing and dance on the grave?

This grave belongs to none other than renowned English clown Joseph Grimaldi, widely regarded as the "King of Clowns".

Born in 1778, Grimaldi shot to fame in the early 1800s, playing notable venues such as the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and Sadler's Wells. His style of physical comedy took a heavy toll on his body and in 1823 he was forced to retire, although his farewell performance took place on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1828.

Grimaldi's personal life saw him crippled with pain and caring for his wife, Mary, who had suffered a stroke. A suicide pact was made between the two after Grimaldi's son, Joseph Samuel, died. The pact failed, after the poison they ingested gave them nothing more than stomach cramps. As a result, any further attempts were abandoned.

Grimaldi died in 1837, after being found unresponsive in his bed by the housekeeper. Peculiarly, the coroner's report lists his death as 'died by the visitation of God.' He was buried in St James's Churchyard, Pentonville, on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1837.

The Churchyard was eventually renamed Joseph Grimaldi Park, and in 2010 a coffin-shaped musical memorial dedicated to the clown was installed on the burial plot. The memorial, which is made of musical floor tiles, carries an open invitation for visitors to dance upon Grimaldi's grave. The tiles, when danced upon, plays *Hot Codlins*.





## Pneumonia Junction

London's underground network is one of the largest urban railway systems in the world. Stretching from Buckinghamshire to Essex, it has 272 stations, serving over three million passengers on a daily basis.

Given its sprawling nature, it's no surprise that many stations are unrecognisable from their original construction. The station names themselves have always held a fascination with many, in fact it could be argued the etymology of some of these London locations are highly mysterious. One such station is Rayners Lane.

Sited at the north-westerly end of the tube network, and served by both the Piccadilly and Metropolitan lines, it is considered one of the London Underground's more remote outposts. In fact, it was so far out it was nicknamed 'Pneumonia Junction' on account of its exposed location.

The station itself is a Grade II listed building, which first opened its doors in 1906. At the time of opening, there was just one house in the area. This was owned by a local farmer called Daniel Rayner. As a result of this one chap living in the area, the station was called Rayners Lane Halt. But what is a halt?

A halt is a small station, usually unmanned or with very few staff, and with few facilities. In some cases, trains will stop only upon request, when passengers on the platform indicate that they wish to board, or passengers on the train inform the crew that they wish to alight.

The station was eventually rebuilt in 1938 and the word "halt" was dropped from its name, as urbanisation took hold, thus increasing footfall.



## The River Lea: King Alfred and the Vikings

Originating in the Chiltern Hills and running through to Bow Creek, sits the River Lea. It is one of the largest rivers in London and the easternmost major tributary of the Thames. The River Lea is steeped in history, but did you know that a Viking ship was believed to have been unearthed during the construction of the Lockwood Reservoir during the 1900s?

The upturned 40-foot long, clinker-built ship, was originally believed to be a Viking vessel. However, this was debunked after carbon dating attributed the vessel to the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed to have been a barge that capsized in a former course of the river and then struck the bank rather than sinking. It is known as the Walthamstow II ship.

The confusion surrounding the Walthamstow II ship's origin stemmed from the fact that in around 878 AD, the Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum was drawn up. As part of this treaty, the course of the River Lea was to be used to define the border between the Danes and the English. In 894, a force of Danes sailed up the river to Hertford and built a fortified camp, in the higher reaches of the Lea, about 20 miles north of London. Alfred the Great saw an opportunity to defeat the Danes and dug a new channel to lower the level of the river, leaving the Danes stranded. It is believed that the Vikings abandoned their ships and fled to Bridgnorth.

So despite being originally believed to have been a Viking ship burial, to which an account of a skeleton and gold ornaments underneath had become associated, the experts were 800 years out.





# European News Round-up



Wim Faber takes us through the latest stories from across the continent, from 'taxi bashing' in Paris to linguistic strikes in Brussels.



Taxis went on strike against the linguistic laws imposed by the Flemish government.

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## International correspondent

**T**he last days of December came with several surprises – and not of the pleasant, seasonal type. Specifically, the issue was a refusal of many EU member states to agree on the Platform Work Directive (PWD), which could bring proper employment to platform workers. So it's time for the Belgian EU presidency to sort it out. But first, let me belatedly wish you a wonderful 2024!

### Striking over linguistics

A few days before Christmas,

taxi drivers at Brussels Airport went on strike for two-and-a-half hours, protesting against the linguistic demands made by the Flemish government on the predominantly French-speaking drivers from Brussels. As the airport is situated in Flanders, Dutch language exam rules hold sway. By July, the 350 drivers at the airport should be able to converse and write on B1-Level. Many drivers wonder why they should be able to write in Dutch as well, as the customer usually speaks English or French. GTL, the Belgian taxi association, thinks the B1-level is too high. Most drivers suspect there are lingo-political motives behind the Flemish demands.

### 'Taxi bashing' in Paris

As if that was not enough for a year on its last legs, on December's final day, the French Transport Secretary, Clément Beaune, clearly in need of political points, issued a warning on social network X. Having 'discovered' - after a perfunctory 'mystery' test on 31<sup>st</sup> December - that one in three taxis in Paris apparently refuses payment by credit card. Beaune announced that controls and sanctions would be strengthened. "Let this be clear to everyone, particularly 200 days before the Olympic Games are starting." Millions of visitors are expected in Paris for the Games. The French government and Paris

authorities, as well as the taxi industry, hope that cabs will play an important role in the event.

A *TF1* news crew 'verified' Beaune's mysterious statistics. At one of Paris' busiest train stations, Gare du Nord, they found that the first taxi did not accept credit cards: "The terminal doesn't work," the driver said. "Every month, the card companies take commissions from us, while you choose not to declare cash. All drivers do it," they said. The second cab accepted credit cards, but understood colleagues who do not. "The bank terminal costs us 35 Euros per month (£30) and the fees are 0.13%."

### Fine of £59

Hélène Manceron, who runs France's leading taxi magazine, *100% Taxis*, thinks the whole thing stinks of 'taxi bashing' for political reasons and is 'unfounded'. "Some drivers still try to avoid accepting cards but it is a small minority. Times have changed since the Grandguillaume law of 2016, regulating the Paris taxi trade. For seven years, drivers have risked a fine of 68 Euros (£59) if their payment terminal is missing or even if they have one that does not work."

She continued: "Taxis affiliated

with companies like G7 or Alpha Taxis have been taking credit card payments for a long time. Unaffiliated taxis generally have SumUp type on-board terminals which do not need a banking subscription and demand fairly minimal commissions." The specialist journalist suspects that 'taxi bashing' is a good way for politicians to 'get people talking about them without having to spend money. The mystery investigation Beaune claims to have carried out is just as mysterious as the results he announces because he cites no source."



Many EU Member states refused to support the agreement on the PWD.

### No Platform Work Directive... yet

As mentioned, prior to Christmas, many EU Member States refused to support the provisional agreement on the PWD. The agreement on the directive – a rule all EU countries must abide by – must be renegotiated in 2024, under the Belgian EU presidency. Germany abstained (again) from the agreement reached. Italy, France, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, the Republic of Ireland and Sweden rejected a deal negotiated by the Spanish Presidency, regarding the EU Council and European Parliament negotiators. The specialist Gig Economy Project

even claimed "Macron is poisoning an entire continent," recalling how he was once a major advocate of Uber in France, according to the Uber Files. The agreement would have confirmed a presumption of platform economy employment across the EU, giving all gig workers rights regarding algorithmic control over their work.

Almost all political groups in the EU Parliament were in favour of the deal. But the parliament's term of office ends in April 2024, so there's little time to renegotiate on the directive. The aggressive and incessant lobby of the platforms – unheard of in Brussels in terms of negativity – has already paid off. **TAXI**





# Ending a Record Year Right

2023 was a record year for new cab sales, with 1,766 new TXEs being sold, an average of 33 new cabs every week, and a record amount of over £130 million invested by the trade!



## Cab you drive

Looking back on the end of 2023, December saw decent cab sales, bringing an end to what was overall, a record year in terms of sales for London's taxi trade.

In the car sales business, December is always one of the quietest months. People tend to concentrate on things other than dealing with the hassle of buying and selling cars. Even those in the

market for a new car tend to put it off until January, because come trade in or sell on time, the car is, in this case, a 2024 car, rather than a 2023 one.

Unusually, this is not so much the case with the taxi trade and December sales figures, whilst not breaking any records, usually tend to be better than expected. December 2023 was bang on average, with 94 new TXEs joining the ranks. Bearing in mind the fact that December is in reality only three working weeks, that's an impressive average of 30 cabs a week, or in

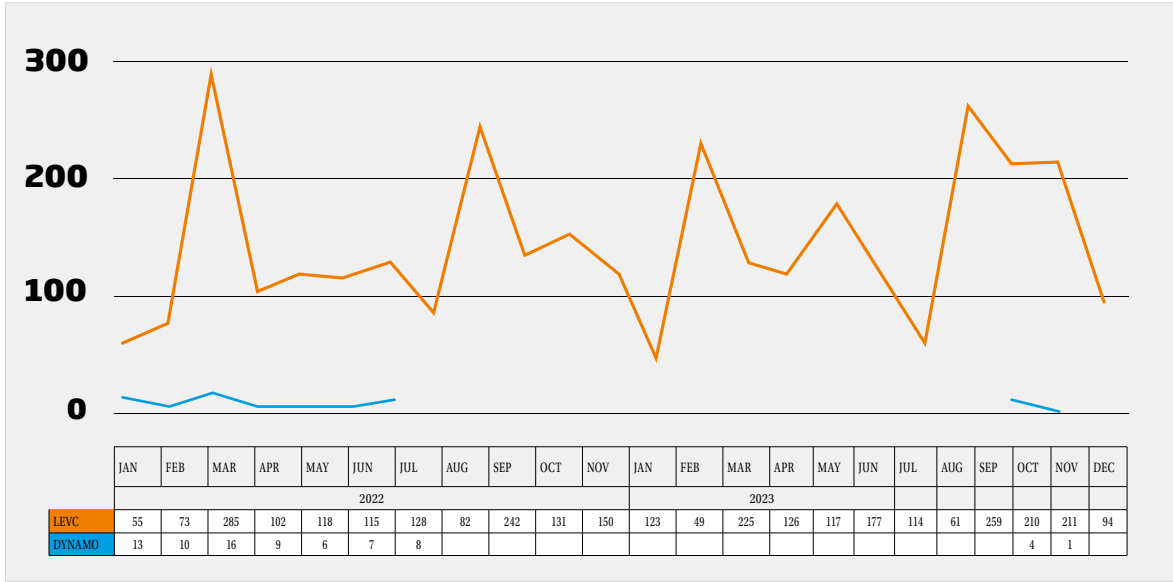
monetary terms over £2 million being invested per week.

In fact, 2023 was a record year for new cab sales, with 1766 new TXEs being sold, an average of 33 new cabs every week, and a record amount of over £130 million invested by the trade!

The second-hand market is the exception in December. It's always slow, which might be why, a nameless small fleet owner tried to catch me out with a Vito he wanted to sell. I went to look at it, drove it, and as usual with any Vito, I checked the rear wheel steering was working and all was good.

A figure was agreed upon and a week later I went to collect the cab. Before I transferred any money, I had a quick walk around it again and noticed some greasy fingerprints on the rear wheel arch. A quick look underneath and it became obvious that someone had been playing with the actuators that control the rear wheel steering. I started it up, and lo and behold it was not working! Needless to say, I walked away from the cab.

When I mentioned the story to a garage owner, he informed me that this fleet is notorious for renting actuators and fitting them to a cab in order to pass the NSL test and then removing them and locking the wheels once the cab has passed! Another lesson learned, and a tip for you if you are buying a Vito, always check the rear wheel steering before parting with you hard earned! **TAXI**



DYNAMO	185
LEVC	7,947
TX2	64
TX4	4,417
VITO	2,160
TOTAL	14,773



# Looking Forward To A Special D-Day Anniversary Trip To Normandy

**TAXI** spoke to Brian Heffernan, Chairman of the Taxi Charity, to reflect and look ahead.

**TAXI** Hi Brian, you had a very busy 2023. What does 2024 look like for the Taxi Charity?

**Brian:** 2023 was a hugely significant year for us, as we celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> year of London cab drivers supporting veterans. 2023 was important for the charity and drivers, but 2024 will be an even bigger year for our veterans, especially those who were involved in WWII.

**TAXI** What have you lined up for the big D-Day anniversary?

**Brian:** This June, people from the UK, France, Canada and the USA (and likely other parts of the globe too) will be heading to Normandy to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day. And we hope to be there as well. Back in 2019, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary was a very moving occasion, and this year I think it will be even more so. Sadly, many WWII veterans are no longer with us and the number who will be able to make the trip to Normandy will be fewer. In 2019, 30 cabs took 30 veterans back to the beaches for our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary trip. This year, we estimate that we will probably need only half this number of drivers.

**TAXI** How do you even begin to plan a trip like this? Are the logistics difficult?

**Brian:** The most infuriating part of planning has been prices of hotel rooms in Normandy for the week of D-Day. They have absolutely sky rocketed, and even at the exorbitant prices there is no - or very little - availability. Unfortunately, this means that we won't be able to take everyone with us that we would have liked to. After the veterans, carers, drivers and medical team have been prioritised, we know there will be some very disappointed supporters out there.

The other volunteer drivers and I totally acknowledge and appreciate what an honour it will be to take these men and women, who gave so much for our freedom, over to Normandy, to pay their respects to those who didn't come home. It'll also serve as a way to remember the events of the largest seaborne invasion in history.



Taxi Charity Veterans pictured at Sword Beach, Normandy, for D-Day 75, in June 2019.



Veterans at Ranville, Normandy D-Day, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 - credit Ben Mayne.





London Cab drivers and Taxi Charity Volunteers Ian Gray, Dean Euesden and Dave Hemstead.



Cab wrap designed by Susy featuring WWII veteran Peter Kent.

### **TAXI** Remind us what was achieved from the 2019 trip.

**Brian:** Five years ago, Marie Scott was presented with the Legion d'Honneur during our visit, and at our Christmas Party David Morgan was presented with his. We are working closely with the French embassy so that another of our veterans will receive one shortly.

### **TAXI** As we know, Taxi Charity relies on donations. How is fundraising going for the D-Day trip?

**Brian:** We have already raised some funds towards the trip but we are still some way short of the required total. We are applying to foundations and other charities for help and doing bucket collections at London Underground Stations. We are extremely thankful to those who are doing money-raising challenges for us, including our advisor, Battlefield Historian and Guide, Ben Mayne, and veteran Ben Mead. In March,

Ben Mayne will be walking 25 km across London, and on 6<sup>th</sup> June Ben Mead, who served in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan, will be walking the route that No.4 Commando took on D-Day in 1944, from Sword Beach to Pegasus Bridge.

There are lots of ways that you can donate, and every penny you do will go towards supporting our work with veterans.

[www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org) ■ **TAXI**



To find out more about **Ben Mayne's challenge** visit [bit.ly/47ulevy](http://bit.ly/47ulevy)



To find out more about **Ben Mead's challenge** visit [bit.ly/3RLMq3c](http://bit.ly/3RLMq3c)

### **D-Day - 6<sup>th</sup> June, 1944**

Codenamed Operation Neptune, and often referred to as D-Day, it is the largest seaborne invasion in history. The operation began the liberation of France, and the rest of Western Europe, and laid the foundations of the Allied victory on the Western Front.

Allied infantry and armoured divisions began landing on the coast of France at 06:30. The target 50-mile stretch of the Normandy coast was divided into five sectors: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword.

The men landed under heavy fire from gun emplacements overlooking the beaches, and the shore was mined and covered with obstacles such as wooden stakes, metal tripods, and barbed wire, making the work of the beach-clearing teams difficult and dangerous.

The Allies failed to achieve any of their goals on the first day. Carentan, Saint-Lô, and Bayeux remained in German hands, and Caen, a major objective, was not captured until 21<sup>st</sup> July. Only two of the beaches (Juno and Gold) were linked on the first day, and all five beachheads were not connected until 12<sup>th</sup> June. However, the operation gained a foothold that the Allies gradually expanded over the coming months. German casualties on D-Day have been estimated at 4,000 to 9,000. Allied casualties were documented at at least 10,000, with 4,414 confirmed dead.

### **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. It is the only Forces charity that focuses on providing fun and entertainment and 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.

The charity received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021 and celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023, a remarkable milestone for a small, niche charity peopled by enthusiastic volunteers.

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

[www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org)



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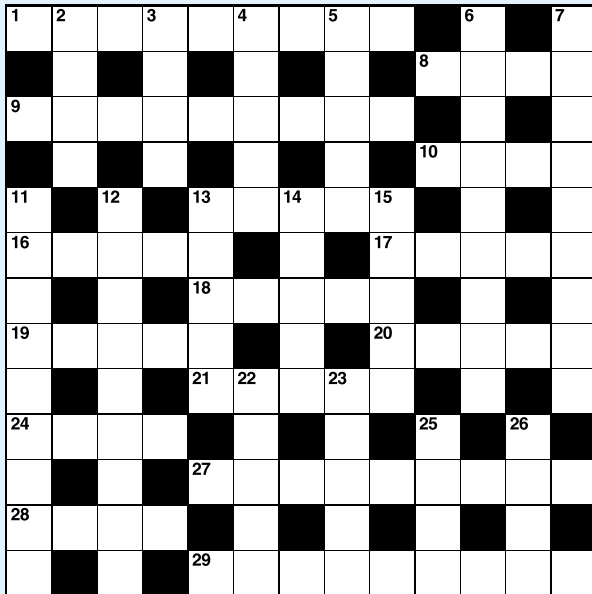
[www.ltda.co.uk](http://www.ltda.co.uk)





# Puzzler Page

## Crossword



### ACROSS

- 1 Suggestions (9)
- 8 Strongly advise (4)
- 9 Take a chance (9)
- 10 Information (4)
- 13 Easy victim (5)
- 16 Up to the time that (5)
- 17 Vacuous, senseless (5)
- 18 In existence (5)
- 19 Rebuff, slight (5)
- 20 Ocean cruiser (5)
- 21 Located (5)
- 24 Snooker cue end (4)
- 27 Dining-room furniture item (9)
- 28 Belonging to us (4)
- 29 Containers of gifts and goodies (5,4)

### DOWN

- 2 Ready for picking or eating (4)
- 3 Speed of walking (4)
- 4 Spicy Mexican sauce (5)
- 5 Medieval stringed instruments (5)
- 6 Grandparent's sister (5-4)
- 7 Gardening tool (9)
- 11 Register of visitors' comments (5,4)
- 12 Arrangement of parts (9)
- 13 Back-up strategy (4,1)
- 14 Cuts sparingly (5)
- 15 Amount produced (5)
- 22 \_\_\_ Ekberg, 1950s/60s actress (5)
- 23 Construct, build (5)
- 25 Search thoroughly (4)
- 26 \_\_\_ Davies, Taskmaster host (4)

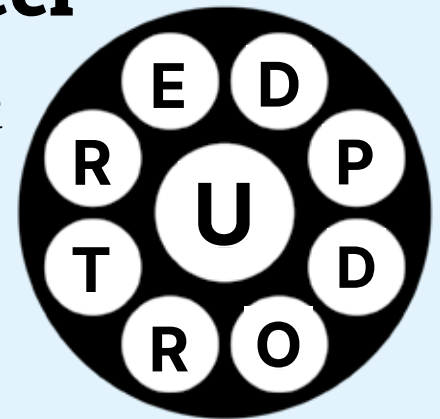
## Sudoku

Have a go at this medium level Sudoku puzzle. Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 just once.

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

4				
		3		
	<		>	
	<			

All answers to puzzler on p30

All puzzles © Puzzler Media Ltd - [www.puzzler.com](http://www.puzzler.com)

**Puzzler**  
BY THOMSON



## CABS FOR RENT



07957 465423  
e16-taxirentals.co.uk

## TX4s TO RENT

- Ascott's maintained.
- Pay by cash/bank/online.
- Mercs also available



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**De-commissioned your  
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outside London.**

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and drive away.**

**John  
07702 554934**

## LINAGE

## CABS WANTED

● All de-commissioned good quality TX4s wanted. Instant decision, cash paid. We come to you. Also, white TX4 elegance wanted 07973 335 739

● 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

## CABS FOR SALE

● Cabs for sale. Main Dealer service history. Non-fleet cabs.

New stock daily. Cabs also wanted. Finance Paid 07957 465423

● Nissan Dynamo, Dec'21 plate, 42,300 miles. £36,950 ono. Call 07779 162 030

● LEVC 18 comfort. 132k miles Black, 2 yrs 3 months ext warranty. Plated til end March. £32,500. 07723309653

● Raven Black TXE Vista Comfort+, 19 Reg, 83k Miles, One owner, excellent condition. £33,995 ono. 07803558146

● TXEs black no ads, Camden area ring Steve - 07976729033

## 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

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 james.martin@cplone.co.uk

 01727 739 197



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Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

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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

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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

To the Manager of \_\_\_\_\_

Bank/Building Society Address \_\_\_\_\_

### 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:





# Hair We Go, 2024!

Because they sit looking at the back of my head, most of my fares probably couldn't pick me out of a police lineup...

## A woman of words

**N**ot that I have ever been in an ID parade, honest. I'm the invisible woman at home too, because over Christmas we played a game with friends where we had to describe parts of our partner's bodies, and Mr Meg got every question wrong.

He described my eyes as brown (they are green), my belly button as an outie (it's an innie), my dress size as a 47 (what is that even?) and worst of all when asked which celebrity has the same hairdo as me he replied, "Brian May."

Which is why, in the first week of January, I booked a 2024 hair makeover at a posh London salon. It's one where I've dropped off many women over the years. Buzz words often muttered there include

'radical', 'shorter', 'sharper' and 'a completely different colour'.

I went on bargain bin night, when (supervised) juniors are let loose with scissors and hair dye.

My trainee was Nathan, from Devon, who looked like he had escaped from a local nursery. He was wearing a pair of dungaree shorts (think Pinocchio) and a silver designer dummy on a rope around his neck that he told me was an 18<sup>th</sup> birthday gift from his parents. They had spent £325 on it! 'Dummies,' I thought to myself.

Nathan's hair was dyed lemon and lime and arranged in tall spikes.

Full of New Year bravado, I said "I'll go short and spiky/tousled in pink and purple please."

Nathan gasped at this news and went to consult with his manager. I could see the pair of them in deep discussion, taking turns to point at me and frown.

"I'm sure!" I called over, "It's not like it's forever, I just want a change."

Long haircut story short – 40 minutes later Nathan had left me with patches all over my head. He'd slapped on the bleach mix and was too busy chatting with another trainee about the new *Willy Wonka* film to check its progress. The manager? He was busy with the hair sweeper out the back and had forgotten all about me too.

Until the 'incident' I'd been happy as Larry, sat there drinking a complimentary latte and enjoying *OK Magazine*, wondering if Amanada Holden owns any clothes that aren't skin-tight, when I heard/felt/smelt sizzling at the back of my head.

I yelled for Nathan and can confirm he needs urgent training in crisis management. After one look at my scorched scalp he started to gag, and then staggered around, as if about to faint.

The Manager said, "So you wanted a radical change, right? I think we have delivered that..."



Solicitor's details have been exchanged.

When I arrived home, Mr Meg tore himself away from studying the 2019 Wickes catalogue to say hello, and looked at me aghast. "What the...?" he began.

"So, do I still look like Brian May?" I interrupted.

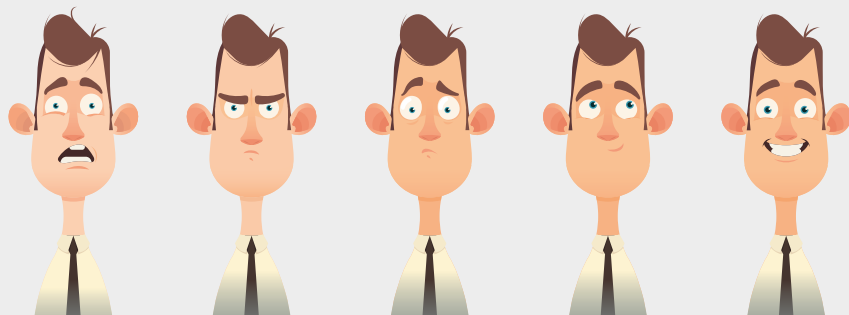
He replied, "No, more like Ross Kemp."

Happy New Year? No. Unhappy No Hair.

**TAXI**

30

## PUZZLER ANSWERS



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

## Crossword

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### Sudoku

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

### Futoshiki

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

### Wordwheel

**SOLUTION:** PROTRUDED

**All words:** Detour, dour, duet, dupe, duped, erupt, euro, ordure, outer, pour, poured, pout, pouted, protrude, proud, prouder, prude, pure, purer, purr, purred, rout, route, routed, router, rudder, rude, rudier, rued, tour, toured, tourer, troupe, trouper, true, truer, udder, PROTRUDED.

**Word targets:** Excellent: 33, Good: 28, Target: 20, Kids: 15





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