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9th July 2024 #568

IS IT ALL OVER FOR THE CONVERSION?



HOPES DASHED FOR EURO V TO EURO VI TAXI CONVERSION

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09.07.24

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IS THE EURO V TO EURO VI CONVERSION DEAD?
HJS Emission Technology has announced via social media that TfL have “ceased the Vito project” and “paused the TX4 durability trials”. The promise of a workable conversion to bring Euro V cabs up to Euro VI standard and extend their age limit, had given some drivers hope that they could get a few more years out of their older diesel cabs. Unfortunately, it now seems that that dream is coming to an end. According to HJS, after the Vito failed once again in testing at Millbrook, TfL has taken the decision to end the project. HJS notes that the recent failure was due to a component (the DPF) not manufactured by them, which developed a fault and negatively affected the emission results. They tried to rectify this stating, “we made some robust proposals to TfL who decided not to accept them.”
TfL’s decision on the Vito then raised questions about the TX4 conversion. . Subsequently, HJS wrote on X, “TfL paused the TX4 durability trials whilst they think about it!! We are awaiting a further response...”, suggesting that may also be over.
After years of speculation and delays, it was already too late for many drivers, who had already been forced to decommission their Euro V cabs. With the final cost of the systems mounting, many had already lost confidence in the conversion, however for those still hoping for a positive outcome this will be very disappointing news.



FURTHER CLOSURES OF BLACKWALL TUNNEL
TfL has announced further southbound closures of Blackwall Tunnel across the weekends of 20th-22nd July and 17th-19th August. The planned closures are required to support the new Silvertown Tunnel, which is due to open in 2025. Northbound traffic will not be affected by the closures and will be diverted via the southbound tunnel when required.



OLD JEWRY REOPENED
In another positive move, the City of London Corporation has reopened Old Jewry to traffic, with taxis also granted additional access. . Since Friday 5th July, Old Jewry has re-opened to traffic travelling in a southbound direction. The closure at the Junction with Poultry has also been removed. All vehicles will now be able to turn right into Cheapside, but additionally taxis and cycles will be able to turn left towards Bank and specifically the Ned, at all times. The purpose of the traffic experiment, which could last up to 18 months, is to assess the extent to which the changes improve journey times for people who need to travel by motor vehicle in the Cheapside area and understand the impacts on other street users. The results of the experiment will be monitored and a decision then made on whether to make the changes permanent.

CRACKDOWN ON DANGEROUS CYCLING
According to the *Evening Standard*, an average of 11 cyclists a day are being fined for running red lights in London. Official statistics from the Metropolitan Police show that 4,067 cyclists were fined by officers for failing to obey traffic light signals in 2023. The figures, obtained under a Freedom of Information request, also reveal 196 cyclists were issued with £30 fixed penalty notices for riding on pavements. This comes as police across the capital have reportedly been cracking down on cyclists flouting traffic laws. City of London Police also handed out 944 fixed penalty notices to cyclists for riding through red lights in the nine months to April.



CONGESTION CHARGE TO APPLY TO ELECTRIC VEHICLES
Transport for London has announced that it is ending the Congestion Charge exemption for electric vehicles. From 25th December 2025, all electric cars and vans will have to pay the £15 per day charge, with the removal of the so-called Cleaner Vehicle Discount. London licensed taxis remain exempt from the Charge. However, PHV drivers with electric vehicles will now also be subject to the charge affecting around 16,000 vehicles according to TfL figures. Overall, more than 100,000 vehicles and drivers will be impacted by this change.
TfL’s statement suggests that the decision was largely aimed at addressing congestion and the number of vehicles entering the zone stating, “Ending the Cleaner Vehicle Discount from 25 December 2025 will maintain the effectiveness of the Congestion Charge, which is in place to manage traffic and congestion in the heart of London.” TfL also acknowledged that it would specifically help to reduce the number of PHVs circulating in the zone stating that “the changes affecting PHVs will help tackle congestion and its associated problems, such as poor air quality, and are expected to reduce the number of PHVs circulating in the Congestion Charging Zone by up to 8,000 a day.” Let’s hope it delivers!





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Another Licence Saved

He's pretty much your typical cabbie. He had never had any points on his licence or been stopped by the police, that is until he was waved to the side of the road one day...

Steve's comment

It's no secret that there is a major problem with knife crime, not just in London, but across the country. Barely a day goes by without a report of a knife attack, stabbing or even murder somewhere. Our TV screens are full of concerning images of machetes and what are now called Zombie knives. Unfortunately, one of our members managed to get caught up in police efforts to crackdown on this, despite being quite innocent.

Policing by numbers

As a result of the pressure on the police, from both the public and politicians, who are being increasingly asked questions on doorsteps as they canvas for votes in Mayoral, local and general elections, it has become a high policing priority. From what I've seen recently, it would appear the police are becoming desperate to add some 'clear ups' to the appalling statistics.

The member was minding his own business, pushing his cab around the streets, pretty much as he has done most days for the past 20 years. He's pretty much your typical cabbie. In fact, the only thing that's perhaps unusual about him is that he's never had any points on his licence and had never been stopped by the police, that is until he was waved to the side of the road in a roadblock where vehicles were being stopped at random.

Tool or weapon?

Initially, a police officer came up to the window, asked for his driving licence, badge and bill. Our man happily obliged and thought that would be it. But it wasn't. He was then asked to get out of the cab and watched as the police officer leaned in and picked up a small lock knife from the centre console, where it was lying with a pile of cable ties and a small electrical terminal screwdriver. This was all in clear and open view. Our member was asked why he had a knife. He quickly explained it was with the cable

ties, as he had recently cut and replaced the ties which held on the hubcaps, following a puncture. He also pointed out the wheel with the shiny new cable ties and offered to reach back into the cab for the receipt for the puncture repair.

Time to call the LTDA

Unbelievably, he was then arrested for having a 'bladed article' and taken to a police station. Fortunately for him, he was an LTDA member and the first thing he did once he had been booked in was to call us. He could then sit back and wait for our lawyers to arrive. With our solicitor by his side, he was advised to do a full reply interview, during which he answered every question put to him, honestly and openly and eventually, after about six hours, he was released.

Two months later, he was asked to reattend the police station, again accompanied by our representative, where he was offered a caution for the offence of possessing a bladed article in a public place. Our advisor

immediately warned against accepting the caution, which is an admission of guilt, and which could cost him his taxi licence. It's fair to say the police were not impressed. He was subsequently charged with the offence and given a court date.

Day in court

I was asked to give a statement on taxis, punctures, hub caps and cable ties to demonstrate that this was all perfectly innocent and routine for a cabbie. I then had to attend court and give evidence to that effect.

Sitting outside the Court, I saw our member, and his very worried wife and family, being reassured by our barrister that the evidence that we had acquired would see justice done. In that moment, I realised just what a great job our lawyers do, day in and day out for all our members.

Acquitted

The member was quickly acquitted and the relief on his, and his family's faces was clear for everyone to see. I was actually annoyed that a totally

"In that moment, I realised just what a great job our lawyers do, day in and day out for all our members."

innocent man had been dragged through the criminal justice system and put through so much stress and grief for what was clearly a small pocketknife, being used, as it was intended, as a tool. Our member was of good character, very obviously not involved in any criminality and yet was treated as a criminal for reasons I just cannot fathom.

Store tools safely

If you do carry a penknife or anything similar, please put it with other tools and keep them in the boot. Equally as important, if you do find yourself involved with the police, do not agree to be interviewed under caution without speaking to us, and never accept a caution without our advice. Remember, we have your back when no one else does!

LTDA



What's Next for Bank?

Traffic modelling will now need to be done, approval sought from TfL, traffic orders written, and yet more bureaucracy navigated before the trial scheme can begin in Spring 2025.

Top rank

We've had a little time to digest what happened a couple of weeks ago at the Court of Common Council in the City, where they rightly decided to have an experiment on permitting taxis back through Bank Junction. This trial should end long-running debate on this once and for all. Will our assertions that all the benefits will remain now be proven or will it indeed be the end of civilisation as we know it? Of course, we could all answer this without the need for a trial, but we are where we are.

Never a sure thing

I told you in the build-up, it really was our last-ditch attempt to gain access and whilst I was very confident in it passing (although, not as resoundingly as it did), I didn't want to jinx it all by being too positive. I suppose that's a result of other slam-dunk votes and judgements either not going our way or more scandalously being overturned later.

I knew for sure it was going to be a good day for us, when a dog came along and urinated on the bag of swag belonging to the 'Don't Break Bank' group, who like us were outside the Guildhall canvassing the attendees to try to swing any undecided votes into our respective camps.

Speaking to some of those holding the placards outside campaigning against us, it was pretty clear they didn't really know anything about the issue of taxi access, and when we told them the facts, some even seemed to agree with us.

Why 2025?

The number one question I'm currently being asked is why do we need to wait until early 2025 for the trial to begin? Surely, you just add the word 'Taxi' onto the signage and crack on? You would think it would be that simple but alas with bureaucracy nothing ever is, never. Well I say never, but of course it seemed



very simple when multiple Experimental Traffic Orders (ETO) were used to close many roads to us or make big changes over the last few years.

We are told Bank Junction is more complicated, so in the City, traffic modelling will now need to be done, approval sought from TfL, traffic orders written, and more bureaucracy navigated, no doubt amid further attempts to derail the process by those who do not want to see us back in Bank Junction. We will be keeping the pressure up to keep things on track.

Pure venom

I could try to explain the rationale of those who campaigned against taxi access or their tactics, but I probably couldn't do it justice. Their pure venom towards us was evident even when speakers claimed not to be 'anti-black cab' or that they had 'friends and relatives in the trade'.

I can't possibly do justice to the ease with which they bent the data or omitted the inconvenient facts to make their arguments. In this case, seeing really is believing so if you want to see what we



were up against, I recommend you watch if for yourselves on YouTube using this QR code.

See for yourselves

The debate on taxi access starts at 14 min 30 sec but to assist,

can I suggest you just look at the following times. If you watch the following clips, you will see what I am talking about and how strongly against the Court even just debating the option of a trial scheme giving taxis access they were, let alone actually giving us that access, even on a trial basis.

As ever I find myself asking why they are so opposed? As we've said all along give us the access and they can then prove that taxis are causing a problem well fine, we can go from there. But why are they so scared of a trial?

- Alderwoman Grekos; 19 mins 50 secs, 26 mins, 48 mins 20 secs, 54 mins 33 secs, 115 mins 15 secs
- Deputy Fredericks; 27 mins 10 secs, 50 mins 34 secs, 52 mins, 141 mins 20 secs
- Deputy Mooney BEM; 112 mins 15 secs
- Alderman Gowman CBE; 101 mins 40 secs
- Catherine McGuinness CBE 40 mins
- Deputy Lloyd Owen; 29 mins 58 secs

Of course, all the people above are entitled to their opinion and express it, it's just a pity flawed data and fear mongering were the tools that in my opinion they used.

The supporters

On the other side of the argument, we had some very sensible and reasonable arguments made in our favour. I would like to thank the following in particular for their support.

Which can be seen at:

- Deputy Thompson; 32 mins
- Alderman Hailes; 43 mins 18 secs, 121 mins 50 secs
- Wendy Hyde; 45 mins
- Ruby Sayed; 109 mins 10 secs
- James St John Davis; 119 mins 30 secs
- Deputy Gupta; 123 mins 50 secs
- Benjamin Murphy; 137 mins 17 secs
- William Upton KC; 147 mins

Thank you

Getting this over the line has meant a lot of my time has been taken up reading multiple reports, meeting councillors, City officers, businesses and many more besides, and countering the many arguments against us. One of the criticisms trade reps get is we don't work together and allow our egos to get in the way. As many of you will know, that's not how I or the LTDA operates and the same is true for many others in other orgs.

I'd like to especially thank my UCG counterpart Karen Proctor for taking some of the burden off my shoulders on other matters during the long final push by keeping me updated on schemes elsewhere in London, assisting with Bank Junction when required and allowing me the freedom to formulate a strategy and carry that out without hindrance. Thanks must also go to *London Taxi Radio* and *TaxiPoint* who actively promoted the Cabs Across Bank Campaign through their various channels. **LTDA**

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Stay Protected with LTDA Support

Make sure you are aware of TfL's latest new licensing requirements and how to comply. If in doubt, or when things go wrong, the LTDA is here to help our members.

Streets ahead

Recently, we have been receiving calls from non-members facing serious issues with Transport for London (TfL), including threats of licence revocation and police matters that could jeopardise their ability to hold a licence. Often, the excuse is, "I was going to join the LTDA but haven't completed the membership application. Can you help me?" While I sympathize with these drivers, our priority is our members. We are busier than ever addressing numerous member issues, especially with all the new policies TfL has imposed on our trade of late.

LTDA support

You can't change the past, but having the largest taxi trade organisation standing by you can alleviate the stress and uncertainty when facing serious

issues. Our in-house barristers provide the best advice and support. Imagine finding yourself accused of driving without insurance, accumulating 12 points, or being arrested. Without someone to support you, anxiety and financial strain can quickly set in.

Every driver knows how easy it is under current TfL policies to lose your livelihood or face serious threats to your licence. The LTDA is here to support all our members, guiding you through any issues with TfL or police matters. Many drivers struggle to get responses from TfL, but our experienced officers are just a phone call away, ready to offer excellent advice and help ease your worries.

New TfL Licensing Requirements

With daily challenges like speed limits, road closures, and LTNs, TfL's increasing number of requirements and changing policies the pressure on drivers is piling up. The latest TPH Notice that drivers should have received



outlines the new Department for Transport (DfT) Statutory Standards that TfL has adopted, effective from 1st July, 2024, including new rules on:

1. Notification of Police Involvement
2. Signage for Taxis and PHVs
3. Certificates of Good Conduct
4. DBS Update Service (updated version)

We encourage all members to read these documents thoroughly, especially the changes to self-reporting obligations.

Crucially, the period for self-reporting police involvement has now reduced from 21 days to just 48 hours. In practice, what this means is that you must now tell TfL about any arrest and release, charge, caution or conviction within 48 hours. This includes all motoring offences resulting in penalty points on your DVLA driving licence. When an offence is dealt with by a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), you must notify TfL within 48 hours of accepting the FPN and paying any associated fine.

TfL's implementation of DfT Standards involves assessing whether a driver can continue to work pending the conclusion of a matter or if the nature of an arrest presents a public risk and is no longer 'fit and proper' to be licensed. It's crucial to be aware of these standards as failing to disclose an arrest might lead TfL to call into question the honesty and suitability of the licence holder, regardless of the outcome and could have implications for your licence.

Medical issues

We frequently assist members receiving letters from TfL requesting further medical information or occasionally asking drivers to surrender their licence due to health concerns. This can be a daunting experience, especially without a representative to answer on your behalf and when you are probably already dealing with a lot and struggling with ill-health. Many drivers struggle to find someone to actually speak or to get a response from TfL, which can make things worse or they don't understand what is being asked of them, as it can be confusing, and our support can be invaluable in these situations.

Insurance matters

I recently spoke to a driver who faced a 60% increase in his insurance renewal, which was a shock in itself. He then assumed his policy would roll over and continue. His taxi even passed the yearly NSL inspection, and if the taxi was not insured it should have never passed the inspection, so he assumed that everything was ok. Unfortunately, he later discovered his taxi was uninsured, only after being stopped by the police. Our barrister is now handling his case so the driver knows he is in good hands.

Staying informed and having the right support behind you is crucial in navigating the challenges of our trade. The LTDA is here to protect and guide you through any issues with TfL or police matters. Make sure you're prepared and supported by joining the LTDA today. **LTDA**

Notice 05/24

Transport for London
London Taxi and Private Hire



Changes to licensing requirements from 1 July 2024

This Notice sets out changes to licensing requirements for taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensees that come into effect on 1 July 2024.

This Notice follows [TPH Notice 07/23](#) which confirmed the outcome of our Improving Safety for Taxi and PHV Passengers [consultation](#).

Changes to licensing requirements from 1 July 2024

A number of changes are coming into effect from 1 July 2024 for taxi drivers, taxi vehicle owners, PHV drivers, PHV owners and PHV operators.

Each change, and how it will impact individual licensees, has been set out below.

Please note that due to the differences in legislation, the changes will be implemented in different ways depending on whether you are a taxi licensee or a private hire licensee.

Licensee self-reporting (DfT 1) – Notification of police involvement

Licensed taxi drivers, PHV drivers and PHV operators must tell us about any arrest and release, charge, caution or conviction within 48 hours. **This includes all driving offences resulting in penalty points on your DVLA driving licence.**

When an offence is dealt with by a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), you must notify us within 48 hours of accepting the FPN and paying any associated fine.

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Lifesaver

An emergency at the Feeder Park showed the importance of first aid training. In those crucial minutes before the ambulance arrived, firefighter Martin and a cabbie saved a fellow driver's life.

Airports & beyond

I enjoy writing in TAXI, when I have something positive to share and this article is definitely one with the feel-good factor.

On Sunday 2nd June a driver collapsed in the Feeder Park. Not knowing what was up, another driver ran into the canteen and asked if there was a first aider present, as a driver had fallen over. Martin Ewins, 42, a firefighter for 18 years identified himself and started to walk towards the driver.

More serious

When he got to the driver, he still thought he had just fallen over. Another driver had put the collapsed driver into the recovery position, but as Martin got closer, he could immediately tell this was something more serious. He asked everyone around him to stand back and instructed someone to get the defibrillator that was fixed on the wall to the right of the building that is the CRS Landside Heathrow Property, with urgency. An ambulance was also called.

Martin then started to work on the driver, suspecting a cardiac arrest, as there was no pulse, and he wasn't breathing. Another cabbie started mouth-to-mouth and Martin then shocked the patient's heart with the defibrillator. He and another driver then continued to work on the poorly cab driver for 10 to 12 minutes, shocking him three times in total, as you must allow time in between. The ambulance then arrived and took over.

Saving a life

In those crucial minutes before the ambulance arrived, Martin and the fellow cabbie saved the driver's life. As a firefighter, Martin has had to attempt to resuscitate people in the past, but this was the first time he had saved a life. He explained when you go into a burning property or one that has been on fire for some time, you sometimes come across casualties, but it is never



Feeder Park Hero, Mr Martin Ewins.

known how long they have been there for. He explained that protocol is always to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) regardless. The casualties that he has come across have sadly been dead for a time, but without knowing that, he must do everything to try to save their life.

When speaking to Martin, I found him very humble, and he was just so pleased he could help. How amazing to have saved a life! The driver was in hospital for some time but is recovering well and is now at home.

So, from all of us in the Feeder Park and those who know this driver, we are eternally grateful to Martin Ewins.

Keep clear

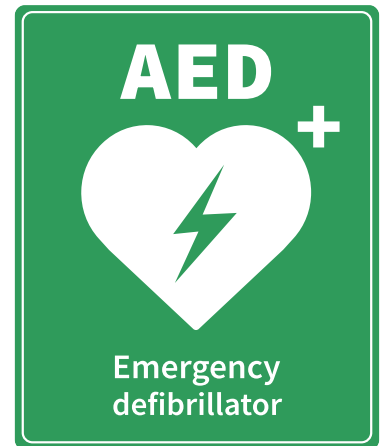
This leads me to talk about the Feeder Park and the yellow box junctions. I know I sound like a broken record, but this story proves the importance of keeping all yellow boxes clear. Just 20 minutes before the driver collapsed, a warden had asked another driver not to park there. The driver had reluctantly moved, but had he ignored the

warden, the ambulance wouldn't have been able to access the Park and get to the driver as quickly. Instead, they would have had to grab all their equipment out of the ambulance and run to the driver. A few minutes delay, could have been the difference between life and death.

We have witnessed several heart attacks at Heathrow in the past few months and all have had a good result. Just so you are all aware, the defibrillator is to the right of the building that is CRS Landside Heathrow Property. The other is attached to the large cabin to the right as you were to enter the garage. Please all familiarise yourselves with this, as it could be anyone of us who may need it next.

Staying healthy

Our lives in the cab have become a lot more stressful, which can no doubt contribute to a heart attack. If we eat well, try to exercise and destress wherever possible, it will help our health. At the Feeder Park, I see many of you going for a walk, riding your bikes or heading off to the gym,



all of this helps a healthy heart.

We were very blessed to have a firefighter on hand that day, but anyone of us can help if we take the time to learn first aid. You never know when it might come in handy. You could be sat at home and help a loved one, whether in the street, or on public transport, minding your own business and someone sat right next to you may need help, or even playing with your grandchildren in the garden.

First aid

I did a first aid course when I worked in a big company and then another recently. It's surprising how much you forget, so doing one every three years would be very beneficial.

I remember when my children were little, I was collecting them from school and my friend asked me to pick up her daughter. She was five at the time and another child had given her a gob stopper without my knowledge. As I looked at her, she was turning blue.

Thanks to my first aid training, I was able to apply abdominal thrusts (the Heimlich Manoeuvre) and the gob stopper came flying out. I had never been so shaken up, as it wasn't my child, but a simple action saved her life.

I do remember declining anyone asking me to collect their child after that, as the four I had were enough to watch! My point is, first aid training can help anyone at any age.

Thank you once again to Martin Ewins and the drivers who also played a part in saving the gentleman's life that day. **LTDA**

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Know the Rules

As much as we all believe that this is draconian and that we are being punished twice, it is in their policy, and we are stuck with it.



Knowledge is power

12

A recent change to TfL's driver policy states that as from 1st July 2024, a driver has only 48 hours to inform TfL of accepting points and paying the fine for ANY motoring conviction or other police involvement. If the matter goes to court, then any conviction also needs to also be submitted within 48 hours.

Mobile phone offences

The LTDA is still receiving far too many calls from our members who have been reported to the police for having a mobile phone in their hand while driving, albeit very slowly in traffic, or stationary at traffic lights.

In the week leading up to this edition alone, I have had three members with this issue, and it is heartbreaking to have to explain what will now happen to them. Even if you are only checking an address or a route, this is still an offence. Make sure your phone is always in a cradle.

Vigilantes

Most of these reports to the police are from cyclists, who seem to like to call themselves 'road safety vigilantes' using helmet or bike mounted cameras. It's not just the regular ones who like to gloat about it

on social media, lots of them are now doing it and the police are very happy to prosecute using this video footage alone. They seem comfortable with general, untrained members of the public doing their jobs for them.

Everybody who works or drives in London knows exactly just how most cyclists completely ignore the rules of the road. When I'm driving, I lose count of the number of cyclists, who don't believe red traffic lights, one-way streets, and turn restrictions apply to them. They are so quick to shout about not being given a 2-meter clearance yet dangerously squeeze up the inside of lorries and buses with only inches to spare. Hopefully, one day they will be forced to have some sort of identification and therefore accountability for their poor riding standards.

Consequences

But back to us, if you break this law, even if you believe you are driving safely, you will face a £200 fine and six points on your licence. But the seriousness of it doesn't stop there. Once TfL are notified, and it's now, as previously mentioned, from 1st July, it is our obligation as drivers to notify them within 48 hours, the matter only escalates. TfL will then likely contact you regarding a suspension of your taxi licence, or even worse and in a lot of cases, revocation of it. As

much as we all believe that this is draconian and that we are being punished twice, once by the police with a fine and points and secondly by TfL, with a threat to our livelihood, it is in their policy, and we are stuck with it.

This is a policy that has been adopted all over the country and not just here in London.

As a member of the LTDA, you have access to the very best protection for your livelihood through our excellent legal team. Normally, when a driver accumulates 12 points on their licence, they will receive an automatic DVLA six month driving ban, but over 90% of LTDA members represented by our barristers receive a ban of just one month or in most cases no ban whatsoever. You don't want to risk being one of the ones who doesn't get the hardship case awarded, and who ends up out of work for a lengthy period of time, so make sure you have the LTDA on side.

Be safe

I am not condoning unsafe or dangerous driving here, in fact it's the opposite, I am reminding you how to drive safely and to obey the rules of the road. Remember please only use your phone when it is legal to do so.

Don't give the certain plastic policeman, sorry cyclists, the pleasure they seem to take from reporting drivers to the police. Be lucky.

LTDA



Kirby's PCN Hotspots

YELLOW BOX CAMERAS

- Upper Woburn Place/ Endsleigh Gardens
- Eversholt Street/Churchway
- 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
- Bayswater Road/Brook Street
- Bayswater Road/Hyde Park Street

CAMERA PCN ENFORCEMENT

- Harrods (Brompton Road) Over-ranking/Zig-Zags
- Tottenham Court Road
- Sopwith Way (Chelsea Bridge) Do Not Enter
- 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
- Lower Belgrave Street AM/PM Timed School Restrictions
- Great Suffolk Street (The old Café) When using J V Bright's or the toilets, Private PCN's are being issued for over-staying the short grace period or non-payment of longer stays.

20MPH MOBILE CAMERAS

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

- Aldwych, No U-Turn across the solid white line. This is police enforced and endorsable with 3 points.

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European News

Assessing how this year's Olympic Games in Paris will play out as far as the taxi workers are

International correspondent

Paris cabs lead Olympic travel

Soon enough, athletes, spectators and tourists will be making their way to Paris for the Summer Olympic Games (between 26th July and 11th August). The influx will stretch the capital's taxi service, as the industry plans to play a major role in making these Olympics accessible, as Paris aims to keep private cars out of the city. With July and August being the holiday period for locals, some Parisians will have left the city with their places occupied by tourists flocking there.

Uniquely, many of the sports venues are located in the centre of Paris, causing daily changes to restricted roads and closed areas. The 20,000-strong Paris taxi fleet (with a population of 2.2 million) will be in pole position with unique access to all these restricted Olympic areas and dedicated roads. "Taxis – not PHVs – will have unique access to these reserved lanes," says Armand Joseph-Oudin, deputy CEO of Paris' largest dispatch centre *Taxis G7*. They direct 50 per cent of the city's cabs. The Paris trade proudly boasts one new feature: a fleet of a 1,000 wheelchair-accessible taxis (of which *G7* already runs 600) fitted with ramps, not lifts. "It was a huge challenge to get to this point. The Paris taxi fleets have been adding these vehicles – with some state support – to their fleets for about a year. These cabs will be the Olympic legacy for people with reduced mobility".

'A complex situation'

"Because of the daily changes in road and area closures, the situation will be very complex for our taxi drivers," stated Joseph-Oudin. "We will update them on a daily basis and support them with e-learning modules, extra dispatch teams and unique meeting points at sports sites. That is particularly important for our wheelchair-accessible vehicles, which have a separate



Armand Joseph-Oudin, deputy CEO of Taxis G7.

dispatch service. That said, we are aiming at supporting all our drivers, all the time, in the best way possible."

There is no special organisation coordinating mobility challenges at Paris 2024, but the taxi fleets have been in touch with police and the mayor's office. "The police are in charge when it comes to all traffic-restricted and secured zones, like the access points. Our taxi ranks within these zones will be 'neutralised'. We cannot use them, because the police want to limit traffic to protect pedestrians in these areas. Replacement taxi ranks will be available nearby.

He went on to remind people about the size of the city and its limitations. "The centre of Paris is much smaller than that of London," Joseph-Oudin added. "Other events can be found within the larger Paris area and taxis serve the entire area of Paris. They can all access the special zones. Passengers will need to have an ID and proof for travelling in the special zones."

'A stimulating atmosphere'

Joseph-Oudin also seems to relish the task ahead: "There is a very positive and stimulating atmosphere in the company at the moment. I would even say enthusiastic. This project and

this period are more challenging than stressful. We have adapted our app, adding new features. When it comes to facilitating our drivers, we have improved the communication with them and created many pick-up points in the special areas where events are held. This is particularly important when it comes to providing the best service to our customers, and especially our wheelchair-bound passengers."

Olympic bonus

Taxi journalist Hélène Manceron, during a recent editorial, wondered why the taxi sector is not receiving an Olympic bonus, as every company in Paris (particularly hotels, bars and restaurants) seem to have upped their prices. But not the taxi trade. "Will you be working during the Olympics?"

Manceron asked her driver. "I don't know yet," he replied. "I'm going to see how the traffic is flowing. We are promised floods of visitors but if I don't work it, I will do too few trips per day to be able to get by. The taxi is not like the PHV which increases their prices as soon as there is extra demand. We will not have a bonus at the Olympics!" Posing the same question to Joseph-Oudin, he smiles: "Les tarifs? The fares? Taxi organisations have been in discussions about that topic with local authorities, but our proposal was not retained." And will drivers, who are needed to keep the city moving during the Olympics, all work? "As far as our fleet is concerned, 80 to 85 per cent of drivers stated they plan to work during this period. Most drivers have adjusted their holidays for Paris 2024."



Round-up



concerned, with a somewhat mixed response.



The way G7 drivers look after their clients has been recognised in customer surveys.

Quality recognised by Parisians

It seems city's cabs have been doing well since Covid, despite the fierce competition from the PHV. "True, the Paris taxis have adapted and improved the quality of service (investment in premium cars, digitalisation, electrification). The way G7 drivers look after their clients

has been recognised in our regular customer surveys. In that sense we have won, we offer the best value for money. Passengers recognise our quality of service and an increasing number are choosing to use our services. In 2023, G7 had the largest number of trips (15 million), well above the pre-Covid trip numbers." The company scored 4.9/5 on quality

in its customer surveys. Joseph-Oudin underlined the fact that G7 is a dispatch centre offering a vast array of specialised services and service levels (G7 Green, G7 VIP, G7 VAN and G7 ZEN), to which clients – many of whom are professional users – can subscribe.

One major challenge remains for G7: to increase the number

of zero-emission (electric/hydrogen) vehicles. Nowadays, 5 per cent of its fleet is electrified (500 cabs) vs 1.9 per cent a year ago. Most G7 drivers cannot charge their vehicles at home, and Paris drivers find relatively few charging points in the centre of or near taxi ranks. That will be the main challenge after Paris 2024.

15

Equilibrium between PHVs and taxis

And what of the struggles between app-taxis, PHVs (mainly Uber, Bolt and FreeNow), and regular cabs that, not too long ago, were quite fierce? "The environment remains highly competitive. However, a number of new laws (in 2014, 2016) have provided a new regulatory structure for the PHV, and created a level playing field between the two types of transportation. Although I must say, these rules are not completely satisfactory and not always applied correctly on Paris' roads. There are still too many illegal practices that penalise taxis. Taxis have stayed strictly regulated with a roof sign and a taxi meter, whereas PHV are not tightly regulated and not limited in numbers. The only thing both types of transportation have in common is the first part of the exam to become a taxi driver or PHV driver. Only the second part of the exam is different." ■ TAXI



TAXI Talks Supporting Cabbies with InstaVolt

How one London cabbie's bright idea inspired a cheaper EV charging offer from InstaVolt.

London cabbies are known for their honest views, and this was no different when *InstaVolt's* Simon Smith hailed an electric cab from the JW Marriott Grosvenor House on Park Lane and struck up a conversation with the driver.

As Chief Commercial Officer at *InstaVolt*, the UK's largest rapid EV charging network, Simon was eager to understand the realities of driving an electric taxi in London and the key challenges cabbies face. Working with the LTDA, he then set about looking at ways *InstaVolt* could support the best taxi service in the world, as it works to also become the greenest.

Simon has shared his vision on how *InstaVolt* can become the go-to choice for cabbies seeking a rapid charge.

TAXI Nice to meet you Simon, tell us a little more about *InstaVolt*.

Simon: *InstaVolt* is the UK's largest rapid charging operator, with a network of almost 1,600 rapid and ultra-rapid (50kW-160kW) chargers across the country.

Our chargers are installed in areas where drivers want to stop and charge, including retail parks or food and beverage locations, such as our nationwide partnerships with *McDonald's* and *Costa Coffee*. Drivers can quickly charge their cabs, while having a drink and a bite to eat before getting back on the road.

We know that reliability is a key factor when choosing where to charge up, and we're proud to offer industry leading reliability of 99%+ across the whole *InstaVolt* network.

All of our chargers are easy to use, with a choice of payment options for drivers including contactless payment, using our *InstaVolt* App or using an RFID card.

TAXI Why should cabbies use *InstaVolt*?

Simon: Black cabs are part of the capital's fabric and cabbies are busy people for whom quite literally time is money, so we're always striving to deliver easily



INSTAVOLT

accessible, rapid and reliable charging solutions, removing the hassle for drivers.

And as part of our ongoing support for lowering the VAT on public charging, which is something we know the LTDA and others in the sector have been calling for to help address the cost disparity between home and public charging, we're running a special offer just for black cab drivers. This offer allows them to take advantage of a 15 per cent discount on charging across all *InstaVolt* chargers for three months*.

From my conversation with the cabbie, I know operating costs are increasing across the board so I hope drivers will take up this offer and benefit from the discount.

TAXI How many chargers does *InstaVolt* have in London?

Simon: There are currently 70 live *InstaVolt* chargers in London and another 20 in build. Current sites include chargers in Wandsworth, Bromley, Bow, Woolwich, Old Kent Road, Hanger Lane, North Acton and Finsbury Park.

We also have a new 14-charger super hub at Syon Park, situated just three miles from the M4 and close to Heathrow Airport.

We launched the Syon Park hub in a joint event with the

LTDA whose members turned up in their numbers to support us. The LTDA told us hubs like this one, with multiple reliable rapid chargers are crucial to ensure drivers can charge when they need to and get back to work quickly. We hope to keep expanding our network in London and provide more sites like this one.

TAXI Electrifying the taxi fleet in London is not without its challenges, what's *InstaVolt's* take on this?

Simon: We understand the taxi trade has had to embrace electric vehicles in recent years as Transport for London (TfL) has pushed to clean up London's air. Since 2018, all taxis licensed for the first time have had to be zero emission capable, as part of the London Mayor's ambition for a net zero-carbon city by 2030. But there are calls for the government and TfL to step in to do more to support drivers with the cost of the vehicle and to reduce VAT on charging points, as well as to expand the public charging network, to make these plans achievable.

On the whole, the feedback we had from speaking to cabbies at the event was really positive. Mostly the trepidation seems



Simon Smith,
Chief Commercial
Officer, *InstaVolt*.

to take place before someone's actually driven an EV – and that's true not just in the taxi market but across all vehicles. Whereas those we spoke with who have had their electric cabs for a while said they wouldn't dream of going back to diesel.

TAXI How are you helping?

Simon: We know the cost of driving an EV is at the top of everyone's agenda, so we are delighted to be supporting black cab drivers in their fight for lower prices for on-street public charging by self-removing 15 per cent of our charging cost, effectively leaving a 5 per cent element in line with the VAT for home charging. And as I've mentioned we're constantly expanding our network across the capital to give drivers more charging options.

We're also working with transport campaigner and original *Top Gear* presenter, Quentin Willson, who is the founder of *FairCharge*, which argues VAT needs to be cut on public EV charging.

Claim your 15% discount code for charging on the *InstaVolt* network:



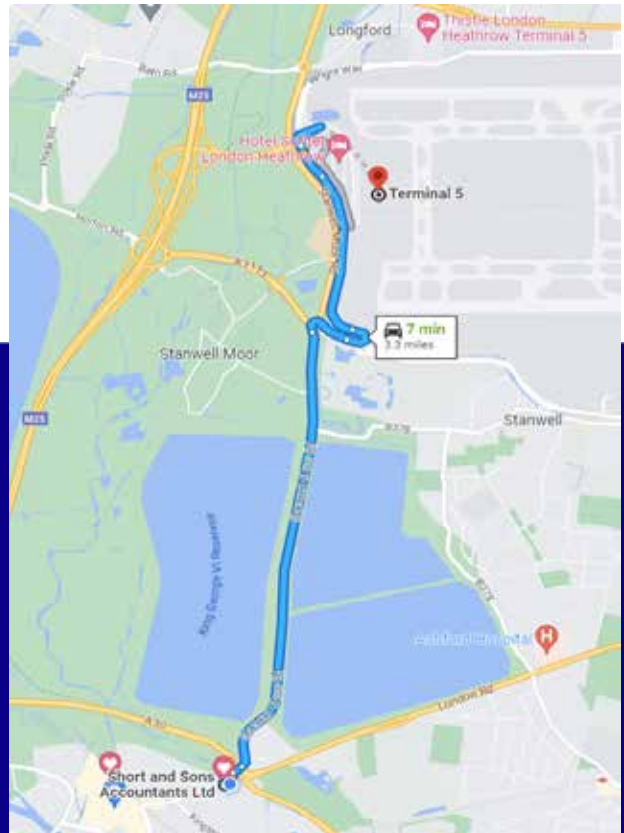
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A Passage Through Time: An Introduction To Camden

From the cultural icons of music to the flowing of its water, this bustling hub has it all.

Footprints and Foundations

I have now arrived in the London Borough of Camden and continue our journey through the timeline of London's historical past. Camden is one of the largest boroughs of inner London. The district encapsulates numerous former idyllic villages with characters that still remain in present day.

Defining Camden's irregular borders is somewhat confusing. Nonetheless, the southside contains the areas of Holborn, Covent Garden and parts of the West End. The east area follows Gray's Inn Road, York Way and Brecknock Road up the hill to Highgate. At the northern section it follows the line of Hampstead Lane across to Hampstead, continuing to Finchley Road and onto the A5. The western side travels south down from Cricklewood Broadway to Edgware Road, to the point of Greville Place where it turns east and continues along the aptly named Boundary Road.

In this series of articles around the heritage of Camden, I will concentrate on the areas either side of Camden High Street. During my perambulations covering my location research, I found many interesting chronicles in this neighbourhood. I hope you will find the stories informative and, in turn, increase your knowledge of London's ancient past. Let us explore the origins of Camden through centuries of colourful history.

Present day

Today, Camden is a cultural hub of contemporary expressionism that focuses on fashion, food and music. When driving your cab through Camden High Street, one is always slowed down at the point of Camden Lock. Here, huge crowds of people gather, wandering along its thoroughfares while seeking retail therapy. The aroma of the world's kitchens excites a salivating hunger, amongst the fast food outlets. The punk era of the 1980s still has a visual



presence, as individuals dressed in outlandish attire request payment for a colourful photo. The music scene is entrenched here too. The Dublin Castle, Jazz Café in Parkway and Koko's on the High Street have provided a plethora of musicians whose first stage appearance was a stepping stone to fame. The Dublin Castle has been at the forefront of

"Today, Camden is a cultural hub of contemporary expressionism that focuses on fashion, food and music."

new-age acts who cut their teeth in this popular watering-hole, including a long list of celebrated artists such as Madness, Coldplay, The Killers, The Arctic Monkeys and Billy Bragg.

Back To Black

In popular culture, there is one singer who stands out and continues to dominate the Camden scene. The late Amy Winehouse (1983-2011) made her debut in the clubs and bars in Camden. The popular singer had a unique style; her melodic vocals

enriched her audiences wherever she performed. Sadly, her early demise left a multitude of fans distraught. Her platinum single *Back to Black* echoes through Camden's nightlife for perpetuity. Winehouse is still revered in this neighbourhood; statues and plaques adorn the streets of this domain. Her former house in Camden Square has become a shrine for her fans who travel from around the globe to pay homage to this north London icon.

Naming rights

Camden takes its moniker from the famous 16th century scholar and headmaster of Westminster School, William Camden. The early ownership of the area was under the estate landlords, the Earls of Camden and Southampton. The street names refer to many of the descendants of the landowners. The first Earl of Camden, Charles Pratt, was married to Elizabeth Jeffries of Brecknock (from Bayham Abbey). Two of his children were Georgina and Caroline (Carol Street was once called Caroline Street); his son George married Harriet Murray, daughter of the Bishop of Rochester. The Earls' builder was Augustine Greenland. So as you drive through the streets of Camden the place names will now have far more relevance to you.

Early beginnings

From the 14th century, this location was known as St Pancras Parish, named after St Pancras Old Church on Pancras Road, which is one of London's oldest religious houses. A small settlement existed in the vicinity of the old church in the 10th century.

Supplying water to people at this time was difficult. Fortunately, the hills in the Northern Heights of Hampstead provided this basic commodity. The River Fleet supplied an adequate water source for the villagers to maintain a daily subsistence. The two streams that converged to form the River Fleet have their starting points in the Vale of Health and the grounds of Kenwood House in Hampstead. These tributaries meet at Kentish Town and meander through King's Cross, Farringdon Road and Street, onto Blackfriars, finally disgoring into the River Thames.

The River Fleet is now underground and lost in the mists of time. The capital's topography references this ancient river in numerous thoroughfares though. But can you name them? **TAXI**

If you are considering a tourist guide course or have any questions on London, please contact me via: journeythroughtime@hotmail.com

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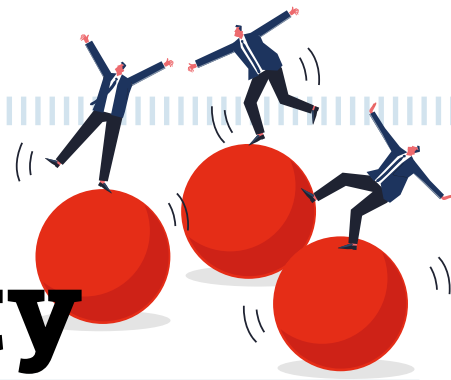
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Common Sense Versus Virtuosity



The decisions surrounding Bank Junction accessibility remains a heated debate. But the bigger question that needs asking is why aren't taxis judged on their own safety merits?

Man in black

American businessman and political strategist, Steve Schmidt, once said, *"A mark of stupidity is a belief that one party is totally virtuous and correct on the issues, while the other is evil and always wrong"*. Never a truer word has been spoken in jest. The initial taxi exclusion from Bank Junction and subsequent campaign to reinstate access, albeit on a trial basis, is testament to this.

22nd June, 2015, saw the tragic death of 26-year-old cyclist Ying Tao. She was killed after being hit by a lorry turning at Bank Junction. Her death prompted a number of protests there and saw a petition calling for a ban on lorries from this junction during rush hour. It was signed by over 13,000 people and became part of the catalyst to close Bank Junction to all forms

of motor vehicle, except buses and bikes, between 7am and 7pm during weekdays.

All about the data

Stats were produced by the Corporation of London to assist in supporting this closure to motor vehicles. On the whole, closing the junction seemed sensible. The figures for those killed or seriously injured at there were horrendous. The numbers in relation to the different types of motor vehicles colliding with pedestrians and cyclists showed there was a major problem at the junction. There was, however, an anomaly within the data: there had been no major incidents at the junction involving those in the Licensed London Taxi industry. There may have been the odd minor bump but nothing to warrant banning the vehicles from Bank Junction. Yet for more than half a decade, statistically speaking the safest form of public transport was excluded.

There are numerous theories why taxis were excluded. The irony is that more people have been seriously injured by buses over the last decade than by taxis. In fact, there have been more serious collisions involving cyclists and pedestrians than there have been involving cabs.

In statistics released for Q4 of 2023/24, TfL (transport for London) said that 86 people had been killed or seriously injured after a crash involving a London bus. The report also mentions the death of Catherine Finnegan, 56, who died after being hit by a double decker bus at Victoria station in January. This is a deeply worrying figure given that there are less than 10,000 buses on London's streets as opposed to less than 15,000 taxis. Because taxi KSI (killed or seriously injured) figures aren't remotely near that number. So is there another reason, other than safety, as to why some councils and cycling campaigners wish to ban taxis from these streets and junctions?

Common sense

In a recent interview prior to the Corporation of London's Court of Common Council vote, Lord Holmes of Richmond, who is blind, said taxis should be allowed to use all of the junction. *"For blind people, for anyone who has access needs, if they want a point-to-point journey for leisure, for tourism, for work, they are effectively barred from this part of the City,"* he said. *"That can't be right for equality, it can't be right for our economy"*

In response, Tom Fyans, from the London Cycling Campaign, said he wanted the junction to stay as it was. *"The whole area just feels a lot safer for pedestrians, for everybody around,"* he said.

"It's a great place to hang out, to eat. Economically, it has been beneficial and environmentally it's great. So we just don't want to see a backward step; we need to go forward in this city around green and active travel, not backwards"

When you look at Lord Holmes' comments, they make sense.





"There are numerous theories why taxis were excluded. The irony is that more people have been seriously injured by buses over the last decade than by taxis."

There is a clear logistical issue in relation to taxi exclusion at Bank Junction – one which needs some form of resolution. However, when you assess Tom Fyan's comments, if you ask me, there is a slight whiff of self-entitlement regarding his viewpoint. There is also the point regarding the

environment. Given that around 60 per cent of London's taxi fleet is ZEC (Zero Emission Capable), Mr Fyan's comment surrounding that aspect of taxi exclusion seems illogical. Environmentally, taxis returning to Bank Junction would be negligible.

Fair point?

Since the vote to re-introduce cabs went in the industry's favour, social media has been awash with some rather peculiar vitriol from the cycling community. Comments accusing the industry of only serving the wealthy and 'disabled-washing' have emanated from a number of individuals. With the industry performing an estimated 48 million jobs per-annum, that's

an awful lot of wealthy people moving across London. The 'disabled-washing' argument simply 'doesn't wash' on the basis that every council in London operates the Taxicard Scheme, offering elderly and disabled residents reduced-cost travel. Therefore, taxis are an essential lifeline to mobility-challenged Londoners.

There seems to be a wilful ignorance in failing to recognise that 45 per cent of the UK population have some form of disability, of which 23 per cent are of working age. There is also the myopic lack of recognition that not all disabilities are visible. As a wheelchair accessible service, taxi drivers are compelled to drive a WAV (wheelchair

accessible vehicle), and this demographic falls squarely into the industry's remit.

Help the aged

Other groups who are routinely ignored include the elderly or frail, those carrying luggage or shopping and, of course, those travelling with children, and in some cases a pram. Everybody has the right to travel unhindered using any form of public transport they desire, safely and quickly. Nobody should be time or cost disadvantaged because somebody fancies eating their sandwich near a junction in one of the world's busiest financial districts.

So it begs the question: what exactly are the objections to taxis using Bank Junction? **TAXI**



What's On? West End

Charlotte reviews some of London's best shows to catch this month, recommending top nights out for you or your passengers.

Under the spotlight



Spirited Away – London Coliseum

Japanese animators Studio Ghibli had been running for 18 years before it broke major records and came to global prominence, after winning Best Animated Feature at the 2003 Oscars for *Spirited Away*. After the success of last year's stage adaptation of another Studio Ghibli production, *My Neighbour Totoro*, it's no surprise this adaptation has arrived in the West End. And the result is nothing short of magic.

It's near impossible to describe the wonder of this production. The staging's breathtaking and a magnificent spectacle that sees audiences transported to the world of the kami, Japanese spirits and deities. Chihiro is a 10-year-old girl reluctantly moving to a new neighbourhood when – after an encounter on their journey – her parents are turned into pigs by the witch Yubaba, and she becomes trapped in a strange world. Taking on a job at Yubaba's bathhouse as a means to stay close to her parents and find a way out, Chihiro is about to see things that will defy your imagination.

Performed in Japanese, with easily accessible subtitles in English, this is a production for all the family, courtesy of the extraordinary puppetry and performances. For hardcore Ghibli fans and newcomers alike, this fantastical production is one that should not be missed!



Spirited Away runs until 24th August.

Boys From The Blackstuff - Garrick Theatre

40 years have passed since Alan Bleasdale's groundbreaking series *Boys from the Blackstuff* aired on BBC2 yet, as this powerful new adaptation by James Graham shows, not a lot has changed. This is the story of five men in 1980s Liverpool – Chrissie, Loggo, George, Dixie and Yosser – and their families. The men are used to working hard to provide for their loved ones, but now there's no work and no money, no-one seems to give a flying fig.

The themes of community, poverty, politics, family and feelings of uselessness are carefully portrayed, as is the sensitive depiction of masculinity and mental health. Flying through its two-hours-and-30-minute runtime, the show manages to achieve a tonal balance between portraying gutting issues with the seriousness they deserve, but with a softer touch. And, as with real life, there's often light to be found in the darkness.

All of the cast are impressive here, but it's Barry Sloane's depiction of Yosser Hughes that steals the show. His iconic repeating of the line "Gizza job. Go on, gizzit," is so extraordinarily delivered throughout the show and with such depth – it's funny, frightening and devastating in equal measure. Just like the show itself, this stage production is bittersweet and stirring. This isn't just a period piece and a tribute to a beloved TV show; it's a wake-up call – and stark reminder – to the institutional structures that continue to allow people to fall through the cracks.



Boys From The Blackstuff runs until 3rd August.



What else is on?

■ **Next To Normal – Wyndham's Theatre (until 21st September)**

Suburban housewife Diana seems to have the perfect life – educated and married with two teen children – but underneath the surface her struggles with bipolar disorder threaten to tear her and her family apart.

■ **Shrek The Musical – Eventim Apollo (until 31st August)**

A restaging of the beloved DreamWorks animation from 2001, following Shrek the Ogre as he sets off on a quest to save Princess Fiona, with the help of a wisecracking Donkey (Todrick Hall).

■ **Hello Dolly – Palladium (until 14th September)**

Imelda Staunton returns to the stage as matchmaker Dolly Levi, a professional meddler whose life turns upside down when she decides that the next match she needs to make is to find someone for herself.

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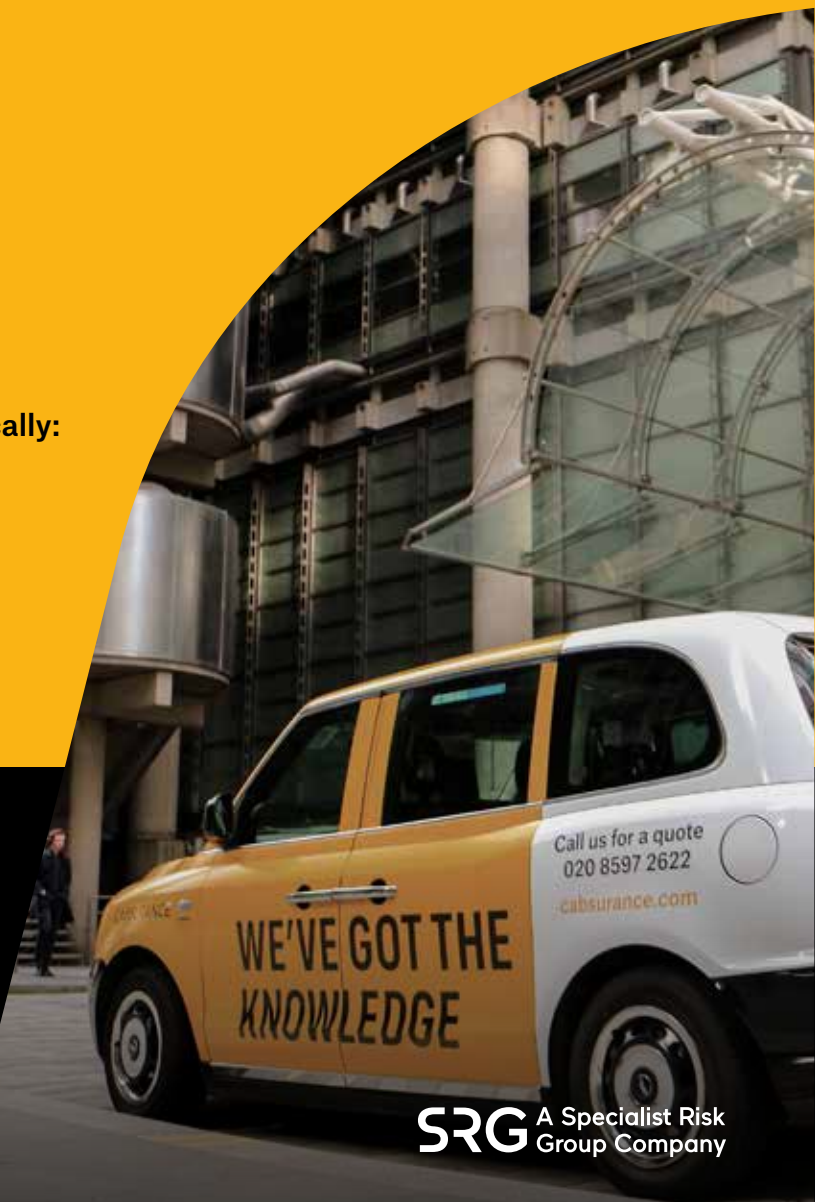
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Taxi Charity And Veterans

After a successful visit to Normandy for the 80th D-Day commemorations, some members

London cab drivers and Taxi Charity volunteers, Dave Hemstead and Dean Euesden, shared their experiences at Southwick Revival.

TAXI What is Southwick Revival?

Dave: Mark Jewell, the organiser of the annual WWII Southwick Revival in Hampshire, invited the Taxi Charity to bring a couple of veterans to the event. The timing worked perfectly. We arrived back in Portsmouth on the evening of 8th June from our trip to Normandy for the 80th anniversary of D-Day, stayed overnight and then spent a lovely few hours in the village of Southwick before taking our veterans home.

Dean: I didn't really know what to expect but the event certainly exceeded anything I'd imagined. It appeared that the whole village had joined in the revival, with all the windows taped as they would have been during WWII, bunting flying from every building and so many villagers and visitors dressed in authentic costume.

Dave: Their website says 'Southwick Revival is a fantastically nostalgic event commemorating the D-Day Landings. Featuring visits to the impressive Map Room at Southwick Park, visitors can indulge in the sights and smells of 1940s England, whilst wandering through the Squires Paddock filled with a vintage fun fair, refuel on home-made cake from Ma Attwell's tea room and marvel at the motorcade rumbling through the village!'

Dean: There were so many people dressed in 1940s gear and everyone looked to be having a great time listening to the music, exploring the WWII camp, shopping in the vintage market and enjoying the perfect weather.

Dave: On the Saturday, the event hosted a panel discussion in honour of the 80th anniversary of D-Day, when they brought together descendants of the Supreme Commanders who led the Allied invasion of Normandy in 1944. Their VIP guests included Susan Eisenhower, granddaughter of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Richard Tedder, son of Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, Viscount



Southwick Village Revival, June 2024.



Marie Scott (right) speaks to guests in attendance.



Attendees at the Revival this year.



Southwick Village Revival from this summer.

Attend Southwick Revival

of the Taxi Charity attended the Southwick Revival on 9th June. TAXI spoke to them.



Don Turrell, WWII veteran.



Marie Scott (left) at the event.



Henry Montgomery, grandson of General Montgomery and William Ramsay, grandson of Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay. The charity had been approached to take some of their VIP guests back to London and we were very happy to help.

Dean: On the Sunday afternoon, WWII Veteran Marie Scott shared her D-Day story. The group listened in total silence as she told them how she had been only a few miles away in Fort Southwick, transmitting messages to and receiving messages from the beaches. After the previous day's panel, the crowd really appreciated hearing from someone who was there and who spoke so eloquently about her experiences.

Dave: It was a really good event and I hope we can attend next year.

To find out more about the support the Taxi Charity offers to veterans, or to donate, visit: www.taxicharity.org



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 75th anniversary in 2023, a remarkable milestone for a small, niche charity peopled by enthusiastic volunteers. In 2024, they took a group of veterans to Normandy for the 80th anniversary of D-Day. www.taxicharity.org

The Taxi Charity online shop has some new D-Day 80 commemorative merchandise, as well as pin badges and windscreen stickers, key rings and T-shirts, which are available at: www.taxicharity.org/shop



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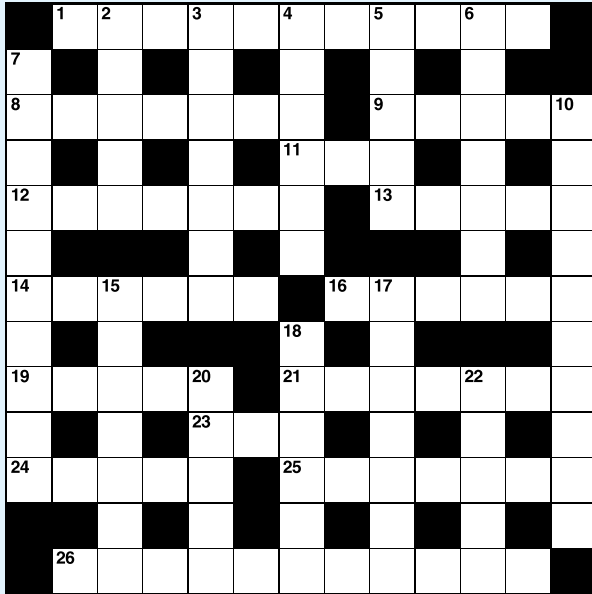
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Puzzler Page

Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Annual domestic tidy-up (6-5)
- 8 Give a better cutting edge (7)
- 9 Low woody plant (5)
- 11 Rage (3)
- 12 Cold beverage (4,3)
- 13 Pours down, teems (5)
- 14 Force upon (6)
- 16 Part of speech usually ending 'ly' (6)
- 19 Head monk (5)
- 21 Strong-willed (7)
- 23 Successful song (3)
- 24 Ahead of schedule (5)
- 25 Pair, duo (7)
- 26 Skill on an old office machine (11)

DOWN

- 2 Location or position (5)
- 3 Spur (7)
- 4 Amiable, cheerful (6)
- 5 Also-ran (5)
- 6 Slot for a broadcast (7)
- 7 Absorb and integrate (10)
- 10 Brewery's finest beer? (4,6)
- 15 Adolescence (7)
- 17 Distribute (4,3)
- 18 Second-mentioned (6)
- 20 Herb of the mint family (5)
- 22 Cupped fruit of the oak (5)

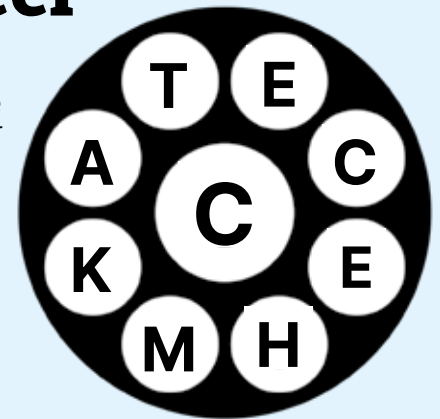
Sudoku

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.

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

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	
	<			<
	<		<	
3				

All answers to puzzler on p30



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LTDA Branch Meeting

The next LTDA Central Branch meeting will take place on Tuesday 23rd July at 4pm. It will be held at the Hall of Remembrance, St Luke's and Christ Church, Flood Street, Chelsea, SW3 5SY

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Suburban badge sector numbers _____

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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.

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Signed _____ Date _____

29

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4. Bank Sort Code --
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Date _____



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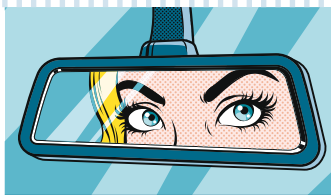
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You can now also apply to join the LTDA online, simply scan here to complete an online application:





Car Boot Fail

It's surprising how much junk you can fit into a taxi – and believe me, it's way more than you could ever imagine...



A woman of words

I know the maximum capacity of a cab because I persuaded Mr Meg to spend a whole day disposing of some of his life debris at a car boot sale.

It would never have worked if I had said we were off to the local dump with it. Oh no. If I'd suggested that I would have had a 40-minute lecture on recycling, repurposing and saving the planet. During his lecture, the only word that would not be spoken was 'hoarding.'

I got the car boot idea from a lady I picked up in Knightsbridge

who was laden with Harvey Nicks bags and was heading home to The Boltons. She told me she had a strict one in, one out policy on her designer clothes, and that her air-conditioned wardrobe was dust free and streamlined. All her used clothing goes to her cleaner who takes them to a car boot sale and sells them on.

I told her about my neat wardrobe which is colour coded and hoovered out in the corners every week. Don't hate me because I am a clean freak, but do feel sorry for me, because I am married to a hunter gatherer that does a lot more gathering than hunting. He's not thrown out an item of clothing since we got married in 1982. I'm sure he still

wears the M&S Y-fronts that he took his vows in.

Mr Meg has been wearing the same camouflage shorts for four decades. He bought them from an army surplus store near Warren Street Station when he was a gangly youth. Back then he used a belt to keep them up. Now he has sewn elasticated panels on the sides to accommodate what he calls his 'core muscles.'

Like a cat with a canary, I carefully laid my plan to get his wardrobe, garage, shed, and side passage cleared out. I took weeks to drip feed into the conversation how much money people can make at a boot sale and how the buyers would be so interested in his junk – I mean, collectable items. I even lied and said he

might find some good stuff to buy there. In truth, I'd tackle him to the ground if he even tried.

He caved, so last Sunday at the crack of dawn off we went to a boot fair just off the A40. His gear tumbled out from the back of the cab and soon there was a queue of fellas who looked just like Mr Meg paying attention to all of his bits and pieces.

One bloke paid £2 for a homemade welly boot remover. Another bought a broken nutcracker for £1. Mr Meg pondered his sales for a few minutes and cried, "No! I might need them!" So, he followed the purchasers and offered each of them more to buy his stuff back.

£7 down on his first two sales meant we couldn't afford to stay.

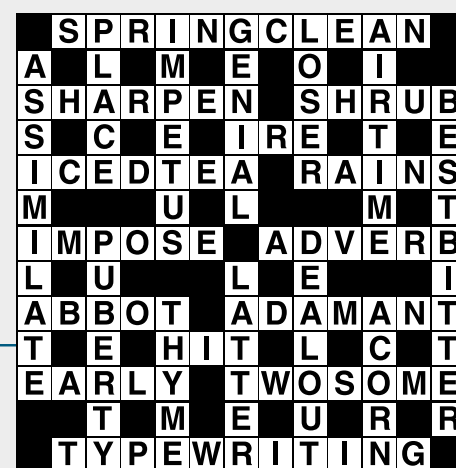
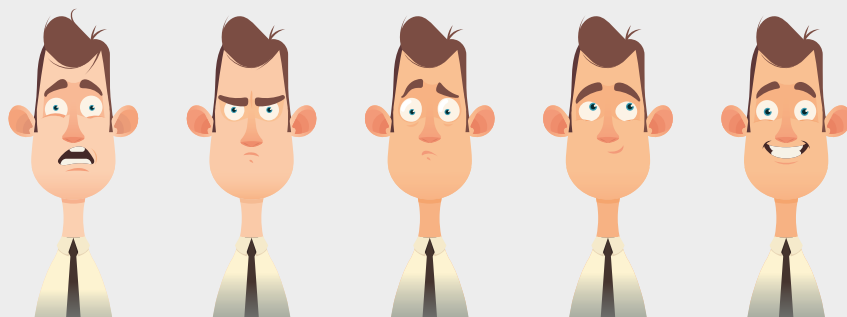
Everything got slung back into the taxi at speed and off home we went. What a waste of a day.

Shame those nutcrackers were broken.

TAXI

30

PUZZLER ANSWERS



Crossword

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Sudoku

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

Futoshiki

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

Wordwheel

SOLUTION: CHECKMATE

All words: Ache, acme, cache, cachet, cake, came, catch, chat, cheat, check, cheek, each, etch, hack, ketch, mace, machete, match, tack, teach, CHECKMATE.

Word targets: Excellent: 18, Good: 15, Target: 11, Kids: 6



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